

Megehe's name sounds like the Catawba Indian word translated "The Great"—*migra'hę*, literally "great the."^o Or more precisely, "strong the"—in English syntax, The Strong. As when we call a repressive head of state a "strongman", one word. Sounds here like a southeastern American Indian equivalent of a military title — this "Megehe" — rather than a personal name of an individual. If we have not erred in equating 'Megehe' with the Catawba *migra'hę*, strong the. Then there's *migra'* for "more", or "great", or "strong", or "chief, head man";^Δ also rendered *mi·ra*, *mi·ra'*, *mi·ro'*, *mi·ro*.[■] Then for "man great", or Great Man in English syntax — loosely translated "chieftan" — you have the following: *ye'' mi' hrare*, *yémirare*, *yęmi·ra'* and *yęmi·ra*. The phonetic transcriptions just given come from members of the last generation of Catawbas in South Carolina using the old language in daily conversation, by preference; since the year 1921, mostly 1921-1931. Then before that, in 1894 a Catawba man whom we know very well translated "chief" (in the sense of an Indian chief or headman) into Catawba as *yam-ma-rar-her*. And in December 1881, from these same Catawbas, we have *mirüre'*. And that seems as if all the evidence I have.

.. The name of the tribe — Anglicized to Waterge, in their own speech probably closer to *watari'* (WataREE)^x — possesses a meaning in the Catawba language. In 1881 we hear *watęra'*, "to float in the water"; and then forty or fifty years afterwards in (hmm!) the exact same Catawba village, *watęra'* for "wash away", and *watęra'hęre*, or *watęra'hę* for, in literal translation, "washing away, is".

^o I would spell it *miGRA'HE'* — a breath, soundless (') after the two accented syllables, and the final vowel deliberately pronounced through the nose.

^Δ *miGRA'*, ending with a voiceless outward breath

[■] *męRA*, *męra*, *męro*, *męRO* — they must've dropped the "g"

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A second, closer look at what we have down on paper of the Catawba language, brings forth a word collected in 1835, yahmeroe, "a chief." Then in 1881 we have also mirare', for "manly, chiefly." And again, forty and fifty years after that, we have:

yę mi·gráhę', "dance supervisor" — speaking here of the Catawba dances known as the Bear Dance, the Wild Goose Chase, and the forgotten Corn Roasting-Ear Dance, Corn-Silk Dance and others.

ya mįgráhęre, for the King snake, literally "snake king": a translation from English back into Catawba.

mi·ra'suwe, literally "am better (at this) than (are) you" — I would spell it meeRA'soo-we; shift the accent to mi·ra'súwe and it translates "outdo I can."

mi·ráwe, literally "more will be"; mi'rotcuwe (pronounced mirochoo-we, the first syllable fast) for "strong too much will be"; and yęmirotcuwe, for "you better much" — you're much improved, much stronger, more healthy

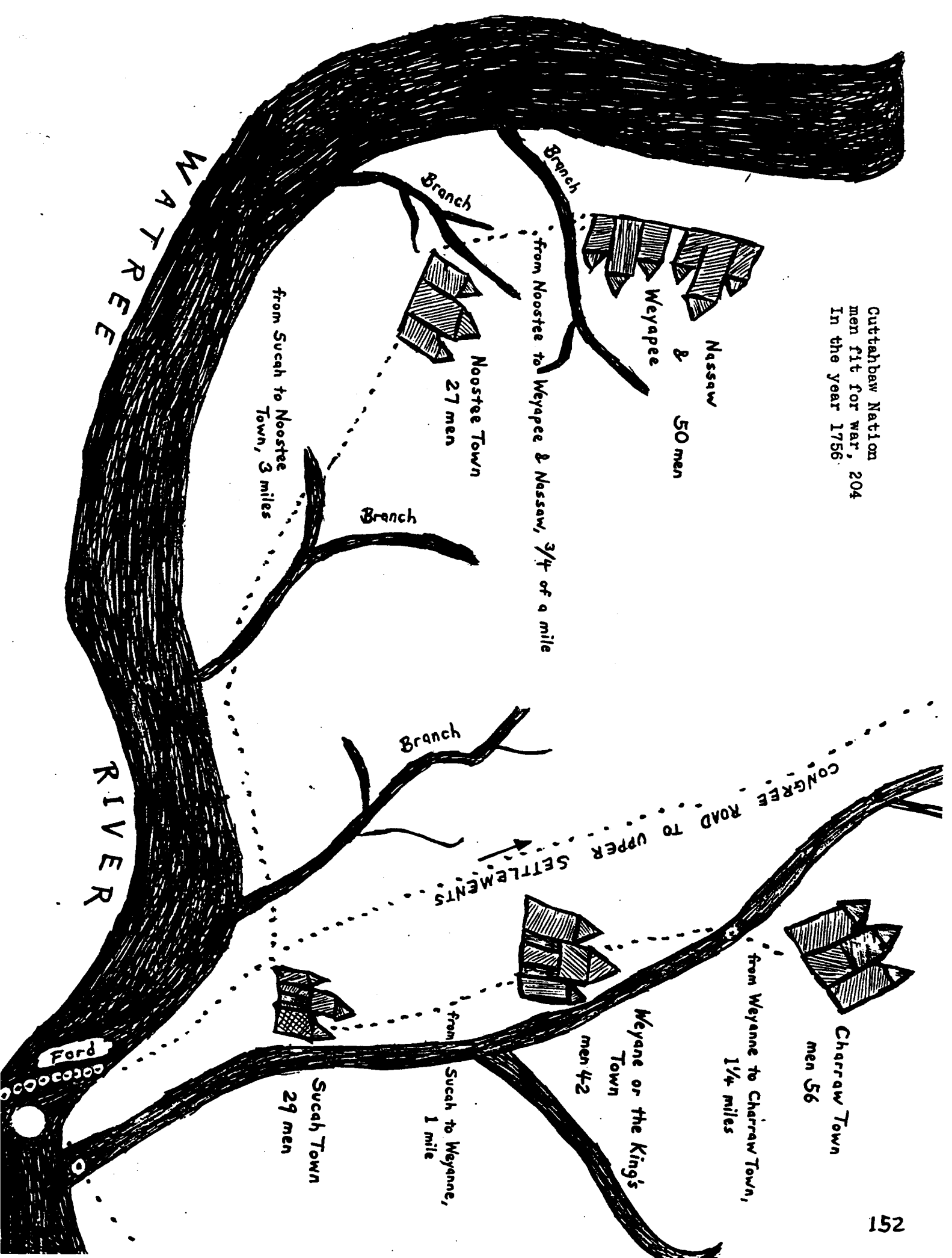
tarumi·ráhę, pronounced tauROOmeeraUHŭ, and signifying "a great big piece."

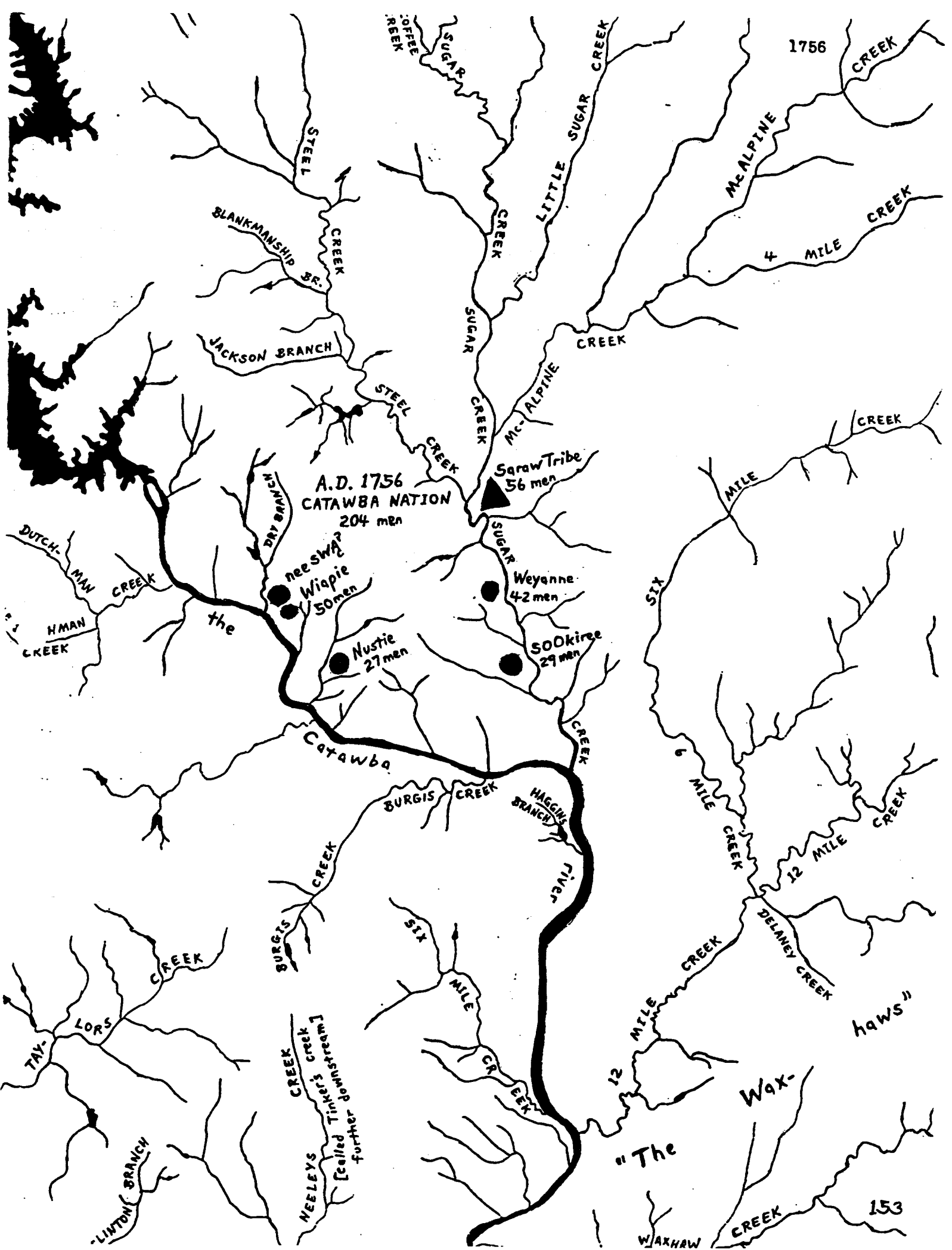
Two "Katahba" words collected, as we deduce, in 1743, may have something to do it — mare'ri for 'good' and maretah'ri for 'best', with the final ri described as the Catawba Indians' "favorite period."

And as for the name of the Wateree nation itself, we hear, in 1921-31, the Catawba word iwatařę'para'are, for "washed away completely."

On the following page we have the earliest map of the Catawba Nation that plainly does not show "the Waterree, who (made) up a large town" in "THE KATAHBA NATION .. about the year 1743 ..", and whose "warriors" still spoke their own "dialect", called "Waterree."¹ And of which South Carolina's Commons House of Assembly said (April 20th, 1744 New Style), " .. the Waterree Town is now reckoned the most numerous tribe in the Catawba Nation."² The "Map of the Catawbaws" that the trader George Haig drew up sometime within two years of the 1st of February 1746 at the request of South Carolina's Governor Glen, shows five Catawba towns whose names we know and two more Catawba towns whose names we don't know, since we don't have the map itself.³ Though the two latter may well include the town of the "Waterree Indians", since their "Captain Tom", called "Megehe", rated third billing (right after the Catawba King and his interpreter) on a September 6th, 1749 list of "The names of the Headmen of the Catawbaws 1749."⁴ — But then, as the trader and interpreter John Evans told Governor Glen of what he (Evans) did on March 4th, 1756: "This day I took a view of the whole" ('Catawbaw') "Nation, and observed the situation of the Towns as well as I could. And" (as Governor Glen had instructed, to avoid stirring up the Indians) "without instruments, drew up a Plan"⁵ — and here you see it:

Cuttahbaw Nation
men fit for war, 204
In the year 1756





Governor Glen had not expected that the forgoing map of the "Cuttahbaw Nation" would necessarily reflect much about the different ethnic groupings among the Indians there. In a letter of the 13th of February 1756 (give or take up to or less than eleven days) Glen had told John Evans that " .. While you are there" (in the company of 'the Hagler' and 'his Head Men'), "make it your business to learn the exact number of warriors, or men able to go to war upon any occasion. Do it in the most distinct manner you can, distinguishing how many Catawbaus, Cherraws and Peeees. At least, be exact how many warriors are in each Town." Evans accomplished the latter: On March 2nd, 1756 " .. The King .. sent for the Headmen of each Town to come to his Town" (Weyane) "the next day and bring in the number of the men in each Town (as I had desired him the day" or rather night "before) which was fit to go to war." But Evans did not say anything about even trying to oblige Governor Glen's desire to know the number of Catawba, Saraw and Peedee warriors in the Catawba Nation.¹

— Fifteen months and two weeks after the date of the map showing not a hint of any formerly independent tribes in the Catawba Nation other than the Catawba and the Saraw, Glen's successor in office got a letter from ten of "the head Men of, and warriors of, the Catawba Nation." The ten include a Peedee Indian and (?) a Waterce and (?!) a Santee:

A document signed June 16th of 1757 by the Headmen of several Indian tribes within the Catawba Nation

"King Hagler and other the head Men of and warriors of the Catawba Nation / to his Excellency William Henry Lyttleton, Esquire, Governor of South Carolina /

"BELOVED BROTHER, agreeable to our promise, we marched against the enemies of our father the great King George. Some of our warriors are not returned; and others are preparing to march. We lost two of our warriors in the first expedition under Captain Johney. He killed several, but got but two scalps.

"We, on the last expedition, got two scalps. One of them was a Head Warrior, a mangy French Indian's. The enclosed is his scalp. We desire you may send it to the great King George, our father; and at the same time, assure him: If it was in our power, we would serve every one of his enemies as we did this French Indian.

"We likewise send your Excellency, our beloved brother, 19 deerskins; which we hope you will accept.

"Our Brothers, the Cherocees,^A has sent us a tomahawk for to kill the French with. We have likewise received assurance from the Creeks,^{*} Chicasaws,[•] Tuskaruras,^{*} Saponas[✓] and Notawas, that they will join heart and hand against the enemies of the great King George, the beloved father of his people. Who (we have been told) loves all his people alike, and will not suffer one party" to "injure another."¹

^A of the present Oconee county, S.C.; extreme western N.C.; & east Tennessee²
^{*} of the present states of Alabama (Upper Creeks) & Georgia (Lower Creeks)³
[•] a Chickasaw offshoot since 1723 at the present North Augusta, S.C.⁴
^{*} 300 people on a 64 $\frac{1}{2}$ square mile reservation around what is now Quitsna, N.C.⁵
[✓] since 1753 or 1754, in what is now southern Vance county, N.C.⁶

"We are desirous of living as brothers with the white people. And to show our sincerity, we gave the government of South Carolina all our lands, for the use of our father, the great King George, to settle his people upon. (Except thirty miles round our towns to plant upon ourselves, and to furnish us with deer; without which we cannot purchase the necessaries of life.) This the beloved men and Governor of South Carolina was well pleased with; and has acted honestly with us.

"But the people of North Carolina — who call themselves your brothers — have parcelled out our lands even to our very towns. We daily complain to them, but are not heard. We likewise made complaint to the late Governor of this province¹ (Governor James Glen, in office 13 years ending in 1756).² "He promised us our lands, but as yet we have not got them.

"We now apply to you, as our elder and well beloved brother, to lay our grievance before our father. Who, we are sure, is ignorant of his children's oppression; otherwise, he would order them relief before now, by ordering their lands to be measured out for them. Our young people are already greatly incensed; perhaps, may not be prevailed upon from doing some great mischief.

"Pray, brother, stand" as "our friend with our father. They say we are in their government. We deny it — we will be of no government but South Carolina. They are now building a fort near our towns, and want to buy land for it from us. We will give you land for it, but not to them. They may build the fort, if you think proper. And when the fort is built, make a law that they shall not sell our people rum or strong drink. They make a kind of liquor they call whiskey, which makes our young people mad. And if they be not prevented selling liquor, mischief will happen, we are afraid.¹

"As you have behaved like brothers in helping us in our distress both last year and this (which preserved, in a great measure, the lives of our wives and children — and enabled us to go to war against the French), we hereby thank you for your kindness. And do assure you, we will, with the utmost of our power, assist you when you desire us.

King Haglar,
his mark

"Watree, June the 16th, 1757

Captain Water,
his mark

Captain Scot,
his mark

Captain Jack,
his mark

Captain Cutlash,
his mark

Captain Jamey Harris,
his mark

Captain Santee Jemmy,
his mark

Johnney Yong,
his mark

Captain Johnney of Pedee,
his mark

Captain Watree Jemmy,
his mark"

The Catawba men all signed with an attempt at the capitol first letter of each man's name (or, in the case of Johnny Yong, his surname) — with a shaky H, W, S, J, C, J and Y, respectively. (Jamey Harris may be a Saraw rather than a Catawba.) The Santee, Peedee and Watree Headmen each signed with a name heiroglyph, it looks like.

SMALLPOX AND DEATH

The weekly newspaper in the colony of South Carolina, published out of its Capitol City, Charleston, tells us (December 15th, 1759) that " .. It is pretty certain that the smallpox has lately raged with great violence among the Catawba Indians. And that it has carried off near one-half of that nation, by throwing themselves in the river as soon as they found themselves ill. This distemper has since appeared among the white and black inhabitants at the Charraws and Waterees, where many families are down." ¹

110 years later we have written of the Catawba Indians in the fall of 1759 that " .. Their numbers were reduced to less than half .. by the smallpox .. the fatality of the disease among them was awful the Indian doctors .. to each and all .. gave a corn sweat. The mode of administering this was to boil ears of corn (slip-shucked); take them, steaming, out of the pot; and pack them closely around the patient. And as soon as it produced a profuse sweat, they" (the extremely sick patients) "were taken and thrown into the river. And it was more frequently a dead than a live body that was taken out of the water an eyewitness, a reliable man who had lived among them at the time .. had seen twenty-five a day, during the prevalence of the scourge, taken out of the river dead." ²

Waterree Jenny in 1765 as one of the 46 adult males in the Catawba Nation

In Charleston, S.C. on February 12th, 1765, "His Honor" (the Governor of South Carolina) "communicated to the Board a letter he had received from Mr. Wyly. In which he" (Samuel Wyley) "informed him" (the Governor of South Carolina) "that agreeable to his order he" (Wyley) "had assembled the Catawbas. Who had chose Captain Frow for their King, and had sent his Honor the following Talk:

"A TALK from the Head Men of the Catawba Nation.

"To the Honorable William Bull, Esquire,
Lieutenant Governor & Commander-in-Chief
in & over his Majesty's province of South
Carolina this 29th day of January 1765.

"Dear Brother,

We met our friend Samuel Wyley; who delivered your Talk to us. And we have unanimously chose Captain Frow to be our King. We are very glad, and rejoice in our hearts that our father the great King George — and our brother the Governor, and his beloved men — are so good to us.

"As the boundary line leaves our Nation on the north side" (of the line between North Carolina and South Carolina), "we hope our Father the Great King and Govenner will keep us in the South Government. Our faces is always turned there, and our hearts is also there, notwithstanding our land is run all round and marked.

"There is several people of North Carolina settled within our line. Two families have lately built houses on our Land.

"We remain your loving brothers (and about forty-two more head men being all that were then in the Nation) King Frow, Captain Thomson, John Chesnut, Waterree Jenny"¹

As we hear in a letter from a certain preacher, date of September 12th, 1768, "the most knowing and intelligent gentlemen that" he had "conversed with" told him "of the CHERAWS" that "These were formerly a considerable nation. But of late, have been so depopulated by wars and sickness that they have fled to the Cataugas for protection, and now live amongst them. They consist of about fifty or sixty souls."¹

I wouldn't be surprized if the traders were calling any Indian in the Catawba Nation who had some Indian language other than Catawba as a first language, a "Cheraw." I also wouldn't be surprized if these fifty or sixty non-Catawbas among the Indians in the Catawba Nation included something like 25 or 30 Cheraws, five to eight each of the Wateree, Waxhaw & Congaree, and at least one or two each of the Saponi, Kussoo, Peedee and Eno (Saxapahaw), and a few Waccamaw Indians. Concerning the Catawbas themselves, the preacher heard, among much else, that

"In the year 1760, they were so reduced by the smallpox, that they have accepted of but 15 miles square" (225 square miles).

"They may consist of 20 or 30 families, and their number is about a hundred souls."¹

Captain Wateree Jamy (the same as the Captain Watree Jemmy in 1757)
as a tribal delegate in the city of Charleston in 1770

In Charleston "In the Council Chamber" on "Tuesday the 27th March 1770", "His Honor the Lieutenant Governor .. informed the Board" (meaning Othniel Beale and John Burn, the only ones present), as the first business of the day, "that some of the Catawba Indians had come to Town," or in other words to Charleston; "and he had directed them to be brought to the Council Chamber this morning to hear their talk.

"And they attending, were introduced. And after shaking hands with his Honor and the Gentlemen of the Board, Wateree Jamy delivered the following letter from King Frow"¹ (the King or Chief of the entire Catawba Nation of 150 or 160 Indians in 1768)² "to the Governor.

"March 15th, 1770.

"Honored Sir,

I offer my compliments to you, as your Honor and the Council has been pleased to lay off my little bed of land"¹ (he means the Catawba Reservation, 225 square miles)³ "to me. I am contented to live upon it, as I like all the neighbors that is round about. And I always listen to your talk. And I think it is very good for me.

"But Sir, I must acquaint your Honor that my old men and women are almost naked for want of clothes. And I desire, Sir, that your Honor will give me some; as you are a good man, I know. For hunting has got very scarce with us."¹

"And Sir, I must further acquaint your Honor that some lying

person is acquaint our gentlemen" (meaning, our white neighbors) "that we" (the Catawbas) "are going to leave our land, and go off to the Cherokees, to join them and kill the white people, and to make war with them. Which is false. And we utterly deny going to any Nation whatsoever. But somebody has imposed it into the heads of our Gentlemen" — the Catawba Nation's white neighbors — "and it has bred a great deal of disturbance among the white people. And the white people does begin to grumble very much to let us hunt on their land.

"And we hope that your Honor will send your Talk to the white people not to hinder us to hunt. And acquaint us what your Honor thinks best for us to do in it; for I assure your Honor that I want to live all at peace, and be good neighbors with the white people.

"Sir, I send these lines by the soberest man of my Nation,
Captain Wateres Jamy.

"N.B." (short for "note well" in Latin — nota bene) "Sir,
The man that always writes for me, his name is John Drinnar.
To direct your letters to him: he lives two miles from the
Nation" — the Catawba Nation of Indians. "For he writes and
reads all our letters.

"Whereupon his Honor", Lieutenant Governor William Bull, "asked them if they had any more to say. To which they replied that ' .. Some white people scolded (us) for hunting in their grounds.'¹

"His Honor then told them" — Wateree Jimmy and at least one other Indian from the Catawba reservation whom he had with him; probably several other Indians — "that he would send a Proclamation to the white people, desiring them to be kind to them", to be kind to the Catawba Indians. "But in regard to what was said about clothes in their letter: He had no clothes to give them; but that 'the Catawbas must do as the white people do — plant corn and buy clothes'; for .. they" (the Catawba Nation in general) "had good land" — he means the 225 square-mile Catawba reservation, surveyed for the tribe in 1764.

"And he", Lieutenant Governor Bull, "always told them that when Indians came down" (to Charleston) "without being sent for, he gave them nothing. When he sent for them he gave them good presents; but they must not expect presents when they were not sent for."¹