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THE NATCHEZ DIASPORA: A HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS DISPLACEMENT AND SURVIVAL IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

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Abstract
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In 1731, the French colonists of Louisiana and their Native American allies defeated the Natchez after a bloody conflict and drove the Natchez survivors from their ancestral homelands. The dissertation responds to the question: what happened to the Natchez survivors after 1731? Instead of thinking about the year 1731 as an end to Natchez history, I argue that the war with the French marked the beginning of a new phase of Natchez history that is best characterized as a diaspora. Indeed, the Natchez established many new communities after 1731: some Natchez eventually settled in colonial South Carolina while others established Natchez communities among the Chickasaws, Cherokees and Creeks. This is the first project to explore Natchez history after the 1730s and it enlarges the temporal scope of Natchez history and its significance to larger colonial processes in the Atlantic World. Through the use of French and English sources, as well as Natchez oral history that I have collected by working with contemporary Natchez communities in Oklahoma and South Carolina, this project examines Natchez communities in an extended Indigenous diasporic network. This network enabled Natchez people to survive multiple colonial displacements and to establish a network of contacts with several different European and Native American populations during the eighteenth century and beyond.

In tracking the diaspora, the dissertation departs from scholarship that focuses on the adaptation of Native American polities, culture, and society in response to

European colonialism. Rather than only looking at how Natchez adapted to European colonialism, which clearly had a major impact on Natchez history, this project also examines how Natchez people responded to living with other Native American groups. The diasporic Natchez communities reveal that the Natchez adapted to changes in multiple directions, not just in response to European colonists, but also in response to their interactions with Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees. By examining how each Natchez community integrated themselves into new areas and with new peoples, the dissertation argues that the limited choices that were available to the Natchez were as much conditioned by Native American societies as European colonization.

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First, I would like to thank Hutke Fields and the Natchez Nation for embracing this project. Their warm invitations to participate in stick ball games and stomp dances, and the opportunity to learn about and to participate in contemporary Natchez culture has been one of the most enriching and enjoyable experiences of the dissertation. I would also like to thank Jason Baird Jackson for helping me to contact the Natchez in Oklahoma.

The History Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz has been a great supporter of my project. They were the first to fund my research, which was invaluable for getting the project started. The department also provided me with funding to attend conferences throughout my graduate career.

Since my dissertation research required travel to multiple archives, I am indebted to numerous institutions. The American Philosophical Society was a great boon to my research. They were kind enough to honor me with two Phillips Fund Grants for Native American Research and a Library Resident Research Fellowship. Earle Spamer and the archivists in Philadelphia made my research trip to the American Philosophical Society feel like I was visiting old friends. The Huntington Library generously offered me a Mellon Research Fellowship that allowed me to peruse the Vaudreuil Collection, an essential archive for my dissertation. Thank you to Olga Tsapina and the entire staff at the Huntington for making my time there productive and enjoyable.

I would not have been able to do this project without the support of multiple institutions and I am grateful to have received research funds from the Center for New Racial Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, from the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South at Tulane University, and the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World at Harvard University. I would also like to thank the archivists at the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City, the Southern History Collection at the University of North Carolina, the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia, SC, and the Colonial Archives of France in Aix, France, for their support of my research and their helpfulness in locating obscure documents.

In addition to the wonderful and extensive research support I have received, I am happy to thank the Institute for Humanities Research at the University of California, Santa Cruz for awarding me a one-year dissertation writing fellowship. This allowed me the time to sort through the archival material and to have the time necessary to write this dissertation.

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mind and caring personality. I would like to thank Amy Lonetree and Lisbeth Haas who helped me to craft a dissertation that never lost sight of the Native Americans at the center of the project. This project was strengthened by the conversations and support I received from my entire dissertation committee and it is my hope that the dissertation will reflect the hard work that they have done for me over the years. I would like also to thank Edmund Burke III who expanded my understanding of history to a global scale and his insights into colonial and world histories helped me to situate Natchez history in a larger context.

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Introduction

In Natchez, Mississippi, a historic marker tells visitors that the town was "First settled by the French, 1716-1729. Lasting growth came with Britain, 1763-1779, and Spain, 1779-98. Cotton and trade made it the commercial and cultural capital of the Old South." This plaque commemorates the diverse European history of the town but makes no mention of the original inhabitants of the land and the people after whom the town is named. While the sign effectively erases any mention of the Natchez who "first settled" the land, to be fair, many people who live in the town of Natchez in the present know something about the original inhabitants. One reason is because there is also a state park in Natchez called The Grand Village of the Natchez. This park has preserved the central village site of the historic Natchez Indians. The park does a wonderful job in maintaining the historic mounds of the Natchez and providing information about the historic Natchez occupation of the land. While the Grand Village of the Natchez at least does not erase Natchez history, the park can also unintentionally reinforce the notion that Natchez history is only a relic of the past since it contains only empty structures and earthen mounds.

The idea that Natchez history ended in the eighteenth century is reinforced by much of the historiography on the Natchez. Most scholarly research on the Natchez focuses on the period of French contact that commenced when La Salle made first contact with the Natchez during his voyage down the Mississippi River in 1682 and concludes in 1731, at the end of a bloody conflict in which the French defeated the

Natchez and drove them from their historic homelands.[1] In both the popular imagination and in some academic histories, Natchez history after 1731 is not well known, in part, because some historians and writers effectively erase Natchez history in their narratives. For example, Christopher Morris wrote that after the Natchez lost the war with the French in 1731, the "survivors [escaped] into the woods, where they disappeared forever."[2] The Natchez did not disappear; rather, they continued to struggle against centuries of misinformation and stories of Natchez disappearance that have circulated since 1731. In some instances, such as the historical plaque that neglects to mention the original inhabitants of the land, the Natchez have been written out of United States history, and in more extreme cases, such as in Morris's account, they are written out of existence entirely.[3] However, the Natchez Nation of Oklahoma currently has thousands of enrolled members and they are working towards gaining federal recognition. There are descendent Natchez communities in South Carolina as well. These Natchez communities evaded removal in the 1830s and the state of South Carolina has recognized Natchez-Kusso Nation.[4]

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[1] For two of the most recent and excellent accounts of Natchez history to the 1730s, see: George Edward Milne, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015); James F. Barnett, Jr., *The Natchez Indians: A History to 1735* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

[2] Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: the Evolution of a Way Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3. While Morris acknowledges the original Natchez occupation of the land, however, his assertion that the Natchez disappeared "forever" is inaccurate. Thank you to Gregory O'Malley for showing me this quote.

[3] Jean M. O'Brien has written about the ways that historians and even the construction of archives have effectively erased much of our knowledge about the Native American presence in New England, see: *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2010).

[4] For information on the contemporary Natchez communities, see: http://www.natcheznation.com and http://www.edistonatchez-kussotribe.com.

There are scholars who have discussed Natchez history after 1731, but there have been few extensive studies of Natchez history after 1731. For example, at the end of the 18th century, Benjamin Hawkins noted a Natchez village among the Creeks.[5] Early twentieth century anthropologists such as James Mooney, John Swanton, and Mary Haas, studied Natchez communities in Oklahoma that had historic links to the Creeks and Cherokees.[6] More recently, historians and archaeologists have also pointed to the existence of Natchez people among the Creeks and Cherokees in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[7] While many have pointed to the existence of Natchez among the Cherokees, Creeks, and English, no one has done an extended study of the Natchez diaspora. This dissertation is the first extended study of Natchez history after 1731 and calls attention to the reality that the Natchez never disappeared and that their history is entwined in the same processes of colonialism and the transformations wrought by Atlantic World connections that helped to shape colonial history more broadly.

Instead of thinking about the defeat of the Natchez by the French on January 24th, 1731 as an end to Natchez history, I argue that the end of the war marked the

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[5] Benjamin Hawkins, *A Sketch of the Creek Country* (Savannah, 1848), 42, https://archive.org/details/creekconfederacy00hawk.

[6] John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 43(Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911); Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 312-313.]; James Mooney, "The End of the Natchez," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (July, 1899); Mary Haas Collection, American Philosophical Society.

[7] Milne, *Natchez Country*, 207-208; Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 132-135; Patricia Galloway and Jason Baird Jackson, "Natchez and Neighboring Groups," in *Southeast*, ed. Raymond D. Fogelson, vol. 14 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 609-614; Brad Raymond Lieb, "The Natchez Indian Diaspora: Ethnohistoric Archaeology of the Eighteenth-Century Refuge among the Chickasaws" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2008).

beginning of a new phase of Natchez history that is best characterized as a diaspora. Immediately after the war, the French army defeated the Natchez and enslaved over two hundred Natchez who had surrendered. The French then shipped the enslaved Natchez to Saint Domingue where they were sold in Cap Français. Some Natchez evaded capture and fled northwest to live with the Chickasaws for much of the 1730s. Others stayed in the area, appearing sporadically in French records when they attacked remote French communities. In the late 1730s and early 1740s, those Natchez who had settled among the Chickasaws moved again and established new towns near to the Abhika towns of the Upper Creeks, the Overhill Cherokee towns along the Hiwassee River, and in colonial South Carolina. In the 1830s, the U.S. government again displaced most of the Natchez to "Indian Territory" (Oklahoma) during the tragic decade of the "Trail of Tears," while others evaded removal and have lived in South Carolina since the late 1730s. For over a century, from 1731 to the 1830s, Natchez communities adjusted to the uncertain times and successfully established Natchez communities that ensured the survival of the Natchez people.

Examining closely the different Natchez communities over time, I explore how Natchez people survived multiple colonial displacements and how they established a network of contacts with several different European and Native American populations. In tracking the diaspora, the dissertation departs from scholarship that focuses on the adaptation of Native American polities, culture, and

society in response to European colonialism.[8] Rather than only looking at how Natchez adapted to European colonialism, which clearly had a major impact on Natchez history, this project also examines how Natchez people responded to living with other Native American groups. The diasporic Natchez communities reveal that Natchez adapted to changes in multiple directions, not just in response to European colonists, but also in response to their interactions with Chickasaws, Creeks and Cherokees. By examining how each Natchez community integrated themselves into new areas and with new peoples, the dissertation argues that the limited choices that were available to the Natchez were as much conditioned by Native American societies as European colonization.

During the eighteenth century, southeastern Native Americans were in a period of rebuilding their societies anew out of the remnants of pre-contact Native American civilizations. The introduction of European diseases by Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century and an amplification of Native American slave trading spurred by European demand in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries caused the destruction of older Native American civilizations into smaller polities. Scholars have called this period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century in the colonial southeast, the "Mississippian Shatter Zone."[9] The peoples that came to be known as

[8] The classic account of the conflict between European and Native Americans in the Great Lakes Region is Richard White's, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). White's model—to look at how both Europeans and Native Americans were changed during the process of contact—is still an important model. In many ways, I also think of inter-Indian relations as having the same process of mutual cultural change through contact.

[9] Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska

the "civilized tribes" of the southeast—the Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Chickasaws—began a process of political consolidation and nation building during the eighteenth century. Out of the smaller towns of the seventeenth century shatter zone, these groups reconstructed larger polities out the remnants of the older societies. For example, the Choctaws and Chickasaws went through a period of "ethnogenesis," as ethnically and linguistically diverse towns began to band together and make larger polities.[10]

Much of the historiography on southeastern Native Americans in the eighteenth century has focused on the process of political consolidation among the largest Native American polities and how this caused dramatic changes to the culture and lifeways of these emergent societies.[11] However, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the Creeks and also the Cherokees were as much a series of

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Press, (2009). For more on Native Americans and slavery in the colonial southeast, see: Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Eric E. Bowne, *The Westo Indians: Slave Traders of the Early Colonial South* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005); William L. Ramsey, *The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy and Conflict in the Colonial South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); Steven J. Oatis, *A Colonial Complex: South Carolina's Frontiers in the Era of the Yamasee War, 1680-1730* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); David La Vere, *The Tuscarora War: Indians, Settlers, and the Fight for the Carolina Colonies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013). For more on the French trade in Native American slaves in New France, see: Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[10] Patricia Galloway, *Choctaw genesis, 1500-1700* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian world, 1540-1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, (2010).

[11] For literature on the Creeks, see: Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Claudio Saunt, A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). For the Chickasaws, see: James R. Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004); Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw.*

interconnected towns as nations or confederacies.[12] My research suggests that the Natchez established communities that eventually integrated into the larger networks of towns that made up the Creeks and Cherokees. While the Natchez integrated into these larger polities, they maintained an autonomous Natchez identity.

In order to unpack the complex relations between the Natchez and the people they lived among, I use the concept of diaspora to analyze how Natchez identity, or a sense of "Natchez-ness" continued in the towns of the Natchez diaspora after 1731 to the present despite geographic displacement and adaptation to new host societies. Much of the scholarship on diasporic communities from around the world analyzes the ways in which displaced communities create identities that span across national boundaries. Scholars explore the way that diasporic identities are constructed around notions of the displaced "homeland"—mythic or real—and the "host" society and how these identities are created, maintained, and altered over time. While the Natchez integrated themselves into their "host" polities, they created a Natchez diasporic network that was different from the process of political consolidation seen among the Creeks, Cherokees, and Choctaws. Instead, the Natchez adopted a strategy they learned from the Chickasaws of establishing communities in distant locations in order to develop closer relations with powerful groups in the southeast. Like the Chickasaws, they maintained connections between their towns across long distances that allowed the Natchez to support each other in communities separated by hundreds

[12] Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation: Town, Region, and Nation among Eighteenth-Century Cherokees* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011); Joshua A. Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

of miles. Furthermore, by having communities among some of the most powerful groups in the southeast—the Creeks, Cherokees, and English—the Natchez worked to influence their host societies to their interests. For example, In chapter 5, I examine Natchez leaders who left signatures alongside significant Creek and Cherokee leaders on treaties and other agreements made with Europeans, illustrating the important role Natchez leaders played in Creek and Cherokee history.

The use of the term "diapora" to describe seventeenth and eighteenth century Native American histories is a relatively new phenomenon but it is becoming more prevalent. Some of the first scholarship to utilize the idea of diaspora in relation to Native American history comes from the work of Tiya Miles who analyzed the history of Black Indians through an analysis of the African Diaspora.[13] In 2008, Sheri M. Shuck-Hall was one of the first historians to effectively apply the concept of diaspora to a Native American tribal history. The recent proliferation of studies on Native American diasporas shows that the Natchez were not the only Native American people to survive after being displaced from their lands.[14] This new trend in

[13] For reference of African diasporas in "Indian Country" see: Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland. *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

[14] Sami Lakomaki, *Gathering Together: The Shawnee People through Diaspora and Nationhood, 1600-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Stephen Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, (2014); Laura Keenan Spero, "'Stout, bold, cunning and the greatest travellers in America'": The Colonial Shawnee Diaspora" (January 1, 2010). Dissertations available from ProQuest. Paper AAI3429170. http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations/AAI3429170. In addition to the literature on the Shawnee diaspora, the term is getting used more frequently. At the 2015 Ethnohistory Conference in Las Vegas, there were many papers that talked about Native American diasporas, see: http://www.ethnohistory.org/meetings/. Kathryn M. Labelle, *Dispersed but not Destroyed: A history of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013). Labelle did not use the word "diaspora" in the title as instructed by her publisher. Personal conversation with Katie Labelle, 11/2015.

the scholarship moves away from older narratives that equated displacement with destruction and pushes for a realization that displacement caused many Native peoples to adapt to new ways of organizing themselves. These adaptations did not destroy their cultures or erase a collective sense of identity. Rather, the creativity and adaptive nature of the Natchez diasporic network did the opposite: it allowed them to survive as a distinct people.[15] In the late 1730s, the Natchez purposely established new communities to the east of their homelands near to some of the most powerful enemies of the French. By the 1750s, the Natchez had transformed from a cluster of villages along the Mississippi River to an extended network of Natchez towns stretched across hundreds of miles in the southeast. This spatial and political reorganization was an adaptive response to survive and not a sign of Natchez destruction.

Tracking the Natchez diaspora in the archives is difficult because they moved in and out of the orbits of French and English colonial control in the eighteenth century and also established towns near to the Cherokees and Creeks that largely existed outside of European purview. So tracking different communities required a search for archival traces in many locations in Europe and the United States.[16]

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[15] Of course, Natchez culture changed over time, but cultural change should not be equated with cultural destruction. As I tell my students in the US survey course, European cultures in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries looked very different than European and American cultures today, but no one ever says that European culture was destroyed in the process of changing over time. It is the peculiar legacy of American Anthropology at the turn of the twentieth century that tried to capture the "essential" culture of Native peoples before they "disappeared." See chapter 6.

[16] To track the diaspora, I visited the following archives: Archives nationales d'outre mer (The Colonial Archives of France), Aix-en-Provence; United Kingdom National Archives, Kew; American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia; Huntington Library, Pasadena; South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia; South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Southern

The research for the dissertation consists of archival research as well as some oral history research and collaboration with the Natchez in Oklahoma. Scholarship in Indigenous Studies argues for scholarly projects on Indigenous peoples to collaborate with the group of people being studied in order to bring Indigenous perspectives and methodologies into the study. For many Native Americans, being involved in scholarly projects is also a way to tell their own history.[17] In September 2010, I met with the principal leader of the Natchez, Hutke Fields, and the Natchez Council who agreed to work with me on this dissertation. I have shared my notes about Natchez history that I find in the archives and in turn, Natchez have provided me with information about the Natchez past that could not be gathered through the written archive alone. I have received genealogical lists of Natchez individuals remembered in Natchez oral histories as well as lists of Natchez compiled by the work of contemporary Natchez genealogists. These lists were vital to my project for finding Natchez individuals shrouded in eighteenth century documents. Therefore, oral histories and other forms of knowledge that I acquired by collaborating with Natchez communities, in addition to providing insight into contemporary Natchez understanding of their own history, aided my research efforts in locating archival

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History Collection, University of North Carolina; Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City; Cherokee Heritage Center, Tahlequah; and the Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

[17] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books,1999); Devon A. Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson, eds. *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

traces. My narrative about Natchez history would not have been possible without the assistance and collaboration of the Natchez people.

When I discovered that the Natchez live in a diaspora in the present day in South Carolina and Oklahoma, it led me to ask different questions in the archives.[18] Specifically, it led me to look for connections between Natchez towns separated by hundreds of miles. Today, Natchez from both communities meet once a year at the Grand Village of the Natchez to tell stories, to stomp dance and to strengthen their ties that had been severed by forced removal in the 1830s. Knowing that the people in the Natchez diaspora work to maintain connections between far-flung communities in the present, I was curious to see if the Natchez tried to maintain connections between their diasporic communities during the colonial period. Indeed, I found many connections between Natchez communities in the diaspora during the colonial period. Therefore, only by engaging with the contemporary Natchez was I able to ask different questions of the archival sources and to provide a better analysis of the Natchez past.

In the chapters that follow, the dissertation follows a roughly chronological order. The first chapter reviews Natchez history during the period of French contact. Chapters two through five focus on the history of the Natchez people in the diaspora during the eighteenth century. Chapter two starts the exploration of the Natchez diaspora by examining the experience of Natchez slaves in the Caribbean. The

[18] The Natchez communities in South Carolina and Oklahoma lost contact with each other after the 1830s, but, when the Natchez in Oklahoma created a website for their nation in the late twentieth century, Natchez in South Carolina saw the webpage and initiated conversations between both groups.

following three chapters analyze the Natchez who escaped enslavement and were able to establish communities among the Chickasaws, Cherokees, English and Creeks. The dissertation concludes with a deep reading of the past two hundred and fifty years of scholarship on the Natchez to illustrate how inaccurate reproductions and misunderstandings of Natchez history continue to permeate and how these lasting legacies damage Natchez assertions of identity and continuity in the contemporary United States.

The first chapter of the dissertation revisits the first years of Natchez contact with the French from 1682-1729. Through a reading of French correspondence, journals, archaeological evidence, and secondary sources, I challenge the way scholars have written about the colonial encounter between the French and Natchez. Scholars characterize the Natchez attack on the French in 1729 as a "rebellion" or "uprising," but I argue that this language hides the exact nature of French and Natchez contact. The war was not a Natchez revolt against a dominant French force. Rather, the conflict arose within the larger framework of escalating violence in the southeast. This escalation was caused by colonial encroachments, European demand for Native American slaves, and conflict among different Native American groups over economic and political issues. When viewed in this multilayered context, it is clear that the violent confrontation between the French and Natchez was a culmination of a complex array of interactions among the English, Choctaws, Chickasaws, French and Natchez. The chapter concludes with the French defeat of the Natchez and sets the stage for the rest of the dissertation. Unlike most histories of

the Natchez that end in 1731, I point to the end of the war as the commencement of the next important phase of Natchez history.

Chapter Two traces the history of Natchez slaves sent to Saint Domingue and it is the first project to explore the history of Native American slaves from Louisiana in the Caribbean. Scholars have begun to uncover evidence that the English and French enslaved thousands of Native Americans in the southern colonies of North America and sold most of them to Caribbean plantations.[19] This chapter explores the hidden history of Natchez slaves in Saint Domingue and challenges the notion that Native Americans did not travel through the Atlantic World. In fact they did, even though their presence in the Caribbean is hard to detect by modern historians, largely due to limited archival material. The chapter asserts that the existence of thousands of Native American slaves—including the Natchez—in the Caribbean will require scholars to re-conceptualize the history of slavery in the early modern West Indies to include not only the history of Africans and Europeans, but also Native Americans from North America.

The second chapter adds to an emerging literature about Native Americans moving through the Atlantic World by including an analysis of the compulsory movement of Native Americans to the West Indies as slaves.[20] Jace Weaver's

[19] Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*; Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*.
[20] Alan Gallay's groundbreaking account of the Indian Slave trade in the colonial southeast revealed that 24,000-51,000 Native Americans were sent by the English to Caribbean locations from 1670-1730. His research led me to ask, what happened to Native Americans once they went to the Caribbean? See: Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 299. Patricia Galloway pointed me to research in the archives of the French West Indies for clues on the experiences of Native Americans from Louisiana in Saint Domingue, Patricia Galloway, e-mail message to the author, June 1, 2009. For a short piece on the underdeveloped scholarship about the history of Native North Americans slaves in the West Indies,

groundbreaking *The Red Atlantic* looks at Native American leaders and other elites who traveled the Atlantic World as free people.[21] Nancy Shoemaker looks at Native American men who participated in the Atlantic and Pacific economies by working in the whaling industry.[22] Matthew Bahar is revealing a complex world of Abenaki seafaring and pirating during the colonial period.[23] These projects demonstrate that some Native Americans freely moved through Atlantic World but the Natchez who entered into the Atlantic World did not do so on their own volition, and in this sense, the Natchez diaspora in Saint Domingue more closely resembles the history of the African diaspora in the Atlantic World.

Chapter Three examines the flight and plight of the Natchez refugees to the Chickasaws from 1731 to the early 1740s amid a period of extensive warfare between the French and Chickasaws.[24] The French and their Choctaw allies relentlessly attacked the Chickasaws who harbored the Natchez refugees. However, by the end of the decade, many Chickasaws grew tired of the constant warfare and sued for peace, promising to expel the Natchez refugees or to turn them over to the French. Sensing their own precarious position, many Natchez fled further eastward along networks of

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see: Patricia Penn Hilden, "Hunting North American Indians in Barbados," *Issues in Caribbean Amerindian Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Aug. 2004 – Aug. 2005), http://centrelink.org/Hilden.html.

[21] Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[22] Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[23] Matthew R. Bahar, "People of the Dawn, People of the Door: Indian Pirates and the Violent Theft of an Atlantic World," *Journal of American History* 101:2 (September 2014), 401-426.

[24] Most histories on the Chickasaws during the colonial period mention the Natchez who lived with them during the 1730s, see: Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People*.

trade and military alliance already developed by the Chickasaws.[25] Over time, the Natchez used Chickasaw networks and remade them for their own purposes. I also argue against the notion that after the Natchez left Chickasaw territories, they also broke relations with their former hosts. Instead, the Natchez and significant segments of the Chickasaw population remained closely aligned after the 1730s, particularly when they came together as a group to settle in South Carolina and at "Breed Camp."

Using published archaeological evidence and written correspondence found in French archives and at the Huntington Library, the third chapter discusses the various possibilities of Natchez history during this period. Both written records and the archaeological evidence suggest that some Natchez women married into Chickasaw society, while the movement of Natchez communities further eastward along Chickasaw networks by the early 1740s suggests that other Natchez people never integrated and remained a distinct people. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the gendered nature of the diasporic experience. Natchez-style pottery shards have been found in small numbers together with larger amounts of Chickasaw-style pottery suggesting that Natchez, particularly Natchez women who made pottery, integrated into the Chickasaw communities and introduced Natchez pottery styles to the Chickasaws.

Chapter four examines the construction of a Natchez diasporic network between "Notchee" towns in colonial South Carolina and among the towns of the

[25] Cashin argues that the "lower Chickasaws" or "Savannah Chickasaws" who lived in colonial South Carolina and Georgia, were not "renegades" but vital to the success and survival of the Chickasaws in an extended network across the southeast. Edward J. Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley: Chickasaws in Colonial South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), xi.

Overhill Cherokees. From the late 1730s through the remainder of the eighteenth century, Natchez communities achieved relative stability in each area and labored to keep their towns connected and influential in the region. This complex Natchez network helped to protect the Natchez in South Carolina and in Cherokee country from predatory raids from "northern Indians." The network also helped to ensure that the Natchez developed secure and stable relations with their host societies and indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, these Natchez towns had firmly established themselves as valuable members to their host communities. The Natchez diasporic network enabled the Natchez to remain an autonomous people who were able to continue their traditions, culture and language despite living among other peoples.

In the fifth chapter, I analyze the Natchez community who settled among the Upper Creeks. While the English and Cherokees were more natural allies to the Natchez because of their mutual dislike of the French, the territory of the Upper Creeks was geographically closer to the French in colonial Louisiana and some of the Upper Creeks had traded with the French since the early eighteenth century. In this chapter, I argue that the Natchez only moved away from the Chickasaw Breed Camp to Upper Creek country after 1745, when it was certain that the Upper Creeks, particularly the Abhika Creeks, would not side with the French against the Natchez. I also suggest that the presence of a Natchez town in Upper Creek territory helped to sway the Upper Creeks away from the French and towards the British. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Natchez history up to the 1830s, and while written documentation about the Natchez becomes sparser in the early nineteenth century,

there is enough evidence to reveal that the Natchez had an independent town among the Creeks to the 1830s when the United States government removed both the Creeks and Natchez to Oklahoma.

The sixth chapter examines the impact of largely romantic narratives of the Natchez past from the eighteenth century to the present. These narratives and histories continue to promote an inaccurate and harmful idea that the Natchez have disappeared. Today, Natchez people continue to resist the notion that they "disappeared," but like many other Federally unrecognized Native Americans in the United States, their communities suffer from impoverishment and marginalization. Today, the Natchez struggle for Federal Recognition to gain access to government funds they desperately need. The dissertation concludes with an examination of how the Natchez past as a site of contested memory continues to have a real impact on Natchez lives to the present. In this dissertation, I offer a version of the Natchez past that reveals, rather than erases, the history of the Natchez diaspora that continues to survive against great adversity.

Chapter 1

Natchez and French Relations, 1688-1730s

The morning of November 28th 1729 seemed like any other day to the French colonists who lived next to the Natchez. The French and Natchez had lived as neighbors for over twenty years, ninety miles north of New Orleans along the Mississippi. The two groups had managed to resolve some violent confrontations in the past, and the conflicts were thought to be resolved to most French colonists by 1729. But the morning of November 28th marked a radical departure to the status quo. The governor of Louisiana, Etienne Pèrier, officially reported that the Natchez "were all armed and equipped as if they had wished to go hunting, and as they passed by the houses of the colonists whom they knew best they borrowed their guns with the promise to bring them venison in abundance. To remove all suspicion they brought what they owed in grain, in oil and other produce."[1] That morning, while most of the Natchez spread out and went to the dwellings of every French colonist, the leader of the Natchez, Grand Sun, met personally with the commandant of the French, Sieur de Chépart. The colonist Antoine Simone Le Page du Pratz wrote that "the Grand Sun arrived, with some Warriors loaded with corn" to give as a gift to Chépart "when several shots were fired. As this firing was the signal, several shots were heard at the same instant."[2] At the fired signal from the Grand Sun, the Natchez proceeded to

[1] Dunbar Rowland and Albert G. Sanders, eds. and trans. *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1729-1740, French Dominion, Vol. I.* (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927), 62. I will hereby cite this as MPAFDI.

[2] Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz. *History of Louisiana or Of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina. Containing a DESCRIPTION of the Countries that lie on both Sides of the River Mississippi: With an ACCOUNT of the SETTLEMENTS, INHABITANTS, SOIL, CLIMATE, AND PRODUCTS.*

attack the French. By the early afternoon, the Natchez had killed over two hundred French men, women, and children. They captured over three hundred individuals: two hundred African slaves and over a hundred French women and children. One tenth of the white population of colonial Louisiana was killed in one day.[3]

Before the violence of 1729, the French had traded with the Natchez since 1688. As seen from the accounts of the attack by Périer and Du Pratz, trade was an important component of French and Natchez relations. Even on the day of the assault, the Natchez "brought what they owed" to the French and in return the French loaned their guns to Natchez in exchange for subsistence.[4] The Natchez and French had lived closely together for three decades, linked through trade, yet the relationship abruptly ended in extreme violence. So why did the Natchez choose such a violent path of action against the French in 1729? What were the events that led up to this bold move? In short, the Natchez attacked because of a culmination of multiple causes,

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Translated from the FRENCH OF M. LE PAGE Du PRATZ; With some Notes and Observations relating to our Colonies. Facsimile reproduction of the 1774 edition. (Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, 2008), 136.

[3] Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 8.

[4] The French trade of manufactured goods for subsistence foodstuffs characterized much of the trade relations between French and Native Americans in the Lower Mississippi Valley. For more on general information on trade relationship patterns between the French and Native American groups from a historian see, Daniel H. Usner Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783(* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 1-7. Usner argues that a "frontier exchange economy" (versus a capitalist based market economy) dominated the trade patterns of the region until the early nineteenth century. From an archaeologist see, Ian W. Brown, "Certain Aspects of French-Indian Interaction in Lower Louisiane" in *Calumet and Fleur-de-Lys: Archaeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*, eds. John A. Walthall and Thomas E. Emerson, 17-34 (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Insitution Press, 1992). For excellent archeaological case studies which unearth evidence similar to the French/Natchez interactions see, Gregory A. Waselkov, "French Colonial Trade in the Upper Creek Country" in *Calumet & Fleur-de-*Lys, 35-53; Diane E. Sylvia, "Native American and French Cultural Dynamics on the Gulf Coast," *Historical Archaeology* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 26-35; and Janet R. Clute and Gregory A. Waselkov, "Faunal Remains from Old Mobile," *Historical Archaeology* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 129-134.

including an onslaught of French colonists who moved to Natchez land after 1717, a shift in the colony away from peaceful trade with Native Americans to a plantation economy that required the acquisition of Native American land, fluctuation in the leadership of the Natchez, the detrimental actions of individuals like the French commander of Fort Rosalie, and Natchez diplomatic relations with other Native Americans. To analyze the complex array of causes that led to the Natchez attack against the French in 1729, I examine the turbulent relationship between the Natchez and the French from the late seventeenth century until the 1740s.

This chapter corrects some of the problematic uses of language in describing the Natchez story and offers a new way of understanding the Natchez. Instead of labeling the events of November 28th as a "rebellion," "revolt," "or "uprising," I argue that it should be seen as an attack against the French by a sovereign Natchez polity. The language of "revolt" implies that the French had already colonized the Natchez, but the situation was far more complex. By asking the question *why* the Natchez chose to attack their colonial French neighbors, I center my analysis on the Natchez themselves. In so doing, one can better understand the effect of French colonialism on the Natchez and at the same time recognize the vibrant role the Natchez played in the colonial encounter. The Natchez conflict of 1729 and the events that led to this decisive violence sit at the intersection of colonialism and Native actions. To untangle this complex story, the dominant and pervasive role of violence in the colonial encounter must be addressed. Many scholars have written

about the Natchez, but none have explicitly addressed the foundational role of violence in the interactions between the French and Natchez.

Much of the historiography on the Natchez oversimplifies the role the Natchez played in their own history. Generally, historians have examined the Natchez through a singular lens of French colonialism and with an implicit understanding of French dominance. The scholars who use this approach do not call the violence of 1729 a "war." Rather, they name it a "rebellion," "uprising," "massacre," or "revolt."[5] This terminology carries an implicit understanding that French colonial pressure, control, or dominance led to a rebellion against that colonial rule. These authors work within a framework of European colonialism that is often blind to the complexity of Indigenous polities and their own internal and external dialogues.

[5] Unlike most scholars, I do not use the politically loaded word "massacre" to describe the aggressive actions taken by the Natchez against the French on this day in 1729. While many French men died that day, the events that transpired could also be called an "attack" on the French, a word I find more applicable to this situation. The word "massacre" was used by the French who wrote about this event in some ways to justify the severe military retribution the French enacted on the Natchez after 1729. For a similar critical intervention over the appropriation of the word "massacre" to describe a Native American military engagement see: Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the "Massacre"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 149-185. For those who study the Natchez and use the term "uprising" (*soulever*) to describe the events of 1729 are: Marcel Giraud and Brian Pearce (trans.), *A History of French Louisiana, Volume Five: The Company of the Indies, 1723-1731* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 391; Patricia Dillon Woods, *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier, 1699-1762* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1980), 95; Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 528; Hall, *Africans*, 96. The prevalence of usage of words like "revolt" are used by scholars who do not directly study the Natchez, see Khalil Saadani, "Gift Exchanges between the French and Native Americans in Louisiana," in *French Colonial Louisiana and the Atlantic World*, ed. Bradley G. Bond, 43-64 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 50; Paul LaChance "The Growth of the Free and Slave Populations of French Colonial Louisiana," in *French Colonial Louisiana and the Atlantic World*, 216, 219-221; and Patricia Galloway, "Colonial Period Transformations in the Mississippi Valley: Disintegration, Alliance, Confederation and Playoff" in *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, 225-248 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002).

Some recent work on the Natchez centers the narrative on the Natchez themselves. However, much of the scholarship still suffers from the same analytical pitfall of only allowing the Natchez agency *in reaction* to French imperial pressure. Daniel Usner, historian of colonial Louisiana, asserts that, "the fateful decision by Natchez leaders to *revolt* against the French in 1729 should not be viewed as the inevitable result of some linear process of conquest by more advanced or more powerful Europeans." He argues that "patterns of adaptation and resistance predating European colonialism" must be understood to analyze properly how the Natchez engaged with the French.[6] Yet even though Usner tries to understand the pre-contact world of the Natchez to tell their story, he does not refrain from calling the events of 1729 a "revolt." By labeling the violence of 1729 a revolt, his narrative unintentionally mirrors the meta-narrative of the inevitable conquest of Native Americans at the hands of more powerful Europeans. The word "revolt" implies a specific power relationship in which French are dominant and the Natchez are subordinate. This relationship oversimplifies the shifting balance of power between the French and the Natchez that developed over the first three decades of the eighteenth century. In a similar vein, Usner makes the argument that "although Indian trade continued to be economically and politically important to Louisiana, some Indian trade partners could be sacrificed for other interests."[7] The argument that the French had the power to "sacrifice" their Natchez trading partners for other imperial

[6] Daniel H. Usner Jr., "French-Natchez Borderlands in Colonial Lousiana" in *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998) 16.
[7] Usner, *Indians*, 47.

motives places dominant power squarely in the hands of the French. The Natchez become only a piece of the colonial project dominated by the French. His argument explains French actions but does not account for the choices of the Natchez.

Other scholars incorporate the Natchez story more fully into the narrative of French/Natchez encounters. The archaeologist Karl G. Lorenz builds off arguments made by anthropologist John Swanton at the turn of the century in combination with later archaeological evidence. He gives detailed insight into the internal politics of the Natchez. Lorenz reveals much about the complicated interplay between pro-French and pro-English factions within the Natchez to explain why the Natchez attacked the French in 1729. However, it is still "European intervention" that "tore the Natchez nation in two."[8] In this claim, Lorenz assumes that a united Natchez nation existed before European contact and that European intervention produced the factional division. First, he makes a strong argument that two factions existed within the Natchez, yet it is unclear why there were specifically two, and not unified polity, or three or more factions. If these factions existed prior to contact with Europeans (which Lorenz does not address directly but hints that factions did exist before European intervention), it cannot be argued that the Europeans tore the nation in two. Moreover, the emphasis on European causation of change within the Natchez has some of the same problems inherent in the work of Woods, Giraud, Havard and Gilles, Hall, and Usner.

[8] Karl G. Lorenz, "The Natchez of Southwest Mississippi" in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archeaology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Bonnie G. McEwan, 142-177 (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 173; John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 43 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911).

Two scholars have recently centered the Natchez in their analysis of the colonial encounter between French and Natchez. The archaeologist James F. Barnett Jr. published the first book-length historical study of the Natchez. He builds off the work of Lorenz and incorporates many more of the documentary sources than Lorenz uses to flesh out his narrative. Barnett laudably attempts to "move the Natchez Indians to center stage," yet his main argument is that the significance of the Natchez is in their "pivotal role in the contest between France and England." To be fair, Barnett also spends a lot of time analyzing Natchez interactions "with neighboring tribes, both friendly and adversarial." However, I posit that he does this analysis not to better understand the Natchez per se but to better understand how the Natchez perished at the hands of "two European superpowers."[9]

George Edward Milne's recent monograph on the Natchez does the best work of examining the Natchez in all their complexity. He focuses his analysis on the "local interests [that] animated decision makers among the People of the Sun." In many ways, his work is a refreshing new take on the Natchez because his careful archival research offers original insights into the importance of local concerns in Natchez country. His central argument is about how the Natchez came to understand themselves through a nascent understanding of race. He argues that members of the Natchez polity "observed that the discourse of race worked well for the 'white' Europeans who lived among them, not only as a tool to dominate their 'black' slaves, but also as a means to unify their heterogeneous population." By 1729, he argues that

[9] James F. Barnett Jr., *The Natchez Indians: A History to 1735* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), xv, 20, 101.

the Natchez understood their position vis-à-vis the French as mutually irreconcilable because of racial differences and they came to believe that discourse of race could be used to unify the Natchez and their Native American allies around a "red" race.[10] My dissertation challenges this argument, particularly because some Natchez would settle among the "white" English in South Carolina as early as 1737. The Natchez after 1731 did not appear to have been motivated by racial ideas more than a specific dislike of the French.

For the most part, the scholars who work on the Natchez overestimate, both consciously and unintentionally, the power of the French. While the French ended up participating in the destruction of Natchez communities, their dominance was never a given. The Natchez did suffer drastic population loss due to disease, but they still had a greater population than the French throughout the entire period of contact. The French only became more populous than the Natchez in 1731 when the Choctaw and the French displaced Natchez communities.[11]

One historian tries to invert the skewed look the Natchez receive from most scholars. Kathleen DuVal conceptualizes the Lower Mississippi Valley in the early

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[10] George Edward Milne, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 2, 13. In his examination of Native American articulations of racial thinking, he builds off the seminal arguments of Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (1997); Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[11] Charles R. Maduell Jr., compiled and trans., *The Census Tables for the French Colony of Louisiana: From 1699 to 1732* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., INC., 1972); Peter H. Wood, "The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790," in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds., Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley. (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 2006), 57-62, 99-106; Usner, *Indians*, 44-49; Usner "A Population History of American Indians in the Eighteenth-Century Lower Mississippi Valley" in *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 35, 48-49; DuVal, "Interconnectedness," 138.

eighteenth century as an Indigenous space where Native Americans dominated, and not Europeans. She argues that the French colonial presence was so marginal that, in actuality, the French were absorbed into a world dominated by the choices and imperatives of Native communities. She does not say the French had no power: she recognizes the effect European introduced diseases and trade goods had in the region. She argues that "the arrival of the French proved one of the most important events of the late seventeenth-century Mississippi valley." Yet she warns that "emphasizing change that occurred after Europeans arrived can create the impression that Europeans *directed* change."[12] In other words, DuVal is arguing that changes that occurred in Native American societies after contact were impacted more by Native American interactions with each other than European colonization. I agree with DuVal that the power of Europeans to cause disruptions or changes in Native American societies can be overplayed, but to argue that they did not direct (or effect) change at all seems difficult ot defend, especially when the destruction of the Natchez homelands at the hands of the French is considered. As monolithic groups, neither Europeans nor Native Americans directed the change that occurred in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Instead, the *interaction* of diverse peoples caused the changes in the region. In other words, the motives and actions of multiple Native and European actors shaped the entire eighteenth century southeast.

To her credit, DuVal is the most successful in telling the story from an Indigenous perspective and for giving possible reasons why the Natchez chose their

[12] DuVal, page 133.

violent path of action. Even more important is her sophisticated look at Natchez politics in a field of competing Native American groups. She argues that for most Native American societies in the Lower Mississippi Valley, "Indian rivalries, alliances, military strategies, trade networks, and ways of conducting foreign relations generally bore more relevance than Europeans." In other words, inter-Indian relations shaped the life of most Native Americans more than Europeans. She posits that Native Americans sought alliances with Europeans only "to gain an advantage in their rivalries with other Indians or to draw Indians into alliance by offering desired goods."[13] While this may have been true for some Native American groups, at some point, certainly Native Americans did trade (or war) with Europeans to gain advantage over other Europeans as well as other Native Americans. The Natchez are a perfect example of a Native community who ultimately decided to trade and ally with the English to gain an advantage over the *French* and Choctaw. While I applaud DuVal's analytical focus upon intra-Native American struggles, she has made the error of the other scholars—but in reverse—who leave out a group of participants in the encounter. Lastly, by focusing on Native Americans at the expense of Europeans colonists, DuVal misses the increased levels of European-induced violence that destabilized the region.

To address the violence inherent in this colonial situation, I draw from the work of Ned Blackhawk, who uses violence as "both a subject and a method" for analyzing colonial contact zones. Blackhawk argues that Great Basin Indians existed

[13] *Ibid.,* 134.

within a Native world already transformed by European colonialism in North America before actual contact with Europeans in the Great Basin. The most important transformation colonialism caused in the region was the dramatic increase in violence due to slave raiding, disease, and land encroachment through European settlement and aggression. Blackhawk argues that "only through analyses of the shifting relations of violence that remade the mountain West during the Spanish colonial era" can one access post-contact great Basin history.[14] Much like in the Great Basin, European-driven "shifting relations of violence" among Native American groups transformed the Lower Mississippi Valley.

There were already tensions in the Natchez polity before European contact and since these tensions came to the fore during the colonial encounter with the French, it is worth examining the patterns of conflict contained in Natchez society before the French arrived and before they exacerbated internal Natchez conflicts. Archaeologists believe that all of the southeastern chiefdoms since before European contact included numerous autonomous "paramount" and "petty" chiefs who vied with each other for political supremacy. Ethnohistoric and archaeological research on chiefdoms in the southeast reveals that a number of competing forces constituted the stability or instability of chiefdom. David G. Anderson terms this competition of forces as "cycling," wherein "decision-making levels within a regional chiefdom fluctuate between one (simple chiefdom) and two (complex chiefdom) levels above the community household levels." The excavation of the Natchez mounds helps

[14] Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 5-10.

archaeologists trace the "cycling" power relations amongst the different villages that composed the Natchez. The archaeological evidence shows that the Natchez had a centuries-long history of competition amongst political leaders from different villages over time.[15]

The scholarship on the Natchez had long accepted the idea that they were a rigid hierarchical society.[16] This has recently changed because of the work of Lorenz. In using the same published data of previous archaeologists, along with his own reading of historical documents, Lorenz makes a new, cogent and widely accepted argument about the organization of Natchez sociopolitical structure. Lorenz argues that the Grand Sun of the Natchez did not have "hegemonic control" over the entire conglomeration of Natchez villages. Rather, factional competition from other Suns constantly challenged the Great Sun's position of authority. By analyzing the artifact distribution patterns found by archaeologists, Lorenz asserts that each "village district" was semi-autonomous, "whose residents made decisions concerning trading alliances and warfare independent of the authority of the Grand Village." Based on

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[15] Quotes are from Lorenz, "The Natchez," 145-147. For more on cycling see, David G. Anderson. *The Savannah River Chiefdoms: Political Change in the Late Prehistoric Southeast* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 9.

[16] Swanton, *Indian Tribes*; Jeffrey P. Brain, "Late Prehistoric Settlement Patterning in the Yazoo Basin and Natchez Bluffs Regions of the Lower Mississippi Valley," in *Mississippian Settlement Patterns*, ed. Bruce D. Smith, 331-368 (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Ian W. Brown, *Natchez Indian Archaeology: Culture Change and Stability in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, Archaeological Report No. 15 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1985); Ian W. Brown, "Natchez Indians and the Remains of a Proud Past," in *Natchez before 1830,* ed. Noel Polk, 8-28 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989); Robert S. Neitzel, *Archaeolgoy of the Fatherland Site: The Grand Village of the Natchez* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Musuem of Natural History, Volume 51, 1965); Robert S. Neitzel, *The Grand Village of the Natchez Revisited: Excavations at the Fatherland Site, Adams County, Mississippi, 1972.* Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Archaeological Report, No. 12. (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1983).

this conclusion, Lorenz argues that the intervention of Europeans in the Lower Mississippi Valley amplified the internal "cycling" of Natchez factional conflict, ultimately tearing the Natchez in two.[17]

The exact number of villages, or settlement districts, contained within the Natchez is estimated to be six, although there is some variance in the historical record. The French explorer Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville provides the first account we have of how many Natchez villages existed in the late seventeenth century. Iberville finished the exploration of the Mississippi River started by René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle in 1682. In 1699, a Taensa informant told Iberville that a nation on the Mississippi River called Théloël consisted of nine villages, including one named Nachés (Natchez).[18] Scholars agree that the Théloël were the Natchez. The Taensa informant gave the names of the nine villages in the Mobilian trade language, a *lingua franca* most likely derived from economic necessity that most southeastern Native Americans (and some French) spoke across the region.[19] The village names "Pochougoula, Ousagoucoula, Cogoucoula, Yatanocha, Ymacacha, Thoucoue, Tougoula, and Achougoulcoula," do not appear again in any French account. Later French visitors to Natchez noted only from five to seven villages and gave them different names. After 1700 though, various accounts repeat the names of six villages

[17] Lorenz, Karl G, "A Re-Examination of Natchez Sociopolitical Complexity: A View from the Grand Village and Beyond," *Southeastern Archaeology* 16 (Winter 1997): 97-98; Lorenz, "The Natchez," 173.
[18] Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, ed. and trans., *Iberville's Gulf Journals* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1981), 72-73.
[19] James M. Crawford, *The Mobilian Trade Language* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978); Kennith H. York, "Mobilian: The Indian *Lingua Franca* of Colonial Louisiana," in *La Salle and His Legacy: Frenchmen and Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley,* ed. Patricia Galloway, 139-145 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982).

that scholars agree played a prominent role in the relations between the French and Natchez: the settlements of White Apple, Jenzeanque, Grigra, Grand Village (Natchés), Flour, and Tioux.[20] The Grand Village of the Natchez was the largest and most important town in the polity and it was also where the Great Sun of the Natchez lived. Each community was surrounded by fields of corn and tobacco, and each developed autonomous trading relations with other Native Americans and European traders.[21]

Since Swanton, scholars have argued that these six settlement districts contained some pro-French and some pro-English communities.[22] White Apple led the pro-English faction of Jenzanque and Grigra. The pro-French faction consisted of Flour, Tioux and Grand Village—site of the pro-French Natchez leaders. The pro-English villages were the furthest north, closest to the Natchez Trace, the overland route to the Chickasaw, and thus also the English. The southern villages were geographically closer to the French.[23]

Curiously, the two political factions fell along geographic lines and not linguistic or ethnic lines.[24] Archaeologist Marvin T. Smith suggests that instead of a lingering Mississippian "chiefdom," the Natchez comprised an amalgamated population of refugee groups set in motion by European diseases, the intensification

[20] Swanton, *Indian Tribes, 45-48;* Barnett, *The Natchez*, 40-44; Lorenz, "A Re-Examination," 100.
[21] Milne, *Natchez Country*, 32-35.
[22] Lorenz, "A Re-Examination," 100.
[23] *Ibid.,* 100.
[24] Brown, *Natchez Indian Archaeology*, 5-6.

of the English-driven slave trade, and the collapse of Mississippian chiefdoms.[25] In this way, the Natchez did not comprise one group of people, but actually consisted of a conglomeration of at least two linguistic groups, Tunican and Natchezan. The Tioux and Grigra spoke Tunican languages and lived with the Natchez. [26] Furthermore, Natchez kinship structure required the influx of new people or "commoners" to maintain noble lineages.[27] In many ways, the early Natchez hospitality towards the French was part of an older tradition of incorporating outsiders into Natchez society.

Most historical accounts of Natchez history begin in 1682 when the French explorer René Cavelier de La Salle and his crew became the first Europeans to record a meeting with the Natchez. However, the Natchez felt the effects of European colonization before ever meeting Europeans.[28] In the Natchez context, the rising levels of violence in the region were caused by the English-driven slave trade.[29] English demand in colonial South Carolina for Native American slaves began with the founding of South Carolina in 1670 and the demand for slaves escalated during the 1690s before peaking in the early eighteenth century. From 1670-1715, Gallay estimates that the English purchased three thousand Native Americans slaves who

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[25] Marvin T. Smith, "Aboriginal Population Movements in the Postcontact Southeast," in *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, 3-20 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002) 18-19.
[26] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 41-44.
[27] For a great summary of the debate over Natchez social organization, see: Lorenz, "The Natchez," 152-157. Many others have written about Natchez social organization as well, see Du Pratz, Antoine Simon Le Page, *Histoire de la Louisiane.* Vol II. (Paris: De Bure, Belaguette, Lambert, 1758) 395-7; Swanton, "Indian Tribes," 107; Usner, "French-Natchez," 17-18; Lorenz, "The Natchez," 157-158.
[28] This is similar to the far-reaching impact of increased violence caused by European colonization that reached Great Basin Indians before actual European contact. See: Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*.
[29] The English and Native American groups who participated in the English-driven slave trade were not the only slavers in the region. The French were another slaving power but never on the scale of the English.

were taken from the Lower Mississippi Valley. As the slave trade in Native peoples grew in size, many Native American groups either had to participate in the slave trade or risk being turned into slaves themselves.[30] For example, to defend themselves from the devastating slave raids by Westos in Chickasaw territory, the Chickasaws reached out to the English to establish a trade that would allow them to defend themselves against slave raiders. Gaining access to English guns enabled the Chickasaws to combat slave raiders in their territory but it also enabled them to become slave traders themselves. Indeed, after securing their homelands from slave raids, the Chickasaws ravaged Choctaws, Acansas, Tunicas, and Taensas in the Lower Mississippi Valley with slave raiding.[31] The context of escalating violence around the slave trade in Native Americans helps to explain why the Natchez initially welcomed the French into their communities because they realized the French could supply them with guns to better defend themselves during this period of escalating violence.

While the Natchez had to adapt to the more violent relationships among Native Americans in the Lower Mississippi Valley caused by the slave trade, they also had to confront another horror brought by European colonization: virulent diseases. As early as 1540, Hernando de Soto introduced European diseases to the southeast. Usner suggests that disease reduced the Indigenous population to half its original size by the time La Salle sailed the Mississippi in 1682. French explorers brought new waves of epidemic diseases that again devastated Native communities.

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[30] Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 56, 103-4, 130; James R. Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004) 4-5, 27.
[31] *Ibid.*, 297.

Of all diseases, small pox killed the most people. Usner estimates that in 1700, the population of the Natchez, Quapaws, Taensas, Upper and Lower Yazoos, and Tunicas was around 11,500; in 1725 the population was only 4,400. By 1750, only 1,900 Native Americans lived in this vast region.[32]

The journals of Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville provide first-hand accounts of how disease ravished the Natchez. Louis XIV sent Iberville to establish the French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River. From there, he documented the devastation that disease wracked on the Native countryside. In early 1699, Iberville and his ships arrived on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and much of the crew became "sick of the plague."[33] From their very arrival, the French brought with them disease. A year later, Iberville sailed up the Mississippi towards the Natchez where he met a Houma community who had suffered from population loss due to disease. He wrote that "the disease diarrhea, which had been in this village for five months, had killed more than half the people."[34] A couple of days later, Iberville met with a Natchez leader who was also sick with "an illness fatal to almost all Indians."[35] Throughout his travels, Iberville saw a number of deserted villages, most likely due to epidemics, and a number of empty houses in villages he visited.[36] On his return back down the Mississippi, Iberville found at Natchez that the sick chief was near death and the Natchez people were already in mourning. Quick, decisive, and violent fluctuations of

[32] Daniel H. Usner Jr., "Population History in the Lower Mississippi Valley," in *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* 33-55 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998) 34-39.
[33] McWilliams, *Iberville's Gulf Travels*, 20.
[34] *Ibid.,* 122. The disease was probably dysentery.
[35] *Ibid.,* 125.
[36] *Ibid.,* 140-141, 169.

population due to wars and disease—that affected every decision made by Native peoples and Europeans alike—characterized the Native world of the Lower Mississippi Valley.

The increased demand for Native American slaves and the disease brought by Europeans also caused a massive relocation of many Native peoples. For example, fueled by British demand for slaves, the Iroquois raided the northern plains of the Ohio River; this forced many Native American groups such as the Quapaws to migrate westward and eventually settle in Arkansas. This, in turn, amplified the violent tensions between the Quapaws, and the Koroas and Tunicas who claimed access to the land through ancient occupation.[37] As different people moved around, contestations over land and natural resources enhanced the violent nature of the region. The historical record reveals that European colonialism, specifically the effects of disease brought by Spanish explorers like De Soto and the English demand for Native American slaves in South Carolina, impacted the Natchez long before the French arrived at their doorstep in 1682.

When the French began to invade the Lower Mississippi Valley, they did so within the context of a European imperial scramble to control the mouth of the Mississippi River. The French, who had been competing for control of North America with the British for over a century, felt that control of the Mississippi was integral to their efforts at building an empire. They wanted to control the Mississippi, the Great

[37] Kathleen Duval, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Lakes, and the Hudson Bay to encircle the British, contain their expansion, and ultimately push the British off the continent.

The reasons why La Salle explored the Lower Mississippi Valley reveal the framework of the French imperial project. La Salle first articulated a plan of French colonization in Louisiana. Although La Salle died in 1687, twelve years before the French actually settled in the Gulf coast region, his plan shaped the formation of the colony. La Salle's plan involved economic and political goals. He desired the establishment of a French colony that would have three important components, "(1) Louisiana would connect Canada and the Illinois country with France's developing sugar plantations on Santo Domingo; (2) it would be a barrier against the expansion of the British from the Atlantic seaboard; and (3) a French outpost on the Gulf of Mexico would split the Spanish holdings in Florida from their holdings in Mexico and perhaps give France a chance to seize the Mexican silver mines."[38] Thus in many ways the French saw the colonization of the lower Mississippi Valley as an important move in the imperial power race for control of large areas of North America.

However, while French economic motivations steered French imperial plans, Louisiana from its establishment in 1699 to 1712, existed largely as a military outpost. The French never sufficiently supplied the Louisiana colony due to costly continental wars and French interest in investing money in more profitable colonies, most notably Saint-Domingue. Thus to survive, French colonists had to ally

[38] Jeffrey P. Brain, *Tunica Treasure*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 71 (Cambridge: The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1979) 257.

themselves to local Native American groups due to the lack of provisions sent to the colony. The French relied on their Native American neighbors across the Lower Mississippi Valley for subsistence foods through trade, even though the intended desire of the French was to create a self-sustaining colony. Pontchartrain, the French Minister of Marine and Colonies in Versailles, wrote to Louisiana's longtime governor Bienville in the early years of the colony to remind him of the importance to apply himself "carefully to the cultivation of the land in order that the colony may be able to subsist itself in difficult times when the assistance from Europe may fail you."[39] Historians have noted that the colonists attempted to grow whatever they could. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall argues that "techniques of cultivating corn, squash, potatoes, tobacco, and other Indigenous crops were surely learned from the Indians."[40] The French also made efforts to grow wheat (a European crop) but with disastrous results. At first the colonists were optimistic because wheat grew very well in the bayou climate. But as colonists grew wheat on the river beds, they found that shortly before harvest time, mists coming off the river ruined the crop.[41] The archaeological evidence from around the Mississippi Valley confirms that the French

[39] Dunbar Rowland, and Albert Godfrey Sanders, eds. and trans., *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 1704-1743*, Vol. III (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932) 17. I will hereby cite this as MPAIII; also see Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, Slaves in A Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 24-25.
[40] Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 15.
[41] Dunbar Rowland, and Albert Godfrey Sanders, eds. and trans., *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 1701-1729*, Vol. II (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929) 59-61, 68. I will hereby cite this as MPAII.

grew very little subsistence food, and they remained largely dependent on food grown and produced by Native Americans throughout the colonial period.[42]

In 1700 there were approximately 67,000 Native peoples in the region and fewer than 300 French; thus their very survival depended on good relations with native populations.[43] One key to French diplomacy with native peoples was their understanding of the importance of gift giving in Indian societies. Bienville often used his adept skills of Indian diplomacy to the benefit of the long-term sustainability of the colony. For example, in order to gain the allegiance of support from the powerful Choctaws and Chickasaws in 1704, Bienville traveled to their villages and gave "them presents because it is an established custom among them." Bienville did not like that he had to give presents to the Native peoples and he promised Ponchartrain, that "when this colony is solidly established that [gift giving] will no longer be necessary."[44] Of course this never was the case. France spent more than six thousand livres on presents to Indians in 1706-1707. The cost of gift giving continued

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[42] A great survey of archaeological research on French/Native contact from around the Mississippi Valley can be found in: Ian W. Brown "Certain Aspects of French-Indian Interaction in Lower Louisiane," and Gregory A. Waselkov, "French Colonial Trade in the Upper Creek Country," in *Calumet & Fleur-de-Lys: Archaeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*, eds. John A. Walthall and Thomas E. Emerson (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): 17-34 (Brown) and 35-53 (Waselkov); Diane E. Silvia, "Native American and French Cultural Dynamics on the Gulf Coast," *Historical Archaeology* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 26-35. For information on specific archaeological sites see: Janet R. Clute and Gregory A. Waselkov, "Faunal Remains from Old Mobile," and H.F. Gregory, George Avery, Aubra L. Lee, and Jay C. Blaine, "Presidio Los Adaes: Spanish, French, and Caddoan Interaction on the Northern Frontier," and Kristen J. Gremillion, "Archaeobotany at Old Mobile," in *Historical Archaeology* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 129-134 (Clute et al.), 65-77 (Gregory et al.), 117-128 (Blaine); Diana DiPaolo Loren, "The Intersection of Colonial Policy and Colonial Practice: Creolization on the Eighteenth-Century Louisiana/Texas Frontier," in *Historical Archaeology* 34, no.3 (Fall 2000): 85-98; Gregory A. Waselkov, and Bonnie L. Gums, *Plantation Archaeology at Rivière aux Chiens, ca. 1725-1848.* University of South Alabama Archaeological Monograph 7. (Mobile: Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama, 2000).

[43] Usner, *American Indians*, 35.

[44] *Ibid.,* 23-25.

to escalate through the years, and in 1732 France spent over twenty thousand livres per year in gifts to Indians.[45] As archaeologist Ian Brown has noted, "these gifts were basically tribute."[46]

The French weathered the high cost of gift giving because of the weak position of the French colony, and the power and influence of Native Americans in the region. The English and the French constantly sought to ally powerful Native American groups to their side for military purposes, but the two European powers also aimed their colonial strategies to acquire Native alliances to facilitate trade. During Queen Anne's War, 1702-1713, both the French and English tried to align with as many Native American groups as possible and persuade them to fight for them. Thomas Welch, an English slave trader, visited the Natchez in 1708 to try to persuade them to attack the French. Welch's compatriot, Thomas Nairne, went to the Choctaws for the same reason.[47] However, their efforts proved to be in vain because the Natchez and the Choctaws had already found the French to be a reliable ally and supplier of munitions. The French, of course, did not know that the Natchez and Choctaws would remain on their side, and French colonists worried that they would join the English and lead a pan-Indian attack against Louisiana. This fear reveals that most French colonists knew that their position in the Lower Mississippi Valley was

[45] Usner, *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves*, 25-27.
[46] Brown, "Certain Aspects," 26.
[47] Thomas Nairne, *Nairne's Muskhogean Journals: The 1708 Expedition to the Mississippi River,* ed. and trans. Alexander Moore (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1988) 14-16, 74*;* Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 291, 297, 318.

relatively weak and most colonists recognized, at least implicitly, that many Native American groups were in a stronger position than the French in Louisiana.[48]

In addition to periods of crisis like during Queen Anne's war, the English also tried to establish trading relations with the Natchez during peaceful times. The written record is littered with instances of an Englishmen visiting the Natchez in their villages. For example, in 1700 Iberville heard from the neighboring community of Acansa that they had seen a party of Englishmen.[49] In 1712, the French carpenter and trader Andre Pénicaut noted the presence of the English trader and frontiersman Price Hughes at Natchez.[50] To combat English competition for Native trading partners, in 1706 Bienville adopted a "scalps-for-guns" policy that he said the Canadians had used effectively in New France. Bienville made it colonial policy to trade a gun for the scalp of any Native American that had harmed a French colonist *or* had allied to the English.[51] This policy was hard to enforce and it likely led to the killing of Native Americans who had not harmed a colonist nor allied to the English. The French colonial administrators did not seem to care if this brutal policy would actually increase violence in the region, but it likely did.

While the competition between the English and French over access to trading relations with Native Americans led Europeans to instigate violent measures, the missionary presence among the Natchez was short-lived and did not significantly

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[48] MPAIII, 144, 151, 171-173.
[49] McWilliams, *Iberville's Gulf Travels*, 144.
[50] Andre Pénicaut, "Pénicaut Narrative" in Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, ed. and trans., *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Pénicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 161-163. I will hereby cite this as Penicaut, "Pénicaut Narrative."
[51] MPAII, 24; MPAIII, 33-34.

increase violence in the region. Iberville thought that the Natchez were "the strongest of all the nations" on the Mississippi River and desired to have a priest live among them to create convivial relations.[52] Iberville requested the priest François Jolliet De Montigny to go the Natchez. De Montigny only stayed with the Natchez for two months in 1700 before returning to France.[53] Shortly thereafter, another priest, Jean-François Buisson de Saint-Cosme, replaced him. Saint-Cosme lived with the Natchez for six years before a group of Chitimachas killed him in 1706. For the six years he was with the Natchez, French accounts report that he was treated well. His stay was made easier by the help of a French boy whom Iberville had left with the Natchez a year before and who had learned the Natchez language. According to another missionary, Charlevoix, Saint-Cosme "made no proselytes, though he so far gained the good graces of the woman-chief, that out of respect of him, she called one of her sons by his name." The only priest who found any success at conversions was Antoine Davion who lived with the Tunica. After he left Louisiana in 1720, priests focused mostly on working among the French, not Native Americans.[54] Unlike the French experience in Canada and the Great Lakes, missionaries played a very small role in the Lower Mississippi Valley and were marginal to French and Native interactions.

From 1700 to 1712, only a handful of French colonists visited the Natchez. One such colonist was the carpenter and trader Pénicaut who sailed with Iberville in

[52] *Ibid.,* 114.
[53] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 33.
[54] *Ibid.,* 48-51, 54-56; François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale,* ed. Pierre Berthiaume (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1994) 258; McWilliams, *Iberville's Gulf Travels*, 137.

1700. Pénicaut wrote an extensive manuscript in 1723 about his "adventures" in Louisiana.[55] In 1704 he returned to Natchez to barter for food because the colonial capital of Mobile suffered from a lack of supplies and was in famine. Pénicaut volunteered to leave Mobile and live on his own through hunting and trading with Native Americans for subsistence foods. Pénicaut headed for the Natchez and in the first four years of his experience in Louisiana, he learned the Mobilian trade language. He was thus able to communicate with the Natchez. The Natchez received him well, but, notably, they did not offer him a calumet to smoke like they did with those perceived to be French leaders. Barnett argues that "by this time, the Natchez were obviously accustomed to the easy-going backwoodsmen who stopped at the river landing to rest, repair their canoes," and trade.[56] Thus in 1704 the Natchez were already accustomed to European traders, mainly *coureurs de bois* and backwoodsmen traders from French Canada who had come down the Mississippi River to find new trading opportunities.[57]

While the Natchez and French peacefully traded in the first decade of sustained contact, eruptions of violence between the two developed after 1712 when Louis XIV gave up control of the royal colony and turned over control to the private financier John Crozat. This transfer of colonial administration reflected a new set of priorities for the French colony in the Lower Mississippi Valley. No longer just

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[55] Pénicaut exaggerates frequently and mixes up his dates. Scholars are warned to take his narrative with some skepticism, see, Barnett, *The Natchez*, 51; McWilliams, *Pénicaut Narrative*, xxiii-xxxviii.
[56] Pénicaut, "Pénicaut Narrative," 80; Barnett, *The Natchez*, 52.
[57] *Coureurs de bois*, or runners of the woods, was the name French colonial administrators gave to French merchants who traded illegally with Native Americans, usually for animal skins. Many married Native American women and lived in Native villages.

concerned about the geopolitical significance of a French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River, the new goal for the colony was sustained profitability. Crozat's goal was to create a plantation and mining empire in the region. This required the acquisition of more land and thus, fundamentally altered French relations with Native Americans.

Crozat's plan included the construction of series of official trading outposts to increase and facilitate the amount of trade conducted with Native American groups, to eliminate the unregulated *courreur de bois* trade, and to channel deerskins to New Orleans for export to La Rochelle. In 1713, the newly appointed governor of the colony Antoine La Mothe de Cadillac went with Crozat's appointees, Marc-Antoine de La Loire des Ursins and Louis-Aguste de La Loire Flaucort, and constructed a trading outpost just outside the Grand Village of the Natchez. The two men, the La Loires, effectively set up a trade outpost and traded with the Natchez for three peaceful years. [58]

Natchez factionalism and French imperial aggression created a violent rupture to the relative peace between the two groups in 1715, during the so-called "First Natchez War." Pénicaut happened to be in Natchez in 1715 and provided an account of the initial cause of the conflict. He wrote that five French voyageurs or traders traveled north along the Mississippi loaded with trade goods when they stopped near the Natchez communities and hired four Natchez men to help paddle their boats. That night the Natchez killed the French traders, took their trade goods, and returned

[58] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 57-61.

home. After hearing of the event, the La Loires abandoned the trade outpost and escaped to New Orleans.[59] It is unclear if the men were acting alone or on behalf of their people, but the French believed the latter. Crozat and his minions worried that the attack posed a problem for access to trade and ease of travel along the Mississippi, so they chose to retaliate with force. The former governor of the colony, Bienville, and a small force of fifteen sailors and thirty-four soldiers sailed up the Mississippi.[60] Drastically outnumbered, Bienville camped on a small island near to the Natchez and, rather than try to attack the Natchez directly, he tried to lure Natchez leaders to meet with him on the island. On April 27th 1716, three Natchez emissaries arrived on the island to speak with Bienville. He demanded that they return with actual Natchez leaders, not just emissaries, so that he could speak to Natchez leaders directly. The Natchez agreed, and when the leaders arrived, he imprisoned them and held them as ransom. In the end, the Natchez gave three of the men they said were responsible for the attack to Bienville in exchange for the return of their leaders. Bienville executed the three men the Natchez had turned over, and for a brief time, this restored the tentative peace. But the French were not confident that it would stay peaceful for long, so the French built Fort Rosalie in late 1716, to protect their trading outpost among the Natchez.[61]

Bienville believed that the Natchez attacked the French voyageurs because earlier in 1715, on his voyage along the Mississippi, Cadillac had refused the Natchez

[59] Pénicaut, "Pénicaut Narrative," 167, 170-174.
[60] MPAII, 205, 214-215.
[61] Usner, "French/Natchez," 21.

entreaty to smoke a calumet pipe with them because he did not have the time. Bienville saw this refusal as not only disrespectful but also antagonistic.[62] This refusal of the calumet may have led to the Natchez attack on the French voyageurs, yet the evidence is unclear as to exactly why the four Natchez attacked them. Another plausible reason is that the Natchez responsible for the attack on the French traders were of the pro-English faction and had little concern for the French. The three men the Natchez gave to the French for execution had lived in White Apple, a pro-English village. The colonist Le Page Du Pratz wrote that Stung Serpent, a pro-French leader, said that "I did not approve, as you know, the war our people made upon the French to avenge the death of their relation."[63] Lorenz and Barnett have argued that the decision to give up the men from the pro-English faction was most likely a strategic move by the pro-French Natchez leaders to eliminate their political opposition.[64]

While Crozat had managed to evade a larger confrontation with the Natchez in 1715 with the help of Bienville, by 1717, it was clear that his intention to establish profitable plantation communities in Louisiana was a dismal failure. To make a plantation economy work, Louisiana needed more French colonists and African slaves but John Crozat was not successful in bringing either to the colony. In 1717, the Crown gave the administration of the colony over to John Law and his Company of the Indies. When John Law took control of the colony, there were still only about 400 French colonists in Louisiana. However, under the new direction of Law's

[62] MPAIII, 198, 208-9.
[63] Le Page Du Pratz, "History of Louisiana," 91.
[64] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 65-72; Lorenz, "A Re-Examination," 101-102.

Company, seven thousand French colonists, including prisoners, came to the colony from 1717-1721.[65] The increase in the colony's population required the establishment of new colonial outposts, and in 1718, the French founded New Orleans, which quickly became the new center of the colony. The arrival of so many colonists altered the balance of power between the French and their Native American neighbors. Additionally, an increasing number of colonists began to move to Natchez country to establish plantations there. The increased population of colonists as well as the new found and steadily growing French desire for prime agricultural land led to increased hostilities between the Natchez and the French.

The desire to acquire Natchez land can be seen in earliest French accounts. In 1682, the explorer Iberville saw his homeland transposed onto North America, noting that this Natchez "countryside is very much like France."[66] In 1704, Pénicaut remarked that "the village of the Natchez is the most beautiful that could be found in Louisiana."[67] Thus it is no surprise that after 1718, the largest number of colonists outside of New Orleans colonized Natchez lands to create a plantation economy.

Initially, while desirous of Natchez land, the French depended on the Natchez for sustenance and trade; land never became an issue. After 1717, access to the fertile Natchez land and the acquisition of this land became more important to colonial priorities than harmonious trade relations with the Natchez. Around the same time, in the early 1720s, the Natchez political balance of power began to shift towards the

[65] Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 5-8; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves,* 27-28, 32.
[66] McWilliams, *Iberville's Gulf Travels*, 126.
[67] Pénicaut, "Pénicaut Narrative," 83.

pro-English faction leaders. The culmination of the shift in French colonial priorities and the Natchez political struggle ultimately led to a series of violent conflicts between the two groups.

In 1722, the "Second Natchez War" started when a Natchez man from the pro-English White Apple village and a Frenchman disputed over a trade debt of corn. The origins of this dispute are not clear. As the two fought, a number of soldiers from Fort Rosalie approached the two and ended up firing at and killing the Natchez man. Outraged that the soldier who killed the Natchez man only received a short suspension, a group of Natchez men ambushed and killed a French planter returning from Fort Rosalie to his concession of land.[68] The pro-English Natchez most likely viewed the retaliatory strike and death of the Frenchman as justice for the death of their own in the corn-debt dispute because for the next three months, groups of Natchez men raided French concessions and daily shot at the Fort Rosalie from a hill next to the fort. Once again, the French ally Tattooed Serpent tried to alleviate the tension between the pro-English Natchez and the French. He sent messages to the French and the leaders of White Apple to try and bring about peace.[69] While the pro-English faction likely resented the decision of Tattooed Serpent, they remembered Bienville's policy toward the Chitimachas—who had recently killed the missionary Saint Cosme—in which he encouraged several Native American groups to relentlessly raid the Chitimachas for slaves, thereby decimating the Chitmachas. Here again is evidence of the increased levels of violence, and the threat of violence, that

[68] Swanton, "Indian Tribes," 207-8.
[69] Lorenz, "A Re-Examination," 102.

the French imposed on the region. French threats of violence, encouragement of violence in others,s and actual violent acts restrained Natchez political decisions. Tattooed Serpent convinced the leaders of White Apple to declare peace and finally in November, Natchez leaders met with the French. The leaders from both groups smoked the calumet and restored the peace.[70]

The peace was short lived and violence erupted again in The Third Natchez War in late 1723. Throughout most of 1723, French antagonism towards the Natchez amplified due to an increasing number Natchez raids on French livestock. Barnett points out that much of this "friction" was due to different conceptions of property ownership. The French felt they had purchased the land from the Natchez, but the Natchez saw the same property lines as more nebulous. While some might have attacked French livestock for food, the efforts could also have been part of a retaliatory plan of the pro-English Natchez upset by the events of 1715 and 1722.[71] In response to the number of livestock raids, Bienville left New Orleans on September 29, 1723 with four boat loads of soldiers.[72] On first arrival, Bienville spoke to Tattooed Serpent who complained that he no longer had control over three (pro-English) Natchez communities.[73] Without further delay Bienville with the help of Tunica, Choctaw, and Yazoo allies, proceeded to burn to the ground the three pro-English communities of White Apple, Jenzenaque, and Grigra. Without warning, Bienville's army initially caught the Natchez of White Apple by surprise, they killed

[70] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 68-72.
[71] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 90.
[72] MPAII, 374.
[73] Swanton, "Indian Tribes," 212.

and scalped the men in the first house they came too and captured the women to sell into slavery.[74] Most of the other Natchez who lived in White Apple, Jenzenaque and Grigra escaped before the army caught them in their homes. Unfortunately the French burnt their buildings and farms to the ground. After Bienville finished his mission of destruction, he returned to Tattooed Serpent and threatened to destroy the Grand Village and Flour districts unless he could produce six Natchez leaders. Miraculously Tattooed Serpent avoided the destruction of his home community and in a few days provided Bienville with the requested leaders.[75] Shortly thereafter, Bienville returned to New Orleans. The severity of the attack by Bienville shows a switch from former colonial method of using local mediation to solve problems to a French attempt at direct control through force. The war also shows the deep rifts that divided the Natchez political factions, as one faction let the others' communities be burnt to the ground. The year of 1723 marked the nadir of political power that the pro-English faction had within the Natchez polity.

The years from 1723 to 1729 found peaceful relations between the French and Natchez, but the potential for violence remained strong throughout the period and erupted in late 1729. As the Grigra, White Apple and Jenzenaque communities slowly rebuilt themselves, the French tobacco plantation system began to take hold. By 1725, the French operated seventeen plantations that produced indigo, cotton, and tobacco

[74] These surprise tactics employed by Bienville and the French to destroy the Natchez villages remarkably resembles the mode of surprise attack the Natchez use in 1729. Perhaps the Natchez learned this military technique from the French.
[75] MPAIII, 386-7; MPAII, 421-422.

most abundantly.[76] Tobacco seemed to grow especially well in the Natchez area, and by 1729 Natchez tobacco was a significant part of the 300,000 pounds of tobacco exported from New Orleans to France that year.[77] Due to the increased importance of the tobacco plantations to the long-term sustainability of the entire French colony, between 1726 and 1729, the French population at Natchez doubled from two hundred to four hundred colonists. The number of enslaved Africans also rose to two hundred and eighty. Apparently no longer fearful of Natchez military might, the French, notably, did not increase the soldiers garrisoned at Fort Rosalie. The colonial administration only ever stationed about thirty men at the Fort.[78]

The loss of two important French allies compounded the problems of French colonial encroachment. In 1725 their long time ally Tattooed Serpent died. In 1728 the Great Sun, another key pro-French leader died. His son became the new Grand Sun, yet an unnamed, more savvy and elder leader from the White Apple settlement district usurped the young Grand Sun's power as the leader of the Natchez.[79] The new leader from White Apple steered the Natchez to the pro-English side and led the strike against the French in 1729.

The French also had appointed a new commander of Fort Rosalie who antagonized relations with the Natchez. From 1723 to 1729 the French appointed three commandants. The last appointed, Sieur de Chépart, was the commandant of the Fort when the Natchez sacked it. His contemporaries knew Chépart drank excessively

[76] MPAII, 419-421.
[77] *Ibid.*, 602.
[78] *Ibid.,* 525-526.
[79] Swanton, *Indian Tribes*, 220-221.

and abused his power.[80] What was perhaps the last straw for the Natchez in 1729, Chépart demanded that the inhabitants of the newly rebuilt White Apple community immediately abandon their homes and give their lands to the French for the purpose of another plantation. The Natchez of White Apple pleaded with Chépart to allow them to remain at least until they could harvest their corn so they would not starve that winter. Chépart agreed as long as they offered him a monthly "basket of corn and a fowl" until they moved.[81] The attack on the French commenced at the moment when some Natchez gave their payments to Chépart. Le Page du Pratz believed that Chépart was himself largely responsible for the fate of the French colonists at Natchez. He wrote that "the massacre of the French at the post of the Natchez" was "occasioned by the imprudent conduct of the Commandant." He thought that the decision to force the Natchez out of the White Apple community allowed the Natchez to "withdraw themselves from the proposed payment and tyrannic domination of the French, who grew dangerous in proportion as they multiplied" long enough to plan a counter strategy.[82]

Conclusion

The cause of the war cannot be reduced to the actions of one person like Le Page du Pratz wanted to believe. The events of 1729 were a culmination of multiple causes: the increase in French population, the change in colonial policy from peaceful trade to the aggressive creation of plantations, the fluctuation of Natchez political

[80] MPA I, 128.
[81] Le Page du Pratz, "History of Louisiana," 78-81.
[82] Le Page Du Pratz, "History of Louisiana," 126, 129.

leadership between rival factions, Natchez diplomatic relations with other Native groups like the Choctaws and Chickasaws, and lastly, the actions of individuals such as de Chépart, Le Mothe de Cadillac, Tatooed Serpent, and the unnamed leader of the Natchez who led his people in a fight against the French. Only through an understanding of the multiple and shifting power relations, dominated by violence as an underlying theme, can one understand why the Natchez and French fought each other so viciously.

The events of 1729 foreshadowed a further increase in the violence of the region. The 1729 attack sparked a series of wars that disrupted the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley for the next twenty years. The war of 1729 compelled people who preferred to cultivate friendship to choose sides."[83] In retaliation for the Natchez attack, the Choctaw and their French allies destroyed all the Natchez villages by 1731. Most of the Natchez who escaped went to live with the Chickasaw. The French and Choctaw proceeded to wage war against the Chickasaw and Natchez until the 1740s.[84] In the 1750s, after having been embroiled in war for a decade, the Choctaw fought a civil war of their own. The reality of violence and war was a major theme in the history of the Natchez and for the entire Lower Mississippi Valley in the first half of the eighteenth century.

[83] DuVal, "Interconnectedness," 144.
[84] For a more detailed discussion of the wars after 1729, including an analysis of how the Choctaw fought a civil war in the 1740's which had roots in their wars against the Natchez and Chickasaw, see Kathleen DuVal, "Interconnectedness and Diversity in 'French Louisiana,'" in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley, 134-162 (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 2006): 144-153.

From the late seventeenth century onward, the Lower Mississippi Valley was no longer an exclusively Native American world. The French and English colonies impacted the Native world they encountered and the overall disruption of European colonialism to the Native southeast is vast. Yet one cannot deny that the French were militarily marginal in the region and relied heavily on gift giving and diplomacy to maintain their tenuous colonial grasp on the Gulf Coast. The French accommodated to a Native world, and they knew they did so. The budget for gifts to maintain alliances was the single most expensive cost of running the colony for sixty years. Thus to understand the Natchez, and the Lower Mississippi Valley in general, one must analyze the combination of a Native American world and a colonial world in which violence—both real and threatened—permeated most human interactions. The story of the Natchez is incomplete without understanding their history at the violent intersection of Native and European worlds.

Chapter 2

Hoping to Return: Natchez Slaves in Saint Domingue

On the morning of January 24th 1731, after days of warfare, the Great Sun of the Natchez surrendered to the invading French army and their Choctaw allies. The battle took place on Natchez land on the east bank of the Mississippi River, one hundred and seventy miles north of New Orleans. The French victors rounded up four hundred and thirty eight surviving Natchez and enslaved them. Fifty-one Natchez died before the French loaded Natchez men, "women and children, numbering in all three hundred and eighty seven persons" onto French boats that rested on the Mississippi River near the site of battle.[1] The French proceeded with "the step of sending the Sun and all who had been taken with him to be sold as slaves in Saint Domingue."[2]

The day of January 24th 1731 marked the beginning of the Natchez diaspora. The war between the French and Natchez caused the dispersal of Natchez people across the southeast of North America and into the Caribbean. This chapter explores the process of Natchez enslavement by the French and examines what happened to Natchez slaves sent to Saint Domingue in 1731. In the end, the French colonies benefitted from the acquisition of prime land for tobacco plantations in Louisiana and Natchez bodies to help supply the constant demand for slave labor in Saint

[1] Charles E. O'Neill, ed., *Charlevoix's Louisiana: Selections from the History and the Journal of Pierre F. X. Charlevoix* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 121. The French enslaved a total of 438 Natchez but fifty-one Natchez died before boarding the boat bound for Saint Domingue. Exactly how they died is not noted, see: Unknown author, "Recapitulation of the Natchez who were killed…" 1731, ANOM, F3/24, 209-209v.
[2] *Charlevoix's Louisiana,* 122.

Domingue. The story of European occupation and dispossession of Native American land, often through violence, is an established and familiar narrative in the historiography on Native Americans in the eighteenth century.[3] The impact of slavery and the slave trade on Native Americans is a more recent trend in the scholarship.[4] This new scholarship analyzes both Indigenous practices of slavery, some that pre-date European contact, as well as the impact of chattel slavery introduced by Europeans on Native American politics, society, economics, and culture. However, very little has been written about the history of Native American slaves in the Caribbean.[5]

The history of Natchez slaves in the Caribbean challenges the notion that Native Americans did not travel through the Atlantic World. In fact they did, even though their presence in the Caribbean has been hard to detect by modern historians, possibly due to the nature of the historical evidence.[6] This preliminary exploration of

[3] The literature on this topic is vast. For a recent synthesis, see: Walter L. Hixon, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[4] Since Allan Gallay's award-winning *The Indian Slave Trade* (2002), scholars have begun to explore the topic of Native American enslavement in the colonial southeast. More recently, Brett Rushforth has shown the foundational role Native American and French forms of slavery played in the history of French Canada. My work complements Gallay's and Rushforth's work as my research explores Native American and French slavery in colonial Louisiana and follows the movement of Native American slaves into the French Caribbean. See Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Christina Snyder, *Indian Slavery in Indian Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). A key book on Indigenous slavery in the southwest is James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[5] Thank you to Gregory O'Malley for informing me that Linford Fisher is working on Native Americans enslaved and sent to the West Indies by the British after King Philips War. Gregory O'Malley, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2016.

[6] In Jace Weaver's impressive survey of the "Red Atlantic", he devotes his first chapter to analyzing Native slaves and captives in the Atlantic world and he spends much of his chapter discussing Christopher Columbus and other early first contacts between Europeans and Native Americans. When

Native American slaves in the Caribbean suggests the need for more research on the topic and ultimately will require scholars to re-conceptualize the history of slavery in the early modern Caribbean to include, not only the history of Africans and Europeans, but Native Americans from North America as well. In regards to Native American history, scholars must examine the processes of Native American enslavement and the effect this had on Native Americans both in North America and in the Caribbean.

In the field of Atlantic History, there is tension within the scholarship as Atlantic histories often place Europeans and/or African diasporic histories at the center of historical inquiry and Native Americans at the margins.[7] In the Atlantic model, much of the scholarship examines the impact of European expansion as it spread further away from Europe. As Europeans expanded across the Atlantic, they brought prolonged contact and exchange between diverse human populations of Europeans, Africans and Native Americans. In response to the dearth of Atlantic World studies that engage with Native American history, Paul Mapp has suggested a

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he discusses the colonial southeast, he writes that "Alan Gallay estimates that more than 50,000 Native slaves passed through South Carolina between 1670-1715", but says nothing about the history of these Native peoples after they "passed" through Charleston. See Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 66.

[7] My understanding of the Atlantic world has been most influenced by shaped by David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. By David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11-27; Philip D. Morgan and Jack P. Greene, "Introduction: The Present State of Atlantic History" in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, eds. Greene and Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 3-34 and Laurent Dubois "The French Atlantic" in the same volume, 137-162; Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Silvia Marzagalli, "The French Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, c.1450-c.1850*, eds. Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 235-51. It should be noted here that there are other critiques of the Atlantic World framework than the continental perspective, for example of a critique by a World historian, see Peter A. Coclanis, "Beyond Atlantic History" in *Atlantic History*: *A Critical Appraisal*, 337-356.

"continental" approach that shifts the focus from the Atlantic Ocean to the North American continent as a unit of analysis.[8] Mapp suggests that when scholars center their analysis on land rather than sea, "early modern North America often seems less like part of a growing Atlantic world and more like a place where an Atlantic world interacted with multiple other [Indigenous] worlds."[9] Thus the continental perspective includes the history of Native Americans into the analysis of European expansion and African diaspora. This perspective allows scholars to explore how Europeans and Africans in the Americas influenced Indigenous Americans, but also how Indigenous American worlds impacted Atlantic world cultures, economies, and societies.[10] However, the continental perspective is limited in its analytical power for understanding the tens of thousands of Indigenous Americans that Europeans enslaved and displaced across the Atlantic. Therefore, the history of Native American diasporas that spread across the continent, and across the ocean, do not fit neatly into the Atlantic nor continental frameworks. Rather, as Natchez history reveals, Native American history can sit at the intersection of continental and Atlantic histories.

The limits to the continental perspective can outweigh its benefits and I suggest that scholars should no longer analyze Native American history only in a continental perspective. The connection between the dispossession of Native

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[8] Paul W. Mapp, "Atlantic History from Imperial, Continental, and Pacific perspectives," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No 4 (Oct. 2006), 713-724. Peter H. Wood has developed the idea of a "continental" approach in Peter H. Wood, "From Atlantic History to a Continental Approach," in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, edited by Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 279-298.

[9] Mapp, "Atlantic History," 718.

[10] For a classic example of this type of work, see: Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and the Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

American land *and* the enslavement of Indigenous bodies for labor in the Caribbean were integral to the making of the Atlantic World. Rather than thinking about Native American history as "outside" of developments in Atlantic World history, the example of Natchez slaves in Saint Domingue provides a clear case of how Native Americans entered and moved around the Atlantic World, and how their history was wrapped up in larger historical processes beyond the continent of North America.

Europeans enslaved Indigenous Americans from when Columbus landed on Hispaniola to the eighteenth century and the combination of disease, enslavement and violence devastated Indigenous peoples.[11] During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the colonial southeast, the English demand for Native American slaves increased significantly and amplified the violence of the region. English traders and agents intentionally tried to instigate conflict between different groups of Native peoples in order to increase instability in Indian country, to secure the English foothold in the south, and to help pay for the South Carolina colony with profits garnered from the slave trade. André Pénicaut, a French carpenter who lived next to the Natchez in the early 1700s, related how the English "had incited the nations [of the area] to war among themselves so that by this means they might find a good number of slaves to buy and take back to Carolina."[12] Antoine de Lamothe de Cadillac, the French governor of Louisiana, corroborated Pénicaut's account when he

[11] For example, see the well-known chronicler of the Spanish enslavement of Indigenous people: Bartolomé Las Casas, *An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. by Franklin W. Knight (London: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003).
[12] Andre Pénicaut, "Pénicaut's Narrative" in Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, ed. and trans. *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Pénicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 149.

reported that English traders from Carolina were seen in the Louisiana colony and were trying to create conflicts between the French and their allies.[13] Indeed, French fears were accurate because the English were successful at sewing discord between Native American groups and reaping profits from the trade in Native American slaves out of the Lower Mississippi Valley. For example, from 1600-1715, Alan Gallay estimates that the English purchased around six to nine thousand enslaved Native Americans from the Lower Mississippi Valley.[14]

While the French empire did not enslave or purchase nearly as many Native peoples as the English, they were not innocent of a desire to duplicate the profits the British gained through the Native slave trade. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, perhaps five hundred Native Americans from Louisiana and Canada had been enslaved and sent to Saint Domingue.[15] This is not surprising considering that even before the French established a permanent foothold in colonial Louisiana at Biloxi in 1699, French imperial designs included enslaving the Native peoples of the region for financial gain. In 1695, a letter by an unknown author to the Minister of the Marine promoted the enslavement and sale of Native Americans to help pay for establishing the Louisiana colony.[16] In the early years of the colony, the French had a policy of trading guns for scalps or slaves, although they preferred slaves to accumulate the labor needed to establish the plantations they desired. However, the French Crown only sent about twenty guns a year to offer in trade, so colonists in

[13] Caddillac's Memoir, May 13, 1710, ANOM, F3/241, 32-34.
[14] Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 299.
[15] James E. McClellan III, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 61-62.
[16] Unknown author (Hubert?) to Council, 1695, duplicate of original letter, ANOM, C/13A/1, 32-39v.

Louisiana could never acquire a large number of Native American slaves like the English.[17]

The French ability to enslave Indigenous peoples in colonial Louisiana was also limited by the fact that most French colonists did not want Native American slaves on their plantations; they preferred slaves taken from Africa. In 1706, the governor of Louisiana—Jean Baptiste le Moyne Sieur de Bienville—wrote to Jérôme Phélypeaux Pontchartrain—the Minister of the Marine and Colonies—that, "the colonists eagerly ask for negroes to clear the land. They will pay cash for them." The French preferred African slaves to Native American slaves because "the Indian allies of the French bring [Indian] slaves who are very good for cultivating the earth but the facility that they have in deserting prevents the colonists from taking charge of them."[18] Thus most French concessionaires wanted African slaves because they thought Native slaves could run away far too easily**.**

Due to concerns with enslaving the local Native population, various Louisiana officials wanted to replicate the English practice of exchanging Indian slaves from North America for enslaved Africans from Saint Domingue and Martinique. In 1706, Bienville reported back to France that the "colonists ask permission to sell these [Indian] slaves in the American islands in order to get negroes in exchange since the English follow the same practice with the Indian allies of the French who are

[17] Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade,* 310.
[18] Abstract of letters from Bienville to Pontchartrain, July 28 1706, ANOM C/13A/1, 524-544. "Les habitans demandens des Negres avec empressemens pour defricher les Terres. Ils les payerons argens comtans. Les Sauvages alliez des francois amenens des Esclaves quis on fors propres pour le travail de la terre mais la facilité qu'ils on a desertir empesche les habitants de s'en charger."

captured, and this commerce is quite necessary."[19] Bienville tried to encourage the establishment of a slave trade with the West Indies in 1708 when "a small French boat from Santo Domingo has arrived at this port to attempt to open a traffic in Indian slaves with the colonists at this place. I… proposed to them that they should bring us some negroes here for whom we would give them two Indians for one."[20] Despite Bienville's intentions, a steady slave trade where enslaved Africans brought from French sugar islands would be exchanged for enslaved Native peoples taken from colonial Louisiana never fully developed.

Some colonial leaders in Saint Domingue also sought to establish an inter-colonial trade with Louisiana, but one not so focused on slavery.[21] In 1731, Monsieur le Gentil proposed the creation of a trade with Louisiana where they could export sugar from Saint Domingue and import wood and foodstuffs from Louisiana.[22] Three

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[19] *Ibid.,* "Les habitants demandens permission de vendre des esclaves aux Isles de l'amerique pour avoir des negres en eschange. Les anglois ensemble mesme pour les sauvages alliez des francois quis ons pris, esc e commerce est tous a faire necessaire."

[20] Bienville to Pontchartrain, October 12, 1708, ANOM C/13A/2, 165-175. "Il'en arrivé à la Louisianne ou petis bastiment francois de la coste St. Domingue pour y negoires de la Sauvages Esclaves… et il luy a proposé d'apporter dans la suite des negres pour chacun desquels on donnerois deux sauages esclaves."
For another, slightly later reference to the proposed trade of enslaved Native Americans for African slaves, see: Mandeville, Memoir on Louisiana, April 29, 1709, ANOM C/13A/2, 457-477.

[21] Many scholars have examined the connections between Louisiana and Saint Domingue during the colonial period. See Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Dawdy describes Louisiana as part of a "Mississippi-Caribbean World", 107-115. Others who have pointed to the connections between the French Caribbean colonies and Louisiana include, Jacques Mathieu, *Le commerce entre la Nouvelle-France et les Antilles au XVIII^e siècle* (Montreal: Fides, 1981) 6,15; Nathalie Dessens, *From Saint Domingue to New Orleans: Migrations and Influences* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2007) and Dessens, *Myths of the Planation Society: Slavery in the American South and the West Indies* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003); Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Traditions in Louisiana, 1718-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997); Priscilla Lawrence and Alfred Lemmon, eds., *Common Routes: Saint Doimingue-Louisiana* (New Orleans: New Orleans Historic Collection; Somogy Art Publishers, 2006).

[22] M. le Gentil to Council, September 23, 1731, ANOM, C/9A/35.

years later, the governor, Pierre the Marquis de Fayet, wrote in a letter that he sought to increase "seafaring knowledge between Saint Domingue and Louisiana" in order to facilitate more trade between the colonies.[23] During that same year, Monsieur Duclos, intendant to M. de Fayet, proposed a plan similar to Bienville's that sought to establish an official trade with Louisiana.[24] The fact that in 1734, Duclos proposed a very similar plan to the one proposed by Gentil in 1731 suggests that the plan still had not taken off by 1734.[25] While the French did not establish a steady slave trade between the Caribbean and Louisiana, the marginal trade that did develop clearly prepared the French to ship the enslaved Natchez to Saint Domingue in 1731 without much trouble.

In addition to the marginal trade between Louisiana and Saint Domingue, there is anecdotal evidence of enslaved Native Americans from North America in the French Caribbean before and after the Natchez arrived in 1731. Indeed, it appears that enslaving and selling Indigenous enemies to distant locations throughout the French Atlantic was a strategy that some colonial governors in North America tried to employ.[26] In a 1708 letter from Saint Domingue, the unknown author mentions that some Native American slaves from *Guyane* [French Guiana] were sold in Saint

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[23] Fayet to Minister of the Marine, August 24, 1734, ANOM F/3/270, 443-444. "*cabotage entre Saint Domingue et la Louisiane.*"
[24] M. Duclos to Council, July 5, 1734, ANOM, C9A/40.
[25] Napoleon's Bonaparte's vision for Louisiana, before selling the colony to the U.S., was to use the colony to grow supplies for France's Caribbean colonies rather than be supplied by the British North America. This is similar to the desires of the French colonial Governors as early as the 1730s. See: Dubois, "The French Atlantic" 144.
[26] This strategy was not used solely against Native Americans. The French sometimes also forced white criminals to relocate to different colonies in the French Atlantic. For example, in 1721, a convicted criminal from Saint Domingue was sent to Louisiana as punishment. See: Order from the Council (of Saint Domingue), August 4, 1721, ANOM F/3/270, 29-30.

Domingue. It is unclear how many were sold and who bought them.[27] In 1719, two "*indienes du Mississippi*" [Mississippian Indians] arrived in Martinique. Since they were called "Indians" from Mississippi, they probably came from colonial Louisiana, but it is unclear who they were exactly. The colonial administrators conscripted the two men into the army, along with another 110 men and "Of the new arrivals, one was a mulatto and two were Indians from Mississippi and monsieur le Fauquierre had already issued a notice that these would not be allowed to be soldiers like the rest of the men." It is unclear from the document if the other 110 men were Indigenous, African or European. Shortly after conscription, the governor of Martinique dismissed the two Mississippians and "a mulatto" because he thought it would be unwise to have them be part of an armed force on the island. The fear of arming these three men but not the other 110 men, could be because the other 110 men were "beautiful and good" Europeans and he did not seem them as a threat to the colonial order. In addition, since he singled out only three men, two as "Indians" and one a "mulatto" and he did not designate the ethnicity or color of the remaining men, they were most likely Europeans.[28] Like many individual African slaves, these two Native American slaves disappear from the historical record.

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[27] Unknown author, 1708, ANOM 8/B/211.

[28] Béilan(?) to M. Fauquierre, June 21, 1719, ANOM, 8/A/26, 1-3. The text concerning the Mississippian Indians is brief and it reads as follows: "On the 6th of June, 110 men arrived on the *Elephant* and entered the fort. Of the new arrivals, one was a mulatto and two were Indians from Mississippi and Monsieur le Fauquierre had already issued a notice that these men would not be allowed to be soldiers like the rest of the men. The rest of the recruits were very beautiful and good and were allocated successfully." "*Le 6. descendirens a terre et entrerens dans ce fors le 110 hommes de recrüe venu par* l'Elephant*, au nombre des que la un mulastre et deux indienes du Mississipi que M. le fauquierre a aussy tous congediez ne convenant point de se serais icy de pareils soldats. Du reste la recrüe est tres belle et bonne es la repartition en ce esté faitte."*

When the French enslaved over three hundred Natchez in 1731, the Natchez became the largest group of Indigenous peoples enslaved by the French from North America and sold to the Caribbean, but they were not the last. There is evidence to suggest that after the enslavement of the Natchez, colonial administrators from other French colonies sought to use the same strategy of enslavement and displacement against their Native enemies. For example, after the French defeated the Foxes[29] in the Illinois country over access to the fur trade, the governor general of New France, Marquis de Beauharnois, wrote about his plans to send the conquered Foxes to Saint Domingue or Martinique to sell as slaves. Beauharnois put his plans into action and on the 19th of October 1734, the administrators of Martinique anticipated the arrival of two Fox "chiefs" and "a woman of the same nation." [30] The Fox leaders finally arrived in Martinique during March of 1735. However, the concessionaires in Martinique refused to purchase them for fear that they would revolt and wage war against the whites like they had in Upper Mississippi Valley. Ultimately the colonial administrators decided to put them on another boat bound for Guyane to sell as slaves in another colony.[31]

By the 1730s, the French had clearly established a pattern of enslaving Native war captives and selling them to concessionaires in Saint Domingue. However, the

[29] The Sauk and Fox people actually call themselves the Meskwakis, but I use "Fox" in the essay since this is the term the French used in the documents, "*Renard."*
[30] M. Dorgueville to the Council, October 19, 1734, ANOM 8/A/45, 39-40.
[31] For evidence about the Foxes arrival in Martinique, see: M. Dorgueville to M. de Fayet, March 12, 1735, ANOM 8/A/46, 1-2. I could find no record of these individuals in the colonial archives of Guyane and I am not sure what their fate ultimately was. Another twenty years later, another boat came from New France and stopped in Martinique by way of Louisiana. This boat carried six Native Americans but it is unclear where they came from and if they were slaves or not. See the annual statement of trade in the French colonies in 1755, ANOM F/2C/4, 118-121.

Natchez are unique in all these examples because the French did not just send the leaders to the West Indies, instead, they enslaved and sent hundreds of Natchez, men, women and children. This can be explained by an examination of the particular context of French and Natchez contact from 1682-1731.

From the first moment that the French made contact with the Natchez, they lusted after Natchez land that they found particularly beautiful and reminded them of home. For example, in 1682, the explorer Iberville was one of the first Europeans to view Natchez country when he wrote that the Natchez "countryside is very much like France."[32] In 1704, Pénicaut remarked that "the village of the Natchez is the most beautiful that could be found in Louisiana."[33] Thus it is no surprise that the largest number of colonists outside of New Orleans eventually settled on Natchez lands to create a plantation economy.

In addition to the aesthetic appeal of the land, Frenchmen coveted Natchez lands for militaristic and environmental reasons. The Natchez lived above bluffs that tower over the Mississippi River and the French were jealous of the natural advantage the bluffs provided against riverine attacks. The bluffs also protected the lands from annual flooding and the land became known throughout colonial Louisiana as having some of the best soil for growing plantation tobacco.[34] Both these interests, military and economic, eventually raised the level of French aggression towards the Natchez over time.

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[32] Iberville, Journal of 1682, in Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, trans. and ed., *Iberville's Gulf Journals* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 126.
[33] Andre Pénicaut, "Pénicaut's Narrative," in *Fleur de Lys and Calumet*, 83.
[34] Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, Slaves in A Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 46.

From the time of first contact in 1682, the Natchez began to trade with French explorers and colonists. The relationship between the French and Natchez was largely peaceful over the next thirty-five years. With typical Mississippian hospitality to outsiders who had valuable trade goods, the Natchez invited small numbers of French into their communities. However, starting in 1716, the relations between the French and Natchez began to break down and violent encounters between the two groups increased over the next fifteen years.[35] The animosity between Natchez and French culminated in war and the eventual defeat and enslavement of hundreds of Natchez people destined for Saint Domingue in 1731.

One of the difficulties in uncovering the history of the Natchez in Saint Domingue is the lack of distinction made between slaves from Africa and those from North America in the historical documents. This problem was apparent to the late eighteenth century to the first creole historian of Saint Domingue, Médéric Louis Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry. In 1796 he wrote that it was impossible for him to phenotypically differentiate between "mulattos" or those of mixed African and European heritage and those of mixed European, African and Indigenous American descent. Saint-Méry wrote that, "There are neither nuances nor exterior characteristics that can reveal what their roots are."[36] In other words, by the 1790s, while Saint-Méry acknowledged the strong possibility of Native American roots in the slave population

[35] I discuss this in more depth in chapter 1.
[36] Médéric-Louis-Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie Française de l'isle Saint-Domingue,* Revised and expanded edition, edited by B. Maurel and E. Taillemite. Volume 1 (Paris: Société de l'histoire des Colonies Françaises et Librairie Larose, 1958), 95. "*il n'y a point de nuances ni de caractères extérieurs, qui fassent reconnaître les individus qui doivent les avoir pour tige.*"

of Saint-Domingue, he argued that it was impossible to determine whether a person had Native ancestors or not by how a person looked.[37]

Another example of the difficulty of locating Natchez in the written record can be found in the infrequent censuses of Saint Domingue. Most of the censuses done before the 1730s distinguish slaves of African descent from those of Indigenous descent.[38] However, starting in the 1730s, the census makers no longer distinguished between African and Indigenous populations on the island, slave or free. When the Natchez entered the world of Saint-Domingue in 1731, they came at the exact moment when the colonial authorities no longer found it useful to distinguish between slaves from Africa and from slaves from the Americas. To the adminstrators of Saint-Domingue, the most important characteristic was not if one was African or Native American. Rather, the definition of whether one was a slave or not became the fundamental characteristic to define people of color during this time. This makes it even harder to identify the Natchez in the archives as the colonial record keepers implicitly erased Natchez history and categorized them simply, and cruelly as slaves.

One final difficulty in doing research on Saint Domingue is that many of the documents were destroyed during the Haitian Revolution. Many of the local records, documents that would be the most likely to mention the Natchez after their arrival in

[37] Jack D. Forbes has argued that the "replacement of Americans by Africans and African-European mixed-bloods" was not accurate portrayal of the West Indies; a more likely scenario was that the African and Native American slave populations grew together over time, even though the nature of the documentary evidence makes his argument hard to prove either way. Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 269.

[38] General Census of Saint Domingue, 1703, ANOM D/1/59. In the general census of 1703, there are different categories for Native Americans ["Indes"] and Africans ["Negres"].

Saint Domingue, are nonexistent. The Natchez arrived in Cap Français but the local records for the Cap only go back to the 1750s.[39]

Despite the many difficulties of doing research on Native Americans in the Caribbean, there are some tantalizing clues about the Natchez diaspora in Saint Domingue. First, there is documentary evidence concerning the two ships that took the Natchez from New Orleans to Cap Français. The first ship, *Le Gironde*, left New Orleans in January of 1731 with a small number of enslaved Natchez aboard. The Natchez revolted during the voyage and the captain and the ship's crew killed almost all of them. There is no mention of what happened to the survivors.[40] The second boat that shipped Natchez slaves to Saint Domingue was called *La Vénus* and it left New Orleans in May, 1731. The ship left Louisiana with 291 enslaved Natchez, but only 160 were alive when the ship anchored at Cap Français. There is no evidence as to why so many Natchez died on the voyage to the Caribbean.[41] However, from what we know of the Middle Passage for African slaves, it is highly plausible that the horrors of disease and malnutrition could have been the cause of the many Natchez deaths on that ship from Louisiana to Saint Domingue.[42] Or perhaps the Natchez revolted like they had done on *Le Gironde*.

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[39] The only local records that I could locate that dated back to the 1730s came from the town of St. Louis on the northwest tip of the island. There was no mention of the Natchez in these records. The documents from St. Louis were additionally difficult to read as many of the papers were burnt, probably from fires dating to the Haitian Revolution, and the papers are riddled with holes where bugs had eaten through the documents. See: Greffes de Siege Royale de St. Louis, ANOM, Les Documents des Greffes, 6DPPC/50.

[40] Letter from the captain of the *Gironde*, January 14, 1731, ANOM C/13C/4, 17. Also see: Giraud and Pearce (trans.), *A History of French Louisiana, Volume Five*, 428.

[41] Letter from the captain of *La Vénus*, January 14, 1731, ANOM C/13C/4, 17.

[42] The mortality rates of the intercolonial African slave trade were higher than the transatlantic African slave trade, see: Gregory O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America,*

After their arrival and sale as slaves in Saint Domingue, the Natchez disappear from the historical record except for a few pieces of trace evidence. The most detailed information about Natchez slaves in Saint Domingue is from a letter by Bienville when he stopped at Cap Français, a port town in northern Saint Domingue, on his way back from France to Louisiana in 1733. The letter gives the best trace evidence of the Natchez in Saint Domingue and, while limited, reveals the best information about them on the island. The letter notes that in 1733, two years after their arrival, some Natchez lived as slaves in the city of Cap Français. They apparently had not been sold to sugar planters and probably worked as domestic slaves in the bustling port city.[43] Cap Français was the largest town in Saint Domingue, and while it was not the administrative capital in the 1730s, it was the "New York" of Saint Domingue, meaning that it was the largest town and a major commercial center.[44] It is likely that Bienville encountered the Natchez near where he docked his ship because the early urban growth of Cap Français centered around the dock area. In later years the town would expand greatly, but in 1733, most of the town huddled close to the harbor. In addition to working as domestic slaves, the Natchez could also have been put to work at a number of urban institutions found only in the largest towns of Saint

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1619-1807 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 70-72. O'Malley discusses the causes of the high mortality rates, including disease, malnutrition, and sexual violence, 72-84. 70-84.

[43] Throughout much of the French Antilles, men and women slaves did domestic labor, particularly in urban areas. Cooking was often done by men, while women were employed as servants, seamstresses, nurses and midwives, see Bernard Moitt, "Women, Work, and Resistance in the French Caribbean during Slavery, 1700-1848" in Verene Shephered, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey, eds., *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 167-172.

[44] James McClellan calls Cap Français, "New York" in McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 41.

Domingue. For example, they could have been forced to work in one of Cap Français's twenty five bakeries, or in the large abbatoir, where thousands of pounds of meat was butchered daily.[45]

Regardless of exactly what they were doing in 1733, the Natchez that Bienville encountered wanted to go home. In the letter from January 28, 1733, Bienville wrote that,

> I have seen here, my lord, the chiefs of the Natchez who are slaves, among others the man named St. Cosme, who had been made to hope that they would be able to return with me. They assured me that it was only their nation that had entered into the revolt and that the harsh treatment that had been given them had forced them to it and that they had decided upon it without taking council of other nations, and if I am willing to believe them about it, my arrival in the colony will restore to it the tranquility that I had left there.[46]

Bienville's reference to the "harsh treatment that been given" to the Natchez by the French before enslavement, most likely is a reference to the burning of three Natchez villages a few years before.[47] Even as slaves, the Natchez tried to remind Bienville of the unjust treatment of their Natchez allies by the French. Throughout most of the colonial encounter with the French in Louisiana, three Natchez villages seemed to favor peaceful trade with the French, while three other villages favored trade with the English and were antagonistic to the French. This document reveals that these

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[45] *Ibid.,* 83-90.
[46] Rowland, Dunbar, and Albert G. Sanders, eds. and trans., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1704-1743, French Dominion, Vol III* (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932), 581. A copy of the original letter is held in Moreau de Saint-Méry's personal collection. See: Bienville to Minister of the Marine(?), copy of letter dated January 28, 1733, ANOM F3/95. I did not write this quote in French because I found it difficult to read in the orignal. Therefore I used the English translation from the *Mississippi Provincial Archives* instead of my own translation.
[47] This material is covered in chapter 1.

Natchez were still quite aware of these internal political cleavages and they assumed that Bienville knew of the as well. When they said that, "they had decided upon it without taking council of other nations", they must have been referring to the 1729 attack when the Natchez killed most of the French colonists who lived nearby. The Natchez in Cap Français blamed the English faction and tried to distance themselves from those Natchez to petition for some sort of pardon or amnesty from Bienville.

Bienville's reference to St. Cosme is particularly interesting because scholars think that St. Cosme was the son of a French missionary of the same name and a powerful Natchez woman, Bras Piqué.[48] St. Cosme was most likely a leader of the pro-French faction that did not want to attack in 1729. But, clearly, he was punished as a leader of the conspiracy and enslaved nonetheless. In fact, most of the Natchez who surrendered to the French used to be their staunchest allies.[49] This suggests that the desire for land and labor trumped French designs for positive relations with Native Americans in Louisiana when it was convenient and possible to do so. Furthermore, this evidence suggests that his mixed identity as a son of a missionary and a Natchez woman did not save him from the fate of the other Natchez. The final comment that Bienville's "arrival in the colony will restore to it the tranquility that I had left there" at first seems that it could be self-serving because Bienville wanted the administrators in France to hear what a good a job he had done. In his account, he seems to imply that if he had been the governor of Louisiana in 1729, the violence

[48] Barnett, *Natchez Indians*, 56, 97, 108-9, 124-27; Gordon Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of American, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 237-40.
[49] This is covered in more detail in chapter 1.

might have been averted. Indeed, the pro-French Natchez had often gotten along very well with Bienville throughout the early 1720s. Furthermore, he did seem to possess great skill at diplomacy with many Native American groups in Louisiana compared to other French leaders. Therefore, perhaps it is unsurprising that St. Cosme, a pro-French leader, would praise Bienville's leadership because this might have worked in the past. However, the idea that the colony experienced "tranquility" during Bienville's previous tenure does downplay the violence that occurred between the French and pro-English Natchez.

One last clue in Bienville's letter hints to Natchez diasporic identity. Bienville writes that the Natchez "chiefs hoped to return" to Louisiana. Much of the current work on diasporic communities analyzes the ways that displaced communities create identities that span across national or colonial boundaries. Scholars explore the way that diasporic identities are constructed around notions of the displaced "homeland"—mythic or real—and the "host" society and how these identities are created, maintained, and altered by diasporic communities. The Natchez desire to return home suggests that their identity as Natchez in Saint Domingue was shaped by their memories and relationship to their homeland. This is not too surprising since the Natchez had only been in Saint Domingue for a couple of years, but does suggest the beginning of a diasporic identity constructed in a similar fashion to many other diasporic communities throughout history.

While Bienville and the administrators of Louisiana had much interest in what happened to the Natchez, the colonial governors of Saint Domingue make no mention

of the Natchez in any of the remaining documents. Furthermore, there is no evidence that they even knew or cared that Bienville stopped by the island in 1733.[50] This is strange that they do no note Bienville's visit because the colonial administrators of Saint Domingue often wrote down when governors of other French colonies stopped by Saint Domingue on their way to and from France. Also, other enslaved Native Americans were mentioned at other times. For example, when Saint Méry mentions Indigenous people from Guyane and "foxes" from the upper Mississippi Valley, there are written references to these Native peoples. Thus it is strange that it is only the Natchez who are not mentioned elsewhere. Even Beauharnois, the governor general of New France knew about the enslavement and shipment of the Natchez slaves to Saint Domingue. Perhaps the governors of Saint Domingue did not care because of the relative insignificance of Louisiana to the larger French Atlantic project. For example, from 1731-1735, the colonial administrators of Saint Domingue seem to show little interest in any place other than Saint Domingue, as the profits made of sugar started to skyrocket during this same period.[51] Or perhaps the French administrators of Louisiana wanted to keep it secret that they were trying to export hundreds of Natchez who had only recently killed many French people. It is hard to determine for sure one way or the other.

[50] There is one document that might mention the Natchez. One letter mentions that a Macnamera might have bought Natchez slaves to help build Ft. Dauphin to the east of the Cap and on the border with the Spanish side of the island. However the document is very hard to read due to the ink bleeding through the pages. See: Unknown author, 1733, ANOM F/1A/31, 89.

[51] Mathieu, *Le Commerce*, 119; Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 22; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997).

Although the Natchez did not seem to catch the attention of the colonial rulers of Saint Domingue, the Natchez were of the utmost importance to the colonial administrators of Louisiana and, perhaps more surprisingly, the French Minister of the Marine, Le Compte (Count) de Maurepas. It was not until the 1740s that the French Ministers of the Marine began to stop asking the governors of Louisiana if they had yet nullified the Natchez threat. Even though the French defeated the Natchez in 1731, the fear of Natchez reprisals terrified Louisiana and Royal French administrators for close to a decade.[52] The insignificance of the Natchez population to the governors of Saint Domingue gives us insight into what role the Natchez played in the island colony. The evidence suggests that to the governors of Saint Domingue, the Natchez were nothing more than additional bodies to feed the labor demand of the sugar plantations.

While the colonial administrators of Saint Domingue showed little interest in the fate of the Natchez, the prominent creole historian Saint-Mèry noted a Natchez presence on the island near the end of the eighteenth century. In 1796, he wrote,

> I will limit myself at this moment to something I have already spoken of, which concerns the class of blacks, and [I will] count (or consider) all the types of slaves in Saint Domingue. Among these, one finds the mixed descendants of some Carib, some Indians from Guyane, some Savage Foxes from Canada, some Natchez from Louisiana, that the government or some of the

[52] There is ample evidence of this. For example, in almost every letter to Louisiana in 1733, the Compte de Maurepas asks for updates on the Natchez issue and continually demands that Bienville find the remaining Natchez and destroy them so that they could not attack the French again at a later date like they did in 1729. For example, see: letters from Maurepas to Louisiana governors, 1733, ANOM B/59.

> men who violate the Rights of Men, judged it necessary or lucrative to reduce them to servitude.[53]

First of all, Saint-Méry casually references that the French only violated the laws of men when they "judged it necessary or lucrative to reduce them to slavery." Here one can see evidence of the logic of slavery ("lucrative") and imperialism (enslavement when it is "necessary") that drove the French Atlantic project. Second, the passage reveals that Saint-Méry knew that the French had enslaved Natchez and other Native Americans in North America and brought them to Saint Domingue, but it is not clear how he came to know this information. Likely, Saint-Méry knew of the Natchez arrival on the island because there is a copy of Bienville's letter in his personal archival collection.[54] However, the langue that Saint-Mèry used suggests a Natchez presence on the island as late as 1796. He argues that "one" can still "find" descendants of Natchez from Louisiana and this hints that he might have located and seen some actual Natchez descendants, or at least heard about them.

There is additional circumstantial evidence that Natchez were living on the island in the late eighteenth century. Indeed, some runaway slave advertisements suggest that some Natchez might have escaped to find freedom. The runaway advertisements, published in the main gazette of Saint Domingue, the *Affiches américaines,* provide some hints that the Natchez might have survived, and some even might have re-attained their freedom. There are numerous slave runaway

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[53] Saint-Méry, *Description topographique*, 83. "*Je bornerai pour ce moment, à ce que j'en ai dit, ce qui concerne la classe des nègres, qui comptend en quelque sorte tous les esclaves à Saint-Domingue. Parmi ceux-ci, se trouve mêlée la descendance de quelques Caraïbes, de quelques Indiens de la Guyane, de Sauvages Renards du Canada, de Natchez de la Louisiane, que le gouvernement ou des hommes violateurs du Droits de Gens, jugeaient nécessaire ou lucratif de réduire à la servitude.*"
[54] Bienville to Minister of the Marine(?), copy of letter dated January 28, 1733, ANOM F3/95.

advertisements that speak of "Indian", "Black Indian" and "Mulatto Indian" slaves that escaped from Cap Français.[55] For example, in early 1785, a man named Philippe ran away with five others, all "from Mississippi". His skin color is described as "a little red".[56] Two teenage "Indians", named Manuel and Pardieu, escaped slavery near Cap Français in 1769 and 1771, respectively.[57] In 1773, a young "black Indian" called André ran away from his owners in Cap Français.[58] Another Andrè, described as having skin "red like an Indian" ran away with another slave in 1775. In 1775, an unnamed "Indian" ran away from the Cap to find a surgeon to treat his syphilis.[59] One slave from Senegal ran away to meet up with his "mulatta Indien" lover in Cap Francais.[60] While none of these runaway slaves advertisements ever identified a particular Native American group, let alone any specific mention of the Natchez, it does not seem outside the realm of possibility that some of these escaped slaves had Natchez ancestors. At the very least, most probably had Native American ancestors, likely from North America.

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[55] Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec and Léon Robichaud, "Marronage in Saint-Domingue", *Affiches américains*, http://www.marronnage.info. See slave runaway advertisements on: 7/18/1778, an "Indian" named André ran away from the Cap; 8/10/1779, a "Mulatto Indian" from the Isle de France, ran away to the Cap for 3 weeks; 2/22/1780, an "Indian" named Papillote ran away from habitation near the Cap; 2/13/1781, "an Indian with a beautiful figure" ran away from the Cap when he was sent to go to the hospital, the owner thought he would try to board a ship and sail to New England or Curacao; 3/13/1781, a young Indian named Ceasar ran away near the Cap; 7/17/1781, a "black Indian" ran away near the Cap; 5/1/1782, "a black named Aly, creole Indian" ran away from the Cap; 2/25/1790, a black Indian, unnamed, ran away from the Cap; 6/12/1790, an Indian named Philosophe ran away near the Cap.
[56] *Ibid.,* 1/19/1785.
[57] *Ibid.,* 9/18/1769 and 9/14/1771.
[58] *Ibid.,* 3/13/1773
[59] *Ibid.,* 5/6/1775
[60] *Ibid.,* 6/24/1775

While it is unclear if any Natchez ever found freedom again on the island, if they had, their lives could have improved. In 1769, Guillaume Levaque, "of Indian blood" tried to marry a French woman in Port au Prince, even though this was a crime punishable by death. He eventually paid a huge fine and got married. During the trial, Levaque was said to be the "son of a chief" on his maternal side.[61] Could this be the enslaved son of Tattooed Serpent—the great Natchez chief? It is impossible to say whether Levaque had Natchez parents or some other Native North American ancestry. Regardless, it seems that the descendants of some enslaved Native Americans acquired freedom in the 18th century. By the 1780s, freedmen and women could own, buy and sell rural and urban property, they could buy and sell slaves as agents for others, the most prosperous could lend credit to others, and some bought slaves to grew coffee on small plantations outside of the city.[62]

While Natchez slaves could have spent their lives around Cap Francais, it is possible that they were sold and were forced to move about the island. Outside of Cap Français, there are many examples of "Indians", "black Indians" and "mulatto Indians" that ran away. For example, in Port-au-Prince, there are six runaways that are identified as having some "Indian" ancestry or ethnicity.[63] Across the colony of Saint Domingue, slaves identified as "Indian", "black Indian" and/or "mulatto Indian"

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[61] See: Unknown author, "Extrait des minutes au Greffe du Port au Prince", June 17, 1769, ANOM AC/F3/95, 16-22.
[62] Susan M. Socolow, "Economic Roles of the Free Women of Color of Cap Français" in David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 279-293.
[63] Glaunec and Robichaud, "Marronage in Saint-Domingue," *Affiches américains:* 4/4/1770 George, an "Indian"; 10/14/1777, an "Indian" named François; 8/18/1778, Zamore, an "Indian"; 9/1/1778, a "black Indian"; 7/22/1786, a "Mulatto Indian" named Jeannot; 8/28/1788, a "Mulatto Indian" named Benjamin.

ran away throughout the 1770s to 1790s.[64] Some "Indian" slaves ran away more than once, such as the man named "Zéphir" or "Zephyr" who could speak Spanish and French. He escaped once to Havana, where he posed as a freedman until he was caught and sent back to Saint Domingue.[65] Was Zephyr a Natchez? I do not think we will ever know. For the slave owners of Saint Domingue, it was important to note the skin color or physical characteristics of their slaves, but they had no interest in recording their pasts or their ethnic histories. So the records provide some hints, but they leave us mostly with historical silence.

Conclusion

This initial research into Native American diasporas in the Atlantic world contributes to the notion that Native American diasporas can be treated as a unit of analysis in Atlantic historiography.[66] Much like the concerns of scholar's of the African diaspora, the condition of the Natchez diaspora must be understood as shaped the broader conditions of slavery, imperialism and colonialism. Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley argue that, "as a condition, [diaspora] is directly tied

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[64] *Ibid.* For example, in 6/20/1770, an "Indian" named Depardieu ran away from Fort Dauphin; 7/15/1777, two "black Indians" ran away from Jacmel; 9/30/1777, François, an "Indian" living ran away from the Coromandel Coast; 12/29/1778, Julien, a "mulatto Indian" ran away near Gonaves; 11/19/1785, an Indian named Marseille ran away from an undisclosed location; 8/22/1780, an Indian named Laurent ran away a Saint-Simon; 3/10/1784, a mulatto Indian ran away from a habitation near Grand Riviere; 10-18-1787, a "Mulatto Indian," called Jean-Louis ran away from a habitation near Saint-Marc; 5/1/1790, a "black Indian" ran away near Petit-Gouave. For more examples, see: 9/18/1776; 11/23/1779; 6/18/1783; 12/31/1783; 4/14/1784; 7/23/1785; 7/15/1786; 4/24/1788; 5/15/1788; and 5/3/1769.

[65] *Ibid.,* 1/31/1776; 10/24/1780; 2/6/1781; 5/7/1783; and 12/27/1788.

[66] Furthermore, Native American diasporas can be considered to be a unit of analysis in world history. Like other "middle passages", the Natchez slave diaspora adds to our understanding of historic processes of slavery, capitalism and the creation of the modern world, see: Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

to the process by which it is being made and remade. In other words, the African diaspora itself exists within the context of global race and gender hierarchies."[67] The richness of African diaspora studies have shown that, "racial capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism—the processes that created the current African diaspora—shaped African culture(s) while transforming Western culture itself."[68] Therefore, the condition(s) that helped shape the contours of the African diaspora, Africa, and the West are the rise of racial capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism. Patterson and Kelley argue that the African diaspora is conditioned by "the same ideologies that forced so-called coolie labor from China and the Asian subcontinent to work on the plantations, mines, railroads of European empires and of the Americas." The question remains for Patterson and Kelly, "how do we situate Chinese and Indian migrations to the Caribbean, Africa, or to the U.S. South for that matter, in relation to the 'African' diaspora?"[69] I add to Patterson and Kelley's question, how do we situate Native American diasporas in relation to the larger conditions of racial capitalism, imperialism and colonialism that shaped the African diaspora and the making of the modern world? The case study of the Natchez begins to answer this question by examining the dispossession of their land and the enslavement of their people to feed the expansion of the French colonial regime.

Shortly after the French defeated the Natchez in 1731, French habitants from Louisiana, Saint Domingue and Martinique began to populate the area that became

[67] Patterson and Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations," 20.
[68] *Ibid.,* 14.
[69] *Ibid.,* 24-5.

Natchez, Mississippi. Within ten years of the war, the French had replaced the Natchez and 450 years of continuous Indigenous occupation on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River with plantations and slave labor.[70] The Natchez sat in the path of French colonial and imperial desire as French colonists lusted for Natchez land and labor. The process of French colonialism replaced the Natchez and their way of life with a new plantation society buttressed on slave labor that was to be replicated later by both the Spanish and the United States.[71] At the same time that the French appropriated Natchez land for the French colonial enterprise, the French also took their bodies and enslaved them to aid in the profits of plantation agriculture in the Caribbean. The very act of enslaving the Natchez also helped the French to expand their settler colonialism in Louisiana. This history of violence and enslavement, causing the Natchez to become a diasporic group, has impacted the Natchez to the present day and they continue to pay the cost.

[70]Archaeological research suggests that the Natchez were one of many Mississippian chiefdoms that existed before contact with Europeans. Unlike all the other Mississippian chiefdoms that had dispersed from historic areas of residence by the time of French contact in 1682, archeological evidence suggests that the people we have come to know as the Natchez lived in same area from 1350-1731. Ian W. Brown, "Natchez Indians and the Remains of a Proud Past" in *Natchez before 1830*, ed., Noel Polk (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 13-15.

[71] For example, M. de Vienne brought a couple of families from Saint Domingue to Louisiana to establish tobacco plantations on the newly vacant Natchez land in 1741. In a letter from the same year, the Commissary General of Louisiana, M. Salmon, remarked that two families brought to the Natchez area from Saint Domingue were doing well growing tobacco, see: AC F3 no. 143, letter dated 29 7bre 1741. In this same letter, M. Salmon talks about an Englishman who wanted to start a tobacco plantation in Natchez.

Chapter 3

Negotiating Diaspora: Natchez Survival along Chickasaw Networks

While the French enslaved hundreds of Natchez and shipped them to Saint Domingue, hundreds of other Natchez evaded enslavement. Some Natchez remained near their homelands and engaged in guerilla warfare against the French while many others sought refuge further east with their allies, the Chickasaws.

The support of the Chickasaws was necessary for the Natchez to regroup after having lost their homeland and after suffering so many casualties in the war with the French. Without Chickasaw support and protection during these dire times, Natchez survival might not have been possible. This is especially true because for most of the 1730s, the French were determined to locate and destroy or enslave all remaining Natchez in the region. The French were unable to succeed in their intentions, largely due to the protection of the powerful Chickasaws. However, by the end of the decade, most Natchez had left the Chickasaws and moved to locations further east, near to the English, Creeks and Cherokees.

Most historians have argued that the Natchez eventually moved to locations further to the east because of a growing cleavage among the Chickasaws. There were those who supported harboring the Natchez against French aggression, and those who were tired of incessant war with the French and who began to try to broker deals in which they offered to turn over all Natchez living among the Chickasaws over to the

French in exchange for an end to the war.[1] However, I argue it was more complicated than this. Certainly, the waning support of almost half of the Chickasaw population led many Natchez to seek alternate solutions to remaining with the Chickasaws. But when the Natchez departed Chickasaws lands, they moved along Chickasaws paths and eventually settled among peoples who were distant economic and military allies of the Chickasaws. Rather than thinking of the Natchez departure as a clean break from the Chickasaws, the fact that the Natchez moved along Chickasaw paths and later settled among allies of the Chickasaws suggests that many Natchez maintained close relations with segments of the Chickasaw population well into the 1740s and 1750s. Furthermore, the fact that so many Natchez left the Chickasaws to found new Natchez towns elsewhere is clear evidence that living with the Chickasaws did not erase a sense of Natchez identity. Christina Snyder offers the general view that the "eighteenth-century nation-making [of the major Native groups like the Chickasaws] resulted in the decrease of Native ethnic diversity in the region, as the major Southern nations absorbed formerly autonomous groups."[2] While some of the Natchez were "absorbed" into Chickasaw society and never left, the Natchez who departed Chickasaw lands continued to maintain a Natchez identity while living as minority

[1] For more on the war between the French and Chickasaws during the 1730s and the resultant divide in the Chickasaw community over harboring the Natchez, see: James R. Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 74-75; Lieb, "The Natchez Indian Diaspora," 222-226.

[2] Curiously, on the next page of her book after describing the decline of Native diversity in the colonial southeast, Snyder describes Native American intermarriages with European traders and concludes that "Stubbornly strong, marriage ties bound disparate groups together and made Indian communities among colonial America's most diverse." It is not made clear why Native ethnic diversity declined while diversity in Native communities increased only with the marriage of Europeans. See Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 120-121.

groups within larger Native and European polities. The history of the Natchez diaspora suggests that many other smaller Native American groups could have maintained distinct group or ethnic identities even while living in larger Native American and European nations.[3]

This chapter examines the early history of the Natchez diaspora during the 1730s and early 1740s to explore the opportunities and constraints that shaped Natchez strategies for survival as a people. Since some Natchez remained with the Chickasaws, while others departed for various locations further eastward, it is clear that the Natchez had some ability to make choices for themselves. However, their time spent with the Chickasaws and immediately afterwards illustrates that Natchez options during the 1730s were as much conditioned by powerful Native American groups like the Chickasaws as much as by European colonization.

In the immediate aftermath of the Natchez War of 1731, determining the exact number of Natchez who escaped enslavement and death is difficult due to the conflicting reports from French sources. Following the defeat of the Natchez, the French commander of the Choctaw forces, Jean Paul Le Sueur, interrogated the captured Great Sun. The Great Sun told Le Sueur that over two hundred warriors and another two hundred boys who could fight if necessary had escaped before the Natchez surrender.[4] However, Edmé Gatien Salmon, the Commissary General of

[3] The Chickasaws allowed other small groups besides the Natchez to live with them. For example, Yazoos, Koroas, and Chakchiumas. The Creeks allowed Natchez, Yuchis and others to live with them as well.

[4] Jean Paul Le Sueur was the "nephew of M. de Bienville" who led the Choctaw attack against the Natchez in 1731, and later was commander of the Alabama and Tombecbé forts during the 1740s, then acted as a major at Mobile from 1750 to 1752 when he died. See: Ory to Périer, draft of letter,

Louisiana, wrote that there were 250 to 300 survivors while French officer Beauchamps, reported there were 600 fighting men. Another officer named Loubois and an anonymous author both claimed that there were fewer than 150 Natchez warriors by 1733.[5] While the exact number of Natchez who escaped is difficult to determine, it is safe to say that there were some hundreds of Natchez who survived the war and enslavement.

Immediately after the war, Le Sueur reported the tentative location of a number of Natchez bands that had escaped. He reported that one group of forty warriors and their families immediately went to the Chickasaws, while twenty men and ten women relocated to live with the Ouachitas. He said that another sixty or seventy warriors and their families camped within a three days ride of Fort Valeur, twenty warriors were in villages near the old Natchez villages, and scouts had sighted a small band just south of Fort Valeur. He noted another group of sixty warriors and their families led by the chief of the Flour village but their location was unknown. Le Sueur also noted that some Koroas and Yazoos—Native Americans who had been living with the Natchez at the time of the war—were in a fort some three days away from Fort Rosalie.[6] Of all these reported sightings, there are three groups of Natchez that can be identified most clearly in the French historical records.[7] Before moving to

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November 1 1730, ANOM, C/13A/36, 338-351. James Barnett erroneously calls Jean Paul Le Sueur "Charles" rather than Jean Paul, see Barnett, *The Natchez*, 109-110, 124.

[5] John A. Green, "Governor Perier's Expedition Against the Natchez Indians," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1936): 547-578.

[6] Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 127.

[7] James Barnett has written in detail about these three "clusters" of Natchez that are most easily identified from 1731-1733. See Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 127-131. My research has not uncovered any other groups that can be easily identified across time and space during this period.

discuss these three groups, it is worth noting that smaller bands of Natchez appear frequently in the French colonial documents from 1731-1733, but often with only a casual mention that includes no individual names, making it difficult to track each individual band on its own. Ultimately what happened to all of the various small groups of Natchez is unclear. It is quite possible that small bands of Natchez moved from one group to another, hidden from the sight of French observers.

Of the three major groups of Natchez refugees that can be located in the documents, one group went immediately to live with the Chickasaws, while the other two stayed in the general vicinity to fight a guerilla war with the French until at least 1737.

One group of Natchez warriors, under the leadership of the chief of the Flour village, attacked a group of seventy Frenchmen on the Acansa River in 1731. Fearing even more attacks by this Natchez group, an unnamed French officer conspired with the nearby Tunicas to invite the Natchez into a trap to destroy them. The plan called for the Tunica chief to declare amnesty for the Natchez and to invite them to their community for refuge and celebration. The Tunicas had converted to Catholicism many years earlier and were particularly close the French. The Natchez had already attacked and massacred the Tunicas in the 1720s.[8] The French plan was that once the Natchez were disarmed, the Tunica and French would descend on the Natchez and massacre them. However, the Natchez were either suspicious or learned of the plan. In June 1731, around 150 Natchez led by the Flour chief, arrived at the Tunicas and

[8] The Natchez and the Tunicas had clashed violently many times before, see chapter 1.

spent two days dancing to celebrate their union. At daybreak on the third day, the Natchez attacked the sleeping Tunicas and Frenchmen in the village. On the same day, another group of Natchez attacked the meager garrison at Fort Rosalie in order to prevent any French assistance towards the Tunicas.[9] This coordinated effort demonstrates that, despite the Natchez having dispersed into smaller refugee groups, they maintained some level of communication between them. The attack on the Tunicas and French also shows that some Natchez chose not to seek sanctuary among the Chickasaws and instead, remained in the area to continue to the war against the French and their Native American allies.

After the successful attack on the Tunica, the Flour chief and a significant Natchez force attacked the French at Natchitoches but lost to a larger army composed of Native American, French, and Spanish soldiers. Seventy to eighty Natchez were killed in the confrontation and the Flour chief perished as well.[10] It is unclear where the surviving Natchez fled to, but there are some hints. In December 1731, Pierre Gabriel Juzan, one of Perier's officers at Natchitoches, reported that the Flour chief's daughter had been captured and was a slave in Natchitoches. She apparently told him that there was a group composed of at least thirty Natchez warriors and that the families of the warriors had gathered near the old Natchez villages.[11] There is also the possibility that Flour chief's refugees joined other Natchez who had already left to the

[9] Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas, June 24, 1731, ANOM C/13A/13, 145-146v; Perier to Maurepas, December 10, 1731, ANOM C/13A/13, 57-64.
[10] Charlevoix, 117-118.
[11] Juzan to Périer, December 29, 1731, ANOM C/13A/13, 207-208V. James Barnett suggests that this very group may have been the ones who attacked the French at Fort Rosalie in November of 1731, see Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 127-128.

Chickasaws, but there is no documentation to confirm or challenge this hypothesis. It is ultimately unclear exactly what happened to the members of the Flour chief's band.

The French discovered a second group of Natchez in 1733 that had continued to live near Fort Rosalie, in the old Natchez homelands. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the French had invited the Ofogoulas, a small Mississippian group, to settle beside Fort Rosalie to hunt for food to sustain the soldiers and to perform other services once handled by the Natchez. The French also saw the Ofogoulas as an additional fighting force to defend the fort if the Natchez tried to attack it again. However, when Bienville returned to Louisiana in 1733, he suspected that the Ofogoulas were in contact with Natchez in the area around the fort. Bienville pressured the Ofogoulas and Choctaws to search the area and see if there were any remaining Natchez. The search party discovered a Natchez man within two day's march from the fort. He was working in a large field of cultivated vegetables when the Ofogoulas and Choctaws discovered and beheaded him. They judged that by the size of the field, there might be a Natchez village nearby with up to fifty warriors living there.[12] A combined force of French and Tunicas came back a few months later and located the Natchez village and burned it and its fields of corn to the ground. The French reported that most of the Natchez had left the area before the attack on the village and had fled to the Chickasaws to join the other Natchez there.[13] However, one old Natchez woman was left behind and captured by the Ofogoulas. She told her captors that most of the Natchez had retreated to the Chickasaws, but still some

[12] MPAI, 196-197; MPA III, 622.
[13] Bienville, "Louisiana: Concerning the Savages," August 1734, ANOM C/13A/18, 215.

remained in the area. According to Bienville, the Natchez woman said "there now remained in the neighborhood of the Mississippi only forty warriors and the same number of young women, who were scattered and hidden in the mountains a short distance from the place where she had been captured, where they did not think themselves in any more safety than with the Chickasaws whose good faith they distrust."[14] Based on this account, some Natchez never wanted to join the Chickasaws and feared associating with them.

Regardless of the veracity of the Natchez woman's statements, there is hardly any mention by French officials of Natchez still living in colonial Louisiana after 1737. By 1741, Bienville argued that "There was no probability that there were any Natchez on the Mississippi" except for a small group that might have returned to the area only in 1741. Bienville thought that after relations soured with the Chickasaws in the early 1740s, "I have reason to think now that since their separation from the Chickasaws several families have come to settle on the river of the Tious twenty leagues above the fort of the Natchez."[15] There could also have been more small groups of Natchez survivors that successfully hid from the French authorities, either by fooling the French by identifying as another Native group or perhaps by integrating themselves into other communities. I have not located anyone who identifies as Natchez who still lives in modern-day Louisiana or any historical references to Natchez living in the area after 1741. If there were Natchez in the area, they have disappeared from the historical records. But the Natchez did not disappear

[14] Bienville to Maurepas, June 26, 1733, ANOM C/13A/16, 277-289.
[15] Bienville to Maurepas, September 30, 1741, ANOM C/13A/26, 97-106.

entirely. There are numerous references to Natchez communities after 1741, but in areas to the east of their historic homelands.

While some groups of Natchez remained near their ancestral homelands, the majority of Natchez survivors moved to Chickasaw country beginning in 1731. When the Natchez started to arrive in Chickasaw territory, they entered a Chickasaw society undergoing a period of internal political change. Chickasaw towns since the Mississippian period had been organized along a white/red or peace/war moieties that divided the communities into groups with specific functions. Chickasaw moieties followed matrilineal descent and were divided between the white (or peace) moiety and the red (or war) moiety. Each individual town was either a red or a white town, and towns of the same moiety tended to cluster together geographically.[16] In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the red Chickasaw towns clustered around the area called Large Prairie, while the white towns clustered around the area called Small Prairie, a division noted by early French observers and used by modern scholars. Later archaeological and historical research shows that Small Prairie towns were likely the peace towns that drew leadership from the white moiety and the Large

[16] "Moities" are a concept used by anthropologists to describe a "particular kinship-based institution, wherein a whole society is divided into two unilineal kin groups" and consists of several related clans. For more on Chickasaw moieties and how they changed over time, see: Robbie Ethridge, "The Making of a Militaristic Slaving Society: The Chickasaws and the Colonial Indian Slave Trade" in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Gallay (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009)), 260-263; Jay K. Johnson, John W. O'Hear, Robbie Ethridge, Brad R. Lieb, Susan L. Scott and H. Edwin Jackson, "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation on the Western Frontier of the Colonial South: A Correlation of Documentary and Archaeological Data," *Southeastern Archaeology* 27, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 3-6. It should be noted that while there are strong indications that the red and white moieties had ancient antecedents, it has not been concretely established at this time. There is also some similarity with the moieties of the Natchez and other groups who had derived from earlier Mississippian kingdoms.

Prairie towns were war towns drawing leadership from the red moiety.[17] The Chickasaws had long-established customs for incorporating outsiders like the Natchez into their communities. However, their customs were changing in response to European colonization and the rise of the Indian slave trade. Traditionally, Chickasaw "white" or "peace" towns had dealt with outsiders, both allies and enemies.

In the seventeenth century, each Chickasaw moiety had complementary political and social roles. The balance of power among the Chickasaws rested on an organization of red towns that decided matters of war, and white towns that directed matters of peace. After contact with the English in the late seventeenth century and the resultant intensification of the Native American slave trade, red towns gained jurisdiction over the slave trade in addition to their authority to make decisions about war. In the early eighteenth century, as the slave trade became more important to the Chickasaw economy, the white moiety's prestige and power eroded under the growing importance of the red towns. The white towns of Small Prairie, largely excluded from the lucrative English slave trade, attempted to establish diplomatic relations with the French. By the time the Natchez arrived in the early 1730s, the Large Prairie towns were largely trading allies to the British, while the Small Prairie Towns had become close trading partners with the French. During this time, the leadership of each moiety sought to widen their jurisdictions; the white moiety began

[17] Jay K. Johnson, "The Chickasaws" in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 98-99; James R. Atkinson, "The Ackia and Ogoula Tchetoka Chickasaw Village Locations in 1736 During the French-Chickasaw War," *Mississippian Archaeology* 20, no. 1, 53-72. The Small Prairie Towns were located near the junction of modern-day King and Town creeks and the Large Prairie towns were just about two miles to the north west, on the northern part of Kings Creek in Tupelo, Mississippi.

to assert more control over affairs with the French by making unilateral decisions over issues of trade and war with their French allies, a role that was formerly done by the red moiety. Red leaders also tried to expand the role of their moiety by inviting Natchez refugees into their communities. Jurisdiction over the incorporation of outsiders had traditionally belonged to the white moiety before the 1730s. However, when the Natchez arrived in the early 1730s, they were invited and welcomed by the red moiety at Grand Prairie. In sum, the Natchez entered a Chickasaw polity divided internally over its relations to the British and French and fractured over internal struggles between moieties.[18]

The first Natchez families arrived in Chickasaw territory in March 1731. According to the journal and letters of Regis Du Roullet, a French lieutenant in the cavalry and one of the officers charged with pursuing the Natchez who escaped enslavement, forty Natchez families led by an unnamed chief made the journey through Choctaw country to Chickasaw territory with fifteen Chickasaw warriors. Roullet reported to his superiors that he had heard the Natchez were at the Chickasaw village of "Falatchao."[19] This was the mother town of the white moiety and contained the leader formally in charge of accepting outsiders, the *fanimingo* or "Squirrel King."[20] Brad Lieb argues that this means some Natchez went through the accepted

[18] Robbie Ethridge, "The Making of a Militaristic Slaving Society" 263-267; Jay K. Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation," 6-8, 23-24; Galloway, "Ougoula Tchetoka", 3-10; Wendy St. Jean, "Trading Paths: Chickasaw Diplomacy in the Greater Southeast, 1690s-1790s," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, 2004.
[19] Régis du Roullet to Périer, March 16, 1731, ANOM C/13A/13, 187-195v.
[20] For more on the Chickasaw fanimingo process, see: Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540-1715* (Chapel Hill:

Chickasaw protocol for absorption into Chickasaw life.[21] However, there are a number of reasons why this probably did not happen. First is that the documentary evidence in inconclusive.[22] Roullet is the only account to mention any Natchez in a white town. Every other written document suggests that the Natchez lived among the red towns at Grand Prairie. Second, the archaeological evidence suggests that the Natchez never lived among the white towns in any significant numbers. Distinct Natchez-style "Fatherland Incised" pottery is found predominately in the red towns of Grand Prairie. This suggests to archaeologists that the Natchez were never fully absorbed into Chickasaw life through the proper channels and eventually left, unlike some other smaller groups who were absorbed by the Chickasaws through the proper white moiety channel of the *fanimingo*.[23]

From March 16, 1731 until September 30, 1741, there are many written accounts by those that reported seeing Natchez among the Chickasaws. However, not all the accounts convey the same information. Many accounts note a distinct Natchez fortified village while others talk about the Natchez being treated as slaves. Some observers note hundreds of Natchez while others count their number much lower. Regardless of the conflicting accounts, two things become clear: most of the Natchez

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University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 228; For a more general look at the fanimingo role among Native Americans in the southeast, see Patricia Galloway, "The Chief who is your Father".

[21] Lieb, "The Natchez Diaspora," 200-201, 228.

[22] Brad Lieb later admitted that the documentary evidence is inconclusive, see: Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation," p26, n7.

[23] Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation", 25; Ethridge, *From Chicaza*, 229. In the white towns of Small Prairie, there are a number of "minor ceramic" styles that have been found. The other "minor ceramic" styles were probably made by other Native refugee groups who entered the Chickasaws through the proper channels, through the *fanimingo* of the white towns. Archaeologists suggest that smaller groups, like the Chakchiumas, who became Chickasaws through the *fanimingo*, were more fully absorbed into Chickasaw life than the Natchez, who eventually left.

refugees lived in a distinct fortified village and while the numbers fluctuate in different accounts, there were hundreds of Natchez living among the Chickasaws during the 1730s.

The colonial leaders of Louisiana received numerous accounts of a fortified Natchez village among the Chickasaw towns of Grand Prairie. The fact that they lived in a fortified town is not surprising because by the 1730s, most Chickasaw villages were fortified by large wooden palisades designed to repel cannon fire and musket shots.[24] Furthermore, the Natchez had built similar fortifications around their villages in their wars with the French in 1730 and 1731. On May 15th 1733, shortly after arriving in Louisiana to begin his second term as governor, Bienville wrote a report on the state of Indian affairs. Bienville wrote about a group of Natchez that had "withdrawn and apparently is fortified in country inaccessible to Frenchmen" and they were "supported by the Chickasaws."[25] Bienville's use of the word "apparently" suggests that he was p skeptical that the Natchez lived in their own fortified village.[26]

Additional accounts of a fortified village began to appear in French reports from 1735-1737. Only a year after Bienville's initial report, the Chickasaws captured

[24] Chickasaw fortifications were extensive and helped the Chickasaws repel French and Choctaw invasions over the 1730s. For example, in one battle during the summer of 1736 in which the Chickasaws and Natchez in their fortified villages repelled the French and Choctaw attack, Bienville commented on the sophistication of Chickasaw fortifications. He wrote that "the method of these Indians in fortifying themselves is that after having surrounded their cabins with several rows of large piles they dig holes in the ground inside in order to hide themselves in them up to their shoulders, and they fire through loopholes that they make almost flush with the ground, but they derive even greater advantage from the nature of their cabins which are separated form each other and all the shots from which cross each other… The covering of these cabins is a wall of earth and wood proof against burning arrows and grenades so that nothing but bombs can harm them." See MPA II, 307-308.
[25] Bienville to Maurepas, July 26, 1733, ANOM C/13A/16, 277-289.
[26] Bienville use of the word "apparently" does not suggest that he was skeptical about the very idea that the Natchez were with the Chickasaws. Multiple reports confirmed their presence and every colonial leader in Louisiana believed the Natchez were living with the Chickasaws by 1733.

a French officer named Sieur Ducoder. The officer eventually escaped after a year of captivity among the Chickasaws and reported back to Bienville about what he had learned. Ducoder told Bienville that the Chickasaws had:

> five stockade forts, and that in addition to every ten individuals had a cabin fortified with three rows of piles with loopholes and covered with earth works to protect themselves from fire. All these cabins are placed in such a way that they defend each other. The Natchez, who are about one hundred and eighty men, make a village separate from, but adjacent to those of the Chickasaws. Besides the fortified cabins they have a large fort with four bastions which they have constructed of trees driven into the ground on the model of the one that we had in their country at the time of their revolt.[27]

Only six months later, Bienville again recounted what he learned from Ducoder, but this time he included more detail about the fortified Natchez village. On February 10th, 1736, Bienville wrote that, "the Natchez are divided into two villages of which the smallest, which has no fort at all, is in the middle of the plain, and the other, which has a good fort, is at one extremity of the eastern side."[28] This is the only French record of two distinct Natchez villages among the Chickasaws, one fortified and one without wooden palisades. A third French soldier held captive by the Chickasaws for a time, Claude Drouet d'Richarville reported that there was only "one village of Natchez" adjacent to the Chickasaws. In another account from 1737, Captain de Pacana—an Alabama chief who was ally to the French and had just completed a month-long visit to the Chickasaws—reported seeing only one Natchez village and it was fortified. Since Ducoder was the only person to report seeing two Natchez villages, most free Natchez likely lived in a distinct fortified village for most

[27] Bienville to Maurepas, August 20, 1735, ANOM C/13A/20.
[28] Bienville to Maurepas, February 10 1736, ANOM C/13A/21, 122-154.

of their time among the Chickasaws.[29] The reports of small numbers of Natchez living in Chickasaw villages could be reports of Natchez slaves or of Natchez women who married into Chickasaw society.

From 1733-1736 there are a number of differing reports on the Natchez population among the Chickasaws by French officers, with population numbers varying from 150 warriors to 400 warriors. Before reviewing the written reports, a few caveats are worth mentioning. First, the French only counted adult men ("warriors") so precise estimates of the entire Natchez population that probably had more women than men due to a decade of war are difficult to assess. Adding to the difficulty of determining exact population estimates from French sources is that officers could have confused Natchez with other Native Americans, and sometimes officers were prone to say there were more Natchez than there actually were in order to get more soldiers and funds for their war against the Natchez and Chickasaws. For example, in the first reported estimate of the Natchez population among the Chickasaws in 1733, Loubouey was skeptical of the reports he was getting from his field officers. He wrote that, "The persons who like to magnify things maintain that there are still two or three hundred warriors altogether, but I think they are mistaken and that there can scarcely be more than one hundred and fifty."[30] However, Loubouy's skepticism of his officer's report aside, a number of other later reports confirm that there were hundreds of Natchez living among the Chickasaws. Also in 1733, Bienville reported, "I have estimated that the rest of the Natchez might amount

[29] Atkinson, *Splendid Land*, 14-18.
[30] Loubouey to Maurepas, May 20 1733, ANOM C/13A/17, 228-233.

all together to two hundred men capable of bearing arms", a statement that he based off an account from a captured Natchez woman.[31] In 1735, four Chickasaw chiefs looking to secure peace with the French told Bienville that "according to their reckoning, [they] have still two hundred good [Natchez] men exclusive of more than two hundred who they assured me had retreated to Carolina."[32] It is unclear exactly why the earlier estimates of around 200 Natchez in 1733 rose to reports of 400 in 1735, although it could be due to small groups of Natchez trickling into the Chickasaw communities from 1731-1733 or from the general inaccurate nature in which these numbers were counted and reported.[33] For example, only a few months after his report of 400 Natchez, Bienville wrote another letter that makes no mention of his earlier report. This time Bienville reported that Natchez only numbered "about one hundred and eighty men".[34] The population estimates that Bienville reported for the Natchez in Carolina also changed over time. In 1736, Bienville reported news from his commander at the Alabama Fort, Sieur d'Erneville, concerning the Natchez in South Carolina. He wrote that the English had been making plans to help the Chickasaw repel French attacks and in addition to sending British agents and war supplies, "the English had induced eighty Natchez families… to come and join those who are among the Chickasaws."[35] Bienville could have said that the Natchez were invited to "rejoin" those who are "still" among the Chickasaws, but he seems to have

[31] Bienville to Maurepas, July 26, 1733, ANOM C/13A/16, 277-289.
[32] MPAI, 256-257.
[33] It seems it is also possible that the Chickasaw chiefs over-reported the amount of Natchez who settled among them.
[34] MPAI, 268-269.
[35] MPAI, 314.

forgotten that in the previous year, he had already reported that 200 Natchez moved to Carolina. A final letter from 1736 is the last reference in the French sources to a significant population of Natchez among the Chickasaws and it reports that the Natchez warriors number "to one hundred and fifty."[36] While the reports of the Natchez population varied from 1733-1736, it is clear that there were at least a few hundred Natchez who settled among the Chickasaws in the early 1730s. However, there is contradictory evidence about the role of the Natchez refugees among the Chickasaws. The Chickasaws treated some Natchez differently than others, enslaving some while treating others more like allies.

The French administrators of Louisiana thought the Natchez and Chickasaws maintained a natural friendship and believed that their union threatened France's grasp on the lower Mississippi Valley. However, theirs was not a natural friendship but one historically built through developing relations of alliance and trade dating to the early seventeenth century. The friendship was a fragile construction maintained through complex interactions between Chickasaw and Natchez traditions and internal diversity. So when the Natchez fled to the Chickasaws for refuge, the Chickasaws did not treat all new arrivals the same. Most importantly, there were numerous reports from French sources that Chickasaws held some Natchez as slaves. A French field commander reported in 1732 that the Chickasaws had killed some of the Natchez men and were enslaving the women and children.[37] In 1733, Bienville reported hearing a similar report from the Natchez woman he had captured. She spoke of a small group

[36] MPAI, 315.
[37] Marchand and St. Ange to Périer, September 15,1732, ANOM C/13A/15, 189-189v.

of 40 Natchez who had recently sought refuge among the Chickasaws. She also told Bienville that the men were killed and the women and children enslaved. Bienville also heard from Sieur de Ricarville's, who reported that the Chickasaws treated the Natchez "like slaves; they make them work, dig, etc."[38] In 1740s, when, the Chickasaws eventually turned over some Natchez to the French to secure peace, they only offered one Natchez woman and her three children to the French, all four of whom were most likely already slaves to the Chickasaw.[39] So it seems that while many Natchez found refuge among the Chickasaws, others found a degraded life as a slave.

There were many reports of Natchez slaves among the Chickasaws, but the reports need to be examined with some skepticism. First of all, when the reports came from French observers, they might not have known what they were looking at. For example, French observers might have reported seeing slaves when they were seeing Natchez who were actually "stinkards," or the lowest class of Natchez society responsible for "servile tasks" among the Natchez before 1729.[40] Furthermore, reports from Native American sources might have intentionally misled the French to think that the Natchez were only slaves among the Chickasaws and therefore, not a military

[38] Bienville to Maurepas, 1733, ANOM C/13A/16; MPAI, 207-21; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 117-118.
[39] Bienville to Maurepas, 1740, ANOM C/13A/25. In 1750, the Jesuit Father Vivier wrote that only a few Natchez "remain scattered among the Chicksasaws and Cheraquis where they live precariously and almost as slaves." Quoted from the Jesuit Relations in Swanton, *Indian Tribes*, 254.
[40] Angela Pauley-Hudson first suggested this point to me. Personal communication, Southern History Conference, 11/15/14.

threat to the French.[41] A Chickasaw leader named Courcerac, who approached the French with a desire to create peace between the French and Chickasaws, reported that the Natchez were only "scattered about the cabins of the Chickasaws who were employing them in the most servile tasks."[42] It would make sense that Courcerac might not mention the fortified Natchez village when suing for peace with the French. There is also the possibility that the Natchez could have intentionally misled the French. For example, in 1732, the French "captured a Natchez Indian" just outside of Fort Rosalie. The captured Natchez told the French, "the Chickasaws had killed part of the Natchez who had withdrawn among them and kept their wives and their children slaves, and that the rest had escaped and come toward the post of the Natchez."[43] This may have been a clever ruse by the Natchez to convince the French that the Natchez were no longer a threat to the French since there was no Natchez alliance with the Chickasaws. Or, perhaps, the report was accurate and was a reason why some Natchez never went to the Chickasaws and remained near their former homelands. While it would be impossible to quantify exactly how many Natchez were enslaved or not by the Chickasaw, and it is difficult to determine even if any Natchez were enslaved at all, both the Chickasaws and Natchez had enslaved other Native Americans in the early eighteenth century so it is possible that some Natchez were slaves among the Chickasaws.

[41] Brad Lieb makes a similar point, see: Lieb, "The Natchez Indian Diaspora," 212.
[42] Bienville to Maurepas, 1733, ANOM C/13A/16; MPA I, 211.
[43] Marchand and St. Ange to Périer, September 15,1732, ANOM C/13A/15, 189-189v.

There are a number of possible reasons and factors to explain why the Chickasaws might have treated various Natchez people differently. First of all, the Natchez had owned Native American slaves and participated in the Indian slave trade in the early eighteenth century and that probably lent itself to a cultural acceptance of the enslavement of weaker Native peoples. Perhaps the Natchez who were not enslaved had brought slaves with them to trade with the Chickasaws in order to cement the alliance.[44] For example, the Natchez group led by the Flour chief had attacked a nearby community of Tunicas in 1731 *before* heading to the Chickasaws. This attack could have been designed to acquire slaves to trade with the Chickasaws on arrival to cement an alliance.[45] If this group did attack the Tunicas for slaves to exchange for sanctuary among the Chickasaws, this could explain why the Chickasaws treated this group well. It could also explain why the Chickasaws took advantage of other smaller Natchez bands that may have arrived without slaves to exchange. Another example of a Natchez slave raid that may have been motivated by a desire to acquire captives to exchange with the Chickasaws comes from Bienville's report in 1734 that "The Frenchman who returned from the Chickasaws informed that the English who were trading in that nation had armed and equipped thirty Natchez to

[44] There is an emerging scholarship about the use and importance of captive exchanges used as gifts to solidify diplomatic relations for many Native peoples, see: Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*; Snyder, *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*; Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*.

[45] Others have suggested that the attack on the Tunicas was because of two key reasons. The first is that the Natchez learned of Perrier's plan to invite the Natchez to the Tunicas under the guise of peace and then attack and enslave the Natchez who came. Since the Natchez learned of the planned deception, they chose to attack first. Also, the Natchez likely attacked the Tunicas in retribution for the alliance between the French and Tunicas for when the Tunicas had killed and enslaved some Natchez from 1729-1731. See: Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 128; and Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas, June 24, 1731, ANOM AC/13A/13, 145-146v. I would add to Barnett's argument that the Natchez attacked the Tunicas also to acquire slaves to trade with the Chickasaws.

come on the Mississippi and carry off some negroes."[46] The report goes on to say that this English-equipped Natchez slaving party captured no one but were blamed for killing one Tunica man. Perhaps this is just documentation of French fears that the English were arming their enemies to steal African slaves off French plantations, which was a recurring fear for French colonists throughout most of the history of colonial Louisiana. But the report could also be accurate for two reasons. First, the English sought to create strong alliances with the Chickasaws and Natchez in order to fight off the French in the southeast and there is ample evidence, both archaeological and historical, that the British supplied the Chickasaws and Natchez with guns, cannons, and other trade goods in order to fight off the French and their Native American allies.[47] Second, both the Chickasaws and Natchez had already conducted numerous slave raids in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to procure slaves to sell to the British.

Another reason that the Chickasaws enslaved some Natchez and befriended others could be the complex array of diverse people that constituted the Natchez and Chickasaw societies. For example, in the early eighteenth century, the Natchez spoke at least two different languages and were a multi-ethnic society divided politically over relations with Europeans. Of the six Natchez villages in the 1720s, three towns favored developing networks of trade and alliance with the French, while three other villages favored developing relations with the English. The town of White Apple led

[46] Bienville to Maurepas, March 15, 1734, ANOM C/13A/18, 130-137.
[47] As discussed in Chapter 1, the pro-English faction of the Natchez had traded extensively with the English in the decades leading up to 1729.

the pro-English faction while the pro-French faction's strength was in the Grand Village. Geographically, the pro-English villages were further north and closest to the Natchez Trace, which was the overland route to the Chickasaw and also to the English. The southern villages were geographically closer to the French.[48] Indeed, the two political factions fell along geographic lines and were not determined by linguistic or ethnic distinctions.[49] Archaeologist Marvin T. Smith suggests that instead of a lingering Mississippian "chiefdom," the Natchez comprised of an amalgamated population of refugee groups set in motion by European diseases, the intensification of the English-driven slave trade, and the collapse of Mississippian chiefdoms.[50] In this way, the Natchez did not comprise one group of people, but actually consisted of a conglomeration of at least two linguistic groups, Tunican and Natchezan.[51]

The Chickasaws were also divided between the red communities of Grand Prairie and the white communities of Little Prairie. By the second half of the 1730s, most Chickasaws in Grand Prairie favored cultivating relations with the British, protecting the Natchez refugees, and continuing to war against the French. But the leaders of the white moiety towns sought peace with the French, even if that meant

[48] Karl G. Lorenz, "A Re-Examination of Natchez Sociopolitical Complexity: A View from the Grand Village and Beyond," *Southeastern Archaeology* 16 (Winter 1997), 100.
[49] Ian W. Brown, *Natchez Indian Archaeology: Culture Change and Stability in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, Archaeological Report No. 15 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1985), 5-6.
[50] Marvin T. Smith, "Aboriginal Population Movements in the Postcontact Southeast," in *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, 3-20 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002) 18-19.
[51] Barnett, *The Natchez*, 41-44.

turning over Natchez refugees.[52] Therefore, the Chickasaws, like the Natchez faced internal political cleavages. The internal divisions in Chickasaw society polarized the Chickasaw population over what to do about the Natchez.

While most of the Natchez found refuge at Grand Prairie, determining exactly which Natchez the Chickasaws favored is unclear. Most likely, the red moiety and pro-English Chickasaws treated pro-English Natchez better than pro-French Natchez due to their obvious mutual political and economic interests. Indeed, the majority of Natchez who fled to the Chickasaws were from pro-English towns. Most of the pro-French Natchez had surrendered to the French in 1731 hoping for sympathy. Sadly, the French enslaved their former allies anyway and sent them to Saint Domingue. The small numbers of enslaved Natchez among the Chickasaws could be evidence of a few pro-French Natchez who either were enslaved by the Chickasaws or fled to the Chickasaws as a last resort.

There is also a possibility that the Natchez and Chickasaw recreated hierarchies that already existed in Natchez society. The Natchez had a strict hierarchy of four classes running from "nobles" or "Suns" to "puants" or "stinkards."[53] It seems likely that the Natchez would allow, or at least not resist the enslavement of some of their people by the Chickasaws, due to the fragile nature of their relationship with the Chickasaws and because of the hierarchical nature of Natchez society. Although the

[52] The white moiety Chickasaw leaders told the French that they will "sacrifice to us the Natchez who have caused the war". See: MPA1, 275; Bienville to Maurepas, May 6 1740, ANOM C/13A/25, 42-68; Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation," 23. For a detailed analysis of the split in the Chickasaw community over what to do with the Natchez, see Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People*, 70-75.

[53] For an excellent review of the literature, see Lorenz, "A Re-Examination."

Chickasaws enslaved some Natchez, there is more evidence to suggest that the relationship between the free Natchez and the Chickasaws was a strong relationship, united in its dislike of the French and a preference for trade with the English.[54] The numerous reports by French observers from 1731-1740 of the existence of a fortified Natchez village suggest this to be true.[55] By allowing the Natchez to build a fortified community among the towns of Grand Prairie, many Chickasaws clearly trusted the Natchez. Indeed, no other Native Americans or Europeans had fortified towns or trading outposts among the Chickasaws at this time. For most of the time with the Chickasaws, free Natchez hunted with the Chickasaws, aligned together in war against the French and Choctaws, and many intermarried into the Chickasaw community.

There are no written accounts of any Natchez who remained with the Chickasaws during the 1740s and beyond, but archaeologists have unearthed tantalizing clues about Natchez women who intermarried into Chickasaw society. In the most extensive excavation of the Chickasaw sites to date, Brad Lieb discovered Natchezan pottery styles (Fatherland Incised, Baytown Plain and Addis Plain) among Chickasaw sites and found no Natchezan pottery styles that predated 1731, the same year the Natchez refugees began to arrive in Chickasaw territory. This indicates that it was the Natchez presence among the Chickasaws that influenced Chickasaw pottery

[54] This is in direct contrast to what others have said about the Natchez habitation among the Chickasaws. Johnson et. al. argue that "The Natchez… who were admitted through irregular channels, were never absorbed into Chickasaw life, and the Chickasaw eventually forced them to leave." As I will show in the next section, most Natchez were integrated into Chickasaw life and the Natchez chose to leave rather than being forced. See Johson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation," 25.
[55] Atkinson, *Splendid Land*, 14-18.

styles rather than earlier encounters and exchanges between the two groups.[56] The Chickasaws had absorbed other Native American groups before the Natchez, like the Chakchiuma and Yazoo Valley peoples, who also brought new pottery styles to the Chickasaws. However, while archaeologists can locate pottery styles of different Native groups among the Chickasaws for short periods of time, all of the non-Chickasaw pottery styles eventually "dwindled out and disappeared" except for the Natchez Fatherland Incised style pottery. This has led archaeologists to conclude that most outside groups were absorbed and assimilated to the Chickasaws, except perhaps the Natchez (who mostly left the Chickasaws).[57]

Archaeologists still have not found any material remains of the Natchez fort or Natchez village among the Chickasaws, although there are areas where archeologists think the Natchez village might be buried that have yet to be excavated. Thus while one might expect there to be evidence of purely Natchezan pottery forms in Chickasaw sites, none have been excavated so far. Only hybrid forms of Chickasaw pottery that incorporate Natchezan styles have been found. Since women made pottery in southeastern Native American societies, Lieb suggests that the prevalence of Natchez stylistic influences on Chickasaw pottery dating to the 1740s and beyond was most likely due to the presence of Natchez women who never left the Chickasaws. Women could have been taken on as additional wives, slaves, or adopted

[56] Lieb, "The Natchez Diaspora," 353, 358.
[57] Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation", 25.

kin. The French reports of Natchez doing "servile tasks" for the Chickasaws could have been a description of women making pottery for the Chickasaws.[58]

Since the archaeological evidence shows that the Chickasaws did not adopt Natchez Fatherland Incised style pottery before the 1730s and that the style continued to influence Chickasaw pottery-making practices even after most of the Natchez left the Chickasaws, suggests that Natchez women continued to practice pottery styles that were shaped by Natchez traditions and culture. Unlike other Native Americans who seem to have been "absorbed" by the Chickasaws, Natchez women show a tenacious commitment to Natchez cultural traditions in their pottery. Archaeologists have found similar patterns of Natchezan-style pottery impacting Cherokee pottery-making practices during the 1740s, the same decade that a group of Natchez moved to live with the Cherokees.[59] The archaeological evidence in both these areas strongly suggests that women continued to identify as Natchez, at least in their production of culturally specific pottery styles, even after marrying Native American men that were not Natchez.

The material remains show the gendered experience of diaspora and suggest that it was mostly women who stayed with the Chickasaws, either as slaves or as wives. Since Natchez women outnumbered Natchez men, intermarriage into other Native communities like the Chickasaws could be a strategy for survival that was less

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[58] Lieb, "The Natchez Diaspora," 346-348. Lieb suggests that, while impossible to calculate accurately, there were probably more women than men in the Natchez population (and in the Chickasaw population). This makes sense if one considers the context of incessant warfare and slave trading during the early 18th century.

[59] *Ibid.,* 349-350; Gerald F. Schroedl, editor, *Overhill Cherokee Archaeology at Chota-Tanasee* (Chattanooga: University of Tennessee Department of Anthropology, Report of Investigations 38, 1986).

available to Natchez men. Natchez women could have intermarried with Chickasaw men to help strengthen the alliance between the Chickasaws and Natchez, an alliance designed by these marriages to last even after most of the Natchez left the Chickasaws. However, it is unclear whether Natchez women had a choice to intermarry or the Chickasaws forced some women to enter Chickasaw communities as slaves and as second wives. Either way, since many women stayed with the Chickasaws and most of the men left, it is clear that strategies of survival for Natchez women, particularly unmarried women, were different than those of men. While Natchez men and women faced different and uncertain futures among the Chickasaws, the women who intermarried with the Chickasaws likely played a significant role in solidifying the alliance between the Chickasaws of Grand Prairie and the Natchez.[60]

While some Natchez seem to have integrated with the Chickasaws, by 1736, a growing number of Chickasaw leaders grew tired of fighting the French in order to protect the Natchez. Ever since the Natchez had sought refuge among the Chickasaws in 1731, the French and their Native allies had attacked the Chickasaws relentlessly. By 1736, the Chickasaws were split between pro-French and pro-English factions over what to do about the Natchez.[61] Some pro-French leaders like *Oulactataska* sought to make peace with the French by making arrangements to transfer Natchez

[60] Intermarriage was a common method for Native Americans to build alliances with each other and with Europeans. For an excellent study of Native marriage strategies with the British, see: Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

[61] The Chickasaws, like the Natchez, had both pro-French and pro-English segments of their population, see Atkinson, *Splendid Land*, 33-42; Lieb, "The Natchez Indian Diaspora", 195.

refugees to them.[62] In response to pressure from pro-French leaders, groups of Natchez began to leave the Chickasaws as early as 1736. Although some Natchez left, others stayed after 1736, indicating that those that stayed maintained close relationships with some Chickasaws, even while other Chickasaws plotted against them. The Natchez must have continued to have strong support from segments of the Chickasaw population because when most of the Natchez eventually left the Chickasaws between 1738 and 1741, they moved to locations that were key nodes within a far-flung Chickasaw circuit of trade and alliance that had developed since the seventeenth century to protect long distance trade between the Chickasaws and the English in South Carolina.

In order to cement ties between the Chickasaws and English and to assure the steady supply of firearms that the Chickasaws needed to fight their enemies, in 1723, a group of Chickasaws had already moved eastward to live near the English colonists of South Carolina and they had settled on the Savannah River. Edward Cashin's, *Guardians of the Valley: Chickasaws in Colonial South Carolina and Georgia*, argues that these so called "lower Chickasaws" or "Savannah Chickasaws" who lived in colonial South Carolina and Georgia were not "renegades" but vital to the success and survival of the Chickasaws as well as being staunch allies of the English.[63] Only ten years after the arrival of the "Lower Chickasaws" in South Carolina, the Natchez

[62] Lafleur to Diron d'Artaguette, July 22, 1729, ANOM C/13A/12. 169v-171v.
[63] Edward J. Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley: Chickasaws in Colonial South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), xi.

would replicate the Chickasaw strategy and send their own party of Natchez to treat with the British.

The French heard many rumors in the 1730s that the English were courting the Natchez and inviting them to meet in South Carolina. As early as 1734, Bienville reported hearing of English designs to create an alliance with the Natchez.[64] These reports were accurate because, indeed, King George II had commanded the South Carolina colonists to court the Natchez and Chickasaws to assist in their struggles against the French in North America.[65] In 1735, an Alabama chief told the French that there were "more than two hundred" Natchez "who they assured me had retreated to Carolina." One year later, a Tunica woman who had escaped slavery among the Chickasaws told the French that, "the English had induced eighty Natchez families, who after their revolt had retreated toward Carolina, to come and join those who are among the Chickasaws."[66] The French accounts are corroborated by British sources noting that the Natchez met with the colonial governor of South Carolina in the early 1730s to create an alliance.

Another group of Natchez did not go all the way to the Savannah River, instead they settled at a Chickasaw village called "Breed Camp." British traders called the town "Breed Camp" because it was populated predominately by Chickasaw women married to British traders. "Breed" was a term used by the British to connote "mixed race" or "mixed-blood" at the time. As early as 1717, the South Carolina

[64] Loubouey to Maurepas, May 20 1733, ANOM C/13A/17, 228-233.
[65] Atkins, *Splendid Land, Splendid People*, 65.
[66] MPAI, 256-257; MPAI, 314.

government had made plans with some Chickasaws to establish an outpost to protect their long-distant trading interests, but the plans did not materialize until 1741, right at the precise moment that some Natchez and Chickasaws came to settle the area from the west.[67]

The Chickasaws established Breed Camp on the Coosa River, carefully located about halfway between the English in Savannah Town and the western Chickasaw towns and situated strategically between the Creeks to the south and the Cherokees to the northeast.[68] At the time, it was less important to protect Chickasaw interests against the Cherokees because they, like the Chickasaws, were allies to the English.[69] But the Upper Creeks, especially the Abhikas, were less certain allies. The French had courted the Upper Creeks throughout the 1720s and 1730s, but in 1737, the French finished a new Fort Tombecbe on Choctaw lands, quite near to the Upper Creeks. This made Upper Creek peoples, like the Alabamas and Abhikas, feel threatened by the French expansion of territory and military power. Until the construction of the fort, the French had established largely peaceful relations with the Abhika Creeks, but afterwards their relationship became more tenuous, especially after the arrival of Natchez and Chickasaw in the area. While Breed Camp was strategically located by the Chickasaws half-way between the British and Chickasaws to protect their extended trade routes from Creek and Cherokee aggression, the

[67] Atkinson, *Splendid Land*, 21.
[68] Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley*, 7, 54.
[69] The Cherokees had been allies to the British since the end of the Yamasee War (1715-1718). On the Yamasee war, see: William L. Ramsey, *The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy , and Conflict in the Colonial South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

Natchez capitalized on this prime location and radiated outward to establish their own connections with the Creeks and Cherokees.

Most of the written observations of Natchez among the Cherokees note that the Natchez went to the Cherokees because they were fleeing potential violence from the Chickasaws. In 1737, Diron d'Artaguette heard from Ymahatabé, a white moiety Chickasaw chief who desired to make peace with the French by killing all the Natchez protected by the Chickasaws. Ymahatabé told d'Artaguette that some Natchez heard of his plan to kill the Natchez living among them and that some Natchez women had fled to the Cherokees to escape the violence. Ymahatabé said that, "that there were still almost 130 women who had gone to settle among the Cherokees and that there might be 40 remaining with them."[70] In 1741, Bienville reported a very similar story. He had heard that, "the Natchez, having quarreled with the Chickasaws, had departed from them with their entire families under the pretext of going hunting for some time but in fact with the intention of withdrawing to the Cherokees."[71] While some Natchez may have fled segments of the Chickasaw population that wanted to kill them and give their heads over to the French, the Cherokees were also allies of the Chickasaws in the late 1730s and early 1740s. It seems more likely that the Natchez went to live among the Cherokees because, again, they moved along circuits of alliance that had already been developed by the Chickasaws.

[70] Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas, October 24, 1737, ANOM C/13A/22, 238v, 239v-240, and 242-242v.
[71] Bienville to Maurepas, September 30, 1741, ANOM C/13A/26, 97-106.

By the 1740s, there were many reports of Natchez who had gone to live among the Overhill Cherokee towns. For example, a Cherokee war party captured and enslaved the French trader Antoine Bonnefoy on the Ohio River in 1741, and they took him to the Overhill Cherokee towns of Tellico and Chota. After escaping enslavement a few months later, he wrote that, "A fortnight after we had arrived among the Cherkis I saw in the village where I was 15 Natchés, four of whom came into our cabin. They told me that they were going hunting among the Chicachas, to seek 15 of their men who were still there" and that when they returned they would have a "village of 75 men."[72] Bonnefoy had accidently encountered a group of Natchez who were establishing their own community along the Hiwassee River with the Overhill Cherokees.

The Cherokees made natural allies to the Natchez, particularly the Overhill towns, because they were antagonistic to the French during this period. Bonnefoy noted that, "Of the 52 villages which compose the nation of the Cherakis, only the eight which are along the river [Hiwassee] are our enemies. The other villages remain neutral, either because of their remoteness or the spirit of peace."[73] The villages of the

[72] A copy of the original journal can be found in the French colonial archives: AC F3, No. 24 (Collection De Moreau de Saint-Méry) « Louisiane : La Description Historique, 1680-1755 ». The Journal of Antnoine Bonnefoy (1741-1742) is also published and translated in, Samuel Cole Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country, 1540-1800* (Johnson City, Tenn.: The Watauga Press, 1928), 158. The French trader Antoine Bonnefoy was surprised when he was attacked and captured in the Upper Illinois country by Cherokees. He had assumed it was Chickasaws who had fired upon him. The Chickasaws and French were still embroiled in the decade-long struggle over the fate of the Natchez survivors and Bonnefoy, at first, logically believed that Chickasaws attacked his party. However, this was not the first time the Cherokees had raided the French in the late 1730s and early 1740s. While the French could not see how much the Cherokees were allies to the Chickasaws, there is a lot of evidence, much from French sources, that shows there were links between the Natchez, Cherokees and Chickasaws as early as 1736.

[73] *Ibid.*

overhill Cherokees, to the west of the Appalachian Mountains, had become increasingly aggressive towards the French during the 1730s and early 1740s. Therefore, it was no accident that the Natchez fled the French to relocate among the Overhill Cherokee towns along the Hiwassee River since these Cherokee towns were not particularly welcome to French traders and colonists.

The Chickasaws also had close ties to the Cherokees for most of the 1730s and early 1740s.[74] Both groups traded extensively with the English and both warred with the Choctaws during this time. The Cherokees also traded frequently with the Chickasaws and English both in Charleston and in the Chickasaw Breed Camp.[75] By 1740, the ties between the two groups were the strongest, precisely at the worst time for the French: near the end of the decade-long struggle between the French and Chickasaws. Towards the end of the Chickasaw-French conflict, French Captain Berthet reported he had heard, without "confirmation," that "four Cherokee villages had joined the Chickasaws and that several others of the same nation were going to follow them immediately."[76] While he could not confirm the report, only two years later, a combined force of Natchez, Chickasaws and Cherokees coordinated raids on French outposts on the Wabash River.

[74] Bienville to Maurepas, September 30, 1741, ANOM, C/13A/26, 306-320
[75] See chapter 3.
[76] Louboey to Maurepas, January 4, 1740, ANOM, C/13A/25, 208v. "qu'ils venois d'aprendre que quatre villages Cheraquis se/aiens journir aux Chicachas."

In 1740, the French reported frequent attacks along the Wabash River against some of their Native American allies who lived along its upper banks.[77] The French received reports that Natchez led an attack against French colonists heading to the Illinois Country. Bienville reported that, "some Natchez had defeated and plundered last autumn the five pirogues [canoes] of voyageurs that were ascending the Wabash River." Bienville wrote that the attack by the Natchez had created discord between the Chickasaws and Natchez, and that some Natchez were now seeking refuge with the Cherokees. In the summer of 1741, Bienville "learned that a part from the nations that live on the upper part of the Wabash River… found seven pirogues in the river of the Cherokees which they attacked and of which they took possession after having killed several men who had undertaken to defend themselves. These pirogues were full of Natchez women and children whom they were taking to land when they were themselves attacked by a party of thirty to forty men who were escorting this little convoy by land."[78] Some Natchez, seemingly mostly women and children, were fleeing to the Cherokees to find a new refuge. However, the French did not fully recognize at the time that the very fact that the fleeing Natchez women and children had "thirty to forty" Cherokee men as escorts seems to indicate that the Natchez had already reached out to the Cherokees and had likely been invited to Cherokee country. Indeed, other reports by French officials confirmed this connection between Natchez and Cherokees. One report claimed that the Cherokees were the "authors" of

[77] The "Wabash River" or "Oubache River" in French, is today called the Tennessee River. During the colonial period, what usually is called the Wabash is the last stretch of the Ohio River after its junction with the Tennessee River. See MPV 4, p76.
[78] Bienville to Maurepas, September 30, 1741, ANOM, C/13A/26, 306-320.

"the misfortunes that befell the French last year at the mouth of the River Ouabache [Wabash]." The French were afraid that the Cherokee attacks were at "the instigation of the English" and asked the Choctaws to retaliate by waiting "for an English convoy on the road from the Abikas to the Chicaksaws."[79] The English were making inroads with the Abhikas, one of the groups that made up the "Upper Creeks," and they had already established good relations with the Chickasaws and Cherokees. Sharing a mutual dislike of the French, and regardless of exactly who participated in the attack on the Wabash River, it seems clear that Natchez and Cherokees were building relations through their mutual animosity against the French.[80] Furthermore, the French continued to alienate potential Native American allies with its antagonism against the Natchez, Chickasaws, Creeks and English, and opened up space for a Natchez network to exist among the diverse enemies of the French.

Conclusion

The 1730s were a time of immense upheaval and rapid change for Natchez people in the diaspora. To survive, Natchez groups had to negotiate complex interactions with multiple European and Native powers in the region. Further

[79] Maurepas to Vaudreuil, October 27, 1742, Vaudreuil Collection (hereinafter cited as VD), Huntington Library, LO/29, 31, and 33.

[80] A few years after the Wabash attacks, Vaudreuil remarked on the capture of a French voyageur named William Bienvenu enroute to Arkansas by a "party of Chicasaws, Corois [probably Koroas], and Abhikas." The Natchez are not specifically mentioned, but with the movement of the Natchez diaspora through Chickasaw and Abhika country, and the fact that the Natchez intermarried with both groups suggests that there were probably some Natchez warriors involved in these types of raids against the French. See, Vaudreuil to Maurepas, July 29, 1743, Vaudreuil Collection, Letter Book 1 (hereinafter cited as VDLB1), 174-175. However, it is possible that they were not directly involved because William Bienvenu wrote a letter while he was held captive among the Chickasaws that "there are no longer any Natchez here" in the Chickasaw towns. See:, Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 25 September 1743, VDLB1, 177-179. It is possible that he just did not see any Natchez because he did not recognize that some of the "Chickasaw" women were actually Natchez women married to Chickasaw men (chapter 3).

complicating these efforts was the reality that the Natchez, Chickasaws and other Native American groups were composed of a diversity of people who did not always agree or get along. Factions among both the Chickasaws and Natchez divided them internally and made any alliance fragile and filled with uncertainty as the balance of power between the factions changed over time. Most Natchez who escaped the French successfully negotiated this shifting and deadly terrain and established their own fortified village among the Chickasaws. The intermarriage of Natchez women to Chickasaw men likely helped ensure the safety of Natchez village among the Chickasaws. But other Natchez were less fortunate: some died fighting the French in guerrilla wars and others became bound to labor as slaves for the French and Chickasaws.

By tracing the movements of the Natchez diaspora, one can see how smaller Native American groups like the Natchez negotiated the tumultuous times of the eighteenth century southeast. Navigating along trading and military alliances already established by their mightier Chickasaw allies demonstrates that, at least during the late 1730s and 1740s, the options open to displaced groups like the Natchez were as much conditioned by other larger groups of Native Americans and their networks as European colonization.

While their options were limited, the Natchez made calculated decisions to ensure their own survival that were similar to what other powerful Native Americans like the Chickasaws had already done. That the Natchez did not move away from the Chickasaws as a single community, but broke into three groups, each establishing its

own distinct community among different peoples along the Chickasaw network, suggests that the Natchez took advantage of Chickasaw connections and alliances and sought to create their own network of alliance. Similar to the Chickasaws, the Natchez attempted to form a series of relationships with a diversity of Native peoples to strengthen their position and to survive in the rapidly changing and violent world of the 18th century southeast.

By the 1740s, the Natchez had settled in three communities where they remained for many years: the Natchez lived with the Creeks and Cherokees until the 1830s when the US government forcibly removed them to Oklahoma, and the modern-day Natchez-Kusso of South Carolina continue to inhabit the same land that they acquired from the British in 1738. The next two chapters will examine these longer-lasting Natchez communities and explore the relations between these communities in an extended network of Natchez alliance building.

Chapter 4

The Natchez Disaporic Network: The Natchez of Four Holes Swamp in Colonial South Carolina, 1738-1754

In 1744, after Natchez had arrived in the colony only a few years before, "12 men of the Catawbas Indians" went to renew their "Friendship with the Pedees and Notchees living within the Settlements… about the four holes Swamp, where there is a store and tavern." According to one British observer, the Catawbas, Natchez and Pedees bought "Strong Liquor" from the store and shared a festive evening of drinking. In one account of what happened next, the "Notchees assaulted" the Catawbas while they were awake but "drunk," and the Natchez "killed Ten of them, so that but two and Some Women Escaped."[1] The Governor of South Carolina, John Glen, reported a different narrative. He wrote that once the Catawbas fell asleep late in the night in a drunken stupor, the Natchez "set upon" the sleeping revelers and "murdered seven of them and next day Scalped them, and cut out their tongues."[2] Regardless of exactly how many people were killed, the violent and treacherous nature of this encounter seems to defy logic because the Natchez had arrived in the colony only six years before and were working towards establishing a safe and permanent community in the Four Holes Swamp area. This Natchez community had spent the first six years in South Carolina working to coexist peacefully with its European and Native American neighbors like the Catawbas. What would cause these

[1] W. Stitt Robinson, ed., *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789. Volume XIII, North and South Carolina Treaties 1654-1756* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2001), 330-332.
[2] Governor Glen to the Council, September 22, 1744, *Records in the British Public Record Office Pertaining to South Carolina, 1743-1744*, 21:401-402 (hereinafter cited as SCPRO).

Natchez to murder Catawbas? The Catawbas were the most numerous of the "Settlement Indians" in South Carolina and had close ties with the English. Why would the Natchez threaten the stability that they had worked to establish?[3] In order to understand this act of Natchez violence, the sinews of an extended Natchez diasporic network must be revealed and better understood. The violence and the motives behind the Natchez perpetrators only start to make sense when examined within the larger context of the Natchez diaspora.

The actions of the Natchez against the Catawbas reveal the sinews of an extended network of Natchez towns that stretched from South Carolina, to the Abhika towns of the Upper Creeks, and to the Overhill Cherokee towns along the Hiwassee River. Natchez violence against the Catawbas in South Carolina can only be understood by examining the long distance networks of Natchez diasporic communities. Specifically, the Natchez community among the Cherokees and its connections to the Natchez community in South Carolina helps to explain why some Natchez attacked the Catawbas in 1744. In order to protect the fragile alliance that the Natchez were attempting to develop, sometimes members of one community would act in a way that supported another community. For example, as I argue in this chapter, the Natchez in South Carolina attacked the Catawbas to develop a burgeoning alliance with the Cherokees and to solidify a place for the Natchez community among the Overhill Cherokees.

[3] James H. Merrell mentions this episode of violence but gives no reason for it, see Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact to the Era of Removal* (New York: Norton, 1989), 155.

When the Natchez first arrived in South Carolina in 1738, they were in a dire position and it was not clear that they would be able to establish a community that could last for hundreds of years. They had lost their ancestral homelands, survived close to ten years of warfare against the French and Choctaws, and were trying to find a new location to call home. Shortly after arriving in the colony, Natchez migrants met with the Governor of South Carolina who treated them as special guests. Indeed, the English invited the Natchez to live in the colony, just like many other "settlement Indians," including the Catwabas. When Natchez and Chickasaws arrived in 1738, they probably expected a warm reception from the English. Parties of Natchez and Chickasaws had visited the South Carolina capital in 1734 and 1735, and they had been fully provisioned and treated as important guests. Indeed, in 1734, two English colonists, Samuel Evelieigh and Abraham Coleson, invited the Natchez to stay in their homes as special guests.[4] There is no other record of the visit, but it probably had something to do with the escalating war between the Chickasaws and French in the Mississippi Valley. Regardless of the intent of this early visit, it established a regular pattern of a warm English reception towards Natchez and Chickasaws who visited the colonial capital.

Without a doubt, the English knew about the Chickasaw war with the French in the west, and this contributed the amicable relations between the two groups.

[4] Accounts payable entries, February 22, 1734, Journal of the Commons House of Assembly (hereinafter cited as SCJCA), 8:22; and February 12, 1735, SCJCA 8:58. The full entries: Feb. 22, 1734, "On Examining the two accounts of Mr. Samuel Eveleigh one of £278.15 being for Sundry supply'd the Euchee Indians, and the Other having a balance of £580.14.6 due for sundrys supply'd the Chickesaw and Notchee Indians". And on February 12, 1735, "The account of Abraham Coleson amounting to twelve pounds fifteen shillings for provisions Supplyd the Chickasaw and Notchee Indians being by the order of his Ex'cy the Governour and regularly proved ought to be paid."

Indeed, the parties of Natchez and Chickasaws who had visited in 1734 and 1735 had likely alerted the English to the plight of the Natchez among the Chickasaws. In 1736, John Colcock visited the French outpost of Mobile and reported back to the English that he "found but few people, most of that Colony, and the Adjacent one of New Orleans, amounting (with the Illinois) to near three thousand Men, were gone to Warr against the Chickasaws, and the Army had parted from Mobille about five weeks before my Arrival." Colcock learned from those that remained in Mobile that the French were angry with the Chickasaws for harboring Natchez refugees since 1731. In particular, the French desired to reacquire, "all the Slaves and Effects the Natches had some time ago taken from the French" and had brought with them to their sanctuary among the Chickasaws. Colcock learned that Louisiana Governor Bienville threatened to "destroy all he met with" unless the Chickasaws delivered "up all the Natches they had amongst them."[5] The English saw the Natchez and Chickasaws as natural allies in their imperial struggle against the French.

The English actively promoted the narrative of unrelenting French aggression towards the Chickasaws and Natchez in their attempts to sway other Native American groups to their side. For example, when the English met with a visiting party of Cherokees in 1738, they tried to convince the Cherokees that they would be better off in an alliance with the English than the French,

[5] "The Information of John Colcock Mariner," May 25, 1736, SCPRO, 19:153-4. In 1738, the English captured a French deserter, John Martin Carpenter and conducted a deposition of him. Carpenter confirmed the reports that the French had continued "designs" to continue warring with the French and Natchez. See: January 19, 1738, SCJCA, 11:391.

> We have heard that some of your Young Men love the French and want to trade with them and are willing to throw away their Old Friends the English, but we hope what we hear is not true. For the French have been your Enemies and have killed your People, and will endeavor to destroy you all as they have already done and are again about to do by the Notchees and Chickesaws. But if it be in your Hearts to love the French and throw away your Old Friends the English you must consider whether they can supply you with the Goods as the English have done.[6]

Over time, the English were largely successful in influencing the Cherokees to their side for most of the eighteenth century. This alliance between the English and Cherokees was partly due to French aggression towards the Natchez and Chickasaws during the 1730s.[7] This alliance also helped to enable a successful Natchez settlement among the Cherokees during the late 1730s.

By the time that the Natchez came to South Carolina looking for land to settle on in 1738, the English welcomed close relations with the Natchez, particularly because of Natchez antagonism against the French. When the Natchez first began to arrive in the colony, Mr. Whitaker from the "Committee of his Majesty's Honourable Council on Indian Affairs" welcomed the Natchez to South Carolina and told them that,

> The Great King loves his People and the Indians who are Friends to his People and he does not love the French because they destroy the Indians who are Friends to his People. The Great King has heard that the French have endeavoured to destroy the Notchees and the Chickesaws, and therefore he has sent a Talk to his Governour here to take the Notchees and the Chickesaws under the Care of the English and to keep them together as a People that they may not be destroyed. The Great King has ordered that the

[6] March 24, 1737/8, SCJCA, 11:560.
[7] For a recent account of the importance of Cherokee "agency" in relation to the British and French during this period, particularly the importance of the actions of the Overhill Cherokee towns in diplomatic wrangling over eastern Tennessee, see: Kristofer Ray, "Cherokees and Franco-British Confrontation in the Tennessee Corridor, 1730-1760," *Native South*, Vol. 7, (2014): 33-56.

> English and the Chickesaws and Notchees shall live as one People and as a Family in one House and that they shall assist and help one another."[8]

Over the next six months, as two groups of Natchez arrived in South Carolina and successfully purchased land in the colony from a welcoming English colonial administration, they strengthened the growing ties between Natchez, Chickasaws and English.

In March 1738, the President of the Commons House wrote a letter to the Assembly in which he proposed a plan to accommodate visiting Natchez people. When the Natchez arrived in Charles Town, they had voiced a desire to live with the Pee Dee Indians "near Mr. Coachman's Plantation." However, there was no public land nearby that the Commons House could offer to the Natchez. Instead, Mr. Coachman, "offered to sell one hundred Acres of good Corn Land" to the government in exchange "for one hundred Pounds currency." The President of the Commons recommended this course of action, "believing the quiet Settlement of those Indians to be of Service to this Province on several Occasion." The House discussed the proposal and approved the purchase of 100 acres of Mr. Coachman's land, which the government then sold to "several" Natchez and Pee Dees.[9]

About six months after several Natchez purchased land to live near the Pee Dees, another group of Natchez arrived in the colony and came to "renew their Friendship" with the English.[10] The English readily accepted and sent them "as soon

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[8] March 24, 1738, SCJCA, 11:556-561.
[9] March 24, 1738, SCJCA, 11:658. One year later, Mr. James Coachman received £100 from the colonial government for the 100 acres he sold for a Natchez and Pee Dee settlement; see March 1, 1739, SCJCA, 11:658.
[10] September 12, 1738, SCJCA, 11:575.

as possible to scout about Port Royal," probably to scout for "Spanish Indians" and to protect Charles Town from any attacks. In the same way that the eastern Chickasaws had come to the colony in 1723 and exchanged their military service for land and inclusion in the colony, so too did Natchez follow their example. In exchange for their military service in protecting Charles Town, the English provided Natchez with "Guns, Ammunition, and Victuals," and most importantly, land. The Natchez had encamped in an area near to Charles Town called "Four Holes", a swampy area along the Edisto River that was not inhabited by British colonists due to the poor quality of the land for agriculture. The English agreed that "the Use of the Island commonly called Pollowonny consisting of about 400 Acres of Land belonging to the Publick" would be given to the Natchez scouts and their families "to plant upon if they be willing to settle upon them parts."[11] Natchez who had escaped French violence on the Mississippi River, had relocated to Chickasaw territory for seven years, and made it to the Atlantic coast had finally found a home in the coastal low land swamps of colonial South Carolina.

The first few years of settlement around Four Holes were relatively uneventful for the Natchez migrants. For the next few years, there is little mention of any Natchez in the annals of colonial South Carolina. However, like the eastern Chickasaw along the Savannah River, and many other "settlement Indians" since the 1730s, the Natchez seemed to have successfully integrated themselves as valuable members to South Carolina by providing military service in protection of the

[11] September 16, 1738, SCJCA, 11:582.

colony.[12] For example, in the spring of 1744, a man named "Will" who was the "King of the Nochee Indians" alerted colonial officials that, "he was desirous to have all his men together to be ready to assist the Government in case of any Insurrection, or rebellion of the Negroes."[13] Shortly thereafter, Captain Richard Wright appealed to the Governor James Glen "for the assistance of some Notchee Indians in order to apprehend some runaway Negroes, who had sheltered themselves in the woods, and being armed, had committed disorders in that neighborhood."[14] The recent Stono Rebellion in 1739 had left many South Carolina planters fearful of the black majority.[15] Playing on these fears, and the real threat of slave insurrection, the Natchez agreed to assist Richard Wright in his mission. James Glen notified his "good friend" King Will that he required his assistance. Glen told Will to "send some of his men, to prove themselves" and their loyalty to the colony. The Natchez, under the direction of "King Will," agreed to assist the English in order to integrate themselves as important members of the colony. Glen had said that if they could squash the slave rebellion, "the Notchees will be a service to the Province" and it was a personal "favor done to" James Glen, arguably one of the most powerful members of the South Carolina Colony. However, the English did not see the Natchez as equals. Glen told Will to send Natchez soldiers to follow "under the direction, and Command of the Captain Richard Wright, and to Obey his orders in all things." The

[12] Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 107.
[13] April 13, 1744, Journal of His Majesty's Council, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, (hereinafter cited as SCJMC), 10(part 2):187.
[14] July 5, 1744, SCJMC, 10(part 2):383.
[15] Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton, 1975).

Natchez in South Carolina had begun to walk the delicate balance between asserting their own power and importance, but they also had to subsume some of their independence because they had to follow orders from the English who tried to control them "in all things."[16]

The general narrative of "settlement Indians" in South Carolina has been a narrative of assimilation and disappearance but Natchez had a different history. James Merrell argues that those Native Americans who "chose to remain with the colonists embarked on a long, slow slide into obscurity."[17] He argued that, over time, many of the settlement Indians, including the Natchez, lost their individual distinctiveness and autonomy by the end of the eighteenth century. While this may have been true for many settlement Indians, it is not true for the Natchez, who only appear to have given up their autonomy.[18] The Natchez in South Carolina appear to have become subsumed by the English regime, but, in reality, they also maintained connections with Natchez outside of colonial South Carolina that helped them maintain some autonomy and a distinct sense of Natchez identity. For example, when Natchez first offered to assist the English in capturing runaway slaves and putting down insurrections, an unnamed "King of the Notchee," likely the man named Will who fought under the direction of Captain Richard Wright, asked "that the Gov't would write to Mr. Haines among the Cherokees, to send down all the Notchees" from

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[16] *Ibid.,* 383-384.
[17] Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 106. "Settlement Indians" are the name given to Native Americans who acquired land in the colony of South Carolina and were technically beholden to the English laws of the colony.
[18] There is also the possibility that many settlement Indians in South Carolina did not assimilate nor disappear. Indeed, other groups besides the Natchez could also have had networks connecting settlement Indians to distant kin.

Cherokee country to South Carolina.[19] Clearly, the "King" of the Natchez in South Carolina knew about the Natchez living with the Cherokees and worked to create ties among these diasporic Natchez communities. Indeed, the Natchez in South Carolina maintained, or attempted to maintain, ties with Natchez living in other places and they mobilized these diasporic networks to aid each other when perceived as necessary.

When the Natchez in South Carolina attacked and killed the Catawbas in 1744, they acted in a way that would help to develop closer ties to the Cherokees and the Natchez community living among the Cherokees. However, these connections between the Cherokees and Natchez are not readily apparent and the English colonists could not understand why the Natchez acted the way that they did.

Immediately after the murders, the English feared that the angry Catawbas would come down from their homes on the Piedmont "to revenge this blood." The English worried about the "Great Inconviency for the Settlement" of South Carolina if an angry army of Catawbas entered the coastal lowland colonial settlements intent on revenge against the Natchez.[20] Many English leaders feared that the violence would escalate into an uncontrollable spiral of violence or that angry Catawbas might kill the wrong people in their thirst for revenge. Colonial Governor James Glen ordered Thomas Brown "to prevent the Catabaws from taking revenge at their own hands." Glen told him to "Persuade them to return to their own homes."[21]

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[19] April 13, 1744, SCJMC, 10(part2):188.
[20] July 25, 1744, SCJCA, 11(part 2):428.
[21] *Ibid., 425.*

While Brown tried to appease the Catawbas and to convince them not to take actions into their own hands, Glen "sent for the Notchee King and his family" to pursue a peaceful resolution with the Natchez. Glen "kept" the Natchez family in his house for a week and tried to convince them of the "iniquity and basenes" of the murders and of the "Justness of punishing it." Governor Glen spoke to the son of the Natchez King who "understood English tolerably well" and, indeed, the Governor remarked that he "made a very great impression" on the English. While Glen claimed to convince the Natchez King "of the necessity of punishing some of the guilty both to prevent their perpetrating of such Crimes, any more and by the example to deter others," this was not so easy to resolve. Many years later, Glen gave additional information to the Board of Trade about these events in 1744. In 1761, he reported that the Natchez King had trouble capturing the guilty warriors and that the Natchez King had told Glen that,

> he would endeavor to infuse the same Sentiments into his People, but said it was very difficult and almost impossible to put it in practice for that those who had been guilty of that Action had ever since kept their Arms by them, and that there were always some to watch, while the others Sleeped; that the two Ringleaders were considerable Men and had several Relations who if any violence was offered to them would think it their duty to kill those who did it; however he promised to do everything in his power.

In addition to the fact that the guilty parties knew that they had a bounty on their head, slept with their weapons ready, and were prepared to die fighting against the Natchez, the "King" of the Natchez clearly had his power tested by the two "considerable Men" deemed responsible for these attacks. While there is no written record of any discussions between the Natchez, a few weeks later, the "Notchee

King" sent two decapitated heads to Glen, who "preserved" them in a "Cask with Spirits" and sent them to the Catawbas. The heads were easily recognizable by the Catawbas as two of the Natchez perpetrators because, "as it is usual amongst the Indians to mark their great men by various figures upon their faces and bodies, the heads were immediately known." In other words, the faces had the same tattoos as two of the perpetrators. Since facial tattoos were reserved for important Natchez leaders, this act of punishment "produced a general Joy in the Catawbaw Nation" because they were pleased that two powerful Natchez men were punished.[22]

Glen commended himself on a job well done and thought he had expertly extended British authority over the competing Native peoples of the colony. He argued that his handling of the situation gave the Catawbas a "very high opinion" of the English and that this "was perhaps the first instance in America where any Tribe of Indians was brought to punish themselves for injurys done to other Indians and has in my opinion led the way to all their subsequent Submissive behavior of the Catawbaws."[23] Surprisingly, he mentions the submissive nature of the Catawbas here and not the Natchez. This hints that the Natchez were not entirely "submissive" to the English. Indeed, they had only offered up the heads of two of the Natchez perpetrators against the Catawbas, implying that they protected the others involved in the violence. And it could be possible that the heads were from someone else not related to the attack.

[22] Robinson, *Early American Indian Documents,* 332-333.
[23] December 1761, SCPRO, 21:423.

Most of the English contemporaries blamed the violent murder of Catawbas by the Natchez on alcohol. Only a few months before the murders, the colony had forbidden the sale of rum to a number of Native Americans settled in the colony because they worried that it led to violence.[24] After the murders, the first report to the Council stated that the Catawbas and Natchez bought liquor from a William Patten.[25] A few weeks later, Glen officially blamed the sale of alcohol on "one Patteraw Irish man, who contrary to his duty and the Laws of their Province furnished" the Natchez with "Rum and Punch."[26] Both accounts blamed the violence on the illegal sale and consumption of alcohol.

Other Englishmen believed that all Native Americans were savages and explained the violence in a language of racial contempt. Speaking of the settlement Indians that he "loved," James Glen reflected on this violence and argued that, "whatever is said of the settlement Native Americans, "and of their native Simplicity and honesty," indeed, they "are a savage, cruel, perfidious, revengefull sett of Men."[27] In trying to make sense of the violence, many English observers relied on standard tropes during the colonial period: they blamed violence between Native Americans on "drunkenness" and "savagery." However, the English failed to see how the Natchez violence against the Catawbas was driven by a desire to strengthen their burgeoning diasporic network with the Cherokees.

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[24] December 15, 1743, SCJMC 11:499. The list of people barred from purchasing alcohol did not specifically name the Natchez. However, the "Edistos" were listed.
[25] July 25, 1744, SCJCA, 11(part 2):427.
[26] September 22, 1744, SCPRO, 21:401-402.
[27] *Ibid., 402*.

Most likely, the Natchez murdered the Catawbas in retaliation for an earlier act of Catawba violence against a Cherokee individual in South Carolina. I argue that the Natchez murdered the Catawbas as revenge for the earlier murder of the Cherokee man and that they believed this would bring them closer to the Cherokees. For example, in the very same letter in which Glen learned of the Natchez murders of the Catawbas, he is also alerted to the fact that the Catawbas feared the Cherokees due to a recent killing. A Cherokee had been killed near the Cherokee town of Saluda while in the company of two Catawbas and two Chickasaws. The "King and the head Warriour of the Catawbas wrote a letter to the Cherokees promising them Satisfaction in Case it Should be found that the Cherokee was killed by one of the Catawbas, and desiring them not to break out war with them, till they had met."[28] This was not the first violent encounter between the Catawbas and Cherokees, nor would it be the last. Indeed, throughout their time in colonial South Carolina, the Catawbas had many ongoing conflicts with the Cherokees.

The Cherokees plagued the Catawbas with predatory raids throughout the eighteenth century while the Natchez never had any violent confrontations with the Cherokees. There are no records of any Cherokee attacks against Natchez communities in South Carolina throughout the colonial period. And while most settlement Indians eventually joined the Catawbas because they were the most numerous group of Native Americans settled in South Carolina, the Natchez remained

[28] July 25, 1744, SCJCA, 11(part 2):428.

independent from them. This would not have been possible for the Natchez without their relationship to other powerful Native American groups like the Cherokees.

The aftermath of the violence also lends more evidence to the argument that the Cherokees and Natchez were especially close. The Natchez had only exchanged the heads of two of the Natchez attackers, and while the Catawbas wanted more to assuage them of their loss, they accepted this meager peace offering.[29] Perhaps the Catawbas accepted the deaths of only two Natchez because they feared prolonged conflict with the Natchez and their powerful allies. For example, shortly after the English had brokered a peaceful resolution between Natchez and Catawbas in May of 1745, the English learned of additional attacks planned against the Catawbas. While visiting the "Chickesaw Camp" along the Savannah River, an English Captain, Pepper reported hearing a "talk brought there by 3 Cherickees and a Nauchee, they brought with them a Catawba scalp… and two Cherokee Pipes." Pepper reported the "contents of the talk": that the Cherokees were determined "to destroy all the Catawbas." The Cherokees had come to the Eastern Band Chickasaws along the Savannah River with the hope that they would "joyn them" in their attacks against the Catawbas. The Cherokees also reached out to the Creeks, having "sent tokens of war, with a talk to several of the towns of the Upper & Lower Creeks." Most importantly, the speakers reported that the Cherokees had already "sent runners to the Notchee Indians, scattered about our Settlements, to tell them to meet them on the head of the

[29] April 25, May 4, and May 6, 1745, SCJMC 14:212-215.

Saluda River."[30] Natchez were central to this conspiracy among the Cherokees, Creeks, and Chickasaws against the Catawbas and provides additional evidence to support the existence of a Natchez diasporic network that worked to integrate itself within multiple host communities. The next chapter will shed further light on the Natchez towns among the Creeks and Cherokees, but for now, it should be clear that there was some sort of interaction or coordinated action between Natchez towns among the English, Creeks and Cherokees.

The Cherokees and Natchez failed to organize an immediate and coordinated attack to "destroy all the Catawbas," but only one summer later the Savannah River Chickasaws living in South Carolina attacked Catawba settlements throughout the colony.[31] The English could do little to protect the Catawbas from these attacks because they did not want to anger Chickasaws who were fundamental to the stability of the colony. So the English promised to broker a peace between the two groups, in a similar fashion to how they had resolved the Natchez-Catawba conflict. The English begged the Catawbas not to leave the colony for other locations even though the English, implicitly, could not protect the Catawbas from attacks by other Native Americans.[32] There is no clear evidence to suggest that Natchez played a direct role

[30] July 30, 1745, SCJMC, 14:293.
[31] One reason the alliance never materialized was because of the tensions between the Cherokees on side and the Creeks and English on the other. The latter two groups did not like the Nottoweys who were friends of the Cherokees because they were allies to the French. The English cautioned the Cherokees from supplying "French Indians" like the Nottowey's because it would threaten the fragile alliance developing between the Cherokees, English and Creeks. See, April 25, 1745, SCJCA, 13:439-442.
[32] W. Stitt Robinson, ed. *Early American Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*. Volume XIII: North and South Carolina Treaties 1654-1756 (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2001), 334-336.

in these attacks, but it speaks to why the Natchez would have antagonistic relations with the Catawbas, while continuing to develop positive relations with larger groups like the Chickasaws.

The Natchez continued to have strained relationships with other settlement Indians throughout the 1750s while they also strengthened ties to more powerful Native American groups outside of the colony. In 1755, Governor Glen sent John Evans to investigate who was responsible for "two Pedee Women killed, one scalped, and two Boys carried away from out of the Settlements." Evans believed that Pee Dees had committed the violent acts with the help of a "Notchee Doctor." However, after speaking to King Hagler of the Catawbas and Lewis Jones, the "chief" of the Pee Dees, Evans concluded that it was likely "five Cherrockees and one Notchee" who had "scalped the Women and carried the boys away." Governor Glen charged Evans with finding and returning the two captured boys, so when Evans met "a Catawba Man and Woman at Gents Ford," he "inquired if any of the Notche Indians were in their Nation and especially the Notche Doctor, which they call Brains." The Catawba woman answered that the Natchez "Doctor" lived with the Cherokees. Evans pressed for more information, asking again, "if any of the Notche lived in their Nation?" The Catawba man confirmed that no Natchez lived among them because "they were not Friends," with the Natchez. He continued to say that "some of the Notchees lived with the Cherrockees and in the Summer the Cherrockees and

Notchees had killed some Pedees and Wackamaws."[33] While Evans seemed to have solved the case, he never reported finding the boys. Regardless, Evans points to further evidence that Natchez courted relations with larger Native groups outside of South Carolina and developed a diasporic network that protected them from the violence other settlement Indians faced annually.

An example of how the Natchez diasporic network helped to protect the Natchez in South Carolina from predatory raids by other Native Americans was that the Iroquois frequently raided the Catawbas in South Carolina, but they left Natchez untouched except during a brief period during the early 1750s. In 1746, the Catawbas complained to the governor of South Carolina that, "it is impossible that the Cherokees and us should continue in Friendship, for they… harbor and assist the Northern Indians, which are our Enemies."[34] Indeed, the Catawba fears were well founded. The Cherokees allowed Iroquois and other Native American raiding parties through their lands to access the weaker settlements of Native peoples in the English colonies. The Cherokees allowed the Iroquois free passage to attack the Catawbas in order to avoid Iroquois attacks on their own towns.[35] These raids by "northern Indians" plagued the Catawbas in South Carolina for much of the second half of the eighteenth century. However, the Natchez largely remained protected from this violence because of their ties to the Cherokees.

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[33] Journal of John Evans, October 14, 1755, in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1970), p85-87.
[34] *Ibid.,* 87. The Catawbas complained that the Northern Indians "are fitted out by" the Cherokees and "they are furnished with flour and other Necessities, and thereby enabled to make War with us."
[35] Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation: Town, Region, and Nation among Eighteenth-Century Cherokees* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 143-145.

The only time that the Natchez were not protected by the Cherokees against raids by "northern Indians" was when the Creeks and Cherokees went to war with each other from 1751-1753. During this time, the Cherokees focused solely on their conflicts with the Creeks and they could not protect the Natchez in South Carolina. For example, in 1751, some Senecas attacked the Natchez and kidnapped four people. They captured a woman named "Betty," who was the wife of a Natchez man named "King Johnny" (this is likely a different person than King Will). The English reported that the Senecas took the captured Natchez to Philadelphia, where they said they lived.[36] The "Nochee King" Johnny told Nathaniel Dean that some Senecas had taken away four "Nochees" while he was "out to hunt." His "eldest daughter made her escape" and was not recaptured, but "two men, Long Soney and Robin" and Betty were taken.[37]

During the Cherokee-Creek war, even Natchez women living among the Cherokees could be vulnerable. For example, in 1754, a Natchez woman living along the Hiwassee River among the towns of the Overhill Cherokees, was captured by "twelve of the Northward Enemy." The twelve men "carried off a Notchee Woman" but were "hotly persued" by Cherokees and Natchez. About "20 or 30 miles" from the town of Hiwassee, the pursuers found her. The raiders had killed her and "left a considerable booty of Beads and Blankets. When the persuers found the woman dead

[36] April 1 and May 4, 1751, SCJMC, 18:1-6 and 60-65, respectively.
[37] Memorandum of Nathaniel Dean, May 6, 1751, in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750 to August 7, 1754* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 14-15.

proceeded no further but returned with what they had got."[38] There is no other mention of this woman or her family. After 1754, there are no more reported instances of "northern Indians" abducting Natchez in South Carolina or in Cherokee country, suggesting that the Natchez alliance to the Cherokees remained strong after the war ended between the Creeks and Cherokees.

Conclusion

When the Natchez first began to leave Chickasaw territories in the late 1730s, there must have been a collective sense of an uncertain future. Natchez survivors had barely escaped enslavement by the French and had found only an uncertain refuge among the Chickasaws. But the Natchez who moved eastward came with purpose and a plan to survive. Following the Chickasaw example of moving closer to the British colony of South Carolina, some Natchez established their communities in the colony.

To create a permanent new home in the colony and to protect their interests, the Natchez developed ties to both the English in the colony, but also to powerful Native American groups that lived outside of the colony. These connections to other Native Americans and distant Natchez towns gave stability to the Natchez in South Carolina that many other Native Americans, like the Catawbas, did not have.

The connections to other powerful Native Americans outside of the colony protected Natchez communities from predatory raids conducted by more powerful Native American nations from the north. Only when the Natchez network with the Cherokees broke down, such as from 1751-1753 when the Creeks and Cherokees

[38] Ludovic Grant to Governor Glen, July 22, 1754, in McDowell, *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765*, 19.

fought each other, did the Natchez have to fear slave raiding. To achieve this protection, the Natchez had murdered the Catawbas in 1744 for the Cherokees.

In the next chapter, I will examine the Natchez towns among the Upper Creeks and their interconnections with other Natchez communities to further illuminate the Natchez diasporic network that connected Natchez people, their identities, and their interests across vast distances and in a diversity of locations.

Chapter 5: The Natchez among the Upper Creeks, 1738-1838

The Natchez who moved to settle among the towns of the Upper Creeks initially left the Chickasaw Breed Camp and established their own community called "Nauchee" on a tributary of the Coosa River, near the towns of the Abihka Creeks.[1] The Chickasaws had established strong and largely peaceful relations with the Abihkas since the late seventeenth century when the Chickasaws became a regional slave-raiding powerhouse. The Choctaws in the west had taken the brunt of their slave raiding in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but Chickasaw raids in the east were truncated because of Creek military strength. When the Chickasaws were involved in slaving expeditions in eastern areas, they did so only as allies of other groups, notably the Abihkas and Alabamas. Archeologists have found ceramics in Small Prairie Chickasaw sites that include a potter style called "Walnut Roughened which suggests sustained contact with eastern groups" like the Abihkas and Alabamas.[2] Through their partnership as allies to the English and successful slave raiders, the Abihkas and Chickasaws had already established a strong relationship and some Natchez chose to join the burgeoning friendship during the early 1740s.

The Natchez established a town called "Nauchee," among the Upper Creeks probably sometime after 1745 because when James Adair visited "Breed Camp" in that year, he remarked that the population still was composed of both Natchez and

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[1] Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 26l. Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 26l. Not all the Natchez moved away. In an extended survey of Creek and nearby towns conducted in 1764, John Stuart reported that out of a population of 53 people, 33 were Chickasaws and 20 were Natchez. See John Stuart, Report on Indian Affairs, 1764, UKPRO, CO/323/17, 249b; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 273.

[2] Ethridge, "The Making of a Militaristic Slaving Society," 257-259; Johnson et. al., "Measuring Chickasaw Adaptation," 6, 25.

Chickasaws.[3] The first written evidence of the Natchez town among the Creeks was recorded in 1750, when a few Natchez petitioned the new governor of Louisiana, Vaudreuil, to leave their village among the Upper Creeks and to return to their homelands. Vaudreuil, however, had little desire to make peace and nothing ever came of this petition.[4] So sometime between 1745-1750, the Natchez left Breed Camp and established their own town among the Abihka Creeks.

While the Chickasaws and Abihkas had congenial relations, the Abihkas—and the Upper Creeks generally—fluctuated between aligning themselves with the French and English in the 1720s and 1730s, making them uncertain allies to the Natchez who had little interest in reestablishing peaceful relations with the French, especially after their pleas to return to their homeland were rejected by Vaudreuil. For the most part, by the end of the 1740s, the Upper Creek towns of the Abihkas and Abekoutchis had shifted away from trading relations with the French and moved towards developing closer relations to the English. I suggest that the Natchez played a key role in this process. Likely, the Natchez established their town among the Abihkas at the precise moment when they could trust the Abihkas to join them in their dislike of the French. Indeed, in the late 1740s, Chickasaws, Abihkas and Natchez organized coordinated

[3] James Adair. *The History of the American Indians* (London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1775), 319, https://archive.org/stream/historyofamerica00adairich#page/n3/mode/2up. Swanton, *Indian Tribes*, 253. The French felt threatened by Breed Camp and from 1743-1745 they tried to convince the Chickasaws to leave their post in return for peace with the French. However, the Chickasaws never abandoned the post. The French governor at the time, Vaudreuil, was less concerned with the Natchez than previous governors, but was still passionate about the destruction of the Chickasaws.

[4] See: Vaudreuil to Maurepas, July 29, 1743, Huntington Library, Vaudreuil Collection, Letter Book 1 (hereinafter cited as VDLB1), 174-175; Vaudreuil to Houssaye, January 5, 1744, Huntington Library, Letter Book 3 (hereinafter cited as VDLB3), 303-304; and "Speech to be delivered to Alabamas by Houssaye", January 5, 1744, VDLB3, 305-306

attacks against the French in the Arkansas territory, strengthening the alliance between the three groups.

While the Natchez made inroads with the Upper Creeks, there were a number of difficulties that the community faced. By the 1740s, the Natchez town among the Abihkas was geographically the closest Natchez town to the French colony of Louisiana. Unlike the Natchez towns in Cherokee country in South Carolina, French traders were a regular presence in Upper Creek towns during the early eighteenth century. Whereas the Cherokees and English had antagonistic relations with the French in the early eighteenth century, the Upper Creeks had tried to make inroads with the French through trade. Complicating matters for the Natchez among the Upper Creeks was how they negotiated conflicts between the Creeks and Cherokees in the early 1750s and the ever-shifting alliances between many Native American groups and European colonizers. The fact that the Natchez managed to keep their Natchez town near the Abihkas until Indian Removal in the 1830s shows a remarkable ability to negotiate shifting alliances and new geographies while continuing to maintain a Natchez identity.

Before moving to establish a "Nauchee" town among the Abihkas sometime between 1745-1750, the Natchez spent at least a few years living at Breed Camp. This is because for much of the early eighteenth century and into the early 1740s, the French had been working to make inroads with the nations of the Upper Creeks: the

Alabamas, Abihkas, Talapouches, and Oskfuskes.[5] The French presence kept the Natchez from settling among the Upper Creeks in the early years of the 1740s.[6] The French had made inroads with the Upper Creeks when they built Fort Toulouse near to the Alabamas in 1717 and they had maintained the closest connection to the Alabamas out of all the Upper Creek towns. Indeed, Vaudreuil believed that the "Loyalty of the Alabama Indians deserves most attention because it insures information on English activities among [the other Creek towns of the] Abihkas, Cowetas, and Talapouches."[7] Vaudreuil, and Bienville before him, worried about English designs to mobilize the Upper Creeks against the French.

Due to the proximity of the French and English, the Abihkas had tried to play the French and English off each other, sometimes working more closely with one side before shifting their allegiance to the other European group. This was different from the majority of Choctaws, who maintained a firm allegiance to the French. After Fort Toulouse was constructed, the French sought to gain influence with the Abihkas, Alabamas and Talpouches by sending annually, "munitions and supplies" and other

[5] Each of these groups represents a particular town or cluster of towns in the Upper Creeks. There are other smaller towns that the French mention periodically, such as the Abekoutchis. But for the most part, the French speak mostly about the Alabamas, Abihkas, Talapouches, and Oskfuskes when discussing French policy in the area of the Upper Creeks. Joshua Piker haw written a wonderful study on the Creek town of Okfuske, see: Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

[6] The letterbook records of Louisiana Governor Vaudreuil are particularly detailed in their coverage of the inner wrangling between various Upper Creek towns and the French. With only two exceptions, Vaudreuil's third letterbook concerns itself with the affairs of the major command at Mobile and its satellite posts, Fort Tombecbe and the Alabama post (aka Fort Toulouse), among the Choctaw and Alabamas (Upper Creeks) respectively. While most of the extant records of colonial French Louisiana were written by the top officials of the colonial administration, this letterbook collection contains letters from the commanders of local forts to Vaudreuil, including letters from Beauchamps, Hazeur, De La Houssaye, and Le Sueur from the Alabama post; Derneville, De Velle, and Hazeur at Tombecbe; Beauchpamps, Louboey, and Diederich (Swiss) at Mobile; Maret (Marest) at the Balize.

[7] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 28 December 1744, VDLB1, 195-196.

gifts to the fort commanders to distribute to the Upper Creek towns.[8] The Abihkas happily received these gifts, and it drew them into the orbit of trading with the French as well as the English.

The peace between the Abihkas and France broke down in the early 1740s when the Abihkas had violent confrontations with France's key ally in the region, the Choctaws. Indeed, the tensions between the Choctaws and Abihkas thwarted any French attempt at creating a strong alliance with the Abihkas. After a series of attacks against Choctaw hunters by the Abihkas in 1742-1743, the French blamed the English for motivating the Abihkas to attack.[9] By late 1743, many French believed that "Peace is impossible" between the two groups "unless the Choctaw are to be content with the Abihkas simply making restitution for their dead."[10] However, only one month later, another Upper Creek group, the Alabamas, had brokered a tentative "truce" between the two groups. The French were only cautiously optimistic because Vaudreuil reported that the Choctaws were not entirely satisfied with the truce because the Abihkas refused to deliver the "heads" of those who had attacked the Choctaws the year before. Vaudreuil hoped that the Choctaws would be content with "the two heads as offered by Opayalactas."[11]

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[8] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, September 29, 1743, Vaudreuil Collection, Letter Book 3 (hereinafter cited as VDLB1), 289-291. The classic example of the playing-off system was articulated by Daniel Richter, see: Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 105-189.
[9] See June 1743, VDLB1, 39-40; July 1743, VDLB1, 41; and May 1744, VDLB1, 44.
[10] Vaudreuil to Louboey, October 18, 1743, VDLB3, 293-294.
[11] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, November 2, 1743, VDLB3, 294-296. The Alabamas also played a role in the attempted peace brokered between the Choctaws and Abihkas, see, Vaudreuil to Housssaye, December 7, 1743, VDLB3, 300-301. A report from Fort Toulouse indicated that the Abihkas wanted peace with the Choctaws and planned to visit the French in Mobile to help broker the peace, see:

After a tense winter, by the late spring of 1744, the Abihkas approached the French to help broker a permanent peace with the Choctaws.[12] However, the French were frightened to allow Upper Creeks into Choctaw territory because people like Father Baudouin worried that, "the Alabamas, Cowetas, and Talpouches" might "be sent by the English under pretext of establishing union and agreement, to debauch them, and to create a liking of the English."[13] Eventually French leaders at the top, men like Vaudreuil rightly concluded that "The Abihkas, Alabamas, Cowetas, and Talpouches commuting to the Choctaw [for peace] are not emissaries of the English, altho the latter in a period of war can be expected to make every effort to influence the Choctaw in their favor."[14]

At the same time that the Abihkas were trying to broker a peace with the Choctaws through French agents, colonial leaders in Louisiana were also working to convince the Choctaws to continue warring with the Chickasaws like they had since the 1730s, even though the Natchez had already departed Chickasaw lands.[15] The French worried that the Chickasaw connection to the English might eventually

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"Speech to be conveyed to the Choctaw on the peace demanded by the Chickasaws," January 29, 1744, VDLB3, 307-308.

[12] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, 27 May 1744, VDLB3, 329-330; Vaudreuil to De Velle, 27 May 1744, VDLB3, 330; Vaudreuil to Louboey, 27 May 1744, VDLB3, 331; and Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 1 June 1744, VDLB1, 185-186. Also see the series of letters from Vaudreuil to Houssay, Louboey, and Father Baudoin, June 25 1744, VDLB3, 332-334. Violent conflicts between the Abihkas and Choctaws continued, despite French overtures towards peace, well into the early 1750s. See: Vaudreuil to the Court, "Report on Indians," May 10 1751, Vaudreuil Collection, Letter Book 2, (hereinafter cited as VDLB2), 264.

[13] Baudouin to Vaudreuil, September 8, 1744, VDLB3, 341-345.

[14] Vaudreuil to Father Baudoin, September 9 1744, VDLB3, 341-345. By December of 1744, the French recognized that peace had been made between the Choctaws and Upper Creeks. Vaudreuil wrote that "Abihkas, Cowetas, and Talapouches make peace with the Choctaw but still war with the Cherokee, see: Vaudreuil to Maurepas, December 28 1744, VDLB1, 195-196.

[15] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, March 15, 1747, VD, LO/89 and 15, 7-8.

influence the Choctaws to turn away from the French and to move closer to British interests. As late as September 1744, Vaudreuil worried that the Choctaws and the Chickasaws were nearing a historic peace settlement, so the French sent emissaries to the Choctaws to convince them that the Chickasaws were nothing but deceitful traitors and that the French were their only true allies.[16] However, the French efforts were in vain; by January 1746, the Choctaws and Chickasaws had made peace, whether the French liked it or not.[17]

While the French worked to influence their Choctaw allies and their desired friends, the Abihkas and other Upper Creek towns, the English also were trying to influence the same towns.[18] During 1743-1744 the English labored to create alliances with Native peoples that worked in their favor. They tried to unite the Cherokees with the Abihkas and other Upper Creek towns to solidify their trading relations with the Cherokees and Chickasaws and to expand their trading into Creek territory. The French heard of an "English captain named Stouar [Steward]" who had attempted "to unite the Cherokee with the Talapouches, Abihkas, and Alabamas to overlook the past" conflicts.[19] The French reported that there was an "English plot for peace

[16] "Speech to be delivered to the Choctaw," September 26, 1744, VDLB3, 352-353.
[17] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, January 6, 1746, VDLB1, 212-214.
[18] In 1739, the English General Oglethorpe met with Chickasaw, Choctaws, Cherokees and Lower Creeks at Coweta and convinced the Chickasaws and Cherokees to agree to trade only with the British. See: Caleb Swan, "Report to Henry Knox on Creek Indians, etc.", January 6, 1746, American Philosophical Society (hereinafter cited as APS), Violetta Delafield-Benjamin Smith Barton Collection, Vol. 32, 26.
[19] Vaudreuil to Loubouey, October 18, 1743, VDLB3, 293-294; and Vaudreuil to Houssaye, November 2, 1743, VDLB3, 294-296.

between the Abihkas, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw," and that the English promised to offer "merchandise" to their Native allies to cement the alliance.[20]

Despite the desire of the English to unite the towns of the Upper Creeks and the Cherokees, hostilities remained. In particular, violent encounters between the Abihkas and Cherokees threatened the fragile alliance. In 1743, Vaudreuil discussed an attack on the Cherokee by a "party of several hundred Abihkas" who soon after held an assembly in the "Touachas' village of the Talapouches."[21] The English "were troubled" by this violence, but they continued to sue for peace. They promised both groups better trade goods than the French could offer, and they sent emissaries to broker peaceful relations. For example, before returning to Carolina, the English Captain Steward "left a good man among the Cherokee to assist in reconciling the Abihkas."[22]

The English also tried to build a new fort in Upper Creek territory and presented the idea to the towns of the Upper Creeks in late 1743 and early 1744. The English tried to persuade the Upper Creeks that an English fort at Okfuskee would help protect the Upper Creek towns from predatory raids by "northern Indians."[23] The

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[20] Vaudreuil to Loubouey, November 6, 1743, VDLB3, 297-299. The plan called "for 100 Cherokee to take Choctaw prisoners and then to return them with presents to gain the support of all tribes and take possession themselves of all the country." Reported by French emissary to the Creeks, a man named Philippe.

[21] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, July 29, 1743, 174-175; Vaudreuil to Loubouey, November 6 1743, VDLB3, 297-299.

[22] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, July 18, 1743, VDLB1, 168-170.Vaudreuil wrote that "The Abihkas involve themselves with the Cherokee, a tribe inferior to the Choctaw. It is believed the English instigate the trouble between the Abihkas and Cherokee."

[23] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, August 30, 1744, VDLB1, 187-189. These "northern Indians" were likely Iroquois raiders or Shawnees and/or Miamis from the Ohio River Valley. For more detail on the general peace brokered between the Cherokees, Upper Creeks, Chickasaws and Shawnees in 1746, see letters from February 6, 1746 to November 20, 1746, VDLB1, 215-225.

English found no success in convincing the Abihkas, Talapouches or Okfuskees to allow the English to build this fort.[24] Additionally, the English insistence on a new fort in Creek territory helps to explain why the Abihkas and Talapouches were not always staunch allies of the expansion-minded English colonists.[25] Regardless of their inability to build an English fort in Creek country, the English had made significant inroads into the Upper Creek towns. So much so that by April 1744, the French worried that the English could only "be expelled in time from the Abihkas and Talpouches."[26]

The Chickasaws were also trying to negotiate and expand their influence and connections with Native peoples in the region. Vaudreuil worried that the Chickasaws were working to unite "the Cherokee and Abihkas to attack the Choctaw and Arkansas" during the winter of 1743.[27] In 1744, the French worried that "the Cherokee have made numerous incursions against the Okfusques, Abihkas and Talpouches, and even against the Chickasaw village among the Abekoutchis."[28] The French fears of a Chickasaw-Cherokee-Upper Creek alliance were well-founded considering the Cherokee raids on the enemies of the Chickasaws and Natchez along the Wabash River in 1740 had already signaled to the French that the Cherokees

[24] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, February 2, 1744, VDLB3, 311-312; Vaudreil to De Velle, February 29, 1744, VDLB3, 314-315; Vaudreuil to De Velle, March 30, 1744, VDLB3, 317-318; Vaudrueil to Louboey, April 10, 1744, VDLB3, 319-320; and Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 11, 1744, VDLB3, 320-322.
[25] The French were aware that they were in competition with the British to gain alliances with the Upper Creek towns. For example, Vaudreuil warned that "The Abihkas and Talpouches should seriously consider the very large amount of powder, lead, and balls drawn each day from the French when they think of involving themselves with the English, who will them the little," see Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 11, 1744, VDLB3, 320-322.
[26] Vaudreuil to Loubouey, April 22, 1744,VDLB3, 324-325.
[27] Vaudreuil to Loubouey, November 6, 1743, VDLB3, 297-299.
[28] Vaudreuil to Father Baudouin, 30 March 1744, VDLB3, 317-318.

might be working with Natchez and Chickasaws against the French. Now, the towns of the Upper Creeks were being brought into this growing network of Native peoples. In the middle of the complex alliance building efforts between Cherokees, Upper Creeks and Chickasaws was the Natchez diaspora.

In addition to the Chickasaw efforts at outreach to the Abihkas, by the 1740s, there were Natchez and Chickasaws living together in an Abhika town called Abekoutchis.[29] The French encountered twenty to thirty Natchez living with the Chickasaws at Abekoutchis in 1750. These Natchez had approached the French that year and asked for a "pardon" to return to "their homeland" along the Mississippi River, but the French were doubtful that this would be possible "as long as the Chickasaws exist."[30] It makes sense that some Natchez would have settled with the Chickasaws at Abekoutchis, particularly because the Chickasaws among the Abekoutchis worked hard to develop good relations with the English and to turn the Upper Creek towns against the French and Choctaws. Also, archaeological evidence suggests that many Natchez women had married Chickasaw men and it is possible that some Natchez men had married Chickasaw women too. Therefore, the Chickasaws and Natchez who settled with the Abekoutchis may have had kinship connections that dated back to the 1730s when Natchez found refuge with the Chickasaws. Regardless, Vaudreuil did not like that the Chickasaws and Natchez

[29] Robbie Etheridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 29, 88-89.
[30] Vaudreuil to the Court, June 24, 1750, VDLB2, 248-250. Note that the Bill Baron index to the Vaudreuil Collection states that 30-40 Natchez were counted by the French, but the actual French text actually counts 20-30 Natchez among the Abekoutchis. See also: Rouillé to Vaudreuil, September 30, 1750, VD LO/235.

lived with the Abekoutchis and worried that any general peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws would "require the Chickasaw among the Abekoutchis to return to their own people, since disruption of the peace by the Abihkas and Talpouches is possible with the influence of the English."[31] Vaudreuil did not give the Natchez any credit for destabilizing French efforts at peace with the Upper Creeks, but it is probable that Natchez living near the Abekoutchis also worked to keep their Native American allies from developing close relations with the French.

The Chickasaws and Natchez who lived with the Abekoutchis, like many of the Upper Creek towns, sought to create peace with the nearby Cherokees. However, the peace was fragile, and the French used what they saw as seemingly unexplainable acts of violence done by the Cherokees against the Chickasaws to try to create a wedge between the Upper Creeks and Cherokees.[32] By the spring of 1744, the English had helped to broker a peace between the Cherokees, Abihkas, Talapouches, and Cowetas but Vaudreuil ordered his captains at Fort Toulouse to give contrary evidence and to sow discord. In particular, Vaudreuil asked his commanders to "inspire" the groups who had made peace "to take revenge for the attacks made on them," referring specifically to violence between the Cherokees and Abihkas only

[31] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, January 5, 1744, VDLB3, 303-304; and "Speech to be delivered to Alabamas by Houssaye", January 5, 1744, VDLB3, 305-306. The latter letter contains a speech written for Houssaye to give to the Chickasaws if they came to make peace with the French. The speech would have made through an Alabama interpreter. The Chickasaws among the Abekoutchis are mentioned again later and to be led by a man named "Talpouches Mingo, an important man among the Abihkas", see Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 11, 1744, VDLB3, 320-322.

[32] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 11, 1744, VDLB3, 320-322. In this letter, the Vaudreuil wanted to make sure that "The Chickasaw should be informed of the killing of four Chickasaw among the Abkoutchis by the Cherokee, their friends." See also, Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 22, 1744, VDLB3, 323-324. Vaudreil "is pleased with the killing of five Chickasaw of the Abekoutchis by the Cherokee near the village of Conchas."

months before.[33] Vaudreuil sent extra supplies to be delivered with the usual annual "presents" to the Alabamas and Talapouches in order to persuade them "to attack the Cherokee." He ordered his men to only give presents to "chiefs known to be loyal to the French, and to refuse, with discretion, those who favor the English."[34] Exactly how the Natchez negotiated this conflict between the Abihkas and Cherokees is not entirely clear, but it seems unlikely that Natchez in both communities would have advocated for war since they had kin living in both areas. And in the long run, the Natchez likely helped to create peace between the two groups.

While there were some Natchez living among the Abekoutchis, by 1733-1734, other Natchez were also living in more permanent Natchez communities among the English, and Cherokees. While there is no direct evidence that the Natchez played a role in the complex geopolitical wrangling among the Upper Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, English and French, it seems likely that their locations among the key players in the southeast meant that some Natchez were involved in these tangled and shifting negotiations involving so many groups. Indeed, the French believed that the "4 or 500" Natchez warriors who found "refuge" with the Abihkas and the "20 warriors" living with the Cherokees were also instigating plots against the French that supported the English and their allies.[35] By 1747, the French reported that the English were "hunting and trading on the lower part of the Cherokee River [Tennessee River]" and they furnished "the Cherokee whom the French are unable to

[33] Vaudreuil to Houssaye, April 22, 1744, VDLB3, 323-324.
[34] Vaudreuil to Louboey, April 22, 1744, VDLB3, 324-325.
[35] Vaudreuil to Loubouey, November 6, 1743, VDLB3, 297-299.

supply."[36] These towns on the "lower part of the Cherokee River" were quite close to the town that the Natchez had established on the Hiwassee River among the Overhill Cherokees. So by 1747, the Natchez had strong allies in the Cherokees and a steady access to trade goods from the English. Also by 1747, the violence between the Cherokees and Abihkas had been resolved, perhaps by the efforts of Natchez leaders in both areas.

By 1748, the English had set up a trading outpost in the Abihka towns of Abekoutchis and Kaapa that upset French designs but secured Abihka and Natchez alliance to the English.[37] Furthermore, the Chickasaws and Abihkas had made peace a few years earlier and the two groups began to raid French outposts in the Arkansas country starting in 1749. In that year, Vaudreuil reported that one hundred and fifty Chickasaws, Abihkas and Choctaws attacked a French outpost in Arkansas. The raiders were reported to "descend the River near Natchez" where they killed six Frenchmen coming down the Mississippi River from the Illinois country. The French blamed the English "as their leaders."[38] Early the next year, Vaudreuil complained that the "Abihkas (40) with some Chickasaw attacked the Arkansas post last spring... The French, too weak to punish the Abihkas, must rely on Indian allies to avenge insults."[39] The French did not mention any Natchez, but it is possible that it was Natchez warriors who remembered their homelands and helped the war party "descend the river near Natchez." Also, since the attacks were led by Abihkas and

[36] Vaudreuil to the Court, April 8, 1747, VDLB2, 233-234.
[37] Vaudreuil to Maurepas, November 5, 1748, VD LO/147.
[38] Quote is from Vaudreuil to Rouillé, September 22, 1749, VD LO/185. See also: Vaudreuil to Rouillé, April 4, 1751, VD LO/239.
[39] Vaudreuil to Rouillé, February 1, 1750, VD LO 203.

Chickasaws, both of whom had Natchez living in their communities, it is reasonable to assume that some Natchez were involved in these attacks on the French.

Not all of the Upper Creek towns were antagonistic against the French in the 1740s. For example, after the attacks in Arkansas, some members of the Talapouches—a group closely aligned with the Abihkas—approached the French with "excuses for some of their warriors whose actions have been contrary to the good the tribe" and they apologized "for those involved with the Chickasaws who attacked the Arkansas."[40] Blaming certain members of a Native community for working against the wishes of its leaders was a common refrain for many Native leaders in the southeast. For the Natchez, this dissention between towns among the Upper Creeks suggests that the instability of Native American relations continued to challenge Natchez stability. The fact that the Natchez managed to keep their Natchez town near to the Abihkas until the nineteenth century reveals a remarkable ability to negotiate shifting alliances to survive as a people, while also illustrating that a Natchez desire for revenge seems to have been satisfied by the coordinated attacks with the Chickasaws and Abihkas against the French in the Arkansas territory.

During the 1740s and 1750s the Natchez community among the Upper Creeks is difficult to track with the written records since they moved between Breed Camp, the Abekoutchis town, and later their own "Nauchee" village near in Abihka country. Europeans did not write about a separate Natchez town among the Upper Creeks until 1766. The first European to do any written accounting of the Creek towns was

[40] Vaudreuil to the Court, June 24, 1750, VDLB2, 248-250.

Abraham Bosomworth, husband to the famous Creek trader Mary Bosomworth, yet, he does not mention a separate Natchez town in his 1758 account. However, his account was not comprehensive and also fails to mention a lot of Creek towns that were documented by later observers.[41] A few years later, the English superintendent of Indian Affairs, John Stuart, conducted an extensive survey of Upper Creek towns. He listed a distinct "Notches" town among twenty other Abihka towns. He counted the population of four towns, including "Abekoutchis, Notches, Nanahumgies and Yallasahatihee," to have a total of 130 inhabitants. He noted that there was another population of 60 "Chickasaws and Natchez" who lived in different Abihka towns. Stuart did not bother to distinguish between those of Natchez or Chickasaw descent and counted them together as one group.[42] In 1766, John Stuart again noted the presence of Natchez people living with the Creeks when he wrote to his superiors that there was an opportunity to collect "the scattered remains of the Natchez and [give] them a settlement in their own country again." He went on to say, "There may be from 150 to 200 Gun Men of them remaining in the Cherokee, Creek and Chickasaw Nations, they still retain their Language & Customs as well as the strongest resentiment for the expulsion and in a great Measure the destruction of their Nation by the French."[43] While Stuart refers to many more Natchez "remaining" in the Creek nation in this later account, he did not reference their town of "Notches."

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[41] Abraham Bosomworth, "An exact list of the number of Gunmen in the different Towns of the Upper and Lower Creek Nations of Indians", 1758, Huntington Library (hereinafter cited as HL).
[42] John Stuart, Report on Indian Affairs, 1766, CO/323/17, Records of the Public Records Office, United Kingdom National Archives, Kew, England (hereinafter cited as UKPRO). Stuart wrote that he counted men, women and children in these population estimates.
[43] John Stuart, letter to the Board of Trade, 1766, CO/323/24, UKPRO.

The next written account of a Natchez town among the Upper Creeks was not made until almost thirty years later. In 1791, the US government appointed Caleb Swan to conduct a "Report on the Creek Indians." He was the second European to note the presence of a Natchez town near to the Abihka towns. After first stopping by the "Natchez village" in Cherokee country for five days without saying much about his visit, Swan went next to the towns of the Upper Creeks. Like many American explorers, Swan focused on the material abundance of the Upper Creek territory, but he also mentioned Natchez living with the Upper Creeks. He wrote that he traveled along the "The Coosa, or Coosahatchee, river… Its course is generally South [and] it runs through the country of the Natchez & other tribes of the Upper Creeks, the roughest and most broken district in the whole nation; it is rapid and full of rocks and shoals, that, although there is a sufficiency of water, it is hardly navigable, even for canoes." Interestingly, he calls Upper Creek country the land of the "Natchez & other tribes of the Upper Creeks," signaling the prominent roles Natchez individuals had among the towns of the Upper Creeks even after the American Revolution. It is also worth noting that Natchez lived in "the roughest and most broken district in the whole [Creek] nation." Perhaps the Natchez among the Creeks, like the Natchez who settled in colonial South Carolina, took whatever land was available to them, and often this land was nothing like the fertile lands they had been forced to leave along the bluffs of Natchez. Swan elaborated a bit about the history of the Upper Creeks, particularly about those Native American groups who had "adopted the ceremonies and customs of the Creeks" and became part of the nation. He says that the Alabamas and

Coosadas (Coushattas) were the first to join the Creeks and then, "The Natches, or Sunset Indians from the Mississippi joined the Creeks about 50 years since, after being driven out of Louisiana; and aided considerably to their confederative body."[44] Swan is one of the only European observers to recognize the importance of the Natchez in the "confederacy" of the Creeks and he places high importance on Natchez history and its importance to Creek history and politics.

After briefly reviewing the history of the English in the southeast during the eighteenth century and their relations with various Native groups, Swan compiled a list of Creek towns and he noted that the Natchez still had their own town among the Upper Creeks.[45]

Swan also provides one of the rare examples of the Anglicized name of a Natchez person, "the Dog Warrior of the Natchez" and an insight into the important role Natchez leaders played among the Upper Creeks. He wrote that "The most influential Indian Chiefs, in the country, either in peace or war, are the Hallowing-King, in the Coweta district; the White Lieutenant of the Oakfuskies; the Mad-Dog King of the Tuckabatchies; the Old Tallasie King, Opilth Mico of the Big Tallasie, or the Halfway House, the Dog Warrior of the Natchez; and Red Shoes of the Coosades and Alabamas." Only a few decades later, Andrew Jackson assigned Jesse Franklin to broker a peace between the Cherokees and Creeks in the aftermath of the Red Stick War. Franklin commented in 1816 that the "Dog Warrior" of the Natchez was

[44] Caleb Swan, "Report to Henry Knox on Creek Indians, etc.,", APS, Violetta Delafield-Benjamin Smith Barton Collection, Volume 32, p8, 12, 20-21, and 27. For more on the diasporic movement of the Alabama-Coushattas and their sojourn in Creek country, see Sheri Meri Shuck-Hall, *Journey to the West: The Alabama and Coushatta Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.)
[45] Swan, "Repot to Henry Knox," APS, 29.

considered to be the "head of the Creek Nation."[46] It is unclear if this is the same "Dog Warrior" in 1816 that Caleb Swan wrote about in 1791 or if "Dog Warrior" was some sort of hereditary name for Natchez leaders. Regardless, Swan's and Franklin's account make it clear that Natchez leader(s) like Dog Warrior were important members of the Upper Creeks. This also signals that Natchez had been incorporated into the Creek body politic without having to give up their Natchez identity or language.[47] Indeed later American observers remarked that "five languages, the Muskhogee, the Hitchittee, Uchee, Natchez and the Alabama or Coosada, are… the only one['s] spoken by the different tribes of the Creek confederacy," showing that Natchez continued to speak their own, unique language well into the era of early American statehood.[48]

While there are very few Natchez names that appear in archival traces, and they usually belong to prominent men with Anglicized titles rather than Natchez names, there are enough names in the archives to suggest that some Natchez men played important roles among the Upper Creeks, Cherokees and Chickasaws.[49] For example, "the head Man of the Notchees" left his signature alongside a list of

[46] "Journal of Jesse Franklin", 1816, in the Jesse Franklin Indian Treaty Papers, Southern History Collection at the University of North Carolina (hereinafter cited as SHC). Franklin said that Dog Warrior played a pivotal role in negotiating peace between the Cherokees and Creeks. Knowing that Natchez lived among both groups, it makes a lot of sense that Natchez leaders would push for peace between the two.
[47] Swan, "Repot to Henry Knox," APS, 32.
[48] Thomas Foster, ed. *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 14s-15s. There are only three original copies of Hawkins' "Sketch of the Creek Country in the years 1798 and 1799" and one can be found at the APS and the other two are held by the Georgia Department of Archives and History.
[49] Women's names are even more difficult to locate in the archives. Aside from Betty, the wife of King Johnny in South Carolina, no other Natchez women are named in English documents.

Cherokee leaders who made a trade agreement with the English in 1751.[50] During the autumn of 1752, a group of Creek leaders including "The Natchee King" signed a trading deal with nearby British colonists who were led by Thomas Bosomworth, the English trader who lived for years in Creek towns.[51] Shortly after making this agreement, Bosomworth met with "the King of the Chickesaws, his three Brothers, and the Notchee King" in the Upper Creek town of Abekoutchis to discuss trading relations.[52] During the American Revolution, British agents meet with a host of Upper Creek leaders, including a "Natchez Chief."[53] While each of these Natchez leaders were called some form of "Natchez King," it seems quite unlikely that they were the same man. More likely, different Natchez leaders among the Creeks, Cherokees and Chickasaws emerged and became part of the leading councils of each larger Native American group. Determining biographical information about particular Natchez, even "Natchez Kings" is mostly impossible when looking at the archival sources. However, while the biographical data is lacking, the evidence of Natchez leaders involved in key decisions of the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, shows further evidence of the Natchez ability to survive as a people in varied locations and with different peoples.

A few years after Caleb Swan's journey into Creek country, Benjamin Hawkins was commissioned by the United States to conduct a more extensive

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[50] Talk of Governor Glen to the Cherokees Concerning Their Treaty, November 26, 1751, in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750 to August 7, 1754* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 188.
[51] Journal of Thomas Bosomworth, September 23, 1752, *Ibid.,* 296.
[52] Second Journal of Thomas Bosomworth, October 32, 1752, *Ibid.,* 314-315.
[53] This shows the persistence and duration of the Natchez diaspora well into the era of the American Revolution, see: David Taitt to Jon Stuart (copy), April 7, 1778, CO 5/79, p152, UKPRO.

investigation of the Creek peoples and their lands. From 1798-1799, he traveled to every Creek town and made a comprehensive list of all the towns visited. He reported that the "The Utchees and the Natchez," were "both incorporated in the confederacy" by 1798. He recognized that the "Natchez, a residue of the well known nation of that name, came from the banks of the Mississippi and joined the Creeks less than one hundred years ago." Hawkins visited a "Nauchee" town among the Upper Creeks and wrote the following entry for the town:

> 19. *Nau-chee*; on Nauchee Creek, five miles above the Au-be-coo-che, below the fork of the creek, on a rich flat of land, of a mile in width, between two small mountains. This flat extends from the town three-quarters of a mile above the town house. The settlements are scattered on both sides of the creek for two miles; they have no work fences, and but little stock…
>
> This town is the remains of the Nat-chez who lived on the Mis-sis-sip-pi. They estimate their number of gunmen at one hundred; but they are, probably, not more than fifty. The land, off from the mountains, is rich; the flats on the streams are large and very rich; the high, waving country is very health and well watered; cane grows on the creeks, reed on the branches, and pea-vine on the flats and hill sides.[54]

Hawkins estimated that there were likely fifty warriors, and even though the Natchez observer estimated one hundred warriors, the rough estimates are both similar to John Stuart's estimation that the population of Natchez in Creek territory was one hundred and thirty 1766.[55] Unlike Swan's report that the Natchez lived in the "roughest district" of Creek territory, Hawkins reported Natchez living on "a rich flat of land." Hawkins does not describe what Natchez grew on this land, but they likely grew the crops that were familiar to them: primarily corn, tobacco, and other vegetables.

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[54] *Ibid.,* 42s.

[55] Hawkins only counted "warriors" while Stuart counted the entire population of men, women and children. The population of the Natchez town was likely somewhere between one hundred and two hundred people by the late eighteenth century. The reasons for why the population remained stagnant over four decades are undetermined.

Whether Natchez acquired more fertile land as they secured their position among the towns of the Upper Creeks or if Swan just had it wrong in 1791 is unclear. What is clear is that Natchez were also starting to try new activities they borrowed from Europeans, things such as pastoralism, but they did so in a limited fashion. Natchez still had not built any fences, but Hawkins mentioned that some Natchez did have a "little stock" and that one headman of the Natchez had ninety hogs "fit for market in 1798." These subtle changes among the Natchez match up to similar material and cultural changes occurring throughout all of Creek society during the late eighteenth century.[56]

Hawkins grouped together the Natchez town with all the towns in what he called the "district of the Abbecoos," or the Abihkas district in contemporary parlance. The town of "Notchiss" is the third of twenty towns counted as part of the Abihka district. This confirms the reports from decades before that Natchez were living with the Abihkas and Abekcoutchis as early as the 1740s.[57]

During the 1820s, early American linguists became interested in the linguistic diversity of the Upper Creeks. Men like Albert Gallatin and Peter Stephen du

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[56] Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Angela Pulley Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[57] Foster, *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins,* 33. The Natchez presence and importance to Upper Creek politics by the early nineteenth century is also apparent in a brief mention of the Natchez by an Upper Creek leader, Tuskonahopoie, on December 13th, 1901. Speaking to Benjamin Hawkins and the Commissioners about a proposed treaty with the English, Tuskonahopoie said that, "I forgot something when I spoke of presents, which I will now mention. We have received presents from you father, the President, part at the Walnut Hills and part at Natches." Tuskonahopoie personally went to Walnut Hills, where "presents were very small" and he makes no other mention of Natchez again. Still, his casual reference to the town of "Natches" shows how much the Natchez had become part of the Creeks, *Ibid.,* 400.

Ponceau started to work on acquiring and building vocabularies of the Natchez language.[58] Twenty years after Hawkins toured the Natchez town among the Upper Creeks, du Ponceau noted that, "there still exists a remnant of the Natchez Indians… They have a little town called Natchez, situated about 20 miles above the fort on the Alabama, near Tallapousa branch, a very small village, they count of no more than one or two hundred souls. They speak a language entirely different from the other Southern Indians."[59] Du Ponceau requested members of the American Philosophical Society, in particular a Mr. Ware of Natchez, MS, to help him acquire 150-200 Natchez words.[60] Du Ponceau and Gallatin eventually made successful careers compiling Native American linguistic knowledge of the southeast, even though neither ever met a Natchez person themselves. Both relied on others to write the words and to send them north to Philadelphia for study. Regardless of their methods, their work provides clear evidence for Natchez survival among the Creeks, well into the 19th century.

Conclusion

[58] Albert Gallatin Collection, entry # 4589 and #808, APS; and Peter Stephen du Ponceau, Historical and Literary Committee Letter Books, APS Archives, Vol. VIII.5.
[59] APS, Peter Stephen du Ponceau, "Memorandum of a talk with Mr. [Nathaniel] Ware of Natchez, concerning customs of southeastern Indians: Choctaw, Chickasaw, Natchez remnants, Uchee living with Chatahowhee," February 10, 1820, APS.
[60] Du Ponceau was principally interested in 5 "categories" of Natchez words, "1. The apparent natural objects as God, heaven, Sky, air, the Seasons, phenomena of nature as rain, hail, snow, hills, mountains, cold, heat etc. 2. The names of relationships and individual distinction, as man, woman, child, boy, girl, husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter etc. 3. The different part of the human body. 4. The colors. 5. The numerals, a few Pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and other parts of speech would also be welcome, as well as some remarks on the construction of the language, particularly the verbs. Two or three conjugated verbs would be very acceptable, as well as a few phrases & sentences." See: Letter from Peter Stephen du Ponceau to John Crowell, 27 October 1821, APS.

The century from 1738-1838 was a key epoch in Natchez history because it saw the creation of ties between the Natchez and the Upper Creeks that continue to bind the Natchez community to the Creeks in Oklahoma to the present day.[61] Despite narratives of Native American disappearance during this period, the Natchez adapted to new environments and succeeded in creating long-lasting communities in Upper Creek country, among the Cherokees and with the English in South Carolina. The century was a time of adaptation and a time of creation, of building new Natchez communities that, despite the new spatial and human geographies, maintained a distinct sense of Natchez-ness that has never been destroyed nor disappeared. The fact that Natchez survived the eighteenth century to the present can no longer be ignored nor dismissed since there is clear evidence of Natchez communities in the southeast to the nineteenth century and beyond.

[61] There is also a close relationship between some Natchez and Cherokees in Oklahoma that has lasted to the present day and was first developed in the 1740s when the Natchez moved to the Cherokee towns on the Hiwassee River (chapter 3).

Chapter 6

"The End of the Natchez"?: A Genealogy of Historical, Literary, and Anthropological Thought about the Natchez Indians since the Eighteenth Century

Adams County Mississippi, the location of modern-day Natchez and the historical home of the Natchez people, has a webpage that describes itself as an "independent, not-for-profit site brought to you as a public service in the interest of *free* genealogy." This website offers all sorts of historical and genealogical material, including historical information about the Natchez. Under the link to "The Extermination of the Natchez Indians," the webpage offers passages from *The Making of America* (1876). Under the subheading "Description of the Natchez Indians" is written,

> This remarkable tribe, the most civilized of all the original inhabitants of the States, dwelt in the vicinity of the present city of Natchez. In refinement and intelligence, they were equal, if not superior, to any other tribe north of Mexico. In courage and stratagem they were inferior to none. Their form was noble and commanding; their statue was seldom under 6 feet, and their persons were straight and athletic. Their countenance indicated more intelligence than is commonly found in savages.

The language is jarring and reflects its nineteenth century context. Scholars no longer think of Native Americans from any period as low on the rungs of "civilization." Referring to the Natchez as "savages" whom the French "exterminated," the webpage misrepresents Natchez history and offers a version of the past that illustrates the

lasting impact of earlier European and American ideas about the Natchez and their history.[1]

For over the past 250 years, European and American writers, anthropologists and historians have misconstrued and misrepresented the history of the Natchez people. While Natchez history did not end in 1731, most non-Natchez observers and scholars of Natchez history have focused almost exclusively on Natchez history from European contact to the early 1730s.[2] Even in the twentieth century some historians write about the Natchez as if they no longer exist.[3] The centuries of inaccurate and sometimes romanticized narratives act as an effective erasure of Natchez history after the 1730s. While Natchez people survived adversity and multiple displacements for over two hundred years, most European and American thinkers have clung to a narrative of Natchez disappearance that continues to impact Natchez people in negative ways. Contemporary Natchez struggles for State and Federal recognition face an uphill battle in arguing against centuries of misinformation that continue to shape the discourse around Natchez history.

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[1] "Adams Co, MS Genealogical and Historical Research", accessed March 5th, 2014, http://www.natchezbelle.org/adams-ind/indians.htm; James Dabney McCabe, *Making of America* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1876).

[2] For an excellent survey of the enormous amount of scholarship on Natchez history to the 1730s, see: James F. Barnett, Jr., *The Natchez Indians: A History to 1735* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007). For a review of scholarship on the Natchez post-1730s, see: Patricia Galloway and Jason Baird Jackson, "Natchez and Neighboring Groups," in *Southeast*, ed. Raymond D. Fogelson, vol. 14 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 609-614; and Brad Raymond Lieb, "The Natchez Indian Diaspora: Ethnohistoric Archaeology of the Eighteenth-Century Refuge among the Chickasaws" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2008).

[3] Christopher Morris wrote that after the French attacked the Natchez in 1731, they chased the "survivors into the woods, where they disappeared forever." Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: the Evolution of a Way Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3. While Morris acknowledges the original Natchez occupation of the land, however, his assertion that the Natchez disappeared "forever" is inaccurate.

Whether in literature, anthropology, or history, European and American thinkers have mobilized the Natchez in curious and diverse ways over time. This chapter identifies three major themes in European and American thought on Natchez history. The first theme, found in French and English literature from the nineteenth century to the present, is a tendency to romanticize the Natchez past, to downplay the violence between the French and Natchez, and to focus narratives on love and self-discovery. The second theme is an ongoing fascination with the rigid hierarchy of the Natchez and their strict forms of social control. This theme was particularly prevalent in the writing of eighteenth and nineteenth century historians and anthropologists who grappled with how to understand Natchez social, political, and religious customs. Anthropologists during this early era distinguished the Natchez as more civilized than other Native Americans in North America, but still only "partially civilized." The third theme of the "vanishing Indian" began to dominate anthropological and historical writing on the Natchez from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. Early twentieth century scholars obsessed with the "disappearance" of the Natchez directed their efforts towards collecting information in order to preserve "original" or "authentic" Natchez culture. Tracking these three themes over time reveals the lasting impact of earlier, and often inaccurate, ideas on contemporary notions of Natchez history and culture and how these ideas continue to influence the construction of knowledge concerning Natchez history. Traces of all three themes still can be seen in contemporary ideas about the Natchez, such as the website from Adams Co., MS., or in the writing of some present-day historians.

As the Natchez struggled to establish diasporic networks throughout the southeast during the eighteenth century, European writers and thinkers already wrote about them as if they were all gone. This tradition continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as American anthropologists used information about the Natchez to construct sweeping accounts of human history. While the Natchez survived, incorrect and misinformed ideas about them also survived and took on a life of their own. By putting a narrative of Natchez survival in conjunction with a narrative about the tradition of scholarly inquiry concerning the Natchez, this chapter complements the rest of the dissertation because it provides an additional critique to current understanding of Natchez history and unearths the root causes of the misinformation surrounding the Natchez.

I begin the chapter with an analysis of the writings of Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, a French colonist of Louisiana in the 1720s, because his first-hand account of living with the Natchez has shaped scholarship about the Natchez since the eighteenth century. Le Page du Pratz described the Natchez in a way that made them appear unique among Native Americans in the southeast. He highlighted characteristics about the Natchez that he believed made the Natchez more "civilized," or more like European societies. I argue that later scholars and thinkers were attracted to the Natchez because of the way that Le Page du Pratz described them as a special group of Native Americans.

Le Page du Pratz

The most important written primary source for the period of French and Natchez contact comes from the writing of Le Page du Pratz who lived near the Natchez from 1720-1728. He left the area right before the Natchez attacked the French in 1729, but did not publish his account for another twenty years. He first published his *Mémoire sur la Louisiane* in installments between September 1751 and February 1752 in the *Journal Oeconomique* in Paris. In 1758 he published the installments together in the three-volume *Histoire de la Louisiane.* Le Page du Pratz was openly fond of the Natchez and he spends a great deal of his *History of Louisiana* discussing the Natchez. Historians, anthropologists and novelists continue to use the writing of Le Page du Pratz because of its ethnographic detail such as his provocative descriptions of sanguinary mortuary rites, spiritual ceremonies, kinship patterns, and marriage rituals.[4]

[4] Antoine-Simon Le Page Du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane.* 3 Vols. (Paris: De Bure, Belaguette, Lambert, 1758). There are two other signficant primary source accounts concerning Natchez history, however, neither have the level of ethnographic detail of Le Page du Pratz. For this essay, I focus on the writing of Le Page du Pratz in order to understand how later scholars and novelists built upon his specific ethnographic writing and how this writing profoundly shapes intellectual discourse concering the Natchez since the 18th century. The two other major primary sources for Natchez history during this period have been published: Gordon M. Sayre and Carla Zecher, eds. *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*. By Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny. Translated by Gordon M. Sayre (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Erin M. Greenwald, ed., *A Company Man: The Remarkable French-Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies: A Memoir by Marc-Antoine Caillot*, trans. Teri F. Chalmers (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2013). For brief contextualization of Le Page du Pratz, Lieutenant Dumont, and Marc-Antoine Caillot within a larger French Atlantic Enlightenment, see: Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 49-54. For a critical reading of the narrative sources from Le Page du Pratz and Dumont, see: Gordon M. Sayre, "Plotting the Natchez Massacre: Le Page du Pratz, Dumont de Montigny, Chateaubriand." *Early American Literature* 37 (2002): 281-413; and Gordon M. Sayre, "Natchez Ethnohistory Revisited: New Manuscript Sources from Le Page du Pratz and Dumont de Montigny," *Louisiana History* 50 (2009): 407-436.

The abundant ethnographic detail concerning the Natchez was a result of Le Page du Pratz's desire to collect practical information about the people, plants, and animal life in Louisiana. He writes, "ever since my arrival in Louisiana, I had tried to use my time to instruct myself in all that was new to me, and *apply myself toward seeking out objects*, the discovery of which might be useful to society" (emphasis mine).[5] The Natchez were one of the "objects" he sought to better understand. However, by identifying the Natchez as an object of practical curiosity, Le Page du Pratz establishes a subject/object relationship that consolidates the French as subject and Natchez as object. An effect of this subject/object dichotomy is that Le Page du Pratz denied "coevalness" to the Natchez with whom he lived.[6] In other words, rather then representing the Natchez as contemporary actors unique in the current moment, Le Page du Pratz locates the Natchez as both timeless and of the past. For example, when he describes the "Paternal authority" of the Natchez as "still the same… such as it was in the first age of the world," he constructs an idea that the Natchez were

[5] This quote is taken from Gordon Sayre, "Le Page du Pratz's fabulous Journey of Discovery: Learning about Nature Writing from a Colonial Promotional Narrative," in *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment,* ed. Steven Rosendale (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 30.

[6] My thoughts on "coevalness" are shaped by Johannes Fabian's examination of nineteenth and twentieth century anthropology. See, Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983 (2002)). Johannes Fabian argues that "as long as anthropology presents its object primarily as seen, as long as ethnographic knowledge is conceived primarily as observation and/or representation (in terms of models, symbols systems, and so forth) it is likely to persist in denying coevalness to its other" (151-152). Whether in the pseudo-anthropological writings of Le Page du Pratz from the eighteenth century or in the writings of later anthropologists, the Natchez are consistently denied coevalness due to the subject/object model that constitutes much of modern anthropology.

unchanged since the beginning of time.[7] He also describes the Natchez as being remnants from the past, something not quite modern or contemporary, when he compares them to the Scythians in Herodotus.[8] The positioning of the Natchez as particularly unique shaped the way that many later writers thought about the Natchez.[9] However, while Le Page du Pratz wrote of the Natchez as if they were both timeless and of the past, he also admired the Natchez. This admiration towards the Natchez mixed with an implicit denial of Natchez coevalness produced an image of the Natchez that is both romantic and savage.

Le Page du Pratz's representations of the Natchez resemble traits of the noble savage trope. Rather than calling the Natchez "sauvages" (savages) like his contemporaries, he calls the Natchez "naturels" (naturals). "Naturel" implied closeness to nature, emphasizing the positive influence of being unfettered by human civilization whereas "sauvage," which also implied the same closeness to nature, additionally emphasized the wild, bestial, and backwards nature of Native Americans. Le Page du Pratz's "naturel" prefigured the trope of the noble savage that became popular in France by the time he published in the 1750s.[10] French intellectuals used

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[7] "Elle (paternal authority) est encore chez les Naturels de la Louisiane telle que'elle étoit dans le premier âge du Monde." In Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane.* 3 Vols. (Paris: De Bure, Belaguette, Lambert, 1758), 386.

[8] *Ibid.,* 94.

[9] The fierce 20th century debates between anthropologists over Natchez kinship structures provide a clear example of the impact of Le Page du Pratz on Natchez scholarship. Le Page du Pratz wrote about four "classes" of Natchez, from nobles to "stinkards" in Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane.* Vol II. (Paris: De Bure, Belaguette, Lambert, 1758) 395-7. For an excellent summary of the modern debate between anthropologists, see: Karl G. Lorenz, "The Natchez of Southwest Mississippi" in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archeaology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Bonnie G. McEwan, 142-177 (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 152-157.

[10] Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). When Le Page du Pratz lived with the Natchez in the 1720s, the image of the noble savage was not yet

the idea of the Noble Savage to propose reform and to critique existing social institutions. Critics of the old Regime used the idea of the Native American in polemical arguments to critique different issues in society with a belief that "what was natural was good, [and] what was civilized was artificial, hence decadent and certainly bad." The *philosophes* critiqued European civilization by conflating ideas about nature with Native Americans, but did not represent Native American societies as alternatives to European civilization. This tension between the idea that the Native was one who "apprehended the laws of nature more clearly than civilized man and the "reality" that they were still thought of as uncivilized, or less than the French, is a tension that runs throughout Le Page du Pratz's narrative and in the writing of many subsequent European and American thinkers.[11]

Literature

In the early nineteenth century, the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand published three novels about the Natchez. Inspired by his travels in North America and his reading of French histories of Louisiana written by people like Le Page du Pratz, Chateaubriand published *Atala*. The novella follows the story of a Natchez man named Chactas who falls in love with a Christian woman, the daughter

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prevalent. However, since he published his work over twenty years after his time in North America, it seems likely that his domestic French audience would have influenced his portrayal of the Natchez. Although, conversely, it is quite possible that the writing of Le Page du Pratz contributed to the image of the North American noble savage so popular during the French Enlightenment and beyond. Indeed, Shannon Lee Dawdy argues that early colonial writers like Le Page du Pratz were, "minor *philosophes* who presented their knowledge and experience in the literary fashions of the day, and also contributed to important debates." I agree with her assertion that colonial writers like Le Page du Pratz helped shape the Enlightenment in France and played an important role "in the uneven evolution of modernity," Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire,* 50, 10.

[11] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 76-77.

of a Native American mother and a Spanish father. The novella has little historical veracity, and is more an exploration of human emotion, spirituality and an argument for the greatness of Christianity. In 1802, Chateaubriand wrote *René*, another novel featuring the Natchez. This highly influential book in the French Romantic tradition features a young unhappy French man who, after traveling the European classical world, finds solace among the Natchez during the 1720s. The third novel, *The Natchez*, is a longer piece about the Natchez and includes many references to *Atala* and *René*. Chateaubriand wrote all three books sometime between 1793-1799, but did not publish *The Natchez* until 1826. While *The Natchez* was less influential to French literature than *René* or *Atala*, Chateaubriand was one of the most important founders of French Romanticism in which French authors, artists, and intellectuals looked to nature, imagination, intuition, and emotion as places of truth and as a critique of the status quo. Less interested in learning of surviving Natchez people, Chateaubriand and his readers were content to imagine a Natchez people of their own making. Chateaubriand's representations of Natchez people and history reveal more about French beliefs and ideas than anything about the Natchez themselves.[12]

American writers also used representations of the Natchez as context for romantic portrayals of early contact between the French and Natchez. In 1892, Irwin

[12] François-René de Chateaubriand, *Atala*, ed. J. M. Gautier (Geneva: Droz, 1973); Chateaubriand, *René*, ed. Armand Weil (Geneva: Droz, 1961); Chateaubriand, *Les Natchez*, ed. Gilbert Chinard (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932). While most French readers would not have known much about actual Natchez people, the Natchez were certainly known, at least in name, to French literary circles in the early 19th century. The French encounter with the Natchez had a lingering effect on French culture long after the war with the Natchez was over. For more on the resonance of the Natchez war in French literature, see: Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero*, 203-248; and Arnaud Balvey, *La Révolte des Natchez* (Paris: Félin, 2008), 182-183.

Huntington published an epic poem, *The Wife of the Sun: A Legend of the Natchez*. The protagonist is a Natchez woman betrothed to the Great Sun but she is in love with another young "brave". The final stanzas tell of the wife of the Sun and her lover leaping from the cliffs above the Mississippi River at Natchez. Huntington's poem emphasizes the tragic loss of romantic love due to the cultural rules that organized Natchez life. The poem certainly could be read as an early feminist critique of patriarchy overlaid with romantic descriptions of nature and love. However, like Chateaubriand, real Natchez are less important than Huntington's critique of her own society and its customs against women's choice in marriage. This theme of using the Natchez to represent a critique of Euro-American societies repeats itself in most fictionalized accounts of the Natchez.[13]

History and Anthropology (18th and 19th centuries)

Le Page du Pratz's two characterizations of the Natchez as more "civilized" than other Native Americans in the southeast and his suggestion that the Natchez originated from civilizations in Mexico shaped arguments in history and anthropology for over a century.[14] While most agreed on the special status of Natchez civilization,

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[13] Irwin Huntington, *The Wife of the Sun: A Legend of the Natchez* (Mobile, AL: The Gossip Printing Co., 1892). The tradition of using Natchez history loosely as context for historical novels continues to the 21st century, see: James Register, *Fort Rosalie: The French at Old Natchez, 1682-1762* (Shreveport, LA: Mid-South Press, 1969); Mary-Louise Christovich and Roulhac Toledano, *Nankowetco: The Natchez Odyssey, 1716-1734* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2001).

[14] Le Page du Pratz wrote that Natchez "manners were more civilized, their manner of thinking more just and fuller of sentiment, their customs more reasonable, and their ceremonies more natural and serious; on all which accounts they were eminently distinguished above all other nations." Since he thought the Natchez were so different from their "neighbouring nations", he "was inclined to believe that they were not originally of the country which they then inhabited." When he asked the Natchez about their origins, they told him that, "'Before we came into this land we lived yonder under the sun,' (pointing with his finger nearly south west, by which I understood that he meant *Mexico*)." Le Page du Pratz, *The history of Louisiana, or of the western parts of Virginia and Carolina: containing a*

some disagreed over which native groups could properly be compared to the Natchez. For example, Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix published the first history of Louisiana in 1744 and relied on Le Page du Pratz's account for much of the ethnographic information concerning the Natchez, including the notion that the Natchez were more civilized than other Native Americans. However, Charlevoix compared the Natchez to the Hurons of Canada, rather than to Mexican civilizations.[15] While the comparison of the Natchez to other groups in the Americas changed over time, the desire to compare them remained strong until the twentieth century. This is because scholars saw the Natchez as peculiar and special people because of their social hierarchies that reminded them of European societies. Most scholars thought that the Natchez had to have come from somewhere else because they appeared different than most other southeastern Native American societies that were more egalitarian in nature. By comparing the Natchez to other well-known Native American groups, they were trying to promote the idea that there was something special about the Natchez.

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description of the countries that lye on both sides of the river Missisipi: [sic] with an account of the settlements, ... Translated from the French, ... by M. Le Page du Pratz; with some notes and observations ... In two volumes. ... (London, 1763), http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=ucsantacruz&tabID=T001&docId=CW3300615792&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE, 109-110, 144, 161.

[15] Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Charlevoix's Louisiana: Selections from the History and the Journal*, ed. Charles E. O'Neill (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 141-151, 154. For an anaylsis of how Charlevoix used Le Page du Pratz and Dumont as sources, see: Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 206-207. After the publication of Charlevoix's *Histoire et déscription générale de la Nouvelle France avec le Journal Historique d'un Voyage fait par ordre du Roi dans l'Amérique Septentrionale* (1744), Charelevoix became a major source for those who did not have access to the original sources.

The earliest reference to the Natchez in European intellectual discourse, outside of specific histories of Louisiana, comes from a history of the Americas written by a historian of the Scottish Enlightenment. In 1777, William Robertson published his two-volume *History of America* in which, among other things, he compares the Natchez to the indigenous peoples of Bogota. His comparison reflects the influences of Le Page du Pratz, as well as an older genealogy of European thought concerning Native American origins and the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment.[16]

From the earliest attempts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to unravel human origins in the Americas, Europeans relied on Biblical information for clues about ancient history. Different theories attempted to establish links between Native Americans to the Lost Tribes of Israel, the Tower of Babel, the Devil, and to classic civilizations of antiquity.[17] In the eighteenth century, origin theories changed as religious arguments came under question by many in the Enlightenment. However, while most *philosophes* critiqued aspects of Christianity, most all continued to base theories of Native American origins on the idea of a "monogenetic origin of humanity," or the idea that all humans came from Adam and Eve. Robertson accepted the fundamental assumption of monogenetic human origins in his *History of America*, writing that, "We know, with infallible certainty, that all the human race spring from

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[16] William Robertson, *The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;idno=ABE6362.0001.001; Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress*, trans. Jeremy Carden (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 90-96; David Armitage, "The New World in British Historical Thought: From Richard Hakluyt to William Robertson", in *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 52-75.

[17] Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 34-38; Lee E. Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967).

the same source, and that the descendants of one man, under the protection, as well as in obedience to the command of Heaven, multiplied and replenished the earth."[18] However, to explain global human diversity, Robertson reasoned that the environment must be responsible for human change over time and could explain Native American origins.[19] *Philosophes* like Robertson explained Native American diversity as a result of and a response to physical geography, implying that all "men were created equal by their Creator."[20] Most European intellectuals in the eighteenth century agreed on the original equality of humans under God, but they also saw themselves as superior to other people in the world, which required a new rationale to justify racial hierarchy.

The conquest of the Americas and the Renaissance in Europe fueled ethnocentrism and the belief that European culture and history was superior to other cultures past and present. Western European thinkers began to see their own history as one of rational progression from the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome to the great scientific achievements of Galileo and Newton. Since the Renaissance, Europeans sought to understand classical societies to better understand their ancient roots and their own progress. During the seventeenth century, scholars made direct

[18] Robertson, *The History of the Discovery*, 129-130. On monogenism, see: Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 9-11.
[19] While the use of the physical environment as an explanation of human diversity dates back as far as the ancient Greeks, "as a way of analyzing the place of the American Indians among the races of man it was particularly characteristic of Enlightenment thought." Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 38.
[20] Robertson was a strong advocate of the environment as the causal factor in human diversity, he writes that, "we should only conclude that the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation, and arise from their situation". "Situation" can be read as "environment". Robertson, *The History of the Discovery*, 131. The idea of equality under the Creator particularly appealed to Americans like Thomas Jefferson, see: Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 42.

comparisons between classical societies and their own to construct arguments supporting the triumph of modern Europeans. Colonists in the Americas continued the tradition of comparison in the eighteenth century, but instead of comparing Europeans to the ancients, they compared the ancients to Native Americans.[21] However, Robertson was critical of drawing connections between indigenous Americans and people from the "old" world to solve the question of American origins and instead sought to draw links between different groups in the Americas.[22] Regardless of the type of comparison, the logic of comparison promoted a sense of human history in which, like the human body, all human societies grew from "savagery" or "barbarism" to (European) "civilization".[23]

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[21] Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 45-47. For examples of French colonists who compared Native Americans encountered in Canada to ancient civilizations, see: Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de La Nouvelle France* (London: Eliot's Court Press, 1609); Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, 21-34; Joseph Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages Amériquains comparée aux moeurs des premiers temps* (Paris: Chez Saugrain l'aîné et Chez C.-E. Hochereau, 1724). Indeed, Robertson cites Lafitau (and Charlevoix) frequently throughout his text. For more on the French influence on Robertson and the Scottish Enlightenment, see: Bruce P. Lenman, "'From savage to Scot' via the French and the Spaniards: Principal Robertson's Spanish sources" in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, ed. Stewart J. Brown (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997). For a broader look at the cross currents of thought between France and Scotland during the Enlightenment, see: Deidre Dawson and Pierre Morère, eds., *Scotland and France in the Enlightenment* Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2004).

[22] Robertson writes that, "Nothing can be more frivolous or uncertain than the attempts to discover the original of the Americans merely by tracing the resemblance between their manners and those of any particular people in the ancient continent." He argues that if "A tribe of savages on the banks of the Danube" resembles people "upon the plains washed by the Mississippi" it is because they share similar environments or "situations", not a similar biological, cultural, social or political heritage. He writes that, "we should only conclude that the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation, and arise from the state of society in which they live." Robertson, *The History of the Discovery*, 131. Later, Thomas Jefferson thought about Native American origins similar to Robertson, see: Sheehan, "The Quest for Indian Origins", 35.

[23] The idea of human progress from barbarism to civilization was not a new idea in the eighteenth century. Spanish writers like Las Casas, Torquemada and Acosta wrote in a similar vein. However, I agree with Berkhofer that the "intellectual context that gave real meaning to such a sequenced did not develop until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Only under assumptions of a common and constant human nature, the uniform workings of immutable laws in human affairs, and the abstraction of the natural from the accidental in history could thinkers of the time compare customs among widely

Robertson's *The History of America* helped to codify, naturalize, and popularize a sense of human history as progress and of European societies as the ultimate fulfillment of this progress.[24] Adam Smith's structures of "stadial history" or "conjectural history" in which Smith organized all human history into developmental stages based on the nature and ownership of property directly influenced Robertson. Smith distinguished "barbarous" societies where private property did not exist from nomadic, agricultural, and commercial societies where it did. He examined the causes and consequences of changes in notions of private property to create a line of human progress from its "rude" or "barbaric" state to its "civilized" commercial state.[25] Robertson applied Smith's "stadial" notion of human history progressing through stages of private property development to his analysis of the Spanish colonization of the Americas and the Native peoples found there.[26] In Robertson's assessment, Native

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divergent lifestyles, range them into a series of gradations, and present them as the history of all human development and achievement." Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 47-48; Anthony Pagden, *The fall of natural man: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[24] Karen O'Brien notes that while Robertson was not the first to think of human history along a single line of progress, his very "plausibility and eloquence," in *History of America* is what made his work so popular and enduring. Karen O'Brien, "Robertson's place in the development of eighteenth-century narrative history", in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, ed. Stewart J. Brown (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997), 89; Murray G. H. Pittock, "Historiography", in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 258-279.

[25] Nicholas Phillipson, "Providence and progress: an introduction to the historical thought of William Robertson", in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, ed. Stewart J. Brown (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997), 59; Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 6-9, 45-71; Lenman, "'From savage to Scot'", 199-200.

[26] For a more nuanced review of when Robertson employs the "conjectural history" model and when he relies on "empirical history", see: H. M. Höpfl, "From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment", *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1978), 19-40. While this chapter focuses on the Native American parts of *History of America*, for more of Robertson's critiques of the Spanish empire, see: Phillipson, "Providence and progress", 62-63; O'Brien, "Robertson's place", 89-90; J. R. Smitten, "Impartiality in Robertson's *History of America*", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 19 (1985-6), 56-77. Bruce Lenman offers a fresh argument that, indeed, Robertson wrote

Americans were at the very bottom of the stadial progression of human history primarily because of their undeveloped notions of private property. Even when Robertson encountered contrary evidence, he consistently positioned Native Americans at the bottom rungs of his stadial hierarchy.[27] However, like most accounts about Native Americans during the eighteenth century, Robertson grappled with where to place the Aztecs and the Incas along the line of savagery to civilization. The Mexican and Peruvian empires resisted easy categorization as "savage" since they exhibited many characteristics similar to European or "civilized" societies.[28] Most resolved this tension by placing the Aztecs and Incas slightly higher along the line of progress than other Native Americans. Robertson did the same but went further because he also connected the Natchez to the Mexican and Peruvian empires.

Robertson placed the Natchez somewhere below the level of the Aztecs but above the majority of all other "rude" people in North America. In accordance with his belief in the environment as a causal factor in human diversity, Robertson observed that Native cultures became more "civilized" in warmer climates, writing that, "if we proceed from north to south along the continent of America, we shall find the power of those vested with authority gradually increasing, and the spirit of the people becoming more tame and passive." Since the Natchez lived in the warmer

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against the Spanish Black Legend, even though he also concerned himself with pointing out flaws of Spanish colonization in regards to private property, see: Lenman, "'From savage to Scot'", 207.

[27] Lenman, " 'From savage to Scot'", 207-208.

[28] Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 96-101; Phillipson, "Providence and progress, 67-68; Berkhoffer, *The White Man's Indian*, 48-49.

southern climate of North America, it made sense to Robertson that the Natchez would be similar to the civilizations in Mesoamerica.[29]

The specific characteristics that distinguished the Natchez from other indigenous North Americans and what made the Natchez appear to Robertson more like the empires of the Americas were its political institutions and religious practices. The power of hereditary chiefs with absolute monarchial power appealed to Robertson's sensibilities, writing that "Among the Natchez, a powerful tribe now extinct… a difference of rank took place, with which the northern tribes were altogether unacquainted. Some families were reputed noble, and enjoyed hereditary dignity." [30] Robertson compares the "perfect despotism" of the Natchez to other Native governments in Hispaniola and Bogota, highlighting especially the connections between the people of Bogota and the Natchez. He writes:

> The subjection of the Natchez, and of the people of Bogota, seems to have been the consequence of a difference in their state from that of the other Americans. They were settled nations, residing constantly in one place. Hunting was not the chief occupation of the former, and the latter seem hardly to have trusted to it for any part of their subsistence. Both had made such progress in agriculture and arts that the idea of property was introduced in some degree in the one community, and fully established in the other.

Robertson reveals the primary reasons why he views the Natchez and the people of Bogota as more advanced than other Native Americans. Robertson favored them because both were "settled nations", both relied on agriculture and not hunting, and

[29] Robertson, *The History of the Discovery*, 166.
[30] Of course the Natchez were not extinct. This was not the last person to erroneously label the Natchez "extinct." On the connections between the Natchez and the people of Bogota, he writes that they "had advanced beyond the other uncultivated nations of America in their ideas of religion, as well as their political institutions." Robertson, *The History of the Discovery*, 164, 182.

most importantly, both developed notions of private property, all of which provided the basis for the "unbounded" power of its rulers—the backbone of an orderly society. But political power alone was not enough for Robertson. The power of Natchez leaders in spiritual matters also impressed him, noting that,

> power and prerogative was exercised by the great chief of the Natchez, as the principal minister as well as the representative of the Sun, their deity. The respect which the people of Bogota paid to their monarchs was likewise inspired by religion, and the heir apparent of the kingdom was educated in the inner most recess of their principal temple, under such austere discipline, and with such peculiar rites, as tended to fill his subjects with high sentiments concerning the sanctity of his character and the dignity of his station.[31]

The hierarchical, rigid, and elaborate structures of the religion, while not Christian, showed to Robertson advancement along his stadial line of history. In sum, Robertson's suggestion that the Natchez and the people of Bogota were related historically to each other is based on his perceptions of their similar economic, political and religious practices. His argument that the Natchez were linked to other empires in the Americas differed from Le Page du Pratz's earlier suggestion that they were related to the indigenous people of Mexico. However, the impulse to draw comparisons between the Natchez and other Native Americans continued to steer the way Europeans and Americans thought about Natchez history.[32]

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[31] *Ibid.,* 166.

[32] Robertson's *History of America* was very influential in the United States, far more than just its content about the Natchez. For example, Thomas Jefferson, and many other prominent Americans, were avid fans of Robertson's work. Jefferson used it when he was Secretary of State to help craft U.S. Indian policy. Lenman, "'From savage to Scot'", 209; Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 48-49; B. W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jefferson Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973).

The Scottish geographer John Pinkerton was next to offer comparisons between the Natchez and other groups, including new comparisons made with Incas and Africans. Pinkerton wrote *Modern Geography* in 1804, an early geography of entire world. While he spends only 187 pages or about 13% of his entire work on the Americas, he does mention the Natchez on three different occasions.[33] The first mention introduces the Natchez as the "chief tribe in North America" second only to "the Mexicans."[34] Like Robertson, Pinkerton saw the Natchez as being higher on the rungs of human progress (stadial history) than other North American Native groups, but also lower than the Aztecs. In a section on South America, Pinkerton parts ways from his contemporaries and Robertson to suggest that all Native Americans come from Africa, and not Asia. He uses a story about the Natchez taken from Le Page du Pratz, that they "came from the rising sun, or the east, that the voyage was long, and their ancestors on the point of perishing when they discovered America", as evidence that indigenous Americans came from Africa rather than Asia.[35] Pinkerton also compared the Natchez to the Incas, rather than to the peoples of Bogota or Mexico. In a section in which he compares the Aztecs to the Incas in order to illustrate the Incas as more "civilized" than the Aztecs, he also compares the Incas to the Natchez. When

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[33] John Pinkerton, *Modern Geography: a description of the empires, kingdoms, states and colonies, with the oceans, seas, and isles, in all parts of the world, including the most recent discoveries and political alterations* (Philadelphia: J. Conrad & Co., 1804), http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=SHAW&p_text_direct-0=u433=%28 7061 %29|u433ad=%28 7061 %29&p_nbid=Y59J58XUMTM5Mzk2Mzk1OC40NjM3NjE6MToxNToxNjkuMjMzLjIwNC4xMjAh; O. F. G. Sitwell, "John Pinkerton: An Armchair Geographer of the Early Nineteenth Century", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 138, No. 4 (1972), 470-479; Robert Mayhew, "British Geography's Republic of Letters: Mapping an Imagined Community, 1600-1800", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (2005), 251-276.
[34] Pinkerton, *Modern Geography*, 503.
[35] *Ibid.*, 519.

discussing how Incan "superstition" led to the sacrifice of "numerous victims on the death of a chief, and a favourite monarch was sometimes followed to the tomb by a thousand slaughtered servants", Pinkerton suggests in a footnote that the Natchez had a "system somewhat similar" to the Incas. He draws connections between Incan funerary sacrifices and a scene described by Le Page du Pratz in which at the death of a Great Sun, the community ritually sacrificed all his wives and some of his servants to accompany him to the afterlife.[36] While Pinkerton's arguments about African origins did not hold up over time, his comparisons of the Natchez to the Incas reveals the protean nature of thought about Natchez history as comparisons between the Natchez and the peoples of Mexico shifted to comparisons made to Bogota and then to the Incas.

In the newly created United States, debates over Native American origins and history became quite popular during the early nineteenth century. Led by men like Thomas Jefferson, Americans began to research and write extensively about pre-contact Native American history and the origin(s) of humans in the Americas.[37] One prominent natural philosopher and friend to Jefferson wrote an important book in 1817 that was cited by later American scholars of Natchez history for most of the nineteenth century. Influenced by the writing of earlier Europeans, James McCulloh argued that Native Americans shared a similar origin with many other world civilizations from the tower of Babel. Comparing "the religious edifices of Babylon,

[36] *Ibid.*, 533-534.
[37] Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 42; Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction*. For a general examination Jefferson and his contemporaries ideas on Native American origins, see: Bernard W. Sheehan, "The Quest for Indian Origins in the Thought of the Jeffersonian Era", Midcontinent American Studies Journal, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1968), 34-51.

Egypt, Hindostan, and Mexico," McCulloh argued that had "such analogies to each other as must convince any one, they are all derived from one and the same model: *which model* appears to be the same as that by which the tower of Babel was built." McCulloh includes more world civilizations, "Hindoos, old Persians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Tuscans, Scythians or Goths, Celts, Chinese, Japanese, and *Peruvians*," and argues they "had an immemorial connexion with one another; and as there appear no reason for believing that they were a colony from any one of those nations, or any of those nations from them, we may fairly conclude that they all proceeded from the same common central country."[38] While earlier European thinkers like Robertson had made a similar point, many later American writers cite only McCulloh's work rather than Robertson to establish the fundamental premise that all people must have come from the same (biblical) source.

Ten years after McCulloh published his ideas, the British author John Ranking argued that the source culture of American civilizations derived from the thirteenth century Mongolian conquest of the Americas and not the Tower of Babel.[39] Ranking asserted that Mongolian armies that conquered most of Eurasia during the thirteenth

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[38] James H. McCulloh, *Researches on America: Being an Attempt to Settle some Points Relative to Aborigines of America, &c* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1817), 137, 177, https://archive.org/details/researchesonamer00mccurich.

[39] John Ranking, *Historical Researches on the Conquest of Peru, Mexico, Bogota, Natchez, and Talomeco, In the Thirteenth Century, by The Mongols, accompanied with Elephants* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827). Ranking's arguments rely on rough comparisons between Native Americans and Mongolians based on a number of sources, including Marco Polo and the great Incan chronicler, Garcilaso de la Vega. Ranking relies on Vega for the key evidence connecting the Mongolians to Peru. He quotes a lengthy story from Vega about the coming of giants to Peru long before Europeans arrived and argues that the "giants" who "came ashore" were actually elephants carrying Mongolian invaders. Ranking, *Historical Researches*, 51-54; Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, ed. Karen Spalding, trans. Harold V. Livermore (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2006).

century also conquered the Americas, including "Peru, Mexico, Bogota, Natchez, and Talomeco." Ranking's work is most influenced by Robertson's *History of America* and Pinkerton's *Modern Geography*. He cites them directly when writing about the Natchez, offering long quoted passages straight from both Robertson and Pinkerton's narratives. However, Ranking does not cite McCulloh, revealing a divergence in thought about the Natchez between Europe and America at this time. Ranking also writes about the exact same groups of Native Americans that Robertson did but with a new angle. The Mongolian invasion argument was Ranking's attempt to explain some of the connections between disparate Native Americans that are suggested Robertson's *History of America*.[40]

Starting in the 1830s, the decade of the Trail of Tears when many Natchez were adjusting to new lives in Oklahoma, American anthropologists began to build upon the arguments of Robertson, Pinkerton, Ranking and others. Some anthropologists used earlier ideas about the Natchez to make arguments supporting the birth of scientific racism. The highly influential, and now controversial, Samuel George Morton included the Natchez in his *Crania Americana* (1839). Morton classified humankind into four distinct races that could be distinguished by skull size, among many other characteristics. Morton measured the skull sizes of different "races" to defend his argument that whites were distinct and superior to other races.[41]

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[40] Ranking writes, "Bogota and Natchez bear irresistible indications of being likewise Mongol settlements" but does not offer any evidence to defend his assertion, claiming that it would take to much space and it would "swell his work with more researches than were necessary to establish his point." Ranking, *Researches on America*, 17-18, 254-257.

[41] Samuel George Morton, *Crania Americana: or, Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North & South America* (Philadelphia: Dobson, 1839), American Philosophical

In the section on the Native American "race," Morton begins with a discussion of Native peoples in Peru and Mexico. He then moves to discuss the Natchez, privileging them before any discussion of any other Native American group from North America. Based on some historical research and a comparison of flattened skulls from Mexico and Natchez, he argues that the Natchez had originally "migrated from Mexico" and that, they "were a branch of the great Toltecan family."[42] Morton cites McCulloh when suggesting links between the Natchez and the Mexican empire, but he does not cite or reference Robertson. Morton argues that there are "obvious analogies" between the Natchez and Toltecs because both share a "worship of the sun, the practice of human sacrifices on the death of eminent persons, hereditary distinctions, and fixed institutions, in which respect they differed from all of the other nations" found in the Americas. Like Robertson, the Natchez were an anomaly for Morton that could only be explained by connecting the Natchez to other great civilizations in the Americas. Unlike Robertson, Morton compared the Natchez to people in Mexico rather then Bogota, echoing the early suggestions of Le Page du

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Society (hereafter APS). There has been much contemporary debate between scholars over Morton's data and his scientific methods. The evolutionary biologist Jay Gould offered the first major critique, arguing that Morton's methods were biased by his racial views and that he intentionally faked evidence to fit his arguments, see: Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981). Since Gould's groundbreaking work, scientists have revisited the debate and revealed Gould's own bias. Jason Lewis et al, "The Mismeasure of Science: Stephen Jay Gould versus Samuel George Morton on Skulls and Bias," *Plos Biology*, June 7th, 2011. Scholars generally agree that Morton's description of a hierarchy of distinct human races is inaccurate and that his ideology of racial hierarchy shaped his interpretation of the data, see Kenan Malik, "the science of seeing what you want to see," *göteborgs-posten*, 24 June 2011, http://www.kenanmalik.com/essays/gp_gould.html.

[42] Morton compares the practice of skull modifications among Native Americans to draw connections between the Natchez and other Native people. He writes, "The practice of artificially moulding the head, varied, it is true, according to fancy, [and] has been traced from Peru into Venezuela, and thence into Nicaragua as matter of fact; and we also find the Natchez and other tribes originally from Mexico addicted to the same usage," Morton, *Crania Americana*, APS, 147.

Pratz. Regardless of whom he compared the Natchez to, Morton agreed with the fundamental premise of others before him, that the Natchez were partially civilized and that comparisons could reveal ancient links between the indigenous people of the Americas. However, while Robertson relied on rhetoric and the use of "logical" comparisons between the people of the world, past and present, to suggest a hierarchy of civilizations, Morton used science to cement these comparisons as verifiable fact. In effect, Morton's science "proved" Robertson's stadial view of history that explained and justified racial hierarchy.

Morton's arguments about the Toltec-Natchez connection drove debates about the Natchez in the American academe for the rest of the nineteenth century. For example, J. F. H. Claiborne, the "Father of Mississippi History," included long sections about Natchez history in his epic *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens* (1880). Although he does not cite Morton, he must have read his work because he mimics Morton's arguments about Natchez links to the Toltecs, writing that Natchez "religion was brutal and bloody, indicating an Aztec origin." Claiborne's writing also reveals evidence of the hardening of ideas about race in America, ideas driven by Morton's scientific racism. Claiborne refutes the opinion of early French writers like Le Page du Pratz and Chateaubriand that the Natchez were "a semi-civilized and noble race, that has passed into history." He says these French writers "often drew upon their fancy for their facts" and insists that among the Natchez there are "no traces of civilization in their

architecture, or in their social life and customs."[43] Claiborne was unique among writers of his time to completely dismiss any notion of Natchez "semi-civilization." Perhaps this was because he was a historian and not an anthropologist. For in the burgeoning field of anthropology, the idea that the Natchez were slightly above "savagery" continued to dominate discourse on Natchez history.

In 1886, the American anthropologist E. L. Berthoud took up the question of Natchez origins in "A Sketch of the Natchez Indians". He addresses several theories of Natchez origins, including Morton's argument about the Toltecs. He also analyzes the merits of an Aztec-Natchez connection as well as comparisons to South American Native peoples. More interesting than the minutiae of these old debates, Berthoud seems to have a level of self-reflection not found in other non-Natchez scholars. He reveals that the interest in the Natchez is driven by

> Their qualified barbarism, an apparent enhanced civilization, compared to the other wild tribes of that [Mississippi] valley, their peculiar religious belief, and sanguinary religious and mortuary sacrifices, their worship of the Sun, their temples and their admitted mental superiority have proved for the Antiquarian and Historian to be full of interest, and the ground-work for many theories of pre-historic derivation.[44]

Berthoud argues that it is the exotic details of the Natchez (mostly taken from the work of the Le Page du Pratz) that inspires so much interest in historian and antiquarian alike. The same stories that attracted Chateaubriand also attracted the

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[43] J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens*, Volume I, (Jackson, MS: Power & Barksdale, Publishers and Printers, 1880).
[44] Edward L. Berthoud, *A Sketch of the Natchez Indians* (Golden, CO: Transcript Book and Job Print, 1886), Huntington Library. In 1899, James Mooney made a similar observation that the Natchez received a "peculiar interest" because of "Their strongly centralized government and highly developed religious ceremonial," and "while their heroic resistance to the French, and their final destruction as nation, lend their history a tinge of romance which writers have been quick to appreciate." James Mooney, "The End of the Natchez," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (July, 1899): 510.

attention of American anthropologists. Berthoud's belief that the "extinct" Natchez were a "brilliant and partially civilized race of savages" is precisely why he had so much interest in them. Like Morton, Robertson, and many others, the Natchez fascinated Berthoud because they were seen to be "partially civilized".

Five years later, Howard A. Giddings published a short piece on the Natchez in *Popular Science Monthly*. Reviewing material already presented by other scholars, Giddings offered a now familiar narrative of the Natchez that relies on the perceived notion of Natchez "demi-civilization." He writes about Natchez sun worship, the power of the Great Suns, and the four "classes" of Natchez people. He quotes extensively from the writings of Le Page du Pratz as well as citing information from McCulloh's early work on Native American origins. However, Gidding does not mention of the Toltecs. While clearly influenced by previous thinkers, Gidding's arguments foreshadowed the entrance of a new era of American thought that continued to operate within a logic of human stadial history but was less interested in making comparisons between the Natchez and other empires in the Americas.[45]

History and Anthropology, 20th century

At the turn of the twentieth century, the relationship between American anthropology and ideas about the Natchez shifted from a fascination with their "qualified barbarism" to an interest in cataloguing and compiling information on the

[45] Howard A. Giddings, "The Natchez Indians," *Popular Science Monthly* 39 (1891): 201-207, https://archive.org/details/popularsciencemo39newy. The fascination with sun rituals, the powers of Suns, and the organizing of four classes of people continues to fascinate non-Natchez to this day. For a contemporary example of this fascination, see: George Franklin Feldman, *Cannibalism, Headhunting and Human Sacrifice in North America: A History Forgotten* (Chambersburg, PA: Alan C. Hood & Co., Inc., 2008), 1-15. Feldman is most fascinated by Native practices of violence during the colonial period and relies on the same material from Le Page du Pratz that everyone else uses.

Natchez before they "disappeared."[46] James Mooney's "The End of the Natchez" (1899) exemplifies this shift in American anthropology. Unlike his predecessors, Mooney begins his essay with the assertion that there were still living Natchez at the time of his writing, maybe "twenty." He reviews French and Natchez history to 1730 and then, towards the end of the essay, offers a number of tantalizing historical references to Natchez living among the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and in Oklahoma and South Carolina. However, while Mooney acknowledges that Natchez still lived at the time of his writing, the intention of the essay is to convey the importance of locating living Natchez before their eventual and inevitable "end."[47]

After Mooney, anthropologists like John Swanton became more interested in locating and interviewing living Natchez speakers. After conducting ethnographic research among some Natchez in Oklahoma, Swanton wrote a book about Native Americans in the Lower Mississippi Valley in which he spends over two-thirds reviewing Natchez history. He spoke to five Natchez speakers, including Creek Sam, Wat Sam, Charlie Jumper, Lizzie Rooster, and Nancy Taylor. However, the majority of Swanton's study is a review of written sources from the colonial period.[48] Of the seventy pages Swanton spends on Natchez "history since white contact", the first sixty-five pages cover the years from 1682-1731, while the last five pages cover

[46] An American obsession with capturing the "vanishing" Native American before they disappeared is not unique to the Natchez. For a similar cases study in New England, see: Jean M. O'Brien, "'Vanishing' Indians in Nineteenth Century New England," in *New Perspectives on Native North America: Cultures, Histories, and Representations*, eds. Sergai A. Kan and Pauline Turner Strong (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 414-432. For an early rebuttal to the idea of the disappearing Native American, see: Brewton Berry, "The Myth of the Vanishing Indian," *Phylon*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1960): 51-57.
[47] Mooney, "The End of the Natchez," 510-521.
[48] Like most others before him, Swanton includes pages-long excerpts from Le Page du Pratz.

Natchez history from 1731-1910. The short attention paid to Natchez history after they left their homelands is because Swanton believed that the Natchez were "practically extinct, but thanks to their peculiar manners and customs and the romance and tragedy surrounding their last war with the French they have probably attained a fame which many existing tribes will never enjoy."[49] Swanton recognized that there were living Natchez in the twentieth century, but they were less important to him than his analysis of the "romantic" and "tragic" encounter with the French in the early 18th century.[50] While recognizing that previous accounts frequently romanticized Natchez history, Swanton's framing of the Natchez past and his privileging of the early eighteenth century repeat the same patterns of romantization and exotification as those before him.

Since Swanton, there has been an enormous amount of material written about the Natchez, almost entirely focused on Natchez history before French contact to the 1730s.[51] In 2007, Jim Barnett published the first comprehensive survey of Natchez

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[49] John Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*. Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 43 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 2, 257. Like Berthoud, Swanton recognized that the earlier comparisons of the Natchez to the Aztecs and the Quechua of Peru effectively "surrounded" the Natchez in "glamour… with the result that the true Natchez tribe has become almost unknown."

[50] The phenomenon of consulting living Native peoples and then downplaying their survival in order to narrate their disappearance is not isolated to the southeast. See: O'Brien, "'Vanishing' Indians in Nineteenth Century New England," 415.

[51] For the most up-to-date review of Natchez scholarship on this early period, see: George Edward Milne, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015); and Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*. For a sample of key archaeological and historical inquiries see: George Edward Milne, *"Picking up the Pieces: Natchez Coalescence in the Shatter Zone" in Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 388-417*; Lorenz, Karl G, "A Re-Examination of Natchez Sociopolitical Complexity: A View from the Grand Village and Beyond," *Southeastern Archaeology* 16 (Winter 1997): 97-112; Karl G. Lorenz, "The Natchez of Southwest Mississippi,"142-177; Daniel H. Usner Jr., "French-Natchez Borderlands in Colonial Lousiana" in *American Indians in*

history to 1735, incorporating extensive research done in the twentieth century. However, while he writes in the epilogue about Natchez communities living today, including a mention of specific people like Hutke Fields (the present Great Sun of the Natchez), the back dust jacket cover reads, "The most complete and detailed examination of a vanished tribe".[52] Clearly it continues to be profitable to market the idea of the "vanishing Indian" even while the author writes about the continued existence of Natchez people.

The appeal of the violent Natchez encounter with the French still has influence today among non-academics as well. In 2001, two public historians wrote *Nankowetco: A Natchez Odyssey* that offers a fictionalized account of the Natchez and French encounter in the early 1700s.[53] In their version, the main character is Le Page du Pratz and he is Natchez, not French. The authors completely erase any problems with documentation and use Le Page du Pratz's writings uncritically.

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the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 15-32; Ian W. Brown "Certain Aspects of French-Indian Interaction in Lower Louisiane," in *Calumet & Fleur-de-Lys: Archaeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*, eds. John A. Walthall and Thomas E. Emerson (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): 17-34; Ian W. Brown, "Natchez Indians and the Remains of a Proud Past," in *Natchez before 1830,* ed. Noel Polk, 8-28 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989); Ian W. Brown, *Natchez Indian Archaeology: Culture Change and Stability in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, Archaeological Report No. 15 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1985); Jeffrey P. Brain, "Late Prehistoric Settlement Patterning in the Yazoo Basin and Natchez Bluffs Regions of the Lower Mississippi Valley," in *Mississippian Settlement Patterns*, ed. Bruce D. Smith, 331-368 (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Robert S. Neitzel, *Archaeology of the Fatherland Site: The Grand Village of the Natchez* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Musuem of Natural History, Volume 51, 1965); Robert S. Neitzel, *The Grand Village of the Natchez Revisited: Excavations at the Fatherland Site, Adams County, Mississippi, 1972.* Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Archaeological Report, No. 12. (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1983).

[52] Barnett, *The Natchez*. The last sentence in Barnett's epilogue about contemporary Natchez is, "In the tragic aftermath of the Natchez Rebellion of 1729, the Natchez Indians vanished as a people; however, their descendants have not relinquished their tribal identity." My question then is, if they will not relinquish their identity, how are they "vanished"?

[53] Christovich and Toledano, *Nankowetco*.

Perhaps the novel acts as a fulfillment of Chateaubriand's dream to join or become one with the Natchez as it brings the French outsider, Le Page du Pratz, to the center of the Natchez story.[54] Again, Natchez history is less important than romanticizing what the Natchez might have been like. Coming full circle, this novel reveals that there is still a strong impulse in Americans to romanticize the Natchez past while still not recognizing the impact of that past on Natchez people today.

The legacy of ideas concerning Natchez history continues to influence contemporary thought. *Nankowetco* and the genealogical webpage of Adams County, MS, clearly illustrate the lasting impact of debunked ideas and how they continue to impact the way people think about Natchez history. The Natchez received a remarkable amount of attention by past European and American thinkers and have appeared in some of the foundational works of Western thought while simultaneously being denied coevalness. The Natchez are mentioned and discussed in the great works of Enlightenment historiography (Robertson), literary Romanticism (Chateaubriand), early geography (Pinkerton), U.S. Indian Policy (Jefferson), scientific racism (Morton), and twentieth century "salvage" anthropology (Swanton). While the Natchez struggle for Federal Recognition to access funds for important programs such housing, social services, and language revitalization, many Americans seem content to regurgitate false ideas about the Natchez without ever acknowledging that the Natchez survive. In order for a full of the history of the Natchez to be written, the

[54] The novel *Nankowetco* fits within a centuries-old American habit of "playing Indian", see: Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Deloria argues that, for most Americans, there was "no way to conceive an American identity without Indians. At the same time, there was no way to make a complete identity while they remained" (37).

scholarship on the Natchez must begin to address its problematic intellectual roots and also recognize that Natchez history, indeed, continues after 1731.

Epilogue

In February 1980, the Governor of South Carolina, Dick Riley, paid a visit to an underdeveloped and marginalized stretch of land along the Edisto River in Dorchester County, South Carolina. Since colonial times, the area has been known in English as the "Four Holes [Swamp]." Today, the descendants of eighteenth century diasporic Natchez and the descendants of an "old Edisto tribe" of Kussos that lived in the area before European contact still inhabit the land. Governor Riley had come to see the area for himself and to meet with Chief Robert Davidson of the Four Holes Indian Organization. Riley "made a quick tour" of the region "in a chauffeured sedan accompanied by Chief Robert Davidson and was shown the community's problems, such as inadequate housing, drainage and roads, and was told of other needs such as jobs, industry, a water system, fire protection and recreation."[1]

The dire poverty and economic marginalization of the region had not changed much since 1969, the year that Native American community leaders, including Chief Robert Davidson, had formed the Four Holes Indian Organization. However, since 1969 the state of South Carolina had begun to provide some economic assistance to the organization, yet Riley could clearly see that many people still lived in poverty in 1980. Riley pledged to help the community, but Chief Davidson was skeptical. Davidson reflected that, "he has been promised help by politicians and government

[1] Wallace C. Hitchcock, "Riley Promises Help to Indian Community: Tour Spotlights Impoverished Area," *The State: Washington, Newberry, Pee Dee and Orangeburg Bureaus* (Columbia, S.C.), Saturday, Feb. 16, 1980. This newspaper clipping is held by the South Carolinia Library at the University of South Carolina, hereinafter cited as USC. See: USC, Indians of South Carolina vertical files collection, "Natchez Indians" folder.

representatives for years and has yet to see a better way of life for his people."[2] Unfortunately, Davidson's skepticism was well founded because the Federal and State funds that Riley promised never came through.[3]

While the government failed to live up to its promises, the Natchez-Kusso of Edisto River worked to address the social ills of poverty in their community. Up until 1969, most Native Americans living along Edisto River lacked access to public education, health services, employment (other than subsistence farming) and were generally marginalized from 20th century American life in South Carolina. David Brown, a white Church of God minister who had been hired to help with adult educational programs reported that, "The Edistos' average life expectancy is about 45 years and the average community income is some $2,500 a year or less—far below the national poverty line. There are no medical facilities or even traveling doctors or dentists who occasionally visit the community, and few community residents have cars to drive 25 miles to the nearest hospital. Also, there is only one tiny country store in the community, and it couldn't possibly meet the grocery needs of a family." Chief Davidson linked the problem of unemployment and poverty to a lack of education.[4]

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[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Kay Gordon, "Resolution Recognizes Indian Tribes in State after Years of Trouble," *Columbia Record*, January 6, 1983. Clipping is held in USC, Indians of South Carolina vertical files collection, "Edisto Indians" folder. Governor Riley blamed "federal funding cutbacks" and "no strong local leadership" as the main contributing factors for his failure to fulfill his promise.

[4] Unknown author, "The Edisto Indians Gird for a Battle for Life," *Adult Education Newsletter*, January 1976, clipping held at USC, Indians of South Carolina vertical files collection, "Edisto Indians" folder.

The lack of educational opportunities was a serious obstacle to the Natchez-Kusso. Chief Davidson said that, "Up until 1969 an eighth grade education was about the highest in the community. We had only one or two people that had finished high school." In 1976, still "over 50 percent of the community's employable adults" could not find any employment. However, in 1976, the Four Holes Indian Organization acquired an annually renewable federal grant of $50,000 for adult basic education. Within the first five months, the program had an enrollment of 49 adults, who averaged 29 years of age and a fifth grade educational background. "Up until that time," Chief Davidson reports that, "none of us went to public schools because we had our own little school. When we organized, we decided that the best thing we could do was close our school and put our children out in public schools, so they could get a good education."[5] The emphasis on education, however, was not only directed towards eliminating unemployment.

The demand for education was also connected to a community desire to better understand their Native heritage. Even though they decided to close their own school and attend American public schools, "Learning about their heritage is an important way for the Edistos to regain their identification as Indians" and many Natchez-Kusso use education to regain "skills that were the pride of the Natche [sic] for hundreds of years."[6]

The more recent experience of struggle by the Natchez-Kusso of Four Holes Swamp to incorporate their communities more fully into modern American life was

[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

very different from the Natchez families who first settled in the area in the 1730s, a time when they were welcomed by the elites of South Carolina to join English society in the colony. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a combination of American racial prejudice and a Natchez desire to remain safe and secluded from the dominant society led to the severe poverty and marginalization seen in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Since the 1980s, the Natchez-Kusso have made great strides to increase educational opportunities and to improve the quality of life of their community.

The Natchez in Oklahoma also suffer from poverty and marginalization from the larger society. Hutke Fields, the Great Sun of the Natchez, has a master's degree in social work but has had trouble finding employment after becoming the Great Sun. When the elders of his community told him that he was chosen to become the next leader of the Natchez, he received specific ceremonial facial tattoos. These traditional tattoos make it hard for him to find employment in a world that does not recognize Natchez traditions.[7] Thus, even today, it is difficult to maintain a Natchez identity in a United States that does not recognize that the Natchez culture and people still exist, but it not impossible. In my own travels to Oklahoma, I have gone to tribal meetings with traditional clan mothers and other community leaders appointed according to Natchez traditions, I have seen Natchez stomp dance, sing songs in the Natchez language and play traditional games like stickball. The Natchez Nation is also currently working to rejuvenate the Natchez language among its youth. While the community faces poverty and discrimination in Oklahoma, the spirit and culture of

[7] Hutke Fields, personal communication, August 2012.

the Natchez people are alive. In the end, I hope this dissertation adds visibility to the Natchez people and their history. Regardless of the impact of this research, I am confident that the Natchez will continue to survive despite the adversity they have struggled against over the centuries.

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