

PETER NATHANIEL MOORE

This World of Toil and Strife: Land, Labor, and the Making of an American Community,
1750-1805

(Under the Direction of PETER CHARLES HOFFER)

This dissertation examines the eighteenth-century origins of southernness in the South Carolina piedmont. Looking through the lens of a single community – the Waxhaws, a predominately Scots-Irish settlement in the lower Catawba valley – “Toil and Strife” challenges the notion that the Carolina upcountry was a static, undeveloped backwater region until cotton planters transformed it after 1800. Rather, in the half-century preceding the cotton boom the Waxhaws underwent a comprehensive social, economic, and cultural transformation of its own making, one driven by the internal dynamics of the community itself – immigration patterns, neighborhood rivalries, changing religious and ethnic identities, population growth, and developing markets for slaves and wheat – not by land-grabbing speculators and aggressive planters. When cotton finally penetrated the piedmont in 1800, the Waxhaws bore little resemblance to the backcountry community of the late colonial period.

The stress of economic, demographic, and generational change was felt most acutely in the community’s central institution, the Presbyterian church. For three decades neighbors and competing kin groups, divided by class, ethnicity, and doctrinal issues, struggled to control church location, leadership, worship, and the force of the Great Revival. This struggle ultimately set the church, once so vital to community life, on the path to obsolescence. In addition to religious history, this study examines contact and conflict between white settlers and neighboring Indians and underlines the importance of this encounter in shaping both the physical/spatial and mental world of white immigrants. It looks at how the insularity bred by the frontier played out in gender relations, sectarian conflict, the ambiguous relationships between masters and slaves, and neighborhood rivalries. It explores the social and economic impact of the Revolutionary War and looks at how class and neighborhood differences affected wartime allegiance. It reassesses the

importance of land speculators both before and after the war from the local perspective. It also takes a long look at the Great Revival of 1802, moving beyond its impact on the local church and deep into its language and ritual structure, exploring the broader cultural context of its peculiar kind of somatic piety and the links between religious experience and generational change.

INDEX WORDS: South Carolina, piedmont, community study, Waxhaws, Waxhaw settlement, Lancaster County, backcountry, religious history, Great Revival, Catawba Indians, land speculation, immigration, settlement patterns, wheat, sectarianism, frontier, Presbyterian Church, trial by touch, touching test, psalmody, hymnody, Revolutionary War.

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AMERICAN COMMUNITY, 1750-1805

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of an obscure and unexceptional place called the Waxhaws, a stretch of land in the central piedmont lying along the east side of the Catawba River near the North Carolina-South Carolina border and settled in the mid-eighteenth century by Scots-Irish farmers.¹ Since the day in 1540 when Hernando de Soto dragged his army of Spanish horsemen and Caribbean slaves through the lower Catawba valley, only to report that “nothing worth mentioning” happened to them on the way, seemingly little of consequence has taken place in the Waxhaws.² Couched between two spectacular Indian chiefdoms in de Soto’s day, crouched in the shadow of the Catawba Indian towns in 1700, subsisting on the margins of two Regulator movements in the 1760s but participating in neither, the Waxhaws and the lower Catawba valley in general have long managed to elude historians.³ There were no great families

¹ The Waxhaws or Waxhaw settlement (the terms are used interchangeably here, as they were in the eighteenth century) is in present-day Lancaster County and vaguely refers to the white settlement on the east side of the Catawba River, bounded roughly on the north by Twelve Mile Creek, on the south by Camp Creek, on the west by the river, and on the east (eventually) by the “blackjack” lands at the creek heads, about fifteen miles from the river. I have constricted these boundaries somewhat for the purposes of this study, placing the Presbyterian meeting house at the center of the community and radiating outward to include neighborhoods likely to be served exclusively by this church. The total area of the community defined here is approximately 156 square miles, comprising about one-third of what would eventually become Lancaster County. On the importance of small places see Darrett B. Rutman with Anita Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions: Explorations in Early American Social History, 1600-1850* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994).

² Charles M. Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South’s Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 186-7; Garcilaso de la Vega, the Inca, “La Florida,” trans. Charmion Shelby, in *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto in North America, 1539-1543*, vol. 2, ed. Lawrence Clayton, et. al. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 307.

³ The only substantial scholarly treatment of the Waxhaws is Robert Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729-1765* (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, 1940), 136-45. Two recent histories of the South Carolina upcountry make only brief reference to the Waxhaws, both focused on its 1802 religious revival. See Lacy K. Ford, Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-*

in the Waxhaws, no Hamptons or Sumters or Calhouns, nor did the community become a hotbed of nullifiers, secessionists, or fire-eating southern radicals for which South Carolina became famous. While Andrew Jackson distinguished the settlement by growing up there, he moved as a young man and left no mark on the community. It was then and would remain an unexceptional, ordinary place, not unlike the hundreds of anonymous small places scattered across the eighteenth-century southern interior. It is as such that the Waxhaws *should* interest us, for its very anonymity makes it an ideal place for examining the ordinary people whose everyday lives make up our early social history.

But there is more to this study than a need to describe a neglected place or further illuminate the lives of plain folk. Despite its obscurity, much indeed worth mentioning has happened in the Waxhaws since de Soto muscled his way through the Catawba valley. In the last half of the eighteenth century the Waxhaws underwent a comprehensive social, economic, and cultural transformation. From a community of interdependent families organized in discrete kin-based neighborhoods, the Waxhaws evolved into a place of independent households for whom kin and neighbors played a diminished economic role. From a community of yeoman farmers who relied almost exclusively on family labor, it became a society of petty slaveholders with ever-deepening market dependencies. From an insular, suspicious, and intensely local place where ethnic and sectarian boundaries were tightly drawn, it became a community characterized by religious tolerance, voluntary association, and weakening ethnic identity. From an extension of the colonial northern yeoman society from which its early settlers had come, it turned its face south toward the wheat and slave markets of Charleston and became a southern community. This transformation, while by no means complete by the end of the eighteenth century, was nevertheless well under way; and while it had colonial roots, its critical years came

1860 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988), 25; and Rachel Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Williamsburg, VA: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1990), 283. The most comprehensive non-academic local history is Louise Pettus, *The Waxhaws* (Rock Hill, SC: By the Author, 1993).

in the 1790s. It was a halting transformation, punctuated by striking changes. This is the story of that transformation and the processes that informed it.⁴

The sources of this transformation are complex and overlapping. It began as a gradual and evolutionary *frontier* process. The white immigrants who established the Waxhaw settlement around 1750 spent the better part of three decades clearing ground, building fences and barns, and creating the commercial infrastructure of roads, mills, and stores needed to market their produce and tie their economy to that of the seaboard. Moreover, their proximity to Indians profoundly shaped their community and mentality. Indians and encroaching whites crossed paths frequently in the 1750s and 1760s, and while a full-scale Indian war never materialized in the Waxhaws, periodic violence and routine disputes over property bred into white colonists habits of constant vigilance. Even as white settlers reached out to connect with lowcountry markets in the quarter century before the Revolution, the Waxhaws' vulnerability made settlers fearful, insular and suspicious, not merely of Indians but of anyone outside their tightly-knit community.

There was also an important *demographic* dimension to this transformation. Three waves of immigrants established themselves in the Waxhaws during the colonial period, settling

⁴ For the purposes of this study I have adopted the definition of community developed by John D. Kasorda and Morris Janowitz, "Community Attachment in Mass Society," *American Sociology Review*, 39 (June 1974): 328-9: "a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life." This definition is broad and dynamic. It suits the Waxhaws rural context by placing family life at the center of community; it also escapes the declension trap by viewing community change in terms of a value-neutral community "life cycle," not decline. As such it is in step with Darrett Rutman's approach to community study, which views community as a network of associations changing over time in response to changing needs and demands. See Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions*, chapter 3. For a Rutman-esque discussion of the problem of community see Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), xvi, 204, note 7. At the same time, Rutman's approach is unnecessarily reductionist, divorcing community from its affective dimension and failing to see it as a powerful source of personal identity. This dimension is an important part of the story of the Waxhaws, and it is featured prominently here. However, while changes in the structure of community made changes in identity possible and perhaps even necessary, these changes did not signal a decline in "sense of community" or communalism. For a discussion of community and declension see Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), chapter 1. Also see note 18, below.

in discrete neighborhoods among kin and old acquaintances. On the eve of the Revolution settlers were crowded into the rich bottomland and trickling into the adjoining uplands approaching the creek heads, where the soils were inferior and the farm sites remote from the roads and the church at the heart of the community. Immigration ceased just before the war, but natural increase continued to push the population up, driving up real estate prices and reducing the amount of good land available to the rising generation. At the same time, the Revolution had opened the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains to settlement. The push of population pressures and high land prices combined with the pull of extensive, affordable western lands to drain the Waxhaws' white population in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Emigration and the lucrative land market eroded the kin-based neighborhoods of the colonial period and helped alter the racial composition of the community.

Generational changes informed the shift to a more open and tolerant society at the turn of the century. The cold warriors of the frontier years were conditioned to distrust Indians and, by extension, anyone outside of their local ethnic, religious, and kinship group. The early Waxhaw settlement, made up largely of creoles from Pennsylvania and Virginia, was a near-homogeneous Presbyterian community in sympathy with New Side evangelicals. The years before the war were marked by bitter sectarian conflict as Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians engaged in a campaign of mutual exclusion and harassment. Moreover, the third wave of immigrants in the 1770s included a contingent of conservative, Irish-born, die-hard Presbyterian traditionalists who established a rival neighborhood in the upland section, breeding conflict within the Presbyterian church as well as between it and competing denominations. In the 1790s, however, a generation came of age with memories of neither Indians nor Anglicans. More open to sectarian cooperation, the spiritual needs of this rising generation informed the pattern of interdenominational mixing so prominent in the revival of 1802-3. This pattern in turn introduced new and controversial forms of enthusiasm into Presbyterian worship, divided the Waxhaw congregation, and eventually led many Presbyterians to abandon their parents' church

and join the Methodists. Insofar as the transformation of the Waxhaws involved a weakening of ethnic identity and religious loyalty, it was a generational process.

Finally, running across and through these frontier, demographic, and generational processes was a more fundamental *economic* transformation, one differing in kind and not just degree from the gradual evolution of the frontier community. At the heart of this process was a change in the labor system and in some respects in the mode of production itself. This change suggests that the history of early American yeoman communities was more complicated than we think; it also challenges our assumptions about the economic origins of the Old South and the soundness of cotton determinism.

The Waxhaws' economic shift cannot be fully understood apart from the wider history of colonial and early national rural communities. Like most early Anglo-American communities, the Waxhaws was made up mainly of yeoman farmers, petty producers who owned their land and worked it primarily with the labor of their own families. In the past decade historians have developed a fine-toned picture of these yeomen and their communities. Yeoman households, we now know, sought neither maximum profits nor mere subsistence,⁵ but a "competency" that enabled them to retain their economic autonomy, maintain a "comfortable subsistence," and organize household labor as they saw fit. They developed "composite farms" and practiced

⁵ In the 1970s historians rediscovered agricultural history, and in attempting to describe the yeomanry they fell into one of two polarized camps, which Allan Kulikoff has termed the "market" and "social" interpretations of early American rural history. "Market" historians maintained that small farmers were liberal individualists and petty capitalists; embedded in an expanding commercial economy, these farmers understood the exchange value of land and produce and eagerly sought to wring a profit from them. In contrast, "social" historians stressed the pre-capitalist relations of production that characterized yeoman households, their subsistence patterns of production and market-wariness, and their emphasis on the social value of land and the use value of its products. Such farmers retained much of their European peasant communalism until the capitalist market swept over them in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, sending some into wage dependency and others into heavily commercialized, for-profit farming. The most representative figures of this early debate are James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); and James Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 35 (1978): 3-32. For a fine summary of this debate see Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd, 46 (1989): 120-2.

“safety-first” agriculture, seeing principally to the subsistence needs of the household, producing some surpluses for local barter and exchange, and producing for the commodities market only to acquire the cash and goods needed to sustain their autonomy from that market. There was a world of complex, multi-layered markets, but it was also one in which “a system of noncommercial exchange prevailed.” These yeomen were sturdy, independent, versatile, inventive, and willing to adopt new strategies in their ongoing effort to stave off market dependency. They resisted such dependency at least until the antebellum period and in some places much later, when they were finally overcome by agricultural capitalism and reduced to bankruptcy, tenancy, and wage labor.⁶

In this world of household competency, safety-first agriculture, and composite farms, there was no market revolution that stood early American rural communities on their heads; instead, farmers exploited the market in order to keep it at bay, and struggled to enlist the support of the state to bring economic development programs in line with their needs as a class of petty producers. Unlike earlier depictions of the yeomanry, this new model thus acknowledges the complex relation between farm households and abstract markets. It also places the rural transition to capitalism in a wide chronological perspective, retaining it as a useful framework for constructing a master narrative of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American rural history.

The story of the Waxhaws departs from this narrative in two important ways. First, the Waxhaws was a southern community, while the portrait of the yeomanry drawn by current rural

⁶ The “model” I have constructed here is a composite of the work of several historians. See especially Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture of Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 47 (1990): 3-29; Kulikoff, “Transition to Capitalism,” 120-44; Kulikoff, “Households and Markets: Toward a New Synthesis of American Agrarian History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 50 (1993): 342-55; Richard Bushman, “Markets and Composite Farms in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 55 (July 1998): 352-74; and Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). Kulikoff sums up this picture nicely in *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 3-4.

historians is largely based on northern farmers.⁷ The regional difference is critical. In the north, yeoman households developed any number of strategies to protect their autonomy, from producing wood products to engaging in home manufacture, but they did not buy slaves, especially after the Revolution. Whereas the destruction of the northern yeomanry was a prolonged and corrosive process, the southern yeomanry “declined” because yeoman households entered the slaveholding class. By switching from free family labor to bonded, commodified labor, southern farmers committed themselves to the commodities market in ways unavailable and unfamiliar to northern yeomen.⁸ Purchasing a slave was not a defensive strategy designed to keep market dependency at bay, but an offensive maneuver designed to

⁷ Historians have recognized the regional bias and have made some efforts to correct it. See “The Transition to Capitalism in America: A Panel Discussion,” *The History Teacher* 27, no. 3 (May 1994): 288. In a sweeping attempt to apply the transition to capitalism framework to multiple regions, James Henretta pointed to growing absenteeism among southern slaveholders who hired out slaves and plantations and to the replacement of gang with task labor, a “capitalist” labor management technique. But Henretta focused on the Chesapeake and ignored the southern backcountry, which would seem to invite a much more fruitful comparison with northern yeomen. See “The Transition to Capitalism in America,” in James A. Henretta, Michael Kammen, and Stanley N. Katz, eds., *The Transformation of Early American History: Society, Authority, and Ideology* (New York: Knopf, 1991): 218-38. Allan Kulikoff’s recent book treats the south as well, but his chronology does not extend to the transformative post-war decades. See *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers*, passim.

On the other hand, there is a large body of literature exploring the transition to capitalism in the southern mountains. Although much of this work focuses on the nineteenth century, there is a group of historians who have dealt extensively with the eighteenth-century Virginia backcountry. This literature has grown out of Robert Mitchell’s seminal *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977). Also see Wilma Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Mitchell’s and Dunaway’s “market” interpretations have been tempered somewhat by a number of more recent works. See Michael Puglisi, ed. *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), especially Puglisi’s introduction and the essays by Warren Hofstra and Richard McMaster. For a discussion that highlights the contradictions of yeoman market behavior in the early West, see Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996). Also see Aron’s part in “Transition to Capitalism: A Panel Discussion,” 272.

⁸ Stephen Hahn has argued that market-wary southern yeoman continued to dominate the Georgia upcountry until the 1890s, when they were finally overwhelmed by cotton planters and debt. See *Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). For a study that challenges Hahn’s conclusions see Fred Gates, “Building the Empire State of the South: Political Economy in Georgia, 1800-1860,” (PhD dissertation: University of Georgia, 2001).

generate profits and wealth. In southern yeoman communities like the Waxhaws, slavery made the market a liberating force – albeit a risky one – not a source of dependency. They might remain safety-first farmers, but their fortunes and a portion of their household labor force were now irreversibly tied to the ebb and flow of a distant market. The timing of the Waxhaws’ transition to a southern slaveholding community⁹ also calls into question the usefulness of the yeoman model in a southern setting. The chronological framework of the rural master narrative is based on the *long duree*, with yeoman households keeping a safe distance from the market through the 1830s in the northeast and into the 1890s or later in the midwest and the wheat belt.¹⁰ But in the Waxhaws the transformation came early and swiftly, accomplished almost entirely in the 1790s, when wheat prices were strong and slaves were still affordable. Although it is inaccurate to call this transformation a “transition to capitalism” – a concept fraught with problems of definition and chronology and ill-suited to an early American context¹¹ – by

⁹ The Waxhaws does not fit neatly into the society-with-slaves-to-slave-society framework. In the first place, the upcountry was already legally embedded in the slave society of the lowcountry, with its rigid codes, restrictions on manumission, and slave patrols. More importantly, while the majority of Waxhaws households entered the slaveholding class in the 1790s, the proportion of slaves in the population remained under 30% (although it too increased dramatically during this decade). For the period under study, it is more accurate to describe the Waxhaws as undergoing a transition from a society with *slaveholders* to a *slaveholding* society. On the distinction between societies with slaves and slave societies (and the transition from one to another), see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998). Despite their emphases on regional distinctions, neither Berlin nor Philip Morgan examine slavery in the eighteenth-century southern upcountry. See Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill : Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

¹⁰ In western Massachusetts, middling yeoman farmers became capitalist farmers after 1820; in the Hudson Valley, small farmers succumbed to the market after 1830; in north Georgia, the yeomanry did not collapse until the 1890s. See Clark, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*; Thomas S. Wermuth, “New York Farmers and the Market Revolution: Economic Behavior in the Mid-Hudson Valley, 1780-1830,” *Journal of Social History*, 32, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 179-96; Hahn, *Roots of Southern Populism*. In part these chronological differences are rooted in geography, but they also rest on the different ways historians approach the problem: as a decline of the yeomanry or as a transition from yeoman to capitalist producer. The problem of multiple declensions is not new; see Bender, *Community and Social Change*, chapter 3.

¹¹ The most outspoken critic of how transition to capitalism proponents define capitalism is Michael Merrill. See “Putting ‘Capitalism’ in Its Place: A Review of Recent Literature,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd, 52 (1995): 315-26.

jettisoning this concept we are left with no framework for explaining the profound changes that did grip many rural communities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The transformation of the Waxhaws and other early American rural communities,¹² while less than revolutionary, was clearly more than evolutionary and stands as an important exception to the yeomanry's *long duree*.

This rapid transition from yeoman to petty slaveholder also signaled a change in the mode of production. As the people of the Waxhaws embraced a new labor system in the 1790s, they increasingly abandoned an older system based on the shared labor of neighbors and kin. Although it is difficult to describe this system using only the limited sources of a single community, broad-based studies have shown that a "borrowing system" – of labor, tools, livestock, and services – prevailed in eighteenth-century rural communities like the Waxhaws.¹³ This local interdependency, the reliance of yeoman households on the occasional labor of their neighbors and kin, made the neighborhood and extended kin group, not the nuclear family or individual household, the basic unit of production. In the strict terms of modes of production, what prevailed in these early yeoman communities was neither a "kinship" mode nor a purely "household" mode, but something in between.¹⁴ Yeoman household autonomy was limited in this interdependent world. Whatever autonomy farm families enjoyed rested on this interdependence; it was not possible outside of the yeoman community. Nor did farm families necessarily view this "neighborly" interdependence as an absolute good: it was inconvenient,

¹² James H. Henretta has long argued that the 1790s was a pivotal decade in the economic history of early American communities. For his most recent statement see "Transition to Capitalism," in *Transformation of Early American History*, 218-38.

¹³ On the borrowing system see especially Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to American Farmers*, 219-25. Kulikoff recognizes the importance of shared labor and local exchange to yeoman households, but he does not elaborate on the tension between interdependency and autonomy, nor does he find that this "communal" labor system represented a distinct mode of production.

¹⁴ On the definitions of the capitalist and kin-ordered modes of production see Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), chapter 1.

unreliable, and prone to create tension and conflict. For many households the market probably offered a welcome alternative from these mutual obligations. In the southern piedmont, the story of the yeomanry is best told not in terms of the erosion of autonomy by an encroaching capitalism, but of the transition from household interdependency to independence, from a communal mode of production based on the pooled labor of neighbors and kin to a household mode based on slave and family labor.

Though not strictly capitalist, this altered mode of production was the product of an expanding commercial capitalist market. The European demand for sugar strained the self-sufficiency of West Indian planters, whose demand for wheat fueled commodity farming and slaveholding in the Carolina piedmont. The economic transformation of the Waxhaws rode the crest of a capitalist business cycle, when slaves were affordable and wheat production profitable. It was the first such cycle to penetrate the Anglo-American piedmont, and the yeomanry of the Waxhaws embraced it. After 1800 they would ride a second wave into deeper dependency and a more prosperous but hazardous autonomy by taking up cotton production.¹⁵

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of these frontier, demographic, generational, and economic processes to the formation of early American communities. These material and developmental forces constrained and liberated farmers, providing the slate of choices that ultimately shaped their communities, and the Waxhaws is as good a site as any for examining them. Of course these processes did not act uniformly on every community, raising a legitimate question about typicality. How typical was the Waxhaws? As noted above, it was an ordinary, unexceptional place, and its ordinariness alone made it in some sense typical. But this is a specious or at best an overly general and not altogether useful kind of typicality. These

¹⁵ For a theoretical framework built on the interplay of global commercial forces and local conditions see Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, chapter 1.

undisputably important processes aside, is it possible to generalize beyond the Waxhaws or at best beyond the lower Catawba valley?

Instead of enumerating the ways the Waxhaws resembled other upcountry communities – counting wheat farmers, Scots-Irish settlers, Presbyterian churches, and petty slaveholders – it is more instructive and more interesting to examine certain aspects of its *atypicality*. Whatever it shared with other piedmont communities, the Waxhaws was unique in the timing of its transformation. As its white population declined and its slaveholding households multiplied during the 1790s, other upcountry localities continued the colonial and early postwar pattern of a growing white population and a low number of slaves and slaveholders until the 1800s.¹⁶ However, this difference does not necessarily imply that the Waxhaws was anomalous, but simply that it was at the forefront of change. As the northernmost of South Carolina's upcountry settlements, it was the first stop for southward-moving immigrants in the 1750s and 1760s, and it subsequently experienced population pressures and outmigration a decade before other communities. The story of the Waxhaws therefore suggests that demographic forces – the land-to-people ratio – were transforming the more densely populated localities before the turn of the century, and that this demographic process, rather than the appearance of cotton, continued to transform more recently settled upcountry places after 1800. Cotton planting penetrated the upcountry as this process was underway, making it easy to mistake the effects of natural demographic change with those of an agricultural revolution. In other words, the transformation of the South Carolina piedmont into a *southern* place, a place with a high slave population and a large slaveholding class, was underway before the advent of cotton. The story of the Waxhaws suggests that the South would have emerged in the interior without the help of cotton. Even for historians who are skeptical of cotton determinism, however, this process is

¹⁶ This pattern is nicely summarized in Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 250-53.

obscured by county-wide data.¹⁷ It becomes visible only at the intensely local, sub-county level, where census data can be combined with highly localized land records to uncover the dynamics at play in discrete settlements.

More than a study of processes and the origins of the Old South, this book also tells a story about localism itself, specifically about the declining importance of localism in early America. The processes that transformed the Waxhaws in the last half of the eighteenth century altered the meaning and significance of local relationships. For most of this period relationships with Indians and neighbors not only determined who people married or where they went to church, but how they viewed outsiders and what side they took in the war. Community and neighborhood, bound as they were by the cords of kinship, ethnicity, class, and religion, were the principal sources of personal identity. Toward the end of the century, growing market connections, demographic pressures, and generational changes led to a decline in localism and opened the way for participation in a broader regional community.¹⁸ But as sectarian loyalties

¹⁷ The most thorough and effective critique of cotton determinism is Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, introduction and *passim*. Klein rightly argues that the roots of upcountry-lowcountry unification lay in the colonial period, that elite planters from both sections developed significant ties well before cotton made its way into the interior, and that the role of cotton in bridging the sectional gap has been exaggerated. However, Klein still attributes the demographic changes of the 1800s to a kind of cotton revolution, claiming that cotton “sparked a flood of outmigration” as land prices soared and planters “warned off” squatters, and likewise attributing the increase in slave ownership to cotton planting. See *ibid.*, 249-54.

¹⁸ This decline in localism is not to be confused with a decline in “community.” In fact, it is certainly possible that, as neighborhood interdependency, ethnicity, and sectarianism weakened and people entered into voluntary relationships with neighbors, community attachment or “sense of place” actually increased. However, the sources do not permit me to measure community attachment, nor am I interested in such questions. Neither do I assume that the people of the Waxhaws valued or should have valued their local relationships and identity any more than their emerging regional ones. On the contrary, localism, with its personal, face-to-face relationships, had a dark side that often made the “impersonal” relationships of the regional market more convenient and the non-kin ties of the camp meeting more rewarding. In short, this is neither the story of “community lost” nor of “community saved,” but of “community liberated” from its local confines. For a discussion of this approach see Barry Wellman and Barry Leighton, “Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question,” *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 14, no. 3 (March 1979): 363-90; Barry Wellman, Peter Carrington, and Alan Hall, “Networks as Personal Communities,” in Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz, *Social Structures: A Network Approach* (London: JAI Press, 1997):130-84; and Bender, *Community and Social Change*, chapter 4. On the continuing importance of spatial networks in a “personal community” setting see John R. Logan and Glenna D. Spitze, “Family Neighbors,” *American Journal of Society*, 100, no. 2 (September 1994): 453-

faded, neighborhood interdependency declined, and ethnic identity weakened, they were replaced not by a liberal cosmopolitanism but by a new racial identity. A common whiteness tied upcountry to lowcountry communities and enabled the once-insular piedmont yeomanry to shuck off their sectarian and ethnic hatreds out of mutual fear of a growing slave population.

There were other transformations in the lower Catawba valley, but they are touched here only briefly. In the two centuries between European contact and white colonization, the Waxhaw and Catawba Indians underwent a profound demographic and economic transformation, suffering severe depopulation through disease and war even as they entered full throttle into the European trade with its promise of prosperity and its unhealthy dependencies. Their story has been more ably and more fully told by others, and it is summarized briefly here in the prologue. The Waxhaw settlement also underwent a political transformation. Beginning in the late colonial period and accelerating during the Revolution, the Waxhaws was integrated into the political structure of South Carolina, moving from the civil limbo of the Carolina border country to the political margins of the South Carolina backcountry to full political recognition and participation during and after the war. This story, too, has been told elsewhere, and it is not developed here. Instead, I have emphasized the economic, cultural, and especially social dimensions of the Waxhaws' transformation.¹⁹

For the most part this study is structured chronologically, with the Revolutionary War at the center (but not the thematic core) of the narrative. The prologue treats the prehistory and post-contact period of the lower Catawba valley, looking in particular at the historic movement of people into and through the valley and the impact of disease and trade in the two centuries after contact. The first three chapters describe the culture, society, and economy of the

76.

¹⁹ On the Waxhaw and Catawba Indians see especially James Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989). On political integration see Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, especially chapters 2, 5, and 8.

Waxhaw settlement during the colonial period. One of the defining features of the early immigrant community was its cohesiveness or insularity. Chapter one locates the sources of this insularity in the kin-ordered, grassroots settlement process developed by white immigrants, the formation of kin-based neighborhoods, and especially in the colonists' proximity to the Catawba Indians and their subsequent vulnerability to attack. Chapter two explores the social and cultural consequences of this insularity. Conditioned by a hostile frontier and huddled in tightly-knit neighborhoods comprised of kin and acquaintances, the people of the Waxhaws were fearful and suspicious of anyone outside their carefully circumscribed world. Kinless widows were especially vulnerable, non-Presbyterians were excluded and ridiculed, and slaves inhabited a limbo defined by their partial inclusion in the white religious community, on the one hand, and their more fundamental economic relationship to whites on the other. Chapter three moves beyond the insularity theme to examine the social and economic structure of the community. Even as they acquired their habits of insularity, the people of the Waxhaws also established civil and economic ties that reached beyond the lower Catawba valley. By the end of the colonial period the community had evolved from a remote, largely subsistence-based backwater settlement to a marginal player in the provincial economy. Economic integration came with a price, however, for it heightened inequality, exacerbated neighborhood tensions, and led to civil strife.

Chapter four explores the impact of the Revolutionary War on the Waxhaws, looking in depth at how the war ravaged the community but concluding that it left the Waxhaws' social structure intact. Chapter five examines the transitional period of the 1790s, when population pressures and rising land prices propelled emigration, a strong wheat market made widespread slave ownership possible, and debt and foreclosure increased. The combination of outmigration and sales of inherited lands eroded the kin-based neighborhood. At the same time, mounting tensions between the established neighborhood of the river bottom and the poorer, less developed neighborhood of the uplands played out in a series of disputes within the

Presbyterian congregation. As chapter six argues, these disputes came to a head during the revival of 1802-3, when the church split permanently, signaling a larger division of the Waxhaws into two communities. Time and revivalism also weakened old religious loyalties as the rising generation abandoned the church of their parents and joined the Methodists.

This study is based on a wide variety of local sources, including wills, probate inventories, militia muster rolls, census records, fragments of tax records, civil and criminal court documents, travel accounts, diaries and journals, memoirs, war correspondence, war pension and claims records, church records, cemetery records, published accounts of the revival, and miscellaneous colonial and state records pertaining to the Waxhaws. The land records are especially rich for this community, providing information on settlement patterns, wealth distribution, neighborhood formation, land speculation, slavery, and debt. As with any intensely local study, however, the sources are thin in places. Now and again I have found it necessary to reach beyond the narrow confines of the community to fill out the narrative. For example, the paucity of sources for the prehistoric and precolonial period led me to expand the geographic boundaries of the community in the prologue. I have likewise used “outside” sources in my discussions of sectarianism, poverty, and the revival. All of these sources, however, also make reference to the Waxhaws and in any event do not relate to events or communities beyond the Carolina piedmont. I trust that the use of these sources has not only augmented the local records but also enriched my narrative, making it both more compelling and more interesting.

PROLOGUE:
THE LOWER CATAWBA VALLEY, 1540-1750

No one lived on Waxhaw Creek when the first white settlers patented lands there in 1751. The Waxhaw Indian villages that once stood in the rich bottom between river and trading path were long gone, burned, abandoned, and washed away. First-growth forests had reclaimed the old fields where a half-century earlier Indians had grown corn, according to one traveler, “as thick as the Small of a Man’s Leg.” A few miles upriver the Catawba Indians, their villages clustered between Sugar Creek and the river bearing their name, might lay claim to the surrounding fields and forests, but in the lower Catawba River valley amid the virgin hardwoods, thick canebrakes and overgrown Indian paths, the land certainly seemed, in the parlance of the times, “vacant.” Indeed, to the first white families who settled there, it probably seemed as though it always had been.¹

But the lower Catawba valley was not a place without history. These Anglo-American families were only the most recent immigrants to an area that was long accustomed to the movement and mixing of people. A generation earlier the bustling, thriving towns near Waxhaw Creek belied the destruction that was to come; before that, a wave of intruders washed into the piedmont and coastal plain from the southwest, turning the lower Catawba valley into a bicultural borderland community; and before that the earliest human immigrants to the southeastern interior had subsisted for centuries, hunting, fishing, farming, trading, and scattering their small villages along the creeks and rivers of the hill country. The transformation that began with these early settlers and

¹ Frances Latham Harriss, ed., *Lawson’s History of North Carolina* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, 1937), 37. The Waxhaw were driven out of the Catawba valley at the close of the Yamassee War in 1716. See John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 206.

continued with the southwestern intruders was accelerated in the two centuries after European contact by disease, trade, and war as the people of the southern interior were integrated into the Atlantic market and European biological community. The Waxhaw Indians were a casualty of this transformation. But while their lands might be unoccupied in 1750, their neighbors, and perhaps some of their descendants, endured in the Catawba towns upstream, where they had forged a community out of the remnants of the piedmont and coastal peoples who had survived the European encounter.²

It was by accident that John Lawson stumbled on the Waxhaw Indians. Lawson was an English trader and adventurer who journeyed through the “pleasant and healthful Country” of the southern interior in the winter of 1700-01, following the trading path north and west from Charleston into the heart of the Carolina piedmont. Lawson rarely strayed from the main trail and would have missed the Waxhaw villages completely had not one of his men fallen behind as the party made its way into the lower Catawba valley. Fearing that “some heathen had killed him for his Cloaths, or the savage Beasts had devoured him in the Wilderness,” Lawson was contemplating sending out a search party when his missing companion suddenly appeared, accompanied by a Waxhaw Indian. “He told us he had missed the Path,” Lawson wrote, “and got to another Nation of Indians but three Miles off, who at that time held great feasting.” The Waxhaw guide invited Lawson’s party “to take up our Quarters with them” rather than “make our Abode with such a poor Sort of Indians, that were not capable of entertaining us according to our Deserts.” Lawson accepted. The account he left of his night among the Waxhaw is wonderfully rich and detailed; it remains the only description of these “extraordinary” and

² The most comprehensive history of the Catawba Indians and the lower Catawba River valley is James Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989). For a more limited but still useful study see Charles M. Hudson, *The Catawba Nation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1970).

“frightful” people who, unknown to Lawson or to anyone else in 1701, were on the brink of extermination.³

Lawson encountered what seemed to be a thriving native community at Waxhaw Creek. The three miles from the trading path to the village consisted of “cleared Ground all the Way,” indicating that the Waxhaw were a well-established people who farmed extensively. The headman had a “large and lightsome Cabin” unlike any Lawson had seen among the Congaree and Wateree Indians of the coastal plain. This “House of great resort” was the province of a fastidious “She-Cook” who prepared “Barbecues” and kept “the Pots continually boiling full of Meat, from Morning till Night.” The council house, distinguished by its pyramidal roof and its thatched ceiling and walls, was even larger than the headman’s cabin. Here the Waxhaw entertained foreign emissaries, such as the Sapona ambassador who attended the feast with Lawson. The Waxhaw were also embedded in the international trade network: Lawson marveled at a massive iron pot standing at his bedside and noted the European-made bells adorning the dancers. The Waxhaws’ proximity to the trading path as well as their eagerness to entertain Lawson’s party (and disparage their competitors as “a poor Sort of Indians”) further attest to the growing importance of the English trade, which engendered competition between native communities and gradually oriented them away from the rivers and toward the trade routes.⁴

However, despite the vast cleared fields, the impressive architecture, the distant economic and political ties, the abundant food, and the festive atmosphere, neither Lawson nor his Waxhaw hosts could escape the sense that these were a people in decline. In the hot darkness of the council house the Waxhaw women danced, circling the fire as

³ Harriss, ed., *Lawson’s History*, xxii, 31. For a brief sketch of the Waxhaws see Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 206.

⁴ Harriss, ed., *Lawson’s History*, 29-37. On the demographic effects of the European trade see Marvin T. Smith, “Aboriginal Depopulation in the Postcontact Southeast,” in *The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521-1704*, ed. Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 257-75.

two old men, one beating a drum and the other rattling a gourd, “sung a mournful Ditty.” “The Burthen of their Song was, in Remembrance of their former Greatness, and Numbers of their Nation, the famous Exploits of their Renowned Ancestors, and all Actions of Moment that had, (in former Days,) been performed by their Forefathers.” Amid the feasting, dancing, and sexual frolic of their corn festival, the Waxhaw told a story of depopulation, political dependency, and decline. For those who could remember, the pleasures of their winter feast only made more bitter the memories of a happier time.⁵

The Waxhaw had apparently lived along the lower Catawba River for several hundred years, although there was little evidence of their “former Greatness” when Hernando de Soto’s army marched up the Catawba valley in 1540 searching for gold. De Soto was en route from Cofitachequi, a relatively advanced Mississippian chiefdom near present-day Camden, South Carolina, to Joara, the northernmost extension of the piedmont Mississippians near present-day Morganton, North Carolina. The Mississippians were relative newcomers to the piedmont, and their intrusion after 1200 was profoundly disruptive to the smaller, decentralized communities settled by Siouan-speaking immigrants like the Waxhaw centuries earlier. Distinguished by their highly developed religious life built around mound construction and temple worship, their relatively advanced agriculture, and their centralized polities, Mississippian chiefdoms like Cofitachequi exerted political influence for hundreds of miles beyond the bounds of their chief towns. The Town Creek community on the Pee Dee River was probably a Cofitachequi colony; the “hill tribes” of the lower and central Catawba valley were apparently subject to the Mississippians as well.⁶

⁵ Harriss, ed., *Lawson’s History*, 35-6.

⁶ On the de Soto expedition see Charles M. Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South’s Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), esp. 186-7. For a general discussion of Mississippians see Charles M. Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 77-97. On the “hill tribes” also see Hudson, *Catawba Nation*, 15-26; and for a brief comparison of the hill groups and the Mississippian “intruders” see Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 9-10, 14-16.

But in 1540 there were few signs of either hill communities or Mississippian outposts in the lower Catawba valley. Pushing up what was probably the same trail Lawson followed 160 years later, sloshing through the swollen streams that fed the Catawba River, De Soto and his men were unimpressed with what would become Waxhaw country. According to Luys Hernandez de Biedma, the land was “poor and lacking in food” – and apparently unpopulated, since Biedma made no mention of either people or dwellings. It was “the poorest land in maize seen,” according to another account. The only Indians they encountered were at Chalaque, several miles upriver from Lawson’s Waxhaw village. Probably Siouan, the people of Chalaque had exhausted their corn reserves and lived “on roots of herbs which they seek in the open field and on game . . . The people are very domestic, go quite naked, and are very weak.” Most of them had abandoned their villages and fled into the forest as the Spaniards approached. Garcilaso de la Vega, who kept the most complete record of the expedition, perhaps best summed up the journey through the lower Catawba valley: leaving Cofitachequi on May 14, they reached Chalaque by the “public highway” two days later “without anything worth mentioning having happened to them on the way.”⁷

Twenty-eight years later, however, Juan Pardo found a string of Indian villages along this same route. Between 1566-68 Pardo led two expeditions into the southern interior, both of which took him through the Catawba valley. Abandoning the quest for gold, Pardo’s Spanish superiors ordered him to explore the piedmont with a view toward establishing an agricultural estate. His reports reflect this concern, emphasizing the land and virtually ignoring the people of the Catawba valley. The expedition’s chief chronicler, Juan de la Vandra, noted that Tagaya (on present-day Beaver Creek just south of the Waxhaws) was “without swamps. The land is plateaus with little tree cover.

⁷ Luys Hernandez de Biedma, “Relation of the Island of Florida,” trans. John E. Worth, in *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto in North America, 1539-1543*, vol. 1, ed. Lawrence Clayton, et. al. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 231; “The Account by a Gentleman from Elvas,” trans. James Alexander Robertson, in *ibid.*, 86; Garcilaso de la Vega, the Inca, “La Florida,” trans. Charmion Shelby, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 307.

[The soils are] blackish and bright red, very good. [There is] much good water [from] fountains and creeks.” At Gueça – on present-day Waxhaw Creek, from whence the name “Waxhaw” is derived – the land was “just like that above and abundant in good” resources. As for the people who inhabited these promising lands, Pardo seized their corn and declared them to be Spanish subjects, neither of which acts seemed to have any appreciable long-term impact.⁸

Pardo’s Gueça was a historically Siouan community that antedated de Soto and was either missed by his expedition or ignored by his chroniclers. Perhaps the Gueça, like their Chalaque neighbors upriver, had heard of de Soto’s atrocities at Cofitachequi and fled into the forest or crossed the river at the nearby shoals, while de Soto, eager to push north toward Joara and its rumored gold, ignored the paths leading from the “public highway” to the Gueça’s riverside villages. In any event, the Gueça of de Soto’s and Pardo’s day seemed to be a mixed people. Their Siouan/Catawban name and small village polity suggest that the Gueça were ethnically related to the hill tribes of the piedmont and had probably settled in the lower Catawba valley several centuries before de Soto.⁹ At the same time, Gueça was well within the sphere of Cofitachequian influence; by the sixteenth century it had surrendered much of its political autonomy to the Mississippian intruders, and it had probably begun absorbing Mississippian culture as well.¹⁰ For example, John Lawson described how the Waxhaw flattened the heads of their infants by mechanically pressing them against their cradle boards, making “the Eyes stand a prodigious Way asunder, and the Hair hang over the Forehead like the Eves of a

⁸ Charles Hudson, *The Juan Pardo Expeditions: Exploration of the Carolinas and Tennessee, 1566-1568* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 29, 301-2.

⁹ Recent linguistic analysts agree with the traditional interpretation that “Gueça” is of Siouan or Catawban derivation, although Catawban itself was a “creolized language.” See Karen M. Booker, Charles M. Hudson, and Robert L. Rankin, “Place Name Identification and Multilingualism in the Sixteenth-Century Southeast,” *Ethnohistory* 39, 4 (Fall 1992), 410, 421.

¹⁰ Chester D. DePratter, “The Chiefdom of Cofitachequi,” in *The Forgotten Centuries*, ed. Hudson and Tesser, 220.

House, which seems very frightful.” Head deformation was a distinctly Mississippian cultural practice.¹¹ In fact, a small, unexcavated mound at Waxhaw Creek suggests that Mississippians may have colonized Gueça during the late prehistoric or early historic period. Such a failed colonial venture could have left a mixed culture at Gueça, one that retained its Siouan language and small village ways but embraced Mississippian head deformation and perhaps even its temple mound worship.¹² In any case, it is fairly certain that Gueça occupied a place between two worlds in the early historic period, embodying the biculturalism and perhaps the bilingualism of a borderland community.¹³

The changing politics of the seventeenth-century piedmont created new dependencies for Gueça a century after the Pardo expedition. In 1670 the German explorer John Lederer claimed to have encountered the “Wisacky” Indians as he journeyed into the southern piedmont from Virginia. According to Lederer, the Wisacky were “subject to a neighbor-King” of the populous Usheries, or Catawbas. Lederer’s contention that the Usheries lived on a great salt lake hedged by mountains casts doubt on his claim that he ever made it to Catawba country, suggesting instead that he acquired his knowledge of the Wisacky and Usheries second-hand. However, his assertion that the Wisacky were tributaries to the Catawba is not so far-fetched: Cofitachequi was clearly in decline by the mid-seventeenth century, and the Gueça/Wisacky proximity to the more populous Catawba makes their cultural and political affiliation, if not their subordination, likely.¹⁴

¹¹ Harriss, ed., *Lawson’s History*, 30; Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 31-2.

¹² On the Waxhaw Creek mound see Booker, et. al., “Place Name Identification,” 405. James Merrell has argued that the early Waxhaw community was a Mississippian colony much like that at Town Creek. See *Indians’ New World*, 14.

¹³ Booker, et. al., “Place Name Identification,” 421.

¹⁴ John Lederer, *The Discoveries of John Lederer*, ed. William P. Cumming (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1958), 29-31. The precise dating of Cofitachequi’s decline is uncertain. Marvin T. Smith suspects that it was “still important” in 1670 though it had “devolved into basically one town” and no longer exerted influence in the region. See “Aboriginal Population Movements in the Early Historic Period Interior Southeast,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Peter H.

Lederer's visit to the Carolina interior came on the eve of a more far-reaching development that had profound consequences for the lower Catawba valley: the penetration of English traders into the piedmont.¹⁵ Previously centralized at the Roanoke River, after 1676 English merchants from the Chesapeake established direct trade ties with piedmont Indians. As trade and contact increased, native populations dropped sharply, declining by as much as 85% by the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁶ Depopulation set in motion a consolidation process as remnants of these diminished piedmont communities relocated and joined neighboring groups. Indian coalescence was further propelled by South Carolina's emergence as a major trade partner at the turn of the eighteenth century. Better positioned than its Virginia rival to trade with the Catawba, Cherokee, and Creek, South Carolina slowly drove Virginia out of the piedmont trade and drew native communities into its trade orbit. By 1700 the cultural landscape of the piedmont bore only a vague resemblance to that of 1650: nearly all of the Virginia communities were gone, the once-populous Tuscarora of central North Carolina were severely diminished, and the Siouan remnants of the North Carolina interior were scattered along the trading path, perhaps contemplating a move south to join the Esaw,

Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 26, 31.

¹⁵ The transformation of the English-Indian trade was precipitated by Bacon's Rebellion. Prior to 1676 trade was centralized at Occaneechi Island on the Roanoke River, but after Bacon's Rebellion the Occaneechi middlemen withdrew, making direct trade possible. For a more detailed summary of the decline of the piedmont Indians in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century, see R.P. Stephen Davis, Jr., "The Cultural Landscape of the North Carolina Piedmont at Contact," forthcoming in a collection edited by Charles M. Hudson. I wish to thank Professor Hudson for sharing this manuscript with me.

¹⁶ This is based on John Lawson's 1701 estimate, but recent studies suggest that it was not far off. See Marvin T. Smith, "Aboriginal Depopulation in the Postcontact Southeast," in *Forgotten Centuries*, ed. Hudson and Tesser, 257-75. As Smith notes, the native population had been in decline since contact if not before; in the piedmont, however, it accelerated with the increase in trade during the late seventeenth century. See Davis, "Cultural Landscape," 11-12.

Kadapau, Sugaree, and Waxhaw who were clustered in the lower Catawba valley (Map 1).¹⁷

It was this rapidly changing world that John Lawson encountered on his tour of the piedmont in 1701. By Lawson's time the lower Catawba valley had witnessed at least two waves of immigrants; as the meeting place of two disparate peoples, it was a mixing zone with a bicultural past. The Waxhaw bore the marks of this earlier coalescence on their bodies: "called by their Neighbors *flat-Heads*," they were a hybrid people, a people apart from their more purely Siouan neighbors and living uneasily among them. But Lawson also recognized that the piedmont was changing much more rapidly now than it had in the preceding centuries. It was not the "former Greatness" of Cofitachequi that the Waxhaw musicians mourned, but the "Numbers of their Nation" that had declined so steeply within their living memory. Depopulation had thrown the demography of the piedmont in reverse: the descendants of settlers who long ago scattered their towns across the hill country were dying out, abandoning their homes, and drawing together. And the transformation wrought by the English trade on the lower Catawba valley had just begun.

In the half-century after Lawson's visit, the native communities of the lower Catawba valley would slowly realize that trade with the English was a mixed blessing. For all the benefits they derived from European guns, beads, and iron pots, piedmont Indians paid a price by importing European diseases and alcoholism. But while they dealt with disease and complained about rum, the Waxhaw and their neighbors could not tolerate abusive traders. In South Carolina, Indian claims that they were cheated, unjustly indebted, unlawfully seized of their property, exploited as carriers, and increasingly enslaved by unscrupulous traders mounted after 1710. Although the Yamassee settlements of the coastal plain felt the brunt of this abuse, frustration was mounting among the piedmont groups as well. In 1716 these groups joined the Creek, Cherokee, and Yamassee in an all-out assault on the English, an assault that ultimately failed. The

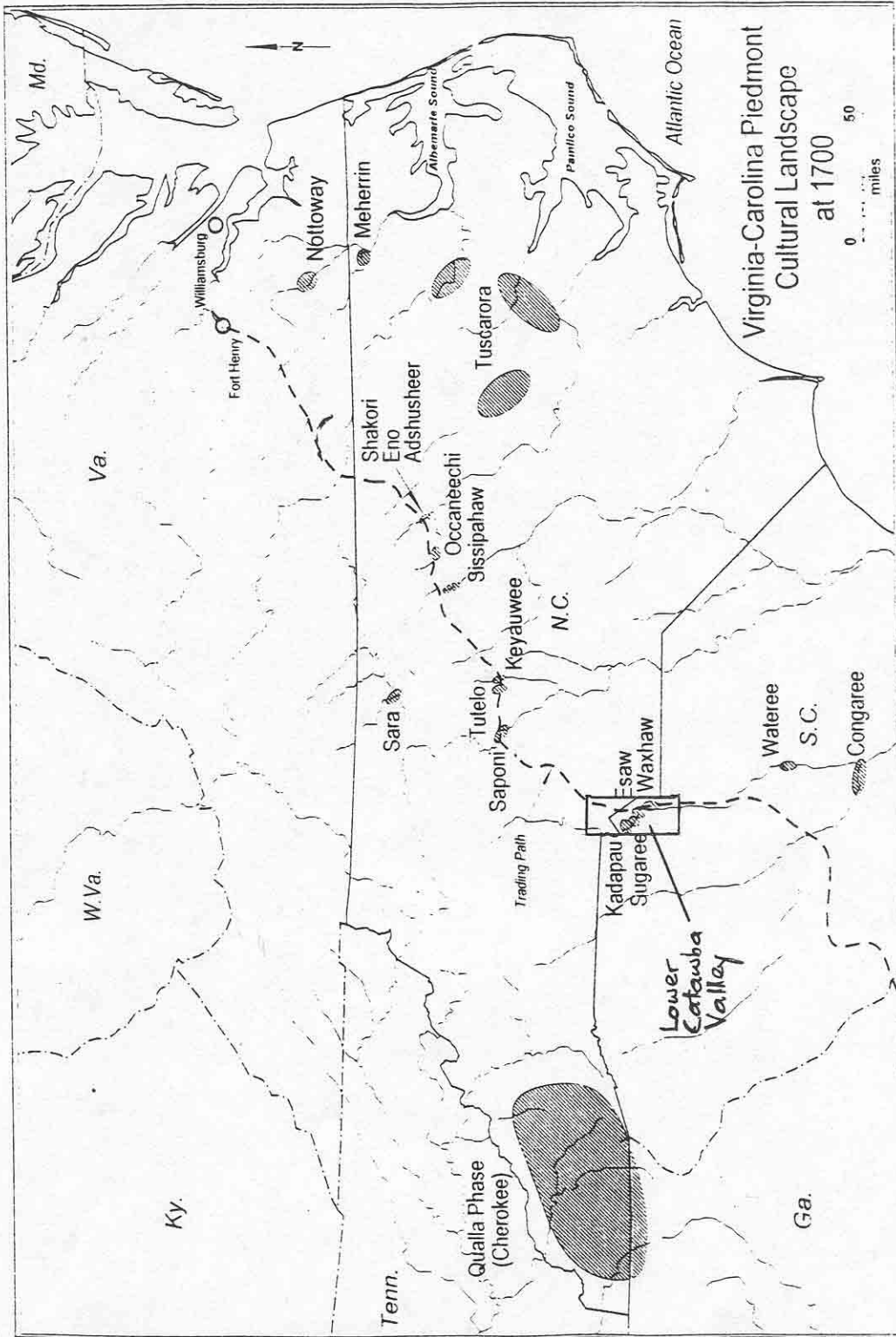
¹⁷ Davis, "Cultural Landscape," 13-15, maps 4 and 7.

Catawba soon made peace with the whites, but the Waxhaw held out, according to colonial officials, “which obliged the Catawbaws to fall on them.” Most were killed by their neighbors and former allies; a band of twenty-five joined the Yamassees in Florida and continued to resist the English; others fled to the Cheraw in eastern South Carolina and may have eventually coalesced with the Catawba.¹⁸

The destruction of the Waxhaw permanently altered the political, economic, and demographic landscape of the lower Catawba valley. It propelled the Catawba into the good graces of South Carolina, affording them a privileged diplomatic status, a firm political and military alliance that lasted until the Revolution, and somewhat later, limited protection from encroachment by white settlers. It also assured the Catawba a monopoly on the lucrative piedmont deerskin trade. Never again would the Waxhaw intercept travelers on the trading path, vying for English favor and disparaging the “poor sort of Indians” upstream. Having eliminated their downriver competition, the Catawba towns were now the first stop for lowcountry traders traveling north.¹⁹ On the other hand, Catawba dependency on European goods threatened their self-sufficiency and autonomy; craft skills were forgotten, dependence on guns and cloth deepened, and by the 1730s the Catawba became the weaker partner in the piedmont trade. Once determining the forms and rules that governed Indian-white exchange in the interior, the Catawba and their neighbors now suffered slights from traders and colonial officials alike. Insofar as the

¹⁸ Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 206; Chapman J. Milling, *Red Carolinians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 135-38, 144, 150, 153. Milling is the best source for the Yamassees War in South Carolina. For a general treatment of the events surrounding the war see Verner Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1928). James Merrell has argued that the Catawba destroyed the Waxhaw as much to eliminate a trade rival and political threat as to ingratiate themselves with the English. See *Indians' New World*, 103-4.

¹⁹ Merrell, *Indians' New World*, 103-4.



Map I: Lower Catawba Valley and Piedmont Cultural Landscape during John Lawson's Visit. Adapted from R.P. Stephen Davis, Jr., "The Cultural Landscape of the North Carolina Piedmont at Contact," in an upcoming collection edited by Charles M. Hudson, Map 7.

destruction of the Waxhaw made the Catawba the undisputed masters of the piedmont trade, it also propelled them down the path to dependency and obsolescence.²⁰

The demography of the Catawba valley was also transformed in the two decades after the Yamassee War. With the exception of a small body of Wateree Indians subsisting below the fall line, the entire Santee-Wateree drainage was now vacant from the Atlantic coast to Sugar Creek. In the quarter-century after the war, Indian refugees from the piedmont and the coastal plain trickled into the Catawba towns, in some cases establishing separate villages but huddling close by the Catawba core. By 1743 the Catawba peoples were speaking at least twenty different dialects. The influx of refugees, however, could not stem the decline in native population. Periodically beset by major epidemics, the Catawba population fell from 1,500 warriors in 1700 to 570 in 1715, 400 in 1743, 240 in 1755, and 100 in 1775. By the middle of the eighteenth century the lower Catawba valley was a melting pot of far-flung native peoples who, despite a steady stream of immigrants, were declining precipitously.²¹

And yet over time the polyglot peoples of the Catawba River, as ethnically and culturally disparate though they once were, melded into a single community. Declining numbers combined with the gradually fading ethnic memories of a rising generation to fuel inter-ethnic marriages, while colonial diplomatic pressure slowly forced political cooperation and even unity on the semi-autonomous towns. By the 1750s the Catawbas had evolved from a confederation of refugee villages banded together for mutual protection into a localized community linked by kinship and loosely subject to a single headman. It was this localized, kin-based, yet intermixed community that white

²⁰This summary of the impact of trade on the Catawba is based on James H. Merrell, “‘Our Bond of Peace’: Patterns of Intercultural Exchange in the Carolina Piedmont, 1650-1750,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle*, 196-222; and *Indians’ New World*, 49-91.

²¹ Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 96, 97, 110-112, 117; Julian J. Petty, *The Growth and Distribution of Population in South Carolina* (Columbia: The Reprint Company, 1975), 16; *Colonial Records of North Carolina* (hereafter *CRNC*), V, 320-21.

immigrants encountered when they pushed into the lower Catawba valley at mid-century.²²

These white immigrants were themselves organized into communities.²³ Through the mid-eighteenth century the native people of the lower Catawba valley had encountered fortune-seekers, adventurers, travelers, traders, diplomats, agents, refugees, armies, and from a distance, planters, but these were fleeting encounters. Such men came to trade, gawk, explore, negotiate, or fight, but they did not call the piedmont home; they could be reasoned with, dealt with, and even integrated into the native community, nearly always in terms that were familiar to and usually established by the Indians. Diminished though these local Indian communities might be, until mid-century they dominated the Carolina piedmont in general and the lower Catawba valley in particular. This was not the case after mid-century, when the Catawba peoples confronted a flood of immigrants much like themselves, transplanted communities of white people bound by kinship ties, suspicious, insular, and no more interested in incorporating Indian ways than Catawbas were in becoming European. Unlike the Indian refugees who dared not settle downcountry from their Catawba hosts, these new immigrants eagerly established themselves on the ruins of the Waxhaw villages. The meeting of these two mutually exclusive communities defined the history of the lower Catawba valley in the two decades after 1750.

²² For Catawba kinship networks and localism see Merrell, *Indians' New World*, 20-1, 23-4.

²³ Historians have only recently begun to focus on the village level and treat Indian groups as communities, an approach James Merrell called for in 1989, "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd, 46 (1989), 118-19. For examples see Merrell, *Indians' New World*, esp. pp. 18-27; and Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). For a work that applies the full-blown community study model to Indian history, see Joshua Piker, "'Peculiarly Connected': The Creek Town of Oakfuskee and the Study of Colonial American Communities, 1708-1785" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1998). While Indian historians have gained new insights as a result of this local emphasis, they tend to lose this perspective when treating the encounter between Indian villagers and white settlers, failing to recognize that settlers too were organized in discrete communities that simultaneously propelled them and constrained them – in short, failing to see this encounter as one of two communities.

CHAPTER 1:
COMMUNITIES, COLONISTS, AND CONFLICT

In 1767 Charles Woodmason, a lowcountry planter-turned-Church of England cleric who itinerated in the South Carolina upcountry in the late 1760s, drafted a sermon for a planned pulpit exchange with William Richardson, the minister of the Presbyterian congregation in the Waxhaw settlement. In the few weeks since his arrival in the “Wild Country” Woodmason had already met with scorn and ridicule from the “Herds of Sectaries” scattered across the interior. Accordingly he planned to preach on Christian charity, warning the Waxhaw Presbyterians against the dangers of their narrow sectarianism and urging them to cultivate a spirit of unity and peace. “There is an External Enemy near at Hand,” Woodmason reminded them. “These are our *Indian* Neighbors. Common Prudence, and our Common Security, requires that We should live like Brethren in Unity, be it only to guard against any Dangers to our Lives and Properties as may arise from that Quarter.” Worse yet, Woodmason continued, “We have an *Internal Enemy*,” a rapidly swelling slave population along the coast that threatens to “surprize us in an Hour when We are not aware.” “Over these We ought to keep a very watchful Eye, lest [we] . . . begin our Friendships towards each other in one Common Death.” It was thus critical, Woodmason reasoned, that the Presbyterians lay aside their “Rough treatment” and “abusive Words,” their “Inhospitability to Strangers” and “reprehensible” religious intolerance, both for their own good and for the mutual protection of all of South Carolina’s white inhabitants.¹

¹ Richard Hooker, ed., *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, VA, 1953), 9, 93-4.

It had not taken Woodmason long to realize that the white communities he encountered in the piedmont were insular, exclusive, and suspicious places. The people of the Waxhaws confirmed as much when they rejected the pulpit exchange: “some of the Kirk Elders not being agreeable” to his visit, Woodmason never got to deliver his sermon on tolerance.² In any event, his appeal to a common whiteness would have left little impression on his upcountry listeners; the sobering racial argument that chilled congregations in the wealthy, black-majority coastal district fell on deaf ears in communities where whites outnumbered slaves by at least nine to one. The day when such communities would feel compelled to “live like Brethren in Unity” with lowcountry planters was yet to come; for now, they could afford to ignore pleas for racial unity and indulge their sectarian hatreds. Moreover, their “*Indian Neighbors*” were largely responsible for creating the insularity Woodmason was trying to overcome.³ A perceptive but not always astute observer, Woodmason failed to see that the localism and insularity of the Waxhaw settlement was neither a luxury nor a choice; it was the social condition of such upcountry communities, their defining feature.

This insularity was grounded in the dual identity of white settlers as immigrants and colonists; it thus had both a social and a political source. It sprang in part from the social make-up of these communities: the people of the Waxhaws were bound by kinship ties that structured their settlement system, shaped their settlement patterns, and determined in general who they would marry and where they would worship. They lived in tightly knit, cohesive ethnic enclaves ordered by kinship. But more than just immigrants or settlers, the white families who flooded the piedmont after 1750 were also

² Ibid., 93, n. 23.

³ In large part, local and state histories of the colonial southeast have not followed the lead of the New Indian Historians in creating a more inclusive early American master narrative. For noteworthy exceptions see Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill : Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996).

colonists. They colluded with colonial authorities to populate the “vacant” lands of the Carolina interior, agreeing to place their bodies between hostile Indians and anxious coastal planters in exchange for land. They inhabited a danger zone where as colonizing intruders they were ever vulnerable to attack, not a “mixing zone” where diverse, mutually accommodating groups met and exchanged goods, services, and cultures.⁴ To fully understand these communities we must set aside our notions of innocuous, multicultural “borderlands” and remind ourselves that the Carolina piedmont of the mid-eighteenth century was a colonial frontier whose story was one of conflict, not accommodation.⁵ There was no middle ground in the encounter between Indians and colonists, only the ill will and mutual exclusion of two polarized communities.

The re-peopling of the Carolina hill country was the most profound historical development in the piedmont since the Siouan immigration centuries earlier.⁶ In sharp

⁴ Indian historians recognize that the cooperation and mutuality of the “frontier exchange economy” ceased when white settlers moved in to establish permanent communities. See Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1992); White, *Middle Ground*; and Merrell, *Indians’ New World*. On the other hand, some “frontier” historians have sought to extend the borderlands framework to the community phase. See Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1985); and Michael Puglisi, “Introduction,” in Michael Puglisi, ed., *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 3-22.

⁵ For a discussion of how the borderlands emphasis obscures the process of colonization see Gregory H. Nobles, *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1997), 14-16.

⁶ Historians have carefully studied the economic, political, demographic, and even ecological dimensions of this movement of people, but we know less about immigration as a social process. On cultural conflict see Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 171-81. The best work on sectional tensions resulting from the peopling of the upcountry is Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*. The seminal study of the economic motives of backcountry immigrants is Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University Press of VA, 1977). Also see Joyce Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1993), 8-9. For the ecological impact of the European invasion on the Carolina piedmont see Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 169-71, 179-81.

contrast to the gradual depopulation that had reduced the interior to a ghost region over the preceding century, in the 1750s and 1760s the piedmont was literally booming. Driven from far-off northern Ireland by rack-renting, famine, and depressed linen prices, or pushed out of Pennsylvania and Virginia by population pressures, rising land prices, and the promise of abundance in a new country, unprecedented numbers of both new immigrants and native-born Americans were pushing southward into the creek bottoms of the Carolinas.⁷ The results were stunning: between 1755 and 1767, the white population of western North Carolina grew by 229 percent. South Carolina experienced a similar if slightly less dramatic increase of fifty percent in the four years following the Cherokee War of 1761.⁸ So rapid was the peopling of the southern piedmont that within little more than a generation the Carolina upcountry was full to overflowing.

Such changes did not escape observers. The three thousand fighting men Matthew Rowan found in western North Carolina in 1753 were “dayley increasing,” made up mostly of “Irish Protestants, and Germans brave Industerous people.” One James River ferryman counted five thousand passengers in a single week in 1756. North Carolina’s governor William Tryon noted that in the fall and winter of 1766 “upwards of one thousand wagons passed through Salisbury with families from the northward.” Traveling from Charleston to Cherokee country in 1769, John Stuart found that these

⁷ On northern Ireland see R.J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 6-18; and Maldwyn A. Jones, “The Scots-Irish in British America,” in *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan (Chapel Hill: Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, VA, 1991), 292-3. For Pennsylvania and Virginia see Robert Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 14-22; Carl Brindenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 122-30. There is nothing to substantiate Ramsey’s claims that border disputes between Maryland and Pennsylvania were a factor in driving immigrants off, nor is there any evidence to support Charles Sellers’ claim that settlers were drawn to the Carolina border country to deliberately manipulate ambiguous boundaries or avoid taxation. See Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 14-20, and Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8.

⁸ For North Carolina, see Marvin Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748-1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 221-27. For South Carolina see Meriwether, *Expansion*, 260.

families were bound for the remote piedmont, ignoring the more easterly vacant lands between the fall line and the seaboard. “The Country near the [South Carolina-North Carolina] line is very full of Inhabitants,” he noted, “mostly Emigrants from the Northern colonies; it is remarkable that in going hence I rode at times 30 and 40 miles without seeing any house or hut yet near the Boundary, that Country is full of Inhabitants, which in my memory was considered by the Indians as their best hunting Ground, such is their rage for settling far back.” Indeed, the “very fruitful fine Spot” of the Waxhaws, wrote Charles Woodmason in 1768, was “most surprisingly thick settled beyond any Spot in England of its Extent.”⁹

Even colonial administrators and land speculators like Rowan, Tryon, and Stuart, who tended to fix on the economic and political dimensions of immigration, could not fail to recognize that this movement of people was a social process.¹⁰ As Tryon noted, the thousand-plus wagons passing through Salisbury in late 1766 carried *families*. Unlike the seventeenth-century Chesapeake or the Carolina lowcountry, which had been initially populated with forced and unfree laborers, the peopling of the southern backcountry was a family affair. As we shall see, these families were embedded in a much larger network of relations, a network stretching along the British-American periphery and across the Atlantic to Ulster and northern England. In other words, the European settlers of this remote country “near the Boundary” were far from isolated; indeed, they were intensely interconnected. Resettlement was a social process, accomplished within a complex web of friends, acquaintances, and kin. Immigration was a fundamentally social act whose end result was a region “full of Inhabitants” clustered in discrete, kin-ordered communities.

⁹ Matthew Rowan to the Earl of Holderness, November 11, 1753, in *CRNC*, V, 25; Brindenbaugh, *Myths*, 125 [ferryman]; *CRNC*, VII, 248 [Tryon]; Brindenbaugh, *Myths*, 127-8 [Stuart]; Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 13-14.

¹⁰ In fact, this movement resembled that of the “grassroots social process” of a much later Great Migration described by James Grossman. See *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 66-97.

In general, immigrants to the colonial southern interior moved within three more-or-less distinct settlement systems. In much of Virginia and western North Carolina and parts of South Carolina, speculator-developers pried massive tracts of land out of the Crown's hands in exchange for promises to establish large numbers of taxpaying settlers in the vacant interior. Chief among these speculators was Henry McCulloch, who took up 1.2 million acres in western North Carolina, some of which he divvied out to other speculators, some of which he sold to squatters, much of which he returned to the Crown unsettled, none of which he paid a shilling on in taxes. Colonial authorities also organized settlement. In South Carolina, coastal elites developed an aggressive settlement system in the township plan, which offered generous land giveaways, ship passage, and start-up funds in order to attract "free poor Protestants" to strategic points on the frontier. Despite its generous funding, however, the township system could not match the success – in terms of drawing settlers into the interior – of the grassroots, settler-driven system on public, non-township lands in communities like the Waxhaws.¹¹

This grassroots settlement process took place within an administrative framework that optimized the agency of settlers and enabled their social networks to freely function. The vast majority of early immigrants procured their lands through royal grants. Crown lands in the mid-eighteenth-century Carolinas included all "vacant" lands except the Granville district, which sprawled over the northern half of North Carolina, and Indian territory on the Catawba River and west of the Appalachian mountains.¹² The amount of land available to grantees varied slightly in the two provinces. South Carolina used the

¹¹ For the full story of McCulloch's speculative schemes see Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Private Profits and British Colonial Policy: The Speculations of Henry McCulloch," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3^d, 8 (1951): 535-51. Also see Marjoleine Kars, "'Breaking Loose Together': Religion and Rebellion in the North Carolina Piedmont, 1730-1790," (Duke University: PhD Dissertation, 1994), chapter 1. On other speculative ventures in the southern interior see Meriwether, *Expansion*, 34-41, and Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 128-34. On the township system see Meriwether, *Expansion*, 19-30.

¹² "Vacant" was a European concept applied to lands not occupied by Indian towns. As John Stuart noted, however, the Indians thought of "far back" places like the Waxhaws "as their best hunting Ground," and thus by no means vacant. Stuart is quoted in Brindenbaugh, *Myths*, 127-8.

headright system, which granted fifty acres for each household member; North Carolina abandoned this system in the 1750s and based acreage on the household's general "condition to cultivate and improve" it. For immigrants settling in its strategically-located townships (generally at or below the fall line and hence south of the piedmont), South Carolina offered an additional "bounty," which included funds for purchasing tools and provisions plus a generous tax break. In the wake of the Cherokee War, South Carolina briefly extended the bounty to non-township lands to lure settlers into the most vulnerable frontier regions. Otherwise the land give-aways alone provided enough incentive to draw settlers into the Carolina piedmont.

The process for acquiring land grants was nearly identical in the two provinces. First, a petitioner applied to the governor and council for an entry or warrant on the land. The approved warrant was then passed on to the Surveyor General, who authorized a survey for the designated acreage. The deputy surveyor marked off the tract and drew up a plat showing its boundaries and dimensions. Once the plat was recorded and the survey approved, the petitioner applied for a patent, paid the requisite fees, and received title to the land. Provincial taxes were due when the survey was filed, and quit rents came due when the grant was made, tempting some settlers to delay the final processing and risk losing their surveys to avoid paying quit rents. Although the taxes and fees were relatively modest – around ten pounds, depending on the size of the survey – they could be prohibitive to small farmers strapped for cash. Equally prohibitive was the inconvenience to backcountry grantees, who might have to make three trips to New Bern or Charleston to process a claim. But in the end the cost was still far below the purchasing price, and the final product was worth the expense and inconvenience: grantees held their titles in fee simple and could freely convey their land by will or deed,

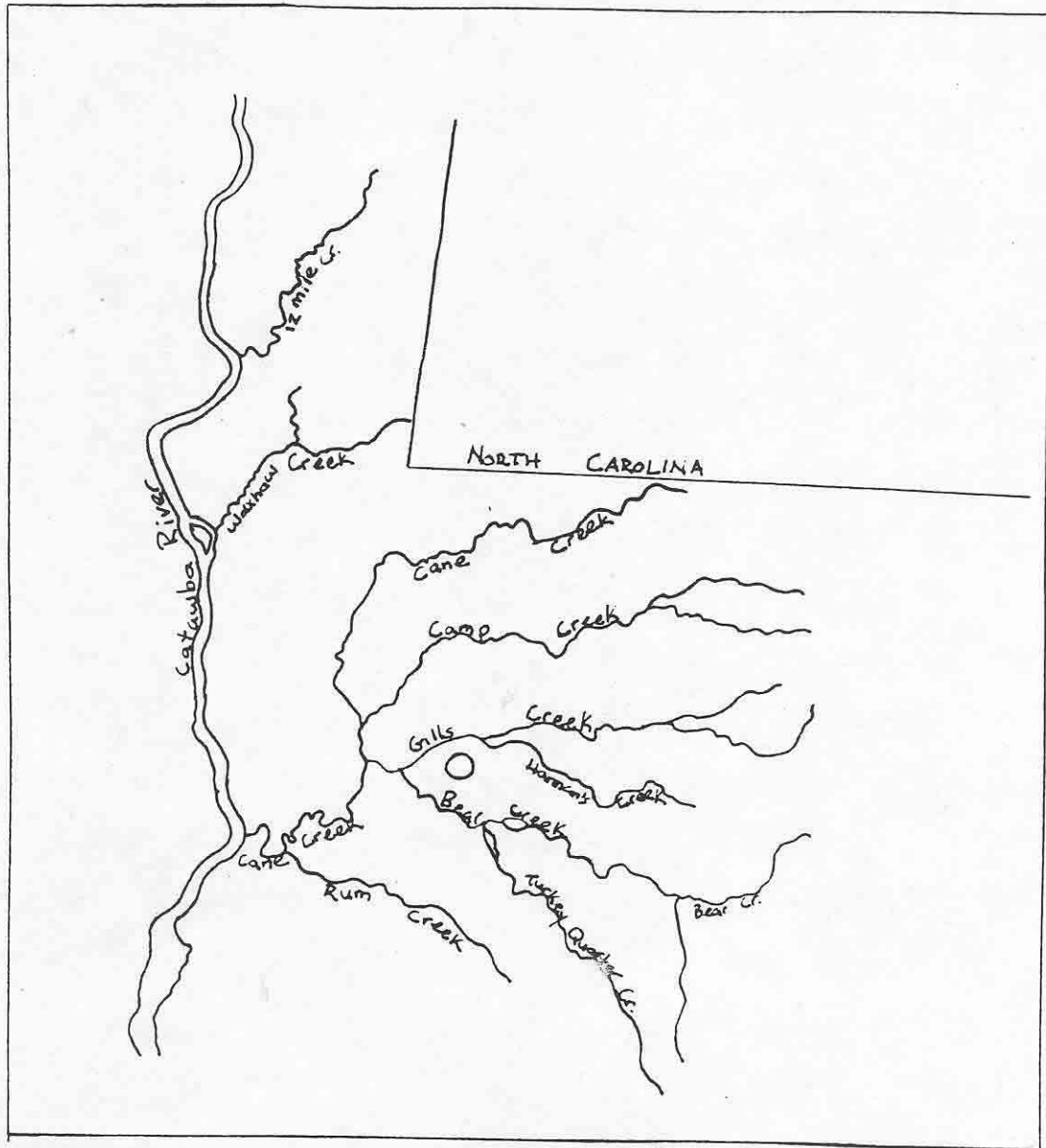
with no worrisome mortgages threatening their autonomy in the event of illness or a bad crop.¹³

On the whole the headright system met the needs of immigrant farm families and functioned well as a vehicle for populating the interior. Setting maximum limits on individual tracts, it generally kept wealthy speculators out of the land market, especially in South Carolina; at the same time it enabled large immigrant households to acquire surplus lands for petty speculation, leasing, or settling family members. Moreover, it gave immigrants the freedom to establish their own communities outside the narrow limits of the townships. White settlers were quick to take advantage of these choices. By 1759 approximately 7,000 people (including 300 slaves) had settled on the non-bounty lands above South Carolina's fall line, nearly all of whom had immigrated since 1750; between 1760-65 this upcountry population would increase by fifty percent. By contrast, only 8,000 settlers (one in six of whom were slaves) moved onto the bounty lands of the townships in the three decades before 1760, while the group settlement schemes of private speculators and developers in parts of North Carolina and in townships like Purrysburg essentially failed to attract significant numbers of permanent settlers.¹⁴

The Waxhaw settlement typified the public, non-bounty spaces of the Carolina piedmont. As a border community located along an undefined provincial boundary, it fell

¹³ George Stevenson, "Forward," in Margaret Hoffman, comp., *Colony of North Carolina 1735-1764, Abstracts of Land Patents*, vols.1 and 2 (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1982-84); Robert Ackerman, *South Carolina Colonial Land Policies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 94-7, 106-13; Meriwether, *Expansion*, 30, 242. After 1750 South Carolina increased its headright acreage to 100 acres for the head of household and fifty acres for all other members.

¹⁴ Meriwether, *Expansion*, 160, 256-9, 34-41; Sellers, "Private Profits"; Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 53-5. Those rare speculator-developers who were successful at recruiting permanent settlers relied on the built-in social networks and agency of immigrant families to facilitate settlement. Such was the case with Arthur Dobbs, an Ulster landlord, piedmont speculator, and governor of North Carolina. See Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 128-34. Turk McClesky has uncovered a similar strategy used by the proprietors of Beverly Manor in colonial Virginia. The Beverly landholding elite used the natural kinship networks to recruit new tenants and to ensure social stability, severely restricting access to land on the part of many would-be freeholders. See "Rich Lands, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 98, no. 3 (July 1990): 449-86.



Map 3: The Waxhaws Creek Systems. Adapted from Vergil A. Rogers, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

under both colonies' land policies simultaneously during the first two decades of white immigration. Settled mostly by Scots-Irish immigrants from Pennsylvania and Virginia, it partook of that same movement of people that flowed into central North Carolina in the 1740s, central South Carolina in the 1760s, and northeast Georgia before and after the Revolution. Like other communities along the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania to South Carolina, it also experienced rapid growth. By 1759, only eight years after the first white settlers took up land along the Catawba River, there were over six hundred people living along Waxhaw and Cane Creeks.¹⁵ This was almost one-tenth of the total non-Indian population of the South Carolina backcountry. As the first stop for northern immigrants into South Carolina, the Waxhaw settlement was the fastest growing area in the upcountry during the 1750s and early 1760s, with a population density of twelve people per square mile by 1761.¹⁶ Growth continued at a slightly slower pace through 1766, largely due to the density of the Waxhaws population relative to the more sparsely settled lands to the west and southwest. However, while less than three percent of the 1,100 grants issued in the backcountry between 1760 and 1765 were for land in the Waxhaws – the fewest new grants of any backcountry community – the sharp decline in land grants was partially offset by a sudden increase in land purchases.¹⁷ Immigration resumed in the mid-1760s, and the Waxhaws population continued to increase at a rapid clip – by fifty percent in the decade following the Cherokee War – prompting observers

¹⁵ This figure is based on the number of landowning households and an estimate of the tenant population based on surplus lands. See Appendix 1 for a full discussion of the methodology. This number is significantly higher than Meriwether's estimate of 500, which was based on headrights and militia rolls and which applied to a larger geographic area. See Meriwether, *Expansion*, 141.

¹⁶ This figure is based on the settled portions of the Waxhaws, not on the total area that would eventually be settled (which would yield 4 people per square mile in 1760). The settlement remained fairly compact through the mid-sixties. There was one landowning household for approximately every 400 acres in 1760. With an estimated 6.4 people per household, there would have been over 10 people per square mile in 1760, not including tenants. With tenants factored in, population density was approximately 12 people per square mile.

¹⁷ For comparative data on grants, see Meriwether, *Expansion*, 256-7. Along Waxhaw and Cane Creeks, the number of grants fell from 95 between 1750-57 to 28 between 1758-65, while the number of purchases increased from 22 to 51 in this same period.

like Charles Woodmason to comment on how “surprisingly thick settled” this remote place had become by 1768. By the time of the Revolution the population of the Waxhaw settlement would approach one thousand (see Appendix 1).

An extensive kinship network facilitated this rapid and prolonged settlement of the Waxhaws. Unfortunately, there is little surviving correspondence between immigrants and relatives back home that documents the social network that made settlement possible.¹⁸ However, land, church, and court records show a high level of prior relationships – as neighbors, siblings, in-laws, church members – between people who moved to the Waxhaws in the 1750s and 60s. Richard Cousar was typical. In 1742 Cousar and Samuel and Robert Dunlap purchased adjacent lands on the Borden Tract in Augusta County, Virginia. Cousar and Samuel Dunlap moved to the Waxhaw settlement in 1752 and took headright grants on Cane Creek and its tributaries. Robert followed seven years later and purchased a Cane Creek tract from Robert Ramsey, another Augusta County neighbor and fellow church member. One year earlier Ramsey had sold his Waxhaw Creek tract to John and Moses Davis, who paid with Virginia currency and whose surname likewise appears in Augusta County church records.¹⁹ In all, nearly one-half of the sixty-two surnames appearing in Waxhaws land records during the first decade of settlement were also listed in Augusta County Presbyterian church records. The complete names of one in six immigrants during this period appear in both communities. Augusta County was the most important feeder community in the early years; although

¹⁸ But contemporaries did attest to this correspondence. See David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 611-12.

¹⁹ James Cousar, *Down the Waxhaw Road: The Life Story of the Reverend John Cousar, a Plain, Practical, Presbyterian Preacher* (Florence, SC, 1753), 16-17; Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Tinkling Spring: Headwater of Freedom: A Study of the Church and Her People, 1732-1952* (Fisherville, VA, 1954), 470-84; Colonial North Carolina Land Grants (CNCLG), North Carolina State Archives, bk. 13, p. 3, bk. 2, p. 3; Anson County Records of Deeds, North Carolina State Archives, bk C, p. 108, bk. 1, p. 222, bk. 5, p. 95; South Carolina Council Journal (SCCJ), III, 168; Brent H. Holcomb, *North Carolina Land Grants in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC, 1980), 7.

this connection grew thinner after 1760, Augusta County continued to supply immigrants through the Revolution (see Appendix 2).²⁰

The Irish Settlement in western North Carolina was another key source of Waxhaws immigrants. Henry White moved there from Pennsylvania in 1749, only to sell out again and push down into the Waxhaw settlement in 1752. His father Hugh and his brother John had both joined him by 1758. John, James, and Andrew Linn had a similarly brief sojourn. Moving from western Maryland into the Shendandoah Valley in 1746-7, the Linns were in the Irish Settlement in 1752 and the Waxhaws by 1753. Many other early immigrants apparently moved directly from southwest Pennsylvania, especially Lancaster and Chester Counties. Also, a much smaller but still important number of settlers drifted up into the Waxhaws from the South Carolina middle country. Not until the close of the Seven Years' War did any considerable number of immigrants come into the Waxhaws directly from Ireland (see Chapter 3).²¹

²⁰ For Augusta County I have used the land records and baptismal records of Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church, 1740-49, published in Wilson, *Tinkling Springs*, 417-19, 470-84, comparing them with the following North and South Carolina land records: Colonial North Carolina Land Grants (hereafter CNCLG), patent books 2, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16, North Carolina State Archives; Records of Deeds, Anson County, North Carolina, North Carolina State Archives, 1749-1759 (vols. A, B, C, 1), 1756-1770 (vols. 1, 7, 6), and 1761-1769 (vols. 5, 3, H-1)(hereafter Anson County Deeds); Brent H. Holcomb, *Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1763-1779* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1979); South Carolina Colonial Grants, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), Drawer 89 (hereafter SCCG); Memorials of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century South Carolina Land Titles, 1731-1775, SCDAH (hereafter South Carolina Memorials); Charleston Deeds, 1719-1785, SCDAH, Drawer 90; and Brent H. Holcomb, *Lancaster County, South Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1788-1811* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1981). Also see Lawrence Maynard, *Hugh McCain of the Waxhaws and His Descendants* (Fort Worth, TX: By the Author, 1993).

²¹ For the Whites see Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 69-70; CNCLG bk. 2, p. 19, bk. 13, p. 15. For the Linns see Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 60. For other Irish Settlement-Waxhaws connections, including Strains, Crawfords, Douglasses, see *ibid.*, 117-19. For immigrants with previous connections in Pennsylvania and Maryland, see the Burnetts in *ibid.*, 56-61; John Cantzon Foster, *Ancestors and Descendants of Joseph Henry Foster and Charlotte Rebecca Brown of the Waxhaws, South Carolina* (Varnville, SC: By the Author, 1997); William Boyce White, Jr., *Genealogy of Two Early Patton Families of York, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, South Carolina* (Roanoke, VA: By the Author, 1996); Ida McDow Rodman, *The McDow Family in America* (Lancaster, SC: By the Author, 1953).

The comparative data show that Cousar, the Whites, and the Lynns typified the immigration pattern of the Waxhaws' early settlers (see Appendix 2).²² Land and church records not only confirm contemporary observations that "families from the northward" peopled the Carolina piedmont; they also show that these families were interconnected. As immigrants into the backcountry moved through space, they also moved along a social network; as they moved into the abundant lands that promised autonomy and competency, they also moved into familiar communities. The peopling of the early southern backcountry was a social movement where groups transplanted themselves in piecemeal fashion. This pattern would hold even when a new stream of immigrants poured into the backcountry directly from northern Ireland in the 1760s and 1770s, although the connections would eventually grow more tenuous, leading to the emergence of rival kinship groups.²³

While kinship networks facilitated immigration, it was and always had been land – cheap, abundant, fertile land – that lured settlers into the southern piedmont in the first place. And it was good land in particular, with its promise of a good crop and a comfortable subsistence, that drew them in such great numbers to places like the Waxhaws. At the same time, the social network that guided settlement into the Waxhaws continued to play a prominent role after immigration, locating new arrivals within specific neighborhoods. Settlers' choices were thus framed by their desire for good land, on the one hand, and the need for trusted, reliable neighbors – who often helped locate

²² For a detailed description of these family connections in the settlement of the North Carolina backcountry, see Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, chapters 3-5 and pp. 191-2.

²³ Looking at emigrants from Ulster during this period, R.J. Dickson found that "people emigrated because their acquaintances had done so to escape the same difficulties and they usually emigrated to the same places." See *Ulster Emigration*, 150-1, 178-80. Nor was the Carolina piedmont the only backcountry place where this settlement system predominated. See Gregory Nobles, "Breaking Into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750-1800," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd, 46 (1989): 648-9, for a glimpse of this same pattern in Vermont.

vacant tracts, arranged surveys, or leased their lands to newcomers -- on the other.

Upcountry communities were shaped by the tension between these two kinds of needs.²⁴

Unlike the tidewater south, where the choicest lands lay along navigable streams for easy access to markets, good land in the piedmont had little to do with river access. Few streams were navigable above the fall line until the mid-nineteenth century, and settlers viewed rivers as obstacles at best, dangers to be avoided at worst. Rather, backcountry settlers looked for a combination of rich, well-drained soil and easy access to water, preferably fresh springwater or easily-dug wells and a nearby creek to provide water and forage for livestock.²⁵ Settlers especially relished the recently abandoned “old fields” of Indian farmers, which were easy to clear and usually indicated good soil.

These Indian old fields almost certainly would have been the first choice among settlers in the Waxhaws. Although first-growth forest had probably reclaimed much of the extensive stretches of cleared ground John Lawson found near Waxhaw Creek in 1701, a 1753 reference to disputed claims in “the Waxaw fields” suggests that Indian old fields were both still recognizable and aggressively pursued by white settlers. In any event, immigrants found what they were looking for in the Waxhaws. While Lawson exaggerated when he described a soil “so durable that no Labour of Man, in one or two Ages, could make it poor,” producing corn stalks “thick as the Small of a Man’s Leg,” later observers nonetheless confirmed the high quality of farmland in the Waxhaws. “It is as fine a Country as any in America,” Matthew Rowan told the Board of Trade in 1754. Fifteen years later Charles Woodmason called it a “very fruitful fine Spot,” and that same

²⁴ Historians studying the early Shenandoah Valley have argued that settlers gave more weight to soil and access to resources than to kinship and ethnicity in choosing farm sites, resulting in heterogeneous “open country neighborhoods.” See Robert D. Mitchell, “‘From the Ground Up’: Space, Place, and Diversity in Frontier Studies,” in Michael Puglisi, ed., *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 43-52; and Warren Hofstra, “Ethnicity and Community Formation on the Shenandoah Valley Frontier, 1730-1800,” in *ibid.*, 59-81.

²⁵ Meriwether, *Expansion*, 163.

year James Cook extolled the “many pleasing and enlarged prospects” afforded by the “rising grounds, rivers, and fruitful vallies” of the Waxhaws.²⁶

Modern soil surveys confirm these contemporary observations about soil quality and give a clearer idea of how soils were distributed throughout the settlement. Narrow strips of poorly drained soil along the Catawba River and in creek bottoms were suitable for forage and for locally-consumed crops like corn and oats, but they would not produce wheat and they were subject to flooding. The best soils lay in the western end of the settlement, extending about seven miles inland from the river. Cecil-Davidson soils dominated this broad band of gently sloping country. Relatively high in organic content, these soils were capable of producing excellent crops of corn, wheat, and later, cotton. Soil quality gradually diminished in the uplands at the eastern end of the settlement, where the finer Georgeville soils mixed with the much poorer Herndon, Enon, and Gills soil types, lower in organic content and mostly suited for pasture. These poor soils dominated the lands along the headwaters of Cane, Gills, and Bear Creek at the extreme eastern edge of the settlement.²⁷

Eighteenth-century farmers had no sophisticated scientific equipment for testing soils, but they could still distinguish soil types, relying primarily on their knowledge of native flora. Indian old fields would have been cleared or covered by first-growth pine forest. Otherwise settlers shunned the pure pine stands, taking up the richer lands dominated by virgin hardwood forests of oak, hickory, and yellow poplar, often mixed with loblolly and shortleaf pine. They would also have recognized the poorer soils in the

²⁶ John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, Hugh T. Lefler, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 38, 45-6; *CRNC*, V, 33; Matthew Rowan to the Board of Trade, June 3, 1754, *CRNC*, V, 124; Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 13-14; *Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette, and Country Journal*, August 9, 1768 [Cook].

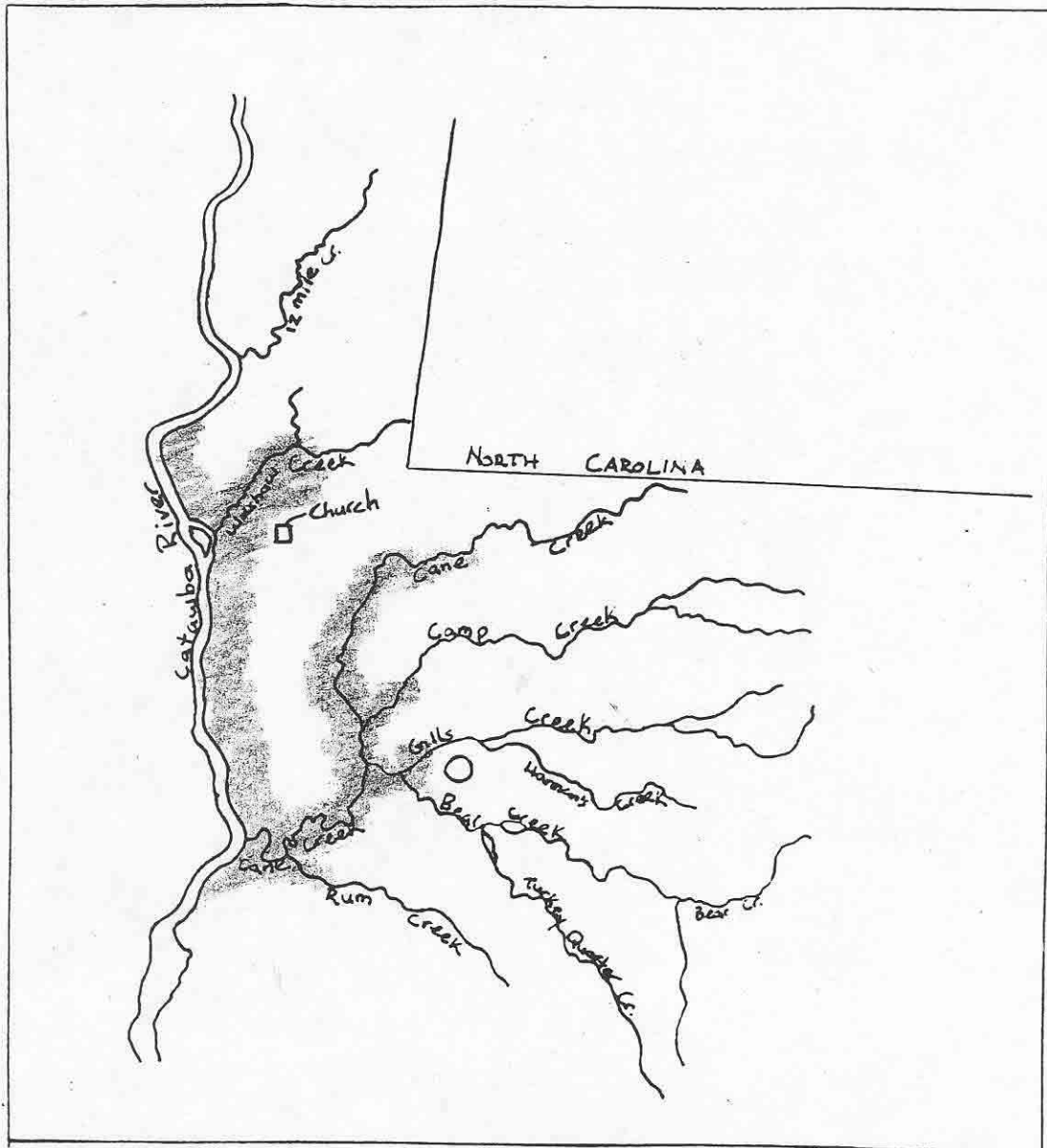
²⁷ United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina* (1973), *passim*; Clarence M. Ellerbe, *South Carolina Soils and Their Interpretations for Selected Uses* (Columbia: South Carolina Land Resources Conservation Commission, 1974), *passim*.

“blackjack” country of the eastern uplands, so called because of the predominance of the blackjack oak, a small, scrubby, thick-barked tree especially suited to poor soils.²⁸

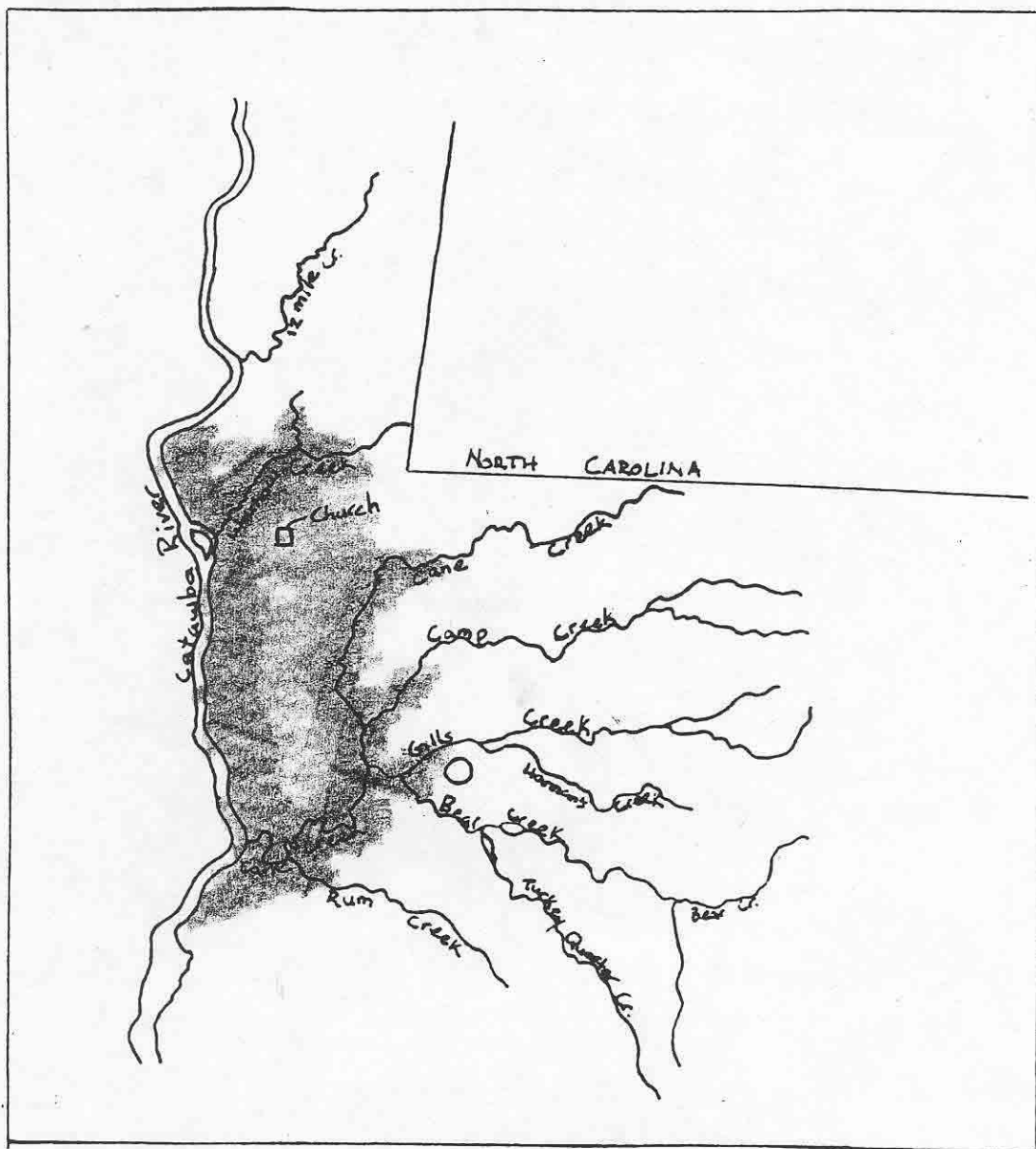
Settlement initially followed this pattern of soil distribution. The earliest grants were at the lower end of Waxhaw and Cane Creeks and in the rich lands between these two streams east of the river. A few early grantees took up land at the mouths of Gills and Bear Creeks, some three to four miles from the river, but most early settlers were concentrated further west, moving gradually eastward over the course of the first decade. Then something curious happened. In the early 1760s, settlers began showing a decided preference for purchasing lands near the heart of the settlement, ignoring the much cheaper granted lands to the east. The geographic expansion of the settlement froze for the better part of the next decade, but population growth slowed little; only new grants ground to a halt, while purchases of previously granted lands increased by 130%. Moreover, when granting activity resumed in the late sixties, ninety-four percent of land grants went to first-time landowners; though still eligible to patent new lands, settlers who made purchases in the early sixties largely neglected to seek grants, despite the availability of good, inexpensive eastern lands. Soil type alone cannot account for this shift. Settlers might prefer the richer lands of the west, but the land they neglected in the early sixties was within the Cecil-Davidson band and was not markedly inferior to the higher-priced and partially occupied western lands. The lands to the east would remain only partially settled until the second wave of immigrants arrived in the late sixties. The even more distant blackjack country would remain vacant until the eve of the Revolution (Maps 4-5).²⁹

²⁸ Ellerbe, *South Carolina Soils*, 8-10, 14; “TreeGuide: The Natural History of Trees” (www.treeguide.com/naspeciesst.asp?TreeID=QUMARI1) [blackjack oak]. Settlers also relied on rock formations to determine soil types. See Mitchell, “‘From the Ground Up’,” 37.

²⁹ Grantholding patterns point squarely at this geographic concentration. The number of grants fell from 95 between 1750-57 to 28 between 1758-65, a drop of 70%. Land purchases rose from 22 to 51 in these periods, a 130% increase. Grantholding after 1767 showed a clear eastward movement: seven were on Gills Creek (four miles from the river), seven were on Hannahs Creek (six miles from the river), and three were on Turkey Quarter Creek (six miles from the river). Only one-third as many grants were



Map 4: Settlement Pattern in the Waxhaws, 1757. Adapted from Vergil A. Rogers, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).



Map 5: Settlement Pattern in the Waxhaws, 1765. Adapted from Vergil A. Rogers, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

The trend after 1761 was toward compactness, and a closer look at settlement patterns within the fertile western strip helps to explain why settlers preferred this compactness to cheap, extensive land. In the Waxhaws, neighborhood formation was guided by kinship. Neighborhoods were of course heterogeneous, with several families occupying a particular spot, but rarely did a single family live in more than one neighborhood. Thus six Adamses had accumulated 1,200 acres collectively by 1775, all of which was interspersed among the tributaries of upper Cane Creek. The Douglas and Montgomery families were also concentrated in this area, while the McCullochs, Robinsons, Crocketts, and Crawfords lived almost exclusively on Waxhaw Creek. Later in the colonial period, John Belk and Ananias Black established new neighborhoods on Hannahs Creek and Turkey Quarter. Belk owned 1,200 acres by 1789, all of it concentrated on the margins of the blackjack area. There were five identifiable neighborhoods in the Waxhaws during the colonial period: on Waxhaw Creek, on the river bottom between the two creek systems and surrounding the church, on lower Cane Creek and Rum Creek, on Gills and Bear Creeks and their tributaries, and on upper Cane and Camp Creeks. In all, over eight in ten Waxhaws families limited their residence to only one neighborhood during the colonial period.³⁰

Kinship structured the settlement of the Waxhaws, steering immigrants into the lower Catawba valley and from there into compact, kin-ordered neighborhoods. A kin-centered society offered numerous advantages to immigrants: knit together in secure, compact, cohesive family-based neighborhoods, settlers enjoyed the security, social power, help, and companionship denied to those living in the more spacious, more

made in the previous sixteen years along these three creeks.

³⁰ Charleston Deeds, 3H,367; Lancaster Deeds B, 210, A, 121, CE, 158, and F, 65; SCCG, 1773, 1775[Adams]; Charleston Deeds, 4F, 227; CNCLG, 13, 36; Lancaster Deeds, D, 128 [Douglas]; Anson County Deeds, B, 110; Lancaster Deeds, B, 251, A, 141, and CE, 8; SCCG, 1766, 1767, 1772 [Montgomery]; Mecklenburg County Deeds, I, 93; Lancaster Deeds, A, 86, 78, and B, 239 [McCulloch]; Anson County Deeds, 5, 302; Lancaster Deeds, A, 224 [Robinson]; Anson County Deeds, B, 488, and 1, 140; Mecklenburg County Deeds, I, 91, and 2, 64 [Crockett]; Mecklenburg County Deeds 2, 213, and I, 161; Charleston Deeds, 4K, 132; SCCG, 1775 [Crawford].

affordable lands at the edge of the community. Although the limited sources of a single community study do not shed much light on the advantages of kin-based neighborhoods, broad-based studies have clearly demonstrated the centrality of kinship in the local economy of rural places. As Allan Kulikoff has shown, in many communities the “borrowing system” – the necessary exchange of labor, tools, livestock, and services, either on an individual basis or through group activities like barn raising, quiltings, harvests, and frolics – was structured by ties of kinship, ethnicity, and religion. Reciprocity was essential in developing communities where labor and other resources were scarce, and kinship greased the wheels of reciprocal exchange by wedding it to family, patriarchy, and inheritance. Moreover, as Daniel Vickers has argued, because nuclear and extended families were essentially cooperative, not competitive, the tensions arising from these reciprocal obligations could be resolved openly, directly, and informally, as could disagreements over boundaries and property damage caused by livestock. It thus comes as no surprise that, once settled among their own kin, families tended to stay put and not move into the unfamiliar, perhaps unfriendly, territory of non-kin.³¹

However, insofar as this kin-centered community made for cohesion and stability, it also made for insularity and intense localism. As the next chapter will argue, to the extent that settlers depended on neighbors and kin, they were also controlled by them. To the extent that they placed kinship at the center of their social and economic life, they excluded and even demonized those outside the kin-neighbor nexus.

Kinship was only one factor contributing to the cohesion, compactness, and insularity of piedmont communities like the Waxhaws; the threat of Indian attack was the other. In February 1760 Cherokee war parties fell on several white settlements west of

³¹ Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to American Farmers*, 219-25; Vickers, “Competency and Competition,” 23.

the Broad River. The Scots-Irish community at the Long Canes was particularly hard hit, losing between twenty-three and fifty-six settlers killed and several more captured, and sending a flood of refugees into the relative security of kin and acquaintances in the Waxhaws. Significantly, the Cherokee War came in the midst of a smallpox epidemic that was severely diminishing the Catawbas, who had a long history of conflict with white settlers but who also had partially shielded neighboring whites from Iroquois raiding parties during the preceding decade. Three years later northern Indians again raided the Catawba and Broad River valley settlements, murdering the Catawba headman Hagler and triggering another wave of refugees into the Waxhaws. It was no accident that Hagler's murder, the weakening of the Catawba, and the Cherokee War came at a time when immigration into the Waxhaws slowed, geographic expansion halted, and the settlement pattern took a decided turn toward compactness.³²

If the people of the Waxhaws were ever tempted to forget that they were colonizing intruders and not simple immigrants, their "*Indian Neighbors*" were usually ready to send a painful reminder – Catawbas as well as Cherokee and Iroquois. Though the Waxhaws never experienced a direct assault on the scale of the Long Canes -- just as the Catawba never suffered all-out conquest on the order of the British and American campaigns against the Cherokee – relations between white settlers, Catawbas, and other Indians of the interior were regularly marred by conflict. This conflict was determined largely by the collusion of immigrant-colonists with colonial authorities to strategically scatter white settlements across the interior. As the demographic make-up of the lower Catawba valley changed over the first two decades of white settlement, so too did the substance of Indian-white conflict and the texture of upcountry violence.

Although land policy in the two Carolinas was similar by virtue of the headright system, the two provinces had different policy objectives – one concerned Indians, the

³² Milling, *Red Carolinians*, chapter 15, esp. 298-99 [Cherokee War]; "Elam Potter to Reverend Ezra Stiles," Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, 1st ser., X, 119-20; Merrell, *Indians' New World*, 193-7[smallpox].

other did not – leading to vast differences in actual land distribution on the ground. With few slaves and little fear of Indian attack, North Carolina could afford to let land grabbers raid the interior and line their pockets with profits from speculation.³³ Not so with South Carolina, where colonial authorities faced a much different demographic, responded with a different agenda, and took measures to limit large-scale speculation. In the rich rice-growing district of the lowcountry, white planters and officials composed a racial minority and never lost sight of the dual threat of their “Internal” and “External” enemies. Land policy was a direct response to South Carolina’s unique demography: fearing that an Indian war would trigger a mass slave uprising, colonial officials implemented the township plan in the 1730s for the express purpose of placing “free poor Protestants” at strategic sites along the frontier. The pull of land give-aways, tax breaks, provisions for tools, and in some cases payment of transatlantic passage – combined with the push of poverty and population pressures – assured coastal South Carolinians that a steady stream of white settlers would create a buffer between lowcountry plantations and Indian land. In the Waxhaws as elsewhere in the piedmont, waves of colonists in the 1750s and again in the early 1770s showed that free poor Protestants were eager to cooperate.³⁴

In the Catawba valley these white colonists planted their settlements in the shadow, and sometimes at the very doorstep, of the Catawba towns. The community at Waxhaw Creek grew up just thirty miles south of the Catawba core in the Indians’ “best hunting Ground,” as John Stuart remembered it. By 1753 as many as 500 white families reportedly lived within the bounds of the Catawba Nation. From Sugar Creek Hagler and the Catawbans eyed this white encroachment with mounting frustration and repeatedly

³³ North Carolina did just that: the northern half of the province was retained and sold by its proprietor, Lord Granville, while Crown favorite Henry McCulloch was granted 1.2 million acres in the south and west. Dubious surveys, contested claims, and prolonged litigation kept the North Carolina land office in disarray during this period and eventually led to violence between McCulloch and immigrant squatters. On McCulloch see Sellers, “Private Profits,” *passim*, and Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 53-5. For an excellent treatment of North Carolina’s land woes and land wars see Kars, “‘Breaking Loose Together,’” chapter 1.

³⁴ Ackerman, *Colonial South Carolina Land Policies*; Meriwether, *Expansion*, chapter 1.

complained to colonial authorities. To appease their Indian allies, in 1754 South Carolina officials prohibited colonists from settling within thirty miles of the Catawba towns, but North Carolina refused to cooperate. As whites continued to pour into the Catawba River valley in the 1750s, Indian-settler tension mounted and the opportunities for violent encounters loomed increasingly larger.³⁵

This tension was a regular part of life near the Catawba towns in the early 1750s. As early as 1749 John Ellis, a Virginia trader, allegedly “disturb[ed] the Peace between the said Catawba Indians and the Inhabitants” by telling Catawbas that neither white settlers nor even the king had rights to certain Indian lands in Anson County, which incorporated parts of the Waxhaw settlement. The North Carolina Governor’s Council immediately issued a warrant for the arrest of Ellis and all such persons who “endeavour to raise jealousies and Fears among the Inhabitants.” That same year Anson County whites charged Catawbas with the murder of a white woman, a charge they denied, placing the blame on Seneca and Tuscarora raiders. Three years later neighboring whites complained of young Catawbas “going into the Settlements, robbing and stealing where ever they get an Oppertunity,” even entering occupied homes and robbing settlers at gunpoint. Hagler, the Catawba headman, believed these charges were unjust. The accused men “took mostly Eatables,” he replied, “and they were mighty hungry.” In Hagler’s view the real problem was white encroachment. “By their being settled so near us,” he complained, “our Horses are stole from us,” leaving nothing with which to pay the debts of men who died in battle. Others did more than complain: just months later, a group of Catawbas drove Andrew Clewer from his home on Fishing Creek (opposite the

³⁵ Brindenbaugh, *Myths*, 127-8 [Stuart]; *CRNC V*, 382, 387; William McDowell, Jr., ed., *Colonial Records of South Carolina, Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1750-1754* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), [hereafter *DRIA*], 490 [Catawba boundary]; *DRIA*, 361; *CRNC V*, 123-4; 579-84 [encroachment]. Complaints of encroachment continued into the 1760s. See *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 22, 1762 and December 11, 1762.

Waxhaw settlement), sparing his goods and life but burning his house and sending him on his way.³⁶

In this tense atmosphere even mundane and ostensibly peaceful encounters could turn violent. Indians seeking food could be easily taken for thieves or vandals, as was the case with the Catawbans who entered William Morrison's mill and "attempted to Frow a pail of water into his Meal Trough." When Morrison tried to stop them, "they made many attempts to striek him with their guns over his head." It was all a misunderstanding, the Indians later claimed, for "what they Intended to do with the water was only to put a handful or Two of the meal into it to make a kind of a Drink which is their way and Custom." Several years later and some time after smallpox had all but eliminated the Catawba threat to white settlers, another seemingly innocent encounter turned violent. Charles Woodmason was preaching to a mixed Catawba-white congregation at Hanging Rock, just south of the Waxhaws, when a "large Body of people, 2/3 of them Presbyterians," made "a great Noise without Door" in a deliberate effort to disrupt the service. "The Indians resented the affronts and fought with several of them, which only made more Noises," Woodmason complained.³⁷ A decade earlier, at the height of Catawba-settler tensions, such casual, unplanned encounters could turn deadly. In the 1750s there were at least thirteen specific, documented instances of theft, assault, and murder between Catawbans and settlers; about half of these incidents took place in the Waxhaws.³⁸

³⁶ *CRNC* IV, 971 and VIII, 249-50 [Ellis]; *CRNC* VIII, 461 [murder]; *DRIA*, 358-9 [robbery]; *DRIA*, 361 [encroachment]; *DRIA*, 371 [Clewer]. As Hagler intimated, Indian-white tensions were exacerbated in the early 1750s by hunger, brought on by war with northern Indians and severe corn shortages. See *DRIA*, 454, 371.

³⁷ Merrell, *Indians' New World*, 169-70, 186-9; Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 20.

³⁸ For thefts see *DRIA*, 371; *CRNC* 5, 141, 142; Samuel Wyly to Governor William Lyttleton, April 26, 1759, William Henry Lyttleton Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan [hereafter Wyly to Lyttleton]. For assault, Wyly to Lyttleton. For murder, *CRNC*, 8, 461; *CRNC*, 5, 142.

The intermittent conflict of the initial years of Indian-settler contact mounted to a fever pitch at least twice during the 1750s. In 1754 the governor of North Carolina dispatched two agents to investigate several “gross abuses” alleged by whites in Anson County against their Indian neighbors. Settlers charged Catawba men with attempting to destroy property, threats of assault, robbery, attempted kidnaping, and theft of horses and livestock. Hagler dismissed some of the charges as simple misunderstandings, blamed others on recalcitrant young warriors, and excused others as legitimate responses to the greed of “Churlish and ungreatfull” settlers who refused to feed his men as they returned from battle. And once again, Hagler shifted the blame for Indian-settler tensions to white encroachment as well as to “the Effects of that Strong Drink” distilled and sold by the settlers themselves. Tensions were temporarily cooled by a “treaty” in which Hagler promised to enjoin his warriors not to “Misbehave on any consideration to the white people,” pledged his “Friendship and kindness” toward his neighbors in return for the same, and offered his military assistance against the French.³⁹

Five years later tempers flared again, this time in the Waxhaw settlement. The intervening years had been relatively quiet, save for tensions over food in the wake of a severe drought in 1756, when North Carolina purchased corn for the Catawbas to prevent them from “oppress[ing] the planters.” In April 1759, however, twenty-one whites from the Waxhaw settlement petitioned South Carolina Governor William Lyttleton to address Catawba aggression in their community. Catawbas, the petitioners charged, had killed several of their cattle the previous winter. In March a company of Catawbas “made attempt to rob our houses and take what they please.” “So deveilish” were these Indians “as to set sum of our fences on fier and burned them.” On their way to Charleston they “got our horses sum they take to pine tree [Camden] and sum to Charleston.” Worse yet, one Catawba man attacked Widow Pickens with a shovel in her own home. She fled the house and fell, whereupon “the fellow haveing the shovel in both his hands laid on the

³⁹ *CRNC*, 8, 309; *CRNC* 5, 141-44b.

womans head and neck and breast with all his might and he wounded and mortified her so that by all appeirance shee had but a short time to live, so this Indian when he thought shee was finished made the best of his way.” The petitioners pleaded with the governor to “put an end to such proceedings” lest “we will be obliged to come to blows, a thing that we are very unwilling to do.” Precisely what course of action would be best was left to Governor Lyttleton to decide, but the petitioners did suggest one strategy: to end the practice of gift-giving, “for the more gifts they get the more proud and Deveilish they become.”⁴⁰

Indians and settlers did not “come to blows” in 1759 because the “blows” they had exchanged over the preceding decade provided an outlet for their tensions at a time when all-out war would have been mutually disastrous. As both Catawbans and white settlers recognized, the two sides had reached parity and were both “very unwilling” to fight. As early as 1756 Hagler realized that the time for a preemptive strike against the settlements had passed. Such a strike, Hagler reasoned, would be ungrateful as well as foolhardy. On the one hand, “the English had cloathed them naked and fed them when hungry;” on the other, “the White People were now seated all round them and by that means had them entirely in their power.” As for the white settlers, they too were constrained by their obligations to the British authorities, who were intent on maintaining their alliance with the Catawbans against the French. But they were also outgunned by the Catawbans. A note appended to the 1755 Anson County militia census, which listed sixty-one able-bodied adult men, speaks volumes: “Guns – 14 – wanting.”⁴¹ Unable to eliminate their “External Enemy,” the people of the Waxhaws could do little more than

⁴⁰ On the drought see *CRNC*, 5, 655, 581; *South Carolina Gazette*, August 12, 1756; Journal of Hugh McAden, in William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 161, 169. For the Waxhaws grievances see Wyly to Lyttleton.

⁴¹ *CRNC*, 5, 582 [Hagler]; A List of the Militia Company Commanded by Captain Andrew Pickens in Anson County [1755], North Carolina State Archives, Troop Returns, 1747-1859, Box 1, Folder - Anson. On the absence of guns in early America see Michael A. Bellesiles, *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (New York: Knopf, 2000).

appeal to colonial authorities and huddle close in the river bottom near the mouths of Waxhaw and Cane creeks, guarded, suspicious, and warily eyeing the “*Indian Neighbors*” whose path they so frequently crossed.

In 1759 smallpox all but decimated the Catawba and permanently altered Catawba-white settler relations; never again would “Deveilish” Catawbas rob, vandalize, or attack their white neighbors. But the weakening of the Catawba also left the Waxhaw settlement vulnerable to assaults from the more distant Cherokee and Iroquois and temporarily heightened white fears of Indian attacks. Cherokee assaults on white settlements on the Yadkin and upper Catawba in 1761 left settlers “very much alarmed,” according to the *South-Carolina Gazette*. “Many of them have desisted Planting, and others are enforcing themselves.” The people of the Waxhaws and their Long Canes refugees may well have been among those communities taking such defensive measures. And though the Catawba River provided some protection against the Cherokee, the Waxhaws remained vulnerable to incursions by Indians from the north. In the summer of 1763 northern Indians penetrated the southern piedmont twice, killing and capturing five Catawba women and as many whites. Refugees from the Broad River, apparently fearing that the Cherokee were behind these attacks, fled to the Waxhaws. In August the Indian raiders murdered Hagler, “which caused such Terror,” William Richardson wrote, “that there was nothing but running and flying where ever safety could be had.” Reporting the murder of two white women, the *South-Carolina Gazette* seconded Richardson’s observation about conditions in the Waxhaws: “the fears of the people there encrease, apprehending a general Indian war.” Richardson appealed to officials for “speedy assistance” in the form of ammunition and a “small scout” to patrol the lower Catawba valley; otherwise, “the Frontiers will, we are afraid, be immediately deserted.”⁴²

⁴² Milling, *Red Carolinians*, 298-99; *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 12, 1759 [Cherokee War]; “Elam Potter to Reverend Ezra Stiles,” 119-20; Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 193-7[smallpox]; *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 16, 1763; Thomas J. Blumer, comp., *Bibliography of the Catawba* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 65 [attack on Catawba]; Thomas J. Kirkland and Robert M. Kennedy, *Historic Camden* (Columbia: State Company, 1905), 55-6 [Richardson]; *South-Carolina Gazette*, September 10,

But as in 1754 and 1759, there was no “general Indian war” in 1763. In fact, the defeat of the French and their Indian allies and the decline of the Catawba marked the end of red-on-white violence in the Catawba valley. However, Catawba-settler conflict did not cease altogether after the epidemic; it simply shifted direction. Before the 1759 epidemic, nearly every violent encounter between Catawbas and whites was the result of either Indian aggression or fateful misunderstandings; after 1760 whites became the aggressors. That very year four white men sat in Nathan Barr’s tavern on Cane Creek, swearing “they would kill the first Indian they should meet.” When a “poor Catawba woman . . . and a boy with her” passed by, three of the men spilled out of the tavern, “Cruelly murdered” the woman, and beat the boy “so much . . . that his life was despaired of.” A decade later bitter feelings toward the Catawba continued to simmer as twenty-six upcountry whites fell on a Catawba hunting party, beating the Indians and destroying their deerskins. In the mean time settlers continued to encroach on Catawba lands with ever-increasing disregard for Indian claims to property.⁴³

There was more to this changing pattern of violence than a simple shift in direction; as the murder of the Catawba woman suggests, there seemed to be a change in the substance of Indian-settler conflict as well. Before 1760 violence between Indians and white settlers made sense. It was often provoked by disputes over property, such as the encounter at William Morrison’s mill, or the unidentified settler who shot an Indian found rummaging through his cabin, or the turning out of Andrew Clewer, who was at the very least encroaching on Catawba hunting ground and may have unwisely established himself on Catawba burial ground.⁴⁴ Even the apparently senseless assault on Widow Pickens made sense from the Catawba perspective. In fact, piedmont women were

1763 [two women].

⁴³ SCCJ, May 5, 1760 [Catawba woman]; *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 12, 1771 [hunting party]; *ibid.*, May 22, 1762, December 11, 1762; *CRNC* VII, 879-80 [encroachment].

⁴⁴ *South-Carolina Gazette*, August 12, 1756 [shooting]. James Merrell conjectured that Clewer may have settled on a sacred site. See *Indians’ New World*, 182.

disproportionately singled out for violence by Indian assailants, an understandable pattern given the demographic threat posed by white families. As Hagler once told colonial officials in Charleston, “the loss of one Woman may be the loss of many lives because one Woman may be the mother of many children.” The ever-expanding white population contrasted sharply with the Catawbas’ own shrinking numbers. White women represented the rapidly growing communities that were closing in on the Catawbas. When the Catawba warrior attacked Widow Pickens in 1759 – an attack that amounted to rape without penetration, a violent inversion of the sexual act – he was crushing her sexuality, destroying her reproductive power and taking “many lives” in the process. Catawbas targeted women not because they valued them so little, but because they valued them so much.⁴⁵

Yet neither property nor survival figured in the murder of the woman outside Barr’s tavern. “I cannot conceive the meaning of it,” Hagler confessed to colonial authorities. “The Path between the white people and their Brothers the Catawbas has always been wide and streight,” he recalled, but by this seemingly random act of violence “it has been stopped.”⁴⁶ Hagler sensed something insidious in the attack at Barr’s, but he was seemingly unable to fathom the pure racial hatred that fueled it. This level of cold-blooded racism may not have been typical in the 1760s, but it was not surprising: in the insular world of the Waxhaws, colonists were bred to the kind of fear and mistrust that made racial hatred possible, while the weakening of the Catawba during the epidemic made racial violence increasingly likely. In some sense the mobbing of the hunting party in 1771 was a more civilized and acceptable version of this tavern racism and represented

⁴⁵ *CRNC*, 5, 582. Claudio Saunt found a similar pattern of violence toward white women among the Creeks, including apparent signs of sexual mutilation. He explained it in part by a nearly identical concern over women’s reproductive power, although he placed much more stress on Creek resentment over white attempts to “civilize” Creeks, a process symbolized most forcibly in the changing roles of Creek women. See *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 151-3.

⁴⁶ *SCCJ*, May 5, 1760.

its logical conclusion: by destroying and not stealing the deerskins, the white mob attacked the livelihood and life-ways of the Catawba hunters and sent a clear message that the piedmont was no place for Indians. By 1771, smallpox and immigration had made the complexion of the piedmont white and transformed its hunting grounds into plowed fields and pasturage. The demographic dominance of white communities had ended in the triumph of the white way of farms, fences, and wheat fields.⁴⁷

They might be a conquered people, but the Catawbas had left their mark on the Waxhaws and neighboring communities. The changing patterns and substance of white-on-red violence itself attests to an emerging racial, not simply economic or territorial, dimension of Indian-settler relations. Changing settlement patterns also had their origin in tensions with the Indians. Although kinship provided the framework that ordered settlement and neighborhood formation, the turn to compactness in 1760 was a direct response to Indian aggression. So conditioned were early colonists by the terrors of the frontier that they neglected to take up the more isolated available lands long after the Indian threat had passed.

As Charles Woodmason learned, however, the effects of Indian-settler conflict were more far-reaching than changing racial attitudes and settlement patterns suggest. A decade of “enforcing themselves,” of hearing the horror stories of refugees and the rumors of atrocities, of constant vigilance, of neglecting their crops for fear of going into their fields, and of readiness to “run and fly” to safety at the first alarm, had instilled habits of suspicion that the people of the Waxhaws carried into other areas of their lives. As we shall see, in the insular world of the colonial Waxhaws, anyone outside or on the margins of the social and cultural boundaries of the local community – kinless widows, slaves,

⁴⁷ Such assaults on Indian hunters forced South Carolina officials to repeatedly remind settlers of Catawba hunting rights; see the three proclamations by Governor Bull, *South-Carolina Gazette Supplement*, April 4, 1770; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, July 15, 1771. The attacks continued in North Carolina; *CRNC IX*, 787. Rachel Klein has rightly linked these attacks to the wider attempt by the Regulators to establish planter hegemony in the interior. See *Unification of a Slave State*, chapter 2.

non-Presbyterians, and new, ethnically distinct immigrants – were suspect, excluded, and vulnerable.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIAL COST OF COLONIZATION

If Indians earned the contempt of the white colonists of the Waxhaws, they also bred a more generalized fear and contempt that pervaded social relations in the upcountry in the waning years of the colonial period. Habits of insularity deepened fears of difference; anyone on or beyond the cultural or social margins of the community was potentially threatening and therefore vulnerable. Slaves, newcomers, widows, Indians, Baptists, and Anglicans – the people of the Waxhaws seemed to be continually defining themselves against a succession of such “external” and “internal” enemies. Consequently, theirs was a continually narrowing world that at times seemed to close in even on its own people. The bargain these immigrant-colonists made with lowcountry planters had come with a price: the frontier had bred into them a kind of siege mentality or social paranoia from which they would not soon recover.

Kinship ordered and internally strengthened this insular world. The interconnections immigrants had brought with them multiplied after settlement, linking families and neighborhoods, tying both to churches, and defining the social and geographic parameters of the community. Kinship provided a vehicle for welcoming and settling related immigrants or excluding unrelated immigrants. It offered protection for those within the network but made unrelated or weakly related persons vulnerable. It gave a vicious bite to sectarian differences, for religious exclusion and hostility did not have to cross kin lines. The same kinship network that offered aid and protection for those within its borders also crushed dissent and heightened fear and hatred of difference.

This and the succeeding two chapters will examine four groups that fell outside the orbit of kin in the Waxhaws: widows, slaves, non-Presbyterians, and new immigrants.

The relationship between these groups and the kin-ordered core community of the Waxhaws was complex and cannot be described by any single “typical” episode. And yet all of these groups were to some extent the objects of derision, violence, and demonization; though complex and multi-faceted, their relationship with the core community was always uncertain, often antagonistic, and sometimes dangerous. This adversarial relationship, as much as the built-in ties that bound kin and neighbors together, gave definition to early American backcountry communities like the Waxhaws.

On July 20, 1771, the Reverend William Richardson died. He was found in his study kneeling against a chair, one hand raised above his head in an attitude of prayer, a bridle looped around his neck. He was forty-two years old. The cause of Richardson’s death was not known; neighbors initially suspected suicide, although in the days and weeks that followed, rumors circulated through the community that Richardson’s wife may have had a hand in his murder.

Some twenty years earlier Richardson had left his home in southwestern Scotland for a fresh start in British North America. By 1755 he was settled in the Virginia piedmont and preparing for the ministry under the direction of Samuel Davies, the noted New Side Presbyterian preacher and architect of Virginia’s Great Awakening. In 1758 Davies dispatched Richardson on a missionary tour to the Cherokee Indians. It would be a bitter and disheartening ordeal, punctuated by fever, hunger, exposure, and delays, frustrated by an angry and unreceptive audience on the brink of war with British settlers, leaving Richardson exhausted, despondent, and tormented by self-doubt. “I think I’m incapable for the Undertaking,” he confessed at the end of his tour, “and only take up the Place of a fitter Person.” But that same year he accepted a call from the newly-formed Presbyterian congregation at the Waxhaws. It was an exciting prospect, one that would enable him to plant new congregations in the burgeoning Carolina piedmont, to earn the salary of a settled minister and start a family, perhaps even to redeem himself by continuing his Indian mission among the Catawbans. He bought land in the heart of the

settlement and shortly thereafter married Agnes Craighead, daughter of Presbyterian preacher Alexander Craighead of nearby Sugar Creek.¹

Richardson was immensely popular. The only settled minister in the South Carolina upcountry, he worked tirelessly for twelve years, organizing or otherwise serving thirteen congregations within a seventy mile radius. At his base in the Waxhaws, according to one source, Richardson drew “seldom less than 9, 10, 1200 people . . . of a Sunday” – an impressive achievement in a region where three-fourths of the white population was unchurched. Richardson was also able to unite congregations with deep-seated doctrinal differences. In the settlement on Rocky Creek he brought together New Side evangelicals from Virginia with the more conservative Old Seceders, regular Presbyterians from Ulster, and the intensely sectarian, anti-authoritarian Covenanters, melding them into a single congregation called Catholic church that maintained its unity during Richardson’s lifetime. So devoted was his congregation on Lower Fishing Creek that it named itself Richardson. During his twelve-year tenure, according to an early church narrative, Richardson earned a reputation for his “remarkable . . . piety,” his “devotion to God, and charity to the poor.” His “untimely death” in the summer of 1771 sent shock wave across the upcountry and was “deeply lamented by the people of his congregations.” Chief among the mourners, or so it seemed, was Richardson’s disconsolate widow, Agnes.²

¹ Nancy Crockett, “Reverend William Richardson, M.A., 1729-1771: A Pioneer, Missionary, and Educator,” typescript in the Manuscripts Division of the South Caroliniana Library, 1958; Blackwell P. Robinson, *William R. Davie* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 1-7; Henry A. White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1911), 90-4; William Richardson’s Cherokee Journal, William Richardson Davie Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, 1758-9.

² The source for the attendance figure is Charles Woodmason in Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 14. Woodmason was prone to exaggerate, but not if his exaggerations put dissenters in a good light. His estimate is not as far-fetched as it might seem. In 1767 Elam Potter estimated that 120 families lived in the Waxhaws, with another seventy living “Near by.” An additional forty families lived across the river on Fishing Creek, some of whom no doubt attended when the river was fordable, making Woodmason’s estimate entirely plausible. For Potter see George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, vol. 1 (Columbia: Duffie and Chapman, 1870), 363. On Catholic Church see William Banks, *Catholic Church: A Historical Discourse Delivered, by Request, on the 101st Anniversary, 1876* (Columbia: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1876), 7-11. On Richardson’s itineracy see White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, 90-4, and Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, 1. The quote is from Howe, 418.

Little is known of Agnes' life before her marriage to Richardson. She was "a lady of great beauty and talent," according to one nineteenth-century historian, who "possessed much of her father's spirit." If so, she was immediately suspect in the patriarchal world of the eighteenth-century backcountry. Alexander Craighead was a restless, contentious man. He was at the center of the controversy surrounding the Great Awakening in western Pennsylvania and by 1743 had alienated not only the anti-evangelical Old Side Presbyterians but also many of his fellow New Side evangelicals, who accused him of seeking to "rent and tear [Christ's] Church in Pieces." That year he published a seditious political pamphlet and broke with the synod, forming his own Covenanting congregation. He moved to Virginia soon thereafter and was readmitted to the ministry in 1753, but when Richardson found him on Sugar Creek in 1758 he had "been twice driven from his congregations in Virginia." His last years were marked by poor health and depression. Agnes was the oldest of his six daughters. Precisely how much of her "father's spirit" she inherited is unclear, but there is no direct evidence that she ever crossed the line of acceptable female behavior. She was nineteen when she married William Richardson and moved to the Waxhaws; the couple was still childless when Richardson died twelve years later.³

Richardson's death was as mysterious as it was sudden. Three accounts have survived, with three conflicting versions of the story. Archibald Simpson, an old friend and fellow minister, recorded the details of Richardson's death in his journal when the news reached him two months later in Charleston. According to Simpson, Richardson's death was "something remarkable:"

³ On Agnes Craighead Richardson see Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 293, 416-21, 539-40; James Geddes Craighead, *The Craighead Family: A Genealogical Memoir of the Descendants of Rev. Thomas and Margaret Craighead, 1658-1816* (Philadelphia: Printed for the descendants, 1876), 76-8. Agnes could apparently think on her feet, bluffing a band of Tories into retreating during the Revolution. See Elizabeth F. Ellet, *The Women of the American Revolution*, vol. 2 (Williamstown, MA: Corner House Publishers, 1848), 154-5. For Alexander Craighead see Samuel Blair, *Animadversions on the Reasons of Mr. Alexander Craighead's Receding from the Judicatures of the Church, Together with its Constitution* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1743)[quote]; William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 183-99; Guy S. Klett, *Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), 70, 157, 224; Richardson, *Cherokee Journal*, 5.

He was of strong and robust make, and in general healthy, but of a heavy, melancholic disposition, subject from his very youth to vapory disorders. His labors for some years were very great. About three or four years ago he began to decline; his vapory disorders increased, his intellect began to fail. He turned very deaf, and lost much of his spirit and liveliness in preaching, but was still very useful to his own people. About three months ago he seemed very sickly, but his people and family thought he fancied himself worse than he was, as he did not keep his bed, but appeared as usual, and only kept his house. Some time in June one of his elders was visiting him, and in order to divert him had entered into some argument with him, in which Mr. R talked with a good deal of spirit, and after wards went up stairs to his room, but was to be down to dinner as usual. Accordingly, when dinner had waited for some time, they went up stairs and found him dead on his knees, one hand holding the back of a chair and the other lifted up as in prayer. So that he seemed to have expired in the act of devotion, and to all appearance had been dead some time: a most desirable death indeed.⁴

The “vapory disorder” Simpson alluded to was a catch-all for a recurrent nervous condition marked by non-specific pain, depression, and hysteria. It was probably this same condition that seized Richardson at the end of his missionary tour, when he claimed to be under “a very great Disorder, which I’m laboring under at Times still,” apparently brought on by the “rainy Weather” but no doubt deepened by his failure among the Cherokees. As Simpson understood it, then, Richardson had died naturally of a lengthy and debilitating illness manifesting physical and mental symptoms.⁵

Charles Woodmason told a much different story. A thoroughgoing Anglican elitist, Woodmason genuinely despised the dissenting sects that populated the backcountry. But he had met Richardson on at least two occasions during his tour as an upcountry itinerant, and by all indications he liked him. He was “a good sort of Man,” Woodmason wrote, “sensible, Moral, Religious, and Moderate” – extraordinary praise from someone who usually had nothing but venom for dissenters. The two had even

⁴ Simpson’s account is printed in Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 418-19. Howe’s reading has been verified against the original. See Archibald Simpson, *Journals and Sermons, 1748-1784* [microform] (Charleston, SC: South Carolina Historical Society, 1981).

⁵ “Vapour,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition; Richardson, *Cherokee Journal*, 35.

planned a pulpit exchange, but it was delayed by bad weather and finally prevented by opposition from Richardson's elders. According to Woodmason, the elders also opposed Richardson's use of the Lord's Prayer and innovative hymns in worship, although he continued to use them in family devotionals. This, Woodmason believed, ultimately led to Richardson's undoing. His wife Agnes – whom Woodmason mistakenly refers to as the daughter of “one Campbel, who had bred up his Children in all the Bigotry and Zeal to the Church of Scotland, as possible “ – hated Richardson for his religious liberalism. He carried out his unorthodox family devotionals “to the Great Disgust of his Wife and her Relations. Thro' these people he led a most bitter Life – and was very unhappy.”⁶

Several years after Richardson's death, Woodmason attached a “Memorandum” to the sermon he had prepared for the pulpit exchange, where he described the death in lurid detail and with his usual anti-sectarian spin:

On June 1772 [sic] He was found dead on his Knees in his Study, with a Bridle round his Neck, reaching to the Ceiling. He was leaning against a Chair (as was his Custom in Prayer) and his Hands uplifted. In this Posture He was found by a female Servant. The Wife pretended Great Grief – sent for the Neighbours &c. the Elders met – and all concluded that it was an Act of his own thro' Religious Melancholy – Therefore (to bring no disgrace on the Kirk) they called no Coroner, but buried Him as next day – the Widow following the Corps with Great Sorrow to the Grave. But some that knew the Temper of the Wife and her Relations – made this Affair Public – And it was insisted on that the Corps should be taken up out of the Grave and examined which was done. And Marks of Strangulation found on the Neck – and Bruises on the Breast. On Examination of Persons, it appeared That all the Servants were sent abroad into the Field that Morning and none left in the House but the Wife – and that her Brother had been there in Interim for a short Space. It was found too that no Man could destroy himself by the Manner in which the Bridle was found about his Neck. And it was more than probable that it was put round his Neck, and the Body plac'd in that Posture after he was strangled. Thus fell this Poor Gentleman a Victim to Moderation – A Martyr to the persecuting Spirit that Distinguishes Superstition and Enthusiasm, from Reason and Religion.

⁶ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 15, 133.

Woodmason's description of the position of the body was identical to Simpson's, and like Simpson he placed Richardson's death in the context of his "bitter" and "unhappy" life. But unlike Simpson, Woodmason knew of the bridle – a fact that was not included in the early report that reached Simpson because it was concealed by the neighbors to spare "the Kirk." Woodmason apparently combined the details of a story he had heard – details of the body, the bridle, the melancholy – with what he had learned from Richardson personally about the church's opposition to the Lord's Prayer and Watts' hymns. He would certainly have known of Alexander Craighead ("one Campbel"), a notorious dissenter, from his travels through the backcountry. In addition to her religious intolerance, Woodmason further described Craighead's daughter Agnes as "Melancholy and Splenetic" because she was childless. He then projected his own anti-sectarian interpretation onto the narrative, charging a bitter Agnes and her bigoted brother with murdering Richardson for his religious "Moderation."⁷ One does not have to look far to see the absurdity of Woodmason's interpretation: as soon as it could agree on a replacement for Richardson, the church hired none other than Thomas Craighead, Agnes' brother and alleged accomplice.⁸ On the other hand, Woodmason's account suggests that there was more to Richardson's death than "vapory disorders." Indeed, if Woodmason is to be believed, a much different story had circulated in the summer of 1771, a story of murder, conspiracy, cover-up, and decomposing corpses

⁷ Ibid., 133-4. Woodmason also disparages Agnes in his "Burlesque Sermon," in which he has Richardson claim that his wife "hates Young Children cause she has none of her own – But that's not my fault." See *ibid.*, 152. Woodmason was mistaken about the year of Richardson's death. Both the probate records and tombstone place his death in 1771. See *Inventories of Estates, Z*, 148, SCDAH; Nancy Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Graveyard* (Lancaster, SC, 1965).

⁸ The Waxhaw church was served by temporary "supplies" until 1778, when it finally settled on Craighead. See Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 421.

A third account, similar in many respects to Woodmason's, was passed on by oral tradition until George Howe published it in 1870, nearly a century after Richardson's death. In Howe's version, Agnes left Richardson alone in the house for the day, during which time he was visited by his brother-in-law, Archibald Davie, and later by William Boyd, a church member from a neighboring settlement. When Agnes returned, she and Boyd found Richardson's body in the upstairs study "dead, in a kneeling position, and a bridle around his neck." The neighbors were called as a kind of informal coroner's jury and determined that Richardson had died by his own hand. Yet they agreed, "in the interests of religion," to cover up the suicide and declare that Richardson had "died at his devotions." Within a year Agnes had married into the prominent Dunlap family. In the mean time, word of the bridle had leaked out, and suspicion fell on Agnes, whose hasty remarriage propelled rumors that she played a role in Richardson's death. Finally, as Howe tells it, a "revolting test of her innocence or guilt was . . . resorted to."

About a year after his interment, the whole community was collected around his grave, the body of Mr. Richardson was exhumed and exposed to view, and Mrs. Richardson was subjected to the shocking ordeal of touching the corpse, on the absurd idea which at that time prevailed, that blood would flow if the murderer should touch the corpse of his victim. She was compelled by the cruel necessity of the case to lay her hand on the forehead of her deceased husband, and tradition says that Archy Davie . . . pressed her hand down on it. The afflicted woman could not restrain her tears, but wept aloud. Yet nothing unusual followed; no divine interposition resolved the mystery, and the transaction was ridiculed or sadly deplored by the majority of the people as a farce discreditable to those who had been the chief actors in it. The belief, however, continued in the minds of some that Mr. Richardson had died by other hands than his own.⁹

The principal behind the touching test Howe describes here was simple enough: a body touched by its murderer would bleed anew. The roots of this tradition lay deep in the Middle Ages, and throughout the early modern period it was recognized by western

⁹ Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, I, 416-18.

jurists as judicial proof, evidence enough at least to merit further investigation or torture.

In some cases corpses bled spontaneously when moved, casting suspicion on a bystander; in other cases suspects were formally or informally arraigned and made to touch the corpse, often, as with Agnes Richardson, weeks or even months after interment.

According to David Hackett Fisher, the “ordeal of the bier” was institutionalized in the violent Scottish borderlands; all mourners were expected to lay their hands on the corpse during the wake. As other ordeals such as witch-ducking and hot irons fell out of use in the seventeenth century, the ordeal of touch, which had no harmful consequences for innocent suspects, actually gained wider currency during this period. The logic of defense attorneys – they had long argued that corpses frequently bled before people known to be innocent and failed to bleed before known murderers – finally prevailed during the Enlightenment, and by the mid-eighteenth century most courts had rejected trial by touch. Like many popular beliefs, however, touch-and-bleed did not disappear but retained a strong hold on the popular imagination for more than a century after jurists rejected it. At least three appeals to the ordeal occurred in the United States in the 1860s. As late as 1869 two hundred people in Illinois were marched past the bodies of two murder victims in hopes of identifying their killer.¹⁰

In addition to describing the ordeal, Howe brings Agnes into much sharper focus and places her in a radically different light than Woodmason. She was, first of all, “a lady of much personal beauty.” Not only was she not at home when Richardson died; she was at a social event, a “quilting.” When she returned and found Mr. Boyd waiting,

¹⁰ On the ordeal of touch see Henry Charles Lea, *Superstition and Force: Essays on the Wager of Law, the Wager of Battle, the Ordeal, Torture* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, 1882), 359-70. On the “ordeal of the bier” see David Hackett Fisher, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 417.

she “immediately withdrew to prepare dinner for her visitor.” When she and Boyd discovered the body, she “uttered a piercing scream.” In Howe’s account, Agnes was the model neighbor, hostess, and wife; she was dutiful and devoted, the very picture of nineteenth-century domesticity with which Howe would have been familiar. Such women were vigorously courted. Who could blame her for her hasty remarriage to “a gentleman of worth?” In the end Howe vindicated Agnes, ascribing Richardson’s death to suicide and denouncing Archy Davie and the other “chief actors” who victimized her.¹¹

And yet Howe’s account has one fatal flaw.¹² In his will Richardson ordered that half of his estate be set aside for Agnes’ maintenance and half sold and divided among various nieces, nephews and namesakes. As both heir and executrix, Agnes was involved in several transactions involving the estate over a two year period. In a transaction dated May 29, 1773, she signed off as Agnes Richardson; in another transaction five months later, she signed as Agnes Dunlap. Although no record of her marriage to George Dunlap has survived, these deeds place it in the summer or early fall of 1773, at least two years after Richardson’s death and well within the accepted period of mourning. This date is consistent with the birth of her first child in late June 1774. Incidentally, Agnes had five children before her death in 1790, showing that the Richardsons’ infertility was due to William, not Agnes.¹³

¹¹ Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 416-18.

¹² Despite its flaws it has become the popular version of Richardson’s death. See, for example, the recycling of this account in Marquis James, *The Life of Andrew Jackson, Complete in One Volume* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938), 12-13.

¹³ Will of William Richardson, Will Book SS, 44, SCDAH; Charleston Deeds, 4YO, 57; Lancaster Deeds, D, 123; Louise Pettus, “Agnes Craighead Richardson Dunlap” (typescript in the author’s possession).

But if Agnes had not, as Howe claimed, remarried sooner “than a proper respect for Mr. Richardson’s memory would justify,” why was she suspected of his murder? Was she suspected at all, or could the whole episode be an elaborate myth? This is not likely. Because both Woodmason and Howe, despite their differences in detail and their widely varying interpretations, implicate Agnes, it is probable that she was suspected of her husband’s murder.¹⁴ It is also likely that Richardson’s corpse was exhumed and examined, since both accounts agree on this point. Further, given the level of detail in Howe’s account – the naming of William Boyd, the gathering of the “whole community” around the grave, the very specific touching of the forehead, and in particular the role of Archibald Davie – Agnes was probably subjected to the touching test. However, even the most credulous observer would be hard put to expect blood from a year-old corpse. It was more likely that the test took place in the shorter time frame given by Woodmason. On the other hand, aside from Howe’s mistake about Agnes’s remarriage and his erroneous dating of the trial, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his account.¹⁵

If both Woodmason and Howe were wrong about motive, why was Agnes suspected, and how did suspicion mount to the point that the community exhumed Richardson’s corpse and subjected Agnes to the touching ordeal? This question goes to the very heart of eighteenth-century backcountry society and culture, where gender, kinship, and supernaturalism interlocked to safeguard the social power of propertied

¹⁴ Howe’s account is based on “one story, which has the appearance of truth” out of a unspecified number of “popular traditions” recounting Richardson’s death. Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 416. There is no indication that he used Woodmason as a source, since Woodmason does not appear in Howe’s voluminous history. Woodmason’s journal and sermons were in any case in manuscript form in Howe’s day and were apparently unknown. They were not presented to an archive until 1894, a quarter-century after Howe published his history, and were apparently purchased by the donor from a private book dealer in England. Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, xxxvi.

¹⁵ Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 417.

men.¹⁶ To understand its full implications requires looking first at colonial inheritance laws and practices, particularly as they concerned widows.

Widows like Agnes occupied an anomalous and troubling place in early modern British society. Under English common law, widows were entitled to dower, or the use of one-third of their deceased husband's real estate (land and buildings) for life and outright ownership of a portion of his personal property (in South Carolina, childless widows got one-half of personalty). A widow could neither devise nor sell real property received as dower; she was required to maintain it so as to prevent loss of value, and upon her death it reverted to her husband's oldest male child or nearest full-blood male kin. She was free to do as she pleased with personalty. Of course, dower only applied when husbands died intestate (without a will). If a husband tried to circumvent dower by using a will to bequeath less than one-third to his wife, his widow could reject the will and receive her dower share of his realty anyway. By taking this path, however, she forfeited her claim to any of his personal property. Further, a widow lost control of her dower when she remarried; as a *feme covert*, any personal property she owned by dower became her husband's at marriage. Although she retained her realty dower, her husband controlled it. He could neither sell nor devise it without her consent, but he was free to manage it as he saw fit. The law thus functioned to force husbands to provide for their wives with minimal disruption to the transmission of property from man to man. It kept

¹⁶ The following analysis builds on the work of Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), esp. chapter 3, and Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1996), chapter 3.

the community from bearing the burden of caring for widows while keeping property, wealth, and power in the hands of men.¹⁷

Widowhood posed both dangers and opportunities to colonial women. In theory, widows disrupted the orderly transmission of wealth among males and were thus a symbolic threat to the male monopoly on property upon which their society rested. But things often played out differently on the ground. In the South Carolina low country, husbands eschewed dower and turned with great frequency to wills, entrusting their wives with sometimes vast estates, much of it in legally disposable slave property; widows responded in kind by managing and protecting the estate until their children reached majority, thus maintaining the gender status quo in regard to property. Still, widows, especially elite widows, owned and controlled property and therefore possessed economic power. They may have perceived themselves as surrogates or tenants, but they had social standing, they were due deference from lower-ranking men, and they therefore both symbolically and actually inverted the natural order. Moreover, they were not subject within their households to the authority of a man. In short, widows were autonomous, a liberating and refreshing but dangerous position to be in, as Agnes Richardson learned.¹⁸

William Richardson was obviously aware of these dangers and opportunities when he drew up his will, and he seems to have crafted it so as to make Agnes as

¹⁷ Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1986), 141-7, 156-60; Carole Shammas, Marylynn Salmon, and Michel Dahlin, *Inheritance in America From Colonial Times to the Present* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 30-8, 51-5; Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 81-4.

¹⁸ Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 115-16; Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property*, 156-8; John E. Crowley, "Family Relations and Inheritance in Early South Carolina," *Histoire sociale – Social History*, 17, no. 3 (May 1984): 35-57; Cara Anzilotti, "Autonomy and the Female Planter in Colonial South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 63, no. 2 (May 1997): 242-5; Norton, *Founding Mothers*, 165.

comfortable as possible while exposing her to the least amount of risk. His orders reflected the spirit of dower law but went beyond it in provisions. First, he bequeathed Agnes the most valuable half of his real estate, which included a 150-acre tract of land, the two-story house, and all improvements, for her use only until she married or died. She was obligated to maintain the property in good order and could not convey it by will or deed. At her death it was to be sold, with the proceeds used to buy religious books for the poor. A second 150-acre tract was to be liquidated immediately and divided among five heirs, who included two nephews, a niece, and two namesakes. In terms of real property, then, Agnes was hardly a threat to the male-ordered transmission of wealth; she was a virtual tenant with no power to transmit any real estate.

But this was not the case with personal property, and here Richardson was even more generous toward Agnes than he was with his real estate. He left her three of his four slaves, most of his livestock, nearly all of the household furnishings, many of his books, and all of his tools. He also left her “the Monies owed me by the people in these parts” after deducting for debts and funeral expenses. The estate inventory did not enumerate these debts, but Richardson apparently had reason to believe that they would exceed his expenses. As executrix, Agnes was also entitled to any residue, or property not named in the will. In all, Agnes received at least 70% of Richardson’s personal estate. He bequeathed the remainder to his nieces and nephews and two acquaintances. To Archibald Davie he left only his saddle and bridle, along with instructions that Davie pay the hundred-pound currency balance on a note he owed Richardson to his, Davie’s, two youngest children.¹⁹

¹⁹ Will of William Richardson; Inventories of Estates, Z, 148, SCDH.

At her husband's death in 1771, Agnes Richardson thus found herself the owner and manager of a substantial estate. She had use of a more-than adequate plantation on some of the richest land in the Waxhaws, located in the heart of the settlement. She personally owned goods and chattel valued at 1,155 pounds currency, propelling her into the ranks of the wealthiest men in the community. As executrix she also had the legal authority to enforce her husband's will and collect debts owed to his estate, debts that would accrue to her, not to her husband. As a result of all this, she also found herself the target of rumor and suspicion. Already predisposed to elicit gossip by her apparent charm and assertive personality – and also no doubt by her childless marriage to an incapacitated husband – her new-found autonomy would only have heightened suspicion. Finally, as one who had the effrontery to be a childless, manless, yet wealthy woman, she found herself in the middle of an inheritance dispute that she would win only at the expense of her good name.

Underlying Agnes's murder trial and largely masked by it was a bitter inheritance battle. If Richardson had died intestate, all of his real property (temporarily excepting Agnes' dower) and half of his personal estate would have devolved to his nearest full-blood relative. Although Richardson had several siblings, only his sister Mary had immigrated to America, and she had died in 1767. Her oldest son, William Richardson Davie, would have been the first heir in the order of succession, and under the primogeniture law of South Carolina he stood to inherit the whole of Richardson's real property. But Davie was a minor, meaning that his father Archibald would manage the estate until he reached his majority. Archibald thus had reason to expect that Richardson's considerable estate, after making the dower provisions for Agnes, would

remain in the Richardson-Davie bloodline. Richardson's will was a bitter blow to Davie, whose three children, the only local bloodline heirs, now stood to inherit less than one-third of the real estate and barely a fourth of the personalty. His bitterness was compounded by the insulting bequest of the saddle and bridle and, most of all, by the provision giving Davie's children the legal right to sue him for debt.²⁰

But the nearest chancery court was two hundred miles away, and challenging Richardson's will would be risky and expensive. It would be far easier to make trouble for Agnes, to discredit her, to create enough ill will and suspicion to make her leave the community and abandon her claims to the estate, perhaps even to convict her of murder. As a woman, a frustrated wife, a widow, especially an assertive wealthy widow, Agnes was an easy target. More important still, Agnes was kinless. Her father had died in 1766, and her brother Thomas was young and, in any event, away at Sugar Creek, perhaps even at seminary. She was an outsider from a family of outsiders. With no local male kin to represent or protect her and no children to legitimize her widowhood, Agnes was easy prey for envious and bitter men like Archibald Davie. Her co-executor, Robert Patton, could provide legal guidance, but could he really be counted on to help when the whole world was arrayed against her? The answer, apparently, was no.²¹

And so it was that Agnes stood before the "whole community," forced to place her hand on her dead husband's decomposing head. At one level her ordeal was the culmination of an extended trial over inheritance, a trial staged not in a courthouse but in the community, the charges against her proceeding by innuendo and gossip and proven

²⁰ Shammass, et. al., *Inheritance in America*, 37. On Mary Richardson Davie and William Richardson Davie see Robinson, *William R. Davie*, 1-7.

²¹ Craighead, *Craighead Family*, 80. In seventeenth-century New England, childless or son-less women were disproportionately targeted for persecution in the form of witchcraft accusations. See Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 116.

by the supernatural touching test. But there was more at stake here than William Richardson's estate, for even Archibald Davie, blinded by resentment, must have known that the touching test was an act of desperation, a "farce discreditable." Beyond the remote possibility that a rotten corpse might just bleed, what the whole community turned out to see in the Waxhaw graveyard was a social drama, the ritual enactment of male power and female powerlessness. Whether they murdered their husbands or not, wealthy, assertive women like Agnes Richardson must be put in their place. The folk court, the touching test, the supernatural drama, all thinly disguised the raw male power put on display over William Richardson's grave. The invisible world might declare her innocence, but in the visible world of kinship networks and gendered power, Agnes had transgressed a serious social boundary. In the end, Agnes was acquitted, but she was also humbled, and the social order was righted anew.²²

²² If Agnes was just an easy target for greedy designing men or a symbolic threat to patriarchy, then who killed William Richardson? Suicide cannot be ruled out. Richardson suffered from fairly severe periodic depression, which was no doubt compounded by his declining health, his loss of hearing, and his incapacitation. There was apparently enough evidence of suicide to convince the neighbors. Moreover, they had good reason to conceal knowledge of the crime, for there was more at stake than the "interests of religion" in covering up Richardson's suicide. Self-destruction was a criminal offense under English common law if both intent and motive were present. Suicide victims were denied Christian burial; instead, the law prescribed that their bodies be thrown naked into a grave at a crossroads and stakes driven through their hearts. Their property was subject to forfeiture, punishing their heirs as well. See Michael McDonald and Terence R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 16-17, 45-50; Howard I. Kushner, *Self-Destruction in the Promised Land: A Psychocultural History of American Suicides* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 13-34. There were, moreover, at least two other documented cases of early American suicide victims hanging themselves while kneeling. See Kushner, *Self-Destruction*, 13, 16. In short, the evidence seems to sustain Howe's conclusion that Richardson killed himself.

On the other hand, suicide does not explain the "Bruises on the Breast" Woodmason had heard about. Moreover, even as Howe attributed Richardson's death to suicide, he hinted at something more foul. Howe placed Archibald Davie in the house the day Richardson died. He also made Davie the "chief actor" in Agnes' trial. Further, Howe did not have access to Richardson's will. He implicated Davie without knowing of Davie's outstanding hundred-pound debt to Richardson. In fact, Davie and Richardson were locked in a dispute over this debt. According to the bond, Davie borrowed two hundred pounds, but the entire debt "was to be void" if Davie paid half the note within a year. Richardson apparently understood their agreement differently, for he was still trying to collect the balance four years later and even ordered in his will that the note be "renewed frequently until paid." If Davie was bitter about Richardson's generous provisions for Agnes, he would have been furious when he learned that Richardson bequeathed this note to his own children, perhaps even furious enough to return the ironic gesture by strangling Richardson with the very bridle he had willed to Davie. The bond is in the William Richardson Davie Papers, Southern

As Richardson's case indicates, Archibald Davie's world was a dangerous place for childless, kinless, widowed women like Agnes Richardson. The law offered them some autonomy, but it could not protect them from the kind of social terror Agnes endured. Only male kin could do that, forcing kinless women to choose between autonomy and protection. For the women of the Waxhaws who witnessed Agnes' trial by ordeal, the consequences of choosing autonomy were all too clear. Agnes, anyway, opted for the safer strategy, eventually surrendering her independence, her plantation, and her property to a man whose powerful family promised to shield her from the Archibald Davies of the world.

Hidden in the interstices of Agnes' story and peering out from its shadows were Richardson's slaves. In Woodmason's account they were "sent abroad into the Field" the morning of Richardson's murder; later, his female house slave Rose discovered her master's lifeless body in the study. Richardson owned four slaves at his death in 1771; the sources suggest that he treated them paternally, taking steps to protect their families and integrating them into the intimate circle of his own domestic life. Such glimpses of slaves and slave-master relationships are rare in the documents of the early Waxhaws. When they do surface, they point only to ambiguity, for slaves, like widows, occupied a complex and contradictory place in colonial Waxhaws' society. They were at once internal to the community yet separate from it, integrated into households but outside of the core kinship network. In varying degrees they formed social relationships, even intimate ones, with their masters – as in Richardson's case – but beneath the social

Historical Collection, box 1, folder 2, 1767-1779. I am indebted to Nancy Crockett, "Trial by Touch," (typescript in possession of the author) for connecting the murder weapon with the bridle bequeathed to Davie.

surface was a more fundamental and inescapable economic relationship. Though the legitimacy of this economic relationship was never really questioned, its boundaries were fluid and were challenged by both whites and slaves. The tension between these two kinds of relationships, between integrating slaves into and excluding them from the world of their masters, helped define Waxhaws's society during the colonial period.²³

The demographic make-up of the Waxhaws accounted for much of this fluidity and ambiguity.²⁴ Slaves were simply too few in number to become the "Internal Enemies" of Charles Woodmason's imagination. Unfortunately, without tax records it is impossible to measure precisely the slave population for specific localities in South Carolina.²⁵ Aggregate tax records for the 1760s place the slave population for the middle and backcountry combined at around 20%. Most of these slaves were undoubtedly in the more commercially-developed middle country, for by 1790 the upcountry slave

²³ On the ambiguous place of slaves in white society see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), esp. pp. 1-76. Also see James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 1-22, 54-6, 70, 94-120. Patterson's notion of slave "liminality" (p. 46) more aptly describes the colonial Waxhaws than his much stronger phrase, "social death."

²⁴ Even the lowcountry, with its much larger slave population, experienced this fluidity until it achieved a slave majority in the early eighteenth century. See Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton, 1975).

²⁵ An incomplete demographic picture is only one aspect of a much larger gap in our understanding of slavery in the early Carolina piedmont. There is a need for a comprehensive examination of basic issues relating to slaves and slavery in this subregion, including slave ethnicity, autonomy and communities, severity, paternalism, cultural exchange, and the impact of the growing slave society on yeoman households and communities. Philip Morgan has written extensively on slavery in the Virginia piedmont, but his work does not touch on the yeoman-dominated far western region where many of the immigrants to the Carolina backcountry originated. See Philip D. Morgan and Michael L. Nicholls, "Slaves in Piedmont Virginia, 1720-1790," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd, 66 (1989): 211-51, and Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Williamsburg, VA: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), 30-2, 41-3, 100, 165-6, 510-11. The only detailed treatment of slavery in the Carolina piedmont is Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*. Although this book surveys slavery in late-colonial North Carolina as a whole and focuses mainly on the more developed slave society of the Cape Fear region, it treats slavery in the western piedmont counties with a refreshing attention to detail. The most extensive work on slavery in the early South Carolina upcountry is Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*. Although slavery is central to Klein's argument, it is far from her exclusive focus. Much remains to be done, in particular an analysis that crosses state boundaries and treats the southern piedmont, from Virginia to Georgia, as a discrete region.

population had reached only 15%. In all likelihood, then, slaves made up less than 10% of the population of the colonial South Carolina backcountry. This figure is fairly consistent with earlier estimates based on militia muster rolls. In the Waxhaws, thirteen slaves were listed among the 135 men counted in the 1757 militia census. However, the militia rolls probably inflate the proportion of slaves, since the sex ratio was heavily skewed toward men in the 1750s, and the male slaves listed would not have represented slave families as completely as free militiamen did. It is more likely that the Waxhaw settlement's early slave population mirrored that of Anson County, North Carolina (of which the Waxhaws was a part), where tax records show that slaves made up less than 7% of the population in 1755. By 1767 slaves comprised 10% of Anson County's population, but in neighboring Mecklinburg County – carved from the western-most part of Anson and more proximate geographically to the Waxhaws – the slave population reached only 8%. By the eve of the Revolution, given the sudden influx of poor white immigrants in the late sixties and early seventies, the slave population of the Waxhaws was probably hovering around 10% or less. Outnumbering their slaves by nine or ten to one, whites had few reasons to fret about slave revolts and every reason to wonder how these slaves, with their broken English and lack of kin connections, fit into this white yeoman world.²⁶

²⁶ For the South Carolina upcountry and backcountry as a whole see Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 20, 110. Meriwether estimates that the slave population for the backcountry as a whole rose from under 5% in 1759 to about 10% in 1765. See *Expansion of South Carolina*, 259-60. For militia rolls see *SCCJ*, may 4, 1757, SCDAH. For sex ratios and the slave population in western North Carolina see Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*, 161, 232, 221-7, 292; and Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 76-80. For Anson County also see A List of the Militia and Taxable Persons in the Several Counties of the Province of North Carolina for the Year 1755, *CRNC*, 5, 575. For slavery and the Scots-Irish see Andrew E. Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro: A History* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966), 8; Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*, 31, 314, n. 46; and Alan Tully, "Patterns of Slaveholding in Pennsylvania: Chester and Lancaster Counties 1729-1758," *Journal of Social History*, 6 (1973), 284-305.

Like the threat of insurrection, the morality of slaveholding remained a non-issue through the late colonial period. Even the most zealous New Side evangelicals could resolve the “problem of slavery” by locating slaves within the divine order. In a 1757 sermon on the duties of Christian masters, William Richardson’s mentor, Samuel Davies, assured his listeners that “the appointments of Providence, and the order of the world, not only admit, but require, that there should be civil distinctions among mankind, that some should rule and some be subject, that some should be Masters, and some Servants.” Far from working to “blend or destroy these distinctions,” Christianity instead “establishes and regulates them, and enjoins every man to conduct himself according to them.”²⁷ In Davies’ view there was no contradiction between Christianity and slavery; it was part of a temporal order instituted by God and sanctioned by Christ. If Presbyterians had qualms with slavery, they kept them to themselves until after the Revolution.²⁸

In colonial Presbyterian communities like the Waxhaws the chief concern was neither controlling nor emancipating their slaves, but christianizing them. As Davies recognized, though the temporal order might rest on “civil distinctions,” in the “affairs of religion and eternity, all men stand upon the same footing” and “the meanest Slave is as immortal as his Master.” Since it was the immortal soul, and not one’s place in the temporal order, that gave “importance to a being,” it was the duty of Christian masters to strive to convert their slaves. This “solemn and important trust” was as sacred as that of

²⁷ Samuel Davies, *The Duties of Masters to Their Servants, in a Sermon* (Lynchburg, VA: William Gray, 1809), 17.

²⁸ According to Andrew Murray, although several leading Presbyterians in Philadelphia and New Jersey expressed opposition to slavery during and after the Revolutionary War, in the colonial period most “accepted the institution of slavery as permitted by God, and tended to accept the customs of the areas in which they settled.” See *Presbyterians and the Negro*, 12-17. For a more complete look at Presbyterian attitudes toward slavery in the eighteenth century, including a more detailed discussion of Davies, see Jewel L. Spangler, “Proslavery Presbyterians: Virginia’s Conservative Dissenters in the Age of Revolution,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 79, 2 (Summer 2000), 111-123.

parents to their children, and to neglect it was nothing short of an “inhuman cruelty.” Davies thus urged his congregations to “labor to make this land of slavery, a land of spiritual liberty to them; and to bring them to share in the heavenly inheritance, in exchange for their liberty, and as a reward for the fruits of their labors, which you enjoy.”²⁹

Davies led his parishioners by example. In the mid-1750s he developed a thriving slave ministry in Hanover County. Between 1755 and 1757 he baptized 150 slaves, distributed hundreds of Bibles, catechisms, and hymnals, and admitted at least sixty slave converts to communion. The young William Richardson shared in this ministry when he trained under Davies in the Virginia piedmont. According to Davies, Richardson possessed “an unusual degree of zeal for the conversion of the Negroes,” distributing a “large share” of the books Davies had solicited from his London supporters. In all likelihood Richardson retained his zeal two years later, when he was installed as the minister at Waxhaw Presbyterian Church.³⁰

Dividing souls and bodies was not as simple as Davies’ rhetoric suggested, however, for christianizing slaves involved considerably more than baptism and instruction in the rudiments of the faith. As both Davies and his listeners knew, spiritual converts crossed important social and cultural boundaries as well; conversion forced whites to share their culture and integrate these outsiders into the spiritual family at the core of their communities. To effectively christianize their slaves, Davies argued, masters must not only give them books but also teach them to read. Slaves and masters

²⁹ Davies, *Duties of Masters*, 17, 6, 20.

³⁰ Samuel Davies, *Letters from the Reverend Samuel Davies, etc., Shewing the State of Religion in Virginia, Particularly Among the Negroes* (London: R. Pardon, 1757), 19, 28, 39.

must have regular spiritual conversations, and slaves should be included in household worship. “Maintain the daily worship of God in your families,” Davies implored his listeners, “and endeavour to time it so, that your Slaves may have opportunity of attending.” In the world of small slaveholdings and scattered farms, integrated public worship (with segregated seating) was likewise the norm. Moreover, slave converts were to be admitted to that most intimate and sacred of Presbyterian spaces, the Lord’s Table. In short, Davies would not let slaveowners have their purely economic relationships; insisting on the immortality of slave souls and the spiritual equality of masters and slaves, he challenged his parishioners to make a meaningful and personal place for the “poor Negroes” in their households, churches, and communities. In its broadest terms, then, christianizing slaves was at the heart of the most important “problem of slavery” facing Davies’ and Richardson’s generation: the problem of inclusion, of where slaves fit in the white Protestant world and how to incorporate kinless slaves into local, kin-based communities.³¹

The mere fact that Davies preached on the duty of masters attests that christianizing slaves was a contested issue; his strong language suggests that opposition to the slave ministry was deeply entrenched, and that the zeal of people like William Richardson was indeed “unusual.” “The generality of the white people” of his charge, Davies told his book donors, were “vicious, and careless about the Religion” of their slaves. For some, Davies noted, the religious care of their slaves was simply a low priority; others feared that literacy and conversion would make slaves “haughty,” while still others were loathe to lose labor time to religious worship and instruction. Whether they were motivated by neglect, fear, greed, or genuine uncertainty about how to

³¹ Davies, *Duties of Masters*, 32-39. On integrated worship services see Davies, *Letters*, 10.

reconcile the tension between the economic and social dimensions of the master-slave relationship, masters' ambivalence about christianizing their slaves assured the latter a place on the foggy margins of the white community. Even in congregations with ministers as zealous "for the conversion of the Negroes" as William Richardson – a slaveowner who doubtless followed Davies' lead in teaching his slaves to read and including them in household worship (and who probably enjoined his congregations to do likewise) – most slaves remained unconverted if not uninvited into the religious community.³²

Many slaves were probably as ambivalent as their masters about converting and crossing the social divide between white and black. White apathy, racist assumptions, control, and condescension probably kept many would-be adherents out of the church. Moreover, the Presbyterian church probably failed to meet the needs of black worshipers. For example, Davies noted that the slaves took such "extatic delight in Psalmody" that they sometimes flooded his kitchen with "a torrent of sacred harmony" deep into the night. Richardson likewise used Isaac Watts' innovative psalms and hymns in his family devotionals, though he was constrained by his white congregation from using it in public worship. The rejection of Watts was only one aspect of a staid and controlled Presbyterian worship style that probably discouraged many slaves who might otherwise have been drawn to evangelical Christianity. White control of church music, like white racist attitudes, acted as an indirect form of exclusion that could place powerful checks on potential black adherents.³³

³² Davies, *Letters*, 16-17; Davies, *Duty of Masters*, 20-24. For a complete discussion of the Watts psalmody controversy see Chapter 5, below.

³³ Davies, *Letters*, 12, 36; Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 15, 133.

Either unable or unwilling to find a place within the white core community, slaves in the Waxhaws were nevertheless eager to establish ties with one another. Although the low slave population and the small and diffuse holdings inhibited the formation of the kind of large slave communities known in the Chesapeake and lowcountry,³⁴ the fluid conditions of the upcountry probably enabled slaves to build a local network of relations. At the very least, many lived in families. Joe and his wife Diana lived on Thomas Simpson's plantation, along with their children, as did Venus and her two children. When William Richardson ordered that the "Negroe called Joe" be hired out for four years to fund his nephew's education, he left explicit instructions that Joe "be hired so conveniently that he may see his wife and children frequently." Thomas McElhenny's slave Sal had at least two children. Other slaves were grouped together in the wills – Leander and Nelly, Mary and Sancho – but their relationships were not specified. Further, the probate records suggest that after 1765, when all of these slaveholders' estates were probated, the sex ratio was balanced. Of the fifty-four slaves whose gender and age are specified, eighteen were men, twenty-two were women, and fourteen were children. By the end of the colonial period there were thus ample opportunities for unwed slaves to find spouses; nothing about the demographic conditions of this backcountry community stood in the way of slave family formation. This pattern echoes

³⁴ The main source for local slaveholdings in the colonial period is probate records, which are skewed toward wealthy estates. Of the fifteen estates probated between 1756 and 1779, eight included slaves. In all, sixty-six slaves were identified in the colonial probate records, almost 90% of whom lived in households with nine or more slaves. The largest slaveholding was 14. The eight slaveholders were Thomas Wright, Will Book 17, 583-4, SCDAH; Thomas Simpson, Will Book 10, 455-6, SCDAH; William Brown, Inventories of Estates, vol. W, 331-2, SCDAH; William Richardson, Inventories of Estates, Z, 148, SCDAH; John Cantzon, Inventories of Estates, vol. Z, 472-3, SCDAH; Robert Dunlap, Inventories of Estates, vol. AA, 101, SCDAH; Thomas McElhenny, Will Book 18, 43-4 and Inventories of Estates, vol. CC, 14, SCDAH; and Richard Cousart, will reprinted in Cousart, *Down the Waxhaw Road*, 36-8. For western North Carolina slaveholdings see Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*, 236, 292. Many slaves were probably part of smaller holdings. Comparable data from western North Carolina shows that half of all slaves there were owned by small slaveholders (1-4 slaves) and one-third by large slaveholders (10-19 slaves). See Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*, 236, 292.

that of more thoroughly documented communities in western North Carolina, where two-thirds of slaves living in households of two to three slaves lived as families.³⁵

It is not difficult to imagine these slave families developing a local kinship network of their own in the late colonial period. Slave kin afforded little protection, but they provided solace, a sense of belonging, and a source of identity in a world that ultimately rested on the denial of slave identity apart from the master. Families also anchored individual slaves in the local community and deterred runaways. The only documented runaway in the colonial Waxhaws, John Barkley's slave Peter, was apparently African-born with no local kin.³⁶ For their part slave owners generally seemed to honor slave families. Although records of colonial-era slave sales have not survived, testators tended to keep related persons together when making bequests. Moreover, while it is hard to determine from the recorded instruments if slave families were broken up by sales, transactions from the 1790s do show that nearly six in ten slaves sold remained within the previous master's family.³⁷

But neither religious conversion, social integration, cultural sharing, nor slave families could change the cold, fundamental truth of the economic relationship. Whatever else they were – Christians, uncles, daughters, neighbors – slaves could not escape their status as legal chattel. They had not been part of the kinship network that guided immigrants and informed settlement patterns; rather, they were forced

³⁵ Thomas Simpson's Will, Will Book 10, 455-6, SCDAH; William Richardson's Will, Will Book 1771-1774, p.44, SCDAH; Thomas McElhenny's Will, Will Book 18, 43-4, SCDAH; Thomas Wright's Will, Will Book 17, 583-4, SCDAH; Kay and Carey, *Slavery in North Carolina*, 292.

³⁶ *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, April 6, 1770. In searching for runaways I have consulted Lathan A. Windley, comp., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790, Volume 3: South Carolina* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983). Many advertisements suggest that family members were harboring fugitives; Peter's ad made no such reference.

³⁷ For slave transactions see Lancaster Deeds, CE, 70, 92; B, 208, 205, 267; D, 175, 177; F, 196.

immigrants, extensions of their masters' households who were subject to being uprooted if their masters moved, despite their religious and familial ties. Although bequests and sales might keep them within specific white families, such transactions could also take them out of the local community and away from their own relations.³⁸ No matter how intimate a religious space they shared with whites, slaves had been brought to the Waxhaws primarily to work and enrich their owners. They would never be more than partially integrated into the core community, and as Davies observed, most remained beyond even these partial connections – despite the zealous labors of William Richardson – inhabiting that limbo between personhood and property.³⁹

Despite Charles Woodmason's appeal, neither the threat of their "*Indian Neighbors*" nor that of their so-called "*Internal Enemy*" of slaves was enough to bring Presbyterians and Episcopalians together "like Brethren in Unity." The Presbyterian communities in places like the Waxhaws, Fishing Creek, Hanging Rock, and Lynches Creek had little tolerance for non-Presbyterians in general and Episcopalians in particular. Religious feeling and sectarian loyalty ran deep; personal identity, the institutional life of the community, and the complex cords of kinship were bound up with very specific religious beliefs, practices, rituals, and styles of worship. Although religious conflict has been overshadowed by the sectional disputes of the late-colonial Carolina piedmont, it was very much a part of the fabric of backcountry life. The deepest

³⁸ For such transactions see Lancaster Deeds, D, 177; F, 9.

³⁹ Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom*, 13-22, 54-6.

divisions between white colonial South Carolinians were based on religious, not sectional, differences.⁴⁰

The Carolina piedmont of Charles Woodmason's day was, in his phrase, a "mix'd Medley" of creeds and denominations. There were few Methodists prior to the Revolution, but both Separate and Regular Baptists had pushed into the upcountry and were aggressively vying for members. Presbyterian communities sprang up along the Catawba River and in the Long Canes district between the Saluda and the Savannah River, while Lutherans settled alongside Dutch Reformed congregations in the Congarees and Broad River valley and Episcopalians scattered themselves throughout the settlements. Much of the population, perhaps half or more, was unchurched, some no doubt like the people Woodmason found on Granny's Quarter Creek, with "Not a Bible or Prayer Book" or "the least Rudiments of Religion, Learning, Manners or Knowledge . . . among them." It is also possible, however, that the unchurched population has been overestimated: in communities like the Waxhaws church adherence was nearly universal, while lay-led conventicles played an important role in maintaining worship and piety in more typical communities that lacked settled ministers. In any event, church growth was steady during the second half of the eighteenth century, fed mostly by transplanted evangelical communities and punctuated now and again by small-scale revivals. Religious diversity, competition for members, and ingrained hostility toward a remote church establishment set the stage for heated religious conflict.⁴¹

⁴⁰ For example, the most comprehensive recent history of the Carolina backcountry treats sectional conflict extensively but gives scant attention to colonial religious conflict. See Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 43-5.

⁴¹ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 6, 23 [quotes]; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 42-4 [Baptists and Methodists]; Meriwether, *Expansion*, 57, 64, 155, 251 [Lutherans, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterians]. For estimates of church membership and adherence in the eighteenth-century South see Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 261-6.

Sectarian opposition to Episcopalians ranged from inhospitality to ridicule, curses, threats, and vandalism. Woodmason encountered them all. The Presbyterians at Pine Tree Hill gave him use of their meeting house for regular services but would not permit him to celebrate Christmas communion, saying they wanted no “Mass said in their House.” The Waxhaw church elders refused to let him preach to their people, although when he traveled there the following year to “consult with some Persons about building of a small Chapel in those parts,” a “Presbyterian Teacher” attempted to dissuade him by claiming they “subscribed to a General-House . . . open for Ministers of all denominations.” Lost in the Waxhaws in April 1768, Woodmason could not hire a guide because he was “a Church Minister,” was repeatedly given wrong directions, and was turned away from William Richardson’s house under the pretense that Richardson was not home. Worse by far was his treatment from the tavernkeeper: despite Woodmason’s hunger, cold, and exhaustion, the tavernkeeper “would not comply nor sell me a Blade of fodder, a Glass of Liquor . . . nor permit me to sit down nor kindle up a Fire. . . . He looked on me as an Wolf strayed into Christs fold to devour the Lambs of Grace. Thus did this rigid Presbyterian treat me.”⁴²

Such treatment was mild relative to the opposition Woodmason endured during church services. Just south of the Waxhaws at Hanging Rock, the Presbyterians ostensibly hired a band of “lawless Ruffians to insult me, which they did with Impunity – Telling me, they wanted no D----d Black Gown Sons of Bitches among them – and threatened to lay me behind the Fire.” A “Gang of Presbyterians” disrupted services the

On church growth in South Carolina and the importance of lay conventicles see Thomas J. Little, “The Rise of Evangelical Religion in South Carolina” (PhD Dissertation, Rice University, 1995), 156-7, 235, 315-16.

⁴² Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 11, 15, 34-5, 59.

next day also, “hallooing and whooping,” as they did again several days later, when they provoked the attending Catawbas to fight. On another occasion Presbyterians “hir’d a Band of rude fellows to come to Service who brought with them 57 Dogs (for I counted them) which in Time of Service they set fighting, and I was obliged to stop.” There were similar incidents at Fishing Creek and Little Lynches, where a group of drunken Presbyterians disrupted communion.⁴³

Such disruptions could easily turn to vandalism and violence. On Cane Creek, the Presbyterian Justice of the Peace removed Woodmason’s advertisements for his upcoming service. In the Congarees Presbyterians destroyed the pulpit, and at St. Mark’s they “left their Excrements on the Communion Table.” The congregation at Little Lynches, just east of the Waxhaws, was hardest hit. In 1767 the Presbyterian militia captain ordered a muster on Christmas Day. “The Church People refus’d. He threaten’d to fine – They defy’d Him: And had he attempted it, a Battle would certainly have ensu’d in the Muster field between the Church folks and Presbyterians, and Blood been spilt.” Presbyterians at Little Lynches later forced Episcopalians to stop construction on a chapel.⁴⁴

The sources of this Presbyterian opposition to the Anglican church are complex. That protesters targeted the communion service on at least three occasions suggests that differences over eucharistic theology, rooted in age-old hostility toward anything

⁴³ Ibid., 16-17, 20, 45, 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17, 31, and 46, n. 40. Admittedly, Woodmason enjoyed casting himself as the martyr and was consequently prone to exaggerate the hardship and opposition he endured. His claims must be read in this light. However, given the high incidence of such encounters, it stands to reason that religious conflict, though perhaps exaggerated by Woodmason, was still a major feature of colonial life.

resembling the Roman Catholic mass, were driving at least some of this conflict.⁴⁵ Such doctrinal differences also prevented lay people from crossing denominational lines to marry or baptize their children (in fact, Woodmason rebuked the Waxhaw church elders for preventing Richardson from baptizing non-Presbyterians). Yet there was more to sectarian conflict than the “zeal and Bigotry of the Church of Scotland.” The Presbyterians who unleashed their dogs at Woodmason’s service or halted construction on the chapel at Little Lynches Creek had not come to debate theology but to antagonize, even terrorize, the religious establishment. It was one thing to have state-supported “Black Gown Sons of Bitches” two-hundred miles away; it was quite another thing to have one “among them,” organizing worship services and building chapels in the midst of dissenter communities. There were probably class, ethnic, sectional, and personal tensions playing out here as well. Woodmason’s elitism, English background, lowcountry origins, and recent turn as stamp distributor, not to mention his sometimes irascible temperament, surely fueled hostility among the poor and middling Scots-Irish Presbyterians of the backcountry. Whatever the sources of sectarian strife, one thing is certain: religious identity mattered in the upcountry, enough to bring neighbors to the brink of armed conflict on the muster field.⁴⁶

This is not to say that religious conflict was a monolithic, strictly anti-Anglican phenomenon, nor that denominational relations were characterized only by strife. Upcountry dissenters targeted each other as well as the church establishment for ridicule and abuse. According to Woodmason, the Baptists called “Mr. Richardson (who is a

⁴⁵ For a rich discussion of Presbyterian eucharistic theology and early conflict over the mass, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and America Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 1-20.

⁴⁶ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 14, 15, 93.

Pale Man) The Pale White Horse of Death, for his People to ride on to Hell,” while for their part “the Presbyterians hate the Baptists far more than they do the Episcopalians.”⁴⁷ Moreover, there were instances of cooperation, accommodation, tolerance, and even kindness as well as ill-will. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian missionary who toured the piedmont in 1755, preached to mixed congregations and at Baptist meeting houses at several stops along his journey. When the lowcountry Baptist leader Oliver Hart visited the upcountry to rally Whig support in 1775, the Presbyterian elders at Duncan’s Creek “held a consultation” and at length allowed him to preach, as did the Little River congregation two days later. Even Charles Woodmason was treated kindly upon occasion; Richardson at least was willing to accommodate him. And yet such instances of hospitality were rare; for every act of kindness Woodmason received there were a dozen others who turned him away, disrupted his services, or threatened to whip him or lay him “behind the Fire.”⁴⁸

Religious differences were dramatized in the public spaces of taverns, muster fields, and meeting houses, but at a more basic level they were woven into the fabric of upcountry communities. Kinship and religious adherence are virtually indistinguishable during this period. The extent to which kinship structured or fueled sectarian conflict is uncertain, but there is no doubt that religious affiliation was key in the choice of marriage

⁴⁷ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 111, 43.

⁴⁸ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 171-2 [McAden]; Glenwood Clayton and Loulie Owens, eds., “Oliver Hart’s Diary of the Journey into the Backcountry,” *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Society*, 1 (1975), 25-6 [Hart]. Woodmason was threatened with whippings on two occasions, once by Seventh-Day Baptists and once by Anabaptists. See Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 53, 58. For a discussion of denominational cooperation in the Virginia backcountry see Robert Mitchell, “‘From the Ground Up’: Space, Place, and Diversity in Frontier Studies,” in Puglisi, ed., *Diversity and Accommodation*, 43-52.

partners, adding an ideological or spiritual layer to the already-cohesive kin-based communities.

Without parish or church records it is impossible to precisely determine the percentage of interfaith marriages in the Waxhaws, but the surviving sources suggest that they were rare. Woodmason summed up the distaste for cross-denominational unions when he declared that “a Presbyterian would sooner marry ten of his Children to Members of the Church of England than one to a Baptist.”⁴⁹ In similar communities, such as the Opequan settlement in Augusta County, Virginia – a major feeder county for the Waxhaws – marriage outside of the ethnic group was almost unknown before the Revolution, while the interfaith marriages that did occur often involved denominational switching by one spouse.⁵⁰ Still more to the point, there were almost no religious alternatives in the colonial Waxhaw settlement: neither Methodists nor Baptists established congregations before the Revolution, there were no Lutherans or Moravians, and the Episcopalians, who were “thinly scatter’d” in the Waxhaws, were unorganized and wholly dependent on the occasional visits of itinerants. Even had the people of the Waxhaws been predisposed to marry across sectarian lines, ethnic homogeneity and the Presbyterians’ near monopoly on institutional religion would have given them few opportunities to do so.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid., 80. Woodmason later gathered eighty people for a service on Cane Creek (p. 17). Compare this with the thousand or more he claimed attended regular Presbyterian services in the Waxhaws.

⁵⁰ On interfaith marriage in the Opequan settlement see Warren Hofstra, “Land, Ethnicity, and Community at the Opequan Settlement, Virginia, 1730-1800,” in Tyler Blethen and Curtis Wood, eds., *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997): 167-88. On denominational switching see Turk McClesky, “The Price of Conformity: Class, Ethnicity, and Local Authority on the Colonial Virginia Frontier,” in Puglisi, ed., *Diversity and Accommodation*, 213-26.

⁵¹ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 14 [“thinly scatter’d”]. On the Baptists see John Asplund, *The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination, in North America, to the First of November, 1790* (Richmond, VA: Dixon, Nicolson, and Davis, 1792), which listed no Baptist congregations in Lancaster

Despite the absence of official marriage records, it is possible to partially reconstruct marriage patterns from family histories, family Bibles, probate and land records, and church cemetery records. These records suggest that few and perhaps none of the twenty-nine marriages that have surfaced from the period crossed denominational lines. For instance, Henry Foster and Anne Kelso were married by a Presbyterian minister in Paxton, Pennsylvania shortly before immigrating to the Waxhaws. Around 1780 their daughter Catherine married Thomas Dunlap, whose family was prominent in the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church leadership, as were the fathers, both church elders, of Moses Stephenson and Elizabeth Dunlap, who married in 1783. William Hagins and Mary Patton married shortly after immigrating in the early 1750s; William is buried in the Six Mile Presbyterian Church cemetery, along with several Pattons. In contrast, neither the families of Hugh McCain nor Eleanor Nutt, who married around 1750, appear in any early churchyard records. Nor do the Doby, Massey, or Cureton families, all of whom intermarried before the Revolution. The Methodist families who settled along Waxhaw and Twelve Mile Creek after the Revolution also married within their group. Wyke Ivy and his wife Anne Clarke both came from Methodist families, as did William Wren and Mary Tomlinson. Overall, at least twenty-five of the twenty-nine Waxhaws marriages can be reasonably assumed to have taken place within sectarian lines. In fact, many of these unions were confined to single congregations; Waxhaw Presbyterians tended not to marry Six Mile or Shiloh Presbyterians, and vice versa. Marriages thus

District in 1790. However, a Baptist congregation apparently formed in 1776 on Flat Creek, opposite the Waxhaws on the eastern side of Lancaster County. See Works Progress Administration, *Inventory of Church Archives, South Carolina Historical Records Survey* (Columbia, SC: Historical Records Survey, 1939). The first Methodist circuit to include the Waxhaws was the Santee Circuit, created in 1786. In 1788 there were twenty whites and no blacks listed in the newly-formed Waxhaws Circuit. See Albert M. Shipp, *The History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 158; and *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from 1773 to 1813* (New York: Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, 1813).

took place within neighborhoods and congregations, not merely within denominations (see Appendix 3 for a complete analysis).⁵²

This social dimension of religious affiliation is part of what gave sectarianism its bite. Religious conflict came much easier when religious others were also social others, when one could intimidate Episcopalians or ridicule Baptists without attacking one's own kinfolk. On the other hand, the kin-sect continuum could also work to undermine church unity, just as religious differences could become the pretext for social divisions. In the Waxhaws, the social and geographic distance between neighborhoods would eventually foment religious discord, and the sectarian arrows aimed at Episcopalians would point inward. These developments were in the future, however. In the years before the Revolutionary War, when the Waxhaw settlement remained fairly compact and homogeneous, the kin-neighbor-church nexus was strong enough to focus hostility outward and keep aliens like Charles Woodmason close to the fire.

A decade of living on a hostile frontier made the Waxhaw settlement a cohesive but suspicious and insular community; kinship provided both the framework for social cohesion and the rationale for exclusion. In the Waxhaws, childless, kinless widows like Agnes Richardson could suddenly find themselves maligned and scorned, at the mercy of

⁵² "Henry Foster Bible," *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, 11, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 5 [Foster-Kelso]. James Hanna, *The House of Dunlap* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1956); Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Graveyard* [Dunlap-Foster]. Hanna, *House of Dunlap*; Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Graveyard* [Stephenson-Dunlap]. William Boyce White, *Genealogy of Two Early Patton Families of York, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, South Carolina* (By the Author, 1996), 2; Louise Pettus, "Old Six Mile Cemetery," Lancaster County, South Carolina GenWeb, Internet on-line, <www.rootsweb.com/~sclancas/6milecem.htm> [November 29, 2000] [Hagins-Patton]. Lawrence Maynard, *Hugh McCain of the Waxhaws and His Descendants* (By the Author, 1993) [McCain-Nutt]. Louise Pettus, "The Doby Family of Lancaster," 1998, Lancaster County, South Carolina GenWeb, Internet on-line, <http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/_USA/SC/LancasterBios> [November 29, 2000] [Doby-Massey-Cureton]. Louise Pettus, "Adam Ivey," 1998, Lancaster County, South Carolina GenWeb, Internet on-line, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/LancasterBios/20>> [November 29, 2000] [Ivy-Clarke]. Betty Wren, "Heath Family," 1998, Lancaster County, South Carolina GenWeb, Internet on-line, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/LancasterBios/35>> [November 29, 2000] [Wren-Tomlinson].

desperate or vindictive men. Slaves occupied an ambiguous corner of this world where the tension between their identity as people and property was never resolved. Outside of the kin network, they were simultaneously tied into it by the complex cords of religious conversion and the shared institutional life of the church. Kinship also interwove with religious affiliation to set the people of the Waxhaws apart from other upcountry whites and give a sharp and dangerous edge to religious differences.

There were other divisions as well, a social chasm developing within the white Presbyterian community itself. In two decades the Waxhaws had grown from a small frontier settlement to the most densely populated community in the backcountry. New and only tenuously-linked immigrants were moving in, pushing the geographic center of the settlement eastward and straining its once-cohesive communal ties. William Richardson could perhaps have eased this strain by bridging the social gap between old and new settlers, but he was now dead. In some sense his death marked the end of an era in the Waxhaws, for the neighborliness, cohesion, and internal stability that had characterized the settlement for two decades was now giving way to discord and ill-will. Finding his replacement was a slow and difficult process in which the neighborhood tensions that developed in the early seventies were played out in the church, just as they were also playing out in the new local courts and, later, in the war.

CHAPTER 3:

TOIL AND STRIFE

In more ways than one William Richardson's death marked the end of an era in the Waxhaws. Within a year the new circuit court would meet in Camden for the first time, ending two decades of civil isolation along with the customary ways of resolving local disputes. A new stream of immigrants was pushing onto the margins of the blackjack lands, shifting the geographic center of the community eastward and bringing a class and neighborhood dimension to the contest over church ownership. At the same time, commercial improvements were opening new markets for upcountry goods, especially wheat, creating new avenues to wealth for ambitious planters. In short, though the Waxhaws might be insular, it was not isolated. As the Revolution approached, lowcountry institutions and markets were penetrating the interior, upcountry farmers were establishing stronger ties with the coast, and yeoman communities like the Waxhaws were sinking deeper into the provincial economy and society.¹

And yet integration came with a price. By surrendering their disputes to more distant courts, the people of the Waxhaws also surrendered a measure of their autonomy. Never again would the "whole community" sit in judgment at a murder trial, and the church, which remained without a permanent minister until 1779, would lose its judicial role as the court established itself in Camden. The benefits of judicial and economic integration, moreover, were unevenly distributed. Those who understood the legal system could exploit it to their advantage, just as those who had good soil, plentiful labor, and ready access stood to benefit most from the new markets. As a result, even within the ranks of the landholding "yeoman" class, a gap emerged,

¹ For a full treatment of this integration process see Klein, *Unification*, passim.

fed by the impoverished immigrants who were pouring into the blackjack district as well as by the new opportunities afforded by the market for wheat. In the years to come this widening gap would put tremendous strain on the church and help determine local patterns of allegiance during the Revolution.

There was never a time when the white settlers in the Waxhaws practiced a purely subsistence agriculture or even sought, much less achieved, self-sufficiency. Farmers might produce their own food, but the plow irons and hay forks they used to grow and harvest it, along with the kettles and pots they used for cooking it, were either made elsewhere or required imported iron. Andrew Pickens might distill enough liquor to meet the needs of most of his neighbors, but he could not manufacture replacement parts for his distillery from native materials. As elsewhere in the colonial interior, farm families in the Waxhaws also depended on imports of salt, shot, and powder. And they needed cash to pay surveying fees, taxes, quitrents, and their ministers' salaries, which required at least a modicum of commercial exchanges with area merchants. Although the earliest inventories suggest that the farm families of the 1750s owned little beyond the basic necessities -- there was no imported cloth, no looking glass, no featherbed listed before 1766 -- even the necessities demanded a relationship with outside, cash-paying markets.²

Nor were these early British-American settlers newcomers to commercial markets.

Although it is certainly possible that immigrants from the Shenandoah Valley, where commercial

² May Wilson McBee, *Anson County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Early Records*, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1950) [hay forks, Pickens]; Estate of Robert McCorkall, Anson County Record of Wills 1751-1795, 123 [plow irons]; Inventory of George White's Estate, Inventory of Estates, W, 437, SCDAH [salt]; Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1977), 152-60 [imports elsewhere]; Kirkland and Kennedy, *Historic Camden*, 55-6 [shot]; CRNC, IX, 113-15 [taxes and quitrents]; Marquis James, *Andrew Jackson: The Border Captain* (New York: Literary Guild, 1933), 13 [minister's salary]. The early inventories, in addition to Pickens, White, and Robert McCorkall, are James McCorkall, Anson County Record of Wills 1751-1795, 270-2, and William Barr, Inventories of Estates, W, 202, SCDAH.

agriculture was the exception through as late as 1760, had essentially grown up in a “subsistence” economy, most immigrants probably had experience with outside markets and for-profit farming. Families like the McDows, Pickens, and Kennedys had previously lived in the wheat-producing areas of Pennsylvania and Maryland. Samuel Burnett, who settled in the Waxhaws in 1754, was a weaver by trade and was no doubt familiar with the vagaries of the Atlantic textile market. Alexander McKewn, who came to the Waxhaws in 1756 with three indentured servants, and Thomas Simpson, who immigrated in 1753 with fourteen slaves, had invested considerably in laborers and were doubtless experienced commercial farmers. Although exceptional, a planter like Simpson would not have waited long to seek an outlet for the goods his slaves produced. Likewise, yeoman households, once their basic needs were met, set to work marketing their surpluses to neighbors and traders in order to acquire the imported goods they wanted and needed.³

Some of these immigrants also had or would soon acquire experience in speculative land markets.⁴ For all its promises to “free poor protestants,” the headright system nonetheless enabled people with large households to patent considerably more land than they could farm. This was especially true during the land boom of the 1750s, when individual grants averaged over 300 acres each and ranged up to 1,000 acres.⁵ Such surplus lands provided their owners

³ Ida Rodman McDow, *The McDow Family in America* (Lancaster, SC: By the Author, 1953) [McDow]; Robert Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 43-4 [Kennedy]; Draper Manuscripts, VV, I, 348-9 [Pickens]; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deeds, 1, 161 [Burnett]; Brent Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Council Journal* (Columbia, SC: SCMAR, 1997), IV, 233 [McKewn], III, 198 [Simpson].

⁴ It is not always clear from the land records alone when a piece of land was sold “speculatively.” In the eighteenth century, grantholders typically finalized their grants and began paying royal quitrents (in addition to provincial taxes) within three years of their surveys. After five years, undeveloped granted lands became a liability. I have assumed, therefore, that landowners who retained their grants for five years or more were not speculators, whereas those tracts sold within five years of the grant date were sold speculatively (for profit) and were never intended for use by the grantee.

⁵ These and the following figures are drawn from data from the Waxhaws land records. See above, Chapter 1, note 19.

with considerably more flexibility than mere “subsistence” farmers could expect: they could lease land to supplement farm income, use it to settle kin and acquaintances and strengthen their neighborhoods, or retain it for the use of their children. They could also sell it, sometimes for a handsome profit. John Lynn was the largest resident speculator of the 1750s, buying and patenting five tracts for over 1,700 acres and reselling over half of his acreage. William Beard was more typical, patenting two tracts for 700 acres and selling one four years later for 30 pounds Virginia currency.⁶ During this period about one in five Waxhaws landowners sold a portion of their lands speculatively, turning 16% of all patented lands into a quick profit – hardly an aggressive market, but aggressive enough to show that some farmers viewed their lands at least partially in terms of exchange value.⁷

While they might dabble in land speculation, however, these immigrants from Pennsylvania and Virginia would not soon add to their commercial farming experience in the Waxhaws, nor would immigrant yeomen have any immediate opportunities to achieve competency.⁸ During the first decade of settlement there were no inland trading centers, no adequate roads, and no ready markets for upcountry produce. River transportation was not an

⁶ Anson County Deeds, B, 114; 6, 119; 1, 171 [Lynn]; Anson County Deeds, B, 334, and I, 216 [Beard].

⁷ This suggests only that some settlers were experienced with speculative transactions, not that widespread land speculation or profit-minded farmers dominated the Waxhaws land market. In fact, the opposite was the case. On average, absentee landowners acquired less than 500 total acres. Of all lands granted during the boom years (over 31,000 acres), resident and absentee speculators combined resold less than 10,000 acres (under one-third); the remaining two-thirds were retained for their use value. Further, at least one-third of the land resold by resident landowners was purchased by kin, suggesting that many of these “speculative” transactions served a social function as well. Contrary to Bernard Bailyn’s claim about the British-American borderlands generally, land speculation in the Waxhaws was far from the “ubiquitous enterprise” carried on by “every farmer with an extra acre of land.” See Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 66-8.

⁸ “Competency,” “safety-first farming,” and “composite farms” have exploded the household-market, subsistence-profit dichotomy that historians once used to describe early American farmers. Neither peasants nor capitalists, these yeoman households ostensibly produced enough commercial goods to achieve a comfortable subsistence but not so much as to risk losing their economic autonomy. For a discussion of the recent historiography of early rural American and the transition to capitalism see above, Introduction.

option: the Catawba River was not navigable above the fall line, which was some thirty miles downstream from Cane Creek. In 1752 a group of enterprising settlers on the Wateree River, claiming to be “discouraged from raising any larger Quantities than what is sufficient for Home Consumption,” petitioned the South Carolina Commons House to have the Wateree cleared. The petitioners also appealed for a road from the Santee River to the “upper Settlements” on the Catawba, which they “humbly presume[d] might, in time, sufficiently supply the Market of Charles town” with upcountry commodities. The assembly enacted provisions for the road the following year, but it would be 1760 or later before the road was cleared to the Waxhaw settlement. Until then the only access to the lowcountry market was along the Catawba trading path.⁹ In the meantime Waxhaws farmers produced little more than what was “sufficient for Home Consumption,” or at least for local consumption. Indian corn, potatoes, peas, pumpkins, wheat, flax, wool, butter, cheese, barley, oats, turnips -- such were the staples of the household economy, along with hogs and, especially, cattle. Not only did cattle appear in every early inventory, but they were consistently among the most valuable goods in those estates. The estates inventoried before 1765 included between twelve and twenty cattle. Although on average valued at six or seven pounds currency each -- about one-fifth the average value of horses and only 2% as valuable as slaves -- cattle were usually identified individually in estate inventories. Like all livestock, cattle grazed freely on an open range. Although there is no record that Waxhaws farmers drove their cattle to outside markets, they no doubt found some

⁹ “Petition of the Inhabitants of the Wateree River,” Journal of the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly, May 9, 1752 [petition]; David J. McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia: A.S. Johnston, 1840), VII, 504-6 [enactment]; Meriwether, *Expansion*, 106-7, 171. On the navigability of the Catawba River see Kenneth W. Mixon, “The Land’s Ford Canal: A Research Report” (Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, 1969), 1-3. On the suitability of roads as commercial arteries in the absence of navigable streams, see Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 145.

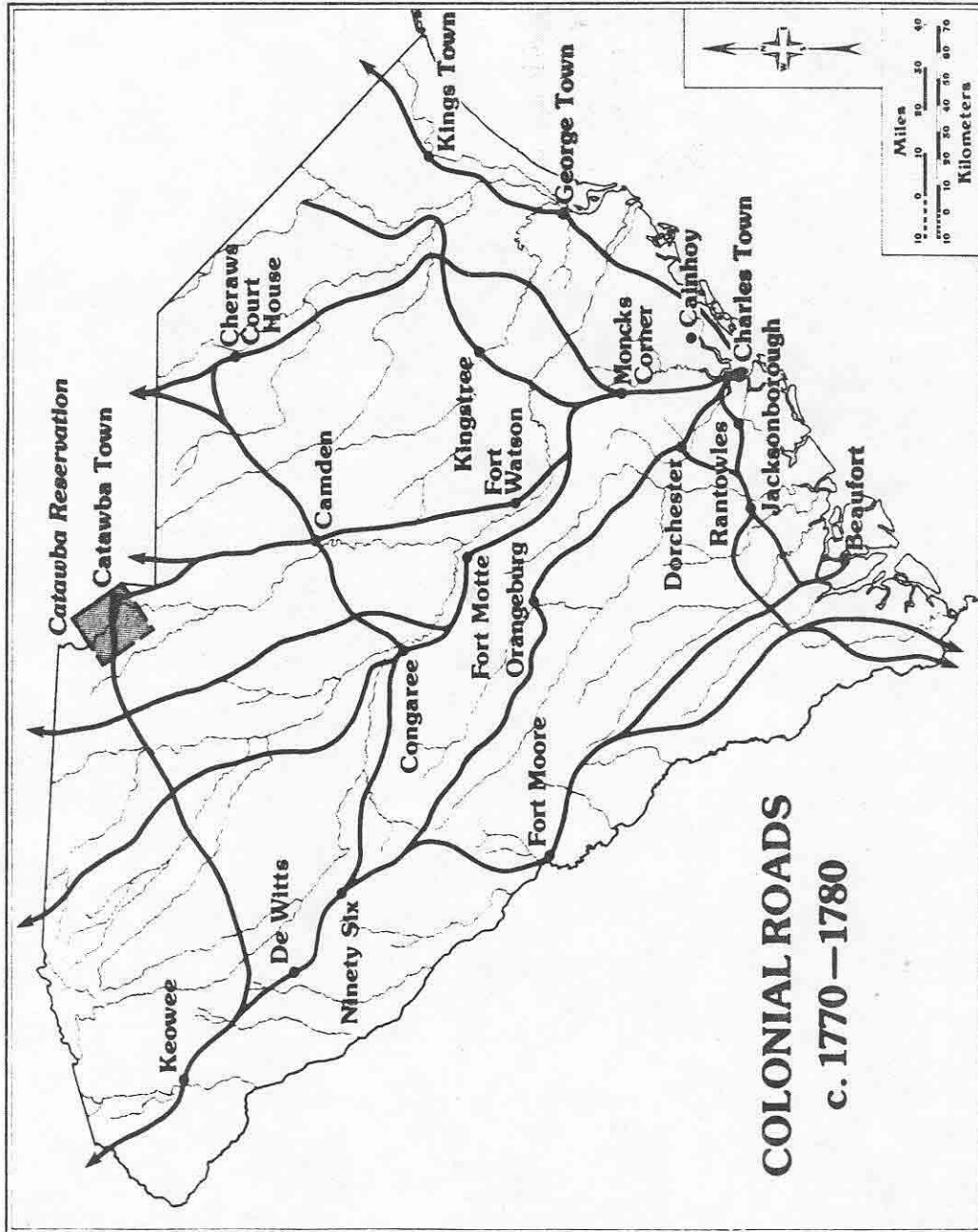
local demand for surplus beef, pork, and field crops in the steady stream of new immigrants during the first fifteen years of settlement.¹⁰

The Waxhaws emerged from this home consumption phase relatively quickly, largely because Charleston merchants established an inland trading center in the region. In 1758 Joseph Kershaw set up a store and mill in Pine Tree Hill, later known as Camden, on the Wateree River fifty miles below Waxhaw Creek. Within two years the first shipments of “fine Carolina flour” reached the coast, and by 1768 Kershaw was shipping 2,000 barrels of flour and 1,500 barrels of ship’s bread to Charleston. Upcountry flour production had quickly reduced the lowcountry’s dependency on imports from Pennsylvania, and by the end of the decade flour was second only to indigo among upcountry exports. In the mean time, Kershaw’s store was supplying settlements as far away as the Yadkin River in North Carolina and Purrysburg to the south, bringing in merchant capital as well as a wide array of goods from the Atlantic market. Coinciding with the completion of the Santee-Waxhaw road, the emergence of Camden as an inland trading center spurred commercial farming and raised consumption in Camden’s hinterland communities like the Waxhaws.¹¹

Farmers had grown wheat in the Waxhaws since the early 1750s, at least since John Douglas or William Moore “turned Cattle into the others Wheat” during their dispute over the Cane Creek tract in 1754, perhaps even sooner. Wheat-growing implements appear in

¹⁰ “Petition of the Inhabitants of the Wateree River;” SCCJ, May 25, 1764; Inventories of Andrew Pickens, Robert McCorkall, James McCorkill, George White, and William Barr; Meriwether, *Expansion*, 165-6, 168.

¹¹ On Camden see Kenneth E. Lewis, *Camden: A Frontier Town in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina* (Columbia: Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of South Carolina, 1976); Judith J. Schulz, “The Rise and Decline of Camden as South Carolina’s Major Inland Trading Center, 1751-1829: A Historical Geographic Study” (Master’s thesis, University of South Carolina, 1972); and Judith J. Schulz, “The Hinterland of Revolutionary Camden, South Carolina,” *Southeastern Geographer* 16 (1976): 91-97. For a discussion of the wider significance of inland urban centers see Joseph A. Ernst and H. Roy Merrens, “‘Camden’s turret’s pierce the skies!’: The Urban Process in the Southern Colonies during the Eighteenth Century,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 30 (1973): 549-74. On upcountry flour production see Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 18-19.



Map 6: South Carolina Roads in the Late Colonial Period. From Charles F. Kovacic and John J. Winberry, *South Carolina: A Geography* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), 82.

Andrew Pickens' 1756 estate inventory. Not until the development of a commercial infrastructure, however, was wheat's future assured as the mainstay of upcountry commercial farming. There are no figures on local wheat production, but an observation by William Moultrie suggests that it was considerable. Moultrie, who passed through the Waxhaws while surveying the provincial boundary line in 1772, noted that there were "a great many large wheat fields" in the "pretty good lands" of the Waxhaw settlement. During the war the British considered sending a small army of regulars to the Waxhaws to safeguard its valuable wheat crop from enemy foragers. Cornwallis would spend more than two weeks there with the main column of the British army, most of which time he kept them busy processing wheat.¹²

Because wheat required little care between sowing and harvesting, it was less labor intensive than southern staples like tobacco, rice, indigo, and sugar, and could be produced with fewer hands. Not requiring large outlays for slave or indentured labor, wheat was well suited to the family labor system of yeoman households. As James Cook reported in 1768, the "Virginians and Pennsylvanians" who populated the Waxhaws, "having but few negroes," cultivated their lands "by the manual labor of their own numerous families." Moultrie was struck by the same phenomenon four years later, when he noted that the farmers of the Waxhaws, despite their "great many large wheat fields," had "very few negroes among them," doing "all their work . . . by plowing and English husbandry." As in wheat producing communities elsewhere, most Waxhaws farmers probably met the intense labor demands of the harvest -- which provided a narrow window for mowing, binding, and carting the crop before

¹² Meriwether, *Expansion*, 139-40 [Douglas-Moore]; Estate of Andrew Pickens; Charles S. Davis, ed., "The Journal of William Moultrie While a Commissioner on the North and South Carolina Boundary Survey, 1772," *Journal of Southern History* 8 (November 1942), 552; Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 235-6; Cornwallis papers, PRO 30/11/80, 16, 18-19.

the grains over-ripened -- by sharing labor, either through mobilizing kin and neighbors or hiring slaves or day laborers.¹³

The development of wheat as a viable cash crop, along with improvements in the commercial infrastructure, stimulated trade between the interior and the coast and gradually raised the levels of wealth, consumption, and debt in the Waxhaws. In addition to the basic plantation tools, livestock, and household furniture of the early estates, after the mid-1760s inventories listed silver watches, imported cloth, brass clocks, expensive wearing apparel, and looking glasses. Slaves first appear in the estate records in 1766. Although some had been acquired before their owners immigrated, others, like the four slaves William Richardson purchased during the 1760s, attest to the growing wealth of local farmers -- in Richardson's case, to the capacity of his farmer-parishioners to support him comfortably. Richard Cousar, who operated a mill as well as a farm, apparently owned no slaves when he immigrated in 1752, but he owned nine at his death in 1779. In the three inventories that listed item-by-item values, slave values ranged from 1,155 to 3,390 pounds currency, making up between 49-91% of the overall value of the personal property of the estates. These estate records, of course, only reflect the top tier of Waxhaws society; slave wealth remained remarkably concentrated before the Revolution, leaving most farmers to rely on "the manual labor of their own numerous families" -- which nonetheless "does them much credit," as James Cook further observed, for it was by their "industry and manufacture" that the settlement had been "improved beyond conception." The market for high-priced consumer goods was also limited. Thus while well-to-do farmers like Andrew Foster and John Barkley might purchase allspice, silk, sugar, and

¹³ For an excellent description of wheat cultivation, including labor needs, see Harold B. Gill, "Wheat Culture in Colonial Virginia," *Agricultural History*, 52, no. 3 (1978): 380-93. *Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, August 9, 1768 [Cook]; Davis, ed., "Journal of William Moultrie," 552.

imported cloth at Kershaw's store in Camden, modest yeomen like Robert Montgomery and William Beard limited their purchases to necessities like salt, rum, buttons, iron, and needles.¹⁴

The market for wheat also led to the emergence of a local money market. As early as 1767 creditors made claims against the estate of George White for 395 pounds; most of this was in book debt and administrative expenses, but it included two interest-bearing notes for a combined 142 pounds.¹⁵ Notes and bond debt began to appear with much greater frequency in the late seventies. With the exception of White's estate,¹⁶ none of the fourteen inventories before 1777 mentioned bonds or notes, yet all five of the estates probated after this date included such debt, often in fairly large sums relative to the overall value of the estate.

Archibald Clark was due 557 pounds at his death in 1777, John Lockart's estate included four notes totaling three hundred pounds, and Robert Howard was due 617 pounds and had 222 pounds in cash. Bond debt was far and away the largest item in four of these estates, making up between 40-60% of their value. As we shall see, the growth of credit brought with it increased litigation as the circuit court settled in Camden after 1772.¹⁷

¹⁴ Estate of James Patton, Inventories of Estates, W, 424-5, SCDAH [silver watch, cloth]; Estate of Moses Dickey, Inventories of Estates, X, 350, SCDAH [silver watch]; Estate of John McKee, Inventories of Estates, Y, 403, SCDAH [brass clock]; Estate of William Richardson, Inventories of Estates, Z, 148, SCDAH [wearing apparel]. Thomas Simpson had immigrated with fourteen slaves; see Holcomb, *Petitions for Land*, III, 198. Based on his 400-acre headright, Cousar's household numbered 8 people in 1752, but since he had nine grown and/or married children at his death twenty-seven years later, it is likely that most of these were his children. Cousar's will is reprinted in James E. Cousar, *Down the Waxhaw Road: The Life Story of the Reverend John Cousar, a Plain, Practical, Presbyterian Preacher* (Florence, SC: By the Author, 1953), 36-8. *Supplement to the South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, August 9, 1768 [Cook]. In addition to Richardson, inventories that itemized slaves included John Cantzon, Z, 472; and Thomas McElhenny, CC, 14. For the transactions at Kershaw's store see "Account Book of Joseph Kershaw, 1774-1775," Camden Archives, Camden, South Carolina, December 13 and December 30, 1774 [Foster], December 14, 1774 [Barkley], December 29, 1774 [Beard and Montgomery].

¹⁵ Estate of George White, Inventories of Estates, Y, 145, SCDAH.

¹⁶ Another minor exception, found in the will but in the inventory, was William Richardson's disputed 100 pound note from Archibald Davie.

¹⁷ See the following in Inventories of Estates, SCDAH: Archibald Clark, AA, 253; James Crafford, CC, 235; William Simpson, CC, 288; John Lockart, CC, 317; Robert Howard, BB, 71.

Between 1750 and 1780 the yeoman economy of the Waxhaws evolved from a “subsistence”-oriented, home consumption phase into a mixed economy with diversified markets and a strong commercial impulse. The completion of the road to Camden and to Charleston beyond and the emergence of Camden as a vibrant inland trading center made commercial wheat production profitable. In turn the wheat market stimulated trade, raised consumption, provided an avenue to “competency” for many and even affluence for some, increased slaveholding, and on the eve of the Revolution gave rise to a fledgling money market. Significantly, this economic integration of the Waxhaws was gradual and evolutionary, not revolutionary; it was a developmental process whose agents -- whether household producers from the Wateree River, Charleston merchants, upcountry storekeepers, or immigrant wheat farmers -- were familiar with markets, roads, and cash crops and who now constructed these familiar forms in an undeveloped region. Equally important is what this economy evolved into; for although the farmers of the Waxhaws faced south toward their markets, they had become much more like the northern wheat-growing communities they had left, both in their agriculture and their labor system. Thirty years after the first white immigrants took up land along Waxhaw Creek, the farm families of the Waxhaws had recreated the economy and the communities they left behind. The Waxhaw settlement had become an extension of a northern yeoman society tied commercially and politically to a southern slaveholding society.

The “composite farms” and “competent” households of this yeoman community were, however, only part of the picture.¹⁸ If some modest households were carried along by the changes that made Richard Cousar and James Patton prosperous, others were left behind. Moreover, because even the most affluent farm families grew their own food, all alike were

¹⁸ The sources here suggest that historians have overstated both the sturdiness and the uniformity of the yeomanry. See Vickers, “Competency and Competition,” Kulikoff, “Transition to Capitalism,” and Bushman, “Composite Farms.”

vulnerable, although in varying degrees, to drought, pestilence, blight, and wartime disruptions to food production and supply. Despite their good soil, their “industry and manufacture,” and the “enlarged prospects” afforded by economic development, the people of the Waxhaws remained no strangers to hunger and anxiety. They could not take even their subsistence for granted.¹⁹

Drought was the constant worry of southern farmers and made for fairly regular food scarcity during the 1750s and 1760s. In 1755 Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian missionary touring the southern interior, reported a severe drought across the entire piedmont. Near Anson County, North Carolina, there was “not . . . so much as one patch of wheat or rye in the ground,” McAden noted. Inhabitants felt the effects of this drought most keenly the following spring, when it generated tensions between white farmers and Indians. “The Indians are in great want of Corn,” reported the North Carolina Council, “and subsist by begging from the neighboring Planters and thereby obliged to Quit their families and oppress the Planters who are themselves scarce of Corn yet Dare not Deny them.” Just three years later the *South-Carolina Gazette* projected a poor rice crop due to a drought that apparently extended into the interior, since it lowered water levels in the rivers and left hardly enough water for cattle. In 1766 Charles Woodmason found his upcountry neighbors “in Great distress for want of Provisions” and his horse suffering for lack of grass. The drought that year followed a poor corn crop from the previous year, raising the price of corn beyond the reach of the poor, forcing corn imports from the north, and leading the South Carolina Council to suspend rice exports and set a ceiling on the price of rice. In Camden, Woodmason reported, relief came by way of Joseph Kershaw, “who open’d all his Stores” to the distressed. In 1769 the *Gazette* again reported a drought, the most severe dry spell in 17 years, extending from Virginia to the West Indies.

¹⁹ *Supplement to the South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, August 9, 1768.

Corn exports ceased, and cattle drivers en route to Charleston were digging as deep as ten feet to find water.²⁰

Blight, contagion, and war also threatened the food supply. In 1766, according to the *South-Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, upcountry wheat farmers, “most of whom place their whole Dependence on the Grain,” were “very great Sufferers . . . many of them losing their whole Crop by the Rust.” Just two years earlier a “contagious distemp[er]” was reported among cattle along the North Carolina-South Carolina border, destroying seven-eighths of the cattle in the region. The previous year William Richardson wrote that Indian raiding parties had sent refugees fleeing into the Waxhaws, further draining an already low food supply. Richardson pleaded for “speedy assistance” to avert “the prospect of Famine, as our crops are but poor, scarce able to maintain ourselves far less ourselves and the frontier Inhabitants.”²¹

Drought and food scarcity affected poor households the most, and by contemporary accounts such households made up a considerable part of the population. Charles Woodmason was deeply struck by upcountry poverty, and he saw it everywhere. Lost in the Waxhaws in the spring of 1768, he lodged with “a poor Old Dutch Woman” who “had no refreshments. Not a Grain of Corn for the Horse, nor the least Subsistence.” Cane Creek was a “starved place, where [I] have lived all this Week on a little Milk and Indian Corn Meal, without any other Sustenance but Cold Water.” In some cases entire neighborhoods lacked even the so-called basics of the household economy. “No Eggs, Butter, Flour, Milk” on Lynch Creek, Woodmason complained, nor “a Grain of Corn to spare” for his horse. There

²⁰Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 161, 169 [McAden]; *CRNC*, 5, 655 [Indians]; *South-Carolina Gazette*, September 29, 1759; Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 7-8; *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 3, 1766 and June 6, 1766; *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 6, 1769.

²¹*South-Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, July 15, 1766 [rust]; Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington, DC, 1933), I, 147 [cattle contagion]; Kirkland and Kennedy, *Historic Camden*, 56 [Richardson].

were no “Necessaries of any kinds” on Little River, “and the poor People almost starving No Bread, Butter, Milk, or anything else to be had.” And where was that ubiquitous rum in which Kershaw’s store did such a brisk trade? “Not a drop of anything, save Cold Water to drink.” There was hunger even during the harvest. Despite a good grain harvest in the summer of 1768, the people on Lynches Creek were “in Great distress for want of Meat and Meal” because the dry streams left no water to run their mills. Where their grain could be milled “hundreds” had bread “but not a Mouthful of Meat” and so were reduced to “gathering Apples Peaches etc. green from the Trees, and boiling them for Food.” Even in Camden, where Joseph Kershaw had once opened his stores to the distressed, Woodmason was forced to live on “Dry Bisket and Water” for a season, for there was “no Meat to be bought for Money.”²²

Food was not the only basic necessity in short supply among the poor population of the Waxhaws and its neighboring communities. Woodmason soon learned to carry his own wares as well as provisions, “as in many Places they have nought but a Gourd to drink out of Not a Plate Knive or Spoon, a Glass, Cup, or any thing.” Even on cold winter nights they had “Little or no Bedding, or anything to cover them.” As for clothing, many of the men wore “no Shoes or Stockings,” the women no “Caps or Handkerchiefs.” “It is well is if they can get some Body Linen, and some have not even that.” For “want of Horses and Saddles” only two or three people per family could attend Woodmason’s services. He refused payment for most of the weddings he performed. “Their Poverty is so great,” he wrote, sounding an atypically tender note, “that were they to offer me a fee, my Heart would not let me take it.”²³

Significantly, Woodmason noted one key characteristic that distinguished these “extremely poor” people from their more affluent neighbors: they were “all new settlers.” As discussed above, changes in South Carolina’s immigration policy in 1761 dramatically altered

²² Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 34, 17, 13, 35, 33, 49, 48.

²³ *Ibid.*, 31-3, 39, 26, 42.

the flow and composition of immigrants to the interior. Lowcountry leaders, desperately seeking to avert a slave uprising, set out to attract “free poor protestants” to the frontier by paying passage from Europe in addition to granting headrights and temporary tax exemption. The program was funded for six years, so by the time Woodmason arrived in Camden in late 1767, poor white settlers, most of whom were from northern Ireland, had pushed well into the remote creek bottoms of upper St. Mark’s Parish. Unlike the first wave of immigrants from Pennsylvania and Virginia, these new settlers, as Woodmason recognized, came with very little and were exceptionally vulnerable to drought and crop failure.²⁴

Andrew Jackson, Sr. was typical of these second-wave immigrants. Jackson was a weaver in northern Ireland who “by all accounts . . . was very poor,” according to an early biographer, “both in Ireland and in America.” He was probably both pushed to immigrate by famine or a depressed textile market and pulled by his wife’s kin, James, Robert, and Joseph Crawford, who had immigrated to the Waxhaws around 1760. In any event, Jackson moved with his wife and children to South Carolina via Charleston in 1765. Too poor to purchase a choice tract near the Crawfords in the heart of the settlement, he took up land, either by headright or lease, along Twelve Mile Creek, some seven miles from Waxhaw Presbyterian Church. Jackson died in 1767, shortly before the birth of his son, Andrew, Jr.²⁵

Jackson’s death came just at the crest of the second wave of immigration. The Waxhaws did not feel the effects of the new immigration incentives immediately, but after a lull in the land market during the late fifties and early sixties, conveyances spiked sharply between 1765-68, with the number of grants reaching a thirteen-year high in 1767 and peaking yet again

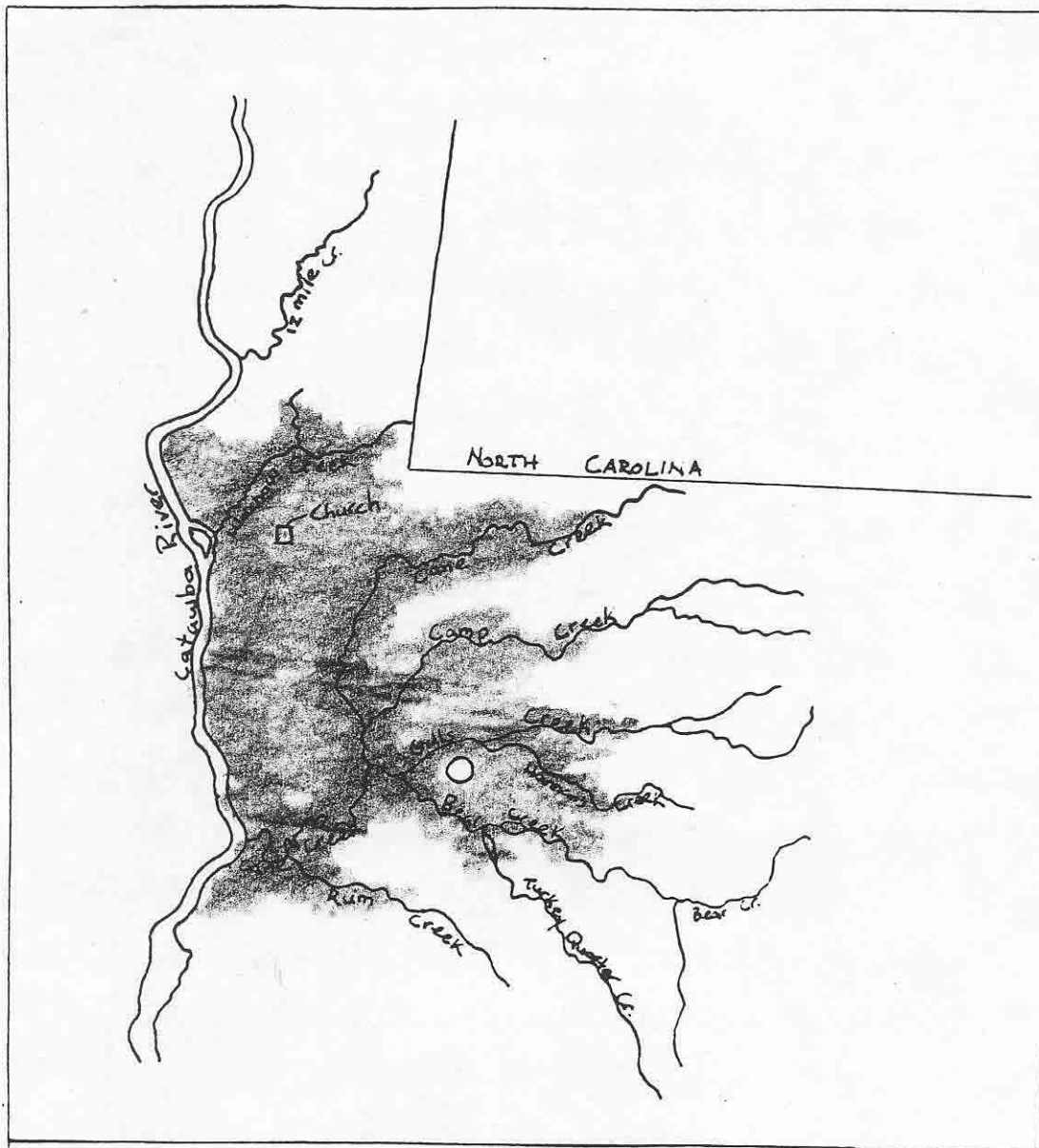
²⁴ Ibid., 7; Meriwether, *Expansion*, 242-3. Contrast Woodmason’s description of these “new settlers” to those of the earlier immigrants who, although they too immigrated “on account of poverty,” were nonetheless “good farmers and worthy people,” “brave Industrious people,” and “very industrious, cultivating Indigo, Hemp, Flax, Corn etc.” See *CRNC*, 4, 1311; 5, 25; and 5, 149.

²⁵ Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, 46-54 (quote on 47); Draper Manuscripts, VV, 12, 369-74 [Crawfords].

in 1773. As with Jackson, most of this property went to first-time landowners, who account for nearly three-fourths of the conveyances between 1762-1775. The surnames of seventy-one of these 106 first-time landowners do not appear in the land records before 1762, suggesting that two-thirds of new landowners were also new immigrants and not the children of earlier settlers. Also like Jackson, many of these new immigrant landholders settled far from the heart of the community. Plats along Hannahs Creek and Turkey Quarter Creek do not appear in the land records until 1767, when they begin to show up with some regularity (Map 7). Settlers were also pushing into the upper reaches of Cane Creek, where several plats from the mid-sixties identify vacant lands on two or more sides. Nor did new settlers choose these remote locations in order to obtain large contiguous tracts with plenty of surplus acreage. Grants after 1762 were on average hardly half the size of grants made before that date, while the average size of all conveyances was only 63% that of earlier conveyances. Opportunities for accumulating surplus lands were much more limited after 1762, when only one in seven new landowners acquired more than one tract, compared with one in three from the earlier period. In short, the new immigrants and first-time landholders of the late sixties and early seventies lived on smaller and more remote farms and were less likely to accumulate surplus land.²⁶

It was such “new settlers” that Woodmason saw in the “starved place” along Cane Creek, edging into the poorer lands of the blackjack district. Like the hundreds of other “free poor protestants” drawn to the piedmont by the promise of free passage and free land, these immigrants settled in with little more than the badges of their own poverty: “no Necessaries of any kind,” little bedding, few clothes, “not the least Subsistance.” Several miles from the new road that connected the western part of the settlement to Camden, it would take years to build

²⁶ For Hannahs Creek see SCCG, grants to Rachel Adams (March 6, 1773), Isaac Barr (May 19, 1773), Ananias Black (August 16, 1773), Francis Gillian (February 28, 1769), and Edmund Hull (January 22, 1773); for Turkey Quarter see William Adams (September 14, 1775), William Carson (May 4, 1768), and Middleton McDonald (December 22, 1767); for upper Cane Creek see John Cain (April 29, 1773), Samuel McClaren (November 24, 1764), Mary Stinson (January 28, 1773), John Stephenson (August 21, 1766), and Philip Walker (January 16, 1765).



Map 7: Settlement Pattern in the Waxhaws, 1773. Adapted from Vergil A. Rogers, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

an adequate commercial infrastructure linking blackjack farmers with the wheat market. These more remote lands also had poorer soils, more limited water access, and a hillier terrain than the choice tracts of the river bottom. The small size of the headrights -- grants averaged just over 150 acres after 1762 -- also had significant economic repercussions. First, it meant that recent settlers had little surplus acreage that could be liquidated or leased; unlike the earlier immigrants whose households averaged nearly twice that of latecomers, land was a means of subsistence to new settlers, not a flexible resource presenting a spectrum of possibilities. Second, the small headrights reflect small households. Too poor to purchase slaves or wage labor, and lacking the family labor power to produce any meaningful surpluses, how could these new immigrants hope to move beyond their meager subsistence or reach the levels of competency achieved by their neighbors to the west?

Unlike Andrew Jackson, Sr., most newcomers had no apparent kin connections with established settlers. This was especially true of the final wave of immigrants that washed into the Waxhaws in 1773-4. Grants reached a six-year high in 1773, and overall conveyances were at their highest since the land boom nineteen years earlier. Of the nineteen grants issued during these two years, eleven (58%) went to people whose surnames were new to the Waxhaws.²⁷ Without kin connections, these new immigrants had little means of locating good lands. When they disembarked in Charleston and registered as colonists with the land office, these settlers were assigned headrights by the Surveyor General, sight unseen.²⁸ As we shall see, as outsiders to the established kinship network these new immigrants would face further

²⁷ The eleven new settlers, all of whom appear in the colonial grants index, were Margaret Craig, George Davison, Daniel Wilson, Andrew Wilson, Agnes Wilson, John Baker, William Barton, Ananias Black, John Cain, Mary Stinson, and Edmund Hull.

²⁸ Nor could these immigrants easily procure tracts adjacent to one another. For example, Daniel, Andrew, and Agnes Wilson were each granted one 100-acre tract, neither of which was adjacent to any of the others.

problems after settlement; slow to integrate into the existing community, they would soon develop an adversarial relationship with the core community of the bottomland.

On the other hand, many of these new settlers were connected to one another. In 1773 over 500 families from William Martin's Presbyterian congregation in Ballymone, County Antrim, Ireland, driven from their Ulster community by excessive rent increases, took passage to South Carolina. These immigrants scattered all over the piedmont, particularly in the settlements west of the Catawba-Wateree, but at least nineteen took up land in the Waxhaws. As hard-line Covenanters who claimed to be the only true heirs to the Reformed tradition, these new settlers distinguished themselves from the somewhat more fluid New Side Presbyterianism of the established creole congregation. They shared a common history and a common economic condition: at least one-third and perhaps many more were unable to pay the fees for their warrants. Many also possessed a common ancestry. Over half of these immigrants shared a surname with at least one other person in their group. These religious, ethnic, and social bonds served to cement ties among recent immigrants as they moved to develop a rival neighborhood in the blackjack country during and after the war.²⁹

The "pleasing and enlarged prospects" that James Cook found in the Waxhaws in 1768 were neither for everyone nor for all times. The "prospect of Famine" also hung over this southern farm community, and despite market integration, even middling farmers and their prosperous neighbors could not take their subsistence for granted. Further, alongside the developing yeoman households hugging the rich river bottom was a rapidly growing community of dirt farmers scattered across the blackjack country. With land but little labor power, or

²⁹ On Martin and his congregation see Jean Stephenson, *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina, 1772 (Rev. William Martin and His Five Shiploads of Settlers)* (Strasburg, VA: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1971), 19 [excessive rents], 18-20 [Covenanters]. Stephenson has carefully culled out Martin's congregants from the ships' passenger lists. Comparing them with Waxhaws land records, the following were identified as immigrants to the Waxhaw settlement: Francis Adams, Mary Adams, John Adams, Rachel Adams, Elizabeth Johnston, Edmund Hull, Andrew Wilson, Daniel Wilson, Agnes Wilson, Margaret Craig, Rachel Adams, William Young, Ann Young, John Clarke, Janet Paterson, John McCrory, Jean Young, Mary Ann McCulloch, and Mary Stinson.

good crops but poor roads, or wheat but no water power to mill it, or meal but no meat, even in good years these newcomers could not escape their poverty. Despite the promise of land ownership, these immigrant families no doubt saw something familiar in the yawning gap between their peasant-like dirt farms and the composite enterprises of their yeoman neighbors.

The integration of upcountry communities into the provincial market was accompanied by, and in part gave rise to, a parallel process of political integration. This primarily took the form of the establishment of local courts in the interior in the early 1770s. Prior to 1772 all criminal cases and all civil suits exceeding 20 pounds sterling were tried in Charleston, making debt collection an onerous and expensive process and consequently retarding commercial development by unduly heightening the risk to would-be lenders. In the late 1760s the Regulators, led by upcountry merchants and wealthy planters, pressed for local courts in the interior and eventually turned to vigilantism to drive home their point. In 1769 the South Carolina Assembly passed the circuit court act, which was implemented three years later. Although Charleston would remain the court of record through which all writs were issued -- one of several "deficiencies" which, in the words of one analyst, made the circuit court system ultimately "unworkable" -- the inland courts functioned, on the whole, to secure credit and strengthen the hand, both economically and legally, of upcountry elites.³⁰

³⁰ For the story of this economic-political process see Richard Maxwell Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), chapter 1; and Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 38-41 and ch. 2. For a discussion of how the new courts operated see JoAnne McCormick, "Civil Procedure in the Camden Circuit Court, 1772-1790," in Herbert A. Johnston, ed., *South Carolina Legal History* (Spartanburg, SC, 1980), 241-54.

In the Waxhaws civil suits were almost unknown prior to the mid-seventies.³¹ With the exception of one relatively minor debt suit in 1756, neither the Salisbury District Court in North Carolina nor the Court of Common Pleas in Charleston lists litigants from the Waxhaws. On the other hand, many early settlers were tied to the court in Anson County, North Carolina, where they probated their wills, registered their deeds, and paid their taxes. Through the early 1760s these people probably tried their minor civil disputes there as well, but the civil court records have not survived, leaving only one recorded civil action between Waxhaws' disputants before 1774: a debt recovery suit for 40 pounds currency filed in Salisbury by Henry White against John Clark, who had fled the county. In any event, not all settlers would have acknowledged Anson County's jurisdiction, and in some cases -- like the contested land claim between William Moore and John Douglas -- the Anson County authorities were powerless to resolve the dispute, referring it instead to the community. Further, after 1765 the Waxhaws relinquished its ties to North Carolina and its local courts. In early cases where jurisdiction was disputed or unclear, as in later cases where there was no local civil authority, the people of the Waxhaws turned to alternative venues for resolving disputes.

The church was one such venue. Given the immigration rate, the proliferation of new surveys, the haphazard techniques of eighteenth-century surveyors, the open range grazing of livestock, and the expanding markets, disputes inevitably arose over boundaries, property ownership, and delivery of goods.³² And given the near-universal church adherence among white settlers, it was only natural for disputants to turn to William Richardson and the Waxhaw

³¹ Rachel Klein has found that the litigation rate for the backcountry as a whole was low prior to the establishment of circuit courts, largely because the absence of local courts made litigation expensive and time-consuming. See *Unification of a Slave State*, 39. Charles Woodmason would have disagreed. His sermon on litigiousness was among his favorites, and he preached it at least four times in 1768-71. When John Chestnut of Camden took personal offense at the sermon, Woodmason wrote him a scathing, and probably undelivered, reply. See Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 130-31, 136-61. Woodmason's concerns notwithstanding, there was no evidence of litigiousness in the Waxhaws before the mid-1770s.

³² For a contemporary description of eighteenth-century surveying see Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 25.

church elders in the absence of a clear and present civil authority. Church members were after all accustomed to the disciplinary role of the church through the session, or religious court, which heard cases involving sexual offenses, false testimony, unethical business dealings, family discord, Sabbath-breaking, and profanity. The church already played a role in maintaining order and mediating conflict, and in the absence of civil authority it could and did assume a judicial role in traditionally civil cases. Immigrants from western Pennsylvania, where churches in remote settlements mediated in property and divorce cases as well as in cases of Christian conduct, were already familiar with this venue. Moreover, Richardson had proven himself a trusted and judicious minister -- as evidenced by his success in uniting four mutually-antagonistic strains of believers under one roof at Catholic Church. In fact, at one level his widow's ordeal points to the void left by his death: the "chief actors" made the customary appeal to church and community for resolution, but the absence of imaginative and capable leaders turned their search for justice into a "farce discreditable." In short, as in other places on the British-American periphery, the people of the Waxhaws settled their disputes, as Peter Hoffer has phrased it, "within the intimacies of communal understandings."³³

This began to change in the mid-seventies, when the Waxhaws experienced a burst of civil litigation. In the four years after 1774 there were seven suits filed by Waxhaws litigants --

³³ Hooker, ed., *Carolina Backcountry*, 14 [church adherence]; Klett, *Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania*, 68, 119, 123-4, 160-1 [sessions]; Banks, *Catholic Church*, 7-11; Peter Charles Hoffer, *Law and People in Colonial America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 78. Also see Charles Woodmason's "burlesque sermon" in Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 155-6, for a suggestion that Waxhaw Presbyterian Church served a civil function. This "sermon" is a tongue-in-cheek rebuttal of criticism leveled at Woodmason for an earlier sermon decrying backcountry litigiousness. In the rebuttal, Woodmason uses the Reverend William Richardson of the Waxhaws as his mouthpiece, urging his hearers to "bring all Your Matters to the little House, before the Elders, and leave all Your Disputes to their Arbitration or Determination -- and then Honestly and Candidly abiding by their Decisions. If You would do this, All your Differences would soon be Adjusted, Rogues detected, Villanies expos'd or punished, and Knavery stigmatized." Despite the obvious satire, Woodmason probably had good reasons for putting these particular words in Richardson's mouth, proposing a system practiced in the Waxhaws as a kind of ironic model. For the judicial function of Presbyterian churches on the early American frontier see William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier: A Collection of Source Materials*, vol. II, *The Presbyterians* (New York: Harper, 1936), 169.

in striking contrast to the one recorded suit over the previous two decades. In all seven cases at least one of the parties belonged to one of two families, the Clarks or the Crawfords.

Untangling this knot of litigation opens a window on the power struggles that accompanied the economic evolution of the late colonial period and suggests that, while some settlers exploited the new courts to their advantage, others were not quite comfortable with the demise of the customary ways of resolving differences among neighbors.³⁴

Robert Crawford, the plaintiff in four of the seven suits, was a man on the make. Crawford immigrated from Ireland around 1760 and immediately established his presence by purchasing 551 acres of prime real estate on the north side of Waxhaw Creek, leasing a portion of the tract before selling it off in parcels in the 1780s and 1790s. In 1773 he purchased another 500 acres on the southside of Waxhaw Creek for 200 pounds currency; the following year he sold just over half of this tract for 1000 pounds currency, reaping a profit of nearly 1000 percent. Within a year he had negotiated yet another land deal, acquiring a 620-acre grant that snaked through the very center of the settlement. Nor was land Crawford's only route to wealth and power. He also had a commission in the British army, which he relinquished when he joined the Americans in 1776, working his way up the ranks to major before his military career ended abruptly and rather disgracefully in 1780 (see below, Chapter 4). Disgrace or no, Crawford claimed war-related losses -- meticulously itemized to include cattle, beef, fodder, timber, corn, flour, use of plantation, and military service -- in excess of 560 pounds sterling. He owned sixteen slaves at his death in 1801.³⁵

³⁴ The following discussion is based on these seven cases, all of which are found in the South Carolina Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Rolls, SCDAH: Robert Crawford v. Amos Richards and Archibald Clark, October 17, 1774, Box 101A, No. 136A; Robert Crawford v. George Grierson, Charles Smith, and Archibald Clark, 1777, Box 135A, No. 131A; Robert Crawford v. George Grier and Jane Clark, September 13, 1777, Box 105A, No. 139A; Robert Crawford v. John Thompson, October 24, 1774, Box 104A, No. 163A; John Thompson v. George Grier, April 1, 1777, Box 105A, No. 134A; John Latta v. Jane Clark, 1778, Box 107A, No. 172A; and Thomas Patton v. James Crawford, Jr., 1778, Box 106B, No. 37A.

³⁵ Draper Manuscripts, VV, 12, 369-74 and W, 15, 90; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deeds, 2, 213; Charleston Deeds, 4K, 132 and 4V, 161; Lancaster Deeds, B, 311, 177; SCCG, 1775; Accounts Audited

In 1774 Crawford filed suit in Camden against Amos Richard and Archibald Clark for 500 pounds currency, charging them with trespass, breaking and entering, and “depriving him of use and possession of his close and plantation.” This was probably a boundary dispute; Crawford and Clark were neighbors, and Crawford apparently believed the defendants were unlawfully using his property. The sheriff at Camden put Clark and Richard under a 1000 pound bond to be paid if they failed to appear in court to answer the charges. Fail they did, and Crawford was awarded the judgment plus 70 pounds in costs. Richard and Clark refused to pay either the bond or the judgment, Sheriff Wyly prosecuted them for the bond, and Crawford filed suit the next term for 1000 pounds.

Although filed in 1775, the second suit was tried in Charleston and was not adjudicated for another two years. In the mean time Crawford had dropped Richard from the suit and added Charles Smith and George Grierson (or Grier), Clark’s step-son. Archibald Clark was dead when the court finally ruled for Crawford in 1777, awarding him a mere 200 pounds for his losses and nothing to cover the costs of nearly three years of litigation. And yet Crawford was undeterred. Six months later he was back in court suing Grierson and Jane Clark, Archibald’s widow and executrix, for 1000 pounds. Again the charge was trespass, with Crawford alleging that the defendants cut and took trees from his property and destroyed his grass. The court ruled for Grierson and his mother, putting an end to Crawford’s tenacious three-year campaign against his neighbors.

Despite his eventual failure, Crawford’s litigiousness, the ease and persistence with which he went to court, suggest that he viewed the new courts in a way that was probably foreign to most of his neighbors: not as a source of justice, law, and order, but as a tool for advancing his own ends. Like land, the military, and the war, the court was another avenue to wealth, another vehicle for his ambition. For their part, Clark and Richard apparently had no

of Claims Growing Out of the Revolution in South Carolina, 1775-1856, no. 1592; Second Census of the United States, South Carolina, Lancaster District.

use for either Crawford or the circuit court; they refused to submit to its judgment, refused even to participate in the legal process. They probably saw little harm in felling a few trees along Crawford's line -- the Waxhaws, after all, was still thickly wooded in the mid-seventies -- and resented the way Crawford abandoned the customary, neighborly way of resolving grievances for the alien and impersonal venue of the courthouse. Caught between the decline of custom and the establishment of civil procedure, Archibald Clark went to his grave refusing to consent to the new legal system.

Three of the remaining four cases³⁶ from the Waxhaws were suits over debt, and all three involved either Crawford, Grierson, or Jane Clark. In his 1774 suit Crawford alleged that John Thompson, another Waxhaw Creek neighbor, owed him 5000 pounds on a bond ostensibly used to secure a mortgage. Thompson denied he had signed such a bond, and the court agreed, awarding him 64 pounds in damages. Three years later Thompson sued George Grierson for failure to deliver some 197 pounds in goods, including a mill iron, a large pot, nine cattle, ten horses, and eight sheep. The outcome of that case is unknown. The following year Grierson's mother, Jane Clark, sued John Latta on behalf of her deceased husband over a debt of 392 pounds currency. As in her previous appearance, the court found for Clark in this case.

The cases these Waxhaws' litigants brought before the court in Camden reflect the concerns of people increasingly engaged in a commercial economy. As the estate records indicate, the economic integration of the Waxhaws had brought credit flowing into the community in the mid-seventies, and disputes over past-due bonds and notes were now playing out in the courts. Despite all the noise Regulators made about bringing "banditti" to justice, from the perspective of the Waxhaws the new courts functioned to service the emerging

³⁶ The seventh and final case was a 1778 suit filed by Matthew Patton against James Crawford, Jr., Robert's nephew, who allegedly slandered Patton by telling neighbors he "hath buggered a mare." The outcome of this suit is unknown. Although beyond the scope of this discussion, Patton's action suggests that the court was also viewed as an arena for working out highly personal points of honor. For a broader discussion of dignity and litigiousness in the eighteenth century see Hoffer, *Law and People*, 83-5.

commercial economy by securing credit and enforcing trade contracts. Of course the courts only reflected the concerns of people bringing actions at law. It was no accident that in the Waxhaws, as elsewhere in early America, these people were typically those most engaged in the new market relationships -- creditors, merchants, traders, millers, and ambitious planters -- who used the courts largely to sue one another. Thus the courts protected the interest of monied men and powered the market economy by maintaining the free flow of goods and credit. They also altered local relationships by placing a powerful impersonal agent between neighbors, an agent that issued judgments on the rule of law, not on the whole texture and history of those relationships and their wider, personal, highly nuanced social context.

By the time of the Revolution the Waxhaws had evolved from an isolated creole immigrant settlement within a household economy to a geographically and demographically expanding community with growing commercial and political ties to the South Carolina lowcountry. Roads linked the community to distant markets, wheat provided a marketable cash crop, and credit infused the local economy with capital for further expansion, all of which raised consumption and lifted farm households to a level of competency that rivaled their northern counterparts. On the other hand, in this world of small farms few could take their subsistence for granted. Further, the benefits of economic integration were unevenly distributed; as new and poorer immigrants edged into the blackjack district, the Waxhaws became a much more conspicuously differentiated community. Class tensions were muted before the Revolution, but other kinds of conflicts featuring the most enterprising players in the new economy were working through the newly established courts, which were supplanting the customary forms of dispute resolution among neighbors and church-goers. Thus as the community expanded, it divided, and as it attached itself to distant civil institutions it surrendered some of its autonomy.

When the war marched into the Waxhaws in 1780 it put a temporary halt to both the circuit courts and long-distance commerce, forcing yeoman households back into a subsistence mode of production. Further, although the commercial relationships that developed in the sixties and seventies might tie Waxhaws farmers to American revolutionaries in Camden and on the coast, it was the local relationships -- the tensions and divisions fostered by integration -- that would ultimately inform patterns of allegiance and determine the degree of enthusiasm for the rebellion.

CHAPTER 4:

HOME FRONT

On May 29, 1780, the Revolutionary War came to the Waxhaws. Charleston had surrendered to the British seventeen days earlier. The only American military presence remaining in South Carolina was a regiment of 350 Virginia regulars under the command of Colonel Abraham Buford, who retreated north when he learned of the fall of Charleston. Cornwallis dispatched his ambitious young cavalry officer, Banastre Tarleton, with 270 troops to attempt to overtake Buford before he reached Salisbury, North Carolina. After marching 154 miles in just fifty-four hours, Tarleton caught up with Buford in the Waxhaws around 3:00 p.m., on a stretch of road not far from Waxhaw church. Buford rejected Tarleton's terms of surrender and prepared for battle.¹

Neither side could have anticipated the confusion and carnage that followed. Buford positioned his army in an open wooded area on the right side of the road, forming one line with a few reserves and hurrying his cannon and supplies ahead toward Salisbury. Keeping about half his men in reserve, Tarleton swiftly charged the American center and simultaneously assaulted both flanks, shattering the American line on the first wave. Buford ordered the white flag, but Tarleton had been thrown from his horse on the opening volley and did not see the flag. He was unable to immediately remount, leading, in Tarleton's words, to "a report amongst the cavalry, that they had lost their commanding officer, which stimulated the soldiers to a vindictive asperity not easily restrained." In the mean time the Americans assumed the enemy was ignoring their surrender and resumed firing, leading Tarleton to believe the surrender was only a ploy. "Not a man was spared" by the British in the ensuing bloodbath, according to Buford's

¹ Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), I, 517-19.

physician, Robert Brownfield. “For fifteen minutes after every man was prostrate they went over the ground plunging their bayonets into every one that exhibited any signs of life, and in some instances, where several had fallen one over the other, these monsters were seen to throw off on the point of the bayonet the uppermost, to come at those beneath.” His account of Captain John Stokes is particularly chilling:

Early in the sanguinary conflict he was attacked by a dragoon, who aimed many deadly blows at his head . . . when another [dragoon] on the right, by one stroke, cut off his right hand through the metacarpal bones.

He was then assailed by both, and instinctively attempted to defend his head with his left arm until the forefinger was cut off, and the arm hacked in eight or ten places from the wrist to the shoulder. His head was then laid open almost the whole length of the crown to the eye brows. After he fell he received several cuts on the face and shoulders.

A soldier, passing on in the work of death, asked if he expected quarters. Stokes answered, “I have not, nor do I mean to ask quarters. Finish me as soon as possible.” He then transfixed him twice with his bayonet. Another asked the same question and received the same answer, and he also thrust his bayonet twice through his body.²

The Americans lost 113 men that day, with another fifty-four taken prisoner and 150 too wounded to travel. Sixty of these died soon thereafter. There were just five British casualties and fifteen wounded.³ But Tarleton’s stunning military victory, with its exhausting march and its complete thrashing of a numerically superior force, was a public relations disaster for the British. Stories like that of John Stokes and of a Lieutenant Pearson, who was “inhumanly mangled” with “his nose and lips . . . bisected obliquely and the lower jaw completely divided,” echoed through the upcountry as American troops rallied behind cries of “Tarleton’s quarter.” As it turned out, Buford’s

² Ibid., 519-23; Banastre Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America*, reprinted in *Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), vol. 32, 30-2; Nat and Sam Hilborn, *Battleground of Freedom: South Carolina in the Revolution* (Columbia, SC: Sandlapper Press, 1970), 118 [Brownfield/Stokes]. Stokes miraculously survived the war and later became a federal judge in North Carolina.

³ Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns*, 80-3.

massacre was a fitting beginning to a bloody backcountry civil war in which both sides would commit their share of atrocities.⁴

It was also an inauspicious beginning for the people of the Waxhaws. Little did they realize, as they quietly buried the American dead in mass graves and cared for the wounded at the Presbyterian church, that their community would soon become a crossroads of the war and a strategic outpost for both American and British forces. Trampled by rebel guerillas and occupied by Cornwallis' massive army, the Waxhaws was picked over and plundered for more than a year, its young men drawn into the fight, its families forced to flee, its slaves escaping, its crops and livestock commandeered, its church burned to the ground. Between the spring of 1780 and the summer of 1782 the Revolutionary War had profound and immediate local repercussions in the Waxhaws. It was also shaped by local concerns, for the neighborhood tensions that had festered over the previous decade now informed patterns of resistance, dividing patriots from loyalists and neutrals. In its timing, its impact, and the patterns of its allegiances, the Revolutionary War in the Waxhaws was very much a product of the home front.

Before 1780 local interest in fighting the British was lukewarm at best, despite the fact that the Waxhaws' white population seemed to be in near-universal sympathy with the Americans. When lowcountry Whigs toured the backcountry in the summer of 1775 to drum up support for the Continental Association and counter growing pro-Tory sentiment, they by-passed the Waxhaws. Unlike settlements in the Ninety-Six district, in the fork of the Broad and Saluda Rivers, and along nearby Little Lynches River, there was no Loyalist leadership in the Waxhaws and only scattered grassroots support for the British. However, the near-absence of Loyalism did not automatically translate into

⁴ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 520, 523-4. For a balanced treatment of the upcountry's civil war that sorts out the atrocities on both sides see John S. Pancake, *The Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1985). The best comprehensive treatment of the war in South Carolina is Jerome J. Nadelhaft, *The Disorders of War: The Revolution in South Carolina* (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1981). Also see Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985).

zealous radicalism. Most of the fighting men of the Waxhaws remained quietly at home, unengaged if not neutral, until the British brought the war to them.⁵

There were several exceptions, the most prominent of whom was William Richardson Davie, Archibald's oldest son. Davie was as sharp as he was ambitious. Unlike most of his neighbors he disdained farming and left the Waxhaws before the war, acquiring an education, a profession, and martial honors in pursuit of a public career that would eventually land him in the North Carolina governor's mansion. In 1774 he had gone off to the College of New Jersey, funded at least in part by the labor of his deceased uncle's slave, Joe. Radicalized during the heady days of 1776, he joined Washington at Elizabethtown but returned shortly thereafter to complete his studies. The following year he moved to Salisbury to study law, but was once again drawn into the rebellion and joined the militia in December 1777. In 1779 he persuaded an acquaintance in Salisbury to raise a troop of cavalry; within a month Davie had assumed command of the unit, was promoted to Brigade Major, and was stationed near Charleston in anticipation of a British invasion. Wounded at the Battle of Stono Ferry in June, he returned to Salisbury, but within a year he was leading a guerilla force against the British army along the North Carolina-South Carolina border. Davie later served as chief commissary officer under General Nathanael Greene during the Continental Army's southern campaign.⁶

There were also a handful of early recruits among Waxhaws' farm families. Archibald McCorkle and Samuel Dunlap both served in the "Snow Campaign" of 1775, where more than four thousand troops under Colonel Richard Richardson trudged through the December snow to put down Loyalists in the country between the Broad and Saluda Rivers. Robert Crawford served as captain under Richardson in 1776 and fought with Davie at Stono Ferry in 1779. Similarly, James Adams and Robert Guthrie took part in Andrew Williamson's three-month slash-and-burn campaign against the Cherokee

⁵ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 33-52.

⁶ Robinson, *William R. Davie*, 27-40.

Indians in the summer of 1776.⁷ Like Davie, however, these men were exceptions. Less than one-sixth of the Waxhaws' men who took part in the war and whose dates of enlistment can be determined joined before the British launched their southern campaign in 1779. Although enlistment climbed dramatically in 1779, only one-third of the men who eventually fought in the war joined before the fall of Charleston. In other words, two out of three Waxhaws' soldiers refused to serve until Cornwallis marched into the upcountry in the summer of 1780, when enlistment soared.⁸

These figures suggest that before the summer of 1780 most of the people in the Waxhaws were either neutral or rebel sympathizers who nonetheless hesitated to take up arms against the British. Developments in the month following Tarleton's victory bear this out. In early June Lord Rawdon, who headed Cornwallis' advance guard, met with a local committee in the Waxhaws to discuss the terms of surrender. The committee declined to take up arms against the Americans and asked to be placed on parole as *bona fide* neutrals, supplying the British with cattle as a sign of good faith. For his part Rawdon promised to respect their neutrality, permitted them to keep their weapons to defend themselves against North Carolina militiamen and their Catawba allies, and urged refugees to return to their farms. He wrote Cornwallis on June 11 that he believed the

⁷ Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files Based on Revolutionary War Service [hereafter Pension Applications], SCDH, numbers S2771 [McCorkle], S3310 [Dunlap], and W293 [Adams and Guthrie]; Bobby Gilmer Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983), 214 [Crawford].

⁸ This and all subsequent analysis of war service in the Waxhaws is based on a list of 100 American soldiers generated from Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots*, and 12 Loyalists generated from three sources: Robert W. Barnwell, Jr., ed., "Reports on Loyalist Exiles from South Carolina, 1783," *South Carolina Historical Association Proceedings* (1937), 43-4; Murtie June Clarke, *Loyalists of the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1981); and Great Britain, Audit Office, Transcripts of the MS Books and Papers of the Commission of Enquiry in to the Losses and Services of American Loyalists held Under the Acts of Parliament . . . Preserved among the Audit Office Records of the PRO of England, 1783-1790 [hereafter Loyalist Transcripts]. The dates of enlistment could not be determined for 9 of the 100 American soldiers. Where the documents do not indicate place of origin of date of immigration, Waxhaws' residency and time of arrival has been determined by checking against land and cemetery records or assumed based on surname and service under known Waxhaws' officers.

people of the Waxhaws might even join the British if other settlements were to take the lead.⁹

In the meantime, however, Loyalists were terrorizing the neighboring settlement on Fishing Creek, where they burned the Presbyterian church along with the home of its pastor, John Simpson. Eleven days later North Carolina forces soundly defeated the Tory militia at Ramsour's Mill and scattered Loyalist refugees along the border. This combination of Loyalist depredations and vulnerability was sure to push the strongest American sympathizers into armed resistance, making neutrality increasingly difficult to sustain. Cornwallis went one step further, making neutrality virtually impossible. Rightly fearing that the American victory would encourage the Waxhaws' neutrals "to temporize," he ordered them to either take up arms for the Crown, surrender their arms and horses, or face execution. In essence, the British forced the people of the Waxhaws to choose sides. Worse yet for Rawdon, many of the Scots-Irish volunteers he had stationed at the Waxhaws, instead of drawing locals into the Loyalist camp as hoped, began to desert the British and flee to the American lines. Rawdon promised severe consequences for deserters, but to no avail. Within a week of arriving in the Waxhaws he was petitioning Cornwallis for a body of regulars to safeguard the Waxhaws wheat crop and laying plans to place Loyalist farmers on rebel plantations. By July 7 he complained that rigid British measures regarding parole and neutrality had alienated inhabitants all along the frontier.¹⁰

Why the sudden about-face? Although the defectors that troubled Rawdon might have been willing to remain neutral against powerful neighbors like the Dunlaps and Crawfords, they would not oppose them. It was better to fight the British than go to war

⁹ Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 125.

¹⁰ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 591-2; Blackwell P. Robinson, *The Revolutionary War Sketches of William R. Davie* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1976), 7-8; Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 179-82; Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 2, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 235-6; Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 7, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 252-5. For a discussion of Rawdon's woes in the Waxhaws see John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 120-1.

against their neighbors – a prospect more fearful by far than resisting an increasingly unfriendly but decidedly temporary occupying army. Or so the men who flooded into the American camp in the summer of 1780 must have reasoned, driven as they were not by strongly pro-American or anti-British sentiment but by the power of these local relationships, by loyalty to, and fear of, their neighbors.

Enthusiasm for the war not only came late to the Waxhaws; it also had distinct social patterns. Part of what distinguished eager from reluctant revolutionaries was their length of residency in America. Fully three-fourths of the thirty-four men who enlisted prior to 1780 were among the first wave of settlers, immigrating in or before 1765 (early immigrants made up only two-thirds of the overall American forces). Many of these early enlistees were native born. Dunlap and McCorkle were both born in the Waxhaws, along with John Ramsey, William Hood, George White, and William Barkley, all of whom enlisted before 1780. Robert White, who served alongside Dunlap and McCorkle during the Snow Campaign, was born in Ireland but belonged to one of the oldest families in the community.

By contrast, only 63% of the late enlistees were early settlers. More striking still, seven out of ten recent immigrants who enlisted did so after 1780 (Table 4.1). John McMurry was typical. Born in Ireland in 1750, McMurry immigrated to the Waxhaws shortly before the war. He enlisted in 1780 and served under James Craig and Robert Montgomery, his neighbors on Cane Creek, seeing action in local skirmishes at Hanging Rock, Camden, and Rocky Mount as well as more distant battles at Edisto and Eutaw Springs. Like McMurry, most recent immigrants were more reluctant than early settlers to join the war effort, doing so only after the British invaded the backcountry and forced them to choose sides.¹¹

Recent immigrants were also more likely to live in the upper or eastern part of the settlement, and enlistment patterns reflect this neighborhood formation (Table 4.2). In

¹¹ Pension Applications, S31318 [Ramsey], S32057 [George White], S16314 [Barkley]; Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots*, 460 [Hood], 986 [Robert White].

general, most enlistees were from the lower or western part of the settlement (nearest the Catawba River), which is not surprising since this was the most densely populated part of the community.¹² However, the significance of these neighborhood patterns lies in the dramatic increase in the number and percent of upper settlement enlistees after 1780.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Time of Enlistment with Length of Residency in Waxhaws

DATE OF IMMIGRATION	ENLISTED BEFORE 1780		ENLISTED 1780-81	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
By 1765	26	76	36	63
After 1765	8	24	21	37

Table 4.2: Comparison of Time of Enlistment with Place of Residence in Waxhaws

NEIGHBORHOOD	ENLISTED BEFORE 1780		ENLISTED 1780-81	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lower settlement	23	68	35	61
Upper settlement	9	26	21	37
Indeterminate	2	6	1	2

The number of upper settlement enlistees doubled after the British invasion, while the number of lower settlement enlistees grew by just over half. Further, the proportion of all enlistees who were upper settlers increased from one fourth to over one third after 1780. American soldiers from the upper settlement remained fewer as a rule, which is consistent with the overall distribution of the Waxhaws population, but they joined the war effort late at a much higher rate than lower settlers. In fact, the number of upper settlement enlistees actually surpassed lower settlement enlistees for the first time in

¹² The lower settlement included Waxhaw Creek, the Catawba River, lower Cane Creek, and Rum Creek. The upper or western settlement included Gills Creek, Camp Creek, Bear Creek, Hannahs Creek, Turkey Quarter, and upper Cane Creek.

1781. The pattern is even more striking when length and place of residency are combined: 78% of upper settlers who arrived after 1765 enlisted late.

If recent immigrants and blackjack farmers were generally more reluctant to join the Americans than their more established neighbors to the west, they were much more likely to join the British. Of the eleven probable Loyalists in the Waxhaws whose neighborhoods are identifiable, nine were from the upper and only two from the lower settlement.¹³ Most of these men lived along Bear Creek, a branch of upper Cane Creek, or one of its tributaries. The most prominent upper settlement Loyalist was James Johnston, who immigrated in 1762, took out land on Camp and Bear Creeks, and later served as captain in Robert English's Loyalist regiment. Others, such as James Baker and James Blackman, probably had roots in the Lynches River community on the other side of the district, a Tory stronghold, and had pushed into the fringes of the Waxhaws before the war. As for the two Loyalists who lived in the lower settlement: both were recent immigrants, along with four of the others. In short, the handful of Loyalists in the Waxhaws either lived in the upper settlement or immigrated late, and over half did both. All of the Waxhaws Loyalists enlisted in 1780 or 1781.¹⁴

Historians have long suspected that South Carolina Loyalism was largely determined by length of residency. David Ramsay recognized as early as 1785 that "Irish" immigrants who took bounty lands after 1763 were more likely to remain loyal, while the Scots-Irish settlers who immigrated from Pennsylvania and Virginia "generally entered with zeal into the new measures." More recently, Wallace Brown used Loyalist claims records to quantify and analyze patterns of allegiance on a state-by-state basis. Brown found that 80% of South Carolina Loyalists were immigrants, and two-thirds of

¹³ In all there were eight known Loyalists in the Waxhaws and four others who had Waxhaws surnames and served in a local Loyalist regiment. Of the eight known Loyalists, seven were listed as exiles in Barnwell, "Report on the Loyalist Exiles," along with their places of residence. The one whose residence cannot be determined lived on Cane Creek and was probably an upper settlement inhabitant, since he shared a surname with another upper settlement Loyalist.

¹⁴ Barnwell, "Report on the Loyalist Exiles," 44; Clarke, *Loyalists of the Southern Campaign*, 360, 370, 420, 111, 112, 115, 117, 118; Loyalist Transcripts AO12/99/333; Brent H. Holcomb, *North Carolina Land Grants in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: By the Author, 1980), 16.

these were recent immigrants. He dismissed religion, ethnicity, and wealth/occupation as factors, since Loyalism cut across all of these lines. Yet neither Ramsay nor Brown explained why recent immigrants were more likely to remain loyal; the assumption is that they had not been sufficiently “Americanized” and thus identified more completely with the mother country. More recently still, Rachel Klein has added sectionalism to Brown’s list of non-factors, arguing that upcountry resentment stemming from the Regulator years did not appreciably influence patterns of allegiance, since former Regulators generally joined their lowcountry enemies against the British. Rather, Klein has pursued the local dimension of patterns of allegiance, suggesting that white settlers followed local “leading men” (or in at least one case, a leading man responded to grassroots pressure) when choosing sides. Lowcountry Whigs recognized the importance of local politics in winning adherents, played on the political and military ambitions of backcountry leaders, and thereby won entire neighborhoods to the American side. However, Klein ignored the residency and immigration issues so prominent in Ramsay and Brown, just as Brown and Ramsay neglected the local relationships that drove recent immigrants into the Loyalist camp.¹⁵

These local relationships explain more about why recent immigrants were reluctant revolutionaries than do abstract notions of “Americanization.” They also put meat on the local political issues outlined by Klein, suggesting that class, kinship, and personal grievances, not just the political ambitions of local leaders, divided upcountry Loyalists from revolutionaries.

As we have seen, the data from the Waxhaws point to a clear correlation between neighborhood, length of residency, and support for the Americans. Recent immigrants and blackjack farmers were reluctant to embrace the revolution; they generally enlisted

¹⁵ David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, From a British Province to an Independent State* (Trenton, NJ: Isaac Collins, 1785), II, 54-5; Wallace Brown, *The King’s Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965); Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 78-82. Also see any of the two book-length studies of South Carolina Loyalists: Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), and Robert W. Barnwell, “Loyalism in South Carolina, 1765-1785” (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 1941).

after the British invasion, and they were much more likely to join the Loyalists than were their more established neighbors to the west. Class and kinship account for much of what lay behind these differences. In the first place, there is a clear correlation between wealth (as determined by land holdings) and time of enlistment. Although many soldiers were too young to head their own households, the land holdings of their families give some indication of wealth.¹⁶ As table 4.3 shows, the families of late enlistees owned only about 65% as much land as the families of early enlistees, while the families of Loyalists owned less than half as much. Further, as we have seen, the families that immigrated in the late sixties and early seventies were generally poor, driven from northern Ireland by rack-renting landlords and a depressed linen industry and immigrating directly to South

Table 4.3: Average Family Land Holdings of Enlistees, 1780

Enlistment	Average Acreage Owned, 1780	Percent of Acreage of Early Enlistees
Before 1780	717	100
1780-1781	470-533	65-75
Loyalist	336	47

Carolina. Their grants were smaller and their lands poorer than those of the earlier immigrants who settled in the river and creek bottomlands to the west. Immigrating directly through Charleston, their kinship links with the core community were more tenuous than those of earlier settlers who had immigrated from Pennsylvania and Virginia. Lacking the near-automatic connections that kinship afforded and further separated by class and geographic distance, the people of the upper settlement were not readily integrated into the established community. This is corroborated by events immediately after the war that revealed deep divisions over the location of the Presbyterian church, divisions that were doubtlessly present before and during the war

¹⁶ Although personal landholdings of Loyalists are not a reliable indicator, colonial land records indicate that 60% of Waxhaws' Loyalists did not own land.

and probably contributed to the church's prolonged (seven-year) search for a suitable replacement for William Richardson. In short, recent immigrants were shunted to the geographic, social, and political periphery of the community. Class- and kin-based neighborhoods, not "Americanization," account for the peculiar patterns of allegiance in the Waxhaws.¹⁷

Of course, there were also reluctant revolutionaries in the lower settlement, but these too fall into familiar patterns. Over 80% of the lower settlers who were recent immigrants enlisted after 1780. As already noted, the only two lower settlement Loyalists were also recent immigrants. One of these was George Grier. As discussed in Chapter 3, Grier was sued twice by Robert Crawford in the mid-seventies; Crawford also sued Grier's stepfather twice and his mother once. A thoroughgoing Whig, Crawford served as captain under Richard Richardson in 1776, fought with Davie at Stono Ferry in 1779, and was promoted to major and subsequently captured at the fall of Charleston in 1780. Paroled by the British, he immediately joined Thomas Sumter's partisan regiment, where he served until Sumter's defeat at Fishing Creek in August 1780.¹⁸ Grier no doubt had little interest in taking sides with his old nemesis. Further, he and his family were also engaged in suits with John Thompson and John Latta, who would later become a Presbyterian church elder. Apparently Grier had few friends among his neighbors. Not surprisingly, he joined the Loyalist regiment in 1781. Not long after the war his 250-acre estate was seized by the sheriff and sold to satisfy a debt of eight shillings sterling to James Dunlap.¹⁹

¹⁷ On post-war divisions in the church see Chapter 5, below. On the search for a replacement for Richardson see Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 421.

¹⁸ Crawford apparently got drunk at Fishing Creek and failed to post proper guards as ordered by Sumter. His role in Sumter's disastrous defeat no doubt accounts for his suddenly abbreviated military career. Draper Manuscript Collection, Thomas Sumter Papers, Series VV, 15, 90 [Microfilm, SCDAH].

¹⁹ For Grier's lawsuits see Chapter 3, above. Moss, *South Carolina Patriots*, 214 [Crawford's war record]; Clarke, *Loyalists of the Southern Campaign*, 112, 117 [Grier's war record]; Lancaster Deeds, A, 254 [Grier's debt].

The most prominent and enigmatic Loyalist in the Waxhaws, however, was Daniel Harper. Harper immigrated from Ireland in 1767, aged twenty-two, with his parents and six siblings. Although most of the Harpers did not own land until after the war, some settled among other recent immigrants along Bear and Gills Creek. Others, including Daniel, settled in the lower settlement along the Catawba River. Sometime before the war he married Sarah Dickey Cantzon, widow of Dr. John Cantzon, who had left a large estate at his death, including a dozen slaves which would have fallen at least in part to Sarah. Like his wife's first husband, Daniel Harper was a physician and would have depended on the patronage of his Whig neighbors. It is all the more surprising, then, that he joined the British army when it invaded the Waxhaws in 1780. In his absence the American forces used his plantation as their local base of operations and "Robbed and Plundered . . . all his Property." By 1781 he was in Charleston, and soon thereafter he was on a ship back to Ireland with other Loyalist refugees. In 1783 he filed a claim for 2,410 pounds sterling lost to the Americans during the war, including two tracts totalling 650 acres, two houses and offices, thirty cattle, and eight slaves. The Loyalist Claims Commission awarded him twenty pounds sterling, and he soon gave up his practice in Ballemone and returned to South Carolina. At his death in 1791 he resided in Chester County, on the west side of the Catawba River opposite the Waxhaws, and had begun rebuilding his estate, owning two slaves, a silver watch, and over three hundred pounds sterling. He was buried in the Waxhaw Presbyterian churchyard.²⁰

Although neighborhood and length of residency largely explain the degree and patterns of allegiance in the Waxhaws, the cases of Daniel Harper and George Grier show that complex and often personal issues stood behind the act of choosing sides. For

²⁰ Viola Floyd, *Descendants of William Harper, Irish Immigrant, to Lancaster County, South Carolina* (Lancaster, SC: By the Author, 1965); Lancaster Deeds, A-226, CE-130, CE-8; Robinson, *William Richardson Davie*, 45; William Henry Hoyt, ed., *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey* (Raleigh, 1914), II, 230-1; John Cantzon Foster, *Ancestors and Descendants of Joseph Henry Foster and Charlotte Rebecca Brown of the Waxhaws, South Carolina* (Varnville, SC: By the Author, no date); Estate of John Cantzon, Inventories of Estates, Z, 472-3, SCDAH; Loyalist Claims, AO 13/129/233-8 [Microfilm, SCDAH]; Gregory Palmer, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing, 1984); Chester County Will Books, A, 60-1; Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Cemetery*, 64.

people like James Blackman and Andrew Walker, who lived in the blackjack section among other reluctant revolutionaries and Tory sympathizers, joining the Loyalist forces was a significant but logical step. Though Waxhaws Loyalists were essentially leaderless, the Tories of the blackjack district could at least count on the ambivalence, if not the outright sympathy, of their neighbors and kin. For people like George Grier, who had already alienated his neighbors and developed deep antipathy toward local Whig leaders, taking up arms against the Americans was likewise the logical conclusion to an already embattled relationship. But for recent immigrants living in the lower settlement like Daniel Harper, who had neither Loyalist neighbors nor Whig enemies, the choice to enlist with the British or at least defer joining the Americans may well have been based on principle. Why else would Harper alienate his neighbors, jeopardize his practice, and risk losing his estate to plunderers and forfeiture? Unable to shield himself behind a prominent local Loyalist leader, Harper's stand for the British took tremendous courage. For risking his life, family, practice, and property, the British rewarded him with twenty pounds – an act wholly consistent with their treatment of southern Loyalists generally, explaining in part why they ultimately lost the southern campaign.²¹

The violence and destructiveness of the Revolutionary War in the Carolina piedmont has been well documented. Between 1780-1782 the people of the upcountry fought British and American regulars as well as each other in a bloody “inland civil war,” exchanging atrocities and leaving one another embittered and exhausted. The war divided communities, destroyed plantations and towns, scattered refugees across the piedmont, carried off surplus grain and livestock, and left populations vulnerable to hunger and disease.²² We know much less, however, about the effects of the war on

²¹ For a discussion of how poor British treatment of its Loyalist allies contributed to the failure of the southern campaign, see Pancake, *Destructive War*.

²² See Pancake, *Destructive War*; Nadelhaft, *Disorders of War*; and Rachel Klein, “Frontier Planters and the American Revolution: The South Carolina Backcountry, 1775-1782,” in Hoffman, et. al., eds., *Uncivil War*, 37-69.

individual communities. On the one hand the experience of the Waxhaws underscores the “uncivil war” thesis, showing that the war was not only violent and divisive but also prolonged and, in its immediate impact, devastating. On the other hand this local perspective sheds light on the social consequences of the war. In the Waxhaws, the Revolutionary War did little to alter the patterns of association that had developed in the late colonial years; despite all its disorder and disruption, the war left the existing social structure intact and to some degree even reenforced it.

The war in the Waxhaws had three distinct stages, each more destructive than the one before. In the critical weeks following Buford’s defeat, the British army established the terms of allegiance, volunteers poured into the American camp, and area militia joined with Catawba Indians and a handful of Continental regulars to wage guerilla warfare on the advancing British army. In mid-August, however, Continental forces under General Horatio Gates were routed by Cornwallis at Camden, inaugurating a period of forced submission under an unfriendly occupying army. American guerillas nipped at the heels of the British army in the weeks after Camden, but armed resistance on the home front largely ceased until Cornwallis pushed north in early 1781, leaving South Carolina poorly defended by Rawdon’s regular forces and Loyalist militia. Cornwallis’ withdrawal led to a period of renewed guerilla activity, escalating violence, civil war, and war weariness. By the time Nathanael Greene marched the Continental army through the upcountry and drove back the British in mid-1781, the Waxhaws had become a burned-over district of abandoned fields and languishing farms. During the last months of the war it would serve as a prison camp for British prisoners of war.

In the weeks following Rawdon’s June 1780 proclamation the Waxhaws was occupied by a motley assortment of American forces. Cornwallis was gathering his army in Camden, some forty miles south of Waxhaw Creek, and had established garrisons at Hanging Rock and Rocky Mount on each side of the Catawba River, midway between Camden and the Carolina border. William Richardson Davie positioned his troops, a combination of trained cavalry and local volunteers, on the north side of Waxhaw Creek.

In mid-July he was reinforced by South Carolina Continental troops under Robert Crawford, a band of Catawba Indians under General New River, and a body of militia from Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Thomas Sumter's guerilla forces joined them briefly on July 17 before returning to their camp on Fishing Creek. By occupying the Waxhaws Davie hoped "to prevent the enemy from foraging on the borders of the State adjacent," as he later recalled, "and check the depredations of the Loyalists who infested that part of the Country." Although six weeks earlier Rawdon had found the area "poor in itself, and much drained," the summer crops had now come in, and Loyalist foraging parties were penetrating the Waxhaws, keeping the British army stocked with fresh supplies and skirmishing almost daily with guerillas. The American forces stationed in the Waxhaws eventually drove foragers back into the British line and forced Cornwallis to supply the garrison at Hanging Rock from Camden. Feeding these troops, however, continued to drain the local food supply, which was already partially depleted because soaring enlistments had left fewer hands to work the fields.²³

Encouraged by their success against British foragers, Davie, Sumter, and three other guerilla commanders met in the Waxhaws on July 30 to plot successive attacks on the two British garrisons. Sumter was repulsed at Rocky Mount three days later and subsequently crossed the river into the Waxhaws to join Davie's assault on Hanging Rock. On August 6 the combined American forces launched a successful raid against the garrison, capturing arms and supplies but failing to take the post. Sumter fell back to the Waxhaws and foraged extensively for more than a week before an advancing Gates ordered him to cross the river to intercept British reinforcements moving toward Camden. Gates did not move down the Catawba Valley but approached Camden from the east instead, crossing the Pee Dee River and dragging his exhausted army through the barren sand hills. By the time it reached Camden his army was primed for defeat. Trounced by the British, Gates retreated north along the Wagon Road through the

²³ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 623-4; Robinson, *Sketches*, 8; Robinson, *William R. Davie*, 45; Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 125.

Waxhaws. Within hours Sumter was surprised and routed by Tarleton at Fishing Creek, losing many of his men and all his arms and supplies.²⁴

This first period of intense guerilla warfare came to a close with Gates' defeat. The "continual devastation and warfare" of the summer of 1780 had, according to Davie, stripped the Waxhaws of much of its food supply. The "many rich farms" that had supported two armies for three months were now "neglected and destroyed, and many of the plantations intirely deserted." Sumter's defeat at Fishing Creek "was marked with the capture and slaughter of a large part of the inhabitants of this populous settlement; so that an army could not be supported there without foraging to a considerable distance." Indeed, Sumter had lost 150 men killed or wounded at Fishing Creek, with another three hundred or more captured. Charles Miller of Waxhaw Creek was left for dead at Sumter's defeat; he later reenlisted under Sumter and survived the war. Most of Sumter's men escaped, including Robert Crawford; his family abandoned its farm and fled to Charlotte as Cornwallis advanced, along with the family of young Andrew Jackson. They had good reasons for doing so. In the wake of Camden Cornwallis ordered extremely punitive measures for the rebels, giving their property to Loyalists, imprisoning captives, and threatening to hang every militiaman who defected from the British to the American army.²⁵

The British occupation of the Waxhaws climaxed on September 8, when Cornwallis moved his army from Camden to the Waxhaws, establishing his camp on Waxhaw Creek and making Robert Crawford's home his headquarters. The American guerilla forces were now scattered, and Gates' army was reassembling far to the north in Hillsborough, North Carolina, leaving only Davie and seventy cavalry in the border country, camped some twenty-five miles above the Waxhaws. Although Davie maintained that "an army could not be supported" in the Waxhaws, Cornwallis found

²⁴ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 623-4; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (Sumter, SC: R.L. Bryan Co., 1931), 90-1, 95-101, 102; Hilborn, *Battleground of Freedom*, 137, 141-2.

²⁵ Robinson, *Sketches*, 21; Moss, *South Carolina Patriots*, 679, 214; James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1861), 71-2; McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 709-10.

otherwise: forage and provisions were plentiful, he reported, and the wheat crop was sufficient to keep his men busy harvesting and processing grain for some two weeks.²⁶

In the mean time Davie was determined to disrupt the Loyalist foraging parties camped on Cornwallis' right flank, which were spreading "havoc and destruction" as the army pushed north. On September 20 Davie took 150 men and surprised four hundred Loyalists camped at James Waughope's plantation north of Waxhaw Creek. Waughope, who served as captain under Davie, had planted corn "to the very door" of his house, providing cover for Davie's advancing infantry. In the ensuing exchange the Loyalists were "completely surprised[,] had no time to form and crowded in great disorder to the other end of the lane when a well reserved fire from the riflemen drove them back upon the cavalry and Infantry who were now drawn up at the Houses, & by whom they were instantly attacked; thus pushed vigorously on all sides[,] they fluctuated some moments under the impressions of terror & dismay and then bore down the fences, and fled in full speed." The British lost fifteen dead and forty wounded, along with ninety-six horses and 120 stands of arms. In retaliation Tarleton ordered Waughope's house, barns, and fences burned.²⁷

By the time Cornwallis pressed north toward Charlotte at the end of September, the British army had exhausted the local food supply. "Flour, cattle, and forage were collected with difficulty by the main army," according to Tarleton, "the depredations having made a desert of the country." Cornwallis was forced to divide his army and send Tarleton across the Catawba River to forage along Fishing Creek. Just three weeks later Cornwallis returned by much the same route, retreating from Charlotte in the wake of the British defeat at King's Mountain. Although slowed by bad roads and foul weather, he

²⁶ Robinson, *Sketches*, 21; McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 742; Cornwallis to [illegible], September 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/80, 16; Cornwallis to Cruger, September 12, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/80, 18-19.

²⁷ Robinson, *Sketches*, 21-2; McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 743.

did not stop in the Waxhaws but crossed the Catawba at Land's Ford and moved his army southwest to Winnsborough, where he would remain through mid-January.²⁸

The "depredations" that had "made a desert of the country" did not end with Cornwallis' withdrawal nor with his retreat to Winnsborough. Guerilla forces moved immediately into the void left by the British army and for the next three months sat out the winter, occasionally skirmishing with Loyalist militia. As with the southern army in general, the winter of 1780 was a starving time in the Waxhaws. The country "has been ravaged and plundered by both Friends and Enemies," wrote Nathanael Greene upon assuming command of the southern army in Charlotte in early December. "I am really afraid it will be impossible to subsist the few troops we have" without "moving to the provisions." Davie foraged extensively in mid-November but could gather only a modicum of provisions from disaffected families. By and large the forage in the Waxhaws was "not sufficient for the wants of Refugee families," he later recalled. The hundreds of troops scattered from Twelve Mile Creek to Cane Creek were "much distressed for Corn and Forage," Rawdon reported. "They have stripped the whole Country near them, and [General William] Smallwood now draws his Corn from Great Lynches' Creek, fifteen miles from his Camp." Not surprisingly, nearly all the skirmishes during this period were rooted in the contest for supplies. In early November Smallwood had dispatched the light infantry to disperse four hundred Loyalist foragers south of the Waxhaws in Hanging Rock. Later that month he sent two companies to Cane Creek to cut off Loyalist raiders who planned to intercept a convoy of non-existent pork and corn. The raiders escaped, but 120 British troops covering their retreat were captured; neither army found the pork and corn.²⁹ Whatever had compelled British and

²⁸ Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns*, 158; Robinson, *Sketches*, 24; McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, I, 808-10.

²⁹ Richard K. Showman, gen. ed., *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) [hereafter *Greene Papers*], 6, 543, 547; Robinson, *William R. Davie*, 84-5, 87; Rawdon to Cornwallis, November 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 175-6; Smallwood to Davie, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 18-19; *Greene Papers*, 6, 538-9, 543.

American soldiers to join the battle in May and June, by December the war in the Waxhaws had devolved into a contest over food.

In mid-January Cornwallis, stung by Tarleton's defeat at Cowpens, began his long march to Yorktown, moving north along the west side of the Catawba River in pursuit of Greene and Daniel Morgan. With the main British column on the march, the South Carolina upcountry entered a period of renewed guerilla warfare, continued deprivation, increased plundering, and waning interest in the American effort. Three events paint a vivid picture of the home front in the year following Cornwallis' withdrawal: Sumter's aborted foray on British supply lines on the Santee River and his subsequent difficulty in raising the militia; the Loyalist slash-and-burn raid on the heart of the settlement in April; and the plundering of British officers imprisoned at the Waxhaws' POW camp in early 1782.

As early as December Greene had noted that the people of the piedmont were, "notwithstanding their danger, very intent upon their own private affairs" and would not easily "be animated into great exertions." By February their private affairs were even more pressing, animated as they were by their obligations to plant corn, but Thomas Sumter nonetheless managed to muster 280 men in the Waxhaws for a proposed raid on British supplies. Cornwallis had left some eight thousand troops occupying South Carolina in his absence, with Rawdon's post at Camden at their strategic center. These posts were not vulnerable to direct attacks from the small guerilla forces under Sumter, but if the Americans could cut Rawdon's supply line, so Sumter reasoned, they might force him to retreat. In mid-February Sumter thus appealed to the upcountry militia for a quick strike at British stores on the Congaree River followed by a foray down the Santee, where he hoped to rendezvous with Francis Marion and seize British supplies moving north. For the 280 men who marched downcountry on February 16, however, the mission was a series of grim disappointments. Forced to abandon their siege of the Congaree stores by Rawdon, they captured and then lost twenty wagons of British supplies on the Santee, failed to link up with Marion, and lost ten killed and fifty

wounded when Loyalists on Lynches Creek tried to block their retreat. Sumter was forced to bring his family to the Waxhaws as refugees. Not surprisingly, less than two months later he reported “inconceivable” difficulties in raising the militia, despite Greene’s return to the state and the hopeful prospects for an American reconquest of South Carolina.³⁰

That the Waxhaws was a safe haven for Sumter and his troops ironically made it vulnerable to British incursions, especially as the war, with its mounting bitterness and unremitting hardship, dragged on. On the night of Tuesday, April 10 a company of 150 Loyalists under Colonel John Coffin marched “with Great precipitation” into the heart of the Waxhaws, where they burned the Presbyterian meeting house along with “Some other houses Barns etc.” Over the course of the next day they continued to pillage, burn, and generally terrorize the settlement. “They have Kild Wound[ed] & Taken Several persons,” Sumter reported to Greene, “Carried off all Kinds of horses, [and] plundered the Settlement of as much as they Could Carry” before they “began to Retreat on Wednesday Night.” The raiders returned safely to Camden before the militia could overtake them, leaving fourteen Americans dead and capturing “a few, without any loss.” Among those captured and imprisoned at Camden were brothers Robert and Andrew Jackson, both of whom contracted smallpox while their mother arranged a prisoner exchange. Andrew recovered slowly in the weeks that followed; his brother Robert died soon after his release.³¹

The Americans, too, could play at the plundering game. Though Governor Rutledge appointed a sheriff for Camden district to suppress plundering in the summer of 1781, five months later Archibald McCorkle, a six-year veteran of the southern campaign, led a raid on a group of British officers imprisoned in the Waxhaws. Having already endured “many insults and numberless threats” from the inhabitants, the officers

³⁰ *Greene Papers*, 6, 543; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 136, 142-3, 153; McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, II, 105-11.

³¹ McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, 182-3; *Greene Papers*, 8, 91-2 and note; Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, 87-94.

were attacked one night in early January, 1782 by “a party of ten or twelve men Disguised” with “their heads tied up, faces painted Black and red, and wrapped up in Blankets.” Armed with “Rifle’s, Swords and Pistols,” the assailants “burst open the door of our Quarters, with presented Arms threatening our Lives forced us into a small Out-house where they had secured our Servants, and kept us Confined until they plundered the House of every individual Article.” The raiders even took the officers’ clothes, shoes, and handkerchiefs. While the victims petitioned Greene for transfer to a “more civilized part of the Country,” the prison commandant, John Galbraith, worried that he would not be “able to maintain the Post” if McCorkle could not be brought to justice swiftly and such plundering stopped. Galbraith managed to apprehend McCorkle’s brother Owen, although several other suspects threatened to kill him “for daring to suspect them yet they were the people who had robbed Two Hessian Deserters on the High Way Some time ago.” Although Greene viewed McCorkle’s action as “an outrage of the rights of humanity” deserving “the severest chastisement,” Archibald managed to elude capture and probably sold his plunder upcountry. He later filed a claim against the state for war-related losses and applied for a Revolutionary War pension in his old age.³²

The angry fires that swallowed Waxhaw church, the plundering of captives, the robbing of deserters, all suggest that the war itself, if not the society that underpinned it, was coming unraveled. There is a growing weariness, perhaps even disillusionment, in the farmer-soldiers who stubbornly resisted Sumter’s pleas for one more campaign. In fact, in its final year the war in the Waxhaws became strangely involuted. This is evident in the “disorderly” North Carolina militia unit that rendezvoused in the Waxhaws in August 1781, made up almost entirely of former Loyalists who had defected to the American army. It is evident as well in the changing sentiment, if not the shifting allegiance, of the people of the Waxhaws. According to an American commissary officer

³² Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 185; *Greene Papers*, 10, 189, 216-17, 274-5; Accounts Audited of Claims Growing Out of the Revolution in South Carolina, 1775-1856 [hereafter Accounts Audited], SCDAAH (Microfilm), number 4961; Pension Applications, S2771.

in the summer of 1781, the Waxhaws inhabitants were “chiefly” disaffected.³³ The British officers who endured “many insults and numberless threats” might disagree, but it stands to reason that much of the Waxhaws’ enthusiastic support for the Americans had evaporated, owing in part perhaps to Sumter’s aborted Santee raid, in part to the inability of the American militia to shield the community from Loyalist raiders, and in part no doubt to hunger, grief, and the desire for a return to normalcy. The war, with its occupying armies, its economic drain, and its senseless destruction, had worn down and destabilized the community, turning yeomen into highwaymen and plunderers, Loyalists into rebels, and one-time soldiers into unyielding farmers determined to attend to their private affairs, “notwithstanding their danger.”

In his old age Nathan Barr remembered the war as a painful and inglorious episode that changed his life forever. In 1779 Barr had served under his neighbor, Robert Montgomery, but his service was cut short when he contracted smallpox early in the southern campaign. When the British pressed into the interior in 1780, he recalled, “all his Property of every Description [was] taken and destroyed.” The war had “reduced him to entire Poverty,” and now, disabled, “destitute,” and incapable of supporting his female dependents, he pleaded with the federal pensions commission for relief. More than two dozen neighbors and friends signed off on his application, many of whom were themselves veterans, and Barr’s petition was approved.³⁴

Barr’s experience was typical in the war-ravaged communities of the upcountry, where few were untouched by property loss, disease, disabling wounds, imprisonment, poverty, or the death of loved ones. The claims filed against the state for provisions, supplies, and services tell part of this story. Well-to-do planters like John Barkley and Robert Crawford surrendered pork, corn, fodder, horses, flour, beef, wagons, timber, and pasturage to American forces. Henry Coffee lost his wagon and team, a key to his

³³ *Greene Papers*, 8, 517-18; 9, 165 and note.

³⁴ *Accounts Audited*, 315.

livelihood, at Sumter's Defeat; Archibald Cousart and William Barnett lost or surrendered their guns, along with saddles, livestock, bacon, and meal. The toll was even heavier on Loyalists like Daniel Harper, who forfeited his entire estate, recovering only a fraction of it by the time of his death in 1791. On the other hand, aside from rare accounts from veterans like Nathan Barr or James Waughope, whose house and farm were burned in 1780, the people of the Waxhaws left no record of their losses to the British. The war records assure us, however, that occupying armies "made a desert of the country," while angry Loyalist raiders sacked the settlement and left much of it in ashes.³⁵

Since most service records pertain only to survivors, it is impossible to estimate the war's toll on human life in the Waxhaws, but the available sources suggest that it was fairly heavy. John Doby was killed at Eutaw Springs in 1780; Joseph Pickens died the following year at Ninety-Six. William Barr, James Walker, and Simon Beard also died or were killed during the war. Especially hard hit was the family of future president Andrew Jackson: his brother Hugh succumbed to the heat at Stono Ferry in 1779, his brother Robert died of smallpox after his release from Camden in 1781, and his mother died of a fever after visiting prison ships in Charleston. John Coffin's raiders killed fourteen people in 1781, while Tarleton's defeat of Sumter at Fishing Creek the previous year "was marked with the capture and slaughter of a large part of the inhabitants of this populous settlement." Almost all of the community's Loyalists were either killed or fled the country.³⁶

The local sources are silent on slaves during the war. The eight slaves owned by Daniel Harper were probably plundered by neighbors or, just as likely, seized by Sumter and awarded as bounties to veterans. Military and political leaders routinely used slaves as pawns during the war, seizing them from enemy estates, using them for non-combat

³⁵ Accounts Audited, 283 [Barkley], 1592 [Crawford], 1332 [Coffee], 1525 [Cousart], 304 [Barnett].

³⁶ Accounts Audited, 1960 [Doby], 5935 [Pickens], 316A [Barr], 8133 [Walker], 240 [Beard]; Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, 71-2, 87-94. All of the Loyalists identified in Barnwell, "Report of the Loyalist Exiles," either fled the country or died during the war.

service, selling them to support the army, offering freedom to soldier-runaways, and, like Sumter, using them to lure volunteers into active duty. Slaves in the Waxhaws, which made up perhaps ten percent or more of the population in 1780, probably fell into these categories as well. Some also no doubt took advantage of the disorders of the war to run away, escaping when masters went off to war or joining the mass of escaped, refugee, and plundered slaves who huddled around British lines. Like the white population, the number of slaves in the Waxhaws probably declined as a result of the war, although in the decade after the war it would dramatically increase.³⁷

On the whole the war did little to alter the patterns of association among the people of the Waxhaws. It is true that Catawba-white relations improved as a result of the war, for the Catawbas were American allies and skirmished with Loyalists alongside Waxhaws militiamen (although tensions had actually cooled long before the British invasion of 1780). But for the most part the bitter memories of wartime opposition died hard. Six Loyalists were executed on Fishing Creek at the close of the war, and according to one tradition Daniel Harper was murdered by his political enemies.³⁸ Further, the comradeship and common suffering of the war could not heal the class and neighborhood divisions that had emerged when settlers streamed into the blackjack district; rather, neighborhood tensions mounted and would eventually split the church. Nor did the losses and short-term privations of wartime permanently change the material conditions of Waxhaws farmers. The Dunlaps, Barkleys, and Crawfords remained economically dominant; Robert Crawford even profited from the war, despite his dishonorable conduct. In a more indirect way, however, the American Revolution did revolutionize the Waxhaws. As we shall see, by opening the trans-Appalachian territory to settlement the war created a strong pull that drained a portion of the white population,

³⁷ Loyalist Claims, AO 13/129/233-8 [Harper]. On slave bounties see Klein, *Unification*, 106-7. For a good general discussion of slaves during and after the war see Nadelhaft, *Disorders of War*, 62-4, 89, 129.

³⁸ William Dobein James, *A Sketch of the Life of Brigadier General Francis Marion . . .* (Hemingway, SC: Three Rivers Historical Society, 1996, 1821), 40-1 [execution]; Pettus, *Waxhaws*, 51 [Harper].

altered the demographic make-up of the community, contributed to the weakening of the kin-based neighborhood, and consequently changed the meaning and significance of kinship. In this respect the war played a role in transforming the Waxhaws from a northern yeoman society into a southern slaveholding society. It spelled the beginning of the end of the yeoman community of the Waxhaws.

CHAPTER 5:

A YEOMAN COMMUNITY IN DECLINE, 1785-1805

If the war was a leveling force that threw the economy of the Waxhaws into a household exchange mode, it did little to permanently alter either the market integration process or the social divisions between neighborhoods. Recovery was slow in the cash-starved economy of the 1780s, but as the farmers of the Waxhaws set about repairing their fences and rebuilding their herds, the great issues of the decade -- the debtor crisis, the land frenzy, the push for publicly-supported internal improvements -- were felt only dimly. Rather, more subtle changes in the local land market, growing population pressure, an expanding wheat market, and an ever deeper and wider dependence on slave labor were the forces that transformed the Waxhaws in the last decade of the eighteenth century. At the same time, American independence opened the trans-Appalachian territories to settlement -- perhaps the Revolution's most important legacy -- which rapidly drained the community's white population. By 1800 the Waxhaws was no longer an extension of the wheat-growing yeoman society of the north but a slaveholding, staple-producing, and at some level self-consciously southern community -- all before cotton made its way into the upcountry.¹

Socio-cultural conflict accompanied these rapid demographic and economic changes. Neighborhood differences persisted as markets and slavery drew the Waxhaws deeper into the regional economy. These differences were expressed and concentrated in religious controversies over hiring ministers, relocating the church, and hymn-singing.

¹ For a discussion of the postwar recovery see Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 108-48.

The religious turmoil of the 1790s indicated that the Waxhaws was rapidly and painfully evolving into two communities, setting the stage for a much greater upheaval in 1802.

* * *

For much of the 1780s Waxhaws farmers struggled to reestablish the competency they had achieved before the war. Estate records from the mid-eighties describe the war's toll on yeoman households and provide a glimpse into the state of the postwar economy. The ten estates probated between 1783-1785 averaged only 7 cattle each, compared with more than twice that number from the estates inventoried in the 1770s. Richard Cousar, who owned eleven slaves at his death in 1781, had only twelve cattle -- far below William Richardson's pre-war herd of thirty or Robert Dunlap's nineteen. Not surprisingly, the average number of horses inventoried also dropped as a result of the war, though not as sharply, declining by 25%. Slaveholdings remained comparable. On the other hand, no post-war inventory listed bonds, notes, or even book debt owed to the estate, in striking contrast to the late colonial inventories.² However, while the postwar debtor crisis that shook the state in the mid-eighties was late in coming to the Waxhaws, it nevertheless left its mark: in 1788 Robert Crawford lost two debt actions to creditors in Camden and Charleston, and that same year George Grierson and David Adams lost land to foreclosure. Grierson may in fact have left the country; his 250-acre tract on Cane Creek was seized and sold to satisfy an eight-shilling debt to James Dunlap. Camden

² The Lancaster County probate records were destroyed during the Civil War, but prior to 1785 the Waxhaws was part of Camden District, whose wills and estate inventories ended up in Kershaw County's records when it split from Lancaster in the 1790s. The following records can be found in Estate Papers, Kershaw County, SCDAH: John Barnett (1784), apt. 5, pkg. 136; William Barnett (1785), apt. 5, pkg. 138; Richard Cousar (1783), apt. 18, pkg. 587; John Gamble (1785), apt. 25, pkg. 892; Robert Harper (1783), apt. 30, pkg. 1075; James Kennedy (1779), apt. 37, pkg. 1338; William Simpson (1783), apt. 63, pkg. 2232; Benjamin Thompson (1783), apt. 67, pkg. 2400; James White (1784), apt. 73, pkg. 2609; Stephen White (1783), apt. 73, pkg. 2610.

merchant Joseph Kershaw also fell victim to the debtor crisis; his mills burned to the ground by the British, Kershaw never recovered and died insolvent in 1787.³

The war's heavy toll on Camden contributed to the sluggish economic recovery of its hinterlands, but by 1790 this began to change. The new decade had begun auspiciously for piedmont farmers; in November the Presbyterian Synod of the Carolinas set aside a day of thanksgiving for "the plentiful crops of the present year." There were also significant improvements to the commercial infrastructure. The completion of the Santee Canal gave communities along the Wateree safe and direct river access to Charleston and gave rise to a small boat-building industry in Camden.⁴ At the same time, Camden merchants constructed three new state-of-the-art mills, and by 1801 they were milling 40,000 bushels of wheat and exporting 6,000 barrels of flour annually. In 1802 John Drayton wrote that the mills at Camden were stimulating wheat production as far away as North Carolina, "particularly in the Waxhaws settlement," one of the main producers of Camden's "*superfine wheat flour*." Flour prices were strong in the nineties, with Camden flour bringing \$15 per barrel in Charleston in 1797 --

³ South Carolina Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Rolls, SCDAH, Box 136A, no. 115A (April 14, 1788) and Box 136A, no. 84A (July 19, 1788) [Crawford]; Lancaster Deeds, A, 254 [Adams] and A, 247 [Grierson]; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 126 [Kershaw].

⁴ There was early interest in opening the Catawba River to navigation as well, and in 1787 the state chartered the Catawba Company for that purpose. The company, none of whose investors actually lived in the Catawba Valley, set out to develop of system of four canals with locks, with the canal at Land's Ford in the Waxhaws as the uppermost. Despite the "extraordinary advantages" of opening the river and the "spirit of improvement" extolled by the company's trustees, the project attracted few investors, could not draw government funding, and was fraught with problems. When the river was finally "opened" in 1830, few farmers used it to transport their goods, and as a result the canals were shut down by the end of that decade. See "An Act to establish a Company for opening of the Navigation of the Catawba and Wateree Rivers," in *First Laws of South Carolina*, v. 2; *Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina*, October 7, 1788; *Catawba Company Petition to the House of Representatives of South Carolina* (Charleston, 1808), Early American Imprints, no. 14652; *United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee to Whom was Referred, on the Fourteenth November Last, the petition of the Company for Opening the Catawba and Wateree Rivers* (1809), Early American Imprints, no. 19056; Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, 157; Kenneth W. Mixon, *The Land's Ford Canal: A Research Report* (University of South Carolina, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1969).

still about 25% below Philadelphia's higher quality flour, but consistently high enough to make wheat a reliable and profitable staple.⁵

The "plentiful crops" and the return to commercial farming also signaled the return of the money market, heightening both opportunities and risks for enterprising farmers. Despite the credit surge of the late colonial period, there is little to suggest that a significant number of colonial farmers were using their land to secure loans. The first sheriff's sale in the Waxhaws was in 1779, when Joseph Barnett was seized of 200 acres to pay his debt to William Hamilton. That same year Andrew Linn secured a loan with land he had inherited from his father. The two sheriff's sales in 1788, like most of the foreclosures during the crisis of the eighties, probably pertained to pre-war debts.

In the 1790s, however, farmers not only began to borrow with greater frequency, but they used their lands as security. The deed books identify sixteen mortgages in the Waxhaws between 1790-1805 -- again, in contrast to the one mortgage before 1790 -- and three sheriff's sales where lands were treated as security, though they may not have been intended as such. All but two of the sixteen mortgages were secured with land (slaves and moveable property secured the others). In three cases, debtors used livestock, tools, and dwellings as well as land -- virtually everything they owned -- as collateral. In some instances debtors were simply purchasing land from the owner on credit; in others they were using existing lands to back new loans. On the whole the credit generated by mortgages functioned as designed, giving farmers the access to land or the capital they needed to expand production. And yet there was an unusually high rate of foreclosure as well, with seven of the nineteen transactions

⁵ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 284 ["plentiful crop"]; Schulz, "Rise and Decline of Camden, 45 [Santee Canal/boat building]; Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina, Including a View of Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular* (Charleston: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826), 588 [mills/flour]; William Henry Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 211 [Waxhaws wheat production]; Marjorie Stratford Mendenhall, "A History of Agriculture in South Carolina, 1790-1860: An Economic and Social Study" (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1940), 31-2 [flour prices]. The price of flour dropped sharply in 1796 and 1798 but otherwise remained strong. See Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, 609.

ending in seizure and sale. These patterns indicate that it was the deepening market engagement of the 1790s more than the postwar debtor crisis of the eighties that left farmers increasingly mired in debt and at risk of foreclosure.⁶

The yeoman households of the Waxhaws did not simply use profits from wheat and credit against land to purchase imported consumer goods; they also used their new-found buying power to expand production. In an economy where land was sufficient but labor was scarce, the fastest way to expand production was to purchase slave labor. More than any other factor, the sharp increase in slaveholding during the 1790s attests to the vitality of the local economy and, at a deeper level, to the way market forces were changing the social structure.

Although it is impossible to say with certainty how many slaves were in the Waxhaws before the Revolution, it is unlikely that they made up more than 12% of the population (see Chapter 2, above). Some slaves no doubt escaped during the war, but slave bounties for military service probably compensated for escapees. The estate records do not indicate a net loss in the slave population; in fact, the opposite was true with Richard Cousar, who gained two slaves between the time he drafted his will in 1779 and his death in 1781, the most intense years of the war.⁷ At any rate, by 1790 slaves made up 15% of the overall population of the upcountry and 17% of the population of the Waxhaws. Slaveholdings in the Waxhaws were fairly concentrated: 28% of households owned slaves, and just 3% of households owned one-third of these slaves. Eighteen percent of all households were petty slaveholders owning four or

⁶ Lancaster Deeds, F, 136 and B, 232 [Barnett and Lynn]. For mortgages and sheriff's sales after 1790 see the following in Lancaster Deeds: Book B, 231, 262, 264, 266, 313; Book D, 150, 157, 203; Book F, 106, 107, 200, 137, 139, 201, 213, 220, 223; Book G, 27, 29, 114, 131. On the use of mortgages as a source of capital see Winifred B. Rothenberg, "Mortgage Credit at the Origins of a Capital Market: Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 1642-1773," paper presented to a joint Seminar of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies and the Program in Early American Economy and Society, December 1, 2000.

⁷ Cousar, *Down the Waxhaw Road*, 38; Inventory of Richard Cousar, Estate Papers, Kershaw County, SCDAH, apt. 18, pkg. 537. On slaves during the war see Chapter 4, above. There are no records documenting either escaped slaves or slaves distributed as bounty in the Waxhaws during the war.

fewer slaves, and three-fifths of these owned only one or two. These petty slaveholders made up nearly two-thirds of the slaveholding class. In short, the picture from 1790 is still that of a predominately non-slaveholding yeoman community with a small group of planters and middling slave owners and a somewhat larger, though unquestionably minority, class of petty slaveholders.⁸

This changed dramatically in the 1790s. By 1800 there were 561 slaves living along the two creek systems of the Waxhaws, an increase of 90% in just ten years. This stunning growth was not connected to a more general population increase; in fact, the white population of the Waxhaws actually declined during the nineties. Slaves now made up 28% of the overall population, up from 17% ten years earlier. Nor was this increase the result of a few large or middling slaveholders adding to their holdings. Rather, the proportion of slave-owning households rose sharply, from 28% to 51%. Three-fourths of these new slaveholders had lived in the Waxhaws before 1790: of these, one-third were the children of early settlers establishing independent households, while the remaining two-thirds were independent householders in 1790 and had entered the slaveholding class subsequently. Only one-fourth of the new slaveholders had immigrated during the 1790s, marking the transition to a slave society as an internal process, not brought about by an influx of non-yeoman households. The distribution of slaves within the slaveholding ranks remained roughly constant: as in 1790, the top tenth of slaveholders owned one-third of the slaves, while petty slaveholders, who made up two-thirds of the slaveholding class, owned just over one-fourth of the slaves.

⁸ The following analysis of slavery is based on census data from Lancaster County. See Bureau of the Census, *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States taken in the Year 1790* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), 23-26; and Bureau of the Census, *Heads of Families at the Second Census of the United States taken in the Year 1800, South Carolina* (manuscript on microfilm). Since the Waxhaws made up only a portion of Lancaster County, the names of household heads were checked against land records to determine who did and did not live in the community. Those whose surnames matched but who did not appear in the land records were included if they were listed in the census within a cluster of Waxhaws residents. Those whose surnames did not match Waxhaws landowners but who were part of such clusters were also included.

Most farm families acquired slaves simply to expand production, although a significant number also seemed to be replacing lost family labor. Over half of the slaveowners in 1800 had average or above-average numbers of free laborers (six or more) within their households. Many of these households were quite large, some numbering upwards of twenty, and some added substantially to their free household members even as they were purchasing slaves. Archibald McCorkle, the Revolutionary War veteran who eluded Nathanael Greene after robbing the imprisoned British officers in 1782, broke into the slaveholding class by purchasing seven slaves in the 1790s, all while adding eleven whites to his already large household of nine. On the other hand, half of all slaveholders had five or fewer whites; the majority of these smaller households were petty slaveholders for whom slave labor was a necessary supplement to family labor. Further, about one-third of new slaveholders -- those who, like McCorkle, acquired their first slaves in the 1790s -- actually lost white members to death, marriage, or emigration and subsequently purchased slaves as replacements.

Purchasing a slave was a major investment, and whether they did so simply to expand production or to replace or supplement family labor, farmers knew that buying a slave required a corresponding increase in commercial production. Slaves were far and away the most valuable item in postwar estate inventories, comprising on average between half and three-fourths of the value of estates. This was as true for wealthy men like Richard Cousar, whose eleven slaves made up 72% of his estate, as it was for petty slaveholders like John Barnett, whose sole female slave made up 59% of his wealth at his death in 1784.⁹ In the 1790s, adult male slaves in Lancaster County brought on average about 100 pounds sterling.¹⁰ This was equivalent to the value of 133 acres of good improved bottomland. Beyond the initial outlay,

⁹ Six of nine postwar inventories included slaves. Of these six, slave wealth constituted between 16% and 92% of the value of the estate. See note 2, above, for specific citations of these estate records.

¹⁰ This figure is based on the sales of three male slaves in their mid-twenties, purchased between 1794-1799 and paid for in sterling. See Lancaster Deeds, CE, 94, 201, 207. Adult females were sold at between half and three-fourths as much as males.

slave ownership also led to higher taxes. Slaves thus constituted a considerable investment, one that would not be undertaken lightly or without a careful cost-benefit analysis. On the other hand, slaves could be worked longer and maintained at less expense than family laborers; they constituted a much greater labor surplus. Furthermore, in the strong wheat market of the nineties, a healthy slave promised a good return, at least for those households that could afford to risk a substantial portion of their income or assets. By the 1790s, most households apparently could.

Entry into the slaveholding class altered relationships within farm households. Farmers could invest their slaves' surplus labor in a variety of ways: to expand production by cultivating more acreage, buying more land, purchasing additional slaves or livestock, or improving their property; to raise their status by acquiring consumer goods; or to educate their children. The latter had been the case with William Richardson Davie, whose education was at least partially funded by the labor of his deceased uncle's slave, Joe.¹¹ As James Oakes has noted, a household servant also freed wives and daughters from the worst drudge work and enabled parents to have their daughters tutored.¹² Although it is difficult to gauge the extent to which slaveholding parents schooled their children, the success of the free school movement in Lancaster District suggest that it may have been considerable. Established in 1799, the push for free schools in Lancaster was dominated by the Waxhaws' community, which contributed four of the school system's five trustees. By 1812 the district was operating eleven schools and serving 206 students – an impressive achievement in the rural and still largely yeoman upcountry.¹³ Many of these students probably came from the families of petty slaveholders,

¹¹ Will of William Richardson, Will Book SS, 44, SCDAAH.

¹² On the benefits of slave ownership to white women and on the changes slave ownership brought to white households generally, see Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom*, 94-6.

¹³ The four Waxhaws trustees were the Rev. John Brown, Dr. Samuel C. Dunlap, Jr., John Montgomery, and William Nesbitt. See Lancaster County Historical Commission, comp., *Education in Lancaster County* (Lancaster, SC, 1957) [typescript in Lancaster Public Library]. This pamphlet gives the

who could make do without their sons' labor as they trained their children for the skilled trades or in some cases the professions.

Farmers in the blackjack neighborhood did not share equally in this dramatic increase in slave wealth. Slaves made up only 7% of the blackjack population in 1790 and 18% in 1800 - a sharp increase, but still no more than two-thirds the proportion of slaves in the overall population of the Waxhaws. There were proportionately fewer slaveholders in the blackjack district, and fewer slaves in slaveowning households. Forty-one percent of blackjack farmers owned slaves in 1800, compared with 51% for the Waxhaws as a whole. Although blackjack households made up nearly one-fourth of the white population of the Waxhaws, they owned only 13% of the slaves. Three-fourths of blackjack slaveholders owned between one and four slaves, and none owned more than twelve. Slaves, like most other emblems of the new prosperity, were concentrated in the older neighborhood of the river and creek bottoms.¹⁴

In the span of only a decade the Waxhaws was transformed from a yeoman society with slaves to a slave society dominated by petty and middling slaveholders. Wheat production, not cotton planting, drove this transformation, just as it powered changes in the land market that further contributed to the new demographic formation of the Waxhaws.

The story of South Carolina's postwar land boom is well known. Purchasing Revolutionary soldiers' indents or capitalizing on liberal land policies, backcountry, lowcountry, and northern speculators amassed over 5 million acres between 1785-1794, mostly in the piedmont and the pine barrens of the middle country. Speculators enclosed previous surveys,

full text of the "Report of the Commissioners of the Free Schools for Lancaster District for the Year 1812." Contrast the success of the Lancaster Free Schools with Rachel Klein's claim that the free school movement was a failure in the upcountry more generally. See *Unification of a Slave State*, 239-44.

¹⁴ Blackjack farmers included landowners who lived on the following creeks: Rum, Gills, Bear, Hannahs, Camp (a branch of Cane Creek), and Turkey Quarter. Landowners whose property lay along these creeks but also bordered Cane Creek were excluded.

sometimes engrossed entire settlements, warned off or made deals with poor squatters, embezzled state funds to prop up failing ventures, and used worthless lands to pay foreign creditors. Some managed to wring a profit from speculative schemes while others ended in bankruptcy, disgrace, or prison. For its part the state intervened to protect the claims of petitioners whose lands had been engrossed while establishing policies that encouraged large-scale speculation, or set limits on land grants but still signed “excessive” grants or simply failed to prosecute even flagrant violators of those limits. In effect, as Rachel Klein has noted, the postwar land grab left losers on both sides: failing to “yield the anticipated economic rewards” for speculators, it nonetheless alienated many poor farmers and “created social tensions within the backcountry.”¹⁵

The Waxhaws had its counterpart, however small, to this frenzy that made South Carolina and indeed the new nation “the land of speculation.”¹⁶ Between 1784 and 1805 the state issued 142 grants in the Waxhaws totaling 35,535 acres. Grants ranged in size from 10 to over 1,300 acres. Four of these grants were for 1000 acres or more, although a number of very small grants on Waxhaw and Cane Creek pushed the overall average down to between 200-250 acres. 80% or more of these postwar grants were in the blackjack district, as were all of the largest grants and nearly all grants in excess of 300 acres. By the end of the century surveyors had laid out lands in the furthest reaches of the blackjack country, encompassing the barren high grounds abutting the Lynches River settlement.¹⁷

¹⁵ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, chapter 6 (quote from p. 178). Klein also notes that the speculative frenzy further united backcountry and coastal elites who shared a “voracious appetite” for land and a common hatred of British merchants, a union that would serve them well in their contest with the Federalists. The land boom thus had a “complex impact” (202).

¹⁶ Quoted in Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 178.

¹⁷ This analysis of state grants is based on records found in the State Plat Books (Charleston Series), SCDAH.

The biggest player in the local land market of the 1790s was the Reverend Brice Miller. Nothing is known of Miller's early career, including his religious affiliation or clerical background, but by the time he came to the Waxhaws he was no stranger to land deals. Sometime during the mid-1760s he immigrated to the Sugar Creek-Six Mile Creek area just north of the Waxhaw settlement, where he bought and sold hundreds of acres before moving into the blackjack district after the war. By 1790 he was a widower living in a household of one, with no slaves and no known dependents. He would soon seek to support himself by cashing in on the land boom, although like his more ambitious counterparts who organized the great land companies, he learned that there was little to be gained by speculating in worthless lands.¹⁸

Miller ventured into the speculative market in early 1793, just months after the state liberalized its land policy to open unwanted lands to speculation. Over the course of the next two years he ordered thirteen surveys for a total of 5,909 acres scattered across the blackjack district and the Little Lynches settlement. He sold ten of these surveys almost immediately, leaving it to the buyer to certify the grant and pay the purchase money. How much Miller made on these transactions is unknown, since they were recorded on the plat and grant and not in the deed book. Lands on Bear Creek and Turkey Quarter, the sites of Miller's Waxhaws surveys, were among the poorest in the area, fetching from one to seven shillings per acre in the mid- to late-nineties -- far below the nine to fourteen shillings paid for lands on Waxhaw Creek. Since Miller did not have title to these tracts, and since the buyer still had to pay the \$10 per hundred-acre purchase price to the state, he probably drew only a modest profit from each transaction.¹⁹

¹⁸ On Miller's Mecklenburg County land transactions see Harold and Mary Criswell, *Brice Miller "et. al."* (Plano, TX, 1994); Bureau of the Census, *Head of Families at the First Census*, Lancaster District.

¹⁹ For Miller's surveys see the following in State Plat Books (Charleston Series), SCDH: bk. 32, pp. 268, 302, 309, 427, 431, 432, 436, 539, 546; bk. 33, pp. 2, 14, 145, 330, 336.

By late 1795 Miller had apparently overextended himself. Within months he would face suits from three local creditors seeking to recover some thirty-two pounds sterling in debts. Perhaps he had other debts as well, or perhaps he hoped to prevent seizure of his lands to pay the creditors. In any event, by December 1795 he was in desperate financial straits and mortgaged everything he owned to his neighbor, William Graham, for two hundred pounds sterling. According to their indenture, Miller granted Graham use but not possession of 11,457 acres, all of his personal property including furniture, tools, livestock, and clothes, and all debts due to him until the loan was repaid. Among the real estate Miller used to secure this mortgage was 3,000 acres on Gills Creek, over 1,500 acres on Turkey Quarter, 4,000 acres “formerly the Property of Joseph Singleton,” plus more than 2,600 acres scattered across Lancaster District and Mecklenburg County, including a 99-year lease on a 962-acre tract in the Catawba reservation.²⁰

If this was a ploy to prevent foreclosure, it failed. In 1796 the sheriff seized 1,537 acres from Miller to satisfy a ten-pound sterling debt to James Huston. One year later the York County authorities seized and sold his Catawba lease -- which included only 300 hundred acres, not the 962 Miller claimed in his indenture -- to pay the Lancaster creditors. Miller fled the state, insolvent save for a 267-acre tract on Bear Creek, itself contested, that he conveyed to a relative in Virginia. Broken but unvanquished, Miller turned up in Hancock County, Georgia in 1804, and two years later his kinsman sold the Bear Creek tract for \$600. The buyer was George Cowan, also of Hancock County; Miller probably arranged the transaction.²¹

²⁰ Lancaster Deeds, B, 292.

²¹ Lancaster Deeds, G, 29 [Huston]; York County, South Carolina Conveyance Book E (1797-1801), 85, SCDAA [Catawba lease]; Lancaster Deeds, F, 132 [contested Bear Creek tract]; Lancaster Deeds, G, 280 [sale of Bear Creek tract]. The Criswells, *Brice Miller*, 16, established Miller’s residency in Hancock County through the Georgia Tax Records Digest.

As we shall see, there was more to Brice Miller's story than the tangle of land deals and petty debts described in the records. The people of the Waxhaws and the blackjack district in particular were prone to exaggerate the importance of speculators like Miller, to accord them more prestige and influence than their actions warranted. But Brice Miller did not embody the land market; as is often the case, what really mattered were the quieter, more subtle changes taking place beneath the surface of events, outside the bubble of Miller's ill-fated negotiations.²²

Although the market for premium land began to shrink in the 1770s, by and large the colonial land market had met the needs of yeoman households. During the boom years of the 1750s the headright system functioned to make large and contiguous tracts available at very low costs to immigrant farmers. As we have seen, farmers used these early grants to meet a range of needs, selling some to acquire cash, selling others to settle kin and friends, and retaining still others to farm and preserve as a legacy for their children. Although the choice lands had been granted by the mid-1760s, land prices were low enough -- two to four shillings sterling per acre, on average -- to enable newcomers to acquire substantial tracts and gradually build their own legacies. Such was the case with George White, who built a 700-acre estate between 1759-1765 through a combination of grants and purchases, and with John Cantzon, who accumulated 800 acres in the mid-sixties through a succession of transactions, leaving a substantial estate to his son at his death in 1767. Thus although the number and size of grants dropped sharply in the sixties, the residual effects of the earlier boom, coupled with the still-developing market for wheat, kept prices low and made the purchase of large tracts of good land possible for middling farmers. Even farmers of modest means like George White, whose

²² As discussed in Chapter 3, historians are also prone to overstate the importance of land speculators. This is true for the early national as well as the colonial period. For a recent example see Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1993), 171-2.

estate was valued at just 409 pounds at his death in 1765, could hope to establish a sufficient legacy for their children.²³

Several features distinguished the postwar land market from its colonial predecessor. First, it was much more robust. Over 73,000 acres changed hands in 362 transactions between 1780-1805, a modest but still significant increase over the first quarter-century of settlement, which had after all included the initial land boom. The number of annual land purchases reached double digits ten times in the postwar period, compared to only once before the war. New land grants were also strong, averaging over 1,600 acres per year, or 63% higher than the annual post-boom average between 1758-1775. Gone too was the oscillating pattern of the colonial market, when a drop in grants was offset by a corresponding rise in purchases and vice versa. Instead, grants and purchases both remained vigorous throughout the early national period; in fact, the peak years for granted lands -- 1787, 1792-4, and 1800 - were also among the strongest years for the market in purchased lands.²⁴

This robust activity took place in spite of higher land prices. Although the colonial period witnessed a gradual upward push in prices, even on the eve of the Revolution the price of prime real estate did not exceed twelve shillings sterling per acre and averaged only around four. By the mid-1780s, however, the average price per acre of land in the Waxhaws had reached over nine shillings.²⁵ Although it dropped in the late nineties, when thousands of acres

²³ For Cantzon see SCCG, 1764, 1765, 1767; Lancaster Deeds, D, 135; South Carolina Memorials, 9, 329. For White see SCCG, 1766; Anson County Deeds, 5, 222; Mecklenburg County Deeds, 2, 720; Inventories of Estates, SCDAH, W, 437.

²⁴ This and the following analysis of the postwar land market is based on the Lancaster County Deed Books and the State Plat Books (Charleston Series), SCDAH. The figures for the peak years are as follows: 1787, eighteen grants and eleven sales; 1792-4, thirty grants and twenty-four sales; 1800, fourteen grants and sixteen sales.

²⁵ Colonial buyers used currency from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina as well as sterling. The exchange rate tables in John J. McCusker's *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1978) have been invaluable. In the absence of reliable tables for the postwar period, I have only used transactions made in pounds sterling. I have also assumed that the value of sterling did not inflate between 1785-1805.

of cheap land in the blackjack district, some selling for as little as one shilling per acre, flooded the market, premium land stayed at ten shillings and spiralled gradually upward through 1803, when it spiked sharply in response to cotton. In short, from 1785 forward the price of land was two to three times that of the late colonial period. Several factors likely contributed to this price increase, including the revitalized wheat market, which raised the value of wheat-producing soils; the increasing proportion of cleared and improved lands in the market; and the growing demand for good land, driven primarily by population pressures. As a result, by the end of the century land had become a source of profit to a degree that was unknown to colonial landowners.

A third feature that distinguished postwar land transactions was the comparatively high percentage of inherited lands changing hands.²⁶ Only three heirs put their fathers' lands on the market before 1776, with inherited land making up just 5% of the total purchases. By contrast, heirs sold thirty-four tracts in the years after the war, and inherited lands made up at least 18% of all purchases. In part this points to an older landowning population and a subsequent higher death rate in the postwar period, but there was also an increasing willingness among heirs to sell off their fathers' lands. Postwar heirs wasted little time putting at least a portion of their new lands on the market; two-thirds of those whose dates of inheritance can be identified sold part or all of their inherited lands within five years, compared with just one-third of colonial heirs. The case of Moses Cantzon is illustrative. Cantzon's brother William had inherited the lion's share of their father's 800-acre estate before the war and retained every acre. When William died intestate and without issue around 1790, Moses and his twice-widowed mother came into a substantial inheritance, which they sold off piece by piece over the next fifteen years. As the value of real estate went up, Waxhaws landowners increasingly came to see it as a commodity,

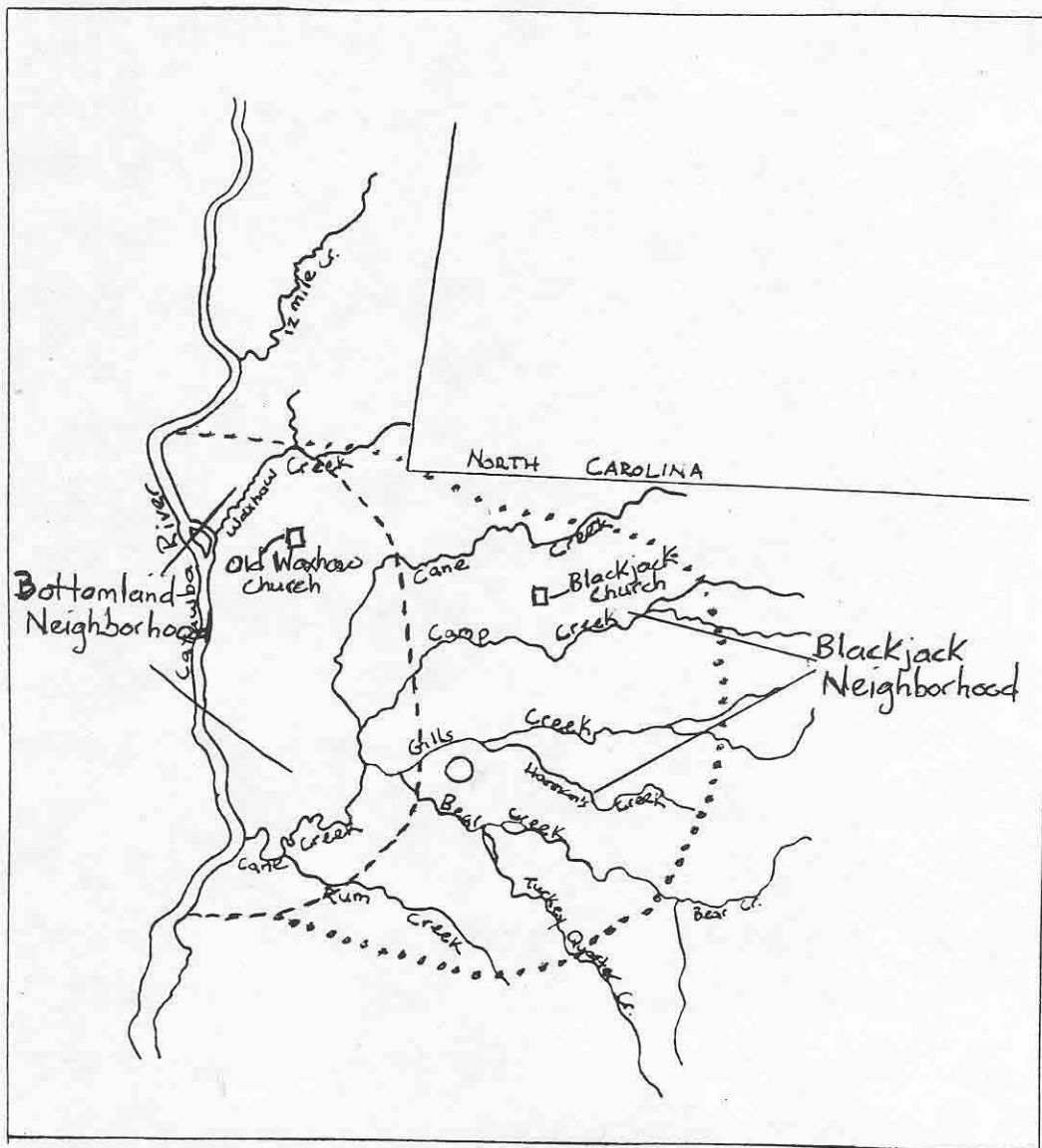
²⁶ Without probate records it is impossible to estimate the percentage of all inherited land put on the market. The deeds, which frequently give chains of title, identify inherited lands only at the point of sale and do not necessarily indicate that a higher percentage of heirs were selling their fathers' lands, but only that more inherited acreage was entering the market.

turning it back into the market for a quick profit rather than farming or leasing it for a steady income.²⁷

Characterized by a high volume of grants and purchases, rising prices yet robust sales, and an increasing proportion of inherited acreage, the early national land market was thus more vigorous and more complex than its colonial antecedent. In essence two geographically distinct land markets developed in the Waxhaws in the years after 1785. In the blackjack district a buyer's market emerged from the combination of vacant lands and state land policy, while in the western bottomlands a seller's market developed around rising prices and the breakup of colonial estates by heirs. During the 1790s this dual market, despite all its activity, was increasingly unable to meet the needs of many farmers, consequently spurring emigration and eroding the kin-based neighborhood system.

The buyer's market of the blackjack district was characterized by an abundance of vacant, undeveloped, and in places poor land, large tracts, low prices, a high volume of grants, and a moderate level of speculation. As we have seen, blackjack soils were on the whole inferior to those of the western bottoms, and the newly surveyed lands of the postwar period were the poorest of the poor, above the creek heads and far from the roads, churches, and neighborhoods that tied the people of the Waxhaws to one another and to the wider world. Postwar grants were concentrated in the blackjack neighborhood, which encompassed perhaps two-thirds of the Waxhaws' overall grants and three-fourths of the granted acreage. These tracts were large, averaging around 300 acres with several ranging between 640-1300 acres. The abundance and poor quality of blackjack lands made for lackluster sales through the mid-nineties, when low prices and a tightening bottomland market finally drove buyers into the district. Sales of blackjack lands even outstripped bottomland sales for the years 1794-6 and 1800-02. As Brice Miller learned, however, the blackjack lands performed very poorly for

²⁷ On the Cantzon estate see Lancaster Deeds, B, 277, 278; D, 135; F, 190, 220, and 227.



Map 8: Neighborhoods, 1795. Adapted from Vergil A. Rogers, *Soil Survey of Lancaster County, South Carolina*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

profit-minded speculators. At three to five shillings per acre on average, grantees could expect only a modest return on their investments. These low prices made the blackjack country a buyer's market, but they also suggest that few farmers were interested in under-producing lands regardless of their price.²⁸

By contrast, the seller's market of the western bottomlands was characterized by rich soils, improved farms, smaller tracts, high prices, few grants, heavy sales, and a low level of speculation but more opportunities for profitable exchanges. By the 1790s farm families had been clearing and improving the lands along the Catawba River and lower Waxhaw and Cane Creeks for three to four decades. Fields, houses, barns, fences, paths, roads, productive soils, access to water, and proximity to neighbors raised the value of bottomland to two and three times that of blackjack lands. By the end of the colonial period very little vacant land remained in this district; as a result few grants were issued, and those were typically small, on average about half as large as blackjack grants. On the other hand, the market in purchased lands was brisk. An estimated 60% of overall land sales were bottomland tracts. Landowners on Waxhaw Creek and the Catawba River averaged two to three transactions per year throughout the period, compared to less than one purchase per year in the blackjack district. The bottomland market also constituted the greater part (82%) of inherited lands. Sales of these lands made up one quarter of the total sales in the bottomland, compared with 18% overall. Unfortunately, gaps in the records, the varieties of currency, and the unknown quantities of farm improvements make estimating profits from individual transactions impossible;²⁹ however, the prevalence of inherited lands in the market, along with the good prices bottomland tracts were

²⁸ The figures for the peak years for blackjack sales are as follows: 1794-6, eleven conveyances in the blackjack district and five in bottomland; 1800-02, twelve in the blackjack district and seven in the bottomland.

²⁹ By using only transactions made in sterling, however, I have not let the varieties of currency affect my land-price analysis.

fetching, suggests that a seller's market offering a fairly high profit margin was operating in the district between 1785-1800.

This high level of activity indicates that the demand for good land was strong and unabated through the turn of the century, strong enough to sustain high prices and brisk sales despite the neighboring market in cheap land. Newcomers to land ownership were especially hungry for good land, accounting for over half the acreage purchased in the quarter century after the war. Further, first-time landowners were twice as likely to purchase their first lands than to take out grants; like buyers generally, purchases by first-time landowners were concentrated in the bottomland district, showing a decided preference for good and well-situated land even if it required a greater financial sacrifice.³⁰

However, if good land remained within the reach of many farmers and continued to be a viable option for many first-time landowners, the dual market failed to meet the needs of many others. For the very fact of a seller's market suggests that supply was not keeping pace with demand. This was distressing news for farmers interested in using land to farm and not to sell, and in accumulating enough land to ensure not just their own but their children's livelihood. Shut out of the market by high prices, locked out by lack of available quality lands, or simply unable to purchase as much land as they needed, by the mid-1790s a rising generation of farmers was looking west toward the cheap and plentiful lands in Tennessee and Georgia.

Although demand was concentrated on the productive and improved lands of the bottomland, it was driven by population pressure. By 1790 the population of the Waxhaws had reached 1,761, an increase of nearly 70% since 1775.³¹ Slaves probably accounted for a quarter of this growth, but natural increase made the biggest contribution, for there were no

³⁰ First-time landowners account for 47% of the transactions and 54% of the acreage purchased from 1780-1805; by contrast, they received 37% of the grants and 41% of the granted acreage during the same period.

³¹ These population figures are based on census data, 1790 and 1800. For the colonial population see Appendix 1.

new waves of immigrants after the war as there had been in the colonial period. Children aged fifteen and under made up approximately 58% of this population, and between 80-88% of all households included at least one child.³² In effect, there was a small-scale baby boom in the Waxhaws during the immediate postwar period. As the oldest of these children came of age over the course of the next decade, they and their parents confronted the inexorable law of supply and demand in the high prices and shrinking supply of good land that characterized the bottomland market. Not surprisingly, many of them left the community.

The case of the Kennedy family illustrates both the impact of population on the land market and the strategies farmers used to cope with and capitalize on land shortages. John Kennedy had immigrated in the early 1750s and by the mid-sixties had accumulated 562 acres of rich bottomland on Waxhaw Creek. By local standards this was a considerable estate, more than twice the 253 acres owned by the average household at Kennedy's death in 1797. Kennedy's estate, however, was to be apportioned among five heirs, leaving them just 112 acres each. Kennedy's son Felix bought out the other heirs for forty-two pounds sterling -- two shillings an acre -- and two years later sold about half of this land for \$1000. Benefitting from his father's accumulation strategy, the generosity of his co-heirs, and the high prices of the seller's market, Felix was able to turn a handsome profit while retaining enough land to farm and pass on to his own children. For their part, at least three of the other four heirs took their earnings and moved west into Georgia and Tennessee.³³

The Kennedy heirs were not alone. After four decades of continual and sometimes dramatic growth, between 1790 and 1800 the white population of the Waxhaws suddenly declined. This was not due to a decrease in household size -- in fact, the average number of

³² Age-specific information is available for males only in 1790 and for both males and females in 1800. Boys under 16 made up 29% of the white population in 1790; I have doubled that number to arrive at a total figure for children, which is consistent with the children's male-female ratio in 1800.

³³ SCCG, 1766; Lancaster Deeds, C, 66; F, 22, 258, 263.

whites per household grew from 5.8 to 6.2 during the nineties -- but to a 9% drop in the absolute number of households.³⁴ Many of the households that dropped out of the 1800 census, moreover, were those with small children in 1790. According to the 1790 census data, an estimated 371 children in 1790 should have still be identified as minors in 1800, but the second census listed only 228 such children, a 39% decrease. In other words, families with young children in 1790 left the community in disproportionate numbers over the course of the next decade. Many of these were probably young families who, shut out of the tightened land market of the nineties, moved into the thinly settled western lands that offered a better prospect for attaining competency.³⁵

The emigrant profile gathered from the census data indicates that the composition of this emigrant population was much closer to that of the overall community in 1790 than in 1800. Like the general population in 1790, just over one in four emigrant households were slaveholders, and about two-thirds of these owned four or fewer slaves. This suggests that the increase in the proportion of slaveholders in the Waxhaws in 1800 was due in part to an exodus of non-slaveholding households. The land records tend to bear out this conclusion. The deeds identify the location of emigrants who inherited and/or sold land after relocating. Although they show us only a small fraction of the total emigrant population, the deeds nonetheless provide invaluable information about the time and place of relocation and suggest something of the composition of the emigrant population.³⁶ None of the ten emigrants named in the deeds through 1805 moved before 1792, indicating once again that outmigration began in the nineties

³⁴ The number of households dropped from 250 to 227, while the total white population declined from 1453 to 1416 (2.5%). Whites as a proportion of the population fell from 82% to 71%.

³⁵ 127 households disappeared from the census between 1790 and 1800, while 103 households were added. I am not suggesting that all disappearing households emigrated; some household heads died and others were probably missed by the second census. With only very limited death records it is impossible to sort out these disappearing households, so I have used all of them to create an emigrant profile.

³⁶ For emigrants in the Waxhaws in the deeds see Lancaster Deeds, B, 210, 271, 294, 329, 344; CE, 196; F, 255, 257, 258, 263; G, 131.

in response to the tightening land market. Nor do any of these emigrants appear to be slaveholders, and only two belonged to families or extended families that owned slaves before 1800. Six of ten were from the bottomland district, and of the remaining four, three were from the families of early immigrants who settled the marginal lands between the blackjack and bottomland neighborhoods. In other words, nine of ten were from long-established and more densely populated parts of the community.

As the land market constricted in the 1790s it offered opportunities to some and obstacles to others. Those with surplus lands were uniquely positioned to reap the rewards of a seller's market. Given the spread of slavery and the market for wheat, good land could be farmed for a good return in the nineties, and as a result such land performed well as a commodity. For the majority of households who continued to rely solely on family labor, however, the shrinking supply and high price of good land was troubling. Unable or unwilling to purchase land and slaves or limit the size of their families and thus reduce their children's dependence on inherited lands, many of these families adopted an alternative strategy: like their fathers had done a generation earlier, they colonized the bustling border country to the west.

By leaving their community these emigrants further transformed it, accelerating the transition to a slave society and weakening the kinship networks that had structured neighborhoods earlier. And yet emigration was only one factor in the demise of the kin-based neighborhood; those who remained behind also contributed to it by selling off their surplus lands, including their inheritances, to non-kin. Overall, two-thirds of the purchased and granted acreage conveyed between 1785-1800 went to non-kin, a figure consistent with transactions during the colonial period. However, there was very little inherited land on the market before the war. Heirs sold an additional 5,000 acres of inherited land to people outside their kin groups during the same fifteen-year period. The Montgomery family, which had accumulated over 1000 acres on Bear and Cane Creeks before the war and an additional 1,300 acres in the eighties and nineties, sold off two-thirds of their acreage by 1805. The Cantzons, Davies,

Kennedys, Adams, Douglasses, Fosters, and Guthries also sold off a significant share of their landholdings in the early national period.³⁷

It would be a mistake to exaggerate the breakdown of kinship networks and kin-based neighborhoods. Much of the land sold outside the kin group was bought by neighbors, who used it to consolidate their landholdings and forestall emigration of family members. This was the case with the Dunlaps, who bought more than they sold in the postwar period and lost no family members to emigration.³⁸ Moreover, in some cases new kin groups were able to replicate the colonial community-building process by establishing new, albeit small, kin-based neighborhoods in the postwar period. The most prominent example was in the Methodist community that established itself on Waxhaw Creek in the 1780s. Between 1783-87 the Tomlinson family acquired 770 acres in small parcels in the heart of the settlement; over the next two decades they conveyed this land almost exclusively within their kin and church group. Many of their new neighbors, including the Wrens, Hancocks, and Ropers, were also fellow Methodists, and while they did not establish strong family presences in the community, they nonetheless demonstrated a pattern of conveying land within their congregation.³⁹ Thus while many families fled the tightening land market of the nineties, others managed to carve out a place for themselves or used the seller's market to expand their holdings and strengthen their presence.

Nor does the transformation of the nineties point to a change in mentality or a shift in market orientation. Like their fathers before them, the farmers of the nineties continued to farm.

³⁷ Lancaster Deeds, A, 147; B, 251; CE, 8, 82; F, 34, 42, 72, 145 [Montgomery]; A, 144; CE, 269; F, 159 [Davie]; A, 247; B, 210; CE, 158; D, 150, 157; F, 46, 249 [Adams]; F, 187, 195, 264 [Douglass]; B, 331; CE, 32 [Foster]; A, 216; B, 70; CE, 264 [Guthrie].

³⁸ There were 8 Dunlap households in the 1790 census; two dropped out in 1800 but two more were added. The deeds do not identify Dunlap emigrants until 1810.

³⁹ Lancaster Deeds, A, 84, 88; B, 239; D, 114 [Tomlinson]; CE, 149 [Hancock]; F, 135 [Wren]; B, 173, 285 [Roper].

They understood both the exchange value and the use value of land, although they tended to convert it to cash with much greater frequency. They started with the competency their parents had bequeathed them and raised it to a higher level by availing themselves of slaves and capitalizing on the demand for wheat and land. And yet yeoman prosperity was limited, and this perhaps is the lesson of the 1790s: that the prosperous economy of the postwar generation simply could not sustain the colonial yeoman society that had given rise to it. The yeoman economy, with its family labor system and its kin-based neighborhoods and its abundant lands, had performed very well, opening markets, raising land values, and reproducing itself enthusiastically. By the 1790s this social and economic system had produced a kind of critical mass, pricing itself out of the market and reproducing itself out of existence. Unable to buy slaves and land or unwilling to settle for a lower level of competency, many of the rising generation turned their backs on the Waxhaws, straining if not breaking the kin-neighbor nexus that had once structured their community.

This demographic and economic transformation produced strains between as well as within neighborhoods. The prosperity of the nineties could not close the social gap between the people of the blackjack district and their bottomland neighbors. Instead, the dual land market and the uneven distribution of slave wealth brought earlier neighborhood tensions to a head, tensions that were expressed in a series of class-informed power struggles over the institutional and cultural control of the Presbyterian church. Beginning with the contest over relocating the church and hiring a new minister, continuing with the liturgical quarrel over psalm- and hymn-singing, and ending with the battle, occasioned by the revival, to basically define the spirit and work of God, the religious controversies of the postwar period were marked by unsatisfying compromises and lingering distrust, and as a result they grew higher pitched and more deeply divisive with time. The changing demography of the Waxhaws, along with expansion and conflict within the larger institutional structure of the Presbyterian church, formed the context for

these struggles. The class and neighborhood divisions that emerged in the late colonial years and were fostered by the war gave them their unique shape. They were further fueled by the ambitions of the land speculator and rogue preacher, the Reverend Brice Miller.

The first task facing the Waxhaw congregation was that of rebuilding its church. Constructed in the 1750s, the original church stood at what was then the geographical center of the community, in the river bottomland between Waxhaw and Cane Creek on the path leading to Land's Ford, the main river crossing connecting the Waxhaws to the neighboring settlement on Fishing Creek. For the first two decades after settlement the community and the congregation faced west toward the river and the densely settled Fishing Creek community more than east toward the sparsely and reluctantly populated blackjack district. Although William Richardson preached every third Sunday at the church and preaching post he had founded on Fishing Creek, settlers near the Catawba probably crossed the river, which was easily forded at low water, and joined the Waxhaw congregation for most Sunday services, swelling the attendance to the thousand or more worshipers that so impressed Charles Woodmason in 1768. Fishing Creek hired its own minister after Richardson's death in 1771, leaving the Waxhaw congregation to contend only with its blackjack constituency over rebuilding and relocating the church after Loyalist raiders burned it to the ground in 1781.⁴⁰

Not only had the "act of wickedness" perpetrated by the church-burners left the presbyterian meeting house a "heap of smouldering ruins;" it also exposed a "rather unhappy" rift in the congregation that had itself been smoldering for more than a decade, according to a 1794 church narrative by John Davis. "A number of emigrants from Europe," Davis noted, "who had during the last ten years settled on the eastern side of the congregation, wished a new meeting-house built some considerable distance from the old one." The "old settlers," however,

⁴⁰ J.H. Saye, *Historical Addresses and Commemorative Ode, Delivered to the Synod of South Carolina . . . October 24, 1885* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1886), 24-5; Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 423.

“wished a house near the place where the old one stood, and near the churchyard where their friends were buried.” The issue of the churchyard was apparently genuine, and not a smoke screen intended to obscure the bottomland faction’s desire for convenience; when the church burned again in the early 1800s, plans to relocate it to a site with better water access were halted during construction because the “old members” hesitated “to leave the graves of their fathers.” In any event, the blackjack and bottomland factions of the early 1780s “could not agree, and each party built a house where they wished.” The eastern contingent dubbed their preaching post the Blackjack Church. It was an unsatisfying compromise for two groups who would have to share support and divide the time of a minister, the first of many cracks in the facade of congregational unity.⁴¹

The Waxhaw pastorate had been vacant since Thomas Craighead fled from the advancing British four years earlier, never to return. Craighead had served the church for only two years. Thus despite its standing as one of the largest presbyterian congregations in the state, by 1784 the church had been pastorless for eleven of the thirteen years since Richardson’s death. It had taken the congregation seven years to agree on a replacement for Richardson, and the “warm contention” that now simmered between the blackjack and bottomland factions did not quite promise an expeditious hiring process. However, in the spring of 1784 the two groups “agreed to be one congregation, and united in presenting a call” to Robert Findley, a young minister from North Carolina. Findley’s installation hints at the tense political atmosphere within the church; instead of waiting for the regular July session of the presbytery to ordain Findley, the congregation “urgently request[ed]” a special session in late May. Though apparently a talented preacher, Findley lasted only four years at Waxhaw. He moved to Kentucky in 1789 where he was implicated in a “false and scandalous report”

⁴¹ In the 1780s the Presbyterian General Assembly directed its North American presbyteries to commission histories of individual congregations. Davis’ narrative was the Waxhaw church’s contribution. Howe quotes it at length, but the original manuscript has been lost. Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 540; II, 120.

concerning the discontinuation of the catechism and was soon thereafter discharged for drunkenness.⁴²

The presbytery records do not say why Findley and the Waxhaw congregation dissolved their relationship, although his subsequent troubles suggest that there was more involved than a simple desire to emigrate to Kentucky. If so, his was not the only such case. The Presbytery of South Carolina's session records for the late 1780s are rife with scandal, accusation, and disgruntled parishioners, pointing to an unprecedented level of lay-clerical conflict. In 1785 a Mr. Hill was charged with insubordination; true to the charges, he refused to submit to the church court and was cut off. The following year a candidate for the ministry was charged with intoxication, while Joseph McNeely, an immigrant preacher from Ireland, was barred from the pulpit until the session investigated various charges against him. In 1789 a Mr. McCarra was embroiled in an unnamed scandal, refused to answer, and was discharged. Perhaps the worst charges were directed at Frances Cummins, whose parishioners accused him of excluding certain persons from communion without due cause, accusing his opponents of sacrilege, and "craving the parishioners on Sabbath day." The presbytery dismissed these charges at their first hearing, suggesting that Cummins was caught between two factions not unlike those Finley was forced to navigate at Waxhaw. This conflict died almost as suddenly as it had appeared; with one minor exception the presbytery heard no lay-clerical cases between 1790 and 1796, when the controversy over slavery once again ignited tensions between preachers and parishioners.⁴³

On the other hand, Findley's departure rekindled the "warm contention" between the neighborhood factions, although in this round the blackjack group took the offensive, largely in

⁴² *Ibid.*, I, 421, 540-41; Minutes of the Presbytery of South Carolina, 1785-1799, Session II, May 23, 1785 and Session XII, October 15, 1788; Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, second session, September 1789.

⁴³ Minutes of the Presbytery of South Carolina, 1785-1799, Sessions I-IV, 1785 [Hill]; Sessions V-VIII [McMullen]; Session IX [McNeely]; Session XI [Cummins]; Session XIII, 1789 [McCarra].

the person of the Reverend Brice Miller. Precisely when and how Miller came by his pastoral credentials is unknown. He did not use a religious title in his colonial land transactions, first appearing as “Reverend” in a 1789 plat and in several documents thereafter, including his 1795 indenture with William Grimes. He was not officially ordained by any North American presbytery, and while one account identifies him as “a foreign clergyman from Ireland,” the colonial land records show him living in the Waxhaws for more than a quarter century before he began his ministry. He may well have been connected to a Baptist community in Greenbriar County, Virginia, this would explain his willingness to preach without a license as well as his attachment to the Blackjack Church, since there were no Baptist churches in the Waxhaws in the eighteenth century. In any event, his religious influence was no doubt enhanced by his illusory land deals, and he found willing ears in the blackjack district after Findley’s departure by exploiting both the social divisions within the congregation and the controversy over psalmody and hymnody.⁴⁴

Presbyterian churches had been singing psalms since the time of John Calvin. Although psalmody was an innovation relative to Roman Catholic worship, it had a powerful conservative thrust as part of Calvin’s “Bible only” standard for Reformed liturgy. The God-inspired psalms of the Hebrew Bible, not human-composed hymns, were in the views of early Reformed church leaders the only appropriate musical forms for congregational worship. Although the church did not prescribe a particular psalter, most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century congregations used the version of the psalms developed by Francis Rous, who set them in a familiar English meter

⁴⁴ State Plat Books, SCDAH, 24, 206; Lancaster Deeds, B, 292. James Henley Thornwell, who pastored the Waxhaw church in 1835, identified Miller as a “foreign clergyman.” See Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, I, 615. The name of Brice Miller appears in Greenbriar County documents as early as 1779, where he was associated with the Old Greenbriar Baptist Church; there were also two Brice Millers listed in the 1810 Virginia census, one in Monroe and one in Frederick County. Gaye M. Whitehead, “Millers of Greenbriar and Monroe Counties, Virginia” (typescript in possession of the author); Index to the 1810 Census for Virginia. A 1790 census of Baptist churches lists none in Lancaster District. See Asplund, *Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination*. The link with the Virginia Baptists is highly questionable, however, given the conservative bent of the Covenanting faction of the blackjack membership.

and rhyme but remained faithful in content to the original translation. Typically, the psalms were “lined out” or fed to the congregation one line at a time by a precenter or uptaker. Six to ten standard tunes were used for the whole body of psalms. This tradition of psalmody was faithfully observed for over two centuries by churches in both the British Isles and North America.⁴⁵

By the mid-eighteenth century, however, some congregations were pressing for a more expansive psalmody. In 1707 Isaac Watts, an English dissenter, had published his first edition of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which was intended to meet the need for songs with explicitly Christian themes and language absent in the Hebrew psalms. Twelve years later Watts also issued his own psalter, *The Psalms of David imitated in the language of the New Testament*, in which he altered the psalms by weaving explicitly Christian themes and images into them. During the Great Awakening, New Side congregations began to incorporate Watts into their worship; generally more open to innovation than Old Side traditionalists and more alert to the emotional power of fresh songs with an evangelical thrust, New Side evangelicals hoped to use Watts to attract and help convert the unconverted. When American Presbyterians reunited in the 1750s the Synod of Philadelphia and New York allowed Watts on a church-by-church basis, pending support from a majority of the congregation. As we have seen, in the Waxhaw church the majority blocked the use of Watts, despite Richardson’s appeals. And yet in the Waxhaws as elsewhere the Synod’s compromise functioned as planned; while psalmody remained a tense issue during the colonial period, it rarely strained congregations to the breaking point.⁴⁶

The heyday of the psalmody controversy was during the late 1780s and early 1790s. In 1787 the Synod of Philadelphia and New York authorized a new version of Watts edited by

⁴⁵ Raymond J. Martin, “The Transition from Psalmody to Hymnody in Southern Presbyterianism, 1753-1901” (DSM Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1963), 1-11, 24, 26-7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 30-34; Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 15, 133.

American poet Joel Barlow, prompting John Rankin of Kentucky to challenge the church's position on Watts at the General Assembly two years later. Rankin and the anti-Watts faction insisted on adherence to strictly Biblical songs in public worship. His petition rejected, Rankin stormed back to Kentucky, barred Watts supporters from communion, claimed direct divine revelation through dreams, and called pro-Watts Presbyterians "swine, sacreligious robbers, hypocrites, deists, [and] blasphemers" who bore "the mark of the beast." Rankin soon joined the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a hybrid body made up of old style Covenanters in the tradition of Alexander Craighead and regular Presbyterians embittered by the new hymnody. The Associates continued to draw disgruntled members from its parent body until the mid-nineties, when the psalmody/hymnody controversy subsided and hymns gradually gained acceptance among mainline Presbyterians.⁴⁷

As Rankin's vehemence suggests, psalmody was for some an emotionally-charged issue that left little or no middle ground. Brice Miller exploited this issue, as one observer later recalled, "with considerable success." John Davis, writing in the middle of the psalmody crisis, could only note that following Finley's departure "the eastern part of the congregation" had "discovered some inclination to join another community." Miller was instrumental in this break, casting a wide net across portions of Lancaster County. Having "itinerated extensively" across the blackjack district, according to a later account, he "ingratiated himself into the favor of a large proportion of this congregation, and in others in its vicinity, and prevailed on many to withdraw from the Presbyterian church," capitalizing on the psalmody controversy "to excite and fix the prejudices of those who attended on his ministrations." The Waxhaw congregation no doubt made Miller's job easier when it called John Brown, a decidedly pro-Watts minister and soon-to-be revival enthusiast, to replace Findley in 1792. Although Miller's "influence was

⁴⁷ Martin, "Transition from Psalmody," 39-45; Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963), I, 217-23.

weakened” when his speculative bubble collapsed and his debts drove him out of the state in 1795, few of his followers returned to the Waxhaw church.⁴⁸

In the Waxhaws there was more to the psalmody crisis than a disagreement over Presbyterian liturgy. It was no accident that the opposition to Watts was concentrated in the “eastern part of the congregation,” where ethnic and class differences had long before drawn the community’s social fault lines. In part these differences centered on strictly religious issues: at least some of the traditionalist Covenanters who once belonged to William Martin’s congregation and who settled in the blackjack neighborhood in the 1770s were probably among the anti-Watts faction. But also behind the emotional tide that swept “a large proportion” of the congregation into Brice Miller’s camp lay the bitter memories of a once-poor and excluded immigrant population. Behind the selection of the innovating John Brown lay memories of the Loyalist sympathies and lukewarm support of the Revolution a decade earlier. The psalmody dispute was in large part a continuation of the earlier stalemate over relocating the church, which was itself the product of older tensions. It had a complicated history in which soils, roads, markets, allegiances, and slavery played as prominent a role as religious tradition and in which tradition became a weapon for waging an essentially social battle. The anti-Watts people were not only Covenanters; they were poorer, excluded, and long-embittered members of a neighborhood that had been shunted to the margins of the community. This is not to say that liturgical traditions lacked the power “to excite and fix the prejudices” of their own accord, but that the controversy was complicated by these intersecting cultural, social, and economic lines and that the “prejudices” of all parties were deepened and sharpened by these multi-layered issues.

Nor was it any accident that Brice Miller’s speculative fortunes ebbed and flowed with the psalmody controversy. Both were cut from the same piece of cloth. On the one hand,

⁴⁸ Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 615-16

Miller was unique and in some sense remains an enigma. As Rachel Klein has convincingly argued, in Miller's world the only true path to respectability was through farming, and yet Miller won the respect and trust of "a large proportion" of his neighbors as, of all things, a land speculator.⁴⁹ It may be difficult to imagine a land speculator with the moral authority of a prophet, but again Miller was enigmatic, and in any event he was not a particularly successful speculator. Further, Miller was kinless. Like Agnes Richardson twenty years earlier, he was widowed, he lived alone, he had no known children and apparently no local kin, having conveyed his last piece of property to a relative in Virginia. And yet unlike Agnes he seemed to be liberated by his kinlessness: not burdened by the baggage of familial obligations and interdependencies, he spun his own elaborate web of relations out of the raw fibers of land deals and "ministrations," promises and mutual antagonisms, neighborliness and common religious agendas. Lacking a family of his own, Miller did what no one could have done two decades earlier: he invented one.

Miller was atypical in many ways, but he also mirrored his world in a way that sheds new light on the relationship between land and church, the two anchors of the Waxhaws' embattled yeoman society. More than simply a poor step-cousin of the "new men" unleashed by the Revolution to make their mark in the world, more even than a piedmont version of the Baptist firebrands who challenged planter hegemony in the Chesapeake, in Miller economic opportunism and religion intersect, setting in motion a dynamic that propelled him, if only briefly, to the top of blackjack society and into the storm center of the community. Miller's land deals marked him as a man of influence and distant connections that enhanced his religious authority, while his "ministrations" established him as a man of integrity and sincerity and lent credibility to his role as speculator. Without Miller the speculator, Miller the itinerant preacher would not have known his "considerable success." In a sense Miller embodied the overall movement of

⁴⁹ Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 35.

the 1790s, when distinct land markets and demographic formations and religious interests developed in unison. In the end, of course, Miller could not sustain the tension, adrift as he was on the illusion of the speculative bubble that legitimated him. Nor could the people of the blackjack district, as the Great Revival was about to reveal, find contentment in their own meeting house or psalmody or even their own religious leader.

At the close of the Revolutionary War the Waxhaws was still in many respects an extension of the northern yeoman society from which it had come. Relying primarily on the “labour of their own numerous families,” farm households produced enough corn and meat for home consumption and planted as much wheat as they could manage for the lowcountry market. Many had accumulated surplus lands in the three decades before the war, lands that enabled their numerous heirs to sustain themselves in the community. Despite class, neighborhood, and ethnic differences, the people of the Waxhaws had also emerged from the war with their local identity intact, bound to one another by the intersecting cords of church affiliation and kinship. They likewise retained the habits of insularity learned on the frontier, directing their suspicion not at Episcopalians or kinless widows but at their neighbors in the eastern uplands, the recent immigrants and reluctant revolutionaries of the blackjack district.

By 1800, however, the Waxhaws was more akin to the slaveholding communities to the south. The expanding Atlantic market had made wheat a major upcountry cash crop, enabling and encouraging farmers to purchase slaves and increase production and profits. Half of all households now owned slaves, counting nearly one-third of the local population as their property. At the same time, the demand for wheat and the rising white population made good, well-situated land both scarce and expensive. Many farmers who could neither sustain a family on their inheritance nor afford good land moved elsewhere, especially into the recently opened territory west of the mountains. Emigration combined with the selling off of inherited lands to erode the kin-based neighborhood, while increasing wealth and slave ownership reduced

dependency on the labor and resources of family and neighbors. Although by no means complete, the transformation to a predominately commercial, slaveholding society was clearly under way by 1800.

While wheat, slaves, and the changing land market were remaking the Waxhaws' economy and social structure, a religious revival was about to ignite its neighborhood tensions. The disputes over psalmody and church location had ended in unsatisfying compromises; instead of resolving differences, these contests were rehearsals for a greater upheaval. This time, however, the issues would cut across class and neighborhood lines and set the stage for the Waxhaws' final conversion to southernness.

CHAPTER 6:

NEW LIGHT

In May 1802 six thousand people converged on the Waxhaws for five days of evangelical preaching and intense religious fellowship. As a form of worship the camp meeting was barely a year old, but word of its astonishing success at awakening sinners and regenerating dead congregations had been trickling into the lower Catawba valley since the previous summer.¹ John Brown, the minister at Waxhaw Presbyterian Church, had watched the steady progression of the revival as it moved east from Kentucky and Tennessee and south from central North Carolina. He had attended two such events just north of the state line, but the “great meeting” at the Waxhaws, which drew participants from as far away as eighty miles, was the first of its kind in South Carolina. It did not disappoint the Reverend Brown. The event was a model of interdenominational cooperation as Baptists and Methodists joined Presbyterians in a “most perfect union.” Moreover, in contrast to the wild and “extravagant” meetings west of the mountains, the Waxhaws’ revival was marked by “general solemnity” while managing nonetheless to “excite the attention” of the public and “engage it to religion.” Most importantly to

¹ On the meeting at the Waxhaws see *The Times* (Charleston), June 10, 1802; Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 109-13; and James Hall, *Narrative of a Most Extraordinary Work of Religion in North Carolina by the Reverend James Hall, also a Collection of Interesting Letters from the Rev. Samuel McCorkle, to Which is Added, the Agreeable Intelligence of a Revival in South Carolina, and in Washington County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Shepherd Kollock, 1803), partially reprinted in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 400-2. Attendance estimates range from 3,500-7,000; the figure used here is from *The Times*. For secondary treatments of the revival in the piedmont see John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 106-120; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 375-413; and Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, chapter 9. For an earlier work see William Speer, *The Great Revival of 1800* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1872).

Brown and other pro-revivalists, over two hundred worshipers were “struck down” at the meeting, including “twelve of the most notorious” mockers and opposers of the revival.²

For both John Brown and his Presbyterian congregation, however, the Waxhaw meeting was anything but an unqualified success. The revival stirred up as much anger as devotion, and when the last wagon rolled out of the encampment and the revival fires cooled, the camp meeting left in its wake a shattered church and a broken community. Brown was shut out of his own meeting house, and half of the Waxhaw elders, along with a significant part of the congregation, permanently withdrew to join an anti-revival denomination. Their official grievance was the presbytery’s sanction of taking communion with the Methodists.³ But beneath these concerns over “promiscuous communion” lay more serious objections to Methodist enthusiasm and an even more fundamental dispute over the divine source of revival conversions. Conflicts over supernaturalism, and in particular the supernatural origins of the strange bodily exercises of revival participants, finally cut the frayed cords that had held the congregation together for a quarter century.

This chapter ranges freely through the piedmont revival sources to explore the interplay between region-wide events and local conditions and to show how these two contexts are mutually illuminating. The first section examines the local religious conditions -- especially the colonial heritage of high church attendance and sectarian identity – in which the revival took place, and moves from there to look at the regional background of the revival and its divisive impact on local institutions. The second section examines the religious experiences underlying these divisions, focusing in particular on the cultural, metaphorical, and physical dimensions of the falling exercise, the most common form of somatic piety experienced in the piedmont meetings. The final section argues that both bodily enthusiasm and weakening sectarian loyalties, the two

² *New York Missionary Magazine* 3 (1802), 180-3 [hereafter *NYMM*]; *The Times* (Charleston), June 10, 1802; Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 112; Hall in Foote, *Sketches*, 401.

³ Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 112.

most controversial features of the camp meeting, were most prominent among young people. Parents anxious for their childrens' spiritual welfare rallied to support their spiritual choices, placing family concerns at the center of the debate over the revival's legitimacy and creating permanent, irreconcilable differences between pro- and anti-revival factions. By combining the power of somatic piety with the longing for generational reconciliation, the revival therefore did what neither church relocation, neighborhood differences, Watts hymns, nor Brice Miller could do – divide the Waxhaw congregation, and with it the Waxhaw community, finally and completely.

To fully understand why the camp meeting split the community so violently and with such finality, it is necessary to look beyond the institutional and doctrinal aspects of the revival and probe deeply into its experiential dimension.⁴ For revival converts, beliefs about the means of grace were forged in the revival moment and bound to a deeply personal, immediate, powerful bodily experience. To get at these experiences we must look at the documents of other piedmont revivals, which were indistinguishable in most respects from the Waxhaws meeting. As these documents suggest, the “divine warrant” for the revival was indisputable to people who experienced what they understood to be the power of God in their bodies – as it was for their families. Indeed, these documents point to an important but overlooked generational dimension of the Great Revival, one linked to the decline of ethnic and sectarian identity among the post-Revolutionary generation.

⁴ Historians have experienced a revival of interest in supernaturalism, enthusiasm, and religious experience over the last decade. For early America see especially Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), chapter 3; Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), esp. chapter 3; Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997), chapter 2; David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); and John Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), chapter 2. On supernaturalism and bodies see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) 20-117; and Susan Juster, “Mystical Pregnancy and Holy Bleeding: Visionary Experience in Early Modern Britain and America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd, 57 (April 2000), 262-79.

In the end, however, the Great Revival was a *religious* event. Although it had an interesting social dimension, the conflicts it generated were primarily religious, not social or cultural, conflicts.⁵ A look at the local religious demography of the Waxhaws helps us understand why this was so. As we shall see, the “great meeting” at the Waxhaws took place in a context of high religiosity, not irreligion. If the Waxhaws was in any way typical, then the eastern or piedmont phase of the revival was more a *re*-viving of flat or flagging spirits than a vehicle for christianizing the unconverted.⁶ Therefore, just as the broader revival illuminates the issues underlying the religious controversy in the Waxhaws, so too the Waxhaws’ religious condition sheds new light on the Great Revival and raises important questions about the so-called “christianization” of the eighteenth-century south.

The high level of church membership and adherence in the colonial Waxhaws continued into the early national period. Precise membership figures are available for only one year during the period under study; ironically, this year was 1801, on the eve of the revival.⁷ That year the First Presbytery of South Carolina reported 178

⁵ With the primary exception of Schmidt’s *Holy Fairs*, recent historians have consistently relegated the religious dimensions of early evangelicalism to the background, emphasizing instead its social and political meaning. The seminal work is Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1982). On the transition to capitalism and the longing for community see Ellen Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999). On revival as a revolt against parental authority see Rodger Payne, “New Light in Hanover County: Evangelical Dissent in Piedmont Virginia, 1740-1755,” *Journal of Southern History* 61, no. 4 (November 1995). On the conservatism of the Great Revival see Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, chapter 9. For the revival as a battleground between clergy and laity see Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*. For a discussion of Methodism’s appeal to men on the make in the new capitalist economy see Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm*. For how the success of evangelicalism rested in its ability to create a refuge for household dependents see Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996). For the discussion of revivals and the origins of southern individualism see Boles, *Great Revival*.

⁶ For an alternative view see Heyrman, *Southern Cross*.

⁷ In 1767-8 there were two contemporary estimates of Waxhaw Presbyterian Church’s members and adherents: Elam Potter reported that there were 120 families in the church, and Charles Woodmason claimed Richardson had an average weekly attendance of 900-1200 worshipers. Potter is cited in Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, I, 363; for Woodmason see Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 14.

communicants in the Waxhaw congregation. This figure was 71% higher than the membership of the next largest church in the presbytery; it was two and a half times that of the neighboring Fishing Creek congregation, and twice the presbytery-wide average of 88. The Waxhaw membership total also compared favorably with churches across the state. Although figures are not available for a precise comparison, George Howe, who in 1870 authored the meticulous two-volume history of the Presbyterian church in South Carolina, described the post-war Waxhaw congregation as “one of the largest and most respectable churches in the state.” In addition to this Presbyterian membership, there were at least forty Methodists worshiping in the Waxhaws by 1801. Taken together, church members made up at least 25% of the white adult population. Black members are more difficult to locate, but given the small size of the Methodist community and the reluctance and/or inability of slaves to attain full membership in Presbyterian churches, it is likely that no more than 7% of adult slaves were church members (see Appendix 4).⁸

Church adherence – regular attendance at a church and subscription to its main articles of faith without entering into full communion and submitting to its discipline – is harder to estimate, but by any measure it was high in the Waxhaws. Using Christine Heyrman’s formula – which counted three Presbyterian and two Methodist adult adherents for every church member – the total number of white adult adherents and members in the Waxhaws in 1801 would have exceeded the adult population by 10%. Heyrman’s formula for the colonial period, which is based on household size, yields an even greater disparity, with the total number of white adherents exceeding the total white population by 16%. Despite the problems with Heyrman’s methodology,⁹ it is nonetheless reasonable to assume that a community with a high number of church

⁸ Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Sessions 3 and 4, 1801; Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, I, 541; *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from 1773 to 1813* (New York, 1813). The Methodist sources list 20 white and no slave members in the Waxhaws in 1788, but figures for the Waxhaws are not broken out from the larger circuit numbers for subsequent years. I have assumed a growth rate of 100% over the course of 13 years, or an addition of 10 whites and 10 slaves. See Appendix 4 for a fuller explanation.

⁹ See Appendix 4 for a full analysis of Heyrman’s formula.

members will also register a high level of church adherence. It is therefore probable that evangelical Protestantism had “captured” the Waxhaws long before the Great Revival. As difficult as it is to believe that nearly one-third of the white adults were church members and most of the white population attended services regularly, we need only remember that Charles Woodmason reported between 900 and 1,200 regular Sunday worshipers in just one congregation as early as 1768. It is not inconceivable that, with three meeting houses and a strong tradition of religious participation, Sunday church attendance in the Waxhaws approached 1,500 three decades after William Richardson’s death.¹⁰

Widespread church adherence if not widespread piety thus formed the religious context for the Waxhaws’ revival. Nor was the Waxhaws alone among piedmont communities in this respect. Although an occasional clergyman like Robert Wilson might lament the “very general neglect of the Gospel and its ordinances” in the rapidly changing upcountry of the late 1790s, the decade was in fact one of intense growth and expansion for evangelical churches, including those of the Presbytery of South Carolina. Just five years earlier Wilson himself had predicted an immanent “glorious revival,” given that “so many young men were turning to the ministry” and charging their sermons with “more earnestness and life than formerly.” In 1789 the South Carolina presbytery had eleven churches, six vacant congregations, and sixteen meetings seeking temporary “supplies” to preach, catechize, and baptize. Ten years later the presbytery had grown to

¹⁰ Although church membership and attendance in the Waxhaws seemed to dwarf that in neighboring communities, it is important to remember that the Waxhaw settlement was one of the most densely populated communities in the upcountry; its exceptionalism cannot therefore be assumed without comparing its data to population-adherence ratios in other places. At the very least these findings suggest that the eighteenth-century South was not as destitute of religion as some have claimed, and they demonstrate the need for a reappraisal of the religious condition of the South in the late colonial and early national periods. Christine Heyrman is certainly not alone in assuming that the early South was a religious backwater; on the contrary, this has long been a prominent theme in the literature, based largely on the observations of missionaries and anxious southern clergy and not on hard data. This is to varying degrees a guiding assumption in Boles, *Great Revival*; Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*; Aron, *How the West Was Lost*; and Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*. And it goes back much further: see Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South, Volume One: 1607-1861* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), 126-7; and Speer, *Great Revival*.

eighteen member churches with twenty-seven vacancies, sending supplies to twenty-eight additional congregations, many of which were in Georgia.

Further, as Thomas Little has shown, vacant and supplied congregations alike developed lay-led “conventicles” for small-group devotional activities that supplemented regular worship. These “praying societies” would become the bedrock of the revival in local congregations. In fact, it seemed as if a revival was not possible outside of this religious setting. James Hall, a leading piedmont revivalist, noted as much in early 1802. Hall was surprised at the extent of the revival in Morganton, North Carolina, a remote place “little improved in religious knowledge” whose people, including the revival converts, were in an “immature state” of spirituality. “In our parts of the country,” Hall wrote, “there had appeared on the public mind a tenderness and susceptibility for many months, which I had never seen before, except under revivals of religion.” At least in its eastern phase, widespread religiosity, not irreligion, was the typical precondition for the Great Revival.¹¹

High church adherence was but one part of the early national religious inheritance; strong sectarian identity was the other, although the meaning and significance of sectarian boundaries was being contested as the revival neared. On the one hand, the bitter strife that had characterized sectarian relations in Charles Woodmason’s day was gone. There was now no “popish” church establishment forcing its way into the interior, so that the Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury could write of his 1790 visit to the Long Canes that “the Presbyterians are very kind, giving us freely whatever is needful for man and horse.” On the other hand, the people of the Waxhaws adhered to their Presbyterian identity and seemed to be aware, perhaps even threatened, by the small but insurgent Methodist community forming in their midst. As noted in Chapter 2 and Appendix 3, interdenominational marriages remained rare if not nearly

¹¹ Robert Wilson to Samuel Wilson, March 27, 1798 and September 30, 1793, Leonidas Glenn Collection, SHC, Subseries 1.1, 1793-1798, Folder 4; Minutes, Presbytery of South Carolina, 1789-1799; Thomas J. Little, “The Rise of Evangelical Religion in South Carolina” (PhD Dissertation, Rice University, 1995), 315-16; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 387, 384; *NYMM* 3 (1802), 177.

unknown at least through the early 1800s. Further, when Asbury spent the night in the Waxhaws in 1794, he commended his Methodist host for his “great favour” of food and lodging, “such as we do not generally receive in this country.” It is worth noting that Asbury typically bypassed the Waxhaws on his circuit through the Carolinas, preferring to cross the border along the Pee Dee and Lynches rivers to the east or the Broad and Pacolet to the west.

Moreover, church officials also took steps to enforce sectarian boundaries. In 1785 the Presbytery of South Carolina, probably fearing the rancor generated by unlicensed itinerants like Brice Miller, prohibited its congregations from inviting guest preachers without either express permission from a member of the presbytery or credentials from a synod. In 1797 the Synod of the Carolinas urged its ministers to abstain from “promiscuous communion” because it implied “a coalesce with other denominations” whose different doctrines might offend Presbyterian communicants. While these strictures suggest that thawed relations posed a threat to denominational integrity and point to a perceived weakening of sectarian loyalty and identity, they also indicate that sectarian feelings remained strong among an important segment of the church’s leadership and membership.¹²

It was into this dual context of widespread religiosity and contested sectarian boundaries that the Great Revival swept like a “mighty whirlwind,” as one participant remembered it, in 1801-02. The first mass meetings of the piedmont phase took place in Orange and Guilford counties, North Carolina in August 1801. Not until January of the following year, however, did the movement gain momentum. That month preacher-organizers from North Carolina’s Concord Presbytery, along with one hundred of their church members, attended a protracted meeting in Randolph County. Many in the Concord group, including “the greater part of our young people,” according to James Hall, were “religiously exercised” at Randolph. In the days following their return home,

¹² Elmer T. Clark, ed., *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, Volume 1: The Journal, 1771-1793* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 628-9; *ibid.*, *Volume II: The Journal, 1794-1816*, 8; Minutes of the Presbytery of South Carolina, Session 1, April 14, 1785; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 297.

“religion . . . made rapid progress among our people,” leading the Concord clergy to stage their own general meeting just two weeks later. By late March there were mass meetings in Iredell County, Morganton, Crossroads, Mecklenburg County, and New Providence. Continuing to proliferate across southwestern North Carolina, in May the revival also penetrated South Carolina, beginning in the Waxhaws and spreading west into Spartanburg and Pendleton District. By the end of the summer it was “running like fire in the dry stubble” across northern Georgia, largely through the agency of Methodists. At the height of the revival in the summer of 1802 there were protracted meetings in South Carolina nearly every week, limited almost exclusively to the western piedmont.¹³

What distinguished these protracted “camp meetings” from traditional Presbyterian communions was not their duration *per se* – Presbyterian sacramental meetings traditionally lasted four days, with two days of preaching, prayer, and fasting in preparation for the Sunday sacrament – but their size and their interdenominational character. Presbyterians generally celebrated communion once or twice each year, but while these festal communions often included multiple congregations, they never reached the proportions of the thousands who flocked to the “religious encampments” during the revival. The numbers themselves are astounding for early nineteenth-century gatherings, not to mention rural gatherings: 2,000 in Randolph County, 3,000 at Hanging Rock, 4,000 in Iredell County, 5-7,000 in Mecklenburg County, 5,000 at Spartanburgh, 5,000 in Pendleton District, 4-7,000 at the Waxhaws, 6,000 at Guilford, 8-10,000 at Crossroads, and 10-12,000 at Couser’s unidentified meeting. Because such large crowds could not be accommodated by the host community, they forced the invention of the camp meeting, as they had first done in Kentucky. And the camp meeting was ripe with possibilities absent in the traditional sacramental gatherings. As John Brown noted, the encampments

¹³ John S. Harris, “History of Bethesda Church: 1769-1885” (MS, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina), 81 [whirlwind]; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 382-409; *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 110-11; *Methodist Magazine* 25 (1802), 523; Boles, *Great Revival*, 80.

presented “a truly august and solemn scene . . . especially in the night season,” when the “whole camp becomes illuminated.” Such a “solemn situation” bespoke “the presence of that God, whose temple is all space. . . . In this situation who would not worship; who would not adore?” This aesthetic of the camp meeting, along with the unlimited opportunities for intense religious fellowship and informal lay exhortation, created an atmosphere charged to induce conversions and to produce what Ellen Eslinger has identified as a deep sense of *communitas* among participants.¹⁴

In their early manifestations these camp meetings were interdenominational affairs. Although they grew out of the exclusively Presbyterian tradition of sacramental “holy fairs,” they evolved into interfaith events in the fluid religious atmosphere of Kentucky, an innovation that was imported by the eastern revivalists. The distribution of clergy at the Waxhaws was fairly typical -- eleven Presbyterians, five Baptists, and five Methodists – with Presbyterians dominating the meetings, although Methodist participation was generally higher than that of Baptists and gained ascendancy over time. Such sectarian unity and cooperation was a major theme in the revival accounts. “All denominations, join hand, and heart, in the common cause of christianity,” noted one Baptist observer. “Party doctrines are laid aside,” wrote James Hall, “and nothing heard from the pulpit but the practical and experimental doctrines of the gospel.” Even in the sacrament itself “Methodist and Presbyterian churches united” – although Baptists declined – “all owning and acknowledging the same God, the same Saviour, the same Sanctifier, and the same Heaven.” According to John Couser, the extent of Baptist and particularly Methodist influence on the sacramental meetings was debated. Some declared the revival “is like what has prevailed for many years among the brethren of the Methodist Church,” while others “who have been acquainted with the greatest revivals in

¹⁴ On Presbyterian communions see Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, introduction and chapter one. Revival figures are from Matthew Moore, *Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia* (no publisher, 1883), 257; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 384, 385, 386, 402, 408; *NYMM*, 3 (1802), 311; *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1803), 132; *The Times* (Charleston), June 10, 1802. For Brown see *NYMM* 3 (1802), 182. James Hall also noted how the “solemnity” of evening meetings “seems to be more favourable to the work” of conversion. See *NYMM* 3 (1802), 178. On *communitas* see Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*, introduction.

that church . . . say there is no comparison.” As Ellen Eslinger has found, however, by the time Couser reported his observations the sacramental meeting had already evolved into a Presbyterian-Methodist hybrid. Especially in the piedmont, Methodist “enthusiasm” brought a bodily dimension to the staid Presbyterian exercises, while the Presbyterian concern for “order” reined in Methodist excesses. In the end Presbyterians would give up the fight and abandon the protracted meetings altogether, while Methodists would institutionalize the camp meeting, making it an outlet for lay somatic piety and a engine for winning converts by the droves.¹⁵

In the Waxhaws as elsewhere across the piedmont, these mass revival meetings transformed a religious setting into a hyper-religious setting; the revival momentarily muscled its way into the center of things and concentrated the emotions of church members. “Religion here attracts the attention of almost every one,” wrote one correspondent at the height of the revival in August 1802, “and is the general topic of conversation.” In the wake of the Waxhaw meeting Richard Furman also noted the “great tendency” of camp meetings “to excite the attention and engage it to religion.” In its enthusiasm the Presbyterian General Assembly even declared that the revival was changing “the general aspect of society . . . from dissoluteness and profanity to sobriety, order, [and] comparative purity.” James Hall echoed these sentiments, however faintly, when he noted that “the face of the public, in point of morals, is evidently changed for the better,” though only “a very small minority have felt its happy effects.” Hall was particularly enthusiastic about the “praying societies” or conventicles that were forming spontaneously in awakened congregations. In such societies, Hall wrote, “the work seems to be promoted as much, and often more, than in our congregational assemblies.” Three societies formed overnight in Hall’s own churches, “in all of which the work broke out like fire, and was making rapid progress before I had an opportunity of attending even at one society.” Breaking out of the “awful solemnity” of the camp meeting, the

¹⁵ Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, chapter 1; *The Times* (Charleston), June 10, 1802; *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 112; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 389, 406; *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1803), 132; Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*.

revival fires burned through communities as well, reinvigorating congregations and perhaps even reforming, if only for a moment, “the face of the public.”¹⁶

Revival accounts from Presbyterians, however, are noticeably reticent when discussing church growth. This was not the case with the Baptist and Methodist revivalists, who delighted in reporting mounting membership levels. Methodists reported one thousand converts in northeast Georgia in 1802, three thousand in their Camden (South Carolina) Conference through 1803, and two thousand in Augusta. One Baptist account identified 703 baptisms in northwestern South Carolina in 1801-02, thirty-six of which took place “at one time.” It is not at all clear from the accounts, however, that the revival dramatically increased membership levels in Presbyterian churches. Presbyterian revivalists used a different language to describe revival converts: not as members or communicants but as “the subjects of this work,” the “stricken,” or “the subjects of God’s free grace” who “obtained an interest in Jesus,” became “hopefully convinced that they were sinners,” were “deeply impressed with a sense of the great importance of salvation,” were “religiously exercised,” or who “obtained the comforts of religion.” In part this language is rooted in Presbyterianism’s Calvinist inheritance: election and hence conversion could never be certain and must never be assumed. In part too it reflects the more stringent membership standards of Presbyterians: requiring adherents to be proficient in church doctrine before admitting them to full communion, they were more likely to view the spiritual drama of the revival moment as but one step in the conversion process. On the other hand, this inattention to membership also suggests that for Presbyterians the revival was as much a re-viving of lapsed or “dull” and “cold” communicants as it was a tool for adding new members. James Hall noted as much when he declared that many of the “stricken” had “long been acquainted with vital piety. This answers many valuable purposes, as it quickens their graces, brightens their evidences,

¹⁶ *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 106; Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 112; Robert Hamlin Stone, *A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770-1970* (Greensboro: 1970), 40; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 387, 389, 384.

attaches them more warmly to the revival, and makes them more assistant to the ministers of the gospel.”¹⁷

Another reason for Presbyterian reticence about the effects of the revival on church membership, however, is that these effects were not universally “happy.” Certainly the early camp meetings were a source of new communicants for Presbyterians, though not at the dizzying levels achieved by Baptists and Methodists. Revivalists documented these conversions through individual cases more than numbers, filling their accounts with conversions of “remarkable libertines,” “mockers,” “opposers,” and especially “infidels.” But surviving church and presbytery records indicate that at the congregational level Presbyterians were losing as many members as they were gaining by the revival. John Davies’ Fishing Creek congregation, which typically added only four to eight new communicants annually “on examination” and lost two to four by death, suspension, or dismissal (release), added thirty-seven in 1801-02, twenty-four of whom joined in 1802 alone. This would have represented a 50% increase, but during this same period the congregation dismissed thirty members. Despite the revival, between 1801 and 1805 Davies’ two congregations grew by only 13%. Comparative figures are not available for other congregations, but presbytery records document similar ruptures at Catholic, Purity, Bullock’s Creek, and Waxhaw churches, all of which probably suffered similar membership offsets.¹⁸

The presbytery records specify the issues in only one of these cases, that of Purity Church. Purity’s minister, Robert McCulloch, had been deposed for adultery in 1800 and

¹⁷ *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1802), 419, 523, 131; *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 110, 112, 113; William Woodward, *Increase of Piety, or, The Revival of Religion in the United States of America containing several interesting letters not before published : together with three remarkable dreams, in succession, as related by a female in the northern liberties of Philadelphia to several Christian friends, and handed to the press by a respectable minister of the gospel* (Philadelphia, 1802), 100; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 383, 385, 387, 389.

¹⁸ Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 391, 397, 401; Brent Holcomb and Elmer O. Parker, *Early Records of Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church, Chester County, South Carolina, 1799-1859 : with Appendices of the Visitation List of Rev. John Simpson, 1774-1776, and the Cemetery Roster, 1762-1979* (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1980); Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Session 8, September 1803 and Session 10, October 1804 [Fishing Creek]; Session 9, March 1804 [Bullock’s Creek]; Session 10, October 1804 [Catholic]; Session 8, September 1803 [Purity].

restored just as the revival was pushing into the bounds of the presbytery in 1802. McCulloch may have had personal motives for opposing the revival, but they do not surface in the session records. Instead, a group of McCulloch's supporters from Purity presented a four-point petition to the presbytery outlining their opposition to the revival, in which they objected to the participation of non-Presbyterian preachers at general meetings, the admission of Methodists to communion, and the use of Watts' hymns in worship. The petitioners also argued that "the Church had all the instituted means of grace and salvation before the existence of Camp Meetings among us, nor can we think that there is any divine warrant for them." In a very strong pro-revival reply, the majority of the presbytery rejected the petition on every point, and by a 7-to-4 vote declared unequivocally that there was a divine warrant for camp meetings.¹⁹

Concerns over communing with Methodists also stood at the center of the revival controversy at Waxhaw church, and Watts, still unresolved and ever at-hand to muddy the waters of church conflict, likewise resurfaced.²⁰ Without minimizing the importance of these issues, especially "promiscuous communion," to early nineteenth-century Presbyterians,²¹ the revival accounts themselves suggest that these doctrinal concerns masked an even deeper religious disagreement over the "instituted means of grace," or over what constituted an authentic work of God. In this vein what divided Presbyterians in the Waxhaws and across the piedmont was not Methodism's "highly erroneous" doctrines, but its enthusiasm – the bodily exercises that ostensibly evinced an "effusion of the Holy Spirit." And if this hallmark of the camp meeting was open to question then so was the "divine warrant" for the revival as well as the legitimacy of camp meeting conversions. As we shall see, this was an unacceptable conclusion for people who

¹⁹ Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Session 8, September 1803.

²⁰ Richard Furman noted that "the practice of communing with the Methodists" divided the Waxhaw church, while George Howe added the revival of the Watts controversy. See Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 112, 119.

²¹ On the importance of communion to early modern Presbyterians see Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, chapter one.

claimed to have experienced supernatural power in their bodies – as it was for the people who believed their children had.²²

On the eve of the Waxhaw revival John Brown attempted to sketch “a kind of general out-line” of the bodily exercises of revival converts. Having dismissed the “unfriendly notions” that these exercises resulted from “bodily imbecility, fear, weakness of the nervous system, sympathy, ministerial oratory, demoniac delusion, or a combination of many or all of these,” Brown concluded simply that “the power is Divine.” He then went on to describe the “various degrees” of somatic piety and its harmless mental and physical consequences, even among “women of the most weak and delicate nerves.” Brown’s description of a typical conversion experience outlines the morphology of the “falling exercise” and serves as a good example of the revivalists’ scientific attention to the minutiae of somatic piety; it bears quoting at length:

When a person begins to be affected, he generally sinks down in the place where he stood, and is for a few minutes overwhelmed in tears; he then makes a weeping noise – some person near lays hold of him – he shrieks aloud – and discovers a desire to be on his back – in this he is indulged – and a friend sits down and supports the head of the person on his lap. Every tear now leaves his eye, and he shouts aloud for about twenty minutes more. By this time he is speechless and motionless, and lies quiet perhaps an hour. During this time his pulse is rather lower than the usual state; the extremities cold, the skin fresh and clear, the features of the face full, the eyes closed, but not so close as in sleep. Speech and motion return in the same gradual manner; the features become more full than before. Pleasure paints the countenance as peace comes to the soul; and when faith is obtained, the person rises up, and with the most heavenly countenance shouts – “Glory to God.” This extasy abates in about a quarter of an hour, and the person is generally led away by a friend to his tent. Calm, mild, sedate pleasure marks the countenance for several days; and those who have been often exercised in this pleasing manner, shew a sweet mixture of love and joy.

The falling exercise Brown described was the most common physical expression of religious enthusiasm in the piedmont. Nearly all accounts of the falling exercise include the basic elements found in Brown: falling “as if dead,” groaning, weeping, a

²² Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Session 8, September 1803; *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1803), 132.

sometimes prolonged state of semi-consciousness or entrancement, shouting, and finally serenity. Other “extravagances” of the western revivals, William Henry Foote later noted, “such as running back and forth, barking like a dog, and uttering inhuman sounds, like nothing imaginable,” never “found their way east of the Alleghanies.”²³ The “jerks” – a spasmodic, seizure-like shaking of the body – appeared occasionally in the east, though not nearly as frequently as in Kentucky.²⁴ But between one and three hundred people typically “fell” at piedmont camp meetings. By James Hall’s calculation, for every person “affected in this extraordinary manner” at least five were exercised in “the usual way,” with “deep and rational conviction” but no “violent exercises.”²⁵

Descriptions of bodily enthusiasm are the most prominent feature of revival accounts. John Brown and his fellow revivalists betrayed an obsession with somatic piety as they struggled in account after account to come to grips with the “extraordinary exercises” that left so profound an impression on those who experienced them. Instead of starting, as many have done, with what may be called the politics of enthusiasm – that is, instead of treating supernaturalism as a kind of battlefield in which race, class, and household relationships were contested – we must begin where revival contemporaries began, with the religious experience itself, if we hope to understand why the camp meeting so completely divided communities like the Waxhaws. For it was the unmediated bodily experience, not the dramatization of relationships, that left its mark on converts and captured the attention of revival contemporaries.²⁶ How did revival

²³ NYMM 3 (1802), 182-3; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 409-10.

²⁴ There is a striking similarity between the “jerks” and pseudo-seizures. In addition to exhibiting similar physical manifestations, both have been linked to emotional distress, and victims of both acquire an attachment to the disorder. Compare, for example, the descriptions of the jerks in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 410-12, with the account of pseudo-seizures in Tony Dajer, “Altered States,” *Discover* 21, no. 11 (November 2000), <http://www.discover.com/nov_00/featvital.html>.

²⁵ Hall, *Narrative*, in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 389; NYMM 3 (1802), 179.

²⁶ On revival ritual see Dickson D. Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974); Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, esp. chapter 2; and Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*. These ethnographic studies have tremendously deepened our understanding and appreciation of revivals by attuning us to their ritual language. However, insofar as ritual is an enactment or dramatization of experience, they convey neither the immediacy nor the raw

participants, the thousands of men and women whose “stricken” and “slain” bodies fell in the turmoil of the revival moment, understand what was happening to them? Of equal importance, how can we get behind the language and ritual that structures and mediates this experience to appreciate its raw physicality and immediacy? The answers to these questions lead us back to the Waxhaw congregation’s polarized response to the Great Revival. We can begin to get at these answers and understand this connection between supernatural power and bodies more adequately by exploring its local cultural context, its peculiar language, and its uncontrolled, spontaneous immediacy to those who seemed to be its passive subjects.

The notion that bodies could be infused with supernatural power was not new to the people of the piedmont. Somatic piety was as old as Christianity itself; its practitioners in early modern Britain and America, though on the religious fringe, were nonetheless highly visible. For those who cared to remember – and few seemed to, given the astonished bewilderment inherent in revival accounts – bodily enthusiasm had infused an earlier Great Awakening in Scotland, Pennsylvania and New England. Of more recent memory, Agnes Richardson’s touching ordeal had been premised on the hope that her husband’s dead body might miraculously bleed forth the identity of its murderer. In fact, early southern evangelicals were frequently persuaded that ministers’ bodies contained supernatural, some said diabolical, power. In a “culture steeped in supernaturalism,” as one historian has depicted the eighteenth-century South, the belief that divine power caused bodies to spontaneously tremble and collapse was simply one more manifestation of a mental universe peopled by spirits and charged with mysterious powers.²⁷

This connection between supernaturalism and bodies was not made only on the religious fringe. Rather, it had a more orthodox side that was integral to the evangelical

physicality of the revival moment. For two very recent studies that do address bodily experience see Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*; and Juster, “Mystical Pregnancy and Holy Bleeding.”

²⁷ Juster, “Mystical Pregnancy and Holy Bleeding,” *passim*; Landsman, “Evangelists and their Hearers,” *passim*; Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 62, 64-5.

belief system: the belief in the bodily resurrection of the saints at the end of time (later known as the “rapture”).²⁸ Bodily resurrection was a central theme of late eighteenth-century epitaphs in the Waxhaw churchyard, reminding the living that not just death, but even physical death, was only temporary. “In hopes of a joyful Resurrection” Joseph Douglas inscribed these words on the gravestone of his five year-old daughter: “My Flesh shall Thy First Call Obey/Shake off the Dust and Rise on High/Then shalt Thou lead the Wondrous Way/Up to Thy Throne Above the Sky.” Death might be a yielding of the “body to the dust/To dwell with fellow clay,” but it was only one stage of a much grander eschatological plan: for “Corruption, Earth and worms/ Shall but refine this flesh/Till my triumphant spirit comes/To put it on afresh.” As these epitaphs attest, the promise of the rapture transformed the bleak physicality of death – “Naked as from the earth we came/and crept to life at first/We to the earth return again/And mingle with our dust” – into the joyful physicality of the resurrection – “My flesh shall slumber in the ground/Till the last trumpet’s joyful sound/Then burst the chains with sweet surprise/And in my Saviour’s image rise.” In evangelical communities like the Waxhaws, the belief that divine power “reanimated” the dead bodies of the saints was literally chiseled in stone.²⁹

In the mental world of these early piedmont evangelicals, supernatural power was a life-giving, revitalizing force: it discharged life-sustaining blood from rotting corpses, transformed the dust of the elect into living flesh, restored the dead to life and raised them “Above the Sky.” In the same way, it brought the spiritually dead back to life, using their bodies as vehicles for renewal and rebirth. In the language of revival converts, the physicality of the “violent exercises” mirrored the bodily death and

²⁸ Belief in bodily resurrection was one piece of the Christian concept of the Second Coming of Christ. See Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, 4:16.

²⁹ Epitaphs of Matilda Douglas, Archibald Cousart, James Walkup Crockett, Henry Foster, and Margaret Walkup, in Nancy Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Graveyard* (Lancaster, SC, 1965).

resurrection proclaimed in the churchyard. Ritually and metaphorically, these two kinds of death were cut from the same cultural fabric.³⁰

Metaphors of death and rebirth pervade the revival accounts and are dramatized in the falling exercise itself. “Thrown to the ground” and “struck down powerless,” the “slain” lay “speechless and motionless” and “apparently breathless” in “the agonies of death.” There they remained for hours, even days, in an “apparent state of insensibility,” sometimes “violently agitated” in “a state of horror and despair,” at other times “almost in silence.” Invariably, however, they “obtained comfort” and rose up, some “break[ing] all bounds with extasies, and raptures of joy and praise,” others rising “with low, humble and fervent expressions of thanksgiving,” all “aroused as those alive from the dead.” Nearly every account draws on these metaphors, and one, Samuel McCorkle’s description of the Randolph County meeting, is one long succession of such falling, prostrate, and rising bodies.³¹

Although most of this language belonged to the observers who recorded the falling exercises, personal narratives suggest that participants themselves also understood their experience in these terms of death and rebirth. In the only complete first-person conversion narrative of the piedmont revival, an anonymous “gentleman” described how he was spontaneously “struck with an unusual sensation in my heart, which in a little time pervaded my chest in general,” leading him to fear “immediate death.” The “convulsions and involuntary gnashing of teeth” that followed left him “as one dead, unable to move.” In the ensuing hours he “experienced a dreadful gloom, and confused horrors of mind,” whereupon the “resemblance of death was succeeded by other convulsions.” When he rose the next morning his “horrors ceased” and his “soul was filled with admiration and love,” his “heart acquiesced in this glorious way of salvation,” and he felt “true joy.” Significantly, the “resemblance of death” this gentleman

³⁰ Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 389.

³¹ Woodward, *Increase in Piety*, 101; *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 176, 106, 177; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 393, 402, 409, 399, 392-3; *NYMM* 3 (1802), 176, 311, 179.

experienced was accompanied by intense fears of actual physical death. Given the severe emotional distress of people in the throes of the falling exercise, such fears were probably widespread, as one convert attested by exclaiming, “Thank God, I am not dead and damned! Glory to God, I am out of hell, and on pleading ground!”³²

And yet if revival participants conceptualized the falling exercise as a spiritual enactment of death and rebirth, or if they understood it within a wider cultural context that linked supernaturalism and bodies, they knew it first and foremost as raw physical experience. They ultimately understood it, that is, with their bodies. Though they might metaphorically approximate their experience as death and rebirth, what converts felt was intense emotional pain and equally intense ecstasy. Though they might agree that falling, lying motionless, and rising somehow dramatized their spiritual journey from death to life, they would insist that they were spontaneously “overcome by an invincible influence” against which they literally could not stand.³³ What gave revival enthusiasm its power was this physical immediacy expressed in the bodies of passive, sometimes even unwilling, subjects.

Although Brown found that subjects of the falling exercise “universally declare that they feel no bodily pain” – a finding supported by other accounts – their severe emotional pain screams from the narratives. “I cry for mercy,” said one “stout young man” at the Randolph meeting, “and feel determined to cry until I find it.” Such “sore and incessant outcries,” groans, and anguished shouts permeated the encampments. In the Pendleton District several young men fell in “the most agitated misery . . . rolling and tumbling about for many hours in the greatest agitation, sometimes crying for mercy, acknowledging the most accumulated load of guilt; then despairing to obtain mercy.” At Spartanburg one convert fell as he fled the camp, “his shrieks declar[ing] the terrors and anguish under which he labored.” But even the “dreadful gloom” and “horrors of mind” of the anonymous gentleman paled beside the “state of horror and despair” of a “stout

³² Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 397-8; *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1802), 522.

³³ *Georgia Analytical Repository* I (1802), 112.

negro woman” in Rowan County, whose prolonged “exertions,” wrote Samuel McCorkle, “nor angel nor devil could describe.”

She often roared out, ‘O hell! hell! hell! Thy pangs have seized me! O torment! torment! What torments me? Hell can’t be worse. Let me go there at once. It is my dreadful doom.’ . . . Two stout negro-men were no match for her struggles . . . At intervals she cried, ‘O for mercy! But what have I to do with mercy? No mercy for poor miserable me.’ Hope, however, began to prevail, and at last she shouted, ‘Glory, glory,’ so loud, and as long as she had roared out ‘Hell-torment’ before.

Whether a passage from death to life or a journey through hell, for many revival converts the falling exercise was a horrifying, emotionally agonizing experience.³⁴

It was also a bodily experience. Some “felt a great load about their heart,” probably similar to the “unusual sensation in my heart” described by the anonymous gentleman (by another account he was “sensibly struck in the forehead”). Other converts suffered what seem to be panic attacks, breathing with difficulty, their lungs “violently agitated.” Some trembled uncontrollably, experiencing varying degrees of “spasmodic affections” or “convulsive spasms,” while others fell “rolling and tumbling about.” Falling was of course the most common physical characteristic, but it was both simpler and more complicated than Brown’s typical convert who “discovers a desire to be on his back.” For most participants falling was apparently a spontaneous, unwilling act: they “swooned,” were “struck down” and “thrown to the ground” by what they came to believe was “the finger of God.” Moreover, they were reduced to a complete state of dependency. “Struck down powerless to the ground,” subjects of the falling exercise “appeared entirely helpless,” unable to walk, rendered “motionless, speechless, and apparently breathless.” At the Waxhaws one man “fled, fell, was found, and brought to a tent” where he cried for mercy. In the same way the anonymous gentlemen described how he lost “the exercise of my bodily organs.” Such physical helplessness and dependency mirrored the convert’s new sense of spiritual dependency on God and fellow enthusiasts. It also reinforced the notion of rebirth, not as a metaphor or process but as a

³⁴ Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 393, 407, 397, 402-3; *NYMM* 3 (1802), 179, 312.

biological fact. For subjects of the falling exercise, their bodies were vessels that mediated conversion and gave outward expression to inner distress; the exercise was not, as Susan Juster has suggested, an “out-of-body” experience, but very much an in-body experience.³⁵

Both the language of the accounts and the direct testimony from the fragments of personal narratives attest that revivalists understood converts to be passive recipients, not willful agents. Account authors, especially Presbyterian ones, invariably used the passive voice when describing converts: never joiners, they were instead “the subjects of this work” or the “stricken” who were “impressed” and “exercised” and who finally “obtained comfort.” Some were struck down when “in a slumbering and inattentive way,” others “where nothing uncommonly alarming or affecting is to be seen or heard”: when walking through the encampments alone, when leaving the meeting, or even in the wagon on their way home. The accounts delight in the fall of “mockers” who expressly resisted the exercises, “defying all the ministers to strike them down;” twelve “of the most notorious” of these opposers fell at the Waxhaws. At the close of the Spartanburg meeting, two men literally “attempted to run off” before they fell. They would probably have concurred with the sentiments of the anonymous gentleman: “I came not hear a sermon, and when I was here I tried to hear as little as I could; but God has laid on me his hand in mercy, when I was not seeking him.”³⁶

Whether they were willing subjects or not, the men and women who experienced the falling exercise believed they had been acted upon by an external “invincible influence,” a force so powerful that it produced “terrible effects upon the body.” Neither

³⁵ Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 397, 399, 409, 387, 393, 401, 398; *Georgia Analytical Repository* 1 (1802), 105, 111; *NYMM* 3 (1802), 311, 312, 179, 307; Woodward, *Increase in Piety*, 101; *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* 3 (1802), 315; Juster, “Mystical Pregnancy and Holy Bleeding,” 273.

³⁶ *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1803), 131; Woodward, *Increase in Piety*, 100-1; Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 384, 387, 401, 407, 396-7, 400; *NYMM* 3 (1802), 311, 307, 312, 178.

yearning for *communitas*,³⁷ psychologically dislocated by capitalism, nor seeking sanctuary from oppressive patriarchs,³⁸ they were simply the subjects of an extraordinary and to them life-shattering religious experience. To make sense of this experience they gravitated toward those with whom they shared it, “renouncing all that is most dear . . . in the world,” as the anonymous gentleman renounced his “deistical companions,” and entering into new communities where their experience would be valued and understood. Believing themselves to be newly born and recreated, these converts naturally recoiled at the suggestion that they were mere enthusiasts whose experience lacked any “divine warrant.” Thrown down trembling, reduced to helpless dependency, laboring for hours in mental anguish, and resurrected in ecstasy, they bore the mark of divine warrant for revivals in their bodies, and they carried this mark into the clash with anti-revivalists in their local congregations.³⁹

The Reverend Samuel McCorkle had not experienced supernatural power in his body; he was, moreover, as skeptical of the “irrational devotion” of the camp meeting as he was critical of its disorder and “moral chaos.” Describing himself as a man “long

³⁷ Ellen Eslinger argues that the Great Revival in Kentucky was causally linked to the social and economic transformation of the preceding decade, and that the *communitas* of the revival moment expressed a subsequent longing for a more cohesive, caring, and intimate society. This social crisis-religious revival equation presumes too much and cannot be sustained without detailed church records tying anomic individuals to revival conversions. Moreover, Eslinger’s argument does not adequately account for the piedmont phase of the revival, where social conditions were generally more stable, at the very least more varied and complex, than in Kentucky. See Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*, passim. These problems notwithstanding, Eslinger’s richly documented study provides an excellent summary of the Kentucky revival and sheds new light on the social conditions that formed its context. Hers is perhaps the most ambitious and well-documented attempt to establish this connection between revivalism and social crisis. For earlier attempts see Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); and Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, NY, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³⁸ In Stephen Aron’s view, Kentucky’s Great Revival served no social function save to offer a compensatory “sanctuary” to powerless women, slaves, and youths. Aron’s discussion sidesteps the issue of causation, only suggesting that a later (1811) revival was prompted by an earthquake. Further, his treatment of the gendered aspects of the revival – that it created a woman’s world and had only temporary appeal to men – is not supported by analysis of evangelical households, as is Heyrman’s. Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, chapter 6.

³⁹ Hall, *Narrative*, in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 388, 398.

enlightened with the rays of the science and religion” who was “far, very far from enthusiasm, and its constituents,” McCorkle approached the January 1802 meeting in Randolph County with serious misgivings. His worst fears were seemingly confirmed on the second day when, “as if by an electric shock, a large number in every direction, men, women, children, white and black, fell and cried for mercy.” McCorkle initially greeted this “scene of seeming confusion” with “horror” and “some degree of disgust.” As he crossed the grounds, moving from preaching tent to encampments to woods, passing the tangle of fallen, shouting, praying, weeping, pleading worshipers, his “mind seemed to be filled with a strange mass of sensations,” and he paused to reflect on the meaning of disorder. Although he concluded that “there was no crime” in the “external disorder” of revival worship, McCorkle remained troubled until the final evening, when his own son was religiously “impressed.” His child’s spiritual awakening resolved all of McCorkle’s doubts about the efficacy of the revival. He became an enthusiastic pro-revivalist, describing his own conversion to revivalism in terms resonant of his stricken congregants: with “joy unspeakable, even raptures” he affirmed the “glorious work” of the revival and “expressed an ardent zeal to promote” it.⁴⁰

McCorkle was not the only parent whose support for the revival was animated and sharpened by concern for the spiritual welfare of his child. Conversions of young people and spiritual reconciliation of parents and children were prominent themes in the piedmont revival, particularly in its early stages. In fact, if the Randolph meeting was in any way typical, the piedmont revival was in large measure a family affair.⁴¹ Groups of families, led by “pious parents who sent or conducted their children,” followed their ministers to the meetings. Many of these families had long been “principally engaged in . . . holding religious societies” and promoting the revival. Their work came to fruition

⁴⁰ Ibid., 391-5. McCorkle does not name his son specifically in the narrative, describing only his prayer for “a particular person who was impressed.” Foote identifies this person as McCorkle’s son, p. 381.

⁴¹ For alternative arguments that view revivals as venues for youth “revolts” against parental, and especially patriarchal, authority, see Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; Payne, “New Light in Hanover County;” Heyrman, *Southern Cross*; and Aron, *How the West Was Lost*.

in the protracted meetings. En route to the Randolph meeting the young people of James Hall's Iredell congregation fell "like fire along a train of powder." The following day McCorkle's youth were exercised, and by the end of the meeting, by Hall's calculation, "nine-tenths of our young people were deeply impressed." McCorkle noted that "after themselves" these converts were chiefly concerned about "their nearest relations." Such was the experience of one young convert at the Waxhaw revival, whose "exercises were joyful, as they respected himself; but became painful when his thoughts turned on his thoughtless or opposing relatives." Some excoriated themselves for turning a deaf ear to their parents' prayers, while others pleaded for their parents while in the throes of conviction: "Where is my father and mother," cried one, "that they don't come and pray for me? I shall be damned." In 1802 the Presbyterian Synod of the Carolinas applauded the impact of the revival on family life, noting how it had turned families from "ignorance and irreligion" to daily devotion and turned youth from "dancing, revelling and folly" to "christian conference." Searching for words, James Hall finally exclaimed that it was "easier to conceive of than describe the joy of the parents and children" who were reconciled in the piedmont revival.⁴²

It is possible that revival enthusiasm itself was initially adopted by young people and subsequently embraced or at least tolerated by their anxious parents. Hall's account of the seminal Randolph meeting certainly suggests as much: when the Iredell youth were exercised en route to the meeting, "the fathers were filled with astonishment, as none present had ever beheld such a scene." After the initial confusion subsided, however, the fathers accepted this "effusion of divine grace" and "spent the better part of the night in prayer and exhortations." Accustomed to the traditional staid Presbyterian communions, an older generation was shocked by this youthful innovation but in the end condoned it and, along with McCorkle, promoted it with "ardent zeal." Young enthusiasts also dominate the accounts of subsequent meetings. Of the twenty-five

⁴² Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 382-4, 393, 402; *Methodist Magazine* 26 (1803), 522; Presbyterian Synod of the Carolinas, *A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of the Carolinas Through the medium of their Commission, to the churches under their care* (Salisbury, SC, 1802), 6.

individual instances of bodily enthusiasm discussed in the accounts, eleven are specifically ascribed to youth; most of the remaining fourteen do not identify the subjects' ages. Young people were thus not only the first to undergo bodily exercises, they were also more frequently exercised than other age groups. Even as youth were entering the religious world of their parents, they established their own identity by embracing bodily enthusiasm. For their part, parents anxious for the spiritual welfare of their families embraced enthusiasm "and its constituents" and defended the divine origins of the revival on behalf of their children.⁴³

The interdenominational character of revival meetings may also have been in part the mark of a young constituency. Born after the Revolution, the rising generation had no memories of the Anglican establishment and would have been at pains to understand their parents' sectarian hostility. As we have seen, strictures against promiscuous communion and unlicensed preachers, along with increasingly favorable attitudes toward itinerants like Francis Asbury (a much greater threat than Charles Woodmason ever was), suggest that the icy sectarianism of the colonial period was thawing by the 1790s. In the revival these sectarian boundaries almost completely collapsed. Although there is nothing in the accounts linking sectarian coalescence with the younger generation, it stands to reason that resistance to denominational mixing was concentrated among the sectarian cold warriors who came of age under the establishment, while the weaker sectarian identity of the rising generation made them more comfortable with the fluid religious boundaries of the revival.

If bodily enthusiasm and sectarian mixing appealed especially to young people, an older generation was willing to accept these innovations and defend the revival for their children's sake. These family dynamics were evident in the split at Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church, the Waxhaws' sister congregation on the west side of the Catawba River. Of the thirteen families that left the congregation in opposition to the revival, only three were related to (or shared a surname with) converts, and in all three cases some

⁴³ Hall in Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 382, 383.

family members remained with the pro-revival faction. These were the only three families that were divided by the revival; the other twenty-nine either remained or departed as a unit. The two families with the largest numbers of new communicants – the Gills with seven and the Porters with six – were united in their support of the revival. Thus although the revival did occasionally cut across kinship lines, 90% of the families at Fishing Creek were unified in either supporting or opposing camp meetings. Those most likely to support the revival were related to new communicants, while those most likely to oppose it had no family members among its converts.⁴⁴

Without church records it is not possible to say if similar dynamics were present in the Waxhaw congregation. We can only say with certainty that shortly after the May 21 meeting a majority opposed the revival and temporarily shut John Brown out of the church; that their stated grievances included communing with Methodists and using Watts hymns; that half of the elders eventually withdrew from the congregation (with presumably half of the members) and claimed the Blackjack meeting house, affiliating with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; and that Brown asked to dissolve his relationship with the Waxhaw church within ten months of the revival. Unlike the rifts occasioned by earlier disputes over relocating the church, psalmody, and Brice Miller, the split precipitated by the Great Revival was deep and lasting. This very depth and permanency, however, suggests that these other issues – supernatural power and the revival's "divine warrant," sharpened by the familial and generational issues – underlay the Waxhaw split as well. As ethnic and sectarian identity eroded and the rising generation faced religious choices not readily available to their parents, a generation gap yawned open. The revival promised to close this gap, offering both young and old new ways to connect, ways that were familiar and yet that made room for youthful innovation,

⁴⁴ Holcomb and Parker, *Early Records of Fishing Creek*.

religious ways that recognized the decreasing importance of sectarian boundaries and the younger generation's need for a physical, bodily spirituality.⁴⁵

In the end, however, the revival defeated the Presbyterians. Divided congregations, conservative backlash, and the appropriation of the camp meeting by more militant Methodists convinced mainline Presbyterians to abandon the protracted meeting and reject its bodily enthusiasm. They soon repudiated its interdenominational dimension as well. In 1808 the Synod of the Carolinas, concerned that the Methodists were draining its membership, went beyond its 1797 declaration by prescribing non-communion and even non-intercourse between members of the two competing groups.⁴⁶ But the synod could not stem the flow of its adherents into the Methodist camp.⁴⁷ The future belonged to the Methodists, with their "irrational devotion" and their tormented, ecstatic bodies.⁴⁸ When the Presbyterians repudiated the camp meeting they lost the South; and yet, as we shall see, in other ways they were already very much a Southern people.

In the Waxhaws as in other Presbyterian communities of the piedmont, the Great Revival was, before all else, a *religious* event. It took place in a religious setting, where church membership, adherence, and influence was already strong, and where it served as much to re-vive or revitalize believers as it did to "christianize" an unchurched population. Likewise, the conflict it generated was primarily religious conflict, dividing churches, communities, even families amid quarrels over communion, enthusiasm, and sectarian boundaries. But it was also a physical, *sensual* phenomenon. In the camp

⁴⁵ Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 112, 119-20; Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Session 7, March 1803, and Session 8, September 1803.

⁴⁶ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 297.

⁴⁷ For a look at the relative gains of Methodists in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century South, see Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 261-66.

⁴⁸ For a more thorough discussion of the place of irrationalism in emergence of the "modern" west see Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), esp. Introduction and Chapter 5.

meetings religiosity and sensuality fused as groaning, shouting, out-of-control bodies collapsed and rose in ecstasy. Understandably, this sensual enthusiasm appealed strongly to young people. The generation gap that emerged in the revival was widened by the weakening sectarian and ethnic identity of the rising generation. These generational issues gave the revival an important *social* dimension. Far from complicating household politics by pitting patriarchs against their dependents, it had a reconciling effect, especially between children and parents. Eager to fold their children into their religious world, parents embraced the bodily exercises, winked at promiscuous communion, and stood by the revival – but at the price of divided churches, for in the debate over the “divine warrant” for the revival, supernaturalism and generational reconciliation left no middle ground.

Waxhaw Presbyterian Church never fully recovered from the “great meeting” of 1802. The bargain it had struck with the revival did not pay off. It continued to lose members to emigration, and, since it no longer enjoyed a religious monopoly in the community, its membership was also threatened by Methodists and Associate Reformed Presbyterians. Weakened by the split, it would be ten years before the congregation engaged another salaried minister. In the interim the meeting house burned, but members again resisted the impulse to relocate it more conveniently, reluctant as they were to “leave the graves of their fathers.”⁴⁹ Thus what had been one of the “largest and most respectable” Presbyterian congregations in the state on the eve of the revival was by 1805 a church in decline. It was a church, moreover, embedded in a community in decline, as yeomen gave way to slaveholders, farms to great plantations, and wheat to green seed cotton.

⁴⁹ Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, II, 120.

EPILOGUE:
ORIGINS OF THE OLD SOUTH

In the late 1850s James Parton visited the Waxhaws to collect information for his biography of Andrew Jackson. Riding his horse into the heart of the old settlement, Parton stopped to linger in the Presbyterian churchyard, a “strange and lonely place” whose silence perplexed him. “Old as the settlement is,” he wrote, “the country is but thinly inhabited, and the few houses near look like those of a just-peopled country in the northern States.” Nor was this sparseness limited to the old bottomland neighborhood surrounding the church. “Miles and miles and miles, you may ride in the pine woods and ‘old fields’ of that country,” he noted, “without meeting a vehicle or seeing a living creature.” Indeed, from his vantage point in the old graveyard, secluded and alone, Parton found it easy to imagine himself as “one who comes upon the ancient burial-place of a race extinct.”¹

The meeting house itself had suffered a similar fate. Removing “the chip that keeps the door from blowing open,” Parton peered in and noted the spartan interior, the “straight-backed pews, and rough Sunday-school benches,” all grown “grimly wooden and desolate” in the half-light of the thick shade. Abandonment had led to such neglect, for the church was no longer used, having fallen victim to “some schism respecting psalmody and close communion.” Or more likely, victim to those historical forces that had made the surrounding country so “thinly inhabited.” As J.H. Saye wrote after the Civil War, during the antebellum years “considerable planters” had taken up vast tracts of land in the river bottom which were “cultivated by negroes.” This process had “operated against the growth and numbers of the church,” for “the white population was

¹ James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1861), 51.

sparse in the vicinity of the place of worship.” But Saye was wise to the ebb and flow of demographic change. “Great changes take place in the movements of population,” he declared, “so that, in a few years, that fine section of country may be filled with the Anglo-Saxon race.” Until then, the neighborhood meeting house would serve as an “important field of labor for the benefit of the other class of our population.”²

What Parton and Saye witnessed in the mid-nineteenth century was the culmination of a process that began in the 1790s. Rising land prices and population pressures had conspired to drive white yeoman farmers out of the Waxhaws, turning what Charles Woodmason once called the “most surprisingly thick settled spot” in the upcountry into a “thinly inhabited,” desolate place. The shift to slave labor that began during the wheat boom of the nineties continued to alter the color of the Waxhaws population. The late-colonial farmers who once cultivated their “great many large wheat fields” with “the manual labor of their own numerous families” had given way to the “considerable planters” whose “large tracts of land were . . . cultivated by negroes.” The bottomland settlement probably achieved a black majority by 1840 if not sooner.³ The plantation system had also taken its toll on the land. The “very fruitful fine spot” of the 1760s -- “so durable,” as John Lawson had once claimed, “that no Labour of Man, in one or two Ages, could make it poor” -- was by Parton’s day a “boundless continuity of pine woods” with only an occasional “interval of fertile soil.” Further, the church that once drew “seldom less than 9, 10, 1200 people . . . of a Sunday” had become little more than an empty shell. Once the only congregation in the upcountry with a full-time settled minister, by the 1820s it was unable to support its own pastor. Torched by Loyalist raiders in 1781 as the supreme symbol of American resistance, it was ignored by

² Ibid., 50-1; J. H. Saye, *Historical Addresses and Commemorative Ode, Delivered in the Synod of South Carolina . . . October 24, 1885* (Richmond, VA, 1886), 34.

³ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 13-14; Davis, ed., “Journal of William Moultrie,” 552; *Supplement to the South-Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, August 9, 1768. Lancaster County as a whole achieved racial parity by 1850. The Waxhaws was the most developed agricultural community in the county and probably reached a black majority much sooner. For a summary of census figures see Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 57.

Sherman's cavalry when they marched through Lancaster County in 1865. Weakened by division and outmigration, it was eventually abandoned by whites and left to the "other class" of the population.⁴

Saye understood what Parton had seen only dimly: that the gradual triumph of the plantation system had turned the bustling yeoman community of the eighteenth century into the sparsely peopled Old South community of the mid-nineteenth century, characterized by extensive farming, intensely commercial, monocrop agriculture, large plantations worked by slaves, the economic and social dominance of a few wealthy planters, and a high slave population and subsequent emergence of slave communities. This transformation began with wheat farmers, but it was accelerated and eventually completed by cotton planters.

Green seed or short staple cotton (also called upland cotton) had long been grown in the interior, but its short fibers and many seeds made ginning difficult, and it could not be grown profitably until the invention of an effective mechanical gin in 1793. Still, most of the cotton produced in the 1790s was of the long-staple, Sea Island variety; cotton gradually made its way into the interior and did not penetrate the piedmont until after 1800. Even so, its impact was profound. Even in communities like the Waxhaws, where population pressures and commercial agriculture had already begun to transform the local economy and social structure, cotton made a significant impression. The land prices that had crept up and out of the reach of many small farmers in the 1790s now soared. Even after cotton prices fell sharply when the market was glutted after 1800, cotton yielded 50% more income per acre than wheat. Consequently, wheat production declined rapidly; Camden's highly competitive flour mills, which had processed 40,000 bushels of wheat in 1801, had closed their doors by 1808. Absentee planters from the lowcountry moved in and acquired choice bottomland tracts, displacing local landowners

⁴ Hooker, *Carolina Backcountry*, 13-14; Lawson, *New Voyage to Carolina*, 45-6; Parton, *Life of Jackson*, 59. The Waxhaw congregation joined two other churches in 1835 when it hired the young James Henley Thornwell. See Pettus, *Waxhaws*, 88, 92-3. On Sherman and the fate of the courthouse also see Pettus, *Waxhaws*, 100-1.

and further propelling the commercialization of the piedmont. In the long run, however, cotton exhausted the soil, and by the 1830s native and absentee planters alike were migrating to the Mississippi delta. Thus the “strange and lonely place” of Parton’s day had been twice abandoned, first by yeoman families fleeing overpopulation and second by great planters seeking virgin soil. All that remained was a handful of cotton planters and their slaves farming on whatever “interval of fertile soil” they could find.⁵

At the very least cotton accelerated the transformation of upland communities. It overwhelmed wheat and tobacco and undermined the infrastructure – warehouses, inspection stations, mills – that made these crops profitable, thus retarding the development of piedmont communities above the cotton belt even as it enriched communities within the cotton belt. It fueled the growth of slavery and the emergence of slave communities, propelled commercialization, and exhausted the soil more rapidly than wheat farming would have done. At the very most cotton changed the southern social structure, creating wide disparities of wealth and concentrating political and cultural power in the hands of great planters and slaveholders. This was certainly the case in the Waxhaws, where the large planters of Parton’s day had long before overwhelmed the petty slaveholding society of the 1790s (which, despite the dominance of a slaveholding class, nonetheless retained much of the egalitarian character of its yeoman base).

But cotton did not revolutionize the piedmont, and we must be careful not to imbue it with a kind of supernatural determinism. It did not transform piedmont communities, nor did it make for a change in mentality. As the experience of the Waxhaws shows, these transformations belonged to an earlier period and were the products of more complex, purposeful, underlying forces, not of historical accidents. The transformation of the insular, suspicious, ethnically and religiously closed settlement of the colonial frontier into the more tolerant, open, voluntary community of the revival

⁵ Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, 152-4, 596-7; Mendenhall, *History of Agriculture in South Carolina*, 40; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 247-8; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 121-3; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 685-6.

years was rooted in generational change. Similarly, emigration and the new prosperity of the 1790s account for the erosion of kin-based neighborhoods and economic interdependency. The strong wheat market enabled farmers to buy slaves at the precise moment that land shortages were forcing their grown children to emigrate; the shift to slave labor began to liberate farm families from their dependence on the labor of neighbors and kin, just as their growing purchasing power enabled them to gradually disengage from the borrowing system. The transformation of the southern interior was thus rooted in the calculus of land-to-people ratios, the changing conditions encountered by a new generation, and the simple, fundamental search for markets and marketable commodities that antedated cotton.

In short, the transformation of the Waxhaws lay at the intersection of opportunities – commodity markets, affordable slave labor, available western lands – with the yeomanry’s drive to exploit them, with its eagerness to ride the wave of the capitalist business cycle. Far from being victimized by encroaching capitalist planters, the yeoman farmers of the Waxhaws embraced the commercial capitalist market. Before it was a Southern community of “considerable planters,” great plantations, cotton fields, and a slave majority, the Waxhaws was an American community of entrepreneurial farmers looking for the main chance and willing to exploit land and people to get it. If there is an American story, this is surely it.

APPENDIX 1: POPULATION

Historians of the early American backcountry have traditionally estimated population in three ways: by using the estimates of contemporaries; by counting headrights, or allotting one person for fifty acres of granted land; and by using militia rolls, multiplying the number of militiamen in a company by five. None of these methods is precise. Contemporary estimates were generally based on conjecture, some perhaps incorporating militia or land data into their projections but none doing so in a systematic way. Counting headrights almost invariably leads to inflated totals, since it fails to account for unoccupied land granted to speculators. Also, North Carolina abandoned headrights in the 1750s and adopted a more arbitrary system for granting land, making headrights virtually useless as a way of calculating population in border communities like the Waxhaws. Militia rolls are also unreliable predictors, mainly because many militia members were dependent children and did not represent households.

The more precise methodology used here makes the landholding household the base unit for determining population in 1759 and 1775. First, I listed all persons who received land through grant, gift, purchase, or will during the colonial period. I compared this list to cemetery records, probate records, deeds, and family histories to eliminate all persons known to have died or emigrated before the target years. I used a variety of sources to identify and eliminate nonresident landowners. Anyone who sold all of their known lands before the target years was also eliminated. I retained anyone who appeared in the land records, as either grantee/grantor or witness, after 1775. I also retained anyone found in Revolutionary War records, along with anyone known to have emigrated or died

after 1775. I checked the 1790 census and court records for those whose whereabouts after 1775 still could not be firmly established. Of the 218 landholding households found in the Waxhaws between 1751 and 1775, the whereabouts of 38 (17%) could not be positively identified after 1775. Of the 180 landowning households whose residency could be established:

- 22 (12%) died
- 31 (17%) moved and/or sold out
- 12 (7%) were nonresident landholders
- 2 (1%) were women who married and gave up independent status
- 113 (63%) stayed and lived through 1775

The next step was to determine an average household size. The headrights give a household size of 5.2, based on the mean average number of acres per grant divided by 50. The 1790 census gives an average of 7 members per household, 1.2 of whom were slaves. Slaves made up 17% of the Waxhaws population in 1790, somewhat less than half that in 1759, perhaps slightly more in 1775. Assuming that the average number of whites per household was at least equivalent to that of 1790, I arrived at an average household size of 6.4 (5.8 whites and .6 slaves) for 1759 and 6.6 (5.8 whites and .8 slaves) for 1775. This figure is consistent with household sizes in other North American British colonies with low slave populations during this same period.¹ It is also consistent with the average household size of all single-grant landowners, those who did not speculate and whose headright more accurately reflects their household size (300-350 acres, or 6-7 people per household).

Using these multipliers, the landowning household population of the Waxhaws was 480 (75 households) in 1759 and 746 (113 households) in 1775. This is a minimum

¹ See Robert V. Wells, *The Population of the British Colonies in America before 1776* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 300. Wells gives the following comparable figures for mean household size: 7.2 in Massachusetts (1764), 6.4 for New Jersey (1772), and 6.3 for Rhode Island (1774). Also see Wells, "Family Size and Fertility Control in Eighteenth-Century America: A Study of Quaker Families," in Maris A. Vinovskis, ed., *Studies in American Historical Demography* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 78, where the average size of Quaker families in 1775 was 6.68.

figure. All of the landowners whose residency could not be established were factored out of the 1775 figure. Further, it does not take tenants into consideration.

Without tax lists it is impossible to accurately determine the rate of tenancy, but we can arrive at a ballpark figure or range by looking at surplus land. Multiple grantholders had to pay taxes and quit rents on their land, and they lost money every year if they failed to put their land to use. Commercial agriculture was not a viable option in the 1750s. Many sold their surplus lands; others retained them and presumably leased them. Assuming that large landowners who did not sell their land within five years of their grant were leasing it out, we can get a vague idea of the extent of tenancy. Between 1750-59, there were twelve multiple grantholders with 30 grants that had not been or would not be sold within five years of the grant. The total acreage on these grants was 9,019. Subtracting 50 acres per landowning household member for household use leaves 4,819 surplus acres. Allotting 50 acres per tenant comes to 96 tenants. Applying the same method to all grantees: 32,326 acres were granted during this period, to a landowning population of 480 people. Subtracting 50 acres per landholding household member for use leaves 8,326 surplus acres, or 166 tenants (16-26 tenant households).

Thus in 1759, the total population ranged between 576 and 646 people, with a mean average of 611. Tenants made up between 18% and 26% of the population. This figure is somewhat lower than the tenancy rate for similar but older communities in rural Pennsylvania.² Applying a tenancy rate of 20% (187 tenants) to the landowning household total for 1775 brings the total population for that year to 933.

In terms of households, the Waxhaws population grew from approximately 95 households in 1759 to 141 in 1775. This is consistent with the number of “families”

² Lucy Simler found that 30-40% of taxable householders in mid-eighteenth-century Chester County, Pennsylvania were renting. See “Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania: The Case of Chester County,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd, 53 no. 4 (October 1986): 542-69.

estimated living in the Waxhaws by Elam Potter in 1767: 120, with another 70 living nearby.³

³ Potter is cited in Howe, *Presbyterian Church*, I, 363.

APPENDIX 2:

KINSHIP AND IMMIGRATION NETWORKS

The table below shows the link between the Waxhaws and its most important feeder community, Augusta County, Virginia. Column A identifies the surnames of people who immigrated to and acquired land in the Waxhaws between 1750-1761. Column B denotes how many of those immigrants' surnames appeared in the baptismal records of Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church, Augusta County, Virginia, between 1740-49. An asterisk signifies that the full name of one or more persons with that surname appeared in both sets of records.

In all, 47% (29 of 62) of the surnames of early Waxhaws landowners also appeared in the church records from Augusta County. Sixteen of 100 individual names (16%) appear in both sets of records, suggesting a strong correspondence between the two communities.

Immigrant/Landholder Surnames, 1750-61	Surname Appeared in Church Records	Immigrant/Landholder Surnames, 1750-61	Surname Appeared in Church Records
Adams	Yes	Gill	
Adamson		Guthrie	
Alison	Yes	Hall	Yes*
Barkley	Yes*	Hood	Yes
Barnett	Yes	Jones	
Barr		Kelso	
Beard (Baird)		Kennedy	Yes*
Burnet	Yes	Kerr	Yes
Caldwell	Yes	King	Yes*
Clark	Yes	Larimore	
Clime		Lee	
Cousard (Cowsar)	Yes*	Lynn	
Cresswell		Maddock	
Crockett	Yes	Magee (McKee)	
Davis	Yes*	McCain	
Douglas	Yes**	McClellan	Yes
Dunlap	Yes**	McCorkill	
Dunn		McElhenny	
Foster		McKewn	
Gamble		McShane	

Immigrant/Landholder Surnames, 1750-61	Surname Appeared in Church Records
McVenev	
Miller	Yes*
Montgomery	
Moore	Yes*
Nisbet	
Nutt	
Patton	Yes*
Pender	
Pickens	Yes
Ramsey	Yes*
Richardson	
Robinson	Yes*
Shaver	
Simpson	
Smith	Yes
Strain	
Taylor	
Thompson	Yes*
Walker	Yes
Waughope (Walkup)	
White	Yes
Wright	Yes

Source: Waxhaws land records (see chapter 1, note 19); Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Tinkling Spring: Headwater of Freedom: A Study of the Church and Her People, 1732-1952* (Fishersville, VA, 1954), 470-84.

APPENDIX 3:

MARRIAGES AND CHURCH AFFILIATION, 1745-1808

The table below demonstrates the correspondence between marriage and religious affiliation in the Waxhaws. The first column lists all known marriages of Waxhaws residents between 1745-1808 (including some couples who married prior to immigration). Column two gives the date of marriage; in the absence of official marriage records, many of the dates have been estimated. The third column shows church affiliation, where known; this is frequently based on cemetery records. Overall, at least twenty-five of the twenty-nine Waxhaws marriages can be reasonably assumed to have taken place within sectarian lines. Moreover, many of these unions were confined to single congregations; Waxhaw Presbyterians tended not to marry Six Mile or Shiloh Presbyterians, and vice versa.

Couples	Date	Affiliation
John Doby and Elizabeth Massey	Unknown	Both families also related to Curetons. Surnames do not appear in churchyard records.
Samuel Dunlap and Mary Craighead	1745 ca.	Both buried in Waxhaw Church cemetery
Robert McClanahan and Elizabeth Patton	1749 before	Pattons appear in Six Mile Creek cemetery records. McClanahans appear in Shiloh ARP church records.
Joseph Kelso and Jean Foster	1750 before	Foster surname appears frequently in Waxhaw church cemetery records. Kelso appears in Pennsylvania Presbyterian records.
Robert Patton and Sarah Strain	1750 after	Pattons appear in Six Mile Creek cemetery records. Strains appear in Shiloh ARP church records.
Hugh McCain and Eleanor Nutt	1750 ca	Neither surname appears in any cemetery records
William Hagins and Mary Patton	1750-53	Both surnames in Six Mile Creek Presbyterian Church cemetery records.

Couples	Date	Affiliation
Henry Foster and Ann Kelso	1752	Married by Presbyterian minister in Paxton, PA
Archibald Davie and Mary Richardson	1752	Both dissenters in Scotland
John Crockett and Margaret McClenachan	1755 ca	Both buried in Waxhaw Church cemetery
William Richardson and Agnes Craighead	1759	Both from Presbyterian families
John Cantzon and Sarah Dickey	1760 before	Married in Pennsylvania. John's surname in Waxhaw Church cemetery records.
George Dunlap and Agnes Craighead Richardson	1773	Both from Presbyterian families
Hercules Huey and wife Catherine	1775 before	Both buried in Waxhaw Church cemetery
Thomas Dunlap and Catherine Foster	1780 ca.	Both families prominent in Waxhaw Church and appear frequently in cemetery records
Daniel Harper and Sarah Dickey Cantzon	1780 ca.	Daniel buried in Waxhaw cemetery. Sarah's first husband's surname appears in Waxhaw Church cemetery records.
William Blair and Sarah Douglas	1780 ca	Both buried in Waxhaw Church cemetery
Moses Stephenson and Elizabeth Dunlap	1783	Fathers of both were elders at Waxhaw Presbyterian
James Craig and Mary Kerr	1786	Buried in Shiloh ARP cemetery
Dr. Samuel Dunlap and Mary Crawford	1790 ca.	Both surnames appear frequently in Waxhaw Church cemetery records
William Dunlap and Agnes Carnes	1790 ca.	Both families prominent in Waxhaw Church and appear in cemetery records
John McCain and Agnes Kennedy	1790 ca	Kennedys affiliated with Presbyterian church prior to immigration. McCain's affiliation unknown.
William Crockett and Nancy Walkup	1790 ca	Parents of both buried in Waxhaw Church cemetery
Wyke Ivy and Anne Clarke	1790 ca	Both from Methodist families
William Craig and Martha Davis	1792	Both full names appear in Shiloh ARP cemetery records

Couples	Date	Affiliation
John McMurray and Sarah Harper	1800	John buried in Shiloh ARP; Harper surname appears in Waxhaw Church cemetery records
John Coffey and Sarah Morrow	1804	John buried in Six Mile Presbyterian Church cemetery, along with Sarah's parents.
Nathaniel Craig and Agnes Thompson	1804	Buried in Shiloh ARP cemetery
Moses Heath and Elsie Wren (1) and Mildred Wren (2)	1808	Wrens active in Methodist church. Heath's affiliation unknown.

Sources: Lancaster County Deeds, book F, 135; Nancy Crockett, *Old Waxhaw Graveyard* (Lancaster, SC, 1965); Eloise Craig, comp., *Shiloh Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Cemetery Inscriptions* (1979); Louise Pettus, "Old Six Mile Cemetery," Lancaster County, South Carolina GenWeb, Internet on-line (hereafter Lancaster GenWeb), <www.rootsweb.com/~sclancas/-6milecem.htm> [November 29, 2000]; "Henry Foster Bible," *South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research*, 11, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 5; James Hanna, *The House of Dunlap* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1956); William Boyce White, *Genealogy of Two Early Patton Families of York, Chester, and Lancaster Counties, South Carolina* (By the Author, 1996), 2; Eloise Craig, *Descendants of John Craig, Espquire, and John Robinson, Senior, Scotch-Irish Immigrants to Lancaster County, South Carolina* (By the Author, 1988); Lawrence Maynard, *Hugh McCain of the Waxhaws and His Descendants* (By the Author, 1993); Blackwell P. Robinson, *William Richardson Davie* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,), 1-7; Viola Floyd, *Descendants of William Harper, Irish Immigrant, to Lancaster County, South Carolina* (1965); John Cantzon Foster, *Ancestors and Descendants of Joseph Henry Foster and Charlotte Rebecca Brown of the Waxhaws, South Carolina* (No date, no publisher); V.H. Huey, *Huey Family History* (1963); Ida McDow Rodman, *The McDow Family in America* (1953); James Cousar, *Down the Waxhaw Road: The Life Story of the Reverend John Cousar, a Plain, Practical, Presbyterian Preacher* (Florence, SC, 1953); Louise Pettus, "Coffey/Morrow," 1999, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/-SC/Lancaster/966>> [November 29, 2000]; D. Maring, "Crockett," 1999, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/-SC/Lancaster/856>> [November 29, 2000]; Louise Pettus, "Gen. James Blair," 1998, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/-LancasterBios/31>> [November 29, 2000]; Linda McCain Stansell, "Kennedy," 2000, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/-USA/SC/Lancaster/1189>> [November 29, 2000]; Louise Pettus, "The Doby Family of Lancaster," 1998, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/-LancasterBios>> [November 29, 2000]; Louise Pettus, "Adam Ivey," 1998, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/LancasterBios/20>> [November 29, 2000]; Betty Wren, "Heath Family," 1998, Lancaster GenWeb, <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/SC/LancasterBios/35>> [November 29, 2000].

APPENDIX 4:
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND ADHERENCE, 1801

The presbytery records for 1801 list 178 communicants or full members in Waxhaw Presbyterian Church. In all probability, the vast majority of these members – perhaps as many as 170 – were white, since other sources indicate that blacks showed little interest in joining the Presbyterian church. There were also at least 40 Methodists in the community by 1801. According to the Methodist conference minutes, the fledgling congregation along Waxhaw Creek had 20 white and no black members in 1788. In subsequent years conference records did not break Waxhaw congregation numbers out of larger circuit figures, but in those years the circuit membership grew by at least half and probably more. Further, the Waxhaw Methodists built their first meeting house in 1799, suggesting that they had outgrown their house churches. It is reasonable to assume at least 40 members in 1801, including an estimated thirty whites and ten blacks (a ratio consistent with overall Methodist numbers). This is a conservative estimate, requiring only a 50% increase in white members in more than 13 years. This brings the total number of white church members in the Waxhaws to 200. Since the adult (16 and over) white population of the Waxhaws in 1800 was 696 – and since Presbyterian membership was reserved primarily for adults – it is safe to assume that one in four adults (25%) were full church members in 1801.¹

Converting membership totals into estimates of church adherents – people who attended regularly but for various reasons did not seek full membership -- is extremely difficult. The most recent and perhaps ambitious attempt is by Christine Heyrman.

¹ Minutes, First Presbytery of South Carolina, Sessions 3 and 4, 1801; Howe, *Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, I, 541; *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from 1773 to 1813* (New York, 1813). For the Methodist meeting house see Lancaster Deeds, F, 135. On black-white ratios in the Methodist church see Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 263.

Looking exclusively at Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, Heyrman estimated that 14.4% of the overall southern white population belonged to evangelical churches in 1790, while an additional 38% were adherents. Heyrman is on much surer footing with Methodists and Baptists, who kept membership totals for that year, than with Presbyterians. She does not define her methodology for estimating Presbyterian membership in 1790; presumably it is based on her formula for the colonial period, which assumed an average of 61 members per congregation.² She then multiplied this figure by three for Presbyterians and two for Methodists to estimate the number of adult adherents. By this method, the total number of white members and adult adherents in the Waxhaws in 1800 would have been 770, or 110% of the total adult population.³ Similarly, based on her formula for estimating the number of men, women, and children who “worshiped regularly” in the colonial (and for Presbyterians, early national) churches, yields a total of 1,200 whites in regular attendance in the Waxhaws in 1801 (85% of the population). This is far in excess of Heyrman’s south-wide average adherence of 54.4% in 1790.⁴

Heyrman’s methodology is the most fully developed formula for estimating church membership in the eighteenth-century south. Although it is inadequate for the Waxhaws, yielding more white adherents than white people in 1801, in the absence of more precise figures we may safely assume that the Waxhaws was thoroughly “christianized” by the turn of the century, with church adherence approaching 85% of the population.

² Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 262, 265. Heyrman arrives at this figure in the following manner: assuming that there were 80 families per congregation, she multiplied this figure by 6 (the average household size) to arrive at an estimated average number of regular attendees of 480. She then took 12.8% (the estimated average percentage of regular attendees who were members) of this figure, to arrive at an estimated average membership of 61.

³ That is, 510 Presbyterian (170 times 3) and 60 Methodist (30 times 2) adherents, plus 200 members, yielding a total of 770 members and adherents.

⁴ Along with her failure to define her methodology for estimating Presbyterian membership in 1790, part of what makes Heyrman’s formula problematic is her failure to distinguish between those who “worshiped regularly” during the colonial period – who made up 7.8 times the number of members – and the “adherents” of the early national and antebellum years, who made up 2-3 times the number of members.

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