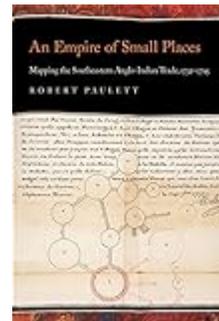




**Robert Paulett.** *An Empire of Small Places: Mapping the Southeastern Anglo-Indian Trade, 1732-1795.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012. xiii + 259 pp. \$69.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8203-4346-4; \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8203-4347-1.



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In 1991, Richard White published his game-changing book, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991), which profoundly changed the way historians have looked at American Indians and Europeans. In the twenty-three years since the publication of White's book, the profession has produced many additional studies that have added to our understanding of military, trade, diplomacy, and other relations between indigenous Americans and European settlers. Kathryn Braund's *Deerskin and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America* (2008) elegantly demonstrates how the trade alliance between the Creek and the British indemnified the power of the Creek Empire. In a similar vein, Julie Anne Sweet (*Negotiating for Georgia: British-Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752* [2005]) and Peter Silver (*Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* [2009]) have made contributions to our knowledge of Indian-European nations, with more focus on the agency of Indian empires than in previous generations of scholarship.[1]

Robert Paulett's *An Empire of Small Places* is among the latest contributions to scholarship on Euro-Indian relations. Like Braund and Sweet, his research focuses primarily on eighteenth-century trade relations in the

American Southeast. Paulett's book reinforces the ways in which economic and political ties to Indian confederacies like the Creek were essential for the maintenance of the British Empire's own power in the New World. What makes Paulett's insights an exciting and new contribution to existing scholarship is his explorations of landscapes and power within the negotiation of these diplomatic and economic relations: the imagination of *âspace*.

Like many aspects of the Atlantic world, the deerskin trade was geographically nebulous. It defies modern conventions of map making and political boundaries. What Paulett reminds us, is that the *âEnlightenment sense of cartographic truth,â* in fact, considered space *âbased on complex connections and interactionsâ* between the inhabitants (p. 12). It is the concept that Edward L. Ayers once described as *âdeep contingencyâ* in his description of alliances and interpersonal relationships during the American Civil War.[2] Certainly, the eighteenth century was a time of insecurity for the British Empire, in spite of its relative strength in comparison to other colonizing powers. The geographic expanse that gave it strength also meant that its economic, political, and religious authorities had to negotiate an increasingly pluralistic landscape, where those considered *âEnglishâ* were not the

majority.[3]

History scholarship has certainly taken a spatial turn, but Paulett's book is not designed as a GIS (geographic information systems) project. He instead focuses on the intellectual process of creating maps, in the eighteenth century, and particularly what that process meant for the envisioning and legitimization of empires—Native American and British alike. Paulett argues that there were in fact five types of space: the imagined spaces of British maps, the lived spaces of the Savannah River, Augusta, traders' paths, and trading houses. His five-pronged approach suggests ways of looking at a historiographical approach that transcends traditional cosmopolitan versus provincial historical geographies. It is a way of understanding landscapes that may prove satisfying for historians who seek a more fruitful way of looking at the often more informal power structures of the Atlantic world.

#### Notes

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[1]. See also Deena L. Parmelee, "Creek Diplomacy in an Imperial Atlantic World" (PhD diss., University of New Hampshire, 2010).

[2]. Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: The Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1864* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004): xx; and Edward L. Ayers, "Turning toward Place, Space, and Time," in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, ed. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010): 6-7.

[3]. On this point, see especially Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America—The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012); Bernard Bailyn, *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).