Grasping the Gulf:
Conquest and Indigenous Power from Florida to Yucatán in the Age of Revolutions

by

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Abstract

During the age of revolutions, the United States and Mexico declared their independence and attempted to define and consolidate their borders in the context of the political, social, and economic worlds of their shared sea, the Gulf of Mexico. A space of interconnection and exchange since before the arrival of Europeans, the Gulf had, from the late sixteenth to mid eighteenth centuries, been claimed almost entirely by Spain. Between 1763 and 1861, it took on qualities common to places that historians term "borderlands." With multiple European empires and nation-states vying to control the Gulf, it became a space where power was contested and authority undefined. The island of Cuba remained a Spanish colony, British American adventurers and merchants continued to sail the Gulf waters, and indigenous peoples retained possession of many of the shores and rivers connecting this bustling region to interior zones.

Europeans' and Euro-Americans' contests over the Gulf involved not only the territory around it but also the lines of exchange that stretched across it and connected it to the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Officials sought, in hopes of controlling traffic into and out of the Gulf, to establish or maintain control over parts of Florida and Yucatán, the peninsulas that formed its entrance. The harsh environment of these peninsular territories made them more conducive to such illegal activities as smuggling and privateering than to imperial or national force. In the same way that "rogue colonialism" has been shown to have kept European empires alive in the Gulf during an earlier period, the United States and Mexico's efforts to establish control over Florida and Yucatán involved the private and illicit trade relationships that they

maintained with other Gulf societies. This was evident in the strategies that each country used in the Seminole Wars and Caste War.

The enduring power of "rogues" in the Gulf also offered political strategies to indigenous peoples. Great Britain gave up many of its official claims to mainland North America south of the St. Lawrence River during this period, but British American adventurers, merchants, and even colonial officials continued to exert military and commercial power in the Gulf. Through these rogue agents, the indigenous peoples of Florida ("dissident Creeks," who at different times included Lower Creeks, Mikasukis, Seminoles, and Red Sticks) and of Yucatán (Mayas, who had been partially incorporated into Spanish, and then Mexican society) found their own direct connections to Gulf trade partners. Abandoned by empires, they were befriended by rogues, who furnished ways for the adventurous among them to seek their own paths through the age of revolutions.

Introduction

In November 1865, two years into the French occupation of Mexico known as the Second Empire, a political official in Mérida named Pedro de Regil y Peón wrote a letter to Emperor Maximilian I bemoaning the devastation caused by the conflict known as the Caste War. This period of violence between residents of the departments of Yucatán and Campeche and groups of Maya revolutionaries living independently near Mexico's border with British Honduras was then in its eighteenth year. Regil informed his superior that access to dense forests surrounding the major sites of war encouraged soldiers to desert, creating a need for reinforcements that had left fields untended and people restless. Insisting that departmental conscription laws would be futile, he urged the emperor to send centralized troops. Perhaps unexpectedly, he justified this plea by comparing Yucatán's struggle to a series of Indian wars that had recently ended in a country seven hundred miles away. "That Yucatán alone hasn't been able, and still isn't able, to end this fight should not be surprising," he wrote, "if you remember the number of years and the millions [of dollars] that the United States of America, despite the immensity of its resources, spent in dominating the Indian tribes of Florida."[1]

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[1] "Que Yucatán por si solo no haya podido, ni pueda concluir la lucha, no debe estrañarse, si se recuerda el número de años y los millones que los E. Unidos de America, a pesar de la inmensidad de sus recursos, gastaron para dominar los tribus indias de la Florida, que sin la organización de las nuestras, eran mucho menos terribles." Pedro Regil y Peon to [Emperor Maximilian I?], November 10, 1865, Exp. 14, Caja 46, Sec. Segundo Imperio, Fondo Gobierno, Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City.

[2] "Lieutenant McDonald," *Daily Delta*, November 22, 1848.

[3] "Don Guillermo Palomino ha manifestado a esta Secretaria la necesidad que tiene de consultar publicaciones en que se trate científicamente el modo de hacer guerra a pueblos bárbaros que habiten paises boscosos y lugares de dificil acceso." Miguel Ruelas to Manuel María de

Regil was referring to the Seminole Wars, a series of early nineteenth-century conflicts in which state, national, and private U.S. militias had battled Lower Creeks, Red Sticks, Seminoles, and the Seminoles' African-descended allies in the territory then claimed as Spanish East Florida. With U.S. forces periodically occupying Spanish cities and forts, the United States had demanded Spanish East Florida, taking official possession of it as a territory in 1821. During the decades that followed, U.S. government officials, settlers, and soldiers had then sought to eliminate Florida's indigenous peoples and to enslave their black allies. Through death and coerced migration, most of these people, by then known collectively as "Seminoles," had been forced out of possession of Florida by the end of these wars in 1858.

Regil's letter comparing the Caste War to the Seminole Wars was not the only such mention. As early as 1848, the second year of the Caste War, the New Orleans *Daily Delta* had linked the Yucatecan conflict to the Indian wars in Florida, which at that point appeared to have ended. In an article praising the hundreds of men who were then departing the United States to fight as mercenary soldiers in Yucatán, the *Delta* editors had called the selection of a lieutenant named John McDonald "a judicious one." McDonald, they explained, had "learned his first lessons in Indian fighting among the everglades of Florida."[2] Three decades later, in 1879, the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations, Miguel Ruelas, would write to a Mexican diplomat in Washington, DC, with a request for information relevant to the war in Yucatán. Ruelas would request, in particular, a publication "dealing scientifically with how to wage war against barbarous peoples who inhabit forested countries and hard to access places." He would add that

[2] "Lieutenant McDonald," *Daily Delta*, November 22, 1848.

this resource should offer a detailed account of the United States' campaign against the Seminoles.[3]

Across three decades, U.S. and Mexican writers advanced the notion that U.S. violence against Seminoles in Florida bore lessons for Mexican attempts to defeat Maya revolutionaries in Yucatán. These writers likened these conflicts to one another in part out of a belief rooted in concepts of civilization and racial difference that Indian fighting in one location resembled wars against "barbarous peoples" elsewhere. Yet their comparisons also centered on other, more genuine similarities: the harsh environment of the seats of war in Florida and Yucatán, the high human and financial costs of these conflicts, and the extended periods through which Seminoles and Mayas withstood state and national military advances.

Like U.S. and Mexican campaigns against Comanches, Apaches, and Kiowas, which shaped the location and character of these countries' land border along the Río Grande, the Seminole Wars and the Caste War both formed crucial events in the long struggle to extend European imperial claims into the sovereign territory of indigenous peoples.[4] Florida and Yucatán together held a shared position in this struggle, one so commonplace in Euro-American thought that Regil, Ruelas, and the editors of the *Delta* seem to have taken it for granted. Jutting out from North America into the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, these peninsulas marked the outer boundaries of the Gulf of Mexico, an interconnected region that European empires had

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[3] "Don Guillermo Palomino ha manifestado a esta Secretaria la necesidad que tiene de consultar publicaciones en que se trate científicamente el modo de hacer guerra a pueblos bárbaros que habiten paises boscosos y lugares de dificil acceso." Miguel Ruelas to Manuel María de Zamacona, May 6, 1879, Exp. 243, Leg. 67, Archivo de la Embajada de Mexico en los Estados Unidos Americanos, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City.

[4] For analyses of Indian war along the United States and Mexico's land border, see Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

never fully possessed. Their similar environments and geographic locations in relation to the Gulf likened Florida and Yucatán to one another, drawing them into a deep history of exchange that had endured the rise and fall of empires.

For much of the imperial era, Spain had held international claims to the lands surrounding the Gulf of Mexico. At strategic posts near its entrances—along the straits between Florida, Yucatán, and the island of Cuba—imperial officials had controlled official access between this body of water and the Atlantic World. Yet this empire had never possessed the Gulf in its entirety. Privateers, smugglers, and independent Indians had controlled many of its shores and secondary ports. Between the Seven Years' War and the American Civil War, Atlantic independence movements brought an additional layer of contestation to the Gulf. No longer a Spanish sea, the Gulf came under the international title of multiple competing powers, none of which could establish complete authority over it. Long after the United States and Mexico had declared their independence, the island of Cuba remained a Spanish colony, British American adventurers and merchants continued to sail the Gulf waters, and indigenous peoples retained possession of many of the shores and rivers connecting this bustling water region to interior zones.

The endurance of Atlantic empires and independent Indians in the Gulf between 1763 and 1861 shaped U.S. and Mexican efforts to secure their independence and to define and consolidate their borders. Tying these young nation-states to one another and to Cuba, the Gulf also afforded the indigenous peoples of Florida and Yucatán—Lower Creeks, Seminoles, and Mayas—direct connections to their own trade partners. While private merchants and militias furthered the cause of U.S. and Mexican conquest in the Gulf, unofficial agents of empire provided indigenous peoples with the weapons and diplomatic resources to assert their own place

in this new world order. This shared history made Florida a likely comparison for nineteenth-century Yucatecans. It also offers historians a glimpse into patterns of conquest and indigenous power often overlooked in historiographies written from national or land-based perspectives.

The Seminole Wars and the Caste War

Major differences exist in Seminole and Maya histories, including differences in their deeper past, their experiences with European colonizers, and their places within the colonial structures of the nineteenth-century United States and Mexico. Such distinctions have led the historiography on the Seminole Wars and the Caste War to develop in different directions, preventing scholars from perceiving these conflicts as part of a shared story. Regil ended his own reference to the Seminole Wars by distinguishing Seminoles from Mayas, insisting that Florida Indians, "without the organization of our own, were much less terrible."[5] Despite the ethnocentric assumptions inherent in this observation, nineteenth-century Seminoles and Mayas did, in fact, vary greatly in terms of their social, cultural, political, and economic situations.

Seminoles represented what Spanish officials had once termed *indios bárbaros* or *indios no sometidos*—"wild" Indians who remained unconquered by agents of the Spanish Crown.[6] While, in fact, they were neither wild nor disorganized, their political and economic systems often diverged from European categories of civilization. Seminoles had themselves migrated into Florida in the late-eighteenth century after British-allied warriors from the Creek confederacy, to which they had belonged, had cleared the territory of Timucuas and Apalaches, and of Spanish

[5] Pedro Regil y Peon to [Emperor Maximilian I?], November 10, 1865, Exp. 14, Caja 46, Sec. Segundo Imperio, Fondo Gobierno, AGN.
[6] For a discussion of these terms, including an argument for translating various eighteenth-century Spanish terms—*bárbaros*, *salvajes*, *bravos*—as "savage," see David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 12-15.

missionaries and ranchers. Hundreds of years before Europeans' arrival, large, hierarchical chiefdoms had dominated the landscape of southeastern North America. "Shattered" by the warfare, diseases, and slave raids that had accompanied European colonialism, these peoples had coalesced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into confederations of diverse, autonomous villages, held together through practices of ritual and kinship. The Creeks bartered and intermarried with British traders. A small number of them had begun to raise cattle, to plant cotton, and even to hold African-descended people as slaves. Most Creeks, however, continued to focus their diplomacy at the village level, and continued to devote a large share of their economy to hunting, subsistence agriculture, and trade. Most importantly, the Creeks owed no tribute or labor to European colonizers. Instead, they signed treaties with Britain—and, in the late-eighteenth century, with Spain.[7]

Mayas, by contrast, fell under the classification of *indios sometidos, reducidos, tributados,* or *domésticos*: those who, having submitted to Spanish rule, had become internal to the Spanish Empire.[8] Spanish colonialism had taken a milder form in Yucatán than in such centers of power as Mexico City. The Mayas' numerical superiority to Spaniards and access to independent indigenous polities in the Guatamalan Petén gave them opportunities to evade colonialism, while Yucatán's lack of agricultural and mineral resources had stalled the development of haciendas and wage labor, which had intensified Spanish colonialism

[7] See, among others, Steven C. Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 2004), 13-26; Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Ethridge, ed., *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).
[8] Weber, *Bárbaros*, 12-15.

elsewhere.[9] Still, the men who led the Caste War movement—village leaders, sometimes aided by Hispanic generals—represented a population that had once been integrated into the Spanish Empire. Through the policy of *reducción*, which Spaniards had also used (with less success) among Timucuas and Apalaches in Florida, Mayas had been consolidated into villages with tribute obligations to Hispanic centers. Despite receiving Mexican citizenship upon the country's independence, they still bore responsibility for state and religious taxes that were specific to their status as *indígenas*.

While both Florida and Yucatán were peripheral to the Spanish Empire, in other words, colonizers in Yucatán had gained more ground. Amy Turner Bushnell describes Yucatán as an "internal periphery" and Florida as an "external periphery" during the colonial period. Relatively close to such cores as Veracruz and Havana, Yucatán manifested "a high level of central control, coupled with a high level of exploitation of natural resources and high demands on the subject population in the form of taxes and tributary labor." By contrast, Florida and other external peripheries remained "relatively distant and loosely connected to the cores that bear administrative responsibility for them—responsibility that is not sought and may well be divided among several cores." Agents of the Spanish Crown maintained fortified presidios in Florida at St. Augustine, St. Marks, and Pensacola at great expense in order to protect the empire's maritime interests along the Florida Straits. As late as the eighteenth century, however, much of Florida was not a Spanish possession at all but what Bushnell terms a "claim": the "vast

[9] Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 39-57.

cartographic expanse to which an early modern monarch held title under European international law."[10]

These differences in the status of the indigenous peoples of Florida and Yucatán within the Spanish empire mirrored differences in the colonial models that the United States and Mexico each inherited upon their independence. Historians have long observed that Spaniards in Mexico and their descendants sought to bring indigenous people into their empire through military conquest and mission work in order to extract their labor and tribute. By contrast, British and Anglo-American colonizers in North America tended to remain separate from indigenous peoples, forming diplomatic and trade alliances and warring for control over land. This distinction had blurred by the late-eighteenth century. With millions of *bárbaros* still controlling the majority of the territory claimed as Spanish America, Spanish administrators began taking cues from their British and French rivals. In places as distant as New Mexico and the Gran Chaco region of South America, Bourbon reformers experimented with treaties and commerce as a way to manage relations with independent Indians.[11] Still, the parallel emphases of Anglo-American historiography on treaty-based sovereignty and reservations and of Latin American historiography on indigenous peoples under Spanish rule has tended to reinforce the fault lines of U.S. and Mexican ethnohistories rather than to promote the exploration of their commonalities.[12]

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[10] Amy Turner Bushnell "Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries: The Field of Frontier Latin America" in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, edited by Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (Routledge: New York & London, 2002), 18-19; Bushnell, *Situado y Sabana: Spain's Support System for the Presidio and Mission Provinces of Florida* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 210-211.

[11] Weber, *Bárbaros*, 205-214.

[12] This divide has only been intensified by the recent emphasis on settler colonial theory in Native American and Indigenous Studies. While Latin American scholars have their own tradition of scholarship on settler versus non-settler communities, and while a recent handbook in settler colonial studies includes chapters on New Spain and postcolonial Latin America, scholars in this relatively new field tend to posit firm distinctions between colonies where settlers sought

Historiography on the Caste War and Seminole Wars has, likewise, taken disparate paths. In the mid-twentieth century, historians may have seen similarities in these conflicts, each of which, while no longer understood in the overtly racial terms that they had been in the nineteenth century, still appeared as products of an inevitable clash of European and indigenous cultures.[13] In later decades, historians of the Caste War divided loosely between those who, using the insights of peasant studies, painted the conflict as an agrarian revolt, and those who used anthropology to investigate the syncretic religious cult that developed to sustain the movement after the initial years of war.[14] One of these scholars has more recently termed the Caste War a

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to eliminate indigenous peoples and those in which colonial officials sought to extract their labor. Foundational worlds include Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999); Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini, *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016). For older conversations about settler societies in Latin America, see Franklin W. Knight, *The African Dimension in Latin American Societies* (New York: Macmillian, 1974).

[13] Compare, for example, John Mahon's claims that the Seminoles were "on the threshold of barbaric prosperity" and that the United States "could not coexist peaceably with Indians," to the following statement by Nelson Reed about agricultural change in Yucatán: "The Maya of Yucatán, finding resistance possible, took up arms in defense of his world." Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1967), 18-19; Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 56.

[14] The foundational work on the agricultural origins of the Caste War is Howard Francis Cline, "Regionalism and Society in Yucatan, 1825-1847: A Study of 'Progressivism' and the Origins of the Caste War" (PhD diss. Harvard, 1947). For a summary of the consensus around this interpretation that had developed by the 1980s, see Gilbert M. Joseph, "From Caste War to Class War: The Historiography of Modern Yucatán (c. 1750-1940)," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (February 1985): 111-134. Anthropological writing includes Paul Sullivan, *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (New York: Knopf, 1989); Victoria Bricker, *The Indian Christ, the Indian King: The Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Works by Terry Rugeley and Don Dumond brought these insights together in the 1990s, using both ethnohistorical and socioeconomic considerations to interrogate, respectively, the mindset of Caste War leaders and the internal politics of the rebellion. Despite their differences, Rugeley and Dumond demonstrate a shared search for a multifaceted account. Terry Rugeley, *Yucatan's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatan* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska

period of *violencia* similar to those in late-twentieth-century Colombia or Guatemala: long episodes of fragmented, sporadic assaults in places with weak state control, where combatants "disagree over what the state should be, who should govern, and how."[15] By contrast, scholars of the Seminole Wars have used the abundant military and government records of these more centralized conflicts to write military and political histories focusing on the personalities of major Anglo-American and Seminole actors and to tie these conflicts to such national policies as slavery extension and Indian Removal.[16] Scholars investigating Seminole society more broadly have analyzed the late genesis of this breakaway group, whose alliances with African Americans made them unique among southeastern peoples.[17]

Rather than comparing these wars, this project seeks to understand their place in the shared world in which they began, a world that provided the context for nineteenth-century comparisons. By crossing the borders (both intellectual and territorial) of present-day nations, we can see the Seminole Wars and Caste War how Regil and Ruelas saw them: as products of a time and place where power between nations, empires, and indigenous peoples operated in

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Press, 1997); Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever: Mayas, Hispanics, and Caste War Violence in Yucatán, 1800-1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 5, 358 n5.

[15] Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever*, 7.

[16] Classic works of this type include James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1993); J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulgee People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); and Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1991). A compact synthesis of these books appears in Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars: 1817-1858* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003).

[17] Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*; Brent Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee Indians* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1999); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010). Works on Black Seminoles include Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-seeking People* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1996); Betty Mae Tiger Jumper and Patsy West, *A Seminole Legend: The Life of Betty Mae Tiger Jumper* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 2001); Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

unexpected ways. These particularities made room for interpretations of Florida and Yucatán as similarly important to their respective nation-states, and as similarly vulnerable to Indian war.

Borderlands of the Gulf World

Florida and Yucatán both lay at the outer edge of the Gulf of Mexico, a bay that had hosted travel, migration, trade, and cultural exchange since before the arrival of Europeans. A "borderland" in terms of its longstanding networks of exchange, it also became, in the 1760s, a space in which the political contestation and lack of clear authority common to many borderlands were especially apparent. By connecting the riches of North America to Atlantic networks, the straits between Florida and Yucatán and the island of Cuba promised power to any state or empire that could bring them under its control. European empires and North American states vied to control these peninsulas in order to possess the Gulf as a whole.

Located between the Mississippi River, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico has, since before the arrival of Europeans, witnessed the passage of goods and ideas from the Great Lakes all the way to the Caribbean coast of South America. Scholars have described the Gulf in various ways—part, for example, of the Greater Caribbean, of the Gulf-Caribbean Complex (*complejo Golfo-Caribe*), and of the Mississippi-Caribbean World—in order to highlight its interaction with larger systems.[18] The people of the Gulf, however, have maintained the most frequent and sustained interactions with one another. Dalia Antonia Muller terms this region the "Gulf World," a "space unto itself that sustains intimate connections with the Caribbean." From the journeys of Mayas, Arawaks, Caribs, and indigenous Floridians before

[18] Laura Muñoz Mata, "El Caribe, La diplomacia y la política Mexicana" in Muñoz Mata, *México y el Caribe vínculos, intereses, region* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2002); Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 102.

the time of European contact to the diasporas and transnational diplomatic visions of late nineteenth-century Cuban revolutionaries, the Gulf has remained a "uniquely connected region sutured together by centuries of circulation."[19]

Like Europeans, indigenous peoples traveled the Gulf even after Europeans' arrival. In the recently published monograph *Indigenous Passages to Cuba*, Jason Yaremko examines case studies of the journeys of indigenous people to Cuba from other parts of the Gulf from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries—journeys, in particular, across what he terms the "Florida-Cuba-Mexico Nexus." These cases included indigenous delegations from Florida in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries and the forced and voluntary migration of Yucatec Mayas, along with other indigenous Mexicans, to labor in Cuba during the same period. Yaremko describes these movements as an "Amerindian diaspora from the North American continent to the Caribbean region."[20] The Lower Creek delegations that traveled to Cuba between 1760 and 1780, according to James L. Hill, initiated longstanding social and cultural connections between these Creeks and Cuban fishermen. A "maritime borderland," Florida's Gulf coast represented "a location in which two networks connected with one another, one Atlantic, even global, in scope, and the other centered on Creek country."[21]

Yaremko and Hill each root their studies of indigenous mobility across the Gulf in borderlands historiography. To Yaremko, indigenous diasporas to Cuba highlight "indigenous peoples' great propensity for struggle and adaptation based on both their own ancient traditions

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[19] Dalia Antonia Muller, *Cuban Emigrés and Independence in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 8, 16-17

[20] Yaremko does not explicitly define this nexus, but it figures prominently in his book. He also writes of a "Florida-Cuba nexus" and a "Creek-Havana nexus." Jason M. Yaremko, *Indigenous Passages to Cuba, 1515-1900* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 2, 10, 14, 48.

[21] James L. Hill, "'Bring them what they lack': Spanish-Creek Exchange and Alliance Making in a Maritime Borderland, 1763-1783, *Early American Studies* (Winter 2014): 43.

and those of the foreign colonizers," an insight that he describes as commonplace in borderlands historiography but lacking in some Caribbean scholarship.[22] While Yaremko represents borderlands as existing somewhere in this nexus of diaspora, Hill locates the borderland in fishing villages on Florida's coast.[23] Drawing on global comparisons, he defines this space as "a site of prolonged interaction at the periphery of two societies," a typical borderland that just so happens "to be located in large bodies of water and along their coastal areas."[24]

Both of these works suggest how attention to the Gulf of Mexico can help to bridge the divide between scholarship on Early American borderlands, which tends to focus on negotiations between empires and Indians, and that on modern subjects, which tends to deal with transnational networks and migration. They also respond to calls to move borderland scholarship beyond "spatially adjacent, land-based relations."[25] Meanwhile, these studies explore the still nebulous connections that historians have begun to uncover between indigenous America and the Atlantic and Caribbean worlds.[26]

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[22] Yaremko, *Indigenous Passages to Cuba*, 7.

[23] He borrows this term from Southeast Asian studies and from Aims McGuinness's book on Panama and the California Gold Rush. See, for example, Noboru Ishikawa, *Between Frontiers: Nation and Identity in a Southeast Asian Borderland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 15-16; David Rosenberg, "The Maritime Borderlands: Terrorism, Piracy, Pollution, and Poaching in the South China Sea," in James Clad, Sean M. McDonald, and Bruce Vaughn, eds., *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia: Geopolitics, Terrorism, and Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2011): 107-26; Aims McGuinness, *Path of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 5. Hill also notes that the following Native American history textbook uses "maritime borderlands" in the title for a chapter on sixteenth-century Florida: Kenneth W. Townsend and Mark Nicholas, eds., *First Americans: A History of Native Peoples*, combined vol. (New York: Pearson, 2013).

[24] Hill, "Bring them what they lack," 38.

[25] These calls for future scholarship appear in Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011), 351-353.

[26] Other examples include Jace Weaver, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native*

For empires, nation-states, and indigenous peoples, the Gulf was not only a region of circulation and migration, but also of political contestation. This "forgotten sea," writes the U.S. historian Jack E. Davis, represented "not only a panorama of flourishing aboriginal cultures" but also "a dynamic enabler in European imperial wealth, and a critical component in the geographic expansion and economic rise of the United States."[27] Muller agrees, writing, "A body of water bordered by the United States, Mexico, and the Spanish colony of Cuba, the Gulf of Mexico became a theater for competition between states and peoples who saw the space as both vulnerable borderlands and a profitable frontier zone."[28] As on many borderlands, the possibility that diverse groups of people might partner and communicate in new ways was often underpinned by fraught diplomatic relationships in which authority was contested by multiple powers. As Richard White recently noted in his reflections on his book *The Middle Ground*, a foundational text in borderlands history, the opportunities for negotiation between Europeans and indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes grew from a context of "confrontation between imperial

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New World Shaped Early North America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1-21, 215-222; Witgen, "Rethinking Colonial History as Continental History," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 2012): 527-530.

[27] Jack E. Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 6-7. A large and growing body of work analyzes the United States' expansion into the Gulf, including their struggle for the Spanish- and French-claimed territories of East and West Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, and southern slaveholders' dreams of building outward from the Gulf to form a Caribbean empire. Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016); David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Richard F. Brown, ed., *Coastal Encounters: The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981)*;* Matthew Karp, *The Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); Matthew J. Clavin, *Aiming for Pensacola: Fugitive Slaves on the Atlantic and Southern Frontiers Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[28] Muller, *Cuban Emigrés*, 4.

or state regimes and non-state forms of social organization, a rough balance of power, a mutual need or a desire for what the other possesses, and an inability of one side to commandeer enough force to compel the other to do what it desired."[29]

In the case of the Gulf World, imperial and state rivalries centered on the aspiration to make the Gulf of Mexico a closed sea. This possibility caused European empires and Euro-American nation-states to envision the Gulf as the potential "wide frontier of a country," whose waters they might possess in practice if not in law.[30] While eighteenth-century Europeans often operated on the assumption that oceans were accessible to all people, they also acknowledged that sovereigns might control certain corridors of movement because privateers and their prey carried the laws of their empires on their ships. Likewise, through prize courts, sovereigns might assert jurisdiction over maritime encounters in certain regions. Not simply a "conduit for exchange" or a "backdrop for movement," oceans acted in practice as "variegated spaces

[29] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xii-xiii. Imperial rivalries were also important to Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron's "From Borderlands to Borders." Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 814-841; Hämäläinen and Truett, "On Borderlands."

[30] "Ello representa una frontera muy amplia de un país, que difícilmente puede ser negada, pues en la práctica se ejercen derechos y acciones que la ratifican y que también se expresan en nuevas formas de relación-interdependencia." Alfredo César Dachary and Stella Maris Arnaiz Burne, *El Caribe mexicano: una frontera olvidada* (Chetumal, Quintana Roo: Universidad de Quintana Roo, 1998), 18-21. The term "frontier" has lost popularity among scholars of the United States because of its associations with Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, which defined the frontier as a line between civilization and savagery. The word has a different significance in Latin American history, where it, like borderlands history, tends to be grounded in work by Herbert Eugene Bolton. As Amy Turner Bushnell explains, the "frontier" constitutes "a geographic area contested by two or more nations, each of which is engaged in a process of polity formation in which control is tenuous and continuously negotiated, and each of which tries to extend its negotiating mechanism to include the others." Bushnell, "Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries," 18.

transected by law," part of what Lauren Benton calls "lumpy sovereignty."[31] Possessing Florida, Cuba, and Yucatán, resembled, from a naval perspective, creating checkpoints along a border. It promised to make this space internal to a single empire or nation-state, even if this polity did not control the land, people, or governments that lay past that line.

Closing the Gulf, of course, was never truly possible. Still, for much of its history after the early 1500s, a single power dominated its connections to the Atlantic world. From the sixteenth century until 1763, when the treaty ending the Seven Years' War ceded the Spanish Floridas to Great Britain, Spain claimed possession of the entire Gulf World, calling it the *Seno Mexicano*—the breast, or heart of their North American empire. After 1860, the independent United States would dominate the political and economic life of the Gulf, nearly fulfilling dreams of making this region an "American Mediterranean."[32] In the century between these moments, however, political claims to the Gulf were less certain, in part because of the overwhelming presence there of the British navy, in part because of contests among empires, nation-states, and indigenous peoples on the Gulf coast, and in part because Florida and Yucatán, which bordered the entrance to the Gulf, were only intermittently claimed by the same power. As contested borders framing a contested North American region, these peninsulas were strategically important. They were also especially difficult to control.

Weak Empires and Rogue States

European contests over American territory and their claims to have established colonial control over American people did not always reflect life on the ground. Beyond the core regions of imperial influence, indigenous peoples retained control of territory and remained autonomous

[31] Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 104-161, see 104.
[32] Muller, *Cuban Emigrés*, 18-20.

from colonial systems. In other places, new, seditious networks of European power emerged. These other sites of political power—the worlds created by indigenous peoples and the Atlantic underworld—together created a fraught and tenuous counterforce to imperial rivalries, which would endure into the national period. Understanding the Gulf of Mexico in the age of revolutions means understanding the convergence these two worlds beyond imperial control.

Europeans imagined that they had discovered North America, that they had conquered its vast territories, and that they could therefore transfer this territory among themselves, but these fantasies did not always materialize on the ground. While Spain had conquered central Mexico, scholars estimate that in the late-eighteenth century, roughly half of the territory claimed as Spanish America remained beyond European control.[33] Likewise, while Britain had displaced Indians along North America's eastern seaboard to establish their own settler colonies, most of the continent remained beyond their control. In the Upper Great Lakes, the Great Plains, and the Arkansas River Valley, indigenous peoples and indigenous systems of diplomacy dominated the eighteenth- and even early-nineteenth-century landscapes. Making their "illusions of empire" into realities of conquest often required greater effort than European and Euro-American narratives suggest. Many parts of interior of North America were not borderlands, in other words, but the "Native Ground" or the "Native New World": places that indigenous peoples, while trading with Atlantic colonists, created and ruled for themselves.[34]

In coastal landscapes, including the low, marshy shores of the Gulf of Mexico, imperial plans faltered in another way. At such portages as New Orleans, near the muddy delta of the

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[33] Weber, *Bárbaros*, 12.

[34] Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 1-21, 215-222. Witgen's study and other recent works that he cites build on Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, now a foundational work in comparative borderlands history. See, among others, Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Mississippi River, the local environment posed complications for imperial designs, offering neither the deep waters for ocean-going ships nor the dry land for a European-style city.[35] Mosquitos exacerbated these problems in most parts of the Gulf, carrying yellow fever and malaria, which could devastate a population that had not developed resistance to these diseases.[36] New Orleans survived its early years as a French colony not through imperial designs but through what Shannon Dawdy calls "rogue colonialism": the elements of colonialism managed by local military and political administrators, freebooters, privateers, smugglers, and the diverse members of the city's underclass, who together created a colony that that eighteenth-century Europeans often described as disorderly or "devilish."

Dawdy uses the word "rogue" not in a romantic or derogatory sense but in order to highlight the flexibility of the line "between banditry and statehood" in colonial projects.[37] The "rogues" of New Orleans included a diverse range of actors, from elite creoles, who supported the city's smuggling economy in order to gain political power, to the sailors, smugglers, and slaves of the city's underclass, whose participation in "circuits of seditious power and contraband flow" radiating out of New Orleans often constituted an "ideological resistance to the imperial impositions of mercantilism and chattel slavery."[38] These rogues often acted out of self-interest, but they played an essential role in maintaining this French colony.

While rogues found a home in New Orleans, they also traveled the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, holding the Gulf World together in ways that defied imperial plans. Their

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[35] Christopher Morris, *The Big Muddy: An Environmental History of the Mississippi and Its Peoples from Hernando de Soto to Hurricane Katrina* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 12.
[36] J.R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2-5, see 2.
[37] Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 5.
[38] Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 4, 137.

destinations included other secondary ports (for example, Yucatán's port of Campeche) but they also included rivers and shores under the control of indigenous peoples or of pirates, privateers, or maroons. Rogues also traveled from New Orleans up the Mississippi River toward the Great Lakes, where indigenous peoples—aided, as in the Gulf, by marshy waterways and mosquitos—still controlled diplomacy. About seven percent of recorded intercoastal ships passing through New Orleans or its nearby transfer point, La Balize, during the second third of the eighteenth century traveled between that city and Florida or Yucatán.[39] These peninsulas, with their extensive coastlines, challenging environments, and small European populations were connected more closely to the Gulf underworld than to the world of Atlantic empires.

The rogue networks that crossed the Gulf and that, along rivers, extended into the continent's interior also confirmed Europeans' longstanding belief that such waterways were places that tested the limits of imperial power. Stretching inland toward the riches that might lie at the heart of a continent, rivers had long taken European explorers to places where they were dependent on indigenous guides and beyond the reach of imperial officials. Even when officials had commissioned these expeditions, they had feared that the expedition leaders would strike out on their own to establish "rogue polities" that would allow them keep the continents' riches for themselves.[40] Such intrigues took place on rivers flowing into the Gulf in the late-eighteenth century, when adventurers, indigenous leaders, and U.S. settlers all competed to control the rivers connecting interior zones to the coast.[41] Later nation-states would inherit these challenges of empire. Even after the United States and Mexico had declared their independence, Mexican

[39] See Table 1 in Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 120.
[40] Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*, 40-86, see 40. For indigenous markers of territorial sovereignty, see Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 2011): 5-46.
[41] Narret, *Adventurism and Empire*, 3.

officials would attempt to reinforce their "extensive, low, sandy, and unpopulated" Gulf border simply by monitoring ports and other major points of connection. The rest of the coastline would remain beyond their control.[42]

When the United States came into conflict with Seminoles and Lower Creeks, and when Mexico entered war with rebel Mayas, these nation-states and indigenous peoples would all draw on the Gulf World as part of their strategy. Just as French colonial New Orleans had survived and prospered on account of rogue agents, U.S. and Mexican efforts to possess Florida and Yucatán often involved private and illicit networks of exchange that stretched across the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time, Indian war and rogue agents also affected these countries' relationship with one another, serving as justification for the United States' insistent interventions into Mexican affairs.

Rogue networks also gave power to Seminoles, Lower Creeks, and Mayas, offering them independent access to trade and military aid. In an official sense, the nineteenth century saw the departure of European empires, which weakened the political power of many independent indigenous groups, who had previously used imperial rivalries to their advanced.[43] In both Florida and Yucatán, however, British American adventurers, merchants, and even rogue colonial officials replaced official imperial agents, continuing to exert military and commercial power in the Gulf. Abandoned by empires, the indigenous peoples of the Gulf peninsulas were

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[42] Muñoz, "El Golfo-Caribe, de límite a frontera de México," *Historia Mexicana* 57, no. 2 (October 2007), 536-538, 543-544. Anglo-Americans would have similar trouble colonizing the "liquid landscapes" of Florida, where the small farming that marked the American ideal could rarely succeed. Michele Currie Navakas, "Liquid Landscape: Possession and Floridian Geography," *Early American Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2012): 89-114, Project Muse. Appearing in some depictions as a system of islands, Florida also provided an early reinforcement of U.S. dreams of overseas empire. Navakas, "Island Nation: Mapping Florida, Revising America," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 2013), 246.

[43] This argument appears most clearly in Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders."

befriended by a new era of rogues, who furnished ways for the adventurous among them to seek their own paths through the age of revolutions.

A Sprawling Archive

Research for this thesis has required travel across and beyond the Gulf of Mexico. Sources have emerged in archives in the Gulf peninsulas (Gainesville, Tallahassee, and Mérida), in national capitals (Washington, DC and Mexico City), in imperial centers (Madrid and Seville) and in places connected to the Gulf peninsulas by trade (New Orleans and Belize). In these locations, I have consulted government and military correspondence, consular records, maps, published memoirs, and newspapers in both English and Spanish. I have also recruited colleagues to obtain photographs of sources from London, a center of empire whose "rogue" place in this story emerged late in my research. A sprawling archive, these sources have proven as diverse and interconnected as the Gulf itself. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

Chapter Summaries

The chapters, while thematic, move roughly in chronological order. The thesis begins with an exploration of the Gulf of Mexico in the decade preceding the American Revolution, focusing on how Spanish and British imperial agents imagined Florida and Yucatán as the potential borders of a closed sea. After the cession of Florida from Spain to Britain in the Treaty of Paris of 1763, writers from both empires suggested that Spain risked losing the *Seno Mexicano* to Great Britain. Yet the claims about imperial possession made by the Spanish deputies Juan Antonio Valera and Francisco Javier de Corres and by the London publisher Malachy Postlethwayt contradict other parts of their description of Gulf. A sea that they knew to

be dominated by privateers and smugglers, it connected diverse parts of a continent that was largely controlled by indigenous peoples.

Chapters Two and Three demonstrate how the dynamics of the Gulf borderlands fostered a particular type of indigenous power in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Florida and 1840s Yucatán. From 1788 to 1821 (before, during, and immediately after the conflict recognized as the First Seminole War), groups to whom I refer broadly as "dissident Creeks" held control over Spanish East Florida's Gulf coast between the Apalachicola River and Tampa Bay, a location that allowed them to remain independent from both the expanding United States and the newly-formed Creek Nation. This control continued, though muted, even after the Spanish cession of East Florida to the United States, only disintegrating in the 1840s after the Second Seminole War. In this decade, across the Gulf, Maya leaders in Yucatán occupied the southeastern presidio of Bacalar, later establishing the village of Chan Santa Cruz just inland from Ascension Bay near the Straits of Yucatán. Unlike the case of Florida, this de facto state endured into the twentieth century, long after this particular era in the Gulf had otherwise come to its close.

These episodes were possible because of these peoples' partnerships with rogue British agents who wished to establish footholds in this part of the Gulf. This shared dynamic can help conceptualize indigenous power in this part of North America. The relationships that these Creeks and Mayas formed with unofficial British agents extended beyond mere trade partnerships, including initiating indigenous delegations to England, acquiescing to plans for British settlement, and suggesting that these states might, upon receiving British recognition, be somehow incorporated into the British Empire. The retrospective knowledge that such incorporation, if successful, would likely have worked to Creeks' and Mayas' detriment need not

imply that these leaders were duplicitous or naive. Rather, the tense partnerships that they formed with these rogue agents offer a previously unexplored version of what Scott Lyons calls an x-mark: "a contaminated and coerced sign of consent made under conditions that are not of one's making."[44] Like Native American leaders who chose to accommodate the United States government in the hope (though not the certainty) that such an x-mark might result in something good, the Seminoles, Lower Creeks, and Mayas who partnered with these self-interested Britons may have seen these concessions as their best option given the constraints of their time.[45]

The final two chapters of the dissertation depart from indigenous politics to consider the Gulf's transnational connections' consequences for how the United States and Mexico defined their nineteenth-century borders—and in the case of the United States, how they extended them into foreign territories. Chapter Four takes up two infamous episodes from the Second Seminole War and Caste War: the United States Army commanders' decision in 1840 to support the purchase of thirty-three bloodhounds trained to hunt people fleeing slavery on Cuban sugar plantations in order to use them against Seminoles, and the government-sponsored trafficking of hundreds of Maya prisoners of war to work as coerced laborers in Cuban sugar provinces between 1848 and the 1870s. The scales of these two war tactics varied considerably, but both demonstrate how attempts to subjugate and eliminate the indigenous peoples of Florida and Yucatán drew strength from the ideological and material resources of Cuban slavery.

Cuba added complications. Its markets were alluring. Its slaveholding repelled anti-slavery Mexico yet attracted pro-slavery advocates in the United States. All this gave merchants

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[44] Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 2.
[45] Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); DuVal, *Independence Lost;* Lyons, *X-Marks*, 3.

and smugglers an important role in these Indian wars. Traveling across the Gulf, these private individuals appropriated tools developed for managing slave revolts, converting them into strategies for fighting Indian wars. They likewise made people who in one location were treated as Indian servants appear elsewhere as free white laborers. These translations call attention to how flexible borderland identities, often seen as the basis of cross-cultural negotiation and understanding, also furthered the violent maintenance of social hierarchies. Private economic actors participated in conquering peoples who were deemed internal to these new nation-states.

Chapter Five looks at conquest and the Gulf underworld from another angle, demonstrating how non-regular soldiers—volunteers, mercenaries, and adventurers—furthered the United States' imperial expansion into the territories of indigenous peoples, the Spanish Empire, and the independent nations of Latin America. Taking as its starting point the night attack of December 23, 1814, when planters on the banks of the Mississippi River south of New Orleans had rallied to defend their property from invading British, black, and Indian forces, this chapter follows white New Orleans residents' celebration of this event in later military expeditions out of this city. New Orleans grew in the nineteenth century from an isolated outpost into the primary point of access to the United States' Cotton Kingdom. Between 1836 and 1849, volunteers from this port proudly sailed to fight Seminoles in Florida, Mexican troops in Texas and Veracruz, and revolutionary Mayas in Yucatán. They framed their participation in all of these conflicts as continuing the defense of independence and the civilization for which their city was known.

In Yucatán, the mercenary service of soldiers out of New Orleans turned into a failed filibustering expedition, a precursor to better-documented pro-slavery designs on and expeditions to Cuba and Nicaragua of the 1850s. In highlighting the connections between the Second

Seminole War, the Texas Revolution, the U.S.-Mexican War, and the filibustering expeditions of the 1850s, this chapter shows how the "rogue" forms of power that had long shaped life in New Orleans supported the various ways that the United States exerted imperial power in the nineteenth century.

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Regil and Ruelas did not, in their letters, draw attention to the Gulf of Mexico itself. It served, nonetheless, as their implied point of reference. Regil, who had once acted as British consul to Mérida and its port of Sisal, knew the Gulf world well. Ruelas, as Secretary of Foreign Relations, would have found it equally familiar. Even though the time when these peninsulas had enclosed a sea under the jurisdiction of the Spanish empire had long passed, the intimate connections that bound Yucatán to other Gulf ports made Florida a natural choice for comparison. They did not mention Yucatán's peninsular location or its corresponding access to the Gulf underworld, but they did mention qualities associated with it: the power displayed by its indigenous people, its forested landscape, and the great cost and manpower it would take to end the Caste War. To hope that the United States' conquest of its own Gulf peninsula had yielded some lesson about Indian war that it might impart to Mexico was, of course, to ignore the other layer of power at work in this region. Subjecting Indians to national rule also required controlling Gulf networks, which were increasingly falling under the power of the United States.

Taking account of how the Gulf World shaped both conquest and indigenous power in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century North America offers a lens into disputes over claims and possession that remained unsettled when the continent's new nation-states declared their independence from Europe. For both states and empires, claiming the land surrounding the Gulf did not necessarily mean possessing these territories or the waters between them. Nor did

the formal departure of empires place the nail in the coffin of indigenous autonomy. Quite the contrary: the enduring presence of rogues with loose ties to empires allowed indigenous peoples to assert their own claims to government and jurisdiction. Warfare against Indians, against empires, and against one another punctuated the United States and Mexico's formative decades as they determined the political boundaries of the Gulf, their shared sea.

Figure 1: The Straits of Florida, 1760s-1840s

Figure 2: The Straits of Yucatán, 1760s-1840s

Prologue: The Strategic Gulf Peninsulas in the Late-Eighteenth Century

In a 1766 report to José de Gálvez, *visitador general* to New Spain, the sub-deputies Juan Antonio Valera and Francisco Javier de Corres claimed that during their journey to the provinces of the Yucatán peninsula, they had heard British subjects laughing about a troubling report apparently circulating in London. This rumor suggested that Britain had taken "Spanish North America by its two horns: as master of Florida and possessor of the Yucatán coast, it would be in a state to place between these peninsulas two squadrons, which, crossing the *Seno Mexicano*, would obstruct the flight of birds toward the interior of these domains."[46] Valera and Corres were referring to the Treaty of Paris of 1763, which, ending the Seven Years' War, had ceded Spanish Florida to Great Britain in exchange for the renewal of Spanish sovereignty over Havana, which British troops had occupied during the war. It had also granted official permission for British subjects to cut, load, and carry logwood from the Bay of Honduras, which stretched, by some estimation, to the northeastern tip of Yucatán.[47] By "Seno Mexicano," Valera and Corres meant

[46] "La soberbia de Londres nos dice en sus panegíricos que tiene cogida a la América Septentrional Española por sus dos cuernos: porque dueño el inglés de la península de la Florida y poseedor de la costa de Yucatán, estaría en estado de poner de una a otra península dos escuadras que cruzando el Seno Mexicano estorben el vuelo de los pájaros para los interiores de estos dominios." Enrique Florescano y Isabel Gil Sanchez, eds., *Descripciones económicas regionals de Nueva España. Provincias del Centro, Sureste y Sur, 1766-1827* (Mexico City: Instituo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1976), 216-217. The original manuscript report is housed at the Biblioteca Nacional in Mexico City. The editors of this collection have copied in full a transcription published by J.Ignacio Rubio Mañé, then the director of the Archivo General de la Nación, in 1938. Thanks to Mark Lentz for bringing this passage to my attention quoted in Sergio Quezada, "Del deficit a la insolvencia. Finanzas y real hacienda en Yucatán, 1760-1816," *Mexican Studies/ Estudios Mexicanos* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2005), 315 n.27.

[47] "Definitive Treaty between Great Britain and Spain (and France). Signed at Paris, the 10th of February, 1763" in Lewis Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions . . .*

the Gulf of Mexico, known to Spaniards as the *seno*—the breast, or heart—of their North American empire. Having claimed Florida and having establishing settlements in Yucatán, this rival empire now seemed poised to close off the straits between these peninsulas and the island of Cuba, preventing the "flight" from Havana and Veracruz of Spanish fleets carrying North American riches to the Atlantic World.

Indeed, over the next century, Spain would see its hold on its North American territories diminish, but so too would Great Britain. More significantly, the idea that imperial officials in London might possess the Gulf of Mexico demonstrated a misunderstanding of possession in the late-eighteenth-century Gulf World. While depicted on maps as part of European empires, this region included large stretches of territory that were contested or controlled by indigenous peoples. Even the ports of the Gulf depended on the activities of smugglers and other free agents, who crossed the Gulf World with little regard for imperial policies. Florida and Yucatán, the peninsulas that bordered the Gulf, drew attention as strategic sites of imperial power, but European empires only loosely controlled them. Their geographic location and environments offered better ground for rogue partnerships than for imperial control.

Dreams of Gulf Possession

If Britons in Yucatán were, indeed, laughing about taking Spanish North America by its horns, they were drawing on ideas that also influenced Malachy Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, published in London in its third edition the same year as Valera and Corres's report. Overall, the *Universal Dictionary* did not provide the same image as

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subsisting between Great Britain and foreign powers . . . (London: H. Butterworth, 1835) 2:233-244; Malachy Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce…: every thing essential that is contained in Savary's dictionary: also, all the material laws of trade and navigation*, 3d ed. London: Printed for H. Woodfall, etc., 1766) , 2 vols.

Valera and Corres did of the Gulf of Mexico as a unified region. The maps of North America that accompanied its volumes were divided into four plates, which severed the port of Veracruz, in Plate 3, from the rest of the Gulf shoreline, in Plate 4 [Figure 3].[48] This segmenting of North America allowed Britain's previous possessions to appear together in Plate 2, framed by the waterways for which it had now obtained access. As Postlethwayt explained in the dictionary, the Treaty of Paris had granted to Great Britain not only Florida, whose ports extended west to Mobile, but also freedom of navigation on the Mississippi and St. Lawrence rivers. "We may be said, at present," he wrote, "to enjoy a Maritime Barrier to all our ancient continental colonies on the North, East, West, and South . . .; Whereby we shall be able to protect them in their inland, as well as their extensive maritime ports, and cultivate an internal as well as maritime commerce with the whole within the British boundaries."[49]

In the entries "America" and "Mexico," however, Postlethwayt praised the wealth of Spanish America: its gold and silver, precious stones, and "vast number of other commodities," including sugar, cotton, and various kinds of logwood. He described Veracruz as "one of the most considerable places, perhaps, in the world" and "the natural center of the American treasure." He spent numerous paragraphs explaining the Spanish flota system, by which the Spanish made sure that "the lawful commerce between this part and Europe is in their hands." At the end of the Mexico entry, he added these remarks about Florida and the recent Treaty of Paris: "Must not every Englishman rejoice, that now he is intitled to a situation in the Bay of Mexico at all; a situation, though not at present in a very wealthy condition; yet from its proximity to millions of Mexican treasures, may prove lucky enough to become instrumental in some

[48] Solomon Bolton, *North America*. 1763, Map, 83 x 87 cm on 4 sheets. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Available at Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/75693503/

[49] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 1, s.v. "America."

measure, to put Britons one day in possession of those very treasures, which have excited Spain to treat this kingdom so ill for many years past."[50]

Figure 3: Solomon Bolton, "North America" (1763)

The acquisition of Florida had played, in Postlethwayt's mind, a double role in promoting British power in North America. While on one hand preventing Spanish incursions into British

[50] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 1, s.v. "America" and Vol. 2, "Mexico." Here and elsewhere, the variations in spelling are from the original.

territory by land, it would also succeed in "enabling us to annoy them upon occasion, by cruizing on their homeward-bound ships coming from the Gulph of Florida, and the Streights of the Bahama." In the case of another war, he added, British forces could retake control of Havana, which he described as the "key of the Spanish Indies," It was in this imagined scenario that Postlethwayt made the very claims that so troubled Valera and Corres. He compared Havana explicitly to Gibraltar, the island at the entrance to the Mediterranean, which Britain had taken from Spain in 1713. If Britain were to reoccupy Havana, he added, "we could then repossess ourselves of the bay of Campeachy," a stretch of coastline in northwestern Yucatán where British subjects had previously cut logwood. Having possessed this territory "on the one side of the gulph, as we are possessed of the Floridas on the other; . . . what hope could Spain have to dispossess us?"[51]

Postlethwayt seemed to know little about Florida apart from the area surrounding the Atlantic port of St. Augustine. His description of Florida's climate as "pure" and "temperate" and the misshapen form of its peninsula on the accompanying map suffice to show his lack of information on the territory. The entry on Florida in the *Universal Dictionary* meanders into other parts of North America: comments on the Iroqouis, on buffalo and wild cotton, and, at length, on the Mississippi River.[52] The entry affirms, however, that Britons, like Spaniards, saw Florida as a boon to their maritime power. Offering a line of defense for their existing colonies, it might also launch them toward Cuba and Yucatán, by which they might possess the wealth of North America.

Strategic Peripheries

[51] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 2, s.v. Mexico.
[52] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 1, s.v. Florida.

Postlethwayt wrote falsely when he claimed that apart from two Atlantic ports, Spaniards had never "made any settlement on this part of the continent."[53] In fact, a mission system and an accompanying ranching economy had been expanding across Florida until earlier that century, when attacks from the Gulf by French buccaneers and from the North by British-allied Creeks had send Spaniards and Indians fleeing to Cuba. Postlethwayt's statement held a grain of truth, however, insofar as it suggested the lack of control that any Europeans had gained in Florida. Held strategically for naval purposes, the territory otherwise presented more challenges than resources. As Amy Turner Bushnell has written about Florida's early centuries as a Spanish periphery: "Had Spain not been concerned about the return route of the silver galleons, Florida, with its semi-sedentary, demanding Indians, its poor soils and piney woods, and its modest maritime resources, would undoubtedly have been left to itself."[54]

As much as they rivaled among one another over possessing the Gulf of Mexico and North America, the agents of European empires knew that Indians controlled much of the continent. Postlethwayt minced no words about the centrality of Indian relations to Britain's security. The ports of the Gulf and the freedom of navigation on the Mississippi River, he wrote, "seem to promise a good security to all our southern colonies on the continent; provided we can also gain the uninterrupted friendship and alliance of the Indians neighboring thereupon; or if that cannot be effectually done, to keep them under due subjection to British power and dominion." Pushing Britain's border out into the Gulf, as the Treaty of Paris had done, placed it "in a situation to surround them," leading Postlethwayt to predict better Indian relations in the future.

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[53] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 1, s.v. Florida.
[54] Amy Turner Bushnell, "Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries: The Field of Frontier Latin America" in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, edited by Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (Routledge: New York & London, 2002), 18-22.

He hoped that the same might be true of the Mississippi River. In a best case scenario, Indians would "live in perfect friendship and harmony with us" on the eastern side of this river; if not, Britain would be forced to "drive them on the western side." And if France were to "stir up the Indians" in the west, Postlethwayt suggested that Britain also take possession of French-claimed territory so that they will "desist from influencing the savages to our constant detriment."[55] As he was writing the second volume of the dictionary, word arrived of the secret Treaty of Fountainebleau, in which France had ceded Louisiana to Spain. Postlethwayt received this news with excitement, "as the latter have no influence over the Indians, and are by no means that enterprising people which the French are."[56]

A different situation existed in Yucatán, where Valera and Corres found over 50,000 Indians paying tribute to the Crown.[57] Yet Yucatán had also remained peripheral to the Spanish Empire. While in other parts of Spanish America, systems of tribute had by the eighteenth century given way to coerced labor on haciendas, in Yucatán, a lack of mines, sugar, or other labor-intensive riches had left the original tribute system in place.[58] While Valera and Corres noted the ease with which Indians managed to evade paying tribute by hiding or relocating, they underscored that the entire peninsula was poor, with many Indians surviving only on corn, and with few trade resources other than cotton and wax.[59]

While the map that accompanied Postlethwayt's *Universal Dictionary* labeled much of Yucatán "Fine Plains," the environment was actually challenging for similar reasons to that of

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[55] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 1, s.v. America.
[56] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce*, s.v. Mexico (Old Mexico and New Spain).
[57] *Descripciones económicas*, 201.
[58] *Descripciones económicas*, 205; Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
[59] *Descripciones económicas*, 202-213.

Florida. Valera and Corres described the peninsula as "white, marble-like shelf, without rivers or springs for abundant farming."[60] Water ran, they observed, not in above-ground rivers but in a system of underground passageways, collecting in wells and *cenotes*, the word used in Yucatán for the sinkholes that are characteristic of this limestone terrain. A porous bedrock, limestone tends to create a "karst" topography: one in which water, instead of forming above-ground rivers, dissolves the bedrock to form underground rivers, caves, and, when caves collapse, sinkholes.[61] The northwestern plain of the peninsula, the most densely settled region before and after Spanish conquest, maintained relative aridity and a high position above sea level, bringing a degree of cool air to its inhabitants while making them dependent on *cenotes* and hummocks, small hills between which patches of fertile soil collect. The coasts, by contrast, and the low, humid, and rainy south, often suffered from an excess of moisture, which the limestone bedrock refused to absorb.

Born of the same geological formations, Florida also sat atop limestone karst. The peninsula hosted a surprising array of plants and animals (today over three thousand species of plants grow in Florida, which is also home to some four hundred species of birds) but this diversity owed more to its humid, tropical climate than to the quality of the soil.[62] Humans had long lived in clusters in Florida, as in Yucatán, near highland sinkholes and hummocks, a term

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[60] "… la naturaleza la hizo toda un peñasco de piedra blanca marmoleña, sin ríos ni manantiales para opulentas labranzas…" *Descripciones económicas*, 205. A Spanish language dictionary from 1792 defines "marmoleño" as "Lo que es de mármol, ó que tiene su semejanza y calidades" and "peñasco" as "Sitio elevado todo de piedra, sin mezcla de tierra." Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* (Madrid: Viuda de J. Ibarra, impresora de la Real academia, 1791), 553, 644.

[61] Randall B. Brown, Earl L. Stone, and Victor W. Carlisle, "Soils," in *Ecosystems of Florida*, edited by Ronald L. Myers and John J. Ewel (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1990), 37-39.

[62] John J. Ewel, "Introduction," *Ecosystems of Florida*, 4.

that in Florida bears the related name "hammock."[63] In the years that Valera and Corres traveled the Gulf, the most popular of these sites, the Alachua Savanna, was controlled by the Seminoles, who grazed cattle and horses upon this hammock while living on the breezy hillside to its west.[64] The greater amount of high ground in Yucatán was part of what had made it easier for Spaniards to conquer: it had been more attractive to them and had sustained large, settled indigenous communities.

In eastern and southern Yucatán, however, these high grounds gave way to lowlands and forests, more closely resembling those of the northern Gulf peninsula. These landscapes offered the destination for flight that Valera and Corres noted. While the similar geographic position of Florida and Yucatán made them desirable for empires seeking maritime power, their similar environments gave potential power to Indians.

The Underworld of the Gulf Peninsulas

In Yucatán, coastal lowlands had also become havens for British subjects, who as in other parts of the Greater Caribbean, organized the cutting of logwood there for Atlantic and intercolonial trade. As Postlethwayt explained, logwood referred to a particular type of tree that grew on the coasts of Central America and the West Indies, whose trunks Europeans used for dyes, and their leaves, for medicine. He also referred to this wood as "Campeachy-wood" and "Jamaica-wood," underscoring the extent to which Europeans associated this product with this part of the Greater Caribbean. The maps in the *Universal Dictionary* pinpoint the Belize River, in particular, as the place where English subjects had received explicit permission in the Treaty

[63] James A. Kushlan, "Freshwater Marshes," *Ecosystems of Florida*, 324-336; Henry Baker, "Spanish Ranching and the Alachua Sink Site: A Preliminary Report," *The Florida Anthropologist* 46, no. 2 (June 1993), 83-87.
[64] Bartram, *Travels and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1996), 167-171.

of Paris to engage in logging. At this river, Valera and Corres reported to have observed 31 frigates, 40 brigantines, 20 sloops, and 50 schooners in operation. These Spanish sub-deputies noted with concern that "industrious" British agents had made use of landscapes that Spanish colonizers had failed to develop.[65] Since the late seventeenth century, British subjects had made similar arguments, defending their right to these coasts by observing that Spaniards had not erected signs of ownership on them.[66]

Since this time, logwood cutting had remained a point of contention between Britain and Spain, less because of what it meant for land-based sovereignty and more because of what it meant for trade. Many logwood establishments had been founded by privateers. When British ships hauled away their logwood, they often remained close to the coast—according to Postlethwayt, because the trade winds required it. But Spanish authorities remained convinced that logwood operations also served as covers for smuggling. Conflicts over these operations had resulted in the War of Jenkin's Ear in the 1840s, and had not yet been resolved by the Seven Years' War. While Postlethwayt was pleased with the concessions of the Treaty of Paris in this regard, he seemed to doubt that it would bring peace. He justified his statements about taking Cuba from Spain by naming it a reimbursement for Britain's war debts. He likewise dismissed British misbehavior as a result of "the ineffectuality both of divine and human laws, that no trading nation can absolutely prevent the smuggling and contraband trade."[67]

In exchange for formal permission to haul logwood in the Bay of Honduras, the Treaty of Paris required British loggers to destroy all of their fortifications in Spanish territory and to give

[65] *Descripciones económicas*, 214.
[66] See the discussion of this history in Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 2, s.v. Logwood.
[67] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 2, s.v. Logwood and Mexico.

up their logging operations on the Laguna de Términos near Campeche. Britons interpreted the Bay of Honduras to extend up the Caribbean coast of Yucatán, but the commandant of the Spanish garrison of Bacalar on Yucatán's Río Hondo expressed surprise and concern in 1764 at seeing British loggers that far north.[68] British loggers—or at least British smugglers—also remained at the Laguna de Términos. When Valera and Corres arrived to the Gulf in the summer of 1765, their first mission was to investigate cases of English and French smuggling.[69] Shallow coasts and small Hispanic populations had made Campeche and other regions of the southern Gulf unpopular to the merchants of the Spanish *flotas*, leaving smugglers as the mostly likely source of European goods and the sole exporters of the logwood that they produced.[70]

Postlethwayt claimed incorrectly that a river flowing through the interior of the peninsula connected the Belize River to the Laguna de Términos. Traveling "through morass and impassible land," this imaginary river would not have provided a means of transportation between these sites. Rather, its presence would have offered another justification for Britons' right to cut logwood in both places. British settlers in the Bay of Honduras had formed an alliance with the Miskito people, who, according to Postlethwayt, were "the original natives of this place, and of the lands hereabouts, and [have] never been conquered by the Spaniards, nor submitted to their dominion."

Britain had no special tendency to recognize the sovereignty of Indians. In fact, during the Seven Years War, colonial officials had ultimately decided that the Indians in the territory west of Britain's North American colonies were neither sovereigns nor British subjects. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued by King George III, had declared that these people existed under

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[68] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 2, s.v. Logwood.
[69] Herbert Ingram Priestley, *José de Gálvez: Visitador-General of New Spain, 1765-1771* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1916), 135-138.
[70] Priestley, *José de Gálvez*, 159-161, 199, 201-205.

the British Crown's "protection" while still insisting on their separation from British colonists.[71] Now Postlethwayt suggested that British subjects' friendship with once sovereign Indians in the Bay of Honduras gave them certain rights to this Spanish-claimed territory. During the War of Jenkin's Ear, he explained, the Miskitos had submitted "to the sovereignty of the crown of England, and that crown's acceptance of such their submission, put themselves and all their lands and territories under the dominion of the British government."[72] His insistence on Miskitos' independence from Spain, in other words, served to justify their supposed submission to Britain.

As this British writer was using his empire's relationship with the Miskitos to argue for the legitimacy of other British subjects' rogue activities, Spaniards were likewise engaging in trade and diplomacy with Creeks in the territory now claimed as British East Florida. Hoping to regain this strategic part of their empire, Spanish officials welcomed Creek delegates traveling to Havana on the ships of Spanish fishermen.[73] While from the perspective of Spain, these journeys served imperial goals, they also gave Creeks power, allowing them to continue the "triple-nation diplomacy" that had underpinned their power for decades by crossing the maritime barrier that Postlethwayt believed Britain had erected in order to court Spanish friendship and gifts.[74]

Strategic points for entering and exiting the Gulf, the "horns" of Spanish North America were under the power of neither the Spanish nor the British Crown. Rather, these contested peninsulas were places where indigenous peoples and Gulf rogues held power—a power made even greater at points where these worlds connected. Indians and rogues would continue to find

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[71] Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2002), 177-178.
[72] Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce,* Vol. 2, s.v. Logwood.
[73] Hill, "'Bring them what they lack': Spanish-Creek Exchange and Alliance Making in a Maritime Borderland, 1763-1783," *Early American Studies* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 45-46.
[74] Steven C. Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 2004), 13-26; Hill, "Bring them what they lack," 45.

common ground into the revolutionary era. After thirteen of Britain's North American colonies won their independence, Spain would regain control of Florida. Having also regained Louisiana in 1768, it would become, along with the young United States, one of two powers retaining European-recognized claims south of the Great Lakes. Some Creeks would respond by bypassing both of these powers in order to retain their autonomy. Instead, they welcomed the friendship of British American loyalists, who for their own purposes supplied them with tools of revolution.

Chapter 1: Rogue Alliances on Creek Country's Gulf Coast

In September 1799, a team of U.S. and Spanish surveyors traveled from the Gulf of Mexico up the Apalachicola River to mark the stretch of international border that ran between the U.S. state of Georgia and Spanish East Florida. Searching for two days for the river's entrance—dropping anchor in the Gulf's still waters to haul the vessel along the marshy shoreline—the men then ascended by canoe, following the Apalachicola to the place where the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers merged to form it.[1] From here, they planned to travel eastward by land, tracing their two nations' border through the Okefonokee Swamp to the mouth of the St. Mary's River, along which they would paddle to the Atlantic Ocean. While the Native American people these surveyors met along the Apalachicola professed feelings of friendship, the party also suffered threats and raids to their camps. Warriors whom they later learned were from the Creek towns of Mikasuki and Tallassee stole their horses, cattle, and surveying equipment. The war parties even captured their schooner, which they found stripped bare, as further testified by a naked shipmaster and passengers. Defeated, the surveyors returned to the Gulf, sailing around the Florida peninsula in order to trace the boundary from its eastern edge. A journal published in 1803 by the head surveyor, Andrew Ellicott, could provide only an estimate of this untraveled

[1] Ellicott refers to this method as warping. An 1820 account of this method, also called kedging, appears in C. H. Ward-Jackson, "Captain Burton's Method of Propelling Ships of War in a Calm," *RSA Journal* 136, no. 5386 (September 1988): 740-741.

stretch of his country's border, depicting it as nothing more than a straight dotted line (Figure 4).[2]

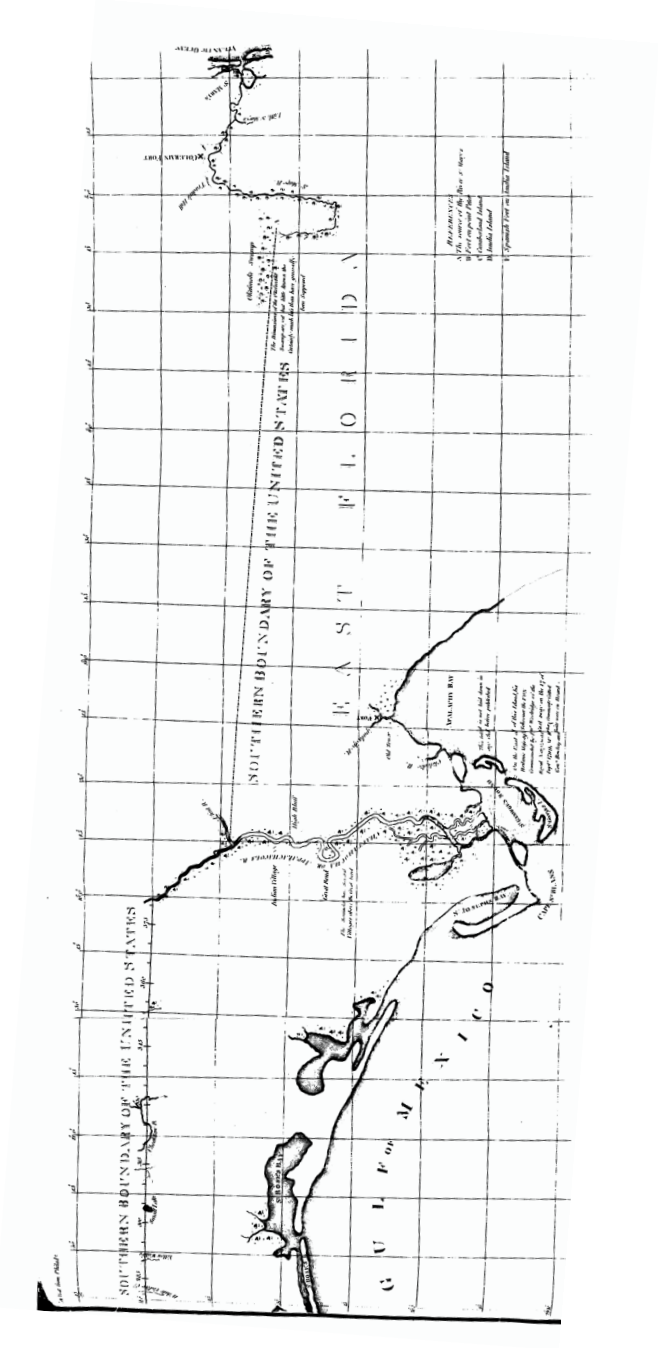

Figure 4: Map from Andrew Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (1804)

[2] Andrew Ellicott, *The journal of Andrew Ellicott: late commissioner on behalf of the United States* . . . (Philadelphia: Budd & Bartram, 1803), 213-223; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulgee People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 151.

That an attempt to survey this part of the East Florida-Georgia border had met Native resistance would have surprised neither government. In the months leading up to the expedition, Efau Hadjo, the speaker of the governing body known as the Creek National Council, had written to the Spanish governor of West Florida that he feared that "mischief" would befall the surveying party. He had likewise sent a letter to be read in villages across Creek country warning against such violence.[3] But the decentralized and ethnically diverse confederation of peoples that had become known during the preceding centuries as Creeks—in Spanish, *Criques* or *Talapuches*—were in the midst of their own political fractures, which left Efau Hadjo's words unheeded. From the Upper Creek towns of the Tallapoosa, Coosa, and upper Alabama rivers to Lower Creek settlements on the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers to Mikasukis and Seminoles in the northern highlands of the Florida peninsula, this sprawling social formation found itself divided by rifts as significant as those between Patriots and Tories. And, in fact, these rifts involved Patriots and Tories, although in indirect and unexpected ways.

The 1795 agreement that had given rise to this surveying expedition and had set the course of this line had sought to secure friendship between the United States and Spain by reducing Indians' ability to negotiate with multiple imperial powers simultaneously, a strategy which had strengthened Creek diplomacy in previous decades.[4] Officially named the Treaty of

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[3] Efau Hadjo to Vicente Folch, April 11, 1799, and Durouzeaux to Folch, April 8, 1799, Leg. 216B, Papeles de Cuba (PC), Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Seville. Little Prince of Broken Arrow appealed to the Seminoles to permit the running of the border as early as October 1798. Durouzeaux to Folch, Oct. 29, 1798, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

[4] Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 121-148; James L. Hill, "'Bring them what they lack,'" *Early American Studies* (Winter 2014), 45-46. For the general pattern of indigenous peoples playing empires off of one another, see Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders." Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999): 814-841

Friendship, Limits, and Navigation Between Spain and the United States, it was commonly called either the Treaty of San Lorenzo, for the place in Madrid where it was signed, or Pinckney's Treaty, for the US diplomat who signed it. The border that it set marked the division between the "reserved" Indian lands that each empire had been allocated at the end of the American Revolution. Running directly through the lower towns of Creek country, this line placed the Lower Creek villages along the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers within the boundaries of the United States, separating them from Seminole and Mikasuki settlements in East Florida, from Spanish officials, and from the Gulf of Mexico.[5] In the fifth article of the treaty, both powers promised "to restrain by force all hostilities on the part of the Indian Nations living within their boundaries," adding that "in future no treaty of alliance or other whatever (except treaties of Peace) shall be made by either Party with the Indians living within the boundary of the other."[6]

The remainder of the Treaty of San Lorenzo suggests what motivated this attempt to place Creek country more clearly within U.S. and Spanish borders and why such a goal could not be fully accomplished. The seventeen articles that follow those on borders and Indians deal with maritime interests. These promises include protecting and defending one another's vessels, prohibiting Spanish subjects and U.S. citizens from engaging in privateering expeditions against the other power, and allowing these subjects and citizens to trade freely at one another's ports with the exception of contraband. The treaty excludes from "contraband" cloth and other manufactured materials, precious metals, grains "and in general all provisions which serve for

[5] For example, it ran directly through the Lower Creek town of Chisquitaluja on the Chattahoochee River. Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1818* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 182.
[6] "Treaty of Friendship, Limits, and Navigation Between Spain and the United States" (1795), http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/sp1795.asp, accessed June 12, 2016.

the sustenance of life." Instead, it defines the term as

> arms, great guns, bombs, with the fuses, and other things belonging to them, cannon ball, gun powder, match, pikes, swords, lances, spears, halberds, mortars, petards, grenades, saltpeter, muskets, musket ball bucklers, helmets, breast plates, coats of mail, and the like kind of arms proper for arming soldiers, musket rests, belts, horses with their furniture and all other warlike instruments whatever.[7]

These governments were most concerned, in other words, with the importation of weapons and ammunition. Yet these items flowed into Creek country with or without the involvement of Spanish and U.S. officials.

In particular, the warriors of Mikasuki and Tallassee received arms from British loyalists, whose continued presence in East Florida—as banditti, adventurers, soldiers, and merchants—had, since the end of the American Revolution, enabled rogue alliances between Creek country and the British West Indies. These partnerships almost never received sanction by officials in London, but they sometimes bore the clandestine support of officials in the British West Indies. More often, they were carried out privately, by merchants and soldiers who arrived to the Gulf-bound waterways of Apalache Bay and the Florida peninsula carrying weapons and diplomatic aid. These men hoped through friendship with Indians to regain a foothold in North America for themselves and, sometimes, for the British Empire. They fought beside Creeks and insisted on Creek sovereignty, in part out of humanitarian impulses and in part to justify plans for formal trade and settlement.

Seeking these alliances, peoples from across Creek country congregated near the Gulf between 1788 and 1821, along the same lands and waterways that Ellicott's surveying party had traveled. These groups included, at different times, Upper and Lower Creeks, Seminoles (Creek peoples who had migrated into North Central Florida in the 1760s), Mikasukis (a village just

[7] "Treaty of Friendship, Limits, and Navigation Between Spain and the United States" (1795), http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/sp1795.asp, accessed June 12, 2016.

inland from the fortress of San Marcos de Apalache, formed by the 1790s), and Red Sticks (adherents of a nativist resistance movement among the Creeks in the 1810s). People of African descent also joined these partnerships, arriving to the villages of Lower Creeks, Mikasukis, and Seminoles from the Gulf of Mexico and from plantations in Georgia, East Florida, and Creek and Cherokee country.[8] The presence of all of these peoples in East Florida often caused U.S. and Spanish writers to describe them indiscriminately as Seminoles, whom they understood to claim this territory. While descendants of these groups would number among the "Seminoles" removed from Florida in the 1840s, many of them remained distinct from the Seminoles of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Partnering with rogue British agents and African Americans allowed these Creek peoples to launch opposition to the Creek National Council, a centralized governing body with close ties to the United States. The Council was originally established by Alexander McGillivray, a Creek leader born of a British father. It aimed—like the US Congress—to unify Creek peoples nationally by assuming some of the power that their leaders had previously held locally. By the time of Andrew Ellicott's surveying expedition, the Council had permitted the counsel of the U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins, whose "civilizing mission" included the creation of a force known as the "warriors of the nation," who had begun enforcing Creek unity through violence.[9] While the National Council departed from traditional forms of Creek leadership, and

[8] Florida had provided a formal sanctuary from slavery since 1693, when the Spanish Crown had issued a decree offering freedom to slaves who converted to Catholicism. After Spain revoked this policy in 1790 under pressure from the United States, these refugees began instead to seek shelter among Indians. Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 25, 79; Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 91-100.

[9] After the attacks on Ellicott's surveying expedition, this force attacked the homes, livestock, and persons who were believed to be responsible. Hawkins to Folch, Oct. 9, 1799, Exp. 216B, PC, AGI; Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 180-183.

while it ultimately failed to represent the interests of all Creeks, its initial formation by McGillivray has recently been interpreted as a sophisticated if contentious response to the pressures exerted on Creeks by the expanding United States.[10] In this way, it stands as one of many x-marks that indigenous peoples made in this tumultuous period. An "assent to the new," the decision to nationalize the Creek confederacy represents a chance taken on an unknown future in a hard situation.[11]

The dissident Creeks who opposed the Creek National Council demonstrated their own "assent to the new" by creating fraught and shifting alliances that swept them into the current of Atlantic revolutions. Operating on behalf of their village, and sometime professing to speak for all Creeks, they used the swamps and pine barren forests of Florida's Gulf coast to form sites of connection between Creek country and the Gulf underworld. They erected buildings, brought in weapons and soldiers, and waged warfare that allowed them to remain separate from Spain, from the United States, and from the Creek Nation. The concessions that these Creek leaders offered to their rogue British allies—occasionally in the form of sovereignty and land—would prove as contentious as the accommodations that the Creek National Council made to the U.S. government. Yet together with these Atlantic partners, dissident Creeks carried out independence movements of their own.

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[10] Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016), 246-255, 295-304, 331-343. An interpretation emphasizing the Creek Nation's departure from traditional forms of Creek authority appears in Saunt, *A New Order of Things*.

[11] Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 3.

Former Loyalists in the Creek-Georgia War:

In the years following the American Revolution, Creek country splintered along many lines as a generation of young leaders struggled to navigate the new political and economic orders taking hold in North America. Seeking to maintain their sovereignty and their control over their lands in the face of threats from US settlers and their government, Creek leaders created new methods of diplomacy fit for what was now, to a large extent, a "world without the British."[12] For some Creeks, the solution to these challenges came in the form of the Creek National Council, centered in Creek country's upper towns, which asserted itself as an Indian peer of the US Congress and a potential ally of the Spanish Crown. Another center of Creek power emerged near the Gulf coast, where British traders and soldiers maintained an active, if illicit, presence. By partnering with these rogue British agents through trade and diplomacy, other Creek opponents of the Creek National Council found ways to assert independence in the changing Atlantic world.

Already in the decades preceding the American Revolution, some Creek headmen had led their people southward toward the Gulf, establishing new centers of alliance, which, while still part of Creek country, increasingly acted apart from it. Those called Seminoles had established ranching and planting sites on the highlands near the Alachua Savannah and the Suwannee River in north-central Florida in the 1760s, trading with British subjects whose sugar, rice, and indigo plantations dotted East Florida's Atlantic seaboard. Other Creeks migrated toward the Tallahassee Hills above Apalache Bay and the bluffs of the Apalachicola River, hitching rides on

[12] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 246.

fishing vessels out of Cuba in order to maintain diplomatic and trade relations with Spain.[13] While these migrants preferred the high hammocks and hills, the lowlands of this coastal region provided sources of fishing and grazing, and havens for white, black, and Indian renegades.[14] While Seminoles and the Lower Creeks who had settled near Apalache Bay still attended councils with other Creeks, they increasingly came to be seen—and to see themselves—as distinct groups within the larger Creek network. These reorganizations would grow in later decades into major divisions, which would follow ethnic lines as well as conflicting stances on the adoption of chattel slavery.[15]

In the 1780s, however, Creek leaders clashed most severely over how best to position themselves in the world of independent nations and free trade that was unfolding across the Atlantic. After the United States achieved its independence from Britain in 1783, settlers from Georgia began squatting on Creek lands. Their newly-constituted state government joined with two Creek leaders to sign questionable treaties, which professed to cede large sections of Creek territory to Georgia.[16] The signers of these agreements included headmen who had previously been responsible for maintaining peace between the Creeks and the patriots of Georgia and the Carolinas. Hoboithle Miko (Tallassee King or Tame King) led the Upper Creek village of Great

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[13] For accounts of these journeys to Havana, see Hill, "'Bring them what they lack"; Jason M. Yaremko, *Indigenous Passages to Cuba, 1515-1900* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 40-66.

[14] Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 46.

[15] Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 79-82; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). For the seminal cultural interpretation of this schism, see Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*.

[16] The Articles of Confederation declared that the general government, not the states, held the power to negotiate treaties with Indian nations. This issue was contentious, however, leading states to claim the right to sign such treaties involving nations within their claimed boundaries in the United States' early years. Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815*, 2nd edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 172.

Tallassee, which would later become involved in the attacks on Andrew Ellicott's 1799 surveying expedition. Neha Miko (Fat King) led the Lower Creek town of Cusseta, another village that would later become affiliated with rogue British agents. Many other Creeks protested these cessions, denying the authority of Hoboithle Miko and Neha Miko to sign agreements with Georgia without the consent of other Creek leaders. By 1786, the Creeks were divided internally and were once again at war with Georgia.[17]

On one side of this divide was Alexander McGillivray, a young Creek planter from the Upper Creek village of Little Tallassee. Born of a French-Creek woman of the influential Wind clan and a Scottish loyalist merchant, he had worked as an apprentice at his father's trading house in Savannah in his youth and had attended school in Charleston.[18] Along with Efau Hadjo (Mad Dog), the Upper Creek leader who would later warn U.S. agents about the attacks on Andrew Ellicott's surveying party, McGillivray objected to Hoboithle Miko and Neha Miko's questionable treaties. McGillivray and Efau Hadjo had behind them the support of the National Council, a meeting of primarily Upper Creek leaders that had previously united Creeks during moments of crisis.[19] The pressures placed on Creek sovereignty during this period led McGillivray to attempt to transform this Council into a regular body that more closely resembled European nation—one in which a central government would represent Creek foreign relations. Persuading Spanish officials to supply the Creeks with weapons, McGillivray urged the U.S. Congress, then undergoing its own nationalizing struggles, to join him in opposing the treaties made by Georgia.[20]

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[17] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 247; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1992), 96-98.
[18] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 24-25.
[19] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 247-254; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 96-98.
[20] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 253-255, see 254.

McGillivray's overtures to the U.S. government may have also reflected his belief that Britain, with whom he had fought in the American Revolution, now retained little presence in Creek country.[21] While he was at work on his nationalizing project, however, a ship arrived from the Bahamas under the command of the British-descended loyalist William Augustus Bowles, who brought the opportunity to form a different sort of foreign alliance. In April 1788, the armed vessel landed at the mouth of the Indian River on the East Florida's southern Atlantic coast. According to a ship captain who had recently sailed from St. Augustine, near that coast, to Pensacola, the armed vessel had arrived at the request of a group of Indians who had traveled from Florida to New Providence, Bahamas, to request aid earlier that year.[22] Another ship arrived at the same place in July. Traders living near Pensacola reported that the ship had carried between two and six hundred soldiers as well as arms, ammunition, and other gifts.[23] At the head of this expedition was Bowles. Born in Maryland, he had resided in the Lower Creek town of Cusseta after being dismissed from the Maryland Loyalist Corps in the American Revolution for unclear reasons.[24]

Returning to Cusseta, Bowles reunited with elite Creek men who, like McGillivray, were born of British fathers: Tom Perryman, one of the town's leaders, and John Galphin, the son of George Galphin, a trader who had overseen Southern Indian affairs for the colonies in rebellion

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[21] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 247.
[22] The Governor of West Florida, Arturo O'Neill, received this report from Capt. Luis Potet of the schooner "Santa María." Copy of O'Neill to Miró, June 10, 1788, enclosed in Miró to Espeleta, July 28, 1788, Exp. 2, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI.
[23] See the declarations of Enrique Snell, an Indian trader and *doméstico* of Thomas Miller, of Jerardo Birne, an inhabitant of Pensacola who claimed to have heard the news from the son of Alexander McGillivray's ranch hand; and Tomas Triler, a trader in Clecatska, Creek Nation. Enclosures in Miró to Espeleta, Aug. 28, 1788, Exp. 1, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI.
[24] *Public Characters, or Contemporary Biography* (Baltimore: Bonsal and Niles, 1803), 333-334; Duvon C. Corbitt and John Tate Lanning, "A Letter of Marque Issued by William Augustus Bowles as Director General of the State of Muskogee," *The Journal of Southern History* 11, no. 2 (May 1945), 247-248.

during the American Revolution.[25] The three men called a council, the details of which became muddled in the rumors that crossed Creek country about it.[26] Some claimed that Bowles planned to establish a port on the Atlantic coast near the St. Mary's River, or to stage a revolution with disaffected white settlers in present-day Tennessee.[27] Some said that he had lied to Creek leaders, claiming to be commissioned by the British king. Others reported that he planned to attack Spanish forts and cities, either of his own accord or on behalf of the British Crown. All sources agreed that the expedition was supplied by the merchant John Miller, previously of West Florida and by then of Nassau.

The governor of the Bahamas, Lord Dunmore, quietly supported the expedition, which resembled an earlier plan that he had devised in which loyalists, Indians, and slaves would conquer Spanish West Florida. Bowles claimed that his force would likewise consist of loyalists scattered across the British West Indies, who would support Creeks in their war against Georgia. Such warfare, of course, also promised plunder and conquest.[28] Opposition to the United States and the desire for personal gain had thus joined diverse parties in common cause. After this

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[25] Copy of Commission to George Galphin, Oct. 2, 1775, in "Papers of the First Council of Safety of the Revolutionary Party in South Carolina, June-November, 1775 (Continued)," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 1901), 99-100.

[26] Such rumors were common on the Spanish borderlands and other Early American frontiers. David Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 1-7; Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

[27] Jayme O'Keefe to O'Neil in Miró to Espeleta, July 28, 1788, Exp. 2, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI; O'Neill to Miró, July 28, 1788, Exp. 1, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI. For an explanation of western disaffection among Cumberland settlers, see Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 129.

[28] See various declarations and informal reports taken by the governors of East and West Florida between July and November 1788, Legs. 1394 and 1395, PC, AGI. Declarations of adventurers affiliated with Bowles, March 10, 1789, "Traducción que escribió el Coronel Británico Thomas Brown al Gobernador de Florida," and other letters from Céspedes to Espeleta, Leg. 1395, PC, AGI. DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 279-280, 327-328.

meeting, Galphin and another Creek leader traveled to New Providence, Bahamas, where they dined and hunted with the governor, and recruited soldiers for another expedition.[29]

In early October, Bowles and his force returned to Florida, where it was said that they planned to attack the stores of William Panton, a commercial rival of Miller, who had with the help of Alexander McGillivray recently gained official control of the Indian trade in the Spanish Floridas. They landed at the Indian River on two armed ships with about forty adventurers, most of whom were Britons otherwise employed as sailors.[30] Under the command of Bowles and John Galphin, the men proceeded toward the Seminole town at Alachua, where they hoped to gain further support. After gathering weapons and provisions at Panton's store, they planned to continue on to Georgia.[31] Although McGillivray had attended the earlier council with Bowles, he had now distanced himself from the expedition. Holding greater confidence in the friendship of Spain and William Panton, he cleared himself of having taken part in this business, also promising to prevent any other English ships from landing in Creek territory.[32]

In the short term, little came of this rogue alliance between the Creek leaders Tom Perryman and John Galphin and the British adventurer William Augustus Bowles. Receiving little more than a gift of corn from the Seminoles at Alachua, Bowles's adventurers began to desert, declining an offer from Galphin to proceed to Creek country under his own command.

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[29] Various sources from Leg. 1394, PC, AGI: "Declaración de Enrique Snell" in Miró to Espeleta, Aug. 28, 1788; news from Pois Mico described in Copy of O'Neill to Miró, July 21, 1788 in Miró to Espeleta, July 28, 1788; and McGillivray to Miró, Aug. 12, 1788 in Miró to Espeleta, Sept. 16, 1788. Also see "Traducción que escribió el Coronel Británico Thomas Brown al Gobernador de Florida" in Céspedes to Espeleta, Oct. 11, 1788, Leg. 1395, PC, AGI.
[30] Of twenty-six deserters from this party who later arrived at St. Augustine, two were German, three American, and the remainder British. Céspedes to Espeleta, Dec. 2, 1788, Leg. 1395, AGI.
[31] See the following two sources from Leg. 1395, PC, AGI: "Traducción que escribió el Coronel Británico Thomas Brown al Gobernador de Florida" in Céspedes to Espeleta, Oct. 11, 1788; and Declarations of adventurers affiliated with Bowles in Céspedes to Espeleta, March 10, 1789.
[32] Copy of O'Neill to Miró, Nov. 21, 1788, Exp. 12, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI.

Instead, twenty-six men made their way to St. Augustine, where the Spanish governor took statements and returned them to their ports of origin.[33] Creeks' interest in partnering with British adventurers also seemed, from the perspective of Spanish officials, to have disappeared. By December, four hundred Creek headmen and warriors had come before the Spanish commandant at Pensacola to pledge their opposition to Bowles and their loyalty to Spain. When by January 1789 Bowles had not returned to Creek country, McGillivray and Spanish officials speculated that he had moved on to other adventures, and that his Creek allies would soon do the same.[34]

In fact, the partnership that had developed between British American adventurers and some lower Creek towns was growing from a temporary wartime alliance into a political movement serious enough to warrant a journey to England. In the spring of 1789, Bowles, another British officer, and four Indian delegates departed the Gulf of Mexico for London, where they sought recognition for a state that Bowles called the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees.[35] The delegates consisted mainly of Creeks and Britons but also included some Chickamaugas, a militant faction of Cherokees who during this period enabled Creeks and other southern Indians to maintain alliances with indigenous peoples farther north.[36] In London, Bowles inflated his ranks extravagantly, professing to speak on behalf of all Creeks and Cherokees and, as Spanish officials had feared, on behalf of six thousand disgruntled American

[33] See the following from Leg. 1395, PC, AGI: "Declarations of adventurers affiliated with Bowles in Céspedes to Espeleta," March 10, 1789; and Céspedes to Espeleta, letters from Jan. 28, Feb. 4, and April 17, 1789.
[34] Céspedes to Espeleta, Jan. 4, 1789, Leg. 1395, PC, AGI.
[35] In a letter to Lord Grenville, Bowles listed his fellow travelers as Unatoy, Kuahtekiske, Sepouejah, Tuskeniah, and Wopio. Bowles to Lord Grenville, Jan. 3, 1791, transcribed in Frederick Jackson Turner, ed., "English Policy Toward America in 1790-1791," *The American Historical Review* 7, no. 4 (July 1902): 706-735. Jane Landers notes that the Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco Miranda was in London at the same time as Bowles's delegation, but whether these parties met is unknown. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 101.
[36] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 330; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 91.

settlers living near the Cumberland River.[37] This sort of intrigue was a common political strategy in the Spanish American borderlands, and would continue to shape the claims made by and about dissident Creeks.[38]

The delegation's main goal was the establishment of formal trade connections between the ports of the Bahamas and Apalache Bay. If recognized as a sovereign state, this proposed nation might be able to trade officially with Nassau through an act of Parliament similar to the Free Port Act, which allowed trade between Nassau and ports in the Americas that were under the control of other European powers.[39] Bowles also suggested that the establishment of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees might serve as a launching place for British attacks on the Floridas, Louisiana, and even Mexico. While they received no official recognition from the British government, Bowles's delegates did receive the promise that ships flying the flag of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees would be allowed to trade in the West Indies. Returning to Florida by way of the Bahamas, the delegates stopped first at Indian River and then continued around the peninsula to the Apalachicola River, where they transferred to a flat-bottomed skiff to travel upriver to Cusseta.[40]

Upon their arrival, they learned of the signing of the Treaty of New York, a controversial step in Alexander McGillivray's state-building project. In 1790, McGillivray had gathered delegates to sign this agreement, which ceded a large portion of Creek land while confirming the

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[37] William A. Bowles to Lord Grenville, Jan. 13, 1791, in Turner, "English Policy," 728-733.
[38] David Narrett argues that intrigue—"policy based on stratagem, covert maneuver, rumor or conspiracy, and ruse or deception"—provided the source of international conflict in the Spanish American borderlands. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 7.
[39] Bowles to Lord Grenville, Jan. 3, 1791 in Turner, "English Policy Toward America," 730; DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 330; Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 1-7.
[40] J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1967), 50-57; Gilbert C. Din, *War on the Gulf Coast: The Spanish Fight against William Augustus Bowles* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012), 39-40.

status of the Creeks as a sovereign nation under US protection. This status meant that the Creeks would be able to sign treaties only with the US federal government, freeing them from future treaties between rogue headmen and the State of Georgia.[41] McGillivray also believed—although the document failed to state as much—that the treaty confined US sovereignty to "*such parts of the Creek Nation* as shall fall within the limits of the same."[42] This was a distinctly ambiguous concession, given that those "limits" remained undefined. A threat to Lower Creek territory and sovereignty, the Treaty of New York had also been signed by a delegation consisting primarily of elites from Creek country's upper towns.[43]

The Treaty of New York added urgency for the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees to enact their claims over Creek country's Gulf coast, increasing William Augustus Bowles's visibility in this movement and leading to another attack on one of William Panton's stores. According to Bowles, the headmen partnering with him chose in their council to name him their director general, tasking him with raising a force of 10,000 men to defend the borders of their nation. In January 1792, Bowles and some number of men—witnesses' estimates ranged from seventy-five to two hundred—from the towns of Coweta, Tlocorcau, Chehaw, and Ooseoochee

[41] The text reads: "The undersigned kings, chiefs, and warriors, for themselves, and all parts of the Creek nation within the limits of the United States, do acknowledge themselves, and the said parts of the Creek nation, to be under the protection of the United States of America, and of no other sovereign whosoever; and they also stipulate, that the said Creek nation will not hold any treaty with an individual State, or with individuals of any State." Treaty of New York, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* (*ASPIA*) 1: 81-2.
[42] McGillivray to Miró, Feb. 26, 1791, as transcribed in John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938), 288-290; emphasis original.
[43] Opponents of the treaty would later complain that the delegates had represented no villages southeast of Broken Arrow, a name that the U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins translated as Tlocorcau. Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 140; Benjamin Hawkins to Maj. Freeman, Agent for the Department of War, Jan. 8, 1797, in Hawkins, *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, edited by H. Thomas Foster (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 59-66.

overtook the Panton, Leslie and Company store at San Marcos de Apalache.[44] From this port and the low, hidden mouths of the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee rivers, the adventurers and warriors of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees now commanded an unbroken stretch of coastline on the East Florida panhandle, ports that connected the lower towns of Creek country to the Atlantic world.

Writing on behalf of the United Creeks and Cherokees from the town of Coweta in the weeks before the occupation of the Panton, Leslie and Company store, Bowles framed this action to Spanish officials as a renewal by force of the "free navigation of the sea that bathes the coasts of their native land."[45] Creeks' natural right to unmediated access to these waterways, he claimed, justified their violent occupation of them. Taking them by force, they would commission ships to enter and exit freely under their own flag. While entertaining no language of receiving protection by a foreign power, Bowles promised Spanish officials that his nation would open their ports to all vessels at peace with them, explaining that the geographic position of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees made it a natural ally to Spain. A useless stretch of isthmus land, he wrote of the East Florida panhandle, it meant little to Spain but formed a major trade route for the ranchers, planters, and hunters of Creek country's lower towns. If Spanish

[44] Bowles's claim to have raised a force of ten thousand men and a description of the takeover of the Panton, Leslie & Company store at San Marcos de Apalache are found in a Spanish language transcript of his trial proceedings entitled "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles from the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid" in "Transcripts of selected documents from various archives in Spain," Ayer MS 1236, Newberry Library, Chicago. I did not locate the original version of these proceedings on a short visit to Madrid. Hereafter this source will appear as "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles." For this citation, see the following letters in Pieza 1: El Conde del Campo de Alange to Conde de Aranda, May 4, 1792; and Luis de las Casas to Conde de Floridablanca, April 21, 1792.

[45] Bowles to Carondelet, Dec. 4, 1791, in Carondelet to Floridablanca, Pieza 2, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles." Narrett writes that both Euro-American adventurers and Native headmen sought to establish influence over interior areas with riverine access to the coast, clamoring in kind for "free navigation" and other trade relations in which they retained power to negotiate. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 3.

officials would recognize the sovereignty of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees over these ports, his people would provide them a geographical buffer against the expansionist United States. If not, they would be forced to go to war to defend their independence. [46]

Bowles was no straightforward champion of Indian sovereignty or equality, but the partnership he organized between Creek country and the Bahamas posed a serious threat to Spanish claims over Creek country's Gulf coast. Despite the fact that his Creek collaborator John Galphin could read and write in English, Bowles drafted all communications sent out by the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees of his own accord, never naming any Creek headmen as the authors of his letters.[47] He described the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees as an Indian nation that aimed to civilize its inhabitants while applying the "life and vigor" of Indian military tactics to Atlantic nations.[48] Such statements suggest an assumption that Britons and Indians would play different, and hierarchical, roles in this revolutionary project. Yet Spanish officials saw the radical implications of Bowles's claims about sovereign territory. They objected to his description of Gulf waterways as "ours" and to his insistence that unmediated Creek access to the Gulf was a condition of peace.[49]

Barely a month after Creek warriors and British adventurers took over the Panton, Leslie and Company store, Spanish officials promised Bowles a meeting with the governor of Louisiana

[46] Bowles to Guessy, January 4, 1792, in Las Casas to Alarge, March 1, 1792, Pieza 1, and Bowles to Floridablanca, June 18, 1792, Pieza 3, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles."
[47] See, for example, Galphin to Tallassee King and Galphin to Bowles, both undated, Fos. 335 and 338, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI; O'Neill to Miró, July 21, in Miró to Espeleta, July 28, 1788, Exp. 2, Leg. 1394, PC, AGI.
[48] Memorial of William Augustus Bowles to His Catholic Majesty, Dec. 4, 1791, Pieza 4, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles," Newberry Library.
[49] Las Casas to Floridablanca, April 21, 1792, Pieza 1, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles."

in New Orleans.[50] Here, these officials arrested him in fulfillment of a royal order from two years earlier. In addition to Bowles's smuggling, warfare, and "insulting" claims about Creek sovereignty over the Gulf coast, these officials objected to what they believed was a certain conspiracy by the British to maintain their trade with southern Indians.[51] Imprisoned first in Cuba's Morro Castle, he was later taken to Spain and the Philippines. In 1797, he escaped.[52]

The State of Muskogee:

In 1798, William Augustus Bowles was in London, settling accounts and making preparations for his return to Creek country. With his escape from prison reported in British newspapers, he had many friends in the country—ship captains, a member of Parliament, and even a naturalist requesting information about the "languages of the inhabitants of the Nations of the back settlements" of North America.[53] In February 1799, he boarded a ship bound for Barbados, carrying three types of writing paper, pens, pencils, and erasers, gifts of satin, beads, and ribbon, and two saddles with cloths and holsters.[54] Eight months later, he arrived at Apalache Bay. He proceeded to Creek country's Gulf coast with two subordinate officers and a letter from a Barbados sugar planter instructing British ships that Bowles was employed by him "to support

[50] Bowles to Hevia, Feb. 22, 1792 in Diary of Josef Hevia, Pieza 1, and Bowles to Creeks, Feb. 29, 1792 in Carondelet to Floridablanca, Pieza 2, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles."
[51] Luis de las Casas to Conde de Floridablanca, April 21, 1792, Pieza 1, "Documents regarding the litigation of Bowles."
[52] Lawrence Kinnaird and Lucia B. Kinnaird, "War Comes to San Marcos," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (July 1983), 26.
[53] Letters to Bowles, many of them unsigned and undated, Fos. 222-302, 216B, PC, AGI; "London, November 11," *Northampton Mercury* (Northampton, England), Nov. 15, 1794.
[54] "Inventory in this Book" and account from Philip Barton, Sadler and Harness Maker, Jan. 20, 1799, and Driftwood to Bowles, Undated, Fos. 247, 297, and 302, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

an open communication with the commanders in chief of His Majesty's Colonies in the West Indies."[55]

Many changes had unfolded in Creek country while Bowles was away. Alexander McGillivray had died in 1793, leaving Efau Hadjo at the head of the Creek National Council, which had increasingly permitted the U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins to intervene in its affairs.[56] The United States and Spain had signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo and, with promises of protection from the National Council, had begun making plans for surveying the East Florida-Georgia border. Meanwhile, dissident Creek control over the rivers of the East Florida panhandle had brought wealth to a handful of elite families, who had expanded their planting and ranching domains throughout East Florida. The headman Kinache established the village of Mikasuki at a site above San Marcos de Apalache, while the mestizo rancher Jack Kinnaird established three new villages in the same area.[57] The number of maroon communities in East Florida had also expanded, with new African American settlements appearing along the marshy banks of the Apalachicola and Suwannee rivers.[58] British supporters of Bowles and of trade between the Bahamas and the Spanish Floridas also continued to live in Creek country, maintaining the rogue connections between Creek country and the British American colonies that had existed since the American Revolution.[59]

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[55] "For Gen. Bowles with Mr. J.A. Beckles's best regards," Fo. 330, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.
[56] Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 112, 149.
[57] Fos. 244 and 253, Leg. 225B, PC, AGI.
[58] Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 96-97.
[59] For example, the adventurer Sarles Lewis, who caught the attention of the captain general of Louisiana in 1793. "Capitán General Luisiana sobre aventurero Sarles Lewis," Aug. 31, 1793, No. 52, Leg. 17, Estado, AGI. I consulted a digital photograph of this letter at the website of the Spanish government archives, Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES). In general, materials digitized on PARES are no longer available for physical consultation. Hereafter, any Spanish sources consulted online will be marked with the name of the archive plus PARES (AGI-PARES or AHN-PARES). All others will only bear the name of the archive in which I encountered them.

From 1799 until 1803, these diverse peoples would use the resources provided by Bowles to control Apalache Bay and the Gulf coast of the Florida peninsula, altering the struggles of the United States, Spain, and the Creek Nation to define their own national borders. Upon his arrival in Florida, Bowles went to the village of his old friend Tom Perryman, where he penned declarations of independence for an Indian state called the State of Muskogee. Calling a council of his supporters, he was by his own account re-elected Director General. Bowles described this election to a British subordinate officer as follows: "The other Councils are now dissolved and I am once more left with the sovereign power." Describing a model of government more reminiscent of Britain than of the United States—one in which sovereignty resides with the King-in-Parliament rather than with the people—Bowles justified this concentration of power as the saving grace of a nation "torn to pieces by the Intrigues of the Americans and Spaniards." He described the people of the State of Muskogee as both "white and red."[60]

As before, one of Bowles's first orders of business as Director General was to issue declarations: the re-establishment of a free port at Apalachicola, complete with duties on spirituous liquors and foreign merchandise, and an order for all people "holding any unlawful commission under the United States or His Catholic Majesty" to leave Creek territory immediately.[61] Bowles established a headquarters and port called Wekiwa on the Ochlockonee River, sending his old friend John Galphin with several ships out to the island where his subordinate officers waited to collect the rest of his goods, especially "a table to write on." He had enough support among nearby towns that he could immediately stock the headquarters with rice, corn, and "other trifles" such as fowls, potatoes, and peas, then cattle, hogs, and venison. He

[60] Bowles to Wooldridge, Oct. 28, 1799, Fo. 353, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.
[61] Decree from Nov. 26, 1799, and from Oct. 31, 1799 in Bowles to Little Prince, Nov. 30, 1799, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI. These are also cited in Kinnaird and Kinnaird, "War Comes to San Marcos," 28.

also informed his officers that men would soon arrive to build a road from this new port to the nearby towns.[62] Bowles and his allies would also establish another port, Achackwheethlee, on the Apalachicola River. From there, Bowles sent letters to England, New Providence, and Jamaica. He reported on this correspondence in a November letter to the Creek headman Little Prince, confirming the broad network of relations that he organized from that town.[63]

If these letters to British Americans in the West Indies and the Bahamas resemble the copy of a proclamation that Bowles later forwarded to the U.S. surveyor Andrew Ellicott, his public portrayal of the State of Muskogee involved more ambiguity about where the state's sovereignty would reside. Although he had previously described himself as holding "sovereign power" over the State of Muskogee, this proclamation suggested a republican form of government with direct benefits to settlers. "Whereas it ever has been & is still our intention," he wrote,

> to better the estimation of all our beloved people and to protect and advance the interest and dignity of Muskugee & to introduce arts, manufacture, and a well regulated commerce . . . knowing that at this time there are a number of worthy families who for their principles have been forced from their countries and possessions and have no fixed place of security and protection and having a large tract of territory unoccupied we do freely offer and invite all such persons so situated to the Peaceable enjoyment of the Rights of Citizens of Muskugee.[64]

Bowles never used the word "republic" to describe this state, but his references to "rights" and "citizens" resemble the revolutionary forms of government expanding in across the Atlantic world. By "worthy families who for their principles have been forced from their countries and possessions," he likely referred to British loyalists. In 1784, the now-deceased founder of the Creek National Council, the Little Tallassee headman Alexander McGillivray, had also

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[62] Letters from Bowles to Wooldridge from Oct. 23, 28, and Nov. 5,1799 (Fos. 351, 353, and 356), Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.
[63] Bowles to Little Prince, Nov. 30, 1799, Fo. 330, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.
[64] Untitled proclamation enclosed in Draft of Bowles to [Ellicott?], Undated, Fo. 328, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

suggested that loyalists—and loyalists only—be invited to live in East Florida under Creek sovereignty.[65] Bowles went on to detail other aspects of this offer to these settlers: the availability of one hundred acres of land within thirty miles of the Gulf of Mexico for anyone who would come and claim the protection of the State of Muskogee. The land in question extended all the way from the Apalachicola River to the Florida peninsula's far southern coast.

Such a polity, if successful, would likely have been disastrous to Creeks, but at least one of Bowles's Indian allies seemed to believe that it was a promising option. In a letter to the headman of the village of Tallassee, Bowles' old friend John Galphin explained that Bowles was working "for the Good of our nation" by "openning a free port" in Creek country. Their "Old friend the Inglish," he added, "want the lands from you" in order "to protect our lands and ennable us to Defend our Country." Galphin accused the Spanish of making "slaves of nations" and the United States of "dividing our Country between them." In a complaint common among the Creek who opposed accommodation of the U.S. government, he charged the U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins with bribing his supporters, including the interpreter Alexander Cornells.[66] "Perhaps, cornels may say that I have no authority for giving anything," Galphin wrote, "but you no my Father to be a great beloved man and who Ever was your Friends in the Midst of Danger, and that I am not the Son of a pidling trader that would Sell my Country for a few Dollars." Using the honorific term "beloved man" (in Muskogee, *isti atcagagi*) to describe his deceased British father, George, John Galphin insisted that a partnership with Bowles would allow the Creeks "to convince the world that we are a free and Independent nation."[67]

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[65] DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 249-250.
[66] For the common complaint that annuity payments were a form of bribery, see Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 149.
[67] Galphin to Tallassee King, Undated, Fo. 335, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI. For "beloved man," see Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 18, 261 n40; Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 29; Hawkins, *The*

Others in Creek country seemed to agree, or at least they were interested in courting Bowles's alliance in order to obtain trade. The Lower Creek trader James Burges, chosen by the United States and Spain as the interpreter during the surveying expedition of the East Florida-Georgia border, wrote to Bowles a week after his arrival to Florida expressing his support. He added that of "two Indians" wished to communicate "their want of your friendship in letting them have powder and ball."[68] Bowles and his partners also received word from another trader that many people in Perryman's village of Cusseta "never can forget the British but wish to take them by the hand and hold them safe & fast."[69]

Spanish officials responded swiftly, placing a bounty on Bowles's head and sending troops to destroy the State of Muskogee town on the Ochlockonee River in February 1800.[70] Bowles responded by declaring war on Spain that April, rallying over three hundred warriors to capture the fort of San Marcos de Apalache, which they held from mid-May until late June.[71] War continued after Spanish forces retook the fort, with State of Muskogee forces headquartered at the village of Mikasuki. Those fighting on behalf of this revolutionary state included white, black, and Indian warriors.[72] By attacking Spanish plantations across East Florida, Mikasukis,

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Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 7. Bowles may have attempted to incorporate the idea of "beloved man" into his own writing. In his proclamation about inviting settlers to the State of Muskogee, he suggested this policy was a desire of "all our beloved people." Later, in a letter to Little Prince, he referenced a decision that he had made "for the sake of our beloved red people." Fos. 328 and 330, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

[68] James Burges to Bowles, Nov. 5, 1799, Fo. 558, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

[69] Richard Thomas to Bowles, Jan. 29, 1800, Fo. 361, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI.

[70] Richard Thomas to Bowles, Jan. 29, 1800, Fo. 361, Leg. 216B, PC, AGI; Corbitt and Lanning, "A Letter of Marque"; Kinnaird, "War Comes to San Marcos," 28-29.
A newspaper account from 1799 locates Bowles's headquarters at the confluence of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers, which is above the Florida-Georgia border. See *Commercial Advertiser* (New York, NY), April 22, 1800.

[71] Kinnaird, "War Comes to San Marcos," 29-30.

[72] Jane Landers observes that Bowles incorporated more people of African descent into his army after 1790. In general, Landers' interpretation of Bowles corresponds to mine. She writes that

allied African Americans, and British adventurers made off with about seventy captives, most of whom were enslaved African Americans. After the war, Spanish officials would ransom many of these men, women, and children in exchange for cattle and specie.[73]

As the war progressed, Tom Perryman and headmen from various other Creek villages had visited the commander of San Marcos de Apalache to express their desire for peace with Spain.[74] In January 1802, the State of Muskogee launched another attack on San Marcos de Apalache, which Spanish forces more quickly crushed.[75] Later that year, the Seminole leader Payne, various traders, and headmen from across Creek country ended the war between Spain and the Mikasukis, negotiating for the release of a Mikasuki headman, Macloggy, who had been captured by Spain.[76] The leaders of many more Creek towns came to San Marcos de Apalache to return captives and to offer peace.[77]

The United States and other southeastern Indians also played a role in ending this conflict—or, put more accurately, in scheming to remove Bowles from Creek country. In May 1803, an assembly of southern Indians, including Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Seminoles, assisted the U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins and John Forbes, who had taken ownership of the former Panton, Leslie and Company, to apprehend Bowles, who would

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while "many contemporary observers, and indeed many later historians, saw Bowles as a self-interested scoundrel," for his black and Indian allies, "he must have spoken to their dreams or represented their perceived best hope for a free life in the face of certain Anglo domination of the Southeast." Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 101, 103.

[73] Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 138-139.

[74] Diego de Vegas to Enrique White, Aug. 26, 1800 and Commandant to Vicente Folch, Fos. 237 and 261, Leg. 225B, PC, AGI. These villages are listed as Fumuluachana, Chifolotica, Seunde Okmulgee, and Chisquetalofa.

[75] Kinnaird, "War Comes to San Marcos," 38-43.

[76] Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 139.

[77] These peace parties also returned captives, including two free black men from Campeche, Yucatán, who had been imprisoned by Bowles at Tampa Bay. Commandant to Folch, Oct. 28, 1802, Fo. 298, Leg. 225B, PC, AGI.

die imprisoned in Cuba's Morro Castle in 1805. As late as the assembly that led to Bowles's arrest, some southeastern Indians still claimed to be at war with Spain.[78] Even for those like the Mikasuki headman Kinache, who had made peace, good feelings toward Spain and the United States were short lived. For a short time, Kinache made regular visits to San Marcos de Apalache, frustrating the commander with his large, costly delegations and demands that the commander purchase his cattle in order to secure his friendship.[79] By October 1804, he was again addressing the commander of San Marcos de Apalache with disgust, making reference to conflicts with John Forbes and Company.[80]

During the assembly at which Bowles had been arrested, the merchant John Forbes and Bowles's one-time friend, the Cusseta leader Tom Perryman, had schemed about a land cession to pay off debts that the Creeks owed to this trading house. The territory in question: a million and a half acres between the Apalachicola and St. Marks rivers, territory that had formed the heart of the State of Muskogee.[81] When the John Forbes and Company member James Innerarity met with Creek leaders to negotiate the cession in September 1804, Kinache, the Creek leader Jack Kinnaird, and the Seminole leader Semothly were his main opponents. In addition to disagreeing over the boundaries of the cession, they objected to rumors from the Lower Creek headman Tustanagee Hopoi (Little Prince) that Forbes planned to "engage all the vagabond

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[78] For the apprehension of Bowles, see John Forbes to unknown, May 31, 1803, Box 1, Marie Taylor Greenslade Papers (hereafter MTG), P.K. Yonge Library (hereafter PKY), Gainesville, FL. For the death of William Panton, see Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 235.
[79] Commandant to Folch, May 30, 1804 (Fo. 309) and June 7, 1804 (Fo. 313), Leg. 225B, PC, AGI.
[80] Commandant to Folch, Oct. 9, 1804, Leg. 225B, PC, AGI.
[81] John Forbes to Unknown, May 31, 1803, Box 1, MTG, PKY; Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 29, 55; William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola: University of West Florida Press, 1986), 182-202, 243-244.

Americans he could" to settle upon it.[82] Innerarity only managed to secure the land cession by promising "that none but good people should be permitted to come upon it—that we intended to Settle it with Englishmen from Providence (whom they were very desirous of seeing) or with Frenchmen or Spaniards."[83]

Removing Bowles from Creek Country, it seemed, had failed to quell the interest among dissident Creeks in forming an alliance with British Americans, which included allowing them to settle near the Gulf. For the time being, John Forbes and Company kept Innerarity's promise to restrict settlement by Americans. Their representatives established a trading post at the former site of Achackwheethlee, where they cleared thirty acres of land to build "a storehouse, dwelling house, skin house, negro houses, granary, and other necessary buildings."[84] Slave owners and slave traders, the company's members likely brought these enslaved people from their other Gulf and Caribbean properties.[85] The company made little progress, however, on selling or settling the lands at Achackwheethlee, which they called Prospect Bluff. These rivers remained under Creek control for another decade. When war returned to the region, many of the peoples who had partnered with Bowles became friends of British American subjects.

New Alliances after the Creek Civil War:

Between 1812 and 1815, the Creek Civil War and the War of 1812 brought another brief alliance between the British government and some Creek leaders. In Creek country, a civil war

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[82] Innerarity to Simpson, September 24, 1804, Box 1, MTG, PKY.
[83] Innerarity to Simpson, September 24, 1804, Box 1, MTG, PKY.
[84] See tracts designated for Edmund Doyle, William Hambly, and James Innerarity on the Hatfield map. For the immediate renaming of Estifanulgie, see Innerarity to Simpson, September 24, 1804, Box 1, MTG, PKY. For land use, see "Deposition of Edmund Doyle," June 6, 1829, in Colin Mitchell, *Record in the case of Colin Mitchel and others versus the United States* (Washington: D. Green, 1831), 619-620.
[85] See, among other sources, the following letters in MTG, PKY: Phillip R. Young to John Leslie, Oct. 21, 1802; Edmond Doyle to John Forbes, Sept. 1, 1811; James Innerarity to John Innerarity, March 28, 1819.

began in 1812 as a struggle between supporters of the Creek National Council and several thousand nativist opponents of this body, who became known as Red Sticks. The United States joined the war on the side of the National Council, while the Seminoles professed their support of the Red Sticks. In 1814, after the Red Sticks had been almost defeated, British forced arrived, offering support from a fort on the Apalachicola River and merging this war with the War of 1812. As they had after the American Revolution, however, British officials in London reneged on this alliance almost as soon as their own war had concluded, leaving the Red Sticks, along with Mikasukis, Lower Creeks, Seminoles, and African Americans, to rebuild their communities on their own.[86]

British officers remaining in the Gulf, however, would maintain friendships with some Creek leaders, continuing for strategic and ideological reasons to trade with them and to issue written communications on their behalf. Later, Spanish American revolutionaries would join them. As the Atlantic world entered the second phase of its age of revolutions, Creeks living near East Florida's Gulf waterways would find once again that alliance with rogue agents of empire empowered them to persist in the face of an expanding United States.

The Apalachicola River remained central to these assertions of independence because it was home to the structure remembered in U.S. history as the Negro Fort. Building and maintaining this structure in 1814 only yards away from the John Forbes and Company warehouses, Captain George Woodbine of the West India Regiment and General Edward Nicolls of the British Royal Marines had secured the friendship of an estimated eight hundred Red Stick men, women, and children; one thousand Seminoles, Black Seminoles, and Mikasukis; and seventeen villages pertaining to Lower Creeks and African Americans along the waters flowing

[86] Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 157, 170-172, 188-190.

toward it, most of them on the Apalachicola River and one on the Flint.[87] Meanwhile, Upper and Lower Creek warriors affiliated with the Creek National Council fought beside the United States, their ally against the Red Sticks during the Creek Civil War.

In August 1814, with the War of 1812 still ongoing, Creeks under duress signed a peace treaty with the United States at Fort Jackson on behalf of the Creek Nation, ceding nearly 22 million acres of land to the United States. For the peoples congregating at the Apalachicola River, however, peace did not come until eight months later, when Article Nine of the Treaty of Ghent promised to restore all "possessions, rights, and privileges" to what they had been in metropolitan eyes before wars began. A copy of this second document was later signed by Edward Nicolls and three "Chiefs of the Muscogee Nation"—Hepoaeth Mico, Cappachimico, and Hopoie Mico—all of whom maintained that the Treaty of Fort Jackson had been made without their consent. A month later, the Creeks at Apalachicola wrote through Nicolls to Benjamin Hawkins the complaint that parties of US citizens continued to enter their land, plundering their homes and ranches and killing innocent people. In this letter, they demanded a complete end to all communication, direct or indirect, with the US government and its citizens.[88]

That August, the Red Stick leader Hillis Hadjo sailed for London along with his son, a servant, an interpreter, and General Edward Nicolls, to seek ongoing ties with the British government against the United States. Like Bowles and other agents in the Gulf borderlands,

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[87] Nicolls estimated the number of warriors "that can be depended on for defense of Bluff" to be 3551, adding that the number of women and children were "supposed to be double the number of warriors." By his record, the villages along the Apalachicola River included: Yawole, Ochese, Tamathla, Euchee, Tolohuilely, Attapalga, Ockekochne, Fowltown, Savocolo, Talwathlaco, Wakahoole, Conchale, Amasey, Conhalway, and Perrymans. He believed that he could also count on the alliance of the Chehaws on the Flint River. Copy of "Return of Muscogee or Creek Indians under the Command of Lieut. Col. Nicolls" in Cochrane to Earl Bathurst, March 12, 1816, WO 1/144, BNA. All citations of BNA records appearing in this chapter refer to photographs taken at my request by Matthew Woodbury.

[88] Copy of Nicolls to Hawkins, April 28, 1815, WO 1/143, BNA.

Hillis Hadjo inflated his support among southeastern Indians and played to British hopes of imperial expansion. Expecting that the British Empire might someday regain control of the Gulf coast or at least benefit from the continued alliance of Red Sticks and other Creeks, Nicolls provided the pen by which the illiterate Hillis Hadjo made a case for his people's independence and their desire for British friendship and supplies.

Nicolls hosted Hillis Hadjo's party in his home at Eltham, England for over a year, while sending letters to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Henry Bathurst, on their behalf. In these letters, Hillis Hadjo made requests primarily on behalf of his own people, the Red Sticks, while professing also to represent all Creeks and "the King of the four Nations and his Chiefs."[89] Describing the destruction the Red Sticks had experienced during the recent wars, he requested financial support and official trade with Britain so that his people could maintain autonomy from their enemy, the United States. Writing that the Red Sticks had been the Indian allies "who first attacked the Americans," he expressed his hope "that men who have fought and bled in the cause of Great Britain will not be forsaken by her in Peace." British merchants would "find good account" with the Muscogee Nation at the Apalachicola River, he noted, making a request reminiscent of Bowles and Galphin for official commerce between this river and Nassau; he added that he would permit the governor of the Bahamas to visit twice a year. To these arguments Nicolls appended his own approval of Hillis Hadjo's conduct in war, emphasizing that he and the Red Stick leader Peter McQueen both had British fathers."[90]

These requests, like those of William Augustus Bowles's delegation sixteen years earlier, received no official support from Bathurst, who believed that the United States had already made

[89] Copy of Nicolls to P. Morier, Sept. 25, 1815, FO 5/140, BNA. Neither Hillis Hadjo nor Nicolls explained the meaning of "four nations."
[90] Copy of Nicolls to P. Morier, Sept. 25, 1815, FO 5/140, BNA.

peace with all of the Creeks in the Treaty of Fort Jackson. He therefore refused to treat with Hillis Hadjo. Bathurst recommended that the Red Stick leader restore "friendly intercourse" with his countrymen and offered to pay his return journey home as soon as possible.[91] London merchants expressed strong interest in trading with the Creeks, however, and vice versa.[92] When the Red Stick leader and his party returned to Florida in June 1816, they would find that their journey to England, and the clothing and gifts that they received at the visit's end, strengthened these efforts, giving the impression that some sort of agreement had been reached.[93]

They also found British American officers and merchants continuing to partner with Red Sticks, Mikasukis, and Seminoles in their ongoing war against the United States and the Creek Nation. The presence of these people from the Bahamas and West Indies—some but not all of them exiled loyalists from the original thirteen colonies— occurred once again at Creeks' request. The John Forbes and Company agent at the Apalachicola River had taken sides with the United States in this warfare, helping them destroy the former British fort in on this Spanish-claimed river in July 1816. Bowles's old friend Kinache and other headmen then sent a letter to the governor of the Bahamas requesting aid. That October, Captain George Woodbine returned to the Apalachicola River in an attempt to overtake the Forbes and Company warehouse. He landed again in Florida in December, proceeding from the Ochlockonee River to Seminole country to hold a council with Kinache, the Seminole Boleck, and the Red Stick Peter McQueen.[94]

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[91] Bathurst to the Chief of the Muscogee Tribe, Sept. 21, 1815, FO 5/140, BNA.
[92] Nicolls to Goulburn, Jan. 15, 1816, WO 1/144, BNA.
[93] See, for example, Francisco Caso y Luengo to José Masot, June 29, 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI.
[94] Francisco Caso y Luengo to José Masot, Dec. 11, 1816, and March 16, 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI.

George Woodbine, a native of Jamaica, sailed on the schooner of the father-son pair Alexander and John Arbuthnot, Bahamas merchants who were in process of establishing trade with dissident Creeks on the Ochlockonee and Suwannee Rivers.[95] The Arbuthnots also shuttled Creek headmen between these rivers and the Bahamas, including Hillis Hadjo during his return journey from England in the summer of 1817.[96] Upon his arrival, Hillis Hadjo visited the commandant of the fort at San Marcos de Apalache along with Kinache, Peter McQueen, and other leaders, carrying a letter from the Bahamas governor certifying that the he had traveled there under British protection and requesting that Arbuthnot be allowed to formally establish a store in the territory.[97]

Like the adventurer William Augustus Bowles, the merchant Alexander Arbuthnot and the captain George Woodbine had their own personal motives for partnering with Red Sticks, Mikasukis, and Seminoles. True to his time, Arbuthnot's personal writing about the Creeks contains paternalistic tropes, describing these people as "children of nature" and lamenting that Nicolls had left "no person to guide them" upon his return to London.[98] A letter that he wrote to the governor of the Bahamas on behalf of Cappachimicco and Boleck implied that Arbuthnot could be this person for them, requesting "an officer or person to lead us right, and to apportion

[95] They had established trade on the Suwannee River by November 1816, and on the Ochlockonee by March 1817. Frank Owsley, Jr., "Ambrister and Arbuthnot: Adventurers or Martyrs for British Honor?" *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Autumn 1985), 293; Alexander Arbuthnot to Francisco Caso y Luengo, March 3, 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI.
[96] Arbuthnot to Caso y Luengo, March 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI.
[97] Francisco Caso y Luengo to José Masot, June 29, 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI. Alexander Arbuthnot to Col. Edward Nicholls, Aug. 26, 1817, in *American State Papers: Military Affairs (ASPMA)* 1:724-726.
[98] Alexander Arbuthnot's Journal, November 8, 1817, quoted in Owsley, "Ambrister and Arbuthnot," 294. The original is in "Papers relative to Arbuthnot and Ambrister communicated by R. W. Rush, January 12, 1819," FO 5/146, BNA.

the supply you may be pleased to send us agreeably to our proper wants."[99] Woodbine, who would later claim to have received 40,000 acres of land from the Creeks during the war, was also said to have skimmed from the diplomatic gifts awarded to Hillis Hadjo when the Red Stick headman stayed with him at Nassau on his return journey from London; his guest departed the island with nothing more than eighty dollars, "a barrel of sugar, a bag of coffee, and a small keg of rum."[100]

Yet these men offered material and diplomatic support to Creek leaders who sought to combat US aggression in the region, delivering arms to defend themselves against intrusions, writing international appeals for aid, and contesting agreements like John Forbes and Company's 1804 land purchase and the peace treaty signed at Fort Jackson, both of which limited control over their own territory. In March 1817, Kinache responded to questions from the commander of San Marcos de Apalache about the purpose of Woodbine's expeditions to Florida by informing him that the ship carrying the officer had come to monitor the movements of the Americans, with the goal of learning whether they were abiding by the Treaty of Ghent. The Mikasuki headman also informed the commander that at their December council with Woodbine, he and the other headmen had moved to annul the Forbes Purchase because the company planned to allow

[99] Cappichimicco and Bowleck to Governor Cameron, and Arbuthnot to the Governor of Havana, *American State Papers: Military Affairs* (*ASPMA*) 1: 724-726.
[100] Popham to John Wilson Croker, Esq. with enclosures, April 12, 1818, ADM 1/269, BNA; Arbuthnot to Colonel Edward Nicholls, Aug. 26, 1817, Minutes from Arbuthnot Trial in *ASPMA* 1:724-725. In fact, this amount may have been all that Hillis Hadjo received at Nassau. After the Red Stick headman and his party had set sail homeward from Edward Nicolls's estate, Nicolls had received a letter from Lord Bathurst saying that the "handsome sum" that he had promised his guests would in fact amount only to one hundred pounds. Nicolls to Goulburn, January 7, 1817, WO 1/144, BNA.

Americans to settle it, a complaint that had remained nearly constant since the moment they had signed the agreement.[101]

These Creek leaders would later repeat their objections to the Forbes Purchase through Arbuthnot. Drafts of letters confiscated from Arbuthnot's ship suggest that they wrote to José Cienfuegos, the colonial governor of Cuba, stating that John Forbes and Company had broken "the faithful promise given us that they would get English people to settle it, and live among us." In order to encourage the Spanish to go on the offense against US activities on the Apalachicola River, they made a halfhearted acceptance of the Treaty of San Lorenzo: "This river is far within that line marked out by your Excellency's Government and the Americans (though that line was unknown to us until very lately, and we never gave our sanction, nor, in fact, knew of any sale of our lands made to the Americans)."[102]

Unlike the declarations that Bowles had written as "director general" of the United Nation of Creeks and Cherokees and the State of Muskogee, Arbuthnot's letters on behalf of Creek headmen made clear that Creeks had authorized or co-authored them, mentioning specific headmen in the text of the letters or affixing their x-marks at the end. Twelve men, for example,—Boleck, Kinache, Inhemothlo, Opauney, Peter McQueen, and other headmen from Atlapaga, Pallatchocoley, and Chehaw—signed their x-mark to a Power of Attorney statement

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[101] Francisco Caso y Luengo to José Masot, March 16, 1817, Leg. 1928, PC, AGI. From 1804 through the start of the Creek Civil War, Creeks had repeatedly accused John Forbes and Company members of partnering with Americans. The company denied these charges despite being in negotiations with potential buyers in North Carolina. Before the departure of Nicolls in 1815, the Creeks allied with him had again tried to revoke the purchase, complaining that the company had breached its conditions by attempting to sell the land to settlers from the United States. Innerarity to Simpson, September 24, 1804; Doyle to Forbes, April 30, 1808; Memorandum for Colonel McKee, June 16, 1809; Forbes and Hinton James Promissory Note, January 3, 1811; Unknown to John Forbes, February 9, 1811; all in Box 1, MTG, PKY. Coker and Watson also discuss attempts to sell the Forbes Purchase in *Indian Traders*, 298.

[102] Arbuthnot to the Governor of Havana, *ASPMA* 1:726.

that Arbuthnot enclosed in a letter to the governor of Cuba.[103] Other letters attributed full authorship to Boleck, Cappachimicco, or Kinache.[104] In other cases, Arbuthnot wrote and signed the letters but included in-text requests from particular leaders.[105] While in England, Hillis Hadjo had requested to leave his son with Nicolls "for the purpose of learning to read and write, that in future they may not be deceived, . . . not having any person to read or explain its Contents to them."[106] Now Arbuthnot filled a similar need, standing in as someone to "attend to our talks, and put them in writing for us."[107]

Another adventurer, the Scotsman Gregor McGregor, offered a final opportunity for Seminoles, Red Sticks, and Mikasukis to receive aid in their efforts against US invasion. On June 29, 1817, a one- to two-hundred man expedition of adventurers out of Charleston led by McGregor invaded Amelia Island, a Spanish territory offshore from St. Augustine. There they proclaimed the "Republic of the Two Floridas," a state that they claimed would stretch along the Gulf coast all the way to the Mississippi River.[108] These men were later joined by adventurers

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[103] "Letter from A. Arbuthnot to the Governor of Havana" with enclosure, *ASPMA* 1:726-727.
[104] "From King Hatchy to General Gaines, in answer to the foregoing," and "Petition of the chiefs of the Lower Creek nation to Governor Cameron," *ASPMA*, 1:723, 728.
[105] "Letter from A. Arbuthnot to Colonel Edward Nicholl," August 26, 1817; Arbuthnot to Gen. Mitchell, undated; "No. 6: Extract from a letter written by A. Arbuthnot to General Mitchell, American agent for the Creek nation of Indians," January 19, 1818, *ASPMA*, 1:724-729
[106] Copy of Nicolls to P. Morier, Sept. 25, 1815, FO 5/140, BNA.
Three months before Hillis Hadjo's departure, Nicolls wrote to Bathurst reminding him of his plans to care for the boy and requesting 50 pounds per annum for this purpose. Given Bathurst's general lack of interest in forming an alliance with the Red Sticks, it seems unlikely that he would have supplied the funds. I have found no record of whether the son stayed in England. Nicolls to Goulburn, September 24, 1816, WO 1/144, BNA.
[107] "Cappichimicco and Bowleck to Governor Cameron" and "Arbuthnot to the Governor of Havana," *ASPMA* 1:724-726.
[108] Antonio Argate Villalobos to Capt. General of Cuba, June 23, 1817, Leg. 1900, PC, AGI; various letters from Ministro Plenipotenciario en los Estados Unidos to Capitan General, Leg. 1898, PC, AGI; "Extract of a Letter to a Gentleman in the District of Colombia," July 30, 1817, *State Papers and Publick Documents of the United States*, 2d ed., Vol. 12 (Boston: T.B. Wait and Sons, 1817), 390.

from other ports on the US Atlantic seaboard as well as by soldiers under the revolutionaries Pedro Gual and Louis-Michel Aury, whom McGregor had met during his time as a privateer for the short-lived State of Cartagena. An ethnically eclectic group—Anglo-Americans, Frenchmen, Haitians, and South Americans—the adventurers who congregated at Amelia Island had contrasting political visions for their declared state, with some seeking the expansion of US slavery, others a launching place for Spanish American revolutions with radical visions of racial equality. They shared a desire for booty, money, and land, intercepting Spanish ships traveling between Havana and Cádiz to capture goods and captives, and receiving promises from McGregor that their service would be rewarded with East Florida land.[109]

In November 1817, Captain George Woodbine sailed from New Providence to Amelia Island to request a commission from McGregor, aiming to unite the Republic of the Two Floridas with his project among the Creeks. Aware that the United States was planning its own invasion of Amelia Island, the adventurers determined to forfeit this post and attack St. Augustine from land, having a force under Woodbine march from Tampa through Seminole country to claim the Spanish city.[110] Sailing with McGregor back to New Providence and then Jamaica, Woodbine began recruiting soldiers to the cause, including British American and

[109] Argate to Capt. General, July 12, 1817, Leg. 1900, PC, AGI. Rufus Kay Wyllys, "The Filibusters of Amelia Island," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December 1928): 297-325. Edgardo Pérez Morales, *El gran diablo hecho barco: corsarios, esclavos, y revolución en Cartagena y el Gran Caribe, 1791-1817* (Bucaramanga, Colombia: Universidad Industrial de Santander, Colección bicentenario, 2012), 191-194; "Free Floridas. Letter of Marque. No. 8," *State Papers and Publick Documents*, Vol. 12, 396; London *Times*, September 15, 1817.

[110] Copy of Francisco Caso y Luengo to Sr. D. José Masot, Nov. 8, 1817, Leg. 1900, PC, AGI; "Extract of a Letter to the Secretary of State, dated December 24, 1817," *State Papers and Publick Documents*, Vol. 12, 393-395.

African American veterans of the War of 1812.[111] He then returned to Creek country, supposedly securing the alliance of 1500 Creek warriors.[112]Arbuthnot and others criticized Woodbine for reportedly lying to his Indian allies, professing to act as an official representative of the British government, whose army he promised would help them protect their lands.[113]

Yet Woodbine's offer to McGregor also seemed to benefit the Creeks. He wrote that he "could find friends and funds in New Providence, and that a British regiment had lately been disbanded there, that they would pick up as many of the soldiers as possible, and with what negroes and others they could gather, would make a tolerable force."[114] Such an offer likely would have appealed to dissident Creeks living in East Florida. Concerned by the presence of adventurers at Amelia Island, near their border with Spain, US troops took Amelia Island in late 1817. In March of the following year, they arrived at the Apalachicola River, where they began a siege on Seminole, Mikasuki, and Red Stick towns that would lead to their victory in the event remembered as the First Seminole War. The United States justified this invasion by accusing these Creeks of attacking US property, and of refusing to hand over the African American people who lived among them, some of whom US citizens claimed as slaves. Before the invasion, the US General Edmund Pendleton Gaines had written an ominous letter to Kinache ordering him to give up these families and to sever ties with the "bird with a forked tongue" in the Gulf.[115]

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[111] "Extract of Letter to the Same, dated January 19, 1818," *State Papers and Publick Documents*, Vol. 12, 398-400; Wyllys, "The Filibusters of Amelia Island," 302-307; Pérez Morales, *El gran diablo hecho barco*, 191; Popham to John Wilson Croker, Esq. with enclosures, April 12, 1818, ADM 1/269, BNA.
[112] "Extract of a Letter to the Secretary of State, dated December 24, 1817," *State Papers and Publick Documents*, Vol. 12, 393-395.
[113] Owsley, "Ambrister and Arbuthnot," 296.
[114] "Extract of a Letter to the Secretary of State, dated December 24, 1817," *State Papers and Publick Documents*, Vol. 12, 393-395.
[115] "From General Gaines to the Seminole Chief" and "From King Hatchy to General Gaines, in answer to the foregoing," *ASPMA* 1:723.

Ignoring these threats, the Lower Creek headman Kinache and others continued to appeal to the British governor at New Providence and the Spanish governor at Havana, writing to them through the merchant Alexander Arbuthnot and through adventurers arriving in East Florida with Captain George Woodbine. With their extensive Gulf connections, perhaps they knew that as of September 1817, Spain had consented to join Britain in abolishing the slave trade.[116] In late March 1818, Woodbine arrived at Tampa Bay with twenty-four black soldiers. He was also accompanied by Robert Christie Ambrister, a veteran of the War of 1812, whose father, James, had been exiled from South Carolina after the American Revolution.[117] These men may have understood themselves to be working in alliance with McGregor and Aury, who had abandoned Amelia Island but who were already recruiting men and outfitting ships for future revolutionary activity.[118] Regardless of how they understood their service, their actions also benefited Seminoles, Lower Creeks, and Red Sticks.

The dissident Creeks used their connections with these rogue allies as it suited them, demonstrating no clear faithfulness to one over the other. While Woodbine returned to the West Indies for supplies, the rest of his force captured the Arbuthnots' schooner, proceeding to St. Marks and the Suwannee River to meet the Creeks there and gather arms.[119] Their first order of business was to join the dissident Creeks in blocking U.S. advances. Ambrister and "a body of negroes" broke into the Arbuthnots' store at Suwannee, distributing the goods and arms among

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[116] "Treaty between Great Britain and Spain, for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Signed at Madrid, 23d September, 1817" in Lewis Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions . . . subsisting between Great Britain and foreign powers . . .* (London: H. Butterworth, 1835) 2: 273-285.
[117] Owsley, "Ambrister and Arbuthnot," 299.
[118] For more about the future activities of McGregor and Aury, see various letters in Legs. 1898 and 1900, PC, AGI.
[119] "Extract of a Letter from the Governour of Georgia to Gen. Gaines, dated Milledgeville, Feb. 5, 1817," *State Papers and Public Documents*, Vol. 12, 334-335; *ASPMA* 1:731-733; Owsley, "Ambrister and Arbuthnot," 299.

them.[120] While there, he was enlisted by Hillis Hadjo, the Red Stick leader who had journeyed with Nicolls to England, and "all our Indian chiefs" to write again to the governor of the Bahamas demanding weapons. Hillis Hadjo again made strategic use of his journey to London, claiming that the Prince Regent had promised to supply him with such goods upon request.[121]

The force then marched toward San Marcos de Apalache to obtain more weapons, but was stopped on the way by people from the village of Mikasuki, who were fleeing the advancing US troops.[122] Establishing their own forts at the Apalachicola River and San Marcos de Apalache, thousands of troops under General Andrew Jackson traveled by land and water across Apalache Bay all the way to the Suwannee River, taking captives and leaving death and destruction in their wake. By early May, the Americans had captured San Marcos de Apalache and Pensacola, executing Arbuthnot, Ambrister, Hillis Hadjo, and Homathlemico, the former pair after controversial military trials and the latter pair with no trial at all.[123]

In 1819, representatives of the United States and Spain concluded their Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits—the Adams-Onís Treaty—in which the Spanish king ceded "in full property and sovereignty, all the territories which belong to him, situated to the eastward of the Mississippi, known by the name of East and West Florida."[124] With the confirmation of this

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[120] During his trial, Ambrister insisted that "the negroes alluded to" were present at the Arbuthnots' store before he arrived, while the other witnesses claimed that they had arrived with him. This distinction was more important during the trial than it is for the history narrated here: Caribbean men of African descent and those living along the Suwannee River all numbered among Ambrister's potential allies. *ASPMA* 1:731-732.

[121] "From General Gaines to the Seminole Chief," "From King Hatchy to General Gaines, in answer to the foregoing," and "Robert C. Ambrister to Governor Cameron, March 20, 1818," *ASPMA* 1:723-732.

[122] "Robert C. Ambrister to Governor Cameron, March 20, 1818," *ASPMA* 1:723-732.

[123] "A. Arbuthnot to his son, John Arbuthnot," April 2, 1818, in *ASPMA* 1:722; Canter Brown, Jr. *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1991), 9-14.

[124] "Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits Between the United States of America and His Catholic Majesty. 1819," *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other*

treaty in 1821, the contested international border established in the Treaty of the San Lorenzo became a domestic border between the State of Georgia and Florida Territory, a change that aided its enforcement among Indians. With the entire stretch of North America coastline from the Florida peninsula to western Louisiana now claimed by the United States, a nation whose military had demonstrated the extreme lengths it would go to control Gulf populations, British American adventurers and merchants lost the legal justification—and the nerve—to continue their open alliance with Creeks.

Conclusion:

While the cession of East Florida to the United States ended overt partnerships between Gulf adventurers and dissident Creeks, it did not put an immediate end to adventurous trade or settlement along the territory's Gulf of Mexico rivers. Even as leaders such as Boleck, Hillis Hadjo, Peter McQueen, and Opauney moved their people away from the Gulf to evade US forces, Alexander Arbuthnot was instructing his son to move their schooner, skins, account books, and other effects to a hiding place near Cedar Key, off the Gulf coast just south of the Suwannee River.[125] Six months later, Red Sticks and allied African Americans had established new homes in the south of the peninsula, along the Peace River just south of Tampa Bay, where they were seen trading with British merchants.[126] By 1822, Opauney had constructed a two-story home there, as well as "a dairy house, corn house, stables, sheds," to support "an extensive peach

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Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America, ed. Francis Newton Thorpe (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), accessed at The Avalon Project website, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/default.asp.

[125] "A. Arbuthnot to his son, John Arbuthnot," April 2, 1818, in *ASPMA* 1:722;

[126] Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 12. Before 1821, these communities were also said to be supplied by the Spanish government at St. Augustine. A.C.W. Fanning to Maj. Gen. E.P. Gaines, Nov. 27, 1818, in *ASPMA*, 1:752.

orchard, & a considerable crop of Corn, Potatoes, etc. etc."[127] After Jackson invaded this region in 1821, many of its inhabitants returned northward toward Apalache Bay. By 1823, at least eight Creek villages dotted the territory between the Suwannee River and the Aucilla River, just east of San Marcos de Apalache, which had become the U.S. town of St. Marks.[128]

During the decade and a half separating the Adams-Onís Treaty from the Second Seminole War, the enduring presence of armed Indians on the rivers surrounding Apalache Bay was a constant complaint of US citizens and officials attempting to settle in this region. An 1823 treaty professed to remove all Florida Indians to a southern reservation fifteen miles from any coast, but few of the leaders living between the Aucilla and Suwannee rivers signed or abided by this agreement.[129] In the late 1820s, conflicts between these Mikasukis, Red Sticks, and African Americans and the US citizens attempting to establish cotton plantations near them escalated again into warfare, seemingly foreshadowing the Second Seminole War in its brutality and the individual players involved.[130] During the Second Seminole War, the Native American and African American peoples who were at war with the United States once again used the Gulf rivers of Apalache Bay to their advantage, seeking shelter on the islands off shore from the

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[127] Journal of Horatio Dexter, enclosed in William P. Duval to John C. Calhoun, Aug. 26, 1822, transcription in Mark F. Boyd, "Horatio S. Dexter and Events Leading to the Treaty of Moultrie Creek with the Seminole Indians," *Florida Anthropologist* 11 (September 1958), 87-91; Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 13.
Peter McQueen established his village south of present-day Bartow, near a ford in the river that allowed them trade through Charlotte Harbor. Brown, *Florida's Peace River Frontier*, 14.
[128] *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* 2:439.
[129] William Duval, James Gadsden, and Bernard Segui to John C. Calhoun, Sept. 26, 1823, *ASPIA* 2:440-441; "Treaty with the Florida Tribes of Indians, 1823," *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, ed. Charles J. Kappler (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904) 2: 203-207.
[130] Canter Brown, Jr., "The Florida Crisis of 1826-1827 and the Second Seminole War," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (April 1995): 419-442.

Apalachicola River.[131] Yet these later methods of survival bore none of the explicit claims to international alliance and state-building of their predecessors; indeed, foreign adventurers and merchants as explicit and present partners had disappeared.

In other parts of the Gulf of Mexico, however, possibilities remained for partnerships between Indigenous peoples and British merchants that were strong enough to support declarations of sovereign statehood. Throughout the entire Caste War, the leaders of Chan Santa Cruz and other autonomous communities in southern and eastern Yucatán would gain arms through the trade networks of this double borderland between Mexico, British Honduras, and the Caribbean Sea. For a brief period, beginning in 1848, British merchants, Maya rebels, and even the superintendent of British Honduras would imagine eastern Yucatán as sovereign Maya territory.

[131] L. Thomas to William Davenport, Feb. 1, 1840 in Zachary Taylor to Adjutant General, Feb. 16 (T-76), 1840, Letters Received (Main Series), Records of the Adjutant General (RG 94), National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC. By the mid-1840s, the United States army had pressured most Seminoles, Black Seminoles, Mikasukis, and Red Sticks into migrating away from the Gulf to the Seminole Reservation in present-day Oklahoma—a move that endangered Black Seminoles even more than their Native American counterparts because their destination lay near the slaveholding Creeks.

Chapter 2: Maya-British Dreams of Territory in the Yucatecan *Monte*

In the second year of the series of civil conflicts that became known as the Caste War of Yucatán, leaders of the rebel forces added something new to their list of conditions for peace. These rebels—described as Indians by contemporaries but including people of Maya and Spanish descent from across the Yucatán peninsula—had begun their warfare in 1847 with diverse and sometimes contradictory objectives. At different times, their leaders had demanded an end to oppressive civil and religious taxes, sought protection over their communal lands, and advocated the forgiveness of debts tying workers to estates. In April 1848, however, after the rebel army took the southern outpost of Bacalar, near Mexico's border with British Honduras, the leaders of this movement began to demand a division of territory that would grant them independent control over eastern Yucatán. Writing in February 1849 to the Baptist missionary Rev. John Kingdon, to Edward L. Rhys, and to other British merchants who had established residence in Bacalar, Jacinto Pat stated that what his people desired most was "freedom, and not oppression" from excessive contributions and fees, a goal that might most likely be achieved if Mexico would agree to "divide the territory of Yucatán as you suggest."[206]

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[206] Jacinto Pat to Messrs. John Kingdon, Edward L. Rhys, & Co., Feb. 18, 1848, 28R178, Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS), Belmopan.
These letters from Maya leaders generally arrived to Belize in Spanish and English, often also with an original in Maya. Because the Spanish translation was likely made first, and because this version is less likely to contain distortions by British writers, I have consulted the Spanish versions when possible. Unless stated otherwise, the English translations are mine from the Spanish. Here, the Spanish version reads: "libertad, y no la opresión porque anteriormente estabamos subjugados con tantas contribuciones y pagos que nos imponían" and "Ya bien sea que se parta las tierras de Yucatán como Uds. me dicen."

When Kingdon forwarded this letter to the superintendent of British Honduras, Charles St. John Fancourt, he described the division of territory as Pat's idea, adding that a "complete separation from the Spaniards"—indeed, "the re-conquest of the whole Peninsula of Yucatan"—had numbered among the rebels' goals from the beginning.[207] This claim was likely exaggerated, given that Pat's February 1849 letter treated this demand as a suggestion from Reverend Kingdon. Yet delegations from Bacalar had visited Belize almost as soon as the rebels had taken the city, seeking British trade and alliance and, some said, offering the territory they had occupied, along with their allegiance, to the British Crown.[208] However the idea for a division of territory had originated, and whatever role Britons had in it, by early 1849 it had gained wide and long-lasting support across the factions of rebel leadership. At a moment of internal tension and of stalemate with Yucatecan forces, the promise of independently controlled territory seemed to unify rebel leaders. Kingdon added that Venancio Pec and Cecilio Chi, leaders of the eastern rebel faction and rivals of Pat, had also voiced support for the measure.

Shortly after Reverend Kingdon sent his letters, Chi, Pec, and a man named José Atanacio Espadas sent their own correspondence to Superintendent Fancourt, stating their desire to divide Yucatán, "as the supreme government of Belize says," in order to end the war.[209] By November 1849, Pec and others of his faction had assassinated Pat; Chi had also died at the hands of a rival.[210] That month, Pec and others declared to Superintendent Fancourt that "no arrangement would be satisfactory that did not secure to them an independent Government, that

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[207] Kingdon to Fancourt, March 9, 1848, 28R178, BARS.
[208] Christopher Hempstead to James Buchanan, May 26 and July 29, 1848, Volume 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, 1847-1906, General Records of the Department of State (RG 59), National Archives and Records Service (NARA), Washington, DC.
[209] Chi, Pec and Jose Atanacio Espadas to [Fancourt?], March 22, 1849, 28R185, BARS.
[210] Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatan* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 148-150, 155-157.

they desired to have a portion of the Country relinquished to them, a line drawn northward from Bacalar to the Gulf of Mexico."[211] Such a border, if enforced, would have officially severed the coastal lowlands of eastern Yucatán from the Hispanic-dominated centers of the west.

The conviction that such a division was possible, one historian has suggested, may have served as a motivation for the rebel leadership to establish the capital for which they eventually became famous—Chan Santa Cruz, just inland from Ascension Bay. Mention of Chan Santa Cruz first appears in records in the months following Pec's meeting with Fancourt, and at the site would appear a miraculous talking cross, urging its followers to continue fighting.[212] The rebel leaders who, along with peasant followers, congregated at Chan Santa Cruz would continue to demand and control this territory for the rest of the war.[213]

This demand for independent territory and autonomous governance, coming from people who had long been integrated—albeit loosely—into the colonial structures of the Spanish Empire and of independent Mexico, is at once striking and suspect. As with interpretations of British involvement with dissident Creeks in early-nineteenth-century Florida, historians have struggled to interpret this chapter of British-Maya relations. Nineteenth-century Yucatecans paid considerable attention to Britons' roles in the Caste War, insisting that officials in Belize had convinced some Mayas to rebel as part of a plot to acquire Yucatecan territory.[214] More recently, these grandiose accusations have been easily contradicted with evidence that Britain's Colonial Office "had neither the intention nor desire to add rebel-controlled eastern Yucatan to a

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[211] Spanish and English versions of the superintendent's report of theses proceedings can be found in Exp. 49, Vol. 62, Caja 112, Gobernación (G), Poder Ejecutivo, Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (AGEY), Mérida. Copies are also located in Exp. 3, Vol. 63, Caja 113, G, PE, AGEY; and 32bR39, BARS.
[212] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 185.
[213] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 126-129, 159-165,
[214] Serapio Baqueiro Preve, *Ensayo histórico sobre las revoluciones en Yucatán*…(Mérida: Impr. de M. Heredia Argüelles, 1878) 2:227-228.

worldwide empire that was already too big and too expensive to handle."[215] Rebels' demands for territory, furthermore, which arose only after the war had begun, offer little to the origins debates that have long occupied Caste War historians. Instead, the demand for territorial sovereignty remains in established accounts as an explanation for the "notions of grandeur" that arose among rebel leaders, and as manipulations by the merchants whose smuggled weapons sustained them but with little backing from the British government officials, who were committed primarily to free trade.[216]

Sources show, however, that British support for Maya rebels extended beyond rogue merchants to Superintendent Fancourt himself, who had motivation and precedent for the hope—made explicit in letters to the governor of Jamaica—that eastern Yucatán might come to bear an official connection to the British Crown. At the time that the Caste War began, British Hondurans were feuding internally over the mission and the administration of their settlement, which occupied an ambiguous position with relation to Mexico and the United States. Superintendent Fancourt and Reverend Kingdon found themselves on the same side in these battles. Despite the ethnocentrism and self-interest that their position entailed, they apparently shared a sincere commitment to joining forces in some way with the Indians whom Venancio Pec professed to command. The presence of these three men along Mexico's border with British Honduras did not outlast the first years of the war; ultimately, the lines of illicit smuggling that had long characterized the borderlands of Belize and Yucatán would bear more importance to rebels than government-to-government relations. Yet this brief moment of semi-official collaboration deserves notice. Considered alongside the case of British-Creek alliance in Florida, it illustrates an understudied pattern of indigenous power in the nineteenth-century Gulf.

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[215] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 424.
[216] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 165, 177-178.

More importantly, acknowledging the extent of British interest in Yucatán reveals the role that territory played in the revolutionary Mayas' own strategizing about their place in the Atlantic world. No mere dupes of British merchants, who could not have followed through on promises of alliance or protection, Venancio Pec and his contemporaries acted on reliable information from British authorities, making the fraught decisions that indigenous leaders often made as they envisioned their peoples' future in the face of European empires and states. As weapons moved across the borderland that the rebels had occupied between British Honduras and Mexico, Britons and Maya rebels together schemed about what the recognition of Indian sovereignty on this borderland might mean.

The Monte: A Borderland Region

By the time rebel forces took the outpost of Bacalar in 1848, Spaniards and their descendants had claimed dominion over Yucatán for three centuries. Their conquest of this peninsula, however, still remained incomplete. While Spaniards had conquered the northwestern provinces of the peninsula fairly early, establishing the settlements of Campeche, Mérida, and Valladolid on the ruins of vanquished Maya cities, the regions stretching along the eastern coast of the peninsula, across Yucatán's present-day border with Belize, and inland toward Lake Petén, remained at the periphery of their control. Described by Spaniards simply as *el monte*—the countryside or the wilderness—this space has been named by one historian the "region of emancipation,"[217] a space where Mayas succeeded in escaping or evading the structures of

[217] Pedro Bracamonte y Sosa, *La conquista inconclusa de Yucatán: los mayas de la montaña, 1560–1680* (Mexico: CIESAS, 2001), p. 15. See also Grant D. Jones, ed., *Anthropology and History in Yucatán* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977); Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Mark W. Lentz, "Black Belizeans and Fugitive Mayas: Interracial Encounters on the Edge of Empire, 1750-1803," *The Americas* (April 2014): 660.

colonialism. Once vital hubs in the Pre-Columbian trade economy, the towns, forests, and waterways of *el monte* had become a borderland space, where contested political claims could empower non-imperial actors, and where foreign goods and people infused traditional practices with new forms of survival.

In the sixteenth-century, *el monte* of the southeastern Yucatán peninsula lay in the borderlands between the Spanish empire, the Itza confederacy, and emerging illicit networks of commerce. Spaniards then struggled for one hundred fifty years to make lasting inroads into the south. The Itza confederacy, their biggest and most well-known challenge, lay near Lake Petén in present-day Guatemala and provided a source of trade and raiding—as well as an escape destination—for Mayas incorporated into the colonial system in the northeast. In a different way, the eastern provinces also remained at the periphery of the Spanish empire. These low, coastal lands were less desirable to Spaniards than the more arid northwest, a closer match to the climate of Spain and free from the diseases associated with lowland climates. More importantly, the lowlands were vulnerable in the seventeenth century to attacks by French, Dutch, and English pirates, endangering any people—Spaniard or Maya—who ventured to settle there. With the climate exacerbating the spread of Old World diseases, leading to significant population loss, as late as 1600 the eastern coast bore no powerful Maya or Spanish settlements.[218]

One of the only successful Spanish settlements on the eastern coast was Salamanca de Bacalar (or put simply, Bacalar) an uncomfortable presidio located on a narrow lake ten miles inland from the Bay of Chetumal. The town's hot, humid climate was matched by its inconvenient location, which required residents seeking Atlantic trade to follow a series of streams now known as Chac Creek to the Río Hondo in order to paddle downriver or to go by

[218] Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule*, 14-16.

foot to the coastal site of Tamalcab.[219] Founded, unlike other eastern sites, through violent campaigns to force submission, the town's small population of poor, uneducated Spaniards and their meager way of life depended on imperial patronage and on tribute from the local Mayas.[220] The neighboring Maya had been brought into the orbit of Bacalar through *reducción*, a practice used across the Spanish Empire to relocate dispersed Indians into large settlements where they might be more easily indoctrinated and controlled.[221] Resettled into these villages, they paid tribute to their respective *encomenderos* and received visits from priests, but they were known to desert whenever they found the Spaniards' demands unbearable.

In distant missions like Tipu, "located far upstream, beyond miles of treacherous rapids, in a small fertile valley in the foothills of the Maya Mountains," they found independent communities hardly visited by the Spaniards, who perceived this region as "a fragile buffer between Christian civilization and the vast Petén pagan heartland."[222] The connection between the southeastern settlements like Tipu and the Petén generated a "culture of resistance" in which prophecy based on the book of Chilam Balam, a collection of historical and sacred texts written by Mayas after conquest, preceded and infused major rebellions. Indigenous rebellions and pirate attacks so often punctuated the life of the presidio of Bacalar that its residents were frequently forced to relocate. While military forces from Mérida eventually used Bacalar in their campaigns

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[219] Grant Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule: Time and History on a Colonial Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 64-66.
[220] For other examples of eastern campaigns, see Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule*, 12-18.
[221] J. H. Elliott compares *reducciones* to the New England Puritans' smaller "praying towns," writing that the results of both policies of relocation "failed to correspond to the high hopes with which the experiment had been invested." Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 74. For a recent account of the parallel case in the Andes, see Jeremy Mumford, *Vertical Empire: The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
[222] Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule*, 14, 106.

to conquer the Itza confederacy in the 1680s and 1690s, the site lay abandoned for the most part until 1729. By this point, Spanish dreams of establishing an encomienda-based system of tribute and labor there had been entirely dashed.[223]

Spaniards nursed a fear throughout the colonial period that the independent Mayas still controlling the Petén and agents of rival empires might together or separately aid colonized Indians in rebellion. During a 1761 revolt led in the north by Jacinto Canek, for example, rumors circulated that the Maya revolutionaries under Canek's leadership believed that "thousands" of Englishmen would soon come to their aid.[224] These claims, as Nancy Farriss writes, likely demonstrate "more of Spanish fears than Maya hopes," but the British did maintain an active presence near Bacalar.[225] Beginning in the seventeenth century, British subjects established rough settlements in the Bay of Honduras and at Laguna de Términos near Campeche, as well as along the Belize River and the Río Hondo, near Bacalar. From these places—all territories under Spanish sovereignty—these British subjects exported logwood, used for dyes and medicines, to their countrymen in Jamaica and New England. Spanish officials believed that these logwood cutters, many of whom had previously operated as privateers, used these establishments for smuggling.

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[223] Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule*, 55-64, 107-109. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule*, 67.

[224] There may have been a millenarian edge to these rumors. Curiously, in 1763, the allies of the Ottawa leader Pontiac near Detroit had rumored a French return to the continent. A century later, Xhosa of South African would rumor Russian assistance against the British. Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Noel Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992).

[225] Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule*, 66. Farriss found the Jacinto Canek source at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. She also cites others from 1565, 1568, 1618, and 1771 there and in the collections of the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City.

Conflicts between Spain and Britain over these logwood establishments lay at the heart of the War of Jenkin's Ear in 1739. After the Seven Years' War, from 1756 to 1763, the Treaty of Paris gave British subjects formal permission to cut, load, and carry away logwood in the Bay of Honduras, and to build and occupy dwellings and storehouses for these purposes. In exchange, Britons were ordered to give up their operations at the Laguna de Términos and to destroy fortifications that they had built in any settlement. Whether this promise applied to the logging operations near Bacalar remained ambiguous, but British subjects claimed that it did: they tended to see these settlements, near the Río Hondo and Belize River, as part of the Bay of Honduras. British loggers therefore increased their operations at the town of Belize at the mouth of the Belize River.[226]

From a British perspective, the settlements in the Bay of Honduras—a part of Central America that they called the Mosquito Coast—were legitimate not only because of agreements between empires but also because of Britain's relationship with the Miskito people, an indigenous group that also included people of African descent.[227] This friendship transformed over time from an alliance of equals to a relationship in which Britons believed that they held the upper hand. During the War of Jenkin's Ear, the "Mosquito King" and other Miskito delegates signed a treaty with a lieutenant selected by Edward Trelawny, the Governor of Jamaica, in

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[226] "Definitive Treaty between Great Britain and Spain (and France). Signed at Paris, the 10th of February, 1763" in Lewis Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions . . . subsisting between Great Britain and foreign powers* . . . (London: H. Butterworth, 1835) 2:233-244; Malachy Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce…: every thing essential that is contained in Savary's dictionary: also, all the material laws of trade and navigation*, 3d ed., s.v. "Logwood" (London: Printed for H. Woodfall, etc., 1766) 2.

[227] See, for example, the explanation by Malachy Postlethwayt, who wrote that this territory "has been claimed, from time immemorial, by the Mosketoe Indians, who being the original natives of this place, and of the lands hereabouts, and having never been conquered by the Spaniards, nor submitted to their dominion, but have long been faithful friends and allies to the English nation." Postlethwayt, *The universal dictionary of trade and commerce*, s.v. "Logwood."

which they professed to cede the territory they inhabited to the British Crown. The agreement had declared the Miskitos British subjects "to be governed by the same Laws as the English who shall settle amongst them." They had promised to fight, with British assistance, to reclaim the "Countries of their Fathers," and to aid "all Indian Nations who are now in subjection to the Spanish Yoke." Despite the shortcomings of this agreement from the Miskitos' perspective, it afforded them powers often denied them by Spain, whose Consejo de Indias had balked at their 1739 suggestion that they negotiate with them through treaties of peace and commerce.[228] With British-obtained weapons, the Miskitos would continue to engage in warfare against Spain into the decades of the American Revolution.

As part of the peace agreements that followed the Revolution, Britain and Spain established the settlement of British Honduras in the Spanish territories surrounding Belize. The Anglo-Spanish Convention of 1786 declared this settlement to stretch from the Río Hondo southward past Belize to the Sibún River. The territory was to remain under Spanish sovereignty; British subjects were to use it only for trade and logging. In a move similar to the formal relocation of British loggers from Laguna de Términos to the Mosquito Shore two decades earlier, the British Crown now ordered the evacuation from the Mosquito Shore settlements of its subjects, including loyalist refugees from its former North American colonies.[229] Many people from the Bay of Honduras relocated with African Americans they claimed as slaves to such colonies as Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and the Bahamas, but some moved northward, settling at

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[228] William Shuman Sorsby, "The British Superintendency of the Mosquito Shore, 1749-1787" (PhD diss., University College, London, 1969), 12-20; Robert A. Naylor, *Penny Ante Imperialism: The Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras, 1600-1914* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989), 46-48.

[229] These loyalists included the South Carolina merchant Lachlan McGillivray, father of the Creek leader Alexander McGillivray, discussed in the previous chapter. St. John Robinson, "Southern Loyalists in the Caribbean and Central America," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 93, no. 3/4 (July-October 1992): 205-220.

sites designated for them just north of Belize. Here they were permitted to gather the "produce of the earth, purely natural and uncultivated" but could not establish plantations or build any non-logwood related industrial works.[230] His Catholic Majesty promised not to "exercise any act of severity against the Mosquitos" in the evacuated territories, while His Britannic Majesty promised to "strictly prohibit all His subjects from furnishing arms, or warlike stores, to the Indians in general, situated upon the frontiers of the Spanish possessions."[231]

Now hemmed in between the Spanish empire and the British Caribbean, *el monte* retained its indigenous and borderland character. Mayas gathered in multiethnic bands to hide out for decades at a time, perceived by Spaniards as *indios bárbaros* and, despite their diversity, communicating with each other in Yucatec Maya. Some of them remained unconquered and others had become apostate from the religion of their former colonizers. Many practiced non-Catholic rituals. A "melting pot of fugitives" in the words of one scholar, *el monte* also became an interracial region, with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people of African descent fleeing from British Honduras toward Yucatán and Petén, where, as in Florida, they were promised sanctuary if they converted to Catholicism. Passing through the no-man's land of *el monte*, they sometimes met and mixed with fugitive Mayas. In at least one instance, a group of "independent Indians" attacking a nearby British settlement included two women whose descriptor "Xbox," a rough translation of "black woman," suggests that these people were of African descent.[232]

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[230] "Convention between Great Britain and Spain. Signed at London the 14th of July, 1786," in Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions* 2: 245-255; Troy S. Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 163-166; Robinson, "Southern Loyalists," 208.
[231] Article XIV, "Convention between Great Britain and Spain. Signed at London the 14th of July, 1786," in Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions* 2: 245-255.
[232] The edict granting sanctuary to converts was repealed in 1790, but unlike in North America, it continued to be enforced. Lentz, "Black Belizeans," 670-671.

Yucatán's independence from Spain in 1821 altered the way of life of Mayas in villages and towns across the Yucatán peninsula, but the area around Bacalar retained its borderland character until rebels occupied it during the Caste War. The liberal politicians who came to power in Yucatán—part of the Mexican Empire, and soon after, a state within the Mexican Republic—worked to reduce the influence of *cofradias* and the *republica de indios*, institutions through which Maya villagers had fostered autonomy and mutual support. These politicians also supported agricultural reform, leading to the expansion of haciendas and the alienation of those who had previous used these public lands. Meanwhile, conservative hacienda owners and rural clergy used what power they had to maintain tribute payments, using the privatization of land to control unruly laborers.[233] Having received promises during the early years of Mexico's independence struggle that tribute, personal service, and corporal punishment would be abolished, many Maya Yucatecans experienced the rising of expectations and the dashing of hopes that tend to intensify old grievances.[234] The Caste War movement gained strength particularly in the east, where Maya Yucatecans, now Mexican citizens, had seen more possibilities for their advancement. Some of the heads of this movement were village leaders, called *batabs*; a few were sugar planters.

Many had fought as conscripted soldiers alongside *mestizo* forces. The decades between independence and the Caste War in Yucatán saw bitter conflicts between factions in the peninsula's major cities, Mérida and Campeche. Many of these revolved around Yucatán's relationship to Mexico. Some also related to other events in the Gulf. In 1836, for example,

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[233] Rugeley, *Yucatan's Maya Peasantry*, 59.

[234] These promises were part of the liberal constitution created by the Cortes of Cádiz. Terry Rugeley, *Yucatan's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 40-48. Rugeley emphasizes that departures from haciendas were complex, more often about "freedom of movement" than "hacienda flight."

demands from Mexico City for the recruitment of battalions to fight revolutionaries in Texas sent Yucatecans northward to an uncertain fate, leaving the countryside vacant from conscription or flight. The elite provincial men tasked with heading these militias, and the common people, including Mayas, who filled their ranks carried out their own federalist revolt later that year, which in 1840 grew into a factional war for Yucatán's independence from Mexico. In 1846, the United States' invasion of Mexico unleashed more civil warfare in Yucatán, as elite factions mobilized Maya militias across the countryside to support an armed dispute over whether to attempt to preserve U.S. trade by again declaring their independence from Mexico.[235]

Independent not through ties to ancient kingdoms but through citizenship and market forces, elite Mayas and a handful of *mestizo* military generals used British arms to take violent control of the peninsula's eastern cities in the summer of 1847, extending their sphere of influence nearly to the walls of Mérida and Campeche. By April 1848, they had occupied Bacalar. Gaining a port to the Atlantic World near to their British trade partners, they were also situated at the edge of *el monte*, a region that for centuries had remained beyond Spanish control.

Partnership with Merchants

By late summer of 1848, rumors circulated in Yucatán and Mexico City that Belizean merchants were supplying rebel forces with arms and ammunition in direct violation of the Anglo-Spanish Convention—assuming, as Mexican officials did, that this agreement had transferred to their nation upon its independence.[236] Indeed, emissaries from British Honduras had been trading with rebels even before their occupation of Bacalar. Shortly after they took

[235] Terry Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever: Mayas, Hispanics, and Caste War Violence in Yucatán, 1800-1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 39-55.
[236] Translation of Mariano Otero, National Palace, Mexico, to Doyle, Aug. 31, 1848 in Doyle to Fancourt, Set. 13, 1848, 29R100, BARS. Doyle to Fancourt, March 21, 1849, 29R238, BARS.

control of this outpost, British merchants established residence in the city, forming relationships that defied both the letter of the Convention and the heart of its prohibitions. By December 1848, both Yucatecan and British officials would believe that the merchant Edward Rhys and other British agents were not only trading with the rebel leadership but also influencing their strategy.[237] No mere case of smuggling, however, this partnership suggested a deeper alliance.

During the early months of the Caste War, British businessmen in Belize had expressed fear of the Indians at their border. Some had claimed, drawing from common tropes about Indians, that their teams of woodcutters on New River and Spanish Creek had been attacked by "Indians armed with bows and arrows."[238] Superintendent Fancourt had shared these concerns. Receiving reports from Hispanic officials at Bacalar that Indians were killing "all other classes" led him to request assistance from the First West India Regiment from Jamaica, which arrived in May 1848 to protect the British settlement.[239] By that time, however, letters from the rebel leadership had convinced Fancourt that these men were "anxious to be on friendly terms with us."[240] As a British merchant at Bacalar, Austin Cox, explained, the Indians wished "to carry on their intercourse with the Inhabitants of British Honduras in the same footing as the Spaniards have always done."[241] Venancio Pec, Cecilio Chi, and others wrote to Fancourt on behalf of the "Peninsula de Yucatán Libertadora," extending a formal offer of peace, union, and free entry at Ascension Bay, 150 miles northward as the crow flies from the port city of Belize.[242]

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[237] Copy of Thomas Rhys to Fancourt, Belize Dec. 28, 1848; Jan. 11, 1849, 25R473, BARS.
[238] Fancourt to Major Mends, March 4 and 18, 1848, 22b253 and 22b256, BARS.
[239] Fancourt to José I. Perera de Loria, Feb. 24, 1848, 22b244, BARS; Fancourt to Office Commanding the Forces, May 29, 1848.
[240] Fancourt to Grey, No. 30, June 7, 1848, 25R377, BARS.
[241] Fancourt to Principal Magistrate of Bacalar, May 9, 1848, 22b269, BARS.
[242] Cecilio Chi and others to "Excellent Sir Commander in Chief of the Liberating Law of Belize," June 15, 1848, 29R37, BARS.

Superintendent Fancourt received these acts of official correspondence with relative favor. Already in May, he had written to José María Tzuc, whom he addressed as the town's Principal Magistrate, that people affiliated with the rebel army would receive the same protection in British Honduras as that extended to the "subjects of other nations."[243] The "Indian chiefs," he remarked the following month to the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Charles Grey, were demonstrating "great moderation" at Bacalar. While he retained suspicions that this "systematic" behavior was a result of outside influence, he determined nonetheless "that the movement of the Indian generally has been purely a political movement," not the act of savage violence that he had once imagined.[244] No longer convinced of the rebels' inferiority in relation to Hispanic Yucatecans, Fancourt determined to treat both sides equally. By July, the US consul at Belize could announce that Fancourt had recommended the appointment of a commercial agent at Bacalar.[245]

These changes in Fancourt's attitude toward the rebels were influenced by reports from other British Hondurans who had begun traveling to Bacalar, both of their own accord and at his request. In late June, a rebel attack on the British side of the Río Hondo led to the death of a Hispanic Yucatecan, leading Fancourt to send Dr. Thomas Rhys, a retired surgeon who had previously served as part of the 3rd West India Regiment, to Bacalar to seek restitution.[246] Rhys reported back a brutal scene in which officials at Bacalar had brought in suspects from the offending party, giving them dozens, even hundreds, of lashes with a cow skin whip until one confessed and was put to death. While Rhys expressed disgust at the severity of the punishments

[243] Fancourt to Principal Magistrate of Bacalar, May 9, 1848, 22b269, BARS.
[244] Fancourt to Grey, Dispatch No. 30, June 7, 1848, 25R377, BARS.
[245] Hempstead to Buchanan, July 29, 1848, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, RG 59, National Archives and Records Service (NARA).
[246] Fancourt to Principal Magistrate Bacalar, June 24, 1848, 22b295, BARS; Hempstead to Buchanan, Jan. 20, 1849, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, RG 59, NARA.

he had witnessed, he emphasized to Fancourt "how rapidly these people punish those who offend the English or those who live under the protection of their flag."[247]

The attack in question had happened under the watch of the commandant Juan Pablo Cocom, who for some time had been appealing to Fancourt for help taxing the mahogany and other products that Hispanic Yucatecans now residing in Belize had taken with them when they fled Bacalar.[248] Cocom had appointed a British commissioner, one Richard Hill, to make an account of these goods. In his effort to collect payment, he had stated clearly to Fancourt his wish to maintain peace between rebel-controlled Bacalar and British Honduras, at one point ordering the return of mules taken from English territory.[249] Fancourt would later state that he had trusted Cocom's ability to promote good relations between Bacalar and Belize.[250] Yet Cocom's implication in this attack on British territory provided a rationale for his assassination. A month later, the rebel secretary José Victor Reyes wrote to Fancourt on behalf of Francisco Cob, Cecilio Chi, Bernardino Poot, and Venancio Pec, with a request for gunpowder and the report that Cocom had been put to death because of the lack of dependability that he had shown with regard to their "beloved" English.[251] By October, Rhys's son Edward, who had likely accompanied him on his journey, was intimate enough with Venancio Pec that Pec

[247] Rhys to Fancourt, July 4, 1848, 29R65, BARS.
[248] Juan P. Cocom to Fancourt, May 18 and June 21, 1848, 28R166 and 28R167, BARS.
[249] Cocom to Fancourt, Bacalar, June 28, 1848, 29R55, BARS.
[250] Fancourt to Principal Magistrate, Bacalar, July 12, 1848, 22b307, BARS.
[251] "… por que no tiene formalidad con los ingleses amantes. Por ese motio fue matado." Francisco Cob and others to Fancourt, July 8, 1848, 28R168, BARS. Fancourt interpreted this phrase to mean that Cocom had "observed no faith with the English," a claim that he said did not match his own observations about Cocom. Fancourt to Principal Magistrate, Bacalar, July 12, 1848, 22b307, BARS.

commissioned Rhys to continue the work begun by Cocom and Hill, collecting taxes from refugees in possession of Yucatecan logwood.[252]

Meanwhile, the Baptist missionary John Kingdon also made his way to the Río Hondo, where he served as another source for Fancourt on activities along this border. Kingdon had arrived to Belize in late 1845 after serving at a mission in Jamaica. Almost immediately upon his arrival, he had become embroiled in a series of disputes with the local Baptist pastor, Alexander Henderson, revolving around their different visions for the mission. A proponent of extending communion to non-members, Kingdon also believed that mission society funds should be allocated not to the life of the church in Belize but to the conversion of "heathens" on the borders of British Honduras. As Kingdon and Henderson had jockeyed for control of the local Baptist church, the faction represented by Henderson had also entered into disputes with the local government, including Fancourt. When Kingdon's small, mixed-communion congregation disbanded in March 1848, he had sold this church property to Fancourt for use in building a lunatic asylum, a pet project that was intended to bear the name of Fancourt Dispensary.[253]

That June, Kingdon departed Belize City to establish a mission station on the English side of the Río Hondo, where he acted as minister, English teacher, and superintendent to a community of four to five hundred Caste War refugees. While the majority of these migrants were people of Hispanic descent, Maya Yucatecans also seem to have numbered among them. In a letter to the Governor Grey, Fancourt explained Kingdon's appointment to the superintendency by referencing his proficiency in both Maya and Spanish. According to an opponent of Kingdon writing an account of these events two years later, the missionary society in London disapproved

[252] Venancio Pec and José Victor Reyes to Fancourt, Oct. 5, 1848, 28R202 and 28R203, BARS.
[253] Frederick Crowe, *The gospel in Central America . . . a history of the Baptist mission in British Honduras* (London: C. Gilpin, 1850), 379, 388-402, 457.

of its agent's taking on such an official role, particularly because Kingdon departed Belize without tying up loose ends with the church in that town.[254]

When confronted directly with charges of breaking the neutrality provisions of the 1786 Anglo-Spanish Convention, Fancourt replied with appeals to free trade. Prohibiting the sale of arms, he wrote to a Yucatecan official in February 1848, would be "an interference to the trade of the settlement" and "a great hardship" to the people of British Honduras.[255] While he later made attempts to influence "respectable" trading houses to end their trade with the rebels, he refused to intervene more directly.[256] He maintained this policy in his dealings with rebel leaders. In response, for example, to the request by authorities at Bacalar that he pressure refugees to abide by contracts taxing them on the removal of logwood, Fancourt responded that he had no information about such stipulations. He added, "However much I might be disposed to employ my influence in satisfying your wishes, I have no power to enforce contracts entered into at Bacalar."[257]

Historian Don E. Dumond has concluded that Britain's responsibility for the Caste War was limited to an "unwillingness to place any real barrier in the way of what London and Belize called 'free trade,'" which in this case included trade that went against the conditions of the 1786 Anglo-Spanish Convention.[258] Yet by appointing a commercial agent at Bacalar and by corresponding frequently with rebel leaders, Fancourt appeared less as a neutral proponent of free trade and more as the welcoming neighbor to whatever government might take hold at his border. As in the case of British merchants' meddling in the political affairs of Mexico City,

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[254] Crowe, *The gospel in Central America*, 475-476; Fancourt to Grey, No. 30, June 7, 1848, 25R377, BARS.
[255] Fancourt to Alonso Manuel Peon, Feb. 1, 1848, 22bR214, BARS.
[256] Fancourt to Doyle, Oct. 13, 1848, 22b356, BARS.
[257] Fancourt to Principal Magistrate Bacalar, Oct. 23, 1848, 22b364, BARS.
[258] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 22, 424.

Fancourt's professed non-interventionist policy enabled men acting with his explicit or implied blessing to intervene in foreign politics in ways that promised to benefit the British settlement.[259] When military confrontations resumed between rebel and Yucatecan forces, these British agents continued to act as friends of the rebels. Fancourt's own response, at first, was to maintain the non-interventionist stance that had so far been his trademark.

Early in December 1848, Fancourt had sent another underling, J. H. Faber, to meet with the Principal Magistrate of Bacalar in order to arrange passports for trade with Belize.[260] Then, shortly after Christmas, news arrived that "Spaniards from all parts of the Coast are murdering the Indians," that they had blockaded Chac Creek, and that a number of Britons who had established trading houses in the city had been detained.[261] One of these letters came from Dr. Thomas Rhys, who believed that Yucatecan militias were also in pursuit of his son. Insisting that his son "has only been trading, not making war," Rhys committed to leave immediately for the Río Hondo, declaring, "Should Edward Rhys become their victim I shall sacrifice every Spaniard I meet."[262] Through his private secretary, Fancourt informed Rhys that it was too early to send British troops and that he could not "be responsible for the consequence which may result from your entering a foreign province which has been for many months, as you are aware, unable to afford protection even to its own inhabitants."[263]

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[259] Barbara A. Tenenbaum, "Merchants, Money, and Mischief: The British in Mexico, 1821-1862," *The Americas* 35, no. 3 (Jan. 1979): 317-339.
[260] Faber to Fancourt, Dec. 4, 1848, 29R160, BARS.
[261] Copy of Thomas Rhys to Fancourt, Dec. 28, 1848 and Austin William Cox and James H. LaCroix to Fancourt, Dec. 29, 1848, 29R174 and 29R175, BARS.
[262] Copy of Thomas Rhys to Fancourt, Dec. 28, 1848, 29R174, BARS.
[263] H.H. Morant, Private Secretary, to Dr. Rhys, Dec. 28, 1848, 22b383, BARS.

Still, Rhys, along with ten or twenty armed men, departed Belize to aid the rebels in defending Bacalar against the armed militias sent by the state of Yucatán.[264] Whatever had previously characterized the relationship between British subjects and rebel authorities, they were now fighting together to protect Bacalar from Yucatecan attack. British Hondurans had also known for some time that Governor Miguel Barbachano had recruited hundreds of US soldiers, many of them veterans of the recent U.S.-Mexico War, to fight as mercenaries alongside Yucatecan forces. Even before these soldiers arrived, Fancourt had used the fear of US intervention in the war as a reason to retain the 1st West Indian Regiment in British Honduras. In a letter to Grey, he had announced it probable "that the government of the United States on the invitation of certain parties in Merida have already occupied a portion of that province, thereby departing from their previously expressed determination to abstain from occupying Yucatan so long as it should remain neutral in the Mexican contest."[265]

With the Maya rebels and their British supporters temporarily repelling the Yucatecan assault, John Kingdon returned to Bacalar, carrying fifty Spanish bibles for distribution there.[266] It was during this time that he joined Edward Rhys and seven other Belizean merchants in writing a letter to Jacinto Pat raising the possibility of the British government mediating a "lasting peace" based on "a just division of the country."[267] Kingdon and Rhys signed first, followed by one Edward Adolphus, who for at least eight years had maintained a trade in indigo and mahogany with companies in Boston and New York.[268] Other signers—Henry Smith, John

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[264] Hempstead to Buchanan, Jan. 20, 1849, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, RG 59, NARA.
[265] Fancourt to Grey, No. 30, June 7, 1848, 25R377, BARS.
[266] Crowe, *The gospel in Central America*, 485-486.
[267] Kingdon and others to the Chiefs of the Yucatecan Indians, Feb. 29, 1849 in John Kingdon, Edward Rhys, and Edward Adolphus to Fancourt, March 6, 1849, 28R178, BARS.
[268] Edward Adolphus Correspondence, 1842-1843, Clements Library, Ann Arbor.

and Charles Catto, George McKay, and John Cross—bore last names shared with other named accomplices of the rebel forces, suggesting broader, family-based networks of support. Seventh on the list was George Fantesie, also called Yach, a man of African descent who would soon gain a reputation as one who both supplied and fought alongside the rebels.

Kingdon forwarded these letters to Fancourt in March 1849, making his claim that territorial separation from Yucatán had numbered among the rebels' goals from the beginning. He insisted that the interest that Pat had shown with regard to a division of territory—an interest shared by Pec and Chi—arose of Pat's own volition, not from fear of Yucatecan troops. "At a time," Kingdon explained, "when the American volunteers, disgusted with Spanish cowardice are leaving the Spaniards & the Indians' affairs are otherwise brightening, it seems to be attributable to that unbounded confidence which they entertain for Englishmen."[269] Whether because of the American presence at his border, the attacks by Yucatecan militias, or the opportunities that Maya sovereignty over Yucatecan territory might offer to his own settlement, Fancourt also began to place hope in a special friendship between Englishmen and revolutionary Mayas.

Visions of a Maya Protectorate

From the beginning of the rebels' occupation of Bacalar, residents of Belize speculated that these Indians might claim sovereignty over Yucatán—and that, in turn, Britain might take this territory under its protection. After receiving Jacinto Pat's correspondence with Kingdon, Rhys, and company—perhaps earlier—Fancourt also formed dreams of the positive results that British friendship with the rebels might have for his settlement and the empire.

[269] Kingdon to Fancourt, March 9, 1848, 28R178, BARS.

On May 26, 1848, the US consul at Belize, the Connecticut merchant Christopher Hempstead, had written with alarm to the U.S. State Department, reporting the rumor that "the Indians have applied to her majesty's superintendent at Belize for protection and have desired him to take possession of the territory which they now occupy and take them under his protection as British subjects." According to Hempstead, this rumor came from Fancourt, who had published a letter in the *Central American Times*, the official paper of British Honduras, announcing his desire to maintain friendly trade relations with the rebels. Even at this early date, Hempstead believed that Fancourt supported the idea of making Yucatán a British protectorate and that he had communicated this vision to the British government.[270]

Hempstead expressed doubt that Britain would pursue this course of action, but he emphasized that such a move would significantly increase Britain's power in this part of the world. "They will then have possession," he explained, "of the entire coast from Cape 'Conte' to 'San Juan De Nicaragua.'" In his next dispatch, two months later, Hempstead announced his suspicion that Fancourt, while supposedly neglecting Hispanic refugees, had "already pledged himself, on behalf of his Government to take them (the Indians) under their protection." He added, "There has been two deputations from the Indians at Backalar to the Government house here, and from what I can learn the English flag will soon float over that unhappy town." Fancourt had reportedly promised to arm the rebels if they would agree to British protection.[271]

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[270] Hempstead to Buchanan, May 26, 1848, Volume 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, RG 59, NARA.
For more on the *Central American Times*, see Archibald Robertson Gibbs, *British Honduras: an historical and descriptive account of the colony from its settlement* (London: S. Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1883), 112.
[271] Hempstead to Buchanan, July 29, 1848, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, RG 59, NARA.

Whatever the truth of these rumors, they surely influenced the tone of the interactions between Belize and Bacalar during the late summer of 1848: the rebel authorities' request—and Fancourt's resulting efforts—to establish a British commercial agent at Bacalar, the journey by the party led by Dr. Thomas Rhys, the assassination of the tax collector Juan Pablo Cocom, the involvement of Richard Hill and Edward Rhys in collecting export taxes, and the private fulfillment of the rebels' nearly constant requests for gunpowder. It surely also influenced John Kingdon's decision to establish himself as a political and religious agent first at the Río Hondo and then at Bacalar. And during the Yucatecan attacks on Chac Creek, which Fancourt described as an important and legitimate grievance for those who desired the "Indian ascendency," it surely mattered that those Britons who aided and fought beside the rebels could imagine Bacalar—with Fancourt's support—bearing the British flag.

After receiving the correspondence that Kingdon and Rhys had made with Jacinto Pat, Fancourt made more explicit his efforts at establishing British sovereignty in Yucatán. He first linked peace, a division of territory, and the expansion of British influence in a dispatch to Governor Grey on May 10, 1849, days after receiving Kingdon's letter. He wrote, "If the Indians could obtain the cession of the Province in which Bacalar is situated, enjoying the protection of Great Britain in the same manner as the Mosquito Indians, they would gladly conclude a peace."[272]

Fancourt did not give precise details about the character of the protectorate that he imagined for eastern Yucatán, but his reference to the "Mosquito Indians" is telling. By the 1840s, the relationship between Britons and Miskitos had evolved so that British agents, contrary to the claims of the Colonial Office, held significant power over Miskito affairs. The Mosquito

[272] Fancourt to Grey, March 10, 1849, 25R491, BARS.

king, George Augustus, was only a boy and, like his predecessors, had been crowned by British authorities. He lived in Bluefields under the British agent's custody, without the power or the desire to manage his people's affairs. Yet a shared opponent in the form of the independent Central American nations still linked the interests of British settlers and Miskitos. In the months before the Maya rebels' occupation of Bacalar, British marines and the Miskito militia had launched a joint expedition on Nicaragua's fort of San Juan. The expedition had been supplied by Governor Charles Grey, the superior to whom Fancourt now wrote.[273]

Fancourt repeated this claim in another letter to Grey the following month, adding with the exaggerated hope that if the rebels could obtain sovereignty over the province of Tekax, they "would be very glad to cede the four Provinces of Merida, Vallodolid, Izamal, and Campeche." The rebel leaders, Fancourt misleadingly informed his superior, "have the most perfect confidence in the English language," and would therefore welcome "the advice of the British Government" if such an arrangement were to occur.[274] These dispatches suggest an interpretation of the Maya rebels' partnership with British Hondurans, and of their corresponding demands for territorial sovereignty, that exceeds borderland rumor. While the specifics seem to have differed between rebel leaders and Fancourt, visions of establishing official ties between rebel-controlled eastern Yucatán and Britain were not mere fabrications by the rebels' British trade partners. On the contrary, this idea had support from the major British authority of the settlement.[275]

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[273] Naylor, *Penny Ante Imperialism*, 46-48, 153, 164-165; Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia*, 61-69.
[274] Dispatch April 10, 1849, 25R501, BARS.
[275] While Caste War historians have drawn heavily from Belize archives, they have focused on Fancourt's letters inward and outward (Records 22b, 28, and 29) rather than the collection of his dispatches to Charles Grey (Record 25, "Dispatches Outward 1844-1849"). See, for example, the footnotes of Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, and Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever*. Marie Lapointe consulted the superintendents' dispatches outward but began with those from 1850 (Record 30). *Los Mayas rebeldes de Yucatán* (Zamora, Mich.: Colegio de Michoacán,

The Anglo-Spanish Convention of 1786 had established British Honduras as a British settlement under Spanish sovereignty. Upon the independence of Mexico and Guatemala, however, it remained unclear under whose sovereignty British Honduras existed. When Fancourt read Kingdon's report that Pat and the other "Indian Chiefs" had long sought "the re-conquest of the whole Peninsula of Yucatan as their natural patrimony which no lapse of time could equitably disannul their claim to," he surely suspected that the question of sovereignty might soon be decided in Britain's favor.[276] Just as defending the Miskitos' ancient claims to the Central American coast had served to justify Britain's rights to the Mosquito Shore, a similar move might now enable Fancourt to protect his own settlement. Achieving a rationale for British sovereignty in British Honduras would also promote Fancourt's own standing, as British settlers in Belize often used the Spanish claims to the territory to undermine the authority of his superintendency. These settlers insisted that power should instead be held in the Public Meeting, a bicameral legislature that had existed since the 1760s, and the Magistrates it elected.[277]

Furthermore, the limitations that the Convention had placed upon British agriculture and industry were becoming more onerous to the settlement as logwood thinned. While permitting British subjects to gather dyewood, mahogany and other "produce of the earth, purely natural and uncultivated," this agreement had prohibited them from establishing any sort of plantations

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1983), 12. Nelson Reed's sparse footnotes make little mention of Belizean sources for this period, but he asserts, "there is no evidence that the English ever seriously considered imperialist expansion in this case." Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán*, rev. ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 127.

[276] Kingdon to Fancourt, March 9, 1848, 28R178, BARS.

[277] Herbert F. Curry, Jr., "British Honduras: From Public Meeting to Crown Colony," *The Americas* 13, no. 1 (July 1956), 34-39.

or industrial equipment.[278] By the 1840s, however, experimentation with sugar production was much discussed in Belize. In February 1848, Superintendent Fancourt corresponded with the chairman of the Public Meeting about abolishing the duty on molasses in order to encourage the local distillation of rum. He told the chairman that he approved of this plan as long as "it could be obtained by promoting the growth of sugar cane within our limits" rather than encouraging the importation of slave-produced sugar.[279] The purchase of sugar from Cuba and Brazil had surged in the British Empire after the passing of the Sugar Duties Act of 1846, which had made equalized duties on foreign and colonial produce. Because British Honduras maintained close ties with Jamaica, whose planters were being undersold by these slaveholding competitors, Fancourt seems to have wished to avoid buying from them.[280]

The friendship that developed, therefore, between rebel leaders and officials in British Honduras during the Caste War's early years also reflected changing dynamics in global slavery. As Britain, the self-appointed promoter of emancipation, sought ways to compete with sugar production in Brazil and Cuba, the officials of these slave societies also sought ways to diversify their work force in order to protect their economies from the twin dangers of slave revolt and abolition.[281] Interested in building this sugar regime, British Hondurans saw Yucatecan lands and people as potential partners in this process. At the same time that residents of Belize were engaging in discussions at their public meetings about how to encourage the local planting of sugar, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people fled across their border from Yucatán. While

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[278] Convention between Great Britain and Spain. Signed at London the 14th of July, 1786," in Hertslet, *A Complete collection of the treaties and conventions* 2: 245-255; Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia*, 163-166.
[279] Fancourt to, W. D. Coffin, Esq, Chairman of the Public Meeting, Feb. 23, 1848, 22b218, BARS.
[280] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 117-118.
[281] As the next chapter will explore, Mayas were caught up in Cuba's search for "free white" labor.

Mayas and other lower-class Yucatecans also fled to British Honduras, Fancourt noted the presence of wealthy families, among them sugar planters.[282] By mid-1848, these settlers established at Punta Consejos on the British side of the Río Hondo cleared land to plant corn and sugar cane.[283] By late 1851, these refugees had established two or three sugar plantations, and were also cultivating tobacco.[284] Their laborers, poor people of Maya and mestizo descent who came with them from Yucatán, were subject to brutal conditions, but they were not technically enslaved.[285]

Sugar was also among the items—along with grain, livestock, and tobacco—that British merchants like Cox were said to receive from rebels in exchange for arms.[286] After his journey to Bacalar in late 1848, J. H. Faber wrote to Fancourt about the advantages of Yucatán in general, which he said possessed "everything of produce, the communications are easy the country being entirely coast and intersected by rivers and the wages for labourers very low." A boosterish exaggeration by any measure, these comments about rivers could only have applied to Yucatán's southern border. Still, Faber's observations highlight how he—and perhaps, others—perceived the peninsula to be useful to British interests. He continued: "The great question if free labour can compete with slave labour for the fabrication of sugar can be solved there; by comparisons I found that an Indian receiving one shilling sterling a day in Yucatan produced more than any slave can do in Cuba during the same time."[287] The "great question" about sugar production that Faber hoped Yucatán would answer had real implications for the British West Indies. After

[282] Stubb to Fancourt, April 27, 1848, 29R7, BARS.
[283] Fancourt to Grey, No. 30, June 7, 1848, 25R377, BARS.
[284] Wodehouse to Grey, Dec. 4, 1851, 38R18
[285] See, for example, letters regarding the 1850 case of a sugar producer of the surname Vega and his laborer Juan Nepomucino Torres, 29R545 and 32aR151, BARS.
[286] Lacunza to Fancourt, Oct. 3, 1849, 33-127, R33, BARS.
[287] Faber to Fancourt, Dec. 4, 1848, 29R160.

slavery had been abolished in Jamaica in 1834, the economic output of the island had declined sharply. What had gone wrong in Jamaica, and how to remedy the situation, occupied British minds on both sides of the Atlantic.[288]

Jacinto Pat's own letter included none of the discussion of re-conquest or natural patrimony that appeared in Kingdon's paraphrase of rebel goals to Fancourt. Instead, his stated concerns remained those that had first brought him into the war: freedom from onerous contributions and taxes, an end to violence, and the acceptance of financial responsibility for the war by the Yucatecan government.[289] The idea of a formal protectorate, therefore, seems to have been a creation of the British. But Pat's rivals within the rebel ranks would soon embrace it, seeing British friendship as the way to gain complete separation from Mexico. By the time Fancourt initiated the mediation that Jacinto Pat and John Kingdon had requested, Pat had been killed. Announcing themselves "governors" of the rebel party, Venancio Pec and Florentino Chan would make no secret of their preference for Britain.

A Return to Borderland Exchange

Fancourt's letters to Grey had represented his sentiments at a time when the rebels, aided by the British, seemed to have the upper hand. "There does not appear to be the least prospect," Fancourt had informed his superior in March, "of the Spaniards regaining Bacalar at present." While Yucatecan forces had taken several towns, he had believed that they lacked the power to establish complete control. This had led him to conclude that Mexican authorities would certainly agree to the cession, "as such an arrangement would ensure the future tranquility of

[288] Thomas H. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 114-117.
[289] Jacinto Pat to Messrs. John Kingdon, Edward L. Rhys, & Co., Feb. 18, 1849, 28R178, BARS.

Yucatan."[290] By May 1849, however, Bacalar was once again under Yucatecan control. After a battle at the mouth of Chac Creek, Yucatán's new 7th military division, created at great cost and including US mercenary soldiers, had indeed taken the city. George Fantesie, the African descended signer of Reverend Kingdon's letter to Fancourt about the division of territory, was said to have fought on behalf of the rebels in this warfare.[291] This Yucatecan victory began to chip away at the official relationship that had been developing between rebel authorities and Belize, leaving in its wake the unofficial exchanges of goods and arms that are more familiar to historians.

In August 1849, Fancourt received word from the British Chargé d'Affaires to Mexico, Percy Doyle, that the Mexican government would not permit a division of territory. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had agreed to allow Fancourt to carry out negotiations for peace, but had specified that rebel Mayas, like Indians in other parts of the republic, might receive "certain territories considered as their own, but they themselves would be obliged to yield obedience to the General Government of Mexico."[292] Dutifully, Fancourt wrote a letter on September 17 addressed to the late Jacinto Pat, who he believed was still alive, José María Tzuc, and other rebel leaders. He passed the letter through the Yucatecan commander at Bacalar, José Dolores Cetina, to Father José Antonio Gloria, who then attempted to convey it to Pat on behalf of the rebel officers Angelino Iza and Apolinario Camal. In this correspondence, Fancourt invited Pat and other "chiefs" to meet with him in person as he awaited more news from Mexico so that he could learn their "views and wishes." He also relayed Chargé Doyle's promise to work to end

[290] Fancourt to Grey, March 10, 1849, 25R491, BARS.
[291] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 153.
[292] Doyle to Fancourt, Aug. 10, 1849, 33-13, BARS.

Yucatecan authorities' trafficking of Maya prisoners of war to Cuba, which Pat, through Fancourt, had insisted would stand in the way of any negotiations for peace.[293]

Fancourt would later learn that Pat had died days before he drafted this letter, leaving Venancio Pec and Florentino Chan his principal rebel contacts.[294] Another victim of factional violence, Pat had been assassinated by a party under Pec's command.[295] The warrant that Pec and Chan had circulated before the murder had accused Pat of reinstating many of the practices that the rebels had so abhorred under Yucatecan rule, including flogging, labor drafts, and war taxes. The two men declared: "There will be no taxes, no beatings, no purchases of woodlands to cultivate, no collecting of money among the poor, nor will things the troops have gotten from the enemy in warfare be taken."[296]

Pec and Chan's distaste for the policies that Pat had professedly employed reflected, in part, Pat's social class. As Don Dumond has observed, Pat was "a property owner with numerous commercial and personal contacts among Yucatecans of the Peto region," and therefore atypical among rebel leaders. Equally importantly, Pat had "engaged in Yucatecan politics on a broader scale so that his support was actively sought by *barbachanistas*."[297] The term "barbachanistas" refers to followers of Yucatecan Governor Miguel Barbachano, a politician from Mérida who had been ousted from power by political rivals from Campeche in the years before the Caste War. Barbachano retook the governorship in 1848 in large part because many Yucatecans believed that rebel leaders preferred to negotiate with him rather than his rival, Santiago Méndez.

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[293] Fancourt to Pat, Sept. 17, 1849, 33-21, BARS; Faber to Fancourt with enclosures, Oct. 26, 1849, 33-115, BARS.
[294] Fancourt to Pec, Oct. 24, 1849 and Fancourt to D. Florentino Chan and D. Benancio Pec, Oct. 30, 1849, 32bR18 and 32bR24, BARS.
[295] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 156-157.
[296] Baqueiro, *Ensayo histórico* 2:199-200. The English translation that I have used here is from Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 156-157.
[297] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 457 n.59.

In the controversial and unsuccessful Treaty of Tzucacab, Pat agreed to govern over all of Yucatán's Indians, a position in which he promised to work alongside Barbachano to ensure peace.[298] This approach, in which he appeared to accommodate the Yucatecan government, was radically different from the insistence on territorial separation that Venancio Pec would embrace in his correspondence with the British.

With the military of Yucatán again in control of the town of Bacalar and with the central government Mexico unwilling to cede territory, Fancourt moved forward with plans to meet with rebel leaders. On October 10, 1849, he received a letter from Chan and Pec telling him to meet them at Ascension Bay on November 15.[299] Fancourt then wrote to the Yucatecan governor Miguel Barbachano, asking that he "suspend operations in that quarter" until after the meeting. In addressing the governor, he responded to the ongoing complaints that British merchants were arming the rebels—in particular, that Austin Cox, George Fantesie, Fantesie's business partner Augustus Lanabit, and others were still trading powder and munitions at Ascension Bay and at the town of Chichanhá on the Río Hondo.[300] While rebel forces had been in power at Bacalar, British logging companies had also begun operating on the Yucatecan bank of the Río Hondo, leading to violent expulsions and the imprisonment of twelve "inoffensive British subjects"—a team of primarily black woodcutters—when Yucatecan forces had retaken the city.[301] In late September 1849, Fancourt had issued a decree prohibiting the people of British Honduras from

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[298] Eligio Ancona, *Historia de Yucatán* 4:415-418; Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 118-119.
[299] Florentino Chan and Venancio Pec to Faber, Oct. 10, 1849, 33-121, BARS.
[300] Faber to Fancourt, Oct. 26, 1849, 33-115, BARS; Lacunza to Fancourt, Oct. 3, 1849, 33-133, BARS; Fancourt to Barbachano, Oct. 31, 1849, Exp. 49, Vol. 62, Caja 112, G, PE, AGEY.
[301] The names of the men who were imprisoned were John Lowry, Joseph Lowry, Joseph Edwards, George Welsh, Frederic Nicholson, Thomas Kelley, Lacio Ramos, Jose Maria Ridrigo, Daniel Braster, Capito Martin, Hilario Simonds, and Primus Simonds. Statement of Francis Longsworth in Faber to Fancourt, May 3, 1850, 33R586, BARS; Faber to Fancourt, May 2, 1850, 33R580, and Copy of Orio to Vaughan Christie & Co, Aug. 12, 1849, 33R610, BARS.

trading arms and powder to the rebels.[302] Barbachano did not respond to Fancourt's letter until late December, long after the meeting at Ascension Bay had taken place. Thanking Fancourt for his mediation with the rebels, he reminded him again that the war would have ended long before without rebels' access to British arms.[303]

As he sailed to Ascension Bay on November 15, 1849, Fancourt wrote again to Chargé Doyle, offering a different perspective on the war than that which he had shown to Grey months earlier. He complained that British merchants were still aiding the rebels, referring in particular to Austin Cox, the trader between Belize and New Orleans who had relayed the message of friendship to him from rebel authorities during the summer of 1848. Cox's ship *Four Sisters* had recently been discovered carrying gunpowder to Jacinto Pat. Mexican authorities had imprisoned his crew. "There are persons here," Fancourt lamented, "who are interested in the Indian ascendency and who are not slow in taking advantage of any real or supposed aggression upon the rights of British subjects." He predicted that his main difficulty in convincing the rebel leaders to agree to a peace that was acceptable to Mexico would be "the influence which these persons possess over the Chiefs of the Indian party."[304] By framing the friendship between British Honduras and the Maya rebels as only existing among merchants like Cox, Fancourt obscured the interest that he himself had taken in the "Indian ascendency."

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[302] Dumond,*The Machete and the Cross*, 155;

[303] "Comunicaión del gobierno yucateco relativa a la entrevista del superintende británico…," Dec. 20, 1849, Exp. 72, Vol. 62, Caja 112, G, PE, AGEY.

[304] Fancourt to Doyle, Nov. 10, 1849, 32bR36, BARS. For more on the seizure of the *Four Sisters*, see Fancourt to Charles Bankhead, Esq., British Minister Plenipotentiary in Mexico, Sept. 17, 1850, 32bR78, BARS; Faber to Fancourt, Oct. 13, 1849, 33-67, BARS.
This lamentation about merchants' self-serving collaboration with rebel forces paralleled later accusations by the Mexican Minister of War and Marina, who bemoaned certain people's refusal to hear "the cry of a people fighting the noble justice that civilization confers against barbarism" in the pursuit of their own private interests. ("…escuchar mas la mesquina voz de sus particulares intereses que el grito de un pueblo que pelea con la noble justicia que da la civilización contra la barbarie.") Ministro Guerra Marina to MRE, July 5, 1850, 33R412, BARS.

In his schooner in the waters off Ascension Bay, Fancourt finally met with Venancio Pec and other rebel delegates. According to the report that he later sent to Barbachano, he asked them "whether they would be satisfied if the same rights were secured to them which were enjoyed by the Spanish population," but assured them that "the Supreme Government would not concede to them any right of sovereignty or relieve them from their allegiance." The delegates apparently responded that they had no faith in the Mexican government—and in particular, in the government of Yucatán—on account of previous broken promises. Instead, they would accept nothing less than "to have a portion of the country relinquished to them, a line drawn northward from Bacalar to the Gulf of Mexico and to be relieved from all contributions to the Government of the State." The delegates added, according to Fancourt, that "Spaniards" could live in their territory but would not be permitted to govern.[305] These demands resemble those in the letter that Chen and Pec had sent to Fancourt via Faber earlier that year, where they had stated that "liberty, peace, and tranquility" depended on their complete independence from the government at Mérida.[306]

Yet some parts of Fancourt's report on these discussions suggested to suspicious Mexican officials that he had influenced the proceedings. While the rebels had agreed to accept a reduced amount of territory, Fancourt stated, anything short of self-government would cause them to "one and all migrate to the British Settlement of Honduras." More strikingly, Fancourt wrote that when asked how they would govern the ceded territory, Pec and others said that they "knew they could not govern it themselves but they wished the 'Governor of Belize' to be their Governor."[307] While in their earlier letter Pec and Chan had emphasized their desire to "act

[305] Fancourt to Barbachano, Dec. 10, 1849, Exp. 49, Vol. 62, Caja 112, G, PE, AGEY.
[306] Florentino Chan and Venancio Pec to Faber, Oct. 10, 1849, 33-121, BARS.
[307] Fancourt to Barbachano, Dec. 10, 1849, Exp. 49, Vol. 62, Caja 112, G, PE, AGEY.

according to the suggestions of the British Government," no record remains of their desire to be governed by him.[308]

In the months that followed Superintendent Fancourt's meeting with rebel delegates, reports circulated in Mexico City that the he was colluding with these Indians in seeking their independence. Chargé Doyle would write to Fancourt even more emphatically that such a division of territory could not occur.[309] Governor Barbachano would also protest this plan, writing that he had no authority to cede land or to dismember Mexican territory.[310] In response to questions from Fancourt, who still hoped that mediation was possible, Doyle explained that in Mexico, Indians were divided into the categories of *indios bárbaros* and *indios pacíficos*: "the former are always at war with the Mexican race and yield them no sort of obedience; the latter are placed with respect to contributions and municipal laws on the same footing as all Mexican citizens." He continued that Mexico might be willing either to reduce indigenous Yucatecans' tax contributions to a level equal—or if necessary, even less than—those of white citizens, or to send them priests paid by the government in order to lower their ecclesiastical contributions. But the most that the government would offer in terms of territory was that it be "made over in perpetuity to the Indians," which they would only concede if completely necessary.[311] While Doyle did not specify the meaning of this distinction, it seems to have centered on Mexico's willingness to cede property but no degree of sovereignty.

Fancourt again wrote to Pec in January 1850, expressing his confidence that the state government would agree to the rebels' terms as long as they did not involve "dismembering the

[308] Florentino Chan and Venancio Pec to Faber, Oct. 10, 1849, 33-121, BARS.
[309] Doyle to Fancourt, Nov. 15, 1849, 33-185, BARS.
[310] Barbachano to Fancourt, Feb 1, 1850, 33R512, BARS.
[311] Doyle to Fancourt, Jan. 16, 1850, 33-206, BARS.

state."[312] But rumors remained—confirmed by surviving, though likely fabricated, documents—that plans for independent government, territorial rights, and an explicit connection with Britain was what this faction of rebel leaders wanted. Letters confiscated by Yucatecan forces around this time include three referring to censuses being taken in rebel towns, supposedly at Fancourt's request. Another letter mentioned correspondence from the English Queen about dividing the territory of Yucatán.[313] While this correspondence with the Queen likely did not occur, the rebels' letter regarding it may well have been authentic, along with the sentiments that it represented.

Meanwhile, George Fantesie and his French associate Silvestre Adolphus Lanabit remained stationed on the Río Hondo, smuggling arms to the rebels and reportedly even fighting alongside them.[314] At various points along the river, including Chichanhá, Agua Blanca, and Douglas, Yucatecans searched ships and storehouses, much to British subjects' chagrin.[315] By this time, the Reverend John Kingdon had purchased property for a house and mission station on the Belize River, "in a very thinly-peopled neighborhood," where he studied and translated Maya and taught a small school.[316]

Suspicions by the Yucatecan government, along with struggles within rebel ranks stemming from the Pec faction's coup-like takeover, unraveled official proceedings. In February, Fancourt received a letter from Governor Barbachano expressing his doubts that a truce was

[312] Fancourt to Pec, Jan. 10, 1850, 32bR58, BARS.
[313] "Rebel letters intercepted by Yucatecan troops and translated by Padre Vela," 33R662, BARS.
[314] Zetina to Fancourt, June 19, 1849, 28R199, BARS; Faber to Fancourt, May 21, 1850, 33R352, BARS.
[315] See, for example, correspondence regarding Yucatecan forces' capture of twelve "inoffensive British subjects" near these points. Faber to Fancourt, May 3, 1850 (33R586) and Capt. Fermín Ongay to Faber, May 7, 1850 (33R596), BARS.
[316] Crowe, *The gospel in Central America*, 493.

possible.[317] In April, he received news that Venancio Pec had lost favor among the rebels because of his trust in Fancourt, who had promised a truce that Yucatecan forces had not abided, leaving the rebels vulnerable to attack.[318] Fancourt also perceived himself to have lost favor with Pec because of negative reports about himself published in Belize newspapers.[319] Perhaps this breakdown in trust was true: in a June 1850 letter, Pec strayed from his usual statements of friendship and deference, instructing Fancourt to address him in Spanish and adding that Miguel Barbachano always did the same.[320]

The year 1850, in short, saw the closing of the opportunities that had temporarily opened for one faction of Maya rebel leaders, their British trade partners, and a British superintendent and missionary eager to form official ties between the British Empire and these rebels, whom they often described as Indian chiefs. Any hope that Fancourt might have regained for creating a British protectorate in Yucatán, or any renewal of trust between himself and the men vying for control of the eastern Yucatan Peninsula—Miguel Barbachano, Venancio Pec, and Florentino Chan—would never come to be. In the summer of 1850, Fancourt was relieved of his position, vacating the post some months later.[321] Kingdon was likewise recalled in April, as the Baptist Missionary Society was reducing its efforts in Central America. Kingdon apparently sold his house and mission station to Fancourt to use as a country residence, but Fancourt could not have used it for long.[322]

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[317] Barbachano to Fancourt, Feb 1, 1850, 33R512, BARS.
[318] Faber to Fancourt, April 12, 1850, 33R524, BARS. Pec to Fancourt, June 10, 1850, 33R384, BARS.
[319] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 167.
[320] José Venancio Pec to Fancourt, June 4, 1850, 33R380, BARS.
[321] Fancourt to Grey, July 11, 1850, 31R97, BARS.
[322] Crowe, *The gospel in Central America*, 494-507.

The US consul Christopher Hempstead's position would also end in 1850, when Gen. Zachary Taylor entered the office of US President and withdrew the US consulate from Belize. In a Special Message to the Senate, Taylor invoked Hempstead's May 26 letter about the "Indians" applying for British protection as part of a rationale for opening negotiations for building a canal through Central America.[323] Residents of Belize—owners of the settlement's commercial houses and mahogany works, "the chief Spanish residents," some "resident foreigners," members of the Public Meeting, and clergy "of all denominations of Christians"—would continue to pressure the British government to settle "all pending questions respecting the sovereignty and territorial rights of Great Britain in Honduras."[324] By the time that happened, however, the mainland British Caribbean settlement was losing importance, as timber supplies dwindled and the completion of the Panama railroad shifted trade routes from Atlantic to Pacific ports.[325]

Conclusion

Florentino Chan disappeared from the historical record in 1851, while Venancio Pec saw his own end at the hands of Hispanic Yucatecan forces in the summer of 1852. Pec had led an unsuccessful attack on Bacalar with eight hundred troops, of whom over one hundred were killed. While smuggling between Yucatán and Belize would continue, the political conditions of the *monte* had changed. The economic exchanges of the borderland would no longer be matched by territorial disputes so great as to convince a British superintendent and a self-styled Maya

[323] Zachary Taylor: "Special Message," March 19, 1850. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=68084.
[324] Wodehouse to Governor of Jamaica, July 11, 1850, and No. 17, Sept. 6, 1851, 31R96 and 31R256, BARS;
[325] Aims McGuinness, *Path of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

governor to embark on a shared political project. Fancourt's successor, Phillip Edmund Wodehouse, oversaw another mediation along Yucatán's southern border in September 1853 with a group of defectors who would become known to the Yucatecans as the *pacíficos del Sur*. After some negotiation, these delegates gave up the demand for a division of territory, choosing instead to retain de facto autonomy by the sheer fact of their geographic distance from Mérida.[326]

Strikingly, however, the waning of British interest in establishing formal ties with rebel-controlled Yucatán coincided with the formation of a new rebel capital just inland from Ascension Bay. Led not by Pec and Chan but by José María Barrera, a former underling of Jacinto Pat, Chan Santa Cruz—"Little Holy Cross"—would continue to claim complete separation from Yucatán and Mexico into the twentieth century. Its people were inspired by prophetic crosses, Christian icons that "spoke" to their followers in Pre-Columbian tradition to urge them to throw off the shackles of their colonizers. Sustained by these miracles, Santa Cruz rebels would again take Bacalar in 1858, retaining it for decades as a military garrison under their command.[327]

Like dissident Creeks' alliances with British adventurers in Florida, this early episode in the long and tumultuous Caste War suggests the options for borderland alliance that continued to exist for some indigenous leaders long after new nations replaced European empires in North America. Not merely a product of borderland smuggling or rumor, the foundational years of rebel activity in eastern Yucatán occurred with real and well-founded hope that this territory might become an independent Maya state with an official relationship to Britain. That this relationship did not materialize in any official capacity—and that hindsight tells us that such a partnership might, through indirect rule, have become as fraught as Britain's relationship to the

[326] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 191-197, 219.
[327] Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross*, 179-185, 221-227.

Mosquito Kingdom—need not detract from the real possibilities that both rebel Mayas and Britons imagined in 1848. Set on establishing Maya control over eastern government and territory, these early leaders embraced a cosmopolitan array of strategies for achieving this independence.

While the networks of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Gulf of Mexico presented the indigenous peoples of Florida and Yucatán with opportunities to create new forms of independent political and economic power, they also fueled efforts by the United States and Mexico to suppress the creation of these rogue states. At moments in the Second Seminole War and Caste War, private citizens and local officials used Gulf networks to bring the resources of Cuban slavery to bear on these borderland wars.

Chapter 3: Cuban Slavery and Borderland Warfare in Florida and Yucatán

In January of 1840, US newspapers announced with horror and excitement that thirty-three Cuban hunting dogs had arrived in St. Marks, Florida to aid US troops in the Second Seminole War.[328] Proponents believed that these dogs, trained to catch people of African descent fleeing slavery on Cuban plantations, would help the US Army and the Florida militia force the Seminoles' surrender, hastening the end of a costly war aimed at removing the Seminoles to Indian Territory. Already a powerful trope in English-language accounts of the Spanish conquest, the image of dogs attacking humans in Florida would take a central place in US political discourse in the coming decades. Believed to represent a new breed called "Blood Hounds," these additions to US military forces were praised and detested for their supposed brutality.[329] Nine years later, a different set of rumors about Cuba circulated in Mexico City. Newspapers reported that the governor of Yucatán had sold over one hundred citizens of Maya descent to Spanish merchants to work as slaves in Cuban sugar fields. The trafficking of Mayas to Cuba would continue in various forms for decades, offering ways to fight and fund the Caste War of Yucatán.[330]

The importation of bloodhounds to Florida [Figure 5] and the *Venta de Indios*, or sale of Indians [Figure 6], endure as "infamous and shameful" chapters of their respective local

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[328] For contrasting reactions, see the Boston *Liberator*, Jan. 24, 1840; *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 11 (March 12, 1840), 172.
[329] John Campbell, "The Seminoles, the 'Bloodhound War,' and Abolitionism, 1796-1865," *The Journal of Southern History* 72, no. 2 (May 2006): 259-302.
[330] See, for example, *El Universal* for May 24, July 2, and October 17, and *Siglo Diez y Nueve* for March 22, May 5 and 22, and June 27.

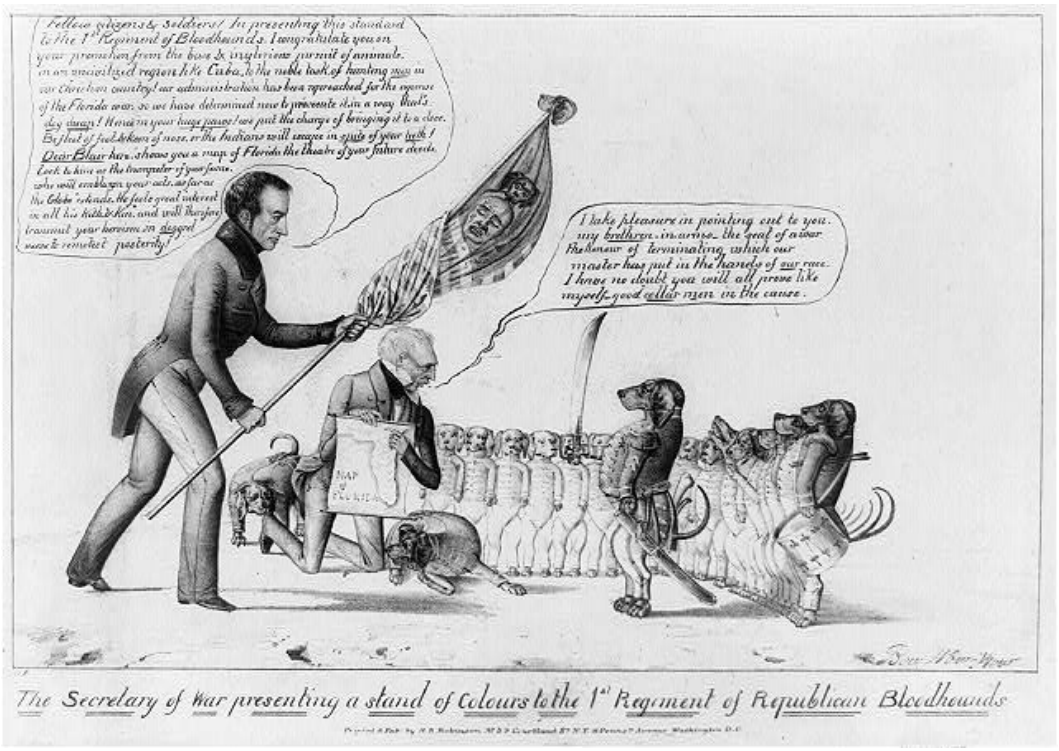

Figure 5: "The Secretary of War presenting a stand of colours to the 1st Regiment of Republican Bloodhounds" (1840)

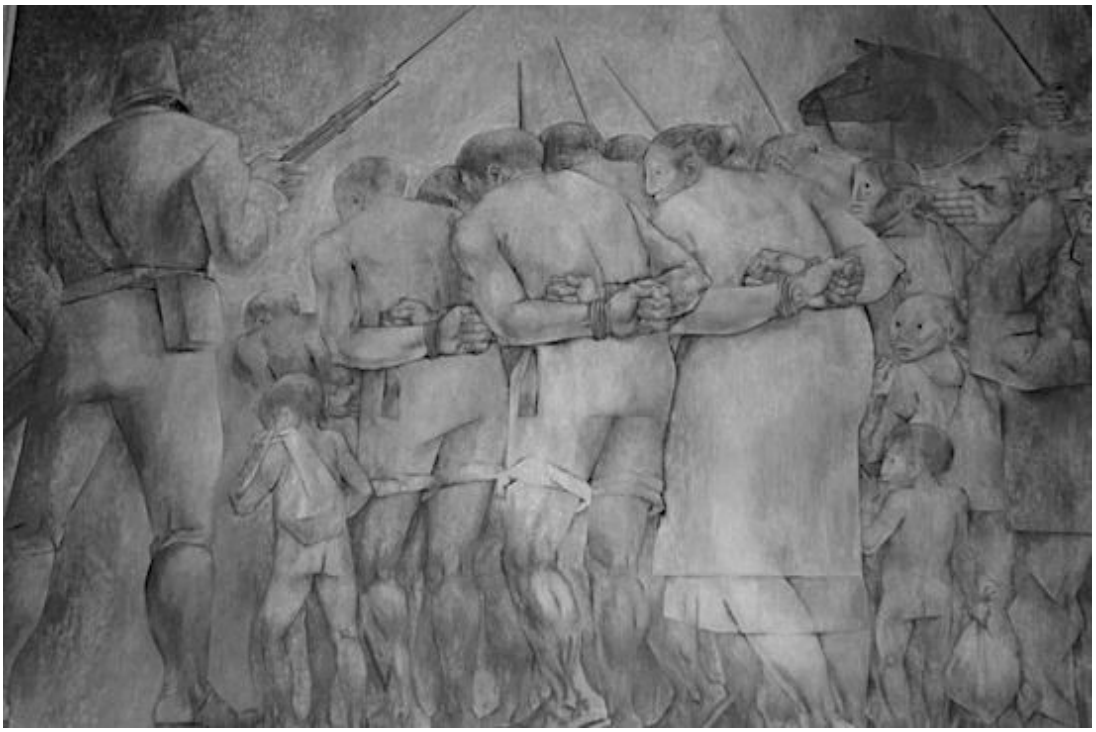

Figure 6: Fernando Castro Pacheco, "Venta de Indios" (1973)

histories.[331] Yet they have rarely been used to analyze broader histories of conquest in North America, appearing merely as scenes of passing intrigue on US and Mexican peripheries.[332] Situating these events in their Gulf of Mexico context highlights unexpected similarities between the Second Seminole War and the Caste War, two of the longest and costliest conflicts fought between North American nation-states and indigenous peoples. The United States' land-based policy of Indian Removal, which prompted the Second Seminole War, differed sharply from the extractive systems of oppression that indigenous people and their allies protested in Yucatán. Such differences have tended to prevent historiographical and theoretical conversations between scholars of the indigenous peoples of the United States and Latin America.[333] Seen from the Gulf, however, these divisions fade. Both the United States and Mexico relied on Gulf trade to fight their borderland wars.

In particular, the residents of Florida and Yucatán found resources for borderland warfare in the Spanish colony of Cuba, the largest island in the Caribbean and their neighbor across the

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[331] Henry R. Robinson and Bow Wow Wow (Napoleon Sarony), "The Secretary of War presenting a stand of colours to the 1st Regiment of Republican Bloodhounds" (N.Y. ; Washington, D.C. : Printed & pub by H.R. Robinson, 1840), Library of Congress Digital Collections; Fernando Castro Pacheco, "Venta de Indios" (1973), Palacio del Gobierno, Mérida. "Infamous and shameful" comes from the title of Carlos R. Mendendez, *Historia del infame y vergonzoso comercio de indios vendidos a los esclavistas de Cuba por los políticos yucatecos…* (Mérida: Talleres Gráficos de la Revista de Mérida, 1923).

[332] Examples include: James Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 98; John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, Rev. ed. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985), 204, 266. Moisés González Navarro, *Raza y tierra*; Javier Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de Castas: La venta de indios mayas a Cuba, 1848-1861* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y los Artes, 1990), 102-103.
One exception is the treatment of the trafficking of Mayas in Terry Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever: Mayas, Hispanics, and Caste War Violence in Yucatán, 1800-1880* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

[333] In Native American and Indigenous Studies, in particular, the recent embrace of settler colonial theory has envisioned these regimes as different forms of colonialism, one based in land, and the other, in labor. Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing settler colonial studies," *settler colonial studies* 1 (2011): 1-12.

Gulf. This chapter shows how Cuba's expanding sugar empire offered the U.S. and Mexican governments a source of military tactics and a market for prisoners of war. US planters migrated to both Florida and Cuba at a time when businessmen across the Atlantic world were investing a portion of their financial, technological, and human capital in this island's sugar regime.[334] Hoping to protect themselves from the forces that had destroyed France and Britain's sugar colonies, planters in Cuba developed innovative ways to counter the threat of rebellion and the spread of abolition, including raising bloodhounds, recruiting white settlers, and maintaining an illicit trade in African captives. This chapter first examines the United States' purchase and unsuccessful use of bloodhounds, whose propensity toward violence that English speakers both abhorred and admired because of its associations with the power of the Spanish Conquest and with Cuban slavery. The chapter then turns to Yucatán, where the Cuban push for white contract laborers created official and illicit markets for prisoners of war and other Yucatecans of Maya descent.

Statesmen in Washington, DC and Mexico City responded to these events with same mix of humanitarianism and permissiveness that they exhibited toward the international trade in African captives.[335] Issuing public condemnations and, occasionally, private orders, they distanced themselves from these events in part by reinforcing the peripheral nature of Florida Territory and the rebellious state of Yucatán. National governments were also able to distance

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[334] Dale Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, World Social Change Series, ed. Mark Selden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 56-71; Ada Ferrer, "Cuban Slavery and Atlantic Antislavery," *Review* 31, no. 3, (2008): 269-270; Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 12-13.

[335] Matthew Mason, "Keeping Up Appearances: The International Politics of Slave Trade Abolition in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (October 2009), 811; Michael Zeuske, *Amistad: A Hidden Network of Slavers and Merchants*, trans. Steven Rendell (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2014).

themselves from the ugly business of conquest through the private and illicit transactions of US, Mexican, and Cuban merchants, who ultimately bore significant responsibility for these strategies. Rather than absolving national governments, Gulf merchants' involvement in these wars illustrates the transnational nature of North American conquest and borderland warfare. The Florida bloodhounds and the *Venta de Indios* were not rogue conspiracies on wild peripheries but complex transactions accomplished with the complicity of national officials.

Caribbean Insurrection on the Straits of Florida:

Between 1815 and the start of the Second Seminole War in 1835, efforts by planters and officials to expand coffee, sugar, and cotton production in Cuba and the US South enticed US investors, traders, and contraband slavers to the narrow channel between Key West and Matanzas called the Straits of Florida. In an attempt to create a buffer against revolts by increasing the colony's white population, Cuban administrators in the last years of Spanish claims to Florida created a white settlement board, the *Junta de Población Blanca*, whose land grants to new immigrants attracted planters from across the Atlantic world. [336] Meanwhile, borderland warfare between the United States and Native Americans in Spanish East Florida provided justification (or pretext) for US settlers and their government to invade this colony. After decades of range wars, semi-official invasions, and the official extension of US military power into East Florida, Spain ceded this territory to the United States in 1821. US commissioners then coerced Seminole, Mikasuki, and Lower Creek leaders into exchanging their northern plantations and ranches for a reservation in the impoverished south.[337]

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[336] Duvon C. Corbitt, "Immigration in Cuba," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 22, no. 2 (May 1942): 282-284, 289-291.
[337] William Duval, James Gadsden, and Bernard Segui to John C. Calhoun, September 26, 1823 in *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* 2: 440-441.

In the 1820s and 1830s, the population of Florida changed dramatically. Planters from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia moved their homes and businesses southward, sending their slaves to build cotton plantations on formerly Seminole and Mikasuki territories in North Central Florida and sugar plantations along the Atlantic seaboard.[338] In the Florida Keys, US wrecking companies—moving into what had once been the business of Calusa and Spanish fishermen—profited from shipwrecks in the swift and dangerous Straits.[339] The men who settled and speculated in Florida during these years were of the same class as those joining Cuba's established sugar industry. Southern planters-turned-investors and northern merchants-turned-planters, these businessmen and their enslaved workers connected this new US territory to its island neighbor and the economic currents of the Gulf of Mexico.[340]

One of these men was Richard Fitzpatrick, a planter from South Carolina who moved to Key West during Florida's second year of US rule. Fitzpatrick profited as an auctioneer and business owner in Key West's wrecking industry, using the wealth he gained to purchase land just inland from Key Biscayne.[341] By 1835, he owned almost all of the privately held land in southeastern Florida. The dozens of people he held as slaves planted sugar and tropical crops on this property. Fitzpatrick acted as a booster for southern Florida, which, despite its low, wet

[338] Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida 1821-1860* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 17, 22-27.
[339] By 1824, nearly $300,000 of wrecked property was sold at Key West, much of it by companies from the northeastern United States. Dorothy Dodd, "The Wrecking Business on the Florida Reef, 1822-1860," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (April, 1944), 171-180.
[340] Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 27, 31-32.
[341] Hugo L. Black, III, "Richard Fitzpatrick's South Florida, 1822-1840, Part I: Key West Phase," *Tequesta: Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida*, No. XL (1980), 49, 52-59.

climate, he compared favorably to Cuba, lauding its nearness to Caribbean ports.[342] Another of these men was John R. Evertson, originally of New York, who had married a Savannah woman whose family had commercial ties to Havana.[343] Evertson became notary public of St. Augustine in 1840 and, in 1845, was nominated to the position of auctioneer at Key West.[344] In 1842, he accepted a land grant at Key Biscayne, near the tracts owned by Fitzpatrick.[345] Evertson also numbered among a group of men who petitioned the Cuban colonial government to welcome one hundred Florida families to settle on the island during the Second Seminole War.[346]

Fitzpatrick, Evertson, and other Floridians nursed a fear of black violence common to planters across the Atlantic world in the decades following the Haitian Revolution. The belief that foreign free people of color might bring Caribbean insurrection to Florida was so great that in 1832 Florida Territory passed the Free Negro Act, which prohibited the entrance of any free person categorized as Negro or Mulatto, and extended penalties to the captains and owners of

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[342] Black, "Richard Fitzpatrick's South Florida, 1822-1840, Part II: Fitzpatrick's Miami River Plantation," *Tequesta*, no. 41 (1981), 34-38.

[343] For biographical information on Evertson, see the finding aid for Evertson Family Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, and Keith M. Read Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. The cigars are mentioned in John R. Evertson to Anthony Glan Richards, Habana, March 4, 1836, Item 3, Folder 408, Box 28, Series 9, Keith M. Read Collection.

[344] *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Territory of Florida, at Its Second Session…*, Part 2 (Tallahassee: J. B. Webb, Printer, Star Office, 1840), 7; *A Journal of the Proceedings… Seventh Session…* (Tallahassee: Office of the Florida Sentinel, 1845), 202, 234.

[345] He would later lose these holdings because he never occupied them. Zachary Taylor to John R. Evertson, Esq, July 28, 1838, enclosed in Taylor to Roger Jones, July 31, 1838, Letters Received (LR), Records of the Office of the Secretary of War (RG 107), US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); General Land Office, Department of the Interior, *Cancellation of Florida Land Permits*, 28th Cong., 1st sess., 1844, H. Doc. 71, serial 442, 7.

[346] Corbitt lists one of the signers as "J. R. Evarston," which I take to be a modification of "Evertson." The *Junta de Fomento* "made some fruitless efforts to provide for the colonists at Nuevitas" but that the matter was soon dropped. In the meantime, changing situations in Florida had lessened these potential settlers' interest. Corbitt, "Immigration." 296.

ships bringing these people to Florida's ports.[347] As Justice of Peace at Key West, Fitzpatrick worked to enforce this act, maintaining a strict, even harsh, interpretation of this law.[348] The Seminoles caused particular fear for white planters because, having gained a reputation as skilled warriors in their previous encounters with the United States, they also had roughly five hundred African descended people in their ranks.[349] The idea that Seminoles might find allies in people fleeing slavery, in foreign governments, and in African-descended people from the Caribbean had served as a rationale for confining them to their southern (and inland) reservation in the 1820s. It also became an argument for their removal to Indian Territory—a policy that, as elsewhere, was proceeded by controversial treaties and war.[350]

Three days after Christmas in 1835, Seminole war parties launched a pair of large-scale attacks on Florida Territory, violently protesting their proposed removal and formally beginning the Second Seminole War. Over the following month, Seminole warriors burned and pillaged plantations across Florida Territory, especially the expensive sugar works along the eastern seaboard. During these raids, they captured or liberated hundreds of slaves, who were said to have joined them in their fight.[351] Volunteer troops from other southern states rallied to protect the lives and property of their countrymen in Florida. Meanwhile, newspapers and pamphlets framed these events both as an Indian war and as a slave rebellion. One publisher used pictures

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[347] "An act to prevent the future migration of Free Negroes or Mulattoes to this Territory, and for other purposes," No. 94, *Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, passed at the 10th session, commencing January 2d, and ending February 12th, 1832* (Tallahassee: William Wilson, 1832), 143-145.
[348] Black, "Richard Fitzpatrick, Part I," 69-72.
[349] Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars, 1817-1858* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 61, 66-67.
[350] Many Seminole leaders were particularly against removal because it threatened their African American members, placing them near the territory of slaveholding Creeks. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 69-86, 102-106.
[351] Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars,* 70-84.

to speak alongside words, illustrating his "Massacre of the Whites by the Indians and Blacks in Florida" with woodcuts from Nat Turner's Rebellion [Figures 7 and 8].[352] The effect of this collage of images was a scene in which men marked visually as slaves killed planters with tomahawks and machetes, framed by depictions of the destroyed homes, "savage" rituals, and white captives that typically illustrated Indian war.

A Failed Experiment

In this context of mixed tropes about blacks and Indians, Floridians and military officials began considering the importation of bloodhounds, a Cuban breed of dog made famous on the plantations and battlefields of the Caribbean. The use of dogs in North American warfare—by Spanish and British soldiers—was as old as Europeans' presence on the continent.[353] In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, however, this practice had taken a particular form. Trained to hunt fugitives in Cuba's sugar country, bloodhounds were now used in warfare aimed at protecting plantation regimes from armed communities of African descent. They had reportedly been used by Spanish troops against Miskitos on the coast of Central America, in the

[352] "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" in Samuel Warner, *Authentic and impartial narrative of the tragical scene which was witnessed in Southampton County* (New York: Printed for Warner & West, 1831); "Massacre of the Whites by the Indians and Blacks in Florida" in Daniel F. Blanchard, *An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War* (Providence, RI: Printed for D.F. Blanchard and others, 1836).

[353] Examples appear in Fernández de Oviedo and Gonzalo Valdés, *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, Vol. 1 (Madrid: Impresa de la Real Academica de la Historia, 1851), 547; Susan Juster, *Sacred Violence in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 51; Henry Bouquet to Jeffrey Amherst, July 13, 1763 in Henry Bouquet, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Donald H. Kent and Sylvester Kirby Stevens (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940), Series 21634: 215. Thanks to Alejandra Dubcovsky and Kate Silbert for alerting me to these cases.

Maroon War in Jamaica, and against insurgents in Saint-Domingue.[354] Mercilessly aggressive because of the brutal training they had received as puppies, bloodhounds

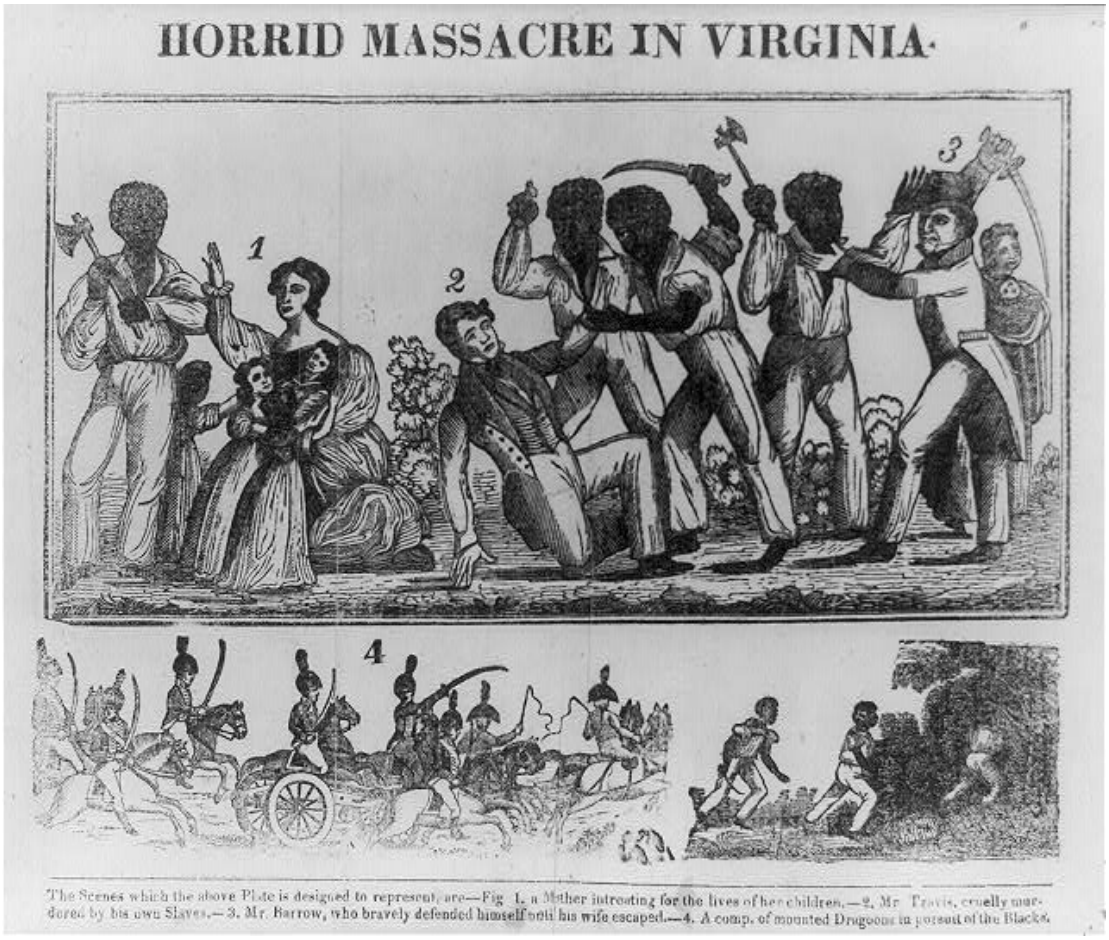

Figure 7: "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" (1831)

[354] Robert C. Dallas, *The history of the Maroons . . . including the expedition to Cuba, for the purpose of procuring Spanish chasseurs. . .* (London: A. Strahan, for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1803) 2:30-67. For arguments for and against the dogs, see debates over the Maroon War in the British House of Commons. "From Gales's Independent Gazetteer," *Stewart's Kentucky Herald*, Nov. 8, 1796, p. 1.

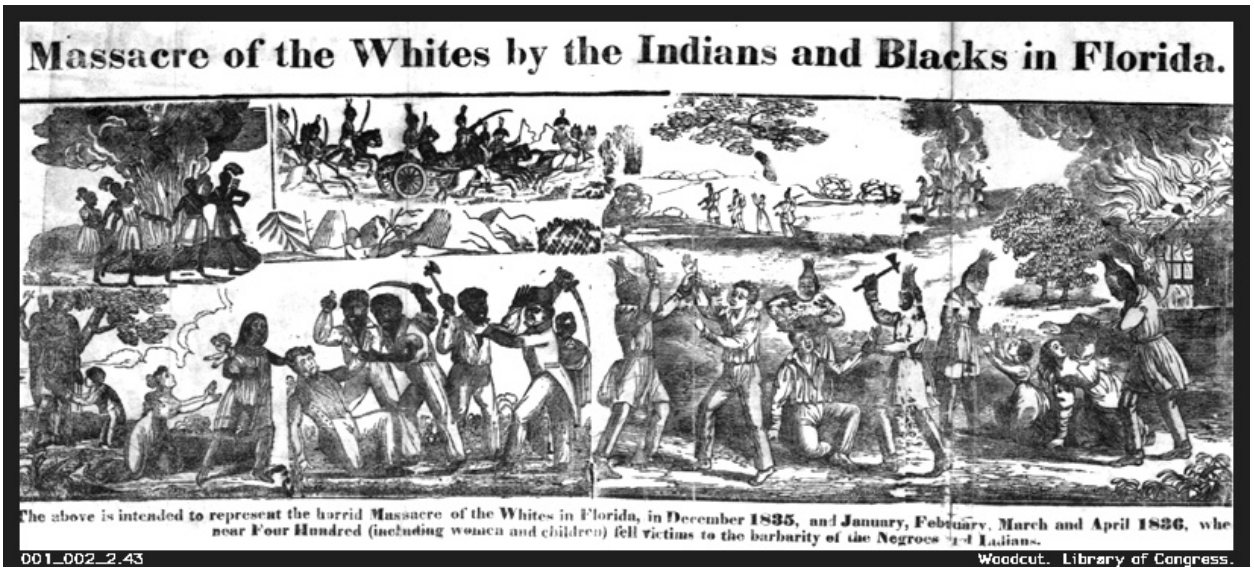

Figure 8: "Massacre of the Whites by the Indians and Blacks in Florida" (1836)

were said to be perfectly obedient to their masters. Their keen sense of smell, supporters observed, made them expert trackers even when they were not allowed to attack. In reality, the dogs often proved useless trackers, but they were effective in terms of terrorizing and dehumanizing an enemy.[355]

The first recorded mention of bloodhounds in US military records from the Second Seminole War appears as a threat from the US Army's commanding general in Florida in May of 1837. This threat seems to have associated bloodhounds specifically with hunting African-descended fugitives. Thomas Jesup wrote a letter instructing his underling Lieutenant Colonel Harney to convey the following message to the Seminole leader Osceola: "tell him I shall send out and take all the negroes who belong to the white people; and he must not allow the Indian negroes to mix with them. Telling him I am sending to Cuba for bloodhounds to trail them; and I

[355] In the cases of Jamaica and Saint-Domingue, the dogs arrived too late and were of little use in the war. Dallas, *The history of the Maroons*, 2: 4-5, 109. Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror*, 159, 184.

intend to hang every one of them who does not come in."[356] Jesup did not make good on this threat, but his language suggests the ways that slavery and conquest intersected in this war. While Jesup expressed disgust for any policy that would make US soldiers into slave-catchers, he pursued a victory that would be acceptable to Florida planters, who insisted that Seminole leaders be required to surrender the slaves formerly enslaved persons among them before departing for Indian Territory.

The following summer, a new commanding general, the future president Zachary Taylor, initiated concrete steps to bring bloodhounds to Florida. In July of 1838, Taylor forwarded a letter to the Secretary of War, Joel R. Poinsett, from the merchant John Evertson, who offered to obtain Cuban bloodhounds on the Army's behalf. Taylor told Poinsett that he was anxious to accept Evertson's offer, which he hoped would put an end to the war. Rather than acknowledging the bloodhounds' connection to slavery, Taylor explained that they might be useful in "ferretting out" the Seminoles from swamps and the dense stands of trees known as hammocks.[357] Jesup would later second these ideas, writing that the Army's most significant challenge in Florida was "not to beat and compel the enemy to make peace, but to catch them."[358] Although the wetlands of Florida differed greatly from the mountains of Jamaica, Jesup's letter and another published in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* that September would claim that bloodhounds' skill at driving

[356] Thomas Jesup to Lt. Col. Harney, May 25, 1837, quoted in Joshua R. Giddings, *Speeches in Congress* (Boston: J. P. Hewitt and Co., 1853), 19. Also cited in Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 199-204.
[357] Zachary Taylor to John R. Evertson, Esq, July 28, 1838, enclosed in Taylor to Roger Jones, July 31, 1838, LR, RG 107, NARA.
[358] The Quartermaster General to Thomas H. Benton, January 19, 1839, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States* 25 (Washington, 1960): 565.

"barbarians from their fastnesses" had been proven in their use by the British during the Maroon War.[359]

Poinsett authorized Taylor to pursue the bloodhound plan but made efforts to distance his own department from this business. He stated that he had "always been of the opinion that dogs ought to be employed in this warfare to protect the Army from surprises and ambuscades and to track the Indian to his lurking place." But he also clarified that these dangerous creatures should be used only for "tracking and discovering the Indians and not to worry or destroy them." Poinsett recommended that Taylor move forward on the plan without the explicit involvement of the Office of the Secretary of War. He wrote to Taylor through the Adjutant General, who authorized the Commanding General to "procure a sufficient number of dogs" based on his own judgment.[360] Following Poinsett's example, Taylor delegated the business to Florida's territorial governor. He stated that the Army would reimburse the territory if the dogs proved useful.[361]

The governor, in turn, assigned the purchase to his former aide-de-camp, Richard Fitzpatrick, who seemed a good choice for the mission because of his Gulf connections and the class of men he represented: men whose capital had developed Florida Territory, and who now found their lives threatened and their property destroyed. One of the first attacks of the war had occurred at a property belonging to Fitzpatrick, forcing his overseer and slaves to abandon his plantation. In later months, Florida's governor would allude to this event, stating that Fitzpatrick was the party with whom the purchase of the dogs "originated, and whose ample justification is

[359] *Army and Navy Chronicle* 9, no. 10 (September 5, 1839), 146.
[360] Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) to Taylor, Aug. 31, 1838, Vol. 14, Letters Sent (LS), RG 94, NARA.
[361] Taylor to Richard Keith Call, Dec. 22, 1839 in Taylor to AG, Jan. 15, T-16, 1840, LR, RG 94, NARA.

the stern necessity which required it."[362] The losses that Fitzpatrick had suffered, in other words, served to justify, even necessitate, the governor's decision to purchase the dogs. Fitzpatrick, however, seems to have sought future profit as well as retaliation in this measure. Shortly after returning with the dogs from Cuba, he would scheme to use the war to increase the scope of his land speculations. In a letter to Congress, he would request the entire 3,200,000 acres offered to homesteaders in the Armed Occupation Bill, which promised free land to new Florida settlers who armed themselves in self-defense. In exchange for these landholdings, Fitzpatrick offered to lead private militia to exterminate the Seminoles or to convince them to surrender.[363]

Fitzpatrick's business ties and acumen directed his journey across the Florida Straits. He left St. Marks in November of 1839 on the Sloop Marshal of Key West and docked at Matanzas, a port where other US businessmen might assist him on his journey. From this port, Fitzpatrick proceeded inland, where he met an acquaintance—likely another planter—to guide him to the town of Madruga.[364] Here, at the crossroads of Cuba's sugar provinces, local authorities helped the men obtain bloodhounds. He departed with thirty-three dogs and five dog-keepers, stopping at Key West on his return journey home to build houses for the dogs. Docking once more at Cedar Key for flour, bacon, and bread, the Sloop Marshall arrived at St. Marks on January 7, 1840, with Fitzpatrick, the hounds, and their keepers.[365] Of the five thousand dollars that

[362] Governor's Message, Feb. 28, 1840 in Reid to Poinsett, March, F-59, 1840, LR, RG 107; also in *Territorial Papers* 26: 109-114.
[363] Black, "Richard Fitzpatrick, Part II," 38-40, 48-61.
[364] Fitzpatrick to Governor Robert Raymond Reid, Jan. 14, 1840 in Reid to Florida House of Representatives, Jan. 17, 1840, Unit 2, E.2, Florida, Executive Records, Early State Records, Library of Congress, hereafter Reid Letter Book.
[365] "Return of American vessels arrived at Matanzas, Cuba from the first day of July to the thirty-first day of December, 1839, inclusive," Reel 2, Despatches from US Consuls in Matanzas, RG 59, NARA.

Florida's governor had allocated for the mission, one thousand went as a salary to Fitzpatrick himself.[366]

The bloodhounds' arrival generated much excitement. By mid-month, the dogs had been sent out to various Army units: ten bloodhounds and two keepers to the 1st Infantry at Black Creek and six more to the 2nd Dragoons.[367] One month later, bloodhounds scouted the Florida panhandle with Col. William Davenport's unit between the Apalachicola and Ochlockonee rivers.[368] In mid-March, nine joined Col. Twiggs's company near today's Ocala National Forest.[369] Language barriers between the dog-keepers and Army troops were mitigated by the diversity of the Florida volunteers. Men remaining from the territory's Spanish period worked as interpreters in Army scouting parties.[370] Bloodhounds also traveled with territorial units, some of which were led by local planters. One of the companies to use the dogs successfully was commanded by the "well known Indian hunter" Maj. William J. Bailey, one of Tallahassee's first residents and the owner of twenty-six slaves.[371]

Meanwhile, the Secretary of War faced a different sort of excitement about the dogs. As news of their arrival circulated across the nation, Senators and Representatives from at least six US states received memorials protesting the federal government's involvement in this "barbarous

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[366] Fitzpatrick to Governor Robert Raymond Reid, Jan. 14, 1840, Reid Letter Book.
[367] Reid to Taylor, January 16, and various letters from Reid to Fauntleroy, Collins, and Taylor, Feb. 2-14, 1840, Reid Letter Book.
[368] Taylor to Jones, Jan. 30, 1840, T-66, and AAG to Davenport, Feb. 1, 1840, in Taylor to AG, Feb. 28, 1840, T-76, LR, RG 94, NARA.
[369] Lt. Col. Thomas F. Hunt to AQ, March 14, 1840, Vol. 21, RLR, RG 92, NARA.
[370] Specifically, men from the companies of Lt. Col. Sanchez, Capt. Hindley, and Capt. Dell. AAG to Sanchez in Taylor to AG, Feb. 7, 1840, T-61, AAG to Twiggs, Feb. 19, 1840, in Taylor to AG, March 4, 1840, T-105, LR, RG 94, NARA.
[371] Reid to Fauntleroy, Feb. 2, and Reid to Bailey, Feb. 13, 1840, Reid Letter Book; *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 8, 117; Census of Leon County, Florida, 1825, .L 69, Division of Library and Information Services, Florida Department of State, available at https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/leoncensus/

and inhuman" measure.[372] These form-letters— over one hundred total—came mainly from Quakers and other abolitionists, who stressed nonetheless the universality of their opposition.[373] A memorial from Rahway, New Jersey professed to have been "signed by the friends and opponents of the present administration." One signer added that he was a military captain and "in his 81st year." While most signers were men, two memorials from Indiana came exclusively from women. Another included the signatures of ninety students and faculty—half male, half female—at the Quaker boarding school in Mount Pleasant, Ohio.[374]

Under pressure from these citizens' congressmen, Poinsett treaded lightly on this issue when he addressed readers of the *Army and Navy Chronicle* in late February. He declined to challenge Taylor's decision but emphasized his own lack of involvement in the purchase and his humanitarian concerns about how the dogs were handled. In a series of published letters, Poinsett reiterated his order that the dogs be muzzled and leashed when used by the Army. He added that the Territory of Florida, not the War Department, bore primary responsibility for importing the bloodhounds. Poinsett concluded that the memorialists, while "animated by humane motives," were "deceived when they suppose that [the bloodhounds'] employment will degrade the

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[372] These letters are stored in two places in the National Archives in Washington, DC: "Committee on Military Affairs: Employment of Blood Hounds in the Florida War against the Seminole Indians, March 16, 1840," g10.1-g10.4, HR:26A, Records of the United States House of Representatives (RG 233); and Box 93, g11, Sen.26A, Records of the United States Senate (RG 46), NARA. Hereafter these will appear as House Petitions and Senate Petitions.

[373] John Campbell lists the number of petitions as 162, probably because he has counted the total number of petitions sent to both the Senate and House without controlling for duplicates. My own count numbered closer to one hundred. Campbell, "The Seminoles," 275.

[374] "The Remonstrance of Sarah Beckett & 30 other Ladies of Indiana against the use of Blood Hounds in the Florida War" and "Remonstrance of Lucinda Butler…," Feb. 11 and May 18, 1840 , G.11.2, House Petitions. The Friends Boarding School in Mount Pleasant, Ohio, opened in 1837 and still operates as the Olney Friends School. See the institutional history at www.olneyfriends.org.

character of the country."[375] This posture differed sharply from the open disdain that the governor of Florida directed toward his critics:

> Shall we look upon our ruined dwellings—upon the murdered and mangled bodies of men, women, and children, and then meekly say, 'the poor Indians have done this—we must be merciful and humane to them—we will not set our dogs upon them'—oh no! That would be more horrible than these butcheries.[376]

Memories of the bloodhound episode would continue to animate abolitionist discourse through the decades that followed, but the episode itself ended almost as soon as it had begun. Army correspondence leaves the impression that the dogs were ineffective. Troops seem to have followed Poinsett's orders to use these animals only for scouting, a purpose for which they seem to have been unsuited.[377] Near Lake Bryant in early April, four scouts with bloodhounds encountered a small party of Seminoles—whether combatants, they failed to say. The Seminoles fled, leaving some of their belongings behind. "The dogs were at this place laid on the fresh trail," Colonel Twiggs later reported to Taylor, "but took no notice whatever of it and after repeated trials, recourse was had to the usual manner of trailing which was followed up as far as the nature of the soil would admit." Three days later near another lake, four bloodhounds again "took no notice whatever of the trail, neither did they manifest any feelings different from others

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[375] Sturgeow and Buchanan to Poinsett February 7, 1840, Vol. 1, Confidential and Unofficial Letters Sent 1814-1847, RG 107, NARA. *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 8 (February 20, 1840), 114. For another insistence that the dogs "have been procured by the territorial, not the general Government," see correspondence from the *New York Commercial Advertiser* on page 117 of the same issue of the *Army and Navy Chronicle*.

[376] Governor's Message, Feb. 28, 1840 in Reid to Poinsett, March, F-59, 1840, LR, RG 107, NARA. Also in *Territorial Papers*, Vol. 26: 109-114; *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 8 (February 20, 1840), 187.

[377] For the debate before Congress, see "The Bloodhounds," *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 8 (Feb. 20, 1840), 114, also discussed later in this chapter. For communication with officers, see AAG to Davenport, Feb. 1, 1840, in Taylor to AG, Feb. 16, T-76, and AAG to Twiggs, Feb. 19, 1840, in Taylor to AG, March 4, T-105, 1840, LR, RG 94, NARA.

of their race on seeing the dead bodies of the Indians."[378] The bloodhounds, in other words, showed no special ability to track or attack Indians.

Florida's governor explained the bloodhounds' failure through allusions to racial difference: "it could scarcely be supposed that Dogs trained to pursue Negroes would instinctively pursue Indians."[379] Meanwhile, some officers blamed the dogs' own "spurious breed."[380] One likely problem with the bloodhounds was that their keepers, who had long expressed reluctance to fight Indians in Florida, refused to enter its hammocks and swamps. Two of these men returned to Cuba at the government's expense after claiming that their contracts only obligated them to work in open woods and on horseback.[381] The dogs' failure might also have stemmed from Poinsett's insistence that they be used only for tracking. Bloodhounds used by the Florida volunteers succeeded in capturing six Seminoles near Tallahassee, but in this case, they "throttled" one man, "threw him down and secured him."[382]

In early April, Army officers returned the sixteen dogs they had used, only three months after these animals had first appeared in their units. Florida's governor tried for the better part of a year to convince the Secretary of War to reimburse him for their services, but both Poinsett and Taylor denied that the dogs had been useful. Ultimately, the federal government paid the dog

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[378] Twiggs to Taylor, April 3, 1840, in Taylor to AG, April 14, T-147, 1840, RG 94, NARA. Taylor calls the lake "Ochapopka." He might mean today's Lake Apopka, just northwest of Orlando. For another account of these expeditions, see correspondence in *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 17 (April 23, 1840), 265, 269-270.
[379] Reid to Taylor, April 20, 1840, Reid Letter Book; see also *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 17 (April 23, 1840), 267.
[380] AAG to J.T. McLaughlin, March 7, in Taylor to AG, April 20, T-140, RG 94.
[381] Fitzpatrick to Governor Robert Raymond Reid, Jan. 14, 1840 in Reid to Florida House of Representatives, Jan. 17, 1840, Reid Letter Book; AAG to Twiggs, Feb. 19, 1840, in Taylor to AG, March 4, T-105, and AAG to Heintzelman in Taylor to AG, April 20, T-140, 1840, LR, RG 94, NARA.
[382] "Florida War," *Army and Navy Chronicle* 10, no. 12 (March 19, 1840), 187.

keepers but nothing toward the dogs.[383] The governor later ordered the bloodhounds to be sold at public auction, where they were likely purchased by local planters.[384]

Unsuccessful in warfare, the Florida bloodhounds serve nonetheless as an illustration of the ideological and material connections between North American conquest and Cuban slavery. Trained to protect Cuba's emerging sugar empire against black insurrection, these dogs had gained a reputation for violence that made them desirable to officers fighting Indian and black warriors in the Second Seminole War. This military experiment failed, but the importation of bloodhounds provided new tools for Florida planters. These animals now patrolled the limits of cotton plantations on lands that the United States had conquered from Seminoles.

Miguel Barbachano's *Venta de Indios*

Like the Florida bloodhounds, the *Venta de Indios* connected Cuban slavery to North American wars of conquest, but differences in time, history, and geography made Governor Miguel Barbachano y Tarrazo's "sale" of nearly three hundred Mayas to merchants in Cuba a better remembered affair. During the US-Mexico War, Campechanos, whose economy depended on trade with New Orleans, had declared independence from Mexico, while Meridanos rejected this declaration. During an attack by the Campeche faction on the city of Valladolid that January, this conflict seemed to take on a life of its own. Campechano troops—two-thirds of whom bore the social category of *indio*—were joined by disfranchised people from the outskirts of the city, including *indios*, *blancos* and mixed-descent *mestizos*. The six-day siege that followed, along with a string of other attacks later that year, had announced the beginning of the half-century war

[383] Taylor to Reid, March 23, 1840, in Reid to Secretary of War, F-60, 1840, LR, RG 107, NARA; Reid to Taylor, April 20, 1840, and Reid to Poinsett, Dec. 26, 1840, Reid Letter Book; Poinsett to Reid, April 18, 1840, Vol. 22, LS: Military Affairs, RG 107, NARA.
[384] Reid to Collins, Feb. 12, 1841, Reid Letter Book. I have not yet found any mention of this auction in Tallahassee newspapers.

between state forces and Maya-led rebels. The result of long-held grievances over taxation, debt peonage, and the alienation of communal landholdings, this conflict appeared in elite writing as a *guerra de castas* or a *guerra de bárbaros*—a caste war or a barbarian war.[385]

The period of competition and infighting that preceded the Caste War had strengthened ties between Yucatán and Cuba, with Havana serving as a place of exile and banishment for people of both factions.[386] Now, while the Yucatecan government attempted to put down this insurrection, some elite heads of household fled Mérida and Campeche with their dependents, including their Maya servants, or *criados*, to seek refuge at Havana and other Gulf ports.[387] These movements of commerce and people across the Canal de Yucatán to Havana occurred as Cuban officials were experimenting with ways to manage enslaved people within their own population. In 1835, Spain had signed a treaty with Britian promising (quite disingenuously) to renew efforts to stop the illicit trafficking of African captives to Cuba. This agreement, combined with a new wave of insurrections near Matanzas in the 1840s, convinced officials to take steps to diversify their work force. In 1844, the former *Junta de Comisión Blanca*—now a commission within the development board, or *Junta de Fomento*—announced a plan to bring five hundred "free white" agricultural laborers to the colony.[388]

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[385] Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatan* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 80-82, 100-105; Nelson A. Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán*, Rev. Ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 40.
[386] These included Miguel Barbachano, who spent much of 1847 in Cuba. Dumond, *The Machete*, 93, 97.
[387] "Cuaderno anotador de pasaportes de 1848 a 1851" and Sansores to Governor, May 23, 1848, Expedientes 32 and 57, Volúmen 60, Caja 110, Gobernación (G), Poder Ejecutivo (PE), Archivo General del Estado de Yucatan (AGEY), Mérida. Hereafter, the location of AGEY records will appear as Expediente/Volúmen/Caja (for example, 32/60/110). Records only organized by *expediente* and *volúmen* will appear as Expediente/Volúmen.
[388] Corbitt, "Immigration," 296- 301.

This project would offer merchants and politicians from both sides of the Canal de Yucatán ways to connect Cuba's demand for "free white" laborers to the Caste War. Like the names of John Evertson and Richard Fitzpatrick in Florida, those of Simón Peón, E.D. Tolmé, and Juan Bautista Anduse stand out in the historical record of repression. In February 1848, Peón submitted a proposal to the *Comisión de Población Blanca* to recruit three to four hundred Maya laborers to staff his Cuban sugar plantation. He intended this project as his entry into a contest that the *Comisión* had begun four years earlier. Cuban authorities had already been impressed by the quality of workers who had arrived in Havana as the *criados* of Yucatecan refugees. They rejected Peón's proposal but began to investigate recruiting these Yucatecans by other means. In March and April of 1848, members of the *Comisión* wrote to the Spanish vice-consuls at Mérida and Campeche to formulate a plan by which these authorities would each recruit two hundred Maya bachelors and one hundred Maya families to work five-year labor contracts on the island. The vice-consuls agreed that Yucatecan *indios* would make excellent agricultural hands, but expressed concern that these men and women might not leave Yucatán of their own accord.[389]

In fact, Maya men and families were already being landed in Cuba through suspicious means. That April, forty-five people designated *criados* docked in Havana under dubious contracts. The same month, fifty-three passengers perceived as *indios* and *mestizos* arrived in Cuba without masters or contracts. Unlike those arriving as servants, these people received the status of *colonos*, or settlers. In August, the *Junta de Fomento* officially approved the *Comisión de Población Blanca*'s plan to recruit Yucatecan laborers to the island.[390]

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[389] Moisés Gonzáles Navarro, *Raza y tierra: la Guerra de Castas y el henequen* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1970), 109-112; Corbitt, "Immigration," 301; Corbitt, "Los colonos yucatecos," *Revista bimestre cubana* 39 (January 1937): 64-99; Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de Castas*, 102-103.
[390] Gonzalez Navarro, *Raza y tierra*, 110-112.

Miguel Barbachano returned to the governorship of Yucatán in March, 1848, facing a ruthless war and few funds to wage it. The eastern half of the peninsula was now in the hands of a rebel army, which was perceived as *indio*, despite the many non-Maya soldiers who also occupied its ranks. In the months before Barbachano's return, his political rivals in Campeche had passed a number of measures in an attempt to maintain their independence from Mexico while sorting out the financial troubles of war.[391] Now Barbachano reunited Yucatán with Mexico in an attempt to gain monetary aid.[392] While he waited for these funds to arrive, the governor turned to private markets to fill state needs. He commissioned the doctor José Matilde Sansores, for example, one of thirty-five Spanish Cubans who had fled Mérida for Havana that April, to investigate the purchase of livestock from Cuba.[393]

In August, Barbachano commissioned another Spanish Cuban merchant, E. D. Tolmé, to investigate the possibility of exiling Maya prisoners of war to Cuba. In the decree he would make about the policy three months later, he would attempt to justify it as a way to "reconcile the principles of humanity and civilization with the mutual interests of Yucatán and Cuba."[394] Quashing the insurrection, it would "whiten" Yucatán's population, and bring financial resources to the state. Barbachano also made arguments in favor of the trafficking of Mayas to Cuba that resembled those made by US writers about Indian Removal: the expulsion of prisoners, he

[391] Some of these resolutions are no longer available for consultation because of damage, but summaries exist in the search database at the AGEY. Hereafter, documents not available for consultation will appear as they are listed the AGEY database: *No sale a consulta* or *NSC*. See 92/17/67, 93/17/67, and 104/17/67, Consejo del Estado (CE), PE, AGEY.
[392] Dumond, *The Machete*, 106-117, 145-146.
[393] Sansores's report leaves no record of whether he also sought information about the trafficking of laborers. Entries 2-55, "Cuaderno anotador de pasaportes de 1848 a 1851" and Sansores to Governor, May 23, 1848, 32/60/110 and 57/60/110, Gobernación (G), PE, AGEY.
[394]Tolmé to Governor, Oct. 23, 1848, 68/60/110, G, PE, AGEY.

argued, spared these people from violence while preparing them for the demands of civilized life.[395]

In the spring of 1849, Tolmé received his reward for arranging this exchange. His own ship, the *Cetro*, became the vessel by which early prisoners or war were transported to Cuba. On March 10, the *Cetro* arrived at the port of Sisal to collect 135 prisoners. After transporting them to Havana, Tolmé sailed back via New Orleans to purchase supplies. Returning to Sisal to deliver these goods, he then shuttled military forces to the southern seat of war. On May 17, the *Cetro* again left Sisal for Havana with another 195 prisoners.[396] Tolmé paid a "voluntary donation" of twenty-five pesos per person to the Yucatecan government—a total of 8,210 pesos. He likewise received 12,812 pesos from the Yucatecan government, in part for the purchase of supplies. Surely, however, he came out of the exchange with money to spare.[397]

Once in Cuba, these prisoners of war worked in multiple locations: farms, tobacco and coffee estates, cattle ranches, cotton fields, and road construction, even performing domestic labor for the Catholic Church. The largest number, however, worked on sugar estates in the provinces surrounding Havana and Matanzas.[398] While these laborers were deemed *colonos*, not

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[395] Barbachano to Ministro de Relaciones Interiores y Exteriores (MRIE), March 15 and April 19, 1849, Libro 29: Copiador de la correspondencia del gobernador D. Miguel Barbachano con los supremos poderes y gobernadores…, Libros Complementarios (LC), PE, AGEY. The military commander of Bacalar made the same argument in a private letter to the Superintendent of British Honduras. Zetina to Fancourt, May 28, 1849, 28R192, Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS), Belmopan.

[396] Entries from April 24-May 18, 1849, Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY; Barbachano to MRIE, March 15, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.

[397] Of the money he received from Yucatán, 12,000 pesos came from funds recently arrived from Mexico City to support the war. Entries from March 10, April 28, May 2, and May 18, 1849, Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY

[398] Jason M. Yaremko, "De Campeche a la Guerra de Castas: La presencia maya en Cuba, Siglos XVI a XIX," *Chacmool: cuadernos de trabajo cubano-mexicanos* (Merida: Instituto de Cultura de Yucatan, 2010), 103. See also Alejandro García Alvarez, "Traficantes en el Golfo," *Historia Social*, No. 17 (Autumn 1993): 33-46.

slaves, the Mexican consul at Havana, Buenaventura Vivó, expressed concern about the severe punishments that Cuban law allowed overseers to inflict on them. A *reglamento* issued in 1849, for example, allowed them to receive lashes beyond the limit applied to slaves and implied that they could be left upside down in the stocks.[399] Vivó received reports from these migrants that they had departed Sisal in shackles and chains without knowing their destination.[400]

With insufficient funds to pay, clothe, and feed soldiers, Barbachano relied on private enterprise to support and motivate troops. In place of rations, the state allowed soldiers half of the provisions, furniture, and "all class of effects" that they "rescued" from properties occupied by rebels, making plundered cattle, corn, and clothing soldiers' primary means of survival.[401] As the ship was preparing to leave Sisal with its first shipment of prisoners of war, Barbachano drafted a circular letter to military commanders offering a five-peso bounty for each prisoner of war whom they delivered to the capital.[402] In this manner, some officers increased their salary by at least one hundred pesos that year.[403]

Encouraging the taking of prisoners through market incentives opened this practice to forms of corruption that would shape it for years to come. Two-thirds of those taken from war zones to the public jails of Mérida and Campeche were women and children, many of them

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[399] The *Reglamento para el manejo y trato de los colonos asiáticos é indios* was issued by the captain general of Cuba on April 10, 1849. See Buenaventura Vivó, *Memorias de Buenaventura Vivó . . . durante los años 1853, 1854 y 1855* (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1856), 327, 330-331.
[400] Vivó, *Memorias*, 326-327.
[401] The other half went to the state. "Decreto que autoriza que los bienes rescatados . . . se dividan entre los rescatadores y la hacienda pública," Feb. 28, 1848, 92/17/67, Consejo del Estado (CE), PE, AGEY.
[402] "Circular relativa al pago de recompensas a la tropa de $5.00 por cada indio sublevado…," March 9, 1849, 28/61/111, G, PE, AGEY, NSC.
[403] 22/116/166, 16/118/168, and 62/119/169, Milicia (M), PE, AGEY.

noncombatants who had fled with their heads of household.[404] The Sisal passport log shows that women and children, presumably unarmed, also made the journey to Havana.[405] These people endured a long march to the public jail at Mérida or Campeche, often arriving improperly clothed, and sometimes growing ill or dying along the way.[406] On at least five occasions between October of 1849 and February of 1850, wealthy Yucatecans complained to the government that their *criados*, who they claimed had not participated in the war, now languished in jail. The government released these workers only after demanding the five pesos it had paid for their capture.[407] Situations like these were common enough that in early 1850, the governor circulated another letter to military commanders clarifying the definition of prisoners as men who had been caught with arms in hand.[408]

Despite being more successful than military scouts' experiment with bloodhounds in Florida, Miguel Barbachano's *Venta de Indios* met an equally swift end. Mexico had declared illegal the international trade in African captives upon its independence in 1821, and slavery itself a decade later, making the reported sale of Mexican citizens to Cuban sugar planters a shock to national antislavery sentiments even greater than the criticism brought by reports of bloodhound deployment in the United States. The episode also represented a clear breach of international agreements: an 1841 treaty between Mexico and Britain had promised to increase

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[404] Their origins included the villages, farms, and haciendas near Tihosuco, Valladolid, and Bolonchenticul. 20/116/166, 22/116/166, 54/116/166, 13/117/167, and 16/118/168, M, PE, AGEY.
[405] "Cuaderno anotador de pasaportes de 1848 a 1851," 32/60/110, G, PE, AGEY.
[406] 56/116/166, M, PE, AGEY; 69/27/77 and 95/27/77, CO, PE, AGEY; Various entries in Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY. Also see correspondence from 1850 in 22/63/113 G, PE, AGEY.
[407] The first of these requests came from Don Diego Crisanto Andrade near Tekax, regarding his *criado* Buenaventura Aké, who had been caught unarmed. Oct. 31, 1849- Feb. 20, 1850, Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY. Similar problems would arise near Valladolid in 1854. 94/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.
[408] Sebastian Lopez de Llergo to Secretario General de Gobierno, Feb. 4, 1850, 43/121/171, M, PE, AGEY.

efforts to combat the international slave trade.[409] Under pressure from many parties, the Minister of Interior and Exterior Relations instructed Barbachano to end this trade even before Tolmé had collected his second shipment of prisoners.[410] The governor protested his censure but acquiesced; no other reports of prisoners leaving Sisal remain in the 1848-1850 passport log.[411]

Yet these early deportations stand as only one chapter in a history that ultimately spanned decades. The market opened by Barbachano would persist by other means, with captives trickling from Yucatán to Cuba on the ships of Gulf smugglers. The governments of Yucatán and Mexico would not officially re-enter this business for another five years, but they, like the US War Department, bore more responsibility than they were willing to acknowledge. The Minister's censure of local officials temporarily absolved the Mexican government of implication in this transnational trade in captives, but it failed to end the domestic and illicit means by which this trade continued.

Smuggling, Slaving and Conquest

When the Minister of Interior and Exterior Relations censured Miguel Barbachano for his deportation of Maya prisoners of war in May 1849, he said nothing of the local and domestic markets through which these people were trafficked. The most significant nexus of these was Veracruz, which by September had received one hundred Mayas to perform railroad construction at a price of twenty pesos each to the Yucatán state government.[412] Prisoners of war continued to

[409] Jaime Olveda Legaspi, "La abolición de la esclavitud en México, 1810-1917," *Signos Históricos*, no. 29 (January-June 2013): 8-34.
[410] Doyle to Fancourt, Aug. 10, 1849, 33-13, R33, BARS; Governor to MRIE, May 26, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.
[411] "Cuaderno anotador de pasaportes de 1848 a 1851," 32/60/110, G, PE, AGEY.
[412] Barbachano had arranged this labor contract with Pedro Garay y Garay of Veracruz at the same time he was negotiating with Tolmé. The Yucatecan government originally agreed to send 110 prisoners of war to Veracruz, but ten were prohibited from leaving Sisal on account of

leave Yucatán for Veracruz for at least a year after the official end of the trade with Cuba.[413] They were also sent under similar conditions to the ports of Tampico and Villa del Carmen.[414] Prisoners of war also continued to perform labor for Yucatecan military units. In some cases, they were sold locally.[415] Meanwhile, merchants in Cuba continued to submit requests to the *Junta de Fomento* to recruit Maya laborers to the island.[416]

Smugglers, many of them known contraband traders in African captives, answered this call, filling the positions previously occupied by Tolmé and Barbachano.[417] The most notorious discovery of smuggling occurred in 1853, when the Superintendent of British Honduras arrested a man named Juan Bautista Anduse for selling Maya captives to a Cuban merchant.[418] Originally from the island of St. Thomas, Anduse had resided, impoverished, in Mérida in 1851.[419] By 1853, he was known for "trading, soldiering, smuggling, & speculating in Yucatan, Belize, and the neighboring places."[420] He worked as the agent of the Cuban businessman Francisco Martí y Torrens, who had built a career as a fisherman and interceptor of contraband—including merchandise and African captives—in the waters near Cuba. Thanks to a concession extended to

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illness; one died on his return journey to the capital. Governor to MRIE, March 15 and Aug. 28, 1849, and Sept. 5, 1850, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY; Sept. 11-22, Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY.
[413] Governor to MRIE, Sept. 5, 1850, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY. 22/63/113, G, PE, AGEY.
[414] Jefe Político de Motul to Secretario General de Gobierno, April 19, 1852, 60/30/80, CO, PE, AGEY, *NSC*.
[415] "Comunicaciones dirigidas al secretario general de gobierno…," July 2-30, 1851, 18/29/79, CO, PE, AGEY.
[416] Vivó, *Memorias*, 328.
[417] García Alvarez, "Traficantes," 37.
[418] Wodehouse to Military Commandant at Bacalar, June 10, 1854, 40R199, BARS. See also Wodehouse to Doyle, Sept. 24, 1853, 40R261; Wodehouse to Admiral Sir George Seymour, June 10, 1853, 40R200; and Wodehouse to Chairman of the Board of Jail Superintendent, July 6, 1853, 40R220. Also in Gonzalez Navarro, *Raza y tierra*, 129.
[419] That year, an official wrote to the Military Commander of Yucatán asking whether to expel Anduse and another foreigner in order to avoid their becoming dependents of the state. The commander's response does not survive. 16/27/77, CO, PE, AGEY.
[420] Wodehouse to Doyle, Sept. 24, 1853, 40R261, BARS.

Spanish subjects in 1848, Martí had extended this business to the islands of eastern Yucatán, where he was rumored to carry out an illicit trade in African captives bound for Havana.[421] Now, having purchased a ship from one of the rebels' trade partners, Anduse docked at the bays of Espiritu Santo and Ascención, and lured thirty men and three young girls into captivity. He sold the men to Martí at twenty-five pesos each, the same amount as the "donation" that the Yucatecan government had received four years earlier. The girls, valued at only eight pesos, were said to remain enslaved at Isla Mujeres.[422]

Reports of the trade between Martí and Anduse drew officials in Mexico City back into these transactions, first in response to British cries of objection, and then through circumspect participation. During this, his last period of rule, the dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna had promised to protect Mexico from internal disorder, US aggression and impending bankruptcy. [423] The inconsistent posturing that he would take with regard to the *Venta de Indios* grew from the challenging nature of these goals, as well as his declining popularity in Mexico. Initially, Santa Anna used outrage over the enslavement of Mexican citizens as justification for his minister in Madrid to demand indemnity payments from Spain.[424] By January of the following year, however, he himself had become involved in the trafficking, a change in policy aimed at funding an orderly and independent Mexico.[425]

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[421] An archival reference to this 1848 concession appears in 61/60/110, G, PE, AGEY. Martí's receipt of it is described in García Alvarez, "Traficantes," 37-38. For rumors of the trade in African captives, see Governor to MRIE, March 4, 1851, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.
[422] The names of the kidnapped men appear in Wodehouse to Joseph T. Crawford, British Consul at Havana, July 15, 1853, 40R222, BARS. Some of these men returned to Yucatán in April of 1854; others remained in Cuba. Stevenson to Crawford, April 20, 1854, 40R312, BARS.
[423] Richard A. Johnson, "Spanish-Mexican Diplomatic Relations, 1853-1855," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 21, no. 4: 559-576; Johnson, "Santa Anna's Last Dictatorship, 1853-1855," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (April 1938): 281-311.
[424] Vivó, *Memorias*, 319-320, 325-333.
[425] Johnson, "Santa Anna," 282-283, 287-288, 295.

That month, the dictator signed agreements with two Havana companies known to participate in the illicit trade in African captives: Goicouría y Hermano, who also did business in New Orleans, and Zangronis Hermanos, insured in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and St. Thomas.[426] As with the Barbachano-Tolmé agreement, Yucatecans who placed x-marks on Goicouría and Zangronis contracts received the formal status of *colonos*. Their contracts obligated them to work for five years, half the time specified by Barbachano in 1849. The companies promised to ensure that these migrants received wages, food, clothing, medical care, and transportation to and from Cuba. Like Barbachano, Santa Anna and his ministers claimed that this "free and voluntary" labor would benefit Mayas by "awakening in them healthy and orderly ideas, economy and the love of work."[427] It would also further the cause of abolition in Cuba by offering a "free" workforce as an alternative to slave labor.[428]

At first, Santa Anna agreed only to allow these companies to contract with men and women who had not been imprisoned, in order to ensure their voluntary participation. By September 1854, however, he was also allowing them to recruit prisoners of war. Santa Anna's minister of internal relations instructed the Yucatecan governor to monitor the business, sending regular lists of the contracts and passports to Mexico City and to the Mexican consul at Havana. He also tasked the governor with ensuring that families remain together.[429] The men involved most directly in recruiting these "contract laborers" also held positions as agents of military conquest. A Spanish colonel from Cuba, for example, Manuel María Jiménez, was rumored to have approached Havana commercial houses shortly before Santa Anna signed the contracts with

[426] For these companies' involvement in the slave trade, see García Alvarez, "Traficantes," 40.
[427] Bonilla to Governor, Jan. 23, 1854, 15/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.
[428] Copy of Tito Visino to Santa Anna, Jan. 16, 1854, 15/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.
[429] See letters between Manuel María Jiménez and Governor Barbachano, and between Santa and the agent of Goicouría y Hermano in 15/69/119, and 60/69/119, G, PE, AGEY. One of the contracts survives in 32/70/120, G, PE, AGEY.

Goicouría and Zangronis with a plan to raise a militia for Yucatán in order to capture and sell prisoners of war.[430] When Goicouría y Hermano established their *Agencia de Colonización de Indígenas* in Yucatán, Manuel María Jiménez and a man named Eduardo Jiménez acted as its agents, working alongside the prefect of war-torn Valladolid to prepare "labor contracts" for prisoners of war and for noncombatant families from the surrounding area. The company offered the central government of Mexico sixteen pesos for each laborer they sent, depositing 20,000 pesos up front with the governor of Yucatán.[431] Some of the people recruited later claimed that they had been taken prisoner while hiding in the woods so as not to be confused with the rebels.[432]

Objections circulating Mexico City again halted official government involvement in this trade, but the trade itself would continue. In December of 1854, Santa Anna's minister wrote to the Yucatecan governor announcing the cancelation of his agreement with Gouicouría and Zangronis, a measure that was necessary to "remove pretexts by which to discredit the Supreme Government."[433] The minister instructed the governor to halt the contracting and trafficking of Maya laborers, but the governor claimed that he could not: he had already spent 17,000 pesos of the 20,000 pesos that Goicouría y Hermano had paid. By this time, the company had already taken twenty-seven prisoners of war and 106 other laborers to Havana.[434] Mexican officials

[430] Gonzalez Navarro, *Raza y tierra*, 134. In 1855, Manuel María Jiménez would request the concession that had been extended to Martí in order to establish fishing camps on the coasts of Yucatán. 61/60/110, G, PE, AGEY.
[431] Manuel María Jiménez to Barbachano, Sept. 12, 1854, 60/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.
[432] Gonzalez Navarro, *Raza y tierra*, 136.
[433] Bonilla to governor, Dec. 4, 1854, 15/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.
[434] Response in margin of Bonilla to governor, Dec. 4, 1854, 15/69/119, G, PE, AGEY.

removed themselves from these proceedings, but the migration of Maya families through Goicouría y Hermano would continue into the following year.[435]

Even after this chapter of official trade had ended, Cuban commercial houses, planters, and even convents continued to receive permission to recruit Maya laborers, while Spanish sailors and merchants still trolled the coast of Yucatán.[436] All three of the officers to hold the position of governor in Yucatán between 1858 and 1860—Martín Francisco Peraza, Liborio Irigoyen Cárdenas, and Pedro Acereto—were directly involved in the trade or at least tacitly supported it. Acereto's successor, Colonel Lorenzo Vargas, cracked down on international sales but continued to rely domestically on the coerced labor of prisoners of war.[437] Juan Bautista Anduse also appeared again in Yucatecan records, when in the late 1850s he and three other men were arrested at the island of Cozumel for attempting to take eighty-two *indígenas* to Havana, without even the formality of a labor contract. He and his business partners declared that their company had approached these Yucatecans only to trade with them.[438] Earlier that year, however, Anduse had received a concession from the state government to "*conquistar indios*" in order to establish a logging camp at Espiritu Santo Bay.[439]

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[435] Bonilla to Governor, July 12, 1855, 56/70/120, G, PE, AGEY.
[436] García Alvarez, "Traficantes en el Golfo," 40. Rugeley, *Rebellion*, 188.
[437] The trafficking of Mayas was so integral to the Caste War that the historian Terry Rugeley has recently described the Yucatecan military's motivation in occupying the rebel capital of Chan Santa Cruz in 1860 as "human booty by the thousands." Rugeley, *Rebellion*, 174-189.
[438] Records can be found in "Expediente creado contra D. Juan Bautista Anduze . . . ," July 1-Sept. 30, 1856, 20/97/145, J, PE, and "Oficio del Superior Gobierno . . . contra Juan Bautista Anduze," July 7-12, 1856, 8/86, Penal, Tribunal Superior de Justicia, Fondo Justicia, AGEY. Anduse wrote to the governor requesting permission to go to Campeche to clear his name of these charges. Anduse to Governor, July 22, 1856, 100/71/121, G, PE, AGEY.
[439] "Oficio del Superior Gobierno . . . contra Juan Bautista Anduze," July 7-12, 1856, 8/86, Penal, Tribunal Superior de Justicia, Fondo Justicia, AGEY.
Francisco Martí y Torrens was also believed to be involved in this incident. Pedro Regil y Peón in Consul-General Crawford to the Earl of Clarendon, Aug. 18, 1856 (No. 535), *House of Commons Papers* 44: 433-435.

The decade-long trafficking of Mayas from Yucatán to Havana reinforces the connection between North American wars of conquest and forms of coerced labor in the Gulf of Mexico. Handled delicately by the Mexican government, this trade served to fund a war that supported social hierarchies and labor systems in a borderland region. Like the Florida bloodhounds, the *Venta de Indios* came to an end when its promised benefits no longer sufficed to sustain government complicity. A short-lived Yucatán cotton boom during the US Civil War and the subsequent expansion of henequen planting renewed local demand for Maya labor, giving Yucatecan elites little reason to support the risky smuggling trade.[440] Many of the merchants who had been active in the first decade of the Caste War emerged as major planters and investors in this later period, their attention now turned to enterprises that required employing Maya laborers on Yucatecan soil. These entrepreneurs included Simón Peón, who by the time of his death in 1869 owned a mansion on Mérida's main square.[441]

Conclusion

Reliant upon their own coercive labor systems, most white residents of Florida and Yucatán held few objections to waging borderland wars that quickly became entangled with two controversial elements of Cuban sugar planting: the brutal suppression of insurrections and the illicit trafficking of captives. The boldest among them entered eagerly into trade with Cuba, in part because they believed this plantation regime held useful tools for conquest and in part because they desired to profit from these exchanges. Whether attempting to expel indigenous peoples or to control a rebellious labor force, officials of the United States and Mexico found resources in the Atlantic networks at their Gulf shores.

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[440] Rodríguez Piña, *Guerra de Castas*, 14-15.
[441] "Intestado del Sr. Don Simon Peon," 13/148, Juzgado Segundo de lo Civil, C, J, AGEY; Rugeley, *Rebellion*, 217-218.

Today some Yucatecans recall having heard that overseers used dogs to hunt laborers on henequen plantations at the turn of the twentieth century, just as planters had done with enslaved Africans in other Gulf and Caribbean regimes. While the evidence to support these sweeping analogies is limited to more isolated episodes, the idea highlights the common history from which the Second Seminole War and the Caste War emerged.[442] As the next chapter will show, the interweaving of slavery, conquest, and Indian war in the Gulf also shaped power relations between the governments of the United States and Mexico. Decades before Florida's merchants and planters schemed to import Cuban bloodhounds for their war against Seminoles—as early, in fact, as the War of 1812—volunteer armies and private militias shipping out from New Orleans had attempted to justify their violence as protecting the Gulf from Indian savagery and Spanish tyranny. Attacking Native American, Spanish, and Mexican territories, these armed forces expanded the reach of the United States, while professing to defend civilization in North America.

[442] Archivists at the AGEY told me these stories about bloodhounds, citing a 1910 exposé by the journalist John Kenneth Turner, whose first chapter, "The Slaves of Yucatán," uses scenes of cruelty between masters and workers on henequen plantations to argue for the end of US intervention in the Mexican Revolution. I found no mention of dogs in this source, however. Turner, *Barbarous Mexico*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: C.H. Kerr, 1914), 6, 9-36.

Chapter 4: New Orleans, Indian War, and US Conquest across the Gulf of Mexico

In 1849, the New York mapmaker Joseph Hutchins Colton published a hand-colored wall map [Figure 9] positioning the United States amidst a curious mix of national and international images and geography.[443] In its top right quadrant, off the Atlantic coast of Maryland, a bald eagle stands on a crest of stars and stripes, preparing to fly from a nameless port toward the nation's capital. Along the map's edges, sketches of four monuments memorialize the United States' independence from Britain: the Bunker Hill Monument in Boston, the Washington Monument in New York, and the Pulaski Monument in Savannah, all tributes to the American Revolution, as well as the Battle Monument in Baltimore, a tribute to the War of 1812. Across the top, idyllic scenes from the Connecticut Valley, Lake Saratoga, and the Columbia and Willamette rivers portray the nation's recent expansion from the pastures of New York and New England into the Indian lands of Oregon Territory. And along the bottom march a series of images that go from expected to strange: the capitol building in Washington City, the entrance to a port, "Mexicans Catching Wild Cattle," and the cathedral of Mexico City. Celebrating the United States' independence and civilization, this map also reaches beyond US borders, pulling Mexican society and landmarks into its patriotic imagery.

[443] J. H. Colton, *Map of the United States of America, the British Provinces, Mexico, the West Indies and Central America, with part of New Granada and Venezuela* (New York : J.H. Colton, 1849), Library of Congress Digital Collections.

Figure 9: J.H. Colton, *Map of the United States of America* (1849)

The title of J.H. Colton's map similarly focuses both within and beyond US borders. Below the bald eagle, bold type exclaims, "Map of the United States of America," with script adding more subtly, "The British Provinces, Mexico, the West Indies and Central America with part of New Granada and Venezuela." The clear subject of this map, the United States, sits in the upper left corner while Mexico, Central America, and the West Indian Islands pull the viewer's eye southeastward toward the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. An inset positioned in the lower left corner of the map likewise expands its focus outward, depicting wind and steam vessels traveling the Gulf, Caribbean, Pacific, and Atlantic waters between the Americas and Europe. Produced in New York by a man who over the course of his lifetime had watched his own port city grow from 60,000 to over 500,000 inhabitants, this map's emphasis on the United

State's maritime connections shifts the geographic heart of this world southward toward his home city's rival, New Orleans.[444] The nation's major port on the Gulf of Mexico sits at ninety degrees longitude and thirty degrees latitude—framed as the exact center of the map itself.

New Orleans provides the key to understanding US expansion in the mid-nineteenth century: not only a march east to west but journeys outward across water, an imperial vision based both in slavery and in Indian war. Founded by the French in 1718, later claimed by Spain, and finally annexed to the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase, New Orleans grew over the first half of the nineteenth century from a rogue colony into a metropolis for the US Cotton Kingdom.[445] Like Havana and Matanzas in Cuba, this city has become a prime site for the study of nineteenth-century slavery and freedom. Historians have scrutinized its trading blocks, streets, and levees to understand the workings of the Atlantic and domestic slave trades, emancipation, and the post-emancipation society that followed, as well as African-descended people's ability to live within, against, and alongside these systems.[446]

More recently, histories of New Orleans have also begun to explore the role of territorial conquest in keeping slavery alive, showing that southern planters' dreams of a Caribbean "empire for slavery" led also to attempts, often bursting forth from New Orleans, to bring Cuba

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[444] 1850 U.S. Census, "Table XXIV: Comparative Population of Thirty-two of the Largest Cities in the United States," under "Progress of the Population," pg. li.

[445] For New Orleans as a site of "rogue colonialism," see Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4-5.

[446] Rashauna Johnson, *Slavery's Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans during the Age of Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba After Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

and other slave societies into the US domain.[447] When the United States acquired the Mississippi River Valley from Native Americans and French colonists, its leaders intended this region as a place for white small-scale farmers. Instead, the most populated portions of the Territories of Louisiana and Mississippi, like other parts of the Deep South, became the domain of speculators and planters, who grew wealthy on cotton produced by the hundreds of thousands of enslaved African Americans, whom they relocated from Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky, and by African captives they purchased from smugglers. New Orleans grew alongside the Cotton Kingdom, its population expanding to bring this cotton to the Atlantic market.

Fears of large-scale insurrection convinced many Louisiana planters that their society must continually expand or risk its own ruin. These fears had began as early as 1811, when an enslaved Louisianan named Charles Deslondes led hundreds of Africans and African Americans in an uprising planned in the swamps of the territory's "German Coast." Newspapers suggested that these insurgents had been mobilized by black agitators from France, Spain, or Britain, by black revolutionaries from Saint Domingue, or by French privateers (although, notably, not by Indians). The volunteer militias and federal troops ordered by the territorial governor and the brutal violence unleashed later by white mobs both testified to the strength of these rumors.[448] By 1840, a period of economic depression had intensified Louisianans' fears of slave rebellion. So-called "filibusters" departed New Orleans in 1850s, aiming to attack and occupy ports throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. Named after the French *flibustiers*, or freebooters,

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[447] This interpretation of "pro-slavery imperialism," Johnson writes, "amplifies an account given by W.E.B. Du Bois in his book *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007; orig. pub.1896), 108." Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 426 n26.

[448] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 18-22; Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2015), 213-214.

a colorful strand in the fabric of New Orleans since its founding, these private militias promised to connect the South—or so planters hoped—to new lands and markets that might relieve social pressure in order to restore democracy and liberty.[449]

Yet if southern planters in the 1850s understood military conquest as having preceded and followed the rise of New Orleans, the soldiers who participated in these filibustering expeditions would have known that conquest had also permeated the entire nineteenth-century life of their city. From the War of 1812, when New Orleans had nearly fallen to British forces, its men had also voluntarily borne arms to protect what they saw as civilization, independence, and republicanism across the Gulf. Having defended their republic from an army that—like US forces—included Native American and African American soldiers, they later responded to calls for aid from other governments and revolutionaries seeking protection from "savage" Indians, British colonizers, and "tyrannical" Spaniards. Seizing land from Seminoles in Florida and helping to "liberate" Texas from the Mexican government, these volunteers solidified and expanded US territorial claims, later sailing under some of the same officers on some of the same ships to fight in Yucatán and Cuba, the "lock and key" to the Gulf.[450] The filibustering expeditions of the 1850s grew out of this history as much as they responded to the demands of slavery.

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[449] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 12-15, 46-72, 303-394. For the foundational work on southern planters' interest in the Caribbean, see Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973). For the prominence of *flibustiers*, pirates, and smugglers in French New Orleans, see Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 115.

[450] Speech of Edward Hannegan, *CG*, 30 Cong., 1 sess., App. 596-597 (May 5, 1848). Lorena Careaga Viliesid picks up on this imagery to describe the perceived relationship not only between Yucatán and Cuba but also between Yucatán and Texas. Careaga Viliesid, *De llaves y cerrojos: Yucatán, Texas, y Estados Unidos a mediados del siglo XIX* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2000), 17-18.

In this way, New Orleans volunteers maintained the ambiguous "boundary between banditry and statehood" that had long characterized colonialism in their city—now a rogue form of state-building that offered ready, if unpredictable, resources for other governments and revolutionaries.[451] Following the tradition of warfare that had become central to New Orleans' image, these soldiers carried US military power to distant ports without concerning themselves with the debates about territorial annexation and the incorporation of people that had stalled official efforts at expansion. Their actions, both licit and illicit, demonstrate how, in this moment before the United States' Age of Empire had professedly begun, some of its residents envisioned southern overseas expansion as consistent with the values of its founding.

The Battle of New Orleans in the Second Seminole War

In the days before Christmas in 1814, General Andrew Jackson led thousands of US troops across the swamps, canals, and plantations that lay between this Mississippi River outpost and its outlet to the Gulf of Mexico, defeating British forces in a famous series of battles waged after the War of 1812 had officially ended but before news of peace had reached the Americas. For New Orleans residents, the Battle of New Orleans was later recalled as a foundational moment, an event that confirmed the power of patriotic citizens to protect civilization and republican independence at home and abroad. Those who would take pride in its memory included many free men of color, who had formed a unit within Jackson's army.[452] On December 23, however, the first night of the battle, the greatest US losses were sustained by a volunteer company composed primarily of local lawyers and merchants, who had famously fallen before an army consisting of British regulars, Native Americans, formerly enslaved Georgians and Floridians of

[451] Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 5.
[452] Shelene C. Roumillat, "From the Hour of Her Darkest Peril to the Brightest Page of Her History: New Perspectives on the Battle of New Orleans" (PhD diss, Tulane University, 2013).

African descent, and black troops from Jamaica. Thrusting Andrew Jackson into national fame, the Battle of New Orleans also acted as a sequel to the American Revolution, offering some white New Orleans residents a central role in the history of US independence from savage warfare and colonial oppression.[453]

As decades passed and New Orleans grew in size and commercial strength, some of its citizens evoked this battle as a rallying cry for volunteer enlistment in the Second Seminole War. Twenty-one years after the Battle of New Orleans, the French-English newspaper called the *The New Orleans Bee/ L'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans* reported that US troops and civilians had fallen victim to Indian attack as a cohort of young Seminole leaders engaged in a violent rejection of treaties demanding their removal to Indian Territory. Launching attacks from swamps and forests, and burning and looting plantations, these Indians had become "masters" of various posts in Florida. In an anxious reference, one article alleged that some of their "chieftains" had attended West Point Academy.[454]

When in January Major General David E. Twiggs arrived to recruit volunteer troops to serve in the US Army in Florida, a committee of local elites published an announcement in the New Orleans *Bee* explicitly connecting the Second Seminole War to the Battle of New Orleans: "The spirit which pervaded New Orleans, on the 23d of December 1814," the announcement began, "was awakened in this community on Saturday, the 23d of January, 1836. About 10 o'clock colonel Twiggs expressed the wish of the government that the citizens of New Orleans should raise volunteers to aide our brave and suffering officers and soldiers, to meet, disperse,

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[453] Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1981), 141-168. Walter Johnson also mentions this battle in *River of Dark Dreams*, 28.

[454] *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 29, 1836. During this part of its century-long run, the first two pages of *The New Orleans Bee* were in English, followed two pages (under the heading *L'Abeille*) in French. I have consulted the English pages only.

and conquer the mostly [sic] hordes of Seminoles and negroes, that are now spreading havoc, fire and massacre among our countrymen in Florida." It concluded, "The horizon lowers: the calm of peace that has smoothed the surface of our affairs for twenty years is ruffled. External and internal troubles begin to threaten. We are an out-post of our country. Let the Orleans volunteers, and our legion, form a Hercules, around which the valor and patriotism of the country will successfully rally in the extremest emergency."[455]

In this way, the committee charged with recruiting volunteer soldiers for Florida framed enlistment in this sort of warfare as a duty particularly suited to New Orleans men. On one hand, the Second Seminole War appeared similar to the Battle of New Orleans because of the "hordes of Seminoles and negroes" in enemy ranks, whose violence threatened the life and property of Florida planters as it had threatened Louisiana's plantations in 1814. Yet geographic themes also came through in this announcement. Themselves residents of an "out-post of our country," New Orleans citizens could sympathize with their vulnerability and help them in "the extremest emergency." The great distance of Florida from Washington, stated an act of the Florida legislature also published in the *Bee*, suggested that "the assistance they are entitled to" would arrive too late. As lines of communication had been cut off between forts, Floridians would not survive except by aid from the sea.[456] Having itself been a similarly isolated maritime settlement, New Orleans was now in a position to place itself at the center of national efforts to support this territory.

The committee announcement referred to New Orleans soldiers as a "Hercules," signaling at once the mighty hero of Greek mythology and the Pillars of Hercules, or the Rocks of

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[455] "Published by Order of the Committee," *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 25, 1836. The term "mostly hordes" was most likely a misprint or variation on "motley hordes," evoking the perceived racial diversity of British-allied forces.
[456] *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 27 and 30, 1836.

Gibraltar, which as the outer limit to the Mediterranean Sea had once been thought to support the western boundary of the world.[457] Like this geographically peripheral rock formation, New Orleans was, by the committee's estimation, central to the survival of its region. An "out-post of our country," it provided the United States with soldiers whose strength and bravery were capable of rallying the "valor and patriotism" of the nation. In fact, while New Orleans' war effort extended a unifying pull to the nation, it also followed and eased internal fractures. The same month that the US Army requested volunteers for Florida, the Louisiana legislature had been accused of launching a local "war of races" in its acquiescence to Anglo-Americans' pressure to divide the city into distinct municipalities that would separate them from the French and Spanish Creole elite.[458]

Non-regular soldiers were prevalent even in the upper ranks of the companies sent to Florida—a trend that emerged out of the political divisions within Louisiana. The new Whig governor, Edward Douglass White, refused to place the regiments under the command of John B. Dawson, his Democratic political rival and a senior major general in the state's regular military corps, the Louisiana Militia. Instead, White gave command of the company to Persifor Frazer Smith, a friend and attorney, whom he had appointed Adjutant General despite Smith's lack of military experience. For Smith, his politically motivated service in this war would mark the first event in a distinguished military career in the Gulf.[459] John B. Dawson and another state militia officer, William Debuys, would attempt to raise their own thousand-man corps in East and West

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[457] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. "Hercules."
[458] Richard Campanella, *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2006), 211-214, 239. Quotation is from *Daily Orleanian*, quoted in Campanella, *Geographies of New Orleans*, 211.
[459] Canter Brown, Jr. "Persifor F. Smith, the Louisiana Volunteers, and Florida's Second Seminole War," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 34, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 389-394.

Feliciana parishes while volunteers were gathering in New Orleans, but White refused the offer with the excuse that the requested number had already been filled.[460] The committee's applause of the "the Orleans volunteers, and our legion" glossed over these tensions, ignoring the governor's refusal to allow his political opponents to lead the units in Florida and instead describing the force as a unified campaign.

Newspaper accounts of recruitment highlighted the participation of both Creole and Anglo-American residents in planning and joining this effort to aid ailing countrymen in Florida. The committee responsible for raising troops and funds for Florida was formed on January 11 in the coffee room of the Banks' Arcade, a posh new building in the part of the city known as the American sector. This group of Creole and Anglo-American elites, led by Governor White, urged citizens to come forward "to afford assistance and stop the murderous effusion of blood by the merciless savage."[461] On January 23, the committee held a second public meeting, in which one hundred men enlisted at the US Custom House in the older part of the city before marching "through the rain and mud" to enlist another hundred men in the American sector.[462] During the week that followed, volunteers would continue to enlist in both municipalities, at hotels and coffee houses easily accessible to the city's growing working class.[463]

These efforts would succeed in raising a body of support that only a growing economic powerhouse like New Orleans was able to provide. Over the course of two months, funding

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[460] *The New Orleans Bee*, February 1, 1836; Brown, "Persifor F. Smith," 392, 397-398.
[461] "Public Meeting," *The New Orleans Bee*, January 12, 1836; Albert A. Fossier, *New Orleans: the Glamour Period, 1800-1840* (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1957), 15.
[462] "Published by Order of the Committee," *The New Orleans Bee*, January 25, 1836. All comments on the geography of the city are taken from L. Hirt, Plan of New Orleans with perspective and geometrical Views of the principal Buildings of the City" (1841), Historic New Orleans Collection (HNOC), New Orleans.
[463] "Volunteers for Florida," *The New Orleans Bee*, January 25, 1836. The rendezvous point near the Custom House was "the Rising Sun Coffee House, Levee street." The other was farther upriver, near the sugar refinery and cotton press.

allocated to the war nearly tripled, with an act of the state legislature ultimately authorizing $75,000 to be placed at the governor's disposal and allowing him to borrow money from New Orleans banks.[464] Among other things, these funds would provide transportation, arms and ammunition, provisions, medicine, camp equipage, and a $30 bounty for each volunteer.[465] The US War Department would also purchase provisions from New Orleans throughout the course of the war, monitoring market prices there and in New York in order to choose the most affordable option.[466] Eight volunteer companies totaling four hundred men departed New Orleans under General Persifor Smith on February 3, alongside three hundred US regulars under Lieutenant Colonel David Twiggs.[467] The following week, the Louisiana legislature authorized Governor White to accept the services of three hundred additional men, a company that would comprise more New Orleans volunteers as well as troops from Mobile, Alabama.[468]

One Louisiana volunteer who published an account of his service in Florida, Captain James Barr, described this experience as, in part, an adventure through scenes of war that had become well known to US readers. When the company arrived to Fort Brooke in Tampa Bay, Florida, they found, as newspapers had reported, that residents of this small settlement had fled their homes, now destroyed, to seek shelter on ships off the coast.[469] Fewer than two hundred soldiers, half volunteers and half regulars, manned the fort; many of them were sick or injured after the

[464] "An Act For the relief of the citizens of Florida," *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 30, 1836.
[465] *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 18 and 25, 1836.
[466] G.F. Hunt to Thomas Jesup, Jan. 17, 1840, H-49, Vol. 21, Register of Letters Received, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (RG 92), National Archives and Records Service (NARA), Washington, DC; Jesup to Capt. S.P. Heintzelman, Dec. 13, 1839, Vol. 29, RG 92, NARA; Stanton to Hunt, Sept. 17, 1838, Vol. 26, NARA.
[467] *The New Orleans Bee*, January 16, 18, 21-23, and February 3-4, 1836.
[468] *The New Orleans Bee*, Feb. 3-4, and 9, 1836.
[469] Capt. James Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative of the Indian War in Florida* (New York: J. Narine, 1836), 4-5. For comparison, see accounts of Key West in *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 20, 26, and 29, 1836.

battles of the previous month. The fort itself bore memories of the war, the cannons on either side of its main wall painted with the names of men who had fallen in the ambush known as the Dade Massacre, which from the US perspective had officially started the war.[470] Also at camp were over four hundred Upper Creeks, appearing in Barr's narrative as "friendly Indians," who engaged in their own skirmishes with the enemy and, in at least one instance, joined with their families and US troops to bury their dead after a military procession.[471]

In the months that followed, more volunteer troops arrived from other states and territories lining the United States' southern Atlantic and Gulf coasts—from Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina—marching in an eleven-hundred man force under Edmund Pendleton Gaines. Barr had the apparent misfortune of remaining at Fort Brooke, but he recorded the stories of men who had experienced the Dade Massacre and the ensuing battle between US regulars, Florida Volunteers, and Seminoles at the Withlacoochee River. Barr also recorded the stories of his fellow Louisiana Volunteers when they returned from their march in early April. This journey had taken them to the sites of highly-publicized US defeats, where they had buried the dead, rescued whatever money remained to send to the fallen soldiers' widows and orphans, and bore witness to the violence that their countrymen had endured.

From Fort Brooke, the Louisiana Volunteers had marched toward the site of Major Francis Langhorne Dade's last camp, past plantations and bridges that had been burned by Seminole warriors. They also engaged in destruction of their own, looting corn, rice, and cooking utensils before burning an unnamed Seminole village. On their arrival to the site of the Dade Massacre, they found "a spectacle never to be forgotten." More than one hundred bodies—weapons and

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[470] Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative*, 4-5.
[471] Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative*, 7, 14. J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 274.

ammunition gone—still lay where they had fallen. The troops buried "the whole command with the honours of war," and then continued across the Withlacoochee River to Fort King to wait for provisions. From there, they marched to the site of the Battle of Withlacoochee, burying the dead and camping erecting their own breastwork around that of the fallen soldiers. The "friendly Indians" also joined on this march, their "chief," Captain Saunders, dying in battle.[472]

The sense of adventure and patriotism that Barr brought to his narrative appeared alongside material interests—a fact that became clear in his depiction of a short march that he took in his last weeks of service. Before they departed Florida, the Louisiana volunteers were called to march inland from Charlotte's Harbor, the bay just south of Tampa, in search of Seminole forces. As it was already late April by the time they set up camp at the mouth of the Myakka River, the troops thinned quickly, fatigued from the heat and some lacking shoes and canteens. Barr continued upriver along with 160 other troops, half ascending in canoes and half by foot. Their guide was a Seminole prisoner, who spoke a "mixture of Spanish and Indian," which the troops found suspicious. This man led them along a circuitous road running through swamps and dense thatches of trees known as hammocks. As they marched inland near the banks of the river, Barr's company passed Seminole villages still in use, one with "the ashes of a fire recently extinguished, green hides, two live fowls, . . . and several razors and other articles supposed to have been the property of the murdered collector of customs." Another sported a large cattle pen. They encountered no people, however, and ultimately returned empty handed, concluding that summer was no time to launch an attack.[473]

While perhaps disappointing for military strategy, this march allowed Barr to bring his narrative to a close with commentary on Florida's landscape: the beauty of the river, the fertile

[472] Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative*, 14-16.
[473] Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative*, 21-24.

soil at its banks, its timber, and the game and vegetation that seemed to grow spontaneously. "The expedition has answered one good purpose," he expressed; "it has given some knowledge of a very interesting and before unknown section of the territory. The land is excellent and the river may be made navigable for steamboats at a very trifling expense; it is besides adjacent to the Orleans market." At least for this volunteer soldier, the war in Florida provided both an opportunity for New Orleans men to participate in memorable triumphs over Indians and a way for the city's investors to reinforce the economic ties that bound them to other Gulf ports.[474] For regular officers stationed in Florida as well, warfare against Seminoles provided opportunities for adventure and land speculation: after marching under Col. David Twiggs near Lake Apooka, the US Army surgeon Edward Aldrich came home with a scalp and three heads, expressing in certain terms to his fiancée, Corinna Brown, that he wished to live on that land.[475]

"Then let the other States follow the example so nobly set by Louisiana," Barr declared in the final paragraph of his narrative; "let them raise such men as she sent out, and like her place active and skillful Commanders over them."[476] Residents of a geographic outpost of the United States, these men of New Orleans saw themselves also as a strong unifier for the nation in this time of war. Recently arrived to the ranks of the United States' major cities, this bustling center of Gulf commerce had moved past its own internal divisions to supply troops and aid to white planters and soldiers in Florida as they battled an apparently savage foe. An effort to protect a growing plantation economy and to reinforce the connections that drew these plantations into the orbit of New Orleans, the participation of the Louisiana Volunteers in the Second Seminole War

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[474] Barr, *A Correct and Authentic Narrative*, 23-25.
[475] *Echoes from a Distant Frontier: The Brown Sisters' Correspondence from Antebellum Florida*, ed. James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 113-114.
[476] *Echoes from a Distant Frontier*, 32.

was also a sequel to the city's own foundation story, in which local businessmen had defended New Orleans and the nation against British, Indian, and black forces.

The Conquest of the Northern Gulf of Mexico

The Battle of New Orleans and the Second Seminole War were connected not only by historical memory but also as two chapters in a half-century struggle by which the United States came to possess the internationally recognized claim to all of the lands along the northern shores of the Gulf of Mexico. The purchases and cessions through which Spain and France transferred this territory to the United States ran parallel to other, private expansionist activities. From 1795 onward, and especially after 1810, private militias of US citizens invaded the territories of East and West Florida, Louisiana, and Texas to wrangle livestock or to fight Native Americans. Affiliating with Latin American revolutionaries, some fought to "liberate" these colonies from Spain or to protect them from influence by England. Neutrality laws, passed roughly every half-decade between 1794 and 1818, declared these private military expeditions illegal, but intermittent federal efforts to suppress these expeditions alternated with instances when government officials overlooked and even aided them. Not yet given the semi-formal title they would ultimately hold, "filibuster," these missions already constituted a key aspect of the United States' presence across the Gulf.[477]

Overlapping with these private military efforts, the US military invaded foreign Gulf territories as part of its warfare against Native American peoples of southeastern North America, conflicts that often coincided with those against European powers. When Andrew Jackson led

[477] Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 5-8. For an Atlantic World perspective on early filibustering attempts in West Florida, see Andrew McMichael, *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

regular and volunteer troops in the War of 1812, his enemy was not only Britain but also Red Stick Creeks and Seminoles, who had allied with British officers as part of their own war against the United States. Over the previous year, Jackson had commanded troops against Red Sticks in Alabama and Georgia, brutally defeating them at the battle of Horseshoe Bend. Later, he trailed the survivors to Spanish Pensacola, which he violently if temporarily took for the United States. In the years that followed the US victory at New Orleans, US soldiers returned to Spanish East Florida, repeatedly invading this territory to pursue Red Sticks, Seminoles, and others who allied with them. From the perspective of Atlantic diplomacy, this long "struggle for the Gulf borderlands" ended with a decisive US victory—the end of British designs on this part of North America and the cession of this territory from Spain to the United States in 1821.[478]

In the 1820s, New Orleans had not yet entered its boom times. Its population hovered around 30,000 at the beginning of this decade, nearly quadruple its size in the 1790s but still on par with the port city of Charleston, barely half the size of Baltimore, and less than a quarter of Philadelphia or New York. Yet these 30,000 souls exceeded the total white population of Florida, which despite the departure of Spanish officials, remained largely beyond the purview of the United States.[479] Over the course of this decade, which saw a lull in the activities that would become known as filibustering, US officials attempted to consolidate their control over the land

[478] Owsley, *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands*, 5, 186-195; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 185-190.

[479] In 1820, the population of New Orleans was 27,176. Charleston was 24,711; Baltimore, 62,738; Philadelphia 112,772; and New York 123,706. The population of New Orleans had been 5,331 in 1788 and 8,056 in 1797. In 1830, Florida would be home to 18,385 white, 844 free colored, and 15,501 slaves. "Comparative Population of Thirty-two of the Largest Cities in the United States" in J.D.B. DeBow, *U.S. Census, 1850: Embracing a Statistical View of the United States* . . . (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), li.

to which they now held title.[480] In East Florida, they sought to reduce Red Stick, Mikasuki, Lower Creek, Seminole, and Black Seminole power in the territory, obtaining some of these peoples' coerced consent to consolidate into two reservations, the larger of which was the Seminole Reservation in the southern swamps. Elected to the US presidency in 1828, Andrew Jackson then signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, after which commissioners began efforts to remove these peoples—now collectively termed "Seminoles"—from Florida entirely.

As the United States worked to make its international claim to Florida a reality, its citizens reinforced ties between this peripheral territory and the emerging metropolis to its west. Andrew Jackson had served as the military governor of Florida during its first year in US possession, naming those close to him to places in the territory's government.[481] Some of these men had ties to New Orleans. Colonel Robert Butler, for example, a ward of Andrew Jackson, was appointed as the first surveyor general of the territory. When Robert's relative Edward George Washington Butler looked to leave the Army to establish his own plantation in the mid-1820s, the young officer considered buying land near Butler's plantation near Tallahassee and near his sister Caroline's estate in Iberville Parish, Louisiana.[482] Florida became and would remain a peripheral

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[480] Robert E. May describes the mid-1820s to mid-1830s as a "period of dormancy" for filibustering. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 8.

[481] Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., and Andrew Jackson, "Andrew Jackson's Cronies in Florida Territorial Politics: With Three Unpublished Letters to His Cronies," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* , Vol. 34, No. 1 (July 1955): 3-29.

[482] Robert Butler, Tallahassee, to Lieut. Edw[ard] G.W. Butler, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 14, 1826, Folder 304, and various letters from Robert and Caroline [Butler] Bell to E.G.W. Butler, 1827-1829, Folders 384-471, Butler Family Papers, MSS 102, Williams Research Center, HNOC. For a West Florida example, consider Henry Marie Brackenridge, who after working as Jackson's Spanish translator and secretary on an 1821 mission to Florida, was appointed judge of West Florida in 1822. Brackenridge had attended school in Louisiana, later returning to serve as district attorney for the Orleans Territory. He had also participated in a fact-finding mission to South America in 1817 on behalf of the Monroe administration. Finding aid for Henry Marie Brackenridge and Family Papers, Archives and Manuscript Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System, Pittsburgh, PA.

contributor to the emerging Cotton Kingdom, but during these early years boosters saw potential for building a sugar empire in its lowlands and "hammocks," the local name for the dense hardwood forests that scattered across Florida's northern border and into the northwestern quadrant of its peninsula.[483] These men looked to examples of successful sugar planting in southern Louisiana for insight on how to manage the benefits and challenges of Florida's low, tropical climate.[484] During this lull in the United States' military conquest of the lands surrounding the Gulf, in other words, New Orleans remained a source for US conquest, contributing to citizens' attempts to replace Native American peoples and properties in Florida.

The outbreak of war in 1835 demonstrated that the US conquest of Florida—and by extension, Andrew Jackson's war on Seminoles and Red Sticks—was still unfinished. A violent rejection of a treaty signed that year demanding the Seminoles' removal to Indian Territory, the battles of 1835 and 1836 were organized by a cohort of young men from the Seminole Reservation, including Osceola, the son of a Red Stick refugee. These men had not been party to this treaty and insisted that they were not legally obligated to leave Florida.[485] Even though New Orleans residents described the local soldiers rallying for this war as protecting US lives and property from "motley hordes" in the tradition of their forefathers, these men were in fact invading a territory whose rightful claim was still contested. The slippery line between national defense and conquest in Florida mirrored a parallel tension at the opposite edge of the northern

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[483] William J. Platt and Mark W. Schwartz, "Temperate Hardwood Forests" in *Ecosystems of Florida*, edited by Ronald L. Myers and John J. Ewel (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1990), 194.

[484] Benjamin Silliman and United States, *Manual on the Cultivation of the Sugar Cane, and the Fabrication and Refinement of Sugar.* (Washington: Printed by F. P. Blair, 1833); James G. Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas; More Particularly of East Florida.* (New-York: C. S. Van Winkle, 1821).

[485] Osceola is believed to be the great-nephew of the Red Stick prophet Peter McQueen, mentioned in Chapter 1. Patricia R. Wickman, *Osceola's Legacy* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), xx; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 193.

Gulf. By the time Seminole forces attacked Dade's command in December of 1835, Mexican troops had arrived to Texas to suppress the Texas Revolution, a federalist rebellion that has also been called "the most successful filibuster in American history."[486]

The men who led revolutionary forces in Texas consisted primarily of Anglo-American planters. These former US citizens who had acquired Mexican citizenship often described themselves as fighting for freedom from bondage under Mexican rule. Their longstanding tensions with the Mexican government, however, in fact stemmed in large part from conflicts over their own reliance on chattel slavery. Across the 1820s, Mexico had passed a number of measures gradually weakening the institution of slavery before abolishing it (with an exemption for Texas) in 1829. In the 1830s, many planters became convinced that slavery was also in danger in Texas. They began a movement for separate statehood in which many held a clear interest in forming political connections between Texas and the United States. As in Florida, Texans' belief that slavery was necessary for their survival had to do, in part, with the state's environmental challenges.[487]

From the beginning, Mexican officials voiced suspicion that the United States government was encouraging this rebellion. For their part, US citizens rallied to aid those they perceived as their former countrymen, whom they claimed were victims of oppression by a tyrannical government.[488] In October of 1835, three months before New Orleans elites met in the coffee room of the Banks Arcade to raise aid for Florida, the "friends of Texas" had met in the private conference room at the same location to organize troops for the "glorious struggle for liberty"

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[486] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 9.
[487] Paul D. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (October 1985): 181-202.
[488] For one allusion to Mexican "tyranny," see *The New Orleans Bee*, Feb. 11, 1836.

there.[489] In an attempt to encourage enlistments for the Florida war, *Bee* editors reminded readers of the distinction between domestic service in Florida and foreign warfare in Texas, an exhortation whose necessity highlighted the indistinct nature of such boundaries. "Let us then up and be doing," the editors opined. "If we aid Texas by men and means, why not our own country?"[490]

Indeed, New Orleans residents were intimately involved in the affairs of Texas, with migrations and investments linking this new metropolis to the burgeoning plantation economies accessible through its Gulf ports.[491] Land speculation in Texas was so prevalent by early 1836 that the *Bee* recommended that readers move on to invest in new sites such as those on the Gulf of California.[492] Correctly believing that US citizens were aiding revolutionaries in Texas, the Mexican government closed its ports to US merchants in late 1835, later declaring that any foreigners caught importing arms and ammunition to Mexican territory would be recognized and punished as pirates.[493] In New Orleans, the Mexican consul monitored the wars in Florida and Texas simultaneously, understanding that the end of the one would free up resources for the other. In particular, the consul suggested to superiors in Mexico City that volunteers leaving Tampa Bay once peace was obtained in Florida might transfer to Texas by sea.[494] The consul's fears appear to have been well founded. Twenty-eight Louisiana Volunteers, reported one US

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[489] *The New Orleans Bee*, Oct. 12, 1835, quoted in "War in Texas," *New-York Spectator*, Oct. 29, 1835.
[490] *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 29, 1836.
[491] Mitchell & Hinman, *New map of Texas: with the contiguous American & Mexican states* (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1835).
[492] *The New Orleans Bee*, Jan. 12, 1836.
[493] *The New Orleans Bee*, Feb. 1, 9 and 13, 1836.
[494] Francisco Pizarro Martínez to Sr. Encargado de Negocios de la República Mexicana, Jan. 30, 1836 (No. 14), Feb. 27, 1836 (No. 38) and April 4, 1836 (No. 44), "Carpeta No. 6, 1836, Correspondencia con los consulados de Nueva Orleans y con los viceconsulados," Exp. 12, Leg. 26, Archivo de la Embajada de México en los Estados Unidos de America (AEMEUA), Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), Mexico City.

newspaper, had been present at the fall of San Antonio to the revolutionaries. "So little have the perils of Indian warfare affected these brave fellows," the editors remarked, "that they go directly to Texas when they are discharged."[495]

One a domestic war against Indians and the other a foreign war between Mexican citizens and their government, the Second Seminole War and the Texas Revolution appeared from the perspective of New Orleans as two parts of an ongoing effort to protect white lives and property along the northern Gulf. Fighting against perceived savagery and tyranny while also reinforcing connections between these peripheral places and the New Orleans market, volunteer soldiers contributed to conflicts that ultimately placed the United States in possession of a semi-circle of coastline extending from the Florida peninsula to the mouth of the Rio Grande. The US Congress passed a joint resolution to annex the Texas Republic in March of 1845, the same month that Florida achieved its statehood. By this time, many Seminole families had been removed to Indian Territory, while those remaining continued to engage US troops in skirmishes that received little attention at the national level.

Mexico disputed the border that the United States claimed for Texas, an issue that would remain in dispute until the passing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. This treaty ended the U.S.-Mexican War, known in Mexico as the *Guerra de la invasión estadounidense*—the War of the US Invasion. It involved a huge transfer of territory, which, along with possession of Oregon, completed the United States' continental expansion from the Atlantic to Pacific oceans. The transfer also completed the U.S. conquest of the northern Gulf. From New Orleans, ships could now travel five hundred miles west or east and reach US-held ports. Unlike in war-weary Florida, where men volunteered reluctantly to serve in Mexico, Louisiana met its own

[495] "Very late from Major General Scott," *Fayetteville Observer* (Fayetteville, North Carolina), April 14, 1836.

four-regiment muster demand in one week—so quickly that the governor issued a proclamation temporarily declining to receive additional soldiers.[496] In all, Louisiana sent more volunteers to Mexico than any other state, with the legislature and private investors channeling hundreds of thousands of dollars into the conflict.[497]

While not itself an Indian War, the US-Mexico War was influenced significantly by Native American peoples, who contributed indirectly to the United States' victory and to the land transfer it incurred. As scholars of Native American history have recently shown, decades of pillage, destruction, and captive taking by Comanches, Apaches, Kiowas, and other Great Plains peoples had by 1846 weakened northern Mexican economies and intensified grievances between northern citizens and Mexico City. As they had done toward Spain in East Florida decades earlier, US citizens criticized Mexico's inability to control these Indians, using this failure as proof of the Mexican government's deficiencies and as justification for staking claim to its northern lands.[498] While Mexican officials would have disagreed with the tone of this rhetoric, many lamented their failure to intervene sooner in these Indian wars. As part of a multifaceted attempt to protect Mexican citizens from future raids, Mexican diplomats negotiated the inclusion of an article in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo requiring the US government to "forcibly restrain" the *indios bárbaros* or "savage tribes" in the transferred territory. [499]

In US public discourse, however, the patriotic ardor displayed by volunteer soldiers proved

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[496] T. Frederick Davis, "Florida's Part in the War with Mexico," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (January 1942), 235-237; Bernadette Rogan, "Louisiana's Part in the Mexican War" (master's thesis, Tulane University, 1939).
[497] Rogan, "Louisiana's Part in the Mexican War."
[498] Regarding East Florida, see, for example, John Quincy Adams to Luis de Onís, July 23, 1818, Leg. 1898, Papeles de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville.
[499] Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), xiii-xxi, 297-298; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

the power of republican government as it had in New Orleans in 1814. Seen as undisciplined and rowdy in comparison to regular soldiers, volunteers were also believed to inspire greater fear among the Mexican people.[500] Memories of the War of 1812 proliferated in history books and ritual commemorations during the war, while volunteer companies from across the nation mustered in and out at Camp Jackson, the site of the Battle of New Orleans.[501] The leadership of these companies, and the US-Mexico War as a whole, bore direct ties to both the War of 1812 and the Second Seminole War. The commanding generals in Mexico, Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor, had served as young men in the War of 1812, and had held positions of command in Florida.[502] Likewise, the largest volunteer force from New Orleans was the six-regiment Brigade of Louisiana Volunteers, led by Persifor Frazer Smith, former commander of volunteer troops during the Second Seminole War. The brigadier generals in Mexico also included Thomas Jesup and David E. Twiggs of Second Seminole War fame.[503]

Now an "out-post of our country" only in the sense of its coastal position, New Orleans had become a center for economic activities and volunteer warfare for slavery and against savagery and tyranny. As US imperial visions shifted southward, this regional metropolis would continue to act as a unifying site for these aspirations.

Civilization, Republicanism and Independence in the Southern Gulf

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[500] For example, see Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the Mexican War* (Cincinatti: W.H. Moore & Co., 1851), 173-175.
[501] Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 55-57; Rogan, "Louisiana's Part in the Mexican War,"; Charles J. Ingersoll, *Historical Sketch of the Second War Between the United States of America, and Great Britain* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1845-49).
[502] Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Winfield Scott*, ed. Timothy D. Johnson, Voices of the Civil War Series (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2015); *Taylor and his generals: A biography of Major-General Zachary Taylor . . .* (Philadelphia: E.H. Butler & Co, 1847).
[503] William Hugh Robarts, *Mexican War Veterans : a complete roster of the regular and volunteer troops in the war between the United States and Mexico, from 1846 to 1848 ; the volunteers are arranged by states, alphabetically* (Washington, DC: Brentano's, 1887), 5.

With the acquisition and confirmation of the lands and coastline contained in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States accomplished what enthusiasts would describe as its "manifest destiny": a contiguous continental empire stretching from the Atlantic to Pacific oceans. A half-century before the island acquisitions that would later initiate its formal "age of empire," the late 1840s and early 1850s saw a renewed rise in US filibustering, a term modified from the French *flibustier* and the Spanish *filibustero*. (Appropriately, the word became more common in English in the early 1850s.)[504] These private military expeditions to Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Honduras have typically entered the larger narrative of US history as precursors to the Civil War, demonstrating the push and pull factors that drew southern planters toward the Caribbean in the years leading up to their attempted secession from the United States. Having flourished from expansion along the Mississippi River Valley in the 1830s and 1840s, slaveholders later supported a push into Latin America and the Caribbean as the only way to ensure the prosperity and predominance of plantation slavery.[505]

These expeditions also hold meaning for the broader course of US imperialism, which prevailed across the nineteenth century and beyond. The US-Mexico war contributed to the revival of filibustering, creating "a pool of latent filibusters—conquering soldiers accustomed to military campaigning who dreaded being mustered out of the service (if they were volunteers) or being posted to routine peacetime assignments (if they were regulars)."[506] These men used "the new Latin American frontier" as an opportunity to practice the "martial manhood" that had prevailed in the preceding decades, which would rise again in the final decade of the century.[507]

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[504] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 3-4.
[505] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*; May, *The Southern Dream of Caribbean Empire*.
[506] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 14.
[507] Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 270.

These connections among Manifest Destiny, filibustering, and overseas imperialism also reached beyond the personal experience of soldiers. Having already used tropes of civilization, republicanism, and independence to justify warfare that walked the line between national defense and foreign conquest, soldiers and merchants continued to use these strategies to reinforce connections between New Orleans and other Gulf lands, people, and ports. The tensions these expeditions posed for government officials mark them not as divergent from the goals of the nation but as signs that national interest in expansion continued even when racial prejudice toward the people living in these territories complicated politicians' plans for annexation.[508]

While the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo evoked the "savage tribes" that dominated what became the US West, the US-Mexico War had also carried soldiers, politicians, and readers farther into the heart of Mexico, where they had met other Indians, leading some to speculate about the nature of Mexican society itself. After a series of northern battles under Zachary Taylor, regular and volunteer companies had launched an invasion that took them into Mexico City under Winfield Scott, sailing from Brazos and Tampico to invade the southern port of Veracruz and then marching inland through Xalapa and Puebla, along a route similar to the one taken by the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés in the sixteenth century.[509] Familiar with the Spanish Conquest from the popular history published by William Prescott in 1843, some soldiers

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[508] This struggle over the relationship between territorial annexation and the incorporation of people intensified after the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which extended citizenship to all people, excluding Indians not subject to state jurisdiction, born or naturalized in the United States. The Insular Cases of 1901 offered a way around this problem, declaring Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines "unincorporated territories," whose people were deemed incapable of the full benefits of the US Constitution. Cristina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds., *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion and the Constitution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Sam Erman, "Meanings of Citizenship in the U.S. Empire: Puerto Rico, Isabel Gonzalez, and the Supreme Court, 1898 to 1905," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 5-33.

[509] *Times Picayune*, Feb. 21 and March 9, 1847.

imagined themselves reenacting these events.[510] Scott's force occupied Veracruz on April 9, Good Friday, the same holiday on which Cortés had reportedly landed at the same place. Had Cortés seen their landing, wrote the naval officer Raphael Semmes, he would have understood that time had brought "a newer race, to sweep away the moldered and moldering institutions of a worn-out people, and replace them with a fresher and more vigorous civilization." The images that Semmes associated with this progress included also the steamship, "that most wonderful and most potent of all modern machines," and a technology that had accelerated the growth of New Orleans.[511]

Semmes explained his doubts about Mexico's progress by recounting the failures of Mexican elites. Encountering people of indigenous descent on his journey, men and women whose ancestors had long ago been subordinated within Spanish social and economic structures, Semmes described these people as laboring in a slave-like state while living in "miserable huts, no better than the wigwam of the North American Indian."[512] Mexico had lost the recent war, he suggested, because elites had neglected these "docile and comparatively civilized people." In particular, they had failed "to educate and elevate them to the rank of citizens; not to that nominal rank which they do, indeed, enjoy, but to that real rank which springs out of, and finds its sustenance in, social equality." A radical idea for its time, "social equality" was not something that Semmes seemed to support in the United States because he believed that nature had planted an "unconquerable antipathy" between "the white man and the negro." Yet he claimed that equality and even racial mixing would be beneficial in Mexico, where most indigenous Mexicans were "physically, the superior of the compound of the Celt and the Moore which is there

[510] Johanssen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 245-248; William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (New York: Harper, 1843).
[511] Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 125-126; Johannsen, 100.
[512] Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 19.

denominated the white man." Semmes expressed hope that US-Mexico War had served as a "moral shock" to Mexican elites, teaching them the value of federal republicanism.[513]

Concerns over republicanism and race also underpinned the debates that preceded the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which offered a compromise between politicians who aimed to acquire all of Mexico and others who resisted any form of territorial acquisition. In the Senate, the former position was held by a group of expansionist Democrats not from the Cotton Kingdom but from northwestern states such as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, as well as the Michigan senator Lewis Cass, who had served as secretary of war during Indian Removal.[514] On the other side, some Whig senators raised doubts that Mexico, then under a republican government, held the power to divide and cede territory over which its people were sovereign. These men and moderate Democrats—many of them, like John C. Calhoun, from slaveholding states—also raised concerns about whether the people living on these lands were prepared to become full members of the Union. Not only "ignorant and indolent half-civilized Indians," Mexican citizens included "free negroes and mulattoes, the remnants of the British slave trade."[515]

The eventual decision to draw the US-Mexico border at the Rio Grande ended congressional debates about the immediate annexation of all of Mexico, offering, in the words of one Democratic newspaper, "all the territory of value that we can get without taking the

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[513] Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 474-479.

[514] Other expansionist Democrats, many of whom supported the All Mexico Movement, included Edward Hannegan of Indiana, William Allen of Ohio, Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, and a trio of senators and representatives from Illinois: Stephen A. Douglas, Sidney Breese, and Orlando Ficklin. Thomas R. Hietala writes that "Anglophobia and an exaggerated sense of frontier nationalism" motivated these men, as well as the desire to support the agricultural economies of their states by expanding commerce abroad. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 71, 161-162.

[515] "Occupation of Mexico," *Democratic Review*, 21 (November 1847): 389; *Congressional Globe*, 30 Cong., 1 sess. (Jan. 24, 1848); Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 158-163.

people."[516] Some politicians and citizens maintained the expectation, however, that Mexico would eventually fall under US dominion. For some, like Raphael Semmes, a political revolution and three to four generations of independent progress would prepare Mexico's Indian population to voluntarily join the United States and the "Anglo-American family."[517] Others believed that the transfer would occur through piecemeal annexations akin to Texas, as US-Mexico War veterans and other Anglo-American pioneers settled in Mexico, invigorating their race or occasioning their disappearance. These predictions followed theories about Anglo-American settlement and the racial progress of Indians that had been rehearsed during the invention of Indian Territory and the removal of eastern Native Americans like the Seminoles to this space. During the Congressional debates over annexation, in fact, some Democrats in Congress had suggested removing Mexico's nonwhite populations to reservations.[518]

US citizens, however, continued efforts to incorporate Mexican territory into the United States, launching filibustering expeditions that merged with the US-Mexico War. In August, 1848, while US troops were still departing for home from the northern theater of war, adventurers plotted with revolutionaries in the northern states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila in an attempt to establish the Republic of the Sierra Madre, a project begun during the federalist movements of the 1830s and now, according to one observer, set to create "the Texas

[516] *Louisville Democrat*, March 9, 1848, quoted in Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 245.
[517] Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 474-479.
[518] Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 160-162; Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 245; James P. Ronda, "'We Have a Country': Race, Geography, and the Invention of Indian Territory, *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Special Issue on Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic (Winter 1999): 739-755.

story all over again."[519] Louisiana volunteers were eager participants in the Sierra Madre Movement. Late in the war, companies out of New Orleans had defended the garrison of Tampico, the port to Tamaulipas.[520] In October, the *Daily Delta* called for soldiers to return to this port, whose commandant general had reportedly offered $100,000 to the first thousand-man company that would "aid the people in a struggle for the Independence of Mexican rule." Drawing on the ideas about republicanism that had circulated previously, the *Delta* added, "Having once tasted the blessings of enlightened government, nothing will satisfy them but a recovery of their late state of peace and contentment."[521] Later that fall, a group of adventurers traveled from New Orleans to Corpus Christi to aid Sierra Madre revolutionaries, just before the movement receded from national view.[522]

Mexican officials continued to watch this movement, however, which they believed was led by foreign merchants seeking to foster political rebellion in order to engage in contraband trade.[523] They also saw this movement as connected in some way to indigenous rebellions occurring in the Sierra Madre and Sierra Gorda mountain ranges.[524] One leader of the Sierra Madre Movement, José María Jesús Carbajal, who had earlier participated in the Texas Revolution, issued a proclamation in 1851 demanding the withdrawal of Mexican troops from northern Mexico and a period of duty-free trade between northern Mexico and Texas. Recruiting

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[519] Helen Chapman to her mother, June 13, 1848, in Caleb Coker, ed., *The News from Brownsville: Helen Chapman's Letters from the Texas Military Frontier, 1848-1852* (Austin, 1992), 49-50, quoted in May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 16.
For the origins of the Republic of the Sierra Madre Movement, see May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 303 (n.35).
[520] "Later from Tampico," *Times-Picayune*, March 9, 1847.
[521] "Late and Highly Important from Tampico!," *Daily Delta*, Oct. 20, 1848.
[522] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 17.
[523] De la Rosa to Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, June 22, 1849 (No. 77), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.
[524] Political reports of José María Lacunza, Aug. 31 (No. 112) and Oct. 13 (No. 137), 1849, Exp. 1, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.

hundreds of US volunteers from Texas, this revolutionary launched attacks along the Rio Grande over the next two years, successfully obtaining reduced duties on US goods.[525] Likewise, US-Mexico war veterans received appeals for aid by Cuban revolutionaries—merchants, planters, and professionals who were believed to seek annexation by the United States.[526]

Other points across the Gulf were also of interest to expansionist politicians, who in the spring of 1848 found, with the intensification of the Caste War of Yucatán, a second opportunity to extend US influence southward. In 1847, while the US-Mexico War was still in progress and Yucatecan elites were still quarreling over whether to secede from Mexico, the secessionist government, then in power, had sent two diplomatic expeditions to Washington to negotiate an end to the US wartime blockade of its ports. The second delegation, led by Justo Sierra O'Reilly, a lawyer, literary figure, and the son-in-law of the separatist governor Santiago Méndez, was still present when news arrived that a series of struggles between state officials and Maya elites that had begun earlier that year had grown into a war that now claimed the state's eastern cities. In an attempt to gain the upper hand in this conflict, thereby maintaining separation from Mexico, Sierra befriended these expansionist politicians and the newspapers that supported them. Together, these men and their opponents brought previous configurations of whiteness, civilization, and republican independence to bear on new territories of the Gulf.

In newspapers and before Congress, Sierra and his allies rhetorically linked the war in Yucatán with other Indian Wars occurring throughout US history. As in central Mexico, Yucatec Mayas had long been incorporated into colonial and national systems, particularly in the more densely populated northwestern regions, where Sierra recalled, "Our policy has always been to alleviate the *indios*' social condition, improving them by civil and religious instruction and

[525] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 36-38.
[526] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 14-15.

extending to them the gift of civilization in the same manner and to the same extent as they have offered their own resources to us."[527] The outbreak of war, however, had shown the futility of these efforts, marking these people as *indios bárbaros* who must disappear.[528] Their "savage and atrocious fury," wrote Sierra, threatened to exterminate Yucatán's *familias blancas*, white families, having already reduced its women and children to rape, torment, and murder.[529] Likewise, other Yucatecan elites appealed to US officers and diplomats stationed near the peninsula, observing, in the words of one Campeche merchant, that the Indians "seem to be as wild in their atrocities as they were at the time of Conquest."[530] Predictions of the imminent decline of civilization in Yucatán also appeared in US newspapers, supporting appeals to US citizens to rise to this state's aid.[531]

Yet if civilization was endangered in Yucatán, so was republican independence—a virtue that seemed to align poorly, as it had in Mexico, with either side of the conflict. For Sierra, the war threated to force Yucatán back into the fold of Mexico, whose militarization under centralist leaders had distanced it from his own liberal state.[532] On the other side, some US politicians and writers described the Caste War as Mayas' own political revolution against the tyranny,

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[527] Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje a los Estados Unidos: la pretendida anexión de Yucatán*, ed. Héctor Pérez Martínez (Mexico City: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1938), Appendix, Document 17.
[528] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, entry from April 18, 1848.
[529] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, Appendix, Document 26; *The New York Herald*, April 11 and 20, 1848; *The New Hampshire Gazette and Republican Union*, May 16, 1848.
[530] Extract from Sr. Dn. Joaquin Gutierrez de Estrada to M.C. Perry, Jan 16, 1848, Vol. 2, Despatches from United States Consuls in Campeche 1820-1880, General Records of the Department of State (RG 59), NARA. For other examples of appeals to US officials, see a letter from McGregor to Secretary of State, dated March 25, 1848 in the same volume; and "Comunicaciones al jefe político de Campeche…," Exp. 31, Vol. 60, Caja 110, Gobernación (G), Poder Ejecutivo (PE), Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán (AGEY), Mérida.
[531] *The New Hampshire Gazette*, May 23, 1848.
[532] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, Appendix, Document 8.

oppression, and slavery placed upon them by elite Yucatecans.[533] A surgeon stationed near Campeche wrote home that neither Hispanic nor Maya Yucatecans were capable of governing the state: "The one is too uncivilized—the other too ignorant & lazy & selfish." For this observer, the solution lay in the intervention of "some foreign power," which "should come here to keep the two races, now much intermixed from entirely destroying each other."[534] As Sierra pleaded for US aid and intervention in the conflict, he also intimated that such policies might include Yucatán's annexation by the United States, a topic that was taken up and widely debated in US newspapers.[535]

After investigations by the War Department and Committee on Foreign Affairs and a private meeting with Sierra, President James K. Polk, an aggressive expansionist, put a bill before Congress in May of 1848 requesting that the United States pursue a military occupation of the peninsula. In the days before the Yucatan Bill went before the Senate, Sierra joined forces with the expansionist Democrat Edward Hannegan of Indiana to translate information and statistics about Yucatán to support the bill.[536] Hannegan, along with Lewis Cass, had been one of the primary supporters of the All Mexico Movement, which in addition to claims about civilization and republicanism had used the Monroe Doctrine to argue that the United States

[533] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, entry from April 14; *The New York Herald*, April 28, 1848; argument Independent Democrat Amos Tuck as represented in *New Hampshire Gazette*, May 23, 1848.
[534] Alexander Rice to [?], June 10, 1848, Alexander J. Rice Papers, Manuscripts Division, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
[535] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, Appendix, Document 26. For the first expedition led by José Robira, see "From the New Orleans Delta of April 13. The Atocha and Yucatan Follies," *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 22, 1847, 2; "Messrs. Atocha & Robira," *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 22, 1847, 3.
[536] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, entry from May 4.

must protect Mexico at all costs from dependence on European powers.[537] Now Hannegan applied similar arguments to Yucatán. He assured his fellow congressmen that no permanent occupation was intended, but added, "considerations may arise which will lead us beyond our first intentions."[538]

Hannegan's argument about the Monroe Doctrine and Yucatán focused on the threat of British influence, indirectly connecting the proposed occupation of this state to the War of 1812. Months earlier, when debating the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, expansionist Democrats had again resurrected the memory of this foundational war, describing themselves as descendants of patriots like Andrew Jackson while comparing their opponents to the pro-British secessionist movement that had grown among some New England Federalists in 1814.[539] Now, Hannegan used reports from Sierra to argue that Britain was interfering in the Caste War, deploying troops to Yucatán and sending its agents to arm Maya rebels.[540] He concluded that Britain aimed to control Yucatán, thereby securing her claim to Atlantic-Pacific connections through the isthmus of Central America. More significantly, controlling Yucatán would position Britain to take Cuba. With these two territories, the "lock and key" to the Gulf of Mexico, this

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[537] The idea that Mexico was vulnerable to European influence bore a grain of truth, considering the growing strength of British commercial interests in Mexico and later efforts by Antonio López de Santa Anna to court the alliance of Spain, France, and Britain in order to protect Mexican territory from the United States. In 1861, France would invade Mexico, supported initially by Britain, Spain, and conservative Mexicans. Barbara A. Tenenbaum, "Merchants, Money, and Mischief: The British in Mexico, 1821-1862," *The* Americas, Vol. 35, No. 3 (January 1979): 317-339; Richard A. Johnson, "Spanish-Mexican Diplomatic Relations, 1853-1855," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4: 559-576.
[538] *Congressional Globe (CG)*, 30 Cong., 1 sess., App. 596 (May 5, 1848).
[539] Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 186.
[540] Hannegan stated that Britain had "advanced her troops, and actually seized upon the southern portion of Yucatan, under the pretense of taking care of British interests there" and that "England through her agents is furnishing these Indians with arms." While the records of the British superintendent at Belize confirm the arrival of First West India Regiment from Jamaica to defend the border later that month, no record exists of them crossing into Yucatán. *CG*, 30 Cong., 1 sess., App. 596-597 (May 5, 1848); 22b279, Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS).

European power could make the region a *mare clausum*, or closed sea, shutting off New Orleans and the entire Gulf of Mexico from foreign commerce. Instead, concluded Hannegan, "The Gulf of Mexico should be American: not that America should exclusively use it in time of peace; but in case of war, we should be able to close it against hostile occupation."[541]

Events in Yucatán and the United States soon ended discussions of the Yucatan Bill, again pushing the impulse for intervention into the private arena. That March, Miguel Barbachano y Tarrazo (Sierra's father-in-law's political rival) had returned to power in Yucatán, signing a short-lived peace treaty with Maya rebels. News of the treaty arrived while Sierra and the Democratic senator John Dix of New York were planning a compromise to push the bill through Congress. The apparent end of the Caste War, combined with national criticism of President Polk's expansionist policies, which now appeared also to include designs on Cuba, made the occupation of the peninsula appear unfeasible. Hannegan himself declared the Yucatan Bill unnecessary. Sierra returned to Yucatán, which by August had rejoined Mexico.[542] Months before, however, citizens of US port cities had written to Sierra, expressing their sympathies for Yucatán and offering to raise militias on the state's behalf.[543] Even after Barbachano brought Yucatán back into the Mexican fold, he would rely on foreign countries to support state war efforts, which in fact were still in their earliest stages.[544] Under contracts impermissable by

[541] *CG*, 30 Cong., 1 sess., App. 597 (May 5, 1848); Hietala, *Manifest Design*, 248.
[542] Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, entry from May 17; Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatan* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 106-117; Hietala, *Manifest Designs*, 212; May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 16.
[543] These early overtures came from the Atlantic seaboard: New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Sierra, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, entry from April 22.
[544] The arrival of ships carrying this aid to the ports of Campeche and Sisal appear in "Copiador de la correspondencia del gobernador, relativa a la Hacienda Pública" (Libro 27), Libros Complementarios (LC), PE, AGEY.

Mexican law, Yucatecan merchants imported grain, arms, and ammunition from foreign cities, and outfitted companies of soldiers from the United States and Cuba.[545]

The Caste War reached New Orleans through multiple paths. By late 1848, two commissioners from Yucatán, José Tiburcio López and Salvador Fernandez, had established a presence in the city, importing thousands of dollars in specie and exporting thousands of sacks of corn, bread, arms, and gunpowder.[546] Silver from Yucatán's churches was also said to have traveled across the Gulf as payment for munitions from New Orleans.[547] In November of 1848, roughly one-third of the New Orleans corn exports recorded in the *Daily Delta* were bound for Yucatán, leading the paper to report the grain in "brisk demand."[548] New Orleans men would also rise to the assistance of the rulers of Yucatán, taking the lead in US efforts to conquer a "savage" foe in exchange for glory and material connections. The multiple ties between this expedition and the US-Mexico War, the Sierra Madre Movement, and future attacks on Cuba have caused one historian to write that it "would seem to be splitting hairs" to try to differentiate this episode of mercenary service from the filibustering expeditions of the 1850s.[549] Rather than tarnishing the authenticity of US volunteers' claims about their own motivations, the

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[545] For instructions about trade from Mexico City to the Mexican legation in the United States, see Lacunza to De la Rosa, Aug. 31, 1849 (No. 112), Exp. 1, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE; and De la Rosa to Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Jan. 6, 1849 (No. 9), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE. Governor Barbachano's defense of this trade to officials in Mexico City appears in entries from March 21, June 12, and July 28, 1849, "Copiador de la correspondencia del gobernador D. Miguel Barbachano, con los supremos poderes y gobernadores de los estados de la republica. Jan. 26, 1849- Aug. 13, 1851" (Libro 29), LC, PE AGEY.

[546] "From Yucatan" and "Port Statistics," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 28-29, and Dec. 27, 1848. Salvador Fernandez and Jose Tiburcio Lopez are listed as commissioners to New Orleans in an entry from Jan. 27, 1849, Libro 27, LC, PE, AGEY.

[547] McGregor to Secretary of State, July 24, 1848, Vol. 2, Despatches from United States Consuls in Campeche, 1820-1880, RG 59, NARA.

[548] "Port Statistics," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 1, 1848. Two ships carrying flour arrived in Campeche later that week, after battling a Gulf storm. "Havana," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 7, 1848.

[549] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 17.

filibustering dimension of the New Orleans mercenary expedition to Yucatán highlights the continued entanglement of conquest, Indian War, and political revolution.

George W. White's Yucatan Company

The Caste War stood as yet another conflict in which New Orleans men tied their city and country more closely to the Gulf ports through warfare aimed at advancing the causes of civilization, republicanism, and independence. Traveling to Yucatán in October of 1848 as mercenary soldiers, and months later setting sail a second time from New Orleans with plans to attack Yucatán, other Mexican coasts, or Cuba, the company of men led by "Captain" George W. White, who had served in Mexico as a captain under Persifor Frazer Smith of Second Seminole War fame, continued the march of conquest that had proceeded from New Orleans outward to Florida, Texas, and other Mexican ports. A movement that foreshadowed the 1851 filibuster in which US forces attempted to aid revolutionaries in Cuba, this episode highlights the complex ways that tropes of savagery, tyranny, and colonial oppression were realigned when applied to the peoples of the southern Gulf. In Yucatán, a place where power seemed to be contested between savages and tyrants, some armed US men moved easily between roles as mercenary soldiers and conquerors.

In the summer of 1848, US-Mexico War veterans still stationed in Veracruz made overtures to the Yucatán government offering their services in the Caste War, which had continued despite attempts on both sides to negotiate a treaty. Announcements that men were enlisting for this movement appeared in the *Free American*, one of the US newspapers in Veracruz, as early as June 2: officers such as Captain William Tenbrink of the Independent Company of Louisiana Volunteers hoped in a few days to recruit "four hundred noble hearts" to

save Yucatecans from "the dreadful knife of the blood-thirsty savages."[550] In mid-July, John H. Peoples, a veteran and former correspondent for the New Orleans *Delta*, traveled from Veracruz to the capitol of Yucatán, signing a contract to bring thousands of US soldiers to the peninsula.[551] The *Delta* would later report that the contract guaranteed soldiers "eight dollars a month, with comfortable clothing and good rations, besides granting to each soldier three hundred and twenty acres of the best land in the world."[552] Barbachano's hope, the New Orleans paper proclaimed, was to "form a nucleus for an army which Yucatan may depend on in any future difficulties, either with the Indians or with any foreign foe."[553]

Straight out of their service in Mexico, New Orleans men continued to fight for civilization and a version of independence in other parts of the Gulf. That October, recruitment for Yucatán began in New Orleans, led by the US-Mexico War veteran George White. The first regiment of White's company left New Orleans for Sisal, Yucatán on October 14, on the Brig *Harriet*—a force of 125 men that included other officers who had volunteered in Mexico. Leaving the troops at Sisal on October 22, the ship returned three weeks later with White, David S. McDowell, who had served as a lieutenant in the same regiment in Mexico, and Robert J. Kelly, who had served as a senior officer in the Battalion of Louisiana Mounted Volunteers.[554] These men and other

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[550] *Free American*, June 2, 1848, quoted in "Later from Vera Cruz. Return of the Army. Baltimore Volunteers for Yucatan, &.," *Baltimore Sun*, June 21, 1848.
Rosters of the companies to which White's officers had previously belonged appear in Robarts, *Mexican War Veterans*, 53-56.

[551] McGregor to Secretary of State, July 24, 1848, Vol. 2, Despatches from United States Consuls in Campeche, 1820-1880, RG 59, NARA; Barbachano to E. Sr. Ministro de Estado y del Despacho de Relaciones Interiores y Exteriores (hereafter MEDRIE), Jan. 26, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.

[552] "American Soldiers for the Mexican Army," "Volunteers for Yucatan," and "One Hundred Fighting Men," *Daily Delta*, October 15, November 15-29, 1848.

[553] "The Yucatan Regiment," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 23, 1848.

[554] "From Sisal," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 4, 1848; "Col. George White," *Daily Delta*, Nov. 14, 1848.

veteran volunteer officers began efforts to recruit a second force of one thousand men, which would depart in late November, also carrying grain for Yucatán.[555]

In contrast to the enthusiastic official collaboration during the Second Seminole War, city officials held no public meetings about White's Yucatan Company. Likewise, no mention of the conflict appears in the letter books kept by the New Orleans mayor.[556] Yet for those being recruited, enlistment still promised the chance to participate in a long history of military service by which New Orleans residents achieved glory for themselves and their city. The coverage of recruitment offered by the *Daily Delta* explicitly made this connection in its reports of the company's officers. Lt. John McDonald had proven his bravery by fighting in the Battle of Okechobee in the Second Seminole War under Zachary Taylor, "Old Zack."[557] James J. Connolly, another officer from Persifor Smith's Louisiana Volunteers, had earned a reputation in Mexico as the War-horse of Buena Vista. "If laurels are to b'won," the *Delta* observed, he would surely earn his share.[558] Another officer from Smith's company, George H. Tobin, had kept a newspaper column called "Tobin's Knapsack" during the Mexican War. Now he promised to entertain readers by investigating "some of the natural curiosities and antiquities" of Yucatan.[559] Another officer, Lorenzo Besançon, had captained the Louisiana Mounted Volunteers and would later participate in the Sierra Madre Movement.[560]

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[555] "The Volunteers for Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, Dec. 1, 1848. Tobin writes that the journey took four and a half days, a number that is inconsistent with the departure date of November 25 and arrival December 5. "Late from Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, Dec. 25, 1848.
[556] Vol. 5, Letter books, 1811-1920, New Orleans (La.) Office of the Mayor, Records of the Mayors of New Orleans, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library.
[557] "Lieutenant McDonald," *Daily Delta*, November 22, 1848.
[558] "Volunteers for Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, November 15-16, 1848.
[559] The *Delta* promised, specifically, that Tobin would see the "region over which [John Lloyd] Stephens and [Benjamin Moore] Norman have traveled, and in traveling, found materials for interesting and valuable books." "Distinguished Arrival," *Daily Delta*, November 24, 1848.
[560] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 17.

The hundreds of men who responded to this opportunity to fight on behalf of New Orleans in yet another Gulf war represented not only the pool of potential soldiers available after the war between the United States and Mexico, but also the mass of wage laborers available in the growing city of New Orleans.[561] Official recruitment began, as before, with a highly-publicized rendezvous in a posh area of town—this time, at Devereaux's Coffee House, across from the new and majestic St. Charles Theater.[562] As troops departed for Yucatán, the *Delta* professed the "assurance that their gallantry and energy will add greatly to the strength of the Yucatecos."[563] Meanwhile, a group of self-made officers opened a second rendezvous at the Rainbow Coffee House, a business closer to the levee. "Though not claiming to be 'the hero of a hundred fights,'" wrote the *Delta* of one of these officers, John G. Malloy, he was "an ambitious officer, who will no doubt do the State of Yucatan good service." Newspapers did not report on the departure of this independent company, but Molloy, at least, ended up serving in Yucatán.[564]

Upon their arrival in Sisal, the Yucatán Company marched inland to the capital of Mérida, later congregating in Tekax, one of the major seats of war.[565] Mérida's official paper reported enthusiastically on their arrival, praising their prompt and enthusiastic answer to the governor's

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[561] The argument about surplus soldiers leftover from Mexico appears in May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 14, 82.
[562] "Volunteers for Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, November 15-16, 1848; *The New Orleans Bee*, February 28, 1836, quoted in Fossier, *New Orleans*, 479.
[563] *Daily Delta*, November 23 and 24, 1848. Other captains under White included Jacobs and Reed. The former might have been John Jacobs, who had served as a lieutenant under White that year in the US-Mexican War. Veterans of the US-Mexico War that served in White's Yucatan Company also included Russell P. Mace and John Freeland, also of Persifor Smith's Louisiana Volunteers.
[564] *Daily Delta*, November 16, 21-25, and 29,1848. Molloy's return is listed in March 14, 1849, "Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820–1875," Records of the U.S. Customs Service, RG 36, NARA.
[565] "Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, Dec. 22, 1848.

call, the good conduct of the soldiers, and the firm deportment of their officers.[566] While thirty-two men returned only a month after their arrival—unable, according to Governor Barbachano, to tolerate the scarcities of military service in Yucatán--, many more, including the officers McDowell, Mace, Freeland, Molloy, and Tobin, stayed until March, when the Yucatecan government officially discharged its foreign companies.[567] Others stayed even longer, accompanying Yucatecan forces to the port of Bacalar, the heart of rebel territory.[568] The Yucatán state government armed these men and committed, though it often failed to fulfill this promise, to support those who became disabled in battle or were otherwise unable to support themselves.[569]

No simple filibuster, the participation of New Orleans men in the Caste War was an act of mercenary military service in a conflict that many saw as protecting North American civilization from savagery and from British control. If these soldiers carried expectations of receiving material rewards in exchange for their service, these expectations were nothing new. The US government had offered free homesteads to armed citizens in Florida during the Second Seminole War, a conflict during which regular and volunteer soldiers were accused of using

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[566] "Late from Yucatan," *Daily Delta*, Dec. 25, 1848

[567] Passenger logs kept by the U.S. Customs Service only account for the return of around 250 of the 1100 men who went to Yucatán. See entries from January, March, and April, "Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820–1875," Records of the U.S. Customs Service, RG 36, NARA.
Barbachano's comment that some of the US soldiers "no puede soportar la escasez y penuración que se sostiene la guerra" in Yucatán appears in his letter to the Minister of Interior and Exterior Relations, Jan. 26, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.

[568] Barbachano to MEDRIE, March 21, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.
Praise of American soldiers and the death of Robert Kelly in this battle appears in the *Boletin Oficial* at the Biblioteca Yucatanense in Mérida. I have lost my notes on this periodical and will need to consult it again on my next trip to Yucatán.

[569] Barbachano to MEDRIE, Jan. 26, 1849, and Aug. 31, 1850, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.

military service as a way of generating income.[570] Mexican War veterans had received bounty land totaling 14,400,000 acres.[571] Likewise, the pay for filibustering soldiers in the 1850s was roughly equivalent to that offered by the Army.[572] While little evidence remains that Yucatecan officials actually intended for US veterans to settle among them, they did consider establishing colonies of Frenchmen and Spaniards on the eastern islands and coasts in order to "whiten" the area between themselves and Maya rebels.[573] Yucatán's coastal areas had long intrigued US developers because of the opportunities they held for tropical crops.[574]

The first waves of soldiers who returned from Yucatán, however, professed to have been convinced during their service that "the Yucatecos, or whites" did not deserve US sympathy. Picking up themes that had circulated during deliberations on the Yucatan Bill, they described Yucatán's Indians as "a brave, virtuous, and interesting race, full of patriotism, fidelity, and honesty," narrating scenes in which rebel soldiers had approached their camp, beckoning "to the Americans to come over and join them."[575] If true, these conversations would have been made possible by the decades of trade between Mayas and Britons along the Yucatán-Belize border,

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[570] While the Armed Occupation Act was generally unsuccessful at bringing civilians into the conflict, the commanding general Zachary Taylor believed that the establishment of state militias allowed Floridians to demand financial support from the government while never leaving their homes. Joe Knetsch and Paul S. George, "A Problematical Law: The Armed Occupation Act of 1842 and Its Impact on South Florids," *Tequesta* (Miami: Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1993); Taylor to Poinsett, May 11 (T-175), 1840, Letters Received, Records of the Adjutant General (RG 94), NARA.
[571] *Daily Delta*, Oct. 3 and 24, Dec. 15, 1848.
[572] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 96.
[573] July 28, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.
[574] The US consul to Campeche in the late-1820s and early-1830s, Henry Perrine, imported hemp, logwood, and other tropical plants from Yucatán to the United States, hoping to "domesticate" them in southern Florida or Louisiana for use by the United States. See various dispatches from Henry Perrine to Secretary of State between June 30, 1830 and February 1, 1834, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States Consuls in Campeche, 1820-1880, RG 59, NARA; "Dr. Henry Perrine—Tropical Plants," Report No. 564, Reports of the House of Representatives, 25th Congress, 2d Session, Feb. 17, 1838.
[575] "From the New Orleans Delta," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, May 21, 1849.

which made some eastern Mayas as conversant in English as Spanish. Learning of these and other newspaper reports in favor of the rebels, Mexican statesmen voiced concerns not only about their country's international reputation but also that rebel leaders might discover that they had US support.[576] According to returning volunteers, Yucatecan commanders had kept their regiment divided from one another in order guard "against the possibility of our volunteers accepting these invitations, as well as against another not less serious peril, of their assuming the government of the country."[577]

At least one US citizen in British Honduras would experience a similar change of heart over which Yucatecans, if any, deserved US sympathy. The Connecticut merchant Christopher Hempstead, who had moved to this territory in 1845 and accepted the position of US consul at Belize two years later, found his support for elite Yucatecans waning over the course of the war.[578] When refugees first arrived in Belize in the summer of 1848, Hempstead found these "white" people in a "truly heartrending" state.[579] Two years later, attacks by "Spaniards or Indians" on mahogany works in British territory appeared in his letters as one and the same: "the depredations of a lawless and savage people whom fear alone can constrain or control."[580] For Hempstead, the military power of the United States offered one of the only ways to instill this fear among the Hispanic and Maya populations of Yucatán. As an explanation of why Caste War

[576] Political report of Luis de la Rosa, May 22, 1849 (No. 69), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.
[577] "From the New Orleans Delta," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, May 21, 1849.
[578] Hempstead to Secretary of State, May 12, 1847, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, 1847-1906, RG 59, NARA.
[579] Hempstead to Secretary of State, May 26, 1848, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, 1847-1906, RG 59, NARA.
[580] Hempstead to Secretary of State, May 30, 1850, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, 1847-1906, RG 59, NARA.

attacks had not targeted his own property, he wrote, "Since the Mexican War there seems to be a dread of and a respect for the U.S. by the Spaniards and Indians in this vicinity."[581]

By the time Hempstead wrote this 1850 letter, officials across the Gulf of Mexico were watching in suspense as private US militias crisscrossed the Gulf in search of revolution and filibuster. In addition to the Sierra Madre Movement, one of the earliest examples was a failed movement by many the same men who had traveled as mercenary soldiers to Yucatán in 1848. In July of 1849, a reported four to six hundred armed men under George White again departed New Orleans, bound to attack an unknown foreign port. The forces set up camp at Round Island, a barrier island ten miles off the coast of Mississippi, where they remained for the following two months. During this time, officials across the Gulf circulated anxious letters, hoping to determine the force's next move; it was said that even the subordinate officers were ignorant of their final destination.[582] In Yucatán, Miguel Barbachano received word that New Orleans commercial houses supported these activities.[583] The steamer Fanny that they were believed to have purchased for their expedition had also shuttled volunteers to New Orleans from Veracruz at the end of the US-Mexico War.[584]

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[581] Hempstead to Secretary of State, Sept. 5, 1851, Vol. 1, Despatches from United States consuls in Belize, 1847-1906, RG 59, NARA.
[582] Copy of Dabelsteen to Barbachano in Dabelsteen to De la Rosa, Aug. 18, 1849 (No. 15), Exp. 12, Leg. 30, AEMEUA, SRE. This letter also in Exp. 1, Leg. 4, Fondo de Filibusterismo, SRE.
[583] Barbachano used these reports to continue pushing for increased aid from the supreme government, insisting that Yucatán could not fight two enemies at once. At one point he suggested that the best intervention would be to request warships from Havana. Barbachano to MEDRIE, Aug. 31, Sept. 12 and 14, and Nov. 15, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY. 1849.
[584] Dabelsteen to de la Rosa, Aug. 18, 1849 (No. 15), Exp. 12, Leg. 30, AEMEUA, SRE; "Army Intelligence," *The New York Herald*, June 23, 1848.

Mexican officials believed that the adventurers were bound for Mexico, in particular Yucatán, although they questioned on whose behalf the men would fight.[585] Luis de la Rosa, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington, DC, first suspected that the force traveled at the behest of the Yucatán government. Later he supposed that Yucatán had again declared its independence, and that officials in Mexico City had hired US soldiers to put down this revolution.[586] De la Rosa and O.L. Dabelsteen, the Mexican consul at New Orleans, also reported rumors that the troops intended to fight in Yucatán on the side of the Maya rebels; George White, it was said, had promised to have the *blancos* on the peninsula's shores begging for mercy.[587] Meanwhile, officials in Washington, DC concluded that the expedition planned to aid independence efforts in Cuba, claims that De la Rosa and Dabelsteen sometimes believed.[588]

The short distance between Yucatán and Cuba made the mutual vulnerability of the two places apparent. When mercenary soldiers had first departed New Orleans for Yucatán in 1848, the US consul at Havana had reported rumors that Cuban revolutionaries expected American

[585] Dabelsteen to de la Rosa, Aug. 18 and Sept. 8, 1849 (Nos. 15 and 21) with enclosures, Exp. 12, Leg. 30, AEMEUA, SRE; De la Rosa to Lacunza, Sept. 27, 1849 (No. 107), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.

[586] De la Rosa to Lacunza, Aug. 28, 1849 (No. 105), AEMEUA, SRE; De la Rosa to Lacunza, Aug. 17, 1849 (Res. No. 32), AEMEUA, SRE. The Minister of Interior and Exterior Relations assured De la Rosa that Yucatán and Mexico were again on friendly terms; that the Mexican government had not been involved in recruiting these soldiers; and that the government in Mexico City did not believe that Yucatán would try again to raise an expedition in the United States. De la Rosa to Lacunza, Oct. 8, 1849 (Res. No. 45), AEMEUA, SRE.; Lacunza to De la Rosa, Sept. 11 and Nov. 12, 1849 (Res. Nos. 21 and 25), Exp. 1, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.

[587] Copy of Dabelsteen to Logan Hunter, July 31 in Dabelsteen to de la Rosa, Aug. 18, 1849 (No. 15), Leg. 30, Exp. 12, AEMEUA, SRE. A copy of this letter also appears in Barbachano to MDRIE, Sept. 12, 1849, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY.

[588] De la Rosa to Lacunza, Aug. 17, 24, and 28, 1849 (No. 105 and Res. Nos. 33 and 39), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, and Copy of Dabelsteen to Abogado de Distrito de Louisiana, July 31, 1849 in Dabelsteen to de la Rosa, Aug. 18 and 28, 1849 (Nos. 15 and 19), Exp. 12, Leg. 30, AEMEUA, SRE.

forces to arrive to their aid from Yucatán.[589] A year later, as George White's filibusterers prepared at Round Island, De la Rosa speculated that even if these men were bound for Cuba, they would likely continue on to other "border or coastal points."[590] When this force in fact disbanded in early October, leaving impoverished soldiers wandering the streets of New Orleans, Mexican officials prepared to shift their attention to other concerns, but found rumors of US meddling in the affairs of the hemisphere difficult to ignore.[591] In May of 1850, the Cuban revolutionary Narciso López launched an invasion of Cuba from Isla Mujeres off the eastern coast of Yucatán.[592] He launched a second, more widely publicized expedition in July of 1851. Raising money and soldiers at the Banks Arcade and other popular New Orleans rendezvous, López traveled first to Florida and then to an isolated shore near Havana, where his troops landed, blundering inland until they were stopped by Spanish authorities. Even after López was executed in late August of that year, citizens of New Orleans, other northern Gulf cities, and ports along the Atlantic seaboard continued their filibustering efforts in order to spread what they depicted as the area of liberty toward this eastern border of the Gulf.[593]

Conclusion

[589] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 15.
[590] De la Rosa to Lacunza, Aug. 17, 1849 (Res. No. 32), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE. "Es pues muy probable que el proyecto se frustre y yo temo que una multidud de aventureros que estaban ya alistados y armados para la espedición a Cuba se dirijan a Texas o a otros puntos fronterizas o literales desde donde puedan invadir a Mexico."
[591] Political reports of José María Lacunza, Oct. 13 and Nov. 13, 1849, (No. 137 and 143), Exp. 1, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE; Dabelsteen to de la Rosa, Oct. 5 and 17, 1849, (Nos. 24 and 25), Exp. 12, Leg. 30, AEMEUA, SRE; De la Rosa to Lacunza, Oct. 18 and 21, 1849, Res. (Nos. 48 and 52), Exp. 2, Leg. 31, AEMEUA, SRE.
[592] Governor to MEDRIE, Dec. 9, 1850, and Jan. 16 and March 31, 1851, Libro 29, LC, PE, AGEY. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 28.
[593] May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 30-33; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 303-394.

Even a New Yorker like J.H. Colton, whose map opened this chapter, could not help but place New Orleans at the center of the United States' geography, for it was the point that seemed always to connect the continental nation to its sister states around the Gulf of Mexico. Had the map been made in New Orleans, perhaps the monuments around its edges would have differed: the remembrances of the Revolutionary War would likely have given way to memorials to Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans. Seeing their city not only as the heart of southern slavery but also of an independence won by white volunteer soldiers against British, Indian, and black enemies, New Orleans men attempted to bring the gifts of civilization and republican independence to countrymen and trade partners at ports in every part of the Gulf. In doing so, they acted as agents of US empire, even when these gains were temporary and not officially supported by the United States government.

As the 1850s progressed, filibustering movements sailed beyond the Gulf of Mexico to Nicaragua and other parts of the Caribbean, leaving the United States government and its citizens to grapple with how to spread republicanism into territories whose people they did not want as citizens. Heirs to deep histories of official and rogue colonialism, and equipped with the resources, gained through slavery, to carry this power into foreign nations, New Orleans volunteers remained central players in US imperialism through this period. These particular dreams of empire would come to a halt in 1861, when the U.S. Civil War would turn attentions inward and, ultimately, devastate the slaveholding South. But the United States' military and economic interventions in the Gulf World would continue even as this era came to its end.

Conclusion

In the century following 1763, the peninsulas of Florida and Yucatán marked the contested entrance to the Gulf of Mexico, a region connecting North America to the Atlantic Oceana and Caribbean Sea. The people of the Gulf had long interacted with one another through the regional lines of trade and migration, which crisscrossed the Gulf's shallow shores. But in order for empires and nation-states to share the wealth of the continent in the markets of other regions, they needed to retain access to the often turbulent straits between Cuba and Florida, by which ships sailed outward past the Bahamas into the Atlantic Ocean, and to the slower route to the Caribbean Sea between Cuba and Yucatán. As Spain ceded its claims to North America--first to Britain and France, then to the United States, and finally, to Mexico—the body of water once known as the *Seno Mexicano* became a shared sea sought after by agents of revolution and of the emerging U.S. empire. The imperial officials, armed citizens and their governments, and rogue agents of empire aiming to control the land and waters of the Gulf of Mexico knew that Florida and Yucatán held a strategic place in this world.

These contests among the official and unofficial representatives of empires and nation-states provided new political opportunities to indigenous peoples at a time when life was becoming more difficult in certain parts of the continent's interior. Regardless of how the Gulf of Mexico appeared on eighteenth-century maps and treaties, many of its rivers and shores remained indigenous territory or the havens of pirates, privateers, and maroons. For Lower Creeks, Seminoles, and Red Sticks seeking to remain independent from the United States and the Creek Nation, and for a group of Maya leaders staging a revolution in order to end the oppressive

systems of labor and taxation that they had experienced in the state of Yucatán, the loosely-held fortresses and the isolated rivers and bays of Florida and Yucatán offered points of connection to the Gulf, and sometimes to its underworld. Serving as makeshift ports, these maritime outlets provided these leaders opportunities to obtain the weapons and external relations necessary to assert international claims of independence.

Official governments did not always endorse the activities of these indigenous leaders or of the British American adventurers, merchants, and rogue officials who often partnered with them, but these movements were still serious events in the history of North America and of the Atlantic world. From the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, trade and diplomacy that flouted imperial policies had long kept empires alive. The United States and Mexico, heirs not only to Atlantic empires but also to traditions of rogue colonialism, relied on private and illicit networks of exchange as they sought to conquer the territories they claimed as their borders by eliminating connections between indigenous worlds and the Gulf underworld. The partnerships that Maya revolutionaries and dissident Creek leaders established with men bearing loose ties to Great Britain, though fraught, demonstrate the many ways that indigenous peoples imagined new futures for themselves in the age of independent states.

During this transitional century, private and rogue agents also propelled the United States into new parts of the Gulf. The triple threat of Indians, Spaniards, and Britons encouraged volunteer militias, mercenary soldiers, and filibusterers to occupy and "civilize" foreign territories across this region. Meanwhile, lines of trade strengthened connections between New Orleans and other Gulf ports. The Gulf of Mexico would never become the "American Mediterranean" that some people in the United States imagined, but by the late-1860s it would

be a region dominated by the United States. As the century progressed, the United States would take sides in civil warfare between liberals and conservatives in Mexico; its businessmen would continue to invest in Mexico during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz in the final decades of the century. Likewise, Cuban revolutionaries would find in their independence struggles against Spain, avid, if generally self-interested, supporters in the United States. Aiming to remove the remaining European empire from the region, these fickle friends would also hope to possess Cuba, the "key" to the Gulf.[594]

After U.S. Civil War, indigenous peoples within the borders claimed by the United States would confront a U.S. military whose regular troops had increased significantly since the days of the Seminole Wars. Pushed inland or removed from the Gulf, they had lost access to the international trade partners who might have helped them weather these violent onslaughts. Mayas in eastern Yucatán, however, would remain largely independent into the twentieth century.[595] No longer supported by the rogue alliances of the late-1840s, their autonomous communities were, nonetheless, signs of the incomplete advance of Euro-American empire in North America. Positioned between a forested interior, British Honduras, and the Straits of Yucatán, these communities continued to draw strength from the resistance of the Gulf and Caribbean regions to centralized control.

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[594] Muller, *Cuban Emigrés*, 5.

[595] During the final decades of the century, Hispanics in northwestern Yucatán would profit from the exportation of the hemp-like fiber henequen, produced by Maya laborers, for which U.S. companies were one of the primary importers. New research suggests that exports for foreign markets may also have aided independent Mayas in the east. Here, chicle extracted for use in the chewing gum industry offered resources to preserve Maya autonomy, including by the purchase of weapons. Sterling Evans, *Bound in Twine: The History and Ecology of the Henequen-Wheat Complex for Mexico and the American and Canadian Plans, 1880-1950* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); Adrienne Kates, "Maya Autonomy and International Capitalism in Mexico's Chewing Gum Forests, 1886-1947" (PhD diss. in progress, Georgetown University).

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Mexican rivers come from The North American Atlas: Hydrography dataset, provided by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), available at http://www.cec.org/naatlas/

United States rivers come from the USGS National Hydrography Dataset, provided by ESRI: Esri, U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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Archives

AGEY Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán: Mérida, Yucatán

- J Fondo Justicia
- PE Poder Ejecutivo
  - CE Consejo del Estado
  - CO Correspondencia Oficial
  - G Gobernación
  - J Sección Justicia
  - LC Libros Complementarios
  - M Milicia

AGI Archivo General de Indias: Seville, Spain

- PC Papeles de Cuba
  Legajos 216A, 216B, 225B, 1394, 1395, 1898, 1900, 1928

AGN Archivo General de la Nación: Mexico City, Mexico

- Fondo Gobierno, Sección Segundo Imperio

BARS Belize Archives and Records Service: Belmopan, Belize

22bR Letters Outward, 1842-1849
25R Dispatches Outward, 1844-1849
28R Letters Inward, 1847-1851
29R Letters Inward, 1848-1850
31R Dispatches Outward, 1849-1851
32aR Letters Outward, 1849-1851
32bR Letters Outward, 1849-1851
33R Indian Correspondence, 1841-1850
38R Dispatches Outward, 1851-1852
40R Letters Outward, 1851-1854

BNA British National Archives: London, England

WO War Office
FO Foreign Office

HNOC Historic New Orleans Collection: New Orleans, LA

Butler Family Papers

LOC Library of Congress: Washington, DC

Early State Records

NARA National Archives: Washington, DC and College Park, MD

RG 46 Records of the United States Senate
RG 92 Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General
RG 94 Records of the Adjutant General
RG 59 General Records of the Department of State
RG 107 Records of the Office of the Secretary of War
HR Records of the House of Representatives

Newberry Library: Chicago, IL

Edward E. Ayer Collection

NOPL New Orleans Public Library: New Orleans, LA

City Records, Records of the Office of the Mayor

P.K. Yonge Library: Gainesville, FL

MTG Marie Taylor Greenslade Papers

SRE Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores: Mexico City, Mexico

AEMEUA Archivo de la Embajada de Mexico en los Estados Unidos Americanos
Fondo de Filibusterismo

Periodicals
Army and Navy Chronicle
Commercial Advertiser (New York, NY)
Congressional Globe
Daily Delta, (New Orleans)
El Universal (Mexico City, Mexico)
Northampton Mercury (Northampton, England)
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