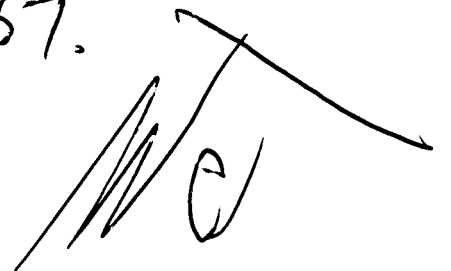


A History of the Wateree or
WataRA² Indians 1566-1770

by Wes White

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Note: By 1999 Briceland's
scholarship had made the
location given for 1670
out-of-date, and other
scholarship had added
much to the data for
1566-1567.



PREFACE

My purpose in writing this history of the WataRA? Indians is to set forth and explain the entire written record that we have on that small nation. Someone else can synthesize, summarize and say in a few words what it all means.

Wes White

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1566 to 1609

the Water^RA^P Indians as the English colonists saw them

A brief visit to the Wateree Indians by a single European in the summer of 1670 32

Our first hint that the Wateree Indian Nation had moved into what we now call South Carolina (1682) 37

The Wateree or Wateree Chickanee Indians, or Waterrees, on Catawba river's Cane creek where the path to the Catawba Nation (the present Highway 521) crosses that creek, on the 18th and 19th of January 1701 41

A Wateree Indian man held as a slave by a Governor of South Carolina living in former Ettowan Indian territory until 1706 47

"Not much" trade between the South Carolina colonists and the Wateree Indians even as late as the fall of 1708 (48)

Concerning " .. the way Colonel John Barrwell marched from Charleston in the year 1711" (1712 New Style) "with the forces sent from South Carolina to the relief of North Carolina" 49

THE SECOND MARCH: Wateree Indian warriors a small part of it for less than 6½ months, or less than 6 months, A.D. 1712-1713 64

The Yamasee War: Wateree Indian involvement in 1715 from the 18th or 25th of April to the 13th of June 76

(notably, the action of May 17th described on pages 80-84 [the Indians win, with 27 soldiers slain]; that of June 5th on pages 87-91 [the Indians win again, with 19, or 22, soldiers slain and five

soldiers captured, only about three to five of the soldiers escaping]; and the action of June 13th on pages 91-94 (the English win, the Indians losing 40 to 60 or more Catawba, Sarraw and Wateree warriors, women and children, with two Indians captured and the other 350 or so retreating and losing many of their supplies)	
Forty Wateree Indian men and their, probably, 55 to 100 or more dependents making up that entire nation and its single village, apparently, between May 14th, 1715 and the end of that year	95
The Catawba, Wateree and Peedee together (along with the Waccamaw, Winia, Cape Fear and Keyauwee as a 2nd cluster) find themselves intimidated by the Ani Yun'wiya or "Cherokee" into leaving off making war against South Carolina, in February to April of 1716, or thereabouts	101
The Wateree Indian tribe temporarily submerged into the Catawba Nation, 1717 to 1730	103
"Waterree Old town" and its irrigated fields of corn and grain opposite the mouth of Wateree river's Pinetree creek, 1730 or 1733 to March 13th, 1736 (New Style)	116
(<u>pages 119-125</u> concerning Thomas Brown, the trader, who knew them)	
The Wateree Indians divided in 1736 between their village on the west bank of the mouth of Catawba river's Sugar creek, and their other village seven miles downstream on the east bank of both Catawba river and Twelve Mile creek's mouth	126
The Catawba Indians (a people possibly $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 times more populous than the Waterrees) speak, early in the fall of 1737,	

of moving their entire nation to the Waxhaw Old Towns; and that they would finally actually do more than 23 years later, erecting their main town at the mouth of Twelve Mile creek: a choice location, and a prized one 131

The Wateree Indians under one of their number called "Captain Tom" by the English, the Catawbas calling him Megehe, which sounds like a Catawba military rank best translated 'The Strong'; from at least 1739 to his apparent death late in 1749 133

(pages 132-137, the Wateree Indians quarreling bitterly with the white settlers at, one might as well say, Camden, over compensation for lost Indian lands—— a controversy already blowing full blast on the 23rd of February 1738, and pretty well negotiated, it seems, when last heard from on February 12th, 1741; three years both dates New Style)

The names "Wateree" (or perhaps more properly, WataREE) and "Megehe" compared to similar-sounding words in the Catawba language 149

Reproductions of insets from original maps

A.D. 1670 (John Lederer, published)	34
A.D. 1670, blown up	35
A.D. 1682 (published in London; based on the surveys taken by South Carolina's Surveyor-General, Maurice Mathews)	40
A.D. 1701 (John Lawson, published in London)	46
A.D. 1712 (Barnwell's war route depicted in a map, now in Lon- don, that he worked on in 1720 and 1721)	51
A.D. 1713 (further Tuscarora War routes on a map, now in Lon- don, that Richard Berroford drew while in England in 1713)	66
military map, action of March 20th-23rd, 1713 (New Style); map turned up in the Fireproof Building in Charleston, S.C. ...	70-71
{ that part of the Orangeburg and Berkeley County Highway Department Maps (1963 and 1974, respectively) correspond- ing to roughly the upper one-third of the parish of St. Johns Berkeley (established 1706)	86
A.D. 1715, in London	96
A.D. 1736, in London	128
(A.D. 1746, give or take a year or two; missing; described, pages 141-142)	
A.D. 1747, land plat showing "Indian old field"	143
A.D. 1749, land plat showing Indian irrigation ditches	144

A.D. 1682, "Esaw" Indian Town on Watere river (today's Lynches / river) very near its source, perchance in its fork with Buffalo creek, and thus in what we now call the far northwestern corner of South Carolina's Chesterfield county 37

A.D. 1701, the Wateree Chickanee Indian Town 4 and two-fifths miles up the present Highway 521 north from the present-day city of Lancaster, S.C. — where 521 crosses Cane creek 41

A.D. 1712, the Wateree Indian town in the present Fairfield county, S.C., on Wateree river's west bank roughly between, say, Big Wateree creek and Rocky creek; probably closer to Big Wateree creek 49

A.D. 1715, the Wateree Indian Town (40 warriors) in the present Kershaw county, S.C., on the north side of Wateree river in between, roughly, Beaver creek and White Oak creek 95

A.D. 1730 to 1736, the Wateree Indian Town on the trading path a little southwest of their cleared fields on Friends Neck (formed by a meander of Wateree river, and facing the mouth of Pinetree creek directly opposite); which cultivation extended even to the north side of the mouth of Wrights Branch; all still in the present Kershaw county, S.C. 114

A.D. 1736, the two occupied Wateree Indian towns 7 miles apart, one back in Lancaster county again (mouth of Twelve Mile creek) and the other on the York county side of Sugar creek at its mouth — Catawba river in both cases 126

approximately December 1566-
January 1567; Pardo

"And the next day I left" (left Quinahonagui, with less than 125 soldiers) "and was in a depopulated area, for there was no town.

"And the next day I reached Guatari, where I found more than 30 chiefs, & a large quantity of Indians, & where I gave them the parliament that is accustomed. And they were left under the dominion of His Sanctity & His Majesty. Here I was 15 or 16 days, more or less .. where this chief demanded that I leave someone who would indoctrinate them. And in that manner I left them the cleric of my company, & 4 soldiers. Because there there came to me a letter from Esteben de las Allas, telling me to return to Santa Elena, because in that way I comply with the service of his Majesty; because there was news about Frenchmen.

"And the next day I left & reached an unpopulated area where I spent the night.

"And the next day I went to Guatariatiqui .. where I made a parliament as is accustomed, and there left under the dominion of His Sanctity & His Majesty.

"And the next day I left & made camp, for there was no population. All this land is very good.

"The next day I reached Racuchilli.."

The above, together with the passages on the following page, comes from the "Relation of the entrance & the conquest that I was ordered by Pedro de Mendes de Aviles made in 1565" (actually, in 1566 & 1567) "in the interior of Florida by the Captain Juan Pardo, Written by himself."

September 1567

Pardo

"Another day I left" (left Racuchi) "and went to an unpopulated area. And the next day I left & went to Quataricatiqui, where I found a large quantity of Indians and chiefs, and where I gave them the parliament as is accustomed. And they said they were ready, as the first time. From there I went to a chief whose name I do not remember.."

late 1567

Pardo

"And having been, as I have said, ten days in Joada, I left to return to Guatari. And I was 4 days getting there, where I found the Indians & the chiefs together. And I made them parliament as it is accustomed. And they answered that they were ready to do what was ordered by His Sanctity & His Majesty. And they demanded that I leave them Christians; and in that fashion I made a fort, where I left 17 soldiers & a corporal to stay with them, where during this time I stayed in said Guatari 16 or 17 days, more or less.

"And seeing .. the conclusion of the time period given to me by Adelanto Perez Mendez de Aviles, I left to return to Santa Helena, for my journey. This land, as I have said— Guatari — is one of the exceedingly good. And because I have made .. relation of the first days' travel from Guatari towards Santa Helena, I do not do it (again this time). JUAN PARDO"

"From this Otari to another country called Guatari is some fifteen or sixteen leagues" — 59 to 63 miles, "to the right & lower down from the north than this other. In this there were & are two cacicas* who are ladies and of no small authority compared to the other caciques; for in their retinue, they have pages & ladies.

*It is a rich land. There are, in all the towns, very good houses & round huts of earth, very large & very good. It is a land of mountain & good plain as ever was in the world. This place we saw, spending twenty days there, on coming back.

"By this place passes a very large river, which comes to Sauxpa and Usi, where salt is made near the sea, sixty leagues" — 237 miles — from Santa Elena. From Santa Elena to this Guatari is eighty leagues" (316 miles)..

• from the Taino & Arawak words for "Indian chief"

An account¹ of "the interior", made in 1605 to the Españoles at St. Augustine, Florida, by two Chyawah ("Kiawah") Indian men from the immediate vicinity of Charleston Harbor in South Carolina:²

One of the Indian men had travelled as far inland as to the Watāyrēe Indians (pronounced, in English, the same as the Spanish spelling of Guateri). Judging from what he said, he apparently had penetrated to a point some 230 miles north of Charleston Harbor. Seeing that nothing in his story makes it impossible to assume that the Wateree Indians lived, in the years up to 1605, exactly where we find them the next time after 1605[•] that we hear of them — roughly, somewhere around the present-day Randolph-Guilford county line north of the city of Ashboro in the former county and south of the city of Greensboro in the latter county.³ That's right around the geographic center of the present state of North Carolina, halfway between Ashboro, N.C. and Greensboro, N.C.

The cast of characters in St. Augustine on September the 24th, 1605:

Pedro de Ybarra, the Governor at St. Augustine; a Spaniard⁴

Maria de Miranda of St. Augustine, where she had a Spanish soldier (a Juan d'Espinosa) as her husband.⁴ She herself was an American Indian; spoke Spanish and several Indian languages well enough to interpret; and apparently came from the Escamacu nation of Indians.⁵ Or in other words, from the two islands (Parris island and Saint Helena island, on either side of Beaufort river in far southern South Carolina) to which the Escamacu Indians seem to have fled at the very start of the Escamacu War (1576-1579).⁶

Panto and his daughter's husband, Alonso: Kiawah men

• or 1605-1609

Alonso Garcia de las Vesas of St. Augustine, a Spaniard and a notary public

Ybarra, speaking in Spanish, would ask a question. Maria de Miranda would translate the question to some Indian language, shall we say into Chyawahaw (a language or dialect, probably a language; from which, arguably, we have all of ten words,¹ untranslated place names). Alonso and Panto would reply in Chyawahaw, most likely; or if not that, then in some other American Indian tongue. Maria de Miranda would translate their answers into Spanish for Ybarra; and Alonso Garcia would write down what she said. Translated now into English:²

"They were asked if they had any knowledge of a big mountain range that is inland, that it shines in the night and is very (luminous, distinct, unclouded).

"And they said that they had news that inland there is a great mountain range" — the Blue Ridge of the Appalachian Mountains, obviously. "And that the Indians there" — the Wateree Indians, as it would seem — "said that these have many riches. And they" — the two Chyawahaw men, Panto and Alonso; "have not seen these. And they have only heard about these from one of their number" (meaning Alonso) "who had gone to Guateri, which is a town on the road to the mountains. And that they have news that immediately adjacent to the mountain range there is a very big town by the name of Hoadá that has many Indians" — the Saraw nation of Indians,³ as nearly as we can figure out. "And that it is on a direct road to the mountain range. And that the towns" (or rather, places) "that are inbetween are Guatari and coguan = Guandu - Guacoguayn = hati - Guaca = hati = animache - lasi - guasar - Pasqueoti. That through the said towns it was a straight road to the mountains. And that it was thirty days

to Hoada according to how the Indians; that the Indians go very slow, because they go stopping in every town.

"They" (Panto and Alonso) "were asked if it was a good road, and if there was a lot of food.

"And they said that the road is good, and that they cross also some rivers on foot — and others in canoes. And that inland there is a great quantity of food: of corn, and beans, and pumpkins. And much meat: of deer venison, and bear venison, and rabbit. And a lot of hunting of flying birds, which the Indians killed with their bows and arrows, for eating. And that there are many nuts and other 'fruits': of plums, and crab apples, and grapes; and many other things to eat. That there is never any scarcity; and that there are no swamps inland.

"And they were asked if any of them had gone inland.

"And they said no." (Or Panto said no.) "That the said Alonso had gone as far as Guateri."

This "animache-" may or may not refer to Aramanche river ¹ (a creek of Deep river; it converges with Haw river to form Cape Fear river). And as many as four or five of the other names put one to thinking about two other American Indian nations — the bearded Keyauwee, Kewawee or Wawee, and the Flatheads with Ani Yun'wiya ("Cherokee") and thus mountain cultural connections, ² called Waxhaw, Wascau, Weesocky and so on.

Deep river; but the present Alamance county, N.C. gets its name from the old designation of that river

Twenty-five or twenty-six Spaniards from Saint Augustine, Florida
 (in company with their interpreter, an Escamacu Indian woman) take
their small sailship¹ far enough up Santee river to meet with a chief
of the Wateree Indians

According to "the Relation of this voyage",² on "Friday the 21st" of August 1609, " .. the Chief of the Jordan" (the Chief of the Sewee Indian nation on the lower reaches of the Jordan river, today's Santee river) " .. guided us and took us through some narrows into the river Jordan. And we to the town of the said Chief, and there came some Indians to see the Captain And this day we went up something like four leagues" (15.78 miles) "to take water and to clean our clothes." It sounds as if the Sewee town lay downstream from that point, and thus about where we find it a century later — on the Santee river delta, within fifteen miles of the Atlantic ocean. The Spaniards do not make it clear, but it looks as if they returned to the Sewee Indian town to stay as guests for the next few days:²

"And Tuesday that was counted the 25th of said month, there came to see the said Captain four chiefs and many principle Indians, and many women and children.

"To whom the said Captain made presents, giving them (to three of whom were Chiefs of the Sati: the one of Guandul, the one of Guateri, and the one of Satil), to all axes. And to the other important Indians, knives and 'counts.'

"And after having given them to eat and drink, being very happy, spoke the said Captain with them through the said Maria de Miranda" (the interpreter), "with the Chief some things; being informed of all that he could. And in that fashion they left, very happy."²

"And Thursday the 27th of this month, we went out of this river to the sea, en route to the harbor of Cayagua" (Charleston Harbor).¹

Interpretation. On Santee river in 1609 and long thereafter, one nation of Indians (the Suye or Joye of the Spaniards, same as the Indians called Sewee much later by the English) held the Santee river delta — North Santee river, South Santee river, Wadmacen island and so forth. (Pronounce Suye and Joye as Sō-jāy and Hō-jāy.)²

Upstream, the Sewee had another nation of Indians, Indian people, as their neighbors, called Sati or (once in the records) Satil by the Spaniards. (Pronounce that Saw-tēe and Saw-tēel.) Much later, the English would refer to that same nation of Indians as the Santee or (again, one time only in our records) Seretee.²

After the twenty-six Spaniards had lodged in the Sewee town for four days, the Santee nation, naturally, sent a delegation down to the Sewee town to see these Españoles. Besides the Santee Chief, this delegation included Chiefs from two other Indian nations — a visiting Chief from the far away WaterA?², and one other.¹ This makes the first time that we hear of an individual WaterA?² Indian in what we now call the state of South Carolina.² He had apparently travelled all the way down the Catawba-Wateree river to its junction with Congaree river to form Santee river, and then all the way down Santee river to its mouth.³ As the Sewee Indians had explained four years earlier about that river system, " .. the river (comes) from far inland .. the Indians (come) down by way of it in canoes," to, as the Sewee and Chyahaw Indians had both explained, buy fish, salt and shellfish, and to sell silver nose-rings, copper nose-rings, clothing made of dressed bueskin or of other hides, and so forth.^{3,4}