

The Terrain of Factionalism: How Upper Creek Communities Negotiated the Recourse of Gulf Coast Trade, 1763-1780

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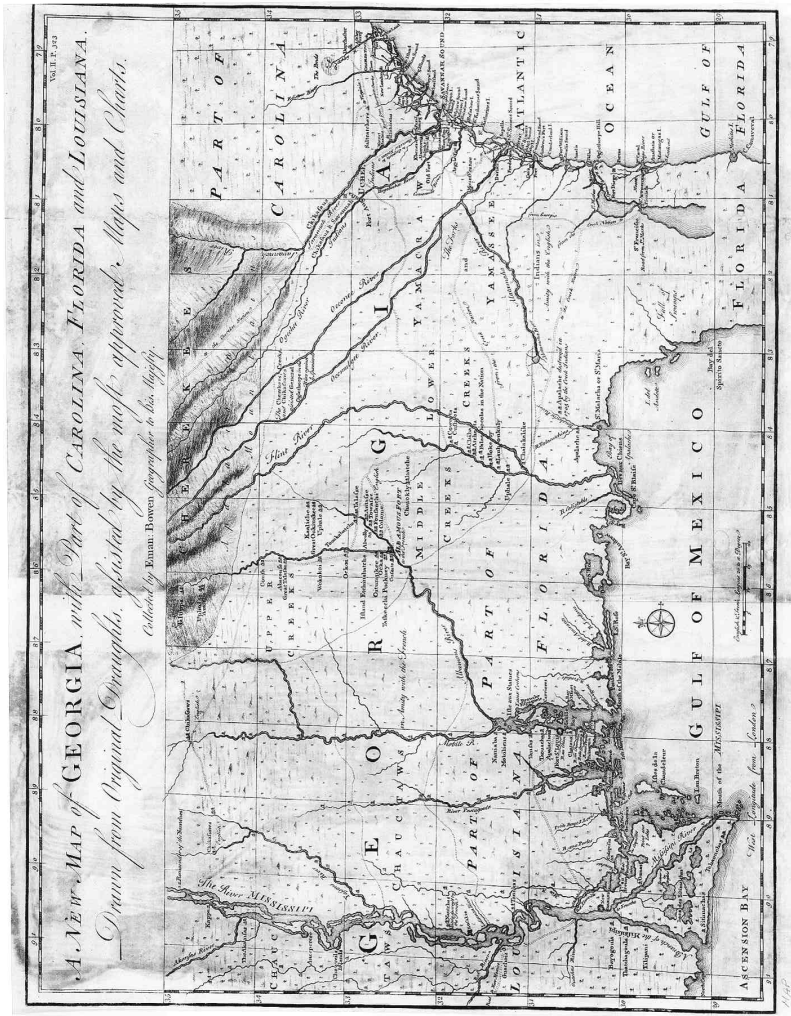
THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH ON THE GULF COAST IN THE LATE eighteenth century challenged the trade and diplomatic advantages Upper Creek towns enjoyed since the arrival of the French and Spanish. The Catholic powers' departure redirected factional competition among an Upper Creek leadership eager to define and direct the balance of power in the region in ways that enhanced the statuses of their communities and personal prestige. A recurrent few of these Upper Creek headmen continually appear in the colonial records of British West Florida in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution. Their discussions with colonial administrators reveal not only the saliency of the community in Creek life, but also how they subordinated market principles to social arrangements and responsibilities. Discourses relative to the geographic location of towns (whether European or Creek) and those communities relation to one another, prove that trade and diplomatic networks were multi-dimensional and situational. This reality complicated British merchants', traders', and administrators' labors to instill order across the colonial Southeast.

Both Europeans and Creeks understood the importance of the geography of trade. For Europeans seeking an advantage over their imperial rivals in the North American Southeast, commercial and diplomatic access to indigenous allies was critical. On his diplomatic errand to the Lower Creeks in 1728, South Carolinian Charlesworth Glover remarked: "I hear there is a French man coming with a talk

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Emanuel Brown’s “A New Map of Georgia with Part of Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana,” found in John Harris’ Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels (1748). This was one of the earliest maps of the colony of Georgia and additionally showcases many of the more prominent towns and forts located across the region’s coasts and backcountry around mid-century. Image scan courtesy of the author.

to you, I wou'd have you take no notice of anything he says. If it was a talk from their great men it would have come from the French path."¹ Encouraging healthy competition from multiple directions was an intrinsic Creek objective. British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, John Stuart, observed in 1768: "some amongst them [the Creeks] wish to see that competition for their friendship renewed, which subsisted when the French and Spaniards had footing near them, and from which they reaped great advantages."² During much of the colonial period, this play-off strategy succeeded, using a confusing array of individual town or factional interests.

Competing factions among the Creeks were certainly not unknown prior to 1763. Spanish, French, and British colonial administrators long recognized the fractious nature of coalescent societies such as the Creeks and labored to reward loyal or manageable leaders with special presents. "Medal chiefs" (named for the silver medals given native leaders or "headmen") received a disproportionate number of presents to assure their continued cooperation. These headmen could then distribute gifts among their favorites, thus increasing their own influence through a dependency on the good graces of a colonial governor. Colonial leaders sought to aid efforts that concentrated leadership in one or several men as potential mouthpieces to their own particular agenda. Gifts in this system also buttressed influence among potential Indian allies. Larger and more lucrative gifts, in terms both of their immediate value (e.g. medals) and longer-term accretions of wealth and power (e.g. titles) were given to more influential headmen. Less prestigious headmen received less prestigious gifts as did those who had shown unusual acts of loyalty or military prowess. In this sense, factionalism flourished from 1717–1763 with neither the French nor the British (both representing the major

¹ "Charlesworth Glover's Journal," British Public Records Office (hereafter cited as BPRO-SC), 13: 130.

² "Superintendent Stuart to Hillsborough, reporting Upper Creek Isolation," December 28, 1768 in *Georgia and Florida Treaties 1763–1776 Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607–1789, Volume XII: Georgia and Florida Treaties, 1763–1776* edited by John T. Juricek (Bethesda, Md., 2002) 347–48.

colonizing influences in the Southeast during the first half of the eighteenth century) commanding a monopoly of trade over the Creek towns. Yet while these headmen might serve a particular administrative purpose for colonial policymakers, they were not universally recognized as legitimate authority figures among their own communities where statuses were achieved, and not simply awarded, from or by an outside source.³

The practices of trade and gift giving aided the growth of factionalism among the Creeks. Internal factions were a culturally intrinsic characteristic common among many matrilineal societies populating the Southeast as well as other indigenous groups throughout North America.⁴ Archaeological evidence confirms how material exchanges highlighted and possibly accentuated these internal divisions among the Creeks, demonstrating pro-British and pro-French factions coexisting with a neutral faction in a highly effective trade-balancing act. For example, during the early twentieth-century, the Alabama Anthropological Society researched Creek graves and refuse heaps some twenty-five miles from the French garrison of Fort Toulouse (near modern-day Wetumpka, Alabama) revealing a fascinating scale and timeline for this factional competition. Sixty-one sites dating from 1700–1720 affirmed goods primarily of English manufacture with some French-made artifacts interspersed. However, burials from 1720–1760 revealed three distinct, equally proportioned groups, representing exclusive ties to English and French sources with a third segment possessing quantities of both. Naturally, there were no burials containing heavy concentrations of French goods after 1760.⁵

³ Verner Crane, *Southern Frontier, 1670–1732*, (Durham, N.C., 1929) 104; “Duclos to Pontchartrain,” October 25, 1713 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Dominion Volume II* (hereafter cited *MPAFD*) edited by Dunbar Rowland and Albert G. Sanders, 125–29.

⁴ For other examples of factions existing among the southeastern nations see: Patricia Galloway, “So Many Little Republics”: British Negotiations with the Choctaw Confederacy, 1765,” 41, no. 4 (Autumn, 1994) 513–37; James R. Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa, 2004).

⁵ Gregory Waselkov, “Historic Creek Indian Responses to European Trade and the Rise of Political Factions,” in *Ethnohistory and Archaeology: Approaches to Post-contact Change in the Americas*, edited by J. Daniel Rogers and Samuel M. Wilson, (New York, 1993) 123–31.

Debate persists concerning whether these special interest groups were the result of a collective Creek response to the Yamasee War (1715) or were the orchestrated strategy of the famed Creek headman Emperor Brims of Coweta. Historian Steven C. Hahn in his *Invention of the Creek Nation* proposes that Emperor Brims authored what he terms the 1718 “Coweta Resolution,” and that this political arrangement governed Creek neutrality in the wake of the Yamasee War to prevent one colonial power from having a commanding influence over the whole region. Coweta is a heavily documented Creek town, and it is unclear from the archival evidence the extent to which other Creek towns followed Brims’ policy of neutrality or were simply acting in their own best interest when dealing independently with Europeans. Regardless, the Creeks steered a middle course between competing Europeans and provided themselves a lucrative trade for over forty years.

These special interest groups remained a constant challenge for colonial officials seeking to consolidate their control over the indigenous Southeast. French administrators often pressured the Choctaws to speak with one voice. The English did the same with the Creeks. Unfortunately for the Choctaws, the combination of internal divisions and external pressures accompanied an economic dependency that degenerated into a bloody and culturally scarring civil war (1746–1750).⁶ That this was not replicated among the Creeks until early in the next century is a testament to their flexibility and the geographic location of their communities between three competing empires. Insistences for the type of commercial exclusivity that was forced on the Choctaws by the French could not be replicated with any earnestness among the Creeks. Despite the southern Upper Creeks granting the French rights in the construction of Fort Toulouse near their towns, they continued trading with nearby English merchants from

⁶ Patricia Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War, 1746–1750,” in *Pre-removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths* edited by Greg O’Brien (Norman, Okla, 2008) 70–102. For evidence of Choctaw neutrality and factionalism see: *MPAFD* V, “Vaudreuil to Rouillé,” March 3, 1749, 18, 20.

Charlestown. Frustrated French soldiers remained bitterly silent as English goods were often plied only a few miles from the garrison's perimeter, further underscoring a Creek community's right to open trade privileges.⁷

What the English first termed a "confederation" of towns largely consisted of a conglomeration of many disparate groups looking for protection in times of war, famine, disease, and ecological change. James Adair noted this distinction in 1775:

"The nation [the Creeks] consists of a mixture of several broken tribes, whom the Muskohge [sic] artfully decoyed to incorporate with them, in order to strengthen themselves against hostile attempts. . . . [these various nations] who usually conversed with each other in their own different dialects, though they understood the Muskohge language; but being naturalized, they were bound to observe the laws and customs of the main original body. These reduced, broken tribes . . . have helped to multiply the Muskohge to a dangerous degree. . . ."⁸

The challenge for historians is to understand not only the Creek's coalescent origins and how they adopted new groups, but also how they thrived for so long despite their structural fluidity. While internal factions posed obvious challenges for both the Creeks and outsiders, they also proved to be a valuable asset in maintaining their autonomy. But this counterbalancing system was compromised in the wake of a diminished French and Spanish presence in North America immediately following the French and Indian War. The Creeks, however,

⁷ "Journal of Tobias Fitch," ed. Newton Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916) 199–202. Fitch openly mocked and challenged the French commander at Fort Toulouse concerning the supposed ownership of an escaped black slave. On one occasion, two Englishmen built a small trading post in the Alabama town of Akiouitamopa, near Toulouse. French Lieutenant Benoist and several men confronted the diminutive undertaking and effected its immediate removal; Verner Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 326.

⁸ James Adair, *History of the American Indians*, edited by Samuel Cole Williams (New York, 1966) 274, 285.

proved remarkably adaptable and forged new opportunities for their respective communities despite these developments.

The war's outcome did not extinguish factionalism among the Southeast's indigenous populations. French and Spanish activity among factions of the Choctaws and the smaller Indian nations residing along the eastern banks of the Mississippi River encumbered British efforts to consolidate control in the West. For the Upper Creeks, who controlled the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa river systems, the introduction of new market realities complicated existing factional tensions, which in turn complicated British colonial policies meant to police Creek behavior. Because British West Florida was virtually defenseless, its administrators were susceptible to the persistent fear of a pan-Indian alliance against them, and therefore advanced policies that oscillated from conciliatory to those fostering dissension. Fears of a pan-Indian alliance were never realized though, and while British trade policies often alienated and frustrated many local headmen, protest did not manifest itself beyond a few isolated incidents of targeted violence and harmless banditry. By contrast, controlling violence along the Georgia–South Carolina border after 1763 was a greater consideration for the British, especially as settlers flagrantly squatted beyond agreed-upon boundaries, irreverently drove cattle across ancestral hunting grounds, and violated the traditional talwa structure by plying Indian clients with rum and subjecting them to unscrupulous trade methods outside the towns.⁹ For the Upper Creeks, pivoting the geography of trade away from these more disturbing developments in the East (Georgia–South Carolina) preoccupied factional leadership. Fresh trade opportunities in the former French and Spanish towns of Mobile and Pensacola divided Upper Creeks, especially as British land lust in places like

⁹ The talwa or town was a basic sociopolitical unit that undergirded Creek society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Common elements of the talwa were a square ground in the middle, chunky yard (ball field), council house, and ceremonial fire. But the Creek talwa was more than a physical or geographic location and held tremendous social significance for individual Creek men and women as a source of identity and governance. Governor James Wright estimated that when he entered office in 1760, there were less than 6,000 settlers in the province. By 1766, the population of Georgia was over

the Mobile–Tensaw delta and the Escambia River valley tinged Indian conferences and talks.

An elemental concept in the geography of trade was the spatial relationship among economic agents and how these individuals and commercial forces privileged certain Creek towns over others. Distance obviously complicated economic matters due to transportation costs, the difficulties in managing more remote supply chains, and the expenses associated with entering, regulating, and defending new market access points. In the postwar period, the British were able to reduce their transportation costs to inland indigenous nations by limiting the distance to their towns through the development of posts along the north-central Gulf coast. British West Florida benefitted Anglo-American skin-trading companies and territorial expansionists alike, but in the process complicated the Creek political landscape through the creation of new ephemeral interest groups with designs on influencing, controlling, and/or limiting trade from Mobile and Pensacola. A decade-long conversation between British colonial officials and the principal Upper Creek headmen would ultimately lead them to establish a new leadership, trade, and influence axis that linked the Upper Creek town of Little Tallassee with the Tensaw region and the ports of Mobile and Pensacola by the 1780s. This would have profound implications for the Creeks as they continued to use geography as a means to defend against external threats and secure trade resources as they had earlier in the century.

10,000 and growing. The African slave population also more than doubled in the same time frame from 3,578 to 7,800. See: "Governor Wright to Shelburne," November 18, 1766 in *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (hereafter cited as *CRSG*) edited by Allen D. Candler (Atlanta, 1906) 37, pt. 1:141–44. The colonial population of the Lower Mississippi Valley also increased dramatically in areas other than the main port towns of Mobile, Pensacola, and New Orleans. From 1763 to 1783, these populations concentrated in three principal settlements: Natchez (and its immediate surroundings on the Mississippi River), Baton Rouge and Manchac farther south, and the Tensaw settlements, near the junction of the Alabama–Tombigbee rivers. British West Florida's total population was somewhere from 6,000–8,000. See: Robin F. A. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763–1783* (Tuscaloosa, 1988) 18–20; David Taitt had a low opinion of the traders at this time, considering most of them, "Composed of Deserters, Horse thieves, half breeds and Negroes. They all trade without any Licenses or permits," Mereness, "Journal of David Taitt," in *Travels in the American Colonies*, 525.

Euro-American settlements pushed as far west as the Creek hunting grounds on the Ogeechee River by 1765. This worked in conjunction with a British military and commercial presence on the Gulf coast, exciting fears and confusion among both Upper and Lower Creek headmen about British motives with regard to settlement. Strategies varied among Creek leaders on how best to approach these postwar challenges. A strike against any one of these settlements might invite serious British military and trade repercussions. In reference to this dilemma, The Mortar of Okchai complained to Georgia governor, James Wright, “that he and his Family are Masters of all the Land, and they own no Masters but the Master of Breath; but he thinks the White People intend to stop all their [Creek] Breaths by their settling all round them.”¹⁰ French and Spanish agents, still residing among the Creeks, were partly to blame for creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and were not averse to perpetuating rumors as a tactic. Pontiac’s Rebellion in the Ohio country (1763–1766) was likely encouraged by French machinations in the backcountry.¹¹ One Lower Creek headman verbalized his concern to Governor Wright “that the French and Spaniards said a great Number of English Troops were landed at Pensacola, Mobile etc. and that they were to go away from those Places: And that the Designs of the English were to surround the Indians and punish them for their past Misbehaviour and to make them tame.”¹² The Creeks might not have been able to stop the British from possessing Mobile and Pensacola, but they could strive to contain them there. The question concerning former French military and commercial installations troubled headmen like The Mortar. In May 1763, he spoke for the Upper Creeks when he asserted that the lands previously occupied by the French were loaned to the Alabamas, and not for the French to relinquish during

¹⁰ *CRSG*, 9:72–73, “The Mortar and Gun Merchant to Governor Wright,” May 8, 1763.

¹¹ “Governor Johnstone and John Stuart,” June 12, 1765 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion Volume I* (hereafter cited as *MPAED*) edited by Dunbar Rowland, 184–88; John Richard Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 1754–1775* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1944) 234–35.

¹² *CRSG*, 9:76, “His Excellency’s Memorandum and Answer,” May 15, 1763.

Parisian treaty negotiations.¹³ Efforts to reassert Creek control over this region remained salient issues in the coming years.¹⁴

For Europeans, control of trade was an essential component in the mercantilist system and maintaining order on the frontier. Cooperation from native headmen was an elemental part of this process. Newly acquired territory from Spain and France created six new British governor's positions, each equal in the task of licensing traders, who now had access points to previously unexploited parts of the Southeast (i.e. through Mobile and Pensacola). John Stuart, Edmond Atkin's successor as Superintendent of the Southern District, vied against colonial governors in the chaotic task of trying to regulate a frontier rife with men of questionable character and motive. They unequivocally opposed Stuart's attempts to consolidate his authority to license and regulate the trade, however.¹⁵ Stuart's more conciliatory approach to hardliner nativists like The Mortar stood in stark contrast to Atkin's confrontational style. However, British officials simply lacked the tools necessary to regulate the trade, thus episodic violence, miscommunication, and political backbiting characterized much of the colonial drama during this period.

Trade was one challenge for the superintendent; western settlement was another. In earlier decades, increasing pressure to compete with South Carolina prompted Georgian settlement on lands as far as the Ogeechee River (some fifty miles west of Augusta). This inevitably invited skirmishes with Creek hunters and raiding parties, who had jealously controlled the area for generations. Augustan trader George Galphin explained in a letter: "If anything brings War it will be the Ogeechie [sic] Settlement for they and Indians keep Robbing

¹³ *CRSG*, 9:72-73, "The Mortar and Gun Merchant to Governor Wright," May 8, 1763; see also: *CRSG*, 1:52.

¹⁴ The Creeks were fundamentally distrustful of the British and strove to limit their settlement objectives. See: Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "The Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida," July 22, 1764, 217-18.

¹⁵ *BPRO-SC*, 30:131-37, "Governor Boone to the Board of Trade About the Authority of Superintendent Stuart," April, 7, 1764.

one another.”¹⁶ Issues involving settlement west of Augusta, past grievances over trade debts, and future boundary agreements, however, were resolved at the fruitful Augusta Congress in November 1763. Here assembled many of the most prominent headmen from among the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Catawba, Cherokee, and Creek nations assembled. Through the skill of veteran Indian traders like Lachlan McGillivray and George Galphin, the colonies obtained a remarkable series of concessions by the assembled nations.¹⁷ Many past grievances were reconciled, with the Creeks agreeing “to a new boundary for Georgia that encompassed all of the advanced settlements of the colony,” and trade guarantees from Mobile and Pensacola.¹⁸ Direction of trade was a major issue at the conference, especially considering the conspicuous absence of anti-British Creek faction leaders like The Mortar.¹⁹

The British regarded The Mortar as “bold and enterprising” and would do everything within reason to charm him into submission.²⁰ But when fourteen settlers were murdered in December 1763 near Long Canes in South Carolina, it was assumed by colonial officials that The Mortar, whose noticeable absence from the late congress, may have played a part.²¹ Upper and Lower headmen quickly distanced themselves from the Long Canes incident, hoping to ward off the inevitable trade embargo to their towns. Notable Upper Creek headmen came forward blaming the crime on “a Parcell of

¹⁶ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “George Galphin to Superintendent Stuart,” June 2, 1768, 46–47.

¹⁷ Edward J. Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Shaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Columbia, S.C., 2000) 221.

¹⁸ “Journal of the Congress at Augusta with the Indians,” October 1–November 21, 1763 in *Early American Indian Documents, Volume V*, (hereafter cited as *EAIID*) edited by W. Stitt Robinson, 263–303.

¹⁹ “Superintendent Stuart to the Earl of Egremont,” December 5, 1763 in *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks: Anglo-Indian Diplomacy on the Southern Frontier*, edited by John T. Juricek (Gainesville, Fla., 2010) 359–61.

²⁰ Juricek *Ibid.*, “Same to Same,” 361.

²¹ *CRSG*, 9:114–15, “Mr. Galphin in his Letter to his Excellency,” January 5, 1764. James Adair considered The Mortar responsible for these murders: *The History of the American Indians*, 269–70, 314.

young Fellows,” or “Runagadoes” from the Lower towns. Always a staunch ally of the British, Upper Creek headman, the Wolf King of Mocolussah, went further, suggesting that if resolution of the murders could not make the proverbial path “straight” once more, the British should close the Upper Creek trade path altogether, “and [let] the Grass grow upon it, and if you will supply them [the Upper Creeks] another Way.” It was understood that this “other way” was from the conveniently situated southern ports of Mobile and Pensacola.²²

This appears to have been a strategic guise on the part of the Wolf King. He argued that troubles emanating from the incident at Long Canes concerned the young warriors from the Lower towns, and additionally accused Lower Creek leaders of impeding Upper Creek verbal contributions at the Augusta Congress. By traveling to Pensacola and arguing for a closure of the path from Augusta, the Wolf King likely understood that an opened southern corridor created competition between east coast merchants and colonial officials with the new proprietors and administrators then emerging along the Gulf coast and bypassed the Lower Creeks. Shorter distances from the Gulf to the Upper towns guaranteed cheaper prices and traveling via river courses (mastered by the French) assured quicker, more dependable deliveries.²³

British traders flocked to West Florida. French colonists still residing in the colony found themselves in a precarious position. Major Robert Farmar’s manifesto to the French inhabitants of Mobile in October 1763 encouraged them to remain “in their diverse abodes” as they would be protected under British law, once they professed an oath of allegiance. He assured them that their Catholic faith would not prejudice his government against them, but an oath of loyalty was necessary after three months or they would be

²² Juricek, *Georgia Treaties*, “Upper Creek Reply to Superintendent Stuart’s Protest,” March 6, 1764, 11–12.

²³ The Wolf also argued the expediency of a southerly path. Taitt records that, “the Wolf seemed a Sensible Old Man, said he might be a hundred years old, and that the fatigues he had undergone in going down to the Colonies in Georgia and Carolina, had effected him and made him look as old as he did.” Mereness, in ed. Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies*, 385.

given eighteen months to gather their property and leave.²⁴ Of the ninety-eight French families living in Mobile, Farmar figured only ten might remain.²⁵ While many did leave for New Orleans, others stayed and cooperated with the British government and performed various valuable functions for the new regime. Some like Louis Favre and Chevalier Montault de Monbérault, served as interpreters and midlevel functionaries for the new government. Monbérault, a man of considerable property and influence, commanded Fort Toulouse from 1755–1759 and had personal relationships with many Upper Creek leaders, The Mortar included.²⁶

With an atmosphere of uncertainty concerning proper jurisdiction in the region, accounts of conflicts between military and civilian authorities pervade the early records and correspondences during this time.²⁷ One of the principal traders who relocated in Mobile from Augusta was John McGillivray—Lachlan McGillivray’s younger cousin—who had immigrated from Strathearn, Scotland a decade earlier. Upon John’s arrival in Charlestown, Lachlan instructed his young relative in the mechanisms of Indian trade just as his uncle, Archibald McGillivray, had apprenticed him. In a relatively short

²⁴ MPAED, I, “Manifesto issued at Mobile by Major Farmar,” October, 1763, 60–63.

²⁵ MPAED, I, “State of the Revenue of Louisiana, with Appointments Civil and Military, whilst under the French Government,” January 24, 1764, 30–31.

²⁶ Robert Rea, *Major Robert Farmar of Mobile* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1990) 41; For information about Monbérault’s service at Fort Toulouse and for British West Florida see: *The Memoire Justificatif of the Chevalier Montault de Monbérault: Indian Diplomacy in British West Florida, 1763–1765* translated and introduction by Milo B. Howard, Jr. and Robert R. Rea (Tuscaloosa, 1965).

²⁷ For a discussion of British immigration to West Florida after the French and Indian War see: Robin Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 6–21; for information on the skin traffic leaving Mobile and Pensacola see: Fabel, 55–60. Traders moving from the eastern companies, John McGillivray among them, see: Katherine E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (Lincoln, Neb., 1996) 56–57. In Robert Rea’s, *Major Robert Farmar of Mobile* (Tuscaloosa, 1990) we learn of an incident involving John McGillivray, his “hirelings,” the daughter of the aforementioned Chevalier Monbérault, and Major Robert Farmar. John McGillivray’s men were notorious characters, most likely fugitives from other colonies, but typical of the types of men attracted to the Indian trade. A famous incident involved their having insulted Chevalier Monbérault’s daughter, resisting arrest and prosecution for the affront from Farmar’s soldiers. More than an isolated incident though, this was indicative of how unmanageable the employees of even the most considerable traders had become.

time, John became as capable of turning a profit and commanding influence as his older cousin. His initial forays in the native South involved the Chickasaws and Upper Creeks, where he established invaluable connections that aided his move to Mobile in 1763. He chose two Chickasaw wives with whom he fathered two métis sons, anchoring his kinship ties with native leadership elements, just as Lachlan had done in Little Tallassee. His arrival in Mobile led to his lucrative partnership with Peter Swanson in a trading house venture where he laid a firm commercial foundation for the McGillivray family on the Gulf coast. Trade with individuals like John McGillivray promised new benefits and challenges for the Upper Creeks.²⁸

For decades, eastern trade routes from South Carolina and Georgia (the Upper and Lower paths) geographically privileged the Lower Creek towns, while French sources benefited the Upper Creeks from the south and west. This, of course, did not mean the Upper Creeks were insulated from British trade. Towns such as Okfuskee long benefited from their fictive kinship ties with resource centers such as Charlestown and Savannah, but still acknowledged their place further down the trade path. An assemblage of Upper Creek headmen articulated this point to Superintendent Stuart, when they emphasized their commitment to an historic commercial relationship with the British, despite being at a greater distance: “It was our Forefathers that Entered into peace and friendship with the people of Carolina, which we still approve of and are willing to do everything in our power to hold them fast and keep the path between us white, notwithstanding we are the back part of the Nation.”²⁹ The

²⁸ Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray*, 155–56. Keeping with the Scottish nepotistic tradition common at the time in places like Charlestown and Savannah, Superintendent John Stuart appointed his cousin Charles Stuart as his deputy superintendent when Chevalier Monbérault absconded to New Orleans under inauspicious circumstances in June 1765. Charles Stuart employed John McGillivray as his principal translator and Indian advisor to the British government in Mobile. For information on the details surrounding Monbérault’s alleged intrigues with pro-French-faction Choctaws, and other possible embellishments regarding his special relationship with individuals like The Mortar see the accusations raised by Johnstone in, *The Memoire Justificatif of the Chevalier Montault de Monbérault*, 95–104.

²⁹ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Upper Creek Chiefs to Superintendent Stuart, Replying to his December 17 Talk,” April 20, 1767, 335–36.

many southern Upper Creek communities, which had commercial histories more in sync with the French at Mobile, likely, saw an opportunity in the recalibration of trade flow with McGillivray from the Gulf South.³⁰ A reliable southern trade certainly privileged “the back part of the Nation” just as the Upper and Lower paths had for the northern Upper towns and Lower Creeks since the mid-to-late seventeenth century. Just as they had with the Catholic powers, factions among the Upper Creeks encouraged new commercial opportunities on the Gulf coast, but also labored to limit the growth of these new British settlements.³¹

For nearly a year after the withdrawal of the Spanish government and upon invitation from the British, periodic waves of Creek delegations traveled to Pensacola and received gifts. At one such conference in September 1764, the Wolf King granted the British a large S-shaped tract of land. Because of the sandy soil around Pensacola, outlying farms were necessary to grow corn and raise cattle for the town’s subsistence—something the Spanish had neglected to do, relying almost exclusively on the enterprise of local Indians and imperial imports.³² The allocation was “Ten Miles in depth from Deer Point [southernmost point on Santa Rosa Island], opposite to the Island of Saint Rose, quite round the Bay of Pensacola, and to Extend along the Sea Coast, to the Point of Mobile Bay, from thence up the East side of Mobile Bay, till it comes Opposite to the Town of Mobile.” The grant was also conditioned on a prohibition of the rum trade to the Wolf King’s people, a strict adherence to the agreed upon settlement boundaries and reliable commercial intercourse with British entrepôt on the Gulf coast.³³ Settlement beyond the outlined

³⁰ Joshua Piker in “White and Clean and Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years War,” is perhaps first to employ the term southern and northern Upper Creeks instead of the more recognizable Tallapoosas and Abekas.

³¹ At a general meeting at the town of Little Tallassee on April 10, 1764, the Upper Creek’s insisted that the British on the Gulf coast submit to the territorial confines previously held by the French and Spanish, Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Upper Creek ‘Great Talk’ to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright,” May 20, 1764, 212–14.

³² *MPAED, I*, “From Major Forbes to Sectary of State,” 1764(?), 141–43.

³³ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Captain Robert Mackinnen’s Conference with, and ‘Grant’ from, The Wolf King and other Tallapoosa Headmen,” September 5–10, 1764.

boundary, the Wolf King threatened, would result in “a declaration of War” and the scalping of many settlers.³⁴ The Upper Creek leader’s actions, however, were unsanctioned by other headmen with vested interests in alternative trade directions in the region, but his adroit willingness for a connection to outside markets without allowing those same markets a controlling influence through territorial degradation (i.e. settlement) superseded any concerns about seeking the approval of others.

Superintendent Stuart was pleased with the agreement, though he recognized its illegitimacy.³⁵ Complicating matters with the Creeks even more were the results of the Mobile Congress earlier that spring (1764). Stuart and Major Farmar worked together in achieving a long-sought peace accord with a majority of the Chickasaw and Choctaw leadership. Peace with the Choctaws was especially necessary, not only for the security of British West Florida and the westward expansion of the deerskin trade, but also to check Upper Creek designs in the region. Like the Augusta Congress the previous year, the conference at Mobile successfully relieved past grievances and established a more friendly commercial footing with these powerful inland nations. The conference garnered Choctaw loyalty and witnessed previously pro-French headmen symbolically “casting aside” their French allegiance, pledging to advance and assist British goodwill gestures to nations as far north as the Illinois country, and cooperation in the regulating of unlicensed trade. But perhaps most important to British West Florida was that Choctaw leadership granted them a large land concession of their own.³⁶

The Choctaws ceded claims to several contested islands between the Mobile and Tensaw rivers. A boundary was then set that paralleled the Alabama River to a vaguely defined location north of the junction of the Alabama–Tombigbee rivers. It then proceeded west

³⁴ *MPAED*, I, “Report of William Forbes on Pensacola,” January 30, 1764, 112–14.

³⁵ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Governor George Johnstone to John Pownall, Secretary to the Board of Trade,” October, 31, 1764, 224.

³⁶ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Treaty with the Choctaws and Chickasaws at Mobile,” March 26, 1765, 251–53; Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, 224; “Superintendent Stuart to John Pownall, Reporting on the Mobile Congress,” April 16, 1765, 254–56.

and southwest to the banks of the Pascagoula River to a point some thirty-six miles (twelve leagues) from the Gulf coast and as far west as the eastern shore of the Mississippi River, where Choctaw influence waned in favor of other smaller nations residing there. Lands north of Mobile were disputed terrain for the region's indigenous inhabitants, however. The Upper Creeks resented Choctaw claims, and when British settlement threatened this territory called "Tensaw," headmen like The Mortar balked at Choctaw presumption and prepared to chasten any new European arrivals there.³⁷

Many Upper Creek headmen expressed concerns about the southern trade. The entrepreneurial spirit emerging from companies like John McGillivray's along the Gulf coast invited a flourish of commercialism. Traders might no longer need to travel through Creek lands to access the Choctaws, nor were the Chickasaws as distant. The commercial and military advantages for the Choctaws were also glaringly apparent. The Choctaws could easily control a southern trade corridor from Mobile, denying the Upper Creeks a role in regulating the western flow of goods that passed through their towns. Additionally, as Joshua Piker argues, competition between southern and northern Upper Creek factions and town leaders arose in response to this trade and the new settlements.³⁸ Northern Upper Creek towns like Okfuskee and Okchai benefited diplomatically and commercially from the generations-old overland paths and the interpersonal and inter-communal relationships linking their towns with Augusta, Savannah, and Charlestown.³⁹ Conversely, southern Upper Creek towns were more geographically situated to benefit from southerly-river courses and land routes just as they had been under the French regime. This, perhaps, best explains why some Upper Creek headmen favored trade from the Gulf coast, while others were vehemently opposed.

³⁷ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "The Mortar and other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida," July 22, 1764, 217-19.

³⁸ Joshua Piker, "White & Clean' & Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years' War," *Ethnohistory* 50 (2003): 315-47.

³⁹ For a description of this path see: John H. Goff, "The Path to Oakfuskee Upper Trading Route in Georgia to the Creek Indians," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39 (March 1955): 1-36.

British settlement on lands lent the French was particularly galling to leaders such as The Mortar. Delegations of Upper Creek headmen explained to British officials that the French had been given usufruct rights to settle Tensaw, just as they had when they constructed Fort Toulouse among the Alabamas. Leading southern Upper Creek leaders initially welcomed a measured British presence along the Gulf coast, as demonstrated by the Wolf King's generous allowance and trade guarantees. But his actions in Pensacola and the Choctaw's presumptive behavior in ceding lands north of Mobile created new factions among the Upper Creeks as a response. At a major gathering of Upper Creek headmen at Little Tallassee in April 1764, another figure joined the growing political fracas. Little Tallassee's leading headman, Emistisiguo, came forward as a recognized spokesman for the Upper Creeks and presented a counterweight to The Mortar's anti-British position. At the Augusta Congress (1763), Emistisiguo acted as The Mortar's substitute, representing his Upper Creek constituency.⁴⁰ At the 1764 meeting at Little Tallassee, Emistisiguo highlighted the generational importance Fort Toulouse played in the life of his hometown, but he also expressed no interest in seeing the British reoccupy the fort. He was comfortable with a commercial relationship with British West Florida and optimistic about promises regarding limited settlement north of Mobile in the fertile lands of the Mobile–Tensaw delta. He assured Stuart that he was “glad . . . that the vessels [riverboats] are going and coming there with Goods to supply his Nation, and other Indians and that they may never want for Goods” either.⁴¹ Emistisiguo's position as a voice of influence seemed secure, but when The Mortar decided against the new southern trade a few weeks later, Emistisiguo dutifully followed suit.⁴²

⁴⁰ This is confirmed by Emistisiguo's “talk” at Little Tallassee. He voices collective opinions held about major issues impacting the Upper Creek towns. Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Upper Creek ‘Great Talk’ to Superintendent Stuart and Governor Wright,” May 20, 1764, 212–14.

⁴¹ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Emistisiguo and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart,” July 15, 1764, 215–17.

⁴² Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “The Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida,” July 22, 1764, 217–18.

While Emistisiguo represented a prominent faction among the Upper Creeks, The Mortar commanded considerably more influence and had an antagonistic reputation as a counterweight to British interests in the region. Additionally, Emistisiguo recognized the primacy of his factional rivals in the northern Upper towns led by The Mortar. But it appears The Mortar's absence at several notable Indian conferences, coupled with his past allegiance with the French cost him politically. David Taitt noticed this on his mission to the Upper Creeks in 1772: "You will plainly observe by these answers that the Nation [Upper Creeks] is divided one part against another which is caused by a jealousy [sic] between the Abeckas [northern Upper Creeks] and Tallapusses [southern Upper Creeks] in regard of the respect that has been of late showed to Emistisiguo, who unfortunately is of a Slave race."⁴³

The Mortar feared British expansion and expressed his disfavor with breaking a time-tested commercial discourse to Augusta, which had helped provide him commercial/political clout as a factional leader. "The [Augusta] Path was made before he [The Mortar] was Born, by which they were supplied with Goods, and he expects no Alteration will be made."⁴⁴ The Mortar bolstered this sentiment in a message to Governor Wright later in the summer of 1764 where he conveyed his regret at ever having been in the French interest. This was merely a play to British sentiments. He sent a string of white beads collected from other leading Upper Creek headmen, along with a symbolic white eagle's wing to affirm eternal friendship with and loyalty to Augusta. It was "their desire," he proclaimed, "that the Great Old Path between Augusta and the Nation, may be kept White and Clean, and that they may be Supplied with goods etc. by

⁴³ David Taitt's 1772 mission to the Upper Creeks is recorded in Mereness, *Travels*, "Journal of David Taitt," 524. Taitt continues on the same page, claiming that "those in the Upper Towns carry the greatest authority." Taitt's mention of Emistisiguo's lineage is a reference to his father having been a captive during the slave trade.

⁴⁴ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "The Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida," July 22, 1764, 218.

that Path, as they want to know no Other.”⁴⁵ A more advantageous southern trade route threatened to undermine his authority by favoring headmen in the towns of the southern Upper Creeks. The Mortar here effectively outlined the position of the northern Upper Creek towns with regard to the continued health of their commercial relationship with Augusta, and a formal rejection of Emistisiguo’s earlier endorsement of trade to the south via Mobile and Pensacola.

Upper Creek headmen and their communities had long-standing relationships with merchant companies from Georgia and South Carolina. Interpersonal and inter-communal bonds privileged certain towns and individuals. How those bonds might be phrased, understood, or measured varied a great deal, but eighteenth-century Creeks envisaged their social world in terms of family and community, whether they were dealing with indigenous neighbors or Europeans. While evidence confirms The Mortar’s conspicuous leadership of the most prominent pro-French Upper Creek faction, he still relied on British trade, either directly or indirectly and long recognized its role in the lives of his people.⁴⁶ New sources of commerce from the south threatened to undermine certain realities. While courting the colonial governors in Georgia and South Carolina with apologies and other goodwill gestures on one hand, The Mortar stated on an official visit to Pensacola that he “desires that his Nation may be supplied with Goods from Augusta as they have been for many years, and that he will not suffer any Horses with Goods Either from Pensacola or Mobile [sic]. . . .” He would seize any pack trains or vessels carrying goods

⁴⁵ *CRSG*, 28 pt. 2: 52–53, “Talk of The Mortar, Creek chieftain, delivered at Fort Augusta,” Augusta 24, 1764.

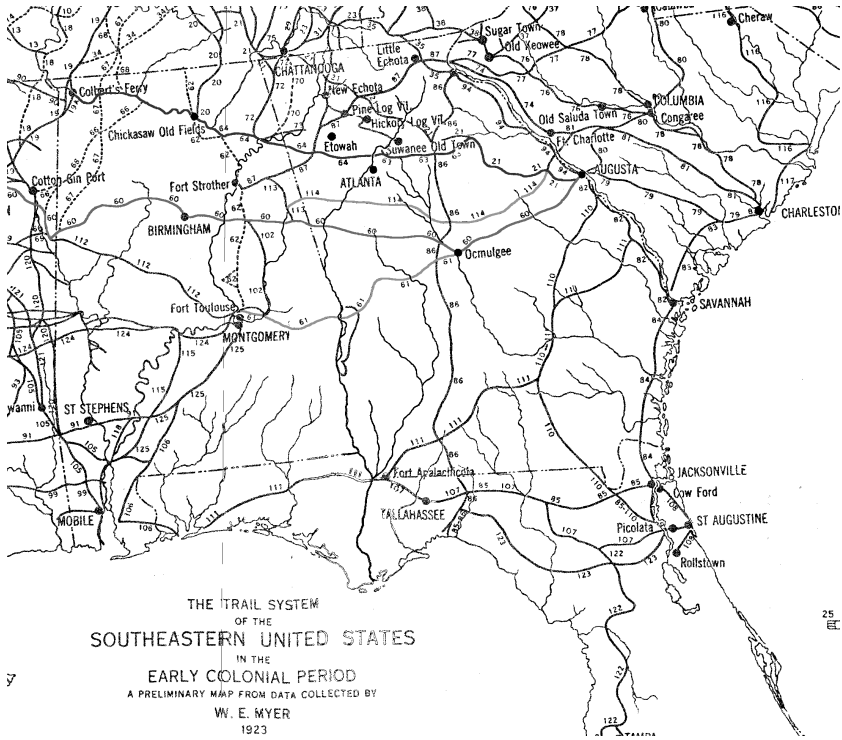
⁴⁶ Referring to The Mortar as pro-French is somewhat misleading. He was nativist and considered his affiliations with other Indian nations and Creek towns far more important than those towards any particular European power, as evidenced by his continual pursuit of pan-Indian alliances with the Chickasaws under Paya Mingo Euluxy, the Cherokees, and the Shawnees. See: James Adair, *History of the American-Indians*, 310–31; “John McIntosh to Charles Stuart,” in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770–1783*, V (hereafter cited as *DAR*) edited by K. G. Davies (Dublin, Ireland, 1974) 185–86. It was necessary to consider him pro-French in this sense, because this was one way the British antagonistically viewed him.

from the Gulf coast and consider them free gifts. Equally instructive to his understanding of the new British role on the Gulf coast was when The Mortar sent a necklace or belt of both red and white beads to John Stuart, who was stationed at Pensacola. The administrator was to discard the stringed red beads and return the remaining white if he desired peace.⁴⁷ This demand is inconsistent with earlier, more conciliatory messages he sent Georgian officials.

Close examination of Okfuskees' relationship to the Georgia-South Carolina rivalry of the 1730s, it appears notions of kinship linking Creek towns with places of market orientation such as coastal ports may have also accounted for The Mortar's inconsistent message. This is not meant to suggest that his motivations were without thought of personal gain and his reputation, or distrust of British schemes among the Choctaws, but that cultural values may have also factored into how he related to outsiders. The Mortar's behavior and reference to history illustrates how tradition governed decisions in previous generations with regard to the Upper and Lower paths and centers of market activity. He essentially denied there was comparable familiarity between his communities and the new British posts on the north-central Gulf of Mexico. Inter-communal and interpersonal bonds occasionally linked Creek and colonial towns. Okfuskee openly enjoyed such a privileged status. It is, therefore, logical to assume that The Mortar's town of Okchai may have enhanced its own commercial standing by drawing from the inter-communal relations built by neighbors like the Okfuskees or the Alabamas. If this was the case, the northern Upper Creek rejection of Gulf coast trade may have assumed a cultural nuance as well as a pragmatic one.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "The Mortar and Other Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting Trade from West Florida," 217-18.

⁴⁸ These thoughts were developed through a series of conversations with Dr. Joshua Piker via email, May 17-18, 2012. The Mortar's passionate defense of the more familiar trade paths illustrate his commitment to time honored networks linking his town of Okchai with the Great Old Path from Augusta and Charlestown that passed through Okfuskee first before traveling to the other Upper Creek towns. David Taitt tells us that Okchai (alternately spelled OakChoy) was about thirteen miles from Okfuskee: Mereness, "Journal of David



Detail from William E. Meyer, “Indian Trails of the Southeast,” from the Forty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for 1924-1925 (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1928) plate 15. Image scan courtesy of the author.

Taitt,” *Travels*, 528. For a perspective on how these inter-communal relationships between Creek towns functioned see: Gerald M. Sider, *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, Ethnicity, and Indian Identity in the Southern United States* (Cambridge, England, 1994). Sider states on page 231: “Before consolidation of these [Indian] confederacies as great trading, warring, slaving, and slaveholding regional empires, the core feature of their social formation was that their constituent towns seem to have been widely connected to other native towns in a diverse array of non-coterminous ties—ties that had substantially different boundaries, substantially different “maps.” It is first necessary to understand how these various communities related to one another before understanding how they related to outsiders.

Superintendent Stuart and Governor of British West Florida, George Johnstone, were confused by the contradiction of The Mortar's statements. They assumed scheming backcountry merchants were influencing Upper Creek decisions.⁴⁹ The Mortar's refusal to trade with Mobile and Pensacola did not

“seem to us to be the Dictates of their own reasons, but rather the Instigation of some Evil minded persons, because it is certainly the Interest of the Creek Nation that they should be supplied with Goods from as many places as possible and from the nearest places . . . they may always depend on having a surer supply and that the Goods will arrive in better Order and the Indians will find a better markt [sic] for their skins.”

Many trading companies in Savannah, Augusta, and Charlestown dispatched branch firms to Mobile and Pensacola anyway. Johnstone and Stuart assured the northern Upper towns “They will be the very same persons who supplied you before, that will supply you now. When the path is opened and clear these very men will probably remove from Charles Town and Georgia to this province as more convenient for themselves as well as for you.” They also asked why the Creeks objected to the British settlements at Tensaw when they had permitted the French to reside there.⁵⁰

The Mortar's favorite line of argument was that the Upper and Lower path's legitimacy rested upon historical precedent, which accordingly, proved the British favored towns like Okfuskee and

⁴⁹ David Taitt's mission among the Upper Creeks was complicated by these Augusta merchants. He writes: “I found the [Upper Creek] Indians in such a Situation by the Idle speeches of some unworthy hirelings to whom the Merchants in Augusta had made known some of their Intentions that if I had been observed in doing the smallest matter I must have run a very great risk for what the Indians does not understand themselves the Traders will assist them and you know the Indians jealous [sic] disposition,” Mereness, “Journal of David Taitt,” 524.

⁵⁰ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Reply to the Upper Creek Talk of July 22 by Superintendent Stuart and Governor Johnstone,” November 30, 1764, 225–26.

Okchai above all others. Emistisiguo cleverly disputed this, however, citing the Lower Creek town of Coweta's rightful claim to having opened the road a century earlier.⁵¹ The paths then traveled through the southern Upper Creek towns (Tallapoosas) second and lastly to the northern Upper Creeks (Abeikas). Emistisiguo deftly exploited The Mortar's attempt at historicity by observing that the path from Augusta and Charlestown was certainly the oldest, and most revered, but that simple geography meant trade accommodated the Lower towns first. Likening the paths and towns the road encountered from the east to a string of beads, Emistisiguo explained that trade passed from Augusta and Charlestown via "the Cowetas, from thence to the Tuckabatchies [southern Upper Creeks] and Abekas" last.⁵²

Throughout the remaining years of British West Florida, Emistisiguo carefully dodged the trade path issue when he was in the presence of northern Upper Creek factions as he did while speaking in Okchai in 1772. Stressing the popular Upper Creek desire to limit the geographic expansion of British West Florida, Emistisiguo celebrated the path to Augusta as "old" and "white." As an appointed Upper Creek spokesman, he was trusted with advocating a party line, so to speak. "As for the path to Augusta it is an Old and beloved path but the path to Pensacola and Mobile I do not know much about it. It is true since the Congress at Augusta the Chickasaws has got another path [from the south] for their goods but still I hold my Old Friends [Carolinian and Georgian merchants] by the hand."⁵³ This comment acknowledged the benefits enjoyed by the Chickasaws, while refusing to alienate his "Old Friends" in the east. Emistisiguo's skill at speaking

⁵¹ *CRSG*, pt. 1, 38: 246–61, "Governor Wright's Meeting with a Small Creek Party Headed by Emistisiguo," April 14, 1774. Emistisiguo asserted before Governor James Wright that the "Their Forefathers Trod in a White Path to Charlestown, and He would do the Same. That the Cowetas were the First who Opened the Path."

⁵² Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Upper Creek 'Great Talk' to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia-Lower Creek Reconciliation," February 4, 1774, 136–37. Piker also discusses Emistisiguo's reasoning in his article, "White & Clean' & Contested," 326–28.

⁵³ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart," April 19, 1772, 428–29.

and negotiating won him many British friends and caused Governor Wright to assert that he was “a man by far of the greatest consequence, weight, and influence of any in the Creek country.”⁵⁴

Emistisiguo could count on continued opposition from The Mortar. With historic rivals of the Creeks like the Choctaws benefitting from a southerly commercial flow, Emistisiguo’s desire for a Mobile–Pensacola trade must have lost support among other Upper town headmen, especially as tensions between Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws violently escalated into open conflict in the late 1760s.⁵⁵ But encouraging trade from the Gulf coast was a pragmatic necessity for all involved. Disagreements involving lands cessions and debt repayment between Augusta and Charlestown merchants and the Lower Creeks verged on open warfare. Disputed lands as a result of the Creek–Cherokee war contributed to the need of company and colonial officials to receive repayment for debts. Financial troubles coupled with a series of violent reprisals from Lower town warriors against Georgian–Carolinian hunters operating on contested Creek lands. Inevitably, this disrupted trade flow from South Carolina and Georgia.⁵⁶ In light of these developments and The Mortar’s intransi-

⁵⁴ *CRSG*, 37, pt. 2: 371, “Governor Wright to Hillsborough,” September 17, 1768.

⁵⁵ *DAR*, V, “John Stuart to Earl of Hillsborough (No. 40),” February 7, 1772, 36–39. Stuart discusses encouraging trade with the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The principal headmen of the Choctaws assembled in Mobile in early 1772 revealing that the French in New Orleans were still eager to trade with them, but that with the English so close, they had given up their French medals and “esteemed themselves very happy in the friendship of the English on whom they depended for support and were determined to look for no other white people, . . .” For a description of the movement to war with the Choctaws see: “Journal of David Taitt,” in ed. Mereness, *Travels*, 507–34.

⁵⁶ The murders of three white hunters—William and George Payne and James Hogg—by Lower Creek Limpiki, son of Coweta headman Sempoyaffi, sparked a serious backlash. For British anger over the incident see: Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, Governor Wright and Superintendent Stuart to Upper Creek Great Medal Chiefs, Protesting Payne–Hogg Murders,” December 27, 1765. The Wolf of King of Mocolussah expressed his concern with Stuart and Governor Wright’s protest. He then lectured them on Creek factionalism and distanced the actions of the Lower towns from the Upper. For his reply see: Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “The Wolf King’s Reply to Wright–Stuart Protest,” April 29, 1766, 20. The Tallapoosas, Abeikas, and Alabamas voiced their concern over the behavior of the Lower Creeks and assured John Stuart that they hoped the trade continued to their towns despite the actions of others. Juricek, *Treaties*, “Purported Talk from Abeika Headmen to Stuart and Wright, as Delivered to Taitt at Augusta,” August 23, 1774 . 151–52.

gency, Emistisiguo prudently guarded his desire for a firmer relationship with British West Florida in mixed company, but championed it to colonial officials in private discussions. Repeatedly, from the British standpoint, Emistisiguo emerged as a voice of reason.

In the wake of Pontiac's Rebellion, the British urgently sought a reaffirmation with the Upper Creeks and resolution of the arresting issues compromising settlement in Tensaw and trade from Mobile and Pensacola.⁵⁷ Stuart and Johnstone sent a friendly message to the Upper and Lower towns in November 1764, inviting them to a grand congress in Pensacola in May 1765. That spring, several hundred Upper and Lower Creeks arrived in the port town, eager to receive expected gifts and discuss past and present grievances with regard to land usage, trade prices, and trade from West Florida. A former French officer at Fort Toulouse, Chevalier Montaut de Monbérault, translated the meeting's proceedings. Monbérault had recently become John Stuart's personal deputy and advisor in recognition of both his interpersonal relationship with many prominent Upper Creek headmen and his professed cooperation with the new regime.⁵⁸ When The Mortar begrudgingly arrived two days after the Pensacola Congress began, he voiced his concern over the Wolf King's generous land cessation the previous year.⁵⁹ The Mortar's chief complaint was that the grant had not been sanctioned by the whole of the Creek nation and was, therefore, null and void. But when Cheva-

⁵⁷ *MPAED*, I, "From Governor Johnstone and John Stuart," 184–88. The state of the British military operating on the Gulf coast was desperate. Fear of an impending Indian attack was prevalent among colonial administrators. Even though Pontiac's Rebellion in the Ohio country waned by the summer of 1765, the necessity of charming important leaders like The Mortar was more important than ever. With British troops stretched so thin on a virtually unmanageable frontier, open conflict with a large nation like the Creeks would be disastrous. General Thomas Gage was unable to send requested troops, leaving the British vulnerable. Gage advised his subordinates to utilize other means of securing their borders i.e. "Embassies, fair promises, presents . . . [and] creating Jealousies amongst themselves, and using those Engines in the best manner." This was certainly reminiscent of the tactics employed by the over-extended, undermanned French forces in Louisiane. A "divide and conquer" approach would prove helpful in checking a Creek-Choctaw presence.

⁵⁸ *MPAED*, I, "Congress at Pensacola," May 26–28, 1765, 192, 197.

⁵⁹ The Mortar was convinced that John Stuart would try and poison him once he arrived. John Alden, *John Stuart*, 205; *The Mémoire Justificatif*, Howard and Rea, 36–38.

lier Monbérault privately translated the extent and purposes of the request for land, and assured The Mortar that true British interest in the region was modest, the headman relaxed his opposition and even agreed to future land concessions if promises of mutual respect were met. The British assured the Creek delegates they would not require more land in the future.⁶⁰ This arrangement would go through a trial phase of four years. If peace between Britain and the Creeks lasted, “then there will be an Addition made to the Lands already granted [by the Choctaws and the Wolf King].” Any attempts to settle north of the Alabama–Tombigbee confluence (the vaguely agreed upon boundary), however, would incur the wrath of the northern towns.⁶¹

During negotiations, The Mortar also posed an interesting question to Chevalier Monbérault: “Is it possible that you [Monbérault], who at the time you were with the French so often exhorted us not to yield a bit of land to the English, you chide us today, and press us with so much fluency to give it up to them?” Monbérault slyly replied that he had indeed made those overtures, but that his earlier remarks were for the good of the Creek people at that time. Recognizing the factional spirit among the Creeks, he believed any other entreaty would have certainly caused a civil war. Now that the British encircled them on all sides, he explained, it was necessary for Creek

⁶⁰ Much of Monbérault’s *The Mémoire Justificatif* is a self-serving treatise both defending and boasting of his influence in various Indian congresses. But none of the British officials (Stuart, Johnstone, and their agent John McGillivray included) completely trusted the former French officers in their employ. The delicate relationship with the Upper Creeks and Choctaws was a constant concern, and it was feared the French were fundamentally disloyal, motivated by personal gain, and an ultimate desire to ruin the new colony. This is evidenced by the treatment of Louis Favre and Chevalier Monbérault. Both were suspected of duplicitous motives and eventually removed from their posts.

⁶¹ The boundary was vaguely defined but not formerly established until 1772. *MPAED*, I, 188–201; “His Excellency the Governor, John Stuart Esq. Superintendent, Lieutenant Colonel Wedderburn, &c., Indian Chiefs Interpreters, &c. as Usual,” May 29, 1765, 201–04. The Mortar was impressed (or so it is recorded that way) with Stuart’s initial disposition. Recognizing the psychological effect of the gesture, Stuart records that he “received him [The Mortar] with the Medals, Gorgets, Commissions etc. which the French gave the Chactaws, strewed under my Chair and Feet; they soon attracted his Attention. He was struck with the Sight, and from it formed Ideas of our Influence with that Nation superior to any I could otherwise have conveyed, which contributed greatly to facilitate our Negotiations.” Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Superintendent Stuart to Pownall, Reporting on Post-Congress Talks in Mobile and the Pensacola Congress,” August 24, 1765, 275–78.

leadership to consolidate in manner and opinion for the sake of peace and commercial prosperity.⁶² Monbérault did not appreciate how a culturally integral component like factionalism transcended colonial competition and British encirclement. While trade exacerbated Creek factional divisions for the first half of the eighteenth century, the late war's outcome presented new challenges to Creek leadership and internal tensions that were increasingly embodied in a few principal characters, or emergent elite.⁶³ This is evident in the notable attention given Creek leaders at conferences held in Pensacola and elsewhere. The importance afforded these men and the role they played in negotiations with colonial officials is plainly seen in the order the headmen signed treaties, who led the talks, and who the administrators primarily addressed at pivotal diplomatic moments.⁶⁴

In Little Tallassee, Emistisiguo continued to use the Upper and Lower path's historical distinction to discredit the validity of the northern Upper Creek faction's preferences for commercial relations with South Carolina and Georgia. He agreed with The Mortar that the trade from Augusta was older and certainly "white," but again stressed that they passed through the Lower towns first. Recent misdeeds and escalating violence from the Lower Creeks along the Georgia corridor were certain to "bring us who are in the back Part [of the Creek nation] into poverty by their doings."⁶⁵ Lower Creek importance in trade and diplomacy reigned supreme in earlier times as a result. Emistisiguo was always quick to remind his listeners that it was the Lower towns that first opened the path from "Ochese" a century earlier. Being sensitive to the demands of his people for goods and understanding the benefits to other options for trade that did not preference the Lower towns first, Emistisiguo artfully

⁶² *The Memoire Justificatif of the Chevalier Montault de Monberaut*, trans. Howard and Rea, 171-72.

⁶³ Vernon Knight Jr., "The Formation of the Creeks," in Hudson and Tesser's ed. *The Forgotten Centuries*, 375.

⁶⁴ Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006) 178-79.

⁶⁵ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Proposing Redirection of Upper Creek Trade Toward Pensacola and Mobile," February 4, 1774, 441.

balanced his rhetoric as never to alienate other opportunities. He openly expressed his desire that paths to British towns on the Gulf remain open and “white,” even while echoing The Mortar’s concerns about the relationship enjoyed by British West Florida and the Choctaws, settlement in and above Tensaw, and the growing prestige of the southern Upper Creek towns. On a trip to Savannah in 1768, Emistisiguo revealed his determination to maintain ties with British West Florida and that “he had visited the Governour of Pensacola, and presented him with the Tail of a white Eagle,” and considered all the British the same and “that he would always use his utmost Endeavours that the road between the white and red People should be kept white.”⁶⁶

The First Pensacola Congress (1765) did little to abate tensions. Still angry about price disparities between the Creeks and the Cherokees, leaders like The Mortar insolently discarded their medals and incited further frontier violence in the immediate wake of the late congress, creating a general atmosphere of “mischief.”⁶⁷ While Upper Creek headmen were divided on how best to approach the British along their southern corridor, they were united in their animosity to the Choctaws, who now posed an even greater trade and military threat to them.⁶⁸ Official correspondence reveals that British officials encouraged a Creek–Choctaw war as a means to weaken and distract the two Indian nations from exploiting thinly-spread British military resources along the Gulf coast.⁶⁹ Experienced Creek agents

⁶⁶ *CRSG*, 10: 567, “At the Council held in the Council Chamber at Savannah,” September 3, 1768.

⁶⁷ *MPAED*, I, “From William Struthers to Governor Johnstone, April 10, 1766, 516–17; The Oakchoy King predictably denied culpability in the escalating tensions, and asked for a continued commercial discourse with the British via “the old Path & where the Boats comes up to supply us & have supplied us,” despite the various “Accidents happening to white People in Regard to their Goods.” *MPAED*, I, “Answer of the Chiefs,” May 16, 1766, 526–27.

⁶⁸ They openly taunted the Upper Creeks in one instance. Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Stephen Forrester to Governor Johnstone, Reporting Upper Creek Acceptance of Choctaw War Challenge,” May 25, 1766, 297. Alden, *John Stuart*, 224–25.

⁶⁹ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Governor Johnstone to Elias Legardere, Commissary to the Choctaws,” November 21, 1765, 291–92; The British were not shy about this strategy and frequently threatened the Creeks with enforcing it. Juricek, *Georgia and Florida*

such as Lachlan McGillivray and George Galphin cautioned against any involvement in the two nation's quarrels, advising Stuart to use his influence to support a policy of neutrality. Upper Creek headmen such as The Mortar and Emistisiguo surmised the scheme though, and their suspicions and condemnations tainted future talks on land usage, boundaries, and trade direction.⁷⁰ Despite how bitter and protracted hostilities during the ensuing Creek–Choctaw war became, British activity in the Tensaw and trade via Mobile and Pensacola never receded as a subject from conversations between Emistisiguo and Stuart. Trade direction and preferred paths consumed much of their discussions, always remaining a salient issue with the Little Tallassee headman. When the British pressed the Upper Creeks for land along the Escambia River (which emptied into Pensacola Bay), they used the Tensaw boundary dispute as a pretext for arranging another grand congress at Pensacola in October 1771.⁷¹

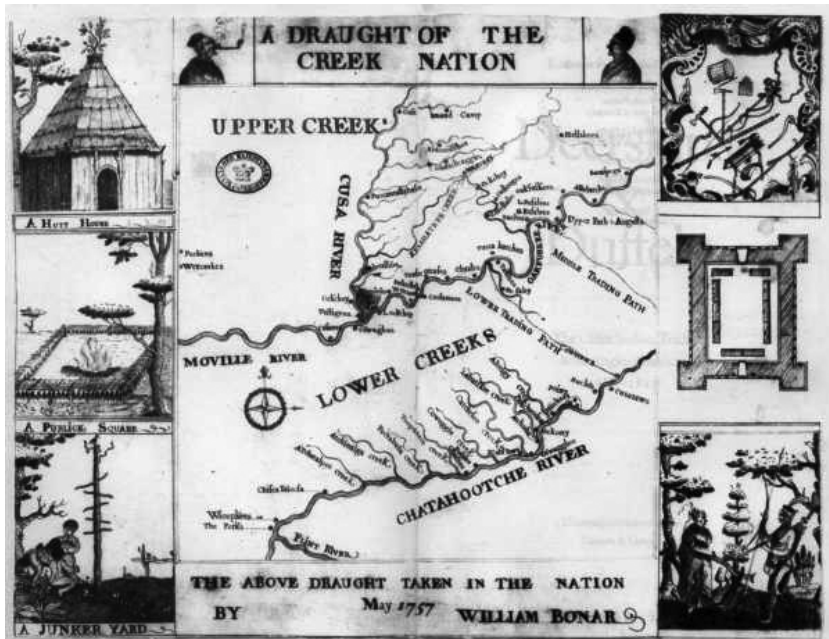
After smoking the calumet of peace with Stuart, Emistisiguo and his troop of fellow headmen bestowed the superintendent “the greatest Compliment we are capable of paying.” Although the practice of fanimingo is obscure in the records, it appears that what followed was a formal rite akin to it—a fictive kinship arrangement between Stuart and the leading Creek town representatives present at the ceremony.⁷² Since the proceedings were on the Apalachicola's ancestral lands (Pensacola), they stepped forward first and gave Stuart

Treaties, Colonel Tayler to General Gage, Reporting the Passing of the Crisis,” November 30, 1766, 317–18. Stuart countenanced against it, however. See: Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Superintendent Stuart to Governor Johnstone, Urging Restraint Toward the Creeks,” December 13, 1766, 319. Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, 288–89.

⁷⁰ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Mortar, Emistisiguo, and the Second Man of Little Tallassee to Governor Johnstone,” May 20, 1766, 296–97; *MPAED*, I, “Answer of the Chiefs: The Mortar alias Otis Mico,” May 16, 1766, 529–31.

⁷¹ *DAR*, II, “West Florida Council Memorial,” March 9, 1771, 140–42.

⁷² The process of formal adoption (a type of fictive kinship) expanded the role of the *fanimingo* (Muskogean for “Squirrel King”) functioning as a product of the peace-moiety in leadership institutions throughout the Southeast. The fanimingo operated as a title and an institution. As the matrilineal senior clan male (or clan uncle), the fanimingo acted as a representative or spokesman for his family or nation, among his adopted family or nation. As a “go-between,” the title assured a peaceful relationship with an external community and forged kinship networks that restored inter-communal and interpersonal trust.



“A Draught of the Creek Nation. Taken in the Nation by William Bonar, May, 1757.” Courtesy of The Keeper’s Gallery from the National Archives in London.

the title of Appalachicola Mico (King). The Lower Creeks of the town Cusseta followed suit and titled Stuart Cussitaw Mico. Lastly, the Upper Creeks spoke and extolled the virtues of the Alabamas (southernmost of the southern Upper Creeks) as “great in War in Peace, and solicitous for the good of all the Tribes, as you [Stuart] are the Father of all the Southern Indians and constantly employed in taking care of their Interests, we call you Alibama Mico.”⁷³ In an instant, Stuart effectively embodied the physical paths commercially linking the British with the Upper and Lower Creek towns. The same could

⁷³ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Proceedings of the Second Pensacola Congress with the Upper Creeks,” October 29–31, 1771, 387–401.

be said of the other two honorable titles, but the Second Pensacola Congress was meant for, and directed by, the Upper Creeks. It seems an unlikely coincidence that out of the sixteen Upper Creek towns represented at the Second Pensacola Congress, none of the assembled headmen represented prominent northern (Abeika) Upper Creek factions or towns.⁷⁴

After these pleasantries, however, the Congress quickly broke down. Emistisiguo began with the usual protests concerning land encroachments, the depredations of unlicensed traders operating outside the towns, and the profligacy of the rum trade. Stuart, under pressure from the new Governor of British West Florida, Peter Chester, blindsided Emistisiguo by asking for two thin strips of land (five miles in depth) on each side of the Escambia River, stretching some thirty-five miles inland, to satisfy the agricultural needs of the colony. Stuart also asked Emistisiguo to help mark the Tensaw boundary once and for all. British settlements increasingly crossed well beyond the Alabama–Tombigbee junction, causing a stir of protests from the Upper Creeks.⁷⁵ Emistisiguo denied (either rightly or smartly) having the proper authorization from the other leading Upper and Lower headmen to grant such a request. He then changed the subject, protesting the Choctaws' audacious allocation of the islands in the Alabama–Tombigbee river region (north of Mobile) to the British seven years earlier. Emistisiguo then used the current war with the Choctaws as an excuse to postpone settling

⁷⁴ Piker makes note of this incident too in "White & Clean' & Contested," 327. The treaty lists the attending headmen and their representative towns. The Mortar's absence was no surprise, as he promised never to return to Pensacola for more talks.

⁷⁵ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Proceedings of the Second Pensacola Congress with the Upper Creeks," October 29–31, 1771, 388–89. In an effort to underscore the importance of more land to the Creek delegation, Chester apologizes for the paucity of food at the ceremony: "I wish I had it in my power to be more Liberal to the Red Men when they come to Pensacola, but the Land about us is so poor, nothing but a barren sand." Concerning the settlers beyond the Tensaw, Chester claims they departed as per his instructions and that their discretion was an innocent mistake and, "not done with any design of Encroaching upon Your Lands, but it must be attributed to their not knowing where the Boundary Line was." According to Stuart, Governor of West Florida, Montfort Brown (1767–1770), permitted settlement above the Tensaw line. Alden, *John Stuart*, 317.

the Tensaw boundary until the following May. Stuart refused to back down, and in an effort at rewriting history, he asserted that at the First Pensacola Congress (1765) the Upper Creeks granted the British “all the French settlements at Tassa [Tensaw] Old Field.” Emistisiguo denied this claim, arguing that as he understood it, the boundary was set at Major Robert Farmar’s plantation.⁷⁶ Emistisiguo reiterated his earlier insistence from that summer where he affirmed the Creeks were done relinquishing new lands to the British. Citing the First Augusta Congress (1763), when the British promised they would make no more requests for land from the Creeks, Emistisiguo hoped the “whites would all go to their own land.” Deputy Superintendent, Charles Stuart, promised that the line from Pensacola to Tensaw would be final and “should be like a stone wall never to be Broke.” Comparing the boundary to something akin a to mending wall, Emistisiguo contended that mutual respect for this line assured the Creeks would “hold our Brothers the White people fast as a Vine Holds a Tree, the longer the faster it holds.”⁷⁷ Stuart questioned the Upper Creek’s historical right to those lands, pointing out that until recently the occupants of Tensaw were the *petites nations* peoples (Tomés, Naniabas, and Mobilians, etc.), who had been staunch allies of the French.⁷⁸ Stuart posed the question to Emistisiguo: “will you refuse us the same advantages you allowed the French, and same said Tribes?” The land was reasonably the domain of the *petites nations*

⁷⁶ The plantation in question was located on the Tensaw River. Major Robert Farmar purchased 542 acres from François Daran on June 11, 1764. It was listed in a 1780 appraisal as “the home plantation of Farm Hall on the Tensa River” and worth about \$2,500. Farmar situated his home on the boundaries of West Florida. Robert Rea tells us: “There was no settlement to the north or east of Farm Hall, though toward Mobile the land designated for British settlement; the Tensa property he secured in 1770, a few miles farther north, lay within the Indian boundary line.” Robert R. Rea, *Major Robert Farmar*, 114, 124, 131. Translator Joseph Cornell, records their understanding of this in Juricek, *Treaties*, “Upper Creek Headmen to Governor Peter Chester, Replying to his Complaint over Incident at Tensaw,” May 8, 1771, 381–82.

⁷⁷ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Upper Creek Headmen to Superintendent Stuart, Warning about Land,” July 15, 1771, 382–83.

⁷⁸ John Stuart explains his line of reasoning in *DAR*, V, “John Stuart to Earl of Hillsborough,” February 6, 1772, 33–34. The *petites nations* people had apparently gone off to reside among the Chickasawhays.

before the ongoing Creek–Choctaw war had driven those groups away. In light of this, the Upper Creeks eased their protests.⁷⁹

The following January, Stuart sent David Taitt, along with two interpreters—Joseph Cornell and Jacob Moniac—to reconnoiter Creek country, secure a fresh assessment of those lands, search for evidence of French intrigues, deliver a series of speeches to the principal Upper and Lower headmen, and chastise the latter for entertaining Spanish notions concerning trade opportunities via Cuba.⁸⁰ Taitt’s mission, although political and military in nature and purpose, is profoundly illustrative of the region’s terrain and its potential in the geography of trade on the Gulf coast. Unfortunately, it is also sadly reflective of the corrosion of Creek life at the hands of the many scandalously corrupt men operating in the southern backcountry. Taitt’s journal explicates in vivid detail the numerous protests from headmen such as Emistisiguo concerning these men.⁸¹

When Taitt arrived at Little Tallassee, he learned that Emistisiguo lived several miles away at a place called Hickory Ground. Taitt approached him about Stuart’s request for lands paralleling the Escambia River.⁸² Emistisiguo sidestepped Taitt’s request for an immediate conference as he was about to go off to war with the Choctaws. He also informed Taitt that Augusta merchants promised that if the

⁷⁹ The exchanges of this conference are recorded in lengthy “Proceedings of the Second Pensacola Congress with the Upper Creeks,” October 29–31, 1771, 387–401.

⁸⁰ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, Superintendent Stuart to the Lower Creek Headmen, Protesting Depredations,” January 20, 1772, 424–25.

⁸¹ One trader named Francis Lewis “a Hireling of Mr. Golphins [Galphin]” kept some (according to Taitt) thirty kegs of rum at this house that he in turn used to keep an entire Creek town “Continually Drunk.” Taitt posits that type of behavior was common in the Creek towns and that these men preferred trading horses for rum above all else. These backwoodsmen permeated nearly every stop along Taitt’s journey. Beyond taking advantage of their Creek clients, a one William Simory, was inexplicably spreading the false rumor that the British, under Charles Stuart, were amassing a force to “take their wives and Children [sic].” Hugh Simpson told Taitt flatly that he would not accede anything from the governor or superintendent and only answered to his employer. But their employers were not immune either. Taitt details the pervasive frontier scam where traders used company resources to steal horses from whites and Indians only to sell those same animals back at higher prices. Mereness, *Travels*, “Journal of David Taitt,” 512, 525.

⁸² Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Superintendent Stuart to the Upper Creeks Headmen, Again Requesting Escambia Cession,” January 20, 1772, 423–24.

Creeks acquiesced to recent land cessations granted by the Cherokees, they would give them [the Upper Creeks] “a very good Trade.” Emistisiguo dismissed these promises from the Augusta merchants as little more than “a man telling a fine storey to his Children to make them Merry at Night but in the Morning would be forgot.” He then asked Taitt to provide him a letter of introduction in case he passed near the Tensaw settlements in want of food, shelter, or munitions. Taitt obliged, but only with the assurance that Emistisiguo and his party promise not to kill any cattle, molest any settlers, or take any Indian slaves.⁸³

In late February 1772, while in Tuckabatchee, Taitt received a message from The Mortar stating that there would be a meeting of Creek town headmen about recent British requests for more land. It was here that Taitt observed the scale of factional and inter-communal divisions then existing among the Upper Creeks and the growing resentment building against Emistisiguo and his relationship with Stuart.⁸⁴ Later that spring, Taitt learned that the Gun Merchant—acting as the elected spokesman for the Upper Creeks—had vetoed all past and future British requests for land. Lands “as far as the Old Spanish Cowpen (the Escambia River)” were lent the British, but nothing more.⁸⁵ Violence against Anglo-American settlers and traders continued unabated over the succeeding months without, according to the British, proportionate justice exacted against the Creek perpetrators.⁸⁶ By 1774, to stave off what seemed like an inevi-

⁸³ Mereness, *Travels*, “Journal of David Taitt,” 508–09.

⁸⁴ Mereness, *Travels*, 524.

⁸⁵ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Upper Creeks to Superintendent Stuart, Rejecting any Further Cession,” April, 19, 1772, 427. Taitt records this message while in the northern Upper Creek town of Okchai. The Gun Merchant’s reasoning is plain enough. Trader abuses and British land lust were corrosive to Creek life. The Creeks were tired of broken promises.

⁸⁶ A series of high-profile murders occurred between the Goodwin–Davis murders in September 1766 and the White–Sherrill murders in 1774. Governor Johnstone estimated (as a rationale for war against the Upper Creeks) that by his calculations the British had suffered 138 unavenged Creek-inspired murders. Stuart disputed these figures as reflective of total slain throughout the entire colonial period, and even then certainly exaggerated. Alden, *John Stuart*, 226; Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Superintendent Stuart to Governor Johnstone, Urging Restraint Toward the Creeks,” December 13, 1766, 319.

table war, the British tightened trade exports to Creek country.⁸⁷ Rather than bringing discordant groups together in a greater recognition of the value of the British trade, the policy led Creek faction leaders to explore other avenues to outside resource centers, hoping to once again ignite playoff strategies on an international level. Contributing to this percolating crisis for the British was evidence of Spanish intrigues among the Lower Creeks.⁸⁸

Hedging his bets on the trade embargo that seemed likely to spring from the escalating border tensions with Georgia, The Mortar hoped to utilize blossoming Lower Creek diplomatic connections with the Spanish and proposed a meeting where the two halves of the Creek nation could synchronize foreign policy in an effort to curb British commercial control over their towns. The meeting proved abortive in the end, however, but the alarm it raised proved effective enough to concern colonial administrators like Stuart.⁸⁹ Emistisiguo hoped to resolve the crisis by reminding the superintendent of Creek poverty and dependence on the British trade, but most of all, Stuart's role as the Alabama King.⁹⁰ Stuart personified the trade between the two peoples, so Emistisiguo harkened back to more peaceful times in an effort to forestall the growing rift between the his people and

⁸⁷ *DAR*, VIII, "John Stuart to the Earl of Dartmouth," May 6, 1774, 110.

⁸⁸ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Reporting Spanish Overtures via Lower Creeks," September 28, 1773, 121-22. Emistisiguo remained in the British interest and dissuaded talks and gifts from the Spanish. Though, it is interesting when he explains to Taitt that if the Spanish sent him, "Six Large Ships Loaded with Ammunition" he would most likely accept. He assures Taitt of his continued friendship and loyalty, but shrewdly informs him that others were aggressively vying for Creek affections, then asks for anticipated gifts.

⁸⁹ Emistisiguo attended this meeting seen in Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, 121-22. The Mortar was laboring to consolidate a pan-Indian confederacy against the British, as well as utilizing a budding relationship between the Lower Creeks and the Spanish. John Stuart writes that the Lower Creeks were also interacting with the Spanish via fishing vessels "which frequent the point of Florida from the Havannah [sic] . . . This intercourse certainly furnishes the Spaniards with an opportunity of carrying any bad design they may have formed with respect to those Indians into execution, and will render the management of the Creek nation (one of the most turbulent upon the continent) more difficult and expensive." *DAR*, VI, "John Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth," December 21, 1773, 257-58.

⁹⁰ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Upper Creek "Great Talk" to Superintendent Stuart, Seeking Georgia-Lower Creek Recognition," February 4, 1774.

the British. He implored Stuart to remember their earlier talks with respect to trade and once again stressed the importance of an open path from Mobile and Pensacola as a solution to the growing crisis: “Formerly Pensacola and Mobille [sic] belonged to different People but now they belong to the King of England, and they are all English people, and you all know what I mean by the Old [Augusta] path.” He stressed the danger of traveling along the road to Augusta, blaming the Lower Creeks for the escalation of frontier mayhem: “The Cowetas who are the Front Part seem to want to bring us who are the back Part into poverty by their doings.” While the northern Upper Creek (Abeikas) towns had not sanctioned his efforts, he was certain they would support his proposition for a more consistent and dependable trade from Mobile and Pensacola. “Pensacola and Mobille [sic] which are the safest Paths . . . are the Kings people and we would be glad to have a Supply from thence, as there are two paths one to Pensacola and one to Mobille.” The Okfuskees and Lower Creek peoples might disagree, “but these two Rivers here would be glad of a supply from thence.” Emistisiguo did not “want large Cargoes but just enough to supply out Wants.”⁹¹ Despite Stuart’s honorific titles the trade was sequestered anyway.

Undaunted, and unwilling to rely on the erratic Lower Creeks and their tenuous Cuban connections, The Mortar sought to reorient the geography of trade through more dependable avenues. Omitting Augusta, St. Augustine, Mobile and Pensacola all together, The Mortar pivoted westward towards Spanish Louisiane, hoping once again to reignite play-off strategies meant to offset British commercial prowess. Although the French had officially evacuated the territory in 1766, it was still heavily populated with French émigrés and officers in key political and military positions, doubtless eager to disrupt British imperial agendas in the region. The Mortar apparently believed the Creeks could once again receive support from France through these men. Traveling to New Orleans in late 1774 at

⁹¹ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Emistisiguo to Superintendent Stuart, Proposing Redirection of Upper Creek Trade toward Pensacola and Mobile,” February 4, 1774, 441.

the head of some eighty warriors to effect this arrangement, a smaller party of Choctaws ambushed The Mortar on the Alabama River somewhere above Mobile. The Creeks quickly routed their attackers and pursued them to Mobile trader William Struthers's house. The Choctaws evicted the family and fortified themselves inside the main house and outbuildings. A three-day battle ensued before the house and surrounding buildings were set on fire, forcing the small party of Choctaws to take refuge in a nearby fenced pen. In the act of finishing off his quarry, The Mortar was fatally wounded. Distraught at having lost their leader, the remaining Creeks returned home. When some one hundred Lower Creeks passing through Pensacola to accompany The Mortar to New Orleans received news of his death, they too abandoned their mission.⁹²

The Mortar's death and the advent of the American Revolution did not diminish factional divisions over trade direction, and in many ways, the Americans actually amplified the debate. Early in the war the Americans controlled paths to Georgia and South Carolina, while Mobile and Pensacola remained British.⁹³ Indian agents such as George Galphin sided with the Patriots and pressed for Creek neutrality, but the backcountry Georgians actively subverted his efforts when possible and largely prevented the Creeks from exercising a modicum of control over trade direction from Augusta.⁹⁴ In a message to the Creeks, Governor of East Florida, Colonel Patrick Tonyn, esteemed the American rebels as nothing more than liars and thieves. He warned the Creek headmen that "If they [rebels] had it

⁹² Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, "Taitt to Superintendent Stuart," December 29, 1774, 165–66; "Superintendent Stuart to General Gage," January 18, 1775, 166–67. Stuart in a latter document records: "Their [The Mortar] Object was to begg the good offices and mediation of the French Officers in the Spanish services to make a peace with the Chactaws, and to prevail upon them if possible privately to solicit the King of France to take them under his Protection and to assist them in driving the English and Spaniards out of this Land."

⁹³ Savannah fell to the British in December 1778, Augusta in January 1779, and Charlestown in May 1780.

⁹⁴ "George Galphin to Henry Laurens," in *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Twelve: November 1, 1777–March 15, 1782*, ed. David R. Chesnutt and C. James Taylor (Columbia, S.C., 2000) 525–27.

in their power, they would kill and destroy, all the Great Kings good people, and although they pretend to love and be friends to the Red people, they would kill and destroy them afterwards.” Whatever the rebels were able to supply the Creeks, Tonym assured, it was stolen from Superintendent Stuart and his commissaries. “The Great King and people of England, will never alter in Affection for the Red people, but love them as the mother loves the Child lugging [sic] at the Nipple.”⁹⁵ Eventually, most Upper Creek towns became decidedly pro-British.⁹⁶ Despite this reality and the difficulty of trade from Augusta, however, northern Upper Creek towns continued to stubbornly shun the Mobile and Pensacola paths.

For the British, the American Revolution underscored the strategic importance of the paths from Mobile and Pensacola into Creek country.⁹⁷ This did not go unnoticed by the Americans. Galphin discusses an incident in the summer of 1778 when two British or Loyalist traders were brutally slain and mutilated on the path to Pensacola by pro-American, northern Upper Creeks. The traders’ dismembered bodies festooned the surrounding trees overlooking the road, acting as a poignant reminder to all who passed that the path’s control was far from settled.⁹⁸ American sympathizers gleefully reported murders and robberies committed against British traders moving along the paths from Mobile and Pensacola.⁹⁹ Additionally, the violent symbolism inherent in these acts sullied any conceptions headmen like Emistisiguo had about the road remaining a “white”

⁹⁵ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Governor Tonym’s Speech to Lower Creeks at Cowford, with Kaligie’s Reply,” December 6–7 1775, 495–97.

⁹⁶ Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge, England, 1995) 45.

⁹⁷ Juricek, *Georgia and Florida Treaties*, “Superintendent Stuart to Lower and Upper Creek Chiefs,” August 15, 1775, 169–70.

⁹⁸ “George Galphin to Henry Laurens,” in *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Fifteen: December 11, 1778–August 31, 1782*, ed. Chesnut and Taylor, 19–20; Piker also highlights the significance of this incident in his article: “White & Clean’ & Contested,” 330. Piker makes the observation about the perpetrators originating from the northern Upper Creek towns. The symbolism of the act seems apparent considering Emistisiguo’s line of argument about the path as both a peaceful alternative to the road from Augusta, and as a reliable means of moving goods into Creek country.

⁹⁹ “John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens,” November 3, 1777, in *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Twelve: November 1, 1777–March 15, 1782*, 13–18.

and a peaceful alternative for commercial discourse. Northern Upper Creek towns still preferred goods from Georgia and South Carolina in the late 1770s, regardless of who temporarily held the reigns of power there. As long as they were supplied from this direction, Galphin argued, they could be counted on as peaceful and quiet.¹⁰⁰

The Revolutionary era inaugurated new challenges for Creek country, but it also underscored how cultural arrangements that connected them to the outside capitalist world were amendable under the right circumstances. Through a discussion of how the geography of trade transformed Creek leadership moieties as defined through individual town autonomy into broader territorial ranges with designs aimed at collective negotiation (such as treaties granting large tracts of land), one can begin to understand how paths played a role in creating shared experiences. Spatial and geographic trading structures and shared memories of past economic arrangements (vis-à-vis The Mortar's assessment of the ancestral value of the Upper and Lower paths to Augusta and Charlestown), reveal economic capabilities rooted in local people's prior experiences with a globalized market economy. Cultural identity was then shaped through participation in niche markets (i.e. the slave and deerskin trade) with those physical locations. Trade is then foregrounded as a cultural component in the so-called Creek policy of neutrality.

Neutrality could not exist without a sufficient colonial presence within which it could operate. External rivalries fueled an integral cultural element like factionalism, shaping it as a self-preserving mechanism through divided town and factional loyalties. Alliances came through necessity. As dependably loyal to the British as someone like Emistisiguo was, he was not averse to invoking playoff strategies. As anti-British as The Mortar seemed, he was not beyond entertaining notions of invoking traditional commercial arrangements to maintain access to resource-rich peripheries. The Creeks continued to prove they were neither naïve nor vulnerable by consistently adapting trade strategies to fit new cultural paradigms.

100 "George Galphin to Henry Laurens," in *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume Twelve: November 1, 1777–March 15, 1782*, 525–27.

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