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*Archaeology of the Lower Muskogee Creek Indians,
1715-1836*, by H. Thomas Foster II

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Archaeology of the Lower Muskogee Creek Indians, 1715–1836. By H. Thomas Foster II with contributions by Mary Theresa Bonhage-Freund and Lisa O'Steen. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007. 344 pages. \$55.00 cloth; \$32.95 paper.

Foster takes on a daunting task in his *Archaeology of the Lower Creek Muskogee Creek Indians, 1715–1836* and that is to provide a sense of the variation among the Lower Creek towns, or *talwas*, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I say daunting, because *talwas* (a fundamental social-political-economic unit) were hardly stable entities at any point in time, much less over the course of a century. So comparison can be difficult. Further, the nature and intensity of archaeological investigations among Lower Creek communities are so uneven that issues of comparison become even more greatly compounded. To his credit, Foster is fully explicit about these difficulties and pulls off an admirable synthesis from the variable quality of data available to him. This volume is particularly useful to a larger audience because it draws to a great degree from the “gray literature” of cultural resource management reports, which typically are not widely accessible outside of archaeological circles.

The book's starting point is a logical one: the return of the Lower Creek peoples to the southerly reaches of the Chattahoochee and Flint River drainages (in today's Georgia and Alabama) in 1715, following the onset of the Yamasee War in Carolina territory. An important backdrop to this entire study is migration and population movement, including the wholesale uprooting of the Creek Nation on several occasions and the seasonal shifts associated with smaller, short-lived occupations. Foster does not address head-on the impact of these movements on Creek daily life, but archaeological studies of colonization in North America have left migration largely undertheorized and underproblematized so his recognition of this issue is welcome.

Foster's focus on variation among the Lower Creek is predicated on the idea that we cannot understand their accommodation and resistance to the encroachments of colonization as the response of either a homogenous ethnic group or a centralized polity. As he emphasizes, the rubric “Creek” encompasses a broad ethnolinguistic cluster (more appropriately referred to as *Maskókî*) and a constellation of semiautonomous communities that defy easy characterization. As a result, we must attempt to grasp how *talwas* and even households differentially engaged the Euro-American presence in order to apprehend fully the changes witnessed among the Creek from 1715 to Removal in the 1830s. As Foster rightly notes, archaeology is a very important complement to oral histories and ethnohistoric narratives in this endeavor.

Archaeology of the Lower Creek Muskogee Creek Indians is organized around what Charles Redman once referred to as “baseline data” in archaeology, that is, the material (and materialist) sources of data that—at least processual archaeologists would argue—are the building blocks of analysis. Thus, in addition to very useful background chapters on ethnohistory and archaeological investigations, we are presented with summaries on environmental contexts, pottery, architecture, botanical remains, and animal remains. At

one level, this is a successful approach. Foster and his collaborators Theresa Bonhage-Freund (archaeobotany) and Lisa O'Steen (zooarchaeology) craft a very systematic site-by-site overview and synthesis of the data available in each of these categories. Despite the limited number of sites for which large-scale data are available, their analyses and interpretations will be invaluable for scholars of the Southeast and for those who work in colonial contexts worldwide. We discover through Foster, for example, a strong persistence of pottery-manufacturing traditions that managed to continue even after Removal. Architectural patterns are consistent throughout most of the eighteenth century, but attempts to "civilize" the Creek greatly accelerated the dispersal of *talwas* and the adoption of cabins in lieu of traditional housing styles following the American Revolution.

In my opinion, the environmental, botanical remains, and animal remains chapters are the most successful. Thomas continues his top-notch work on historical ecology and anthropogenic impacts to the environment by Native Americans. Bonhage-Freund and O'Steen provide strong perspectives on the entanglement of Native American and Euro-American subsistence economies and important insights into the rise of new adaptations such as cattle ranching. Moreover, Foster and his colleagues are cautious scholars, and readers frequently are reminded of issues of sampling bias, taphonomic concerns, and the like. This care certainly confers a sense of reliability to their research.

The chapters' episodic quality does have its drawbacks. Although there are useful syntheses within topics, we do not see much interweaving between topical areas. As an example, Foster's study of pottery vessel forms begs to be articulated with the perspectives on the change in foodways provided by Bonhage-Freund and O'Steen. The book has some odd gaps. For example, lithic technologies receive little mention. Despite the rapid decline in flaked stone tools in the colonial era, there is now too much evidence to argue that this was a uniform process, and our appreciation of variable Creek responses to Euro-American technologies is weakened by this oversight. A similar argument could be made for groundstone technologies, which in some areas of eastern North America persisted well into the nineteenth century. The lack of attention to stone tools seems to presume a unidirectional movement (in this case, widespread and rapid decline of this technology), which contradicts Foster's key thesis that we cannot make broad assumptions about the Creek experience in the colonial era.

More troublesome is the lack of attention to the incorporation of Euro-American material culture into Creek lifeways. Foster's primary justification is that the volume and variety of trade goods still lack a systematic study. This may be true to some extent, but a number of scholars have made important inroads into understanding issues such as how creolized identities were expressed by the use of trade goods for adornment or how religious syncretization was manifested through the meshing of local and imported objects. As Bonhage-Freund and O'Steen nicely demonstrate in their botanical and animal remain analyses, one can hardly discuss indigenous traditions without taking notice of outside influences because the two have such a profound impact on one

another. One suspects that by the mid-to-late 1700s many goods obtained by the Creek from colonists were viewed as being just as vital to social reproduction as were any commodities (such as salt or certain lithic raw materials) that may have been obtained by exchange with other indigenous groups in earlier centuries. Although I appreciate Foster's aim of relying on a direct historical approach to emphasize changes in indigenous traditions, I think a discussion of Euro-American trade goods would have been warranted.

Archaeologists will appreciate much of the detail and nomenclature in these chapters. I hope that our colleagues in ethnohistory and allied disciplines will at least peruse the syntheses that close each chapter and that begin and end the book. Materiality, which ranges from landscape alterations to the use of glass beads, was a cornerstone of the colonial and frontier experience. Archaeologists by virtue of their trade have much to offer in this domain, and Foster and his colleagues have provided an excellent treatise on colonial materiality to balance the known inventory of oral histories and ethnohistories that inform our knowledge of the Creek prior to Removal.

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Art of the Northwest Coast. By Aldona Jonaitis. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press and Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2006. 344 pages. \$26.95 paper.

Aldona Jonaitis's survey of Northwest Coast art, culture, and history is a much-needed and ambitious effort to do justice to this entire region of Native North America. Jonaitis's task is to be wide-ranging, although not actually encyclopedic, in the interest of lucidity so that she might direct her discussion to a varied audience of scholars, students, and art lovers who will approach the book with different levels of experience. From the book's outset Jonaitis announces her intention to compose a discussion that will be inclusive, one that is conscientiously evenhanded. For instance, she credits her friend and colleague Wayne Suttles, to whom she has dedicated this volume, as an inspiration for ongoing efforts to raise consciousness about the arts of the Southern Coast Salish. Salish-style art has been described as being simpler or more minimalist than that of other Northwest Coast traditions. It is now understood to have great historical depth and to have been more ubiquitous in the past. Until recently, it had received less attention from scholars and the art-buying public who were more often entranced by the elaborate and elegant graphic designs of the north and considerably more interested in the dramatic and better-known sculptural works of the central groups. This inequity has been adjusted in *Art of the Northwest Coast*, which has as its frontispiece an illustration of an outstanding Halkomelem Coast Salish rattle that was made of mountain sheep horn in the nineteenth century. It is impressively incised with the trigons, crescents, and circles that are understood to define the negative spaces within this composition of