

WARD, MONICA R., Ph.D. *Little Tallassee: A Creek Indian Colonial Town*. (2019)
Directed by Dr. Greg O'Brien. 331 pp.

This dissertation explores the role of the Upper Creek Indian town of Little Tallassee in Creek History, beginning with the town's origins during the 1740s and 1750s and ending with its decline in the late 1780s and early 1790s. Little Tallassee is a unique place as it was a product of a colonial encounter and originated as a center of Euro-exchange and Atlantic trade. Yet under the leadership of headman and warrior Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee evolved into a prominent Creek town that saw the creation of a formal town structure as well as a ceremonial space in which to conduct international diplomacy and manage trade.

The vast majority of American Indian histories of the Native South have attached Little Tallassee's identity to its most notable resident, Alexander McGillivray, a mixed-ancestry Creek and arguably one of the most notable historical figures to emerge out of the American Southeast. Contrary to existing historiography, I argue that Alexander McGillivray was first and foremost a trader who held little political authority within Creek society. An examination of the town's history reveals Emistisiguo to have been the individual most responsible for Little Tallassee's prominence as a Creek town within Creek society. McGillivray's activities actually contributed to the town's subsequent decline. Placing Little Tallassee at the forefront of Creek and colonial American historiography challenges the current scholarship on Alexander McGillivray's power and authority and restores agency to Creek Indians at the local level in their own domestic and foreign affairs.

Scholars have cast their gaze far too long at western-educated mestizos and cultural brokers like Alexander McGillivray, and as a result have obscured other Native architects of diplomacy and trade who dominated the economic and social realms of Indian societies throughout the eighteenth century. By restoring credit to Emistisiguo as the engineer behind the transformation of Little Tallassee from a mere trading post to a leading Upper Creek town and center of diplomacy, this dissertation addresses this significant oversight in Creek and Southeastern Indian historiography.

LITTLE TALLASSEE: A CREEK INDIAN
COLONIAL TOWN

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
2019

Approved by

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To my loving parents, James and Jill Ward

To the memory of my Grandfathers

Al Niedzwicki (1932-2014)

James R. Ward Sr. (1927-2011)

APPROVAL PAGE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am overwhelmed by the generous support I have received from scholars, institutions, colleagues, friends, and family in order to complete this dissertation. It seems like only yesterday I scribbled in my high school year book that I wanted to be a history professor. This dissertation is a step toward achieving that dream. The following acknowledgements are my attempt to express my gratitude to all who have been a part of this process.

I am indebted to my mentor and committee chair, Greg O'Brien, for his advice, wisdom, and support. This dissertation is the product of countless drafts and revisions that he read over patiently, providing copious notes and invaluable feedback. I am humbled to have worked with such a great mind, scholar, and historian. Thank you, Greg, for taking a chance on me and granting me the opportunity to become the historian I have always longed to be.

I could not have asked for a better dissertation committee. Mark Elliott provided insight that enabled me to convey the larger historical significance of Little Tallassee. Peter Villella's knowledge of Ethnohistory assisted in my interrogation of European and American sources, which enabled me to extract and subsequently bring Creek voices to the forefront of my study. Colleen Kriger's extensive knowledge of historical linguistics, oral traditions, and Native Institutions strengthened my larger argument. Perhaps, most of all, I am grateful for the encouragement and enthusiasm each committee member provided throughout the process.

Friends have been a vital part of life and in many ways are responsible for the completion of this dissertation. Virginia (Ginny) Summey, my former colleague and now an accomplished historian, made me feel at home in the South. Finette-Llerman Russak is the strongest person I know and inspired me to believe a similar strength lay within myself. I am forever indebted to my physician Eugene Eskow. He saved my life, and without him this dissertation simply would not have been possible. It is with open arms that I thank my dear friend and former professor, Camilla Townsend. Outside of my family, I cannot think of one person who has been more supportive of my dreams than Cami. I am grateful to have benefited from many years of her guidance and wisdom.

My greatest debts are those I owe to my family. The memories of my grandfathers, Al Niedzwicki and James Ward Sr., are fresh in my mind as is their love for the subject of history. My grandmother, Jeanine Ward, is the most enthusiastic person I know. Her positive attitude is infectious and I am grateful to have benefited from it throughout my life and graduate career. I am equally grateful to my only sibling, Jennifer Rakhit. I smile when I think about our long walks on cool autumn days at the Manasquan Reservoir. My sister always listened patiently while I attempted to overcome the challenges of writer's block by talking about my chapters out loud and I am thankful for her thoughtful advice. I am additionally thankful towards my two aunts, Jan Spohn and Nancy Niedzwicki Hollabaugh. The encouragement they have provided over the years has given me a confidence in myself that I never knew I had. My Great Dane, John

‘Quincy’ Adams, has offered me his paw, a listening ear, and a loving gaze as I continued to plug away day and night at this dissertation.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother and father, Jill and James Ward. I cannot adequately put into words the gratitude I have for my parents for the countless sacrifices they have made, financially and emotionally, to support my dream of becoming a historian. My parents have taught me the definition of unconditional love and for that I will always be truly grateful. This dissertation is for them.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Upper Creek town of Little Tallassee is a familiar place to historians of Southeastern Indian and Colonial history. It is best known as the home of Alexander McGillivray, a mixed ancestry Creek and arguably one of the most notable historical figures to emerge out of the American Southeast. McGillivray was a powerful and influential man who at different points in his life served as a champion of Creek national independence after the American Revolution, a diplomatic liaison between Spain and the United States, and a partner of one of the region's most successful trading houses, *Panton, Leslie and Company*. He also negotiated The Treaty of New York, one of the largest Creek land cessions in history to the American government. The details and motivation behind the treaty are subject to interpretation, and have left McGillivray with a debatable, but memorable legacy.¹

Little Tallassee was also the home of Emistisiguo, one of the most prominent traditional headmen of the Creek Nation from 1763 to his death in 1782. Emistisiguo's role in the region was not limited to local Creek politics, and within his relatively short

¹ There is an overwhelming amount of literature available on the career of Alexander McGillivray. For an introduction, see Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2015), 24-34; John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, ed. William J. Bauer, Jr. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938, reprinted Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 3-57, and Linda Langely, "The Tribal Identity of Alexander McGillivray: A Review of the Historic and Ethnographic Data," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 46:2 (Spring 2005): 231-9.

life he came to be a respected war hero, politician, diplomat, and Beloved Man of Little Tallassee. Furthermore, he was an invaluable ally to the British during the American Revolution, and mentor to the young Alexander McGillivray.² Emistisiguo's strong and crucial role in the development of Little Tallassee has long been overshadowed by his successor, Alexander McGillivray and the later years of Little Tallassee during the birth of the American Republic. Looking back on the origins of the town offers a fresh perspective on Emistisiguo and the evolution of Creek towns that resulted from the development of new intercultural trade routes to distant markets during the eighteenth century. Focusing on this early period provides invaluable insight into the relationship between two important Creek leaders, Emistisiguo, Alexander McGillivray, and restores Emistisiguo to his prominent role in late eighteenth-century Creek history.

This dissertation explores the contributions of the Upper Creek Indian town of Little Tallassee to Creek History beginning with the town's origins during the 1740s and 1750s to its decline in the late 1780s and early 1790s. Unlike other Creek towns, Little Tallassee is unique as it was a product of a colonial encounter and originated purely as a center of Euro-exchange and Atlantic trade. I argue that despite these unique origins, under the leadership of Emistisiguo during the 1760s Little Tallassee evolved into a prominent Creek town that responded to all the needs of Native culture with the creation

² There is no one book on the career of Emistisiguo. The paper trail of Emistisiguo exists in almost every modern book on Creek history, but is scattered and quite muddled at times. The most detailed and recent account of Emistisiguo can be found in Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2015), 19, 77-78, 82-83, 85, 177-78, 228-29, 240, 246, 248. Another valuable work that one can look to for accurate information on Emistisiguo is John T. Juricek's *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015).

of formal town political structure as well as a ceremonial space in which to conduct international diplomacy. Emistisiguo based his authority on traditional markers such as success as a warrior, and innovative diplomacy that expanded Little Tallassee's importance within Creek Country. As a result, he transformed Little Tallassee into a sacred space where decisions of war and peace were made during the Creek-Choctaw War (1766-1776) and the American Revolutionary War (1776-1783). Under his leadership, by the mid-to-late eighteenth century, Little Tallassee had emerged as a center of diplomacy and Anglo-Creek trade not only for the Upper Creeks, but the majority of Creek towns.

Emistisiguo's death in 1781 marked an end of an era for Little Tallassee as a traditional Creek town. Alexander McGillivray, whom most scholars view essentially as Emistisiguo's political successor resided at Little Tallassee throughout the 1780s. He was one quarter Creek, one quarter French, as well as half Scottish, and is usually envisioned as a bicultural, adept Indian who thus made a highly successful leader.³ McGillivray was not a Creek headman, warrior, or even as a savvy politician and memorable leader of the Creek 'Nation' as current historiography has depicted him to be. I contend that Alexander McGillivray was first and foremost a Creek trader. McGillivray did serve Little Tallassee

³ McGillivray was only one quarter Creek, his mother Sehoy being the daughter of a French Captain named Marchland. Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Shaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 72-73; "Lachlan and Sehoy," in John Walter Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, ed. William J. Bauer, Jr. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1938, reprinted Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 9-13.(hereafter cited as Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, page number(s). See also, Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period*. 1851. (Repr. Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Book and Magazine Co., 1962), 343-33; Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives Lost on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2016), 28.

and the Upper Creeks in an advisory capacity as well as an active spokesperson, but unlike Emistisiguo, he held little political authority within Creek society. McGillivray was the sole facilitator of Euro-Creek trade throughout the 1780s, but a Creek town cannot exist on trade alone. No traditional headman ever replaced Emistisiguo, and because of this by the middle of the 1780s Little Tallassee quickly lost its place as the center of Creek diplomacy and prestige as a leading Upper Creek town. By the time of McGillivray's death in 1793, Little Tallassee was nothing more than a trade depot. Thus, even Little Tallassee's decline was unusual, as the town itself dissolved decades before Indian Removal.

There is no known documentary evidence of what Little Tallassee looked like spatially, but given the fact that Little Tallassee served as a center of international diplomacy throughout the mid-1760s to 1770s one can assume it looked similar to other important Creek towns such as the Okfuskee or Tuckabatchee. Located at the very center would be a large town square that served as an accessible public and ritual space, along with a large plaza and public buildings. The plaza was a place for Creeks to socialize, perform ceremonial dances and festivities, play ball games, debate personal affairs, and conduct business with resident traders. Outside of the plaza were agricultural fields, where Creek women during the spring and summer seasons would tend to their crops. Once a year, both men and women would gather together to celebrate the Creek Corn

Busk, a ceremony of both physical and spiritual renewal for the town and their neighbors.⁴

Creek towns were independent social and political units within Creek society that served as diplomatic and spiritual centers. Headmen and warriors gathered around the sacred square and held a town council to discuss domestic and foreign affairs. The council was composed of a selection of men, all of whom held a merit-based rank and title. While each Creek town was different, their councils were composed of similar members, including the leading headman (*mico*), the second man (*heniha*) who advised the principal headman and assumed political control in extreme circumstances, as well as a number of other political officials and secondary advisors. Elders referred to as Beloved Men (*isti atcacagi*) also served on the council and provided wisdom and experience to guide all discussions. The town meetings lasted anywhere from a few hours to several days, and ended when a consensus had been reached amongst all councilmen. A spiral cane would be lit at the start of each town meeting as a symbolic reminder that the council was “of one fire” based upon kinship and all councilmen had an equal voice while deliberating town affairs.⁵

There is ample evidence that throughout Emistisiguo’s residency at Little Tallassee he was accompanied by a Second Man known as Neothlucco.⁶ In addition,

⁴ Robbie Ethridge’s *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2003) provides one of the most detailed descriptions of the spatial layout, social organization, and sacred elements of Creek towns. See Chapter 4, “The Heart of Creek Country” of this book in particular. Another excellent account can be found in Steven C. Hahn’s *The Invention of the Creek Nation 1670-1763* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), pp. 20-26.

⁵ Robbie Ethridge’s *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 101-108; Steven C. Hahn’s *The Invention of the Creek Nation*, 20.

⁶ Several historians have noted the presence of the Second Man at Little Tallassee. For examples, see *John*

there is one account in the documentary record that confirms the presence of an actual town square at Little Tallassee during a diplomatic meeting hosted by Emistisiguo in February of 1774. During the meeting, Emistisiguo presented the British Superintendent David Taitt with gifts of white beads, tobacco, both symbolic peace offerings on behalf of the Upper Creeks. During the exchange, Emistisiguo remarked the clay to have been “white” and “the same as our Square.”⁷ The presence of a town square and a Second Man at Little Tallassee supports my argument that a formal Creek town and political structure was in place by 1774 at the latest, while the number of diplomatic meetings that took place before 1774 indicates Little Tallassee could have been a traditional Creek town as early as the 1760s.

All town meetings were accompanied by a series of rituals in order to create a sacred atmosphere that fostered honest discussion. A trained spiritual specialist or master of ceremonies prepared and served *Acee*, also known as “the black drink,” that was consumed by all council participants at the beginning of the meeting. *Acee* was a high caffeine plant that in most cases caused one to regurgitate minutes later and served as a means to “purify” one’s mind and body before entering discussion of any important town

T. Juricek, Endgame for Empire: British Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776 (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015), pp. 47, 113, 145, 192-94, 218-20, 227; Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskin and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 151; *David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 255.

⁷ Emistisiguo references the town square in the following talk: Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia-Lower Creek Reconciliation, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, in *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002). Historian David Corkran does also report that on on April 20th of 1766 that “Upper Creek headmen assembled in Emistisiguo’s square at Little Tallassee.” *David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier*, 258.

affairs.⁸ At the close of the meeting, the spiritual specialist would circulate a calumet that when smoked would sanctify agreements between all council members. These two particular rituals were required especially if the meeting was cross cultural in scope. In order to guarantee success of all diplomatic agreements between outsiders, whether they be European, Indian, or American, a sacred atmosphere sealed by the smoking of the calumet was of utmost importance.⁹

Emistisiguo's status and expertise as a traditional headman enabled Little Tallassee's transition from a trade post to a Creek town. Emistisiguo gained authority amongst his fellow Creeks through his accomplishments as a military official as well as someone who controlled access to vital European manufactured goods. Furthermore, he was a war prophet, a type of spiritual specialist who possessed the power to predict the outcome of battles from afar with the assistance of a sacred medicinal bundle. As a successful diplomat, warrior, and a man of inherent spiritual power, Emistisiguo served multiple needs of Creek culture as a traditional headman. Emistisiguo participated in town councils where he gained the support of his townspeople, created the necessary sacred ceremonial setting for diplomatic meetings between other Indian groups or Euro-Americans, as well as supplying Creeks with trade goods through many of his diplomatic negotiations.

⁸ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 104-105; Steven Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 24-25.

⁹ For further discussion on ceremonial and spiritual components of Southeastern Indian diplomacy, see Greg O'Brien, "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier", in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O'Brien (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 148-183.

Relying on trade as a source of authority was dangerous due to the fact that war with neighboring Indian groups or Euro-Americans could easily disrupt it and being in debt to traders threatened the long-term stability of Indian societies. If the headman lost access these important trade routes then their prestige and influence would wane. By the middle of the eighteenth century, control over access to trade goods became a new way to exert authority over others.¹⁰ Emistisiguo's ability to maintain Creek access to European trade through various diplomatic meetings throughout the 1760s and 1770s bolstered his authority amongst the Creeks. He was a traditional headman who demonstrated his authority through traditional and non-traditional definitions of power.

While combing through the sources on Creeks during the Revolutionary period, Emistisiguo's name kept appearing and reappearing. I recalled seeing his name in Creek and Native South historiography, but his identity remained quite a mystery to me. Little Tallassee appeared in the same historiography just as frequently as Emistisiguo, but all sources indicated it to be a place of trade and the birth place of Alexander McGillivray. Based on current scholarship and primary source readings, it became clear to me that Little Tallassee was an important place. Exactly why it was significant became and remained the question, as well as Emistisiguo's connection to the bustling trade center.

Within only a period of approximately twenty years, Little Tallassee transformed from a trading center to a true Indian town. In fact, it is the only known Upper Creek

¹⁰ For a more in-depth analysis of traditional and non-traditional sources of Southeastern Indian sources of power during the Eighteenth Century, see Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age 1750-1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), Chapters 3 and 4 in particular.

town (and possibly Lower) to be a product of eighteenth-century Euro-American trade. Little Tallassee lacked ancient origins and before the arrival of Emistisiguo had no traditional town square. It also appeared to contain no significant cultural and ceremonial features of what constitutes a Creek town by Native standards. Little Tallassee's evolution, from trade post to Creek town and subsequent decline, provides historians rare and unique insight into the colonial encounter in the American Southeast during the eighteenth-century.

Further study of Little Tallassee's origins transforms Alexander McGillivray's legacy regarding the success of his home town and Creek national politics. A close examination of the town's history revealed Emistisiguo to be the architect and force of leadership behind Little Tallassee's prominence as a Creek town within Southeastern Indian and Creek society. McGillivray's later presence only led to the town's subsequent decline. Placing the history of Little Tallassee in its entirety at the forefront of Creek and American historiography challenges current scholarship on Alexander McGillivray's power and authority as well as restores Creek Indians' agency in their own domestic and foreign affairs at the local level.

Trade was not enough to sustain a traditional Creek town. Under the leadership of Emistisiguo during the 1760s and 1770s, Little Tallassee was a place where significant diplomacy took place between Creeks and both their Indian and non-Indian neighbors. As a traditional headman, Emistisiguo created a space at Little Tallassee that was vibrant in Creek culture, whether that be participation in town councils or conducting ritual ceremonies before trade negotiation. Little Tallassee provides historians a closer look at

what constitutes a Creek town during the eighteenth-century. The strength of Indian institutions and traditional Indian leadership is thus the most vital component of a Creek town.

It is not the case that Little Tallassee was so obscure a place that historians have not noticed it. The problem is that past and current scholars have misunderstood Little Tallassee's role in Creek society and therefore have not recognized it was, for a brief period, an actual Creek town. Creek scholars have reduced Little Tallassee to be a small trade community or a mere trade outpost and depot. The oversight, I argue, is due to the fact that historians have focused too long on the subject of Alexander McGillivray. The majority of historians who have examined Little Tallassee utilized the abundance of evidence that McGillivray himself left behind, and an even wider literature examines the McGillivray family and their notable trade companies. As a result, scholars have associated Little Tallassee as a place of European trade, rather than examining the role that Creeks, and in particular Emistisiguo, played in Little Tallassee's emergence as a Euro-American trade center as well as prominent Upper Creek town.

Alexander McGillivray and the extensive scholarship surrounding him has hindered development of a more realistic and nuanced understanding of Creek history. The reason scholars have magnified McGillivray's power and influence within Creek society was due to the large quantity of correspondence between Spanish, American, Scottish and English trade partners, letters that he penned himself and subsequently archived. Alexander McGillivray's writings are filled with self-aggrandizement, desire for wealth, and a yearning for authority within Creek society that he never achieved. A

closer reading of these documents along with Spanish and lesser known English sources exposes the bias and inaccuracies of the bulk of his writings. When these documents are placed within a larger historical context as well as read through an ethnographic lens, McGillivray's identity more closely resembles that of a white landed planter and a business man who prioritized his own private investments in trade over the interests of Creek society. Alexander McGillivray was the sole facilitator of Creek trade during the 1780s but held very little authority within Creek society outside of the trade monopoly he and his firm, Panton, Leslie, and Company created.

The goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate and restore power to the Creek actors that were responsible for Little Tallassee's evolution from a center of Indian trade to a prominent Creek town. All decisions, whether they were for peace or war, were conducted in the square grounds of Creek towns. Even the famous Alexander McGillivray was reliant on the headmen and warriors of other Creek towns throughout the duration of his life in Indian country. Too much credit has been given to Alexander McGillivray and to educated mestizos, cultural brokers, and intermediaries, in general, and not enough attention has been paid to traditional aspects of Creek culture in the town's history. A close study of Little Tallassee as a trade community and Creek town exposes this problem.

This dissertation is part of the wave of New Indian history, which places Indians at the center of the narrative. By looking at Little Tallassee's entire history, and focusing on Emistisiguo's importance, recasts and limits the role of McGillivray within this history. Little Tallassee's emergence within Creek society depended upon the ambitions

of the key Native personalities that inhabited it. This study is therefore not only written as a town history, but also as a biographical study of the two individuals that created and shaped Little Tallassee: Emistisiguo and Alexander McGillivray.

There is no scholarly study dedicated solely to Little Tallassee, despite its unique place to Creek and European worlds during the middle of the eighteenth-century.¹¹ In addition, Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee's prominent headman, has garnered very little attention by scholars of Creek history and the Native South.¹² One of the first historians to discuss Emistisiguo, and highlight the importance of his presence was Colin G. Calloway. Calloway proclaims, in his pioneering work *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (2006), that Emistisiguo's first "debut on a major stage" occurred at the Treaty of Augusta in 1763.¹³ At that conference, he and his fellow Creeks gathered to discuss the idea of conducting trade only with the British, not any other European power, in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. Calloway's emphasis

¹¹ The most substantial research that has been conducted on Little Tallassee has been that of the archaeologists Gregory Waselkov and Craig Shelton but their scope has been limited due to the fact that most of the former town is restricted and off limits for excavation. The fact that Little Tallassee declined in both population and significance during the late 1780s and 1790s partly explains their limited findings. Gregory A. Waselkov, "Coosa River Valley Archaeology Volume I: Auburn University Monograph 2" (Auburn, GA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Auburn University, 1980), 20-37, sites 1EE5, 1EE150, and 1EE211. The largest geographical site, 1EE3, Waselkov suspects to be the largest location of Little Tallassee, but the site has not been revisited since 1955 and there are no available descriptions of the types of artifacts that were found there.

¹² For examples of important Creek scholarship that discuss Emistisiguo briefly but lack analysis, see the following: Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation: 1670-1763* (Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 274; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 157, 163; Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 146, 189-191; Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskin and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 141, 151, 161-162, 166-170; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 19-21, 39, 47-49, 81, 96, 151.

¹³ Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 103.

was not Emistisiguo's role in the Treaty of Augusta, but the importance of the treaty itself. However, it was the first book to acknowledge the role that Indians across the Eastern seaboard played important roles negotiating new trade alliances after the French and Indian War. He places the Creeks at the center of the discussions of politics and trade that occurred at Augusta.

John T. Juricek's *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1778*, builds on Calloway's acknowledgement of the significance of the year 1763, by providing a detailed account of Anglo-Creek trade and politics from 1763 to 1776.¹⁴ Juricek argues that the Treaty of Augusta was the first of many significant public appearances Emistisiguo made representing Little Tallassee. These appearances followed his emergence as a significant Upper Creek headman and strong advocate for the preservation of Anglo-Creek trade. For example, Juricek verifies that Emistisiguo was present at the Congress with the British at Pensacola in 1765, which demonstrated the headman's support for trade based out of the Gulf Coast. His presence at this meeting has gone largely unnoticed as few historians have focused on the conference. This dissertation is indebted to Juricek's work as he was the first historian to provide a

¹⁴ Juricek's collection of primary source documents: *Georgia Treaties* and *Georgia-Florida Treaties* also provided a steady paper trail for me to follow while I searched for the beginnings of Emistisiguo's career as a headman, warrior, and diplomat. Chapter 4 as well Chapter 7 of *Endgame for Empire* in particular discuss Emistisiguo's defining actions in matters of Anglo-Creek trade. See, *John T. Juricek, Endgame for Empire: British Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015); *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002); *Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763-1776*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 12 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002).

detailed paper trail of Emistisiguo and his involvement in Anglo-Creek trade during the Colonial Era.

My dissertation both adds to and revises John T. Juricek's work. First and foremost, I argue that the Treaty of Augusta in 1763 was not the first public appearance of Emistisiguo as Little Tallassee's headman and warrior. Emistisiguo appeared in major diplomatic meetings in 1759 and again in 1761.¹⁵ The 1759 congress was held by the British to convince the Upper Creeks to enter the fold before the end of the Seven Years War, and the 1761 assembly was held at Little Tallassee by leading headmen of the Upper Creek towns to discuss that idea.¹⁶ Second, I contend that Emistisiguo championed forging an alliance with the British to open trade out of the Gulf Coast region as far back as 1763 and continued to do so throughout the 1760s and 1770s. Last, my most significant revision is one that builds off of Juricek's study of Emistisiguo organizing a campaign to abandon clan revenge momentarily in order to preserve Anglo-Creek trade in lieu of escalating frontier violence with the colony of Georgia in the mid-1760s.

Clan or "blood" revenge was a Creek cultural practice that stipulated a Creek warrior had the right to kill any person or relative that was responsible for the murder of a member of their own clan. Creek clans were ancient kinship groups, related by blood,

¹⁵ In 1759, Emistisiguo appeared but under the name Eenyhathlucko. Linguistic evidence as well as historical context strongly supports Eenyhathlucko and Emistisiguo to be the same person. See pages 47-48 of Chapter One of this dissertation for more details.

¹⁶ For Emistisiguo's appearance in 1759, see No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabutchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in William Henry Lyttelton papers, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (hereafter cited as WHLP). On Emistisiguo's 1761 appearance, see also William Struthers to Governors Wright and Bull, 5/17/1761, Little Tallassee, in Allen D. Candler, Kenneth Coleman, and Milton Ready, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 28 vols. (Atlanta and Athens, GA: 1904-16, 1974-6) vol. 8, 545-546 (hereafter *CRSGA*).

which Creeks believed could be traced through matrilineal lineage and a common mythical ancestor. If a clan member was murdered and revenge was not performed, then the soul of the deceased Creek kinsman would be stuck on an earthly plane and according to Creek tradition unable to rest and enter the spirit world. The practice of clan revenge was centuries old and an integral cultural custom tied to life and death in Creek society.¹⁷ Small skirmishes between Creeks and frontier settlers were increasing in number and in intensity throughout the 1760s and clan revenge fueled this violence.

Although Juricek credited Emistisiguo for engineering the campaign, he believed the initial negotiations between Upper and Lower Creek towns to end this practice occurred at the town of Great Tallassee. These discussions were successful and headmen agreed to “drop the hatchet” in order prevent a trade embargo.¹⁸ However, this dissertation makes a case that the meeting took place at Little Tallassee, and Emistisiguo was the individual responsible for organizing it. I argue the first meeting occurred in May of 1774, in Little Tallassee, where Creek headmen from all towns were present and voluntarily agreed to forego clan revenge momentarily in order to protect access to European manufactured goods. In my interpretation, this assembly was significant because it demonstrates that Creek headmen and warriors were willing to put aside a cultural tradition that was centuries old to maintain Anglo-Creek trade. As the architect of both the assembly and controversial yet progressive campaign, Emistisiguo established

¹⁷ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 109. Steven C. Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 25-26.

¹⁸ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 197.

himself to be an innovative and persuasive diplomat as well as respectable headman and spokesman. I explain this topic further in Chapter III of this study.

Understanding Little Tallassee's evolution at first appeared to be an impossible task. The archaeological record provided very little information and in fact, much of the site has been off limits to archeologists. To trace Little Tallassee's transformation from trade community to official Creek town, I utilized the biographical knowledge I acquired of Emistisiguo and placed him within the historical contexts that surrounded him. In addition, I applied ethnohistorical insights to interpret what culturally constituted an eighteenth-century Creek town and to understand the central role communities and Native institutions at the local level served within eighteenth-century Creek society. By placing Little Tallassee within a series of cultural and historical contexts, I was able to recognize what allowed Little Tallassee to be a place of trade as well as an important Upper Creek town.

Several seminal works in Creek and Native South scholarship shaped my understanding of the role Indians played in the eighteenth-century deerskin trade and demonstrate Little Tallassee was a thriving center of Euro-Indian and Atlantic exchange. Although written in the early 1990s, Kathleen Holland E. Braund's *Deerskins and Duffels* remains the most comprehensive and accurate analysis of the eighteenth-century Euro-Creek deerskin trade to date.¹⁹ Braund's book not only carefully explains both Indian and non-Indian interests in the Southeastern deerskin trade. It continues to remind scholars

¹⁹ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

that trade is first and foremost “a mutual affair.”²⁰ Based on her extensive research, I pieced together how a select few Upper Creek headmen worked with Scottish and English trade representatives of large companies such as *Brown and Rae* to mold Little Tallassee into a place where inter-cultural trade took place for the benefit of all parties involved.

In 2010 Kathleen DuVal published, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the heart of the Continent*, an in-depth study of relations between Indians and Europeans in the Arkansas Valley from the sixteenth to early nineteenth century. Although her focus was not on the Creeks, her argument that “in the heart of the North American continent, far from centers of European population and power, Indians were more often able to determine the form and content of inter cultural relations than were their European would be colonizers,” was crucial to me.²¹ DuVal’s study guided my approach to examining the relationships between Creek and resident Indian traders at Little Tallassee, as well as served as a model to a certain degree for understanding places of exchange that were on the outskirts of heavy European populations during the early- to mid-eighteenth century. DuVal contends, “This story of one contingent place contributes to a reorientation in thinking about colonialism itself” and that “Early American history is too rich for the old narrative that presumes the inevitability of European colonial success.”²² My study of Little Tallassee strengthens DuVal’s argument but redirects it to a single, small, trade community in Upper Creek country. I depart from DuVal because my research

²⁰ Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, xiii.

²¹ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 4.

²² DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 10.

demonstrates that power changed hands on a rapid basis at Little Tallassee. More specifically, I argue that during the 1740s and 1750s traders and Creek headmen had equal control over the Indian trade based out of Little Tallassee, but by the mid-1760s the Creeks at Little Tallassee had complete control and Emistisiguo, the town's headman, facilitated that shift.

Joshua Piker's book *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (2004), inspired this dissertation as it outlined the importance of Creek towns. Piker argued in *Okfuskee* that through "peculiar connections" the history of Okfuskee, and many other Creek Native towns and centers, were "histories that are at once Native and American." Furthermore, his book "traces the history of a Native community that was also in many ways, an American town."²³ Piker draws this conclusion by exploring the intricate dynamics and importance of European-Creek trade networks and as a result is able to draw the conclusion that as neighbors the two people's histories are subsequently intertwined. He argues scholars need to stop putting Native history into a separate category. Piker demonstrated "Native histories" and "American histories" cannot exist without the other and his book is a significant contribution to the study of Creek History but also Colonial history as well. My dissertation builds on Piker's study as it is evident that Little Tallassee as a trade center and eventual Creek town, could not have existed without Euro-Creek trade. Little Tallassee was a product of a colonial encounter and a world made through Atlantic exchange.

²³ Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: The University of Harvard Press, 2004), 2.

Steven C. Hahn's *The Invention of the Creek Nation* (2001) also guided the framework of this study. There are a multitude of benefits of writing a "town" history. Creek towns are the center of political, spiritual, economic, and social and cultural life for individual Indians. Hahn highlighted how many Creek historians had tended to gloss over the dynamics and diversity of towns even though their nation was made up of a multitude of individual, loosely tied together communities. As Hahn points out in *Invention of the Creek Nation*, it was not until the early eighteenth century that individual Creeks even began to use the term "Creek Nation" or identify with other Creek towns as a larger whole.²⁴ Therefore, one needs to privilege the town as the location where Creek culture was maintained and reinvented throughout the colonial period. Likewise, Piker poignantly reminded scholars that Creek history is community history. "Without histories of Indian communities, scholars will have a stunted understanding of American history and cannot hope to understand Indian history."²⁵

I desired to conduct a town study, since this location was the heart of Creek society. By doing so, I show that without a proper understanding of Little Tallassee, as an official Creek town, one cannot properly understand Creek history at that time nor perhaps any community that emerged out of trade. Sociopolitical categories such as nation, state, and colony have often obscured what is going on at the local level. My study of Little Tallassee's evolution from center of Euro-trade to official Creek town and

²⁴ Steven Hahn suggests that it was in 1718 at the "Coweta Resolution" that the Creeks first referred to themselves as being part of a larger "nation" when treaty making with the British. See: Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation*, 3-8 and 227-270.

²⁵ Piker, *Okfuskee*, 7.

its subsequent decline is a contribution to historiography on Native towns and communities alike.

In addition, this dissertation follows the recent biographical and narrative turns in Creek historiography like Joshua Piker's *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Colonial America*. Published in 2013, it used a multi-perspective study of the execution of one Creek warrior to offer invaluable insight into how historians must avoid taking the documentary record at face value. Piker presented his readers with the biographies of four different "storytellers" and examined how each party had their own agenda in Acorn Whistler's execution. Piker suggests that the story tellers "knew that no hard and fast line separated winners from losers in colonial British America, and they likewise knew that, in times of flux and chaos, telling the right story was more important than getting the story right."²⁶ Furthermore, *Four Deaths of an Acorn Whistler* reminded historians of all fields of study not to read sources at face value and to continue to question facts we have long held to be true.

Steven C. Hahn's ground-breaking study, *The Life and Times of Mary Musgrove* (2012), is another example of how a biographical approach written utilizing ethnohistorical insights can provide invaluable insight into Creek history and the much larger historiography on the Colonial Southeast and Native South. *Life and Times* is the first complete and accurate analysis of the woman Mary Musgrove whom historians thought they knew but in actuality greatly misunderstood. Hahn explores Mary

²⁶ Joshua Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: University of Harvard Press, 2013), 11.

Musgrove's identity as both a "Creek" and "English woman," considering questions that historians have been perplexed by in regards to "mixed blooded" and "mestizos" within Native societies for years. Hahn contends that Mary Musgrove's identity was not that of a "Creek-Englishwoman" but rather "situational." He asserts that "she wore different masks depending upon the company she kept at various times in her life."²⁷ Hahn also makes a bold but necessary point: "I don't think Mary can be fully understood unless we come to grips with the fact that self-interest governed most of her decisions and actions."²⁸ After conducting my research on Little Tallassee, Emistisiguo, and Alexander McGillivray, I cannot agree more with Steven C. Hahn. American Indians followed their cultural traditions, but they also recognized their own self-interests.

This study builds off of Piker and Hahn's recent works as I use a biographical approach to understand individuals' relationships to the Creek towns they belonged to. I demonstrate that Emistisiguo was largely responsible for the creation of Little Tallassee, and Alexander McGillivray to be associated with accelerating its decline. Emistisiguo derived his power as a Creek headman and warrior through traditional and nontraditional means. He was an accomplished warrior and war leader, a great orator, master of Creek persuasion, manipulator of spiritual power, savvy diplomat, and had developed strong ties to Anglo-Creek trade. Alexander McGillivray was Creek by matrilineal law, but he dedicated his life to preserving and expanding his Scottish father's Indian trade company; however, a fully functioning Creek town is not a town based solely on trade.

²⁷ Steven C. Hahn, *The Life and Times of Mary Musgrove* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida press, 2012), 234.

²⁸ Steven C. Hahn, *The Life and Times*, 235.

McGillivray's sole focus on trade and his misuse of his role as an advisor within Creek society contributed to the downfall of Little Tallassee. My dissertation not only explores the relationship between these two prominent figures of Creek history, but it analyzes McGillivray's relationship to his birth place of Little Tallassee with fresh eyes.

McGillivray's identity as a Creek of mixed ancestry has impressed historians as far back as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁹ McGillivray has been consistently praised for being a "masterful diplomat," or known as the "Talleyrand of Alabama," and despite both his Creek and European ancestry was not only "loyal to the Creeks" but "definitely of the Creeks."³⁰ Other historians of this era referred to him as a dictator who "displayed the greed of the Scotch, the diplomacy of the French, and the craft of an Indian." McGillivray's life has caught the attention of various scholars for centuries. They all agreed that he was an individual who held incredible power among the Creeks.³¹

In recent years, scholars have continued to depict Alexander McGillivray as an individual of power and varying authority amongst the Creeks. Historians praised him for also being a clever politician and diplomatic liaison on behalf of the Creeks in regards to trade and land negotiations with the Spanish and Americans throughout the 1780s. For

²⁹ Alfred J. Pickett wrote of McGillivray, "We doubt if Alabama has ever produced a man of greater ability," and President Theodore Roosevelt praised McGillivray to be a "master of diplomacy." Quotes cited in John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 57, 34. In 1938, William Caughey's *McGillivray of the Creeks* emerged as the most comprehensive and accurate biography to have been written about the famous 'mixed-blooded Creek.' Caughey described McGillivray as a masterful diplomat and laudable Indian leader. Caughey utilized the extensive amount of research and collection of correspondence between McGillivray and both Spanish and American diplomats in his bibliography, which appeared hard to refute. The majority of scholars accepted Caughey's book to be groundbreaking. For more on the reception of Caughey's book, see William J. Bauer, Jr.'s introduction to *McGillivray of the Creeks*.

³⁰ Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 56-57.

³¹ Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, xvii.

example, in *Deerskin and Duffels*, Braund argued that McGillivray's identity as a "mixed blood" enabled him not only to be Emistisiguo's successor, but an individual of tremendous authority within Creek country. According to Braund, "McGillivray's literacy, experience, natural ability, and clan connection made him the most successful man in the upper Nation," and by 1783 "McGillivray took control of the meetings of Upper Creek [Abeika, Tallapoose, and Alabama] headmen . . ." ³² Theda Perdue's seminal work, *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (2003) bolstered Braund's claims. According to Perdue, "Among the Creeks, Alexander McGillivray was the most powerful chief in the nation in the late eighteenth century." ³³ Similarly, Linda Langley's 2005 publication, "The Tribal Identity of Alexander McGillivray," described McGillivray be "one of the best-known American Indian leaders of eighteenth century," and "highly influential in Southeastern politics in general and early United States-Spanish Relations in particular." ³⁴

³² Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 170-171.

³³ Theda Perdue, *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 46-47, quote on 46.

³⁴ Linda Langley, "The Tribal Identity of Alexander McGillivray: A Review of the Historical and Ethnographic Date," *The Journal of Louisiana Historical Association* 46:2 (Spring 2005), 231. Similar portrayals of Alexander McGillivray are as follows: Michael D. Green, "Alexander McGillivray," in *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity*, ed. David Edmunds (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1980). Edward Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Shaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992). An exception to this scholarship is Claudio Saunt's, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Saunt's work points out that "McGillivray exploited his power among the Creeks" and is to blame for overturning traditional based Creek government of consensus for coercion. Saunt generated a much-needed discussion among scholars in regards to McGillivray's use of violence to protect trade as well as his attempts to unify the Creeks as a method of control, not a selfless act to protect the sovereignty of the Creek 'Nation.' Saunt leads his readers astray by the amount of power he gives to McGillivray in making this argument. Alexander McGillivray did not lead town meetings or large Creek assemblies; nor did Creek traditional consensus collapse in the presence of the "famous" mestizo. A close reading of McGillivray's own letters demonstrates that he was powerless to make any decisions without the consultation of leading Upper Creek headman and warriors. Quote on 78. See also, Chapters Three and Four of Saunt's *A New Order* on this topic.

This dissertation challenges the current historiographical portrayal of Alexander McGillivray by placing him within the context of his (Creek) home community: Little Tallassee. By doing so, Alexander McGillivray's identity is revealed to be that of an Indian trader guided by self-interest, his authority limited to an advisory capacity only. No other scholar has attempted this approach. As a result, I reveal that the Creek leader most responsible for the prominence of Little Tallassee is Emistisiguo, not Alexander McGillivray.

In addition, by examining Little Tallassee's position within Creek society based upon the individuals that resided there, I draw attention to an area of historiography that American Indians have largely been left out of: The American Revolution. Studies on the role American Indians played in the American Revolution, in particular the deep south, are extremely limited. The first scholar to explore the role of Southeastern Indians during American's war for independence was James O'Donnell, in *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (1975). O'Donnell's account is rich in archival material and is a pioneering work in its exploration of Spain's multiple Gulf Coast military campaigns against the British and their Southeastern Indian allies. Particular attention is given to the battle of Pensacola. O'Donnell's book is not a work of ethnohistory and little analysis is given to Indian culture or insight into the varied cultural encounters between British, Spanish, American, and Southeastern Indians in the Revolution's southernmost theatre of

war. O'Donnell's work, however, is the first of its kind and eye opening to any scholar who seeks to understand the American Revolution to full capacity.³⁵

Colin C. Calloway's publication of *The American Revolution in Indian Country* in 1995 renewed historical attention to the role of American Indians in the American Revolution after decades of silence. Calloway's book argues that "the Indians' 'War of Independence' was well underway before 1775 and waged on many economic, cultural, political, and military fronts and continued long after 1783."³⁶ Calloway's study looks at a number of groups, such as the Cherokee, Iroquois, Abnaki, etc., and attempts to understand how and why these Native groups were drawn into a war that was not their own as well as exploring the life altering effects the war had on their communities. Calloway does not give a detailed account of the Creek experience nor does he expand his study to include the Gulf Coast, but it is a book every scholar interested in Native History, Revolutionary History, and American History should have on their bookshelf.

Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (2016) is the most recent contribution to the existing scholarship on Native Americans in the American Revolution, and in particular, the Gulf coast region. According to DuVal, America's war for independence in the deep South was not just a war between Great Britain and its colonies, but "another imperial war, another war fought for territories and treasure." Spain and American Indians fought their battles parallel to the more common story that generally limits the War of Independence to just England

³⁵ James H. O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975).

³⁶ Colin C. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xiii.

and northeastern colonial America. DuVal's study mirrors Hahn and Piker's bibliographical approach to studying history by centering her analysis around eight individuals all of whom experienced the impact of the American Revolution on the Gulf Coast from Florida to Louisiana in various ways.³⁷ My chapter on the American Revolution joins Duval in expanding scholar's attention to the Indian experience on the Gulf Coast, except that I place Emistisiguo at the center of the Creek story.

The Choctaw-Creek War (1765-1776) is another area of history that has been neglected by scholars of both Native and Southern History. Kathryn E. Holland Braund was the first scholar to tackle the subject and argues in *Deerskins and Duffels* that competition over British trade during the post-Seven Years War period was the root of the war between the two Indian groups. In 2002 and 2008 Greg O'Brien emerged as the leading scholar on the Choctaw-Creek War after publishing *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (2002) as well as "Protecting Trade through War: Choctaw Elites and British Occupation of the Floridas" (2008). Greg O'Brien complicates Braund's thesis by conducting a much more detailed analysis of Choctaw society during the eighteenth century, and as a result concludes that the war erupted as a result of a number of economic and social/cultural reasons. In order to control young warriors and restore power to Choctaw elites, O'Brien contends that the Choctaws encouraged war with the Creeks. Intertribal warfare served as a means by which the Choctaws were able to

³⁷ Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2016), Introduction, xv and xvi. DuVal does conduct a significant study of Alexander McGillivray's role in the American Revolution and provides long overdue analysis of the Creek experience during the war.

redirect escalating violence away from nearby white settlers. By doing this, O'Brien argues the Choctaws were able to uphold and renew British trade alliances.³⁸

My dissertation expands on O'Brien's and Braund's discoveries. By focusing on Emistisiguo and Little Tallassee, I discovered that war was being conducted on two fronts for the Creeks during the 1760s. The first was an escalation of frontier violence, and the other was the war that erupted to minimize this chaos: the Choctaw-Creek War. To maintain Creek strength during these wars, Emistisiguo innovated a unique form of Creek diplomacy that asked Creeks from both Upper and Lower towns to abandon the tradition of clan revenge in order to ensure that trade with the British would not be disrupted. Inter-tribal warfare, as O'Brien points out, was one way in which this policy could be carried out and Emistisiguo's actions as well as those of the majority of the Creeks, exemplify that trade could be protected through warfare or another front. My research also demonstrates that Emistisiguo during the mid-1760s to 1770s emerged as an accomplished and respected headman and warrior, and his innovative diplomacy exemplifies that he also gained prestige as a spokesperson and diplomat. O'Brien contends that the Choctaw-Creek war was another means to restore power to elites, and Emistisiguo's power at this time, as not only lead headman of Little Tallassee, but also broker in both war and peace, resulted in a bolstering of Emistisiguo's authority amongst the Creek Confederacy.

³⁸ Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age: 1750-1830* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Greg O'Brien, "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O'Brien (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 148-183.

Since Creeks and other non-literate Native groups did not leave a paper trail of their own to follow, this study draws on eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century archival evidence and written sources produced by colonists. I analyze British, American, and translated Spanish correspondences, private journals and letters, travel accounts, treaty documents, transcriptions of Creek headmen's speeches in diplomatic meetings. The task of uncovering Native institutions and conceptions of power and authority, as well as Creek definitions of towns and communities require reliance on these eighteenth-century written sources. Although such documentary records do allow historians to investigate people and places that lack a written history, they are problematic due to inherent biases and misinterpretations by European and American authors.

Like other ethnohistorians of the Native South, I address these problematic sources through close reading and detailed analysis of multiple accounts and competing perspectives, as well as placing each document within its proper historical context.³⁹ I also consult later anthropological sources such as nineteenth century ethnographic data, and archeological reports, and I utilize historical linguistics to bring Creek culture to the forefront of my investigation.

In order to prove Little Tallassee to be an important Creek town by the mid eighteenth-century, I combine linguistic and ethnohistorical insights to interpret Creek diplomacy and politics. This method allows me to fill in the gaps in the historical record surrounding the origins of Little Tallassee as well as piece together Emistisiguo's identity

³⁹ Examples include the following works: Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee*; Steven C. Hahn, *The Life and Times of Mary Musgrove*; Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*; Kathleen DuVal, *On Native Ground*, Joshua Piker, *Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler*.

and source of power before his arrival at the bustling trade center. I also revisit past historiography regarding Little Tallassee and Alexander McGillivray and through scholar's new awareness of Creek culture, and the enduring power of Native institutions, I am able to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of past interpretations of Alexander McGillivray as well as Little Tallassee.

* * *

Little Tallassee was a unique place in Colonial America and during the early years of the American Republic. Born out of inter-cultural trade, Little Tallassee offers invaluable insight into the eighteenth-century deerskin trade, the Indian and European inhabitants who depended on it, and how their exchanges connected them to a much larger Atlantic World. The transformation from trade center to Creek town is a mystery that scholars have left unanswered. Ignoring the fact that Little Tallassee was viewed by Creek society as a sacred space and official town under Emistisiguo's leadership obscures scholars' understandings of what actually constitutes an actual Creek town.

Little Tallassee, like any other place, was shaped by those who inhabited it, and they were mostly Indians. Emistisiguo, the town's lead headman and warrior, has been left out of the spotlight of Creek historiography and his innovative trade policies, skill in diplomatic affairs, and fierce protection of Creek trade throughout the Choctaw-Creek War and the American Revolution deserve deeper analysis. Little Tallassee's rise to prominence within Creek society paralleled the success of its lead headman and warrior. This study provides a historical context and an ethnohistorical lens for scholars to examine Emistisiguo's role in eighteenth-century Anglo-Creek affairs, and recasts him to

be an important Creek leader, worthy of significant discussion by historians of Creek History and the Native South.

Last, it is my hope that the scholarship on Alexander McGillivray can be set aside to make room for new studies on his identity as a trader and Creek advisor, not a leader or figure of authority in regards to Creek affairs. I conducted a town-based history and contextual study that led me to see the between Emistisiguo, Alexander McGillivray, and the place they both claimed to represent: Little Tallassee. It was only after examining these relationships, and improving my understanding of what constitutes a Creek town and the hand each individual had in Little Tallassee's rise and fall that I formulated my arguments. The goal of this dissertation is to make an argument for Little Tallassee to earn a place as an Indian space within Creek, Colonial, and American historiography.

My research traces the evolution of Little Tallassee from its origins in the 1740s and 1750s and to its decline in the late 1780s and early 1790s. I begin by exploring the European traders who resided at Little Tallassee in the 1740s and their interactions with neighboring Creek headmen. Lachlan McGillivray, Alexander McGillivray's father was a key figure in this process, as well as headmen such as Mortar of Okchai, Wolf of Muccolossus, and Handsome Fellow of Okfuskee. The firm *Brown and Rae* was also integral in the startup of Little Tallassee's thriving trade community. Therefore, much of Chapter III examines the interaction of the notable trade company with the Creek population who made trade possible for the company on the banks of the Tallapoosa and Coosa rivers of Upper Creek country. Inter-cultural trade and Euro-Indian exchange are

the themes of Chapter II as well as the basic cultural components of what constitutes a Creek town verses a trade community.

Chapter III is dedicated to trade and highlights Emistisiguo's interest and pursuit of an Anglo-Creek trade alliance based out of Pensacola and Mobile. This chapter navigates Creek politics as well as economics, as Emistisiguo rose as a great orator amongst the Creeks, and eventually convinced stubborn Creek towns to embrace a new trade path out of the Gulf Coast. Little Tallassee, I argue, at this time became the center of Anglo-Creek trade within Upper Creek Country and Atlantic exchange.

Chapters IV and V examine how Emistisiguo utilized the context of a war-torn society to not only amplify the importance of Little Tallassee within the Native South but also bolstered his own authority within Creek and Anglo societies. During the Choctaw-Creek War as well as the Revolutionary War, Little Tallassee evolved into a sacred space where diplomacy was conducted. Town headmen and warriors assembled in the square grounds of Little Tallassee between the mid-1760s to the late 1770s and discussed both domestic and foreign affairs. Emistisiguo organized a Creek conference that was national in scope in 1774, where he was able to unite all Creeks at Little Tallassee in order to protect Anglo-Creek trade. This is a task Alexander McGillivray later set out to accomplish but never achieved. Likewise, Chapter V explores McGillivray's entrance into Creek country during the American Revolution as well as what type of relationship Emistisiguo and McGillivray shared.

Chapter VI of this dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of Little Tallassee during the 1780s and early 1790s, and recounts the town's rapid decline as a sacred space

and official Creek town. It is in this section of the dissertation that I investigate the identity of Alexander McGillivray, as well as the roles he played in Little Tallassee and Creek Country. Topics of discussion include McGillivray's monopoly over Creek trade, his compulsory enforcement of that trade over neighboring Creek towns, as well as his partnership in the famous trade firm *Panton, Leslie, and Company*. I also contend that McGillivray embodied the identity of what might be called a war profiteer, where he encouraged violence against the state of Georgia and promoted Creek unification during the early years of the American Republic. Previous scholars argued that McGillivray's interest in Creek sovereignty was due to his allegiance to the Creeks whereas I argue Creek sovereignty and warfare protected McGillivray's trade monopoly. The Treaty of New York is also discussed in Chapter Five and it is within the so-called secret articles that I think McGillivray's true nature is revealed.

This dissertation concludes with Chapter VII, a short synopsis of Little Tallassee in the aftermath of Alexander McGillivray's death in 1793 and an examination of the transfer of power and diplomacy to the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee away from Little Tallassee. I briefly discuss the several conferences that were conducted and led by the elected speaker and head warrior, Mad Dog, at Tuckabatchee in 1793. It was during these assemblies that representatives of both Upper and Lower Creek towns united for the first time since Emistisiguo's conference at Little Tallassee in 1774 and decided to make peace with the growing American republic. This decision, however, I contend was based on *Creek consensus*, and not just the needs of trade. Town politics and interest still ruled Creek domestic and foreign affairs, just as Emistisiguo had understood they always

would. In fact, this study concludes with a brief glance at the importance of towns and local politics within Creek government in the twenty-first century.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ A discussion of the persistence of Creek towns and Creek politics can be found in Duane Champagne, *Social Change and Cultural Continuity among Native Nations* (Lanham, NY: Altamira Press, 2007), Chapters 4 and 5, and especially 71-74, 90, 98-101.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Lachlan McGillivray, Alexander McGillivray's father, took up residency at Little Tallassee shortly after his arrival to North America from Scotland in 1741.¹ From his home at Little Tallassee, strategically located just a few miles North of the French Fort Toulouse, Lachlan McGillivray played two major roles. He served as a "spy" on French activities to South Carolina's Governor Glen, and he managed established trade routes along the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. His distant relatives, William and John McGillivray had first developed these trade routes in conjunction with the local Creek Indians as early as 1725.² By 1755, Lachlan had expanded his family's operations and owned two of his own trading firms, *Clark & McGillivray* and the more well-known, *Brown, Rae, and Company*. The two firms maintained a monopoly over the region's Creek-Indian deerskin trade throughout the eighteenth century.³ Little Tallassee served as the center of a trade between the Creeks and the McGillivray family that lasted approximately one hundred years.⁴

The town's importance continued into the American Revolution as David Taitt, the British Superintendent of Southern Indian affairs, made Little Tallassee his

¹ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders of the Old Southwest Frontier, 1716-1815* (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2007), 48.

² Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 30.

³ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 50-21.

⁴ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 30.

headquarters. From the town, he oversaw the British campaign against the Americans throughout the war and did his best to maintain an alliance with the Creeks. After the death of Alexander McGillivray in 1793 and Taitt's retirement in the wake of the emergence of the American Republic, the emerging nation appointed a new agent to supervise Southeastern Indian affairs, Benjamin Hawkins. Hawkins, like David Taitt, chose to spend most of his life amongst the Southeastern Indians at a place called "Hickory Ground," only four and half miles from Little Tallassee.⁵ Hawkins is a familiar name to most historians of the Southeast, since he first implemented the U.S. government's "civilization plan," a program to designed to "Americanize" Indians by attempting to transform them from hunters and gatherers to pastoral farmers with the underlining goal of acquiring Creek Land for the United States.⁶ The plan brought social, cultural, political, and economic changes to all respects of Creek life, and ultimately, by the dawn of the nineteenth century, civil war.⁷

In short, between the early 1700s and the early 1800s Little Tallassee emerged as a significant Upper Creek Town and a center of exchange, both culturally and economically, in the Colonial Southeast. Although Little Tallassee became a Creek town, according to Creek standards and indigenous perspectives, its transformation was not expected and continues to leave historians with a mystery in need of explanation. Lacking

⁵ Octipofa is another name for Hickory Ground. John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922) (as part of the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 73), 242.

⁶ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 139.

⁷ For more information on the the Creek Civil War that broke out in 1812 (also known as the Red Stick War) see Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 249-272.

ancient origins or even a traditional town square, at the time, it seems to have been the only Upper Creek town that arose purely as a product of Euro-American trade interaction. Thus, the uniqueness of Little Tallassee to the Creek world makes it a vital space to interrogate Creek and European relationships and observe the impact of colonialism and shifting Indian politics.

Little Tallassee's importance rests with the key personalities of the individuals that resided there. It is necessary to revisit the origins of Little Tallassee to understand the amount of power and influence the Creeks, and Emistisiguo in particular, held over their European counterparts in the creation of the town, rather than continue to over extend credit to the newly arrived Scots family as past and current historians have tended to do. Emistisiguo, master of diplomacy and savvy politician among his Creek neighbors, possessed incredible foresight that not only allowed him to make Little Tallassee the center of Creek trade during the colonial period, but also enabled it to emerge into a new Creek town. For Creeks, the center of political, spiritual, economic, and social life rested within their towns during the eighteenth century. Emistisiguo and his neighboring Creek headmen's ability to transform Little Tallassee into a sacred and integral part of the Creek world is a testament not only to the town's unique location, but also a vivid illustration of how Creek towns were created from colonial encounters.

Past historians have misunderstood the significance of Little Tallassee. As a result, there are few studies that discuss Little Tallassee's place in Creek life. The bulk of this scholarship has largely utilized the massive documentary evidence left behind by Alexander McGillivray. Much of the literature surrounding the McGillivray family and

subsequently Little Tallassee as a place of European trade has obscured the Creek actors that played an equal if not larger role in Little Tallassee's emergence as a Trans-Atlantic trade center as well as official Creek town. Repositioning the Creeks at the center of the origins of Little Tallassee allows one to reexamine the evolution of Little Tallassee through an ethnohistorical vantage point that places the Creek people of Little Tallassee at the forefront of a forgotten narrative. The evolution of Little Tallassee will be the subject of this chapter. This will allow one to see how a select few individual Upper Creek headmen together with some Scots-Irish, English, and French traders, worked to create a space of opportunity, wealth, and survival, contributing to an already drastically transformed Southeastern frontier economy during the mid to late eighteenth century.

The Nature of Creek Towns

Between 900 CE and 1700 CE, the American Southeast was populated by a people historians now refer to as the Mississippians, which was composed of a series of individual chiefdoms built along the Mississippi River. Each chiefdom shared a similar sociopolitical structure that included civil and priestly classes, and fixed hierarchies between elites and non-elites. These chiefdoms were known for their earthen mound temples and flat-topped pyramids, Cahokia being the largest.⁸ During the colonial period these chiefdoms destabilized and eventually collapsed under the weight of disease and continued raids by other Indigenous groups that sought slaves to be sold in markets throughout the Southeast.⁹

⁸ Robbie Ethridge, "Introduction," in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 5-6.

⁹ Robbie Ethridge, "Introduction," *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, 12-13; Steven J. Peach, "*The Three Rivers Have Talked*": *The Creek Indians and Community Politics in the Native South, 1753-1821*

The archaeological record suggests that refugees from these fallen chiefdoms relocated and banded together to form three main provinces that evolved over time to form the modern Creek Nation. The first of these provinces was Abhika, which was located along the middle Coosa River (northern Alabama). According to archaeologists, Abihka were descendants of the former chiefdom of Coosa, where these refugees left the Etowah River Valley (present day northeastern Georgia) after Coosa collapsed, and over the course of 200 years traveled along the Coosa river to form the province of Abhika.¹⁰ The second of these provinces was Apalachicola, located on the lower Chattahoochee River (western Georgia). The refugees of Apalachicola spoke mainly Hitichi, which is an offshoot of Muskogean, the “mother tongue” and more popularly spoken language of the Creeks.¹¹ Apalachicola, home of the Lower Creeks, was composed of two prominent towns, Apalachee (northern Florida) and Coweta, as well as several other towns located along the convergence of the Towaliga and Ocmulgee rivers (near present day Macon, Georgia).¹²

The third province, which is the focus of this dissertation, was Tallapoosa, its name originating from the Tallapoosa river (located within present central Alabama). Whether or not the Tallapoosa people were descendants of any of the fallen Mississippian chiefdoms remains an archeological mystery.¹³ By the early eighteenth century, large populations of peoples of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds sharing a common

(PhD. Dissertation: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016), 43-44.

¹⁰ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: NC, The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 26-27.

¹¹ For a good discussion on language, see Steven J. Peach, “*The Three Rivers Have Talked*,” 48.

¹² Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 28.

¹³ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 27.

language, converged together along the Alabama River near or at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers.¹⁴ These people collectively became known as the Alabamas, particularly those who lived at or around the area that would become the French Fort Toulouse. Over time, the Alabamas made alliances with neighboring populations, most significantly the Cussetas, who left their homelands in Tennessee to join the Alabamas, though they retained their own identity. Together, these groups established their own towns and villages, which later were collectively referred to as the Upper Creeks.¹⁵

By the late eighteenth century, Upper Creek Country consisted of approximately 48 towns that varied in size and population. The largest of these might consist of as many as 200 individual families, and the smallest only 10 to 20 families.¹⁶ During the time of Little Tallassee's founding, the leading Upper Creek town was Okfuskee, followed by Okchai, and Tuckabatchee. The smaller towns of Muccolossus and Puckantallahasee were also important to the development of Little Tallassee.¹⁷ Three headmen of importance from this cluster of towns were The Gun Merchant (Enactanatchee) and The Mortar (Yahatustunagee) from Okchai and Duvall's Landlord (Hoithlepoya Hadjo) of

¹⁴ Ned J. Jenkins, "Tracing the Origins of the Early Creeks, 1050-1700 CE," in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 227.

¹⁵ Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, "Alabama and Coushatta Diaspora and Coalescence in the Mississippian Shatter Zone," in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 259-261.

¹⁶ There were approximately 25 Lower Creek towns at the time. See also, Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 31.

¹⁷ See Figure 5, Map of Creek Towns during the eighteenth century.

Puckantallahasee. All of these headmen would later play varying, but significant, roles in the history of Little Tallassee.¹⁸

Recent historians have observed that general sociopolitical categories such as “nation,” “state,” and “colony,” etc., have often obscured what is going on at local levels of societies. In the case of the Creeks, traditional scholarship that focused on the Creek “Nation” or “Confederacy” ignored the importance of Creek towns all together. Eighteenth century records, however, indicated the centrality of Creek towns to their society and to the larger definition of ‘Nation.’ These records, whether they be a documented conference or talk, always listed the towns present. In addition, the documents attested that Creek headmen often identified themselves to Euro-American officials by the town they were from, and in many cases, referenced neighboring or competing towns to cement their town claims. Creek history continues to be a history derived from the community, and the base of it is their town.¹⁹

It is debatable to what extent individual Creek towns saw themselves as part of a much larger, cohesive Nation. Early British traders were the first to group the Creeks into two categories: Upper and Lower due to geographical location of their towns and the “relative position of the two main paths that linked the Creeks with South Carolina.” Historical documents by Spanish officials also added a “Middle” category when they

¹⁸ Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 201 and 250.

¹⁹ Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3.

spoke of the Creeks, although the current consensus amongst historians is that there were no definitive “middle towns.”²⁰ [See Figure 1 below.]

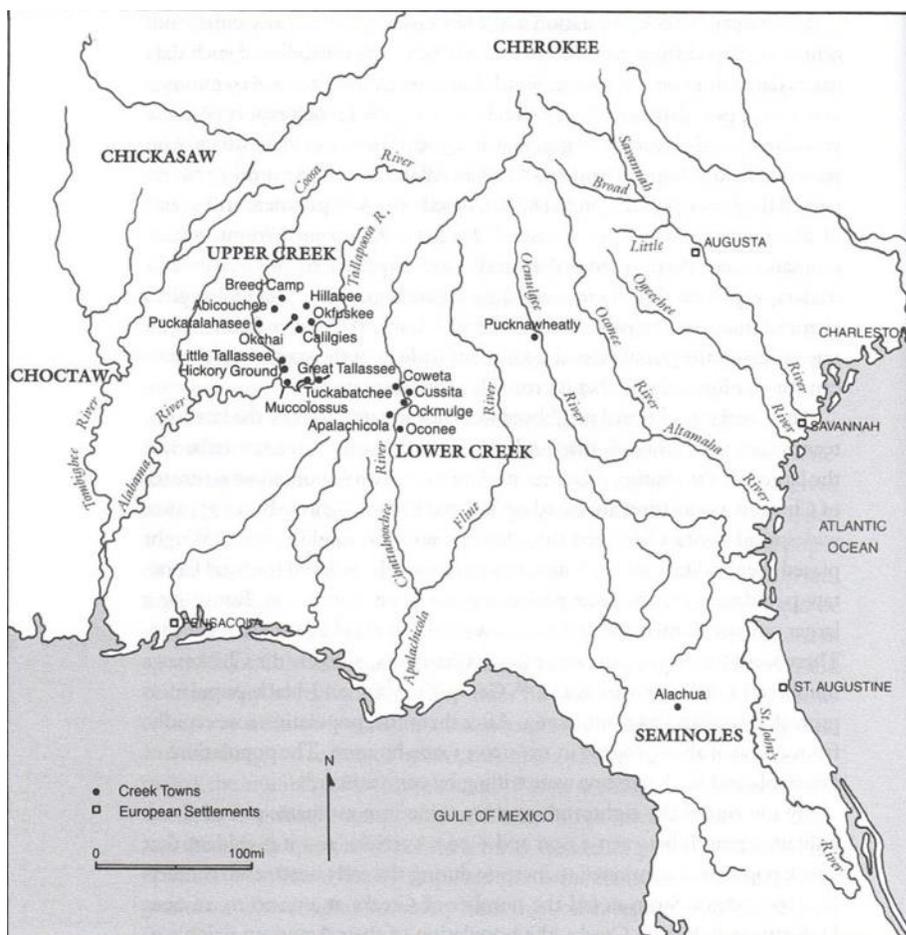


Figure 1. Creek Country during the Eighteenth Century. Source: Map from Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (1993; repr., Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 10.

Whether or not Creeks identified as being part of a Nation, “the basic political unit of the Creek Confederacy was the township or *talwa*.”²¹ More specifically, Creek

²⁰ For an example of the use of “middle towns” see Alexander McGillivray to O’Neil, 8/12/1786, Little Tallassee, in John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 127-128.

²¹ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 95.

towns were important autonomous governing bodies that tied themselves loosely with neighboring Muskogean townships, but put their own town's needs over the Nation. These "needs" encompassed cultural, political, or economic desires. Towns served as focal point of Creek life and all regional, local, and national concerns were secondary to them.²²

Many Creek towns also included *talofas*, which were smaller towns or villages that broke away from their mother town geographically, but still remained politically and culturally tied to that town. *Talofas* still participated in larger town ball games, town councils, public ceremonies, and the annual Green Corn Busk. Some of these satellite towns were located as close as the other side of the river, but others would settle as far as several miles away. The number of *talofas* could be in constant flux, ranging anywhere from one to seven. Creek towns splintered over time for several reasons: population growth, internal factionalism and or politics, agricultural field exhaustion, and better trade options.²³

Little Tallassee was never a *talofa*. It had no affinity with the Upper Creek town called Tallassee, which was located on the left bank of the Tallapoosa, opposite the town of Tuckabatchee. Little Tallassee was never documented to be a satellite of Tallassee, nor was it located within the geographical vicinity that would make sense for it to be a *talofa*, for it was separated from Tallassee not only rivers, but other renowned Creek Towns.²⁴

²² Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee*, 10.

²³ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 96.

²⁴ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 244-245. See also Bernard Romans, "A Draught of the Upper Creek Nation," May 1757 (small maps), William L. Clements library, The University of Ann Arbor, MI.

Linguistically, both towns have similar translations. Tal-e-see stems from Talofau [town] and *ahasi* which translates to “old.”²⁵ Little Tallassee was also often referred to by Lachlan McGillivray as the “Old Town on the Coosa River” or simply “Old Town,” a term never used to describe Tallassee.²⁶ Present day Creek linguistic place names for both towns also indicate the two towns to be separate. According to Jack B. Martin’s *A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee*, the people of Tvlvhassee or Tallahassee are now located in McIntosh County, Oklahoma, and the inhabitants of Tvlvhassee or Little Tallassee are in Seminole County, Oklahoma. The populations of each town were separate in the eighteenth century and remain so today.²⁷

The Creek town or *talwa* was their political, economic, spiritual, and cultural center. Guiding the town in these affairs, was the council or “body politic.” This group was composed of a combination of headmen, warriors, and ‘beloved men’ (*isti atcagagi*) who made decisions and carried out the wishes of the community to the best of their abilities.²⁸ Some Creek men were born into these positions, based upon one’s clan’s

²⁵ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 244.

²⁶ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Reshaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 59. French traveler and later Creek resident Louis Milford referred to Little Tallassee as “village of the Hickory Trees” in his memoir of his travels through Creek Country in 1775 to 1776, which suggests that the one commonality the two towns shared was that hickory trees were nearby. For more information on this possibility, see also Louis LeClere de Milford, *Memoir or, a Quick Glance at my Various Travels and my Sojourn in the Creek Nation* (Chicago, IL: The Lakeside Press, 1956) 17-18. Milford was a Brigadier General for the French Republic under Napoleon Bonaparte. His journey to the Creek Nation was in the interest of the French, but he did have close ties to the McGillivrays, since he married Lachlan’s daughter and Alexander’s sister, Jeannette.

²⁷ Jack B. Martin and Margaret McKane Mauldin, *A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee: with notes on the Florida and Oklahoma Seminole dialects of Creeks* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) 165-167. For exploration on this topic, see Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 30; See also, Bienville to Maurepas, 4/14/1735, New Orleans, in Dunbar Rowland and A.G. Sanders, eds., *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 1729-1748*, vol. 1, 258. (Hereafter cited as *MPAFD*, vol. number, page number(s)).

²⁸ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 102.

animal affinity or family ties. For example, in the Upper Creek town of Okchai, the Bear clan held the most prestige, but in Tuckabatchee it was the Eagle.²⁹ Even though lineage within Creek society was matrilineal, women were not given seats on the town council; instead, clan authority was passed down from uncles to maternal nephews. Despite the weight given to affinity and lineage, council positions and other leadership opportunities had to be earned. Hawkins wrote, “If one is not equal to his office, they elect another.”³⁰

There were two means by which positions of prominence were achieved in Creek society by the mid-eighteenth century, and both required the mastery of spiritual power that accompanied offices of authority. The first of these was through the demonstration of one’s manhood. Creek men received considerable prestige in the town for successfully providing food through hunting. Titles could be awarded for killing the largest game animals, especially since hunting was the primary source of protein for families. In addition, when the clan went to war, Creek men gained stature through leading their fellow warriors, victories against other important enemy headmen, and collecting a significant number of scalps or prisoners. Participating in these undertakings marked the transition to adulthood for young men who were awarded new names or “titles” that reflected this transition.³¹

The second way Creek men earned leadership roles and respect from their fellow townspeople was through the demonstration of respected skills. The ability to trade and

²⁹ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-American, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 20.

³⁰ Quote cited in Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 20.

³¹ Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1759-1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 52.

negotiate favorable terms of that trade with Europeans was increasingly important as Creeks became dependent on Euro-American trade goods. More specifically, Creeks that possessed knowledge of the rapidly changing political landscape outside of the village and could cement an important trade alliance, avoid war, or preserve native lands, were increasingly relied upon to protect the town's interests. Diplomats, orators, and other 'politicians' experienced a quick rise in stature that made them the equals of warriors or good hunters. "We are very sensible that neither us nor the Choctaws can live without assistance of the English," head warrior and beloved man Emistisiguo remarked in 1770 at Little Tallassee. He and his townspeople knew the importance of the trade goods the English could provide, and the choice to relocate to take advantage of that center of that trade was sign of effective leadership.³²

The Earliest Formation of Little Tallassee

All things considered, little is known about the origins of the Upper Creek town of Little Tallassee. The town does not enter historical records at all until the mid-1750s, and those primary sources are scarce, at best. The archeological record prior to this timeframe is even less clear since no excavation of the four major sites that composed the original town have ever been conducted.³³

The first map to document the existence of the town of Little Tallassee appears in 1757, which positions the town in close proximity to Fort Toulouse, but also the

³² 'A Talk from the headmen and warriors of the Creek Nation delivered at Little Tallassee', 10/1/1777, *Records of the British Colonial Office, Class Five Files, Westward Expansion, 1700-1783, The Board of Trade, The French and Indian War*, ed. Randolph Boehm (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983) vol. 72 (Hereafter cited as CO5/vol. number).

³³ Email conversation with Gregory A. Waselkov (February 9, 2015 at 12:12PM.)

neighboring Upper Creek towns such as Puckana, Okchai, Okfuskee, and Muccolossus.³⁴

Within the same year, a second and more detailed map of the Upper Creek Nations was drafted by William Bonar, its illustration of the location of Little Tallassee strikingly similar to the first map.³⁵ [See Figures 2 and 3.]

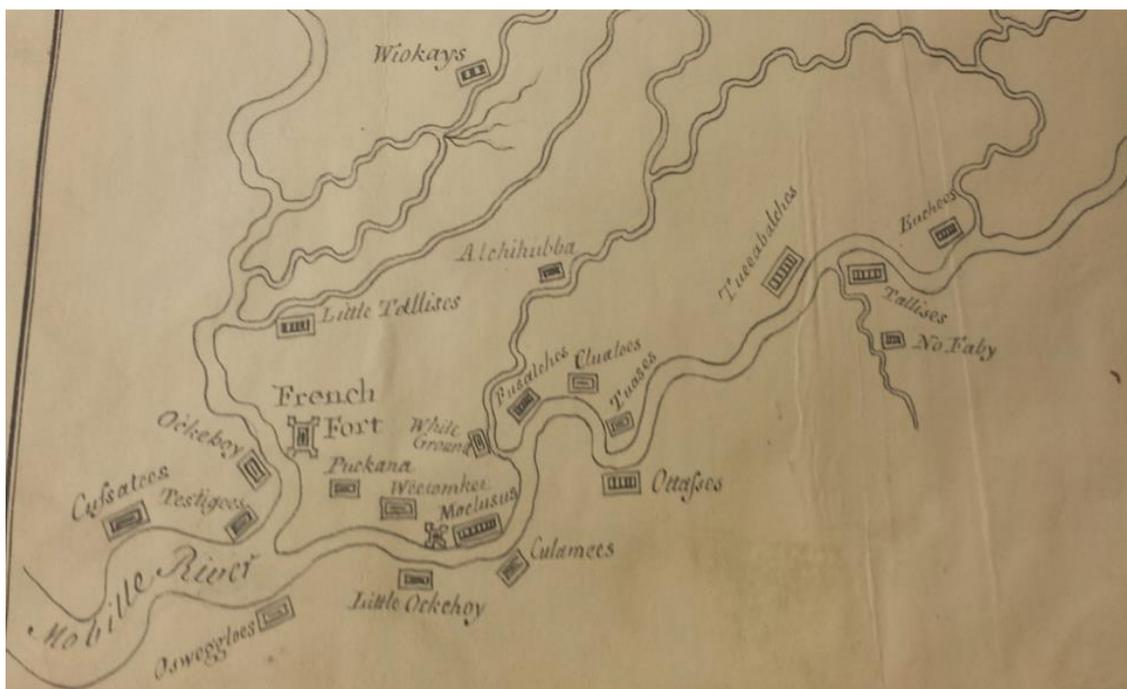


Figure 2. Bernard Romans, “A Draught of the Upper Creek Nation,” May 1757 (Small Maps), William L. Clements Library, The University of Ann Arbor, MI.

³⁴ Bernard Romans, “A Draught of the Upper Creek Nation,” May 1757 (small maps), William L. Clements Library, The University of Ann Arbor, MI. This map is assumed to have been drawn by Bernard Romans, a Dutch born cartographer and principal deputy surveyor of the Southern British colonies, although his name being absent from the draught does draw into question the actual author of the map.

³⁵ William Bonar, “A draught of the Creek nation by William Bonar, May 1757” (manuscript maps), William L. Clements Library, the University of Ann Arbor, MI.

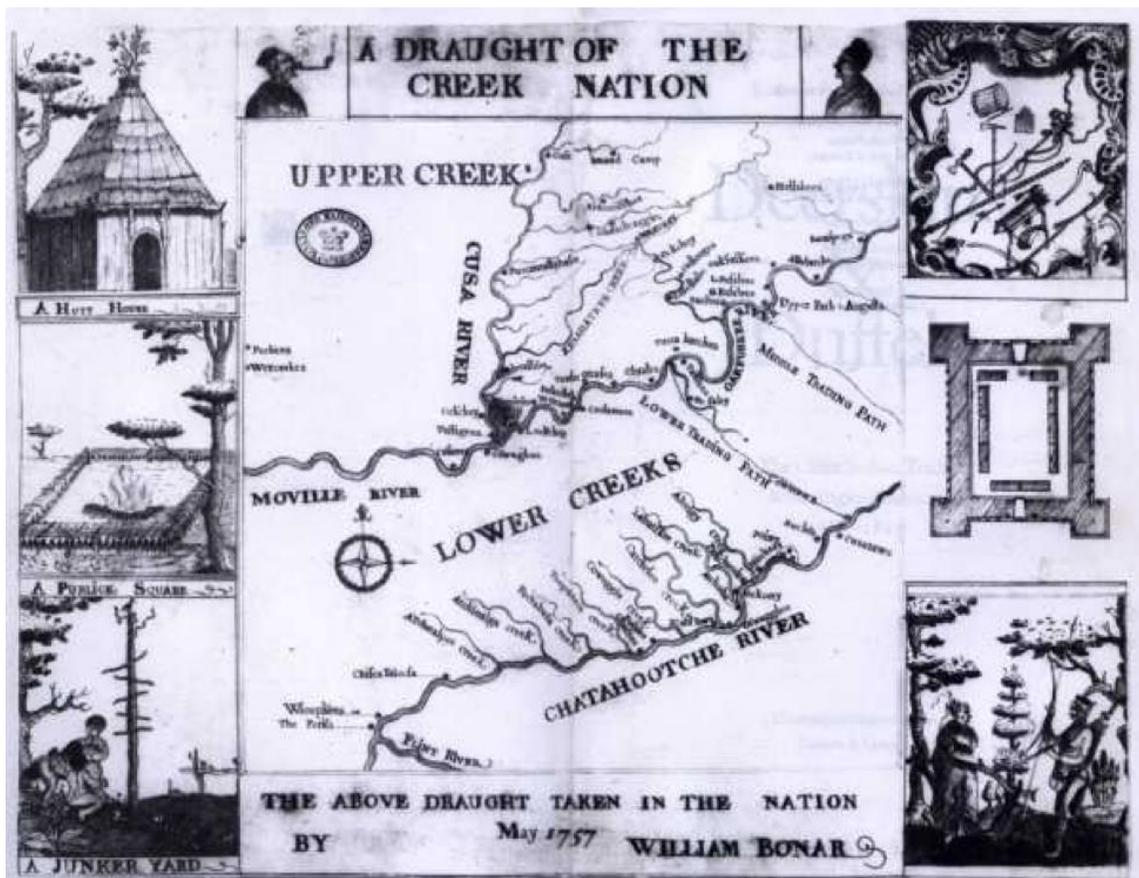


Figure 3. William Bonar, "A Draught of the Upper Creek Nation," May 1757 (Manuscript Maps) William L. Clements Library, The University of Ann Arbor, MI. Photostat Original in British Colonial Office, C.O., Carolina, 21. Shows Upper Creek Villages Near Fort Toulouse, Particularly Along the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.

Archaeology, however, does provide evidence for the establishment of a *trade outpost* during the 1730s that later evolved into the Creek *town* of Little Tallassee during the late 1750s. In 1979, Gregory Waselkov and Craig T. Shelton led an archaeological reconnaissance of the entire Coosa River Valley, documenting four major archaeological sites located "on or near the east bank of the Coosa River, north of Wetumpka in Elmore County" (present-day Alabama) that are conjectured to be the location of the former Creek Town of Little Tallassee. Due to historical preservation and Creek privacy laws,

Shelton and Waselkov were only able to take surface collections, rather than excavate the archaeological site. As a result, limited archaeological discoveries have been made.³⁶

Despite the fact that archaeology does not offer substantial insight in regards to the origins of Little Tallassee, it does offer an explanation for the town's peculiar absence from the historical record prior to 1753. Compared to other historic Creek towns in the Coosa River Valley, there was a significant absence of midden as well as artifacts. The lack of depth in the archaeological record indicates that Little Tallassee had only existed for a "fairly short length of time- several decades at most," not centuries. The town itself was also "situated in an odd location, without much adjacent river bottomland for agricultural fields."³⁷

Accounts of early travelers confirm Waselkov and Shelton's conjectures that the geographic placement of Little Tallassee was not suitable for traditional Creek agriculture. According to the first American Superintendent of Southeastern Indian Affairs, Benjamin Hawkins, the town of Little Tallassee was "located on the east bank of the Coosa River 3 miles above the falls," and even though the falls could be "easily passed in canoes, either up or down; the rock is very different from that of Tallapoosa; here it is ragged and very coarse granite." Hawkins added that the land along these

³⁶ Gregory A. Waselkov, "Coosa River Valley Archaeology Volume I: Auburn University Monograph 2" (Auburn, GA: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Auburn University, 1980), 20-37, sites 1EE5, 1EE150, and 1EE211. The largest geographical site, 1EE3, Waselkov suspects to be the largest location of Little Tallassee, but the site has not been revisited since 1955 and there are no available descriptions of the types of artifacts that were found there. Craig T. Shelton also participated in the archaeological reconnaissance of the Coosa River Valley in 1979 along with Waselkov, although I did not have any direct correspondence with Shelton, only Waselkov. Information also taken from an email conversation between myself and Waselkov on February 9, 2015 at 12:12PM.

³⁷ Email conversation with Waselkov (February 9, 2015 at 12:12PM.)

numerous waterfalls appeared to be “broken or waving, gravelly, not rich” and therefore not conducive for the cultivation of any type of fruitful agriculture.³⁸

In 1755, British Superintendent Edmond Atkin indirectly pointed out the unique placement of the Creek town of Little Tallassee when he described the cumbersome nature of the numerous waterfalls surrounding Fort Toulouse, which happened to be only about nine miles at most from Little Tallassee. According to Atkin, “in the dry season, the boats on account of Sand bars in the River, cannot go up so far as the Fort, without having small Boats sent down to lighten them,” and “no boat can at any time go more than two miles above the fort, upon the Coosa River, nor more than two miles above Tuckabatchee, on the Tallapoosa River, on account of water falls in each.”³⁹ Two Augusta traders confirmed Hawkins’ and Atkin’s descriptions of Little Tallassee’s odd placement by adding that the terrain was also “a great deal of hilly ground and bad rivers ever full and rapid in the winter, in so much that in our trading way we have great hardships in crossing them with out big leather canoes.”⁴⁰ British Indian Agent Daniel Pepper in 1756 also noted in a letter concerning trade with the Upper Creeks, that the area was indeed “stoney and hilly.”⁴¹ Thus, Little Tallassee was not ideal for farming but

³⁸ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, 242.

³⁹ Edmond Atkin, “The Report and Plan of Edmond Atkin 1755,” in ed. Wilbur R. Jacobs’, *The Appalachian Indian Frontier* (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1954), 60-63 (Hereafter cited as Edmond Atkin, “The Report of Edmond Atkin 1755”).

⁴⁰ Extract of a Letter from Two Traders at Augusta in Georgia to Governor William Henry Lyttelton dated 07/17/1758, CO5/18.

⁴¹ Daniel Pepper to Governor Lyttelton, 11/18/1756, Okchai, in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765*, ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (1970, repre., Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1992), 255-256. (Hereafter cited as CRSCIA, 1754-1765, page number(s)).

the perfect spot for a trade outpost, due to the fact that it served as a portage by carrying boats and or cargo quickly and efficiently alongside the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.

Little Tallassee may have lacked the soil and land for traditional Creek agricultural fields, but records suggest that by 1750 prominent Scots-Irish Trader Lachlan McGillivray, the father of Alexander, had chosen to make it one of his permanent residencies.⁴² Referred to by Lachlan McGillivray as the “Old Town on the Coosaw River” as well as “Weetomkee Old Town,” the location of McGillivray’s plantation was the original site of the Creek town Little Tallassee, a few miles above the modern town of Wetumpka Alabama.⁴³ In the 1770s, French traveler Le Clerc Milford visited the home of Alexander McGillivray, the son of Lachlan McGillivray. Milford stated that he and McGillivray “set out and after four days march arrived at a village called Little Tallassie, or Village of the Hickory Trees.” Alexander McGillivray’s house, Milford continued, “is near this village on the banks of the Coosa River, half a league from Fort Toulouse, which formerly belonged to the French and is now the site of the village of Taskigi [Tuskegee].”⁴⁴ In 1799, during his stay at Hickory Ground, United States Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins added explicitly: “three and a half miles above the town [Hickory Ground] are ten apples trees, planted by the late General McGillivray; half a mile up further up are the remains of Old Talesee, formerly the residence of Mr. Lachlan, and his son, the general.” Hawkins reported the area also to still be abundant with apple trees,

⁴² Traders had multiple residencies.

⁴³ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Reshaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 59

⁴⁴ Louis Milford, *Memoirs or, a Quick Glance at my Various Travels and my Sojourn in the Creek Nation* (Chicago, IL: The Lakeside Classics, 1956), 18.

orange groves, hogs and cattle.⁴⁵ In fact, the Wetumpka Chamber of Commerce in Elmore County erected a monument in memory of Lachlan McGillivray's plantation called "McGillivray Plantation known as Little Tallassee and 'The Apple Grove' 1740-1793."⁴⁶ It is apparent that the location of Little Tallassee and Lachlan McGillivray's residence were one and the same. [See Figure 4.]

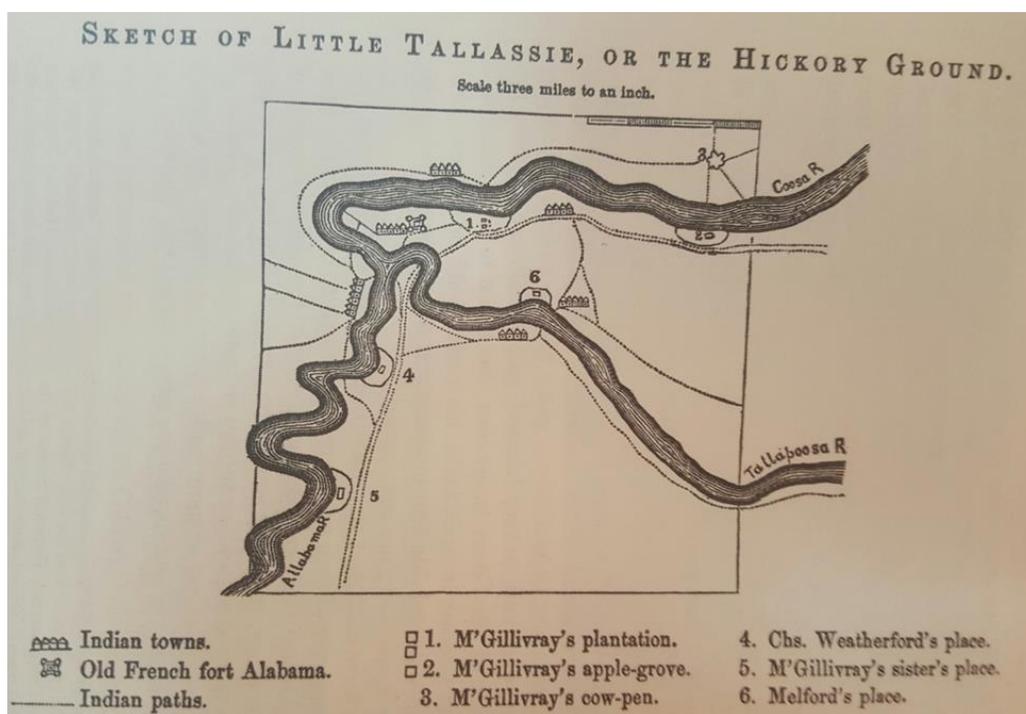


Figure 4. Caleb Swan's Sketch of the Junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers from His Visit in 1791 Highlights the Details of Alexander McGillivray's Plantation. It is Important to Note, However, That Little Tallassee and Hickory Ground Were Not the Same Place, as I Describe in My Text. The Title is Swan's Error, But the Map is Still Useful. Charles Weatherford Was a Scotsman Who Married One of McGillivray's Sisters. Melford is a Variation of Milford. Primary Source, "Caleb Swan, Position and State of Manners and Arts in the Creek or Muscogee Nation in 1791", in *Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Trade of the United States*, ed. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (New York, NY: Paladin Press, 1855), 5: 244. Also Found in Claudio Saunt's *New Order of Things*, 74.

⁴⁵ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 242.

⁴⁶ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 242.

The exact date of Lachlan McGillivray's arrival at Little Tallassee is not known. The oldest documents regarding his activities date back to 1741. It was in January of that year that Indian Agent and respected Carolina Trader James Bullock of the Creek Nation employed Lachlan McGillivray to investigate French influence amongst the Indians around Fort Toulouse. Afterward, Lachlan McGillivray filed a claim of 244 pounds as payment for his services.⁴⁷ In 1744, Lachlan was asked to carry out a second mission, this time upon the request of Governor Glen of South Carolina. Lachlan was to serve as an interpreter as well as negotiate trade and peace with the Choctaw Nation.⁴⁸

Lachlan McGillivray's ability to speak fluent Muskogean (Creek) and serve as a translator for two British officials by 1744 indicates that he had been in Creek territory for quite some time. Being a member of the Scottish McGillivray clan meant Lachlan had family connections, and after he arrived in Savannah or Charles Town he likely joined one of Archibald McGillivray's trade caravans, Fort Toulouse.⁴⁹ In fact, Little Tallassee just might have been Lachlan McGillivray's destination from the start, due to the fact that by the time he was granted his official license to trade in 1744, he quickly obtained additional licenses to trade in the Upper Towns of Pucknatallhassee, Weoka (Wewoka), as well as Wetumpka old Town, better known as Little Tallassee.⁵⁰ Archibald

⁴⁷ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 41; Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 36-37. McGillivray's claim can be found in *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly*, ed. J.H. Easterby (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Historical Commission, 1951), 355.

⁴⁸ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 46.

⁴⁹ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 43. Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 42-43.

⁵⁰ Thomas Deval, trader to Pucknatallhassee disappears from the written record in the 1750s, which is most likely why Lachlan McGillivray obtained a license for Pucknatallhassee. See Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 44-46. For when Lachlan obtained his licenses, see also "Petition of Lachlan McGillivray," in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents relating to Indian Affairs*, May 21, 1750-

McGillivray applied to retire from that province that same year and relocated to attend his businesses in Charlestown, and left the trade at Little Tallassee in his younger cousin's hands.⁵¹

Why was McGillivray interested in establishing a home or a trade post near Little Tallassee? Archaeological studies suggest that the original inhabitants of the place later known as Little Tallassee might have belonged to the stray town of "Wiwohka," a settlement formed by fugitive Creeks from multiple towns and villages. John Swanton, one of the foremost anthropologists to study the Southeastern Indians, was told by an informant that the name *Wiwohka* was often used interchangeably with *Witumpka* as both meant "roaring and tumbling water."⁵² Both of these towns do appear on early European maps, but are inconsistent in these appearances. For example, Romans illustrates a town called "Weetumkee" in 1757, but it is nowhere to be found on Bonar's map draught of the Upper Creeks in May of 1757. [See Figures 2 and 3]. Neither *Witumpka* nor *Wiwohka* are found on any modern maps of the Creek Nation, which only complicates the matter. [See Figure 1.]

Weetumkee (*Witumpka*) was a refugee Creek settlement during the early eighteenth century, but it ceased to exist by the time the first modern map of the Creek Nation was designed. It makes the most sense to conclude that *Weetumkee*'s Indian inhabitants relocated elsewhere over time, being that they were an informal town by

August 7, 1754, ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (1958; repr., Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1992), 518. (Hereafter, cited as CRSCIA, 1750-1754, page number(s).

⁵¹Archibald McGillivray announced that he intended to depart the province in November of 1744. See Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 42- 43.

⁵² John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creeks*, 271.

definition, and odds are the place only became an interesting place to settle in large numbers due to the European trade brought by the McGillivrays. Wewocau, on the other hand, by 1759 was a recognized Creek town.⁵³ Given the intimate geographic proximity to Little Tallassee and Weetumkee and the fluid nature of eighteenth-century Creek towns, it is very likely that Wewocau inhabitants intermarried with peoples from Little Tallassee. Others may have even chosen Little Tallassee as their permanent place of residence, slowly aiding in the evolution from trade outpost to Creek town. The existence of Wewocau and Weetumkee demonstrate two things. First, early Little Tallassee was not just a place of trade in the eighteenth century, but a settlement made up of several dislocated Creek villages. Secondly, Little Tallassee was a unique product of eighteenth-century colonial exchange. Little Tallassee can thus be seen as a microcosm of the origins of the loosely tied together Creek Confederacy, a place where people of like mind and language gathered to survive in the chaotic new world of the eighteenth century. Little Tallassee during the 1740s and 1750s was an upstart trade hub and potential Creek town, and therefore Creeks and Europeans had good reason to relocate to what was becoming a significant place within Creek society and the Colonial Southeast.

Populating Little Tallassee: War, Change, and Migration

The archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that unlike traditional Creek towns, Little Tallassee was a product of a long series of Trans-Atlantic exchanges and European-Indian encounters that combined with eighteenth century culture created the foundation for a new town. It had been a period of great change for the Creeks,

⁵³ John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creeks*, 271.

especially related to trade and its impacts. As early as 1565, ancestors of the Creeks had been introduced to European trade goods, after the Spanish had founded St. Augustine. Although Spain was more interested in converting local Indians to Christianity and maintaining a permanent, physical presence in America, many individual Spanish colonists and officials did engage in trade on their own with several Indian groups, including the Creeks. Most of the trade was centered around Pensacola and smaller mission sites along the Gulf coast, often between Spanish soldiers and the Apalachee Indians of northern Florida. When the Creeks became involved, they mostly sold deerskins and foodstuffs in exchange for manufactured goods such as textiles, metal tools, bead ornamentations, and rum. Guns were highly sought after, but due to trade restrictions enacted by Spanish authorities, they were in short supply.⁵⁴ Almost a century later, in 1685, the Creeks entered into their first British trade agreement working with Henry Woodward and two hundred and fifty Englishmen. Woodward and Indigenous leaders cemented a Creek-Carolina alliance at the preeminent Lower Creek town of Coweta, located along the Chattahoochee River.

In addition to this agreement, Creeks continued to trade with the Spanish who had lessened their restrictions and now welcomed the trade of firearms. The increased number of firearms exacerbated the taking of captives for sale as slaves to the British. For Creeks and other Indians, slavery was not a new concept and had existed in the region long before the arrival of Europeans. Archaeological studies demonstrate that during the pre-contact era, Indians usually took captives for alliance building, laborers, ritual killing, and

⁵⁴ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 5, 28-29.

in many cases, captives were adopted to replace lives lost in war or from disease. It was only after Europeans arrived on the continent that trade in captives became a commercial interest, and Indian captives started to be sold into slavery largely in exchange for European guns and ammunition. The desire among European colonists for slaves created an organized and systematic system to seize captives. It drove stronger Native groups to conquer their weaker neighbors and perpetuated European hunger for more slaves.⁵⁵ As a result of this new militaristic form of enslavement, Indian groups throughout the Southeast and the Eastern seaboard found themselves competing for power and control of the trade. Firearms became necessary trade item as groups sought to protect themselves or capture new slaves. Repercussions of this revolutionary shift in how Indians treated slavery transformed the region. If one was not sold into slavery, they most likely participated in the acquisition of slaves. As the number of slave raids increased, the amount of lives lost soared and produced a considerable population loss that threatened to destabilize the region.

The increase in violence during this period was not motivated solely by economic factors. The loss of life was intensified through the cultural practice of “blood vengeance,” a practice by which individuals sought to avenge the death of a relative by taking the life of the party responsible for that death. Relatives of the individual who committed the murder were also often killed, for if the perpetrator was not found justice was not served until the blood of a family member was shed.⁵⁶ Blood revenge was clan

⁵⁵ Robbie Ethridge, “Introduction” in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, 26.

⁵⁶ Christina Synder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 80-81.

based, not personally motivated, and held a spiritual component. Traditionally, Creek clans had a form of shared kinship amongst individual Creeks that shared ancestral links that Creeks held to the equivalent of blood relatives. Each clan member could trace their origins matrilineally back to a mythical ancestor, which was symbolized by an animal or natural phenomenon. The four most common clans among the Creek were Wind, Bear, Deer, and Tiger (Panther).⁵⁷ Clans were matrilineal based, which meant that individuals only traced their ancestry through their mothers. At birth individual Creeks inherited their clan identity through their mothers, and their family consisted only of their maternal relatives. A Creek child's maternal uncle, not their father, was the one who raised them in Creek society. The biological father played little to no role at all in their upbringing, except as a provider.⁵⁸

Blood or clan revenge was personal and motivated them to seek revenge. The death of a clan member was not just loss of life, but the death of a loved one. For Creeks and many other Indian groups, clan members could not enter the spirit world until blood was shed of the individual or family responsible for their death. Through such blood revenge, Indian warriors captured part of the spiritual energy or soul of the victim, which would therefore assist in enabling their family to cross over to the spirit world. Improper burials also prevented the soul from entering the afterlife, which made it even more pressing for clan members to seek blood revenge. Their spiritual obligation to retaliate

⁵⁷ Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 191.

⁵⁸ Steven J. Peach, "*The Three Rivers have Talked*," 28-29.

often led to an endless cycle of killing and increased warfare amongst Southeastern Indians beyond what was necessary to acquire slaves to trade.⁵⁹

To make up for a massive population loss caused by European disease and slave raids, Southeastern Indians sometimes adopted their captives, rather than sell them into slavery. Between the years 1711 and 1715, more and more Indians sought to transform strangers into kinsman in order to replace lost family members to raiders.⁶⁰ As Indian populations dwindled, so did the commodity of the Indian slave, and therefore groups such as the Yamasee found themselves in a tremendous amount of debt to their British trade partners. As potential captive populations continued to dwindle, the Yamasee soon found themselves presented with the reality that they might become the target of British slave raider's themselves.⁶¹ All things considered, a revolt by the Yamasee and their fellow Indian trade partners against the British seemed inevitable. The Yamasee War of 1715-1717 caused disruptions throughout the Southeast.

The Upper Creeks played a much more limited role than the Lower Towns in the Yamasee War, given the simple fact that the Upper Creeks were approximately 480 miles away from Charles Town; the "backwater" or "backcountry" of the Creek Nation so to speak.⁶² Unlike the Lower Towns, the Upper Creeks also had the opportunity to build

⁵⁹ Christina Synder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 82-83.

⁶⁰ Paul Kelton, "Shattered and infected: Epidemics and the Origins of the Yamasee War, 1696-1715," In *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, 326.

⁶¹ Paul Kelton, "Shattered and infected," 327.

⁶² Edmond Atkin, *Atkin Report*, 58.

substantial trading ties with the French, where Sieur de Bienville (later Governor of Louisiana) built a fort in 1702 at the current site of Mobile, Alabama.⁶³

Whereas the role of the Upper Creeks in the Yamasee War is debatable, the impact of the war's aftermath contributed greatly to the growth of Little Tallassee during the 1750s to 1760s. According to historian William Ramsey, by 1718, "over four hundred colonists and untold number of Native American warriors had perished" as result of the conflict, and these deaths had spurred "extensive tribal migrations and alliance realignments that changed the diplomatic and cultural landscape of the region for the remainder of the eighteenth century, and it led to the collapse of South Carolina's proprietary government in 1719."⁶⁴ Indian groups such as the Ochese, Yamassee, Apalachee, Apalachicola, and several others took "great pains to find new homes further away from their enemies and closer to potential allies," altering the "physical and human geography of the Southeast."⁶⁵ The French capitalized on Indian animosity towards the British and the temporary collapse of the South Carolina Indian trade by erecting Fort Toulouse in 1717, later referred to by the British as the 'Alabama Fort.' Situated on the Coosa river "near the junction of that stream and the Tallapoosa," the French fort was only "four miles south of present day Wetumpka Alabama," and within only seven miles of the neighboring Upper Creek Towns including Okchai, Muccolossus,

⁶³ William Ramsey, *The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy, and Conflict in the Colonial South* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 132- 142. A more thorough investigation of French sources during the Yamasee War might demonstrate that the Upper Creeks, indeed, played a much larger role in the war than the current historiography leads on and is undoubtedly, a worthy scholarly pursuit.

⁶⁴ William Ramsey, *The Yamasee War*, 2.

⁶⁵ Steven J. Oatis, *A Colonial Complex: South Carolina's Frontiers in the Era of the Yamasee War 1680-1730* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 300.

Pucknatallahassee, and what would later be the town of Little Tallassee.⁶⁶ [See Figure 4.] Founding Little Tallassee in the shadow of the French fort made sense as the population was mostly comprised of migrants that fled during the Yamasee war. The Natives now living in the region saw the economic opportunity to trade with the forts occupants to generate wealth and survive.

The Eighteenth Century Anglo-Creek Deerskin Trade

By the mid-eighteenth century, the bartering of deerskins for European manufactured goods became an integral component in the daily lives of Creek men and women as well as their partners in trade. European traders were mostly of English, Scottish, or Irish descent, and were based out of South Carolina and Augusta, the former becoming the more favorable conduit of trade due to its significant location at the head of a major Southeastern Indian trade path. Anyone granted a license by the Governor of Georgia or South Carolina at the time was allowed to conduct trade, but over time larger firms such as Brown, Rae, and Company monopolized the Southeastern deerskin trade. Individual traders within the company would then be assigned a specific Creek town and often took up residency within those towns on a permanent basis.⁶⁷

Creek headmen defined the terms they wished to trade and that included whom they traded with. Leading headmen restricted residential traders to those they trusted and accepted as a friend and ally. Upon arrival, European traders were introduced to the niece

⁶⁶ Edmond Atkin, *Atkin Report*, 63. See also, Gregory A. Waselkov, "Introduction", in *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa*, Daniel H. Thomas (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1989), x.

⁶⁷ Kathryn E. Holland Baund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 44-48, 81.

of a female relative of the town's leading headmen and marriage alliances were often proposed. Since Creek societies were matrilineal, marriage to a Creek woman turned traders into extended kin or family. Over time, the children of these marriages often became traders themselves. Town headmen developed strong, lasting friendships with their resident traders and consequently believed them to act within the town's best interest.⁶⁸

Commercial hunting was an economic venture shared by both men and women. Men hunted and provided skins that the women cleaned, cured, and dressed until the raw hides transformed into a polished, supple leather commodity. Creek men were often accompanied by their wives and children on long hunting trips, which occurred during the Fall and Winter seasons. Creek towns often appeared abandoned during these months, with the exception of the elderly or those unfit for travel. Spring and Summer towns were bustling and were reserved for planting and harvesting.⁶⁹

The standard medium of exchange between Creeks and their Scotch-English trade partners was the skin of the white-tailed deer. During the eighteenth-century leatherworking was one of the largest industries in England, London in particular. Buckskins were transformed into a variety of useful items to English men and women. The most popular of these items were clothing, in particular breeches, as well as gloves, footwear, and hats. Other common manufactured goods made from the deerskins

⁶⁸ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 83-81.

⁶⁹ This process was quite complex where women scraped the deer's flesh from the skin, as well as soaked, dried, and treated the skins with the brains of the deer or by smoke. See, Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "Guardians of Tradition and Handmaidens to Change: Women's Roles in Creek Economic and Social life during the Eighteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer 1990), 244. (Here after cited as "Guardians of Tradition").

included saddles, harnesses, as well as bookbinders. Indian peltry or furs of beaver, bear, fox, and raccoon were also sought after by British markets and crafted to the latest London fashions, but on a much smaller scale compared to the skin of the white-tailed deer.⁷⁰

In exchange for skins and peltry, Creek headmen would receive a number of useful European trade goods that benefited men and women of their villages. Guns, ammunition, and cloth were the most prized items, but metal tools as well were also priority items. By the eighteenth century bows and arrows had been replaced by English firearms and were necessary for Creek hunting and warfare. Iron goods such as hoes, axes, knives, and hatchets quickly replaced stone tools, which allowed women to perform daily tasks at a much easier and quicker pace. Copper kettles were also exchanged during the winter months.

The highly valued cloth came in a variety of colors, weights, and designs, which women fashioned into clothing with newly acquired scissors and needles. One of the most popular cloth forms for women were duffels, a coarse woolen cloth that could be used as a blanket or overcoat in the winter. Stroud, a cheaper cloth was also quite popular, as Creeks worn them annually in the form of men's leggings and women's skirts. Strouds were available in red (scarlet) or blue (indigo), and duffels were available in the same colors but also in white or striped patterns. Originally, Creeks wore little clothing in the summer months and during winter covered themselves with tanned deerskins and furs. The introduction of European textiles, however, revolutionized Creek

⁷⁰ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 87-88.

clothing. It was also facilitated by the practice of British awarding prominent and allied headmen European style suits and trousers, which was quickly seen as a symbol of status and or rank. By the late eighteenth century, boots, belts, hats, overcoats, and petticoats were commonplace in every Creek town and culture.

A variety of European beads were also exchanged for skins and pelts. Most of these beads were worn used as necklaces or to decorate pouches, sashes, and belts. Traditional deerskin moccasins were popular amongst Creek men and women, but they were often adorned with beads as decoration. Beads, for the most part, were in demand largely for traditional ceremonial and spiritual practices. For example, wampum belts still used to communicate diplomatic messages to other Indian groups as well as Europeans. The medium of the belt had changed, but the colors remained the same and so did their significance. For example, red, black, and blue symbolized war or a call to war, and a belt adorned with white beads served as a peace offering.⁷¹

By the mid-to-late eighteenth century men and women had abandoned traditional Native handicrafts for European manufactured goods, and were therefore dependent on the Anglo-Creek deerskin trade. Guns and ammunition were prioritized over bows and arrows and improved metal tools were superior to those of bone, shell, and stone. Debt from rising prices in trade goods, over extended credit, and waning deer populations from over hunting played similar roles that facilitated Creek dependency on the deerskin trade. Ultimately, Creek men and women consumed European manufactured goods that were

⁷¹ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 124-125.

worth, commercially, much more than those they produced. Creek economic self-sufficiency was traded away one deer skin at a time.⁷²

Little Tallassee's Traders: Creek and European

Although evidence indicates that the McGillivray family and their Indian and European trade partners had set up a trade outpost at Little Tallassee as early as 1725, it was not until Lachlan McGillivray joined *Brown & Rae & Company* that Little Tallassee evolved from a mere trade depot to a prominent center of Euro-Creek and Atlantic trade.⁷³ Brown & Rae, founded by Archibald McGillivray in the late 1740s, was the most successful trading firm to develop and be sustained by the McGillivray family. It was the newest addition to the McGillivray family companies based out of Augusta, Georgia, and the key to its success was the number of traders that Archibald McGillivray employed, as well as the vast territory they could cover. The most notable of the firm's members included Patrick Brown, John Rae, William Sludders, Issac Barksdale, Thomas Deval, William Struthers (nephew of William Sludders), and George Galphin. Although Archibald McGillivray retired in 1744, all his employees, both old and new, had worked with him at some point in time, and had excellent relationships with individual Creek towns throughout Georgia and Alabama.⁷⁴ Patrick Brown replaced Archibald McGillivray as director of the Brown, Rae, & Company after his return to Scotland, but

⁷² Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "Guardians of Tradition," 245-246; Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 53-54, 137-138. Women did continue to prefer ceramic pottery over imported wares, and by doing so preserved an important aspect of Creek tradition that is still practiced today.

⁷³ By the late 1740s, Brown, Rae, and Company had moved its headquarters to Augusta, Georgia. The name remained the same, but was often interchanged or more popularly referred to simply as the "Augusta Company" due to its operation out of Augusta. For more on this subject, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 44, 46-48; Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 51.

⁷⁴ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 44-45.

this position was more of an abstract title than a position of power. The secret to the firm's success was the collective efforts of all Brown's trading partners, the number of individual Creek towns they traded with, but more important, the friendships that were formed between the firm's traders and prominent Creek headmen.⁷⁵

Almost all of the trade alliances that Brown & Rae formed were with prominent Upper Creek towns and subsequently, neighbors of Little Tallassee. For example, Patrick Brown held a license to trade in Muccolossus, the closest town to Little Tallassee besides Pucknatallhassee, which held an alliance with Thomas Deval, another associate of the firm.⁷⁶ Issac Barksdale and William Sludders were also licensed to trade in several Upper Creek towns, the most notable being the towns of Okfuskee and Okchai. George Galphin was an exception, who already had a thriving trade store in the most powerful Lower Creek town of Coweta, which added to the successful growth of *Brown, Rae, and Company*. Lastly, there was Lachlan McGillivray, who was the primary trader for Weetomkee Old Town, alias Little Tallassee. As early as 1743 Lachlan had utilized his family connections to establish himself as a respected trader at Wacocoys, a nearby Creek village situated on a stream that flowed into the Coosa River near where Little Tallassee would be founded.⁷⁷ It was not surprising that by 1754, Lachlan McGillivray was made

⁷⁵ Alabama was part of the Georgia colony at this time.

⁷⁶ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 44-45.

⁷⁷ Lachlan McGillivray was also given license to trade at the Creek town of Pucknatallhassee. The partners continued to obtain licenses from South Carolina as well as Georgia. CRSCIA, 1750-1754, 128-129, 214. Struthers is also sometimes rendered as Sludders. See William E. Wright, *Abstracts of Colonial Wills of the State of Georgia, 1733-1777* (Atlanta, GA: Town Committee of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Georgia for the Department of Archive and History, 1962), 126; CRSCIA, 1750-1754, 129, 261, and 518. For more on McGillivray's trade at Wacocoys, see also, Ed Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 46.

an official partner of Brown & Rae, and for the first time Little Tallassee is documented not as a trading post, but a culturally defined and formal Creek town.⁷⁸

Reports by Edmond Atkin to William Lyttelton in November 1759 demonstrated Little Tallassee's evolution from trade depot to town by documenting the long trade history that the McGillivray family shared with the area, and also the vast network of important Upper Creek headmen that participated in that trade. Edmond Atkin was a former member of the South Carolina Council and the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1759. The Crown had appointed him to recruit Creek warriors during the French and Indian War and assist in attacking the nearby French Fort Toulouse. The "Alabama Fort," another name for Fort Toulouse, was a frequent meeting place for French diplomats and their Indian allies throughout the French and Indian War. Given Little Tallassee's proximity to the fort and elaborate trade ties, Atkin was suspicious of Little Tallassee's purpose as a trade hub from the beginning of his appointment as British Superintendent. Atkin's goal was to curb any allegiances, trade, or alliances with the French during the war and the growing population and trade economy of Little Tallassee threatened Atkin's mission. William Lyttelton, the Royal Governor of South Carolina, planned to assist Atkin. Lyttelton predicted Atkin's mission to be a failure from the start. Lyttelton noted that the Creeks were not "ill disposed to us [British]," but "it is a fixed principle with them to observe a strict neutrality between us and the French." Governor Lyttelton turned out to be correct. The Creeks, Upper and Lower, remained neutral

⁷⁸ Amos J. Wright Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 51.

throughout the course of this war, and Atkin's goal to turn the Creeks against the French as well as discontinue with the French at Little Tallassee was a complete failure.⁷⁹

Atkin's journey to Little Tallassee therefore provides valuable insight into the trading community at Little Tallassee. According to Atkin, Lachlan McGillivray's trade at Little Tallassee is "infamous" and a place where "his family had been getting estates in succession already above 30 years."⁸⁰ The same year, Atkin also informed Lyttelton that, "Thomas Perriman being duly sworn, saith that he has been employed in the Indian Trade in the Creek Nation, 21 years last June." Throughout that time, Perriman bought and sold goods for several different traders, most notably James McQueen, Thomas Morgan, and John Spencer. All three of these men were licensed to trade at "Little Talsey," with the exception of Spencer who had another store "nearly about midway between Muccolossus and Little Okchai, one of the Alabama Towns" that "stands alone in the woods, with other convenient buildings."⁸¹ The store, Atkin added, "was a mile and a half further [from Muccolossus], alone in the woods, and nearer to the French Fort."⁸² If Atkin was correct, both McGillivray's family estates and the trading career of Thomas Perriman suggest that Upper Creeks had been engaged in a fairly rich and profitable trade for at

⁷⁹ Steven C. Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 245-246, 250. Quote on 245.

⁸⁰ Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, Okfuskee, with Atkin to Lyttelton 12/16/1759, enclosing nineteen numbered items, Box 13, in WHLP.

⁸¹ Deposition of Thomas Perriman, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/23/1759, Okfuskee, Box 14, WHLP. For more documentation of Spencer's trading stores and where his licenses belonged, see Atkin to Lyttelton, 1/25/1760, Fort Moore, Box 14, in WHLP.

⁸² Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, Okfuskee, with Atkin to Lyttelton 12/16/1759, enclosing nineteen numbered items, Box 13, in WHLP.

least a decade before Lachlan McGillivray set up his plantation at Little Tallassee during the early 1750s.⁸³

Lachlan McGillivray was not unique in making Little Tallassee his permanent residence. Most eighteenth-century traders lived among their trade partners. The most successful traders were those who immersed themselves in Indian culture. They learned their language, customs, and created strong alliances with prominent headmen and their corresponding towns. An alliance, in Creek culture, was a formation of a new friend or family member, not just a business partner. All new trading agreements were accompanied by a traditional Creek ceremony, where traders like Lachlan McGillivray would be invited to sit amongst the headmen, smoke the calumet, sip the black drink, and participate in gift exchange. These traders afterward were considered by the Creeks to be “brothers” or “friends,” not strangers or mere business partners.⁸⁴ Almost all of Brown, Rae, and Company lived among the Creeks and took part in these highly symbolic and powerful ceremonies. They not only earned the trust of the Creeks, but their friendship, which led to lucrative trade partnerships.

One of the most common ways a European trader was able to secure an alliance with a powerful Creek headmen was through marriage. Since Creek society was matrilineal, when a European trader took an Indian wife, he not only became a friend or

⁸³ The exact date to when McGillivray built his actual plantation at Little Tallassee is not known. It is known that he had to have been living near or at Little Tallassee as early as 1743 when he was trading at Wacocoy and then obtained his official trade license to trade in 1744. Alexander McGillivray, Lachlan’s son, was also born in 1750. Scholars have thus concluded the best guess for Lachlan’s plantation to be the early 1740s. See John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creeks*, 242; Ed Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 59. For Alexander McGillivray’s birth date, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2015), 24.

⁸⁴ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 30-31.

brother, he was granted access to many of the privileges of his wife's clan. These privileges included both protection and support of the town or towns where the Creek woman's clan held influence. Creek wives often tutored their husbands in Muskogean or served as interpreters, and also familiarized European traders in Creek customs at an accelerated rate.⁸⁵

Marriage to a European trader provided benefits to Creek women. Through their white husbands, Creek women had the opportunity to learn English as well as insight into the political and economic dynamics of the European deerskin trade. Indian wives of traders became privy to new household skills that revolved around animal husbandry, which was a concept foreign to Indians of the Southeast during the early to mid-eighteenth century. These skills included how to milk cows and produce Butter and cheese (European women's work). In addition, they learned how to slaughter the cattle for beef.⁸⁶ All in all, these Creek women transformed into "cultural brokers," or mediators between two worlds. The eighteenth-century Euro-Creek trade required both parties to change for it to be successful, and women provided the foundation for the Creeks.

One of the most notable marriage alliances between the Creeks and Augusta traders was Lachlan McGillivray's marriage to Sehoy Marchland. Sehoy's mother was a Creek and her brother was an Upper Creek headman named Red Shoes. Her father's identity, was most likely Captain Marchland de Courtel, who was a commander at Fort

⁸⁵ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 83-84.

⁸⁶ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 84-85.

Toulouse until 1729.⁸⁷ The date of marriage is not known, but in 1750 Sehoj gave birth to Alexander McGillivray at Little Tallassee, placing their marriage alliance somewhere between 1744 and 1750.⁸⁸ Lachlan McGillivray's marriage, which straddled both the Creek and French world undoubtedly earned him the trust of many important Creek headmen at the site of Little Tallassee and the neighboring towns.

The French and Indian War

The Seven Years War (1754-1763) also known as the French and Indian War complicated the role and place of trading spaces such as Little Tallassee, which served as a site of espionage during the French and Indian War. Between the years 1755 and 1758 Lachlan McGillivray sent several letters to Governor Glen of South Carolina. In these letters, he reported the activities of the French and their Indian allies at Fort Toulouse, only a few miles from McGillivray's plantation at Little Tallassee.⁸⁹ Lachlan McGillivray wrote to Glen on the first of February of 1755 that "I have had no opportunity to converse with the Headmen therefore can have no material to communicate, but it is most certain that the Governor of Orleans made a vigorous Push last Summer at Mobile, to set on the Creek Indians to break out with the English." Lachlan elaborated that the French even used "all the little, mean, insinuating, malicious lies that the French Policy could

⁸⁷ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 72-73, John Walton Caughey, "Lachlan and Sehoj," in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 9-13. See also, Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period*. 1851. (Repr. Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Book and Magazine Co., 1962), 343-33. (Hereafter Pickett, *History of Alabama*, page number(s).)

⁸⁸ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 73. Cashin's footnote states "copy of Lachlan McGillivray's will, June 12, 1767, supplied by Professor W.W. Wallace, in Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trade*, 333.

⁸⁹ Amos J. Wright Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 52.

suggest,” but “several of them came away not well satisfied” and that he would give his excellency a “full account” of what transpired when he was next in Charles Town.⁹⁰ In the same letter, Lachlan added that he also had the “honor to convey a letter” that was given to him by the commander of French Fort from the Governor of New Orleans to Governor Glen.⁹¹ Only a few months later, Lachlan McGillivray would report to Glen that a “French Captain with some other officers and soldiers arrived at the Alabama Fort” and soon after his arrival the Captain “called a general meeting of both Creek Nations,” where he told the Creeks that “the French would sell goods as cheap as the English and something cheaper.”⁹²

A few years later, in 1758, another series of correspondences occurred between Lachlan McGillivray and William Henry Lyttelton, who replaced Glen as Governor of South Carolina in 1756.⁹³ Within these correspondences, Lachlan McGillivray continued to report the business of the French from Little Tallassee, and suggested that it would be a “great advantage” to the British if they possessed Mobile and New Orleans, both ports at the time occupied by the French. Lachlan’s letters to Lyttelton also discussed military strategies, including an estimate that it would take about six thousand men to capture Fort Toulouse and Mobile.⁹⁴ Although the French and Indian War was fought mostly in the

⁹⁰ Lachlan McGillivray to Governor Glen, Upper Creeks, 2/1/1755 in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765*, ed. William McDowell, Jr. (1970, repr., Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1992), 38-39. (Hereafter cited as *CRSCIA*, 1754-1765, page number(s)).

⁹¹ Lachlan McGillivray to Governor Glen, Upper Creeks, 2/1/1755, in *CRSCIA*, 1754-1765, 38-39.

⁹² Lachlan McGillivray to Governor Glen, Upper Creeks, 5/13/1755 in *CRSCIA*, 1754-1765, 72-73. The Alabama Fort is an English name for Fort Toulouse.

⁹³ Lyttelton was appointed Governor in 1755, but French privateers captured his ship and held him prisoner in Brest (present day Brittany, France).

⁹⁴ Amos J. Wright Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 53.

northern colonies, the English could not afford to lose the Creeks or Choctaws, two large and potential Indian allies. Lachlan McGillivray's information in regards to the French activity at Fort Toulouse was no doubt crucial to both Governors of South Carolina and Britain. Little Tallassee was not just an evolving Creek town, but a contested and coveted space by two European powers during the French and Indian War. Little Tallassee, however, was never a theatre of war and no combat took place there.

Lachlan McGillivray's allegiance to Britain was dubious at best. While some evidence indicates that Lachlan did spy on the French for Governor Glen and Lyttelton, the documentary record provides ample support that Lachlan McGillivray put the interests of his trading firms and partners above all else. In 1755, McGillivray asked Governor Glen why

the gentleman of the assembly should have so mean an opinion of me; I don't know what part of my conduct could give them any room to think so, except it was my over eficiousness to do anything that lay in my power to serve the pulick upon all occasions [even to the neglect of my own private business].⁹⁵

It is clear from Lachlan McGillivray's inquiry to Glen that by 1755 the men of the South Carolina assembly and other gentleman of the colony not only gossiped about Little Tallassee being a place of "infamous" trade, but Lachlan himself. What is perhaps more insightful from this piece of gossip, however, is that McGillivray appeared to be more concerned that he often neglected his "own private business" in order to serve the King's colony. McGillivray was a trader first and foremost and espionage for the British

⁹⁵ Lachlan McGillivray to Governor Glen, 10/15/1755, New Windsor, in *CRSCIA*, 1754-1755, 82.

threatened to compromise Brown and Rae's daily business activities and alliances during the formative years of Little Tallassee. This threat was due to the fact that Brown and Rae's traders depended on trade with the Alabama Indians and were supposed allies of the French.

Creeks at Little Tallassee

Besides being a place to spy on the French, Little Tallassee was the site of one of the busiest trading hubs in the American Southeast during the late eighteenth century and a place of "illicit" exchange, according to the Royal Governors and British Indian agents. Although the British conducted several conferences with both the Indians and traders in attempt to regulate trade after the disaster of the Yamasee War, royal governors and Indian agents had little power over where traders conducted business. The trading career of John Spencer, a member of Brown, Rae, and Company, and friend of Lachlan McGillivray, offers insight into why Little Tallassee was a place of interest to Royal Authorities. Little Tallassee's location, only a few miles from Fort Toulouse, allowed Spencer to frequently trade with the local Creeks and Alabama Indians but also the Choctaws, Chickasaws, French at Fort Toulouse, as well as British traders out of Charles Town and Augusta. In a deposition by one of Spencer's employees, Thomas Perriman, dated November 11, 1759 Perriman reported his duties were "to deal not only with the Indians of any town named in his license for trading, but with any of the French Indians of the Alabama Towns, and with the French themselves." Perriman also attested that, "the Frenchmen belonging to the French Fort, did every year in the time he served Mr. Spencer as aforesaid, bring deerskins to him and sometimes to Spencer himself" along

with other items such as “duffel blankets, striped flannel and calico.” Lastly, Perriman admitted in his report to Atkins, “that the foresaid Spencer, did sometimes go to the French Fort, and French men and women belonging to that Fort came often to Mr. Spencer’s House to see him and his Indian woman.”⁹⁶

The Alabama Indians, simply known as the Alabama, were a separate group of Southeastern Indians that historians and archeologists believe to have been descendants of the historic chiefdom known as Moundville that dominated western Alabama and eastern Mississippi for almost 500 years before European contact. Moundville and other similar chiefdoms of the Southeast collapsed around 1300 and by the time Spanish Conquistador Hernando de Soto plundered the remains of these chiefdoms in 1540, the Alabama became refugee Indians. Escaping warfare, disease, and possible enslavement, the Alabama moved north and eventually settled near the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, just north of present-day Montgomery. A trade agreement was coordinated by the Alabama, the French, and neighboring Creeks as early as 1715. The Alabama asked French officials in Mobile to establish a trading post within the area. By 1717, Fort Toulouse was constructed and the Alabama resided in about seven small towns within close proximity to the French Fort.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Deposition of Thomas Perriman, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/23/1759, Okfuskee, Box 14, WHLP.

⁹⁷ For a history on the Alabama, see Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, “Alabama and Couthatta Diaspora and Coalescence in the Mississippi Shatter Zone, in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, ed. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 251-258. For a history of the Alabama and their early activities at Fort Toulouse, see also, Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, *Journey to the West: The Alabama and Couthatta Indians* (Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 32, 54-63, 93-94. For the importance of the Alabama during the Seven Years War, see Greg O’Brien, “Quieting the Ghosts: How the Chickasaws and the Choctaws Stopped Fighting,” in *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*, eds. Tim Alan Garrison and Greg O’Brien (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 51-52.

The Alabama were a unique group because they resided on Tallapoosa land, but they were not Creeks themselves, despite being historically close in language and culture.⁹⁸ The Alabama traded deerskins in exchange for guns and other necessary European trade items with the French at the fort. Over time, they therefore gained the reputation as being “French Indians” and enemies of the British whom coveted all Indian trade by the mid-eighteenth century. Spencer’s trade with the Alabama appeared to be an act of treason to British officials during the Seven Years War, but caused few problems locally as the group had become a significant portion of the Little Tallassee’s population by the 1750s. As French trade dwindled at Fort Toulouse and was relatively nonexistent by the time of the Seven Years War, it was not surprising that many Alabama Indians chose to trade with or relocate to the emerging Creek town of Little Tallassee. Perhaps Emistisiguo, eager to expand Little Tallassee in trade and population, invited the Alabama to join him. The success of the Alabama in procuring the construction of Fort Toulouse and their ability to utilize their geographic position to establish a successful trade that capitalized on the competing Indian Nations and Europeans in the area may have given Emistisiguo the idea that he could do the same.⁹⁹

British Indian Agent, Edmond Atkin appeared to be more suspicious of Lachlan McGillivray’s activities at Little Tallassee than John Spencer’s. Less than a week after Perriman accused Spencer of illegal activity, Adkin reported McGillivray to have been

⁹⁸Swanton, 191-192. John T. Juricek, *Anglo-Indian Diplomacy on the Southern Frontier*, 246.

⁹⁹ Greg O’Brien, “Quieting the Ghosts,” 52. Swanton documents the modern town of Wetumpka to be an Alabama town. See *Early History*, 192. For more on trade at Fort Toulouse, see Amos J. Wright Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 60. For a general history of *Fort Toulouse*, see Daniel H. Thomas, *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989).

“engrossing the whole trade of 450 Alabhma [Alabama] Indians & dealing with them & others his Majesty’s Enemies” and “Lachlan McGillivray’s store at Little Talsey” to be the center of that trade.¹⁰⁰ In addition, Atkin reported McGillivray to have “promoted a private trade with the Choctaws independent of the Company” which Atkin attested, “nothing could be more prejudicial to the King’s service,” because at the time the British considered the Choctaws to be French allies.¹⁰¹ Besides the fact that England was at war with France, Atkin had issued an injunction in September of that year to all Upper Creek traders that forbid trade with the Alabama Indians.¹⁰² During a time of war, the French and their Indian trade partners were one and the same to both the Superintendent of Southern Indian Affairs and the British Crown.

Edmond Atkin may have been the Superintendent for Southern Indian Affairs, but he did not have control over the region’s traders. He spent most of his career arguing with London officials in hopes of strengthening his commission to reform Indian trade in the South, but his efforts were fruitless. Without greater authority from London, he could not prevent Lachlan McGillivray’s Brown, Rae, and Company from monopolizing the Southeastern Indian trade markets by the mid-1750s. Atkin and McGillivray maintained a healthy dislike for each other throughout the rest of his commission.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, Box 14, WHLP. This letter was 33 pages long and was full of accusations against McGillivray as well as Atkin’s open dislike of Lachlan McGillivray, his company, and Little Tallassee.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, Box 14, WHLP.

¹⁰² Amos J. Wright Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 62.

¹⁰³ Atkin was appointed Superintendent for Indian affairs in 1755. John T. Juricek, *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks*, 230-231.

Atkin was not incorrect in sensing the importance of regulating the trade around Little Tallassee. As the Seven Years War continued, the town became an important and coveted trading space by both the French and the British. Both countries not only wanted to win a war but secure a monopoly over the lucrative deerskin trade in the region. Individuals like Lachlan McGillivray, John Spencer, and other members of Brown, Rae, and Company that resided and traded at Little Tallassee complicated this process. Brown and Rae may have been made up of British subjects, but they were an independent trade company. McGillivray and his men traded with whomever allowed them to make the most profit. Similarly, the Creeks attempted to make the best deals for their clans. While the Creeks at Little Tallassee publicly abided by the doctrine of neutrality, they leveraged the European powers against each other for profit and never cemented a permanent trade alliance with just one potential trade partner.¹⁰⁴

Much of the trade conducted out of Little Tallassee by Lachlan McGillivray and John Spencer was frowned upon by the British and Superintendent Atkin, but the Crown had no system in place to regulate trade conducted by independent outfits.¹⁰⁵ Local traders prioritized their friendships and business arraignments with the local Natives, especially the Upper Creek, before their British and French allegiances. For the town, it was largely business as usual at Little Tallassee despite the larger and bitter war being

¹⁰⁴ Creek headmen were aware of their own economic and political value, whether it be as partners in the deerskin trade or potential allies in war. As members of their own Nation, Upper Creeks also knew that they did not owe allegiance to any one European power. Thus, economic and political allies were chosen by Creek headmen to meet the needs of their town, and they did not limit themselves to one trading partner when they could have two or three. For one of the best discussions of the Creek's "doctrine of neutrality", invented by Emperor Brims, see "The Coweta Resolution: The Invention of Neutrality" in Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation*, 110-120.

¹⁰⁵ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 81 and 103-118.

carried out on American soil. A Carolina trader commented on this behavior in 1752, having stated that Brown, Rae, and Company “was a monstrous set of rogues for the major part of whom the gallows groans.”¹⁰⁶ Governor Wright of Georgia described the Augusta Company in similar terms, describing the traders to be “not the honstest [honest] or soberest of people,” and the “very worst and abandoned set of men.”¹⁰⁷ The success and general disdain that traders at Little Tallassee had for authority while the war raged on outside the town left an unsavory taste in the mouths of British officials.

Little Tallassee was a community that was formed by Brown, Rae, and Company. By the 1750s, the trading company was more interested in earning a profit than abiding by rules and regulations enacted by colonial officials. These regulations threatened the autonomy of almost every Augusta trader that had built a life for himself in the Carolina-Georgia backcountry. Traders, like Lachlan McGillivray, William Struthers, and John Spencer had stores, cattle plantations, and families at Little Tallassee. Brown, Rae, & Company had created more than a trading out post at Little Tallassee. By the 1750s, it was a thriving Euro-Indian community, based on the eighteenth century trans-Atlantic deerskin trade.

The Emergence of Emistisguo

By them middle of the eighteenth century access to a steady supply of European trade goods was crucial to the survival of any Creek community, but a Creek town was not based on trade alone. Towns were sacred spaces where diplomacy was conducted and

¹⁰⁶ *CRSCIA*, 1750- 1754, 263.

¹⁰⁷ Wright to the Board of Trade, 8/27/1767, in Allen D. Candler, Kenneth Coleman, and Milton Ready, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 28 vols. (Atlanta and Athens, GA: 1904-16, 1974-6) vol. 28 (part 2), 51-52. (Hereafter cited as *CRSGA*, vol. number, page number(s).)

decisions on both war and peace were discussed and deliberated. Little Tallassee remained merely a trade depot until the arrival of an individual who was able to envision and engineer Little Tallassee, the Creek town. In the mid-1750s, the prominent Creek Emistisiguo became the town's first leading headman, renowned warrior, and future spokesperson and diplomatic liaison.

In June of 1753, Little Tallassee was documented as a *Creek town* for the first time in British records during a conference in Charles Town where both Lower and Upper Creeks gathered to parlay with the British to lower the price of trade goods. Several prominent headmen were also noted to be in attendance such as the Red Coat King of Okfuskee, The Wolf of Muccolossus, Duvall's Landlord of Pucknatallhassee, as well as approximately ninety-nine Creeks in total.¹⁰⁸ Joining these leaders was the first "Indian representative" from Little Tallassee.¹⁰⁹ Unnamed in the records, I argue this representative was Emistisiguo, who used this opportunity to make his debut in regional politics. The meeting was important since war had broken out between the Creeks and Cherokees during the previous month in a dispute over British trade rights.¹¹⁰ Throughout

¹⁰⁸ The Wolf of Muccolossus was a Tallapoosa Indian, like Emistisiguo, and long-standing friend of the British. His presence during these meetings bolsters the possibility that the representative was, indeed, Emistisiguo as he and the headman Tallipoosas were pro-British. For information on the Wolf king's support for Governor Glen during the Cherokee-Creek War, see Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs, Thursday, A.M., 5/31/1753, in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750- August 7, 1754*, ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (1958, repr., Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1992), 397. Hereafter cited as *CRSCIA*, 1750-1754, page number(s).

For information concerning the ninety-nine chiefs present at Charles Town, see Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs, 5/28/1753, in *MPAFD*, 1: 406.

¹⁰⁹ Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs, 5/28/1753, in *MPAFD*, 1: 406.

¹¹⁰ The origins of the Creek-Cherokee war stem from a number of factors related to British expansion, a longstanding Anglo-Cherokee alliance, and the dependence on trade by all Southeastern Creeks. By May of 1754, most Upper Creek towns ceased war with the Cherokees. For more on the causes of the war, see William Ramsey, *The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy, and Conflict in the Colonial South* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 151-152; Steven Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*,

July of that same year, several Upper Creek towns had met with South Carolina Governor Glen to aid in the war's escalation in exchange for the British to lower trade prices and maintain friendly relations.¹¹¹ A representative from Little Tallassee was not documented at any of the July meetings, but in 1754 Mortar of Okchai traveled to Cherokee country in an attempt to make peace with the headmen there.¹¹² Given the fact that Emistisiguo was pro-British trade throughout his entire life, and a kinsman of Mortar, and that the town of Okchai was an important ally for Little Tallassee during the 1750s and 1760s, this historical context leads me to suggest the true identity of Little Tallassee's "representative" in 1753 to be Emistisiguo. A war over trade was the perfect debut for the ambitious headman, warrior, and leader of a town whose creation was based on the foundation of European trade itself.

Only a few years later, in July 1757, representatives from Little Tallassee attended a conference at the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee, where headman Wolf of Muccolossus along with several other headmen from both the Upper and Lower Creek Nations agreed to a new treaty of friendship with the British. The identity of Little Tallassee's representatives remained unspecified. A few months later, on the third of November, a new alliance between the British and select Upper and Lower Creeks was fashioned during what was known as the Treaty of Savannah. A total of twenty-one

250. On the Upper Creek-Cherokee peace, see Malatchi to Glen, 5/12/1754, Coweta, in *CRSCIA*, 1750-1754, 500.

¹¹¹ "Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs," 5/30/1753-6/4/1753, *CRSCIA*, 1750-1754, 387-414. For a specific list of headmen present, see p. 410 of the "Proceedings."

¹¹² Lachlan McIntosh to Glen, 4/3/1754, Kialijee (Caileges), in *CRSCIA*, 1750-1754, 504. Morar was rumored to be an embassy to the Cherokee town of Chota due to the fact that he had kinship ties to the Beloved town. See, Steven Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 250.

Creek towns signed the treaty, including Little Tallassee.¹¹³ The Tallapoosa headman Wolf was the chosen spokesperson for pro-British Upper Creek towns during the treaty. The identities of Little Tallassee's representatives during the November conference are a mystery, but speculation can be made that Emistisiguo was there and of like mind with his Tallapoosa neighbor because in later years they often worked together on diplomatic and trade issues.

In July of 1759 British sources revealed that the identity of Little Tallassee's headman to be a warrior titled "Eenyhaththlucko."¹¹⁴ Although Eenyhaththlucko disappeared from the historical record the same month that he appeared, linguistics provides great insight into the mysterious individual's identity. The root word *thlucko* in Creek and or Muskogee dialect translated roughly to "big" or "head great warrior" of a town when combined with a war name or title.¹¹⁵ *E-na-he-tv* reflected the first part of Eenyhaththlucko's name and referred to a type of warrior that in Creek society "recited a war formula" often to "increase one's determination to win" and "only uttered in time of immediate and extreme danger."¹¹⁶ Titles such as "great warrior" were rarely bestowed

¹¹³ Treaty Minute, Ellis to Lyttelton, 11/13/1757, Savannah, Box 6, WHLP. Creek towns besides Little Tallassee and Muccolossus that were present consisted of the following Upper and Lower towns: Coweta, Cussita, Hillabee, Sauwoogelo, Tallassee, White Ground, Upper Eufaula, Wewoka, "Tamuchassee," Hachechubbau, Fusihatchee, Autosee, Pucantallahassee, Oconee, Tuskegee, Yuchi Town, Chewhaw, Okfuskee, and Tuckabatchee. For more on the Treaty of Savannah, see Steven Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 261-262.

¹¹⁴ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹¹⁵ Thlucko or thlacco is the eighteenth-century phonetic spelling of the word rakko, which is pronounced "thlucko." The word warrior in Creek/Muskogee is *tstnvke*, but when paired with *thlucko*/*rakko* equates to big or great warrior. See, Jack B. Martin and Margret McKane Mauldin, *A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee: with notes on the Florida and Oklahoma Seminole dialects of Creek* (Lincoln: NE, University of Nebraska Press, 200), 344. (Hereafter, Martin, *A Dictionary*, page(s).

¹¹⁶ Martin, *A Dictionary*, 27. It is noted that *e-na-he-tv* is an archaic term and now obsolete in the Creek language, "with the advent of peaceable occupation."

on Creek men unless they proved themselves to be highly successful in war over a period of years.¹¹⁷ That said, although little else is known about the identity Eenyahthlucko, his name does prove he held a position of importance within Creek society and Little Tallassee by the summer of 1759.

There is a strong possibility that Eenyahthlucko was an earlier title for Emistisiguo. “Emissee” or “imis” in Muskogee translates to “one responsible for carrying the battle-charm or war physic.”¹¹⁸ Linguistics suggests that Emistisiguo was a war leader who employed the spiritual power held in the war physic to achieve success in battle. By the late 1770s, Emistisiguo was bestowed with several other honorary war names/titles, these names including: Big Fellow, Big Man, Big King Mr. Sego, and the most notable: *Opaya Mico Thucko*.¹¹⁹ In addition to his collective war titles, Opaya is another spelling for *Hopaii*. *Hopaii* referred to a war prophet and an individual who can predict the outcome of a battle and would often lead war parties into battle.¹²⁰ Given Eenyahthlucko’s disappearance from the historical record and the linguistic similarities

¹¹⁷ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 103.

¹¹⁸ See Martin, *A Dictionary*, 25. The contents of the battle charm were bones of snakes and lions. Oral tradition states that that long ago a lion “devoured” several Creeks. As a result, they ‘dug a pit and caught hi in it’ (the lion) and “covered him with lightwood knots, burnt him” and saved the bones. A snake happened to be in the water at the time, and when the old people sung, the snake appeared and “showed his horns”, which are also supposed to be in the bundle. See, Benjamin Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country in the years 1798 and 1799,” in *Letters, Journals, and Writings, of Benjamin Hawkins*, ed. C.L. Grant (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1980) 79-80.

¹¹⁹ For a summary of the many names and alias’ of Emistisiguo, see *Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763-1776*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 12 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002), “Notes to Chapter One”, 507. (Hereafter cited as *GFT*, vol. number, page number(s.) See also, Joshua Piker, “White & Clean & Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years’ War,” *Ethnohistory* 50:2 (Spring 2003), 341.

¹²⁰ For a discussion on Hopaii, see Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 28-29.

between his and Emistisiguo's war titles, it is possible that the two names in the archival records refer to the same person.

Although the exact date of Emistisiguo's arrival at Little Tallassee is unknown, the simultaneous appearance of Little Tallassee as a new town and the documentation of a headman and other town representatives suggest he became part of the town between 1753 and 1759.¹²¹ In fact, a closer analysis of Emistisiguo's personal background offers significant insight into what might have motivated him to invest himself in the future of Little Tallassee and represent the former trade depot turned town. While references regarding Emistisiguo's biographical identity are sparse, snippets of information can be gleaned from his own words transcribed by British officials during speeches and town meetings. Emistisiguo was from the Tyger (or Panther) clan, which he claimed to signify that he was of "royal descent," but according to John Stuart, "unfortunately his mother was a slave so that he has no pretension to Family." Most likely Emistisiguo's mother was therefore a captive that was adopted into the Panther clan which passed down to her offspring. Emistisiguo's father (or more likely his maternal uncle) must have had some stature, due to the fact that he received a commission from South Carolina and presented it to Emistisiguo sometime before his death.¹²² This select piece of information allows one to conclude that Emistisiguo's "father" was a trusted facilitator of Creek-Anglo trade

¹²¹ In front of 'Little Talsey' is a note saying "a new town." See, No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹²² Emistisiguo's father was probably his Uncle since Creek society was matrilineal. Stuart to Gage, 05/23/1777, in Thomas Gage Papers vol. 11 (hereafter cited as *TGP*), William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI. The only other record of Emistisiguo's family is that his mother was a slave. See, Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, "Notes to Chapter One," 507.

during Little Tallassee's formative years, and most likely responsible for Emistisiguo's early trade connections at Little Tallassee.¹²³

Creek societies were matrilineal and children are considered to only be "blood" descendants of their mother. Creek children know their fathers, but they are not considered blood relations and therefore play a limited role in the upbringing of the child. Instrumental in the child's upbringing then, was the mother's brother. Matrilineal blood ties were the strongest emotional, social, and obligational ties within Creek societies. Kinship within Creek culture was tied to a series of social and reciprocal relationships, which tied terms such as "brother" or "father" to carry deep connotations of responsibility and authority. The strongest kinship relationship within Creek society was therefore believed to be that of blood, and the reason why Emistisiguo's "father" was his mother's brother. Emistisiguo's paternal father was a relative through marriage but this carried no kinship responsibility within Creek culture.¹²⁴

Evidence indicates that Emistisiguo was trading with Brown, Rae, and Company during the mid-1750s. By June of that year, William Struthers was asked by his trade partner Lachlan McGillivray to "tend to his interests in Little Tallassee" while he was away conducting business at his other stores in Augusta, Georgia. The British often referred to Emistisiguo as "Struthers landlord," which indicates that the two had formed a business relationship that began upon Struther's arrival in 1755 or soon after.¹²⁵

Emistisiguo's alias the "landlord" also implied that Struthers was Emistisiguo's tenant,

¹²³ A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, in GFT, Vol.12, 35.

¹²⁴ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 74-75, 110.

¹²⁵ Struthers Landlord or Struthers Friend was once of Emistisiguo's early nicknames or alias. Robert McIntosh to John Stuart, 2/8/1768, in GFT, Vol. 12, Document 24.

which allows one to assume that Emistisiguo might have been one of the first Creeks to live at Little Tallassee and be able to provide protection to traders. Emistisiguo's relationship to Lachlan McGillivray remains ambiguous, but Lachlan was the designated trader to Little Tallassee's neighboring village of Wacocoys as far back as 1743, and later Little Tallassee, the Creek town, in 1754. This evidence indicates the two were most likely closely acquainted through trade and their mutual interest in growth and prosperity of Little Tallassee. Emistisiguo referred to himself as a "king warrior of the Little Tallassies," in 1764 and all evidence from that point forward document him as identifiable with no other town besides Little Tallassee.¹²⁶

Significant in the formation of Little Tallassee as a new town and in Emistisiguo's debut as its primary headman, was the fact that by the mid-eighteenth century many successful Southeastern Indian warriors had transcended the limits of their powers in the realm of war and evolved into chief diplomats and leading town headmen. Success in war not only elevated the status of Creek men within their towns, but their reputation among their Native neighbors as well. Creek warriors earned the respect of their kin, whether it be for obtaining clan revenge or the restoration of peace after months to years of bloodshed. Some warriors, like Emistisiguo, earned additional respect for their abilities to use war medicine to protect war parties via the use of the war physic as well bear the responsibility of the battle's outcome. War became so integral to Creek life that warriors garnered the approval of their town's entire community. Festivities were carried out in the town square for returning war parties, where women performed dances, decided the

¹²⁶ Upper Creek "Great Talk" to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright, in *GFT*, Vol.12, 212.

fate of war captives, and both men and women feasted for days. Elite warriors over time not only bolstered their own authority through war, but they often established an elite status that transcended that of a warrior. More specifically, war leaders by the mid-eighteenth century were often elected by their communities to become chief diplomats and leading town headmen. Emistisiguo's emergence as the leading town headmen and warrior of Little Tallassee during the late 1750s and 1760s makes logical sense within the cultural logic of the eighteenth-century American Southeast.¹²⁷

Edmond Atkin's Mission and The Anglo-Cherokee War

The same year Little Tallassee emerged as a new Creek town in 1759, a war erupted between the Cherokee and the British. The Cherokees had long been at odds with the colony of South Carolina and the heavy encroachment of settlers and squatters on their land. Cherokee headmen were also displeased that a growing number of traders had taken up residency within Cherokee country, as well as excessive rum trade. Increased frontier violence between the Cherokee warriors and their European neighbors exacerbated the situation. Rumors that the Cherokee were aligning themselves with the French at Fort Toulouse, and possibly also the Creeks, circulated widely. In August 1759, the British cut off ammunition to the Cherokee and despite a delegation of approximately

¹²⁷ Greg O'Brien has long argued that war leaders often became chief diplomats based on their use of spiritual power and ability to lead and gain the respect of men within their town. For more information, see "Warriors, Warfare, and Male Power," in Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 27-49, 38 -47 in particular.

fifty-five Cherokee who traveled to Charleston to make amends with the British, South Carolina Governor Henry Lyttelton declared war against the Cherokee that Fall.¹²⁸

The outbreak of the Anglo-Cherokee War exacerbated England's need for Indian allies and momentarily shifted the focus of the French and Indian War to the Southeast. Under order to secure Native allies, Superintendent Edmond Atkin worked to procure reconciliation with the Cherokee, and secure an alliance with the Upper and Lower Creeks. Atkin's new mission was thus to journey into Creek territory and hope that a steady supply of European trade goods would cement the alliance. The alliance was difficult to forge, as many Creek towns still preferred to adhere to the doctrine of neutrality and refused to tie themselves to one European power despite Governor Glen's success in obtaining a trade agreement with Little Tallassee, Muccolossus, and several other Tallapoosa towns during the Treaty of Savannah in 1757.¹²⁹ Upper Creek headmen wanted to hold onto their politics of neutrality and more reliable access to European trade goods.

One conversation, between Superintendent Atkin and head warrior Yahahtustunnogy of Tuckabatchee, during one of the first of several meetings at Tuckabatchee held between the Creeks and Atkin throughout the months of July and October of 1759, opens a crucial window into understanding why Upper Creek towns

¹²⁸ The Cherokee War spanned from 1759 to 1761. Thomas Hatley, *The Dividing Path: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, 105-115 and Chapter 9 for more details on the events of the war.

¹²⁹ Juricek, *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks*, 232-236. The Creek town of Okchai and its leading warrior the Mortar, in particular, held strong ties to the French. For more on the Mortar and his contact with the Cherokees throughout the Anglo-Cherokee war, see Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, Okfuskee, box 13, WHLP.

tried to remain friends with each side of the conflict.¹³⁰ The conversation occurred in July of 1759 and Atkin informed Yahahtustunnogy that he was “not a little surprised” that so few headmen had left their towns to discuss a treaty of friendship with him. The commissioner further commented, “I have heard a great deal of French talks in my coming up here and you have a French Fort in your Country.”¹³¹ Atkin’s hearsay proved to be true, as Mortar was holding a meeting at his home town of Okchai, where many Upper Creeks, Cherokees, and Frenchmen were said to be in attendance.¹³²

The British official misunderstood the absence of Creek Headmen from his meeting. “If the Creeks chose to go at such a time to that meeting, rather than come to receive me, I suppose it is because they love the French better,” the Superintendent told Yahahtustunnogy. The Upper Creeks did not prefer the French over the British. Instead, they were buying time. They had only “five days’ notice” of Atkin’s arrival, and the Upper Creeks could only send some of their head warriors, including Talsey Mico, whom Yahahtustunnogy informed Atkin to be the “mouth [speaker] of one of the greatest micos in our nation,” to placate Atkin while the rest of the Creeks finished treating with the French and their allies at Okchai.¹³³ “We thought it our duty upon this occasion to come

¹³⁰Yahahtustunnogy is also noted to be a commissioned warrior and the appointed speaker at this meeting. See, No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹³¹ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP. For more information on the Cherokee war, see Steven J. Oatis, “Chapter 7, Inchoate Resistance: Indians and Imperialists in the Creek-Cherokee War, in Oatis, *A Colonial Complex*, 223-263, 235 especially.

¹³² No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹³³ Note here that the Talsey Mico is from the town of Tallassee, not Little Tallassee. The two towns, are independent. Tallassee is NOT the mother town of Little Tallassee. No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

out to meet you,” Yahahtustunnogy apprised Atkin, when he met him ten miles from Tuckabatchee. The Headman was not alone, having managed to bring with him several other warriors who held commissions, which alluded to the fact that these men retained some importance to both the Creek and British Nations.¹³⁴ Yahahtustunnogy had admitted to knowing that “before we came out, that it was wrong for so few of us to come to meet you, whom we look on as our Mother. But if none at all had come, it would have been worse.”¹³⁵

Yahahtustunnogy’s decision to meet Atkin, despite former loyalties to the French is significant. Though many people might have preferred remaining neutral, Fort Toulouse had become dependent on trade with Brown, Rae, and Company to survive. Their reliance on British trade demonstrated to the Creeks that France could not be relied upon as a stable and profitable trade ally.¹³⁶ Thus, for the duration of Creek-Anglo negotiations, Tuckabatchee hosted Atkin’s visit.

Testing Neutrality: The 1759 Conferences

In early July, Tuckabatchee was joined by five hundred Upper Creek towns eager to renew the alliance previously made two years earlier in Savannah, including the Tallapoosa town of Little Tallassee.¹³⁷ Several prominent Indian traders from Little

¹³⁴ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹³⁵ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹³⁶ Joshua A. Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler*, 136.

¹³⁷ Atkin to Lyttelton, 7/8/1759, Tuckabatchee Square, box 13, WHLP. Other notable towns and corresponding headmen of note to attend the Atkin conference besides Little Tallassee that were present included but were not limited to: Ten Abeika headmen (Upper Eufaula Captain, the Okfuskee Captain, Dog King of Wococococie, two Hillibee “Captains,” Deval’s Landlord of Pucantallahassee, Wewoka’s Second Man, “an Upper Creek town,” and “a few” Alabamas. All were present to renew Anglo-Choctaw trade made previously at Savannah. It is extremely rare that diplomatic conferences had such a large number of

Tallassee had gathered in Tuckabatchee Square that day to renegotiate trade with the British. Included in this group were several “missing” headmen from the meeting two days prior. The meeting was composed of the town’s most prominent figures: Lachlan McGillivray, John Spencer, and William Struthers of Brown, Rae, and Company, as well as the Wolf of Muccolossus (Tustunnogy Eemathla) and the Gun Merchant of Okchai (Enastunnogy).¹³⁸ In addition, there were twenty-one Upper Creek towns present, evidence that the majority of Upper Creeks were open to the idea an alliance with the British in hopes of retaining their trade agreements.¹³⁹ Mortar of Okchai was not in attendance and was noted to have been conducting business at the “French Fort” as proceedings began in his absence at Tuckabatchee.¹⁴⁰

The conference opened with a formal greeting given to Atkin in the Tuckabatchee Square where “a fresh party of Indians came singing and dancing with Eagle tails, with which they stroked the Superintendent,” as well as “a great number of beloved men, micos & others, advanced from behind with a cup of black drink headed by the Wolf and the Gun Merchant.”¹⁴¹ The Wolf informed Atkin that he had “just come off his journey”

participants. Atkin most likely exaggerated the turnout of “500 persons” but for certain there was a large number of towns. See, Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP. For a detailed scholarly account on renewing this trade alliance, see Greg O’Brien, “Quieting the Ghosts: How the Chickasaws and the Choctaws Stopped Fighting,” in *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*, eds. Tim Alan Garrison and Greg O’Brien (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 47-69.

¹³⁸ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/9/1759, Box 13, in WHLP. Other notable headmen in attendance were Tallassee Mico, The Long Lieutenant of Tallassee, Tuckatchee Mico Great Setter, and Hoithlewaulee Mico.

¹³⁹ Document No. 1, 7/8/1759, Tuckabatchee Square in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP.

¹⁴⁰ Document No. 1, 7/9/1759, Tuckabatchee Square in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP. The Gun Merchant was the brother in law of The Mortar and both were from Okchai. See, Hahn, *Invention*, 255.

¹⁴¹ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/9/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

and “no doubt wanted rest,” which led to him to have “sat there a great while,” until the “Superintendent rose up and taking him by the hand [*but not Enastunnogy sitting next to him*] took leave and went out of the square.”¹⁴² Atkin’s choice to not take the Gun Merchant by the hand offers valuable insight concerning larger Creek politics. The Gun Merchant’s arrival at Tuckabatchee was delayed because he had been meeting with the French and purportedly “forbid” several headmen from “going to meet the Superintendent.”¹⁴³ Atkin believed and told others that the Gun Merchant had also “sent messengers to others for the same purpose,” which “was the reason why only 14 men from 6 towns came to me at camp within 10 miles of Talsey or Tuckabatchee.” It was not until Mortar of Okchai, Gun Merchant’s brother in law, advised him and several other headmen to meet Atkin, while Mortar remained, leaving Gun Merchant with instructions “to send for him at the French fort” if his presence was absolutely necessary.¹⁴⁴

Atkin’s account of Gun Merchant Mortar’s actions would lead one to believe that two of the Upper Creek leading headmen preferred their preexisting French trade alliance above the possibility of renewing ties with the British. The two warriors from Okchai were just adhering to the old Creek politics of neutrality. They knew trade was essential for survival and refused to limit themselves when they chose political or trade alliances. In the same account, Atkin revealed both the Mortar and his brother in law to have also

¹⁴² I added the italics. In the document there was an X and the line about Atkin not taking the Gun Merchant by the hand was in parenthesis. No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/9/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹⁴³ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/9/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹⁴⁴ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

engaged in peaceful talks with the British. “My two greatest opponents [Mortar and Gun]” have “contributed most themselves, without design, to raise my reputation amongst the Creeks, the first speaking of me as a man, the other of my abilities,” Atkin declared.¹⁴⁵

Even though Superintendent Atkin and the British had secured an alliance in July of 1759, by September of that same year Upper Creek unity fell apart and leading Creek headmen such as Gun Merchant, Mortar, and even Wolf of Muccolossus retracted their previous commitments to only trade with the British. When Atkin summoned the Creeks to what he proclaimed to be a “Great Meeting” in Tuckabatchee Square on September 28, the majority of the Upper Creeks, including Tuckabatchee’s leading headmen, did not attend.¹⁴⁶ Both Gun Merchant and Mortar were also absent, and evidence indicates that the two purposely held a meeting in their home town of Okchai on the same day in order to draw Creeks away from Atkin’s “Great Meeting” and renew Creek faith in their politics of neutrality.¹⁴⁷ Wolf, whom up until this point had been one of the British’s most faithful allies, was present but informed Atkin at the end of the meeting that he “had no Answer to make” in response to Atkin’s trade and alliance proposals.¹⁴⁸ Little Tallassee and the town’s headman Emistisiguo was also conspicuously absent.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ No 1. Speeches, July 1759 before going into Tuckabatchee and afterwards in that square to the headmen of the Upper Creek Towns, 7/13/1759, Box 13, in WHLP.

¹⁴⁶ Document No. 10, 9/28/1759, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP.

¹⁴⁷ Document No. 10, 9/28/1759, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP.

¹⁴⁸ Document No. 10, 9/29/1759, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP.

¹⁴⁹ Emistisiguo was referred to by the title Hoboytusnogy in the document. *Tustanuggee* in Muskogee means warrior, Martin, 344. The prefix *hoboy* a title similar to *Hopaii*, which meant “prophet, priest, war chief, war prophet, seer,” O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 29. For Little Tallassee, Emistisiguo, and a list of other absent headmen and towns, see “minutes” in Document No. 10, 9/29/1759, in Atkin to Lyttelton, 11/30/1759, box 13, WHLP. The document suggests the reason for Emistisiguo’s absence to be

Although Emistisiguo did not attend Atkin's meeting in July 1759, the fact that he is mentioned by the British Superintendent in his letters and documents as a headman is quite significant. Atkin's mission was to incorporate not just the Creeks, but the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokee into a formal British trade alliance. That he noted Emistisiguo to have been a headman and absent demonstrates that the Superintendent regarded him to be an individual of importance by 1759. Perhaps even more significant was Atkin's recognition of Emistisiguo as Little Tallassee's headman; this demonstrates that by 1759, even British Superintendent Edmond Atkin, regarded Little Tallassee was no longer merely a place of trade, but an actual Creek Indian town. Emistisiguo, a traditional headman, was crucial in Little Tallassee's transition from trade post to town.

Wolf of Muccolossus silence and the absence of the leading headmen of the seemingly pro-English towns that attended the July conferences reveal the general attitude of most Creeks towards the British by the end of 1759. Henry Ellis, Governor of Savannah, months later commented on Wolf's silence. Ellis wrote to Lyttelton that the Creek leaders were "surprised" and were so "daunted and confounded" at the Tuckabatchee that they "could make no answer" to Atkin's requests.¹⁵⁰ Despite what the British believed, the Creeks were not confused. They desired a steady flow of European goods, but they were not ready to put their trust in a single European power. The Creeks were not against British trade; they simply did not see the need to abandon a century of

due to illness. A list of "sick" headmen is given which included three others: Uflegey of Coweta, Talhalegy of Cussita, Enyhahmico (Halfbred), and a Beloved man of Hitchiti. All notable headmen.

¹⁵⁰ Ellis to Lyttelton, 10/16/1759, Savannah, box 12, WHLP.

Creek neutrality politics that still in the year 1759 appeared to serve the interest of the Creeks well.

Superintendent Atkin's mission to cajole the Creeks into a trade alliance with the British was not a complete failure despite the collapse of the trade agreements. Before the British agent left Creek Country, Atkin did successfully ratify a "treaty of friendship" in October of 1759 with the Alabama Indians.¹⁵¹ The treaty agreed to end the trade embargo placed on the Alabama that had prevented them from receiving any British trade goods. According to Atkin, "the Alabama towns" did "humbly request to be looked upon and treated as well as the Creeks by having the Trade allowed to them, professing equal friendship and promising to live in perfect peace with his majesty's subjects."¹⁵² The trade the Alabama town requested in return for their allegiance to the British was to "purchase Goods from British Licensed traders at the same rates as the Creeks now, either at the Town of Moocolussah on the Tallapoosa River, or in the *Town of Little Talsey* on the Coosa River."¹⁵³ In exchange, the Alabama towns' agreed to relinquish all trade, talks, and "not take part with the French in anything whatever, against or to the prejudice of his British Majesty or any of his subjects."¹⁵⁴ Atkin agreed to the Alabama' demands and the treaty was signed. By December, he left Creek country and never returned.

¹⁵¹ Treaty of Friendship & Commerce, 10/9/1759, Tuckabatchee, in CO5/64.

¹⁵² The Alabamas were Creeks and close neighbors to Little Tallassee. Atkin looked upon them differently than the majority of the Creeks for they lived within the closest proximity of Fort Toulouse and had been trading with the French since the construction of the fort in 1717. Treaty of Friendship & Commerce, 10/9/1759, Tuckabatchee, in CO5/64.

¹⁵³ Treaty with the Alabama Indians, 10/9/1759, Tuckabatchee, in Mr. Atkin's of 10/24/1760, p.3, CO5/64. The italics are not my own, but those of Atkin.

¹⁵⁴ Treaty with the Alabama Indians, 10/9/1759, Tuckabatchee, in Mr. Atkin's of 10/24/1760, p.3, CO5/64.

The conferences between Atkin and the Creeks between the summer and winter of 1759 offer valuable insight in Little Tallassee's evolution from trade space to origins as a traditional Creek town, as well as Emistisiguo, its headman. Little Tallassee and Emistisiguo were both present and absent during the conferences at Tuckabatchee, a clear sign that Little Tallassee's attendance as a Creek town was worthy of noting by British officials, specifically the Superintendent of Southeastern Indian Affairs Edmond Atkin. In addition, the fact that Little Tallassee supported its fellow Upper Creek towns in their decision to remain neutral despite waning French support is evidence that Little Tallassee was no longer a space to merely conduct trade. Emistisiguo, the town's leading headmen, attended the Tuckabatchee conferences with leading headmen such as the Wolf, the Mortar, and Gun Merchant, but remained at home when these headmen chose not to attend or to simply remain silent. Although Emistisiguo had championed British trade his entire career as lead headman of Little Tallassee, before 1763 he respected that he was not in a position of authority to challenge the principal warriors and diplomats of his neighboring towns. Little Tallassee's participation in adhering to the century old Creek custom of neutrality illustrates that by 1759 Creek politics dominated the town of Little Tallassee, and exemplifies that trade was no longer the only subject of discussion at Little Tallassee. Atkin's documentation of "the town of Little Talsey" in his Treaty of Friendship with the Alabama in October of 1759 only cemented this fact.

Within only a window of approximately twenty years, Little Tallassee's identity was no longer confined to that of a place of Euro-Indian exchange, but an important place within Creek society. The arrival of a traditional headman, second man, and Little

Tallassee's participation in Creek politics of neutrality all demonstrate crucial components that compose a traditional Creek town. Emistisiguo's arrival at Little Tallassee was central to this transformation. A warrior, traditional headmen, and emerging orator and diplomat, Emistisiguo brought Creek culture and tradition to Little Tallassee. By 1759, the foundation was set for one of Creek society's most prominent Creek towns to emerge during the mid-eighteenth century.

CHAPTER III
TRADE AND DIPLOMACY
1761-1765

The story of Little Tallassee, in many ways, encapsulated a unique era in Creek History and Colonial America. A product of a colonial encounter, Little Tallassee between the mid-1740s to early 1750s was a center of Euro-Creek exchange and Atlantic trade. In 1759, under the leadership of warrior and traditional headman Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee evolved into a formal Creek town and by 1761 even hosted its first diplomatic meeting. Between 1763 and 1765 Emistisiguo championed a new southern trade path with the British out of the Gulf Coast, which bolstered Emistisiguo's authority within Upper Creek society and confirmed Little Tallassee to be a sacred space by Creek standards. Euro-Indian trade dominated the American Southeast throughout the eighteenth century, and Little Tallassee took full advantage of its benefits.

Waning Neutrality

Two years after British Superintendent Edmond Atkin's departure, several Upper Creek towns reconsidered their position of neutrality. In April of 1761, Wolf of Muccolossus spearheaded a request to align with the British in friendship and trade, which Emistisiguo formally facilitated during the conference of Augusta in 1763.¹ By the

¹ Several other towns were present during the first of many meetings between the Upper Creeks and Govenor Wright in the spring of 1761. These towns and their corresponding headmen were as follows: "Oakchoy's" and the Gun Merchant, "Hillaby's" and Mad Bear and Big Chatter, "Oakfuskees" and High-Atka-lega and the half breed, "Wacakoy" and the Dog King, "Euphala" and the Captain, "Fushatchee" and the town's second man, "Great Talissee" and the beaver Tooth King, "Weoka" and long second man,

end of April of 1761, Wolf of Muccolossus informed the Governors of South Carolina that “we [Creeks present] hold fast by the English and they to hold fast by us.” He continued, “We have not thrown away the Govenours Talk and we shake hands with them, and all the Towns hold fast by the English.”² Even though Wolf may have wavered during the Tuckabatchee councils of 1759, the Creeks knew that their days of neutrality were limited as the French and Indian War came closer to a British victory.³

Gun Merchant of Okchai seconded Wolf’s desire for peace during the same conference in late April. “We are now renewing out Peace with you. Our head Warriors and Young people want nothing but Peace and Goods, and white People amongst them,” Gun Merchant apprised the British officials. Gun Merchant was well-known as a pro-French supporter, as his kin Mortar of Okchai, and his presence and speech on April 30 demonstrated the serious intentions of the Upper Creeks in offering their allegiance in exchange for British trade. Gun Merchant’s closing remarks during the conference spoke only to the protection of that trade. He listed nine headmen who had “staid [stayed] at Home last Winter to protect the Traders” within each of their towns, Little Tallassee

“Cusadees” and Tom-matha-King, “Tuskegee” and Tuskegee King, and “Cialegees” and the town’s head warrior. The town names are in quotes due to the British spelling. See, Upper Creek Headmen to Governor Wright, 4/30/1761, in *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*, ed. John T. Juricek, vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1989), 342. (Hereafter cited as *GT*, Vol. 11, page(s).) On Emistisiguo and the conference of Augusta, see David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 240; John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British*, 53. Emistisiguo’s role in the conference at Augusta in 1763 will be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter of my dissertation.

² Upper Creek Headmen to Governor Wright, 4/30/1761, in *GT*, Vol. 11, 342-343.

³ Quebec fell to the British after the battle of the Plains of Abraham on September of 1759, and the French ceded “French Canada shortly after. In 1761, France made an alliance with Spain to defend sugar islands in the Caribbean, but by January of 1762 England had captured Spanish Cuba and French Martinique. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 brought an end to the Seven Years War, and thus, the French and Indian War. See, Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001), 431-432.

being one of the nine.⁴ Gun Merchant remarked that there had been “Disturbances in the upper Towns” due to the nearby Anglo-Cherokee War and feared if “any Cherokee should run here for shelter” it would not be “taken amiss.” In exchange for trade, Gun Merchant made it clear: “No head or Common Warrior will take up the Hatchet against the English to help the Cherokees.”⁵

The next month, several prominent Upper Creek headmen met to confirm their commitment to a British trade alliance. Instead of gathering at Tuckabatchee, the primary Upper Creek town for diplomatic negotiations, the headmen assembled at Little Tallassee to carry out their talks. The speaker at this talk was identified only as “second Indian,” but his words echoed that of Wolf and Gun Merchant the month before: “we intend to hold by the English fast,” as “the French we know it is not in their power to supply us with anything but Ammunition, and was we to throw away the English we should soon come to want.” A complete list of towns and headmen that met at Little Tallassee was not provided by Struthers, but evidence suggests that the May assembly was an extension of the prior conversations between the Upper Creek towns and Governor Wright conducted and that the identity of the ‘second Indian’ speaker was that of Emistisiguo.⁶

⁴ Mad Wind is listed as the “persons” in charge of protecting trade at Little Tallassee. For a list of the other eight town and persons, see Upper Creek Headmen to Governor Wright, 4/30/1761, *GT*, Vol. 11, 342-343. William Struthers, friend of Emistisiguo, long time trade partner of Brown, Rae, and Company, and resident trader of Little Tallassee recorded the Creek’s talk on the 30th and signed the document. See also, “Talks from Upper Creek Country,” 4/30/1761, in Allen D. Candler, Kenneth Coleman, and Milton Ready, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 28 vols. (Atlanta and Athens, GA: 1904-16, 1974-6) Vol. 8, 542-544. (hereafter cited as *CRSGA*).

⁵ “Talks from Upper Creek Country,” 4/30/1761, in *CRSGA*, Vol. 8, 542-544; Upper Creek Headmen to Governor Wright, 4/30/1761, *GT*, Vol. 11, 342-343.

⁶ William Struthers to Governors Wright and Bull, 5/17/1761, Little Tallassee, in *CRSGA*, Vol. 8, 545-546. Struthers stated that he delivered the talks “at Little Tallassee” in the opening of the document. The identity of the speaker is not known. John T. Juricek speculates that it was the Okfuskee Captain, see John T. Juricek, *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks: Anglo- Indian Diplomacy, 1733-1763* (Gainesville, FL:

The Upper Creek towns decision to reach out to the British in 1761 demonstrated their ability to understand the global shifts in diplomacy and trade that were about to occur as a result of the French and Indian War ending in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. Britain gained control over all of France and Spain's former territories, and consequently monopolized control over Southeastern Indian trade except for the Spanish stronghold in New Orleans. The aftermath of the war ushered in a period of great change for the Creek Indians and their neighbors. Little Tallassee, along with its headmen and key traders, would be at the center of this change and geopolitical situation.

Creek Diplomacy at Little Tallassee

The decision to conduct a meeting diplomatic in nature at Little Tallassee in May 1761 was a turning point in the former trading post's evolution to traditional Creek town. Creek diplomacy required an elaborate set of rituals and ceremonies to create a sacred atmosphere for those meeting to maintain control and achieve success in the negotiation at hand. The objective of the May meeting at Little Tallassee was to forge an alliance with the British to secure access to European trade as the French and Indian War came to a close. For Creeks, individuals were grouped into two single categories: relatives and enemies. Outsiders, such as the British, were viewed by the Creeks and Southeastern Indians as foreigners and categorized as enemies. Unlike the McGillivray family that had traded with Little Tallassee and took Creek women as their wives, the colonies of South Carolina and Georgia and the British officials attached to those colonies were complete

University of Florida Press, 2010), 294. Historical context leads me to argue it was Emistisiguo. See also, "Talks from Upper Creek Country," 4/30/1761, in *CRSGA*, Vol. 8, 542-544; William Struthers to Governors Wright and Bull, 5/17/1761, Little Tallassee, in *CRSGA*, Vol. 8, 545-546.

strangers. To take advantage of this trade and transform potential enemies into kinfolk diplomacy was necessary, but only a spiritual specialist, an individual with a proven ability to manipulate supernatural forces, possessed the skills to carry out such an elaborate process.⁷ Emistisiguo was one of these spiritual specialists.

Creeks conceptualized power to be connected to anything that originated outside one's daily experience, which could be highly unpredictable and dangerous. The unknown could take the form of a geographically distant place, a foreigner, or a mystical force that resided in within the supernatural realm. Since diplomacy required Creek headmen to engage with strangers or travel to distance places, spiritual specialists were valuable and necessary thanks to their abilities to predict and influence distant events. The presence of someone capable of these abilities was needed in order to ensure success of all Native diplomatic negotiations as well as the safety of those participating in diplomatic missions. Spiritual specialists were also needed during travel to create a sacred atmosphere through a variety of ritual practices and ceremonies that fostered an environment that allowed Creeks to convert strangers into relatives and friends on foreign soil. These rituals included but were not limited to the smoking of a calumet (pipe) and consumption of the black drink in order to foster an open and honest discussion by all involved. The bestowment of white eagle feathers to the chosen partner in diplomacy was

⁷ Greg O'Brien discusses the role of spiritual specialists, political spiritual specialists and spiritual leaders in great length in *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age: 1750-1830* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2002), especially Chapters 3 and 4. For an example of a Choctaw spiritual specialist, see his discussion of Taboca within these chapters as well pages 38-39, 55-56, 71 in particular.

also supervised by a proven spiritual leader in order to promote peaceful relations and negotiations.⁸

Although the meeting in May 1761 at Little Tallassee did not require the Creeks to journey outside of their familiar territory, it did require the employment of a spiritual specialist that could establish a sacred atmosphere necessary for incorporating strangers into the system of Creek kinship. Emistisiguo was more than Little Tallassee's first known leading headmen and warrior, but a spiritual specialist. Not only did Emistisiguo's name literally translate to war psychic, but within a decade he received the title *Opaya Mico Thucko*, which confirmed his abilities as a great war prophet. The decision by Gun Merchant and Wolf, two prominent Upper Creek headman to continue their peace overtures to the British at Little Tallassee, rather than Muccolossus, suggests that the two were in search of a spiritual specialist and Emistisiguo by that time had proven himself to be quite capable of creating the sacred atmosphere needed to complete their peace overtures.⁹

Creek diplomacy was only conducted in sacred spaces, by well-respected headmen, warriors, and under the direction of spiritual specialists. The meeting at Little Tallassee was evidence that Creek society no longer considered Little Tallassee to be a

⁸ For a discussion on American Indian concepts of power, see O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, "Introduction" and xxvi-xxvii in particular. In regards to diplomacy as a sacred act, see Greg O'Brien, "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O'Brien (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 148-183, 155-156 in particular on the role of spiritual specialists, such as Taboca (war prophet).

⁹ John T. Juricek still refers to Little Tallassee as a village at this point. However, he does note the significance of the community's rise as an "extremely influential and common meeting site for the Upper Creek leaders for the remainder of the colonial era." See, Juricek, *Colonial Georgia of the Creeks*, 294.

place of Euro-Creek exchange, but a Creek town. Documentary evidence only serves to bolster this fact by mentioning that a town square by Creek standards was intact at Little Tallassee by this time.¹⁰ Emistisiguo's arrival at Little Tallassee was crucial to this transformation. His identity as a traditional headman, warrior, spiritual specialist, and aspiring diplomat propelled Little Tallassee's position within Creek society as an important and sacred space. The peace overtures for an Anglo-Creek trade alliance during the spring 1761 were the first of many to be conducted out of Little Tallassee and under the direction of Emistisiguo.

Aftermath of the French and Indian War (1763-1765)

The aftermath of the French and Indian War brought great change to Little Tallassee. Within three years, Little Tallassee surpassed its neighboring towns in power and prominence, and emerged as the lead town of the Upper Creek Nation in matters of trade and diplomacy. During the same period, Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee, transformed himself from a little-known warrior into a leading headman, head warrior, and an elected spokesperson and diplomatic liaison on behalf of all Upper Creeks. The British victory in 1763 removed the element of European competition from Creek trade, which ushered in a new era of trade and diplomacy for everyone in the region. Under the leadership of Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee seized upon this opportunity and became the first town and headman to openly accept and promote trade with the British at Mobile and Pensacola. It was, therefore, during the aftermath of the French and Indian War that

¹⁰ Upper Creek "Great Talk" to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia-Lower Creek Reconciliation, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, *GT*, Vol. 11, 136.

the town of Little Tallassee, via trade and the leadership of its headman, became a much more important place not only within the Creek Nation, but also the Colonial Southeast.

There is no scholarly study to date that analyzes the growth of Little Tallassee or that puts the town at the center of eighteenth-century Gulf Coast trade. In addition, there is no substantial study on the town's headman, Emistisiguo, who facilitated that trade and established Little Tallassee's status as the key link in the relationship between the Upper Creeks and the British.¹¹ Current historiography has glossed over Emistisiguo's significant presence at the conference of Augusta in 1763, which was the first attempt by the British and the Creek Nation to negotiate new trade alliances in the aftermath of Great Britain's acquisition of Pensacola and Mobile in the new colonies of East and West Florida following the defeat of France.

The most significant factor in this scholarly oversight, is because few historians have identified Emistisiguo as the only Upper Creek headman to speak at Augusta in 1763. The first historian to address this possibility was David Corkran, in his seminal work, *The Creek Frontier*. Corkran did not account for Emistisiguo having spoken at the conference, but he did state the headman was "on record as attending under the name 'Mistisequa.'" Corkran believed this was an alias possibly used to protect his identity as a

¹¹ The closest historical study on this topic can be found in Joshua A. Piker's article, "White & Clean & Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years' War," *Ethnohistory* 50:2 (Spring). Piker's primary focus is not Little Tallassee or Emistisiguo, but I am indebted to him for his thorough research on Trade Paths in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. See also, John T. Juricek's *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015). Juricek also does not center his story on Little Tallassee or Emistisiguo, but he brings new details to the significance of the Treaty of Augusta in 1763.

“discreet agent” of the Upper Creek headman who was not in attendance.¹² Edward Cashin, in his book, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, was the second to make the connection between Mustisikah and Emistisiguo, but he leaves this connection only to a footnote, with no further explanation than what Corkran provided.¹³ The most recent and comprehensive study on the Creeks at the Treaty of Augusta is John T. Juricek’s *Endgame for Empire*. Juricek, not only states that Emistisiguo was in fact Mustisikah, but that he was indeed, the only Upper Creek to speak at the conference, his words being “a small but pregnant comment.”¹⁴ That said, Mustisikah is merely an alternative spelling for Emistisiguo, but has largely gone unnoticed by previous scholars. Emistisiguo’s emergence as Little Tallassee’s first official headman and most influential representative until his death in 1780 also indicated that he played a significant role in shaping the town’s identity. As Emistisiguo rose to power, so did Little Tallassee.

The need to hold a conference at Augusta in 1763 was a necessary due to the results of the French and Indian War. France had lost all of its territory east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain. French land claims west of the Mississippi were given to Spain and included New Orleans, which France had ceded to Spain a year earlier. Although many Frenchmen remained in New Orleans, their holdings in the Americas paled in comparison to Great Britain’s empire, which encompassed all of North America

¹² David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 240.

¹³ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Reshaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 356.

¹⁴ John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British*, 53.

east of the Mississippi River and included the former Spanish and French trade strongholds of Montreal, Quebec, Mobile and Pensacola.¹⁵

Although Florida now belonged to Great Britain, Indians continued to dominate the region and any changes in European claims to the area had to be explained to them. East Florida was occupied by the Lower Creeks, and West Florida to the Upper Creeks and Choctaws. If the British wanted to occupy the region, they needed to negotiate with the Southeastern Indian Nations first.¹⁶ Establishing a successful and profitable trade with the Southeastern Indians at Pensacola and Mobile remained vital to British and Indian interests. The Board of Trade outlined specific a clause in the Proclamation of 1763 that proclaimed “trade with the said Indians shall be free and open to all our subjects” as long as two conditions were met. First, traders needed to secure a license from a colonial governor. Second, each trader was required to post a bond that pledged their allegiance to observe any regulations that the Board or Commissioners of Trade saw fit.¹⁷ Trade with the Southeastern Indians was of the utmost importance to the British. [See Figure 5.]

¹⁵ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 5.

¹⁶ Juricek, *Endgame for empire*, 28.

¹⁷ Juricek, *Endgame for empire*, 27.

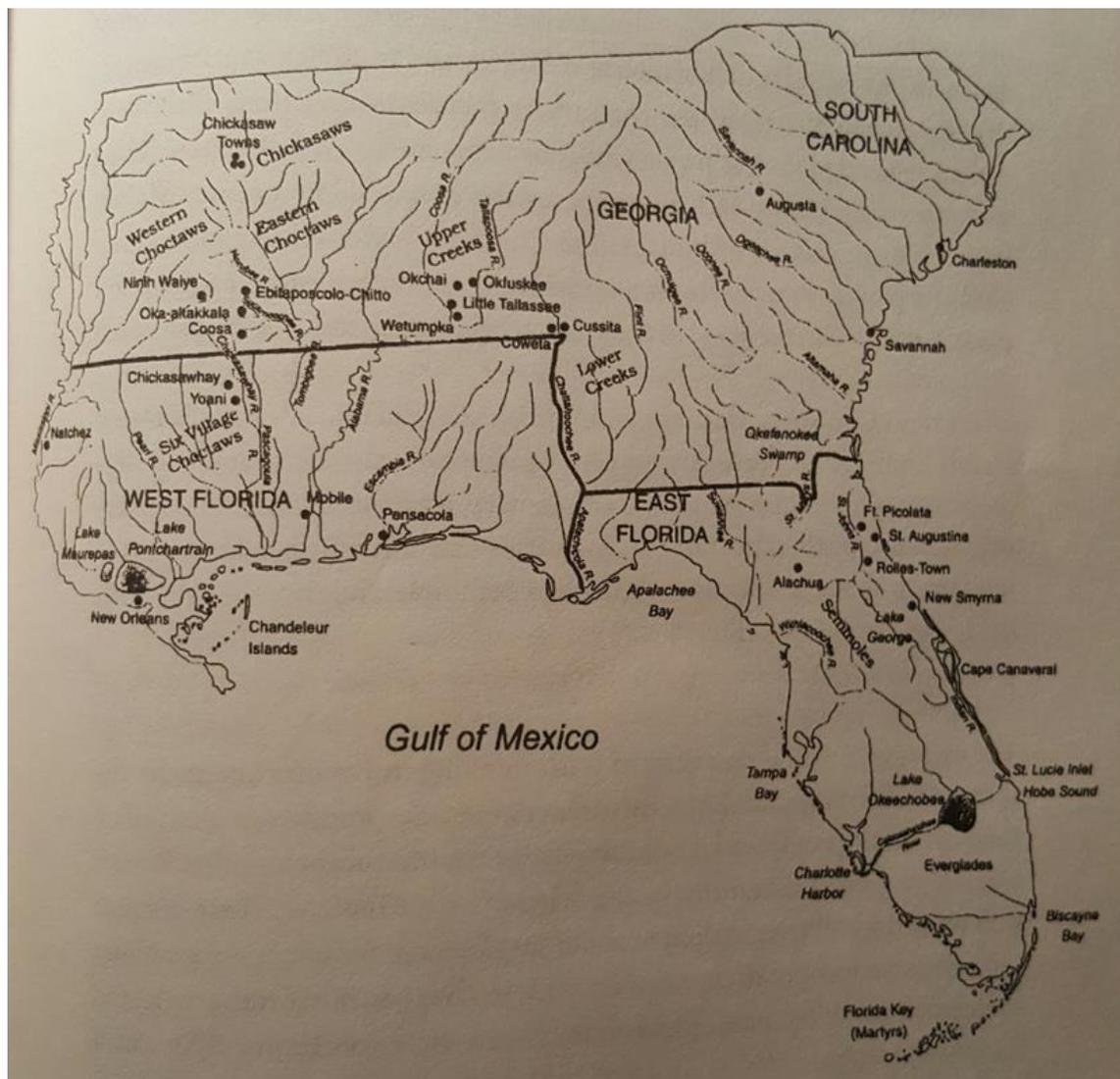


Figure 5. Formal Boundaries of Georgia and Adjacent British Colonies, 1764-1776. From Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Kathryn Braund, University of Alabama Press, 1999. Found in Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 31.

Creek Concerns and Town Opposition

It took a series of conferences after the transfer of colonial claims from France and Spain to Britain to negotiate boundary lines and trade alliances between the Southeastern Indians and the British colonies. The first of these conferences took place

during the Fall and Winter of 1763. John Stuart replaced Edmond Atkin as the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern District in 1763. He was advised by Henry Ellis, Royal Governor of South Carolina, and ordered by the King to conduct a conference with all Southeastern Indian groups to address these issues no later than November of 1763. All four of the southern district's governors were instructed to be present: Thomas Boone of South Carolina, Arthur Dobbs of North Carolina, James Wright of Georgia, Lieutenant-Governor Francis Fauquier of Virginia, along with Superintendent Stuart.¹⁸ Stuart choose James Colbert, a Scottish trader who had resided amongst the Chickasaws for an extended period of time, as one of the lead interpreters. Augusta Georgia, was selected by British consensus to be the location for these conferences, and a peace and trade alliance with the Southeastern Indians remained the goal.¹⁹

Out of all the Southeastern Indian groups, the Upper Creeks were the most hesitant to meet with Stuart and the British. Their initial concern was the meeting location and the time of year it would occur. On October 4, 1763, Governor Thomas Boone informed James Wright in a letter that “none of the Creeks will be there, at the congress,” Augusta simply being too far from their towns along the north-western portion of the Coosa and Tallapoosa River Valleys.²⁰ The Second man of Tuckabatchee met with

¹⁸ “Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” 10/1/1763- 11/8-1763, Augusta, *Records of the British Colonial Office, Class Five Files, Westward Expansion, 1700-1783, The Board of Trade, The French and Indian War*, ed. Randolph Boehm (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983) vol. 65 (Hereafter cited as CO5/vol. number).

¹⁹ Juricek, *Endgame for empire*, 44.

²⁰ Letter from Governor James Wright, 10/11/1763, Savannah, in “Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress,” in CO5/65.

John Stuart at Fort Augusta later that week, along with a number of Choctaws, Chickasaws, and a few other Creeks. At that meeting, they informed Stuart that they could not make the conference in Augusta because “it was their hunting season,” and “during this time they should be in the woods providing for their families.” The Second Man of Tuckabatchee asked Stuart if he could, instead, “deliver the king’s talk to them, and dispatch them immediately,” or change the location of the conference.²¹ In addition, Upper Creeks were worried about land seizure. In May 1763, only a few months before the desired conference date, Mortar (Yahahtustunnogy) and Gun Merchant (Enastunnogy) of Okchai met with Governor Wright of Georgia. During this meeting Mortar gave a talk where he stated, “that formerly lands that the white people now live upon were theirs, but now he believes white people have forgot or think they have no lands belonging to them, as he hears we are going to take all the lands which they lent the French and Spaniards.” To the governor, Mortar expressed his surprise, “in how people can give away land that does not belong to them,” which is why he and his townsmen were puzzled as to why there was a need to draw a boundary line in the first place. The Creeks had lent the contested land to the Spanish and French, but still claimed it as their own. The British arrival did not change this fact.²²

²¹ Letter from Governor James Wright, 10/11/1763, Savannah, “Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress,” in CO5/65.

²² Mortar and Gun Merchant to Governor Wright, 5/8/1763, Okchai, in *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002), 252 (hereafter cited as Juricek, *GT*, vol. 11, page number). Juricek states in a footnote that Gun Merchant was indeed present at this talk, but he spoke with Wright privately and was more concerned with the fact that the Cherokees were able to buy goods more cheaply than the Creeks.

Mortar continued to express his distrust towards the British at a second meeting with Governor Wright before the conference at Augusta. In that meeting, he reminded Wright that “their agreement was that this Side of Savannah River above Augusta should belong to them [the Creeks],” but

now find it settled all over the woods with People Cattle and Horses, which has prevented them for some time from being able to supply women and children with provisions as they could do formerly, their buffalo, deer, and bear being drove off the lands and killed.²³

Handsome Fellow, a headman from the Upper Creek town of Okfuskee, confirmed Mortar’s concerns. “His Talk is the same as Mortar’s,” Handsome Fellow told Wright, and “he sees the Virginia People settled upon a great Part of their Lands which they never granted, such as Satilla to the South of Georgia, Ogeechee, Conutchee, and Savannah River up high,” where he was “certain no red People ever granted any lands in those parts.”²⁴ For Creeks, these “contested” lands were not mere pieces of property that could be simply be given away or replaced by a monetary value. Land to Indians in general was tied to practical and spiritual realms. Hunting grounds and agricultural farmlands were necessary to Creek society, whether it be the meat of a deer or trade goods procured from dressing and trading its skin. The same land was also used to bury the dead or “the bones of our people,” as Stump-finger of Coweta informed Henry Ellis, Governor of South

²³ Upper Creek Protest to Governor Wright Over Encroachments, 4/5/1763, Okchai, in Juricek, *GT*, vol. 11, 351.

²⁴ Upper Creek Protest to Governor Wright Over Encroachments, 4/5/1763, Okchai, in Juricek, *GT*, vol. 11, 351. According to Juricek, Secretary of State William Pitt on June, 10, 1758 ordered the evacuation of white settlers or “Virginians” in New Hanover, on the Satilla River. However, by April of 1759 “nearly all the settlers had returned,” proving Handsome Fellow’s concerns to be correct.

Carolina, three years before Augusta conference.²⁵ Mortar attempted to express these concerns to Wright, saying, “when the King sees this talk he may think we are cross and love our lands a great deal, and so we do, the wood is our fire and the grass is our bed.”²⁶

British officials did not make the connection to the Creeks spiritual connection to their land and remained dumbfounded to their resistance to make a deal. As negotiations for the meeting bogged down, Stuart remarked, “It is certainly within the interest of the Creek Nation that they should be supplied with Goods from as many places as possible and from the nearest places.” Why continue to trade only with Augusta, Stuart continued, when presented with the opportunity to “always depend on having a surer supply” of trade goods, as well as a “better market” for all their skins?²⁷ Stuart and other officials believed the financial benefits being discussed at the conference regarding the possibility of having three trading centers were a win-win situation for the Creek Nation, and should be the most important factor for the Indians.

When making this observation, however, Stuart grossly underestimated the complexity of Upper Creek Town politics. Okchai and Okfuskee were “northern” Upper Creek Towns, located further up the Tallapoosa River than Little Tallassee, as well as a greater distance east, in the direction of Augusta. Trade with Pensacola and Mobile would center around the southern towns such as Little Tallassee, which would take away the power that Okchai and Okfuskee had generated over the years being in close contact

²⁵ Talk From the Creeks Assembled at Tallassee to Governor Ellis, 4/25/1760, Tallassee Square, in Juricek, *GT*, Vol. 11, 316.

²⁶ Mortar and Gun Merchant to Governor Wright, 5/8/1763, Okchai, in Juricek, *GT*, Vol. 11, 352.

²⁷ Reply to The Upper Creek Talk of July 22nd by the Superintendent Stuart and Governor Johnston, Pensacola, 11/19/1764, in *GFT*, Vol. 12, 225.

with Augusta and Charles Town traders. Instead, a southern Upper Creek Town such as Little Tallassee would therefore serve as a gateway through which all Creeks towns could acquire and benefit from a newly formed Creek-British relationship centered on trade.²⁸ Although trade with Mobile and Pensacola would benefit the Creek Nation as a whole, one must remember that the *talwa* or town, was the center of Creek society. Individual headmen made political and economic decisions to advance themselves or their immediate town, not a remote nation. Okchai and Okfuskee's ties to Augusta, no doubt, assisted in building the reputations of both Mortar and Gun Merchant as two of the most respected headmen and warriors of the entire Creek Nation. Their respected position in Creek politics was not something that the two men would easily want to give up, or in the best case, leave to chance. They had no interest in supporting a conference at Augusta that would open new trade routes out of Mobile and Pensacola. [See Figure 6.]

Town politics were not the only obstacle that stood in the way of Stuart's desire for the Upper Creeks to attend the peace conference at Augusta. A trade alliance, for Creeks, was more than a business transaction; it was a partnership between friends and extension of Creek diplomacy. Trade relationships were understood by the Creeks to go beyond the realm of economics and include politics as well. More specifically, any alliance made between Creeks and Europeans was believed to be an extension of kinship.

²⁸ Piker, "White & Clean & Contested," 316.

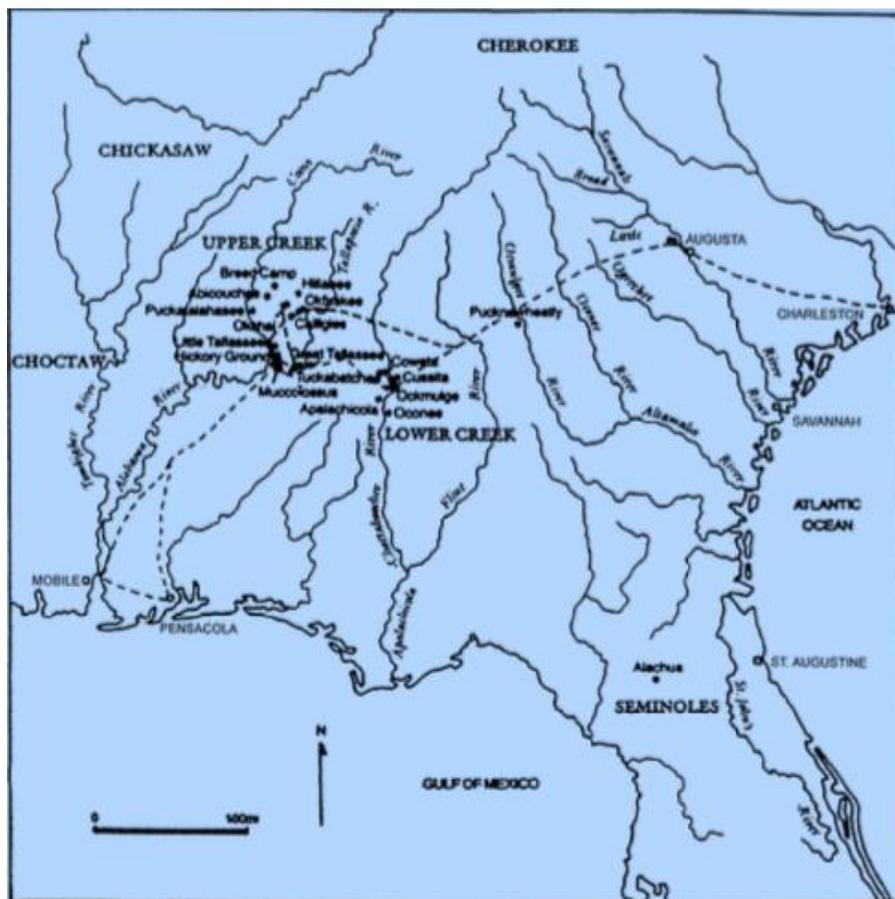


Figure 6. Map of Creek Country and Trade Paths. Circa. 1770. Adapted from Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE, 1993), 10, 91. Also Found in Joshua Piker's *White & Clean & Contested*, 316.

Paired with these symbolic alliances was the physical space where trade was conducted. Agreeing to trade at Mobile and Pensacola would require the Creeks to literally open up a new path or ‘road’ that would allow future economic transactions to take place. Veering away from Augusta and placing Creeks and their fellow traders in unfamiliar territory, constituted a break from tradition and ceremony. “The Great Old Path” also known as the path that linked the Upper towns to Augusta had been a place of

peace and friendship for generations between the British and Creeks.²⁹ From this perspective, Stuart was not just asking the Upper Creeks to enrich Indian trading options, he was proposing that they reconsider tradition and open themselves up to a major change.

Understanding the significant implication of changing trade routes, it was no surprise that when Mr. Colbert, an interpreter for the Chickasaw and Choctaw nation, “set out with an express for the upper Creeks” that invited them to Augusta, the headmen of Okchai greeted him not with a presentation of eagle feathers or tobacco, but by “pointing their guns.”³⁰ Although Colbert reported that “all the headmen of the upper Creeks” were present at the time of his visit, the hostile greeting he received was most likely Mortar’s idea, the primary headmen and warrior of Okchai, as well as the most verbal about his hesitation to open a new trade path to the South.³¹ “They have known the path to Augusta and no other and as there are goods enough there to supply his people, it will occasion disturbances in his Nation, should a new set of traders come in amongst them,”³² Mortar told Governor Wright at a meeting in Little Tallassee in 1764. The Great Old Path, Mortar informed John Stuart a month earlier that year, was the path “made before he was born” and “no alteration will be made.”³³ “He will not suffer any horses with goods from

²⁹ Piker, “White & Clean & Contested,” 322.

³⁰ Copy of Mr. Colbert’s Journal, as enclosed in Superintendent Stuart’s letter to the Governors, 7/13/176, Augusta, “Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65. Colbert was the interpreter for the Chickasaw and Choctaws at the conference of Augusta in 1763.

³¹ Copy of Mr. Colbert’s Journal, as enclosed in Superintendent Stuart’s letter to the Governors, 7/13/176, Augusta, “Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

³² Mortar to Governor Wright, 8/24/1764, Little Tallassee, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 16.

³³ A Talk from Mortar to John Stuart, 7/22/1764, Little Tallassee, in the *Thomas Gage Papers*, vol. 28 (Hereafter cited as *TGP*, vol. number), William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI. (WHLP).

Pensacola or Mobile to come to his nation,” Mortar continued, making it clear that he desired only for the Great Old Path “between Augusta and his Nation, may be kept White and Clean,” and they “want to know no other.”³⁴

Although the idea of opening a new trade path challenged Creek traditions and pre-existing power arrangements among the Upper Creek towns, it did not mean that Mortar, Okchai, and the rest of the “northern upper Creeks” were not inclined to make a peace alliance with the British. Furthermore, one should not mistake Mortar and Gun Merchant’s resistance to the new southern path as the voice and thoughts of the entire Creek Nation. Rather, new trade sources from the Gulf Coast threatened the monopoly that the Okchai headmen had enjoyed over trade with the British.

Trade and Authority

Mortar and Gun Merchant’s resistance to opening a new trade path out of the Gulf Coast in order to protect Okchai’s monopoly over Creek trade offers important insight into the dynamics of Creek diplomacy in regards to the realm of trade. Since by the 1760s Creeks were heavily reliant on European manufactured goods, headmen used access and control over trade to bolster their authority. Trade items were not only necessary for a full functioning Creek society, but they were also believed to be items of spiritual power. European goods were seen as miraculous in nature, as items such as guns and metal tools were considered superior to their own handicrafts. They were also objects from a distant and unknown world. Given the fact that outside people, lands, and objects were seen as

³⁴ Mortar of Okchai to Superintendent Stuart and Governors of Georgia and South Carolina, 8/13/1764, delivered by Handsome Fellow of Okfuskee, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vo.12, 14.

sources of spiritual power, and those who had the unique ability to harness control over that power were quickly elevated in rank and status amongst fellow Creeks.³⁵

In order to maintain such an elevated status, headmen were expected to redistribute trade goods to their family and individual towns. As demands for these goods increased, the headmen needed to amass large reservoirs of goods through trade alliances with Europeans to continue to funnel those items to their supporters.³⁶ Mortar and Gun Merchant had a steady supply of trade items coming out of established alliances with Augusta traders, which allowed the two to bolster their authority not just amongst their home town of Okchai, but with all Upper Creek towns. A new trade path based out of Pensacola and Mobile would redistribute trade into the hands of other headmen, and consequently would jeopardize Okchai's monopoly on trade but also undermine Mortar and Gun Merchant's power within Creek society.

Reliance on trade as a source of authority was a dangerous venture. War with neighboring groups of Indians or Euro-Americans could easily disrupt established methods of exchange. If headmen lost access to crucial trade routes, then their prestige and power would deteriorate. By the late eighteenth century control over continued access to trade goods, not just the possession of European manufactured goods, became a new way to exert authority over others and bolster one's authority. Successful treaty negotiation with political powers, rather than informal agreements with individual traders, was one way headmen acquired this new source of trade power.³⁷

³⁵ Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 71-76.

³⁶ Greg O'Brien, "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," 151-152.

³⁷ Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, Chapters 3 and 4 in particular.

The Treaty of Augusta (1763)

While the prospect of Gulf Coast trade threatened Okchai's dominance over British trade, it presented an opportunity for Little Tallassee to position itself as the new center of Anglo-Creek trade. As far back as 1758, Lachlan McGillivray (resident trader of Little Tallassee) had told Governor Lyttelton of South Carolina that it would be a "great advantage" if the British possessed Mobile and New Orleans.³⁸ Profit gained from Gulf Coast ports would not only benefit McGillivray and *Brown and Rae*, but would also allow Little Tallassee to replace Okchai's monopoly over British trade and bolster Little Tallassee's power and prestige amongst its Upper Creek neighbors. Furthermore, it allowed Emistisiguo to become one of the primary Creek backers of opening the new trade with the British in the Gulf Coast.

Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee did not hesitate to capitalize on this opportunity. On October 15, 1763 Emistisiguo and Neothlucco (Little Tallassee's Second Man) led a large party of Upper Creeks to Augusta to conduct a new peace and trade alliance with the British. Emistisiguo was accompanied by "the leader of the Chickasaws, Pia-mattah" as well as "one considerable leading man of the Choctaw nation called Red-Shoes."³⁹ Emistisiguo was not only the first Upper Creek to arrive at the conference of Augusta, but he was accompanied by two prominent leaders from neighboring Southeastern Indian Nations.

³⁸ Lachlan McGillivray to Lyttelton, 07/13/1758, Augusta, Box 6, WHLP.

³⁹ Letter from Mr. Stuart to his excellency Thomas Boone Esq, 10/15/1763, Fort Augusta, in *Virginia Treaties, 1723-1775*, ed. W. Stitt. Robinson, Vol. 5 of *Early American Indian Documents Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1989), 270. Stuart referred to Emistisiguo in this document as "the Upper Creek warrior Mustisicah." See also, Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 47-48.

Emistisiguo's appearance at Augusta in October is significant in two ways. First, it demonstrates Emistisiguo's strong support for Gulf Coast trade and a British alliance. Second, the fact that he was the individual elected to lead the Upper Creek delegation is evidence of the popularity and respect he and Little Tallassee had earned among his fellow Upper Creeks by the fall of 1763. Red Shoes and Piamattah's choice to accompany Emistisiguo allows one to assume that his reputation had extended beyond Creek towns, and that within only a short period of time Emistisiguo began to act not only as a warrior and headmen, but as a diplomat for Little Tallassee and several other Southern Upper Creek towns.

Approximately a week after Emistisiguo's arrival, Stuart reported a total of "five hundred or more" to be present at Augusta. Although "about three hundred Cherokees" were the bulk of this figure, Stuart did note that there were about "seventy" Upper Creeks in attendance by October 23.⁴⁰ Not long after the Upper Creeks arrived, the Superintendent was alarmed to the fact that "all the Creeks were setting out on their return home," which Stuart believed to be the consequence of rumors circulated by the Mortar of Okchai regarding several "late murders" which demanded blood revenge.⁴¹ Fortunately for Emistisiguo and Stuart, the news arrived while the Upper Creeks were encamped only a mile or two outside of Augusta at one of Lachlan McGillivray's plantations known as Indian Springs. McGillivray and trader George Galphin were present at the site, along with Emistisiguo. Many of the Upper Creeks dismissed the

⁴⁰ John Stuart to Thomas Boone, Arthur Dobbs, and Francis Fauquier, Esqrs., 10/23/1763, Fort Augusta, *Virginia Treaties*, Vol. 5, 278-279.

⁴¹ John Stuart to Thomas Boone, Arthur Dobbs, and Francis Fauquier, Esqrs., 10/23/1763, Fort Augusta, *Virginia Treaties*, Vol. 5, 278-279.

report of Mortar's actions as false and remained at Augusta to negotiate, a true testament to Emistisiguo's evolving powers of persuasion and influence amongst the Upper Creek population. Galphin no doubt had some influence over the Upper Creeks' choice to remain at Augusta. Emistisiguo, however, as a headman and warrior who supported these traders, as well as someone well acquainted with Mortar, in all probability had the greatest impact on the Upper Creek's decision to stay for the conference.⁴²

Despite Mortar's and many other northern Upper Creek town headmen's objections, the Creeks attended the Treaty of Augusta on November 5, 1763. According to Stuart, the Creeks arrived in "two distinct bodies," which included "one hundred and seventy" Lower Creeks and "about 117" Upper Creeks.⁴³ Out of these approximate 305 Creeks in attendance, most of the leading Upper Creek headmen remained absent. Wolf of Muccolossus, Duval's landlord (Hopithlepoya Hadjo) of Pucknatallahassee, and Neathluko Chupko of Pallachicola were in attendance.⁴⁴ These headmen and their corresponding towns were all close neighbors to Little Tallassee, being Southern Upper Creek Towns, and their presence a statement that they shared Emistisiguo's vision. As far as the Lower Creek headmen, the most notable and outspoken was Captain Aleck of

⁴² Edward Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray*, 220; Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 103; Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 49. Governor James Wright had also been reported to have asked George Galphin to provide his "best assistance" to convince the Upper Creeks to attend the conference in November of 1763. For Wright's instructions to Galphin, see Letter from James Wright, 10/11/1763, Savannah, "Journal of the Proceedings of Augusta," CO5/65.

⁴³ Stuart to B.T., 12/1/1763, in *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, Colonial Records of South Carolina*. 2 vols. Edited by William L. McDowell, Jr. (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 2:303-5 (Hereafter *DIASC*, vol., page number(s)). See also, John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015), 51. There is another account that puts the Upper Creek headmen count at 70, for this statistic, see Letter from Superintendent Stuart, 10/23/1763, Fort Augusta, "Journal of the Proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta," in CO5/65.

⁴⁴ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 63. See also, Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 385.

Cusseta, followed by Sempoyaffi, Togulki, and Telletcher (the White King), all of whom were from the prominent and leading Lower Creek Town of Coweta.⁴⁵

The conference of Augusta opened with several talks from Lower Creek headmen. Telletcher of Coweta made it known that the Lower Creeks were in favor of the new British trading paths to Mobile and Pensacola, having stated that they “shall be kept open to the traders that are peaceable.”⁴⁶ The Young Twin, the late Malatchi’s nephew, appeared to have seconded this motion when he stated that he desired to “hold his hand out to the white people,” in hopes to carry on a peaceful trade alliance as his father did many years ago, along with Captain Aleck, who told Stuart that “the four governors here are all beloved,” and he being “appointed to speak,” declared “half of his body to be English and half Indian,” and although the “talk the governors gave was in writing . . . his heart is the same in inclination.”⁴⁷ It is clear that the Lower Creeks came to Augusta to open the path to Pensacola and Mobile.

The Lower Creek delegation present at Augusta may have been in favor of opening a new trading path, but this decision was not made without reservations. Sempoyaffi, often referred to as “Fool Harry” in British documents, followed Captain Aleck’s talk, and requested British officials acknowledge his presence and concerns: “As

⁴⁵ A Talk to the Indians, 11/5/1763, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65. Togulki is the nephew of Malatchi of Coweta.

⁴⁶ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/7/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

⁴⁷ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/8/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

the governors had heard the rest of his nation, he hoped they would hear him.”

Sempoyaffi was agreeable to trade with Pensacola and Mobile, as long as the traders remained out of the woods, and went “into the towns to trade.”⁴⁸ He also asked that “no rum be sold to the Indians in the woods, because the young people there get drunk,” and as a result “disposed their skins for that commodity [rum]” that they were then “unable to pay their debts to the traders in the nation, which frequently occasioned quarrels and mischief among them.”⁴⁹

The Lower Creeks may have been the first to open the conference at Augusta, but the headman who closed the conference on behalf of the Upper and Lower towns was Emistisiguo.⁵⁰ Emistisiguo and the remaining Upper Creeks present at the conference embraced change with expanding their trade markets to include Pensacola and Mobile. Tallechea, a seasoned warrior from the Ocmulgee Upper Creek town stated, “That no

⁴⁸ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/7/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

⁴⁹ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/7/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

⁵⁰ Ample evidence confirms that Emistisiguo was Mustisikah and was not only present at Augusta but indicates that he even had more to say on the topic of Gulf Coast Trade than the conference report the Treaty of Augusta documented. In fact, both Stuart and Governor Wright recall speaking with Emistisiguo directly in 1763. “I remembered the talk we had together last year at Augusta, and I see that you remember it likewise,” Stuart told Emistisiguo at a conference at Pensacola in November of 1764, Emistisiguo confirmed this statement only a few years later when he assured Stuart that he had “not forgot the good Talks that I and all the headmen heard (of all the different nations) some years ago at Augusta.” Governor James Wright also placed Emistisiguo at the 1763 scene of Augusta when he addressed Emistisiguo and a body of Upper Creeks in Savannah in 1768, with Lachlan McGillivray as interpreter. “I very well remember the Congress at Augusta in November of 1763, at which I presided and had the pleasure of seeing you,” Wright stated, no doubt with the intention to flatter Emistisiguo to begin marking the boundary line of the lands that were ceded at the above conference, which he clearly laid out during the duration of his speech. See, Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, Stuarts Journal, 5/16/1767, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 7; Provincial Council: Talks with Emistisiguo, 9/5/1768, Savannah, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 55.

settlement should be made by the white people at Pensacola, but within the ebbing and flowing of the tide. Mobile to be settled in the same manner. The path shall be kept open to the traders that are peaceable.”⁵¹ It is clear that Tallechea’s words are an echo of Lower Creeks’ Captain Aleck’s and Sempoyaffi’s concerns in regards to newly agreed boundary and ceded lands, but it is also safe to conclude that the “path” he spoke of was a new trade road, from Creek country to Pensacola and Mobile.⁵² “Mustisikah [Emistisiguo]” was reported to have “declared to the same effect” as Tallechea and had “finished the Creek’s talk” for that day.⁵³ Additionally, the last day of the conference, James Colbert, interpreter to Superintendent Stuart, reported to have witnessed Emistisiguo to be engaged in “friendly talks” with Lower Creek headman Fool-Harry of Coweta, as well as two Cherokees, Young-Warrior and Tisowih, and gave beads to each of the Creeks. These beads were white clay symbolizing peace and friendship between the two Nations.⁵⁴

Emistisiguo’s role in facilitating a successful peace between the prominent Creek and Cherokee headmen present at Augusta highlight the amount of diplomatic skill he

⁵¹ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/5/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

⁵² Trade out of Mobile was included in the fourth article of the final copy of the Treaty of Augusta in 1763. See, Articles of the Augusta Treaty, 11/10/1763, Augusta, in *Virginia Treaties*, Vol. 5, 296-298, Mobile being on 298.

⁵³ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/5/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

⁵⁴ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences’ James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/9/1763, Fort Augusta, “Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta,” in CO5/65.

had amassed within Creek society by November 1763. The peace talks between the Creeks and Cherokees that took place at Augusta were a separate, diplomatic affair between the Indian groups, aside from the treaty negotiations with the British. Since the diplomatic meetings on foreign soil and between two polities required a spiritual specialist to establish a sacred atmosphere in order for diplomacy to take place, Emistisiguo's participation was essential. The bestowment of white beads to Emistisiguo and his fellow Creek by Cherokee headman indicates that a peace between the two parties was indeed successful that day, and Emistisiguo, as the leader of the Creek delegation was the individual responsible for creating the opportunity for that peace to take place. His journey to Augusta aided him in gaining access to an esoteric source of power and his ability to transform strangers into kinfolk demonstrated to Creek society he was an individual of great knowledge and mastery of spiritual forces. As a result, Emistisiguo's authority within Creek and Southeastern Indian society had reached new heights by the winter of 1763.⁵⁵

The prospect of Gulf Coast trade was the primary reason why Emistisiguo, Duval's Landlord, Wolf as well as the lesser known members of Emistisiguo's delegation attended the conference at Augusta, and Mortar, Gun Merchant, and Handsome Fellow returned or remained home. The British possession of Pensacola opened up a new trade

⁵⁵ Emistisiguo's rise in diplomatic power resembles that of Taboca, a Choctaw traditional headman and war prophet, who bolstered his authority amongst Southeastern Indian society during the Eighteenth-Century through his command of spiritual power as well. I am indebted to Greg O'Brien's detailed analysis of the life of Taboca throughout his scholarship on the Choctaws, which has enabled me to draw the parallels to Emistisiguo's life. For more information on spiritual specialists, diplomacy, and the example of Taboca, see Greg O'Brien, "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered," 148-173, especially 155-156, 169; Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, "Chapter 4," 50-69, 52-55 and 64 in particular.

path for their Indian allies, which was only 225 miles from the southern-most Upper Creek Towns, whereas the path to Augusta, known as the “Great Old Path” or the “Eastern Path,” was 280 miles away. This new path, which later became known as the “southern path,” was also much easier for traders to travel, lacking the many river crossings, and waterfalls that plagued the Eastern path, as well as the fact that the Alabama River that linked the Upper Creek towns to the Gulf Coast could “be navigated with large boats up to” the southern towns, but no further. The Tallapoosa River, the Alabama’s tributary, was equally challenging for traders to navigate with the southern Creek town of Tuckabatchee being “the farthest any boat or canoe can go up with this river on account of falls which begin at the upper end of the Town.”⁵⁶ Thus the opening of a new southern trading path would decrease the prominence of Northern Upper Creek towns such as Okchai and Okfuskee, while it offered the southernmost Upper Creek towns the opportunity they had been waiting for: to be at the very center of Creek-British trade relations and the growing Trans-Atlantic economy of the American Southeast. [See Figure 2.]

After Emistisiguo closed the Creek talks at Augusta in favor of a new Gulf Coast trade alliance with the British, all five of the Upper Creek headmen present signed the treaty. They supported Emistisiguo’s talk as well as a collective vision of economic growth and prosperity for the towns along the southern part of the Tallapoosa and Coosa River.⁵⁷ Emistisiguo, then, at the Treaty of Augusta in 1763, became the first Upper

⁵⁶ Piker, “White & Clean & Contested,” 317. See all of Joshua Piker’s article for more information on this topic. He is the first historian to point out the significance of the two trade paths.

⁵⁷ For a list of the treaty signers, including the Lower Creeks, see *Augusta Treaty Articles, Virginia Treaties*, Vol. 5, 299.

Creek headman to consent to a new southern trade path and envision the future potential of Gulf Coast Trade for not only Little Tallassee, but the neighboring Upper Creek towns.

Emistisiguo's talk and the relative silence of his fellow Upper Creek headmen during the assembly at Augusta offers significant insight into his evolving status as a warrior and headman to a spokesperson and diplomat. Emistisiguo and Tallechea were the only Upper Creek to speak at the conference, which allows one to assume that the two were the elected spokesmen to speak on behalf of the Upper towns.⁵⁸ Although Captain Alleck (Lower Creek) announced that he was "appointed to speak" not just for the Lower Creeks, but "for the upper, middle, and lower towns," it makes more sense that the Upper Creeks would have their own spokesperson.⁵⁹ The Creeks were far from being united in 1763, the idea of the "Creek Nation" still a misleading assumption on behalf of the Europeans.

Emistisiguo also had experience in diplomatic affairs prior to 1763. As discussed in Chapter I, a council was held in 1761 at Little Tallassee to make forge a peace alliance with the British, where prominent chiefs such as Wolf and even Gun Merchant were present. Emistisiguo's ability to persuade the Upper Creeks to remain at Augusta instead of retreating to Creek country despite the fierce opposition by the respected headmen of

⁵⁸ It is my guess that although British records of the treaty only documented Emistisiguo to have spoken a single line, "having declared to the same effect" (*Virginia Treaties*, 286), the fact that he finished the Creek talks for the conference is an indication that Emistisiguo most likely had much more to say on the topic, but still being a lesser known headman to the British and Colbert (the interpreter), his talk was not thought important enough to record.

⁵⁹ The Talks of the Chickasaw, Upper and Lower Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Catawba Indians to their excellences' James Wright, Arthur Dobbs, Thomas Boone, Francis Fauquier, John Stuart, interpreted by James Colbert, 11/9/1763, Fort Augusta, "Journal of the proceedings of the Southern Congress at Augusta," in CO5/65.

Okchai was a testament of his growing oratory skills. Emistisiguo's and his town's close relationship to traders such as Lachlan McGillivray and the lucrative *Brown and Rae company* were also signs to neighboring Creeks that Emistisiguo possessed savvy business skills and valuable knowledge of Indian trade. The fact that Emistisiguo was also known to be not just a successful warrior, but a war prophet, which only added to his evolving reputation as an individual who possessed and demonstrated control over a variety of traditional spiritual powers.

Emistisiguo Champions Gulf Coast Trade: Talks at Little Tallassee

Emistisiguo continued to advocate for trade with the British at Mobile and Pensacola the following year, and he did so by holding several diplomatic meetings within his own town of Little Tallassee. During one of these assemblies in May of 1764, Emistisiguo informed Superintendent Stuart that he had “used his utmost endeavor” to “adhere strictly to the promise and agreement made at the Congress made at Augusta,” which in this case, happened to be trade with Mobile and Pensacola. Emistisiguo voiced his pleasure to see the vessels at Mobile and Pensacola “going and coming there with goods to supply his Nation” so that his town and “other Indians” will “never want for goods.”⁶⁰ His statement, short and subtle, clearly implies that Emistisiguo supported redirecting Creek trade to the Gulf coast.

Mortar was present during the meeting in April at Little Tallassee, but remained silent. However, Oakchoy King, another headman of Okchai, was eager to make peace

⁶⁰ Oakchoy King was another prominent headman from the Upper Creek town of Okchai. For quotes and a list of headmen, see Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright, 4/10/1764, Little Tallassee, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 216. See also, Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 76-77.

with the British and supported Emistisiguo's ideas to open a new trade path. "As to the English taking possession of Mobile and the former Spanish settlements we are satisfied, proving they keep within the Bounds the French and Spaniards did," Oakchoy King proclaimed to all headmen and British officials present at Little Tallassee. As long as the British respected Creek boundaries, he was willing to concede the town's former monopoly over British trade.⁶¹ The talk of Oakchoy King proved that Emistisiguo's vision of Gulf Coast trade had begun to appeal to even dissenting Northern Upper Creek towns such as Okchai, and therefore was a testament to both the benefits of multiple trading paths as well as Emistisiguo's power of persuasion.

In early July, a second meeting was held at Little Tallassee, where Mortar took a lukewarm stance regarding a new Anglo-Creek trade based out of the Gulf Coast. Mortar proclaimed that he preferred the Great Old Path and he would "not suffer any horses with goods either from Pensacola or Mobile to come to his Nation."⁶² Mortar continued: "he desires no settlements to be made on this side of the Alabama River from Mobile," but made a strong point to inform all in attendance at Little Tallassee that "*thou by this* [statement] *he does not Mean that they should Either Quit Mobile or Pensacola*, but keep on the other Side of the River, and Leave this Side for their use." His speech was accompanied with red and white beads that Mortar explained to Stuart he sent to the

⁶¹ Upper Creek "Great Talk" to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright, 4/10/1764, Little Tallassee, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 214. If the British remained within the French and Spanish boundaries, Oakchoy King stated the following in response: "If so we shall be contented, and that we may have Trade as usual." For a list of headmen in attendance, see Upper Creek "Great Talk" to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright, 4/10/1764, Little Tallassee, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 212.

⁶² Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida, Little Tallassee, 7/22/1764, in *GFT*, Vol. 12, 217. Emphasis is mine.

Commander at Pensacola, where he desired the Commander to “throw away the Red” if he was for peace and “return him the white, with a white Flag, that he might shew the same to his Nation and let them know that the *English as well as he was for Peace.*”⁶³

Mortar’s talk at Little Tallassee that July demonstrated a significant shift in the prominent headman’s previous stance on both Gulf Coast trade and possible British alliance. Mortar preferred trade with Augusta for his town of Okchai, but he did not oppose it for the rest of the Upper Creeks. His lukewarm attitude was a dramatic change from his outright refusal to treat with the British at Augusta the year before, which leads one to believe Emistisiguo had convinced the Okchai headman of the benefits of trade from Mobile and Pensacola for all Creeks. Or Mortar himself accepted the new southern trade path as an inevitability. While the reason for the shift in attitude is unknown, Mortar’s talk in July reflected his desire for a peace agreement with the British, and his larger concern about the proposed alliance was not trade but land encroachment. Creek boundaries were to remain in place, just as they had under French and Spanish rule before the end of the French and Indian War.

During another assembly at Little Tallassee that month, Emistisiguo strengthened his authority by serving as a diplomatic liaison for Superintendent Stuart and Mortar of Okchai. Evidence of this role can be seen where Emistisiguo reminded Stuart that “when he was at Augusta you desired him to tell all the Talks to Mortar, and get him Mortar to Send down a Talk which he has done.” Afterwards, Mortar delivered a second talk,

⁶³Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida, Little Tallassee, 7/22/1764, in *GFT*, Vol. 12, 218. Emphasis is mine.

where Emistisiguo apprised Stuart of Mortar's new pro-British stance: "Mortar has given his promise through the whole nation that a firm Peace should be maintained for four years."⁶⁴ Emistisiguo was not only successful in procuring a talk from Mortar as requested by Stuart, but he also persuaded the most prominent Upper Creek warrior to commit to a peace alliance with the British for the first time since before the Seven Years War. The fact that Stuart selected Emistisiguo to be his chosen liaison also serves as a testament to his growing reputation amongst the British as a valuable ally and persuasive individual. Mortar's trust in Emistisiguo was equally impressive, and an indicator that the Little Tallassee headman and warrior by the summer of 1764 had become a very important person not only among the Upper Creeks, but to high ranking British officials as well.

Little Tallassee rose in status along with its headman, Emistisiguo. All peace overtures shortly before and after the Treaty of Augusta took place at Little Tallassee. In former years, leading Upper Creek towns such as Okfuskee, Tallassee, or in most cases, Tuckabatchee, would be the elected location to conduct Creek diplomacy. By 1761 all discussions in regards to trade or peace with the British began to take place at Little Tallassee. As a successful diplomat, warrior, and a man of inherent spiritual power, Emistisiguo served multiple needs of Creek culture as a traditional headman. His presence at Little Tallassee created the necessary sacred ceremonial setting for diplomatic meetings between other Indian groups or Euro-Americans. Little Tallassee was no longer

⁶⁴ Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida, Little Tallassee, 7/22/1764, in GFT, Vol. 12, 218. I describe Emistisiguo as a diplomat. Juricek described him as a "go between." See, Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 75.

just a place to conduct trade or a Creek town of little significance, it was the favorite locale for Upper Creek-Anglo relations by the mid- eighteenth century.

The Congress at Pensacola

In 1765, the British organized a congress with the Creeks to be held at Pensacola to ratify a peace treaty with the Creeks to officially secure a Gulf Coast trade with the Upper Creeks. It was during this conference that Mortar finally abandoned his attachment to the “Great Old Path,” and fully endorsed Emistisiguo’s vision to rewrite the map of Creek trade to include Pensacola and Mobile.⁶⁵ While the meeting at Little Tallassee in 1761 might have been Emistisiguo’s debut to Creek politics and the historical stage, it was the Congress at Pensacola that allowed him to pursue his agenda for the Upper Creeks to embrace Gulf Coast Trade, as well as to convince his fellow Upper Creeks to do the same.⁶⁶

During the Congress of Pensacola, both Emistisiguo and Mortar confirmed their new leadership roles adopted the year before during the April and July talks at Little Tallassee. Mortar introduced himself as a peace chief by declaring himself to be “a King” and “the voice of my People,” and Emistisiguo announced his identity as “a warrior” and that Mortar was indeed his “king.” By this time Emistisiguo was indeed Mortar’s “head warrior” on behalf of all Upper Creeks and continued to act as a diplomatic liaison and spokesperson on his and British behalf during all Upper Creek matters of trade and peace

⁶⁵ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 76.

⁶⁶ John Juricek contends Emistisiguo’s debut to the historical stage to be 1763. See, Juricek *Endgame for Empire*, 95. I suggest that 1761 is perhaps a more fitting date.

brokerage.⁶⁷ It is clear, from the proceedings of the treaty, both Emistisiguo and Mortar embraced their roles as “peace” and “war” headmen, but on equal footing. Emistisiguo did not surpass Mortar as the primary war leader of the Upper Creeks, but during this congress his words were on equal footing to that of Mortar’s as the Upper Creek’s chosen war headman. Mortar and Emistisiguo acted as “dual headmen” during the Congress of Pensacola, and both Creek and British parties officially signed the treaty on May 28, 1765.⁶⁸ His ascension meant that in a period of four years, Emistisiguo had climbed the ranks of Upper Creek society from warrior to head warrior and lastly a warrior-diplomat.

The actions of Emistisiguo and Mortar during the assembly at Pensacola offer incredible insight into the complexities of their newly acquired leadership and dualistic roles. As custom, during the proceedings before the treaty, Mortar was “first introduced to the Governor and Superintendent,” followed by the rest of the warriors, “all seated in order, and after smoking as customary on such occasions.”⁶⁹ Yet, instead of speaking first, Mortar yielded the floor to Emistisiguo.⁷⁰ Emistisiguo rose and spoke as follows: “I remember what was said at the late congress at Augusta, all which I faithfully recounted on my return home to my Nation and in compliance where with I continue to hold the English fast by the hand.”⁷¹ The mention of Augusta was in regard to the Gulf coast

⁶⁷ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks, 5/26-28/1765, Pensacola, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 261-263. Quotes taken from 262.

⁶⁸ On the concept of “dual headmen” see Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 76; *GFT*, Vol. 12, 541n98. The dualism makes even more sense when one considers that Emistisiguo was a Tallapoosa and Mortar was an Abeika, and thus showing a sign of unity between the Upper Creeks.

⁶⁹ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, 256.

⁷⁰ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 262.

⁷¹ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 262.

trade, and the gesture to hold the English by the hand, a common phrase used to by the Creeks to offer friendship. Emistisiguo elaborated on this desire for peace through a series of metaphors. “I observe that amongst the white people friendship is compared to a chain which links people together,” he said. “In our Nation friendship is compared to a grape vine which though slender and weak when young, grows stronger as it grows older.” Thus, Emistisiguo hoped that “friendship and harmony” would “daily increase” between “the Great King’s White and Red Children,” and as they grow “their hearts, like the tendrils of the vine” overtime become “strong, united, and knit together.”⁷²

Emistisiguo’s opening words at Pensacola provide a clear example of his new role as a warrior-diplomat.

After Emistisiguo declared that he had “nothing more to say at present,” Mortar then rose and fully adopted his role as headman for peace, not war, by the presenting “a pair of “white wings” to the Governor, Superintendent Stuart, as well as the rest of His majesty’s council for the Province of West Florida.”⁷³ “These white wings are emblems of peace,” Mortar said, “untainted and spotless” and a mark of his own “good and friendly intentions.”⁷⁴ In addition to these peace offerings, Mortar also instructed his warriors to strip themselves of all their “warlike implements,” which were “now buried in oblivion.”⁷⁵

⁷² Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 262.

⁷³ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 257.

⁷⁴ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 262.

⁷⁵ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 262.

After making his desire for peace known, Mortar then addressed the second treaty topic; Gulf coast trade. “I am determined that the Path shall not only be made white and straight here but everywhere,” Mortar stated. He declared that “in order preserve peace and good order,” a white path and friendship between the English was necessary.⁷⁶ Mortar presented a “belt of wampum,” to the Governor of East Florida, which Stuart had noticed, “he had kept in his hands all the time he was speaking.”⁷⁷ Afterward, both Mortar and Emistisiguo received a “string of white beads” from the Superintendent, and the talks for that day came to a close.⁷⁸ By the time of the meeting in 1765, it is clear that Mortar had a change of heart in his decision towards the Gulf Coast Trade, likely due to the influence of Emistisiguo. Importantly, with Emistisiguo leading the proceedings, the Creeks were formalizing the process of turning Pensacola into an extension of their trading operations.

The following day, Mortar, who had just declared himself to be the “king” of his Nation, once again elected Emistisiguo to speak first on his behalf and the rest of the Upper Creek Nation. It was during this talk and the many more to follow, that, when carefully analyzed, one can see the talent Emistisiguo possessed for translating Creek customs into words and metaphors that the English could understand. For example, after Emistisiguo presented Governor Johnston and Stuart with an “eagles tail,” he explained that it was “custom” of his country to do so. The eagle’s tail “spreads like a sheet of

⁷⁶ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 262-263.

⁷⁷ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 263.

⁷⁸ Congress at Pensacola with the Upper and Lower Creeks: Proceedings Before the Treaty, 5/26/1765, in Juricek, *GFT*, Vol.12, 263.

paper,” Emistisiguo told the English. Although the “three parts of my Nation here” cannot speak, Emistisiguo continued, “they have heard your talks,” which “like the eagles tail” is “white, and covers us all over.”⁷⁹ Granted, Emistisiguo’s words are subject to interpretation. Nevertheless, his analogy, of an eagle’s tail to a piece of paper, suggests Emistisiguo had learned the importance of writing things down in English culture, and desired that Creek oral customs be known to have the same weight and worth. The headman conveyed to the British that their paper treaty had the same meaning of peace as the Creek’s eagle feathers signified.

It is through these diplomatic and newfound oratory skills that a new, evolving relationship between Mortar and Emistisiguo is made visible, as well as Emistisiguo’s own priority to assert his own identity and value apart from Mortar. In one of his first talks during the Pensacola conference of 1765, Emistisiguo stated the following:

I have observed that the Admiral, whom I look upon as a warrior of the Great Kings, has spoke before the Governor, who is the king on this land, and *as I am a Warrior* in my nation as the Admiral is in yours, I will follow his example and will reply before my King Mortar.⁸⁰

By drawing a comparison between the admiral and himself, Emistisiguo not only displayed his ability to dismantle cultural misunderstandings of power, but also identify himself as an important individual in front of the English Superintendent, the Governor of East Florida, and his fellow Creeks. Emistisiguo kept this particular talk short, noting at

⁷⁹ Congress at Pensacola, *MPAED*, 1: 201.

⁸⁰ Congress at Pensacola, *MPAED*, 1: 198.

the time he had “nothing more to say at present,” which suggests that he was aware of his audience and the message he intended to convey.⁸¹

After the Treaty at Pensacola was signed, Superintendent Stuart held a “medal ceremony,” where select headmen were awarded by the British with both a physical medal and title of “great medal chief” or “small medal chief.”⁸² These medals, for British purposes, were visible markers of status. They were not used by Europeans typically to create leaders, but award those who already established an important and chiefly role. The French were the first to bestow these medals of rank to the Southeastern Indians, the British borrowed the idea.⁸³ Indians that were given medals were also given commissions and were to act as diplomatic liaisons for the British when called upon. Among the great medal recipients, were Mortar, Emistisiguo, the Gun Merchant, and Duvall’s Landlord, all of whom were Upper Creek headmen. The small medal recipients were Topalga, the White Lieutenant, and the Beaver Tooth King from Lower Creek towns.⁸⁴

The Creeks placed an incredible amount of significance on the medals that were given to them by both the French and the British. Access to foreign prestige items and monopolization of trade, as well as the ability to redistribute these goods had long been associated with elite status amongst the Creeks and Southeastern Indians in general. Access to European wares demonstrated a mastery of both diplomacy and trade, which required one to possess the ability to not only step outside the bounds of Creek society,

⁸¹ Congress at Pensacola, *MPAED*, 1: 198.

⁸² I use the term headman, but chief is equivalent. So is the Muskogean term Mico.

⁸³ Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750: 1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska press, 2002) 79.

⁸⁴ Congress at Pensacola, *MPAED*, 1: 210.

but “demanded the expertise of political-religious specialists,” or one who could “manipulate spiritual forces” and therefore have control over the objects or knowledge gained.⁸⁵ The title of great medal chief had two important meanings within eighteenth-century Creek society. First, it was a visible material display of rank and status. Second, it demonstrated that rank or status to be a result of one’s ability to master spiritual power in both diplomacy and trade. Emistisiguo, by 1765, was not only a great medal chief and a facilitator of Gulf Coast Trade, but also a war prophet and warrior-diplomat. According to Creek standards, he was a man who not only possessed great spiritual power but commanded it.

Much of Emistisiguo’s success can be attributed to his own talents and determination to climb the social ranks of Creek society. The foundation of that success was Little Tallassee. In the aftermath of the French and Indian War, all Creek towns and their corresponding headmen were challenged to reinvent politics of trade and diplomacy. Under the leadership of Emistisiguo, the town of Little Tallassee transformed this challenge into an opportunity, and as early as the conference of Augusta set out to form an alliance with the British at Pensacola and Mobile. This Gulf Coast trade brought Little Tallassee into a regional center of social, cultural, and economic exchange during the second half of the eighteenth century, and a much larger and growing Trans-Atlantic economy.

⁸⁵ Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 71 and 77. O’Brien points out that the Choctaw Indians called these medals *tali hullo* or sacred stones. The word for a metal stone in Creek was *cvto*. The suffixes *naphvtke* (silver) *naplane* (gold) added on occasion. See Martin, 19.

Land Encroachment and Violence: Alliances Tested

While peace was being restored between the Creeks and British between 1763 and 1765, hostilities between British settlers, traders, and neighboring Southeastern Indians were beginning to reach a boiling point. For example, in December of 1764 “an Indian of note belonging to the Lower Cherokee Towns” was out hunting when he was “surprised in his Camp by a Justice of Peace with an armed Possee and detained many days, bound with ropes like A Felon.” Just a few months before this unwarranted bloody affair, a “party of Overhill Cherokees having gone into the back Settlements of Virginia, with friendly Intentions were set upon by the Inhabitants.” According to Stuart, “five of them were murdered, and those who returned to their Nation Several died of their wounds.” Stuart admitted that a “succession of such events greatly enraged the Indians” but he was more concerned that “Encroachment on their Lands may become very Serious, having roused the attention *of all the Nations.*”⁸⁶

Stuart’s concerns were not unfounded. Only two months after the Treaty of Pensacola, news of the slain innocent Cherokees and invasion of their hunting grounds had reached Mortar. Stuart reported, “In a message which I received of late from Mortar he upbraids me of having a double Tongue, for Says he, while you are making things Straight in one Corner, your people are killing the red men and Stealing their land in another.” Mortar added that, “it was time for the red people to look about them and

⁸⁶ Superintendent Stuart to the Earl of Halifax, on Talks with Mortar, 8/24/1765, Charlestown, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 280-281. My emphasis.

prepare for their defense,” which was quite an ominous threat from a headman who had just promised peace at the Pensacola Congress.⁸⁷

The fact that Mortar had such hostile words for British Superintendent Stuart shortly after the meeting at Pensacola was not surprising. Land encroachment had been a legitimate concern of Mortar since the British obtained the former French and Spanish territories. By the 1750s and 1760s, Mortar of Okchai along with his brother in law, Gun Merchant, were actively pursuing a multi-tribal resistance movement against British encroachment. Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws held several conferences throughout this time period in order to keep the peace between the Indian groups and work towards a much larger, collective goal of raising anti-British sentiment to protect Native land.⁸⁸ Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that Mortar had a number of family members living in the Cherokee Nation in 1765. His brother-in-law had married a Cherokee woman and chose to reside within the Cherokee Nation along with his wife and several children. The Cherokees were also the Upper Creek’s closest neighbors and the infiltration of South Carolinians onto their land and the murder of innocent Cherokee hunters raised legitimate concerns for the Creek town of Okchai.⁸⁹

Not long after the Cherokee murders, frontier violence spread into Lower Creek country and three white men, William Payne, George Payne, and James Hogg were killed

⁸⁷ Superintendent Stuart to the Earl of Halifax, on Talks with Mortar, 8/24/1765, Charlestown, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 280-281.

⁸⁸ For more information on Mortar’s role in a multi-tribal resistance movement against the British, see Greg O’Brien, “Quieting the Ghosts: How the Chickasaws and the Choctaws Stopped Fighting,” in *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*, eds. Tim Alan Garrison and Greg O’Brien (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 47-69, 51 and 52 in particular.

⁸⁹ Wolf’s Reply to Messages from Governors Wright and Bull, 5/17/1761, Little Tallassee, *GT*, Vol. 11, 244.

by a party of Lower Creeks and Limpiki, the son of a prominent headmen of the Lower Creek town of Coweta known as Sempyaffi. Governor Wright reported the murders took place in late December of 1765 and noted that the Lower Creek war party also stole Payne and Hogg's "horses, guns, and other belongings" and carried them "into Cherokee Country" after the crime was committed. Governor Wright demanded "satisfaction" for the three men and proclaimed that "if any Indian should thereafter murder or kill a White man, the offender should without any delay excuse or pretense whatever, be Immediately put to death in a Public manner in the presence of at least 2 of the English who may be in the Neighborhood."⁹⁰ The Payne and Hogg murders coupled with the slaying of innocent Cherokee served as two examples of the escalation of frontier violence by 1765 included not only the Cherokee and the British, but the Lower Creeks as well. Thus, while Mortar's town of Okchai remained uninvolved in the frontier hostilities, his instinct that the Indians needed to be on the "defense" proved to be true. As more and more white bodies filtered beyond the agreed upon boundaries between Indian Country and the British colonies and or newly acquired territories, frontier violence was inevitable.

Only a year later, in May of 1766, Mortar "resigned" his medal and commission bestowed upon him by the British at Pensacola.⁹¹ The medal was reported by William Struthers to have been "at present in Possession of the Headman of Little Tallasey," where Emistisiguo was reported to have returned it to Governor Johnstone at Pensacola.⁹²

⁹⁰ Governor Wright and Superintendent Stuart to Upper Creek Great Medal Chiefs, Protesting Payne-Hogg Murders, 12/27/1765, Savannah, *GFT*, Vol. 12, 17. Juricek notes that the murders occurred in September of 1765, which makes more sense than December. See, Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 108-109.

⁹¹ Answer to His Excellency of Governor George Johnstone's Talk to the Creek Nation delivered by Otis Mico & Other Headmen, 5/15/1766, Okchai, MPAED, Vol. 1., 531.

⁹² William Struthers to Governor Johnstone, 4/10/1766, Mobile, MPAED, 515-517.

The resignation and exchange of Mortar's medal, in many ways, can be seen as a highly symbolic gesture of his choice to step down from his position and reject the British as a peace chief and entrust Emistisiguo with another leadership role. From that moment on Mortar is only documented to have acted as the primary war leader of the Upper Creeks and left peace overtures to prominent warrior-diplomats such as Emistisiguo. It is plausible that Mortar's resignation was less a declaration of war on the British than a resignation as a peace chief and a move to encourage his head warrior (Emistisiguo) to taking on an even more prominent status amongst both Creek and British societies.

The frontier violence between the Creeks and their white neighbors in 1765 was the beginning of a long period of hostility, land encroachment, and bitterness between the two parties. The one element that continued to keep both the Creeks and the British united however, was trade. Emistisiguo continued to promote the benefits of Gulf Coast trade among the Upper Creeks and took it upon himself to ensure that the new path towards Mobile and Pensacola remained open and fruitful for Little Tallassee and all Upper Creek towns well into the 1770s.

Emistisiguo's ability to engineer a new southern trade path based on the Gulf Coast ports redefined Upper Creek trade and diplomacy between the years of 1763 and 1765. Little Tallassee replaced Okfuskee and Okchai's monopoly on Anglo-Creek trade, and along with its powerful connections to *Brown and Rae* developed itself into a thriving place of Trans-Atlantic and Colonial exchange. In addition, as Emistisiguo earned and embraced new leadership roles as a head warrior, spokesman, and diplomatic liaison, the town of Little Tallassee mirrored its headman in advancements. By 1765

Little Tallassee replaced Tuckabatchee as the favored Upper Creek town and sacred space to conduct matters of diplomacy, and was an important place within Creek and British Colonial society during the mid-eighteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

WAR 1765-1776

Over a period of ten years, Emistisiguo faced several obstacles in advancing his agenda to promote Gulf Coast Trade to his fellow Creeks and position Little Tallassee to be at the center of that trade. First there was increased violence along the Georgia / Creek border between Creeks and British settlers. A close second was the inability of Creek headmen to prevent their people from participating in the violence. Third, long standing abuses within the Anglo-Creek trade only further complicated the goal of Emistisiguo and the townspeople of Little Tallassee to find peace within that trade. Finally, the eruption of the Choctaw-Creek war in 1765-1775/76 was Emistisiguo's greatest challenge. Instead of concentrating on issues of Gulf Coast Trade, Creek headmen and warriors channeled their energy towards military prowess and clan (blood) revenge. Instead of abandoning his agenda, Emistisiguo utilized this framework provided by the Choctaw-Creek War to advance and protect Anglo-Creek trade, particularly along the Gulf Coast.

The context of war created a space that allowed Emistisiguo and Little Tallassee to further their claim as the center of Upper Creek society. Emistisiguo's reputation as a successful warrior grew as he led war parties throughout the Choctaw-Creek war, as did his role as a diplomatic liaison on behalf of the Upper Creeks. In addition, Emistisiguo emerged as arguably the first Creek headman to engineer a meeting that united all Creeks

at a single location without European intervention to meet a common goal: protect Anglo-Creek trade. This national Creek conference took place at Little Tallassee in 1774, which not only elevated the town's status amongst its Creek neighbors but its larger place within the Colonial Southeast.

The Beginning of the Choctaw-Creek War

The Creeks and Choctaws shared a mutual history of conflict and violence towards one another. Both groups claimed the hunting grounds along the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers to be their own, and Choctaw villages had been easy targets for Creek slaving and raiding during the latter of the seventeenth century and the first decades of the eighteenth century. The aftermath of the French and Indian war escalated tension between the two Nations. The British had invited the Choctaws to attend the first Treaty of Augusta in 1763, but the Creeks blocked all their headmen from attending, except Red Shoes. In 1765, the British held a separate conference at Mobile with the Choctaws, and promises of guns and ammunition threatened Creek power and leverage over their formerly inadequately supplied, French-allied neighbors.¹ Red Shoes summarized the conflict to Charles Stuart (Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs and nephew to Superintendent John Stuart), at Mobile in July of 1766 as follows, "I do not tell you that I want to go to war; the Creeks are your children as well as we, but you must not let one child kill another nor give the one powder and the other none. It grieves me to see the Creeks come and take away our scalps with impunity."²

¹ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 133-134.

² Red Shoes Talk to the Deputy Superintendent, 7/4/1766, Mobile, *Records of the British Colonial Office, Class Five Files, Westward Expansion, 1700-1783, The Board of Trade, The French and Indian War*, ed.

The catalyst behind this conflict can be attributed to the death of a Choctaw man named Swei Nantla, one of many victims of an endless cycle of aggression between Creek and Choctaw warriors. The Creek war party responsible for Swei Nantla's death placed a "bloody war stick" near the body, which abiding by Creek tradition was an invitation to war.³ The Choctaws answered the Creek's call for war by murdering six Creeks and capturing a woman.⁴ Soon after, in May of 1766, the Choctaws dispatched a war challenge to the Creeks that was addressed to Emistisiguo. The Choctaws reported that they had "lost above twenty men at different times," and planned to "send 100 men to lye between Pensacola and the Upper Creeks," as well as an additional 200 men to specifically destroy the towns of Muccolossus and Puckatalahassee. The Choctaws confidently declared that they would fight the Creeks openly "in the plains and not behind trees like cowards," for they were convinced that the Creeks were solely responsible for the deaths of their loved ones.⁵ Emistisiguo, head warrior of Little Tallassee, accepted the challenge on behalf of the Upper Creeks, and consequently set in motion a decade of inter-tribal warfare.⁶

Randolph Boehm (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983) vol. 67 (Hereafter cited as CO5/vol. number).

³ George Johnstone's Answer to the Talk of the Creeks, 6/9/1766, Pensacola, in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion, 1763-1766*, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Nashville, TN; Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1911), 524 (Hereafter cited as *MPAED*). Johnstone stated that the "murder of Suchee Nathla by the Creeks" was the "reason the Choctaws go to War."

⁴ William Tayler to General Thomas Gage, 6/1/1777, in the *Thomas Gage Papers*, vol. 28 (Hereafter cited as *TGP*, vol. number), William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁵ The Choctaws included in their war challenge that they had reserved 500 men to remain within the Nation to protect women and children. Stephen Forrester to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Upper Creek Acceptance of Choctaw-War Challenge, 5/25/1766, Chister-ca-lusfa, in *Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763-1776*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 12 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ED. Alden t. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002), 296 (hereafter cited as *GFT*).

⁶ Three scholars have examined the multifaceted causes of the Creek-Choctaw War in depth. The first to do so was Kathryn E. Holland Braund, who argues that England's emergence after the French and Indian War

Emistisiguo did not need to deliberate the idea of war with the Choctaws for very long. The peaceful trade alliance that he had negotiated with the British at Pensacola in 1765 was quickly disrupted and in danger of retraction due to escalated violence between Creek warriors, white settlers, and unlicensed traders. Only four months after the congress of Augusta, Governor Johnstone claimed that the Creeks “killed fourteen men in cold Blood” and estimated that “upon an accurate state of facts it appears that not less than one hundred and thirty-eight people have been killed by them [Creeks] since the year 1731.”⁷ These deaths were pardoned by the British, according to Johnstone, but the hostilities continued. In September of 1765, William Payne and James Hogg were killed by an Indian named Limpiki, the son of the well-known Coweta headman Sempoyaffi (alias The Fool Harry). The men had been hunting in Creek territory near the head of Little River, “about seventy miles” from the boundary agreed upon at Augusta in 1763.⁸

as the sole supplier of trade goods prompted Creeks and Choctaws to compete for better prices, access, etc., which eventually erupted into a full-scale war. The second historian to tackle the complexities of the Creek Choctaw War is Greg O’Brien, whose arguments inspired this dissertation. O’Brien agrees with Braund but conducts a closer and much more detailed analysis of Choctaw society during the mid-eighteenth century. As a result, O’Brien draws several conclusions. The first being that Choctaw and Creek elites initiated war with the Creeks in order to restore power that seemed to be falling into the hands of common traders and or young and restless warriors. In addition, O’Brien argues that the Choctaws and Creeks promoted intertribal warfare to redirect violence away from white frontiersman and preserve and renew Anglo trade ties. Last, Steven Peach adds to this historiography by exploring the role that clans and towns played on a non-elite level to cause and perpetuate the Choctaw-Creek War. See the following works by these individuals for further reading on the subject: Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 133-124 and Chapter 7; Greg O’Brien, “Protecting Trade Through War: Choctaw Elites and British Occupation of the Floridas,” in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O’Brien (1999; repr., Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 103-122, and O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), Chapter 3 and 84-85; Steven J. Peach, *The Three Rivers have Talked”: The Creek Indians and Community Politics in the Native South, 1753-1821* PhD. dissertation: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016), 108-111 and Chapter 3.

⁷ Governor Johnstone’s Report, 6/23/1766, Pensacola, *MPAED*, 511.

⁸ Governor Wright to Superintendent Stuart and Upper Creek Great Medal Chiefs, Protesting Payne-Hogg murders. Savannah, 10/27/1765, *GFT*, 17-18. Emistisiguo was included in this letter as one of the Great Medal recipients. William Struthers referred to the victims as “two men and a boy.” See, William Struthers to Governor Johnstone, 4/20/1766, Mobile, *MPAED*, 516.

Outraged, Governor Wright demanded satisfaction, “if any Indian should thereafter murder or kill a white man, the offender should without any delay excuse or pretense whatever be, *immediately put to death.*”⁹ Johnstone heeded a similar warning in regards to trade. In June of 1766, Johnstone warned Emistisiguo: “Peace cannot long be maintained where murders are every Day committed . . . without any provocation on our Side, and without any Satisfaction from you after the most solemn Promises.”¹⁰ Violence continued despite the Governor’s requests. In August of 1766 two more English traders by the names of Goodwin and Davis were killed by the Creeks.¹¹

War with the British was not an option for Emistisiguo, but he could fight an intertribal war with the Choctaw Nation. British trade was too vital to Little Tallassee, especially the potential for economic growth as promotion of high status amongst fellow Creeks that Pensacola and Mobile now offered. By accepting the Choctaw war challenge, Emistisiguo redirected the aggression of Creek youth to Choctaw warriors, away from white traders.¹² Creek warrior and small medal chief of Cusseta, Topoye (alias the Fighter) agreed with Emistisiguo’s plan. In a letter to Charles Stuart in June of 1766, the Fighter reported that “the Choctaws and Creeks are now going to war,” and will “turn the bows and arrows they were preparing against the English on the Choctaw.”¹³ The Fighter

⁹ Governor Wright to Superintendent Stuart and Upper Creek Great Medal Chiefs, Protesting Payne-Hogg murders. Savannah, 10/27/1765, *GFT*, 17-18. The Italics are not mine, but Governor Wright’s own hand and emphasis. Wright also demanded that there be two English witnesses and the death be public. Italics are mine.

¹⁰ Governor Johnstone to the Upper Creeks, Pensacola, 6/9/1766, *GFT*, 298. Johnstone particularly addressed Emistisiguo within his letter.

¹¹ Stuart to ?, Pensacola, 10/1/1766, CO5/67

¹² Greg O’Brien is the first historian to make this argument. I have found it to be the case with Little Tallassee under the leadership of Emistisiguo. See, Greg O’Brien “Protecting Trade through War” in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, ed. O’Brien, Chapter 3, 103-122.

¹³ Topoye alias the Fighter, his Talk to the Deputy Superintendent, 6/25/1766, Mobile, CO5/67.

added that he thought the Creeks who harmed British traders to be “a wild people for thinking any harm against the English, who alone can supply them with everything they wanted,” including “skins” to “cover their wives and children.”¹⁴ Emistisiguo and the Fighter were not alone in their thoughts. Effatiskiniha, also referred to as “Mackay’s Friend,” who claimed to have led the first war party against the Choctaws, told Superintendent David Taitt, years later that he “made war on purpose to keep his young people from falling out with the English,” for “he knows they must be at war with somebody.”¹⁵ Thus, by Creek consensus and under Emistisiguo’s leadership, the Choctaw-Creek war became a means to protect British trade.¹⁶

Satisfaction for Trade

As many Creek warriors set off to wage war against the Choctaws in 1766, Emistisiguo remained at Little Tallassee to answer British demands for satisfaction of the Payne-Hogg and Goodwin-Davies murders. In early October, Emistisiguo and several other headmen from his district among the Creeks assembled a general council to meet with Governor Johnstone to discuss their desire to cooperate with these demands. During this meeting Emistisiguo clarified the situation: “We the chiefs of this District are determined that the offender should die. He was accordingly put to death and shall everyone who is guilty of the like crime.”¹⁷ Conscious of the fact that the Royal

¹⁴ Topoye alias the Fighter, his Talk to the Deputy Superintendent, 6/25/1766, Mobile, CO5/67.

¹⁵ David Taitt’s Journal To and Through the Upper Creek Nation, 1772, in *Travels in the American Colonies*, ed. Newton D. Mereness (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1916), 532-34.

¹⁶ The Choctaw implemented a similar policy. See, Greg O’Brien “Protecting Trade Through War,” in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, ed. O’Brien, Chapter 3.

¹⁷ Tallapoosa Chiefs to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Execution of the murderer of Goodwin and Davies. 10/11/1766, *GFT*, 312-313; A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68. Emistisiguo is referred to as “Mr. Sego” in this document.

Governors required a British witness for proper satisfaction, Emistisiguo added that, “we have shown the deceased offender to a white man,” which he hoped would “clear the blame” from his people as “agreeable to treaty.”¹⁸

Evidence indicates that out of all the Tallapoosa headmen present during the council, Emistisiguo took it upon himself to implement a plan that appeased the British. “I spoke to the Governor as well as to the beloved Men some time ago at Pensacola and promised them if anything disturbed the peace between us I would endeavor to keep the peace,” Emistisiguo related to Johnstone.¹⁹ Emistisiguo then made it known to Johnstone that he would personally see that he and his fellow Creeks intended to keep that promise. Towards the end of the council, he confidently declared: “I am a Head Warrior and I have asserted myself against the late Murderers. Otherwise he would not have been put to Death . . . I hope you will not blame the whole for the misbehavior of that one.”²⁰

Emistisiguo’s determination to pacify the British during the October council was part of a much larger agenda to restore peaceful trade relations. Emistisiguo beseeched Governor Johnstone,

The path between us and Pensacola was Straight & Clear but some of the young men have endeavored to stop it up, but we the Headmen will endeavor to keep it

¹⁸ Tallapoosa Chiefs to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Execution of the murderer of Goodwin and Davies, 10/11/1766, *GFT*, 312-313; A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68. Governor James Wright declared that satisfaction required 2 English witnesses. See also, Governor Wright to Superintendent Stuart and Upper Creek Great Medal Chiefs, Protesting Payne-Hogg murders. Savannah, 10/27/1765, in *GFT*, 17-18. The treaties spoken of were the Treaty of Pensacola and the Treaty of Augusta, 1763 and 1765.

¹⁹ A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68.

²⁰ A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68.

open. The reason of our keeping the Path open is that our Guns may fire and that we may have a free trade to supply ourselves with ammunition and Cloathing.²¹

In light of the Choctaw-Creek war, a steady flow of ammunition was necessary. Clothing would also supplement any shortage that Creek men could not provide while they were at war instead of hunting. Last, Emistisiguo had seen the economic opportunity trade with Pensacola and Mobile offered his own town of Little Tallassee, as he expressed at the 1763 Augusta meeting. Emistisiguo's efforts to appease British demands for satisfaction had one primary motive: to preserve trade with Little Tallassee as the focal point for British-Upper Creek relations and protect his own elevated status as a war leader and diplomat.

Notably, Emistisiguo's cooperation with British demands of satisfaction for the deaths of a few white traders was not a common occurrence. European concepts of justice were starkly at odds with those of the Creeks. European laws stated that the punishment for an individual proven guilty of a murder charge was death. Governor Johnstone could not close the case of the Goodwin-Davies or Payne-Hogg killings until the execution of the guilty party (or parties) was carried out and met the criteria of British satisfaction. Creek views on murder abided by the cultural practice of "clan" or "blood revenge," which stipulated that a Creek warrior not only had the right to kill any person or their relative responsible for the murder of a fellow clan member, but it was their duty to carry out that revenge. If clan revenge was not performed, the soul of the dead Creek kinsman

²¹ A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68; Tallapoosa Chiefs to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Execution of the murderer of Goodwin and Davies, 10/11/1766, *GFT*, 312-313.

and or family member would be suspended on an earthly plane and by Creek tradition prevented from entering the spirit world.²² “Our method of punishing offenders Differs from that of yours,” Emistisiguo stated to Superintendent Stuart on the matter.²³ Furthermore, Creek laws of clan revenge did not find those responsible for the killing of the British traders as guilty of murder. The Goodwin-Davies and Payne-Hogg murders were a necessary cultural act to restore balance to Creek society, not a crime that in British society was punishable by death.

Whether or not Stuart understood the concept of blood revenge, he knew the tradition was nearly impossible to break. Stuart’s comment to General Thomas Gage on the matter supports this claim: “I am told the satisfaction they have given us is very uncommon amongst them.”²⁴ These peace efforts often failed because they were part of a culture that obeyed the dictates of retributive justice despite the efforts of leading headmen trying to negotiate for peace on several occasions. The Creeks were not a static people, nor were they bound to culture that was incapable of change. By 1766, frontier violence fueled by clan revenge threatened Anglo-Creek trade and to protect it, the leading headmen cast clan laws aside. Emistisiguo was one of them, if not the first. His decision to bend to British law for the sake of protecting trade was not only a testament of his unique diplomacy regarding eighteenth century Anglo-Creek relations, but also the

²² For a discussion on clan/blood revenge, see Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 80-82.

²³ Tallapoosa Chiefs to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Execution of the murderer of Goodwin and Davies. 10/11/1766, *GFT*, 12, 312-313; A General Council held of the Chiefs of Fourteen Towns of the Tallipoosas, 10/11/1766, CO5/68

²⁴ Stuart to Gage, 11/20/1766, Pensacola, *TGP*, Vol. 59.

value he and others in Little Tallassee placed on the preservation of Anglo-Creek trading ties.²⁵

The execution of those guilty for the murder of Goodwin and Davies under Emistisiguo's instructions was not enough to satisfy the Royal Governors.²⁶ James Wright insisted that Payne and Hogg be avenged, and that their deaths serve as an example of British law and order.²⁷ In December of 1766, Superintendent Stuart appointed Roderick McIntosh as 'Commissioner to the Creeks,' and issued him the task of venturing into Creek Country to discuss with "Great and Small medal chiefs" the need for satisfaction for the unanswered Payne-Hogg murders.²⁸ Stuart instructed Roderick: "After delivering my talks to the Lower Creeks, you will proceed to Emistisiguo's town of the Little Talasses," and "deliver to him a white wing and some tobacco with a particular talk from me."²⁹ These tokens were to communicate to Emistisiguo that Stuart acknowledged his role in providing satisfaction for the Goodwin and Davies murders, but that he "expects and requires justice be reciprocal" upon all occasions.³⁰ In addition, Roderick was ordered by Stuart to deliver to Emistisiguo and his second man a "string of

²⁵ By 1773, Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee, and several Upper and Lower Creek towns all broke from tradition and cast their clans aside to preserve trade. This is a direct contradiction to historian Steven J. Peach's argument that Creeks could not "escape the tug of war" between town and clan and needed to carry out clan revenge no matter what cost. See, Steven J. Peach, "*The Three Rivers have Talked*, Chapter 3, 107-108.

²⁶ Stuart to McIntosh, 12/19/1766, Charlestown, CO5/68. In this letter, Stuart discusses that satisfaction has been given for the Goodwin and Davies murders, but the need for British law and order are still of the utmost importance.

²⁷ John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville: FL, University of Florida Press, 2015), 113-114. Stuart to Gage, 11/20/1766, Pensacola, *TGP*, Vol. 59.

²⁸ Stuart to McIntosh, 12/19/1766, Charlestown, CO5/68.

²⁹ Stuart to McIntosh, 12/19/1766, Charlestown, CO5/68.

³⁰ Superintendent Stuart to the Upper Creeks with Warning Black Beads, 12/17/1766, Charles Town, *GFT*, 320-321.

white Beads with Seven black beads at the End.” The black beads, Stuart related, “shall be taken off and thrown into the River” only after Emistisiguo provided “every proof in your power of your love for justice.”³¹

Emistisiguo could not provide proof of a crime that his people did not commit. The Payne-Hogg murders took place in the Lower Creek town of Coweta, not Little Tallassee or any other Upper Creek town. In April 1767, Emistisiguo clarified to Stuart that “we [Upper Creeks] look upon the Lower Creeks, to be a different nation from us,” and not he nor any other Upper Creek headmen or warrior had any power to interfere in their affairs. According to Emistisiguo, the Cowetas had no desire to seek out those responsible for the Payne-Hogg murders, or any other killing of a white man. Emistisiguo explained to the British official that

Some time ago, there happened to be two black spots, made by the nation, one by the Cowetas; and the other by our nation. The Great Beloved man then sent a Talk from Charlestown to have the Spots washed white. The Cowetas then threw that Talk away, and still do; but we received it, and we washed our spot white.³²

The only Creeks that could provide satisfaction for the deaths of Payne and Hogg were the headmen of Coweta. By casting Stuart’s talk away, the people of Coweta had spoken; European concepts of justice would carry no meaning in Lower Creek Country.

³¹ Superintendent Stuart to the Upper Creeks, with Warning Black Beads, 12/17/ 1766, Charles Town, *GFT*, 322.

³² Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Replying to his December 17 Talk, 4/20/1767, *GFT*, 335. Stuart did send Coweta a talk in April. See, Talk to Captain Aleck, Talechea, White Coweta King, Sempoyaffee, the Young Lieutenant, and other Chiefs and Warriors of the Lower Creek Nation, 4/1/1767, CO5/68.

Emistisiguo's departure from Creek tradition to accommodate the British notions of crime and punishment throughout the spring of 1767 can be considered an extension of his larger plan to protect trade and place his town at the center of that trade. On April 20, 1767 Emistisiguo had McIntosh deliver a talk to Stuart. The highlight of this talk was that Emistisiguo not only desired that the path "from Charlestown thro this Nation into the Chickasaws should be kept clean and white," but also the path towards the Gulf coast. Emistisiguo elaborated on this point: "It is not the Governor of Carolina only, we have often assured our friendship; but also the several Governors of Georgia, and Pensacola, and through them we assure the subjects of the Great King of our real Love and Friendship."³³ Approximately one month later, Stuart responded to Emistisiguo's talk and sent word to Little Tallassee of what needed to be done in order for both paths to be kept open. Stuart's reply, "I expect from your Headmen and Warriors, that you will Co-Operate with me, that you will keep our young men Orderly; that you will protect the white men in your nation," and last, "procure restitution and justice to all his Majesty's subjects," was nothing new.³⁴

Superintendent Stuart did not have to wait long to see how far Emistisiguo was willing to compromise his own values to keep his investment in British trade alive. In early May 1767, another white man was killed by an Indian in Upper Creek Country. The victim, most likely, was a case of mistaken identity in the ongoing Creek-Choctaw War. According to Emistisiguo, the death was an "unlucky accident" for he had "carried a

³³ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Replying to his December 17 Talk, 4/20/1767, *GFT*, 335.

³⁴ Superintendent Stuart to Emistisiguo and the Upper Creek, 5/10/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 336.

woman and some Choctaw hair with him.”³⁵ The headman was quick to act after he heard the news. During a talk on May 16, Emistisiguo reported to Stuart that he “immediately went up to the Hillibys” where the “man was killed in the woods,” the killing “just done by one of their people.”³⁶ Emistisiguo attested, “My business to the Hillibys was entirely to have this Murderer killed but he had been off to the Mountains five or Six days before I got there; however we are resolved to send some of our best runners after him to have him killed.”³⁷ The possibility that the murderer had fled to the Cherokee Nation was also mentioned during Emistisiguo’s talk, which he assured Stuart would not prevent the Creek effort to kill the perpetrator “as soon as we know of it.”³⁸

Emistisiguo was not alone in his decision to provide satisfaction to the British. Although Stuart had addressed his previous talks and letters to Emistisiguo, the headman did not have the authority to order the execution of a Creeks from other towns; instead, Emistisiguo relied on the support of his town and fellow Upper Creek headmen to support his diplomatic goals. On May 16, 1767, in the presence of The Mortar, Molten, and another Creek referred to as “Old Bob Warrior,” Emistisiguo clarified this fact: “I don’t send this Talk of myself but with the advice and consent of all Headmen in the upper Creeks.” Neothlucco, Second Man of Little Tallassee, confirmed this statement to

³⁵ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 27.

³⁶ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 27.

³⁷ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 27-28.

³⁸ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 28.

be true. “This Talk is not from one Man but from all Headmen and Warriors of the Upper Creeks so it should not be thrown away.”³⁹ Not one headman said otherwise.

Emistisiguo’s talk was a promise to the British that he and the Upper Creeks agreed to capture and put to death the Indian responsible for the recent murder. Suspecting that the perpetrator had fled to Cherokee Country, the talk requested Stuart to “be so good as to send a man up to the Nation [Cherokee] with this talk to all the headmen particularly to the great Warrior of Chote and let them know we shall take it as a great favour and piece of friendship if they will do their Endeavors to have him killed.” Emistisiguo added that he and the Upper Creeks wished that this talk also be sent to “all the white people in that nation and that we shall esteem it a great favour if they will kill him.”⁴⁰

Creeks abided by laws of clan justice and blood revenge. Concepts of punishing an Indian by death for killing a white man was both a foreign concept and a departure from Creek cultural understandings of life and death. The continuous unregulated frontier violence between young Creeks and white settlers threatened to destabilize these established trade relationships as well as the power of respected headmen to control them. During the late 1760s, however, ensuring that access to British trade remained in the hands of elite Creek headmen, such as Emistisiguo, was of utmost importance. The talk delivered by Emistisiguo on May 16, 1767 exemplifies this fact, as well as provides

³⁹ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 28.

⁴⁰ Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Another Murder, 5/16/1767, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 28.

significant insight to the level of trust the Upper Creeks held in Emistisiguo as their chosen diplomatic liaison.

In less than a month following Emistisiguo's talk, another white man was killed in Upper Creek Country in June 1767. A meeting was held at Little Tallassee immediately to discuss the matter and Emistisiguo was "appointed" by the "Upper Towns" to speak on their behalf.⁴¹ According to Emistisiguo, Mortar and several other head warriors were on their way to attend the meeting at Augusta when "a white man fell by the hands of one of our mad young men," which prevented their attendance. They returned "to see Justice done and the Path rendered clear."⁴² As a "testimony of their good intentions," Emistisiguo presented Stuart with a pipe and suggested that they "smoke it together."⁴³ Emistisiguo was given the pipe by the Mortar to hold in his absence, and was to serve as a gesture of peace and confirmation that Mortar and his warriors were determined to provide retribution for the crime committed in their Nation. Adhering to British law to keep trade open was originally Emistisiguo's idea, but by 1767 the headmen and warriors of all the Upper Creek towns trusted his decision and followed his lead. Emistisiguo assured Stuart of his faith in Mortar by referencing the white and black spots that had clouded their former talks: "You shall soon have proof of our Love of Justice and the black at the End of your Talk shall be washed off."⁴⁴

⁴¹ A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 34. The meeting included John Stuart (Superintendent), Mr. Roderick McIntosh (Commissary to the Creek Nation), The Principal Merchants and Traders, as well as the interpreters John Proctor and James Forrest. Emistisiguo was named the Great Medal Chief in attendance.

⁴² A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 34. Mortar is mentioned under the alias of Otis Mico in the document. For the sake of consistency, I refer to him as the Mortar.

⁴³ A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 34.

⁴⁴ A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 36.

Emistisiguo's role as the Upper Creek spokesperson and diplomatic liaison to the British regarding the Goodwin-Davies and Payne-Hogg murders bolstered his authority as one of the Upper Creek's leading headmen and cemented his role as a warrior-diplomat. In addition, Emistisiguo's evolving relationship with Stuart as a diplomatic liaison between the Upper Creeks and the British also served to validate his importance to both the white and Indian world during the mid-eighteenth century. As discussed in Chapter II, successful war leaders often won over the respect of their own people and neighboring towns and were entrusted to take on additional and much larger diplomatic and political responsibilities. By 1766, Emistisiguo had assumed several roles, ranging from war leader, diplomat, cultural broker, and lastly that of pioneer in Gulf Coast trade and innovative Anglo-Creek diplomacy to protect that trade. Superintendent Stuart did not conduct a single affair without a consultation with Emistisiguo, which served as an indication of the Little Tallassee headman's recognized authority in negotiating deals on behalf of the Creeks. Both the Upper Creeks and British officials recognized Emistisiguo as a capable and trustworthy diplomat capable of serving their best interests.

Emistisiguo's achievements in war, trade, and diplomatic relations proved that by the mid-1760s Emistisiguo held significant authority within the Creek society, based upon both Creek defined spiritual power as well as a newer trade-based power.

As the talks regarding the Goodwin-Davies and Payne-Hogg murders ended, Emistisiguo warned Stuart that the retribution the British desired would not be as immediate as Stuart expected. "We are now engaged in War with the Choctaws," Emistisiguo reminded Stuart. "Neither party seems inclined for peace. Each has lost

friends and want revenge . . . we are not as yet tyred of war and do not want to bury the Hatchet so Soon.”⁴⁵ Emistisiguo’s words spoke volumes about the priorities of the Upper Creek Nation. Neither he nor any of his warriors could ignore the cries for blood revenge against the Choctaws that echoed throughout Little Tallassee and Creek Country. That said, there were limits as to how far Emistisiguo and his fellow Upper Creek headmen would compromise their own laws of justice in favor of the British. If they continued to press Upper Creeks for retribution, the British would simply have to wait.

Buzzard Roost and Emistisiguo’s Raid

While Creek warriors carried on their war with the Choctaws during the early winter of 1768, Emistisiguo prepared a different type of battle plan. On February 7, “a gang of Indians 27 in number,” robbed “Bussard Roost,” a “detached village about seventy miles from any town” within Upper Creek Country. The roost was purported to be a popular place for white men to gather and conduct illicit trade.⁴⁶ According to the deposition of William Frazier (a notable Indian trader), Emistisiguo was the mastermind behind the raid. Frazier reported, “The big fellow’s [alias Struthers’] friend at the head of them robbed the store at the Buzzard Roost and carried off everything in it together with the provisions packsaddles and six valuable horses.”⁴⁷ The party also included the Young Lieutenant (Escotchaby) and Fool Harry (Sempoyaffi) of Coweta, who then proceeded to

⁴⁵ A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 36.

⁴⁶ Deposition of William Frazier, 3/16/1768, Georgia. Parish of St. Paul, *GFT*, 41; Commissary McIntosh to Superintendent Stuart on Emistisiguo’s “authorized” raid, 5/29/1768, *GFT*, 44. Mad Dog of the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee also participated in the raid.

⁴⁷ Deposition of William Frazier, 3/16/1768, Georgia. Parish of St. Paul, in *GFT*, 41. Frazier stated that the robbery was committed “on or about the 7th of February.” Big Fellow is also a known alias for Emistisiguo. Similar to Big Man or Big King.

rob “a great amount in leather and goods” from two more stores that same day.⁴⁸ In the deposition, Frazier related that “raw skins” were also amongst the items that Emistisiguo and his party had stolen in large quantity, but not a single drop of blood was shed. His deposition confirmed this fact, saying, “Mr. Dureseau who had the Care of Mr. Galphin’s store at the Buzzard roost was not in the least molested.”⁴⁹

Before Emistisiguo set out for Buzzard Roost, he asked Commissary Robert McIntosh for a “paper” that sanctioned the raid. McIntosh complied with Emistisiguo’s request, and drew up a document authorizing Emistisiguo “to Size upon and take away all the undressed Deer Skins he may find with any White Man or Indian Trading in or at Villages Hunting Grounds or any Part of the Woods.”⁵⁰ The raid ignored the Lower Creek Indians who supported trade at Buzzard Roost and expropriated licensed traders who were members of one of George Galphin’s companies.⁵¹ McIntosh justified his actions with the following response:

I could not help looking upon myself in some degree authorized to give the Paper I did to Emistisiguo, for in that Talk the Indians were told that I had orders to call in all the stragling Traders in the out settlements and as far as lies in my power to remedy the Evils they Complained of.⁵²

⁴⁸ Deposition of William Frazier, 3/16/1768, Georgia. Parish of St. Paul, *GFT*, 41-42. The two addition trade stores belonged to a Mr. Munrow and Stephen Smith.

⁴⁹ Deposition of William Frazier, 3/16/1768, Georgia. Parish of St. Paul, *GFT*, 42.

⁵⁰ Commissary McIntosh to Superintendent Stuart on Emistisiguo’s “authorized” raid, 5/29/1768, in *GFT*, 44-45.

⁵¹ Juricek T Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2015), 123-124.

⁵² Commissary McIntosh to Superintendent Stuart on Emistisiguo’s “authorized” raid, 5/29/1768, in *GFT*, 45. The “talk” he referred to took place at Augusta in May and June of 1767.

Buzzard Roost was an outlying illegal trade center, which is why McIntosh fulfilled Emistisiguo's request.

Emistisiguo's raid was an extension of a much larger, calculated Creek agenda. Since the signing of the Augusta Treaty in 1763, Emistisiguo and the entire Creek Nation had asked the British to remove the illegal traders who had infiltrated Creek Country, as well as lower the price of trade goods.⁵³ The raid at Buzzard Roost was a political statement crafted by Emistisiguo to redirect British attention toward these grievances. The head warrior of Little Tallassee may have placated the British to the best of his ability by procuring satisfaction to protect trade, but he demanded that trade be conducted on Creek terms. These terms included that weapons and ammunition be made available to the Creeks, so they could continue to participate in their fight against the Choctaws.⁵⁴ Illicit trade also threatened profits to be made in Little Tallassee, as well as threatened Emistisiguo and other elite headmen's control over trade. As an illegal and outlying trade center, Buzzard Roost jeopardized the long-term stability of Indian societies dependent on Anglo-Creek trade.

In September 1768, Emistisiguo traveled to Savannah to discuss these terms with Governor James Wright. These terms were the opinion of both the Upper and Lower Creek towns, as Emistisiguo proclaimed the following at the beginning of the Provincial Council: "For his part, what he has to say he is authorized to do by a general Meeting of

⁵³ These complaints resurfaced during the June meeting at Augusta in 1767, where the Mortar asked that prices be "greatly reduced" and Emistisiguo "strenuously insisted in restraining white people from trading in the woods and villages." See A Meeting in Augusta, 6/6/1767, Augusta, *GFT*, 35; Commissary McIntosh to Superintendent Stuart on Emistisiguo's "authorized" raid, 5/29/1768, *GFT*, 44.

⁵⁴ Sempoyaffi and the Young Lieutenant's participation in the robbery at Buzzard Roost demonstrated Lower Creek support in this matter.

headmen of both upper and lower Creeks.”⁵⁵ Emistisiguo continued and informed Wright, “that the Traders are instructed that they shall not take any Raw Skins, yet those Orders are broke through every Day, notwithstanding a Remonstrance was made to the Deputy Superintendent.”⁵⁶ These illicit traders were also carrying “spirituous liquors” into the Nation on a daily basis—a clear violation of the agreement made at Augusta in 1763 that no rum was to be carried into Creek Country.⁵⁷ The consequences of this treaty breach were grave. Emistisiguo lamented to Wright, “The Indians are often induced to part with their skins for rum, which should be laid out in Cloathing and Necessaries for their Families; and they also part with and sell their Horses for rum.”⁵⁸ The root of these grievances was the number of illicit traders that had been steadily infiltrating Creek Country throughout the 1760s. Emistisiguo summarized the situation to Wright at the end of their Council at Savannah: “There is too many Traders and too great a Quantity of Goods in their Nation, more than they can possibly purchase or pay for.”⁵⁹ Emistisiguo and the Upper and Lower Creek headmen he represented agreed that British trade was essential for Creek survival and economic growth; now they needed to decide what price they were willing to pay.⁶⁰

Unregulated British took trade control away from elites within Creek society. More specifically, it enabled any Creek to obtain access to European manufactured goods. New traders also ignored the fact that trade was only to be carried out in

⁵⁵ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 51.

⁵⁶ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 57.

⁵⁷ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 57.

⁵⁸ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 58.

⁵⁹ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 57.

⁶⁰ Provincial Council: Talks With Emistisiguo, 09/3/1768, Savannah, *GFT*, 51.

designated towns, where more established traders (and essentially their creditors) were waiting to supervise all Creek-Anglo transactions.⁶¹ Trade was only legal in established Creek towns with designated headmen, not in the woods or forest places, such as Buzzard Roost. This illegal trade threatened the traditional role of Creek headman to control that trade, as well as their chiefly authority and power they derived from funneling goods into their own hands. Many warriors who had risen from head warrior to diplomat had gained their power and authority from their ability to access and manipulate the Anglo-Creek trade to their advantage. In addition, acquisition of trade goods built reciprocal and obligatory relationships which enhanced the authority of whomever had control over the distribution of trade. More specifically, the power of elite Creek headmen rested on their exclusive ability to distribute trade goods to their towns. The unregulated trade in the 1760s allowed traders to exchange their products with any Indian instead of acting according to Creek tradition and trading according to the terms set by established chiefs.⁶² Thus, Emistisiguo's complaints to Governor Wright during the September council of 1768 was an effort to maintain town-based trade and protect the tradition of chiefly control over Anglo-Creek trade.

Emistisiguo: A Diplomat for Peace

In November of 1768 a party of Choctaws killed several Creeks from Little Tallassee and "carried off five prisoners" before they departed. After the attack, Emistisiguo reported to Superintendent Stuart that he was going to war "immediately in

⁶¹ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 107-108.

⁶² For a discussion on the growth of illegal trade in the 1760s during the Creek-Choctaw war and its disruption of chiefly power, see Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 84-85; "The Conquered Meets the Unconquered," in *Pre-Choctaw History*, ed. O'Brien, 151.

pursuit of them.”⁶³ During a meeting at Fort Augusta on November 12, Neothlucco (Second Man) confirmed Emistisiguo’s accusations: “The Choctaw’s sent a sharp Hatchet into our town, they burnt Puckatalahassee, killed several of our own people.” Neothlucco then asked if Emistisiguo as well as the rest of the Upper Creek Nation’s headmen and warriors could be pardoned for not attending the conference. “We cannot come to see our Father. We must pursue our Enemies,” the Second Man declared.⁶⁴

Before ending his talk, the Second Man relayed a request from Emistisiguo to John Stuart asking if the British would cut off trade with the Choctaw Nation entirely. The reality that the Choctaws continued to receive guns and ammunition from the British as they had at Tombecby, Pensacola, and Mobile in 1767 had unsettled the Creeks. If trade could not be cut off entirely, the Second Man communicated that Emistisiguo and the Upper Creek headmen requested “supplies of ammunition to the Choctaw” at the very least, be discontinued.⁶⁵ However, the British supported the Creek-Choctaw war, for it was in the best interest of the Crown if the Southeastern Indians were at war with one other rather than their white neighbors.⁶⁶ Deputy Charles Stuart denied Emistisiguo’s request:

The Great King was quiet when he heard that his red Children Spilt each other’s blood, yet he had not directed me to take part in their quarrels, or to interfere any

⁶³ Copy of a Letter to His Excellency Governor Wright from John Stuart Esq, 11/02/1768, Augusta, CO5/73.

⁶⁴ A Congress of the Principal Chiefs & Warriors of the Creek Nation, 11/12/1768, Fort Augusta, CO5/73.

⁶⁵ A Congress of the Principal Chiefs & Warriors of the Creek Nation, 11/12/1768, Fort Augusta, CO5/73.

⁶⁶ Greg O’Brien, “Protecting Trade Through War,” 106. British support of the Creek-Choctaw War was so great that many scholars attribute British officials to be the war’s sole instigators. For a comprehensive list of scholars and works that make this claim, see 177, note 15.

otherwise, than by interposing my mediation, and good offices, to bring about a reconciliation, when the parties at war should desire it.⁶⁷

The war between the Creeks and Choctaws continued.

By the spring of 1770, both the Creeks and Choctaws attempted to put down their war clubs. After five long years of conflict, peace was desired by both parties. On June 12, Deputy Charles Stuart reported to Stuart that peace overtures had begun and “after repeated promises and tokens of friendship interchanged on both sides,” he observed peace to be “firmly established.”⁶⁸ In fact, Charles Stuart assured the Superintendent that the Choctaws were “so confident” that peace was amongst them at last “they buried all their war sticks and clubs.”⁶⁹ The deputy spoke too soon. Shortly after the tokens of friendship were exchanged, four Creeks out hunting were killed by a party of Choctaws. The deputy received information that the Choctaws had also taken a woman prisoner who happened to be the niece of Mingo Houma, Great Medal chief of Little Muccolossus. The attack and kidnapping of a Great Medal Chief’s niece was a strategic choice by the Choctaws, and as a result abruptly put an end to all peace efforts. The misfortune Stuart concluded had “rubbed up old sores” and “left them in doubt what to do.”⁷⁰

Deputy Stuart, however, was in luck. Less than a week later Emistisiguo arrived at Pensacola. Charles Stuart had anticipated Emistisiguo’s arrival and expected that he would have the power and authority among the Creeks to quickly repair the thwarted peace plan. “I expect here this day or tomorrow, Emistisiguo, who will I hope put all

⁶⁷ A Congress of the Principal Chiefs & Warriors of the Creek Nation, 11/12/1768, Fort Augusta, CO5/73.

⁶⁸ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/12/1770, Pensacola, CO5/71, frame 284.

⁶⁹ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/12/1770, Pensacola, CO5/71, frame 284.

⁷⁰ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/12/1770, Pensacola, CO5/71, frame 284.

Right,” Stuart commented on the subject. Emistisiguo did not disappoint and upon his arrival immediately initiated the first of a long series of peace overtures to the Choctaw Nation on behalf of Little Tallassee and the majority of the Upper Creek towns.⁷¹ Earlier that month Emistisiguo had been appointed by his fellow Creeks to serve as their “principle [principal] speaker” in all Creek-Choctaw negotiations.⁷² This appointment along with the accountability that Deputy Stuart placed upon Emistisiguo in order to restore peace is a testament to the high level of authority Emistisiguo had achieved.

According to Deputy Stuart, Emistisiguo presented him with “two white strings and some tobacco” which he then instructed Stuart to deliver to the Choctaw “as the last token of friendship to wipe away all bad talks.” The delivery was to be accompanied by two white wings, one from Mortar and the other Emistisiguo, along with the request that several Choctaw headmen be sent “into their towns” to prove that Emistisiguo’s words were true and that no Choctaw would be harmed.⁷³

Not all Creek warriors shared Emistisiguo and the Mortar’s desire for peace. In September 1770, Emistisiguo had received word that his peace talks were “thrown away” and that the Choctaws had no intention of putting down their war clubs. There were several Lower Creeks who had yet to participate in the war against the Choctaws and refused to miss the chance to earn respect and recognition through battle.⁷⁴ According to Emistisiguo, Gun Merchant of Okchai had heard a rumor that there “was no Appearance

⁷¹ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/12/1770, Pensacola, CO5/71, frame 284.

⁷² Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 6/17/1770, Pensacola, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office Series)* (hereafter cited as *DAR*), ed. K.G. Davies (Great Britain: Colonial Office, 1972-1981), 2:109.

⁷³ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/17/1770, Pensacola, CO5/72.

⁷⁴ Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 06/12/1770, Pensacola, CO5/71, frame 211.

of Peace but War as the Choctaws were coming in great armies against them,” this intelligence he imagined “made the lower towns go to war,” and consequently caused the Choctaws to cast his peace talks aside.⁷⁵ During a talk in late September of that year, Emistisiguo informed Charles Stuart that a group of white men with packhorses traveling from Pensacola “heard of six Choctaws being killed some where about Mobile and one wounded.” Emistisiguo admitted, “If that is true I cannot blame the Choctaws.”⁷⁶ Given this information, it was quite clear that individual factions of both Creeks and Choctaws had their own reasons to decline Emistisiguo’s peace overture.

Emistisiguo was determined to save the peace promises. In December of 1770 Emistisiguo asked Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart to dispatch a “belt of whampum” to the Choctaws to communicate this desire.⁷⁷ Wampum are small beads that were traditionally extracted from various types of seashells. These beads were first used by the Algonquian and Iroquois Nation in the Northeast, and traditionally served as mnemonic devices during acts of diplomacy. The beads varied in color and size and were arranged in a precise manner to convey a message to the recipient from the speaker. Wampum belts could therefore be read like a text, each bead representing the equivalent of an alphabetical letter.⁷⁸ By the middle of the eighteenth century, Creek Indians began to create wampum belts of their own, but used European ceramic beads rather than

⁷⁵ Abstract of a talk from the Creeks to Charles Stuart by Emistisiguo, 09/?/1770, CO5/72; Emistisiguo stated in this talk that he believed Nicholas Black, the Interpreter, to be at fault for the miscommunication and therefore had made he and Charles Stuart appear to be “liars.” See also, Upper Creeks to Charles Stuart- Speak Emistisiguo, Late September of 1770, *GFT*, 372.

⁷⁶ Upper Creeks to Charles Stuart- Speak Emistisiguo, Late September of 1770, *GFT*, 372.

⁷⁷ A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, in CO5/72.

⁷⁸ Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 47.

shell.⁷⁹ The “belt of whampum” that Emistisiguo asked Deputy Stuart to deliver was an expression of the Creek’s desire for a long lasting peace.

Evidence to support this claim can be seen in Emistisiguo’s elaborate description of the wampum belt he entrusted Deputy Stuart to deliver to the Choctaw from the Upper Creeks in December of 1770. Emistisiguo explained to Stuart that the beads on the belt were “all one as a letter in our way,” and that he looked upon Stuart “to be a brother and friend” whom he trusted to communicate its meaning.⁸⁰ According to Emistisiguo, the “black ring” on the end of the belt “resembled the Whole Creek Nation,” but the color black was chosen specifically to represent the number of deaths that the Tallapoosa and Abihka Creeks had suffered at the hands of the Choctaw throughout the course of the war.⁸¹ At the opposite end of the belt, a “white bead” was woven into the belt to express Creek desires to make peace with the Western Division Choctaw town of Congeetoo.⁸² Emistisiguo explained to Stuart, “The White Bead to the one End he reckons to be a clear path to Cungitio.” Lastly, there was a “strap” in the middle of the belt; its purpose to symbolize the joining of the two Nations in a “broad” and “clear path.” At the strap’s center was a collection of beads that represented Emistisiguo, the principal speaker and

⁷⁹ James Adair, *The history of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 201-201, 504n169. Adair states that beads replaced conch shells as the primary medium for wampum by the mid eighteenth century.

⁸⁰ A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, in CO5/72.

⁸¹ Emistisiguo to Charles Stuart, Explaining Accompanying Peace Belt to the Choctaws, 12/13/1770, in *GFT*, 373; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, in CO5/72. Black is the color that represents death within Creek society.

⁸² Cungitio is another spelling for the town of Congeetoo. This was the home of the prominent Choctaw warrior and headmen Taboca. See Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 21- 22.

diplomat of the Upper Creeks, taking “Holaghtaobaye” (Choctaw headman) by the hand, with whom he hoped would “meet him at Mobile” to establish a permanent peace.⁸³

Although Emistisiguo was at the belt’s center, the beads were fashioned to represent many other Upper Creeks towns and their collective plans for peace. Emistisiguo explained to Stuart that “the white beads round each shall be a sign of peace from the trading town of the nation,” and when they (The Choctaw) “see you will know whom it belongs.”⁸⁴ This “trading town” (Little Tallassee) was accompanied by a cluster of “four towns,” all located within close proximity to the “Alabama Fort” (Fort Toulouse).⁸⁵ Headmen Gun Merchant and Mortar of Okchai both interpreted smaller portions of the wampum belt to Deputy Stuart, along with their own tokens of peace which included tobacco and beads enclosed in a “blue bag.”⁸⁶ Emistisiguo, as principal speaker of the Upper Creek peace delegation, clarified what was to be done with these tokens,

The Old Gun Merchant desires that Mr. Stuart will smook out of this Pouch and the Choctaws the same. And inform them alto an ugly one and an ugly man sent it yet the Tobacco in it is good and so is his Heart. And alto Old yet if they keep his Pouch he will see them at Mobbille and smook with them in Friendship.⁸⁷

⁸³ Emistisiguo to Charles Stuart, undated, enclosed in John Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98. A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72. Holahataobaye was most likely the Choctaw headmen named Taboca, who resided at Congeetoo.

⁸⁴ “A Peace Talk The Creeks to the Choctaws,” enclosed in John Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁸⁵ Emistisiguo to Charles Stuart, undated, enclosed in John Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁸⁶ Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, Explaining Peace Tokens, Enclosed in Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, in *GFT*, 373-374; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁸⁷ Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, Explaining Peace Tokens, Enclosed in Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, in *GFT*, 375; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

Given this request, the headmen of Okchai had clearly agreed that they longed to put down their guns and war clubs.

Okfuskee, although not part of the “four town” cluster, was another Upper Creek town that desired peace. Handsome Fellow, leading headman of Okfuskee, directed that a “long string of Barley Corn Beads” be delivered alongside the wampum belt and other secondary peace tokens.⁸⁸ These beads represented the “farthest part” of the Upper Creek Nation and were “to be sent to the farthest part” of the Choctaw. The beads were “long and white,” just as Handsome Fellow’s intention that the two Nations put an end to war and begin a “path” to perpetual harmony.⁸⁹

Following Handsome Fellow’s requests, Emistisiguo presented Stuart with a “white wing” and a “cane/bone,” which he hoped the Choctaw would “hold fast always as a token of friendship” on behalf of all the Upper Creek towns.⁹⁰ In addition, Emistisiguo personally forwarded a “long” eagle wing to represent “all the warriors in the [Creek] Nation,” and their commitment to peace. This long wing was accompanied by a few “white beads” with “double strands,” which if accepted by the Choctaws and not “thrown away” as the year before, “nothing but love and friendship” would exist between the two Nations.⁹¹ Finally, Emistisiguo advanced a pipe, tobacco, and his own personal

⁸⁸ Handsome Fellow is documented as “Handsome man (Fellow) in Emistisiguo’s talk. Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, Explaining Peace Tokens, Enclosed in Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, *GFT*, 375; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁸⁹ Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, Explaining Peace Tokens, Enclosed in Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, *GFT*, 375; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁹⁰ A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

⁹¹ A Peace Talk The Creeks to the Choctaws,” enclosed in John Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; A Talk to Charles Stuart from Emistisiguo, 12/2/1770, CO5/72.

“pouch” to the Choctaw headmen, which was to be the “last token” of peace sent before the desired meeting “on the fifth moon” at Mobile.⁹²

All these tokens symbolized the sincerity of the select Upper Creek towns and their desire for reconciliation Autumn of 1770. “I have been thinking of this long time,” Emistisiguo told Deputy Stuart after handing over the tokens. “All I want is peace that our Children may frequent the woods without dread or Fear.”⁹³ As the appointed principal speaker and diplomatic liaison between the Choctaw and Upper Creeks, Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee was determined to establish that peace. During the mid to late eighteenth century, diplomacy was just as important a skill as warfare. By 1770, Emistisiguo had proved himself capable of both.

Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart delivered the Upper Creek peace tokens to the Choctaws as promised, but the outcome did not go as they had hoped. On December 12, Stuart reported that he had “not yet Received any Answer to the Talks I sent into the nation.” The silence he imagined to be a response to traveling news that “a large party of Red men came over across this bay last Friday or five days ago to War against the Choctaws.” The identity of this war party most likely belonged to the “Cusadoes or the Cousa King,” a pro-war faction of the Lower Creeks.⁹⁴ By the time Emistisiguo arrived at Mobile “4 or 5 of their people” had been killed by the Choctaws, no doubt casualties of the recent violence brought on by the Lower Creeks. Emistisiguo concluded that “it

⁹² “A Peace Talk The Creeks to the Choctaws,” enclosed in John Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, *GFT*, 375.

⁹³ Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, Explaining Peace Tokens, Enclosed in Stuart to Gage, 12/13/1770, *TGP*, Vol. 98; Emistisiguo and the Mortar to the Choctaws, late September 1770, in *GFT*, 375.

⁹⁴ Charles Stuart to the Upper Creek Headmen, 12/12/1770, Mobile, *GFT*, 380.

would be to no purpose to make the Peace today and War tomorrow, for they had lost their friends in that action” and “would surely seek Revenge.”⁹⁵ The Choctaws who did respond to the Upper Creek peace overtures were reported by Stuart to have left Mobile “sorely disappointed.”⁹⁶

Emistisiguo the Warrior

In Autumn of 1772, peace between the Choctaws and Creeks remained elusive. Emistisiguo “takes a good deal of trouble to keep peace,” David Taitt (British Commissary to the Creek Nation) reported to Superintendent John Stuart in October of that year, but he could not quell the Lower Creek’s appetite for war.⁹⁷ “The [Upper] Creeks are bent on peace with the Choctaws,” Taitt added, but “some are now going to war, others are going to hunt for some time, then going to war.” Emistisiguo was documented twice that year to have done both. According to Taitt, Emistisiguo departed Little Tallassee with a rather “large party” to hunt about the Escambia River on October 31 and was accompanied by the Fighter the following month on a second hunting trip “towards Pensacola.”⁹⁸ After each excursion Emistisiguo was noted to have “afterwards” gone to “war against the Choctaws.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Charles Stuart to the Upper Creek Headmen, 12/12/1770, Mobile, *GFT*, 381; Charles Stuart to John Stuart, 12/12/1770, Pensacola, in *DAR*, 2:205. Stuart’s report that the Creeks casualties were “their people” and the fact that Emistisiguo referred to them as “their friends” indicates that they were most likely clan members, and for that reason Emistisiguo sought revenge.

⁹⁶ Charles Stuart to the Upper Creek Headmen, 12/12/1770, Mobile, *GFT*, 381.

⁹⁷ David Taitt to John Stuart, 10/31/1772, Little Tallassee, CO5/74.

⁹⁸ David Taitt to John Stuart, 10/31/1772, Little Tallassee, CO5/74.

⁹⁹ Taitt to Stuart, 11/22/1772, Little Tallassee, CO5/74. The Mortar was also reported to have temporarily put aside his efforts for peace as well and went off to war somewhere across the Coosa River. David Taitt reported that Emistisiguo left Little Tallassee in December of 1773 and “had gone to war” as well. See also, Abstract of a Letter from David Taitt Esq. Commissioner in the Creek Nation, 11/12/1773, Hickory Ground, in Mr. Stuart’s Number 15 of 12/21/1773.

Emistisiguo embraced his role as the head warrior of Little Tallassee with the same level of dedication as he did when he was brokered for peace with the Choctaws two years before. After hunting about the Escambia River and Pensacola, Emistisiguo's war party scalped seven Choctaws. In addition, they party managed to kill several small and great medal Choctaw chiefs including Tattouly Mastabe from Coosa, Cholko Oulaca from Ayanabe, and Yasi Mattaha from East Yazoo.¹⁰⁰

In January 1774, Emistisiguo and his war party were "fired upon by a party of 50 Choctaws from a swamp," which left him "shot through the left breast" and "dangerously wounded."¹⁰¹ According to Commissary Taitt, Emistisiguo would not have survived "had not three of his sons who were part of the party got him into a cane branch," which provided shelter from any remaining fire and were later able to make a getaway. Although Emistisiguo's injuries were grave, the headman of Little Tallassee narrowly escaped death after being rescued by his sons and others in the Creek war party.¹⁰² Only one month later, Emistisiguo was back at Little Tallassee where he organized a meeting with Superintendent Stuart in regard to matters of Gulf Coast trade.¹⁰³ Emistisiguo was truly an individual of incredible spiritual power, strength and fortitude, and a committed diplomat not only on behalf of his town, but all Upper Creeks.

¹⁰⁰ Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade," in *Pre-Choctaw Removal*, ed. O'Brien, 112.

¹⁰¹ Abstract of a Letter from Robert Mackay, Established Merchant at Augusta, dated 30 November 1773, in Mr. Stuart's No 15 of 12/12/1775, CO5/75.

¹⁰² Abstract from a letter from David Taitt, Little Tallassee, 1/3/1774, CO5/75. This document reported that there were "sixty" Choctaws.

¹⁰³ Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Proposing Redirection of Upper Creek Trade Toward Pensacola and Mobile, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, CO5/75.

Emistisiguo's success through war had long ago advanced his reputation among the Upper and Lower Creeks. Men distinguished themselves within Creek society through success in war and their ability to harness spiritual power. Emistisiguo's ability to lead men in war, defeat powerful enemies, as well as survive a near death attack all testified that he was not only a skilled warrior, but an individual capable of controlling his spiritual gift as a war prophet and living up to his warrior title of a *hopaya*.¹⁰⁴ Emistisiguo's achievements in war also served to bolster his abilities to control spiritual power in civil life, as he proved himself to be an adept diplomat in matters of trade and peace negotiations throughout the Choctaw-Creek War. To that end, whether it was through peace or war, Emistisiguo's power and reputation amplified within all contexts of a war-torn Creek Society and his eminent status also raised the profile of Little Tallassee as a place that dominated trade and diplomacy.¹⁰⁵

The White and Sherrill Murders

On January 29, 1774 news reached Little Tallassee by a letter addressed to British Commissary David Taitt from "His Majesty's Interpreter" that relations between Creek and Georgia settlers had taken an unprecedented and violent turn.¹⁰⁶ Houmatchla of Coweta, Ochululkee of Okfuskee, and a few other Creeks (mostly from the town of Coweta) had ventured into the "newly ceded land" to the British along the "Ogeechee River" in search of an Indian "they intended to kill on account of witchcraft." During the manhunt, Houmatchla, Ochululkee, and their party "stole the Indians horses" in attempt

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter I of this dissertation, 47-48.

¹⁰⁵ See Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 27-35.

¹⁰⁶ Commissary Taitt to Governor Chester Warning of Creek Danger, 1/29/1774, Little Tallassee, in *GFT*, 440-441.

to “draw him off from the rest.” The plan was foiled when the horses turned out to not belong to the intended target, but to a white settler named William White. According to John Stuart, White’s neighbor William Sherrill took it upon himself to retrieve the horses, and “pursued and overtook two Creeks with the horses which the Indians refused to give up, whereupon White shot one of them.” After discovering their fellow Creek’s “body bloody” and “tracts of four horses” that led to White’s house on the Ogeechee River, Houmatchla, Ochlulkee, and the rest of the war party calculated their revenge.¹⁰⁷

The Creeks retaliated on December 25 when they attacked White and Sherrill’s homesteads and “murdered White and all his family.”¹⁰⁸ Approximately The war party returned on January 14 and killed William Sherrill, his wife and daughter, two slaves, and “four more whites.” Sherrill had two sons who “defended themselves bravely” for “six hours.” The Sherrill sons killed at least one or two of their Indian attackers, which prompted the war party to abandon the scene.¹⁰⁹ The colony of Georgia quickly responded and deployed a “militia of twenty-five men and ten rangers” to the White-Sherrill residences. Ambushed only two or three miles from the Sherrill and White residences by a party of approximately sixty Creeks, three militia men were killed. Lieutenant David Grant was reported to not only have been gravely wounded but also tortured: “his mangled body was found tied to a tree, his scalp and ears cut off, a gun barrel thrust into his body supposed to have been red hot, twelve arrows sticking in his

¹⁰⁷ David Taitt to John Stuart, 1/22/1774, Little Tallessee, in CO5/75.

¹⁰⁸ John Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, 2/13/1774, Charleston, *DAR*, 8: 48.

¹⁰⁹ John Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, 2/13/1774, Charleston, *DAR*, 8:48 (four more whites); Stuart to Haldimand, 2/3/1774, *DAR*, 8:34 (defended themselves bravely); Wright to Dartmouth, 1/31/1774, *DAR*, 8:30 (six hours).

breast.”¹¹⁰ After the loss of their lieutenant, the militia retreated, as did Houmatchla, Ochlulkee and the rest of their party.¹¹¹

Governor James Wright of Georgia demanded immediate satisfaction for the White-Sherrill murders, but consult from Superintendent James Stuart and Commissary David Taitt convinced him to consider a more effective option; suspension of the Anglo-Creek trade. “Had only two or three people been killed it might be very proper to demand satisfaction here,” Taitt replied to Stuart, “but as there is so many and committed by 47 Creeks; it is what they will never give us.” Taitt argued that even if he were to “call a general meeting of all the headmen it would immediately cause these villains to murder every trader here.” The situation was entirely too volatile to consider the execution of *all* responsible for the White-Sherrill killings.¹¹² Governor Wright did not need to consider Stuart and Taitt’s advice for long. On January 31, 1774 Wright solicited the Royal Governors of South Carolina and both East and West Florida to join and cut off all trade to the Lower and Upper Creeks. Although Wright himself did not take any immediate action, East Florida placed an embargo on trade with the Creeks by early February.¹¹³

The first Creek headman to respond to the Gulf Coast trade embargo was Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee. Supplies of guns, gun powder, and bullets were all necessary if the Creeks were to continue their war with the Choctaws and redirect violence towards the Choctaws rather than the British settlers. Most important to

¹¹⁰ John Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, 2/13/1774, Charleston, in *DAR*, 8:48

¹¹¹ It is unclear whether or not the Lieutenant died immediately or survived after been tortured due to conflicting accounts. See Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, p. 294n7 for a discussion of these accounts.

¹¹² Taitt to Stuart, 2/25/1774, Usitchie Lower Creeks, C05/75.

¹¹³ Wright to Dartmouth, 1/31/1774, *DAR*, 8:31. Wright to Dartmouth, 5/30/1774, C05/571: Juricek’s *Endgame for Empire*, 190.

Emistisiguo was that his town of Little Tallassee needed Gulf Coast trade to maintain their new position as the Upper Creek center of Anglo-Creek trade. Determined to not only to remove the East Florida trade embargo but prevent the rest of the British provinces from taking any further action, Emistisiguo orchestrated a meeting with British Superintendent Stuart at Little Tallassee on February 4, 1774.¹¹⁴

Emistisiguo began the meeting by announcing that he was going “to talk a great talk” on behalf of all the “Abekas, Tallipooses, and Aliabamas at the Little Tallassies.”¹¹⁵ The emphasis placed on the talk being “great” an indication that Emistisiguo placed an “unusual importance” on the restoration of Anglo-Creek trade.¹¹⁶ Emistisiguo utilized the recent unrest due to the White-Sherrill murders to advance his agenda to get British traders to abandon the “Great Old Path” for the new “Southern Path,” based out of Pensacola and Mobile. “The Traders are always complaining of losing their Horses Bells etc. and it is as if they had their Enemies Country to bring their Pack horses through,” Emistisiguo explained to Stuart. “If they have a mind to Carry on the Trade from Augusta they may, but they are white people enough to send us goods from Pensacola and Mobile which are the safest Paths.”¹¹⁷ Emistisiguo then presented Stuart with “white clay,” which he used as a symbolic metaphor to remind Stuart that Little Tallassee that was not responsible for the recent breach in British-Creek relations: “This white Clay is the Same

¹¹⁴ Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia- Lower Creek Reconciliation, *GFT*, 136.

¹¹⁵ Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia- Lower Creek Reconciliation, *GFT*, 136.

¹¹⁶ John T. Juricek notes in his chapter “Crumbling Controls,” 191 in *Endgame for Empire* that “a great talk” indicated a talk of “unusual importance.”

¹¹⁷ Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Proposing Redirection of Upper Creek Trade Toward Pensacola and Mobile, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, CO5/75.

as our Square, there is nothing black upon it. It is not bloody.”¹¹⁸ Emistisiguo assured Stuart that he would “try everything in my power to put a stop to the mischief,” and he hoped that Stuart would also “try to put a stop to the difference between the People of Georgia and the Cowetas before the Talks become too great.”¹¹⁹ Instead of stopping Anglo-Creek trade, Emistisiguo tried to redirect it. Confident in his proposal, Emistisiguo ended his talk with no further mention of the White-Sherrill murders. His final words were only of future trade with the Gulf Coast: “When a path is newly made it does not at once become a great path. I hope when everything is made straight again that the Governor of Pensacola and the Deputy Superintendent Mobile will hear this talk.”¹²⁰

Unfortunately for Emistisiguo, British officials had no intention of discussing any matters of trade until justice was achieved for the White-Sherrill murders. Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright went around Emistisiguo and attempted to negotiate with Coweta and Okfuskee, the two towns responsible for the recent killings. The principal headman of Coweta, Escotchaby (The Young Lieutenant) was not open to negotiation. On the February 22, 1774 the *Georgia Gazette* reported that Escotchaby had Mad Turkey of Okfuskee deliver a message to George Galphin which summarized Escotchaby and the town of Coweta’s sentiments on the British official’s demands of satisfaction. Escotchaby’s nephew had been killed by a white man during the incident, and according to Mad Turkey, “this loss grieved him very much, and therefore he sent out his people

¹¹⁸ Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia- Lower Creek Reconciliation, *GFT*, 136.

¹¹⁹ Upper Creek “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia- Lower Creek Reconciliation, *GFT*, 136.

¹²⁰ Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Proposing Redirection of Upper Creek Trade Toward Pensacola and Mobile, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, CO5/75.

twice to take satisfaction.” After Escotchaby obtained blood revenge, Mad Turkey explained to Galphin that he had no plans to cooperate with Governor Wright or Stuart’s demands. Escotchaby’s final words on the subject were as follows, “the white people would put up with their losses” and they “had people plenty.”¹²¹

Okfuskee, Ochullkee’s home town, did not get a chance to negotiate. Mad Turkey, Escotchaby’s envoy and notable Okfuskee warrior, was killed by a blacksmith named Thomas Fee in Augusta, Georgia in late March 1774. In early April, Fee and a group of other white settlers got Mad Turkey drunk and then used an iron bar to “beat his brains out.”¹²² Although Fee was arrested and jailed for the crime, a mob that was “encouraged and head by some magistrates and militia officers,” broke him out of jail and he “made his escape” to Carolina.¹²³ Governor Wright offered a reward of one hundred pounds sterling silver for Fee’s capture, which the Governor of South Carolina purportedly doubled, but Fee was never found.¹²⁴ Mad Turkey’s death combined with the mob action taken by whites to protect his killer only amplified tension between the Creeks and Georgia settlers. Not only did the town of Okfuskee refuse to provide satisfaction for the White-Sherrill murders, it appeared as if both the Upper and Lower Creeks were on the verge of waging war on two fronts; one with the Choctaws and the other with their southern British neighbors. Governor Wright’s reaction to the recent violence confirmed the gravity of the situation: “If you make Warr with us in Georgia, It

¹²¹ Stuart to Haldimand, 2/3/1774, *DAR*, 8:34; Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 191.

¹²² Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 193-195 for a detailed account of Mad Turkey’s murder.

¹²³ Wright to Dartmouth, 5/24/1774, *DAR*, 8:116; Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, *GFT*, 138.

¹²⁴ Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, *GFT*, 138.

is the same as making WARR with the GREAT KING. And what are you to get by a WARR? The Trade with you will be stopped, from all parts.”¹²⁵

To prevent war and restore Anglo-Creek trade, a small party of Creeks “headed by Emistisiguo” attended a conference orchestrated by Governor Wright at Savannah on April 14, 1774.¹²⁶ According to Superintendent Stuart, it was his and the Governor’s idea to recruit Emistisiguo to convince the Coweta and Okfuskee headmen to provide the “satisfaction” of the White-Sherrill murders that they themselves had failed to achieve. “Mr. Taitt who resided as an agent in the Upper Creeks behaved with much prudence and firmness. As soon as he had received my Letters, he convened the Chiefs and proposed their coming to Savannah,” Stuart explained to General Thomas Gage in a letter he wrote describing the meeting a month later. Among these chiefs, Stuart continued, “Emistisiguo was to have conferred with us and to have stipulated the Nature and extent of the satisfaction that would be required.”¹²⁷

Although Wright and Stuart had looked to recruit Emistisiguo to mediate what had grown into a very tense situation, Emistisiguo’s decision to parlay with Wright at Savannah was entirely of his own accord. In fact, not even a month after the White-Sherrill murders were committed, Little Tallassee’s Second Man (Neothlucco) was reported to have “sent out for Emistisiguo to come immediately” in order to “consult together and settle Affairs with Sempoyaffe,” both of whom were away at war with the

¹²⁵ Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, *GFT*, 139. The capitalization of war and great king is from the document, not my own emphasis.

¹²⁶ Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, *GFT*, 138.

¹²⁷ Superintendent Stuart to General Gage on Repercussions of White-Sherrill Murders, 5/12/1774, *GFT*, 143-144.

Choctaws at the time.¹²⁸ On March 9, Wright heard news that Sempoyaffi had returned to Coweta and after hearing the news was immediately “gone to the Tallasses,” where Wright “was to set out the next morning to talk with Emistisiguo & the Second Man.”¹²⁹ Given Emistisiguo’s commitment to maintain peaceful and profitable trade relations with the British, the Gulf Coast in particular, there is little reason to doubt that Emistisiguo had made his own plans to mediate the White-Sherrill murders. In the past, Emistisiguo had done his best to provide the British with the satisfaction they desired for the Payne-Hogg and Goodwin-Davies murders in order to protect Little Tallassee’s interests regarding Anglo-Creek trade. Almost a decade later, Emistisiguo’s diplomacy remained the same: to cooperate with British laws of justice in exchange for trade.

During the April conference at Savannah, Emistisiguo’s priority was to prevent Governor Wright from placing an embargo on Anglo-Creek trade and to convince East Florida to rescind the block they had already placed.¹³⁰ To achieve this goal, Emistisiguo first made it a point to clarify that the White-Sherrill murders were not a random act of violence, but a product of Britain’s failure to regulate Anglo-Creek trade. “Formerly the Trade was

¹²⁸ Taitt to Stuart, 1/22/1774, CO5/75 (quote). The most important advisor to the leading headman of a Creek town was a “Henihalgi” whom the Europeans referred to as the Second Man. The duties of a Second Man were to carry out all orders from “the mouth of the chief” to the townspeople. The Second Man was also known as the town administrator and oversaw the building of public works and communal fields. Neothlucco of Little Tallassee was the most notable amongst the Creeks during the 1760s and 1770s. For more information on the duties of the Second Man, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 21. Henihalgi is based on the Creek root word, *henehv*, which translates to “second in command.” See, Jack B. Martin and Margaret McKane Mauldin, *A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 49 and 306. On Neothlucco’s identity, see John Stuart to Emistisiguo and “Neothlucco” (the Second Man), July 1774, enclosure 8 of Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth (?), 8/2/1774, CO5/75.

¹²⁹ Wright to Stuart, 3/9/1774, Savannah, CO5/75. Historian John T. Juricek

¹³⁰ Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, Savannah, *GFT*, 141-143. Emistisiguo made it clear that “He hoped the Trade would not be Quite Stop’t” upon his arrival at the Conference in Savannah.

Carried on by a few People in their Principal Towns, but now great Numbers of Traders are Amongst Them from All Parts and Trade about in the Woods and Hunting grounds, and in the villages and wherever they can find a Single House,” Emistisiguo explained to Wright and Superintendent Stuart. “Many Unruly Bad White People are Amongst them and Carry great Quantities of Rum,” Emistisiguo continued, “and that by this Means the Young People become Unruly, and will not be Governed by their head men as Usual.” In addition, Emistisiguo reminded them that British were equally to blame for the violence, for they “could not Govern their own Men who are very disorderly and do bad things as well.”¹³¹ Mad Turkey’s murder and the violent Georgia mob that aided his killer to escape bolstered Emistisiguo’s claim: “the confusion in the Trade have been the Cause and Foundation of all Evils.”¹³²

Emistisiguo’s argument in the Creek’s defense could not have been more accurate. Houmatchka of Coweta, Oktulki of Okfuskee, and the rest of their party did not set out to murder white settlers, but a fellow Indian rumored to be practicing “witchcraft.” It was only when the party mistook White’s horses to belong to their intended target that violence erupted.¹³³ The White-Sherrill murders were committed in an out settlement known as Pucknawheatly, an illicit trade venue located along the Ocmulgee River half way between Augusta and the Creek town of Coweta.¹³⁴ Business conducted at

¹³¹ Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, Savannah, *GFT*, 141-143.

¹³² Governor Wright’s Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo, 4/14/1774, Savannah, *GFT*, 141-143.

¹³³ David Taitt to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 1/22/1774, CO5/75.

¹³⁴ Pucknawheatly was more commonly known by the English as “The Standing Peach Tree.” See, Stuart to Haldimand, 2/3/1774, *DAR*, 8:35.

Pucknawheatly was supervised by an unauthorized trader employed by George Galphin, who happened to own several of the illegal trade stores that Emistisiguo himself had raided with the Crown's permission at Buzzard Roost in 1768. In addition, Galphin was based in Augusta, giving more reason for the Little Tallassee Headman to oppose him.

Rumor had it that George Galphin had supported the White-Sherrill murders, the *South Carolina Gazette* having reported the following in regard to his character and activity: "he is said to have encouraged those Indians who committed the late Murders, to settle at the Place called the Standing Peach Tree, and to carry on an advantageous Trade [with him] in their Hunting Grounds."¹³⁵ Galphin's letter to Escotchaby written shortly after White and Sherrill's deaths supported the Gazette's claim, the content strictly pertaining to Galphin's desire to convince Governor Wright that the incident was isolated and his eagerness to return to business as usual. "I told everyone not to be afraid," Galphin wrote Escotchaby, "that it was only a parcel of Young mad men about 17 that had done all the damage that was done, and that the Headmen and Beloved Men knew nothing about it." Galphin also added that he asked the remaining settlers "not to leave their houses and all would be made well again," and assured Escotchaby that he was doing "all that is in my power to keep peace here with your People and the white people."¹³⁶

¹³⁵ *South Carolina Gazette*, 2/4/1774 in Juricek's, *Endgame for Empire*, 293, note 3.

¹³⁶ George Galphin to Escotchaby of Coweta, ca. February 1774, *GFT*, 138.

The White-Sherrill murders were not only a product of British authorities' inability to regulate Anglo-Creek trade, but their short comings in providing a remedy to longstanding grievances within that trade.

It was not surprising that the owner of several of the illegal trade stores Emistisiguo had raided at Buzzard Roost was George Galphin. Neither was the fact that Galphin offered asylum to the Indians who were responsible for the White-Sherill murders. Galphin was an independent and wealthy Irish deerskin trader who resided in Creek Country during the middle to late eighteenth century. Galphin championed independent agents over the centralized authority model that British Superintendent John Stuart promoted that placed regional stability over individualized returns.¹³⁷ Similar to Stuart, Galphin was held in high esteem by many Creeks, specifically the Lower Creek town of Coweta, and he often acted as their diplomatic liaison to British authorities. Galphin's main residence was Silver Bluff, a large brick home with a warehouse for storage of Indian trade goods, just a few miles south of Augusta, Georgia and along the South Carolina River.¹³⁸ In all probability Galphin lobbied on behalf of Escotchaby not only to keep the peace between Lower Creeks, angry British officials, and backcountry settlers, but to ensure that his independent trade ventures carried on without further interruption.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Michael P. Morris, *George Galphin and the Transformation of the Georgia-South Carolina Backcountry* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 1-2. Morris described Galphin's "for profit" economic mentality as "thinly disguised capitalism."

¹³⁸ Michael P. Morris, *George Galphin*, 26.

¹³⁹ Michael P. Morris, *George Galphin*, 33 (on Coweta diplomatic liaison) and 45 (Escotchaby).

Emistisiguo's fears of a complete breach in Anglo-Creek trade were realized only a few days after he left Savannah. West Florida Governor Wright joined East Florida and placed an embargo on "all trade and intercourse whatever with any of the said Creek Indians" until satisfaction was given for the White-Sherrill murders.¹⁴⁰ Within only two weeks the provinces of South Carolina and West Florida followed Governor Wright's lead and severed all trading ties with the both the Upper and Lower Creeks. Although "Stopping the Trade" might have been a "Bold or in some Degree Rash decision," it was "the only Effectual means we had in our power to bring them to do us Justice," Wright wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth a few months after the decision was made.¹⁴¹ In late April 1774, the Creeks were still at war with the Choctaws and in desperate need of ammunition. In addition, Creek women felt the loss of trade as men spent their hunting seasons at war instead of scouting deer. According to Wright, "The fact that the trade could be stop't," was a reality the Creeks needed to face if the British were to not only secure satisfaction for the White-Sherrill murders, but put a stop to the "destruction" and "violence" in the Georgia province.¹⁴²

Once news arrived at Little Tallassee that all four British provinces in the deep south had placed an embargo on Creek trade, Emistisiguo and Neothlucco immediately organized another meeting to address the matter. The conference took place either on May 23 or 24 at Little Tallassee.¹⁴³ The correspondence surrounding the meeting

¹⁴⁰ Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 196.

¹⁴¹ Governor Wright to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State, 10/24/1773, Savannah, *GFT*, 156.

¹⁴² Governor Wright to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State, 10/24/1773, Savannah, *GFT*, 156-157.

¹⁴³ Historian John T. Juricek argues that the May 23 and 24 meeting of 1774 took place at Great Tallassee, not Little Tallassee. His argument for this location is based upon the fact that the single document that summarizes the events of the meeting was dated to be at "the Tallassies" which Juricek equates to be

recorded that “Head Men from 26 Towns” were in attendance, and “three headmen from every town were desired to attend on that day.”¹⁴⁴ Although the names of the exact towns and particular headmen that convened at Little Tallassee that May are not known, documentary and circumstantial evidence indicates that both the Lower and Upper Creek towns were in attendance and therefore made the meeting a matter of *National* importance. David Taitt’s letter to Stuart on the matter supports this conclusion: “Emistisiguo had appointed a meeting of the Chiefs of the Upper and Lower Creeks at the Tallassies of last month,” and “by the same advice his excellency is acquainted that the Nation in general seems inclined to give satisfaction.”¹⁴⁵ Reports that the Seminoles

“presumably great Tallassee.” Wright to Stuart, June 13, 1774, GFT, 145 (the Tallassies); Juricek, *Endgame for Empire*, 192. Based upon historical context as well as plentiful documentation that Emistisiguo organized the meeting, I argue that the May conference of 1774 took place at Little Tallassee, not Great Tallassee. All evidence indicated that Emistisiguo organized the May 23 and 24 meetings. “I received a letter said to have been wrote by Direction of Emistisiguo to the Second Man dated at Little Tallassee the 26 of May’ wherein they acquaint me on their return they Summoned Three Headmen from every Town to meet and Consult.” Wright to Stuart, June 13 1774, GFT, 145. This is not surprising for Emistisiguo had been planning and rallying the Lower and Upper Creeks to attend the conference to get the British to retract their threat of a trade embargo and put aside clan revenge to protect trade as early as January of 1772. For a discussion on Emistisiguo’s actions between 1772 to 1774, see Juricek’s own account in *Endgame for Empire*, 163-201, especially 168-174, 190- 200, and 201. There is also evidence that “the Tallassies” was just a short form for Little Tallassee and its surrounding towns. For example, British commissioner David Taitt (later Stuart’s replacement as Superintendent) resided at Little Tallassee on the 22 and 23 of January 1774. Taitt appeared to be at Little Tallassee on January 3 1774, but that document states "Tallassies" to be his location whereas he is clearly at “Little Tallassee” in late January. For a closer reading on these documents, see Taitt to Stuart during the month of January in CO5/75. Lastly, if one places the May 23 and 24 meetings in historical context, Little Tallassee would have been the selected Upper Creek town, not Great Tallassee. By 1774, Little Tallassee had supplanted Tuckabatchee and Okchai as the center of diplomacy for the Upper Creeks. I argue that the meeting took place at Little Tallassee, due to the amount of evidence and historical context. Great Tallassee or Big Tallassee was not active in diplomacy during this time.

¹⁴⁴ Governor James Wright to J. Stuart, 6/13/1774, Savannah, in Vol. 121, TGP. The actual date of the meeting was either the 23 or 24 of May. Wright wrote his account based on a letter he received from an interpreter by the name of Murneac. Murneac wrote the letter “by the direction of Emistisiguo and the Second Man, dated at the Little Tallassies May 20.” For more on this topic, see Juricek’s note in GFT, Vol. 12, 521n12. See also, David Taitt to Stuart, 6/3/1774, Savannah, Vol. 121, TGP (“three headmen from every town were desired to attend).

¹⁴⁵ David Taitt to Stuart, 6/3/1774, Savannah, in TGP, Vol. 121.

might also have been in attendance had even surfaced by June of 1774.¹⁴⁶ Eighteenth-century botanist and traveler William Bartram summarized the affair during his Georgia travels as follows: “the whole Creek confederacy were assembling at one of their principle towns . . . determined to oblige the Cowetas who were the aggressors to give up the Murderers.”¹⁴⁷

William Bartram’s comment only captured a portion of the magnitude of the diplomacy that took shape during the meeting organized by Emistisiguo in late May 1774 at Little Tallassee. For the first time in Creek history the Lower and Creek towns united as one Nation for a common cause; the preservation of Creek trade.¹⁴⁸ This major decision made by all twenty-six headmen after consultation with Emistisiguo, that “satisfaction should be given” in order to restore that trade was also extraordinary.¹⁴⁹ Prior to the meeting, Emistisiguo had been one of very few headmen to put aside Creek traditions of blood revenge and execute fellow Creeks to protect Anglo-Creek trade. The execution of Oktullkee in the Lower town of Hitchitaw after the meeting in May, proved that other headmen, particularly the Lower Creeks, were inclined to do the same.¹⁵⁰ No European was present at the May meeting, except the interpreter Emistisiguo had

¹⁴⁶ Wright to Stuart, 6/13/1774, Savannah, *GFT*, 146.

¹⁴⁷ William Bartram, *Travels and other Writings* (New York, Library of America, 1996), 150.

¹⁴⁸ I am indebted to John T. Juricek’s insight into “national” aspect of this conference. *Endgame for Empire*, 197-198.

¹⁴⁹ Governor Wright to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Creek Promise of Satisfaction, 6/13/1774, in *GFT*, Vol. 12, 145; Haldimand to Gage, 7/14/1774, in *TGP*, Vol. 121.

¹⁵⁰ Stuart to Emistisiguo Warrior of the Little Tallassies and Nealthucko Second Man, July 1774, in Stuart to Dartmouth, 8/2/1774, CO5/75. The identity of who executed Oktullee is not known, but Stuart reported that it was “with the consent of the chiefs of the 26 towns” that he had been put to death. A second document provides evidence that Pumpkin King might have expedited the execution. For this account, see also, Lower Creek Headmen to Governor Wright and Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Two Executions, 6/23/1774, Hitchitee, *GFT*, 147.

requested to record the gathering's proceedings. His attendance highlighted another significant detail about the conference at Little Tallassee; it may have been one of the first meetings to take place between both the Upper and Lower Creeks without European involvement.¹⁵¹ To that end, under the direction of Emistisiguo, all Creeks worked together to provide the satisfaction the British requested and restore trade by whatever means necessary.

Emistisiguo's diplomacy produced results. By October of 1774, the Upper and Lower Creeks met Governor Wright at Savannah and signed a peace treaty. Approximately 150 Indians were reported to have been in attendance, the most notable to have signed the treaty being Emistisiguo, The Second Man, and Sempoyaffii of Coweta.¹⁵² Emistisiguo and Neothlucco had agreed prior to the October engagement that the Creeks would give "moderate satisfaction" in exchange for the British to lift the trade embargo.¹⁵³ Their agreement stipulated that "five of the leaders or chiefs of the Indians who were concerned in the said Murders" were to be "put to death," along with the return of "the white People's horses and cattle" that were stolen by the "Indians aforesaid."¹⁵⁴ The execution of these five Creeks was based upon the grounds that the White-Sherrill murders were a "direct breach" of the Treaty of Augusta of 1763 and "all other treaties

¹⁵¹ Steven Hahn argues in his book, *The Invention of the Creek Nation* that Creek social convergence was a form of political consolidation. More specifically, Creek Nationhood was a "function of politics." (244). Hahn provides several examples of Lower and Upper Creek towns aligning together for common causes in the face of change throughout the eighteenth century but does not mention any meeting/conference where a representative of all Creek towns were present and assembled without a European third party. It is safe to say that Emistisiguo's may conference is the first solely Creek organized meeting on a national scale.

¹⁵² Emistisiguo signed the treaty first; a symbol of his role in negotiating the peace made that day. For the full list, see Treaty with the Upper and Lower Creeks at Savannah, 10/20/1774, *GFT*, 156-157.

¹⁵³ Endorsed Talks from the Superintendent to Emistisiguo, Warrior of the Little Tallassies and to Neothuocko, second Man, 9/15/1774, *CO5/75*.

¹⁵⁴ Treaty with the Upper and Lower Creeks at Savannah, 10/20/1774, *GFT*, 153.

subsisting between the Great King and his subjects, and the said Creek Indians.” The breach being that

in all cases and upon all occasions, Full and ample Justice should be done to each other . . . that if any Indian or Indians whatever should hereafter murder or kill a white man, the offender or Offenders should without and [any] delay, excuse or Pretense whatever be Immediately put to Death.¹⁵⁵

At the time of the treaty, the Creeks had already carried out three out of the five executions, and all headmen in attendance pledged to carry out judgment against the remaining two perpetrators.¹⁵⁶ In return, the British agreed to restore Creek trade: “The Trade shall be Opened to the Several Towns, of the said Upper and Lower Creeks.”¹⁵⁷ Together, the Upper and Lower Creeks, carried out Emistisiguo’s diplomacy of “satisfaction for trade,” and British-Creek trade relations repaired.

Reconciliation: The End of the Choctaw-Creek War

Although the British promised to lift the embargo on all Creek trade at the Treaty of Savannah in October 1774, merchants and traders from all four provinces were slow to arm a Nation they saw as potential enemies. “Having received no Supplies for ten months” by Autumn 1775, Neothlucco (Second Man of Little Tallessee) pleaded to

¹⁵⁵ Treaty with the Upper and Lower Creeks at Savannah, 10/20/1774, *GFT*, 153-154. The same stipulation applied to the murder of any Indian: “That if any White man should Kill or Murder an Indian He should be Tried for the Offence in the same manner, as if he had Murdered a white man, and if found Guilty should be Executed Accordingly.”

¹⁵⁶ Treaty with the Upper and Lower Creeks at Savannah, 10/20/1774, *GFT*, 154; John Stuart to Dartmouth, 7/21/1775, St. Augustine, C05/76. Two Indians by the name of “Howmahta and Sophia” were said to have escaped but would be executed when found.

¹⁵⁷ Treaty with the Upper and Lower Creeks at Savannah, 10/20/1774, *GFT*, 155.

Superintendent Stuart to assist in a peace negotiation to end the Creek's ten-year war with the Choctaws.¹⁵⁸ Neothlucco stated,

We in this part of the nation are made very poor by long war not being able to hunt, to feed and clothe our women and children as we used to do. I therefore hope that you will take pity on your friends and endeavor to get a peace made for us and as soon as I see your answer I will speak to our headmen about it.¹⁵⁹

Little Tallassee and its surrounding Upper Creek towns were still in the thick of the war, while the Lower Towns continued to focus much of their energy towards their Georgian neighbors. "They are heartily tired of war as the burden lays upon the frontier towns in the upper Creeks," David Taitt described in a letter to Superintendent Stuart from his residency at Little Tallassee.

Lately the Flats [Choctaws] came into Puecantlyhousie, and killed a woman while the men were dancing in the Square and a few days ago a party came within three miles of the Coosada town and painted themselves in order to proceed but on hearing the drum beat for black drink they returned leaving their war tokens behind.¹⁶⁰

Emistisiguo's previous peace overtures were not in vain. Peace between the Creeks and the Choctaws was now a necessity for the Upper Towns; so much so that Little Tallassee was inclined to ask the British to involve themselves in an inter-tribal affair.

¹⁵⁸ Governor Wright to the Earl of Dartmouth, 10/24/1774, Savannah, *GFT*, 156-157. Trade was stopped in April of 1774 and promised to be restored in October of 1774. Yet, Wright states that the Creek's went without trade for "ten months" and the poor the Creeks were in by October of 1775 proves that trade relations were not restored to the Creek's as quickly as promised.

¹⁵⁹ A Talk from the Second Man of Little Tallassee, 10/20/1775, in Stuart to unknown, 1/6/1776, *CO5/77*.

¹⁶⁰ David Taitt to J. Stuart, 10/20/1775, Little Tallassee, *CO5/77*. "Flats" was a term used to describe the Choctaws.

Neothlucco's request on behalf of Emistisiguo for British assistance was welcomed. In fact, one year prior to the request, British General Thomas Gage had instructed Superintendent Stuart to promote peace among all the Indians of the Southeast in order to secure allies for a war against the American colonies, which by late 1775 appeared to be inevitable. By October 1776 Stuart therefore not only insisted that he act as a mediator between both parties but organized a peace conference to take place in Pensacola between the Creek and Choctaw Nations.¹⁶¹ Neothlucco and Emistisiguo embraced Stuart. To put an end to war, the use of a neutral third party was required by traditional Creek and Southeastern Indian diplomacy.¹⁶²

The Upper Creek headmen met delegates from both the Eastern and Western division of the Choctaw Nation that October and a peace was finally both concluded and ratified.¹⁶³ The individual headmen who attended the conference are not noted, but it is likely that either Emistisiguo or Neothlucco were present (Emistisiguo the former diplomatic liaison between the two parties and Neothlucco's recent request for peace).¹⁶⁴ During the conference, each party carried a "white flag as an emblem of peace and were highly painted." They also sang songs while "waving eagles' tails and swans' wings over their heads," all gestures of peace and friendship. Stuart reported that "at least both parties met" and "after saluting each other joined hands" in his presence. The headmen then entered his house and "delivered" into Stuart's hands "two war clubs painted red as

¹⁶¹ Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade Through War," in *Pre-Choctaw Removal*, ed. O'Brien, 113.

¹⁶² Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade Through War," in *Pre-Choctaw Removal*, ed. O'Brien, 111.

¹⁶³ John Stuart to Lord George Germain, 10/26/1776, *DAR*, 12:239-40.

¹⁶⁴ Stuart also stated, "for ten days past I have had the chiefs of the Upper Creek nation with me." John Stuart to Lord George Germain, 10/26/1776, *DAR*, 12: 239-40.

the last ceremony of laying down arms,” which he then “promised to bury very deep into the earth.”¹⁶⁵ At long last, both the Choctaw and Creek headmen were at peace with one another.

To ensure that friendly relations continued, a party of Choctaws led by renowned warriors Franchimastabe and Taboca journeyed to Little Tallassee in August of the following year.¹⁶⁶ Once the Choctaw delegates arrived, it was revealed that Handsome fellow of Okfuskee and a few other “rebel” Creeks had continued to violate the peace made at Pensacola. To remedy this fracture in Creek-Choctaw relations, the delegates requested that Creeks had “go and visit the Choctaws that no doubt or supposition might remain on the minds of the young people of either nation” and that the “professions of friendship” promised at Pensacola were “sincere” and thus not to be broken.¹⁶⁷

Franchimastabe and Taboca also pledged to assist the Creek’s in their continued conflicts with Georgia and encroaching American settlers. Although the headmen controlled the peace proceedings, British officials were present as a neutral third party. The conference ended with the British bestowment of gifts, which included guns, ammunition, and other coveted European manufactured goods to the leading Creek and Choctaw headman present at Little Tallassee.

¹⁶⁵ John Stuart to Lord George Germain, 10/26/1776, *DAR*, 12: 239-40.

¹⁶⁶ Emistisiguo reached out to Taboca during his first peace overture towards the Choctaw in Fall 1770, but that negotiation had failed due to ongoing violence between Choctaws and Lower Creeks at the time near Mobile. Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 21-22. (Taboca) Charles Stuart to the upper Creek Headmen, 12/12/1770, Mobile, GFT, 381. (Lower Creeks killed by Choctaw)

¹⁶⁷ Extract of a Letter from Mr. Taitt Deputy in the Creek Nation to the Superintendent, 8/3/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78. For more on this topic, Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 35-36.

These gifts and the promise of a steady supply of goods were clearly given by the British to secure Southeastern Indian allies as the American Revolution had just began. In addition, the gifts strengthened the authority of the leading headmen present. Emistisiguo's leadership of the final peace overtures to the Choctaw Nation and his acquisition of trade goods bolstered his authority amongst the Upper and Lower Creeks. The conference between Choctaw delegates and Emistisiguo at Little Tallassee in October 1776 did not just bring about the end of a decade of violence but also helped to facilitate the redirection of Anglo-Creek trade back into the hands of the leading headmen within Creek society; Emistisiguo and the town of Little Tallassee in particular.¹⁶⁸

Between 1765 and 1776, Creek Country was a volatile place. Frontier hostilities between Creeks and their white Georgian and Alabama neighbors was at an all-time height, and Creek elders struggled to control violence carried out by restless Creek warriors. The outbreak of the Choctaw-Creek War, however, enabled headmen like Emistisiguo to redirect this violence away from their British trade partners and towards their long-standing Indian rivals. In addition, Emistisiguo temporarily cast aside the Creek tradition of blood revenge to placate British officials and lift the threat of an embargo on Anglo-Creek trade. Although this was a radical departure from Creek norms, Emistisiguo's radical diplomacy was embraced by all Creek headmen during his meeting at Little Tallassee in 1774. Whether it was through intertribal warfare or revolutionary

¹⁶⁸ Taboca and Franchismastabe returned to the Choctaw Nation with their reputations bolstered as well after the acquisition and promise of a steady trade with the British. Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade Through War", in *Pre-Choctaw Removal*, ed. O'Brien, 113-114.

political maneuvers, Emistisiguo crafted a new type of diplomacy that successfully preserved Anglo-Creek trade out of the Gulf Coast during one of the most war-torn decades in Creek history.

Emistisiguo utilized the framework of war to amplify the importance of Little Tallassee as well as bolster his own authority within both Creek and Anglo societies during the mid-eighteenth century. Not only was Emistisiguo appointed “leading headman and warrior of the Upper Creek Nations” by 1777, but he was also the elected diplomatic liaison and spokesperson on behalf of the Upper Creeks to conduct matters of peace and war when deemed necessary, whether it be the end of the Choctaw-Creek War or satisfaction for frontier violence.¹⁶⁹ As a result, Little Tallassee remained the center of Anglo-Creek trade, but it was no longer a meeting ground for trade exchange alone. Under the leadership of Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee surpassed its neighboring towns of Okchai and Tuckabatchee in domestic and foreign affairs. On the eve of America’s war for Independence, Little Tallassee was a sacred space and town where Creeks decided questions of both peace, war, and diplomacy.

¹⁶⁹ Extract of a Letter from Mr. Taitt Deputy in the Creek Nation to the Superintendent, 8/3/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

CHAPTER V
REVOLUTION
1776-1783

When the American Revolution erupted in July of 1776, the Creek Confederacy viewed the colonists' declaration for independence as nothing more than a dispute between their longstanding British neighbors. Little Tallassee, along with the rest of the Upper and Lower Creek towns, wanted no part in a "white man's war," and immediately declared neutrality. The concept of neutrality was a precarious notion for a nation dependent on the continuous flow of manufactured trade goods. Throughout the war, the Americans and the British competed for Creek allegiance, trade their primary means of leverage. Although a few Creek towns chose to align themselves with the Americans, most of both Upper and lower Creek towns remained loyal to their longstanding British trade partners and fictive kin.¹

Little Tallassee, under the leadership of Emistisiguo, was the first of the towns to forgo neutrality and form an advantageous alliance with the British. As the Americans took control of Savannah, Charlestown, and Augusta by 1776, the British were forced to relocate to St. Augustine and conduct all trade negotiations with the Creeks out of Mobile and Pensacola. Emistisiguo had championed Gulf Coast Trade as far back as his historical debut in 1763 at the first Treaty of Augusta. The creation of a new southern

¹ Okfuskee, Tallassee, and the Lower town of Cussita chose to align themselves with the Americans, and during and after the American Revolution remained at odds with the bulk of the Creek Nation. Details on this subject will be discussed throughout this chapter.

path towards Pensacola and Mobile made Little Tallassee the center of Creek-Anglo trade and had by default bolstered Emistisiguo's reputation in both the Creek and outside world.

The war time climate of the American Revolution marked the height of Emistisiguo's career as a head warrior, headman, and spokesperson for both the Upper and Lower Creek towns and further solidified Little Tallassee's place as the center of Creek diplomacy. Emistisiguo's success in recruiting Creek allies to serve as scouts and warriors on behalf of the British demonstrated a mastery of the art of Creek persuasion. In addition, Emistisiguo's ability to mobilize these warriors in such a prompt manner exemplified his ascendancy as a prominent leader of the Creek Confederacy by the middle of the 1770s. Even more noteworthy was Emistisiguo's ability to recruit allies outside of the Upper and Lower Creek towns, among the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws to protect British trade along the Gulf Coast. This Pan-Indian alliance ushered in a new era of diplomacy for the Creek Confederacy, and Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee was its pioneer. It is time that historians recognize this fact and see Little Tallassee's role at forefront of Creek History.

The significance of Emistisiguo and Little Tallassee has yet to be explored by historians studying the Creek Indians during the American Revolution. Emistisiguo continued to act as the leading diplomatic liaison on behalf of the Upper Creeks, but instead of embracing intertribal war to preserve Anglo-Creek trade during the Revolutionary period, Emistisiguo fought against the Americans to protect his and all Creek interests along the Gulf Coast. The decisions Emistisiguo and the Upper Creeks

made regarding peace and war can be viewed as an extension of the innovative diplomacy Emistisiguo had crafted during the Choctaw-Creek War. Creek self-interest remained the focal point of this diplomacy, not loyalty to the British, Americans, or any European party. However, during this period, Emistisiguo's diplomatic policies worked within both a national and international framework, and the town of Little Tallassee remained the central space where this diplomacy was conducted.

Alexander McGillivray

Alexander McGillivray, the "mixed-blood" leader and spokesperson of the Creek Nation in the late eighteenth century, has dominated Creek historiography for decades, the Revolutionary war period being no exception. McGillivray made his historical debut in 1777 when he came to Little Tallassee as an assistant commissary in the British Indian service, and quickly assumed a role as cultural broker and spokesperson for Creek Country.² Historians such as Kathryn E. Holland Braund and Kathleen Duval argue Alexander McGillivray was responsible for the recruitment of Creek allies on behalf of the British to preserve Gulf Coast trade, and his military service was crucial in preserving

² Michael Green stated, "Alexander McGillivray is probably the best-known Creek in the history of the Creek Confederacy." See, Michael Green, "Alexander McGillivray," in ed. David Edmunds, *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 41-42. For the best biographical summaries on Alexander McGillivray, see also: *McGillivray of the Creeks*, ed. John Walton Caughey (Columbia, SC: 2nd ed, 2007), 3-57; Linda Langley, "The Tribal Identity of Alexander McGillivray: a Review of the Historic and Ethnographic Data," in *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, Vol. 46 (Spring 2005), 231-239; J. H. O'Donnell, "Alexander McGillivray: Training for Leadership, 1777-1788," in *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49 (June 1965), 172-186; Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost, Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House Press, 2015), 24-35; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 67-89.

British Florida until Spanish forces seized control of Pensacola in 1783.³ Other scholars, such as Claudio Saunt and Steven Hahn contend that McGillivray fostered a sense of nationalism during and after the American Revolution, and credit McGillivray for being the first Creek leader to unite both the Upper and Lower towns. The concept of an actual “Creek Nation” was a supposedly foreign concept before Alexander McGillivray’s arrival.⁴

Although Alexander McGillivray began to assert himself among the Creeks during the Revolutionary War period, previous historians have failed to point out the fact that McGillivray’s twin strategies regarding trade and war were already established by his predecessor and contemporary Emistisiguo. Alexander McGillivray was born at Little Tallassee in December 1750 and resided there until he was six years of age. He relocated to Augusta and later Charlestown to receive a formal British education and apprenticeship within his Scottish father’s (Lachlan McGillivray) prominent fur and skin trade business.⁵ When McGillivray returned to Little Tallassee in 1777, besides being a member of the Wind clan by his matrilineal birthright, he was unfamiliar with Creek tradition, barely spoke or understood the Muskogean language, and had no experience in hunting or war.⁶ McGillivray was only one quarter Creek, his mother Sehoy being the

³ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (1993; repr., Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 164-175; Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 24-35 and 135-188.

⁴ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 38-63, 67-135; Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation*, 1670-1763 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) 110-120, 274-275.

⁵ The classic biography on McGillivray by John Walton Caughey states that Alexander McGillivray was fourteen when he left Little Tallassee, but recent scholarship has now come to the consensus that he was only six years of age at the time. For Caughey’s argument, see *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 15-16. For recent scholarship, see also Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 29; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 83-84.

⁶ There have been up to fifty distinct clans in Creek history, but out of those seven to ten clans were more prominent than others. The Wind clan, for example, was one of these prestigious clans that was known for

daughter of a French Captain named Marchland.⁷ In both appearance and behavior, Alexander was a stranger to his home town and the people of Little Tallassee, but he was still recognized as Creek.

McGillivray's literacy and command of the English language as well as his knowledge of European trade and economics were assets in Creek society. Emistisiguo, headman and warrior of Little Tallassee, how important those abilities were to the Creeks. It was under his guidance that Alexander McGillivray acquired the skills needed to gain acceptance and respect from traditional Creek society. Emistisiguo proved to be an excellent mentor. By the the end of the Revolutionary War period, Creeks began to call McGillivray *Isti atcagi thulucco* or Great Beloved Man.⁸ Alexander was never a Creek headmen or warrior, but with the aid of Emistisiguo he did earn a place within Creek Society as a respected leader, spokesperson, and representative of both Little Tallassee and the Creek Confederacy. McGillivray proved to be an adept student and clever individual, but his policies regarding war, trade, and even "nation" building were not innovative. Emistisiguo was the engineer of Creek diplomacy during the late eighteenth century. McGillivray merely followed the blueprint his mentor left behind.

containing the highest ranking officials and leadership roles within Creek society and the National Council. McGillivray's Uncle, Red Shoes, was one of these high ranking Creek leaders, specifically in civil (domestic) affairs. Michael D. Green, "Alexander McGillivray," in *American Indian Leaders: Studies for Diversity*, ed. R. David Edmund (Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 42. For more information on Alexander McGillivray's need for an interpreter, see Linda Langley, "Tribal Identity of Alexander McGillivray," 236; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 83-84.

⁷ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader*, 72-73; John Walton Caughey, "Lachlan and Sehoy," in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 9-13. See also, Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period*. 1851. (Repr. Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Book and Magazine Co., 1962), 343-33; Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 28.

⁸ Michael Green, "Alexander McGillivray," 42-43; Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 77.

Often, the physical space in which war is conducted is of equal importance to the individuals who set historic diplomatic measures in motion. Little Tallassee was more than the home of Emistisiguo and Alexander McGillivray during the Revolutionary War period; it was an established meeting ground for both the Upper and Lower Creeks, as well as many of their Southeastern Indian neighbors. Headmen, warriors, and beloved men gathered in Little Tallassee's town square to deliberate questions regarding war and peace, as well as who to trade with and for how long.⁹ In fact, it was during a meeting at Little Tallassee that Emistisiguo first rallied the Creeks to raise the war hatchet against the Americans, and later agreed to lay that hatchet down. Little Tallassee was more than the home of these two notable Creeks; it was the geographical location where Creek diplomacy was formulated during the Revolutionary War period.

Disruptions in Creek Country

In August 1775, British Superintendent John Stuart informed the Creeks that there was “an unhappy Dispute between the People of England and the white People of America.” The dispute, better known as the American Revolution, forced Stuart and other British loyalists to abandon their homes and trading posts in Charlestown, Savannah, and Augusta to relocate to East Florida. Despite these events, Stuart assured the Creeks that trade necessities would continue to flow between the two parties. The only change required on behalf of the Creeks was that they officially commit to trade out of East

⁹ For evidence that there was indeed, a town square, see “Great Talk” to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia-Lower Creek Reconciliation, 2/4/1774, Little Tallassee, in *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*, ed. John T. Juricek, in vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002). See also, *David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 258.

Florida and the Gulf Coast: Pensacola, Mobile, and Saint Augustine now being the only viable option for British trade.¹⁰

David Taitt, deputy agent to Stuart, organized a meeting at Little Tallassee that same month to better explain the conflict “amongst the white People” as well as the sudden geographical relocation of the British and their centers of Southeastern Indian trade. According to Taitt, the Indians that were present at Little Tallassee seemed “exasperated at the Virginians, meaning traders like Galphin based in Augusta, for stopping the flow of their ammunition and fighting against the great King’s people.” Even though they had to change trade paths, many headmen were hesitant to leave them behind the “Old Path” and embrace the new path towards Pensacola and Mobile.¹¹ Although the Creeks “agreed to pay no regard to any Talks but what come from Mr. Stuart or the Governors of the different colonies as they look upon them only to have the Great Kings Mouth,” Taitt related to Stuart, Emistisiguo had informed him that most Creek headmen were “very much Confused with different Stories brought into their Nation by different people.”¹²

Their uncertainty was most likely because several headmen from five of the principal Lower Creek towns had just arrived in Little Tallassee from Augusta, where

¹⁰ Superintendent Stuart to Lower and Upper Creek Chiefs (Intercepted), 8/15/1775, St. Augustine, in *Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763-1776*, ed. John. T. Juricek, in vol. 12 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002), 169-170. Quote on 170. (Hereafter cited as *GFT*).

¹¹ Taitt to Stuart, Little Tallassee, 8/1/1775, in *Records of the British Colonial Office, Class 5 Files: Westward Expansion, 1700-1783*, ed. Randolph Boehm (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983) Vol. 76. (Hereafter cited as CO5/Vol. Number.)

¹² Talk to Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart (Extract), 8/27/1775, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 170-171. Quotes on 171.

they heard a much different “talk” from Galphin regarding the future of Creek trade. Before the outbreak of the Revolution, Galphin was a prominent deerskin trader in Creek Country and oversaw several stores and merchants in Augusta, Savannah, and Charlestown. Not long before Galphin met with the Lower Creeks, he was appointed the position of “Superintendent of Indian Affairs” by a Patriot Congress in Georgia.¹³ Galphin had broken ties by 1775 with Loyalist Governor James Wright and accepted a commission to be a Continental Indian Commissioner for the Continental Congress. As an ambassador for the Continental Congress, George Galphin’s sole agenda was quite simple: convince the Creeks to detach themselves from the interests of the British and solely rely upon the Americans for trade.¹⁴

During his meeting with the Lower Creeks at Augusta that August, Galphin promised the Creeks that “ammunition” was to be sent to them “as a present to the Indians from the Rebels.” Galphin admitted that the ammunition had been “taken by force of Arms” from the British, but they intended to “share it with their friends the Creeks,” as a gesture of good will. Galphin was quick to ameliorate any concerns that ammunition would be short in supply, for he told the Creeks that he and his merchants “now make powder at Hollow Creek,” between his store and “the three runs in Carolina.”¹⁵ Lastly, the Lower Creeks reported to David Taitt during their meeting with

¹³ Talk to Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart (Extract), 8/27/1775, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 170-171.

¹⁴ The first Continental Congress met in the fall of 1774 in Philadelphia. By 1775, the Congress created the position of a Continental Indian Commissioner to handle Indian affairs. These Commissioners are often referred to as “American Commissioners.” See, Michael P. Morris, *George Galphin and the Transformation of the Georgia-South Carolina Backcountry* (Lanham, MY: Lexington Books, 2015), 85-86, 88.

¹⁵ Talk to Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart (Extract), 8/27/1775, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 171.

Galphin that it was said that “lately there was some difference between them and this Nation but now the Path is again opened and made straight and White.”¹⁶ Given the fact that by the Summer of 1775, Americans had seized control of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, the “path” Galphin spoke of was none other than the “Great Old Path” that many Upper and Lower Creeks were reluctant to abandon.¹⁷

Galphin and the rest of the American Commissioners made several promises to the Creeks that they could provide a steady supply of trade goods but were later proved to be in vain. The Americans’ ability to supply gunpowder and other trade necessities was next to impossible, given that all their imports and exports up until this point had been limited to the empire they were now fighting against. In addition, the powder and ammunition the Americans did manufacture and later received from France and Spain, they used for their own war, not trade with the Creeks.¹⁸

Choosing Sides

Emistisiguo turned a deaf ear to Galphin’s talks. “We know very well that no white man but a Governor or the Alabama king can make a Talk or give to or receive anything of a red man, and no one man can make a Talk himself or give anything away,” Emistisiguo assured Stuart in a talk he had forwarded to the Superintendent by way of David Taitt in September 1775.¹⁹ He expected Stuart not Galphin, to provide the Creeks

¹⁶ Talk to Deputy Superintendent Charles Stuart (Extract), 8/27/1775, Little Tallassee, *GFT*, 171.

¹⁷ Gary D. Olson, “Thomas Brown, the East Florida Rangers, and the Defense of East Florida,” in *Eighteenth Century Florida and the Revolutionary South*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville: FL, The University Presses of Florida, 1978), 15.

¹⁸ John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763-1776* (Gainesville: FL, University of Florida Press, 2015), 223-224.

¹⁹ The Alabama King was a Creek title of respect given to Superintendent John Stuart by the upper Creek chiefs. Neothucco (The Second Man of Little Tallassee) bestowed the title to Stuart at a conference in

with “powder and bullets,” and in large quantities. “We are not a small people but many in Number,” Emistisiguo stressed to Stuart. He then suggested that Stuart personally travel to Pensacola to deliver the ammunition as “St. Augustine . . . being so far off” from Little Tallassee and the rest of the Creek Nation. “You can come in a ship there and if you will appoint a time to meet we will meet you in Pensacola but Cannot at St. Augustine.”²⁰ Emistisiguo’s demands were clear. West not East Florida would be the center of Anglo-Creek trade during the Revolutionary War period.

The following week the Lower Creeks sent a collective talk to Stuart notifying him that they preferred to remain neutral and receive goods from both the Americans and the British. The Lower Creeks did not differentiate between the two parties. “You are all one people and our oldest white Brothers,” and “we all see now your good talk and the talk from the beloved men from Georgia is the same,” the Lower Creeks explained to Stuart. The Americans and the British were then viewed by the Lower Creeks to be one and the same, and they awaited “to hear the difference settled and all at peace again.” In the meantime, trade goods and talks were welcomed from either party in Lower Creek Country as “they [The Americans] have sent us a handful of Powder and Lead, and now we see your good talk and send us world to come down and get some more.”²¹ The

Pensacola in 1771. The term “Alabama” a term used to describe the Tallapoosa towns and neighbors of Little Tallassee as a whole. “At a Congress of the Principle Chiefs and Warriors of the Upper Creek Nation,” 10/29/1771, Pensacola, CO5/73; Emistisiguo’s Reply to Superintendent Stuart’s Talk of August 15th, dated 9/20/1775, Little Tallassee, in *GFT*, 174. Jacob Moniac served as the Interpreter.

²⁰ Emistisiguo’s Reply to Superintendent Stuart’s Talk of August 15th, dated 9/20/1775, Little Tallassee, in *GFT*, 175.

²¹ Lower Creek Reply to Superintendent Stuart, Declaring Neutrality, 9/29/1775, Cussita Square, *GFT*, 177-178. Quotes taken from 177. Sempyoffee of Coweta and Blue Sault of Cussita were both present during this talk. Samuel Thomas served as the Interpreter.

Lower Creeks had no interest in the war they saw as a “difference between the white People.” Instead, they were focused on only the trade goods each side had to offer.²²

As the war “between the whites” carried on into fall and winter of 1775, neutrality became an increasingly precarious notion. As the warfare intensified, allies were required by both parties, and it became clear to the Creeks, if it had not already, that the whites at war with one another were no longer “one” people. The American Board of Commissioners, led by George Galphin, began to increase efforts to win over the Creeks, as did Superintendent John Stuart. The Revolutionary South quickly became a competition for Indian allies. The Creeks were not pawns in the game but active players who chose their partners with careful discretion.²³

In October 1775, John Stuart instructed his brother Henry Stuart to visit the Upper and Lower Creek towns and do his best to secure their allegiance to the British in both trade and war. Stuart wrote, “You’ll apply in Private to Emistisiguo and the second man of the Little Tallasseses and endeavor by every practical means to engage them to act in his Majesty’s Service.”²⁴ Stuart also directed his brother to remind Emistisiguo “in private” that “he will draw to himself the greatest honour by exerting himself in the Kings Cause.”²⁵ Given Emistisiguo’s recent offer to meet Stuart at Pensacola for trade and his disinterest in the Americans’ talks, Stuart’s request that Henry approach

²² Lower Creek Reply to Superintendent Stuart, Declaring Neutrality, 9/29/1775, Cussita Square, *GFT*, 177-178.

²³ Neutrality not a viable option for those who are not financially independent. For more on this discussion, See Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and diversity in Native American communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 31 and 43-46.

²⁴ John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Saint Augustine, 10/24/1775, CO5/77.

²⁵ John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Saint Augustine, 10/24/1775, CO5/77.

Emistisiguo with these requests was not surprising. Between 1763 and 1775, Emistisiguo had proven himself to be a headman and warrior who had fulfilled most requests made by the British if those requests enabled Anglo-Creek trade to continue with Little Tallassee at its center.

Instructions for Henry Stuart's "public talk" at Little Tallassee also addressed matters of trade. "Confirm the confidence in his Majesty and his Servants to convince them [the Creeks] that their want of Trade and Ammunition is entirely owing to the bad designs of the Rebels," John Stuart told Henry.²⁶ "Whereas by attaching themselves to the King's Interest they will find plenty of all necessaries pouring in upon them from Pensacola and mobile as well as from St. Augustine."²⁷ Stuart procured a large "quantity of ammunition" to be "distributed to the Upper Creeks" in order to bolster this promise which gave Henry's talks "greater weight and influence."²⁸ Henry Stuart had only recently been employed in the King's service and was a stranger to the Creeks compared to his brother whom was a Beloved Man amongst the Upper Creeks.²⁹

The head warrior and principal headman of Little Tallassee had championed forging a southern trade path towards the Gulf Coast long before Henry Stuart arrived with his brother's talk or gifts of ammunition. Emistisiguo foresaw Pensacola and Mobile as a new supply line that would secure Little Tallassee preeminence among the Upper Creek Towns. In early March 1776, during a talk directed to Stuart, Emistisiguo formally

²⁶ John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Saint Augustine, 10/24/1775, CO5/77.

²⁷ John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Saint Augustine, 10/24/1775, CO5/77.

²⁸ John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Saint Augustine, 10/24/1775, CO5/77.

²⁹ "At a Congress of the Principle Chiefs and Warriors of the Upper Creek Nation," 10/29/1771, Pensacola, CO5/73.

declared his plans. “I am going to make a new Path,” Emistisiguo announced to Henry Stuart, while “holding a Strap of White Beads with three Squares of brown in it,” that he had “received form the Coosa King of the Cherokees.”³⁰ “I am now going to forward it to Pensacola,” Emistisiguo explained in reference to the strap, “on account of the Ships going that way.”³¹ The strap Emistisiguo received from the Coosa King was of particular significance to his talk. Emistisiguo’s initial vision of a trade path towards the Gulf Coast only included the Upper Creek towns. The revised plan now not only encompassed the entire Creek Nation, but the Cherokees as well. Emistisiguo summarized his “transnational” trade plan as follows: “Here is Chotey [Chota], this is the Creek Nation, and this is Pensacola, and we hope that the Path will be kept clear and white from Chotey to this nation and from this to Pensacola.”³²

In exchange for British trades supplies, Emistisiguo pledged his and Little Tallassee’s allegiance to Stuart and the British Crown. “I am now talking to my great King, and although we cannot reach him, we all hold out our Hands across the Sea to him,” Emistisiguo stated, a handshake being a metaphor for friendship and peace between the two parties. Regarding the Americans, Emistisiguo continued to turn a deaf ear and desired that the Great King be apprised of this. Presenting a “broad strap of white beads,” Emistisiguo instructed the “Alibama King” to “acquaint the Governors of St. Augustine, Georgia, and Carolina, and their beloved Men that I have heard that the People in these parts have thrown away their Great King’s Talks, but we are not so here, but listen

³⁰ Emistisiguo’s Talk to the Honorable John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 3/2/1776, CO5/77.

³¹ Emistisiguo’s Talk to the Honorable John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 3/2/1776, CO5/77.

³² Chota was the capital city of the Cherokee Nation. Emistisiguo’s Talk to the Honorable John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 3/2/1776, CO5/77.

attentively to what he says.”³³ For the people who “do not agree” or refuse to “give Ear to the Great King’s Talks,” Emistisiguo declared that he then “shall know the great King’s enemies and will look upon them as my Enemies as well.”³⁴ By March 1776, the town of Little Tallassee was the first Creek town to abandon the idea of neutrality and enter a new era of diplomacy, as partners in trade and war with the British during the American Revolution.

Not long after Emistisiguo assured Stuart of Little Tallassee’s allegiance to the British Crown, the Indian Commissioners for the Continental Congress held their first official conference in mid-May. The congress was held at Augusta and was led by American Commissioners George Galphin, John Rea, and Edward Wilkinson, all who had been members of the renowned trade firm *Brown, Rae, and Company*.³⁵ All of the prominent Lower Creeks towns were present, Nitigee, head warrior of Chowalga (Little Coweta) the elected principal speaker. Very few Upper Creeks were present: a testament to Emistisiguo’s continuous ascension in power and prestige. Talks were made on behalf of the Commissioners to win over the Creeks, but they had no goods to accompany them.³⁶

³³ Emistisiguo’s Talk to the Honorable John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 3/2/1776, CO5/77. St. Augustine was still in possession of the British in 1776, so I believe Emistisiguo meant only Georgia, Carolina, and wherever the rest of the American Commissioners were stationed.

³⁴ Emistisiguo’s Talk to the Honorable John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 3/2/1776, CO5/77.

³⁵ The Continental Congress appointed John Walker and Willie Jones to serve as Patriot Indian Commissioners in North Carolina shortly after the conference. See, Michael P. Morris, *George Galphin*, 94.

³⁶ Journal of a Congress between the American Commissioners and the Creeks of Augusta, May 16-19, 1776, Augusta, *GFT*, 183-190.

Instead, the American Commissioners appealed to Creek kinship practices to gain the favor of the Creeks that May. Galphin was married to a Creek woman named Metawney, who was from the prominent Lower Creek town Coweta.³⁷ By way of marriage Galphin was adopted as fictive kin. The importance of this kinship can be seen in how Cussita Mico, a prominent headman of Cussita, formally acknowledged Galphin and his business partner Rae as family during closing statements during the mid-May talks. Not only did the Cussita Mico pledge to his allegiance to the American commissioners, he declared “Messrs. [commissioners George] Galphin and [John] Rae not only as my Elder brothers but as my father and mother.”³⁸

The Commissioners were largely successful. By early July 1776, Lower Creek headman Blue Salt, “got about sixty of the Cussataw Indians to agree to go with him to Savannah,” to hear more of what Galphin and the Commissioners had to say.³⁹ While Sempeyoffee and Escobee of Coweta were not part of Blue Salt’s crew, Taitt informed Superintendent Stuart that he had reason to suspect that their allegiance to the Americans “may soon be gained” as well.⁴⁰ Determined to put Blue Salt’s journey and any other Creek plans to collude with the Americans to an immediate halt, Taitt quickly notified Stuart that he had “got Emistisiguo and a party to agree to go to the Oconee in order to call back these fellows and to watch the motions of the rebels.”⁴¹

³⁷ Michael p. Morris, *George Galphin*, 26.

³⁸ Journal of a Congress between the American Commissioners and the Creeks of Augusta, May 16-19, 1776, Augusta, *GFT*, 190. Captain Aleck was the intermediary during this process.

³⁹ David Taitt to John Stuart, 7/7/1776, Little Tallassee, CO5/77.

⁴⁰ David Taitt to John Stuart, 7/7/1776, Little Tallassee, CO5/77.

⁴¹ David Taitt to John Stuart, 7/7/1776, Little Tallassee, CO5/77.

Handsome Fellow of the Upper Creek town of Okfuskee was just as interested in what the American Commissioners had to say. Just “before the appointed day for the party’s setting out, Handsome Fellow came in from Augusta and called a meeting of the Upper Creeks in order to give out the talks he had heard.”⁴² A seasoned warrior and headman of a prominent town, Handsome Fellow’s talk was welcomed by a large audience. “This prevented most of the people” from joining Emistisiguo’s party, and by the end of the day Taitt reported that “only twelve men accompanied Emistisiguo to the Lower Creeks,” the Okfuskee headmen having done “everything in their power to prevent Emistisiguo proceeding.”⁴³

Little Tallassee’s Northern Neighbors

Throughout the summer and fall of 1776, American Patriot forces from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia invaded Cherokee country. Within only a few months the Cherokees were defeated: their homes, villages, and corn fields destroyed and burned to the ground. Deputy James Cameron estimated the rebels to be “about 4000 men,” a number too great for him to even “prevail upon them [the Cherokees] to make a stand.”⁴⁴ Left only with two options, the Cherokees could elect to send peace overtures to the Americans or flee. The majority chose the latter. By the winter of 1776, Cherokee refugees had poured into Little Tallassee, women and children were starving and in need of shelter.⁴⁵

⁴² David Taitt to John Stuart, 7/7/1776, Little Tallassee, CO5/77.

⁴³ David Taitt to John Stuart, 7/7/1776, Little Tallassee, CO5/77.

⁴⁴ Stuart to Germain, 11/25/1776, Pensacola, CO5/78. Stuart noted to Germain that his information on the incident was provided by an express sent by Cameron “dated the 5th of October from Little Tallassee in the Upper Creeks.”

⁴⁵ Colin G. Calloway, *Revolution in Indian Country*, 43-44.

The Cherokees were not the only friends of the British Crown that had been ousted from their homes and driven South that year. American Patriots grossly outnumbered British Loyalists in both Savannah and Augusta, and Royal Governor James Wright was exiled in 1776.⁴⁶ Patriots forced John Stuart, the British Superintendent of Southeastern Indian Affairs and Beloved Man to the Creeks to leave Charlestown as early as June 1775. By the summer and fall of 1776 the Cherokees fled for their lives, and Patriot leaders had consolidated their control over both South Carolina and Georgia.⁴⁷ Wright, Stuart, and the remaining backcountry British Loyalists relocated to St. Augustine: East and West Florida remained the only British strongholds in the southern part of North America.⁴⁸ David Taitt, deputy Superintendent to Stuart, remained at Little Tallassee, which contributed to the town's and Emistisiguo's important role during the American Revolutionary era.

By November 1776, neutrality in trade and war was no longer an option for Little Tallassee and the Upper Creeks. The destruction of the Cherokee Nation and the proximity of the rebel forces propelled Little Tallassee to formally join the British in their war with the Americans. "I have sat quietly a long time without joining either party, but the Virginians are now very near my nation and I do not want them to come any nearer,"

⁴⁶ Edward J. Cashin, *The King's Rangers: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (New York, New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 40.

⁴⁷ David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier 1540- 1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 289.

⁴⁸ Gary D. Olson, "Thomas Brown, the East Florida Rangers, and the Defense of East Florida," in *Eighteenth Century Florida and the Revolutionary South*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, FL: The University Presses of Florida, 1989), 15-16. Mobile and Baton Rouge also remained in British hands at this time.

Emistisiguo apprised Stuart.⁴⁹ “I told you that if the red warriors to the northward would hold a red stick against the Virginians there, I would hold one against them here,” Emistisiguo told Stuart, the “red stick” was another phrase for a war hatchet and represented the declaration of war. In return for their service, the Creeks expected ample and prompt assistance from the British. “I am in hopes that the Great King will fight strong and not drop the hatchet,” Emistisiguo communicated to Stuart. “I hope we shall not want for ammunition,” but if given ample supplies, Emistisiguo assured the Superintendent that the Creeks would not retract their war declaration: “if we begin [war] we will never leave off until we are desired by you and the rogues conquered.”⁵⁰

The threat of American encroachment on Creek land was not the only driving force behind Emistisiguo’s decision to lead Little Tallassee into war. Protecting the remaining British trading centers held equal weight in Emistisiguo’s mind, especially his long-term vision of Little Tallassee being the nexus of a “new” path to the Gulf Coast for both Creeks and Cherokees. Emistisiguo conveyed his thoughts on the matter succinctly to Stuart: “I know that St. Augustine, Pensacola, and Mobile are the places from which we may expect assistance, and should the Virginians get possession of these places we are ruined.”⁵¹ Emistisiguo’s decision to assist the British in their war against the Americans was not based solely upon loyalty to the English Crown, but as a means to

⁴⁹ Emistisiguo to John Stuart, 11/19/1776, Little Tallassee, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office Series)*, 12: 250-251, ed. K. G. Davies (Great Britain: Colonial Office, 1972-1981). (hereafter, cited as *DAR*). A copy of Emistisiguo’s talk to John Stuart was delivered to Alexander Cameron at Little Tallassee, who then forwarded the talk to Stuart. Translator unknown.

⁵⁰ This conversation has implications for the later “Red Stick Movement” during the the War of 1812. War stick meaning “at war” or “taking up the hatchet.” Emistisiguo to John Stuart, 11/19/1776, Little Tallassee, in *DAR*, 12: 250-251. Quotes on 250.

⁵¹ Emistisiguo to John Stuart, 11/19/1776, Little Tallassee, in *DAR*, 12: 250-251. Quote on 251.

protect Anglo-Creek trade, as well as advance his longstanding agenda to redirect that trade towards the Gulf Coast.

Recruitment

On May 30, 1777, Emistisiguo engineered a conference at Little Tallassee to convince “the chiefs and head warriors of the Upper Creeks” to band together and join the war against the Americans. Emistisiguo was quite persuasive, for the headmen and warriors did not deliberate long before a consensus was reached to send “out a large body of their people against Georgia,” as soon as their annual “Green Corn dance” concluded.⁵² The Upper Creeks also agreed to “immediately send off one of their warriors with a Talk and some Tobacco for the Handsome Fellow,” in hopes to “bring him back” from Ogeechee, Georgia and thwart any further collusion between he, Okfuskee, and the American Commissioners.⁵³

Emistisiguo was not alone in his recruitment efforts. On June 5, 1777 Alexander McGillivray arrived at Little Tallassee “with a message from Sempeyoffee and the Chief of the Cowetas” addressed to Mad Dog, head warrior and prominent headman of the Upper Creek town Tuckabatchee.⁵⁴ The message “required Mad Dog to get the Warriors of Tuckabatchee, Sawanogi, Coosada, and Okchoy Towns to send out men immediately” to assist Coweta “against the settlements of Georiga.”⁵⁵ Mad Dog, already at Little Tallassee for Emistisiguo’s talk there, did not hesitate to fulfil Sempeyoffee’s request.

⁵² David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78. Taitt noted that the meeting began “on the 30th of May.”

⁵³ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁵⁴ This is the earliest mention of Alexander McGillivray at Little Tallassee in the documentary record. Before this he was at Augusta, Georgia. David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁵⁵ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

According to David Taitt, “After Consulting with Emistisiguo,” Mad Dog “set out for Coosada where he met the Chiefs of the Alibamas, Tuckege, and Coosada” towns.⁵⁶ The headmen agreed to join Mad Dog in the proposed frontier raid against the Georgians, “whenever he was ready to lead them.”⁵⁷ Afterwards, Mad Dog “proceeded to the Savannas [Shawnees] who also agreed to go with him and afterwards went home to Tuckabatchee to muster his own people.”⁵⁸ Once Mad Dog organized his warriors, he informed David Taitt that he would return to Little Tallassee to discuss “at what time he would lead these men out,” an indication that even a seasoned warrior such as Mad Dog would not raise the hatchet without discussing his battle plans with Emistisiguo.⁵⁹

Taitt dispatched a letter to Superintendent Stuart apprising him of the plans of Mad Dog, Emistisiguo, and the rest of the Upper Creek headmen and warriors had formulated. Their “design” Taitt wrote Stuart, “is to carry out what he can in a body and afterwards disperse in small parties along the frontier.” The purpose of this, Taitt continued, was to “keep the Georgians in play until the main body of the Nation can turn out” and assist.⁶⁰ Mad Dog led several frontier raids against the Americans, but the

⁵⁶ Coosada was an Alabama town that was located downstream from Little Tallassee. Tuckege was a Koasati town. Recent studies suggest that the two towns most likely spoke the Koasati dialect best described as an offshoot of Muskogean. See, *Sheri Marie Shuck-Hall, Journey to the West: The Alabama and Coushatta Indians* (Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma press, 2008), 31 and 215n60 (Tuskegee) 30-31 (Coosada).

⁵⁷ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁵⁸ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78. There was a Shawnee town amongst the Creeks. Taitt wrote “Savannas,” but in all likelihood meant Shawnee. All of the town’s Mad Dog visited were Upper Creek Towns and Sawanogi was mentioned specifically in Sempeyoffee of Coweta’s request for assistance. Okchai was almost amongst the towns that Sempeyoffee asked Mad Dog to garner assistance from, but for some unknown reason he bypassed the town or Taitt failed to document the visit.

⁵⁹ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁶⁰ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

Creeks did not launch a significant attack against the colony of Georgia, nor defend West and East Florida until the 1780s.⁶¹

The meeting that occurred at Little Tallassee from May 30 to June 5, 1777 did not end with Mad Dog's journey through the Upper Creek Nation. David Taitt reported that during the same conference the headmen "desired to know" the whereabouts of a "Northward belt" and several "tokens" that accompanied it. More specifically, the Creek headmen asked Superintendent Stuart to "forward" the belt on their behalf to the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, as well as "different nations on the Mississippi and Ohio."⁶² Taitt also noted that the belt was also to be sent to the "Shawnee Warrior," in order to "see how they stand affected and what part they have taken in the present dispute." The Creeks were not just interested in the procurement of allies but curious as to what side the Indians to the far north, in particular the Shawnee Nation, had taken in the Revolutionary War.⁶³

The "Northern Belt" served as an example of a new form of "international" or "intertribal" Creek diplomacy and Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee spearheaded it. David Taitt dispatched the belt and requested that it be restored to Little Tallassee, his instructions dictating that the belt be "returned to the nation whence it came."⁶⁴ Creek domestic and foreign policy merged together to take on an international role for the first time in Creek history. More specific to Little Tallassee, Emistisiguo's attempt to gather

⁶¹ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 188-189; Edward J. Cashin, *The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (New York, NY: The University of Fordham Press, 1999), 124-146.

⁶² David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁶³ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

⁶⁴ David Taitt to John Stuart, 6/5/1777, Little Tallassee, CO5/78.

allies outside of the Upper and lower Creek towns was a notable move towards a Pan-Indian alliance.

Lessons in Diplomacy: Alexander McGillivray Intervenes

In September 1777, Alexander McGillivray stumbled upon a plot devised by a number of pro-American Okfuskee warriors to murder David Taitt and the Deputy Indian Superintendent Alexander Cameron.⁶⁵ McGillivray was on the road “by desire of Mr. Taitt to stop the Okfuskee chiefs from going to the rebels,” when he encountered “several parties” of Okfuskee warriors that appeared to be on their way to Little Tallassee. McGillivray questioned the party and “asked them where they were going” but the warriors “refused to answer.” Suspicious of their intentions, McGillivray sent an “express to Mr. Taitt with a caution” that trouble might be coming his way.⁶⁶

Alexander McGillivray persuaded the warriors to put their mission on hold and come down from their horses for a brief parley. After “a good deal of talk” McGillivray “prevailed on the chiefs to return to their homes with the young people,” but the headmen insisted that they were in need of “clothing to last the winter” and continued onward to Little Tallassee.⁶⁷ The Okfuskee headmen, according to McGillivray, plundered several stores at Hickory Ground, but “spared the store at Mr. Taitts.”⁶⁸ McGillivray’s warning must have reached Taitt and Cameron in time, for the two were already on their way to safety to British West Florida by the time the Okfuskee raiders reached Little Tallassee.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Edward J. Cashin, *The King’s Ranger*, 71-81.

⁶⁶ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79.

⁶⁷ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79.

⁶⁸ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79.

⁶⁹ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 82-83.

Whether or not the Okfuskee warriors intended to murder Taitt and Cameron, the destruction of multiple stores in Little Tallassee was enough of a disturbance for Emistisiguo to decide it was time to assemble the Upper Creeks for a second time to discuss the troublesome Okfuskee behavior. Emistisiguo and his British and anti-American counterparts needed allies, not enemies to protect the “new” trade path to the South as well as keep the Virginians (Americans) from destroying the Creek Nation as they had flooded the Cherokees. Rather than conducting the meeting himself, however, Emistisiguo appointed Alexander McGillivray to be the principal speaker of the late September conference at Little Tallassee. McGillivray verified Emistisiguo’s request in a letter he drafted to John Stuart during the meeting. “In a few days I shall have a meeting with all the chiefs of the whole upper towns, Okfuskee, and all,” McGillivray wrote; “I shall give them a very strong talk, as the Big Fellow [Emistisiguo] insists . . . he says my powerful clan will support me,” and “I mean to try.”⁷⁰

Emistisiguo, the headmen and warrior of Little Tallassee, had good reason to appoint Alexander McGillivray to speak on his behalf. By the time of the September conference, McGillivray had proven himself to be a valuable intermediary between the Creeks and Euro-Americans. McGillivray’s intervention with the Okfuskee war party had saved the lives of Taitt, Cameron, and possibly Emistisiguo, which aligned with Little Tallassee’s growing reputation as a center of diplomacy. By the 1770s Little Tallassee had established itself as a “white” (peace) town, and its population largely supported

⁷⁰ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79. The Big Fellow another name for Emistisiguo.

peaceful relations within and outside the Creek Nation.⁷¹ Born a Creek and member of the prominent Wind Clan, Alexander McGillivray had the potential to earn the respect of the people of his home town and the rest of the Creek Confederacy. Although McGillivray had resided at Little Tallassee until he was six, most of his mature years were spent at Charleston and Augusta as an apprentice to the Creek trade empire that his father had built. McGillivray's literacy and knowledge of the Atlantic market by default made him an extremely useful ally to have in Little Tallassee's corner.⁷²

British Superintendent John Stuart agreed with Emistisiguo. Although the exact date is not known, Stuart appointed Alexander McGillivray assistant to David Taitt, deputy Superintendent of Southeastern Indian Affairs, by the time of the conference at Little Tallassee on September 21, 1777.⁷³ A born intermediary, McGillivray accepted the commission. McGillivray's responsibilities as Taitt's assistant were to keep the peace between the British and the Upper Creeks, as well as organize a military alliance throughout the duration of the war. Why Alexander as a young man chose to involve himself in a major war rather than return to Scotland with his Loyalist father remains an open question. Most scholars have speculated that he was far more motivated to engage in a war against the Americans to regain he and his father's business and lands rather than any outstanding affinity for the Creeks.⁷⁴ Regardless, McGillivray had made his choice by returning to his mother's home town of Little Tallassee in Summer 1777. Emistisiguo,

⁷¹ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 83.

⁷² Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 28-29, 76-77. Alexander McGillivray was born in Little Tallassee in 1750 and went to Charleston for a British education. See also, Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 67.

⁷³ J.H. O'Donnell, "Alexander McGillivray: Training for Leadership, 1777-1783," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49 (June 1965), 173-175.

⁷⁴ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 34.

the Upper Creeks, and the British needed all the allies they could get. Once McGillivray arrived, he quickly began to assist in the recruitment of Creek warriors and backcountry loyalists.⁷⁵

Out of their mutual need to protect Anglo-Creek trade, Alexander McGillivray started an apprenticeship under the leadership of Emistisiguo, where the elder headmen and warriors of Little Tallassee instructed McGillivray in the arts of Creek tradition, diplomacy, politics, and lastly, warfare. French Brigadier General Louis LeClerc Milfort reported to have seen Emistisiguo and McGillivray travelling “around the sixty or so towns” in both the Upper and Lower Creek Nations.⁷⁶ Emistisiguo’s intentions were twofold; to familiarize McGillivray with Creek Country as well as demonstrate his support of his chosen student. Alexander McGillivray may have been a member of the Wind Clan by birth, but to most Creeks he was an outsider.

Emistisiguo’s mentorship was essential for Alexander McGillivray to carry out his respective duties as an assistant to David Taitt as well as Creek spokesman. Literacy and command of the English language assisted in peace brokerage between Creeks and Europeans, but without an understanding of Muskogean (Creek) as well as traditional Creek diplomacy, McGillivray’s British education fell flat for both parties. McGillivray also lacked the trust and respect needed by the leading headmen and warriors of both the Upper and Lower Creek towns to serve as a proper intermediary. His mentor,

⁷⁵ The need for backcountry loyalists were equally important to the recruitment of Creek allies. For more information on this subject, see Robert M. Calhoun, “The Floridas, the Western Frontier, and Vermont: Thoughts on the Hinterland Loyalists,” in ed. Samuel Proctor, *Eighteenth Century Florida: Life on the Frontier* (Gainesville, FL: The University Presses of Florida, 1976), 1-15, especially 2-3.

⁷⁶ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 77; Emistisiguo to John Stuart, 11/9/1776, *DAR*, 12:250.

Emistisiguo, as the principal speaker and elected diplomatic liaison on behalf of the Upper Creeks, had proven himself by 1777 to be a master of traditional Creek diplomacy, a skillful orator, and highly respected headman and warrior. The skills that McGillivray learned as an apprenticeship to Emistisiguo during his years in Little Tallassee served as a significant component of his success as an intermediary throughout the American Revolution, as well as a much larger contributor to his rise in popularity as a ‘Beloved Man’ and appointed spokesperson for the Upper Creeks during the 1780s.

Alexander McGillivray was successful in assembling the Upper Creeks, including Okfuskee, the town’s headmen already beginning to “to show signs of repentance” at Little Tallassee on September 21, 1777.⁷⁷ McGillivray wrote to Stuart on his achievement: “The upper town chiefs are now with me. I talked to them today, they express the utmost abhorrence of these disturbances and declared themselves openly against them.”⁷⁸ Most of the towns “were ready to join Mr. Taitt on the intended expedition against the Rebels,” McGillivray added, including the Lower, for “the second man of the Ussithes is now here” and “says the whole lower towns are yet for us.”⁷⁹ McGillivray’s assessment of the Lower Town’s affinity for the British was fairly accurate. David Taitt held a meeting the following month with the Lower Towns and confirmed that all the chiefs were present, “except the Cussitahs.”⁸⁰ Superintendent Stuart was pleased with McGillivray’s service. “I have great hopes and expectations from Mr.

⁷⁷ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79

⁷⁸ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79.

⁷⁹ Copy of a Letter from Mr. Alexander McGillivray to John Stuart, Little Tallassee, 9/21/1777, CO5/79.

⁸⁰ Stuart to Germain, 10/6/1777, Pensacola, CO5/79.

McGillivray's activity and good sense," he wrote to Lord George Germaine shortly after David Taitt's meeting.⁸¹ Emistisiguo was, no doubt, of similar mind.

In mid-January of the new year, Alexander McGillivray, now officially the "assistant Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation," traveled to Pensacola "with a message from the Chiefs of the Oakfuskie" addressed to Stuart.⁸² The new commissioner embraced his role as a Creek diplomat and intermediary. When McGillivray arrived at Pensacola, he presented Stuart with "white beads and tobacco and other symbols of friendship" on behalf of the Okfuskee headmen. According to McGillivray, the Okfuskee headmen "declared their sorrow for what had happened and wished to be forgiven," for their past digressions.⁸³ The message from the Okfuskee headmen also included their "hope the rest of the nation would not be punished for their fault," although this declaration might have been McGillivray's own words; Okfuskee's affinity towards the rest of the Upper Creeks was dubious at best.⁸⁴

Stuart was skeptical of Okfuskee's new loyalty to the British but agreed to entertain the thought of an alliance if the headmen agreed to listen to a talk by deputy David Taitt. After Taitt was sure of their honest intentions, Stuart instructed Taitt to invite the Okfuskees to Pensacola to meet with him personally. Handsome Fellow, the town's leading headman, had died a few months earlier and the Americans had cut all trade with Creeks by March 1777.⁸⁵ Given the situation, McGillivray was "fully

⁸¹ Stuart to Germain, 10/6/1777, Pensacola, CO5/79.

⁸² Stuart to Germain, 1/25/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79

⁸³ Stuart to Germain, 1/25/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79

⁸⁴ Stuart to Germain, 1/25/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79

⁸⁵ Stuart to unknown, 3/5/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79.

persuaded” that the Okfuskees would “accept” the invitation, and left for Little Tallassee shortly after the meeting to relay Stuart’s response.⁸⁶

The Okfuskee headmen arrived at Pensacola on May 19, 1778.⁸⁷ The pro-American towns of Tallassee and Cussita also made the journey to talk with Stuart, the Americans’ inability to supply the towns with trade goods their motivation. The result of the meeting restored Stuart’s trust in the three towns. The Superintendent wrote the following on the matter: “In order to remove any misunderstandings on account of their behavior since when I have had many conferences with them; the result of which was of the strongest assurance of their part of future good behavior.” In addition, Stuart was convinced that Okfuskee, Tallassee, and Cussita would “cut off all commination with the rebels” from that moment on, due in part to “their place whole dependent on supplies from this place [Pensacola].”⁸⁸ There is no reason not to believe Stuart’s assessment of the towns’ loyalty. By 1777, the American Commissioners failed to fulfil their promises of goods in exchange for Creek allegiance to the Patriot cause, which most likely prompted Okfuskee, Tallassee, and Cussita to turn to the British for material goods and payment. The American Revolution was not a Creek fight. Trade, not allegiance to the British or Americans, ruled the hearts and minds of all Creeks during the American

⁸⁶ Stuart to Germain, 1/25/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79. McGillivray returned to Little Tallassee to not only relay Stuart’s response to David Taitt, but most likely Emistisiguo and the rest of the Upper Creek headmen.

⁸⁷ Stuart to Lord George Germain, 5/19/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79.

⁸⁸ Stuart to Lord George Germain, 5/19/1778, Pensacola, CO5/79.

Revolutionary period. Creeks acted primarily from perceptions of their own self-interests, not blind loyalty to Europeans.⁸⁹

St. Augustine: Diplomacy and the War Effort

The spring and summer of 1778 was a difficult time for the British and their Creek allies. After the American victory at Saratoga the previous year and France officially declaring war on England the following year, the rebels began to look towards the South to expand their victories.⁹⁰ Governor Patrick Tonyn of East Florida communicated his fear for the safety of the Southern colonies in a letter to Stuart: “The Carolina and Georgia rebels, said to be near two thousand with artillery, are advancing with intentions to reduce this province. The assistance of the Indians is absolutely necessary in the most speedy and forcible manner.”⁹¹ Governor Tonyn’s concern for his province was not exaggerated. In August 1778, the Continental Army as well as the militias of Georgia and South Carolina had orders from the American Congress to invade St. Augustine.⁹²

Alexander McGillivray confirmed Governor Tonyn’s report. On September 1, 1778, McGillivray wrote Stuart from his post at Little Tallassee that “he received accounts from deserters in Georgia that a large body of the Rebels of about six thousand

⁸⁹ Creek warriors also utilized the context of the American Revolution to achieve military prowess as well as increase sociopolitical prestige as providers through payment, gifts, and promises of trade made by the competing parties. See Greg O’Brien “The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution,” in ed. O’Brien, *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 128-129, 132, 141-142 (Chapter 6).

⁹⁰ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 83.

⁹¹ Governor Tonyn of East Florida to John Stuart, 5/16/1778, St. Augustine, CO5/79.

⁹² Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 83.

men were on their March against St. Augustine.”⁹³ In response Stuart wrote, “considerable parties of the Creek Indians immediately turned out to attack the Frontiers of Georgia and South Carolina,” but “did not massacre women and children, only attacking bodies of the Rebels whenever they found them under Arms.”⁹⁴ The journey to St. Augustine was too far for Creek forces to travel in order to make an impact, but their strategy to lure the rebels away from East Florida through consistent frontier raids was quite successful. The Americans were forced to “abandon several Forts on the Frontiers” and the rebel soldiers in East Florida, having “suffered greatly,” were left with no choice but to retreat.⁹⁵

While intermittent skirmishes rolled on throughout the Georgia and Carolina frontier during the fall 1778, Alexander McGillivray continued to fulfill his role as assistant Commissary to the British Superintendent. Utilizing his Charlestown education, McGillivray apprised Stuart of the Creek war effort through a series of monthly correspondences. McGillivray reported that Creek scouts obtained valuable “intelligence respecting the movement of the Rebels,” on a routine basis and that the “war whoop” continued throughout the Nation.⁹⁶ As long as the “war whoop” continued, McGillivray

⁹³ Report on the State, Temper, and Disposition in the Upper Creek Nation made by Alexander McGillivray assistant Commissary in that nation to the Colonel Stuart Superintendent for the Southern District, 9/1/1778, Little Tallassee, CO5/80.

⁹⁴ Report on the State, Temper, and Disposition in the Upper Creek Nation made by Alexander McGillivray assistant Commissary in that nation to the Colonel Stuart Superintendent for the Southern District, 9/1/1778, Little Tallassee, CO5/80.

⁹⁵ Report on the State, Temper, and Disposition in the Upper Creek Nation made by Alexander McGillivray assistant Commissary in that nation to the Colonel Stuart Superintendent for the Southern District, 9/1/1778, Little Tallassee, CO5/80. For more information on the frontier raids and the American’s attempt to attack St. Augustine, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 84; David Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 314.

⁹⁶ Alexander McGillivray Assistant Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation to Colonel Stuart, 11/20/1778, CO5/80.

explained, the Creeks who “have taken up the hatchet against his enemies and will never bury it until they have orders from you.”⁹⁷

Being the appointed spokesperson on behalf of the Upper Creeks by Emistisiguo, McGillivray was also needed to carry out his duties as diplomatic liaison of Little Tallassee. Part of those tasks were to relay messages from Emistisiguo and the other head warriors of Creek country to Superintendent Stuart. One of these requests was on behalf of Emistisiguo, who desired to speak with Mr. Cameron or “anyone from the Cherokees,” of any information they might have obtained in regards to the movements of the rebels as well as if any of the Indian Nations to the north had agreed to join the Creeks in their fight against the Americans.⁹⁸ Clothing was an additional request of Emistisiguo’s for Stuart, their summer hunt disrupted by continuous warfare. “They expect to be clothed by you,” McGillivray frankly wrote to Superintendent on November 12 later that year.⁹⁹ Emistisiguo’s demands were a testament to the dilemma the Creeks were facing as winter approached, as well as a reminder to the British of their commitment to supply the Creeks in exchange for their service.

Trials of Mobilization: Georgia and McGillivray’s War Debut

In February the following year, the British not only sent the Creeks their long overdue supplies, but also a “considerable force” of British soldiers to Georgia and the

⁹⁷ Report on the State, Temper, and Disposition in the Upper Creek Nation made by Alexander McGillivray assistant Commissary in that nation to the Colonel Stuart Superintendent for the Southern District, 9/1/1778, Little Tallassee, CO5/80.

⁹⁸ Report on the State, Temper, and Disposition in the Upper Creek Nation made by Alexander McGillivray assistant Commissary in that nation to the Colonel Stuart Superintendent for the Southern District, 9/1/1778, Little Tallassee, CO5/80.

⁹⁹ Alexander McGillivray Assistant Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation to Colonel Stuart, 11/20/1778, CO5/80.

Carolinas to assist the Creeks. To “subdue the Rebellious Southern Provinces,” as Stuart and his British counterparts were determined to do, a much larger turnout of Creek warriors than during the assault on St. Augustine was a necessity.¹⁰⁰ David Taitt received Stuart’s instructions on February 1: “You will use your utmost endeavors to collect and march a body of Indians to Augusta and you will provide horses, provisions, and other necessaries which you shall judge required.” Emistisiguo and Alexander McGillivray were to assist Taitt in procuring that “body of Indians.”¹⁰¹

After Emistisiguo, McGillivray, and the rest of the Upper Creek warriors and headmen convened on February 20, 1779 at Little Tallassee, the decision was made by all to send as many war parties they could assemble in time.¹⁰² David Taitt, who was present at the meeting, estimated the number of recruits to be “upwards of 1000” by early Spring. He also reported that he was to “be joined by Mr. William McIntosh, commissary for the Lower Creeks,” whom had recruited a “large body from that part of the Nation.”¹⁰³ The quick mobilization of both Upper and Lower Creeks was a testament to Emistisiguo’s power of persuasion, as well as his student, Alexander McGillivray’s growing popularity.

Alexander McGillivray got the chance to bolster his popularity among the Creeks during his first wartime engagement in April 1779. According to Jacob Moniac, Stuart’s interpreter, McGillivray set out with a party of “about four hundred men red and white”

¹⁰⁰ Talk to the Principal Chiefs, Head Men and Warriors of the Upper and Lower Creek Nation, 2/1/1779, Pensacola, CO5/80. Duval, 85.

¹⁰¹ Instructions to David Taitt deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 2/1/1779, CO5/80.

¹⁰² Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 85.

¹⁰³ Alexander Cameron and Charles Stuart to Lord George Germain, 4/10/1779, Pensacola, in *DAR*, 17:98.

on a mission to secure Augusta.¹⁰⁴ Midway, the Creeks split into smaller parties to attack frontier settlements along the way, and by the time Alexander McGillivray reached Fulson's Fort, near the Little River in Georgia, he was left with a meager party of only "fourty Indains and ten white men."¹⁰⁵ Although the Creeks had time to burn the fort, McGillivray and his party were ambushed "by a party of two hundred rebels," and six Indians and one white man were "killed on the spot."¹⁰⁶ Alexander McGillivray and "a few more of the white people" were able to escape "between the two fires from the Right and Left," the rest of the Indian war party, according to Moniac, "stragglng and going in small parties in Order to Join Mr. McIntosh in the Rear with some Indians of the Lower Creeks."¹⁰⁷ An express message was sent to McGillivray by way of David Taitt that told McGillivray and the remainder of the men to meet General Provost at his Ebenezer encampment, located twenty miles from Savannah on the path to Augusta.¹⁰⁸ Alexander McGillivray had survived his first wartime experience, but the combat he saw was far from glorious nor did it gain him any respect amongst the Creeks.

The British haphazardly coordinated one last attempt to take Georgia during the summer 1779. Information had spread throughout the Southeast that General John Ashe's North Carolinian Troops crossed the Savannah River and planned to sever ties between

¹⁰⁴ Minutes at a Board of the Commissioners for Exercising the Offices of the Superintendent, 4/16/1779, Pensacola, CO5/80. It is noted within the document that the document was "dated (by mistake) the 16th", when it was actually the first. Moniac the Interpreter was also Alexander McGillivray's father in law by way of marriage.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes at a Board of the Commissioners for Exercising the Offices of the Superintendent, 4/19/1779, Pensacola, CO5/80.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes at a Board of the Commissioners for Exercising the Offices of the Superintendent, 4/19/1779, Pensacola, CO5/80.

¹⁰⁷ Minutes at a Board of the Commissioners for Exercising the Offices of the Superintendent, 4/16/1779, Pensacola, CO5/80.

¹⁰⁸ Shaw to Germain, 8/7/1779, *DAR*, 9: 183-4.

the Creeks and the British army at Brier Creek. General Provost assembled a body of “one hundred and twenty Creeks” to march towards the enemy, but most of those Creeks quickly left the force and returned to their homes after the arrival of more American troops under General Benjamin Lincoln.¹⁰⁹ Disorganized, inadequately supplied, and undermanned, the Creeks and their British counterparts had failed to come together and win Georgia.

The Battle for the Gulf Coast

On June 21, 1779, the Spanish officially declared war on England. Determined to win back the territory Spain lost after the Seven Years War, Florida and the Gulf Coast became the central deep South theatre of war during the remaining years of the American Revolution. Preoccupied with the rebellion to the North between 1775 and 1778, the British government had neglected Florida in manpower, resources, and finances. British leaders prized their sugar islands over West Florida, viewing Pensacola only as a potential base to capture New Orleans. The trade hubs of Mobile and Baton Rouge were for the most part ignored as Spain was an unanticipated enemy during America’s war for independence. Baton Rouge quickly fell to Spanish forces in September of 1779, as did the remaining British posts along the entire Mississippi River. Mobile was captured by the Spanish in February of the following year, which left Pensacola vulnerable and in immediate danger.¹¹⁰ [See Figure 7.]

¹⁰⁹ Charles Shaw to Lord George Germain, 8/7/1779, *DAR*, 9:184; Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 87-88.

¹¹⁰ For a short summary on Spain’s quick entrance to the war, see “Introduction” in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaird (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), Vol. 2, XXXVII-XXXI (Hereafter cited as *SMV*). For information on the Choctaw involvement in the battle of Pensacola, See Greg O’Brien “The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution,” in ed. O’Brien, *Pre-*

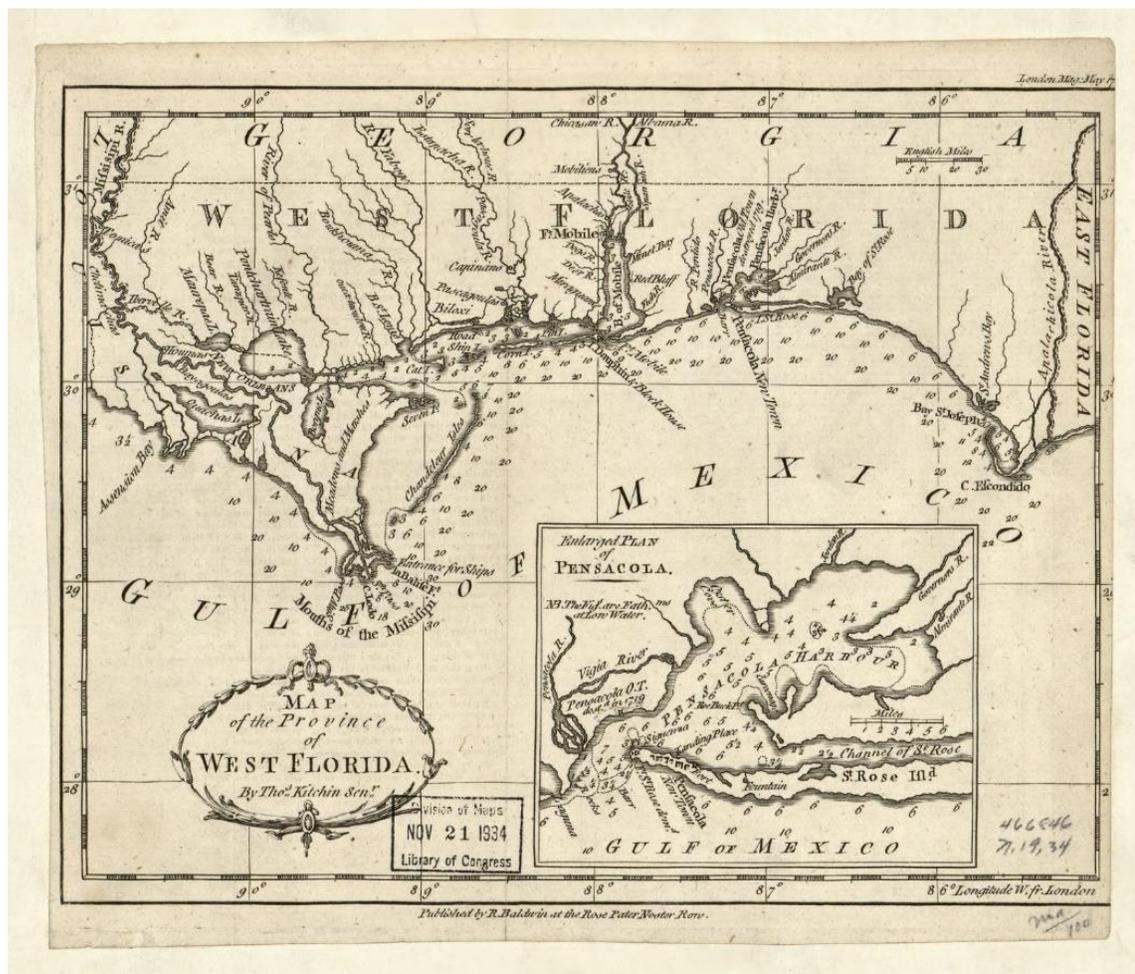


Figure 7. *Map of the Province of West Florida*. Kitchen, Thomas, 1718-1784. Taken from the *London Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*. (May 1781), vol. 50, 240. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014589388/>

News of the fall of Mobile and Spain's plans to capture Pensacola reached Little Tallassee within less than a month's time. Emistisiguo's terms from the start of the Creek-British Revolutionary wartime alliance were simple: service in exchange for Gulf

Removal Choctaw History, 123-43 (Chapter 6). In regards to Britain's neglect of Florida, see Robin F. A. Fabel, "West Florida and the British Strategy in the American Revolution," in *Eighteenth Century Florida and the Revolutionary South*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville: FL, The University Presses of Florida, 1978), 49-53, 65. For the most recent summary of the Battle of Pensacola, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 188-223 (Chapter Thirteen).

coast trade. If the fall of Mobile was not enough to persuade the Creeks to unite and fight to protect that very trade, the threat of Pensacola having the same fate was. In March 1780, Alexander McGillivray received an “express from major general Campbell” that informed him that “on February 10 a Spanish fleet of fourteen” was on its way from “Mobile Bay and New Orleans” to seize Pensacola.¹¹¹ Emistisiguo and Alexander McGillivray gathered a force of about six hundred Upper Creek warriors and set out for Pensacola on March 20 of the same month.¹¹² William McIntosh, Commissary to the Lower Creek’s followed McGillivray and Emistisiguo’s lead: “The Upper Creeks set off for Pensacola this day and I propose setting out the 28th instant with 100 Cowetah and shall take the towns as I go.”¹¹³ By May, as many as “between fifteen hundred and two thousand Creeks” were reported to have arrived in West Florida.¹¹⁴ The large turnout was an example of Emistisiguo and McGillivray’s combined powers of persuasion.

While droves of Creek warriors rode to Pensacola’s aid throughout 1780, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown counted only “a body of about three hundred and fifty” Creeks that May in “his service” to take on the Americans at Augusta. The number doubled to “about 450 Creeks Indians” by September, after Brown sent out an “express to

¹¹¹ A Copy of a letter from Alexander McGillivray, Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation to Superintendent, 3/25/1780, Little Tallassee, CO5/81.

¹¹² A Copy of a letter from Alexander McGillivray, Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation to Superintendent, 3/25/1780, Little Tallassee, CO5/81;

¹¹³ Extract from William McIntosh Commissary in the lower Creek nation to superintendent, dated little Coweta, 3/20/1780, CO5/81.

¹¹⁴ The number of Creeks was probably closer to “between eleven and twelve hundred men.” See, Alexander McGillivray to Brown, 5/15/1780, Pensacola, CO5/81; Liut-Colonel Thomas Brown to Lord George Germain, 5/25/1780, in *DAR*, 18:99. Two hundred of that count were most definitely Lower Creeks.

the disaffected Chiefs of the Creek Nation” to meet him at Augusta.¹¹⁵ McGillivray defied orders to report to Augusta with a larger body of Creeks, “assistance” being “more needed at west Florida,” he told the Superintendent.¹¹⁶ The significance of McGillivray’s statement lies not in whether or not Augusta or Pensacola was in more immediate danger in 1780, but more in the fact that Pensacola held more value to Little Tallassee. Okfuskee and Tallassee, the two “disaffected” Upper Creek towns that longed to preserve the “Great Old Path” to Augusta most likely made up the 450 warriors Brown spoke of.

The large body of Creek warriors present at Pensacola saved the British post in 1780.¹¹⁷ By June of 1780, when no Spanish troops had arrived, many Creeks returned to their homes. Consumed by fears of Spanish piracy and warfare, few British merchant ships sailed to Pensacola and food and supplies became scarce. The gifts that were promised to the Creeks in return for their service thus never arrived, and the annual Creek Green Corn Harvest was quickly approaching. Given the fact that neither the Spanish nor the Americans had made any attempt on the post, the Creeks disbanded.¹¹⁸ Alexander McGillivray was reported to have been one of the last to return home, his salary as

¹¹⁵ Liut-Colonel Thomas Brown to Lord George Germain, 5/25/1780, Savannah, *DAR*, 18:99; Governor Sir James Wright to Lord George Germain, 9/18/1780, Savannah, *DAR*, 18:167.

¹¹⁶ A Copy of a letter from Alexander McGillivray, Commissary in the Upper Creek Nation to Superintendent, 3/25/1780, Little Tallassee, CO5/81.

¹¹⁷ James H. O’Donnell III makes an excellent argument for this case. See his article, “The Florida Revolutionary Indian Frontier: Abode of the blessed or Field of Battle?” in ed. Samuel Proctor, *Eighteenth Century Florida: Life in the Frontier* (Gainesville, FL: The University Presses of Florida, 1976), 60-74, 67 in particular.

¹¹⁸ The Cherokee and Choctaws that assembled to protect St. Augustine also returned home by June of 1780. See, Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 182.

Commissary to continue to recruit Creek allies the most probable motivation for him to remain so long.¹¹⁹

The siege of Pensacola took place approximately one year later, between late February and May 1781. Without Creek protection, Pensacola was significantly undermanned. At the time of the Spanish attack, Pensacola was manned by diseased garrisons, a small number of troops, Africans (slave and free), unreliable loyalist refugees and local citizens. The best defense for Pensacola was Hessian mercenary units and the British navy, but ships failed to arrive on time when Spanish General Bernardo de Galvez landed at Pensacola on April 19, 1781 with 7000 or more fresh troops or more from Havana.¹²⁰ Galvez's forces also included French and African Louisianans, Irish troops, and the French navy. Alexander McGillivray returned to Pensacola on April 8, but only with "about forty" Creeks, compared to the near fifteen hundred warriors he and Emistisiguo had recruited the previous year. Alexander Cameron did report that a total of "500" Indians composed of Chickasaws and Choctaws accompanied McGillivray.¹²¹ Despite the low Creek turn out, a significant body of Southeastern Indians did arrive at Pensacola.

In fact, by the time General Galvez landed at Pensacola on April 19, a total of approximately two thousand soldiers both Indian and white arrived to defend Pensacola.

¹¹⁹ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 180-181. According to McGillivray, his salary was "fixed at 10 pounds a day." See Alexander McGillivray to Brown, 5/15/1780, Pensacola, CO5/81. For more information on the involvement of Hessian troops as well as other minor participants in both the British and Spanish forces at Pensacola, see also, Greg O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," in ed. O'Brien, *Pre-Choctaw Removal*, 123-124, 128 (Chapter 6).

¹²⁰ Robin F. A. Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 65-67; *SMV*, Vol. 2, XXX-XXXI.

¹²¹ Envoys on the Tallapoosa River Upper Creeks by Alexander Cameron, 5/27/1781, CO5/82.

The late arrivals included Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles.¹²²

Emistisiguo's vision of a pan-Indian alliance on behalf of British to defend Gulf trade may not have been as large as he had planned, but the turnout itself was significant.

However, the British supplies of food and ammunition in exchange for service were meager. There was also an outbreak of smallpox within Creek country along with crop failure.¹²³ The Southeastern Indians of Little Tallassee that defended Pensacola in April and May 1781 were there for one reason and one reason only; protection of the Gulf Coast trade.

Despite Indian allies, Pensacola fell quickly to the large number of Spanish forces. On May 8, the British Fort George was under heavy artillery fire and the powdered magazine exploded. The explosion killed nearly 100 men and the chaos of the Spanish artillery continued to bombard Pensacola. General Campbell officially surrendered two days later, leaving the Gulf Coast entirely in the hands of the Spanish. Afterwards, Alexander McGillivray demanded that Alexander Cameron write down the Creek's participation in the siege, the warriors' bravery, honor, and commitment all were to be included. Whether McGillivray had the events recorded for his own personal fame or to honor the Creek commitment to Pensacola is questionable. Regardless, Cameron agreed, and the written narrative of the Creek defense of Pensacola became a monumental break from the use of traditional Creek oral history.¹²⁴ [See Figure 8.]

¹²² Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 205.

¹²³ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 205-206.

¹²⁴ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 216-217. Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, *DAR*, 20:150.



Figure 8. *The Taking of Pensacola*, Engraved by H. G. Berteaux and Nicolas Ponce, Paris, 1784. Rare Book Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Taken from Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York, Random House Press, 2015), 215.

The Death of Emistisiguo and the Defeat of the British

Just a few months later, after a loss for the British at the Battle of Yorktown, General Cornwallis surrendered to the French and the Americans on October 19, 1781. Despite the defeat at Yorktown, the Southeastern Indians and their British counterparts refused to give up. Just as Emistisiguo envisioned, Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, loyalists and back country settlers all joined together and continued to raid the western edge of the southern states. The raids continued well into the summer of the

following year, until Emistisiguo and the rest of the Upper Creek headmen received word that the rebels (both French and American) were besieging Savannah. The Americans had attempted to siege Savannah in 1779, but it remained largely under British control until the winter of 1781-82, when the Americans under General Anthony Wayne attempted to strip the British of one of their last strongholds along the east coast.¹²⁵ Alarmed that the last British-Creek trading post would be destroyed, Emistisiguo “immediately sent off [head warrior of the Upper Creeks] with “one hundred and fifty chosen Indians.”¹²⁶ According to Lieutenant Brown, Emistisiguo and his warriors “marched near five hundred miles” and soon learned that “the rebel army under General Wayne was encamped within five miles of the town.” The Creeks, under the leadership of Emistisiguo, “not disheartened at this intelligence” were “determined to cut a passage through the rebel army or perish in the attempt.”¹²⁷ Although the Creeks estimated that they killed or wounded 100 or so rebels, there were a total of seventeen Creek casualties. “The brave, gallant Emistisicho,” was one of those casualties, along with Savannah. Shortly after, the British along with the Creek survivors evacuated Savannah, and sailed to the only remaining British stronghold in the post-war South: St. Augustine.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ For more information on the American’s extended efforts between 1779 to 1782 to successfully besiege Savannah, see David Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma, 1967), 309-325.

¹²⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown to Sir Guy Carleton, 10/9/1782, St. Augustine, Report on American manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain, Vol. 3, 1972, 157.

¹²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown to Sir Guy Carleton, 10/9/1782, St. Augustine, Report on American manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain, Vol. 3, 1972, 157. For a detailed account on the Creeks last effort to take Savannah and Emistisiguo’s death, see David Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 319-322.

¹²⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown to Sir Guy Carleton, 10/9/1782, St. Augustine, Report on American manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain, Vol. 3, 1972, 157; Liuet-Colonel Thomas Brown to Earl of Shelburne, 9/25/1782, Fort Picolata, St. Johns River, *DAR*, 20:122-123. Kathleen Duval reports Emistisiguo’s death to have taken place on Jun 24th, 1782. See, 228-229. The Creeks were joined by the last

In late 1782, the Spanish, French, British, and American representatives gathered together in Paris to negotiate an end to the Revolutionary War and redraw the lines defining the land each empire owned. Even though both Southern and Northern Indians had fought extensively in the very same war, not a single Indian representative was welcomed to join. The main topic of discussion during the Treaty of Paris was boundary lines. The Thirteen American colonies that rebelled negotiated control over their territory, free navigation of the Mississippi River and the western boundary of the United States as far south as the thirty-first degree of north latitude. The Southern boundary was agreed to follow that parallel to the Apalachicola or Chattahoochee River. On September 3, 1783, England ceded both East and West Florida to Spain, but their treaty did not provide any definitive boundary lines. In addition, a secret article was embedded in the Treaty between England and the United States that confirmed the thirty-first parallel to be the border between the new nation and West Florida. Spain had no knowledge of this article, and the Treaty of Paris ended without a clear boundary between the United States and Spanish Florida, as well as disagreements about American use of the Mississippi River.¹²⁹

The English defeat along with the death of Emistisiguo marked the end of an era. In December of 1783, only a few months after England had ceded Florida to Spain, the Upper Creeks held a talk at Little Tallassee. During the talk, they not only expressed their disbelief in regards to the British evacuation of Pensacola and Mobile, but their sentiments of abandonment by a Nation they regarded as fictive kin: “We are now in

of the British loyalists, as well as bands of Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees in East Florida throughout 1782 to early 1783.

¹²⁹ *SMV*, Vol. 4, XII. Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 229-238.

great distress- Our hearts are heavy-our beloved Whiteman have left the Land . . . Our fathers told us that the English were Men- that their hearts were good and their Arms Strong. We believed them.”¹³⁰ “You tell us that the Sun is darkened” and that “you believe the English will soon cross the Great Water,” the headmen continued. “Father- we know you will not tell a lye- if this is the Talk, we will follow our friends for while we live we will not take a Spaniard or a Virginian by the hand.”¹³¹

The Upper and Lower Creek headmen had no choice but to make an alliance with one of their new neighbors. McGillivray, following Emistisiguo’s faith in Gulf Coast Trade, looked to Spain for the continuation of Creek Trade. His decision was by no means unanimous. The Tame King of Tallassee as well as the Fat King of Cussita foresaw a more secure future with the new American Republic and the restoration of the “Great Old Tye” towards the former trade ports and posts of Charlestown, Augusta, and Savannah. The end of the American Revolution in 1783 ushered in a new set of challenges, both political and economic, internal and external for the Creek Confederacy. The Upper and Lower towns that had unified to protect English trade began to splinter in a state of uncertainty.

Emistisiguo left behind a diplomatic legacy that provided a clear blueprint for all Creeks to navigate a new ‘American’ world of uncertainty. Emistisiguo spent his entire political career as a Creek warrior and headman prioritizing and protecting Creek trade based out of the Gulf Coast over all other civil and foreign concerns throughout the mid-

¹³⁰ Sustenance of a Talk from the Chiefs of the Upper Creeks To Lieut. Colonel Brown Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 12/30/1783, Tallassie, CO5/82.

¹³¹ Sustenance of a Talk from the Chiefs of the Upper Creeks To Lieut. Colonel Brown Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 12/30/1783, Tallassie, CO5/82.

to-late eighteenth century. Spain's grip on the Gulf Coast did not mean the end of Creek trade, it simply indicated a change in European partners. Alexander McGillivray, utilizing the knowledge acquired from Emistisiguo in addition to the unity the former headman had instilled between the Creeks and Southeastern Indians to protect that trade, embraced the challenge.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW LEADER?

Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee spent most of his life transforming a small trading outpost into a Creek town that not only became the center of Anglo-Creek trade, but also a sacred and diplomatic space within the heart of Creek Country. After his death, however, the memory of his legacy was quickly supplanted by Alexander McGillivray, who “is probably the best-known Creek in the history of the Creek Confederacy.”¹ Emistisiguo’s choice to select McGillivray as Little Tallassee’s principal spokesperson and Creek intermediary was well calculated. Due to McGillivray’s education, literacy in language and economics, and heightened understanding of the Anglo-Creek trade, Emistisiguo most likely presumed he would serve his town and the interest of the Creeks well. McGillivray carried out his duties, but his power and influence never went beyond the role the Creeks carved out for him within their society. All decisions, treaties, land cessions, were all predetermined by the headmen and warriors of the individual towns that made up the Creek Confederacy. There was no unified Creek “Nation” and Alexander McGillivray was far from being the sole or most important leader among the Creeks. The real movers and shakers of Creek history during the 1780s remained the Creek village headmen, and the politics of Little Tallassee and its American and Spanish neighbors during this period demonstrate this fact.

¹ See Michael Green, “Alexander McGillivray,” in *David Edmunds, American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 41-61, quote on 41.

Alexander McGillivray was first and foremost a Creek trader, not a headman or warrior. He was a representative of the British trade firm *Panton, Leslie, and Company*, as well as a replacement for his father, Lachlan McGillivray, as a primary facilitator of Euro-Creek trade throughout the post-revolutionary era until his death in 1793.

Alexander's connections to the world of trade coupled with his apprenticeship to Emistisiguo, allowed him to assume the well-respected role as the Upper Creek's primary spokesperson and diplomatic intermediary. Thus, Alexander was welcomed by many of the Upper Creek towns to serve in an advisory capacity during the 1780s, but that was the extent of his authority within Creek Country.

Alexander McGillivray spent his entire life in an effort to grasp unobtainable achieve power and influence among the Creeks, and as a result abused his advisory position. By the mid-1780s, Panton, Leslie, and Company held a monopoly over the Southeastern Indian trade, and McGillivray turned to violent and manipulative tactics to protect his personal interests within that trade. These acts included not only embargoed trade on towns who did not support McGillivray's desire for power among the Creeks, but also organized warfare against the state of Georgia and the United States to extract a steady and continued profit from that trade. McGillivray's support for military mobilization was backed by his attempt to unify the Creeks into a much larger, cohesive "Nation." Throughout McGillivray's time as advisor and resident trader to the Upper Creeks, McGillivray championed the idea that the best chance of Creek self-preservation in the face of American expansion was to create a strong centralized government. Although this idea has been interpreted by scholars as a strategy to protect Creek

sovereignty, further analysis exemplifies that McGillivray championed Creek sovereignty only when it proved to be advantageous to his own personal economic and political agenda. A unified Creek ‘Nation’ at war with the United States was an insurance policy to protect his monopoly over Creek trade. As early as 1784, McGillivray was granted complete control over Panton, Leslie, and Company’s trade within the Creek Nation. This information paired with McGillivray’s unsavory actions to promote and protect his personal trade investments among the Creeks reveal an individual who prioritized business and private wealth over the townspeople of Little Tallassee and the interests of both Upper and Lower Creeks as a whole.²

The death of Emistisiguo essentially marked the end of Little Tallassee as a leading Creek town and sacred space. Sources do not indicate any significant headman or warrior to have taken Emistisiguo’s place, only that McGillivray’s connections to the Euro-Creek trade and spokesman capabilities allowed him to become the face of Little Tallassee in name only. Unfortunately, McGillivray’s singular focus on trade slowly eroded all traditional components that made Little Tallassee a Creek town, not a mere trade depot. McGillivray’s fixation on trade was in his own self-interest but not necessarily in the best interests of the Creeks. Lacking the respect, position, and authority

²For examples of McGillivray’s compulsory efforts to unify the Creeks, see Michael D. Green, “Alexander McGillivray,” in *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity*, ed. David Edmunds (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 59-60; Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House Press, 2016), 253-255. On McGillivray’s violent tactics to preserve his and Panton, Leslie, and Company’s monopoly on Creek trade, see also Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733- 1816* (Cambridge University of Press, 1999), Chapters Three and Four; Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 33-35, 34 for control over Panton, Leslie, and Company’s trade with the Creeks.

to unite the Creeks, McGillivray utilized his hold over Creek trade to force individual Creek towns to conform to a foreign and uniform style of government they simply did not want. Alexander McGillivray was unsuccessful in his quest for power and authority. In fact, not only did he make enemies with many of the Creek towns he was trying to unite, but his singular and militarized focus on trade stripped Little Tallassee of all elements that defined a sacred space, a place of diplomacy, and a Creek town.³

The Identity of Alexander McGillivray

By 1783, Alexander McGillivray was often referred to as *Isti atcagagi thlucco* (Great Beloved Man) by the Upper Creeks who knew him best. The title was a significant reflection of McGillivray's position in Creek society, as he was not a chief but someone of importance that was entitled by the Creeks to sit on the sidelines during town meetings and offer advice. Creek Country was full of Beloved Men, which is why McGillivray's title was accompanied by the word, *thlucco*, to distinguish him as Little Tallassee's and the neighboring Upper Creek town's elected spokesperson as well as advisor. The title was a deliberate reminder orchestrated by leading Creek headmen to remind Alexander McGillivray of his fixed place and obligations within Creek society.⁴

McGillivray left behind countless letters and correspondence between both Spanish and American officials, where he presented his audience with an image of

³ By the time of McGillivray's death in 1793, Tuckabatchee had replaced Little Tallassee as the center of Upper Creek affairs. The Alabamas and the Kosatis as well as the "westernmost partners in the Confederacy" were ignored by both the Upper and Lower Creek towns after McGillivray's passing. See, Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 40. I argue throughout this chapter, however, that Little Tallassee fell out of favor with the Upper Creeks as early as the mid to late 1780s. There is no scholarship or evidence that I know of that identifies a headman or warrior to replace and or succeed Emistisiguo.

⁴ Michael D. Green, "Alexander McGillivray," 41-43, 49. Emistisiguo was the headman who most likely engineered McGillivray's title, though this point remains unclear.

himself as an invaluable Creek leader. Closer analysis of Spanish and lesser-known English sources, however, prove McGillivray's writings to be tainted with self-aggrandizement and fueled with grand illusions of power and authority within Creek society. The majority of historians have continued to take Alexander McGillivray's personal writings at face value, and the image of McGillivray as a renowned Creek representative and adept politician continue to appear in current historiography.⁵ Placed within historical context, McGillivray's correspondence, as well as reexamined documentary evidence, allows one to unravel the complexities of McGillivray's identity as both a Creek and a Mestizo. Deeply alienated from Creek society for the majority of his life, McGillivray's identity resembled a white landed planter, a Scots trader and businessman, but not a Creek headman or warrior.⁶

Alexander McGillivray was only six years of age when he moved away from his birth town of Little Tallassee, his mother Sehay, and sisters.⁷ McGillivray relocated (with his biological father), Lachlan, to the McGillivray family's plantation and trading post just north of Augusta. It was there that McGillivray observed the life of a landed planter, where he watched his father's slaves work in the fields, the gristmill, serve as boatmen

⁵ The most recent publication to tackle this subject is Kathleen DuVal's, *Independence Lost*. Although DuVal does imply throughout her book that McGillivray may have had less power than former historians have thought, she is inconsistent in her analysis. McGillivray is admitted to never have been a chief, but at the same time credited to be a great diplomat and politician. Yet, the ideas behind all McGillivray's policies were not his own. They were Emistisiguo's or the surrounding Creek headmen and warriors, which will be discussed throughout the duration of this chapter.

⁶ Claudio Saunt is the first historian to make this argument. See, Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 67-90. See 68-69 specifically on historians' failure to recognize the bias behind McGillivray's writings and the illusion of power and authority he held among the Creeks. McGillivray's volumes of correspondences are still worthy of analysis, as they do offer invaluable insight to not only the mind of the man who wrote them, but Creek society during the late eighteenth century.

⁷ Historians debate the actual age of McGillivray when he left Little Tallassee. Kathleen DuVal, however, has made the best case for him being six years of age. See, Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 28.

and dress deer hides daily. In the early 1760s, Alexander relocated to his (Paternal Uncle) John Bullock's house in Charles Town and learned to read and write in not only English, but Latin and Greek. By 1765, McGillivray moved to his third residence, Vale Royal, a plantation just outside of Savannah. While Alexander was at Vale Royal he served as an apprentice to the notable shipping company *Inglis and Hall*, where he learned to understand the economics behind the Anglo-Creek skin and fur trade. At an age when Creek boys transitioned into adulthood by earning war names and titles, Alexander McGillivray spent his formative years observing the daily operations of a Southern plantation and keeping ledgers of the deerskins he would have been carrying to Augusta or Charles Town himself if he were to have remained in Little Tallassee.⁸ Although it was Creek tradition for male children to be raised by their maternal uncles (mother's brother), Sehoi most likely married Lachlan McGillivray to secure access to British trade goods. Sehoi and his family's choice to immerse Alexander at a young age in the world of that trade is not surprising. Literacy as well as indispensable knowledge of British trade was advantageous not only to young McGillivray, but his family and town of Little Tallassee as well.

As an adult, Alexander McGillivray was the embodiment of a Southern Gentleman. He Alexander McGillivray owned several plantations, one near the colonial settlement known as Tensaw, which was located above Little River near Mobile, and the second at his home town of Little Tallassee. At Little Tallassee, McGillivray owned

⁸ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 28-29; Andrew Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 32.

about sixty black slaves, several stocks of horses, hogs, and cattle, and employed an overseer by the name of William Walker for his plantation.⁹ McGillivray's house was built in an English clapboard style, very similar to his brother in law's residence (George Colbert) built in 1790. Colbert claimed that the total cost of the house's construction was \$650 dollars, which was near the equivalent of 850 deerskins.¹⁰

Alienated from his Creek roots, McGillivray did not speak, look, or act like a traditional Creek male. McGillivray employed an interpreter throughout his adult years in Creek country, Muskogean being a foreign language to him in comparison to English and classic languages such as Greek and Latin.¹¹ Traditional Creek warriors also had tattoos on their limbs and torso that depicted their victories in warfare or hunting.¹² McGillivray abstained applying any type of tattoos to his body, and he never participated in a victorious hunt or particular battle that might have been worth marking.¹³ McGillivray

⁹ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 70-71.

¹⁰ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 71-72.

¹¹ James Moniac was the most notable of all his interpreters and was also his Father in Law. For more on Moniac and McGillivray's interpreters, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 87, Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders on the Old Southwest Frontier 1716-1815* (Montgomery, AL: New South Books, 2007), 219 & 267; McGillivray to O'Neil, 4/4/1787, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 147-148;

¹² William Bartram, "Travels of William Bartram April 1773- October 1776", in *William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians*, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 122 & 144. Bartram described the tattoos to be of "bluish, lead, or indigo color" and often depicted "a sketch of a landscape representing an engagement of battle with their enemy, or some creature of the chase." Quote on 144.

¹³ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 75. Alexander McGillivray did participate in small skirmish during the American Revolution (1776) and was present at battle of Pensacola (1781). There are multiple accounts of his participation in the skirmish, but all indicate that he "fled to safety" whether out of fear or pure luck is debatable. As far as Pensacola, McGillivray primarily served as a recruiter for Creek and British allies. After the American Revolution, McGillivray had no interest in war for he left all military operations to his Upper Creek allies such as Red Shoes or Mad Dog. Milford wrote, "Right at the very beginning of the engagement, McGillivray hid in the underbrush where he remained til nightfall." Three days later, McGillivray remarked to Milford "he did not like to witness such affairs, that never again would he be caught in a similar situation." Quotes and summary found in Louis LeClerc de Milford, *Memoir: or A Cursory Glance at My Different Travels & My Sojourn in the Creek Nation*, trans. Geraldine De Courcy, ed., John Francis McDermott (Chicago, IL: The Lakeside Press, 1956), 94-95. About simply retreating and

also conceptualized time according to the European calendar rather than the annual Creek Busk, and drafted a will at the time of his death in 1793 that left his property to his sons, instead of abiding by Creek matrilineal customs and leaving his land to his sisters and women of the Wind Clan.¹⁴ These actions further exemplified McGillivray's identity as representative of a Scottish trader, similar to that of his paternal father Lachlan McGillivray.

Alexander McGillivray was not a well man and even if he had desired to participate in long hunts, gain military prowess, or a ball game, his health most likely prevented it. He was riddled with rheumatism, gout, headaches, and was confined to his bed for weeks at a time. In August 1786, McGillivray described his ill health in vivid detail: "The Fever has reduced me very low & it has been Succeeded by a breaking out over my body. I'm Apprehensive that I shall lose all my finger Nails & tis with much difficulty, that I can take the pen in my hand to write."¹⁵ Two years earlier, McGillivray described his condition to be so severe "that made it totally impossible for me to mount a horse."¹⁶ Between 1791 and 1792, McGillivray complained that "his constant companion

his role in the battle of Pensacola, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 87 and 205-217. On delegating military duties, see Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 5, as well as McGillivray's correspondence, "War on the Cumberland and Georgia", in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 153-166. In one incident, McGillivray sends Emistisiguo's brother to "ravage the settlement of Cumberland and destroy their houses and plantations." McGillivray remarked on the "Big Fellow's" brother to be someone to "take some notice of," McGillivray to O'Neil, 6/10/1787, in John Walter Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, ed. Will J. Bauer, Jr. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1938, reprinted Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 155. (hereafter Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*).

¹⁴ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 84 (time) 89 (will). Initially, McGillivray's wishes were fulfilled, until his sisters, Sophia Durant and Sehoj Weatherford (both married to traders) who lived in Creek Country, confiscated all of Alexander McGillivray's land, slaves, and livestock. For more on the McGillivray's sisters' success on maintaining Creek tradition regarding McGillivray's will, see also, Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, 8/27/1809, in *Letters, Journals, and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins*, Two Vols., ed. C.L. Grant (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1980), 2:556. (Hereafter *LBH*, Vol. number, Page(s)).

¹⁵ McGillivray to O'Neil, 8/12/1786, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 127-128.

¹⁶ McGillivray to McLatchy, 9/18/1784, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 81n29.

the Rheumatism has made a fresh attack upon me,” and “every periodical attack” of the gout grew “more severe & longer in continuance.” McGillivray elaborated on the gravity of his illness to William Panton: “It now mounts from my feet to my knees & [I] am still confined to the fireside.”¹⁷ McGillivray was so often plagued with pain and stiffness, that his joints did not allow him to carry out every day activities that remotely resembled a powerful headman or warrior.¹⁸ Given these circumstances, it is hard to imagine any Creek warrior seeing McGillivray as an equal or a man worthy of respect outside his trade connections, literacy, and knowledge passed down to him by Emistisiguo.

McGillivray was Little Tallassee’s spokesperson and served the Creeks as a valuable intermediary throughout the course of the post-Revolutionary war period. He assisted in peace alliances with Spain, utilized his connections to Panton, Leslie, and Company to preserve Gulf Coast trade, and through many correspondences to both the Americans and Spaniards was able to communicate the desires of many Creek men and women. However, Alexander McGillivray had little personal attachment to the Creeks and was a man who acted mostly out of self-interest from the very day he relocated to Little Tallassee. The history of Little Tallassee and the Creeks during the Post-Revolutionary War period is multi layered like an onion, the truth buried under the voluminous written records of a man who projected an image that reflected an unrealistic amount of power and authority.

¹⁷ Amos J. Wright, Jr., *The McGillivray and McIntosh Traders*, 255. For quotes, see Caughey, McGillivray of the Creeks, pages 322-323 (Rheumatism), 348 (Gout & confined to fireside).

¹⁸ Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 3-4, 43, 52-56. Alexander McGillivray died at the age of 34 of his prolonged illness. See, Panton to Carondelet, 2/20/1793, Pensacola, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 353-354.

The Treaty of Augusta 1783

American Commissioners organized a series of meetings between 1781 and 1783 inviting Upper and Lower Creeks to forge a trade alliance with the new American Republic. Two notable headmen accepted the American's invitations. Hopothle Mico (better known as Tame King or Tallassee King) of the Upper town of Big Tallassee was one of these headmen, and Fat King (Neha Mico) of the Lower town of Cussita was the second.¹⁹ The attendance of these prominent headmen during these meetings proves that not all Creek towns were ready to commit to an alliance with Spain over the new American Republic. Fat King and Tame King's serious consideration of an American-Creek trade alliance also signified that Little Tallassee and Alexander McGillivray did not have the support of the entire Creek Nation, contrary to McGillivray's growing trade monopoly. The American Commissioners invitations to trade created new opportunities for Tame King and Fat King to challenge Little Tallassee as the center of Creek trade and restore power and prominence to their towns.

Just months after Britain's surrender at Yorktown in October of 1781, Tame King attempted to forge a peace alliance with the Americans. The meeting of the two parties was postponed until May 28, 1782, when Tame King traveled to Augusta along with "his headmen of Tallassee" to negotiate with the American Commissioners. He addressed the Americans as "old friends" while professing "that now the Time is drawing near that there will be nothing but peace" and "that the Path between them and us may be kept

¹⁹ Tallassee or big Tallassee was a separate Upper Creek town and not related to Little Tallassee. See pages 8 and 9 of Chapter II, People and Places, of this dissertation.

white and straight.” Tame King explained to the commissioners that during this period of peace the Americans and Creeks should acknowledge each other as equals: “it was ordained that our children should eat out of one dish that is one with a Red hand and the other with white and as brother and Friends,” there would be “no Forked Tongue” between the two.²⁰ Tame King requested that the “great warriors that are now laying near Savannah and Charlestown and also the Virginia King at Philadelphia be acquainted with this Talk,” as a reminder that his men had served as staunch allies to the Americans throughout the Revolutionary War.²¹

Towards the end of his talk, Tame King bestowed upon the commissioners a “number of white beads as a Token of friendship from all the Sundry Towns of the Nations,” which included the Hitchiti, Apalachicola, Ococee, Sauwoogelo, and the Sauwoogelooche. That these towns supported Tallassee King’s vision for peace with the Americans was not surprising. Trade was still essential to Creek survival and in the absence of the British the Americans now controlled the former “Great Old Path” to Augusta and Charlestown.²²

Tame King was not alone in his desire for peace with the young American Nation. In December of that year, the Neha Mico (better known as Fat King) of the Lower town of Cussita apprised John Rae (an American Commissioner) that he also wished for peace.

²⁰ A Talk given by the Tallassee King and Sundry Head Men of the Upper and lower Creek Nation, 5/28/1782, Augusta, Document TCC260, Telamon Cuyler Collection, in *Southeastern Native American Documents, 1730-1842*, Digital Library of Georgia, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu> (hereafter cited as *SNAD*).

²¹ A Talk given by the Tallassee King and Sundry Head Men of the Upper and lower Creek Nation, 5/28/1782, Augusta, Document TCC260, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

²² A Talk given by the Tallassee King and Sundry Head Men of the Upper and lower Creek Nation, 5/28/1782, Augusta, Document TCC260, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

“I hope that our old Friends the Virginians will take fast hold of the Chain of Friendship that their forefathers held and we the Creeks will hold fast also,” Fat King communicated to Rae. However, in exchange for that peace, Fat King demanded trade. “If the Governor will come to Augusta my Heart will be glad. I hope they have Shirts, Paint, Powder, and Rum and Goods of every kind for my people are poor and want goods of every kind,” Fat King explained. He added that in exchange for those goods, he would return “what Negroes and Cattle & Horses” he could find in his town of Cussita as well in Broken Arrow, a neighboring village of the Lower Creek town of Coweta.²³

Before any peace could be made, Tame King, Fat King, and the rest of the leading headmen of the Lower Towns who supported reconciliation with the Americans needed to persuade the head warriors of each town that it was time to lay down the hatchet. Tame King commented the following during his talk to the commissioners in May of 1782: “The Time is now at hand that peace and Plenty is so near but that it depends entirely upon our warriors how soon.”²⁴ Both the Fat and Tame King were peace headmen whose civic duties were to promote harmony with neighboring towns and nations. It was their responsibility to ensure that avenues to negotiate peace remained open always. White or peace towns functioned similarly, as they were designated spaces to conduct diplomacy year-round.²⁵

²³ A Talk given by Fat King, enclosed in James Rae to John Martin Esquire, 12/27/1782, Augusta, Document TCC124, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

²⁴ A Talk given by the Tallassee King and Sundry Head Men of the Upper and lower Creek Nation, 5/28/1782, Augusta, Document TCC260, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

²⁵ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 251-252.

The head warriors of the Upper town of Tallassee were the first to consent to peace with the Americans. Following Tame King's talk, the town's Head Warrior informed the commissioners that it was not "his Business as a Warrior" to make peace but, "his king has talked to him and told him to be at peace and on that account, he has received the white wing." Tallassee's Head Warrior then assured the commissioners that his decision was not made from haste, but after consultation with all his warriors who stood beside him. The warriors declared that their wings once "red" now "turned white," and that they intended "nothing but Peace and Friendship" from that moment forward.²⁶

The rest of the leading warriors of the pro-American towns followed suit when they agreed to assemble at Augusta in November of 1783, along with Tallassee King, Fat King, and thirteen other leading headmen. Two of these headmen included the notable Tallassee Warrior and Hitcheto Warrior.²⁷ Since Creek politics were always based upon town consensus, these warriors were most likely persuaded to make peace in exchange for the promise of a fruitful Creek-American trade. The treaty drafted and signed that day promised "that a trade shall be carried on by the traders and merchants" of the state of Georgia, but also that the Creeks agreed to cede the Lower Creek hunting grounds of the east Oconee River. All of the headmen present that day signed the treaty, but whether they did so by their own free will is debatable.²⁸ In June 1784, Fat King told Alexander

²⁶ A Talk given by the Tallassee King and Sundry Head Men of the Upper and lower Creek Nation, 5/28/1782, Augusta, Document TCC260, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

²⁷ Treaty of Augusta With the Creeks, 11/1/1763, Document 7, in "Revolution and Confederation", ed. Colin G. Calloway, in vol. 18 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Bethesda, MD: University of Publications of America, 1994), 372-373 (hereafter cited as *RC*).

²⁸ Treaty of Augusta with the Creeks, 11/1/1763, Document 7, 372-373, *RC*.

McGillivray that he and his followers were “threatened with instant death if he did not comply” with the demands of the American Commissioners at Augusta, and “wishing to preserve their own and company’s lives” he and the rest of the headmen consented.²⁹

Fat King, Tame King, and several Lower Creek towns had met with the American Commissioners several times the year before to discuss matters of peace and trade, and evidence indicates that Fat King’s accusations of being “threatened by death” when he signed the treaty were fabricated. Not only did Fat King desire peace, but he and Tame King had sided with the Americans throughout the war. If trade were to fall into the hands of Alexander McGillivray, a British loyalist and an outsider to most Creeks, Little Tallassee would continue to be the center of Creek trade- not Tallassee or any of the former leading Lower Creek towns. Power and town politics were at play during the meeting at Augusta in November 1783 and would continue to be so as the Creeks slowly navigated a world without the British empire.

Opposition

News of the east Oconee land cession reached Little Tallassee by June 1784. After receiving a report, “prevailing among the Indians that the Georgians were surveying the land on the Oconee under the pretext that Fat King of Cussita and the Tallassee King had Ceded it to them and finding them on this Occasion on the point of rushing to war,” Alexander McGillivray of Little Tallassee was “determined to call a general meeting of the whole nation” to discuss the event in an “amicable manner” and in

²⁹ Alexander McGillivray to an unidentified Georgia official (possibly John Houstoun, Governor of Georgia, 1784), 6/30/1784, Little Tallassee, Document TCC901, *SNAD*.

return avoid any unnecessary hostilities. By June 30, McGillivray remained true to his word and “thirty-four of the principal towns were assembled” in the town square of Little Tallassee.³⁰ The large turnout to Little Tallassee that June signified that the majority of the Lower and Creek towns still considered Little Tallassee a place of great diplomatic importance as first established by Emistisiguo.

It was during this meeting that Fat King claimed he was threatened by death if he did not sign over the East Oconee lands, but no other headmen or warrior present at Augusta supported this claim. After all the headmen present “deliberated on the matter” McGillivray informed the Governor of Georgia by letter that the treaty of Augusta was considered to be invalid and demanded the surveyors abandoned their posts.³¹ The Oconee lands were ceded by only two chiefs of two towns, and a land cession to the Americans could only be validated “by the unanimous voice of the whole, as joint proprietors, in common.”³² McGillivray explained to Governor Houstoun that treaties could only be ratified by the entire Creek Nation, not two single towns or chiefs. “It therefore behooves the Authority of your Government to prevent the consequences of an Indian War which will Certainly attend the Settling of the Oconee Lands.”³³ His words to the Governor made the dissatisfaction of most of the Creeks to the Treaty of Augusta clear.

³⁰ Alexander McGillivray to an unidentified Georgia official (possibly John Houstoun, Governor of Georgia, 1784), 6/30/1784, Little Tallassee, Document TCC901, *SNAD*.

³¹ Alexander McGillivray to an unidentified Georgia official (possibly John Houstoun, Governor of Georgia, 1784), 6/30/1784, Little Tallassee, Document TCC901, *SNAD*.

³² Alexander McGillivray to James White, 4/8/1787, Little Tallassee, Document 4, 445, RC.

³³ Alexander McGillivray to an unidentified Georgia official (possibly John Houstoun, Governor of Georgia, 1784), 6/30/1784, Little Tallassee, Document TCC901, *SNAD*.

McGillivray had no more power to overturn the Treaty of Augusta than the Fat and Tame King did in signing it but the power was reserved to the chiefs of the thirty-four towns that assembled at Little Tallassee, as well as Governor Houston of Georgia. The decision to discredit the Treaty of Augusta was therefore a reflection of the Creek majority on the matter, and the letter drafted by McGillivray to Houston the means by which they both communicated and exercised their powers to negate any negotiation with Americans or Europeans made without the consensus of the entire Creek Confederacy.

Forging an Alliance with Spain

Alexander McGillivray of Little Tallassee, Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee, and several other Upper Creek towns looked to Spain instead of the new American Republic to reestablish peace and a profitable trade in the absence of the British. Little Tallassee was the leading town of Gulf Coast-based trade before the outbreak of the American Revolution, and McGillivray worked to ensure that Little Tallassee maintained that position. Disgruntled over the confiscation of his father's properties in South Carolina, Alexander McGillivray had no interest in forging any ties with the new American Nation or any trade promises it had to offer.³⁴ Mad Dog, like any other Creek headman, wanted access to a steady supply of trade goods, and in the early winter of 1784 an alliance with Spain appeared to be the most plausible option.

After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, Spain not only held possession of East and West Florida, but also the previously British-occupied trading ports of Mobile and Pensacola.

³⁴ Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 246. See also, D.C. Corbitt, Notes and Documents, "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," in *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 20:4 (December 1936), 357-358. (Hereafter cited as *GHQ*).

Emistisiguo had campaigned his entire life for Creek trade along the Gulf Coast, and his successful efforts positioned Little Tallassee as a lucrative center of Atlantic trade. If a peace alliance was made with Spain in exchange for trade, Little Tallassee would have access to Mobile and Pensacola once again. In addition, if Spain agreed to McGillivray, Mad Dog, and the rest of leading headmen and warriors of the Upper Creek town's terms, there would be no need to create an entire new trade system as they would need to do with the United States.

As the elected spokesperson for Little Tallassee, McGillivray began to draft an alliance with the Spanish in early January 1784. The details were communicated through a letter McGillivray addressed to Arturo O'Neil, the newly appointed Governor of Pensacola. "I shall offer some reasons to Shew that it would be a good Policy in the crown of Spain to Grant us [the Creeks] our desires," McGillivray penned. Amongst those desires, was the "One Principle Consideration" that there "should be a plentiful supply of Goods [that] should be carried to trade in the Nation on the footing that the English used to do," McGillivray explained to O'Neil, "for Indians will attach themselves to & Serve them best who Supply their Necessities."³⁵ McGillivray requested that an additional "stipulation be made" where "the Indian Trading Merchants remain and carry on their trade as usual," but "it is much more convenient for the Upper Nation to have

³⁵ McGillivray to O'Neil, 1/1/1784, Little Tallassee, in John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, introduction by William J. Bauer, Jr. (1938: repr., Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 64 (Hereafter cited as Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*).

trade from West Florida,” and goods be moved from “St. Augustine to Mobile,” where the Creeks could easily transport their trade “by water carriage.”³⁶

The requests made by McGillivray to the Spanish were almost an exact duplicate of the arrangement Emistisiguo had configured with the British years before. Shortly after the French and Indian War, Emistisiguo had led a delegation of Creeks to Augusta, Georgia in 1763 to forge an Anglo-Creek trade alliance based out of England’s newly acquired Gulf Coast ports. Emistisiguo continued to champion trade based out of Pensacola and Mobile in 1765, where he signed a treaty to seal the deal. When Anglo-Creek trade was threatened, during a decade of frontier violence between 1765 and 1775/76 as well as throughout the American Revolution, Emistisiguo orchestrated a diplomacy that protected Anglo-Creek trade on the Gulf Coast, whether through peace or war. Just as England had replaced France as the major European power in the aftermath of the French and Indian War, Spain supplanted England after the American colonies gained independence. By opening Anglo-Creek trade out of the Gulf Coast, Little Tallassee was already the center of Creek trade by the time Alexander McGillivray had assumed his role as spokesperson. All McGillivray needed to do was protect the legacy that Emistisiguo had built, not just for Little Tallassee but all Upper Creeks.

Panton, Leslie, and Company

Alexander McGillivray provided an additional advantage to the Creeks if they supported his desire to ally with Spain; he had been a silent partner in one of the largest

³⁶ McGillivray to O’Neil, 1/1/1784, Little Tallassee, McGillivray of the Creeks, 65. Water Carriage simply meant by boat, rather than the traditional use of pack horses.

and most successful Scots led British trade firms of the late eighteenth century and sole operator of Creek trade within that firm.³⁷ Panton, Leslie, & Company consisted of five original partners, all of whom were Scotsman who had been trading with the Southeastern Indians long before the American Revolution. These men were William Panton, John Leslie, John Forbes, Charles McLatchy, and William Alexander, and their trade with the Indians before the Revolution sprawled from East and West Florida to Augusta, Charlestown, and Savannah.³⁸ During the American Revolution, the company relocated to East Florida, and funneled ammunition and an assortment of goods for both the English Crown and its Southeastern Indian allies through William Panton's close contacts with wealthy London and Glasgow merchants. After the war, Spain granted the company permission to remain in East and West Florida, and by 1785 Panton, Leslie, and Company had warehouses located in Saint Augustine, St. Marks, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, as well as along the Mississippi River. The company even had successful warehouses in Nassau and New Providence Island, John Forbes the partner who first took the initiative to dabble in Caribbean waters. By the late 1780s, the British firm was

³⁷ Panton offered McGillivray "one-fifth share" of the company's profits until the time of his death, which McGillivray accepted. John Leslie Memorandum, 12/31/1792, Saint Augustine, The Indian Trade in the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands Collection, in the *Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company*, Gale Document Number SC5009634675, <http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.uncg.edu> (Hereafter cited as the *Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*). For more information on McGillivray becoming a partner to Panton & Leslie, see also McGillivray to O'Neil, 1/3/1784, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 67. McGillivray confirms that appointment when he wrote to O'Neil, "those Gentleman [Panton] offered me a part in it" and "They have hopes of succeeding, and I am certain will be good policy to permit such a measure by the Court of Spain." Additional information can be found in William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847*, forward by J. Leitch Wright, Jr. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1986), 54. In regards to the Spanish government granting sole control over the Creek trade to McGillivray, see Michael D. Green, *The politics of Indian Removal*, 34.

³⁸ William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 23-25.

granted an “unofficial commercial monopoly” over the Southeastern Indian trade- and in Spain’s last American frontier.³⁹

The story behind Alexander McGillivray’s role as a silent partner in the company dates to the formation of his home town of Little Tallassee. William Panton was an apprentice to John Gordon and Company of Charleston in 1765. Gordon’s partner was John McQueen, who not only had several trade stores at Little Tallassee but was a partner in Lachlan McGillivray’s successful deerskin trade company, *Brown and Rae*.⁴⁰ After Panton’s apprenticeship was over, Panton mingled with other successful Indian traders and slowly built his career. Among these successful “mercantile adventurers” was Lachlan McGillivray, whom Panton met in Charlestown somewhere in the early 1770s handling business for Gordon. It was at this point that Panton not only formed a friendship with Lachlan McGillivray, but most likely began trading with the town of Little Tallassee- the central locale of Anglo-Creek trade. There is no evidence that Panton met Alexander McGillivray at the time, but one can speculate the two might have met, given the fact that Alexander resided at a nearby cousin’s residence in Charlestown.⁴¹

For a British owned Indian trade outfit to maintain residency in Spanish territory once the American Revolution was over, Panton and his partners knew they had to make themselves useful to the region’s new colonial master. Luckily for Panton & Company, after the Peace of Paris was signed in 1783 Spain was in desperate need of Indian allies. The British generously gave the Americans the right to navigate the Mississippi River as

³⁹ William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, x-xii.

⁴⁰ William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 15-17.

⁴¹ William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 24.

well as the territory east of the Mississippi River and south of the Great Lakes. Although Spain did receive West Florida, the southern boundary of the United States was marked at the 31st parallel and ignited a fierce contest for control over the Mississippi River and its nearby territories for nearly two decades. Spain insisted that Britain had no right to give away territory that was already claimed as Spanish territory by Bernardo de Galvez by right of conquest. Action was taken the following summer, June 1784, when Jose de Galvez (minister of the Indies) ordered that American citizens were forbidden to navigate the Mississippi River. Spain then declared its own definition of the U.S.-West Florida boundary, which is best defined by an outline of the confluence of the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and Flint Rivers.⁴² Spain was not equipped for a war with the Southeastern Indians. They were also in desperate need of some type of buffer to prevent American encroachment. To maintain these contested boundaries and control over the Mississippi River, Spain needed to make an alliance with the individuals who held real power within those boundaries: The Creek Indians and the Panton, Leslie, & Company.

Spanish officials deliberated the peace overtures made by Panton, McGillivray, and his Creek allies with careful examination. Estevan Miro (Governor of Louisiana between 1780 to 1782), wrote a letter to Josef de Ezpelete (acting general of Havana until 1790) that expressed his feelings on the matter. "I beg your Lordship not to forget the letter of the half-breed, Don Alejandro McGillivray, in which is shown the urgent necessity to befriend the said nations within His Majesty's dominion," Miro stated.

⁴² William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 2-4. Bernardo de Galvez was the Governor of Louisiana during the pre and post American Revolutionary War Era.

“There is in this province a total lack of Indian effects [merchandise with which to make gifts to the Indians] and Your Lordship knows that without them it is impossible to retain their friendship and subordination.”⁴³ Governor Miro was not the only Spanish official who realized the importance of established trade with the Creeks. Vincent Manuel de Zespedes, the Governor of East Florida not only seconded Miro’s advice, but specifically argued for Panton, Leslie & Company to be the means of the coveted trade. “It is clear the house of Panton and company, who have handled for ten years the trade of this province, have much influence over the neighboring Indians,” Zespedes explained to his fellow Spanish officials. “If it is desired, therefore, to win effectually the friendship of these Indians for ourselves, it would be risky to expel this firm and company at one stroke, or even until several years have passed . . .”⁴⁴ Zespedes logic was sound, but bold for a Spanish Governor.

The men of Panton, Lesile, & Company were not only British Loyalists, but they continued to operate out of London, England and Glasgow, Scotland. The Scotsmen, however, had the most experience with the Southeastern Indian trade, as well as the partnership of an educated and influential Creek man such as Alexander McGillivray. McGillivray reminded Spanish officials of that fact in a lengthy letter to an unknown Spanish official. “In order to Secure & firmly attach the Nations to the Crown of Spain, the first measure that ought to be adopted is by a Well-regulated trade,” McGillivray wrote,

⁴³ Estevan Miro to Josef de Ezpeleta, 8/1/1784, Gale Document SC5009617026 *Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*.

⁴⁴ Zespedes to Galvez, de Bernardo, 8/16/1784, St. Augustine, Gale Document SC5009617076, *Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*.

for which purpose it will be necessary to establish a house in Pensacola *the Holders of which ought to be permitted to Import English goods to which the Indians have long been accustomed & which it will be difficult to wean them from the use of, without much discontent . . .*⁴⁵

Treaty at Pensacola

On June 1, 1784, a treaty was signed between Spain, McGillivray, and the Creeks that cemented the long-awaited alliance. The terms of the treaty appeased both parties. The Creeks present at Pensacola agreed to recognize Spain as “their sole protector” in exchange for Spain’s pledge to allow the Creeks to continue trading along the Gulf Coast with Panton, Leslie, & Company. The terms of the treaty also dictated that the Creeks prevent any U.S. citizens without passports from entering the contested territory as well as stop any clandestine trade or unapproved navigation of the Mississippi river. Spain also acknowledged Creek land claims and promised to assist in the protection of that land if any Nation, such as the United States, try to violate those claims. Lastly, a tariff was placed on the goods that Panton, Leslie & Company imported and exported, in accordance with the value of deerskins at the time.⁴⁶

In addition to these terms, Alexander McGillivray was appointed “commissary of the Creek nation,” and was awarded a salary of “fifty pesos monthly” in return for his

⁴⁵ The use of italics are my own to emphasize McGillivray’s endorsement of the British trade firm. For quote usage, see McGillivray to ?, 7/1/1784, Gale Document Number: SC5009616871, *Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*. For information in regards to Spain’s tendency to adopt British trade rather than create their own system, see Stanley and Barbara Stein, *Edge of Crisis: War and Trade in the Spanish Atlantic, 1789–1808* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

⁴⁶ Copy of a treaty between the Spanish Government and the Tallapoche (Tallapoosa) Indians. May 31-June 1, 1784, Pensacola, Gale Document Number: SC5009616759, *The Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*; Treaty of Pensacola, 6/1/1784, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 75-77. For a good secondary source on the treaty, see also William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 58-59.

services.⁴⁷ As commissary, McGillivray was expected to “use his influence among the Creeks” to maintain their allegiance to Spain, as well as promote peaceful and friendly relations with their Southeastern Indian neighbors. Spanish officials also negotiated for Alexander McGillivray to supervise the Indian trade according to the terms agreed upon at Pensacola. McGillivray was ordered to monitor the said company for any suspicious activity that might jeopardize Spain’s control over the Indian trade even though Spain agreed to let Pantan, Leslie, & Company continue as the primary source of Indian trade within Spanish and Indian territory.⁴⁸

Alexander McGillivray—A Trade Intermediary

Alexander McGillivray was indeed the spokesperson for Little Tallassee and penned many letters on behalf of the Creeks, which included the correspondence that resulted in the above treaty. However, evidence indicates that McGillivray’s authority was limited to that of an intermediary only, not the authority of the Creek ‘Nation’ that the Spanish envisioned him or as he portrayed himself to be. Only one month prior to the signing of the treaty at Pensacola in June of 1784, McGillivray met with a number of headmen and warriors from various Upper and Lower Creek towns at Little Tallassee to discuss the details of the forthcoming alliance. Little Tallassee was the chosen town for

⁴⁷ Miro & Estevan to McGillivray, 6/7/1784, Pensacola, Gale Document Number: SC500961683, *The Papers of Pantan, Leslie, and Company*. For McGillivray’s salary of “fifty monthly pesos”, see Miro to Ezpeleta, 8/1/1784, Gale Document Number: SC5009617026, *The Papers of Pantan, Leslie, and Company*. For “an annual 600 pesos,” see also Miro & Estevan to Galvez, de Bernardo, 8/1/1784, New Orleans, Language Spanish, Gale Document Number: SC5009617031, *The Papers of Pantan, Leslie, and Company*.

⁴⁸ Miro & Estevan to McGillivray, 6/7/1784, Pensacola, Gale Document Number: SC500961683, *The Papers of Pantan, Leslie, and Company*. See also, William S. Coker & Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*, 59-60.

such an important and large-scale assembly, which emphasized that the town had cemented its place within Creek society as a sacred and diplomatic space.

The meeting was documented by McGillivray, in a letter to Arturo O'Neil, Governor of Pensacola. "I held a General Meeting with all the Nation last Month, where I sent to the Governor of Georgia a positive refusal to everything they desired of us," McGillivray informed O'Neil. "This notice [today] is sent to *the greatest Chiefs in the Nation*, that they prepare to Set off in ten days for Pensacola."⁴⁹ Since Creek decisions were based on consensus of all headmen and warriors, McGillivray had no authority to make any decisions for all the Creeks. The congress was held with the principal headmen and warriors of various Creek towns before the treaty was signed at Pensacola, which bolsters the notion that the Spanish were mistaken in regards to McGillivray's authority. As a spokesperson and intermediary, McGillivray could organized meetings where Creek foreign and domestic affairs would be discussed, but he did so only by the direction of the principal headmen and warriors whom he represented. McGillivray performed the role of a cultural broker, but all decisions in regards to making an alliance with Spain remained in the hands of the Creek headmen, not McGillivray. He could offer advice, but that was the extent of his influence among the Creeks in regards to politics. The Spanish,

⁴⁹ McGillivray to O'Neil, 5/1/1784, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 75; In another copy of the letter, McGillivray adds that "young warriors" attended the meeting as well as "most capital chiefs." See, McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1784, Little Tallassee, in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Vol. 3, 101. ed. Lawrence Kinnaird (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946) (Hereafter cited *SMV*). The italics are my emphasis.

strangers to Creek town politics, assumed that McGillivray had more power than he actually possessed.⁵⁰

A careful reanalysis of the treaty document itself also serves as evidence that McGillivray's authority among the Creeks was exceedingly exaggerated. The text of the treaty documented that Alexander McGillivray was the "principal representative of the towns of the Upper Tallapuches, Middle Tallapuches, and Lower Tallapuches, called Seminoles or Wanderers."⁵¹ Several notable headmen and their corresponding towns are mentioned from the above towns, the most notable being Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee, but they were reported to have remained in the nation "having given consent" to Alexander McGillivray to treat in their absence. The majority of the Upper Creek towns were located on the fall line of the Tallapoosa river valley, but the towns along the Coosa and Alabama Rivers were conspicuously absent.⁵² Not only did significant towns choose not to align themselves with McGillivray and the Tallipoosas, but "consent" to the treaty rested in the hands of the headmen and warriors of the respected Upper Creek towns – not Alexander McGillivray.

⁵⁰ Kathleen Duval discusses the Treaty of Pensacola in her latest book, *Independence Lost*. Her analysis does indicate that Alexander McGillivray did not have as much authority as he claimed to have, but she argues that McGillivray's treaty held more weight than the former held at Augusta in 1763 by the Tallassee and Fat King. Her argument is that "while fourteen Creeks signed in Augusta," and only "McGillivray did at Pensacola, "the Pensacola treaty was more representative of the Creek Confederacy for "Creek headmen from every town participated in the negotiations." This assertion ignores the fact that Tallassee and Fat King had the support of their entire towns, as well as the fact that the number of towns present at Pensacola are not known. Duval wrote that "McGillivray signed as their legitimate representative," but she does not discuss of which Creeks he was representing. See, Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 257-258 for more on this historiographical discussion.

⁵¹ Copy of a treaty between the Spanish Government and the Tallapuche Indians. May 31-June 1, 1784, Pensacola, Gale Document Number: SC5009616759, *The Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*.

⁵² Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 68-69.

As a matter of fact, European sources throughout the latter half of the 1780s indicate that if there was any one town or individual that had more influence over any other particular Upper Creek town it was Mad Dog and the town of Tuckabatchee. In May 1786, Governor O'Neil acknowledged McGillivray to have been the "Commissary of the Creek Indians," but stated to the Minister of the Indies that "Mad Dog of the Chief of the Indian Village of Tuckabache" was the one he considered to be "of most importance in the said [Creek] Nation."⁵³ Similarly, in November the same year, a letter was drafted by a Frenchmen who referred to Mad Dog as the "king and chief of the whole Nation," which supported O'Neil's observation.⁵⁴ That McGillivray was noted as commissioner, not a headmen of a town or the Creeks as a whole, was a strong indication that real political power resided with Mad Dog, Tuckabatchee, as well as other village headmen. Alexander McGillivray served as a conduit between the two nations, his town of Little Tallassee the center of a new budding Creek-Spanish trade. McGillivray was something more akin to a mouthpiece for Creek headmen and warriors such as Mad Dog. Vincent Folch, Governor of Mobile, commented on McGillivray's tendency to exaggerate his role among the Creeks in a letter he wrote to Arturo O'Neil: "The disease

⁵³ O'Neil to Galvez, 5/30/1786, Pensacola, in "Papers From the Spanish Archives Relating to the Tennessee and the Old Southwest, 1783-1800" edited and translated by D.C. Corbitt and Roberta Corbitt, in *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* (Knoxville, TN: *East Tennessee Historical Society*, 1937), No. 9, 139-140 (Hereafter *ETHS*).

⁵⁴ Within this document, Alexander McGillivray is noted to be one of three other commissioners, whom the author wrote "These four are white." The four being Jacob Maganaque, Joseph Cornel, Richard Belly, and Alexander McGillivray. See, Linder to Favrot, 11/13/1786, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 137; Mr. J. Linder, "Senior" to Pedro Favrot, 11/13/1786, Tensaw, *SMV*, Vol. 3, 190.

of wishing to be king has possessed him as a great delirium.”⁵⁵ Folch’s comment was short and sarcastic, but based on the evidence one cannot deny the truth of his words.

The “delirium” was real. McGillivray manipulated the privileges bestowed on him as Commissioner to the Creeks in order to bolster his own individual power and authority within Creek society. As a Spanish commissary McGillivray was the intermediary between the Spanish and the Creeks when it came to gift distribution. More specifically, if a headman of a particular town was in need of ammunition, McGillivray would be the one to write to the Governor at St. Augustine or Pensacola to convince the Spanish of the necessity of such coveted items.⁵⁶ For example, McGillivray wrote to Zespedes on behalf of a request made by the headmen of Chiaja and Usiche, and in return the Governor of East Florida replied: “I will continue attentively giving powder and balls and other presents . . . to *whoever gives me a letter from you for the purpose.*”⁵⁷ Within Creek society, the ability to access and distribute European goods was a highly respected skill, but not one that automatically resulted in being recognized as a town headman. McGillivray, utilized his position as a commissary and his ability to both read and write in such a way that Creek headmen were more often left with no choice but to rely on him as the recognized intermediary in regard to gift distribution. Although McGillivray’s access to trade allowed him to manipulate Creek trade, it did not promote him to any position of authority within the Creek Confederacy. Only traditional spiritual

⁵⁵ Folch to Miro, 7/2/1789, Fort of San Estevan, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 242. Vincente Folch was the nephew of Arturo O’Neil.

⁵⁶ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 75-76.

⁵⁷ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 76.

accomplishments of success in hunting and war could enable a man to eventually be considered a headman.

The ability to regulate trade was the second method Alexander McGillivray employed to direct power within Creek Country in his direction. According to the articles of the recent Treaty at Pensacola, all traders were to report to Alexander McGillivray to receive their license. The Scots Indian's tight business relationship with Panton & Leslie & Company also served to tighten McGillivray's control over Creek trade. By 1787 the company had an unofficial monopoly over the Southeastern Indian trade, and McGillivray himself even resorted to violent means to help protect that monopoly as well as his share of profits as a silent partner.⁵⁸ Tustanagee Thlucco (Big Warrior) commented on McGillivray and Panton's systematized efforts to ensure their control of the Indian trade when he remarked that the partners "were always giving out talks, to keep the trade in their hands."⁵⁹ American agent Daniel Murphy, known to the Indians as "Yellow Hair" dispatched a letter to Governor O'Neil on the topic of the monopoly. Murphy stated,

. . . the Traders requiring to show their Lycences When I found they had not any from the State of Georgia, but had a Lycense from Alexander McGillivray. The said traders to be subject to him & no other & to observe the regulations given by former Superintendents.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 77-78.

⁵⁹ Copy of a talk from Big Warrior to General Twiggs, 4/20/1793, in *American State Papers, Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, from the First Session of the First to the Third Session of the Thirteenth Congress, Inclusive: Commencing March 3, 1789, and Ending March 3, 1815*, ed. Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), Vol. 1, 401. (Hereafter cited as ASPIA, volume number, page number). See also, Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 77.

⁶⁰ McMurphy to O'Neil, 7/11/1786, Lower Creek Nation, Gale Document Number SC5009620493, *The Papers of Panton, Leslie, And Company*.

McGillivray strived to protect Creek trade out of self-interest. Not only did he withhold licenses from individual traders, but he also refused to sell or distribute gunpowder to Creek towns that opposed him. To carry out these unsavory tactics, McGillivray formed a private group of “constables” to either reward or punish those who supported or challenged his trade monopoly. Alexander McGillivray also organized a group of constables to serve as personal body guards, as McGillivray reported to uncover several plots to assassinate him. Other times, the same constables that protected McGillivray also acted as executioners as he did not hesitate to eliminate his enemies.⁶¹ The use of both a private police force and essentially placing a trade embargo on Creek towns that opposed Panton, Leslie, and Company came with repercussions. Over time, dissent within the Upper Creek community spread and Creeks gradually moved away from Little Tallassee.⁶² As Creek men and women no longer felt safe within their own town, Little Tallassee started to lose its place within the Creek community as a sacred space.

Alexander McGillivray was not just an intermediary, but the resident trader of Little Tallassee. McGillivray’s mother Sehoi was a Creek from the prominent Wind clan, but this did not grant him any status within Creek society as a headman. In fact, the only difference between McGillivray and his father Lachlan besides McGillivray’s Creek blood, was the fact he used unsavory means to enforce his trade monopoly. Control and

⁶¹Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 33-34; McGillivray to Zepedes, 11/15/1786, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 139. For more information on the role of constables, see also Green, “Alexander McGillivray,” in *American Indian Leaders*, 51. Attempts on McGillivray’s life, see also, McGillivray to O’Neil, 3/4/1787, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 144-145.

⁶² Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 34.

or access to trade meant nothing within Creek society without traditional accomplishments in hunting and warfare. Additionally, respect by prominent headman and warriors was necessary. By the mid-1780s, McGillivray had clearly abused his connections to Panton, Leslie, and Company, rather than implementing trade policies based on consensus that benefitted not only Little Tallassee, but all Creek towns.

Galphinton

During spring 1785, land encroachment by citizens of Georgia into Creek Country significantly increased. Frustrated that only Congress could treat with the Indians for land, not the states, many individuals of Georgia disregarded the laws of Congress and treated Creek Country as their own. In late April, Alexander McGillivray authored a letter to the American official William Clark about his concerns regarding encroachment, the Ogeechee lands in particular. "I must observe that the nation in their Talks protested in the strongest manner against your people settling over the old Boundary of Ogeechee," McGillivray wrote, "The Indians are extremely tenacious of their hunting grounds, of which that between Oconee and Ogeechee form a principal part and on which they generally take three thousand Deer Skins yearly." In the same letter, McGillivray backed his request up with the threat of military action. The Scots Indian informed Clark that since the Creeks had formed an "alliance and friendship" with the "Spanish Nation," Spain was ready to "stand engaged and protect our territories entire to us." McGillivray concluded his letter as follows: "All this I beg leave to submit to the consideration of your legislature, tis my sincere wishes that the result of their deliberations will tend to

remove the horrid effect of a savage war to a great distance.”⁶³ Encroachment simply was not to be tolerated by the Creeks. Access to an abundance of deer was crucial for Creek hunters to trade. McGillivray’s actions to ward off Georgia encroachment protected his personal interests in that trade while simultaneously expressing the concerns of both Upper and Lower Creek headmen.

To alleviate tension between the Creeks and the state of Georgia, three newly appointed members of the American Continental congress sent a request to Little Tallassee to meet them at a new town called Galphinton.⁶⁴ The three members of Congress were Andrew Pickens, Joseph Martin, and Benjamin Hawkins, who would become the Superintendent of Southeastern Indian Affairs in the 1790s. The invitation was addressed not to McGillivray, but the “to the Kings, Headmen and Warriors of the Creeks,” and the purpose of the summoning was “for making peace with you” and “removing between us all causes of future Contention & Quarrels.”⁶⁵ Congress also communicated through its correspondence that the Creeks were welcomed into the “favor” and “protection” of the United States, a response directed most likely to McGillivray’s recent letter that implied that American encroachment on Indian land was to be answered with both Creek *and Spanish force*.⁶⁶

⁶³ Alexander McGillivray to William Clark, 4/24/1785, Tuckabatchee, Gale Document Number SC5009619354, *The Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*.

⁶⁴ Galphinton was located west of the Ogeechee River and named after George Galphin, a veteran Creek trader who served as an agent to Congress during the American Revolution. See, Duval, *Independence Lost*, 299.

⁶⁵ Benjamin Hawkins, Andrew Pickens, Joseph Martin to The Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creeks, 5/10/1785, Charleston, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 96.

⁶⁶ Benjamin Hawkins, Andrew Pickens, Joseph Martin to The Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creeks, 5/10/1785, Charleston, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 96. Emphasis mine.

On September 5, Alexander McGillivray wrote to Andrew Pickens and informed him that he and the Creeks declined to meet him at Galphinton. The reason being, McGillivray professed, was that the Americans were simply too late in their peace overtures and interests in Creek trade.⁶⁷ “When we found that the American independency was confirmed by the peace, we expected that the new Government would soon have taken some steps to make up the differences that subsisted between them and the Indians during the war,” McGillivray wrote. These steps included taking the Creeks “into protection and confirm to them their hunting grounds,” as Spain had done at Pensacola in 1784. “I am sorry to observe that violence and prejudice had taken the place of good policy and reason,” McGillivray explained, and the talks given by the state of Georgia, “breathed nothing to us but vengeance . . . as [if] we were wholly at their mercy”⁶⁸ As a result, “as a free nation,” McGillivray emphasized, the Creeks opted for an alliance with Spain, which guaranteed by treaty to protect Creek hunting grounds, territory and boundaries, as well as “grant free trade in the ports of the Floridas.”⁶⁹ In other words, there was simply no need to form an alliance with another country, such as the United States, when Spain already agreed to meet all Creek requests and allowed for the continuation of Creek trade via Panton, Leslie, & Company and Little Tallassee.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ “Delayed on your parts,” was the exact phrase McGillivray used to describe American tardiness. Alexander McGillivray to Andrew Pickens, 9/5/1785, Little Tallassee, ASPIA, Vol. 1, 20.

⁶⁸ Alexander McGillivray to Andrew Pickens, 9/5/1785, Little Tallassee, ASPIA, Vol. 1, 20.

⁶⁹ Alexander McGillivray to Andrew Pickens, 9/5/1785, Little Tallassee, ASPIA, Vol. 1, 20.

⁷⁰ It is significant to note that McGillivray did not trust the Americans in any form. The Americans, also, had preconceived notions as to how much power he held over the Upper Creeks, asking him for a personal interview. He wrote: “The Americans likewise have twice Invited us to a conference pretending that they desire an amicable adjustment of our differences in preference to war, but having reason to distrust the sincerity of their professions, I have declined all proposals tending to a personal Interview.” See, McGillivray to Farvot, 11/8/1786, *SMV*, Vol. 3, 188-189.

Mad Dog and several other Creek towns approved of McGillivray's position in regards to Galphinton, and in all likelihood, asked him to decline the American's invitation on their behalf. McGillivray dispatched a letter to Governor Miro in early May 1786, which informed Miro that Mad Dog had held a council at Tuckabatchee the prior year, where all headmen and warriors present unanimously agreed an alliance with the Americans was not an option. "*The Great Chief called the Mad Dog presiding at the council,*" McGillivray's letter stated, and "accordingly the Chiefs of the following towns [being those that *always decide on National affairs of Importance*] assembled at Tuckabatchee."⁷¹ During the council, McGillivray claimed that he advised Mad Dog to opt for defensive measures over peace with the Americans. According to McGillivray, the "most decided measures in defense of & preservation of so Great a part of our Lands" for the Americans had "by fraud and Violence possessed themselves" of Creek land.⁷²

McGillivray's words reflected war to be the best option to deal with American encroachment on Creek land, not diplomatic talks or treaties. He wrote to Miro that, "to prevent future evil being the General policy of all Nation it is our duty to Check the Americans in time before they get too Strong for us to Contest with Them." Warriors present at the Tuckabatchee assembly were then instructed to "Set out in every direction to Where ever the Americans were Settled and where they were forming New

⁷¹ The following towns according to McGillivray included "Abechooches, Natchez, Coosaws, Upper Eufaulas, Waccokoy, Weokey, Hillabee, Okchoy, Okfuskee, Kyalejie, Great Eufaulas, Toushatchie, Ottapie, Cluewally Talessies, Coosadas." Italics in the text are mine. McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, in D.C. Corbitt, "Papers from the Spanish Archives," in *ETHS* 9 (1937): 131-134. Quote taken from 132.

⁷² McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, "Papers from the Spanish Archives," *ETHS* 9 (1937): 131-134. Quote taken from 133.

establishments . . . the Oconee Lands were the first [to be] visited.”⁷³ Although McGillivray admitted that the deployment of several hundred warriors might have appeared to be “a declaration of war,” he ensured Miro that “is not yet our intention & which is evident from not pushing the affair to the extent we Might have done . . .” This decision, McGillivray added, was “unanimously resolved” to be “adopted” by all headmen and warriors present.⁷⁴

All evidence considered, the resolution not to treat at Galphinton was not McGillivray’s, but that of Mad Dog and the majority of the Upper Creek towns. Given that McGillivray was famous for projecting an image of being the sole leader of the Creek ‘Nation’ throughout his writings, it is no surprise that he wrote that he “advised” Mad Dog and the headmen during the meeting a Tuckabatchee - not vice versa. As a spokesperson for Tallassee his wisdom was welcomed during the assembly, but the decision to make war or peace was always town based. Warriors would also not be dispatched without the authority of their head warrior, in this case, Mad Dog. That meeting was held at Tuckabatchee, not at Little Tallassee, served as an indication that the initial idea not to make peace with the Americans was from Mad Dog.

The Creeks had every reason not to enter an alliance with the Americans. Preservation of Creek hunting grounds and access to a continuous and steady trade was essential for the Creeks during the Post-Revolutionary War period. McGillivray’s reference to the Creeks once again as a “free nation” gave the letter a European flare, but

⁷³ McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, “Papers from the Spanish Archives,” *ETHS* 9 (1937): 131-134. Quote taken from 133.

⁷⁴ McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, “Papers from the Spanish Archives,” *ETHS* 9 (1937): 131-134.

it did serve the interest of many of the Upper Creek towns. Gulf Coast trade and a British company like Panton & Leslie were familiar and reliable.⁷⁵ The new American nation was an unknown to the Creeks, and the trade between the two non-existent- a gamble many were not willing to take.

Not all Creeks shared the sentiment of McGillivray and his Upper Creek allies. In November 1785, Fat King, Tame King, as well as the notable Hollowing King of Coweta and a few Lower Creek towns met American Congressmen and Georgia commissioners at Galphinton. The meeting resembled that of Augusta two years prior, that granted the Oconee lands that were disputed by McGillivray, Mad Dog, and other Upper Creek towns. In addition, the new treaty signed in November 1785 included a cession south of the Altamaha River, lands which belonged to both the Creeks and Spanish Florida. In return, the Georgians promised to leave all other Creek lands alone.⁷⁶ Although neither the Fat, Tame, or Hollowing King desired to cede any Creek hunting grounds, the promise of peace with Georgia and the Americans in their minds outweighed the alternative. The ninth article of the treaty also guaranteed the Creeks a steady trade, although the details behind that trade were not discussed.⁷⁷ Regardless, these three

⁷⁵ William Panton was officially given a license by the Spanish to trade on October 4th, 1785. The treaty of Pensacola in 1784 already guaranteed that Panton, Leslie, and Company were to continue trading in the Gulf Coast as they had during British occupation, but McGillivray and the Creeks must have known that the Spanish were not far from making the companies license to trade official. See, The Intendant-General Martin Navarro to the Conde de Galvez, 10/4/1765, New Orleans, in "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," ed. and trans. D.C. Corbitt, *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21. No. 1 (March, 1937), 78. (Hereafter cited as *GHQ*).

⁷⁶ There was a total of fifteen headmen present. To see the articles of the treaty and the list of the treaty signers, see Treaty of Galphinton, 11/12/1785, in RC, 390-391.

⁷⁷ Article 9 read as follows "That the trade with the said Indians shall be carried on as heretofore." Treaty of Galphinton, 11/12/1785, in RC, 390-391. Although details behind the trade were not discussed in the Treaty itself, all ten treaty articles reflected the Treaty at Augusta in 1783, which allows one to safely conclude the trade would be carried out of Augusta.

headmen whose traditional roles within Creek society were to maintain peaceful diplomatic relations with outsiders, the Treaty of Galphinton secured harmony between the Creeks and the new and quickly expanding United States. The treaty was therefore signed on November 12 by all fifteen headmen present.⁷⁸ Given the large turnout of Lower Creeks at Galphinton, it seems clear that these Lower towns wanted their own trade and the Americans could provide it, just as the British had done before via Augusta.⁷⁹

Escalation of Frontier Violence

By early March the following year, news of the recent land cession to the Americans by the fifteen Lower Creek headmen reached Little Tallassee. McGillivray was quick to inform Spanish officials that the headmen present (Fat King and Tame King in particular) were “not authorized to make such Grant,” and that treaty once again was not legitimate, for “the Governor of that State [Georgia]” was “left to finish the treaty,” and only members of the American Congress had the power to authorize the cession of Indian land.⁸⁰ Mad Dog and McGillivray at this time had already dispatched warriors to prevent further land encroachment, but Galphinton propelled Creek warriors to mobilize in greater numbers. McGillivray wrote to O’Neil on behalf of the Creeks and declared the

⁷⁸ Treaty of Galphinton, 11/12/1785, in RC, 390-391; Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 299-301.

⁷⁹ For a list of Lower Creek headmen who signed the treaty of Galphinton, see Treaty of Galphinton, 11/12/1785, in RC, 391.

⁸⁰ McGillivray to O’Neil, 3/28/1786, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 105; McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 107. For more information on the powers of Congress and the Articles of Confederation verses the states, see “Report of Committee on Southern Indians,” 8/3/1787, in RC., 454-455. Within this document it is stated that “Congress shall have the sole and exclusive right and power of regulating the trade and managing all affairs with the Indians, not members of any of the States.” See also “Report of the Secretary of War on the Southern Indians,” 7/18/1787, in RC, 449-451. For a good discussion on this issue, see Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost*, 333.

following: “We the Chiefs of the Nation have come to a resolution in this last general meeting to take arms in our defense & repel those Invaders of our Lands, to drive them from their encroachments fix them within their own limits.”⁸¹

Angry that McGillivray once again used the power of the pen to undermine yet another peace overture, Fat King of Cussita had a talk of his dispatched to John Galphin to both confirm the alliance formed at Galphinton as well as warn the Americans he suspected the Spanish to have armed Mad Dog’s warriors with ammunition for their frontier raids. Fat King reported that the Spanish had sent Cussita “a bad talk” that invited them to “come Down to murder the white people on the frontiers” and that they will provide “guns and ammunition” to all who chose to participate. According to his knowledge, “two parties” had already “gone out to kill people on the upper parts of Georgia and killed two white men on the Cumberland.” The talk ended with Fat King ’s promise to continue “hold the Virginia people by the hand” and “will always let them know when there is a bad talk in the Nation.”⁸² The Second Man of Coweta delivered Fat King ’s message to John Galphin, which is a significant indication that the town of Coweta as well as the rest of the towns that were present at Galphinton in November of 1785 supported the talk. The Creek “Nation” that McGillivray had mentioned in his letter to O’Neil, was far from a nation and as Fat King ’s talk demonstrates that individual Creek towns continued protect and act on their own self-interests, as well as serve as a reflection of an obvious split between the Upper and Lower Creek towns.

⁸¹ McGillivray to O’Neil, 3/28/1786, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 104.

⁸² Copy of the Cussita (i.e., Cussita King’s talk delivered to John Galphin, 4/11/1786, document TCC205, the Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*).

The Spanish did arm the Creeks in their frontier raids, but in secret. Spain still needed to abide by terms agreed upon at Pensacola, for they needed the Creeks to remain as a buffer against American expansion. Trade with Panton, Leslie, & Company was also running smoothly, which secured the majority of the Upper Creeks allegiance to Spain. “I must warn you on the point of giving help to the Indian Nations against the Americans,” Conde de Galvez wrote to Miro on the subject, “it must be reduced to the least which can be given them, without compromising ourselves in any manner with them.” Galvez continued, “they may be given power, balls, and other things, which we may supply them as they were included in the trade with them, doing it nevertheless with the greatest secrecy and dissimulation.”⁸³ Zespedes, Governor of East Florida, supported Galvez’s decision to discretely arm the Creeks. He wrote to McGillivray in mid-May that he “may rest assured” that he would continue to “attentively give powder and balls and other presents.”⁸⁴

Mad Dog’s warriors and those of the allied Upper Creek towns used this steady supply of ammunition from Spain to fuel their campaign against encroaching Georgia settlers. An anonymous letter by a “Gentleman of Augusta” drafted to “another at Charleston” on May 16, 1786, provides a detailed and relatively unbiased account of the

⁸³ Conde de Galvez to Miro, 5/20/1786, Mexico, “Papers from the Spanish Archives, 1783-1800,” trans. and ed. by D.C. Corbitt and Roberta Corbitt, *The East Tennessee Historical Society*. No 9, 136-137. Bernardo de Galvez was made Conde de Galvez and Captain General of Cuba, Louisiana, and Florida after his position of Governor of Louisiana and service during the American Revolution. He was also minister of the Indies during the 1780s.

⁸⁴ Zespedes noted that there were few guns available but that he “took care that sufficient number were sent” to him. Zespedes to McGillivray, 5/22/1786, St. Augustine, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 113.

Creek raids.⁸⁵ It is clear from the gentleman's account that the violence was escalating specifically in the contested Oconee territory. Governor Telfair of Georgia reported a force of "about 300" Creeks West of Oconee and that Colonel Clarke and his "150 men" were "obliged to fall back and send a request to Washington County for reinforcement." Three other large parties of Indians were noted to have crossed over the Oconee river and "some 65 miles from Augusta," the "general opinion" that they intended to "loot" the town.⁸⁶ McGillivray's correspondence with Miro confirms that warriors were dispatched to the Oconee lands, as well as the Cumberland and "a place called Muscle Shoals" a new American settlement located in Northern Alabama.⁸⁷

Peace Overtures and Shoulder Bone Creek

Fat King and Tame King refused to allow Mad Dog and McGillivray's frontier violence to spoil their plans for peace with the Americans. In June and August 1786, both Lower Creek headmen sent several talks to American officials that explained they continued to desire peaceful relations in regards to their Georgia neighbors, and both headmen resolved to do their best to remedy the recent disturbances committed by the Upper Creek towns. "We remember the talks we have had together as Eating Drinking and Smoking in friendship together, as we will continue although there has been some

⁸⁵ The Augusta Gentleman wrote the following: "It is clear beyond peradventure of doubt that for a long time the Georgians have been provoking the Indians and that they have long desired a pretext for seizing the hatchet." This statement along with a purely factual account of his knowledge of the frontier raids have allowed me to draw this conclusion and find it to be a valuable account of the violence in Georgia during the spring of 1786. See, A Gentleman of Augusta, Georgia, to Another at Charleston, 5/16/1786, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 111.

⁸⁶ A Gentleman of Augusta, Georgia, to Another at Charleston, 5/16/1786, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 111-112.

⁸⁷ McGillivray to Miro, 5/1/1786, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 109.

bad talks here among us,” Tame King related to American Agent Daniel Murphy.⁸⁸ “We still remember friendly talks, which we had together at Ogeechee in particular . . . we there agreed that whenever we Saw a white man to hold our and to him,” for “we agreed upon for the benefit of our woman and children,” Fat King added, his talk supported by “the headmen and principle warriors of ten towns” of which he was appointed to be the “chosen speaker” on their behalf.⁸⁹

Although most of the Lower Towns, except for Tallassee, desired “nothing but peace and a clear path between us [the Americans]” Fat King asked the officials to “give us time” before any alliance to deal with Alexander McGillivray. During a meeting held at the Cussita town Square in August, Fat King described the “obstacle” to the Americans as follows: “McGilvery is an Indian that has brought the Nation to a great disturbance . . . we must settle this among us.”⁹⁰ The Lower Creek headmen knew that Alexander McGillivray did not act alone in regards to the late frontier violence, but they were familiar with his propensity to filibuster all of their previous peace treaties and his formidable allies, like Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee. The Tallassee King and Fat King needed to quell any festering suspicions the Americans might have of their roles in the recent violent affairs. Fat King informed agent McMurphy that he and the Lower towns planned to “meet the headmen of the upper towns” as soon as the arrangement could be

⁸⁸ A Talk from the kings, beloved men, and warriors of the Upper Towns [of the Creek Nation], the Tallassee King [acting as] speaker, 6/25/1786, Document TCC207, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁸⁹ A Talk from the kings, beloved men and warriors of the Lower Creek Nations, Fat King as speaker, 6/4/1786, Document TCC206, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁹⁰ The exact quotation reads as follows “We Desire nothing but peace and Clear path between us you must give us time as McGillivray is an Indian that has brought the Nation into a great disturbance.” A Talk from the Lower Towns in the Creek Nation, 8/11/1786, Document TCC026, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

made for “they are the people that must settle the matters as to what mischief was done.”⁹¹ In the headman’s opinion it was the “upper towns,” and McGillivray that were responsible for violating the agreements made between the Creeks and the Americans at Galphinton and Augusta in 1783 and 1785; not Tallassee King, Fat King, and the ten Lower Towns aligned with them. McGillivray and the Upper Creeks were not parties to those American treaties, the Tallassee King and Fat King were.

Tame King and Fat King did get their chance to make amends with the Americans. In late October 1787, fifteen Creek towns led by Fat and Tallassee King gathered at the tributary of the Oconee River known as Shoulderbone Creek to make peace with their Georgia neighbors for the third time in five years. A total of three hundred Creeks were estimated to be in attendance, including “men, women, and children.”⁹² The Georgia commissioners announced that it was their “sincere wish to make up the quarrel which has subsisted between our people and our nation for some time past,” but since the past two treaties were not honored, they were “sorry, to have to say” that they were “disappointed.”⁹³ The terms of Shoulderbone were to be the same as those at Augusta and Galphinton, the commissioners having clearly stated that they “expected what was then agreed upon would have been carried into effect,” as well as “satisfaction for six of our People killed by yours last spring.”⁹⁴ The alleged murders that

⁹¹ A Talk from the kings, beloved men and warriors of the Lower Creek Nations, Fat King as speaker, 6/4/1786, Document TCC206, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁹² Linder to Favrot, 11/13/1786, Tensaw, *SMV*, Vol. 3, 139.

⁹³ A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creek Nation, on Shoulder Bone Creek, near Oconee River, 10/21/1786, Shoulderbone, Document TCC117, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁹⁴ A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creek Nation, delivered by the Commissioners appointed by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 10/23/1786, Shoulderbone, Document TCC119, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

were carried out by the Creeks were no doubt committed by the allied Upper Creek towns, but the Americans wanted the perpetrators put to death regardless of their town affiliation.

To ensure these terms were met, the Georgia Commissioners turned to violence and intimidation. An army of near “three thousand armed Americans” were “hidden nearby,” and surrounded the entire Shoulderbone settlement.⁹⁵ The Commissioners claimed that they were provoked by McGillivray to display force during the treaty negotiations, for he acknowledged “the murders were committed by his direction” and approved by all since he was the “voice of the Creek Nation.”⁹⁶ “It is owing to what this man has said that we have drawn out the numerous Army of warriors which you saw two days ago and whom we are determined not to send home until we get satisfaction for the injuries we have sustained,” the commissioners explained to Tame King and Fat King during the Shoulderbone assembly.⁹⁷ The Georgians also claimed that the American Congress was “bound to assist” them “when we make war with your Nation,” although this claim was farfetched for Congress was not present at Shoudlerbone nor did they support war with the Creeks at this time.⁹⁸ An account of the episode written a month later by Alexander McGillivray reported that Tame King gave a “furious Talk” in response to hostile environment the commissioners placed his fellow Creeks in, which

⁹⁵ Linder to Favrot, 11/13/1786, Tensaw, *SMV*, Vol. 3, 189.

⁹⁶ A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creek Nation, on Shoulder Bone Creek, near Oconee River, 10/21/1786, Shoulderbone, Document TCC117, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁹⁷ A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creek Nation, on Shoulder Bone Creek, near Oconee River, 10/21/1786, Shoulderbone, Document TCC117, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

⁹⁸ A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors of the Creek Nation, on Shoulder Bone Creek, near Oconee River, 10/21/1786, Shoulderbone, Document TCC117, Telamon Cuyler Collection, *SNAD*.

“frightened the Georgians from their purpose of keeping them and made them some presents and bid them go home.”⁹⁹ Fat King, indeed, left Shoulderbone that day, but many headmen remained behind and on the third of November of 1786 fifty-five headmen signed the treaty that ceded the Oconee lands and approved the execution of six Creeks “responsible” for the recent frontier murders.¹⁰⁰

Within less than a week, Daniel McMurphy and his interpreter John Galphin arrived in Tuckabatchee “for the purpose of calling a meeting of the chiefs” to inform and demand that the entire Creek Nation abide by the terms agreed upon at Shoulderbone.¹⁰¹ McMurphy’s choice of Tuckabatchee as the town to deliberate the news, rather than Little Tallassee, was significant. Tuckabatchee was Mad Dog’s home town as well as the former meeting ground for diplomacy, before Little Tallassee replaced it under the leadership of Emistisiguo. After the death of Little Tallassee’s respected warrior, diplomat, and headman, the town began to lose its place as a space where diplomacy was conducted. Alexander McGillivray garnered a successful Euro-Creek trade for Little Tallassee during the immediate post-Revolutionary War period, but by the mid to late 1780s he had abused his position as Little Tallassee’s resident trader. As McGillivray’s unsavory trade tactics began to create more enemies than allies, the Creek population of

⁹⁹ Alexander McGillivray commented on the Tallassee King’s behavior as follows: “Tame King for once in his life time behaved like a man.” This statement is a bit ironic, for McGillivray was by no means a “man” according to Creek tradition or custom. His words did discredit the Tallassee King’s creditability as a headman, however, which was a common theme seen in McGillivray’s letters as well as in his attempts to centralize his own power. McGillivray to Governor O’Neill, 12/3/1786, in RC, 437; Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 140.

¹⁰⁰ John Houston, “camp” near the Oconee, 10/26/1786, Keith Reid Collection, *SNAD*. For the list of headmen who signed the treaty at Shoulderbone as well as its terms, see Treaty of Shoulderbone with the Creek Indians, 11/3/1786, *RC*, 433-436.

¹⁰¹ Letter Alexander McGillivray to John Habersham, Tuckabatches, 11/28/1786, Document TCC905, *SNAD*.

Little Tallassee and neighboring towns dwindled. By the winter of 1786 Little Tallassee began to resemble a trade community rather than a traditional Creek town and sacred space. There is no known evidence or clues in the documentary record that indicate who might have been the next headman of Little Tallassee. The position was oddly left vacant. The Creek town of Little Tallassee seemed to rise and fall along with the key personality who had once resided there: Emistisiguo.¹⁰²

Alexander McGillivray was present at Tuckabatchee when McMurphey arrived and after the headmen and warriors heard the news, McGillivray fulfilled his duties as the Creek's chosen spokesperson and communicated their refusal to abide by any of Shoulderbone's terms. In a letter addressed to the Governor of Georgia, McGillivray explained that the rest of the Creek towns not present at Shoulderbone refused to cede the Oconee lands nor give any satisfaction for the death of any Georgian. "These demands affect our leaders of the first distinction and their friends," McGillivray wrote, "now in their absence I loudly declare that if it is persisted in they will Swell the list of your killed tenfold. Better to die like men seeking revenge than at home like dogs."¹⁰³

¹⁰² Michael D. Green stated that "After McGillivray's death, the center of Upper Creek affairs swung to Tuckabatchee." See, Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, 40. Little Tallassee most definitely declined during McGillivray's lifetime and as the town's resident trader, but I argue the start of this decline began shortly after Emistisiguo's death. Green's argument, however, does support my thesis that Little Tallassee did indeed decline, and other than McGillivray, there appeared to be no other individual of note residing at Little Tallassee. Thus, without a traditional headman to maintain Creek traditions, Little Tallassee was no longer a sacred space or center of diplomacy. For more on Green's argument, see also, "Erosion of Creek Autonomy," in *Politics of Indian Removal*, 17-45.

¹⁰³ Letter Alexander McGillivray to John Habersham, Tuckabatchee, 11/28/1786, Document TCC905, SNAD.

War Against Georgia

The Creek declaration of revenge that McGillivray spoke of was no idle threat. In April and May 1787 “a general convention was held at Tuckabatchee” that not only reinforced the principal headmen and warriors’ position against Shoulderbone, but orchestrated a call for war against the state of Georgia. On April 8, 1787, McGillivray dispatched a letter to American Congressman James White having stated that both Tame King and Fat King were “severely censured for their conduct” at Shoulderbone and “the chiefs of ninety-eight towns agreed upon a talk to be sent to Savannah, disapproving, in the strongest manner, of the demand made upon their nation.”¹⁰⁴ Within this talk, McGillivray explained, the American’s mandate for satisfaction and lands were unwarranted, for they [Creeks] “had warned the Georgians of the dangerous consequences that would certainly attend the settling of those lands in question . . . The nation, justly alarmed at the encroachments, resolved to use force to maintain their rights.” The deaths of the white settlers along the Oconee lands were simply casualties of the Creek actions of self-defense to “awaken” the Georgians to “a sense of justice and equality” in response to the “hostile intentions” of the commissioners and their use of military force at the Shoulderbone assembly.¹⁰⁵

Approximately a week later, Alexander McGillivray journeyed to the Lower Creek town of Coweta, and the town of Coweta decided to take up the hatchet against Georgia. James White, the American Congressman whom McGillivray had been in

¹⁰⁴ Alexander McGillivray to James White, 4/8/1787, Little Tallassee, in RC, 445-446.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander McGillivray to James White, 4/8/1787, Little Tallassee, in RC, 446.

correspondence with over the invalid satisfaction and land claims by the Georgians, was present during the talk. The Hallowing King, the town's appointed speaker, explained to White that the Georgians "took and detained five principle men of the Coweta and Cussita as hostages" to get the Lower Creeks to provide the satisfaction demanded by the American commissioners at Shoulderbone.¹⁰⁶ Although Coweta was inclined towards peace with their Georgia neighbors in November 1786, the use of armed force to sign the treaty as well as the seizure of five respected headmen had reversed Coweta's decision to form an alliance with the Americans. Instead of compliance, the Hallowing King declared "severe retaliation" if the Georgians did not "deliver up" the Coweta and Cussita hostages.¹⁰⁷ "The Cowetes I am certain by this time have attacked the Georgians on account of the hostages beside the war that is Carrying on against Cumberland," McGillivray stated in a letter to O'Neil in a letter which summarized the mid-April talk of the Hallowing King.¹⁰⁸ By late May 1787 Coweta had dissolved all ties with the Americans and joined McGillivray, Mad Dog, and its Upper Creek neighbors in their frontier war against Georgia.

Coweta was not the only Lower Creek town that abandoned their affinity ties with the Americans that Spring. Besides the Cussita headmen that were taken hostage along with Coweta's, six Cussitas were shot and killed in June 1787. Timothy Barnard, a trader who lived among the Creeks along the Flint River, drafted a letter on the June 8, 1787 to Governor George Matthews recounting the events that led up to the Cussita deaths.

¹⁰⁶ McGillivray to O'Neil, 4/18/1787, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 149-150.

¹⁰⁷ McGillivray to O'Neil, 4/18/1787, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 149-150.

¹⁰⁸ McGillivray to O'Neil, 4/18/1787, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 151.

“Seven in number were incamped [encamped] on the west Side of the ocone River, and had been over several times among the peaceable inhabitants begging [begging] of milk from them.”¹⁰⁹ The Indian party was going about their business as usual, when they were then “surrounded by a party of white people and the whole six of them were Shot down and the camp stript ([stripped]) of everything of any value that could be found.” The seventh Creek, who was out hunting when the murders took place, returned to find his “dead comrades” and while “several guns were fired at him” and “pursed by a number of horsemen” he “dodged them and made his escape.” When he returned to town, Barnard heard of the events, which he himself declared to be a “very rash proceeding of some headstrong men” in his letter to the Georgia Governor.¹¹⁰ A war between the state of Georgia and all its Creek neighbors appeared inevitable.

In July 1787, Cussita held an assembly, led by Fat King, and it was during this council that war was unanimously declared upon Georgia. The murder of the six Cussita men at Buzzard Roost only amplified tensions that had brewed between the two neighbors since the previous November. “We have not forgot the Talks at Shoulder bone but you,” Fat King communicated in his talk addressed to Governor Matthews, but “it was proposed and agreed to us that no hasty revenges should be taken in by either side and in the late affair tis you that have been rash.”¹¹¹ These “hasty revenges” Fat King

¹⁰⁹ This small camp known for trade is also known as Buzzard Roost and was mentioned in Chapter III, featured as “Emistisiguo’s Raid.” Timothy Barnard to Georgia Matthews, 6/8/1787, Flint River, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC674, *SNAD*.

¹¹⁰ Timothy Barnard to Georgia Matthews, 6/8/1787, Flint River, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC674, *SNAD*.

¹¹¹ Talk of Fat King to His Honor Governor Matthews & Council, 7/27/1787, Cussita, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC906, *SNAD*.

spoke of were not limited to the deaths at Buzzard Roost, but also six more Cussita lives that were taken by the hands of white men. “You must give us immediate & ample Satisfaction life for life an equal number for twelve of our people destroyed by you—the leader of those mad people that did the mischief.”¹¹² Only after this satisfaction was provided, peaceful relations between the two could be restored and “tears of the relations of the dead will be dried up and our hearts,” explained Fat King. The deaths of the white men along the Oconee River were done by the Upper Creeks and Fat King attested that he nor his town should be held “accountable for any measures of the upper Towns.” The recent murders of the townsmen of Cussita were a clear violation of the treaty of Shoulderbone and as result, the “chain of friendship” was made “in Vaine.”¹¹³ The town of Cussita proclaimed that they saw a war “determined against them” by the state of Georgia, and subsequently joined their Coweta neighbors in dissolving all peace overtures with the Americans.¹¹⁴

The Upper Creek town of Tallassee joined forces with his longtime ally Cussita in the war against Georgia in September of 1787. Arturo O’Neil (Governor of Pensacola) drafted a letter to the Governor of Louisiana to inform him of Little Tallassee’s retraction of peace with the state of Georgia. According to O’Neil, “the Indians of the said towns [including Tallassee] together with other Nations are resolved to take vengeance for the

¹¹² The Georgia militia, in pursuit of Upper Creek raiders, ambushed twelve Cussita bystanders, and scalped at least six. See, Coker and Watson, *Indians Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*. For Fat King’s quote which confirmed these deaths, see Talk of Fat King to His Honor Governor Matthews & Council, 7/27/1787, Cussita, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC906, *SNAD*.

¹¹³ Talk of Fat King to His Honor Governor Matthews & Council, 7/27/1787, Cussita, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC906, *SNAD*.

¹¹⁴ Timothy Barnard to Georgia Matthews, 6/8/1787, Flint River, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Document TCC674, *SNAD*.

Dead of the eleven Indians from Casista [Cussita] who were murdered by the Georgians.” O’Neil also noted that The King of Tallassee, named Poismeco, “who was such an ardent friend of the Americans,” had visited him “last month with a recommendation from Mr. Alexander McGillivray that he be given two hundred and twenty-five pounds of powder.” O’Neil, pleased to hear that another Creek town was seeking an alliance with Spain, gave the powder to Posimeco, as well as an array of other trade goods. The Pensacola Governor concluded his letter with a simple, powerful, and accurate statement: “all the Creek Towns are now united and inflamed against the Americans, and I predict that in a sort time we shall have news of their raids.”¹¹⁵

By summer 1787, almost all of the Creek towns formed a Pan-Indian alliance with their northern Indian neighbors in order to combat the expansion of the young American Republic into Indian Country. Alexander McGillivray informed Spanish Governor O’Neil of the alliance in a letter he drafted in late June. “We have had a great meeting with the Chiefs of the northern Nations” and “they have routed & dispersed many parties of Surveyors from the Ohio & Western Country.” After the meeting, McGillivray apprised O’Neil that the Creeks “agreed Jointly to attack the Americans in every place wherever they Shall pass over their own proper Limits, nor never to grant them Lands, nor suffer Surveyors to roam about the Country.”¹¹⁶ Another report, written by Spanish official Carlos de Grand Pre noted that the “confederate league” of Indians also included the Cherokees and Chickasaws. His account reported that the Creeks were to “ruin all the

¹¹⁵ O’Neil to Miro, 9/17/1787, Pensacola, in *ETHS* 12 (1940): 101. See also pages 112-114 of this issue of the *East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications* for more details on these future raids.

¹¹⁶ McGillivray documented the Northern Nations to include the “Iroquois, Hurons, Mohocks, Wyandots, Onedias, & Shawnees.” McGillivray to O’Neil, 6/20/1787, Little Tallassee, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 153.

villages that have taken sides with the Americans” and the other Indian allies were to “surprise and destroy the Americans” established at the Chickasaw Bluffs, but failed to note which specific Creek towns did, indeed, align with one another.¹¹⁷

There was a multifaceted significance to the alliance made between the Creeks and their Northern and Southern Indian neighbors in 1787. First, the Creek towns of Cussita, Coweta, and Tallassee, entered the alliance by their own free will. There is no evidence that indicates that Alexander McGillivray or Mad Dog coerced these towns into dissolving their peace plans with the Americans. Rather, it was their desire for clan revenge and sense of betrayal by the state of Georgia in both their violent tactics at Shoulderbone and careless murders of innocent Creeks that ultimately turned Coweta, Cussita, and Tallassee against the Americans. The Northern Indians, as well, had their own reasons for war, and they sent delegates to the Creeks. Thus, contrary to popular historiographical trends, McGillivray did not unite or centralize the Creeks and their Indian neighbors; instead, they did so on their own accord.

McGillivray—The War Profiteer

The unanimous decision to go to war by the Upper and Lower Creeks without holding an official assembly at Little Tallassee beforehand offers significant insight into its decline as anything more than a trading post. In 1774, Little Tallassee became the first Creek town to hold an assembly where all Creeks were in attendance. Emistisiguo was responsible for the assembly, where through a combination of logic, persuasion, and his

¹¹⁷ Carlos de Grand-Pre to Governor General Estevan Miro, 6/1/1787, Fort Panmure of Natchez, *SMV*, 3:210.

own reputation as a respected headman and warrior, he convinced his Creek neighbors to abandon clan revenge in favor of peace and trade. Two years later, Little Tallassee was also the chosen town to finalize peace between the Creeks and the Choctaws. These are just two examples of multiple occasions where Little Tallassee served as a diplomatic space to discuss important issues of both foreign and domestic affairs. By 1787, however, diplomatic decisions were conducted in the square grounds of individual Creek towns. Creek Country had lost its center of diplomacy, Little Tallassee, along with the individual who was responsible for its facilitation: Emistisiguo.

Alexander McGillivray and Emistisiguo's motivations for war, trade, and unification were opposite one another. As a traditional Creek headmen and warrior, Emistisiguo based decisions pertaining to trade and war for the benefit of the populaces of Little Tallassee and the Creek people. These decisions were also never made solely by Emistisiguo, but discussed and voted upon during town councils and larger assemblies conducted in the sacred square of Little Tallassee. McGillivray, however, encouraged fellow Creeks to go to war with Georgia to protect his interests in trade monopoly. If the Creeks were to develop trade with the United States, at the very least the profits of Pantan, Leslie, & Company would suffer. The monopoly McGillivray had on the Creek trade would disintegrate, as well as the firm's control over the rest of the Southeastern Indians. In addition, war by default increased trade. If Creeks needed ammunition, then the demand for European trade remained. As the resident trader of Little Tallassee and partner in Pantan, Leslie, and Company, McGillivray's interests rested in maintaining his personal trade monopoly over the Creeks, not their long-term welfare. Alexander

McGillivray's disapproval of the Treaties of Augusta, Galphinton, and Shoulderbone and actions taken to nullify the subsequent treaties supports this argument. McGillivray's support for war over diplomacy in response to frontier violence and land encroachment with Georgia further exemplifies this logic.

Alexander McGillivray utilized this control over the Creek trade to augment his power among the Creeks and spent his entire political career attempting to unify the Upper and Lower towns into one cohesive Creek Nation. McGillivray did so under the guise of the idea that a Nation State, similar to the United States, was the optimum avenue to preserve Creek sovereignty during the early years of the American Republic. A sovereign Creek Nation, however, was also another means for McGillivray to maintain his monopoly over Creek trade in the face of American frontier expansion. McGillivray's staunch promotion of Creek sovereignty and centralization advanced his agenda to maintain a commercial monopoly over Creek trade. If the Creeks were united in a war against Georgia, McGillivray not only reaped the benefits of the ongoing need for supplies and ammunition, but also the elimination of any trade competition that peace with the United States might bring.

Waning Spanish Support

In early October 1787, Spain's support of the Creek war against Georgia was questionable. Spanish officials were delayed in dispatching supplies from their Gulf ports, and ammunition was a necessity in order for the Creeks and their Southeastern Indian neighbors to continue to protest American encroachment and frontier violence. "The supply of Ammunition which I received of the Governor of Louisiana, the delivery

of it was accompanied with some degree of backwardness and Caution,” McGillivray wrote to Zespedes. This “caution” McGillivray spoke of led him to suspect that “this present supply was given to me upon the condition of not using it against the Americans.” Skeptical of where Spanish loyalties lay, McGillivray declared that “If it is really the wishes of Government that I should be a peace with the Americans at the expense of every Sacrifice, surely they should speak a plain language & which I ought to Clearly Understand.”¹¹⁸

McGillivray’s suspicion was not unfounded. Zespedes pleaded the necessity of maintaining the friendship of the Creeks through trade to Galvez, Governor of St. Augustine in March of 1788, no doubt a reaction to McGillivray’s correspondence as well his own misgivings of waning Spanish support. Zespedes argued that “to cut loose from McGillivray at the present time, or to throw out Panton, Leslie, and Company [to do one is to do the other] will be to lose at one stroke all that we have gained with the Indians, and to hand them over irretrievably to the Americans.” Zespedes also reminded Galvez that aid to the Creeks and their new pan-Indian alliance would only support Spain’s empire, not put it in jeopardy. “The said general confederation will add a new degree of perfection, directed toward curbing the evident usurpations that the State of Georgia and the other sates intend to make on the Indians Lands.”¹¹⁹ The Creeks and other Southeastern Indians were a vital buffer to American encroachment on contested

¹¹⁸ McGillivray to Zespedes, 10/6/1787, Pensacola, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 162-163.

¹¹⁹ Zespedes to Valdes, 3/24/1788, St. Augustine, Ed. and Trans. by D.C. Corbitt and Roberta Corbitt, “Papers from the Spanish Archives” in *ETHS* 14 (1942): 86-94, quotes taken from 88-89.

territory and navigation of the Mississippi between Spain and the American Republic.

Thus, Zespedes supported the Creek war against Georgia.

Zespedes did not trust McGillivray. Rather, McGillivray's connection to Panton, Leslie, & Company and his role as Spanish ambassador to the Creeks was too vital to Spanish interests to ignore. Zespedes's skepticism became visible when he recommended that a "Spanish Member and Spanish employees" be added to the "firm of Panton, Leslie, and Company" to spy on McGillivray and Panton. The fact that they were British loyalists could not be erased from the minds of the Spanish officials, and Zespedes's letter confirmed this. Zespedes even suggested to Galvez that the Spanish subjects "reside among the Indians themselves, with secret orders to watch the movements of McGillivray and some Englishmen."¹²⁰ By 1787, it appeared that no one (Creek, American, or Spanish) trusted Alexander McGillivray. Despite his skepticism towards McGillivray, Zespedes did not waver in his argument in favor of arming the Creeks against Georgia. "Providing the Indians opportunely with Arms and Ammunitions for their hunts and for self-defense against any invader if necessary . . . will have them in an immediately an important barrier, be it against Adventurers or Americans," Zespedes ultimately concluded.¹²¹

Arturo O'Neil (Governor of West Florida) also had concerns regarding Alexander McGillivray's loyalties as well his partners in Panton, Leslie, & Company. "British at Heart," O'Neil described McGillivray in a letter to Estevan Miro (Governor of

¹²⁰ Zespedes to Valdes, 3/24/1788, St. Augustine, Corbitt, "Papers from the Spanish Archives, 1783-1800," in *ETHS* 14 (1942): 83-94, quote on 91.

¹²¹ Zespedes to Valdes, 3/24/1788, St. Augustine, Corbitt, "Papers from the Spanish Archives," *ETHS* 14 (1942): 86-94, quotes on 91 and 93.

Louisiana), “it is always necessary to distrust him.” O’Neil was equally skeptical of McGillivray’s trade partner William Panton. Spanish officials had asked Panton to “become a vassal” to the King of Spain, but according to O’Neil “Panton refuses to do so.”¹²² Both McGillivray and Panton were open British loyalists, and despite the alliance made at Pensacola in 1784, the Spanish did have good reason to wonder if the firm would abandon their pledges to Spain if a better opportunity presented itself. O’Neil confided in Governor Miro that he worried McGillivray’s “authority in the nation [Creek]” and Revolutionary ideas might “bring about the entire independence of the Indians.” If that were the case, O’Neil suspected that “he would prove more loyal to the British trade than to the Spaniards,” and he might “drive out the Americans.” The governor’s suspicions stemmed from the realization that Spain might one day become dispensable to the Creeks and the successful Panton, Leslie, & Company.¹²³

Although Spain understood the necessity of Indian country as a buffer to U.S. expansion, between 1788-1789 several Spanish officials developed a new strategy to deal with their American neighbors. Instead of refusing to allow U.S. citizens to immigrate to Spanish territory, Americans were welcomed. The idea behind this was to grow a larger population of individuals loyal to Spain, which therefore would provide strength in numbers and subsequently Spain could be less reliant on Indian country to provide a buffer from American advancement. These immigrants had to pledge their allegiance to

¹²² O’Neil to Miro, 3/24/1788, Pensacola, Corbitt, “Papers from the Spanish Archives”, *ETHS*: 4 (1942), 86-94, quotes on 97. John Forbes, another partner in Panton, Leslie, & Company, also refused to take an oath of allegiance to Spain. See O’Neil to Miro, 7/28/1788, Pensacola, Corbitt, “Papers from the Spanish Archives,” *ETHS* 15 (1943): 95-98 quote on 96.

¹²³ O’Neil to Miro, 5/21/1787, Pensacola, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 152-153.

the King of Spain, but they were granted religious toleration and citizenship. By February 7, 1789 the number of American transplants to the Natchez district was large enough for Governor Miro to create a post and appoint an official to manage the budding province.¹²⁴

American immigration only escalated the current war between the Creeks and their Southeastern neighbors against Georgia. In late April, Alexander McGillivray wrote to Folch that a “large number of Americans has been introduced into their lands on the Tombigbee River and its branches.” These Americans, McGillivray explained, have “greatly alarmed and inconvenienced” the “tribes of the Alabamas” as well as “roused complaints of the Choctaws,” and as a result “have decided to work together soon to evict and plunder the greater part of the settlers of these districts.”¹²⁵ McGillivray admitted in his letter that he both predicted and feared the actions of the Alabamas and Choctaws, because he knew the “disposition and temper of the tribes located along the river.” On behalf of the Creeks, however, McGillivray reminded Folch that he had “strongly opposed” the “instruction of the government to introduce Americans,” and that he had asked Miro to “restrict the settlement” but “he did not give full attention to my warning,” and therefore placed the blame of the violence not on the Creeks or Choctaws, but the Spanish officials themselves. McGillivray did offer to “assemble the chiefs of the Upper towns” to curb the violence for the sake of keeping peace with Spain, but his powers were limited as “the Alabama chiefs seldom present themselves at our assemblies

¹²⁴ Introduction, “Post War Decade,” in *SMV*, Vol. 3, XXVI-XXVII. Manuel Gayoso de Lemos was appointed by Miro to this post.

¹²⁵ McGillivray to Folch, 4/22/1789, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 226-227.

protesting their great distance away.”¹²⁶ McGillivray left out the fact that he simply did not possess the power to assemble these chiefs, for his role in Creek society was limited. As a spokesperson he could only relay messages between the Creeks and the Spanish officials, and his own personal powers of persuasion were mediocre at best within Creek society.

Governor Miro was outraged that not only had frontier violence escalated, but that new Spanish citizens were the victims. Already suspicious of McGillivray’s loyalties to Spain, Miro accused McGillivray of having a hand in the planning of the recent attacks, despite McGillivray’s declaration that the Alabamas and Choctaws acted entirely without his knowledge. Miro penned to McGillivray that “it is not possible that without your knowledge your Nation would have launched upon such an outrage,” and added that McGillivray’s failure to “stop this disorder” was a breach of trust between two friends and alliances.¹²⁷ Regardless if McGillivray had knowledge or not of the attacks, the Spanish officials continued to be disillusioned by McGillivray’s lack of power over the Creeks. “If he is king in Louisiana I am one in the Creek Nations,” Alexander McGillivray wrote to Folch on May 14, 1789.¹²⁸ It is no wonder the Spanish remained deceived. In response to McGillivray’s “failure” to prevent the recent attacks, however, Miro threatened to cut off all “commerce and the distribution of munitions” to the Creeks until the violence was “remedied.”¹²⁹ Trade was the one tie that bound the Creeks and the

¹²⁶ McGillivray to Folch, 4/22/1789, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 226-227.

¹²⁷ Miro to McGillivray, 5/22/ 1789, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 232-233.

¹²⁸ McGillivray to Folch, 5/14/1789, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 230-231.

¹²⁹ Miro to McGillivray, 5/22/ 1789, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 232-233.

Spanish together, and Miro's threat to take that bond away was a sure indication that Spain's support of their shared their interests was no longer their priority.

Spain had another reason to threaten to dissolve trade unless the Creek agreed to make peace with the Americans. The Creeks and their new Southeastern and Northern Indian allies' war against American encroachment had become burdensome and costly to Spain. War required ammunition and not only did the Creek's require arms against their Georgia neighbors, but Spain's new American allies.¹³⁰ Spain had pledged to assist the Creek's against American encroachment, but they were not interested in the aggrandizement of the Creek Nation or its neighbors. Spanish officials did not support an independent Creek state financed by their own economy.¹³¹ They retracted their support for the Creeks war against Georgia, and declared that "it was the utmost important to get a treaty of Peace" with the United States but "limited to their being friends without granting them the trade and commerce."¹³² If the Creeks made peace with the Americans, Spain was happy to dissolve its threat to cut off commerce to the Creeks.

American Peace Overtures and Divided Creek Responses

Spain's new policy put the Creeks in a difficult position. Trade was vital to the Creek economy, as well as Alexander's position within that economy. Panton, Leslie, & Company's ability to trade within Spanish territory allowed the Creeks to continue to receive arms and commerce from the Gulf Coast as usual. On the other hand, peace with Americans would require some type of land cession, for in every treaty beginning with

¹³⁰ Introduction, in *SMV*, Vol. 3, XXIX-XXX.

¹³¹ Caughey, "The Career of Alexander McGillivray, in *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 34-35.

¹³² Miro to Valdes, 7/13/1788, New Orleans, Corbitt, "Papers from the Spanish Archives," *ETHS* 15 (1943): 92-93.

Augusta in 1783 officials from Georgia had demanded the valuable Creek hunting territory West of the Oconee River. The Upper and Lower Creek's reactions to the prospect of peace with Americans varied from town to town.

In April 1789, the Lower Creek towns, except for Tallassee (being an Upper Town), met with American Commissioner Andrew Pickens and revealed that they felt betrayed by their American friends and vowed to continue war against Georgian encroachment. Evidence of this sentiment can be seen in the words of Tame King, who was the first to speak during the assembly with Pickens. Tame King was documented to have declared:

He had always been a friend to the white people, that after the war, he was invited to Augusta, where he expected to be treated like a friend, instead of which, the white people, *their long knives in their hands*, insisted on his making a land cession, which he had no right to do so.¹³³

Demands to take Creek hunting land by force was enough for Tallassee King to see the chain of friendship eroded, as treaties were diplomatic measures towards peace, not threats backed by armed force.

Tame King's talk was seconded by the Hallowing King of Coweta. Although he "expressed" the town of Coweta's "thankfulness to the superintendent for coming so great a journey," the hostile encroachment by the Georgians and the unreasonable demands for Creek lands made peace impossible. Hallowing King explained to Pickens that "these last strides tell us they [Americans] never meant to let their foot rest; our lands

¹³³ Meeting with the Lower Creeks, 4/10/1789, in RC, 507-508, quotes on 507. Emphasis mine.

are our life and breath; if we part with them, we part with our blood. We must fight for them.”¹³⁴ The superintendent explained to the headmen that it was impossible to evacuate lands that the white people had already settled on “after buying them,” for the Georgians were under the impression that the lands were “granted by the Indians in atonement for the many unprovoked injuries the State had sustained.” Pickens words, however, were spoken in vain. Both Tame King and Hallowing King declared that “if nothing would do but relinquishing the lands on the Oconee,” then their answer was simple “war.”

Disappointed, Pickens took his leave.¹³⁵

On June 1, 1789, the headmen and warriors of the Lower Creek towns delivered a second talk to the U.S. Commissioners. Their talk conveyed that their resolution towards war remained firm, but if their hunting lands could be preserved, they desired nothing more than peace with their neighbors. The speaker of this talk is unknown, but the content summarizes the Creek dilemma in a concise and sincere fashion.¹³⁶ “As we are all made by the master of breath, although put in different parts of the earth, he did not make us to be at variance against each other, but it has happened, by the bad doings of our mad people, on both sides” the Creek spokesmen communicated via the interpreter James Derezeaux. “When we first met the white people” there was a “desire of being further acquainted with each other,” the Creek speaker informed the Commissioners. The two parties did not “meet in arms” until “the great encroachments of our lands,” which was responsible for the “late troubles” among the two. The Creek spokesperson appealed to

¹³⁴ Meeting with the Lower Creeks, 4/10/1789, in RC, 507-508, quotes on 508.

¹³⁵ Meeting with the Lower Creeks, 4/10/1789, in RC, 507-508, quotes on 508.

¹³⁶ Talk from the Lower Creeks to the U.S. Commissioners, 6/1/1789, RC, 515-516.

the commissioners by explaining the value of the lands to Creek society as well as the American economy. “What will be the use of goods brought among us, if your young men have not hunting ground to kill game, to purchase the goods brought to us?”¹³⁷ It was not that the Lower Creeks were opposed to peace, the demands by the Americans were just impossible to satisfy. War continued to be the only option, or that was what the headmen and warriors of the Lower towns and Tallassee believed.

By late May, Alexander McGillivray chose preservation of trade over hunting grounds. “I had pledged the Spanish good faith & my own Credit for the Certainty of a further Supply of Ammunition & arms to enable this Nation to obtain a Safe & honorable peace,” McGillivray informed Governor Miro. Although McGillivray admitted that during his meetings with the rest of the Upper Creek towns the headmen were “pressing” him for “information on the subject,” and reluctant to treat without knowing American land demands, McGillivray confirmed he believed that “peace with the Americans absolutely necessary for this Nation [Creek] under our present circumstances.”¹³⁸ The circumstances McGillivray was referring to, no doubt, was Spain’s threat to cut off trade.

By June 1789, the United States had formed a new government that represented the constitution signed that year and created a department and policy to manage Indian affairs. General Knox (the Secretary at War) was appointed by President George Washington to head it. The new government had determined that peace with the Southeastern Indians was crucial to the success of young Republic. The Northern Indian

¹³⁷ Talk from the Lower Creeks to the U.S. Commissioners, 6/1/1789, *RC*, 515-516.

¹³⁸ McGillivray to Miro, 5/26/1789, Little Tallassee, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 234-235.

nations had formed a confederacy, and Knox informed Washington that he feared a similar union would soon be formed in the South. Knox reported on the subject that “their situation, entirely surrounded on all sides, leads naturally to such a union, and the present difficulties of the Creeks and Cherokees may accelerate and complete it.” Fear that the Creeks and their neighbors would also cement a permanent alliance with Spain also troubled the United States.¹³⁹ Determined to finally win over the Creeks to their side, Congress sent a special envoy led by Colonel Marinus Willet to invite Alexander McGillivray and the Creeks to meet in New York and meet with President Washington. Colonel Willet was no ordinary messenger. He was hand chosen by former Commissioner and Senator Benjamin Hawkins, and had an impressive war career during the American Revolution.¹⁴⁰

Willet used a variety of tactics to convince Alexander McGillivray and the headmen of Creek towns at war with Georgia to agree to negotiate President Washington in New York. The first of which, was nothing out of the ordinary—promises the Americans never intended to keep. McGillivray reported the details of Willet’s visit to Creek Country to Pantan shortly after the Colonel’s departure, where Willet assured the Creeks that “not one acre of Land shall be asked of us, but rather restore whatever is usurped,” and that “the attempts of any State to infringe on Indian Rights by force are Strongly reprobated & Washington wishes before his Career close to see formal peace pervade the land on all sides.” Although Willet’s promises were nothing but empty

¹³⁹ Report of the Secretary of War on the Southern Indians (General Knox to the President of the United States), 7/7/1789, in RC, 526-529. Quote on 526.

¹⁴⁰ Hawkins to McGillivray, 3/6/1790, New York, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 256-258.

words, the idea of a new president and directly negotiating with Congress, not the state of Georgia, appealed to McGillivray.¹⁴¹

Flattery and bribery also enticed Alexander McGillivray. First off, McGillivray seemed to be enamored by Millet: “I find him just as Genl. Pickens a Candid and Benevolent Character, possessing abilities but without Show or Parade.”¹⁴² Perhaps McGillivray saw a resemblance of himself in Willet, for he spent most of his life living as a Southern gentleman, landed planter, and tradesman. Willet did not neglect to inform McGillivray that he believed he would not only recover his father’s property in Georgia that was confiscated during the Revolution, but that the opportunity to conclude a peace with President Washington himself would long be revered by United States Citizens. Willet understood that McGillivray was an ambitious man and the idea that Creek lands might be bought through bribery was a farfetched notion.¹⁴³

McGillivray himself, the spokesperson for the Creeks, could write all the letters he desired but only with the permission of the principal headmen and warriors of each towns did he have permission to agree to treat on their behalf in New York. Luckily for the Americans, Willet took the time to travel to deliver his talks to several assemblies of headmen and warriors at a number of towns including Tuckabatchee, Coweta, Oussitche, and Little Tallassee. “A favorable trade” along with the protection of the sacred hunting

¹⁴¹ McGillivray to Panton, 5/8/1790, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 259-262, quote on 261. Willet had also explained to McGillivray that treating with President Washington and the United States Congress offered an “opportunity of Defeating the late Grants to those companies [Yazoo] & to restore to & secure us our Rights of Territory.”

¹⁴² McGillivray to Panton, 5/8/1790, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 259-262, quote on 260.

¹⁴³ “The Treaty of New York,” in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 42-43.

grounds was promised by Willet during these assemblies. The Colonel also apprised the Creeks that Spain and England appeared to be on the brink of war over a territory dispute in Nootka Sound, and if a war broke out Panton's trade would have slim chances of survival. A world without trade was unfathomable to the Creeks, and the reason that twenty-six headmen agreed to attending McGillivray at New York and supported the idea of a permanent peace with the United States.¹⁴⁴

It was in early June that William Panton learned of Alexander McGillivray's decision to go to New York. Panton agreed that peace was necessary, but he did not trust the United States. "When you see these men, you will learn their true Business which I shall like to hear—but take care of them, for there is no knowing what unworthy design they may harbor," Panton advised. Panton did not hold much weight in the Nooka Sound debate, for he was confident that as long as McGillivray made peace with the Americans but remained loyal to Spain for protection, Panton, Leslie, and Company would continue to profit and "I shall then have it in my power to sell my goods as cheap as the Georgians can and I mean to do it."¹⁴⁵ Panton ended his letter with his final words of advice for McGillivray, "I am therefore of opinion you should decline a Commercial Treaty with these people [Americans] at least for some months to come until you see what may be determined by the Court of Spain."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Caughey, "The Treaty of New York," in McGillivray of the Creeks, 41-42.

¹⁴⁵ William Panton to Alexander McGillivray, 6/7/1789, Pensacola, in D.C. Corbitt, "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21. No 4 (December 1937), 375.

¹⁴⁶ William Panton to Alexander McGillivray, 6/7/1789, Pensacola, in D.C. Corbitt, "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21. No 4 (December 1937), 375.

Panton did not receive a response to his letter from McGillivray until he had already left for New York. Panton, who feared that a treaty negotiated outside of Creek country would be corrupted to the interest of the Americans only, hurried to Little Tallassee to speak with McGillivray personally before his departure. Unfortunately, Panton's approximately three-hundred-mile trip was in vain. All that was left for Panton were a number of letters that assured Panton and the company that he would not buy into a commercial trade with the Americans.¹⁴⁷ "I wish I had seen him before he went," William Panton wrote to Miro, but "I nevertheless have confidence enough in his Steadiness to reply that he will reject any overture which may be made to him, that can be considered injurious to Spain or disgraceful to himself and friends."¹⁴⁸ Although McGillivray did not possess the power to make treaties on his own nor go against the wishes of the leading headmen, in particular Mad Dog, Panton knew that in New York McGillivray had an edge. Diplomacy in New York would be conducted not in a town square, but the office of President Washington and American Commissioners. The Treaty was a true test of McGillivray's loyalties.

The Treaty of New York

Alexander McGillivray and thirty Creek headmen arrived in the capital of the United States in August of 1789.¹⁴⁹ Reports said that McGillivray looked "like a white man" and the rest of the Creeks were adorned with eagle feathers, beads, earrings, silver

¹⁴⁷ Caughey, "The Treaty of New York," in *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 42-43.

¹⁴⁸ Caughey, "The Treaty of New York," in *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 42-43.

¹⁴⁹ 30 headmen traveled to New York, but only twenty-four signed the treaty, see "Treaty with the Creeks, 1790," 8/7/1790, New York, in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, compiled and ed. by Charles J. Kappler (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), Vol. 2, 28-29. (Accessed January 2018). (Hereafter cited as Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. Page(s)).

gorgets; all symbols of high rank and status.¹⁵⁰ They were escorted by Colonel Marinus Willet and were received with a grand display of roaring guns and a detachment of soldiers who escorted McGillivray and company up Wall Street to Secretary Knox's residence. Interestingly enough, McGillivray spent the night at Knox's residence, while the rest of the Creek party stayed in a local inn. Mad Dog, head warrior and principal chief of Tuckabatchee and known ally of McGillivray was conspicuously absent from the delegation.¹⁵¹

During the treaty, Creek leaders ceded the lands east of the Oconee to the United States, and in exchange the Creeks were awarded a lump sum of 1,500 in perpetuity.¹⁵² Article 12 of the treaty also stipulated that the United States furnish the Creeks with domestic animals and farm implements in order to assist in order to elevate them to a "greater degree of civilization."¹⁵³ Additionally, select Creek headmen received an annual payment of \$100 for their cooperation, and in a secret article of the treaty McGillivray accepted an annual salary of \$1,200 and a military commission of brigadier general.¹⁵⁴ The Creeks were able to hold onto valuable hunting grounds along the Altamaha river, and were guaranteed protection by the United States against any encroachment by the state of Georgia.¹⁵⁵ The most significant secret provision, however, was that McGillivray

¹⁵⁰ Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, The First Americans, and the Birth of a Nation* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2018), 366.

¹⁵¹ J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek- American Treaty of 1790: Alexander McGillivray and The Diplomacy of the Old Southwest, *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (December 1967), 380. (hereafter cited as J. Leitch Wright Jr, "Creek-American Treaty of 1790", page number).

¹⁵² Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 199.

¹⁵³ Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington*, 369.

¹⁵⁴ J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790," 394-395; Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 199.

¹⁵⁵ Caughey, "The Treaty of New York," in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 44.

was to be granted a free port in southern Georgia where commercial goods could be imported tax free and therefore give McGillivray a complete monopoly over Indian trade.¹⁵⁶ The only member of McGillivray and his Creek party to actually sign the secret articles, however, was Alexander McGillivray himself.¹⁵⁷

The preservation of a lucrative trade had always been a priority of the Creeks, as former Creek headmen and warrior Emistisiguo had spent his entire career advocating for and protecting trade, along the Gulf Coast in particular. The motivation behind Alexander McGillivray's dedication to protect trade at the expense of such a large land session is unclear. In 1790 a war between Spain and England seemed likely, and it was quite possible that Panton, Leslie, & Company's British sources of ammunition and commerce were in jeopardy. The secret article for the free port was McGillivray's way of protecting Creek trade, but also his partnership in Panton & Leslie's monopoly. More specifically, with a free and independent Creek port, the company could just shift its base from Spanish to American territory and continue trade as usual.¹⁵⁸ Given the fact that McGillivray also received monetary compensation and a title, however, in addition to the duty-free port, suggests that Alexander McGillivray's attempts to preserve Creek trade was for personal gain, not affection or loyalty to his fellow Creeks.

Out of the thirty Creeks present, only twenty-four signed the Treaty of New York. It is quite possible that they did not have enough status to sign or were not presented with

¹⁵⁶ J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790," 356; Secret Article, 8/4/1790, ASPIA, 1: 95.

¹⁵⁷ Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington*, 369. For more details on the Treaty of New York, see also Calloway's chapter "Courting McGillivray," *The Indian World of George Washington*, particularly 363-72.

¹⁵⁸ J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790," 394-395; Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 199.

the opportunity. Many may have objected to the treaty. Although Alexander Cornel was present to interpret the articles of the treaty, Alexander McGillivray was the spokesperson for the Creeks. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the majority of the discussion between Washington, Knox, and McGillivray during the ratification process was in English. Muskogean was McGillivray's second language and was almost always accompanied by an interpreter during Creek assemblies, which bolsters this assumption. Regardless, the majority if not all the headmen signed the treaty of New York were illiterate, and likely did not have full knowledge of the detailed contents of the treaty they had given approval.¹⁵⁹ The protection of trade was agreed upon universally among the Creeks, but to what extent remains debatable.

Aftermath

By the fall of 1790, news had spread throughout Creek Country that the Oconee lands had been sold. The Creeks were not only outraged by the cession, but a sense of betrayal to the treaty signers lingered throughout the both Upper and Lower Towns. The deposition of a Georgia settler known as John Bradshaw offers valuable insight into the Creek's dissatisfaction. Bradshaw traveled through the two prominent towns of Coweta and Tuckabatchee, both known to have long been physical and spiritual spaces where Creek diplomacy was conducted. While passing through both towns, Bradshaw remarked that the general attitude of the townsmen seemed "very surly, morose, and much displeased" with the news of cash for land deal signed by McGillivray and only twenty-

¹⁵⁹ J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790," 394-295.

four rather insignificant headmen.¹⁶⁰ Bradshaw reported in his deposition that the Creek's told him that they were "very much displeased by with the Treaty held at New York and also with McGillivray" and "payed very little respect to his authority." The Creek informants continued to inform Bradshaw and his company that "Congress might do what they pleased with the Treaty, for they intended to do as they pleased with it," which Bradshaw noted that "uttered with great contempt." Last, they declared that the "the prisoners and property taken by the Indians would never be given up without a war," and this property included the Oconee hunting grounds.¹⁶¹ War not peace, was the consensus among the Creeks at Coweta and Tuckabatchee in the aftermath of the Treaty of New York.

Although Alexander McGillivray was Little Tallassee's spokesperson and intermediary, he never earned the respect or trust that all of Creek Country had given to his predecessor. Given Emistisiguo's dedication to the preservation of trade, it is difficult in hindsight to guess what the headman and warrior of Little Tallassee would have done if he were in McGillivray's position. The one thing Emistisiguo would never have done, however, was treat without the consent of all the headmen and warriors of both the Lower and Creek towns. Emistisiguo was a Creek and he acted on behalf of Creek interests, despite his own personal ambitions to bring power and prestige to himself and town of Little Tallassee. Emistisiguo was a headman that earned his position through traditional Creek practices, McGillivray did not and was never a headman to begin with. Instead,

¹⁶⁰ [Letter with deposition enclosed], 11/22/1790, State House Augusta to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the house of Representatives, Document TCC096, Telamon Culyer Collection, *SNAD*.

¹⁶¹ [Letter with deposition enclosed], 11/22/1790, State House Augusta to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the house of Representatives, Document TCC096, Telamon Culyer Collection, *SNAD*.

Alexander McGillivray was a man who traveled to New York, ignored the advice of his own business partner, and signed a treaty that gave him a monopoly on Creek trade, monetary compensation, and an American military title. All the while, he was only a mere spokesperson, and had no authority to do so. The opposition voices of the townspeople at Tuckabatchee and Coweta, embodied in many ways, the entirety of the Creek Nation. One Lower and one Upper town, both former respected spaces of diplomacy and politics, decided they would rather go to war with the Americans than concede to the demands of the Treaty at New York.

Due to the heavy Creek backlash to the Oconee land cession, the Americans spent months waiting for the Creeks to meet them and run the newly agreed upon boundary line. The surveyors, however, eventually abandoned the project as no Creek delegation from the Upper or Lower towns ever showed up to do so. By September 1793, the American Secretary at War, Henry Knox, made an announcement that ironically summarized the sentiment of the entire Creek Nation. In a letter to James Seagrove, Knox asked the Indian Agent to locate “real chiefs” to return to New York and negotiate terms for a second time.¹⁶² Whether or not Knox ever understood that Creek politics were consensual, he did realize by 1793 that Alexander McGillivray was not the head over the Creek Confederacy nor did he hold any significant power. In fact, the Creeks were so angry with McGillivray’s decision he left Little Tallassee early in 1793, and spent the remaining few months of his life in the house of William Panton at Pensacola. Rumors

¹⁶² Knox to James Seagrove, War Dept., 9/16/1793, ASPIA, Vol. 1, 366-67. See also, J. Leitch Wright Jr., “Creek-American Treaty of 1790,” 396-397.

circulated that McGillivray still attempted to control Creek affairs from Pensacola, but no evidence indicated he had any credibility left among the Creeks to be able to do so.¹⁶³ Even if McGillivray had allies, his health declined rapidly. Panton described McGillivray's condition in a letter on February 16, 1793 as follows: "Mr. McGillivray lies dangerously ill in my house of a Complication of disorders of Gout in the stomach attended with a perepneumony and he is so very bad as to leave scarcely any hope of recovery."¹⁶⁴ Panton's letter of McGillivray's impending death most likely never reached the Baron Carondelet on time. Alexander McGillivray passed away only four days later, at eleven in the evening at Panton's home, accompanied by only Panton and a few unknown Creeks.¹⁶⁵

Alexander McGillivray spending his final days within the home William Panton and outside of Little Tallassee confirmed just how far removed McGillivray was from Creek Country not only at the time of his death, but his entire life. Years of compulsory trade and promoting war against Georgia to reap the benefits of that trade expose McGillivray's identity as that of a European trader. It was only after his realization that Spain's waning support jeopardized the survival of Panton, Leslie, and Company that McGillivray considered peace with the United States. By 1790, McGillivray was quick to surrender valuable Creek hunting grounds in exchange for the promise of a free port in southern Georgia to maintain his personal monopoly over Creek trade. The fact that the majority of the Upper and Lower Creeks had no voice in this matter did not faze him.

¹⁶³ Caughey, *Untimely Death*, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 53.

¹⁶⁴ Panton to Carondelet, 2/16/1793, Pensacola, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 353.

¹⁶⁵ Panton to Carondelet, 2/20/1793, Pensacola, Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 354.

Alexander McGillivray's last will and testimony encapsulates his identity as a Creek trade, as he abandoned Creek tradition and embraced European-style paternalism. He left all his assets to his sons; not to his maternal Creek family. Alexander McGillivray's last priority was that the McGillivray trade legacy live on, not the preservation of Creek tradition and sovereignty in face of American expansion.¹⁶⁶

Little Tallassee's position within Creek society rested in the quintessential individuals that inhabited it. Although Emistisiguo left McGillivray a blueprint to follow in order to utilize his literacy and trade knowledge for the benefit of Little Tallassee and the Upper Creeks, McGillivray's alienation from the Creek world and hunger for power left Little Tallassee nothing more than a trade depot by the late 1780s. Without a traditional Creek headman and warrior such as Emistisiguo, Little Tallassee rapidly declined as the Upper Creek center of diplomacy and sacred space. By the time of McGillivray's death, the Upper Creeks were already gathering at Tuckabatchee square to discuss matters of trade, war, and diplomacy and Mad Dog, the town's head warrior, appeared to take on a very similar role to that of Emistisiguo during the 1760s. Creek towns are not towns without traditional headmen or war leaders. Despite the attention and importance that historians have long bestowed on Alexander McGillivray, when his career is placed within the context of the rise and fall of Little Tallassee, his accomplishments are outshone by his predecessor Emistisiguo.

¹⁶⁶ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order*, 89; Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, 8/27/1809, in *Letters, Journals, and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins*, 2:556.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Little Tallassee held a unique role within eighteenth-century Creek society. Born out of a colonial encounter, the space was home to Creek men and women, and the several Scottish, English, French, and later American traders who interacted with one another through various forms of exchange on a daily basis. Circumstance, ambition, and skill, enabled Emistisiguo of Little Tallassee to climb the ranks of Creek society as a head warrior, diplomat, spokesperson, as well as become the first and only headman to represent Little Tallassee. During the 1760s and 1770s, Little Tallassee evolved into a center of Euro-Creek exchange and Trans-Atlantic trade, as well as a sacred space and official Creek town where decisions in regard to domestic and foreign affairs were discussed within the town square. Even during times of war, whether it was inter-tribal (Creek-Choctaw War) or a Euro-American creation (American Revolution), Emistisiguo developed new diplomatic policies that addressed a war-torn society and bolstered his and Little Tallassee's position within Creek society. Little Tallassee, originally a trade post in the 1740s, became by the middle of the eighteenth century, a place of importance for Creeks and their partners in trade.

The histories of spaces and places are indirectly and directly shaped by those who reside there. Little Tallassee is an example of such a relationship, for by the late 1780s the Creek town that Emistisiguo had created had dissolved into a place resembling a trade

depot more than a sacred space. Alexander McGillivray's presence at Little Tallassee, despite his limited authority within Creek society, accelerated Little Tallassee's decline as an official Creek town. Focused solely on trade and his personal use of the monopoly he held on Creek access to trade, Alexander McGillivray's actions slowly stripped Little Tallassee of its credibility within Creek society. Creeks left Little Tallassee in search of a headman they could trust and respect to carry on Creek traditions.¹

Close reading of both English and Spanish sources exposes Little Tallassee's decline well before the death of Alexander McGillivray. By the winter of 1786 and early spring of 1787, assemblies in regard to Creek-American diplomacy were being conducted at Tuckabatchee, not Little Tallassee. Mad Dog, the former town's head warrior, was the elected speaker and organizer of the majority of these meetings. For example, in April and May of 1787 several assemblies were conducted to express Upper Creek dissatisfaction with the 'Treaty of Shoulderbone,' which gave up large tracts of Creek hunting grounds to the new American Republic. Alexander McGillivray was present during these meetings and supported Mad Dog's rejection of Shoulderbone in favor of war.² McGillivray's support, however was self-motivated. War against Georgia propelled Creek need for ammunition, which only strengthened his monopoly on Creek trade.

¹ For a discussion on McGillivray being motivated by self-interest, see Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 67-90. On Little Tallassee's depopulation, see Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 17-45, 40 in particular.

² Letter Alexander McGillivray to John Habersham, Tuckabatchee, 11/28/1786, Document TCC905, Keith Read Collection, *Southeastern Native American Documents, 1730-1842*, Digital Library of Georgia, <<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu>> (hereafter cited as SNAD).

It is also quite clear from these sources that McGillivray served as an intermediary on behalf of the Creeks during American and Spanish negotiations throughout the 1780s. However, Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee seemed to have replaced Emistisiguo as speaker and the head warrior among the Upper Creek Towns shortly after Emistisiguo's death. In fact, Governor O'Neil often reported in his letters that Mad Dog was "of most importance in the said [Creek] Nation," and several treaties documented McGillivray to have sought consent from leading Creek headmen and warriors before any decisions were made.³ The Treaty of Pensacola in 1784 is an example of such a scenario. Not only was Alexander McGillivray described to be the "principal representative" of the Upper towns, not a headman or warrior, but Mad Dog, unable to attend the Pensacola conference, was reported to have "given consent" to McGillivray to treat in his absence.⁴

By 1793, a series of diplomatic meetings conducted at Tuckabatchee confirmed the fact that Little Tallassee no longer held the seat of diplomacy in Upper Creek Country. During the late 1780s and early 1790s, the Creeks were engulfed in frontier violence. The U.S. was expanding all along the Oconee, Tennessee, Tombigbee, and Cumberland Rivers. The Cumberland happened to be a shared hunting ground between the Creeks and Chickasaws, which sparked fierce competition between the two that eventually erupted into what historians refer to now as the Creek-Chickasaw War (1793-

³ O'Neil to Galvez, 5/30/1786, Pensacola, in "Papers From the Spanish Archives Relating to the Tennessee and the Old Southwest, 1783-1800" edited and translated by D.C. Corbitt and Roberta Corbitt, in *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* (Knoxville, TN: *East Tennessee Historical Society*, 1937), No. 9, 139-140 (Hereafter *ETHS*).

⁴ Copy of a treaty between the Spanish Government and the Tallapuche Indians. May 31-June 1, 1784, Pensacola, Gale Document Number: SC5009616759, *The Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company*. Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 68-69.

1797). Similar to Emistisiguo's diplomacy of protecting trade through intertribal war, Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee organized a similar policy which the Upper and Lower Creeks adopted to prevent further hostilities against American settlers. Creek trade was split between U.S. factors (government sponsored traders) and Spain in 1793, but the growing American presence in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee made trade with the United States appear to be more the viable option for a sustainable trade. Embracing intertribal war to reduce hostilities with the American settlers therefore became the center of Creek diplomacy between 1793 and 1795, and Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee led the way.⁵

James Seagrove, the first permanent U.S. federal representative and agent to the Southeastern Indians, sent peace overtures to the Upper Creeks as early as the ratification of the Treaty of New York in 1790.⁶ It was not until April 1793, however, that the Upper Creeks responded favorably. On the 8th of that month, Mad Dog dispatched a talk to Seagrove that promised peace with the Americans as well as his and the Upper Creeks

⁵ For more on the U.S. factory system and American trade, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press), 176-177. On the Creek-Chickasaw War, see Steven J. Peach, *The Three Rivers Have Talked: The Creek Indians and Community Politics in the Native South, 1753-182*, PhD. dissertation: University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016), Chapter 5. For more on the concept of embracing intertribal war to deter violence against Americans, see Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade Through War: Choctaw Elites and British Occupation of the Floridas," in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O'Brien (1999; repr., Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 103-122, and O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), Chapter 3 and 84-85.

⁶ On the 22 of March, 1793 Timothy Barnard reported that Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee and White Lieutenant of Okfuskee "assured" him that all Upper Creek towns were "for peace" and the Lower towns were "not inclined for mischief except for Coweta," but it was not until April that documentation is provided that demonstrates these two headmen to indeed be inclined towards peace. See, Timothy Barnard to James Seagrove, 3/26/1793, Flint River, *American State Papers. Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, from the First Session of the First to the Third Session of the Thirteenth Congress, Inclusive: Commencing March 3, 1789, and Ending March 3, 1815*, ed. Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), Vol. 1, 381-382. (hereafter cited as ASPIA, volume number, page number).

best efforts to control the restlessness of young warriors against frontier settlers. Mad Dog proclaimed:

We wish to have a wide path down to you, that our women and children may travel down to you; it is the wish of the Upper Towns that it should be so. The Tuckabatchee town and the rest of the head-men, have taken your talks, and mean to live by them, as long as you and the brothers of the United States exist.

Mad Dog's talk was accompanied by belts, which Mad Dog clarified to serve as a symbol of "everlasting peace and friendship." The belts had "one stripe for General Washington, one for Mr. Seagrove, and the others for the brothers of the United States."⁷

Mad Dog's diplomacy to protect American trade was not limited to the Upper Creeks. A resolution was agreed upon by the leading town headmen located along the Chattahoochee, Tallapoosa, and Coosa Rivers a few days after the talk at Tuckabatchee that confirmed that even the Lower Towns agreed to join Mad Dog in Creek-American peace negotiations. Bird King and Cussita King of the Lower town of Cussita town dispatched a talk on April 13th that confirmed this agreement: "The three rivers have talked, and wished for peace, and have to have things settled to the satisfaction of both sides."⁸ The satisfaction the headmen referred to was in regards to the frequent murders of both Creeks and Whites, which all Creeks agreed must be stopped in order for peace to prevail and trade be preserved.

⁷ Talk of Mad Dog, 4/8/1793, Tuckabatchee. ASPIA, Vol. 1, 385-385. The White Lieutenant of Okfuskee was noted to be present at the time of Mad Dog's talks which were translated by Alexander Cornell.

⁸ Bird King and Cussetah (Cussita) King to Major Henry Gaither, 4/13/1793, Cussita, ASPIA, Vol.1, 420.

In July of 1793 it was reported that a “talk from the heads of the Upper and Lower Creeks” was to be given out “by order of Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee” in Cussita’s town square and subsequently forwarded to President George Washington. The purpose of the talk was to inform Washington that all Creeks had consented to refrain from frontier violence and provide retribution for any murders committed by Creeks. The following quote from this talk makes this point evident:

We, the heads of the Upper and lower Creeks wish to inform the president of the United States that we have give out talks to put a total stop to all our young people going out to commit any hostilities against Cumberland or Kentucky . . . so that his [the President] and the red people, should be at peace.⁹

Thus, by July of 1793 it was quite clear that the majority of Creek towns agreed to protect trade by making peace with the Americans and curtailing frontier violence, and that Mad Dog of Tuckabatchee was the architect of these particular plans.

As the Creek-Chickasaw war raged on, the Upper and Lower Creeks continued to deflect frontier violence away from Americans and met with James Seagrove in November of that year to negotiate a final peace between the Creeks and the Americans. The meeting took place in the Tuckabatchee town square and a “full representation of the Creek nations” was reported to be in attendance. Even the Hallowing King of Coweta, the town most reluctant to make peace with the Americans, was present and joined the ranks of the rest of the Upper and Lower towns during peace overtures. Satisfaction for the

⁹ A talk from the heads of the Upper and Lower Creeks, by order of Mad Dog of the Tuckabatchees, given out at Cussetah (Cussita) square, at a meeting of a number of Lower Creeks, 7/3/1793, Cussita, ASPIA, Vol.1, 424.

murders of several whites along the St. Mary's river was promised by the Creeks "by capitally punishing two or more of the principals in that affair," which signified that the Creeks were committed to peace with the Americans. Just as Emistisiguo called the Creeks to Little Tallassee in 1774 to put aside clan retribution practices in order to preserve Anglo-Creek trade, so did the Creeks under the direction of Mad Dog in the town square of Tuckabatchee in 1793.¹⁰

It is not surprising that Tuckabatchee replaced Little Tallassee as the center of diplomacy and leading town of the Upper Creeks by 1793. Tuckabatchee possessed all the key components of what constituted an official Creek town. The town's headman, Mad Dog, was a warrior-diplomat who obtained power and respect in multiple areas held sacred to Creek people: war, diplomacy, and trade. Just as Emistisiguo transcended his position from warrior to lead headman and diplomatic liaison through obtaining military prowess during the Creek-Choctaw War, and the American Revolution, so did Mad Dog. As a result, Mad Dog garnered respect from not only his townspeople of Tuckabatchee, but from the Upper and Lower Creek towns as well.

The power that Mad Dog and Emistisiguo held was propelled and sustained by the support they received from their towns and neighboring villages. More specifically, matters of peace and war discussed amongst headmen in the town square became actual diplomacy only when a consensus was reached amongst the populace. For example, Mad Dog was successful in pursuing peace with the Americans in 1793 because the majority

¹⁰ Extract from a letter from James Seagrove, Agent of Indian Affairs of the Southern Department, to the Secretary of War, 11/30/1793, Tuckabatchee, ASPIA, Vol. 1, 471-472.

of Tuckabatchee men and women supported him. Respected headmen such as Mad Dog and Emistisiguo used the art of oral persuasion, logic, and examples of their extensive accomplishments in war to launch their individual diplomacies. They did not use deception or coercion as McGillivray did. Most important, both ambitious headmen's power stemmed from their strong relations at local level, and it was this combination that enabled the two individuals to lead their towns to prominence within the larger Creek community.

Historian Michael D. Green observed that "After McGillivray's death, the center of Upper Creek Affairs swung to Tuckabatchee."¹¹ The truth of the matter is that Tuckabatchee replaced Little Tallassee in prominence and as a diplomatic center much earlier than 1793. After examining the relationships between Little Tallassee and the two key leaders who had dwelled there, it is quite clear that Little Tallassee lost its significance as a sacred space beginning with the death of Emistisiguo, not Alexander McGillivray. Little Tallassee's decline was gradual. Little Tallassee was a bustling trade hub, home to the many Creeks that resided there, and had been the center of diplomatic affairs for two decades. Emistisiguo's legacy lived on well into the early 1780s, as the documentary record demonstrated diplomatic assemblies still taking place in the town's square after his death.

By the mid to late 1780s, however, diplomatic assemblies of importance in Upper Creek country were being conducted at Tuckabatchee, not Little Tallassee. The underlying factor behind this decline was Alexander McGillivray's identity as a trader,

¹¹ Michael D. Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, 40.

not a Creek headman, as well as his personal priorities in regard to trade over Creek cultural traditions at Little Tallassee. As a partner in the lucrative trade firm Pantou, Leslie, & Company, McGillivray did garner a degree of respect from the Creeks at Little Tallassee and surrounding Upper towns. Creeks revered Euro-Americans ability to create indispensable trade items such as guns, woven cloth, cooking supplies, etc., and those wares had become integral to Creek life by the late eighteenth century. European goods were therefore associated with powerful outside individuals and any Creek who had access to that world and the wares they supplied were looked upon highly. Access to and control of trade, in essence, was a “new” source of power in the Creek world, in addition to traditional avenues through hunting, war, diplomacy, oration and persuasion.¹²

Trade alone, however, was not enough to sustain Little Tallassee as a Creek town and sacred space. Towns were communities where individuals gathered together and made collective decisions in regards to social, economic, political, and spiritual affairs. To that end, town squares, accompanied by sacred fire, spatially and symbolically represented the ties townspeople shared together despite any distance between them.¹³ Thus, all decisions in regard to Creek life were discussed around the sacred fire and collectively decided upon. Alexander McGillivray was not only disinterested in the spiritual and social life of Creek society, but he had no means to draw on any traditional sources of power to participate in that world. He was not a headman or warrior and as a Beloved Man he could only advise the council around the sacred fire, not participate.

¹² On sources of power, see O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), Chapter 5.

¹³ On towns, see *Joshua Piker, Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), Introduction.

Alexander McGillivray accelerated Little Tallassee's decline. First, McGillivray abused his access to trade. Ruled by self-interest, McGillivray coerced Upper Creek towns to trade only with *Panton, Leslie, & Company*. Towns that did not willingly enter the fold, McGillivray pressured with violence through his private police force and was rumored to have carried out execution orders of independent traders. Since Spain had granted McGillivray the power to distribute trade goods, he threatened to withhold wares from towns that challenged McGillivray's vice grip on Creek access to trade.¹⁴ Individual Creek towns were locally autonomous units that belonged to a loosely tied together Creek Confederacy. Thus, it was Creek custom and law that towns decided for themselves what was best for their village. McGillivray's monopoly on Creek trade endangered individual town autonomy and often left headmen no choice but to defer to McGillivray on matters of trade.

Second, Alexander McGillivray's campaign to push for a centralized Creek 'Nation' and government was part of a new worldview and one that the Creeks in the 1780s and 1790s were just not ready for. It was not until the Creek Civil War (Red Stick War) beginning in 1812 that the Creeks contemplated the idea seriously and divided. Yet, even after the civil war, the importance of local politics and individual town autonomy remained. Out of all the Southeastern Indian Nations, the Creeks are the only Nation to not allow their government to penetrate village and clan affairs. More specifically, as historian Duane Champagne points out, "villages remained the primary political unites of

¹⁴ There are no records of McGillivray ordering any Creek to be executed. Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 33-34; McGillivray to Zepedes, 11/15/1786, Little Tallassee, in Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 139. For more information on the role of private police, see also Green, "Alexander McGillivray," in *American Indian Leaders*, 51.

Creeks and Seminole societies, and political relations were mediated through village governments.” This was so even after Removal in the 1830s. Thus, while other Natives all adopted U.S. style constitutional governments by the twenty-first century, the Creeks ensured that “their sacred, political, and social rights” be preserved through the sacred and official unit of Creek life, the town.¹⁵ The present-day Creek Muskogean Nation continues to preserve the importance of Creek towns in government and identity.

Alexander McGillivray’s attempt to dismantle the autonomy of Creek towns and his blatant disregard for local and consensus politics alienated him from the townspeople of Little Tallassee as well from neighboring towns. Without respect and support from the Creek community, McGillivray’s power was confined to trade and his abuse of that authority left him disgraced by Creek headman and warriors. Without a traditional headman to embrace Creek traditions and customs, Little Tallassee quickly reverted back to its original form: a trade post. Alexander McGillivray was indeed, Lachlan McGillivray’s son and replacement as Little Tallassee’s resident trader.

The Creek town of Little Tallassee is a unique product of a particular colonial encounter. Emistisiguo’s role in shaping Little Tallassee into a sacred and diplomatic space is just as exceptional as his own transformation from warrior to leading headman, warrior-diplomat, and Upper Creek spokesperson. The rise and fall of Little Tallassee as a sacred space is intertwined with the events of Emistisiguo’s life, which demonstrates the relationship between Emistisiguo and the town of Little Tallassee as somewhat of an

¹⁵ Duane Champagne, *Social Change and Cultural Continuity Among Native Nations* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007), 100-101, 104.

enigma. The fact that no headman ever replaced Emistisiguo leaves many questions unanswered. This dissertation has explored the evolution of Little Tallassee from trade center to Creek town, and restored Emistisiguo's role in and importance to Creek history. The twin goal of this study was to dismantle many myths that surround Alexander McGillivray as a Creek leader and an individual of authority within Creek Country. It is my hope that these chapters have done so and in turn, answer one mystery that belongs to the Native South and the world of Early American places and spaces.

The research findings within this study encourage scholars to reevaluate significant people and places within eighteenth-century Southeastern Indian historiography by paying closer attention to the perspectives and motives of individual Native people. By doing so, historians can better understand the actions of Native Americans such as Emistisiguo and the physical locations they occupied and operated within, which up until this study were misunderstood and overshadowed. Scholars have cast their gaze far too long at western educated mestizos and culture brokers like Alexander McGillivray, and as a result have obscured the Native architects of diplomacy and trade that dominated the economic and social realms of both European and Indian societies throughout the eighteenth-century. I encourage historians of Native American History to keep in mind the value of town and local town studies, as well as the enduring power of Indian institutions and worldviews in shaping and reshaping these historical interactions.

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Abbreviations

ASPIA. *American State Papers, Indian Affairs.*

CO5. *Records of the British Colonial Office, Class 4 Files, Westward Expansion.*

CRSGA. *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia.*

CRSCIA. *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents relating to Indian Affairs.*

DAR. *Documents of the American Revolution.*

ETHS. *East Tennessee Historical Society.*

GFT. *Georgia and Florida Treaties.*

GHQ. *Georgia Historical Quarterly.*

GT. *Georgia Treaties.*

MPAFD. *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion.*

MPAED. *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion.*

PLC. *Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Company.*

RC. *Revolution and Confederation.*

SMV. *Spain in the Mississippi Valley.*

SNAD. *Southeastern Native American Documents.*

TGP. *Thomas Gage Papers.*

VT. *Virginia Treaties.*

WHLP. *William Henry Lyttelton Papers.*

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