THE BLOODY GROUND: THE CHICKAMAUGA WARS AND TRANS-APPALACHIAN EXPANSION, 1776-1794.

by

Sean Patrick Kane

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
History

Charlotte

2018

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Daniel Dupre

_____
Dr. Carol Higham

_____
Dr. Christopher Cameron

ABSTRACT

SEAN PATRICK KANE. THE BLOODY GROUND: THE CHICKAMAUGA WARS AND TRANS-APPALACHIAN EXPANSION, 1776-1794. (Under the direction of DR. DANIEL DUPRE)

Despite the plethora of works on the American Revolution and the Cherokee, few scholars have placed the Cherokee within the context of the Revolution. This thesis explores the often overlooked history of the Cherokee during last quarter of the eighteenth century. It examines the Cherokees' motivations to join the American Revolution and the impact the Revolution had on Cherokee society and politics. The fight did not stop after the Revolution ended in 1783 and continued in intermittent wars throughout the 1780s and 1790s. The Cherokee continually fought and strove to retain their territories against steady land cession and encroachment by settlers. This thesis argues that the Cherokee attached their own independence and sovereignty to their lands, and in doing so they set the roots of early Cherokee nationalism that would fully form in the nineteenth century.

DEDICATION

To my parents for their support, to Britney for being my rock through some hard times, to Riley for being the best bud I could ask for.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First I would like to thank UNCC and the History Department for giving me the opportunity to pursue my graduate studies here. This campus is like another home for me and I like to think I can finally leave my mark here, at least in the department. It has been an absolute pleasure to attend many of the classes from the history professors. I would also like to thank my professors Dr. Daniel Dupre, Dr. Carol Higham, and Dr. Christopher Cameron for putting up with so many drafts from me and the countless office visits. Your feedback and encouragement has helped me grow as a scholar and a writer. Finally, I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students for the support and the fun nights de-stressing at Trivia Night. I could not have asked for a better group of colleagues and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

As America recovered from the quakes of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), tremors continued to resound in the Southern borderlands. After the long, uneasy peace of the 1760s, tensions arose between the Cherokee and the British American colonists, who continued to push westward and deeper into Cherokee territory, ever hungry for more land. In the early 1770s, inhabitants of the Carolinas and Virginia flooded over the Appalachian Mountains, establishing settlements near Cherokee towns. The steady encroachment angered many of the Cherokee, whose desperate pleas fell on the deaf ears of the British provincial governments. At the same time a revolution began in the coastal cities as colonists protested against the British Empire. In the summer of 1776, as American Patriots declared independence from Britain, the discontented Cherokee took up the hatchet once again and descended on the American settlements. The fighting continued well after the Revolution and intermittent warfare with the Chickamauga Cherokee lasted until 1794.

This thesis explores the history of the Cherokee in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It examines the Cherokees' motivations during the American Revolution and the impact the war had on Cherokee society and politics. In the face of steady land cession and encroachment throughout the late eighteenth century, the Cherokee continually fought and strove to retain their territories. This thesis argues that the Cherokee attached their own independence and sovereignty to their lands, and in doing so they set the roots of early Cherokee nationalism that would fully form in the nineteenth century.

This thesis explores an often overlooked period. Much of the current historiography on the American Revolution has an eastward focus with the emphasis on the battle between American and British troops and Patriots and Loyalists, but the war on the frontier with the Cherokee and other Indians played a role in the outcome of the Revolution. Historians have paid little attention to the effects of the Revolution on the Cherokee. The American Revolution and the resulting Chickamauga Wars in the 1780s and 1790s caused changes within Cherokee society, including both fracturing and consolidation from within. While many Cherokee sought to keep peace, others pushed for war, which eventually led to the warlike faction splitting away and created the Chickamauga Cherokee, named after the creek they settled in. Although the two Cherokee factions had split from each other, they shared a similar goal: an independent Cherokee nation. They bought sought to keep as much traditional Cherokee lands as possible, whether through diplomacy or war. This internal split eventually led to rethinking of the Cherokee people as a sovereign nation in the midst of changing continental powers in the late eighteenth century.

Cultural encounters between whites and Indians were nothing new by the eve of the Revolution. Conflict between whites and Indians existed since the early colonial era. As Euro-Americans settled and encroached on native land, pushing the boundaries further westward, they intermingled and interacted with Indians. Euro-Americans and Indians traded goods with each other as much as they traded blows. The Europeans gave Indians guns and woven cloth, the Indians gave corn and fur pelts. The borderlands were a place where not everything was completely binary, as both whites and Indians conceded to each other's culture and social norms in one form or another. European groups like the

Scots and English often became Indian traders, and the more prominent Indian leaders travelled into the colonies for diplomatic missions. However, not all interactions were peaceful.

War and conflict were always on the mind of both whites and Indians. The French and Indian War had a lasting impact on colonial America. The war not only sowed the seeds of Revolution, but also drastically changed the relationship with the Indians. The end of the war resulted in not only peace treaties between the British and French, but also the creation of new western borders for the colonies with the Proclamation of 1763. The Proclamation of 1763 created--at least on paper-- a rigid boundary between white and Indian lands, symbolizing a separation. It prohibited European settlement and expansion west of the Appalachians, which the Proclamation deemed for the Indians. Its purpose was to prevent another Indian war, as the British sought to keep the benefits of the Indian trade for their empire.

By the eve of the Revolution, early patriots disparaged taxation and tyrannical government, but the borderlands had a different story. The war in the Appalachians was not one of revolutionary ideals, but rather a continuation of the previous war, a fight over land. The Proclamation angered colonists, as they desired more land. Many European colonists saw it as an affront to their local sovereignty. So while Patriots in New England and southern coastal cities rose against an encroaching empire, the position seemed to be ironically reversed in the borderlands. If any group fought to retain their sovereignty and autonomy from invaders and encroachment, it was the Indians like the Cherokee.

Historiography

Early historians drew upon Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, where, Indians were simply in the way of America's manifest destiny of westward expansion. Turner saw the frontier as the birth of American democracy, where old ideas eroded away to new American ideals. The concept of the frontier played a huge part in historical theories concerning the American Indians. Even Verner Crane's groundbreaking book, *The Southern Frontier: 1670-1730* in 1928, had its own basis on the Turnerian frontier thesis, though it was more nuanced and complex.[1]

However, towards the end of the twentieth century, historians began to reexamine the historical perceptions of the frontier and how whites and Indians shaped the boundaries. Richard White's book on the Ohio Valley, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815,* drew from the frontier thesis, but created a new way of looking at it: the frontier not as a binary border between two powers, but a place where the culture intermixed, a "middle ground."[2] This shift away from the stark Turnerian frontier thesis led to deeper understandings of Indian and white cultural relations. Whereas earlier historians treated Indians as a monolith, only relevant when they engaged in geopolitical conflict with Europeans, historians like White saw Indians as individual groups with their own agendas.

In more recent years, historians have delved deeper into white-Indian cultural relations. European contact had an impact on both Indians and white settlers, as the two communities acted and reacted to each other. James Merrell's *The Indians' New World*

[1] Verner Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670- 1732* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1928).
[2] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

showed how the Catawba, one of the more prominent Carolina Piedmont Indian tribes, adapted to European contact, as their own power steadily declined.[3] Borderlands historians have built upon Richard White's middle ground thesis. Cynthia Cumfer's *Separate Peoples, One Land* analyzes the ideologies of the Cherokee, the white settlers, and black slaves on the Tennessee frontier in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and shows how contact transformed their concepts and assumptions.[4] She saw a limitation on the middle ground thesis, saying that white and Indian contact did not take place in borderlands between whites and Indians, but more often on actual Indian land and claimed cultural interaction impacted the Indians more than the whites. Thomas Hatley's *Dividing Paths* also looks at the relations between whites and Cherokee in the South Carolina backcountry, examining how the two communities first found commonality through open trade in the early eighteenth century and then became estranged. By the end of the century, the Cherokee desired a closed boundary with their American neighbors.[5]

Conflict often led to the destruction of relations, but also the formation of new identities. Peter Silver's *Our Savage Neighbors* explores the creation of a proto-American identity during the French and Indian War in Pennsylvania through colonial literature. Literature formed colonial ideas about Indians, usually shaped by fear, and –indirectly– ideas about the white settlers themselves. Fear and anxiety of Indians gave the diverse European ethnic groups in the backcountry, such as the Scots Irish and Germans, common ground to band together against the Indians, creating a somewhat more unified

---

[3] James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), viii-ix.
[4] Cynthia Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Mind: The Minds of Cherokees, Blacks, and Whites on the Tennessee Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 2.
[5] Thomas Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), viii-xiv.

community of "white people."[6] Jill Lepore's *The Name of War* makes similar argument, though set in New England during King Philip's War in the late seventeenth century. New England colonists shaped their own identities, as they struggled to maintain an English identity living next to Indians and participating in cultural exchange.[7]

Historians have also written about how contact has shaped and created Indian identities. Daniel Richter's *Facing East in Indian Country*, a comprehensive book on early American history from an Indian perspective, showed how Indians began to create a "red" identity in parallel to the European settlers' formation of "white" identity. In Hatley's *Dividing Paths*, land encroachment before the American Revolution and the Cherokee War of 1776 led to a split within the Cherokee, by creating a separate group of Cherokee, the Chickamauga, who referred to themselves as the "real people."[8] Hatley claimed that war and opposition to land encroachment by white settlers impacted how the Cherokee saw themselves. However, much of Hatley's analysis stopped at 1777 and did not examine the post-Revolutionary years.

Historians of American history have often treated American Indian history as its own distinct genre of history apart from American history. Scholars like Colin Calloway, however, have begun to synthesize American Indian history and include it with the rest of early American history, no longer treating it as solely American Indian history. Historians of the colonial southeast have also included the other Europeans in play, such as the French and Spanish, within the realm of American history. They have pushed beyond the borders of the colonial British American world and include peoples and nations such as

---

[6] Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), xviii-xx.
[7] Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 4-5.
[8] Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 225-6.

Indians, other European, and even Africans. Historians like James Merrell have continuously argued for including Indians as central actors in early American history.[9] Merrell and others like him have sought to place the Indian presence within colonial society, both culturally and politically. In this thesis I will place the Cherokee within the context of the American Revolution and treat them as a central actor in the South rather than a chess piece.

As for Indian involvement in the American Revolution, many early scholars excluded them as players. They depicted the Indians as no longer having any important role in American history, except the decades before and after the Revolution, when Americans fought them over land. Early historians deemed Indians irrelevant by the 1760s and placed them on the periphery, bringing forward again only when the new American republic created removal acts in the early nineteenth century. In 1973 James O'Donnell strove to include Indians within the timeframe of the American Revolution. However, his book, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution*, seems almost rudimentary in approach compared to later works, as it was wide in scope but not too deep in analysis.[10] O'Donnell focused mainly on white-Indian diplomacy, with little attention to the Indians themselves. However, that may be forgiven considering that he was among the first to include Indians within the context of the Revolution. His work was one of the last of the diplomatic histories, as ethnohistory with James Axtell and others leading the charge, began to take over American Indian studies by the seventies. Those

[9] James H. Merrell, "Coming to Terms with Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 535-40.
[10] James O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973).

like Axtell paid more attention to the cultural impacts and actions of American Indians, making them historical actors rather than mere obstacles.

By the late eighties and nineties, with revisionist American Indian history taking form, historians began to include the Indians within the context of the American Revolution. The most prominent text on the American Indian role in the Revolution is Colin Calloway's *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*.[11] Calloway sought to close the wide gaps historians of both the Revolution and American Indians had left about Indian participation in the American Revolution. He investigated the impact of the Revolution on eight Indian communities, in both the northern and southern regions and on both sides of the war. He dispelled any notions of generalization, showing that each community responded to the oncoming war in their own way. Following his steps, Ethan Schmidt recently offered a more comprehensive synthesis in *Native Americans in the American Revolution*, but had a very broad approach in attempting to weave an overall narrative with little analysis. [12] I build on the foundations of Calloway and Schmidt as I focus on the war's impact on the southern Appalachian frontier (Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia) and the peoples who lived there. By showing the Indian experience, Calloway and Schmidt helped to place Indians into the history of the Revolution. However, neither of the books delved deeply into the various tribes and they stop after the end of the Revolution. This thesis closely examines the Cherokee during and after the Revolution.

---

[11] Colin G Calloway. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[12] Ethan Schmidt, *Native Americans in the American Revolution: How the War Divided, Devastated and Transformed the Early American Indian World* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014).

For most of its development, the historiography on American Indians has been regionalized. The British colonies split not just between North and South, but also the varying regions like Appalachia, Piedmont, Chesapeake tidewater, and so forth. The different tribes become compartmentalized within these regions, as if they were static. However, Indians migrated and settled across the continent as much as their white counterparts did. They traded and interacted with other Indians and European powers, like the British, Spanish, and French, and played them against each other. They also did the same with other Indian powers. The Southeast existed as a hub of geopolitics and cultural mesh. Although the British colonists were more likely to be more isolated from the French and Spanish colonies, Indians interacted with the other European powers. By the 1760s and 1770s, Indians like the Creek and Cherokee may have been pushed westward out of British lands, but that meant they had closer contact with not just each other but other empires as well such as Spanish Florida and French Louisiana. More recent scholars have recognized this multi-directional contact.

In recent years, scholars writing about the colonial period and the American Revolution have looked beyond the Thirteen Colonies to Florida and the Gulf Coast. Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost* explores how the Revolution affected those outside of the British colonies, such as the Creek and European colonists in the Gulf Coast. The book takes a wider perspective on the war, showing the views of more marginalized people like women, slaves, and Indians. DuVal added more nuance to the history of the American Revolution, showing that even though people in the North rallied over taxation, those in the Gulf faced competition between European powers like the British and Spanish. The inhabitants of the Gulf were caught in between the powers of the British

and the Spanish. Duval highlighted the Revolution's impact even on the fringes of the colonies, where various people and groups reacted differently to the war for American independence. In this thesis I show how the war affected the southern Appalachian frontier.

These expanding perspectives have caused historians to reexamine the role of Indians in both early and late colonial periods, recognizing the Indians' integrated role in the transatlantic world, especially for the southeast. Allan Gallay's *The Indian Slave Trade* highlighted the Indians' role in the early indigenous slave trade in South Carolina, which affected British imperial expansion.[13] Kathryn E. Holland Braund's *Deerskins & Duffels* looks at the trade relations between the Creek and the British from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, showing the two-sided negotiations between both whites and Indians.[14] Indian trade goods flowed across the continent and the Atlantic just as much as European goods travelled throughout the interior. It shows how trade relations with Indians influenced European markets. These books help to show how well-connected Indians were into the European empires.

Trade goods were not the only thing exchanged in the borderlands, but also culture. Indian traders had a great impact on colonial history, as they often helped shape relations with Indians through trade and exchange. Historians have not only recognized the roles men played in diplomatic relations, but also women's diplomatic roles. Scholars of gender have acknowledged the interplay of gender roles in both Euroamerican and Indian societies. By the nineties, histories of Indian women began to appear. Theda

---

[13] Allan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
[14] Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

Perdue's *Cherokee Women* challenge the notion that European contact gave way to patriarchy and argues that Cherokee women did retain, and fought for, an amount of power.[15] She analyzes the development of gender roles within Cherokee society and how male elites fought for social control and power with females. Michelene Pesantubbee has written a history of Choctaw women, showing how interactions with the French altered the lives of both Choctaw men and women.[16]

The American southeast is an important but underrated part of early American colonial history. The nineties saw new heights with studies of southeastern Indians and continued into the twenty-first century. Many scholars have started to reexamine the colonial period, from the sixteenth century and well into the eighteenth century. Patricia Galloway and Greg O'Brien have written extensive works on the Choctaw, placing them in a broader context of colonial southeast history. Galloway's *Choctaw Genesis* traces the tribe's earliest histories, using archaeological data as well as responses to contacts with other Indians and the arrival of Europeans.[17]

Many scholars have overlooked the history of the Cherokee in the late eighteenth century, particularly the years after the Revolution. Much of the attention after the Revolution has been placed on the Removal era or early colonial wars, such as the French and Indian War and the Anglo-Cherokee War. William McLoughlin's *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* mainly covered Cherokee history from the early nineteenth century towards removal and skimmed over the eighteenth century.[18] He

---

[15] Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 10.
[16] Michelene Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).
[17] Patricia Kay Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
[18] William McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

explored the formation of Cherokee national identity in the midst of the Removal crisis. However, McLoughlin offered more narrative than analysis.

This thesis furthers McLoughlin's work on Cherokee identity but places it further back into the eighteenth century. It bridges the two halves, Colonial and Removal, and fills in the gaps of Cherokee history. The years between the Anglo-Cherokee War and the American Revolution set the trend that followed through the rest of the century, such as land cessions and a burgeoning Cherokee identity associated. It also highlights the 1780s and 1790s and shows how these decades were important to the formation of Cherokee national identity, and that its start was rooted more in the Revolutionary-era than during Washington's assimilation policies or the Removal.

A Note on Methodology and Definitions

Due to the limited amount of sources for the era, this thesis will engage in an ethnographic method, where conclusions are made through inductive reasoning and understanding of a subject matter and culture. It has been, used by many historians to combat the lack of sources for some groups of people. Unfortunately the Cherokee and many settlers of the frontier did not leave written material and most of their words were recorded by other people like officials, planters, interpreters, traders, and other more educated individuals.

I strive to use the most accurate terms. Many modern terms have different meanings compared to the eighteenth century such as "American," "British," and "Patriot." Everyone in the colonies and the British Isles considered themselves British

subjects. Most Americans considered themselves British subjects until the separation, unless they were Loyalists, who were Americans that wished to remain as a British colony. “Patriot” can also be a tricky term, which usually refers to the American revolutionaries, though that may be a more modern application. Dictionaries of the eighteenth century, such as Samuel Johnson’s own dictionary, referred to a patriot as “One whose ruling passion is the love of his country.” However, it seemed that many of the revolutionaries adopted “Patriot” as their own label. “Whigs” and “rebels” may also describe the revolutionary side, but again these terms have their own limitations. Only pro-British people called the revolutionaries “rebels,” which may color the perspective and narrative in a negative light. “Whigs” works for the most part, but not all those who fought against Britain were Whigs, nor would they all have been outright revolutionaries in the way one may think of Thomas Jefferson or John Adams.

However, using half a dozen terms to describe one side of the fight will only lead to confusion and clutter. Out of necessity and consistency I will use the most concise terms. Some may find them a little generalizing, but I have laid out the nuances of the terms. So for this paper “British” will refer to the officials and people from the isles, “Whigs” and “Patriots” will refer to the Americans for independence, and “Loyalists” for the Americans wanting to remain with the British.

Terms become just as complex when talking about the various ethnicities in the Americas. When referring to non-Indian settlers, “British” or “Anglo-American” does not work as not all of the settlers came from Britain and “Anglo” excludes the various non-English groups like the Scots, Irish, Germans, and French. In this thesis, I will refer to the emigrants of Europe that settle in the Americas as “Euroamericans” as it most inclusive

term for them. “White” can also be apt but it can be very generalizing. I shall also refer the various Indians by their groups instead of lumping them into one label of “Indian.” However, at times the sources do not always specify and may simply state “Indians,” so the term may be used when a specific group cannot be determined. As for individual Cherokee, the paper uses their commonly-known name for the sake of the reader, but will state both their Cherokee and English names.

The terminology of frontiers, borderlands, and backcountry is also an issue of debate among historians. In the eighteenth century, the colonies oriented themselves eastward, looking towards Europe. Any land to the west of the coastal cities belonged to the “interior.” Eighteenth- century people used the terms “frontiers” and “backcountry” almost interchangeable. For this paper, more consistent terminology shall be used. The “frontier” refers to the lands at the western fringes of the colonies, like the Watauga settlement in the Appalachian Mountains. “Backcountry” refers to lands westward of the large coastal cities. “Borderlands”, as most historians have defined it, refers to the intersection of different peoples, nations, and cultures. It can be used interchangeably with frontier. However, I view frontier as a one-sided term whereas borderlands involves multiple perspectives.

The Lay of the Land

By the middle of the eighteenth-century, the Cherokee faced internal changes from external pressure. The Cherokee had changed dramatically after nearly a century of European interaction. Cherokee population had declined drastically. Some of the Cherokee settlements suffered tremendously during the Anglo-Cherokee War in the 1750s and early 1760s.[19] Economic pressure, such as the decline in the deerskin trade, and cultural intermingling led the Cherokee to build more European style "individual farms and isolated settlements" rather than their traditional communal villages and farms.[20] Moravian missionary work in Cherokee towns also sparked some religious change, as it caused many Cherokee to adapt to Christianity.

The Cherokee resided deep in the Appalachians and its western foothills. The British divided the Cherokee settlements and towns into four regions: the Overhill in the north on the Little Tennessee and Tellico Rivers in northeastern Tennessee, the Valley and Middle towns in western North Carolina, and the Lower Towns in the western horn of South Carolina.[21] James Adair, an Indian trader and historian, wrote that the towns were very spread out from each other "because the land will not admit any other settlement."[22] Adair stated that the geography of the area did not allow for closer settlements like towns in the Carolina upcountry or the Virginia tidewater and created separated Cherokee settlements. According to Adair, Cherokee territory by the 1770s totaled around 140 miles distance from the southernmost town at Fort Prince George to

[19] Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),187.
[20] Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*,182.
[21] Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*, 185.
[22] James Adair, *A History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (New York, 1775; repr. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 248.

Fort Loudon.[23] In essence their "territory," or at least the lands they occupied constantly, was mainly within what is now eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. However, the lands they used as hunting grounds extended far into northern Alabama and most of Kentucky.

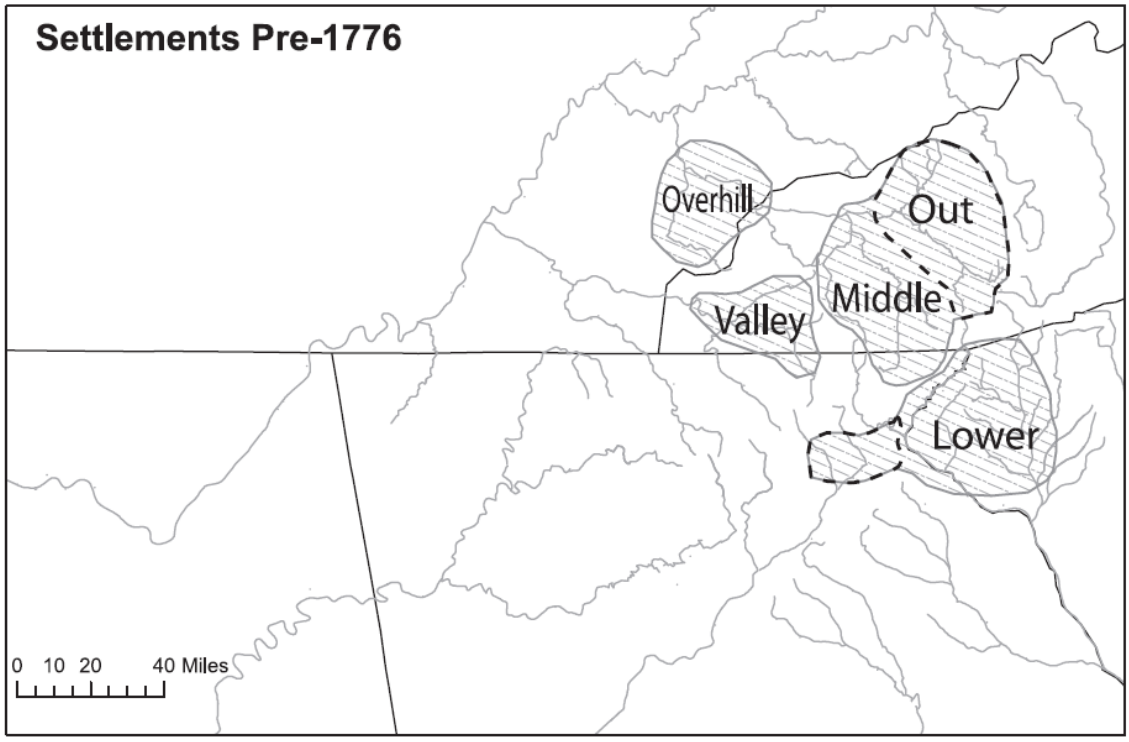


Figure 1: Location of the Cherokee towns prior to 1776. Some scholars include more than four towns. The map shows the settlements on the western horn of North Carolina, with the Overhill townss in modern-day eastern Tennessee and the Lower towns in western South Carolina. From Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation : Town, Region, and Nation Among Eighteenth-century Cherokees* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 177.

The Cherokee clung onto their older traditions amid a changing landscape. These traditions guided how the Cherokee formulated relationships among each other and with

[23] Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 247.

Europeans. The Cherokee used a form of kinship as a basis for their relationships and even their society. They predicated their actions on whether they saw someone as family or as strangers. Kinship affected diplomatic relationships as the Cherokee saw other tribes and Europeans as symbolic family members. A tribe may be hailed as "uncles" by the Cherokee and see another tribe as "sisters," which giving the tribes their attributed roles and relationships within diplomacy. The Cherokee called the British and their Euroamerican neighbors their "brothers," and the King of Britain "father." As a matrilineal society, the Cherokee emphasized the maternal side of the family, where the male members of the mother's family instructed the children rather than the father.[24] This matrilineal emphasis helped white traders gain ties to the Cherokee by marrying Cherokee women. The Cherokee saw traders and agents, like Alexander Cameron and John Stuart, as beloved family members, and often referred to them as brother or father.

The governance of the Cherokee may have also seen changes. James Adair painted the Cherokee as egalitarian liberals who lived by the "plain and honest law of nature."[25] Adair unwittingly followed the tendency among Europeans attributing Indian tribes with western ideals as noble savages. In a small sense of irony, to Adair the Cherokee epitomized the life ascribed by natural laws à la John Locke. Adair described their government as a "federal union of the whole society for mutual safety."[26] The description sounded rather similar to the governments of the colonies under the British Empire and might have been ascribing a similarity. The different towns acted autonomously but they still coordinated under a quasi-central authority. The highest title they had was that of chieftain, or Beloved Man, which did not have absolute power but

[24] Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Mind*, 25.
[25] Adair, *History of the American Indian*, 375.
[26] Adair, *History of the American Indian, 415*.

commanded respect. Chieftains did not make decisions based on their title or power, but rather had to "persuade or dissuade" people through reasoning and oration. The Cherokee government seemed more democratic than a Virginia House of Burgesses, as heads of households could express their opinions and concerns at the councils instead of through an elected official.[27]

The wars of the 1750s and 60s fractured Cherokee society and governance. Many influential policymakers that had been considered friendly to the British, such as Round O and Standing Turkey, passed away due to epidemics sweeping the nation. The loss of such leaders led to a disorganization of Cherokee leadership in the Overhill and Lower towns. During the Anglo-Cherokee War, a conflict between the British and the Cherokee during the years 1758-61, some towns such as Chota and Tellico supported hostile actions towards the British, while other towns seemed reluctant to fight.[28]

The wars also affected the next generation. Dragging Canoe and Young Tassel, who would both eventually lead bands of Cherokee warriors against the Americans, experienced the destructive expeditions from British Generals Archibald Montgomery and James Grant during the Anglo-Cherokee War in their youth. New leaders emerged out of the power vacuum, such as Attakullakulla, or the Little Carpenter, who became the new elder spokesperson. Attakullakulla had been acting as one of the primary Cherokee diplomats for the British since the 1730s. By the 1760s, William Lyttleton, governor of South Carolina, saw Attakullakulla as the single spokesperson for the whole Cherokee nation. William Byrd, governor of Virginia, had even crowned Attakullakulla as

---

[27] Adair, *History of the American Indian, 415*-6.
[28] Thomas Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993),157-9.

"emperor" of the Cherokee.[29] Although the Cherokee towns operated mainly on a local scale, the British, and later the Americans, tried to categorize them as one singular nation.[30] They assumed that Attakullakulla held a seat of absolute power in Chota and spoke for all of the Cherokee towns.

The Cherokee towns developed as trading centers over the eighteenth century. The Overhill town of Chota in modern-day southeastern Tennessee emerged as a "terminus" of trading paths that stretched to Charleston and Savannah. Chota became one of the most powerful Cherokee towns by the 1750s. Even then, Chota did not act as a central place of authority for the Cherokee, as the various regions kept to their own towns and settlements for governance. The British wrongly applied a sense of a singular Cherokee nation by emphasizing Chota as the main town, similar to how Byrd and Lyttleton treated Attakullakulla as the head of all Cherokee.

For most of the century, the Cherokee had been important actors in the deerskin trade. However, after mid-century the deerskin trade started to become unprofitable for British and American merchants in comparison to agriculture, as the Cherokee could not keep up with the increasing white hunters and trappers. Decreased deer population because of overhunting also hindered the Cherokee in obtaining skins to trade. Newly arrived merchants realized that the trade would not last indefinitely and did not have the same trade relationships as older, more established merchants, so they started to value land more than the trade.[31]

---

[29] Hatley, *Dividing Paths,159*-60.
[30] Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 26.
[31] J. Russell Snapp, *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Western Frontier* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 34-9.

Merchants and traders took advantage of Cherokee debts, knowing the Indians would never be able to pay them off. If Indians like the Cherokee could not pay with deerskins alone, then traders hoped the trade investment would later mean a chance at obtaining Indian land. Richard Pearis and Jacob Hite, traders from Virginia, swindled the Cherokee by tricking them into thinking they signed a trade agreement with Virginia, but in reality the Cherokee signed away 150,000 acres. Traders and merchants eyed the lands in the west, but because the Proclamation Act forbade outright purchasing of "Indian" lands, many merchants invested in trade as a means of having a stake in future land cessions.[32] The traders' and merchants' desire for land forged new relations with the Cherokee, one that took advantage of their economic vulnerabilities. Based on this desire for more land, the new relationship only created tensions between the Cherokee and the settlers, as well as traders and government officials that sought to regulate the Indian trade.

At the end of the French and Indian War, white settlement in the South expanded, filling up the backcountry and slowly moving towards the western frontier. For most of the eighteenth century many colonists settled in the eastern portions of the colonials, towards the cities on the Atlantic coast. However, the war's end meant an opening of new land and migration towards the Carolina and Virginia backcountry increased. Thousands of Germans, English, and Ulster Irish immigrated to the Americas, where many found themselves in the southwestern region of Virginia and the Carolinas.[33] People also migrated within the colonies. Many Pennsylvanians went to the west to Fort Pitt, now modern-day Pittsburgh. Others pushed southward down the Cumberland and Shenandoah

[32] Snapp, *John Stuart*, 38-43.
[33] Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 56-7.

Valleys, following the Great Wagon Road into southern Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.[34]

Backcountry settlers formed distinct societies in comparison to the coastal cities. The various ethnicities brought their own mixed multitudes of cultures and ideas. They lived far removed from any form of provincial government, leading to a rugged and rough life that many easterners compared to that of the Indians. During times of war they often became the barrier, absorbing the blows of Indian attacks.[35] However, the chance for free land in the west may have been worth the price.

The Breaking of Chains

Land became the main source of conflict for the war in the frontier, as it often did in the colonial era. Land represented different things to the various inhabitants of the region. To the Euroamerican settlers, land functioned as a way towards prosperity and independence. The Cherokee and other Indians viewed land as a means of prosperity, since they sold the deerskins from their hunts for profit, but it also represented a physical border that symbolized freedom and sovereignty. The Cherokee also had spiritual attachments to their lands since they held the burial grounds of their ancestors.[36]

One of the sources of conflict over land was through ownership and usage. The Cherokee and their American and British neighbors held differing beliefs over the concept of landownership. Many Americans and British subscribed to Lockean beliefs of property, where ownership derived of mixing labor into supposed unclaimed land. The

[34] Calloway, *Scratch of a Pen*, 59.
[35] Calloway, *Scratch of a Pen*, 59.
[36] Cumfer, *Separate People, One Land*, 26.

Cherokee saw land as communal, with occupants having a right to the tenure of the land. The British held different concepts of landownership and usage because of the scarcity of land in Britain, where most of the land was dedicated to agriculture, versus America where land scarcity did not exist. Indians cultivated lands for agriculture much like the Europeans, but they also set aside lands for hunting grounds which did not see continuous use or occupation.[37] Many colonists saw these hunting lands as undeveloped plots ripe for the taking.

During the seventeenth century, British philosophers wrestled with the idea of whether Indians owned their lands. For the most part, many concluded that the Indians did indeed own lands, but only partially. Samuel Purchas and William Penn, for example thought Indians owned the land they occupied while the rest of America was up for grabs. Penn believed Indians lacked claim to uncultivated land, which would translate to their hunting grounds.[38] The same line of thinking continued into the eighteenth centuries, where later settlers eyed the lands in Kentucky, the traditional hunting grounds of the Cherokee. The Cherokee saw land as communal, with occupants having tenant rights. They believed in individual personal property.[39]

The Cherokee still sought out interaction with their white neighbors through trade. They did not wish to be completely cut off from the British colonies, since they depended on the deerskin trade for European consumer goods. The stream of nearby white settlers did upset the Cherokee however they had a level of toleration for them because of an easier access to trade. They received goods mainly from traders but they also interacted

[37] Although the Cherokee did not use the Lockean property theory like their British/American counterparts, I would hardly compare it to a more communist view of where no one owns anything and shares everything. Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 32.
[38] Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, 31.
[39] Cumfer. *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 26.

and traded with the nearby settlers. The Cherokee saw these settlers and traders as their brothers. However, as much as the Cherokee welcomed the newcomers, they wanted them to keep to their boundary lines set up by the treaties. The Cherokee would tolerate the nearby American settlers as long as they stayed on their own side.[40]

The British hoped to stem land disputes between Indians and whites through land treaties and the redrawing of newer boundaries. They intended the boundary lines to keep the peace between Indians like the Cherokee and the westward-faring white settlers. In 1768, John Stuart, the superintendent of the southern Indian Department, conducted the Treaty of Hard Labour in South Carolina between the British government and the Cherokee. The treaty ceded the Cherokee lands east of the new line to Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina and pushed the boundary line created by the 1763 proclamation further westward.[41] A second treaty in 1770 between the Cherokee and Virginia at Lochaber did the same. With the treaties of Hard Labour in 1768 and Lochaber in 1770, the Cherokee saw their lands dwindle away piece by piece.

Although the British government tried to form boundary lines to separate the British lands from Indian country, they never had the intended effect. The stream of nearby white settlers did upset the Cherokee, but the Cherokee tolerated the settlers because of an interest in trade and ease of access. The Cherokee saw these settlers and traders as their brothers. However, as much as the Cherokee welcomed the newcomers, they wanted settlers to keep to their side of boundary lines set up by the treaties. The Cherokee would tolerate the nearby settlers as long as they settled on their own side.[42]

---

[40] Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 28.
[41] *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, William L. Saunders, et al. (Raleigh, 1886-1914) Vol. 7, 851-5.
[42] Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 28.

The settlers saw the Proclamation of 1763 and its succeeding acts as an affront to their liberties, because it created lines of demarcation between the Indians and Euroamericans and barred the latter from crossing over to settle. British American settlers settled across the line in spite of the provincial and imperial governments. In the early 1770s, Euroamericans moved over the Blue Ridge Mountains into the river valleys of the Upper Tennessee such as the Watauga, Nolichucky, and Holston, naming their settlements after these respective rivers. They formed companies and associations for their settlements, such as the Transylvania Company in modern-day Kentucky and the Watauga Association in modern-day Tennessee. Both of these settlements were technically over the Proclamation line. Richard Henderson's Transylvania Company was more of an extra-legal colony led by Euroamerican land speculators and investors, who wanted the lands in Kentucky. The Transylvania Company existed outside of provincial law, since Virginia did not sponsor it and it was a private purchase. The Watauga settlers established their Association as a democratic government autonomous from any provincial government. Having a separate government indicated they did not fall under any provincial rule and fell outside of the law like Transylvania.

Some areas west of the Appalachians, such as the Ohio and Kentucky regions were contested among multiple parties. Much of the hard fighting occurred in the Ohio area during the French and Indian War in the 1750s. For decades, colonists, government officials, and land speculators alike eagerly looked at the Ohio and Kentucky regions. Even other Indians and European nations, like the French, sought the Ohio and Kentucky. Rival land speculator companies competed over exploring and settling modern-day Kentucky during the 1760s and 70s, including the Loyal Company with Virginia

governor Lord Dunmore as an investor, and the Ohio Company, funded by the Washington and Jefferson families.[43] James Harrod and Daniel Boone, both vaunted frontiersmen and explorers, led expeditions through the country in the early 1770s.[44] The area of southern Ohio and Kentucky again became the center of the fighting during Lord Dunmore's War in 1774 between Virginia and the Shawnee and Mingoes. At the end of the war in October of 1774, the defeated Shawnee ceded their lands south of the Ohio River, their usual hunting grounds, to Virginia at the Treaty of Camp Charlotte.[45] However, the Shawnee cession of the Kentucky region did not settle the contest for Kentucky once and for all as the Cherokee still used the lands for hunting grounds. While technically the lands fell into the hands of Dunmore and Virginia, others like the Transylvania Company and the Wataugans would continue to pursue the lands in their westward push.

The desire for the Ohio and Kentucky regions only added fuel to a growing fire. Indians like the Cherokee felt a threatening pressure from both the encroaching settlers and the boundary moving steadily westward. The provincial governments could hardly control their subjects as more and more settlers and land speculators continued to squat or illegally purchase Indian lands. The expansion led to rising tensions between colonists and Cherokee, setting the stage for a future conflict.

---

[43]Craig Thompson Friend, *Kentucke's* Frontiers (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 51-3.
[44]Friend, *Kentucke,* 53; John Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 89.
[45] Friend, *Kentucke,* 53-5.

The Henderson Purchase

After the end of Lord Dunmore's War in 1774 and the cession of Shawnee lands in Kentucky, jealous eyes turned once again to the west. In early spring of 1775, Richard Henderson, a judge in North Carolina, negotiated a deal with the Cherokee to purchase a large tract of land. The Treaty of Sycamore Shoals, also known as the Henderson Purchase, transferred most of modern-day Kentucky to Richard Henderson and the Transylvania Company. The effects of the treaty later incited resentment by discontented Cherokee and eventually led to the outbreak of war in southern Appalachia.

Henderson had much to gain from the deal, as he had lost his house and barn in the Regulator movement in the early 1770s and faced other financial hardships. During the movement, colonists of the Carolinas rose up against the colonial government, styling themselves "Regulators," and demanded a transparent government, reduced taxes, and more government representation. As a judge, Henderson opposed Regulators and earned their ire as they burned his house and barn. [46] The lands in Kentucky would have been a way to recoup losses by selling them to potential settlers. In 1774 he approached the Cherokee chiefs with a proposal to buy their lands north of the Tennessee River. In anticipation, the Transylvania Company already sent out advertisements in late 1774 and early 1775 to spur interest from potential settlers.

Henderson and the Transylvania Company were not alone in wanting Cherokee lands. The Wataugans, Euroamerican settlers that named themselves after the Watauga River Valley, had settled in the area around the late 1760s. After finding out their settlements lay on the wrong side of the Proclamation line in 1771 they made plans to

[46] Faragher, *Boone*,107.

avoid eviction. The Wataugans made a deal with the Cherokee to stay in their settlement with a clever loophole. Although the Proclamation forbade purchasing land, it said nothing about leasing, and they successfully negotiated with the Cherokee for a ten- year lease.[47] By 1774 the Cherokee had become dissatisfied with the lease and complained to the British about the settlement being too far into their lands and wanted the Wataugans to remove. Despite orders from the Indian Department to remove and a proclamation from Governor Martin, the Wataugans held firm and remained in their settlement.[48]

The four- day conference between Henderson and the Cherokee occurred in March of 1775 at Fort Watauga in modern-day Elizabethton, Tennessee. As the conference occurred on their home ground, the Wataugans also participated and hoped to purchase their lands from the Cherokee.[49] Henderson negotiated with some of the Cherokee leaders, Attakullakulla, Dragging Canoe, and the old war leader, Oconostota.[50] The lands at stake contained much of the Cherokee's hunting grounds between the Cumberland and Kentucky rivers.[51] Henderson intended to purchase the lands and encourage people to settle. Henderson offered wagons of goods worth ten thousand pounds sterling, which the Cherokee chiefs accepted, and subsequently signed the deed.

The dubious and vague nature of the agreement threatened some of the Cherokees' holdings to culturally important lands, such as the Long Island of Holston. Although the Cherokee agreed to the deal, they did not know the actual boundaries of the

[47] Ben Allen and Dennis T. Lawson, "The Wataugans and the 'Dangerous Example,'" *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1967), 137-8.
[48] Allen and Lawson, "The Wataugans and the 'Dangerous Example,'" 142.
[49] Allen and Lawson, "The Wataugans and the 'Dangerous Example,'" 142.
[50] Faragher, *Boone* ,111.
[51] Hatley, *Dividing Paths*,217.

agreement, which Henderson kept vague until the deed had been signed.[52] On the morning after the signing of the deeds Richard Paris, an Irish-born Indian-trader, asked the Cherokee chiefs if they had in fact sold their lands at the Long Island of Holston to Henderson. The chiefs replied that they "had not, nor would not." They later told Henderson that they did not sell him the "Lands upon these waters & had only allowed him a path through them to pass to the Kentucky."[53] However the misunderstanding, it had been too late.

In his mind, Henderson had outright purchased the lands from the Cherokee. Though the purchase may not have been technically legal under the current law, he had still gone through the necessary channels and customs. Henderson and his associates obtained the deed for the lands from the Cherokee in exchange for a consideration of wagons of goods. Other witnesses had claimed the exchange was fair and that Henderson had pulled no tricks over the Cherokee. Like other land speculators, he hoped to gain from the purchase. He believed that the deal would become legal in the future when Britain would open up the land for settlement.[54]

The Cherokee made the deal with Henderson out of necessity. In the years prior to 1775, the Cherokee population had been declining due to the wars, famine, and disease. Henderson brought wagons of goods to trade, which the Cherokee most likely needed. Considering the decline of the deerskin trade and the increasing dependency on the British, headmen like Oconostota made a hard decision to accept Henderson's deal.[55] The elder headmen showed reluctance during the conference when they tried to offer

---

[52] *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781,* William P. Palmer, et al. (eds.),(Richmond, 1875-83), Vol. I, 283-4.
[53] Palmer, *VSP*, Vol. 1,285.
[54] John R. Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 49-50.
[55] Hatley, *Dividing Paths,*162-6.

Henderson the lands north of the Kentucky River instead of the southern lands that he wanted. The Cherokee reluctantly agreed to the deed, because they used the lands south of the Kentucky as hunting grounds. The Cherokee looked to these lands for their game, just as much as the "Tame Cattle were to the white people."[56] Selling the southern lands meant losing access to hunting grounds, one of the primary means of sustenance and cultural pride for Cherokee men, but they still had not been paid the five hundred pounds that Virginia owed them for the northern lands.[57] The ten thousand pounds of goods that Henderson offered would have been very enticing.

The Henderson Purchase caused a schism within Cherokee society. Although Attakullakulla, the First Beloved Man of the Cherokee, and other elders agreed to the treaty, others opposed the deal.[58] Dragging Canoe, Attakullakulla's son, grew angry over the prospect of selling the land to the settlers, stating that "the white people wanted too much of their Hunting Grounds."[59] He feared the prospect of more encroachment and being surrounded by white settlers. For Dragging Canoe the prospect of being encircled spelled doom for the Cherokee. The continuous loss of lands would mean less hunting for Cherokee men if the forests that they hunted their game in became cleared grazing grounds for cattle and livestock. A loss in hunting would mean a shift towards agriculture as a primary means of sustenance, which would have been disagreeable to a relatively young Cherokee male like Dragging Canoe. He did not seem to be as accommodating to Henderson as his father and the others were.

---

[56] Palmer, *VSP*, Vol. I, 283.
[57] Palmer, *VSP*, I, 291.
[58] A First Beloved Man is the equivalent to tribal chief.
[59] VSP, 291.

Dragging Canoe vehemently opposed Henderson's incessant demands out of fear. To him, it seemed as if Henderson asked for more and more from the Cherokee, which meant more losses for the Cherokee. Henderson insisted on the lands "below the Kentucky" instead of the lands the Cherokee offered to the north of that area. He told the Cherokee that if he did not get what he wanted, he would simply take his goods back home. Henderson also wanted a "path" through the Kentucky lands and offered more goods and ammunition in exchange.[60] Dragging Canoe responded by stamping his foot down on the ground, saying "we give you from this place," and pointed north towards the Kentucky. Before storming out of the conference, Dragging Canoe told Henderson that "it was the bloody ground, and would be dark, and difficult to settle."[61] Dragging Canoe's remark seems like a veiled, foreboding threat. The "bloody ground" referred to the Kentucky lands that Henderson wanted. Henderson could buy the land, but keeping it would be a different matter altogether.

Just as the desires for the Kentucky and Tennessee lands were contested, so was the ownership. The Cherokee may not have even had the full rights to the lands they reportedly sold to Henderson. Many Indian tribes in the region had a common usage of the lands. Although Henderson thought he had purchased the rights to the land, the Cherokee did not have the rights as sole proprietors of the land. The Cherokee used the lands as hunting grounds, but so did other Indians, like the Shawnee and Creek. Most, if not all, eastern Indians believed that they all held the hunting grounds in common and available to all, similar to the common fields in England before enclosures.[62]

---

[60] *VSP,* 290.
[61] Palmer, *VSP*, 283.
[62] Banner, *How the Indians Lost their Land,* 37.

Henderson's purchase had muddied the waters, making true ownership unclear, as his claim now contested against Virginia's. The lands to the north of the Kentucky that Henderson refused to buy from the Cherokee had been a part of the lands that the Shawnee sold to Virginia. William Preston, a militia leader in western Virginia, told Governor Henry that the land "was never Claimed by the Cherokee" until recently, and that other Indians, like the Six Nations, had already sold the land to Virginia in various treaties.[63]

Preston, among many others, worried that this disputed territory could lead to future conflict with the Cherokee. Even the chiefs warned Henderson that "their children...might have reason to complain, if they sold that land."[64] The chiefs did not mean the future generations of Cherokee children, but the present younger generation like Dragging Canoe and his followers. They knew Dragging Canoe would be angry with not only the elder Cherokee but Henderson as well. The elders passively warned him of the possibility of incoming confrontation as they gave up the Kentucky lands. They told Henderson that "it was a bloody Country, and if he went to it they would not hold him by the hand any longer."[65] The chiefs knew it would bring conflict and told him they would essentially wash their hands of the blame if anything would happen.

British and colonial officials, such as the colonial governors, objected to the Henderson purchase.[66] North Carolina Governor Josiah Martin declared the purchase by Henderson illegals since it violated the Proclamation Acts prohibition of private land

---

[63] William Preston to Patrick Henry, Draper Mss, 4QQ1, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.
[64] Palmer, *VSP*, Vol. 1, 286.
[65] Palmer, *VSP*, 286.
[66] It is important to note that while colonial officials were considered British and held allegiance to the British crown, there were some distinctions between the British and the colonial governments. British agents like John Stuart worked directly for the British government, while colonial officials worked directly for the provincial governments.

deals with Indians.[67] The boundaries established by the Proclamation Acts forbade private purchases. In January 1775, before the Henderson land deal, John Stuart, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the South, wrote to William Legge, the Earl of Dartmouth and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and informed him about the negotiations, hoping the Earl could do something about it. He told Legge that North Carolinians in Cherokee lands had the intent to purchase and reminded him that the Proclamation Acts rendered private land deals with Indians illegal.

Officials feared the possibility of disorder from the Henderson purchase. Governor Martin saw the land purchase as dangerous "to the Peace and Welfare" and to the colonies of North Carolina and Virginia.[68] In his reports, the Indians had been paid with gunpowder, which he thought the Cherokee would use as a "means of annoying his Majesty's subjects" in North Carolina and Virginia. If the Cherokee became discontent they would use that gunpowder against the colonists. Stuart worried that the settlements would brew "discontents in the Indian Nations," and if they could not be stopped then it would ultimately lead to bloodshed.[69] Indian attacks on the borderlands during French and the Indian War and the Anglo-Cherokee War had stemmed from white encroachment. Stuart feared that the purchase would disrupt the uneasy peace and bring about another Indian war, which the government could ill afford.

With the roots of the Revolution beginning to sprout in 1775, the Henderson purchase created more grief for the colonial governments in managing their populations. Colonial officials like Governor Martin did not have much faith in the future settlers of the lands in Kentucky. He claimed that "Debtors" had fled to the lands to escape creditors

[67] *CSRNC*, Vol. 9, 1123.
[68] *CSRNC*, Vol. 9, 1124.
[69] Letter from John Stuart to William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, *CSRNC, Vol*. 9, 1106-7.

and that the land would then "become an Asylum to the most abandoned Fugitives … to the great Molestation and Injury of his Majesty's subjects."[70] Martin thought that the debtors fleeing to these illegal lands would only stir up trouble, eventually harming other more upright British subjects living on the frontier. Having a dangerous sort of people would only inflame the tempers of the Indians and bring their hatchets to bear once more on hapless Americans. Martin hoped that taking legal action would stop the sale and settlement. Martin and other colonial governors did not want another Indian war on their hands.

The Henderson purchase signified the breakdown of the colonial government's power as the colonial governments could do very little at the time of the Henderson purchase. The deal not only angered the younger Cherokee warriors, like Dragging Canoe, but also colonial and British officials. Governor Josiah Martin issued a proclamation telling the settlers to remove themselves, though seemingly without any enforcement. John Stuart stated that he had written to the provincial leaders "but without any effect."[71] The Transylvanians ignored Stuart's pleas and continued with the deal. William Preston, a colonel of Virginia militia and agent, wrote to Virginia governor, Patrick Henry, to tell him of the land deal and regretted that the Virginia government might not be able to do much because of the long distance from the settlements.[72] However, by the spring of 1775, most of the colonial governments had other problems to deal with, such as the seeds of dissent and the burgeoning rebellion against the British Empire.

---

[70] *CSRNC*, Vol. 9, 1124.
[71] *CSRNC, Vol*. 9, 1106-7.
[72] William Preston to Patrick Henry, Draper Mss., 4QQ1-3.

The Start of War

"This is a family quarrel between us and Old England. You Indians are not concerned in it."[73]

When the American War of Independence began, the Whigs wanted to keep the Indians out of the war. The first shots of the American War of Independence began in Massachusetts in mid-1775 with the Battle of Lexington and Concord and the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Whig forces drove off the British, but only for the time being. The drums of war had yet to sound their tattoo in the South, but the Whig and British forces started to prepare. As soon as the battles concluded, both sides turned their attention to the backcountry. Control of the backcountry was strategically important, as it could mean having a two-front war for either side. That meant maintaining the loyalty of Indians like the Cherokee and the backcountry settlers alike. Both sides during the revolution sought the alliance of Indians like the Cherokee, the Americans to prevent a frontier war, and the British to aid them in the war.

With the start of the American War for Independence in 1775, the Americans in the South fretted over the possibility of another war with the Cherokee. Both sides competed for the Cherokee's aid or neutrality. After the Whigs forced the royal governments to dissolve and flee, the British sought to keep control of the southern backcountry and the Cherokee. In order to prevent that, the rebel governments of Virginia, North and South Carolina made amicable approaches to the Cherokee. Their goal was to either win them over on their side, or at least keep them neutral to have one less threat to deal with, which would benefit a money-starved government. Henry

[73] *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Worthington C. Ford (ed.),(Washington, DC, 1905-37), Vol. 2, 182.

Laurens, a Whig planter from South Carolina, claimed in a letter to his son, John Laurens, that the Cherokee seemed "well disposed towards us" and that they blamed King George III for "quarrelling with his Children about 'the Leaves of a Tree'," calling him "foolish."[74] Laurens thought that the Cherokee were inclined to agree with the Americans about the troubles with the British government, as if the sentiment was common sense even for Indians. He hoped the Cherokee would see the rationale of the Patriots and that by trying to play to the Cherokee's displeasure by the British government, the Patriots in the southern colonies could gain an ally in the western lands.

Just as the British had their Indian Departments, the Continental Congress commissioned Whig-leaning traders to act as agents on their behalf. John Stuart noted to William Legge in a letter that the Continental Congress had appointed George Galphin, Edward Wilkinson, and Robert Rae, all notable Indian traders from the South.[75] Traders were already used to dealing with Indians and spoke their language. The Continental Congress needed to compete with the British agents, like Alexander Cameron and John Stuart who already had good relations with the Cherokee. The traders' familiarity would make it easier for the Continental Congress to maintain relations with the Indians.

One of the more efficient ways to keep them on one side over another was through trade, because of the relatively poor material condition of the Indians. George Galphin, an Irish-born Indian-trader, wrote to Laurens in February 1776, to advise him of the necessity to keep the Indians "in our Intrest [sic]" by extending trade with them.[76] Prior to Galphin's letter the Continental Congress had prohibited the exportation of

---

[74] Letter to John Laurens, Aug 20, 1775, *Papers of Henry Laurens*, David R. Chesnutt, Ed., et al (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) Vol. 10, 325.
[75] CSRNC, Vol. 10, 348.
[76] *HLP*, Vol. 11, 94.

deerskins, which also meant the trade to the Indians. He warned that they needed to keep their promises to the Indians, or else they would think "we have been telling them nothing but Lies." The relationship the Americans had with southern Indians was tumultuous at best. Perhaps to keep to his honesty with the Indians, Galphin accented his point by threatening to quit his position as an Indian commissioner for Congress if they stopped the Indian trade. He saw the trade as the best option, stating that they could "either suply the Indians with Goods, or run the risque of an Indian War."[77] Having goods sent to Indian country was a better price to pay than sending soldiers. If the Whigs supplied the Indians with goods and kept them on their side, then the trade would have been worth it. Otherwise, they risked having the Indians side with the British.

The British also worked to placate the Indian, hoping to keep them loyal and ready to fight if necessary. John Stuart, as Superintendent of the Southern Department, worked with his deputies to keep the Cherokee on the British side. The British agents and deputies had a better chance of keeping a relationship with the Cherokee, as they were not only more experienced but many Cherokee leaders preferred them over some of the American agents. Stuart and Alexander Cameron, Stuart's deputy for the Cherokee, for example, were well adored by the Cherokee and other southern Indians.[78] John Stuart had been acquainted with the Cherokee from the time when he was an agent during the Anglo-Cherokee War. Cameron had lived among the Cherokee for over a decade,

[77] *HLP*, Vol. 11, 95.
[78] *Documents of the American Revolution*, K.G. Davies, ed. (Shannon : Irish University Press, 1972- 1981), Vol. 11, 34; *DAR*, Vol. 12, 131.

married a Cherokee woman, and earned their trust.[79] The British held the advantage of keeping the Cherokee on their side, as they had old established relationships.

The British and Americans also competed to gain the favor of backcountry and frontier Euroamerican inhabitants. Both sides could not control the backcountry without their support. Having the Cherokee only meant one half of the strategy. If one side obtained the allegiance of both Cherokee and whites, they would effectively have nearly total control of the backcountry, and largely the South. Maintaining control held strategic importance for both sides as it meant their armies could focus elsewhere in the Continent. Backcountry and frontier inhabitants held a great fear of Indian attacks and lived in apprehension. They had good reasons to join either side. For Loyalists, the British were not only familiar to them but also offered protection from Indian attacks because of established relations. However, many settlers also saw the British government as overbearing in their control of the western lands and joined the Patriots.

The British worked to win the backcountry and frontier in their favor. In February of 1776, when the British worked to ascertain the loyalty of people throughout the South, Thomas Brown, a British Loyalist from Georgia, led a regiment of rangers around the Georgia-Florida countryside while trying to gain support from the locals. He hoped to appeal to them, claiming that the "frontier inhabitants of Carolina are a brave, hardy, industrious people… and in general warmly attached to government."[80] It is likely Brown assumed the loyalty of the backcountry settlers to the king. He was not too far off. Some Loyalists in the western counties of North Carolina pledged their allegiance. Loyalists

[79]John L Nichols, "Alexander Cameron, British Agent Among the Cherokee, 1764-1781," *The South Carolina Historical* Magazine, Vol. 97, No. 2 (April 1996),100.
[80] Letter from Thomas Brown to Governor Patrick Tonyn, Feb 1776, *Documents of the American Revolution*, ed. K. G. Davies (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1972), Vol. 12, 69-70.

from Rowan, Surry, and Guilford Counties proclaimed their attachment to the king.[81] Loyalists may have also been pushed further to the British side after experiencing abuses from their Whig neighbors, such as violence and destruction of property.[82] During the Snow Campaign in the winter of 1775, the Whig militia drove the Loyalists out of the backcountry to Cherokee lands. Without homes the Loyalists felt compelled to live with pro-British Cherokee, forming an ethnic mixture that would impact the Cherokee for the years to come.

Not all backcountry inhabitants were loyal to the king. Many Protestant Irish had settled in the backcountry and more aligned with the "Cause of Liberty."[83] William Henry Drayton, Chief Justice of East Florida, roamed throughout the South Carolina backcountry and frontier looking for Whig supporters, finding many in the Irish settlements among the Congaree and Broad Rivers. Drayton did not have much success among the "Dutch" population, who lived in a relatively secluded society from British-Americans and seemed more averse to Drayton and the cause. In a letter to the Council of Safety in Charleston, he noted that forming "voluntier companies [sic]" in "this frontier" would "[form] a good barrier against the Indians" and act as a check against loyalists.[84] Though some loyalists thought they could be swayed to their side and that they had been misguided.[85] Supporting the Crown might have seemed counterintuitive for backcountry inhabitants considering their situation. Many of the settlers in the Appalachians lived there extra-legally, so joining the loyal cause would have meant their lands taken away at

[81] *CSRNC*, Vol. 9, 1160-1.
[82] Robert DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 108-15.
[83] Draper Mss., 4QQ34.
[84] Letter to Council of Safety, Aug 7, 1775, HLP, Vol. 10, 278-80; 347.
[85] Draper Mss., 4QQ34.

the end of it, especially since many of the Indian agents who had worked to oppose the land deals also worked for the British government.

At the start of the Revolution, the British and the Americans competed for control of the South. Gaining the loyalty of the backcountry inhabitants and the Cherokee proved crucial to maintaining control of the South. The British needed the aid of the Cherokee and the backcountry residents to gain a foothold in the South, especially at the coast. The Americans sought to keep the Cherokee neutral in order to focus their war efforts on the coast and in the North. However, the British found that the diverse backcountry populations had their own motivations, some that did not align with the British government. The Americans gained favor many disgruntled backcountry inhabitants, but could not compete with the British Indian Departments established relations with the Cherokee. The Americans would soon find out that some of the Cherokee resented them and had their own motivations.

The Indians Hold Congress

"[T]hat the Cherokees had a Hatchett … & desired that they would take it up and use it immediately."[86]

The Cherokee had their own reasons to join the fray. The constant land encroachments from white settlers drove many to the point of violence. Some, like Dragging Canoe, saw encroachment as a threat to the Cherokee's very existence. He claimed that the Cherokee "were almost surrounded by the White People, that they had but a small spot of ground left for them" and that the "White People" intended "to destroy them from being a people."[87] Dragging Canoe's lament alluded to more than just simply the loss of lands or people due to war. The loss of Cherokee land also meant a decline and a change in social and cultural norms. The loss of sacred hunting grounds meant a shift in the roles of men as both hunter and warrior. For those like Dragging Canoe, fighting with the British would mean a way for the Cherokee to fight against this cultural change.

Henry Stuart, John Stuart's brother and deputy, travelled in May 1776 from Pensacola to Mobile and into Indian lands to distribute ammunition. He wrote to John Stuart in August 1776, to inform him the events of the past months. Although Henry Stuart tried to appease the Cherokee by saying that the land encroachment and deals had been "contrary to King's Order," he still admonished the Cherokee "for making private Bargains for their Lands contrary to all the Talks that they had received from [John Stuart] and Mr Cameron." He and other deputies had warned the Cherokee, advising them not to make deals as the deputies knew that the land deals could eventually lead to

[86] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 778.
[87] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 764.

quarrels with the white settlers. Stuart also informed the Cherokee that they had been well within their rights to defend their lands from encroachment. He told them that if people came on their lands then they could have taken it upon themselves to drive them out, and would not have been faulted if they "took away their Effects and burnt their Houses."[88] Stuart had implied that the Cherokee still had some sovereignty over their land, as they had some power to push out trespassers. However, Stuart did not mean to bring about war or give permission to kill settlers, but rather use violence as a means of keeping unwanted people out. At that time in May, Stuart had orders from his brother to rein in the Cherokee from committing indiscriminate attacks on the frontier until an appointed time in the future. He blamed the Cherokee for not pushing out encroaching settlers before instead of making deals.

Dragging Canoe thought the Cherokee had themselves to blame, but assigned specific blame to the "Old Men who … were too old to hunt and who by their poverty had been induced to selling their Land."[89] He called out the headmen, insulting them by saying their age had impaired them as Cherokee men. In Dragging Canoes' eyes, the headmen had lost their power and were reduced to appeasing the Americans and the British. Yet at the same time he also realized the tenuous position that the headmen had faced, and saw that they sold the lands to those like the Wataugans and the Transylvanians out of dire necessity. He added that he had "a great many young fellows that would support him and that were determined to have their Land."[90] If the headmen lacked the vitality, then he would take it upon himself and his followers to take the land back. It is doubtful though he meant more negotiations. Dragging Canoe and the other

[88] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 764.
[89] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 764.
[90] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 764.

young warriors had a more militant mentality and grew tired of diplomacy. The young warriors saw the negotiations as fruitless, as they had only led to the loss of lands, and that fighting to retake their lands became the best option.

Dragging Canoe seemed hellbent on fighting, even to the point of going against the wishes of the Cherokee elders. He confided to Henry Stuart that if the settlers did not leave, he would talk to the "Old Warriors," and if they did not approve of his intentions then "he and the young Warriors would follow their own way."[91] If he did not get his way, then he would split and act on his own accord. He did not make this threat lightly. Splitting from the rest of the Cherokee showed Dragging Canoe's desperation and motivation. Some Cherokee had informed Stuart that they had recently received insulting messages from the settlers of Watauga, who threatened to kill Alexander Cameron, an agent of John Stuart for the Cherokee. These insults pushed Dragging Canoe and his followers towards "mischief."[92] Henry Stuart never explicitly stated Dragging Canoe's intentions, but danced around saying that Dragging Canoe's party were readying to fight. Dragging Canoe's party saw the threats to Cameron as threats to themselves, as Cameron acted on behalf of the British, who supplied the Cherokee. The Cherokee also considered Cameron one of their own.

Henry Stuart seemed both reluctant to having the Cherokee go to war and hopeful that they would protect British loyalists within their lands. He wanted the Cherokee to wait until a more opportune time, such as a concerted effort with British regulars. He attempted to placate Dragging Canoe and the headmen by giving them some ammunition for hunting, but the amount was too small to divide it up among the different parts of the

[91] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 766.
[92] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 766.

nation. Stuart told the Cherokee that more ammunition was on the way and assured them that their loyalty would keep them in good hands.[93] The British Indian agents used the control of the ammunition supply to their benefit. Gunpowder was necessary for both hunting and fighting, so having control of the gunpowder and lead meant control of the Cherokee, at least in British minds.

Henry Stuart tried to keep the Cherokee under restraint, as he had orders from John Stuart to keep them under control until the proper time to attack. He heard that a war party was being readied to head from the Great Island. The Cherokee prepared to fight sooner than he wanted. The likely course of action for the Cherokee would be to cross over the Appalachians and attack the settlements there. Stuart hoped to stop the Cherokee war party from going, as he thought such an action would bring "their Nation in Ruin."[94] Although he may have disagreed about the land dealings, he understood the reasoning of attacking the Watauga settlement. However, an attack on Watauga meant the possibility of having the armies of the Whig governments come to Cherokee lands in retaliation, which meant doom for the Cherokee. Considering their condition, especially with the low amount of ammunition and small numbers of warriors, the Cherokee were in no position to win an all-out fight with the Patriots.

The Cherokee had made their own military strategies. The Cherokee met with other Indians from the "Northern Nations," such as the Iroquois Confederacy, Ottawas, Delaware, and Shawnee to talk about joining them in the war against the Americans. Stuart met with them at Chota for the "Grand Talk" between the northern Indians and the Cherokee. He could already tell their "inclinations from their appearances" and noted that

[93] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 766.
[94] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 766-7.

"[the northern Indians] came in all black" from their travels south via Pittsburgh. The Cherokee from the Great Island, and "all the Chilhowie and [Tellico] people and some from every Town," had also blackened their faces.[95] For most Indians, black was the color of war. If the northern Indians had come to convince the Cherokee to go to war, they did not need to work hard at it. The northern Indians said that on their journey south they had found the people on the frontier, mainly Patriot sympathizers, "all in arms" and the Patriots had constructed forts throughout western Pennsylvania, which forced the northern Indians to go around them to "avoid being discovered" by Patriot sympathizers.[96] The Americans in the Alleghenies already braced for Indian attacks and the northern Indians had to avoid them in order not to be attacked on their travels. It seemed that in the spring of 1776 all of Appalachia, North and South, prepared for war with the Indians.

The Mohawks and other northern Indians had already beaten the Cherokee to the punch by going to war. The Mohawks retaliated against an attack they suffered by the "White People" near them. Whigs in their area had attacked their village, and taken Sir William Johnson's son prisoner, later killing him.[97] The Mohawks claimed they had not only gotten "all the Northern Tribes to assist them to take Satisfaction" but that the French had supplied them with ammunition and promises of support.[98] This new war had changed old alliances. During the French and Indian War, the Shawnee and other Algonquian tribes had sided with the French against the Iroquois and their British allies.

---

[95] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 773; 777.
[96] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 773.
[97] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 773. Sir William Johnson had been the superintendent of the Northern Indian Department, John Stuart's counterpart in the north, until his death in 1774. Due to his relations with the Mohawk, he fathered children with Mohawk wives. The name of his son was not mentioned. See Fintan O'Toole's *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* for more on William Johnson.
[98] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 773-4.

Now the Mohawks courted both the British and the French. This was a traditional strategy for Indians in the accommodation system, where they would play European powers off of each other. In order to keep balance, they would support the stronger of the powers.

However, the northern Indians did not come to Chota to brag but to extend an offer of a united front with the Cherokee against the Americans. They told them that the British would "soon fall on their Enemies toward the Sea and if they united and fell on them on this side they would find them nothing; That now all Nations of Indians were at peace with one another."[99] The first part of the quote refers to the British plans of having the Indians attack the western American frontiers while British troops invaded from the coast. The interesting note is the suggestion of Indian unity. Although banding together was nothing new for most Indians, ages-old alliances and rivalries often prevented them from undergoing a sort of pan-Indian union. However, they now all had a common enemy, the American Whigs that threatened their existence. The northern Indians thought that coming together would make them powerful and give them an advantage over the Americans.

The northern Indians called for a united action against the "Virginians," the name that most Indians gave to the Americans. At the "Grand Talk" at Chota, deputies from the Mohawks, Ottawas, and Shawnee presented several belts of purple and white wampum to the Cherokee. These belts represented messages from the northern Indians to the Cherokee. One belt represented peace between the Cherokee and the northern Indians and

[99] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 774.

another belt represented war.[100] The "principal Deputy for the Mohawks and six Nations" told the Cherokee that the "settlers of the Northern Provinces" had attacked them without provocation.[101] The Patriot-leaning settlers had started to place the Mohawk, Shawnee, and other northern Indians on the British side. Previous Indian wars had instilled fear and likely influenced the northern settlers in their attacks on the Mohawk. The Mohawk deputy warned the Cherokee that a similar attack might occur to them if they did not act or join with them.

The northern Indians enticed the Cherokee to join with promises of friendship. The Mohawk deputy hoped to "secure the friendships of all Nations for he considered their interests as one" and that they would forgive their past "quarrels."[102] The deputies hoped the Cherokee would join them even though in the past they had been rivals and fought against each other. However, that did not stop the northern Mohawk deputy from offering an ultimatum to the Cherokee. The deputy told the Cherokee that if they did not join this Indian confederacy against the Americans, then the Cherokee would be considered their "common enemy" and would be attacked "when affairs with the White People should be settled."[103] The deputy forced a choice on the Cherokee. If the Cherokee did not side with the northern Indians, and effectively the British, then they would be considered enemies of both.

The Mohawks and northern Indians realized that the infighting between them and the southern Indians like the Cherokee had weakened them, "while their common

---

[100] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 777-8. Normally wampum belts, made of pieces of shell, depicted images that signified peace, war, or other messages. Unfortunately, what was on these belts is lost, but it seemed that Stuart understood their messages. "Deputy" is the word that Stuart used in his letter to his brother.
[101] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 777.
[102] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 777.
[103] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 778.

enemies were taking the advantage of their situation."[104] Both the northern and southern Indians had lost lands to treaties because of their loss of power over the course of the last century. The French and Indian War had drastically reduced the powers of not just the French but the Indians as well. While in the past the northern Indians fought against the southern Indians, the conditions created by the French and Indian War made the northern Indians consider other options such as an alliance with their old rivals in the South.

A united Indian attack would not only create new bonds, but also restore the old balance of power that Indians could control. The Indians wanted to be a force to be reckoned with again. Earlier in the century they held power over the Europeans and their colonists. It was also a means of assuring the survival of their people and their culture. The loss of land through encroachment of white settlers had caused their power to dwindle, and they realized that. The Shawnee deputy complained about the "Virginians" and lamented about the decline of the Indians' status, stating that "that the red people who were once Masters of the whole Country hardly possessed ground enough to stand on." The Shawnee also realized that they were steadily being surrounded by Euroamerican settlers. The Shawnee had ceded their lands in Kentucky to Virginia in 1774, similar to the Cherokee with Virginia and Richard Henderson in 1775.The Shawnee deputy told the Cherokee that if "they fought like men they might hope to enlarge their Bounds."[105] Separated Indians had no power, but united Indians did. The deputy's premise to the Cherokee was that the united Indian forces could fight and retake their lost lands from the settlers.

[104] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 777.
[105] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 778.

For all of Stuart's work in advising the Cherokee away from war, many Cherokee seemed eager to fight after the northern Indians' talks. Chota erected a "standard of war" and painted the flags and posts of the "Town House" black and red.[106] Stuart noted that "every young fellow's face in the Overhill Towns appeared Blackened, and nothing was talked of but War." He saw that the people of Tellico and the Great Island had started to make spears, clubs, and scalping knives. Stuart did not share their passion and continued to warn them against an immediate attack, which many of the "principal chiefs" agreed with, but the young warriors grew impatient.[107] He seemed disappointed with the warlike disposition of the young warriors. Cherokee society fractured along generational and family lines. Dragging Canoe and his party of young warriors disagreed with his father, Attakullakulla, the Beloved Man of the Cherokee, and the elders' policy of negotiation and peace. Dragging Canoe's promise to Henry Stuart had started to come to fruition. The younger generation bucked the elder headmen by painting their faces black, the color of war, which suggested they would raise the hatchet once again.

While the Americans and the British prepped for their own war efforts, the Cherokee found themselves pressured from the British, the northern Indians, and encroaching settlers to joining the war. The pressures divided the Cherokee into two factions: one for peace, one for war. Cherokee elders that hoped for peace and neutrality, like Oconostota and Attakullakulla, lost control as Dragging Canoe led many Cherokee to war on the frontier. Stuart also struggled to maintain control over the Cherokee in order to carry out the British's southern strategy.

---

[106] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 776.
[107] *CSRNC*, vol. 10, 774.

Tidings of War

"He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."[108]

In early July of 1776, Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. Hundreds of miles from Philadelphia the western frontier of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia faced attacks from the Cherokee. For over twelve months, southern Whigs had feared attacks from over the mountains. When the attacks finally did come, they only solidified the anti-British resolve of backcountry Whigs and confirmed their fear of a new Indian war in the South. No longer a wild card, the attacks placed the Cherokee on the British side and gave the Americans a target to fight.

The fears of frontier settlers were realized when the Overhill Cherokee in northeastern Tennessee crossed into North Carolina with weapons in hand simultaneously with other Cherokee attacks in Virginia, the Carolinas, and parts of Georgia. The Overhills established a base on the Nolichucky River and ranged along the Tow River, even heading south into Georgia. Some of the war parties comprised of both Cherokee and Loyalist militia. The Whig militia often repulsed these attacks from their forts.[109]

Panic overtook the frontier as the yearlong tensions came to a boil. According to a testimony in mid-July by Jarret Williams, a trader and inhabitant of Watauga, the Overhill Cherokee had been preparing for war, much like what Henry Stuart had seen in

---

[108] Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence" (1776).
[109] Richard Blackmon, *The Dark and Bloody Ground: The American Revolution Along the Southern Frontier* (Yardley: Westholme, 2014), 52-3; 61.

his travels in May. Williams stated that the Cherokee had around 600 "warriors" and that "we may expect a general attack every hour." Isolated and distant, the frontier communities feared the impending attacks. Williams claimed that the Cherokee had "purpose to take away negroes, horses and kill all kinds of cattle, sheep, &c." as well as destroy their homes and corn.[110] Williams and other frontiersmen saw a total war approaching, one that would not only harm their farms but their families as well. They feared that the attacks would destory their means of livelihood. Without livestock or farms, they would have no means of living on the frontier anymore.

To the Patriot frontier inhabitants, the Cherokee had picked the British side. According to Williams, Alexander Cameron, the British agent of the Cherokee, had told the Cherokee to find "any King's men among the inhabitants" and to set them off to Cherokee lands and then "fall on the inhabitants and kill and drive all they possibly could." The Cherokee attacks meant to not only instill fear on the frontier, but also to push the frontier inhabitants away.[111]

The Cherokee attacks on the frontier backfired and created resentment against Alexander Cameron from both Patriots and Loyalists. Although Cameron had told the Cherokee to only attack the rebels, with Loyalist homes distinguished with white poles, the Cherokee hatchet found the flesh of both Patriot and Loyalists. The Cherokee either did not recognize the distinction or did not care as even Loyalist settlers occupied their lands. Soon after, neutral parties and disgruntled Loyalists who had suffered from the Cherokee attacks in early July swapped sides.[112] Even vaunted Loyalist leaders like Robert Cunningham and Richard Pearis offered their service to Andrew Williamson's

---

[110] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 660.
[111] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 660.
[112] Nichols, "Alexander Cameron," 109.

Patriot militia, who then turned the two down because of distrust. Cunningham and Pearis' attempt to join the Whigs showed that even ardent Loyalists became discontent with the Cherokee attacks.[113] The Cherokees' indiscriminate attacks against the frontier alienated many potential supporters.

With the Cherokee supporting the British, many frontier people rationalized joining the Patriots and blamed the British for the attacks. Many throughout Virginia and the southeastern colonies saw the British Indian agents as the true instigators of the new Indian war, if they had not already done so. Thomas Jones, a member of the North Carolina Council of Safety, wrote to James Iredell, a Whig lawyer and judge, and blamed "the wicked and diabolical" Alexander Cameron, the British Indian agent to the Cherokees, for the "cruel Indian war."[114] Many Whigs thought that the agents had used their influence over the Cherokee to convince them into attacking the western settlements of Virginia and the Carolinas.

After the first Cherokee attacks on the frontier, the Americans rallied to war. John Rutledge, then President of South Carolina, wrote to Cornelius Harnett, President of the North Carolina Council of Safety, and declared that the Cherokee "have actually begun a War against the Colonies."[115] The gloves finally came off. Rutledge further stated "[t]hese outrages must not go unpunished but be instantly checked." He called for a show of force, to gather troops and march into the Cherokee lands and fight "unless they will submit to reasonable Terms."[116] He thought that immediate military action would end the nascent Indian war.

---

[113] Blackmon, *Dark and Bloody Ground*, 64.
[114] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 1033.
[115] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 657.
[116] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 657.

The afflicted states responded with attacks on the Cherokee. Griffith Rutherford from North Carolina, Andrew Williamson from South Carolina, and William Christian from Virginia led a combined punitive expedition into Cherokee lands.[117] Rutherford and Williamson attacked the Middle, Valley, and Lower Towns, while Christian attacked the Overhill Towns. Henry Laurens, the Whig Vice-President of South Carolina, saw the combined attack as justified as he thought the Cherokee attacked "not only without provocation from us but also under the most Solemn promises of Neutrality."[118] For Laurens, the Cherokee had breached their word as honorable neighbors. Southern Whigs had hoped that the Cherokee remain neutral throughout the war, but now they were far past that.

Henry Laurens and the other discontented Americans did not see the nuances or try to distinguish between Attakullakulla's peaceful Cherokee or Dragging Canoe's war party and painted them all part of the same group. They likely did not know of the split within Cherokee society as they did not have agents living with the Cherokee like the British. Laurens saw the "total Destruction as a Nation will probably be the consequence." The expedition would end the troubles with the Cherokee, though with fire and musket rather than peace and promises. Laurens did not guess wrong, as the expeditions burned several of the major Cherokee towns to ashes and destroyed fields of crops.[119] By the winter of 1776, the Cherokee faced total destruction and despair and sued for peace.

In 1775, a year before the attacks, John Stuart and Alexander Cameron had already earned the distrust of the American Whigs. The South Carolina Committee of

---

[117] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 650-1;748-9.
[118] *HLP*, Vol. 11, 248.
[119] Hatley, *Dividing* Paths,195.

Safety, a shadow government established by the Patriots, had originally tried to sway Cameron and Stuart to their side. They offered Cameron a position with pay. Rumors circulated among the Whigs of Cameron's allegations of inciting the Indians. Cameron fled from his plantation in the Long Canes in western South Carolina which only increased the rumors. The South Carolina Committee of Safety demanded that Cameron return and leave Cherokee country, but Cameron obstinately refused. When a man from the Saluda River threatened Cameron's life, the Cherokee men of Seneca town formed a body of warriors saying they would attack the settlements if any harm came to Cameron.[120] Cameron wrote to the Committee and other prominent Patriot leaders, denying his alleged incitement of the Cherokee. Cameron stated that he would never do something of the sort and felt insulted at the prospect.[121]

John Stuart faced similar obstacles in South Carolina. Stuart's opposition to the land cessions struck a bad chord with many southern colonials, who began to see his and the British government's goals as the same. To whiggish colonials, Stuart and the British government threatened their right to self-government.[122] For over a decade, Stuart had been working on strengthening the British government's control over the Indian trade and proposed greater restrictions on acquiring land from Indians, which annoyed settlers and land speculators alike. A rigid governmental control over lands meant less chances of prosperity for the land speculators that eyed the lands in the west.

Many Whigs in Charleston, South Carolina distrusted Stuart. In the summer of 1775, the Committee of Intelligence in Charleston had been investigating him for allegedly inciting the "Creek & Cherokee Indians to act against, this Colony," and when

[120] Nichols, "Alexander Cameron,"105.
[121] HLP, Vol. 10, 223-4.
[122] Snapp, *John Stuart*, 148.

Stuart produced letters he had written to Cameron that he hoped would vindicate himself he unfortunately "produced unwarily one Letter too much." The contents never came to light, but it may have been a letter that Stuart sent to Cameron discussing the British General Gage's grand strategy of using the Cherokee attacks simultaneously with an invasion on the southern coast. The Committee wanted Stuart to come into town in person, but he, fearing arrest, fled. Caught unprepared, Stuart had to leave his family and estate behind to fall into the custody of the committee to be held as "Guarantee for the quiet & good conduct of the Savages."[123] Stuart's escape from Charleston convinced the Committee of his guilt.

The southern colonials' distrust of both Cameron and Stuart started to harden the lines against the British. Cameron and Stuart's roles with the British government impacted the reactions of southern American Whigs, as they initially wanted Cameron and Stuart's influence with the Cherokee. However, the two were ardent supporters of the British government and earned the ire of the Whigs, especially after they learned that the pair of them were involved in a plot to have the Cherokee attack the southern colonies.

The Cherokee attacks did not come unexpectedly. If the Watauga and Holston settlers seemed wary about Cameron among the Overhills, the letters from Henry Stuart, John Stuart's brother and deputy, that advised them to leave their land likely steeled their resolve to prepare and fight. Henry Stuart tried to placate the settlers of Watauga, showing his understanding of their "great apprehensions of the Indians doing mischief." He promised them protection from attacks if they gave their "alliegiance [sic] to his Majesty." Stuart wished for those that professed their allegiance to head to Chota in

[123] *HLP*, Vol. 10, 189.

Cherokee country.[124] Having the loyal settlers in Cherokee lands would protect them from the indiscriminate attacks, would have given Stuart an opportunity to keep an eye on them. The warning also signaled the lack of control that Cameron and Henry Stuart actually had over the Cherokee. Even some of the prominent Cherokee began to see the dams of war starting to break. On the eve of the frontier attacks, Nancy Ward, the Beloved Woman of the Cherokee and cousin of Dragging Canoe, warned the Watauga and Holston settlements which helped their preparations for war.[125]

In 1776 the hairline cracks within America began to fracture. When American revolutionaries declared independence from Britain, they also cut ties from within the continent. The war for independence altered the situation between the Cherokee and their colonial neighbors as the Cherokee attacks in 1776 solidified the American Whigs not only against the Cherokee, but Britain as well. The combined American expeditions against the Cherokee in late 1776 destroyed not only the Cherokee towns, but the British hopes to controlling the South. Both the Americans and the Cherokee needed to rethink their alignments.

The war also fractured Cherokee society even more. The generational schism would begin to widen further until eventually Dragging Canoe and his party would split from the Cherokee, creating the Chickamauga Cherokee. Essentially, two different Cherokee existed then, each attempting to preserve their society and culture in their own terms. While the states would make peace with the Cherokee in 1777, the war with the Chickamauga Cherokee would continue for another seventeen years.

---

[124] *CSRNC*, Vol. 10, 606-7.

[125] Nichols, 108-9. Beloved Woman of the Cherokee is a similar title to Beloved Man, the equivalent to a chief. It is usually a great honor bestowed on a Cherokee woman and meant they headed the Council of Women and had a voice in the council of chiefs. See Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 27-30.

Peace by Piece

"But Brothers, do you remember that the difference is about our Lands Your Children are growing up upon it. It is about this very land we stand on which is ours."[126]

After the American expeditions into Cherokee country in late 1776, the Cherokee, except Dragging Canoe's faction, sued for peace with the American states. The peace treaties came hand in hand with land cessions. The chapter examines the Treaty of Long Island at Holston and explores how the Cherokee maintained a steadfast insistence of retaining their lands on the Holston River. The results of Cherokee land cessions following the treaties created a paradox: coalescence and division. The Cherokee also saw a consolidation in power and land within the Overhill towns as the land cessions compacted the Cherokee further westward. While at the same time a faction led by Dragging Canoe split away and moved to Chickamauga Creek, creating the Chickamauga Cherokee. The treaties also highlighted a difficult choice the Cherokee faced: to continue the war with the Americans or have a new border that cut into their towns.

By the spring of 1777, both the Cherokee and the southern states sought peace and began to make preliminary treaty talks yet constant conflicts interrupted them. Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia wrote to Oconostota, the Great Warrior, about making peace and even invited some of the prominent Cherokee to Williamsburg. However, even the preliminary talks did not start without a hitch. Virginia blamed the Cherokee for the death of Samuel Newall, a messenger in their employ, the Cherokee denied responsibility, blaming Dragging Canoe's party for the murder.[127] The misfortune

[126] Old Tassel to Commissioners, 4QQ95, Draper Mss.
[127] Letter from Patrick Henry to Oconostota, 4QQ78, Draper Mss.

reignited some of the mistrust the Americans still had for the Cherokee, but they seemed willing to let it go as long as the peace talks meant an end to the hostilities. The Virginians likely did not differentiate between the peace and war factions of the Cherokee. The Cherokee's denial showed that they sought peace and hoped the accident did not spoil their efforts for peace. Blaming Dragging Canoe's party also showed that their actions did not represent the rest of the Cherokee, as he had split away from them.

Before the Cherokee went to the peace conferences with the Americans the British tried to keep control of the Cherokee, as they needed them for the war effort in the South. Weeks before the conference, Alexander Cameron sent a letter via James Vann to the Overhills, the only region directly represented at the Long Island of Holston, to sway them away from the peace talks there. Many of the Overhills had been a part of Dragging Canoe's war faction and Cameron hoped to keep them that way. As the Overhills had the town of Chota within their lands, they held some prominence and influence over other Cherokee. Cameron told the Cherokee that the Americans were only trying to deceive them.[128] He pleaded with the Cherokee not to make peace with "Rogues," saying that if they did the Americans would imprison them and further added that if the Cherokee "would be so foolish as to treat with Rebels" then they "must return the Medals the King had given" them.[129] The medals stood for the relationship the British had with the Cherokee, taking them back symbolized a severance. The Americans, he argued, would not have anything to give to the Cherokee, only the British could keep the Cherokee well supplied. Cameron used the poor situation of the Cherokee and the promises of goods to try to persuade them to continue the fight against the rebel Americans.

---

[128] Archibald Henderson, "The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July, 1777," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jan 1931), 65.
[129] Old Tassel to Virginia, Draper Mss., 4QQ87.

The Cherokee came into the conference expecting a quick peace. The Raven did not seem intent on staying there long, as he said he wanted to head back home to tend to his corn fields. He stated that he "we only come to show you our good will and to meet our beloved man."[130] The Old Tassel spoke up saying he thought they had concluded a peace three months prior, treating this conference as a formality. The Cherokee had acceded to the Virginians in the spring, believing any notion of war between the two had been swept away without any more thought.[131] However, the Americans had a different agenda. Waightstill Avery, a commissioner from North Carolina, told the principal men of the Cherokee "Your nation begun the war and made the path dark… You made the path dark and bloody."[132] He claimed that the Cherokee started the hostilities, not the colonies. Avery also put the onus on rectifying the situation with the Cherokee "as you struck first and made the path dark, it is necessary that you should begin to clear it up."[133] The commissioners required more than a simple apology from the Cherokee: they wanted Cherokee land.

The Cherokee appeased the American commissioners by appealing as victims rather than instigators in hopes to gain a sincere peace negotiation. Oconostota addressed the commissioners and sought assurance from Governor Patrick Henry during his visit to Williamsburg in the spring. "The Governor told me that no man should break the Belt given me by him… He told me that he had hold of one end of the Belt and myself the other but the white people has given the first stroke and tryed [sic] to break it they have

[130] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 80-1.
[131] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 81.
[132] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 74.
[133] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 75.

struck me and spilt Blood about the chain."[134] Oconostota implied that the Americans had been the first to attack and that the Cherokee had been justified in retaliation. He wanted the Americans to clean off the proverbial blood on the chains of friendship and placed the onus on the Americans to make things right. It was likely an attempt to keep some form of standing with the Americans, rather than be portrayed as the conquered warrior. By appearing as an ally to the Americans, Oconostota appealed to the sense that the Cherokee had been wronged rather than being wrongdoers. He even claimed that he wanted nothing more to do with Alexander Cameron and John Stuart, the British agents for the Cherokee, "I shall tell my own people not to mind Camerons & Stuarts Talks."[135] Declaring himself free of British influence was also a play for political independence, showing that he and the Cherokee did not play as pawns in the British's continental game. It also acted as a concession and apology to the Americans, showing that the Cherokee had made a mistake by listening to the British agents.

Both parties negotiated over the land and boundaries. The Americans wanted more land and called for the line drawn in 1771 to be extended further west to include the Cumberland Gap. [136] The Cherokee leaders tried to remain firm about affirming the peace and the current boundary. They realized they had more to lose than to gain. They faced losing lands that included their towns, not just hunting grounds. The Old Tassel stressed peace, but seemed reluctant about conceding anything to the commissioners. The Raven hoped "this Boundary will be made so that it may not be crossed without consent being first had."[137] The Overhill Cherokee wanted a boundary line to keep encroachment at

[134] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 62.
[135] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 62.
[136] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 58.
[137] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 81.

bay. They hoped the state governments would give them some form of redress for their complaints about the settlers. They were willing to negotiate about the boundary as long as the boundary would be clear and enforceable.

The commissioners tried to undermine the Cherokees' claim to the lands by reading the Treaty at DeWitt's Corner, which took the Lower Cherokee lands in South Carolina by right of conquest. The Old Tassel did not want the Overhills to give in like the Lower Cherokee did to South Carolina and Georgia at DeWitt's Corner and denied that the Americans had the right to the lands by conquest.[138] The Old Tassel argued that if the Americans could claim land through conquest, then so could the Cherokee. He told the commissioners that "I live in Toque and my beloved people in Chote, we did not go far away and came back again these middle settlements people did so too, and I don't see how they can claim the land by that, for we drove the white people from their houses too."[139]

The Cherokee faced a dire situation, running low on both food and remaining landholdings. Any sort of cession would mean less of both, and a slimmer chance of retaining any sort of power in the southern Appalachians. The Old Tassel hoped that the commissioners at Long Island would treat the Overhills better and "take pity on us and do us justice." He complained of the lack of "provisions" his people had, due to the destruction from the expeditions, and that they wanted "a little room, because your people have encroached upon us verry close and scarcely given us room to turn round."[140]

---

[138] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 81.
[139] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 81.
[140] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 82.

The Cherokee continued to be adamant in their grievances over encroachment and complained about the Nolichucky and Watauga settlements on Cherokee lands. The Raven complained of unwanted settlers and hoped to be redressed for the trespassing. He hoped to maintain the boundary made before the start of the war and that the government would expel the trespassers. Avery then interrogated the Raven, hoping to find a weak spot in his argument and catch him consenting to the settlements. Avery asked Raven if the "white people" had settled on the Nolichucky by Cherokee consent, referring to the settlements in the early 1770s, which the Raven affirmed but only because "fear only made us agree to it" and that they had expected the government "would again remedy us."[141] The Cherokee had felt threatened by the waves of settlers that outnumbered them and could only hope for redress from the British or provincial government at the time.

Oconostota pushed back against Avery to strengthen the Cherokees' bargaining position and argued that the Cherokee never fully conceded to the Watauga and Nolichucky settlements. Avery had asked the Raven if the Cherokee had agreed to sell the Watauga and Nolichucky lands afterwards and Oconostota interceded. He stated that he had originally told the Watauga and Nolichucky settlers that the Cherokee needed to gain the consent of the King first before making any kinds of deals with colonists. He said that although the settlers gave them guns, the settlers did not wait for consent from the king and had "made a great deal of grain...and destroyed our hunting," and therefore the Cherokee "could not take pay for the lands but the rent only."[142] Oconostota saw the deal only as a rental, and not a permanent settlement, undercutting Avery's pointed questions. Since the settling occurred before the start of the revolution, affirmation or

[141] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 83.
[142] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 83.

consent from the king could not be gained, especially since now that many of the current denizens of those settlements sided with the Patriots. As the settlers had destroyed the hunting lands by clearing out forests for crops and livestock, the Cherokee at the time had only wanted compensation for the use of land rather than the outright purchase of it.

The Cherokee thought the king still had power and control, but the commissioners strengthened their own claim by nullifying the power of the king. William Christian contested the Cherokees' disputes about land-ownership by legitimizing the encroachment. Christian stated that the "old King over the water granted these lands to us who were his subjects."[143] Even though Christian and the other commissioners were fighting against the British Empire, they still used the claims given to the settlers as justification for land-ownership. Christian evoked the king to strengthen their claim, even though they had claimed independence, because the Cherokee still saw the king as a legitimate authority figure. Christian further said that the King "endeavoured to enslave his people" and used Cameron and Stuart to goad the Cherokee into war by telling them the "white people had settled these lands without his consent."[144] He portrayed the Cherokee as pawns of the British, driven by falsities from Cameron and Stuart. It de-legitimized the Cherokee complaints about encroachment, as Christian asserted that the lands no longer belonged to the Cherokee.

The Cherokee did not share the Americans' belief of rights to the lands. The Raven disagreed that the Americans had claim to these lands, much less the King, stating that "if the land ever belonged to [the King] its more than I know of."[145] He deflected Christian's aggressive push of legitimizing Virginia's claim and stated that he could not

[143] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 86.
[144] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 86.
[145] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 87.

agree with Christian's boundary proposal. He likely saw through Christian's politicking. He seemed adamant that the Cherokee were the rightful owners of the lands, not anyone else, and did not remember making any agreements stating otherwise. The Proclamation of 1763 and its later iterations would only reinforce his beliefs that the lands to the west of the Appalachians belonged to Indians.

The Cherokee and the state commissioners contested placement of the boundaries. While the Raven proposed a line that would force the removal of settlers from their hunting grounds, the commissioners of Virginia and North Carolina wanted the boundary pushed even further west.[146] Virginia wanted their new boundary to include the Cumberland Gap and North Carolina wanted theirs to include the Watauga and Nolichucky settlements. The Virginia commissioners assured the Cherokee that the cession would conclude a peace with Virginia, and that they were not trying to take advantage of the Cherokee nor would they compel them to accept.[147] An empty promise, because if the Cherokee did not make a peace and concession, it would be the renewal of war which they could ill afford.

The Cherokee faced two possible threats: renewed war or a very close border that cut into their towns. The Raven balked at the proposed boundary lines, saying they proposed "a line that goes beyond what I mentioned and binds verry [sic] close upon me."[148] He desired peace but seemed reluctant on agreeing to cede the lands. The line threatened more than just hunting grounds, but would also cut through Cherokee towns, a fate similar to the Middle, Valley, and Lower towns. Their original grievance had been encroachment on their lands. A border close to their towns would only encourage it. The

[146] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 83.
[147] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 86.
[148] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 87.

Raven actually returned the string of wampum given to him by the commissioners in hopes that they would reconsider the proposal.[149] Such a move could not be taken lightly. Receiving wampum signaled concordance to the giver's wishes or statements. By returning the string, the Raven showed he disagreed with the commissioners' statements and demands.

North Carolina claimed the Watauga and other settlements, moving the line closer to Cherokee lands. North Carolina had little reason to accede to the Cherokees' wishes. Waightstill Avery, a North Carolina commissioner, blamed the Cherokee, not just for starting the war but for not complaining about encroachment sooner. According to him, The Cherokee had willingly engaged in private land deals, contrary to government wishes. Avery stated that North Carolina had to include Watauga and Nolichucky since they fell under North Carolina protection during the war, therefore they could not remove the settlers as easily as the Cherokee wanted as it would have been more trouble to do so. Avery made it seem like his hands were tied. It is doubtful North Carolina wanted to leave the settlers out to dry at this time during the war with Britain. The line that Avery proposed would actually cut the Cherokee lands in half, splitting the Overhills from the Middle settlements.[150]

The proposed boundary from the commissioners threatened the wellbeing of the Cherokee. The possible continuing encroachment would chip away at any remaining Cherokee lands, including the loss of towns. The Old Tassel stated to the commissioners that he wanted the "liberty to raise my children and have an open Country." He disliked their proposal, citing it as too close to his "Nation" as well as the nearby settlers of

[149] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 88.
[150] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 89.

Nolichucky. [151] The Cherokee would not have the ability to raise their children in an independent Cherokee society if they kept losing their lands. Some foresight might dictate they saw a possibility of losing aspects of their society. It is doubtful that the reference to "open Country" meant fluid borders, as they vehemently opposed anything but a rigid line, but rather a contiguous Cherokee country. The proposed border cut through the Cherokee lands in modern North Carolina, either meaning that those lands would be lost or separated from the rest of the Cherokee, further dividing them.

The Old Tassel and the Cherokee still faced the problem of either a getting the quick peace that they wanted but with more land cessions, or continue the war the Cherokee could not seem to win. He seemed to be trying to show the high value of the land, so that the Americans would be compelled to give the Cherokee compensation worth the value. The Cherokee saw little choice of resisting a cession, and tried to at least get as much as they could in exchange. He complained to the Americans, drawing from his past experiences, saying that the lands the Cherokee would give up "will bring you a great deal [more] than hundreds of pounds. It spoils our hunting ground; but always remains good to you to raise families and stocks on, when the goods we receive of you are rotten and gone to nothing."[152] He did not view it as an equal trade, and the Cherokee stressed balance.

As a means of self-preservation, the Old Tassel wanted the commissioners to write a letter for Nathaniel Gist to take to George Washington, as he thought Washington could adjudicate between the two parties like the King George had in previous years.[153] The Old Tassel referred to Washington as the "great and noble Warrior of America" and

[151] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 90.
[152] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 91.
[153] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 90-1.

hoped that he would "give me some redress" for South Carolina taking one of their "principal Towns."[154] Washington did command the army but he did not have civil powers. The Old Tassel thought that going to the one in charge would ease the situation, much like appealing to the British Indian Department in the pre-revolution days. However, the commissioners objected to the idea and wanted to keep the matter between themselves. They did not want the Continental Congress involved as they wished to keep the power for the states. William Sharp, North Carolina Commissioner, told the Cherokee that they did not wish to "delay" any further, as he wanted the line to be agreed upon between only "your country and ours immediately."[155] Settling the border meant a quick and hopefully, firm peace, which would allow them time to focus on the rest of the war.

The commissioners of Virginia and North Carolina disagreed among themselves after facing the Cherokees' stubborn resistance to land cession, as they both had different motives for the peace treaty. The Virginians seemed willing to give a "specifick sum" for the lands north of the line at the Cumberland Gap and wrote to the North Carolina commissioners telling them that they wished to negotiate with the Cherokee for the line and give them compensation. However, North Carolina did not share Virginia's conciliatory approach. North Carolina maintained that they did not want to "give up to the Indians any part of the settlements, that our State took under protection" and did not want to change their proposed boundary line as they had "no intention to purchase any lands from the Indians."[156] North Carolina could not imagine paying for lands that they had taken as their own in the previous year. By their view, they had taken them through not only conquest by also through protection. North Carolina saw the lands as theirs by

[154] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 94.
[155] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 103.
[156] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 94-5.

rights. Changing the boundary line meant North Carolina would have to remove their newly added constituents who had just been victims of Cherokee attacks. North Carolina did not want to give the Cherokee any compensation, since they believed the Cherokee had caused the bloodshed in the first place.

One of the major problems with the proposed boundaries was that the Long Island of Holston fell north of the line, out of Cherokee control. They wanted the island to be a neutral ground so that both sides could meet in peace. The Cherokee designated Nathaniel Gist to have ownership of Long Island so that the land would be used to "hold good talks on."[157] The Cherokees held Long Island as a special place in their society. Long Island also served as an important intersection for inter-tribal communication for the Cherokee. It acted as a means to connect with other Indian tribes, including the Shawnee and Six Nations to the north.[158] Gist at the time was one of the most trusted interpreters and had a good relationship with the Cherokee. Being a Continental Army officer would help bridge the two sides. The Old Tassel referred to Gist as "our friend and Brother."[159] Gist had befriended the Cherokee for a considerable time, and had supposedly taken a Cherokee wife sometime before the war, siring a child in the process. This gave Gist a familial connection with the Cherokee, making him a part of them as well as his child. This would secure the Cherokees' hold on Long Island. However, the treaties never stipulated whether Gist received the island as a steward.

As had the British, the Americans tried to sway the Cherokee to their side. William Christian invited the Cherokee to travel northward to see their "extensive, rich

[157] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 108.
[158] Thomas Hatley, *The Dividing Paths*, 224.
[159] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 109.

and populous Country" and "the finest and largest Army that ever was in America."[160] Christian sought to show off the military might of the American Continental Army to the Cherokee, perhaps to strike fear as well as give assurance to their power of protection. He informed the Cherokee that other allied Indians "have joined the General." He wanted to show the strength and power of the new American government, not just through a display of the army but the alliances with other Indians. The alliances would show the Cherokee that they would not be alone in the venture, but also show the British the growing strength of the Americans. When the Cherokee finally agreed to the boundary with Virginia, Col. Christian proclaimed that "these three great Countries and the Cherokees will become one people," meaning Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.[161] Ironically, although the borders would be like solid walls and keep them separated, they would supposedly also act in unity. It seemed that the Americans wanted to take the Cherokee under their own wing and keep them in check, but still separate from the rest of their state lands. It also acted as a way to pacify the Cherokee, and allow the states to focus on other war efforts.

The Cherokee delegates finally conceded on boundaries but shifted their emphasis on the enforcement of the boundaries to stop encroachment. The Raven pressed hard for a defined and rigid line "as if it was a wall that reached up to the skies."[162] The demarcation highlighted the strong push for separation. The best way to keep peace between the two meant for well-kept boundaries. As long as the Americans could keep to their own side and prohibit any more encroachment all would be well. The Raven also promised that the Cherokee would keep their own on their side. He also promised that the

[160] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 92.
[161] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 99.
[162] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 97.

Americans could have a "path" through their lands via the Cumberland Gap. Whites would be welcome in their lands as long as they did not intend to permanently settle down. The Cherokee still wanted access to traders so they would be the few allowed to come into the towns. The Cherokee needed their goods and provisions, as the expeditions had destroyed their fields and towns. Open trade helped the Cherokee males maintain their role as hunters. The Raven promised that the "Warrior," their word for the agent, the commissioners would send to Chota to keep justice would be protected throughout Cherokee lands.[163]

After weeks of deliberation and debate, on July 20th, 1777 the Cherokee finally conceded to the boundary proposed by the commissioners of Virginia and North Carolina and ceased hostilities. The Cherokee signed two separate – though nearly identical-- treaties with Virginia and North Carolina. By the articles, the Cherokee had to return prisoners, both white and black, as well as any livestock or property. The treaty forbade any whites from residing or passing through the Overhill towns without a "proper Certificate."[164] Requiring a license to travel into Cherokee lands would limit encroachment, or at least keep trouble down. The states sought to regulate the trade, giving only themselves the power to deliver "Goods" to the Cherokee. Trade regulation gave the states control over the interactions of the Cherokee. By limiting who could travel into Cherokee country, they could ensure a better quality of traders and lessen the chance that the Cherokee would think themselves abused and cheated by unfair deals. It also placed the Cherokee into the pockets of the states and directly competed with the

[163] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 97.
[164] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 103.

British Indian Department, as both sides enticed the Cherokee with the promises of goods and provisions.

Although the Cherokee had relinquished their claims, the treaty gave them the power to arrest and deliver trespassers to the "Agent," a trusted trader or interpreter sent by the state governments to reside in Chota. The power to detain intruders meant the Cherokee did not have to solely rely on the government to redress their concerns of encroachment. Although the agent would technically handle the trespassers, this allowed the Cherokee some power and control over their lands. The Cherokee were expected to give safe passage to anyone authorized to pass or reside. To keep conflict at a minimum, any white person that murdered a Cherokee would be tried by their respective state and laws, and any Cherokee that murdered a white person would be punished by the Cherokee.[165] North Carolina appointed James Robinson, and later Joseph Martin, as agents for the state. The job of the agent was essentially a keeper of the border and intelligence. The commissioners wanted Robinson to find out the "temper" of Dragging Canoe's party and whether they would accede to peace, as they did not appear at the conference.[166]

The treaty worked to keep white encroachment at bay by forbidding any newcomers from crossing over or making settlements in Cherokee lands, which included building, planting crops, hunting, or driving any livestock over the boundary. White settlers could fetch a stray livestock that had accidently crossed the boundary line, without it being claimed by a Cherokee, provided they did not carry a gun with them or

[165] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 104;107.
[166] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 112.

else both the gun and the livestock would be forfeited to the Cherokee.[167] It seemed like a way to keep any provocations at a minimum, as well as lessen the chances of highway banditry.

The Cherokee became something akin to protectorates of the states. The commissioners promised the Cherokee protection from attacks from other Indians. The Cherokee may have had to rethink their alignments with their Indian neighbors. Northern Indians still fought for the British so going neutral would make the Cherokee an enemy of them. But keeping alliance with British would mean anger from Americans which meant a continued war from the east. American protection was a means of keeping the Cherokee away from the British side. It helped that the British did not have control of the southern colonies and backcountry. Having the Cherokee as quasi-protectorates eliminated them as a threat in the South. The states had other threats to deal with, such as the British in the Mid-Atlantic and northern states, as well as other Indians like the Shawnee and Iroquois.

By the time of the treaty, the Cherokee had already faced some internal changes, especially with the power of the head beloved men. During the conference, Oconostota appeared only in a ceremonial role. He and Attakullakulla, or the Little Carpenter, were still signers of the treaty. His role as a ruling figure over all the Cherokee towns had diminished as he relinquished talking power to the Old Tassel and the Raven of Chota. However, he still retained enough social power to command respect that "if they ever should speak contrary to his sentiments he would put them right."[168] Once again leadership changed towards a younger generation. The older leaders, like Oconostota and

[167] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 105.
[168] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 78.

Little Carpenter, declined in power and others rose up, although their successors were not much younger. The Old Tassel and the Raven still pushed for peace and neutrality much like their predecessors.

Cherokee society fractured and consolidated at the same time. The schism between the Cherokee peace party and the war faction that started in 1776 grew in 1777 with the land cessions. Dragging Canoe's war faction moved away from the ancestral lands and built settlements on Chickamauga Creek. The lands that would be ceded away lay in the territory of the Middle and Valley Cherokee, who were not present at the conference. The expeditions in 1776 destroyed many of the Middle and Valley towns, forcing them to relocate further down the Tennessee River, leading to the growth of the Chickamauga. At the same time, the rest of the focus in power started to lie within the Overhill towns. As the Cherokee had been more of a loose confederation before the war, it seems that the war shows a transformation of Cherokee government that was slowly coalescing into one. The Overhill leaders seemed to have been growing in power and commanded more and more of the Cherokee towns, a trend that would develop throughout the 1780s and 1790s..

Since the cession of most of their lands in South Carolina, the Cherokee were pushed back further west leading to a more coalescent land. As the Middle, Valley, and Lower Cherokee looked to Chota for the voice of all Cherokee, the Overhill Cherokee gained some power within Cherokee society. Clananah, a chief of Cowee, stated he saw Chota as "the beloved town of the whole Nation, and that it has been the means of saving all my people."[169] Chota had been a central town for the Cherokee for decades by this point. Although the Cherokee still considered themselves a confederacy of towns the

[169] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 114.

power within the Overhills started to grow, especially since many of the Middle, Valley, and Lower towns had been destroyed.

The push for separation had as much to do with cultural differences as it did with landownership. Once again, the Cherokee stressed the differences between the two societies, as they had years prior with Henderson and Transylvania. The Old Tassel noted that while the Americans' "stocks are tame and marked," the Cherokee's were "wild" as "[h]unting is our principle way of living."[170] He might have had reasons more than just stressing differences. Noting the differences highlighted the greater value the Cherokee placed on hunting, signaling their attachment to the lands as a means of sustenance. He knew the Americans relied on farming and range cattle.

The Cherokee faced a decline in military power by 1777, though the trend had started much earlier in the 1760s. The combined expeditions from Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia showed the Cherokee's defenseless and helpless situation. The Old Tassel told a party of Mingoes that had come into Chota that "[y]ou may kill a great many of them… many more will come in their place. But the red men cannot destroy them."[171] The Cherokees, and other Indians, lacked the means and the numbers to completely stop the Americans, even united. The power and influence the Cherokee held earlier in the century had dissipated by the 1770s.

By the spring of 1777, the plans of the British agents and Dragging Canoe had failed. The Cherokee did not sweep away the Holston and Watauga settlers away from their hunting grounds, nor did the British gain a foothold on the South with the help of their Indian allies. The Treaty of Long Island at Holston stripped away more lands from

[170] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 97.
[171] Henderson, "Treaty of Long Island," 66.

the Cherokee, further cementing the failure of Dragging Canoe's hopes and plans. The year of 1777 also saw changes with Cherokee diplomacy, as they had to face a shifting balance of power between the Americans and the British, and Cherokee society with the growth of the importance of the Overhill towns.

Identity Crisis

The loss of ancient lands forced a change in Cherokee identity. As the expeditions in 1776 destroyed many towns and the land cessions in 1777 took away even more, a divide began to grow within the Cherokee. In the spring of 1776, the Cherokee divided over whether to pursue peace and neutrality or to pursue war with the Americans. Although the Cherokee peace party achieved control by 1777, Dragging Canoe and the Chickamauga Cherokee continued their war against the Americans.

The schism that began in 1776 within Cherokee society solidified when the towns sued for peace with the Americans in 1777. The conclusion of the peace treaties further divided the Cherokee. On one side stood the elders who pushed for peace, and the other the young warriors who wished to wage war. The two sides split mainly on tactics, but had similar goals. They both wanted to preserve the Cherokee nation and society, but had different methods of doing so. Dragging Canoe and the young warriors saw the peace settlements as an affront to their way of life and the survival of their traditions.

By the spring of 1777, the elders told Dragging Canoe that they were engaging in peace talks with Virginia. The Old Tassel told Dragging Canoe that he desired "he would

not go to War any more."[172] The peace party of the Overhills acted without permission of the warriors. Although the Old Tassel did not have the same social prestige as Oconostota, as an elder he still had some form of social power and could attempt to rein in Dragging Canoe and his party. Or at least the Old Tassel tried to show that he could still influence Dragging Canoe. However, the events later in the year and afterwards showed that the elders had little power over Dragging Canoe as he separated himself from the rest of the Cherokee. His separation gave the Cherokee peace party a headache, especially when concerning diplomacy with the American states.

While the Cherokee peace party to the north gathered for peace, the Chickamauga prepared for war. The warriors sent Cameron a black wampum belt to prove they still wanted war and Cameron promised to help them in their fight against the "Watauga people."[173] Continuing the war may have given Dragging Canoe a chance to prove himself. The expeditions of 1776 left him dejected. Robert Dews, a trader, attempted to persuade Dragging Canoe to hear the "talks" from Col. Christian, but Dragging Canoe deflected the idea, saying he had already heard all the talks he wanted to hear. Dragging Canoe supposed that "he was looked upon as a boy and not as a warrior" and would not get the same respect as the other headmen.[174] The attacks in the summer of 1776 did not go as he expected and had disastrous results for the Cherokee. However, he needed to be resilient to keep receiving help from the British agents like Cameron.

For many young Cherokee men, Dragging Canoe offered a means of retaining a traditional way of life by maintaining the "prerogative of Cherokee young men in diplomacy, war, and economy." Dragging Canoe sought to keep open what the beloved

[172] Old Tassel to Virginia, Draper Mss., 4QQ87.
[173] Disposition of Robert Dews, *CSRNC*, Vol. 22, 998.
[174] Disposition of Robert Dews, *CSRNC*, Vol. 22, 996.

men of Chota had closed off at Long Island, the pathways of trade and war. The young Cherokee men fashioned their identities and statuses from the open paths of war and trade, without them they would not be the same.[175] As what Dragging Canoe told Henry Stuart in May of 1776, he feared that the Cherokee were being "surrounded," which meant the death of the Cherokee as he knew it.

The steady loss of land and white settlement isolated the Cherokee from their tribal neighbors to the north and south. The closed borders cut off communication from the path to Charleston as it did with the Six Nations to the north. The loss of most of their Kentucky lands also restricted their access to the shared hunting grounds with the northern Indians like the Shawnee, as well as communication and trade with them. That was why Dragging Canoe remained adamant about keeping Cherokee land.

Dragging Canoe also differentiated himself from the peace party in the composition of his towns. Whereas the elders wanted to create a rigid border to separate themselves from their white neighbors, Dragging Canoe was much more open. Chickamauga towns included white loyalists, traders, and black refugees as much as they did with *metis* and other Cherokee.[176] Many of the loyalists lived within Cherokee country long enough to become a member of the Cherokee, or a "countryman." While Dragging Canoe wanted to retain the traditional Cherokee way of life, he also relied on whites for supplies like guns and ammunition. Having open towns gave Dragging Canoe and the Chickamauga a way to keep the Appalachian West in the hands of the Indians like Cherokee, as well as the Creek and Shawnee.

---

[175] Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 223.
[176] Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 225.

The events in 1776 and 1777 reshaped the Cherokee as a people and their homes. The expeditions of 1776 had left destruction and ruin in Cherokee lands, leaving many dispossessed and homeless. In the spring of 1777, the homeless of Big Island, Settico, Tellico, Chilhowee, and other Middle Cherokee fled west to Chickamauga Creek. Instead of rebuilding their ancient towns, they established new ones as the old ones would have left them exposed to the Americans.[177] Many of the Lower and Middle Cherokee moved to the headwaters of the Coosa and became affiliates of the nearby Chickamauga Cherokee.[178] The treaties of DeWitt'ss Corner and Long Island of Holston pushed the Cherokee out of their Carolina lands and into the area of what is now Tennessee and Alabama.

Dragging Canoe's split with the main Cherokee towns created a separate nation of Chickamauga Cherokee, who called themselves "Ani-yuni'wiya," or the "real people." They saw themselves as a continuation of the traditional Cherokee way of life. The Chickamauga saw the peace party as an antithesis to their goals and referred to them as "Virginians," the same name they gave to the American settlers.[179] Acquiescing to the Americans only meant a destruction of the Cherokee as they lost their lands piece by piece. It also meant a betrayal. Dragging Canoe likely saw the peace party as turncoats to his ideals, as they went against the wishes of the British agents and himself. Peace, for the Chickamauga, meant the surrender of lands and the decline of the Cherokee. From then on, the Chickamauga Cherokee would continue the fight.

---

[177] R. S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954) 44.
[178] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians*, 46.
[179] Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 225.

A Rekindling Flame

The expeditions of 1776 and the resulting surrender of the Cherokee the following spring foiled the plans of John Stuart and the British in the South. The Patriot forces still retained control over much of the South, as the British army failed to make a foothold at Charleston in 1776. Stuart would have to wait until 1779 to implement his combined attack with his Cherokee. The twilight years of the American Revolution showed a decline in British power in the South and cemented the foundations of the post-war relationships the Cherokee had with the Americans.

The Cherokee found themselves in a state of distress. They suffered from a lack of supplies due to the decline in trade. Stuart had cut off supplies to the Overhill Cherokee after they made peace with the Americans and decided to supply only the Chickamauga and their allies. He had forbidden any sort of trade with the peace party and the Overhills. The Americans at the time did not have the means to furnish supplies to the Cherokee due to wartime expenses. Joseph Martin, the Virginia agent in Chota, even wrote to John Stuart begging him to restore trade with the Cherokee as they were in favor of the British rather than the Americans. Martin cited the Cherokee's fear of the Americans as the reason the Cherokee did not formally swap sides. He claimed he had no sympathy with the Wataugans.[180]

By 1778, the peace party of the Cherokee wanted to reunite with Dragging Canoe against the Americans. Little Carpenter himself ventured to Pensacola in February of 1778, promising Stuart to lead Cherokee north to guard the Ohio. The Cherokee had once again grown uneasy with the Americans as the Wataugans had continued to encroach on

[180] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,*48.

Cherokee lands without any reproach from North Carolina. The encroachment had come too close to the Overhill towns. In April of 1778, the Raven of Chota protested to North Carolina Governor Richard Caswell about the Wataugans "marking trees all over my country, near to the place I live" and killing live stock near towns.[181] Caswell responded by stating he would ensure no more trespassing would occur, promptly giving a rather empty proclamation to the Wataugans that amounted to nothing more than a stern talk.[182] North Carolina's indifference sparked messages from Virginia and South Carolina telling them to uphold the treaty to prevent another war with the Cherokee.[183]

The growing frustrations with the Americans gave Stuart another chance to revive his plan of attack. In 1779 the British turned to the South once more to stage another campaign. Clinton and Cornwallis planned to besiege and capture coastal cities like Savannah and Charleston as they had attempted in 1776. Stuart would use the Cherokee as an auxiliary force raid the upper Holston Valley to distract the militia that would have gone to aid Clark in Illinois or the forces in Charleston.[184] However, Stuart died in 1779 and did not live to see his plans realized. Cameron took over as the new superintendent but he did not have the same authority with the Choctaw and Chickasaw as Stuart had. Although the British succeeded in taking Charleston and Savannah, the Indian strategy fizzled in the backcountry. The invasion force of 800 Cherokee and Creek dissipated after facing 1,500 Patriot forces in Georgia.[185]

As they had in 1776, the Cherokee attacks in 1779 proved to be disastrous and led to Virginia Governor Patrick Henry sending out troops to the Chickamauga towns in

---

[181] Raven of Chota to Richard Caswell, *CSRNC*, Vol. 13, 90-1.
[182] *CSRNC*, Vol. 13, 115-7.
[183] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,* 47-8.
[184] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,* 48.
[185] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,* 49-51.

April. The expedition succeeded in burning towns and supplies, as the warriors were too far removed from their homes to protect them.[186] Dragging Canoe continued his attacks on Cumberland settlements with the Upper Creeks but without any synchronized British aid. The Chickamauga still frequently raided settlements in the Cumberland in December of 1780, which led Virginia and North Carolina to launch another expedition. However, they did not march against Chickamauga towns but the towns on the Hiwasee and Little Tennessee Rivers. The expedition destroyed some of the most important Cherokee towns like Chota before the Cherokee could even sue for peace. After the destruction, Virginia and North Carolina went to arrange another peace.[187]

Fortunately for the Americans, the Cherokee peace party seemed to be in control and conceded to the demands of the Americans. A few chiefs volunteered to go to Richmond and proposed an attack on Chickamauga towns. Still, the Cherokee seemed reluctant about breaking their ties with Britain. While Oconostota and other Cherokee volunteered to go to Williamsburg with Joseph Martin, the Raven went to Savannah to meet with Thomas Brown, leader of the East Florida Rangers, a Loyalist group, and a head agent of the Indian Department. The Raven tried to persuade Brown that the Cherokee still remained loyal, mainly to acquire supplies. However, Brown's faith in the Cherokee waned, and the lackluster Cherokee raids in late 1781 hardly restored what little faith he had. By 1782, Brown could do little to keep the Indians employed with the British as funding had severely declined and the British had lost control over much of the South.[188]

---

[186] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,* 49.
[187] Cotterill, *The Southern Indians,* 51-2.
[188] O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution,* 118-21.

The Cherokee had little impact on the southern campaign towards the end of the war. The British did not have a successful campaign in the South, as they lost several of their strongholds including Augusta and Pensacola, which had been used as centers of supply and intelligence. However, the British plan of pacifying the backcountry never materialized as the Cherokee attacks in the summer of 1776 had created a hotbed of resentment in the frontier and Carolina backcountry. The attacks had alienated many much-needed potential supporters in the backcountry and hindered the British plans for the South. Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown effectively ended much of the British presence for the South. By the spring of 1782, the Americans had gained control over the southern interior and prevented the British from effectively communicating with the southern Indians and their agents. The British held onto the coastal cities like Charleston until the evacuation later in the year.[189] When the last British troop stepped onto the transports and sailed away from North America, the Cherokee and other southern Indians were left to themselves to figure out their place in a changing world.

Although the American Revolution ended for the Americans in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris, the Cherokee would be in a continual flow of conflict and peace for another decade. The last years of the American Revolution decimated the Cherokee. Incursions from John Sevier and Joseph Martin in 1780 led to the destruction of more towns and deaths of more Cherokee. Faced with destruction and the lack of British support, the Cherokee started to consider peace and were willing to engage in a treaty.[190] However, the Cherokee would soon realize that land cessions would remain a constant for the decades to come.

---

[189] O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution,*114-5; 129.
[190] O'Donnell, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution*, 111-7.

Post Revolution

"[T]he Cherokees…hunt on a large space of the best hunting grounds in America…which they have long ceded… This is an indulgence for which they ought to be thankful, instead of complaining, without a cause, of encroachment."[191]

The years after the revolution forced change on the Cherokee. The British lost their hold on North America, especially in the South. The Cherokee now had to deal with a new government, the United States. The new American government was decentralized for most of the 1780s, but even the increased federalization with the adoption of the Constitution did not add much power to the government's control over the frontier. The Cherokee faced continual pressure from the settlers of Franklin and Tennessee, as well as government officials. With the treaties of Hopewell in 1785 and Holston in 1792, the Cherokee accepted the protection of the United States and conceded to the demands of the new union in order to create peace between the two. However, peace was never stable and throughout the 1780s and 1790s, as intermittent wars broke the fragile peace. The final decade of the intermittent war showed the Cherokee attempting to adapt to their situation.

Old Problems, New Face

The conflict did not cease with the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785. The Cherokee faced two problems: external pressures from settlers and land speculators and a weak

[191] William Blount to Henry Knox, June 14, 1793, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, Class II (Washington, D.C., 1832) Vol. 1, 433.

federal government. The Cherokee found any enforcement of the boundaries lacking. The continual pressures from white settlers eventually drove some of the Cherokee, usually from the Lower towns of the Chickamauga, to take up the hatchet once again. For the next decade, the Cherokee and the Americans entered into an intermittent war, where the fighting would resume, followed by a peace treaty and more land cessions, and then tensions would rise to restart the fighting after a year.

Encroachment was only a symptom of a bigger problem. Americans desired the lands west of the Appalachians and many could grow extremely wealthy through land speculation. Many frontier leaders, like John Sevier, grew rich from land speculation gains from land cessions. The borderline created by the Treaty of Holston in 1777 and Hopewell in 1785 had little power and much like the Proclamation of 1763, many settlers ignored the line out of spite. Some of the settlers rebelled against the federal government in the late 1780s, creating the extra-legal and short-lived state of Franklin, and continued the westward expansion. Even government officials sought to grow rich from speculation. William Blount, Governor of the Tennessee Territory, engaged in land speculation and worked to gain land from the Cherokee.[192]

The changes in the federal government throughout the 1780s and 1790s did not help the Cherokee against encroachment. Although the Treaty of Hopewell placed the Cherokee under federal protection, they did not realize the weakness of the federal government and its inability to rein in the states. The government either had little power to stop encroachment or failed to use them. Before federalization and ratification of the US Constitution, the federal government had little power over the states, including Indian

[192] William McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 23.

policy. In 1787, Congress had wanted to re-establish peace with the Cherokee, but did not want to infringe on the legislative rights of the states which gave the commissioners a difficult balancing act between Cherokee and states.[193]

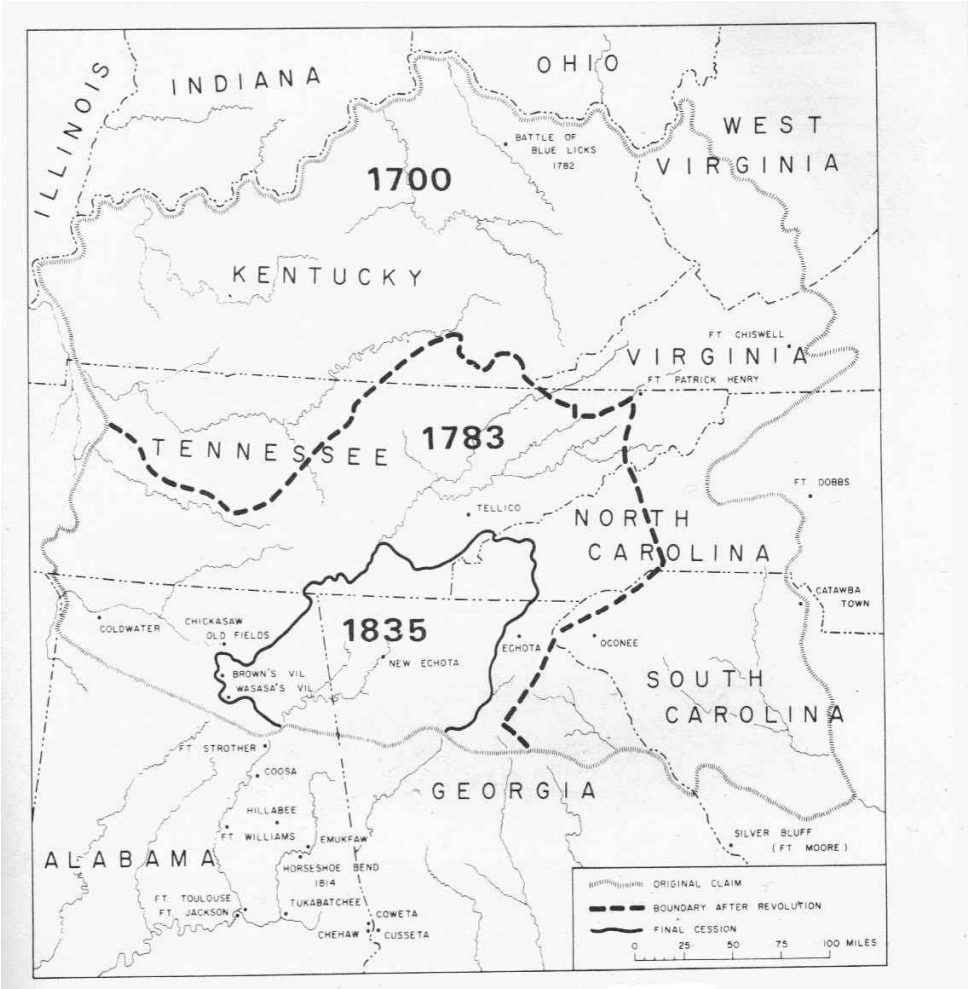


Figure 2: Cherokee Territorial Losses, In the Periods 1700-1788 and 1783-1819. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Cherokee had lost most of their lands in Kentucky and the Carolinas. From William Mcloughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 27.

[193] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 21-3.

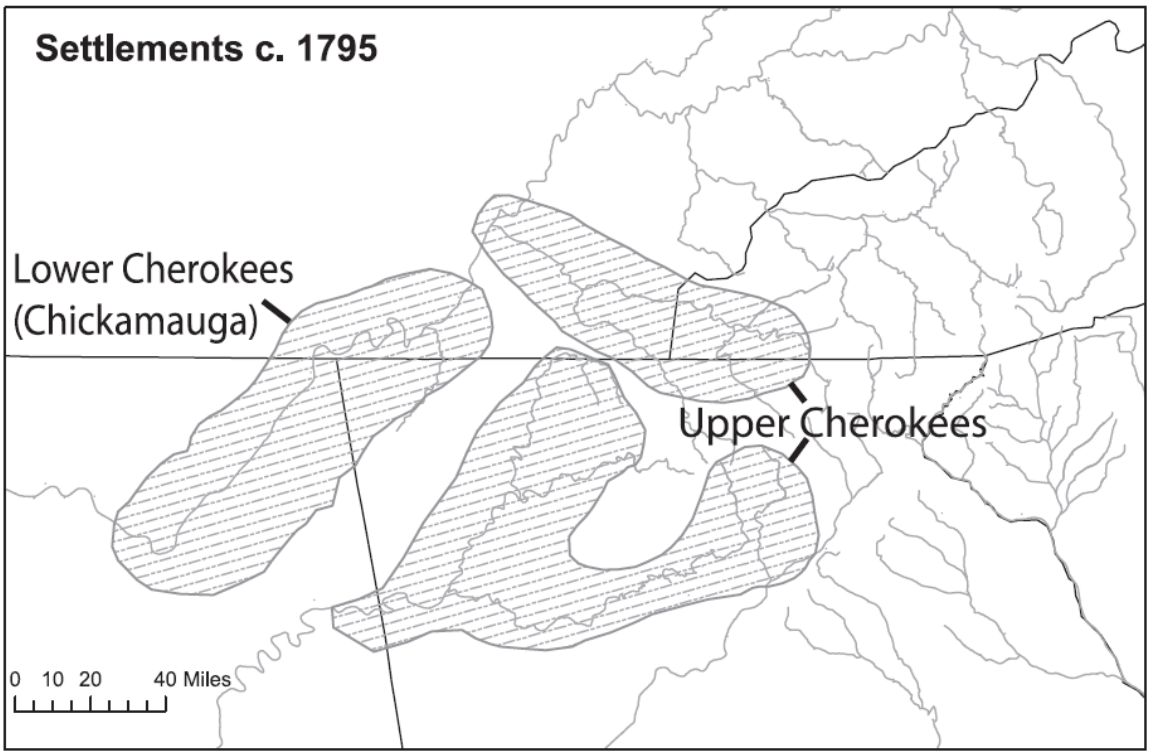


Figure 3: Cherokee towns by the 1790s had shifted further westward after the Revolution, settling mainly around the Upper Coosa River and the eastern Tennessee River Valley. The Cherokee still claimed much the Tennessee lands for their hunting grounds. From Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation : Town, Region, and Nation Among Eighteenth-century Cherokees* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 177

Land, as it had since the 1770s and into the 1790s, remained the main source of contention. At a meeting at Ustinaire late 1788, the Cherokee headmen complained to Richard Winn, a South Carolina senator, about squatters but seemed hopeful that they would regain their towns after being driven into the "woods" and regain the use of their hunting grounds. Little Turkey saw the Franklinites as "deceitful" and feared them, as they not only had settled on their land but had been attacking them.[194] In 1789 at Long Island, William Elders, a Lower Cherokee chief, said he wanted peace and to go home,

[194] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 46.

but that the Cherokee had no means of sustenance due to the fighting. He thought it would be more beneficial to the Cherokee to have the whites removed from their lands.[195]

For the Cherokee, land meant more than just borders but also a link to their traditional culture. The American frontiersmen had settled on traditional Cherokee hunting grounds on the Cumberland. Aside from plots of corn and other food crops, these hunting grounds acted as primary sources of food for the Cherokee. Cherokee men traditionally hunted as their social occupation. However, American settlement threatened their role as hunters. The Cherokee did not complain about encroachment merely about the ever decreasing amount of land they had, but rather the access to these lands. They desired for the hunting grounds to become "open" once again.[196] Even other southern Indians, such as the Creek, used the lands as common hunting grounds along with the Cherokee. American settlement cut off their access, as the sight of a Cherokee or any Indian ranging nearby the settlements could cause commotion. The nature of the settlements also cut off access, as settlers cut down trees and had free range cattle. The problem of losing access to the hunting grounds was twofold: a loss of a food supply and a threat to Cherokee culture.

The Cherokee felt powerless against the ongoing encroachment. In late 1789, William Elders had written a letter to Martin, complaining that the whites settled too fast on their lands and saw them as a threat.

> You told us at the treaty, if any white people settled on our lands we might do as we pleased with them. They come and settle close by our towns, and some of the Chickamoga people came, contrary to our desire, and killed a family; and the white people came and drove us out of our towns, and killed some of our beloved men, and several women and little children,

[195] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 47.
[196] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 47.

although we could not help what the Chickamoga people does.[197] Although the treaty of Hopewell had stipulated that the Cherokee had control over their own lands, they found their own enforcement had little or very negative consequences. When the Chickamauga Cherokee decided to try to push off the settlers, it only angered the settlers into fighting back, even though the Chickamaugas thought they were rightfully trying to drive the settlers off of the lands.

The lands also acted as ways of communication. The southern Indians ranged through the hunting grounds to send talks to each other. James Carey, an interpreter for the Cherokee, told Governor Blount that the Cherokee had attacked the Cumberland settlements because "these people are in their way, and interrupt their communication with each other."[198] The Cherokee shared the grounds with other Indians. Being cut off and surrounded by white settlers would also hinder any sort of communication with other Indians.

Federal Government and Cherokee Relations

The decades after the end of the Revolution saw development with diplomacy between the United States federal government and the Cherokee. In the 1770s, the Cherokee made treaties with individual states, as seen at Dewitt's Corner and Long Island of Holston but with the treaties of Hopewell in 1785 and Holston in 1791, the Cherokee dealt with the federal government. However, most of the problems for the Cherokee were at local levels. The Cherokee had to negotiate at the federal level to take care of those

[197] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 47.
[198] Information by James Carey, March 20, 1793, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 439.

problems. However, government indifference caused resentment from the Cherokee as the government did little to block the westward expansion from American settlers.

Although the Revolution had ended, the federal government continued to have problems with their Indian neighbors throughout the 1780s and 1790s. The federal government had to deal with Indian wars that sparked in both the South and the Northwest territories. As the Ohio Indians started the Northwest Indian War, lasting from 1785-1795, the Chickamauga Cherokee also had their own conflicts with the Americans during the same time.

By the turn of the 1790s, the federal government grew in scope and power after the adoption of the new US Constitution. George Washington took the office of President in the spring of 1789. In 1790 the US government created the Southwest Territory and established Tennessee, the problems continued. Washington appointed William Blount, a North Carolina senator and land speculator, as the new governor of the territory who proved to be more of an ally to his constituents and fellow land speculators than to the Cherokee. When the Cherokee would retaliate and begin the frontier fighting again, he would claim that the Cherokee never complained about encroachment to him, even though the Cherokee cited it as one of their main reasons for the fighting.

The Cherokee took notice of the change in US government and hoped to use it to their advantage. After the hostilities with John Sevier and the Franklinites in 1788, Taken Out of the Water, a Cherokee chief, pleaded to President Washington in May of 1789 to end the hostilities, hoping that the president would be able to do something. He noted that Congress has “got strong powers now” and hoped they could do something about the attacks and the encroachment. It showed that the Cherokee were aware of the changes in

the United States.[199] The Cherokee saw the president as the "beloved man" of the Americans as well as the "Father" to both the Americans and the Cherokee. Diplomatically, Washington held power over both, much like the British kings before the revolution.

Congress often attempted to placate the Cherokee without actually giving them what they wanted. In August of 1790, the US Senate resolved that the Franklinites had indeed violated the Hopewell treaty by illegally settling on prohibited land and attacking the Cherokee, who had also been under US protection. In 1788, Congress had issued a weak proclamation telling the settlers to leave the lands, but found difficulty with enforcing the law and having five hundred families remove themselves. Although the Senate admitted the fault of the settlers they did nothing to remove them, but instead resolved to create a new boundary line and compensate the Cherokee for the cessions, though with the stipulation that they would forbid any further encroachment.[200] The Treaty of Holston in 1791 created a new boundary line, one that reflected the westward push of the American frontier, but did little to curtail the resentment from the Chickamauga about the continued loss of lands.

The Treaty of Holston left a bitter taste in the Cherokees' mouth as they had to cede yet more land for what they felt was too little compensation. Blount promised to right the wrongs and get rid of the source of contention, encroaching settlers, but instead he secured the settlers' title to the land. The Cherokee ended up ceding lands in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee and received a small amount of supplies and a

[199] "A Great Talk Held by the Warriors and Chiefs of the Cherokee," May 19, 1789, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 57.
[200] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 83.

paltry annuity.[201] In early January of 1792, several Cherokee headmen visited Henry Knox, Secretary of War, in Philadelphia in hopes of obtaining justice from the US government. Bloody Fellow, a headman from the Lower towns, complained of Blount and claimed that Blount had cheated and manipulated them. Blount had caught them off guard by insisting they sell their lands, and had told them that he had authorization to buy land.[202] Bloody Fellow sought to go to the top of the administration, someone above Blount's station, much like the Cherokee had done in the British colonial days by appealing to the superintendent or the king. Blount had misused his powers as a supposed protector of the Cherokee, appointed by the US government, and had misled the Cherokee to their disadvantage. They also protested that whites continued to settle beyond the boundary of the Holston treaty. They wanted more money, as the $1000 annuity from the Holston Treaty had not been enough and demanded at least $1500 to buy farming equipment. Knox agreed, seeing it as a small price to keep the Cherokee on their side as potential help against the Ohio Indians.[203] Bloody Fellow hoped to rebalance the relationship between the US and the Cherokee.

Bloody Fellow and the Cherokee had expected redress from the federal government, but only received indifference. Bloody Fellow requested new agents to be sent to Cherokee lands who could be trusted to protect them and "explain all things."[204] In the past, the Cherokee relied on traders and interpreters as intermediaries, as they had resided in Cherokee lands and understood their custom and language. It seemed they found Governor Blount and his men lacking in trustworthiness and did not have the same

---

[201] Stanley W. Hoig, *The Cherokees and Their Chiefs: In the Wake of Empire* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 74-5.
[202] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 203-4.
[203] Hoig, *Cherokees and Their Chiefs*, 75-6.
[204] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 205.

relationship with the Cherokee as Joseph Martin and previous agents. Unfortunately, Bloody Fellow did not get his wish. The US government backed Blount and his Treaty of Holston, though once again promising to punish encroachers. Bloody Fellow reluctantly agreed, though grumbled that they had given up so much land for so little in return.[205]

Blount and the federal government became disappointed with the Cherokees' lack of control over their own people. However, he placed pressure on the Cherokee at Coyatee to "restrain your young people."[206] At a peace conference in Coyatee in May of 1792, Blount said he did not blame them but rather the "people of your Lower towns, and the Creeks."[207]Blount claimed that he had been holding back the Americans on the settlements from retaliating, so the Cherokee must do the same. He did not want Little Turkey and the rest to remain neutral in dictating the actions of the Lower towns, but rather have some form of control over them. Blount did not understand how little power Little Turkey held over the Cherokee. After the attacks in 1794, James Robertson, colonel of the Southwest Territory militia, desired justice and wanted the Cherokee to punish the instigators. Robertson wanted some form action from the Cherokee and grew impatient from the "half-way peace" by the Cherokee, as the Upper Cherokee towns pleaded for peace while the Lower towns attacked American settlements.[208] Blount and Robertson found the traditional Cherokee decentralized government lacking, especially in comparison to the new federalized American government.

The Cherokee also expected justice from the Americans. Hanging Maw chided Secretary Daniel Smith, Blount's deputy, saying that he was weak and could not control

---

[205] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 205
[206] Minutes of the Coyatee Conference, May 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 268.
[207] Minutes of the Coyatee Conference, May 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 268.
[208] Copy of Letter from Robertson to Watts, September 20, 1794, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 531.

his own people. Hanging Maw felt that the Cherokee could not venture out to Philadelphia to talk to Washington because of the danger, as a party of Americans had killed several Cherokee headmen. The American government had promised safety and the killings had proved their inefficiency in carrying out that promise. Hanging Maw called out Smith's inaction saying that Smith was "afraid of them."[209] Smith could have been reluctant against taking action against his own constituents. Acting in favor of the Cherokee would have been a bad political stunt to the frontier settlers. It may have also been the case that the federal government could do little to protect the Cherokee from the settlers. Tightening the reins on the settler might set off a frontier insurrection, much like the Whiskey Rebellion. Doublehead, a Lower town headman, also voiced his dissatisfaction with Smith, citing that the recent attack had been the third time that whites had attacked Cherokee during peace talks.[210] The Cherokee wanted justice from a government that had promised peace between the Cherokee and the United States. The Cherokee viewed the American government as the benevolent father figure and to be pushed aside signalled to the Cherokee their indifference.

Watts' War

Once again the push for peace contested with the push for war as conflict erupted between Americans and the Cherokee. The tensions between militant Cherokee and American settlers never ceased after the American Revolution's closing. In the late 1780s, the Chickamauga Cherokee fought against the fledgling State of Franklin. After

[209] Hanging Maw to Secretary Daniel Smith, June 15, 1793, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 458.
[210] Doublehead to Secretary Smith, June 15, 1793, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 458.

the death of Dragging Canoe in the early 1790s, John Watts, or the Young Tassel, carried the torch and continued the fight in the frontier. The loss of land again drove the Chickamauga to fight the frontier settlers. Much like Dragging Canoe's wars in the 1770s and 1780s, John Watts fought to preserve the Cherokees' independence and hoped to reclaim land.

The problem of encroachment drove the Lower Cherokee towns towards distrust and animosity. John Watts, or the Young Tassel, a headman from the Lower towns, had his own reasons not to trust Blount and the promises of the US government. The Franklinites had murdered his uncle, the Old Tassel, under a flag of truce and the federal government did too little for Watts. Watts also knew that the American frontiersmen would simply ignore the boundary line "as he knew they would have their own way, and that they would not observe the orders of Congress or any body else."[211] He saw the pattern of cessions and persistent encroachment, and claimed that debating about a new boundary line would only be in vain and that none of the promises from the US government ever held true. The boundary lines hardly stopped new settlements and the US government's only solution seemed to simply promise a new boundary each time with an annuity and wagon-load of goods as their only consolation.

In the early 1790s, the Chickamauga Cherokee, led by John Watts, sought to retake their lost lands and launched attacks on the Cumberland settlements.[212] They did not intend it as a full-scale war, but only a means of pushing out the settlers on the hunting grounds. Just as Dragging Canoe had lamented in 1776, Little Nephew feared being surrounded. He stated that "We are bound up all round with white people, that we

[211] *ASP*, Vol. 1, 204.
[212] Knox to Governor of Virginia, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 261.

have not room to hunt."[213] As before, the Cherokee saw the loss of hunting grounds as a threat to their survival and their culture. Some of the Chickamauga even took part in the Northwest Indian War. The Shawnee had invited the Cherokee to go to war with them after the defeat of American General Arthur St. Clair. Much like the conference at Chota in 1776, the Shawnee told them that if the Cherokee did not join they would be considered enemies.[214] However, the Chickamauga would likely have needed little forceful incentive to join the fight against Americans in the Ohio. Several Chickamauga took the opportunity to attack American settlements and steal horses along their travels northward to join the fight.[215] The Chickamauga were aware that the conflict with encroachment affected more than just the Cherokee.

The renewed fighting with the United States caused another rift within the Cherokee. In spring of 1792, Little Turkey disconnected from the Chickamauga and told them he refused to visit and talk with them anymore. Furthermore, he told them that if they wished to go to war, they could and he "would sit still and look at them." As the Chickamauga had made their choice, he made his own for the rest of the Cherokee and would remain on the sidelines. He also told them to stay within their side of the mountains and "not mix with the other parts of the nation."[216] He did not want the Chickamauga to travel through to the rest of the Cherokee towns for a couple of likely reasons: he did not want the Chickamauga spreading war talks to the other towns and he may have feared the sight of Chickamauga in the towns would make them appear complicit to their actions. He disproved of their actions as they not only angered the

[213] Journal of the Grand Cherokee National Council, June 26, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 272.
[214] Report of David Craig to Governor Blount, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 264.
[215] Information from James Carey to Governor Blount, March 20, 1793, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 437-8.
[216] Report of David Craig to Governor Blount, March 15, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 264-5.

Americans but also made the Cherokee more vulnerable. Since frontier relationships were tenuous at best, having any number of Cherokee at war would mean that settlements would be on high alert and associate any passing Cherokee as an enemy. Even David Craig in his report noted that Blount might as well consider the Chickamauga on the side of the Shawnee. The Glass wrote to Blount after a Chickamauga attack on Robertson's settlement that Robertson threatened to come to Cherokee lands and "sweep it clean with our blood."[217] The Upper Cherokee towns had more to fear from American retaliation as they lived in the near vicinity of American settlements. It did not seem that the settlers cared to distinguish which Cherokee attacked them.

The Chickamauga sought to use other parties like the Spanish to their advantage in their fight against the American settlers. The Chickamauga Cherokee worked to gain the support from the Creek and Spanish to the south. The Americans' continual westward advance threatened Spanish interests so they gave the Chickamauga guns and ammunition to carry on the fight.[218] The Chickamauga interacted with continental politics in many levels, as had been the case earlier. Although the British still supplied the Chickamauga and Cherokee to some degree, they no longer held the same amount of power in the area as they did before. However, as the new American government expanded westward they contended with the Spanish government in Florida and Louisiana. The Spanish sought to use the Chickamauga Cherokee to their goals in waylaying anymore American expansion.

As it had in the 1770s, the younger men started to take the reins for the Cherokee. However, because of the openness of the Chickamauga towns and the vicinity of the

[217] Letter from the Glass to Governor Blount, September 10, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 280.
[218] Hoig, *Cherokees and Their Chiefs*, 74.

Americans, the younger generation included a lot of mixed bloods. Dragging Canoe had become an old man at the time of his death in 1792 and left the seat vacant for another, younger Cherokee: John Watts, also known as Young Tassel. Watts had been the nephew of the Old Tassel and his father had likely been John Watts, a British interpreter. He had a strong personality and skilled as an orator, helping him be elected as head war chief of the Chickamauga Cherokee.[219] The death of his uncle, the Old Tassel, in 1788 solidified Watts's antipathy toward the frontier settlers. While the rest of the Cherokee under Little Turkey, the new Beloved Man, still pushed for peace and diplomacy and hoping the US would remove the settlers to no avail, the Chickamauga under Watts once again prepped for war.[220]

The early to mid 1790s saw changes in Cherokee leadership, especially among the Chickamauga. Little Turkey became known as the 'great beloved man of the whole nation" and Hanging Maw and the Badger were the beloved men of the "Northern division" and "Southern division" respectively.[221] In 1785, the Americans made peace with the multiple towns of Cherokee with the Holston treaty. By the Treaty of Holston in 1791, the United States dealt with just the leading headmen instead of the individual towns. As the British had tried in the 1760s, the Americans attempted to centralize the Cherokee hierarchy, at least in their diplomatic roles.[222]

Following the trend that began in the later 1770s, the Cherokee towns consolidated. By the 1790s, the old divisions of Overhill, Middle, Valley, and Lower had given away to simply Upper and Lower towns as the dominant regions. The Upper towns,

---

[219] Hoig, *Cherokees and Their Chiefs*, 79-80.
[220] Hoig, *Cherokees and Their Chiefs*, 80-1.
[221] Journal of the Grand Cherokee National Council, June 26, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 271.
[222] Tyler Boulware, "The Effect of the Seven Years' War on the Cherokee Nation," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol 5, No 2 (Fall 2007): 424.

in northern Georgia and the eastern Tennessee River valley, became the region of the Cherokee peace party while the Chickamauga faction situated themselves in the Lower towns in northern Alabama and northwestern Georgia. The new divisions reflected the centralization pushed by the United States, as well as the centralization happening in the federal government. For the Americans, the Cherokee no longer consisted of the multitude of towns and regions but rather two divisions and an overall headman.

American encroachment affected Cherokee town dynamics. The Cherokee saw constant loss of land in the 1780s. The Cherokee moved their main capital from Chota to Ustanali on the Coosawati River in northern Georgia in the late 1780s. By then, Chota had lost much of its central power due to intruders from Franklin settling close to the town.[223] The smaller landholdings led to more compacted regions and towns. The fact that many Cherokee had to leave their ancient towns in the late 1770s and 1780s also impacted the attachment to land and Cherokee identity. Through the gradual recognition of these Upper and Lower divisions, a nascent sense of Cherokee national identity began to develop. It would formalize into a more complete form of identity in the early nineteenth century, but the beginnings started in the post-Revolutionary period.

The loss of land forced a change onto Cherokee society and culture, pushing them away from their ancient traditions. Instead of giving back the hunting grounds to the Cherokee the federal government decided to push the Cherokee into changing so they would not need it anymore by assimilating them and nudging them towards adopting American cultural practices. Washington's assimilation policies of the early 1790s emphasized farming over hunting. Leonard Shaw, a federal agent to the Cherokee, informed the Cherokee that Washington ordered him to "instruct [their] children" and

[223] Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*, 211.

would furnish them with the necessary farming equipment.[224] A section of the Holston Treaty of 1791 stressed the push for farming and that the Cherokee "may be led to a greater degree of civilization, and to become herdsmen and cultivators, instead of remaining in a state of hunters." [225] The US government hoped that the Cherokee would acculturate and assimilate to American norms, becoming yeomen farmers instead of relying on hunting for sustenance. The Cherokee would not need their hunting grounds if they could farm the lands they had instead.

By the late 1780s and early 1790s, the Cherokee had already undergone a form of assimilation through cultural interaction. The Cherokee Lower towns became spots of intermingling. Many *metis* adopted English names, learned some literacy, and became guides or interpreters, such as Richard Finnelson.[226] Many of the *metis* joined John Watts's war party, who himself was also *metis*. Ironically, many of the *metis* were the most militant Cherokee, as many of their fathers were British loyalists and traders. Although the Upper towns were closer to the American border, they did not have as much intermingling as the Lower towns as many of the Upper towns were isolated in mountains. The Lower towns were home to white traders and Loyalists who became a part of the Cherokee people, at least in name. Many Loyalists fled after the revolution into Cherokee territory and continued British influence, though to a much smaller degree. William Panton, a Scottish refugee and merchant from Georgia, moved to Pensacola after the war and continued to import British goods into the area to supply the southern Indians.[227]

---

[224] Journal of the Grand Cherokee National Council, June 26, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 272.
[225] Records of the Senate, October 26, 1791, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 125.
[226] Finnelson's Narrative, Sept 26, 1792, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 291.
[227] Information to Blount, August 18, 1793, *ASP*, Vol. 1, 458.

The end was nigh. By June 1794, the US government wanted to pacify the warlike Chickamauga Cherokee and invited the chiefs to Philadelphia to make a new treaty agreement and reaffirm the treaty of Holston. The respite was tenuous at best as conflict resumed for another five months. Continued attacks meant more back and forth retaliations until finally Watts wrote to Robertson for peace. Doublehead wrote to Blount wanting only peace and to hunt without being bothered why whites. In late August, the US had won a victory over the Northwestern Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, demoralizing the Creek and Chickamauga Cherokee in the South. In November 7, 1794, Blount held a council at the Tellico blockhouse near old Fort Loudon with Hanging Maw, Watts, Bloody Fellow, and Glass in attendance. Hanging Maw was vexed with the Lower towns for all the trouble they had caused for the Cherokee but still made peace on their behalf. As Watt stepped down as war chief, the last organized military resistance from the Cherokee came to a close.[228]

[228] Hoig, *Cherokees and Their Chiefs*, 86-8.

Conclusion

By the mid-1790s, the Cherokee gave up war as a means of resisting the United States. However, that did not mean the Cherokee stopped resisting completely, but rather they switched tactics by engaging in diplomacy and law. Many Cherokee assimilated and adopted American culture, learning English and dressing like whites. The Cherokee worked on strengthening their nascent nation through open trade and inviting Moravian missionaries into their lands. Ironically, many of the Lower Cherokee became major proponents of assimilation and other progressive policies. The Cherokee faced ongoing trouble from the federal government for the decades to come, as the federal government would later switch gears from assimilation to outright removal. At that point is where much of the historiography of Cherokee history in the nineteenth century begins. Although important, this paper has strived to show that the period beforehand is just as important and that many of the ideas of a Cherokee nation had their roots in the revolutionary era.

The Cherokee-American Wars made a lasting impact on both the Americans and the Cherokee. As a portion of it occurred in parallel to the American Revolution, it highlights how the Revolution in the southeastern backcountry resembled more of a sequel to the Anglo-Cherokee War than a revolution. However, the Cherokee had their own motivations as they too fought for their own independence. They had strong cultural ties to the encroached lands, the loss of which they felt threatened their very existence as Cherokee. By the 1790s, the Cherokee hardly resembled their former selves from half a century ago. The results of the fighting and land cessions culminated into a redefinition

of the Cherokee, as factions split and towns disappeared. The consolidation of power shifted with each cession, as the new boundaries reshaped Cherokee society and politics. The Cherokee could never fully recover from the land cessions and tensions with American settlers never completely declined. The wars took their toll on the Cherokee as they could hardly resist against the westward American expansion. They did, however, manage to survive into the twenty-first century.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Unpublished Manuscripts

Draper Manuscript Collection. Edited by Draper, Lyman Copeland, and John Dabney Shane. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Published Collections

American State Papers: Indian Affairs, Class II, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C., 1832.

Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781. Palmer, William P., ed. Vol. I Richmond, 1875-83.

Colonial Records of North Carolina, William L. Saunders, et al. 10 Vols. Raleigh, 1890.

Documents of the American Revolution. Davies, K.G., ed 21 Vols. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972- 1981.

Papers of Henry Laurens, David R. Chesnutt, Ed., et al (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) Vol. 10

State Records of North Carolina. Edited by Walter Clark. 12 Vols. New York, 1970.

Adair, James. *A History of the American Indians*. Edited by Kathryn E. Holland Braund, 1775. Reprinted. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

Henderson, Archibald. "The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July, 1777," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jan 1931): 55-116.

Secondary Sources

Articles

Allen, Ben, and Dennis T. Lawson, "The Wataugans and the 'Dangerous Example,'" *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1967): 137- 147.

Boulware, Tyler "The Effect of the Seven Years' War on the Cherokee Nation," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol 5, No 2 (Fall 2007): 395-426.

Nichols, John L. "Alexander Cameron, British Agent Among the Cherokee, 1764-1781," *The South Carolina Historical* Magazine, Vol. 97, No. 2 (April 1996): 94-114.

Monographs

Blackmon, Richard. *The Dark and Bloody Ground: The American Revolution Along the Southern Frontier.* Yardley: Westholme, 2014.

Boulware, Tyler. *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation :Town, Region, and Nation Among Eighteenth-century Cherokees.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

----------, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Cotterill, R. S. *The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.

Crane, Verner. *The Southern Frontier, 1670- 1732*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1928.

Cumfer, Cynthia. *Separate Peoples, One Mind: The Minds of Cherokees, Blacks, and Whites on the Tennessee Frontier.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

DeMond, Robert. *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1940.

Faragher, John Mack. *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992.

Finger, John R. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Friend, Craig Thompson. *Kentucke's Frontiers*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Gallay, Allan. *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English in the American South, 1670-1717.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Galloway, Patricia Kay. *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Hatley, Thomas. *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

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

Hoig, Stanley W. *The Cherokees and Their Chiefs: In the Wake of Empire.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998.

Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* New York: Knopf, 1998.

McLoughlin, William. *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Merrell, James H. *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through Removal.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

O'Donnell, James. *Southern Indians in the American Revolution.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973.

Perdue, Theda. *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Pesantubbee, Michelene .*Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

Schmidt, Ethan. *Native Americans in the American Revolution: How the War Divided, Devastated and Transformed the Early American Indian World.* Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014.

Silver, Peter. *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America.* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007.

Snapp, J. Russell. *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Western Frontier.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815.* Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Appendix: Interpretive Plan

Historical Overview

The end of the French and Indian War had drastic effects on America. It altered the landscape, for both whites and Indians. The war had resulted from the contest for land between the British and French, but much of the tension lay between white settlers and the Indians. For many colonists, the British victory over the French signalled an open country to the west.[229] Though the colonists thought the land up for grabs, many of the inhabitants --the Indians-- felt otherwise.The British government created the Proclamation Line of 1763 in order to settle the tensions and prevent another expensive Indian war. However, in the early 1770s settlers continued to pour over the Appalachian Mountains, creating further resentment among the Indians.[230]

By the mid-eighteenth century, the Cherokee also started to see change. The end of the French and Indian war and the following Anglo-Cherokee War had devastated their country. Cherokee population had declined due to the war. Cultural intermingling and the decline of the deerskin trade led to the gradual change in Cherokee culture.[231] The Cherokee found it difficult to cling to their old traditions with the pressure from the incoming settlers. The Cherokee faced continual encroachment in the early 1770s. Euroamericans established a settlement on the Watauga River in modern-day western

---

[229] Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 56-7.
[230] James H. O'Donnell, III, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville: University of Tennesee Press, 1973), 6-16.
[231] Colin Calloway,*The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),182-7; Thomas Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution*
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1993),157-9.

North Carolina, to the Cherokees' displeasure.[232] A private deal with Richard Henderson and the Transylvania Company resulting in the loss of most of their hunting grounds, essentially all of modern-day Kentucky.[233]

In the spring of 1775, the conflict between Britain and the American colonies erupted like wildfire. Many took up the musket to fight for independence or for king and country. However, many Indians, like the Cherokee found themselves involved in the war as any colonist. For those like the Cherokee, it was not a war for independence but another land struggle. Lord Dunmore's War in 1774, a conflict between Virginia and the Mingoes and Shawnee, had shown an escalation in the rising tensions between whites and Indians, and signalled what was to come.

By the summer of 1776, a new Indian war began. In early July, as men signed the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, Cherokee war parties led by Dragging Canoe attacked the settlements in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The attacks resulted in a combined expedition in the fall from Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Expeditions devastated the Cherokee as towns were razed and crops destroyed. The following peace treaties in spring and summer of 1777 led to more land cessions and a tenuous peace with the American states.[234]

The next decade and a half showed a tense relationship between the Cherokee and the newly independent United States. Intermittent wars broke out during the 1780s and early 1790s as the warlike Chickamauga Cherokee faction attacked the settlements on the Cumberland river in hopes to push out settlers and regain the old lands. Their hopes never

---

[232] Ben Allen and Dennis T. Lawson, "The Wataugans and the 'Dangerous Example,'" Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1967), 137-42.
[233] *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781*, William P. Palmer, et al. (eds.),(Richmond, 1875-83), Vol. I, 283-92.
[234] O'Donnell, *Southern Indians*, 34-59; Archibald Henderson, "The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July, 1777," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jan 1931), 62-109.

materialized as the Chickamauga Cherokee relented to the United States in 1794 and consented to renewed peace, effectively ending the military resistance of the Cherokee.[235]

Statement of Goals

The purpose of the exhibit plan is to teach the public about the Cherokee during the American Revolution. It shows that the war had a wider context than a fight between Patriots and redcoats. The exhibit places the Cherokee as rational actors within the war, rather than obstacles on the frontier. They had their own reasons that stemmed from the loss of lands to white settlers. Visitors will see that southern Appalachia were connected and not isolated to the revolutionary events. It gives the public a different perspective on the war and the various parties involved. The exhibit's ideal location would be with the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, North Carolina, but can be modulated to fit the needs and requirements of any museum or institution. The objective is to engage the audience through active learning and thought-provoking panels.

Budget

A speculative budget comes to approximately $20,000 needed for the exhibit. The budget covers for all materials needed and assumes that a space for the exhibit is readily available. At minimum, approximately $10,000 could be needed if budget-conscious materials are used and others locally sourced through donations or internal means.

[235] Stanley Hoig, *The Cherokee and Their Chiefs: In the Wake of Empire* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 67-86.

Potential Funding

Funding for the exhibit can come from a variety of sources. The institution's current funding can be supplemented through donations from the community and wider public. Local individuals and businesses can provide private donations and the institution can also apply for public funds.

Community Funding:

GoFundMe/Kickstarter

- Crowdfunding has gained traction in recent years. People from all over can donate to any cause via the Internet. The donations from crowdfunding do not need to be the primary source of income, but can be used to supplement from other sources.

Silent Auction

- Local and area businesses can donate items to the institution for an auction where proceeds go directly to exhibit or event funding.

Dinner Plate

- The museum can host a dinner event where participants buy tickets for the plates. The proceeds from the tickets help for fundraising. The event can also be paired with a keynote speech about the upcoming exhibit and its importance.

Public Grant Funding

Public Humanities Project

- The Public Humanities Project "grants support projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences. Projects must engage

humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics, and art history."[236]

Museums for America

- The Museums for America (MFA) program "supports projects that strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public."[237]

Exhibit Design

Indoor

The exhibit can be set inside a museum or event space. Ideally, a larger room would fit the best. The exhibit follows the visual timeline. It is designed to encourage the visitors along a designated path. The indoor exhibit contains display cases with artifacts and items, mannequins dressed in period clothes, and panels with illustrations and text.

Outdoor

The project can be suited for outdoor opportunities as well, including an open-air exhibit or living history event. Tours can be led to a recreated period Cherokee village. Panels give a brief history and description of the types of buildings. Period reproduction items decorate the buildings to show the audience what kinds of things the houses would have had and show the exchange of goods between whites and Indians. An outdoors

[236] "Public Humanities Projects," National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed November 28, 2017, https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/public-humanities-projects
[237] "Museums for America," Institute of Museum and Library Services, November 28, 2017, https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/museums-america?GrantId=11

exhibit helps to illustrate to the visitor what life may have looked like at the time and give context.

Accessibility

The exhibit should comply with all ADA regulations and be accessible to as many visitors as possible.

- Entrance door will be minimum 32" wide
- Entrance and exit will have push button to open
- Outdoor visitor path will be minimum 36" wide
- Wheelchair accessible ramp – preferably made from the recommended aluminum or concrete
- Inside aisles will be minimum 32" wide and free of immovable objects

Main Idea/Messages

The exhibit aims to education visitors of various backgrounds about the involvement of the Cherokee in the American Revolution. It covers a wide span of time, from the 1760s to the 1790s. The revolutionary era of America saw not only a creation of a new republic but the reshaping of society, including those on the periphery like the Cherokee. The westward expansion that occurred before and after the revolution impacted many Indians on the western frontiers, causing strife and schism. The project has three topics in mind: show how Cherokee society changed during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, show their involvement during the Revolution, and connect the Cherokee War with the greater context of the Revolution.

The exhibit showcases the social change of the Cherokee during the late eighteenth century. It addresses the social and political pressures from within society and from outside factors, like Euroamerican settlers and the British administration. Cherokee

culture started to see a change during this time. As a result of land loss, the Cherokee began to place a greater emphasis on agriculture rather than the traditional hunting. The fragmented Cherokee government also began to coalesce and a nascent Cherokee national identity started to develop by the 1780s and 1790s. The Cherokee Republic from the early nineteenth century had its start in this era.

The revolution affected more than just the lives of colonists. It also shows how the Cherokee became involved in the revolution, their reasoning and their actions. The Cherokee became involved in the American Revolution as willing participants and not as obstacles for the American Patriots nor merely as British pawns. They fought for their own version of sovereignty, hoping to gain back lost lands. Visitors will learn that the Cherokee were one among many other groups that participated in the war. The exhibit will address key figures such as Cherokee peace chief Attakullakulla, the war chief, Dragging Canoe, and British agents like John Stuart.

The visitor should gain a wider contextual understanding from the exhibit. It shows how connected the southern Appalachia was with the rest of the continent. It links the Cherokee wars with the rest of the conflicts during the American Revolution instead of making it seem like an isolated event. It shows how southern Indians like the Cherokee had a connection to the American Revolution. It also exemplifies the different reasons and causes of the Revolution, showing that the backcountry Patriots had more to do with wanting land versus British taxation.

Education Plan

Audience

The goal is to interpret Cherokee history from the mid-eighteenth century to the turn of the century. The material has several audiences in mind: those of Cherokee descent and those interested in the time period. The exhibit should also seek attract tourists. The exhibit should be family friendly and target younger audiences as well.

Audience Goals

General Visitors
The exhibit's goal is to offer an opportunity for visitors to learn about Cherokee history and engage them in self-guided and tour-guided activities.
Goals for Visitors: ● Develop a connection with the exhibit ● Gain knowledge about Cherokee history and a broader context of the American Revolution ● Encourage and increase curiosity ● Positive learning experience

Educators
The exhibit offers an alternative means of educating about the Cherokee and the American Revolution. Educators can use the exhibit to supplement North Carolina based curriculum.
Goals for Educators ● Increase subject knowledge ● Encourage learning outside of the classroom ● Interpreted lesson plans using exhibited resources ● Show tangible connections to history

Programs

The projects theme highlights the tenacity of the Cherokee and the ongoing changes within their society during the late eighteenth century. Public programming helps to promote the theme. Different programs can meet the needs of specific target audiences that are not covered within the general exhibit. The goal of the programs is to inspire learning and teach through interactive learning.

The desired outcomes for the programs are:

- Increased understanding of the history
- An engaged and positive learning experience

Cherokee and Colonial American Culture

Cultural differences between the Cherokee and the colonists often resulted in conflict and impacted negotiations and diplomacy. The two had differing perspectives on gender roles, trade, warfare, land usage, and governance. The exhibit has programs that cover a variety of these topics. By comparing and contrasting the two cultures, the programs help visitors understand the differences between Cherokee and colonial cultures in the eighteenth century.

The program compares colonial and Cherokee culture to help visitors/students understand the differences between the two and how the cultural differences impacted them. The program can be used for students from visiting schools. It can be for different grades, providing some adaptation to fit the age groups.

The various topics are broken up into different stages. Small groups of students can engage in the different stages to help staff and volunteers facilitate the program and allow the the different groups to rotate between the stages. Hand-outs containing necessary information for each station should be handed out to the student groups.

The stages are:

1. Governance/Law
2. Gender
3. Religion
4. Dress/Attire
5. Land Usage

The program should facilitate a discussion about how Americans lived back then in comparison to their Cherokee neighbors and how that may have impacted their relationships. Staff can also ask if they saw any similarities between the two, or between modern-day.

Interpretive Approach

The exhibit caters to various learning styles to reach a broad audience, such as interpretive panels, multimedia displays, and visual/oral sources. This section contains examples of exhibition tools and techniques that have been considered for the design of the exhibit.

Timeline

The exhibit follows a visual timeline, starting from the mid-eighteenth century and ending near the close of the century. It will run in chronological order and sectioned by theme and topic. It guides the visitor throughout the exhibit and offers supplementary information via labels and panels. The timeline includes a brief historical narrative of the time before 1775 to give some background information to the visitor. It follows the major events for the Cherokee during this time. It also gives some context and a wider scope by

including other contemporary events and issues, such as the developments of the American Revolution.

Hand-Outs

Hand-outs can range from leaflets and self-guided tours to quick feedback surveys. They are a way to reach more people. Hand-outs can help to engage the people with the exhibit by providing more information and supplement the exhibit. They can also create ways for younger audiences to interact with the exhibit, such as having a treasure hunt for children where they can fill out sheets of paper. Hand-outs for self-guided tours offers a way for those that wish to have an individual experience at the exhibit.

Interpretive Panels

Interpretive panels help illustrate the history for the visitor as well as highlight the relevance of the material. They are a combination of both text and images, with enough text to give a succinct description without being too wordy. Attractive designs allow interpretive panels to engage the audience on different levels. They can ask the visitors questions and add to their own experiences and prior knowledge, or stimulate a dialogue. The design will be simple but thematic, with graphics and presentation that correlate with the time period. The panels can resemble eighteenth century print and parchment. The text should be comprehensible for various reading levels. Braille can also be available for vision impaired or the text can be spoken through speakers or headphones.

Hands-On Learning

Parts of the exhibit will encourage hands-on learning. Visitors will be able to touch and interact with objects. These can include interactive display that require

movement, such as flipping up a panel to reveal an answer or an image, or even being able to handle reproduction items like clothing or material. Workshops can also provide ways for visitors to participate in craft-making, where they can make Cherokee-styled items, such as bead-ware or small clay items. Having an avenue for a tactile approach will help immerse the visitor and give them a tangible understanding.

Technology

Museums have increased the use of technology within their exhibits. Technology can be used to enhance visitor experience by encouraging interaction with the displays in multimedia formats. Visitors can engage in oral stories through the use of headphones. Music can help create atmosphere for visitors. A digital map can show the changes of the Cherokee borders overtime. Visitors can watch a short video about a topic on Cherokee history and culture. Technology gives the visitor another choice and allows them to negotiate the levels of interaction with the exhibit.

Tours

The exhibit allows for both individual and group tours. A docent can lead a group of people through the exhibit, allowing a more personal touch with an immediate, and direct form of communication. Tours will be designed for specific audiences, such adults or school-age children. It is also designed for individual self-guided tours.

Collections

The exhibit will show artifacts along with displays and panels. The panels will help the visitor understand the relevance of the artifacts and give interpretation. Reproduction period items from companies can be used, or locally-made craft items. Some may be purposed for hands-on interaction and others may be behind display cases.

Somes examples of items to include:

- Clothing such as trade shirts, leggings, breechclout, moccasins, and wampum jewelry. They can be placed on mannequins or wax statues to resemble life-like figures.
- Ceramics and pottery
- Trade goods such as iron and/or tin pots, blankets, steel knives, gunpowder, and whiskey. It might also be important to show examples of the deerskin that the Cherokee traded for the items.
- Weaponry such as steel tomahawks, rifles/muskets, scalping knives, etc. Although the exhibit encourages hands-on learning, for safety reasons weapons should be placed behind display cases.

Events

Living History

Living history events can be one of the more popular ways of presenting history to the public without becoming too much of a spectacle. Living historians can portray the Cherokee and backcountry colonists, showing the public the different cultures that interacted with each other. Living historians can show the different crafts people did back then and help to personify the history. A battle reenactment is not necessary, but if the volunteers are willing they can perform demonstrations of the different weapons and tactics used in the time period.

There can be several opportunities or events to portray Cherokee history. Battles are not necessary but volunteers can recreate important moments of Cherokee history of the late eighteenth century. Reenactors can recreate “talks” in Cherokee meeting houses,

or the peace conferences with the Americans, such as the 1777 Long Island of Holston treaty. Small skits can show segments of Cherokee history.

Staffing Needs

- **Volunteers** The exhibit allows opportunities for students or members of the community to participate. Certified volunteers can act as docents and guides for the exhibit. They can also participate at events held by the institution.
- **Staff** The exhibit requires at least one staff member to be present in order to answer questions, as well as security reasons. The position can also be filled through volunteers.

Digital Outreach

The exhibit's digital outreach plan includes a social media campaign and a website. These digital tools will help the site and exhibit engage with a broader audience outside of the locality. They also help the site keep in touch with patrons and let them know the upcoming events and important dates. Social media also allows for other avenues to disseminate information that cannot be included in the exhibit. It also lets the institution connect with a younger audience that relies more and more on digital technologies and social media in their everyday lives.

Social Media

Social media is one of the best avenues to reach broader audiences, like young adults. The exhibit can be presented on social media sites like Facebook, YouTube,

Twitter, and Instagram. The goal of a social media campaign is to promote the exhibit as well as engage wider audiences.

Short bite-sized videos can show off new upcoming events or parts of the exhibit. They can be displayed on any of the social media platforms and allow viewers to comment and share. Staff or guest speakers can record a short video on important dates, like anniversaries of events or birthdays, and share information to the public.

Social media encourages interaction with the public. Visitors can take pictures of themselves and tag the museum and exhibit. Digital geotags connect visitors with the museum's location. The museum can interact with the visitors online by sharing their pictures on their social media platforms. These interactions help promote the exhibit and the museum.

Social Media Campaign

The institution can conduct a social media campaign in order to engage the audience. The campaign consists of a variety of posts including snippets of information, such as quick blurbs on a historical event, short biographies of important Cherokee, or a simple announcement of community events.

During Women's History Month in March, the institution can make posts about Cherokee women, such as Nancy Ward and the impact of Beloved Women in Cherokee society. Posts can give information about the social roles of Cherokee women. (See below for example Facebook post)

The site can also take advantage of Native American Heritage Month in November. Posts can be made about important Cherokee in the late eighteenth century, such as Attakullakulla, Occonostota, the Raven of Chota, Dragging Canoe, John Watts,

Little Turkey, and Hanging Maw. Also, to show the diversity of the Cherokee society at the time, the site could also make posts about some of the British and Americans that integrated into Cherokee society like the British agents, John Stuart and Alexander Cameron, or Nathaniel Gist, the American father of Sequoyah, the inventor of the written Cherokee language.

Website

Websites is still one of the main ways of having a digital presence. Websites contain all the necessary information a patron needs in one convenient location. The exhibit website can be its own entity, or like other museums, have it as a part of their own website. It acts as a supplement to the physical exhibit and has links to sources for those interested in learning more. A calendar of events shows any upcoming dates and relevant information. A tab with educational material can help teachers plan out field trips for their students. The website can feature links for patrons to make donations. It can also includes a page for visitor to leave comments and share their experiences.

YouTube Videos

YouTube can be a phenomenal tool to engage in a wide audience. Videos are streamed to millions all across the world. Although it is mainly a platform for entertainment, it can still be a means of providing a form of education to the digital visitor and blend entertainment with education. The success of historically-based YouTube channels, such as Townsends, shows that people find enjoyment in learning about history and culture through videos. YouTube is very user-friendly and gives content creators easy ways to upload videos, even from their phones.

The site can create videos on a variety of subjects in order to attract visitors to the channel, and ultimately the exhibit, as well as provide a way for people to learn more about Cherokee history and culture. Videos can vary on length of time. Shorter videos can be good to present information in a quick manner whereas in-depth discussions can be reserved for the longer videos. The videos can be shared on the social media platforms in order to engage as much people as possible.

Possible topics for videos include:

Cherokee food

Sharing recipes is a fun way for people to learn about Cherokee culture. The Townsends YouTube channel shows the success and interest in historical recipes and cooking. The videos can show how to make traditional Cherokee dishes as well as give a brief history behind the dish. Discussing historical Cherokee foods helps give viewers more insight as to how the Cherokee lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Historical Cherokee Attire

Videos can show what kinds of clothing the Cherokee wore in the eighteenth century. They can explain the purposes and give a history of the changes in Cherokee dress. Presenters can show both male and female attire and explain the differences. Videos can show the contrast between the dress of European colonists and the Cherokee, as well as cultural adaptations between the two, to give more perspective to the viewer. If possible, the videos can even show how to make some of the items.

History Talks

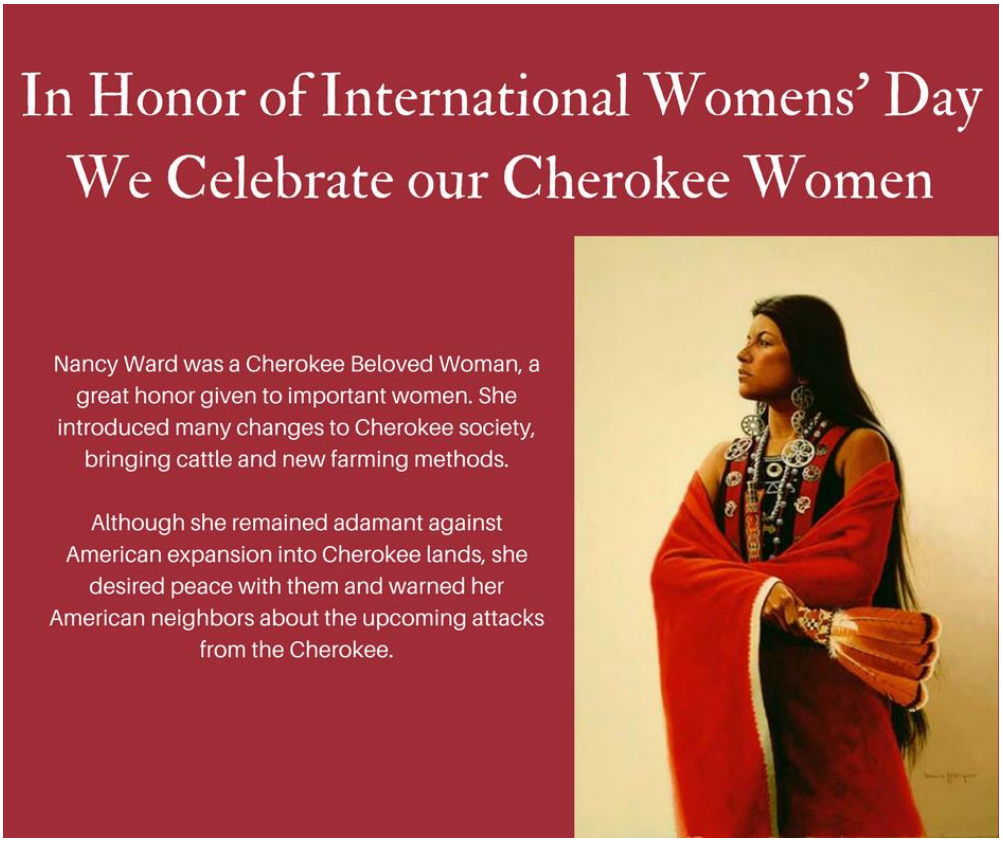
Videos can supplement the historical information within the exhibit by providing more information to satiate the curiosity of visitors or potential visitors. Shorter videos can discuss important highlights of Cherokee history or the exhibit, such as significant people, places, and dates. Longer videos provide more in-depth discussion with possible speakers, such as community leaders or academics.

Culture

Aside from food and dress, videos can also show other aspects of Cherokee culture. They can display traditional recreational activities, teach Cherokee words and phrases, show forms of music and dance, etc. The videos can discuss how some aspects of Cherokee culture would have changed in the last half of the eighteenth century, following the American Revolution and the Chickamauga Wars.

Examples

Example Facebook Post



Example Blog Post

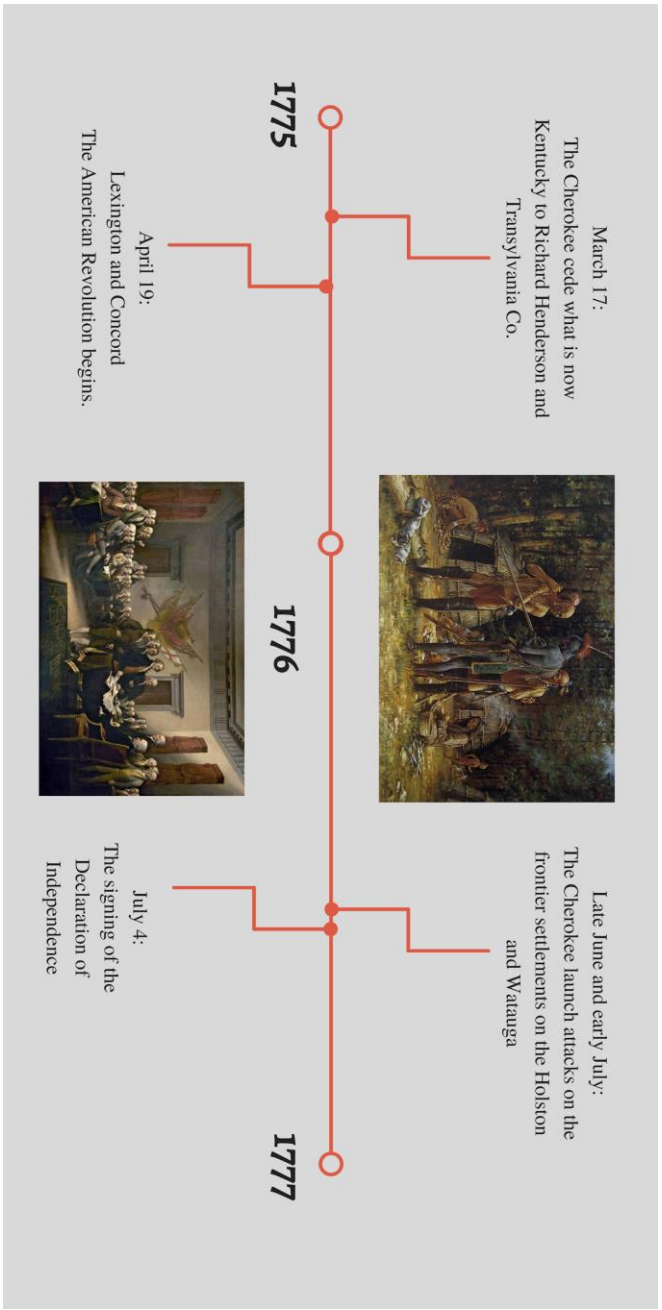
Cherokee Women

Women were an integral part of Cherokee society. They farmed and took care of the domestic duties. Important women, such as Nancy Ward, gained status as Beloved Women and had a voice in Cherokee politics. Women could voice their concerns in the Women's Council and allowed them to participate in international politics and diplomacy. Nancy Ward held important connections within Cherokee society, as she was related to some of the prominent Cherokee chiefs, such as Attakullakulla and Dragging

Canoe. They also conducted trade and diplomacy with Europeans and Americans, although the British often insisting on negotiating only with men.

The Cherokees' matrilineal culture gave women power over property, but also emphasized the importance of females and family. The Cherokee associated any child to be a part of the mother's clan, rather than the father, and children derived any status from the mother's family. European and American traders intermarried with Cherokee women in order to create familial ties with the Cherokee, as their children would gain the benefits from the mother's family.

Segment of Timeline

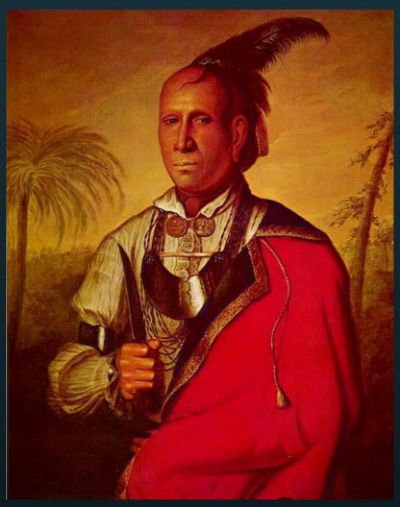


Example Panel

Acculturation

Contact with Europeans altered the Cherokee in various ways, including dress, tools, and food.

The Cherokee adapted European goods to their own daily lives. The Cherokee traded deerskins for goods like metal tools and European fabrics.



Note the portrait of Stalking Turkey by Francis Parsons. He wears a metal gorget and medals, wields a metal knife, and wears a linen shirt and red wool mantle.