

## **ABSTRACT**

DIXON, BRADLEY JOSEPH. *Surveys of Ambition: Indians, Carolina, and Empire, 1700-1715*. (Under the direction of Dr. Judy Kertész).

The prevailing historiography characterizes the growth of the British empire in the early American Southeast as a process driven by the Indian trade in indigenous slaves and European goods. The place of Native Americans within the British empire was predicated on a hub of trading and military alliances with Charlestown, South Carolina as its center. This thesis considers one alternative to this model proposed by the land surveyor and natural historian, John Lawson (1674?-1711), in his 1709 book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*.

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Surveys of Ambition: Indians, Carolina, and Empire, 1700-1715

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Stan and Vanessa Dixon, and to Kim and Phoebe.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Brad Dixon grew up in eastern North Carolina. He graduated from North Carolina State University with degrees in history and political science in 2005. Brad will receive his Master of Arts in History from North Carolina State University in May, 2013.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## Introduction

On Wednesday, February 4, 1701 John Lawson took his ease in the home of Keyauwees Jack, king of Keyauwees Town. Surrounded by high mountains, the town, “were it a Seat of War, it might easily have been made impregnable.”<sup>1</sup> It was Lawson’s second day enjoying the hospitality of Keyauwees Jack. The day before, on the journey into town, Lawson admired the “large Corn-Fields” and the wide savannah that stretched from the town’s stockade to the foot of the mountains. The respite from his travels was welcome. Setting out from Charlestown the previous December, Lawson and his company crossed hundreds of miles through the Carolina backcountry, paddling over rivers, wading in marshes, and plodding on foot through forest and savannah. Relaxing now in the home of his host and “having some occasion to write,” he took out his pen and paper. Lawson kept a journal of his travels to one day present as a survey of the colony for Carolina’s distant rulers, the Lords Proprietors.

As Lawson began to write, Keyauwees Jack noticed him scribbling notes in his journal and boasted to his guest “that he could write as well as I.”<sup>2</sup> The wager amused Lawson who decided to take him up on it. “Whereupon, I wrote a Word, and gave it to him to Copy, which he did with more exactness, than any European could have done, that was illiterate.”<sup>3</sup> Keyauwees Jack eventually grew bored of copying Lawson’s hand and decided to scratch his own symbols on the paper. “Afterwards, he took great Delight in making Fish-hooks of his own Invention, which would have been a good piece for an Antiquary to have

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<sup>1</sup> John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina* ed. Hugh T. Lefler (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 56.

<sup>2</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 56.

<sup>3</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 57.



puzzled his Brains withal in tracing out the Characters of Oriental Tongues.”<sup>4</sup> Lawson admired what he took to be the natural, untutored talents of the Indians he met. Like the “Antiquary” of his imagination, he too puzzled over their origins. During his years in Carolina, Lawson would make his living as a land surveyor. But he aspired to be one of the “vertuosi.” England’s virtuosi were polymath collectors, specializing in natural history, medicine, and antiquarianism.<sup>5</sup> He measured land, collected plants, and tried to read Indian peoples. Soon, other men gathered round to marvel at Keyauwees Jack’s copies of Lawson’s handwriting. They compared Jack’s letters with Lawson’s. Jack’s friends were convinced that his letters were better wrought than Lawson’s. The Indians thought “I could read his Writing as well as I could my own.”<sup>6</sup>

Outside the fastness of Keyauwees Town, Native Americans and English colonists did not often enjoy such concord. The expansion of the English into Indian lands was fraught with tensions. Empire in the Southeast advanced on the backs of the trader’s mules bearing European goods. The English played one Indian nation against another, forging trading and military alliances and keeping them until they were no longer expedient. Wars were started for nothing more than the chance to take a few Indian captives to sell as slaves. Peoples of different nations banded together as their kin were taken away by slavers or killed. Keyauwees Jack was a Congaree Indian who fled his own home to join the company of friendly strangers. Even the Tuscarora, Iroquoian speakers whose territory extended over the eastern interior of North Carolina, complained in vain of the traffic in slaves. They asked

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<sup>4</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 57.

<sup>5</sup> For the intersections between virtuosity and medicine, see Craig Ashley Hanson, *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine, and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 57.

that for “their young men fit to Hunt, that privilege to leave their Towns, & seek Provision for their aged, might be granted to them without fear of Death or Slavery.”<sup>7</sup> When Lawson entered an Indian town he was often graciously received. But an Indian man could not expect a hearty welcome when, chasing a deer, he happened across the bounds of an English plantation. Lawson reproached his European readers. “We look upon them with Scorn and Disdain, and think them little better than Beasts in Humane Shape though if well examined we shall find that, for all our Religion and Education, we possess more Moral Deformities and Evils than these Savages do, or are acquainted withal.”<sup>8</sup>

John Lawson was a critic of empire, but not an opponent. He believed that the interests of imperial expansion and the interests of the Indians were compatible—that it was possible “to make these People serviceable to us and better themselves thereby.”<sup>9</sup> To achieve these contradictory goals, Lawson proposed his own imperial project designed to advance empire while ostensibly relieving some of its most grueling effects upon Indians. His imperial project was predicated on the idea of incorporating Native peoples into the empire and colonial society. Lawson believed that culture was learned and could be changed over time under the proper conditions. Thus he was attentive to the education of Indian youth and thought it an essential component that Indian children should be inculcated with different sense of the relationship to labor and property. There, they would learn how to make the European goods on which many Native peoples were increasingly dependent. Lawson also proposed that new arriving European immigrants to the colony be encouraged to marry

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<sup>7</sup> From “The Tuscarora ask Pennsylvania for aid.” LEARN North Carolina, 2008. Available on the web at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1960>.

<sup>8</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 243.

<sup>9</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 243.

Indian wives, gaining property, skill in Indian languages, and drawing nations into kinship with the English. Gradually, the Indians would “better themselves,” taking on the “Religion and Education” of the English. The Indians at Keyauwees Town in 1701 thought Lawson could read Keyauwees Jack’s handwriting better than his own. And Lawson was confident that he could read the Indians. His outlook as a surveyor and aspiring natural historian provided Lawson the basis of his project in making the peoples he met comprehensible as human beings and thus fit for his project to adjust the course of empire in the Southeast.

### ***The Development of the British Empire in the Southeast***

How did the British empire in the North American Southeast develop during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries? How did colonial leaders conceive of the place of Native Americans in the empire? Historians have proposed various answers. Verner Crane, in his seminal work, *The Southern Frontier*, argued “that throughout the colonial period, the Indian trade was the chief instrument of expansion.”<sup>10</sup> Despite slow growth in the number of English settlers, Carolina, he writes, experienced a rapid expansion in power during the early eighteenth century. The colony’s expansion was characterized by the development of trade relations and alliances with Native Americans. “Neglected by the Proprietors, unsupported by the Crown, the Carolinians had contrived to push the first frontier of the province, the frontier of the Indian trade and Indian alliances, farther into the

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<sup>10</sup> Verner Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 22.

wilderness than English traders elsewhere were wont to venture.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Crane noted that the trade in Indian slaves was “an important instrument in Carolinian expansion.”<sup>12</sup>

Gary Nash took Crane’s argument further, focusing intently on the Indian trade’s role in imperial development, particularly the English traffic in Indian slaves. From the start, Nash argues, the English colonizers in the Southeast recognized the potential to reap fortunes from the Indian trade. Trade became their model of imperial expansion rather than the Spanish method of claiming territory then securing it “by establishing missions that gathered local Indians into a sedentary agricultural mission life.”<sup>13</sup> Trade shaped the nature of the empire in the Southeast and determined the character of expansion. “The Carolinians did not penetrate the interior themselves but formed alliances with coastal native groups, whom they armed, rewarded with European trade goods, and encouraged to make war on weaker tribes, some of whom were ancient enemies.”<sup>14</sup> Indian nations allied with the English were little more than tributaries. By this means, Carolina colonists reaped what Nash calls “secondary advantages” from wars and slave raids. These advantages included the depopulation of Indians, opening the way for English expansion into the south and west. As for relations between the metropolitan Lords Proprietors and colonists in Carolina, Nash observed that “nobody took the distant London proprietors very seriously.”<sup>15</sup>

Recent scholarship focuses closely on the effects of British empire-making on Native Americans. James Merrell argues that the Indian trade—in both material goods and slaves—

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<sup>11</sup> Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 140.

<sup>13</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1974), 127.

<sup>14</sup> Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, 130.

<sup>15</sup> Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, 127.

was the defining characteristic of England's empire in the Southeast and its relationships with Native Americans during the early eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Merrell showed how the combination of trade, war, and disease transformed the societies and cultures of Native Americans. As Native populations declined, disparate groups banded together to form new nations and identities. The early eighteenth century was a time fraught with devastating change in Native societies. Paul Kelton traces the paths of disease through the early Southeast.<sup>17</sup> The Indian slave trade carried epidemic diseases over vast distances, infecting disparate Indian peoples. Thus, he suggests that Indian disease mortality was encouraged by the process of imperial development in the Southeast. There is also a wealth of scholarship on the ways in which Native peoples construct and situate themselves in space.<sup>18</sup> Native peoples conceived of themselves in relation to their networks of kinship, communities, and their historical experience rooted in place.

Alan Galloway argued that the Indian slave trade was the most important factor in the development of the empire in the Southeast. In his 2002 work, *The Indian Slave Trade*, Galloway moved the discussion of the traffic in indigenous slaves front and center, contending that the slave trade was an instrument of imperial policy that was often employed deliberately to enhance English power in the region.<sup>19</sup> Galloway also considers how imperialists in the Southeast imagined the place of Native Americans in the British empire. For Galloway, the

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<sup>16</sup> James Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492-1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> For instance, see Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon Books, 1969) and Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

empire was a subject of political contestation. Indeed, he contends that the question of Indian relations was the central dividing line between political factions in Carolina.<sup>20</sup> Gallay's so-called Tories urged only subjection of Native peoples, believing them to be "incapable of incorporation into European society."<sup>21</sup> Gallay's Whigs, on the other hand, sought first to "subject the South's Indians and then incorporate them into some as yet undefined way into the empire."<sup>22</sup> Whigs, in Gallay's reading, also favored missionary activities among the Indians as "a way to elevate heathens while preparing them for incorporation into the empire."<sup>23</sup>

The distinction between "subjection" and "incorporation" was central to the debate that Gallay argues took place in early eighteenth century Carolina. To be considered a subject during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Gallay argues that Indians needed only to trade with the English and be willing to go to war with them as needed. From the English perspective, "if you traded with Indians you could claim them as an ally, which magically transformed them into subjects whose land you could then claim sovereignty over at the diplomatic tables of Europe."<sup>24</sup> Barbara Arneil also sees in early Carolinian conceptions of the Indian subject, the typical dependent relationship as prevailed between master and servant, patron and client.<sup>25</sup> Other scholars observe reluctance among the English to adopt incorporation. Travis Glasson considers evangelization as incorporation in his

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<sup>20</sup> In his formulation Tories are mostly Anglican planters from along the Cooper River; Whigs are Colleton County Dissenters and their allies. Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 224.

<sup>21</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 231.

<sup>22</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 232.

<sup>23</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 231.

<sup>24</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 176.

<sup>25</sup> Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1996), 85.

recent study of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), chartered in 1701.<sup>26</sup>

“Early SPG supporters envisioned the conversion of Indians would be a speedy and glorious work that would lead many souls to Christ while providing Britain with reliable allies in America, but converting Native Americans proved difficult.”<sup>27</sup>

### ***John Lawson’s Imperial Alternative***

One alternative to the model of subjection was the plan of Indian incorporation proposed by John Lawson in his 1709 book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*. Born in approximately 1674, John Lawson first came to Carolina in 1700.<sup>28</sup> Arriving in Charlestown, he embarked on a surveying expedition through the interior of the colony from 1700–1701. During his trek, Lawson’s kept a journal of the lands he surveyed and the Indian peoples he met. Lawson remained in North Carolina for eight years afterwards. He made a living as a surveyor. In 1705, Lawson surveyed the land on which the English town of Bath was erected. He returned to London in 1708. There, he collected his writings on the Carolina colony into his book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*. The book’s full title declares that it is an “Exact Description and Natural History of that Country.” He was a correspondent and collector for one London naturalist, James Petiver. He included in the book the journal of his first long survey expedition through North and South Carolina. He also included observations on the colony’s history, its present state, its plant and animal life, and a lengthy

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<sup>26</sup> Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> For two standard biographies of John Lawson, see Charles L. Holloman, “John Lawson, 1674-1711,” in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 4, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1991), 34-36 and Hugh T. Lefler’s introduction in Lawson, *New Voyage*, xi-liv

section entitled “An Account of the Indians of North-Carolina.” While in London, the Lords Proprietors commissioned him Surveyor-General of North Carolina. He also assisted in the preparations for the move of Palatines to North Carolina. In 1710 he and the Palatines’ leader, Christoph de Graffenried established a new settlement called New Bern. While on an expedition searching for the headwaters of the Neuse River, the pair was captured by warriors from the southern band of the Tuscarora Indians. After two separate trials at Catechna, the town of the Tuscarora leader Hancock, Lawson was sentenced to death by the assembled council. On September 22, 1711, the Hancock’s Tuscarora and their allies launched an attack deep into Bath County, North Carolina that began the Tuscarora War.

Scholars offer varying assessments of the work of John Lawson and its proposals for the incorporation of Native Americans. A. L. Diket argues that Lawson’s book “reflected all of the elements of a wilderness paradise, including the Noble Savage, ripe for redemption.”<sup>29</sup> Diket concludes that Lawson believed that “if natives were going to be Christianized and civilized they must be amalgamated with the white race” through intermarriage between English colonists and Native Americans.<sup>30</sup> Richard Beale Davis argues that Lawson’s proposal of intermarriage between Native peoples and European colonists only made Lawson’s death at the hands of the Tuscarora as “ironic as it was tragic.”<sup>31</sup> James Merrell presents another view of Lawson’s intentions. Rather than incorporating the Indians into the English world, Lawson “lost himself in dreams of a time when Indians would be gone and

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<sup>29</sup> A. L. Diket “The Noble Savage Convention as Epitomized in John Lawson’s *A New Voyage to Carolina*,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 43, no. 4 (Oct. 1966), 423.

<sup>30</sup> Diket, “Noble Savage,” 428.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763*, vol. I (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 136.



colonists could take over.”<sup>32</sup> Merrell writes that Lawson envisioned Carolina “shorn of its aboriginal inhabitants and tamed by men like himself.”<sup>33</sup>

More recently, Marjorie Hudson, Amy R. W. Meyers and Kirsten Fischer closely examined the prescriptive portions of Lawson’s writings about Indians. Hudson calls Lawson’s plans for Indian incorporation the “merging of two cultures.”<sup>34</sup> Meyers discusses the plan at greater length attempting to understand the assumptions that undergird it. She describes Lawson’s program as one of English “absorption of native Americans into their culture” rather than a merger on equal terms.<sup>35</sup> “For Lawson,” she writes, a ‘Reasonable’ and ‘Christian’ approach to the treatment of native American peoples that included ‘Tenderness,’ ‘Mildness,’ and ‘Clemency’ would ensure the protection of English interests on American soil.”<sup>36</sup> Kristen Fischer described Lawson’s plans as envisioning “an ever expanding empire” with “English-Indian marriage as a cornerstone of conquest.”<sup>37</sup> Fischer argues that Lawson believed “intermarriage would not lead to the feared disintegration of colonial society’s norms of patriarchy and private property. Rather, intermarriage would strengthen both.”<sup>38</sup>

Historians have yet to fully consider the dimensions of John Lawson’s imperial project. The prevailing historiography does not adequately address the underpinnings of

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<sup>32</sup> Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Merrell, *Indians’ New World*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Marjorie Hudson, “Among the Tuscarora: The Strange and Mysterious Death of John Lawson, Gentleman, Explorer, and Writer,” *North Carolina Literary Review* 1, no. 1 (1992), 78.

<sup>35</sup> Amy R. W. Meyers, “Picturing a World in Flux: Mark Catesby’s Response to Environmental Interchange and Colonial Expansion,” in *Empire’s Nature: Mark Catesby’s New World Vision* eds. Amy R. W. Myers and Margaret Beck Pritchard (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 258.

<sup>36</sup> Meyers, “Picturing a World in Flux,” 258.

<sup>37</sup> Kirsten Fischer, *Suspect Relations: Sex, Race, and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 74.

<sup>38</sup> Fischer, *Suspect Relations*, 74.

Lawson's project in his work in surveying and in natural history. When he was not surveying lands for improvement he was observing Indians, discerning signs that they could also be "improved." Humanizing the Indians by reconstructing their ancient descent in common with the rest of mankind was the first step to incorporating Indians into the empire. Thus, Lawson's work in natural history included the search for Indian origins. Historians have not entirely explored the political implications of the Lords Proprietors' patronage of Lawson. By the time that Lawson arrived in London to publish his book, critics were assailing the proprietary government with charges of mismanagement and negligence. Lawson's work sought to answer critics of the proprietary regime by recasting the history of Carolina in a more favorable mold. Lawson's imagined Carolina—of flourishing commerce, easy government, and inviolable religious liberty—was the version of English colonial society into which the Indians were to be incorporated.

Moreover, historians continue to reduce Lawson's motivations for proposing the incorporation of Indians to, on the one hand, imperial interests and on the other, a profound sympathy for the condition of Native Americans. Lawson had complicated motives—often contradictory ones. The contradiction may be resolved when we understand Lawson was a critic of the course of empire in the Southeast. The transfer of wealth that he thought was sure to come through English and Indian intermarriage was only one side of a larger exchange. Lawson proposed to share English knowledge of manufactures and trades with the Indians. This was in response to the ill-dealings in trade that Lawson observed among the Native peoples he met. By incorporating Indians into the empire and into colonial society, Lawson hoped to alleviate the worst effects on Indians of empire-building without hampering

further English expansion. Moreover, incorporation was but one part of a larger imperial project. Even Lawson was conscious of its limitations. Incorporation was not enough to make a limitless empire. He did not doubt that Indians could be incorporated into the empire and colonial society but he believed the process was too slow and the number of Indians too great. His project therefore included the settlement of immigrants from Continental Europe, “Switzers,” on the colony’s frontiers.

This study argues that John Lawson’s project of incorporation was designed to secure English expansion while alleviating its ill-effects upon Native peoples. Lawson proposed to incorporate Indians first into humanity’s collective past and second, into a shared future with the English colonizers. Yet, the contradiction between the interests of Native peoples and the ambitions of imperialists were still present in Lawson’s proposal. From the Native American perspective his plan would likely have seemed a form of gradual dispossession. Chapter one, “Sympathy,” considers John Lawson’s reputation for sympathy for Native Americans. The chapter argues that Lawson’s motives are better understood when he is considered as a critic and reformer of the process of empire-building in the Southeast. From his perspective, the benefits of incorporation were not limited only to the English. Yet, Lawson’s sympathy was circumscribed. He did not directly address the Indian slave trade, nor did he seem to consider it more than a problem for the Indians themselves. The chapter compares Lawson’s career with that of the Moore Family, who made fortunes in the Indian slave trade and whose relations with Indians were predicated on the model of subjection.

Chapter two, “Incorporation,” argues that Lawson’s project for incorporation of the Indians began with his quest to find their origins. Before Native Americans could be

incorporated into the empire, they first had to be considered human. This chapter goes further than other studies of Lawson by examining the process whereby he developed his own theory of Native American origins as a strategy for humanizing the Indians. Lawson personally pursued the question of Indian origins in a manner oft overlooked by scholars. His quest for the relics of lost civilizations in the Carolina backcountry speaks to the curious relationship between natural history and the formation of empire. By recovering the Indians' ancient past, he could then narrate for them a common future with the English. The chapter argues that Lawson believed language was the most significant marker of difference setting Indians apart from other peoples.

Chapter three, "Regulation," explores John Lawson's proposed Indian policy that he called the "Regulation of the Savages." That he called incorporation by the name of "Regulation" was a function of the times and political debate over the management of the Indian trade. But Lawson's plan for regulation went further than policing traders. Significantly, he began its description by presenting a census of the Indian population of North Carolina. The census listed the Indian nations Lawson knew, the number of their towns, and the number of warriors in each nation. From there he offered a scathing critique the treatment of Indians by the English. Lawson proposed to share the "Mysteries of our Handicrafts" with the Indians. He also proposed to apprentice Indian youth to masters so as to learn those handicrafts and to change their relationship to labor. Lawson then proposed intermarriage between Indians and English colonists of "lower Rank." The discussion then turns to the larger imperial prospect of Britain versus Spain and France. Incorporation was not enough to secure the empire's footing in America; Lawson therefore proposed settling

warlike European immigrants on Carolina's frontiers. Finally, the chapter recovers the sense of historical mission that Lawson possessed for himself and that is overlooked by historians. Incorporation of the Indians was a biblical imperative, he argued. Were the English not to heed it, they would have to answer to a greater power.

## Chapter One:

### Sympathy

*I am well-affected to the Indians.*

– John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 1709.<sup>39</sup>

When John Lawson wished to appear as a trustworthy observer of Native Americans, he did so through his guide on the expedition of 1700-1701, Enoe-Will. When Enoe-Will offered to leave his son with Lawson as his tutor, he did so because “he was of the Opinion that I am well-affected to the Indians.” By “well-affected,” Lawson meant sympathetic. He wished that his readers know that he was fond of Indians, understood them, was inclined to their interests, and even wanted them to one day become part of the towns that he laid out as a surveyor. Indeed, his proposed policies were inspired by an acute understanding of the dire circumstances in which many Native peoples found themselves. He wrote with authority of the demise of whole towns to disease and of the antics of traders eager to cheat their customers. Yet, Lawson’s sympathy was circumscribed. In Lawson’s mind, imperial interests and the interests of Indians were compatibly intertwined. And despite his support for incorporation, John Lawson was silent on the greatest of Native American grievances—the rampant trade in Indian slaves.

The circumstances of John Lawson’s death in 1711 encouraged the development of his legend as a sympathetic observer of Indians. Taken prisoner with his partner in the New Bern venture, the Baron de Graffenried, Lawson was tried before an assembly of the lower

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<sup>39</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.

Tuscarora and their allies. While de Graffenried escaped, Lawson was sentenced to death. Lawson's contemporaries did not see the matter the same way. They were struck by what they thought was the incongruence of a purported friend of the Indians executed at their hands. For them the death of John Lawson was a tragedy, his demise made worse by its contrast with all the good intentions toward Indians he was said to have expressed in his book. The alleged gruesomeness of his death only compounded the historical irony. Christopher Gale, North Carolina's Chief Justice, wrote to a sibling on November 2, 1711 of the Surveyor-General's demise. At that time, de Graffenried was presumed dead also, but Gale believed "the fate of Mr. Lawson (if our Indian information be true) was much more tragical, for we are informed that they stuck him full of fine small splinters of torchwood, like hog's bristles, and so set them gradually on fire."<sup>40</sup> Gale was the first writer to record the rumor that Lawson had been executed in a manner similar to the one reserved by the Sapona Indians for prisoners of war as so vividly described in his journal. Five Seneca men were captured at Sapona-Town about ten days before Lawson's party arrived there. "Those Captives they did intend to burn, few Prisoners of War escaping that Punishment.

The Fire of Pitch-Pine being got ready, and a Feast appointed, which is solemnly kept at the time of their acting this Tragedy, the Sufferer has his Body stuck thick with Light-Wood-Splinters, which are lighted like so many Candles, the tortur'd Person dancing round a great Fire, till his Strength fails, disables him from making them any farther Pastime.<sup>41</sup>

Others thought that Lawson simply had his throat cut, as in William Byrd II's typically colorful rendering, "from ear to ear." Still others were convinced that Lawson got what he

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<sup>40</sup> Christopher Gale to [his sibling], including a memorial concerning attacks by Native Americans, November 2, 1711, *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 1 ed. William L. Saunders (Raleigh, NC: P.M. Hale, 1886), 826. Hereinafter abbreviated as *CRNC*.

<sup>41</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 53.

deserved. In 1715, John Urmstone, a missionary to North Carolina from the SPG wrote in disgust of the country comparing it to “Siberia in Muscovy.” The backward inhabitants and their Lords Proprietors in England “ought to be ashamed of their famous Country, they would have all men do as Lawson did write whole Volumes in praise of such a worthless place: he has his reward.”<sup>42</sup> The naturalist Mark Catesby considered John Lawson to be a pathbreaking forerunner for his own work in the Carolinas and Florida. Catesby was among the first writers in print to suggest it an irony that Lawson was killed by the Indians for whom he was said to have professed so much sympathy. “I cannot but here lament the hard fate of this inquisitive traveller,” Catesby wrote, “who, though partial in his favourable opinion of these Barbarians, died by their bloody hands, for they roasted him alive in revenge for injuries they pretended to have received from him.”<sup>43</sup>

Some historians considering Lawson’s relations with Native peoples tended to pick up the same refrain. Samuel A. Ashe expressed disbelief at Lawson’s “unhappy fate” as it was “in strange contrast with the humane and friendly sentiments he had expressed in his *History*.”<sup>44</sup> In bringing forth a new edition of that celebrated book, now better known by its original title, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, Frances Latham Harriss wrote of Lawson as “absolutely fearless,” confident in his reputation for “kindness and fair dealing with the Indians.”<sup>45</sup> As the colony’s surveyor-general, Lawson was merely “the agent” though the

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<sup>42</sup> John Urmstone to William Taylor, June 12, 1715, *CRNC* II, 186.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands: Containing Two Hundred and Twenty Figures of Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents, Insects, and Plants* ed. George Frick (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1974), viii.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel A. Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, Vol. I, from 1585-1783 (Charles Van Noppen, 1925), 181.

<sup>45</sup> Frances Latham Harriss, “Biographical Sketch of John Lawson,” in *Lawson’s History of North Carolina*, ed. Frances Latham Harriss (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie Publishers, 1937), xvii.



Indians “mistook him for the cause of their despoiling.”<sup>46</sup> Only the perfidy of the Baron de Graffenried, Lawson’s companion on his last encounter with the Tuscarora and the Coree, can account for the arrogant, disputatious version of the man the reader finds in the scribbling of New Bern’s founder. The real Lawson, Harriss was sure, will yet prevail. After all, there is his *book* and “the kindly tolerance” and “sympathy” for the Indians expressed therein for all time.<sup>47</sup> Well into the twentieth century, the question of the justice of Lawson’s death persisted. William S. Powell and Hugh T. Lefler could not permit Lawson’s death by “exquisite torture” to pass by without noting ironically that among Carolina’s Englishmen it was he “who best understood and sympathized with the Indians.”<sup>48</sup> In recent years, Alan Gallay challenged the prevailing opinion on Lawson by suggesting that during his ultimately deadly confrontation with King Hancock’s council Lawson’s “familiarity with the Indians did him ill.”<sup>49</sup>

Lawson’s sympathy did not extend to all Indians nor was it reciprocated by everyone he met on his travels through the interior of Carolina. During his first surveying expedition in 1700–1701 his reception of differing Native peoples varied. While he found hospitality with the Siouan-speaking peoples of the Piedmont, Lawson received only contempt from the Tuscarora he met on the journey. If we measure its limits in terms of how many Indians he thought could be incorporated, his sympathy is again narrowed in scope. He was convinced

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<sup>46</sup> Harriss, “Biographical Sketch,” *Lawson’s History*, xvii; Harriss’s words are almost verbatim those of Stephen B. Weeks who wrote the John Lawson entry for the 1905 *Biographical History of North Carolina*. “They mistook him for the cause, while he was only the agent in despoiling them of their lands.” Stephen B. Weeks, “John Lawson,” in *Biographical History of North Carolina II*, ed. Samuel A. Ashe (Greensboro: Charles Van Noppen, 1905), 215.

<sup>47</sup> Harriss, “Biographical Sketch,” *Lawson’s History*, xix.

<sup>48</sup> Hugh T. Lefler and William S. Powell, *Colonial North Carolina: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 69.

<sup>49</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 263.

that there were “more Indians than we can civilize.” Most glaring of all is the omission of any serious critique of the Indian slave trade. Of course, Lawson did comment upon slavery. His observations, however, were not critical of the slave trade. Rather, he praised the labor value of enslaved Indians, writing that he knew “several of them that were Slaves to the English, learn Handicraft-Trades very well and speedily.”<sup>50</sup> Even Enoe-Will had a slave whom Lawson remembered for killing and cooking their party some wild turkeys.<sup>51</sup> Lawson had evidence of the scope of the trade. He related in awe the story of a “young *Indian* Woman, that had been brought from beyond the Mountains, and was sold a slave in *Virginia*.”<sup>52</sup> To his astonishment, the woman who had been captured for slavery on the other side of the Appalachians spoke the same language as the Coree Indians who lived near Cape Lookout. Slavery itself did not trouble Lawson; his attitude to the trade in Indian slaves is unknown. He was “well-affected” to the Indians but like many of his contemporaries accepted slavery as part of the order of things.

### ***Lawson’s Motivations for Travel***

John Lawson’s perspective is better understood if we consider his motivations for travel and his intellectual background. “Tis a great Misfortune,” Lawson lamented in the Preface to *A New Voyage to Carolina*, “that most of our Travellers, who go to this vast Continent in *America*, are persons of the meaner Sort, and generally of a very Slender

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<sup>50</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 175.

<sup>51</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 64.

<sup>52</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 174.

education.”<sup>53</sup> Of all that is mysterious in the life of John Lawson, it is almost certain that he was neither lower-class nor poorly educated. Emblazoned on the book’s title page is at least the author’s self-conception: “JOHN LAWSON, Gent.” Likewise on the documents he signed in his many lawsuits and on his will, the appellation appears. Whether his genteel epithet was the marker of a wanderer who made his fortune in the New World or Lawson’s only inheritance from a poor but respectable family is left to speculation. Born in about 1674, John Lawson’s life before he left England for Carolina is mostly a mystery. Historians have advanced two theories about Lawson’s early life. Raymond Phineas Stearns and Hugh T. Lefler argued that Lawson was a Yorkshireman, a grandnephew of the John Lawson who made his name as an admiral under the Protectorate and the Restoration. Stearns found a John Lawson enrolled as an apprentice in the London Society of Apothecaries.<sup>54</sup> Charles R. Holloman, after extensive research in England and on the Continent, pieced together a different account of Lawson’s life. Holloman placed Lawson in a London family and speculated that he might have attended lectures at Gresham College.<sup>55</sup>

It appears that Lawson had some aspirations for success in the field of natural history. Before leaving for Carolina in 1700, Lawson began a correspondence with the London apothecary, naturalist, and Fellow of the Royal Society, James Petiver. Writing of Petiver’s patronage, Lawson wrote of his delight at serving “so great a Vertuosi.”<sup>56</sup> Collecting and

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<sup>53</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Raymond Phineas Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1970), 306.

<sup>55</sup> Holloman, “John Lawson, 1674-1711,” in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* 4, 34.

<sup>56</sup> 12 April 1701, John Lawson to James Pettiver, in Lawson, *New Voyage*, 267; The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides the definition of “virtuoso” prevailing in Lawson’s time as “one who has a general interest in arts and sciences, or who pursues special investigations in one or more of these; a learned person; a scientists, savant, or scholar.”

ordering specimens of the natural world from plants to human beings, was the virtuoso's chief pursuit. Some concerned themselves with ancient material culture, also. Indeed, before archaeology as a university discipline developed in the nineteenth century, virtuoso antiquarians cataloged the locations of ancient ruins, copied down inscriptions, and scrupulously collected ancient coins, pottery, and sculpture. These men considered themselves part of a distinct social order. Most were gentlemen who possessed the leisure to pursue a refined sense of curiosity.<sup>57</sup> Seeking their patronage, other men busied themselves with the often grubby work of collecting. John Lawson was just one fieldworker among James Petiver's world-girdling web of correspondents. From his apothecary's shop in London, Petiver directed the collecting activities of scores of men and women, several of whom called Carolina home. Though plant specimens were his chief pursuit, Petiver accepted other curiosities besides. His Carolina correspondents often sent over American Indian artifacts. In 1705, one Hannah Williams of Charlestown sent Petiver the tobacco pipe of an Indian king and the moss "Petticoat" of the king's wife, along with assorted "Indian herbs and medicines."<sup>58</sup> Petiver's "Brief Directions of the Easie Making and Preserving Collections of All Natural Curiosities" underscores the imperial and commercial motivations of collecting. "NOTE If to any ANIMAL, PLANT, MINERAL & c. you can learn its Name, Nature, Vertue, or Use," Petiver's instructions read, "it will be still the more Acceptable."<sup>59</sup> Usefulness was not the highest priority, however. The virtuoso, wrote one anonymous

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<sup>57</sup> For an excellent discussion of the social and gendered bases of virtuoso culture, see Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 76-81.

<sup>58</sup> Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies*, 298.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph and Nesta Ewan, *John Banister and His Natural History of Virginia, 1678-1692* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1970), 347.

pamphleteer—likely Mary Astell—in 1696, “values a Camelion or Salamanders Egg, above all the Sugars and Spices of the West and East-Indies, and wou’d give more for the Shell of a Star-fish, or Sea Urchin entire than for a whole *Dutch* Herring Fleet.”<sup>60</sup>

If other men’s learning was “Slender,” Lawson’s seemed extensive. His reading must have been wide. The catalog of Lawson’s personal library exists only as scattered hints throughout his own book, left to be patched together with learned conjecture. Reconstructing all that Lawson brought with him to the writing table is almost impossible. There is some evidence that Lawson read Robert Beverley’s 1705 *History of Virginia*, in particular, the paragraphs recommending the virtues of intermarriage between Indians and Englishmen. Lamenting that the “French far outstrip” the English in the quality of men they send to explore the interior of America, Lawson reveals glimmered of familiarity with the accounts of the likes of LaSalle or Bienville or perhaps the *Jesuit Relations*. From the writings of the Spanish conquistadors Lawson explained he was acquainted the accounts of native civilizations in Mexico and the Andes.<sup>61</sup> Elsewhere, he fumes in rage against “those that generally write Histories of this new World” who know little more about the Indians “than I do the *Laplanders*.” These men write books “stuf with Invectives against the Government they lived under, on which Stage is commonly acted greater Barbarities, in Murdering worthy Mens [sic] Reputation, than all the Savages... are capable of equalizing.”<sup>62</sup> The works of John Smith, George Percy, William Strachey and other early Virginians come to mind as answerable to Lawson’s charge. Lawson rarely named a source. In relating the

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<sup>60</sup> [Mary Astell], *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (London, 1696), 99.

<sup>61</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>62</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.

latitude of various features along the Carolina coast, Lawson quoted extensively from the account of a 1663 voyage to what is now Albemarle Sound.<sup>63</sup> Exploring Lawson's mental universe thus requires a kind of triangulation to find one's bearings. His statements must be carefully marked and their location plotted in relation to the universe of opinion surrounding his own. Where possible, the present essay will engage those works with which there is a strong probability to believe Lawson was familiar. Much like the circumstances of his early life, we can recreate his intellectual milieu only partially.

Lawson's motives for travel are much clearer. He would have his reader believe that his decision to travel was impulsive, almost on a whim. John Lawson began the tale of his journey to Carolina "in the Year 1700, when People flock'd from all Parts of the Christian World, to see the Solemnity of the Grand Jubilee at *Rome*."<sup>64</sup> Fashionable young gentlemen departing London for the Jubilee was a common, and evidently comical enough sight, despite England's rigid official Protestantism, to become the fodder for wits and playwrights. George Farquhar's *The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee*, written and performed in 1700, included a scene wherein the young traveler's brother learns just who calls Rome home.

*Dick.* Ay, Sir, He'll spend his whole Estate at this same Jubilee. Who, d'ye think lives at this same Jubilee?

*Clin.* Who pray?

*Dick.* The Pope.

*Clin.* The Devil he does! my Brother go to the Place where the Pope dwells! he's bewitch'd sure.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 80; For the source of Lawson's citation, see William Hilton, *A Relation of a Discovery Lately Made on the Coast of Florida* (London: J. C., 1664).

<sup>64</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 7.

<sup>65</sup> George Farquhar, *The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee* (London: 1700), 35.

His decision to witness with his own eyes the Catholic world's greatest spectacle does not mean John Lawson was a Catholic nor bewitched. That he was bound for the Jubilee signifies nothing so much as his possessing sufficient leisure to travel. This would-be Ulysses at first appears as mercurial and naïve as Furquhar's Clincher. With hardly a second thought the young adventurer changed his plans when he met with a gentleman who said Carolina was the place to which he ought to sail. "My Intention, at that Time, being to travel, I accidentally met with a Gentleman, who had been Abroad, and was very well acquainted with the Ways of Living in Both the Indies," Lawson wrote who "assur'd me, that Carolina was the best Country I could go to."<sup>66</sup>

### *The Surveyor Surveyed*

Yet, Lawson was not merely a traveler—he was a surveyor. The book that he produced at the end of eight years spent in North Carolina was dedicated to the eight Lords Proprietors of Carolina. During his time in the colony, Lawson made his living surveying tracts of land and oversaw the foundation of Bath, North Carolina's first chartered English town. Although published in the hope of attracting prospective settlers to the colony, Lawson's book was addressed to the proprietors as the report of an extensive survey of the lands in their possession. He declared that his survey of the proprietors' American domains presented Carolina in "her Natural Dress, and therefore less vitiated by Fraud or Luxury."<sup>67</sup> The colonial surveyor was a figure with many sides, an actor at the center of many varied enterprises. Historians have for too long relegated the surveyor's project to a peripheral

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<sup>66</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 3.

place in the formation of empire in the early American Southeast. The surveyor—whose pursuits were often intertwined with that of natural history—was central to this process. The etymology of the word “surveyor” is bifurcated along the subtle line that separates the act of “looking over” or examining a place with the eye, and “overseeing,” that is, governing it. Matthew H. Edney, writing of the East India Company, sums the essential imperative underlying the larger business of surveyors, “To govern territories, one must know them.”<sup>68</sup> Lawson’s journal reads as an extended official dispatch, reporting on the plants, animals, and peoples in the Lords Proprietors’ colonial realm. By his act of surveying, the Lords Proprietors would be enabled to reassert their possession over the land and its myriad Indian peoples. But underneath the spectacle of the traveler’s relation is a persistent focus on the quality and potential uses of land.

Arriving in Charlestown, Lawson’s first expedition set out on December 28, 1700. Lawson’s first survey of the Carolinas took him through 500 miles of territory, in a wide arc from beginning in Charlestown, curving into the backcountry, and turning back again to end up at the mouth of the Pamlico River in North Carolina. During his trek through the Carolinas John Lawson surveyed the lands he encountered with an eye to where labor might be productively applied. In his journal and translated to his map of the region, Lawson jotted down notes describing the local topography, indicating for instance whether a place was fertile or possessed of good marble. Near Sapona Town, Lawson observed “very good” land “free from Grubs or Underwood.” The savannah there practically offered itself up to be subdued by the enterprising English settler. “A man near *Sapona* may more easily clear 10

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<sup>68</sup> Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2.



Acres of Ground, than in some places he can one,” Lawson explained. Once cleared the land itself abounded in the instruments of its enclosure and improvement “there being much loose Stone upon the Land” with which to build a home and a “durable Fence.”<sup>69</sup> On reaching the banks of the river whereon Sapona Town stood, Lawson was captivated by the prospect. A “pleasanter Stream” than the Sapona River would not be found in the whole of Europe provided that this American place were “inhabited by *Christians*, and cultivated by ingenious Hands.” Lawson even mused of purchasing the land himself from the town’s friendly king. Taking his leave of Sapona Town, Lawson again marveled at what “little Trouble” the place would require of an Englishman were he to settle there. The country beyond was equally fertile and easy with a point in one place “where many thousand Acres may be fenced in, without much Cost or Labour.”<sup>70</sup> But planting imaginary farmers in this verdant country was not Lawson’s only preoccupation. Along the creeks he crossed on the trip outbound toward Keyauwees Town, Lawson dotted the banks with the engines of manufacturing, as they proved “very convenient for Water-Mills.”<sup>71</sup> The Native Siouan peoples Lawson encountered in the Piedmont were living in the midst of a second Paradise, open for appropriation and improvement, while east of Eden the Europeans along the Albemarle Sound played in the ashes of a land burned out like a torch. “The Savages do, indeed, still possess the Flower of *Carolina*,” the surveyor wrote in his journal, “the English enjoying only the Fag-end of that fine Country.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 51.

<sup>70</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 55.

<sup>71</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 55.

<sup>72</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 61.

As Lawson and his party moved into Tuscarora country, his reception by the locals and the tenor of his observations changed. Tuscarora country was mostly “Pine Land” and fit only as a “good Range for Cattel.”<sup>73</sup> Before entering Tuscarora country, Lawson sensed a change in his Indian guides whom he “perceiv’d... were in some fear of Enemies.”<sup>74</sup> The change in his companions first manifested itself some time before when “two *Tuskeruro Indians*” stopped the party as they prepared to cross a river. Lawson’s guide, “Enoe-Will,” translated the pair’s message. To Will, the Tuscarora called “the *English*, to whom he was going, were very wicked People; and, That they threatd the *Indians* for Hunting near their Plantations.”<sup>75</sup> Despite the message, Lawson and his party pressed onward only to receive scant hospitality. At one town, Lawson noted glumly, “We could find no Provision at that Place.”<sup>76</sup> What appears to the historian as a deliberate withholding of Tuscarora hospitality was to Lawson a function of population. The Tuscarora, “tho’ they are expert Hunters, yet they are too populous for one Range.”<sup>77</sup> Population pressures and the desire to prevent their western neighbors from having “any Commerce with the English” made the Tuscarora a formidable power. There was another reason for their frigid hospitality that Lawson did not discuss. The Tuscarora were increasingly victims of the slave trade. The situation was so atrocious that by 1710 a group of Tuscarora headmen would visit the Conestoga to obtain from the government of Pennsylvania permission to relocate there.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.

<sup>74</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.

<sup>75</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 64.

<sup>76</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.

<sup>77</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.

<sup>78</sup> See Galloway, *Indian Slave Trade*, 265 – 266.

### *A Serviceable People*

The potential of lands in the Carolina backcountry for “improvement” was not Lawson’s only interest as a surveyor. While slave traders were looking for able bodies to sell as chattel to the West Indies and the northern English colonies, John Lawson was assessing their customs and bodies for signs that Native peoples might be incorporated into English society. The Indians’ incorporation would mark the end of their isolation from the course of history as envisioned by Lawson. As a husbandman’s labor improved the land, by studious cultivation Lawson intended that the Native peoples in Carolina be “improved” according to English lights. His book is filled with his encounters with the Indians of the Carolina backcountry. Each one influenced Lawson’s understanding of the problems of Indian relations in the colony.

*A New Voyage to Carolina* is peopled with individual Indians whom Lawson said he met in the course of his travels. Some Indians, like the young man who told Lawson his conjurer “never spoke Lyes,” remained anonymous. The unnamed “Queen” of the Congarees offered the English traveler and his part exceptional hospitality, permitting them to partake of “what Rarities her Cabin afforded, as Loblolly made with *Indian* Corn, and dry'd Peaches.”<sup>79</sup> The memory of his meeting her led Lawson into a disquisition on the heights of Indian female pulchritude. There was the king of Keyauwees Town who, after seeing Lawson’s pocket devotional “Manual” with “King David’s picture in it” asked “who that figure represented.”<sup>80</sup> “I told him, It was the Picture of a good King,” Lawson wrote, “that liv’d according to the Rules of Morality” and who was now enjoying “all the delightful

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<sup>79</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 57.

pleasures in the other world” for his obedience to the “Omnipotent Being.”<sup>81</sup> One Indian, in particular, Lawson singled out from all the rest—that was his guide, Enoe-Will. Will figured as sage companion to Lawson during their journey through the backcountry together. Will was often a barometer that gauged the pressure of the situations in which the party found themselves. During their travels there in 1701, it was Will who urged Lawson to turn back from Tuscarora country. Through the figure of Will, Lawson also sought to vouch for his own sympathy with Indians. Their relationship suggested to Lawson’s readers what Carolina could become were his project for the Indians fulfilled.

In the backcountry Lawson met two Indians who had made sacrifices of their noses in order to win favor with their god and so gain the same technologies and industries as the English colonists. Their tale was a statement on the dependence of many Indians upon the goods provided by English traders. But it was also indicative of Indian resistance. Lawson’s visit in 1700 with the “Nonos’d Doctor” among the Santee has been interpreted by one recent historian as a playful joke on Europeans’ alleged microbial and technological superiority.<sup>82</sup> Instead, it may hold signs of Native resistance to colonial advances. To the ears of Lawson, who thought all Indians “an easy, credulous People, and most notoriously cheated by their Priests and Conjurers,” the relation of the doctor’s story no doubt sounded like something worthy of ridicule.<sup>83</sup> The doctor claimed that he lost his nose whilst, in Lawson’s recounting, “conversing with the white Man above, (meaning God Almighty).”<sup>84</sup> This conversation with

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<sup>81</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 57.

<sup>82</sup> Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 27.

<sup>84</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 26.

the divine occurred in the process of seeking a cure for the bout of “*Lues Venerea*” under which the doctor suffered. Withdrawing into the woods, the doctor and a companion who “labour’d under the same Distemper” embarked on what was likely a regimen of purgatives and a spare diet to cleanse themselves of the sickness. Their errand into the wilderness ended with a spiritual experience that both Lawson and his historical interpreter diminish as a joke. The doctor and his friend “were very kindly entertain’d,” Lawson reports, “by that Great Being: he being much pleas’d with their Ways, and had promis’d to make their Capacities equal with White People in making Guns, Ammunition, &c. in Retaliation of which, they had given him their Noses.”<sup>85</sup>

Dissecting this story and examining its contents with an eye to Indian custom reveals a lesson behind the joke. It was a lesson that Lawson would take to heart when he formulated his own Indian policy. First, there is the description of the “Great Being” as a “white Man” to examine. To Lawson and his readers, then and now, the implication is that the Santee doctor was here referring to God in his carnal manifestation as a European figure, perhaps cloaked in flowing robes and stroking an alabaster beard. Moreover, Lawson was reading in Native religion yet another hopeful sign for the prospects of their conversion to Christianity. To the Santee, however, the “white Man” was likely instead one of the two figures, competing and balanced divinities of good and bad that the colonists often read as God and Satan, respectively. This god, “the *Quera*, or good Spirit,” Lawson wrote

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<sup>85</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 26-27.

elsewhere, “delights in doing good, and in giving the Fruits of the Earth, and instructing us [Native peoples] in making several useful and ornamental things.”<sup>86</sup>

Second, there is the doctor’s temporary withdrawal from society and the upshot his conversation with the “Great Being” to consider. Native medicinal practices were inseparable from spiritual practices. Though Lawson thought that both were flavored with the “Spice of Quackship,” he nevertheless acknowledged the efficacy of Native remedies as “admirable Cures.”<sup>87</sup> The Santee doctor’s withdrawal was a pious effort to obtain sacred power from the good spirit with which to combat his affliction. This quest ended with an audience before the good spirit or, as Lawson terms him, the “Great Being.” Noteworthy is the reason the “Great Being” intervenes in the case of his Santee supplicants. The spirit was “much pleas’d with their Ways,” Lawson wrote. In other words, by seeking a cure after the traditional fashion, observing tested, ancient ritual, the doctor and his companion elicited the spirit’s blessing and were granted powers greater than they sought—powers to rival the European invaders’ own. Though Lawson related this story as a tale of Indian physic, curing the “French Pox” was almost secondary in the Santee’s eyes. The tale of the “Nonos’d Doctor” evidently made a deep impression on Lawson’s thinking. In his “Account of the Indians of North-Carolina,” Lawson urged that the secrets of English manufactures be shared with the Indians. Lawson maintained a skeptical curiosity about the role of Native holy men, like the “Nonos’d Doctor.”

Though he was impressed with the practical efficacy of some Indian healers, John Lawson was exceedingly skeptical about the “foolish” religion they professed. Indian

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<sup>86</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 220.

<sup>87</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 26-27.

cosmology at least had the value of correctly asserting that “this World is round.”<sup>88</sup> Otherwise, most all of Indian practice and belief amount to so many “Absurdities.”<sup>89</sup> There remained, however, a sense of the mysterious in even the most skeptical. There was, as Susan Scott Parrish suggests, a point beyond which the European virtuoso would not travel.<sup>90</sup> Past the European’s “*ne plus ultra*,” Indians were free to enter and return again bearing efficacious knowledge, no matter how dubious their understanding of it seemed. Charges of diabolism had long tinted European descriptions of Native American medicines and religions.<sup>91</sup> Lawson continued the tradition in his account of Indian conjurers. Nothing in Lawson’s writing better illustrates the latent tension between contempt for superstition on the one hand and an appreciation for its mysterious effectiveness on the other than his opinion of Indian conjurers. As for these Indian holy men, besides the smell of hellish sulfur insinuating their intimate connection with Lucifer, Lawson esteemed them “the cunningest Knaves in all the Pack.”<sup>92</sup> To prove the point he related to his readers the story of hearing an Indian conjurer explain the cause of lightning.

During a visit to an Indian town, a fierce lightning storm forced Lawson to take refuge aboard his canoe. When the storm subsided the town gathered together for a feast on the eve of an Indian funeral. After the food was served, the town’s conjurer held forth on the nature of lightning and its power against which the doctor averred “no Wood or Tree” could

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<sup>88</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

<sup>89</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

<sup>90</sup> Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006), 216.

<sup>91</sup> Parrish, *American Curiosity*, 222.

<sup>92</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

stand.<sup>93</sup> It was when the conjurer told the tale of a man he once knew who could keep “Lightning in the Likeness of a Partridge” that Lawson’s ridicule burst forth. On hearing this “absurd Parcel of Lyes,” Lawson spoke disparagingly of the conjurer to a young Indian who had spent most of his time among the English. To Lawson’s surprise, the young man grew defensive. He told Lawson that the old man “did never tell Lyes.”<sup>94</sup> With that, Lawson dropped the matter. “Thereupon,” Lawson recalled, “seeing the Fellow’s Ignorance, I talk’d no more about it.”<sup>95</sup> Lawson elsewhere relegated Native peoples’ animism to the realm of foolery and deceit when considering Indian taboos against the killing of snakes. To kill a snake, Lawson explained, was thought to bring the wrath of the snake’s whole family upon the perpetrator of the deed.<sup>96</sup> “They have thousands of these foolish Ceremonies and Beliefs,” Lawson wrote, “of which they are strict Observers of.”<sup>97</sup> However foolish their beliefs and no matter what “great deal of Imposture” is in the work of their conjurers, Lawson admitted that “I never knew their Judgment fail.”<sup>98</sup> Just as there were Indians who were friendlier to Lawson than others, there were also those whom he deemed more civilized. Savage customs were practiced by some Indians while others—mostly near the English coastal settlements—were busy dressing, talking, and eating like Englishmen.

John Lawson surveyed in the Carolinas a world of fractured histories, a collision of past and present that he hoped to explain and then to mend. He documented uneven development among the Indian cultures he encountered on his travels. Near the coast there

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<sup>93</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 221.

<sup>94</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 222.

<sup>95</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 222.

<sup>96</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

<sup>97</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

<sup>98</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 223.



lived Indians who herded cattle, made butter, dressed in English clothes, and wore English shoes. With their old customs, these Indians discarded their former languages for English. Further inland, the peoples he encountered abided in a way of life that to Lawson seemed crude, barbarous, and backward. Entering the Indian world of the backcountry, the traveler passed into a state of primeval existence where war and privation were more frequently known than peace and plenty. In towns separated by only a few leagues' distance, Lawson heard stories spoken in languages entirely different one from the other. Since the colonization of Carolina began in earnest—roughly half a century before Lawson's time there—English traders had penetrated this Indian world and begun to pull its inhabitants into the emerging Atlantic economy. From their primeval state of nature, the Indians were being wrenched into history again.

### ***Lawson's Critique of Indian Relations and its Limits***

In the Carolinas, Lawson believed that English expansion in the Southeast had been at best a mixed blessing for the Indian inhabitants. So overpowering was the force of English imperial expansion in John Lawson's appraisal that the entire process seemed to act upon Native peoples with a corrosive force. The Indians who had adopted English ways of life were his most obvious examples of the civilizing influence of the colonial venture. But their condition was unusual. Although he never denied that the destiny of the English in America was to possess the whole continent, he wished to somehow take it justly. Dispossession of the natives was being accomplished but, to Lawson's chagrin, it was carried on without scruple and in bad faith. Indians were defrauded of their land not relieved of it; they were

sold poor trifles for exorbitant sums and received nothing but vices; and they were denied Christianity and the knowledge to produce modern manufactures themselves. Native peoples were thus on the path, he reckoned, to a hopeless dependent state leading ultimately to extinction. John Lawson was perhaps more acutely aware of the implications of the English form of colonialism than were many of his contemporaries. “We reckon them Slaves in Comparison to us, and Intruders, as oft as they enter our Houses, or hunt near our Dwellings. But if we will admit Reason to be our Guide, she will inform us that these *Indians* are the freest People in the World, and so far from being Intruders upon us, that we have abandon’d our own Native Soil, to drive them out, and possess theirs.”<sup>99</sup> Dispossession followed disease. “The Small-Pox and Rum have made such a Destruction amongst them, that, on good grounds, I do believe, there is not the sixth Savage living within two hundred Miles of all our Settlements as there were fifty Years ago.”<sup>100</sup> Upon the slave trade, Lawson made little comment. War he understood largely as endemic to the Indians in their primal state. Internecine conflict—from frequent poisonings to incessant war—was “Another Destroyer of them.”<sup>101</sup>

Contrasted to the constant wars of the Indians was the potential of economic exchange to provide a kind of uplift toward civilization. Yet, this was not how history in the Carolinas unfolded. “We trade with them, it’s true,” Lawson complained, “but to what End? Not to shew them the Steps of Vertue, and the Golden Rule, to do as we would be done by. No, we have furnished them with the Vice of Drunkenness, which is the open Road to all

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<sup>99</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 243.

<sup>100</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 232.

<sup>101</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 233.

others and daily cheat them in every thing we sell, and esteem it a Gift of Christianity, not to sell to them so cheap as we do to the Christians, as we call our selves.”<sup>102</sup> For Lawson, the English were on trial and the burden was to prove to the Indians whether indeed they were a “worthier Race of Men.”<sup>103</sup> The Indian trade expanded the empire but had proved too exploitive. But Lawson’s critique of the Indian trade was inimical to a powerful portion of the colonial elite.

### ***Indian Traders and the Model of Subjection***

The Indian trade was a profitable enterprise and its leading dealers formed a powerful interest in the colonial government. Traders made their fortunes quickly and were apt to keep them. Writing of the trades and resources of Carolina, Lawson was understated about the scope of the trade but not its potential for English settlers on the make. “And for the small Trade that has been carried on in that way,” he noted, “the Dealers therein have throve as fast as any Men, and the soonest rais’d themselves of any People I have known in *Carolina*.”<sup>104</sup> The Indian trade for deerskins was hardly small. For the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century, South Carolina exported on average 54,000 deerskins per year.<sup>105</sup> Power accrued to the successful dealers in the Indian trade. Many of the leading men in Charlestown were Indian traders. It was these men who were most often at odds with the Lords Proprietors over Indian relations. Indeed, colonial dynasties were founded on the

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<sup>102</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244.

<sup>103</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 201.

<sup>104</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 93.

<sup>105</sup> Nash, *Red, White, Black*, 130.

profits of the trade, with sons taking up the work and antiproprietary agenda of their fathers. The story of the Moore family of Goose Creek is an instructive case in point.

From the beginning of settlement in Carolina, the Moores appeared determined to win riches and glory from the exploitation of Native Americans. The activities of the family's first patriarch, James Moore, Sr., attracted the notice of the Lords Proprietors as early as 1683. The elder Moore, they wrote had "most contemptuously disobeyed our orders about sending away of Indians... & contrived most unjust warrs upon y<sup>e</sup> Indians." All this he did "in order to y<sup>e</sup> getting of Slaves."<sup>106</sup> Before embarking on a career as an Indian trader, Moore was the manager of Lady Margaret Yeamans' sizable estate, overseeing servants and tending the herds of cattle that grazed on her land. Margaret Yeamans was the widow of Sir John Yeamans, a former governor of the colony and a man who perhaps served as a model for the up-and-coming Moore. "If to convert all things to his private profit be the marke of able parts," the Earl of Shaftesbury observed, "Sir John is without a doubt a very judicious man."<sup>107</sup>

Sixteen eighty-three was also the year that Moore found a partner in his ventures, a Goose Creek planter named Maurice Matthews. Arriving on the first ship to Carolina in 1670, Matthews was a fellow Barbadian immigrant, who held little respect for the directives of the Lords Proprietors.<sup>108</sup> Together, the two would pursue wealth to the utmost limits of Carolina, embarking in 1690 on a mission into the distant Appalachian Mountains in search

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<sup>106</sup> W. Noel Sainsbury and Helen Craig Carson, ed., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, Vol. 1* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 19--?), 266-267.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>108</sup> See Maurice Matthews, "Mr. Matthews's 'relacon' of St. Katherina," *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 114-116.

of mines and Native American trading allies.<sup>109</sup> During the same 1690 mission Moore encountered some of the southern towns of the Cherokee, establishing trade and diplomatic relations with them.

Matthews also showed Moore how to handle the rough-and-tumble politics of Charlestown. “[H]e is Metchivell Hobs and Lucifer,” one contemporary wrote of Matthews, “in a Huge lump of Viperish mortality a soull as big as a musketo.”<sup>110</sup> As the nominal leader of the Goose Creek men, Matthews skillfully managed opposition to the Lords Proprietors, outwitting successive proprietary appointees and maintaining a vise-grip on the Indian trade. The Goose Creek men, so called for the branch of the Cooper River on which they were seated, were early recognized as the foremost antagonists to proprietary rule in Carolina. Comprising many of the original settlers from Barbados, the Goose Creek men sought to firmly establish in South Carolina a slave society similar to the one prevailing in their former home. The Goose Creek men presented themselves as the logical alternative to the Lords Proprietors. They were confident that the colony would be better run in their hands, guided according to their lights, and protected by their arms. Incoming governors were repeatedly instructed by the Proprietors to be wary of their wiles. It is in one such letter, dated April 12, 1693 that James Moore, Sr., his political apprenticeship completed, was acknowledged by the Lords Proprietors as “the head of this faction.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 161; For Matthews’ role see Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 41.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in South Carolina Historical Society, “Grimball of Edisto Island,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 32, 114.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in William James Rivers, *A Sketch of the History of South Carolina to the Close of the Proprietary Government by the Revolution of 1719* (Charleston: McCarter & Co., 1856), 169.

In 1700, Moore was elected governor after the death of Joseph Blake left the office vacant. Though governors were appointed by the Lords Proprietors in London, when the office was left vacant by death or otherwise, the choice of a temporary replacement was the prerogative of the proprietary deputies who comprised the colony's council. For Moore, the election was the singular opportunity of his long career; his governorship presented a fleeting moment in which to consolidate his power and look to extending his family's influence. The perquisites of office were now his to collect and bestow on his family. He wasted little time. Word of Moore's election reached South Carolina's allied Indians in December 1700 as a request for tribute. John Lawson, his trek through the Carolinas underway, records meeting an Indian "a Man of great Esteem among them" who reported "that *James* had sent Knots<sup>112</sup> to all the Indians thereabouts, for every Town to send in 10 Skins, meaning Captain *Moore*, then Governour of *South-Carolina*."<sup>113</sup> The new governor would shortly demand of them far more.

The impending union of the French and Spanish crowns threatened war for Britain. From his vantage in South Carolina, Moore saw a means for extending the war against both powers in America, settling his eyes and intentions three hundred miles south to Saint Augustine. With word of a formal war declaration imminent, Moore surveyed the strategic scene for the Assembly in August. "The Takeing of St. Augustine," he explained, "before it be Strengthened with French forses opens to us an easie and plaine way to Remove the French (a no less dangerous Enemy in time of peace than Warr) from their Settlement on the

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<sup>112</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* an archaic usage of "knot" was to signify "a bond or obligation; a binding condition; a spell that binds." In this case, the word perhaps signifies a bond to provide tribute.

<sup>113</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 48-49.

South Side of the Bay of Apalatia.”<sup>114</sup> Moore’s opponents in the Assembly were quick to check his prospective invasion, branding it “no more than a Project of Freebooting under the specious Name of War.”<sup>115</sup> From the outset of his governorship, Moore faced considerable opposition in the Assembly. Overcoming their objections, Moore secured an appropriation of some £2,000 to outfit a massive army of some “1200, 600 English and 600 Indians.”<sup>116</sup> At the insistence of the Commons House, Moore personally assumed command. Without sufficient artillery, Moore’s siege stalled. “The English held the Possession of the Town a whole Month, but finding they could do nothing for want of Mortars and Bombs, they dispatch’d away a Sloop for Jamaica.”<sup>117</sup> Before the supplies could arrive, two ships were spotted pushing into St. Augustine’s harbor. Certain they were a relieving Spanish force, Moore retreated with his army back to Charlestown overland.

Moore thus effected the destruction of much of Guale and thereby won the respect of many of Carolina’s Native allies.<sup>118</sup> Five months after the expedition, on May 1, 1703, new commissions at last arrived from the Lords Proprietors. Sir Nathaniel Johnson replaced Moore as governor; Moore meanwhile still exercised power as the colony’s Receiver-General.<sup>119</sup> In an effort to repair his damaged reputation and capture slaves, Moore again looked south toward Spanish Florida. At the urging of the new governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson, Moore undertook in the winter of 1703 – 1704 an expedition against the Apalachee,

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 75.

<sup>115</sup> Ash, “State of Affairs,” *Early Carolina*, 272.

<sup>116</sup> Oldmixon, “Oldmixon’s Empire,” *Early Carolina*, 342.

<sup>117</sup> Oldmixon, “Oldmixon’s Empire,” *Early Carolina*, 343.

<sup>118</sup> “Although the siege of St. Augustine failed, many Indians did not consider it an English defeat. After all, the invaders had decimated the surrounding area and taken numerous captives which many natives would have deemed a great success... Whereas the English sought total victory through removal of the Spanish presence, southern Amerindians saw nothing to gain from it.” Alan Galloway, *Indian Slave Trade*, 137.

<sup>119</sup> Salley, *Commissions*, 166-167.

a nation of Indians long allied with the Spanish. Only reluctantly was the expedition agreed to at all. No monies were voted from the public treasury for its support. Moore's share of the plunder was to be significantly reduced as well. As many of the Apalachee as would go willingly, were to be transported back to Carolina and settled as allies, rather than taken as slaves. "I have now in my Company all the whole People of three Towns, and the greatest part of four more," reports Moore in a dispatch to the governor printed in the *Boston News-Letter*. In the same letter, Moore complained of the hamper these Indians placed on his marches and of how their being saved from slavery made his soldiers' "part of the plunder (which otherwise might have been £100 to a man) but small."<sup>120</sup>

Moore's forays into Florida were ultimately judged by other Carolina imperialists to have nearly broken power of Spain there, leaving its richest provinces in utter desolation. "I shall not trouble you with a long Account of these Enterprises," wrote Thomas Nairne in 1710, "but only tell you our Forces intirely broke and ruin'd the strength of the *Spaniards* in *Florida*, destroy'd the whole Country, burnt the Towns, brought all the *Indians*, who were not kill'd or made Slaves, into our own Territories, so that there remains not now so much as one Village with ten Houses in it, in all *Florida*, that is subject to the *Spaniards*; nor have they any Houses or Cattle left, but such as they can protect by the Guns of their Castle of St. *Augustine*, that alone being now in their Hands, and which is continually infested by the perpetual Incursions of the *Indians*, subject to this Province."<sup>121</sup> Moore died of fever in 1706 but his model of warfare and Indian relations continued through the career of his son. His

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<sup>120</sup> Weeks and Bacon, *The Provincial Press*, 65.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Nairne, "A Letter from South Carolina" in Jack P. Greene, ed., *Selling the New World: Two Colonial South Carolina Promotional Pamphlets* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 53. Hereinafter cited as Nairne, "A Letter."



son, also named James Moore, commanded the second South Carolinian expedition against the Tuscarora in 1712 and left behind a visual representation of the model of Indian subjection which his family had worked to establish.

The Neoheroka Map (1713) depicts the disposition of forces at the Tuscarora fort, Neoheroka, just before it was stormed by Moore and his army of Indian allies.<sup>122</sup> Much more than the record of a siege, the Neoheroka Map conveyed the awesome reach of Moore's Indian alliances. His chart was a diplomatic atlas masquerading as a battle plan. Considered alongside other maps of its era, the Neoheroka Map resembles the great deerskin maps fashioned by the Catawba and Chickasaw and presented to South Carolina's first royal governor, Francis Nicholson in the 1720s, maps whose "main function was to portray social and political relationships" not mere geographic detail.<sup>123</sup> While the power relationships depicted in the deerskin maps were multiaxial and interconnected, the Native camps surrounding Fort Neoheroka are understood to be in orbit about a single, though unseen center, Charlestown. On the deerskin maps, circles represented the Native peoples. Circle size appears to vary according not only with the number of fighting men each are capable of fielding in combat, but also by the mapmaker's perceptions of the relative importance of each in the web of trading paths and alliances of the Southeast.<sup>124</sup> European minds made similar distinctions. Native groups sending larger forces to the battle have camps represented with many more structures in them. To reinforce the point, numerical tallies of warriors are listed

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<sup>122</sup> For a tracing of the Neoheroka Map, see Joseph W. Barnwell, "The Second Tuscarora Expedition," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10, no. 1 (Jan., 1909), 33-48.

<sup>123</sup> Gregory A. Waselkov, "Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast," *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 443.

<sup>124</sup> Waselkov, "Indian Maps," 448-449.

alongside the list of their white officers. But though the Yamasee send only “Fifty Indians,” they are nevertheless one of only two Native groups distinctly named on the map, hinting at other subjective considerations. The “Charikee” are the other group so named, dispatching 310 men to the siege—the largest contingent from any Native group identified by the Neoheroke Map. Singling out both these groups from among the others, Moore underscored their importance in Charlestown’s network of alliances and hinted at the historic relationship that each group shared with the Moore Family, forged in the campaigns of Queen Anne’s War and cemented by trade. But in so doing, Moore also obscured them. The map’s audience did not learn *which* Cherokee and Yamasee were present, from what towns. A conglomerate of 400 warriors listed only as “Indians of Severall Nations” brings the map’s muster roll of Moore’s Native army to 760—a sizable force that brought deadly results to the people inside Fort Neoheroke. By his own account, Moore took 392 prisoners, 192 scalps and reported 366 of the fort’s defenders were either burned alive inside the fort or shot dead defending it.<sup>125</sup> When James Moore, Jr. was named to command the expedition the SPG missionary, Francis Le Jau noted Moore’s “skill in Managing... Indians.”<sup>126</sup> Managing Indians was not the same thing as incorporating them. Instead, Le Jau meant that James Moore, Jr.—like his father—was skilled in making alliances with some Indians in order to subjugate others, keeping them all essentially dependent upon but separate from the English imperial center in Charlestown.

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<sup>125</sup> Saunders, *CRNC II*, 27.

<sup>126</sup> Le Jau, *Carolina Chronicle*, 157.

### *Toward Incorporation*

It might seem easy to argue that John Lawson had more sympathy for Indians than James Moore, hence the one supported incorporation and the other did not. Some historians seem content with just such an assessment. Instead, Lawson differed from Indian traders like Moore as to the best model for regulating the Indians. Moore preferred to keep Indians at bay, forging military and trading alliances, rather than encouraging them to become a part of colonial society. These alliances were viewed by the Moores as radiating out from the power center of Charlestown like the spokes of a wheel from its axle. Lawson, however, wished to bring Indians closer to the English to become “as one people with us.”<sup>127</sup> This entailed making Indians not merely “serviceable” to the English but also “improving” them in the process. Incorporation would benefit both peoples. The English would gain a durable peace and the benefits of Indian knowledge of the regions of Carolina as yet unexplored. The Indians, Lawson believed, would receive the benefits of a civilized state and Christian religion after so long living in a primitive one.

What could explain the backwards condition of the natives, their strange customs and myriad languages, Lawson wondered. For Lawson the explanation was prehistoric, antedating even the remotest memory of man, and discernible in the marks it left behind in the very landscape of Carolina. To his trained eyes, Carolina everywhere displayed the “fairest marks of a deluge.” The flood of Lawson was not to be mistaken with that of Noah. The Carolinian deluge was conceived as a particular one after the events of the Book of

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<sup>127</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

Genesis but before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. The flood was a disruption of history in America and it destroyed a native civilization in North America that Lawson intimated was more advanced than Mexico and Peru, indeed coming close—as he put it—to the sophistication of the ancient Romans. The deluge washed this civilization from history, leaving only broken joists that colonial farmers dug from the bottom of wells or potsherds that their children found uncovered on a creek bank. The destruction was total, leaving the land in the possession of degenerate peoples whose “Jargon” languages were the catastrophe’s most glaring debris. By presenting his evidence for a deluge that destroyed a superior ancient civilization, John Lawson was doing more than advancing a clever conjecture—he was attempting to explain the reason for the polyglot and primitive condition of Carolina’s Indian peoples. They were a people outside of history, hampered in the ordinary course of development by this great natural disaster. The origins of the Indians Lawson knew—peoples like the Saponi, the Core, and the Tuscarora—were obscured by the work of time. The inheritors of Lawson’s antediluvian civilization were a “wandering people” who removed to North America from the “Eastern Parts of the World.” Nevertheless, Lawson established them firmly as human beings and not as some would have it “beasts in Humane Shape.”

## Chapter Two:

### Incorporation

*We look upon them with Scorn and Disdain, and think them little better than Beasts in Humane Shape.*

*Thus we should be let into a better Understanding of the Indian Tongue, by our new Converts; and the whole Body of these People would arrive to the Knowledge of our Religion and Customs, and become as one People with us.*

– John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 1709.<sup>128</sup>

To become “as one people” with the English, the Indians had first to be understood as human beings, as more “than beasts in Humane Shape.” Before Indians could join English communities, learn English trades like blacksmithing or tallowmaking, they had to be incorporated into the English body of knowledge. The colonial project of incorporation was thus two-fold. Native peoples had to be understood as human beings, their ancient past traced back to their origins from ancestors in common with the rest of mankind. On this premise, Lawson’s other project of incorporation depended. Lawson believed that human beings—all descended from a common parent—behaved in essentially the same way. Indians, like other people, could change under the right conditions. Thus, Lawson sought out all the evidence available—from Native oral tradition to their material remains buried in the earth—to incorporate Native Americans with the sacred and natural histories of Europe. Based upon native stories, Lawson concluded that the Indians he knew migrated from Asia.

“When you ask them whence their forefathers came, that first inhabited the country,” Lawson wrote of Carolina’s Indians, “they will point to the Westward and say, *Where the*

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<sup>128</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 243 and Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

*Sun sleeps, our Forefathers came thence.*<sup>129</sup> “At that distance,” Lawson writes, with the sun’s nightly lodgings in mind, the Indians’ forebears traveled from a place that “may be reckon’d amongst the Eastern Parts of the World.”<sup>130</sup> By so deducing, John Lawson reconnected Carolina’s indigenous peoples with the history of the Old World, thereby establishing them as people functioning according to the same natural laws as any others. Lawson’s pronouncements on the origin of Carolina’s Indians were an integral part of his project to incorporate as many of them as possible into English colonial society. He established the Indians’ personhood but presented them as people outside of history, the victims of a prehistoric catastrophe that halted the progress of their cultural development.

They were capable, he wrote, of reckoning with exactitude the “Accidents which happen’d many Years ago.”<sup>131</sup> Once at the funeral of a great war captain, Lawson observed a headman bring forth “the Records of the Country, which are a Parcel of Reeds, of different Lengths, with several distinct marks, known to none but themselves.” By this method of counting the notches, the headman could recall the exploits of his town back “two or three Ages or more.”<sup>132</sup> Although he cited oral accounts, Lawson did not find them entirely satisfying as history. In America, history began “when we,” that is Europeans, “first found out those Parts, and appear’d therein.”<sup>133</sup> At that instant of discovery, whatever claims possessed by the first inhabitants of that “Tract of Land we call America” were cast forever in doubt. The Indians were assumed to be the “Natives thereof” only by virtue of their

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<sup>129</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>130</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>131</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 187.

<sup>132</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 187.

<sup>133</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173; See also the discussion of the historicity of the Americas in Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 114-115.

presence on the continent when Europeans first arrived there beginning in the fifteenth century. “Yet, this,” the Indians’ presence at contact with Europeans, “has not wrought in me a full Satisfaction,” Lawson explained, “to allow these People to have been the Ancient Dwellers of the New-World.”<sup>134</sup>

The uses to which John Lawson put his theories about the origins of Native Americans have received negligible scholarly attention. This is perhaps understandable given the brevity of Lawson’s observations on the question of the Indians’ ancient past. However brief, his writing on the subject is rich in detail that historians have invariably ignored. J. Ralph Randolph argued incorrectly that Lawson “made no guess as to the origin of the Indians, but he did not believe the ones he visited were the oldest inhabitants of the New World.”<sup>135</sup> Richard Beale Davis cited Lawson’s theory that Carolina was the site of an ancient lost civilization and that “the present Indian inhabitants of the land were not its original possessors.”<sup>136</sup> This theory, Beale remarked, “was an intelligent speculation, but really nothing more.”<sup>137</sup> Joyce Chaplin echoes this assessment.<sup>138</sup> She dismissed consideration of the meaning behind Lawson’s and various other Europeans’ theories of Native American origins and focused instead on the cynicism underlying them. “These conjectures implied that Indian cultures lacked the dignity of an ancient history and the right to be considered truly indigenous,” Chaplin explains. “At its most cynical, the view of

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<sup>134</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 172.

<sup>135</sup> J. Ralph Randolph, *British Travelers Among the Southern Indians, 1660-1763* (Norman, OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 86.

<sup>136</sup> Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763*, vol. I (University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 174.

<sup>137</sup> Davis, *Intellectual Life I*, 174-175.

<sup>138</sup> Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 177.

migration could posit a long sequence of new world migrations, one that awarded definitive settlement to the final arrivals: European colonists.”<sup>139</sup> In the case of John Lawson, the matter is more complicated.

Lawson’s consideration of Indian origins should be resituated within a larger transatlantic discourse. Although a reader today might take for granted to common humanity of Native Americans, this was not the case in the early modern world. Numerous scholars in Lawson’s time were busy working out their own conjectures as to the origin of Native Americans. To understand Lawson’s thinking must be reconnected with the larger trends reflected in the works of other European writers on the subject. Figuring out where Native Americans came from was just part of Lawson’s larger project. During his sojourn in the Carolinas, spanning roughly the first decade of the eighteenth century, Lawson developed his own construction of “the Indian” on which his proposed imperial policies would operate. This systematic construction of “the Indian” required a narration of Native peoples’ common human origins, the foundations of their difference, and the means by which difference may be overcome to incorporate Indians as subjects of the British empire. The Indian himself was no less human, in Lawson’s eyes, than the Englishman. The difference was in manners, customs, and, most especially, language. The alleged handicaps of Indian language were doubled according to Lawson. First, the absence of written languages among Native American peoples privileged other accounts of their history. To supplement oral accounts, Lawson sought after the relics of the Indians’ past that were concealed beneath the dirt. The advanced pottery shards Lawson found buried in Carolina’s soil were proof that the land was

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<sup>139</sup> Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 177-178.



once possessed by a sophisticated civilization that vanished in a primordial cataclysm like Noah's universal deluge.

Lawson believed the peoples he met in the backcountry lived with only fables and dim recollections of their own beginnings. They were the relicts of a lost ancient history that only learned European observers like Lawson could fully recover. The breathtaking linguistic diversity observed among Native peoples in Lawson's opinion served to hamper the development of Indian societies. War was ever the sequel to misunderstanding. Moreover, Native languages were construed as a mighty barrier standing against religious conversion and political subjection at the hands of the English colonists. For John Lawson, the condition of Native peoples was primarily a function of the accidents of time and their enduring separation from civilization. He believed that humanity generally was capable of progress as well as retrogression. The former was accomplished only by great labor; the latter was merely the function of time and separation from civilization. Objects of curiosity, the Indians were, on these bases, to prove fit subjects for Lawson's imperial project.

### *Transatlantic Discourses of Indian Origins*

John Lawson's observations on the subject were only a small part of a much larger debate on the origins of the first inhabitants of the Americas. John Lawson's contribution is worthy of attention as the basis for his project of Indian incorporation into the empire. By reconnecting Native peoples with Adam's line, Lawson sought to firmly established their humanity and thereby their potential for "improvement." We cannot know for certain which books on the subject he might have read but we can recover a sense of where Lawson's

views appeared along the spectrum of contemporary opinions. Not only was Lawson likely influenced by contemporary European accounts of Indian origins, as a natural historian he was no doubt familiar with the various theories of the earth's sacred history that were published in the late seventeenth century. The earth's sacred history was an important consideration for anyone like Lawson seeking answers to the origins of Native Americans. The workings of time were thought to have profoundly influenced the peopling of the Americas.

In England during the later seventeenth century, the problem of Indian origins received substantial attention from a number of writers whose contentions were likely familiar to Lawson. If the history of science is, as the popular imagination would have it, the story of the steady, gradual approach to the conclusions of the present day, then the theory of Native American origins was substantially "correct" by the middle of the seventeenth century, if not indeed much earlier. Long before Beringia there were Sir Matthew Hale's "Necks of Land" over which America's first "planters" crossed from Asia. Based upon close readings of the relevant works ancient and modern, Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, advanced his theory of American origins in a posthumously published work of 1677, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind*. Hale contended "that those parts of *Asia* and *America* which are now dis-joynd by the interluency of the Sea, might have been formerly in some Age of the World contiguous to each other."<sup>140</sup> Hale was convinced that most of the first Americans were mariners, some purposefully seeking to plant on the continent while others arrived after being blown off course.

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<sup>140</sup> Sir Matthew Hale, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind Considered and Examined According to the Light of Nature* (London: William Godbid, 1677), 193.

The objective of Hale's argument was to buttress Scriptural authority against the claims of those who suggested that the "*Mosaical*" account in Genesis recounted only one act of creation among many. The so-called "Pre-Adamites," for instance, contended that Adam was not the first human created by God, nor the only progenitor of mankind.<sup>141</sup> The discovery of America opened a serious crisis for European historicity. The Bible was purported to be the definitive account of man's ancient past. On the authority of this divinely-inspired text, men like Hale and Lawson relied for a true relation of humankind's beginnings, common descent, and ultimate destiny. What, then, they asked, accounted for America and its inhabitants? The answer typically entailed the extension of the Biblical story of man's creation to the Americas by tracing Indians' descent from Adam through Noah and his sons. American Indians had no such text as the Bible. They were unlettered; what records they had amounted, in European estimation to so many straws and fabulous stories. Without a definitive text to rely upon, inquirers were left to make deductions from what European texts they could. They also sought physical evidence, for example the evidence of Noah's Flood in the American landscape that would thus link the Indians to Europe's own vision of sacred history. While Hale preferred reasoning from textual authorities, Lawson preferred another method. He sought out native oral tradition and also physical evidence like the "marks" in the landscape he thought were suggestive of a past deluge.

Very often, the debate was freighted with political implications. If, as the "pre-Adamites" argued, Native Americans were separate creations then they might claim a special relationship to the land such as Adam was given by God in the Book of Genesis. The

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<sup>141</sup> Isaac LaPeyrre, *Men Before Adam...* (London, 1656).

thinkers in Hale's sights believed that Native Americans descended from a line different from that of Adam or at least, Noah. Its most extreme version was that the Indians were entirely separate creations from the rest of mankind—in Hale's words, true "*Aborigines*."<sup>142</sup> Thus, it might be possible to infer, that as Adam was granted dominion over his now smaller world, so too some Indian original was likewise made lord over his American Eden. Indian land claims might be sanctioned by God. By that reasoning, the American continent was likely spared Noah's Flood, though it may have experienced its own "Particular Deluges" like that of Deucalion in Greece and Thessaly.<sup>143</sup> These floods were isolated events and not necessarily of biblical proportions. Some parts were alleged to have experienced no flood whatsoever.

The 1680s and '90s witnessed a surge in scholarly works concerning the earth's sacred history, authored by men like Mary Astell's virtuoso who "finding Moses hard beset of late" resolved "to give him a lift, and defend his Flood."<sup>144</sup> Among the most ambitious of these works was Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*. Burnet's book labored to prove that the whole world was covered with water in one complete and *universal* flood.<sup>145</sup> The world that the flood destroyed was a veritable Paradise compared with the one men now lived in. "We have still the broken Materials of that first World," Burnet wrote in his dedicatory epistle to King Charles II, "and walk upon its Ruines."<sup>146</sup> After eight chapters of reasoning from textual authorities, Burnet at last turned to the material remains of the former

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<sup>142</sup> Hale, *Primitive Origination*, 183.

<sup>143</sup> Hale, *Primitive Origination*, 184.

<sup>144</sup> [Astell], *Defence of the Female Sex*, 100.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Burnet, *The Theory of the Earth: Containing an Account of the Original of the Earth... Till the Consummation of All Things*, (London: R. Norton, 1684).

<sup>146</sup> Burnet, *Theory of the Earth*, i.

world for “those that require more sensible arguments.”<sup>147</sup> By “more sensible” Burnet meant inductive arguments that relied on physical evidence. The imperfections of the earth’s surface, its cavernous openings, the irregularity of its coastlines, the disorder of its mountain peaks are all evidences of the fall of the antediluvian world and the destruction of its more perfect substance, argued Burnet. Unlike the poets, who he said sing of Nature’s perfection, Burnet presented “the pourtraiture of our Earth, drawn without flattery.”<sup>148</sup>

The floods and earthquakes throughout terrestrial history not only broke apart the face of the earth, they also disrupted the development of mankind. John Lawson began his “Account of the Indians of North-Carolina,” by expressing doubts that the Indians he knew in his day were truly the first inhabitants of North America. Seeking to form his own “more sensible arguments” John Lawson sought out the signs of an ancient calamity he believed were visible to an observer of Carolina’s landscape. “In Carolina (the Part I now treat of),” he wrote, “are the fairest Marks of a Deluge, (that at some time has probably made strange Alterations, as to the Station that Country was then in) that ever I saw, or, I think, read of, in any History.”<sup>149</sup> Lawson hinted that the deluge he was writing about happened sometime between the flood of Noah and the arrival of Europeans in North America. The topography of the country before the deluge was radically different than the one Lawson found on his travels. The deluge destroyed an ancient civilization more advanced, he concluded, than the ones the Spanish encountered in Mexico and Peru. In support of his contention, Lawson presented an account of physical evidence—what he called “subterraneous proofs”—that

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<sup>147</sup> Burnet, *Theory of the Earth*, 109.

<sup>148</sup> Burnet, *Theory of the Earth*, 111.

<sup>149</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 172.

included potsherds and parts of buildings discovered in the course of several inadvertent antiquarian excavations in North Carolina. Lawson offered this evidence of advanced indigenous material culture Lawson offered as proof that the Native peoples he met in the Carolina backcountry were not the “Ancient Dwellers of the New-World.” Lawson believed that all the Indians were the products of cultural retrogression, the descendants of some lost but superior civilization. During the deluge the course of their history in what became the Carolinas was interrupted. Lawson’s deluge thus helped to explain the condition of the Native American societies he encountered on his travels.

### ***Lawson’s Theory of Indian Origins***

Lawson not only wanted to establish that Indians shared a common human ancestry with Europeans, he also sought to understand why their way of life was so different. He had a range of theories to choose from. Indeed, the possible answers to the question of Native American origins were as various as there were writers. While Lawson ultimately joined Robert Beverley and William Byrd II in the conviction that Native peoples migrated from Asia, other thinkers chose different theories depending on their intentions. The meaning of the choices that Lawson made to explain Native American origins are important to understanding his intentions.

Comparisons of America to Tartary and Scythia were readily at hand for Lawson’s well-read contemporaries, Robert Beverley and William Byrd II. Beverley most frequently compared Native American customs to the habits he read were prevalent in Asia. “Their Seats,” meaning those of the Indians of Virginia, “like those in the Eastern part of the World,

are the ground itself; and as the People of Distinction amongst them used Carpets, so cleanliness has taught the better sort of these, to spread Match-coats and Mats, to sit on.”<sup>150</sup> The method Indians had of encircling game in a ring of fire was not unlike, he thought, the practice of the Tartars. “Father Verbiast, in his Description of the Emperor of China’s Voyage into Eastern Tarray, Anno 1682, gives an Account,” Beverley reported, “of a Way of Hunting the Tartars have, not much unlike this, only whereas the Indians surround their Game with Fire, the Tartars do it with a great Body of armed Men, who having environ’d the Ground they design to drive, march equally inwards, which still as the Ring lessens, brings the Men nearer each other, till at length the wild Beasts are incompassed [sic] with a living Wall.”<sup>151</sup> William Byrd II thought the practice of scalping in wartime was “perhaps not the least proof of their Original from the Northern Inhabitants of Asia.”<sup>152</sup> The “Ancient Scythians,” Byrd added, were also fond of taking the heads of their enemies for cups.

John Lawson’s conclusions were by no means the only ones available to European writers of his day. Sir Matthew Hale posited that any number of people of various stocks may have crossed at successive times by boat or over “Necks” of land into America. Carthaginians, Norsemen, and ancient Egyptians all figured in the theories of Hale and many others over the centuries since Europeans encountered the erstwhile lost continent. Fed first by millenarian hopes and Scriptural authority, one theory revived again and again had it that the first Americans were the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Roger Williams in his 1643 *A Key into the Language of America* offered up “Observations to the judgment of the

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<sup>150</sup> Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia* ed. Louis B. Wright (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. C. Press, 1947), 176.

<sup>151</sup> Beverley, *History of Virginia*, 155.

<sup>152</sup> William Byrd, *Dividing Line*, 308.

wise” that the Algonquin peoples of New England were of Jewish descent.<sup>153</sup> In their language and customs, Williams divined a similitude with the ancient Hebrews of the Bible. The Indians “anoint their heads” and offer “Dowries for their wives, as the Jewes did.”<sup>154</sup> The practice of circumcision was for other writers sufficient evidence that Indians were of “Judaical” origin. Circumcision was to Lawson’s mind hardly proof of anything. He reported that he encountered the practice of circumcision only once in all his years among the Indians of North and South Carolina. When Lawson did observe the practice, it was confined to only two families of the tiny Machapunga nation and signified nothing general to him. He recorded Machapunga circumcision as another of the “foolish Ceremonies and Beliefs” of which he believed the Indians were such “strict Observers.”<sup>155</sup>

Observation alone does not account for Lawson’s discrediting the theory of Indians’ Jewish origins. Perhaps, Lawson’s lack of interest in the Jewish origins thesis owes something to its association with Puritan millenarianism. Much of the work in English on this question was undertaken during the Civil War and Interregnum by enthusiasts who believed the end of days was near. To hasten Christ’s return, all the nations were to be converted including all the tribes of Israel.<sup>156</sup> Similar to his skepticism toward Indian religion, Lawson likely eschewed what he might have perceived as Puritan fanaticism. Writing in 1708 or 1709, when the English (not to mention the Carolinian) religious

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<sup>153</sup> Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, eds. John J. Teunissen and Evelyn Hines (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 86.

<sup>154</sup> Williams, *Key*, 86.

<sup>155</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 219.

<sup>156</sup> For instance, according to the Puritan theology of John Cotton, the conversion of Jews was part of the so-called “Middle Advent” to be effected by earthly actors. See Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians Before King Philip’s War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 11.



settlement was still a very volatile issue, Lawson may have been pleased to let the matter rest. On the other hand, Lawson's assertion of Indians' common humanity from an Asian root was published in an age when this explanation appears to have been widely accepted.

Within another generation, James's 1775 *History of the American Indians* would revive the thesis of Jewish origins partly as a rebuff to the challenge of emerging theories of race.<sup>157</sup> By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, some philosophers reified the old pre-Adamite premise in order to argue that the aboriginal peoples of North America were separate creations, inferior in body and mind to Europeans. "Of this opinion," wrote Adair, "is Lord Kames, and which he labours to establish in his late publication, entitled, *Sketches of the History of Man*."<sup>158</sup> A year before Adair's book went to press, Kames's appeared with the thesis "that America has not been peopled by any part of the old world."<sup>159</sup> In answer to the challenge of Lord Kames's polygenetic theory of race, Adair argued that Indians were descended from the Biblical Israelites. Besides the Jewish customs Adair thought he observed among the Chickasaw and Choctaw, his opposition to Kames and other racist polygenetic thinkers was based upon several, larger assumptions, not least of which was the perfect economy of God's act of creation. In direct contradiction with Kames, Adair believed that skin color was the result of the climate in which a people were accustomed to living, and not as Lord Kames argued, "a singularity in the race of people."<sup>160</sup> Adair witnessed for himself how the constant application of "bear's oil, or grease, mixt with a

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<sup>157</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians, Particularly Those Nations Adjoining to the Mississippi, East and West Florida, George, South and North Carolina, and Virginia* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968).

<sup>158</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Henry Home, Lord Kames, "Sketch XII," in *Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: 1774), 72.

<sup>160</sup> Kames, "Sketch XII," in *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2.

certain red root” could change “those who are white born” into the color of Indians.<sup>161</sup>

“Moreover, to form one creation of *whites*, a second creation for the *yellows*, and a third for the *blacks*, is a weakness, of which infinite wisdom is incapable,” Adair averred.<sup>162</sup>

The alleged similitude between Native American customs and those of Biblical Hebrews was supported by the assumption, current among early modern thinkers, that mankind’s diversity was the result of degeneration from a condition of uniformity at Creation. Indeed, much of Lawson’s thinking was likely influenced by the prevailing assumption that the sublunary world was growing older, decaying after successive calamities like the deluge that he thought had washed over Carolina in ancient times. The myriad languages of the world were likewise thought to be the result of the diffusion over time from one pure speech, namely ancient Hebrew.<sup>163</sup> Indian religious practice appeared as the result of a slide from primeval truth to modern ignorance. “The wandring Generations of Adams lost posteritie,” Roger Williams wrote, “having lost the true and living God their Maker, have created out of the nothing of their owne inventions many false and fained Gods and Creators.”<sup>164</sup> Whereas Williams ascribed degeneration to man’s fallen, sinful state, Lawson did not base his theory of cultural change on irremediable defects in human character.

Instead, Lawson believed that a people declined when they were forced out of the reach of civilization. The Hatteras Indians informed Lawson that “several of their Ancestors

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<sup>161</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 3.

<sup>162</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 3.

<sup>163</sup> Margaret T. Hogden, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 265.

<sup>164</sup> Williams, *Key*, 139.

were white People, and could talk in a Book, as we do.”<sup>165</sup> Despite the reference to “white People,” Lawson is not here asserting some early construction of race as we know it today. The “white People”—the Lost Colonists—were forced, he believed, to join the ancestors of the Hatteras Indians for “Relief and Conversation.” Their cohabitation with the Hatteras meant that “in the process of Time, they conform’d themselves to the Manners of their Indian Relations.” From these deductions Lawson pronounces his own conclusion with the force of natural law. “And thus,” he declares, “we see, how apt Humane Nature is to degenerate.”<sup>166</sup>

### *Lawson’s Deluge Thesis as an Explanation of Indian Difference*

To explain why Native Americans differed culturally from Europeans, Lawson proposed the theory that an ancient natural disaster had destroyed an advanced indigenous civilization leaving the survivors in a primitive state. In this conjecture, Lawson followed a venerable European tradition of locating a lost ancient civilization in North America. Indeed, travelers who recorded their observations of Native peoples in the Southeast from the late seventeenth century onward were preoccupied with piecing together the puzzle of who formerly possessed the land. Joyce Chaplin rightly points out the cynical use to which this thinking was often employed. Certainly, the assumption that Native Americans necessarily came from someplace other than the Americas was used directly to undermine their claims to land. But for Lawson this speculation also helped to explain why Indians had different languages and different customs from the English. In his work the thesis of a lost civilization

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<sup>165</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 69.

<sup>166</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 69.

in North America supported Lawson's conclusion that the Indians of Carolina were a people outside of history.

The natural disaster—the “deluge” of which Lawson wrote—destroyed the ordinary movement of history in North America long before the arrival of the English. Never mind the diseases, war, and depopulation brought to the Mississippian chiefdoms by early Spanish incursions, led by the likes of Juan Pardo and Hernando de Soto. Whether Lawson knew this history or not, he chose to locate the purported degeneration of Indian societies in a remote past that could only be recovered through the efforts of a virtuoso antiquarian like himself. The aim of Lawson's political program was thus to draw Native peoples back into history by transforming their systems of property relations, providing them with European technologies, and converting them to Protestant Christianity.

The connection Lawson made between a long-ago deluge and the destruction of an ancient advanced civilization in North America is resonant with a European discourse that perhaps begins with the writings of Francisco Lopez de Gomara. Gomara is credited with the dubious distinction of being the first European to speculate at length that the Greek philosopher Plato's fictive continent, Atlantis, was located in the Americas. Richard Eden introduced Gomara's argument to English readers as an appendix to his 1555 translation of *The Decades* of Peter Martyr.<sup>167</sup> The passage of Gomara's translated by Eden implied that the great indigenous Mesoamerican civilizations—the Mexica, the Maya, and the Inca—were the beneficiaries of cultural transmission from Plato's Atlantis. “In Mexico also at this Day they caul water Atl. by the halfe name of Atlant, as by a woorde remaynyng of the name the

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<sup>167</sup> Peter Martyr, *The Decades of the New Worlde or West India...* trans. Richard Eden (London: 1555), 310.

Ilande that is not.”<sup>168</sup> Pieces of Atlantis survived not only in language but on maps as features of American geography. “Wee may lykwyse lay that the Indies are eyther the Ilande and firme lande of Plato or the remanent of the same: and not the Ilandes aof Hesperides or Ophir, or Tharsis, as sum haue thought of late dayes.”<sup>169</sup>

Francis Bacon further developed the theme in his 1627 utopian work, *New Atlantis*.<sup>170</sup> Jacqueline Cowan recently argued that Bacon’s New World history in *New Atlantis* suggested an “epistemological framework” for Europeans struggling to make the marvels of the Americas intelligible.<sup>171</sup> Bacon’s work may also be read as a disquisition on the difficulty early modern thinkers faced in historicizing Native Americans. A close inspection of the text reveals the particular attention on Bacon’s part to the vagaries of human memory as the basis of knowledge about past ages. Bacon was especially interested in the passage of peoples from history based in written words to the fables passed round firesides by word of mouth. Through the voice of a governor of his fictional island commonwealth, Bensalem, Bacon explained the apparent degeneracy of the native inhabitants of North America as the result of a natural catastrophe—a particular deluge that followed the Flood of Noah. Before the disaster, the continent was the seat of Plato’s fabled philosophic kingdom “the great Atlantis, (that you call America).”<sup>172</sup> Ships from every corner of the earth sailed there to trade. “At this time, this Land was knowne,” Bacon’s governor reported, “and frequented by the Ships and Vessells of all the Nations before named.” Bacon took pains to demonstrate

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<sup>168</sup> Martyr, *The Decades*, 310.

<sup>169</sup> Martyr, *The Decades*, 310.

<sup>170</sup> Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis. A Worke unfinished* (London: 1628).

<sup>171</sup> Jacqueline L. Cowan, “Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis and the Alterity of the New World,” *Literature & Theology* 25, no. 4 (Dec., 2011), 417.

<sup>172</sup> Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 13.

the way that Atlantis slipped from history into fable, from being a “knowne” land to a place of which “there is with you sparing Memory, or none.”<sup>173</sup> Modern-day Europeans like the sailors who arrived in Bacon’s utopia were inheritors of a tradition marred by inaccuracy. Plato’s account of Atlantis was “all Poeticall and Fabulous.”<sup>174</sup>

Even the means of Atlantis’s destruction was obscured by the processes of time. Rather than the earthquake described by Plato, Atlantis was destroyed “by a particular Deluge or Inundation.”<sup>175</sup> The flood interrupted the process of history making savages of the survivors. “So marvaile you not at the thin Population of America, nor at the Rudenesse and Ignorance of the People,” wrote Bacon, “For you must account your Inhabitants of American as a young People; Younger a thousand yeares, at least, then the rest of the World. For that there was so much time, between the Universall Floud, and their Particular Inundation.”<sup>176</sup> The survivors of Bacon’s flood were the forebears of contemporary Native Americans, “some few wild Inhabitants of the Wood.” The cataclysm hampered what Bacon considered to be the ordinary course of a people’s cultural development, a process that required more time to unfold. The flood was an event that Bacon might have classified as a “naturall Revolution of Time” such as the one that his fictive spokesman speculated as the cause of the slowing of worldwide commerce after the decline of Atlantis. Implied in Bacon’s description of the Americans as a “young” people, Cowan astutely observed, is the idea that “given the time to grow and advance, the Americans may once again regain the eminent status of their ancestors.” How to shorten the time required for the Indians’ advancement was at the heart

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<sup>173</sup> Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 14.

<sup>174</sup> Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 14.

<sup>175</sup> Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 15.

<sup>176</sup> Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 15.

of John Lawson's political project as we shall see in the next chapter. Thus, the idea that Native Americans were the victims of an historical break brought about by an ancient deluge not only explained the cause of their "alterity"—to use Cowan's term—but it also indicated that the breach could be repaired. People who had been severed from history could be reconnected with the wider world again.

Searching for clues left behind by such "naturall Revolutions of time" was a significant vocation of several of the naturalists, explorers, and missionaries who wrote about Carolina in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Take for example, the case of John Lederer. Lederer, a Hamburg-born adventurer with support from the governor of Virginia, embarked on three marches into the interior searching for a passage to the Pacific Ocean, from 1669 to 1670. He is perhaps best remembered for his contribution to the cartographies of the region, including the location of the vast, briny, and apparently fictional "Ushery Lake" near the seat of the Esaw Indians. He did not find the South Sea but Lederer was just as consumed with the quest for Indian origins and histories. His account of Indian customs comprises the second section of his 1672 book, the English edition of which ran under the title *The Discoveries of John Lederer*.

On the question of Indian origins, Lederer was somewhat coy, hinting at their migration from over the Appalachian Mountains and, by inference, that they emigrated there from Asia. According to Lederer, the "Apalataean Mountains" were called by an unnamed group of Indians "Paemontinck, (or the origine of the Indians)." Writing in the discourse of lost American civilizations, Lederer was convinced that the Indian peoples living in Virginia and Carolina in his day were comparatively recent comers. "These parts were formerly

possessed by the *Tacci*, alias *Dogi*; but they are extinct,” Lederer concluded, “and the Indians now seated here, are distinguished into the several Nations of *Mahoc*, *Nuntaneuck*, alias *Nuntaly*, *Nahyssan*, *Sapon*, *Managog*, *Mangoaqk*, *Akenatzy*, and *Monakin*, & c.”<sup>177</sup> Lederer never explained how the “Tacci” became extinct or what their relation was to the “Indians now seated here.” He likely blamed the extinction of the Tacci on a natural disaster, perhaps also a particular deluge.

The name “Tacci” tempts the more speculative reader to think that Lederer was there playfully evoking the Latin word “Tace,” the imperative form of the verb *tacere*, “to be silent.” John Lawson did not have a name for the people whose civilization was ruined in his deluge. Their history was only recoverable by an examination of objects excavated by chance from under the ground.

Amongst the other Subterraneous Matters, that have been discover'd we found, in digging of a Well that was twenty six foot deep, at the Bottom thereof, many large Pieces of the Tulip-Tree, and several other sorts of Wood, some of which were cut and notch'd, and some squared, as the Joices of a House are, which appear'd (in the Judgment of all that saw them) to be wrought with Iron Instruments; it seeming impossible for any thing made of Stone, or what they were found to make use of, to cut Wood in that manner.<sup>178</sup>

The “Tulip-Tree,” he surmised, could not have drifted on the waters “from some other Continent; because Hicory and the Tulip-Tree are spontaneous in *America*, and in no other Places, that I could ever learn.”<sup>179</sup> The logs themselves were not as interesting to Lawson as the evidence that they were fashioned into beams by carpenters with tools of iron. He conceded that stone tools were used by the civilizations of the Mexica to erect their temples,

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<sup>177</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 2.

<sup>178</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 172-173.

<sup>179</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.



pyramids, and palaces. “It is to be acknowledg’d, that the *Spaniards* give us Relations of magnificent Buildings, which were raised by the *Indians of Mexico* and other Parts, which they discover’d, and conquered,” Lawson conceded, “amongst whom no Iron Instruments were found.”<sup>180</sup> Had the “Joices” been the only objects of ancient manufacture Lawson knew, perhaps his curiosity would not have been piqued. There were other evidences to be extracted from the “Bowels of the Earth.” Of these, “the next is, the Earthen Pots that are often found under Ground, and at the Foot of the Banks where the Water has wash’d them away.”<sup>181</sup> The scattered potsherds found frequently by English settlers were of a different quality than the ones found put to use in the Indian towns of the Carolina backcountry. “The Bowels of the Earth cannot have alter’d them, since they are thicker, of another Shape, and Composition, and,” Lawson observed, “nearly approach to the Urns of the Ancient *Romans*.”<sup>182</sup> The broken pots and vases found washed up on Carolina creek banks were the signs that a sophisticated civilization preceded the deluge. If workmanship of those lost ancient potters approximated Roman work, Lawson implied, then their vanished cities must have been greater even than the ones the Spanish conquistadors invaded during the sixteenth century. The deluge destroyed their world, leaving the landscape and the peoples living on it in confusion.

Lawson was himself puzzled as to whether the present-day Indians he knew were the direct descendants of the civilization that fell victim to his deluge. Lawson thought that

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<sup>180</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>181</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>182</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

“these People might come from some Eastern Country.”<sup>183</sup> Whatever the case, he declared that Indians were a “shifting, wandring [sic] People” despite his own visits to settled, fortified Indian towns. “I know some Indian Nations, that have chang’d their Settlements, many hundred Miles,” he observed, “sometimes no less than a thousand.”<sup>184</sup> But of all the qualities of Indian life, nothing was thought by English observers to be quite as degenerate as their languages. The languages of Native Americans were among Lawson’s foremost preoccupations. Lawson believed that the differences in languages between Europeans and Indians—and between Indian nations themselves—could only be overcome through incorporation.

### ***Indian Languages: Key Markers of Difference***

For some observers, Indian languages held contained clues to their origins. Roger Williams recognized in myriad Indian words what he believed was an “affinitie” with “*Hebrew*” and with “the *Greek Tongue*.”<sup>185</sup> With Greek, Williams was sure that Indian language bore the “greater *Affinity*.” Williams offered as evidence the similarity between Greek and Algonquin names for constellations. Just “as the *Greekes* and other Nations, and our selves call the seven *Starres* (or Charles Waine) the *Beare*,” observed Williams referring to the constellation Ursa Major, “so doe they [the Indians call those stars] *Mosk* or *Paukunnawaw* the *Beare*.”<sup>186</sup> Culture and language were bound up together in Williams’ estimation. Each chapter in Williams’ book treated a particular aspect of Indian customs and

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<sup>183</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173.

<sup>184</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 173-174.

<sup>185</sup> Williams, *Key*, 86.

<sup>186</sup> Williams, *Key*, 86.

features the phrases that are incident to them. Indian language, he wrote, was a “Doore” into their hearts and Williams’ book but the “poore KEY” by which it might be opened.<sup>187</sup>

John Lawson thought Indian languages amounted to little more than a barrier that prevented mutual understanding between all the peoples in the Southeast. For the most part, Lawson was interested in Native languages primarily as they related to the absorbing business of the backcountry, the Indian trade. The diversity of languages found in Carolina was symptomatic of the primitive state in which most of the Indians were said to live. Moreover, the profusion of tongues was also responsible for fomenting constant wars among Native Americans. Language was the most glaring difference that separated Native peoples from the European invaders and from each other. It was Lawson’s aim to overcome the barrier presented by language.

Far from discerning in Indian words echoes of the Attic Greek of Herodotus or the Hebrew of the Bible, Lawson instead remarked with derision on the rudeness of their language. “To repeat more of this *Indian* Jargon,” Lawson concluded, “would be to trouble the Reader.”<sup>188</sup> John Lederer, on the other hand, marveled at the eloquent orations of Indian headmen. “Though they want those means of improving Humane Reason, which the use of Letters affords us,” Lederer noted admiringly, “let us not therefore conclude them wholly destitute of Learning and Sciences: . . . many of them advance their natural understandings to great knowledge in Physick, Rhetorick, and Policie of Government.”<sup>189</sup> Lederer boasted that he was “present at several of their Consultations and Debates” and could not but admire the

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<sup>187</sup> Williams, *Key*, 250.

<sup>188</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 239.

<sup>189</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 5.

addresses delivered “with as much Judgement and Eloquence as I should have expected from men of Civil education and Literature.”<sup>190</sup> A generation later, John Lawson would not second Lederer’s assessment of Indian speeches. “Do not credit the accounts of others who relate how Indians “express themselves in such a Flight of Stile,” warned the seasoned traveler and reputed sympathetic expert in Indian culture. “They are so far from it,” Lawson declared, “that they are but just able to make one another understand readily what they talk about.”<sup>191</sup>

The variation in languages from one people to the next astounded Lawson. “It is wonderful, what has occasion’d so many different Speeches as the Savages have.”<sup>192</sup> Linguistic diversity, he believed, was the cause of so many “Jealousies and Fears amongst them, which bring Wars, wherein they destroy one another.” The dissensions among the Indians brought about by mutually incomprehensible languages prevented them from uniting to resist the European invaders. Lawson imagined that the “the Christians had not (in all Probability) settled America so easily, as they have done, had these Tribes of Savages united themselves into one People or general Interest, or were they so but every hundred Miles.” Lawson professed amazement at what “seems like a Miracle to us” that given the deficiency of their language the Indians are “able to bring about their designs, as they are able to do.”<sup>193</sup> Linguistic diversity proved a hamper to political development among the Indians. Their alleged constant warfare brought about thereby was one of the chief causes of Indian

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<sup>190</sup> John Lederer, *The Discoveries of John Lederer... Together with a General Map of the Whole Territory Which He Traversed*, ed. Sir William Talbot (London: J. C., 1672), 5.

<sup>191</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 239.

<sup>192</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 239.

<sup>193</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 239.

depopulation, Lawson asserted. He marveled at “the continual Wars these Savages maintain, one Nation against another, which sometimes hold for some Ages, killing and making Captives, till they become so weak thereby, that they are forced to make Peace for want of Recruits to Supply their Wars.”<sup>194</sup>

His contemporary, the Virginian Robert Beverley concurred with Lawson in his judgment of Indian languages. For Beverley, linguistic diversity was proof that the Indians of the Carolinas and Virginia abided in a more primitive state, not unlike the warlike tribes of pre-Roman Britain. “Their Language differs very much as antiently in the several parts of Britain,” he observed, “so that Nations at a moderate distance do not understand one another.”<sup>195</sup> Beverley posited that the difficulty of communication was thought to be surmounted by the prevalence of a single Indian language that held sway in matters of trade and diplomacy. Beverley wrote that the Indians of North America “have a sort of general Language, like what *Lahontan* calls the *Algonkine*, which is understood by the Chief men of many Nations, as *Latin* is in most parts of *Europe*, and *Lingua Franca* quite thro the *Levant*.”<sup>196</sup> Writers in the years before and during the Tuscarora War observed the use of different trading language in various parts of the Southeast. John Lawson remarked that the Tuscarora language was so employed by Indians in the Carolina backcountry. As the Tuscarora were “most Numerous in *North-Carolina*, therefore their Tongue is understood by some in every Town of all the *Indians* near us.”<sup>197</sup> Robert Beverley, on the other hand,

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<sup>194</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 233.

<sup>195</sup> Beverley, *History*, 190.

<sup>196</sup> Beverley, *History of Virginia*, 191.

<sup>197</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 233.

asserted that the Ocaneechi language held sway “tho they have been but a small Nation.”<sup>198</sup> Still others believed that one *lingua franca* prevailed among Indians across the Southeast and beyond, like the SPG’s Francis Le Jau, who was convinced “the Savannah Language is understood all over the Northern Continent of America.”<sup>199</sup> John Lederer claimed that the Indians he encountered all spoke the same language. “One Language is common to them all, though they differ in Dialects,” Lederer believed.<sup>200</sup>

By far the greatest perceived deficiency of Native American languages was that they seemed entirely oral. “Yet there was never found any Letters among the Savages of *Carolina*,” Lawson noted, “nor, I believe, among any other Natives in *America*, that were posses’d with any manner of Writing or Learning throughout all the Discoveries of the New-World.”<sup>201</sup> Though able to communicate by “certain Hieroglyphicks” and drawing maps “very exactly,” Indians in Carolina were without what was considered by Europeans to be the surest means of transmitting knowledge faithfully through time.<sup>202</sup> Writing was a precondition for learning which was itself essential for civilization. Describing the great Powhatan, Opechancanough, Robert Beverley praised the political acumen that came in spite of the Indian’s want of learning. “Tho’ he had no Advantage of Literature, (that being no where to be found among the *Indians*,) yet he was perfectly skill’d in the Art of Governing his rude Country-men,” wrote Beverley.<sup>203</sup> From the earliest English reconnaissance of the Southeast, travelers were curious as to how, in John Lederer’s words, the Indians “supply

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<sup>198</sup> Beverley, *History*, 191.

<sup>199</sup> August 5, 1709, Le Jau to the Secretary, in Klingberg, *Chronicle of Le Jau*, 57.

<sup>200</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 2.

<sup>201</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 214.

<sup>202</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 213-214.

<sup>203</sup> Beverley, *History*, 61.

their want of Letters.”<sup>204</sup> This they accomplished by three means, Lederer reported in 1672, “first by Counters, secondly by Emblemes or Hieroglyphicks, thirdly by Tradition from father to son, which being children they are made to learn by rote.”<sup>205</sup> Lederer was not clear as to how these “Emblemes or Hieroglyphicks” were actually used by the Indians. He wrote instead of the signification of each of the several emblems that he encountered. “The faculties of minde and body they commonly express by Emblemes,” Lederer explained, “By the figure of a Stag, they imply swiftness; by that of a Serpent, wrath; of a Lion, courage; of a Dog, fidelity.” The symbols and their significances do not seem particularly foreign, but might be found in an old bestiary from medieval England. The English were said to be represented by one of these pictograms, also. “By a Swan, they signifie the *English*, alluding to their complexion, and flight over the Sea.”<sup>206</sup>

Dr. Henry Woodward reported similar symbols carved into the trees on his 1674 journey up the Ashley River to the Westoe. “As we travelled this day I saw (as divers other times likewise in my journey) were these Indians had drawne upon trees (the bark being hewne away) the effigies of a bever, a man, on horseback and guns,” Woodward wrote. The Lords Proprietors’ agent among the Indians in the colony’s early days, read the signs on the tree trunks as a special message of friendship with the English. The carved figures were “Intimating thereby as I suppose, their desire for friendship and commerse wth us.”<sup>207</sup> Similar signs were left, according to Robert Beverley, when the Indians wished to disclose

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<sup>204</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 3.

<sup>205</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 3.

<sup>206</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 4.

<sup>207</sup> Henry Woodward, “A Relation of My Westoe Voyage, 1674,” *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 130.

something secret among themselves that they dare not communicate by messenger. Beverley commented that “when they would communicate any thing, that cannot be deliver’d by message, they do it by a sort of Hieroglyphick, or representation of Birds, Beasts or other things, showing their different meaning, by the various forms describ’d, and by the different position of the Figures.”<sup>208</sup> John Lawson associated the use of “Hieroglyphicks” with secret communication between the members of Indian war parties. “Besides, in their War Expeditions,” Lawson wrote, “they have very certain Hieroglyphicks, whereby each Party informs the other of the Successes or Losses they have met withal; all which is so exactly perform’d by their Sylvian Marks or Characters, that they are never at a loss to understand one another.”<sup>209</sup>

John Lederer thought that by their “Hieroglyphicks” and the other means at their disposal, the Indians more than supplied the “want of Letters.” Though without letters, “let us not conclude them wholly destitute of Learning and Sciences.”<sup>210</sup> Lederer, in contrast with his contemporaries and with later travelers, was confident that “by these little helps which they have found, many of them advance their natural understandings to great knowledge in Physick, Rhetorick, and Policie of Government.”<sup>211</sup> Lawson remained skeptical. Though intelligent, the Indians of Carolina were without learning or invention, he concluded. “They are no Inventors of any Arts or Trades worthy mention,” he wrote, “the Reason of which I take to be, that they are not possess’d with that Care and Thoughtfulness, how to provide for the Necessaries of Life, as the *Europeans* are.” “Yet,” Lawson added,

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<sup>208</sup> Beverley, *History*, 190.

<sup>209</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 213-214.

<sup>210</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 5.

<sup>211</sup> Lederer, *Discoveries*, 5.



“they will learn any thing very soon.”<sup>212</sup> There being no necessity for labor and no letters, the Indians were therefore without the ornaments of civilization. On occasion, Lawson displayed a nuanced understanding of the relationship between native languages and cultures as when he discussed the shades of meaning behind the word signifying “slave” in English. “As for Servant, they have no such thing, except Slave,” Lawson explains, “and their Dogs, Cats, tame or domestick Beasts, and Birds, are call’d by the same Name: For the *Indian* word for Slave includes them all.”<sup>213</sup> This single word denotes any being “which is to obsequiously depend upon the Master for its Sustenance.”<sup>214</sup> Lawson’s disquisition on the shades of meaning of the word *slave* is a rare instance of an attempt at deeper linguistic explanation. The capaciousness for meaning of single Indian words was for Lawson a root cause of linguistic confusion.

In his “Account of the Indians of North-Carolina” Lawson published a handy lexicon of words and phrases in three Indian languages. Lawson’s dictionary seems to be haphazardly assembled and the author warned his reader that it is “not Alphabetically digested.”<sup>215</sup> After presenting the basic numbers, skipping up to one thousand, the dictionary’s priorities and ordering become apparent. The first entry after the Tuscarora, “Pampticough,” and “Woccon” words for “one thousand” is “Rum,” with the next entry being “Blankets.” He included words for goods like tobacco, deerskins both “drest” and “undrest,” and the metal items so coveted in Native towns: kettles, pots, and axes. Lawson included a few choice phrases, tellingly the Tuscarora and Woccon for “I will sell you Goods

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<sup>212</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 175.

<sup>213</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 210.

<sup>214</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 210.

<sup>215</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 233.

very cheap.”<sup>216</sup> The words for some animals and types of people are also found in the dictionary but there are no poetic observations on their cultural significance as appears in Williams’ *Key*. Trade is the subject of Lawson’s dictionary. The lexicon amounts to a Carolina Indian trader’s handbook complete with important phrases that one might require on an expedition to truck with the natives. The contents of Lawson’s dictionary are striking in that they suggest that there was something like a universal language among Indians and Europeans in the backcountry, namely, the language of exchange. Though Indian languages varied radically from one town the next, the goods Native peoples demanded and the rituals of exchange were common to all.

Lawson’s dictionary and his thoughts on Indian linguistics reflect a larger trend evident among the traders and adventurers of the colonial Southeast. In the Southeast, the English were more likely to complain of the incomprehensibility and limitations of Indian languages than in New England. There serious efforts at making sense of the Native idiom were undertaken by men driven with missionary zeal. Though every English colony professed in its charter a design to bring the Gospel to the American Indians, other interests predominated. But in New England, particularly in Massachusetts Bay, the mandate was taken more seriously than in most. Roger Williams’s early lexical efforts were soon followed by the work of John Eliot who established missions throughout Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1666, Eliot published *The Indian Grammar*, in which he attempted to bring Indian language “into Rules.”<sup>217</sup> The book, dedicated to Robert Boyle, doyen of the new

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<sup>216</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 238.

<sup>217</sup> John Eliot, *The Indian Grammar Begun: Or, An Essay to bring the Indian Language into Rules...* (Cambridge: Marmaduke Johnson, 1666).

natural philosophy in England, treated Indian language systematically that others might readily learn how to speak it in their missionary efforts. What confounded other observers, Eliot met with understanding. Notably, Eliot appreciated the utility of the agglutinative character of Native language, a chief source of settler complaints. “This Language doth greatly delight in Compounding of words, for Abbreviation,” Eliot observed. Among the great virtues of Indian language was that it enabled one to “speak much in few words, though they be sometimes long.”<sup>218</sup> The linguistic project launched by John Eliot culminated in the translation of the Bible into Algonquin.<sup>219</sup>

Quite apart from Eliot, the drift of opinion concerning Indian language in the Southeast was similar to Lawson’s decidedly unfavorable verdict. Lending credence to his own negative appraisal of Indian languages, Lawson wrote to his readers that an account of “how imperfect” the “Moods and Tenses” of Indian language are “has been given by several already.”<sup>220</sup> Crucially, Indian language was thought to be sorely lacking where matters of theology were concerned. When missionary efforts at last began in earnest in South Carolina, the alleged crudeness of Indian language was cited as the greatest impediment to progress. Samuel Thomas, one of the first ministers dispatched by the nascent SPG, refused to begin his planned mission to the Yamasee largely on account of their language which he described as “barbarous, savage and extreme difficult to attain.”<sup>221</sup> Thomas summed the matter up by relating how a certain Indian trader had translated the Lord’s Prayer into

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<sup>218</sup> Eliot, *Indian Grammar*, 6.

<sup>219</sup> “This translation,” Cogley explains, “was the first Bible printed in any language in the New World.” Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 121.

<sup>220</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 239.

<sup>221</sup> W. Noel Sainsbury, ed., “Documents Concerning Rev. Samuel Thomas, 1702-1707,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 5, no. 1 (Jan., 1904), 41.

Yamasee. The prayer thus began “Our Father which art a top” and concluded with “thy great Town come.”<sup>222</sup> Indians simply did not possess any vocabulary to describe, much less comprehend, the finer abstractions of Protestant Christian doctrine. Even John Eliot admitted as much. Where approximate Indian words for Christian religious terms were lacking, he simply substituted English ones.<sup>223</sup> Like Roger Williams before him, Eliot likewise attempted to develop other conversational approaches to introducing Christianity to his Indian interlocutors. For his part, Lawson also sought other avenues to Indian conversion. Rather than engage his prospective converts in a cerebral discussion of theology requiring in-depth linguistic knowledge, Lawson proposed to dazzle them with what he called a “lively carnal Representation.”<sup>224</sup> He meant that he believed the best method to conversion was to tell Indians about all the good things they would receive in the hereafter if only they were to convert to Christianity. Thus, Lawson hoped to “dispense the Precepts of our Faith according to the Pupil’s capacity.”<sup>225</sup>

Francis Le Jau was sent by the SPG to succeed Thomas. He pursued a mission to the Indians with more vigor than his predecessor, encountering major obstacles along the way. “I find our Indian traders are very much averse to see Missionaries amongst the Indians,” Dr. Francis Le Jau wrote in 1709.<sup>226</sup> “I wish some things here were carried [sic] on more for the glory of God than for private ends,” Le Jau complained. In Carolina, the Indian trade was a

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<sup>222</sup> “Samuel Thomas,” *SCHGM*, 41.

<sup>223</sup> In his translation of the Bible, Eliot “used English words with Massachusett affixes.” Such words lacking in the Indian language included such words as “book” and “Gentile.” Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 121.

<sup>224</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 58.

<sup>225</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 58.

<sup>226</sup> August 5, 1709, Le Jau to the Secretary, in Frank J. Klingberg, ed., *The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis Le Jau, 1706-1717* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1956), 58.

major economic interest. The trade in Indian slaves proved particularly profitable. Le Jau believed that furtherance of the practice of “fomenting of War among them [the Indians] for our people to get Slaves” was the principal obstacle to “the publishing of the Gospel among the Indians.”<sup>227</sup> Le Jau was eager to perform the work necessary to penetrate the mysteries of Indian language. Le Jau’s efforts were for naught. By 1712, he was still complaining of trader resistance to his mission among the Indians, this time in much bolder terms. While South Carolina’s armies were engaged in the Tuscarora War, bringing in hundreds of slaves won in battle, Le Jau again bitterly attacked the practice as the real impediment to Indian conversion.

The Indian traders have always discouraged me by raising a world of Difficultyes when I proposed any thing to them relating to the Conversion of the Indians. It appears they do not care to have clergy-men so near them who doubtless would never approve those perpetual wars they promote amongst the Indians for the onely reason of making slaves to pay for their trading goods; and what slaves! poor women and children, for the men taken prisoners are burnt most barbarously.<sup>228</sup>

For men like James Moore, who made their fortunes peddling old duffels and copper kettles in exchange for dressed deerskins and passels of slaves, the extent of the linguistic knowledge required for their work was just so much as would seal the deal. Moreover, they were not interested in permitting the most apt students of Indian language, the clergy, from getting anywhere near Indian towns. Not only might Christian doctrine condemn wars for slave-catching, but conversion of the Indians would exempt them from capture altogether. The Carolina economy, deeply imbricated with the political and social concerns of the Indian trade, dictated the terms on which the English could investigate and utilize Indian language.

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<sup>227</sup> October 20, 1709, Le Jau to the Secretary, Klingberg, *Chronicle of Le Jau*, 61.

<sup>228</sup> May 27, 1712, Le Jau to the Bishop of London, Klingberg, *Chronicle of Le Jau*, 116.

Partly for this reason, Lawson's dictionary is a trader's dictionary. The limits of his dictionary are the constraints placed upon him by the nature of the colonial economy and political establishment in the Carolinas.

### *Establishing a Common History and Future*

The limitations of linguistic understanding imposed by the trading economy did not preclude Lawson from seeing the advantages in mastering Indian languages. For Lawson, Indian conversion was also means to achieving a "better Understanding" of Indian language among the English.<sup>229</sup> Christian conversion was not the end of Lawson's interest in native language but rather the beginning. Once admitted into the mysteries of Indian language, the English would obtain surer knowledge of native medical practice and would receive information as to the "Situation of our Rivers, Lakes, and Tracts of Land in the Lords Dominions."<sup>230</sup> Viewed in this light, Lawson's linguistic skill seems less important. With only a slight working knowledge, Lawson could perhaps bluster and bluff his way through most encounters as many Indian traders likely did. His recording of the native tongue need not be comprehensive as it was only the first assay in a much longer process of reconnaissance and assimilation that would end when the Indians came to live as Christians and English subjects. America, in John Locke's imagination was the world in its primeval, unenclosed state. For John Lawson, America was the world after Babel, its natives scattered and confounded by myriad tongues, awaiting a power to bind them again.

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<sup>229</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

<sup>230</sup> Perhaps Lawson hoped to make Indian conversion more palatable to Indian traders by demonstrating its potential material benefits by another sort of "lively carnal representation." Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

Trade offered the keys to one such power. The jingling of burdeners' packs signaled to an Indian town the arrival of European goods. English traders were the heralds of Indian integration into the wider Atlantic economy. Trade reconnected the Indians of Carolina with the movement of European history and suggested a means to bring them out of the degenerate state in which Lawson found them. If Lawson's knowledge of Indian languages was limited by the preoccupations of trade, his political project drew considerable inspiration from it. Transforming Native peoples' relationship to property became the basis of Lawson's scheme for the "Regulation of the Savages." Yet, Lawson was unimpressed by the results of the Indian trade as a civilizing agent among the Indians. Often, traders abused and cheated Indians. Whereas trade failed to meet its potential among the Indians, Lawson believed incorporation could serve to civilize them. Lawson's masters in London, the Lords Proprietors, had long been at odds with colonial elites in Carolina over the drift of Indian policy. They clashed with leaders in Charlestown over how best to regulate the Indian trade. Although he wrote of "regulation," Lawson did not confine himself to addressing the abuses of the Indian trade, the common subject of policy in the colony. Rather than police the English brokers of the Indian trade, Lawson offered the proprietors a policy that he believed would obviate the need for regulation. Indians would be incorporated into the empire and colonial society. While accounting for the Indians' ancient past, John Lawson also narrated for them a common future with the English in the ideal Carolina colony of his imagination—a realm of flourishing commerce, easy government, and inviolable religious liberty.

## Chapter Three:

### Regulation

*And since I hinted at a Regulation of the Savages, and to propose a way to convert them to Christianity, I will first particularize the several Nations of Indians that are our Neighbours, and then proceed to what I promis'd.*

John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 1709<sup>231</sup>

Crafting a solution to the problems of Indian relations exercised the minds of Carolina's leaders throughout the early eighteenth century. A man as different from Lawson in temperament and career as South Carolina's governor James Moore exhorted members of the colony's Commons House to reform the Indian trade in 1702. Of paramount concern to Moore and other men like him was not so much the suffering of Indians as the safety of the province's frontiers. "Gentlemen," Moore exhorted the members of the Commons House, "I have the most Numerous Family of Relations and children in the Collony" and should "any mischief fall on us, from the Indjans I have Reason to Expect to be the first and Greatest sufferer."<sup>232</sup> Indian abuse at the hands of unscrupulous traders also threatened to drive otherwise willing Indians into the "French interest." And, of course, there were English profits to consider. Moore, whose campaigns into Guale and Apalache in 1704 displaced and enslaved hundreds of Indians allied to the Spanish, was likely happy to do his part in seeing that the enemy indigenous population was pared down through profitable slaving ventures. *Thinning* the Indians was often presented to be as desirable as converting them to Christianity.

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<sup>231</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.

<sup>232</sup> April 2, 1702, *Journals of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina for 1702*, ed. A. S. Salley (Columbia: The State Company, 1932), 48.



The Quaker John Archdale, himself a former Carolina governor, gloried in “the Smallpox” as God’s handiwork. During the “first Settlement of Carolina,” he wrote, “the Hand of God was eminently seen in thinning [sic] the Indians, to make room for the English.”<sup>233</sup> God’s favor for England, Archdale contended, was made manifest by His choosing to weed out the Indians of Carolina by the pox, rather than use English arms as the instrument of their destruction. For the “Bloody Work” of clearing Mexico and Peru of their mighty peoples, God chose the “Spanish Nation, and not the English, who in their Natures, are not so cruel as the other.”<sup>234</sup> To spare the kind hands of the English, “it pleases God to send, as I may say, an Assyrian Angel to do it himself.”<sup>235</sup> John Lawson’s pen recorded the bloody workings of the small pox in depressing detail, altogether different from the descriptions of God’s providence wrought by Archdale. Indian traders brought the pox along with their wares and had “destroy’d many thousands of these Natives” thereby. The “*Sewees* have been formerly a large Nation, though now very much decreas’d since the English hath seated their Land,” wrote Lawson on his first trek through Carolina in 1701, “and all other Nations of Indians are observ’d to partake of the same Fate, where the Europeans come, the Indians being a People very apt to catch any Distemper they are afflicted withal.”<sup>236</sup> Indeed, Lawson was confident that smallpox “had never visited America” at all “before the Discovery thereof by the Christians.”<sup>237</sup> The Virginian Robert Beverley concurred that the Indians “have on several accounts reason to lament the arrival of the Europeans, by whose

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<sup>233</sup> John Archdale, “A New Description of that Fertile and Pleasant Province of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 285.

<sup>234</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 285.

<sup>235</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 285.

<sup>236</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 17.

<sup>237</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 232.

means they lost their Felicity as well as their Innocence.”<sup>238</sup> The reduction of Carolina’s Indians under the privations of disease, slaving, and war were compounded, Lawson believed, by the introduction of rum. Again, the blame was placed at the door of the English, whose trade failed to introduce anything but vices into Indian towns. “Drunkenness was a Stranger” to them before the colonists arrived, Lawson wrote.<sup>239</sup>

Just as he believed history began in America when Europeans first appeared there, so too did the sufferings of Native peoples. John Lawson’s was a notable voice in a host of English writers of the early eighteenth century who commented on the destructive tendencies of European colonization in America. “They have learnt several Vices of the *Europeans*, but not one Vertue, as I know of,” Lawson declared. “Swearing their Speech cannot express yet those that speak *English*, learn to swear the first thing they talk of.”<sup>240</sup> The reader of his work might readily believe that Lawson likened the entry of Europeans into America to the Serpent’s taking up lodgings in the Garden of Eden. The Fall seemed inevitable. Lawson considered empire-building to be a process that was largely mismanaged by the English in Carolina. Whereas the thrust of most expansionists was to expel the Indians, Lawson’s project was designed absorb them safely into English society, thereby obviating their utter destruction. As Ned Blackhawk has contended, indigenous peoples were integrated into “new mental and political regimes” as a precursor to dispossession.<sup>241</sup> Thus, Lawson’s work

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<sup>238</sup> Beverley, *History*, 233.

<sup>239</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 240.

<sup>240</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 240.

<sup>241</sup> See Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 152-153; Edney identifies a similar process in British India “to transform a land of incomprehensible spectacle into an empire of knowledge.” Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2.

should be considered as an effort not only to recast Carolina's history, but to establish a place for Indians within the colony's future. Although he wrote of "regulation" much as his contemporaries did, Lawson meant more by that word than a mere correction of trade abuses. For John Lawson, regulation meant incorporation.

Drawing upon natural history, surveying, and political economy John Lawson constructed his own version of "the Indian" understandable to his English contemporaries. What began as a travelogue, narrating the variation of local topographies and inhabitants, recalling "Enoe Will" and a visit to "Sapona-Town," concluded with a broad vision for the place of "the Indian" within the British empire. In his mind, Lawson's plan for teaching trades to Indian youth and for a broad policy of intermarriage between Native peoples and English colonists was to act justly. By these means, he proposed to incorporate Native peoples, not only into the emerging British empire but into Anglophone colonial society. This ambitious scheme for what he called the "Regulation of the Savages" sought a radical realignment of indigenous peoples' relationship to labor and property. This transformation, recasting Indians in Lawson's mold, was to be effected gradually over more than one generation. The Indians would no longer be a people apart, cast out of history by an ancient catastrophe; instead, they would be drawn into the wider English world to "become as one People with us."<sup>242</sup> Into Lawson's imagined Carolina of religious toleration and flourishing commerce, Native peoples would in time enter as "Members of the same Ecclesiastical and Civil Government" as the English colonists.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

<sup>243</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

### *Lawson Recasts Carolina*

By the first decade of the eighteenth century the Carolina proprietary was under steady attack from critics on both sides of the Atlantic. It is into this cockpit of political strife that John Lawson's book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, entered as a contestant. Among the Lords Proprietors' leading critics were Dissenters and Whigs disgusted with the administration of affairs in both the Carolinas. The resultant disorder, they argued, was grinding trade and civil life to a halt. From South Carolina, Dissenters had sailed for London to seek an audience before the Lords Proprietors for redress of their grievances. Their brief included a demand for the end of a new religious test for office-holding, a restoration of commerce, and for a stable policy toward Carolina's Indian peoples. In North Carolina, Thomas Cary and his Quaker supporters seized the political initiative and began their own government in 1708 that was unapproved by the Lords Proprietors. The Proprietors' opponents presented their own rival narrative of Carolina's history. Daniel Defoe, writing in behalf of South Carolina's Dissenters, portrayed Carolina as an errant child misled by wolfish masters. Whig pamphleteer John Oldmixon narrated a troubled history of religious imbroglios, illegal warfare, and economic ruin. The former Quaker governor of South Carolina, John Archdale, saw in the colony's disorders "God's Chastising Hand" at work.<sup>244</sup> Defoe's and Oldmixon's narration of events unfolded over secular time. By contrast, providence had ever guided history, Archdale believed, and was now striking against the pride of what he called the High-Churchmen and their party in Charlestown.

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<sup>244</sup> John Archdale, "Description of Carolina, 1707," in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 308.

Countering the claims of the likes of Oldmixon and Defoe, John Lawson's book was an effort to recast the Lords Proprietors' rule in North Carolina as a successful experiment in religious toleration, commerce, and regulation of the Indians. His influence at this moment in the Carolina proprietary was brief but significant. Pondering the state of the Carolina proprietary from the vantage of 1715, the Anglican missionary John Urmston lamented the ascendancy of the "Quaking lords Danson & Ray" who "would have all men do as Lawson did [and] write whole Volumes in praise of such a worthless place: he has had his reward."<sup>245</sup> Before his execution by the Tuscarora in 1711, Lawson became the Lords Proprietors' leading propagandist, spearheaded the planned migration of "poor Palatines" to colonize the fledgling city of New Berne, and was commissioned Surveyor-General of North Carolina.<sup>246</sup> He was buoyed by the influence of new proprietors after the death of the palatine or senior proprietor, the Tory Lord John Granville in 1707.<sup>247</sup> Despite the claims of at least one recent historian, the Proprietors were far from disinterested in their colony.<sup>248</sup> They commissioned Lawson to intervene at a crucial moment as their opponents argued for resumption of Carolina's charter by the Crown. Faced with a rival interpretation of Carolina's history from the pens of Daniel Defoe, John Oldmixon, and other critics, Lawson propounded his own

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<sup>245</sup> John Urmston to William Taylor, Secretary of the SPG, 12 June 1715, *CRNC* 2, 186.

<sup>246</sup> For more on Lawson's role in the Palatine Movement, see Daniel Statt, *Foreigners and Englishmen: The Controversy over Immigration and Population, 1660 – 1760* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 124 and 159.

<sup>247</sup> Despite its tantalizing title, Roper's work is not an intellectual history of Carolina's relationship to English political economic thought or ideology over time. L.H. Roper, *Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 137-138; Roper correctly sees a leadership vacuum during this period, but little remarks upon the ascendancy of the Quaker John Danson and his wife, Mary Archdale Danson. Like Lawson she also corresponded with James Petiver on natural history. See William S. Powell, *The Proprietors of Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1963), 61.

<sup>248</sup> Gally is incorrect when he asserts the proprietors withdrew from colonial affairs by 1707. Alan Gally, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 208.

history of uninterrupted economic and political progress. While Defoe and Oldmixon heard from the Proprietors' London headquarters echoes of Stuart absolutism, Lawson averred that the constitution of Carolina was the freest of any in the universe. Religious liberty was inviolable, he asserted, provided no mischief came from it. Likewise, the values of industry and the enjoyment of the fruits of one's labor were declared sacrosanct in John Lawson's Carolina. The privileges of rank and established wealth yielded before the industrious yeoman and the enterprising merchant. Most surprising was Lawson's boast that Carolina stood alone as the one colony least disturbed by Indian commotions. Lawson considered the fact "remarkable, That no Place on the Continent of America has seated an English colony so free from Blood-shed, as Carolina."<sup>249</sup> The Indians of North Carolina, he claimed, were friendly and "covet a Christian Neighbourhood," an alleged inclination Lawson intended to encourage.<sup>250</sup>

The direction of Indian affairs was only one issue in the debate. Barred from public life by the so-called Exclusion Act, a 1704 statute requiring members of the Commons House of Assembly to take the Anglican communion exclusively, South Carolina's Dissenters protested. They demanded the act be revoked by the Lords Proprietors. Meeting the wooden ears of the Palatine, Lord Granville, South Carolina's successive Dissenter agents John Ash and Joseph Boon engaged the pen of Daniel Defoe to make their party's case against the ruling clique in Charlestown. The resultant pamphlet, *Party-Tyranny*, appeared in London in 1705. In it Defoe argued that the passage by the Assembly of an "occasional bill in

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<sup>249</sup> John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina* ed. Hugh T. Lefler (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 92.

<sup>250</sup> The Tuscarora, the Core, and other victims of the Indian slave trade would have vehemently disagreed with the most sanguine of Lawson's declarations. Lawson, *New Voyage*, 6.

miniature” was tantamount to the renunciation of Carolina’s constitutional guarantee of religious toleration. An “occasional bill” referred to pieces of legislation introduced in England that sought to ban Dissenters, Nonconformists, and Roman Catholics from taking the Anglican only as needed to meet the religious test of officeholding.<sup>251</sup> With the effective abrogation of the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, the people there were absolved of their allegiance to the Lords Proprietors and fell “under the immediate Direction and Government of the English Empire, whose subjects they were before, and from whom their Government was deriv’d.”<sup>252</sup> The proprietors did not govern anyway, he contended, but ruled by a “Sub-Tyranny,” turning a blind eye toward the rogue colonial leaders who ruled in their names. These “Proprietary-Monarchs” were bereft of any ties of affection to their people. “Like a Landlord to his Tenant,” Defoe wrote, “they have their Eyes upon the Rent.”<sup>253</sup>

History assisted polemic as Defoe narrated the course of Carolina as a project turned horribly wrong. The first Earl of Shaftesbury and his philosopher-scribe John Locke “handed the Infant Government into the World,” Defoe wrote, “and turn’d it loose before it cou’d stand alone.”<sup>254</sup> The Lords Proprietors of Carolina proved ill masters for their distant domains. The babe Carolina was cast out into the wilderness “like the young Romulus... has got a Wolf to its Nurse, and is like to be bred up a Monster.”<sup>255</sup> Though pulled from antiquity, the allusion to Rome was unmistakably contemporary in intent. Defoe implied that

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<sup>251</sup> See Daniel Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 225 and n. 1.

<sup>252</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 227.

<sup>253</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 235.

<sup>254</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 232.

<sup>255</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 232.

the “Sub-Tyrants” who governed Carolina in the Proprietors’ name were little better than crypto-Catholics, who sought absolute and arbitrary sway over the colony’s nonconformists. By countenancing the Exclusion Act, the Lords Proprietors joined their “Sub-Tyrants,” the Charlestown High Churchmen, in declaring “War against the Christian Religion, and the Church of England” as both were established following the Revolution of 1688-1689.<sup>256</sup>

If that were not enough, the Lords Proprietors had set the colony’s trade on the path to utter ruin. The prevailing disorders withered the erstwhile “flourishing Circumstances” of Carolina’s commerce. Their effect on trade was “fatal,” Defoe wrote, “especially on the Number of inhabitants, which is allow’d by all to be the Wealth, Strength, and Prosperity of a Country.”<sup>257</sup> Finally, Defoe reprinted the earlier memorials of South Carolina’s Dissenter agents, including John Ash’s lengthy brief against the perversion of the Indian trade by the former governor James Moore. Despite the repeated instructions of the Lords Proprietors, Ash wrote, the Indian trade was under no “good regulation.” Instead, the trade “whereby we held our chief Correspondence with England” was transformed by Moore and his confederates “into a Trade of Indian or Slave-making, whereby the Indians to the South and West of us are already involv’d in Blood and Confusion, a Trade so odious and abominable, that every other Colony in America... abhor to follow.”<sup>258</sup> The reckless Indian policy pursued by the ruling faction in Charlestown “will in all Probability draw upon us an Indian War,” Ash continued ominously, “with all the dreadful Consequences of it.”<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 257.

<sup>257</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 260.

<sup>258</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 240.

<sup>259</sup> Defoe, “Party-Tyranny,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 240.



Defoe's history was both narratological and analogical, recalling echoes of the crisis that brought down the last Stuart king. When presented with the petition of the Dissenters for the repeal of the Exclusion Act, Lord Granville "answer'd in" an "Arbitrary and Imperious Manner" that "I am for this Bill, and this is the Party that I will Head and Countenance," Defoe recalled. "This is so much the Picture of the Answer of King James to the Humble and Peaceable Address of the Bishops, when he sent them to the Tower," Defoe wrote, "that a Body would wonder the Tale of one, should not warn his high Mightiness against the Practice of the other."<sup>260</sup> The Tory Lord John Granville, champion of occasional bills in England, was portrayed as the petty James Stuart, erecting his own arbitrary and absolute government over the people of a distant realm. Granville was therefore thought fit to be driven off his throne after the model of James II's own ouster. Defoe believed that if the constitution of Carolina "were rightly Administered, it may be allow'd the best Settlement in America." As it was the situation in Carolina was so dire, Defoe argued, as to justify a revolution in the colony's government. The collected outrages perpetrated upon the people by one faction in the colony and countenanced by the Lords Proprietors proved destructive of Carolina's constitution and were therefore enough to revolve the government back to the English Crown. Resumption by the Crown of the Carolina charter was the only answer to relieve the colony's beleaguered inhabitants. Daniel Defoe was not the only critic of proprietary rule who marshaled the proxies of history in the service of a contemporary cause.

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<sup>260</sup> Defoe, "Party-Tyranny," in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 259.

In 1708 John Oldmixon produced his own interpretation of events in Carolina. Oldmixon wrote in the guise of an historian, chronicling the colony's development from its first discovery and settlement to the present day. He, too, drew comparisons between the reign of James II and the inflexible rule of the Lord Proprietors and their Palatine over Carolina. Of Granville's reply to the Dissenting petitioners, Oldmixon could only gasp in disbelief at the "Tone" of this "Sultan of Carolina."<sup>261</sup> The exotic specter of Turkish despotism soon gave way to a form slightly more familiar in the English imagination. Recounting Granville's resolution to approve the Exclusion Act without consulting the other Lords Proprietors in council, Oldmixon slyly remarked that the Palatine "should have added, *Car tel est notre Plaisir*," the language accompanying the decrees of the King of France.<sup>262</sup> Passing legislation solely by the pleasure of the monarch was unthinkable in post-revolutionary England. The like "was never heard from the Throne, at least in this Reign or the last," Oldmixon declared, "both which are the Glory of the British Annals."<sup>263</sup> Go back another reign, Oldmixon slyly suggested, and the same thing was heard. Carolina, he hinted, was as England had been in the uncertain days of 1687-88. Property and liberty were insecure before a grasping, implacable, arbitrary monarch, in this case Lord Granville, and the men acting with his consent in the colony.

Against Defoe's and Oldmixon's histories of Carolina, John Lawson crafted an alternative that celebrated the purported achievements of the Proprietors in establishing a mild and stable government under which all men were free in their conscience, commerce

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<sup>261</sup> John Oldmixon, "Oldmixon's British Empire," in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 353.

<sup>262</sup> Oldmixon, "Oldmixon's British Empire," in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 353.

<sup>263</sup> Oldmixon, "Oldmixon's British Empire," in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 354.

flourished, and peaceable Indians awaited to be incorporated as dutiful English subjects. Carolina's critics, Lawson implied, were mendacious knaves, bereft of his patrons' virtues. The Lords Proprietors were Carolina's guarantors of "*Liberty and Right*, the Darlings of an *English Nature*" and should be considered "Noble Patrons in the Eyes of all Men... which nothing less than Ingratitude and Baseness can make us disown."<sup>264</sup> Lawson dismissed the charges against the proprietary regime as the distortions of designing men whom he prayed would be united with the Lords Proprietors' interest again. *A New Voyage to Carolina* was a salvo signaling a political shift by the Proprietors aimed at "banishing from among us every Principle which renders Men factious and unjust," Lawson wrote.<sup>265</sup>

The history of North Carolina in Lawson's imagination was a story of nearly unbroken progress. "The first Discovery and Settlement of this Country," he wrote, "was by Procurement of Sir *Walter Raleigh*, in conjunction with some publick-spirited Gentlemen of that Age under the Protection of Queen *Elizabeth*."<sup>266</sup> The material remains of the Lost Colony were offered as Lawson's best evidence that it ever existed. The wreckage of Raleigh's failed venture was employed to provide Carolina with a heroic past. Lawson did not fail to remark that on Roanoke Island "the Ruins of a Fort are to be seen at this day, as well as some old English Coins which have been lately found."<sup>267</sup> For the reader, he excavated the entire hoard of relics including "a Brass-Gun, a Powder-Horn, and one small Quarter deck-Gun, made of Iron Staves, and hoop'd with the same Metal." With an eye for material culture, Lawson dated the site based upon the method by which the gun was made, a

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<sup>264</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 4.

<sup>265</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 4.

<sup>266</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 68.

<sup>267</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 69.

technique that “might very probably be made use of in those Days, for the Convenience of Infant-Colonies.”<sup>268</sup> Only “about fifty Years ago, in that part we now call *Albermarl-County*” was the forerunner of the present settlement begun. Rather than rogues and runaways, North Carolina’s settler-founders were “several substantial Planters, from *Virginia*, and other Plantations.” Attracted by the climate and soil, these late planters spread out “at great Distances one from another, and amidst a vast number of *Indians* of different Nations.”<sup>269</sup>

North Carolina’s success was said to be excelled only by its neighbor to the south and west of the Cape Fear River. Describing the country as it appeared to him in 1700 when he first arrived in Charlestown, John Lawson elevated South Carolina as a model of commerce. By coincidence, Lawson’s description of South Carolina is preceded by his recollection of his layover in New York where “a good Part of the inhabitants are *Dutch*, in whose Hands this Colony once was.”<sup>270</sup> The model of Dutch industry impressed Lawson.<sup>271</sup> After describing the high quality of New York’s commodities and the well-ordered buildings “of the *Dutch* Fashion,” Lawson arrived in the “Metropolis of *South Carolina*,” a place that appeared to thrive after the like fashion.<sup>272</sup> Lawson’s Charlestown was a nursery of great fortunes, a hub of trade, and an exemplar of peaceful religious coexistence. “They are very neat and exact in Packing and Shipping of their Commodities,” Lawson wrote of South Carolina’s merchants, “which Method has got them so great a Character Abroad, that they

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<sup>268</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 69.

<sup>269</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 69.

<sup>270</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 8.

<sup>271</sup> For one discussion of English appropriation of Dutch commercial models, see Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 49-90.

<sup>272</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 8.

generally come to a good Market.” From Charlestown’s capacious harbor came and went a “considerable Trade both to Europe, and the West Indies, whereby they become rich.”<sup>273</sup>

Unusual among mainland North American colonies, he claimed that South Carolina overflowed with cash, the essential ingredient to commerce. “The Place is more plentiful in Money, than most, or indeed any of the Plantations on the Continent,” marveled the traveler Lawson.<sup>274</sup>

With commerce considered, Lawson turned to the state of religion in the colony. Far from a den of sectarian strife, Lawson’s Charlestown was a harmonious collection of sacred buildings each housing a different congregation of “well-meaning Christians.” Each sect had its proper seat, including the Church of England. “Near the Town is built a fair Parsonage-house, with necessary Offices, and the Minister has a very considerable Allowance from his Parish,” he notes, writing of the Anglican communion in Charlestown. The established church is but one of many, however, coexisting under law. “There is likewise a French Church in Town, of the Reform’d Religion, and several Meeting-houses for dissenting Congregations,” Lawson explained, “who all enjoy at this Day an entire Liberty of their Worship.”<sup>275</sup> Upholding Charlestown as an example of successful toleration was necessary in Lawson’s drive to combat the fallout from the Exclusion Act. To the relief of Churchmen toleration was conditional upon good behavior. Nonconformists could “enjoy a free Toleration, and possess the same Priviledges, so long as they appear to behave themselves

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<sup>273</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 9.

<sup>274</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 10.

<sup>275</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 9.

peaceably and well.”<sup>276</sup> In North Carolina the Proprietors provided for an Anglican minister at no charge to the other inhabitants. The gift of free land for a glebe was an assurance that all inhabitants would be free from financial exactions.<sup>277</sup>

Secure in their consciences North Carolina’s settlers were likewise secure in their persons and their property. The rights of English subjects were safe from abrogation in the Proprietors’ garden. Lawson stated unequivocally that “as for the Constitution of this Government, it is so mild and easy, in respect to the Properties and Liberties of a Subject, that without rehearsing the Particulars, I say once for all, it is the mildest and best establish’d Government in the World.”<sup>278</sup> In Carolina, Lawson suggested, there would never be an arbitrary government. The subjects who settled thence “may enjoy their Liberty and Religion, and peaceably eat the Fruits of their Labour, and drink the Wine of their own Vineyards.”<sup>279</sup> With a flavor of incipient English radicalism, Lawson declared that in Carolina “Rank and Superiority [are] ever giving Place to Justice and Equity.” He might well have added to the latter “Industry.” Lawson had already conceived of the American landscape as a largely empty space to which labor could be productively applied. Not only was he eager to attract English labor to the colony, Lawson also envisioned a new way of using Indian labor—not just as slaves but as free people trained in English manufactures and mechanical arts. Combined with a sweeping program of intermarriage between the Indians and the English, this would form the basic components of Lawson’s plan for incorporation.

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<sup>276</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 9.

<sup>277</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 171.

<sup>278</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 169.

<sup>279</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 169.

### ***“The Regulation of the Savages”***

John Lawson called his proposed Indian policy, the “Regulation of the Savages.” In his project, John Lawson drew upon assumptions current among his contemporaries concerning human personality and its relationship to property, language, and culture. John Lawson read hopeful signs in the Indian notions of property he observed. Though “they have no Fence to part one anothers [sic] Lots in their Corn-Fields,” Lawson writes, citing the quintessential English mark of possession, nevertheless “every Man knows his own, and it scarce ever happens, that they rob one another of so much as an Ear of Corn.”<sup>280</sup> If Native people conceived at least of separate shares, Lawson suggested, they could be induced to take another step and fence their portion, alienating it from the clan’s stock thus opening the parcel for English acquisition.

Humans were considered to be all essentially alike insofar as their rational faculties functioned according to the same basic rules. Men were thought to possess no innate knowledge. Every man’s mind was assumed to be of the same plastic substance, a wax tablet or a blank sheet of paper awaiting inscription as in John Locke’s famous metaphor of the *tabula rasa* in his *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*.<sup>281</sup> John Lawson assumed a similar plasticity in the human personality. The minds of Native peoples presented yet another open field to be surveyed, cleared, and planted with ideas. Difference among peoples, Lawson thought, was principally the result of their varying manners of education. According to Lawson, the Indians’ “Sylvian Education” served to perpetuate their uncivilized

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<sup>280</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 184.

<sup>281</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: 1690).

state.<sup>282</sup> The school of the forest which “they have ever been train’d up to” produced men whom the English tended to deride, despite the Indians’ natural gifts. Looking back upon the era of the Tuscarora War, William Byrd II would express much the same sentiment as Lawson. “The principal Difference between one People and another proceeds only from their different Opportunities of Improvement,” Byrd declared. On the other side of the Atlantic, John Locke had put the matter as succinctly as Byrd, writing in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, that “the difference to be found in the abilities of men is owing more to their education than anything else.”<sup>283</sup> For Lawson, the clearest markers of Indian subjectivity were “Speech and Customs,” inculcated in a person by his upbringing.

Despite profound markers of difference, he praised Indian mental faculties saying “they will learn anything very soon.”<sup>284</sup> Lawson’s contemporary, William Byrd II, generalized the sentiment more than a quarter-century later. “All Nations of men have the same Natural Dignity,” Byrd wrote, “and we all know that very bright Talents may be lodg’d under a very Dark Skin.”<sup>285</sup> The older the person, the more difficult the process of cultural change would be. When he asked Enoe-Will whether he would become a Christian, his trusted Siouan guide reportedly replied that he was too old to make such a change.

However, he told me, If I would take his Son *Jack*, who was then about 14 Years of Age, and teach him to talk in that Book [Lawson’s devotional manual], and make Paper speak, which they call our Way of Writing, he would wholly resign him to my Tuition.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244.

<sup>283</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: 1693), 33.

<sup>284</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 175.

<sup>285</sup> William Byrd, II, *Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* ed. William K. Boyd (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), 120.

<sup>286</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 65.



Will's words, if they were his own, conformed to Lawson's notions about the usefulness of education in transforming the culture of a people.<sup>287</sup> Indian education interested some Southeastern colonial leaders during the years prior to the Tuscarora War. William Byrd II wrote a poem in about 1710 lauding the plans of Virginia governor Alexander Spotswood for educating Nottaway youth at Fort Christanna and in the College of William & Mary. The poem, left unpublished for decades, closed with the lines: "With fairer Hopes he forms the Indian Youth / To early Manners, Probity and Truth."<sup>288</sup> The last stanza of Byrd's poem enumerates in order the steps from an Indian boy's acculturation, the learning of "Manners," to the "Truth" of Christian revelation.

John Lawson's plans for Indian education did not encompass the usual curriculum of the colonial grammar school. Nor was religious instruction a significant part. Instead, the Indians were to "send their Children Apprentices to proper Masters, that would be kind to them, and make them Masters of a Trade."<sup>289</sup> Critically, these young apprentices must "be put into those Hands that are Men of the best Characters" with a "mild, winning and sweet Disposition."<sup>290</sup> Mildness, Lawson wrote, was a "Vertue the Indians are in love withal."<sup>291</sup> Indian conversion to Christianity was a secondary effect of Lawson's ultimate plan. His foremost concern was the effecting of a realignment in the Indian youth's relationship to labor. "But of themselves, they never work as the English do, taking care for not farther than

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<sup>287</sup> This sort of question often arises when one reads travel accounts of the period. For one scholar's attempt to establish a framework for answering it, see Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 26-27.

<sup>288</sup> Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line*, 120.

<sup>289</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244.

<sup>290</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

<sup>291</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

what is absolutely necessary to support Life.”<sup>292</sup> According to Lawson, Indians were thus “no Inventors of any Arts or Trades worthy mention.”<sup>293</sup> He was sure that not to share with Indians the “Mysteries of our Handicrafts” would be to “deal unjustly by them.”<sup>294</sup> There was another reason, also. Apprenticing Native youth to trusty masters offered a means of drawing them into English settlements, cleaving them from the customs of their elders at home, and persuading them of alleged colonial good intentions. Then there would be “daily Conversions amongst them, when they saw that we were kind and just to them in all our dealings.”<sup>295</sup>

Good faith would encourage the other major component of Lawson’s scheme for incorporation, the intermarriage of Indians with English colonists “of a lower Rank.”<sup>296</sup> By this means Lawson averred “the whole Body of these People would arrive to the Knowledge of our Religion and Customs, and become as one People with us.”<sup>297</sup> Lawson urged the Lords Proprietors to adopt a policy “to give Encouragement to the ordinary People, and those of a lower Rank, that they might marry with these *Indians*, and come into Plantations, and Houses, where so many Acres of Land and some Gratiuity of Money... are given to the new-

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<sup>292</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 176.

<sup>293</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 175.

<sup>294</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244.

<sup>295</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

<sup>296</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244; J. Ralph Randolph is astute to note that his intermarriage proposal was directed toward “the ordinary People.” However, Randolph ascribes Lawson’s distinction in this matter to his sense of “racial superiority.” See J. Ralph Randolph, *British Travelers Among the Southern Indians, 1660-1763* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 87. I am not convinced that this is the whole explanation. Rather, the major value of intermarriage for Lawson was as another means to transfer property from Indian to English hands, thus alleviating the plight of poor immigrants who would otherwise experience the “tyranny of a bad master.” Lawson, *New Voyage*, 246. For more on property transfer and intermarriage see Fischer, *Suspect Relations*, 74.

<sup>297</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

married couple.”<sup>298</sup> Intermarriage was certainly not a novel proposal among English colonizers. In the trading posts of the Levant and the more permanent settlement of Virginia, sexual alliances with local women afforded the gentleman-adventurer a useful entrée into networks of kinship and power. But these relationships were seldom recognized as true marriages by the men involved. The unions were typically high-profile peace gambits as that between Matoaka and the English entrepreneur John Rolfe in 1614.<sup>299</sup> The brothers-in-law Robert Beverley and William Byrd II both regretted that more such unions did not take place during Virginia’s early days. Both men upbraided their ancestors for declining what they believed was a sure and easy means of achieving peace, prosperity, and fulfilling their Christian duty. For his part, Byrd declared that intermarriage between the English and the Indians was the “only method of converting the Natives to Christianity.”<sup>300</sup> If the English were ever truly serious about converting the Indians, wrote Byrd, “they would have brought their Stomachs to embrace this prudent Alliance.”<sup>301</sup>

Robert Beverley—Byrd’s brother by marriage to his sister, Ursula—dwelt upon the subject of intermarriage in the same section of his history that recounted the nuptials of Rolfe and Matoaka. Beverley believed that the Natives’ conversion to Christianity was not the least advantage to be obtained by intermarriage. The lost advantages were manifold and redounded to the shame of Virginia’s first planters. The wars which ruined the Indians and hampered the English would have been prevented. By intermarriage “the Abundance of

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<sup>298</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 244.

<sup>299</sup> Allison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560 – 1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 133.

<sup>300</sup> Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line*, 3.

<sup>301</sup> Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line*, 3.

Blood that was shed on both sides wou'd have been saved." The privations experienced by the early English settlers "by which so many died," Beverley was confident, "wou'd not have happen'd." With war and starvation at bay, "the Colony, instead of all the Losses of Men on both Sides, wou'd have been increasing in Children to its Advantage." The whole of Virginia would be "full of People, by the Preservation of the many Christians and Indians that fell in the Wars between them." Beverley, who lamented that the Indians of Virginia were wasting away, the present population but a fraction of their former strength, diverted his disappointment with a vision of the many nations that might have been saved from removal or dissipation by a policy of intermarriage. "Besides, there would have been a Continuance of all those Nations of Indians that are now dwindled away to nothing by their frequent Removals, or are fled to other Parts," Beverley imagined. Early success in the colony, he thought, would have enhanced the reputation of Virginia and encouraged "others to have gone over and settled there."<sup>302</sup> In his treatment of intercultural unions, Beverley practically narrated a counterfactual history of Virginia in which Indians and Englishmen lived together in a harmonious land teeming with people, including many Indians which were destroyed in war or driven away.

It is possible that Lawson read Beverley's book. With an Indian population estimated to far outnumber its European one, North Carolina in 1709 bore a greater resemblance to the Virginia of 1609. Perhaps, he discerned parallels between the present state of North Carolina and that of early Virginia, and opted to heed Beverley's advice. It is clear, from reading other portions of *A New Voyage to Carolina*, that Lawson's proposal was also rooted in his

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<sup>302</sup> Beverley's expatiation on the benefits of intermarriage may be read, in their entirety, in Beverley, *History*, 38.

unique personal experience and interests. “The English Traders are seldom without an Indian Female for his Bed-fellow,” Lawson noted in his journal. Taking an “*Indian Mistress*” was a matter of prudence as it “preserves their Friendship with the Heathens” and means that a trader will have “Provisions whilst he stays amongst them.”<sup>303</sup> Besides a warm bed and ready victuals, there were other benefits to be had by the Indian trader who took a Native wife. “This Correspondence makes them learn the *Indian Tongue* much the sooner,” Lawson wrote of the Indian traders, “they being of the *French-man’s* Opinion, how that an *English Wife* teachers he Husband more *English* in one Night, than a School-master can in a Week.”<sup>304</sup> It was in the marriage beds of English traders and their wives that Lawson’s hopes for civilizing the Indians were conceived. For if an Englishman could learn Indian languages in concourse with his Native wife, the woman and her relations would likewise pick up English and even bits of Christianity. His other observations of Indians in the backcountry bolstered Lawson’s opinion of the benefits to be gained by intermarriage. Discussing the ritual feasts sealing alliances between Native peoples, Lawson well understood the role that intermarriage played in the bargain. Erstwhile warring towns Lawson reported as coming together, solemnly declaring “that their Sons and Daughters shall marry together, and the two Nations love one another, and become as one People.”<sup>305</sup> Incorporation was to be consummated in marriage.

A sweeping plan of intermarriage could, he thought, secure the peace permanently between the English and their new Indian relations. Similar observations recommended

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<sup>303</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 34-35.

<sup>304</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 35.

<sup>305</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 177.

intermarriage as a policy to Robert Beverley. The Indians, Beverley wrote, were amenable to intermarriage “urging it frequently as a certain Rule, that the English were not their Friends, if they refused it.”<sup>306</sup> William Byrd II was likewise convinced that Native mores made intermarriage the best guarantor of peace. “The Natives could, by no means, persuade themselves that the English were heartily their Friends, so long as they disdained to intermarry with them,” Byrd concluded.<sup>307</sup> The troubles in Massachusetts during the seventeenth century might also have been avoided if only the “Large Swarm of Dissenters” who settled there but deigned to take Native wives. “These Saints conceiving the same aversion to the Copper Complexion of the Natives, with that of the first Adventurers of Virginia, would, on no terms, contract Alliances with them, afraid perhaps, like the Jews of Old, lest they might be drawn into Idolatry by those Strange Women.”<sup>308</sup> Intermarriage, Lawson and Beverley suggested, would in fact have drawn the Indians out of “idolatry” by smoothing their way to civilization.

For Lawson and most of his contemporaries, the natives of Carolina were to be civilized then Christianized, and in that order. John Archdale bemoaned the negligence of Carolina’s rulers in “executing the proper Means for their Soul’s Salvation, which being a gradual Work, the introducing of a Civilized State would be a good and stable Preparatory for the Gospel State.”<sup>309</sup> Providence brought forth the Roman Empire, Archdale believed, to prepare the ancient Britons for the coming of the Gospel. The Roman roads running through England were highways that bore civilization and a welcome path to the first evangelists who

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<sup>306</sup> Beverley, *History*, 38.

<sup>307</sup> Byrd, *History of the Dividing Line*, 3.

<sup>308</sup> Byrd, *History of the Dividing Line*, 4.

<sup>309</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 285.

reached the island. Archdale urged that English missionaries should make plain to the Indians that “we were once such as themselves, but were by a Noble Heroick Nation reduc’d into a Civiliz’d State.”<sup>310</sup> Britain, newly forged by the Union with Scotland, would now play the providential part of Rome in America. Britain’s role would be doubled; she would both civilize and Christianize the Indians of Carolina. Archdale believed that “if managed discreetly, many of them, in a few Years, become Civilized, and then very capable of the Gospel of Christ.”<sup>311</sup> Discreet management of the Indians was possibly only in the most recent age. The epochal shifts that heralded the early modern era were the necessary conditions for the fulfillment of Britain’s mission in America. The invention of printing, the compass, and gunpowder were all “Preludiums to what is quickly to ensue,” namely, for Archdale at least, the last days or, the Christian millennium, hastened by the subduing and conversion of the Indians. The Anglican minister, Reverend John Blair, reported in 1704 that “those that speak English among them seem to be very willing and fond of being Christians.”<sup>312</sup> That English-speaking Indians would be ready for conversion was no surprise. They were thought to be more civilized than their neighbors whose tongues still tripped over the old barbarous speech. John Lawson himself remarked upon the Indians he encountered in North Carolina who were “more civilized than the rest.”<sup>313</sup> There were Indians, he wrote, who raised cattle and made butter. “The *Paspitank Indians* did formerly keep Cattle, and make Butter,” Lawson wrote, pointing his readers to these signs of an

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<sup>310</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 293.

<sup>311</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 289.

<sup>312</sup> John Blair, “Reverend John Blair’s Mission to North Carolina, 1704,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650 – 1708* ed. A. S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 218.

<sup>313</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 200.

inclination to civilization. Such signs demanded a patient, caring response from the English. For the Quaker John Archdale, Christ would “receive the Heathen for his Inheritance.”<sup>314</sup> John Lawson, however, aimed to gradually disinherit the heathen.

Officials were uncertain just how vast “Christ’s inheritance” truly was. John Blair boasted that there were “no less than 100,000” Indians in North Carolina alone!<sup>315</sup> What was agreed among colonial writers in the years before the Tuscarora War was that the number of Native peoples living in the Carolinas was considerably larger than in Virginia. In 1705, Robert Beverley published a roll of Indian nations, tallying the numbers of “Bow-men” and families in each. “The Indians of Virginia are almost wasted, but such Towns, or People as retain their Names, and live in Bodies, are hereunder set down,” Beverley recorded, “All which together can’t raise five hundred fighting men.”<sup>316</sup> Lawson also created a census of Indians in the colony. Lawson’s census of the Indian nations within the boundaries of North Carolina enumerates the number of towns in each and, like Beverley, the number of men capable of appearing in arms. The object of Lawson’s census was the classifying and ordering of the various Native powers within the bounds of the Lords Proprietors’ domain in North-Carolina that they may be better controlled. Although he estimated the total population at the end of his census, Lawson’s enumeration by nation and town recorded only the number of “Fighting Men.”<sup>317</sup> Their military capability, whether threatening or potentially helpful, is of more account than the numbers of women and children which he extrapolates from the number of warriors.

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<sup>314</sup> Archdale, “Description of Carolina, 1707,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 284.

<sup>315</sup> Blair, “Blair’s Mission,” in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 218.

<sup>316</sup> Beverley, *History*, 232.

<sup>317</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.



In total, Lawson put the total fighting strength of the Indian nations he estimated at 1,612 warriors.<sup>318</sup> For the total population, Lawson estimated that there were some 4,780 “Men, Women and Children.”<sup>319</sup> For a government that clung to the coasts, possessing in Lawson’s words, “but the Fag-end of the Country,” the presence of nearly 5,000 independent people within the colony’s pretended borders was not inconsiderable, nor comforting. But Lawson’s plans for imperial reform did not rest solely on his scheme of intermarriage and education embodied in his project for the “Regulation of the Savages.” He also intended to bolster the Carolina colony’s strategic position by encouraging the immigration of Continental mercenaries.

### ***Incorporation and Lawson’s Imperial Prospect***

Incorporation was not enough to secure the empire. Carolina stood, by Lawson’s formulation, in a precarious position, surrounded by “more Indians than we can civilize and so many Christian Enemies lying on the back of us.”<sup>320</sup> The incorporation of Indians into English colonial society was to form only one prong of Lawson’s imperial strategy for the American Southeast. To reinforce the colony’s defenses, Lawson proposed settling veterans of Europe’s wars on freeholds along the frontier. Most often, these new-fangled Spartans were to be “Switzers,” Swiss mercenaries. Lawson argued that “nothing can be of more Security and Advantage to the Crown and Subjects of *Great-Britain*, than to have our

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<sup>318</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.

<sup>319</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.

<sup>320</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 215.

Frontiers secured by a warlike People, and our Friends, as the *Switzers* are.”<sup>321</sup> Historically, the bulwark of Carolina’s military establishment was its Indian allies. To aid North Carolina in the event of invasion, several small groups of Native peoples were allied with the government for mutual defense. In 1710, Thomas Nairne published his pamphlet, *A Letter from South Carolina*. In it, Nairne described that colony’s strategic situation including an account of the colony’s Indian allies. The Indians, Nairne explained, are “reckon’d a very considerable Part of our Strength.” There were, he reported, “some thousands of these, who are hardy, active, and good Marksmen” and crucially, the Indian allies may be “brought together with little or no Charge.”<sup>322</sup> To the south, seated along the Savannah River, the Yamasee stood as South Carolina’s most reliable allies in the early eighteenth century. But by the end of the century’s first decade, the effects of their service in Queen Anne’s War had reduced the Yamasee’s numbers considerably.<sup>323</sup> The numbers of the Settlement Indians along the coast were likewise dwindling and the Apalachee, who were relocated from Florida to South Carolina by the thousands in 1704, were now reduced by desertion and disease to no more than a few hundred men, women, and children.<sup>324</sup> The Cherokee, meanwhile, remained largely aloof from Charlestown’s affairs and took even less interest in those of North Carolina.<sup>325</sup> To bolster the colony’s defense, Nairne proposed encouraging Swiss

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<sup>321</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 215.

<sup>322</sup> Nairne, “A Letter,” 52.

<sup>323</sup> During Queen Anne’s War, which spanned roughly the first decade of the eighteenth century, the Yamasee were South Carolina’s “virtual mercenaries.” William Green, Chester B. DePratter and Bobby Southerlin, “The Yamasee in South Carolina: Native American Adaptation and Interaction along the Carolina Frontier,” in *Another’s Country: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Cultural Interactions in the Southern Colonies*, eds. J. W. Joseph and Martha Zierden, foreword by Julia A. King (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>324</sup> Gally, *Indian Slave Trade*, 148.

<sup>325</sup> Gally, *Indian Slave Trade*, 203.

immigration to South Carolina. His *Letter from South Carolina* was written with the conceit that it was an actual letter from a Switzer settled in the colony to his friend in Bern.<sup>326</sup>

Like Nairne, Lawson was convinced of the need for a diversified defensive strategy of which military alliances with Indians were to play a diminished role. His eyes were upon the expansive imperial prospect now open to the Crown of Great Britain. Addressing Carolina's Lords Proprietors directly, Lawson argued that "we might be sufficiently enabled to conquer, or maintain our Ground, against all the Enemies to the Crown of *England in America*, both Christian and Savage."<sup>327</sup> Were Carolinians to find a better policy, a policy such as the one he proposed for a union between Indians and the English, the colony might greatly expand its own puissance by winning more allies and avoiding dangerous conflicts. In the meantime, warlike Europeans would be encouraged to settle along the frontiers providing added leverage with Indian friends and foes alike.

Linked with his ambitions to defeat the Spanish and the French, however, was a larger aim. Through a policy of incorporation, the British empire could fulfill a mission to civilize and Christianize the lost peoples of America. "For were the Jews engrafted thus," Lawson wrote near the end of *A New Voyage to Carolina*, "and alienated from the Worship and Conversation of Jews, their Abominations would vanish, and be no more."<sup>328</sup> In so writing, Lawson drew upon the horticultural metaphor found in the eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, notably verse 24. "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more

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<sup>326</sup> Nairne, "A Letter," 35.

<sup>327</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

<sup>328</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 245.

shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?" The verse was a staple of pamphleteers arguing for the readmission of the Jews into England during the 1650s. "They being the natural seed of *Abraham*," wrote Thomas Collier in 1656, "who notwithstanding they are not the spiritual, yet they are the natural branches, and shall again in the Lords time be graffed in, *Rom. 11.24*."<sup>329</sup> Much as Lawson would later do in the cause of Indian conversion, Collier argued that the example of English Christians would provide the "way by which God will draw them over to the gospel-grace."<sup>330</sup>

The work of conversion would be for naught, Lawson wrote, "for if we do not Shew them Examples of Justice and Vertue, we can never bring them to believe ourselves to be a worthier Race of Men than themselves."<sup>331</sup> To fail in this task was to court the danger of defeat at the hands of another imperial power. More frightful than that, for Lawson, failure would invoke the judgment of God upon the English. The souls of the Indians extirpated at the hands of the English would testify against them at the Last Judgment. "This seems to be a more reasonable Method of converting the Indians, than to set up our Christian Banner in a Field of Blood," he declared, "as the Spaniards have done in New Spain, and baptize one hundred with the Sword for one at the Font. Whilst we make way for a Christian Colony through a Field of Blood, and defraud, and make away with those that one day may be wanted in this World, and in the next appear against us, we make way for a more potent Christian Enemy to invade us hereafter, of which we may repent, when too late."<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Thomas Collier, *A Brief Answer to Some of the Objections and Demurs Made Against the Coming in and Inhabiting of the Jews in this Common-wealth* (London: 1656), 1-2.

<sup>330</sup> Collier, *Brief Answer*, 14.

<sup>331</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 200-201.

<sup>332</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 246.

The intimate scale of the story of Enoe-Will and his son Jack is thus misleading. Lawson's scheme was not to be effected one Indian child at a time. Whole peoples were the objects of John Lawson's project. His book included an assay of a comprehensive census of Indian towns and their strength in women, children, and "Fighting Men."<sup>333</sup> These peoples stood within Lawson's Carolina and yet beyond it. Recast in Lawson's mold, Carolina was a success story of religious toleration, the promotion of commerce, and friendly relations with Indians. Yet, John Lawson intended more than the subjection of Native peoples. He aimed to incorporate Carolina's indigenous peoples into colonial English society and the British empire. To do so, Lawson attempted to make legible for English audiences the signs that Native peoples were receptive to such a momentous change. John Lawson aimed to effect incorporation by transforming Indians' relationship to labor, language, and culture over the course of a generation or more.

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<sup>333</sup> Lawson's census is mainly remarkable for its hint toward a kind of political arithmetic. Alas, he does not articulate such a theory in *A New Voyage to Carolina*, though one surmises something like William Petty's "transmutation" of the Irish was on his mind. Lawson, *New Voyage*, 242.

## Conclusion

Near the very end of his book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, John Lawson paused to tantalize the reader with his ambitious visions for further discoveries. “I do intend (if God permit) by future Voyages (after my Arrival in *Carolina*) to pierce into the Body of the Continent,” Lawson wrote, in the language perhaps of a great physician.<sup>334</sup> In retrospect, death appears ever the companion of Lawson’s curiosity. The vastness of his project required a divine dispensation granting Lawson years beyond the usual allotted for a man’s span. “If God prolong my dayes,” he wrote in 1710, again invoking both his own mortality and the immensity of his labors, Lawson intended to compose a still more “Compleat History” of Carolina comprising “a strict collection of all of plants I can meet withal,” of the beasts, birds, fishes, insects, and fossils to be found there. He would render a fuller account of the “nature of Soyles” and of what “mountains, valleys, nations of *Indians*, natural waters, springs, cataracts, & other natural varieties are discovered” by his endeavor.<sup>335</sup> Tucked between “valleys” and “natural waters,” the indigenous people of Carolina appear as unremarkable as the stylized trees that spread evenly over the map of the region Lawson drafted as a companion to his text. It was on another reconnaissance of the backcountry that he was seized and tried by the council of lower Tuscarora, Core, and Neuse Indians. Some Native American peoples seized the initiative for themselves, rejecting the prevailing system of trading abuses, slavery, and dispossession. Lawson’s death heralded the beginning of the Tuscarora War and several years of pan-Indian resistance.

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<sup>334</sup> Lawson, *New Voyage*, 265-266..

<sup>335</sup> John Lawson to James Petiver, 30 December 1710, reprinted in Lawson, *New Voyage*, 270-271.

But the Tuscarora War was not an inevitable response to the excesses of empire-building in the Southeast. Indians and Englishmen alike looked for their own alternatives to war. The Tuscarora applied to leave North Carolina for Pennsylvania where they hoped to live free of slave raids. Their request failed to meet success when the government of North Carolina refused to vouch for their good behavior. To other Native peoples—particularly the ones whom Lawson met on his journey through the Piedmont in 1701—the alternative of incorporation likely held some appeal at least in that it was somewhat familiar to their own experience. The Siouan speakers of the Piedmont were used to people from different nations banding together through adoptions and might have been encouraged by the tenor of Lawson’s proposal. Yet, if they were consulted about the matter most Indians would have likely seen that the interests of empire tended still to predominate. They thought of themselves in terms of their own towns and nations, not entirely as a homogenous, inert, and pliable species of people called “Indians.” The implications of Lawson’s project—the languages lost, the customs changed, the religions forfeited, the sovereignty that they stood to give up—would likely have struck them as too high a price for Lawson’s peace.

The greatest deficiency in Lawson’s proposal from the Native American perspective would have been the absence of any real solution to the threat presented by the Indian slave trade. Lawson nowhere addresses the slave trade in condemnatory terms. He commented on the skill of Indian slaves, praised their handiwork and industry, but he failed to grapple with the trade in their bodies. When he wrote that Englishmen “reckon them Slaves in comparison to us,” he was not taking on the systemic violence of the slave trade. Perhaps, Lawson imagined that the apprenticeship of Indian children to masters of English trades

would point toward a new method of using Indian labor. Yet, slave traders were less concerned with domestic labor than they were with exporting their chattel outside of Carolina for a profit.

From the English perspective the challenges to Lawson's project were also significant. The experience of South Carolina's *SPG* missionaries—Samuel Thomas and Francis Le Jau—showed two sides of the problem. Thomas became little more than chaplain to the colony's governor, choosing to focus on the welfare of English souls rather than the conversion of the Indians. Le Jau, who was determined to embark on his own mission to the Indians, encountered difficulties from the Indian traders whom, he believed, wanted no ministers meddling in their business. Moreover, the Lords Proprietors who perhaps sanctioned Lawson's ambitions of incorporation, while interested in their colony had limited influence there. Lawson addressed his proposals to the proprietors, expected them to help put incorporation into practice.

Despite its failure, an understanding of Lawson's proposals sheds new light on the formation of the British empire in the Southeast. First, Lawson's patronage from the Lords Proprietors and his defense of their charter suggests that the metropolitan neglect historians think characteristic of the empire in the Southeast should be reconsidered. Lawson's work appears to have been in part an intervention by the proprietors in Carolina's political affairs designed to bolster their position. Indian wars were not in the proprietors interests. Second, a fuller consideration of Lawson's thinking invites historians to seriously interrogate the role of surveyors and natural historians in the formation of empire in the Southeast. Thus far, historians have considered the activities of both as tangential to the real thrust of imperialism



in the region—the Indian slave trade. Natural historians, connected to the metropole through correspondence with distant patrons, were often at the center of transatlantic discourses about the nature of the empire.

With the coming of Indian war to the Carolinas, another model of empire was given free reign for a time. Incorporation was rejected in favor of subjection and exclusion. The victory of South Carolina in the Tuscarora War foreclosed other alternatives to Indian relations. Tuscarora defeat opened North Carolina—in particular, the Cape Fear River valley—to colonization by slave plantation agriculture from South Carolina. From thence forward, the movement against the Lords Proprietors accelerated. The proprietors' effort to reassert their influence over colonial affairs was turned back by South Carolina's leaders in the so-called Revolution of 1719. Yet Lawson's project reminds us that the path of empire in the Southeast was not foreordained even when the ambitions of men seemed limitless.

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