

CATAWBA MILITARISM: ETHNOHISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEWS

by

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Abstract

While many Indian societies in the Carolinas disappeared into the multi-colored fabric of Southern history before the mid-1700s, the Catawba Nation emerged battered, but ethnically viable, from the chaos of their colonial experience. Later, the Nation's people managed to circumvent Removal in the 1830s and many of their descendants live in the traditional Catawba homeland today. To achieve this distinction, colonial and antebellum period Catawba leaders actively affected the cultural survival of their people by projecting a bellicose attitude and strategically promoting Catawba warriors as highly desired military auxiliaries, or "ethnic soldiers," of South Carolina's imperial and state militias after 1670. This paper focuses on Catawba militarism as an adaptive strategy and further elaborates on the effects of this adaptation on Catawba society, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While largely ethnohistorical in content, potential archaeological aspects of Catawba militarism are explored to suggest avenues for future research.

American Indian societies in eastern North America responded to European imperialism in countless ways. Although some societies, such as the Powhatans and the Yamassees (Gleach 1997; Lee 1963), attempted to aggressively resist European hegemony by attacking their oppressors, resistance and adaptation took radically different forms in a colonial world oft referred to as a "tribal zone," a "shatter zone," or the "violent edge of empire" (Ethridge 2003; Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a, 1999b). Perhaps unique among their indigenous contemporaries in the Carolinas, the ethnically diverse peoples who came to form the "Catawba Nation" (see Davis and Riggs this volume) proactively sought to ensure their socio-political and cultural survival by strategically positioning themselves on the southern Anglo-American frontier as a militaristic society of "ethnic soldiers" (see Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a, 1999b). Catawba leaders, "unable to defeat yet unwilling either to embrace or flee Anglo-America" (Merrell 1987:56), consciously cultivated a warlike mystique and shrewdly marketed their martial skills to Anglo-American officials in the Carolinas and Virginia throughout much of the late seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. In Anglo-American eyes, Catawba warriors became indispensable paramilitary allies and enforcers of governmental policies through the American Revolution and beyond.

Through such an adaptive strategy, which was much more sophisticated than simple “accommodation,” the Catawbas affected the cultural survival of their people by promoting and fielding Catawba warriors as highly desired military auxiliaries of South Carolina’s imperial, and later state, militias as early as the mid-1670s. Moreover, the projection of power, real or perceived, partially insulated the Catawbas to some degree from the numerically superior, predatory slaving societies (e.g., Chickasaws and Northern Iroquois [see Ethridge 2003]) most heavily involved in the eighteenth-century, Anglo-Indian slave trade. While the Catawbas’ hawkish stance, particularly during the mid-eighteenth century, provided tangible and intangible societal benefits, the negative repercussions, including combat deaths on distant fields, enemy reprisals on the home front, and recurrent disease exposure, nearly destroyed the Catawba Nation by the end of the Seven Years’ War (see McReynolds this volume). The documentary evidence of the Catawbas’ perpetual involvement in many violent conflicts from the mid-1670s to 1865, as well as numerous lively accounts of Catawba martial prowess, bears witness to these general observations.

The study presented here is a preliminary contribution to the University of North Carolina’s Catawba Project, which R. P. Stephen Davis and Brett H. Riggs initiated under the auspices of the University’s Research Laboratories of Archaeology in 2001 (see Davis and Riggs this volume). In this article, I briefly explore the history and nature of “Catawba militarism” and consider the potential social and material aspects of such an adaptation on Catawba society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I use the term “militarism” in a broad sense, encompassing such notions as the projection of a bellicose attitude, the development of a socio-politically influential warrior class, and a societal penchant for warfare. Ferguson and Whitehead’s (1999a, 1999b) concept of “militarization in the tribal zone” and the concurrent development of “ethnic soldiers” inform this study. While aspects of Catawba militarism are explored in seminal Catawba studies by Blumer (1987, 1995), Brown (1966), Hudson (1970, 1979) and Merrell (1986, 1987, 1991), and it is challenging to substantively add to their considerable contributions, my intent here is to bring the phenomenon into somewhat sharper focus and to suggest ways that Catawba militarism both influenced their society and shaped the present archaeological record.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, geopolitical actions of rival European states, fiercely competing for land, natural resources, slaves, and loyalties of ethnically diverse indigenous peoples, radically altered the Contact period cultural landscape of eastern North America. In this highly unstable socio-political milieu, native societies succumbed to or resisted European hegemony in different ways and along different historical trajectories. Through the end of the American Revolution, competition among rival European states gave many American Indian societies greater autonomy within the colonial realm and better rates of exchange for European produced trade goods, but there was a terrible cost—more bloodshed, as global forces drew indigenous peoples into ever-expanding European wars (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a). By 1670, the nascent “Catawba Nation,” which ultimately came to incorporate the politically dominant Catawbans (Cuttauboos, Esaws, Kadapaus, Katahbas), and their allies and subject peoples (e.g., Cheraws, Congarees, Peepees, Sugarees, Waterees, Waxhaws), found itself in this chaotic colonial environment. Capitalizing on an early warlike reputation and demonstrable martial abilities, the Catawbans opted to ally with the British regime in South Carolina and provide ethnic soldiers to fight rival military forces, primarily other ethnic soldiers, organized by French or Spanish military officials in neighboring colonies.

In many colonial settings, ethnic soldiers, typically culled from an existing indigenous warrior class, are “drawn into the service of state agents by varying combinations of coercive and seductive measures” (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a:22) such as force and trade. Empires and states use ethnic soldiers as auxiliary combat troops, as raiders to procure something the state desires (e.g., slaves), or to further the geopolitical interests of the empire. Moreover, ethnic soldiers often perform internal policing functions to control subversive activities or enslaved populations (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a:21–22). Given the geopolitical situation of eastern North America at the end of the seventeenth century, the Catawbans were, in the face of numerically and technologically superior forces, fundamentally restricted to the following limited suite of adaptive strategies: (1) remain passive and accept the status of “tributary” Indians; (2) fight the militarily superior colonial regime and be decimated; (3) fight other Indian societies in response to perceived self-interests; or (4) become indispensable to colonial patrons as ethnic soldiers.

The Catawbans, ever cognizant of their political situation, astutely learned from the mistakes of their neighbors. While numerous coastal Carolina tribes quickly dwindled to the impotent status of “settlement” or “tributary” Indians (e.g., Cusabos and Croatans), colonial forces decimated

the Tuscarora (1711–1713) and Yamassee (1715–1718) communities that chose the “fighting option” in a quick succession of essentially genocidal conflicts prosecuted by British officials in the Carolinas (Corkran 1970; Dunbar 1960; Gallay 2002; Lee 1963; Milling 1940). After initially assisting the Yamassees in their brief attempt to destroy the South Carolina colony in 1715, the Catawbias adopted alternate paths to survival, namely diplomacy and ethnic soldiering.

Before any indigenous group decides whether or not to provide ethnic soldiers to a dominant colonial power, there must be a perceived military need for such auxiliaries by the state. The numerical population weakness of the Anglo-European enclaves on the Carolina coast was readily apparent to Indian and colonist alike, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As such, the foreign invaders sought military alliances with all Indian tribes where possible (Sirmans 1966). While other Carolina tribes allied themselves with the English at various times, such alliances were fickle arrangements in the fluid geo-political environment of colonial North America. With the brief exception of the Yamassee War, the Catawbias remained staunch allies of South Carolina, spurning Cherokee and French overtures in the 1730s and 1740s, throughout the colonial period, and well into the nineteenth century (Corkran 1970; Hewatt 1971 [1779]; Milling 1940; Merrell 1991). From the perspective of the colonial government in Charles Town, the Catawbias were a ready-made, “frontier garrison” in a strategic geographic position (Jacobs 1967; Merrell 1991; Nester 2000).

To reach their southern enemies, both English and Indian, Northern Iroquoian war parties often followed the Great Trading Path, the gateway to the Atlantic Southeast, which passed through the Catawba settlements at Nation Ford on the Catawba River (Brown 1966). The Catawbias formed a living bulkhead between the coastal British settlements, the unpredictable Cherokees to the west, and northern Indian raiders, primarily from the Iroquois Confederacy, influenced by French machinations. As well as a strategic buffer, the Catawbias served as a ready-reserve force and a psychological weapon to suppress potential black slave insurrections in the Carolinas (Hudson 1970; Bentley 1991; Willis 1971). Moreover, white Carolinians remained perpetually fearful of potentially murderous alliances between Indians and enslaved blacks, “two exploited colored majorities,” throughout the colonial era (Oliphant 2001; Willis 1971). Accordingly, British officials carefully cultivated friendly relations with the Catawbias and the Catawbias’ satellite allies or subjects by plying them with gifts of guns, ammunition, and other sundry “presents,” perhaps as early as the mid-1670s (Brown 1966).

Decades later, James Glen, Royal governor of South Carolina (1743–1756), continued to reinforce the Catawbas' perpetual military alliance with trade protections, lavish gifts, and administrative efforts to curtail unrestricted white encroachment of traditionally recognized Catawba territory (McDowell 1958, 1969; Merrell 1987, 1991; Nester 2000; Robinson 1996). The perpetuation of the Anglo-Catawba alliance, however, was not a simple matter of British officials applying state powers of seduction and coercion. Such an assumption fails to recognize Catawba actions and choices within the confines of their colonial experience. Throughout much of the eighteenth century, Catawba leaders used play-off diplomacy; this was particularly true under King Hagler's tenure (1750–1763) as leading chief of the Catawba Nation (Merrell 1986). The Catawba leadership carefully manipulated colonial officials from Virginia and the Carolinas, those administrators seeking and competing for Catawba military support, to garner the best possible arrangements, in terms of political patronage and gift payments (McDowell 1958, 1969; Merrell 1986, 1987, 1991; Oliphant 2001; Saunders 1993a). Despite Anglo-American attempts to fully orchestrate the Catawbas' actions, the Catawbas readily recognized their power, influence, and place in fluid colonial affairs through the late 1700s. As James Merrell (1986:63; emphasis in original) noted:

Once the goods [i.e., payments and gifts] arrived, the Catawbas usually lived up to their end of the bargain, but only in their own time and their own way. War parties set out when it suited them, fought in their own manner, and stayed as long as they wished, much to the dismay of their colonial 'superiors.'

Why did British officials from competing colonies repeatedly send diplomatic missions to curry Catawba favor? Most colonial officials recognized the need to form friendly relationships or strong military alliances with Indian societies for both economic and strategic reasons (McDowell 1958, 1969; Robinson 1996). White Carolinians, however, exhibited a particular interest in the Catawbas, in part because of their highly touted, warlike reputation, which neighboring Indian groups undoubtedly inspired. Indeed, it is likely that the Catawbas' development of martial skills and their ferocious reputation among neighboring southeastern Indians predated initial English occupation of South Carolina in the 1670s. In 1693, a Cherokee entourage requested protection from the South Carolina government “against the *Esaw* [Catawbas]...Indians, who had destroyed several of their towns, and taken a number of their people prisoners” (Hewatt 1971 [1779]:127). The Cherokees, although more populous than the Catawbas, “...begged the governor [of South Carolina]

to restore their relations [with the Catawbas], and protect them against such insidious enemies” (Hewatt 1971 [1779]:127), actions which Governor Thomas Smith solemnly swore to pursue in a spirit of friendship and peace.

Reportedly, Catawba warriors were among the fiercest, most capable fighters known to the colonials in the East. As one observer concluded, “Other tribes went on the warpath occasionally, but with the Catawbas fighting was a trade” (McCants 1927:151). Edmond Atkin, a Carolina Indian trader and later British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the South, remarked:

In War, they are inferior [to] no Indians whatever. The greatest loss perhaps the Six Nations ever Received at one time in Fight with Indians, was by them [Catawbas]. Such is the Honour in Indian Estimation to be acquired by Killing any of them, that Indians as far remote as the [Great] Lakes go in quest of them. [Jacobs 1967:47]

Atkin likely refers to a 1727 action when a small party of Catawba warriors, pursuing Oneida raiders into Virginia, fought a running, two-day battle and ultimately killed 57 Oneidas and took a number of others prisoner (Milling 1940:236). Another example of the Catawbas’ fighting skill is evident in an August 1753 account where “six Catawbas and two Boys, had out of 20, killed 18 French Indians” in a running firefight deep in the South Carolina backcountry (McDowell 1958:456).

Even with the ultimate eclipse of Catawba military power, especially in the aftermath of the great smallpox epidemics of 1738–1739 and 1759–1760 (see McReynolds this volume), James Adair, noted Indian trader and author of *The History of the American Indians* (1775), stated, “We are not acquainted with any...of so warlike a disposition, as the Katahba and the Chikkasah” (Williams 1930:235). In a lively vignette, Adair (Williams 1930:421–423) recounted how a single Catawba warrior killed seven Northern Iroquois warriors in a running battle, and after his subsequent capture, endured great torture in the Iroquois’ town, only to escape and kill five Iroquois pursuers before returning home in triumph with all 12 scalps. Raids and defensive actions against the Iroquois in the mid-1700s enhanced the Catawbas’ fearsome reputation among white Carolinians and Virginians, such as George Washington (Fitzpatrick 1931a, 1931b), but their reputation was certainly more than false bravado. As James Merrell (1987:122) pointed out, “by the time Iroquois warriors began venturing south [in the early 1700s], the piedmont populations that made up the Catawba Nation were probably both thoroughly accustomed to and very good at killing people.”

Catawba leaders astutely capitalized on the achieved status of their warriors and further cultivated the mystique in their diplomatic interactions with Anglo-American leaders. In 1756, the Catawba Nation's most famous *Eractasswa* (chief), King Hagler (*Nopkehe*), boasted to South Carolina Governor James Glen, "We are a small Nation but our Name is high, and if we go to the War with the White People against the enemy we shall drive them so far as that we shall raise many Children without any Danger or Molestation" (McDowell 1969:107–108). Word of the Catawbas' bravado and bellicose attitude often filtered back to British officials as they attempted to negotiate peace agreements between warring Indian nations in the colonies. In 1750, Iroquois representatives demanded that:

the English not...mediate in their war with the Katahba Indians, as they were fully resolved to prosecute it, with the greatest eagerness, while there was one of that hateful name alive; because in time of battle, they [the Catawbas] had given them the ugly name of short-tailed eunuchs [i.e., castrates with short penises]. [Williams 1930:143]

The purposeful militant posturing by the Catawbas continued well into later Federal period. South Carolinian Lucius Bierce commented on the Catawbas' anger when South Carolina officials failed to invite them to fight for the American cause in the War of 1812. After some discussion on the Catawbas' plight as a "poor degraded people," he concluded: "Thus, the ruling passion [militarism] shows itself strong in the death of their nation...and but a remnant of them, and yet, rather than not be at war, they will fight for their oppressors" (Clark 1973:63–64).

While the Catawbas reacted to colonial conditions that essentially forced them to select from a limited range of adaptive strategies, they diplomatically maneuvered as agents of their own destiny. Coercive and seductive measures undertaken by European governments certainly contributed to the decision-making process, but Catawba leaders shrewdly manipulated colonial administrators and frequently used "play-off" diplomacy to enhance the position of the Catawba Nation (McDowell 1958, 1969; Merrell 1986; Saunders 1993a). The Catawbas opted for actions based on their exceptional abilities to field and perform as ethnic soldiers or enforcers of the dominant regime, whatever that regime might have been—proprietary colony, royal colony, rebel colony, fledgling state, or rebel state, between 1670 and 1865. By purposefully positioning their society in a particular militaristic niche, the Catawbas endeavored to advance or protect their socio-political interests for nearly two centuries.

History of Catawba Militarism

Throughout much of the Colonial period from the mid-1670s through 1776, Catawba warriors capably operated as ethnic soldiers in most British sponsored military expeditions supported by the governments of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. Catawba warriors served in auxiliary combat units in several major wars as well as scouts who collected military intelligence or guided Anglo-American militia forces through hostile Indian territories (Flynn 1991). Other Catawba contingents quelled slave insurrections or tracked down and re-captured escaped slaves well into the post-Revolutionary, Federal, and Antebellum periods (Bentley 1991; Clark 1993; Flynn 1991; Hudson 1970). All such paramilitary operations were undoubtedly encouraged and supported, both materially and emotionally, by Catawba women who bore their share of the war efforts, much like their counterparts among the Northern Iroquois (Prezzano 1997). Some women accompanied warriors in the field (Fitzpatrick 1931b), while other women on the home front provisioned war parties and managed food production, household activities, slaves, and other aspects of community life in the absence of the war parties.

In the late seventeenth century, Charles Town officials first courted Catawba warriors as allies against the Westos and Savannah-Shawnees, but evidence of Catawba participation in the Westos War is largely circumstantial (Brown 1966; Corkran 1970; Gallay 2002; Milling 1940; Merrell 1991; Silver 1990; Speck 1939). In 1709–1710, British officials hired the Catawbas to both take the war north and defend the colony when Northern Iroquois warriors mounted raids against settlement Indians and outlying white settlements scattered about Charles Town (Blumer 1987). For a brief period in the Yamassee War (1715–1718), the Catawbas allied with the warring Yamassee coalition, but quickly realigned themselves with the Carolinians after suffering brutal losses of men, women, and children at Goose Creek in 1715 (Corkran 1970; Hewatt 1971 [1779]; Klingburg 1956; Merrell 1991). To cement the restored alliance with the white Carolinians, Catawba warriors later destroyed several warring Waxhaw villages and reportedly subjugated the warring Cheraws (Merrell 1991; Milling 1940). Most notably, however, Catawba contingents fought with Carolina militiamen, British regulars, and other Indian auxiliaries in the Franco-Spanish attack on Charles Town (1706), the Tuscarora War (1711–1713), and the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), which included several expeditions in the Ohio Valley, patrols in the Broad River valley, and major actions against the Savannah-Shawnees and the Cherokees

(Barnwell 1908a, 1908b; Blumer 1987; Brown 1966; Fitzpatrick 1931a, 1931b; Gregg 1991 [1867]; Hamilton 1899; Hewatt 1971 [1779]; James 1971; Kegley 1938; Kirkland and Kennedy 1905; Klingburg 1956; Meriwether 1940; Merrell 1991; Lee 1963; McDowell 1969; Merrell 1986, 1987, 1991; Oliphant 2001; Ramsay 1858; Robinson 1979, 1996; Saunders 1993a; Speck 1939; Starkey 1998; Steele 1994).

Although deadly conflicts between northeastern and southeastern Indians, as well as the so-called “mourning wars” and the associated mourning war ritual complex, probably predate European contact in eastern North America, internecine warfare between northeastern and southeastern Indian peoples intensified with the onset of colonialism (Fenton 1978; Merrell 1987; Richter 2001; Sullivan and Snow 1992; Wallace 1972). Throughout most of the eighteenth century, except for sporadic interludes associated with shifting Euro-Indian alliances, the Catawbas remained at war with the Savannah-Shawnees, Cherokees, Tuscaroras, and the Iroquois Confederacy (Aquila 1997; Merrell 1987, 1991; Speck 1939; Wallace 1972; Williamson 1930), a brutal conflict of attrition that dramatically escalated after 1701. When French and Iroquois Confederacy representatives signed “The Great Peace” in 1701, the French directed their Iroquois allies southward to attack British settlers in the Carolina backcountry and their Indian allies (Drooker 2002; Merrell 1987). Although such monuments are not known to archaeologists today, perhaps the “seven heaps of Stones, being the Monuments of seven [Catawba] *Indians*, that were slain in that place by the *Sinnagers* [Senecas], or *Troquois* [Iroquois],” which John Lawson (Lefler 1967:50; emphasis in original) observed in 1701, materially reflected the increased violence.

For complex socio-political reasons, the Catawbas regularly participated in these protracted inter-tribal wars both autonomously, to pursue their own interests, and at the behest of British agents. In such internecine conflicts, the Catawbas were not, however, simply victims of colonial machinations. Since the Catawbas shared a “common culture of conflict” with the Northern Iroquois, they essentially needed enemies to fight (Merrell 1987) and certainly profited from the capture and sale of Indian slaves taken during frequent counter-raids (Bentley 1991; Milling 1940). Although imperial forces of coercion and seduction encouraged the Catawbas to fight for the British cause, the Catawbas “operated within a mourning-war tradition and fought to ‘satisfy the supposed craving ghosts of their deceased relations’ ... [Indeed, the] desire to prove oneself as a warrior was also in the forefront of a Catawba’s thoughts” (Merrell 1987:120; quoting James Adair [1775]). The scale and intensity of these intertribal conflicts, however, greatly diminished with the ultimate British

victory over Spanish and French forces at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

The stirrings of the American Rebellion, readily apparent by 1770, must have been obvious to the Catawbas, but there is no record of their thoughts on the matter. Their position, however, became clear to the South Carolina government with the news of battles at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, and the subsequent seizure of forts and British military supplies on the coast in 1775 (Lumpkin 1981). Even though the Catawbas were "too decimated to be of much [strategic] military importance" (Hudson's 1970:51), especially against the populous Cherokees to the west, South Carolinian officials apparently considered Catawba military prowess of some significance at a tactical level. Knowledgeable militia officers were likely interested in their well-known expertise as riflemen, scouts, and trackers. With the outbreak of the American Revolution, the South Carolina Council of Safety specifically courted the Catawbas and sent a letter to the Nation that promised gifts and pay to soldiers in return for military service. The letter, however, threatened non-specific repercussions if the Catawbas chose the "wrong side" (Merrell 1991). The Council stated, "we expected their warriors [Catawbas] to join ours" (Moultrie 1968 [1779]:81), and several influential colonists made overtures to the Catawbas on behalf of the Rebel cause (Brown 1966; Merrell 1991).

It is oft concluded that the Catawbas, geographically surrounded by white Rebels all of whom might do the Catawbas great harm, had no choice but to fight for the American cause (Calloway 1995; Merrell 1991). Despite this undisputed fact, a complicating issue similarly noted by King Hagler nearly 20 years before (Saunders 1993a), I suspect that veiled threats were not especially necessary. The Catawbas, as in the past, were perfectly willing to fight for war honors as well as for lucrative gift or monetary payments. Moreover, if they were to be paid for their services, the Catawbas were wholly satisfied in fighting with the rebel South Carolinians. Of the southeastern Indians who actively participated in the American Revolution, only the Catawbas fought from beginning to end for the Rebel cause (Lumpkin 1981). Even after the British invasion of South Carolina, when all appeared to be lost in the South, the Catawbas did not run for the British lines; instead, they evacuated their families and their warriors continued to cast their lot with the rebel Americans. These actions suggest that factors other than fear of Rebel reprisals entered into their decision. The South Carolinians were not the only party interested in the Catawbas' services. The North Carolina Committee of Public Claims paid for presents sent to the Catawbas in March of 1775 (Clark 1994).

Although the expressed purpose of these gifts is unclear, North Carolina Rebels at that time were forming regiments in southeastern North Carolina to fight Crown forces (Robinson 1963). Anticipating the war, the North Carolinians were apparently courting the Catawbas for military support.

During the American Revolution, some 80 Catawba auxiliaries, primarily riflemen, participated in the Rebel defense of Charleston and the Battle of Sullivan's Island in 1776. Catawba volunteers operated with Rebel partisan ranger units against marauding bands of escaped black slaves and Loyalist Tory units in the Carolina backcountry in 1775–1776 and 1780–1781. Catawbas served as scouts and riflemen with Colonel Andrew Williamson's forces in the 1776 expedition against the Cherokees and in General Benjamin Lincoln's Georgia campaign of 1779. Later, under General Thomas Sumter, Catawba riflemen supported General Nathanael Greene in North Carolina at Guilford Courthouse and Haw River (Blumer 1987; Brown 1966; Corkran 1970; Flynn 1991; Kirkland and Kennedy 1905; Logan 1980; Lumpkin 1981; Mahon 1988; Merrell 1991; Milling 1940; Mills 1972 [1826]; Olson 1968; Scaife 1930; Speck 1939; Swanton 1979; Watson 1995; Williams 1943).

With the fall of Charleston in May and the subsequent American disaster at Camden in August of 1780, the Catawbas sought to secure their vulnerable families from the British advance and removed to the safety of Virginia (Merrell 1991; Milling 1940; Williams 1943). With their families safe from British or Tory retribution, the Catawba soldiers returned to fight with the Rebels in the backcountry. The Nation's leading chief, General New River, the noted soldier Captain Pinetree George, and some 50 Catawbas served in Captain Thomas Drennan's Company under General Sumter during the rancorous guerilla war between the Rebels and the Tories (Watson 1995). Near Orangeburg, South Carolina, Colonel Robert Gray reported:

The swamps were filled with loyalists, the rebels durst not sleep in their houses, & Sumpter irritated by the hostility of the Country, got the Catawba Indians to track the Loyalists from the swamps, w^h were at the same time traversed by large parties of armed rebels to kill or take the tories. [Gray 1909:155]

With the American victory at Yorktown, Virginia, in October 1781, the Catawbas returned to the Nation's reservation, which had been looted and destroyed the previous summer by British troops under the command of Lord Rawdon (Lumpkin 1981).

With the change from a nation within a colonial regime to that of a nation within the new republic, the Catawbas remained a people oppressed by an outside polity, the State of South Carolina, in which they were not

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citizens. Although minor intertribal warfare continued between the Catawbas and their old nemesis, the Iroquois Confederacy (Merrell 1987), the Catawbas had fewer opportunities to exercise their martial skills during the post-colonial era. Catawbas served with the state militias as slave catchers and participated in an attack on an escaped slave camp on the Savannah River in 1787 (Bentley 1991; Blumer 1987). Although largely ignored by state military officials during the Federal period, a Catawba contingent served with the South Carolina militia, without seeing combat, in the War of 1812 (Clark 1973; Flynn 1991; Skeen 1999). Some fifty Catawba volunteers, many of whom were veterans of the American Revolution, regularly attended militia muster in York County, South Carolina, but Governor David Williams (1814–1816) “ordered them off the field for lacking proper military discipline” (Flynn 1991), undoubtedly an affront to the veteran riflemen and scouts so respected by General Sumter and other prominent American officers in previous conflicts.

After an apparent antebellum hiatus, Catawba volunteers served in the Mexican War (1846–1848) (United States Senate 1930) and at least 16 men went on to enlist in the South Carolina State Troops to serve with the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War (1861–1865) (Blumer 1995; Brown 1966; Hudson 1979; Milling 1940). An 1864 report, delivered by Catawba Agent John R. Patton to the South Carolina General Assembly, noted:

All of the males Except 3 is now or have been in the Service of the Confederate States Five of whom have died in the Service, one or Two Discharged from Physical Disability. Two or three have been Severely Wounded and one of them a cripple for life. [Blumer 1995:223]

Most of the Catawba Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded over the course of the war. Several died in disease-ridden Union prisons and a number of survivors suffered permanent physical handicaps. Of the sixteen known Catawbas who served, nine died in service or in Union prisons (Blumer 1995).

While Catawba oral tradition indicates that local whites threatened to shoot Catawba men if they did not enlist in the Confederate service (Brown 1966; Hudson 1979), I suggest that the relatively poor Catawba farmers, as during the American Revolution, saw military service as an opportunity for both honor and money. Confederate enlistment bounties were offered and military service generated pay (Blumer 1995; Shock 2001), albeit in Confederate notes. It should be noted, however, that a number of the Catawbas held enslaved blacks in bondage during the antebellum period (Bentley 1991). Whether or not the Catawbas simply

adopted the practice of purchasing enslaved blacks simply to emulate whites, and thus gain social acceptance (Bentley 1991), this social factor may have played some role in their decision to fight for the Confederacy. Whatever their reasons, Blumer (1995:228) concluded, “When the state of South Carolina made its call to arms in 1861, the Catawba responded willingly. The Nation, once the scourge of the entire eastern seaboard, never shirked an opportunity to go to war.” Blumer (1995:221) further indicates that modern “Catawba[s] are proud of their military history and are quick to point out that their ancestors fought for the Confederacy.” There seems to be little evidence to support the notion that the Catawbas were truly forced to fight in any war. To the contrary, King Hagler’s statement to Governor Glen during the Seven Years’ War is significant. Hagler boasted, “Our Warriors delight in war...and our young Men are equally pleased that they have an Opportunity of going to Battle” (Merrell 1987:120).

Although this overview largely focuses on Catawba militarism in the colonial period, aspects of the tradition continued well into the modern era. In post-colonial times, however, overt Catawba militarism rapidly waned with the pacification of the tribal zone in the East. Nevertheless, young Catawba men continued to seek the socially important warrior status. Proportionately high percentages of Catawba males accordingly enlisted as soldiers in organized volunteer or conscript armies after 1775. As discussed, they served with North and South Carolina regiments in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, possibly the Seminole Wars, and the American Civil War. Reportedly, all able-bodied Catawba males in South Carolina volunteered for service with the Confederate Army in the Fifth, Twelfth, and Seventeenth South Carolina infantry regiments (Blumer 1995; Brown 1966), while several living in North Carolina apparently served in Thomas’ Cherokee Regiment (Milling 1940). Dozens of men and women, primarily volunteers, later served with US forces in World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War (Brown 1966; Blumer 1987; United States Senate 1930). The Catawbas, like most American Indian tribes across the United States, have volunteered in disproportionately high percentages for service in all of the country’s twentieth-century conflicts (Department of Defense 1998). Their willingness to serve and the great respect shown to war veterans in the Catawba Nation today are traditions influenced by Catawba militarism of an earlier era.

Functions and Effects of Catawba Militarism

The obvious functions and societal impacts of Catawba militarism and the Catawbas' perpetual role as ethnic soldiers were most evident during the mid-to-late eighteenth century, but what we glean from their colonial experiences inform our understanding of Catawba militarism over time. As an adaptive strategy, Catawba militarism served multiple tangible and intangible functions that operated at both individual and group levels, but there were positive and negative social consequences. The most obvious function of militarism and the projection of a bellicose attitude is that of societal self-preservation for peoples subject to frequent attacks by polities exhibiting superior military force. The Catawbas certainly had to fight or be destroyed by their numerous, often numerically superior enemies (e.g., Northern Iroquois, Cherokees, and Chickasaws) throughout the eighteenth century, but by decisively developing a peculiar mystique as the toughest backcountry Indians, their reputation likely protected them from many potential attacks from either fearful European colonists or other Indian enemies. This issue was critical during the heyday of the Indian slave trade, when other militaristic, Indian slaving societies preyed on weaker victims across the Southeast (Ethridge 2003, Gally 2002). In other instances, however, as with the Northern Iroquois and the Cherokees, the Catawbas' militant attitude and swagger made their enemies even more determined to destroy them (Merrell 1987; Williams 1930). In the 1740s, for example, the Iroquois Confederacy intensified attacks on Catawba settlements after Catawba warriors disparagingly referred to the Iroquois warriors as "women" and stated that Catawba warriors were "double men." Outraged Iroquois representatives reported to British officials that Catawba warriors said that they "had two Conveniences, one for their Women, and one for us [the Iroquois]" (Merrell 1987:123).

Despite such repercussions, chronic internecine warfare and ethnic soldiering contributed to the ethnogenesis of the Catawba Nation through the incorporation and acculturation of subject or allied peoples, such as the Waxhaws, Sugarees, Waterees and Cheraws, under the protective umbrella of the Catawba identity. As Ferguson and Whitehead (1999a:14) noted, colonialism generally changes patterns of indigenous social relations as warfare and diseases reduce populations, which can force previously separate groups to coalesce. As in other regions of the colonial Southeast, chronic warfare drove alliance formations and brought ethnically diverse societies together (Willis 1980). In general, warfare involving indigenous

peoples “leads to the differential survival of ethnic formations and political organizations” (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a:14). With the Catawbas, the Catawba-Iroquois wars promoted group solidarity among politically decentralized tribes, speaking some twenty different dialects, which came to form the “Catawba Nation” (Merrell 1987, 1991; Steele 1994).

By the mid-eighteenth century, the militant “personality” of the waxing Catawba polity “encouraged” smaller tribes decimated by disease and war to seek Catawba protection from predatory slaving groups and, perhaps more insidiously, “persuaded” dissatisfied member tribes not to splinter off for fear of encouraging the Catawbas’ wrath (Merrell 1991). The bellicose attitude helped the Catawba polity to both grow as a nation and curb population reductions by discouraging ethnically unrelated groups from withdrawing once within the Catawba sphere of influence. In a symbolic sense, Merrell (1987:121) observed, “conflict also brought in its train [of] heroes and stories that provided Cheraws, Waccamaws, and their Catawba hosts with a shared heritage.” Such shared commonality enhanced group solidarity within the clearly multi-ethnic polity.

In terms of diplomacy, Catawba leaders and individual warriors often used their war record to “wave the flag” in their diplomatic relations with the British and subsequent American regimes. In 1755, King Hagler requested ammunition to fight the French, a drum, and a “Union Jack” flag after one of his sons died in battle. Hagler stated, “The Colours we have I covered my Son with when he was dead” (McDowell 1958:85). Hagler recognized the value of manipulating the symbol of British might. The implication in his statement was that the Catawbas’ best bled for the English and his people expected something tangible in return. Decades after Hagler’s statements, such “flag waving” continued in the aftermath of the American Revolution when the “Catawbas derived maximum mileage from their revolutionary services, and by wrapping themselves in the [American] flag used their record of service in the patriot cause” to rightfully further their socio-political interests in the Carolina backcountry (Calloway 1995:285).

Strategically, the Anglo-Catawba military alliances indirectly helped to protect the Catawbas from predatory northern Indians. For several reasons, in part due to the Catawbas’ perpetual loyalty, British officials made several formal and informal attempts, from the 1740s through the 1760s, to bring about a peaceful resolution to the long-standing Catawba-Iroquois wars, as well as sporadic conflicts between Catawbas and their southeastern neighbors, such as the Natchez and the Chickasaws. While all parties concerned agreed to peace terms on a few occasions (e.g., in 1738, 1741, 1742, 1744, 1745, 1746, 1751, 1757, and 1763), long-

standing hostilities, shifting political interests, “crying blood,” and meddling colonial officials collectively operated to re-ignite conflicts (Merrell 1987; Meroney 1991; Milling 1940; Robinson 1996; Steele 1994). While the Anglo-Americans could not culturally comprehend the mourning war complex, they readily perceived the ultimate outcome of the process—the near destruction of the Catawba Nation by 1763. Although a garrisoned British fort, variably proposed by colonial administrators or requested by Catawbans for a decade in the 1750s, came too late, both North and South Carolina officials eventually ordered forts built near the Catawba settlements. Ostensibly for the protection of the Catawbans, but certainly to protect their own backcountry settlements, North Carolina Governor Arthur Dobbs and South Carolina Governor William Lyttleton, respectively, orchestrated the construction of separate bastioned forts in 1757–1758 and 1760. Only the South Carolina fort was completed, but it was never armed or garrisoned by British forces during the height of the Catawba-Iroquois conflict at the end of the Seven Years’ War (Heath 2004).

At the Augusta Conference of 1763, colonial officials heard and acted on Catawba complaints about white land encroachment and granted a 144,000-acre reservation tract—a “final payment” of a sort for the Catawbans’ war services—to the Catawba Nation (Hudson 1979; Merrell 1991). Despite the fact that the Catawbans were reeling from heavy population losses and were of “negligible military importance” by 1763 (less than 100 warriors [McReynolds this volume]), the Catawbans were included at the bargaining table and recognized as a sovereign Indian nation (Hudson 1970; Richter 2001). It is apparent that South Carolina officials, while land-hungry, acknowledged and somewhat protected the reservation from further Anglo-American settlement because the Catawbans continued to serve, on a reduced scale, as a buffer against the ever-worrisome Cherokees to the west, as well as an effective, anti-insurrection threat against enslaved blacks (Bentley 1991; Clark 1993; Hudson 1970; Willis 1971). White Carolinians used the enslaved blacks’ fear of the Catawbans and other tribes to discourage slaves from attempting escape beyond the settled frontiers. At times, Indians in the Southeast did raid remote plantations and enslaved, killed, tortured, or scalped blacks, along with their white masters, irrespective of ethnicity. As Dr. John Brickell noted of early slave uprisings in the Carolinas:

When they [enslaved blacks] have been guilty of these barbarous and disobedient Proceedings, they generally fly to the Woods, but as soon as the *Indians* have Notice from the *Christians* of their being there, they disperse them; killing some, others flying for Mercy to the *Christians* rather than to fall

into the others Hands, who have a natural aversion to the *Blacks*, and put them to death with the most exquisite Tortures they can invent, whenever they catch them. [Brickell 1968 [1737]:273]

Thus, it was not difficult for plantation masters to portray the Catawbas to their subjugated charges as cruel and inhuman (Willis 1971).

In pure military terms, the Catawbas were not a realistic military threat to the British Empire or the Cherokees after 1763, but they were a psychological weapon. The Catawbas martial reputation, combat expertise, and continued services as a paramilitary police force against enslaved blacks allowed the Catawbas to live somewhat autonomously “on borrowed time.” Regardless of their diminished numbers, the Catawbas were still “a force in being,” just as they had been in the decades of the 1740s and 1750s.¹ The psychological threat of their comparatively small but potentially highly lethal force, derived from their long-standing martial mystique, allowed the Catawbas to negotiate and preserve their place as a distinctive minority in American society from a position of influence. As Hudson (1970:58) observed, “the Catawbas of the late eighteenth century occupied their social position [in South Carolina] by virtue of the role that the planters and [government officials] *thought* they played.” Unlike the coastal tribes, which were more rapidly decimated by disease and warfare to the reduced status of accommodating “settlement Indians” with little or no autonomy (Milling 1940), the Catawbas retained a relative degree of socio-political autonomy and held on to their status as a sovereign Indian nation through 1840 (Hudson 1970, 1979).

Despite their stalwart service to the Carolina colonists and the perpetual gifts or payments, the colonial government often neglected the Catawbas until their living conditions had devolved to particularly mean states. In 1753, Robert Steill, in a letter to Governor Glen, reported, due to intense fighting with Northern Iroquois raiders on the Carolina frontier, that:

They (Catawba) have been in a very parishable Condition all this Summer. They could not hunt, for the Enemy, and were obliged to give away what Cloathing they had for Corn, and since that was gone, they have lived entirely upon Blackberries... They want Ammunition very much and a little Cloathing would be very acceptable to them. If your Excellency thinks proper to order what few Goods there are at the Congree Fort, *this is what they expect* as they are our steady Friends and a good Guard to our Back Settlements. [McDowell 1958:454; emphasis added]

Such accounts reflect the reality of the situation, while South Carolinians prided themselves on their patronage of the Catawbas. In a

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1769 report to the Earl of Hillsborough, the South Carolina Council boasted:

Their (Catawba) Complaints when injured by any White Men have been attended to and redressed by the Governor...their Men accompanied the King's Troops and the Troops in the pay of the Province in the two Cherokee Expeditions during which their Men were in the pay of and their Women and Children were fed and cloathed by this Province for proof of which we refer to the Journals of the Council and Assembly. [Clark 1993:227]

Beyond the more external aspects of Catawba militarism discussed thus far, habitual warfare and the associated warrior “caste” system influenced Catawba internal society as well. As with most southeastern Indian societies (Hudson 1976), Catawba chiefs, council members, and respected male elders typically were proven warriors or veteran war leaders during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Blumer 1987; Merrell 1986, 1991; Watson 1995). As male rank and status were generally achieved with respect to one’s accomplishments in war, men who did not validate their masculinity by distinguishing themselves in combat had to work, in some cases, at menial tasks, such as tending fires and serving other men (Hudson 1976). The expected pursuit of war honors, “one of the main preoccupations of Southeastern Indian men” (Hudson 1976:325), usually came at a great societal cost. During General John Forbes’ disastrous 1758 expedition to destroy the French garrison at Fort Du Quesne, two prominent Catawba war party leaders, Captains Bullen and French, were killed in an ambush near Fort Cumberland. The young Colonel George Washington reported:

The loss we sustain by the death of these two Indians, is at this juncture very considerable, as they were remarkable for their bravery, and attachment to Our interest; particularly poor Bullen whom (and the other) [French] we buried with Military Honours. [Fitzpatrick 1931b:274]

Even when the Catawbas were not actively fighting, an overriding martial spirit and the male social need to exhibit prowess in war (Hudson 1976), albeit in altered form, influenced their actions. After the American Revolution, South Carolina State Militia “muster was a time for the Catawbas to visit with their old comrades in arms and a place to show off their skills as warriors since there was no longer an occasion for the war party so basic to [Catawba] Indian culture” (Flynn 1991:148).

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Catawba “kings” (later “generals” with the coming of the Republic) mentioned in various records all led war parties against the Northern Iroquois or fought

with the British in the major colonial wars (Blumer 1987; Merrell 1986, 1991; Watson 1995). Several American Civil War veterans served as chiefs during Reconstruction, and many World War I and World War II veterans later served as chiefs or tribal council members (Blumer 1987; Watson 1995). As the effects of Catawba militarism faded over time, associated social practices changed. After 1865, many, but not all, chiefs were war veterans (Blumer 1987; Watson 1995). Similar patterns are found with other American Indian tribes across the United States (Department of Defense 1998). In recent decades, Catawba military veterans have been highly esteemed in the Nation, but there are no positions within the tribal government that require military service as a prerequisite for civil service, and no particular social or ritual tasks must be performed by veterans. Catawba veterans, however, are socially recognized during festivals through their participation in a special dance on the Reservation (Thomas Blumer, personal communication 2002).

With the end of the Catawba-Iroquois wars in the late 1700s, James Merrell concluded:

Without the central thread provided by the Iroquois wars...the entire fabric of Catawba warfare came unraveled, and Catawbas stopped fighting the Iroquois or anyone else...Its end, however gradual, must have had a profound effect on the Nation. How would "crying blood" be silenced, a young man's ambitions satisfied.... For a time some warriors substituted runaway slaves or British troops for native enemies.... After 1800 the wounds of warfare healed.... Only the memories of old battles remained...and the last Catawba warrior passed away. [Merrell 1987:132]

While this statement is generally accurate, Catawba men actively sought military service in the wars of the nineteenth century and perhaps in the twentieth century as well, in order to perpetuate the "central thread," albeit in modified form, of their society. Indeed, the Catawbas' anger when not invited to fight for South Carolina in the War of 1812 relates to the very issue raised by Merrell (1987). Such issues, individual social aspirations, and the culturally influenced desire to fight for honor, as well as the desire to follow the warrior tradition (see Holm 1996), entered into the complex mix of reasons why Catawba men sought to participate in numerous wars from the colonial period through the modern era. In the face of increasing economic marginalization and social injustice during the post-colonial period, the Catawba warriors "soldiered on" for a country and state that largely neglected them, especially after 1840 (Hudson 1970; Merrell 1991).

Beyond the more abstract aspects of Catawba militarism are the material aspects. Colonial officials typically "paid" Catawba chiefs, war

leaders, warriors, and their families with “presents” of arms, trade goods, or food supplies for their alliances and martial services, or to track and recover escaped black slaves. Moreover, the Anglo-Americans paid cash bounties, or “premiums,” for enemy Indian scalps taken during the major imperial wars and during the American Revolution (Kirkland and Kennedy 1905; Mahon 1988; McDowell 1958, 1969, 1992; Milling 1940; Shaw 1931). For turning against the Yamasee coalition in 1715, a trading factory was positioned near the Catawba settlements to facilitate the Catawbas’ access to highly desired European goods (Merrell 1991). One colonial observer wryly noted that “presents of considerable value were also necessary, to preserve the friendship” of the Catawbas during the Yamasee War (Hewatt 1971 [1779]:233). As witnesses to the genocidal outcomes of the Westo, Tuscarora, and Yamasee Wars, the Catawbas likely realized that without firmly established trade relationships, especially for the acquisition of guns and ammunition, they could not survive the readily apparent arms race—the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century militarization of the North American tribal zone (see Ethridge 2003; Ferguson and Whitehead 1999a). By remaining at peace with the English, the Catawbas *preserved* their trade relationship. By going to war with the English as stalwart military auxiliaries, the Catawbas *enhanced* their trade relationship and sociocultural autonomy in a native world increasingly manipulated and controlled by Europeans.

Records from the Seven Years’ War period indicate that Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina officials provided a diversity of gifts, which included: sugar, rum, wine, coats, shirts, breeches, ruffled shirts, laced hats, belts, buttons, thread, scissors, blankets, cloth, bound trunks, mirrors, beads, brass wire, ear bobs, hawk bells, combs, paints, brass kettles, tin pots, glass decanters, clasp knives, hatchets, iron tools, horse tack, swords, muskets, musket rifles, powder, ball, and gunflints. Moreover, Charles Town officials paid for services rendered to the Catawbas by European craftsmen, doctors, and apothecaries for gun repairs, saddle repairs, medicines, and medical treatment (McDowell 1958, 1969, 1992). Until the collapse of the Indian slave trade in the mid-1700s, captives taken in raids against enemy tribes were another important source of profit for the Catawbas. While some captives were adopted or otherwise held in the Nation as slaves to replace Catawba war losses (Bentley 1991; Merrell 1987; Richter 2001; Wallace 1972), many successful Catawba raiders regularly traded or sold their war captives to Carolina slavers in the Charles Town markets, who primarily resold them to Low Country, Middle-Atlantic, or West Indies planters (Bentley 1991; Gallay 2002; Milling 1940). Moreover, grateful Carolina planters and

colonial administrators paid Catawba warriors in cash or trade goods for capturing runaway black slaves, or when the Catawbas squelched black slave uprisings (Bentley 1991; Willis 1971). At the Augusta Conference of 1763, colonial officials set the lucrative price for a captured and returned black slave at “one musket and three blankets” (Willis 1971:106).

Fighting alongside British troops during the Seven Years’ War provided the Catawbas, both at home and abroad, with arms, food provisions, and sundry presents. Early in the war, James Glen gave each of King Hagler’s subordinate chiefs new pistols, while individual warriors received guns and ammunition as well as food rations and other presents from British garrisons in combat zones (Fitzpatrick 1931a, 1931b; Gregg 1991 [1867]; Hamilton 1899; McDowell 1958, 1969; Milling 1940; Saunders 1993a). Beyond such material incentives, warriors were paid cash scalp bounties for each enemy scalp taken. Virginia paid 5-pounds per scalp, while South Carolina apparently paid as much as 10-pounds per scalp (Fitzpatrick 1931a; Hamilton 1899; Kegley 1938; Kirkland and Kennedy 1905). Intensive warfare, however, diminished the Catawbas’ ability to feed their own people (McDowell 1958), despite the intermittent integration of Indian captives taken by Catawba warriors as slaves or adoptees.

Combat deaths incurred on campaigns, as well as fielding and provisioning warriors for long treks north, west, and south of Catawba territory, sapped labor and supplies needed to support families at home. Additionally, Catawba women often accompanied warriors in the field and suffered death or wounds alongside their male counterparts (Fitzpatrick 1931b; James 1971). As intertribal conflicts between Indian societies throughout the East escalated in the mid-eighteenth century, Catawba warriors were killed or incapacitated, while women and children were killed or captured in the Catawba settlements to serve as slaves or adoptees among groups as diverse as the Natchez, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy (Fenton 1978; Merrell 1987; Milling 1940; Richter 2001; Robinson 1996; Wallace 1972). Although there is little evidence for such actions before the Seven Years’ War, North and South Carolina officials, vying for Catawba loyalties, sent allotments of beef and corn to the Catawba settlements in 1756, 1757 and 1769 (McDowell 1969; Saunders 1993a, 1993b). By the late 1760s, however, the perceived military value of the Catawba paramilitary force diminished, and the decline in status is reflected in a 1767 list of presents distributed to several different allied tribes by the British Southern Department of Indian Affairs (Shaw 1931).

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As Catawba warriors made the later transition from ethnic soldiers of the colonial era to enlisted ethnic soldiers in the American armies of the Revolutionary and Federal periods, enlistment bounties, service pay, and eventual pension payments or land grants (in a few cases), as well as occasional relief payments to dependent Catawba families, replaced the colonial-era scalp bounties and trade good payments (Brown 1966; Flynn 1991; Merrell 1991; Sarrett 1998; Watson 1995). Given the Catawbas' traditional subsistence regime, focused on hunting and gardening, there were limited opportunities for them to earn money during the post-colonial era, except for commercial pottery production (see Davis and Riggs this volume), reservation land leases (Merrell 1991), and ethnic soldiering. After 1775, individual Catawba soldiers apparently spent enlistment bounties and pay on food supplies, spirits, and a host of consumer goods produced in European or American factories (for an archaeological overview, see Davis and Riggs this volume). In addition to gifts and payments made to Catawba soldiers during, or after, the American Revolution, the South Carolina Legislature reimbursed the Catawbas for horses, cattle, and hogs provided to supply Rebel partisans or lost to British forces during the war (Flynn 1991; Watson 1995).

After 1818, some surviving Catawba veterans received monthly pensions for their Revolutionary War services (Blumer 1987; Brown 1966). The situation was somewhat similar during the American Civil War. With most of the Nation's able-bodied men deployed with the Confederate Army, living conditions on the Reservation, as in many rural areas across the South, were even more difficult than before the war. By 1863, the State of South Carolina increased annual funds to the Nation and allowed families with men in Confederate service to draw additional money for dependent family relief (Blumer 1987). During the war period, South Carolina paid Catawba soldiers both an initial enlistment bounty and a monthly wage (Shock 2001)—for what Confederate notes were worth by 1865! After the war, surviving Catawba Confederate veterans and their widows, if not remarried, received “Confederate pensions” after 1888 (Blumer 1987). Thus, for military services as ethnic soldiers in the nineteenth century, which served both internal and external social needs, the Catawbas received money, trade goods, weapons, food supplies, and varying degrees of autonomy or sporadic official recognition and protection.

Despite contemporary accounts that portrayed the nineteenth century Catawbas as wretchedly poor people (Calvin Jones Papers; Clark 1973; Mills 1971 [1826]; Scaife 1930 [1896]), recent archaeological investigations have yielded exceptionally diverse artifact assemblages

indicative of the Catawbas' full integration into the early American market system (see Davis and Riggs this volume). Despite great adversity and many social setbacks throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the socially positive aspects of Catawba militarism coalesced with other factors to preserve the Catawba Nation.

Archaeology of Catawba Militarism

The archaeological manifestations of Catawba militarism are as difficult to assess as our historical understanding of the issue. How might the collective observations discussed here affect the material record on Catawba archaeological sites in the Carolinas? At a macro-scale, Catawba settlement patterns certainly reflect, at least partially, the Catawbas' fortunes at war. In the Coalescent (1716–1759) and Late Colonial (1760–1775) periods (see Davis and Riggs this volume), the Catawba-Iroquois wars reshaped more dispersed seventeenth century settlement patterns as smaller allied and subject tribes moved under the protective umbrella of Catawba militarism. While a complex myriad of factors played into settlement arrangement decisions (e.g., natural/cultural environments, subsistence regimes, trade relationships, and population pressure), early-to-mid-eighteenth century Catawba towns along the lower Catawba River, at least through the late 1760s, either were heavily fortified or incorporated associated fortifications to shelter the local populace from enemy attacks (Figure 1).

In response to intensified inter-tribal warfare, the Catawbas apparently further modified their settlement patterns in mid-1700s to better protect their communities and to enhance their abilities to operate as ethnic soldiers. As James Glen observed, "...the Situation of their Towns makes them stronger than any Indian Nation of double their Number for they are very compact all their Gun Men...can be called together in two hours time" (Merrell 1987:122). Recent documentary study and archaeological survey data suggest that mid-eighteenth century Catawba towns, to which Glen referred, were fortified and well-situated as "hilltop forts," commanding the heights of the Catawba River valley (see Davis and Riggs, Figure 2, this volume).

If such a settlement pattern was beneficial in conflict situations, however, it proved extremely detrimental during disease epidemics. Especially in 1738–1739 and 1758–1759, Catawba diplomats and warriors exposed to smallpox in Charles Town (1738) and on the Fort Duquesne expedition (1758) transmitted the disease to their families at home (see McReynolds this volume). Unfortunately, the concentrated settlements,



Figure 1. Detail from a circa 1730 map, “Road to the Cuttauboos.” Note the bastioned fortifications of “Nasau Town” (Nassaw), the Catawba’s principal town, and the satellite palisaded village inhabited by the Waterees. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC (original in The National Archives, London).

while beneficial for the common defense, proved ruinous when close-quarter living conditions stimulated the rapid spread of disease. During the 1758–1759 epidemic, approximately one-half of the Nation perished in the settlements. While the disease raged, King Hagler and a large Catawba contingent, apparently healthy and resistant, moved down the Catawba River and established two new settlements at Pine Tree Hill, near present day Camden, South Carolina.

By the end of the Seven Year’s War in 1763, the Catawbas returned to their old settlement areas, upriver from Camden, but stability was short-lived. Due to their military support of the Rebel cause during the American Revolution, the Catawbas’ settlement system again completely collapsed in the summer of 1780 when the British army invaded South Carolina. Catawba families, fearful of British reprisal, evacuated first to North Carolina and then to Virginia, reportedly to live among the Algonkian Pamunkeys in the Chesapeake Tidewater. After open hostilities

ended in 1781, most Catawba families returned to the Nation's reservation, but found their homes, crops, and livestock destroyed—the cost of supporting rebellion (Brown 1966; Merrell 1991; Milling 1940; Mills 1972 [1826]; Rountree 1979; Williams 1943).

In terms of material life, various trade records define the nature of “presents” or gifts made to the Catawbas for their colonial military services through 1775. From the late seventeenth century through the Yamasee War period, Virginia traders dominated the Indian trade in the Carolina backcountry. South Carolina traders, however, vigorously pursued trade with the Catawbas and aggressively pushed the Virginians out of South Carolina by cutting “prices” or resorting to physical violence to drive out competitors (McDowell 1991; Merrell 1991). The Catawbas typically obtained diverse goods from the deerskin trade, but colonial officials presented special gifts to warriors when they participated in campaigns and to successive kings and village headmen in return for military alliances. South Carolina officials courted the Catawbas' military support and loyalties well before the Seven Years' War. In an effort to cut the Virginians out of the Carolina trade and to gain more influence with the Catawbas, the South Carolina Commissioners of the Indian Trade ordered in 1718 that exchange rates for trade goods be lowered for the Catawbas (McDowell 1992). Despite the “Disadvantage the Publick may be under, from the Lowness of the Rates and Prices,” it is in the “Interest and Safety of this Government, to prosecute our Trade with those [Catawba] Indians” (McDowell 1992:207). Such actions suggest that the Catawbas' position as a martial force of ethnic soldiers allowed them to perhaps procure more trade goods than less powerful “settlement” tribes in the Low Country region, given the same quantity of deerskins traded. By 1752, however, trade administrators attempted to curb apparent excesses and advised the commander of the trading factory at Fort Congaree: “There is not any Occasion to give the Catawbas any more of the said Presents than in Proportion to what is to be given to the other Indians contiguous to and in Alliance with Carolina and Georgia” (McDowell 1958:201). Although the colonial administration apparently downgraded the Catawbas' special status in 1752, it quickly rebounded with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756. South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor William Bull reportedly presented King Hagler a fine “silver-mounted rifle” and a solid gold gorget for his leadership in the Cherokee expeditions (McCants 1927; Ward 1940).

Perhaps the most concrete way we might assess the material aspects of Catawba militarism is the most obvious—the presence of military related accoutrements on Catawba sites. Presently, the most famous



Figure 2. Engraved silver gorget presented to the Revolutionary War soldier Piney George (Pine Tree George). Note the silversmith incorrectly engraved the name as “Finey George.” Courtesy of the University of North Carolina Press (Jones 1983).

recovered object, although looted from its original burial context, is the silver gorget made for Revolutionary War Captain Pinetree George or “Piney George” (National Park Service 1998) (Figure 2). This object has since been repatriated to the Catawba Indian Nation. Other known Catawba military objects, likely recovered from looted burials, include two War of 1812 period uniform devices (Figure 3). The context of these objects suggests that many military accoutrements were interred as burial goods, but military coat buttons (post-1775) and other more mundane martial accoutrements associated with Catawba militarism likely entered the archaeological record in household contexts.

In special circumstances of major wars, colonial patrons sent sundry presents to the Catawba kings or their headmen to encourage them to fight for the British, but from a material standpoint unique gifts, such as silver gorgets made for war party captains, or King Hagler’s golden gorget and silver-mounted rifle, may not necessarily manifest themselves archaeologically, except in mortuary contexts. In 1815, Calvin Jones met General Scott and Colonel Ayers, Revolutionary War veterans and principal Catawba Nation leaders (Watson 1995), and reported Catawbas, presumably warriors, wearing silver “plates [i.e., gorgets] on the neck with their names on them” (Calvin Jones Papers). Special gifts, such as the gorgets noted by Jones, likely exited the living cultural system as burial goods, especially in the case of deceased warriors, or as raid plunder



Figure 3. Federal-era brass uniform devices, probably headgear badges, looted from a Catawba burial in the 1960s. Courtesy of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology, University of North Carolina.

collected by enemy war parties in the eighteenth century. In other instances, warriors' payments were, archaeologically speaking, highly perishable objects that included food supplies, gunpowder, coats, breeches, shirts, hats, stockings, fabrics, ribbons, and spirits (Fitzpatrick 1931a, 1931b; McDowell 1958, 1969; Saunders 1993a). Accordingly, little evidence of such gifts will survive in the archaeological record. Other payment goods were commonly traded items pulled from trade good stocks in colonial market centers such as Charles Town, Williamsburg, or Brunswick Town.

Given the informal nature of colonial military uniforms on the North American frontier (McMaster 1971), especially outfits worn by *ad hoc* European militia units and ethnic soldiers (Figure 4) before and during the American Revolution, it is highly unlikely that any diagnostic military accoutrements, other than weapons parts and ammunition, will be found on pre-1775 Catawba sites. With the coming of the Revolution, however, Catawba warriors apparently obtained some American military uniform components, such as uniform coats, from the Rebels. While we have no contemporary images of Catawba soldiers, John Trumbull's 1790 sketch of a Creek warrior, Fus-hatchee Miko, is informative. The striking warrior in Figure 5 is generally representative of a southeastern Indian warrior of the early post-colonial era (note the military style uniform coat, gorget, and individually unique headgear of the ethnic soldier). One post-



Figure 4. Mesquakie warrior, circa 1766. Note the traditional summer dress (leggings, moccasins, loincloth), trade musket, and unique adornments of the colonial-era ethnic soldier. Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library (Carver 1781).

Revolutionary War account of an old Catawba veteran mentioned that he rushed off to pull on an “old Greencloth Coat, with gold binding” for an astonished Reservation visitor in 1798 (Merrell 1991:219). Certain South Carolina ranger units wore similarly described uniform coats, green in color, during the war (McMaster 1971).

Other war materials provided to the Catawbas by the colonial governments typically included: guns, gunpowder, ball, shot, gunflints, powder horns, knives, swords and hatchets (Fitzpatrick 1931a, 1931b; McDowell 1958, 1969; Saunders 1993a). Such items, however, were part of the regular trade network and always available in some quantity at some price. Moreover, Eastern Woodlands Indians, at least through the colonial era, rarely preferred the heavy martial muskets used by British or French regulars (Brown 1980; Hamilton 1982, 1987). Through the early 1800s, the Catawbas were generally armed with trade guns, such as long-barreled, small-bore muskets, so-called “trade fusils” (“fuzees”), martial pistols, and over time, musket rifles. Limited documentary evidence (Lumpkin 1981; McCants 1927; Milling 1940; Ward 1940) and the results of recent archaeological investigations at Catawba sites tentatively support these



Figure 5. Creek warrior, Fus-hatchee Miko, sketched by John Trumbull (1790). Note the military issue coat, silver gorget, and unique adornments of the post-colonial-era ethnic soldier. Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library (Trumbull 1905).

observations (Figure 6). Imperial officials provided many weapons and the Catawbas, apparently “armed to the teeth” by the early eighteenth century, obtained other small arms through the deerskin trade network. While expendable war stocks, such as powder, ball, shot, and gunflints, were consumed in the act of war, possible caches of such items, if found archaeologically, may represent hunting stocks rather than war stocks. Thus, the potential material manifestations of Catawba militarism will be ephemeral. With adequate samples, however, we might tease out differences in trade good assemblage richness and diversity between various eighteenth century Catawba towns, or perhaps between contemporaneous Catawba and Cherokee sites.

To What End?

During the interludes between the litany of North American wars from 1670 to 1865, British and Anglo-American officials in Virginia and the Carolinas often neglected the Catawbas’ grievances and living conditions, but when potential attackers loomed on the horizon, the Catawba Nation was invariably called into action. At the zenith of their

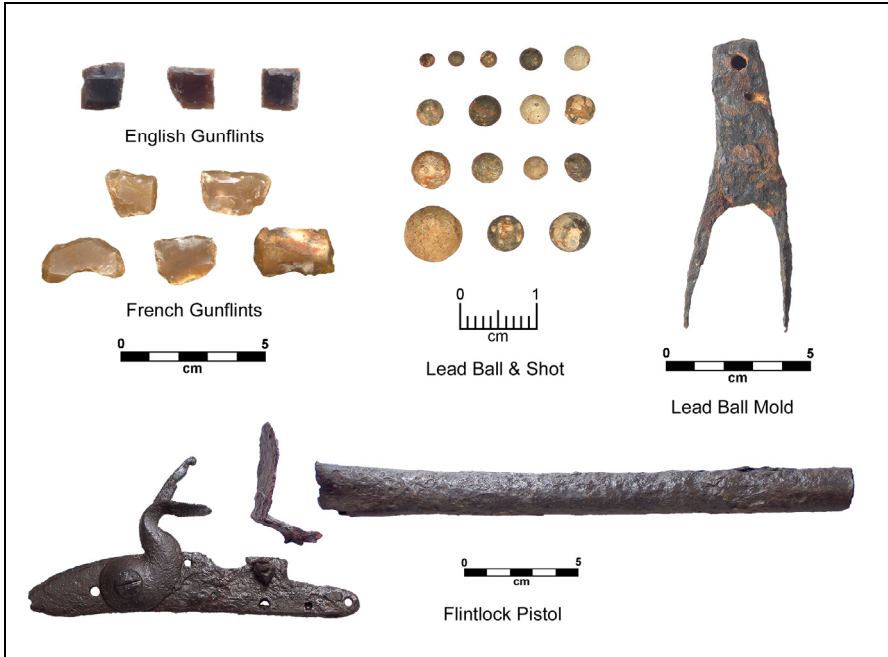


Figure 6. Representative sample of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century artifacts recovered from Catawba houses at the Old Town, New Town, and Bowers sites. Courtesy of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

influence and military power in the 1740s and 1750s, the Catawbas negotiated their world with a degree of autonomy long unknown to the remnants of once populous Indian societies scattered across the Piedmont and Coastal Plain provinces of the Carolinas, but bouts of pestilence and protracted warfare took their toll. With the end of the Seven Years' War, and perpetual fears of Northern Iroquois raids but a memory by the 1770s, Carolina settlers eyed Catawba lands in earnest, and expansionists within the colony conveniently forgot their stalwart allies, as well as promises made under duress of war. Particularly after South Carolina Governor William Lyttleton's administration (1757–1760), white Carolinians had no qualms about settling on, or farming in, Catawba territory despite official restrictions (Hudson 1970; Merrell 1991). Throughout the period of King Hagler's leadership, he was both aggressive and politically perceptive in his overtures toward and manipulations of colonial officials from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (Merrell 1986). Hagler, an astute and eloquent orator, continually sought to enhance the position of his people and his nation by playing the governors of the three colonies off against one another—"when he died much of the glory of the Catawba

Nation died with him” (Ward 1940:2). Problems worsened as the Catawba population continued to dwindle in the late colonial era and the fears of Catawba retribution diminished (Hudson 1970; Merrell 1991). Through time, the Catawbas’ military sacrifices were further ignored, or considered of little consequence, by the very people the Catawbas opted to defend.

As such, the Catawbas’ perpetual loyalty to the Anglo-Americans seemingly gained them little, except higher mortality rates and incremental losses of homeland territory. As conditions continued to deteriorate in the early 1800s, an 1822 petition for a Revolutionary War pension from Peter Harris is especially poignant:

I fought the British for your sake. The British have disappeared nor have I gained by their defeat. I pursue deer for subsistence; the deer are disappearing and I must starve.... The hand which fought the British for your liberty is now open for your relief. In my youth I bled in battle that you might be independent; let not my heart in my old age bleed for the want of your commiseration. [Scaife 1930:16]

Catawba population losses from disease outbreaks and intensive warfare dramatically reduced their martial capabilities by 1776, but despite the precipitous decline, many Catawba warriors served with both North and South Carolina Regiments in the American Revolution. Catawba service in the Rebel army during the American Revolution was, in many ways, the Catawbas’ “finest performance” (Merrell 1991:215) of fighting prowess and loyalty in their perpetual role as ethnic soldiers.

The Catawbas’ Revolutionary War participation and other Antebellum period services, such as policing slaves, continued to protect Catawba sovereignty and 1763 reservation territory until 1840. In 1840, South Carolina “terminated” most state services and the state’s sponsorship of the Catawba Reservation with the signing of the Treaty of Nation Ford. With this treaty, the Catawbas ceded rights to their reservation to the government of South Carolina for a mere pittance (Hudson 1970, 1979; Merrell 1991; Milling 1940; Rountree 1979; Swanton 1979). In 1839, the Catawba Nation’s chief, General Kegg, spoke to state commissioners negotiating the reservation purchase. General Kegg (Scaife 1930:7) rebuked the commissioners and stated, “When they [the Catawbas] were a strong nation and the State weak they came to her support, and now when the State was strong and the Catawbas weak she ought to assist them.” A century later, Catawbas were still echoing such rhetoric to the federal government, but living conditions had changed little to their benefit in later years (United States Senate 1930).

With the loss of the Nation’s homeland, the Cherokees, despite ancient animosities, invited the disenfranchised Catawbas to resettle

among their people in western North Carolina—the beginning of the Catawba Diaspora. Some Catawbas moved to Virginia to live with the Pamunkeys, while a few families managed to stay in North and South Carolina (Hudson 1979; Milling 1940; Speck 1939). Approximately 100 Catawbas moved to the Cherokee Reservation in western North Carolina, but ancient enmities soon surfaced. Friendly relations quickly deteriorated and most of the Catawba contingent moved back to South Carolina in the late 1840s (Hudson 1979; Neely 1979; Watson 1995). Some Catawbas sought refuge among the Chickasaws in Arkansas, but the Chickasaws rejected the overture. The Choctaws in Oklahoma later accepted this group (Covington 1954; Swanton 1979). By 1852, those who chose to return to South Carolina were given a token annual payment and some 650 acres of poor land, a tract administered by the South Carolina government within the bounds of the former 144,000-acre reservation (Hudson 1979; Scaife 1930). Although the details of the governmental compensations, in terms of annual funds, government services, and land rights, fluctuated over time, the Catawbas were never adequately compensated, despite their continued diligent service to the state and the nation in America's wars of the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the astute King Hagler observed in 1755, "the White People spoke much and performed but little" (McDowell 1969:86). For American Indians across the United States, the trend continues.

The archaeologically oriented observations offered here are tentative suggestions regarding how we might perceive and assess the historical influence of Catawba militarism in the archaeological record. As the University of North Carolina's Catawba Project continues to develop, and as new data are collected from a diachronic sample of Catawba sites in the Carolinas, our present understanding of Catawba militarism will certainly evolve. The limited scope of this study lacks the nuances of more detailed syntheses of Catawba history, such as Merrell's (1991) groundbreaking volume. Indeed, the historical overview presented in this article simply lays a foundation for future research. I have incorporated information from a number of primary sources in this study, but have relied upon numerous secondary sources without the benefit of closely studying the obscurely archived documents cited in these sources. As I have only "scratched the surface," perhaps future research in the area of Catawba militarism, fully integrating archaeological, ethnohistorical, and historical data, will provide a more nuanced understanding of this anthropologically important issue.

The Catawbas, as all peoples past and present, typically prefer peace over war, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they lived in the

shatter zone on the violent edge of empire. In such a hazardous and uncertain colonial context, the Catawbas were forced to adapt and resist physical destruction or disappear as a distinctive society. Actively responding to complex external forces, the Catawbas exploited “opportunities” thrust upon them during the struggle for empires by cultivating a militaristic stance and projecting a bellicose attitude toward their enemies *and* their fickle, undependable Anglo-American allies. Unlike many other Indian societies found in the Carolinas at Contact, the Catawbas emerged from the chaos of colonialism to live and thrive in the heart of their traditional homeland. Although many social factors not discussed here, especially the cultural tenacity and indomitable spirit of the Catawba people, contributed to this achievement, Catawba militarism undoubtedly played a significant role in the survival of the Catawba cultural identity we continue to acknowledge today.

Notes

¹ For the notion of a “force in being,” I borrow the theoretical concept of “fleet in being” from naval warfare studies. A fleet in being is a naval force that exerts strategic influence without ever leaving port. If the fleet left port to face an enemy, it could lose in battle and no longer influence enemy actions, but by remaining in port, it serves as a psychological weapon. The enemy is forced to guard against it through the deployment of additional forces or diplomatic action. Thus, the fleet in being, even if numerically inferior to potential enemy forces, exerts power that influences enemy actions (see Holger 1990).

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