

# **Muskogean Tribes Musical Influence on the Genre of Delta Blues**

by

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A thesis presented to the Honors College of Middle Tennessee State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the University Honors College

Spring 2021

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to my family who have supported me in my research and showed continued interest in its development.

Inki, yakoke. Chi\_pila\_tok lawa yancha oklhlhili moma falayya ii\_liit  
ii\_fatpolachi\_tok anoa yancha anoa. I could not have done this without your help.

To my tribe and elders who have taught me through the years and built the foundation of my knowledge of our culture. Yakoke.

And to my thesis Director, Cosette Collier, who listened, believed, and encouraged me throughout the entire process of writing this thesis. Your faith in me helped give me the motivation to pursue this project to its end. Your guidance helped give me directions when I did not know the next step to take. Thank you.

## **ABSTRACT**

Little is known about the Native American influence on popular genres of music today. The subject has attracted little interest until recently, yet none of that interest has focused on the southeastern tribes, such as the Chickasaw or Choctaw. This is not altogether unusual as there remains much research to be done on how the various Native American cultures have influenced modern society. In terms of music specifically, there are very few descriptions and very little documentation of early Native American songs as the technology for recording was not invented until 1877. This thesis is merely a first step in introducing the idea that American Indigenous music has had an influence on popular forms of American music, such as Delta Blues. The written portion of this thesis has been done in conjunction with supporting audio musical compositions (many of which are original for this project) to assist in demonstration.

## PREFACE

A late 1800s music style began to develop in Southern states bordering the Mississippi River that came to be known as the Delta Blues. Many have undertaken valuable and thorough examinations of this genre from the African slave influential perspective. However, upon learning that the acclaimed Father of the Delta Blues was also Choctaw, I began to question that this was all there was to the story. Being from Chickasaw/Choctaw descent myself, and being familiar with our Native music and dance, I felt there were strong similarities shared that were not being discussed. I theorize that there is also a connection to the Native peoples who lived in the Delta region before, during, and after slavery.

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## LIST OF TERMS

Hilhlha (“HITH-thlah”) – Stomp Dancing, to dance

Mishasipokni ("mish-shah-si-POKE-nee") - The Old Long River, Mississippi river  
(Chickasaw/Choctaw)

Taloe ("ta-LO-ah") - Song, to sing, singing.

“Kullihoma” (“kul-lee-HOME-ah”) – Red Spring or Red Well (a place) near Ada,  
Oklahoma

“Chokkilissa” (“choke-kwa-LISS-ah”) - a quiet place; the ghost village formerly  
Chickasaw Bluffs near Memphis, TN

“Okhlhili” (“oak-THLEE-lee”) - Nighttime

“Kapochocha” (“kah-poach-cha”) - Stickball (a popular Native American sport)

“Naki Aiulhto Alota” (“NA-kee eye-ULTH-toe ah-LOW-tah”) - A full quiver (of  
arrows; a singing group)

“Minko” (“MEEN-ko”) - Chief or leader, affectionate title for a respected elder

“Chunkey” (“Chun-KEE”) – A traditional Southeastern sport

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## **LIST OF ORIGINAL AUDIO RECORDINGS:**

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2. *Kullihoma Oklhlhili* (Written by Keith Shackleford, performed by Dale Shackleford)
3. *Fochoosh Hatchie* (written and performed by Dale Shackleford)
4. *Flute Blues* (written and performed by Dale Shackleford)
5. *Lookin' Back Blues* (written and performed by Dale Shackleford)
6. *Down the Dirt Road Blues* (original song written by Charlie Patton, additional lyrics and performance by Dale Shackleford)

## INTRODUCTION:

Unknown to many, yet pertinent to my argument, is the reality that not all members of Native American tribes in the Delta region actually moved away from their homelands during forced removal. Many during that time hid out and continued to live in their original areas, married, had families, and often passed for former slaves. Most notably among these in the Mississippi region are members of the Choctaw tribe, now known as the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI). In the same area that the Delta blues began lived many members of this tribe who were of mixed Choctaw/African descent. One of those men is Charley Patton, credited by all as the father, or grandfather of Delta blues. Another heavy influencer of blues that is also known to be Choctaw is Howlin' Wolf. I feel strongly that traditional Native rhythmic and structural influences shine through in their music.

To those who are not actively interested in the history of music, learning that these artists of an obscure genre of blues were Native American may seem trivial, but the effect that this blues had upon generations in years to come is undeniable. Delta blues is the groundwork for not only other formats of blues (which has given us some of the most articulate forms of guitar playing), but also is the foundation for more popular genres such as rock n' roll, metal, rhythm and blues (R&B), and even pop (Morrison; Wardensky). We owe Delta blues much for shaping our modern music because without it, music today would be completely different. Therefore, it is imperative that we study its origins and what creative influences went into the origins of this genre. The Southeastern Muskogean tribes, I believe, have played a fundamental role in the formulation of Delta

Blues, and thus would have considerable sequential influence on the other modern genres. As a people, we have a responsibility to honor and give credit where credit is due.

The purpose of this study is multifaceted and I have composed music and lyrics for several songs that I believe demonstrate those Chickasaw influences. Essential to my study has been those artists from that era who play blues, and more specifically those of Muskogean tribal descent such as Charley Patton and Howlin' Wolf ("Rumble: Indians Who Rocked the World."). I aimed to blend these two genres together to demonstrate their similarity and help bring light to the influences that I believe are present in the early Delta blues music.

To most in society, American Indian music has only the sound of the Plains tribes, which is far different from so many other styles. To the world, Southeastern music has been lost and forgotten because it has been willfully neglected by those with the power to keep its flame alive. This project hopes to bring light to Southeastern traditional tribal music and to how it has influences which may have led to the development of blues. I have attempted this by means of original songs and audio recordings demonstrating similarities between the two genres.

## CHAPTER I: Characters/Peoples

### Chickasaw and Choctaw Tribes:

Long before European contact the North American continent was filled with millions of people belonging to many vibrant tribes.<sup>1</sup> Today there still remain 574 federally recognized tribes, the highest concentration of tribes of which reside in Oklahoma today.<sup>2</sup> These tribes built their lives, homes, cultures, history and art here for centuries before European contact and the subsequent attempted eradication. In the southeast region of the United States (including Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana) resided several different tribes, many of which are considered part of the Muskogean family language group. Among the Muskogean tribes were and are the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muskogee Creek, Natchez, Alabama-Coushatta, Seminole, and Yazoo. All these tribes spoke sister languages and participated in very similar cultures. According to oral traditions, the Chickasaw and Choctaw were once one tribe, and as such are still very closely related today. There were also other tribes in the same area that practiced similar cultures while possessing different languages, these include the Yuchi, Hitichi-Mikasuki, Okmulgee, Etowah, and Shawnee. A major point of

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<sup>1</sup> Devenan, William. *UW Press - The Native Population of the Americas in 1492: Second Revised Edition, Edited by William M. Denevan, With a Foreword by W. George Lovell*, 1 Mar. 1992

<sup>2</sup> National Congress of American Indians. "Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction". Washington, D.C., February 2020: 25.

special focus in our study is the common practice of each of these tribes in what the Chickasaw and Choctaw call Hilhla or Stomp Dancing.

### Father of Delta Blues: Charlie Patton

Charlie Patton (sometimes spelled Charley) was the first blues superstar of the Mississippi Delta. He was a traveling guitarist, singer, and songwriter who is reported to be the first of his style who could attract crowds from miles around. He is often credited as either the Father or the Grandfather of Blues.<sup>3 4</sup> His work shaped the genre and influenced or even directly taught many other superstars in the next generation such as Howlin Wolf and Muddy Waters. He commonly played with other star musicians such as Son House, Skip James, Willie Brown, Kid Bailey, Henry “Son” Sims, Tommy Johnson, and a young yet untrained Robert Johnson. However, among all of these famous artists he was still the fan favorite.

Questions abound regarding Patton’s lines of heritage. All recognize he is of mixed race, and some have supposed he was part white but due to questions about his paternity this cannot be decided. What has been firmly established, however, is that he was mixed Black and Native American (Choctaw) on his mother’s side. The area in Mississippi where he grew up was not only once the Choctaw homeland, but even in his

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<sup>3</sup> Rumble: Indians who Rocked the World, directed by Catherine Bainbridge (Jan, 2019; PBS; Rezolution Pictures (Rumble) In., Vision Maker Media), PBS Broadcast and DVD.

<sup>4</sup> WL Woodward, “Charlie Patton: Father of the Delta Blues Issue 55,” Charlie Patton Father of the Delta Blues Comments (PSA Audio), accessed January 26, 2021, <https://www.psaudio.com/copper/article/charlie-patton-father-of-the-delta-blues/>.

day there was still an active presence of tribal events. His Choctaw heritage was commonly known and not a secret. When interviewed, most people who knew him willingly referred to him as “Indian.” Howlin’ Wolf, one of his pupils, described Patton as “Charlie Patton was an Indian. And he was the baddest \*\*\*\*\* in the world”.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, most of the black population described him as white, while the white population all described his as black, however, both sides knew and recognized him as Native American. One person who knew him thought he looked either Mexican or Spanish. One oddity of note in the interviews conducted by Gayle Dean Wardlow about Patton is that nearly every person who described his physical appearance comment on Patton having “good hair.” Other descriptions note that he was a short man with a tall spirit, how he later in life had a scar on his neck (presumably from a knife wound murder attempt) as well as limped on his left leg (presumably from being shot).

In his music Patton was a mastermind of the day. He would occasionally adapt other people’s works, but mostly he was a prolific writer and performer. Although Patton did not record until 1927, he was known to already have a large arsenal of songs by 1914.<sup>6</sup> His most famous works include *High Water Everywhere (part 1 and part 2)*, *Stone Pony Blues*, *Down the Dirt Road Blues*, and *Spoonful Blues*. Many of his songs have been covered and brought forward to new generations by other artists. Howlin’ Wolf did a song called *Little Red Rooster* which was admittedly based on Patton’s song *Banty*

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<sup>5</sup> Howlin’ Wolf, interview by Chris Strachwitz (Berkeley, California: KPFA-FM, April 20, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> Nathan “Dick” Banks (Delta resident) in discussion with Gayle Dean Wardlow. August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1967

*Rooster*. Others in the Delta were also known to steal and cover his songs commonly calling them their own when performing at juke joints and house parties.

Patton was an all-around entertainer as well, and as such would perform whatever kind of songs he felt would get the audience going or make him happy. In his recordings he has become known for his gravely, and at times nearly indistinguishable voice, but most of those who knew him that Wardlow interviewed said he was understandable.<sup>7</sup>

While he is most known for his Blues songs, he would also perform pieces that could be considered more pop or ragtime-esque. *One of these Days* and *Shake It and Break It* are good examples of differences in his repertoire. Along with those styles, he also would sing gospel music. During shows he would sometimes stop everything and play a hymn, which would stop all of the dancing and lively activity but, because of Patton's powerful personality, everyone would bite their tongues and wait for the next dance piece.<sup>8</sup>

Patton only took part in a part of a few recording sessions, at least that have survived the test of time. Most of his recordings were done as solo acts, but he did record some tracks with some of his longtime friends Willie Brown, "Son" Sims, and his last wife Bertha Lee. During his solo recording career, he published works under three separate names. The majority of his work was under his real name Charlie Patton while many of his early recorded religious songs were under the pseudonym Elder J. J. Green. Patton had one song published under The Masked Marvel, which was put out as a

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Calt and Gayle Dean Wardlow, *King of the Delta Blues*, (Rock Chapel Press, 1988), 52

<sup>8</sup> Booker T. Miller (Blues musician and Delta Resident) in discussion with Gayle Dean Wardlow. August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1968



promotional push to sell more of his music.<sup>9</sup> They released a sketch of him with parts of his face covered with the song and promised a free copy his album if anyone could guess the artist. To the best of my knowledge according to my research, no one ever claimed a copy through that means.

In his music, Charlie Patton sang about many of the typical troubles and trials of the day. Patton also liked to sing about trains, rivers, boats, current events, and sometimes personal experiences and adventures. While there are no official records of him traveling west beyond Arkansas and Louisiana, in his song *Hammer Blues* he discusses traveling up the Red River. More directly important to this thesis is a lyric found in *Down the Dirt Road Blues* where Patton says, “I feel like choppin, chips flyin everywhere... I went to the nation, but I couldn’t stay there.” This has been accepted by most as his account of traveling to his tribal nation in Indian Territory.<sup>10</sup> To tribal members, the use of the term “the Nation” on its own has meant their tribal areas the same way as some people might say “the States” or even “the City” referring to a specific place or town. Within a tribe it is understood that they are speaking of their own tribe’s territory. This is commonly used today as well. Patton was not alone in using this expression of the Nation or similarly used the Territory.<sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup> The first known use in a recording was by Bessie Smith in 1924 in a song title *Workin House Blues*.<sup>13</sup> The Nation was often sung about as a refuge or haven

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<sup>9</sup>Charlie Patton, *Screamin' and Hollerin' the Blues: The Worlds of Charley Patton*, Revenant Records, December 2006

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Calt and Gayle Dean Wardlow, *King of the Delta Blues*, (Rock Chapel Press, 1988), 25

<sup>11</sup> Max Haymes, “The Red Man and The Blues”, EarlyBlues.com, 1980 <http://www.earlyblues.com/Essay%20-%20The%20Red%20Man%20and%20The%20Blues%20-%20Chapter%204.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Smith, Chris. "Going to the Nation: The Idea of Oklahoma in Early Blues Recordings." *Popular Music* 26, no. 1 (2007): 83-96. Accessed March 19, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4500301>.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, Chris. "Going to the Nation: The Idea of Oklahoma in Early Blues Recordings." *Popular Music* 26, no. 1 (2007): 83-96. Accessed March 19, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4500301>.

for freed slaves post emancipation. His phrase right before of “I feel like choppin, chips flying everywhere” is an old way of describing an attempt to do something that just did not work out. It’s a metaphor of chopping wood, but instead of splitting the wood like one would want, it is only chipping off into useless pieces. I believe this is his way of saying that he went to Oklahoma, but for some unstated reason staying there was not working out for him. Some online blogs and non-credited sources suspect perhaps he tried to become an enrolled member in the tribe but may not have been able to.

Outside of singing, Patton was apparently known for telling animal stories.<sup>14</sup> Characterization of animals in stories is something commonly done amongst all of the tribes across America. While animal stories are fairly universal, they seem to be more predominant among Native American tribes where animals are used to teach lessons through stories told by elders and storytellers.

### Howlin’ Wolf:

Chester Burnett, better known as Howlin’ Wolf, was one of the most famous Chicago Blues artists. Chicago Blues is the direct descendant of Delta Blues music as it came from the migration of people from the Delta looking for work in the northern

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Calt and Gayle Dean Wardlow, *King of the Delta Blues*, (Rock Chapel Press, 1988), 34

cities.<sup>15</sup> It is frequently described as Delta Blues with electric guitar and a band. Many of the biggest artists grew up as sharecroppers or on plantations in the Delta and played with the greats. Howlin' Wolf is no exception. He grew up in Mississippi learning where "Charlie started me out picking the guitar."<sup>16</sup> Howlin' Wolf is also another major blues artist with Choctaw blood. He gained his nickname Howlin' Wolf from his Choctaw grandfather as a child.<sup>17 18</sup>

Wolf became a huge influence and inspiration for a whole other generation of incoming artists. The Rolling Stones claimed him to be one of their biggest heroes. Early on in their career when they were first making a trip to America, they once specifically required Wolf to be a part of their TV performance on *Shindig*.<sup>19</sup> The show's host, Jack Good, initially rejected the idea as he feared that his audience would not respond well to a large, dark, middle aged blues player. But the Stones refused to play if Wolf was not present as well. It ended up being one the best received shows to date. Wolf performed his biggest hit *Smokestack Lightning*.

### Gayle Dean Wardlow:

Gayle Dean Wardlow was a field researcher and historian who traveled throughout the South during the 60s documenting what he could about blues. Perhaps one

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<sup>15</sup> Rowe, Mike. "The Influence of the Mississippi Delta Style on Chicago's Postwar Blues." In *Charley Patton: Voice of the Mississippi Delta*, edited by Sacré Robert, by Ferris William, 157-64. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018. Accessed March 26, 2021. doi:10.2307/j.ctv5jxn73.11.

<sup>16</sup> Howlin' Wolf, interview by Chris Strachwitz (Berkeley, California: KPFA-FM, April 20, 1967).

<sup>17</sup> James Segrest and Mark Hoffman, *Moanin' at Midnight: The Life and Times of Howlin' Wolf*, (Pantheon, 2004)

<sup>18</sup> Joe Gioia, *The Guitar and the New World (a Fugitive History)*, Excelsior Editions, 2013

<sup>19</sup> Rumble: Indians who Rocked the World, directed by Catherine Bainbridge (Jan, 2019; PBS; Rezolution Pictures (Rumble) In., Vision Maker Media), PBS Broadcast and DVD.

of the most important things he did was field recordings of people who lived in the Delta and knew many of the artists personally. It proved to be a great resource in my study about the characteristics of many musicians. Throughout his career, Wardlow spent a great deal of his energy focused on Patton, and to a lesser extent Kid Bailey and Robert Johnson.

Henry Columbus Speir:

H. C. Speir is considered one of the first talent scouts in the south. He had a music shop in Jackson, Mississippi where he produced the first recordings of the majority of blues artists during that time period from the Delta, many of whom became stars. He was in the business of “discovering” blues artists whom he thought could make money selling records. Speir’s job was to determine if they would be able to record well on the technology of the day and sell records, and if he felt that they were good enough he would send them north to Paramount records for them to record more songs there. Speir believed the best voices came from closest to the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Chicago, but primarily in the Delta.<sup>20</sup> He said that if one went past Shreveport to the west or to the east past Birmingham that the voices would change. He gained a name for being a talent broker in the region and most of the time the players would come to him for their shot, however in some cases Speir would travel to find specific artists. Patton was one of these artists whom Speir had heard so much about that he traveled to Dockery

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<sup>20</sup> H. C. Speir (Delta resident and Blues Talent Scout) in discussion with Gayle Dean Wardlow. August 23<sup>rd</sup>, circa 1968

plantation near Ruleville, MS to find Patton himself. According to Calt and Wardlow in their book *King of the Delta Blues*, Patton's voice didn't seem too unusual to Speir, but "the rhythmic pulse that propelled it struck him as sounding different than anything he had ever heard."<sup>21</sup> Where then did this rhythmic difference come from? We may not know conclusively, but without Speir's recognition of the uniqueness of Patton's music, we would have no recordings of Patton today.

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen Calt and Gayle Dean Wardlow, *King of the Delta Blues*, (Rock Chapel Press, 1988), 15

## **CHAPTER II: A Brief Socio-Historical Sketch of Chickasaw/Choctaw**

The ancient homelands of the Muskogean language group encompassed an area roughly on the western boundary from Memphis to New Orleans, and then going east to the Carolinas and down to Florida, with the general northern border being the Ohio River. Tribes in this area are commonly referred to as the Southeastern Tribes. The Chickasaw and Choctaw peoples are part of this group and at one time controlled virtually all of the territory along the Mississippi River and a considerable way towards the center/east Tennessee and western Georgia. They exerted great influence on the trade and culture in the region. Their mark remains today in that many of the place names are still in the original tongues.

It is well established that there was anciently no written language on this continent. There is ample evidence of cross-continental trade, and, to facilitate this, an “Indian” sign language came to be which all travelers learned. This sign language can still be seen today across the nation in various tribal Princess programs as they use it commonly in iterations of “The Lord’s Prayer.” Locally, cultural heritage and history depended on oral traditions and art. Artistic expressions, emblems, symbols, etc. became the means of visual communication. Storytelling, counting sticks, music and dance became the oral means of passing down important knowledge. Through personal and community demand for honor these histories were kept as accurately as possible.

Today, even though these tribes have been removed from their ancient homelands to Oklahoma or other reservations many have been able to maintain or recover great portions of their oral traditions, including their music. Any other cultural or historical

information that is considered important to this thesis will be presented within the descriptions of the songs in Chapter Four.

### CHAPTER III: Observations of Similarities in Music

Delta Blues is the oldest genre of what we consider Blues today. It is not to be confused with the blues heard in New York recorded by artists like Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Mamie Smith, and even Mildred Bailey who herself was a member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe in Idaho.<sup>22</sup> This form of Blues is more similar to Jazz than other forms of music we call blues today. Delta Blues (sometimes during that time called Country Blues or Down Home Country Blues) comes from the Mississippi Delta where it began to develop at the end of the 1800s but really solidified into its true form in the 1910s and 20s. This is of course different from Chicago Blues which came directly out of Delta Blues, and it is also different from Hill Country Blues, which developed around the same time, but in a different part of Mississippi. Hill Country Blues and Delta Blues are very similar, the only main difference being that Hill Country Blues tends to be more repetitive and often the entire song is built on one chord or riff alone. Delta Blues, in contrast, is more melodic and is where the first examples of 8-bar and 12-bar blues are found. Delta blues was not built solely on those modern standard forms, but rather is the genre that those forms came out of. Delta Blues often followed the basic I-IV-V or I-IV-I-V chord progressions.

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<sup>22</sup> National Congress of American Indians, Fawn Sharp, RESOLUTION: Milred Rinker Bailey, Resolution number REN-13-044, 2013 Mid-Year Conferenc, Reno, NV.





*Figure 1*

Figure #1 Hickman Thomas, Neshoba County, MS, 1909, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, NO2661.

In the heart of Mississippi also grew a presence of Choctaw fiddle players. Fiddles were also very common in early in blues music. Some of Patton's work features fiddle, as his friends and colleagues Henry "Son" Sims and Willie Brown both were fiddle players. The Choctaw people in Mississippi adopted fiddles into their culture at some unknown point in the early 1800s and continued until the into the 2010s.<sup>23</sup> By

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<sup>23</sup> Xerxes, Jake. "Out of This World: Hearing Indigenous And Immigrant Music In The American South." OleMiss.edu, 2013. <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1874&context=etd>.

1909, Choctaw fiddle players were well established as performers and they often played at Choctaw festivals. The modern-day Choctaw Indian Fair is an event built on a much older festival, which continues to occur every July near Philadelphia, MS. This event takes place during the time of year that an even older ceremony called Green Corn would normally have taken place. By at least 1909, this festival was large and well known, and it would draw people from many states. Big Chief Henry's String Band was an all-native band from Indian Territory who are a good example of Choctaw fiddlers (and other stringed instruments) during this time period. They performed at the festival where H. C. Spier heard them and later recorded them in 1929.<sup>24</sup> This is another band that Speir is attributed to discovering and recording first. With as large and well known as the fair was at that point in time, is it possible that the other music and dances of the Choctaw people also could have been well known and influential on the early formation of the Delta Blues in the early 1900s?

#### Muskogean Dances:

What are the other dances? Stomp dancing, or Hilhlha in Chickasaw and Choctaw, is a form of social activity for tribal members. These are not always "war dances" as is commonly believed, although there are some. These dances do not appear like the plains tribes' dances or powwow style dancing that is typically seen in modern

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<sup>24</sup> *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. "Big Chief Henry's Indian String Band," accessed March 25, 2021, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/304333>.

media. Stomp dancing is much more subdued. There are two basic categories of the overarching style of dancing we call Hilhlha: Social Dances, and Stomp Dances.

a. Social Dances:

These dances have set specific songs and melodies that all know and sing together. Social Dances also are set variant patterns of movement specific to each song. Social Dances are meant for social events and fun activities. Many of the dances either tell stories, give respectful imitation to animals and nature, or are means to meet new people and enjoy the company of family and friends. Dances in this category include *Honkompa Hilhlha* (Stealing Partners), *Sinti Hilhlha* (Snake Dance), *Nunni Kullo* (Garfish), *Double Header*, *Oka Ishko* (Drink Water Dance), and others. The only specific war dance currently in use among the Chickasaws is *Hilhlha Falayya* (Long Dance). It is performed before and after important stickball games, and is also more commonly used as the final dance of the night during an evening of social activity.

b. Stomp Dances (Stomps):

This is also what we commonly call the subgroup of dances that are individuals dances. Sometimes Stomps are also called warrior songs. Typically,

these dances follow the same basic pattern for each song. Each leader crafts their own words and order for the song, which is comprised of the known chants from other songs. It is a chance for each warrior or leader to express their individuality. These are not war dances, however, they can occasionally be heard before stickball games and used to honor warriors.

Muskogean dances and songs, as has been discussed, are a very old form of music. By oral traditions they go back for centuries. Each tribe has their own songs, variations of styles, and specific dances, but they are all still able to sing together. From the 60s through the 90s, Indian House created recordings of various groups from Muskogean tribes singing and dancing many of the social dance songs in Oklahoma. Buster Ned also produced a CD which is now out of print titled “Choctaw-Chickasaw Dance Songs” during the 70s as an initiative of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Heritage Committee.<sup>25 26 27</sup> Their work is invaluable for demonstration and teaching of future generations, and both contain examples of many of the songs still sung today. It is important to note that these recordings do not contain the entirety of songs and dances which any of the tribes practice.

Hilhlha songs create the bulk of the traditional music that has survived to this day. Native flute music has remained, and a few other songs passed down within families as

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<sup>25</sup> Choctaw-Chickasaw Dancers. *Choctaw-Chickasaw Dance Songs Volumes I and II*. Sweetland Productions, 1979

<sup>26</sup> Draper, David E. *Ethnomusicology* 25, no. 3 (1981): 553-56. Accessed March 24, 2021. doi:10.2307/851575.

<sup>27</sup> Muskogee Creek Tribal Dancers, *Songs of the Muskogee Creek*, 1969, Indian House, CD and Cassette Tape

well. Chickasaw tribal member and dance leader, Jason Burwell, shared one such song which was recorded impromptu for this project in Tuscumbia, AL.<sup>28</sup> Prior to the recording, Burwell told the story of how he received this song from a Creek elder who instructed him to take it and make it his own, crafting his own words to this melody. He gave the impression that the song was much older still. Just after he finished singing, Burwell then gave the song to me, telling me the same thing that was told to him. This song, while modern in lyrics, is a great example of a much older style of song that is not directly related to Hilhlha Taloa. Burwell said it has crossed his mind to incorporate it into his personal Stomp song, but that it was not the original purpose of the piece. *Burwell's Song* shows both the typical call-and-response nature of Muskogean music as well as the descending nature of the genre.

*A Tribute to Johnna (with English Lyrics)* is an excellent example of how Blues can be adapted easily into traditional southeastern Stomp Dancing.<sup>29</sup> Whereas the original works of this creative thesis aim to demonstrate how Stomp Dances songs works within Blues, *A Tribute to Johnna* is the exact opposite. It features traditional Hilhlha formatting, melodies and chants, rhythms, and setting. It is interesting to note that prior to the English lyrics begin, the melodies are entirely traditional and are heard as nothing other than that. While with the English words the melody does change, it still remains

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<sup>28</sup> Jason Burwell, Interview/Field Recording by Dale Shackelford, Oka Kappassa (Return to Cold Water) Festival Tuscumbia, AL, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019. [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtmail\\_mtsu\\_edu/EZ7rR1JR9v1PlqUuaIn5C6QBqUEE-QfOelEMD5BZ804TQg?e=BPVs8m](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtmail_mtsu_edu/EZ7rR1JR9v1PlqUuaIn5C6QBqUEE-QfOelEMD5BZ804TQg?e=BPVs8m)  
Stomp Dance Troupe, *Tribute to Johnna (with English lyrics)*, 1999, Indian House, CD and Cassette Tape

very similar to the original melody before. It exemplifies how both genres of music work well together from the opposite perspective of this thesis.

General Rhythmic and Melodic Observations:

There is no denying that there are major African influences on Blues, but is it the sole contributor? It is obvious regarding traditional African rhythms that there are beautiful and complex drum rhythms. It is also obvious that their patterns and general feel is quite a bit different from the Blues we know. On the other hand, the Hilhlha Taloa (stomp dance songs) of the Southeastern Tribes are what I am increasingly convinced are an additional springboard for the Delta Blues.

Delta Blues and Hilhlha Taloa both focus their expression in the same rhythmic patterns and to some extent their melodies too. The rhythm established by the Shell Shakers during a Hilhlha is a virtually identical pattern to the basis of what most Delta Blues is built upon. Young Stomp Dancers, like other native musicians across the continent are taught from an early age that the rhythms played are meant to mimic the heartbeat inside. The Shell Shaker's pattern in Muskogean music follows a doublebeat pattern of eighth notes, much like our hearts. This rhythmic feel is also very present in Delta Blues songs.



*Figure 2*

Figure #2, Leg Turtle Shakers, Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, Sulphur, OK, ca. 2019

Descending melodies are also typical of the local Native style. Delta Blues uses this melodic form often. *Spoonful Blues* (Charlie Patton), *Devil Got My Woman* (Skip James), and *Cross Road Blues* (Robert Johnson) are all good examples of this form. Are these mere coincidences? Considering that both these forms of music developed in the same area of the world, albeit many generations apart, could it be possible, even reasonable, to entertain the idea that the older indigenous form had tremendous influence on the younger?

Hilhlha songs have followed a basic call-and-response pattern for centuries where one leader sings a line and the other singers repeat a specific response based off of the leader. Many slave songs also made use of this call-and-response pattern. Most discussions about the Blues are from this African viewpoint and describe how the response portion developed into a musical feature adapted for fiddles or guitars. That the

basic pattern of the songs is the same and that both African and Blues feature this style is all well and good, but it does not change the fact that Blues music did not originate in Africa or in any other place those slaves were taken. Blues began in the Mississippi Delta where North American Indigenous peoples had lived, and whose language is stamped in the land even to this day. Given this originating geographic proximity, should we merely assume that these are mutually exclusive? Is such an assumption logically justified? Why didn't Blues develop in other places the slaves were sent?

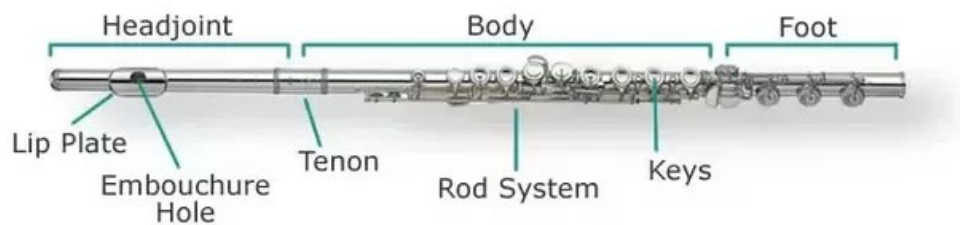
Both Freedmen (emancipated slaves) - some of whose descendants are still members of the tribes today - along with Tribal members in Mississippi shared common experiences: hardships, racism, and other social difficulties. Because of this, those two groups were more likely to latch together and they often intermarried. Even prior to the Civil War, some tribes were known to have adopted slaves into the tribes as freedmen. These close links show how the two groups were not living in separate worlds, but rather much closer together than one often thinks. If their lives were so closely related, would their entertainment be so foreign to each other?

#### Native American Flute:

Native American style flutes are also a major part of music of the southeastern tribes. This style of flute is different than European style flutes. The Native flutes of the Southeast are made of river cane or cedar wood. Some newer flute makers craft them out of other woods as well, however, cedar is still the most popular while cane is the most traditional. Traditionally, depending on the tribe, the flutes are either used for recreational



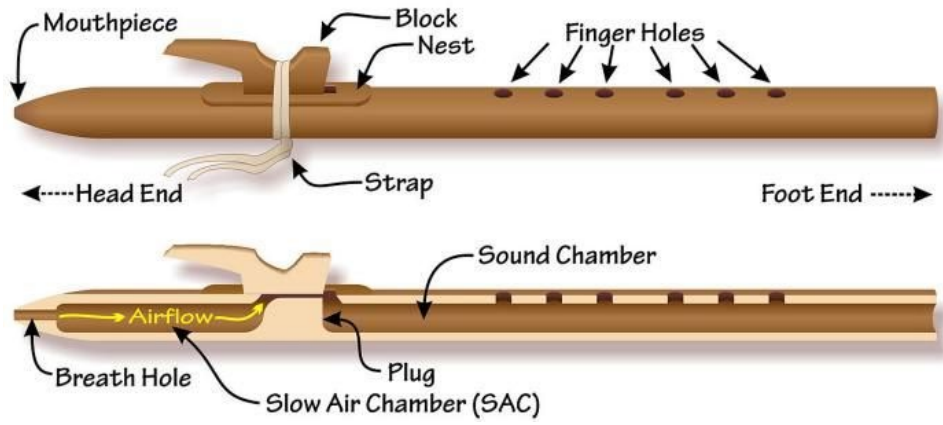
entertainment, or for a few tribes they are only used for courting purposes. Native flutes are one of the more complex instruments of their age. They are built using two separated air chambers which split the air thus creating the sound and individual notes are made by covering the barrel holes with the players fingertips. For comparison, modern orchestral flutes use one chamber, and the musician splits the air over the embouchure hole and individual notes are made by pressing a combination of keys which cover the necessary barrel holes.



*Figure 3*

Figure #3 , Anatomy of a Flute, Lambert Music

Because of the materials and style in which they are made, Native American flutes are very limited in the number of notes they can play. Because each flute is hand made it means each one is tuned slightly different than another, and they are almost never in modern concert pitch. They are created as a solo instrument with fixed notes. Native flutes are also different than most instruments as their tuning is strictly crafted in a minor key. For a common five hole flute the notes that will be present will be 1-3-4-5-minor7.



*Figure 4*

Figure #4, Anatomy of a Native Flute, Fluteopedia.com

## CHAPTER IV: Songs and Analysis

Tuning plays a role in the way a guitar's timbre sounds. Today guitars are typically tuned in a specific manner which is commonly called E Standard (E-A-D-G-B-E). This manner of tuning a guitar was common during that era of blues, but Delta blues also had a few other tunings which helped make it distinguishable. Booker T Miller, another bluesman from that era, said in an interview with Wardlow that Patton preferred what they called "natural" and "Spanish" tunings.<sup>30</sup> Those terms are no longer used, instead today they would be called "Open C" (C-G-C-G-C-E) and "Open G" (D-G-D-G-B-D). Some performers favored other tunings, such as Skip James' typical Open D Minor (D-A-D-F-A-D). These open tunings were liked so much in part because are far easier to play with a slide. A guitar slide is an object typically made of either glass or brass that the player holds and slides across the strings on the neck. It creates a fluidic sound between the notes and has become a style of playing the guitar that was very popular in Delta Blues. Some of the earliest iterations of slide guitar playing was said to be using the back side of a pocketknife. Open tuning and/or slide guitar were used on the follow songs to stylistically follow the sound of the Delta Blues: *Honkompa Hilhlha*, *Fochoosh Hatchie*, *Flute Blues*, *Lookin' Back Blues*.

Words have meaning but context gives the understanding. This is certainly the foundation of the Chickasaw language. The context of any Chickasaw conversation,

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<sup>30</sup> Booker T. Miller (Blues musician and Delta Resident) in discussion with Gayle Dean Wardlow. August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1968

regardless of the speaker, is set from that speaker’s perspective. To comprehend the context any conversation, one must be able to hear the words as if they were the speaker. Often times, due to the face-to-face nature of conversations, many particulars are dropped from the sentences as these are simply understood without needing to be spoken. To aid in understanding, I have provided both a literal translation and a more accurate description of the meanings of each lyric below with their respective songs.

**Original Recordings:**

*Honkompa Hilhlha or Stealing Partners<sup>31</sup>*

*Table 1*

Chickasaw	English Literal Translation
Ihoo aa-li	You’re my woman
Ihoo aa-li	My woman
Toshpa filaama	Hurry back to me
Ihoo aa-li ha	My woman
Ihoo aa-li	My woman

<sup>31</sup> Dale Shackelford, “Honkompa Hilhlha” [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtmail\\_mtsu\\_edu/EeyTFEVX3spGrRvM-j1dRDoBLi3r60WlvWHZCXtTp6UR2Q?e=aEqu88](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtmail_mtsu_edu/EeyTFEVX3spGrRvM-j1dRDoBLi3r60WlvWHZCXtTp6UR2Q?e=aEqu88)

Amihoo at ayatok	My girl left and went away
Ihoo aa-li ha	You're my girl
Ihoo aa-li	My woman
Minti amihoo	Come here my girl
filaamachi	Come back to me
Ihoo aa-li	You're my woman
Chi hattak la-ittibi	I'll fight your man
Honkonpachi	I'll steal you back
Ihoo aa-li	You're my woman

“Honkompa Hilhla,” or commonly called “Stealing Partners,” is a traditional song associated with its dance that the Chickasaw and Choctaw people have sung for centuries. It is a social dance where throughout the song individuals give a war call and rush out to find a partner to “steal.” It begins with a small group of dancers, an equal number of men and women (typically 7-8 of each), circling the singer in the middle who sings with a drum in hand near the dance fire while the community watch in a crowd sitting around the dance circle. The dancers form a line with the men first (each one placing his hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him). The last man and the first

woman hold has as do the rest of the women who form up behind the men. They all walk together in a counterclockwise circle around the singer and the fire.

As the dance begins, the first male dancer calls out a short war cry yip then searches the crowd gathered around for a partner to join with him. It is customary that whoever is asked does not refuse as it is seen as rude, but from time to time someone is rejected. This process repeats down the line sequentially for a few people until others begin to break off when they are ready to ask people to dance with them. Sometimes courageous individuals will ask more than one person to join them. Once they bring back their partner(s), they join the line hand in hand continuing in the circle. When the Choctaw's bring someone back, they will show off their partner in the middle of the dancing area by spinning them around for all to see. Occasionally you will see people steal another person from the circle that has already been taken, and the two thieves will "fight" over the person in a match of tug-of-war. Typically, it is the women dancing who "fight" over the men, but this can be done by either group. It is a lighthearted social dance that is fun for all participants, however, it can also be a time for people to try to make a play for a prospective mate. It has been described humorously as the original version of Speed Dating. At its root, the dance is an early-stage courting dance but is often also just a fun game between friends.

The song is sung primarily by one man with a hand drum as the others dance around the fire. It is a popular song, full of life and movement. At the start of the song, some of the male dancers may also be heard joining in singing, however, it is too fast paced for the dancers to keep up and also worry about assisting the lead singer.

Additionally, the male dancers usually become too distracted by chasing women to sing

the rest of the song. This song is unique in that the women do not double-step with their shell shakers in rhythm to the song as they do in others.

The song is broken up into two distinct sections: the introduction, and the body of the song. Both portions of the song use the same lyrics for the most part, but the difference lies in the tempo. The intro is sung much slower as the dancers just begin to form the line and walk. Drumbeats are also more spread apart. The leader will repeat the first line several times before the song picks up into the body of the song with the lyric "Toshpa filaama." The drumbeat and lead singer then pick up the pace and the dancers begin to go look for their partner. This song can go on as long as the lead singer desires, and he will loop the song until he decides it is time to end. As with all stomp dance songs, every leader has his own style, approach, and version, however, most sing some variation of these lyrics.

"Ihoo aa-li

Ihoo aa-li

Toshpa filaama

Ihoo aa-li ha

Ihoo aa-li"

These words were used as the basis of my song. Although the original song does not contain the later verses which I wrote, individual leaders may wish to add in small

lines of their own. However, on this specific song I have never heard additional lyrical verses. I expanded the song with my own words to help describe the viewpoint of a dancer during the dance, and to flesh it out for a guitar accompaniment. I attempted to match the sentiment of the original words and the atmosphere of the dances with the lyrics I added. The last verse that I added in Chickasaw can be taken humorously in the language as people witness dancers stealing partners from each other, perhaps even fighting over who gets the most attractive girl (or bravest warrior) at that time. It is a flirtatiously fun song to be a part of, and my lyrics attempt to imitate that sentiment.

***Kullihoma Oklhlhili or A Night at Kullihoma<sup>32</sup>***

*Table 2*

Chickasaw	English Literal Translation
Hatak alhiha	People several
Alumpoli hakloli	Words I Hear
Mahli ka	On the wind
Mak-oklhlhili ka	It is night

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<sup>32</sup> Dale Shackelford, "Kullihoma Oklhlhili" [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtmmail\\_mtsu\\_edu/EeyTFEVX3spGrRvM-j1dRDoBLi3r60WlvWHZCXTnp6UR2Q?e=d4Xpfn](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtmmail_mtsu_edu/EeyTFEVX3spGrRvM-j1dRDoBLi3r60WlvWHZCXTnp6UR2Q?e=d4Xpfn)



Lowak ut lowa	Fire is soft
Iyyi ut hilhlha	Feet are dancing
Lowak	Fire
Ho-Hilhlha	we dance
Ilbak	Hand
Ho-ti Halali	we hold each other's
Lowak shokmalali	Fire sparkles
Loksi hakshop obayochi	Turtle shells sound of shaking
Nunni kullo	Garfish
Ankana	Friendship
Honkompa	Stealing Partners
Ho-hilhlha	We dance together
Lowak pachicha isht ayya	Fire bursting it is going
Tikba hikia ma, talo-isht ayya	The one who stands in front is singing
Apakna Yumma	Up on the hill It is quiet there
Chokkilisa	An empty place (because it is empty)
Moma ka	All (the people)
Ho-nosi	All sleep

Lowak shakawi	Fire dwindles
Hushi naktomi	Moon shining

Special Definitions:

“Kullihoma” – Red Spring or Red Well (a place) near Ada, OK

“Chokkilissa” - a quiet place; the ghost village formerly part of the Chickasaw Bluffs near Memphis, TN

“Okhlhili” - Night time

“Hilhlha” - A dance or dancing

“Kapochocha” - Stickball (a popular Native American sport)

“Taloa” - Singing or a song

“Naki Aiulhto Alota” - A full quiver (of arrows; a singing group)

“Minko” - Chief or leader, affectionate title for a respected elder

### Preface:

Whereas previous songs spoke about specific songs and dances, Kullihoma Oklhlhili is a descriptive song of an entire night of activity. It is a modern song written by Keith Shackleford and performed at Kullihoma and other tribal events by Naki Aiulhto Alota (a music and storytelling group comprised of the Shackleford children and sometimes their father). The lyrics attempt to engrave in music cultural activities and adapted traditional sounds for the current era. As with any language, there are concepts that do not fully translate word for word. Because of this I will describe each line's meaning rather than the literal translations. However, in order to understand the description of the song, one must have a basic knowledge of the context of Stomp Dances. For this we will look briefly into the history of Stomp Dancing through time.

### History:

#### Pre-Removal:

A favored time for Stomps to take place was when the day's work ended and dusk began. The song opens with the beginning of such an evening and continues until the last dancers leave as day break dawns a new day. Stomp dances over the centuries have evolved and adapted like all things do. In earlier times, before removal, stomp dances could be heard during the day as they were part of celebrations. Often before another village or tribe was allowed inside the city's palisade walls the hosting town's people would dance Ankana Hilhlha or Friendship Dance to let those outside know they were in the company of friends and no harm would befall them. These festivals could span days

depending on what time of year it was and the reason for the celebration. Stomp dancing, stickball, storytelling, and other games and activities are just a few of the activities that would be heard during the events.

### 1830s-1978:

Today we carry many of these activities forward in their traditional purity, but due to the events of history some have changed. In 1883, about fifty years after removal from their homelands to modern day Oklahoma, it became illegal for the tribes to practice any kind of gathered event, especially those involving festivals, feasts, and social dancing. Many white Americans sought further control of the tribes and, acting without understanding, labeled those events as “devil worship.” For the next 95 years, the law that went into place not only restricted legitimate religious practices but it also ensnared these non-religious social aspects of life. Localized areas also put further restrictions in place and were often the scene of vigilante style violence. These types of events happened both before the federal regulations were officially in place as well as after they were rescinded.

Kill the Indian and save the man was a popular sentiment during this era at religious and industrial boarding schools created for the tribes that promoted the desire to eradicate the culture and identity of each individual. United States Brigadier General Richard Henry Pratt, who operated Fort Marion, which was a military prison designed for Native Americans, and who founded Carlisle Indian Industrial School, was the first

recorded to put those thoughts into words with his quote “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.”

Forced assimilation was done first to the children through the boarding schools, and later to adults. This created generations of tribal members and people who lived in the areas nearby to completely disassociate themselves from any type of tribal social event. However, the Muskogean tribes were resilient and began to take their culture into secret places. Since it was illegal to practice even prayer amongst the tribes until 1978, the dances, stickball games, and cultural activities were taken deep within the woods and performed at night where no one could find or hear them sing. Stomp dances would then begin at sundown and continue until the sun would come up on the horizon. Once the sun came up, they would either divide their separate ways back into normal life, or sometimes stay around for a game of Kapochcha.

#### 1978-2000:

Once the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was signed in 1978, the tribes were then able to practice without fear of beatings, incarceration or other punishments such as the withholding of rations. This did not mean, however, that it was safe in public society nor did it erase the distrust and anxiety instilled in generations of tribal members. It also did not erase the new cultural traditions that were created out of necessity. Because of those pressures, even today, deep in the woods at Stomp Grounds they have created, many tribes still practice their dances once the sun goes down. The Grounds are a place consecrated by a local tribe’s elders and song leaders for the people to gather to practice

traditions and dance together. It has been said (with regards to many of the Grounds which adhere more strictly to traditions) that one cannot find the Grounds until they have first become lost in the woods. These old Grounds have been built far away from towns and you must be invited to join.

#### 2000-Present:

In modern days some of the Grounds have become much more open and relaxed towards visitors, while some (including Kullihoma) are open for all to visit and join in the dances. Kullihoma, which means “Red Spring” or “Red Well,” is a relatively young Ground that only goes back into the early 90s when the tribe was pressured to move out of their old Ground because of community prejudice. Realizing the need to combat social ignorance, the tribe opened Kullihoma as a platform for education, not only to local citizens but especially for younger tribal members to learn the proper behavior and respect of their culture. Kullihoma also became a location for other tribal gatherings that focus on culture. However, historically Kullihoma was a place of great importance to the Chickasaw’s as it was an early landing spot for many of the Chickasaw people shortly after their arrival in Indian Territory in the Removal of 1836. Over the years, the location had been used for many things since but it later went quiet before being brought back into use in the 90s.

Now the tribe has realigned its focus on commercial aspects towards the service of its people. The identity which was Kullihoma has now been mostly transported to the Chickasaw Cultural Center’s Village at Sulphur, OK. This leaves Kullihoma a bit like

Chokkilissa - more quiet than before. However, during when our Green Corn festival once would have been, and during other certain lunar times of the year one can still find traditionalists stomping until dawn.

With its reactivation in the 90s, Kullihoma became the location for Chikasha Ittifama, which means Chickasaw Family or has commonly been called Chickasaw Reunion. At this annual event, hundreds of Chickasaw people from across the nation come together to see each other as a family. Curious visitors experience this event by participating or observing the cultural demonstrations: crafting, storytelling, dancing, singing, playing kapocha, chunkey, and Chickasaw Marbles, and above all eating. This was an event I personally grew up attending where we camped out for Thursday and Friday night. Each night there would be a gathering at sundown up the hill around the fire. The first dance on Thursday would be small, usually Chickasaw only, with Friday night and Saturday night's stomps getting bigger with visitors from other tribes coming each dusk. The smaller dances would only last a few hours, but, when I was younger, the Saturday night dances might last all night or at least until early in the morning. There is no modern type of dancing that compares to this. These were not intended to raise a sexual appetite to music but to tell the stories of life around them and to enjoy the social company of friends and family.

Song Analysis:

The Lyrics and Context:

This song was written with the imagery of a Thursday evening's dance at Kullihoma, when only Chickasaws were present. That evening's dances are the most intimately meaningful of the whole weekend precisely because it is comprised of the most dedicated of the Chickasaw family. This song depicts the rise and fall of the night's fire and the feeling of the dances from beginning to end.

#### The Stage:

A dance fire is burning just below the crest of the hill. It lies at the heart of a wide, dirt packed circle. Brush arbors are fixed on the four cardinal directions and traditionally the Eastern one is symbolically left empty.

#### The Scene:

Each dance begins with a designated man walking around the dance circle announcing and calling to all in Chickasaw that a dance is about to begin and who going to be leading. Between dances men will sit in the North, West and Southern arbors surrounding the circle. The women and some of the men bring chairs and sit either just behind or in-between the arbors in the grass surrounding the circle. The caller cries out for all to join in the first dance, Ankana Hilhlha. As people slowly make their way to form lines at the Eastern edge of the fire, one can hear the rattle of river rocks inside the women's turtle shells strapped to their calves. Their footsteps carry the rhythm of each song while the head male singer leads the men in the singing of the song. With each new song, a new leader is chosen by the caller or Minko who sits in the West. Many songs



will be sung through the night, and the last song stomped is always Hilhlha Falaya or Long Dance.

The Fire:

Lowak is the Chickasaw word for fire. It is an important figure in this song, almost living. The fire is burning normally at the first, but, as the night progresses, it gets bigger and brighter as it responds to the dancers. When the hilhlha winds down, the fire slowly sparks and ebbs towards a soft glow. People leave the circle, make their way downhill and find their sleep.

Table 2

*Table 3*

Verse 1	English description
Hatak alhia Alumpoli hakloli Mahli ka Mak-okllhlili ka Lowak ut lowa Iyyi ut hilhlha	Night is here, the wind is blowing the caller's voice out for all to hear. He cries for all to "listen." The fire glows softly as you hear the sound of feet beginning to dance.

The first verse describes the beginning of the night. The wind blows across the hill, and one can hear a man calling for everyone to gather; a prayer will be said and the first song is about to begin. Generally, with the first dance people are still arriving at the Grounds, casually late as is usual.

*Table 4*

Chickasaw	Verse 2 English description
Lowak Ho-Hilhla Ilbak Ho-ti Halali Lowak shokmalali Loksi hakshop obayochi	Around the fire everyone dances. Grab my hand, we will dance together. The fire is sparkling bright and the sound of turtle shells rattling fills the air.

Verse 2 adds another voice as more people gather to dance. The fire gets bigger and brighter as the night gets darker around everyone. Each pass of the dancers around stirs up the fire with the air movement created. In the social dances everyone goes together hand-in-hand counterclockwise around the fire. The sound of turtle shells and cans can be heard a long way off as more women join in their double-step pattern.

Table 5

Chickasaw	Verse 3 English Description
Nunni kullo	We danced Garfish, Friendship, and Stealing
Ankana	Partners together. The fire leaps and bursts
Honkompa	into the air, the leader stands in front singing.
Ho-hilhla	
Lowak pachicha isht ayya	
Tikba hikia ma, talo-isht ayya	

Verse 3 is a list of some of the songs one might dance at Kullihoma. It is not a complete list, but a grouping of some of everyone’s favorite dances. While most of our social dances are shared between all of the South Eastern tribes, Nuni Kullo is the only known to be specifically Chickasaw in origin. More voices are added to this verse as it is the climax of the evening where the most people are dancing together at the same time. The fire burns its biggest and brightest of the night as the stomping intensifies, the dance belt pom-poms swishing and fanning the flames, and the dancers turn in towards the fire and beckon it with their hands to join them.

Table 6

Chickasaw	Verse 4 English Description
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Apakna Yumma	Everything gets quiet up on the hill. Silence all around. Everyone has gone to their beds. The fire dwindles down, and the moon is the only one left awake.
Chokkilisa	
Moma ka	
Ho-nosi	
Lowak shakawi	
Hushi naktomi	

Verse 4 is just like the fire: dwindling to its quiet coals. As the night gets later and later, people begin to leave to find a place to rest for the next day's events. Young children have been sleeping for hours and their parents wish to join them. The fire dies down low and its brightness is soon overtaken by that of the moon.

The Music:

The music was composed as a collaboration of the Shackleford family. The lyrics and primary melody were developed by Keith Shackleford, while the accompanying harmonies were created by each singing member of the family. There are four sisters and myself who sang this song originally; Amanda, Skye, Brooke, Katy, and Dale (the members of Naki Aiulhto Alota). It is an example of traditional music set to a 5-part harmonic system. While there are no known remaining non-ceremonial Chickasaw songs

to my knowledge, this song's melody has attempted to incorporate elements of traditional sounds with the sentiment of the people with a modern perspective. The last of the known songs have faded with the passing of elders within the last two decades. The recording of this song does not feature all of the original parts, only the 3 primary voices all sung by me.

The melody was created by limiting the vocal notes to what the Native American 5-hole river cane flute was able to produce. The entire melody can be played via a flute and is featured in the beginning and ending of the song as the main instrument. It cries out into the night reminiscent of the sounds of night birds singing as the dances begin and end the evening. This song was written in a minor key related to what the original flute was fixed in to create a sense of self-reflection and somberness. The shakers are symbolic of the hand rattle that song leaders use to set the pace of the song as well as the constant rhythm carried out by the women's leg shakers. In the original performances of this song, the shaker was a traditional hand turtle rattle, however this recording utilizes wooden egg shakers in its place.

*Fochoosh Hatchie or Duck River Blues:*<sup>33</sup>

Table 7

Chickasaw	English Literal Translation
Fochoosh Hatchie	Duck river
Fochoosh Hatchie	Duck river
Oka Yopi-li	Water, I'm going to swim
Amihoo at sha-kaniyachi	My woman she left me
Amihoo at sha-kaniyachi	My woman she left me
Hattak issikopama in-ilbak hallali	A man that's bad (evil), his hand she's holding
	Duck river
Fochoosh Hatchie	Duck river
Fochoosh Hatchie	Water, I'm going to swim
Oka Yopi-li	The land, all of it is sick
Yakni moma kat hobiika	The people, all of them are sick
Hattak moma kat hobiika	I'm in pain and can't move
Sah-topa aiina ik-kanalo	

<sup>33</sup> Dale Shackelford, "Fochoosh Hatchie" [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtmmail\\_mtsu\\_edu/EYBe7um6SVtOnGy0DXq4fgwBcgq76xAHdIRTvvzi0LnHA?e=PQ2BzS](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtmmail_mtsu_edu/EYBe7um6SVtOnGy0DXq4fgwBcgq76xAHdIRTvvzi0LnHA?e=PQ2BzS)

Fochoosh Hatchie	Duck river
Fochoosh Hatchie	Duck river
Oka Yopi-li	Water, I'm going to swim

“*Fochoosh Hatchie*,” or “*Duck River*,” was written after visiting Link Farm State Archeological Area. Link Farm is a Native American mound site situated along the Duck River, in a place well with-in the borders of the Chickasaw people’s ancient homelands in Tennessee. It is north of I-40 not far from Loretta Lynn’s ranch. This site was once of great importance as it lies at the conflux of two rivers (the Duck and the Buffalo), and thus held significant strategic value. It also is where one of the single greatest collections of tribal artifacts has been found (the Duck River Cache). The mound site is situated high above the Duck River on plateaus of the hills and is still fairly well preserved today for locations of its type. Part of the reason for this is due to it only being open to the public for tours on two back-to-back weekends a year, for which one must reserve and pay for limited tickers in advance. I was fortunate to be able to tour it with one of my sisters only two short weeks prior to the entire nation being put on lockdown for COVID-19 in March of 2020.

When I saw the Duck River, I was struck by how green that it was, yet also how clear. The tint in the water was a stark contrast to the red hue to which I am used to in Oklahoma. This helped me understand some visual context to Patton's song *Green River Blues* (Patton, 1932). The Duck River flowed clean and clear until it passed beyond the bend. If one visits this place of the river coming from the south, there is a bridge which crosses over the river and seemingly immediately dead ends into a cliff face. When first I laid eyes on this, I began to see why this would be a great place for a town site. Looking at the lay of the landscape near where mound sites are typically found, I could easily imagine other good places where villages once would have sat. The Link Farm site featured not only tall cliffs that would have added natural protection for the town's inhabitants, but also abundant clean water at the river's edge. Down across the river in a flat basin was also a prime location for cultivating crops.

These thoughts continually spun through my mind as we toured the main plaza surrounded by mounds, with the tour guide pointing out where others had previously stood. I could not help but wonder if any of my ancestors once lived and were buried here. The tour also took us high upon the ridge just above the cliffs and river to where smaller house mounds stood, now overgrown with trees. Our tour guide pointed to us from there where they had found dozens of stone box coffins that unfortunately had been dug up, looted, and destroyed as settlers came into the area. We unfortunately did not have the luxury of time to walk to see them.

While the song *Fochoosh Hatchie* does not include specific details of this visit to where this settlement once proudly stood, the mound site and location was of extreme value to the inspiration of this song. I thought to myself when approaching writing songs



for the thesis “what did the old Blues cats sing about?” The first two things that came to mind were trains and rivers. While I don’t have the same experience of trains as they did during that era, we can all share in the timelessness of the rivers. My mind immediately went to the Duck River as it was a place of prominence in my memory from my visit. While it was not my first time visiting a mound site, it certainly has been one of my favorites.

The Lyrics:

Verse 1

Another thing that the old bluesmen would write about was the blues of losing their woman. This I tried to imitate with my lyrics:

*Table 8*

Amihoo at sha-kaniyachi	My girl has left me for another guy. She’s left me for good. The guy she left me for is not a good character; bad, evil, rotten.
Amihoo at sha-kaniyachi	
Hattak issikopama in-ilbak hallali	

It seemed in their music there was always another man lurking around their back door trying to steal their woman. Just as that was common then, so it is still something we see today, especially with young people. It is a classic troupe and story that has gone on for centuries.

Verse 2

*Table 9*

Yakni moma kat hobiika	There's a sickness everywhere. The land feels it, the people feel it, and it is tearing everyone down. It has gotten me and hurts so much I cannot even move.
Hattak moma kat hobiika	
Sah-topa aiina ik-kanalo	

Another lyrical idiosyncrasy which is common in delta era blues is suffering and hardships. This is why it was called the Blues. While the music was often upbeat and happy, the lyrics would tell of hard times that would get people feeling low. The hard times sung about were not always hypothetical or stories, however. The lyricists were often very literal and direct in their meanings, even if it were hidden behind analogies and characters. Many of these hard times were current events that the singers had lived through. Patton famously did this with his song *High Water Everywhere* and *High Water Everywhere part 2*. Part 1 became one of his most highly favored songs, which was about the great floods from the Mississippi River in 1927.<sup>1</sup> I tried to emulate this in verse two speaking of how the land and all the people were sick. The COVID-19 pandemic was present for a few months by the time I wrote this song and was on everyone's minds. Little did I know when I wrote the last phrase of the second verse about hurting that I would come down with the virus later that fall and experience the effects of the illness myself.

## Chorus

*Table 10*

Fochoosh Hatchie	The Duck river is where I want to go. It's the place to get away from it all, and just swim.
Fochoosh Hatchie	
Oka Yopi-li	

The chorus of the song is simple and repetitive. It speaks of going to swim in the Duck River. Original drafts of the song included other activities such as going to fish, but syncopation of the lyrics in Chickasaw did not work as well. However, with either line it speaks of the desire to escape all of the problems in life to just visit the river. The Duck River in the narrative of the song becomes symbolic for a place of rest, peace, and refuge. It is a place where nothing can touch you as you float downstream in the cool water. Relationship problems and world-wide epidemics have no influence there, it is just you and the relaxation of the river.

## The Music:

The music from this song came after listening to all of Patton's work and an extensive portion of other contemporary artists of his time as well as artists who he trained such as Howlin' Wolf. While by the Chicago era of blues they had adapted the music to fit larger band arrangements and electric instruments, much of the overall

rhythms of the songs still feel the same. It follows the syncopated and accented double eighth note pattern. Patton's blues songs such as *34 Blues*, *Revenue Man Blues*, *High Water Everywhere part 1*, or *Screamin and Hollerin the Blues* all demonstrate this double beat pattern well. Patton breaks up much of his rhythmic playing with small melodic lines on guitar that demonstrates his mastery of the genre and is a major factor in what propelled him to popularity. I tried to copy his style and rhythmic patterns as well as the use of melodic lines in my song, however, I cannot pretend to be able to write at his level.

### *Flute Blues*.<sup>34</sup>

The *Flute Blues* is an instrumental piece created to showcase how the Native American style flute can work with various forms of Blues. It is accompanied by a solo guitar playing a typical blues I-IV-I-V chord progression with a turnaround after the end with V/IV-I-V. The guitar composition of this track is centered around the Chicago Blues style guitar work, like the works of Howlin' Wolf or Muddy Waters, both of whom learned directly from Patton and later crossed over into the Chicago style.<sup>35</sup> Waters' song *I Can't Be Satisfied* became another source of inspiration for the guitar work in *Flute Blues*.<sup>36</sup> *Flute Blues* is my interpretation of how that genre sounds without the full band,

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<sup>34</sup> Dale Shackelford, "Flute Blues", [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtsu\\_mtsu\\_edu/EXuLpugBPrHupO9jEjAPHQBUIYzhQ10z3uxGB0kRurAxzw?e=P84LJ5](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtsu_mtsu_edu/EXuLpugBPrHupO9jEjAPHQBUIYzhQ10z3uxGB0kRurAxzw?e=P84LJ5)

<sup>35</sup> Peter Rutkoff, and Will Scott. "Preaching the Blues: The Mississippi Delta of Muddy Waters." *The Kenyon Review* 27, no. 2 (2005): 129-47. Accessed March 24, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4338737>.

<sup>36</sup> Muddy Waters. *I Can't Be Satisfied*. Vogue Productions. June 1948.

but with the Native flute. Due to how Native American flutes are naturally tuned this song is in a minor key. The guitar accompaniment is not tuned perfectly by modern standards, but rather tuned to fit as close as possible in an open tuning to the tuning of the flute (in this case between somewhere between Gm and F#m). For this I intentionally follow descending melodic patterns to match both Hilhaha Taloa and Blues genres.

***Lookin' Back Blues:***<sup>37</sup>

*Table 11*

English, Chickasaw, and Choctaw lyrics
I'm gonna leave my woman
She done messed around
Snuck off with some other man
Now I'm gonna skip town
Won't look back no
Won't look back no more

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<sup>37</sup> Dale Shackelford, "Lookin' Back Blues" [https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtmmail\\_mtsu\\_edu/ETMpZXPZ5ydCtGC\\_112G0toB36N9Mhr2Z\\_25UIp37T\\_0aA?e=adNI77](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtmmail_mtsu_edu/ETMpZXPZ5ydCtGC_112G0toB36N9Mhr2Z_25UIp37T_0aA?e=adNI77)

You'll wake up in the morning hoyo (girl/baby – Choctaw)

Just the dog scratching at the door

I left my best shoes ahoyo (my baby – Choctaw)

Just inside the door

Kochabla Nowa chi (I'll walk on outside - Chickasaw)

Dirty gray feet on the floor

Won't look back no

Won't look back no more

You'll wake up in the morning hoyo (baby – Choctaw)

Okisat amofi sholaafi (my dog scratching at the door – Chickasaw)

Ayalachi akithano (I don't know where I'm going - Chickasaw)

Natalowa pays my way (my music/guitar pays my way – Chickasaw)

Long as you ain't here

You stay far away

Aashka pisa (Looking back – Chickasaw)

Aashka pisa keyo (I won't look back – Chickasaw)

You'll wake up in the morning

Dog scratching at the door

Lost all my skulli (money – Choctaw)

Don't know where I am

But this life still better

Then being your man

Won't look back no

Won't look back no more

You'll wake up in the morning

I'll be a long ways outside your door

Lookin Back Blues was written as a period piece of the early 1900s, specifically the Mississippi blues era of the 1920s-30s. The melody and music was inspired by Blind Willie McTell's *You Was Born to Die*. It was common practice during that time period for bluesmen to share and borrow songs from each other, often changing the words to make the songs their own. Some took offense to such actions, but it was nonetheless a very common occurrence. For this song I borrowed some of the verse melody to base my song upon, diverging from it in the last part of the verses and during the choruses.

The lyrics for this song were inspired by two distinct sources. They were written in main part as something that would reflect the typical nature of blues songs of the day; the feeling of being down and out, the loss and disengagement of love, and being left with nothing but your own music. The secondary part that inspired the lyrics was centered on pulling forward personal experience of romantic issues to build a relatability

for the listener. The bulk of this song was written in one night after I had gone to bed. Words began to race through my mind, and I knew it needed to be written down. After jotting them down I promptly fell asleep. As with any good blues song it revolves around personal loss and the depressing feelings associated with it. The purpose of this song was not to display specific culture, instead to demonstrate how the language easily fits into the sound and style of the genre of blues.

The first verse is entirely about setting the stage for what the song is about. In this song the singer feels hurt about the actions his girl has taken. He knows that she runs around the town with men, and most likely has known for some time, only now he has decided to take action. However, it seems that she is the one who controls the house so he realized he must be the one to leave. From here he turns into a rambling man with no home. While he feels the pain of leaving that behind him, he knows it is for the best and he refuses to look back. She does not really care for him, and the dog is the only one that wants to follow.

The second verse starts after he is gone. It describes his state on the road. The lyric of him leaving his shoes can be taken both literally and symbolically. In going away he left behind what was both important to him and what was a protecting buffer to the world. They are just inside the door, right there out of reach. Even though life is now tough, he still refuses to go back. She will wake up and he will be gone. From his point of view perhaps it will help her realize her mistake.

The third verse is about what he turns to in order to survive. Music is all he has left. He has no job, no home, no shoes, and no luck. He does have his guitar and that is



enough as far as he is concerned. Here he is finally truly accepting that he does not want to be around her, and would rather be anywhere that she is not.

The final and fourth verse is another description of how hard his life is with nowhere to call home. While it is not explicitly stated, he most likely spent all of his money in juke joints on alcohol or gambled it away trying to gain a dollar. He has traveled so far and lived such a hard life he no longer even knows where he is, but through all of the struggles and difficulties would still choose it over her.

This song I wrote with English, Chickasaw, and Choctaw. I am much more proficient in Chickasaw than Choctaw which is why it is more predominant in the song; however, the languages are sister languages. Some consider them different dialects of the Muskogean language group, and as such are very similar. The largest part of both are interchangeable, but out of safety I have labeled the Chickasaw phrases as purely Chickasaw instead, even though those phrases could likely still be understood by speakers of both.

One reason Choctaw was specifically included is as a tribute to Charlie Patton and Howlin Wolf who were both Choctaw from Mississippi. Another reason is because the term “hoyo” and other forms of that word have become common use among the Chickasaw people in the last several years. It is used to mean “my woman,” “my girl,” “my wife,” or simply females in general. Words like “hoyo” and “skulli” both are heard often mixed with English at tribal events. A person who attends fairs or events hosted by the tribes can walk around and expect to hear people regularly speaking mixed sentences with both their native tongue and English at the same time. Because of this I chose to write the song in a manner that reflect how tribal members regularly speak.

*Down the Dirt Road Blues:*<sup>38</sup>

Table 12

Vocal Lyrics	English Literal Translation (where needed)
(Shackleford v. 1)	
Akanomi hopaki yummat	My family/cousins are a long ways away
Akanomi hopaki yummat	My family/cousins are a long ways away
Chin-chokwat ayya ish-kanihchi ta	Your house, how will we get there
(v. 2)	
Ahposi ii-wathali chi	My grandma is frying
Ahposi ii-wathali chi	My grandma is frying
Shokka nippi chi bunna ii-achi	Pork, do you want some she asked
(Patton v. 1)	
I'm goin' away	
To a world unknown	
I'm goin' away	
To a world unknown	

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<sup>38</sup> Dale Shackleford, "Down the Dirt Road Blues",  
[https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q\\_mtsu\\_mtsu\\_edu/EWDnh1ZPcdRDsWMoRAHFWFABQKlhTmmQbYnAfvXIijpBYQ?e=y22ube](https://mtmail.mtsu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/des4q_mtsu_mtsu_edu/EWDnh1ZPcdRDsWMoRAHFWFABQKlhTmmQbYnAfvXIijpBYQ?e=y22ube)

I'm worried now but I won't be worried

long

(v. 2)

I feel like choppin'

Chips flying everywhere

I feel like choppin'

Chips flying everywhere

Been to the Nation

Oh, but I couldn't stay there

(v. 3)

Well I can't go down

Any dirt road myself

Well I can't go down

Any dirt road by myself

Who you gonna carry (spoken)

Won't carry my rider

No I'll carry me someone else

*Down the Dirt Road Blues* is a song written and originally recorded by Charlie Patton in 1929.<sup>39</sup> It was one of his most famous songs and has been covered by countless artists. It details the hardships he battled everywhere he went. His original song has a few other verses not included in the version presented for this thesis. I chose these three verses from his original song based on the following criteria.

*Table 13*

English Verse # in My Song	Verse # in Original Song	Reason for Inclusion
1	1	Recognizability. Maintained its position as opening verse.
2	3	“Nation” reference. This refers to Indian Territory/Oklahoma
3	6	Contains title lyrics. Maintained its position as closing verse.

The Chickasaw lyrics added to this song are original for this project. My perspective of these lyrics is about how the singer is not where he wants to be, he wants to be somewhere else, where his family is. Whereas Patton’s lyrics detail how life is rough, where he is, and how he would like to be somewhere else, mine describe the place the singer wants to be. The lyric reflects everyone’s longing for a better life.

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<sup>39</sup> Charlie Patton. *Down the Dirt Road Blues*. Paramount. Wisconsin. November, 1929.

The first verse is all about where the singer's people are at and how he is going to get to them. Family is one of the most significant parts of life for the Chickasaw people. One's whole tribe is considered one family; "akanomi alhlhia" is a common phrase used among Chickasaw people describing "all my relations" or "my whole tribe." Cousin, aunt, uncle, etc. are all terms used to describe the various relations one has with other members of the tribe regardless of immediate kinship. It is normal for someone who is not closely related to another member to call them their cousin.

While unstated, the second verse is intended to be one of memory and imagination. The singer is longing for something he does not have now. He imagines his own grandmother preparing food for his welcome home. It is lyrically symbolic of the peace he does not possess. Something as simple as grandmother's fried bacon is a reminder of what he can come back to, which leads into his current state of mind in Patton's subsequent verses.

Musically this is the most difficult of the songs to learn and play for this thesis project. Patton was self-taught and created a style of picking not effectively used by anyone else. His manner of playing chords mixed with random seeming breaks to play individual notes makes imitation difficult. However, this is not immediately apparent to the average listener not attempting to learn his works.

His style of breaking stride between chords is demonstrated in this song, it also leads him to a unique sound that caused him to change time signature often, sometimes nearly every bar if measured by modern standards. This inconsistency in time signature is another part of Patton's distinctive sound which became the original sound of the Delta Blues. No matter what time signature Patton played, or did not play in, his coursing

rhythms that propel most of his songs are choppy, accented eighth notes. Seeing as this is the same rhythm found in Hilhha songs is it reasonable to consider that he was influenced by them?

My version of this song musically begins with beating the guitar body and strings to mimic both his strum pattern and Shell Shaker rhythms. This was done to reflect the similarities both share. After two verses in Chickasaw with this type of percussive playing, I transition into playing the original pick pattern and guitar work of Patton's recording.

## CHAPTER V: Reflection

So, is there some sort of connection between Muskogean indigenous cultural music and Delta Blues? I have been made aware that I am not the only one considering theories along these lines. *Rumble*, after all, was my personal catalyst into this search for connectivity.<sup>40</sup> Whereas others have established Patton as being Choctaw, they looked no further into how this part of his heritage actually could have influenced his music. This Thesis has intended to establish a closer link to the Native culture to which he belonged.

How can a culture like the Muskogean live in a place for centuries without leaving an imprint on the people who followed? Chickasaws, Choctaws, blacks and whites were not peoples who lived centuries apart, rather these were people who were

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<sup>40</sup> *Rumble: Indians who Rocked the World*, directed by Catherine Bainbridge (Jan, 2019; PBS; Rezolution Pictures (Rumble) In., Vision Maker Media), PBS Broadcast and DVD.

contemporaries on the land. None of these groups have faded into history. How can there not be an impact on the new people who came into an already established territory? We know it impacted the white culture – just look at river names, towns, foods, etc. How can we begin to dismiss the impact on the black culture?

Going forward, how big is Patton's influence on subsequent genres of music? So many artists have listed him as their direct or indirect inspiration. His form of music created what later became much of our modern chord progressions. As a whole, early Blues music has shaped the entirety of American popular music. Don't we owe it to consider where this genre began?

It may be impossible empirically to prove a direct connection between the Native tribes and the genre of Blues, but I believe that enough situational evidence exists and has been produced in this Thesis that will have the power to convince many of this influence.

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## APPENDIX

Blues artists known, or who claimed to be Native American:

Andrew Baxter <sup>41</sup>	Josephine Baker <sup>42</sup>
Big Chief Henry's String Band <sup>43</sup>	Leadbelly <sup>44</sup>
Bo Carter <sup>35</sup>	Louisiana Red <sup>35</sup>
Bunk Johnson <sup>45</sup>	Lowell Fulson <sup>46</sup>
Champion Jack Dupree <sup>35</sup>	Mississippi Sheiks <sup>35</sup>
Charley Patton	Poor/Big Joe Williams <sup>35</sup>
Earlene Lewis <sup>35</sup>	Pops Foster <sup>47</sup>
Eddie Clearwater <sup>48</sup>	Robert Wilkins <sup>35</sup>
George Lewis <sup>40</sup>	Roy Brown <sup>35</sup>
Howlin' Wolf <sup>49</sup>	Sam Chatmon <sup>35</sup>
Jessie Mae Hemphill <sup>50</sup>	Scrapper Blackwell <sup>51</sup>
Jim Baxter <sup>35</sup>	Tina Turner <sup>52</sup>
Jimi Hendrix <sup>53</sup>	Tommy McClennon <sup>35</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Max Haymes, "The Red Man and The Blues", EarlyBlues.com, 1980 <http://www.earlyblues.com/Essay%20-%20The%20Red%20Man%20and%20The%20Blues%20-%20Chapter%204.htm>

<sup>42</sup> New World Encyclopedia, *Josephine Baker*, [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Josephine\\_Baker](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Josephine_Baker)

<sup>43</sup> Joe Gioia, *The Guitar and the New World (a Fugitive History)*, Excelsior Editions, 2013

<sup>44</sup> Ellen Harold and Don Fleming, *Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly)*, Association for Cultural Equality (ACE), <http://www.culturalequity.org/alan-lomax/friends/ledbetter>

<sup>45</sup> Don Crook, *The Bunk Johnson Collection*, Iberia Parish Library, 2009

<sup>46</sup> Tony Russell, *Lowel Fulson obituary*, The Guardian, March 1999

<sup>47</sup> Morgen Stiegler, "The African Experience on American Shores: Influence of Native American Contact on the Development of Jazz", Bowling Green State University, 2009

<sup>48</sup> Jon Pareles, *Eddy Clearwater, Chicago Bluesman, Is Dead at 83*, New York Times, June 2018

<sup>49</sup> James Segrest and Mark Hoffman, *Moanin' at Midnight: The Life and Times of Howlin' Wolf*, (Pantheon, 2004)

<sup>50</sup> LaBalle, Candace "Hemphill, Jessie Mae 1937- ." *Contemporary Black Biography*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. (March 26, 2021). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/hemphill-jessie-mae-1937>

<sup>51</sup> Leonda Levchuk, *Blues Concert and Discussion*, The National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC, August 2009

<sup>52</sup> Oprah Winfrey, *Oprah Talks to Tina Turner*, O, the Oprah Magazine, May 2005

<sup>53</sup> Rumble: Indians who Rocked the World, directed by Catherine Bainbridge (Jan, 2019; PBS; Rezolution Pictures (Rumble) In., Vision Maker Media), PBS Broadcast and DVD.

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