Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

This report documents archaeological data recovery investigations by the Research Laboratories of Archaeology (hereafter termed "RLA"), The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, at site 38YK534 in York County, South Carolina. These investigations, along with additional excavations at a nearby archaeological site, 38YK533 or Ashe Ferry, were conducted under contract with Mulkey Engineers & Consultants to provide for mitigation of adverse effects to these archaeological resources by planned South Carolina Department of Transportation replacement of the SC Highway 5 bridges across the Catawba River and Twelve Mile Creek (Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). Both sites had previously been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by reference to Criterion D, which assigns significance to cultural resources that have the quality and capacity to "yield … information important to history or prehistory" (36 CFR Part 60.4). In addition, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, in consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and the Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, determined that mitigation of adverse effects to these National Register-eligible resources by the proposed bridge construction undertaking would consist of recovery and documentation of archaeological evidence to actualize the "information important to history or prehistory" judged to be present within these sites. Within this context, it should be noted that a site's archaeological importance is not simply a *pro forma* combination of contextual integrity and substantive material content, but rather a quality that is gauged by the potential or demonstrated capacity of the site to yield information that is salient and essential within an articulated framework of archaeological inquiry.

Archaeological site 38YK534, also known as the Ayers Town site, was discovered in 2008 during a cultural resources survey within the proposed SC Highway 5 bridge replacement project area by archaeologists working for Legacy Research Associates, Inc. It was located on the north side of SC Highway 5 approximately 880 m west of the Catawba River bridge. Here, Legacy archaeologists delineated a 65 m x 60 m site area as defined by the presence of historic-era Catawba ceramic sherds (indicative of a Federal period component) and lithic artifacts (representing one or more Archaic and possible Woodland period archaeological components). These artifacts were found in shallow, near-surface (probable plowzone) deposits. The 2009 Legacy Research Associates final report notes "38YK534 is recommended as being eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D for its information potential. The ca. 1760–1780 Catawba component at 38YK534 is an example of mid-eighteenth century Catawba occupations similar to those excavated at Nassaw Town (38YK434)…" (Legacy Research Associates 2009:70).

Contemporary documentary evidence intimates the inception of historic-era Catawba Indian occupancy of the west side of the Catawba River in 1781, and it appeared likely at the onset of field investigations by UNC archaeologists that the Catawba archaeological component at 38YK534 did not predate this horizon. By comparison with other late Colonial period, Revolutionary War period, and early Federal period components documented at the nearby sites of Old Town (RLA-SoC 634) and New Town (RLA-SoC 632/635) (Davis and Riggs 2004;

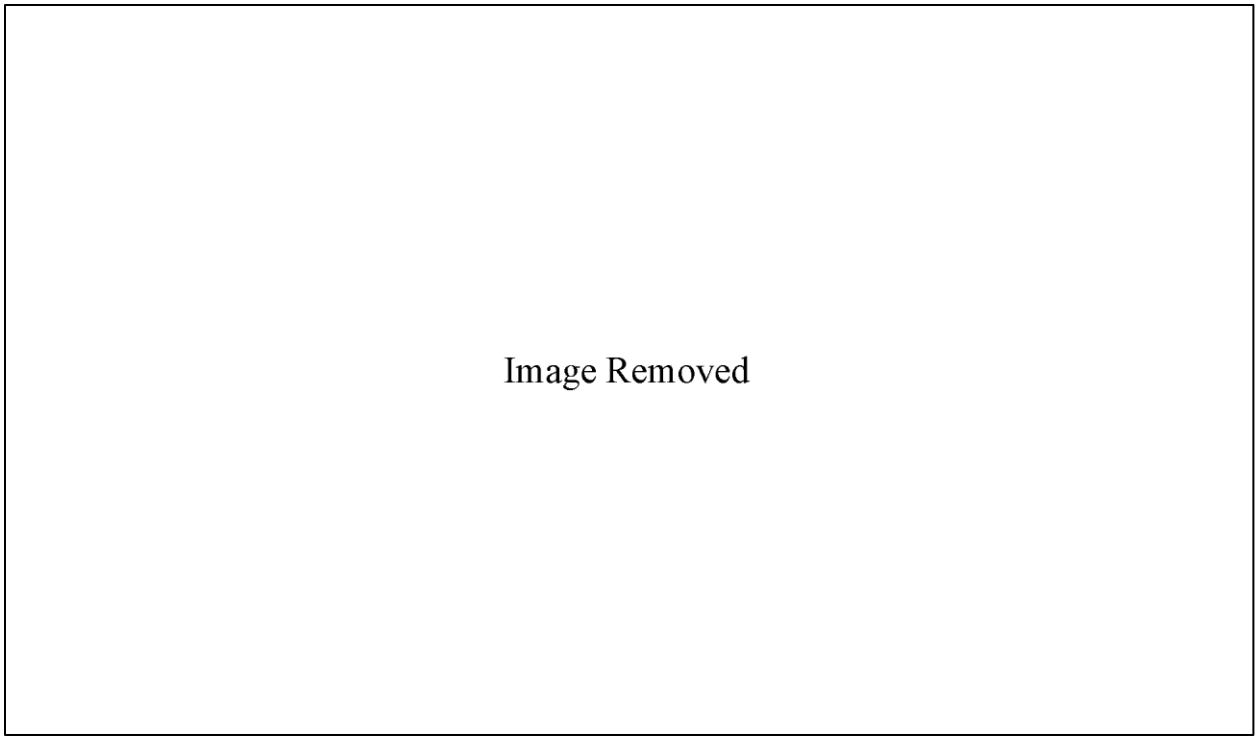

Figure 1.1. Aerial photograph taken March 30, 2004 of the project area, showing the locations of archaeological sites 38YK533 and 38YK534 in relation to SC Highway 5. Note the prehistoric fish weir (38YK535/38LA569) at the shoals in the river just northeast of 38YK533. Photo from Google Earth (© 2012 Orbis, Inc.).

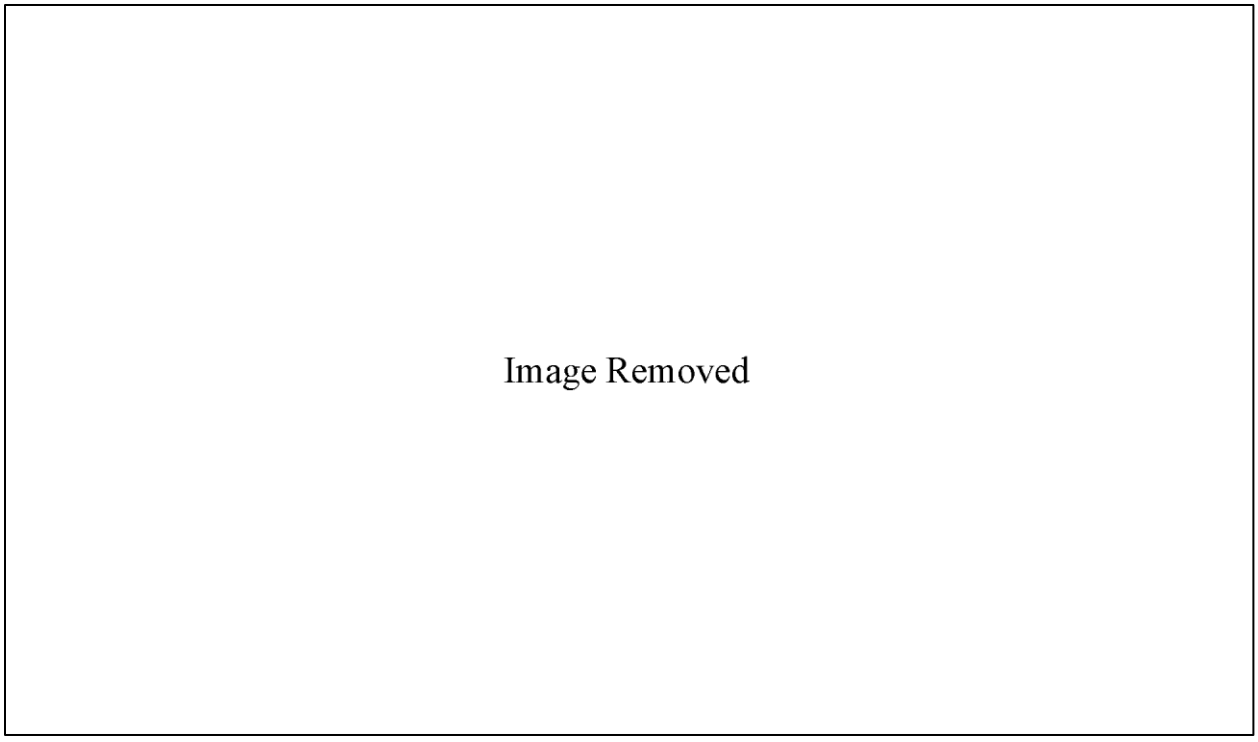

Figure 1.2. Aerial photograph taken March 26, 2012 of the project area, showing the locations of archaeological sites 38YK533 and 38YK534 in relation to new highway and bridge construction along SC Highway 5. Photo from Google Earth (© 2012 Orbis, Inc.).

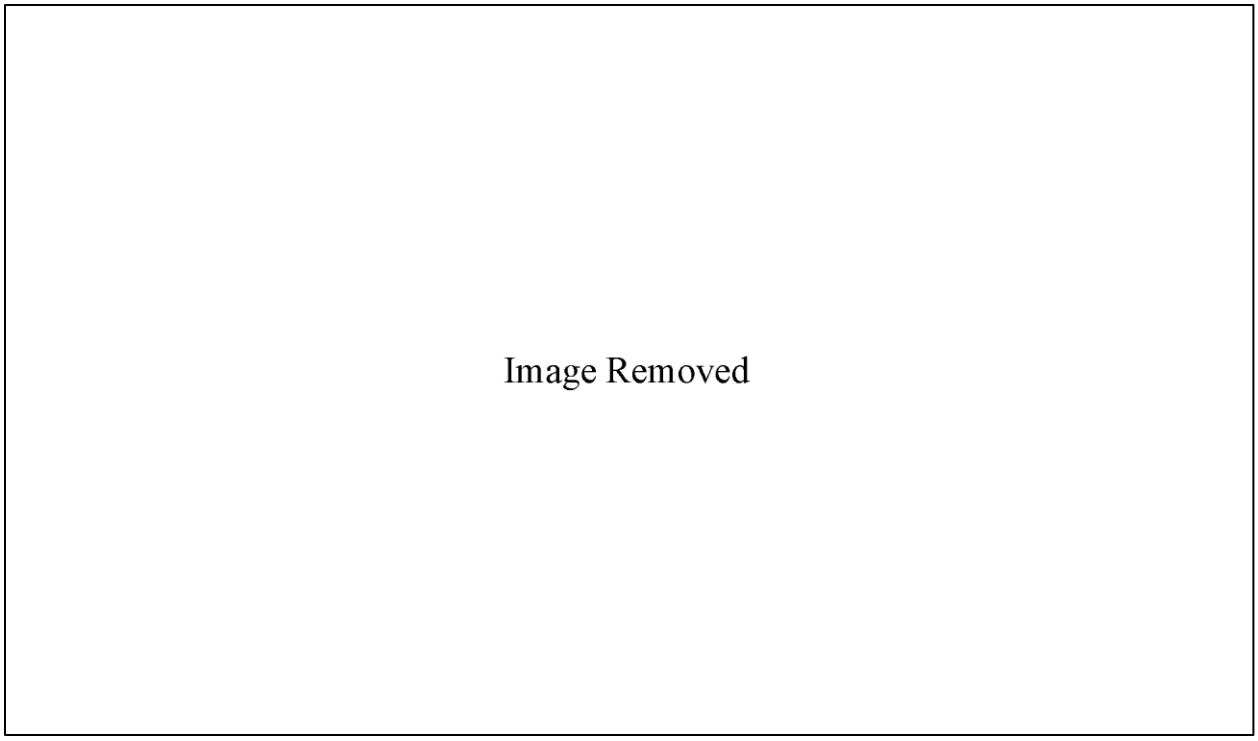

Figure 1.3. Close-up aerial photograph taken March 26, 2012 of archaeological site 38YK534, showing the site boundary, adjacent road construction, and the relocated high-pressure gas pipeline. Photo from Google Earth.

Riggs et al. 2006), the historic-era Catawba Indian component at 38YK534 was deemed most likely the product of an early post-Revolutionary war occupation (c. 1781–1800). As such, it was regarded as most directly comparable to recently documented contexts and assemblages at Old Town, located about 4 km upstream on the east side of the river, and thus constituted a potentially important context for inter-household and intercommunity comparisons of the early Federal period Catawba archaeological record. Such comparisons can shed light on the role of individual households and community segments in the social and economic transformations of Catawba society in the aftermath of the Revolution. During this period, Catawba households gradually abandoned subsistence horticulture in favor of itinerant pottery production and sales, augmented by land lease payments. In addition, comparison of evidence from 38YK534 with data from Old Town could reveal continuing community-scale differences in housing, subsistence, and other material practices that relate to the persistence of pre-1760 ethnic identities within Catawba society. It may be asserted, therefore, that the historic-era Catawba Indian component at 38YK534 assumes particular significance in the context of the RLA's continuing program of research that explores diachronic pattern and change in Catawba society in the post-contact era (Davis and Riggs 2004; Riggs 2010).

Topographic Setting

The Ayers Town site is located in the Piedmont physiographic province at the western edge of the Catawba River valley in southeast York County, South Carolina (Figure 1.4). It is situated along the front edge of a pre-Holocene terrace, about 450 m southwest of the river channel and immediately adjacent to the active T-1 alluvial terrace. The site area, lying nine meters above

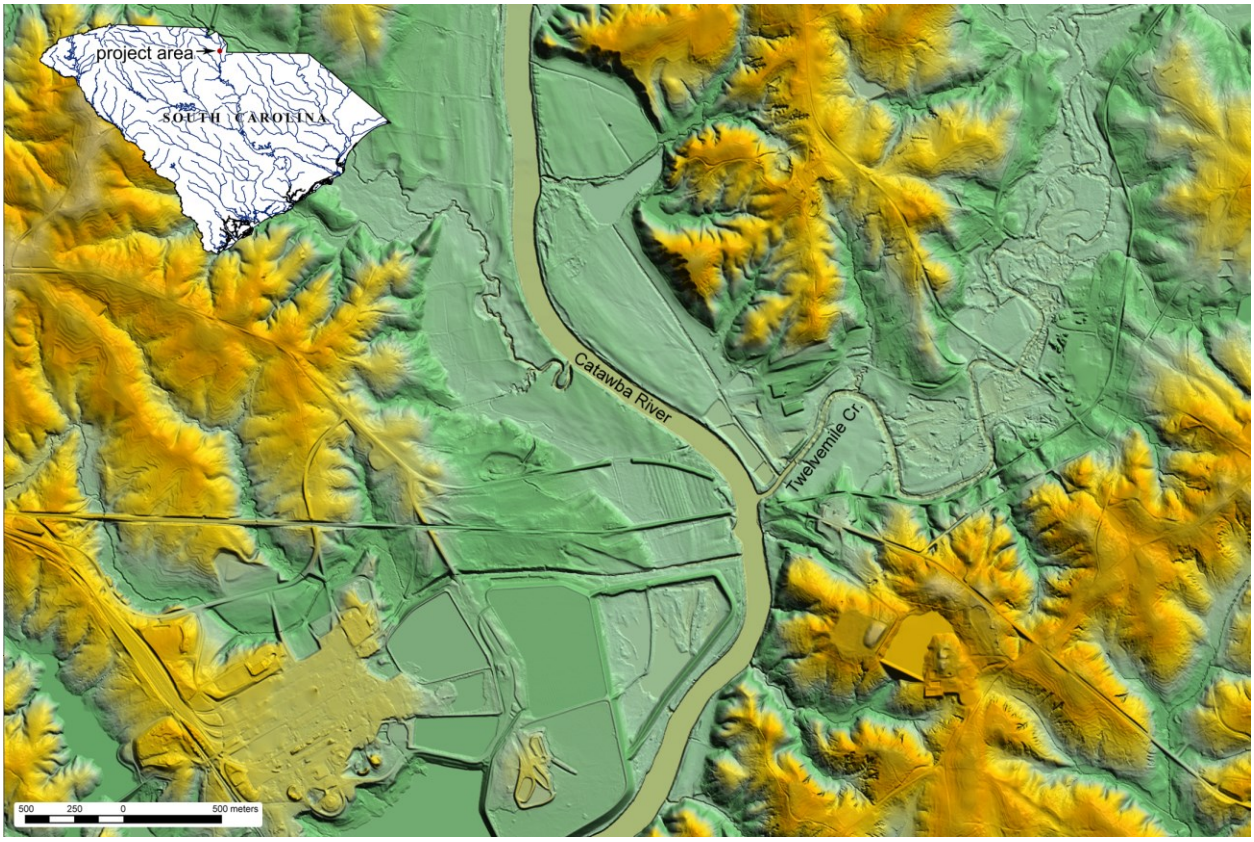

Figure 1.4. LiDAR-based relief map of the Catawba River valley showing the topographic setting of the Ashe Ferry (38YK533) and Ayers Town (38YK534) sites opposite the mouth of Twelvemile Creek. (Site locations removed)

the normal river level and almost four meters above the back edge of the T-1 terrace, is not subject to periodic flooding; however, the site would have been submerged by the July, 1916 flood. During this epic event, a 16.5-m (54 ft) high Southern Railway trestle across Catawba River, located less than two miles (2.8 km) downstream from the site, was floated off its piers by floodwaters (Southern Railway Company 1917:102). Other severe floods along the Catawba River, including those in 1901 and 1912, also may have put the site under water (Atlanta Constitution 1901a, 1912).

The eastern edge of the site is coincident with and defined by the front edge of the pre-Holocene terrace (see Figure 1.4). Along this edge, and extending westward several meters into the site, the subsoil contains a bed of alluvial cobbles that represents a relict stream channel or gravel bar (Figure 1.5). The presence of this cobble bed would have inhibited the excavation by the site's occupants of subsurface pits in this part of the site, and this is borne out by the results of archaeological excavation.

A natural feature also defines the northern edge of the site. Although the modern ground surface slopes gently beyond the northern site edge, this surface is a modern feature created by extensive soil erosion and deposition. Whereas the topsoil is about 30 cm thick at the north edge of the site (i.e., in the vicinity of Features 106–109), 25 m to the north, at Square 912R170, the top of subsoil surface is buried beneath more than 60 cm of redeposited sediments. Fragments of Catawba pottery occur in these sediments from top to bottom, indicating that they were deposited during or after, but not before, the Catawba site occupation. Feature 102, a buried erosional

Figure 1.5. Alluvial cobbles exposed at the base of plowed soil in Square 860R210, located at the eastern edge of the site.

gully exposed by excavations at the northwest edge of the site, provides a perspective on what the land surface may have been like at the time of Ayers Town. The gully formed just west of Feature 109, between two house areas defined by Features 106–108 (Structure Locality 5) and Feature 5 (Structure Locality 7), and became progressively wider and deeper toward the northwest. The deposits within the gully, as well as the overlying, finely lensed sheet wash, contained Catawba potsherds and other artifacts attributable to the Ayers Town occupation. These two stratigraphic units were clearly separate and distinct, suggesting that they were not part of the same depositional process (see description of Feature 102 in Appendix A).

The land surface west of the site originally had a gradual upward slope; however, aerial photographs taken during and after the SC Highway 5 bridge was constructed in 1959 indicate that this area was extensively modified at that time (Figure 1.6). Similarly, the land surface flanking the highway just south of the site and the terrace surface south of the highway were modified by filling (north of the road) or cutting (south of the road). The filling north of the road capped a few archaeological features at the edge of the site with as much as a meter or more of highly compacted soil, while south of the road as much as a meter of soil was removed, eradicating any scattered archaeological features that might have been present there. The elevation of the present land surface south of the highway is almost two meters lower than the surface of the Ayers Town site, and numerous shovel test pits dug as far as 80 m south of the highway failed to yield any artifacts or evidence of undisturbed soils. Fortunately, neither the construction of the highway nor the soil-borrowing activities associated with it appear to have adversely impacted the site, as those disturbances occurred just beyond the archaeologically identified boundaries of the site. The only associated activity that may have disturbed one or

Figure 1.6. Aerial photograph showing the Ayers Town site area in 1959, during construction of the SC Highway 5 bridge and approaches. The site boundary is shown in red; the white areas west and south of the site indicate extensive soil removal. Photo 1959-PL-3W-238; courtesy of Chad Long, South Carolina Department of Transportation. (Site location removed)

more archaeological features was the placement of two high-pressure gas pipelines along the north side of the highway. These pipelines cut across the south edge of the site.

Soils and Site Stratigraphy

The soil at Ayers Town is classified as Wickham sandy loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded (WcB2). Wickham series soils are described as deep, well-drained, moderately permeable soils that developed from alluvium derived from granite, gneiss, schist, and basic rocks. They are common along the older terraces that flank the Catawba valley and would have supported a forest composed of oak, hickory, elm, and gum, and an understory of elders, vines, briers, and native grasses (Camp 1965:34).

The typical profile for Wickham sandy loam, described by Camp (1965:34), is consistent with that observed at Ayers Town and is as follows: "0–7 inches, dark-brown, very friable sandy loam; 7 to 20 inches, reddish-brown, very friable sandy clay loam [with] weak subangular blocky structure; 20 to 35 inches, yellowish-red, friable clay loam [with] subangular blocky structure; 35 to 42 inches, clay mottled with red and yellowish red...; [and] 42 to 46 inches +, sandy clay loam mottled with red, yellowish red, and brownish yellow."

The plow zone, comprising Camp's uppermost soil unit, ranged in depth from about 10 cm (~4 inches) at the east edge of the site to almost 30 cm (~12 inches) at the west edge. It was

capped by a thin layer of humus and consisted of a mixture of topsoil, midden, and plow-disturbed subsoil clay. Excavators generally described the plow zone as a silty or silty clay loam, and it varied in color from dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) to dark brown (7.5YR 3/4) to strong brown (7.5YR 4/6). Except for pits, postholes, and other cultural disturbances that extended below the base of plow zone, all artifacts and other evidence of cultural activity were contained within this zone. As was noted above, the site experienced severe soil erosion sometime following the abandonment of Ayers Town, and much of the eroded soil (and artifacts) was redeposited on the terrace slope flanking the north edge of the site (also see discussion of Feature 102 in Appendix A).

Excavations terminated at the base of plow zone, except where archaeological features intruded subsoil. This subsoil, Camp's second soil unit, was a stiff, friable clay or clay loam that ranged in color from yellowish red (5YR 5/8) to red (2.5YR 4/8) and was also observed in the walls and floors of the deepest excavated archaeological features (e.g., Feature 123, a deep storage pit that extended 58 cm [~23 inches] below the base of plow zone).

The mottled red, yellowish red, and brownish yellow clays that Camp describes for his deepest soil units were not observed directly; however, soils matching this description were consistently observed in the tops of the more than two dozen long, rectangular features interpreted as graves. Similar soils also were observed in the backfill of the two high-pressure gas pipeline trenches that cut across the south edge of the site. The presence of these soils in these contexts suggests that they were originally dug to a depth of almost a meter below the base of plow zone.

As with other eighteenth-century Catawba towns described by travelers and depicted on maps, the adjacent alluvial bottomlands, which provide more than 100 acres of arable land, likely served as agricultural fields for the cultivation of corn and other crops (Davis 1942:553; Williams 1930:236). These bottomlands comprise the first, or T-1, terrace and contain soils of the Chewacla and Congaree series (Camp 1965:17–18). Chewacla silt loam (Ch), which lies at the back edge of the terrace, adjacent to Ayers Town, is more poorly drained than the Congaree fine sandy loam (Cn) which covers most of the terrace. Both soils are characterized as being high in natural fertility and are well suited to corn agriculture. Lady Henrietta Liston (1797), writing about a visit to Ayers Town late in the eighteenth century, noted that "the only cultivation we saw was a small quantity of Indian corn in the vicinity of the Town." It is presumed that this cornfield was on the first terrace adjacent to the town.

Climate

The Ayers Town locality has a humid subtropical climate, with warm, humid summers and mild winters, and average annual precipitation (mostly rainfall) of 46.1 inches (Landers 1974; South Carolina State Climatology Office 2012). Daytime temperatures during midsummer are typically near 90°F; the record high temperature is 106°F. Winter daytime temperatures are usually above 40°F; a record low winter temperature of -4°F is reported. The average growing season between seasonal frosts is 220 days. These present-day conditions probably approximate the climatic regime established after abatement of the Holocene Climate Optimum (ca. 5000 BP), and likely reflect prevalent conditions experienced during sporadic site occupations by Late Archaic and Woodland peoples (ca. 3000 BC–AD 1000). Earlier site occupants, evidenced by the occurrence of artifacts attributable to the late Paleoindian, Early Archaic, and Middle Archaic

periods (ca. 8,500–3000 BC), probably would have experienced a climate that was both cooler and moister with harsher winters (Watts 1980:197).

The historic Catawba occupation of the site is situated within the Little Ice Age climatic episode (ca. AD 1450–1850), a period generally defined by marked cooling and drying trends (Stahle and Cleaveland 1994); however, the degree to which temperatures and rainfall during the latter half of the 1700s varied from those earlier in this episode is not known. Robert Mills (1826:133–134), citing South Carolina historian David Ramsay, notes that between 1731 and 1802, "the difference between our coolest and warmest summers has ranged between 88 and 93, and the difference between our mildest and coolest winters has ranged (on a few particular days) from 50° to 17° of Fahrenheit." These temperature ranges are generally consistent with current trends. Mills (1826:135) also notes that the total rainfall in Charleston for 1802 was 39.1 inches, and that more than half of that total occurred during July, August, and September. Almost no rain was reported for October, January, February, or March.

Biotic Environment

Ayers Town is situated in a historically rich biotic environment, with proximate access to a wide range of riverine and terrestrial resources important to human economies. The site is positioned within the greater Piedmont Level III ecoregion (Omernik 1995), a zone broadly dominated by variations of the oak-hickory community or oak-hickory pine community (Braun 1950; Skeen et al. 1993). Notable terrestrial habitats defined in the north-central South Carolina piedmont include oak-hickory forest, basic (i.e., alkaline) forest, bottomland hardwood forest, cove forest, levee, shoal and stream bar, mesic mixed hardwood, montmorillonite forest, piedmont seepage forest, small stream forest, and upland depression swamp forest (Nelson 1986), as well as piedmont savannah (Barden 1997; Davis et al. 2002; Juras 1997; Schmidt and Barnwell 2002).

Most of these stable/climax habitats are now reduced to vestigial tracts scattered through a mosaic-developed landscape, and the original distribution of these habitats must be inferred by reference to existing local physiography. The Ayers Town locality is within the Carolina Slate Belt Level IV ecoregion of the piedmont, where felsic substrates in the uplands probably dictate a climax Piedmont Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory Forest subtype (Grossman et al. 1998) characterized by a white oak/red oak/mockernut hickory/pignut hickory-dominated canopy with subcanopy species including sourwood, red maple, black gum, dogwood, redbud, and American holly. The understory is often dominated by hillside or dryland blueberry, with climbing vines such as muscadine grape and poison ivy. Herbaceous plants and grasses are sparse but omnipresent. Slightly more mesic settings in ravines or on lower slopes with northerly aspects probably presented mesic mixed hardwood forest, with canopies dominated by white oak, southern red oak, tulip poplar, red maple, and American beech, and understory including dogwood, American holly, and heaths (Nelson 1986).

The sandy alluvial levee along the Catawba River adjacent to Ayers Town probably supported a mixed community with stands of river cane interspersed with sycamore, river birch, box elder, black willow, red maple, tulip poplar, green ash, sweet gum, and elm. The extensive terrace complex adjacent to the site likely hosted a mix of piedmont bottomland forests that included canopy species such as swamp chestnut oak, water oak, willow oak, loblolly pine, sycamore, green ash, box elder, red maple, tulip poplar, sweet gum, elm, red maple, hackberry,

cottonwood, and American holly. Older, more elevated terraces such as the one where Ayers Town is situated probably were covered with either mesic mixed hardwood or mesic oak-hickory forests.

Diverse terrestrial fauna populated habitats surrounding Ayers Town and comprise species typical of the oak-hickory zone of the Southern Temperate Deciduous Forest Biome (Shelford 1963:57). Contemporary mammalian fauna of the north-central piedmont region of South Carolina (Fields 2007) include white-tailed deer, black bear, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, southern flying squirrel, opossum, eastern cottontail rabbit, chipmunks, woodchucks, beaver, muskrat, gray fox, raccoon, long-tailed weasel, mink, river otter, striped skunk, bobcat, and a wide variety of small rodents (e.g., rice rat, harvest mouse, white-footed mouse, woodrat, pine vole), bats (e.g., red bat, hoary bat, big brown bat, evening bat), shrews (southeastern, short-tailed, least), and the eastern mole. Extirpated species include cougar, elk, gray wolf, and possibly bison and red wolf. The zooarchaeological record from Ayers Town (see Chapter 7) documents white-tailed deer, black bear, tree squirrel, gray squirrel, cottontail, raccoon, and opossum as the non-domesticated mammalian species most important to the Ayers Town inhabitants.

The varied habitats of the central piedmont once hosted a profusion of resident and migratory birds. Loomis (1891) reports records of 202 species in nearby Chester County. Recent annual bird counts conducted in York County have documented 126 species present in midwinter, with as many as 80 species present in a single year. Archaeological contexts at Ayers Town provided evidence for wild turkey, mourning dove, mallard, sparrow, eastern blue jay, mimic thrush, pileated woodpecker, and common flicker. Conspicuously absent from Ayers Town and other historic-era Catawba village samples are grassland/edge habitat species such as bobwhite and meadow lark, as well as passenger pigeon, which Lawson (1709) reports in vast abundance in the central piedmont region.

Terrestrial and aquatic habitats along the Catawba River in the vicinity of Ayers Town also abound in reptiles and amphibians, including diverse colubrid (e.g., eastern garter snake, scarlet snake, black racer, corn snake, rat snake, eastern hognose snake, eastern kingsnake, northern water snake, rough green snake, queen snake) and croatalid (i.e., copperhead, timber rattlesnake, pygmy rattlesnake) snakes (Thompson 1982; Wilson 1995). Native lizards include the green anole, eastern fence lizard, six-lined racerunner, coal skink, five-lined skink, southeastern five-lined skink, broadhead skink, mole skink, ground skink, and eastern glass lizard. Turtles common to the area include the box turtle, common snapping turtle, painted turtle, river cooter, slider turtle, eastern mud turtle, common musk turtle, and spiny softshell. Amphipians documented in southern York County include Fowler's toad, eastern spadefoot toad, eastern narrowmouth toad, northern cricket frog, green treefrog, pine woods treefrog, barking treefrog, spring peeper, upland chorus frog, bullfrog, green frog, pickerel frog, and southern leopard frog, along with spotted salamander, marbled, spotted dusky salamander, southern two-lined salamander, three-lined salamander, spring salamander, four-toed salamander, slimy salamander, mud salamander, red salamander, and red-spotted newt. Zooarchaeological samples from Ayers Town provided evidence for frog (Rana sp.), toad (Bufo sp.), eastern box turtle, slider/cooter, eastern mud turtle, and salamander.

The documentary (i.e., Jones 1815; Lawson 1709) and zooarchaeological records indicate that fish were particularly important to human economies in the corridor along the Catawba River. DeWitt (1998) documents 37 native fish species currently resident in the lower Catawba River, including warmouth, bluegill, redbreast sunfish, redear sunfish, green sunfish,

pumpkinseed, black crappie, largemouth bass, brassy jumprock, white sucker, quillback, shorthead redhorse, v-lip redhorse, striped jumprock, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, yellow perch, piedmont darter, tessellated darter, white bass, striped bass, bowfin, longnose gar, mosquitofish, spottail shiner, highfin shiner, greenfin shiner, swallowtail shiner, sandbar shiner, whitefin shiner, eastern silvery minnow, bluehead chub, coastal shiner, white catfish, flat bullhead, snail bullhead, and channel catfish. Mills (1826) also indicates limited runs of anadromous and diadromous fish (e.g., shad, eels) that ascended above the Great Falls of the Catawba prior to major river impoundments. Archaeological contexts at Ayers Town contained the remains of pickerel, Carolina redhorse, redhorse, brassy jumprock, sucker, snail bullhead, bullhead catfish, sunfish, and largemouth bass.

Aquatic habitats near the site also supported molluscan and crustacean fauna useful to the human inhabitants of Ayers Town. Bogan et al. (2008) identify a broad suite of bivalves as having been historically present in the lower Catawba basin, including multiple species of Alasmidonta, Elliptio, Lampsillis, and Villosa. Archaeological contexts in the area have yielded specimens of Elliptio sp.; most of these appear to have been valves used as potters' tools (see Chapters 6 and 7). Crayfish, particularly Cambarus sp. and Procambarus sp. (Eversole and Jones 2004), were also widely available, but no archaeological record of these crustaceans is documented in the area.

History of Site Vicinity

The Ayers Town site lies within the territory claimed by Catawbas at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It also is situated within the original Catawba Nation reservation, measuring 15 miles square, or 144,000 acres, which was established by the Treaty of Pine Tree Hill in 1760 and confirmed by the Treaty of Augusta in 1763. A boundary survey for these reserved lands was completed by Samuel Wyly in early 1764 (Brown 1966:245–246). This reservation was approximately square but rotated about 45 degrees, such that the reservation's corners pointed in the four cardinal directions. The northern boundary now forms part of the border between North Carolina and South Carolina; the southern boundary east of Catawba River followed Line Creek, now known as Twelvemile Creek, while to the west of the river it was marked by a line that ran southwest from the mouth of Twelvemile Creek, just 550 meters south of site 38YK534. This meant that Ayers Town lay at the very edge of the reserved Indian lands (Figure 1.7).

Although the reservation was established to curb encroachment by white squatters on Catawba lands, it was largely ineffective in this regard. Some white settlers, such as Thomas "Kanawha" Spratt who was befriended by the Catawbas, received land grants on the reservation during the years prior to the American Revolution (Merrell 1989:209–210); however, most were not welcome, and Catawba headmen petitioned the South Carolina Council to have them removed (Brown 1966:256). After the Revolution, the Catawba Nation began issuing long-term leases of tribal lands to white settlers in return for annual payments, and this system was formalized by the State of South Carolina in 1785. The state, through its governor William Moultrie, actively encouraged the Catawbas to lease their lands, and three commissioners were named to keep a record of the land transactions, surveyor's plats, and annual lease payments (Pettus 2005:29). Three separate record books were kept by the commissioners during the years between 1785 and 1840, when the leasing system terminated with the Treaty of Nation Ford; unfortunately, only one of these, used by Indian Commissioner Hugh White between 1811 and

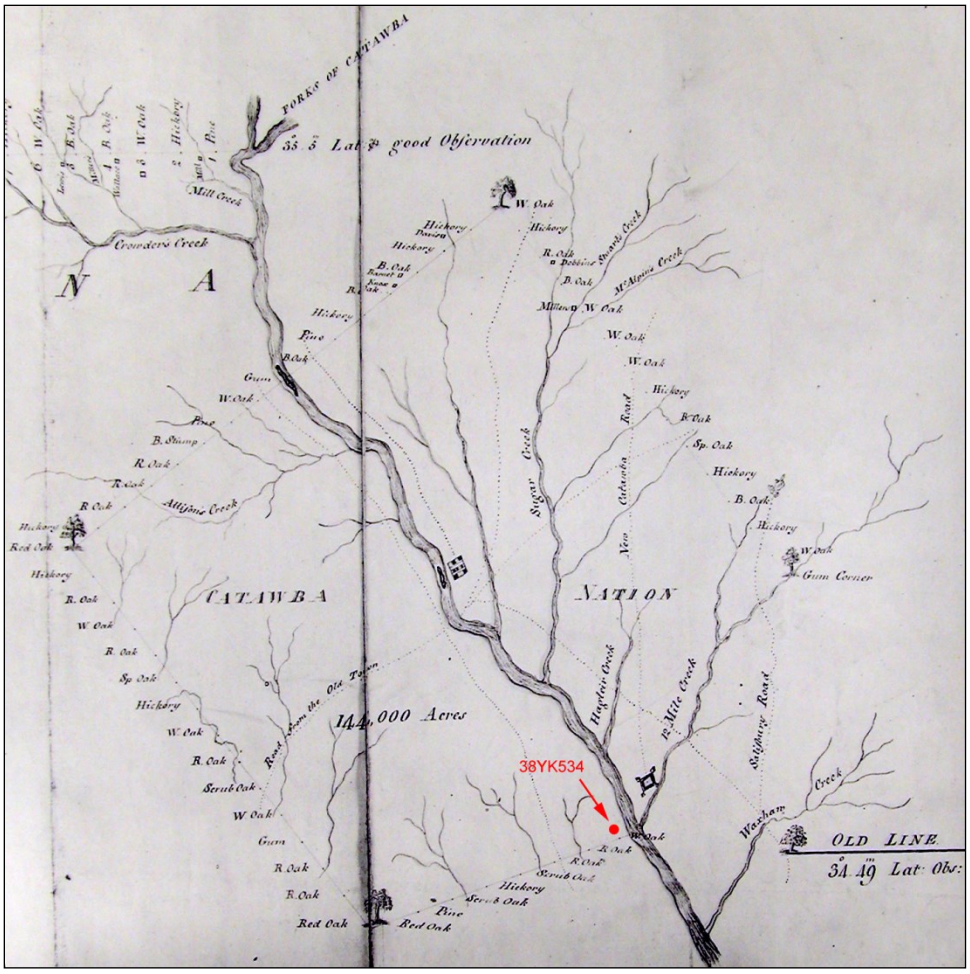

Figure 1.7. 1772 map of the Catawba reservation boundary showing the location of archaeological site 38YK534 (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

about 1840 to record leases and lease payments on the east side of the river, has survived (Pettus 2005:9, 31). Because of this, it is unclear if the Catawbas leased the land in and around Ayers Town until just before the 1840 Treaty of Nation Ford. During her extensive research into the Catawba leasing system, Louise Pettus located numerous individual lease plats in the South Carolina State Archive, but none of these refer to the lands along Catawba River opposite the mouth of Twelvemile Creek (Pettus 2005; personal communication 2012). Given that the occupants of Ayers Town likely continued to use the town site as a cemetery in the years following its abandonment (see Chapter 5), it may not have been leased out for agricultural use; however, the land containing the early nineteenth-century settlement of New Town (see Chapter 2) *was* leased in 1833 to George W. Doby, even though Catawbas reportedly continued to bury their dead there until 1855 (Pettus 2005:89; Speck 1939).

Fords, Ferries, and Bridges

While the Catawbas may not have readily relinquished their lands around Ayers Town, the area near the mouth of Twelvemile Creek remained an important place in regional transportation history. The shoals just above the creek could be forded when the river was low, and the

complex archaeological record of Mississippian, Woodland, and Archaic occupations on both sides of the river (i.e., at archaeological sites 38YK533 and 38LA125) attest to the enduring attraction this locale held for native peoples. A stone fish weir, designated as sites 38YK535 and 38LA569 and situated adjacent to site 38YK533, is still visible at the upstream end of the shoals during periods of low water, and would have mediated river conditions to facilitate the river crossing (see Figure 1.1). A straight alignment of stones immediately upstream from the W-shaped weir may be a built component of the ford.

Two accounts from the eighteenth century indicate a ford crossing of the Catawba River just upstream from the mouth of Twelvemile Creek. The first is by John F. D. Smyth, who in 1772 (Merrell 1989:226) visited the Catawba town located on the dividing ridge between Twelvemile Creek and the Catawba River, and then traveled to Camden. Smyth notes:

> … I left the Catawbas, and set out on a journey to a very distinguished place of trade, in South-Carolina, lately entitled Camden….
>
> We set out from hence in the morning very early, and … crossed the Catawba river, at a ford just above the confluence of a considerable rivulet that falls into it on the north-east side named Twelve Mile creek, leaving the great road or trading path on our right, that leads west towards the Cherokee country, our course being almost due south a little easterly; and during all this morning's ride hitherto, we have still been upon the territory belonging to the Catawba nation.
>
> The Catawba is a large and rapid river, containing an enormous quantity of water: it is about three hundred and fifty yards wide, and, although fordable, is deep, and runs in a rocky channel with great velocity. [Smyth 1784:196–197]

Contemporary maps indicate that Smyth traversed the "New Catawba Road" that linked to the Salisbury–Camden road, passed through the main Catawba Town, and crossed the Catawba River above Twelvemile Creek to pass down the west side of the Catawba-Wateree. The road mentioned by Smyth as heading toward the Cherokee ran along the west side of Catawba River through the reservation and in the nineteenth century was known as the Upper Land's Ford Road (see Figure 1.7). Smyth re-crossed the Wateree by ferry near Camden. The road on the west side of the Wateree continued southward through Amelia Township, Dorchester, and eventually attained Charles Town.

During their retreat from Charlotte in October 1780, Cornwallis' Crown army may have followed a similar route between present-day Fort Mill and Winnsboro. Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton recounted:

> … The royal forces remained two days in an anxious and miserable situation in the [old] Catawba settlement [at Thomas Spratt's plantation], owing to a dangerous fever, which suddenly attacked Earl Cornwallis, and to the want of forage and provisions: When the physicians declared his lordship's health would endure the motion of a waggon, Colonel Lord Rawdon, the second in command, directed the King's troops to cross Sugar creek, where some supplies might be obtained from the country…. A few days afterwards the army passed the Catawba river, near Twelve-mile creek, without difficulty or opposition. [Tarleton 1787:167]

Anderson (2012) suggests that Tarleton may have been referring to "where the British Legion crossed first to secure the opposite embankment" since both Davie (1810, in Robinson 1976:27) and Rawdon (1780, in Saberton 2010:126) indicate that the main army passed through the Waxhaw settlements below Twelvemile Creek and crossed further downriver at Land's Ford. Regardless, the lack of more references to the Twelvemile Creek ford suggests that it was not a major crossing point but could afford passage across the river if needed.

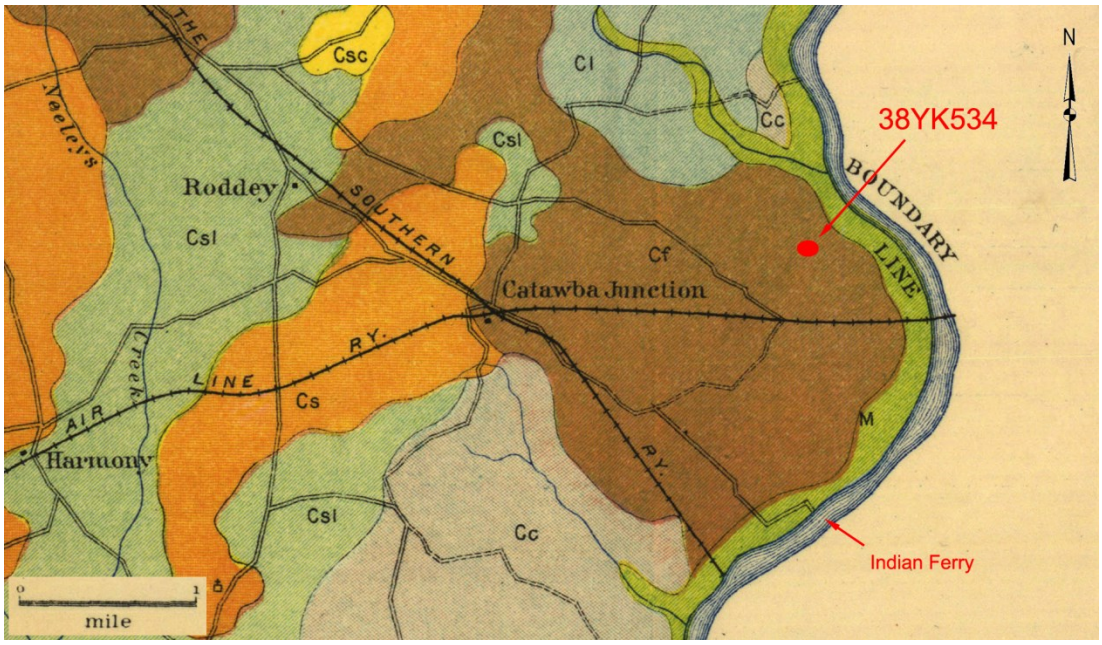

Figure 1.8. Section of the 1905 soil map for York County showing the towns, roads, railroads, and ferry located in the vicinity of the Ayers Town site (38YK534) at the beginning of the twentieth century (USDA 1905).

Following the American Revolution, and coinciding with the period during which Ayers Town was occupied (c. 1781–1800), several ferries were established across Catawba River. One of the earliest was McClenahan's Ferry. In 1795, the State of South Carolina licensed Finney McClenahan to establish a ferry on his plantation along Catawba River, less than two miles below Ayers Town (McCord 1841:362). In 1847, the ferry was re-chartered to Thomas R. Cureton and became known as Cureton's Ferry (State of South Carolina 1873:462) (Figure 1.8). It was re-chartered again in 1881 to James M. Ivy, to be known as Ivy's Ferry (State of South Carolina 1882:547). In the twentieth century, it was operated successively by two Catawba men and generally was referred to as "Indian Ferry." John Brown ran the ferry until his death in 1927, and his son Early Brown continued to operate it until 1935 (Reed 1950, 1959). The ferry remained in operation into the 1940s but had been abandoned by 1956 (US Army 1942; Whelan 1956).

By the early 1840s, another ferry was established immediately above the mouth of Twelvemile Creek, less than 100 meters above the old ford and apparently at the same location where Ashe's Ferry operated during the mid-twentieth century. Following the Treaty of Nation Ford, leaseholders were able to acquire title to their lands by submitting to the South Carolina Secretary of State a survey and a copy of their lease (Pettus 2005:47). Titles to two large tracts of land — one on the east side of the river in Lancaster district, adjoining Twelvemile Creek and encompassing 519 acres, and another containing 430 acres on the west side of the river in York district, immediately above the reservation boundary — were deeded to Benjamin Sykes Massey in this manner. On November 1, 1839, less than a five months before the treaty was signed, Massey leased the tract on the east side, described as being 539 acres on "12 Mile Cr. and Catawba R.," and it is possible that he leased the other tract at the same time (Pettus 2005:94). Plats for both tracts, surveyed in late 1843 by James D. McElwain, show roads running across the properties to a river crossing labeled "Massey Ferry" (Figures 1.9 and 1.10). Interestingly,

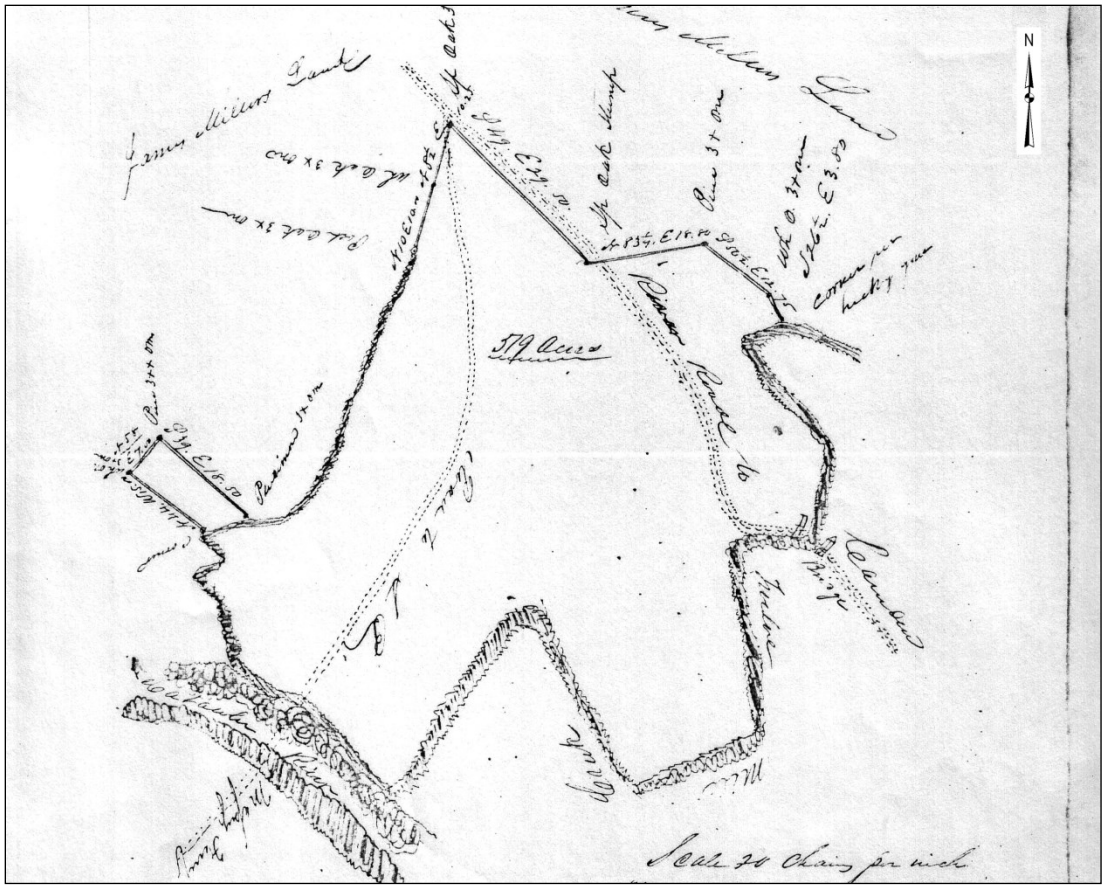

Figure 1.9. 1843 plat for land deeded to Benjamin S. Massey on east side of Catawba River above Twelvemile Creek. Note the road crossing the tract and river crossing labeled "Massey Ferry."

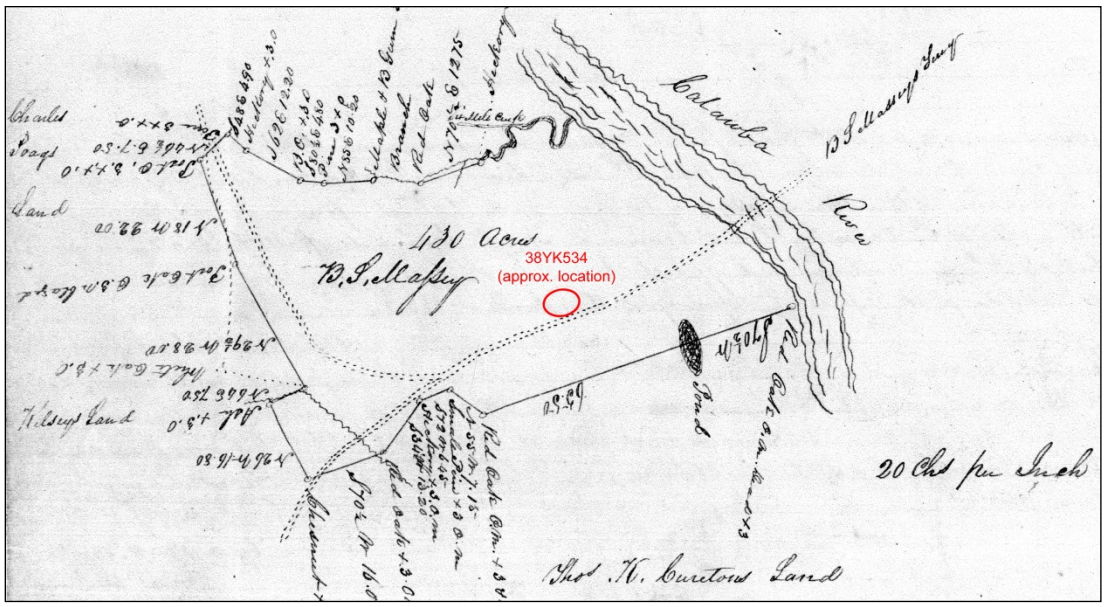

Figure 1.10. 1843 plat for land deeded to Benjamin S. Massey on west side of Catawba River above Twelvemile Creek. Note the road crossing the tract and river crossing labeled "B. S. Massey Ferry." The site of Ayers Town (38YK534) is located on this tract and is shown in red.

this ferry was never authorized by the state, which suggests that it was a private ferry established for Massey's private use and not operated as a public ferry, or that Massey had been able to operate it without a license since it was located within the Catawba Nation. Two arguments against the latter possibility are: (1) it was not licensed in the years after the reservation was terminated by treaty; and (2) another ferry that operated within the Catawba Nation — the Herron and Spratt Ferry, located above Nation Ford near the center of the Catawba reservation — was granted a license to operate in 1813 (McCord 1841:472). A detailed survey of the Catawba River in 1879 does not show a ferry at Twelvemile Creek, indicating that the Massey Ferry was no longer in operation at this date (US Army 1879).

A second ferry was established at this location in the 1920s, and it operated until the completion of the first SC Highway 5 bridge in 1959 (Figure 1.11). The road approaching the ferry landing from the west ran along the southern edge of the Ayers Town site, and both the approach road and the landing are still clearly evident. Remnants of the old road bed along the north side of SC Highway 5 were revealed during the 2010 archaeological investigations at Ayers Town.

News of the soon-to-be completed ferry was announced in the April 26, 1927 issue of *The Yorkville Enquirer*:

> Thanks largely to the enterprise of Mr. W. N. Ashe, there will soon be a new ferry on the Catawba at Catawba Junction which will cut the distance across the river between Van Wyck and Catawba Junction," said Dr. G. W. Hill, veteran physician of Catawba Junction who was a visitor in York last Wednesday. "A site near the Seaboard Bridge crossing the river has been selected by Mr. Ashe for his flat boat and ferry."
>
> Dr. Hill went on to tell: landings have been constructed, the boat has been completed and it is presumed that the new crossing will be ready within a short time now. The new ferry will be the means of elimination of that big hill on the Lancaster side at Cureton's and as I say make a more direct route between the village of Catawba and that of Van Wyck.
>
> The understanding is that Mr. Ashe's principal idea in constructing this new ferry was in order that he might have a more direct connection between his extensive farming interests on both sides of the river; although the general public is to have the benefit of it. And we people down around Catawba Junction feel mighty good over it. [Yorkville Enquirer 1927]

Another account of the ferry's history was provided in 1959 by William Moore, a nephew of W. N. Ashe:

> Ashe operated the Ashe Brick Co. on the Lancaster County side of the river and owned a farm on the York County side. In 1927, he built the ferry and a mile and a half of road leading to it. He was aided by both York and Lancaster counties.
>
> Originally called the Ashe Ferry, the square-looking boat went into operation in 1928. When it wore out it was succeded [sic] by another ferry, and finally by the present craft.
>
> The first ferry was poled across the river. But today's ferry, built in 1942, is motorized.
>
> The original ferry was operated by the Ashes on a private basis. It was taken over by the state in 1942 and became an official link for State Rt. 504. [Rock Hill Evening Herald 1959]

During most of the 1940s and 1950s the ferry was operated by Catawba ferryman Early Brown, who resided in a house on the west bank of the river, "above the reach of high water, yet near enough to hear any motorist who needs ferrying across the river" (Rock Hill Herald 1950); Bigham 1954). W. D. Workman, who visited the ferry in 1953, described its operation as follows:

Figure 1.11. Section of the Monroe, N.C.–S.C. 15-minute series topographic map showing the towns, roads, railroads, and ferries located in the vicinity of the Ashe Ferry (38YK533) and Ayers Town (38YK534) sites in 1941 (US Army 1942). (Site locations removed)

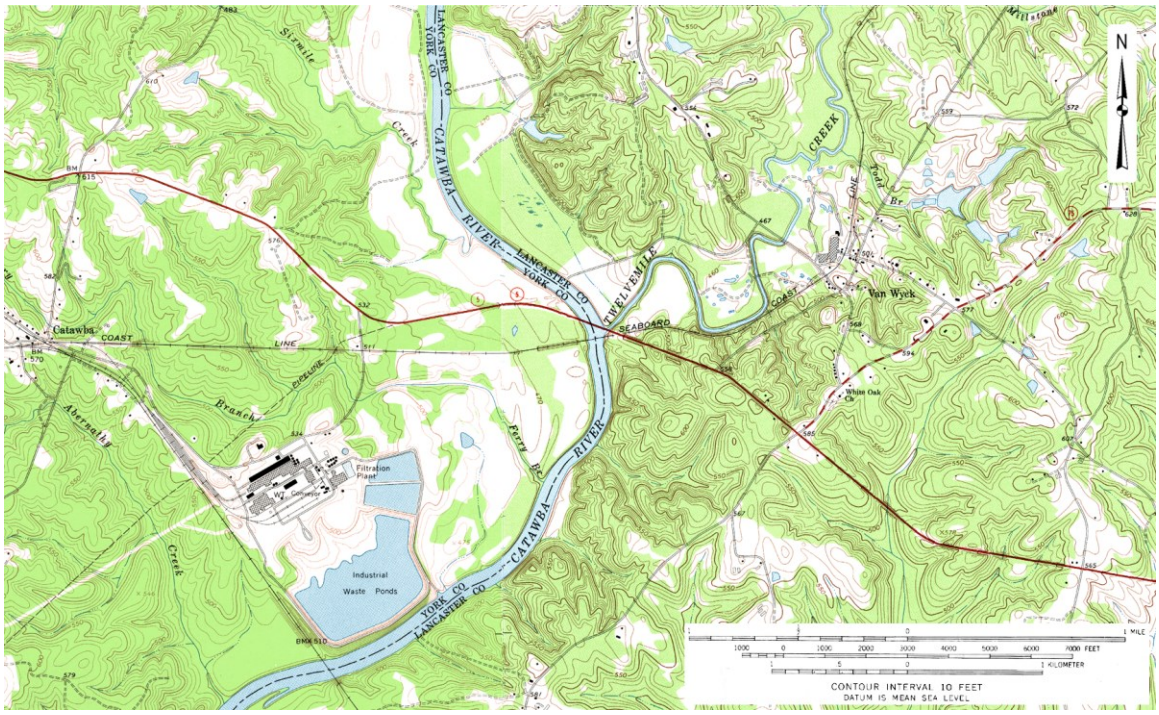

Figure 1.12. Sections of the Catawba, S.C. and Van Wyck, S.C. 7.5-minute series USGS topographic maps showing the towns, roads, and railroads located in the vicinity of the Ashe Ferry (38YK533) and Ayers Town (38YK534) sites in 1968. (Site locations removed)

> The entire scene of the ferry reflects by-gone days, for approaches on both sides of the river are dirt, the ferry is an old flat-bottomed barge, and its motive power comes from the push exerted by the ferryman as he poles the craft across the river. Nowadays, that push comes from a wiry young man named Howard George, who does the job for his grandfather, Early Berley Morgan Brown. Both are Catawba Indians of the tribe which historically has lived on the Catawba River lands on York county. [Workman 1953]

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, local politicians and businessmen pushed to have a highway bridge built that would connect southern York County with northern Lancaster County, providing better access between Rock Hill and both Lancaster and the east–west federal highway (US Highway 74) that ran between Charlotte and Wilmington. The first bridge, which crossed the Catawba River a short distance below the mouth of Sugar Creek, was constructed in 1912 but stood only four years, being washed away by the 1916 flood (Charlotte Observer 2001). Subsequent efforts from the late 1920s through the early 1950s to have a bridge built were unsuccessful due to lack of funds. Finally, in 1956 construction of a two-lane highway bridge using state and federal money was approved (Charleston News and Courier 1956). In part, the decision to finally construct a new bridge was prompted by the announcement of plans by the Bowater Paper Corporation to build a $100 million dollar pulp mill on the banks of Catawba River just outside Catawba (formerly Catawba Junction). The final decision on where to site the bridge was delayed until Bowater's design plans were finalized. Construction of both projects began in 1957, and both were completed in 1959 (Figure 1.12). With completion of the bridge, the old Van Wyck ferry was decommissioned.

Railroads

Two major railroads — Norfolk Southern and CSX — intersect at Catawba, formerly Catawba Junction, located 1.9 miles (3.1 km) west of the Ayers Town site. Both rail lines were established in the late 1880s and served to stimulate local industry as well as provide passenger transportation through the region.

The earlier line was part of the Chester, Greenwood, and Abbeville Railroad, which was chartered in 1885 to provide rail service between Monroe, North Carolina, and Atlanta, Georgia. In 1887, it was reorganized as the Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railroad, which was owned by the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad. The section between Monroe and Catawba Junction, with a stop at Osceola, was completed and in operation by 1888, and an additional stop was added at Van Wyck in 1889 (Lewis 2012). The trestle crossing Catawba River was built just below the mouth of Twelvemile Creek, about 100 meters south of the Ashe Ferry site (38YK533) and about 900 meters southeast of Ayers Town (38YK534). In 1892 the line was completed between Monroe and Atlanta, and this permitted the establishment in 1906 by W. N. Ashe of a brick works at Van Wyck, which operated for about 100 years. The Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railroad merged with the Seaboard Air Line Railway in 1900, and by 1916, it comprised a majority of the main Seaboard line which ran from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Birmingham, Alabama. The Seaboard Air Line Railway was re-organized in 1946 as the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, and in 1967 merged with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to become the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. In 1986 it became part of CSX Transportation, Inc.

Two events were particularly significant in the railroad's history. The first occurred during the early hours of September 9, 1904, when sabotage of the tracks at a bridge just south of the Catawba River trestle led to the wreck of a passenger train of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad.

According to a report by the Associated Press (1904), "The train, consisting of an American car, a mail car, two day coaches and a Pullman sleeper, crashed down an embankment as it cleared the sinking trestle. A light engine and caboose following the train smashed into the debris and plowed through a coach, dealing death to four passengers and injuries to thirty-five others." An investigator "found some spikes and bolts and two angle bars which had been removed from the track with claw bars, and he said he was confident that criminal work had been done. He expressed his belief that someone had disconnected the joints in the lower half of the bridge." The following year, a member of a gang responsible for the sabotage was arrested in Waxhaw and confessed to the crime (Washington Post 1905).

The second event occurred in July, 1916, and was a natural disaster. The Catawba River valley has a long history of significant flooding, and following massive deforestation of the southern Appalachians by the logging industry in the late 1800s and early 1900s, severe flood events became progressively more frequent and severe. This was compounded by the common practice of not removing all cut timber during clearing for reservoir construction along the upper reaches of the river. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, at least four separate floods—in 1901, 1912, 1916, and 1919—caused major disruptions to rail service traversing the valley and destroyed numerous mills and other structures built along the river (Atlanta Constitution 1901a, 1912, 1916, 1919; Southern Railway Company 1917). Some of these, such as the 1901 flood, had dramatic consequences. During this flood, the Cliff Hotel, a newly-constructed but not-yet-operating summer resort on the Carolina and Northwestern Railroad and located along Catawba River near Hickory, was swept off its foundations and washed downstream. According to reports, "Fortunately no one was in the hotel. Today half the building was seen in the river near Chester, 135 miles from Hickory. The Catawba washed away the Southern and Seaboard bridges" (Atlanta Constitution 1901b).

The most epic of these flood events, however, occurred in July, 1916, when two successive tropical cyclones, later determined to be Category 4 hurricanes, dropped unprecedented amounts of rain on the southern Appalachian Mountains and the eastern flank of the Blue Ridge (Southern Railway 1917:7–9). This caused massive flooding along the entire Catawba-Wateree drainage. The main Southern Railway bridge at Belmont, which had been weighted down with loaded boxcars along its dual tracks to prevent it from being floated off the piers, was swept away with the loss of more than a dozen lives. The Lake Wylie dam also was overwhelmed, and all other bridges along the Catawba, including the Seaboard Air Line trestle between Van Wyck and Catawba Junction and the nearby Southern Rail Line trestle, were destroyed (Southern Railway 1917:93). Many passengers were stranded for more than a week, and trains had to be re-routed throughout the Carolinas.

> Bridges of the Southern and Seaboard railroads over the Catawba River having been swept away by floods in the Carolinas, the two roads announced yesterday that all direct train communications from Atlanta to the flood swept area … have been discontinued, and that there is no sign of relief for several days…. Seaboard Air Line trains [which pass through Catawba Junction] are being turned from the main lines at Hamlet, N. C., and sent by Columbia, S. C., from Atlanta. [Atlanta Constitution 1916]

Both the Seaboard Air Line and the Southern Rail Line were equipped in handling these disasters, given their experience with previous floods, and astonishingly, normal rail service was restored in a matter of weeks rather than months.

The other rail line passing through Catawba Junction began as the Charleston, Cincinnati, and Chicago Railroad, also known as the 3-Cs or Triple Cs Line. It was organized in 1886 to

create a rail line from the coal fields in eastern Kentucky to Charleston. The section of the railroad between Rutherfordton and Camden, and passing through Rock Hill, Catawba Junction, and Lancaster, was completed by 1888 (Lewis 2012). Its trestle across Catawba River was built 2.1 miles (3.4 km) below the mouth of Twelvemile Creek and about 1,000 meters below Cureton's Ferry (USDA 1905). Following financial troubles, the railroad was re-incorporated in 1893 as the Ohio River and Charleston Railroad; in 1902 it was re-organized as the South and Western Railroad. As part of this re-organization, the rail system in South Carolina was sold. By 1905 it had been acquired by the Southern Rail Line, later Southern Railway, which eventually merged with Norfolk & Western in 1982 to form Norfolk Southern. The line is labeled on the 1905 soil map of York County as "Southern Ry" (USDA 1905).

The destruction of the Southern Rail Way trestle by the 1916 flood was well documented by the company and illustrates both the magnitude of damage caused by this event and the rapidity by which the washed-out trestles were restored (Southern Railway 1917).

> The Howe truss bridge across the Catawba River, two miles east of Catawba Junction, S. C., was washed away at 9:40 a.m., July 17th. This structure consisted of three spans with a total length of 524 feet, with a trestle approach at the east end 137 feet long and a trestle approach at the west end 200 feet long. The base of the rail was fifty-four feet above the normal water level. The bridge was carried away by being floated off the piers and abutments, carrying the deck and rail, and not even overturning the water barrels used for fire protection. It was broken up on islands and rapids four or five miles below the crossing, and little of the material was recovered. The trestle approaches and about 400 feet of a long forty-foot embankment west of the bridge were also washed out, making the break to be filled by a temporary pile frame bridge 1,333 feet long. [Southern Railway 1917:101–102]

While passenger service was restored two weeks later by ferrying passengers across the river, Southern Railway did not begin the task of bridge replacement until August 7. And, within less than a month, the first train was able to cross a temporary bridge. Ultimately, this structure was replaced by a much longer steel bridge comprised of nine spans resting upon concrete piers (Southern Railway 1917:102).

Ayers Town Property History

Following the Treaty of Nation Ford in 1840, a tract of land encompassing the Ayers Town site and containing 430 acres was platted for Benjamin Sykes Massey by surveyor James D. McElwain (York County Register of Deeds 1843; also see Figure 1.10). This tract ran north from near the old reservation boundary to Sixmile Creek and was bounded (south to north) by tracts deeded to Thomas H. Cureton, Kelsey, Charles Poag, and W. B. Dunlap. Less than a year before the treaty, Massey had leased a 539-acre tract from the Catawba Nation on the opposite of the river; however, there is no surviving evidence that he also leased lands on the west side of the river at that time. This Lancaster County tract also was surveyed by James McElwain on November 16, 1843. It is presumed, but cannot be demonstrated, that Massey was the first owner of the Ayers Town tract following the treaty. Massey maintained his residence in Lancaster County throughout his life, and there is no evidence for residential occupation of the Ayers Town property during his tenure. When Massey died in 1854, his holdings passed to his son, L. H. (Lycurgus Herschel) Massey. L. H. Massey, who lived north of the property near present-day Catawba, South Carolina, held the tract until 1872. Massey fell into bankruptcy as a result of losses suffered during the Civil War and ensuing economic collapse in the South, and in 1872 was forced to liquidate his real estate holdings to pay debts. W. B. Metts, the court

assignee in Massey's bankruptcy, sold 300 acres, including the Ayers Town site, at public auction in 1872 to Massey's niece, C. A. (Charlotte Addie) White and her husband, Dr. W. J. White (York County Register of Deeds 1872).

The Whites held the property until 1909. At that time, C. A. White sold the 300-acre tract to Rock Hill entrepreneurs S. N. Sowell and J. L Sowell (York County Register of Deeds 1909). The Sowells, who operated the Sowell Brick Company, merged that business with William Nelson Ashe's brickmaking companies (the Rock Hill SC Brick Works and the Catawba River Brick Works at Van Wyck) in February 1910 to form The Catawba Press Brick Company (South Carolina Secretary of State 1911:76). The Sowells then sold their private interests in the Ayers Town site property to the Catawba Press Brick Company in 1913 (York County Register of Deeds 1913).

The Catawba Press Brick Company operations were largely limited to a plant at Van Wyck on the east side of the river, and the former White property appears to have remained in agricultural use. When the company went into receivership in 1917, William N. Ashe purchased full ownership of the tract that included the Ayers Town site (York County Register of Deeds 1917). Ashe, whose holdings also included the property on the opposite side of the river, established Ashe Ferry in 1927 to link his properties and facilitate travel to his Ashe Brick Company plant (est. 1906) in nearby Van Wyck.

Upon W. N. Ashe's death in 1932, the Ayers Town site property passed in estate to his sister, Elizabeth Ashe Moore, and devolved into trust with her death in 1966. Operation of Ashe Ferry, whose western approach road passed along the southern edge of the site, continued throughout much of Elizabeth Ashe Moore's tenure. The state of South Carolina assumed operation of Ashe Ferry in 1942, and employed Early Brown, a Catawba Indian ferryman who had once run Cureton Ferry, to manage the crossing on SC State Route 504. Brown resided in a house on the west bank of the river and on the north side of Highway 504, about 500 meters east of Ayers Town. Brown, with assistance from his relatives, continued to operate Ashe Ferry until 1959, when the state constructed SC Highway 5 and a new bridge across the Catawba River that obviated the ferry.

The Ayers Town site tract passed into trust after the deaths of Elizabeth Ashe Moore (d. 1966) and her son, James M. Moore (d. 1975). The heirs, as substitute trustees, deeded the land to the Ashe Brick Company, Inc. in 1985 (York County Register of Deeds 1985), then filed a quitclaim deed on the property in 1987 as Ashe Farms, Inc., following the 1986 sale of Ashe Brick Company to Boral Industries (York County Register of Deeds 1987). Ashe Farms, Inc. sold the Ayers Town site property to Calhoun Newsprint Company (a division of Bowater Incorporated) in 1993 (York County Register of Deeds 1993); the property was retitled to Bowater Incorporated in 1996 (York County Register of Deeds 1996). The South Carolina Department of Transportation acquired right-of-way for the current bridge replacement project from Bowater in 2009, setting the stage for the 2010–2011 archaeological investigations.