Chapter 2
HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

When John Lawson traversed the Carolina piedmont in 1701, he witnessed a region barely known to Europeans, yet already profoundly transformed by the European presence on the continent. The young Englishman found much of the country emptied by "the Small-Pox [which] has destroy'd many thousands of these Natives" (Lawson 1709:10). The survivors were scourged by the well-armed "*Sinnagers* …a Sort of People that range several thousands of Miles, making all Prey they lay their Hands on" (Lawson 1709:47). Lawson encountered a jumble of displaced communities, and observed that "every dozen Miles, you meet with an Indian Town, that is quite different from the others you last parted" (Lawson 1709:225). Many of these were coalescent communities of disparate peoples who banded together for mutual protection from the Iroquois raiders. Only in the lower Catawba River Valley did Lawson witness thriving, seemingly intact native communities organized in multi-settlement polities. Here, Lawson visited the "*Esaw Indians*, a very large Nation containing many thousand People" and passed through a "great many Towns, and Settlements, that belong to the *Sugeree-Indians*" before arriving at the Kadapaus (Lawson 1709:40, 43). Beyond the Kadapaus, the landscape was again depopulated and disordered.

Over the next two decades, Lawson's "powerful Nation of *Esaws*" gave rise to the Catawba Nation. As a safe haven in the chaotic piedmont, the ascendant Catawbas sheltered a multitude of "broken nations" decimated by disease, slaving, and warfare. The Catawbas led this coalition to successfully negotiate the early colonial "shatter zone," to withstand the onslaught of European settlement, and, eventually, to accommodate Anglo-American hegemony.

The first Catawba–European encounters, involving Spanish explorers and conquistadors rather than English explorers and traders, were brief and occurred more than 150 years before John Lawson's epic journey and more than a century before Virginians first made their way down the Great Trading Path from Fort Henry to the Catawba valley. Reconstructions of early Spanish explorations into the Carolinas have placed the native town of Chalaque, visited by Hernando de Soto in 1540, and the towns of Tagaya the Lesser, Gueca, Aracuchi, and Yssa, visited by Juan Pardo during two expeditions between 1566 and 1568, within the lower Catawba drainage and upriver from the sixteenth-century political center of Cofitachequi (Hudson 1990:23–35; Hudson et al. 1984:73). While none of these Catawba valley towns has been identified archaeologically, investigations at the Berry site (31Bk22) near Morganton, North Carolina, have provided convincing evidence that it represents the native town of Joara, where Pardo established and garrisoned a fort — Fort San Juan — in 1567 (Beck et al. 2006; Levy et al. 1990; Moore 2002). The Berry site is located on the headwaters of the Catawba drainage, more than 120 miles (193 km) upriver from Nation Ford where Lawson found the Catawbas; and the cultural-historical relationship of the sixteenth-century Joarans to late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Catawbas is uncertain.

Until the late twentieth century, archaeological interest in the Catawba homeland — the area along Catawba River and its tributaries in York and northern Lancaster counties, South Carolina

— was largely speculative and sporadic. Limited archaeological reconnaissance, beginning in the 1930s, identified important sites such as New Town (Baker 1935) and Spratt's Bottom (Wauchope 1940), and other sites were brought to public attention as a result of soil erosion from flooding and as a consequence of looting by artifact collectors; however, most of these sites were not systematically sampled or documented. While more recent compliance-related surveys, employing professional standards of site discovery and data collection, have added greatly to the overall inventory of archaeological sites in this area, these projects have only rarely contributed directly to our understanding of Catawba archaeology in the historic era (see Green 2007; Legacy Research Associates 2009).

The first systematic attempt to assess the archaeological resources of the Catawba homeland did not occur until the 1970s, when Steven Baker of the University of South Carolina undertook an ambitious study to construct an ethnohistorical overview for guiding future archaeological research on the historic Catawba Nation (Baker 1975). With his research sponsored by Duke Power Company, Baker sought to produce a report that could be used to identify, protect, study, and preserve the fragile Catawba archaeological record of the historic era. In it, he attempted to locate Catawba towns that were depicted on historical maps — particularly the 1756 John Evans map and the 1764 Samuel Wyly map — and also predict the locations of other major eighteenth-century towns. His study was both important and timely given the looming threat of urban expansion in and around Fort Mill and Rock Hill, and along Charlotte's southern margin. Unfortunately, subsequent archaeological research did not keep pace with the region's economic development. In the years following Baker's study, the archaeological resources of York and Lancaster counties became increasingly threatened, and many important sites were destroyed by the construction of golf courses, new homes, and apartment complexes, commercial development, and even the mining of clay to provide bricks for those projects.

Over the past 20 years, two long-term projects have focused on the historic Catawba archaeological record. Beginning in the 1990s, archaeologists with the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, the Schiele Museum, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte collaborated on several field projects, including a survey to identify archaeological resources on the Catawba Reservation, test excavations at various sites, and more extensive excavations at the Spratt's Bottom site (May and Tippitt 2000).

In 2001, staff and students from the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also began a long-term program of archaeological research to understand better the emergence and endurance of the Catawba Nation through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Davis and Riggs 2004). To date, this project has investigated: the mid-eighteenth-century sites of Nassaw, Weyapee, and Charraw Town; the late eighteenth-century sites of Old Town and Ayers Town, the subject of this report; and the early nineteenth-century sites of New Town and Turkeyhead, represented archaeologically as the Bowers site. Limited testing also was undertaken in 2011 at Spratt's Bottom (Table 2.1). These site excavations and surveys have necessitated a re-evaluation of Baker's (1975:114) town location model, particularly as it relates to those Catawba settlements shown on the Evans map.

Several known historic Catawba sites have not been investigated for various reasons. In York County, two mid-eighteenth century sites located above Nation Ford have been identified during surveys by UNC archaeologists. These sites correspond to the locations of Weyane and Sucah depicted on the 1756 John Evans map, but both have been severely disturbed by previous land uses, and their research potential is considered limited. The site of the contemporary town

Table 2.1. Historic Catawba Sites That Have Been Archaeologically Investigated.

Site Name	Site Designation	Dates	Reference(s)
Bowers (Turkeyhead)	38LA483	1800 to 1820s	Davis and Riggs 2004; Edwards 2006
New Town	RLA-SoC 632/635	1790 to 1820	Davis and Riggs 2004; Shebalin 2011; Plane 2012
Ayers Town	38YK534	1781 to 1800	this report
Old Town	RLA-SoC 634	1761 to 1800	Davis and Riggs 2004; Davis et al. n.d.
Nassaw-Weyapee	38YK434	1750 to 1759	Fitts et al. 2007
Charraw Town	38YK17	1750 to 1759	this report
Spratt's Bottom	38YK3	1700 to 1750	May and Tippitt 2000
Belk Farm	31Mk85	late 17th century	Wilson 1983

of Noostee, located nearby, has not yet been identified. These three villages, along with Charraw Town, Weyapee, and Nassaw, comprised the Catawba Nation at the beginning of the French and Indian War. Another small site (38YK435), possibly occupied the same time as those identified by Evans but not shown on his map, was recorded during archaeological surveys in 2007 of the Museum of York County property (Green 2007).

Residential and commercial development in the Fort Mill area also has taken its toll on Catawba heritage resources. The Catawba settlement of Sugar Town, occupied before 1760, is thought to have been destroyed by commercial development of the PTL Club's Heritage USA complex in the 1970s. Other eighteenth-century Catawba sites now destroyed by housing developments have been identified along Sugar Creek and adjacent to Old Nation Ford Road which followed the earlier Catawba Trading Path. Still other historic Catawba sites likely were destroyed by the recent expansion of residential development along Johnnytown Branch.

Two additional, important Catawba sites are located in northern Lancaster County. The first of these is the site of the South Carolina fort and adjacent Catawba town depicted in the 1764 Wyly map. Part of this site has been eradicated by clay mining for the nearby Ashe/Boral brick plant (now defunct); however, archaeological surveys indicate that part of the site may still be intact. Between this site and the Old Town site lie the remains of a second Catawba town, depicted on Henry Mouzon's map of 1775 and burned by British troops during the summer of 1780. The location of this town has not been confirmed through archaeological reconnaissance, but it appears to have been situated in close proximity to the Nisbet Bottoms, an important clay source for Catawba potters since the 1760s.

In this chapter, we explore material and documentary evidence of Catawba history and settlement in the lower Catawba River valley from the late seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries, providing a context for interpreting the archaeological site of Ayers Town. For convenience of discussion, we segment this span into the following temporal blocks that reflect major trends in the Catawbas' historical experience (Early English Contact Period, 1676–1715; Coalescent Period, 1716–1759; Late Colonial Period, 1760–1775; Revolutionary War Period, 1776–1781; and Federal Period, 1782–1820).

Early English Contact Period (1676–1715)

Ethnohistorical Context

Sustained contact by Europeans with native groups in the Catawba River valley began around 1676 with the establishment of regular, direct trade with Virginia. Contacts from Virginia may have slightly preceded the opening of the trade, as John Lederer (1672) claimed to have visited the Usherees (a gloss for the Esaw-Catawba-Sugaree groups) in 1670, and James Needham and Gabriel Arthur passed through Sittaree (another gloss for Sugaree) in 1673 (Wood 1674).

These early travelers hint at the spread of a chaotic "shatter zone" throughout the piedmont region during this period. By 1676, the region became heavily militarized and intergroup conflict appears to have become both chronic and acute, a situation particularly exacerbated by the Occaneechis' collapse as middlemen in the Virginia trade and the emerging trade in Indian slaves sponsored by Virginia and South Carolina (Davis and Ward 2003; Gallay 2003). Population collapse in the piedmont was sparked by the successive waves of Old World diseases from European settlements; losses to epidemics were compounded by losses to increased warfare and large-scale slaving. Northern refugees displaced by the Iroquois wars menaced piedmont groups, who in turn shifted their settlements southward in a domino effect that spread to the Savannah. Seneca raiders turned their attentions to Virginia and the Carolinas as the wars in the Great Lakes drew to a close, and pushed more refugee movements through the piedmont.

The Catawba-Esaw-Sugaree countered the growing chaos in a number of ways. Documentary and archaeological evidence hint at a major contraction of settlement in the lower Catawba Valley, with Catawba-Esaw-Sugaree concentrating their towns in a more defensible position near the Virginia Trading Path. This position provided better access to the Virginia trade, and higher settlement density, together with firearms supplied by the Virginia traders, enabled the Catawba-Esaw-Sugaree to effectively resist Westo and Seneca raiding and other threats. The "Esaughs" also entered into a strategic alliance with South Carolina in 1674 to fight the Westoes, an agreement that may have secured an additional source of crucial firearms for the Catawba-Esaw-Sugaree (Salley 1907:64). This alliance, which remained constant through much of the next century, was key to Catawba survival, and Catawba leadership came to be predicated on management of this relationship. During this early period, South Carolina armed the Catawbas to police Savannah "deserters," fend off attack by French and Spanish allied groups, and to join sponsored expeditions against the Tuscaroras and others.

By the 1690s, the Catawbas were pre-eminent in the Piedmont and began to expand their reach by dabbling in the slave trade. The developing Catawba power bloc also began to draw weaker nations into its orbit, and the Virginians and Carolinians ascribed governance of these groups to the Catawbas. Lawson (1709:30–33) found the Waterees (originally from the northern piedmont) resettled on the lower Catawba; within five years, the Saura had also moved southward to the Pee Dee River to escape Iroquois raids (Byrd 1841:112).

Archaeological Evidence

Archaeological evidence for the Catawba-Esaw-Sugaree during the early English Contact Period is scanty. Limited excavations during the 1960s at Belk Farm (31Mk85) in Mecklenburg

County, North Carolina, identified an English Contact Period component that yielded complicated stamped, cordmarked, plain, and corncob-impressed ceramics along with glass beads, a button, a brass bangle, and a peach pit (Riggs 2010; Wilson 1983). Surveys by UNC archaeologists along Sugar Creek in York County, South Carolina, have located probable Early English Contact period hamlets, communities that may correspond to Lawson's "great many Towns, and Settlements, that belong to the *Sugeree-Indians*." Farther afield, the archaeological records of other seventeenth and early eighteenth-century piedmont groups attest population collapse and the spread of chaotic "shatter zone" conditions (Davis 2002). At Madison Cemetery (31Rk1), Upper Sauratown (31Sk1a), the William Kluttz site (31Sk6), and the Fredricks site (31Or231), dense cemeteries indicate highly accelerated population loss (Davis et al. 2003; Eastman 1999; Ward and Davis 1993). Many of these late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century occupations appear to have been brief, perhaps indicative of heightened settlement mobility.

Coalescent Period (1716–1759)

Ethnohistorical Context

The Early English Contact period terminates with the Yamassee War of 1715, an episode that radically transformed the native Southeast. Native anxiety over Carolina's trading practices and the growing threat of the metastasizing slave trade erupted at Yamassee Pocotaligo Town, and quickly spread among the nations that earlier had aided South Carolina against the Tuscaroras. The Catawbas and their affiliates initially joined the fight against Carolina, but military losses led these combined "northward Indians" to suspend their campaign, and the Catawbas sued for peace through Virginia mediation. In return for resumption of normal relations, Carolina required the Catawba coalition to subdue other "Northwards" and supplied the Catawbas for policing the hostiles. Ironically, the Yamassee War fixed the Catawbas as the authority of the piedmont tribes, and Carolina looked to the Catawbas to regulate a host of peoples (Brown 1966:138–156; Merrell 1989:103).

During the ensuing Coalescent Period, Carolina followed Virginia's lead and vested native political authority with the Catawbas, creating a privileged trading status to cement Catawba alliance. With this European imprimatur, the Catawba nation became a military, political, and economic magnet that drew disparate peoples from across the piedmont and beyond. As illustrated by a Catawba headman's 1721 deerskin map, the Catawba nation (indicated by Nassaw) was the hub that linked Charles Town and Virginia to the Wateries, Wasmisas, Casuies, Nusties, Charras, Youchines, Wiapes, Suttires, Succas, and Saxippaha (Figure 2.1). Other groups that came under the Catawba aegis included Pedees, Enos, Shakoris, Keyauwees, Cape Fears, Congarees, and sporatically, the Saponis. Some of these groups relocated to the Catawbas, while others residing as much as 100 miles away became part of the confederacy that scholars call the "Greater Catawba Nation." As early as 1717, a Shawnee leader noted that the Catawbas included "many Nations under that Name" (Pennsylvania Provincial Council 1852:23). James Adair observed that, in 1743, "their nation consisted of almost 400 warriors, of above twenty different dialects" (Williams 1930:235–236). By gathering and incorporating such allies, the Catawba leadership stanched the continuous attrition by disease and warfare that plagued most southeastern groups. These allied personnel served South Carolina's strategic interests, guarding the colony's northern flank against incursions from French allied natives, and

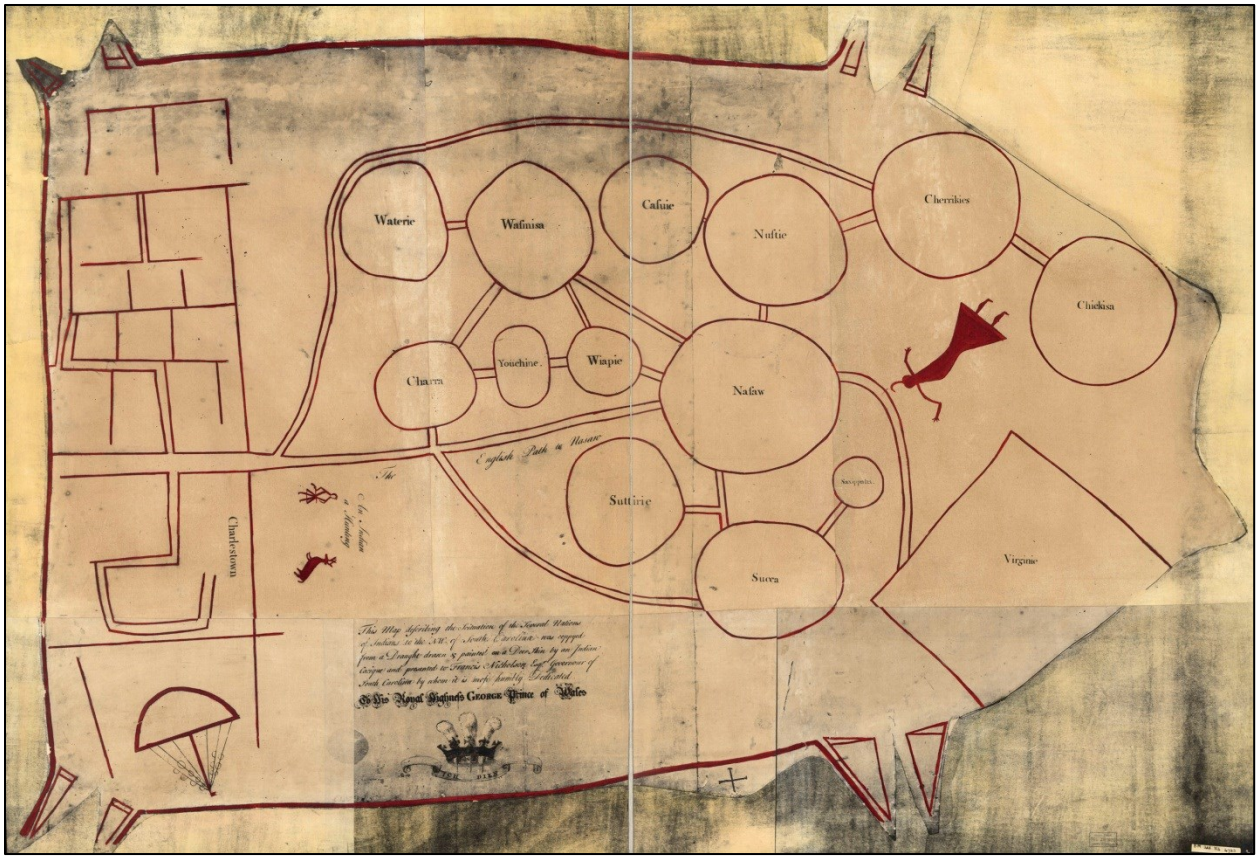

Figure 2.1. Deerskin map presented to South Carolina Governor Francis Nicholson by a Catawba headman in 1721 (see Waselkov 1989:297).

forming "an excellent barrier to this Province" (Merrell 1989:144). This guardian role guaranteed both targeted trade and diplomatic gifts that brought crucial goods to the nation — particularly essential firearms and ammunition. The alliance with Carolina enabled the Catawba Nation to build and maintain its military potency; by 1750, the nation prosecuted simultaneous wars against at least 11 other native nations. Conflict with the northern Iroquois was especially ferocious during this period.

The influx of Ulster Scots settlers into traditional Catawba territory around 1750 opened a new frontier of interaction and conflict. These emigrants flooded down the Great Wagon Road, establishing farmsteads and communities within 30 miles of the Catawba towns. Catawba leaders leveraged their strategic alliance with South Carolina to regulate these new Europeans, even obtaining payments to offset intrusions upon Catawba hunting grounds and losses of Catawba horses to Scots thieves. Nevertheless, Catawba relationships with these troublesome neighbors remained uneasy and tenuous throughout the decade.

Hostilities with the northern tribes accelerated in 1753, and by the outbreak of the Seven Years War, Catawba warriors were constantly afield on the behalf of South Carolina and Virginia. During this era, the colonies were desperate for allies to stem the Shawnee raids on their back settlements, and outfitted the Catawba war parties as never before. When crop failures and famine struck during the conflict, South Carolina provided cattle and corn to the Catawba towns. Although Catawba warriors were able to parlay their roles as "ethnic soldiers" into

relative economic success for their communities, their participation in the war came at a terrible price. Catawba men returning from the Quebec campaign in the fall of 1759 brought smallpox into the nation. Over the next few months, "the smallpox …raged with great violence among the Catawba Indians, and … carried off near one half of that nation" (Brown 1966:181). The survivors of the epidemic fled their towns and regrouped under English protection at present-day Camden, South Carolina. Yet even in this broken condition, Catawba warriors, who sensed a new degree of dependence upon the English, sent warriors on British expeditions against the Cherokees.

Archaeological Evidence

Coalescent Period occupations are well documented near the Catawba River around Fort Mill, South Carolina. Archaeological surveys along the route of the Trading Path have identified outlying village sites in upland settings, marked by diverse arrays of ceramics and abundant period trade goods. These sites, miles from the Catawba core at Nation Ford, may represent the influx of new communities into the area after the Yamassee War.

The most conspicuous archaeological site in the Fort Mill vicinity is Spratt's Bottom (38YK3), situated on an elevated alluvial terrace just upriver from Nation Ford (Figure 2.2). This large, multi-component site was the focus of excavations by avocational archaeologists in the 1970s (Archie and Archie 1977) and was scientifically investigated between 1991 and 1993 by archaeologists and students from the Schiele Museum, UNC-Charlotte, and the Catawba Cultural Center, who identified evidence of an historic Catawba settlement, as well as earlier Mississippian, Woodland, and Archaic cultural components (May and Tippitt 2000). Ceramic artifacts and European trade artifacts, particularly glass beads and kaolin pipe fragments, indicate that the historic Catawba component likely dates to the first half of the eighteenth century, and may predate the towns shown on the Evans map by less than a decade. The Evans map does not locate a town at Spratt's Bottom, even though towns are shown both above and below the bottoms, and this indicates strongly that the settlement represented by the Spratt's Bottom site had been abandoned by 1756. It is possible that the site represents the community of Nasaw shown on the 1721 deerskin map.

Archaeological surveys have also identified the mid-eighteenth century sites of Charraw Town, Weyane, Sucah, Nassaw, and Weyapee depicted on the 1756 Evans map (Figure 2.3). These towns are all located within a two-mile radius; Evans attributed the Catawbas' potency to their ability to assemble their full force within two hours. The upland village sites occupy relatively small areas, with dense, compact distributions indicative of nucleated settlements. Evans' map depicts such close-ordered towns; a 1757 account refers to Charraw as a palisaded "round town" (Richardson 1758). These town configurations reflect the acute defensive posture of the Catawba nation during this violent era.

Nassaw and Weyapee (c. 1750–1759). Nassaw and Weyapee are paired towns whose histories are linked from at least the early 1720s until 1759. They are depicted on the 1721 deerskin map (Waselkov 1989:297), and they also are shown together on the Evans map, which places their collective warrior strength at 50 men (Merrell 1989:163) (Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3). The inhabitants of Nassaw likely derive from the Esaw tribe referenced by John Lawson in 1701 and shown on the earliest maps of the Catawba valley. Both towns were abandoned in the wake

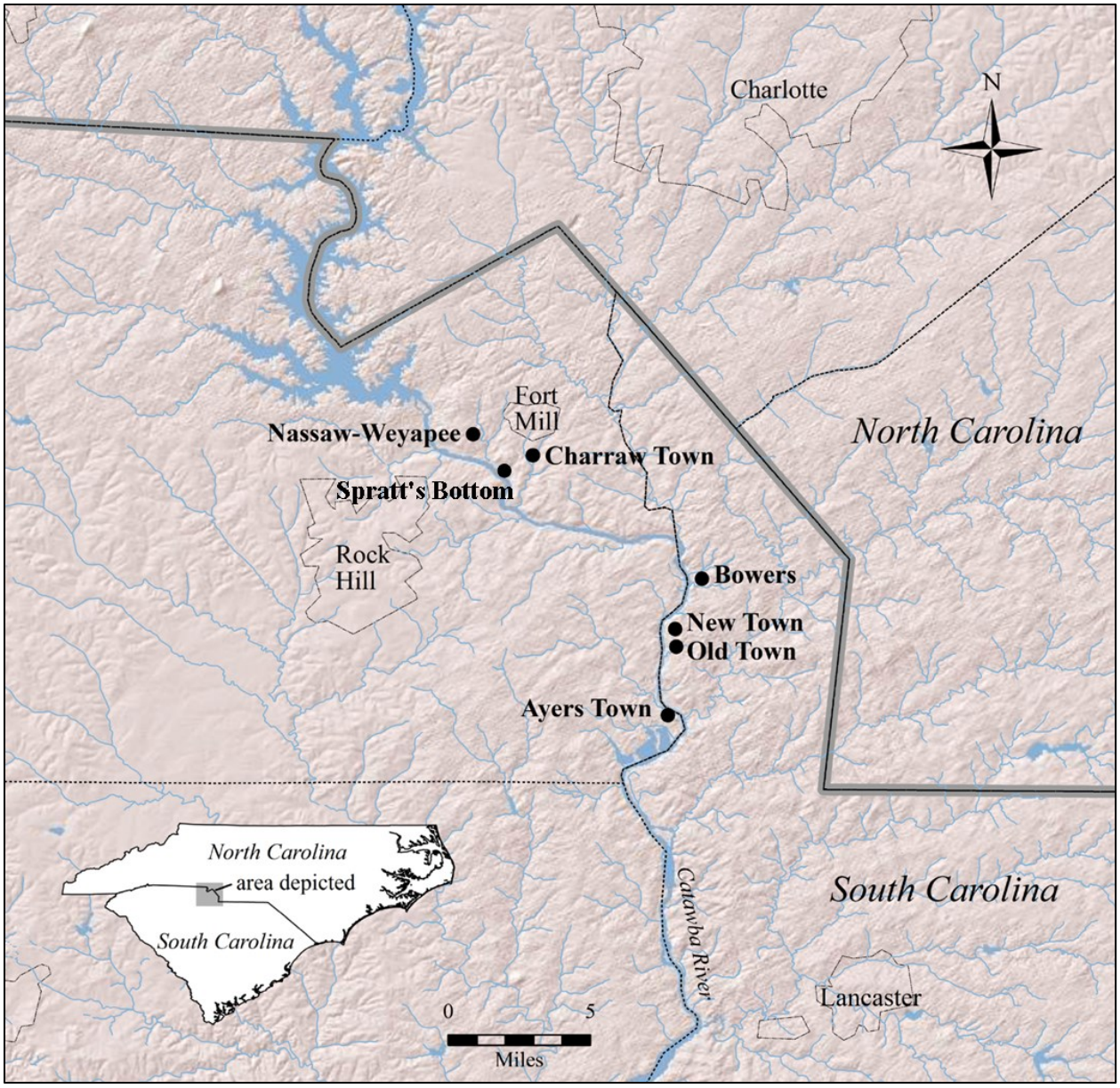

Figure 2.2. Map of the Catawba project area showing eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catawba sites that have been investigated through archaeological excavation.

of the 1759 smallpox epidemic, during which up to two-thirds of the towns' inhabitants may have perished (McReynolds 2004).

The archaeological site of Nassaw-Weyapee (38YK434)—the communities depicted on Evans' map—was discovered in 2005 along an upland ridge on the east side of Catawba River near Fort Mill, South Carolina. It was surveyed in 2007 and excavated by the UNC field school in 2007 and 2008 (Fitts et al. 2007). The site lies on property that was donated to York County and was the location of a planned mixed-use development called Kanawha involving Cherokee LLC, the county, and the Museum of York County. Annette Snapp, an archaeologist with the museum, had identified two potential eighteenth-century sites along a transmission line right-of-way within the proposed project area, and Cherokee LLC contracted with UNC to determine the

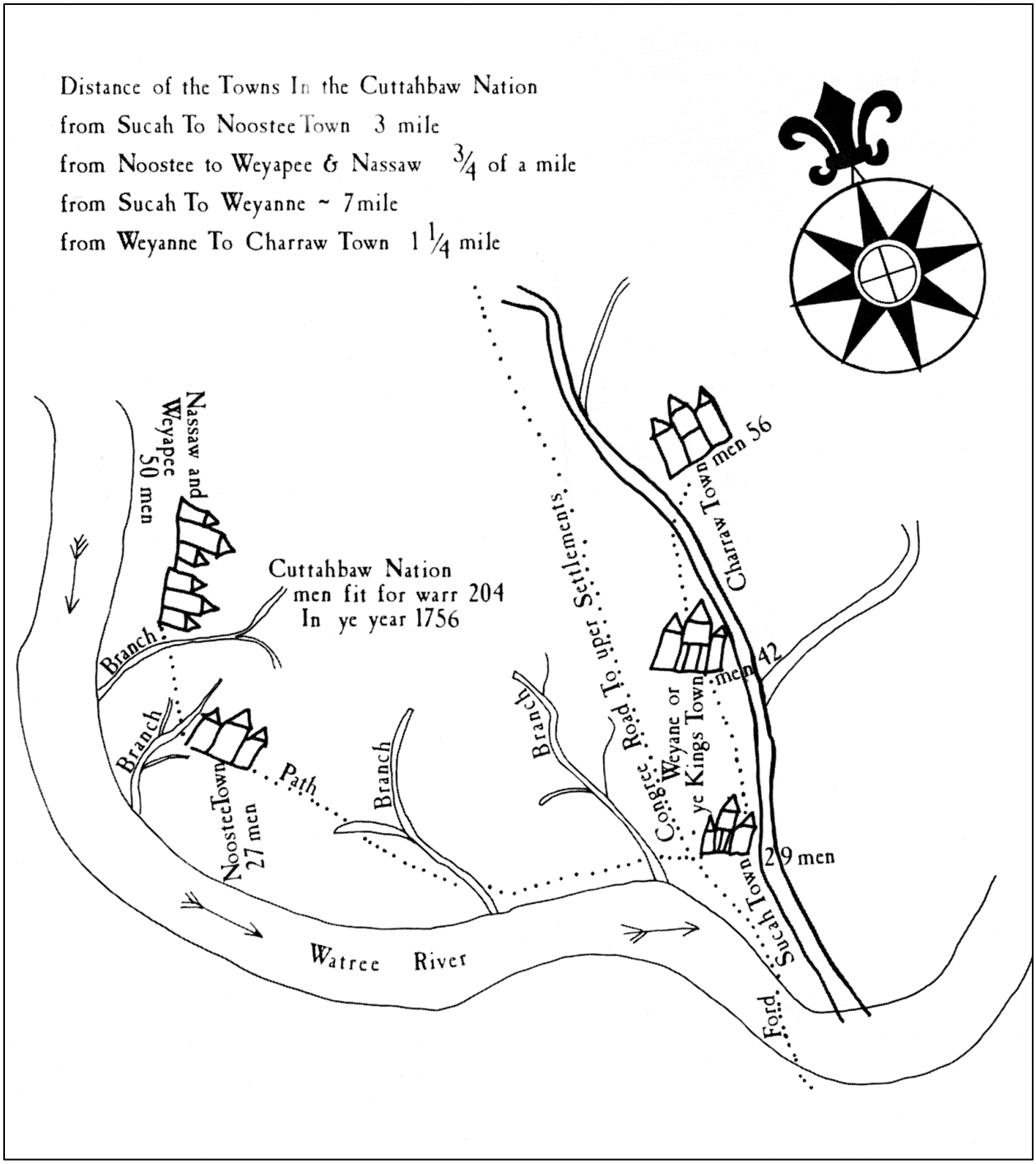

Figure 2.3. Map drawn by John Evans in 1756, depicting the Catawba Towns at Nation Ford (from Merrell 1989:163).

extent and significance of those sites. The remainder of the approximately 400-acre project area was surveyed by archaeologists with S&ME, Inc. (Green 2007).

Systematic metal detector survey at one of these sites, 38YK434, recovered almost 2,000 mid-eighteenth-century brass, iron, lead, glass, and ceramic artifacts within two spatial clusters

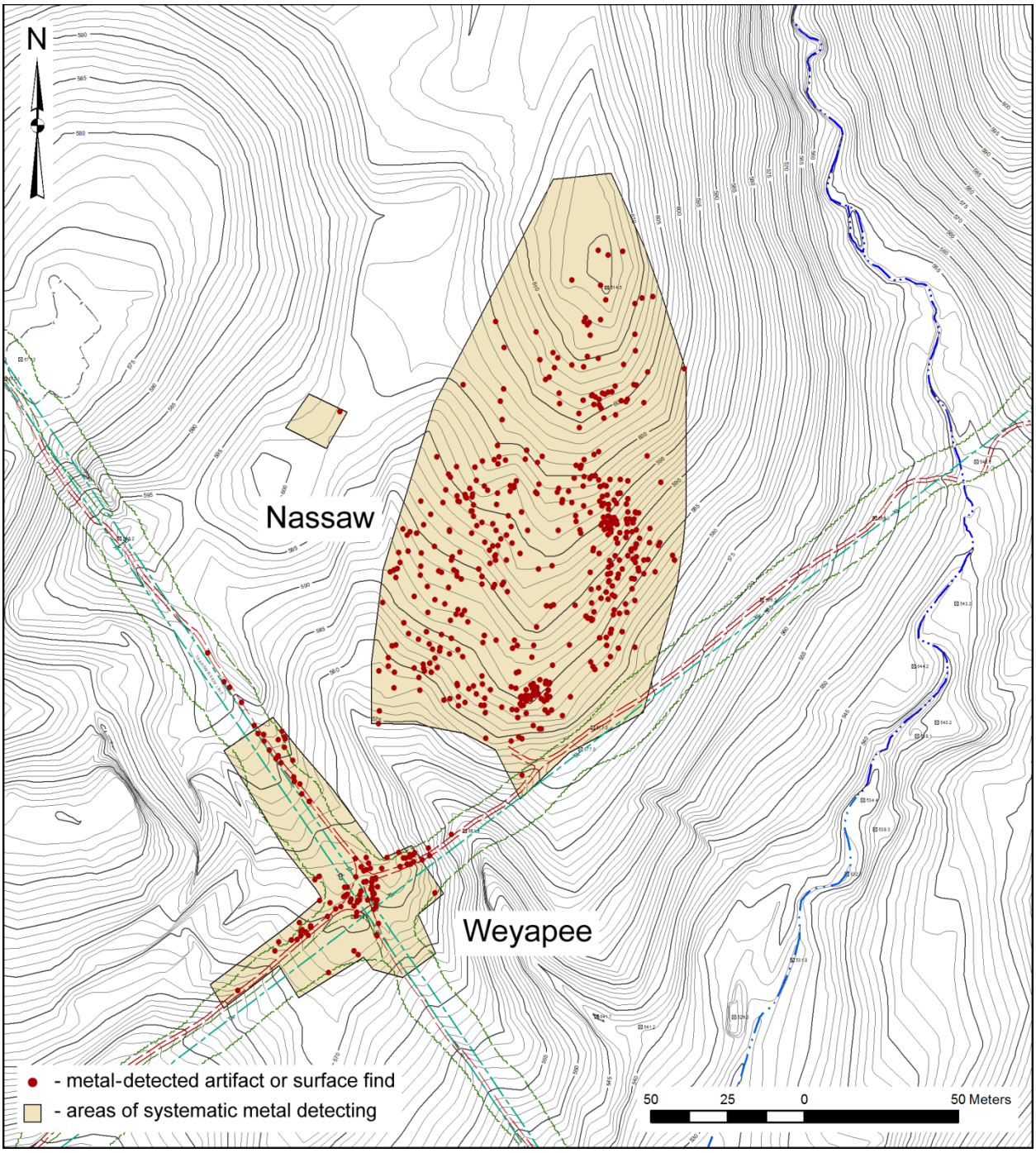

Figure 2.4. Map of Nassaw-Weyapee, showing areas of metal detector survey and piece-plot locations of mid-eighteenth century artifacts. Contour interval = 1 ft.

separated by a small drainage, and also identified several pit features (Figure 2.4). The southern artifact cluster, lying within the heavily eroded transmission line corridor, represents a small settlement covering about 0.3 hectares and has been interpreted as the probable location of Weyapee. Excavation of 11 one-meter units and flatshoveling of the eroded ground surface revealed a corncob-filled smudge pit and a cluster of five storage pits likely representing a single

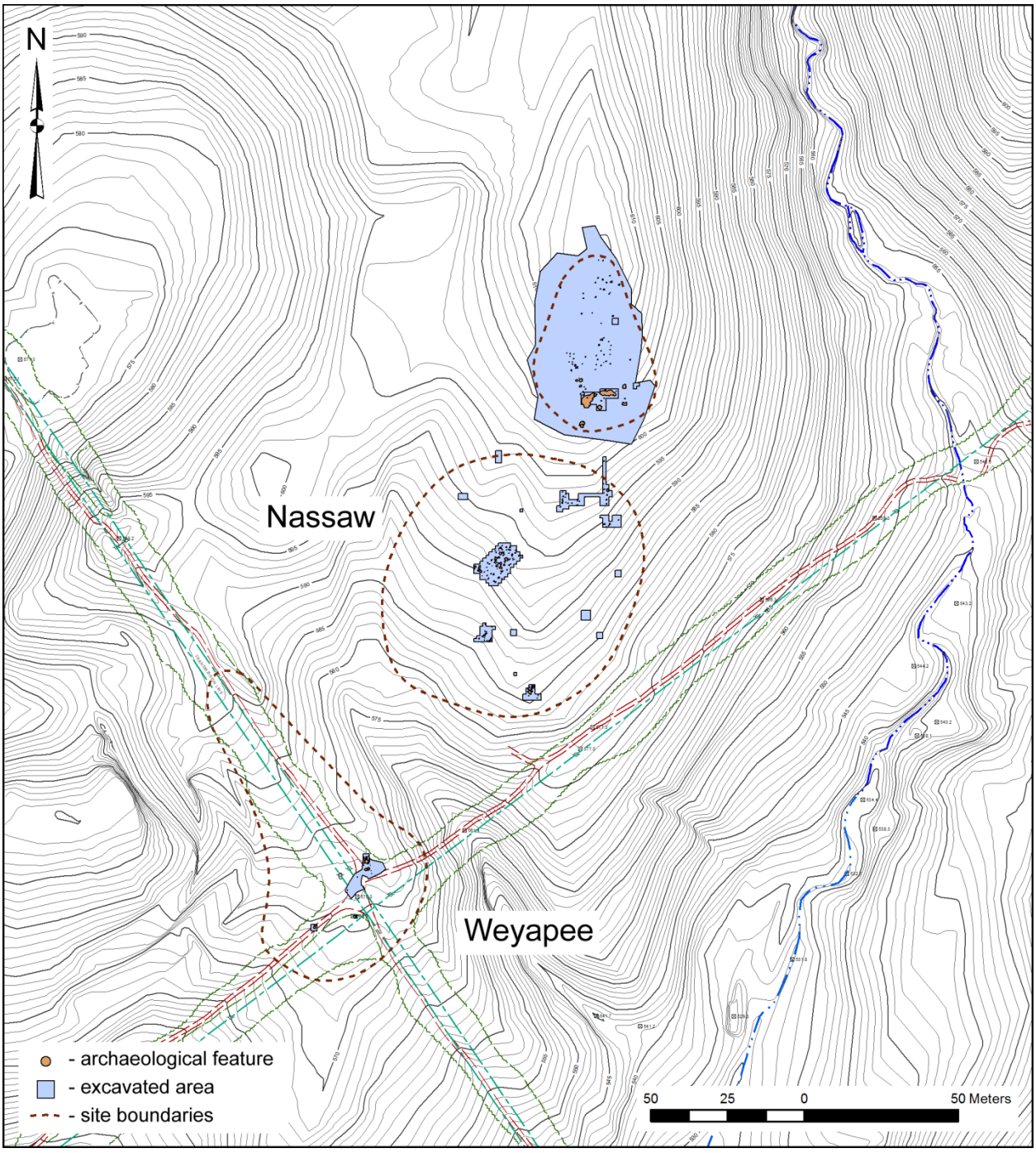

Figure 2.5. Map of Nassaw-Weyapee showing site boundaries as defined by metal detecting and areas excavated by hand and mechanically stripped in 2007 and 2008.

house (Figure 2.5). One of these pits contained an iron dirk, or short sword, and all contained fragments of broken complicated-stamped pottery vessels.

To the north of the drainage, a far greater number of artifacts were identified within a large oval area covering about 0.7 hectares. This is interpreted as the archaeological remains of Nassaw. The tight distribution of artifacts here and descriptions of other Catawba towns of the

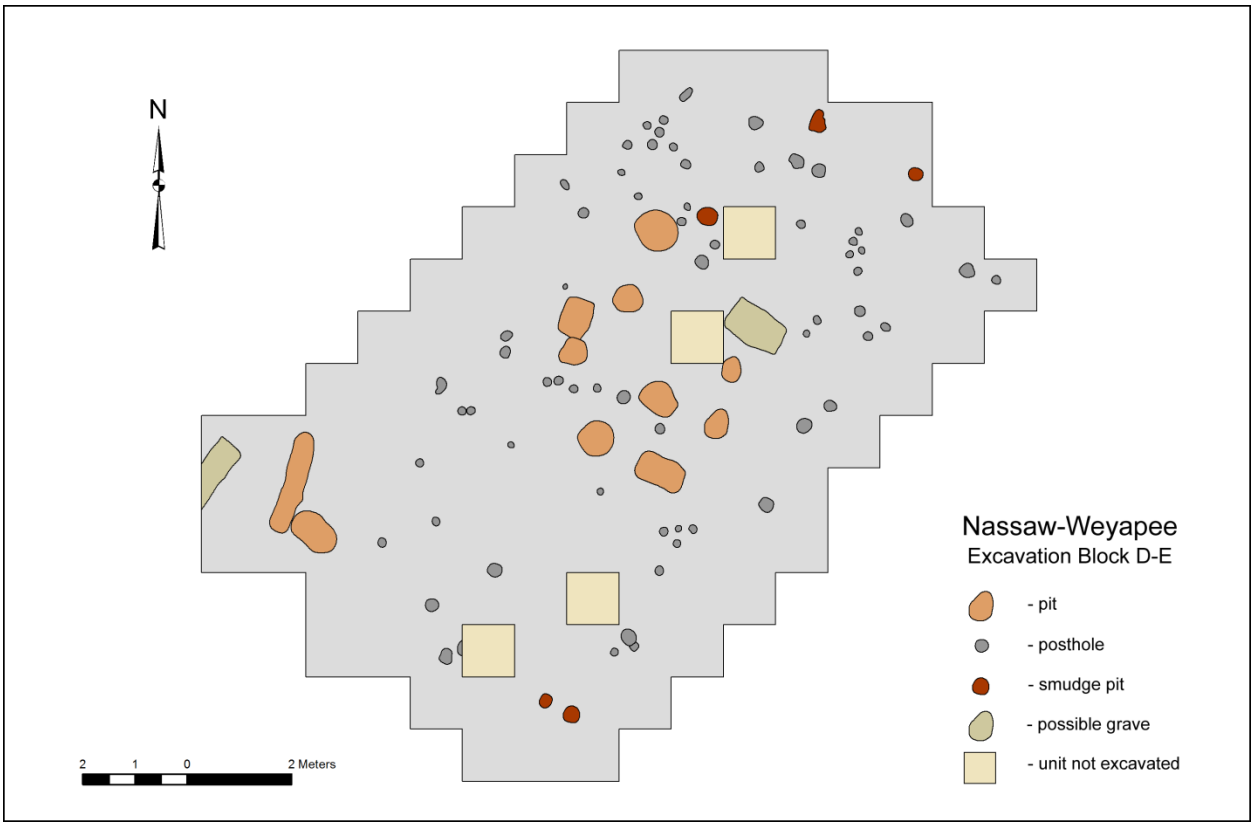

Figure 2.6. Plan of excavation block at Nassaw showing posthole pattern of a rectangular house and associated pit features.

French-and-Indian War period suggest that Nassaw likely was surrounded by a palisade, though trenches excavated at two separate locations along the site edge did not reveal a palisade post line. While the spatial distribution of metal-detected artifacts ended abruptly along the east, south, and west edges of the site, a light scatter of material continued along the broad ridgeline to the north. Hand excavation of 353 one-meter units and mechanical stripping of a 2,000 sq meter area (north of the main site area) revealed 23 refuse-filled storage and other pits, 27 cob-filled smudge pits, three soil borrow pits, more than 120 postholes, and seven probable graves which were mapped but not excavated (Figure 2.5). The 20 excavated storage pits occur in six clusters attributable to separate households. Excavations in 2008 at one of these house areas revealed a rectangular pattern of posts encompassing nine storage pits and a probable grave (Figure 2.6).

Excavations at Nassaw and Weyapee recovered more than 47,000 artifacts, including over 26,000 potsherds, 18,000 glass beads, 1,000 English kaolin pipe fragments, and 120 gun parts and pieces of ammunition (Figures 2.7 to 2.10). The relative abundance and diversity of commercially manufactured goods at Nassaw is considerably greater than that documented at contemporaneous Cherokee sites, reflecting the Catawbas' privileged trading status and their strategic alliance with Carolina. Especially noteworthy are numerous gunparts and sword fragments, artifacts that attest the importance and abundance of European-made weaponry in Catawba villages, and which are consistent with the Catawbas' militaristic stance and their role as "ethnic soldiers" for the English. The potsherd assemblage is attributed to the Cowans Ford series and represents: (1) globular jars with punctated rimstrips and curvilinear-stamped, smoothed, cord-marked, and cob-impressed exteriors; and (2) plain carinated bowls with

Figure 2.7. Gun parts recovered from Nassaw-Weyapee.

Figure 2.8. Stone, clay, and English clay tobacco pipes from Nassaw-Weyapee.

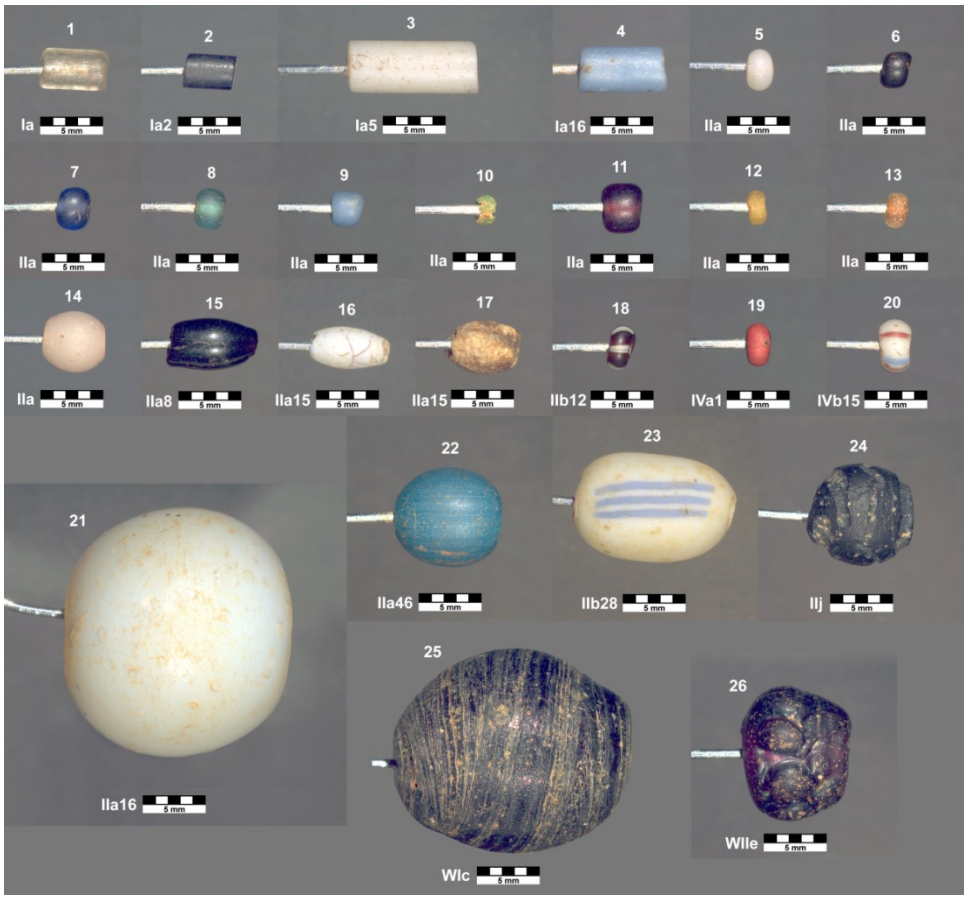

Figure 2.9. Glass bead types represented at Nassaw-Weyapee (type designations follow Kidd and Kidd 1970).

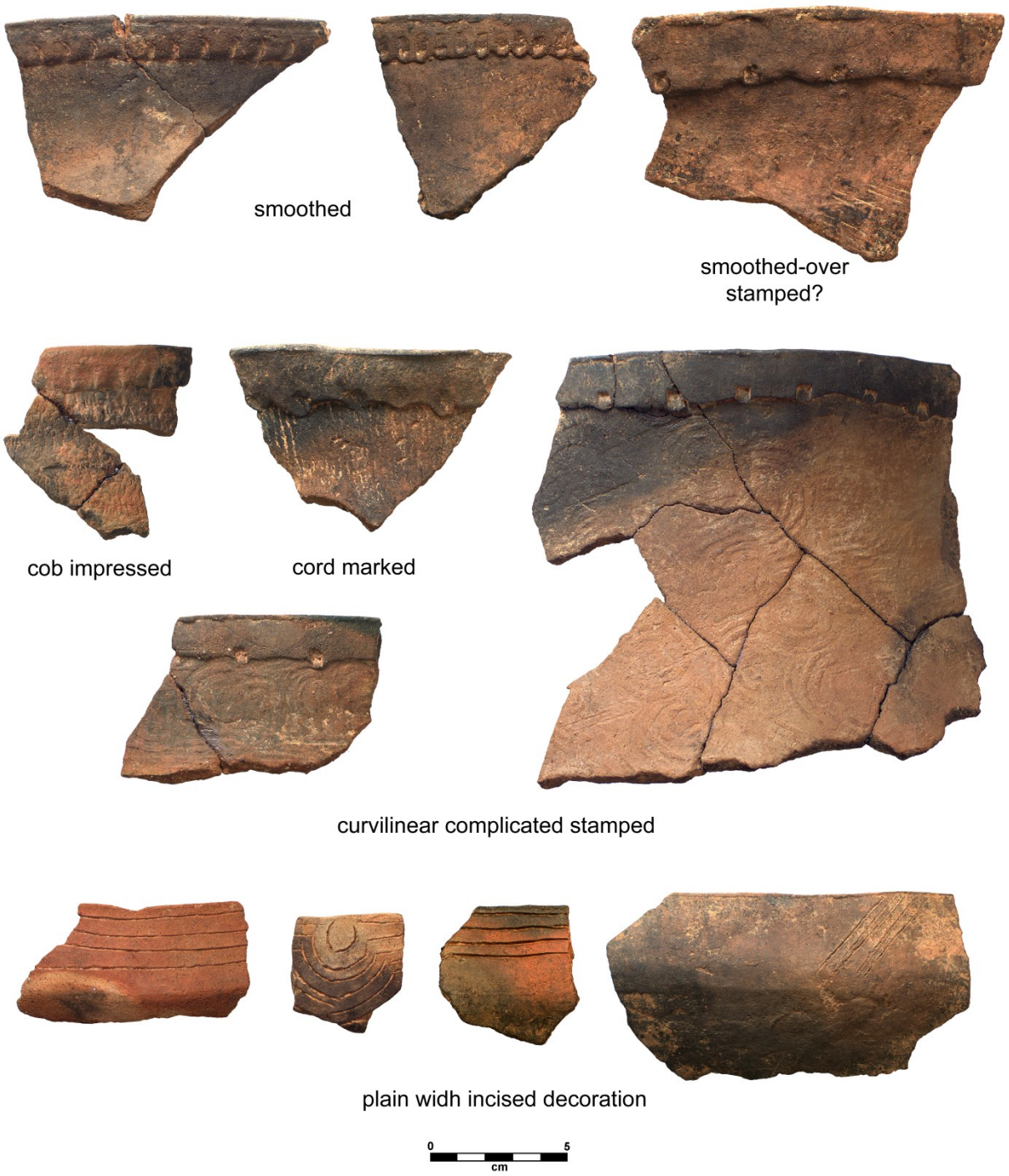

Figure 2.10. Globular jar rims with folded and punctated rim treatments (top and middle rows) and carinated bowl rims with incised decoration (bottom row) from Nassaw-Weyapee.

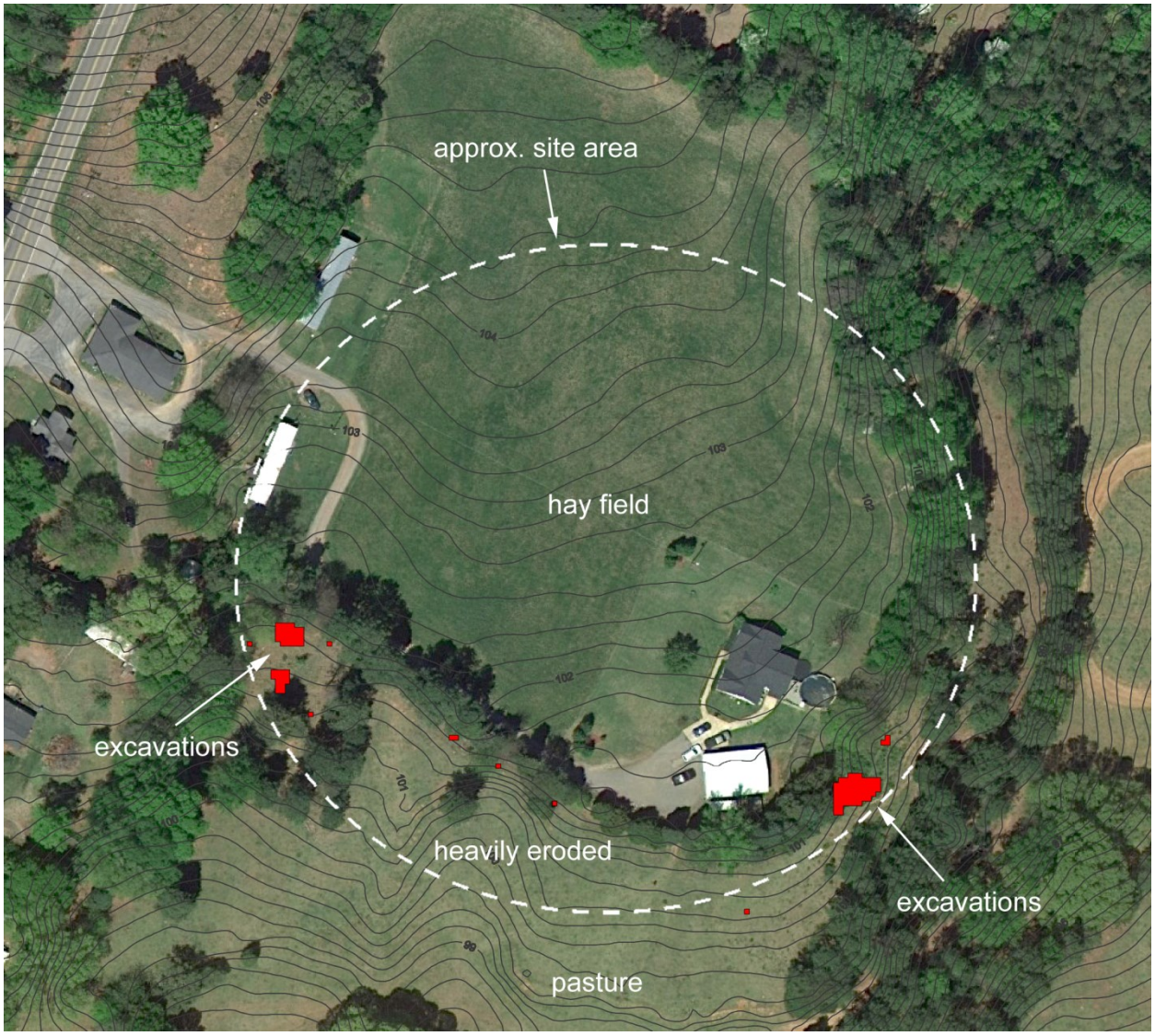

Figure 2.11. Aerial view of Charraw Town, showing locations of 2011 archaeological excavations (in red).

fineline-incised decorations (Riggs 2010). Subsistence remains reflect a broad-based subsistence pattern that incorporated European domesticated animals and include white-tailed deer, black bear, squirrel, skunk, box turtle, cow, and pig. The moderately low density of artifacts and lack of superpositioning among features suggest that the towns were occupied for less than a decade. A pipestem date of 1762 for the site, based on 459 kaolin pipestems, actually postdates by two years the known time of abandonment, and is viewed as supporting evidence for a relatively brief occupation span.

Charraw Town (c. 1750–1759). Charraw Town (38YK17) was a settlement of the Charraw, or Sara, who immigrated to the Catawba shortly after the Yamassee War of 1715–1717 (Figure 2.11). The town appears to have been established no earlier than the 1740s, and perhaps later, and it too was abandoned in the wake of the 1759 smallpox epidemic. Charraw Town appears as the largest of the six towns on Evans' map, with 56 men "fit for war," and in 1758 was visited by the Reverend William Richardson who described it simply as "built Circular" and presumably

Figure 2.12. Metal artifacts recovered at Charraw Town.

fortified (Richardson 1758) (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). The town was located along a trail that branched off of the Great Trading Path north of Nation Ford and is situated on a broad ridge between Moore's Branch and one of its tributaries, about four kilometers east of Nassaw-Weyapee.

Archaeological investigations at Charraw Town were undertaken by the UNC field school in 2011. Much of the site was inaccessible due to the presence of a hayfield and private residence, and thus the excavations were restricted to heavily eroded and terraced pastureland along the site's periphery. Despite these less-than-favorable conditions, an analytically significant sample of more than 12,000 artifacts and subsistence remains were recovered from six probable sub-floor storage pits, a refuse-filled gully, and a buried midden. Another 10,000 artifacts were recovered from plow-disturbed and eroded topsoil. The overall artifact assemblage from Charraw Town, including the kinds and proportions of European-manufactured artifacts, is similar in composition to that found at Nassaw-Weyapee; analysis of the pottery sample is currently underway by Mary Beth Fitts to determine how it compares in terms of style and function, and what those similarities and differences might suggest about the broader Catawba community during this period.

Figure 2.13. Rim and body sherds from Charraw Town.

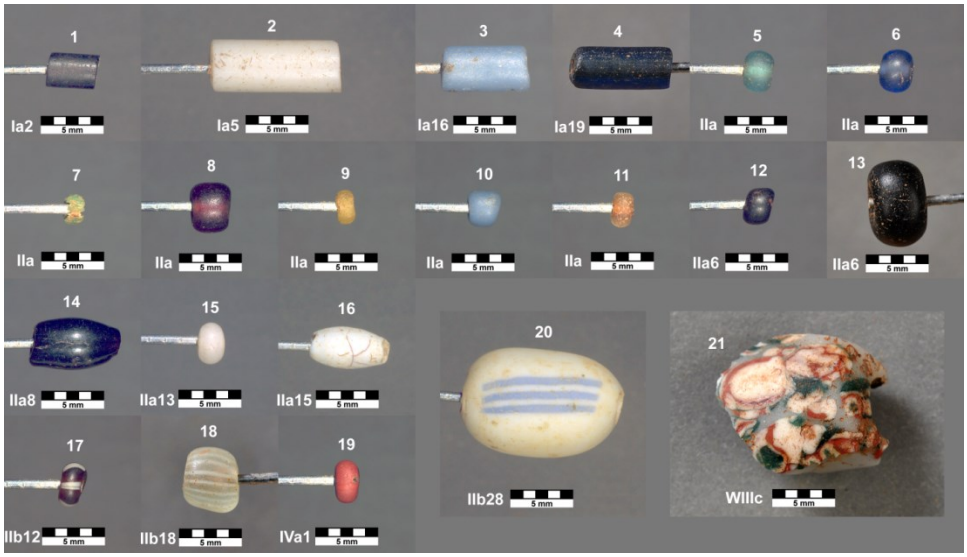

Figure 2.14. Glass bead types represented at Charraw Town (type designations follow Kidd and Kidd 1970).

Two areas of the site were investigated, with other test units excavated in between. At the southwest edge of the site, two adjacent blocks totaling 42 sq meters sampled a buried midden that extended up to 45 cm below surface. This midden produced potsherds, glass beads, gun parts, kaolin pipe fragments, bottle glass, brass kettle fragments, and small quantities of poorly preserved faunal remains (Figures 2.12 to 2.14).

Another block of 59 one-meter squares was excavated along the eastern margin of the site. Although the soils here were relatively shallow due to erosion, artifact density was higher and the bottoms of four storage pits, as well as several postholes, were identified. These pits formed a tight cluster and likely were dug into the floor of the same house. Less than two meters east of this pit cluster was a deep, refuse-filled gully. Over 5,700 artifacts, including more than 4,000 glass beads, were recovered from these features.

An analysis of glass beads from Charraw Town and Nassaw-Weyapee indicates that the assemblages are remarkably similar, as would be expected at two contemporaneous and closely related village sites. Likewise, a date of 1755 derived from 161 kaolin pipestems corresponds well with the expected period of occupation for the site.

Late Colonial Period (1760–1775)

Ethnohistorical Context

The Late Colonial period begins with the Catawba population collapse and abandonment of their old towns near Nations Ford. While approximately 300 Catawba survivors reorganized under English protection at Pine Tree Hill, Catawba leaders petitioned South Carolina for a surveyed boundary to exclude encroaching settlers and for a fort to protect their community (Anonymous 1760; McReynolds 2004:45). When the Catawbas returned to their territory in 1761, they left the exposed location at Nation Ford and formed two new settlements above Twelvemile Creek, near the Scots-Irish communities in the Waxhaws. Now, the remnants of the

Figure 2.15. Portion of Samuel Wyly's 1764 map of the newly surveyed Catawba Nation reservation, showing Catawba towns near the mouth of Twelvemile Creek and on King's Creek (known in the mid-nineteenth century as Old Town Branch).

formerly distinct tribal towns were simply called the "Catawba Town." The 1763 Treaty of Augusta confirmed the Catawba reservation, and in 1763–1764 Samuel Wyly surveyed a 14.5 mile square boundary between Catawba lands and surrounding white settlements (Brown 1966:250–251) (Figure 2.15).

With the end of the French and Indian wars, the Catawbas' role as mercenaries for South Carolina was diminished, and the nation struggled to maintain its relevance to South Carolina — the alliance so critical for trade supplies and diplomatic gifts. Catawba warriors retained some policing functions for the Carolina backcountry. When Shawnee raiders killed King Haigler and several whites in 1763, both Catawbas and white militia pursued the perpetrators. In 1774, Catawba warriors supported the Virginians in Lord Dunmore's war against the Shawnees.

However, Catawba warriors were more often relegated to catching runaway slaves and horses for the Carolinians. Other Catawbas began trading meat, hides, baskets, and pottery for goods in the local Waxhaw settlements. They even sanctioned settlement of certain white "friends" within their boundary — in return for nominal rents (Pettus 2005).

In 1772, William Moultrie visited the Catawba settlements during a survey of the South Carolina boundary. He observed:

> … the people very thickly settled close to the Indian Line some of their houses almost upon it. They have an advantage that they have a fine range for their cattle, which in all probability will continue many years until the Catawba's are extinct or bought out. The Catawba Lands are a very fine body, it's a square of *14* miles, they occupy but a very small part, their Town is built up in a very closs [sic] manner and the field that they plant does not exceed *100* acres… [Davis 1942:553]

Archaeological Evidence

Catawba life during the Late Colonial Period is documented archaeologically at the Old Town site (RLA-SoC 634), located in northern Lancaster County, South Carolina. The site's name derives from Old Town Branch, a stream also known as King's Creek and Haglier's [sic] Creek, that flows along the southern edge of the site. These alternate stream names imply that this was the town where King Haigler resided just prior to his death in August, 1763 (Brown 1966:246–247). Old Town is situated on an old alluvial terrace of Catawba River about 14 km southeast of Nassaw-Weyapee and Charraw Town, and represents two sequential Catawba occupations (c. 1761–1780 and 1781–1800) during the last four decades of the 1700s. The establishment of Old Town followed the 1759 abandonment of the upriver towns and a brief sojourn at Pine Tree Hill (Camden), and is depicted as the smaller of two Catawba settlements on a plat of the newly-formed Catawba Nation reservation drawn by Samuel Wyly in 1764 (Figure 2.15). The larger town was established just northeast of the mouth of Twelvemile Creek, near archaeological site 38LA125, and in 1761 South Carolina constructed a fort at this town (Brown 1966:241–242). Unlike the earlier towns of the French-and-Indian War period, Old Town was not fortified; instead, it consisted of clusters of scattered households. And, post-in-ground-style structures like those documented at Nassaw were abandoned in favor of cribbed log houses.

Four cabin loci, including three found through systematic metal detecting, have been identified at Old Town; two of these, situated along the terrace edge about 40 m apart, were excavated by UNC field schools in 2003 and 2009 (Davis and Riggs 2004, 2009). Twenty-eight one-meter units and six features were excavated in 2003 at Locus 1; an additional 154 units and 12 features were excavated at Loci 1 and 2 in 2009 (Figures 2.16–2.18). Each locus contained evidence of multiple houses, and each house contained one or more rectangular, sub-floor cellars, as well as other peripheral pit features. At each cabin locus, artifacts from these features, and the superposition of some features, indicate sequential households separated by a brief abandonment. These sequential households represent two periods of occupation, designated Old Town I and Old Town II. Historical accounts indicate that the British army burned the Catawba settlements in July 1780, forcing Catawbas to remove to Virginia until mid-1781. This event likely correlates with the interruption of occupation at Old Town.

Ten deep, sub-floor cellar pits, five clay processing pits, a cob-filled smudge pit, a large basin, and a refuse-filled stump hole were excavated at Old Town. Four graves comprising a small cemetery at Locus 1 were mapped but not excavated. The features classified as clay

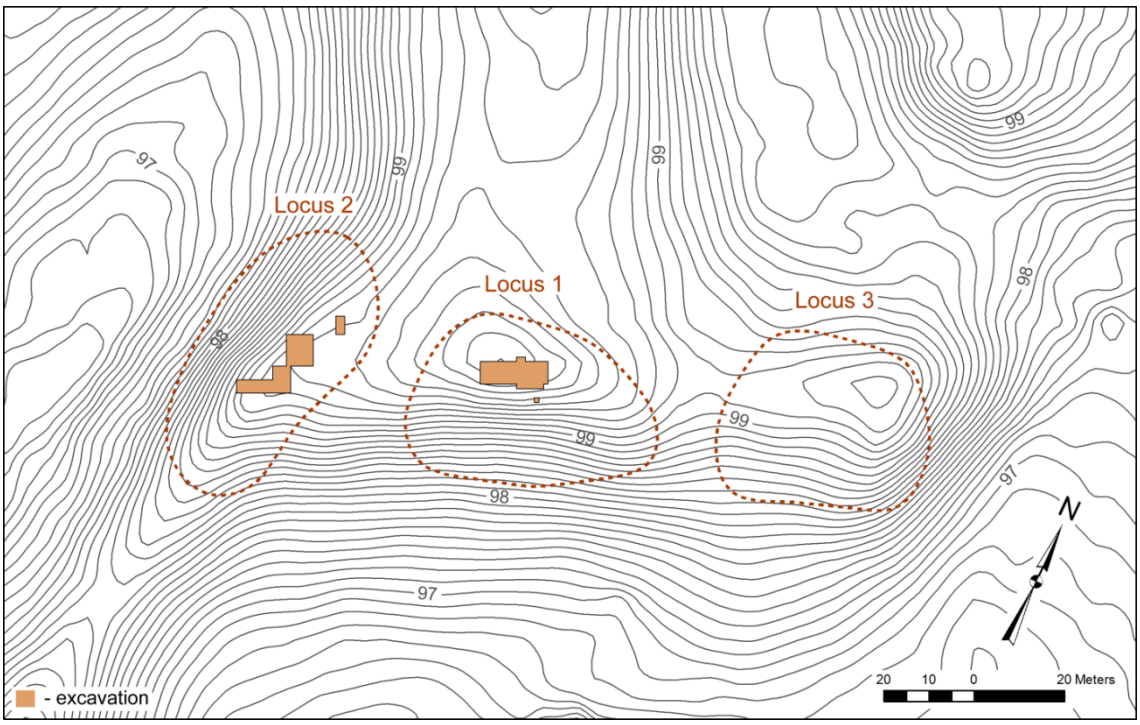

Figure 2.16. Map of the southern edge of Old Town, showing boundaries of cabin loci 1, 2, and, 3 as defined by systematic metal detecting, and areas excavated in 2003 and 2009. Contour interval = 10 cm (elevations reference an artibrary datum).

Figure 2.17. Excavation plan of Locus 1 at Old Town, showing cellar pits (Features 2, 5, 6, and 7), graves (Features 3, 8, 9, and 20), clay processing pits (Features 1 and 19), large basin (Feature 4). Smaller disturbances are possible postholes.

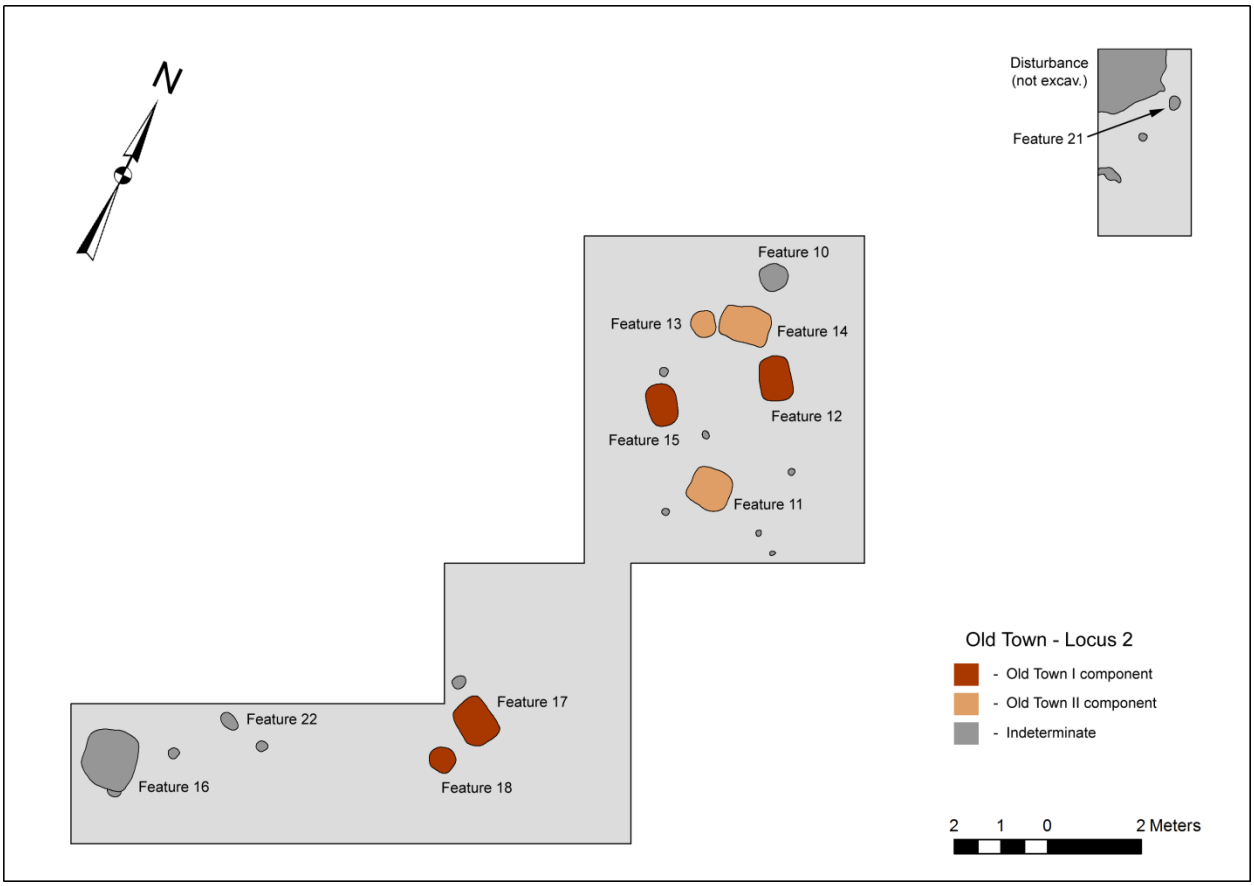

Figure 2.18. Excavation plan of Locus 2 at Old Town, showing cellar pits (Features 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17), clay processing pits (Features 10, 13, and 18), large basin (Feature 16), smudge pit (Feature 21), and refuse-filled stump hole (Feature 22). Smaller disturbances are possible postholes.

processing pits were shallow, circular facilities with fill consisting in part of wads or lumps of unfired potter's clay. While they appear to be associated with the preparation of clay for potting, how they functioned is unclear. All feature fill was processed by flotation or waterscreened through 1/16-inch mesh, and most of the 17,500 artifacts from Old Town were recovered from features rather than plow-disturbed topsoil. The earlier occupation of the site, designated Old Town I, is represented by four cellar pits and a clay processing pit; the later occupation, designated Old Town II, is represented by five cellar pits, a clay processing pit, the large basin, and the unexcavated graves. The temporal association of the remaining features is ambiguous.

Although Old Town dates only a decade after Nassaw, their material assemblages differ significantly. These differences are particularly apparent in native-made ceramics. In contrast to the highly traditional Nassaw wares, Old Town vessels are well-made copies of English ceramics. Plates, cups, bowls, and milkpans exhibit highly burnished surfaces; some vessels have hand-painted designs. Polished bowls with well-defined footrings and 16-sided plate rims replicate English wares in detail; some of these are executed in pale-bodied clays, perhaps emulating Staffordshire slipwares, soft-paste porcelains, and white saltglazed stonewares also recovered from early Old Town contexts. Later ceramics, when decorated, are painted along the vessel rim with a red or orange-red pigment made from purchased sealing wax (Riggs 2010:36–37; Riggs et al. 2006) (Figures 2.19 and 2.20).

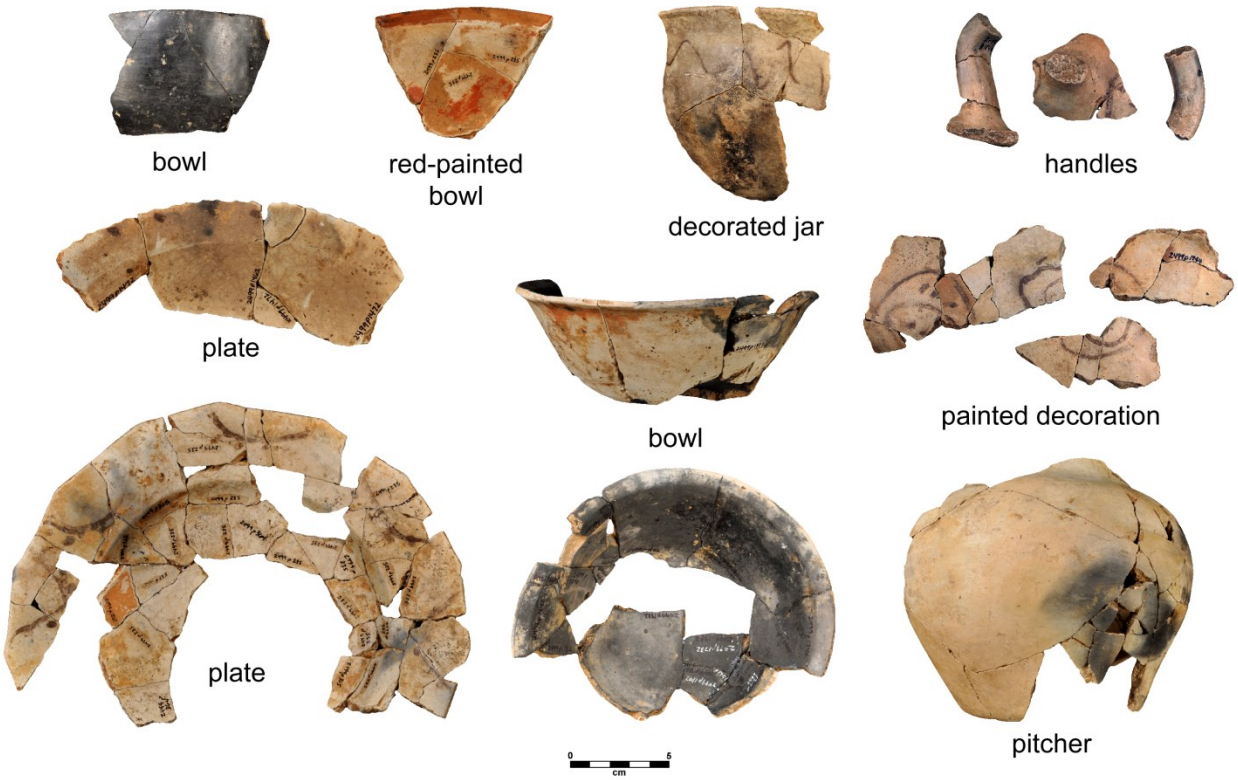

Figure 2.19. Old Town I ceramics from Old Town.

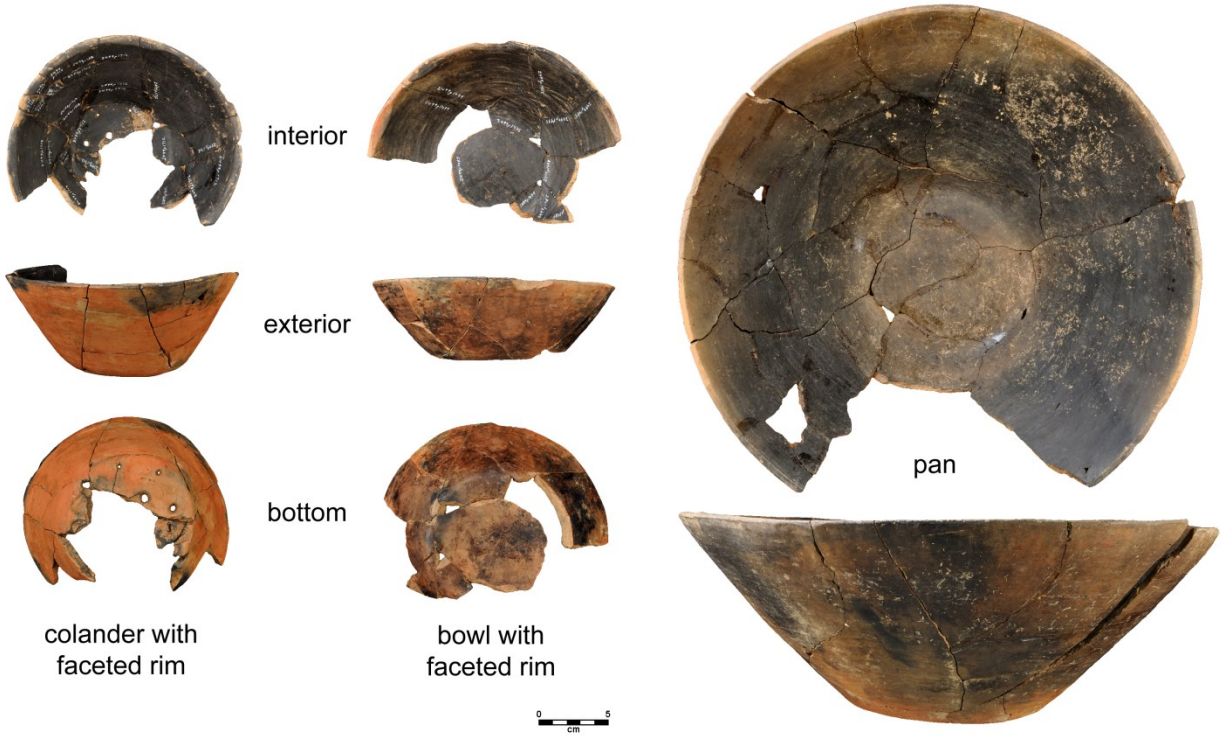

Figure 2.20. Old Town I (left) and Old Town II (center and right) vessels from Old Town.

These wares signal a sea-change in Catawba potting traditions. Evidence from late Coalescent Period sites indicates that constituent groups of the Catawba Nation retained distinct potting traditions. These distinct traditions disappeared with the catastrophic collapse of the Catawba population in 1759 and its reorganization in 1760–1761, and the Old Town wares reflect the rapid emergence of a highly homogeneous style — a full-blown expression of the style commonly understood as "Catawba pottery." This radical shift coincides with the Catawbas' respite at Pine Tree Hill, where potters encountered commercial demand for earthenwares in the Carolina backcountry, and soon reoriented their production to meet the market. Making pottery to suit European tastes created a new Catawba tradition, transformed and newly homogenized — a mirror of the Catawba Nation at mid-century. With this, Catawba women assumed a new (and eventually dominant) role in the nation's commercial economy.

Other artifacts reflect apparent material prosperity, despite the nation's lessened military role and reordered economy. Firearms, still important for hunting and defense, are represented by gunparts, ammunition, and a bullet mold (Figure 2.21). These reflect adoption of robust and accurate (and expensive) colonial-made rifles to replace the fragile imported trade fusils. Four coins (the latest dating to 1769) attest growing use of specie in regular, perhaps from daily contacts with Europeans. Riding tack hardware is much more common than at Nassaw, indicating increased ownership and use of horses. Personal ornamentation, such as glass beads and silver jewelry, reflect changes in how Catawbas marked their identity, including the appearance of the triangular nose bangle, a novel ornament made from cut silver sheet and worn suspended from the nose (Figures 2.22 and 2.23). Syncretic ritual may be reflected by an English porcelain punch bowl and English and Catawba cups — a set for rum punch, a common component of English-Indian diplomatic rituals that entailed toasts to the health of the king, governor, chiefs, and headmen.

Subsistence remains from Old Town — chicken eggshell, pig and cow bones — likely indicate Catawba adoption of animal husbandry. The relatively rapid changes in Catawba subsistence practices, housing modes, transportation, ceramic production, and other daily practice may have proceeded from close-order contact with Scots Irish neighbors. The vastly outnumbered Catawbas were now faced with accommodating the permanent presence of Europeans, and may have emulated European practices to downplay differences and to smooth daily interactions.

Revolutionary War Period (1775–1781)

At the outset of the Revolutionary War period, the Catawbas followed their rabidly Whig neighbors and committed to the American cause. All able-bodied Catawba warriors served for the duration of the war, and fought on behalf of the Americans from the defense of Charleston and the Battle of Sullivan's Island in 1776 until the defeat of the British army at Yorktown in 1781 (Heath 2004:90). During the intervening years, their reservation provided sanctuary for American forces in the Carolina backcountry. In mid-1780, the advance of Cornwallis' army forced the entire nation to take refuge in Virginia (Drayton 1802:98).

Just as they had since the Westo wars, the Catawbas served South Carolina as "ethnic soldiers" to create tangible political and economic obligations on the part of the newly independent nation. By fighting alongside Thomas Sumter, William R. Davie, and other luminaries (as well as Andrew Jackson's brothers), these "Patriot Indians" astutely guaranteed

Figure 2.21. European artifacts and clay pipes from Old Town.

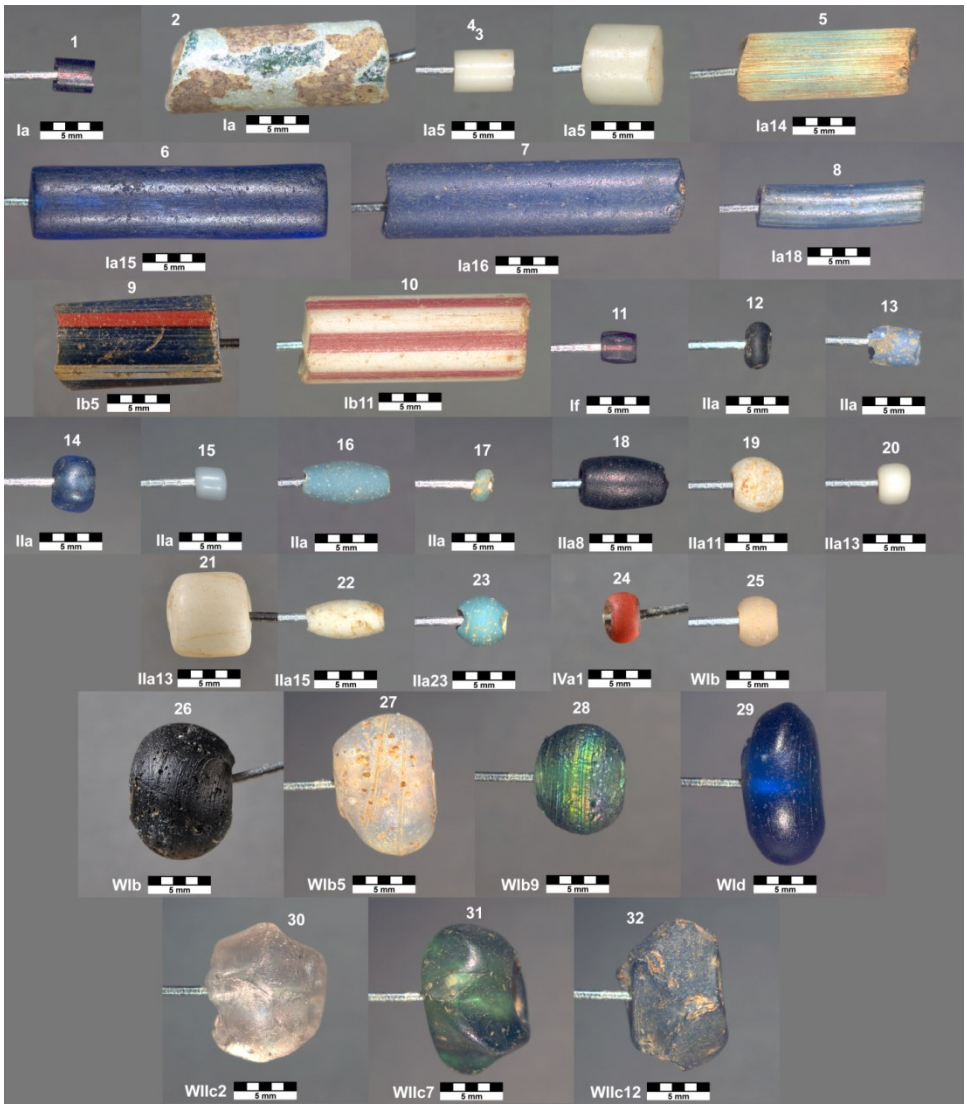

Figure 2.22. Glass bead types represented in Old Town I contexts at Old Town (type designations follow Kidd and Kidd 1970).

their continued rights and privileges in post-colonial South Carolina, and the newly constituted state recognized Catawba reservation lands.

The main Catawba town occupied at the time of the American Revolution has not been identified archaeologically. Two maps published on the eve of the revolution—one by James Cook in 1773 and another by Henry Mouzon in 1775—show a single Catawba town at the junction of two roads north of the mouth of Twelvemile Creek (Cook 1773; Mouzon 1775) (Figure 2.24). While the town's location traditionally has been assumed to be in the vicinity of Sixmile Church, several miles east of Catawba River, this placement appears to be contradicted by accounts of individuals who visited the town or town site shortly after it was abandoned in 1780.

Lieutenant William Feltman, an officer in the Pennsylvania Line when it marched through the Catawba reservation on December 20, 1781, wrote:

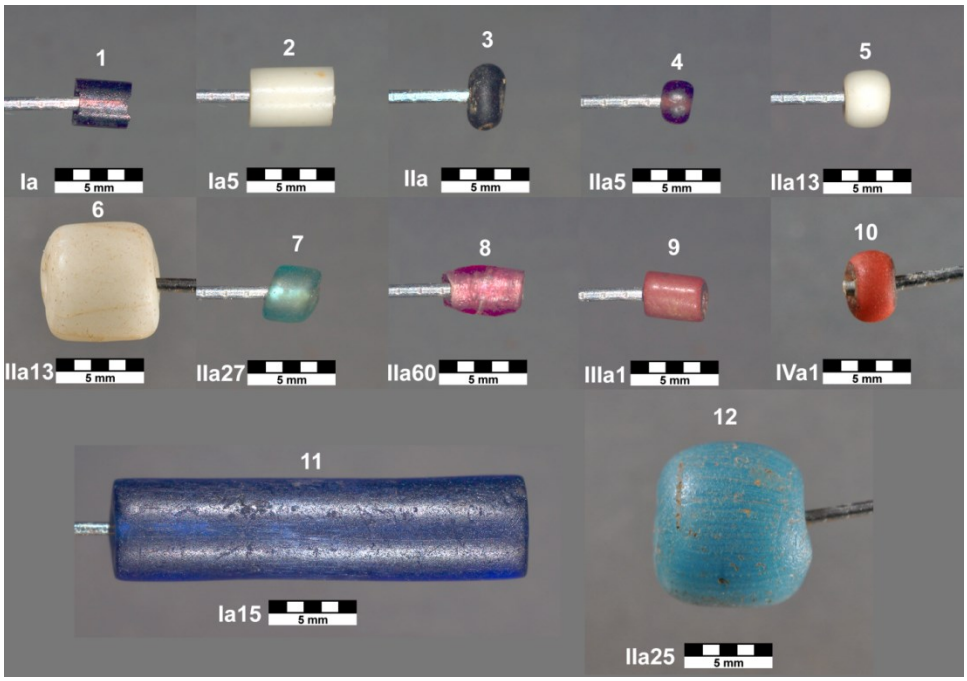

Figure 2.23. Glass bead types represented in Old Town II contexts at Old Town (type designations follow Kidd and Kidd 1970).

> This morning at sunrise the troops took up the line of march. Passed through a fine level country and encamped at 12 mile creek, Indian Land, in South Carolina. 10 miles. Camden District.
>
> Lieuts. Lodge, McKinney, Stricker, Van Court, and self took a ride about four miles from our encampment to see an Indian town of the Catawba Nation. We had a long, tedious, and disagreeable ride, and all small Indian foot-paths and thick woods to ride through. We see one of their towns, but it was only the remains of a town, which was burnt by the British. We rode on half a mile farther, when we found a very fine bottom, but all the old houses evacuated.
>
> We see three Indians in a canoe, coming down Catawba River. We hailed them, and brought them to, and asked them several questions.
>
> They informed us the town was half-a-mile the other side of the river. We were very desirous of seeing the town, but could not trust our horses on this side for fear they would be stolen. [Feltman 1853:31]

The Pennsylvania Line's encampment within the reservation likely was near Sixmile Church, on the high ground adjacent to where the road from Charlotte to Camden crossed Twelvemile Creek. A journey four miles southwest of this location, across the dissected western edge of Twelvemile Creek valley, would have taken Feltman's party to the suspected location of the abandoned Catawba town along the upland ridge flanking Catawba River, less than 3 km above the mouth of Twelvemile Creek. The Old Town site appears to have been at the northwestern extremity of this dispersed settlement, though the evacuated "old houses" Feltman encountered may have been just downstream from Old Town in the vicinity of Nisbet Bottoms.

Lieutenant Feltman also provides the earliest record for a Catawba settlement on the west side of Catawba River. While he didn't visit this village, Ayers Town is just over a half mile below Nisbet Bottoms and thus fits well with the Indians' description.

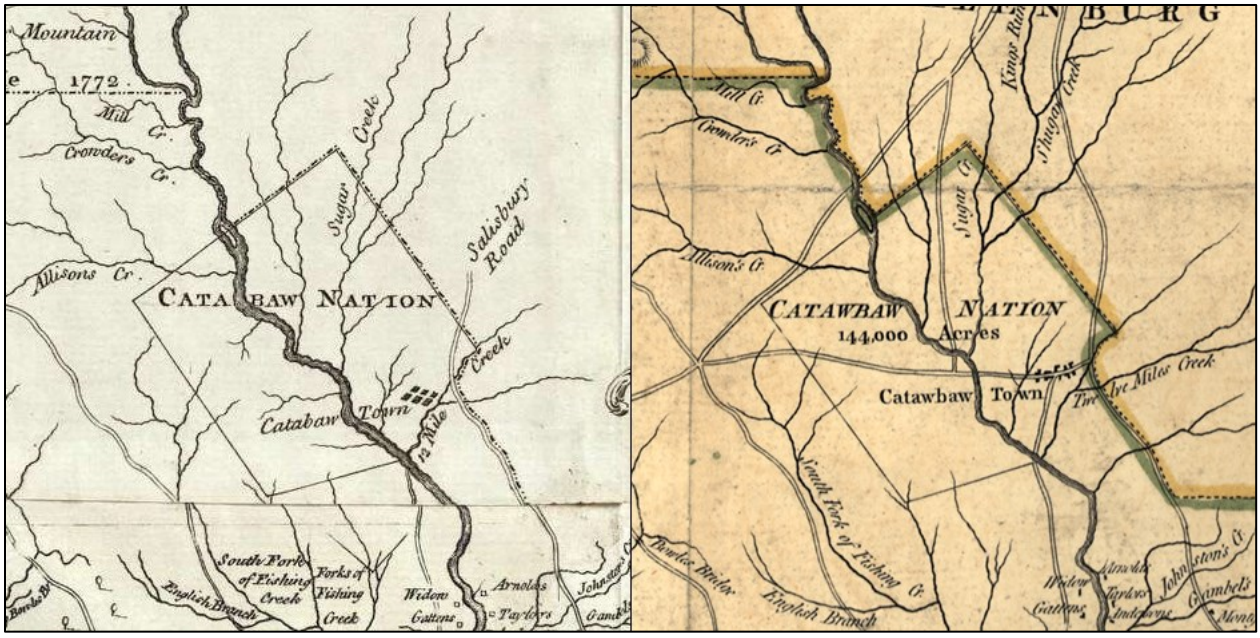

Figure 2.24. Portions of James Cook's (1773) *A Map of the Province of South Carolina* (left) and Henry Mouzon's (1775) *An Accurate Map of North and South Carolina, with their Indian Frontiers* (right), showing the 1763 Catawba Nation boundary and the location of the main Catawba town.

Federal Period (1782–1820)

Ethnohistorical Context

When Catawbas returned from Virginia in 1781, they established at least two separate towns. The earliest of these appears to have been Ayers Town, located opposite the mouth of Twelvemile Creek and about 4 km below Old Town. At the time of Feltman's visit in late 1781 to the abandoned Catawba town site, no other town appears to have been re-established within the Catawba Nation, and not all Catawbas had yet returned to their homeland. In fact, an encampment of about 80 Catawbas had been encountered by the Pennsylvania Line four days earlier along Rocky River just northeast of Charlotte.

> 16th Dec'r. – This morning at sunrise marched at the usual time; crossed Coddle Creek, and Mr. Pheiffer's Ornery, where Capt. Bower and self dined. Passed through a fine country, and encamped on Rocky Run. Mecklenburg county. 14 miles.
>
> Within half a mile of our encampments was an Indian Town of the Catawba Nation. They are but a few in number at this place, about eighty. About four [sic] miles from this place, I am informed, their principal town is, where they have fifteen square miles of land. [Feltman 1853:30–31]

After Ayers Town was established, Old Town was resettled, presumably by its previous inhabitants and perhaps by other families as well. These may have been among the same group of Catawbas encountered on Rocky River. The fact that the Catawba population had split into at least two groups at the close of the Revolutionary War hints at potential internal divisions within the tribe. Despite, or perhaps because of, the coalescent nature of the Catawba Nation, internal ethnic and tribal divisions appear to have persisted in some form well into the nineteenth century. Merrell (1989:264) notes that "The Catawbas' penchant for drawing boundaries was so deeply

ingrained that they even continued to insist some people on the land *inside* were different. In the 1840s the Nation's Cheraws were still distinguished from Catawbas by language, if nothing else."

By the 1790s, several Catawba families had established a third village and were living at New Town, in the uplands just a few kilometers above Old Town. New Town and a smaller settlement to the north called Turkeyhead appear to have been the only Catawba communities situated on the east side of the river during the first decades of the 1800s. While no descriptions of Turkeyhead survive, other than its brief reference by Robert Mills (1826:773–774), the other three towns—Old Town, Ayers Town, and New Town—were visited during this period by several travelers who wrote about Catawba conditions.

The earliest of these was Elkanah Watson, who in 1786 visited the Catawba settlement at Old Town. His goal appears to have been simply to satisfy his curiosity and "to see an Indian people in their native savage condition, so that I might contrast them with the polish and refinement of France…."

> When I entered the first village, the young Indians and squaws fled in every direction, the men being absent on a hunting expedition. It was some time before I could find the residence of their king or chief New-River, *alias* General Scott. At length, an old squaw pointed to a log house, where I was kindly received by the old king on his crutches. He spoke no English; and, to induce him to send for a person to interpret for us, I intimated by signs, that I had an important communication to make. On this, he dispatched a runner across the Catawba river, for an interpreter. In about an hour, his cabin was thronged with savage warriors, and among them was one who had been educated at William and Mary College, a sensible and well-informed person, but a perfect Indian in appearance and habits. I stated to them the probability of a new war with England, on account of that government's having retained the western posts on our territory, in violation of the treaty of peace. The king lighted a large pipe, and we each took three or four whiffs. I produced my bottle of rum, my only credential. We circulated the bottle and pipe alternately, drinking from the former, without the intervention of any other vessel. I observed every countenance sedate and attentive; and, although they appeared warmly interested in the event, they maintained, in the discussion in which they engaged, the utmost decorum, one only speaking at a time. In this council, and strolling through the village with the educated Indian, I spent the residue of the day. We entered their cabins, where I saw several straight-limbed, handsome young girls, daubed with paint, and decorated with feathers, rings, and brooches.
>
> I proceeded afterward to a white tavern, where I lay down in my clothes, with my pistols under my head. My curiosity was but partially satisfied; and I returned the next day to the Indian wigwam, obtaining all the information I desired, and seeing enough to afford abundant sources of reflection and meditation. I found among them a degree of civil hospitality and submissive kindness, which would have done no discredit to their white neighbors. The wife of the chief fed my horse, and supplied me with a meal of smoked venison, placed in a small tub upon the floor. She did all in her power to render me comfortable, if not with the grace of a Parisian lady, undoubtedly with equal kindness of heart. [Watson 1856:294–296]

Five years later, Thomas Coke (1793:148–150) preached at Old Town and observed "Their Nation is reduced to a very small number, and [they] chiefly live in a little town, which in England would be only called a village." He noted that the Catawbas resided in log cabins, which were "not uncomfortable—far superior to the mud-houses in which the poorest of the people in Ireland dwell." As with other visitors, he remarked about the emerging land-leasing system on the reservation, noting that "They possess a quantity of land, fifteen miles square, on the river Catawba. A very small part of this land they cultivate themselves: a much larger part they let out in long leases to the white people." Land leasing became increasingly important to

Catawbas as a source of income during the early nineteenth century, and by the 1810s most Catawba lands were being farmed or managed by whites.

The only known account of a visit to Ayers Town was in late 1797 when Lady Henrietta Liston, wife of British envoy Robert Liston, passed through the town on her way from Camden to Charlotte. Her description of the journey by carriage from her previous night's lodging at Major Robert Crawford's residence provides sufficient detail, both in terms of terrain and distances, for determining the town's approximate location, which is consistent with the location of archaeological site 38YK534. Liston states that the distance from where she entered the woods (see below), between Major Crawford's house and Catawba River, and where she encountered the town was four miles; however, the exact location of this point of departure is uncertain, and the road she traveled also is not definitely known. According to Lindsay Pettus (personal communication 2014), Major Crawford's house was located somewhere along Causar Branch, a tributary of Waxhaw Creek, near the modern intersection of US 521 and SC 5. The only operating ferry across Catawba River in 1797 was McClenahan's Ferry, which later became Cureton's Ferry, and it is likely that this is where she crossed the river.

Robert Mills' (1825) map of Lancaster District, surveyed by J. Boykin in 1820, shows only a single route for accessing the ferry from Crawford's house. The much later *Soil Map of Lancaster County* (USDA 1904) likewise does not show an alternate or shorter route of travel. The distance to the ferry would have been about nine miles. Given that the distance between the ferry site and site 38YK534 is only about 1.5 miles, the total distance traveled by Liston would have been about 10.5 miles. By this route, her carriage would have traveled the ridge road that passes Old Waxhaw Church and entered the dense woods about 6.5 miles from Crawford's house near Mill Branch as it approaches Waxhaw Creek.

While we do not know what the occupants called their town, Liston notes that the town's leader was an "old Warrior" who held the rank of "Colonel" in the tribe and was second in command to the "General," who resided in another of the three Catawba towns. During the 1780s and 1790s, General New River was the tribe's leader and lived either in Old Town or New Town with his wife, Sally; the second in command during this same period was Col. John Ayers (Watson 1995:93–94). Thus, the site has been named Ayers Town.

In addition to providing information about town location and leadership, Liston also provides meaningful descriptions about house architecture, cabin interiors, foodways, dress, physical appearance, and other customs. The full account of her observations about Ayers Town and its residents is as follows:

> Early next morning we set out, accompanied by a guide who was to serve as Interpreter, to visit the Nation, as it is here termed. This is a Tribe of Indians, the remains of the Catawba whose number is now reduced to three hundred. Their territory is fifteen miles square. We proceeded a little way on the high road, then suddenly turned into a wood & crossed the tract through grapes, very difficult for a carriage of four horses. We crossed the Catawba River & at the distance of four miles, from the entrance of the wood, reached one of their Towns, situated in a hollow near the River. The first objects that struck us were two Boys sitting at the door of a Log House, the oldest a Boy about ten had a bow & arrow in his hand, & the younger, about four, a Pipe in his mouth, was smoking with all the gravity of a Philosopher.
>
> The Indians settled in the midst of their natural Enemies – the Whites – are obliged in some measure to adopt their customs & their Vices. Many of them build their Log Houses of the same form, always adhering to one apartment only. They have given up the name of King, in compliance to the Republick & their Chief substitutes a Military title. The General was at another Town, more distant, for they are settled in three Towns. The Col., the next in rank, presides in the one we happened to visit. He is

> esteemed the most sensible & valliant of his Tribe. Our first respects were paid to him & it being yet early, we found the old Warrior sitting in a Chair, at the side of the fire, with a blanket jacket. His Wife, or as our Interpreter styled her – his Lady, sat on a Stool, with a Savage look squalid & nasty, a woolen Petticoat & a blanket about her naked shoulders her long black hair hanging loose. At one corner of the fire & within the chimney, squatted in form figure & posture a large ape, blind & playing on his teeth with his fingers – This shocking spectacle was it seems an Idiot, almost naked & a quantity of hair hanging over its face, for with this Nation as with some more civilized, these unfortunate objects are not only held sacred (which perhaps they ought to be everywhere) but it is esteemed fortunate to have one in your family.
>
> The Colonel was surrounded with Sons Daughters & grand Children – The young Indian Men are very handsome & the children would be extremely pretty, if they were not often disfigured by Nose jewels. The fine clear dark olive is set off by brilliant black eyes, & there is a characteristic wild sparkling in the eye of an Indian, & a quantity of shining black hair. The Squaws, & all the elder people appear a shade paler, which is no advantage, & the females, except in extreme youth – with their high cheek bones, appeared very ugly. The Col. & a few of the older Men spoke a little bad English. He apologized for the smallness of their numbers saying, the young Men had not yet come in from hunting. We had, indeed, met some of them selling their Deerskins a hundred miles to the South. On the Colonels fire stood a pot, & there was a hoecake on the hearth. I asked what was in the Pot, he said Deers flesh for breakfast, but did not offer us any. In another Hut we found Wild Turkey preparing in the same manner. The only cultivation we saw was a small quantity of Indian corn in the vicinity of the Town, cultivated I am told, by the Women, & this is rather for traveling with (when an Indian sets out on a journey the flour of Indian Corn in a bag & pot to boil it in is all his provision) than to use as bread.
>
> In the course of our visits through the Town, we entered several of the Wigwhams (the original form of their Houses). The fire is in the middle. In one of them we found a sick Indian lying half naked, on a Deerskin near the fire, & in all of them the half naked wretches lay indolently on skins round the fire place. In another Wigwham was a Woman lately delivered. She sat at the fire & the child in her lap, which she covered with her blanket at our entrance. I expressed a desire to see it, & with great difficulty the Interpreter prevailed with her to indulge me. I asked the reason for her reluctance & was told, she was afraid lest the eyes of a Stranger should be evil. I assured her that mine though not beautiful, had been very fortunate.
>
> Before departing we again paid our Compliments to the Colonel, who we were told expected to see us. We found that, upon hearing from the Servants who we were, he had drest himself, in an old green cloth Coat with gold binding, which buttoned very imperfectly over his naked body. [Liston 1797:25–28]

In addition to accounts by Lady Liston and Lieutenant Feltman, another document from the 1780s appears to reference the Catawba town. It is an entry in York County Deed Book A, recorded during "July Term, 1786," for the sale to Benjamin Lowrey of 200 acres lying on "both sides of 12 Mile Creek opposite Catawba Indian Town" (Schmidt 1985:76). This sale was for land originally granted on Catawba lands, illegally, to Robert Mucklhaney in 1752 and exemplifies problems of encroachment on tribal lands that the Catawba Nation was confronted with throughout the latter half of the 1700s.

Finally, John Drayton (1802:98–99), in *A View of South Carolina*, notes that the Catawbas established towns on both sides of the river upon their return from Virginia in 1781:

> When the British troops overran this state in 1780, these Indians who had always been true to her interests, retreated before lord Cornwallis to Virginia; and some of them attached themselves to colonel Lee's legion, during their absence; and took the field with him. After the battle of Guilford, in North-Carolina, they returned; but not to their old town. This they deserted; establishing in its room other towns on each side of the river; and a few miles higher up its stream.

Accompanying Drayton's book is a map showing towns on both sides of Catawba River between Twelvemile Creek and Sugar Creek (Figure 2.25). The town depicted on the west side

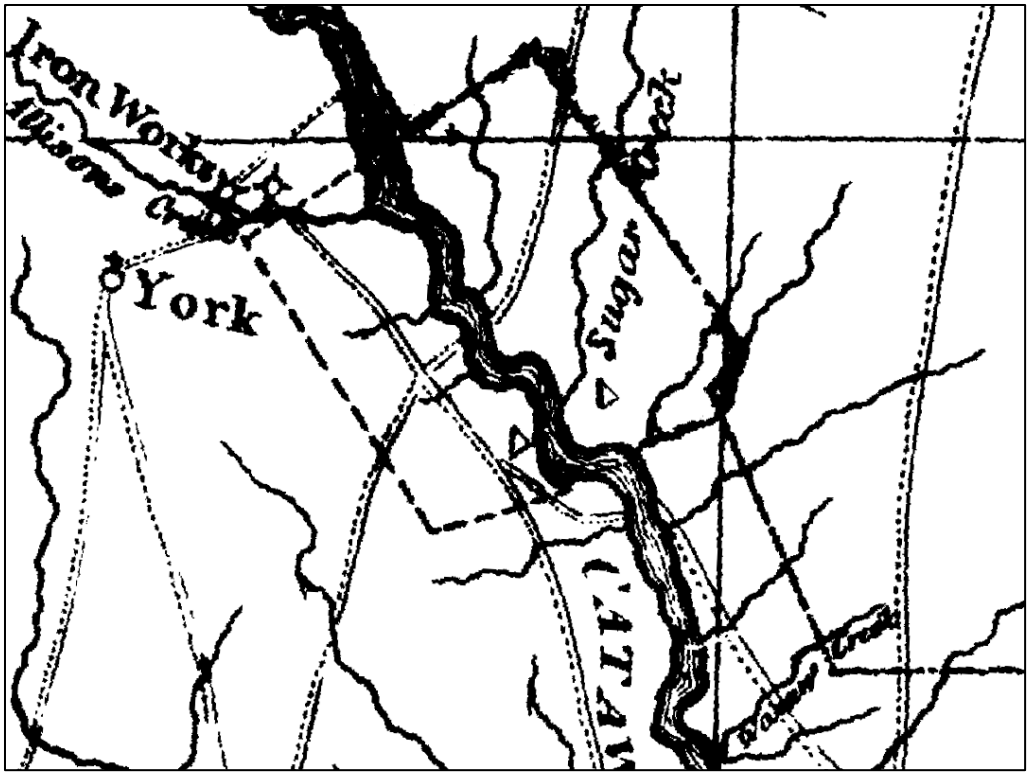

Figure 2.25. Portion of John Drayton's 1802 map of South Carolina showing Catawba towns on both sides of Catawba River and roads crossing the nation.

of the river, thought to be Ayers Town, is situated near the intersection of the road from Lancaster, which crossed Catawba River at McClenahan's (later Cureton's) ferry, with the road that ran through the nation from the Hill-Hayne Iron Works on Allison Creek to Camden. McClenahan's ferry, first licensed by the state of South Carolina in 1795, is where Lady Liston's carriage would have crossed the river as she approached Ayers Town (McCord 1841:362). The triangular town symbol shown on the east side of the river likely represents New Town; this settlement also is depicted on the 1808 Price-Strothers map of North Carolina (Price and Strothers 1808) (Figure 2.26).

Two travelers left accounts of their visits to New Town during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Calvin Jones, who passed through New Town in 1815, noted that the community consisted of "6 or 8 houses facing an oblong square" with the entire population within the Catawba Nation "not exceeding 25 or 30 Warriors" (Jones 1815). He also observed that their houses were of cribbed-log construction with chimneys and dirt floors, except for the houses of Sally New River and Jacob Ayers which had wooden floors. He found the Catawba women busy making earthenware vessels and, like other travelers, remarked that most men were away from the village hunting or fishing. The following year George Blackburn, a professor at South Carolina College, visited New Town while conducting an astronomical and topographic survey of the state. In an account related to Robert Mills (1826:112–113), he described the town as "a little village consisting of four families."

The New Town community sustained itself through subsistence farming and hunting, supplemented with cash income from cottage industries and land rents. Rents from leasing the reserved lands to white planters became an essential part of the Catawba economy (Mills

Figure 2.26. Portion of the 1808 Price-Strothers map of North Carolina showing the Catawba Nation boundary, New Town (Catawba Town), and the abandoned settlements near Nation Ford, depicted simply as "Old Town." Catawba settlement on the west side of the river is not shown.

1826:111–116). In addition to providing much-needed income, the leasing system helped secure Catawba tenure. The lessees, who derived great economic benefits from their exclusive (and cheap) use of Indian lands, supported the Catawba nations' territorial rights and actively barred intruders and squatters from Catawba lands. With these proxies guarding their territory, the Catawbas were free to pursue an itinerant strategy. Between rent payments, the Catawbas frequently traveled the Carolina midlands and low country like gypsy bands. These groups moved from plantation to plantation, where women produced pottery for slaves and planters alike, while men hunted game or escaped slaves for planters (Plane 2011).

These seasonal rounds served multiple economic, social, and political functions. Ceramic production offered a higher return on labor than agricultural production or other modes available to the Catawbas, and Catawba women generated considerable income from thousands of vessels sold annually. As enforcers for the plantation system, Catawba men were able to perpetuate their image as allied, but independent, warriors who were still relevant in the new order. Itinerancy increased Catawba visibility, and the annual arrival of Catawba bands reminded Carolina

planters and other political elites of the continued presence of the "Patriot Indians" who fought for South Carolina's independence.

Archaeological Evidence

Archaeological evidence of Catawba lifeways during the Federal period derives from four sites. Ayers Town and the Old Town II component at Old Town are largely contemporary settlements that were occupied during the last two decades of the 1700s, while New Town and the Bowers site (Turkeyhead) document Catawba settlement during the first decades of the 1800s. The archaeology of Old Town was described earlier while discussing the Late Colonial Period; the archaeological remains of Ayers Town are the subject of this report and are treated in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

New Town (c. 1790–1820). New Town (RLA-SoC 632/635) is situated on an upland ridge overlooking the Catawba valley, about 1.3 km north of Old Town, and should not be confused with another town called "Newtown" that was situated on the opposite side of Catawba River by the mid-1820s (Mills 1825, 1826) (Figure 2.27). Archaeological and historical evidence suggest that New Town was established during the last decade of the eighteenth century and abandoned following the death of resident Sally New River in 1820. During this period, Catawbas derived much of their annual income by leasing large parcels of reservation lands to white farmers and through the production and sale of hand-built earthenwares. This period also witnessed the establishment of nearby towns and commercial establishments, which would have facilitated Catawbas' access to manufactured goods.

Between 2003 and 2005, UNC archaeologists conducted systematic metal detector survey at the heavily wooded site and located seven discrete concentrations of artifacts and architectural remains representing individual households (Figure 2.28). An eight cabin locus was identified during a recent reconnaissance of the site in 2012. These cabin loci are distributed over a 12 hectare area and correspond well with Calvin Jones' (1815) description of "6 or 8 houses facing an oblong square." The cabins, of cribbed-log construction, were linked to one another by a network of wagon roads and foot paths. Traces of this network are still visible as landscape features, particularly in the vicinities of Locus 3 and Locus 4 which were never disturbed by agricultural plowing (Davis and Riggs 2004, 2005, 2006; Riggs et al. 2006; Shebalin 2011).

Excavations at six of the cabin sites covered about 800 m^2 and exposed a cellar pit, borrow pits, refuse-filled stump holes, peripheral trash dumps, stick-and-clay chimney bases and hearths, and sheet midden deposits. Houses at two of the loci (Loci 4 and 5) had elevated floors, indicated by raised end-chimney hearths preserved within chimney-fall "mounds." Fired areas indicative of earthen floor-level hearths were identified at three other loci (Loci 2, 3, and 6). Only the house at Locus 2 had a sub-floor cellar, indicating that most New Town residents no longer required these kinds of sub-floor storage facilities.

Because few pit features were discovered and most other cultural features represent surface deposits or architectural remains, comparatively little soil was processed by waterscreening or flotation; however, all other excavated soils were screened through 1/4-inch mesh. About 86,000 artifacts were recovered from New Town, including more than 60,000 Catawba pottery fragments and numerous European and Euroamerican-manufactured items.

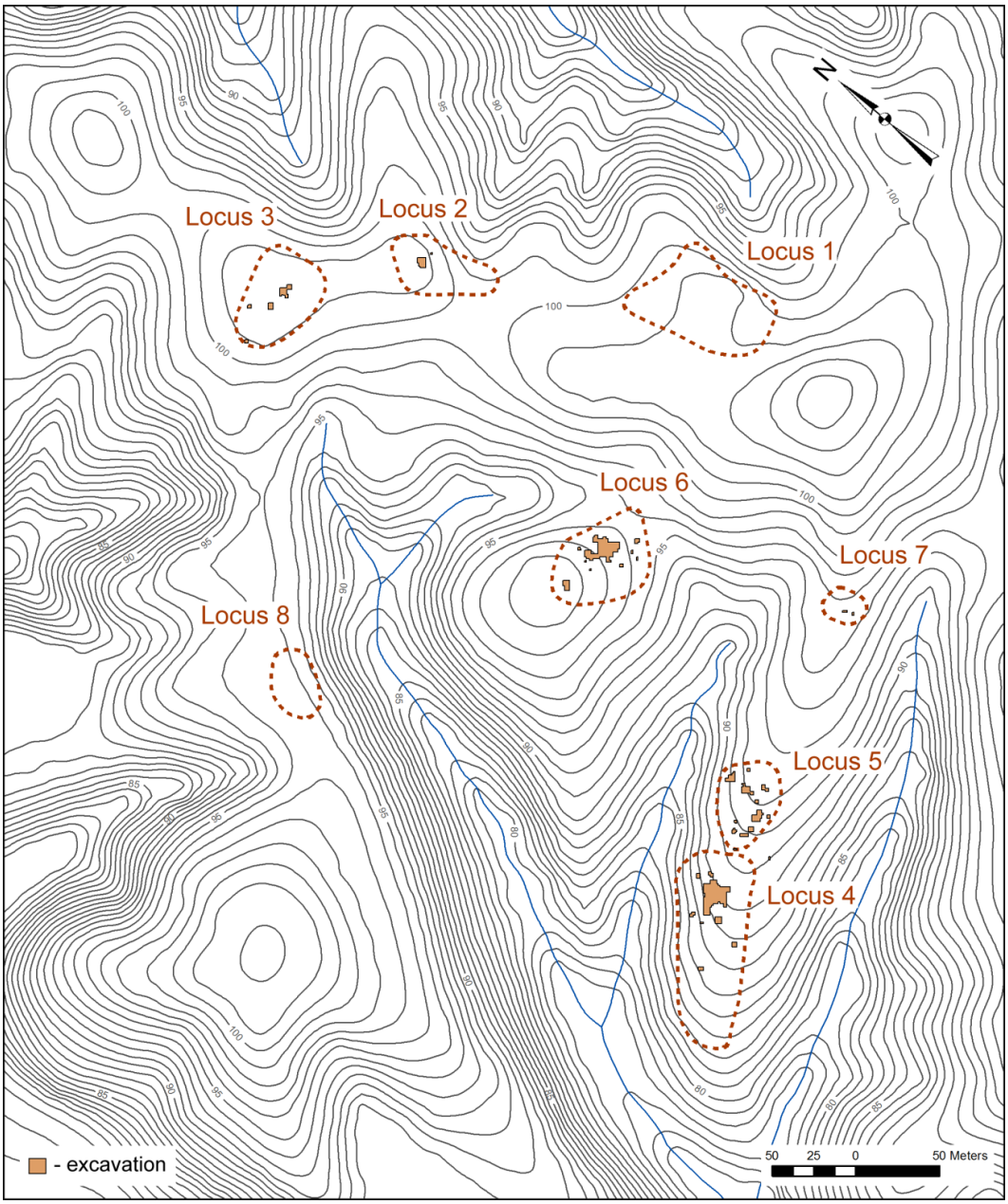

Figure 2.27. Map of New Town showing boundaries of eight cabin loci, as defined by systematic metal detecting and the distribution of surface finds, and areas excavated in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Contour interval = 1 m (elevations reference an artibrary datum).

The most extensively investigated cabin locus was Locus 4, where two sequentially occupied cabins were identified that are thought to be the residence of Sally New River (Figure 2.28). Prior to excavation, systematic metal detector survey around the two well-preserved chimney falls recovered more than 500 artifacts and identified accumulations of refuse around chimney bases, at the far edge of the front yard, and within dump areas behind the cabins and along a wagon road that passed in front of the cabins. Subsequent excavation of the chimney falls, the cabin footprints, the yard areas, and within several of the trash dumps recovered more than 16,000 artifacts.

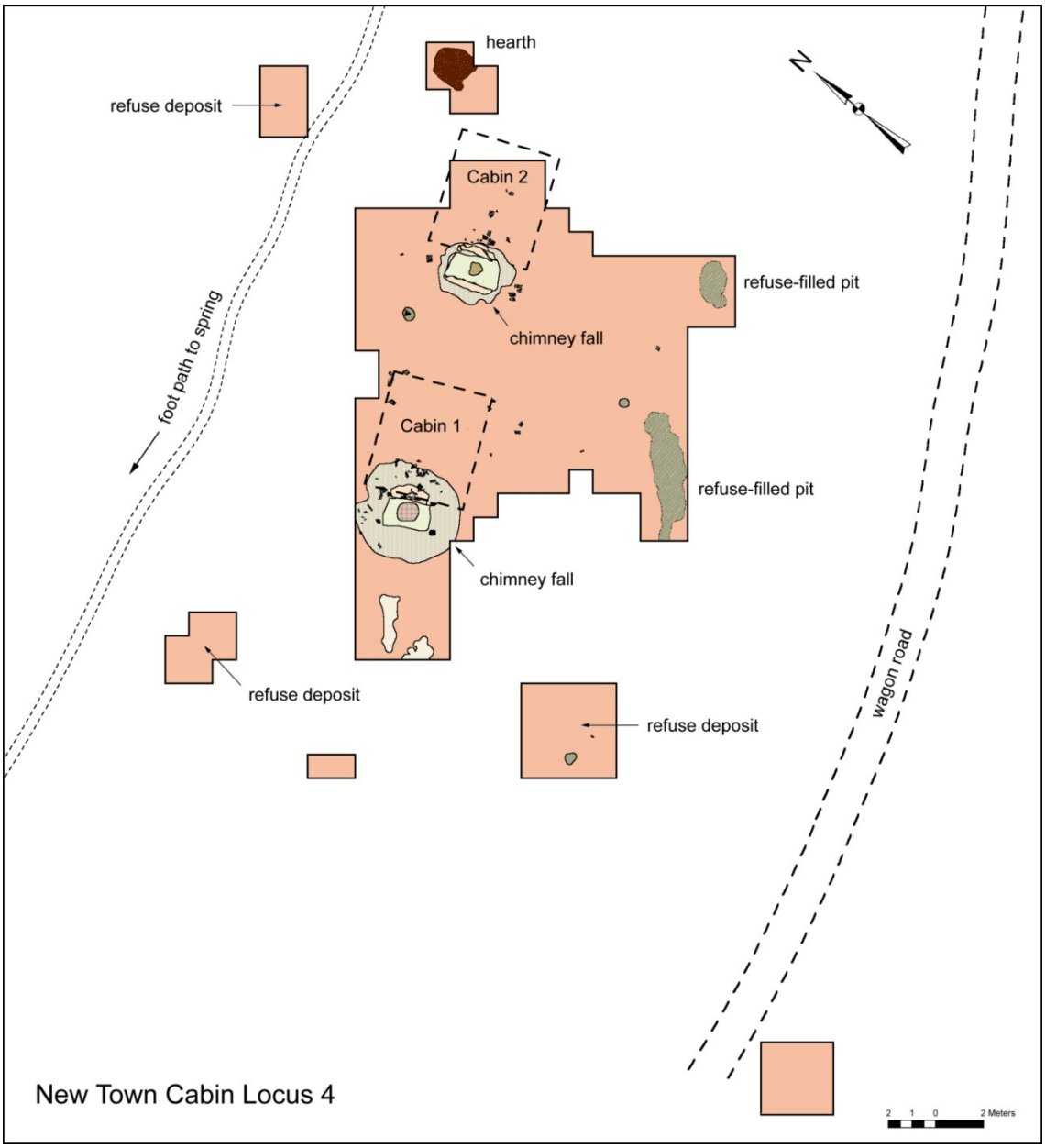

Figure 2.28. Excavation plan for Locus 4 at New Town, showing cribbed-log house footprints, associated end chimney and hearth remnants, an outside cooking area, peripheral refuse dumps, and landscape features. Artifact distributions in the yard areas just south of the cabins suggest sequential occupations, with Cabin 2 being the later structure.

As with the other cabin seats, most (about 60%) of the assemblage consists of Catawba-made plain earthenware. Represented vessels include plates and flat-bottomed, flaring-walled pans, as well as cooking jars with thickened rims and tripodal kettles with loop handles. Many of the Catawba-made vessel rims are decorated with reddish orange paint, and at least a few were decorated to mimic English shell-edged wares. Nearly 2,800 English-manufactured ceramics, mostly pearlwares but including creamwares and some porcelains and stonewares, also were recovered. Aside from clay pipes, which are almost entirely of Catawba manufacture and often elaborately decorated with fine engraving, the remainder of the material assemblage consists

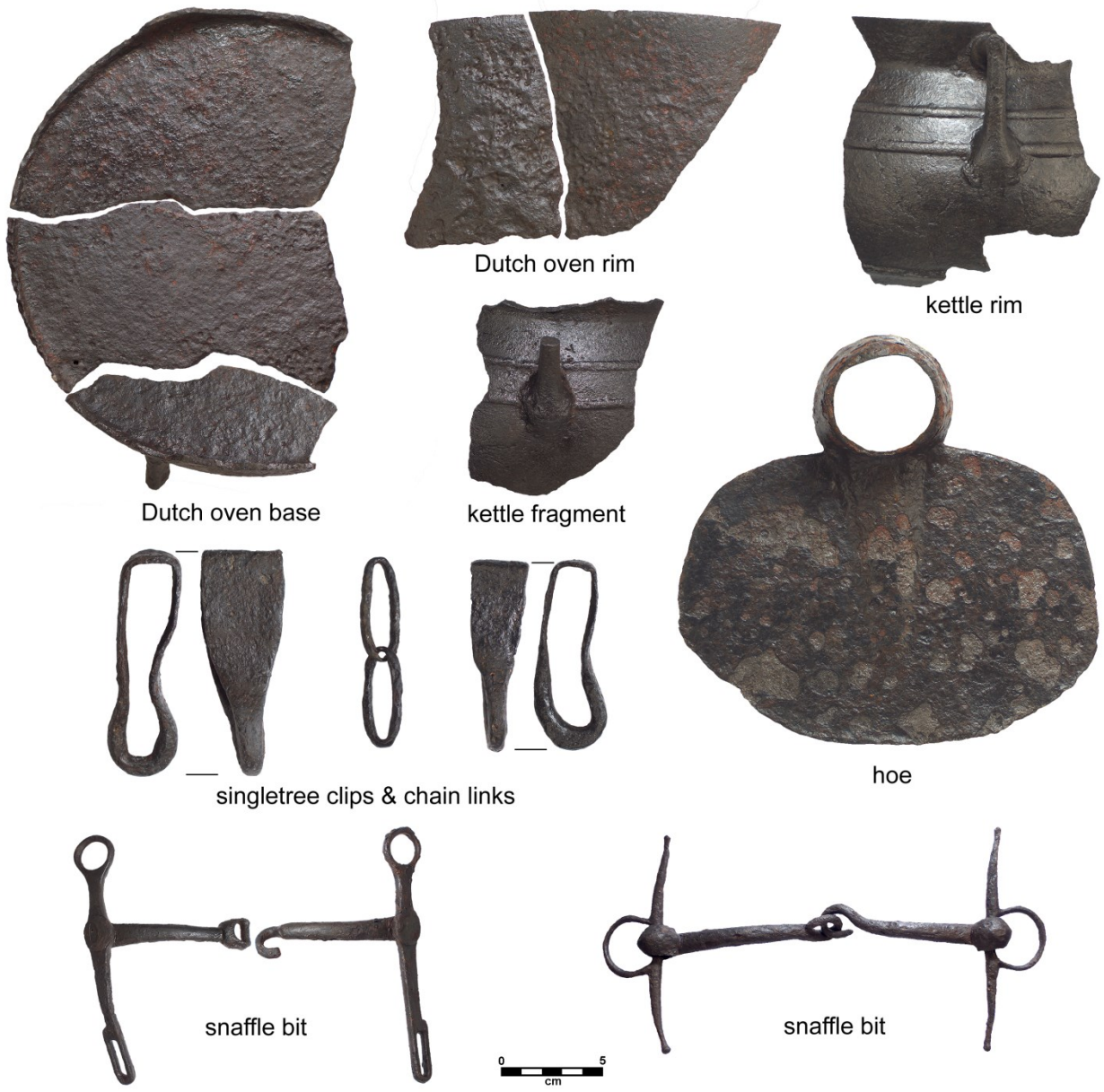

Figure 2.29. Cast and wrought iron artifacts from Loci 1, 2, and 3 at New Town.

mostly of Euroamerican and European-made goods. These include fragments of glass bottles, metal buttons, glass beads and other jewelry, table cutlery, harness hardware, agricultural equipment, and gun parts and ammunition.

Overall, the six excavated cabin loci at New Town yielded rich and diverse material assemblages (Figure 2.29–2.33). Riding tack hardware is especially prominent, reflecting the ever-increasing importance of horses for Catawba mobility and the nation's growing wealth in horses. Wagon hardware recovered from two cabin areas also indicates the adoption of wheeled vehicles; these may have been particularly useful to Catawba itinerants.

Firearms and ammunition are much less prevalent than at Nassaw and Old Town, a reflection of the steeply declining importance of warfare and hunting. Personal items,

Figure 2.30. Clay pipes, glassware, silver and brass ornaments, and other artifacts from New Town.

particularly glass beads, silver jewelry, and Jew's harps, are numerous. Personal ornamentation items, including silver earbobs and nose bangles, may have been particularly important for Catawbas who sought to clearly project their identity as "wild" or "exotic" Indians, as distinct from the tame, "degraded" settlement Indians who had assumed a tertiary status in South Carolina society. In contrast, abundant clothing hardware and sewing equipment reflects widespread adoption of western modes of dress.

The New Town cabins also yielded abundant cast iron cookwares and tablewares, such as pearlware and creamware plates, bowls and cups, cutlery, and glassware (e.g., tumblers and decanters), that indicate widespread and detailed adoption of western equipment, if not the associated rituals and symbolism. Complementary to English tablewares are Catawba-made low-fired earthenwares. These finely made pans, jars, bowls, plates, and mugs closely resemble some of the colonoware ceramics from Federal period contexts in the South Carolina piedmont and coastal plain, much of which may have been the work of itinerant New Town potters.

Figure 2.31. Glass bead types represented at New Town (type designations follow Kidd and Kidd 1970).

Figure 2.32. Catawba and English pottery from Locus 4 at New Town.

Figure 2.33. Vessel forms represented in the Catawba-made earthenware assemblage at New Town.

Potters' tools (e.g., burnishing pebbles and shell scrapers) and waster dumps further attest the prominence of the New Town ceramic industry. Mold-made clay tobacco pipes were likely a substantial component of this industry.

Subsistence remains and food storage facilities are notably scarce at New Town. Only one pit yielded appreciable quantities of charred corn, peach pits, eggshell, deer bones, pig bones, and fish bones. The scarcity of such remains is consistent with one lessee's observation that the seasonal residents had effectively abandoned agriculture and were largely dependent on hunting, gathering, and lease payments of bacon, meal, and flour. Jones found only one Catawba woman who actively farmed.

Bowers Site (c. 1800–1820s). The Bowers site (38LA483) is located atop a high ridge overlooking Catawba River, about 2.5 km north of New Town. It is shown on Robert Mills' 1825 map of Lancaster District, and he notes that the unnamed small town "is generally called Turkey-head" (Mills 1826:773–774) (Figure 2.34). The site was discovered in 1970 and in early 2002 was the first to be excavated as part of the University of North Carolina's Catawba project (Davis and Riggs 2004). Shovel testing defined a small (500 m²) cabin locus, one of three identified at the site, and located a shallow, rectangular cellar pit aligned parallel to a Federal period roadbed (Figure 2.35). Excavation of this substructure cellar recovered more than 2,000 artifacts, including Catawba burnished pottery (representing plates, pans, bowls, jars, and a cup), English pearlware and creamware sherds, Catawba clay pipe fragments, glass bottle and

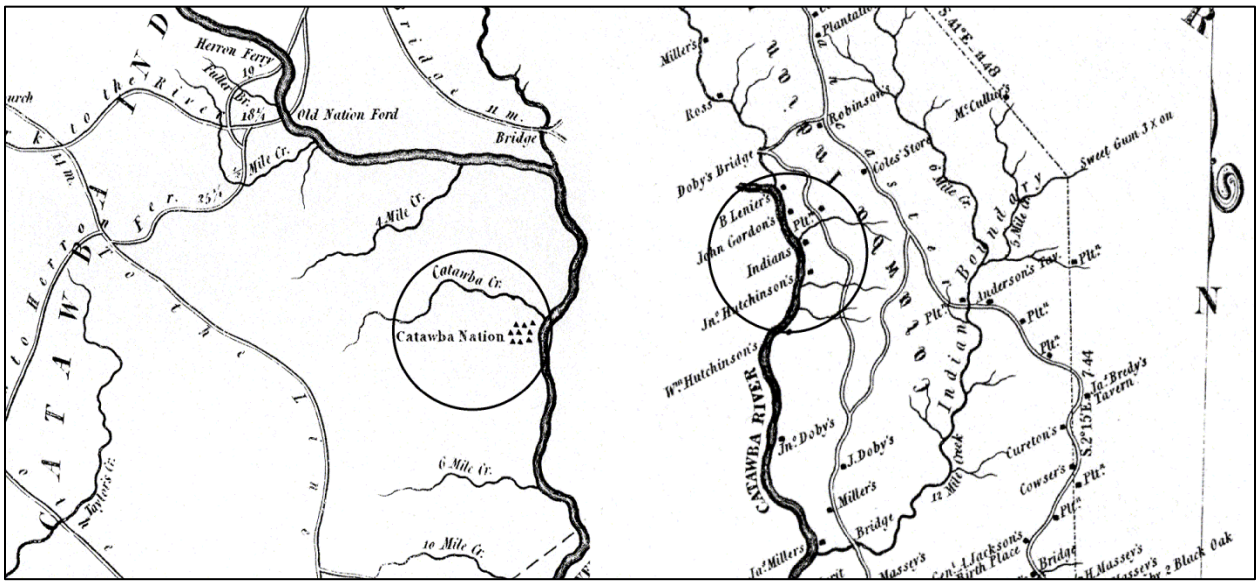

Figure 2.34. Portions of York (left) and Lancaster (right) district maps from Robert Mills' 1825 atlas, showing Turkey-head (designated simply as "Indians") and the main Catawba Nation settlement on the west side of Catawba River at the location of the modern-day Catawba Reservation.

stemware fragments, brass buttons, lead shot, an iron snaffle bit, and glass beads (Figures 2.36 and 2.37). The Catawba ceramic assemblage is similar to that found at New Town, representing European vessel forms and containing fragments of vessels with painted decorations. The worn and highly fragmented character of this collection, together with the inclusion of abundant gravels and Archaic lithic artifacts in the cellar deposits, suggests that most of this material was cleaned from the site surface and dumped into the cellar after its abandonment as a storage facility. The English-made ceramics and other associated materials indicate a site occupation during the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

Shortly after archaeological investigations were undertaken at the Bowers site, the property was sold for development, and today all but a very small part of Turkeyhead has been subsumed by the residences and golf courses of the Sun City Carolina Lakes community (Edwards 2006).

Conclusion

Despite secure economic and territorial bases, Catawba population spiraled downward during the early nineteenth century due to disease and rampant alcohol abuse. With the death in 1820 of Sally New River, the matriarch of New Town, the community moved across the river to the location of the present-day Catawba reservation, but Catawba families continued until about 1855 to visit the site of the old town to bury their dead (Speck 1939:43). By the time of the town's abandonment, most of the Catawba lands were under long-term leases to white farmers, a system which Robert Mills (1826:114–115) described as follows:

> The remains of this nation now occupy a territory 15 miles square, laid out on both sides of the Catawba river, and including part of York and Lancaster districts. This tract embraces a body of fine lands, well timbered with oak, &c. These lands are almost all leased out to white settlers, for 99 years, renewable, at the rate of from 15 to $20 per annum for each plantation, of about 300 acres. The annual income from these lands is estimated to amount to about $5000. This sum prudently managed, would

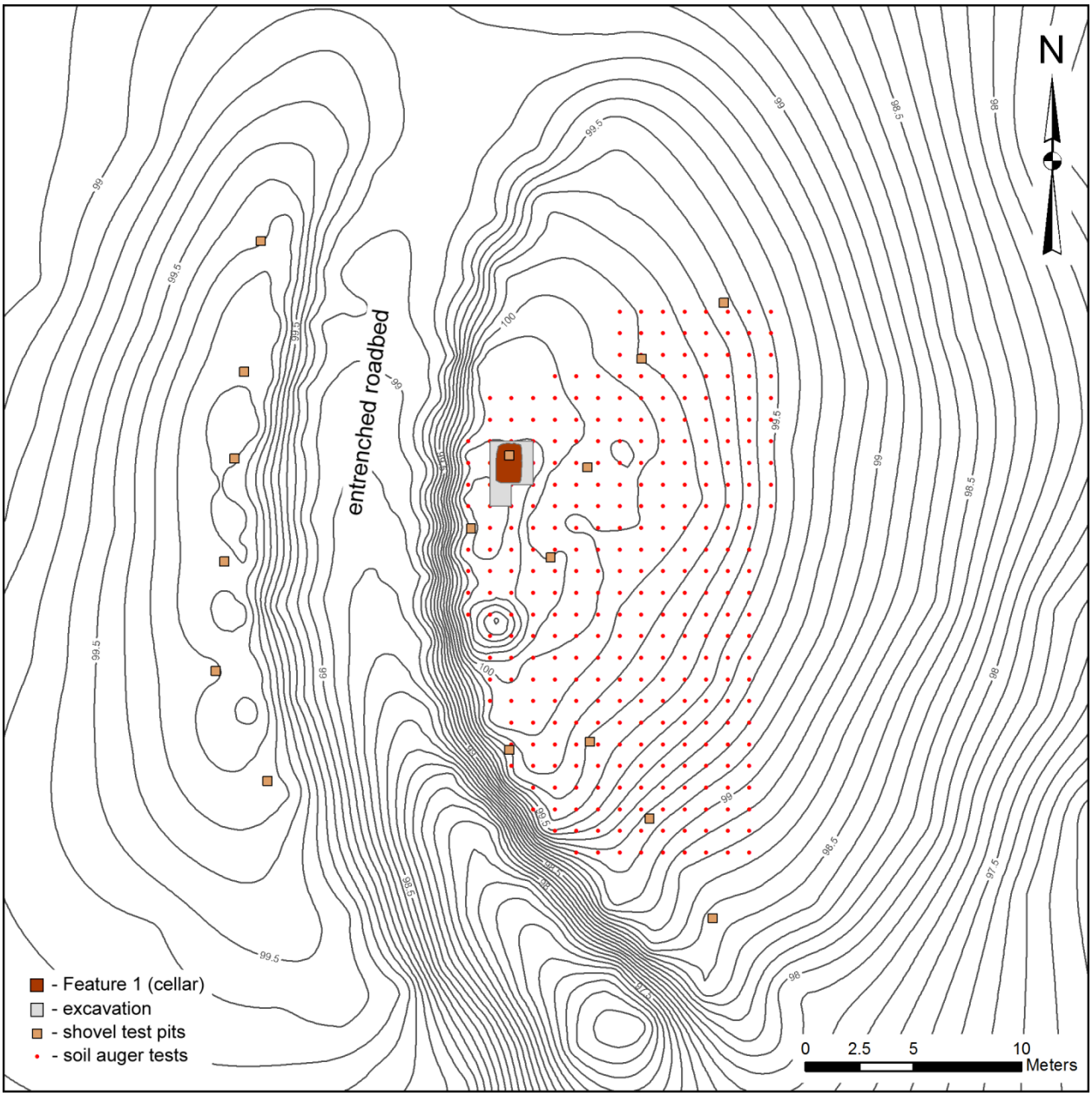

Figure 2.35. Map of the Bowers site showing the location of the cabin cellar pit (Feature 1) and the areas investigated in 2002. Contour interval = 10 cm (elevations reference an arbitrary datum).

> suffice to support the whole nation, (now composed of about 30 families,) comfortably. Yet these wretched Indians live in a state of abject poverty, the consequence of their indolence, and dissipated habits. They dun for their rent before it is due, and the 10 or $20 received are frequently spent in a debauch; poverty, beggary and misery follow, for a year. What a state of degradation is this for a whole people to be in, all the result of neglect of duty on our part, as guardians of their welfare.

Over the next two decades, the nation maintained a measure of political, economic, and cultural autonomy in its native territory, but gradually fell into obscurity, and their 150-year alliance with South Carolina faltered. White politicians and businessmen interpreted the Catawbas' waning numbers and declining economy as evidence of impending extinction.

Figure 2.36. Catawba pottery recovered from Feature 1 at the Bowers site.

Attitudes of non-Indians residing on Catawba lands also shifted, as more and more white leaseholders came to regard Catawba lands as theirs. This shift is evidenced in the leases and other legal documents associated with the leasing system.

> In the beginning, leaseholders referred to "my lease of land inside the Indian Boundary" or "my Indian lease." Over time, the wording often became "my land" with the word "lease" dropped altogether. "Indian Boundary," if used, was shortened to "I.B." While some leaseholders still recognized the Indians' ownership, others dropped references to the Indians altogether. Second- and third-generation heirs often inherited "my land" with no acknowledgment that the land still legally belonged to the Catawba Indians. [Pettus 2005:43]

In 1840, South Carolina politicians cajoled a few Catawba leaders into ceding their reserved lands for a small cash payment and the promise of a new reserve near the Eastern Cherokees. By this time, many Catawba families already had moved to Qualla Boundary, and others soon

Figure 2.37. Glass and English pottery recovered from Feature 1 at the Bowers site.

followed (Brown 1966:319). This resettlement failed, and the Catawbas soon were denationalized and dispossessed of their lands, reduced from "the Patriot Indians" to landless "free persons of color," wandering as itinerant potters and day-laborers through an increasingly race conscious and strident South. While some Catawbas remained among the Cherokee in western North Carolina, many returned to their old lands on Catawba River, and still others left the Carolinas altogether, including a group of 23 who joined the Choctaw Nation in western Arkansas after unsuccessful attempts by the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs to re-settle them among the Cherokee and Chickasaw in Indian Territory (Brown 1966:324–327). In 1842 Joseph White, acting as agent for the Catawbas on behalf of the state of South Carolina, purchased a 630-acre tract of poor, hilly, and forested land on the west bank of the river, opposite the site of New Town, for the Catawba families who had remained or returned after their unsuccessful

resettlement in western North Carolina (Brown 1966:320). Today, this tract forms the nucleus of the Catawba Reservation.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catawbas became nearly invisible to their surrounding white neighbors, as they quietly got on with the task of day-to-day living and raising families. As a visitor to the reservation in 1893 noted, "this people, which once made the woods of Carolina ring with the war-whoop as they went forth against the enemies of the early settlers, have been allowed to dwindle away unnoticed, until now the very fact of the existence of an Indian in South Carolina is, perhaps, not generally known, even in counties almost touching the Catawba Reservation" (Scaife 1896:3).

Entries for 13 Catawba households enumerated in the 1880 federal census for Catawba Township, York County, South Carolina (pages 38 to 41) suggest that most families survived either as subsistence farmers or day laborers. Occupations for Catawba men were listed as "farmer" or "laborer," while those for Catawba women were recorded as "keeping house" or "washer woman." The traditional crafts of pottery-making and pipe-making also continued to provide an important supplement to household incomes.

Despite the many hardships, abuses, and tragedies that they suffered, the Catawbas' historical narrative ultimately is one of adaptation, re-adaptation, and survival in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Over a period of more than 170 years following the establishment of the English at Charles Town, Catawbas successfully negotiated with colonial and state governments, traders, and other Indian tribes to insure their survival and relevance on the ever-shifting frontier between Europeans and Indians. The arrival of Europeans posed innumerable challenges, but it also presented opportunities for trade and alliance that the Catawbas seized upon to solve the looming crises of the shatter zones that emanated from the Great Lakes. Catawba leadership parlayed strategic partnerships with the English of South Carolina and Virginia into a position of economic and military strength that drew native allies, bolstered sagging populations, and solidified the Catawbas' preeminent position in the piedmont. By skillfully managing these relationships with Europeans, the Catawbas were able to maintain territorial integrity and political and cultural autonomy even as they continuously redefined and reinvented themselves in the face of changing conditions. The ultimate persistence and florescence of the Catawba Nation during the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries confounded the frequent earlier predictions of their inevitable disappearance, and is testament to the strength of this community and its sagacious adaptations to the "New World" that the Europeans had brought (Merrell 1989).

Today, the Catawba Indian Nation is the sole federally recognized tribe in South Carolina and boasts over 2,800 enrolled members. The nation maintains a reservation on the Catawba River, within the bounds of the old 1763 reservation and just 5 km north of Ayers Town, and unlike most native peoples in the eastern United States, Catawbas still reside where they were first encountered by European explorers almost 500 years ago. Members of the Catawba Nation still maintain native traditions that set them apart as unique citizens, even while fully integrated into the broader social, political, and economic fabric of South Carolina and the nation.