CAPITAL NEGOTIATIONS: NATIVE DIPLOMATS IN THE AMERICAN CAPITAL, 1789-1837

by

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ABSTRACT

“Capital Negotiations: Native Diplomats in the American Capital, 1789-1837,” examines the culture of diplomacy created by Native delegates and American officials as they negotiated in the seat of federal power. Between 1789 and 1837, more than 170 delegations of Native peoples from more than forty nations arrived in the national capital to engage in diplomacy with the United States government. Deputations ranged in size from a single diplomat to several dozen. The majority of delegations consisted of members of only one nation, though a notable minority was comprised of individuals from multiple nations. With many of these visits overlapping, Indian ambassadors were visible, nearly ever-present figures in the capital’s streets, theatres, hotels, and federal offices, as well as on the roads and waterways leading to and from the capital. Examining speeches, government records, newspapers, guidebooks, and personal letters, this dissertation uncovers the evolving expectations and strategies of Native diplomats as well as federal officials’ attempts to control Native visits. This project demonstrates the myriad ways in which Natives and federal officials performed diplomatic identities not just for one another but also for a wider American public, through extensive newspaper reporting and public displays of Native culture and American progress. Further, it establishes the importance of the American capital as a physical and ideological space for Native leaders and diplomats. “Capital Negotiations” refracts the broader history of United States-Indian policy through the experience of Native diplomats in order to highlight the contingent and contested place, literally and figuratively, of Indians in the American nation.

Philip Morgan
Toby Ditz
François Furstenberg
Mary Fissell
Sharon Kingsland
I, like any graduate student going through the process of writing a dissertation, have accrued an array of debts both personal and professional in the course of this project. Each individual and organization that supported or aided me in this endeavor was indispensable in their own ways. While the assistance in this project was myriad, all errors and oversights remain, alas, my own.

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my application to graduate school and admitting me to work with him. Over the years, his bracing questions and editorial suggestions drove me to sharpen my thinking, research deeper, and be methodological in my approach, all of which served to strengthen this project. Toby Ditz has always felt like a second advisor to me, and I am deeply grateful for the time she devoted to reading drafts, offering advice, and recognizing that we all need to escape from the academic life sometimes.

This dissertation would never have been written without a simple but insightful question posed by Mike Johnson. I’ll never forget sitting in his office in Dell House at our final meeting before my comps. He asked the questions that brought this entire project into my mind—so what would you write about if you were a 19th century historian? My excitement for this topic has never waned, which is a testament to Mike’s ability to ask just the right question.

I am grateful to all that I learned in my fields, and thanks therefore go to John Marshall and Mary Ryan, in addition to Phil, Toby, and Mike. While François Furstenberg barely overlapped with my time at Hopkins, he graciously agreed to join my committee and commented on drafts both in seminar and out. His feedback helped me polish the project and reassured me of its merit during the final push.

Johns Hopkins’ seminar culture is truly distinctive. Fellow members of the Early American/Atlantic seminar bore witness to every stage of this dissertation. Their critical reading shaped both my writing and my thoughts. Even when I was not workshopping my own drafts, the conversation and questions at Monday seminars was important to shaping me as a scholar. The scholars that filled the table when I arrived provided both an introduction to graduate school and examples of incisive reading and questioning. They
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Before I arrived at Johns Hopkins, numerous faculty at The College of William and Mary fueled my passion for history and provided guidance and mentorship. From the first week of college, Jim Whittenburg took me under his wing as a budding history major, teaching quite simply the best history class (among many) I ever took. Jim Axtell taught me to write like a historian and was a kind but rigorous mentor as I composed my senior honors thesis; he guided me through the grad school application process, and was wise enough to know when meetings over coffee should be meetings over ice-cream.
instead. Cindy Hahamovitch saw promise in me and went out of her way to help me follow my dreams of being a scholar of Native history. Andy Fisher allowed me to take his graduate course on Native history, despite being an undergraduate, and introduced me to historiography and the grad style seminar. John Gamber, too, bent the rules to allow me into his class and introduced me to new scholarly questions. Fred Smith expanded my horizons by introducing me to archaeological fieldwork and facilitating a research trip to the National Museum and National Archives of Barbados. Many others were exceptional scholars and teachers, giving me an exceptional foundation as an aspiring scholar.

I have saved the nearest and dearest to my heart for last, in keeping with the old adage. I want to thank my family for their patience and support over the past seven years. I know this project took too long and hung over everything. But time with you all is what kept me sane. Thank you for believing that I could finish and for bearing with me while I did. You have helped me more than I could write—Mom, Dad, Jen, Katie, Bobby, Blake, and Whitney and Ashton. The Gambles too offered support and encouragement, as they welcomed me into their family in the midst of this process.

The most wide-ranging thanks, however, is reserved for Rob. His support, both intellectual and emotional, undergirds this entire undertaking. Thank you, Rob, for reading every word, every footnote, and every iteration. Thank you for your ideas, your book recommendations, and your edits. Thank you for listening to my outbursts of inspiration and rants of exasperation. Thank you for knowing when to push me harder and when to help me get critical distance from this project. And, most importantly—though it is futile for me to attempt to express in words—for your unconditional love during every up and down over the past seven years, thank you.
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Introduction: Native Diplomats and the Federal Capital

Between 1789 and 1837 nearly two hundred delegations, representing dozens of Native American nations, journeyed to the federal capital—New York in 1789 and 1790, Philadelphia until 1800, and Washington City thereafter. These groups have been overlooked in most accounts of Native Americans and their relations with the federal government in the early republic. Yet, delegations are essential to understanding the full scope of interactions between Natives and the United States government. Trekking hundreds or thousands of miles to meet the President of the United States, air grievances, or contest federal policy, Native diplomats carried with them a series of expectations for the Father of the American people. In the process, they, along with the officials and residents of the capital they encountered, molded a diplomatic culture—a system of shared practices, meanings, and expectations about how to negotiate—rooted in Native protocols and American self-expression.

Two of the most striking features of Native delegations were their frequency and diversity. One hundred seventy-four groups visited between 1789 and 1837. Most of them consisted of diplomats from a single nation, but a notable minority (44, or 17%) were multinational delegations that contained representatives from between two and a dozen nations.¹ While the largest multinational contingents came from the lands of the Northwest Territory or farther west, northern and southern nations also participated in joint delegations, as in 1796 when Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws traveled together to Philadelphia.

¹ In 1796, a delegation from the Ohio Country consisted of twelve nations, while in 1806 eleven nations sent representatives.
Visiting delegations also became a more frequent sight in the capital over the period. From an average rate of just over two delegations per year in the 1790s, the frequency of capital visits increased to nearly six per year in the 1830s. With the average delegation including ten individuals, scores of Native diplomats could be found at the seat of government annually. Representatives from at least fifty-five Native nations within the formal boundaries of the U.S. made their way to see the President. Some nations sent but one representative during the period, usually as a part of a multinational delegation. Other nations, such as the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Seneca, and Stockbridge, routinely dispatched diplomats to the capital.

In examining the significance of the federal capital as a place of intercultural negotiations, along with the culture of diplomacy that developed there, this dissertation makes three principal claims. First, it argues the federal capital was an important site of negotiation, both symbolically and in practice, between the U.S. and Native people. Exploring the spaces and routines of capital negotiations offers fresh insights into the evolving political relationship between Native Americans and the federal government in the early republic. In particular, diplomatic engagements in and along the routes to the

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2 From 1789 to 1799, there were 24 delegations (2.18 per year); from 1800 to 1809, there were 37 (3.7 per year). Between 1810 and 1819, there were 28 (2.8 per year)—a drop directly related to the War of 1812. Numbers increased again with 39 delegations between 1820 and 1829 (3.9 per year). The 1830s saw the highest rate of visits, with 46 in the years between 1830 and 1837 (5.75 per year).

3 Figures on the number of individuals per delegation are only available for 87 (50%) of the total number of visits. The average of 10.56 is derived from those visits.

4 I have used the largest tribal unit for counting nations, even when competing bands or factions sent separate delegates. For example, in an 1837 delegation, which included Pawnee Loups and Pawnee Republicans, I have only counted the Pawnees as one nation. The exception is the Cherokees, who sent at times as many as four distinct delegations to the capital. I have counted the Cherokees (East) and the Arkansas Cherokees (or Cherokees West) as two nations.

5 These five nations sent the greatest number of delegations, led by the Cherokees with 34 (33 national delegations, and participation in one multinational delegation). The Chickasaws sent 17, with representatives in an additional two multinational visits; the Creeks 13 and one multinational; the Seneca 11 and 5 multinational; and the Stockb ridges with 10.
capital illustrate the robustness and diversity of political ties between white Americans and Indians between 1789 and 1837.

Second, the culture of diplomacy in the federal capital was not a mere holdover from the colonial period. Native delegations to the federal capital indicated a novel, if historically rooted, attempt—by both sides—to address a multitude of problems resulting from their mutual occupation of the same continent, from the punishment of crimes to the meaning and location of borders. That the number of capital visits grew over the period further suggests that both sides relied on face-to-face negotiations in the capital to address delicate matters, particularly those related to the Indian Removal controversy in the nineteenth century. Whether or not the trips alleviated the tensions at hand, they all contributed to an intercultural form of diplomacy that not only drew on colonial precedents but also developed its own standards that would govern the interactions of future diplomats, American and Native alike, after 1789.

Finally, this project contends that Native political rituals were central to the culture of diplomacy that diplomats and federal officials jointly forged through social and political engagements in the federal capital. Indigenous ceremonies, rhetorical devices, and protocols pervaded negotiations at the seat of government. Even in the institutions that most defined federal power—the White House, the Capitol, and the War Office—Native delegates found ways to negotiate a range of issues, including military alliance, jurisdiction and boundaries, trade, religion, and cultural expectations, from a position of relative authority. Moreover, the variety of deputations demonstrates the initiative of Native peoples in appealing to the President. The centrality of Native political rituals also demonstrates the freedom with which Native people contributed to the articulation of the
culture of Indian-white diplomacy in the capital. This project attempts to understand both the experience of Native diplomats and the ideas and expectations that undergirded capital negotiations through the development, maintenance, and ultimate change in the culture of diplomacy.

What becomes clear from an examination of Natives’ capital experiences is that they were a persistent, and oft-noted, presence in eastern cities throughout the period. This consistency holds broader implications for the study of Native North America. The western movement of peoples has dominated the story of America: explorers sailing west, Europeans migrating to the Americas, the trafficking of enslaved Africans across sea and land, American settlers flooding over the Appalachians, and, ultimately, the forcible removal of Native peoples to lands west of the Mississippi River. Although they constituted a comparatively miniscule stream, hundreds of Native diplomats physically transmitted their curiosity, concerns, and hopes to the eastern U.S., contravening the westward drift of American-Indian history. These men and women beat a path connecting Indian country and the American capital, which would see continual traffic in the early republic.

Native visits to the seat of government in the early republic were not without precedent. Examining the origins and experiences of Native Americans and Inuits who traveled to the British Isles voluntarily or by force in diverse capacities between 1500 and the American Revolution, historian Alden Vaughan identifies 175 individuals who made

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the trip. Only some of them were diplomats; others were enslaved, employed in commercial entertainment, trained as translators or missionaries, or victims of kidnapping. Individual visits to the British metropole have also garnered scholarly attention, particularly those of Pocahontas, four Iroquois in 1710, the Cherokees in 1762, and the captivating characters Joseph Brant and Samson Occom. During the Revolutionary War and under the Articles of Confederation, indigenous leaders attended Congress and met with American revolutionaries. Native visitors to Europe or the Confederation government were instrumental in particular diplomatic episodes and in developing ideas in the metropole about American Indians and English/British colonization.

The diplomatic visits of Natives to the federal capital after 1789 outstripped earlier visits many times over, in terms of frequency as well as numbers of delegates. Nevertheless, few scholars have looked at Native peoples in the federal capital; those who have noted their presence have also primarily scrutinized individual visits in

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isolation—most often a 1790 Creek deputation. A notable exception has been the work of Herman Viola on Indian delegations between 1800 and 1900. Over the course of the century, Viola saw a consistent “nature and purpose” to delegations, as Natives were “paraded about eastern cities to gape in wonder at the marvels of the white man’s world.” While commendable for uncovering a previously unstudied set of Native actors, Viola’s investigation bypassed delegations in the decade before 1800, citing the loss of earlier War Department papers by fire that year, and overlooked the majority of delegations in the remainder of the period covered here.

Given these visits’ potential as lenses through which to examine early republic political relations between Natives and whites, it is striking how they have been overlooked in political histories of the period. The rich scholarship on Indian policy and treaty-making pays scant attention to capital trips, particularly in contrast to the American public’s fascination with delegations at the time. Many scholars’ tendency to equate treaty-making and diplomacy in the early republic partly explains this disparity. Few


11 Not only does this project uncover more than a hundred additional delegations than those included in Viola’s volume, it also nuances the expectations and experiences of Native diplomats over the course of the early republic, showing that there were important changes in capital diplomacy between 1789 and 1837, much less by 1900. Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 11.

12 Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins*. Viola’s coverage of delegations is incomplete—*Diplomats in Buckskins* references fewer than twenty percent of the delegations in the period from 1789 to 1837.

delegations to the capital (thirteen percent) directly resulted in treaties. Only 26 treaties were authorized in the capital, twelve percent of the roughly 200 Indian treaties signed between 1789 and 1837. Focusing almost exclusively on treaties has led historians to overlook delegations, which in turn has reinforced a supposed dichotomy between U.S. dominance and indigenous resistance or persistence. Lost in the emphasis on treaties, and thus central to this project, are the cultural processes at work in the individual and collective acts of diplomacy between Indians and whites in the capital.\(^\text{14}\) Without discounting the significance of treaties, this project shows how policy and the culture of diplomacy shaped each other. Furthermore, recovering the richness of capital diplomacy emphasizes the ongoing and bilateral (if imbalanced) negotiations between Native leaders and federal officials in the early republic.\(^\text{15}\)

There are two primary reasons for the historiographical elision of the many hundreds of Native American diplomats who traveled to and conducted negotiations in the federal capital. The first concerns where and how historians look for Native people. As it has been pointed out recently, historians, especially of colonial and early national America, generally see Indian men inherently as warriors, obscuring their roles as traders,


\(^{15}\) This is not to suggest that power was equal but rather that the historiographical focus on policy has overemphasized or distorted the shape of American power in federal treaties with Indians.
missionaries, diplomats, guides, neighbors, spouses, servants and slaves. Likewise, Juliana Barr observes, historians, having been encouraged to look for the “Indian behind every bush,” still tend to look for Indians only “behind bushes, roaming the woods, consigned to the wilderness.” While Barr exhorts historians to approach Indian spaces with a more politicized language that identifies and locates Indian cities, highways, and states, it is also imperative to look for Indians in unexpected places, as Philip Deloria has demonstrated in the context of twentieth-century America. This project extracts Native men from their historiographically circumscribed role as woodland warriors by showcasing the Native diplomats who engaged with the nascent United States. In the process, it shows that neither the capital nor eastern cities were devoid of, or unaffected by, the presence and negotiations of Native people.

To overcome a second reason capital delegations have gone largely unnoticed in Native historiography, this dissertation spotlights a cross-tribal cohort of Native diplomats rather than a particular community. Indeed, Native ambassadors as a whole have remained in the shadows because of the tendency among historians of Native people to write tribal centered stories. While tribal histories make sense for numerous methodological and heuristic reasons, they also obscure certain shared experiences and themes that are more continental than local. Focusing on the multinational aspects of

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18 I do not suggest that Native diplomats had a sense of pan-Indian participation, rather than stemming from a deeper sense of identification across national divisions a cross-tribal cohort is situational, a group of diplomats from diverse nations that nevertheless shared certain experiences in their role as capital diplomats. I take the term “cross-tribal cohort” from Deloria, Indians in Unexpected Places, 12.
19 For works that have taken broader, less nationally delineated approaches to Native history, see Gregory Evans Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore:
capital diplomacy illuminates a sphere of experience outside of tribal or national boundaries, putting nations from across the continent into a shared framework. By tracking Native diplomats across indigenous national boundaries, it becomes easier to make out the sharpening divide between groups as some, particularly eastern nations, adopted the language of “civilization” from white neighbors. Not only did white Americans note the widening breach between purportedly civilized and uncivilized nations, but Natives themselves also remarked on the growing differences between them.

To study the presence of Natives in the capital and place them in a continental context, this project emphasizes not only formal ceremony but also the more quotidian social and cultural practices of Natives and federal officials in the capital. The result is an emphasis on the process of negotiations, not just the results, and on the variety of sites in which diplomacy took place. Acts of diplomacy shaped negotiations not only in wood-paneled rooms of national power but also in the roads leading to the capital, city streets, theatres, and a host of other public institutions. With every interaction between the federal government and Native delegates throughout the first several decades of this

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20 On the adoption of white notions of civilization and its international ramifications in Indian Territory, see also David La Vere, Contrary Neighbors: Southern Plains and Removed Indians in Indian Territory (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).


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cross-cultural diplomacy, the American government proved unable to ignore or entirely replace Native forms of diplomacy. Rather, the rituals of Indian-white diplomacy became entrenched because this type of cultural syncretism signaled a level of cooperation. By broadening the scope of diplomatic activity to incorporate the whole experience of being a diplomat or hosting a delegation, this project will show the ways in which the culture of diplomacy changed, and resisted change, as the policies and purposes driving diplomatic interaction transformed throughout the period.

Scholarship on frontiers and borderlands has provided many examples of colonial and federal officials accommodating Native forms at the edges of empire. While this literature is deeply important for our understanding of Native people and their relationship with the settlers and officials of the young American republic in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it has relegated the story of Native action to the frontiers and Native towns far from the centers of American power. Historians Kathleen DuVal, Pekka Hämäläinen, and Michael Witgen all have drawn attention to the need to reconsider Native diplomacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. DuVal views the Arkansas Valley as key to the power held by Native peoples, noting that it was “in the heart of the North American continent, far from centers of European population and power,” a region where “Indians were more often able to determine the form and content of inter-cultural relations than were their European would-be colonizers.” Native power was dependent on superior numbers in and knowledge of the Arkansas Valley. After

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1815, Anglo-American population superseded Native populations, and the Native ground rapidly ended—DuVal concludes her discussion in 1822. Likewise, Hämäläinen conceives of Comanchería as a place where metropolitan visions “mattered less than the policies and designs of Comanches,” whose expansive and kinetic empire encompassed a huge swath of the southwest through the middle of the nineteenth century. In the Old Northwest, Witgen introduces Annshanabawaki—a Native New World to parallel the Atlantic New World that developed in the wake of European arrival in the Americas. From the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, Annshanabeg and Dakota peoples projected power in the region that became Michigan Territory in the face of French, British, and U.S. attempts to expand their own empires. All three studies have re-centered Native groups in the history of the continent. In their emphasis on spaces dominated by Native groups, however, they have missed other opportunities to rethink how power operated when Native diplomats negotiated where whites were more numerous.

Focusing on the U.S. capital, meanwhile, provides a chance to think about the power that Native diplomats held when they travelled to places of undeniable federal, and white, authority. While delegations visited the capital during a period in which Native political and economic power clearly waned relative to the U.S.—something that diplomats were coming to recognize—capital negotiations manifested Native political rhetoric and rituals from the beginning. If the nations of the Native Ground, Comanchería, or the Native New World were able to dictate the culture of diplomacy on their own turf, it would seem federal officials should have been able to do likewise at the

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23 DuVal, Native Ground, 3-5.
24 Hämäläinen, Comanche Empire, 2-3.
25 Witgen, Infinity of Nations, 7.
seat of American government. But they did not, and Native practices set the terms of capital negotiations for most of the early republic. This dissertation explores why this imbalance was the case, showing the capital itself to be a diplomatic arena that enabled Indians to use their presence to press issues and articulate expectations directly to federal leaders. Going to the capital allowed delegates to bypass the mid-level commissioners or agents who kept them at arm’s length. Indigenous codes of diplomacy became routinized in the federal capital and persisted over time through these visits, producing an unexpected site of intercultural exchange—a “Native Washington”—that needs to be situated alongside the frontiers and borderlands that frame most studies of Native-white relations in the period.26

Inverting the geography of Native diplomacy in the early republic does more than prompt a reconsideration of what forms of power delegates wielded in white-dominated areas. It also generates new questions about the “disappearing Indian” narrative that came to dominate early-nineteenth-century American thought about Natives. In histories of the early republic as told from the center—rapidly urbanizing cities of the eastern U.S.—Native people figure more as idea than reality, recorded (if not fossilized) in literature, theatre, and art.27 When Indians appear in studies of early Washington, DC, for instance,

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it is most often in the carvings and paintings of the Capitol. Literature on the image of the Indian in the early national period, which often focuses on the development of a romanticized Indian in the absence of “real” Indians in the East, usually fails to account for an important set of questions: how, and how often, urban Americans interacted with actual Native people; the effects of white encounters with Native people in urban settings for the image of the Indian; and the ways in which Native Americans themselves utilized and shaped public perceptions. A focus on the federal capital, and the delegations that passed through it, necessarily raises these questions.

“Capital Negotiations” heeds historian James Merrell’s call to “chart a course” away from Indian Country in the quest to incorporate Natives into the larger narrative of U.S. history. Merrell suggests that bringing Indians into the general account of the early republic will be best accomplished by “connecting Natives to broader patterns of American life.” When more attention is given to diplomacy rather than treaties and policy, it becomes easier to see commonalities in how Natives and white Americans came to understand and negotiate with the newly formed federal government. Indeed, Merrell prods scholars to “include relations with Natives in the study of diplomacy in the new republic,” lamenting that the “intricate diplomatic negotiations with Natives” is “a story traditionally served up treaty by treaty from the federal side of the table.”

Illuminating how Natives came to understand and negotiate with the U.S.—drawing on colonial precedents and cultural traditions, just as white Americans did—points to the common

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30 Ibid., 340, 349.
continental experience of grappling with the experiment of creating a federal government, symbolized in the capital city itself.

The capital city was not an empty vessel in which negotiations took place but rather directly influenced the culture of diplomacy. The capital itself was in limbo during the very decades in which federal policy towards Native peoples dramatically shifted. New York (capital between 1789 and 1790) and Philadelphia (1790 to 1800) were both flourishing cities at the close of the eighteenth century with burgeoning populations, active commercial ports, and a robust public culture. With the passage of the Residence Act in 1790, the federal government became destined for its own seat, ostensibly extricating it from state interests. Even still, the physical order of the capital remained in flux, to say nothing of its symbolic order. Washington City, as Americans referred to the site in the early republic, largely failed to live up to its urban moniker. When the offices of the still-diminutive federal government relocated in 1800, the District of Columbia was more meadow than metropolis. Despite expansion in population and construction, Washington in 1837 still struck observers as a peculiar sort of town, a bustling node of activity for a few months of the year but dormant for most of the rest. In particular, the dearth of commerce and culture shaped the contours of capital negotiations, compelling federal officials to reroute Native diplomats through more impressive urban centers like Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York.

The turn from Indian Country to the federal capital as an arena of Native diplomacy also draws attention to a diverse cast of participants that looks different from the frontier congresses that dominate our conceptions of Native-white negotiations. This project accounts for those who came to the capital as well as those who did not—that is,
which nations sent delegations and which demurred, along with who populated
diplomatic retinues. Those who came held diverging ideas about diplomats’ roles and
responsibilities—such as the place of Native women in the proceedings, the distinction
between audience and negotiators, and how authority was allocated within delegations.
Indeed, the diplomats who negotiated in the capital found several features distinguishing
diplomacy in the capital from the majority of congresses and treaties in Indian country or
on the frontiers. The number of participants was one key difference. While congresses at
common sites of negotiation like Vincennes, Portage des Sioux, and various frontier forts
could number in the thousands, the largest delegations to the capital topped out at fifty.
The Native men and women who attended conventions closer to home were not merely
spectators; they provided a barometer of national opinion to mindful leaders. The absence
of public supervision of diplomacy marked another distinction between capital
negotiations and those elsewhere.31

Those Natives who did participate in capital diplomacy generally fell into six
categories: chiefs, orators, warriors, boys, women, and interpreters. Chiefs were the
principal figures in both frontier congresses and capital negotiations, but their power
functioned differently when they traveled to the seat of the federal government and
operated beyond the immediate oversight of their people. Most indigenous leaders held
authority by persuasion. They became leaders through proven success—in local affairs,
in war, as orators. Heredity might play a factor, but it was insufficient to keep a man in
power if he proved otherwise inept. Leaders could only be successful, then, if they could

31 On congresses see Cayton, “’Noble Actors’ upon the ‘Theatre of Honor,’” in Contact Points; White,
Middle Ground, 442-45; Prucha, American Indian Treaties, 24-30; Francis Jennings ed. The History and
Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their
League (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985); Cary Miller, Oginga: Anishinaabeg Leadership,
1760-1845 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 87-89, 99-112.
convince their community or nation to follow their counsel. These leaders were recognized by both their own nations and the federal government to conduct business. Because of the small size of capital delegations, leaders who negotiated in the capital did not have the checks on them that they would have in councils at home.

When chiefs could not—or would not—preside in the capital, the nonattendance of recognized leaders limited delegations’ ability to conduct business. Their absenteeism also impinged on the impact of decisions made at the seat of government by a delegation once upon returning home. Occasionally, the most important leaders were not present, due to the time and distance required in traveling to the capital. Federal officials recognized this and pressed for chiefs to attend. In 1805, the secretary of war urged his agent to the Creeks, yet again, to “prevail on the Speaker to accompany you” to Washington. The Speaker of the nation was the most important leader, and “the President of the United States, will be disappointed & mortified, should he not come; and will consider his not coming, as a strong indication of want of friendship.”32 Most often, however, capital delegations included key leaders and influential orators.

Whether or not prominent leaders attended, Native orators—who accompanied virtually every delegation—performed a key role in communicating in formal negotiations. Skilled rhetoricians did not speak on their own behalf; rather, the leaders for whom they spoke counseled them on the content of their talks. Leaders in most Native societies in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries relied on voluntary compliance for their authority. A speaker’s verbal abilities could make them quite influential both among their own nations and in the U.S., as the case of Red Jacket

shows. Red Jacket (Seneca) was the most famous speaker of his day and took part in at least eight capital delegations between 1792 and 1829.

A third, less easily discernible set of diplomats attended the capital with chiefs and orators: men identified by white documents as “warriors.” These delegates are perhaps more properly understood (in general) as politically aspiring young men, especially since most of them traveled on missions of peace and policy and not war. Others were not so young, but were not accorded the designation “chief” in the records. The seemingly vaguely defined responsibilities of “warriors” frustrated federal officials. American officers, like Europeans before them, tried to combat the dispersed and non-coercive authority of Native leaders by trying to appoint or “make” an individual into a solitary chief with whom to negotiate. Some so-called “warriors” who attended the capital may have been secondary leaders or heads of smaller towns—important to their own followers, but not recognizable to outsiders as prominent individuals.

Another frequent party in delegations, young boys, points to the persistence of Native diplomatic expectations and patterns of intercultural exchange that went back to the earliest interactions between Europeans and Natives. By the early nineteenth century,
however, boys brought to the capital for education were part of a one-sided exchange.\textsuperscript{36}

At this point, missionaries had established a host of schools in Native towns. Nevertheless, diplomats continued to bring young boys—frequently their own relatives—to the capital to receive an American education and confirm their nation’s good will toward and cooperation with the U.S.\textsuperscript{37}

The general absence of women from capital diplomacy, meanwhile, underscores a fundamental difference between frontier and capital negotiations. Women rarely attended the federal city, and the few who came were not women of authority. At home, women were part of political and diplomatic negotiations, as spectators, advisors, and symbols of peace, and also participated in hosting conference attendees.\textsuperscript{38} Historian Juliana Barr has shown how the presence of women was integral to peaceful diplomacy on the southwestern borderlands.\textsuperscript{39} The correlation between femininity and peace was not unique to the southwest. The Mohican diplomat Hendrick Aupaumut was challenged on his 1791 trip to the western confederacies for proclaiming to be on a mission of peace but travelling with only male companions. “If these Indians were upon good business, they

\textsuperscript{36} APS, Indian Committee. All of my evidence from those who accompanied envoys is for boys. Some girls were sent to be educated in Philadelphia with Quaker families, but their travel was arranged in other ways.

\textsuperscript{37} This practice can traced, by the English, back to Lane’s kidnapping of Manteo and Wanchese from Roanoke. Henry Spelman was sent to live among the Powhatan in an exchange in the early years of the Jamestown settlement, and the practice continued throughout the English settlements. It also occurred with other European nations, but English provided the most pressing precedent.

\textsuperscript{38} Theda Perdue, \textit{Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 36-39; Richter, \textit{Ordeal of the Longhouse}, 20-22, 39-44; Kathryn E. Holland Braund, \textit{Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 23; Barr, \textit{Peace Came in the Form of a Woman}. For particular discussions on Native women as advisors, see Cherokee beloved women and Iroquois matrons. Braund points to the role of Creek “Women of Note” in diplomacy with Europeans. On women as symbols of peace, see Barr’s work.

\textsuperscript{39} Barr, \textit{Peace Came in the Form of a Woman}. Barr illustrates the predominance of gendered constructs in diplomacy, particularly in showing how those moments when women acted as mediators of peace did not simply signal cross-cultural rapport but rather the predominance of Native codes of peace and war. Gendered codes of diplomacy serve in Barr’s work to illustrate the dominance of Native people on the Texas borderlands, from the central place of gender in the social, political and military understandings of various Native groups, to the presence and absence of women at diplomatic encounters and the volatile practice of taking women as captives.
would certainly follow the customs of all nations,” charged the Iroquois Molly Brant, pointing specifically to the gender of Aupaumut’s envoy, “they would have some women with them, but now they have none.”

Women did occasionally visit the capital, but deputations were most often entirely male. The general absence of Indian women on these diplomatic visits could be explained in a number of ways—Native men’s hesitance to bring women on such a long trip, the limited number of delegates traveling, or an expectation of a masculine setting in the national capital.

Natives could play more than one role, and sometimes over time they added responsibilities. Moreover, these responsibilities were mutable and often overlapping categories, as when a chief also served as the orator. Roles could change over time for delegates who attended multiple delegations. James McDonald, a Choctaw, was educated in Baltimore beginning in 1813. In 1818 he was sent to Washington to complete his education. After 3 years, he returned home by way of a legal internship in Ohio.

McDonald later traveled, in 1824, to the capital again, this time as a lawyer for the Choctaw deputation. The members of the actual delegations could also consist of different individuals than if the negotiations had happened on Native land, especially due to the time and hazards involved in long-distance travel. This constraint opened opportunities for some delegates to acquire influence as career diplomats, a novel

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41 Barr, Peace Came in the Form of a Woman; Perdue, Cherokee Women; Brooks, Captives and Cousins; Catherine Allgor, Parlor Politics. At the very least, this provides a counterpoint to the argument for the influence of women in the capital put forth by Allgor. Perdue explores how gender shaped the internal response of Cherokees to encounter and “civilization” by constructing divergent male and female approaches to change. Along with Barr, Brooks examines the gendered constructs of honor and shame, martial masculinity, and women as symbols of peace in intercultural interactions.

42 Herman J. Viola, Thomas L. McKenney, Architect of America’s Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830 (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1974), 40-41, 44-46, 127-34.
category of Native political actor—and an important and enduring legacy of the culture of diplomacy. Possibilities for carving out a career in Native diplomacy grew over time, as visits became increasingly common.

Interpreters—Native, white, or mixed-blood—were imperative to the workings of capital diplomacy. Although they seldom left their mark in sources, their importance was laid bare on those occasions when they were not present.43 The time and skill involved in acquiring the linguistic and cultural knowledge to be a successful translator contributed to the long tenure many of these men held, often visiting the capital on multiple occasions. Interpreters were quasi-state actors, federally employed under the supervision of the U.S. Indian agent. Often they were held in high esteem within their own nations, as in the case of Alexander Cornell. During preparations to set out for the capital in the early spring of 1817, the poor health of the Creek interpreter induced the delegates to suspend their “seting out til Mr. Cornells’s health should be restored.” Without Cornell, the Creeks were “unable to get an interpreter suitable for such a mission.” Indeed, later that spring Cornell “died on the road” on his way to a council within the nation, an event that the agent Benjamin Hawkins declared “a national loss.” An interpreter for the Creeks for decades, he had served in the capital in 1790 and 1805. Hawkins lauded his skill, writing that Cornell was “the only correct interpreter we have had, of high standing among his Chiefs, possessing the confidence of his nation, and worth by his correct deportment of ours.” Replacing such a man would be no small task, “as we have not his equal among

43 Interpreters’ names are often included on documents, but little about their role in delegations is apparent in the sources.
When the delegation arrived in 1817, it took two men to replace Cornell, George Lovett and Samuel Hawkins.

The case of interpreters also underscores the role of failed negotiations in capital diplomacy. Deputations that arrived in the capital without interpreters were ineffectual, as translators could not be procured in the capital itself. In the early years of the capital at Washington, three successive Chickasaw delegations arrived without interpreters—in 1800, 1801, and again in 1802. Unable to negotiate without translators however, these visits ended in frustration on both sides. Most delegations, however, did include interpreters, who were often recognized by both sides as official. While interpreters provide little evidence of their direct involvement, it was through their work that many of this project’s sources came into being.

Speeches are a rich and potentially complicated source for capital negotiations. For most delegations, their speeches to U.S. officials offer the only means to access their own words. But those speeches exist in the record because they were translated (generally by the official interpreter) and then recorded (likely by War Department clerks), creating multiple filters through which the original words passed. Some of the speeches may have been written “talks” instead, still translated and recorded, not necessarily given as a speech but rather as a missive. Though often removed in these ways from the speaker, Native speeches often represent the most direct evidence available. Many interpreters were quite adept, relaying not only the words but also the larger meanings of a talk. Such

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44 Benjamin Hawkins to William Crawford, April 2, 1816, SW IA LR, vol. 2, 28-31; James Seagrove to Alexander Cornell, February 20, 1793, PWD; President’s Talk to the Creeks, SW IA LS, vol. B, 154-60; National Intelligencer, Nov 8, 1805. Alexander Cornell was an interpreter by 1793. In 1805, he mentions a previous visit to the capital, which refers to 1790. Interpreting was a family profession for the Cornells, Joseph Cornell was interpreter for the 1790 delegation. Alexander was his nephew. Alexander’s son, Charles, would later visit the capital was part of 1819 delegation. Though not official interpreter, Charles was an important leader, and his language skills may have contributed to that. Lovett and Hawkins would serve in 1817, 1819, and 1820.
orations may well have gone through their own negotiation before being rendered in English. Describing the skills of the Creek interpreter Paddy Carr, Thomas McKenney explained that “as the substance of the harangues made on such occasions, by aboriginal diplomats, is usually matured by previous consultation, he [Carr] was probably well advised of the whole ground that would be taken” and was not translating on the spot.\(^{45}\)

White participants in the capital also differed from those who attended frontier or Indian country negotiations. Higher officials had more direct roles; the president and secretary of war were key participants in capital negotiations. On the frontier, by contrast, treaty commissioners convened and directed treaty conferences along with Indian agents. Because few treaties were signed in the capital, treaty commissioners were not necessary for capital negotiations.\(^{46}\) For those treaties concluded in the capital, the secretary of war served as treaty commissioner. While the secretary of war had greater authority than Indian agents and treaty commissioners in the federal government, he also had less familiarity with the local situation.\(^{47}\)

The President was central to capital diplomacy. As the head of the U.S., it was the chief executive that Native delegations trekked to see, to speak with, and—they hoped—to have remedy their grievances. For the President, Indian affairs were an important concern throughout the early republic, and every executive between 1789 and 1837 met with Native diplomats to exchange speeches; many also hosted Natives for dinner, social


\(^{46}\) Only 26 treaties were signed in the capital. The secretary of war served as commissioner for 14 of those, and the agent or territorial governor for the remaining 12. Prucha, *American Indian Treaties*, appendix B.

events, or national celebrations. The literature on Native people in the early republic demonstrates that Indians, and those officials who engaged with Indian peoples, referred to the President as the “great white father.” This dissertation seeks to ground that relationship by examining how frequently Indian peoples and the president interacted directly, tracing the meanings and experiences of those interactions, and showing how those interactions in turn shaped and reflected broader relations between Natives and the federal government in the early republic. The evidence from Native diplomats suggests a decided shift over the course of the period. Whereas early in the period, Native delegates appealed directly to the “great white father” to resolve grievances, by the 1820s and 1830s, diplomats directed their petitions to Congress. This is an important change that scholarship, particularly that which deals with the “great white father,” has yet to address.

A variety of other federal actors participated in shaping the culture of diplomacy, most notably those attached to the War Department. Of necessity, this project has relied heavily on the records of the War Department, so it is worth providing a brief sketch of the department and its document base. War Department records take three distinct forms during the period of 1789-1837. In November 1800, the War Office burned, destroying all of the department’s papers dating back to its beginning in 1784. Fortuitously, a recent

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48 As Daniel Usner has recently pointed out in his article on President John Adams, some presidents’ relations with and ideas about Native people have been under-studies. Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson have received the most attention for their Indian policies. However, even Usner underplays Adams’ interactions with Native diplomats during his presidency. Ten deputations negotiated with President Adams at Washington City during his single term, though the only delegations discussed by Usner are the Creek 1790 visit during Washington’s administration and the Cherokee visit in 1801, during Jefferson’s first term. Daniel H. Usner, “‘A Savage Feast they Made of It’: John Adams and the Paradoxical Origins of Federal Indian Policy,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 607-641.

49 In turn, the president and federal officials viewed Native people within the U.S. boundaries as their “red children.” On the idea of the “Great Father,” see Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986). There is a bast literature that employs the concept of the “Great Father.” For instance, see the preface in the Red River Books edition of Ronald Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001 [1975]).
project to recover the destroyed papers from other archives in an online database—
compiling letters, speeches, and assorted documents of the War Department—has made it possible to trace the origins of the culture of diplomacy between 1789 and 1800. From 1800 to 1824, all letters relating to Native people delivered to and departing from the War Department were categorized under Indian Affairs. This project has examined all of these letters. Finally, in 1824, the department was reorganized. The first Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Thomas McKenney, was appointed to oversee the new Office of Indian Affairs (still housed in the War Department). In the new set up, letters were noted in general registers and then filed by superintendency and agency. The general registers of all correspondence between 1824 and 1837 have been consulted for this dissertation, as well as select communications from the superintendencies and agencies.

Other federal bodies also engaged with Native diplomats, and this dissertation employs their records when possible. Congress played an increasingly central role in the culture of diplomacy, which is documented in the American State Papers’ volumes regarding Indian Affairs (through 1827), containing reports, letters, and speeches. Published records of congressional debates proved invaluable for identifying Native memorials submitted to Congress. Financial information has been cobbled from various sources including Trade and Intercourse reports, Financial Division requisition records. Other financial information was included in the papers of the War Department, described above.

Private correspondence and diaries of federal officials, particularly the president and secretary of war, but also a variety of other officials from agents to congressmen, cast additional light on the social and informal aspects of capital negotiations.

50 Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800, wardepartmentpapers.org (hereafter PWD); “The War Department and Indian Affairs, 1800-1824,” United States, War Department, United States and National Archives and Records Administration, Gale Cengage Learning, http://gdc.gale.com/archivesunbound (hereafter SW IA LS and SW IA LR – letters sent and letters received).
51 Other financial information was included in the papers of the War Department, described above.
This project also explores the role of the public in the culture of diplomacy. The presence of numerous and diverse white Americans around Native delegations in the capital marked another point of distinction from frontier negotiations, when the public primarily meant Native people. In the capital and other eastern cities through which delegations passed, the white public served both as spectators and actors. Capital newspapers advertised the comings and goings of Native diplomats, printed speeches and letters, and inserted stray observations about Natives currently in town.\[^{52}\] Newspapers throughout the U.S. also reported when delegations traveled through their towns and cities heading to or returning from the seat of government. Reprinted articles from the capital press about the activities and popularity of diplomats were common. Men and women recorded personal encounters with Native diplomats in their diaries, journals, and familiar correspondence, noting not only descriptions of visiting diplomats but also their reactions to the indigenous people in their midst.

While white voices predominate in this study, official and other white-produced sources offer some clues as to the views of Native diplomats. There are, however, some exclusively indigenous documents that provide less filtered access to Native voices. Beyond the speeches recorded in the federal archive, Native diplomats and leaders—all too infrequently—produced personal and public correspondence and print media. In addition to American newspapers, the Cherokee Nation ran its own press, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, beginning in 1828. Its descriptions of delegations (Cherokees and others)

\[^{52}\] For each capital paper on *America’s Historical Newspapers*, I employed keyword searches for each year for general terms used in noting delegations (delegation, deputation, Indian, chief, and the phrase “now in this city”) as well as specific searches for each year for Nations that visited that year and the names of any individuals—Natives, agents, or other officials—who participated in the delegation. Strategic searches were made for certain delegations who visited other cities or passed through known cities on their travels to and from the capital.
complement American newspaper accounts. More prominent Native Americans in the early republic also provide insight into the culture of diplomacy. Indeed, two well-educated and elegant writers—Alexander McGillivray (Creek) and John Ross (Cherokee)—bookend this study. In between, assorted chiefs penned scattered missives, though none left as deep a documentary trace as McGillivray and Ross. Included among this scattered communication were letters of instruction from Native councils to delegates and, by 1820, Native petitions to Congress, all examples of Native authorship.

“Capital Negotiations” examines, and is structured around, the central elements of the culture of diplomacy. The first two chapters identify the roots of capital diplomacy and how visits were initiated in the early republic, before turning to the process of traveling to the capital. Chapters Three and Four reconstruct the routines and milieu of capital diplomacy—the speeches, spectacles, and spaces of negotiation. The final chapter focuses on changes in the culture of diplomacy over the course of the 1820s and 1830s.

Chapter One begins in the 1780s with an array of federal officials, traders, and other Natives setting out to introduce the new American government to Native communities and leaders. The position and person of the president as well as the site of the federal government were incorporated into Native understandings of diplomacy in ways that shaped indigenous expectations for their relation to the federal government. Native leaders quickly learned about changes in the governmental structure of the United States in 1789 from Native and white informants and government officials. Federal officials used longstanding kinship metaphors to introduce their first president, George
Washington, as the Great Father. The language used by federal officials on the ground to introduce the Great Father contributed to Native notions of the president a figure who would arbitrate disputes and possessed both might and benevolence. Closely linked to ideas of the presidency were those of the seat of government itself. Native people drew on their own ideas of space and diplomacy to make sense of the federal capital.

Chapter One also contemplates federal and Native reasons to initiate capital negotiations. The decision to visit the seat of government and meet with the president was not taken lightly. Whether in response to a federal invitation, or upon their own initiative, Native diplomats journeyed to the seat of government to solidify alliances, discuss treaties, or lodge grievances against American citizens. Natives themselves initiated plans to visit the Great Father based on their expectations of his ability to assist them, journeying great distances to seek resolution to their concerns, issues, or questions. As following chapters will show, however, delegations often were forced to reassess their expectations once they arrived in the capital and interacted with federal officials.

Travel in the early republic was fraught with danger, but as Chapter Two shows, Native diplomats undertook long journeys—in both time and distance—to negotiate in the capital. Indeed, delegations often spent more time on the road than they did in the capital city. This chapter centers on the experience of travel. Native diplomats’ incorporated their sojourns to the capital into indigenous ideas about movement and distance, particularly through rhetoric of hazard and risk. Before treating in the capital, Native leaders had to deliberate the purpose of the trip, select the right men, obtain passports and make other preparations, then spend weeks traveling by horseback, stage,

53 Washington was a metaphorical father outside of Native negotiations as well. For more on Washington as a father figure see François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington’s Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
wagon, boat, or train. Advances in the technology of travel in the early decades of the nineteenth century mitigated some of the time and danger of long-distance travel. But technology could cut both ways; while steamboats sped movement along eastern seaboard and western rivers, steam technology was prone to accidents and explosions. Federal officials were also concerned about Native travel, but this stemmed more from white officials’ ability (or lack thereof) to control the size, cost, and timing of Native delegations. The entire experience of negotiating in the capital occurred not only in New York, Philadelphia, or Washington City, but also along Natives’ literal and figurative routes to the capital.

Chapter Three examines the physical and material performances of diplomacy. From public spectacles to personal sartorial choices, both Natives and white Americans contributed to the cultural performances that constituted capital negotiations. Federal officials used Native visits to the capital to impress Indians with the advantages of “civilization.” The symbolic presentations through which they did so point to the entanglement of Native history and urban history. Native delegations contributed their own cultural displays in the form of song and dance, public parades, and personal presentation. The city itself was an essential part of U.S. performance, and this chapter emphasizes how the move to Washington City in 1800 crippled federal officials’ ability to perform the sociocultural routine as it had developed in New York and Philadelphia. Washington’s limitations as an urban and cultural center led officials to look elsewhere to show American society to visiting diplomats. Many Native envoys were thus sent on circuits of eastern cities. Through these excursions Native leaders and everyday urban Americans interacted and had opportunities to adjust their perceptions of each other.
Native deputations also met foreign visitors and dignitaries and interacted with a range of Americans beyond federal officials, such as the St. Tammany Society in New York and Quakers in Philadelphia.

Turning to the more formal and substantive elements of diplomacy, Chapter Four traces the development of the diplomatic culture created by the president, secretary of war, and Native diplomats. Forged in the 1790s, when federal officials felt compelled by border struggles and violence to accommodate powerful Native nations, the protocols that they developed in the capital drew heavily on Native customs. Employing the rhetoric and imagery of the Great Father, federal officials and Native diplomats developed and reinforced a culture of diplomacy laden with Native oratorical styles, diplomatic gifts, and expectations of hospitality. These practices were also sources of negotiation and tension. Nevertheless, even as the U.S. grew in size and power through the early republic, federal officials retained Native coded rhetoric and protocol in diplomacy, demonstrating the mutuality and durability of the culture of diplomacy in form if not always in intention.

Finally, Chapter Five addresses changes to the formal routines of negotiation. By 1820, Native diplomats had developed an archive of experience from their visits to the seat of government, which they used to begin expanding their political strategies. Faced with white encroachment and the threat of wholesale removal, Native diplomats found the president-centric diplomacy of earlier years insufficient and used their familiarity with the capital and the workings of the national government to turn to Congress, strategic allies, and the American public in their attempts to successfully achieve their Nations’ goals. In petitioning Congress and reaching beyond the Great Father and the
War Office, Native diplomats expanded and altered the diplomatic script in ways that made them increasingly visible to capital denizens and the American public.

By 1837, capital negotiations involved an increasingly distinct group of Native diplomats with a store of knowledge to utilize on behalf of their nations. They continued to treat with the president and secretary of war, who had made up the core of negotiations in 1790. Nevertheless, their itineraries more frequently included engagements with congressmen, lawyers and judges, and other influential allies, as well as the reading public. As they had throughout the period, residents of the capital and Native delegations encountered each other in the streets, drawing rooms, and theatres of the capital to participate in the bilateral performances and spectacles that constituted capital diplomacy. After 1800, however, many of these social performances took place at a distance from the political negotiations of the capital, as federal officials encouraged Native diplomats to visit the U.S.’s most populous and impressive cities. Remaining constant for each delegation was the fact that, from inception to completion, every part of the process was subject to negotiation.
Chapter 1:
“He will be your father, and you will be his children”: Introducing the President, Developing the Great Father

In the first decade and a half of the early republic, federal officials and Native emissaries participated in the elaboration of an embryonic culture of diplomacy in the United States’ capital that focused on the production of a shared political language. The metaphors and rhetoric of U.S.-Native diplomacy was not created anew. But, as each party employed laden terms like “father” or “children” that defined their relationship, and “council fire” or “white city” that delineated the place of negotiations, they worked towards formulating the particular boundaries and expectations of their specific affiliations.

At the core of the diplomatic culture was the notion of the “Great Father,” a concept through which Native people understood, and white officials sought to portray, transformations in the U.S. government from the Confederation Congress to the federal constitution and the new figure of the president. By considering how the language of the Great Father was employed particularly introducing and initiating capital diplomacy, this project emphasizes the role of face to face interactions between ‘father’ and ‘children’ rather then distant and disembodied rhetoric.

Beginning in 1789, Natives and white Americans alike spread information about the capital, along with word of the president. American citizens and American Indians both imbued political and ceremonial sites with particular ideas, and the chapter begins with their notions of and ideological investments in the federal capital in the 1790s. Natives and federal officials both brought preconceived notions to their understanding of what made a seat of government. The development of a diplomatic culture was
inextricable from the concept of the federal capital as a symbolically invested site, even if those symbols differed for whites and Native diplomats. For negotiating parties the “white city,” and “great council fire,” terms used in formal speeches, represented more than oratorical ploys.

Building from the rhetorical groundwork that introduced the president and capital, the chapter will then demonstrate how the language of the Great Father shaped the expectations of Native leaders in their affiliation with the United States. The perpetuation of this language by Natives and white Americans over time contributed to particular, if at times conflicting, ideas of the relationship between the Great Father and his children. Meanwhile, the proliferation of this language across the continent informed capital negotiations in the early republic, conditioning Native expectations of a personal relationship with a powerful and benevolent president who could and would protect their interests.

Acting on these beliefs, both Native people and federal officials deemed it vital for indigenous diplomats to visit the capital and the president. Yet initiating such envoys was frequently a delicate business. Federal officials tried, with often limited success, to control the process of convening Native leaders in the capital. Section four moves beyond the 1790s in order to encompass the spurt of invitations to Washington that captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark issued in 1804, 1805, and 1806 as they introduced the Great Father to the indigenous nations along the Missouri River.

The paternalist language used by U.S. bureaucrats to introduce the presidency was freighted with possible pitfalls. The final section considers the latent risks embedded in
the rhetoric of invitation and introduction that posited the president, as a figure of, and his seat as a locus of, paternalism, peace, and power.

Unlike entrenched European capitals with established court protocols, the incipient culture of the federal capital was malleable. Native visitors contributed to formulating the etiquette of capital diplomacy as they interpreted white American’s descriptions of the U.S. government, by initiating, rejecting, or accepting invitations to the seat of government, and by articulating their expectations and fears to the president and federal officials.

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Familial metaphors predominated in Native as well as colonial officials’ rhetoric in the Americas and did not themselves represent a novel development in United States-Indian relations. Yet just because the same metaphors were employed did not mean that they conveyed the same messages in all times and places. Native nations used familial and gendered metaphors in diplomacy among themselves as well as with European empires before the American Revolution. Elder brother, younger brother, uncle, nephew, grandfather, and sometimes father all were terms used to designate particular relationships among (and sometimes within) Native nations. Relative power, as conveyed through these metaphors could refer, as Nancy Shoemaker notes, to “military victory, population size, and more ancient claims to territory.” Particular relations, like that of an elder brother to a younger, or an uncle to nephew, entitled the elder or higher ranking relation to deference from, though not control over, the lesser ranking.

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Iroquoian and southeastern peoples relied on kinship metaphors that were inflected by their own matrilineal societies, but diplomatic relations with patrilineal Europeans gradually adjusted the shared language of diplomacy and alliance, adding, or at least making more visible, the language of father and children. Father, in relation to the English at least, referred not to the colonial officials on the ground, but to the king across the water.\textsuperscript{56} In the Great Lakes region, Native peoples also participated in diplomatic overtures as children, having developed a functional and rhetorical relationship as children of Onontio, who, as governor, was the on-the-ground representative of the king of France. Here, and in other relationships, the original diplomatic figure’s name became a title—Onontio, Onas, Assaryquoa—that was passed along to all successors.\textsuperscript{57} The transformation in some colonial-Native situations from brother-brother to father-son diplomatic metaphors seems more related to the exchange of trade and commodities than military prowess or population, though the latter continued to inform diplomacy.\textsuperscript{58}

Nevertheless, the particular relationship that developed after 1789 was unique as the president was a relatively accessible head of state. The British and French kings had been—and remained—principally abstracted figures upon their thrones across the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{59} Congress, while closer, was an assembly of revolving delegates.\textsuperscript{60} The formal talks, casual chatter, stray remarks, and terms in letters and notes that constituted the

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\textsuperscript{56} White, \textit{Middle Ground}, 306 \\
\textsuperscript{58} Shoemaker, “An Alliance between Men,” 253. \\
\textsuperscript{59} For diplomatic visits to London, see Alden T. Vaughan, \textit{Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006). \\
\end{flushleft}
conversation about the political relationship between Indians and Americans in the 1780s crystallized a diplomatic idiom. Going forward, this language of negotiation, which drew on terms and metaphors from discrete languages and cultures to define the new federal government and its relationship with Native peoples, became the main mode of communication between those nations. Facilitating dialogue between societies with widely varying political structures and cultures, capital diplomacy was a product of constant negotiation and revision, one that allowed indigenous envoys and federal officials to engage in a shared as well as contested diplomatic relationship.

From the close of the Revolutionary War, Congress valued open communication with Native nations along or within their claimed borderers, and endeavored to keep indigenous leaders abreast of changes in the United States. When Congress determined in April 1783 to make “Indian Affairs” the exclusive domain of the Congress through the War Department, it further resolved to suspend “offensive hostilities,” and that “immediate measures be taken to communicate the same to the several tribes.” As peace was negotiated with Britain, Congress further decided to “take the most effectual measures to inform the several Indian nations, on the frontiers of the United States, that preliminary articles of peace have been agreed on,” and “to communicate to them that the forts within the United States, and in possession of the British troops, will speedily be evacuated.”

News of the official peace travelled quickly, but direct negotiations between the new United States and the Indian nations on its troubled borders proceeded more slowly. In a letter to General Andrew Pickens, treaty commissioner for the Southern Tribes in the

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fall of 1785, the Creek leader Alexander McGillivray complained, “when we found that the American independency was confirmed by the peace, we expected that the new Government would soon have taken some steps to makeup the differences that subsisted between them and the Indians.” Instead, the Creeks had been left to sort out their differences with the state of Georgia directly. When Congress finally sent officials to negotiate peace with the Creeks in 1787, the Commissioners distinguished themselves from state officials, explaining they were “sent here by the great council which, in peace and war, directs the affairs of all the thirteen united nations of white men.”

Natives were indeed familiar with the real and rhetorical delineations between local, state, and national authority, even if it could be expedient at times to conflate various tiers of American actions. In the late 1780s, backcountry militias stirred up trouble for Indians and federal leaders, ratcheting up the cycles of violence in the region. Rather than conceiving these acts as monolithic acts of American aggression, Indians along the Wabash differentiated between backcountry militias and federal troops, even as local and state militias asserted broad powers. Conflicting actions of white Americans was an issue in the Northwest Territories as well as in existing or soon-to-be established states. In the south, for instance, the Creeks concluded that they would “prepare . . . to meet the commissions of Congress,” who, unlike the Georgians they detested, would, they hoped, settle their differences “with that liberality and justice, worthy of the men who have so gloriously asserted the cause of liberty and independency.” Expressing hope,

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63 Pickens, along with Benjamin Hawkins, Joseph Martin, and Lachlan MacIntosh, oversaw the 1785 treaties of Hopewell (Pickens’ plantation) with the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws. Though the treaty was not concluded with the Creeks, the commissioners and Creek leaders were in contact. Alexander McGillivray to Andrew Pickens, Little Tallassie, September 5, 1785, ASP, vol. 5, 1:17-18. Italics mine.
64 James White, April 10, 1787, ASP, vol. 5, 1:22. Italics mine.
65 White, Middle Ground, 427-429.
they noted, “we shall in future consider them as brethren and defenders of the land.”

This capacity to discern differences between official and unofficial actions and to compartmentalize local and national problems likely kept violence from exploding in border regions.

In the southeast, the Creeks’ stance toward negotiation with Congress suggests why a culture of capital negotiations so quickly took shape in the early republic. In the final months of the Confederation, McGillivray positioned Congress as the pinnacle of U.S. government, and assumed that it would “find” the Georgians as “obstinate and intractable” in their efforts to obtain and settle on Creek lands as did the Creeks. Indeed, for McGillivray, as for many Native leaders, a centralized federal government was appealing for many reasons. The revolution had taught the lesson that the colonies/states would ally with each other and could not be handled separately. While relationships with state governors were important, the ability to treat with a central national authority could facilitate negotiation, if not always ensure positive results.

In April 1789, the newly inaugurated President Washington and his secretary of war, Henry Knox, were concerned over the competing powers—Native and European—along the nation’s frontiers. As Washington took office, both Britain and Spain remained firmly planted along U.S. borders, retaining forts and settlements. Powerful Indian nations and confederacies—to the north, south, and west—harbored resentments from the Revolution and from treaties extracted by Congress or individual states through the 1780s. Furthermore, federal authorities had some concern regarding the loyalties of those

settlers who pushed west from the states into the Cumberland and Ohio valleys. Although federal officials may have believed their own ultimate claim to Indian lands, they were concerned about the smooth settlement of those lands to which they sought title. Frontier warfare was a genuine threat that both Washington and Knox worried would tarnish the new nation’s reputation and ring up costs in both money and men.

To control the troublesome border regions, President Washington requested reports on the situation of Indian affairs from both the Northern and Southern departments. The reports from Knox were grim. Under the Confederation Congress, treaties of peace and cession had been negotiated with the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws at Hopewell, South Carolina, but as late as 1790, no U.S. treaty had been established with the Creeks. Despite various attempts to promote a positive rapport with the Creeks, Congress had witnessed relations in the south deteriorate over the course of the 1780s. Knox declared Georgia a war-zone, and the deep stack of documents that accompanied the report was evidence that attempts to remedy the discord were inadequate. The packet of letters, going back to 1785, exuded frustrations on all sides as officials—U.S., Georgian, and Creek—stubbornly clung to their disparate visions for the southeast.

70 For Creeks during the Revolution, see David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967). Following the Revolution, in 1783, 1785, and 1786, Georgia had negotiated treaties with a minority faction of the still divided Creeks. These treaties re-established trade and ceded over 800 square miles between the Oconee and Ogeehee Rivers to Georgia. However, the signatories were not representative of the majority of Creeks. Particularly discontented by the cession of lands at Augusta was McGillivray, who opposed negotiations with the state but favored diplomatic relations with Congress. Congress sent a commission to negotiate with the Creeks and soothe the dissatisfaction in the region since the 1783 treaty, but it was unsuccessful.
Relations with Native nations to the north and west proved similarly unsettled. Through the 1780s, Congress had negotiated treaties with the Six Nations, Delawares, Wyandots, Chippewas, Ottawas, and Shawnees. These treaties signified attempts to solidify claims to land nominally acquired from Britain in 1783: at Fort Stanwix in 1784, Fort McIntosh in 1785, and on the Great Miami in 1786. Rather than settling anything, however, these treaties drew the United States further into conflict with the various nations of the Ohio. Unable to dominate the region’s Native or white settler populations, the U.S. government lacked the ability to assert federal control of the Ohio. Among Native towns and villages, frustration at the influx of settlers, coupled with the brash treaty policies of the U.S. government, mounted throughout the decade. As Washington took office, the Ohio region was a powder keg waiting for a spark. The “Northwestern Tribes,” or “Western Indians”—Miamis, Pottawatomies, Shawnees, Delawares, Weas, Piankashaws, and Kickapoos—grew discontented with Congress and the continuing flood of westering settlers. By summer 1789, violence along the Wabash no longer was limited to war parties and militias; it overspread its banks to involve the American army, forcing the new president to fix his attention on the turbulent Northwest.\footnote{White, \textit{Middle Ground}, 413-432; Francis Paul Prucha, \textit{The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 17.} As in the Southeast, Washington eagerly sought a new relationship between the United States and the Western Indians. Capital visits would prove to be a useful tool in the process of renovating frayed relations.

While Washington slogged through Knox’s reports about the Indians, indigenous nations were also assaying the changes on their frontiers, keeping themselves up-to-date on the transformations within the American government. They did so through established
networks of traders, officials, and Native and white travelers. Because these networks depended largely on oral communication, it is difficult to point to the first moment that news of any particular political development reached Native peoples and leaders. However, Native people were well aware of changes of policy in the American states. Native leaders had a major stake in staying abreast of political and diplomatic changes among their neighbors, allies, and enemies, which by 1789 meant the United States, in particular.

Reportage of the new government under the Constitution was rapidly—especially for the time—disseminated. McGillivray was attuned to the changing structure of the United States government, identifying which channels were most important to his nation in redressing grievances. Eager to be informed, he pumped his correspondents for updates, writing that he would “be glad to be favored with an account, when convenient, soon after the meeting of the new Congress, and in what manner the new constitution is finally settled.” Even before Washington’s formal inauguration, treaty commissioners Andrew Pickens and H. Osborne informed Creeks of the fundamental change brought about by the new constitution: “We are now governed by a President, who is like the old King over the great water.” Other commissioners sent to treat with the southern Indians in September 1789 further spread the word of the transformed federal government. They dispatched “talks,” the colloquial term for speeches with Natives, from Savannah to the Chickasaws and Choctaws that “a new and great council fire is kindled.” By September,

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74 Alexander McGillivray to Andrew Moor, Little Tallassie, January 4, 1789, ASP, vol. 5, 1:19.

75 “To the Head-men, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Creek Nation,” April 20, 1790, ASP, vol. 5, 1:31.
the commissioners’ announcement likely was old news. Trade and travel networks throughout the southeast circulated the information rapidly. A mere nineteen days after Washington was inaugurated, at a Cherokee council at Chota, the Tickagiska King addressed a “talk” to the new president, explaining the Cherokees “hear[d] that Congress have got strong powers now, and nothing can be spoiled that you undertake to do.”

Taking action on the announcement of a new U.S. leader, Native chiefs began to build a rapport with him. The Chota council delegated, Nontuaka (the Northward) and Kasohanse to visit the president in person. Tickagiska King introduced them to Washington, writing “we send some of our head-men and warriors to you with talk, and to represent the case and circumstances of our nation.” The Cherokees hoped to settle ongoing violence with North Carolinians over the region between the Holston and French Broad rivers. Unfortunately for both parties, little could be accomplished. North Carolina had yet to ratify the Constitution, leaving federal administrators no room to act in the region. A dialogue, however, was opened. Nontuaka at least found the visit cordial, if not able to achieve his ends, and visited the capital at Philadelphia in 1792 with a larger party in another attempt to resolve their grievances, and again in 1795.

Reports from inaugural capital diplomats also circulated news of the nascent federal government. Chinabee, a Natchez, arrived at Estanaloee in the Cherokee Nation in 1791, just prior to the departure of a Cherokee delegation for Philadelphia. He brought a message from the Creeks to be carried to the president by the Cherokees. He also encouraged the Cherokees with tales of the successful Creek visit to the capital a year

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76 “At a Great Talk held by the warriors and chiefs of the Cherokee Nation,” May 19, 1789, ASP, vol. 5, 1:57.
77 Tickagiska King [to George Washington], May 19, 1789, ASP, vol. 5, 1:57.
78 Nichols, Red Gentlemen, 63-66.
earlier. While not recorded, it is also likely he passed along information about the journey, President Washington, and the capital itself. For their part, the Cherokees did not need to rely on the Creeks for affirmation that visiting the capital was worthwhile: Nontuaka and Kasohanse, both Cherokee, had been the first Indians to visit the new president.

Others did not always get news of the federal government as easily as did the Creeks and Cherokees. On the western side of the Appalachians in 1789, the Mohawk Joseph Brant, a man who kept abreast of political news on many fronts, appears to have remained unaware of the new federal government for over a month. A letter Brant wrote in late May near Detroit was still addressed “to the Congress of the United States of America.” He soon learned of the changes. Less than a fortnight later, and fewer than two months after Washington’s inauguration, Brant his signature to a letter to the president drafted back in Iroquoia at Buffalo Creek, indicating that he had been brought up to date on developments in the capital. Natives quickly came to know about a new figure of power, the president.

The ways in which Natives utilized Great Father ideology and language to frame their expectations are well represented in the talk of Bloody Fellow. Speaking on behalf of the Cherokees in 1792, Bloody Fellow articulated expectations for their visit that hewed closely to the relationship Knox and Washington hoped to establish. Bloody Fellow explained that the Cherokees were at their wits’ end with the governor of North Carolina, who had been pressing them for land cessions. “Finding Governor Blount still urging the sale of lands, I told him I was desirous of going to General Washington and

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80 Visit of Cherokee Delegation, January 7, 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:204-05.
81 Correspondence of Joseph Brant, May 23, 1789, PWD.
Congress, to see whether I could not obtain better satisfaction,” he told Washington. Expecting protection from the Great Father, Bloody Fellow proceeded to lay out the troubles of the Cherokees with the North Carolinians. In the end, his expectations of the Great Father and the risk of traveling to the capital were fulfilled: “We came to Philadelphia with our eyes full of tears. But since we have seen General Washington, and heard him speak through you,” he told Knox, “our tears are wiped away, and we rejoice in the prospect of our future welfare, under the protection of Congress.”

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The most important site for working out face-to-face diplomacy became the American capital. Native people incorporated their understandings of these changes in the structure of American government in both the person—the president—and the place—the capital. Attention therefore now turns to white and Native ideas about the capital as a locus of political power, before turning to conceptions of the American executive. When officials informed Native people in 1789 that “a new and great council fire is kindled at our beloved city of New York,” a tangle of ideas, white and indigenous, were brought into conversation. Native people carried diverse understandings of political sites to the American capital. Americans added to the mix quickly evolving expectations of how their capital could best manifest republican ideals. These expectations accrued new layers of meaning through dialogue among white and Native diplomats, as Natives visited the capital and as the capital itself changed.

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82 Visit of Cherokee Delegation, January 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:203-06.
83 “A Message to the Chickasaw nation of Indians, from the commissioners plenipotentiary for restoring and establishing peace and amity between the United States of America and all the Indian nations situated within the limits of the said States, southward of the river Ohio,” September 13, 1789, ASP, vol. 5, 1:69-70.
Native groups possessed long and varied histories of civic centers from which to draw. Early-contact southeastern chiefdoms had a central ceremonial town, typically located on high ground at an advantageous alluvial site. While these sites declined by the late-eighteenth-century, southeastern towns continued to be built around public ceremonial plazas and buildings. Creek plazas contained a town house or rotunda, a square ground or summer council house, and a chunkey yard (a carefully maintained space for playing chunkey, a common game in the southeast). Town houses were large structures, commonly twenty-five feet across and as many tall, some even larger. Creeks situated their town house and square ground opposite each other with the chunkey yard between the two forming the central axis of the town. Cherokee towns also possessed a townhouse and plaza that were venues for community activities including dances, town councils, war rituals, and diplomacy. Cherokee town houses were large enough to host as many as 500 people. Summer council houses, or square grounds, were composed of a series of four open buildings around a square, standing only one story, around thirty feet long. As historian Charles Hudson explains, these central public buildings were sites “to settle grievances among members … [to] give audience to ambassadors and strangers, and to consult and plan activities such as agriculture and the construction of new buildings,” as well as for spaces for public celebrations—feasts, dances, and other communal activities. In the north, large council houses, built to accommodate guests and gatherings, were central features in Iroquois towns as well.84

Native peoples also recognized particular towns as nodes of political activity and diplomacy. As southeastern nations coalesced into more centralized political groups,

certain towns became more prominent at a national level. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Tuckabatchee and Coweta had developed into “divisional capitals” for the Upper and Lower Creeks.85 The Chickasaws, meanwhile, had principal towns at Big Town/Chuckalissa and Long Town.86 Northerners also constructed towns to serve as political and diplomatic centers. Among the Iroquois, individual nations were oriented to their own towns of influence, while the confederacy recognized Onondaga as its capital.87

Color was a key element in the formation of Native capital towns. In the southeast, red, black, and white held particular significance. Red was associated with war, blood, and the sun; black with death; white with peace, purity, and old age. Among various southeastern cultures, towns were assigned symbolic colors that imbued those towns with particular characteristics. Red towns provided leadership in matters of war; for example, war parties departed from red towns. White towns among the Creeks, and particularly beloved white towns among the Cherokee, were places associated with peace, social harmony, and sanctuary.88 Color thus represented an important aspect in how Natives experienced and interpreted the built environment. When in 1787 McGillivray informed commissioners sent by Congress that “your coming from the white town (seat of Congress) has raised great expectations that you will remove the principal, and almost only cause of our disputes,” he imposed on the commissioners the imaginative link to the consensus he hoped for by ascribing to the capital the role of a white town, a

87 Jennings, _Iroquois Diplomacy_, 221.
88 For analysis of color symbolism and dual organization in southeastern culture, see Hudson, _Southeastern Indians_, chapters 3 and 4; Ethridge, _Creek Country_, 94-95.
space of peace and social harmony. The Cherokee chief Bloody Fellow did the same five years later at Philadelphia when in his speech to Knox he recalled Nontuaka’s 1789 visit “to New York, to the great beloved man, at the great white house.”

While color symbolism resonated in the northeast, traditional council fires, not white towns, were the venue for congresses of peace. The council fire was central, literally, to negotiations—conferring parties sat on opposite sides of the fire as orators gave speeches, wampum, and gifts back and forth. Business was often informally conducted “in the bushes,” so that consensus and ceremony could reign in formal deliberations. Conferences followed an intricate series of cultural protocols, and while councils could convene anywhere, ones involving multiple Iroquois towns generally met at Onondaga, while conventions with members of the Covenant Chain assembled at Albany. Making the national capital the site of Iroquois-U.S. relations established a new map of diplomacy, prying authority away from New York. For federal officials, who struggled against states—especially New York and Georgia—to assert sole control over Indian affairs in the early republic, hosting Iroquois or Creek ambassadors in Philadelphia was a coup in more ways than one.

Just as Native diplomats drew from a broad set of cultural references in interpreting the new federal capital, American officials utilized their experiences with Native people in order to articulate what they thought Indians wanted to hear. Though well versed in Iroquois rhetoric, Col. Marinus Willett, secret envoy to the Creeks, did his

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92 The Covenant Chain began as a pact of peace between the Iroquois Six Nations and Dutch settlers. For its evolution in Iroquois-American diplomacy, see Jennings, Iroquois Diplomacy; Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse.
best to adopt a more southern dialect when inviting that nation to the capital in 1790.

Willett initiated his speech with an explanation: “I am come to you from our beloved town by order of our beloved chief, George Washington, to invite you to a treaty of peace and friendship at a council fire in our beloved city.” Rufus Putnam, appointed by President Washington as an emissary of peace to the North Western tribes, introduced himself to the Indians of the Eel River and Wabash in the Ohio country in 1792: “I am on my way to you from the great council fire of the United States, where the great and good chief, General Washington, resides.”

Both Native diplomats and federal officials articulated the importance of place in diplomatic negotiations. In 1792 Knox further explicated the importance of convening at the capital, informing several Seneca chiefs at Alleghany that “we should like them to be present at the proposed meetings” in Philadelphia “so that all our proceedings may be marked with the highest openness and truth.” When Seneca and Tuscarora ambassadors arrived in the capital in 1801, acting Secretary of War Samuel Dexter greeted them with thanks to “the great Spirit that he has vouchsafed to you his protection on your long journey to the great Council Fire of the United States at this place.” Red Jacket’s reply the following day explained that they had come because the “commissioner from the Fifteen Fires of the United States” had assured the Iroquois that “whensoever by any grievances the chain of friendship should become rusty we might have it brightened by calling on you.” As diplomacy and place were linked for the Iroquois, who had conducted their brightening of the Covenant Chain at Albany, the American capital

95 Knox to the New Arrow, Cornplanter, Big-Log, and other Seneca chiefs, Feb. 10, 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:228.
96 Correspondence of Red Jacket, SW IA LS, vol. A, 9, 12.
became incorporated into the diplomatic map as the site at which to conduct negotiations with the young United States.

Native diplomats, however, were not the only ones interested in imbuing the capital with symbolic weight. With the transition from a confederation to a federal system, the capital, as a projection of centralized federal power, acquired greater significance. As citizens of a nascent, experimental, and now federal nation, Americans expressed strong ideas about their seat of government. The capital of the United States would be a physical manifestation and representation of the nation’s republican government. Beginning in 1790, when Congress passed the Residence Act, federal officials worked to design a capital that, they expected, would embody their expectations. The designers of Washington City wanted to create an impression of grandeur—to make the city physically and visually fulfill its symbolic role as foremost in the nation. Through the medium of grand architectural statements, men like Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and city designer/architect Charles L’Enfant sought, according to historian Laura Kamoie, to have Washington City “reflect important ideas of the new government: national union, government of and by the people, equal access to all Americans, individual liberty, the good of the whole, virtue, justice, and freedom from tyranny.”

Classical architecture best portrayed the republican ideal for these men, and federal buildings were erected to fulfill that vision. The city’s layout also expressed its republican politics—the Capitol, Congress’ seat, was granted the most dominant position in the city. Centrally located on a rise, the Capitol claimed a spot of preeminence for the

representatives of the people. The president’s house, to the west, was spatially linked to
the capitol by the mall, which L’Enfant intended to be the site of popular and cultural
institutions.\textsuperscript{98}

For white Americans, the newly reconstituted government required a novel type
of space—free of state interests—as well as new bureaucratic structures and personnel. In
addition to creating a capital that conveyed to its citizens and the world an American
political ideology, the founders and designers of the nation’s capital also had to grapple
with the real politics of competing states’ interests in selecting a location as well as
varying ideas for the city’s layout and its public edifices. Meanwhile, Philadelphia played
host to the federal government for a formative decade of the young nation.

Indeed, throughout the period during which state (New York, then Pennsylvania)
and federal governments shared the physical space of the capital, both jurisdictions
played a role in Native visits. At the end of October 1791, the \textit{Independent Gazetteer}
reprinted news from Harrisburg that “Corn-Planter with several Chiefs and Warriors of
the Five Nations set off from this place towards Philadelphia, in consequence of the
following letter of invitation,” which was reprinted in the paper. Though the newspaper
indicated that the Seneca were responding to Mifflin’s invitation, the Seneca themselves
initiated the request by writing to the governor and council of Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{99} Governor
Mifflin, then invited the Seneca to Philadelphia in 1792 “to give you an opportunity of
laying before the government of Pennsylvania your grievances and explaining your
wishes,” their visit was not limited to business with the state. After discussing grievances
with representatives of Pennsylvania, Cornplanter, Half-Town, and Big Tree treated with

\textsuperscript{98} Frederick Gutheim and Antoinette J. Lee, \textit{Worthy of the Nation: Washington, DC, from L’Enfant to the
\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser}, February 4, 1792.
President Washington. From their relationship with Governor Mifflin—personifying Onas, or Penn—came further negotiations with the federal government once the deputation arrived in the shared capital.

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The initial conversations introducing the president to various Indian nations, from the east coast to the west shaped the expectations of the relationship they described. Harkening to the era of the Confederation Congress, officials described the new government as consisting of a council of “old and the wise men, from all our States, [who] come to consult and promote the prosperity of all America.” What was new, however, was that America had made George Washington “the head-man of all our councils.” Word that the Americans were now united “under our great chief warrior and President,” who would “have regard to the welfare of all the Indians,” was recounted indigenous leaders, assemblies, and settlers by federal commissioners and agents, traders, and fellow Natives. Commissioners introduced the president in the south with an assertion: “he will be your father and you will be his children.” As historians have shown for the colonial era, to be one’s father required being “allies, protectors, suppliers, and . . . mediators of their disputes.” Native leaders in the north, meanwhile, having received similar news, already translated this relationship to suit their own needs. The “Sachems, chiefs, and warriors of the Five Nations Assembled in Council at our Great Council fire,” wrote to President George Washington in 1789 to “Congratulate you upon

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100 *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, February 4, 1792.
101 For more on Onas and other Iroquoian titles, see Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 172, 177.
103 White, *Middle Ground*, 36.
104 “To the Head-men, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Creek Nation,” April 20, 1790, *ASP*, vol. 5, 1:31.
your new System of Government, by which you have one Head to rule, *Who we can look to for redress in all disputes* which have arose or which may Arise between your People and ours.*”

Relying on Native knowledge of Washington during the War for Independence, speeches introducing Washington as president stressed his military might. Officials described the president as “the chief of all our warriors,” “our great chief warrior and President,” and the one who “commands all the warriors of the thirteen great Fires.” The emphasis on martial leadership implicitly suggested that the United States’ fighting men could be directed anywhere, including against truculent Native nations and towns. At the same time, the message had a more positive side. While declaring to Indians that the president “will be your father and you will be his children,” officials explained that this was “so that none shall dare to do you harm.” The president, “who is the father and protector of all the white people,” would equally protect his red children.

The particular relationship implied in this diplomatic script was personal, between Native children and the president—their Great Father. As the first to embody the role, Washington reinforced this image in his speeches. Opening his talk to the Senecas in 1790, he emphasized his immediate, direct role in the proceedings: “I the President of the United States, by my own mouth, and by a written speech, signed with my own hand, speak to the Seneca Nation.” Establishing the Great Father as a patron, Washington consistently used the first person to address Native leaders in speeches and in writing.

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105 Chiefs and Warriors of the Five Nations to George Washington, June 2, 1789, PWD. Italics mine.
107 “To the Head-men, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Creek Nation,” April 20, 1790, ASP, vol. 5, 1:31.
108 George Washington to Seneca Indians, December 29, 1790, George Washington Papers, 1741-1799, Series 4: General Correspondence, Library of Congress (hereafter GWP, LoC). See also George Washington to Choctaw, December 30, 1790, and George Washington to the Chickasaw, December 30,
Native leaders replied in kind. Cornplanter, Half-Town, and Great Tree opened their response to Washington’s talk: “Father: The voice of the Seneca nations speaks to you, the great councilor, in whose heart the wise men of all the Thirteen Fires have placed their wisdom.”

The viability of this claim was tested early and often. When the Seneca envoys arrived in Philadelphia in 1791, Knox took the opportunity to “to impress them with the moderation of the United States, as it respected the war with the Western Indians,” which at the moment consumed much of the secretary’s thoughts. The visitors, however, had different problems on their minds. In their address to President Washington, Cornplanter, Half-Town, and Great Tree delineated the wrongs done to them by the land speculator Oliver Phelps. Appealing to the president as the ultimate authority and power, the Senecas entreated Washington “to inquire into our complaints and redress our wrongs.” Further articulating their expectations of Washington as father-president, the Senecas concluded their talk by appealing particularly to this element of the father-child relationship: “we know that you are very strong, and we have heard that you are wise, and we wait to hear your answer to what we have said, that we may know that you are just.”

To cultivate a positive relationship with Native nations, federal officials encouraged the notion of a personal and paternal relationship between the president and Indian peoples. Upon arriving at Philadelphia in the last days of 1791, Knox formally greeted a Cherokee deputation on behalf of the president. Getting down to business,

1790, GWP, LoC. Additional speeches and letters of Washington to Indians were compiled in ASP, vol. 5, no. 1.

109 Reply of Northwestern Tribes, ASP, vol. 5, 1:139-141.

110 Ibid.
Knox explained that Washington had “commanded me to assure you, that your arrival makes him glad; that he will kindly hear every thing you have to say; and he hopes that you will open your hearts fully, and conceal nothing from him.” Desiring that the red and white live together in harmony, Knox implored the half-dozen Cherokees—“speak, therefore, without reserve: for you speak to your real friends.”

Personal connection could give even inconclusive negotiations a positive cast by connoting friendship. Nontuaka, a Cherokee who had traveled to New York in 1789, found the visit encouraging. Though unable to secure a resolution for the Cherokees’ issues at the time—North Carolina having not yet ratified the constitution and joined the union—he nevertheless returned to the capital with the 1791 delegation. Addressing Knox on that occasion, Nontuaka declared: “I have attended to the talks of the President, delivered two years ago, in New York, and, always believing in his words, I have persuaded our warriors to repair again to the President, knowing we should have justice done us fully, and it makes my heart glad to find myself under the roof of my friend, who treated me kindly when in New York.”

His sense of a personal and positive relationship with the president encouraged him to recommend to his countrymen further consultation with the Great Father—and a long journey—despite having been unable to settle the Cherokees’ complaints in his 1789 interview.

When federal officials introduced the Great Father to Native people they also imbued the presidency with an expectation of benevolence. In the same breath that officials told Indians that they had a new father, they also asserted, “he will have regard

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to the welfare of all the Indians.”  

To the fraught Wabash region, Putnam brought a similar message: “I am coming with the wishes of his heart to you, which are very good, and which I hope will make your hearts rejoice, when you hear them.” The language used by officials to introduce the American executive contributed to Native ideas about this new figure, which preceded visits to the capital. Like the assumptions that the Great Father was a powerful chief with whom Indians had a personal relationship, the ideal of the benevolent Great Father was central to the formative diplomatic culture.

Beyond verbal assurances, material proofs of friendship and benevolence served both parties. Native ambassadors received presents during their stays in the capital. Returning home from Philadelphia in 1791, Cornplanter wrote President Washington from Pittsburgh, expressing his pleasure at the visit and the ease of his trip home, with one exception, “one of our wagons has not yet arrived here, the one . . . with the goods you presented us.” The president had given Cornplanter the opportunity to take his gift in goods or money and also directed Knox to “make suitable presents to the other chiefs in Philadelphia,” and to send “further tokens of friendship” to the chiefs back home.

Providing gifts to the visiting Chickasaws in 1794, Knox further promised “goods to the amount of three thousand dollars per annum,” not for any treaty, but as “a free gift.” Ambassadors departed New York and Philadelphia well stocked with gifts from their visits. The ability to bestow gifts came with some authority to select what those gifts would be. In his talk to the Cherokees in 1796, Washington bequeathed to them “all the

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113 “To the Head-men, Chiefs, and Warriors, of the Creek Nation,” April 20, 1790, *ASP*, vol. 5, 1:31.
115 Seneca to George Washington, March 17, 1791, GWP, LoC.
116 “The reply of the President of the United States to the speech of the Cornplanter, Half-Town, and Great-Tree, Chiefs and Councillors of the Seneca nation of Indians,” *ASP*, vol. 5, 1:143.
117 Timothy Pickering to James Robertson, May 9, 1795, PWD.
necessary apparatus for spinning and weaving,” as well as “some cattle and sheep” and “some plows and other implements of husbandry.”

Underlying Washington’s benevolence was his hopes to convert Native peoples into model yeoman farmers.

The Native audiences of such speeches were not passive; conferences often lasted over several days as speeches were delivered back and forth. Natives both absorbed and shaped the diplomatic script. In distant towns or in the capital, Indians did not reflexively use the language of deference but employed and accommodated their own political language, which contributed to and nuanced the meanings of their relationship with the Great Father. Native addresses to the president, such as Red Jacket telling Washington, “we know that you are very strong, and we have heard that you are wise,” were not mere observations. When Red Jacket added, “and we wait to hear your answer to what we have said, that we may know that you are just,” he was articulating a standard to which the Senecas, and Native “children” broadly, could hold the president and United States.

Federal officials planned the visits of many capital delegations and were flustered by the surprise arrival of others. Throughout the period, officials attempted to control the Native embassies in the capital: who was invited, when they came, and how many Native people travelled in the diplomatic retinue. Of course, neither the president nor the secretary of war was able to dictate the terms of capital diplomacy unilaterally. Rather, Native leaders and federal officials instigated deputations in various and complex ways.

Despite federal officials’ hopes, Native leaders did not wait to be invited to the capital; they acted independently of administrators’ preferences and initiated their own

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118 Talk of the President of the United States, to His Beloved Men of the Cherokee Nation... (Philadelphia, 1796).
119 Reply of Northwestern Tribes, ASP, vol. 5, 1:139, 141.
deputations. They travelled to the capital to meet the president, settle disputes, and seek redress for grievances. A land dispute induced a party of Seneca diplomats to trek to Philadelphia in December 1790 without prior invitation. These visits, deliberated upon at home, could vex officials in the capital, as in 1791 when officials were “surprised with a visit” of seven Cherokees and their interpreter. Impromptu visits created logistical difficulties for officials and led to occasional disappointment for Native delegations. Sometimes the secretary of war acceded to their comments and requests with a formal invitation.

Most often, however, the invitation of envoys proceeded through well-worn diplomatic channels. In the first decade of the federal government, the president and secretary of war invited delegations from the Northwest as well as Senecas, Mohawks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, in the hopes of tightening alliances, quelling antagonisms, and enticing Native people to embrace American civilization. James McHenry, Secretary of War in 1796, responded to the Cherokees’ request to have an audience with the president by sending a talk from the president to the Cherokee nation by way of the Cherokee agent Silas Dinsmoor. Top American officials, though, repeatedly insisted that they be the sole authority in initiating and permitting Native delegations to the capital. Moreover, they sought to control those visits throughout their duration. When neither happened, the real power capital diplomacy revealed itself as federal officials felt obligated to host and negotiate with deputations regardless of who initiated the visit.

120 Knox to Governor Blount, Jan. 31, 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:245.
121 For examples of invitations, see Message from the Secretary of War to the Choctaw Nation, February 17, 1792; Message from the Secretary of War to the Chickasaw Nation, February 17, 1792; and Speech of General Putnam to the Indians, October 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:248-49, 320.
The secretary of war typically issued formal invitations either directly or through federal Indian agents. Looking south in 1790, Washington and Knox believed that the only way to forestall raising an army to quell the border warfare in Georgia was to issue an invitation to for Creek headmen to visit the capital, the first such request issued by the president. Washington selected Colonel Marinus Willet of New York, a veteran of the Revolution, to “persuade him [McGillivray] to repair to New York, with such other chiefs as he shall think proper to accompany him.” Ever attentive to reputation, Washington and Knox felt that it was necessary for the mission to remain unofficial so that the nation would not “suffer in its dignity if the attempt to get him [McGillivray] here should not succeed.” Washington met directly with Willett to impress him with “the critical situation of our Affairs with that Nation—the importance of getting him & some other chiefs to this City—the arguments justifiable for him to use to effect this—with such lures as respected McGillivray personally & might be held out to him.” Though Willet’s mission was “sanctioned by the President of the United States,” and he bore a passport for the Creeks to travel to New York, Knox instructed Willett that he “should not at present appear to be authorized on the part of the Union, either to the Creeks, or the Citizens of the United States.” Willet’s introduction was a letter to McGillivray from Benjamin Hawkins, congressman for North Carolina, who had been among the commissioners sent to negotiate with the Creeks in 1785. Hawkins’ introduction called McGillivray to “Come forward Yourself with a few of the principal Chiefs of the Upper

122 Henry Knox to Col. Marinus Willett, March 12, 1790, PWD.
125 Henry Knox to Col. Marinus Willett, March 12, 1790, PWD.
& Lower Creeks to the President of the U. States.”\textsuperscript{126} Washington and Knox hoped their invitation to bring McGillivray and “some other Chiefs of that Nation to this place,” would be “an expedient to avert a War with them.”\textsuperscript{127} Subsequent secretaries of war under different circumstances often repeated this process.

One visit could lead directly to another. Such was the case with the 1791 Seneca visit, which led to a much larger delegation the following year. Washington and Knox requested the Senecas to intercede on behalf of the U.S. in the west and press for peace with the Western Indians, a request that grew in importance after they defeated St. Clair’s army on the Wabash in the fall of 1791. On March 14, 1792, just shy of fifty Iroquois arrived at Philadelphia. According to the local presses, these men were “invited the last Winter by Colonel Pickering, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, on behalf of the President of the United States, to make a visit to the seat of the General Government for the express purpose of promoting their national happiness, and brightening the chain of friendship.”\textsuperscript{128} The papers were partially right. Timothy Pickering, who was in fact Postmaster General, relied on his experience and familiarity as a special emissary to the Seneca in 1790 to invite the Iroquois to the capital. In many ways, however, this extensive delegation followed on the heels of the earlier negotiations with Cornplanter, Big-Tree, Half-Town and New Arrow.\textsuperscript{129}

Even when American officials did not expect certain Native leaders to be willing or able to visit the capital, at times they went out of their way to invite them. While the

\textsuperscript{126} Hawkins to McGillivray, March 6, 1790, in Caughey, \textit{McGillivray of the Creeks}, 257-258.
\textsuperscript{127} George Washington, February 16, 1790, 1790, \textit{Diaries of Washington}, 6:35.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{General Advertiser}, March 28, 1792.
U.S. eagerly sought peace with the Western Indians through Seneca mediators, Knox could not afford to ruffle any feathers. Realizing that his invitation to the chiefs at Buffalo Creek (near modern day Buffalo, NY) to visit the capital might be misinterpreted as having excluded those chiefs on the Allegheny, he dispatched an invitation to New Arrow, Cornplanter and “the other chiefs and warriors residing on the Alleghany.” In the note, he implored, “Your situation is such, and the bad Indians are so hostile, that it is the desire of the President of the United States, that the New-Arrow, the Cornplanter, and two other principal chiefs, should immediately repair to Philadelphia.” He then dispatched a messenger, Captain Waterman Baldwin who lived among the Seneca, explaining: “as they may possibly conceive themselves neglected, they are now invited.” Knox went to all this effort even though he thought it likely that they would “decline to come.”

Federal officials attempted to limit the number of individuals who attended the president at the capital. When Knox tried to smooth things over with the chiefs on the Allegheny, he still limited the invitation to four. In instructions to agents and escorts, Knox and his predecessors repeatedly insisted that diplomatic parties be restricted in size. This directive proved nearly impossible for officials to enforce. Governor Mifflin invited only three individuals to Philadelphia in 1791: Cornplanter, Half-Town, and the New Arrow. The first two arrived along with Big Tree, James Hutchins, Seneca Billy, and John Dukert, doubling the size of the party. In 1796, the secretary of war limited his

130 Captain Baldwin was one of a host of intermediaries employed to invite and escort Native envoys to the capital. Baldwin was a prisoner among the Iroquois during the Revolution and had returned to the Seneca in 1791 to teach Seneca youths. Knox to Captain Waterman Baldwin, Feb. 10, 1792, ASP, vol. 5, 1:227; “Narrative of Colonel Proctor,” July 9, 1791; and Arthur St. Clair to Chiefs of the Seneca Nation, February 17, 1791, PWD.

131 Mifflin’s invitation also included a commission for Joseph Nicolson, interpreter. Nicholson did accompany the six Senecas to Philadelphia. Independent Gazetteer, October 30, 1790.
invitation to the Cherokees, as he had done earlier to the Senecas, to “a small number of your wisest chiefs,” who should come in November, though what constituted a small number was debatable. These issues vexed officials privately, but they took care not to show it publicly. In response to Willett’s invitation, thirty-one Creeks traveled to the capital, inducing William Knox, who met the Creeks in Alexandria on behalf of his brother Henry, to lament: “I wish the numbers had been reduced at least to 20 as the expences of that number of unimportant ones amount to a great sum.” Nevertheless, all thirty-one Creeks proceeded to the capital, where they were hosted and entertained for over a month at the government’s expense.

Knox and his successors were right to be concerned about the issuance of invitations. In particular, the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant tested the political savvy of federal officials. When Washington and Knox decided it was important to bring the enigmatic Mohawk to the capital in 1792, they went about it, according to Brant, very badly. The Indian Affairs officer-turned-author, Thomas McKenney, later wrote that Brant’s professions of peace in the earliest years of the republic corresponded with the hopes of the president for the western country. Brant “was several times invited, in urgent and complimentary terms, to visit the government at Philadelphia,” which he finally did in the summer of 1792. Brant, however, did not find the invitations sufficiently complimentary and was quite reticent about accepting them. The Ohio country was the most daunting region faced by Washington’s administration, and, they believed, the key to quelling the unrest fermenting in the region between Native residents and would-be

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132 Talk of the President to the Cherokee Nation.
133 William Knox to Henry Knox, July 14, 1790, PWD.
134 Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, History of the Indian Tribes, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs... (Philadelphia: E. C. Biddle, 1837-1844), 2:280.
American settlers lay with the Iroquois Six Nations. Knox insisted that to achieve any success in the Ohio country, the U.S. needed, at minimum, for the Iroquois nations to remain neutral. Better yet, he hoped to induce the Iroquois to actively help subdue the region through their political clout or by sending men to fight on behalf of the U.S. To this end, the federal cabinet organized a council at Newtown Point along the Chemung River in southwestern New York and commissioned Timothy Pickering as their agent.

Enticing Joseph Brant to the capital seemed crucial, for he was, in the eyes of the federal officials, the lynchpin to Iroquois assistance in the west and to Iroquois politics in general. Although Brant was far from as powerful as they imagined, he cut a dominating figure. Frustrated by the British after the Revolution, Brant was open to American overtures. When he was invited to treat at Newtown Point, however, Brant was busy at Maumee and Quebec and unable to attend. At the Newtown Point council, Pickering invited chiefs of each of the Six Nations to visit Philadelphia in the winter to impress the Iroquois with the wealth and power of the U.S., a need felt more acutely by the federal officials after the western confederacy defeated the U.S. army in the fall. Nearly fifty chiefs and warriors set out early in the spring of 1792 towards the capital, but Brant was not among them. Pickering had sent the initial invitation to Brant in a letter. Brant declined the invitation, finding it demeaning, insufficiently formal, and further expressing concerns about the trip itself. In particular, he complained of being insufficiently singled out: “those people [the Newtown council] are more pointedly mentioned in your
superintendents invitation, [than I:] had I recd so particular a message … I should no doubt have done myself the pleasure of being amongst them.”

Washington and Knox persisted. They made a second overture through the reverend Samuel Kirkland, with whom Brant had been acquainted for three decades as they attended school together. “I don’t wonder, that after all the great characters you have seen in your tour in Europe,” wrote Kirkland, “you should still indulge a curiosity of getting a look at the great American Chief Washington.” He continued, appealing to Brant’s ego: “your own personal merit will insure you a cordial welcome, and every mark of respect you can wish.” Captain Hendrick Aupaumut (Stockbridge) tried his hand next, setting out in February to visit Brant, but he did not succeed in changing the Mohawk’s mind, either.

Knox threw his hat in the ring, too, but Brant did not find his attempt “sufficiently explicit.” After a flurry of missives in all directions, Brant finally agreed to visit the president at Philadelphia. In late June, Washington was able to declare, “with difficulty still greater I have bought the celebrated Captain Joseph Brant to this city with a view to impress him also with the equitable intentions of this government towards all the nations of his color. He only arrived last night and I am to give him an audience at twelve this day.” The meeting was inconclusive. Brant retained his alliances with the British while accepting private gifts from the U.S., but most importantly for Knox, he

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138 Joseph Brant to Alexander McKee, March 27, 1792, in *Correspondence of Lt. Gov. Simcoe*, 5:11.
agreed to work towards peace.\textsuperscript{140}

Important for understanding capital diplomacy were the groups that did not visit. Whether for reasons of disagreement or inability, at least two invitations from the president went unheeded in the 1790s. In the midst of the crisis in the Ohio country, Washington and Knox eagerly sought to bring a deputation of confederacy chiefs to Philadelphia. Several envoys, American and Native, went forth from the capital to the west in attempts to bring about peace and to send a deputation eastwards. Putnam, one of these westward envoys, wrote back to Knox in August 1792 that he was expending “every possible exertion, in persuading those Western tribes to send a deputation to Philadelphia, and am not without hopes of prevailing.” Initially, the outlook was bleaker than Putnam suggested. Lagesse, the Pottawatomi chief, informed Major Hamtrack, commander at Vincennes on the Wabash, that the Pottawatomies, and other nations that he spoke for, “cannot comply with your request.” The unrest in the region made such a trip dangerous and impractical—“we are everyday threatened by the other Indians,” who menaced their villages: “this alone, my Father, makes it necessary for all the chiefs to remain at home.”\textsuperscript{141} Concerns about the hazards of travel and extended absence from home were not unfounded.

Likewise, violence induced the Chickasaw leader Hanging Maw to reject the president’s invitation in 1793. Explaining the circumstances, he wrote “the heads of our land thought very well of going to Philadelphia, but some of them now lie dead, and some of them wounded.” The chiefs, gathered by the federal overture, had been attacked at Hanging Maw’s own home within days of its receipt. “You need not look for us to go

\textsuperscript{140} Taylor, \textit{Divided Ground}, 275-77; Isabel Thompson Kelsay, \textit{Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man Between Two Worlds} (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984) 470-76.

\textsuperscript{141} Indian Speech to Major Hamtramck, \textit{ASP}, vol. 5, 1:241.
there at this time,” the Chickasaw informed Washington.\textsuperscript{142} The surviving chiefs waited several months and attempted their visit to Philadelphia, but were again deterred. Upon reaching Virginia, white citizens informed the travelers of “the danger of the fever at Philadelphia,” and the Chickasaws determined to return home.\textsuperscript{143}

While delegations in the 1790s came to the capital from border regions—the north, northwest and southeast—primarily, the expansion of American territorial boundaries after 1800 broadened the range of Native nations invited to the capital. When the United States purchased Louisiana in 1803, it suddenly claimed sovereignty over a vast and unfamiliar space. Furthermore, officials needed to introduce federal sovereignty to a host of nations heretofore unaffiliated with the U.S. Much of that task fell to Captains Lewis and Clark as they reconnoitered the lands and peoples west of the Mississippi. More than anyone else, these men spread the language of the Great Father across the continent, issuing a flurry of invitations to the capital.

In his meetings with Indians west of the Mississippi, Clark propagated and elaborated this language. All along the Missouri, Lewis and Clark made harangues to the Indians about their new Great Father that “informe[ed] thos Children of ours of the Change which had taken place,” referring to the Louisiana Purchase extending U.S. claim over their territory and allegiance, and “the wishes of our government to Cultivate friendship & good understanding.”\textsuperscript{144} On a wet and cloudy morning at the end of August 1804 along the present day border of South Dakota and Nebraska, for instance, Captain Clark spent his morning “much engaged writeing a Speech.” The following day, he

\textsuperscript{142} Letter from Hanging Maw to the President of the United States, June 15, 1793, \textit{ASP}, vol. 5, 1:459-60.
\textsuperscript{143} Correspondence to Henry Knox, October 5, 1793, \textit{ASP}, vol. 5, 1:458.
delivered the talk with the aid of Pierre Dorion, a French/Sioux interpreter, to about seventy Sioux men and chiefs. Clark recorded that the talk was “expressive of the wishes of our government and explaining of what would be good for themselves.” While Clark did not record the text of that speech, replies by Shake Hand, the primary chief, and others suggest its contents. In reply, Shake Hand addressed Clark, stating, “I am glad to here [sic] the word of my G.F. [great father, i.e. the President of the United States] and all my warriers [sic] and men about me are also glad.” The other chiefs and warriors were also glad to learn about their “Great Father.”

Six weeks later, and farther up the Missouri, a similar scene unfolded among the Arikaras. On the morning of October 10, Lewis and Clark “Delivered a Similar Speech to those delivered the Ottoes & Sioux,” carrying the news farther west.

The Corps of Discovery, like American officials in Indian country before them, emphasized the power and benevolence of the Great Father in introducing the president and inviting nations along the Missouri to visit him. In their negotiations with the Arikaras, Lewis and Clark assured the headmen and warriors that the United States could protect them from their enemies. When Pocasse, the second chief of the Arikaras, replied to the captains’ request to visit the Great Father he “Spok at Some lengths” with some concern that such a trip passed through Sioux country. In the end Clark must have succeeded in portraying the president’s power. As best as could be understood in translation, Clark recorded Pocasse asserting, “You tell us to go Down, we will go . . . and think fully that our nation will be covered after our return.”

145 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 3:21-23.
146 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 3:28-30. Italics and brackets in original.
147 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 3:156-168.
148 Ibid.
delegations sent east by Lewis and Clark descended on the capital in 1804, 1805, and 1806 with the expectations that their “Great Father” would provide more than protection. They also expected medals and gifts, and that his “pity” would bring aid in the way of trade and other perks. Shake Hand, a Sioux chief, told Clark, “I had an English medal when I went to See them, I went to the Spanoriads [sic] they gave me a meadel [sic] and Some goods,” before adding his explicit expectation, “I wish you would do the same.” To the Sioux, and the Arikaras who acceded to go see the Great Father “& receve [sic] his Gifts,” Clark promised a bounty of presents.149

In Washington City, President Jefferson was a master of rhetoric, and artfully crafted the language of negotiations to articulate his own vision of the U.S.’s relationship with American Natives. As much as the Corps of Discovery physically brought the message about the new Great Father westward; the Native delegates who visited Jefferson in the capital brought back his words and their own experiences, further developing the image of a benevolent father, one who would consider complaints, arbitrate disputes, and provide presents. Addressing a delegation of Osages in 1806, Jefferson called on his visitors to “tell your Chief, the big Track and all your people that I take them by the hands; that I become their father hereafter, that they shall know our nation only as friends and benefactors.” He promised “that we have no views upon them but to carry on a commerce useful to them and us; to keep them in peace with their neighbors, that their children may multiply, may grow up and live to a good old age and their women no longer fear the tomahawk.”150 As Jefferson rhetorically stepped into the shoes of the Great Father, he also indicated what that position entailed. The relationship

was as “friends and benefactors,” and emphasized “peace,” and “commerce.”\textsuperscript{151} To the Mandans, Jefferson spoke of the “proofs of the friendship which myself & all their white brethren of these United States bear them, of our desire to live in peace with them, and to render them all the services in our power.”\textsuperscript{152}

Even interactions with officials other than the president could contribute to the expectations implicit in the rhetoric of the Great Father. Speeches by Lewis and Clark, Indian agents, treaty commissioners, and other official and unofficial representatives of the government were typically given in the name of the president. Even without the direct involvement of the president, the presence of the Great Father persisted—augmenting the idea of a personal relationship, if one sometimes mediated by lesser officials. Such talks also contributed to a sense that the president was fully informed of Indian affairs, sympathetic to Indian complaints and grievances, and the final arbiter and authority in determining conflicts and questions.

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When addressing nations invited to the capital by Lewis and Clark from the Mississippi and Missouri regions, President Jefferson did not introduce the idea of diplomatic paternalism, but rather elucidated the changes in America’s diplomatic family. Addressing the Osage chiefs in Washington at the end of 1806, he expounded upon the transitions: “My children, Your forefathers have doubtless handed it down to you that in ancient times the French were the fathers of all the red men in the country called Louisiana, that is to say, all the country on the Mississippi and on all its western waters.” However, “in the days of your fathers France ceded that country to the Spaniards and

\textsuperscript{151} [Henry Dearborn?] to James Wilkerson, April 9, 1806, SW IA LS, vol. B, 192-194.
\textsuperscript{152} President’s Talk to the Mandan Nation, SW IA LS, vol. B, 204.
they became your fathers: but six years ago, they restored it to France, and France ceded it to us, and we are now become your fathers and brothers: and be assured you will have no cause to regret the change.”153

For both Natives and white administrators, the iteration of the president as Great Father carried certain risks. Built into rhetoric of the Great Father’s military might was the possibility, most obviously, that American officials could be called upon to use that strength to solve Native problems. While happy to impress Natives with their strength, American officials had no interest in actually utilizing their small and underfunded army to settle conflicts, especially those of non-citizens. Natives nevertheless endeavored to mobilize the powers that federal officials held out to them. In 1801, Red Jacket told the acting Secretary of War a tale of woe on behalf of the Senecas from the Genesee country. His people were victims of a series of murders, and Red Jacket begged “the President will exert all his influence with all officers civil and military in that quarter to remedy this grievance.” Continuing to the Senecas’ next complaint—the Holland Land Company’s survey—the Seneca orator explained, “[we] wish the President to examine the transfer and permit us to have what we are justly entitled to.”154 The language of a powerful president invited Natives to call upon him to use his power to achieve their ends.

On the other hand, the rhetorical role as children of a mighty father came with the prospect of punishment—that his force could be used against them. In his speech to a party of Osages in 1806, President Jefferson informed them that their “depredations on the Caddos … are known by the President,” and he was displeased. Jefferson went on to admonish his visitors: “unless they [the Osage] take effectual measures for preventing

any further hostilities on our particular friends, the Caddos, they will forfeit the good opinion and friendship of their father the President.”\textsuperscript{155} Jefferson flexed his paternal power, but only just enough to chastise. Realistically, the Osages’ military power was enough to worry the United States, such that even as Jefferson alluded to potential repercussions, he continued to emphasize positive relations and friendship.\textsuperscript{156}

The intimate nature of the father-child relationship contributed to particular hazards for all involved. The peril of relying on personal relationships lay in investing expectations in a single individual. To the great mortification of Secretary of War Dearborn, a surprise diplomatic visit from the Chickasaws was prematurely aborted in 1801, costing the U.S. the chance to perform the Great Father role at all. The Chickasaws, it seems, were interested only in seeing the president. Two Chickasaw men arrived in the capital without an interpreter and, worn out from their journey, made their way to a public house. It so happened that they checked themselves in at the same house where Dearborn himself lodged. He tried to convey to the men that after they recovered from their journey, he would introduce them to the president. Without an interpreter, however, it seems the conversation between Dearborn and the men was a failure. In the morning the Chickasaws went to the president’s house alone to conduct their business only to find he was not at home. Unable to obtain an audience with President Jefferson, the Chickasaws left Washington City and returned home a mere three days after their arrival.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{155} [Henry Dearborn?] to James Wilkerson, April 9, 1806, SW IA LS, vol. B, 192-194.
For their part, Dearborn and Jefferson were deeply concerned about any “unfavorable impressions” this preemptory departure made on the Chickasaw Nation. Dearborn quickly scratched off a letter to his agent in the south, Return J. Meigs, conveying how “the President was much disappointed in no seeing them [the Chickasaws] and mortified at the manner of their going off.” Fully aware of the positive relations the government had with that nation, Jefferson “would have been happy in paying attention to these men.”\(^\text{158}\)

Jefferson and Dearborn both commented on the visitors’ lack of credentials, but in emphasizing this point they misunderstood their relationship with Native people. These two Chickasaws attended the capital, authorized not by any federal papers, but by their own understanding of a personal relationship with the Great Father. Indeed, their expectation was strong enough that even after traveling hundreds of miles, they could not be convinced to discuss their business with anyone other than him. Among the reasons the Secretary of War gave agents for making sure Native diplomats traveled with passports from the War Department was to head off embarrassing situations. Because “the President cannot always be there [in the capital],” unexpected visits were risky. The efforts of Native ambassadors, “if they should arrive during his absence, will be all in vain,” and such failed visits could undermine the relationship between the United States and Indian nations.\(^\text{159}\)

Since the relationship between Native people and the father-president rested on a personal bond, turnover in the government, particularly the presidency, was a concern for Native diplomats. At the beginning of 1801, Samuel Dexter was serving a fleeting tenure

\(^{158}\) Ibid.  
as acting secretary of war. Jefferson had been elected the third president, but had not yet been inaugurated. The Senecas had not visited President Adams earlier in his term, and already he was on his way out the door. Red Jacket, speaking for his delegation of Senecas and a Tuscarora, observed “that the men now in office are new men & we fear not fully informed of all that has befallen us.” He was especially concerned about a treaty that “was made in the name of the President of the United States, who was then General Washington,” observing that, “he is now no more” and suggesting that “perhaps the present President would wish to renew the Treaty.” Shortly after Jefferson’s inauguration, the Cherokees sent a delegation to Washington City “to see the new President of the United States, to make representation to him as the father and guardian of our country.” They expressed concerns similar to those of the Senecas, and referred to “Our Father the former President of the United States.” These concerns prompted the new secretary of war, Henry Dearborn, to assure the Cherokees “that all the engagements entered into by the Predecessors of the President would be by him rigidly observed.”

The personal nature of Indian relations with the father-president introduced the risk of rupture with each election. Yet this uncertainty also ensured all sides would actively seek to renew this political relationship at regular intervals. Turnover in the executive office encouraged frequent visits, as Natives sought to meet the new Great Father and obtain assurances that he would deliver on promises made by the man who had filled the role of president before him.

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In the years immediately following 1789, white and Indian leaders contributed to the vocabulary that would also fix, for the next several decades, the bounds of negotiation. At the core of this process was the notion of the Great Father. The particular connotations that came to be associated with the presidential father figure were created as whites explained the president and United States government to Native people, as Native people interacted with the federal government and president, and as the president himself embodied the Great Father persona. Native expectations of the father-president and the federal capital itself were bound up together. They were also in larger conversation with federal officials’ own expectations.

The nascent federal capital was a unique space for interaction between the president and Native leaders because of both its newness and its proximity to indigenous nations. As white American administrators worked through the process of diplomacy with Native American diplomats, both parties contributed their notions and expectations of the capital as a space of negotiation. Because the federal seat of government had, as yet, no entrenched policy of Native diplomacy, the initial visits of Cherokee, Creek, and Seneca delegates, for example, contributed to the development of mutual American protocols. Furthermore, unlike the British metropole, the U.S. capital was firmly planted on the same continent that its constituents shared with American Indian nations. Native diplomats could take it upon themselves to make their way to New York, Philadelphia, or Washington City and increasingly knew others who had or undertook the journey themselves.
Chapter 2:
“We have come a great way by our desire to talk with you”: Native Envoys to the Federal Capital

A consideration of the journeys Natives made to and from the federal capital illuminates the power dynamics of their relationship to the United States government. Historians have yet to explore the political and cultural import of these sojourns in a comprehensive fashion. Understanding capital diplomacy then, requires retracing indigenous routes, for travel to the seat of government constituted a highly contested process. It was debated, in particular, because both sides operated on expectations that frequently did not align, both invested different meanings in the visits to the capital, and both sought to define the shape of the visits on their own terms.

The expectations, experiences, and negotiations of Native travelers who headed east to the seat of U.S. government between 1789 and 1837 were diverse. Some traveled alone, others in large national envoys or part of multi-national delegations, though the typical delegation averaged just under a dozen men from a single nation. They went by horse, wagon, stage, sail, steam, and rail, facing dangers human and natural. Native diplomats were hardly inexperienced travelers, having navigated extensively within their own territories and abroad to other Indian nations on the continent. Some came to know the road to the capital well, making multiple trips in the course of their lives. Others never made it to their destination, dying along the way. Little Turtle (Miami), Red Jacket and Cornplanter (Seneca) visited the capital at both Philadelphia (1790-1800) and

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161 Herman Viola describes some of the experiences of diplomats in this period, but does not examine the larger significance. Moreover, as noted previously, Viola’s coverage of delegations however is incomplete, as his Diplomats in Buckskins references fewer than twenty percent of the delegations in the period 1789-1837. Herman J. Viola, Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995). See also Alden T. Vaughan, Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
Washington City. Joseph Brant (Mohawk) and several Osage visitors had ventured to
other capitals, including London and Paris, before trekking to the U.S. capital.

This chapter begins by considering the diverse negotiations and parties involved
in getting to and from the seat of government. Natives’ travel often took as long as—or
longer than—their stays in the U.S. capital and required careful orchestration. Federal
officials took great pains to arrange the logistical and financial details for trips they
approved. Traveling diplomats were often entertained with great attention by state, local,
and extra-administrative groups along their paths to the capital. Costly and time
consuming, Native travels were subject to regulation and restriction by administrators,
though with little success.

In an effort to manage indigenous travelers, federal bureaucrats employed
passports, the administrative tool that the next section considers. Officials and delegates
also had to contend with the varied political meanings of border crossings. Thus,
passports were included among the documents of travel for many delegations, as well as
the vouchers, drafts, and receipts to cover expenses. But, this document of travel was also
bound up with other concerns of federal officers, particularly the movement of whites in
Indian territory. As imperial tensions waned for the U.S. after the War of 1812, so too did
the presence of passports in the documentary record.

The myriad hazards that Native diplomats faced in order to visit the capital attest
that these deputations were not undertaken lightly, or without great hopes on behalf of
their nations. New or newly facilitated modes of travel decreased the time needed to get
from one place to another as the mid-century approached, as well as its costs, but were
attendant with their own risks.\footnote{Over time, steamboat fares and travel times continued to drop in both the east and west, as did the fares for stages and toll roads. George Rogers Taylor, \textit{The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860} (New York: Rinehart, 1951), 140-141.} By land or water, mix-ups, accidents, sickness, and attack by whites or Indians were a frequent source of anxiety for visitors and hosts. Travelers often spent months at a time on the road, exposed to inclement weather and unfamiliar environments, and uncertain of when they might again see their homes and families. Despite the burdens and dangers of travel for Natives, they continued to trek to the U.S. capital, testifying to their faith that capital diplomacy could redress a multitude of grievances.

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For Native diplomats and federal administrators, travel strategies were an important topic of negotiation. While officials at the capital were primarily concerned with cost, and consequently the size of delegations, and timing, Natives themselves were often more invested in the routes and conditions of their sojourns. Because the Creeks were the first nation invited to the seat of government, it is worthwhile to examine how government officials attempted to orchestrate their precedent setting journey. Furthermore, because Alexander McGillivray wrote of his experience, the 1790 trip provides uncommon insight into the interests and experience of indigenous travelers.

The Creeks dispatched their party on the first of June, headed by Alexander McGillivray, to accompany federal envoy Colonel Marinus Willett to New York, and from the beginning, these men were at odds over the course they would travel.\footnote{William M. Willett, \textit{A Narrative of the Military Actions of Col. Marinus Willett} (New York, 1831), 110.} Georgia land speculators, like those of the infamous Yazoo Company, made no secret of their designs on Creek lands, and in towns across the low country “the Rambling Agents of the
Yassou Companys” strenuously solicited McGillivray’s involvement in their schemes. Running into these speculators along the way would have undermined McGillivray’s main goal for visiting the capital, namely, putting an end to conflicts over contested lands claimed simultaneously by the Creeks (as well as the Cherokees and Chickasaw) and Georgia.\textsuperscript{164} Consequently, McGillivray insisted the delegation avoid Charleston and “the importunities of the Caro.[lina] Comp[an]y.”\textsuperscript{165} Contrary to Secretary Knox’s orders, the Creeks departed from Little Tallassee in the Creek nation and proceeded overland by horse, stage, and wagon through the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Knox would have preferred the Creeks to take a sea route, departing from Charleston. He did allow in his instructions that if the Creeks “should prefer coming by land altogether instead of water, and make it an absolute condition,” Willett should comply, “although such a measure would greatly increase the expense.”\textsuperscript{166} Knox was primarily concerned with monetary cost, but McGillivray anticipated other debts if he departed from Charleston, as Knox suggested.

Traveling diplomats were often feted and entertained with great attention in towns and cities through which they passed. After convening parts of the delegation—McGillivray, his nephew, young David Tate, two servants, and eight warriors from the Upper Creeks, eleven Cowetas and Cussatas—at Stony Mountain, Georgia, they proceeded through remote parts until ferrying across the Seneca River to Hopewell,

\textsuperscript{165} Willett had been able to use McGillivray’s goals to his advantage, convincing the Creek leader that his attendance in New York would “give Congress an opportunity of Defeating the late Grants to those Companies & to restore to & secure to us [Creeks] our Rights of Territory.” McGillivray saw that he and the federal government shared a common interest, as the federal government was pressing various states, especially reluctant ones like Georgia, to cede their western claims to the nation. McGillivray to Panton, May 8, 1790, in Caughey, \textit{McGillivray of the Creeks}, 262.
\textsuperscript{166} Knox to Willett, March 12, 1790, PWD.
South Carolina, the home of General Andrew Pickens. There an additional fifteen Creeks arrived, and all were well entertained by Pickens for several days before setting off—three wagons carried twenty-six Creeks, the rest rode horseback. Like other travelers through the south, the delegation either camped along the road in sparsely populated areas or lodged at private homes.\textsuperscript{167} Upon reaching Virginia, the Creeks were treated to more public hospitality. To facilitate their travels, as well as the federal government’s purpose for inviting the Creeks to the capital, Knox wrote to the governors of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, requesting them to entertain the delegation on its journey “as it may answer valuable purposes to the chiefs to be impressed with our numbers” and “civilities.” He and Washington sought to orchestrate an American performance of civilized society to impress the Creeks. To this end, they advanced Willett one thousand dollars, not an insignificant sum for hospitality, with license to draw on Knox for any other expenses for traveling.\textsuperscript{168}

It seems that the governors, looking to curry favor with the federal government, heeded Knox’s wishes. The various headmen and warriors of the Creek nation arrived in Richmond after five weeks on the road. During their brief stay, “his Excellency the Governor gave them an elegant entertainment at the Academy on Shockoe-Hill, to which

\textsuperscript{167} After departing from Hopewell, the delegation spent their next night at the residence of a Mr. Hambleton, and upon reaching Guilford-Courthouse in North Carolina, at Captain William Dent’s home. Willett records that Mr. Hambleton’s was 15 miles from Hopewell. The Creeks were hosted overnight at least three times at private homes of this journey. General Pickens’ plantation was a frequent site of hospitality for travelers Native and white alike. Other delegations also stayed at, or where entertained in private homes, particularly in regions where public houses and taverns were unavailable. In November 1798, a party of Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Chippewa chiefs was entertained at the Loring’s home in New York on their trip to Philadelphia. Many were hosted or entertained in Philadelphia by Quakers after the capital was removed to Washington. Willett, *Narrative of the Military Actions*, 111-115; Claypoole’s *American Daily Advertiser*, December 4, 1798. For Quaker hosting, see Elaine Forman Crane, ed., *The Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, 3 vols. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991); Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Indian Committee Records, 1791-1892, reel 1, American Philosophical Society (hereafter APS, Indian Committee Records).  

\textsuperscript{168} Henry Knox to Colonel Marinus Willett, July 3, 1790, PWD.
were invited the honorable council of state, the judges, and a number of principal
gentleman of this place.”169 From Richmond they did not travel far before being detained
in Fredericksburg to attend the theatre and a public dinner in their honor. There they also
met President Washington’s sister, Elizabeth Lewis, and other relatives on a visit to the
president’s boyhood home. The Creeks then proceeded northward, through Alexandria
and Georgetown, with a brief stay in Baltimore, and then on to Philadelphia,
encountering similar performances of civility and hospitality along the way.170 Arriving
in Philadelphia on a Saturday, the Creeks were welcomed with ringing bells and federal
artillery salute before being led by the light infantry to their weekend lodgings at,
naturally, the Indian Queen tavern. On Sunday, the Creeks attended a service at Christ
Church, and on Monday, for at least the second time in two weeks, attended the
theatre.171 While local and federal officials no doubt pulled out all the stops for the
Creeks, the first major delegation to the capital in the new republic, these scenes were
replicated for many other groups that followed.172

169 The Academy was founded by Chevalier Quesnay as a French-American University, but was never
realized. The structure, however, seems to have been an important meeting spaced due to its size, having
hosted the 1788 Virginia Convention two years earlier. “Richmond, July 10,” Daily Advertiser (New
York), July 23, 1790; New York Daily Gazette, July 17, 1790; Gaillard Hunt, The Life of James Madison
170 Federal Gazette (Philadelphia), July 19, 1790.
171 Many of these performances would be repeated during the Creeks’ month-long stay in New York City;
parades, federal salutes, military escorts and demonstrations, public dinners, and entertainments with
leading officials filled their itinerary. The performance they saw in Philadelphia was Tamberlane. Federal
Gazette (Philadelphia), July 19, 1790; Pennsylvania Packet, July 20, 1790.
172 See, for instance, the experiences of a Chickasaw delegation in 1794, which traced roughly the same
path through elite Virginia society as the Creeks. Approaching Winchester, Virginia, the delegation was
met by a troop of light horse and a company of infantry and escorted into town. Over drinks at the local
tavern, the Chickasaws, “troops and a large concourse of respectable elites fraternized,” newspapers
reported. The Chickasaws then returned to the road, escorted for several miles by the friendly militia.
Perhaps due in part to the convivial reception the received, the Chickasaws passed through Winchester
again on their return. Gazette of the United States, July 7 and Aug. 9, 1794; General Advertiser, July 15,
1794.
Map 2.1 Creek route to and from New York in 1790.

Extra-administrative groups, particularly churches and religious societies also engaged travelers. Forty-seven Iroquois men, primarily Senecas, accompanied by Rev. Kirkland passed through Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on their visit to the capital in spring 1792. There the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen hosted a ceremony in the Church Hall. The Iroquois listened first to singing and then speeches by the United Brethren, before being welcomed by an address, interpreted by Kirkland, from the young ladies’ school. After the brief address and more singing, Red Jacket the famous
orator, rose to speak, followed by Good Peter, who apparently was quite captivated with the talk by the schoolgirls. The feeling seems to have been mutual. After staying the night in Bethlehem, Good Peter was invited to visit the ladies school, which he accepted, giving a separate address to each of the five grades. Several young ladies in return gave “presents as tokens of the good will of young ladies and specimens of their ingenuity and improvement.”

The Quakers consistently played a part in hosting Native travelers. Having taken an active interest in Indian relations throughout Pennsylvania and New York for over a century, Quakers in Philadelphia involved themselves with Native diplomatic visits during the decade the capital resided there. Little Turtle found his relationship with the Philadelphia and Baltimore Quakers useful in supporting his efforts to ban the sale of liquor to Indians. In 1796, while the capital remained at Philadelphia, a party of Creeks visited. Formerly unfamiliar with each other, the Quakers and Creeks initiated a relationship there that continued over subsequent visits and by post with the exchange of letters and gifts. By all accounts, Native diplomats seemed impressed with their interactions with the Quakers, likely attributable to the Friends’ professions of peace and fraternal harmony in a period when Indian-white violence was foremost in the minds of Native ambassadors.

173 *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia), March 14, 1792.
174 During the decade Philadelphia was the federal capital, the Quaker Indian Committee met with, entertained, provided gifts to, and otherwise participated in the hosting of delegations from at least 12 nations. They participated in the Seneca delegation in 1791. The Indian Committee book in the papers at the APS begins in 1796, and between 1796 and 1800 when the capital relocated, they engaged with all 9 of the delegations. Several of these delegations were multi-national, and the Indian Committee often met with each nation individually. APS, Indian Committee Records.
175 Crane, *Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* (Dec. 21, 1801), 2:1473; *Memorial of Evan Thomas, and others, a Committee Appointed for Indian Affairs ... 7th January, 1802* (Washington, 1802).
176 The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting sent seeds and farming implements to the Creeks over the next several years. Two Creek boys, Alexander Durant and James Bailey, were also left in Philadelphia to be educated by the Quakers. APS, Indian Committee Records.
Quaker investment in Indian affairs increased through the beginning of the century, in part through the relationships Quakers established with travelling delegations. Therefore, the capital’s move to Washington in 1800 did not limit the part played by Philadelphia Quakers. Instead, their network expanded to include Baltimore Friends in the hosting and entertaining of Indian diplomats. Philadelphia Quaker, Henry Drinker, was among the members of the Indian Committee frequently called upon to meet with Indians arriving in the city.177 On several occasions, he brought diplomats or delegations into his own home, as on February 22, 1801, when returning home from a meeting he surprised his wife with “6 Indians with their interpreter … who all dined with us.” The guests included Sacharissa, Red Jacket, and Blue Sky, Tuscarora and Seneca delegates returning from Washington.178 When a Miami and Potawatomi delegation passed through later that year, Drinker again busied himself meeting with the travelers, among whom was the famed Little Turtle, who had himself been to Philadelphia twice before when the capital was still at that city. Leaving Philadelphia, Little Turtle and his compatriots headed to Baltimore, where they were supported and entertained by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting.179

Federal officials encouraged the multifaceted role Quakers took in hosting these diplomatic envoys. A party of Shawnees and Delawares returning home from the capital via Philadelphia and Pittsburg in 1802 carried a letter from Secretary of War Henry

177 In 1795, Drinker was appointed to the Indian Committee, along with John Hunt of Darby, Joseph Sloan, Benjamin Iwett, James Cooper, Anthony Johnson, John Pierce, John Parrish, John Elliott, Joseph Sansom, William Savery, John Biddle, Thomas Harrison, Thomas Wistar, and John Hunt of Evesham. These men continued to constitute the committee over the next decade with limited change. APS, Indian Committee Records.
178 Henry Drinker spent the next evening with the Seneca and Tuscarora and the Indian Committee. The delegates departed Philadelphia the following day, Feb. 24, 1801. Crane, Diary of Elizabeth Drinker, 2:1387-88.
179 Diary of Elizabeth Drinker (Dec. 21, 1801), 2:1473; Memorial of Evan Thomas.
Dearborn to the superintendent of military stores in Philadelphia, William Irvine, with instructions for their accommodations. The federal government would happily cover any necessary expenses, Dearborn wrote, though he suspected “it is probable the Society of Quakers in Philadelphia may pay a part or the whole of the expenses incurred by the Indians at that place during their continuance there.”  

Quaker hospitality alleviated some of the financial burden of the federal government incurred by the steady stream of Native envoys, but not all of it.

Travel arrangements for the six men who comprised the Choctaw deputation invited to the capital by President Jefferson in 1803 provide a window onto the intricate logistics and politics of travel. Secretary Dearborn informed the Choctaw agent, Silas Dinsmoore, that several chiefs had been permitted to come to the capital and sent a passport for “Mingo OckChummia, Mingo Iuppusa, Mingo Pushbush, Mingo Pushamartaka and Mingo Stubby with their Interpreter,” Mr. Turner Brashears. Letters between Dearborn and his agents on the ground detailed how the Choctaws would cover the hundreds of miles between their nation and the capital. Departing their homes, “the Chiefs will ride their own Nags and subsist themselves to our frontier,” where at Fort Wilkinson an agent would direct them onto the stagecoach line. One agent suggested that a few young men go along as far as the fort in order to conduct the chiefs’ horses

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180 He instructed Irvine to “discharge all necessary expenses incurred by them at Philadelphia not paid [by the Quakers],” and that the government would provide sufficient money to cover their travel expenses to Pittsburg. From there they were likely provided afresh by the agents at Pittsburg for the remainder of their journey. Henry Dearborn to William Irvine, Feb. 10, 1802, SW IA LS, vol. A, 159.

181 These arrangements are representative for delegations from east of the Mississippi invited by or travelling with permission from the President and Secretary of War. Passport from Henry Dearborn, April 16, 1803, SW IA LS, vol. A.

182 Fort Wilkinson stood at the border of Indian country in Georgia, now the location of Milledgeville.
back to the Choctaw nation.\textsuperscript{183} To facilitate their transition, Dearborn requested the officers at Fort Wilkinson to “afford them all necessary assistance in forwarding them to the nearest point at which they may fall in with the stages,” Augusta, Georgia. The government would remunerate the proprietors of the stage line for the Choctaws’ seats.\textsuperscript{184}

Despite the best-laid plans, miscommunications and mistakes were rife in such long distance travel. Dearborn’s arrangements and clear instructions regarding the stage, were mislaid or unheeded, and the Choctaw ambassadors were taken to Savannah, not Augusta, where instead of continuing by land, they boarded a ship and set sail. Fortunately, the Choctaws arrived safely from their ocean voyage, though they seemed rather keen to travel home on solid ground. Apologizing for the mix-up that had “exposed you to the risks of a voyage by sea,” President Jefferson assured the men their trip home would be by land.\textsuperscript{185}

Finances were a particularly worrisome element of transportation logistics for federal administrators. After the Choctaws departed for Philadelphia, Dearborn turned his attention to making arrangements for getting the delegates back home. Because the Choctaws desired to return by land, Dearborn arranged an agent at Augusta to purchase seven horses, six for the men to ride and one as a packhorse, and the appropriate tack, to be charged to the War Department. From Washington to Augusta the men would take the stage line, where they would mount the newly acquired horses to travel the remaining miles from Augusta to the Choctaw nation. There, they would turn the horses over to Dinsmoore, who was ordered to sell the animals “to the best possible advantage for the

\textsuperscript{183} SW IA LR 1803, [J. A. Wilkins?] to Silas Dinsmoor, Chickasaw Hay August 19 1803, [J. A. Wilkins?] to Henry Dearborn August 20, 1803.

\textsuperscript{184} Henry Dearborn to J Halsted, October 5, 1803, SW IA LS, vol. A.

\textsuperscript{185} Thomas Jefferson to the Choctaw Deputation, January 1804, SW IA LS, vol. A.
United States.” The rest of the travel costs that the government bore would not be so directly recovered. In addition to the funds entrusted to Brashears, the interpreter, for travel, lodging, and other expenses in Philadelphia and New York, the Choctaws were allotted 623 dollars “to defray the necessary expenses” on their journey home, which of course did not include the horses and saddles acquired for them at Augusta. Thus the initial outlay for the delegation’s trip exceeded $1,000, no modest appropriation for a federal department with tightened purse strings.

Dearborn’s attentiveness to finances—ensuring the interpreter had money for the delegation, that government officials were instructed to allow for additional expenses, and that Augustans, like the proprietors of the stage line, were informed to draw on the War Department—underscore the significant costs of travel in the early republic. Diplomatic envoys that travelled under the invitation or permission of the federal government were typically “accompanied by an Agent, Subagent or Interpreter,” officially employed by the federal government. The interpreter, Brashears, filled that role for the Choctaws in 1803 and 1804, though it is unclear exactly how much money was “deemed sufficient” for travel, lodging, dining, and contingencies. In any event, intermediaries like Brashears held and dispensed the cash, which was seldom given directly to Indian travelers. “Expenses in travelling to and from the Seat of Government are provided for by advances of such sums of money as are deemed sufficient” to these officials, noted Secretary of War Eustis in 1811. By controlling the purse strings, the

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186 Since the Augusta agent, John Course, was discouraged from exceeding forty or fifty dollars per horse, it seems the War Department hoped to recoup some of that cost through Dinsmoore’s sale. [Henry Dearborn] to John Course, Jan. 6, 1804, SW IA LS, vol. A; [Henry Dearborn] to Silas Dinsmoore, Jan 6, 1804, SW IA LS, vol. A.

187 William Eustis to James Monroe, February 16, 1811, in The Papers of James Monroe (forthcoming). Thanks to Cassandra Good, Assistant Editor, for bringing this and other letters to my attention.
federal government retained its position as a liberal host, if more in theory than practice at times.

Native travelers knew of the costs of travel and the role of the federal government in defraying them, factors they used in negotiating visits with officials. The Glass, a Cherokee, spoke for his delegation in 1801 when he informed the Secretary of War, “Our horses are low and have come far. We cannot purchase and have nothing to barter for better horses. We shall therefore travel slowly.” The Secretary assured him and the other Cherokees that they would “have all necessary assistance” when they turned homeward. Red Jacket also voiced his expectation that the federal government would pay the costs of travel. Speaking for the Senecas in 1801, he claimed, “The business that has caused this our long journey was occasioned by some of your bad men. The expence of it has been heavy on us.” Putting the burden of their visit on the U.S., Red Jacket did not hedge on who the Senecas thought should bear the cost: “We beg that, as so great a breach has been made on your part, the President will judge it proper that the United States should bear our expences to and from home and whilst here.” Delegates like the Glass and Red Jacket understood that political negotiation included haggling over travel subsidies, playing on their white hosts’ scheduling needs to extract better accommodations.

The sums the War Department spent on Native transportation varied widely. Delegations could be as small as one man, like Passamaquoddy Deacon Sockbason in 1835, or as large as several dozen, as when forty-nine Iroquois visited Philadelphia in 1792. The size of a delegation directly affected its cost. Sockbason, for example

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188 Conference with the Cherokee Deputation, June 30, 1801, SW IA LS, vol. A.
189 [Conference with the Seneca and Tuscarora], SW IA LS vol. A, 17.
represented a cheap trip, requisitioning thirty dollars for his expenses from Washington home to Maine.\textsuperscript{190} By contrast, when Sockbason had visited in 1829 with one other companion, they obtained $350 to get to and from the capital.\textsuperscript{191} Distance could also dramatically inflate travel costs. For conducting a delegation of Assiniboin, Cree, Ojibway and Sioux, Major J. F. A. Sanford, the sub-agent for the Upper Missouri, requested $5,658.83 in travel costs, which included steamboat voyages each way.\textsuperscript{192} Most trips did not ring up such high travel bills, but the costs could still be considerable. In 1828, the department spent $800 transporting a Seneca delegation, $2,400 for a delegation of Arkansas Cherokees, and unknown amounts for visits from the Stockbridge Indians and a party of Winnebagos.\textsuperscript{193} Most travel costs specifically referenced in the Finance Division of the Indian Affairs section of the War Department between 1817 and 1837 ranged from one hundred to several hundred dollars. Officials commonly cited the costs of delegations as a primary reason to keep Native diplomats at home.

The expenses of travel were also endured by parties other than the federal government, as seen already with the Quakers. Individuals, towns, and cities on the path to the capital bore the cost of travelers, as did Native nations themselves. When the twenty-man Cherokee delegation arrived in Columbia, South Carolina in May of 1794, the legislature convened a committee to investigate their reason for visiting Congress. Apparently, it deemed the Cherokee purpose legitimate, because a resolution on May 10 from the state’s senate authorized the governor to draw on the state treasury “for a sum

\textsuperscript{190} E.H. to Lewis Cass, January 31, 1835, Department of War, Office of Indian Affairs, Folder 1835, 1 of 3, Box no. PI-163 E- 849 NM1995; Requests for Requisitions, 1832-35, Finance Division, RG 75, NAB
\textsuperscript{191} Dec 15, 1829, Journal 1827-1831, Finance Division, RG 75, NAB.
\textsuperscript{192} Sanford was later the owner of Dred Scott at the time of the famous trial in 1857. September 7, 1832; Box PI-163 E-865 HM 1995; Register of Agents’ Accounts that were transmitted to the Second Auditor, 1831-33; Finance Division; RG 75; NAB.
\textsuperscript{193} Jan 16, 1828, March 25, 1828, and October 23, 1828; Journal 1827-1831; Finance Division; RG 75; NAB.
not exceeding 250 dollars, to defray the expence of conveying certain Cherokee Indians, now at this place, to Philadelphia.” The state did expect, perhaps in vain, to be paid back, as the resolution further demanded that the governor “take proper steps to have the said sum reimbursed from the federal treasury.”194

If the later experience of Richmond is typical, the South Carolina legislature did not recoup its money. Early in 1811, during his brief time as Governor of Virginia before appointment as Secretary of State, James Monroe tried to “take proper steps” to have the state treasury reimbursed for Indian expenses. Writing to Secretary of War, William Eustis, Monroe explained that “it is and has been long usual for parties from the Indian tribes,” passing through Richmond on their way to and from the capital, “to ask and receive of this Government supplies which they have represented, and which appeared to be necessary to their comfort.” Recognizing the importance of Indian diplomacy, and thus of providing those necessities, Monroe sought to relieve that cost “felt in the finances of the State.” He did so by asserting that “the management of all concerns relating to the Indians, belongs exclusively to the General Government”—a telling delineation of state and federal relations with Indians. Monroe also sought to routinize Richmond’s role in hosting Indian travelers. So long as the federal government informed him “what supplies, and to what extent, it may be proper for the Executive of this State to furnish, to such parties of Indians as may occasionally visit this City,” he would “be happy to afford any accommodations and facilities” that might be desired. Happy, that is, so long as Virginia would be reimbursed.195 Unfortunately for Monroe, and Virginia’s

194 City Gazette (Charleston), May 17, 1794.
195 Apparently he was unaware that his suggestions were not new, and in fact already in operation, like his idea that each delegation carry “a passport specifying the tribe to which it belongs, the number composing
treasury, the federal government responded by “positively refusing to enter into any arrangements, or afford any relief whatever.” As Secretary of War and then President, Monroe would see from the other side how the federal government leaned on the states for assistance in hosting Indian diplomats.

As early as 1801, officials such as Dearborn began to doubt the wisdom of the delegations altogether. After the departure of a deputation of Cherokees that year, Dearborn complained to Cherokee agent, Return J. Meigs, that “much inconvenience results from the frequent visits of Indians to the seat of government, and it is necessary that they should be checked.” But, the secretary’s laments in his circulars to Indian agents were unsuccessful in suppressing trips to Washington. Not the least of the “inconvenience[s]” Dearborn protested stemmed from the fact that “the President cannot always be there [in the capital],” so that if Native ambassadors, “should arrive during his absence” their trip would “be all in vain.” Such failed encounters did occur, as when several Oneida and Onondaga delegates arrived in 1821. Dearborn argued that “representations made on paper will travel with more speed and without expense.” His larger concern was the financial cost of the continual procession of Natives to and from the capital. Other Secretaries of War echoed Dearborn’s sentiments in missives to agents elsewhere in the country over the next several decades. The specific costs of travel were cited foremost among the “inconvenience” of visiting delegations.

Dearborn and others hoped to conduct their business by pen and paper, rather than face-to-face. Persistent

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196 William Giles to James Monroe, February 20, 1811, Papers of James Monroe.
199 The costs of presents, entertainment, and lodging at the capital will be discussed in chapter 3.
Native envoys, however, ensured that the practice of attending the capital would not be eliminated.

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One instrument the federal government deployed in an attempt to regulate the frequency and timing of visits, partly in order to control costs, was passports. Yet, passports had the unintended consequence of establishing an ambiguous relationship between the federal government and those who were, at that point, considered to be foreign dignitaries. The secretary of war frequently penned letters and circulars, as Dearborn did to Agent Peter Chouteau, asserting, “You will in no case allow any of the Chiefs or others to set out on a visit to the President of the United States until they shall first have received through you a passport from the President or from the Department of War.”201 As a gate-keeping mechanism, however, passports engendered a certain set of expectations.

Passports represented an artifact of the contested and shifting national boundaries of the continent at the turn of the nineteenth century. The movement of Native and white people across and through both Indian and American territories initiated a system of passports in the early republic. The issuance and use of these documents between Native nations and the United States exposed tensions between the view of Indians as foreign subjects and as imperial subjects. Moreover, the process that both sides needed to navigate illustrates the fears and assumptions of the U.S. that defined the Indian nations’ relationship to the American government.

Early national laws on the subject reflected the opaque and decentralized nature of interstate travel regulations. The Ordinance for the Regulation of Indian Affairs of 1786

201 Henry Dearborn to Peter Chouteau, July 17, 1804, SW IA LS, vol. B.
made rules regarding entrance into Indian territories, but did not regulate what was to happen to Indians traveling out of their territories. Native border crossing was usually specified in individual treaties. The law prohibited non-U.S. citizens from living or trading in Indian Territory, required all U.S. traders to have a license issued by their State’s governor and all travelers into Indian country to carry passports. Reflecting concerns about traders disappearing from the government’s view, passports were to be granted for no longer than a year by the superintendent of the Indian department. The Trade and Intercourse Act of 1802 reinforced the need for “any such citizen or other person” who crossed the boundary into Indian lands to bear a pass, which could be obtained from the governor of any state, an officer of U.S. military at the nearest frontier post, or any other person authorized by the president to do so, which in practice included the secretary of war and Indian agents and sub-agents. These regulations were rearticulated again in 1816 and 1834.202 It was not until 1856 that the U.S. passed a law limiting the ability to grant passports to the secretary of state, as advised by the president.

Despite the dispersed authority to issue passports, the secretary of war was almost exclusively responsible for issuing the extant passports for Native ambassadors. The bulk of extant passports were issued between 1800 and 1812. Because the War Department papers burned in 1800, it is likely that passes were issued prior to 1800 and have not survived. Only a few passports have been identified for later years. Most delegations probably journeyed without them. Or they may have been traveling on passes from their agents, which have not been recorded. During the period of consistent use, between 1800 and 1815, passes exist for 21 out of 28 delegations. Several of those delegations received

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202 Francis Paul Prusha, *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 8, 17-18, 28, 64.
multiple passports. For example, the Shawnee and Delaware delegation received one for their trip to the capital, and two for the return trek. On February 14, 1802, “Buckingillis a Chief of the Delaware Nation, with his Interpreters and associates,” were given a pass to return home. Two days later, another was given to Captain Reed, a Shawnee chief. 203

Bureaucratic instruments, the passports themselves were fairly uniform. Though not a printed form, each contained formulaic language, requesting the bearers to be allowed to pass “freely and without molestation” to or from the capital. Passports in the early republic were more akin to earlier safe-conduct passes issued by monarchs or other authorities, granting travelers the privilege of protection from “arrest or harm while making a particular journey or travelling within a certain region.” 204 Passports to the capital were typically written at the War Department, with blanks to be filled in by the agent indicating the names of the actual travelers and date of departure from their nation. Sometimes each individual was listed, sometimes just the number of travelers, and frequently a combination thereof, like the pass for “Captain Rabbit and his ten associates.” 205 The blanks on the passes show that attempts to limit and control the makeup of delegations was beyond the ability of the War Department.

Federal officials’ concern with Native nations rather than individuals is evident in other ways as well. In contrast to other forms of state surveillance, passports in the early nineteenth century had only a tentative relationship to individual identity. Native people given passports for traveling to the capital were not described and only sometimes even

203 No single delegation received more than three passes. Twenty-nine passes are available, primarily through the files of the War Department, and reverences are made to various others that are not in the archive. SW IA LS, vol. A, 127, 161.
named. In 1802, Secretary of War Dearborn sent a blank passport to the agent for the Iroquois, explaining, “enclosed you will receive a passport for the four Chiefs mentioned in your letter. You will be pleased to fill the blanks in said passport with the names and Nations of the Chiefs who will visit this city and deliver it to said Chiefs.” Some blanks were not filled in with such specifics. Another passport from the same year simply requested “that the Chiefs of the Delaware and Shawnees Nations of Indians and the eight young men and two Interpreters accompanying them” pass freely from Pittsburg to Philadelphia, then on to the capital in Washington, D.C. Perhaps owing to their last-minute composition, the open-ended quality of passports nevertheless underscored the government’s general disinterest in the individual rather than the collective delegation.

While the boundaries of many Native nations nested within the territorial claims of the United States, Native diplomats were international travelers. Before departing their respective nations, chiefs and warriors obtained a passport from the secretary of war to secure them safe passage in American territory and serve as an introduction along their routes. Unlike more typical letters of introduction used throughout this period, these passports played for white travelers into or through Indian nations. Whites entering Indian territory seem, in fact, to have been more systematically monitored, as they were much more likely to be described or privately vouched for. In these instances, whites applied to either the Secretary of War, or locally to Indian agents or state governors, rather than to Indian leaders. The power of granting or denying passports was not fully reciprocal, but the necessity of a passport for crossing U.S./Indian boundaries was. The requirement for whites to have passports to enter Indian country allowed the U.S., in theory, to control the borders by keeping foreigners—British, French, and Spanish—from entering Indian nations. But it also focused largely on the tracking of American nationals. Passports for whites were more specific in the identification of individuals, and generally included their specific purpose for entering Indian territory, their destination, and sometimes, the time by which they should have departed. Even government factors and agents reporting to their posts carried passports, underscoring just how anxious the federal government was about white interlopers stirring up trouble in Indian Country. While Native nations did not control the issuance of passports for travel into their territories, Native sovereignty was recognized in other ways. Most significantly, enforcement of passport rules and the punishment of violators were left to the trespassed nation.

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208 The lack of concern regarding individual identity also marks a contrast with the role that passports played for white travelers into or through Indian nations. Whites entering Indian territory seem, in fact, to have been more systematically monitored, as they were much more likely to be described or privately vouched for. In these instances, whites applied to either the Secretary of War, or locally to Indian agents or state governors, rather than to Indian leaders. The power of granting or denying passports was not fully reciprocal, but the necessity of a passport for crossing U.S./Indian boundaries was. The requirement for whites to have passports to enter Indian country allowed the U.S., in theory, to control the borders by keeping foreigners—British, French, and Spanish—from entering Indian nations. But it also focused largely on the tracking of American nationals. Passports for whites were more specific in the identification of individuals, and generally included their specific purpose for entering Indian territory, their destination, and sometimes, the time by which they should have departed. Even government factors and agents reporting to their posts carried passports, underscoring just how anxious the federal government was about white interlopers stirring up trouble in Indian Country. While Native nations did not control the issuance of passports for travel into their territories, Native sovereignty was recognized in other ways. Most significantly, enforcement of passport rules and the punishment of violators were left to the trespassed nation.
passports did not speak to the character of their bearers, nor were they directed to particular individuals. In the assorted laws that specified passports for the U.S./Indian boundaries, clauses about passports and licenses always immediately followed the clauses declaring the physical borders. The articulation of borders, and how they were to be crossed, implied territorial sovereignty for both parties. Furthermore, because nation and state were increasingly synonymous by the early nineteenth century, the requirement of a passport to cross U.S./Indian borders implied U.S. recognition of Native sovereignty, at least to a point. Interestingly, while U.S. officials were concerned about Native people moving across Native/Native borders, they did not attempt to regulate movement across those borders. Even as fears of Indian collaboration in the northwest and Ohio country plagued citizens and officials, well-known “troublemakers” like Tecumseh were able to move at will among the Native populations of the west.

A reflection of these ambiguities of the status of Indians as foreign diplomats, passports were documents in which the U.S. government simultaneously articulated control over Native peoples and conceded Native sovereignty. Like treaties, which historian Francis Paul Prucha has noted “had certain characteristics or elements that, although appearing paradoxical or even incompatible, did not cancel each other out,” so too did passports.209 The specific employment of a passport rather than a letter of introduction or permission (as enslaved and other subjugated persons received) suggests that Indian Territory was foreign and thus sovereign. By retaining the authority to craft “legitimate” documents of identification, however, the U.S. tacitly withheld recognition

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209 Yet Natives could not issue passports for those individuals, Native or American, entering or leaving their country. For all their co-opting of Native sovereignty, the U.S. seems unique in not having concerned itself with the mobility of its “colonized” population of Native people. Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.
of Native nations as states. As scholar Mark Salter has shown, “the right to authorize and regulate movement has been intrinsic to the very construction of states” since the early modern period, a factor that no doubt shaped American efforts to retain control of the processes by which Native movement were legitimated.\footnote{Mark B. Salter, \textit{Rights of Passage: The Passport in International Relations} (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003). To regulate movement, states historically have utilized a range of documents for identifying and categorizing persons. John Torpey, \textit{The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.}

Complaints about Natives traveling without passports usually referred to problems such as the government not receiving advance notice of visitors, travelling without an interpreter, or the cost and nuisance of their visits. Passports, then, were primarily instruments that allowed the secretary of war, who issued them, to be aware of who was coming to visit and to cut down on visits deemed superfluous. But passports alone did not resolve these problems. In 1800, Chickasaw John Peter Brown arrived in the capital unannounced, sans passport and interpreter. From what Secretary of War Samuel Dexter could determine, Brown had papers, an interpreter, and an additional companion when he departed from Tennessee, but the interpreter and companion fell ill and Brown determined to go on alone. This served him well enough until he showed up in Hagerstown, Maryland, where “being intoxicated he lost all his papers.” In lieu of a passport, he arrived in the capital with “certificates from Gentlemen in Hagerstown stating that they had seen his papers while in his possession and that they were of a Public Nature.” Brown was provided a passport and a new suit of clothes for his return trip.\footnote{Samuel Dexter to David Henley, November 19, 1800; Correspondence of Samuel Dexter, November 17, 1800, SW IA LS, vol. A, 11-12.}
The use of passports seems to have declined after about 1814. The secretary of war frequently lamented in his circulars to the various Indian Agents the “impropriety of their [Indian diplomats] coming on without proper passports from the President.”\textsuperscript{212} Possibly the use of passports was phased out due to their ineffectiveness in dictating the terms of travel—as in the blanks for individual names, alluding to unknown companions. The role of agents in conducting delegations to and from the capital may have also negated the need for passports. Changing geopolitics on the continent in the wake of the War of 1812 likely played a major role, as well. Administrators’ concerns about whites in Indian Territory without proper passes were much more substantial prior to the end of hostilities. Up through 1815, the U.S. was afraid of whites, particularly foreigners, fomenting rebellion among the various Indian nations on its borders who could wreak destruction on their own, or more frighteningly, with European allies. The eruption of the War of 1812 marked the zenith of these fears, which likely explains the corresponding decline in the issuance of passports after the conclusion of the war. More secure in their territorial hegemony after defeating the British, the federal government was less concerned with foreigners fomenting Indian rebellions on the edges of American territory.\textsuperscript{213} The use of passports at the beginning of the period reveals the multifaceted and politically charged meanings and practices of travel to and from the capital.

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Natives covered hundreds of miles to attend the capital. Man, nature, and the supernatural threatened travelers; the possibility of attack by enemy nations or hostile

\textsuperscript{212} Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, November 23, 1802, SW IA LS, vol. A, 293-94.
\textsuperscript{213} Indeed, that the onus of state surveillance fell on whites entering Indian Territory is revealing in suggesting the perceived power of Native people in this period. The U.S. was far less concerned with parties of Native diplomats making their way to the national capital, or other Indians who had various business in the states, than with whites among the Indians.
Americans, the elements and new environments, hunger, illness, homesickness, getting lost, and accidents all loomed farther downstream or along muddy and rutted roads. Delegations, even those consisting of experienced diplomats, faced the unexpected, and did not know upon departure how long they would be gone. The value they placed on negotiating with the president and visiting the capital outweighed their vulnerability during their treks, however, as hundreds of Natives made their way to the federal seat of government.

For many Native travelers, the link between path and destination was both real and symbolic. Binary views of home and abroad, peace and war, and community member and stranger underpinned the way Native travelers made sense of their journeys. Inhabited areas, or clearings, were places of safety. The orderly landscape of homes and fields was a zone of human control and society. Travel sent individuals out of the clearings and into the woods, a place deeply invested with meaning, according to historian James Merrell. The metaphor of the woods encompassed any unsettled, or even foreign, place. Even established paths and roads carried one through the woods; while travelers might camp along the path or river, these sites were not truly inhabited. For Native people, the woods were unpredictable. While they harbored opportunity for hunting, harvesting, or spiritual intervention, they also concealed a multitude of natural and supernatural perils. Native diplomats continually evoked the dangers of the woods.

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214 While Natives were not unique in these binary views, they did distinctly shape the idea of travel for Native diplomats. James Merrell, Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999); Wendy St. Jean, “Trading Paths: Mapping Chickasaw History in the Eighteenth Century,” American Indian Quarterly 27, no. 3/4 (Summer/Fall 2003): 758-780.

215 While Merrell explores the meanings of travel and the woods for the eighteenth-century Iroquois and their neighbors, particularly Delawares, Shawnees, the language of the Woods Edge ceremony, and the opposition between domesticated and undomesticated space are shared across the continent. The language of the Woods Edge ceremony resonates through many of the speeches given and received by Native diplomats in the capital. Merrell, Into the American Woods, 19-27.
and the trials they faced in the accounts of their journeys. But, the menaces they faced were not merely metaphorical. The distances covered between home and the capital were fraught with hazards; human, natural, and supernatural.

Native American maps illustrate the relationship between paths and destinations. Sociogram style maps drawn by Natives were often collected or described by Europeans. These maps, “where personas or groups are represented as nodes and the social connections between them makeup the network connections,” depicted paths, notes Patricia Galloway—by land or water—that reflected group relations. Setting out on a path to the capital demanded the formulation of an idea of the American capital, for no path could exist without a relationship with the new federal government. Over time, the federal capital became a known place for many Native diplomats, who had visited the city or heard others tell of it. Until that archive of knowledge was acquisitioned, however, and even as it continued to be cataloged, Native people drew on their own ideas and expectations to give meaning to the place that was the seat of the United States government.

Among the dangers the woods harbored were others Natives encountered there, human or supernatural. White Americans along the route could be just as dangerous as Native enemies, accidents, and sickness. In 1794, a deputation of twenty Cherokees visited Philadelphia. Traveling by boat from Philadelphia to Charleston, the delegation disembarked in early August and headed west overland. Concerned for the Cherokees’

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217 In late June, the Cherokees boarded Captain Hunt’s brig, Fame, joined by Captain William McCaleb, to begin their journey home. For arrival at Columbia, see City Gazette (Charleston), May 17, 1794; for voyage
safety passing though the South Carolina frontier, Secretary of War Henry Knox wrote to Major General Andrew Pickens at his home, Hopewell, on the Carolina frontier, appealing to his “zeal to prevent any catastrophe.” Receiving Knox’s letter, Pickens called up 200 men to serve for two months at Pendleton Courthouse, with others called to be on the ready to march at an hour’s notice after the Cherokees’ expected arrival on August 21. However, an express letter indicated that “a Captn. [David] McCluskey from Georgia, who is famous for such business,” killing Indians that is, was raising men to attack the travelers before they reached the guard at Pendleton. Pickens dispatched a company to meet and escort the Cherokee to Pendleton, where they and their goods had in fact all arrived safely by September 4. With the Indians, their presents from the president, and the guard established in good houses at Pendleton, Pickens sent a runner to the Cherokee nation with the information on the delegation, expected to arrive in ten to twelve days. The militia would then escort the Cherokees and their wagons of goods as far as the Occone River, or the boundary with the Cherokee nation. The crisis was averted, but only with timely—and costly—exertions of federal and local officials.

Of the ambassadors who ventured to the capital, the Mandan Sheheke experienced among the most extreme and unexpected challenges on his journey. On Saturday, August 17, 1806, Sheheke set off by boat to visit the man he had been hearing so much about, his new white father, President Thomas Jefferson. Sheheke did not make the decision to leave home lightly, nor without trepidation. His concerns were warranted. Not until

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218 Henry Knox to Alexander Pickens, June 27, 1794; Alexander Pickens to Henry Knox September 6, 1794, PWD. In 1792, Captain David McCluskey of Elbert County, Georgia, likely the same McCluskey mentioned here, was arrested for the murder of several Cherokees. Augusta Chronicle, May 11, 1793.
September 24, 1809—three years after departing—would this Mandan leader finally return to his home, family, and nation. While exceptional in its length, Sheheke’s experiences traveling to and from Washington are illustrative of the dangers all Native diplomats faced in their travels.

As Captains Lewis and Clark returned down the Missouri River with the Corps of Discovery in the summer of 1806, they entreated the Mandans and Minetarras “to Visit the United States and [their] Great Father.” Black Cat, a Mandan leader, politely expressed his wish to oblige, but declined for fear of his life on the journey. The chief pointed out that the Sioux “were on the river below and would Certainly kill him if he attempted to go down.” Clark was quick to assure him that the Corps would protect any who came downriver with them and that the president would ensure they were well protected on their return home as well. But the Mandans were in the midst of a war with the Sioux, and Clark’s reassurances were evidently insufficient. A Minetarra chief, perhaps Black Moccasin, agreed that it was too dangerous to travel through Sioux country and so none would go.

Eager to fulfill President Jefferson’s instructions to send Native leaders from the newly acquired Louisiana Territory to Washington in order to solidify peace and alliance, the captains persisted in their attempts to find a willing ambassador. Black Cat and Black Moccasin may have had other reasons to turn down the offer of captains Lewis and Clark, such as not wanting to risk losing authority in their absence. Nevertheless, they insisted that their reason for declining was pragmatic: “the Sieoux were very troublesom and the

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road to [the] great father dangerous.” Ultimately, it was an interpreter, Rene Jusseaume, who convinced Sheheke, another esteemed Mandan leader, to make the dangerous journey. The following day, Sheheke, his wife and son, and Jusseaume with his wife and two children, joined the Corps of Discovery and began their journey.221

The first leg of the journey for the Mandan family was by canoe, rather, two large canoes fastened together to make them more stable for the float down the Missouri. The company made sixty-eight miles in the first three days of travel. Sheheke was likely on edge the following day as he entered into Sioux territory, but aside from a number of wolves and wild game, the Corps and their guests passed through the country alone. The next morning, Sheheke heard from some passing Arikaras that their chief who had travelled to the Great Father never returned, but died on his way home, an event that would, in turn, deeply affect the Mandan travelers.222 At the next Arikara village the chief accosted Sheheke, and Clark was forced to step in and ameliorate the situation. The men shared a pipe and a meal, but Sheheke remained on guard, and close by Clark’s side.223 For the next week, their voyage was largely uneventful as they continued downstream, deeper into Sioux country.224

Passing through enemy territory kept the travelers on heightened alert, as it did for virtually all Native diplomats in the period. On August 30, Clark reported, “about 20 indians was discovered on an eminance a little above us…imediately after 80 or 90 Indian men all armed with fusees & Bows & arrows Came out of a wood on the opposite bank abut ¼ of a mile below.” Clark, and surely Sheheke and his family, feared that their

221 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 8:301, 304-06.
222 The Arikara chief actually died in Washington, and his death induced Arikara hostilities against the U.S. for several years, as will be explored in the final chapter. Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 8:305, 310-11.
223 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 8:313-16.
224 Moulton, Lewis and Clark, 8:326.
observers were hostile and set about determining their affiliation. Clark’s worst fears were confirmed when his interpreter informed him that the armed men were Tetons led by Tar-tack-kah-sab-bar, or The Black Buffalo, who had already given the Corps trouble on their way upriver two years earlier.\footnote{For the corps’ encounter with The Black Buffalo, see Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 3:111-25.} Both sides exchanged strong words and threats. To stay clear of the Sioux, the party endured a miserable night at a “very disagreeable” camp. In the morning, Sioux men along the river continued to unsettle the party. Unsurprisingly they travelled farther that day, seventy miles, than they had any day in the past week and a half.\footnote{Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 8:329-33.}

Following his encounter with the Tetons, Sheheke was relieved (after an initial moment of panic when he heard gunfire) to encounter a group of Yankton men, who were peaceably disposed. After exchanging mutual salutations, the men shared a smoke, no doubt easing Sheheke’s nerves and returning him—however fleetingly—to the comfortable routines of home. To solidify their friendly interchange, Sheheke gave the leader a “par of elegant Legins,” before the two parties went their separate ways.\footnote{Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 8:337-38.}

Although the most fearsome part of the journey was over, the Mandan travelers were not in great spirits. Despite encountering plenty of new sights and experiences, such as dining on wild turkey, they were over 800 miles from home acutely aware of the distance. Sheheke and his wife were weary of travel and the three children were often tearful.\footnote{Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 8:344, 350-51.}

Homesickness was compounded by other discomforts for Sheheke and company, particularly the paucity of provisions. The party passed through Kanza territory, then the villages of the Little Osage, as they headed downriver. By the middle of September,
despite earlier obtaining basic necessities from traders passing upriver, the travelers were out of food. On days when the hunters were unsuccessful at obtaining game, the whole party subsisted on pawpaws they picked on the banks.\footnote{Pawpaws are a type of fruit.} For their part, the men of the Corps were sustained by their excitement at approaching white settlements again and content to get by on limited rations. The Mandans, who were now 1400 miles from home and already longing to return, no doubt viewed the austere conditions less cheerfully.\footnote{Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 8:365.}

Finally arriving at the first outposts of the nation he had set off to visit, Sheheke headed with Clark to the public storehouse at Fort Bellefontaine where he received “Some clothes &c.” Perhaps he procured some items for his wife and child, as well.\footnote{Fort Bellefontaine is in present day Spanish Lake, Missouri, not far from St. Louis. Moulton, \textit{Lewis and Clark}, 8:370.}

Later that afternoon, the whole party traveled the last few miles to St. Louis. There, after thirty-eight days of continuous travel, the Mandans had a chance to rest. For many of the Native delegations that traveled from west of the Mississippi, St. Louis was a place to stop and regroup on their long eastward treks. From there, they traveled more fully provisioned, better marked, and less treacherous paths to their destination. On December 28, the Mandan party finally reached Washington, after 134 days on the road.
Sheheke’s return journey was more fraught and protracted than his trip to the capital. His fears of being attacked on the road were fulfilled and stymied his passage for almost two years. Nathaniel Pryor, who knew the chief well, having been part of the Corps of Discovery before it disbanded, conducted Sheheke, Jusseaume, and their families home from the capital, departing west from St. Louis in May 1807. Pryor, the Mandans, a contingent of soldiers, and a party of traders—48 in all—traveled upriver by keelboat covering 1,430 miles over the next several months. By September, they had made it through much of Sioux territory and were approaching the Arikara villages, not far from their Mandan homes.

Unbeknownst to the travelers, the political climate of the region had worsened during Sheheke’s absence. The Mandans and Arikaras were at war. The latter nation had soured on their relationship with the U.S. after Arketarnawhar’s death, information the travelers ascertained too late. As the party put to shore, hundreds of Arikaras turned out
to intimidate Pryor and the Mandans. In a tense exchange, Pyror extricated his party and proceeded. Farther upriver, however, the Arikaras proved even more hostile, and when Pryor refused their demand to turn over Sheheke, a firefight ensued. Wildly outnumbered and losing men, Pryor and his party retreated, harassed for several miles by the Arikaras. In the end, Sheheke and his family were safe, though two Arikara bullets hit Jusseaume. At least four in the party were killed and a dozen wounded.\textsuperscript{232} Retreating all the way back to St. Louis, Pryor believed that only a party of at least 400 men had a chance of making it upriver, advice that consigned Sheheke and his family to wait another two years before a party could be mustered to return them home in September 1809.

Accidents and violence, discomfort and sickness, and death all made the process of long distance travel a generally unpleasant ordeal for many travelers. Sheheke’s experience, though unique in its length and for being escorted by the Corps of Discovery, nevertheless illustrates the opportunities for trouble that Native travelers chose to face to visit the capital. Delegates sometimes spent more time traveling than they did in the capital.\textsuperscript{233} Many never made it to the capital at all; a multinational delegation from the Missouri region buried six of their compatriots on the road to the capital in 1806.\textsuperscript{234}

Between 1789 and 1837, transformations in transportation facilitated new opportunities for delegates visiting the capital. Indian ambassadors traveled eastward (and north and southward) by horse, wagon and stage on improved roads as well as

\textsuperscript{232} Morris, \textit{Fate of the Corps}, 29-35.

\textsuperscript{233} In 1794, for example, a delegation of Cherokees was away from their nation for six months but spent just under three weeks at Philadelphia.

\textsuperscript{234} In addition, five Osages died en route in 1804, and several others became sick. Puckshenubbe fell to his death not long after setting out to the capital in 1824. Unlike those who died in the capital (see chapter 3), the evidence is largely silent regarding funerary practice or mourning for those perished on the road. For the Missouri delegation deaths, see Henry Dearborn to Mr. Boilvin, April 11, 1806, SW IA LS, vol. B, 197-98. For Osage, \textit{National Intelligencer}, June 6, 1804. For the Choctaw, Puckshenubbe, see \textit{Daily National Journal}, November 2, 1824.
aboard steamboats, and even a few by rail—the same technologies that facilitated the
swell of Americans and immigrants westward. While overland travel was still quite
rudimentary throughout the first half of the period, country roads and turnpikes connected
most of the coast under varying conditions along the eastern seaboard. Construction,
ongoing for decades, began in 1808 on the Cumberland, or National Road, connecting the
Maryland piedmont across the Appalachians to Wheeling, VA, and then on to the Ohio
country. Scores of Native ambassadors would trek part, or all, of the National Road. In
the decades after 1812, thousands of miles of turnpikes were built along the eastern
seaboard and stretched into local hinterlands. As roads were upgraded, stagecoach travel
improved apace. By 1815, stages averaged 6-8 miles per hour on good roads, charging an
average of 7 cents a mile.\textsuperscript{235} In the south, overland travel remained minimally improved,
though the federal government cut a road through Indian territory that connected Georgia
to Natchez.\textsuperscript{236} Accidents occurred by all modes of road travel. An overturned stage on the
road from Wheeling to Hagerstown broke the arm of a soldier transporting the
imprisoned Black Hawk to Washington. Luckily, Black Hawk only “received a slight
injury.”\textsuperscript{237} In 1824, Puckshenubbe, member of a Choctaw delegation on their way to
Washington fell from a cliff, fracturing his skull, and died while taking a rest on the road
through Kentucky.\textsuperscript{238}

\textsuperscript{235} The section from Cumberland to Wheeling was completed by 1818, and in 1833 the road stretched west
to Columbus. Like the turnpikes, private companies typically operated bridges and ferries and required
fares of travelers, another expense of travel. Taylor, \textit{Transportation Revolution}, 17-22, 142. See also John
Lauritz Larson, \textit{Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government In

\textsuperscript{236} Indeed, some delegations visited the capital to address the very issue of a federal road through Indian
country. For a rich exploration of road through the Creek nation see Angela Pulley Hudson, \textit{Creek Paths
and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South} (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 2010).


\textsuperscript{238} Viola, \textit{Diplomats in Buckskins}, 153.
New technologies also bolstered travel in the early nineteenth century. Americans began using steamboats in the first decade of the century, and their effectiveness contributed to the proliferation of the vessels by the end of the War of 1812. In the east, steamboats helped to connect New York City and Philadelphia and were widely used on eastern rivers as well as in the harbors and bays on the coast.\textsuperscript{239} Once eastern steamboats became widely used, they became the preferred method of travel over stages and sailing packets for Natives shuttling between eastern coastal cities. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, the steamboat emerged as a common mode of transport for diplomats from the central and northern plains as well. By 1830, railway construction was underway in the United States, with various companies laying track from eastern cities to their western hinterlands, and some delegations covered short stretches of their journeys by rail.\textsuperscript{240} While some Natives in the mid-1830s traveled by rail, and steamboats increasingly appeared on western legs of these journeys, horse, wagon, and stage—facilitated by a rapidly expanding and improved network of roads—remained the preferred means of travel to many delegations.

The ever-present risk of accidents plagued many on the path to the capital. By 1815, sojourners of the western river systems typically boarded steamboats. Steamboat travel was attended with danger, particularly those vessels that plied the Mississippi and Missouri river systems. Interior steamboats were more likely than eastern ones to use

\textsuperscript{239} Taylor, \textit{Transportation Revolution}, 59-60.
\textsuperscript{240} Surveying, mapping, and construction started on the Baltimore and Ohio in 1830, and fourteen miles of track were opened before the year ended. By the end of the decade, hundreds of miles of track had been laid, primarily in the east, with Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts being the leading states. Taylor, \textit{Transportation Revolution}, 78-82.
high-pressure engines, which increased the risk of boiler explosions.\textsuperscript{241} In the five years between 1825 and 1830 alone, forty-two boiler explosions killed 273 passengers and operators.\textsuperscript{242} Newspapers described frequent steamboat accidents in lurid detail, and Native diplomats were not spared from such incidents. In 1827, a delegation of about thirty Sioux was headed from St. Louis to St. Peters aboard the steamboat Rolla when a boiler flu collapsed, blowing a fireman overboard and maiming the engineer. The Sioux were unscathed, but likely quite unsettled, by the accident.\textsuperscript{243}

Along with improvements in transportation came improved communication. The spread of post officials and the increase in express modes of transportation allowed agents and federal officials to be in more efficient communication by the end of the period than they had been when hosting delegates in New York and Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{244} Officials in the capital encouraged Natives, through agents, to conduct their business by mail rather than in-person visits.

While decreasing rates and improved communication stimulated the movement of individuals throughout the eastern half of the continent, they did not cut federal costs for Native travel overall. Indeed, delegations came from farther away after Jefferson purchased the Louisiana territory, mitigating the improved rates per mile. Even more vitally, Native people resisted federal efforts to stem the stream of diplomats to and from the capital.

\textsuperscript{241} Western steamboats developed a unique style in response to the peculiarities of the interior river system, including the impressive ability to make way in as little as two feet of water. Taylor, \textit{Transportation Revolution}, 64-67.
\textsuperscript{243} \textit{Public Ledger} (Philadelphia), November 23, 1837. St. Peters, Missouri is about 50 miles up the Missouri River from St. Louis.
\textsuperscript{244} For communication, see Richard John, \textit{Spreading the News: The American Postal System From Franklin to Morse} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); David Henkin, \textit{The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America} (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006).
Regardless of what mode of transportation diplomats used, sickness presented another danger on the road as new environments and pathogens exposed them to ailments they had never encountered. With frequent outbreaks of influenza, malaria, and cholera in eastern cities, travelers were exposed to diseases that all residents faced.\textsuperscript{245} While no cases of death from yellow fever were noted for visitors to the capital in Philadelphia, the inoculation of Miami chief Little Turtle for smallpox in 1798 reminded visitors of the physical dangers of the cities.\textsuperscript{246} Rumors of outbreaks sometimes forced travelers to revise their itineraries. In 1831, Indian agent Major Stanford escorted a party eastward that included delegates from nine nations of the north central plains. However, “after having avoided their enemies and surmounted the greatest privations and difficulties” on the first portion of their journey, “they became alarmed at reports of the smallpox, and five returned.” Nor were these idle reports. An outbreak of smallpox was at that time sweeping through the Pawnee towns that lay along the delegations’ path to the capital.\textsuperscript{247} Returning from the capital in 1837, several Winnebagos became sick, forcing the sub-agent, Thomas Boyd, to adjust their travel plans.\textsuperscript{248} Whether causing death or merely inconvenience, disease and sickness were additional concerns for diplomats to face.

Hospitality from officials or settlements en route was not always forthcoming, making time ‘in the woods’ frustrating and uncomfortable. Having been encouraged by the Miami interpreter, William Wells, to visit the president at Washington, a party of

\textsuperscript{245} Arketarnawhar, the Arikara chief whose death spelled trouble for Sheheke, had in fact died of an unknown sickness that he contracted while touring the eastern cities.


\textsuperscript{247} \textit{National Gazette} (Philadelphia), Jan. 19, 1832.

\textsuperscript{248} Nov. 26, 1837; Box 1 PI-163; Register of Letters Received by the Secretary of War Concerning Indian Finance, 1834-38; Finance Division; RG 75; NAB.
Shawnees and Delawares set out for the city in 1802. Though Wells had assured them, they later complained, that the U.S. would “provide everything for our journey,” the travelers found nothing but trouble. Convening at St. Mary’s in Ohio territory, the local officials “made many difficulties to our coming” and sent them 130 miles away to Chillicothe.\(^{249}\) When the envoy arrived, however, Governor St. Clair, rather than settling “every necessary for our journey,” as they had been assured, seemed unhappy to see them. At this point, the delegations opined, “We were in great distress and the Governor would give us no lodging, so we had to lay out without a house and with much difficulty with him we got only twenty dollars, which is only enough for one man.”\(^{250}\) With no thanks to American hospitality, the delegation persisted to the capital.

Some sought supernatural protection from such disasters. To avoid adverse events on their journey, the Shawnees who set out to visit the President in June 1819 “retired into the forest, encamped, killed game, and prepared the sacrifice” that was their practice “in order to obtain the good will of the Great Spirit.” Having heard the voice of the Great Spirit, they “set forward on their journey with alacrity, anticipating the best success.”\(^{251}\) In spite of such supernatural assurances and the proper ritual conduct, accidents happened.

Even without accident or injury, the tedious and tiring months spent on the road left many delegates longing to be home. Transferring from steamboat to stage at Wheeling, VA in 1833 Black Hawk, who was “unaccustomed to this mode of travelling”

\(^{249}\) St. Mary’s is about 130 miles northwest of Chillicothe in present-day Ohio. The delegates met with Wells at Fort Wayne, now Indiana, 50 miles northwest of St. Mary’s. Wells had travelled with the Miamis to the capital, and likely met the Shawnees and Delawares shortly after returning from the Miamis’ visit to Washington in winter of 1801-02.


tired of his journey. Instead of being cooped up in a stage, he and his companions
“wished ourselves seated in a canoe on one of our own rivers, that we might return to our
friends.”252 Expressions of discomfort while traveling thus revealed a deeper longing to
return home as quickly as possible. In addition to reflecting their physical and mental
state, routine expressions of weariness could also serve the purpose of demanding better
accommodations, as Black Hawk shows.

§ § §

For Native diplomats, the seat of American federal power was a place where face-
to-face negotiations could be employed to resolve concerns and disputes. As a white city
or great council fire, the capital was a place of greater authority for Indian/U.S.
diplomacy than backcountry sites. Therefore, despite the ordeal and risk of long-distance
travel, Native diplomats persistently took to the road with their problems and complaints.
These diplomats were experienced travelers, moving through Native and white spaces for
personal and political reasons. Federal officials often found the number, size, and cost of
Native deputations to be greater than they desired and attempted to regulate Native travel
through tightly managed travel plans and, for a time, passports. The size and frequency of
Native delegations, however, resisted federal restraint.

The process of negotiating diplomatic travel highlights the early republic as a
period of overlapping zones of power. Native travel was challenged by the competition of
Native nations, individual states, and the federal government. Contests over borders
between Native nations and between Natives and the U.S. contributed to the violence and
warfare that threatened travelers, particularly in those contested regions. Resolving these
conflicts also constituted much of the reason Native delegations trekked to the capital.
Logistics and finance for these envoys were also complicated by white contests over the
authority of treating with Native people and the attendant financial burdens, as James
Monroe saw first as a state official and later in federal employ. The additional role of
non-state parties like the Quakers could either mitigate or confuse these issues. Indeed,
the persistence of overlapping authority throughout the period was more significant to the
character of Native diplomacy than the changes in transportation technology and
infrastructure that usually frame transportation in this period. Even as the federal
government sought to establish its primacy over Native diplomacy, the capital’s
limitations as a landscape of political authority hindered these efforts.

As with many of the delegations that ventured to the capital after it moved to
Washington, the Choctaws’ path to the capital in 1803 was not a simple round trip. Two
months into their visit, Jefferson addressed the Choctaws, elated that they were “willing
to go and visit some other parts of our country.” Dearborn and Jefferson viewed this side-
trip as an opportunity to “impress their minds with the strength and population of the
United States,” particularly by “afford[ing] them an opportunity of seeing our largest
Cities and some of our Military Stores and Magazines.” Federal officials sought to
capitalize on Native visits by impressing diplomats with the presumed superiority of
American population, civilization, and military might. Unfortunately, as officials readily
conceded, early Washington lacked the vivacity and sheen of more established American
cities, hardly conveying the spirit of civilization that they would have wished. Visits to
the capital held ideological importance, as did formal meetings with the President and
other federal officials, but Indian delegations were often encouraged to extend their

already long journeys to tour cities of the eastern seaboard, especially Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Boston.
Capital diplomacy, from its beginning in 1789, involved a range of social performances by federal officials, Native diplomats, and the American public. Repeated and refined over the ensuing decades, these performances constituted the socio-cultural side of diplomacy. Both the symbolic and the more formal political elements of negotiations comprised the culture of diplomacy in the federal government. The symbolic and political components were never mutually exclusive. Indeed, both parties employed the social elements of capital diplomacy for political ends. Spectacle—performances intended to validate, intimidate, or amuse—was a key element of socio-cultural diplomacy. Upon arriving at the capital, Native diplomats, like other visiting dignitaries, were continually in the public eye. This chapter focuses on public performances—diplomatic spectacles—in the capital.

White Americans modeled their position as a civilized and cosmopolitan nation through various performances in the capital. Federal officials intended to impress upon Native visitors the notion that the United States was a civilized and populous nation. Most obviously, they projected their civilized identity to Natives through technological wonders, military reviews, and entertainment. Federal officials’ demonstration of the civility and superiority of the U.S. was just one of the purposes—albeit an important one—to which spectacle was put. Indeed, because of its public nature, diplomatic performances targeted Native as well as white audiences thus illuminating a mixture of

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self-boasting and self-doubting on behalf of white Americans. Extra-administrative groups and capital denizens also contributed to American performances by hosting social events and performances and by playing the role of spectator. In the social performances of capital diplomacy, there were multiple audiences—who was performing for whom was never a straightforward question.

Native leaders, too, employed a range of performances in negotiating the social milieu of the capital. Almost constantly in the public eye, Native diplomats’ decisions about how to craft personal appearance and demeanor, as well as which events to attend, were all part of their negotiations. Furthermore, Indian leaders used spectacle to assert their authority or relationship vis-à-vis those they encountered in the capital. Some delegations performed public dances in the capital while marched in parades.

This chapter is organized around the settings in which diplomatic spectacles were produced. The capital city—as an urban environment (or, in the case of Washington, an aspirational one), assemblage of cultural institutions, and collection of diverse people—directly influenced the emergence of capital diplomacy. Thus, the first part examines foundational delegations that visited the young nation’s more urbanized capitals, New York and Philadelphia. The socio-cultural protocols that developed initially in New York, then in Philadelphia, illuminate the ways federal officials viewed the particular urban features of the federal capital as a microcosm of national power and progress.

The year of the installation of the capital in Washington, 1800, marked an important transition in the culture of diplomacy, for it required federal officials to devise new ways of impressing Native delegations with the nation’s power. As the next section of the chapter will examine, the new setting for capital diplomacy had many
shortcomings. The move from Philadelphia to Washington was an important one, for it provided a blank slate upon which white leaders could project a range of ideas about the nation and its martial and cultural progress. Problematically, Washington City was a spartan, roughhewn, and decidedly unimpressive beacon of cosmopolitanism and political might in 1800. It may have provided an apt symbol of the nation’s untapped potential, but it did not convey the gravitas and splendor to Native visitors that officials had grown accustomed to in New York and Philadelphia.

The final section addresses eastern cities beyond the capital and the important role they played in diplomacy. To overcome the social limits of Washington, federal officials deployed Native diplomats to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York in order to continue to demonstrate U.S. civility and power as they had in the 1790s. It is this emphasis on the city, and on urban performance as an index of the nation’s cultural and political progress, that differentiates capital negotiations from previous diplomatic relationships with Native groups, where conferences occurred in Native-dominated or “middle ground” spaces. Examination of the symbolic performances of diplomacy shows that even though capital negotiations took place in white-dominated spaces, they were still marked by uncertainty and a multiplicity of viewpoints and audiences.

The broad outlines of the socio-cultural diplomacy remained largely consistent over most of the period. Many of the elements introduced in the first few capital visits persisted as federal hosts invested time and resources in showing visiting diplomats the gamut of civilization, military spectacles, and U.S. hospitality. However, the changing location of the seat of government led, in time, to a dislocation between the social and political components of capital diplomacy. Formal negotiations took place in the capital,
while performances of cultural power often, after 1800, took place beyond the capital’s borders.

§ § §

Intercultural protocols first emerged in New York and were fleshed out in Philadelphia over the course of the 1790s. Both of these cities were commercially vibrant, populous cities with well-established public cultures in addition to serving as the seat of government. As thriving commercial and cultural centers, these cities provided ample opportunities for presidents and visitors alike to participate in social displays and entertainments. Hence the public viewed Indian delegations through the prism of a robust, preexisting public culture in these two cities. The social and cultural engagements prepared for the Creeks, who visited New York in 1790, were a first attempt by federal officials and capital denizens to determine how to host Native diplomats. The pattern modeled during this visit, by all involved, provided precedents that permeated subsequent negotiations.

The performances surrounding the deputation’s arrival in the city contained the seeds of an informal script that would define capital negotiations for the next several decades. When the thirty or so Creeks disembarked from the packet that brought them into New York harbor, W.P. Smith, Grand Sachem of the Society of Saint Tammany, first welcomed them. Smith, according to observers, was “attired in the most splendid dresses and other emblems” of Indian regalia. The Grand Sachem then led the Creeks, flanked on either side by a file of St. Tammany members into the city, followed by General William Malcom’s New York troops of horse, infantry and artillery. The parade proceeded from the wharf to Broadway in a celebratory spirit, surrounded by crowds of
spectators in the streets and hanging from house and shop windows. Music filled this urban amphitheater, as a band played and the Creeks sang songs of their own.255

Their initial journey through the streets of New York was a literal tour of the federal and state administrations. Moving from Broadway to Wall Street, the parade approached Federal Hall, where the Congress had assembled on the balcony to see the Native emissaries. Pausing, the Creeks saluted the American delegates, who responded in kind. Proceeding onward, the parade continued to the home of the Secretary of War, Henry Knox, who greeted the chiefs with a calumet of peace. The spectacle continued, under the earnest leadership of the Grand Sachem, to the home of President Washington, where the Creeks were congratulated on their safe arrival and each man was introduced individually. Crowds followed as the parade traveled next to the home of George Clinton, Governor of New York, who also extended his greetings to the Creek ambassadors. The procession concluded at City Tavern. In a reserved room, the St. Tammany Society’s officers hosted a welcome feast for the Creeks, as well as Secretary Knox, General Malcolm and the militia officers, and the senators and representatives of Georgia.256

Officials initiated three key conventions in New York in 1790. The first involved a choreographed recital of the progress of civilization. Subscribing to an understanding of culture as a progression from savagery to civility, U.S. officials hoped to raise Native people from their putative barbarism, exchanging the hunt for farming.257 President

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257 Native peoples possessed their own ideals of what qualities indicated civilization; for example, Creeks engaged in agriculture. Nevertheless, the civilization policy of the U.S. ignored these realities in their
Washington’s civilization policy outlined a set of conceptions of and expectations for Natives. The program emphasized Euro-American gender norms, especially regarding labor, the primacy of agriculture for subsistence, and the production of surplus domestic products for the marketplace. At the other end of the spectrum, civilization referred more pointedly to the nascent republic and American aspirations for it. In these hopes, the United States would ascend to the pinnacle of civilization, defined by gentility, cosmopolitanism, education, and urbanity.

The *pomp* and circumstance involved in hosting Native delegations aimed to impress upon Indians the benefits of American industry and civilization. Rather than demonstrating the idea of civilization they wanted Natives to achieve—simple farming—officials and others in the capital sought to inspire them with the level of civilization that the United States had attained. On the one hand, this objective was meant to illustrate what becoming civilized—at even a basic level—would allow Natives to realize, eventually. On the other, it was intended to signal the United States’ superiority, in 1790 and in the future. Federal policy focused on the first form of civilization, offering farming implements, missionaries, and schoolmasters. Performances in the capital instead emphasized what American civilization was, not what white Americans hoped Natives would become.

Frequent social entertainments drove home this dual message of civilization. With the exception of Congress, gathered at its political space in Federal Hall, the parade that accompanied the Creeks stopped at the private homes of elite officials. The hosting of

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private parties by government officials and local elites would become commonplace in capital diplomacy. A week into their 1790 visit, the Creek delegation attended “an entertainment” aboard the ship *America*. Joining them were Captain Sarly, recently returned from China, as well as Washington, Knox, Clinton, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, and “a very respectable company of officers and citizens.” Three days later, many of these same men, and others including Chief Justice Jay and Mayor Varick, attended a festive “conference” hosted by the St. Tammany Society. Creeks also dined at the homes of Henry Knox and George Washington. Their leader, Alexander McGillivray was elected an honorary member of the St. Andrew’s Society, where he mingled with great affability in the festivities of the evening. Elite social gatherings aimed both to impress Natives with American society and to entertain them.

Second, in addition to emphasizing civilization, federal officials looked to impress the Creeks with the United States’ military potency. Upon the Creeks’ arrival, mounted troops and infantry as well as artillery followed them through the city. Later in their visit, Washington and Knox reviewed all the uniformed militia of New York, nearly 4,000 men, in front of their Creek guests. The aim was to display American might through sheer numbers and firepower. Although the Creeks may not have been able to defeat the U.S. in an all-out war by themselves, they posed a legitimate military problem, especially through their strategic alliances. Washington’s goal for the visit and forthcoming treaty was to align the Creeks with the U.S. and inculcate an official stance of peace between

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the two nations. Impressng McGillivray and the Creek warriors with American military potential thus was part of the larger process of capital negotiation. During the tense and violent decade of the 1790s, Native envoys were frequently greeted with similar martial displays. The general lack of a regular American military, along with Native successes on the battlefields of the northwest, certainly complicated federal efforts to convince envoys of the nation’s military prowess. But as the Creek case shows, putting on a good show could serve a range of diplomatic ends.

Finally, besides conveying messages of civilization and martial supremacy, Americans—federal officials, elites, voluntary organizations, and common citizens alike—sought to be good hosts. As with the Tammany Society in New York, extra-administrative groups put on sundry entertainments for visiting diplomats. In doing so, their reasons ranged from curiosity to fulfilling a stated mission. The theatre was an important site for hosting and amusing Native visitors. Some Americans had reservations about theatrical performances, but Washington himself provided the necessary stamp of approval. Upon his arrival in New York, Washington regularly attended the theatre and assembled “theatre parties” to join him. As Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick have shown, theatre owners capitalized on Washington’s celebrity as when the John Street Theatre filled its seats “owing to the President and Lady being there, and its being previously known.” Theatre managers used the same tactic of advertising celebrity audience members in touting the presence of Native diplomats at their performances. The

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Creeks attended the theatre at least twice on their visit in 1790. Federal officials’ assiduous efforts to put on an impressive display of civilization, military might, and hospitality divulged more than officials’ confidence in their cultural superiority over the Creeks. These exertions also show officials were unable to impose their vision of civilization on the Creeks but rather needed to persuade them, spending considerable money along the way.

While the federal government dictated the types of spectacle and performance to which Native delegations would be exposed, it had far less control over reception of the messages. Native visitors were active participants in the creation of social protocols, as well. Newspaper accounts of the Creek parade, for instance, point to the place of Native performances in and contributions to the event. As an American band accompanied them during their march through New York streets, the thirty Creeks, apparently without prompting, began to sing songs in Muscogee. At various moments throughout their visit, the delegates performed songs and dances for themselves and captivated American spectators. Those onlookers also took note of the diplomats’ sartorial appearance, from McGillivray’s scarlet suit to the more striking “national habits” of the majority of the delegation.

These precedents—performances of civilization, might, and hospitality—established in New York outlived the city’s fleeting tenure as the capital. Within a week of each other, both the federal government and the Creeks departed New York—the Creeks returned home, while the government relocated to Philadelphia. There, the federal government ensconced itself for the next ten years. During the formative decade of the

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266 Federal Gazette (Philadelphia), July 19, 1790.
1790s, the young republic governed itself from a growing and bustling metropolis that was America’s center of trade, immigration, science, and art. In 1790, as Congress moved into Federal Hall and President Washington took up residence at Sixth and Market Street, Philadelphia and surrounding townships contained a population of 45,000, the largest metropolitan region in the nation. Long a hotbed of voluntary organizations, the city also boasted myriad cultural institutions, including the Library Company, American Philosophical Society, and Peale’s Museum, in addition to promenades, bustling wharves, markets, and shops along the central avenues of High Street and Chestnut Street.268

Subsequent Native delegations to Philadelphia reinforced many of the elements of the diplomatic script first outlined in the 1790 Creek visit to New York. Native diplomats continued to be included in elite social activities. Little Turtle, for instance, attended the 1798 Washington Ball along with the wealthy and political families of Philadelphia and other visiting ambassadors. “Seated in a loge” and “dressed in an American uniform with enormous epaulets,” Little Turtle “appeared very content with the entertainment,” according to observers.269 At genteel engagements like this, Native visitors were feted alongside other foreign dignitaries. Also present at the Washington Ball was the darling

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269 Niemcewicz also mentions relatives of Washington. President Adams refused to attend. The ball was hosted in the Circus. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Under Their Vine and Fig Tree Travels Through America in 1797-1799, 1805 ..., ed. Metchie Budka (Elizabeth, NJ: Grassmann, 1965), 44-45.
of Philadelphia, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, whose friend noted Little Turtle’s presence as well as “the ambassadress of Portugal.”\textsuperscript{270}

Acting in less official roles, Philadelphians took turns elaborating upon an emergent and informal script, taking Native delegations to various points of interest that they believed embodied the civilization and advancement of the United States. Few sights better captured Americans’ civic pride and scientific ingenuity than the city’s waterworks, which supplied Philadelphians with drinking water from the Schuylkill. The waterworks was one of numerous sites that Philadelphians pointed out to Native diplomats to promote a narrative of American technological advancement. Likewise, outings to Peale’s Museum, schools, and scientific demonstrations aimed to convince Native visitors of the progress of the United States as a civilization. During the 1790s, especially, when officials like Washington, Knox, and Jefferson held to a belief that Native people were capable—with aid from whites, education, and due time—of becoming as advanced as white Americans, these demonstrations were also meant as an inducement to leaders to initiate the civilization process.\textsuperscript{271}

As these examples suggest, the social and political aspects of the diplomatic script overlapped during the decade Philadelphia served as the seat of government. Two dozen Native delegations arrived in the capital before 1800, when it moved to Washington City.

\textsuperscript{270} Niemcewicz, Under Their Vine, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{271} Jefferson was indeed the first president of the museum’s board of visitors. Charles Coleman Sellers, Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art (New York: Norton, 1980), 70-71. David Brigham’s description of audience at public entertainments like Peale’s Museum emphasizes its racial, gendered, class, and religious limitations. While largely true, this rendering leaves important encounters and exceptions unexplored. Writing of the catering to white audiences by museums, theatres, and circuses, Brigham simply mentions in passing that “Peale displayed wax figures of Native Americans along with Native manufactures form around the world,” without exploring the production of those figures, which were based on life from Red Pole and Blue Jacket on their visit to the capital, and the museum, in 1796. David R. Brigham, Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 31.
Each visit brought indigenous people—almost exclusively men—into the streets, public buildings, and private homes of Philadelphia. William Birch’s prints, the most familiar and prolific depictions of Philadelphia’s streets in the 1790s, include Indian visitors in two of his twenty-seven views. As art historian Wendy Bellion has shown in her analysis of the prints’ multiple perspectives, Birch locates the observer in the scene itself, inviting the viewer to see the city as if perambulating along the sidewalks. It is telling, then, that in this series of prints, which were so clearly “the products of eyewitness observations of the city,” Native dignitaries appear more than once in his depictions of the city’s most public spaces. In one print, three Indian men, attired in red leggings and bold blankets, are being given a tour of the streets by an American, who gestures to the surroundings. (Figure 3.1) The print offers evidence of the attention Native visitors often attracted on such tours, as several men and boys as well as a more withdrawn female spectator follow the party. In a second image, “Back of the State House,” four Native men stand in the foreground, unaccompanied by a guide but still drawing the curiosity of onlookers. (Figure 3.2) Several children pause in their play to stare at the party, while two gentlemen hurriedly approach a party of women, perhaps to project or distract them, who stand gazing at the Indians. But the image also suggests that, while an intriguing sight, the presence of the four men was not out of the ordinary: many, including the Indians themselves, go about enjoying the park undisturbed. Whether in streets and parks, or

272 Four delegations attended the capital in its brief residence at New York (Creek, Cherokee, Cayuga, and Oneida delegations) and at least eighteen visited Philadelphia, though many of the Philadelphia delegations consisted of parties from various nations traveling together. If each nation is counted separately, there were at least thirty-six envoys (it is unclear how many nations were represented in the delegation of “Wabash Indians” in the winter of 1792) to Philadelphia.

balls, plays, circuses, and other public spaces, Native diplomats were an acknowledged and increasingly commonplace part of the Philadelphia landscape by the late 1790s.

**Figure 3.1** William Birch, *View of Philadelphia in 1800*, “New Lutheran Church in Fourth Street.” John Carter Brown Library, Archive of Early American Images.
Figure 3.2 William Birch, *View of Philadelphia in 1800, “Back of the State House.”* John Carter Brown Library, Archive of Early American Images.

In Philadelphia, social and political spaces bordered and overlapped, integrating the formal political elements of Native visits with their social and cultural experience of the American capital. Peering out his window in the spring in 1792, the speculator (and Senator) Robert Morris watched as “49 of the chiefs & sachems of the Six Nations Marched up Market Street by my door or more properly speaking, passed in review before the President’s door about an hour ago,” as they entered the city.\(^{274}\) Parades, particularly upon arrival, were common among larger delegations. These public performances engaged capital dwellers, like Morris, in informal environments while also opening the diplomacy that would happen later in more formal settings—the President’s

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house or State House. Furthermore, nearby the political sites of diplomacy at the President’s House and State House were a variety of sites of public entertainment. Within a block of the State House on Chestnut Street were Rickett’s Circus, Oellers’s Hotel, and the New Theatre, all which hosted delegates at various points in the 1790s. Considered in this context, the Natives behind the State House in Birch’s print could as easily be leaving or attending formal negotiations in the State House as they could be departing Peale’s Museum, visible in the background in Philosophical Hall. They may even be observing the live specimens of the museum housed in the State House garden in cages and hutches. Formal and informal sites of diplomacy were thoroughly enmeshed, and Native diplomats moved with relative ease between the two.

Frequenting public spaces and entertainments, Natives were often a source of spectacle in the capital. From renditions of Shakespeare to the likely unintended irony of performing “for the entertainment of Little Turtle the Indian Chief . . . The Historical Play of COLUMBUS, OR, A WORLD DISCOVRED,” in 1798, the theatre was a ubiquitous site for bilateral urban spectatorship. Indeed, while Natives were taken or sent to the theatre ostensibly to view the performances themselves, newspaper advertisements made clear that the Natives in the audience were as much part of the scene to be consumed by white audiences as the scheduled show. When the Chickasaws and

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275 See, for example, New-York Weekly Museum, July 14, 1790; The Mail (Philadelphia), March 15, 1792; General Advertiser, July 14, 1794.
276 Additionally, the residences of many public officials, including the Secretary of War Timothy Pickering, were within a block of the State House. Brigham, Public Culture, 17, n. 6.
277 From 1794 to 1802, Peale’s Museum was located in Philosophical Hall, before moving into the former State House itself. By that time, formal negotiations with Native diplomats were conducted at the capital in Washington. Brigham, Public Culture.
278 Porcupine’s Gazette, Jan. 10, 1798. Other guests were occasionally advertised as well, like George Washington’s attendance at the circus (General Advertiser, April 20, 1793) and theatre (General Advertiser, May 7, 1794). In later years dignitaries like Lafayette would also be advertised to draw attendance to public amusements. Brigham, Public Culture, 30.
Choctaws were in Philadelphia in 1795, newspapers advertised their presence at the theatre: “The Chickasaw and Choctaw Indian Chiefs now in this City, will be present at Messrs. Warrel and Sons’ Benefit this evening at the New Theatre.” At other moments, the blurring between audience and performer went even further as when, in 1799, members of a Cherokee delegation participated in Mr. Rickets’ circus. The press informed Philadelphians that the Cherokees “intend to pay a visit this evening at Mr. Rickets’ Circus, and one of them has already acquired so much proficiency in the horsemanship as to be able to appear with Mr. R. in a part of the performance.” The exoticism of the visitors was an attraction in much the same way as advertising the presence of a celebrity such as Washington.

Philadelphia’s dynamic and diverse social scene offered various opportunities for individuals to meet with Native deputations. During the visit described above, Little Turtle paid a visit to Kosciuszko, the Polish hero of the American Revolution. Attired in his military uniform, which likely had been presented to him in Philadelphia, Little Turtle called on the Polish warrior. They exchanged gifts and seemingly enjoyed each other’s company. The Miami leader also visited with the retired George Washington and the French intellectual, Constantin François de Chassebœuf, comte de Volney. Little Turtle, along with his interpreter William Wells, met nearly a dozen times over the course of their tenure at the capital with Volney, who sought to compose an indigenous

279 Gazette of the United States, July 3, 1795.
281 Niemcewicz, Kosciuszko’s friend was evidently greatly impressed by the Miami leader, significantly more so than the Chickasaws or Iroquois who also visited the capital during this and Kosciuszko’s stay in the city. Little Turtle presented Kosciuszko with a tomahawk, while Kosciuszko gave him his bourka as well as a pair of spectacles that caught Little Turtle’s interest during his visit. Anecdotes of this meeting circulate in a variety of sources, including the interpretation at the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial in Philadelphia, with numerous embellished details. However, Niemcewicz’s account seems to be the only primary source of this encounter. Niemcewicz, Under Their Vine, 45.
vocabulary. Foreign visitors and intellectuals residing in the capital or other eastern cities often arranged to meet with visiting Natives. On his visit to the United States, Lafayette, like Kosciuszko, shared a poignant conference with Native diplomats. The gracious speeches by both the Choctaw and Chickasaw chiefs caused Lafayette to be “agitated by strong emotions.” The famous General was “evidently much affected at the marks of respect which they shewed him,” as the chiefs recounted the General’s valor and friendship, and their great desire to see him. Notable figures, Native people were present at all levels of capital society during their visits.

One particularly active extra-administrative group in Philadelphia was the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers. While no longer as active in political office as they had been in the colonial era, Philadelphia Quakers continued to be key players among the city’s local elite and also remained involved in Indian affairs. The Philadelphia Friends had a standing Indian Committee that, along with other interested Quakers, entertained, corresponded with, and provided gifts to, nearly every deputation through the city. For nations like those of the Iroquois confederation and other northern

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284 *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 27, 1824.
285 As Peter Silver argues, the violence of the Seven Years’ War led most whites in the mid-Atlantic to castigate Quakers for their friendly relationship and non-violent approach to Native peoples. Silver points to the fears of, language about, and actual violence of the Seven Years’ War as the key culprit in the unseating of Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly and their retreat from public office. Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: Norton, 2009), esp. 95-124. Still, Quaker ambassadors attended treaty conferences throughout the colonial period. During the 1790s, they worked to establish working farms among the Senecas and Miamis to model agricultural practices. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Indian Committee Records, 1791-1892, reel 1, and Letters and Miscellaneous, box 1 (1791-1802) and box 2 (1802-1815), APS. See also Jayne Ptolemy, “‘Our native soil’: Philadelphia Quakers and Geographies of Race, 1780-1838,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013).
and western nations, negotiations in Philadelphia and the presence of Quaker in intercultural negotiations were familiar elements of diplomatic culture going back several decades. The southern nations—Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws—first encountered Quakers upon their visits to the capital at Philadelphia in the 1790s. From these meetings, some nations developed friendly and sustained relations with the Philadelphia Quakers.

Quakers were particularly keen on advocating peace, encouraging agricultural pursuits, and entering into dialogue with Native delegates. They did so, in part, by offering to educate Native children. Quaker families took on the education of two Creek boys, Alexander Durant and James Bailey, and a Cherokee lad, Thomas Wilson brought by delegations. After conferring with Seneca, Stockbridge, and Tuscarora diplomats in the capital, those nations also left, or later sent, children—boys and girls—to be educated. Some children lived among Quaker families for years, forming bonds that lasted beyond their formal education. Thomas Wilson wrote several times to Henry Drinker, who organized the education of Indian youths, in the years after he returned to the Cherokee nation.

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286 Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*.
287 For the ironic misperceptions that led Quakers and others in the early republic to promote agriculture and commerce to agricultural and commercially involved Native peoples, see Daniel K. Richter, “‘Believing that Many of the Red People Suffer Much for the Want of Food’: Hunting, Agriculture, and the Quaker Construction of Indianness in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1999), 601-628.
288 The Creek and Cherokee boys were left in 1796, and costs for their education were reported to the Treasurer of the Indian Committee at least through 1800 for Durant and Baily. In 1797 four Stockbridge girls were brought (Margery Hendrick Aupaumut, Elizabeth Baldwin, Mary Peters, and Margery Jacobs), as were Catherine Peters and Leah Peters, both Tuscaroras. In 1791 Complanter wrote to the Quakers about the arrangements for his son and the son of Joseph Nicholas to be sent for education. Wilson returned home in 1801 according to the diary of Elizabeth Drinker. APS, Indian Committee Records; Elizabeth Drinker, *Diary of Elizabeth Drinker*, ed. Elaine Forman Crane (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 1466.
The Friends also devoted time to entertaining and conversing with chiefs and other delegates in the city. For example, when the Indian Committee convened on November 18th, 1796, they resumed an ongoing dialogue with the visiting Creeks and their agent, Benjamin Hawkins. At the same time, the committee also learned that “some of the Shawnees, Chipaway and other Western Indians were now in this City.”

Concluding their conference with the Creeks, the Committee invited the Western Indians “to a Conference.” With the help of two translators, Quakers and the Shawnees Blue Jacket and Red Pole, as well as Awsimut of the Pottawattamis and Black Chief of the Chippewas, discussed “the peaceable principles professed” by the Quakers and their hope for peace in the northwest. Before the deputation left the city, the parties met again. This time, nineteen Friends were present to dispense a variety of gifts “as a Testimony of the Continued Regard entertained by friends for the Indians,” which the Red Pole and his compatriots accepted with much gratitude. Like other delegations in Philadelphia, the visitors found the Quakers to be “very Cordial” hosts and expressed pleasure at their commitment to peace.290 Scenes like this played out with visiting Cherokees, Creeks, Chippewas, Choctaws, Senecas, Miamis and others who arrived in the capital in the 1790s. The Indian Committee convened time and again to welcome Native diplomats to the capital, welcome them into their homes, and talk of peace.291

Quakers went beyond entertaining Natives, addressing political subjects despite their extra-administrative position. Whether meeting in private homes or larger locations, like the Fourth Street Meeting House, or touring facilities like William Waring’s schoolhouse, the Friends and Indians discussed peace, agricultural improvement, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion, religion...

290 APS, Indian Committee Records.
291 APS, Indian Committee Records. Also see Crane, Diary of Elizabeth Drinker.
education, and science. In late 1798, the Indian Committee received “letters from the Creeks thanking them for the talk and gifts,” which included agricultural implements sent to encourage Creeks towards ‘civilization.’ After his visit, Little Turtle wrote to committee member Thomas Fisher “giving an account of his arrival in health & safety among his people,” and likewise, “of their receiving the articles provided for his nation & forwarded by the Committee in good order.”

Both the Creeks and Miamis maintained their rapport with the Quakers in subsequent years. Other nations did likewise. In 1792, the visiting Cherokees were pleased to strike up a friendship with the Quakers. The delegates were particularly moved by their conversation with Mary Ridgeway and Jane Watson in the home of Isaac Jane, informing the committee afterward: “we did not believe that any women could say such wise things as our Sisters have said to us.” Upon reflection, however, they mused that “when we consider that from Women come all men, we cannot wonder that they from who we all come should be as wise as us.” The “wise” talks of Quakers, male and female, commonly focused on peace—in a particularly pointed fashion when the Shawnees, Miamis, and other western nations visited in the 1790s—and the rejection of spirituous liquors. Quaker hospitality and professions of peace and equality did much to facilitate good relations in the capital, though not under formal federal directives.

One repeat visitor to Philadelphia, the Miami Little Turtle, observed his impression of the city to an acquaintance, noting the importance of a vibrant city for the national capital. Peering from his window overlooking the High Street market, Volney recounted, Little Turtle was struck “by the great number of the white people,” he

292 APS, Indian Committee Records. Both letters were noted at the meeting on Nov. 17, 1798.
293 APS, Indian Committee Records.
observed in the market and about the city.\textsuperscript{294} Little Turtle’s visits instilled in the former fighter a regard for the population and prosperity of the young nation with which he was negotiating.

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If Little Turtle or Red Jacket had recorded their thoughts as they each arrived, with their respective delegations, in the new federal capital at Washington City in 1801, they surely would have wondered why the Americans had removed to such a lackluster place. Both had attended the capital at Philadelphia on multiple occasions and been impressed by the city’s bustling industry, trade, and society. Arriving at Washington City just a year after the capital was relocated there, none of the commerce or culture of Philadelphia existed in the nascent capital.

In 1800, Washington City was more like a village than a capital city. Among the intents of the designers of the new federal city was to create an impression of greatness—to make the city physically and visually fulfill its symbolic role as foremost in the nation. But the plans for building the capital, underway for a decade, had not progressed as expected. Land sold at a sluggish pace, federal buildings remained unfinished, and settlement was barely extant. Buildings languished in a state of partial-completion for decades after the federal government took up residence. The center portion of the Capitol was not built until 1826. Indeed, the House of Representatives could not even meet in their chambers until 1807, and even then the wing was incomplete.\textsuperscript{295} The President’s House was under construction until 1833, its grounds scattered with “workmen’s

\textsuperscript{294} Volney, \textit{A View}, 382-83. Little Turtle and the interpreter William Wells met nearly a dozen times over the months of January and February 1798.
shanties, privies, [and] stagnant pools of water in basins once used for mixing mortar.”

Roads and streets, radiating like spokes and boldly envisioned to connect the citizens of the republic to their representatives, instead resembled “dustbowls in dry weather and morasses when it rained,” where they existed at all. Lacking lamps on its few established streets, congressmen and other officers easily lost their way, as “old fields and waste grounds broken up by deep gulleys or ravines” partitioned the settled parts of the city.

What most appealed to federalists—the opportunity to build a capital from the ground up—severely limited the capital as an actual city for decades. The District of Columbia was a blank slate in 1790 when the site was selected, and the city embodied the governmental experiment of the young republic. In addition to creating a capital that conveyed to its citizens and the world a distinctively American political ideology, the founders and designers of the nation’s capital also had to grapple with the reality that the capital was being created from scratch. Americans expected the capital of the United States to be a physical manifestation and representation of the nation’s republican government. As capital historian James Sterling Young has observed, “the physical arrangement of Washington was the structure of the government expressed in terms of space.”

The heart of a republican government, the legislature, was situated on the central high ground, Capitol Hill. The executive and judicial branches, rather than clustered close to Congress at the Capitol, were given their own spaces. The executive, in

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298 Young, *Washington Community*, xii.
the President’s House, was set apart from the representative Congress and surrounded by the offices of the president’s cabinet, including the War Office. Indeed, for most of the early two decades, this placement would facilitate keeping Native envoys in the close orbit of the president and secretary of war, physically separated from Congress and the judiciary.299

Being most commonly in the capital during the Congressional session, Natives were present during the brief Washington social season.300 While they attended the drawing room “squeezes,” New Year’s receptions at the President’s House, and other social events in the federal city, Washington City struggled to live up to the urbanity of its name.301 The capital barely held the interest even of its governmental officers. From a mere 291 official members in 1802, to 625 in 1829, few resided in the capital year-round. Congress was in session “after the harvest season and before spring planting,” swelling the city’s population in the fall and winter and depleting it in summer. The president and cabinet members also retreated in the summer.302 Not only did government officers return home to tend to their personal business, they, nearly to a man, found nothing to keep them in the capital.

In the absence of a thriving cultural scene, both Washington residents and Native visitors relied on government entertainment for sociability. Residents of Capitol Hill

299 In time, it will be seen, Native envoys too would realize that the Capitol was the center and heart of Washington City, and though diplomats would still visit the president, they increasingly, after 1820, shifted their focus to the men of Congress. Young, *Washington Community*, 5-8.

300 While session dates for Congress varied, most began about November 1 in this period and went into March, many extended into the late spring. For this calculation, any delegation in the capital in the months of November through March was counted as visiting during the Congressional session. From 1789 to 1820, 89 delegations visited the capital, 49 during the session, 17 in summer, and 23 unknown. Most summer visits were by Cherokees.


turned to Congress for diversion, and according to Young, the “Senate and House chambers were the settlement’s theatres,” the galleries of the legislature acting as public entertainment, the “lounging places of both sexes, where acquaintance is as easily made as at public amusements.” Native ambassadors, by the design of federal officials or at their own behest, also sat in on Congress and visited the Capitol. An 1806 deputation divided their time between the House and the Senate chambers. While some delegations were noted for their attentiveness and interest in the congressional galleries, others did not receive such affirmations of decorum. When Louisa Catherine Adams found herself in the congressional gallery with a party of Missouri Indians in 1821, she found them “very savage and appearing in the costume of their Country and adorning the Gallery of the house of Representatives with no covering but the Blankets which they occasionally drop … a sight loathsome and disgusting to the Spectators.” While much of their time in the capital was spent close to the executive center of influence, visits to the Capitol further shaped Native experiences with and knowledge of the workings of the federal government.

303 Young, _Washington Community_, 72.
304 _Washington Federalist_, Jan. 1, 1806. In 1805, the Cherokees also visited Congress and presented speeches to the Speaker. Entries for December 27 and 30, 1805 (Diary 27, mss. pp. 196-97), _Diaries of John Quincy Adams_.
305 While Congress met at Federal Hall in Philadelphia, the visiting Cherokees attended the House of Representatives’ chamber, one newspaper reported. There they “sat without the bar in the utmost gravity and composure until the House had adjourned,” at which point they rose and “saluted the Speaker and several of the members.” Their composure impressed other observers who noted they “preserved a degree of dignity and decorum in their manners that is seldom to be met with amongst the uninformed inhabitants of the eastern hemisphere.” All the men of the deputation attended, the woman who traveled with them did not. The bust of America, lately set over the Speaker’s chair, attracted their particular notice, and drew aspirations of applause form the youngest chief; his astonishment, however, was soon changed into a sigh of concern on being informed that the bust weighed twelve hundred pounds Averdupois!—for what would be the consequence should the supporters give way and destroy the center of gravity!” _The Mail_, Dec, 31, 1791.
306 She also notes “two squaws are of the party,” though it is unclear if they also attended the congressional chambers. Entry for December 4, 1821, in Judith S. Graham, ed. _Diary and Autobiographical Writings of Louisa Catherine Adams_ (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2:613.
In the capital’s early years, social activity and entertainment beyond Congress marked a dramatic decline from their previous level in Philadelphia. After the capital removed to Washington City, references to the performing arts in the capital itself waned for at least two decades. It was not merely that Native diplomats were attending fewer entertainments in Washington City, but rather that little entertainment existed. Congressmen complained of the lack of amusement, finding only a racetrack and dingy theatre at their disposal.\textsuperscript{307} As late as 1828, Washington was described as “almost wholly deficient in [theatrical] attractions.” Baltimore theatre owners recognized the dearth of dramaturgy and put on many shows during the winter legislative season with the explicit aim of drawing federal officials to Baltimore, the most “convenient” place for such entertainments.\textsuperscript{308} Symptomatic of the restrictions of the capital as a fully-fledged city in this period, American performances of urbanity generally took place outside the city itself. Urban tours tended to physically dislocate much of the social context for diplomatic negotiations from the formal negotiations that remained firmly lodged at the War Offices.

Whatever entertainments and social life existed in the capital, Native diplomats participated in them, their presence visible in the streets, at balls and parties, and in private homes throughout the city. In early Washington, women controlled the social events—the parlors, levees, crushes, assemblies, and visits—that, as Padraig Riley put it, “proved crucial to making formal politics work.”\textsuperscript{309} Unsurprisingly, women’s voices

\textsuperscript{307} Young, \textit{Washington Community}, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{308} Petition to City Council, 1828, RG 16, Series 1, WPA 372, Baltimore City Archives. Thanks to Rob Gamble for bringing this source to my attention.
\textsuperscript{309} Padraig Riley, “The Lonely Congressmen: Gender and Politics in Early Washington, D.C.,” \textit{Journal of the Early Republic} 34, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 246. For more on the role of women in the development of capital society, see Catherine Allgor, \textit{Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City}
describing Native diplomats are most frequent in social settings. Often overlooked by historians, Native people were nevertheless a regular set of participants in capital society. In her diary, Washington socialite Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton noted several engagements of the visiting Osage, Shawnee, Sac and Fox, Sioux, Iowa, and Winnebago delegates in August 1812. Early in their stay the delegates dined at the president’s house. Thornton was invited by Dolley Madison to “see the Indian Talk—there were 40 [Indians] of different tribes several of whom made speeches after the president had done.” Afterwards, the formal presents were exchanged, a process Thornton must have found tedious, noting that it lasted six hours! Several days later, the delegation was again at the White House, where Thornton, on her way to Georgetown, dallied, having spied the “assemblage at the president’s,” and “saw the Indians dance a little” before returning home.  

Native visitors piqued the curiosity of the capital’s female residents. Attending the president’s house on July 4, 1801 among numerous citizens of Washington and Georgetown, diarist Margaret Bayard Smith “found about 20 persons present in a room where sat Mr. J[efferson] surrounded by the five Cherokee chiefs.” Among conversation and refreshments “such as cakes of various kinds, wine, punch, &c.,” Smith, and the crowd of “near a hundred, including all the public officers and most of the respectable citizens, and strangers of distinction,” enjoyed martial music and patriotic airs and “various military evolutions” performed by the Marine Corps. Writing to a friend in 1822, Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis recorded a humorous story from attending “one of

and a Government (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000). There is no reference to Native visitors in Allgor’s work.


311 Smith, First Forty Years, 30-31.
Madame de Neuville’s evenings.” The Pawnee delegation was present and “much amused with the dancing.” They were even more transfixed by Mrs. Ann Greenleaf, who Lewis described as “painted up to the eyes,” which elicited the Pawnees’ attention. “They called her squaw,” Lewis wrote, “& one Indian remarked that although he had sixteen wives at home, he should like to add that squaw to the number.”312 While the Pawnees provided a way for Lewis to chide a peer for her behavior, Louisa Adams used her encounter with several Cherokee diplomats to comment on their nation more generally. Leaving dinner to attend the “Ball at the Assembly Rooms” in January 1823, Adams and her party of “Ladies and Gentlemen and all the Corps Diplomatique” spent an enjoyable evening in the company of the Cherokees. Adams noted that “several Cherokees were there who are nearly civilized—one of them speaks English fluently and is quite a politician subscribing for the National Intelligencer that he may be informed of current events.”313

Not all social interactions between white women and Native men were so pleasant or humorous. An earlier Cherokee delegation arrived at the Adams’ household on Christmas 1805, but, with no men at home, Mrs. Adams and the ladies in her company “felt very disagreeably.” In the still embryonic capital, Adams wrote, “the house was so isolated that it was impossible to divest ourselves of fear.” During their visit, she continued, the Cherokees insisted “on hearing the Piano which my sister played for them. And we were obliged to give them beads and ribbons and Feathers before we could get

312 Anne-Marguerite-Henriette Rouillé de Marigny was the wife of French Minister to the U.S., Jean-Guillaume, baron Hyde de Neuville. Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley, March 4, 1822, in George Washington’s Beautiful Nelly: The Letters of Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, 1794-1851 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 287.
313 Diary of Louisa Catherine Adams, 2:645.
Unsure of how to interact with their Native guests, the women expected the worst. Perhaps some of their fear derived from the isolation of the early Washington community. Adams herself noted that she attended the “parties, the dinners, the Assemblies” of the Congressional season “almost at the risk of life, in consequence of the difficulties of intercourse—The City not being laid out; the Streets not graduated; the bridges consisting of mere loose planks; and huge stumps of Trees recently cut down intercepting every path.”

Even as the city developed, white women’s fears of Native men persisted, revealing a racial edge. When the Winnebagos visited the capital in 1828, they made the young ladies of Washington so uncomfortable that Margaret Bayard Smith took it upon herself to address the situation. Calling on the Secretary of War, Peter Porter, Smith presented herself as “a self constituted delegate from the young ladies of Washington.” She beseeched Porter to “use his authority and forbid the ferocious Winebagos from assaulting the girls in the manner they did.” The Winnebagos, she alleged, had “run after several young ladies and others they have caught in their arms and kissed,” making it such that “decent young women are nearly afraid to walk out.” Despite the “general dread” the Winnegabos inspired, Smith and another female companion found it irresistible to attend a dance by the delegates later that week. Choreographed social performances like this dance—in which white men were present in greater numbers—

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315 Entry of October 12, 1803, in Diary of Louisa Catherine Adams, 1:204.
served to keep the behavior of the Winnebagos and other delegations more firmly within the bounds of white decorum.\textsuperscript{316}

Occasionally, Native people were the sole or primary performers at public events, which ranged from war dances to parades down city streets. When Osage delegates performed a dance during their stay in 1804, the “President, the heads of Departments, and a large and brilliant collection of Ladies and Gentlemen” attended this “exhibition of naked Savages.” An arena was “fitted up for the occasion, and lighted with lamps” so the dancers could be seen, and the distinguished spectators as well. Indeed, the president and “his red brother, the King of the Ossage, and the Court Ladies occupied an elevated situation prepared for them, so as to ‘command a better view of the whole ground.”\textsuperscript{317}

The men of the Osage delegation performed, according to one observer, “a very interesting spectacle, principally composed of the war dance in various forms.”\textsuperscript{318} Whites enhanced Native dances with accompanying bands or fireworks displays, heightening the spectacle.\textsuperscript{319} Such dances, commonly on the lawn in front of the president’s house, were performed throughout the period by diverse nations.\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{316} Smith, \textit{Forty Years}, 245-47.
\textsuperscript{317} The Osage also performed a war dance in New York when they visited that city after departing the capital in 1804. Other examples include a war dance by the joint Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw deputation to Philadelphia in 1796-97, and the Missouri tribes at Washington in 1805-06. Also the Shawnee and Delawares while in Philadelphia in 1802, performed a war dance, “cornpiece” and “eagle tale dance.” \textit{Washington Federalist}, July 23 and Oct. 20, 1804; \textit{Gazette of the United States}, Nov. 26, 1796; \textit{National Intelligencer}, Dec. 27, 1805; \textit{Washington Federalist}, Dec. 24, 1805; [John P[ershouse] to [James] Pershouse, February 26, 1802, John Pershouse Papers, APS.
\textsuperscript{318} \textit{National Intelligencer}, July 20, 1804.
\textsuperscript{319} The Osage dance was accompanied by the “Italian band.” A war dance by the Missouri Tribes in 1806 included a “Concert and Fire Works.” \textit{Washington Federalist}, December 24, 1805; \textit{National Intelligencer}, December 27 and 30, 1825.
\textsuperscript{320} \textit{Gazette of the United States}, November 26, 1796; \textit{Washington Federalist} August 1, 1804; Missouri Indians in 1805/06; Kansa, Missouri, Oto, Omaha, and Pawnee in 1822; Winnebago in 1828; Sioux in 1837; Sac and Fox in 1837, \textit{Baltimore Patriot}, February 9, 1820; \textit{Washington Gazette}, November 19, 1821; \textit{Baltimore Patriot} February 14 and 16, 1822, December 12, 1828; \textit{The Madisonian}, September 30 and November 14, 1837.
War dances contributed feats of Native military prowess and masculinity to the diplomatic performances in the capital. The dances were collective, male-only acts that portrayed, through gesture and pantomime, the practices of war and particular feats of madness (fearlessness) or valor.\textsuperscript{321} In short, war dances enacted power. Therefore, the selection of a war dance, in contrast to a social dance, may mark an act of political resistance and identity—both Native and masculine. Describing a war dance in front of the president’s house in 1822 by the Kansa, Missouri, Omaha, Oto, and Pawnee delegates, an anonymous correspondent for the \textit{Baltimore Patriot} emphasized the savagery of the performance: “you might supposed them to be some damned spirits escaped from the confines of hell . . . come to create horror in the minds of the living.”\textsuperscript{322} Spectators, such as the \textit{Patriot} correspondent, interpreted war dances in a way that reinforced stereotypes of savage Indians. More circumspect members of the audience, however, showcased a degree of cultural relativism in their descriptions. Critiquing the kind of account that portrayed Native dancers as possessed hellions, or their dances as “without meaning,” another newspaper correspondent in 1804 queried: “shall we ridicule their mode of dancing because they do not kick up as high as we [?]” He then posited that Native dance had more “meaning,” explaining: “Their war dances accompanied with gestures, are musical and pantomimical representations of a war. Taken as plays their war dances are divided in five acts—preparation for war; [?] battle; returning home, or rather reception by their wives, young children &c. and the celebration of victory.”\textsuperscript{323} Whether

\textsuperscript{321} On madness (hadjo—mad, crazy, fearless) in war, see Charles Hudson, \textit{The Southeastern Indians} (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 325.
\textsuperscript{322} \textit{Baltimore Patriot}, February 14, 1822.
\textsuperscript{323} \textit{Washington Federalist}, October 20, 1804.
received with contempt or sympathy, war dances communicated Native masculinity that emphasized martial bravery/ferocity and physical strength.

Native dance prompted palpable political and moral anxiety among white spectators, as well as fascination. Spectators described the movement of Native dancers as “grotesque” or “ferocious.” Such descriptions degraded Native dance as inferior to Euro-American dance. Without their accompanying judgment however, the fury spectators perceived was not entirely wrong; ferocity was the intended message of the war dances. Observers unfailingly commented on the “almost total nakedness” of Native dancers, which, in capital performances, were exclusively male. The stress placed on nakedness illustrates how war dances reinforced certain stereotypes of exoticism. However, this emphasis also highlights the fascination of white Americans with Native bodies, which is evident not only in descriptions of dance but also of general appearance. In 1822 a Baltimore Patriot correspondent offered particularly pointed criticisms of Native nakedness and the fascination with which white women in the capital viewed male Indian bodies. He quipped that “the best description I can give you of their dress and speak the truth, is to say, that they were not dressed at all,” though adorned with paint and feathers. He noted with disapproval: “our ladies gazed very intently and sighed as they reflected they might look in vain for as much bone, sinew, muscle, or nerve in their more civilized but less athletic husbands.” In various accounts, white male observers betrayed their fears that Native dance was excessively erotic, particularly for white women.324

Thus Native appearance itself served as a spectacle in the capital, on display during parades, social engagements, in the streets, or in formal settings. As during war dances, Native bodies and attire captured the gaze of capital denizens, male and female.

324 Baltimore Patriot, February 14, 1822.
Two days after meeting “a procession of Masons and a number of the Indians who are here on visits” in the street on his way home from the Capitol in December 1805, John Quincy Adams encountered the same Natives again. On the second encounter, Adams observed and noted the appearance of the various deputations. The Cherokees “differ very little in appearance from our own people,” wrote Adams, and conveying his expectation for Native adornment, he described them by what they lacked—they “use no paint, no beads, and none of the customary Indian adornments.” The Missouri, Osage, Sac, and Fox better conformed to his assumptions, being “very deeply painted, and with various colours, had beads at the nose and ears, birds feathers, fox and squirrel skins and tails, and other decorations usual to the Savages of this Continent.” The Osages particularly impressed Adams as “remarkably strong, and athletic men.”

While change came slowly, the first four decades of Washington witnessed growth in the city’s social and cultural institutions. Hosts in the capital city took Natives to see the Capitol, Navy Yard, and public sites, as well as invited them to the theatre and crushes or levees that served as entertainment in the city. Yet, even by 1837, Washington was little more than a country town, impressive in concept but not in reality. True evidence of the nation’s cultural and economic progress lay elsewhere, and as a result, the process of diplomacy extended far beyond the borders of Washington.

Federal officials were self-conscious about the capital city, particularly in what it lacked in urbanity, and were determined to compensate for its shortcomings by supplementing Natives’ experience of the capital with other cities. Thus, in an attempt to

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325 Entries for December 27 and 30, 1805 (Diary 27, mss. pp. 196-97), Diaries of John Quincy Adams.
negotiate the tension between federal expectations of their own degree of civilization and
the manifold failings of Washington as an urban place, delegations were invited, or
simply directed, to visit Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. In addition to the visit
to the capital itself, such multi-city tours also served to exhibit the diplomats themselves
to a curious American public.

Although the federal capital moved from Philadelphia in 1800, that city remained
critical to the federal undertaking of hosting Indians—as well as the larger project of
national self-fashioning to which these visits contributed. In 1803, when General William
Irvine, the superintendent of military stores, received word from Secretary of War Henry
Dearborn that the Choctaws were on their way from Washington to Philadelphia, his only
direction was to show them “whatever you may think proper” and make sure that the men
were lodged at a “decent house.” The important men of the Society of Friends might also
be alerted, Dearborn suggested, as the Quakers likely would be interested in meeting with
the Choctaws. The sights deemed “proper” were those that would, in the hopes of those
arranging the visits, impress the Natives with the civility, power, grandeur, and
population of the U.S. These objects of exhibition therefore provided a window onto
what Americans, collectively and as residents of particular cities, perceived as their most
impressive and enlightened achievements. The sights in Philadelphia included Peale’s
museum, the waterworks, the mint, the theatre, military reviews, and public buildings.

Tours of the eastern cities endeavored to expose Indians to all of the cultural
tableaus, technological feats, and vistas of America that previously had been available in
New York and Philadelphia but were decidedly absent from Washington City. When the

327 J. Gerald Kennedy, ed., Life of Black Hawk or Mà-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiàk, Dictated by Himself (New
York: Penguin, 2008), 143.
Choctaws visited New York in 1803, Dearborn again called upon local officials—this time, Dewitt Clinton, mayor of New York City. Dearborn was unsure if the Choctaws would agree to go all the way to New York, but he hoped that “their curiosity which is already excited, will on seeing Philadelphia, impel them forward,” as he wished Clinton to show them the “Forts, Public buildings &c&c.”329 Dearborn, and subsequent secretaries, continued to emphasize military and public displays of power, even as they relinquished control over Natives’ itineraries by sending them beyond the capital.

In the cities of the east, public amusements were standard fare for Native diplomats. When a deputation of Winnebagos visited New York in 1828, they attended the theatre for a performance of *Pizarro*, a five-act play about the Spanish conquistador of the Inca; “by signs [they] testified their approbation,” one observer noted. During their stay in New York in 1833, the Sac and Fox prisoners, including Black Hawk, were brought to Castle Garden for a fireworks display, as well as various public buildings and an array of popular amusements.330 Such visits laid bare the irony, not acknowledged in popular media, of the continent’s supposedly disappearing peoples witnessing the very technologies and marks of civilization that, it was assumed, would take their place.

The Peale Museum provides a particularly clear illustration of the intersection of diplomacy and popular entertainment. The Peales were a family of artists as well as entrepreneurial museum men. After founding Peale’s Museum in Philadelphia in 1784, they began satellite museums in Baltimore (1795) and New York (1825). Repositories of art, flora, fauna, scientific paraphernalia, optical illusions, and a range of other natural curiosities from wild animals to mammoth bones, the museums attracted an audience of

329 Henry Dearborn to Dewitt Clinton, Dec. 20, 1803, SW IA LS, vol. A.
members from polite society to school children and, for particular events, the wider public.\footnote{Brigham, Public Culture. See also John C. Ewers, “‘Chiefs from the Missouri and Mississippi’ and Peale’s Silhouettes of 1806,” Smithsonian Journal of History 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1966): 1-26.}

Alongside domestic and exotic plants, live and taxidermied animals, and minerals, there were human representations—the apex of the Linnaean system that organized the collection—the arrangement of which revealed the Peales’ ideas about culture and civilization. Portraits of important national figures, including George Washington and other revolutionaries, as well as Natives like the Mohawk Joseph Brant, lined the walls. Charles Peale painted Brant while the latter was in Philadelphia in 1797. Subsequent visitors would see his portrait on the wall with the other human likenesses, an increasing number of which included Native delegates. Blue Jacket and Red Pole were immortalized in wax, rather than on paper, and their life-sized figures adorned the museum amidst those of other cultures—Chinese, Carib, Tahitian, and African. Later, Capitan Meriwether Lewis would be added to the group of figures, bedecked in the ermine cloak presented to him by the Shoshones on his and Clark’s expedition west. Peale was intentional in incorporating Native diplomats and interlocutors like Lewis. Indeed, choosing to dress the figure of Lewis in the Shoshone cloak and holding a peace pipe from the same encounter, Peale recorded: “I completed a wax figure of Capt. Lewis and place it in the Museum. My object in this work is to give a lesson to the Indians who may visit the Museum”—the lesson being one of friendship and peace.\footnote{Charles Coleman Sellers, “‘Good Chiefs and Wise Men’: Indians as Symbols of Peace in the Art of Charles Willson Peale,” American Art Journal 7, no. 2 (Nov. 1975): 10-18; Sellers, Mr. Peale’s Museum, 40, 91-92, 187-89.}

Beyond the museum’s educational goals, for the Peales, it was a savvy business move to bring Native visitors to their establishments. As much as the Peales were also
interested in how Native people reacted to the fantasia of the museum, they were also eager for the hordes of urban denizens that would flock through their doors for that very same purpose. In 1828, young Rachel Mordecai Lazarus detailed the Winnebago’s visit to Peale’s New York Museum at the specially constructed “Parthenon,” where they were “entertained by an exhibition of phantasmagoria,” as well as “some experiments upon the air pump, atmospherick pressure, etc.”\(^{333}\) Having capitalized on the draw of seeing real-live Indians at his museum, Reuben Peale tabulated the income he brought in during the Winnebago’s stay in New York: $237.37 for the night they were invited, which had been advertised in the papers. An additional $20.37 came the following morning when the Winnebagos “called again to complete their view,” which also “brought in a number of persons.” Finally, Peale collected $57.00 the following Monday, when he invited them back to receive some presents; though “they had promised Mr. Gilford to be at the Bowery on Monday evening,” they agreed to spend an hour in the evening with Peale.\(^{334}\)

The possibility of profits made Native visitors highly desirable to business owners. So eager to use the Indians to attract visitors, Peale was willing to outlay money to purchase gifts that would justify bringing the Winnebagos back a second night. On that occasion, the delegation was arranged on one side of the long room with the “presents on the center table in 16 parcels.” Peale distributed each gift in order, and “after some passing compliments on each side they simultaneously squatted on the ground,” opening the parcels. Fifteen contained “a Handkerchief, Large bunch of Feathers, artificial Flowers, and Beads,” and one for “the Squaw had an elegant wreath for her head & c.”


\(^{334}\) Rubens Peale to Coleman [Sellers], Oct. 27, 1828, Peale-Sellers Family Papers, APS.
The gifts were put to use straight away, as the Winnebagos “immediately began to dress
their head and after this was done they marched around the room shaking hands &x, and
lastly with Mrs. Peale & myself.”  

The goal of federal officials was for Natives to see American culture, although, as
the Peales’ capitalization on Native diplomats’ celebrity exemplifies, delegates frequently
became the spectacle for urban Americans. The promise of improved business induced
numerous entertainers to use Native diplomats to make money and advertise their
businesses, even to the point of interfering with Natives seeing the intended sights and
accomplishing other business. As the Winnebagos left New York for Philadelphia,
Reubens Peale was quick to secure a promise that the delegations would “visit the Phila.
Museum on Wednesday evening next.” He then gave orders for his brothers Franklin and
Titan to post a notice he composed “in every paper in the City.” The same notice, when
sent to the papers in New York, had yielded Reubens “a crowded house” and “thousands
that could not get in the building.” While crowds were the purpose of the Peales’
invitations, the crush of onlookers often hindered the invited guests’ ability to see the
curiosities displayed about the museum, in New York or Philadelphia, and to enjoy other
spectacles, as well. Like the Winnebagos, who returned twice to the New York museum
to finish their tour, the 1833 Sac and Fox visitors to Peale’s Museum in Philadelphia
thanked Titan Ramsay Peale for the pleasure of their visit but “regretted very much the
inconvenience experienced, from the great crowd.” From goodness, or from a sense of
generosity after collecting fees from that “great crowd,” Titan invited them back again,

335 Rubens Peale to Coleman [Sellers], Oct. 27, 1828, Peale-Sellers Family Papers, APS.
336 Rubens Peale to Franklin [Peale], Oct. 30, 1828, Peale-Sellers Family Papers, APS.
“previous to their departure, with closed doors.” Whether a boon or an inconvenience the crowds turned out time and again to view Indian diplomats.

What Native delegates thought as they toured the capital and other eastern cities is difficult to decipher—or filtered through whites’ accounts—as is a reconstruction of overall impression they brought home with them from their tours. There are indications that touring Indian diplomats sought to incorporate what they saw and heard into a more familiar cognitive framework, though the goals of these tours precisely sought to minimize any such familiarity. One such external narrator, Indian Office official Thomas McKenney, adroitly captured the ambiguities in Native responses when he recorded his own reflections on a conversation at Washington between Ongpatonga (Big Elk) and several white gentlemen in 1821. Over the course of the conversation, Ongpatonga, an Omaha chief, apparently articulated his view that “the same Being who made the white people made the red people, but the white people are better than the red people.” McKenney provided several possible interpretations for this seeming declaration of inferiority: “this remark has been called a degrading one, and not in accordance with the independent spirit of a native chief,” which he felt an unjust interpretation. “Having travelled through the whole breadth of the United States, and witnessed the effects of civilization, in the industry of a great people,” McKenney wrote, “he might readily infer the superiority of whites, and make the observation with a candor which always formed a part of his character.” This was the interpretation that American officials hoped for, as it fulfilled their expectations for Native envoys. Yet McKenney offered a different—and less ingenuous—reading of Ongpatonga’s assertion, noting, “it is equally probable, that

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the expression was merely complimentary,” and motivated by a “spirit of courtesy” (or, one might add, strategic flattery).338

The blurring of diplomacy and spectacle extended beyond museums and theatres into less commercial spaces. During Black Hawk’s stay in Baltimore in 1833, the *Niles’ Register* aptly summarized federal intentions: “they (Black Hawk & Co.) will be conducted through the principal cities, with a view to exhibit to them the extent of the population and of the country, its wealth, resources, and means of defence, and to impress them with a conviction of its strength and power.”339 Black Hawk described Philadelphia as the place “they make medals and money,” suggesting that his visit to the mint there made a strong impression on him.340 Most diplomats were given medals on their visits, so seeing the workers in action at the mint may have been especially interesting to them, as well as to Philadelphians and the officials who made sure it was among the sights seen in the city. The Sac and Fox were also shown by their hosts in Philadelphia “their great public works, their ships and steamboats,” and the militia drilling.341 At the same time he was being shown the tokens of civilization, Black Hawk himself was on display for the city’s denizens.

Newspapers in the capital and throughout the nation cued the transformation of Native visits into public spectacles, providing urban readers with information on where to see the diplomats and reporting on Native responses to American culture. Although

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339 *Niles’ Register*, June 8, 1833.
341 *Life of Black Hawk*, 145.
newspapers often recorded Native reactions to various feats of civilization—balloon launches, scientific displays, military parades—their reports reveal more about what Americans hoped or expected these performances to elicit than the actual reactions of their Native audience. One is left to wonder what Native delegations made of their tours, given they were as much the spectacle as the spectator, if not more so. When Black Hawk departed Washington in 1833, as a prisoner rather than a diplomat (but a celebrity all the same), he did so by “a circuitous route” that mirrored the eastern tour of President Andrew Jackson. In a striking moment of convergence, the two men competed for attention in each city through which they passed. Newspapers gladly made much of their rivalry. Like so many others, Black Hawk’s tour began in Baltimore, where the Sac found “much to admire,” being “well entertained by the people, who crowded to see us.”342 Baltimoreans were eager to see Native people firsthand rather than in the portraits hanging in Peales’ Museum. News outlets kept readers apprised of when and how to do so, as when the Baltimore Gazette informed subscribers that “the celebrated Indian, Black Hawk, and his party, will visit the Front-street Theatre, This Evening.”343 Several days later the Baltimore public was invited to a lecture in the Athenaeum, “in which some interesting matters in relation to Black Hawk and his companions will be given.”344 The crowds of citizens pressing to see the Sac chief grew so large that he and his party were removed to Fort McHenry from their former lodgings, while some observers lamented

342 Life of Black Hawk, 144. See also Richard H. Gassan, “Tourists and the City: New York’s First Tourist Era, 1820-1840,” Winterthur Portfolio 44, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2010): 221-246.
343 Baltimore Gazette, June 8, 1833.
344 Baltimore Gazette, June 11, 1833.
that the prisoner had provided a “rich harvest” to the pickpockets who thrived in such “immense crowds.”

Traveling north from Baltimore, through Philadelphia, then on to New York, diplomats were treated to the sights, sounds, and smells of the nation’s predominant commercial city, which had expanded dramatically since its brief period as the federal capital. Black Hawk’s visit to New York provided many opportunities for written accounts of the man and the spectacle. A celebrity-outsider in her own right, British actress Frances Kemble, visiting New York in the spring of 1833, recorded her encounter with Black Hawk in her journal. With her father and two others, Kemble set off to the Exchange Hotel, where Black Hawk was lodged, unsure of what to expect of the now-national celebrity who had made his way up the coat. Her journal entry described in great detail and with considerable reflection the spectacle that enveloped Black Hawk and other Native visitors on their tours.

Her narrative captures the countervailing emotions that Black Hawk’s (and other Native celebrities’) visits stirred in urban white Americans, particularly among those attentive to the political controversies over Indian Removal. Kemble fully engaged in the practice of viewing the Natives out of curiosity and as a social pastime, but she also felt repulsed by her experience. These feelings perhaps led her, and others who scrutinized Native visitors, to question where the distinction between savage and civil truly rested. Visitors thronged the Exchange Hotel, filling the portico, passage, and staircase to the Sacs’ room, all “upon the same errand as ourselves . . . to stare at their fellow wild beasts.” Despite this hint of self-consciousness in her participation, Kemble observed the

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345 *Niles’ Register*, June 15 and July 20, 1833.
346 Kemble simply mentions that they headed to the hotel, but the *New York Morning Herald* of September 4, 1833, notes that the party’s quarters were at the Exchange Hotel on Broad Street.
men before her with great interest, noting first Black Hawk himself, “a diminutive, shriveled looking old man, with an appearance of much activity in his shrunk limbs, and a calmness and dignified self-composure in his manner, which, in spite of his want of size and comeliness, was very striking.” Such a visage did not necessarily accord with his reputation for warring with the U.S. Likely having read about the visitors in the newspaper, and listening to the buzz throughout the city, as well as some additional information from “their keeper,” Kemble described the relationships among the travelers—beside the chief sat “the adopted son of his brother,” whose “gravity of face and deportment were those of a man nearly forty, whereas he is little more than half that age,” though some of his “undisturbed seriousness” was attributed to a champagne hangover. Black Hawk’s son, sometimes referred to as Tommy Hawk in the newspapers, attracted the lady’s attention most, being to her eye “a noble, big young creature, like a fine Newfoundland puppy, with a handsome, scornful face,” which nevertheless “exhibited more familiarity and good-humoured amusement at what was going on, than any of the rest.” The good humor startled Kemble, whose stereotype of Indians’ “immovable gravity” was so strong that when the young man “laughed one or twice aloud” in the course of his conversation she found it utterly unexpected and surprising.

Humor and relaxed countenances were not the only features to take Kemble aback. At great pains to examine not only their countenances but also their attire, Kemble found Black Hawk to be dressed like “an old French gentleman” in his “blue cloth surtout, scarlet leggings, a black silk neck handkerchief, and ear-rings.” His son on the other hand must have fulfilled her imagination of Indian dress as she detailed every element from this hair, “powdered on the top, and round the ears with a bright vermilion-
coloured powder,” to the “string of glass beads tied round his naked throat.” As a further indication of the performative qualities of this spectacle, Kemble admitted her disappointment that he was “wrapped in a large blanket, which completely concealed his form.”

As it likely did for many other white onlookers, the visit to the Indians deeply unsettled Kemble, for as much as she participated fully in the spectacle of Black Hawk and his comrades, it created feelings of both common humanity and inherent difference—of language, appearance, and gender—between her and the men she observed. Back in her own lodgings, Kemble confided in her journal, “I cannot express the feeling of commiseration and disgust which the whole scene gave me.” She elaborated: “That men such as ourselves, creatures with like feelings, like perceptions, should be brought as strange animals at a show, to be gazed at the live long day by succeeding shoals of gaping folk, struck me as totally unfitting.” Her discomfort arose in part from the perceived breakdown in urban manners, as cities were understood to be spaces of mutual observation, while the observation of Black Hawk seemed to be anything but bilateral.

Placing herself in their position—being a famous woman and a foreigner in American society surely helped give her perspective on what it felt like to be out of place—Kemble sympathized with her fellow humans, even if she referred to them as savages. “To look at those two young savages, with their fine muscular proportions, and think of them cooped up the whole horrible day long, in this hot prison-house full of people,” she said, “made my heart ache.” Nevertheless, even simple demonstrations of

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348 Kemble, Journal, 2:159. See also Helton, Tena L. “What the White ‘Squaws’ Want from Black Hawk: Gendering the Fan-Celebrity Relationship.” American Indian Quarterly 34, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 498-520.
their humanity, like laughter, startled Kemble, who considered their place to be the
“unmeasured range of wilderness,” rather than the city. Perhaps to allay her own
conscience for her fascination with the party, particularly Black Hawk’s son, before
departing Kemble reached into her own pouch and gave him her silver vinaigrette, “by
way of keepsake,” promptly adding (perhaps sensing the impropriety of the gift from a
single young lady to young Indian man) that “it will make a charming present for his
squaw.” Able to sympathize greatly, while still referring to the men as savages and
participating in the spectacle of observing them in their quarters, Kemble illustrated the
ambivalent but profound interest that urban Americans took in Native dignitaries.349

Yet Kemble may have underestimated Black Hawk’s ability to view and judge
those “gaping” at him. Taking his role as human spectacle quite in stride, Black Hawk
noted that in New York, the leaders were “desirous that all their people should have an
opportunity to see us,” and that his party did indeed see “an immense number of people;
all of whom treated us with friendship, and many with great generosity.” Suggesting
perhaps that Kemble was not alone in her conflicted feelings about viewing the Indians
that she sought to relieve through gift, Black Hawk noted that “the squaws presented us
many handsome little presents, that were said to be valuable.” New Yorkers were careful
to balance the prerogatives of urban spectators with the aims of the federal officials who
sent, and guided, the diplomats to the city, ensuring the visitors experienced the city’s
trappings of civilization and commerce. Shortly upon arriving, the Sacs viewed the
ascension of a hot air balloon, a frequent spectacle of the period. The valedictory given
by the aerialist from above the crowd verbalized the sympathies New Yorkers should feel
towards their Native guests:

He fought for Independence too—
He struck for Freedom—with a few
Unconquered souls—whose battle-cry
Was—“Red men!—save your land, or die!”—
But fought in vain—for ‘tis decreed,
His race must fall, and yours succeed.
Then kindly treat the captive chief,
And let your smiles assuage his grief;
He Knows your strength—has felt your power—
Then send him to his native bower.\textsuperscript{350}

The aerialists’ words likewise summed up the intended message of the urban tours that federal officials arranged for Native diplomats.

It is indeed remarkable that Black Hawk and his compatriots met with such an enchanted audience so immediately after their participation in what became known as the Black Hawk War. Eastern Americans were quick to recognize an American (that is, revolutionary) spirit in those Native leaders who fought to preserve their lands and cultures. Icons of the valorous but disappearing Indian abounded in popular culture: King Philip, Hiawatha, Pocahontas, and Tecumseh all could be found on the stage, their heroism translated for an American audience desperate to trace its own national genealogy back through (an imagined) Native history. Fictional figures, like those Indians of James Fennimore Cooper, served a similar purpose.\textsuperscript{351} It was through these filters that Black Hawk could be rapidly converted from a violent warrior to an object of “kindly” treatment. But it was not merely on the frontier in his capture that Americans could believe “he Knows your strength—has felt your power,” but also in the very spaces they come to view him. It was in part, their own presence in the eastern metropolises, or

\textsuperscript{350} \textit{New York Spectator}, June 17, 1833.
their presence at the balloon launch as part of the urban masses, that showed Black Hawk and other touring diplomats the strength and power of the United States.

Native diplomats and a broad spectrum of Americans together formulated a set of diplomatic protocols, which persisted throughout the early republic with fairly minimal changes in practice. In their contributions to capital negotiations, federal officials, American citizens, and extra-administrative groups like the Quakers stressed their nation’s civilization, might, and population, though which messages were emphasized differed according to group and time. On their end, Native delegates advanced their own participation in informal diplomacy with an array of public performances, including parades, dances, and more individualized forms of self-presentation.

The urban context proved critical in shaping the parameters and possibilities of diplomatic protocol. It also provided numerous instances where the ideals of the practices—in particular, Americans’ self-perception as the vanguard of human civilization—faltered (or, more fittingly, stumbled over a rut in one of Washington’s unfinished streets). Indeed, when the federal government relocated to Washington in 1800, the capital was unable to sustain the social components of negotiations that had been forged in New York and Philadelphia in the 1790s. Rather than adjusting the protocols by doing away with the public performances and spectacles that had become routine in the federal capital’s first two iterations, federal officials encouraged Native diplomats to visit Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and other bustling cities. There, officials hoped, Natives would be properly impressed with U.S. civilization, might, and population.
By consigning social diplomacy largely to other cities, federal officials created a physical separation between social and political diplomacy that had not existed prior to 1800. This spatial partitioning of the culture of diplomacy produced several unintended effects. One such outcome was that state and local officials, citizens, and extra-administrative bodies assumed control over components of negotiations, while federal officials possessed less influence over how Native delegates received the intended messages of the United States’ superior civilization, martial prowess, and burgeoning population. While organizations such as the Tammany Society in New York and the Religious Society of Friends in Philadelphia had contributed to the culture of capital visits in the 1790s, they did so in close proximity to federal officials. Once the capital relocated to Washington, the Quakers in particular continued to play an important role in Native visits. Their role expanded, in fact, as the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, closer to the capital, assumed the mantle of hosting, educating, and negotiating with diplomats as they passed through that city. Local officials and enterprising businessmen, like the Peales in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, determined how to host and entertain Native diplomats at a distance from federal officials, often supplanting federal goals with their own.

Because officials were most interested in conveying American civilization to those deputations they viewed as most uncivilized, western diplomats were most likely to tour eastern cities.\textsuperscript{352} Not intentionally geographical, the distinction rather reflected the young and tenuous nature of these nations’ relations with the U.S. It was precisely at this stage the federal officials were most invested in impressing delegations with American

\textsuperscript{352} No evidence suggests that any eastern nations were invited to tour other cities after the 1803 Choctaw tour.
civilization. Little Turtle seemed to provide the ideal response to his visit to the capital:

“Yes, I am pretty well accustomed to what I find here. I think this dress warm and comfortable,” he informed Volney. “These houses are good to keep out wind and rain, and they have everything convenient. This market (we overlooked Market-street) gives us everything we want, without the trouble of hunting in the woods. All things considered, you are better off than we.” Being impressed and admitting it, however, did not denote Native acquiescence to federal goals. Continuing his thought, Little Turtle explained, “when I walk the streets, I see everybody busy about something; one make shoes, another hats, a third sells cloth, and all live by their work . . . I can make a bow, catch fish, kill deer, go to war, but none of these things are done here.” Little Turtle acknowledged the gulf that separated him from Volney and other urban residents: “To learn what you do would ask much time, be very difficult, and uncertain of success.”³⁵³

Likewise, American ideas about Native people continued to evolve throughout the period, particularly in regards to those western nations that were newly introduced to them by way of the civilization tours. Because the least acculturated diplomats were those sent to the cities, Americans in the east most frequently encountered Native people who were, in their eyes, exotic, uncivilized, and warlike. These encounters—in newspaper accounts or in public spaces of the city—as much as the purported disappearance of Native people in the east, probably played a significant role in Americans’ changing conceptions of the Indian in the first decades of the nineteenth century.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Volney, A View, 374-76.
Meanwhile, nations with long-standing relationships with the U.S.—and greater evidence of acculturation or “improvement,” according to officials—were not invited to visit the urban centers of the east. Instead, they spent the duration of their visits sequestered in the capital itself. With much of the social side of diplomacy dislocated to other cities after 1800, these more familiarized capital diplomats focused almost exclusively on more formal aspects of political diplomacy during their time in the capital. Over time, diplomats from nations like the Creeks, Cherokees, and Iroquois became more intimate with the capital, spending virtually all their time there, rather than divided between several cities, during visits. Thus they also encountered less of the spectacle that accompanied the civilization tours. Unsurprisingly, then, it was this group of diplomats who would be responsible for a host of alterations in the more formal elements of diplomatic protocols by the 1810s and 1820s.
Chapter 4: “Aboriginal Diplomats”: Formalizing Negotiations

When the Creeks visited the capital in 1790, they, along with the federal officials they encountered, produced the outline for formal diplomacy that would persist for decades. The new American Constitution, though ostensibly giving control over Indian affairs to federal authorities, did not make explicit how negotiations with Indians should be conducted. President Washington deliberately sought to clarify how to conduct treaties through the 1790 visit of the Creeks, the first such trip conceived, negotiated, and executed under the new government. As with the social elements of capital diplomacy, Washington, Secretary of War Knox, and the Creek diplomats composed a set of more formal practices for negotiations that endured, and became more elaborate, through two capital relocations, five presidential administrations, and ten different secretaries of war.

Scholarly literature on Native-federal relations in the early republic largely elides the role of diplomacy and negotiation by focusing more narrowly on treaties and federal policy. Not only did diplomacy persist in the early republic, it maintained key elements of Native political protocol, particularly in regard to oratory and rhetoric, the importance of gift-giving, and expectations of hospitality during negotiations. Scholarship on the colonial period provides ample demonstrations of how Native rhetoric and procedure shaped Native-white diplomacy at Indian councils and treaties. While it is understandable why white negotiators in Native towns, or those looking for concessions, would adopt or adapt to indigenous practices, what has not been explored is why federal officials in the

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355 Although the first treaty to be ratified under the new government was the Treaty of Fort Harmar, it was negotiated and written before Washington took office and the constitution was ratified. Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 18-20; Prucha, American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 70-79.
capital would do the same. More than an exercise in recovering an overlooked aspect of early national politics, this chapter demonstrates how the culture of diplomatic encounters (and the complicated performances that constituted those encounters) furnish a significant counterpoint to the dominant narrative of Native dispossession and cultural decline under the United States government in the decades leading to removal. Indeed, as the policy of the United States towards Indian nations changed throughout this period, the culture of diplomacy, created and regulated through continual Native visits to the capital, sustained its general form. The language and performances associated with delegations maintained a distinctive “Indian” style as diplomatic culture—modes of gift giving and hospitality, language and rhetoric, and cultural performances—became entrenched.

Focusing on the nearly 200 delegations that visited the capital demonstrates the need to temper the weight given to policy and treaties, which constituted only a portion—if the most visible one—of early republican Indian diplomacy. In the years examined here, Native nations and the United States negotiated and signed only 12% of all treaties in the capital. By focusing on treaties, which were largely negotiated at frontier sites,


357 Akin to some of the approaches suggested in the new political history, and evidenced in Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early Republic (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Recent arguments in Native history have pointed to moments of Native dominancy; see Juliana Barr, Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Kathleen DuVal, The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Pekka Hämäläinen, The Comanche Empire (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Although they are important moments and nations to examine, however, they maintain an approach that utilizes the same standards of political and military dominance that are used to argue in later moments for Native decline. By re-evaluating those standards we may see a very different picture of cross-cultural encounters and interactions.
historians have missed the capital itself as an important space and instrument of negotiations.\textsuperscript{358} Not all negotiation or diplomacy can be summed up in the goals that were or were not achieved in treaties. In fact, only 12% of diplomatic visits to the capital concluded in a treaty. The elements of capital negotiations between 1789 and 1837 reveal more about Indian-white negotiations and relationships of power than simply a textual examination of the treaties and policies, which were rarely produced in the process of capital diplomacy.\textsuperscript{359}

When federal officials began negotiating with Native peoples, they drew on a long history of British-Indian diplomacy, as well as a variety of personal experiences with Native people. The first section of this chapter returns to the vanguard Creek deputation of 1790, as McGillivray and other Creeks forged the precedents of formal diplomacy in New York in conjunction with federal authorities. Elements of the routine established there—the use of Native oratory, gift giving, or the custom of ‘presents,’ and the importance of being a good host—formed the foundation for future negotiations. These practices formalized and routinized relations between visiting Native nations and the federal government.

As with the more informal performances of the capital, formal diplomatic protocols established at the beginning of Washington’s administration grew deeper roots.


\textsuperscript{359} In the expanding political and cultural landscape of the early Republic, historians have demonstrated there were many ways to lay claim to political power. See David Waldstreicher, \textit{In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1997); Susan G. Davis, \textit{Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Carolyn Eastman, \textit{A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public After the Revolution} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
over the course of the 1790s as federal administrators and powerful Native nations worked through negotiations in Philadelphia. This solidification is charted in the next part of the chapter, before turning, in section three, to how formal practices of diplomacy transferred to Washington after 1800. In contrast to the social rituals of diplomacy, which underwent dramatic changes with the move to Washington, the system of formal negotiations continued to operate as it had in Philadelphia.

An unusual visitor to the capital in 1827 demonstrated both the stability of diplomatic routines and the concomitant ease with which they could be manipulated. The visitor, Tshusick, not a diplomat but rather an independent Ojibwa woman, became an instant celebrity. Her arrival and stay in Washington hewed closely to the protocols established in the preceding decades by male diplomats. Indeed, the persistence of capital diplomatic practices is markedly evident in her case, which, as it turned out, was a trickster tale. Tshusick had learned enough about the practices of formal diplomacy to style herself as a well-connected and influential leader of her nation. After receiving gifts and praise, she slipped out of Washington before officials learned of her charade.

While Tshusick’s visit in the capital highlights the routinization of Native presence in the capital, the final part of the chapter examines a shift in ideas about Native people. Beginning in 1817, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Thomas McKenney, began work on an Indian gallery within the War Office, a key site of negotiations. McKenney’s modifications to the War Office became important to capital negotiations, not the least because diplomats commonly contributed to the collection by sitting for their portraits, which later adorned the walls. Despite the newness of the Indian gallery, it also represented modifications of existing practices like gift-giving. Changing perceptions
about indigenous people in the American nation that mounted throughout the first decades of the century, came to a head in the debates over Indian removal that exploded in the 1820s and 1830s.

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Even when federal officials felt they had the upper hand, they still needed to participate in the process of negotiating in order to achieve their goals. Officials may not have doubted their ultimate ability to claim Indian lands, but they were concerned about the smooth settlement of the lands to which they sought title. Frontier warfare was a genuine threat that could tarnish the new nation’s reputation. Administrators turned away from the policies of the 1780s that dictated cessions from Natives through the logic of conquest. Violence all along the American borders proved more than the nation could handle militarily or financially. Instead of marching towards war, officials preferred to rely on presents and diplomacy to establish peace.  

The efforts of George Washington and Henry Knox at New York in 1790 show how both federal officials and Native diplomats forged a broad and adaptive culture of diplomacy. The key federal actors, the President and the Secretary of War, were aware of the precedent setting nature of these initial visits as they constructed a new national government. The first delegation invited to the American capital under its new presidential leadership, the Creeks, helped Washington and Knox forge a template for how Indian-white diplomacy would be conducted.

As they assembled in New York to launch the new federal government, Washington and Knox faced a number of challenges to peace along the United States’ southern border that demanded, at least in their calculation, an accommodationist posture.

360 White, 413-16, 473; Nichols, Red Genglemen & White Savages, 82-83, 98-106.
towards Native nations. In August 1789, Washington and Knox presented to the Senate their view on the “Southern Tribes.” They implored the Senate that “to conciliate the powerful tribes of Indians in the Southern district…and to attach them firmly to the United States” was “highly worthy of the serious attention of Government.” Peace and security in the south depended on a firm alliance. Furthermore, the Southern Tribes were necessary “to form a barrier against the colonies of an European Power, which in the mutations of policy, may one day become the enemy of the United States.” Overall, they determined that the fate of the southern United States did “principally depend on the present measures of the Union towards the Southern Indians.” More specifically, Washington and Knox believed that the existing treaties with the Cherokees had been “entirely violated by the disorderly white people on the frontiers,” particularly of North Carolina. At that moment, however, North Carolina had not yet formally joined the Union, making any resolution difficult for the federal government. The Creeks, too, were at loggerheads with an individual state—Georgia—over treaties; finding a resolution was a matter of the “highest importance.”

Despite their various attempts to cultivate a positive relationship with the Creeks, Congress had witnessed relations in the south deteriorate over the course of the 1780s. By 1790, the federal leaders felt the need to create an official relationship with the Creeks and quell the violence in the South between

361 Washington and Knox found the Chickasaw and Choctaw towns to still be sufficiently far from white settlements to prevent the same difficulties encroachment that were making alliances with the Cherokee and Creek such a high priority. “The Southern Tribes,” August 22, 1789, ASP, vol. 5, 1:54-55.

362 The Creeks had signed a treaty at Pensacola in 1784 concerning trade and defense with the Spanish in Florida and Louisiana, who claimed lands that the U.S. also claimed. Prucha, Indian Treaties, 80; J. Leitch Wright Jr., “Creek-American Treaty of 1790: Alexander McGillivray and the Diplomacy of the Old Southwest,” Georgia Historical Quarterly 51, no. 4 (December 1967): 388.
Creeks and Georgians and to consolidate American claims to land in the region to facilitate settlement by the growing white population.\textsuperscript{363}

The negotiations at New York illuminate the accommodations federal officials made to Native diplomacy in order to secure peace. Drawing on frontier diplomacy, capital negotiations relied on three key features: Native oratorical and rhetorical protocols, the imperative of gift-giving, and the expectation of hospitality. The 1790 negotiations also marked a break from frontier negotiations in several ways: the small numbers of Native actors, the central and active roles of the president and secretary of war, and the presence of large numbers of white spectators.

When they set out for New York in 1790, chief Alexander McGillivray and the Creeks left behind their familiar spaces and modes of negotiation. Thirty-one Creeks traveled to the capital, but not all of them were men in positions of leadership to speak for their towns. In addition to McGillivray, whose authority generally encompassed the Upper Towns, were five from “Cussitah,” four from Coweta, two each from Little Tallasee, Coosades, Tuskabatchy and Tallissee, and one each from Alabama and

\textsuperscript{363} During the American Revolution, Creeks, like so many others, held divided loyalties. Both Americans and Britons sought to count the Creeks among their allies, while Creek leaders, officially maintained a delicate stance of neutrality. In reality the nation was fragmented, and leaders like the Tallassee King and the Fat King were pro-American, while others like Cowkeeper and Alexander McGillivray championed the British; Creek warriors engaged in the war on both sides. Both Alexander McGillivray and the Tallassee King were part of the 1790 delegation. Following the Revolution, in 1783, 1785, and 1786, Georgia had negotiated treaties with a minority faction of the still divided Creeks. These treaties re-established trade and ceded over 800 square miles between the Oconee and Ogeechee Rivers to Georgia. However, the signatories, led by the Fat King of Cussita and Opeitley Mico of Tallassee, were not representative of the majority of Creeks. Chief among those discontented by the cession of lands at Augusta was McGillivray, who opposed negotiations with the state, but favored diplomatic relations with Congress. Congress sent a commission to negotiate with the Creeks and soothe the dissatisfaction in the region since the 1783 treaty but it was unsuccessful. On the Creeks during the American Revolution, see David H. Corkran, \textit{The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783} (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); Claudio Saunt, \textit{A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. 67-89; Joshua Piker, \textit{Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).
Notches. The other delegates were warriors from the various towns, and two kinsmen of McGillivray brought along to be left for schooling in Philadelphia. No women traveled with the delegation. While McGillivray and other members of the delegation were fluent in English, they nevertheless relied upon an official interpreter, Joseph Cornells, to translate the speeches and negotiations.

Federal negotiators and hosts employed a range of Native rhetorical and oratorical styles throughout the Creek’s visit. Even when perceiving themselves in a place of authority, U.S. officials sought, as Andrew Cayton has argued, to “demonstrate good faith by doing [and saying] things Indians would appreciate.” In doing so, they first had to identify what those things were. Washington, Knox, and other U.S. officials in New York seem to have developed their notions of Native diplomacy and rhetoric from the Iroquois. A pair of unexpected visits from the Iroquois earlier in 1790 reinforced the tendency of earlier federal officials to use Iroquoian diplomacy as a reference point for their dealings with other nations.

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364 By the late eighteenth century, the Creek nation consisted of at least 73 towns, about two-thirds of which were Upper towns and the remaining third, Lower towns. Robbie Ethridge, Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 31.
The result was a culturally muddled diplomatic script during the Creek visit that, if anything, underscored the cultural and political distance between white leaders and the powerful southern nation they sought to accommodate. When W.P. Smith, Grand Sachem of the Tammany Society, addressed the Creeks at a public conference attended by such officials as Governor Clinton, Chief Justice John Jay, Secretary of War Knox, Willet, and New York Mayor Richard Varick, he organized his talk to the Creeks by ‘paragraphs’ beginning, “brother—,” a practice common among Natives north and south. But, he also used terms and phrases taken from past interactions with Iroquoian nations; “Great Spirit” to refer to a divine being, “Sachem of the Thirteen Fires” referred to the president, while “Council Fire” denoted the sites where meetings occurred. Smith even spoke of making the Creeks a “strong bright link in the [covenant] chain,” a uniquely Iroquoian convention.

In his responding speech, McGillivray matched Smith’s tone, but made subtle corrections and adjustments to the particular symbols and terms Smith invoked, not only readjusting the diplomatic script but also reclaiming a degree of autonomy in the proceedings. McGillivray spoke of the “Muscoghies,” the “Great Master of breath” and “beloved chiefs,” the “White Town of the Grand Council,” and his desire to be “united in friendship,” rather than chained. Whether he wished to emphasize the mutable nature of their relationship moving forward, or was simply translating the language to reflect Creek diplomatic rhetoric, these semantic adjustments were noticeable enough to be picked up in press accounts. In either case, McGillivray’s revisions carried distinct political significance. Creek, for instance, was the American moniker for a diverse group of peoples who referred to themselves as Muskogees. McGillivray asserted authority over

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368 *Daily Advertiser* (New York), August 4, 1790.
his and his nation’s identity each time he articulated the “Muscoghoes,” rather than the Creeks, as the nation negotiating with the federal government. McGillivray also refined the imagery of a “council fire” to acquire a more specific meaning for the Creeks. White towns were associated with peace negotiations and treaty making, so it mattered that the U.S. capital was not simply a “council fire.” Referring to New York as the “White Town of the Grand Council” claimed the capital as a place of peace, free from outside interference.  

In the subsequent American speeches, the speakers responded, in some cases, to McGillivray’s modifications by using “Muscoghoes” in place of “Creeks.” Throughout their visit, U.S. speakers continued to refer to the covenant chain and “tree of peace,” references drawn from Iroquois rhetoric. Nevertheless, despite their regional cues, during the Creeks’ visit U.S. speakers made a game effort to adopt Native rhetorical forms and paid enough attention to language to follow, to some degree, the subtle revisions of their guests.

Federal officials employed additional Native protocols, which displayed their efforts to adopt symbols and practices from past experiences with Native peoples. Although the signing of the treaty fulfilled the American government’s goals for the negotiation, Washington continued to follow his understanding of Native scripts. He had obtained what he needed, a signed treaty and affidavit from McGillivray, but Washington still provided tobacco for the calumet of peace. After the treaty between the Creeks and U.S. was signed and ratified in a public celebration in Federal Hall on August 13, 

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369 Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 3, 8.
President Washington presented McGillivray and the Creeks with “a paper of tobacco to smoke in remembrance” of the treaty, as well as “a string of beads as a token of perpetual peace.” The string of beads, or wampum, was likely white to signify peace. The exchange of wampum also derived from northern Natives’ customs, but the Creeks understood the symbolic power of the white beads. The presentation of white strings of beads accorded with Creek symbolism—the wampum or bead strings served as a mnemonic device to both recall and emphasize the oral transcript, and the color reiterated peace. Tobacco too, was a gift associated with peace. On several occasions during their visit, the Creeks were invited to smoke the “calumet of peace” by American officials. When offered the pipe by Knox during their welcome to the city, reports noted that several warriors took a smoke.

Gift giving and the role of presents in diplomacy, like the dominance of Native rhetoric and prominence of Native ceremonies, such as smoking the calumet, was a practice Native people everywhere had enforced in their interactions with whites since the era of first contact. In piecing together the types of gifts exchanged in the early

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372 Some traditions seemed to have merged as well. Newspapers reported frequently on the performance of handshakes between Creeks and U.S. officials, particularly Washington. Although the shaking of hands happened on a number of occasions, it is hard to tell by whom it was initiated. The Creeks shook hands with Washington when they met him at his house on the day they arrived, and after the conclusion of the ceremony ratifying the treaty they also lined up and shook hands. This is frequently described as lining up “Indian file” for a shake of hands, blending the cultural coding of this action. *New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, August 10 and 17, 1790.

373 A week later, officers of the St. Tammany Society also produced a peace pipe for the Creeks. On this occasion the Tammany sagamore, Ven Den Broeck, addressed the Creeks, enjoining: “I request you all to smoke with us this Calumet of peace, and may it be an everlasting monument, that never discord shall break the chain which unites us together.” He then presented the “richly ornamented” calumet to McGillivray and the other chiefs, before passing it among the Tammany members and other guests. This was the second occasion in which an American leader presented their own pipe to the Creeks for a traditionally Native ceremony. *New York Journal & Patriotic Register*, August 19, 1790.

374 Various scholars have considered the role of gift exchange in diplomacy. For Creeks in particular, see Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 27. Also, see White, *Middle Ground*; Cary Miller, “Gifts at Treaties: The Political Use of Received Gifts in Anishinaabeg Communities, 1820-1832,” *American Indian Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Spring, 2002): 221-245.
capital, sartorial descriptions of diplomats in capital newspapers’ provide some clues. For instance, articles described the Creeks arriving in their “national habits.” Several days later, when the Creeks attended a militia review, they were all “dressed in cloathes made in the present fashion.” Other fragments of evidence fill out the gaps in these descriptions, including visual representations. Artist John Trumbull sketched several of the Native visitors, not in staged portraits as was most common, but “by stealth.” Trumbull’s depiction’s reflected a mix of American military jackets, gorgets, and cloth turbans that were popular among southeastern Indian men. (Figures 4.1 and 4.2) This syncretism in dress was hardly novel. If later visits offer any indication, the fashionable clothes the Creeks sported at the militia review were gifts from the government for their travel to the city and participation in diplomacy. Willet, escort for the Creeks, provided “small articles of clothing as the Chiefs may want” on their journey to the city, while Knox took responsibility for ensuring the chiefs would be “fully clothed” at the capital.

377 Henry Knox to Marinus Willet, July 15, 1790, PWD.

After the Creek delegation’s visit in July and August 1790, almost every engagement between Natives and the U.S. in the capital would begin with government officials providing clothing, often military garb, to their Native guests. Viewing the fashionable clothes donned by the Creeks in New York in the tradition of presents-for-diplomacy, demonstrates how accepting and wearing an American shirt and jacket did not necessarily constitute tacit acceptance of American civilization, even if American spectators were pleased to see the Creeks in proper attire. It was one form of engagement in a bilateral culture of diplomacy. Despite frequent assertions of cultural and political dominance and an abiding wish to cut costs and ease the federal debt, federal officials
saw no option but to engage in the Native-dictated practice of hosting and providing presents.\textsuperscript{378}

The education of Indian boys long had been another element of intercultural diplomacy, and McGillivray and Knox perpetuated this tradition in New York. Among the deputation of Creeks to the capital were two young men, relatives of McGillivray, David Francis and David Tate.\textsuperscript{379} While both young men spoke English well already, McGillivray left his young relatives at the home of Secretary Knox to receive a “cultivated education.”\textsuperscript{380} The symbolism in leaving one’s own to be educated among another culture or nation was clear; it served to reinforce the bonds between nations. Spanish officials keeping close tabs on the Creeks in New York, for one, did not miss the meaning. The Spanish official Carlos Howard, later meeting with McGillivray on the final leg of his trek back to Little Tallassee, pointed out that “to give over one’s nephew in that manner to the Americans was to manifest a decided predilection for that nation.” Ever keen to keep the appearance of relations balanced, McGillivray informed Howard that he was instead more inclined towards Spain and would be happy to “give over another nephew to be brought up as a Spaniard.” Young Tate and Francis were sent to


\textsuperscript{379} William Knox estimated Tate and Francis to be 12 and 16, though it is not clear who was which age. Howard mentions that the nephew left in NY was ten or twelve, so likely, if each report is correct David Tate, about twelve, was left with Knox. Francis was described in the newspapers as “a young half breed, Kinsman to Col. M’Gillivray,” while Tate was described as McGillivray’s nephew. \textit{New York Journal}, July 27, 1790; William Knox to Henry Knox, July 14, 1790, PWD; Howard to Quesada, Sept. 24, 1790, in John Walton Caughey, \textit{McGillivray of the Creeks} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007 [1938]), 283.

\textsuperscript{380} Howard to Quesada, Sept. 24, 1790, in Caughey, \textit{McGillivray}, 283.
Philadelphia to be educated by Quakers where they remained in school for five years, a living symbol of the newly signed peace between the Creeks and the Americans.\textsuperscript{381}

The payment of bills was another remnant of this peace mission. During their month in the capital, the Creek diplomats experienced the federal government’s hospitality to the sum of $3,194.99.\textsuperscript{382} The City Tavern, where most of the delegates were lodged received the bulk of these payments.\textsuperscript{383} In New York, the St. Tammany Society provided some hospitality. The St. Tammany Society in Philadelphia did not continue this trend. The role of the federal government in housing Native delegations was an important part of capital diplomacy. Knox considered all the possibilities for handling the crisis in the south and determined that hosting Creek ambassadors was by far the most desirable—saving the young nation’s reputation and its treasury. Before inviting the Creeks to New York, Knox calculated that the financial cost of raising an army to settle the Indian threat would tally over 1 million dollars.\textsuperscript{384}

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Despite administrators’ satisfaction that peace might reign in the south under the new Creek treaty, Indian relations in fall of 1790 were falling apart elsewhere. In the waning days of 1790, the federal government removed to its new, though still temporary, capital at Philadelphia. From their new seat, Washington and Knox turned their attentions

\textsuperscript{381} It is unclear if any relative was subsequently sent to Howard. Gregory A. Waselkov, \textit{A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814} (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 45.

\textsuperscript{382} It seems that this total is only for hospitality costs incurred at New York. Willet was advanced separate funds for bringing the delegation to the city—see chapter 2. In the letter, Knox asks for a copy of Willet’s expenditures in the city. Because presents would likely have been taken care of by Knox or through other officials, this total probably does not include the cost of presents. Henry Knox to Marinus Willet, March 5, 1791, PWD.

\textsuperscript{383} McGillivray himself stayed at the house of Henry Knox. Viar to Quesada, August 13, 1790, in Caughey, 276-77.

\textsuperscript{384} No. 9, “Southern Tribes,” \textit{ASP}, vol. 5, 1:59-62.
northward to Iroquoia and to the Ohio country. Delegations to the city in the early 1790s were primarily concerned with the developing war in the west. A deputation of Senecas, led by Complanter, arrived at the capital at the same time as the president. Both parties came to the table deeply concerned by violence.

In the context of eroding alliances in the northwest and evolving political concerns, two-dozen delegations arrived at Philadelphia over the ensuing decade to negotiate and fortify their ties to the federal government. Washington and Knox invited many of these diplomats in their attempts to facilitate peace in the northwest. As in the case of the 1790 Creek visit, then, Native delegations to the capital in the 1790s continued to represent nations that posed formidable threats or offered timely alliances. These years also marked a solidifying script for capital negotiations—one in which negotiations maintained Native diplomatic protocol, including the use of presents, oratorical practice and rhetoric, and hospitality.

Natives expected a direct relationship with the Great Father, but negotiations in the capital illuminate the tension in their expectations of the relationship and the realities of the negotiations that took place. The Great Father’s Red Children were not of one mold. Their role as children could be performed in distinct ways in attempts to meet the unique needs of a deputation. For example, a delegation’s speaker could portray the neglected child of the Great Father, who was in need of help and attention in order to request money for a school, or larger annuities, or justice in the case of property crime.

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385 One such delegation was a group of Choctaws who visited in 1795. Like the Creeks, the Choctaws’ ambiguous allegiances heightened the stakes of federal diplomacy. Throughout the 1780s, the Choctaws retained and developed new relationships with both Britain and Spain, respectively. The sizable population of the Choctaws, and thus their potential as formidable military enemies if they joined the Northern Indians against the US or remained allied with Spain (despite having forsworn foreign alliances in the 1786 Treaty of Hopewell), led federal officials to seek a true Choctaw alliance.
Others critiqued the president’s ability to act as a father and control the misbehavior of his white children.

Formal speeches, or talks, formed the core of negotiation between delegates and the federal government. While series of talks exchanged over a period of weeks or even months between a deputation and the secretary of war typified the substance of negotiations, direct exchanges with the president were usually more limited. Most deputations were addressed but once by the president himself and addressed or replied to him but once in person. Talks through the secretary of war, or memorials or letters to the president might round out the process of negotiation. Following established custom, speeches were rarely replied to the same day they were given. Negotiations were protracted, with days sometimes intervening between the exchanges of talks, prolonging negotiations over weeks and sometimes months.  

After reiterating their direct relation between Father and children, Native orators turned their focus to their purpose for visiting the seat of government. While formulaic in certain elements, Native talks were highly detailed in their complaints or expectations. The specificity of their grievances called not only on their expectations for benevolence or adjudication from the president, but emphasized the specific nature of their relationship. The president was not expected to give general succor, but rather to aid in the particular personal issues of each nation. Grievances covered a wide range of issues, from the drawing of boundary lines, pressure for land cessions, trouble with traders and liquor, complaints about agents, encroachment of whites, unfulfilled treaty obligations or annuity payments, and commonly, the punishment of wrongdoers (trying to get whites

386 For 1789-1799 see PWD. Thereafter, see SW IA LS, vols A-F. Many are additionally available in ASP, v. 5, 1 and 2.
punished for wronging Indians, or trying to pardon or appeal the punishment of Indians by local white settlers). These various causes of distress were detailed and outlined to the president, sometimes accompanied by strings of wampum to signify their importance.\textsuperscript{387} Diplomats’ speeches focused on their expectations of the Great Father and their individual nation’s grievances.

Native delegates expected gifts for their participation in intercultural diplomacy, and the early years of capital negotiations established the precedent for those gifts. Nevertheless, Washington and Knox were hardly innovative in the gifts they presented to capital diplomats—munitions, textiles, symbolic items such as medals, and items for personal adornment, like paints, gorgets, and beads.\textsuperscript{388} Building on British traditions, every president from Washington to Polk had his own Indian peace medal cast by the federal mint. With the exception of the Washington medal, during this period the mint cast medals in three sizes. Medals were distributed by rank—the most prominent leaders received the largest medallions.\textsuperscript{389} Cast in large lots at the mint in Philadelphia, medals were ubiquitous among capital diplomats. While not unique to capital diplomacy, medals given at the capital took on important meaning. Because each president had his own medal made, it symbolized not a generic association with the federal government, but rather a direct relationship with the specific person of the president at a moment in time, the moment an individual diplomat served his nation in the capital.

\textsuperscript{387} Often the President’s and Sec. of War’s speeches are in the WD record, but not the speeches of the delegates, though from the federal speeches it is clear they are direct responses to Native speeches, and the issues they respond to suggest the content of the missing speeches. Some exemplary speeches include Speech of the Seneca and Tuscarora, February 1801; Miami, Potawatomi to Jefferson, January 4, 1802, SW IA LS, vol. A, 9-25, 138-142; Creek 1805, SW IA LS, vol. B, 156-58, 176-82; Shawnee 1807, SW IA LS, vol. B, 301-05.

\textsuperscript{388} For colonial gift giving, see White, \textit{Middle Ground}, 15, 180-82, 257-58, 403-04.

Diplomats even, at times, brought old medals to be traded for up-to-date ones, representing the refreshing of the relationship with the current Father-President.\textsuperscript{390} Treating with Secretary of War Knox in 1792, Bloody Fellow presented two medals to him. A treaty commissioner had given the Cherokees those medals several years earlier. He returned them, Bloody Fellow explained, because “some disturbances have since happened, they are now returned, to obtain others from the United States.” He also elaborated on the importance of the medals; “medals are valuable to the Cherokees, and when accompanied with speeches, are monuments of friendship to their nation.”\textsuperscript{391}

A frequent visitor to the capital, Seneca orator Red Jacket provides an example of the medal’s power as a symbol of connection with the Great Father. On his first visit, President Washington presented him with a medal that became critical to Red Jacket’s sartorial identity. Writing decades after Red Jacket received his medal, former Superintendent of Indian Trade, Thomas McKenney recalled that “the medal which Red Jacket wore, and which is faithfully copied in the portrait [by King] before the reader, he prized above all price.” McKenney explained why: “It was a personal present, made in 1792, from General Washington. He was never known to be without it. He had studied and comprehended the character of Washington, and placed upon this gift a value corresponding with his exalted opinion of the donor.”\textsuperscript{392} In dozens of portraits painted of Red Jacket after 1792, Washington’s medal figured prominently worn over his chest.\textsuperscript{393}

\textsuperscript{390} Exchanging British medals for American medals was also an important symbolic exchange, though one that seem more common at frontier negotiations than those that took place in the capital. By the time a delegation was invited to, or initiated their own capital visits, they already had a relationship with the United States and therefore were less likely to carry British medals. Prucha, \textit{Indian Peace Medals}. \textsuperscript{391} Cherokees, ASP, vol. 5, 1:203. \textsuperscript{392} Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, \textit{History of the Indian Tribes, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs...} (Philadelphia: E. C. Biddle, 1837-1844), 2:28. \textsuperscript{393} Jadviga da Costa Nunes, “Red Jacket: The Man and His Portraits,” \textit{American Art Journal} 12, no. 3 (Summer 1980): 4-20.
Figure 4.3 Lithograph of Bird King’s “Red Jacket.” McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes*, vol. 1, illustration 1.
Federal officials enacted the benevolence of the Great Father through material gifts, a continuing diplomatic tradition, even if the presentation sometimes fell short. Gifts varied but almost always included clothing and other textiles; guns and ammunition were common. Status and gender dictated the quality and quantity of gifts. Gift giving was not just about the object itself but also the ceremony of offering. Federal officials also thought about gifts for those not in attendance. When another Creek deputation visited Philadelphia in 1797, Secretary of War James McHenry allotted an additional 500 dollars in presents for chiefs who had not travelled to the capital. McHenry fretted that “some of the Chiefs who have staid at home may think those who visit the seat of Government are the best treated and be inclined from that circumstance to follow the same course oftener than would be proper or convenient, or get discontented on the sight of presents, which they have not shared in.”

He recognized that the chiefs at the capital represented only a portion of their peers at home, and he was disinclined to appear to play favorites. In an attempt to stave off possible discontent when the delegation returned home, McHenry was willing to dig deeper into the War Office pockets, even providing gifts for “wives and families” at home.

The benevolence of the Great Father in giving gifts also extended, or rather was expected to extend, to hospitality during diplomatic missions. President Washington articulated the role of generosity in his address to the members of various Iroquois nations at the capital in 1792. “It has been my direction, and I hope it has been executed to your satisfaction,” Washington addressed the diplomats, “that during your residence here you should be well fed, well lodged and well cloathed, and that presents should be

394 Correspondence of James McHenry, January 2, 1797, PWD.
395 Ibid.
furnished.” Typically, funds for hospitality were handled through interpreters who were allotted funds for “cloathing [and] boarding,” providing they produced the proper lists of expenditures or vouchers for the War Office.

When circumstances required, medical care and funerals formed an aspect of diplomatic hospitality. The Miami, Little Turtle, suffered from both gout and rheumatism, “for which the government had eagerly provided him medical aid.” While doctors could be expensive, the funerals for diplomats who died while in the capital were often extravagant affairs. Two days after Oneida Peter Otsequette died at Philadelphia in 1792 a funeral procession took his corpse from Oellers’ Hotel to the Presybterian burial ground where he was interred. The procession included “detachments of the Light Infantry of the city, with arms reversed—drums muffled—music playing a solemn dirge,” followed by the corpse, then “six of the Chiefs as mourners, succeeded by all the Warriors now in this city—the reverend Clergy of all denominations—the Secretary of War and the Gentlemen of the War Department—Officers of the Federal Army, and the Militia,” as well as a number of citizens. Spectators calculated that “the concourse assembled on this occasion is supposed to have amounted to more than 10,000 persons.” In addition to the cost of the funeral, the War Department, at the request of Otsequette’s widow, paid his debts.

Hospitality was not only about cost but also custom, and adherence to certain Native ceremonial practices was of great importance, particularly in moments of grief.

396 George Washington to Five Nations, April 25, 1792, PWD.
397 Peter Hagner to James McHenry, May 3, 1799, PWD.
399 Federal Gazette, March 24, 1792.
400 Timothy Pickering to Henry Knox, February 7, 1794, PWD.
Otsequette’s death was not the only one to mar the 1792 deliberations, as Big Tree also died in Philadelphia and was interred at the Quaker burial ground. While Big Tree’s funeral was a simpler affair than Peter Otsequette’s, President Washington treated both equally in his condolences to the delegation. Employing the Iroquois Condolence Ceremony, Washington explained that he “ordered that your tears should be wiped away according to your custom and that presents should be sent to the relations of the deceased.”

Likely, it was Henry Knox, perhaps with the help of Samuel Kirkland or another interpreter, who performed the important ceremony.

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When the capital moved from Philadelphia to Washington City in 1800 the formal culture of diplomacy changed little. Thomas Jefferson possessed the greatest dramatic flair as Great Father, while hewing closely to the developed script. Like the other executives, his speeches focused on paternalism, benevolence—often in the form of presents—and civilization. Nevertheless, these speeches, when viewed as a body, lacked the personal relationship Natives expected. Indeed, Jefferson frequently recycled the same speech across delegations with minimal adjustment, so much so that some talks are only recorded as marginal notes in the records of the War Office. (Figure 4.5) For example, Jefferson simply added a new introduction to his speech to the Arikaras delivered earlier in the year and repurposed the rest when he addressed the Mandans.

Thus, while deploying the language of paternalism, one that was supposed to embody a

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401 Independent Gazetteer, April 28, 1792.
402 George Washington to Five Nations, April 25, 1792, PWD. Condolences were also to be performed, and presents sent to cover the grave, of the Arikira chief who died in 1804 at the capital. [Henry Dearborn] to James Wilkinson, April 9, 1806, SW IA LS, vol. B, 214-16.
403 President’s Talk to the Ricara Nation and President’s Talk to the Mandan, SW IA LS vol. B, 200-203, 204.
close rapport with his individual Native children, Jefferson’s talks, like those of his successors, were also formulaic.

Figure 4.5 SW IA LS, vol. B, 204.
Speeches to the president followed a format common to Native oratory, attuned to the particular expectations Native diplomats held for the Great Father. Talks began by establishing their connection to the Great Father and emphasizing the process of coming to see him in person, as in the case of Pottawottama in the winter of 1801-1802. He began his address, “Father, Listen to your children, your children are happy that the Great Spirit has given them permission to speak with you this way,” and continued, “Father, your children have travelled a great distance, and are happy to meet you at the great Council of the sixteen fires.” Following Pottawottama, Little Turtle reiterated the chief’s expressions—that the Miamis were happy to see their father at the capital and thanked the Great Spirit “who has made us both [and] has permitted us to take you by the hand.”

The emphasis on a direct connection between Native visitors and the president was strong enough that even when no productive communication could take place, Natives still had a meeting with the executive, as with the Chickasaws who arrived without interpreters in 1802. The exchange of speeches that constituted such a crucial part of negotiations was not mere show, even as it hewed closely to a common template. Effects could range widely. After listening to the speech of Little Turtle, who spoke for the Miami/Potawatomi delegation in the winter of 1801-02 exhorting against the sale of liquor to the Indians, Jefferson submitted a resolution to Congress to prohibit alcohol sales to the region’s Natives. The Miami chief also complained that certain boundary

405 Unlike the Chickasaw visit in 1802 that departed without seeing the president, the 1802 delegation, though also without an interpreter or passports, did meet with President Jefferson and receive gifts and an escort home. Henry Dearborn to Samuel Mitchell, November 27, 1802, SW IA LS, vol. A, 311-12.
lines had not been drawn. Again, Jefferson took action, authorizing Secretary of War Dearborn to write Gov. William Henry Harrison to have the lines from the Treaty of Greenville drawn, as the delegates requested.\textsuperscript{407} When the Glass headed a deputation of Cherokees in 1801, he and the secretary of war exchanged talks and wampum. The Glass was firm in declaring the Cherokees’ wish not to sell any land. The secretary of war immediately wrote to his commissioners, who had already been sent south to treat with the Cherokees, and ordered them to suspend the part of their orders regarding the boundary line and to “treat the subject [of cessions] with great tenderness” and “not press them on any other subjects than those which relate to roads and settlers thereon.”

Informed so clearly by the Glass of the Cherokee Nation’s disposition, the secretary recalibrated his plans. Instead of requesting lands at the upcoming conference as planned, he asked his commissioners on the ground to “impress upon them the belief that the United States have no desire to purchase any of their lands.”\textsuperscript{408} The gap between aspiration and reality could be large, and while Native diplomats informed and at times directed administrators’ courses of action, they nevertheless rarely achieved their goals in full.

While the exchange of speeches did the majority of the political work, negotiations with the president were an important feature of the culture of diplomacy for they performed the imagined link between the Great Father and his children, as well as situated the particular visit within a longer genealogy of capital visits. When the Creek deputation in 1805, for example, cited in their talks to President Jefferson the “Treaty

with our friend and father Gen[eral] Washington,” they were about calling upon a shared history and using that history to shape present negotiations.\textsuperscript{409}

The tone and language of talks for the president often differed from that of documents of negotiation with the secretary of war or superintendent of Indian Affairs. The speeches between the president and Natives were also the most likely to retain highly Native-coded language. After the formal affair with the president, the nitty-gritty negotiations played out with the secretary of war and later the superintendent of Indian Affairs at the War Office.\textsuperscript{410} Negotiations with those officials were typically more direct and detailed than with the president. Though still deferential, these negotiations were typically formatted as letters, rather than talks, and lacked the platitudes of those directed to the president. Throughout the early republic, general patterns became established for this process and remained the template even as changes began to occur around 1820.

Talks between diplomats, the president, and secretary of war, planted seeds for later change. While Jefferson had “consider[ed] it as fortunate” when the Miamis and Potawatomis made their visit in winter 1801-02 “when our wise men for the sixteen States are collected together in council,” by 1820, federal officials consistently urged Native diplomats to come while Congress was not in session.\textsuperscript{411} Other references to Congress’ role in the early years of capital negotiations were more explicit. In reply to the Shawnee and Delaware deputation later in 1802, Secretary Dearborn explained that “The great Council of the sixteen States now sitting at this place have under consideration the subject of establishing Trading houses in the country of our red brethren, North West of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[409] Talk of McIntosh, a Creek Chief, to the President of U.S., Nov 4, 1805, WD IA LS, vol. B, 157-60.
\item[410] For a full discussion of the personnel structure in the War Department and the role of McKenney, see Viola, \textit{Thomas McKenney}.
\end{footnotes}
the Ohio, and what ever shall be agreed on by the great Council, will be strictly attended to by your Father the President.”412 In 1817, acting Secretary George Graham acknowledged the Creek delegation’s growing impatience as their stay in the capital dragged on without resolution, but figuratively shrugged, “our great council does business slowly.” Again placing the authority with Congress, he informed them “the law which has passed on that subject,” by Congress, only “authorizes the President to apply eighty five thousand dollars to that object.”413 Secretary Calhoun was eager to finish negotiations with a party of Cherokees in 1819, when to speed up the process he advised them “The Session of Congress is drawing to a close, and it is desirable that the treaty should be formed as soon as practicable, so as to have it ratified by the Senate before the adjournment of Congress.”414 These references, accumulating over time, in conjunction with their broader experiences in the capital, acquainted diplomats with congressional authority.415

Though continual visits had created a powerful routine, diplomacy was not static and room remained for adjustment. President Jefferson used the language of friendship from formal talks and his experience with European diplomats as secretary of state to develop a new and symbolic gift for capital diplomats. During Jefferson’s administration, a gold chain was a recurrent gift with symbolic and financial value. This souvenir was rooted in two distinct histories—Iroquoian diplomacy and European diplomacy. Although Jefferson gave his first gold chain to a deputation of Cherokees in 1801, the

415 Visits to see Congress at the Capitol, reading capital newspapers, and interactions with other delegations and capital denizens also may have contributed. Other examples can be found from Creeks’ visit in 1805 (President’s Talk to the Creeks, Nov. 2, 1805, WD IA LS, vol. B, 159).
gesture originated in his term as secretary of state under President Washington. In 1790, prompted by the suggestion that French minister to the United States, Anne César, chevalier de La Luzerne, be presented some token in recognition of his service, Jefferson solicited advice from various correspondents on the customary practices in Europe. President Washington noted the process in his diary, recording that he “Fixed with the Secretary of State on the present which (according to the custom of other Nations) should be made to Diplomatic Characters when they return from the employment in this Country,” the present being “a gold Medal, suspended to a gold Chain--in ordinary to be of the value of about 120 or 130 Guineas.” While some countries gave “a gold Snuff-box set with diamonds,” “300 guineas in Specie,” or “a Medal & Chain … the value of which to be encreas'd by an additional weight in the chain when they wished to mark a distinguished character,” Washington and Jefferson selected a medal and chain. “The Reason why a medal & Chain was fixed upon for the American present,” Washington noted, “is, that the die being once made the Medals could at any time be struck at very little cost, & the Chain made by our own artizans, which (while the first should be retained as a memento) might be converted into Cash.”

For European diplomats, the ability to convert this gift to cash was valued, but it seems that the symbolism was central to the gift when presented to Native diplomats. The language of the Covenant Chain, which originated in Iroquoian diplomacy, permeated all Indian-white relations by the early republic and took physical form in Jefferson’s gold

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Presenting a gold chain to the 1802 deputation, Jefferson expounded on the meaning of the gift: “I send you [the Shawnees and Delawares] by your beloved Chiefs a Chain: it is made of Gold, which will never rust, and I pray the Great Spirit, to assist us in keeping the chain of our friendship (of which this gold chain is meant as an emblem) bright for a long succession of ages.” Over the next several years, Jefferson bequeathed at least four additional gold chains, each time with the same sentiments about national friendship. This symbolic gesture embodied the personal link, explicitly represented in the links of the chain, between the diplomats’ nation and the federal government.

The gold chain was an important addition to the gift-giving repertoire, but it did not displace traditional presents. Along with the gold chain gifted to the Osages in 1804, Jefferson presented the Dog Soldier a medal promising, it “will testify to your people and to all others the esteem we bear you, & the confidence we repose in you.” Gifting medals continued to be a part of capital negotiations throughout the period and is visible through the many portraits of Native diplomats painted in the capital. Charles Bird King painted over one hundred visiting Indians, such as the Iowa, Mahaska, who is portrayed wearing the Monroe medal the president presented to him on his visit in 1824. Others held on to or passed down dated medals to show their close connection with a former

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417 The Covenant Chain began as a pact of peace between the Iroquois Six Nations and Dutch settlers. For its evolution in Iroquois-American diplomacy see Jennings, *Iroquois Diplomacy*; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*.
president, or the long tenure of their relationship with the transitory position of the
president.\footnote{422}

While gold chains and medals symbolically connected the giver and the recipient,
other gifts were more ambiguous, particularly clothing. Even visitors who did not meet
with the president, like women, were granted gifts. New apparel was a typical gift,
consisting typically of a full set of clothes—a hat, jacket, waistcoat, pantaloons or “cloth
equivalent for leggones,” two shirts, two pairs of stockings and two pairs of shoes and a
blanket. Some variation occurred, be it finer hats, the addition of cotton or silk
handkerchiefs, or, as for the Ottawa in 1811, assorted accoutrements including “100
small broaches to each” and “50 larger” as well as pairs of ear bobs, spools of thread and
“1 silver head piece … (for the old Indian).”\footnote{423} On the one hand, while occasional
personal adjustments were made—like the head piece for the old Ottawa—clothing,
whether ready made or in bulk cloth, was a fairly impersonal gift. The gifts to an 1804
delegation of Chickasaws demonstrated additional items that were given—each of the
chiefs was provided “one new Saddle, one Brass kettle, to contain three or four gallons, 2
lbs of powder, four pounds? of lead & one rifle.” They were also granted “goods, to the
value of thirty dollars, in articles suitable for the wear of Indian women, intended as

\footnote{422} For more on the passing down of medals see the conclusion.
\footnote{423} For clothing given see, Eustis to Mason, Oct. 5, 1811, January 23, 1813, March 3, 1813, February 15,
1814, March 10, 1814, November 11, 1814., November 25, 1814, and December 20, 1814, March 3, 1815,
March 11, 1815, March 25, 1815, March 27, 1815, William Crawford to Gen. Mason, December 18, 1815,
November 17, 1815, November 18, 1815 February 7, 1816, George Graham to Gen. Mason, March 23,
1816, Crawford to Thomas McKenney, May 26, 1816, SW IA LS vol. C; Graham to Thomas McKenney,
November 7, 1817, Calhoun to McKenney, December 11, 1817, December 22, 1817, November 26, 1818;
A.J. Dallas to Gen. Mason, June 21, 1815, SW IA LS vol. D; John Johnston to General Mason, March 23,
1812, SW IA LR 1812-13; Calhoun to [], December 16, 1817, SW LR IA 1817 III.
presents for their wives.” Clothing items were not even given by high officials but rather delegated to disbursing agents or interpreters and shop-keepers.

On the other hand, as historian Timothy Shannon has shown, officials who had a more refined understanding of Native diplomacy recognized the value of being seen as “a distributor of Indian goods rather than as a mere supplier of them.” Personally selecting and gifting items attached a deeper significance to the presents themselves as well as making the exchange into a bond between the giver and receiver. By delegating the task of providing presents to disbursing officials, the president lost an opportunity to invest greater significance to his relationship with Native diplomats. Despite this missed opportunity, the incorporation of these gifts as personal sartorial expression could make federally dispensed clothing a highly individual statement of a diplomat’s relationship with the Great Father. As Shannon has shown for earlier periods, context shaped the way clothing was perceived, such that Natives “might invest clothing presented to them at a treaty conference with a ceremonial significance that would merit saving and wearing it again on similar occasions.” This “ideological value helps explain why Indian men were more likely than Indian women to dress in a distinctive fashion when among Europeans.”

While recognizing the necessity of providing presents to visiting delegates, federal officials lamented the high cost of gift-giving. Presents themselves could set back the government thousands of dollars per delegation. When William Hambly conducted several Seminoles to the capital in 1818, he was allotted $2,250 for presents alone—

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424 Henry Dearborn to Nicholas Byers, March 9, 1805, WD IA LS, vol. B, 44.
only three delegates.\footnote{Entry 848, July 22, 1818, Finance Division, Record of Requisitions, 1817-1819 (75.12.1), NARA.} The annual pay for Indian agents at this time averaged $1,388, and a mere $490 for sub-agents. Politically unable to withhold generosity from those diplomats who arrived in the capital, officials attempted to curtail the costs of gifts by restricting delegations from visiting at all. Writing to an agent in 1801, Secretary Dearborn complained of the inconvenience of Native visits asserting he found it “necessary that they should be checked.” Particularly, he felt “hopes of receiving presents, which it is difficult for us to decline realizing, are a powerful inducement for them [Indians] to seize every frivolous pretext for paying such visits; and they are too frequently the sources of vast expense without any resulting good.”\footnote{Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, July 10, 1801, WD 1A LS, vol. A, 87-89.} Of course, Native diplomats did not base their visits on “frivolous pretext” for obtaining presents, but rather real problems they expected the federal government to assist in resolving.

Benevolence was another component of the father/child relationship that was continually negotiated in the capital. In addition to outright presents, the War Department paid the cost of Native visits in regard to lodging, board, and medical expenses. Taverns, inns, hotels, and boarding houses all played host to visiting deputations. Paying for delegations was a way of sanctioning, or withholding permission, for visits, and therefore was a federal articulation of control as well as a display of hospitality. The tension between federal providing and withholding was an additional source of negotiation—implicit in the government’s paying for diplomatic visits was their ability to withhold their hospitality and overturn the existing routine.\footnote{This was a tactic they would employ at various moments in the 1820s and 1830s. See chapter 5.}

Federal financing for Indian delegations was established by law in 1800, providing for the president to defray at government expense “the reasonable expenses of
such Indians as may from time to time visit the seat of government,” including travel, lodging, presents, and other related costs.\textsuperscript{430} Appropriations for these funds were not consistent, and much of the money was redirected from general funds in the Indian budget, particularly those for presents and contingencies.\textsuperscript{431} In addition to the noted costs of travel, hosting Natives in the capital could ring up quite a bill. When initially establishing an appropriation for visits in 1800, the Committee of Ways and Means turned to the secretary of war to determine how much had been spent in the previous two years, which he calculated at $15,178.08, or nearly $4,000 per delegation, three times the average annual salary of an Indian agent.\textsuperscript{432}

With hospitality, the federal government traced a fine line between giving and withholding. When a deputation of nations from the Missouri arrived in 1806, the secretary of war placed a notice in the \textit{National Intelligencer} with a warning and a request. First, he warned citizens that, as the deputation would be present “During the festive season,” and may therefore “be tempted by the accustomed hospitality of the citizens of Washington and George Town, to drink in excess” and that the Indians “are apt, to be troublesome when intoxicated.” He then “requested that the citizens will give them neither wine or strong drink, and that the tavern keepers and retailers will not sell it to them.” Rather than withholding liquor from the delegation entirely, the advertisement noted “A competency[was] being furnished for their use by the government at the Indian house,” the hotel where the delegation lodged.\textsuperscript{433} Government officials acknowledged

\textsuperscript{430} Richard Peters, ed., \textit{The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America} (Boston: Little and Brown, 1845), 2:83, 85,
\textsuperscript{431} For a breakdown of the changes in authorization, see Viola, \textit{Diplomats in Buckskins}, 54-55.
\textsuperscript{432} While this sum did include travel costs, it also covered only four delegations over the two years. An average year had over four delegations. \textit{APS}, vol. v, 1:644.
\textsuperscript{433} \textit{National Intelligencer}, Jan. 1, 1806.
their role in providing hospitality—in this instance with liquor—but also wanted to have full control over the extent of that generosity.

Native diplomats resided most commonly during their time in the capital city in inns or hotels. In Washington, they most frequently stayed at Brown’s or Tennison’s hotels, though occasionally at other establishments.434 Rates at such establishments for most of the period, ranged from about $1.50 to $2.50 per day, including both board and lodging.435 The two Tuscarora’s, Longboard and Cusick, were allotted $139 for “expenses while at the seat of Government and on their Journey home,” and another $48 was allowed to Frederick Cana for “board & lodgings, and which has been allowed by the Secy. Of War.” The two men were also given $200, “being a present to them by the President.”436 Their expenses were paltry in contrast to a party of twelve Delaware, Wyndot, and Seneca the same year that incurred $2,255 in Washington, not including the $550 “allowed for their expenses in returning home.”437

Well aware of the customs of diplomacy, Natives could put pressure on administrators in negotiations by testing the limits of federal generosity. A party of ten Choctaws in 1824 played with the cost of hospitality to wait out their federal hosts in

434 As we will see in chapter 4, once Cherokee delegations began paying their own way they sometimes stayed at boardinghouses in the city rather than hotels. While traveling on tours of other cities, inns/hotels also seemed to be the norm, frequenting Barnum’s in Baltimore. Taverns, however, continued to play some role. While Brown’s and Tennison’s are the most commonly noted, other establishments appear, like Mr. Strothers Tavern, where the 1819 Creek delegation stayed. Many others are not noted at all. William McIntosh to John C. Calhoun, February 14, 1819, SW IA LR, 1819, II.
436 Sec. of War to Sect. of Treasury, December 13, 1817, WD IA LR, 1817 III; Calhoun to Sec. of the Treasury, March 5, 1818, SW IA LR, 1818 III. Cana does not seem to have operated a public house, but he did, for some time, run a grocery in Washington. For the gift of $200, Entry 848, December 11, 1817, Finance Division, Record of Requisitions, 1817-1819, NARA. The government also defrayed $139 for the two Tuscaroras as they passed through Washington on their return home in March 1818.
437 Calhoun to William Crawford, December 24, 1817, SW IA LR, 1817. This may include some of the cost of clothing given to the deputation, but it is unclear. The deputation spent at least a month in the city. It also does not seem to include the $60 spent on a coffin for Silas Armstrong, a delegate who died in the capital (SW IA LR, 1817:3).
hopes of concluding a more satisfactory negotiation. The process led to a nearly three month stay at the capital, a tenure that cost the government over $6,000--$2,000 for lodging, $1,771 for clothing, an astounding $2,149 for liquor, and an assortment of incidental from oysters and brandy ($394.75) to shoe blacking ($75), barbering ($58), and laundry ($25).\footnote{With this sum, the delegation averaged approximately $7.00 per delegate per day, or about $5.00 above the cost of room and board. Expenses of Choctaw Delegation, 1825, SW IA LR, 1825, Choctaw Agency.}

Hospitality extended beyond lodging and board for diplomats; for example medical costs continued to add to the strain on federal coffers. Although the War Office delegated medical care for Indians to the Surgeon General’s office, civilian doctors were more often than not the ones submitting bills to the department for services rendered.\footnote{See Viola, Diplomats in Buckskins, 152-53.} Despite lamentations about high medical bills, not all medical expenses were in response to injuries and ailments contracted in the capital. Shawnees and Delawares thanked the federal government several years later “for sending the Doctor to inoculate some of our young men.”\footnote{Black Hoof to President Jefferson, Feb. 5, 1802, SW IA LS, vol. A, 153.} Whether proactive or reactive, the government absorbed the cost of tending to sick or ailing diplomats.

For Native delegates, their direct relationship with the president was important to conducting negotiations. In 1819, Big Warrior and Tustunuge hopoyo, Creek leaders, sent a speech to introduce the appointed Creek deputation; “To the president my friend & father I send my talk to you & I [ap]pointed six of my men to you the president to see you & settle my buisnes … you will kno[w] that the[y] are strate men of my nation[,] you will take them by the hand as if you see me your self … as if I was telling you my self to the
In this way, diplomats reminded the president of his responsibilities as their Father, and demonstrated their interest in a positive relationship, one that was honest—face-to-face—and friendly—particularly through the language of taking the president by the hand.

Both parties relied heavily on the language of paternalism, which took various forms. Black Hoof, on behalf of the Shawnee and Delaware deputation in 1802 did so by “mention[ing] once more what bad People you have under you,” pointing particularly to an allotment of farm tools that were supposed to be sent to them, which “to our great surprise when we went to Detroit, they were all exchanged for old Blankets and damaged goods,” chastising the president for not keeping his white children in line.442 A Native diplomat could also highlight his nation’s role as the good children who came to the aid of the United States, who were friendly and strove to acculturate in order to request special consideration or to maintain lands. This was the strategy that Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw delegates adopted in the wake of the Red Stick War.443 The capital press also noted this language, describing the Chickasaw delegation in 1816 as being made of “Chiefs and Warriors” who “took an active part in the late war against our combined white and red foes,” and could boast to have “never spilled the blood of a white man, except in war, and then have always taken part with the U.S.”444 In the capital to petition for concessions in 1817, Cherokee delegates positioned their own talk by highlighting their role having “fought for the U. States in the late war.”445 Some

441 Big Warrior and Tustunuge hopoyo to James Monroe, January 22, 1819, SW IA LR, 1819, I.
443 John Blount to Mr. White, December 10, 1827, Apalachicola Agency, 1826-1842, M234, NAB.
444 Daily National Intelligencer, June 10, 1816.
445 Cherokee Deputation to President Monroe, November 22, 1817, WD IA LR, 1817, I.
delegations performed their Indian identity, others assumed an acculturated role, and yet others critiqued the president, but each spoke to the role of child.

Presidential use of Native rhetoric persisted as well. In response to the talks of Black Hoof and Black Beard, Jefferson began his remarks, “my children, Chiefs of the Shawnee Nation,” before noting that he had listened to their words and “considered them well.” He then addressed each grievance delivered in the previous speeches. Madison followed suit. In 1818, he addressed a deputation of Arkansas Cherokees, beginning “My Friends and Children…I am glad to see you. When we are face to face we can understand the wishes and intentions of each other without any danger of mistake.” He then expounded on their relationship: “I have long known your friendship for the white people, and it is my wish to make you and your nation happy.” Monroe and Adams, and at times even Jackson, all continued in this usage.

When the Choctaw leader, Pushmataha, fell ill in Washington on his visit in 1824, he knew his end was upon him. As he prepared for his death with his companions, he requested, “When I am gone, let the big guns be fired over me.” Pushmataha soon died at the capital, and his funeral was a spectacle to behold. In accordance with his wishes, the minute guns on Capitol Hill were fired in his honor, “and from the ground contiguous to the place of internment, there was an immense concourse of citizens, a long train of carriages, cavalry, military, bands of music, the whole procession extending at least a mile in length.” Indeed, the whole city seemed to turn out for the deceased chief, “there were thousands lining the ways, and filling the doors and windows, and then the military

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honors at the grave.” The performance was so impressive that one of the young Choctaws with the party lamented that it had not been he who expired to be interred with such pomp.449

Funerary honors are one way to use benevolence as a tool of negotiation in capital diplomacy. In the winter of 1824-1825, President Monroe made his recommendation to Congress to remove all Indians to the west of the Mississippi. The Choctaws, in the capital for his message, were greatly displeased with this plan. At the same time, War Department officials were trying to negotiate a large cession from the Choctaw delegates, and needed to proceed carefully. The death of Pushmataha was a major blow for the Choctaws, but also to Americans who still remembered his leadership when the Choctaws fought with Andrew Jackson against the Red Stick Creeks in 1814. The grand military funeral for Pushmataha was one way federal officials could perform their appreciation for the friendship and alliance of the Choctaws at a moment when they were also seeking Choctaw cooperation in ceding land and removing west.450

Native leaders adapted to the practices of capital diplomacy in which their delegates engaged throughout the early republic. Some nations, because of the lack of oversight made clear instructions at home regarding what business delegates could and could not conduct at the capital. Several days after arriving in the capital in the winter of 1816, the Cherokee John Lowrey presented President Madison “a duplicate of my instructions for my government & of the other Cherokee Chiefs who accompany me.”451

When the president introduced land sales outside the bounds of the instructions, the

449 McKenney and Hall, History of the Indian Tribes, 1:190-93.
delegates pointed to their inability to negotiate on the subject. They informed the president that in order “to renew the application” for the tract of land “it must be made to our chiefs at their national meeting.” They further explained “perhaps the Cherokee nation may have a certain price for it, if they should be disposed to sell it. But of this, we know not. Our instructions shews that our head chief as well as ourselves are not authorized to dispose of it.” And, with that, they closed discussion of the sale and returned to the issue they were authorized to handle, the running of the line determined in the treaty of Fort Jackson.452 Diplomats found these instructions to be fully binding. Indeed, when forwarding a copy of the instructions to Congress, the secretary of war lamented “from these instructions, they would not consent to deviate.” Several issues the government wished to address and resolve with the delegation would not be attended to at all as they lay outside the purview of the National Council’s instructions.453

Officers at the War Department found the instructions binding Native diplomats to be too restrictive. Already believing that delegations to the capital were costly and often unnecessary, officials found the limitations of the instructions further limited their productivity. Writing to the Chickasaw agent in 1816, Secretary Crawford sent permission for a delegation to “come on” to the capital. But, he cautioned, “should the Chickasaws send on a deputation to Washington, it would be expedient to give them authority to adjust the question while at the seat of government.” Delegations without

452 [Cherokee] Indian Talk, March 12, 1816, SW IA LR, 1816, 1:22-27.
453 William Crawford to George W. Campbell and John Williams, April 4, 1816, WD IA LS, vol. C, 319-20. Campbell and Williams were senators for TN, and interested in a tract of land the delegation would not discuss. Other delegations with instructions referenced include Chickasaw 1816 (William Crawford to [Chickasaws], SW IA LS, vol. C, 395; Creek 1817 (George Graham to Creek Deputation, March 3, 1817, SW IA LS, vol. D, 9-11);
permission to adjust the questions—primarily cessions and boundaries—which concerned the government, would be a costly nuisance. The visit of Tshusick to the federal city demonstrates how routinized Native visits to the capital had become by the 1820s. The tinsmith who discovered the woman warming herself by his furnace directed the cold woman to McKenney’s home, “supposing that Colonel McKenney, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, was bound to provide for all of that race who came to the seat of government.” After being welcomed into McKenney’s home, Tshusick explained, as she warmed by the fire, that she had travelled from Detroit (alone and on foot) to meet the wife of the Great Father. As McKenney interrogated the woman, she convinced him with her tale of woe and hopes

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Sometime in the winter of 1827, an Ojibway woman arrived in the capital, alone and with only the clothes on her back. Calling herself Tshusick, she immediately attracted the interest and good will of the capital community. Soon she became a local celebrity, regaling her new acquaintances with talk of her unyielding quest for civilization through Christianity, which had drawn her to Washington. She also followed the script for Native diplomats to the city, requesting to see the right people, performing the appropriate rituals of gift receiving and prayerful appeal to paternal authority while adopting gendered appeals that demonstrated a grasp of diplomatic protocol. Only after she left did Superintendant McKenney and others sense there was something amiss about the meteoric Tshusick who briefly lit up Washington society.

The visit of Tshusick to the federal city demonstrates how routinized Native visits to the capital had become by the 1820s. The tinsmith who discovered the woman warming herself by his furnace directed the cold woman to McKenney’s home, “supposing that Colonel McKenney, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, was bound to provide for all of that race who came to the seat of government.” After being welcomed into McKenney’s home, Tshusick explained, as she warmed by the fire, that she had travelled from Detroit (alone and on foot) to meet the wife of the Great Father. As McKenney interrogated the woman, she convinced him with her tale of woe and hopes

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for Christian salvation. Her husband had died, Tschuick explained, and she “attributed his
death to the anger of the Great Spirit,” who she believed was “offended with her” for
worshiping in the Indian way rather than the “true religion” of the whites. From the agent
at Mackinaw, Colonel George Boyd, she knew of the Great Father in Washington, so in
the wake of her husband’s death she vowed to “immediately proceed to Washington, to the
sister of Mrs. Boyd, who being the wife of the great father of the white people, would,
she hoped, protect her until she should be properly instructed and baptized.”

McKenney, and all those who heard her tale in Washington, seem to have found
Tshusick a compelling and remarkable woman with an entirely logical goal. McKenney’s
reflections on this Ojibway traveler reinforced the array of expectations even a Native
visitor as exceptional as Tshusick embodied. To him, “it seemed natural that a native
female, capable of acting as this courageous individual had acted, should seek the
protection of a lady who held the highest rank in her nation.” With a decidedly gendered
cast to the image of the Great Father, the idea that a lone Native woman would invest her
hopes in the First Lady—wife of the Great Father—fit squarely with McKenney’s
expectations. If the president was the Great Father for all the Indians, and the individual
for whom Native diplomats (all male) trekked to the capital, why should this Indian
woman not come to see her Great Mother? Tshusick’s quest for civilization—through
Christianity—also corresponded with federal officials’ expectations for Natives in the
capital. For McKenney, “there was something of dignity and much of romance, in the
idea of a savage convert seeking, at the mansion of the chief magistrate, the pure
foundation of the religion which she proposed to espouse, as if unwilling to receive it

455 George Boyd’s wife, Harriet Johnson Boyd, was the sister of Louisa Adams, then the First Lady. Paul C.
from any source meaner than the most pure.” Tshusick’s purported hopes aligned precisely, if uniquely, with that of male diplomats’ expectations of the Great Father. Like them, she presumed a direct relationship could be had with the Great Mother, that her benevolence would protect her and provide civilization, and while diplomats expected adjudication from the Great Father, Tshusick’s hope for baptismal sponsorship from the First Lady alluded to a unique (and perhaps more appropriately feminine?) form of intercession.

Tshusick’s stay in Washington followed the protocols for Native visitors, albeit with certain adjustments for her gender and circumstances. The young woman met all the proper officials. She was “introduced in due form at the presidential mansion, where she was received with great kindness,” and the “families of the secretary of war and other gentlemen, invited and caressed her as an interesting and deserving stranger.” Rather than diplomatic negotiations, as with Native delegates, Tshusick was assisted in fulfilling her religious request. Mr. Gray, the rector of Christ Church in Georgetown worked with her and, impressed with her seemingly preternatural Christian knowledge, supervised her baptism. McKenney made Tshusick comfortable in a hotel “under the care of the hostess,” and provided her with cloth and “other finery” with which to make a new set of clothes. (Figure 4.6) The Adams’ and others heaped more presents on Tshusick when she departed, for herself and to bring back to Mrs. Adams’ relatives in Mackinaw. The government also provided her money for stagecoaches and lodging. Departing from Washington, Tshusick stayed at Barnum’s Hotel in Baltimore where she was entertained as a special guest of Mrs. Barnum, before taking the stage for Frederick. In the process of these social engagements, the city’s residents, McKenney recalled, became quite smitten

with this Indian woman, who was not only “beautiful” but possessed an “unstudied grace,” fluency in English and French, and an air of “high refinement.”\footnote{McKenney and Hall, \textit{History of the Indian Tribes}, 2:122-26. While male visitors were typically given ready articles of clothing, Indian women, when the accompanied delegations were typically provided with cloth, as Tshusick was, sometimes of their own choosing, to make clothing.} Adopting a posture so squarely in line with federal expectations of Native visitors to the capital, and being a compelling woman in her own right, Tshusick became a great favorite of the federal city that winter.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Tshusick_lithograph}
\caption{Tshusick, lithograph from Bird King’s painting. McKenney and Hall, \textit{History of the Indian Tribes}, vol. 1, illustration 13.}
\end{figure}
Only days after her departure from the city, McKenney and other federal officials were shocked to discover that the endearing Indian woman had hoodwinked them. Tshusick was “a sort of female swindler.” Her husband, the scullion at Mr. Boyd’s home, was alive and well and “supporting her absence without leave with the utmost resignation,” according to Governor Cass, whose letter spelled out the subterfuge. Cass was “highly amused at the success of the ladys adventure” on behalf of his friends in Washington, and wryly congratulated them on “the acquisition which had been gained to their social circle.” Tshusick, meanwhile, escaped west laden with presents, ever to elude McKenney. Tshusick’s ruse was successful only because federal officials subscribed so ardently to the notion of a Great Father as a compelling figure. On the other hand, since diplomatic protocols were inflected by Native customs, Tshusick probably found it fairly easy to ingratiate herself—revealing how deeply entrenched such practices were for federal officials and how much they drew from Native idioms. Tshusick’s winter in Washington is a comic, though forceful, example of how Native Americans could manipulate diplomatic language to their own ends.

While the protocols of diplomacy proved durable, American ideas about Native people were in flux. In the 1820s in particular, policy, science, and art each drew on and proliferated an American notion that Native people and indigenous cultures were disappearing. White Americans were ambivalent about the disappearance of the Indian.

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458 McKenney, who traveled to the lakes region to conduct a treaty with the Chippewa subsequently, would chase Tshusick across the region, always a step behind the clever woman. McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes*, 2:126-29.

On the one hand, they encouraged it by trying to civilize or remove Native people to the west. On the other, as expressed in the romantic literature and art of the 1820s and 1830s, they also lamented the supposed passing of Native culture. Various writers and artists, the most familiar being James Fenimore Cooper and George Caitlin, acted on this impetus to record and catalog Native peoples and cultures.460

Around 1820, shifting American perceptions of Native people began to infiltrate diplomacy, a process visually manifested in the War Office itself. The typical location and most traditionally political scene of negotiations in the capital played out between Native delegates and the secretary of war (with his cast of subordinates) within the War Office, located adjacent to the President’s House and the other cabinet buildings. Passing the building from the street, the War Office was simply one of many public buildings in the federal city, and not nearly as notable as the capitol or executive mansion. City guides that referred to exterior architecture left scant space for this public building, mentioning it briefly in conjunction with its fellows, the State Office, Treasury Office, and Navy Office.461 Inside however, Superintendent of Indian Trade (and later of Indian Affairs) Thomas McKenney with the support of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, began in 1817 the creation of an Indian gallery.462

While unimpressed with the War Office’s architecture, some city guides encouraged visitors to explore the remarkable interior of the War Office, a space that

462 Herman J. Viola, Thomas L. McKenney: Architect of America’s Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830 (Chicago: Sage, 1974), 238. McKenney also collected books about Indians, Indian medical knowledge, vocabularies, and American flora and fauna.
impressed American, foreign, and Native visitors. Jonathan Elliot’s 1830 guide to
Washington declared the War Department an important sight because the Indian gallery
made the office of “much interest, perhaps more than any other in the Government.”
Upon, its walls, Elliot noted, are “arrayed, in tasteful order, the likenesses of one hundred
and thirty Indian chiefs, in their native costume.” Each portrait was done from life,
primarily by the Washington artist Charles Bird King. In addition to the expansive
portrait gallery, which covered over 230 square feet of wall space, there were Native
tools, weapons, articles of clothing and specimens of manufacture—baskets, beadwork,
pipes, and other curiosities to capital denizens and visitors.463

Beginning in 1821, the artist Bird King painted scores of Indian visitors, whose
busts and full-length portraits populated the walls, right up to the ceiling, of the Indian
gallery. King’s paintings were not only for the War Office. Diplomats wanted portraits
for themselves and their families. In 1821, King painted 25 portraits—8 were hung in the
War Office, the other 17 were brought home by the Pawnee, Omaha, Kansa, Oto, and
Missouri delegates who sat for them. The portraits taken home by the Creeks in 1825
were smaller than King’s standard 18 by 14 inch busts, in order to be more “convenient
and portable.”464 These paintings were a visual rendering of the routinized protocols of
capital diplomacy. They were gifts, modes of expression (both for whites like Bird King,
but also for Indians who chose how to dress for their portraits) and they became almost
ceremonial over time as the practice became well-known. But, with the emerging
controversy over removal, many came to view these portraits in a different light.

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463 Jonathan Elliot, *Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square Forming the District of Columbia* (Washington, 1830), 165-67. Elliot cites over 130 pictures in his 1830 publication, which were almost entirely done by King. King’s paintings were oil on wood, 18x14 except some larger full-length portraits. For more on the collection, including a library, see chapter 13 in Viola, *Thomas McKenney.*

Natives attended to and changed their visual appearance—choosing to wear, or not, the gifts of clothing from the government, and how to adorn themselves with paint and other accessories—many expressions of which were preserved, in their way, for posterity in the portraits of Charles Bird King. Through King’s portraits, it is possible to see representations of the variety of ways delegates to the capital dressed and presented themselves. Hoowanneka, a Winnebago delegate, visited the capital in 1824. (Figure 4.7) A skilled orator, Hoowanneka addressed the president and the various officials and diplomats “in one of the saloons of the White House” carefully adorned for the occasion with paints, ribbons, armbands on both arms, and various necklaces and medallions, including a newly presented Monroe medal. When he sat for his portrait by King, Hoowanneka adorned himself in the same manner as when he spoke to the president, providing a glimpse of how diplomats presented themselves in their meetings with the Great Father.

465 King was responsible for the vast majority of art representing Native diplomats, though a few others produced works as well. Jonathan Trumbull sketched several Creeks in 1790, George Catlin painted some diplomats who visited the capital during his tours in the west, and Friedrich Pettrich sketched diplomats who visited in 1837.
466 McKenney and Hall, History of the Indian Tribes, 289-90. McKenney notes that Hoowanneka’s portrait was painted in the same attire “in which he presented himself before the President.”
While McKenney may have had the disappearing Indian in mind when he began commissioning paintings of Native diplomats in earnest in 1820, the process of collecting
an Indian Gallery and its impact was not limited to one man’s interpretation. The War Office was, on the one hand, a deeply imperial space. Covered in paintings and artifacts of its ‘red children’ the Indian Gallery can be seen as a massive curio collection of peoples under the imperial federal government. Considered in this light, there could be no true negotiation or balance of power between Natives and officials, and the gallery itself asserted the power of the federal government to control and catalog America’s Native peoples. In this reading too, the War Office was an impersonal space, jumbling side by side on the walls peoples from across the continent.

Visitors to the gallery were not all sympathetic to McKenney’s purpose, particularly as debates over Indian removal roiled in the capital. The English writer, Frances Trollope, critiqued removal in her description of the gallery. In contrast to Elliot and McKenney who supported removal, Trollope found that the “many objects of much interest” in the Indian Office were “a very painful interest” due to the “peculiar circumstances of this most unhappy and ill-used people.” She interpreted the collection, which included “worked muslin and other needlework, some very excellent handwriting,” and “many specimens of their [Indian] ingenuity,” including the “splendid” attire “worn by the chiefs when their portraits were taken” to show how capable the Natives of America were. To Trollope, the gallery demonstrated the injustice of removal.

While Americans and other visitors viewed the gallery in differing, though decidedly ethnocentric ways, the War Office’s Indian gallery was also, and increasingly so, a Native space, and many diplomats did indeed read it as such. Some of the items collected by the War Department were solicited from agents in the field, but others came

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468 Frances Milton Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (London, 1832), 180-81.
from visiting delegates. By contributing their likenesses and personal articles to the collection, Indians further indigenized the War Office as they did with the diplomatic practices of gift giving, oratory, and ceremony. Though McKenney was unsuccessful in obtaining Red Jacket’s red jacket and peace medal, other diplomats contributed to the collection, offering items they wore to the capital. Participating in negotiations in the gallery detracted from the awe of civilization the federal government otherwise sought to impress upon their Native visitors at the same time that it contributed physical and visual manifestation of the archive of diplomatic experience in the capital.

The portraits on the gallery walls produced a catalog of capital diplomats. McKenney frequently commented on delegates’ responses to the gallery that suggest its familiarity. King painted a portrait of the Creek chief, Menawa, on his visit in 1826. (Figure 4.8) During subsequent visits by Creek diplomats, McKenney recorded, they would see the painting and exclaim, “‘Menawa!’ and then, fired by the remembrance of the deed which gained him the name of the Great Warrior, they have gone on to recount them.” The gallery was a visual log of the ambassadors to the capital, and prompted diplomats to recall the engagements of their countrymen at the capital. These connections were emotional, as the shared memories of the late Menawa by Creek delegates indicate. Other recollections were even more personal than those for a fellow countryman. In 1824 Mahaska, found both his deceased mother and father among the portraits on the wall, as well as close friends. Spotting the image of his father, Mahaska expounded “my father was a brave man, and had a big heart, and died an honorable death doing the will of my great father.” Upon seeing his mother’s portrait painted two years earlier however, “he

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469 Viola, Thomas McKenney, 240.
470 McKenney and Hall, History of the Indian Tribes, 1:115. Creek diplomats visited in 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1836, and 1837.
immediately asked to have a copy of it,” and “rejoiced in once more beholding so good a mother.”

The portrait gallery, in this way, served a diplomatic function. For example, when Hoowenneka and the Winnebagos visited the War Office, they were pleased to recognize

Figure 4.8 Lithograph of Menawa from Bird King’s portrait. McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes*, vol. 1, illustration 10.

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471 Mahaska also identified his friends, Shaumonekusee and his wife the Eagle of Delight. In addition to his mother’s portrait, he also requested a copy of that of the Eagle of Delight, also deceased, to bring home to Shaumonekusee. McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes*, 226-28.
many familiar faces, but disappointed that no Winnebagos were included. McKenney petitioned for permission to have several of the delegates painted and five sat for King before they left the city. Under attack by Congress for the cost of the gallery, McKenney pointed out this diplomatic function, writing for the newspaper, “Indians are like other people in many respects—and are not less sensible than we are to marks of respect and attention.” When delegations arrived in the capital to negotiate and saw the images of themselves or past and present leaders, “they see this mark of respect to their people, and respect it.”472 The gallery was more than a hall of curiosities, but rather a way to establish a visual rapport with Native diplomats.

§ § §

All of the various parties involved in capital negotiations contributed to the constellation of practices that constituted the culture of diplomacy. Shifting dynamics of power influenced which practices had staying power and which did not, but no one—not the President, the secretary of war, nor the individual indigenous leader—was able to dictate entirely how formal negotiations would occur. Capital diplomacy was a mutual process, the constant repetition of which entrenched certain protocols. The collective construction of diplomacy was an iterative process that required the contribution of numerous parties.

There was a pressing need to construct a culture of diplomacy in 1790, when Native groups in the Southeast and Northwest proved a major concern for federal officials. But the Creeks were not the only nation that deeply concerned federal officials, and the accommodation of Native protocols initiated with the Creek visit were duplicated and refined in the early 1790s as the capital shifted to Philadelphia. In particular, the use

472 National Intelligencer, May 31, 1828; Viola, Thomas McKenney, 249.
of Native rhetoric, gift-giving, and hospitality continued in form, even if the meaning of (or agenda behind) these actions did not necessarily remain the same. Over the first decades of the nineteenth century, American officials built upon and embellished these practices, from Jefferson’s gold chains to McKenney’s Indian gallery.
Chapter 5:  
“Not the Presidents say so alone but Congress too”: the Expanding Scope of Capital Negotiations, 1820-1837

By the 1820s, Native delegations to the capital had become well aware of the limits of the presidency. Rather than relying on the President and the Secretary of War, Native diplomats increasingly turned to other institutions—most notably Congress—and sought allies among a range of influential whites and even other Indian delegations in the federal capital. They came to recognize that the final determination of treaties, appropriations, and lawmaking resided in Congress. In the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, partly out of desperation and partly owing to growing sophistication, Native emissaries expanded the scope of capital diplomacy.

These years coincided with the second administration of James Monroe, the single tenure of John Quincy Adams, and the notorious administrations of Andrew Jackson. This nineteen-year period witnessed a continual stream of envoys, about five per year—consistent with previous decades. Federal attempts at Indian removal to the territories west of the Mississippi dominated the U.S. government side of negotiations and, while Native diplomats championed a variety of issues for their nations in this period, removal was foremost on their agendas as well. The subject cast a pall over the image of the Great Father.

Native diplomats used the rhetoric of the Great Father, and the president’s failure to fulfill that role, as they explained their new strategies. As federal policy became increasingly focused on Indian removal, federal officials took further steps to control Native envoys—restricting the frequency, timing, and funding for capital negotiations. Doing so, however, impinged on Native expectations of their relationship with the Great
Father, while also providing greater urgency to diplomats’ negotiations as they fought to remain in their homelands or get the best offer for leaving.

Protocols showed less and less deference to Natives over time. The language of the Great Father remained important to negotiations in the capital, but negotiations frequently happened in the Capitol, boardinghouses and hotels, and newspapers in addition to, or in lieu of, the War Office and White House. Ironically, it was increasingly savvy Native diplomats who remolded the culture of diplomacy, removing elements of Native protocol, in their desperate and unavailing quest to resist removal. Native diplomats’ agile manipulation and expansion of capital diplomacy did forestall federal agendas for a decade or more. It also increased the visibility of Native diplomacy in the capital.

Three main experiences were common among deputations that expanded their diplomatic strategies. The most common features of delegations that turned to Congress, strategic allies, or the public in this period was that they were under the threat of removal. Facing immense pressure, these nations’ diplomats diversified their diplomatic practices. Another factor was the duration of an individual nation’s relationship with the U.S.—those with longstanding relations had developed a store of knowledge over the previous decades. This archive of experiences included federal officials’ references to the role of Congress—particularly in ratifying treaties and making appropriations—and visits to the

473 Federal ideas for Indian removal emerged as early as 1803, when the augmentation of United States territory by the Louisiana Purchase made the possibility of relocating eastern Natives a geographical possibility. As president, Jefferson began suggesting to visiting Native delegations the option of exchanging lands in the east for lands west of the Mississippi. Monroe took up the torch of removal during his administration, which acquired particular urgency in the southeast. Not until 1830, under Jackson, was the Indian Removal Bill passed. It was not until 1838, a year after the end of Jackson’s administration and this project, that the Cherokees were finally forcibly removed to Indian Territory. For work that situates this period within a larger history of “removal,” see Stuart Banner, How the Indians Lost Their Land: Law and Power on the Frontier (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), esp. 191-227.
Capitol, which acquainted diplomats with congressional authority. Diplomats could also
draw on broader experiences from capital visits, conversations with officials and citizens
reading capital newspapers, and the rhetoric and protocol of diplomacy. Most of these
deputations included at least one member who was educated in missionary schools,
spoke, and wrote fluent English.\textsuperscript{474} This experience, coupled with the increasing urgency
of diplomatic success in the removal era encouraged ambassadors to pursue new avenues
of redress.

The scope of federal removal policies of the 1820s and 1830s included all Native
nations east of the Mississippi. Indigenous responses varied. Some resisted with
violence—the Seminoles battled the United States throughout the period. In 1832, United
States regulars and militia fought Sac and Fox Natives who resisted removal.\textsuperscript{475} Others,
such as the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Seneca, Ottawa, and Winnebagos resisted through
diplomacy. Resigned to the inevitability of white encroachment, and seeking the best
offer they could get, Stockbridges, Weas, Pottawatomis, Shawnees, Delawares, and
Miamis, as well as minority groups of nations such as the Cherokees removed
voluntarily.\textsuperscript{476} Many of the tribes facing removal, north and south, looked beyond the

\textsuperscript{474} For the education of John Ridge, John Ross, and Elias Boudinot, see Thurman Wilkins, \textit{Cherokee
Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People} (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,
1989), 119-53. For the education of John McDonald (Choctaw), see Herman J. Viola, \textit{Thomas L.
McKenney, Architect of America’s Early Indian Policy, 1816-1830} (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1974), 40-41,
44-46, 127-34. John W. Quinny and Solomon Hendricks, both Stockbridge leaders, were educated by
Quakers at a boarding school in New York. James W. Oberly, \textit{A Nation of Statesmen: The Political Culture
\textsuperscript{475} On the Seminole Wars, see John Missall and Mary Lou Missall, \textit{The Seminole Wars: America’s Longest
Indian Conflict} (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004). For the Sac and Fox, see Donald Jackson,
[1955]), 1-40.
\textsuperscript{476} For the standard treatments of removal, see Anthony Wallace, \textit{The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson
Philanthropy and the American Indian}, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973); Ronald
Satz, \textit{American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975). Many
tribal histories also address individual nations’ experience of removal; for a useful example, see Laurence
Great Father for aid. While nations from the west also sent envoys to the capital in this period, they were both less frequent than eastern nations, and more likely to follow the older script of capital diplomacy, though they too found a new diplomatic landscape in the capital by the 1830s.\textsuperscript{477}

The Cherokee Nation East of the Mississippi provides a clear example of the way experience and frustration combined to induce Native diplomats to look beyond the Great Father in their capital negotiations beginning in the 1820s and more persistently in the 1830s. Because the Cherokees were at the heart of the removal controversy they were the vanguard against it and were most visible to the American public. Several leaders of the Cherokee nation also left copious personal papers, which in conjunction with the federal documents allow a rich exploration of both sides of the diplomatic process that played out in the capital during the 1820s and 1830s.\textsuperscript{478}

Cherokee historiography errs towards a sense of Cherokee exceptionalism, which for this period, is highlighted by the historical dominance of the Cherokee in removal debates.\textsuperscript{479} While the Cherokees were persistent and powerful force in this period, and were perhaps unique in their ability to forestall removal peacefully for so long, the


\textsuperscript{478} Between 1820 and 1837, 83 delegations visited the capital, several of which were combined delegations made up of several different nations. Of these, 56 were made by northern (Seneca, Oneida, Stockbridge/Mohican, Brothertown, and Passamaquoddy) or southern nations (Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole), and 28 by western nations (Osage, Shawnee, Winnebago, Quapaw, Wyandot, Pottawatomi, Sac, Fox, Iowa, Piankashaw, Sioux, Chippewa, Ottawa, Menomonee, Pawnee, Kansa, Missouri, Omaha). Western nations also visited the capital fewer times per nation—the 28 visits were made by 18 different nations (averaging 1.5 visits per nation), while the 56 by northern/southern nations were made by 10 nations (averaging 5.6 visits per nation).

\textsuperscript{479} This includes Ross, Boudinot, Ridge, as well as the newspaper, \textit{The Cherokee Phoenix}.

Cherokees were nevertheless part of a broader story. Delegates from the Seneca, Stockbridge/Mohican, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Passamaquoddy, Shawnee, Wayndot, Ottawa, and Sac and Fox nations also negotiated in the capital. In their efforts to protect and advance their nations, these diplomats diversified their diplomatic strategies in the period after 1820.

Others have focused on the astute political leadership of the Cherokees. Cherokee diplomat and chief, John Ross has been pointed to as the exemplary Native politician, but his endeavors in Washington were not unique. His efforts were part of an increasingly continent-wide phenomenon. Scholars such as Francis Paul Prusha, who have focused on policy, obscure the diplomacy of the Cherokees in the capital during the removal crisis. After noting that “politically astute leaders, generally mixed-bloods who were wise in the ways of the whites, kept delegations in Washington,” Prusha then turns to the public campaign of Jeremiah Evarts and northern whites to explore the protest against the Removal Bill. After the passage of the bill, he explores the legal positions of William Wirt, attorney for the Cherokee, and Chief Justice John Marshall, but not Cherokee participation in capital diplomacy. Cherokee, as well as other Native diplomats, were integral to negotiations in the capital in the era of removal.

Discussions of Indian policy typically center themselves on the administrations of Jefferson or Jackson or hinge at 1830 with the Removal Act. The trajectory of removal policy connects Jefferson’s administration to Jackson’s. However, the culture of

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diplomacy has a different chronology. The Jefferson administration’s diplomacy was strongly pro-Native in character and focused on the executive. Jackson’s presidential stance towards Native diplomats was not a new departure, but followed from changing relations beginning under James Monroe and John Quincy Adams. The 1830 Removal Bill was not the key transition point in capital diplomacy. A closer look at the culture of diplomacy shows that changes in the way federal executives handled Native diplomats began a decade before Jackson’s Removal Bill, and continued in its changed form after the passage of the bill.482 Further, as Native diplomats diversified their diplomatic efforts in the capital, in response to a changing relationship with the executive, Native protocols were abandoned.

Beginning in 1820, Native diplomats turned increasingly towards others in their negotiations in the capital, particularly to Congress, upon recognizing the limits of presidential power. They turned to the legislature, individual allies, and the American public in their attempts to find relief or justice when stymied by the president. By the height of the Removal Crisis under Jackson, the image of the Great Father had been thoroughly undermined. Despite the actual authority Jackson wielded throughout the Removal Crisis, the culture of diplomacy shows the rhetoric between Native diplomats and the president vacillating between the Janus poles of tyranny and impotence.

Tracing these evolving strategies, this chapter begins with the Stockbridges’ initial turn to congress in 1820 and the Cherokees’ in 1824, showing the circumstances that induced experienced diplomats to seek redress by new means. Next, it considers

482 Daniel Usner’s recent article points to some of these issues, particularly the focus on a few administrations’ Indian policy while largely ignoring others. Daniel H. Usner, “‘A Savage Feast they Made of It’: John Adams and the Paradoxical Origins of Federal Indian Policy,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 607-641.
federal administrators’ responses to Native forays to congress and the increasing crackdown against capital visits. The tool diplomats employed to reach out to the legislature was the memorial, and section three focuses on this instrument of diplomacy. Congress was not the only body diplomats turned to as they struggled to resist or handle the threat of removal, and the next section considers the ways diplomats employed individual allies and the American public to try to influence federal officials.

The final section turns to those western delegations whose concerns were not about their own removal, and who had less experience in the capital. Their diplomacy remained centered on the executive. Particularly, this section focuses on the multinational delegations of 1837 and the involvement of capital residents in the formal practice of negotiations.

§ § §

Recognizing the authority of Congress in Indian affairs, Native diplomats turned to the legislature when the president failed to redress their grievances. Diplomats particularly relied on Congress’s role in ratifying treaties, making appropriations, and controlling public lands. The Stockbridges of New York were among the first to bring their claims to the legislature, but over the ensuing decade and a half, a dozen nations would petition Congress through scores of memorials.

Considering removing to Indiana, the Stockbridges requested to visit the capital in 1820 to discuss land. In December, Secretary of War Calhoun wrote back, that the issue “has already been investigated,” and the proposed delegation “could not it is believed effect anything in relation to it by their presence.” The Stockbridge leaders disagreed. They had sent a memorial and a bill to Congress earlier that year with no success.

Believing that their presence at the capital during the Congressional session was necessary to their success, Solomon Hendrick and John Kunkapot proceeded to Washington. Armed with an affidavit from their nation to treat with the president and sell their land claims in Indiana, Hendrick and Kunkapot applied to the executive for aid. But, as the issue at hand related to a treaty between the Delaware and the US that had been ratified by the senate, they also submitted memorials to Congress. The diplomats proposed a bill providing title to the Stockbridge to lands on White river that had been granted them by the Miami and Delaware nations, before those nations had ceded the lands to the United States. Accompanying the bill, they included a description of the Stockbridge-Delaware relationship that called upon “tradition handed down from our ancestors.” 484 In this process, they drew on Native tradition, their regular practice of visiting the president, and a new tactic of appealing to the legislature.

As they had in the past, delegations would continue to approach the president and secretary of war in the familiar routines of the culture of diplomacy. In 1824, Cherokee diplomats used their past experiences in the capital to introduce alternative strategies, like the Stockbridge before them. The delegation, the Cherokees’ 18th such deputation to the federal capital, included John Ross, Elijah Hicks, Major Ridge, and George Lowrey. Each also brought a variety of direct and second-hand experience. 485 Ross had been to the capital twice before, in 1816 and 1819, and may have also been in 1812. Ridge had been with Ross in 1816, and Lowrey had in 1819. Only Hicks was making his first visit.

484 Jacob Kunkapot and Solomon W. Hendrick to John C. Calhoun, February 27, 1821, SW IA LR, 1821:1; H.R. 88, SW LR IA 1821-2.
485 Sources note that Ross’s first was 1816, but one document including his name dates from 1812. Visits including several dozen Cherokees in 1812, 1814 and 1815 have not yielded names, so it is possible that these men had traveled then as well.
After arriving and situating themselves at Tennison’s Hotel early in January 1824, they followed the usual custom of announcing their arrival to the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, and requesting an audience with the president, James Monroe. On this particular visit, the Cherokee National Council directed the delegation to address the adjustment of stolen property claims of Cherokees, the mismanagement of the valuation of Cherokee claims on lands ceded in 1819, the problem of intruders, and a rerunning of a section of the boundary line. The usual round of introductions and negotiations continued in the early weeks of January. After an initial meeting with Monroe that did not cover the particulars of their visit, the delegation addressed Calhoun nearly a week later explaining their intentions and detailing many of the grievances for which they sought redress. For several days missives shuttled back and forth between the Secretary of War and the Cherokees touching each of the objects of the deputation’s mission “excepting that part which has been deemed expedient to communicate directly to the President.”

In keeping with usual practice, the Cherokees presented their particular grievances with deferential language to the Father-president. Ross, Lowrey, Ridge, and Hicks performed their direct and personal relationship with the Great Father as ambassadors, writing on such important national issues “we have thought proper to present them directly before you.” They also followed standard form calling upon Monroe for “justice & redress,” relaying their friendship, and reiterating the relationship

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487 These were the primary issues addressed by the delegation; some other particulars were addressed during the visit. Correspondence to John C. Calhoun, January 13, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:56-7.


of the president and Cherokees. In such a manner, the delegation continued to lay out their particular grievances, against their agent, to the president. Calhoun took issue with this direct appeal, admonishing the delegates, “it is the practice of the Government that all communications requiring the consideration of the President should be submitted to him through the proper Department, and receive his answer through the same medium.” However, the Cherokees had already finished their composition for the president.

Embedded within this familiar rhetoric, however, was a particular request on the president that foreshadows the Cherokee’s turn towards alternative authorities in their quest for “justice & redress.” Asserting the Cherokee nation’s decision not to make further land cessions, the delegation implored, “Father, We would now beg your interposition with Congress in behalf of your red children the Cherokees, so that provision may be made by Law to authorize an adjustment between the United States and the State of Georgia,” in which the Cherokees hoped that Georgia might relinquish its claim to Cherokee lands. The recognition that final authority in Indian matters did not reside in the Father-president, but largely in Congress, was key to Native diplomats’ increasing turn to Congress for redress. Their requests stymied by both the president and secretary of war, the deputation remained in the capital for months in on-going but fruitless negotiations.

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492 Much of the Cherokees’ frustration with Georgia lay in the fact that Georgia claimed Cherokee lands based on and 1802 compact with the United States of which the Cherokees were not a party, thus, while the United States was obligated to Georgia to acquire Cherokee lands for the state, the Cherokees were under no obligation to give those lands to the United States. This, at its most simplistic, formed the source of frustration between the three parties for decades. [Deputation] to James Monroe, January 19, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:59-61.
Long detained and thoroughly frustrated, the Cherokees finally gave up on receiving the president’s “interposition” and went to Congress themselves. On April 15, the Cherokees penned a memorial “to the Senate and House of Representatives” in order “to submit, before your honorable body, a few remarks, which we are bound, (as we believe) to make, under a sense of duty to our nation, as well as to ourselves.”

Three and a half months without help from the president coupled with knowledge of federal legislative power brought the Cherokees to the legislature.

Well informed about Congress during their stay, the Cherokees referred directly to the speeches and writings circulating among that body regarding the question of Cherokee removal. The deputation appealed to honor, civilization, and the Declaration of Independence in their attempt to extract “justice, and the protection of the rights, liberties, and lives, of the Cherokee people.”

Unwilling to cease their taxation of traders in the Cherokee nation at the behest of the secretary of war, the delegation also submitted that issue to Congress. Appealing to Congress did not interrupt the Cherokees’ negotiations with the War Department, and as the months elapsed, the deputation engaged in an ongoing and frustrating correspondence with the newly appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Thomas L. McKenney.

Congress’ ability to resolve the deputation’s various issues proved mixed; Removal remained a thorn for years. Congress did not resolve the issue of taxing traders for the Cherokees on this visit either. But, the negotiations on this visit also turned up an

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493 To the Senate and House of Representatives, April 15, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:76-78.
494 To the Senate and House of Representatives, April 15, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:76-78.
495 [Deputation] to Thomas L. McKenney, April 29, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:80-83.
496 In 1824 the secretary of war reorganized the Indian section of the War Department and appointed a Superintendent of Indian Affairs, first filled by Thomas McKenney. Other appeals to congress, Daily National Intelligencer, February 25, 1825; Jacob Kunkopot and Solomon W. Hendrick to John C. Calhoun, February 27, 1821, SW IA LR, 1821:1; Daily National Intelligencer, February 22 and February 25, 1825.
unratified treaty from 1804. When the Cherokee deputation pressed for the late payment—$5,000 in goods had been paid in 1804 when the land was ceded, but a $1,000 annuity had yet to be received—Calhoun could find no evidence of the treaty. Having spent twenty years waiting for payment, the delegation was prepared and produced their own copy of the treaty, which was verified by Thomas Jefferson, and John McKee, a commissioner for the 1804 treaty and then serving as a Congressman from Alabama. Congress did promptly ratify the dated treaty, confirming for the delegation Congress’ ultimate authority regarding treaties.497 The Cherokees’ foray to Congress in 1824 added a new tool to the kit the nation’s diplomats had been collecting since 1789, one the Cherokees, and these delegates in particular, would turn to again and again in the following decade.

§ § §

By 1820, the president and War Office officials consistently discouraged delegations from attending the capital during sessions of Congress. When delegations continued to visit the capital, and increasingly the Capitol, the president and secretary of war took stronger action than in earlier times. Corresponding with deputations’ attempts to resolve their issues through Congress and other avenues, they began refusing to fund visits to the capital and withholding annuities in a vain attempt to keep diplomats at home.

Federal officials’ efforts to shift the season of Native visits from winter to summer is significant not merely because it suggests that the federal government

497 The problem was only partly solved. Payment remained slow, irking the Cherokees, who also pressed the federal government for interest on the two-decade delay in payments. Troubles also arose from the treaty over if and how to divide payment between the Cherokees (East) and the Arkansas Cherokees. For news of the ratification see [Delegation] to Thomas L. McKenney, May 17, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:88; Pruscha, American Indian Treaties, 111-12.
preferred not to deal with Indian delegates during the busy congressional season, but because it discouraged delegates from coming during sessions of congress just as Indian diplomats were discovering the possibility of using congress to their own advantage. While officials had tried in past to control and limit Native visits to the capital for their expense, attention, and presumed ineffectiveness, around 1820 the language dismissing Native requests changed in character. Requests were increasingly denied for being deemed unnecessary. Unapproved visits were denied funds. Even those visits permitted were subject to the new scheduling refrain not to come while Congress was in session. In 1820 alone the War Office denied or put off visits from the Creeks, Shawnees, and Stockbridges. James Miller, agent to the Arkansas Cherokees, told that nation, “as winter is the most busy season…it would be preferred that such visits should be made in the spring or summer when there is more leisure to attend to them.”\footnote{498 John C. Calhoun to Capt. Jasper Parrish, December 20, 1820; Calhoun to James Miller, November 6, 1822, SW IA LS, vol. E, 43, 353.} Delegations had occasionally been asked to come in the off-season in the past, but now nearly every delegation given permission in this period was ordered to defer to the summer months.

Looking beyond the Great Father was one way for nations to circumvent War Office recommendations to stay at home or pay their own way. When the Stockbridge, in 1820, requested to visit the capital to settle their claim to lands in Indiana, Secretary Calhoun responded “they could not, it is believed, effect any thing in relation to it, by their presence.” Therefore, he concluded, “it is deemed impossible to give them the time they would require, when congress is in session,” so their request was denied. However, if the Stockbridge decided to “send a delegation at this time I shall not oppose it, but it
must be at their own expense.” The Stockbridge considered the options and sent a delegation anyway, in part, perhaps, because they were more interested in Congress than the War Office and president. Having sent a memorial before Congress the previous session that was not yet adjudicated, Jacob Konkopot and Solomon U. Hendrick headed to the capital the following winter. There, to their disappointment, they found the Congress preoccupied with Missouri yet again, and “as Congress will probably rise in the course of few days there is no likelihood of accomplishing anything before that Honr Body.” Only after sensing another session of Congress slipping them by did Konkopot and Hendrick turn to Secretary Calhoun and the president to provide some compensation for their claims. Feeling caught between the branches of government, the Stockbridge delegates opined to the secretary of war “now we are assured nothing can be done. That it was for Congress to settle with us. And they also say that it was for the President to settle with us.” Dedicating their capital efforts towards Congress did not guarantee greater success for delegations, particularly as the legislature was frequently embroiled in other national controversies, especially those linked to slavery.

Federal officials hoped that by withholding hospitality—a key tenet of capital diplomacy—and putting the financial burden of capital envoys on Native nations, they could keep Natives from the capital. Even before the Cherokee’s 1824 delegation arrived at Washington, Secretary Calhoun wrote the Cherokee’s agent condemning the visit. Not

499 Calhoun to Jasper Parrish, December 20, 1820, SW IA LS, vol. E, 43.
500 Jacob Konkopot and Solomon U. Hendrik to John C. Calhoun, February 27, 1821, SW IA LR, 1821, I. Although the Missouri Compromise that had held up their petition in 1820 passed in March of that year, the Missouri question arose again in the 1821 session in response to a clause about free blacks in that state’s constitution.
501 The Missouri Compromise and the Nullification Crisis were both issues that preoccupied the capital far more than Indian affairs in this period, despite the mounting issues of removal. See Robert Pierce Forbes, The Missouri Compromise and Its Aftermath: Slavery & the Meaning of America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 231, 260.
only had the Cherokee nation “not thought proper to conform to the usual practice of informing the government of its wish to send on a deputation to Washington,” which they clearly intended to do, but also because “of the objects to be accomplished by it,” Calhoun was “apprehensive that this nation is becoming disposed to be troublesome.” Explicitly, he cautioned that “if the deputation which they have appointed should come, no part of the expenses will be paid by the government.” The deputation nevertheless presented their bill for expenses during their stay at the capital, a sum totaling $4,343. Calhoun stayed firm. Two years later the Cherokees were still trying to get the government to cover these costs. Ross argued that “the Government of the United States in justice ought to pay the expenses which has been created by its own omission in the non-ratification in due time of the Treaty of 24th Oct[obe]r. 1804.” In doing so, Ross redirected the conversation from Calhoun’s original refusal to pay for the delegation and placed the onus on the government, since it was during the 1824 visit that the delegation had proved that the government failed to follow through its 1804 treaty. Denied funds the following year as well, while attempting to obtain back-interest on the twenty years of late annuities due from the 1804 treaty, Ross again requested payment for the visit on the same grounds. Because the issue at hand was caused by the U.S., Ross argued that hospitality too, was the responsibility of the federal government.

Withholding hospitality did not stop delegations from proceeding to the capital. After Calhoun’s first attempt to stem the flow of Cherokee diplomats by withdrawing financial support in 1824, the eastern Cherokees made another fourteen visits to the capital in just thirteen years. They were indeed in Calhoun’s words, “troublesome.”

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503 For the 1825 trip, Ross gave $1401 as the total expenses. Ross to Thomas L. McKenney, January 31, 1826 in *Papers of John Ross*, 1:110-11.
Chickasaws also sent a delegation in 1824 “at their own expence.”504 The Cherokees and Chickasaws could afford to send delegations at their own cost from the substantial annuities the tribe received from land cessions in previous decades. With an organized central government, especially after the ratification of the Cherokee constitution in 1827, the Cherokee National Council received payments and annuities through their treasurer, and decided how best to handle the finances of the nation. Deputations were costly, but some nations were willing and able to pay.

Thwarted in their attempts to keep diplomats away from the capital, the secretary of war and president intensified their financial pressure. Reporting to the Cherokee Nation in 1831, Chief Ross addressed the new presidential tactic— withholding the Cherokees’ annuities. Pointing out the various strategies of the nation and its diplomats, Ross concluded, “as these measures could not have been effectually adopted without money, our annuity fund has been of great service in carrying them into effect.” Unfortunately the Great Father had turned against his children, for, “the President seeing this & finding himself disappointed and defeated in his policy of removing us west of the Mississippi by Treaty, has determined to withhold our annuity from the proper authorities.” Indeed, rather than refuse the annuities, which were guaranteed to the Cherokees, the federal administration decided to pay out the annuity to all the individuals of the Cherokee Nation, rather than to the Cherokee government. This strategy would have amounted to less than a dollar per person, and would have required Cherokees to travel long distances to the agency to receive it. Furthermore, it would bankrupt the Cherokee Council’s coffers. This was, of course, the point.505

504 *Daily National Intelligencer*, January 5, 1825.
Without funds the Cherokees could no longer afford to attend the capital, much less pay attorneys or run their printing press. The ruse was entirely transparent. Ross declared that the “object of the President is unfolded & made too plain to be misunderstood.” The intention was “to create divisions among ourselves, break down our government, our press & our treasury, that our cries may not be heard abroad; that we may be deprived of the means of sending delegations to Washington City to make known our grievances before Congress.”

This hurdle too, failed to impede the Cherokees. Indeed, the maneuver became yet another of the “particulars in the conduct of the Executive” included in yet another memorial to Congress. But the question of funding visits constituted only one aspect, though a particularly visible one, of the larger contest over the frequency and meaning of Native delegations to the capital.

Not only was the Great Father failing to protect and defend his Native children, Jackson also threatened the Natives’ ability to engage in capital diplomacy. Having a personal relationship with the Great Father had been an important element to the father-children relationship in the early republic. Upon returning from the capital in 1831, the delegation told their fellow Cherokees that Jackson had thwarted their attempts at conversation. Having put their concerns to the President and “after remaining in a state of suspense for a long time,” the secretary of war informed them, “that no reply would be given by the President to their communication,” a policy that chief, and veteran diplomat, John Ross found “astonishing” and “unjust.” As a direct result, the deputation was “induced to draw up & lay before the Congress a Memorial.” With no word from the president, the delegates instead prayed “that measures may be taken [by Congress] for the

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506 To the Cherokees, April 14, 1831, in Papers of John Ross, 1:215-219.
507 Memorial to the Senate and House of Representatives, May 17, 1834, in Papers of John Ross, 1:290-92.
relief of our sufferings.” Though Congress was too busy to fully address their grievances, their memorials did seem to have some effect, as, according to Ross, the number of “friends to the Indian cause” in Congress was increasing.\(^{508}\)

Jackson continued to plead impotence: his reply to the Cherokee avowed “all right of interference with the question of our [Cherokee] political condition and rights.”\(^{509}\)

Facing an obstinate, rather than benevolent, Great Father, the rest of the Cherokees’ visit was invested in drafting a succession of memorials to Congress. To that body they lamented that they had “appealed to the Executive of the United States to protect these rights according to obligations of treaties and the injunctions of the laws.” Instead, “having failed in their efforts to obtain relief elsewhere, your memorialists now appeal to Congress.”\(^{510}\) Even as he declared impotence, the President was, in fact, taking measures to regain control over Native diplomacy.

Not all Native nations persisted in the face of federal refusals to fund delegations. In 1832, the Wyandots faced a dilemma. Unwilling to sign a treaty for removal at home, they considered visiting the capital. The secretary of war made it clear though that a Wyandot delegation “must pay their own expenses.” Only if a visit resulted in a signed removal treaty “will the Government pay the expenses of their visit.” Unwilling either to remove or pay the cost of an unsponsored deputation, the Wyandots stayed home.\(^{511}\) The same year the Osages’ request to visit the capital was flatly denied. Secretary Cass told the Osages that, “as you live a great way off, and it would take you a long time to come


\(^{509}\) [Deputation] to Andrew Jackson, March 28, 1834, in *Papers of John Ross*, 1:282-84.

\(^{510}\) For memorials see John Sergeant Papers, box 4, folder 11, HSP. For further examples of Jackson’s unwillingness to communicate see [Delegation] to Andrew Jackson, January 23, 1835; [Delegation] to Lewis Cass, February 14, 1835, in *Papers of John Ross*, 1:317-18, 321-23.

\(^{511}\) Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins*, 55.
here, and your journey would be attended with much trouble and great expense, [the
Great Father] thinks it best for you to remain at home.”512 The Osages sent no delegation.

§ § §

In the ensuing decade, those delegations that did visit the capital consistently
penned memorials for the legislature in their negotiations, particularly in regard to their
role in ratifying treaties. Members of 12 different nations presented at least 49 memorials
to Congress between 1820 and 1837.513 The issues addressed by diplomats in their
petitions were wide-ranging and unique to each nation’s needs, but a comparison of
extant memorials shows certain similarities in the language of these documents. Native
rhetoric was not present in the petitions to congress the way it was in interactions with the
president. These instruments were not written as talks, but were crafted to highlight
Natives’ understanding of and claims to U.S. democracy.

The memorial of a Choctaw delegation in 1825 is typical in its deference to
congress, assertion of Indian advancement, and the prominence of the language of
civilization. Like many, it also referenced the Declaration of Independence and its
principals. James McDonald, who had been educated in the capital under the supervision
of the War Office and trained as a lawyer penned the deputation’s memorial. McDonald
began by deferring to congress, explaining “you are an assembly which we have been
taught to consider the most august in the world.”514 Likewise, the memorial emphasized
civilization and acculturation. The Choctaw referred to “the schools and religious

512 Lewis Cass to Pahaska, May 28, 1832, Samuel C. Stambaugh Papers, folder 7, HSP.
513 These numbers only include memorials on behalf of Native nations. Petitions of individuals for land or
property restitution are not included. Memorials increased over the period, and in the years following 1837
continued to proliferate.
514 For deference to Congress see also the Creek memorial of Feb 3, 1830 and various Cherokee memorials
in John Sergeant Papers, folders 11 and 14, HSP.
institutions which have been established among us” as evidence of their “become[ing] like white men.” In a clever maneuver, McDonald wrote, “the theory of your Government is, justice and good faith to all men. You will not submit to injury from one party because it is powerful; nor will you oppress another because it is week,” the Choctaws, impressed by these assertions of liberty expressed their confidence that their “rights will be respected.” Having thus put the burden of philanthropy on his audience, McDonald got to the heart of his petition asking one of the great questions of the removal era, “What will you do with those who remain,” and requesting that non-emigrating Choctaws have full citizenship available to them. Additional delegations, from the Choctaws and other nations, would also rely on these refrains of Native advancement and American liberty and equality in presenting their grievances to Congress.

At the same time the Choctaws were petitioning Congress, the Cherokees Ross, Lowrey, and Hicks were back in Washington following up on the previous year’s negotiations. In 1819, the Cherokee National Council passed a law which charged non-Cherokee traders and peddlers a tax of $80 for the right to trade within the nation. Violators were charged $200. White traders who refused to pay the tax or fine complained of the law to the secretary of war after Cherokees seized goods from the traders to cover the cost of their fines. For federal officials, the traders’ complaints raised the question of whether the Cherokee courts had the right to fine white traders under Cherokee laws. After reminding President Adams of their expectations of the president, the delegation diversified their diplomatic strategy. Holding out for assistance from Congress on the question of taxing traders, the delegation refused to refund the

515 Daily National Intelligencer, February 25, 1825.
517 McLoughlin, Cherokee Renascence, 319-25.
moneys McKenney required of them.\footnote{[Delegation] to Thomas L. McKenney, February 28, 1825, in Papers of John Ross, 1:99-101. See also the letters of the delegation from February 2 and 21, 1825, in Papers of John Ross, 1:97-98.} The superintendent tried to deter diplomats from turning to Congress. Writing that they held an “erroneous conception” that Congress could decide on the issue, the secretary of war admonished the delegation that he “never considered your memorial to Congress in the light of an appeal.”\footnote{Thomas L. McKenney to Ross, George Lowrey, and Elijah Hicks, March 1, 1825, in Papers of John Ross, 1:101-02.} Ultimately, it was the attorney general who ruled on the Cherokee’s ability to tax traders, declaring in 1824, after their memorial to Congress, that they did not have the right.

Despite these discouragements, delegations continued to direct memorials to Congress. After sending two to the legislature as part of a delegation in 1829, John Ross assured the Cherokee people that he did not believe Georgia would extend her laws over the Cherokees as the state threatened to do because “the Genl. Govt. has too much respect for the Treaties to let them be violated.” Tellingly, he added, “it is not the Presidents say so alone but Congress too.” Accordingly, the delegation of 1829 had “given up our papers to them and our objections to the conduct of Georgia, from the Treaties, and our papers were presented and laid before Congress, and laid on the Table and probably will be taken up nex[t] Congress.”\footnote{The 1829 delegation included John Ross, Edward Gunter, Richard Taylor, and William S. Coodey. They sent one memorial to the House and another to both the House and Senate combined; [Delegation] to the House of Representatives, February 10, 1829; [Delegation] to the Senate and House of Representatives, February 27, 1829, John Ross and George Lowrey to the Cherokee People, [July 17], 1829, in Papers of John Ross, 1:151-52, 154-57, 166.} By summer of 1829, and the beginning of Andrew Jackson’s administration as President, the Cherokee diplomats vested more of their hopes in Congress than the Great Father.

Native nations began including appeals to Congress in their instructions to capital diplomats. The Cherokee National Council was regularly counseling their deputations to
turn to Congress by 1830. John Ross, as elected Chief of the Cherokee nation, directed George Lowrey, William Hicks (son of former delegate Elijah Hicks), Lewis Ross, Richard Taylor, Joseph Vann, and William S. Coodey, a party including several seasoned diplomats, how to proceed when they arrived at Washington in early 1830.\(^{521}\) The delegation was to “report your arrival thro’ the War Department to the President [Andrew Jackson]” to address the “leading objects of your visit.” Then, they should turn their attentions to Congress. Ross’s instructions provided a memorial from the Cherokee General Council to Congress as well as assorted documents and memorials from prior delegations. He further tasked the delegation to “draw up in behalf of the nation and present before Congress a memorial” requesting to the legislature to refund moneys to the nation that were withheld by the secretary of war on account of the ongoing struggle over taxing traders. Included with the memorial were copies of the relevant correspondence to settle the issue.\(^{522}\) In succeeding years, the Cherokee Council would continue to direct diplomats to Congress.\(^{523}\)

The failure of the Father-president to act on the Natives’ behalf corresponded to the increased petitioning of Congress to secure protection and arbitration. Through repeated negotiations in the capital, diplomats became versed enough to engage independently with other spheres of Washington politics. They did this by utilizing other branches of the federal government when the president failed to redress their grievances.

\(^{521}\) The party was selected and instructed in late 1829, but would not arrive in the capital until 1830.


\(^{523}\) Instructions for delegations continued to explicitly point to Congressional engagement. For example, the delegation appointed in the fall of 1830 was instructed “to attend to the business of this nation at the seat of the General Government during the session of the approaching Congress…you will without loss of time, lay a memorial before both Houses of Congress praying for protection & relief.” John Ross to Richard Taylor, John Ridge, and William S. Coodey, November 19, 1830; John Ross to William Wirt, November 11, 1831; John Ross to John Martin, John Ridge, and William S. Coodey, December 1, 1831, in *Papers of John Ross*, 1:206-07, 231, 232-33.
When Georgia extended state jurisdiction over the Cherokees in 1830, Jackson’s diplomatic stance was to claim impotence and the idea of the “Great Father” reached its nadir. Writing to the Cherokee Agent after the return of the 1830 delegation, John Ross articulated his frustration at the failings of the supposed Great Father. Ross wrote, with some irony, that while “it is pleasing to be informed that the ‘President seeks not to oppress or drive us, and that he feels for us as a Father feels for his children, and is deeply solicitous for our welfare,’” those words rang hollow. More importantly, Ross explained, “we are grieved to hear him say that he has no power to interfere” with the states’ power. Ross expressed disbelief that “the General Government will withdraw their protection and abandon us,” when the Cherokees had upheld their role as children to the Great Father.”

Ross honed-in on the ethic of mutuality that had long undergirded capital diplomacy and the ideology of the Great Father. Now it was time for the Great Father to stop pleading his inability or unwillingness to assist the Cherokees. Fatherly duty required Jackson to intercede and protect his Native children.

Petitioning the Senate and House of Representatives, Natives both vented their frustrations and deferred to the promise of American diplomacy in foundational U.S. texts. The Cherokees led their memorial in 1834 by asking “for protection of the rights of your memorialists and redress of their grievances,” based on their rights were “stipulated by numerous solemn treaties which guaranteed to them protection, and guarded, as they supposed, by laws enacted by Congress.” The Cherokees used the language of civilization to appeal to Congress: “happy under the parental guardianship of the United States, they [the Cherokees] applied themselves assiduously and successfully to learn the

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525 [Delegation] to Andrew Jackson, March 12, 1834, in Papers of John Ross, 1:277-79.
lessons of civilization and peace.” In short, the Cherokees became civilized at the behest of the United States, internalizing what had been “taught to them.” Having met these expectations, the memorialists pointed to the injustice of their sufferings, and to the “cupidity” of Georgians who were “seeking to force and by every variety of oppression and wrong to expel them from their lands and their homes.”

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At the same time that delegations turned to Congress to fulfill the perceived failings of the Great Father, they also began to use other strategies—one such tactic was to seek out powerful or at least sympathetic allies. Through their diplomacy in the capital, Native diplomats made connections with individuals who they could turn to for aid. As nations faced government obstinacy in the era of removal, diplomats reached out to individuals within Congress and among sympathetic lawyers, editors, foreign diplomats, missionaries, and others.

The Cherokees acquired a number of useful and important allies during the 1820s and 1830s through their visits to the capital. William Wirt was attorney general from 1817 to 1829, a position that brought him into communication with the Cherokee and their concerns. Indeed, the Cherokees had come to know Wirt when he decided against their right to tax traders in the 1820s. Under increased pressure from Georgia and the federal government to submit to removal, the Cherokee National Council instructed their deputation to Washington in 1830 that they were “authorized by law to employ a counsel or counsels to aid you in any business for the benefit of the nation.” Their congressional allies connected the deputation with Wirt who recently retired as attorney

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526 Memorial to the Senate and House of Representatives, May 17, 1834, in Papers of John Ross, 1:290-92.
527 John Ross to George Lowrey, William Hicks, Lewis Ross, Richard Taylor, Joseph Vann, and William S. Coodey, November 27, 1829, in Papers of John Ross, 1:177-79.
general to his home in Baltimore. They provided him with the necessary documents and put him in contact with Chief Ross. On the Cherokees’ side this time, it was on the advice and counsel of Wirt that the delegates first considered the idea of bringing a case before the Supreme Court.

Through their connection with Wirt, the Cherokees also enlisted a passel of additional lawyer allies, including John Sergeant, Horace Binney, and James Kent, men with whom they were connected through their growing capital network. With Wirt’s guidance, the Cherokees began their path to the Supreme Court with the case of George Tassels, issuing a writ of error. While this initial effort was unsuccessful, Wirt and the Cherokees persisted, turning next to an attempt to use an injunction to stop Georgia from executing its Indian code. Though sympathetic, the court’s decision did not allow for the injunction. With Georgia’s extension of law, including the prohibition against whites residing in the Cherokee areas of the state, the Cherokees, through the arrest of missionaries Samuel Worcester and Dr. Elizur Butler, got another shot at using the courts for vindication. The decision in this case vindicated the Cherokees, but to little effect.

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528 William Wirt to John Ross, June 4, 1830, in Papers of John Ross, 1:189-90.
531 Wilkins, Cherokee Tragedy, 216-18.
Jackson and his administration flouted Judge Marshall’s decision and proceeded with removal.532

During their often long stays in the capital, delegates sought to create alliances with individual congressmen.533 Legislators were useful allies not, per se, for their votes on particular issues, but for introducing issues on the floor. Twenty-five different legislators, in addition to the vice president (in the Senate) and the speaker (in the House) advanced Native memorials in Congress. Because Natives were not citizens, they were also not constituents of any legislator. They needed to cultivate congressional allies willing to bring their memorials and defend them in debate. Nations who sought assistance with removal were more likely to find local allies than those who fought removal. In their quest to secure lands in Wisconsin for removal to Green Bay, the New York Indians (Senecas, Oneidas, Stockbridges, and Brothertowns) had New York congressmen introduce their memorials. Similarly, Wyandot memorialists, complaining that a promised road had not been constructed, induced the Ohio representative to bring their memorial before Congress.534

State delegations were often not supportive of the Natives who lived within their bounds and were not only unhelpful in introducing memorials but downright antagonistic. With the Georgia delegation to congress bringing memorials against the Cherokee, the Cherokee diplomats were forced to look further afield for allies. Deputed to the capital in the winter of 1831-32, John Ridge and Elias Boudinot met with Kentucky Senator Henry

532 McLoughlin, Cherokee Renascence, 439-47, 166-68.
533 Other nations who created allies with congressmen include the Stockbridge and Mohicans with Henry R. Storrs of NY (Henry R. Storrs to President, February 12, 1821, SW IA LR, 1821:2) and the Creeks with Andrew Stevenson of Virginia; H.R. Doc. 219 (1828).
Clay to obtain his “friendship and assistance” in the Senate. Clay would introduce two Cherokee memorials in the next several years. Delegates also conferred with representatives from Tennessee, Luke Lea and James Sandefer. While these men did not bring memorials for the Cherokee, Sandefer would later do so for the Choctaw. Another ally cultivated by them was the Tennessee congressman David “Davy” Crockett. Eventually, legislators from eight different states—mostly in the mid-Atlantic and New England—would introduce Cherokee memorials. The involved parties solidified and publicized these relationships in various ways. For his support, the delegates in 1830 presented Theodore Frelinghuysen, Senator from New Jersey, “an elegant Wampum Belt” and a letter of gratitude, all which was publicized in the Daily National Intelligencer.

These meetings occurred outside governmental offices. Some took place in the boardinghouses of the city where congressmen lived during the legislative session, or in the hotels or boardinghouses where the delegations themselves resided. Social events were another opportunity for diplomats to make introductions and create public interest. Whether at balls, crushes, or more intimate gatherings—for example, John Ridge taking

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535 John Martin and John Ridge [to John Ross], December 28, 1831, in Papers of John Ross, 1:234.  
536 John Ross to Andrew Jackson, March 12, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:279-80.  
537 John Ross to David Crockett, January 13, 1831, in Papers of John Ross, 1:210-12.  
539 Cherokees had utilized that paper in the past for publicity. Daily National Intelligencer, June 4, 1830.  
540 For a detailed account of meeting in a boardinghouse, see John Ross to William H. Underwood, June 22, 1824, in Papers of John Ross, 1:296-98, which details Ross’ visit to meet Judge Augustin S. Clayton. On boardinghouse culture, see Wendy Gambrer, The Boardinghouse in Nineteenth Century America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).
breakfast with the author Catharine Maria Sedgwick—Natives were constant ambassadors for their nations.\textsuperscript{541}

Capital visits also provided opportunities for Native diplomats to communicate and exchange strategies and ideas with other Native delegates in the capital. Experience was shared directly between nations, as in 1825, when John Ridge and David Vann, both Cherokees, traveled to Washington with a Creek delegation. There, the literate Cherokees served as secretaries to the Creeks, but also advisors.\textsuperscript{542} Finding themselves all at the capital facing similar issues in the winter of 1831, deputations from the Iroquois, Quapaw, Choctaw, and Creek nations came together to observe a day of fasting and humiliation—a moment of solidarity in their struggles with the federal government. In the long day they spent together in their hotels, as well as the rest of their stays, these men shared their experiences, strategies, and small triumphs.\textsuperscript{543} Because there were typically several delegations each year, despite the government’s best efforts, the overlap in these delegations was frequent. Finding themselves both in the city in 1834, the Seneca delegation and the Cherokees East exchanged letters, and conversation, in which they verified their friendship as “red Brethren,” and commiserated together regarding their denigrated status as Indians in the American republic.\textsuperscript{544} The 1836 members of the Cherokee deputation took it upon themselves to visit delegates of the Chippewa when the


\textsuperscript{542} Wilkins, \textit{Cherokee Tragedy}, 154-85.

\textsuperscript{543} Calvin Colton, \textit{Tour of the American Lakes, and Among the Indians of the North-West Territory, in 1830, Disclosing the Character and Prospects of the Indian Race} (London: Westley and Davis, 1833), 2:204-10; Wilkins, \textit{Cherokee Tragedy}, 221.

latter arrived in the city. Their meeting was followed by talks of friendship and good will from both nations.\footnote{The Globe, May 28, 1836; Daily National Intelligencer, May 26, 1836; United States’ Telegraph, May 27, 1836.}

Delegations in the capital were not always natural allies; encounters were sometimes more terse than friendly when competing delegations overlapped in the capital. Removal was divisive for Native communities, and throughout the removal period nations were divided into factions. The Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws all sent competing or divided delegations.\footnote{In 1824, both the Cherokees and Arkansas Cherokees visited the capital with differing agendas. This marked the first instance in which explicitly competing delegations arrived from the same nation.} An observer of the Creek visits in 1825 and 1826 noted their sartorial differences: “the black scarfs and plain garb of the friendly chiefs, form a striking contrast with the military habiliments of the hostile party.” Both parties, however, impressed the observer with their character, though only the “hostile” anti-removal party provided him with “a rich feast of Nature’s eloquence.”\footnote{Richmond Enquirer, Jan. 24, 1826. In 1832, one party of Chickasaws, under Levi Colbert, departed the nation in secret to protest a recent treaty. Upon discovery of their plans, the Chickasaw agent, with a party of delegates supporting the treaty also set out of Washington. The main body of the Cherokees were persistent in holding out against removal until 1838, though other Cherokees were among the first to take Jefferson’s offers and begin moving west, dividing the nation eventually into three locales and bodies—the Cherokees, or Cherokees East, who resisted removal from their territory primarily in the state of Georgia; the Arkansas Cherokees, who had begun moving west under Jefferson; and, eventually, the Western Cherokees, who removed from Arkansas in 1828 to Indian Territory. It was not until 1838, a year after the end of Jackson’s administration and this project, that the Cherokees East were finally forcibly removed to Indian Territory. All three bodies sent delegations to the capital, frequently overlapping in time and pursuing contradictory ends.}

As the removal crisis continued to escalate, delegates increasingly found themselves seeking productive alliances. On behalf of the frazzled but well experienced Cherokee delegation of 1835, John Ross began to look outside the United States for solutions. Having had an introduction to the well-respected Prussian ambassador, Friedrich Ludwig Von Roenne, Ross relied on him in turn to introduce him to the Mexican charge d’affairs, Joaquin Maria del Castillo y Lanzas. As he resided not in
Washington, but in Philadelphia, he and Ross had never before met. Once introduced by Baron Roenne, Ross began a correspondence with Lanzas. The dialogue was fruitful enough that the Cherokee diplomat visited Philadelphia upon his departure from the capital for a personal visit with Lanzas, who he hoped might facilitate a Cherokee removal to Mexico.\textsuperscript{548} While nothing came of this meeting, it does highlight the extent to which Cherokee, and other Native diplomats’, diplomatic strategies were expanding beyond the Great Father.

§ § §

While expanding their tactics to include memorials and capital allies, Native diplomats also turned to the American public. Capital newspapers were particularly useful tools in appealing to American citizens for support. While newspapers had long reported on the arrival, and at times the activities, of capital delegations, it was in the 1820s and 1830s that Natives themselves began using the press to air their grievances and/or cultivate sympathy.

When they initially turned to Congress in 1824, the Cherokees also began to make direct appeals to the American public. Papers all over the country took an interest in the Cherokee question in 1824, and the delegation was deeply insulted when papers republished the policy position of the Georgia congressional delegation. Both the Georgia delegation to Congress and Governor Troup attacked the president for not obtaining Cherokee lands and argued that the National Council’s decision not to sell their lands was

\textsuperscript{548} The 1835 felt the impossibility of their situation, but also distrusted any removal proposals that would set them up for similar troubles in the future. The delegation, through Ross, seemed to believe that one option might be removal out of the United States entirely and establishing a Cherokee colony in Mexico. They believed that other removed southeastern tribes might join them in a flourishing Native civilization. John Ross to Friedrich Ludwig von Roenne, March 5, 1835; John Ross to Joaquin Maria del Castillo y Lanzas, March 22, 1835, in \textit{Papers of John Ross}, 1:1:330, 334-36.
foisted on them “from the polluted lips of outcasts and vagabonds.” Whites, not Natives, were controlling the diplomats in the capital the Georgians accused.\textsuperscript{549} The four Cherokees then in the capital decided it was time to clear their name publicly. Writing to the publishers of the \textit{Daily National Intelligencer}, the delegates addressed the Georgia charge that their correspondence with the government “was never written, or dictated by an Indian.” With great force and eloquence, the deputation informed the editors “we cannot in justice allow it to pass . . . without a flat contradiction.”\textsuperscript{550} The editors of the \textit{Daily National Intelligencer}, Gales and Seaton, did not publish the men’s letter, but several days later they did print another item, the delegation’s memorial to congress in full.\textsuperscript{551}

That same year, the Creeks, meeting in council in the Creek nation to discuss the possibility of removal resolved “that a copy of this [council] be transmitted to some editor of the public newspapers in the United States for publication.” The chiefs then rejected removal, “confiding in the magnanimous disposition of the citizens of the United States, to render justice” in their cause. The document was sent to the press, and was published in the capital just over a month later.\textsuperscript{552}

To expand their own presence in print, in 1826, John Ridge and Elias Boudinot left the rest of the Cherokee delegation in Washington and set out for a civilization tour of a new sort. Ridge and Boudinot, cousins, were both educated in American schools, and literate and fluent in English. By 1825, the Cherokee government was bent on obtaining a printing press to publish their own paper and materials, and they hoped to obtain types in

\textsuperscript{549} G.M. Troup to J.C. Calhoun, February 28, 1824 and Georgia Delegation in Congress to the President of the United States, March 10, 1824, \textit{ASP}, 2:475-77.
\textsuperscript{551} \textit{Daily National Intelligencer}, May 1, 1824.
\textsuperscript{552} \textit{Daily National Intelligencer}, Dec. 1, 1824.
the Cherokee syllabary as well as English. To obtain funds, Boudinot and Ridge toured America’s eastern cities to develop support—civic and financial.553

The Cherokees succeeded in reaching a wide audience when their own Cherokee Phoenix was launched beginning in 1828. But, they continued to utilize papers in the capital region to bring their cause to the public.554 As editor of the Cherokee Phoenix, Boudinot worked to expand not only the circulation of the paper, but also reciprocal connections with other editors throughout the country. It was not unusual then, to have items from the Cherokee Phoenix reprinted in capital papers like the Daily National Intelligencer, including orders for Cherokee delegations and Cherokee speeches and letters.555 Only a few years into the paper’s run, Chief Ross noted that “the wide circulation of the Cherokee Phoenix throughout the United States, [has] had a very salutary & happy effect in counteracting the misrepresentations which are fabricated against us for the purpose of aiding the unjust policy of our oppressors, by enlightening the great mass of the people of the United States upon the Indian Cause.”556

The diplomats who expanded the diplomatic script in the 1820s and 1830s drew on their personal and national experiences in the federal capital, as well as the experience of other Native nations. The articles published in the Cherokee Phoenix provide a unique glimpse into the diplomatic annals that Native ambassadors accumulated and communicated to their countrymen. Among the editorials, news, and miscellaneous

553 Both began their education at the Spring Place mission school, then continued at the American Board school in Cornwall, Connecticut. For more on Spring Place, Ridge, and other boarding schools in this period, see John Demos, The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic (New York: Knopf, 2014), 143-206. On Boudinot, see Theda Perdue, ed., Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).
554 For readership and circulation of the Cherokee Phoenix see Perdue, Cherokee Editor, 16-17.
555 For one instance of this, see Daily National Intelligencer, Nov. 7, 1829.
556 To the Cherokees, April 14, 1831, in Papers of John Ross, 1:215-219.
articles of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, editor Elias Boudinot included a wide range of pieces detailing capital negotiations.

Boudinot did far more than publish news of ongoing or recent Cherokee deputations to the capital. News on current negotiations was reported in detail. But, readers of the *Cherokee Phoenix* also found pieces that printed “the entire speeches of the Cherokees, the Secretary of War, and Gen. Washington” that were recorded “in a book, presented to the Cherokees by Washington, and signed with his own hand” during a visit to Philadelphia in 1791-1792. The full account of this visit was given over several months, informing readers of past speeches and performances of diplomacy.

The circulation of knowledge in the *Cherokee Phoenix* was not limited to the Cherokee nation. From the beginning of the paper’s run, Boudinot also included news on the diplomacy of other nations. In 1828, the paper printed the text of the Seneca chief Complanter’s speech to President Washington in 1790. More current news of other nations’ visits to the capital were also noted, such as a description of the Winnebago’s war dance. Also published was the text of a Creek memorial to Congress, or news of the Chickasaw delegates in the capital.

The Cherokee were not the only Native people who maintained their national history in diplomatic documents, like the Washington book, or stayed abreast of diplomacy between other nations. The *Cherokee Phoenix* is just perhaps the most historically visible record of the way Natives and their selected diplomats catalogued

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557 For examples of contemporaneous reporting, see *Cherokee Phoenix*, July 3, 1828; *Cherokee Phoenix and Indians’ Advocate*, Feb. 12, 1831, Feb. 18, 1832, May 1, 1830, and May 4, 1833.
559 *Cherokee Phoenix*, June 11, 1828.
560 *Cherokee Phoenix*, June 25, 1828; *Cherokee Phoenix and Indians’ Advocate*, Feb. 11, 1829, March 3, and 17, 1830, May 6, 1834.
diplomatic experience. The expansion of the diplomatic script in this period, led by 
Native diplomats, shows how they deployed that experience to do the best they could for 
their nations. In the process, they changed the nature of capital diplomacy.

Cherokees were the only Natives to run their own press, but other nations also 
utilized capital papers to cultivate sympathy. Cherokee delegates too, submitted pieces 
directly to capital papers. Coodey, a frequent delegate to the capital, wrote to the editors 
of the *Daily National Intelligencer* in late April, 1830 to defend the delegation against 
rumors. The Georgia Senators, the article attested, had insinuated on the floor in 
Congress, that the Cherokees were using violence and brutality against those who chose 
to emigrate west. The editors sat on the letter for a time, but chose to publish the letter in 
July when “the debate to which it refers should have appeared.”^561^ A series of responses 
regarding Cherokee affairs was published in the newspaper as a “Letter from John 
Ross…in Answer to Inquiries from a Friend.” The letter, dated July 2, 1836, appeared in 
*Niles’ Weekly Register* at the beginning of October.^562^ Other nations also made direct 
appeals to the American public through print media, in hopes of yoking to their cause the 
“magnanimous disposition of the citizens of the United States.”^563^

In 1832, Ridge and Boudinot again took to the American cities for support for the 
Cherokee press. While Boudinot focused on raising funds for the press, Ridge worked to 
rally public support for the Cherokee cause. Meeting with key individuals in 
Philadelphia, Mathew Carey and the former superintendent of Indian affairs, McKenney,

^561^ *Daily National Intelligencer*, July 14, 1830.  
^563^ Creek delegates submitted letters to be published in the *Daily National Journal*, which were indeed published; *Daily National Journal*, Dec. 1, 1824. Meanwhile, Arkansas Cherokees also called on Gales and Seaton; *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 29, 1823.
the Cherokee men worked diligently to expand their alliances. Ridge, writing from Philadelphia, expressed his plans to Chief Ross; once in New York, he intended to arrange a large meeting and send a memorial to Congress from the citizens of that city. Writing several months later, as he returned from his tour of the eastern cities, Ridge again wrote Chief Ross from Washington, conveying the success of the trip and the matters at hand in Washington. In doing so, Ridge’s letter highlights how diversified the strategies of diplomacy had become. Ridge moved adroitly from his success in enlisting support for the Cherokee cause among America’s urban public to the Supreme Court ruling in *Worcester v. Georgia* and his belief that Jackson would still not interfere with Georgia despite the court’s ruling, to Wirt’s recommendations on how to proceed if that was the case. The advice, of course—petition Congress. Ridge turned then to relations in Congress and conversations with the secretary of war. Having danced from one strategy to another, Ridge left off with a discussion of the recent Creek treaty, as published in the *Daily National Intelligencer*, and contributions to the Cherokee cause from Scotland. No longer focused on the president, Ridge’s letter is indicative of the widened scope of capital diplomacy, a process that now included the Congress, the courts, an array of American and foreign allies, the press, and the American public.

As capital diplomacy between Natives and the Great Father became increasingly fraught by 1820, the scope of that diplomacy widened. Disappointed by the president, Native nations facing removal turned to Congress, to other powerful and sympathetic allies, and to the American public, to plead their cause. As they did so, they altered the bounds of capital diplomacy, created durable alliances, and increased the visibility of

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Native diplomacy. As this cohort of diplomats voiced their appeals to Congress, the courts, white allies, and the American public, they abandoned their expectations of the Great Father and the diplomatic routines that federal officials and Native delegates had mutually created over the preceding decades.

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For delegations from the West, the executive office remained the predominant node for capital negotiations throughout the 1820s and into 1830s. This orientation reflected the different political realities facing Indian groups north and west of the Ohio. In contrast to southeastern groups, western nations’ experience with removal began much later, picking up in the mid-1830s and continuing through the 1840s. Not coincidentally, western deputations visited the capital less frequently in the 1820s and early 1830s than those in the East. Because removal and the compendium of experiences acquired by easterners were central to the changing culture of diplomacy, the practice of capital negotiations differed for western nations during these years. Namely, the culture of diplomacy for western nations continued to invoke the benevolence and hospitality of the Great Father, maintained Native practices, particularly speech patterns and calumet smoking, and retained an emphasis on gift exchange. The formal aspects of negotiations, however, became more public throughout the period, culminating in the highly visible multi-national convention in the fall of 1837.

The centrality of the president in capital negotiations for western nations like the Sioux, Pawnee, and Winnebago in the 1820s and 1830s served as the clearest evidence of

565 Removal effected all nations east of the Mississippi, which includes a number of the nations identified here as western. The sparse white population in the territories in the northwest up through the 1830s however, contributed to the delayed era of removal for these nations compared to the east, where removal was largely complete by the mid 1830s. David Edmunds, “The Prairie Potawatomi Removal of 1833,” Indiana Magazine of History 68, no. 3 (September 1972): 240-52.
the bifurcation of the culture of diplomacy, with eastern and western groups on opposite sides of the divide. President Monroe received the multinational delegation consisting of Kansa, Missouri, Omaha, Oto, and Pawnee delegates who attended the capital in 1822. Each chief “delivered a speech on the occasion” and then together, with their Great Father, shared a smoke from the pipe of a Pawnee delegate.\(^ {566}\) The delegation did not submit any memorials to Congress. Likewise, the deputation of Ottawas and Chippewas who arrived in Washington in 1836 was “kindly received by the President.”\(^ {567}\) For these westerners, capital negotiations centered on their relationship with the Great Father, much as it had for decades. Furthermore, the protocols of diplomacy continued as before, with the exchange of “talks” employing Native rhetoric, the smoking of calumets, the U.S. performances of civilization, and administrators presenting medals, clothes, and guns.\(^ {568}\)

The growing geographic divide in Native diplomatic practices was evident in other ways, as well. Not only did western delegations persist in the use of older diplomatic practices, but they were also less likely to adopt the newer trends. In the 1820s, it has been seen, eastern nations introduced and refined the approach of petitioning Congress. Far fewer western groups relied on petitions. Delegations from the West made up 34% of delegations in this period, but only 12% of memorials were submitted by western nations. Even more to the point, just three of the eighteen western nations who sent delegations in this period utilized memorials. Out of ten eastern nations who sent deputations, nine composed and submitted petitions during this period. For

\(^ {567}\) *The Globe*, March 19, 1836.
whites in the capital and other eastern cities, there were other, more visually striking differences between experienced and novice Native diplomats.

By 1837, capital residents were well versed in the practices of capital diplomacy. After a decade of debate over Indian removal and the visible efforts of eastern Native diplomats against the policy, Washingtonians, though far removed from the western nations negotiating in the capital, were interested in the politics and spectacle of indigenous diplomacy. Through the 1820s and early 1830s, Cherokee, Creek, and Stockbridge diplomats, among others, had reached out to the capital public for alliances, sympathy, and support. Residents saw diplomats in the streets, hotels, and theatres of the capital, as well as in Congress. For those who did not get to interact with delegations in the flesh, the War Office gallery made capital diplomacy and its legacy visible to visitors any day of the year. While Native visitors had always been an interesting presence in the capital’s social spaces, by 1837 the formal negotiations themselves verged on public spectacle.

A large part of the public’s interest in Native diplomats at this moment stemmed from the removal controversy, which appeared to be hurtling towards a dramatic conclusion. For their part, federal officials’ fears of a large-scale indigenous war, coupled with lingering hopes of purchasing large tracts of land, impelled them to arrange an extensive convention of western groups in Washington in 1837. Violence between the Sioux and Sac and Fox, as well as the Winnebagos, deeply concerned whites, both in the region and in Washington. Furthermore, in the face of declining numbers of game and mounting debts, at least some Native leaders were open to land sales, a moment of
opportunity that federal officials did not want to see slip away.\textsuperscript{569} A large, indeed unprecedented, convening of various western nations seemed to offer the best route for all parties.

Capital residents were eager to catch glimpses of the Native diplomacy being conducted in their midst in the fall of 1837. On the morning of Saturday, September 23rd, Washingtonians funneled down F Street to Dr. Laurie’s Presbyterian Church. Not being the Sabbath, they were not headed to service; rather, one newspaper reported, this “large company of ladies and gentlemen” who “filled the church” sat in rapt attention for two hours, as a Sioux delegation negotiated with Secretary of War C. A. Harris over the sale of western lands. Constructed in front of the pulpit was a stage, covered in carpet, which provided seating for the Sioux men, the secretary of war, the Sioux agent and interpreter, and assorted dignitaries—the Postmaster General, the Austrian minister, and others. The council commenced as the elevated men shared a smoke on the calumet; the Sioux spoke first.\textsuperscript{570} After both parties had said their piece, the convention adjourned for the day. Over the next two months, similar scenes played out on the same stage. Diplomats from the Pawnee, Otto, Omaha, Missouri, Sac and Fox, Iowa, and Winnebago nations visited the capital and negotiated with the secretary of war before an inquisitive white audience in the F Street church. Public interest remained high throughout the fall. At a council with Sioux, Ioway, and Sac and Fox delegates on October 9, the \textit{Daily National Intelligencer} reported that “all the seats in the church, both on the floor and in the galleries, were occupied, and many gentlemen remained standing in the aisles during the entire

\textsuperscript{570} \textit{Daily National Intelligencer}, Sept. 25, 1837.
proceedings.” Some days, the councils drew such crowds that “many who went there to see and hear the Indians could not get into the church.”

One of the multitudes of onlookers was a well-traveled, German-born sculptor residing in Washington in the late 1830s, Ferdinand Pettrich. In between his commissioned work on sculptures of George Washington and Martin Van Buren, Pettrich took advantage of the opportunity to sketch several scenes of Native diplomacy. In one of them (Fig. 5.1), he captured a moment of intense negotiation with white officials and Native diplomats situated at either end of a long table, with an Indian, Keokuk, gesturing at white officials and both groups leaning away from one another. In addition to emphasizing the numerical advantage of the Indian diplomats, the image dwelled on visual dichotomies. Not only did open space indicate the invisible but palpable divide between the two sides, but the dress and deportment of the western Indians stood in direct contrast to the formally dressed American negotiators—and perhaps also, contemporary viewers might have thought, to the more acculturated eastern Native delegates not pictured. Only one white figure, the interpreter, stands with the Sac and Fox delegation to the left of the negotiating table. Emphasizing the importance of Native diplomatic practices the Secretary of War John Forsyth stands smoking the calumet.

Figure 5.1 Ferdinand Pettrich, Sketchbook, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library.

571 This council also began with the assembled diplomats and officials smoking a peace pipe. Daily National Intelligencer, October 10 and October 14, 1837.
Sartorial choices were not the only feature distinguishing these more unfamiliar diplomats from the eastern groups that had largely determined the shape of capital negotiations since the 1790s. Throughout the speeches in September and October, Native diplomats routinely invoked the image of the benevolent Great Father, an increasingly rare symbol in diplomacy with eastern nations. For western deputations, the president remained a patron figure—at least rhetorically—and it was upon his wish that they trekked to the capital. The Great Father could be called on to “relieve them,” and who “wished to do something for the good of their nation.” And, before departing, Sioux diplomats “asked to be protected by their Great Father until they arrived at their respective homes,” a request that the secretary of war assured them would be fulfilled.572

Federal displays of hospitality for the Sac and Fox, Sioux, Winnebago, and other western delegations further reinforced expectations of the benevolent father. Upon its departure from the city, the mixed delegation of Sac, Fox, Ioway, and Sioux conveyed its gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. James Maher, who had hosted the group. The Sac and Fox and Winnebago deputations also thanked their hosts, through their agents, for their “commodious rooms” and “such fare as they were well pleased with.”573 Federal funding paid for travel, lodging, and board for the nine delegations in 1837 that included representatives from fourteen nations. The executive office refused to extend funding for “troublesome” eastern delegations in this period but repeatedly dipped into federal coffers for western delegations. For the president and other officials, hospitality was a wise investment, for they expected a solid return in the form of millions of acres of land.

572 These quotations come from summaries of the translated speeches; The Globe, Oct. 3, 1837; Daily National Intelligencer Sept. 25 and 28, Oct. 3 and 10, 1837.
573 The Globe, Oct. 23 and Nov. 6, 1837.
Similarly, the president bestowed upon western delegations a steady stream of presents, which had dried up for eastern visitors. Capital papers noted how delegates had been “handsomely uniformed at the expense of the Government.” In a second illustration, Pettrich sketched a party of Sioux diplomats as they paraded, dancing and singing, down Pennsylvania Avenue (Fig. 5.2). Pettrich took note of the recently acquired habiliments the Sioux wore, including a caption specifying that the Sioux were “in the Captains uniforms presented by the U.S. Government.” Other newspaper accounts noted that federal administrators provided each of the Sioux delegates “a blue frock coat, faced with red, and red undergarments, and a hat encircled with tin, having feathers and other ornaments about it.” Silver epaulets complemented the outfit, while officials also provided bands, scarves, and blankets. Gifts of clothing and other tokens of American civilization symbolized the process of incorporating western groups into the federal culture of diplomacy, illustrating the continuing relevance of federal-Indian negotiations in the capital. Yet these gifts also pointed to the fact that the eastern groups who had in large part created and shaped the culture of diplomacy were at the same time creating new political strategies and practices to deal with their rapidly changing circumstances.

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By 1837, the culture of diplomacy in the national capital had fissured. Indigenous nations had always experienced U.S. policy and expansion in their own particular ways, but by the beginning of the 1820s the immediate pressures of removal for eastern nations surrounded and infiltrated by white Americans and the depth of their experience with the U.S. contributed to their manipulation of diplomatic protocols in order to resist removal. Experience took several forms. Selective adaptation of American culture—including education in white schools—among eastern nations led to a growing number of diplomats who read, wrote, and spoke fluent English. Some of these men even had legal training or
had been educated in the capital or other eastern cities. Their familiarity with American culture and their ability to conduct their own research on U.S. policy in tribal documents, correspondence, and newspapers informed them in expanding capital negotiations.

By the 1820s too, eastern Nations had been sending diplomats to the capital for three decades, building national knowledge bases for the protocols and possibilities of capital negotiations. Repeated visits allowed nations and individuals to continually develop their expectations and strategies for success in Washington. While success often remained elusive, repeat visitors like John Ross, Solomon Hendrick, Red Jacket, and John Quinney familiarized themselves with other avenues for negotiation. These men, along with diplomats in other eastern nations, led the shift towards petitioning congress and seeking aide beyond the executive branch of the U.S. government.

Not all nations had the depth of experience or faced early pressures to remove and it was those, primarily western, nations that continued the culture of diplomacy much the way it had been in the past. Not only did nations like the Sioux and Pawnee have different experiences with the U.S. and American culture, but federal officials viewed western nations differently than those in the east. The moniker of the “Civilized Tribes” speaks to white views about the acculturation of nations like the Cherokee and Creek, as opposed to the nations of the west that urban Americans perceived as disappearing savages.575 Furthermore, eastern nations adamantly resisting removal were considered obstinate and troublesome. Western nations, on the other hand, had both more to offer—

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575 In visual depictions, Treuttner identifies a shift occurring around 1820 towards a “Republican Indian,” a category of western Natives who were perceived as “untouched, fiercely independent people” but also unable or unwilling to assimilate to American culture. William H. Treuttner, Painting Indians and Building Empires in North America, 1710-1840 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 61-69.
millions of acres of land—and, officials hoped, would be more impressionable, validating their visits to the capital.
In 1831, a delegation of Assiniboin, Cree, Ojibway, and Yankton Sioux departed Fort Union, an outpost on the Yellowstone River, along the present day border of Montana and North Dakota. The group traveled three thousand miles east to Washington, accompanied by their agent, Major John F.A. Sanford. Following their return from Washington, artist George Catlin, whose paintings of Native people garnered international renown, produced a distinctive double portrait of Wi-jun-jon. As the title explained, the portrait on the left depicts the Assiniboin as he departed from his home. The U.S. capital, his destination, lies in the distance on the left. Everything about Wi-jun-jon before his departure marks him as indigenous to viewers. The now-iconic eagle-
feather headdress, his leather hunting shirt and leggings, the painted buffalo robe thrown over his right shoulder, and the calumet in his left hand portray a man untainted by white culture—an authentic Indian. The man on the right, however, bears virtually no resemblance to this authentic Indian. Sauntering home, with teepees looming in the background, Wi-jun-jon has been transmogrified into an urbanized dandy, from his plumed top hat to his high-heeled boots. His calumet has been replaced with a fan and umbrella, and peeking out of his pockets are two corked bottles, which viewers, well aware of the controversies over alcohol among the Indians, were sure to note as another sign of degeneracy.

Scholars have been enamored with this painting and its concise articulation of a powerful nineteenth-century trope: the Indian corrupted by the white men. Art historian William Truettner contextualizes Catlin’s image within a longer series of bifurcated, before-and-after moralizing tales popular in European art and with some America precedents. The lesson in Wi-jun-jon’s case, Truettner avers, is that “Indians don’t belong in white men’s clothes, or, more to the point, Indians should remain Indians.” Corresponding with other, contemporaneous works of art and literature, this painting highlights what Treuttner refers to as the “Republican Indian,” who is “locked in an immutable past,” or worse, doomed to disappear entirely.576 Historian Herman Viola likewise characterizes the double portrait as a product of Catlin’s “dismay” over the “change in appearance and demeanor” of Wi-jun-jon upon his return and an indictment of civilization efforts.577

What the portrait obscures in its exaggerated moral are other vestiges of the deputation’s trip to the capital. With his back to the viewer, the portrait does not show the Jackson medal given to Wi-jun-jon by the president at Washington. Artist Charles Bird King’s less well-known portrait of Wi-jun-jon, painted in the capital, showcases the medal.\(^{578}\) More than the medal, the federal government provided the Assiniboin with his entire new garb, a by-then standard set of presents for his travel to the capital and participation in negotiations. In fact, Wi-jun-jon no longer had the skin shirt he had worn on his way to Washington, because he had presented it to President Jackson in reciprocity for the military uniform presented to him, which he then wore home.\(^{579}\) Furthermore, in light of the shift from away from the Great Father relationship toward an emphasis on negotiating with Congress around 1820, it is telling (if unintentionally so) that Catlin uses the Capitol building as a symbol of where Wi-jun-jon is headed on the left side of the painting.

Reading this infamous image and the accompanying story of Wi-jun-jon in Catlin’s *Notes and Letters* for the legacies of capital diplomacy, rather than its didacticism or artistic significance, three particular legacies stand out.\(^{580}\) Most prominent is a legacy of failure. Not only did some Native delegations fail to achieve their goals in the capital, but federal officials also failed, at times, to realize theirs. The case of the joint Assiniboin, Cree, Ojibway, and Yankton Sioux delegation documents the barriers posed by travel. Wi-jun-jon was one of a party of twelve who departed Fort Union in 1831.

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\(^{578}\) The painting is held privately by the Gulf States Paper Corporation. For an image of the Bird King portrait, see Viola, *Indian Legacy*, 90.


Initially, nine Native men from as many nations living along the upper Missouri, two interpreters, and Major Sanford made up the deputation. Rumors of smallpox along their path induced five to turn back. The remaining four (inoculated against the smallpox as they passed through St. Louis) visited the capital as well as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York before returning home a year later.581

Even though the challenges of traveling across the continent to reach the capital did not scuttle the entire trip, what happened after its conclusion points to the inability of federal authorities to manage the reception of their message. Wi-jun-jon was impressed with the sights he saw, as federal officials had hoped, but that did not lead to the successful dissemination of his impression for the U.S. upon his return. The tales he told of the American cities earned the poor traveler nothing but heckling and the reputation of a liar. His travelling companion, Broken Arm, perhaps because of the poor reception of Wi-jun-jon’s stories, or perhaps for some other contrarian purpose, “represented the Americans as but a handful of people far inferior in every respect to his own.”582 In 1831, the Natives of the upper Missouri who could be bothered to make the long trek to Washington at all were unable or unwilling to convey any of the U.S. civilization messages that federal officials spent over $6,000 to impart.583

Wi-jun-jon’s experience illustrates a second form that failure could take in the wake of visits to the capital and, indeed, a second legacy: trips to the capital could make or break the political or social ambitions of individual Native diplomats. For delegates,

581 The deputation travelled a portion of their eastern leg by rail arriving in January 1822. They lodged at Brown’s Hotel during their stay in the capital. Daily National Intelligencer, January 17, 1832; National Gazette, January 19, 1832.
583 While consistent data is elusive, this sum seems high even for western delegations. For example, a party of 16 Winnebagos in 1829 cost the government approximately $650 per delegate, compared to the roughly $1,500 per delegate in the 1831 visit. On cost see Ewers, “When the Light Shone in Washington,” 7-8.
trips to the federal capital could be personally ruinous, contributing directly to diplomats’ loss of authority upon returning to their nations. As payment for his year as a delegate to the federal capital poor Wi-jun-jon lost his head. In perhaps the most extreme example of diminished local influence, the Assiniboin destroyed his credibility reminiscing about tall buildings, populous cities, and other foreign and unbelievable anecdotes until one particularly irritated listener shot the taleteller in the back of his head. Wi-jun-jon may have proven especially tin-eared at translating what he saw and heard during his trip for a home audience, but he was certainly not the only diplomat who failed as a newly recruited agent of the federal government.

There were additional consequences for the loss of personal authority that reinforced the first legacy of failures of the federal civilization message. Not only could returning delegates fail to convince members of their nation to adopt American ways, but their potential fall from grace within their community could also dash any federal hopes for continued influence with a particular nation. The line of communication that opened when a delegation agreed to visit the capital could be sundered just as quickly if a community found the diplomats too changed, with little potential for that line to be reopened in the near term. This was intensified for western nations like the Assiniboin, who had only the one delegation during the period. A failed visit might ensure a nation would remain beyond the influence of the federal government for many decades. The legacies for individual diplomats and for the federal government were intertwined.

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584 Pawnees returning in 1806, shamed by their chief for being given medals from the president that were above their station.
585 Denig, *Five Indian Tribes*, 87.
586 Another example would be the hostility of the Arkikaras to the U.S. after the death of their chief at the capital in 1805.
Catlin’s print and his accompanying story of Wi-jun-jon highlight a third legacy: the role of shifting popular ideas about Indians—the image of the Indian—in shaping the social and political scripts of diplomacy. By the 1830s, when Catlin’s western prints sold widely and contributed to growing interest (or rather belief) in the disappearance of Native peoples, Americans viewed the figure of Wi-jun-jon as emblematic of wider efforts to uplift Indians. Catlin’s double portrait of Wi-jun-jon served as a critique of Native-white interactions precisely because most Americans no longer believed in the wholesale improvement or civilization of Native people. The presence of western diplomats in eastern cities seemed, for white Americans, to both fuel and verify this shift in opinion. Catlin’s prints were popular among the same people who felt dread in encountering Winnebagos in the streets (1828), or who gazed, like Francis Kemble, at Black Hawk and Sacs and Foxes in 1833. Americans were fascinated with Catlin’s images not because they would never see buffalo hunting Indians themselves, but because they also participated in the spectacle of the western Natives in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. It was not the absence of Native people that made Americans believe they were distinct and disappearing, but their tantalizing presence.

Yet one should not extrapolate too much from Catlin’s exceptional portrait of Wi-jun-jon. The hundreds of Natives who served as diplomats in the capital between 1790 and 1837 cannot be represented in a single image. From those who took up frequent residence in the federal capital to those who saw the city but once, Native diplomats had

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myriad experiences in their nations after the completion of their deputation. Some, whether moved by inspiration or resignation, advocated the adoption of American farming, education, or government. According to Thomas McKenney, the Iowa Mahaska, “in obedience to the advice of his great father,” built himself a log house, took up farming, and “lived in great comfort.”\textsuperscript{588} A distinct minority came away convinced by the means by which federal officials governed the U.S. and worked to bring their own nations’ government more in line with what they saw in the capital. In 1821, the Pawnee Sharitarish (the younger) served as a diplomat in the capital. Upon his return home, he replaced his elder brother, Tarecawawaho, who had refused to visit the capital because he thought it beneath him. Sharitarish’s decision to go to the capital contributed directly to his rising prospects and made him popular among his people. Before his untimely death later that year, he was said to have “enlarged [the Pawnees’] views of the numbers and power of the white men.”\textsuperscript{589}

Over time, capital diplomacy came to reshape structures of local authority among many groups. Many Native nations responded to the importance of capital diplomats by formalizing the means by which delegates were selected and defining their roles. The Cherokee nation elected diplomats in their National Council, the same body that composed the written instructions for deputations, elucidating the objects of their negotiations and their limits. The Stockbridge “chief principal men and Warriors” accorded their delegates with power of attorney to conduct business in the capital.\textsuperscript{590} Becoming a capital diplomat provided another route to influence within a nation outside

\textsuperscript{588} Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, \textit{History of the Indian Tribes, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs...} (Philadelphia: E. C. Biddle, 1837-1844), 2:213.
\textsuperscript{589} Ibid., 1:33-34;
\textsuperscript{590} Letter of Attorney, SW LR IA, 1821-2.
the more established roles of warrior, chief, and orator. In time, the selection as diplomat in many tribes favored young men with schooling, who could speak and write English, or had familiarity with law.

Capital diplomacy did not end with the conclusion of removal efforts in 1837 but rather continued to define negotiations between Natives—removed, remnant, or resistant—and the federal government in the ensuing decades. Moreover, the memories and material objects of capital negotiations passed down within nations, preserving nations’ capital legacies that dated in some cases from 1790. The chronicles of these experiences would go on to have more immediate effects on Indian policy. In 1869, the Seneca Ely Parker became the first Native person to be appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Parker brought with him a firsthand familiarity of the capital and its spaces of political and social authority. In 1846, Parker had been part of a delegation in which he served as the “voice” of the Senecas in their fight against removal. Parker, and the two Seneca chiefs in the small deputation, met with President Polk and conferred with the secretary of war. In the capital, Parker lobbied for his nation and penned memorials to Congress, but to no avail.⁵⁹¹

Parker, followed a familiar diplomatic script as well as a tribal legacy, a fact of which he was well aware. Parker descended from the same clan as the famous Seneca orator and diplomat Red Jacket. When Parker was installed as a Sachem of the Iroquois Confederacy in 1851, five years after his initial trip to the capital, he was bequeathed the Washington medal that Red Jacket had worn until his death, “the master of ceremonies placing it around my neck,” he later recalled. With the ceremonial bestowal of the medal,

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the “speaker remark[ed] the fact that it was given by the great Washington to my tribal relative, Red Jacket.” Washington’s medal symbolized Parker’s physical and cultural link to the chain of Seneca diplomats who first visited the president in 1790 as well as the continued significance of the culture of diplomacy.\footnote{Quoted from Ely S. Parker to George S. Conover, March 9, 1891 in Francis Paul Prucha, Indian Peace Medals in American History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 9.}
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2013 Teaching Fellowship, Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Johns Hopkins University, Fall (declined)
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2012 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at the Library Company of Philadelphia and Historical Society of Pennsylvania
2012 Travel Grant, Frederick Jackson Turner Fund, Johns Hopkins University, Summer
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2009  “Mergers and Migrations on the Virginia Frontier: Fort Christanna and the Creation of the Saponi Nation, 1670-1740,” The Early Chesapeake: Reflections and Projections (November 19-21, Saint Mary’s City, MD)
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2012  Native America: Past and Present, Freshman Seminar, Fall
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2011  From Tobacco Wharf to Star Spangled Banner, Intersession
2010  First Colonies: English Settlement in America, Intersession

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2013  Extreme America: Political Extremism in the U.S., 1870-1920, Spring
2010  America Since 1929, Fall
2009  Colonial Latin America part II, Spring
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