
Colonists Encroach on the Stanwix Line

In 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War, France surrendered its colonies on the North American mainland and Britain acquired a huge new empire that stretched to the Mississippi. Although many colonists expected that Britain's victory would open the western territory to a land rush, the British government, in an attempt to reduce conflict on the frontier, issued a proclamation to restrict colonial encroachments on Indian land. The Royal Proclamation, as it became known, set the Appalachian Mountains as the boundary of English settlement; west of the mountains was to be an Indian reserve, and Indian lands there could be bought only by the Crown's representatives in formal and open council. But the British government was far from the scene; the proclamation did not stop the loss of Indian lands, and settlers and land speculators clamored for a new boundary.

At the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, the largest Indian treaty in colonial America, British Indian superintendent Sir William Johnson met with some two thousand Iroquois, who agreed that the Ohio River henceforth should constitute the boundary between Indian territory and colonial settlement. In doing so, they ceded to the British a huge amount of land south of the Ohio, land they claimed but did not occupy or control. The Shawnees and other tribes objected that the lands given up so readily by the Iroquois belonged to them. Even the Stanwix line was penetrated as settlers trespassed on Indian lands and threatened to spark renewed hostilities.

John Killbuck, a Delaware chief, described the colonists' encroachment at a meeting in December 1771 between the Delawares, Munsies, and Mahicans and the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

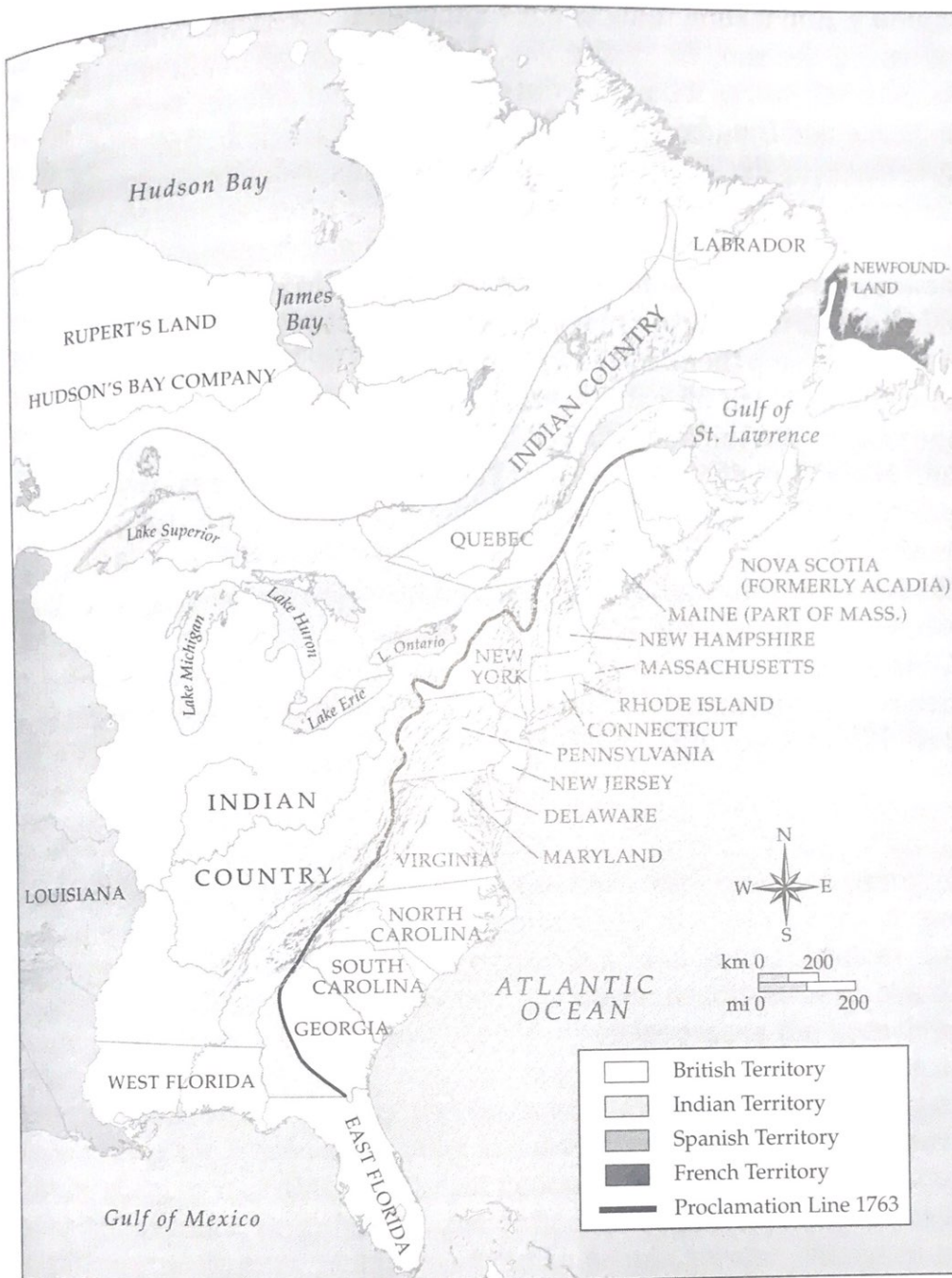
JOHN KILLBUCK

*Speech to the Governors of Pennsylvania,
Maryland, and Virginia**December 4, 1771*

Brethren, in former times our forefathers and yours lived in great friendship together and often met to strengthen the chain of their friendship. As your people grew numerous we made room for them and came over the Great Mountains to Ohio. And some time ago when you were at war with the French your soldiers came into this country, drove the French away and built forts. Soon after a number of your people came over the Great Mountains and settled on our lands. We complained of their encroachments into our country, and, brethren, you either could not or would not remove them. As we did not choose to have any disputes with our brethren, the English, we agreed to make a line and the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix three years ago sold the King all the lands on the east side of the Ohio down to the Cherokee¹ River, which lands were the property of our confederacy, and gave a deed to Sir William Johnson as he desired. Since that time great numbers more of your people have come over the Great Mountains and settled throughout this country. And we are sorry to tell you that several quarrels have happened between your people and ours, in which people have been killed on both sides, and that we now see the nations round us and your people ready to embroil in a quarrel, which gives our nation great concern, as we on our parts want to live in friendship with you, as you have always told us you have laws to govern your people by (but we do not see that you have). Therefore, brethren, unless you can fall upon some method of governing your people who live between the Great Mountains and the Ohio River and who are now very numerous, it will be out of the Indians' power to govern their young men, for we assure you the black clouds begin to gather fast in this

¹The Tennessee River was often referred to as the Cherokee.

United Kingdom National Archives, C.O. 5/ 90:5; also Library of Congress transcript; reprinted in K. G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1977-1981), 3:254-55.



Map 3. *Boundaries between Colonies and Indian Territory, Proclaimed by the English in 1763*

country. And if something is not soon done those clouds will deprive us of seeing the sun. We desire you to give the greatest attention to what we now tell you as it comes from our hearts and a desire we have to live in peace and friendship with our brethren the English. And therefore it grieves us to see some of the nations about us and your people ready to strike each other. We find your people are very fond of our rich land. We see them quarrelling every day about land and burning one another's houses. So that we do not know how soon they may come over the River Ohio and drive us from our villages, nor do we see you brethren take any care to stop them. It's now several years since we have met together in council, which all nations are surprised and concerned at. What is the reason you kindled a fire at Ohio for us to meet you (which we did and talked friendly together) that you have let your fire go out for some years past? This makes all nations jealous about us as we also frequently hear of our brethren the English meeting with Cherokees and with the Six Nations to strengthen their friendship, which gives us cause to think you are forming some bad designs against us who lives between the Ohio and Lakes. I have now told you everything that is in my heart and desire you will write what I have said and send it to the Great King. A belt. Killbuck, speaker.

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In a World of Warfare: Indians and the Wars for Empire

You both tell us to be Christians, you both make us madd we know not what side to choose.

—Iroquois sachem Dekanissore to the governors of Canada and New York, 1701¹

It is plain that you white people are the cause of this war; why do not you and the French fight in the old country, and on the sea? Why do you come to fight on our land? This makes every body believe, you want to take the land from us by force, and settle it.

—Delaware Indians to Christian Frederick Post, 1758²

The contest for North America was not simply a battle between Indians and Europeans. Various European powers—England, France, Spain, Holland, Sweden, and even Russia on the northwest coast—had imperial ambitions on the continent and competed with one another at the same time as they endeavored to establish a hold on the lands of the Indians. By the late seventeenth century, the contest in eastern North America had boiled down to a struggle for empire among the French in Canada and the upper Ohio Valley, the English on the eastern seaboard, and the Spaniards in Florida and the lower Mississippi Valley. Competition among the European nations required that they compete in turn for the allegiance of different Indian nations. Indian nations thus had to pursue diplomatic negotiations with different English colonies as well as different European nations, and Indian people became entangled in European colonial wars fought in North America at the same time as they were fighting to keep their lands clear of European settlers.

¹E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parsons, 1853–1887), 4:893.

²Reuben G. Thwaites, ed. *Early Western Travels* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 1:214–16.

Englishman, although you have conquered the French, you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods and mountains were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none. Your nation supposes that we, like the white people, cannot live without bread—and pork—and beef! But you ought to know that He, the Great Spirit and Master of Life, has provided food for us in these spacious lakes and on these woody mountains.

Englishman, our father, the King of France, employed our young men to make war upon your nation. In this warfare many of them have been killed, and it is our custom to retaliate until such time as the spirits of the slain are satisfied. But the spirits of the slain are to be satisfied in either of two ways; the first is by the spilling of the blood of the nation by which they fell; the other by *covering the bodies of the dead*, and thus allaying the resentment of their relations. This is done by making presents.

Englishman, your king has never sent us any presents, nor entered into any treaty with us, wherefore he and we are still at war; and until he does these things we must consider that we have no other father, nor friend among the white men than the King of France; but for you we have taken into consideration that you have ventured your life among us in the expectation that we should not molest you. You do not come armed with an intention to make war; you come in peace to trade with us and supply us with necessaries of which we are in much want. We shall regard you, therefore, as a brother; and you may sleep tranquilly, without fear of the Chipewa. As a token of our friendship we present you with this pipe to smoke.

Pontiac's War

Indian warfare traditionally combined spiritual as well as military dimensions. Warriors consulted dreams and visions before embarking on expeditions, prepared ritually for conflict, and often went to war to appease the spirits of the dead and assuage the grief of bereaved relatives. Not surprisingly, resistance to white expansion sometimes combined spiritual and moral revival with political and military opposition as Indians tried to recover the world they had lost. In 1763, in the wake of France's defeat and with British redcoats occupying forts formerly held by the French, the Indians of the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes mounted such a campaign. Historians have labeled the ensuing war "Pontiac's conspiracy," after the Ottawa war chief whom contemporaries identified

as its most prominent leader. In fact, it was not a conspiracy so much as a widespread revolt by the Indians against the inroads of European culture and against British imperialism.¹

A Delaware Indian prophet by the name of Neolin preached rejection of European ways and values among the tribes of the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes. In a speech delivered in the form of a parable to assembled Indians from various tribes in the spring of 1763, Pontiac related how the Master of Life, appearing to the Wolf (the French applied the name loup, or "wolf," to the Delaware and other Indians), reminded the Indians that they had become weak and dependent on Europeans. The speech originally was recorded in French, possibly by a priest.

Pontiac's War ultimately failed, but it had far-reaching consequences. In an effort to prevent future Indian wars, the British government by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 placed the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains off limits to settlers. Colonists and land speculators who resented this imposition of royal authority began to contemplate independence from Great Britain.

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PONTIAC

The Master of Life Speaks to the Wolf

1763

I am the Master of Life, whom thou desirest to know and to whom thou wouldst speak. Listen well to what I am going to say to thee and all thy red brethren. I am He who made heaven and earth, the trees, lakes, rivers, all men, and all that thou seest, and all that thou hast seen on earth. Because [I have done this and because] I love you, you must do what I say and [leave undone] what I hate. I do not like that you drink until you

¹Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections (1886), 8:270-71.

lose your reason, as you do; or that you fight with each other; or that you take two wives, or run after the wives of others; you do not well; I hate that. You must have but one wife, and keep her until death. When you are going to war, you juggle, join the medicine dance, and believe that I am speaking. You are mistaken, it is to Manitou to whom you speak; it is a bad spirit who whispers to you nothing but evil; and to whom you listen because you do not know me well. This land, where you live, I have made for you and not for others. How comes it that you suffer the whites on your lands? Can't you do without them? I know that those whom you call the children of your Great Father supply your wants, but if you were not bad, as you are, you would well do without them. You might live wholly as you did before you knew them. Before those whom you call your brothers came on your lands, did you not live by bow and arrow? You had no need of gun nor powder, nor the rest of their things, and nevertheless you caught animals to live and clothe yourselves with their skins, but when I saw that you went to the bad, I called back the animals into the depths of the woods, so that you had need of your brothers to have your wants supplied and cover you. You have only to become good and do what I want, and I shall send back to you the animals to live on. I do not forbid you, for all that, to suffer amongst you the children of your father. I love them, they know me and pray to me, and I give them their necessities and all that they bring to you, but as regards those who have come to trouble your country, drive them out, make war to them! I love them not, they know me not, they are my enemies and the enemies of your brothers! Send them back to the country which I made for them! There let them remain.

The Pleas and Plight of the Choctaw Chiefs

In the eighteenth century, the powerful Choctaw Indians of Mississippi played a key role in the competition among France, Spain, and England for control of the lower Mississippi Valley. They generally sided with France against the English and their Chickasaw allies, but different parties within the Choctaw Nation favored different strategies and allegiances. This factionalism disrupted Choctaw society but allowed the Choctaws to survive in a world of intense rivalry and maintain a constant supply of European trade goods. The French in particular made annual gifts an integral part of their Indian diplomacy. These gifts allowed the Choctaw "medal" chiefs (Europeans gave Indian chiefs large and small medals as

symbols of their rank and allegiance) to carry out one traditional function of a chief, redistributing wealth among the people.

In 1763, at the end of the Seven Years' War, France ceded the Choctaw homeland to Britain. In reality, France ceded only its claims to Choctaw territory; the Choctaws continued to own and control the area. Nevertheless, the Choctaws no longer could play off rival European powers and had to look to the British alone for their supplies. The British, however, preferred to exchange merchandise in trade or as payment for direct services rather than to give gifts as a standard procedure. At a time when the white-tailed deer population, on which the Choctaws relied for trade, was in decline in Choctaw territory, the new regime hit the Indians hard. Traders came into Choctaw towns, peddling alcohol, cheating the Indians with short weights, and causing unprecedented social chaos. The chiefs were unable either to maintain peace or to counter the power of the traders by distributing merchandise to their people.

The Choctaws first met British superintendent for the southern Indians John Stuart in conference at Mobile, Alabama, in 1765, but the problems remained unresolved. They met him again at Mobile in December 1771 and January 1772. At first glance, the speeches the chiefs from the various Choctaw towns made to Stuart that winter look like confessions of abject dependence on the British. But the situation was more complex than that. The chiefs were campaigning for a resumption of the practice of annual gift giving so that they would have goods to distribute to their followers and halt the downward spiral in their influence and the chaos in their towns. As Mingo Emmitta, the great chief of the Choctaw nation, indicates at the start of his speech, many chiefs had been killed in the social turmoil. The Choctaw chiefs at Mobile were, in fact, pleading for their political lives.¹

¹Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), chap. 4, esp. 69-75.

CHOCTAW CHIEFS

Speeches to John Stuart, Mobile, Alabama

1772

Mingo Emmitta Speaks

Chiefs and white Brethren

Many of our great Chiefs who attended the last Congress are dead, Since that time we have lost Five great Medal Chiefs and other leading men, the Dead cannot Speak Such as are living and Present have now an opportunity to Speak for their Nation.

Addressing the Superintendent

You are the father and Chief of the Red men, you are returned after a long absence to See us and Supply our wants, you Fixed no time for returning to meet us, you made us no Promise of a Congress at any Particular Period, but you told us That the Seas were dangerous and your return was uncertain, but That if you never returned Some other Person would be appointed by the Great King to take care of us, you are at last come, heaven has preserved you in great danger and the sight of you makes us Glad, I once lost a Father but I found one dearer and greater in you, at the last Congress we met you naked and Miserable, you sent us home Cloathed and Comforted, during your absence I was like a Sick man you have returned to Cheer my Spirits and administer relief and I hope you will be attentive to relieve our necessities, This day I see you are a just and Good Father, and have not forgotten your Children, you are like a Great Doctor who can Cure all distempers, the Sight of whom Comforts and Cheers the Spirits of His Patients; We have been used to meet Great Chiefs, this day we meet Greater Chiefs we rejoyce in the Sight of our Father and gratefully Thank the great King for Sending him to relieve our Wants? what can Red men ask of their Father? but arms and ammunition to defend them and Cloathing to keep them warm, what can make a Red man Rich and powerfull? a Gun and ammunition, it is in

Proceedings of the Mobile Congress, reprinted in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* 5 (1925): 147-51.

the power of our Father to make his Children Rich and happy by giving us arms and Cloathing.

When I return to my Nation It will be asked what have you Seen? I will answer That I Saw my Father the Cheif of the Red men the Great Governor and Chief of the white men in this Country and the Chief Leader and General of the Great Kings Warriors who received me kindly and as a proof I will Show them what I shall receive from my Father, what can we ask or Expect from our white Brethren but to Supply our wants.

Our Father is Like a Turkey perched upon the Top of a High Tree we are his Brood of Chickens eagerly looking up at but cannot reach him at our return to our Houses our Young our Old our Fathers our Wives our Children will all rejoyce and be happy in having their wants Supplied.

What can our White Brethren think of us by giving us such narrow Flaps, they dont cover our Secret parts, and we are in danger of being deprived of our Manhood, by every Hungry dog That approaches us, these Flaps are too narrow I hope this will be altered.

I must Complain of the great Quantities of Rum carried into our Towns it is what distracts our Nation we wish to see a Stop put to this pernicious Practice and That the Traders be allowed to Carry no more then a Small Quantity Sufficient to procure some Provisions and pay for the building Stores or Houses. When the Clattering of the Packhorse Bells are heard at a Distance our Town is Immediately deserted young and old run out to meet them Joyfully crying Rum Rum; they get Drunk, Distraction Mischief Confusion and Disorder are the Consequences and this the Ruin of our Nation.

I have no Complaint to make against the Traders residing in my Town, but I desire Such of my people as have Complaints to make of their Traders to speak out and be particular.

**Illepotapo of the Chickesawhays Great Medal Chief Desires
all the Red men present to attend to his Speech**

I am Glad to See my Father and Brothers here to day, and Glad to take them by the Hand, I am a red man and very poor, my hand is Black and Soils their white hands Chickesaws and Chactaws behold your white Brethren who have come at last to Supply our Wants. The day is now come That I much longed for, but almost despaired of seeing, Brothers Chickesaws you and we Chactaws will Share between us the Presents which our Father has brought us as we are Brothers.

I am not come here to beg, and enumerate Particular Articles, I know my father the Superintent, is Just and knows what things are fitting for

Red Men and will Supply our wants accordingly he knows us to be poor and Incapable of making Necessaries for ourselves.

Father, I beg to be Furnished with a Copy of the Tarriff to carry into my Town, That I may Show it to the Traders who Supply us with Flaps so Scanty that they are Insufficient to cover our Nakedness.

When Mr. John McIntosh arrived amongst us the Trade was well regulated but the Chickesaws took him from us since which time the measure by which the Traders sell their Goods is Shortned and the weights by which they take our Skins are grown hevier. I hope therefore to have Standard weights and measures which cannot be altered given me to carry into my Town which may prevent Quarrels between us and our Traders; for why Should we be obliged to Quarrel with our white Brethren when my people return from hunting and carry their Skins to Barter for Goods, the Traders hold them between them and the Light, and carefully Examine them before they take them but they are not equally carefull to do them Justice my Warriors Reproach me and ask me why I who am their Chief do not obtain Justice for them? This makes me ashamed and Diminishes my Consequence in the Nation.

When Mr. Smith (who stands here) First came into my Town he acted honestly and Traded Fairly, but he afterwards fell off his measure, Shortned and his weights grew hevier; then Mr. Sims (who I see here also) Settled in my Town also and Traded Justly and Fairly I reasoned with Mr. Smith and recommended to him to follow Mr. Sym's Example but he rejected my Council which occasioned such a Quarrel That we had almost gone to blows, I have no more to say, but to beg that the Superintendant will order my old Drum to be mended or give me a new one.

Captain Ouma of Seneacha Great Medal Chief

All the Chiefs of the Six Towns except myself are dead and I am happy in having lived to See my Father and white Brethren.

It is very long Since I last saw my Father we are very poor and in want of ammunition we are Ignorant and helpless as the Beasts in the woods Incapable of making Necessaries for our selves our sole dependance is upon you.

In my part of the nation people have Sometime been murmuring and Jarring, they used to reproach me, and Say, you have no Father to assist you in taking care of your people. Your Father is dead. But this day I have the happiness to See you alive, and I hope you will Supply my wants, and those of my people That we may return with Gladness of heart, my

wife and Family are here I recommend them to your care they want Cloathing.

I am now to tell you the Cause of all disorder and Quarreling between us and our white men. It is Rum. It pours in upon our nation Like a great Sea from Mobbille and from all the Plantations and Settlements round about Particularly from the House of Simon Favre who is Settled upon this River. I am not a bad Man ask all the Traders and white men who go into our Nation if I am a bad man. I may be sometimes Cross but whenever That happens Rum is the Cause I beg some regulation may be made to prevent the profuse Importation of Rum amongst us and I will engage That our white People and us will live in Harmony like Brothers.

Mr. Taitt (who I see here) is my Trader. I have no Complaint against him, but nevertheless I beg to be Furnished with Standard weights and measures, and a Copy of the Tarriff to carry with me which will greatly Contribute to the maintenance of Peace, and if the Trade is laid under Proper Regulations you will never hereafter be Troubled with any Complaints of or from us but we Will live in Friendship Harmony and ease.

Appapaye of the Town of Olitachas Small Medal

We are poor Ignorant Red men Incapable of Assisting ourselves our dependance is upon our Father; look at us we are poor Red men, it is true, yet are we men and not Beasts my white Brethren can tame Bears Tiges and other Savage Beasts you Certainly can tame us and make us look like men by Cloathing us a Poor Chactaw miserably wraped up in a Bear Skin for Cloathes, is despicable but Cloath us and Let the great King be told that his Children the Chactaws look like men.

I hope our father the Superintendant will Consider our Situation and not Send us home with Tears in our Eyes and destitute of all necessaries I speak for my people, Send them home Sattisfied I shall follow with a Chearfull Heart.