



Middle Grounds, Borderlands, and Frontiers

The early borderlands of North America were born of mutual weakness. European colonists lacked the numbers and the military strength to subdue neighboring native societies, and the Indians were either unable or unwilling to drive the newcomers away from their borders. Indians and Europeans also possessed things that the other needed—food, furs, technology, information, sexual partners, allies—and that were easier to obtain through persuasion than force. Such a blend of wants and weakness spawned a long history of mutual conciliation that saw European settlers and administrators becoming gradually drawn into native social and economic networks, even as Indians themselves adjusted their traditions to European expectations. Well into the eighteenth century, European colonial ventures in North America reflected grand metropolitan designs only to a degree. They were also, and perhaps primarily, locally driven negotiated systems with Native Americans who, in a sense, forced the Europeans to leave the relative safety of their colonial enclaves for the untested terrain of mutual accommodation.

The most notable of such realms of mutual accommodation existed in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Great Lakes region, where French colonists met and mingled with various indigenous societies. Here both the natives and the newcomers failed to impose their will by force and therefore had to accommodate one another in mutually beneficial ways. This “middle ground” of coexistence and compromise, as historian Richard White has called the new intercultural arrangements, rested on practices and rhetoric that were neither entirely Indian nor entirely European, but a fusion of both. The middle ground was a world where conciliation achieved more than coercion and where diverse peoples tried to reach their goals not by clinging to their own principles but by appealing to what they thought to be the cultural premises of others. Indians and French frequently, and often deliberately, misunderstood one another, yet that did not thwart conciliation between them because out of their misunderstandings arose new meanings and practices—the meanings and practices of the middle ground. Listening to one another, misunderstanding one another, appealing to one another, and eventually reinventing one another, the French and

the Indians forged a vast array of mutual accommodations—economic, political, diplomatic, legal, sexual—that became the bedrock of their long coexistence.

The Great Lakes middle ground was a creation of local actors—traders, chiefs, petty colonial officials, missionaries, and native women—who found their traditional practices inadequate for navigating the new and confusing intercultural world. But the middle ground was also a product of large historical forces and of a specific geopolitical context. In the Great Lakes region, both the French and the Indians felt threatened by the more powerful English and Iroquois in the East, a position of vulnerability that not only drew them to seek protection in an alliance but also pushed them to make the necessary cultural compromises that underwrote the alliance. The Great Lakes middle ground, then, emerged not only from mutual weakness, from an inability of the French and Indians to dictate to one another. It also grew out of a shared sense of vulnerability that compelled both to overcome their deep reluctance to readjust their behaviors, compromise their standards, and alter their customs.

By revealing the layered texture and the often paradoxical nature of cross-cultural encounters, White's book galvanized the study of Indian-European relations and borderlands in North America. It has also engaged historians in a prolonged debate: Was the middle ground a unique historical phenomenon specific to the Great Lakes region, or is it possible to identify other middle grounds elsewhere in the Americas? This chapter focuses on two broad North American contact zones that bore both similarities to and differences from the Great Lakes middle ground: seventeenth- and eighteenth-century eastern North America, where westward-moving English colonists brushed against the many native societies in the interior, and eighteenth-century Louisiana, where French newcomers faced numerous native societies on both sides of the lower Mississippi Valley. The two areas lend themselves to several comparisons, both with one another and with the Great Lakes region. The English colonies and French Louisiana both sought mediation with the native peoples on their borders, but their efforts did not result in anything like the Great Lakes middle ground. Why the difference? Why did the French-Indian middle ground not extend from the Great Lakes region down to the lower Mississippi Valley into French Louisiana? And why did the English settlers push their border with Indian country gradually westward during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while the French settlement remained anchored in the shores of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence and Mississippi rivers? Why, in other words, did the English engender an aggressively expanding settlement frontier, whereas the French did not? Demography leaps to mind—English colonists far outnumbered French colonists in North America—but did other factors play a role?

DOCUMENTS

The first three documents illustrate how Indians and Europeans struggled to understand one another in the early stages of colonization. Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in North America, was founded in 1607 in the Chesapeake Bay, a region dominated by the powerful Powhatan Indian Confederacy, which was held together by marital and kinship ties that centered around Chief Powhatan. The first document is a description of the Powhatans, written by John Smith, Jamestown's principal liaison with the Powhatans, and

published in 1624. (Smith also wrote an account claiming that he had been captured by the Powhatans and then rescued by Pocahontas, the daughter of Powhatan, the paramount chief of the confederacy. That event, if it actually took place, was probably a ritualized adoption ceremony intended to turn Smith into a subordinate chieftain under the Powhatans.) The second document is a speech Chief Powhatan reportedly delivered to Smith in 1609, when Powhatan-English relations had collapsed to violence. The speech is open to interpretation. Was the chief trying to forge a zone of coexistence based on peace and trade, was he submitting himself to the English, or was he trying to incorporate them as fictive, adopted kin?

The third document presents the instructions of Father Jean de Brébeuf, written in 1637, for Jesuit missionaries among the Huron Indians. Brébeuf's focus on the external dimensions of behavior may appear superficial, but it does not mean that his manual for cross-cultural communication was not effective. Early North American contact zones were highly ritualized places where small gestures, expressions, and utterances mattered a great deal. They mattered so much precisely because the relationships between Indians and Europeans—peoples separated by a vast cultural gap—were so fragile.

Early Indian-European borderlands were sites of cross-cultural negotiation and coexistence, but because they brought together people from vastly different cultures, clashes were inevitable. One of the most dramatic sources and expressions of conflict was captive raiding, which complicated native-newcomer relations across the Americas. Document 4 presents extracts from the autobiography of Mary Jemison, a white woman who was captured in 1757, at the age of fifteen, by a Shawnee-French raiding party on the Pennsylvania frontier. She was adopted by the Seneca Indians, renamed Dehgewanus (Dickewamis in the document), and married to a Delaware Indian man. Jemison lived out her days among the Senecas. In 1823, she told her story to James Seaver, who the next year published *The Life and Times of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, one of the most famous captive narratives. Jemison's autobiography reveals the shock of being incorporated into the Seneca society that, despite more than a century of sustained interactions between Iroquois and English, remained alien and terrifying. But Jemison's account also suggests how captive raiding could foster understanding between cultures and narrow the crevasse between them.

In the late seventeenth century, the southeastern corner of North America became a contested international borderland, where Indians, Spaniards, and English vied for power, formed alliances, and reluctantly adjusted to each other's presence. Spanish Franciscans had maintained a string of missions in Florida since the early seventeenth century, imposing their religious and civil institutions on native communities, but the establishment of a new English colony in South Carolina in 1670 opened a new, turbulent era in the region. South Carolina grew rapidly in numbers, sending colonists south and west, and the borderland between Florida and South Carolina became a site of fierce contestation. Slavery was at the heart of this rivalry. South Carolina became a center of a burgeoning Indian slave trade, which extended across the South, keeping some native groups

on the English orbit, while alienating the victims of the traffic. In 1693, in an effort to undermine the plantation economy in the English colonies, Spanish King Carlos II decreed that fugitive slaves from Carolina be granted asylum and freedom in Florida if they converted to Catholicism. That policy was later extended to runaway slaves from Georgia, which was established in 1732. The next two documents illuminate these borderland ties and rivalries from different angles. Document 5 is a part of the act that the South Carolina legislature passed in 1700 concerning runaway slaves and their apprehension. Fearful that Indians and Africans might unite against them, Carolinians hoped to foment mutual hostility between the two groups. This act served that objective by encouraging Indians to serve as a police force for the colony, but it also helped enforce a sharp racial hierarchy among Europeans, Indians, and Africans. Document 6 is a letter of William Stephens, president of the colony of Georgia, written in 1742 when the War of Jenkins's Ear raged in the Florida-Georgia borderlands. Stephens assesses the prospects of African slavery in Georgia, complicated by the colony's proximity to Spanish Florida.

The last three documents focus on French-English-Indian relations in the Southeast borderlands. Since its founding, South Carolina engaged in active trade in Indian slaves with its native neighbors, extending its commercial influence as far west as the Mississippi Valley. The French responded by extending its own Indian alliance eastward from Louisiana, and the result was a protracted borderlands rivalry with fluid and shifting demarcations: The French and English competed for native loyalties, and the powerful Indian nations—the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Natchez, and others—played the two colonial rivals against one another. Document 7 is an excerpt from the journal of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, who established French presence at the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1699. Threatened by South Carolina's growing influence among the southeastern Indians, especially the powerful Chickasaws, Iberville in 1702 invited the Chickasaws and Choctaws to a meeting where he hoped to forge a unified French-Indian front against English incursions. Mixing offers of gifts and mediation with threats, he goaded the Chickasaws to accept peace with the French and the Choctaws. Political stability in the Southeast borderlands remained elusive, and the continuing French-English-Indian rivalries put the thinly populated and internally heterogeneous Louisiana—approximately two-thirds of its nearly six thousand inhabitants were slaves—in a vulnerable position. The seriousness of the situation became evident in late 1729, when the Natchez Indians rose against the French. The Natchez approached other native nations and Louisiana's African slaves, inviting them to join the war. Document 8 is a letter by Etienne de Périer, the governor of Louisiana, to Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count of Maurepas, the secretary of state for the Navy, written a month after the outbreak of the war. It captures the fear that gripped French Louisiana and the governor's ambivalence over arming and using African slaves against the Indians. Document 9 is a letter by Périer to Philibert Ory, the controller general of finances in the French court, written eight months into the Natchez War, and it reveals the opportunism and daunting complexity of the borderlands diplomacy Périer had to employ to save his colony.

1. John Smith on the Powhatan Confederacy, 1624

ALTHOUGH the Country people [Powhatans] be very barbarous, yet have they amongst them such government, as that their Magistrates for good commanding, and their people for due subjection, and obeying, excell many places that would be counted very civill. The forme of their Common-wealth is a Monarchiall government, one as Emperour ruleth over many Kings or Governours. Their chiefe ruler is called Powhatan, and taketh his name of his principall place of dwelling called Powhatan. But his proper name is Wahunsonacock. Some Countries he hath which have beene his ancestors, and came unto him by inheritance, as the Country called Powhatan, Arrohateck, Appamatuck, Pamaunkee, Youghtanund, and Mattapanient. All the rest of his Territories expressed in the Mappe, they report have beene his severall Conquests. In all his ancient inheritances, he hath houses built after their manner like arbours, some 30. some 40. yards long, and at every house provision for his entertainment according to the time. At Werowcomoco on the Northside of the river Pamaunkee, was his residence, when I was delivered him prisoner, some 14 myles from James Towne, where for the most part, he was resident, but at last he tooke so little pleasure in our neare neighbourhood, that he retired himselfe to Orapakes, in the desert betwixt Chickahamanta and Youghtanund. He is of personage a tall well proportioned man, with a sower looke, his head somewhat gray, his beard so thinne, that it seemeth none at all, his age neare sixtie; of a very able and hardy body to endure any labour. About his person ordinarily attendeth a guard of 40 or 50 of the tallest men his Countrey doth afford. Every night upon the foure quarters of his house are foure Sentinels, each from other a flight shoot, and at every halfe houre one from the Corps du guard doth hollow, shaking his lips with his finger betweene them; unto whom every Sentinell doth answer round from his stand: if any faile, they presently send forth an officer that beateth him extreemely.

A myle from Orapakes in a thicket of wood, he hath a house in which he keepeth his kinde of Treasure, as skinnes, copper, pearle, and beads, which he storeth up against the time of his death and buriall. Here also is his store of red paint for oyntment, bowes and arrowes, Targets and clubs. This house is fiftie or sixtie yards in length, frequented onely by Priests. At the foure corners of this house stand foure Images as Sentinels, one of a Dragon, another a Beare, the third like a Leopard, and the fourth like a giantlike man, all made evill favouredly, according to their best workemanship.

He hath as many women as he will, whereof when he lieth on his bed, one sitteth at his head, and another at his feet, but when he sitteth, one sitteth on his right hand and another on his left. As he is weary of his women, he bestoweth them on those that best deserve them at his hands. When he dineth or supbeth, one of his women before and after meat, bringeth him water in a wooden platter

to wash his hands. Another waiteth with a bunch of feathers to wipe them in stead of a Towell, and the feathers when he hath wiped are dryed againe. His kingdomes descend not to his sonnes nor children, but first to his brethren, whereof he hath 3. namely, Opitchapan, Opechancanough, and Catataugh, and after their decease to his sisters. First to the eldest sister, then to the rest, and after them to the heires male or female of the eldest sister, but never to the heires of the males.

He nor any of his people understand any letters, whereby to write or reade, onely the lawes whereby he ruleth is custome. Yet when he listeth his will is a law and must be obeyed: not onely as a King, but as halfe a God they esteeme him. His inferiour Kings whom they call Werowances, are tyed to rule by customes, and have power of life and death at their command in that nature. But this word Werowance, which we call and construe for a King, is a common word, whereby they call all commanders: for they have but few words in their language, and but few occasions to use any officers more then one commander, which commonly they call Werowance, or Caucorouse, which is Captaine. They all know their severall lands, and habitations, and limits, to fish, foule, or hunt in, but they hold all of their great Werrowance Powhatan, unto whom they pay tribute of skinnes, beads, copper, pearle, deere, turkies, wild beasts, and come. What he commandeth they dare not disobey in the least thing. It is strange to see with what great feare and adoration, all these people doe obey this Powhatan. For at his feet they present whatsoever he commandeth, and at the least frowne of his brow, their greatest spirits will tremble with feare: and no marvell, for he is very terrible & tyrannous in punishing such as offend him.

2. Chief Powhatan Addresses John Smith, 1609

Captaine Smith you may understand, that I, having seene the death of all my people thrice, and not one living of those 3 generations, but my selfe, I knowe the difference of peace and warre, better then any in my Countrie. But now I am old, and ere long must die, my brethren, namely Opichapam, Opechancanough, and Kekataugh, my two sisters, and their two daughters, are distinctly each others successours, I wish their experiences no lesse then mine, and your love to them, no lesse then mine to you; but this brute from Nansamund that you are come to destroy my Countrie, so much affrighteth all my people, as they dare not visit you; what will it availe you, to take that perforce, you may quietly have with love, or to destroy them that provide you food? what can you get by war, when we can hide our provision and flie to the woodes, whereby you must famish by wronging us your friends; and whie are you thus jealous of our loves, seeing us unarmed, and both doe, and are willing still to feed you with that you

cannot get but by our labours? think you I am so simple not to knowe, it is better to eate good meate, lie well, and sleepe quietly with my women and children, laugh and be merrie with you, have copper, hatchets, or what I want, being your friend; then bee forced to flie from al, to lie cold in the woods, feed upon acorns, roots, and such trash, and be so hunted by you, that I can neither rest, eat, nor sleepe; but my tired men must watch, and if a twig but breake, everie one crie there comes Captaine Smith, then must I flie I knowe not whether, and thus with miserable feare end my miserable life; leaving my pleasures to such youths as you, which through you rash unadvisednesse, may quickly as miserably ende, for want of that you never knowe how to find? Let this therefore assure you of our loves and everie yeare our friendly trade shall furnish you with corne, and now also if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your gunnes and swords, as to invade your foes.

3. Father Jean de Brébeuf Instructs Jesuit Missionaries, 1637

The Fathers and Brethren whom God shall call to the Holy Mission of the Hurons ought to exercise careful foresight in regard to all the hardships, annoyances, and perils that must be encountered in making this journey, in order to be prepared betimes for all emergencies that may arise.

You must have sincere affection for the Savages,—looking upon them as ransomed by the blood of the son of God, and as our brethren, with whom we are to pass the rest of our lives.

To conciliate the Savages, you must be careful never to make them wait for you in embarking.

You must provide yourself with a tinder box or with a burning mirror, or with both, to furnish them fire in the daytime to light their pipes, and in the evening when they have to encamp; these little services win their hearts.

You should try to eat their *sagamité* or *salmagundi* in the way they prepare it, although it may be dirty, half-cooked, and very tasteless. As to the other numerous things which may be unpleasant, they must be endured for the love of God, without saying anything or appearing to notice them.

It is well at first to take everything they offer, although you may not be able to eat it all; for, when one becomes somewhat accustomed to it, there is not too much.

You must try and eat at daybreak unless you can take your meal with you in the canoe; for the day is very long, if you have to pass it without eating. The Barbarians eat only at Sunrise and Sunset, when they are on their journeys.

You must be prompt in embarking and disembarking; and tuck up your gowns so that they will not get wet, and so that you will not carry either water or sand into the canoe. To be properly dressed, you must have your feet and legs bare; while crossing the rapids, you can wear your shoes, and, in the long portages, even your leggings.

You must so conduct yourself as not to be at all troublesome to even one of these Barbarians.

It is not well to ask many questions, nor should you yield to your desire to learn the language and to make observations on the way; this may be carried too far. You must relieve those in your canoe of this annoyance, especially as you cannot profit much by it during the work. Silence is a good equipment at such a time.

You must bear with their imperfections without saying a word, yes, even without seeming to notice them. Even if it be necessary to criticise anything, it must be done modestly, and with words and signs which evince love and not aversion. In short, you must try to be, and to appear, always cheerful.

Each one should be provided with half a gross of awls, two or three dozen little knives called jambettes [pocket-knives], a hundred fishhooks, with some beads of plain and colored glass, with which to buy fish or other articles when the tribes meet each other, so as to feast the Savages; and it would be well to say to them in the beginning, "Here is something with which to buy fish." Each one will try, at the portages, to carry some little thing, according to his strength; however little one carries, it greatly pleases the Savages, if it be only a kettle.

You must not be ceremonious with the Savages, but accept the comforts they offer you, such as a good place in the cabin. The greatest conveniences are attended with very great inconvenience, and these ceremonies offend them.

Be careful not to annoy any one in the canoe with your hat; it would be better to take your nightcap. There is no impropriety among the Savages.

Do not undertake anything unless you desire to continue it; for example, do not begin to paddle unless you are inclined to continue paddling. Take from the start the place in the canoe that you wish to keep; do not lend them your garments, unless you are willing to surrender them during the whole journey. It is easier to refuse at first than to ask them back, to change, or to desist afterwards.

Finally, understand that the Savages will retain the same opinion of you in their own country that they will have formed on the way; and one who has passed for an irritable and troublesome person will have considerable difficulty afterwards in removing this opinion. You have to do not only with those of your own canoe, but also (if it must be so stated) with all those of the country; you meet some to-day and others to-morrow, who do not fail to inquire, from those who brought you, what sort of man you are. It is almost incredible, how they observe and remember even the slightest fault. When you meet Savages on the way, as you cannot yet greet them with kind words, at least show them a cheerful face, and thus prove that you endure gayly the fatigues of the voyage. You will thus have put to good use the hardships of the way, and have already advanced considerably in gaining the affection of the Savages.

This is a lesson which is easy enough to learn, but very difficult to put into practice; for, leaving a highly civilized community, you fall into the hands of barbarous people who care but little for your Philosophy or your Theology. All the fine qualities which might make you loved and respected in France are like pearls trampled under the feet of swine, or rather of mules, which utterly despise you when they see that you are not as good pack animals as they are. If you could go naked, and carry the load of a horse upon you back, as they do,

then you would be wise according to their doctrine, and would be recognized as a great man, otherwise not. Jesus Christ is our true greatness; it is he alone and his cross that should be sought in running after these people, for, if you strive for anything else, you will find naught but bodily and spiritual affliction. But having found Jesus Christ in his cross, you have found the roses in the thorns, sweetness in bitterness, all in nothing.

4. Mary Jemison Looks Back on Her Capture by and Life Among Indians, 1824

The Indians by whom I was taken were a party of Shawanees, if I remember right, that lived, when at home, a long distance down the Ohio.

My former Indian masters, and the two squaws, were soon ready to leave the fort, and accordingly embarked; the Indians in a large canoe, and the two squaws and myself in a small one, and went down the Ohio.

On our way we passed a Shawanee town, where I saw a number of heads, arms, legs, and other fragments of the bodies of some white people who had just been burnt. The parts that remained were hanging on a pole which was supported at each end by a crotch stuck in the ground, and were roasted or burnt black as a coal.

At night we arrived at a small Seneca Indian town, at the mouth of a small river, that was called by the Indians, in the Seneca language, She-nan-jee, where the two Squaws to whom I belonged resided. There we landed, and the Indians went on; which was the last I ever saw of them.

Having made fast to the shore, the Squaws left me in the canoe while they went to their wigwam or house in the town, and returned with a suit of Indian clothing, all new, and very clean and nice. My clothes, though whole and good when I was taken, were now torn in pieces, so that I was almost naked. They first undressed me and threw my rags into the river; then washed me clean and dressed me in the new suit they had just brought, in complete Indian style; and then led me home and seated me in the center of their wigwam.

I had been in that situation but a few minutes, before all the Squaws in the town came in to see me. I was soon surrounded by them, and they immediately set up a most dismal howling, crying bitterly, and wringing their hands in all the agonies of grief for a deceased relative.

Their tears flowed freely, and they exhibited all the signs of real mourning. At the commencement of this scene, one of their number began, in a voice somewhat between speaking and singing, to recite some words to the following purport, and continued the recitation till the ceremony was ended; the company at the same time varying the appearance of their countenances, gestures and tone of voice, so as to correspond with the sentiments expressed by their leader:

“Oh our brother! Alas! He is dead—he has gone; he will never return! Friendless he died on the field of the slain, where his bones are yet lying unburied! Oh, who will not mourn his sad fate?”

And why do we mourn? Though he fell on the field of the slain, with glory he fell, and his spirit went up to the land of his fathers in war! Then why do we mourn? With transports of joy they received him, and fed him, and clothed him, and welcomed him there! Oh friends, he is happy; then dry up your tears! His spirit has seen our distress, and sent us a helper whom with pleasure we greet. Dickewamis has come: then let us receive her with joy! She is handsome and pleasant! Oh! she is our sister, and gladly we welcome her here. In the place of our brother she stands in our tribe. With care we will guard her from trouble; and may she be happy till her spirit shall leave us."

In the course of that ceremony, from mourning they became serene—joy sparkled in their countenances, and they seemed to rejoice over me as over a long lost child. I was made welcome amongst them as a sister to the two Squaws before mentioned, and was called Dickewamis; which being interpreted, signifies a pretty girl, a handsome girl, or a pleasant, good thing. That is the name by which I have ever since been called by the Indians.

I afterwards learned that the ceremony I at that time passed through, was that of adoption. The two squaws had lost a brother in Washington's war, sometime in the year before, and in consequence of his death went up to Fort Pitt, on the day on which I arrived there, in order to receive a prisoner or an enemy scalp, to supply their loss.

It is a custom of the Indians, when one of their number is slain or taken prisoner in battle, to give to the nearest relative to the dead or absent, a prisoner, if they have chanced to take one, and if not, to give him the scalp of an enemy. On the return of the Indians from conquest, which is always announced by peculiar shoutings, demonstrations of joy, and the exhibition of some trophy of victory, the mourners come forward and make their claims. If they receive a prisoner, it is at their option either to satiate their vengeance by taking his life in the most cruel manner they can conceive of; or, to receive and adopt him into the family, in the place of him whom they have lost. All the prisoners that are taken in battle and carried to the encampment or town by the Indians, are given to the bereaved families, till their number is made good. But if their mental wound is fresh, their loss so great that they deem it irreparable, or if their prisoner or prisoners do not meet their approbation, no torture, let it be ever so cruel, seems sufficient to make them satisfaction. It is family, and not national, sacrifices amongst the Indians, that has given them an indelible stamp as barbarians, and identified their character with the idea which is generally formed of unfeeling ferocity, and the most abandoned cruelty.

It was my happy lot to be accepted for adoption; and at the time of the ceremony I was received by the two squaws, to supply the place of their brother in the family; and I was ever considered and treated by them as a real sister, the same as though I had been born of their mother.

My sisters were diligent in teaching me their language; and to their great satisfaction I soon learned so that I could understand it readily, and speak it fluently. I was very fortunate in falling into their hands; for they were kind good natured women; peaceable and mild in their dispositions; temperate and decent in their habits, and very tender and gentle towards me. I have great reason to respect them, though they have been dead a great number of years.

Not long after the Delawares came to live with us, at Wiishto, my sisters told me that I must go and live with one of them, whose name was She-nin-jee. Not daring to cross them, or disobey their commands, with a great degree of reluctance I went; and Sheninjee and I were married according to Indian custom.

Sheninjee was a noble man; large in stature; elegant in his appearance; generous in his conduct; courageous in war; a friend to peace, and a great lover of justice. He supported a degree of dignity far above his rank, and merited and received the confidence and friendship of all the tribes with whom he was acquainted. Yet, Sheninjee was an Indian. The idea of spending my days with him, at first seemed perfectly irreconcilable to my feelings: but his good nature, generosity, tenderness, and friendship towards me, soon gained my affection; and, strange as it may seem, I loved him!—To me he was ever kind in sickness, and always treated me with gentleness; in fact, he was an agreeable husband, and a comfortable companion.

I had then been with the Indians four summers and four winters, and had become so far accustomed to their mode of living, habits and dispositions, that my anxiety to get away, to be set at liberty, and leave them, had almost subsided. With them was my home; my family was there, and there I had many friends to whom I was warmly attached in consideration of the favors, affection and friendship with which they had uniformly treated me, from the time of my adoption.

One thing only marred my happiness, while I lived with them on the Ohio; and that was the recollection that I had once had tender parents and a home that I loved. Aside from that consideration, or, if I had been taken in infancy, I should have been contented in my situation. Notwithstanding all that has been said against the Indians, in consequence of their cruelties to their enemies—cruelties that I have witnessed, and had abundant proof of—it is a fact that they are naturally kind, tender and peaceable towards their friends, and strictly honest; and that those cruelties have been practiced, only upon their enemies, according to their idea of justice.

5. The South Carolina Legislature Passes an Act for the Capture of Runaway Slaves, 1700

IV. That if any Indian or Indians shall apprehend or take or shall be assisting in apprehending or takeing any Runnaway as aforesaid, and the same shall bring back, shall have all the armes and ammunition that shall be taken in the possession of the person or persons so apprehended and taken, and such further reward as by the Governor shall be thought fitt, not exceeding twenty shillings to every Indian that shall be assisting in apprehending and takeing the said Runnaways.

V. And every white man that shall apprehend or take or shall be assisting in apprehending or takeing such Runnaways as aforesaid, shall have and receive out of the publick treasury for every such Runnaway so apprehended or taken, by an order under the hand of the Governor, not exceeding five pounds, and such order to the Receiver shall be his discharge.

VI. And for the better security of all such persons that shall endeavour to take any Runaways, it is hereby declared lawful for any white person, or Indian in whose company there is a white person, to beat, maim or assault any person aforesaid resisting, and if such Runaway aforesaid cannot otherwise be taken, to kill, he making resistance to avoid being apprehended or taken as aforesaid.

6. William Stephens Assesses the Prospects of Slavery in Georgia, 1742

S'r, ... I do not conceive that from what you are pleased to write in your last, concerning Negroes, it is expected I should enter into the Argument of their utility comparatively with white men, and take upon me to give reasons why the honble. Trust[ees] have not thought it hitherto expedient to allow the use of 'em in this Colony; since I find That already done so judiciously, and with such clear Strength of Reason publish'd to the World in the Year 1741; That I think it unanswerable: but for as much as I observe from what you write, that several Gentlemen of Eminence in Trade had given to the Trust[ees] their Opinion in favour of Negroes, under proper Regulations and Restrictions; what they are pleased to expect from me now (I think) is, my opinion how Negroes can be admitted here consistently with the safety of the Province: which therefore is the Point I am to stick to.

If tis meant without exception as to time, I apprehend the answer is so obvious, and past all controversy, that twill admit of no disquisition: for during the War we have with the Spaniards, and Augustine remaining in their hands, it is impracticable with Safety to make use of Negroes in Georgia; which is a Frontier of such a nature, that I conceive it impossible, even for the General, to prevent their escape to the Enemy; tho' his whole Regiment were appointed to keep a Guard for that purpose; as his Excellence has at this time, divers Troops of Rangers appointed by him, to watch and examine persons of all kinds, passing to, and fro' wherever they are found: nevertheless Negroes, seeking for liberty, were they now among us, would soon find means, by untrodden paths thro' a Wilderness of thick Woods, to flee to Augustine so near us as tis; more especially when they will not only obtain their promised freedom, but also have Arms put into their hands, and become a part of their Army to fight against us.

Presuming what I have so far said, to be undeniable; it is next to be considered with what safety they can be admitted in time of Peace. As I have always professed my own natural Aversion to keeping Slaves; and still (were it in my choice) would rather prefer keeping of white Servants, if they might be had for moderate Wages; perhaps I may be looked on as prejudiced in my opinion: but since it has fully appeared, that there is little or no likelihood of supplying this Colony with a competent number of those, to make such improvement in Cultivation of Land as is to be wish'd, and at this very time most of our ablest young

people, have rather chosen to go into the Publick Service, (either in Scout boats, or as Rangers etc.) than labour in clearing and improving of Land, which too many of 'em shew an aversion to. For these reasons, if the Use of Negroes is admitted after the War; tis natural that I should (among others) be dealing for a few also: and in such case I am to offer such regulations and restrictions as occur to me necessary to be observed, for the future preservation and advantage of the Colony: which I shall endeavour, with due deference to better Judgments, and with a perfect impartiality.

1. If Augustine remains in the Spaniards hands at the conclusion of this War (the contrary of which must be wished for, by all good Englishmen, who have experienced already too much what a Thorn they are in our side in times of Peace) it ought not to be supposed but that due care would be taken in a Treaty of Peace, effectually to prevent any runaway Negroes from being received or entertained by the Spaniards, either at Augustine, or in any other of their Settlements on Florida: wherein too much care can not be had to prevent their eluding such an Article again, as has been formerly practiced, and which they are very fond of. But in case of any future Rupture betwixt the two Nations, and Augustine still in the hands of the Spaniards; what the consequence then might be, of the negro's revolting to the Enemy, who by that time might probably be some thousands in Number; I must leave to the consideration of those, whose capacitys reach far beyond mine.

2. As to the proportion necessary for the safety of the Colony, how many Negroes may be allowed towards carrying on Plantation Work; I conceive that any number not exceeding 4 at most will require one white man, of Growth and Strength sufficient for bearing Arms in defence of his King and Country, always to attend; and either work with 'em, or at least constantly inspect 'em: as well to see them properly employd in the Day time, as to secure them at nights: for which reason such white man must make his abode on the Plantation: and in that case, if the Owner himself shall at any time chuse to continue on his Plantation, to see his own Work carried on, he may be understood to be such a White man as here meant; otherwise he must employ one for that purpose: and whether he himself or a Servant under him be so employd; strickt care should be taken, that Arms of all kinds be kept out of the power of Negroes coming at them.

3. Whereas the reason given for the use of Negroes has been principally, if not wholly, an Impossibility of clearing land to any degree, and cultivating it without 'em: it tacitly implys, that they are not wanted on any other occasion: which indeed I think: and therefore they ought not to be allowed in Towns, or any where, but on Plantation work: under which term it is to be understood, that rowing in a Boat on his Masters Service, or going to and from one Town or place to another, on the same, is included; since it may conduce to the improvement of his Plantation: for a greater liberty would be a great discouragement to labouring white people coming to live among us; who by such means would find little Room to work; as many of our Deserters to Carolina have sadly experienced, contrary to their Expectations: where Negroes take off all occasion of white men being hired: and if the case is so, with respect to Day labourers only; much more then ought there to be here a total prohibition of Negro's

occupying or learning any trade; which must inevitably contribute to the unpeopling of this Colony. Nor should the Master of such Negroes be permitted to let them out to hire for wages which would confirm the practice of converting them to no other use, that putting so much money in his pocket, wherewith to live idle, and voluptuously; as tis most notorious was the case of too many among us formerly who were the first, that upon their Servts. times expiring, and that Fond failing began to be clamorous, and to perswade the World to believe, they were driven hence thro' fear of starving.

7. Pierre Le Moynes d'Iberville Addresses Chickasaw and Choctaw Leaders, 1702

At eight o'clock in the morning I had the presents laid out that I desired to give these two nations: to each, 200 livres of powder, 200 livres of bullets, 200 livres of game-shot, 12 guns, 100 axes, 150 knives, some kettles, glass beads, gun flints, awls, and other hardware, which made a considerable present indeed. After this I had them assembled. My brother De Bienville acting as interpreter, I said to them: "I rejoice to see you disposed to live in peace with each other and with all the nations of the region"—after I had made them perceive the advantages to be had from good relations rather than from destroying each other, which they had been doing. I said: "The Chicacha [Chickasaw] have foolishly followed the advice of the English, who have no other objective than to work their destruction by inciting the Chicacha and the Chaqueta [Choctaws] to make war on each other so that the English can get slaves, whom they send away to other countries to be sold. One proof that the English are not your friends, but are seeking only to destroy you is, as you well know, that your enemies have taken Chicacha prisoners, whom the English of St. Georges bought, as they bought the Chaqueta, and whom they sent off to the islands to be sold—far from sending them back home, as they should have done. You Chicacha can observe that during the last eight to ten years when you have been at war with the Chaqueta at the instigation of the English, who gave you ammunition and thirty guns for that purpose, you have taken more than 500 prisoners and killed more than 1,800 Chaqueta. Those prisoners were sold; but taking those prisoners cost you more than 800 men, slain on various war parties, who would be living at this moment if it had not been for the English. The Chaqueta see it well—and the Chicacha ought to see it, too,—that the Englishman is to blame for the loss of your dead brothers. And the ultimate plan of the Englishman, after weakening you by means of wars, is to come and seize you in your villages and then send you to be sold somewhere else, in faraway countries from which you can never return, as the English have treated others, as you know. To prevent all these calamities, you must no longer listen to the Englishman.

"And, if you do not drive him from your villages, the French and you cannot be friends with one another, and I shall engage in no trading with you.

I shall arm with guns all the Chaqueta, the Mobilians, and the Tohomés as I have already begun to arm the Nadchés and the other nations that are our allies. Far indeed from preventing the Illinois from making war on you, I shall incite them to it. Certainly you see that you will be in no condition to hold out against so many nations; you will suffer the sorrow of seeing yourselves killed at the gates of your villages, along with your women and children.

“But, if you drive the Englishman from your villages, who likes nothing except blood and slaves, I will have a village built between the Chicacha and the Chaqueta, as you want it, where you will find all kinds of goods to be bartered for skins of buffalo, deer, and bear—those are the slaves I want. You will feed yourselves and all your families on the meat of the animals you kill. To get them will not cost you your lives.”

I had them told, after their manner of speaking, several other things that aimed solely at driving the English out and ruining them in the minds of the Chicacha. They promised me to drive the Englishman out provided I would engage in trading with them, about which we came to an agreement over prices. Then I gave a gun, a blanket, a hooded cloak, an ax, two knives, some powder, and bullets to a Chicacha as payment for the Chaqueta slave he had taken away from the Englishman and given to M. de Tonty. I armed with guns all the chiefs of the two nations and their men and gave each a hooded cloak, a shirt, and additional trifles. Next I gave them the presents for their nations. I promised the Chicacha to warn at once all the nations, our allies, to go in war no more among the Chicacha and promised to send some of my men with the Chicacha to escort them safely to their country, from which my men would go on to the Illinois and bring back their men held as prisoners by the Illinois and have the Illinois make peace. For their part, the Chicacha would induce the Conchaques and the Alabamon[s] to make peace with the Chaqueta, the Tohomés, and the Mobilians, to come to the French fort, and to listen to the English no more. If they did not do so, they could assure themselves that our friends the Apalaches—whose tomahawks I controlled—would make cruel war against them, which I had so far prevented. All these Indians seemed to me quite satisfied and disposed to live in peace.

8. Governor Etienne de Périer Considers the Use of Black Slave Troops against Indians, 1730

On the second of December I learned from Sieur Lunel, inspector of tobacco, and from Mr. Charpentier who had been appointed captain at the Natchez that on the 28th the Indian nation of that place had attacked between nine and ten o'clock in the morning all the French of that post and those who were in that district. In order to succeed in it with certainty it had taken the following measures.

They 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, while one party went with two calumets to the house of *Sieur de Chépart* who was in command, to whom they carried some chickens to keep him in the state of confidence in which he was that the Indians were speaking no evil against the French, as they had taken pains to assure him the day before in regard to several rumors that had spread abroad that the Natchez were going to assassinate the French. The confidence of this officer had gone to the extent of having put in irons seven colonists who had asked to assemble to forestall the disaster with which they were menaced. This very confidence had allowed him to see without [a sense of] danger about thirty Indians in the fort and as many in his house and in the neighborhood, while the rest of this nation were scattered in all the houses of our colonists and even in the workshops of our workmen which were two or three leagues away in the cypress-groves above and below the Natchez. When this arrangement had been made and the hour had come the general assassination of our French was the signal for the affair; so short it was that a single discharge ended it, with the exception of the house of *Sieur de La Loire Desursins*, in which there were eight men, of whom six were killed and the two others escaped in the night without the Indians having been able to capture them during the day.

Sieur de La Loire was on horseback when the attack began, not having been able to return to his house. He defended himself until death, having killed four Indians. His house killed eight of them. So it cost the Natchez only twelve men to destroy two hundred and fifty of ours; through the fault of the officer who would have deserved alone the evil fate which so many unfortunate people have shared with him and which it was easy with the information and the people that he had to turn back upon our enemies, a loss which has brought this colony within two finger-breadths of ruin as you are going to see. These barbarians before undertaking this massacre had made certain of several negroes, among others those of the *White Earth* at the head of whom were the two foremen who gave the other negroes to understand that they would be free with the Indians, which was in fact the case during the time that they remained with them; and that our wives and our children would be their slaves; that on the same day on which they would destroy us at the Natchez the other nations would strike in all the French quarters, which would have been carried out if I had not diverted the storm by summoning here in the month of last October the *Choctaw* chiefs who I knew were in conferences with our neighbors of the East who were to enter this nation with one hundred and twenty horses loaded with merchandise which was to be the compensation for our destruction with which we have long been threatened in this province; which we regarded as a rumor of the Indians who are ordinarily liars.

On the same day on which I learned of the destruction of the post of the Natchez I sent the *Sieur de Merveilleux*, a Captain of Infantry, in a pirogue with

a detachment to warn all our colonists on both sides of the river to keep themselves on their guard and to make themselves fortifications at intervals in order to put their slaves and cattle in them in case of attack, which was promptly carried out on both sides of the river so that now only men would be lacking to be in security, the forts being made and in a state of defense. I ordered also Sieur de Merveilleux to examine closely the small nations that are on the river and not to give them arms until I should be sure of their fidelity. I sent out on the same day a courier to carry a letter for me to the Choctaws and to notify two chiefs of that nation who were hunting on Lake Pontchartrain to come and talk to me.

On the third of December there arrived a pirogue coming from the Illinois in which there was a Choctaw who had made the journey, who asked the interpreter for a private conversation with me. I had him come at once. After having paid me his compliments he said to me: "I am very sorry about the death of our brothers. I should even have been able to prevent it if I had not regarded as a lie what the Chickasaws told me when I was up the river, but now I see that they did not lie to me. That is why you must be on your guard. They then told me that the Indians were to attack all the French quarters and assassinate them all; that even our nation was in the conspiracy, which had made me regard the thing as false, because of the friendship that we have for our brothers the French. So let me go to our nation so that I may see what is happening there. I shall carry a letter to the French officer who is there and I shall bring back to Mobile news of what he has done."

I had no sooner left this Indian than others of the small neighboring nations came to warn me that we had reason to fear the Choctaws; that it was even said that they had already attacked Mobile. In fact we had had one man killed and one wounded in the Mobile River without having been able to find out by whom. This bad news which I was seeking to hide spread as quickly as the terror. It was then that I saw with great sorrow that people were less French in Louisiana than elsewhere. Fear had so powerfully taken the upper hand that even the Chaouchas who were a nation of thirty men below New Orleans made our colonists tremble, which made me decide to have them destroyed by our negroes, which they executed with as much promptness as secrecy. This example carried out by our negroes has kept the other little nations up the river in a respectful attitude. If I had been willing to use our negro volunteers I should have destroyed all these little nations which are of no use to us, and which might on the contrary cause our negroes to revolt as we see by the example of the Natchez, but I had considerations to observe, and in the situation in which I was I could not rely however little on the Frenchmen whom I had; which caused me to have them all assembled in order to arm those who were not armed. I have divided those of the city into four companies which are composed of about one hundred and fifty men. At the head of each I have put a councillor and some employees as officers. I have also put the principal colonists at the head of those that I have had formed on the river, and I then had negroes come to work on an entrenchment around our city which I shall have continued this autumn.

9. Governor Etienne de Périer Appraises French-English-Chickasaw Relations, 1730

Since my letters of the eighteenth of last March ... the Illinois chiefs whom I had summoned have come to see me. I have spoken to each one separately about the activities of the Chickasaws, the friends of the English, who are the ones who led the last conspiracy. They confirmed for me the information that some Indians had given me two days after the defeat of the [post of the] Natchez, which was that the Indians were to attack all the French quarters on the same day. I have treated this conspiracy as a wild idea in order to reassure our colonists, who for nine months have been seized by such a great terror that the least rumor makes them rush to the woods like hares. They make us pay them dearly, especially the Choctaws, who do not cease to murmur although they are the best treated. There is every probability that this nation will be divided unless the English cease their active solicitations, which they express with an infinite number of presents that they give both to the chiefs of these nations and to the ordinary warriors, assuring them that they would always sell them their goods more cheaply by half than would the French. These solicitations, which are so urgent, make me believe that the English will carry out badly the agreements that will be made both on the subject of the boundaries and about the nations that will be considered allies. The colony will continually be by depending upon the caprice of the Indians, whose inconstancy is unequalled and who think that we use them only because we are not capable of making war. That is the idea we have given them of us by using them in our defense. The least little nation thinks itself our protector in the situation in which we are, whereas if we had forces to sustain ourselves by our own efforts the greatest nations would respect us and would very carefully seek an alliance with us, which would be as honorable as it would be useful for them. It would be necessary to be strong in troops for only five or six years, after which they would be reduced from year to year to a number sufficient to guard the forts. The best colonists here are those who have been soldiers, and in all the colonies it is the same, especially in the beginning. They will also carry out more surely and more promptly the things with which they are charged. I have had the time in the last ten months to test what I am suggesting. Since the Natchez have been on the other side of the river I have sent out five different parties of Indians to destroy the grain and the crops of our enemies. Not one has executed my orders about that. The first killed about ten men; the second killed four; the third brought me nine prisoners, four of whom they burned here; the two others returned without doing anything under different pretexts; so that one may draw the conclusion that the Indians are not suitable for really making war, but to serve as greyhounds to chase fugitives, and not at all to hold firm or to do anything that calls for patience and order.

If I had received the assistance that I was led to expect, I would already have set out to complete the destruction of the Natchez, which is absolutely necessary in order to serve as an example to the other nations. That of the Chickasaws will be no less necessary at the proper time. That is a nation that we must never trust. It is too closely bound to the English. In addition to that, it is situated in the midst of our nations. It is the one that has been sending the goods of the English into our nations to induce them to slaughter all the French. The thing is certain and proved; so that there is no circumspection to be used with this nation except that which is necessary in order not to lose track of them and to destroy them without fail—but that must not be done until the Natchez are destroyed—and to do it in such a way as not to use the Choctaws, in order to show them that we do not need them and that if we treat them with respect it is only because of pure friendship. That is what I shall give them to understand at Mobile, where I shall go in the month of October to give them their presents and to learn from them themselves the sources of their causes of dissatisfaction, since I have not wished to reproach them with having entered in part the conspiracy that the Chickasaw nation organized at the solicitation of the English. The only thing of which they complained last year is that goods were sold to them too dearly. Thereupon the Administrative Council withdrew the trade from M. Diron, who would not sell them the goods at the prices that we had agreed upon with them. This led M. Diron to write me the most offensive and the least restrained letter in the world. I entreat your Lordship, my lord, to put an end to all these missives that are hindering and causing the ruin of this colony. They are enough to discourage the most zealous man in the world. Nothing is so hard as to establish a country. A thousand difficulties follow, one after another.

I am sending your Lordship the map for which M. Le Pelletier had asked me in order to establish the boundaries between the English and us. The line that I have marked in red is what it is advisable that we should have as boundaries. I have indicated with a "P" all the nations that are our allies and that receive presents from us, and with two "P"s those that receive presents from the English and from us. Whatever may be done, I do not think that the English will carry out in good faith what they will promise in the matter of the boundaries. There will be perpetual quibbling. The only good that that can do will be to delay them in the plan that they have of approaching Mexico. The expenditures that they have been making for three years to bring about the success of this plan are astonishing. They sell their goods at a very low price to all the Indians, with the promise to sell to them at an even better rate if they will aid them to establish themselves on the river.

ESSAYS

Much of the borderlands scholarship focuses on events and activities that are most visible in the historical record: battles, raids, epidemics, rituals, treaties, trade, missionary overtures. But people in encounter also did many other things

that at first glance might seem mundane, even forgettable. They exchanged gifts and shared meals; they learned—or, pointedly, refused to learn—each other's languages; and they laughed with, but mostly at, one another. These were ordinary things often done by ordinary people, but they were not insignificant, argues James H. Merrell, professor of history at Vassar College, in his essay on Indian-English relations in eastern North America during the colonial era. Wars, diseases, and demographics largely determined the balance of power between natives and newcomers, but we cannot fully understand their shared history without exploring the endless face-to-face dealings, for the human drama of contact was played out in those intimate encounters. It mattered, Merrell writes, who was laughed at and whose language was spoken in intercultural settings, because such outcomes reveal who was likely to be in charge of the situation. Merrell traces how native rules usually prevailed in early contacts and how they gradually yielded as English settlements pushed westward and the line separating—and linking—Indian and English worlds moved deeper into the interior. Merrell calls that shifting line a frontier, but his frontier is not the frontier Frederick Jackson Turner made famous in 1893: a divide between civilization and savagery, the past and progress. Merrell's frontier is a contact zone where Indian and European realms brushed against and partially blended into one another. Such frontiers of cultural interpenetration rose and fell across the East over several generations until, by the late eighteenth century, the colonial world engulfed the indigenous one. Merrell concludes his essay with an overview of the struggles the Indians faced and the survival strategies they employed once the passing frontier had delivered them into an Anglo-American world.

The English-Indian borderlands were in many ways a study in contrasts with French Louisiana and its borderlands, the subject of the second essay. English-Indian contact zones were shifting and short-lived, moving constantly across space over time, whereas the French-Indian borderlands in Louisiana were firmly anchored in the lower Mississippi valley. English colonial agents rarely involved themselves with the day-to-day affairs of contact zones, but in Louisiana French officials strove to manage all aspects of the colony's Indian relations. And in Louisiana's borderlands Indians remained much more powerful than in the East, where English settlers kept pushing westward, rendering any cross-cultural arrangements temporary at best. Indeed, of the many peoples living in eighteenth-century Louisiana and its borderlands, the French were the least authoritative and least independent, argues Kathleen Duval, professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in her essay. French colonists and their African slaves did establish themselves on both sides of the lower Mississippi Valley, but they did so in native terms and under native control. The French, Duval concludes, never became more than marginal players in a complex borderlands world where indigenous norms remained dominant. But if Indians held such an advantage in power over the French, how then did French Louisiana survive in the Mississippi Valley until the end of French tenure in North America in 1763?

Indian-English Frontiers of Cooperation and Conquest

JAMES H. MERRELL

It was 1634, Maryland's first year, and already there was trouble on the colony's northern border. At William Claiborne's Chesapeake Bay trading outpost on Kent Island a Susquehannock Indian had injured a Wicomiss while both were doing business there, and some of Claiborne's men thought it funny. Soon five Susquehannocks and three of Claiborne's people lay dead, ambushed by angry Wicomiss warriors. Now, two months later, the Wicomisses sent a messenger to Governor Leonard Calvert with word that they wanted to make amends for the actions of their young men. "What will give you content," the envoy asked Calvert. The governor's answer was simple: turn over the culprits "unto me, to do with them as I shall thinke fit."

There was "a litle pause." Then the Wicomiss spokesman tried to set the governor straight. "It is the manner amongst us Indians," he said, "that if any such like accident happen, wee doe redeeme the life of a man that is so slaine, with a 100. armes length of *Roanoke* ... and since that you are heere strangers, and come into our Countrey, you should rather conforme your selves to the Customes of our Countrey, then impose yours upon us." If Calvert understood, he did not let on. "It seemes you come not sufficiently instructed in the businesse which wee have with the Wicomesses," he replied; "therefore tell them what I have said; and that I expect a speedy answer; and so dismist him."

Calvert's conversation with the Wicomiss was part of a continuing debate in colonial times as native Americans and Anglo-Americans tried to establish whose country this was and whose customs ought to hold sway. Their exchange was more explicit than most, however, because in 1634 both natives and newcomers could at least claim to rule the Chesapeake. Elsewhere the issue was not in doubt, and conformity was not up for debate. When John Lawson left Charleston, South Carolina, in 1700 to head inland through "a Country inhabited by none but Savages," for example, he was careful to behave in a manner "acceptable to those sort of Creatures." He relied on Indian guides, said nothing when his Keyauwee hosts served such delicacies as "Fawns, taken out of the Doe's Bellies, and boild in the same slimy Bags Nature had plac'd them in," and sat patiently through the night in a Waxhaw council house as old men sang and young people danced.

Compare this with Dr. Alexander Hamilton's journey from Maryland to Maine and back again more than forty years later. Hamilton, too, met many native Americans in his travels, enjoyed the hospitality of a local headman, and sat with Indians at a sacred ceremony. Yet here any resemblance to Lawson's

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journey ends, for Hamilton never left the familiar Anglo-American confines of taverns and clubs, concerts and churches, enthusiastic New Lights and impertinent social upstarts. Along the coast colonists were many, natives few, and it was Indians who had to fit in. Instead of fawns, Hamilton's Indian host (who "lives after the English mode") served him a glass of excellent wine. Instead of joining the "confused Rabble" in the Waxhaw council house, Hamilton took a pew near some Indians during a service in a Boston church.

Between Hamilton's journey and Lawson's lay a barrier that scholars has labeled a frontier, a cultural divide, or a marchland. On one side of this line native Americans set the conditions under which intercultural encounters occurred; on the other, colonists did. Frederick Jackson Turner's Eurocentric version of the American frontier has given the concept a bad name, but there can be no doubt that a frontier existed in colonial times. Certainly English colonists had no doubts. "Wee are here att the end of the world," wrote William Byrd I in 1690 from his plantation at the falls of the James River. And Byrd was right: it was the end of his world, the English world, and the beginning of another—called "Indian Country"—where different rules applied.

Different sorts of Indian peoples lived on opposite sides of this frontier. Nonetheless, this spectrum of native cultures broke down into two basic types: those inhabiting Byrd's world and those from Indian Country.

The invisible barrier between [native and non-native worlds] was crucial in shaping the life of an Indian people. A tribe's population, its economy, and its political life—indeed, its entire culture—depended less on whether it lived in New England, New York, or North Carolina than on whether it was located among the English. Thus "plantation Indians" in Massachusetts and Virginia had more in common with one another than with some "back nation" nearby. North or south, their numbers were small, their subsistence routine disrupted, their political autonomy compromised, their customs under indirect influence from colonial neighbors if not direct attack from Christian missionaries.

Not the least of the differences between resident and inland groups was the way they interacted with the English. While hardly a precise gauge, laughter helps draw this distinction, because in intercultural contacts whoever made fun of the other generally was in control of the situation. In Indian Country the joke was on the colonist. Lawson's hosts often "laugh'd their Sides sore" at his antics, and he was not alone. Natives made fun of the Anglo-American because his fingernails were too short and his spoons too small. They laughed at his attempts to speak their language, laughed at his prayers, laughed at his beard. Where a man like Hamilton felt at home, on the other hand, Indians tended to be the butt of the jokes. When the "queen" of a local tribe performed a ceremonial dance in Williamsburg in 1702, the audience burst out laughing, and the laughter never stopped. Colonists mocked Indian efforts to speak English or ride a horse, dress in English clothing or understand English law.

"Above all things," wrote one colonist of the Massachusetts Indians, they "loved not to be laughed at." The Massachusetts—and, eventually, Indians throughout the East—would have to get used to it. When English colonists first arrived in America, virtually all of the land between the Atlantic and the Mississippi was Indian Country; by the end of the colonial era virtually none of it was.

The history of Indian-English relations in early America is the story of how this dramatic change in the country and its "Customes" came about. It is no laughing matter, but listening for laughter is one way of retracing the steps that led from "remoter Indians" to "neighbour-Indians," from "wild" to "domestic."

The place to begin is with that border between Anglo-America and Indian America, a border as difficult to pinpoint on a map as it was real. Sometimes its location was obvious. In 1524, when Abenakis on the Maine coast refused even to allow Giovannie de Verrazano's exploring party to come ashore, it reached right down to the water's edge. Plotting its position thereafter can be more complicated. For one thing, there was no inexorable advance across the continent; the English push into the interior could quickly reverse itself when Indians fought back. During King Philip's War of 1675-1676, for example, native warriors destroyed thirteen New England towns, and it was 1700 before colonists reoccupied the lands they had held at the war's beginning. Even when the boundary did move west, its progress was uneven. Much depended on when the English arrived in a particular area: Carolinians in 1670 (not to mention Georgians in 1732) were clinging to the beaches at a time when their fellow colonists to the north had conquered the entire coastal plain. To complicate matters further, navigable rivers helped some colonists get ahead in the race for land. Thus the Connecticut River valley boasted a thriving English population one hundred miles from the coast at a time when most towns were little more than a day's walk from Boston or Plymouth, and this pattern of settlement was followed later along the Hudson, the Potomac, and the Savannah.

Whatever its twists and turns, its distortions and detours on the way west, the frontier did move across the continent, and the principal forces behind it were warfare, disease, and colonial settlement. Each was crucial in tipping the scales from what John Winthrop called a land "full of Indians" to one dominated by European immigrants.... violence along the edges of the colonial world was endemic, and untold numbers of natives perished in forgotten skirmishes.

The casualties suffered in wars with Anglo-America were certainly appalling; the Indians' losses from exposure to alien diseases—conservatively estimated at 75 percent in New England alone—almost defy comprehension. Yet noting that demographic disaster formed a grim backdrop to all of colonial history is one thing, coming up with reliable population estimates for Indians quite another. A best guess for the number of natives east of the Mississippi River on the eve of permanent English settlement might be close to 1,000,000; a century earlier the total would have been higher still, for by the time the English set foot on these shores, Indians were well acquainted with imported diseases. Whatever the earlier figures, after Anglo-Americans arrived native numbers plummeted with frightening speed. In 1674, inquiries among New England tribes elicited similar answers: from 4,000 warriors to 300, from 5,000 to 1,000, from 3,000 to 300, from 3,000 to 250, on and on the roll call of death went as memory called forth the world Indians had lost. Some thirty years later another curious colonist took a census of natives in Virginia, and again the response was a litany of loss: "much decreased of late"; "reduc'd to very few Men"; "a small number yet living"; "almost wasted"; "Wasting"; "but three men living, which yet keep up their Kingdom, and retain their Fashion."

English colonists considered the Indians' catastrophic losses a sign of God's favor. It was, wrote one colonial governor, "as if Heaven designed by the Diminution of these Indian Neighbours, to make room for our growing Settlements," and indeed disease often did clear the way for colonial farmers. But the farmers helped. Natives still around when the English moved into an area found that their new neighbors were "like pigeons": "where one of those people settled, ... a thousand more would settle." A generation or so after the first pioneers arrived, the colonial population would reach a critical mass, the pressure on Indians would increase, and many tribes would retreat. Within twenty years of Pennsylvania's founding, Indians near Philadelphia talked of heading into the hinterlands, and near Charleston in 1710 local native groups had "gone further up in the Country Thro' badd usage they received from some of Our People." In 1755 Edmond Atkin, soon to be the crown's superintendent of Indian affairs for the Southern Department, blamed it less on "badd usage" than a simple "difference of manners and way of life" between Indian and English. Whatever the reason, history taught him that "the Indians generally chuse to withdraw, as white People draw near to them." "Will not it be impossible for Indians and White people to live together?" wondered a Pennsylvanian. "Will not there be ... a perpetual Scene of quarrelling?" The answer, throughout England's mainland provinces, was often yes.

War, disease, settlement—these three horsemen of the Indian apocalypse are essential to an understanding of English contacts with native America. But they are more the story's beginning than its end, for they cannot capture the substance and subtlety of the American encounter. The conquest of the continent was not as *swift* as the emphasis on depopulation and displacement implies; Indians did not surrender or disappear overnight. Without belittling the devastation wrought by smallpox, militias, or settlers, we need to remember that Indians survived. While some abandoned traditional burial rituals in the aftermath of an epidemic, most continued to inter their dead in customary fashion. While warfare or sickness utterly destroyed some groups, others constructed new societies from fragments of the old. While many did retreat when faced with the prospect of being hemmed in by farms and fences, many others did not.

To understand how the Indians lost America and the English won it, we must look past the grand events—warfare, epidemics, the frontier's advance—to examine the less celebrated but no less important meetings between peoples. The real (and still largely untold) story is less dramatic than invasions and battles, less drastic than sickness and settlement; more intimate, more human in scale, it is also harder to uncover. These long-forgotten encounters lie in scraps of evidence, mere snatches of conversations that took place in several different contact arenas—linguistic, economic, diplomatic, legal, and religious—where Indian met colonist. The conversations, taken together, speak of a shift in patterns of interaction as face-to-face contacts slowly became more Anglo-American than native American, more like Alexander Hamilton's journey than John Lawson's. If that shift, that frontier, is often hard to pin down precisely, the overall trend is unmistakable: Indians slowly gave way and colonists slowly took over, until the line between one world and another was not Verrazano's shore or Byrd's plantation but the Appalachians and then beyond.

American Indians and English colonists brought to their encounter considerable experience with exotic peoples. For native Americans the English were only the latest in a series of European intruders, while those English colonists had a fund of knowledge about alien cultures derived from books about America and contacts with Ireland. Yet if neither were novices in dealing with foreigners, they had a hard time making sense of one another once sustained interaction began at the end of the sixteenth century. Indians in New England called "every thing which they cannot comprehend" *Manitóbo*, and they used the term frequently when talking among themselves about the English. Indians, whose cultures emphasized personal restraint, were appalled by the colonists' "excited chattering, ... the haste and rashness to do something," and some wondered aloud why, if "the Europeans are always ranging and uneasy, ... they do not go out of this World, since they are so uneasy and discontented in it." Colonists were no better at comprehending natives. "Uncivil and stupid as garden poles," noted one. "A very strange kind of People," wrote another. "An odd sort of People," agreed a third. "Their way of Living is so contrary to ours," concluded John Lawson in 1709, after studying Carolina Indians for eight years, "that neither we nor they can fathom one another's Designs and Methods."

True understanding of the other would remain elusive. But the quest for that elusive goal started immediately, with a search for some way to cross the linguistic barrier. Thus began a tug-of-war between English and Indian as each tried to impose its modes of communication on the other. Natives expected colonists to follow local custom, which dictated that "the most Powerful Nation of these Savages scorns to treat or trade with any others (of fewer Numbers and less Power) in any other Tongue but their own." The English agreed in principle, but insisted that they, not Indians, had the numbers and the power. Moreover, colonists felt that the English language should prevail not only because England *should* rule; it would actually *help* England rule, because "changing of the language of a barbarous people, into the speech of a more civil and potent nation" was a way "to reduce such a people unto the civility and religion of the prevailing nation."

Colonists expecting Indians to welcome the chance to learn "the treasure of our tongue" were disappointed. The intruders did eventually win the war of words, but it was a long struggle, waged against stiff opposition. At first an elaborate pantomime was probably the most common means of conversing, no doubt accompanied by wild swinging of arms, exaggerated facial expressions, and whatever sounds might help get the gist of the message across. Crude, perhaps, but it worked. It was not hard to guess that Indians waving furs on the end of a stick at a passing ship were interested in trade or that an Englishman piling beads into an Indian's canoe wanted to make friends. Nor was it easy to mistake the meaning behind "stern-look'd Countenances" or a "scornfull posture."

[T]he need to discuss more complex matters encouraged the two cultures to break through the language barrier. The first halting steps were probably secondary to the sign language in common currency: a verbal exchange between the explorer William Hilton and a tribe of Carolina Indians, for example, consisted of many gestures but only two words, "Bonny" and "Skerry." Far more useful were pidgin languages—English as well as several different Indian versions—that

developed. Impatient colonists, who called these inventions "a broken language," "a made-up, childish language," were always trying to learn more, but Indians held back. In New Netherland, where the linguistic battle has been studied most thoroughly, natives clearly sought to establish and then maintain the upper hand. One frustrated colonial student claimed "that they rather try to conceal their language from us than to properly communicate it, except in things that have to do with everyday trade, saying that it is sufficient for us to understand them to this extent." The Indians' purpose was obvious: "Even those [colonists] who can best of all speak with the savages, and get along well in trade, are nevertheless altogether in the dark and as bewildered, when they hear the savages talking among themselves." Another "Indian grammarian" trying to crack this code became hopelessly confused by the different tenses and pronunciations: "I stand oftentimes and look, but do not know how to put it down." His efforts to sort out the confusion failed, for Indians, he concluded, were "very stupid" and his fellow colonists ignorant. One supposed expert, consulted about variable pronunciations, explained the mystery by claiming that local tribes altered their entire language every few years.

The "Indian grammarians" did not give up easily. Their persistence, coupled with the growing need to communicate as contacts became more frequent, overcame the Indians' reluctance to train capable linguists. Most early interpreters were colonists who mastered a native language, not Indians speaking English, for despite claims that some natives were delighted to learn and then show off their English, most colonists agreed that the local tribe's speech "is the first thing to be employed with them." Over time, however, Indians were the ones expected to learn a foreign language. Not surprisingly, neighboring groups were the first to face this language requirement; indeed, a pledge to learn English could be part of formal submission to colonial rule.

Even as they lost linguistic predominance, Indians resisted by refusing whenever possible to speak an alien tongue. "If you ask them a question," one Virginian complained of the tributary Indians in the 1680s, "unlesse they be made three parts drunk they will not answer, tho they can speake English." "Notwithstanding some of them could speak good English," reported another visitor to the colony's tributaries three decades later, "yet when they treat of any thing that concerns their nation, they will not treat but in their own language, ... nor will not answer to any question made to them without it be in their own tongue." Such stubbornness only slowed the spread of linguistic imperialism, however. In 1734, "seeing the tributary Indians understand and can speak the English language very well," Virginia removed the natives' facade of superiority by discharging its official interpreters.

Natives themselves helped hasten the spread of writing. Awed by this new means of conversing and eager to capture its power, Indians copied the figures John Lawson jotted down, asked that their initials be carved into a tree alongside those of colonial explorers in order to "be an Englishman," and pestered Roger Williams, "Make me a paper." Even native diplomats who protested against "that Pen and Ink work" began demanding copies of the treaties to take home.

Indian and English forms coexisted well into the eighteenth century. In 1758, messengers sent from Philadelphia to the Ohio country carried belts of wampum that were keyed to a written speech, so that the talk could be read and the belts delivered simultaneously. To Indians this marked a real improvement, for it "was like two tongues": the letter "confirmed what the Messenger said to them" through the belts. Even so, the direction—from the rattle of wampum beads to the scratch of pen on paper—was clear. A few Indians learned to read and write, either in English or in their own language. But the vast majority remained illiterate, inhabitants of a symbolic universe they were unable to decipher.

Much of the impetus for communication between peoples—that march from gesture through jargon to fluency—came from a shared eagerness for trade. It was trade that prompted Indians to hoist furs on sticks, trade that gave birth to the pidgin languages, trade that trained most interpreters. The lists of Indian words colonists compiled reveal how closely talking was tied to trading. Each phrase book had Indian equivalents for all sorts of merchandise, numbers for counting these items, and handy phrases every enterprising salesman should know, like "How d'ye do," "Have you got anthing to eat," "Englishman is thirsty," "What price," "I will sell you Goods very cheap," "I will pay you well," "My money is very good," and "It is worth it."

The colonists' concern with price serves as a reminder that, while Indian and English were both experienced traders and each had products the other wanted, they were schooled in different classrooms. Hence handing over one object in return for another was not as simple or as easy as it looked. Among Indians, exchange was embedded in a ceremonial code designed to cement relations between peoples; in these rituals the giving itself was as important as the gift. Colonists, on the other hand, tended to think more of prices and profits. Intercultural trade in colonial America combined both traditions at first; eventually, however, commerce went the way of speech, and natives ended up living by the economic rules of the Atlantic world.

Indians unacquainted with European ways were a colonial trader's favorite customers. These people, still operating within the context of aboriginal exchange, cared little about sampling the entire range of trade goods and less about prices. They sought wares that fitted established norms—glass instead of shell beads, for instance, or mirrors that substituted for crystal—and in return they gave whatever the colonist considered fair. It did not take Indians long to catch on, however. In New England they had "already" in 1634 "learned much subtiltie and cunning by bargaining with the *English*," and Roger Williams agreed that "they are marvellous subtle in their Bargaines." Experience made natives discriminating consumers: instead of accepting whatever was offered, they began to shop more carefully. "The Indians wilbe very long and teadeous in viewing" a trader's merchandise, complained one colonist, "and doe tumble it and tosse it and mingle it a hundred times over." They were looking not just for beads or mirrors but cloth, tools, and weapons. Moreover, that cloth had to be "a sad colour," that iron hoe a certain weight, that gun a light flintlock instead of a cumbersome matchlock. And all—cloth, hoe, gun—had to be for sale at a fair

price, for the more Indians traded with colonists, the fewer qualms they had about haggling over rates of exchange.

Indians, though soon enough "wise in trade and traffic" with colonists, did not immediately become slaves to European habits of exchange or pawns in the Atlantic economic system. In fact, during the early years of intercultural trade the colonist who hoped to succeed tried to meet his customers' needs and obey their rules. In putting together a cargo he selected the right color, the right weight, and the right price. Upon arriving in a village he gave gifts to the proper people and accepted their offer of adoption, even marriage, into a kinship network. Once the bargaining began, he said nothing about the Indians' preference for bartering, "not by any certeyne measure or by our English waightes and measures," but by an arm's length instead of a yard and a mouthful instead of a pint. He went along because competition for Indian customers was fierce—not only between England and France but between Pennsylvania and New York, Albany and Schenectady, even within (especially within) Albany itself—and Indians could afford to be selective. "If any traders will not suffer the Indians soe to doe [examine the goods for sale]," one colonist lamented, "they wilbe distasted with the said trades and fall out with them and refuse to have any trade."

As time went on, however, few Indians could simply refuse to trade. While natives did not become dependent on European wares overnight, within a generation or two of their entry into regular trade relations they did become dependent. The early shift from comity to competition and from passive acceptance to active haggling was only the beginning. The next stage removed the production of goods from its traditional context. Deer once put to many different uses were now left to rot as the hunter stripped the skin from the carcass and moved on. Prisoners of war once adopted to replace dead kinfolk or tortured to assuage a mourner's grief were now sold. Wampum once restricted to persons of high status was now mass-produced by coastal communities that interrupted their seasonal subsistence routine to concentrate on the shells. The final step was more obvious, as people less able to remember and to replicate traditional craft skills found they simply could not get along without European commodities.

Settlement Indians were the first to pass through these three stages. But even peoples well removed from colonial settlements found that a generation or so of colonial trade had taken its toll and "they cannot live without the assistance of the English." "What are we red People?" a Cherokee asked in 1753. "The Cloaths we wear, we cannot make ourselves, they are made to us. . . . We cannot make our Guns, they are made to us. Every necessary Thing in Life we must have from the white People." Lest any Indians forget this harsh truth, colonists reminded them: "We can live without you, but you cannot live without us." "'Tis in vain for you to stand out [against us]," a South Carolinian informed the Creeks in 1728. "What can you do without the English?"

Following the native Americans' entry into an alien economic system obscures how far trade remained what it had been in aboriginal America, an arm of diplomacy. Certainly Indians and colonists were aware that swapping merchandise was more than a way to make a living. Natives often spoke of peace

and trade as one and the same thing, and colonists were quick to agree. In 1736, after giving some of the credit to God and the king, the South Carolina legislature asserted that the colony's "Security and Welfare ... hath been owing to nothing more than the Regulations ... with regard to the Trade and Commerce carried on from hence with the several Nations of Indians almost surrounding us.... [I]t is by these means alone that We have been able to preserve a general Peace and Friendship with them." For trade to serve as a vital cog in any diplomatic machine, however, that machine had to be built; learning to communicate and working out rules of exchange were essential to successful diplomacy, but without a mutually agreed-upon body of protocol for conducting a formal conversation they were just talking and trading.

Confusion reigned at first, in part because many early colonial leaders—Ralph Lane at Roanoke, John Smith in Virginia, Miles Standish of Plymouth—were by training and temperament about as far from diplomats as they could be. The conquistador was their model, and they came to America fresh from service among alien peoples where the sword was the first rather than the last resort. But even colonists who put more stock in negotiation often fared little better. Faced with a political world that bore little resemblance to their own, they tried to conjure up emperors, kings, and nations that were not there. In fact, most eastern Indian chiefs led by persuasion and example, custom and council. Whatever authority a headman did wield generally was limited to a narrow sphere of face-to-face relations; few ruled an extensive territory. Reality inevitably intruded, leaving many English diplomats feeling as Carolina authorities did in 1682 as they cast about for an alliance with a people "whose Government is lesse Anarchicall" than the colony's current friends.

Experience taught colonists the limitations of kingly power and the narrow definition of nationhood in native America.

Colonists sorting out Indian political reality also had to undergo a crash course in native diplomacy, for, once diplomatic relations opened, Indian rules prevailed. The Covenant Chain, forged in the late seventeenth century to connect the Iroquois and other Indians with New York and other colonies, was only the most famous example of how native diplomacy shaped formal intercultural contacts. From Creeks and Cherokees to Delawares and Shawnees, natives set the tempo and tenor of diplomatic encounters. They came when they pleased, and in delegations larger than cost-conscious crown officials liked. They insisted on preliminary rituals ("the usual Salutation of Shaking of hands" in the Southeast, "the usual Salutation of Shaking of hands" in the Southeast, "the usual Compliments of Condolence" in Iroquoia) and punctuated their talks with wampum belts and gifts. The talks themselves sounded strange to colonial ears, for native ambassadors spoke in a rich, metaphorical language of elder brothers and nephews, paths clear or bloody, hatchets taken up or thrown down, a language that invested kinship terms and everyday objects with deeper meaning.

Anglo-American diplomats went along initially because they had to: their pretensions to conquest aside, the English simply lacked the power to dictate forms, much less terms. But they continued to play the diplomatic game by Indian rules, because treaty protocol became a tool for exerting influence.

Wherever the fall in native numbers and the Indians' dependence on trade tipped the balance of power toward the English, native diplomatic formulas became a means of wielding that power. Skillfully employed, diplomacy was a vehicle not only for contracting alliances and settling differences but also for issuing threats, acquiring land, and, as one governor phrased it, putting "a Bridle in the Mouths of our Indians." It is true that for the Five Nations treaty councils were "a species of drama in which the Iroquois were the playwrights, the directors and the teaching actors"; but with Indians along the coast in the seventeenth century, Anglo-Americans had begun to direct the play themselves, and, before 1800, more distant groups also found that the path between peoples was becoming a one-way street, the chain was becoming fetters.

Once the fetters were in place, colonial officials demonstrated the depth of their commitment to native treaty forms by abandoning them. For Catawbas, the shock came shortly after the smallpox epidemic of 1759 cut to one hundred the number of warriors they could muster and threats from Cherokees and the French subsided. South Carolina saw little point in placating its old allies any longer, and a Catawba delegation visiting Charleston in September 1761 found its efforts to follow "the usual" rituals brusquely turned aside. Officials complained that the Indians had come, complained about the size of the delegation, complained about the presents requested, and bluntly informed the Indians not to return unless summoned. The chill in the air was perceptible, and later delegations found it still colder. By the end of the American Revolution Catawbas rarely approached the South Carolina capital, and even the once-mighty Iroquois faced diplomats who believed that "instead of conforming to Indian political behavior We should force them to adopt ours—dispense with belts, etc."

Anglo-America could afford to treat Catawbas and Iroquois so casually because they were joining Pamunkeys, Narragansetts, and the many other tribes that long since had been surrounded by settlers. Among some of these neighboring peoples the diplomatic niceties might still be observed for a time—negotiations continued, treaties were signed—but they were now at best a mere shadow of their former grandeur, at worst a caricature. Native delegations accustomed to arriving when it suited them now came once a year at a time set by the colony. The ceremonial exchange of gifts turned into a public display of subjection, with Indians handing over a few pelts or arrows as token tribute and officials responding with a present or two that was more charity than bribery. In such encounters it is safe to assume that native formal expression went the way of large delegations, elaborate presents, and official interpreters, forcing headmen to conform to English speech and English practice.

With even the pretense of equality stripped away, function followed form; diplomatic relations became less negotiation than protection and, finally, less protection than subjection. The time devoted to hearing a tributary's complaints and the energy spent redressing grievances dwindled with the years, and enforcement of treaty rights, never very rigorous, fell still lower on the public agenda. In the end, diplomacy was a way to build a paper prison. Treaties stipulated that the selection of headmen be supervised, contacts with other native groups curtailed, and the tribe confined to certain lands.

For most native Americans, judges took up where diplomats left off, and the courtroom, not the council chamber, regulated intercultural relations. Unlike diplomacy, trade, or language, however, when it came to questions of law English colonists never considered submitting to native forms. The reason was simple: by English standards Indians had no law to speak of. There was no written code, no institution to interpret and enforce that code, in short nothing recognizable in English terms. Indian law consisted of rules upheld by ostracism, shaming, compensation, and—between clans or tribes—retaliation. Colonists, who missed the power of ridicule and looked upon revenge as savagery, had no misgivings about imposing their own legal framework upon the native. From the very outset they promised to punish any colonist committing a crime against an Indian but insisted that, if the situation were reversed, the Indian must submit to English law.

English assertions of legal imperialism had little impact on tribes far from colonial capitals. As Leonard Calvert had learned from the Wicomisses in 1634, claiming jurisdiction was one thing, exercising it quite another. Some distant Indians might sign a treaty in which they agreed to surrender a native suspected of committing a crime against Anglo-America. But, treaty or no treaty, natives beyond the frontier commonly dealt with an unruly colonist in their own way and ignored pleas to give up any Indians wanted for trial. The best that Anglo-Americans could hope for was that diplomatic pressure might persuade these Indians to do the job themselves. In 1748, South Carolina informed the Cherokees that, if they executed an Indian who had killed a colonist, the province would build a long-promised fort in the Cherokee country; if not, the colony's traders would withdraw. After the Cherokees complied, Governor James Glen proclaimed it "a great step towards civilizing savage and barbarous Nations when they can be brought to doe Publick acts of Justice upon their Criminals." Certainly the Cherokees' acquiescence testified to the power of trade, but it was still a long way from getting the wrongdoer into a colonial court. That would have to wait until distant Indians became neighbors.

Once that change had taken place, an Indian committing a crime was far more likely to wind up in court. Civil disputes still might be handled by negotiation and provincial magistrates might overlook crimes among Indians, but a native who killed, robbed, or otherwise harmed a colonist was going to come before the bench.

The erosion of native legal rights was most evident in New England, where those rights had been most advanced. During the first decades of colonization some Indians were active participants in the judicial system, sitting on juries, giving testimony, serving as constables, even running their own courts. This was hardly equality: native jurors were balanced if not outnumbered by settlers, and restricted to cases involving Indians; native courts operated under the watchful eye of a supervisor who could overturn decisions. But it was more justice than they had after King Philip's War, when even this limited say in judicial affairs crumbled swiftly. Colonial officials, claiming that natives could not handle the responsibility, dismantled Indian courts and replaced them with "guardians" or "overseers," men appointed by the executive whose powers over their native charges reached beyond the courtroom. During the same period the number of

statutes discriminating against Indians expanded dramatically. To the old laws aimed at keeping kegs and muskets out of native hands were added curfews and restrictions on assembly and travel; even carrying a cane could land an Indian in trouble.

The Indians' treatment at the hands of colonial law cannot obscure the more fundamental legal issue at stake here: whose rules were law. While Anglo-American leaders may have sought justice as they construed it, Indians saw things differently. To them, crimes were being defined in alien terms and dealt with in alien ways. The gap between the colonial ideal of justice for all and the native view of proper treatment was evident in Virginia in 1729, when an intoxicated Saponi headman killed a colonist. The Saponis considered this an unfortunate accident that should be forgotten, since by native custom those under the influence of alcohol were not responsible for their actions. Virginia's governor, William Gooch, thought otherwise, and unlike Leonard Calvert a century earlier he was in a position to do something about it. He sent word to the Indians to give the culprit up and ordered them to Williamsburg to witness the proceedings. During the ensuing trial and execution Gooch took great pains to explain to the assembled natives "that the proceedings in the Court against Him were the same as in the like Case, they would be against a white Man, and indeed as it hap'ned, ... there was one tryed and executed with him."

Colonist and Indian, swinging side by side from the gallows: what could be more fair? The Saponis, Gooch concluded happily, sat through it all "without any sign of resentment." Appearances were deceiving, however. Even as Gooch closed the books on the case, Saponis were leaving the colony in search of more civilized patrons. Small wonder that as the noose of alien law tightened, many neighboring Indians—in New York, South Carolina, Virginia, and elsewhere—still tried to go through diplomatic channels when disputes arose or crimes were committed, preferring to take their chances with governor and council rather than with judge and jury.

The legal controls that Saponis and other tribes tried to escape went hand in hand with the work of English missionaries. It was a fundamental tenet of the faith English Colonists brought to America that belief and behavior were two sides of the same coin, that civilization must accompany—indeed, it must precede—Christianity. The law could not dictate belief, but it could do something about behavior. In 1646, a week after skeptical Indians heckled a Puritan minister during a sermon, Massachusetts Bay passed a law against blasphemy by anyone, Christian or pagan. Six years later, Plymouth legislators forbade Indians from working on the Sabbath, and in 1675 Connecticut went even further, not only insisting that natives honor the Sabbath but requiring their "ready and comely attendance" whenever preachers held services for them. Once the law had stopped Indians from working or heckling and got them to pay attention, it was up to missionaries to do the rest.

The missionary's ability to win an Indian audience for Christ depended largely on where that audience was. Tribes beyond the frontier were for the most part indifferent to the Christian message as translated by the English, in part because English clergymen, unlike the Jesuits operating in New France, rarely visited Indian Country to spread the word. In New England, every

minister was tied to a particular congregation and therefore could not venture too far away in search of converts. But even men recruited to do the Lord's work among remote tribes tended to hug the coast. Clergymen sent to South Carolina in the early eighteenth century by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to "propagate Christianity ... among the wild Indians in the woods" found some excuse—rumblings of war among those distant peoples, plenty of pagans close at hand among the colonial population—to postpone their mission. Few went beyond asking traders about the best tribes to approach and having the Lord's Prayer translated into Yamasee or Shawnee for future use. In Virginia the story was much the same. "The missionaries that are now sent," reported the Anglican cleric Hugh Jones in 1724, "generally keep among the English, and rarely see an Indian."

Reluctance to head into the interior may have stemmed from a lack of nerve, but it also could have arisen from a sense that Indians there were not very fertile soil for sowing the English version of Christianity. Jesuits with a tolerance for native ways, a gift for languages, and a religion rich in symbol and ritual enjoyed considerable success. English Protestants, on the other hand, usually lacked the delicate touch needed to convert distant Indians. They "know but little how to manage them [Indians]," Jones remarked; "for you may as well talk reason, philosophy, or divinity to a block, as to them, unless you perfectly understand their temper, and know how to humour them." If a missionary did make the effort, he discovered that natives beyond the frontier were uninterested in the gospel according to the English, especially when they found out that conversion entailed political subjection and cultural suicide. Some reacted with open scorn, laughing or going so far as "flatly to say, that our Lord God was not God, since hee suffered us to sustaine much hunger, and also to be killed of the Renapoaks." Others listened politely and walked away. Still others were ready to grant that Christianity was fine for the English but not for Indians, who preferred a different way. "We are Indians," they would say when pressed, "and don't wish to be transformed into white men. ... As little as we desire the preacher to become Indian, so little ought he to desire the Indians to become preachers."

Settlement Indians were more susceptible to the missionary's message. Confidence in their own cultural traditions had been badly shaken by demographic disaster; who could doubt the power of the Englishman's God when Indians mysteriously died by the score and colonists did not even become ill? The awe an epidemic could inspire was clear from the very beginning of the English colonial venture. At Roanoke, where disease visited every native town that opposed the English beachhead and "the people began to die very fast," colonists reported that survivors were "perswaded that it was the worke of our God through our meanes, and that wee by him might kil and slai whom wee would without weapons and not come neere them." Once the colonists' more conventional weapons had defeated Indians in battle, the newcomers further sapped native commitment to ancient deities and added to the growing evidence of the Christian God's power.

Those neighboring Indians who *were* offered the chance to convert sometimes turned it down. Narragansetts, Mohegans, and other groups defeated in

King Philip's War wanted nothing to do with the religion of the victors, and well into the eighteenth century they spurned missionary overtures. In South Carolina, clergymen in coastal parishes conversed regularly with "Neighbouring Indians," but found these remnant groups unlikely candidates for conversion. They "are a moving People," one reported, "often changing their place of habitation so that I can give no account of their Number"—much less the state of their souls. Prodding them did no good, for they seemed "wholly addicted to their own barbarous and Sloathful Customs and will only give a laugh w[he]n pleased or a grin w[he]n displeas'd for an Answer." "It must be the work of time and power that must have any happy Influence upon em," one would-be savior concluded glumly.

After more than a century, the missionary campaign had enjoyed mixed results. On the one hand, signs of progress were clear: in New England at one time or another more than a score of Indian churches had been built, nearly one hundred praying towns or reservations organized, and even more natives had become teachers or preachers. On the other hand, however, those bent on wiping out every stain of paganism were disappointed. Too many Indians remained outside the fold, and those within it had entered on their own terms, shaping the new religion to serve their spiritual and cultural needs. Far from making Indians English, the new faith (where natives embraced it) proved to be a powerful revitalizing force, helping people to cope with defeat and dispossession, to rebuild their aboriginal communities on a new foundation.

In the end it proved easier to kill Indians than convert them, easier to make them speak English than make them listen to a sermon, easier to get them into a courtroom than into a church, easier to bring them to acknowledge the English king than the English God. The missionary's failure to see his dreams become reality is a useful reminder that natives were neither the "Indian dust" one early New Englander envisioned nor the "soft Wax, ready to take any Impression" that a Virginian described. Far from crumbling and being swept aside or passively receiving everything the English handed them, Indians learned to conform to the new "Customes of the Countrey" without surrendering unconditionally to the country's new rulers.

It was not easy. Some tribes fought, some fled. Others stayed behind and protested the invasion of America in their own way, stealing a colonial school's Latin and Greek books or burning a planter's fences, acts some have termed "purely whimsical" but that may have had symbolic significance. Still others made their feelings known by refusing to abide by colonial customs. The problem in the Massachusetts praying town of Natick was as simple as saying "Hello." Waban, the community's first headman and one of John Eliot's converts, won praise for greeting colonists "with English salutations." But some inhabitants of Natick would not follow Waban's lead. In 1680 they were "refusing to take notice of an Englishman if they meet him in the street," and decades later one holdout, Hannah Pittimee, still "past by ... with a great deal of scorn ... with her face turned right from us."

Pittimee and every other Settlement Indian had reason to be scornful, for those natives living behind the frontier faced a future of poverty and oppression.

As their resources disappeared and their skills eroded, natives searched desperately for ways to put food in their mouths and a roof over their heads. The search sometimes led to an ancestor's grave, which Indians ransacked for the valuable wampum it contained. Not everyone was driven to such lengths, but almost all struggled to scrape together the necessities of life, and they did so amid the insults, the laughter, the abuses spawned by the conquerors' hatred. Sometimes that hatred was disclosed only by a slip of the pen: a clerk in a Massachusetts court referred to an Indian as "it," and a Philadelphia scribe wrote that the spectators at a council consisted of "many other People and Indians." More often the colonists' feelings were easier to detect. Young Indian apprentices discovered that "their fellow Prentices viz. English Boys will dispise them and treat them as Slaves." The colonial youths picked up this attitude from their parents, who openly doubted that anything besides "Powder and Ball" would convert the natives, and, acting on that belief, placed only "a Bullet and Flynt" in a missionary's collection plate. Even colonists with good intentions inflicted their own kind of pain. When the evangelist George Whitefield's colleague Benjamin Ingham built a schoolhouse for Indians atop an ancient temple mount near Savannah, Georgia, he dismissed the local Creeks' spiritual attachment to the site and insisted that it now serve a different deity.

But if neighboring Indians did not prosper, they did survive. One secret of their survival was the ability they had to make themselves inconspicuous. When drinking, for example, they aped their English neighbors. "It rent my heart as well as ears," wrote one Virginian in the 1680s, "when once passing by a company of Indians in James City, that drinking in a ring were deplorably drunk ... one cried to another swear swear, you be Englishman swear, w[i]th that he made a horrid yelling, imperfectly vomited up oaths, whereupon the other cryd, oh! now your [*sic*] be Englishman."

Natives learning to drink and curse like an Englishman were also learning to dress like one, and this camouflage, too, was crucial to their survival. Simply putting on English clothes was not enough; one had to know how to wear them.

As important as this mimetic talent was the ability to retain a distinctly Indian identity. Natives imitating colonists still stood out in subtle ways in every sphere of contact. For most, English was a second language, imperfectly mastered and used only for talking with colonists and slaves. In the mid-eighteenth century, one Rhode Island native woman's English vocabulary consisted of a single word—"broom"—and in Massachusetts confused colonists learned that the Braintree Indians' English disguise held up only "till you come to converse with them." In material culture and economic pursuits, too, their conversion was less than complete. Many led a peripatetic life modeled on traditional habits of seasonal migration. From Etiwans in South Carolina to Naticks in Massachusetts, they were "strangely disposed and addicted to wander from place to place." If they did come to lead what colonists considered a settled existence, Indians still might depart from colonial norms. One built an English frame house but no chimney, preferring to rely on an open fire; others put brick fireplaces into their wigwams; still others bought tea tables, dressers, chairs, and other articles commonly found in colonial households, then placed the furniture in the domed dwellings they made out of bark and saplings.

The same habit of blending into the landscape of English America without becoming wholly invisible can be seen in diplomacy, law, and religion. Though native enclaves might be "little Tribes," tribes they were, not mere aggregates of individuals or a vaguely defined ethnic group. However unequal the terms of diplomacy had become, Indians with their own corporate identity and cadre of leaders were equipped to deal with colonial politicians on a diplomatic footing. They were also in a position to police themselves, and many continued to settle their own disputes. In 1704, some Settlement Indians in New England were "Govern'd by Law's of their own making." "If the natives committ any crime on their own precincts among themselves, the English takes no Cognizens of it," and the same was true of South Carolina's Indians more than a century later. Finally, and perhaps most important, the Christianity that some remnant groups used as the new foundation for an ancient identity remained distinct from its English progenitor. The sharing of tobacco during services on Martha's Vineyard incorporated old rituals into a new ceremonial context, and in Rhode Island the Narragansetts' August Meeting—several days of services, feasts, and dances—harked back to a traditional harvest festival. In all of these ways, Indians managed to pacify the powerful without losing all sense of a unique past—and a separate future.

This adaptive talent was present from the first. In 1634—the very year Clavert and the Wicomiss were meeting along the Chesapeake—it was already on display in New England, where William Wood and two companions got lost on the way to Plymouth, "being deluded by a misleading path." It was, the travelers thought, too wide to be an Indian trail, but they were wrong. They had been fooled because "the dayly concourse of *Indians* from the *Naragansets* who traded for shooes, wearing them homewards had made this *Indian* tract like an *English* walke, and had rear'd up great stickes against the trees, and marked the rest with their hatchets in the *English* fashion, which begat in us a security of our wrong way to be right." Like Narragansetts, Indians throughout the East who might look English were in fact following, indeed carving, paths that took them toward another destination. Learning to survive as a conquered people by combining European and aboriginal ways: this was the fate in store for every native group as the English and other migrants from the Old World pushed deeper into the heart of the American continent.

French Louisiana in the Native Ground

KATHLEEN DUVAL

In 1750, after more than half a century of colonization, the French governor of Louisiana declared in exasperation, "we can do nothing by ourselves." While the French called Louisiana their colony, in reality, as Governor [Pierre François de

Kathleen Duval, "Interconnectedness and Diversity in 'French Louisiana,'" in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley, pp. 133–162 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). Reprinted by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright 1989, 2006 by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska.

Rigaud, Marquis de] Vaudreuil, knew, officials, explorers, priests, merchants, traders, and slaves became small parts of the large, complex neighborhood of the Mississippi valley. One narrative of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries stars French colonial officials such as Vaudreuil forging (and losing) Louisiana, where they sought to profit and to challenge France's European rivals. But countless other intertwined narratives run through this place and time, centering on Choctaws, Natchez, Chickasaws, Tunicas, Osages, Quapaws, Bambaras, Mobilians, Caddoans, Britons, Spaniards, and other groups and individuals within them.

This is not to say that the French has no effect on Louisiana. On the contrary, European diseases and goods changed the region's history. Indians became entangled in the world economies that colonialism created, and ultimately the arrival of the French proved one of the most important events of the late seventeenth-century Mississippi valley. But emphasizing change that occurred after Europeans arrived can create the impression that Europeans *directed* change. In reality, the French had little power, and the Mississippi valley remained largely an Indian-defined and Indian-controlled place through the end of the eighteenth century.

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

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

By the late seventeenth century, most North American Indians saw reciprocal gift-giving and marital or fictive kinship ties as the means to establish and maintain good relations between peoples. When the French arrived, Indians greeted them with the same ceremonies they used to transform any foreigners into friends and allies—calumet (peace pipe) dances and songs, speeches of welcome, and feasts to demonstrate generosity and friendship.

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

to acquire slaves to trade to the English at Charlestown for guns, ammunition, and horses. In the northeast, Iroquoian peoples monopolized Dutch and British trade and regularly attacked Illinois Indians and others east of the Mississippi. In the west, Apache and Comanche bands soon blocked Spanish trade.

Despite their immediate popularity, the French were one of the weakest groups in a land full of people struggling to strengthen their positions in the wake of sixteenth-century changes. Although colonial officials regularly requested more soldiers and arms to "intimidate the Indians," tight budgets, desertions, and recurrent French war against other European nations kept Louisiana's forces small and unstable. At times, fewer than two hundred soldiers were assigned to the entire colony, on both sides of the Mississippi. In the mid-1720s Louisiana had some 2,500 French, plus 1,500 slaves. In contrast, Louisiana Indians numbered well over 35,000. While many Indian groups were tiny, the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Natchez, Osages, and Caddoans all had populations greater than the French, and many others rivaled the French population. No one people had the power to rule the others, and all found themselves entangled in webs of foreign relations and obligations.

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

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

The extreme fragmentation of the colonial population put the French in a unique position. In some ways being fragmented made them more influential because they spread across the countryside, encountering a wider variety of

people than most Indians met and offering goods the native peoples wanted. But being fragmented also meant that the French were more influenced by native peoples than they might otherwise have been. Various French people's goals and methods often conflicted, and their decentralized nature attenuated them, giving more centralized, established, and knowledgeable people opportunities to influence the newcomers. French officials quickly learned that their low numbers and fragmentation precluded dominating Indians.

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

How various Indians used this knowledge depended on their own history, their beliefs about themselves and the world, their current relations with neighbors, what they needed or wanted from Europeans, as well as what kind and how many Europeans they met and how often. As the French attempted to make Indians serve colonial purposes, Indians worked to shape the French into useful allies and neighbors. All Indian allies demanded French compliance with the dictates of reciprocity. As early as 1717, the Commissary General of Louisiana, Marc Antoine Hubert, could report that "all the chiefs of the Indians, even those remote from these posts," regularly traveled "to see the commandants, with the expectation of receiving some presents." Within the rubric of reciprocity, these gifts served as the obligation of those wealthy in exotic goods but short on practicalities to those able to provide guides, interpreters, warriors, food, and land. Often in fact short on goods, French officials thought of these demands as tribute.

French officials had no choice but to comply. There was no other way to counter the English and Spanish. In fact, Indians' desire for French weapons to counter enemies armed by Spanish and especially English trade harmonized with French imperial objectives. French-Indian negotiations developed a standard vocabulary that drew on the presence of other Europeans. Indians complained of attacks by European-armed foes, and French officials promised not only weapons but also a friendship more in line with Indian ideals of reciprocity and obligation than other Europeans would provide.

Native peoples in turn used their knowledge of European rivalries to instruct Europeans in how they should act. Louisiana Indians sought trade with as many Europeans as possible, and most traded at least sporadically with the English from at least 1700. Despite French, English, and Spanish admonitions that trading relationships were exclusive to one European power, their Indian partners did not agree. In 1745 Quapaw leaders warned their local commandant that if supplies

did not improve they would "see the English again." They knew that mentioning the English would always agitate the French official, who quickly wrote to the governor requesting more merchandise.

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

Events surrounding the Natchez war, which began in 1729, illuminate this unstable world of alliances and rivalries. Triggered by Natchez-French conflict, war spread through the complicated alliances of the Mississippi valley.

[D]istrust [had] mounted between Natchez and French leaders, as each attempted to dominate the other. To the Natchez allowing French settlements made these French into subordinates, like previous Indian settlers. When French traders and officials proved less pliable than the Natchez expected, some began to consider that pillaging French goods and recruiting English trade might be a more reliable way to maintain Natchez security than continuing this unstable and unpredictable relationship.

On several occasions beginning in the 1710s Natchez killed and raided French parties when they violated Natchez propriety. In the 1720s the Natchez's White Apple village found itself at the center of conflict. In the winter of 1723 a dispute over debt led to the death of one of that village's men. When the French commandant only reprimanded the murderer, warriors from the White Apple village attacked nearby French settlements.... Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, led an army the following winter to punish the White Apple village. Pressured by French violence and probably the insistence of other villages, the White Apple village surrendered the chief whom Bienville demanded as recompense for the previous winter's violence. In the peace terms the Natchez agreed to build a fort on their lands that the French would staff and supply, granting the Natchez steadier access to trade and a means for settling future disputes with French traders and settlers.

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

More accustomed to giving than taking orders, the Natchez decided to get rid of these interlopers once and for all. At the urging of the White Apple

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

The Natchez attack decisively placed the French on the opposite side of this conflict. But lining up the sides did not determine how the French should react. Many desired vengeance, but fear was the dominant reaction among the French population. As Governor Périer reported in 1730 of his colonists, "the least rumor makes them rush to the woods like hares." Local Indians stoked these fears with reports that the powerful Chickasaws and Choctaws had joined the conspiracy and were going to kill all the French throughout the colony. With frightened and outnumbered colonists, French officials knew that they would have to persuade their allies to reject Natchez overtures and instead assist the French in getting revenge.

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

Most Indians' reactions to the crisis depended more on relationships with other Indians than with Europeans. The Yazoos and Koroas agreed to join the Natchez effort. Their familial and alliance ties to the Natchez and the devastation they had experienced from European disease joined to pull their loyalties to the Natchez side. Following the Natchez example the Yazoos and Koroas killed their Jesuit missionary, the French who were in their post, and several ill-fated traders who happened to pass along the Mississippi. Koroa women, who apparently had the authority to determine the fate of captives, decreed that five French women and four children be taken to the Chickasaws and sold rather

than killed. With their decision to attack the French in November of 1729, the Yazoos and Koroas found their destinies linked with the Natchez.

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

The Quapaws' good relations with the French also contributed to their decision. In contrast to the Natchez the Quapaws built a strong friendship with their French neighbors. One reason was the smaller numbers of French—fewer than fifty—living in their midst. And these French and the Quapaws both had reasons to be more adaptable than did their French and Natchez counterparts. Not only outnumbered in a strange land hundreds of miles from Louisiana's French capital, non-Indians on the Arkansas also had not come as settlers determined to build plantations. They were voyageurs, *engagés* (indentured servants) freed and stranded by John Law's 1720 financial debacle, and deserters. For the Quapaws' part, their status as newcomers on a contested land seems to have given them a flexibility that the long-powerful Natchez chiefs lacked as well as a greater desire to get along with the most recent newcomers. The French farmed fields and lived in a town surrounded by Quapaw fields and towns, and under their supervision. The French settlers provided mutual protection in a dangerous place and traded furs, food, and other material goods. Their needs coincided with those of the Quapaws, and Quapaw rituals transformed neighbors into family. Having successfully incorporated French men and women, largely on local terms, the Quapaws seized the opportunity to ally with the French against old enemies.

Although not enemies of the Natchez, Yazoos, or Koroas, the Choctaws had no particular affinity for them and hoped to profit from the captives, spoils, and French supplies that would come from the war. French officials very much hoped to have this powerful people on their side, whose participation would be infinitely more valuable than the Louisiana army. In January of 1730, French soldiers established a siege on Natchez. But when the Natchez charged out of the fort to fight, the French soldiers fled "without firing a single shot," as Governor Périer despondently informed his superior. To the governor's and the Natchez's surprise, five hundred Choctaws attacked Natchez two days later. In the battle, they killed at least one hundred Natchez and recovered fifty French women and children and between fifty and one hundred African slaves. The French governor's delight was dimmed a bit by a rumor that the Choctaws had attacked rapidly because they wanted to retrieve the captives before the French or any other Indians got to them.

When the French politely asked for the captives' return, the Choctaws demanded ransoms for each, in part to make up for the hunting their warriors

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

The Tunicas' history with the Natchez made them more ambivalent than the Yazooos, Koroas, Quapaws, or Choctaws. They apparently had allied with the Natchez in the past, but conflict had erupted in 1723 when Tunicas killed three Natchez. In early 1730 the Tunicas swore to fight the Natchez and their allies. They scouted for the French, although it is not clear that they actually engaged in battle. Whatever their earlier designs, in June of 1730 the Tunicas made a mistake. One hundred Natchez men plus women and children who had fled after the Choctaw attack sought refuge among the Tunicas. They asked for Tunica mediation to make peace with the French. Whether sincerely or in hopes of capturing the Natchez to deliver to the French, the Tunicas invited the Natchez refugees to settle among them. When the Tunicas asked the Natchez men to hand over their arms, the men answered that they wanted to but they needed to hold onto them "to reassure their wives," who were naturally apprehensive about entering the town of their former enemy. Acceding to the sensibility of the women's fear, the Tunicas hosted the Natchez with a calumet ceremony and feast that lasted well into the night. After the Tunicas went to sleep, the Natchez guests killed twenty of them and drove off the rest long enough to escape with the Tunicas' guns and ammunition, of which they had a large supply due to recent French recruitment. This betrayal placed the Tunicas firmly on the anti-Natchez side. They routed Natchez refugees along both sides of the Mississippi through the early 1740s, demanding provisions and armaments from the French to supply their missions.

According to one account the Natchez were assisted at the Tunicas by Koroa and Chickasaw warriors who had hidden outside the town during the feasting. Traditionally allies of the Natchez, Yazooos, and Koroas, the Chickasaws at first hoped to play both sides in the conflict. The French had failed to defeat them in the "First Chickasaw War" of the early 1720s, but most Chickasaws seemed to prefer neutrality to overt war. They apparently knew of Natchez plans in 1729 but did not join in the violence. However, when refugees from the three nations sought protection in Chickasaw country after the Choctaws drove them from their homes in early 1730, the Chickasaws could not remain neutral. The demands and plight of the Natchez pulled the Chickasaws toward war. In the summer of 1730 they sent emissaries to the Quapaws, Choctaws, Cherokees,

Miamis, and several Illinois peoples proposing that they all join against the French with the Natchez, Yazooos, and Koroas, armed with English weapons supplied by the Chickasaws. Apparently at least one former French slave who had been captured by the Natchez simultaneously traveled to New Orleans to tell slaves that "they would get their liberty" if they revolted against the French.

By early 1731, after some debate, the Chickasaws escorted Natchez refugees onto Chickasaw lands, allowing them to settle near their clustered towns to act as a barrier from Choctaw raids. Although Chickasaw-Natchez relations would occasionally become strained, the Chickasaws generally fulfilled their alliance obligations. When Governor Périer demanded that the Chickasaws surrender these refugees, the Chickasaws answered that they "had not gone to get them in order to hand them over." As they committed themselves to the Natchez coalition in the 1730s the Chickasaws continued to attempt to recruit the Choctaws, Tunicas, and Quapaws, and the French determined to pursue a second Chickasaw war.

Despite occasional disagreements the French, Choctaws, Quapaws, and Tunicas generally agreed to fight the Natchez, Yazooos, and Koroas.

Fighting the Natchez fit Quapaw, Tunica, and Choctaw alliance obligations as well as interests. Not only were the Natchez old aggressors, their attacks on the French and the Tunicas did seem to break the rules. Even a Chickasaw chief reportedly told a Natchez delegation in 1730 that the French had a right to defend themselves and avenge the killings at the Natchez post. For most Indians, fighting Chickasaws was harder to justify. While often enemies of the Quapaws and Choctaws, their main offense here was harboring fugitives. More importantly, the Chickasaws were more populous and better armed, and starting a war against them would decisively cut off the English trade that they brokered.

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

Choctaws had varying reactions to this French-Chickasaw war. The divided nature of the Choctaw polity meant that different divisions maintained ties with different neighbors, and the Choctaw western towns had in recent years found themselves drawn into Chickasaw offers of trade. The history of Chickasaw and English violence against the Choctaws proved a vivid enough memory to prevent the Choctaws from joining the Chickasaws' coalition, but a unified anti-Chickasaw policy proved elusive.

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

Tensions over alliance methods heightened when the French attempted to assemble their allies to defeat the Chickasaws in one decisive conflict. The war party was to include 1,000 French soldiers led by Bienville, more than 300 African slaves, Choctaws, Quapaws, Indians and French civilians from the Illinois country, and an Iroquois contingent, which the Quapaws supposedly had recruited. At first the allies heartily backed such a decisive plan. In the fall of 1737 Quapaw guides led a French party to explore the route from the Mississippi to the Chickasaw towns. Quapaws and several parties of Illinois Indians helped to build forts on both sides of the Mississippi to house the coming troops and supplies for an assault in the fall of 1739. But Bienville repeatedly postponed the attack because of delays and lack of communication among New Orleans, the forces assembled on the Mississippi, the reinforcements supposedly coming from the Illinois country, and the promised Iroquois. In addition, French officials vacillated between including the Choctaws and keeping them out of the battle for fear they would demand high prices for their services.

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

When the peace proved short-lived and Chickasaws began to inflict heavy damage on French convoys, the Quapaws persuaded the French to accept an alternative war plan for protecting the Mississippi River. The Quapaws fought the Chickasaws when they wished, in parties of 30 to 50 warriors who could strike quickly and escape without major casualties. The French contributed by paying the Quapaws for Chickasaw scalps. Nor did they interfere when Quapaw attacks occasionally hit the Choctaws. Louisiana's governor in the 1740s, Vaudreuil, told his superiors that he had "engaged" the Quapaws to raid the Chickasaws; however, it is clear that the Quapaws were now in charge of their effort and that their methods were more effective.

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

By the 1740s many Choctaws had wearied of the Chickasaw war. If the French had met the Choctaws' pecuniary demands, they might have simply skirmished occasionally against the Chickasaws, as Red Shoe did in the 1730s and the Quapaws and Tunicas continued to do. But the persistent temptations of trade that the Chickasaws offered prompted some Choctaws to desire a Chickasaw alliance. When rumors spread that the French were trading and allying with the Chickasaws behind Choctaw backs, many Choctaws felt they had been duped into depriving themselves of Chickasaw trade. These desires and grievances pulled against both the eastern Choctaw towns' continued reliance on French trade and the Choctaws' history of alliance with the French versus the Chickasaws and English. A movement arose to make a publicized peace with all. In 1738 Red Shoe declared in front of French and Chickasaw listeners, "I have made peace with the Chickasaws whom I regard as my brothers. For too long a time the French have been causing the blood of the Indians to be shed." Over the next few years more Choctaws came to agree with Red Shoe, while others resolutely opposed him. In the 1740s violence escalated and became more chaotic as groups of Choctaws, French, and Chickasaws raided and counterraided one another, some Choctaws attacked English traders, and ultimately various Choctaw factions committed violence against one another.

Old alliances and animosities had expanded the Natchez-French conflict into regional, and in one case civil, war. When the Natchez used extreme violence against the French invaders, they forced their neighbors to make choices, informed by their relations with others. Pushed by their allegiance to the Natchez and conflict with the French, Choctaws, and Quapaws, the Yazoos and Koroas supported the Natchez. By the summer of 1732 most of them were dead, enslaved and shipped to the Caribbean, or refugees among the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees. While some African captives fought with the Natchez, most found themselves treated like booty, captured in Choctaw and Chickasaw raids and counterraided. At least twenty returned to French slavery. Others were sold to the English or died in captivity, and a few escaped to build lives lost to the records. The Natchez war had repercussions for other Africans, too. Participation on the French side resulted in permanent free black participation in Louisiana militia. And the Natchez war may have inspired an attempted slave revolt. In the summer of 1731, French officials in New Orleans uncovered an apparent plot to kill the masters returning from mass. Even if the French exaggerated the conspiracy, clearly some New Orleans men and women had considered following the Natchez example, or at least taking advantage of the troops'

preoccupation to the north, and some were executed for the possibility. The Choctaws, Tunicas, and Quapaws sought moderate policies, which led the Tunicas to expose themselves to Natchez deception and the Choctaws to internal discord. Still, all remained influential groups into the nineteenth century and beyond. Despite their decision to support the Natchez, so too did the Chickasaws, whom the French by no means succeeded in destroying.

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

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