

Arts: History essay - annotated example

Native Americans were powerful actors in the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War. Lasting from 1754 to 1763, the war was a conflict between European powers that played out on a global stage; the North American struggle of which is known commonly as The French and Indian War. Throughout this war both the French and the British relied heavily on their alliances with native Indians. It is through the study of these alliances that we can come to understand the nature of relations between the Europeans and the native populations within the framework of colonial America. The alliance between the British and the Cherokee will be employed for this essay as its chosen case study. By tracing the initial alliance and subsequent deterioration of British-Cherokee relations, this essay will aim to uncover the origins of the Anglo-Cherokee War of 1758-1761, and by doing so will survey the limitations of diplomacy and the struggles of intercultural exchange during this period. Mutual mistrust and suspicion was a hallmark of this exchange, and would contribute to the outbreak of the conflict.

Scholarly interest in the Seven Years' War has increased in recent years, exemplified by Fred Anderson's seminal work *Crucible of War*, published in 2000.[1] Within the existing literature the Cherokees have often been under-studied; their diplomatic efforts overshadowed by the part they played in the Anglo-Cherokee War narrative.[2] British-Cherokee diplomacy is fundamental to understanding their relationship, and this is best reflected through the study of gift-giving. Deep within the study of gift-giving lies the cause of the deterioration of their relations, which is that they had fundamentally different conceptions about the nature of the alliance itself, and their roles within it. Ultimately this essay will argue

Historical accuracy is important. The French and Indian War began in 1754. The Seven Years' War didn't officially begin until 1756, when Britain declared war on France

This is a clear and convincing justification of the case study.

A clearer expression of your argument is needed here - think about the kind of response that the question is asking for.

Legend


✓ Good practice


✎ Needs improvement


💡 Comment


that British-Cherokee relations are reflective of native Indian power in the face of European colonialism; that they were not willing subjects caught in the crossfires of an imperial conflict between France and Britain.


Allied with the British since the Yamasee War of 1715-1717, the Cherokee was one of the largest and most formidable Indian tribes of the American southeast.[3] Residing throughout the “western Carolinas, northwestern Georgia and what is now eastern Tennessee,” the Cherokee enjoyed successful trading relationships with the southern colonies, in particular South Carolina.[4] The British highly valued their alliance with the Cherokee; they were very well aware that having Indian allies was crucial to their continued survival and prosperity in the southeast. General John Forbes commented in a 1758 letter to General James Abercromby that they must make sure to “provide everything that can keep them steady to our Interest.”[5] In another 1758 letter, this one sent to British official William Pitt, Forbes commented that “our greatest Dependence is upon them,” referring to the Cherokees.[6] George Washington suggested that the Cherokees abandoning the alliance “might be of the most fatal consequence to this part of the Continent.”[7] That settlers from colonies such as Virginia, under continual attacks from other Indian tribes, would relocate to South Carolina demonstrates the sturdiness of the alliance with the Cherokees.[8] In 1754, James Glen, the Governor of South Carolina, proclaimed that the Cherokee “were never more strongly attached to the British interest,” and that they were the “key of Carolina.”[9] The words of Glen and Forbes highlight the dependency of the British on their Indian allies, and are reflective of the strength of the alliance prior to the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War. This war would prove to be the ultimate test for British-Cherokee relations.

This is not the main point of this paragraph. State the main point at the beginning of the paragraph (this is called the topic sentence). 

This is the main point (the topic sentence). Move it to the beginning of the paragraph. 


Clarification needed. Who was he? Why is his opinion important? 


William Pitt was effectively the head of the British government, even though the Duke of Newcastle was officially the prime minister. Stating this would illustrate the importance of the letter and show your understanding of the period. 

Solid concluding sentence, but reference to secondary sources would have further strengthened the point and shown that your primary source quotes reflect the broader views of British soldiers and politicians. 

The Cherokee would prove themselves invaluable allies in the war as they were involved in campaigns against the Shawnee and Delaware in the Ohio Valley, as well as those directed toward the French-held Fort Duquesne. Cherokee involvement in the northern conflicts peaked in 1758 with the contribution of seven hundred warriors to the British cause.[10] In addition to providing enemy scalps, the value of the Cherokee alliance also came from their ability to gain information about the workings of the French forces. In 1757 George Washington, then Colonel of the Virginia Regiment, wrote to Colonel John Stanwix that the Cherokees had “returned ... to Fort Cumberland with five scalps, and a French Officer prisoner.”[11] It is through the interrogation of these prisoners that the British could gain an upper hand on French campaigns. The success of the Cherokees prompted Edmond Atkin, the Southern Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to comment that “[Cherokee] Scouting in these parts hath been of infinite service this summer to [Virginia] as it hath kept the enemy’s parties out of its settlements.”[12] Defeating the French meant forging, as well as maintaining, alliances with the Indians that were as prosperous as those between the French and their Indian allies. In a 1758 letter Forbes informed Abercromby that “I think the Cherokees of such consequence that I have done everything in my power to provide them in their necessary’s,” highlighting the dependency of the British on the Cherokees.[13] Maintaining the alliance was essential to ensuring that the Cherokees would not abandon the British cause and join forces with the French, whom Washington claimed, in an October 1757 letter to Virginia governor Robert Dinwiddie, were “making them vastly advantageous offers.”[14] That the French were making such offers speaks to the strength of the Cherokee tribe and to the often fickle nature of Anglo-Indian alliances within North America at this time.

[There are 2 paragraphs here that have not been included in this example]

 A more accurate topic sentence is needed here, too. This paragraph continues the previous point but in a more specific way. Are there two separate points here (one for this paragraph and one for the previous paragraph)? Or is there a single point to be made (in which case only one paragraph is needed)?

 This is an excellent example of how to incorporate a primary source quote into a sentence

The exploration of this alliance provides great insight into the wider relations of the British and the Indians in eighteenth-century North America. The Cherokee were masters of their own fate, and the deterioration of their alliance with the British is the greatest example of this. The violence that sparked the Anglo-Cherokee War broke out due to the differing views that the British and the Cherokees had of the role that they were each meant to play within their alliance. Through the study of gift-giving it becomes evident that the British expected subservience from those they considered mercenaries, whilst the Cherokee expected respect from those they considered their partners. The disintegration of the British-Cherokee alliance highlights ultimately that the Cherokee nation possessed a great deal of agency during this period; that they were not just pawns playing a part in an imperial game. It is only through a recognition of this agency that we can move away from the common belief that the Cherokee, and other Indians involved in the Seven Years' War, were only involved as "antagonists to the British." [44]

This is an excellent point to emphasise in the conclusion. This is where you "zoom out" and come back to the main academic debates on the topic. ✓

This is an excellent point to finish the essay on, but if this is a "common belief" it would be a good idea to mention it earlier (i.e. in your introduction where you introduce some of the literature). This is because it is a key problem about how we view this topic that your essay is tackling. ✎

Notes

[1] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Random House Inc, 2000).

[2] Paul Kelton, "The British and Indian War: Cherokee Power and the Fate of Empire in North America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69 (2012): 765.

[3] Leonard J. Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations: Indians, Empires, and Diplomats in the Founding of America* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 17.

[4] John R. Maass, *The French and Indian War in North Carolina: The Spreading Flames of War* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2013), 81.

[5] 'Forbes to Abercromby April 22 1758' in *Writings of General John Forbes Relating to his Service in America* ed. by Alfred Procter James (Menasha, Wisconsin: The Collegiate press, 1938), 69.

[6] 'Forbes to Pitt May 1 1758' in *Writings of General John Forbes*, 77-78.

[7] 'George Washington to Major Francis Halkett 11 May 1758' Accessed 4th June 2015
<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=cherokee%20Author%3A%22Washington%2C%20George%22&s=1511311112&r=72>

[8] Gregory Evans Dowd, "'Insidious Friends': Gift Giving and the Cherokee-British alliance in the Seven Years' War," in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830*, ed. by Andrew R. L. Clayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 114-115. 114- 151

[9] First quote: James Glen in Gregory Evans Dowd, "Insidious Friends," 114. Second quote: James Glen in Matthew C. Ward, "Understanding Native American Alliances," in *The Seven Years' War: Global Views*, ed. by Mark Danley and Patrick Speelman (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 55.

[10] Anderson, 457.

[11] 'George Washington to Colonel John Stanwix June 15 1757' Accessed 7th June 2015

<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=cherokee%20Author%3A%22Washington%2C%20George%22&s=1511311112&r=53>

[12] 'Edmond Atkin to William Henry Lyttelton August 13 1757' in Kelton "The British and Indian War," 769-770.

[13] 'Forbes to Abercromby April 22 1758' in *Writings of General John Forbes*, 68.

[14] 'George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie 5 October 1757' Accessed 6th June 2015

<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=cherokee%20Author%3A%22Washington%2C%20George%22&s=1511311112&r=61>

[15] Kelton, 791.

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'Forbes to Abercromby April 22 1758' in *Writings of General John Forbes Relating to his Service in America* ed. by Alfred Procter James. Menasha, Wisconsin: The Collegiate press, 1938.

'Forbes to Pitt May 1 1758' in *Writings of General John Forbes*.

'George Mercer to George Washington 26 April 1757'
Accessed 2nd June 2015
<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-04-02-0079#GEWN-02-04-02-0079-fn-0003>.

George Washington in Evans Dowd, Gregory. "Insidious Friends': Gift Giving and the Cherokee-British alliance in the Seven Years' War." In *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830*, edited by Andrew R. L. Clayton and Fredrika J. Teute, 114- 151. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

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'George Washington to John Stanwix July 15 1757'
Accessed 1st June 2015
<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=cherokee%20Author%3A%22Washington%2C%20George%22&s=1511311112&r=58>.

James Glen in Gregory Evans Dowd "Insidious Friends."

This is a good selection of sources covering British perspectives on the Cherokee alliance. Is there a lack of available sources on Cherokee perspectives? If so, this is worth commenting on in the essay itself.



It is acceptable to use primary sources that are quoted in secondary sources, but bear in mind that the historian has selected and edited these accounts for his article. It is preferable to find your own primary sources in edited collections, digital collections, and perhaps even original manuscripts (if available). It is good to see plenty of original primary research in your bibliography!



Bibliography

James Glen in Matthew C. Ward, "Understanding Native American Alliances," in *The Seven Years' War: Global Views*, ed. by Mark Danley and Patrick Speelman (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 47-73.

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'The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake' Accessed 1st June 2015 <https://archive.org/details/memoirsoflieuthe00intimb>

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Boulware, Tyler. "Our Mad Young Men: Authority and Violence in Cherokee Country," in *Blood in the Hills: A History of Violence in Appalachia*, ed. by Bruce Stewart, 80-99. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2012.

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Grenier, John. *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Hatley, Tom. *Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians during the Revolutionary Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Kelton, Paul. "The British and Indian War: Cherokee Power and the Fate of Empire in North America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69 (2012): 763-792.

This is an excellent selection of secondary sources. The chosen works are relevant to the topic, they are up-to-date, and you have selected quality studies (academic books and refereed journal articles). It is important to use a combination of books (which usually have a broad coverage) and refereed journal articles (which focus on particular aspects in depth).



Maass, John R., *The French and Indian War in North Carolina: The Spreading Flames of War*. Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2013.

Oliphant, John. *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2001.

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White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011.