

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CATAWBA PROJECT

by

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Abstract

In 2001, the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology began the Catawba Project, an extension of the 20-year Siouan Project that seeks to trace the evolution of native societies of the Carolina piedmont through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Re-analysis of documentary sources and re-evaluation of Catawba settlement patterns have led researchers to a series of settlements occupied sequentially between c.1750 and 1820, a critical period of group coalescence that gave rise to the modern Catawba Nation. Recent archaeological investigations at Old Town (c. 1770–1780), the Bowers site (c. 1800–1820), and New Town (c. 1781–1818) provide initial glimpses into the transformations of Catawba material culture through the late Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federal periods.

In 2001, the University of North Carolina’s Research Laboratories of Archaeology launched the Catawba Project, a program that seeks to trace the evolution of native societies in the Carolina piedmont through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This project is an outgrowth of UNC’s Siouan Project, which investigated the archaeological records of Siouan-speaking native communities, including the Sara, Shakori, Sissipahaw, and Occaneechi, that lived in piedmont North Carolina during the late precontact and early contact periods (Dickens, Ward, and Davis 1987; Ward and Davis 1988, 1991, 1993). By 1715, European-introduced diseases, Iroquois raiding, and Indian-Colonial wars had ravaged the native peoples of the piedmont and forced many of these small groups to abandon their homelands and take refuge among the more powerful and protected Kadapau, Esaw, Sugeree, and Wateree tribes along Catawba River of upper South Carolina (Hudson 1970; Merrell 1989; Williams 1930) (Figure 1). Through a dramatic process of coalescence, the emerging Catawba Nation forged these diverse native communities into a military powerhouse that exerted disproportionate political influence across the colonial South. The Catawba Project aims to illuminate the emergence of the modern Catawba Nation in the early eighteenth century,

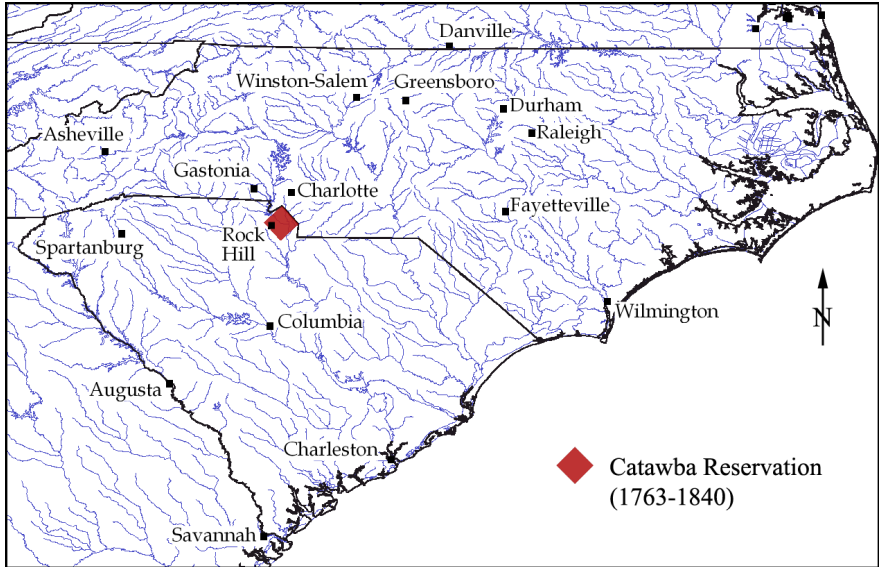


Figure 1. Map of North and South Carolina showing the location of the old Catawba Reservation (1763–1840).

and to document the creative adaptations that have enabled the endurance of the Catawba people in their ancient homeland.

Historical Overview

The Catawba Project examines the native experience from the late seventeenth century, when Virginians and South Carolinians began to engage the Catawbas in regular trade (Cumming 1958; Wright 1966), until the cession of Catawba reservation lands in 1840. This span can be divided into six periods, each characterized by distinctive political, economic, and cultural trends. During the early English Contact period (c. 1675–1715), explorers and traders from Virginia and South Carolina first entered the Catawba valley and encountered a large native population comprised of Sugerees, Esaws, Kadapaus, Waxhaws, and others. John Lawson, who traveled through the Catawba-Wateree valley in 1701, remarked that the Esaw were “a very large Nation containing many thousand People” and that the Sugaree occupied “a great many Towns and Settlements” (Lefler 1967:46, 49). The English colonies quickly developed strong trade relations with the Catawba Nation and established a

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century-long military alliance that held firm until the American Revolution.

The Coalescent period (1716–1759) opened with the Yamasee War of 1715, which radically altered the native landscape of the Carolinas and drove many additional groups to seek shelter among the Catawba (Merrell 1989). During this period, the Catawba/Esaw settlements swelled with refugee groups who established themselves as distinct towns under the Catawba aegis. As James Adair observed:

About the year 1743, their nation consisted of almost 400 warriors, of above twenty different dialects. I shall mention a few of the national names of those, who make up this mixed language;—the *Katahba*, is the standard, or court-dialect—the *Wataree*, who make up a large town; *Eeno*, *Chewah*, now *Chowan*, *Canggaree*, *Nachee*, *Yamasee*, *Coosah*, &c. [Williams 1930:235–236]

Under Catawba leadership, this coalition guarded the Great Trading Path and formed South Carolina's bulwark against the French and their native allies. Catawba warriors fought alongside the English and Anglo-Americans throughout the Seven Years War, but in 1759, warriors returning from Fort Dusquesne brought smallpox into the Catawba Nation, and within months more than half of the Catawbas and their allied tribes perished (Williams 1930). This marks the beginning of the Late Colonial period (1760–1775), a time of consolidation and decline for the Catawba. The distinct identities of the multiple tribal groups that formed the nation collapsed and the survivors, now known simply as Catawbas, moved downriver in 1760 to Pine Tree Hill (at modern-day Camden, South Carolina). They assisted the English in the Anglo-Cherokee war of 1760–1761 and then moved back upriver in 1761 to establish two new towns in the Waxhaw Old Fields, seven miles south of their old towns along the Trading Path. With the 1760 Treaty of Pine Tree Hill, the Catawba Nation had relinquished claim to an expansive territory in North and South Carolina in return for guaranteed title to a 15-square mile tract around their old towns (Merrell 1989:197–198). The nation accepted this reduced boundary to secure Crown protection for their core homeland, which was threatened by Scots-Irish and German settlers who flooded down the Great Wagon Road (formerly the Great Trading Path) into South Carolina during the mid-eighteenth century.

At the outset of the Revolutionary period (1776–1781), the Catawba Nation, which then numbered only about 600 individuals, resided in a single town near Twelve Mile Creek. In 1775, the Catawbas broke their long alliance with Britain and cast their lot with the Americans. Catawba soldiers served with South Carolina troops throughout the war, and their

NORTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGY [Vol. 53, 2004]

reservation provided sanctuary for harried American forces in the Carolina backcountry. As “the Patriot Indians,” the Catawbas guaranteed their continued rights and privileges in post-colonial South Carolina, and the newly constituted state recognized the Catawba reservation lands.

In the post-Revolutionary Federal period (1781–1820), the remnants of the Catawba Nation formed a single community in the uplands above the Waxhaw Old Fields. Here, Catawba families survived through a mix of subsistence farming and hunting, supplemented with cash income from cottage industries and land rents. John Smyth, who visited the community in 1784, noted:

The Indian women...cultivate the soil, as well as perform the common menial domestic services; the sole occupation of the men being war, hunting, fishing, fowling, and smoaking tobacco. [Smyth 1784:193]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Catawbas had leased most of their reserved lands to white planters, and rent payments became an essential part of the Catawba economy. In 1791 Rev. Thomas Coke noted that:

They possess a quantity of land, fifteen miles square, on the river Catawba. A very small part of this land they cultivate themselves: a much larger part they let out in long leases to the white people (Coke 1792:11–12).

Robert Mills (1826) observed:

The remains of this nation now occupy a territory 15 miles square. These lands are almost all leased out to white settlers, for 99 years, renewable, at the rate of from 15 to \$20 per annum for each plantation, of about 300 acres. The annual income from these lands is estimated to amount to about \$5000. This sum prudently managed, would suffice to support the whole nation, (now composed of about 30 families) comfortably. Yet these wretched Indians live in a state of abject poverty....

Catawba potters supplemented their lease incomes with commercial sales of handmade pottery to Anglo-American and African-American customers (Baker 1972; Blumer 2004). Itinerant Catawba potters peddled their wares in the backcountry as early as 1772 (Merrell 1989:211), and Gilmore Simms (1856) notes a well-developed during the early nineteenth century in which Catawbas took their wares as far away as Charleston.

[I]t was the custom of the Catawba Indians...to come down, at certain seasons, from their far homes in the interior, to the seaboard, bringing to Charleston a little stock of earthen pots and pans, skins, and other small matters, which they bartered in the city for such commodities as were craved by their tastes, or

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needed by their condition... Their productions had their value to the citizens, and for many purposes, were considered by most of the worthy housewives of the past generation to be far superior to any other. [Simms 1856:122]

Despite a secure economic base, Catawba population spiraled downward during the early nineteenth century due to disease and chronic alcohol abuse. In 1815, Calvin Jones observed:

Nation declining. During the war had 40 or 50 warriors in service. Now not more than 30 in the nation.... Women have but few children, many none. Children die – all suffer from too much whisky and too little bread. In 40 years probably extinct. [Jones 1815]

In 1826, Robert Mills stated: “The Catawba Indians are now reduced, from habits of indolence and inebriation, to very few; their number does not exceed 110 of every age....”

By 1820, the Catawbas abandoned their last settlement on the east side of the Catawba River in favor of a community on the west bank where the present Catawba reservation is located. For the next two decades, the Catawba Nation maintained a measure of political, economic, and cultural independence in their native territory, but whites interpreted their waning numbers and declining economy as evidence of impending extinction. In 1840, a few Catawba leaders were cajoled into ceding their reserved lands to South Carolina for a small cash payment and the promise of a new reserve near or among the Eastern Cherokees. However, North Carolina rebuffed these attempts to resettle the Catawbas in the mountains. By 1845, the Catawbas were denationalized and dispossessed of their lands, reduced from “the Patriot Indians” to landless “free persons of color” who were forced to wander as itinerant potters and day-laborers through an increasingly race conscious and strident South. Their persistence and ultimate florescence as the Catawba Nation during the twentieth century confounded predictions of their inevitable disappearance. The survival of the modern nation on ancestral Catawba lands is testament to the strength of this community and its inexorable connection to place.

Research Goals and Strategies

This general historical outline of the Catawba experience over the century and a half prior to 1840 has been ably synthesized by a number of scholars (e.g., Brown 1966; Hudson 1970; Merrell 1989; Rudes et al. 2004), who have drawn evidence largely from British and American documentary sources. The UNC Catawba Project employs these historical syntheses (and their documentary sources) as points of departure,

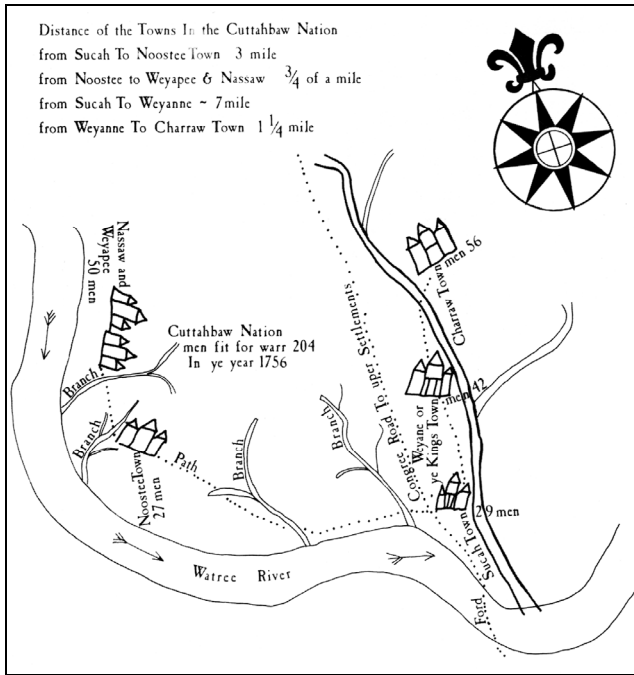


Figure 2. Map of the Catawba Nation drawn by John Evans in 1756. Courtesy of the University of North Carolina Press.

frameworks within which to develop and use archaeological evidence to address issues of cultural process, change, and continuity in the evolution of Catawba Indian society. Specifically, the Catawba Project aims to use the archaeological record to: (1) document and explicate material evidence of the processes of Catawba coalescence and ethnogenesis; (2) identify and document the material evidence of Catawba adaptations and accommodations to rapid and extreme changes in cultural and sociopolitical landscapes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and (3) compare and contrast the Catawba material record with those of southeastern peer groups to illustrate divergent adaptive responses to European and American encroachment.

Investigation of these themes proceeds with a temporally sequential approach to the Catawba archaeological record. The Catawba Project has first examined the records of more recent occupations to which detailed documentary controls apply, as a means to identify and characterize Catawba material culture after the presumed convergence of the Catawbas and their client groups. Once such baseline characterizations of Catawba material culture are established, investigations of Coalescent period sites

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Figure 3. Portion of Samuel Wyly's 1763 map of the Catawba reservation boundary, showing a Catawba town and English fort along Twelve Mile Creek and a Catawba town near the mouth of King's Creek.

will examine the material records of the diverse communities that merged to form the modern Catawba Nation. Thereafter, the project will investigate English Contact period sites to document Catawba/Esaw culture prior to the influx of refugees.

Re-analysis of documentary sources and re-evaluation of Catawba settlement patterns have allowed Catawba Project researchers to identify a series of eight town sites occupied sequentially between about 1750 and 1818. Historical maps indicate that the Catawba were situated primarily along Catawba River in York County prior to about 1760, and in adjacent Lancaster County between about 1760 and 1820. To date, researchers have identified archaeological evidence of four of the five towns depicted on the John Evans map of 1756 (Figure 2) —Sucah Town, Weyane or King's Town, Charraw Town, and Noostee —arrayed along the Great Trading Path near the Catawba River. Several cabin sites associated with the southernmost town depicted by Samuel Wyly in 1763 near the mouth of Twelvemile Creek also have been located (Figure 3). Three later Catawba sites on the east side of Catawba River in Lancaster County have

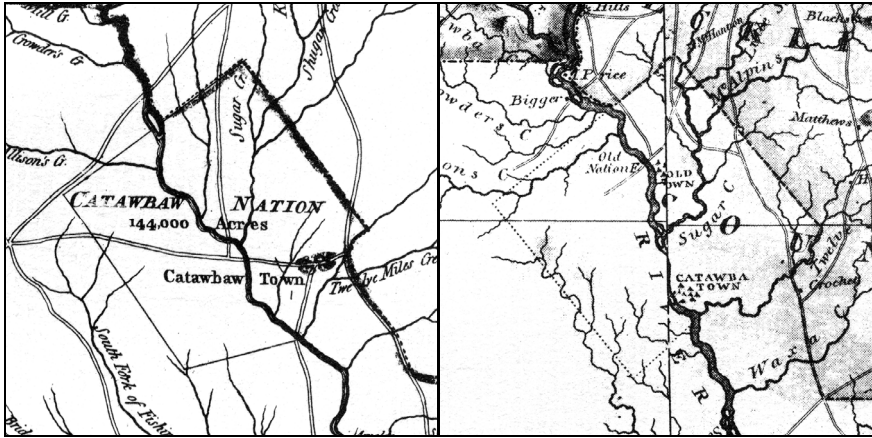


Figure 4. Maps of the Catawba Nation drawn by Henry Mouzon in 1775 (left) and Jonathan Price and John Strother in 1808 (right).

also been identified and partially excavated. Initial investigations at the Old Town, Bowers, and New Town sites provide glimpses into the transformations of Catawba material life during the late Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federal periods.

Catawba Old Town

Archaeological records of late Colonial and Revolutionary period occupations are represented at Old Town, a dispersed village site named for the adjacent stream “Old Town Branch” depicted on an 1843 land plat. This site is believed to be a part of the single “Catawba Town” indicated on the 1775 Mouzon map and the 1781 Stuart map (Figure 4). This may also be the location of the more northerly settlement depicted on Wyly’s 1763 plat of the Catawba reservation (see Figure 3).

Old Town is situated along ancient terrace remnants that flank the Catawba River valley, in an area known as King’s Bottoms or Waxhaw Old Fields. Limited reconnaissance at Old Town has identified at least five widely dispersed cabin loci. A UNC field school investigated one of these cabin seats in 2003, excavating 28 m² to expose two deep, rectangular cellar pits, two shallow, rectangular pits, two circular pits, and a probable extended burial pit (Figures 5 and 6). The edge of another possible burial also was detected, but neither burial was excavated. The cellar pits are likely sub-floor storage facilities beneath cribbed log structures (Figures 7 and 8). Such structures are indicated in Catawba documentary record as early as 1759 (Merrell 1989:188), and the absence

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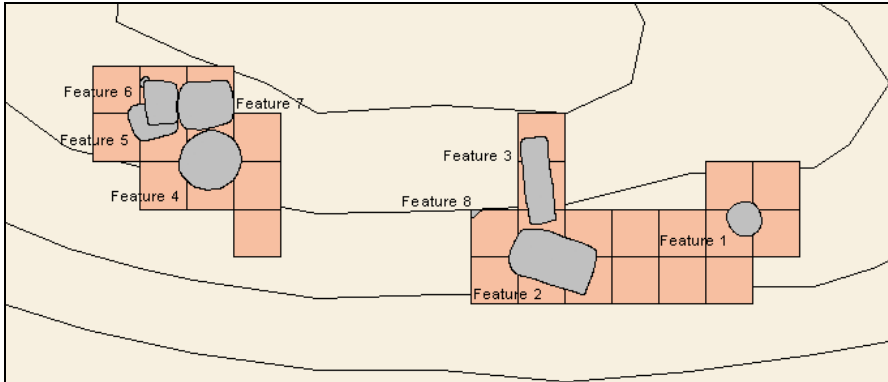


Figure 5. Map of archaeological excavations at Old Town, showing features and one-meter excavation units.



Figure 6. Photographic mosaic of the excavation block at Old Town containing Feature 1 (shallow circular pit) (far right), Feature 2 (cabin cellar pit) (bottom left), and Feature 3 (probable grave) (top left). Excavation measures 7 m by 4 m.

of architectural postholes (associated with earlier earth-fast structures), together with the incidence of highly formal rectangular storage pits (characteristic of late Colonial period Anglo-American cabins), suggests that the Catawbans had adopted this introduced building pattern at Old Town.

The excavated pit features yielded a substantial assemblage of Catawba ceramic vessel and tobacco pipe fragments, as well as diverse



Figure 7. Excavating Feature 2, a cabin cellar pit at Old Town.



Figure 8. Feature 7, a cabin cellar pit at Old Town, with south half excavated. Note the iron hoe at the left side of the pit.

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Figure 9. Catawba earthenware pottery from Old Town.

array of commercially manufactured goods (Figures 9 and 10). Most of the Catawba vessels are exceptionally well-made renditions of English ceramic forms. Plates, cups, bowls, and pans exhibit smudged and highly burnished or polished surfaces, and some vessels have hand-painted designs—a trait that occurs more commonly in later contexts at New Town and the Bowers site. Bowls with well-defined foot rings and octagonal plate rims indicate efforts to replicate English wares in detail. These

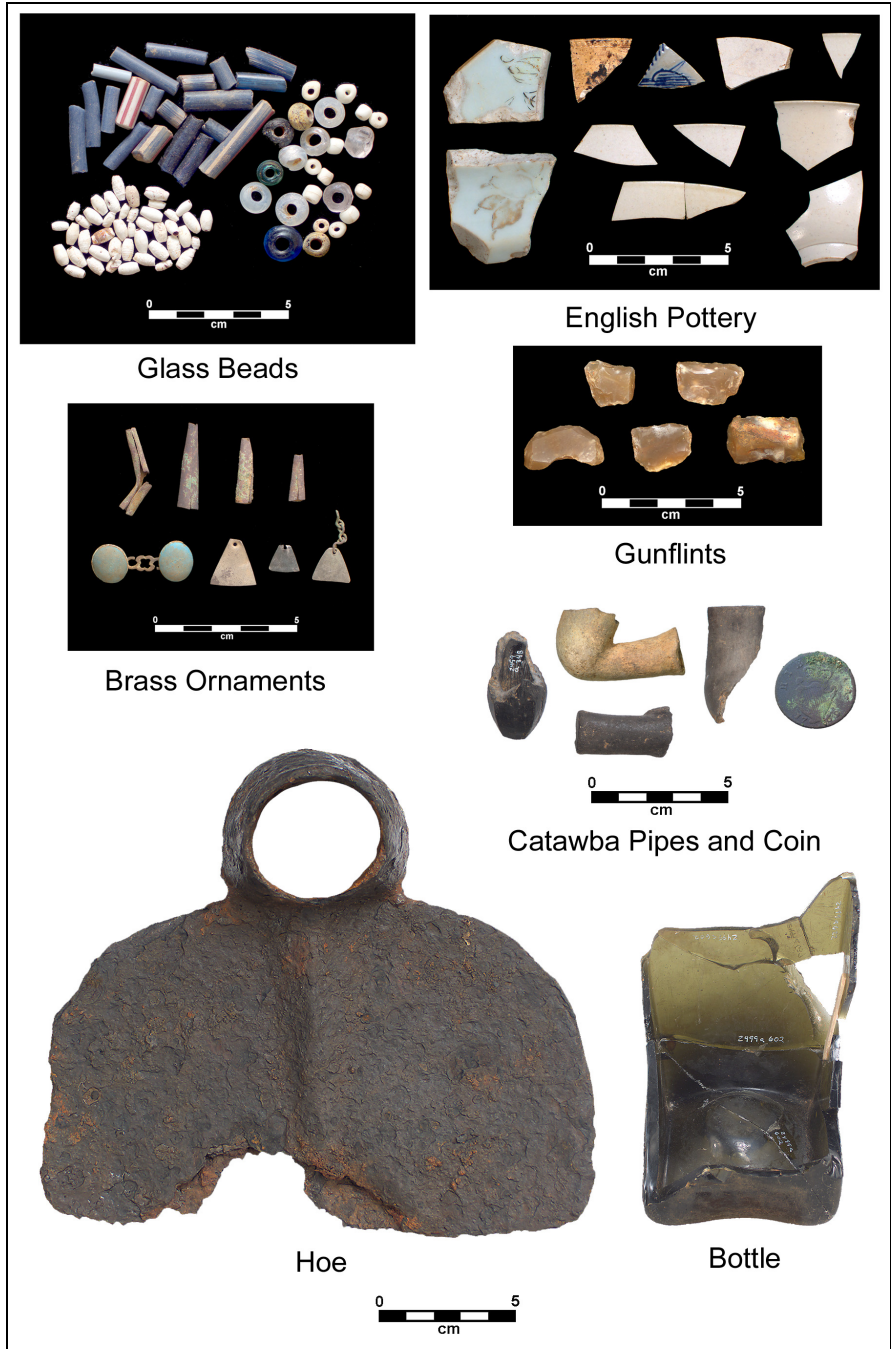


Figure 10. European artifacts and Catawba pipes from Old Town.

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European-styled wares may represent early Catawba attempts to cater to the tastes and needs of British colonial customers in the Carolina backcountry. The burnished Catawba elbow pipes (Figure 10) may also be an element of this early ceramic trade. Evidence from late Colonial period contexts at Camden (Lewis 1976) and Cambridge (Baker 1972), South Carolina, substantiate this trade.

Commercial goods recovered from Old Town include: kaolin pipe stems; fragments of white, salt-glazed stoneware teacups and a soft-paste porcelain punch bowl; brass tacks, cones, and rolled tubes; bottle glass (including a case gin bottle); three triangular silver nose bangles; more than 1,700 glass beads; French gunflints, lead shot and sprue; wrought nails; and numerous other iron artifacts. While some of these goods may derive from itinerant English traders, many probably came directly from stores such as Joseph Kershaw's trading house at Camden or from Charleston, where the Catawbas visited on a regular basis.

Four coins recovered from the largest cellar all appear to be British coins from the reign of George III, and one bears a legible date of 1769. These coins, along with the remainder of the commercially manufactured materials recovered from Old Town, are consistent with an occupation on the eve of the American Revolution, and it appears likely that the site was abandoned by 1780, when the entire Catawba Nation withdrew to Virginia to escape the invading British army of Lord Cornwallis.

The Bowers Site

The Federal period Bowers site was occupied a generation later than Old Town. This single cabin seat, situated atop a high ridge flanking the Catawba alluvial valley, was probably part of a small community called Turkey-head identified by Robert Mills in 1826 (based upon 1820 data) (Mills 1826:115). The site was initially identified during a reconnaissance in 1970 (Davis et. al 1970) that recovered an iron hoe and fragments of distinctive nineteenth-century earthenware pottery directly comparable to River Burnished (Ferguson 1990) and Catawba (Wheaton et al. 1983) types. Shovel testing sampling at the Bowers site in 2002 defined a small (500 m²) site extent, and identified a rectangular cellar pit aligned parallel to a Federal period roadbed (Figure 11). Excavation of this substructure cellar recovered more than 2,000 artifacts, including Catawba burnished pottery (representing plates, pans, bowls, jars, and a cup), English pearlware and creamware sherds, Catawba clay pipe fragments, glass bottle and stemware fragments, brass buttons, lead shot, an iron snaffle bit, and glass beads (Figure 12). Like the Catawba ceramic wares from Old



Figure 11. Excavating the cabin cellar pit (Feature 1) at the Bowers site.



Figure 12. Artifacts from the Bowers cellar pit: Catawba earthenware pottery (top left); English pearlware sherds (top right); glass beads, lead shot, and brass wire clothing fasteners (bottom left); and glass bottle, vial, and stemware fragments (bottom right).

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Town, the Bowers pottery is dominated by adopted English forms, and this well-made ware probably served table functions identical to the pearlware and creamware plates, cups, and bowls found at the site. Other materials recovered from the Bowers cellar pit indicate access to a broad range of consumer goods, with selections of manufactured goods focused on dining and drinking, clothing, and personal ornamentation.

The worn and highly fragmented character of this collection, together with the inclusion of abundant gravels and Archaic period lithic artifacts in the cellar deposits, suggests that most of this material was cleaned from the site surface and dumped into the cellar after its abandonment as a storage facility. English ceramic wares and other associated materials indicate a site occupation during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, presumably predating William Hutchinson's lease of the property sometime before 1820 (Mills 1826). Three other cabin seats identified nearby may represent the remainder of the Turkey-head community.

Catawba New Town

Contemporary with the Bowers site is the site of New Town, the primary settlement of the Catawba Indian Nation from the close of the American Revolution until 1818. This site was originally documented in 1935 by Isabelle Baker, then a student at Queens College in Charlotte, who interviewed former Catawba chief Samuel Blue. Blue conducted Baker to the site of New Town and described the community from his mother's recollection. Baker recounted the visit in a letter to UNC archaeologist Joffre Coe, and related Blue's description of New Town:

Most of the village was on a hillside sloping toward the river.... The houses were something like log cabins. In size they were about twelve by sixteen feet. The walls were shoulder high and built of logs. The roofs, also of logs, were gabled. The logs were covered with rough boards and the cracks daubed with mud. The huts had dirt floors. Very few had either fireplace or chimney. In those which did the fireplace was made with rocks and the chimney of wood. [Baker 1935]

Early travelers' accounts offer similar perspectives on the character of New Town. In 1791, Methodist Bishop Thomas Coke (1792:11) preached at New Town, and observed "Their Nation is reduced to a very small number, and [they] chiefly live in a little town, which in England would be only called a village." Elkanah Watson (Watson 1856), who visited the community in 1785, noted that Catawba families lived in log houses and cabins, which Coke (1792:12) found "not uncomfortable—far superior to

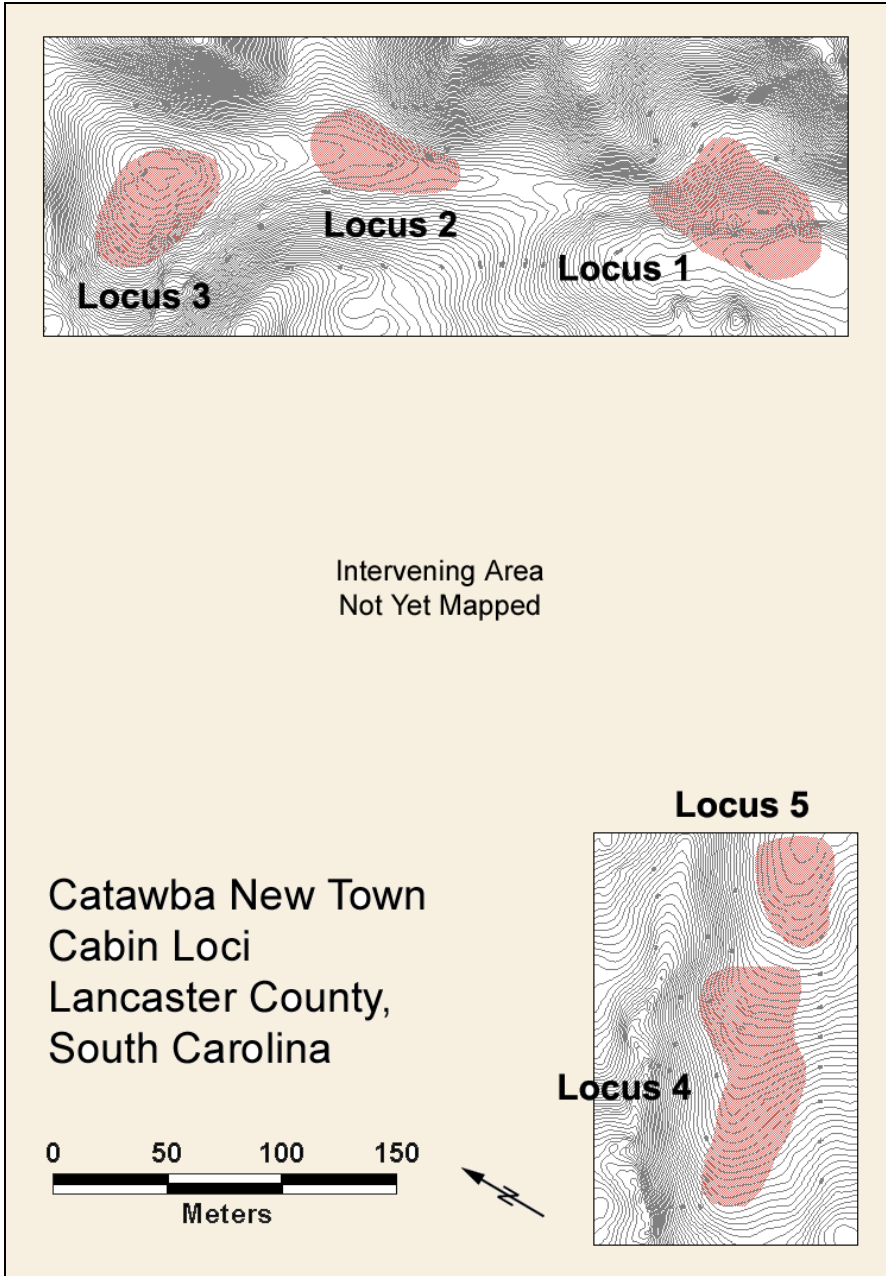


Figure 13. Map of New Town showing identified cabin loci.

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the mud-houses in which the poorest of the people in Ireland dwell.” Calvin Jones (1815) described New Town as “6 or 8 houses facing an oblong square.” George Blackburn, a visitor in 1816, described one of the New Town hamlets as “a little village consisting of four families” (Mills 1826:112).

In her 1935 letter to Coe, Baker noted that potsherds and other artifacts were evident along a portion of a farm road that ran through the wooded site of New Town. She provided a rough sketch map of the site of New Town depicting the access road and other points of reference, and comparison with modern topographic maps indicated that the same access road is still actively used. A 2002 reconnaissance of the site followed this access road and identified a cluster of tiny Catawba potsherds and pearlware fragments exposed along the road bank. This area, now designated Locus 1, proved to be a cabin seat at the northeastern edge of New Town. Since that time, five cabin loci in two separate hamlets have been identified in the northern and central parts of the town (Figure 13). Each of these five loci represents one or more cribbed log dwellings, associated structures, peripheral middens, and discrete trash dumps. These cabin seats are archaeologically manifest as scatters of Catawba and English pottery, cut and wrought nails, and numerous commercially manufactured items such as buttons, thimbles, and kettle fragments. These artifact clusters have been identified through a combination of pedestrian reconnaissance and metal detector survey, a low-tech remote sensing technique that is exceptionally effective due to the ubiquity of Federal period metal artifacts in these contexts. Point provenience assigned to metal artifacts assures close spatial control with high-resolution definition of site boundaries and internal site structure.

Cabin Locus 1

The least well preserved portion of the site is Locus 1, located atop a ridge which drops off steeply toward the north. This area, which has been logged and shallowly plowed, is estimated to cover about 2,900 m². Surface exposures around the periphery of Locus 1 yielded more than 100 diagnostic Catawba sherds, as well as numerous fragments of pearlware, all indicative of an early nineteenth-century occupation. Soil auger sampling at one-meter intervals over an 850 m² area has identified four shallow, midden-filled features within Locus 1. Systematic metal detector survey over a 2,000 m² area recovered 135 Federal period artifacts, including numerous wrought nails, cast iron vessel fragments, lead shot, buttons, snaffle bits, a thimble, and a Jew’s harp (Figures 14 and 15). The

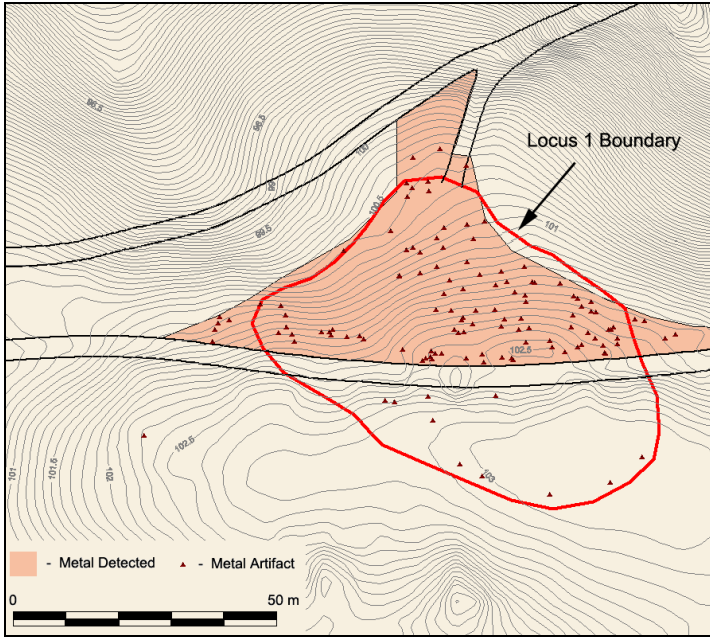


Figure 14. Map of Locus 1 showing results of metal detector survey.

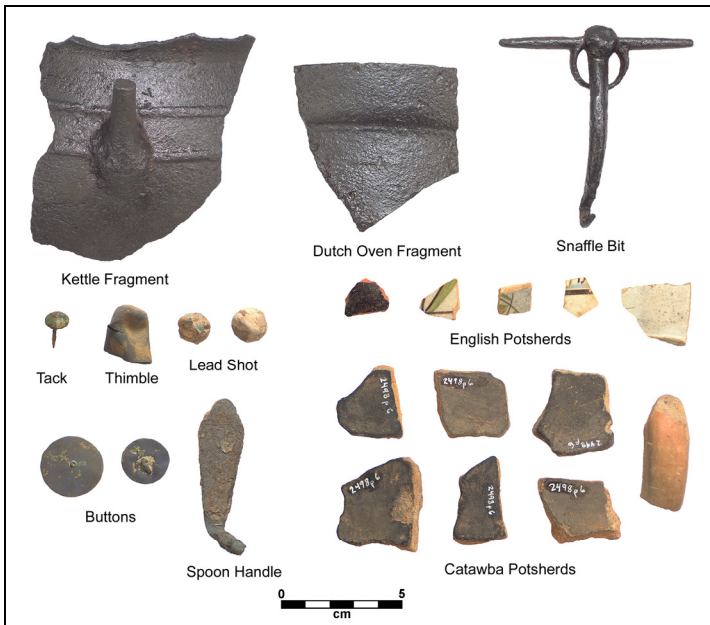


Figure 15. Artifacts recovered from Locus 1 at New Town.

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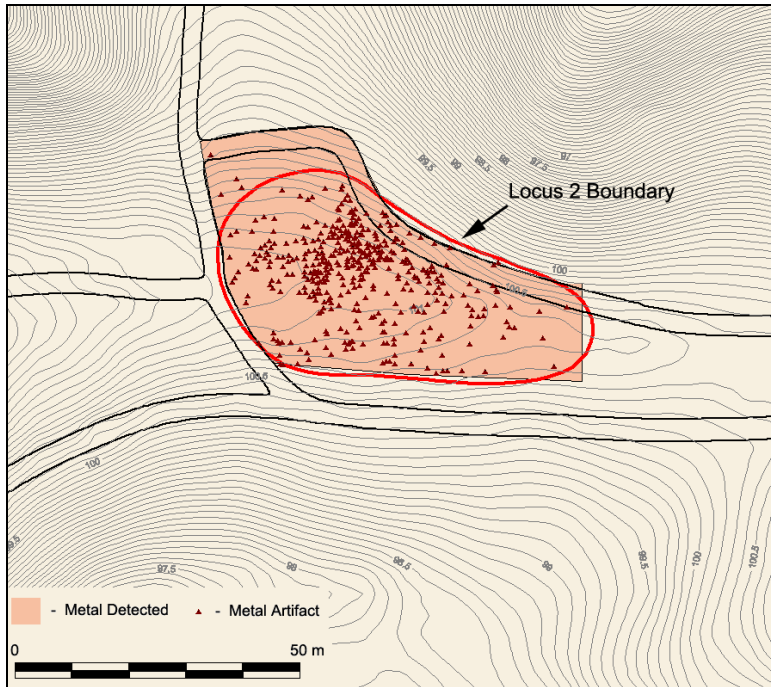


Figure 16. Map of Locus 2 at New Town showing results of metal detector survey.

distribution of these objects indicates a broad, fan-shaped dispersion from a probable cabin seat at the northern edge of the farm road.

Cabin Locus 2

Cabin Locus 2 is located about 100 m northwest of Locus 1 along the same broad ridge. Systematic metal detecting and surface collecting across an 1,800 m² area defined a fairly compact distribution of ceramic and metal artifacts covering 1,600 m² (Figure 16). Artifact densities here are significantly higher than at Locus 1, and spatial patterning of artifacts suggests much greater spatial integrity. Metal detector survey at Locus 2 recovered more than 250 artifacts. Large metal artifacts, including numerous kettle and Dutch oven fragments, were scattered along the southeastern edge of the site, while wrought nails, buttons, buckles, Jew's harps, thimbles, lead shot, and other personal items were concentrated near the northwestern edge near a Federal period roadbed (Figure 17).

Close interval auger testing across a 440 m² area identified a large pit near the center of this artifact cluster. This area, now wooded, appears to



Figure 17. Representative metal artifacts from Locus 2 at New Town.

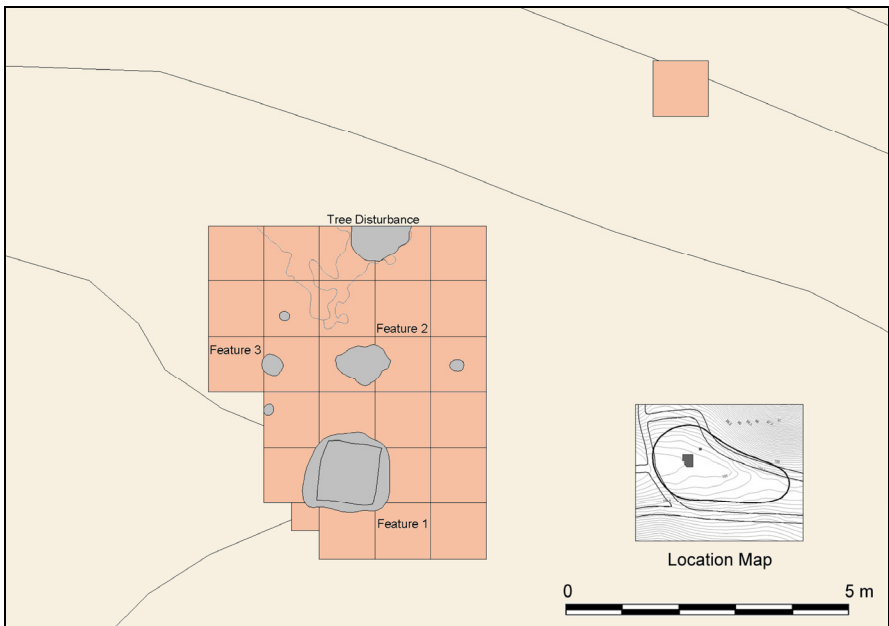


Figure 18. Excavation map of Locus 2 at New Town.

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Figure 19. View of the Locus 2 Cellar Pit with south half excavated.

have been minimally disturbed by a few shallow plowings. Excavations in 2003 exposed a square cellar pit (Feature 1) and an associated stick-and-clay chimney base (Feature 2)—contexts most likely associated with a horizontal-cribbed log dwelling with a dirt floor (Figures 18 and 19). A small, shallow pit near the cellar (Feature 3) yielded large fragments of a Catawba-made jar. Cellar deposits yielded a diverse assemblage that included numerous sherds from Catawba earthenware vessels, several polishing pebbles, pearlware sherds, buttons, thimbles, buckles, glass beads, silver ornaments, Catawba elbow pipes, and a 1793 French coin (Figure 20). Six hundred forty-three creamware, pearlware, stoneware, and porcelain sherds from Locus 2 yielded a mean ceramic date of 1806, an occupation mid-point consistent with ethnohistoric evidence and other datable artifacts found at the site.

Cabin Locus 3

Cabin Locus 3 is situated about 50 m to the northwest of Locus 2. Metal detector survey of the wooded and unplowed site area identified



Figure 20. Artifacts recovered from the Locus 2 cabin cellar (Feature 2) at New Town.

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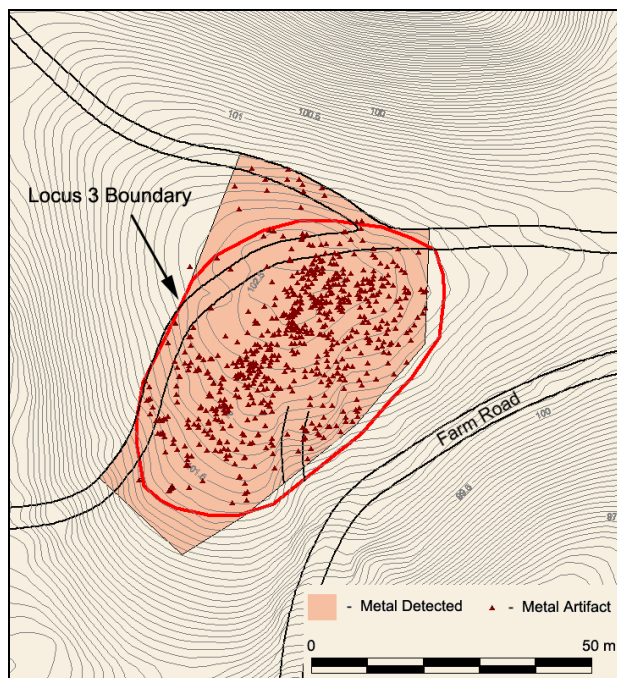


Figure 21. Map of Locus 3 at New Town showing results of metal detector survey.

almost 700 metal artifacts within a 2,000 m² area (Figure 21). Among 40 metal artifacts initially recovered for confirmation of the site's age were kettle fragments, buttons, wrought nails, knives, a buckle, snaffle bits, a hoe, and a gunlock from a flintlock pistol (Figure 22). Numerous Catawba and pearlware sherds also were found.

Locus 3 was investigated more intensively in 2003. Excavations focused on five concentrations of refuse identified by the metal detector survey (Figure 23). Because the site appeared relatively undisturbed and exhibited potential to yield fine-scale spatial patterning, sediments were hand dug from 50-cm excavation units, and many artifacts within these units were piece-plotted. Soils containing artifacts were relatively shallow, extending no more than 10–15 cm below surface, and numerous *in situ* artifacts and the tops of features and hearths were observed just beneath the ground cover. All soil from general excavations was dry screened through 1/4" mesh; soil from features was waterscreened through 1/16" mesh or processed by flotation.

The largest excavation block, a 30-m² unit, exposed four refuse-filled pits (Figures 24 and 25). One of these (Feature 5) was a large, somewhat



Figure 22. Metal artifacts from Locus 3 at New Town.

irregular-shaped basin that contained more than 8,000 Catawba potsherds and numerous other artifacts. This feature likely represents a pit that was dug to retrieve clay for daubing. The other three features were roughly rectangular pits that contained relatively rich deposits of artifacts. Features 4 and 6 may represent shallow cellar pits. All three features contained fragments of broken Catawba vessels and pearlware sherds, as well as glasswares, tableknives, and silver bangles; Feature 6 also yielded a small, unbroken Catawba-made bottle and a simple Catawba cup (Figures 26 and 27). Approximately 1,200 fragments of English-made

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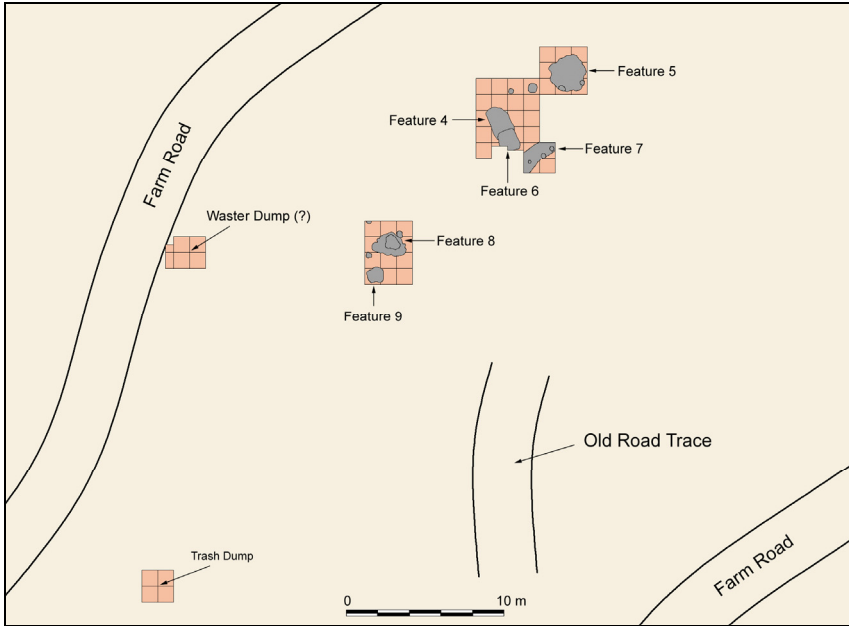


Figure 23. Excavation map of Locus 3 at New Town.



Figure 24. Students excavating Feature 5 at Locus 3.



Figure 25. Feature 6 at Locus 3 with north half excavated. Note the Catawba earthenware cup located near the center of the profile.

pottery recovered from Locus 3 yielded a mean ceramic date of 1803, indicating an occupation contemporaneous with the Locus 2 cabin.

A nearby 12-m² excavation block revealed the base of a stick-and-clay chimney (Feature 8) and a trash-filled stump hole (Feature 9) that contained large sections of two broken Catawba vessels. The chimney base was covered with a thin deposit of charcoal, ash, and burned pearlware sherds that appear to represent *in situ* hearth debris.

Two smaller areas excavated near the edges of Locus 3 revealed discrete trash dumps. One of these yielded numerous, highly fired Catawba sherds and may represent a waster dump. A significant aspect of Catawba economy in the early nineteenth century was the production of pottery for sale in commercial markets. This intensification of production is generally reflected by the uniformity and apparent large quantity of pottery found at Locus 3. Numerous heavily worn pebbles, used for burnishing pottery, were recovered at Loci 2 and 3, and they indicate a substantial scale of pottery production around these cabins.

Another small excavation, where a gunlock and snaffle bit had been found during metal detecting, revealed a second snaffle bit, a harness buckle, a pistol barrel and frizzen, and a worn-out shovel blade.

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Figure 26. Catawba and English pottery from pits at Loc 3.



Figure 27. Ornamental and personal items from Locus 3 at New Town.

Cabin Locus 4

Four hundred meters south of Locus 3 is a second hamlet that consisted of at least two households. This area, on a low wooded ridge surrounded by numerous springheads, was identified by metal detector reconnaissance in early 2003. More intensive survey identified a cluster of metal artifacts, as well as Catawba and pearlware sherds, around a group of fieldstone piers and two low mounds of dirt thought to represent collapsed stick-and-clay chimneys. More subtle surface features include a Federal period wagon trace just east of the cabin seats and an eroded footpath that leads down slope from the two cabins to an improved

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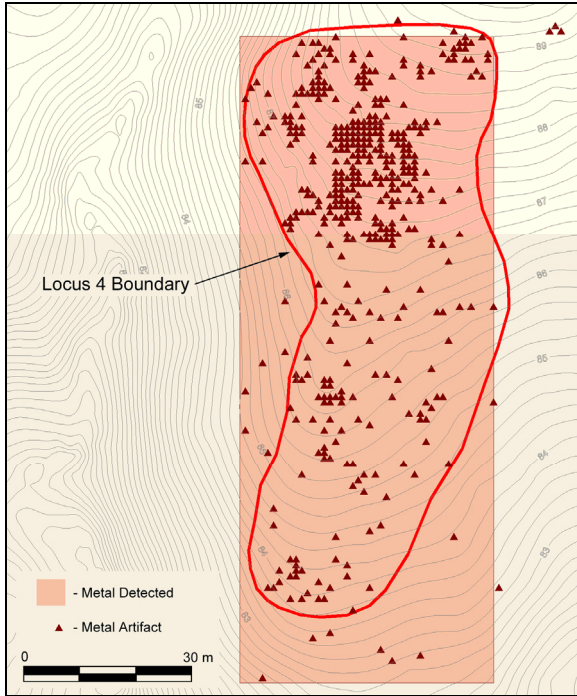


Figure 28. Map of Locus 4 at New Town showing results of metal detector survey.

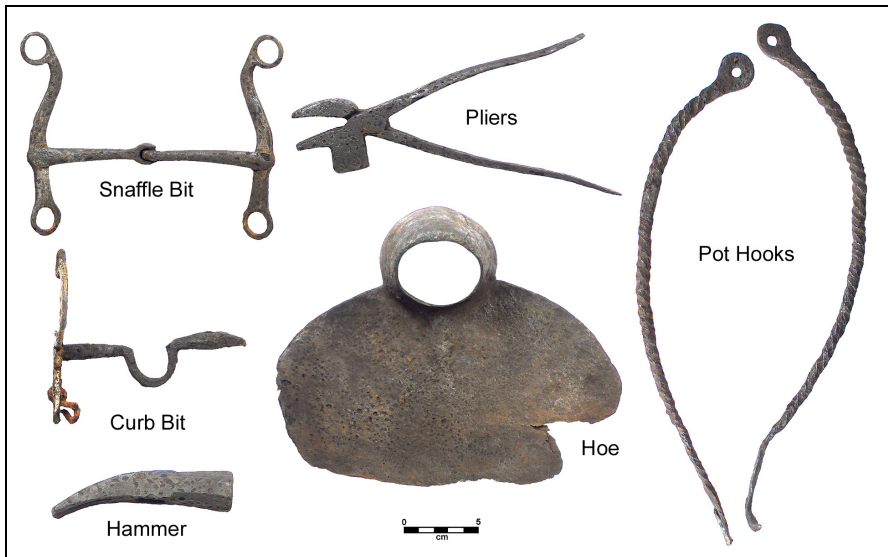


Figure 29. Large metal artifacts from Locus 4.

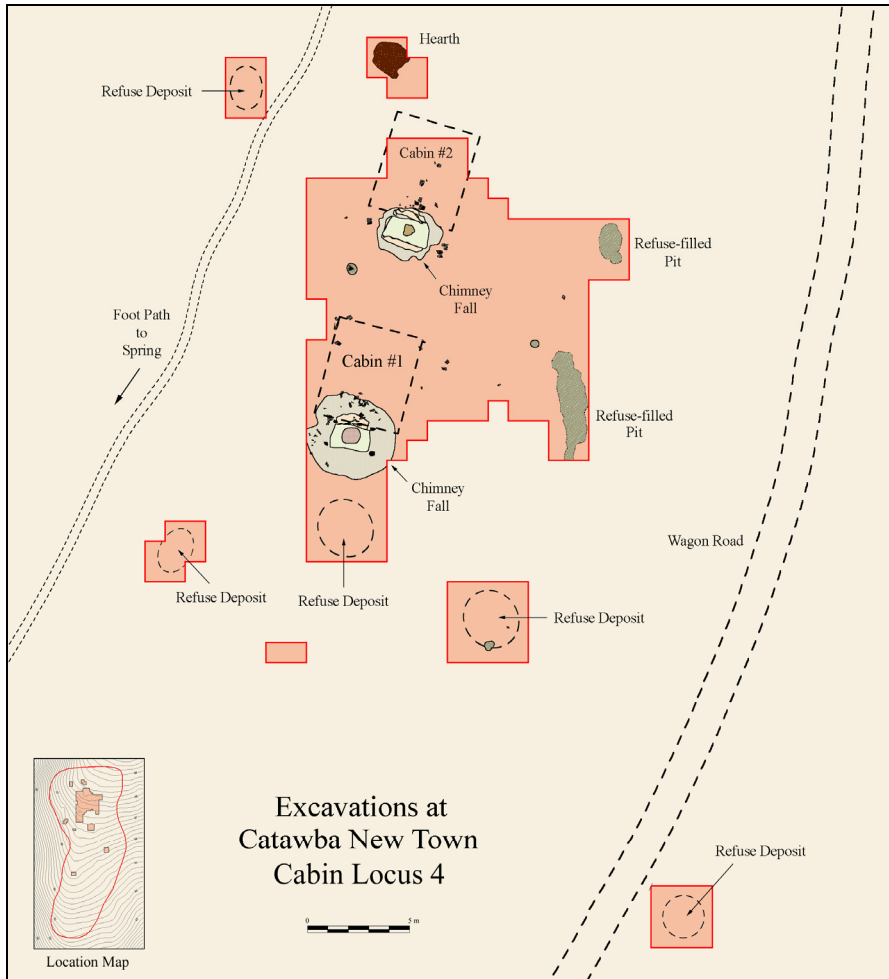


Figure 30. Excavation map of Locus 4 at New Town.

springhead. These two adjacent cabin seats and the surrounding area are designated Locus 4. This area is covered in mature hardwoods and has not been disturbed by plowing.

More intensive investigations at Locus 4 in 2004 defined a 3,600 m² site area and delineated a number of discrete refuse disposal zones around the two cabin seats. Systematic metal detector survey recovered almost 1,000 Federal period artifacts, with concentrations around the chimney ruins and within toss zones around the periphery of the yard areas (Figures 28 and 29). Excavations focused on the cabin seats and adjacent areas in

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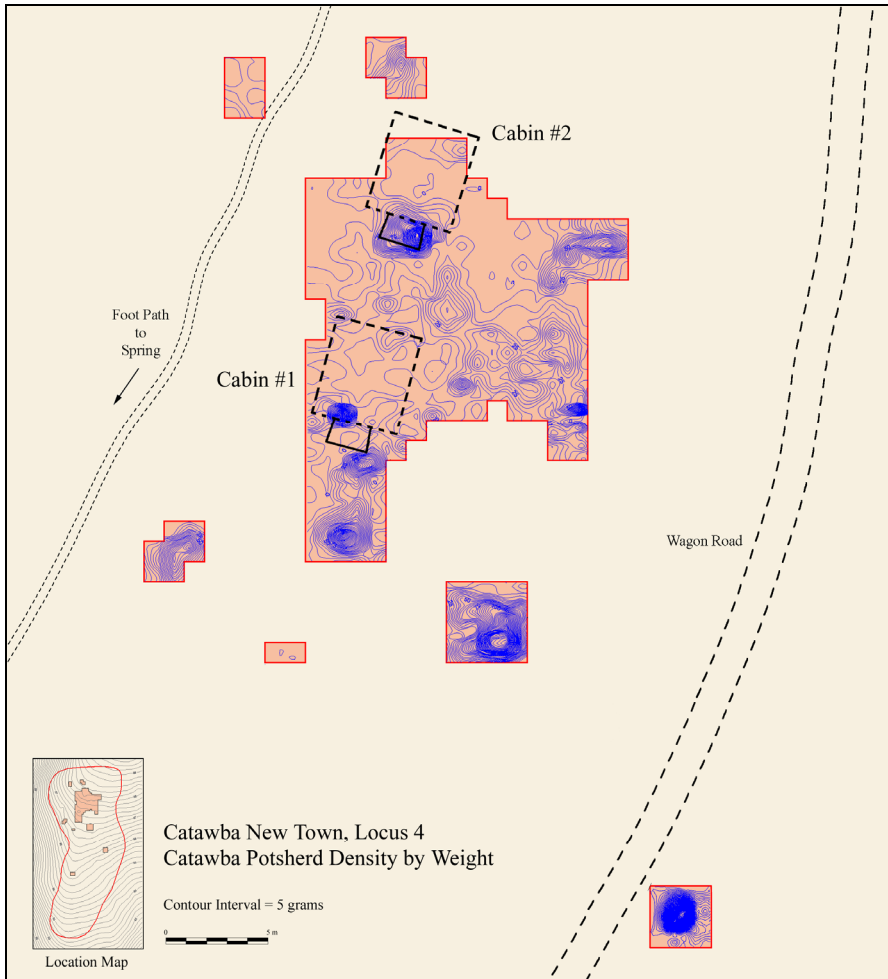


Figure 31. Excavation map of Locus 4 at New Town showing the distribution of Catawba earthenware pottery.

front (to the east) of the two cabins. Hand excavation of 1,020 50-cm units exposed the hearths of both cabins, most of the cabin floor areas, a surface hearth, and several concentrations of artifacts interpreted as trash dumps and discarded hearth cleanings (Figure 30). Highly patterned artifact distributions around the cabin exteriors and yard edges, as well as discrete trash dumps along the wagon trace, further reflect intentional refuse management (Figures 31 and 32). Door-front yards, as high activity zones, were apparently swept clean, resulting in elliptical rings of broken pottery and other refuse surrounding relatively clear areas. Broken pottery and

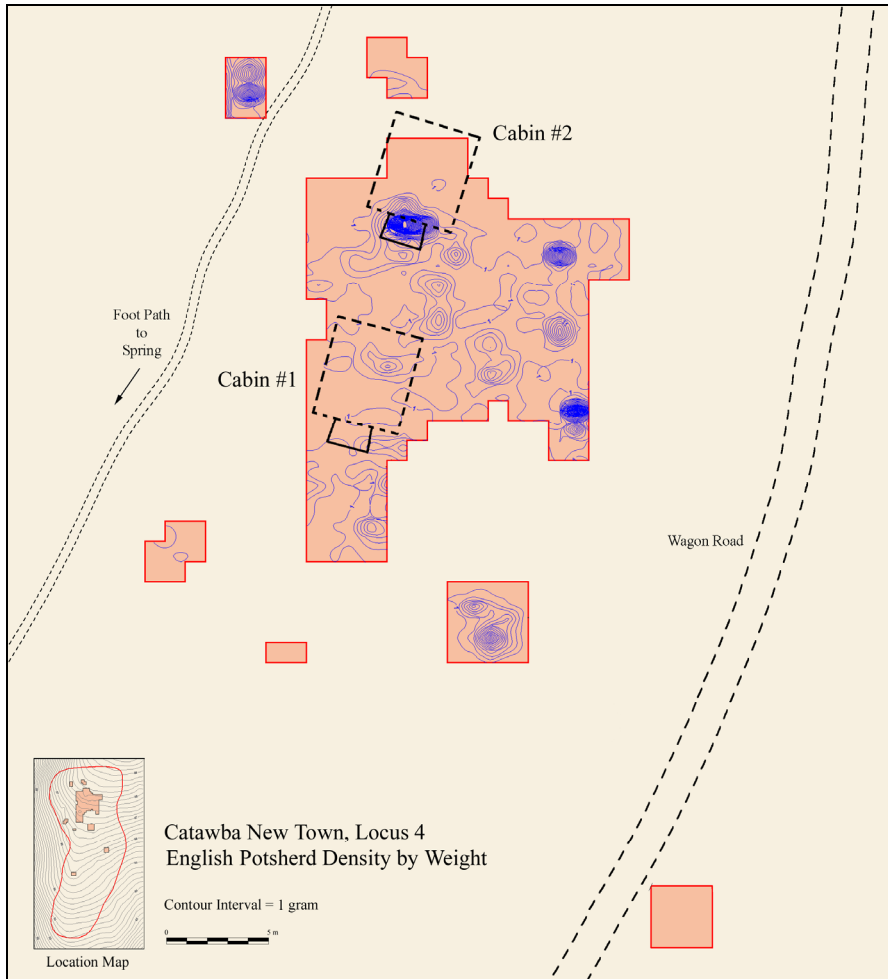


Figure 32. Excavation map of Locus 4 at New Town showing the distribution of English creamware, pearlware, and stoneware pottery.

other debris also accumulated around chimney bases and corner blocks, but did not accrue beneath the wooden house floors. Larger quantities of refuse were dumped in discrete patches along the nearby wagon road. Broken glass only rarely occurred near the cabin, but was plentiful in some of these peripheral dumps; other dumps consisted exclusively of Catawba pottery. Large, obtrusive objects, such as kettle fragments and heavy iron implements, were tossed even further away, downslope from the rear of the cabins.

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Figure 33. Catawba and English pottery from Locus 4.

Excavations at Locus 4 recovered more than 10,000 sherds of Catawba pottery and nearly 2,800 fragments of commercially made ceramics (Figure 33), as well as glass bottle fragments, Catawba pipes, metal buttons, glass beads and other jewelry, table cutlery, harness



Figure 34. Excavating Feature 1, the remnant of a stick-and-clay fireplace and chimney associated with Cabin #1 at Locus 4.

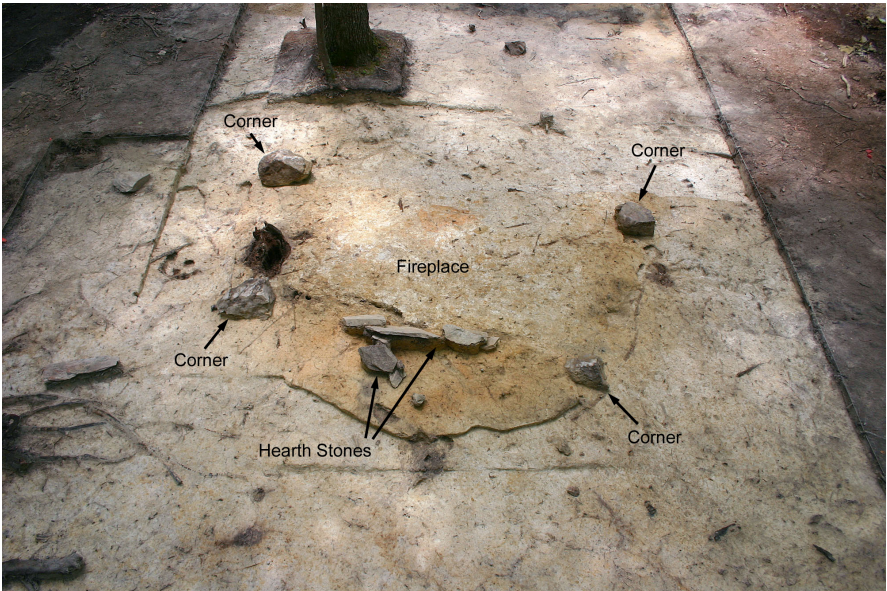


Figure 35. Feature 1 following the removal of collapsed chimney remnants, burned fireplace surface, and firebox fill. The trapezoidal shape of the fireplace is indicated by the placement of the corner stones.

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hardware, agricultural equipment, gunparts and ammunition, and numerous other categories of household refuse. Catawba pottery from Locus 4, unlike that found at Locus 3, does not appear to represent products for commercial sale. Instead, sherds are from well-made vessels and most display worn and damaged surfaces indicative of domestic use. In addition, only two fragments of pottery burnishers were recovered at Locus 4, as compared with a dozen whole or fragmented burnishers from limited excavations at Loci 2 and 3.

Catawba ceramic vessels represented at Locus 4 include numerous plates and flat-bottomed, flaring-walled pans, as well as cooking jars with thickened rims and tripod kettles with loop handles. Many vessel rims are decorated with a reddish orange paint, and at least a few rimsherds were decorated to mimic English shell-edged wares.

The most interesting archaeological features at Locus 4 were the two chimney piles, and considerable effort was spent excavating them (Figures 34 and 35). These low mounds represent the eroded remains of earth-filled, cribbed log chimney bases that elevated the hearth surfaces to the levels of the wooden cabin floors, a common construction technique. Such wooden chimney bases were cribbed from ground level as closed, earth-filled boxes to the hearth surface. Above the hearth surface, the firebox jambs, or sides, were integrated into the cribbed cabin wall, leaving the face of the fireplace open. Above the mantle log, the chimney was cribbed of smaller logs or sticks and stepped away from the cabin wall. Both chimney piles were located at the down-slope ends of their respective cabins, with the hearth surfaces elevated 30 cm above the surrounding ground level to accommodate raised cabin floors. This interpretation is supported by the presence of foundation blocks and the absence of artifacts in the floor areas. Interestingly, both chimneys were trapezoidal in shape at the base, with the chimney width increasing away from the cabin wall. Both fireplaces also had prepared clay surfaces and hearths composed of flat, tabular stone. The fireplace surface (Feature 2) associated with Cabin #2 was largely intact and contained deposits of charcoal and ash mixed with fragments of a broken Catawba pan, a Nottingham stoneware bottle, and pearlware vessels (see Figure 33).

Cabin Locus 5

Immediately north of Locus 4 is Cabin Locus 5, in an area that was logged during the 1960s. Subsequent bulldozer clearing of the loggers' slash and stumps exposed the remains of at least one additional Catawba

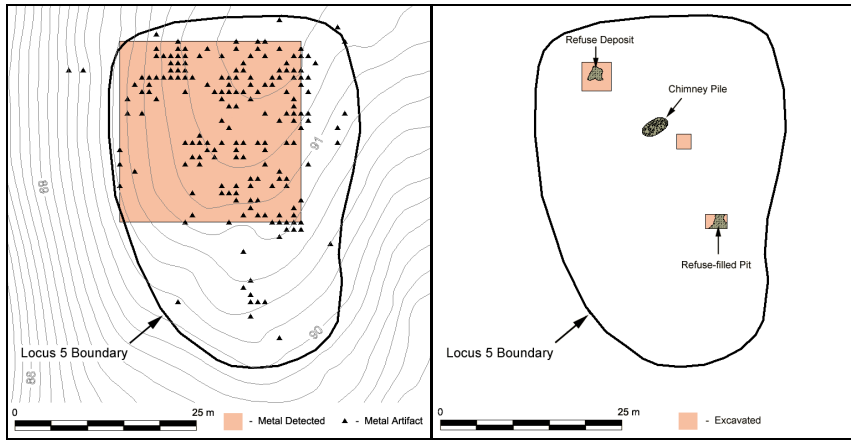


Figure 36. Maps of Locus 5 at New Town showing results of metal detector survey (left) and excavation (right).

cabin which was discovered and disturbed by relic collectors. Subsequent reconnaissance of the site in 1970 defined a small cluster of Catawba pottery exposed within the clearcut area (Davis et. al 1970).

Locus 5 is estimated to cover about 1,400 m², though survey and metal detecting are not yet completed. Metal detector survey of a 625-m² area recovered more than 350 artifacts, including wrought nails, buttons, scissors, a nose bangle, thimbles, a knife blade, a spoon, bottle glass, and English and Catawba pottery (Figure 36). Excavations in three small blocks revealed two shallow midden deposits containing ash, large quantities of Catawba pottery, and other artifacts. Nearby was a low mound of dirt from another collapsed chimney. While it was not investigated, auger testing indicates a burned clay hearth surface near the top. More extensive investigations at Locus 5 are planned for the 2005 field season and should permit more precise delineation of the cabin, associated pits, and peripheral middens.

Comparison of Cabin Loci

The two hamlets defined at New Town may correspond to the separate neighborhoods described by Calvin Jones in 1815. Jones indicated that Sally New River and General Jacob Ayers maintained households at some distance from the remainder of New Town, where the Scott, Brown, Kegg, Redhead, and Marsh families resided. Jones also noted that the “New Rivers and Ains houses had floors” while those in the large hamlet had dirt floors. Loci 4 and 5 include evidence of cabins with

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elevated floors that were occupied as late as Jones' visit, and which may correspond to the New River and Ayers occupations. Jones also observed that Ayers and New River were particularly industrious farmers, and Loci 4 and 5 have yielded much more agricultural hardware than the other areas.

Cabin Loci 2 and 3, situated nearly 400 m to the north, apparently had cabins with earthen floors, and probably correspond to the larger hamlet. Large-scale pottery production is clearly represented at these cabin loci; and Jones noted a substantial pottery industry at the larger New Town hamlet, where he observed:

Women making pans – Clay from the river – shape them with their hands and burn them with bark which makes the exposed side a glossy black. A pitcher a quarter of a dollar. Sell pans frequently for the full [measure?] of meal. Saw some sitting on their beds and making pans. [Jones 1815]

Distinguishing and attributing these two hamlets at New Town provides a basis for future analytic comparisons. Sally New River, a one-quarter Catawba métis reared in an English household, was almost certainly more Westernized in outlook and practice than her Catawba neighbors. Contextual and assemblage configurations of the New River and associated Ayers households probably more closely approximate those of their contemporary American neighbors than do the cabin assemblages from the northern hamlet. Analyses of these assemblages will focus on assessments of inter-household variability and comparison with contemporary non-Catawba contexts to determine the scale and direction of economic and perhaps cultural variation among the households of New Town.

Conclusion

These initial investigations at the Old Town, Bowers, and New Town sites illustrate the richness of the Catawba archaeological record and its potential for addressing a broad range of research issues. The substantial material samples recovered from these sites not only present opportunities to reconstruct Catawba material life and lifeways in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but are also important reflections of Catawba adaptive strategies and accommodations to the rapidly changing social, political, and economic environments of the late colonial and post-colonial South. Contrary to contemporary accounts, which characterize the Catawbas as an indigent and degraded community, the rich and diverse assemblages recovered from these sites suggest that Catawba families

were avid consumers of commercial goods. At the same time, it is clear that Catawba consumers structured these purchased goods in distinctly non-Western configurations that represent sustained efforts to maintain and project native identities. Substantial intersite and intrasite variation in these material samples reflect not only diachronic trends in Catawba material life, but also indicate appreciable levels of synchronic variation in wealth and Westernization among Catawba households.

Ongoing and planned analyses of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century material assemblages from Old Town, Bowers, and New Town will focus upon issues concerning: Catawba access to and selection of mass-produced consumer goods; the economic role, scale, and organization of ceramic production for market disposal; and the degree and extent of Catawba resistance, accommodation, and assimilation of Western material lifeways among individual households. With the acquisition of still earlier samples, these research themes can be expanded into a truly diachronic archaeological perspective on Catawba coalescence and ethnogenesis, and the subsequent evolution of Catawba cultural identity in the turbulent centuries after sustained European contact.

Notes

Acknowledgments. The Catawba Project has benefited from the support and assistance of many individuals and institutions. We particularly want to thank the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology, the UNC Summer School, the Winthrop University Foundation, Mr. Robert V. Graham, and the National Geographic Society for their continuing support of our fieldwork. Individuals responsible for that support include Drs. Vin Steponaitis and Jim Murphy of UNC and Dr. Tom Moore of Winthrop University. We wish to thank Mr. Lindsay Pettus and Ms. Louise Pettus for sharing their advice and insight into the history of our study area, and we acknowledge Drs. Doug Eckberg and Rick Chacon of the Winthrop Department of Sociology and Anthropology, who have helped foster interest in the local community for the Catawba Project.

We also want to extend our appreciation to Dr. Wenonah Haire, director of the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, and her capable staff, for their continued interest, support, and counsel as we have undertaken research into the history of their ancestors—the Catawba people.

Fieldwork during 2003 and 2004 was undertaken as an archaeological field school with the participation of 20 students from UNC and Winthrop University. We acknowledge their hard work and recognize the following undergraduate and graduate field supervisors: Jon Marcoux, Rebecca Richman, and Michelle Schohn (2003); and Lance Greene, Theresa McReynolds, Jayur Mehta, Mark Plane, Rebecca Richman, and Dara Slivka (2004).

Finally, we wish to thank the owners of Old Town, New Town, and the Bowers site, who graciously permitted us to conduct our archaeological research on their properties.

Collections. All archaeological collections, associated field records, and photographs from the Catawba Project are curated at the Research Laboratories of Archaeology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

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