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Source: *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), pp. 537-565

Published by: [Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919153>

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The Indians' New World: The Catawba Experience

James H. Merrell

IN August 1608 John Smith and his band of explorers captured an Indian named Amoroleck during a skirmish along the Rappahannock River. Asked why his men—a hunting party from towns upstream—had attacked the English, Amoroleck replied that they had heard the strangers “were a people come from under the world, to take their world from them.”¹ Smith’s prisoner grasped a simple yet important truth that students of colonial America have overlooked: after 1492 native Americans lived in a world every bit as new as that confronting transplanted Africans or Europeans.

The failure to explore the Indians’ new world helps explain why, despite many excellent studies of the native American past,² colonial history often remains “a history of those men and women—English, European, and African—who transformed America from a geographical expression into a new nation.”³ One reason Indians generally are left out may be the apparent inability to fit them into the new world theme, a theme that exerts a powerful hold on our historical imagination and runs throughout

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¹ Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, eds., *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith . . .*, II (Edinburgh, 1910), 427.

² Bernard W. Sheehan, “Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XXVI (1969), 267-286; James Axtell, “The Ethnohistory of Early America: A Review Essay,” *ibid.*, XXXV (1978), 110-144.

³ Benjamin W. Labaree, *America's Nation-Time: 1607-1789* (New York, 1976), cover, see also xi. Two exceptions are Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), and Mary Beth Norton et al., *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States* (Boston, 1982), I. For analyses of the scholarly neglect of Indians in colonial America see Thad W. Tate, “The Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake and Its Modern Historians,” in Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1979), 30-32; Douglas Greenberg, “The Middle Colonies in Recent American Historiography,” *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXVI (1979), 415-416; and Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York, 1982), 3-7.

our efforts to interpret American development. From Frederick Jackson Turner to David Grayson Allen, from Melville J. Herskovits to Daniel C. Littlefield, scholars have analyzed encounters between peoples from the Old World and conditions in the New, studying the complex interplay between Europeans or African cultural patterns and the American environment.⁴ Indians crossed no ocean, peopled no faraway land. It might seem logical to exclude them.

The natives' segregation persists, in no small degree, because historians still tend to think only of the new world as the New World, a geographic entity bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the one side and the Pacific on the other. Recent research suggests that process was as important as place. Many settlers in New England recreated familiar forms with such success that they did not really face an alien environment until long after their arrival.⁵ Africans, on the other hand, were struck by the shock of the new at the moment of their enslavement, well before they stepped on board ship or set foot on American soil.⁶ If the Atlantic was not a barrier between one world and another, if what happened to people was more a matter of subtle cultural processes than mere physical displacements, perhaps we should set aside the maps and think instead of a "world" as the physical and cultural milieu within which people live and a "new world" as a dramatically different milieu demanding basic changes in ways of life.⁷

⁴ Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," American Historical Association, *Annual Report for the Year 1893* (Washington, D.C., 1894), 199-227; Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1981); Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York, 1941); Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, La., 1981).

⁵ Allen, *In English Ways*; T. H. Breen, "Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXII (1975), 3-28, and "Transfer of Culture: Chance and Design in Shaping Massachusetts Bay, 1630-1660," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, CXXXII (1978), 3-17.

More generally, others have argued that the European settlement of America marked an expansion of the Old World rather than a separation from it, "an extension of Europe rather than a wholly new world" (G. R. Elton, "Contentment and Discontent on the Eve of Colonization," in David B. Quinn, ed., *Early Maryland in a Wider World* [Detroit, Mich., 1982], 117-118; quotation from Quinn, "Why They Came," *ibid.*, 143).

⁶ Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective* (Philadelphia, 1976), 22; Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (New York, 1977), 25-34.

⁷ While never thoroughly examined, the term has often been used this way by students of Indian history and others. For example, see Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* (College Station, Tex., 1975); Carolyn Gilman,

Considered in these terms, the experience of natives was more closely akin to that of immigrants and slaves, and the idea of an encounter between worlds can—indeed, must—include the aboriginal inhabitants of America.

For American Indians a new order arrived in three distinct yet overlapping stages.⁸ First, alien microbes killed vast numbers of natives, sometimes before the victims had seen a white or black face. Next came traders who exchanged European technology for Indian products and brought natives into the developing world market. In time traders gave way to settlers eager to develop the land according to their own lights.⁹ These three intrusions combined to transform native existence, disrupting established cultural habits and requiring creative responses to drastically altered conditions. Like their new neighbors, then, Indians were forced to blend old and new in ways that would permit them to survive in the present without forsaking their past. By the close of the colonial era, native Americans as well as whites and blacks had created new societies, each similar to, yet very different from, its parent culture.

The range of native societies produced by this mingling of ingredients probably exceeded the variety of social forms Europeans and Africans developed.¹⁰ Rather than survey the broad spectrum of Indian adaptations, this article considers in some depth the response of natives in one area, the southern piedmont (see map). Avoiding extinction and eschewing retreat, the Indians of the piedmont have been in continuous contact with the invaders from across the sea almost since the beginning of the colonial period, thus permitting a thorough analysis of cultural intercourse.¹¹ Moreover, a regional approach embracing groups from South

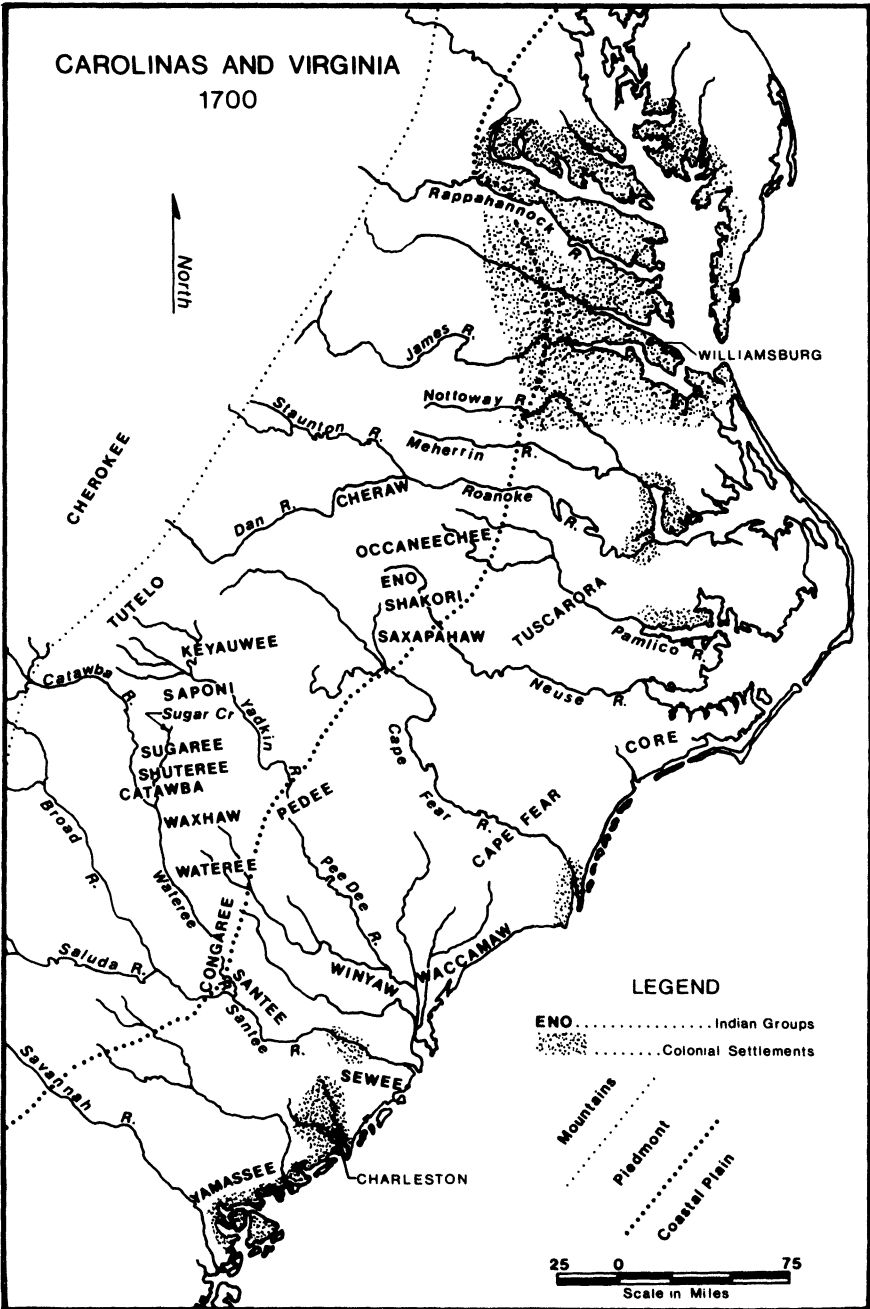
Where Two Worlds Meet: The Great Lakes Fur Trade (St. Paul, Minn., 1982); Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 2d ed. (New York, 1973); Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York, 1982); and Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York, 1976).

⁸ See T.J.C. Brassier, "Group Identification along a Moving Frontier," *Verhandlungen des XXXVIII Internationalen Amerikanistenkongresses*, II (Munich, 1970), 261-262.

⁹ Salisbury divides the course of events into two phases, the first including diseases and trade goods, the second encompassing settlement (*Manitou and Providence*, 12).

¹⁰ For the societies created by Europeans and Africans see James A. Henretta, *The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815: An Interdisciplinary Analysis* (Lexington, Mass., 1973), esp. 112-116; Jack P. Greene, "Society and Economy in the British Caribbean during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *American Historical Review*, LXXIX (1974), 1515-1517; and Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *ibid.*, LXXXV (1980), 44-78.

¹¹ Among some Indian peoples a fourth stage, missionaries, could be added to the three outlined above. These agents did not, however, play an important part in the piedmont (or in most other areas of the southeast) during the colonial period.



Carolina to Virginia can transcend narrow (and still poorly understood) ethnic or "tribal" boundaries without sacrificing the richness of detail a focused study provides.

Indeed, piedmont peoples had so much in common that a regional perspective is almost imperative. No formal political ties bound them at the onset of European contact, but a similar environment shaped their lives, and their adjustment to this environment fostered cultural uniformity. Perhaps even more important, these groups shared a single history once Europeans and Africans arrived on the scene. Drawn together by their cultural affinities and their common plight, after 1700 they migrated to the Catawba Nation, a cluster of villages along the border between the Carolinas that became the focus of native life in the region. Tracing the experience of these upland communities both before and after they joined the Catawbans can illustrate the consequences of contact and illuminate the process by which natives learned to survive in their own new world.¹²

Lack of evidence precludes discussion of native religion among upland communities or the changes in belief and ceremony that occurred after contact. It is clear, however, that Indians there opposed any systematic efforts to convert them to Christianity. See Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia: From Whence Is Inferred a Short View of Maryland and North Carolina*, ed. Richard L. Morton (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1956), 59.

¹² Catawbans and their Indian neighbors have been objects of much study and considerable disagreement. Because these peoples lived away from areas of initial European settlement, detailed records are scarce, and archaeologists are only beginning to help fill the gaps in the evidence. Important questions—the linguistic and political affiliations of some groups, their social structures, the degree of influence exerted by powerful societies to the east, west, and south, even their population—remain unanswered. But there are many reasons to argue for a fundamental cultural uniformity in this area beyond a common environment, hints of similar cultural traits, and the shared destiny of the region's inhabitants. Although these scattered villages fought with outsiders from the coast and the mountains, the north and the south, there is a distinct lack of recorded conflict among peoples in the piedmont itself. Peaceful relations may have been reinforced by a sense of common origin, for some (if not all) of these groups—including Saponis, Tutelos, Occaneechees, Catawbans, and Cheraws—spoke variant forms of the Siouan language and were descended from migrants who entered the area some seven centuries before Columbus arrived in America. Finally, other natives were cognizant of connections among these far-flung towns. The Iroquois, for example, called natives from the Catawbans to the Tutelos by the collective name "Toderichroone." For studies of these peoples see James Mooney, *The Siouan Tribes of the East*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 22 (Washington, D.C., 1894); Joffre Lanning Coe, "The Cultural Sequence of the Carolina Piedmont," in James B. Griffin, ed., *Archeology of Eastern United States* (Chicago, 1952), 301-311; Douglas Summers Brown, *The Catawba Indians: The People of the River* (Columbia, S.C., 1966); Charles M. Hudson, *The Catawba Nation* (Athens, Ga., 1970); and James H. Merrell, "Natives in a New World: The Catawba Indians of Carolina, 1650-1800" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1982).

For centuries, ancestors of the Catawbias had lived astride important aboriginal trade routes and straddled the boundary between two cultural traditions, a position that involved them in a far-flung network of contacts and affected everything from potting techniques to burial practices.¹³ Nonetheless, Africans and Europeans were utterly unlike any earlier foreign visitors to the piedmont. Their arrival meant more than merely another encounter with outsiders; it marked an important turning point in Indian history. Once these newcomers disembarked and began to feel their way across the continent, they forever altered the course and pace of native development.

Bacteria brought the most profound disturbances to upcountry villages. When Hernando de Soto led the first Europeans into the area in 1540, he found large towns already “grown up in grass” because “there had been a pest in the land” two years before, a malady probably brought inland by natives who had visited distant Spanish posts.¹⁴ The sources are silent about other “pests” over the next century, but soon after the English began colonizing Carolina in 1670 the disease pattern became all too clear. Major epidemics struck the region at least once every generation—in 1698, 1718, 1738, and 1759—and a variety of less virulent illnesses almost never left native settlements.¹⁵

Indians were not the only inhabitants of colonial America living—and dying—in a new disease environment. The swamps and lowlands of the

¹³ Coe, “Cultural Sequence,” in Griffin, ed., *Archeology of Eastern U.S.*, 301-311; Hudson, *Catawba Nation*, 11-17; William E. Myer, “Indian Trails of the Southeast,” Bureau of American Ethnology, *Forty-Second Annual Report* (Washington, D.C., 1928), plate 15.

¹⁴ “True Relation of the Vicissitudes That Attended the Governor Don Hernando De Soto and Some Nobles of Portugal in the Discovery of the Province of Florida Now Just Given by a Fidalgo of Elvas,” in Edward Gaylord Bourne, ed., *Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto . . .*, I (New York, 1904), 66. See also John Grier Varner and Jeannette Johnson Varner, trans. and eds., *The Florida of the Inca . . .* (Austin, Tex., 1951), 298, 315, and Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983), 262-264.

¹⁵ South Carolina Council to Lords Proprietors, Apr. 23, 1698, in Alexander S. Salley, ed., *Commissions and Instructions from the Lords Proprietors of Carolina to Public Officials of South Carolina, 1685-1715* (Columbia, S.C., 1916), 105; Alexander Spotswood to the Board of Trade, Dec. 22, 1718, C.O. 5/1318, 590, Public Record Office (Library of Congress transcripts, 488); *South Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), May 4, 11, 25, June 29, Oct. 5, 1738. Catawba losses in this epidemic were never tabulated, but fully half of the Cherokees may have died (see John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* [Baton Rouge, La., 1953], 82-83; Catawbias to the governor of South Carolina, Oct. 1759, William Henry Lyttelton Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.; and *S.C. Gaz.*, Dec. 15, 1759). Dobyns constructs epidemic profiles for the continent and for Florida that offer a sense of the prevalence of disease (*Their Number Become Thinned*, essays 1, 6).

Chesapeake were a deathtrap for Europeans, and sickness obliged colonists to discard or rearrange many of the social forms brought from England.¹⁶ Among native peoples long isolated from the rest of the world and therefore lacking immunity to pathogens introduced by the intruders, the devastation was even more severe. John Lawson, who visited the Carolina upcountry in 1701, when perhaps ten thousand Indians were still there, estimated that "there is not the sixth Savage living within two hundred Miles of all our Settlements, as there were fifty Years ago." The recent smallpox epidemic "destroy'd whole Towns," he remarked, "without leaving one *Indian* alive in the Village."¹⁷ Resistance to disease developed with painful slowness; colonists reported that the outbreak of smallpox in 1759 wiped out 60 percent of the natives, and, according to one source, "the woods were offensive with the dead bodies of the Indians; and dogs, wolves, and vultures were . . . busy for months in banqueting on them."¹⁸

Survivors of these horrors were thrust into a situation no less alien than what European immigrants and African slaves found. The collected wisdom of generations could vanish in a matter of days if sickness struck older members of a community who kept sacred traditions and taught special skills. When many of the elders succumbed at once, the deep pools of collective memory grew shallow, and some dried up altogether. In 1710, Indians near Charleston told a settler that "they have forgot most of their traditions since the Establishment of this Colony, they keep their Festivals and can tell but little of the reasons: their Old Men are dead."¹⁹ Impoverishment of a rich cultural heritage followed the spread of disease. Nearly a century later, a South Carolinian exaggerated but captured the

¹⁶ See Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975), chaps. 8-9; Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, "Of Agues and Fevers: Malaria in the Early Chesapeake," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXIII (1976), 31-60; and several of the essays in Tate and Ammerman, eds., *Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake*.

¹⁷ Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, ed. Hugh Talmage Lefler (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1967), 232. See also 17, 34. The population figure given here is a very rough estimate. Lawson reckoned that Saponis, Tutelos, Keyauwees, Occaneechees, and Shakoris numbered 750 and that Catawbas (he called them "Esaws") were "a very large Nation containing many thousand People" (pp. 242, 46). Totals for other groups in the piedmont are almost nonexistent.

¹⁸ Philip E. Pearson, "Memoir of the Catawbas, furnished Gov. Hammond," MS (1842?), Wilberforce Eames Indian Collection, New York Public Library (typescript copy in the York County Public Library, Rock Hill, S.C.). For estimates of population losses see *S.C. Gaz.*, Dec. 15, 1759; Arthur Dobbs to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Apr. 15, 1760, in William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols. (Raleigh, N.C., 1886-1890), VI, 235, hereafter cited as *N.C. Col. Recs.*

¹⁹ Francis Le Jau to the secretary, June 13, 1710, in Frank J. Klingberg, ed., *The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis Le Jau, 1706-1717* (Berkeley, Calif., 1956), 78.

general trend when he noted that Catawbas “have forgotten their antient rites, ceremonies, and manufactures.”²⁰

The same diseases that robbed a piedmont town of some of its most precious resources also stripped it of the population necessary to maintain an independent existence. In order to survive, groups were compelled to construct new societies from the splintered remnants of the old. The result was a kaleidoscopic array of migrations from ancient territories and mergers with nearby peoples. While such behavior was not unheard of in aboriginal times, population levels fell so precipitously after contact that survivors endured disruptions unlike anything previously known.

The dislocations of the Saponi Indians illustrate the common course of events. In 1670 they lived on the Staunton River in Virginia and were closely affiliated with a group called Nahyssans. A decade later Saponis moved toward the coast and built a town near the Occaneechees. When John Lawson came upon them along the Yadkin River in 1701, they were on the verge of banding together in a single village with Tutelos and Keyauwees. Soon thereafter Saponis applied to Virginia officials for permission to move to the Meherrin River, where Occaneechees, Tutelos, and others joined them. In 1714, at the urging of Virginia's Lt. Gov. Alexander Spotswood, these groups settled at Fort Christanna farther up the Meherrin. Their friendship with Virginia soured during the 1720s, and most of the “Christanna Indians” moved to the Catawba Nation. For some reason this arrangement did not satisfy them, and many returned to Virginia in 1732, remaining there for a decade before choosing to migrate north and accept the protection of the Iroquois.²¹

Saponis were unusual only in their decision to leave the Catawbas. Enos, Occaneechees, Waterees, Keyauwees, Cheraws, and others have their own stories to tell, similar in outline if not in detail. With the exception of the towns near the confluence of Sugar Creek and the Catawba River that composed the heart of the Catawba Nation, piedmont communities decimated by disease lived through a common round of catastrophes, shifting from place to place and group to group in search of a safe haven. Most eventually ended up in the Nation, and during the opening decades

²⁰ John Drayton to Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton, Sept. 9, 1803, Correspondence and Papers of Benjamin S. Barton, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. I am indebted to Maurice Bric for this reference.

²¹ Christian F. Feest, “Notes on Saponi Settlements in Virginia Prior to 1714,” Archaeological Society of Virginia, *Quarterly Bulletin*, XXVIII (1974), 152-155; William Byrd, “The History of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina Run in the Year of Our Lord 1728,” in Louis B. Wright, ed., *The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover: Narratives of a Colonial Virginian* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 315; H. R. McIlwaine et al., eds., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 6 vols. (Richmond, Va., 1925-1966), IV, 269, hereafter cited as *Va. Council Jours.*; “A List of all the Indian names present at the Treaty held in Lancaster in June 1744,” in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives. Selected and Arranged from Original Documents . . .*, 1st Ser., I (Philadelphia, 1852), 657.

of the eighteenth century the villages scattered across the southern upcountry were abandoned as people drifted into the Catawba orbit.

No mere catalog of migrations and mergers can begin to convey how profoundly unsettling this experience was for those swept up in it. While upcountry Indians did not sail away to some distant land, they, too, were among the uprooted, leaving their ancestral homes to try to make a new life elsewhere. The peripatetic existence of Saponis and others proved deeply disruptive. A village and its surrounding territory were important elements of personal and collective identity, physical links in a chain binding a group to its past and making a locality sacred. Colonists, convinced that Indians were by nature "a shifting, wandering People," were oblivious to this, but Lawson offered a glimpse of the reasons for native attachment to a particular locale. "In our way," he wrote on leaving an Eno-Shakori town in 1701, "there stood a great Stone about the Size of a large Oven, and hollow; this the *Indians* took great Notice of, putting some Tobacco into the Concavity, and spitting after it. I ask'd them the Reason of their so doing, but they made me no Answer."²² Natives throughout the interior honored similar places—graves of ancestors, monuments of stones commemorating important events—that could not be left behind without some cost.²³

The toll could be physical as well as spiritual, for even the most uneventful of moves interrupted the established cycle of subsistence. Belongings had to be packed and unpacked, dwellings constructed, palisades raised. Once migrants had completed the business of settling in, the still more arduous task of exploiting new terrain awaited them. Living in one place year after year endowed a people with intimate knowledge of the area. The richest soils, the best hunting grounds, the choicest sites for gathering nuts or berries—none could be learned without years of experience, tested by time and passed down from one generation to the next. Small wonder that Carolina Indians worried about being "driven to some unknown Country, to live, hunt, and get our Bread in."²⁴

Some displaced groups tried to leave "unknown Country" behind and make their way back home. In 1716 Enos asked Virginia's permission to

²² Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 173, 63.

²³ Edward Bland, "The Discovery of New Brittain, 1650," in Alexander S. Salley, ed., *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708* (New York, 1911), 13-14; William P. Cumming, ed., *The Discoveries of John Lederer . . .* (Charlottesville, Va., 1958), 12, 17, 19-20; John Banister, "Of the Natives," in Joseph Ewan and Nesta Ewan, eds., *John Banister and His Natural History of Virginia, 1678-1692* (Urbana, Ill., 1970), 377; William J. Hinke, trans. and ed., "Report of the Journey of Francis Louis Michel from Berne, Switzerland, to Virginia, October 2, 1701-December 1, 1702," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXIV (1916), 29; Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 50; David I. Bushnell, Jr., "The Indian Grave"—a Monacan Site in Albemarle County, Virginia," *WMQ*, 1st Ser., XXIII (1914), 106-112.

²⁴ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 214.

settle at "Enoe Town" on the North Carolina frontier, their location in Lawson's day.²⁵ Seventeen years later William Byrd II came upon an abandoned Cheraw village on a tributary of the upper Roanoke River and remarked how "it must have been a great misfortune to them to be obliged to abandon so beautiful a dwelling." The Indians apparently agreed: in 1717 the Virginia Council received "Divers applications" from the Cheraws (now living along the Pee Dee River) "for Liberty to Seat themselves on the head of Roanoke River."²⁶ Few natives managed to return permanently to their homelands. But their efforts to retrace their steps hint at a profound sense of loss and testify to the powerful hold of ancient sites.

Compounding the trauma of leaving familiar territories was the necessity of abandoning customary relationships. Casting their lot with others traditionally considered foreign compelled Indians to rearrange basic ways of ordering their existence. Despite frequent contacts among peoples, native life had always centered in kin and town. The consequences of this deep-seated localism were evident even to a newcomer like John Lawson, who in 1701 found striking differences in language, dress, and physical appearance among Carolina Indians living only a few miles apart.²⁷ Rules governing behavior also drew sharp distinctions between outsiders and one's own "Country-Folks." Indians were "very kind, and charitable to one another," Lawson reported, "but more especially to those of their own Nation."²⁸ A visitor desiring a liaison with a local woman was required to approach her relatives and the village headman. On the other hand, "if it be an *Indian* of their own Town or Neighbourhood, that wants a Mistress, he comes to none but the Girl."²⁹ Lawson seemed unperturbed by this barrier until he discovered that a "Thief [is] held in Disgrace, that steals from any of his Country-Folks," "but to steal from the *English* [or any other foreigners] they reckon no Harm."³⁰

Communities unable to continue on their own had to revise these rules and reweave the social fabric into new designs. What language would be spoken? How would fields be laid out, hunting territories divided, houses built? How would decisions be reached, offenders punished, ceremonies performed? When Lawson remarked that "now adays" the Indians must seek mates "amongst Strangers," he unwittingly characterized life in native Carolina.³¹ Those who managed to withstand the ravages of disease had to redefine the meaning of the term *stranger* and transform outsiders into insiders.

²⁵ Council Journals, Aug. 4, 1716, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, II, 242-243.

²⁶ William Byrd, "Journey to the Land of Eden, Anno 1733," in Wright, ed., *Prose Works*, 398; *Va. Council Jours.*, III, 440.

²⁷ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 35, 233.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 184.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 184, 212, 24.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 193.

The need to harmonize discordant peoples, an unpleasant fact of life for all native Americans, was no less common among black and white inhabitants of America during these years. Africans from a host of different groups were thrown into slavery together and forced to seek some common cultural ground, to blend or set aside clashing habits and beliefs. Europeans who came to America also met unexpected and unwelcome ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. The roots of the problem were quite different; the problem itself was much the same. In each case people from different backgrounds had to forge a common culture and a common future.

Indians in the southern uplands customarily combined with others like themselves in an attempt to solve the dilemma. Following the "principle of least effort," shattered communities cushioned the blows inflicted by disease and depopulation by joining a kindred society known through generations of trade and alliances.³² Thus Saponis coalesced with Occaneechees and Tutelos—nearby groups "speaking much the same language"³³—and Catawbias became a sanctuary for culturally related refugees from throughout the region. Even after moving in with friends and neighbors, however, natives tended to cling to ethnic boundaries in order to ease the transition. In 1715 Spotswood noticed that the Saponis and others gathered at Fort Christanna were "confederated together, tho' still preserving their different Rules."³⁴ Indians entering the Catawba Nation were equally conservative. As late as 1743 a visitor could hear more than twenty different dialects spoken by peoples living there, and some bands continued to reside in separate towns under their own leaders.³⁵

Time inevitably sapped the strength of ethnic feeling, allowing a more unified Nation to emerge from the collection of Indian communities that occupied the valleys of the Catawba River and its tributaries. By the mid-

³² Robert A. LeVine and Donald T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior* (New York, 1972), 108.

³³ Spotswood to the bishop of London, Jan. 27, 1715, in R. A. Brock, ed., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722* (Virginia Historical Society, Collections, N.S., II [Richmond, Va., 1885]), 88, hereafter cited as Brock, ed., *Spotswood Letters*. See also Byrd, "History," in Wright, ed., *Prose Works*, 314.

³⁴ Brock, ed., *Spotswood Letters*, 88.

³⁵ Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Adair's History of the American Indians* (Johnson City, Tenn., 1930), 236; The Public Accounts of John Hammerton, Esq., Secretary of the Province, in Inventories, LL, 1744-1746, 29, 47, 51, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, hereafter cited as Hammerton, Public Accounts; "Sketch Map of the Rivers Santee, Congaree, Wateree, Saludee, &c., with the Road to the Cuttauboes [1750?]," Colonial Office Library, Carolina 16, P.R.O. (copy in Brown, *Catawba Indians*, plate 6, between pp. 32-33); "Cuttabaws Nation, men fit for warr 204 In the year 1756," Dalhousie Muniments, General John Forbes Papers, Document #2/104 (copy in S.C. Dept. Archs. and Hist.).

eighteenth century, the authority of village headmen was waning and leaders from the host population had begun to take responsibility for the actions of constituent groups.³⁶ The babel of different tongues fell silent as "*Kàtabba*," the Nation's "standard, or court-dialect," slowly drowned out all others.³⁷ Eventually, entire peoples followed their languages and their leaders into oblivion, leaving only personal names like Santee Jemmy, Cheraw George, Congaree Jamie, Saponey Johnny, and Eno Jemmy as reminders of the Nation's diverse heritage.³⁸

No European observer recorded the means by which nations became mere names and a congeries of groups forged itself into one people. No doubt the colonists' habit of ignoring ethnic distinctions and lumping confederated entities together under the Catawba rubric encouraged amalgamation. But Anglo-American efforts to create a society by proclamation were invariably unsuccessful;³⁹ consolidation had to come from within. In the absence of evidence, it seem reasonable to conclude that years of contacts paved the way for a closer relationship. Once a group moved to the Nation, intermarriages blurred ancient kinship networks, joint war parties or hunting expeditions brought young men together, and elders met in a council that gave everyone some say by including "all the Indian Chiefs or Head Men of that [Catawba] Nation and the several Tribes amongst them together."⁴⁰ The concentration of settlements within a day's walk of one another facilitated contact and communication. From their close proximity, common experience, and shared concerns, people developed ceremonies and myths that compensated for those lost to disease and gave the Nation a stronger collective consciousness.⁴¹ Associ-

³⁶ J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Colonial Records of South Carolina: The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, November 10, 1736–June 7, 1739* (Columbia, S.C., 1951), 481-482. Compare this to the Catawbas' failure to control Waccamaws living in the Nation a decade before (Journals of the Upper House of Assembly, Sept. 13, 1727, C.O. 5/429, 176-177 [microfilm, British Manuscripts Project, D 491]).

³⁷ Williams, ed., *Adair's History*, 236.

³⁸ Catawba Indians to Gov. Lyttelton, June 16, 1757, Lyttelton Papers (Santee Jemmy); Rev. William Richardson, "An Account of My Proceedings since I accepted the Indian mission in October 2d 1758 . . ." Wilberforce Eames Indian Collection, entry of Nov. 8, 1758 (Cheraw George). South Carolina Council Journals (hereafter cited as S.C. Council Jours.), May 5, 1760, in William S. Jenkins, comp., *Records of the States of the United States*, microfilm ed. (Washington, D.C., 1950) (hereafter cited as *Records of States*), SC E.1p, Reel 8, Unit 3, 119 (Congaree Jamie); John Evans to Gov. James Glen, Apr. 18, 1748, in S.C. Council Jours., Apr. 27, 1748, *Records of States*, SC E.1p, 3/4 233 (Saponey Johnny); Hammerton, *Public Accounts*, 29, 51 (Eno Jemmy).

³⁹ See, for example, Spotswood's efforts to persuade some tributary groups to join the piedmont Indians at Fort Christanna. *Va. Council Jours.*, III, 367; Spotswood to bishop of London, Jan. 27, 1715, in Brock, ed., *Spotswood Letters*, II, 88.

⁴⁰ Easterby, ed., *Journal of the Commons House, 1736-1739*, 487.

⁴¹ See Brassier, "Group Identification," *Verhandlungen*, II (1970), 261-265.

ations evolved that balanced traditional narrow ethnic allegiance with a new, broader, "national" identity, a balance that tilted steadily toward the latter. Ethnic differences died hard, but the peoples of the Catawba Nation learned to speak with a single voice.

Muskets and kettles came to the piedmont more slowly than smallpox and measles. Spanish explorers distributed a few gifts to local headmen, but inhabitants of the interior did not enjoy their first real taste of the fruits of European technology until Englishmen began venturing inland after 1650. Indians these traders met in upcountry towns were glad to barter for the more efficient tools, more lethal weapons, and more durable clothing that colonists offered. Spurred on by eager natives, men from Virginia and Carolina quickly flooded the region with the material trappings of European culture. In 1701 John Lawson considered the Wateree Chickanees "very poor in *English* Effects" because a few of them lacked muskets.⁴²

Slower to arrive, trade goods were also less obvious agents of change. The Indians' ability to absorb foreign artifacts into established modes of existence hid the revolutionary consequences of trade for some time. Natives leaped the technological gulf with ease in part because they were discriminating shoppers. If hoes were too small, beads too large, or cloth the wrong color, Indian traders refused them.⁴³ Items they did select fit smoothly into existing ways. Waxhaws tied horse bells around their ankles at ceremonial dances, and some of the traditional stone pipes passed among the spectators at these dances had been shaped by metal files.⁴⁴ Those who could not afford a European weapon fashioned arrows from broken glass. Those who could not go to great lengths to "set [a new musket] streight, sometimes shooting away above 100 Loads of Ammunition, before they bring the Gun to shoot according to their Mind."⁴⁵

Not every piece of merchandise hauled into the upcountry on a trader's packhorse could be "set streight" so easily. Liquor, for example, proved both impossible to resist and extraordinarily destructive. Indians "have no Power to refrain this Enemy," Lawson observed, "though sensible how

⁴² Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 38.

⁴³ William Byrd to [Arthur North?], Mar. 8, 1685/6, in Marion Tinling, ed., *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776*, I (Charlottesville, Va., 1977), 57, Byrd to Perry and Lane, July 8, 1686, 64, Byrd to [Perry and Lane?], Mar. 20, 1685, 30, Byrd to North, Mar. 29, 1685, 31.

⁴⁴ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 44-45; George Edwin Stuart, "The Post-Archaic Occupation of Central South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1975), 133, fig. 72, B.

⁴⁵ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 33, 63. Archaeologists have uncovered these arrowheads. See Tommy Charles, "Thoughts and Records from the Survey of Private Collections of Prehistoric Artifacts: A Second Report," Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, *Notebook*, XV (1983), 31.

many of them (are by it) hurry'd into the other World before their Time."⁴⁶ And yet even here, natives aware of the risks sought to control alcohol by incorporating it into their ceremonial life as a device for achieving a different level of consciousness. Consumption was usually restricted to men, who "go as solemnly about it, as if it were part of their Religion," preferring to drink only at night and only in quantities sufficient to stupefy them.⁴⁷ When ritual could not confine liquor to safe channels, Indians went still further and excused the excesses of overindulgence by refusing to hold an intoxicated person responsible for his actions. "They never call any Man to account for what he did, when he was drunk," wrote Lawson, "but say, it was the Drink that caused his Misbehaviour, therefore he ought to be forgiven."⁴⁸

Working to absorb even the most dangerous commodities acquired from their new neighbors, aboriginal inhabitants of the uplands, like African slaves in the lowlands, made themselves at home in a different technological environment. Indians became convinced that "Guns, and Ammunition, besides a great many other Necessaries, . . . are helpful to Man"⁴⁹ and eagerly searched for the key that would unlock the secret of their production. At first many were confident that the "*Quera*, or good Spirit," would teach them to make these commodities "when that good Spirit sees fit."⁵⁰ Later they decided to help their deity along by approaching the colonists. In 1757, Catawbas asked Gov. Arthur Dobbs of North Carolina "to send us Smiths and other Tradesmen to teach our Children."⁵¹

It was not the new products themselves but the Indians' failure to learn the mysteries of manufacture from either Dobbs or the *Quera* that marked the real revolution wrought by trade. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, everyone in eastern North America—masters and slaves, farmers near the coast and Indians near the mountains—became producers of raw materials for foreign markets and found themselves caught up in an international economic network.⁵² Piedmont natives were part of this larger process, but their adjustment was more difficult because

⁴⁶ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 211, 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 211; Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1947), 182.

⁴⁸ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 210. See also Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (New York, 1969), chap. 5.

⁴⁹ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 220.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* One Santee priest claimed he had already been given this power by "the white Man above, (meaning God Almighty)" (*ibid.*, 26-27).

⁵¹ Catawba Nation to Gov. Dobbs, Oct. 5, 1757, encl. in Dobbs to Lyttelton, Oct. 24, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

⁵² Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974), esp. chap. 6.

the contrast with previous ways was so pronounced. Before European contact, the localism characteristic of life in the uplands had been sustained by a remarkable degree of self-sufficiency. Trade among peoples, while common, was conducted primarily in commodities such as copper, mica, and shells, items that, exchanged with the appropriate ceremony, initiated or confirmed friendships among groups. Few, if any, villagers relied on outsiders for goods essential to daily life.⁵³

Intercultural exchange eroded this traditional independence and entangled natives in a web of commercial relations few of them understood and none controlled. In 1670 the explorer John Lederer observed a striking disparity in the trading habits of Indians living near Virginia and those deep in the interior. The "remoter Indians," still operating within a precontact framework, were content with ornamental items such as mirrors, beads, "and all manner of gaudy toys and knacks for children." "Neighbour-Indians," on the other hand, habitually traded with colonists for cloth, metal tools, and weapons.⁵⁴ Before long, towns near and far were demanding the entire range of European wares and were growing accustomed—even addicted—to them. "They say we English are fools for . . . not always going with a gun," one Virginia colonist familiar with piedmont Indians wrote in the early 1690s, "for they think themselves undrest and not fit to walk abroad, unless they have their gun on their shoulder, and their shot-bag by their side."⁵⁵ Such an enthusiastic conversion to the new technology eroded ancient craft skills and hastened complete dependence on substitutes only colonists could supply.

By forcing Indians to look beyond their own territories for certain indispensable products, Anglo-American traders inserted new variables into the aboriginal equation of exchange. Colonists sought two commodities from Indians—human beings and deerskins—and both undermined established relationships among native groups. While the demand for slaves encouraged piedmont peoples to expand their traditional warfare, the demand for peltry may have fostered conflicts over hunting territories.⁵⁶ Those who did not fight each other for slaves or deerskins fought

⁵³ Harold Hickerson, "Fur Trade Colonialism and the North American Indians," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 1 (1973), 18-22; Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1976), 65-66, 316. Salt may have been an exception to this aboriginal self-sufficiency. Even here, however, Indians might have been able to get along without it or find acceptable substitutes. See Gloria J. Wentowski, "Salt as an Ecological Factor in the Prehistory of the Southeastern United States" (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1970). For substitutes see Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 89; Banister, "Of the Natives," in Ewan and Ewan, eds., *Banister and His History*, 376; Beverley, *History*, ed. Wright, 180.

⁵⁴ Cumming, ed., *Discoveries of Lederer*, 41-42.

⁵⁵ Banister, "Of the Natives," in Ewan and Ewan, eds., *Banister and His History*, 382.

⁵⁶ "It is certain the Indians are very cruel to one another," Rev. Francis Le Jau wrote his superiors in England in April 1708, "but is it not to be feared some white

each other for the European products these could bring. As firearms, cloth, and other items became increasingly important to native existence, competition replaced comity at the foundation of trade encounters as villages scrambled for the cargoes of merchandise. Some were in a better position to profit than others. In the early 1670s Occaneechees living on an island in the Roanoke River enjoyed power out of all proportion to their numbers because they controlled an important ford on the trading path from Virginia to the interior, and they resorted to threats, and even to force, to retain their advantage.⁵⁷ In Lawson's day Tuscaroras did the same, "hating that any of these Westward *Indians* should have any Commerce with the *English*, which would prove a Hinderance to their Gains."⁵⁸

Competition among native groups was only the beginning of the transformation brought about by new forms of exchange. Inhabitants of the piedmont might bypass the native middleman, but they could not break free from a perilous dependence on colonial sources of supply. The danger may not have been immediately apparent to Indians caught up in the excitement of acquiring new and wonderful things. For years they managed to dictate the terms of trade, compelling visitors from Carolina and Virginia to abide by aboriginal codes of conduct and playing one

men living or trading among them do foment and increase that Bloody Inclination in order to get Slaves?" (Le Jau to the secretary, Apr. 22, 1708, in Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle*, 39). Over the summer his worst fears were confirmed: "It is reported by some of our Inhabitants lately gone on Indian Trading that [Carolina traders] excite them to make War amongst themselves to get Slaves which they give for our European Goods" (Le Jau to the secretary, Sept. 15, 1708, *ibid.*, 41). For an analysis of the Indian slave trade see J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *The Only Land They Knew: The Tragic Story of the American Indians in the Old South* (New York, 1981), chap. 6. General studies of Indian warfare in the Southeast are John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 137 (Washington, D.C., 1946), 686-701, and Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 239-257.

Evidence of an escalation in competition for hunting territories is sparse. But in 1702, only a year after Lawson noted that deer were scarce among the Tuscaroras, Indians in Virginia complained that Tuscarora hunting parties were crossing into the colony in search of game and ruining the hunting grounds of local groups. See Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 65, and *Va. Council Jours.*, II, 275. It seems likely that this became more common as pressure on available supplies of game intensified.

⁵⁷ "Letter of Abraham Wood to John Richards, August 22, 1674," in Clarence Walworth Alvord and Lee Bidgood [eds.], *First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1912), 211, 215-217, 223-225; "Virginias Deplored Condition: Or an Impartiall Narrative of the Murders committed by the Indians there, and of the Sufferings of his Maties. Loyall Subjects under the Rebellious outrages of Mr. Nathaniell Bacon Junr. to the tenth day of August A. o Dom 1676," Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, 4th Ser., IX (Boston, 1871), 167.

⁵⁸ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 64.

colony's traders against the other to ensure an abundance of goods at favorable rates.⁵⁹ But the natives' influence over the protocol of exchange combined with their skill at incorporating alien products to mask a loss of control over their own destiny. The mask came off when, in 1715, the traders—and the trade goods—suddenly disappeared during the Yamasee War.

The conflict's origins lay in a growing colonial awareness of the Indians' need for regular supplies of European merchandise. In 1701 Lawson pronounced the Santees "very tractable" because of their close connections with South Carolina. Eight years later he was convinced that the colonial officials in Charleston "are absolute Masters over the *Indians* . . . within the Circle of their Trade."⁶⁰ Carolina traders who shared this conviction quite naturally felt less and less constrained to obey native rules governing proper behavior. Abuses against Indians mounted until some men were literally getting away with murder. When repeated appeals to colonial officials failed, natives throughout Carolina began to consider war. Persuaded by Yamasee ambassadors that the conspiracy was widespread and convinced by years of ruthless commercial competition between Virginia and Carolina that an attack on one colony would not affect relations with the other, in the spring of 1715 Catawbas and their neighbors joined the invasion of South Carolina.⁶¹

The decision to fight was disastrous. Colonists everywhere shut off the flow of goods to the interior, and after some initial successes Carolina's native enemies soon plumbed the depths of their dependence. In a matter of months, refugees holed up in Charleston noticed that "the Indians want ammunition and are not able to mend their Arms."⁶² The peace negotiations that ensued revealed a desperate thirst for fresh supplies of European wares. Ambassadors from piedmont towns invariably spoke in a single breath of restoring "a Peace and a free Trade," and one delegation even admitted that its people "cannot live without the assistance of the English."⁶³

⁵⁹ See Cumming, ed., *Discoveries of Lederer*, 41; Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 210; and Merrell, "Natives in a New World," 74-77. For the competition between colonies see Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (New York, 1981 [orig. publ. Durham, N.C., 1928]), 153-157, and Merrell, "Natives in a New World," 136-147.

⁶⁰ Lawson, *New Voyage*, ed. Lefler, 23, 10.

⁶¹ The best studies of this conflict are Crane, *Southern Frontier*, chap. 7; John Phillip Reid, *A Better Kind of Hatchet: Law, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Cherokee Nation during the Early Years of European Contact* (University Park, Pa., 1976), chaps. 5-7; and Richard L. Haan, "The 'Trade Do's Not Flourish as Formerly': The Ecological Origins of the Yamasee War of 1715," *Ethnohistory*, XXVIII (1981), 341-358. The Catawbas' role in the war is detailed in Merrell, "Natives in a New World," chap. 4.

⁶² Le Jau to [John Chamberlain?], Aug. 22, 1715, in Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle*, 162.

⁶³ *Va. Council Jours.*, III, 406, 412, 422.

Natives unable to live without the English henceforth tried to live with them. No upcountry group mounted a direct challenge to Anglo-America after 1715. Trade quickly resumed, and the piedmont Indians, now concentrated almost exclusively in the Catawba valley, briefly enjoyed a regular supply of necessary products sold by men willing once again to deal according to the old rules. By mid-century, however, deer were scarce and fresh sources of slaves almost impossible to find. Anglo-American traders took their business elsewhere, leaving inhabitants of the Nation with another material crisis of different but equally dangerous dimensions.⁶⁴

Indians casting about for an alternative means of procuring the commodities they craved looked to imperial officials. During the 1740s and 1750s native dependence shifted from colonial traders to colonial authorities as Catawba leaders repeatedly visited provincial capitals to request goods. These delegations came not to beg but to bargain. Catawbas were still of enormous value to the English as allies and frontier guards, especially at a time when Anglo-America felt threatened by the French and their Indian auxiliaries. The Nation's position within reach of Virginia and both Carolinas enhanced its value by enabling headmen to approach all three colonies and offer their people's services to the highest bidder.

The strategy yielded Indians an arsenal of ammunition and a variety of other merchandise that helped offset the declining trade.⁶⁵ Crown officials were especially generous when the Nation managed to play one colony off against another. In 1746 a rumor that the Catawbas were about to move to Virginia was enough to garner them a large shipment of powder and lead from officials in Charleston concerned about losing this "valuable people."⁶⁶ A decade later, while the two Carolinas fought for the honor of constructing a fort in the Nation, the Indians encouraged (and received) gifts symbolizing good will from both colonies without reaching an agreement with either. Surveying the tangled thicket of promises and presents, the Crown's superintendent of Indian affairs, Edmond Atkin, ruefully admitted that "the People of both Provinces . . . have I believe [*sic*] tampered too much on both sides with those Indians, who seem to understand well how to make their Advantage of it."⁶⁷

By the end of the colonial period delicate negotiations across cultural

⁶⁴ Merrell, "Natives in a New World," 280-300, 358-359.

⁶⁵ For an example of the gifts received by Catawbas see the list of goods delivered to the Catawba Indians at the Congaree Fort, Feb. 14, 1752, in William L. McDowell, ed., *The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750-August 7, 1754*, Ser. 2, *The Indian Books* (Columbia, S.C., 1958), 217-218, hereafter cited as *Indian Affairs Docs*.

⁶⁶ J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Journals of the Commons House of Assembly, September 10, 1745-June 17, 1746* (Columbia, S.C., 1956), 132, 141, 173; George Haig to Gov. James Glen, Mar. 21, 1746, S.C. Council Jours., Mar. 27, 1746, Records of States, SC E.1P, 3/2, 74-75.

⁶⁷ Atkin to Gov. William Henry Lyttelton, Nov. 23, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

boundaries were as familiar to Catawbas as the strouds they wore and the muskets they carried. But no matter how shrewdly the headmen loosened provincial purse strings to extract vital merchandise, they could not escape the simple fact that they no longer held the purse containing everything needed for their daily existence. In the space of a century the Indians had become thoroughly embedded in an alien economy, denizens of a new material world. The ancient self-sufficiency was only a dim memory in the minds of the Nation's elders.⁶⁸

The Catawba peoples were veterans of countless campaigns against disease and masters of the arts of trade long before the third major element of their new world, white planters, became an integral part of their life. Settlement of the Carolina uplands did not begin until the 1730s, but once underway it spread with frightening speed. In November 1752, concerned Catawbas reminded South Carolina governor James Glen how they had "complained already . . . that the white People were settled too near us."⁶⁹ Two years later five hundred families lived within thirty miles of the Nation and surveyors were running their lines into the middle of native towns.⁷⁰ "[T]hose Indians are now in a fair way to be surrounded by White People," one observer concluded.⁷¹

Settlers' attitudes were as alarming as their numbers. Unlike traders who profited from them or colonial officials who deployed them as allies, ordinary colonists had little use for Indians. Natives made poor servants and worse slaves; they obstructed settlement; they attracted enemy warriors to the area. Even men who respected Indians and earned a living by trading with them admitted that they made unpleasant neighbors. "We may observe of them as of the fire," wrote the South Carolina trader James Adair after considering the Catawbas' situation on the eve of the American Revolution, "it is safe and useful, cherished at proper distance; but if too near us, it becomes dangerous, and will scorch if not consume us."⁷²

A common fondness for alcohol increased the likelihood of intercultural hostilities. Catawba leaders acknowledged that the Indians "get very Drunk with [liquor] this is the Very Cause that they oftentimes Commit those Crimes that is offensive to You and us."⁷³ Colonists were equally

⁶⁸ Treaty between North Carolina Commissioners and the Catawba Indians, Aug. 29, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 144a.

⁶⁹ Catawba King and Others to Gov. Glen, Nov. 21, 1752, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 361.

⁷⁰ Mathew Rowan to the Board of Trade, June 3, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 124; Samuel Wyly to clerk of Council, Mar. 2, 1754, in *S.C. Council Jours.*, Mar. 13, 1754, *Records of States*, SC E.1p, 6/1, 140.

⁷¹ Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (Columbia, S.C., 1954), 46.

⁷² Williams, ed., *Adair's History*, 235.

⁷³ Treaty between North Carolina and the Catawbas, Aug. 29, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 143. See also conference held with the Catawbas by Mr. Chief Justice

prone to bouts of drunkenness. In the 1760s the itinerant Anglican minister, Charles Woodmason, was shocked to find the citizens of one South Carolina upcountry community "continually drunk." More appalling still, after attending church services "one half of them got drunk before they went home."⁷⁴ Indians sometimes suffered at the hands of intoxicated farmers. In 1760 a Catawba woman was murdered when she happened by a tavern shortly after four of its patrons "swore they would kill the first Indian they should meet with."⁷⁵

Even when sober, natives and newcomers found many reasons to quarrel. Catawbas were outraged if colonists built farms on the Indians' doorstep or tramped across ancient burial grounds.⁷⁶ Planters, ignorant of (or indifferent to) native rules of hospitality, considered Indians who requested food nothing more than beggars and angrily drove them away.⁷⁷ Other disputes arose when the Nation's young men went looking for trouble. As hunting, warfare, and other traditional avenues for achieving status narrowed, Catawba youths transferred older patterns of behavior into a new arena by raiding nearby farms and hunting cattle or horses.⁷⁸

Contrasting images of the piedmont landscape quite unintentionally generated still more friction. Colonists determined to tame what they considered a wilderness were in fact erasing a native signature on the land and scrawling their own. Bridges, buildings, fences, roads, crops, and other "improvements" made the area comfortable and familiar to colonists but uncomfortable and unfamiliar to Indians. "The Country side wear[s] a New face," proclaimed Woodmason proudly;⁷⁹ to the original inhabitants, it was a grim face indeed. "His Land was spoiled," one Catawba headman told British officials in 1763. "They have spoiled him 100 Miles every way."⁸⁰ Under these circumstances, even a settler with no wish to fight

Henley at Salisbury, May 1756, *ibid.*, 581, 583; Matthew Toole to Glen, Oct. 28, 1752, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 359; Catawbas to Lyttelton, June 16, 1757, Lyttelton Papers; and James Adamson to Lyttelton, June 12, 1759, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Richard J. Hooker, ed., *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1953), 7, 12. See also 30, 39, 53, 56, 97-99, 128-129.

⁷⁵ S.C. Council Jours., May 5, 1760, Records of States, SC E.1P, 8/3, 119.

⁷⁶ Robert Stiell to Gov. Glen, Mar. 11, 1753, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 371; Gov. Thomas Boone to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, Oct. 9, 1762, in W. Noel Sainsbury, comp., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782*, 36 vols., microfilm ed. (Columbia, S.C., 1955), XXIX, 245-246, hereafter cited as *Brit. Public Recs.*, S.C.

⁷⁷ Treaty between North Carolina and the Catawbas, Aug. 29, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 142-143; Council Journal, Mar. 18, 1756, *ibid.*, 655; Samuel Wyly to Lyttelton, Feb. 9, 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Treaty between North Carolina and the Catawbas, Aug. 29, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 142-143, and Catawbas to Lyttelton, June 16, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

⁷⁹ Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 63.

⁸⁰ Augusta Congress, Nov. 1763, in *Brit. Public Recs.*, S.C., XXX, 84.

Indians met opposition to his fences, his outbuildings, his very presence. Similarly, a Catawba on a routine foray into traditional hunting territories had his weapon destroyed, his goods confiscated, his life threatened by men with different notions of the proper use of the land.⁸¹

To make matters worse, the importance both cultures attached to personal independence hampered efforts by authorities on either side to resolve conflicts. Piedmont settlers along the border between the Carolinas were "people of desperate fortune," a frightened North Carolina official reported after visiting the area. "[N]o officer of Justice from either Province dare meddle with them."⁸² Woodmason, who spent even more time in the region, came to the same conclusion. "We are without any Law, or Order," he complained; the inhabitants' "Impudence is so very high, as to be past bearing."⁸³ Catawba leaders could have sympathized. Headmen informed colonists that the Nation's people "are oftentimes Cautioned from . . . ill Doings altho' to no purpose for we Cannot be present at all times to Look after them." "What they have done I could not prevent," one chief explained.⁸⁴

Unruly, angry, intoxicated—Catawbas and Carolinians were constantly at odds during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Planters who considered Indians "proud and deveilish" were themselves accused by natives of being "very bad and quarrelsome."⁸⁵ Warriors made a habit of "going into the Settlements, robbing and stealing where ever they get an Oppertunity."⁸⁶ Complaints generally brought no satisfaction—"they laugh and makes their Game of it, and says it is what they will"—leading some settlers to "whip [Indians] about the head, beat and abuse them."⁸⁷ "The white People . . . and the Cuttabaws, are Continually at varience," a visitor to the Nation fretted in June 1759, "and Dayly New Animositys

⁸¹ Robert Stiell to Gov. Glen, Mar. 11, 1753, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 371; Inhabitants of the Waxhaws to Samuel Wyly, Apr. 15, 1759, encl. in Wyly to Lyttelton, Apr. 26, 1759, Lyttelton Papers (colonists attacked). S.C. Council Jours., Feb. 6, 1769, Records of States, SC E.1p, 10/3, 9; King Frow to the governor, Mar. 15, 1770, in S.C. Council Jours., Mar. 27, 1770, *ibid.*, SC E.1p, 10/4, 56; "At a Meeting Held with the Catabaws," Mar. 26, 1771, Joseph Kershaw Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia (Indians attacked).

⁸² Information of John Frohock and others, Oct. 10, 1762, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, VI, 794-795.

⁸³ Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 45, 52.

⁸⁴ Treaty between North Carolina and the Catawbas, Aug. 29, 1754, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 143; Catawbas to Glen, Nov. 21, 1752, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 361.

⁸⁵ Waxhaw inhabitants to Wyly, Apr. 15, 1759, encl. in Wyly to Lyttelton, Apr. 26, 1759, Lyttelton Papers; Meeting between the Catawbas and Henley, May 1756, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 581.

⁸⁶ Toole to Glen, Oct. 28, 1752, *Indian Affairs Docs.*, 358.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 359; Meeting between the Catawbas and Henley, May 1756, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 581.

Doth a rise Between them which In my Humble oppion will be of Bad Consequence In a Short time, Both Partys Being obstinate.”⁸⁸

The litany of intercultural crimes committed by each side disguised a fundamental shift in the balance of physical and cultural power. In the early years of colonization of the interior the least disturbance by Indians sent scattered planters into a panic. Soon, however, Catawbas were few, colonists many, and it was the natives who now lived in fear. “[T]he white men [who] Lives Near the Neation is Contenuely asembleing and goes In the [Indian] towns In Bodys . . . ,” worried another observer during the tense summer of 1759. “[T]he[y] tretton the[y] will Kill all the Cattabues.”⁸⁹

The Indians would have to find some way to get along with these unpleasant neighbors if the Nation was to survive. As Catawba population fell below five hundred after the smallpox epidemic of 1759 and the number of colonists continued to climb, natives gradually came to recognize the futility of violent resistance. During the last decades of the eighteenth century they drew on years of experience in dealing with Europeans at a distance and sought to overturn the common conviction that Indian neighbors were frightening and useless.

This process was not the result of some clever plan; Catawbas had no strategy for survival. A headman could warn them that “the White people were now seated all round them and by that means had them entirely in their power.”⁹⁰ He could not command them to submit peacefully to the invasion of their homeland. The Nation’s continued existence required countless individual decisions, made in a host of diverse circumstances, to complain rather than retaliate, to accept a subordinate place in a land that once was theirs. Few of the choices made survive in the record. But it is clear that, like the response to disease and to technology, the adaptation to white settlement was both painful and prolonged.

Catawbas took one of the first steps along the road to accommodation in the early 1760s, when they used their influence with colonial officials to acquire a reservation encompassing the heart of their ancient territories.⁹¹

⁸⁸ John Evans to Lyttelton, June 20, 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁸⁹ Adamson to Lyttelton, June 12, 1759, *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Meeting between the Catawbas and Henley, May 1756, *N.C. Col. Recs.*, V, 582.

⁹¹ The Indians lobbied for this land beginning in 1757. Crown officials finally reserved it to them in Nov. 1763 and surveyed it in Feb. 1764. See Catawbas to Lyttelton, June 16, 1757, Lyttelton Papers; *S.C. Gaz.*, Aug. 9, 1760; *S.C. Council Jours.*, May 15, 1762, Records of States, SC E.1P, 8/6, 497; Augusta Congress, Nov. 1763, *Brit. Public Recs.*, S.C., XXX, 84, 104-106, 112-113; and “A Map of the Catawba Indians Surveyed agreeable to a Treaty Entered into with Them At Augusta in Georgia on the tenth Day of November 1763 . . . Executed, Certified and Signed by me the 22nd Day of February Anno Domini 1764, Sam[ue]l Wyly D[eputy] S[urveyor],” Miscellaneous Records, H, 460, S.C. Dept. Archs. and Hist.

This grant gave the Indians a land base, grounded in Anglo-American law, that prevented farmers from shouldering them aside. Equally important, Catawbans now had a commodity to exchange with nearby settlers. These men wanted land, the natives had plenty, and shortly before the Revolution the Nation was renting tracts to planters for cash, livestock, and manufactured goods.⁹²

Important as it was, land was not the only item Catawbans began trading to their neighbors. Some Indians put their skills as hunters and woodsmen to a different use, picking up stray horses and escaped slaves for a reward.⁹³ Others bartered their pottery, baskets, and table mats.⁹⁴ Still others traveled through the upcountry, demonstrating their prowess with the bow and arrow before appreciative audiences.⁹⁵ The exchange of these goods and services for European merchandise marked an important adjustment to the settlers' arrival. In the past, natives had acquired essential items by trading peltry and slaves or requesting gifts from representatives of the Crown. But piedmont planters frowned on hunting

⁹² Brown, *Catawba Indians*, 283-284. For contemporary accounts, see Thomas Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London, 1793), 148-149; "Travel Diary of Marshall and Benzien from Salem to South Carolina, 1790 . . .," in Adelaide L. Fries *et al.*, eds., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, 11 vols. (Raleigh, N.C., 1922-1969), V, 1997; David Hutchison, "The Catawba Indians. By Request," *Palmetto-State Banner* (Columbia), Aug. 30, 1849 (copy in the Draper Manuscript Collection, Ser. U, vol. 10, Doc. #100 [Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison]), hereafter cited as Hutchison, "Catawba Indians."

This land system broke down in 1840 when the Catawbans ceded their lands to South Carolina in exchange for promises of money and land to be purchased for them in North Carolina. By that time, the Nation's place in South Carolina society was secure enough to survive the economic and social shock of losing its land base. When plans to live in North Carolina fell through and the Indians drifted back to their ancient territory, no one forced them to leave. Instead, the state of South Carolina purchased a small reservation for them, a tract of land that has been the core of Catawba life ever since. See Brown, *Catawba Indians*, chaps. 13-14.

⁹³ Affidavit of John Evans, S.C. Council Jours., Nov. 6, 1755, Records of States, SC E.1P, 7/2, 439; Affidavit of Liddy, Jan. 1, 1784, Kershaw Papers (horses). Report of the South Carolina Committee of Council, Apr. 19, 1769, Brit. Public Recs., S.C., XXX, 145-146; Hutchison, "Catawba Indians" (slaves).

⁹⁴ John F. D. Smyth, *A Tour in the United States of America . . .*, I (London, 1784), 193-194; Lucius Verus Bierce, "The Piedmont Frontier, 1822-23," in Thomas D. Clark, ed., *South Carolina: The Grand Tour, 1780-1865* (Columbia, S.C., 1973), 64; William Gilmore Simms, "Caloya; Or, The Loves of the Driver," in his *The Wigwam and the Cabin* (New York, 1856), 361-363.

⁹⁵ Frank G. Speck, *Catawba Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing*, Joint Publications, Museum of The University of Pennsylvania and The Philadelphia Anthropological Society, No. 2 (Philadelphia, 1946), 10; Thomas J. Kirkland and Robert M. Kennedy, *Historic Camden, I: Colonial and Revolutionary* (Columbia S.C., 1905), 58-59.

and warfare, while provincial authorities—finding Catawbas less useful as the Nation's population declined and the French threat disappeared—discouraged formal visits and handed out fewer presents. Hence the Indians had to develop new avenues of exchange that would enable them to obtain goods in ways less objectionable to their neighbors. Pots, baskets, and acres proved harmless substitutes for earlier methods of earning an income.

Quite apart from its economic benefits, trade had a profound impact on the character of Catawba-settler relations. Through countless repetitions of the same simple procedure at homesteads scattered across the Carolinas, a new form of intercourse arose, based not on suspicion and an expectation of conflict but on trust and a measure of friendship. When a farmer looked out his window and saw Indians approaching, his reaction more commonly became to pick up money or a jug of whiskey rather than a musket or an axe. The natives now appeared, the settler knew, not to plunder or kill but to peddle their wares or collect their rents.⁹⁶

The development of new trade forms could not bury all of the differences between Catawba and colonist overnight.⁹⁷ But in the latter half of the eighteenth century the beleaguered Indians learned to rely on peaceful means of resolving intercultural conflicts that did arise. Drawing a sharp distinction between “the good men that have rented Lands from us” and “the bad People [who] has frequently imposed upon us,” Catawbas called on the former to protect the Nation from the latter.⁹⁸ In 1771 they met with the prominent Camden storekeeper, Joseph Kershaw, to request that he “represent us when [we are] a grieved.”⁹⁹ After the Revolution the position became more formal. Catawbas informed the South Carolina government that, being “destitute of a man to take care of, and assist us in our affairs,” they had chosen one Robert Patten “to take charge of our affairs, and to act and do for us.”¹⁰⁰

Neither Patten nor any other intermediary could have protected the Nation had it not joined the patriot side during the Revolutionary War.

⁹⁶ Compare, for example, the bitterness whites expressed to Adair before the Revolution (Williams, ed., *Adair's History*, 234) with the bemused tolerance in Simms's 19th-century fictional account of Catawbas and planters (“Caloya,” in his *Wigwam and Cabin*, 361-429).

⁹⁷ Besides the conflicts over hunting noted above, see Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 20; Lark E. Adams, ed., *The State Records of South Carolina: Journals of the House of Representatives, 1785-1786* (Columbia, S.C., 1979), 511-512; Journals of the House of Representatives, Dec. 5, 1792, Records of States, SC A.1b, 23/1, 83.

⁹⁸ Catawba petition “To the Honourable the Legislature of the State of South Carolina now assembled at Charlestown,” Feb. 13, 1784(?), Kershaw Papers. The Indians had made this distinction earlier. See S.C. Council Jours., Oct. 8, 1760, Records of States, SC E.1p, 8/5, 36.

⁹⁹ “At a Meeting held with the Catabaws,” Mar. 26, 1771, Kershaw Papers.

¹⁰⁰ Catawba Petition to S.C. Legislature, Feb. 13, 1784(?), *ibid.*

Though one scholar has termed the Indians' contribution to the cause "rather negligible,"¹⁰¹ they fought in battles throughout the southeast and supplied rebel forces with food from time to time.¹⁰² These actions made the Catawbans heroes and laid a foundation for their popular renown as staunch patriots. In 1781 their old friend Kershaw told Catawba leaders how he welcomed the end of "this Long and Bloody War, in which You have taken so Noble a part and have fought and Bled with your white Brothers of America."¹⁰³ Grateful Carolinians would not soon forget the Nation's service. Shortly after the Civil War an elderly settler whose father had served with the Indians in the Revolution echoed Kershaw's sentiments, recalling that "his father never communicated much to him [about the Catawbans], except that all the tribe . . . served the entire war . . . and fought most heroically."¹⁰⁴

Catawbans rose even higher in their neighbors' esteem when they began calling their chiefs "General" instead of "King" and stressed that these men were elected by the people.¹⁰⁵ The change reflected little if any real shift in the Nation's political forms,¹⁰⁶ but it delighted the victorious Revolutionaries. In 1794 the *Charleston City Gazette* reported that during the war "King" Frow had abdicated and the Indians chose "General" New River in his stead. "What a pity," the paper concluded, "certain people on a certain island have not as good optics as the Catawbans!" In the same year the citizens of Camden celebrated the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille by raising their glasses to toast "King Prow [*sic*—may all kings who will not follow his example follow that of Louis XVI."¹⁰⁷ Like tales of Indian patriots, the story proved durable. Nearly a century after the Revolution one nearby planter wrote that "the Catawbans, emulating the examples of their white brethren, threw off regal government."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ Hudson, *Catawba Nation*, 51.

¹⁰² The story of the Indians' service is summarized in Brown, *Catawba Indians*, 260-271.

¹⁰³ "To the Brave Genl New River and the rest of the Headmen Warriours of the Catawba Nation," 1771 (misdated), Kershaw Papers.

¹⁰⁴ A. Q. Bradley to Lyman C. Draper, May 31, 1873, Draper MSS, 14VV, 260. For other expressions of this attitude see J. F. White to Draper, n.d., *ibid.*, 15VV, 96; T. D. Spratt to Draper, May 7, 1873, *ibid.*, 107-108; Ezekiel Fewell to Draper, n.d., *ibid.*, 318-319; and David Hutchison, "Catawba Indians."

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *Catawba Indians*, 276.

¹⁰⁶ The Nation's council "elected" headmen both before and after 1776, and kinship connections to former rulers continued to be important. For elections see S.C. Council Jours., Feb. 20, 1764, Records of States, SC E.1p, 9/2, 40-41; Nov. 9, 1764, *ibid.*, 354; Feb. 12, 1765, *ibid.*, 9/3, 442-443; S.C. Commons House Jours., Jan. 27, 1767, *ibid.*, SC A.1b, 8/1, n. p. For later hereditary links to former chiefs see John Drayton, *A View of South Carolina As Respects Her Natural and Civil Concerns* (Spartanburg, S.C., 1972 [orig. publ., 1802]), 98; Spratt to Draper, Jan. 12, 1871, Draper MSS, 15VV, 99-100.

¹⁰⁷ *City Gazette* (Charleston), Aug. 14, 1794, quoted in Kirkland and Kennedy, *Historic Camden*, 320, 319.

¹⁰⁸ Spratt to Draper, Jan. 12, 1871, Draper MSS, 15VV, 99. See also Hutchison, "Catawba Indians."

The Indians' new image as republicans and patriots, added to their trade with whites and their willingness to resolve conflicts peacefully, brought settlers to view Catawbas in a different light. By 1800 the natives were no longer violent and dangerous strangers but what one visitor termed an "inoffensive" people and one group of planters called "harmless and friendly" neighbors.¹⁰⁹ They had become traders of pottery but not deerskins, experts with a bow and arrow but not hunters, ferocious warriors against runaway slaves or Tories but not against settlers. In these ways Catawbas could be distinctively Indian yet reassuringly harmless at the same time.

The Nation's separate identity rested on such obvious aboriginal traits. But its survival ultimately depended on a more general conformity with the surrounding society. During the nineteenth century both settlers and Indians owned or rented land. Both spoke proudly of their Revolutionary heritage and their republican forms of government. Both drank to excess.¹¹⁰ Even the fact that Catawbas were not Christians failed to differentiate them sharply from nearby white settlements, where, one visitor noted in 1822, "little attention is paid to the sabbath, or religion."¹¹¹

In retrospect it is clear that these similarities were as superficial as they were essential. For all the changes generated by contacts with vital Euro-American and Afro-American cultures, the Nation was never torn loose from its cultural moorings. Well after the Revolution, Indians maintained a distinctive way of life rich in tradition and meaningful to those it embraced. Ceremonies conducted by headmen and folk tales told by relatives continued to transmit traditional values and skills from one generation to the next. Catawba children grew up speaking the native language, making bows and arrows or pottery, and otherwise following patterns of belief and behavior derived from the past. The Indians' physical appearance and the meandering paths that set Catawba settlements off from neighboring communities served to reinforce this cultural isolation.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Smyth, *Tour*, I, 192; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Treat with the Catawba Indians, Apr. 3, 1840, in A. F. Whyte, "Account of the Catawba Indians," Draper MSS, IOU, 112.

¹¹⁰ W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York, 1979), chap. 1. For reports of excessive drinking by whites along the Catawba River see Records of the General Assembly, Petitions, N.D. (#1916), 1798 (#139), S.C. Dept. Archs. and Hist.; Journals of the Senate, Dec. 11, 1819, Records of States, SC A.1a, 25/3, 57; Journals of the House of Representatives, Nov. 23, 1819, Nov. 21, 1827, Records of States, SC A.1b, 28/1, 8, 29/5, 15, 24.

¹¹¹ Bierce, "Piedmont Frontier," in Clark, ed., *Grand Tour*, 66.

¹¹² The story of the Catawbas' cultural persistence may be found in Merrell, "Natives in a New World," chap. 9, and "Reading 'an almost erased page': A Reassessment of Frank G. Speck's Catawba Studies," *American Philosophical Society, Proceedings*, CXXVII (1983), 248-262. For an interesting comparison of cultural independence in the slave quarter and the Indian reservation see Thomas

The natives' utter indifference to missionary efforts after 1800 testified to the enduring power of established ways. Several clergymen stopped at the reservation in the first years of the nineteenth century; some stayed a year or two; none enjoyed any success.¹¹³ As one white South Carolinian noted in 1826, Catawbans were "Indians still."¹¹⁴ Outward conformity made it easier for them to blend into the changed landscape. Beneath the surface lay a more complex story.

Those few outsiders who tried to piece together that story generally found it difficult to learn much from the Indians. A people shrewd enough to discard the title of "King" was shrewd enough to understand that some things were better left unsaid and unseen. Catawbans kept their Indian names, and sometimes their language, a secret from prying visitors.¹¹⁵ They echoed the racist attitudes of their white neighbors and even owned a few slaves, all the time trading with blacks and hiring them to work in the Nation, where the laborers "enjoyed considerable freedom" among the natives.¹¹⁶ Like Afro-Americans on the plantation who adopted a happy, childlike demeanor to placate suspicious whites, Indians on the reservation learned that a "harmless and friendly" posture revealing little of life in the Nation was best suited to conditions in post-Revolutionary South Carolina.

Success in clinging to their cultural identity and at least a fraction of their ancient lands cannot obscure the cost Catawba peoples paid. From the time the first European arrived, the deck was stacked against them. They played the hand dealt them well enough to survive, but they could never win. An incident that took place at the end of the eighteenth century helps shed light on the consequences of compromise. When the Catawba headman, General New River, accidentally injured the horse he had borrowed from a nearby planter named Thomas Spratt, Spratt responded by "banging old New River with a pole all over the yard." This episode provided the settler with a colorful tale for his grandchildren; its effect on New River and his descendants can only be imagined.¹¹⁷

L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865* (New York, 1978), chap. 18.

¹¹³ Hutchison, "Catawba Indians"; Daniel G. Stinson to Draper, July 4, 1873, Draper MSS, 9VV, 274-277.

¹¹⁴ Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina . . .* (Charleston, S.C., 1826), 773. See also the annual reports of the Catawba Agent to the Governor and State Legislature of South Carolina, 1841, 1842, 1848, 1849, 1860-1864, in Legislative Papers, Indian Affairs, Governors' Correspondence, S.C. Dept. Archs. and Hist.

¹¹⁵ See Merrell, "Reading 'an almost erased page,'" *Am. Phil. Soc., Procs.*, CXXVII (1983), 256 (names). Smyth, *Tour*, I, 185; Coke, *Extracts*, 149; "Letter from the Country. Landsford, S.C., September 6, 1867," in *Courier* (Charleston), Sept. 12, 1867, 3 (language).

¹¹⁶ Catawba-black relations are analyzed in Merrell, "The Racial Education of the Catawba Indians," *Journal of Southern History*, I (1984), 363-384.

¹¹⁷ Thomas Dryden Spratt, "Recollections of His Family, July 1875," unpubl. MS, South Caroliniana Lib., 62.

Catawbas did succeed in the sense that they adjusted to a hostile and different world, becoming trusted friends instead of feared enemies. Had they been any less successful they would not have survived the eighteenth century. But poverty and oppression have plagued the Nation from New River's day to our own.¹¹⁸ For a people who had once been proprietors of the piedmont, the pain of learning new rules was very great, the price of success very high.

On that August day in 1608 when Amoroleck feared the loss of his world, John Smith assured him that the English "came to them in peace, and to seeke their loves."¹¹⁹ Events soon proved Amoroleck right and his captor wrong. Over the course of the next three centuries not only Amoroleck and other piedmont Indians but natives throughout North America had their world stolen and another put in its place. Though this occurred at different times and in different ways, no Indians escaped the explosive mixture of deadly bacteria, material riches, and alien peoples that was the invasion of America. Those in the southern piedmont who survived the onslaught were ensconced in their new world by the end of the eighteenth century. Population levels stabilized as the Catawba peoples developed immunities to once-lethal diseases. Rents, sales of pottery, and other economic activities proved adequate to support the Nation at a stable (if low) level of material life. Finally, the Indians' image as "inoffensive" neighbors gave them a place in South Carolina society and continues to sustain them today.

Vast differences separated Catawbas and other natives from their colonial contemporaries. Europeans were the colonizers, Africans the enslaved, Indians the dispossessed: from these distinct positions came distinct histories. Yet once we acknowledge the differences, instructive similarities remain that help to integrate natives more thoroughly into the story of early America. By carving a niche for themselves in response to drastically different conditions, the peoples who composed the Catawba Nation shared in the most fundamental of American experiences. Like Afro-Americans, these Indians were compelled to accept a subordinate position in American life yet did not altogether lose their cultural integrity. Like settlers of the Chesapeake, aboriginal inhabitants of the uplands adjusted to appalling mortality rates and wrestled with the difficult task of "living with death."¹²⁰ Like inhabitants of the Middle Colonies, piedmont groups learned to cope with unprecedented ethnic diversity by balancing the pull of traditional loyalties with the demands of a new social order. Like Puritans in New England, Catawbas found that a

¹¹⁸ See H. Lewis Scaife, *History and Condition of the Catawba Indians of South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1896), 16-23, and Hudson, *Catawba Nation*, chaps. 4-6.

¹¹⁹ Arber and Bradley, eds., *Works of Smith*, II, 427.

¹²⁰ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, chap. 8.

new world did not arrive all at once and that localism, self-sufficiency, and the power of old ways were only gradually eroded by conditions in colonial America. More hints of a comparable heritage could be added to this list, but by now it should be clear that Indians belong on the colonial stage as important actors in the unfolding American drama rather than bit players, props, or spectators. For they, too, lived in a new world.