Chickasaw Village Names From Contact To Removal: 1540-1835

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Abstract

This study restores the original Chickasaw names to all the traditional tribal settlements east of the Mississippi River and discusses the meaning of those names, many of which have remained enigmatic for years. Every known record of Chickasaw towns in the northeastern Mississippi homeland as well as that of villages in outlying locations is examined chronologically from the time of the De Soto expedition until the years immediately prior to the tribe's removal to Oklahoma in the 1830s.

Introduction

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first systematic attempt to decipher, describe and discuss all of the known names of the former Chickasaw settlements east of the Mississippi River. Several factors have made analyzing those historic names a challenge. Many of the later town designations have most often come to us not directly from the Chickasaw language but rather by way of Choctaw. During the protracted period of conflict between the Chickasaws and the French and their Choctaw and other Indian allies from 1720 to 1763, Chickasaw settlement identifications were made for the French by their own native clients and not, of course, by their Chickasaw enemies. Considering the bloody and relentless antagonism between the Chickasaws and the colonial French and their Choctaw supporters, it is one of history's great ironies that the conventional spelling of so many Chickasaw town names has been French, while the names that the French were representing had so often been provided in Choctaw. The casual observation by numerous writers, both past and present, that Chickasaw was "almost identical" or "virtually identical" to Choctaw may have fueled the notion that it did not really matter how those town names appeared, an assertion tantamount to declaring that the difference between New Amsterdam and New York is a quibble. A case in point is that of the town called *Okla Chitoka* (also frequently spelled *Ogoula Chetoka* or *Ogoula Tchetoka*). *Okla chitoka* is how the Choctaws referred to the Chickasaws' most populous town. It

was not the Chickasaw name of that settlement, which was *Chokkilissa'*, but rather its description in Choctaw in which *okla* is town, *chito* means large, and -*ka* is a suffix which in this instance reinforces the scale and importance of that settlement with respect to the others:"principal town" in short. The French seem to have taken the Choctaw phrase to be the actual name, and it has been an indiscriminate part of the documentary record ever since.

And yet the overlapping of Choctaw with linguistically-related though distinct Chickasaw has been of invaluable benefit in this project of analysis and restoration. The greater richness of the recorded Choctaw lexicon provides us with access to what I believe were once current terms in Chickasaw as well and to numerous secondary or antiquated meanings of a bygone and otherwise irrecoverable vocabulary in that language. Some of the original Chickasaw villages bear names in a terminology that has changed profoundly over the years. Words and phrases have become outmoded, their archaic acceptations unaddressed in either of the two principal dictionaries of Chickasaw whose perspective is understandably and inevitably modern. As in any living language, meanings have evolved in Chickasaw, but so too has the ranking of multiple meanings varied significantly over time. What was once a word's primary sense loses ground or disappears altogether. For example, *aayopi'* ("a place to bathe") mainly denotes a bathtub or a swimming pool nowadays, but to a speaker of the 1700s in addition to a pool of water, it would as readily have called to mind a wildlife wallow, whether a quaggy mudhole or a powdery pit for dust baths for both beast and fowl. Likewise *iksa'*, which today signifies a fellowship of Christian believers, in the eighteenth century would have designated one's clan or house group, a social bond even closer than one's own tribe (Adair 1930: 18-19 [1775]). Cyrus Byington's *Choctaw Language Dictionary* (1892, 2001) and Ben Watkins' *A Choctaw Definer* (1915, 2001) provide priceless insights into such former meanings because of their detail and thoroughness but also, and perhaps essentially, because of their age.[1] The rich historical wordstock that Byington and Watkins set down in the 1800s came from people whose ways of living and thinking and looking at the world are long past. Comparing early Chickasaw town names with entries in both these dictionaries hints at a former period of bountiful Chickasaw synonyms, at a time when both languages must have shared a much more extensive lexicon than is true today. In the discussions of historic Chickasaw locations to follow, I hope

those earlier common terminologies that I have postulated will become both apparent and credible to the reader. Etymologies of older Chickasaw place names frankly cannot be done without resort to Byington's and Watkins' indispensable works in Choctaw.

The task of restoring and analyzing these settlement names has of course been chiefly linguistic and geographic, but it has also depended a great deal on fields as varied as cartography, archaeology, crafts and folklore, costuming, early trade, civil and military history and botany. Many Chickasaw town names derive from natural features of the surrounding landscape, while others describe the villages themselves rather than their settings. The bulk of the data for this project has come from eighteenth-century records, but observation of the natural environment at the locations in question and even aerial or satellite photography have also been useful. In many respects this study is the result of a sort of detective work that has taken into account fields and streams and ridges and hollows as well as printed matter. While I believe I have performed that work with care and rigor, and certainly with considerable affection and respect, I do not pretend to have gotten every name correct. What follows are my best interpretations of the forms and meanings of the names that history has bequeathed to us. I would be pleased to hear from other scholars and speakers of Chickasaw with alternative interpretations wherever my own may be deemed to have fallen short of the mark.

The early Chickasaws are shown by their place names to have been a practical and, as others have often characterized them, even a Spartan people (Adair 1930: 341-342 note 178 [1775]; Gibson 1971: 7; Calloway 1995: 216-217). With one or two doubtful exceptions there is no detectable lyricism in their early place names, nor are there any obvious poetic metaphors attaching to those places: locations are called what they seem to be and they seem what they are called. The Chickasaws' close neighbors and remote kinsmen the Choctaws were widely admired for their gift of public speaking and for their occasionally romantic geographic names, of which Dancing Rabbit and Running Tiger Creeks are familiar examples (Cushman 1999: 197 [1899]). By contrast, the Chickasaws were exceedingly pragmatic if not downright austere in their own geographical naming conventions. If there is any mystery or romance in Chickasaw place names, it is because the words themselves have become enigmatic or because the original reason for those names has been lost to us over time.

The pattern of historical Chickasaw place names is that of simple nouns or of noun-plus- adjective phrases. Occasionally the locative *aa-* will have been added to give a phrase the sense of "a place in which...," as in the previously mentioned *aayopi',* a place where bathing (or wallowing) occurs. The apparent absence of verbs –of complete sentences as place names– is one of the differences between Chickasaw and some Choctaw geographic nomenclature, and the occasional presence of verbs in Choctaw toponyms accounts for the dynamic or lilting quality of more than a few of them.

I have chosen to examine these names based on the chronology of their mention in the documentary record, and of necessity such a cumulative methodology entails repetition. But that very repetition is precisely the sequential orthographic evidence we have of what the European ear thought it was hearing, and therefore the greater and more varied the number of spellings, the better the clues we have to what was actually being said. In many ways, French and English orthography of the eighteenth century are the least felicitous vessels imaginable for phonetic transcription. And yet for all their occasional whimsy and eccentricities, there is system and pattern in the writing of both languages and an earnest effort at expressing the perceived sounds of Chickasaw and/or Choctaw. To the extent that the many alternative spellings over time represent stages of understanding, I have chosen this chronological approach to encourage the reader to follow those steps along with me to the conclusions I have drawn. An additional benefit to a sequential approach is that it permits us to observe how the component parts of the greater Chickasaw community were perceived by the Chickasaws themselves and by friend, foe and neutral observer as well. Insofar as history and archaeology can confirm actual town sites, chronology enables us too to comprehend the range and the contraction of those settlements as organic responses to relative peace and growth, to conflict, to necessity and decline.

The historical and archaeological record reveals that the principal Chickasaw communities were re-sited more than once for defense under conditions of great adversity (Gibson 1971: 6; Johnson 1992: 18; Calloway 1995: 218).[2] Yet the written record demonstrates that the original names of the majority of those settlements were steadfastly retained by their inhabitants despite such relocations. Chickasaw identity, continuity and even defiance were thus made explicit in the stubborn persistence of the seven enduring towns of *Chokkilissa', Chokka' Falaa', Aamalaata',*

Chisha' Talla'a', Tokaahilowa', Foli' Cha'a' and Aahikki'ya'. Even at the tribe's moment of deepest despair in 1754 when the dissolution of the entire nation was seriously being contemplated, the Chickasaw relocation plan was to send four of those villages en masse to live among the Overhill Cherokees and the remaining three to reside with the Upper Creeks (Adair 1930: 234 note 106 [1775]; McDowell 1970:17).

In my discussions and restorations of Chickasaw town names, I will spell those names in Chickasaw, as I have done for the seven towns above. To that end I will use the orthography introduced by Pamela Munro and Catherine Willmond in *Chickasaw: An Analytical Dictionary* (1994) and in their language study text, *Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli' (Let's Speak Chickasaw)* (1999). That spelling takes a little getting used to, but its great value is that it is unambiguously and uniquely Chickasaw. One of my goals has been to point out the preponderance of Choctaw-by-way-of-French naming in the primary records of historical Chickasaw settlements, but I have also sought to provide a genuine Chickasaw spelling for the towns examined. After all, those remarkably resilient places and the story of their steadfast survival are first and foremost the patrimony of the Chickasaw people. To them this study is dedicated and with it the long overdue repatriation of the names of their historic towns.

The Spanish Record (1540-1541)

The first settlements for which there is documentation appeared in all four early accounts of the mid-sixteenth-century De Soto expedition. Variously written in those sources as either Chicaza or Chicaça and as Chicaçilla, those village labels merely styled two towns with the name of the "province" itself (Clayton et al. 1993: I: 501). The Spanish designated the whole domain that they reached in December 1540 as the *provincia de Chicaza,* Chickasaw Province, and they located the *cacique* in the principal town they also called Chicaza. After being almost fatally routed by their reluctant hosts at the main settlement in March 1541, the Spaniards took up a brief residence to convalesce, repair their arms and re-group at some distance in another village that they called Chicaçilla, "Little Chickasaw," before moving on to the northwest and out of immediate Chickasaw sight if not out of mind.[3]

The Coronelli Sketch (ca. 1684)

Nearly 150 years would pass before the same northern Mississippi area and the towns occupied there by the Chickasaw would appear in the written record again. The first such document dates from about 1684, and it is a preliminary sketch for a map of the Mississippi valley done by Italian cartographer Vincenzo Maria Coronelli for the French crown (McCorkle 1985: 49). His drawing is remarkable in that it was produced some two years after the La Salle expedition, and the information it contains must have come ultimately from the Chickasaw men encountered by the French and their Algonquian traveling companions at or near the Chickasaw Bluffs in 1682. Members of the French party had gone in search of their missing gunsmith, Pierre Prud'homme, when they came upon some Chickasaws in the woods. Two of them were detained by the French, and from one or both of them over the next few days the French learned not only the name of the tribe to which they belonged, but the names of their tribal settlements as well (Minet 1987: 45; Stubbs 1987: 42-44).

Coronelli reports –in French– that the Chickasaws "ont 8. villages" (have 8 towns) and he then enumerates them in the following order: 1er *Fabatchaoux*, 2me *Malata*, 3me *Aehebophoni*, 4me *Totchinaske*, 5me *Chichafalava*, 6me *Ontcha patafa*, 7me *Pakaha*, 8me *Chikoualika* (McCorkle 1985: 48).

It is not known for certain whether this list was meant to indicate actual village prominence or if it simply showed the order in which the towns came to mind. In any case, we can easily recognize Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 8 from later records as *Foli' Cha'a'*, *Aamalaata'*, *Chokka' Falaa'* or *Chisha' Talla'a'* (or both co-mingled) and *Chokkilissa'*, respectively. Years later, *Chokkilissa'* and *Chokka' Falaa'* would be regarded as the most populous and the most politically influential of the Chickasaw towns, yet if Coronelli's list in fact did imply a ranking, it may indicate that *Foli' Cha'a'* was already a seat of some political importance even at that very early date. Another possibility, of course, is that the Chickasaw detainees were actually from *Foli' Cha'a'* and that their home town therefore merely received first mention. Of the remaining towns, Nos. 3, 4, 6 and 7 seem to have been mishearings, although the word *foni'* ("bones") is visible in No. 3 and *onchaba* ("hill") appears to be partially disguised in No. 6. The discernible names will be discussed in detail in the following section.

The Iberville Census (1702)

In March 1702, the governor of newly-established French Louisiana, Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, invited head men of the Chickasaws to Mobile for a conference to discuss proposed political and trade alliances and to receive presents. Three Chickasaw chiefs and four distinguished men attended, and while they were there, d'Iberville requested information from them regarding their settlements (d'Iberville 1981: 171, 174). The result was an astonishing list of eighteen villages, each one with its number of dwellings specified, for a grand total of 588 Chickasaw cabins. *That manuscript list,* subsequently copied by the cartographer Claude Delisle, was published in 1922 by Baron Marc de Villiers in the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* and reprinted by John R. Swanton in his 1928 study of the Chickasaws for the Bureau of American Ethnology (Villiers 1922:139; Swanton 1928: 212). All of those towns are listed below in the order of their original French transcription, followed by a modernized Chickasaw spelling and my interpretation of what was meant by the names. Incidentally, Villiers complained in passing of Delisle's handwriting in the documents he transcribed (Villiers 1922: 138 note 1), and Delisle himself may have had some difficulty deciphering d'Iberville's (or his secretary's) script in certain instances. A case in point is the second community listed below as *Ayarraca*. Chickasaw is a language that notoriously has no "r" and the French by that time already knew perfectly well that it had no such sound (d'Iberville 1981: 8; Du Pratz 1975: 313 [1774]). I believe that the name should rightly be spelled *Ayanaca* and that d'Iberville's cursive "n" was misread by Delisle as a double "r." If I am correct, then the more accurate *Ayanaca* will have been identical to the *Ayanaqua* mentioned in the anonymous 1755 French memoir discussed below and to the *Yaneka* mentioned by James Adair in his 1775 *History of the American Indians,* also to be examined in due course.

The number eighteen far exceeds the totals of subsequently recorded Chickasaw villages whether from French, English or later American sources. We must assume, therefore, either a mishearing on the part of those who copied the information, an exaggeration by the visiting Chickasaws in order to impress their French hosts or the possibility that numerous small settlements actually comprised the larger and better known ones.[4] This issue cannot be resolved here, but the last notion is certainly an intriguing one and may find its proof in future archaeological

investigations. From d'Iberville's list then:

Apile faplimengo. Its modern spelling would be *Apilifappoli' Minko'.* This is obviously a misunderstanding on d'Iberville's part. It is not a place name but a personal one, and the early Chickasaws did not name their settlements after people. It means "chief who conjures help [for him/for someone]," from an assumed obsolete verb *fappoli* (nowadays *fappo*), to conjure, charm or cast a spell.

Ayarraca. As stated above, this surely represents de Villier's perpetuation of Delisle's own mistake in copying d'Iberville's transcription. The 1702 original must have been *Ayanaca,* the place later called *Yaneka* by James Adair. If it were a current Chickasaw word, we would write it *Aayaniki'* today. I assume it to have come from an obsolete verb *yaniki* or *yiniki,* related to contemporary Mississippi Choctaw *yi"yiki* and to the obsolete *yunyuki,* meaning to be crooked, twisted, winding, zig-zag.[5] The sense of *Aayanaki'* is that of a "crooked, winding place," and the town was originally located on a stream once known as *Aayaniki' Okhina',* that is, "*Aayaniki'* River."[6] Many years later, in a 1772 description of his map of West Florida, Bernard Romans mentioned a stream called *Yaneka* as one of the principal northern tributaries of the Tombigbee (Phillips 1975: 120 [1924]). James Atkinson (2004: 140) notes a late and surprising mention of what seems to be the reborn village of *Aayaniki',* here spelled *Yanacha,* in a 1793 report written to Spanish Governor Carondolet. The stream name appeared on a number of subsequent Mississippi maps as Yanneker or Yannaker Creek and even as Unaker on one of them. Many years later H. S. Halbert referred to a small Choctaw hamlet called Yaneka immediately north of the major town of *Imoklasha* in present-day Neshoba County. What was being described in both the Chickasaw and the Choctaw contexts was a twisting, zig-zag feature of the landscape, whether that of a ridge or of a stream.[7]

Tolatchao. This is Coronelli's *Fabatchaoux,* a name later written as both *Falatchao* and *Falatché* in French, as *Hollachatroe* in 1708 by Thomas Nairne and as *Phalacheho* by James Adair in 1775. The older Chickasaw spelling is assumed to have been *Foli' Cha'a',* literally "chopped-off switches." I believe the name refers to the cut saplings used in the construction of Chickasaw buildings, namely in the woven latticework known as wattle (Adair 1930: 449-451 [1775]), and "wattle" is one of the older meanings of *fuli* in Choctaw. *Foli'* is obsolete in modern Chickasaw although *fuli* is a current term for switch

in Choctaw. Furthermore, *foli'* is a word that will be of additional interest to historians and anthropologists in the phrase *foli' kawa',* "broken sticks/twigs." These were the bundles used by both Chickasaws and Choctaws at least into the late 1820s as one of their impromptu calendars to appoint meetings. A stick from the bundle was discarded daily until the morning of the last discard, and upon the evening of that day meetings were held at a pre-arranged location (Byington 2001: s. v. *fuli kaua;* McKenney 1973: 164 [1846]; Cushman 1999: 451-452 [1899]; Swanton 1928: 246). Long after the village of *Foli' Cha'a'* had ceased to exist, its name was preserved in that of a creek. U. S. agent to the Chickasaw G. W. Long located the settlement of "Chesafuliah" [sic, *Chisha' Talla'a'*] on "Flatchaaho creek, a branch of the Yannnuby" (Jennings 1947: 60).

Tascaouilo. This town name recurs throughout the eighteenth-century record in both French and English. It is an interesting case of almost universal misspelling because of the widespread European familiarity with the word "tasca" (i.e., *tashka'*) meaning "warrior" in both Chickasaw and Choctaw. So recognizable was *tashka'* that it was obviously assumed to be the first element in this town's name by those who recorded it, although it manifestly is not. The full name of the village is *Itti' okaahilowa'* or *Ittokaahilowa',* literally meaning "ravine-tree" or "gully-tree."[8] It refers to what is variously known in English as ironwood, American hornbeam, musclewood or yokewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*). That the tree prefers moist stream banks and swampy areas helps to explain its name in Chickasaw. In rapid, contracted speech, *Itti' okaahilowa'* sounds like a single word, *Tokaahilowa',* which no doubt accounts for Europeans hearing the familiar "tasca" (*tashka'*) where *tokaa* was being pronounced. Incidentally, the tree called *tokaahilowa'* can easily be confused with the much more frequently mentioned *iyanabi',* because both trees are indiscriminately called "ironwood" in English due to the density and hardness of their woods. *Iyanabi' (Ostrya virginiana)* is also known as hop-hornbeam, leverwood or deerwood, among its other common names.[9] There was once a Choctaw settlement near present-day De Kalb called *Yanobe* or *Ayanabe,* and there is still a Yanubbee Creek in Kemper County and a Yonaba Creek north of Tupelo, all of which derive from the name of the tree known as *iyanabi'* (Rowland and Sanders 1927 I:26 note 3). As for *Tokaahilowa',* we have a serendipitous confirmation of its meaning from the perspective of another language. In his map of the Chickasaw villages in the area of present-day Tupelo, French military

engineer Victor Collot identified one of those settlements as *Carmes*, and *carmes* is the old-fashioned spelling of modern French *charmes*, hornbeam trees.[10]

Chatata. This is *Chisha' Talla'a'*, translated as Post Oak Grove and spelled variously in English as *Shatala, Shatara, Chatelaw*, etc. *Chisha'* (in some dialects *tisha'*) is "post oak" and *talla'a'* is that which stands, in this case a copse or grove of trees. In rapid speech the first syllable of *chisha'* tends to disappear, which accounts for its being occasionally heard as *Shatala'* (Halbert 1914-1915: 93-94; Munro 1994: s. v. *chisha'*). Bernard Romans referred to this place as Coppertown, and others did as well, because it was thought either to have been formerly situated on a stream actually called "Copper Creek" or to have been named after some unknown decorative copper object (Romans 1961: 42 [1775]; Swanton 1928: 213).[11] It is more likely that there never was a "Copper Creek," certainly not so called in Chickasaw and never officially in English either. Because the stream called by the English Chawapa, Chiwapa or Chowapa misshearings or misspellings of *chamapa',*" noisy") would have meant nothing to the early Charleston traders in the area, I am convinced that those same visitors substituted for Chawapa Creek's native name a familiar English one whose pronunciation was vaguely similar: "Copper." "Coppertown" will thus have become an alternate designation for "Chawapa Town" (i.e., *Chisha' Talla'a'*, Post Oak Grove), once sited upon the creek of the same name. "Coppertown" will therefore never have been a location whose eponymous creek or metal adornments had inexplicably gone missing. Rather I believe the memory of its former situation on the "Chawapa" lingered on in its designation as Coppertown from the time of the first visits of the Carolina traders.[12] There are many instances of this sort of linguistic substitution, but perhaps one more will suffice to make my point. There is a small stream or branch in southeastern Choctaw County, Alabama, which was called by the Choctaws *Issi Waiya* –the "Crouching Deer"— and pronounced *Si Waiya* by them in rapid speech. It was subsequently and comically rendered into English as the "Sea Warrior" strictly on the basis of the way it sounded, and so it continues to this day (Hamilton 1910: 283 note 3; Read 1984: 57).

Gouytola. This is the one possible exception to my earlier assertion that there were no lyrical Chickasaw town names, although the pattern of this one is unique. All the settlement names in the record are nouns or noun phrases, while this one is a complete sentence: *Kowi'at ola'*, "the

panther sings." This, however, is the only time such a name is mentioned, and I believe it to be an error.

Tanyachilca. This resembles *Tanchaachilokka'*, a place where corn is shelled. Or perhaps it may be *Ithanachika'*, an influential teacher, although the latter meaning contradicts the practice of not naming places for people.

Ayéheguiya. This is the first known European notice of the town that was to be forever after associated with French military defeat, the one commonly spelled Ackia. Its Chickasaw orthography is *Aahikki'ya'*, and its meaning is "standing place, footing, foothold, vantage" or "outlook," and it may have designated the site as a sentinel post.

Thouquoa fola. This is *Chokka' Falaa'*, Long Town, one of the most important and continuously occupied of the Chickasaw settlements and the residence for many years of one of the most notable of the late eighteenth-century Chickasaw leaders, Piomingo (Gibson 1971: 6; Calloway 1995: 213).

Onthaba atchosa. This may also have been a mishearing insofar as no such town is again mentioned. It appears to be *Onchaba hachoshi'*, "Hill Stream," and the last element is the diminutive form of the now-obsolete (in Chickasaw) *hacha*, "river." There is a clear echo here of village No. 6 on Coronelli's early sketch, the one he listed as *Ontcha patafa* and which looks remotely (and mysteriously) like "mountain laid open." Compare it with Yocona (*Yaakni'*) Creek, a shortened form of its original name, *Yaakni' Patafa'*, or with William Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County, both of them meaning "plowed ground."

Thanbolo. This seems to be *Champoli(')*, "Sweet(ness)." Except for another entry below in this same list where "sweet" more logically modifies "water" and which it seems here to duplicate as a fragment, the term never appears again.

Sebafone. This one recalls Coronelli's No. 3, *Aehebophoni*. Although the Coronelli name seems to contain the word *foni'*, "bones," it is otherwise undecipherable. d'Iberville's term, however, resembles *Soba' foni'*, a shortened form of *issoba' foni'*, meaning "horse bones." This name also fails to reappear in the record.

Thoucaliga. Villiers brackets the word *Thuscawillas* after this entry to indicate that he thought it was identical to *Tokaahilowa'*, discussed above (Villiers 1922: 139). However, every time d'Iberville writes initial "th" in this name list, he intends "ch." (See *Thouquoa fola* and *Thanbolo* above.) *Thoucaliga* must therefore have been *Chokkilissa'*. In this context the

name literally means "deserted dwellings," and it implies a town abandoned but in this case obviously re-occupied at a later date. *Chokkilissa'* is composed of *chokka'* (dwellings) and *ilissa'* (yielded, relinquished, surrendered, given up). Metaphorically, *chokkilissa'* also means "silent, still, quiet" and –by extension– "peaceful" or "tranquil."

Ayebisto. I believe this to be *Aayopishto',* "Big Wallow." It is a name that never occurs again.

Alaoute. This town appears in Coronelli's list and on every one thereafter until well toward the end of the eighteenth century. Coronelli has it as *Malata,* while Adair calls it *Amalahta.* In his well-known 1775 work Bernard Romans spells it *Melattaw,* and says that it means "hat and feather," although there is certainly nothing in the name that would lead us to believe that either the word "hat" or the word "feather" is to be found there (Romans 1961: 42 [1775]. *Yaalhipa* is "hat" in Chickasaw and an ornamental feather is *yaatala.*). A remote hat-and-feather connotation might conceivably be *Imalaata',* literally meaning "their linings." And this would be plausible only if *alaata'* were an old word for the "cased" (linen-lined) Caroline or Carolina hats that English traders carried for barter or as presents from Charleston to the Chickasaw territory. Although plain and of an otherwise unremarkable black color (they were generally meant for servants), the style is also known as a cavalier hat, and in the trade version they were often decorated with an ostrich feather in order to add to their showiness and appeal.[13] Yet the fact that Coronelli lists such a town already in 1684 argues strongly against this meaning as does the form of the name itself. First of all, English traders seem not to have been among the Chickasaws until the late 1690s (Crane 1981: 45-46; Robinson 1979: 97). Secondly, no other Chickasaw town was called "their" anything, although the form of the possessed noun was common in "house names" (*inchokka' holhchifo,* Swanton 1928: 203-211). It is possible that the origin of this name is a term now obsolete in Chickasaw although it is still current in Choctaw. In its Chickasaw form that word may have been *malaata'* or *malahta',* "lightning" or "brightness." If so, the name of the town in question may have then been *Aamalaata'* or *Aamalahta',* the "place where there was lightning" or a place where lightning had struck or perhaps a bright, glistening spot.

Oucahata. This is *Oka' hata'* or *Okhata',* a large lake or pond. It also means "ocean" but that sense, of course, will not fit this context. It is literally "pale water" or "white water," perhaps from whitecaps on a choppy surface or from sea foam in the case of the ocean. Alternatively, it

may simply describe the water's gray expanse.

Oucthambolo, is "sweetwater," meaning water good for drinking, not brackish. Its Chickasaw form is *Oka' champoli'.*

Chinica. This appears to be an eccentric spelling of what was commonly written *Yaneka* in English, the same as *Aayaniki'* above: a place of twists and turns.

Thomas Nairne (1708)

Captain Thomas Nairne's 1708 *Journalls to the Chickasaws and Talapoosies* is a rich resource for many early Chickasaw customs. Nairne tells us from personal experience as a visitor among them that the Chickasaws had eight villages, yet he only names one in his letters, the one he calls "the Chief whereof," *Hollatchatroe.* He also spells it, with typical eighteenth-century inconsistency, *Hallachehoe* and *Hollatchahoe,* and he refers to it as "the mother-Town" (Nairne 1988: 36, 38). *Foli' Cha̱'a'* was the town meant and, unless the same distinction had been implied in Coronelli's list, this is the first indication of that town's political influence. Nairne's deference toward *Foli' Cha̱'a'* may have forecast growing opposition between French- and later Spanish-leaning towns and those of British and then American allegiances. Such rivalries are documented at least since 1715 (Rowland and Saunders 1932: III: 733; IV: 18, 65; Woods 1980: 47; Calloway 1995: 234-241; Atkinson 2004: 36-37, 74-75).

James Adair (1720)

Although Adair's *History of the American Indians* was published in 1775 and he was among the Chickasaws from the 1740s through the 1760s, his information about the early Chickasaw settlements reaches back to 1720 (Adair 1930: 377-378 [1775]). He names the following towns, all of which we have previously encountered:

Yaneka, which has been identified as Aayaniki', "a winding place."

Shatara is *Chisha' Talla'a',* Post Oak Grove and also familiarly "Coppertown."

Chookheereso is, of course, *Chokkilissa',* deserted or abandoned dwellings.

Hykehah is *Aahikki'ya',* the "outlook."

Tuscawillao is *Tokaahilowa',* "ironwood," with the same inserted "s" that mistakenly identifies *tokaa-* with the unrelated *tashka'.*

Phalacheho is *Foli' Cha'a',* chopped switches.

Chookka Pharáh is *Chokka' Falaa'.* Adair frequently confuses "l" with "r" when writing Chickasaw words, as in *Shatara* and *Chookheereso* above.

The French and Chickasaw Wars (1720-1763)

Serious trouble between the Chickasaws and the French and their native allies began in earnest in 1720. English encouragement of Chickasaw slave-raiding among tribes allied with the French, especially the Choctaws, led to frequent retaliation against the Chickasaws' own towns, as did Chickasaw raids against French shipping on the Mississippi. One of the most damaging attacks came in the winter of 1722 and early 1723. It was this Choctaw raid that is reported to have cost the Chickasaws some 400 warriors and three entire villages and motivated the abandonment of *Aayaniki' (Yaneka),* until then the tribe's southernmost town site. As a consequence the Chickasaws withdrew and re-established their settlements farther to the north and east in order to consolidate their defenses in and near the area of present-day Tupelo (Adair 1930: 377-378; Rowland and Saunders 1932: III: 343; Atkinson 2004: 9-11, 33, 51). The following sources from the period illustrate both the French and the English understanding of the Chickasaw towns and their locations.

The Map of Henri de Poilvillain, Baron de Crenay (1733)

Baron de Crenay commanded the French post at Mobile. He was instrumental, although unsuccessful, in pressuring the Chickasaw to give up the Natchez refugees who, after the massacre of the French at Fort Rosalie, had fled to the Chickasaw for protection. His is a highly detailed map with trading paths and numerous tribal and village locations of clear military and political value. It shows ten Chickasaw villages, but he only names nine of them.

Ongoulastoga is an eccentric spelling of the Choctaw name *Okla Chitoka* which is the Chickasaw principal town of *Chokkilissa'.*

Falatchao is *Foli' Cha'a'.*

Tascaolou is *Tokaahilowa'.*

Tchichatala is *Chisha' Talla'a'.*

Aekeia is *Aahikki'ya'.*

Tchoükaffala is *Chokka' Falaa'*

Apeony is *Api' Ani',* flowering trees or perhaps fruit trees. This is the first mention of such a village, but it will appear subsequently as the site of an English factory or warehouse.

Chocchouma is *Hashshok Homma',* literally red grass and probably little bluestem; also the first mention of such a town.

Tchikouléchasto is the last of the ten. It too is a new name and one that identifies the Natchez refugee community and locates it on the well-protected far northeastern side of the village cluster, a siting that agrees with that of the de Batz map of 1737 discussed below. This name never occurs again, and it is unique as well in that it seems to refer to an event rather than to the location itself. That notable departure in naming convention may be accounted for by the unusual circumstance of the status of the Natchez as asylum-seekers and perhaps by the Chickasaws' own attentiveness to something out of the ordinary about their guests. *Tchikouléchasto* appears to be *Yaachakalichishto',* "coronation," and it may well refer to some ritual act of investiture among the Natchez in the refugee camp after they fled to the Chickasaw. Perhaps it commemorates the ordination of a "master of ceremonies" such as the red-crowned individual mentioned by Le Page du Pratz or even the installation of a much-diminished successor to the Great Sun (Du Pratz 1975: 357, 363 [1774]; Swanton 1946: 509).

Alexandre de Batz (1737)

Returning from a prisoner-exchange mission to the Chickasaws, the Alabama Indian Captain of Pacana sketched the Chickasaw village layout for his people and the French in which he identified eleven of those villages and named all of them except for the refugee camp of the Natchez, whose name Crenay had already mentioned four years earlier (Villiers 1921: 7-9, planche I). De Batz will have copied that preliminary native sketch, providing us with the names that follow:

Ogoula Tchetoka. As discussed earlier, this is Choctaw, not Chickasaw. Recall that it means "principal town," but that the Chickasaws called the same settlement *Chokkilissa'.*

Etoukouma. I had originally taken this to be Hottok Homma', literally "Red Dust" or "Red Powder." Anyone who has had occasion to experience at first hand the subsoil of parts of northern Mississippi would certainly find the name aptly suited to that terrain. But beyond its literal sense, I considered that *Hottok Homma'* may have referred to the pulverized

form of *lokfi' homma'* or *lokfomma',* the powdered red ochre once used as body paint, especially war paint, before it was replaced by European trade vermilion. Byington, however, listed the term *hotuk, hotok,* in his Choctaw dictionary as a mere curiosity, and he identified it as an exclusively Chickasaw word, although he did not provide a meaning for it. That he noticed it at all suggests that some other notion may well have been at work in name of the village of *Hottok Homma'.* And what Byington recorded was, I believe, *hahtak* (also pronounced *hattok* and *halhtok),* the Chickasaw word for the dwarf or upland willow also called red-root or red willow *(Salix humilis var. humilis).* An infusion of this plant's root was and is used medicinally and ceremonially by several southeastern tribes, and it is better known as the *mikko hoyunidjv (m?kko hoyvn?cv)* of the Muskogee Indians. I now think it quite likely that the actual name of the town under consideration was *Hahtok Homma',* and that it referred to this ritually significant plant, the one designated *hakshish homma'* (literally "red root") by Frank G. Speck's Chickasaw informant Shabichi' in the early twentieth century. Whatever the case, the town itself vanished from the record shortly after its initial appearance.[14]

Achoukouma. This is *Hashshok Homma',* literally "Red Grass." Malcolm McGee, the Chickasaws' longtime interpreter, called it "Red Grains," although "grass" may have been misunderstood as "grains" by Lyman Draper who took down McGee's oral information when McGee was quite elderly (McGee 2004: "The Colberts," paragraph 8 [1841]). *Hashshok homma'* very likely refers to little bluestem *(Schizachyrium scoparium),* the dominant native grass in the Mississippi Black Prairie then as now (Peacock and Schauwecker 2003: 2, 108, 247).

Amalata. Previously discussed as *Aamalaata',* a place of lightning or of brightness.

Tascaouilo. This is the already examined *Tokaahilowa',* ironwood. Note the continuing intrusion of an incorrectly assumed "tasca" *(tashka')* in this name.

Tchitchatala. This is one of the major towns of the early Chickasaw, *Chisha' Talla'a',* literally "standing post oaks," commonly called Post Oak Grove. As previously stated, it was also known as Coppertown because it was located on what was erroneously called "Copper" (Chawapa/Chiwapa/Chowapa) Creek.

Falatchao. This is the town already noted as *Foli' Cha'a',* wattle.

Tchoukafa. This is *Chokka' Falaa',* Long Town.

Apeony. This is *Api' Ani',* "flowering trees" or "blooming trees."

According to the legend accompanying Ignace François Broutin's map of the Battle of Ackia included in Peter J. Hamilton's *Colonial Mobile* (1910: xvii), *Api' Ani'* was a village in which the British had established a storehouse for their trade goods: "Fort Apeony òu les Anglois ont un Magazin" (Atkinson 2004: 54, 57, 60).

Ækya. This is *Aahikki'ya',* "vantage point" or "outlook," most commonly written as Ackia, where the famous French defeat took place in 1736.

Les Natchez. This is how de Batz refers to the Natchez refugee village depicted on his map. As we have seen immediately above, Crenay calls the refugee community *Tchikouléchasto.* According to a briefing of Bienville by Pierre-Laurent Ducoder, a captured French officer held for ransom by the Chickasaw, the Natchez actually occupied two separate villages in the Chickasaw territory, a small, unfortified one in the center of the clustered towns and another fortified village on the northeastern side of the Chickasaw settlement area. The fortified one was said to be comprised of no more than thirty cabins (Rowland and Sanders 1927: I: 288).[15]

Anonymous French Memoir (1755)

This list, held in manuscript at the Newberry Library in Chicago and reprinted in Swanton, follows the pattern we have already seen, but it has some spelling variations worth noting and three previously unmentioned locations (Swanton 1928: 212).

Ayanaqua. This particular spelling helps to confirm the likely validity of the already proposed and discussed *Aayaniki' (Yaneka).*

Æcquina, an unusual version of *Aahikki'ya' (Ackia).*

Tasca oullou is *Tokaahilowa'* with the customary *tasca* error.

Falatché is *Foli' Cha'a'.*

Coucqua fala is *Chokka' Falaa'.*

Apeonné is the British traders' warehouse site of *Api' Ani'.*

Achouque ouma is *Hashshok Homma'.*

Goulatchitou has dropped an initial syllable; it is the Choctaw *Okla Chito* (Big Town) listed here in error as a separate settlement.

Outanquatle appears to be a distorted version of *Okhata'* (lake), a name not seen since d'Iberville's 1702 list.

Coüi loussa is *Kowi' Losa',* sable cat. Its sable or dark coloring describes the southern "panther" or puma. This village name never surfaces again in the documentation.

Bernard Romans (1775)

In *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida,* previously cited, Bernard Romans voices an undisguised disdain for the Chickasaws, although he does list their by-then seven towns and he is at some pains to indicate the meanings of their names (1961: 42 [1775]). In general, his informant or informants are quite accurate in their translations. The first of these, however, seems very much off the mark.

As discussed earlier, Romans glosses *Melattaw* as "hat and feather," leading me to believe that his informant did not know the obsolete meaning of *Aamalaata'* as a place of lightning.

Chatelaw (Chisha'Talla'a') he calls "copper town," for its location on a so-called "Copper" Creek, although as we have seen, the creek in question was the Chawapa (from the Chickasaw verb *chamapa,* "to clink or bang things together").

Chukafalaya is the Choctaw spelling of *Chokka' Falaa'.*

Hikihaw is *Aahikki'ya'* which Romans calls "stand still."

Chucalissa is clearly *Chokkilissa'* although Romans has it as "great town," a translation of the Choctaw *Okla Chitoka.*

Tuckahaw demonstrates that Romans heard the first part of the word correctly as the colloquial *Tokaahilowa',* ironwood. He translates it as "a certain weed," but we can forgive him (or his interpreter) the error.

Ashuck hooma he renders accurately as "red grass," which is the literal meaning of Chickasaw *Hashshok Homma'* and which may refer to little bluestem or perhaps to Indian grass.

Joseph Purcell (1770)

Purcell's map is meant to demonstrate visually the extent of British trading influence among the southeastern tribes along with the locations of those tribes and the trails that lead to them. He locates and identifies the following settlements:

Chicalaia Opays Matahaw T[own]. This is a combination of *Chokkilissa'* and the name of chief Hopayi' Imalhtaha'.

Hickihaw is *Aahikki'ya.*

Chukasalaya is *Chokka' Falaa'.*

Chatclaw is *Chisha'Talla'a'.*

Mellataw is *Aamalaata'.*

Tuckewillow is *Tokaahilowa'.*

Ashuck Hooma is *Hashshok Homma'.*

Purcell identifies four other sites, all in English: *McGillwray* [sic] *and*

Strather's Plantation, Opay Mattahaw's Plantation, Commissary McIntosh's Plantation and *Rubby's Hog Craul. Opay Mattahaw's Plantation* is shown at the location of *Chokkilissa'* or *Old Town* and Purcell locates *Commissary McIntosh's Plantation* north of *Tockshish,* which will be discussed below. *Rubby's Hog Craul* is a wonderful name, and Atkinson (2004: 92-93) identifies "Rubby" and various other plantation owners who appear on this map and the map of Captain Charles Roberts (Atkinson, 2004: 92, 330). A "hog craul" is a pigpen, "craul/crawl" being perhaps more easily recognized by most modern readers in its cognate form "corral."

Major John Doughty (1790)

Major Doughty was sent by Henry Knox, secretary of war under President George Washington, on a mission of peace and trade to the Indians south of the Ohio. At the same time, he was to ascertain information of a military nature with respect to the British and Spanish presence in the adjacent areas. His report to Secretary Knox noted that there were "4 towns and 1 village in the Chickasaw Nation," although he names only three of those towns and the village (Storm 1945: 130-131):

Chickaulpoo or *Big Town (Chokkilissa')* was the residence of the man Doughty called Tuskatukoh (*Tashka' Hitoka'*), widely known as the Hair Lip King although his name means the Ballfield Warrior.

Chickarallai or *Long Town (Chokka' Falaa')* was located four miles to the southeast of *Chokkilissa'.*

Chettalai (Chisha'Talla'a') was situated eight miles south and a little to the west of *Chokka' Falaa'.*

Tuscatville (Tokaahilowa') was the "village," so designated because it had no chief; located six miles to the southwest of *Chisha'Talla'a'.*

Victor Collot (1796)

Brigadier General Victor Collot was an English-speaking French engineer, military officer and secret agent. He mapped the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers and their adjacent areas on a covert mission to safeguard French interests there during the period of Spanish possession at the time that Spain, Great Britain, the United States and France were all vying for control of the west. As indicated above, John R. Swanton included Collot's map in his *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their*

Neighbors. Collot maps the villages below, from north to south, although he never set foot in those places, and he informs us that he got his information regarding the Mobile River –and presumably the watercourses north of it– from "an officer who resided several years in the town of that name" (Collot 1924: II: 108 [1824]). In fact, a Chickasaw assassination team was dispatched from Illinois to follow his mapping party down the Mississippi in an attempt to eliminate Collot and the threat he posed to the designs of Great Britain or the early United States or both. Collot escaped the attempt on his life, but his traveling and map-making companion, Joseph Warin, was not so lucky (Collot 1924: I: 223; II: 7-8, 16, 26-28, 99; Kyte 1947: 438-439). A curious thing about Collot's "Chickasaw" map is that it was widely reproduced by other map-makers for a number of years thereafter with the repetition of the same designations, spelling errors, etc. (Lewis, *Mississippi Territory,* 1804; Carey, *Mississippi Territory,* 1813; Shallus, *The State of Mississippi and Alabama Territory,* 1817).

Half Breed Settlement. This site is identified in English and is near the headwaters of what Collot calls Town River (i.e., Town Creek). Collot gives no Chickasaw name for it –nor was one ever given afterwards. Since the houses there are depicted as widely scattered, no true or proper village may have actually existed, although Atkinson considers its likely inhabitants in some detail (2004: 23, 117, 142).

Carmes is shown immediately south of the previous settlement on "Town River." This village is labeled in French with the old-fashioned spelling of hornbeam or ironwood trees. It may well have been the location of *Tokaahilowa',* since that is what the Chickasaw word means as well. That its name is given in French suggests that Collot's informant must have been a French officer familiar with the Chickasaw territory.

Great Village of the Chickasaws is how Collot labels the next settlement to the south on the same creek. This one is shown as densely populated on the map, and it corresponds to *Chokkilissa'.*

Long Town is how Collot depicts *Chokka' Falaa',* and he shows it due south of *Chokkilissa'.*

Two additional sites are shown to the south of *Long Town,* and they are *McGullaters* and *Colbert,* no doubt plantations rather than settlements.

Copper Town. This village *(Chisha' Talla'a')* is shown northwest of *McGullaters* and *Colbert,* just above the point at which Conewah Creek enters "Town River," although the stream called Conewah is not named on Collot's map.

Salle Bernaby Village. This settlement is shown even farther up Conewah Creek, northwest of *Copper Town.* It is an odd name that appears to be French at first glance and yet seems upon reflection to be a misspelled echo of the river shown south of *Copper Town* and south-southwest of *McGullaters* and identified as Salabenaly R. This is no doubt the Talabinela or Tala Binela (i.e., *Tali' aabinniili',* literally a "place where stone rests"). In this context it means a stone outcropping that obstructs boat travel (McGee 2004: "Indian Names" [1841]). It is a settlement which appears prominently on several subsequent maps, although Collot's seems to be the first mention of the existence of an actual community by this name.[16] The stream itself appears more than twenty-five years earlier on the previously mentioned 1770 map of Joseph Purcell where it is spelled Talla Bunula. Beyond the headwaters of the "Salabenaly" River on Collot's map there is location marked *Old Chickasaw Town* which appears to identify the site of *Pontotoc.*[17]

The Reverend Joseph Bullen (1799-1803)

Joseph Bullen was a Presbyterian missionary to the Chickasaws at the turn of the nineteenth century. His brief stay in the progressively thinning villages provides us with a clear sense of the profound social change at work among the Chickasaws in the decades immediately prior to removal (Phelps 1955: 254-281). Bullen and his young son arrived at *Big Town (Chokkilissa')* on May 20, 1799, a settlement of 200 houses. Four or five miles to the south, they also stopped at *Long Town (Chokka' Falaa').* A few days later, the Bullens visited John McIntosh in his residence at *Tockshish,* although Bullen did not mention that town by name. During the time of his stay, Bullen cultivated the friendship of the Chickasaws' long-time interpreter Malcolm McGee, of McIntosh, of several of the Colberts and of Wolf's Friend whom Bullen called "head man of this nation." By July 1800, Bullen had proposed to James Colbert visits to the "several towns" (none of them named) to hold talks of a religious nature. On July 17, Bullen reported that his son had opened a school in *Pontetok,* i.e., *Pontotoc,* where Wolf's Friend lived. This village was later to become the location of the Chickasaw national council house, some seven miles southeast of the present site of Pontotoc, in the community of Plymouth (Phelps 1952: 170-176). Its name now and at the time of Bullen's journal was an English-speakers' corruption of *Panki' Tákka'li',* hanging grapes, a name it had received from that of a nearby creek. According to Malcolm

McGee, the Chickasaws resisted the distorted Americanization of that name for many years, but they were obviously unsuccessful (McGee 2004: "Religious Ideas," paragraph 12 [1841]); so much so that the earlier objectionable form *Pontotoc* was eventually taken to Oklahoma after removal and applied to a new Chickasaw settlement in Indian Territory. Since then some have attempted to trace *Pontotoc* to *panti' oktaak*, cattail prairie, but that etymology seems inappropriate both for the natural setting where *Panki' Tákka'li'* was originally located and for the creek after which it was named. It also fails to credit the perfectly reliable testimony of eyewitnesses and area residents like Malcolm McGee.

Bullen's diary contains many references to houses of individuals in the Chickasaw domain and makes clear that the clustered residential character of *Big Town* and *Long Town* was coming to an end. Whereas these earlier, strictly residential settlements were known in Chickasaw as *okla,* another sort of town was rising to prominence and would be represented in the future by both *Pontotoc* and *Tokshish*. These were *aachompa',* commercial towns, literally "places for buying." Originally applied to colonial factories or trading posts, the term *aachompa'* came to represent any kind of commercial location, including related housing, where people went to buy goods, to conduct official transactions and, eventually, to reside.

Dr. Rush Nutt (1805)

Virginia physician and traveler Rushworth Nutt began a walking tour along the Natchez Trail in July 1805 and by early August was in the Chickasaw homeland. His journal entries confirm what we already know of the names and locations of the traditional towns, but his most significant contributions are his additions to that list and his observations about profoundly changed patterns of residence (Jennings 1947: 34-61). He indicates, for instance, that a tiny new village of six cabins also called *Chu,guil,la,so (Chokkilissa')* was in existence at the southern edge of the territory and was occupied by both Chickasaws and Choctaws. Nine miles to the north was *E,tock,shish (Itti' Hakshish),* the residence of former British colonial agent John McIntosh, resident among the Chickasaws since 1770. *Itti' hakshish,* pronounced *takshish,* are what used to be called "grubs" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Grubs were the persistent nuisance roots scattered throughout cultivated fields after the trees had been removed. One of the farmer's recurring

chores was to clear those obstacles after plowing and harrowing until the field was finally free of them. The word still remains in the active rural vocabulary as a verb: one "grubs out" a fence row by clearing it of the volunteer saplings that spring up where mowing machines cannot reach.

Nutt stated that the Chickasaw nation was divided into four districts: *Pontatock, Ches,ha,ta,lia, Chuc,an,fa,li,ah (or Long Town),* and *Big-town (Chugalisa).* Even with Nutt's preference for spelling syllabically, one can easily recognize towns we have already discussed. What is significant is his observation that not more than eight families remain in or near the village *[of Pontotoc];* that only two families remain in *Chisha'Talla'a';* that all the families have left *Chokka' Falaa';* and that in *Chokkilissa',* formerly the primary residence of the whole nation, only eight or ten families are still left. Nearly all the people have "settled out;" i.e., left to establish independent farms throughout the territory. This practice had occasioned the creation of a few new villages. One of those was *Oak,tock,o,pul,lo (Oktaak oppolo')* meaning "dismal prairie" and shortened today to *Toccopola.*[18] Beyond that village and further to the northwest on the way to the Chickasaw Bluffs was the settlement of the Pigeon Roost *(Pachaanosi'),* one of the best-known landmarks then and many years later on the road from Memphis to the southeast. Lastly, Nutt mentions the village of *Hol,ka,* today spelled *Houlka.* I believe this to be *Holloka'* and that the term *holloka'* named a "sacred object" in Chickasaw as it did in Choctaw. *Holloka',* or perhaps *Aaholloka'* for the location of such an object, may have derived from the Thelma Mounds area or from relics formerly visible at the site of the old village (Adair 1930: 60; Jennings 1947: 52; Atkinson 2004: 187).

Maps of Samuel Lewis (1804) and Matthew Carey (1814) and Two Post-Removal Villages

Samuel Lewis's *Mississippi Territory* and Matthew Carey's map of the same name faithfully copy that of Victor Collot of 1796 with a single exception. Where Collot indicates *Old Chickasaw Town* at the approximate location of *Pontotoc,* Lewis and Carey both show a town called *Choklomber* and *Choctumber,* respectively, on a creek of the same name. The name is somewhat distorted but seems to represent *Chokkaachompa',* a store building, stand or other commercial establishment. This location does not appear in subsequent records.

Of passing interest are two final homeland locations that first

appeared on Frank A. Gray, *Gray's New Map of Mississippi* (1878) and were still in evidence on George F. Cram's *Mississippi* (1898). The two settlements are *Chiwapa and Coonewar,* both named for the respective creeks upon which they were sited. As previously indicated, *Chawapa' (i.e., Chamapa')* signifies a clinking noise. *Coonewar* is, I believe, *Kani' aawaa',* "where the young cane ripens."[19] *Chiwapa* was located south of the tiny community of Plymouth below *Pontotoc,* and *Coonewar* was southwest of Tupelo on the Lee-Pontotoc County line. Because of the lateness of the appearance of these two villages, it is not possible to verify their existence as actual Chickasaw settlements prior to removal, and they may well have merely been commemorations of those departed native residents.

Map of Henry M. Lusher (1835)

Lusher's *Map of the Lands in Mississippi Ceded by the Chickasaws to the United States in 1832 and 1834* shows the now-familiar central towns of *Pontotoc, Tokshish* and *Olocopotoo (Oktaak oppolo')* as well as a new village toward the southern edge of newly-formed Marshall County: *Chula Homa (Chola Homma'),* red fox. On Lusher's map the traditional towns on the east have disappeared altogether, and the only notations along the eastern edge of the former Chickasaw territory refer to a few Colbert plantations and to the Tombigbee River settlements of Columbus, nearby Plymouth and, further north, Cotton Gin Point [sic].

Outlying Villages

It remains still to mention the four or five known Chickasaw locations outside those of the main settlements in northern Mississippi. At the bluffs where today's Memphis now stands, the Chickasaws kept regular outposts from the earliest times for guarding their rear flank and otherwise detecting movements of interest to them on the Mississippi. While no name is known for those outposts, what we do know is that the Chickasaws referred to the overlook there as *Sakti Lhafa',* the scored bluff (from the running water that had corrugated the steep bank as seen from the river). We also know that the Chickasaw name for the Mississippi River was taken from that same bluff, *Sakti Lhafa' Okhina',* the "scored bluff waterway" (Gatschet 1994: 41 [1889]; Swanton 1928: 178). It is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that the lookout village located there will have had the same name as the bluff itself.

Early maps and accounts show one or more Chickasaw settlements on the north side of the Tennessee River in today's Alabama, and that location was styled *Okla Sipokni',* (Old Town[s]) in an 1881 document by Chickasaw tribal governor Cyrus Harris (Delisle 1962 [1703]; Swanton 1928: 176-177; Warren 1904: 547).

A third location was originally in South Carolina just east of the Savannah River near Fort Moore. As a result of the destruction of three of their villages by the Choctaws and the death of some 400 warriors in 1722-1723, eighty Chickasaws settled on 21,774 acres in the fall of 1723 along Horse Creek and in 1739 the entire tract was officially deeded to them (Milling 1940: 191; Woods 1980: 85). If the pattern of Chickasaw naming held true for that location, then it may well have been called *Issobabookoshi',* a literal translation of Horse Creek. Between 1756 and 1758, in land dealings with Lachlan McGillivray and others, the Chickasaws exchanged most of their large Carolina holdings for two 500-acre plots, one of them still in South Carolina and another in Georgia (McDowell 1970: 476; Cashin 1992: 179-183). Many moved to near New Savannah at a location twelve miles from Fort Augusta. There they built a palisaded town, although its name is not known (Milling 1940: 198-199; McDowell 1970: 189). About 1776, the band returned to the homeland in northern Mississippi, and although the Chickasaws subsequently filed repeated claims for ownership to the South Carolina property, their petitions were denied and the land reverted to the state (Malone 1922: 353; Milling 1940: 200-201).

Between 1737 and 1743, a band of between sixty and one-hundred Chickasaw mixed bloods and Natchez refugees established a village that James Adair identified as *Ooe-Asah,* a native name for what was called by whites the Breed Camp, but also spelled Bread Camp in the old South Carolina Indian fur trade journals (Adair 1930: 343; Milling 1940: 192; Atkin 1954: 64 [1755]; Alden 1944: 11; McDowell 1970: Index, s. v. "Bread Camp"). Known later as Breedstown or Breedtown, it was located in the Upper Muskogee territory on Talladega Creek near its confluence with the Coosa River. It is shown on both French and English maps as early as 1755 (Mitchell 1755; d'Anville 1755; Bonar 1757). There are two principal sites proposed for *Ooe-Asah's* location, one of them just north of Chandler Springs in Talladega County, Alabama, and another at the conjunction of Talledega Creek and Hudson Branch in the same county.[20] Either place would certainly suffice given the apparent meaning of the name, *Hoyya'*

aa-asha', "the place where there are seeps." Seeps are an oozing or soddenness of ground water somewhat less robust than a flowing spring, although there are plenty of springs in the area as well. John LaTourrette's *An Accurate Map of the State of Alabama and West Florida* (1837) actually names five separate springs near Talladega Creek between the Coosa and the creek's headwaters. A. S. Halbert thought *Ooe-Asah* represented *wiha' aa-asha'*, "emigrants are there," but considering Chickasaw fondness for naming settlements after the landscape and not for people, that does not seem at all likely (Swanton 1922: 418, where he spells the name *Ooe-ása*). Besides, as was often stated by those who knew them, Chickasaws were at home wherever they settled, so it is improbable that they would have thought of themselves as strangers in a strange land and then troubled to label a whole town to proclaim their supposed outsider status (Milling 1940: 188; Gibson 1971: 6). And indeed they were not outsiders, since the community had in fact joined the Creek confederacy and its head men regularly attended confederacy councils (Corkran 1967: 159). Duane Champagne (1992: 63) has mentioned the name *Naucee* as an alternate designation for Breed Town but the documentation he cites does not provide a source for the term. *Naucee* looks very much like an attempt to render the name of the Natchez, perhaps in Creek *(Nacce* or *Nahce)* or in Chickasaw *(Naachi')*. The latter interpretation seems to be borne out by Gregory Waselkov's 1723 Chickasaw map in *Powhatan's Mantle* (1989: 325-326, keyed notation No. 13, there spelled *Nauchee)*.

Finally, John Swanton stated that the Chickasaw had a settlement in historic times at the mouth of the Tennessee where it enters the Ohio on or near the site of present-day Paducah, Kentucky (Swanton 1952: 179). There were a number of legends regarding the Chickasaw in Paducah where I grew up, and one of them had to do with the name of an original Chickasaw village and Paducah's own eponymous Chickasaw chief on the site (Dyson 1994). To the best of my knowledge the settlement's reputed native name appeared in print only once, and that was in a folk-festival program note by local Paducah author Martha Grassham Purcell (1938: 15). She identified the village as *Apela Chebo* and translated its name as "I will help you."[21] Although Mrs. Purcell was among a group of writers who, much like their mentor H. W. Longfellow, were inclined to romanticize America's native population, there may have been a kernel of truth in the location's alleged name if not a correspondent sentimentality. *Apela Chebo* cannot mean "I will help you," but *Aa-apilachi'* (literally "a

place where there are helpers") may well describe a rear-guard encampment, and considering the frequency of Chickasaw retaliatory raids on the French and their native allies north of the Ohio, *Aa-apilachi'* would certainly have been an appropriate name for eager military backup poised on the escape route home.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. The Reverend Cyrus Byington's dictionary was still a work in progress at the time of his death in 1868. It was edited and published in 1915 by John R. Swanton and Henry S. Halbert as *A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language.* Both Byington's work and Ben Watkins' original *Complete Choctaw Definer* are now available in a single volume published by the Global Bible Society.

2. Patricia Galloway (1982: 153-154), citing the voyage of Henri de Tonti to the Chickasaw in 1702, speculates that very early Chickasaw village sites may have been as far south as Clay County and Stubbs (1987: 45) supports this hypothesis, although James Atkinson disputes it (2004: 10-11 note 15).

3. At least one and perhaps two enduring reminders of the Spanish invaders remained. As a result of that violent encounter, a "Spanish" clan name came into being among the Chickasaws, the Oshpani' iksa'. I have argued elsewhere that a new category of warrior also arose from the same clash, one known thenceforward as soonak abi' the killer of an armored foe, derived from the Spanish word sonaja, understood to be the sound of clanking metal, and adopted as a war title by Choctaws as well as Chickasaws (Dyson, 2002).

4. There exists a Choctaw parallel for the notion of a greater town comprised of numerous smaller ones. Of the settlement Bernard Romans recorded as Haanka Ullah it was noted by H. S. Halbert (1902: 42) that

"[t]he town consisted of numerous hamlets, scattered over the ridge, with corn and vegetable patches and peach and plum orchards intervening." Patricia Galloway also remarks on this strung-out hamlet pattern among the Choctaw (1982: 158). See also Atkinson (2004:44, 93) for *Chokkilissa'* viewed as a large town composed of several settlements.

5. Yinyiki is current in Mississippi Choctaw although not in Oklahoma, according to Roseanna Tubby-Nickie, Director of the Tribal Language Program in Philadelphia, and Dr. Virginia Espinoza of Durant, respectively.

6. This stream appeared in the early English record about 1723. It is identified as keyed notation No. 40 and is spelled Tyannacau Oakhinnau on the Chickasaw deerskin map discussed by Gregory A. Waselkov in "Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast" (1989: 325-327).

7. Halbert, 431-432; maps: Anthony Finley, Mississippi (1824); D. H. Vance and J. H. Young, Map of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, Constructed from the Latest Authorities (1826), in which an Unaker C[reek]. appears due north of Yannaker C[reek].; Henry Schenk Tanner, A New Map of Mississippi (1836); Samuel Augustus Mitchell, A New Map of Mississippi (1847). Although the exact location of the settlement of Yaneka is not known, Mitchell's 1847 map places Yannaker Creek between Hamilton and Aberdeen. Twenty-five years later, State Engineer T. S. Hardee shows the same stream now identified as James Creek: Hardee's Topographic, Historical, and Statistical Official Map of Mississippi (1872). It is also worth noting that the 1723 Chickasaw deerskin map documented in Waselkov, "Indian Maps" (note 6 above) appears to locate Yaniki' Okhina' at or slightly north of what would later come to be called Oktibbeha Creek, the traditional dividing line between Chickasaw and Choctaw territory.

8. Oka' aahilowa' (ravine, gully, ditch, canyon) is literally a place where water thunders or roars. It is also spelled okaahilowa', okaawiloha', okaachilowa' and okaachiloha'. Itti' is the tree that grows in such a place.

9. The distinction between these two kinds of "ironwood" is not made clear in dictionaries of either Chickasaw or Choctaw, but there appears to be corroborating evidence in Cora Sylestine et al. (1993: 545-546). At the entry under ironwood, one finds "eastern hophornbeam, ironwood: ayaanabi."

10. G. H. V. Collot, "The Chickasaw Country in 1796-1800." With regard to subsequent maps, in Samuel Lewis' Mississippi Territory (1804) the town was called Carmies and in Matthew Carey's Mississippi Territory it was referred to as Carmy T.[own], indicating that the word Carme was meaningless to English speakers even though a distorted spelling of it persisted. Carme/charme will be found in Nicot, Thresor de la langue françoise, tant ancienne que moderne: "une sorte d'arbre qu'on apelle Carme, Carpinus." And carme translated as hornbeam or "yoak-tree" (i.e., yoke tree) will be found in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues.*

11. The Chickasaws' long-time interpreter, Malcolm McGee, identified Coppertown Creek with Techatulla Creek (Lyman Draper's spelling): 2004 [1841]: "Chickasaw History according to Malcolm McGee: Chickasaw History Continued" (http://www.flash.net/~kma/mcgee.htm).

12. The importance of the settlement of Chisha' Talla'a' may be properly estimated by the fact that the river that lead to it, the upper Tombigbee, was called Chisha' Talla'a' Okhina' by the Chickasaws. See Waselkov, 1989: 325-327, where that waterway is keyed notation No. 39 and is there spelled Shaterrau Oakhinnau. James Atkinson (2004: 9, 11, 50-51, 91-92, 140) asserts that Yaneka and Chiwapa Creeks are one in the same, but if I am correct in my interpretation of the puzzling "Copper Creek," Yaneka will have been farther to the south than Chiwapa Creek.

13. Cunnington et al. (1960: 38); Wilcox (1945: 125-129); Rowland and Sanders (1927: I: 53-54); Verner W. Crane (1981: 116, 331-332); Martin (1994: 312). The Chickasaws were also fond of "laced" hats, those with gold or silver braid (Milling 1940: 192-193).

14. On the disappearance of the village of Hahtak Homma' see Atkinson (1985: 69). My thanks to Brad Lieb of the Cobb Institute of Archaeology at Mississippi State University, Starkville, for suggesting that my earlier assumption of a "Hottok" Homma' might somehow be related to the curiously red-tinted Oktibbeha pockets or basins occasionally encountered in the Lee County Chickasaw settlement areas (personal communication, 2003). "Red Root," Hakshish homma' appears in Speck (written hákcic húmma), 1907: 56. For the identification of hahtak as red-root/red willow, i.e., Salix humilis var. humilis, see Speck; also Swanton (1928: 266, 268), Howard and Lena (1984: 42-45), Lewis and Jordan (2002: 78-79, 151-153).

15. According to Régis de Roullet, a French officer reporting to Louisiana governor Étienne Périer on March 16, 1731, the Natchez were "at the village of Falatchao" (Rowland et al. 1984: IV: 71). The size of the fortified Natchez village is given in Gayarré, 1885: I: 486. Both village sites have been identified (Atkinson 1985: 61-65).

16. The village of Tallabincla [sic] is shown southeast of Pontotoc at approximately the same distance from Pontotoc as Tokshish on the map of J. H. Coulton, Mississippi (1854). Tallabincla is clearly a copyist's error for Tallabinela. Curiously enough, this same map indicates another village called Benela (Biniili', settlement) on the south side of the Yazoo River a few miles southwest of Houston. In 1855 Coulton revised his map to include the new county of Calhoun, where Benela was then located. This name continued to be shown on maps for the next forty-odd years until George Cram's Mississippi (1898), arguably the last year of its appearance.

17. H. B. Cushman (1999 [1899]: 411) equates Pontotoc with Old Town. However on a number of maps, Old Town appears northeast of Pontotoc at the approximate location of Chokkilissa' and Chokka' Falaa' throughout the 1850s and up until 1876. See, for example, J. H. Colton, Colton's Mississippi (1859) and G. W. Colton, Mississippi (1876). Malcolm McGee refers to Big Town (Chokkilissa') as Old Town on many occasions: "Chickasaw History: Piomingo, paragraphs 1 and 3; The Old French & Indian War; The Creek and Chickasaw War; The Chickasaw History Continued" (2004: http://www.flash.net/~kma/mcgee.htm).

18. Or "mean prairie," as one interpreter would have it: J. F. H. Claiborne quoting J. N. Walton, former secretary to Chief Levi Colbert, cited in Swanton 1985 [1939]: 29.

19. Malcolm McGee translated Conewah as "ripe polecat" from koni' waa' (2004 [1841]: "Chickasaw History: Indian Names," http://www.flash.net/~kma/ mcgee.htm), but I have been unable to verify that the Chickasaw verb waa has ever meant "to be ripe" in the metaphorical and half-jocular sense in which it is used in English to indicate foul-smelling or rank.

20. Harris, 2001: 7, cites Owen's *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* in support of the Chandler Springs site. Smith (2000: 76) seems to favor three locations proximate to Chandler Springs as well. But local Talladega County historians Bettye R. Lessley and Aljerald

Powers endorse the Hudson Branch site (personal communication, 2003). The Creek archaeological site map in Smith (2000: 69, figure 16) locates both of those sites and several others as well on Talladega Creek.

21. "I will help you" is achipilala'chi in Chickasaw.

Identifying and Interpreting Prehistoric Site Structure at site 22GN680: Excavations at a Woodland Period Site in Southeast Mississippi

Rita D. Fields

Abstract

Recent research in Southeastern Mississippi has contributed to our understanding of the prehistory of the region. Additionally, broader behavioral patterns of prehistoric people have begun to take shape. One area that has not been explored by archaeologists is intrasite structure and spatial patterning. Recent excavations at site 22GN680, a small multi-component site in Greene County, MS afforded an opportunity to do so. In this paper observable spatial patterns in the archaeological record are interpreted based on models of site use and development using ethnoarchaeological data.

Introduction

Prehistoric archaeology in south Mississippi has been slow to develop. Historically and until quite recently, this area of Mississippi was viewed as little more than upland pine hills where prehistoric occupation was considered sparse and insignificant (e.g., Larson 1970). This general perception is based on a number of contributing factors. First, archaeological research in south Mississippi has mainly documented small, mostly multi-component, upland ridge sites. Moreover, these sites, by and large, are relatively shallow with little, if any, vertical stratification between cultural components, creating difficulties for the assessment of cultural trends. Lastly, soils in south Mississippi are not conducive to the preservation of organic remains or common residential features (e.g. post molds and storage pits) due to high acidity and leaching.

Because sites in the region generally do not produce an over-abundance of artifactual debris and have only limited domestic feature representation, they were once thought to be insignificant and considered unlikely to yield important information about site structure or function. Within the past decade, however, research at prehistoric sites in south Mississippi coupled with an increased awareness of their archaeological