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The Tuscarora Ascendancy

By THOMAS C. PARRAMORE*

The single greatest disaster to have befallen North Carolina was the Tuscarora War of 1711-1712. In a surprise attack that culminated in a protracted frontier conflict, the Tuscarora devastated white settlements in the Pamlico-Neuse region and raised serious fears for the continuance of English occupation in North Carolina. Only the timely arrival of outside help, and an absence of unity among the Tuscarora, enabled the colonists to survive the struggle and, ultimately, to defeat the Indians.

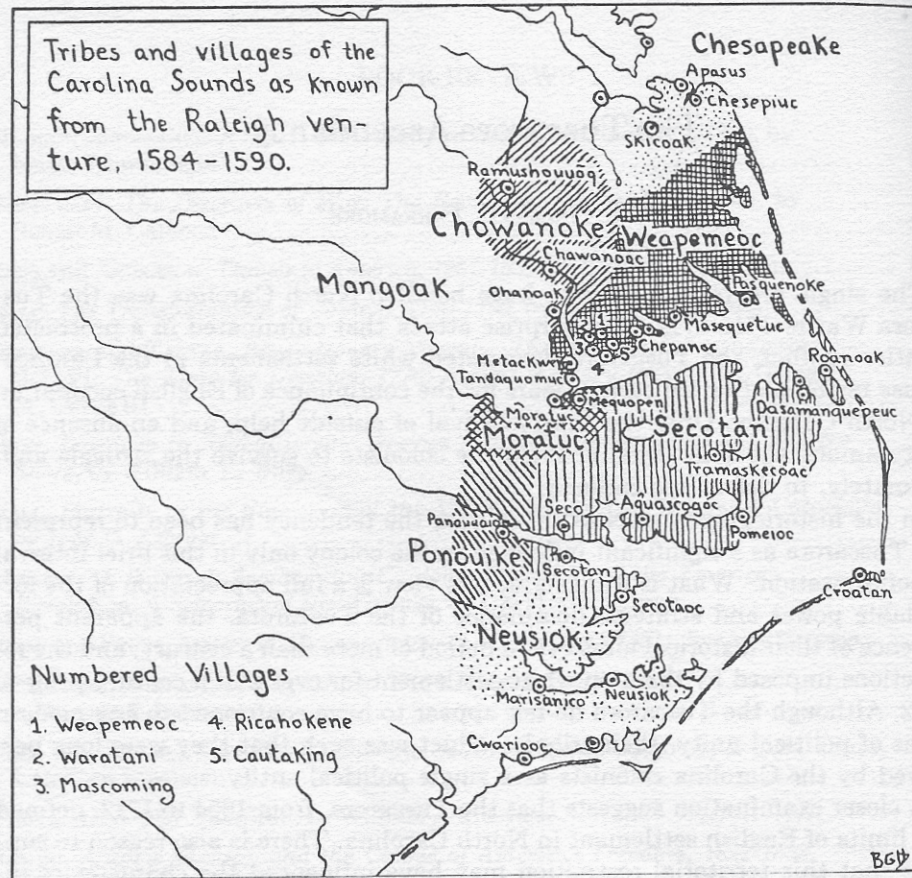
In the historiography of North Carolina, the tendency has been to represent the Tuscarora as a significant influence on the colony only in this brief interval of confrontation.¹ What is wanting in this view is a full appreciation of the formidable power and strategic dominance of the Tuscarora, the apparent persistence of their historical aims over a period of more than a century, and the restrictions imposed by them on white settlement for over half a century prior to 1712. Although the Tuscarora do not appear to have conformed to any modern ideas of political unity, their tribal conduct was such that they were long perceived by the Carolina colonists as a single political entity.

A closer examination suggests that the Tuscarora, from 1654 to 1712, defined the limits of English settlement in North Carolina. There is also reason to suppose that this territorial restriction may have influenced the character of internal conflicts among the colonists, including the Culpeper Rebellion of 1677 and the Cary Rebellion in 1711. Finally, when war came in 1711, it may have owed as much to long-established Tuscarora policy as to encroachments by whites on Indian living space.

The aims of Tuscarora policy appear to have been broadly persistent during the 130 years between their first contacts with the English and their disastrous defeat in the second phase of the war in 1712-1713. Sir Walter Raleigh's Roanoke Island colonists found the Tuscarora, then known to the English by the Algonquian name Mangoak ("Rattlesnakes"), locked in intermittent conflict with

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¹Principal studies of the Tuscarora include Douglas W. Boyce, "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain," in Bruce G. Trigger (ed.), *Northeast*, Volume XV of *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), hereinafter cited as Boyce, "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain"; Herbert R. Paschal, Jr., "The Tuscarora Indians in North Carolina" (unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1953), hereinafter cited as Paschal, "The Tuscarora Indians"; Douglas W. Boyce, "Notes on Tuscarora Political Organization, 1650-1713" (unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971), hereinafter cited as Boyce, "Notes on Tuscarora Political Organization"; and F. Roy Johnson, *The Tuscaroras* (Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing Company, 2 volumes, 1968).



Map from Bernard G. Hoffman, "Ancient Tribes Revisited," *Ethnohistory*, 14 (Winter-Spring, 1967), p. 30; reproduced courtesy American Society for Ethnohistory.

the Chowanoke, largest of the Algonquian tribes of the Carolina coastal plain.² The precise origins of the rivalry are unknown, but subsequent developments suggest that the Iroquois Tuscarora had at least two main objectives: (1) to absorb the Chowanoke or evict them from the valuable Roanoke-Chowan hunting grounds on the eastern perimeter of the Tuscarora domain; and (2) to detach other Algonquian tribes from allegiance to the Chowanoke as a step toward the ultimate extension of Tuscarora influence to the sounds and seaboard.

The Tuscarora aims were probably promoted by the poor relations that developed between the colonists and the Roanoke Indians in early 1586. Wingina, the Roanoke chief, tried to foment an alliance of the Chowanoke and Tuscarora against the English and might have succeeded but for a bold descent by the English commander, Ralph Lane, on the very conference called to discuss such

²David Leroy Corbitt (ed.), *Explorations, Descriptions, and Attempted Settlements of Carolina, 1584-1590* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1952), 40, hereinafter cited as Corbitt, *Explorations*. For the identity of the Mangoak and Tuscarora, see Bernard G. Hoffman, "Ancient Tribes Revisited: A Summary of Indian Distribution and Movement in the Northeastern United States from 1534 to 1779. Parts I-III," *Ethnohistory*, 14 (Winter-Spring, 1967), 27-29.

a union.³ Chowanoke Chief Menatonon, falling captive to Lane, recruited the English for a joint English-Chowanoke venture against the Tuscarora.⁴ The plan was aborted by the premature evacuation of Roanoke Island colonists by Sir Francis Drake in the late spring; but Wingina and Menatonon polarized the Roanoke, Weapemeoc, and perhaps other Algonquian tribes into pro- and anti-English factions. Whether these divisions were of advantage to the Tuscarora—and played a part in the disappearance of the 1587 colony—is unknown. But both the Chowanoke and Weapemeoc were fated for an early surrender to the Tuscarora of much of their land and influence with other tribes. Meanwhile, the Tuscarora were emerging as the principal arbiters of Indian affairs throughout the region.

The Chowanoke, whose main village alone in 1586 was said by Lane to be able to field 700 fighting men,⁵ were not yet undone by the failure of the Roanoke Island colonies. Evidently less numerous than the Tuscarora, they apparently continued for a time to claim a role as the protectors of smaller Algonquian tribes against Tuscarora domination. In this respect, they seem to have enjoyed at least the moral support of the Powhatan Confederacy, itself an energetic promoter of eastern leagues against western foes.⁶ A Powhatan chief was reported to have paid an amicable visit to the Chowanoke in 1584, and there is evidence of a subsequent raid by Powhatan's successor, Opechancanough, supported by the Chowanoke, against the Tuscarora, long bitter enemies of the Powhatan.⁷ When John Pory of Jamestown visited the Chowan River area in 1622, he was entertained by "a great King," evidently a Chowanoke, who proposed "a league" with the English and, like his predecessor Chief Menatonon in 1586, tried to interest them in a joint expedition to some western copper mines, within or beyond Tuscarora territory.⁸

³ Corbitt, *Explorations*, 43. Menatonon appears to have been hosting representatives of the Tuscarora, Moratoc, and Weapemeoc at Chowanoke Town for the purpose of considering Wingina's warnings.

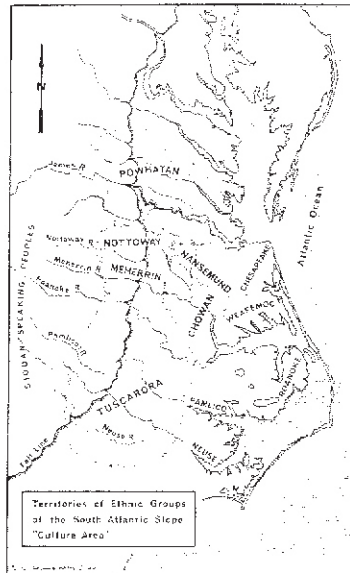
⁴ Corbitt, *Explorations*, 41-43. Menatonon tried to recruit Lane for a joint expedition to the sources of Tuscarora copper, perhaps intending to destroy the Tuscarora in the process. Lane planned almost until the day he left for England to make the attempt.

⁵ Corbitt, *Explorations*, 40.

⁶ Corbitt, *Explorations*, 41. On Powhatan's foreign policy, see Nancy O. Lurie, "Indian Cultural Adjustment to European Civilization," in James M. Smith (ed.), *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 33-60. Lurie stresses the threat of piedmont tribes to Powhatan's empire-building.

⁷ On the visit of a Powhatan chief to the Chowanoke, see Corbitt, *Explorations*, 40-41. On Opechancanough's raid against the Tuscarora, see Edward Bland, "The Discovery of New Brittain," in Alexander S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 13, 14, hereinafter cited as Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*. "Hocamawanack," a Tuscarora town near the falls of Roanoke River visited by Bland, may have been identical with the "Mangoak" town of Ocamahawan (or Oconahowon) shown on the Zuñiga map of 1608 and cited in Jamestown reports of the early 1600s. For the Zuñiga map, see Alexander Brown, *Genesis of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2 volumes, 1890), I, 184. For Bland's route, see Lewis R. Binford, "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia," *Ethnohistory*, 14 (Summer-Fall, 1967), 125-133. See also Alan V. Briceland, "The Search for Edward Bland's New Britain," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXVII (April, 1979), 131-157.

⁸ William S. Powell, *John Pory/1572-1636: The Life and Letters of a Man of Many Parts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 101. Pory traveled some sixty miles south from Jamestown to the "other side" of Chowan River. The "great King" he met was "desirous to make a league with us" and "made relation of a Coper-mine, that is not far from thence. . . ."



Map by R. V. Humphrey; from Lewis R. Binford, "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin, and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia," *Ethnohistory*, 14 (Summer-Fall, 1967), p. 116; reproduced courtesy American Society for Ethnohistory.

In addition to aid from the Powhatan, the Chowanoke by the 1620s were probably able to procure firearms and other hardware through relations with the Virginia colony. But the Tuscarora may have enjoyed a compensatory relationship with other Europeans. A curiously persistent rumor of the early years at Jamestown was that a plantation or factory of Europeans—some identified them as Spaniards—were resident among the Tuscarora, possibly at the town of Ocamawahan (or Oconohowan) near the Roanoke River fall line.⁹ In 1654 the English were informed by a Tuscarora chief of a "very rich" Spaniard, "having about thirty in family, seven whereof are negroes," who lived among the Tuscarora and sometimes made prolonged trips abroad.¹⁰ Twenty years later Jacques Marquette met a party, thought to have been Tuscarora, on the Mississippi River and found them to be equipped with guns and powder. These articles, they said, had been obtained from Europeans who "lived in the east," were

⁹Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley (eds.), *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith, President of Virginia and Admiral of New England, 1580-1631* (Edinburgh, Scotland: John Grant, 2 volumes, 1910), I, 508. Deserters from Jamestown were reported in 1614 to have fled toward Ocamawahan, five days south, "where they report are Spaniards inhabiting." Three years earlier, Powhatan had told Smith of "people cloathed at Ocanawahan," thus confirming reports of people there living in English-style houses, using brass and other European items. See also Hugh T. Lefler and William S. Powell, *Colonial North Carolina: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 25-27, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*.

¹⁰For the location of Ocamawahan/Hocamawananc near the falls of Roanoke, see note 6 above. For the report of a Spaniard in Tuscarora territory in 1654, see Francis Yearly, "Francis Yearly's Narrative of Excursions into Carolina, 1654," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 27, hereinafter cited as Yearly, "Yearly's Narrative." The Spaniard was said to have been "seven years among them" and to have had a Negro living among the "Neuxes" (the Neusiok of Neuse River), perhaps indicative of his route of communication with Spanish Florida. Bland also mentions a mysterious European, possibly Spanish, residing among the Tuscarora in 1650. See Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 15.

on friendly terms with the Indians, and "had rosaries and pictures."¹¹ If, however, the Tuscarora were engaged for a time in a Spanish trade, it must have ceased after the English settlement in 1670 of Port Royal, which lay athwart the route between the Tuscarora country and Spanish Florida.

Opechancanough's defeat at English hands in Virginia in 1622 undermined the role of his confederacy in Indian affairs and left the Chowanoke more conspicuously on their own. It was probably not long after this that "a great King" of the Chowanoke was treacherously slain in consequence of an offense offered to a Powhatan chief.¹² Opechancanough's second defeat in 1644 meant an end to any pretense of Powhatan support for the Chowanoke or other southern Algonquian; it also meant an effective end to the Powhatan effort to exclude the Tuscarora from the Virginia fur trade. When the Weanock, refugees from Opechancanough's collapse, arrived in the Roanoke-Chowan country in 1645, they found it vacated by the Chowanoke and Weapemeoc (and apparently by the Algonquian Moratoc as well) and claimed by the Tuscarora.¹³ There remained no serious obstacle to further Tuscarora expansion into the coastal lowlands.

With their hunting range then extended for the benefit of what was probably an increasing trade, the Tuscarora by 1650 were on the verge of a considerable widening of their influence and activity. They had doubtless long been participants in the busy commerce of the Occaneechee Trading Path, which skirted their territory on the west.¹⁴ A Tuscarora route known as Weecacana Path ran from the Occaneechee Path to the Chowan River, and other trails radiated out toward neighboring peoples.¹⁵

In 1650 Edward Bland's expedition from Fort Henry, Virginia, sought to inaugurate, on Tuscarora initiative, formal trade relations between the Tuscarora and Virginia. The mission may have failed, but the Tuscarora were soon engaged in an active Virginia trade that presumably enhanced Tuscarora commerce with tribes of the piedmont and mountain regions and beyond.¹⁶ Besides

¹¹ On Marquette's encounter with Tuscarora, see Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travel and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries of New France, 1610-1791* (Cleveland: Imperial Press, 73 volumes, 1896-1901), LIX, 149, hereinafter cited as Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*. Thwaites identified the Indians as Tuscarora on the strength of Marquette's description of their language and dress.

¹² Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 13, 14.

¹³ William G. Stanard (ed.), "The Indians of Southern Virginia, 1650-1711: Depositions in the Virginia-North Carolina Boundary Case, 1707-1711," [Part II], *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, VIII (July, 1900), 4-10. Indian sources claimed that the Tuscarora "possessed the lands" but "sold" to the Weanock the tract bounded by the Roanoke, Chowan, and Meherrin rivers. Later eviction of the Weanock by the Tuscarora suggests that the terms were less than fee simple alienation.

¹⁴ John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, edited by Hugh Talmage Lefler (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 64, 89, 232-233, hereinafter cited as Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*.

¹⁵ See Boyce, "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain," 286. Weecacana Path probably derived its name from Wiccacon Creek, a western tributary of Chowan River, where the path probably reached its eastern extremity. The writer is indebted to George Stevenson, head of the Reference Unit, Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, for this proposed identification of Weecacana Path. See also Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, 10.

¹⁶ David I. Bushnell, Jr., "The Account of Lamhatty," *American Anthropologist*, n.s. X, (October-December, 1908), 568-572, hereinafter cited as Bushnell, "The Account of Lamhatty." The Tuscarora in 1706 attacked the Tawassa tribe of the Gulf Coast.

evidence of their familiarity with the Mississippi Valley,¹⁷ other sources connect them with the Gulf Coast and kindred tribes of the Great Lakes region as well.¹⁸

On their western trading expeditions, the Tuscarora carried articles of their own manufacture, including mats, baskets, wooden bowls, and ladles.¹⁹ They also dealt in such coastal products as yaupon (a medicinal herb) and dried fish.²⁰ By the 1670s or earlier they could offer cloth, glassware, rum, knives, hatchets, hoes, guns, powder, and, no doubt, other European goods.²¹ Besides furs, in which they did a great business with William Byrd and other James River dealers as well as with those of the Albemarle, the Tuscarora traders brought back from the West bloodroot (for dye), salt, copper, and other wares.²²

Supreme in eastern North Carolina, their trade spanning much of the region east of the Mississippi, the Tuscarora emerged in the late seventeenth century as a potent influence in Indian and Indian-white relations. The disintegration of tribes along the Virginia frontier also meant that this vast territory was opened to Tuscarora hunters and food-gatherers.²³ John Lederer, who traveled through Tuscarora country in 1670, remarked on "the great trade and commerce" conducted there and the "proud, imperious spirit of a Tuscarora chief,"²⁴ an attitude perhaps rooted in the consciousness of burgeoning power and prosperity. Throughout much of their trading region, the Tuscarora were said to have refused to negotiate in any tongue but their own, wherefore towns far distant from them were required to have one or more interpreters available for the purpose.²⁵ William Byrd I, attempting in 1691 to procure from the Tuscarora the return of fugitive slaves, found the Indians so well supplied with English goods that he supposed they would accept no terms he could afford.²⁶

The beginning of English settlement on Albemarle Sound in the 1650s was evidently welcomed by the Tuscarora as a convenience to their trade.²⁷ The land

¹⁷See note 11.

¹⁸For the relations of the Tuscarora with the northern Iroquois, see Richard Aquila, "Down the Warrior Path: The Causes of the Southern Wars of the Iroquois," *American Indian Quarterly*, IV (October, 1978), 211-220, hereinafter cited as Aquila, "Down the Warrior's Path." See also Lawrence H. Leder (ed.), *The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1713* (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 223.

¹⁹Boyce, "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain," 284.

²⁰David B. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 464.

²¹Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, LIX, 149.

²²Boyce, "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain," 284.

²³For Tuscarora activity on the Virginia frontier, see Henry R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60-1693* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1914), 23, 454, hereinafter cited as McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1659/60-1693*; see also Henry R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1702-1705, 1705-1706, 1712-1713* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1912), 54, hereinafter cited as McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1702-1713*; and Henry R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Executive Journals of the Council of Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 6 volumes, 1925-1932), II, 275, hereinafter cited as McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*.

²⁴William P. Cumming (ed.), *The Discoveries of John Lederer* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1955), 33.

²⁵Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 213. Lawson claimed that the Carolina Indians operated without maps for distances up to 700 miles from their tribal home.

²⁶Marion Tinling (ed.), *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2 volumes, 1977), I, 163, hereinafter cited as Tinling, *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds*.

²⁷The Yearly expedition of 1654 was accompanied back to Lynnhaven Bay by a large party of

taken up by the whites was purchased by them from the Yawpim (remnants of the Weapemeoc) and other small tribes on the margins of the sound and posed no problem for the Tuscarora further inland.²⁸ It soon became clear, moreover, that the whites would not be able to expand with impunity into the Tuscarora interior. When several Quaker families, refugees from Virginia persecution, essayed a settlement in the southeastern corner of the Roanoke-Chowan region in the early 1660s, the Tuscarora attacked the squatters, drove them off, and, it appears, turned back Albemarle's efforts at military reprisal.²⁹

Peaceful relations were formalized in 1672 when leaders of the Albemarle colony met with Tuscarora chiefs and apparently reached accord.³⁰ Thereafter, it appears, the Albemarle colony was understood to be that region bordering Virginia, which "on ye southern part is separated by Albemarle Sound and Chowan River."³¹ Strictly construed, these limits made of Albemarle a reservation for white people and such, in effect, it remained for the next thirty years. During this long period, the English would offer no further challenge to areas under Tuscarora domination.

The apparent unwillingness of the English again to test Tuscarora resolve reflected the relative strength of the two sides. The white population of 1672 amounted to only a few hundred individuals, and it would be many years before it exceeded a few thousand.³² Tuscarora population figures are vague, but their numbers were certainly many times those of the Albemarle whites.³³ Coastal tribes in 1586 had characterized the Tuscarora as those "whose name and multitude besides their valor is terrible to all the rest of the provinces."³⁴ Soon after founding Jamestown, the English learned of "Cathcatapeius," most likely a

Tuscarora to arrange for an English education for their chief's son. Yearly, "Yearly's Narrative," 27-28.

²⁸William S. Powell (ed.), *Ye Countie of Albemarle: A Collection of Documents, 1664-1675* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1958), xxiv.

²⁹Robert Lawrence, who lived in the Salmon Creek vicinity ca. 1661-1668, was a Quaker of Chuckatuck, Virginia. See "Chuckatuck Monthly Meeting," in William Wade Hinshaw and others (eds.), *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 6 volumes, 1936-1950), VI, 31-32. John Lawrence, James Murdaugh, and perhaps others from Chuckatuck also had grants near Salmon Creek at this time. The Lords Proprietors in 1663 proposed that a second governor might be wanted for the Albemarle colony for those settled "on the Larboard side" of the mouth of Chowan River who might be "for liberty of Contience." See William L. Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 10 volumes, 1886-1890), I, 53-54, hereinafter cited as Saunders, *Colonial Records*. On the conflict between colonists and Tuscarora in 1665-1666, see depositions by George Bullock and Richard Sanderson in William G. Stanard, "The Indians of Southern Virginia, 1650-1711: Depositions in the Virginia and North Carolina Boundary Case," [Part I], *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, VII (April, 1900), 345-348.

³⁰Rayner W. Kelsey, *Friends and the Indians, 1653-1917* (Philadelphia: Associated Executive Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs, 1917), 21-22.

³¹Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 391.

³²William S. Price, Jr. (ed.), *North Carolina Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, Volume IV of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, Second Series*, edited by Mattie Erma Edwards Parker and others (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History [projected multivolume series, 1963-], 1974), xiii, hereinafter cited as Price, *Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, IV. The series will be hereinafter cited as Parker and others, *Colonial Records of North Carolina, Second Series*.

³³Lord Culpeper in 1683 estimated the Tuscarora as between 6,000 and 8,000, which would have been about twice Albemarle's white population. Pierre Marambaud, "William Byrd I, A Young Virginia Planter in the 1670s," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXI (April, 1973), 150.

³⁴Corbitt, *Explorations*, 51-52.

1 That there be a firm perpetuall and inviolable peace to continue so long as sun and moon endure betwixt all the and every the inhabitants and people of North Carolina and all the nation and people of the Toforovos Indians.

2 That if any occasion of difference should fall out I that there may be as soon as conveniently can be a meeting of the great men appointed to settle the friendship and peaceably.

3 That if any servant or servants, slave or slaves ~~should~~ come among the Toforovos Indians That they forthwith with all expedition and diligence apprehend him or them and bring them in and what arms or goods they shall have with them to some of the great men of the English who shall be obliged to give them a match coat or the value for their trouble.

4 If any Englishman of this Government shall injure or wrong any of the Toforovos Indians upon complaint and proofs to the great men of this Government the Englishman shall make satisfaction to him or them in and according to Law.

5 and pledges with the English for the payment of debts which they promise to bring in so many and does not perform may be in many days after the time appointed which may occasion difference wherefor it is agreed that if any Toforovos Indian who leaves prison does not bring in the sum to redeem them at the day that he shall lose his power and the country may be sold after as they please.

Lastly That there be always a friendly and amicable correspondence between the first English and Toforovos Indians to be in future.

Also it is agreed that if the Toforovos have any wars with any other nation of Indians the English of this Government (or where they are given) shall not assist them with men powder shot or any other thing.

Also it is agreed that if the English of this Government shall have wars with any other nation of the Indians the great men of the Toforovos (or where given them) shall call home all their Indians (if any be with that nation) and give no manner of assistance to the said nation. Both if required by the Government they shall assist the English and the Government shall give them reasonable satisfaction for their trouble.

This unsigned and undated treaty between "the inhabitants and people of North Carolina and all the nation and people of the Tuscarora Indians" spelled out the terms of "a firm perpetuall and inviolable peace to continue So long as Sun and moon Endure. . . ." Original held by Edenton Historical Commission, Edenton; reproduced by permission.

Tuscarora, who ruled "to the southeast and south" and was "a greater weroance" (or chief) than Powhatan himself.³⁵

Imprecise as such statements are, they suggest a people at least comparable to the 12,000 (estimates run as high as 170,000 or more) thought to have comprised the Powhatan Confederacy.³⁶ John Lawson indicated in 1709 that the 1,200 Tuscarora fighting men of that time (not counting allies) were less than one sixth of what they had been half a century earlier.³⁷ But Lawson's list of Tuscarora towns in 1709, supposedly comprehensive, omits six of those known to have belonged in 1711 to the northern Tuscarora alone.³⁸ Thus, it appears that Lawson may not have been directly familiar with the Tuscarora north of Pamlico River and that he underestimated Tuscarora strength.³⁹

The character of the Tuscarora's relations with Virginia after about 1670 suggests the wary regard in which southern colonists held the most powerful of their neighbors. The Tuscarora hunted and traded on the Virginia frontier to the headwaters of the Potomac and, not infrequently, to the shores of Chesapeake Bay itself, despite efforts by Virginia to prevent such activity.⁴⁰ Complaints of depredations by Tuscarora on the fields and livestock of Virginia plantations appear to have evoked little more than hand-wringing in Jamestown or Williamsburg.⁴¹ A recurrent cause for alarm among Virginians was the relationship of the Tuscarora with the Meherrin, Nansemond, or other tributary tribes.⁴²

For North Carolina, the Tuscarora nemesis was perhaps an indirect source of the furious internal struggles that rent the colony in its early decades. For several years after they acquired their charter in 1663, the Lords Proprietors were accused by some Albemarle colonists of land policies too niggardly and restrictive to promote healthy growth in Carolina.⁴³ By 1676, however, proprietary interest seems to have undergone a revolution. Now the Proprietors were said to

³⁵ Susan Myra Kingsbury (ed.), *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 4 volumes, 1933), I, 19.

³⁶ On the issue of Indian population figures, see Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and English in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 204; and J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *The Only Land They Knew: The Tragic Story of the American Indians in the Old South* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 24-25.

³⁷ Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 23.

³⁸ Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 242. Lawson's list of fifteen Tuscarora towns includes Haruta, Contah-nah, Waqui, Anna Ooka, Conaugh-Kare Harooka, Una Nauhan, Oonossoora, Kentanuska, Chunaneeets, Kenta, Eno, Naur-heg-ne, Nonawharitse, Tosneoc, and Nursoorooka. The Virginia Council in 1711 and 1712 negotiated with the Northern Tuscarora towns of Raroucatthie, Kinquenarant, Tarighousie, Touhairouka, Unaghnarara, and Tastianhk, besides two on Lawson's list. Various other Tuscarora towns appear in John Barnwell, "The Tuscarora Expedition: Letters of Colonel John Barnwell," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, XI (January, 1908), 29-58, hereinafter cited as Barnwell, "The Tuscarora Expedition."

³⁹ Lawson's book aimed at attracting settlers, which may account for his tendency to underestimate Indian populations.

⁴⁰ McIlwaine, *Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1659/60-1693*, 23; William P. Palmer (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, Preserved in the Capital at Richmond* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 11 volumes, 1875-1893), I, 65, hereinafter cited as Palmer, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*; McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1702-1713*, 54.

⁴¹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, II, 275; III, 159.

⁴² McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 200.

⁴³ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Third Edition, 1973), 44-45.

be thwarted by Carolina governors who used "great Violence and Injuries" to prevent settlement on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers and even "commanded back" some who "were planted on the Southside of Albemarle" Sound.⁴⁴ It was the opinion of Peter Colleton, son of a proprietor, that "ye Governors & some of ye Cheife of ye Country" had combined to block the southern extension of the colony, though it "was extremely the interest of the Proprietors" to foster it.⁴⁵ A desire to monopolize the Indian fur trade was doubtless a factor in the restrictive attitude of some settlers, but a caution arising from the menace of the Tuscarora was probably an additional consideration. At all events, it was the leaders of the colonists after the Tuscarora agreement of 1672, and not the Lords Proprietors, whose interest it was to keep the settlement compact and to discourage expansion.

The conflict over land policy was a leading element in the first major civil disturbance in the Albemarle colony. In 1675 expansionist factions captured control of the government of Albemarle, only to be overturned in the next year by Culpeper's Rebellion, which restored power to the more conservative forces.⁴⁶ Even the overthrow of Governor Seth Sothel, himself a Proprietor, in 1689 seems to have reflected, in part, continuing tension between those anxious to press on with settlement to the south and west and those who were antagonistic to such a policy.⁴⁷ It was the aggressive expansionism of Sothel that helped arouse the hostility of settlers and evict him from Albemarle.⁴⁸ Again, the long shadow cast by the Tuscarora in shaping Albemarle's restrictive attitude may be seen in the blighting of Sothel's aims.

With pressure from London once more providing the impetus,⁴⁹ the Carolinians in the 1690s began tentatively to probe the extent and resolve of Tuscarora influence along the coast. So far, the Tuscarora had apparently made little effort to reduce the small coastal tribes to allegiance to themselves; perhaps because increased mortality had lessened the strains of earlier overpopulation.⁵⁰ (John Archdale, however, as Sothel's deputy governor, in 1685 talked "Big

⁴⁴Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 228.

⁴⁵Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 286-287.

⁴⁶Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 228, 233. The Lords Proprietors in 1676 implicitly endorsed Thomas Eastchurch's seizure of the Albemarle government, citing as one ground for dissatisfaction with former governments that "the Phampleco and Neuse should have bin before this well-planted. . . ." The group that came to power with Eastchurch in 1675 included those intent upon overthrowing the conservative land and trade policies of former governors. The conservative element regained control during Culpeper's Rebellion in late 1676. See also Barbara L. Wilson, "Outside the Mainstream: Economic Development and Social Stability in Proprietary Albemarle, 1660-1715," manuscript in possession of Barbara L. Wilson, Stirling, Virginia.

⁴⁷Sothel took out grants for large holdings on the south side of Albemarle Sound, where he operated a plantation and fur-trading station, and on Pamlico River. He evidently intended to push his activity well beyond any previous settler. On Sothel's activities in these areas, see Mattie Erma Edwards Parker (ed.), *North Carolina Higher-Court Records, 1670-1696*, Volume II of *Colonial Records of North Carolina, Second Series*, hereinafter cited as Parker, *Higher-Court Records, 1670-1696*, II; Saunders *Colonial Records*, I, 229, 231; and Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 224.

⁴⁸Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 359-363.

⁴⁹See the Proprietors' instructions to Governor Archdale, dated October 17, 1694, in Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 391.

⁵⁰See Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 342. Lawson's estimate that the Indian population of eastern North Carolina in 1709 was one sixth of what it had been a half century before may exaggerate the decrease among the Tuscarora. It is unlikely, however, that the Tuscarora escaped heavy losses to the diseases that decimated their neighbors.

Hatt," a Tuscarora chief, out of a proposed war against the Machapunga, perhaps in retaliation for an attack by the latter on the Iroquois Coree of Core Banks.)⁵¹ An opportunity to try such a probe with minimal risk presented itself in 1695 when an epidemic—possibly smallpox—all but wiped out the Pamlico Indians.⁵² Whites pushed quickly southward into the vacant lands on the banks of the Pamlico River and achieved occupancy without incurring Tuscarora retaliation.⁵³

For North Carolina and Virginia alike, the gravest concern was the possibility of an alliance between the Tuscarora and the Five Nations of the Iroquois of New York. Whether the Tuscarora had ever undertaken joint campaigns with the Five Nations is uncertain. But both had long fought against the Catawba, Choctaw, and other tribes of the western Carolinas and Virginia.⁵⁴ In 1689 William Byrd I gave voice to his fear of an alliance when two Indian slaves, absconding from Virginia, killed a Tuscarora. Notified that the Tuscarora had "sent to demand Satisfaction," Byrd urged the governor to pay it, "otherwise they will scarce brooke a delay, but take it wch might Sett the whole Country in flame," and bring the Five Nations "rambling this way."⁵⁵

The southern campaigns of the Five Nations were interrupted between 1692 and 1701 while the Iroquois defended themselves from the French and allied Indians during King William's War. By 1702, however, incited and encouraged by the French, the Iroquois had renewed these offensives.⁵⁶ One of several motives of the northern Iroquois was to avenge certain injuries offered to the Tuscarora by other tribes.⁵⁷

The renewed southern campaigns of the Five Nations against enemies of the Tuscarora coincided with aggressive new colonial thrusts by the French, who in 1698 launched a series of initiatives along the Gulf Coast and lower Mississippi.⁵⁸ These movements stimulated, in turn, the imperialistic urges of the English and, in North Carolina, led to more daring expansionist forays by the colonists to the west and south from Albemarle and Pamlico sounds.⁵⁹ The French, eager to make whatever trouble they could for Indians considered friendly to the English, enlisted the Iroquois as catalysts.⁶⁰ By 1701 the pace of colonial rivalries and ethnic discords was beginning noticeably to quicken in North Carolina and elsewhere.⁶¹

⁵¹Paschal, "The Tuscarora Indians," 30.

⁵²John Archdale, *Description of the Fertile and Pleasant Province of Carolina: With a Brief Account of its Discovery, Settling, and the Government Thereof to this Time. With Several Remarkable Passages of Divine Providence during my Time* (London: John Wyatt, 1707), 3.

⁵³See Parker, *Higher-Court Records, 1670-1696*, II, 202, 296, 299.

⁵⁴Aquila, "Down the Warrior Path," 211.

⁵⁵Tinling, *Correspondence of the Three William Byrds*, I, 107-108. Byrd complained that the people of the southern Virginia section were much terrified "& the story's broached to the northward of the French joineing with the Indians doe much augment their fears."

⁵⁶Aquila, "Down the Warrior Path," 211-220.

⁵⁷Aquila, "Down the Warrior Path," 217-218.

⁵⁸W. Stitt Robinson, *The Southern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 98-102, hereinafter cited as Robinson, *The Southern Colonial Frontier*.

⁵⁹See, for instance, Saunders, *Colonial Records*, II, 643-644; and Lefler's introduction to Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, xvii-xviii.

⁶⁰Robinson, *The Southern Colonial Frontier*, 98-102.

⁶¹Robinson, *The Southern Colonial Frontier*, 98-99; Price, *Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, IV, xxiv-xxv.

During the year 1701 Carolina frontiersmen began to take up land along the west side of Chowan River and around the mouth of the Neuse, areas heretofore considered off limits to English penetration. Small plots around the lower Neuse were evidently obtained from the Neusiok tribe by legitimate purchase, but similar tracts along the west Chowan were wrested by main strength from the local Meherrin tribe.⁶² The Meherrin, drifting southward after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, had been buffeted about by pressure from whites and other Indians from one location to another.⁶³ They probably had no formal understanding with the Tuscarora but, as fellow Iroquois, may have been tolerated by them in an area nominally within Tuscarora jurisdiction. At any rate, the incidences of hostility that began in 1701 to distinguish Meherrin-white relations ran the grave risk of provoking the Tuscarora to retaliation.

In fact, a serious erosion of relations between whites and Indians in North Carolina was apparent by about 1703. That the disturbances of this period paralleled the renewed militancy of the Five Nations suggests that the impetus may have come from the northern Iroquois through the Tuscarora. At any rate, it was the northern Carolina Tuscarora, those presumably most directly in the line of Five Nations' influence, who were initially involved.

Evidently fearful of a menace on his western frontier, Governor Robert Daniel in 1703 ordered militia attacks against two Tuscarora groups in the Conoho Creek area of Roanoke River. These were the Keeahweeo and Corenine.⁶⁴ It does not appear that the attacks actually materialized, but the threat from this vicinity subsided at least for the time being. Soon afterward, however, the colony was swept by rumors that a trio of Negro fur traders from Virginia were trying to incite the Tuscarora (evidently those south of Pamlico River) "to cutt off [destroy] the Inhabitants of Pamlico and Neuse."⁶⁵

It may have been these rumors that led worried colonists in 1704 to petition Governor Daniel to send emissaries to the Tuscarora with pledges of peace.⁶⁶ Daniel sought in 1703 to defuse the situation by convening a conference of "all the Indian Kings" to arrange "a firm peace,"⁶⁷ but his effort did not have satisfactory results.

⁶²Alonzo Thomas Dill, Jr., "Eighteenth Century New Bern: A History of the Town and Craven County, 1700-1800," XXII, XXIII (January-October, 1945; January-October, 1946), *North Carolina Historical Review*, XXII, 10-12, hereinafter cited as Dill, "Eighteenth Century New Bern," with appropriate volume; Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 667-671.

⁶³Saunders, *Colonial Records*, II, 643-644. Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in 1676 was led by Nathaniel Bacon in opposition to Governor William Berkeley's conservative policies regarding Indian trade. See Charles M. Andrews (ed.), *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 9-139.

⁶⁴J. R. B. Hathaway, "War Declared Against the Core & Nynsee Indians, 1703," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, II (April, 1901), 204; militia commission for campaign against Keeahwee Indians, no date, signed by Robert Daniel, manuscript in Albemarle County Papers, 1678-1714, Volume I, CR 2.001, British Records, State Archives. The author is indebted to George Stevenson of the State Archives for the suggestion that the Coranines and Keeahweeos were evidently both Tuscarora groups of the Roanoke River. The Corenine Creek, Island, and Bend in Bertie County probably derive their names from the Coranine Indians.

⁶⁵McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 351, 381, 390, 405. Virginia authorities examined the trio but found no grounds for action against them.

⁶⁶Price, *Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, IV, xx.

⁶⁷Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 211.



Robert Daniel, deputy governor of the Province of Carolina, 1703-1705, ordered militia attacks against two Tuscarora groups in 1703. Oil portrait of Daniel by an unknown artist; photograph from the files of the Division of Archives and History.

In the meantime, smaller coastal tribes, their attitudes toward the colonists hardened by the prospect of Tuscarora support, became more determined in their resistance to white encroachments. Colonial records in 1703 and 1704 were rife with complaints by colonists against the behavior of the Neusiok, Pamlico, Coree, Bear River, Hatteras, Machapunga, and other small groups.⁶⁸ It was becoming increasingly apparent that the southern North Carolina Tuscarora (if not the northern as well) had begun to exploit the hostile mood of the coastal tribes by forming alliances and understandings with them.⁶⁹ The situation along the coast offered to the Tuscarora an opportunity to fulfill ambitions to dominate the coastal tribes that reached at least as far back as the sixteenth century.

A case in point was the Bear River tribe of the Pamlico-Neuse region. In 1699 the Bear River Indians accepted a treaty establishing over them a tributary relationship to the Albemarle government. Besides payment of an annual tribute of two hides, the Bear River promised to bring in salvage from castaway ships, submit to English justice tribesmen accused of crimes against whites, and so on.⁷⁰ The first real test of this arrangement, an incident in 1701 in which whites charged some Bear River with theft and the Indians denied it, evidently left the treaty void. More ominously, the Bear River by 1704 were understood by settlers on the Pamlico and Neuse to be anticipating war with the whites and to be in

⁶⁸ See J. R. B. Hathaway (ed.), "Items Relating to Bath County," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, I (July, 1900), 441; J. R. B. Hathaway (ed.), "Petition of the Inhabitants of Machapunga," and "Relating to the Indians, 1703," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, II (April, 1901), 193-194; Ransom McBride, Jr., "William Powell & the Bare River Indians, Albemarle Co.—1704," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, III (May, 1977), 114; manuscripts in Albemarle County Papers, 1678-1739, British Records, State Archives; Price, *Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, IV, xx.

⁶⁹ Mattie Erma Edwards Parker (ed.), *North Carolina Higher-Court Records, 1697-1701*, Volume III of Parker and others (eds.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina, Second Series*, 511, hereinafter cited as Parker, *Higher-Court Records, 1697-1701*, III; Vincent H. Todd (ed.), *Christoph von Graffenried's Account of the Founding of New Bern* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1920), 270, hereinafter cited as Todd, *Christoph von Graffenried's Account*. Graffenried lists among the allies of the Tuscarora the Mattamuskeet, Bear River, Weetock, Pamlico, Neusiok, and Coree Indians.

⁷⁰ J. R. B. Hathaway (ed.), "Articles of Agreement with Bay (Bear) River Indians," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, I (October, 1900), 598-599.



Watercolor drawing (post-1704) of three southern Algonquian (Powhatan?) Indians. This rendering by John Louis Michel is a contemporary copy of a watercolor made by his brother Franz Louis Michel during the latter's two visits to North America between 1700 and 1704. Original held by Burgerbibliothek, Bern, Switzerland.

"more than ordinary familiarity" with the Tuscarora.⁷¹ The Coree of Core Banks were likewise regarded by this time as "slaves of the Tuscarouda Indians."⁷²

The pressure of increased Tuscarora assertiveness was also felt in this period by Virginia colonists. A brief excitement, for example, occurred in 1705 when 200 Tuscarora were reported to be at the Nottoway town on the North Carolina-Virginia border, and "some secret practices" were being plotted by the two tribes.⁷³ But the edgy Tuscarora-Virginia relationship entered a more critical phase in April, 1707, when a Tuscarora was killed in King William County by a planter named Simon Kilcrease. The county court concluded that the Indian was "first aggressor" and acquitted Kilcrease.⁷⁴ In the meantime, the Tuscarora communicated to Williamsburg a demand for the "Satisfaction . . . Usual among themselves" in such cases, namely, 600 cubits (elbow-to-finger-lengths) of roanoke (wampum beads or shells), 120 cubits of peak (or wampum-peag, a more valuable shell money), 2 guns, 6 white striped blankets, 10 bottles of powder, 6,000 shot, 6 cloth coats, and 24 yards of coarse blue woolen cloth.⁷⁵

It may have been word of Kilcrease's acquittal that led to the death of planter Jeremiah Pate of New Kent County on October 14. Authorities arrested six alleged Tuscarora assailants—four of whom promptly escaped; the remaining two were sent to Williamsburg for trial. The Virginia council, sensitive to possible Tuscarora indignation and its consequences, invited the tribe's leaders to send representatives to satisfy themselves of a fair trial. Tributary Nottoway, Nansemond, Meherrin, Pamunkey, and Chickahominy were ordered by the council to send two observers each to Williamsburg for the same purpose.⁷⁶

⁷¹J. R. B. Hathaway (ed.), "Order from Gov. Henderson Walker Relating to Bay River Indians" and "Letter from John Lawson to Gov. Walker, Relating to Bay River Indians," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, I (October, 1900), 597, 598; J. R. B. Hathaway (ed.), "Relating to the Indians, 1703," *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, II (April, 1901), 194.

⁷²Parker, *Higher-Court Records, 1697-1701*, III, 511.

⁷³McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, II, 453.

⁷⁴McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 156.

⁷⁵Palmer, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, I, 113.

⁷⁶McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 161.

The Tuscarora ignored the invitation but did ultimately send one of the four remaining suspects for trial. Two of the three Tuscarora prisoners poisoned themselves in jail, but the third was tried in 1708 and convicted. The council reviewed the case and determined, perhaps for reasons of state, that the man's alibi had not been satisfactorily investigated. Further inquiry established to the general relief that the alibi was valid. The queen's approval was still needed to save the man from the gallows, but it was promptly applied for and, apparently, procured.⁷⁷

During the long delay over the Tuscarora trial, the Virginia council pressed more insistently for the yielding up of the remaining suspects, a requirement born of the need for the colony to retain full credibility with native peoples. This insistence in 1708 initially took the form of a prohibition against the sale of powder and shot by Virginia traders to the Tuscarora. When it was clear that the ban was effecting nothing, it was followed by an ultimatum that the Tuscarora send in the suspects within twenty days or else Virginia would "obtain the sd Indians by force."⁷⁸ Next, the trade restriction was extended to all commerce with the Tuscarora, then to all trade with Indians south of the James, and, finally, "to any inhabitants of North Carolina."⁷⁹ The council's charade ended on April 23, 1709, when William Byrd moved restoration of "free liberty to all persons to trade with all Indians whatsoever. . . ."⁸⁰ The Virginia failure was blamed on the uncooperative attitude of the Carolinians and a "clandestine trade" by Virginia's own frontiersmen.⁸¹ The Tuscarora, however, had demonstrably called Virginia's bluff.

While northern Tuscarora had been engaged in a test of wills with Virginia, southern Tuscarora had been contemplating the increase of white settlement in the Pamlico and lower Neuse regions. Initially limited to a few fur traders, the lower Neuse and Trent rivers appear to have been opened indiscriminately to patentees in 1707 by virtue of an upheaval within the North Carolina government. The emergence of Thomas Cary as de facto governor in 1706 brought to power the land-hungry element in the Pamlico region who had been restrained heretofore by the more conservative (or jealous) Albemarle establishment.⁸² Plans for a body of Huguenots from Manakin Town to settle on the lower Trent in 1708 probably miscarried, but a much larger group of settlers arrived in 1710. These were the Swiss and Palatine Protestants, for whom Baron Christoph von Graffenried had acquired from the Lords Proprietors a grant of 17,500 acres,

⁷⁷ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 162-174, 182, 185, 191, 200.

⁷⁸ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 167.

⁷⁹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 165, 185, 191, 211.

⁸⁰ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 207, 214; Louis B. Wright (ed.), *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712* (Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press, 1941), 25. Byrd's entry for April 23, 1709, notes that he "went to the President's, where I learned that the Tuscarora Indians would not deliver up the men demanded, and Colonel Harrison now wrote that . . . the trade should be open, contrary to what he thought before."

⁸¹ McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 214.

⁸² An act of the Board of Trade in 1707 for encouraging the settlement of North Carolina complained that all of the seacoast from New England to Spanish Florida was settled "save only one Tract . . . lying in this [North Carolina] government which lying waste . . . is not only interrupted but the Enemy in time of Warr and Pyrates in time of Peace have hitherto made use of the Harbours therein . . . being inhabited . . . only by some fugitive Indians. . . ." See Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 674-675.

with an option for 100,000 acres more. All the land involved in these settlements appears to have been purchased from the Neusiok (as well as from the Proprietors) and entailed no infringement of prior understandings between the whites and the Tuscarora.⁸³ The Cary expansionists, who facilitated Palatine settlement, were, like those of earlier years, soon turned out of power and crushed in an armed showdown, but their land policy had helped sow the seeds of a conflict that would almost destroy North Carolina.

Although their vital interests were still intact, the southern Tuscarora could not have viewed benignly the influx of so many whites into the Pamlico-Neuse area. Some English were desirable as agents for the fur trade then shifting south toward Ocracoke Inlet and becoming more valuable to the Indians by virtue of the more direct route to the markets.⁸⁴ So far, the settlers had been circumspect, even deferential, toward the Tuscarora, offering them few, if any, of the injuries visited upon smaller tribes. But the historic expansionist designs of the Tuscarora were being undercut as their allied tribes on the coast diminished, became constricted, or retreated inland.



Pen drawing with black wash (ca. 1711) showing the captivity of Baron Christoph von Graffenried, John Lawson, and their black servant. From Franz Louis Michel, *Relations du voyage d'Amérique que le Baron de Graffenried a fait en y amenant une colonie Palatine et Suisse, et son retour en Europe*; original held by Burgerbibliothek, Bern, Switzerland.

What Tuscarora militants seem to have envisioned in 1711 was a quick strike at outlying white plantations aimed at broadening the buffer between themselves and the Europeans and dampening the ardor for further white colonization, an action similar to that of 1665 against Albemarle. The new town of New Bern was specifically promised exemption from attack when Graffenried fell into Tuscarora hands on the eve of their assault and agreed to a treaty of Pala-

⁸³Dill, "Eighteenth Century New Bern," XXII, 152-175, 293-319.

⁸⁴Parker, *Higher-Court Records, 1697-1701*, III, xiv; Price, *Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708*, IV, xx-xxiii.

tine neutrality.⁸⁵ Hancock, leader of the southern Tuscarora, probably supposed that a similar treaty, or a reaffirmation of the terms of 1672, might be arranged with the English once he had made his point by attack.

In considering Hancock's perspective, it is important to bear in mind that the Tuscarora were not a nation and probably not even a confederacy though colonial perceptions of them had not traditionally recognized any significant internal divisions. Tuscarora allegiance was staked firmly to the village level; however, a powerful village chief might earn recognition as the leader over many villages in a given area or even over the whole tribe.⁸⁶ Those villages north of the Pamlico River in 1711 adhered to Chief Tom Blunt, those south of the river to Chief Hancock, and some villages may have wavered between the two. Thus, Hancock's plans bore no necessary relation to the villages allied with Tom Blunt, and it is unlikely that the northern Tuscarora were privy to Hancock's intentions.

In devising his attack, Hancock may have projected onto the white settlements a political division parallel to that which obtained among his own people. He probably regarded Albemarle County as a separate colony from Bath County and seems not to have anticipated that an assault on Bath would necessarily broaden into a conflict with Albemarle, let alone with Virginia or South Carolina.

If true, all this was, of course, a misunderstanding of the fact that Pamlico and Albemarle settlers were under the same administration, but the reality in 1711 favored Hancock's assessment. The Cary Rebellion had pitted Albemarle against Bath and had left the colonists of the two counties somewhat at odds with each other. It was by no means clear that Albemarle would rush to the defense of Bath County and, in fact, it did not.⁸⁷

Only the southern Tuscarora, then, participated in the assault Hancock made on the Pamlico frontier on September 22, 1711. The northern Tuscarora, inhabiting the largest of the Tuscarora domains, took no part in the attack. It seems likely that the neutrality of Tom Blunt stemmed from the hope of safeguarding the well-established commerce of the northern Tuscarora with their white neighbors in North Carolina and Virginia.⁸⁸ But there is also evidence of some intermarriage between northern Tuscarora and whites and at least partial adoption of European life-styles by those living nearest the Albemarle settlements.⁸⁹ Finally, Tom Blunt evidently preferred to ascertain Hancock's chances of success before committing himself to a role in the fight.

⁸⁵Todd, *Christoph von Graffenried's Account*, 237-239, 281-282.

⁸⁶Douglas W. Boyce, "Did a Tuscarora Confederacy Exist?" in Charles M. Hudson (ed.), *Four Centuries of Southeastern Indians* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 28-40.

⁸⁷Anonymous, "Journal of John Barnwell," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, V (April, 1898), 398; Saunders, *Colonial Records*, II, 40.

⁸⁸Todd, *Christoph von Graffenried's Account*, 276.

⁸⁹Peter Gansett, an Indian living near the mouth of Roanoke River ca. 1701-1706, was apprenticed to Robert West with the "consent of his mother Mary Lee, wife of Daniel Leigh of Chowan prct., planter." See Margaret M. Hofmann (ed.), *Chowan Precinct, North Carolina, 1696 to 1723; Genealogical Abstracts of Deed Books* (Weldon, N.C.: Roanoke News Company, 1972), 7, 8, 25. Mary Leigh appears to have been a Tuscarora or the widow of one. Pennsylvania Council Minutes for July, 1710, contain notice of an appeal by two Tuscarora chiefs alleging grievous wrongs done to their tribe in North Carolina and seeking asylum, evidently for the "entire tribe," in Pennsylvania.

How far into the past the Tuscarora cleavage went, whether it reflected differences of interest, acculturation, or some more basic division, is not known. Virginia's efforts in 1707 to procure suspects in the Pate murder case had shown that Tuscarora towns were split over the question of whether to cooperate with the whites.⁹⁰ That there was also a serious generation gap between younger and older Tuscarora leaders was evident when Governor Daniel in 1703 tried to reach accord with several tribes.⁹¹ It was the understanding of Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia that the Cary faction had won the willingness of younger Tuscarora to attack Governor Edward Hyde in Albemarle in early 1711 but that older tribal leaders had overruled them.⁹²



Edward Hyde (ca. 1650-1712) was governor of the Carolina Province when the Tuscarora war broke out. This oil portrait of Hyde, by an unknown artist, was recently discovered in England. Photograph from the files of the Division of Archives and History.

Finally, the consequences of recent and still-raging epidemic disease among the Tuscarora may have played a part in tribal politics. Virginia sources take note of the havoc wrought among the Tuscarora in 1707 by smallpox; and many Indians were carried off by disease in the course of the Tuscarora War.⁹³ The disease cut down older, more experienced, and, possibly, more moderate leaders among the southern Tuscarora, bringing younger, untried men to the fore, thereby an element of impetuosity in the 1711 assault might be more readily understood.

Hancock's forces, including factions of several allied tribes, killed some 120 colonists and destroyed a great deal of property in the first hours of their September, 1711, attack on settlements on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers. But the southern Tuscarora were disappointed in their apparent hope that peace nego-

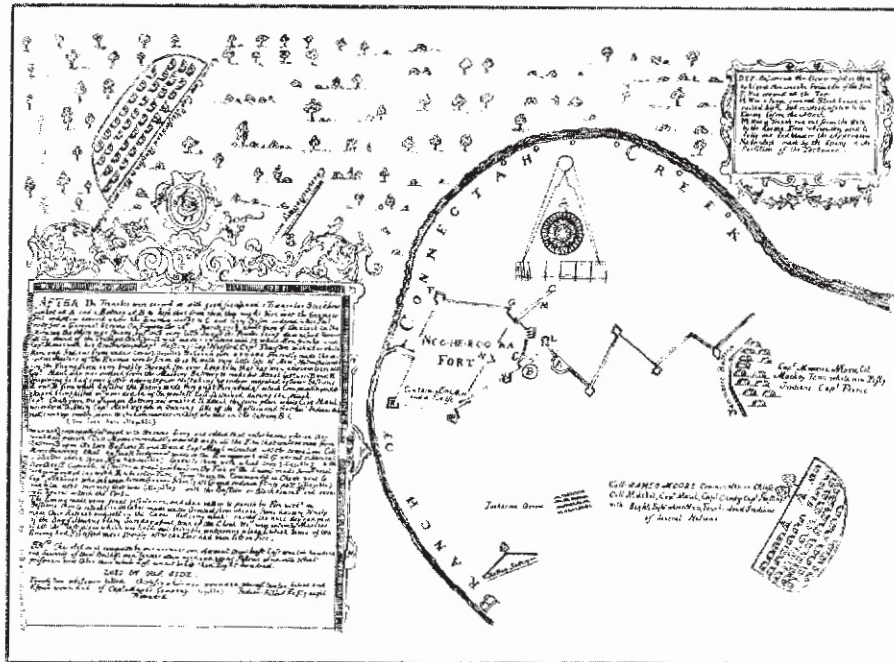
Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania from the Organization to the Termination of Proprietary Government [March 10, 1683-September 27, 1775] (Philadelphia: J. Severns, 10 volumes 1852-1853), II, 511. No known North Carolina sources confirm such mistreatment of the Tuscarora up to that time.

⁹⁰McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, III, 171.

⁹¹Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, 211.

⁹²Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 783.

⁹³Boyce, "Notes on Tuscarora Political Organization," 54; John Brickell, *The Natural History of North-Carolina* (Dublin: James Carson, 1737; Murfreesboro, N.C.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1968), 253. Brickell claimed that the outbreak of smallpox "in the late Indian War, which destroyed most of the Savages that were seized with it," was the only occasion it had "ever visited this Country" (i.e., North Carolina). See also Frank J. Klingberg (ed.), *The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis La Jau, 1706-1717* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 104.



This unsigned and undated map (ca. 1713) gives a plan of Fort Nehucke (shown on map as Noc-he-roo-ka Fort) and vicinity and a full account of the attack waged there in March, 1713, by Colonel James Moore against hostile southern Tuscarora under Chief Hancock. Original map held by South Carolina Historical Society, Columbia; photograph from the files of the Division of Archives and History.

tiations would be quickly proffered by the whites. While Governor Hyde and his council looked on in catatonic terror in Albemarle, vigilante whites counter-attacked, and the frontier struggle soon developed into a full-scale war.⁹⁴ North Carolina quickly exhausted itself in ineffectual response and was obliged to send urgent appeals for aid to South Carolina and Virginia. In 1712 and 1713 armies of white-led Yamasee and others from South Carolina crushed and scattered Hancock and his cohorts. Tom Blunt, promised recognition as "king" of all the Tuscarora in return for his collaboration with the English, at length seized Hancock and turned him over to colonial authorities, who executed him.⁹⁵ Even in defeat, the Tuscarora remained menacing to Indian foes and troublesome to the governments of Virginia and the Carolinas. Governor Charles Eden of North Carolina frankly confessed to the Virginia council in 1719 that he had little influence over Tom Blunt's subjects.⁹⁶ Eight years later the council believed that this was still the case. In the intervening years had come frequent reports of Tuscarora depredations against other tribes in North and South Carolina and Virginia.⁹⁷ Only with massive removals of the Tuscarora to the reservations of the northern Iroquois in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was tranquility attained in eastern North Carolina.

⁹⁴Barnwell, "The Tuscarora Expedition," 29.

⁹⁵Palmer, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, I, 164-165.

⁹⁶Palmer, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, I, 197.

⁹⁷McIlwaine, *Executive Journals*, IV, 132-133.

The collapse of the Tuscarora in 1713 removed the major obstacle to European expansion in North Carolina. The sixty-year period that whites spent clinging to the eastern sounds was then followed by a sixty-year dash to the Appalachians and beyond. Apart from his own miscalculations, Hancock may have been undone by the failure of meaningful assistance from the Five Nations of Iroquois of New York, which he perhaps had reason to expect. Except for a few Seneca,⁹⁸ the northern Iroquois did not intervene, and the greatest remaining Indian alliance lost an opportunity to deal a decisive blow at the southern English colonies. If the Gulf Coast expedition of the Tuscarora against the Tawassa in 1706 was aimed at obligating the northern Iroquois to support initiatives in North Carolina, it failed of its objective.

That public life came virtually to a halt in North Carolina following Hancock's initial assault, that his forces held the upper hand until the arrival of a large outside army four months later, that he accomplished this without the aid that might have come from the northern Tuscarora, the Five Nations, the French, or other sources, are so many evidences of how serious was the real and potential menace that confronted English colonization in the South in 1711. Hancock was strategist enough to strike while the colonists were sharply divided among themselves and on the eve of the harvest season. But he was not diplomatist enough to build the kind of wide-ranging alliance that might have guaranteed his success. Even so, his attempt brought North Carolina to the brink of Armageddon.

⁹⁸ Saunders, *Colonial Records*, I, 828-829, 861, 863, 866; II, 2, 49, 144.