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CAROLINA TRADERS AMONG THE OVERHILL
CHEROKEES, 1690-1760¹

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Though the Carolina settlements in Albemarle and on the Ashley River which later became respectively North and South Carolina, were virtually contemporaneous, the southern colony was from its earliest days much the more interested in exploring the great mountain region along its western border and cultivating a trade with the savages who lived "over the hills." Lord Ashley, in 1671, commended Dr. Henry Woodward, Carolina's famous explorer and first settler, for his zeal in exploring the "Inland Countrys" and developing commerce with the natives, and for his discreet silence with respect to his discoveries. "Pray therefore, if there be any such thing (as mines)," he cautioned, "keep

¹In the preparation of this study, the principal sources consulted have been the South Carolina provincial records in the Department of Archives at Columbia, particularly the Indian Books and the Executive Journals; Adair, *History of the North American Indian*; Alvord and Bidgood, *First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region*; Chicken's Journal, 1715-16, in the Charleston Yearbook, 1894; Chicken's Journal, 1725, in Mereness' *Travels in the American Colonies* and, in part, in Williams' *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country*; Journal of Sir Alexander Cuming, 1730; *Ibid.* p. 113-43. The annotations in this latter book are particularly helpful. Other works consulted are: Byrd, *History of the Dividing Line and Journey to the Land of Eden*; Logan, *History of Upper South Carolina*; Crane, Tennessee River as the road to Carolina, in *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.* 3:3-18; Cooper, *Statutes of South Carolina*; *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, v. 5; Ramsey, *Annals of Tennessee*; Haywood, *Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee*; Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*; Rivers, *Historical Sketches of South Carolina*; *North Carolina Colonial Records*; Lawson, *History of Carolina*; Hanna, *Wilderness Trail, Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*; Bartram, *Travels.*

it secret to yourself alone but if it should be convenient, as perhaps it may, to give me some hint of it in Letters to me, pray call gold always Antimony and Silver Iron, by which I shall be able to understand you without any danger if your letters should fall into other hands."² Nineteen years later the same fascinating hope lured James Moore, the first, and his friend, Colonel Maurice Mathews, into a journey "over the Apalathean Mount'ns for inland discovery and indian trade."³ The Albemarle settlement meanwhile remained inactive, absorbed apparently in its own affairs and indifferent to the fact that both from Virginia and from Charles Town a lucrative traffic was being developed with the Overhill Cherokees in its own trans-montane territory. Hence, it is that the Carolina traders were in fact Charles Town traders; and, when the province was divided in 1729, the trade with the western Indians centered in Charles Town, even though their lands were within the jurisdiction of North Carolina.

Of these over-mountain Indians, the nearest and by far the most important to Carolina were the Overhill Cherokees who lived in a number of towns along the fertile valleys of the Little Tennessee and Tellico rivers in what is now Monroe County Tennessee.⁴

In 1673, two years after Lord Ashley urged Henry Woodward to maintain secrecy about his western discoveries, a Charles Town neighbor and acquaintance of Woodward was employed by Colonel Abraham Wood, a Virginia merchant and trader, to spy out the land beyond the mountains, and the prospect for commerce with its natives. James Needham⁵ and Gabriel Arthur, the first white

² S. C. Hist. Soc. Coll. V. 316.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 332, note; 463 note. Also Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country*, p. 93.

⁴ Colonel George Chicken, who as early as 1715-16 was intimately acquainted with the Cherokee Country, in 1725 names seven "upper towns" as follows: Tunissee, Terriquo, Tallassee, Suittico, Coosaw, Iwasee and Little Terriquo. *Ibid.*, p. 102. In 1730, according to the George Hunter map of the Cherokee Country, the towns were Gr. Tellico, Gr. Tunassee, Settico, Coosaw, and Talasse. South of these villages lay Gr. Yufasse, while to the eastward and bordering on the Valley Settlements were Iwasse and Little Tellico. The Popple map of 1733 shows Tanase, Satere, Jashage, Terequa, Charna, and Tarrase. In 1751, (S. C. Archives, *Indian Book 2*) seven Overhill towns were listed, Gt. Tellico, Chatuge, Tenisee, Chote, Toquo, Settiquo and Tallassee. These identical names appear on the Mitchell map of 1755, while Lieutenant Henry Timberlake in his 1761 draft of the Cherokee Country which appeared with his *Memoirs* in 1765, indicated, adjacent to the ruins of Fort Loudoun, two towns not given in these sources, Toskegee and Mialaquo or the Great Island. The Joseph Purcell map (c. 1770) adds Chilhoe and Tomatly, but does not show Toskegee and Mialaquo.

⁵ S. C. Hist. Coll. V., 271, 302, 345, 411. Also, Williams, *Early Travels*, 21.

men of record found that a in Florida, than sixty S made a prac traders thro able busines River in th Carolina lin traffic which 1673, while with tradin ent Petersb the Cheroke he owed hi Wood, "pr with a par but he will for they ha ye beginning

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⁶ Alvord
⁷ Byrd, p.

men of record to have entered the Overhill Cherokee Country, found that already the Indians had been trading with the Spanish in Florida, apparently for a long time, since they had no fewer than sixty Spanish muskets. They also learned that the Overhills made a practice of obtaining the white men's goods from Virginia traders through the Occoneechee Indians, who conducted a profitable business as middlemen from their island home in the Roanoke River in the southern part of Virginia, not far above the North Carolina line. It was the Occoneechees' jealous defense of this traffic which was responsible for Needham's murder in September, 1673, while on his second trip from Fort Henry to the Overhills with trading goods. On Arthur's return to Fort Henry, the present Petersburg, Virginia, after almost a year's captivity among the Cherokees, he was accompanied by the friendly chief to whom he owed his life. "He staid with me a few dayes," wrote Colonel Wood, "promising to bee with mee again att ye fall of ye leafe with a party that would not be fritted by ye way and doubt not but he will come if he bee not intercepted by selfe-ended traders for they have strove what they could to block up ye designe from ye beginning."⁶

These "self-ended traders" to whom Wood refers evidently were the independent traders who by this time were vigorously striking out into the Indian country with their packs. In 1733 William Byrd, the second, read on a beech tree in the upper Yadkin country, the inscription: "J.H., H.H., B.B., lay here the 24th of May, 1673," and, he comments, these initials refer to Joseph Hatcher, Henry Hatcher, and Benjamin Bullington, three Indian traders, who had lodged there 60 years previously.⁷ It was this same Henry Hatcher who, nine months after this inscription was carved, verified to Wood the unwelcome rumor that his agent Needham had been killed by the ill-tempered Occoneechees.

La Salle, when he descended the Mississippi in 1682, observed clothing and utensils of European manufacture which convinced him that the Indians along the Mississippi had trade relations with Carolina. By 1698, one Captain Thomas Welch, of Charles Town, was well established as a trader among the Chickasaws. His route from Charleston to the Mississippi is shown on Mitchell's map, 1755, which was based upon earlier maps dating from the

⁶ Alvord and Bidgood, p. 225.

⁷ Byrd, *Writings*, II, 309.

beginning of the century.⁸ Tennessee's first historian⁹ states that Cornelius Doherty went to the Middle Towns probably about 1690 and established a trade there with Charleston. "He afterwards taught the Indians to steal horses from Virginia," records the author, "which were the first horses the Cherokees ever had." Ramsey, Logan and others, following this statement, have established firmly the impression that Doherty was the first English trader among the Cherokees. According to his own affidavit, however, which he made in 1751,¹⁰ Doherty went into the Cherokee Country in 1719, in which case he was by no means the first trader to live among them. Eleazar Wigan in 1711 and Robert Bunning in 1714 were two who preceded him.¹¹

The Indian trade in South Carolina began through private initiative, and by an act of the Assembly it passed in 1707 under the regulation of a Board of Commissioners.¹² Every trader was required to have a license, for which he paid £8 annually, and to give bond of £100 to observe certain regulations; among them, not to seize any free Indian and sell him as a slave, not to obtain furs or other goods by threats or abuse, not to supply ammunition to enemy Indians and under no conditions to sell or give rum to the savages. The act provided also for the appointment of a superintendent who was required to live among the Indians in order to see that they were justly treated and that the provisions of the trading act were complied with. Nine years later, in 1716, the fur trade was taken over by the province as a government monopoly. A factory was established at Savannah Town or Fort Moore¹³ and two years later another at the Congarees. Captain Theophilus Hastings was placed in command with John Sharp and Sam Muckleroy as assistants at Savannah Town, where most of the Overhill trade centered. Their duty was to take charge of

⁸ Crane, V. W., *Tennessee River as the Road to Carolina*, in *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.* III, 3-18.

⁹ Haywood, John, *Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee*, 233. "Cornelius Doherty, a refugee of James the second's party, came to those (the middle) settlements shortly after the accession of King William, probably about the year 1690. He died in 1788, at a very advanced age. He said that he was 120 years of age. He was a trader and sent peltry, by the Indians packed to Charleston, who returned also packed with merchandise, which they received in exchange."

¹⁰ S. C. Archives, *Indian Book 2*: 175-78.

¹¹ Logan, *History of Upper S. C.*, 184-86. For Wigan see note (29) below.

¹² *Ibid.*, 171.

¹³ Fort Moore, named in honor of the first James Moore, was about a mile below Hamburg, Aiken County, S. C. The Congaree garrison and factory was near Columbia, S. C. *Ibid.*, 243-46.

the trading goods exchange it for down by the In expansion of the assistants. These different parts of Hatton at Tugal and James Daug

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 307, 308. sioners "to render a This Chota was on confused with the Hunter's map, 1730.

¹⁵ So-called becau the lower Cherokees

¹⁶ See journals of Hunter, Mitchell and Annual Report, Bur the Unicoi turnpike, Tugaloo or Savanna crossed the upper C the Unicoi gap, and scended the Hiwasse Smoky range into T Echota on Little T the Wachesa trail fr place on Beaverdam along the old India designer and engine Mus. King's *Library* trail as "the highest east from the top Tinassee River. Af four miles to the round. They appea could plainly see th Twenty-nine miles r River, passing by T runs in general nor Tennessee River. . .

the trading goods sent up by the Board from Charles Town and exchange it for the furs, slaves and other merchandise brought down by the Indians. Within eight months, so great was the expansion of the trade that Hastings was granted three additional assistants. These five assistants were placed at strategic towns in different parts of the nation, John Chester at Keowee, William Hatton at Tugaloo, John Sharp at Quanasse, — Hill at Cowee, and James Dauge at Terrequa and Tennessee.¹⁴

Travelers from Charleston to the Overhills usually followed the great trading path which passed by the Congarees, Saluda, Ninety-six¹⁵ and Keowee. Continuing westward, the trail led through what is now Murphy, North Carolina, and entered Tennessee at approximately the junction point of Monroe and Polk counties, Tennessee, with Cherokee County, North Carolina, a location now within the bounds of the Cherokee National Forest. Thence it passed down the mountains in a northerly direction to Great Tellico and the other Overhill villages.¹⁶

Some of the Charles Town traders were merchants on a great scale, like Colonel Wood and the first William Byrd in Virginia;

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 307, 308. Hatton, Nov. 25, 1717, was ordered by the Board of Commissioners "to render an account of the Chota trade." (S. C. Indian Books 1:205.) This Chota was on the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River, and is not to be confused with the later Chote of the Overhills on the Little Tennessee. See Hunter's map, 1730.

¹⁵ So-called because it was ninety-six miles east of Keowee, the principal town of the lower Cherokees and the site of Fort Prince George.

¹⁶ See journals of Chicken and Cuming and Bartram's *Travels*, also maps of Hunter, Mitchell and Purcell. Mooney, in his *Myths of the Cherokees* (Nineteenth Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, p. 87) gives the route over the mountains of the Unicoi turnpike, which here followed the old Indian trail: "Beginning on the Tugaloo or Savannah a short distance below the entrance of Toccoa Creek, it crossed the upper Chattahoochee, passing through Clarksville, Nacoochee valley, the Unicoi gap, and Hiwassee in Georgia; then, entering North Carolina, it descended the Hiwassee, passing through Hayesville and Murphy and over the Great Smoky range into Tennessee, until it reached the terminus at the Cherokee capital Echota on Little Tennessee . . . (It) was commonly known in North Carolina as the Wachesa trail from Wachesa, a prominent Indian who lived near the crossing-place on Beaverdam Creek below Murphy, this portion of the road being laid out along the old Indian trail which already bore that name." J. G. W. DeBrahm, designer and engineer of Fort Loudoun (Ga. Dept. of Archives, transcripts, British Mus. King's *Library Mss.* v. 197, p. 2) described the "Hughnaky Mount" on this trail as "the highest of the Apalachian Mountains, on the foot of which and south-east from the top of the Mountain springs Beaver Dam Rivulet, a branch of Tinassee River. After crossing that rivulet, the author measured N N W and NW four miles to the top, from which he could overlook the Apalachian Mountains all round. They appeared like mole hillocks, and trees like young cabbage plants. I could plainly see the valley of Tanassee, Tchotee and Tchubaco on Tanessee River. Twenty-nine miles north from the top of this mount on its northeast issues Talequo River, passing by Talequo and Tchatukey, two contiguous Indian towns, and . . . runs in general northwest and empties one mile north of Fort Loudoun into the Tanessee River. . . ."

but the substantial independent traders, or "traders on their own account" greatly predominated among the Cherokees—brave, sturdy, close-bargaining Scotchmen of the type of James Adair and Ludovick Grant. As the years passed, however, and the country became more accessible to the settlements, while at the same time remaining remote from the agencies of law-enforcement, the number of fugitives from justice, lawless vagrants and of "brave wanton fellows," to borrow an expression from Adair, rapidly increased. Colonel George Chicken on his visit to the Cherokees in 1725 observed: "The men they bring up with them (are) in general a loose vagabond sort of people and will not stick out to say or do anything among the Indians for the lucre of a few skins."¹⁷ Anthony Deane, who was then living at Toquo, only expressed the general opinion of the veteran traders to the Overhills when, in 1751, he wrote to his friend Doherty, "a great deal of the mischief done here some white men are often in the bottom of, and it is no wonder, when every horse-stealer can screen himself here from justice."¹⁸

Remote and small indeed was the Cherokee village which by the second quarter of the eighteenth century could not boast of traders, white men of English, Spanish or French, or even of all three, nationalities. Negroes, too, were not unknown, though one of the earliest acts for regulating the trade forbade taking black slaves into the Indian country¹⁹. Doherty owned at least four negroes, while one of the unsung heroes of Fort Loudoun was Abram, a black man who belonged to Samuel Benn, trader at Tennessee Town. Abram bought his freedom by carrying dispatches from the besieged fort to Fort Prince George, only to lose

¹⁷ Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies*, 107.

¹⁸ *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 2: 79-81. Observing that this could not be if the trade were better regulated, he continues "then every good man wou'd be desirous of a License wch can be of no significance to him now till he can be protected in his Town, and indeed I wonder that a governmt so remarkable for the Excellency of it's laws . . . does not take this Decaying Branch of Trade, and the sufferers in it, into Consideration, Especially as this nation is some Barrier to the out settlements, and was formerly one of the best Branches of Trade belonging to the Colony the neglect of it must certainly be owing to the want of Proper representations of it to His Excelly and that the Hble of both Houses, for otherwise they that venture their Lives to these ramble parts through so many dangers wou'd never be slighted & forgot. I am certain if the Trade was once upon a good footing the government wou'd not be Troubled with so many complaints about this Nation, The Country wou'd be Eased of some Taxes abot it, the Merchants wou'd get their Debts, the Poor Traders subsistence, and the Indians wou'd be satisfied."

¹⁹ Chicken's 1725 Journal in Mereness, p. 138, 159. *S. C. Indian books*, V. 6, p., 105.

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²⁰ *S. C. Gazette*, May 31, 1760. S.

²¹ *S. C. Gazette*, Sep. 22, 1759.

²² *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 3, p. 17.

²³ *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 6, p. 61, and dangerous Fellow, he is old H French affairs in this Nation (C'e narrative, see Williams, *Early Trave*

his life a short time later as he was making the return journey with letters for Captain Demere.²⁰

Frenchmen particularly seemed adapted to life among the savages. Peter Arnaud who traded with the Mississippi Indians for twenty years deserted the French in 1752 and became packhorseman for James Beamer at Estatoe, in the Lower Towns.²¹ Ludovick Grant, trader at Great Tellico, early in 1753 wrote Governor Glen:

"There are two French men at Chote and Toquo. The one is dangerous to be in this nation, he talks the tongue goes to war with them and in time may conduct them to his own nation . . . he is an active Cunning fellow and I believe is Content with his station till opportunity offers whereby he may serve by any means his own nation."²²

Old Hop, the emperor who sat on the white seat at Chote for several years immediately preceding the fall of Fort Loudoun owned one "French John" who was the subject of anxious letters from Captain Demere to Governor Lyttleton.²³ He and his countryman, the mysterious Lantagnac, were credited by their English acquaintances in the Overhills with exerting persistent and powerful influence in drawing the Overhill towns under French domination. Nor was such suspicion ill-founded, for the French were scarcely less eager and industrious than the English themselves in seeking alliance with the Cherokees, whose country, as Governor Glen astutely observed, was the "Key to Carolina." The *courier de bois* from the Illinois country, the *voyageur* captured from a pirogue on the Mississippi and the deserter from the garrison at Mobile were likely material for the Carolina traders' employment, and such men as these constituted in part the tempestuous, brave and lawless class of packhorsemen.

All transactions in the Indian trade were based on credit. The London merchant credited the Charles Town merchant, who in turn credited the trader for his season's stock of goods. When the trader sold to the Indian it was with the understanding that he was to be paid with the skins and furs to be obtained in the coming winter's hunt. Though the amount of credit which the

²⁰ *S. C. Gazette*, May 31, 1760. S. C. Archives, *Executive Journals*, June 30, 1760.

²¹ *S. C. Gazette*, Sep. 22, 1759.

²² *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 3, p. 174.

²³ *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 6, p. 61, 68. "He is a Canadian born, A crafty, cunning and dangerous Fellow, he is old Hop's slave, by way of a Cloke to transact the French affairs in this Nation (C'est un Esclave Volontaire)." For Lantagnac's narrative, see Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country*, 177-84.

trader might extend was limited by law, there seemed no effective means of enforcing the regulation. These skins and furs went successively to Charles Town and London to settle the debts of trader and merchant. Anything then which interfered with the success of the winter's hunt, such as scarcity of ammunition or warfare with other Indian tribes, hurt both the business fabric of the colony and the well-being and serenity of the Indian nations.

Profits of the trade were enormous. McCrady, following an earlier historian, states that all the early fortunes of South Carolina were founded on the Indian trade. In 1708 the Governor and Council of the province reported that an average of at least 50,000 skins were exported annually to England, "to purchase which requires at least £2,500 or £3,000—first cost of goods in England."²⁴ In the same report they record: "The Cherokee Indians live about 250 miles northwest from our settlements, on a ridge of mountains; they are numerous people, but very lazy; they are settled in 60 towns and are at least 500 men. The trade we have with them is inconsiderable, they being but ordinary hunters and less warriors." By 1747-48, about forty years later, the estimate of annual exports included beaver skins to the value in the inflated currency of South Carolina, of £300 and deer skins £250,000, or more than a million and a quarter dollars.²⁵ In 1755 Cornelius Doherty estimated that if this winter were tolerably favorable for hunting he would collect from his district alone 3,500 deerskins. This would indicate from the whole nation a total of 25,000 skins, which were then worth \$2.50 each. At the same time beaver skins brought four shillings, three pence half penny.²⁶ Not only were immense revenues derived from it but the relations between Indians and whites hinged almost entirely on the treatment which the red men received at the hands of the traders. Governor Lyttleton, in 1758, even expressed the opinion that were a subsidy necessary to maintain the trade under the government, as was the case with France, it would be warranted by the value of the traders in their preserving peaceful relations between the Indians and the settlements.

But risks, as well as profits, were great; and while some traders grew rich others were so harrassed by debts that they dared not

²⁴ Rivers, *Hist. Sketches*, 238.

²⁵ Carroll, *Description of S. C.* V. II, 237.

²⁶ Logan, *Hist. of Upper S. C.*, 283-4.

take their peltry in person up by their creditors and at least one occasion Ludovick C. Country, reminding the Gov. the country, requested one of my creditors can recover not a prison might cost me my Doherty, living in 1751 at Excellency:

"I have the misfortune to great companies I was con against my inclination, to having from time to time se with them, which would no in the humblest manner and your Excellency as you an government are so remark Debtors, that you would b mere goodness to grant me passion to my condition th your commands, and there I may hereafter be enable Town, as every Trader oug to leave in a condition to p tentedly in my old days, wh goodness may be compasse under the same misfortunes duty bound to pray for yo Government the longest day

The Indian trader was a must be to keep the govern in his village, and to keep government. He was exper murder which had been com but also to keep a journal i

"... any remarkable oc when any of their warrior missions from this governm proper to succeed them, a

²⁷ *S. C. Indian Books*. V. 5:106

take their peltry in person to Charles Town, lest they be taken up by their creditors and thrown into debtors' prison. On at least one occasion Ludovick Grant of Great Tellico, in the Tennessee Country, reminding the Governor of services he had performed for the country, requested one of his "Protections," adding, "Although my creditors can recover nothing of one in my circumstances, yet a prison might cost me my life, though but a short one." Poor Doherty, living in 1751 at Euphasee, wrote plaintively to His Excellency:

"I have the misfortune to be much in debt by means of several great companies I was concerned in, which obliged me, sorely against my inclination, to stay some years past in the nation, having from time to time sent down to my creditors to make up with them, which would not agree to terms. Therefore I would in the humblest manner and with the greatest submission beg of your Excellency as you and the Honorable Gentlemen of the government are so remarkably favourable to Poor Insolvent Debtors, that you would be pleased of your special grace and mere goodness to grant me your Charitable Protection in compassion to my condition that I may come down in obedience to your commands, and there make up with all my creditors that I may hereafter be enabled to appear every season in Charles Town, as every Trader ought, and which will be the only means to leave in a condition to pay them all with credit and live contentedly in my old days, which if by your Excellency's favour and goodness may be compassed, I as well as other fellow sufferers under the same misfortunes in this nation will think ourselves in duty bound to pray for you and the Honble Gentlemen of the Government the longest day we have to live."²⁷

The Indian trader was a frontier diplomat whose first thought must be to keep the government informed as to the state of affairs in his village, and to keep the Indians on good terms with the government. He was expected not only to report promptly any murder which had been committed or any danger which threatened but also to keep a journal in which was to be recorded:

". . . any remarkable occurrences relating to the Indians, as when any of their warriors or head men that may have commissions from this government die or are killed, who are the most proper to succeed them, and to have Commissions; when any

²⁷ *S. C. Indian Books*, V. 5:106.

number of their people go to war, against what nations they go, how many return and what number of scalps they bring back; the name of the Indian that kills the greatest quantity of deer at each hunt, that some small present may be given them by this government by way of premium; that the said Journal contains as near as may be the number and hands of all the gun men in that district, distinguishing such as are the head men, warriors and beloved men in each particular town.

"That they carefully observe the number of strange Indians that may at any time come into their towns, that they enquire what nation or tribes they are of and whether in the French interest; whether they [the French] bring any talks into those towns, or if they come down under pretence of going to war against other Indians and in particular they should observe whether any Cherokees, either belonging to their own town or to any other district go along to war with them."²⁸

The trader was often the official interpreter or linguist, an important office where integrity, knowledge and diplomacy were required. Eleazar Wigan of Tunisee, one of the earliest of the Overhill traders, and Joseph Cooper of Keowee accompanied Colonel Chicken in this capacity on his tour in the Cherokee country in 1725; for which task of four months' duration the remuneration was £25.²⁹ Wigan in 1730 performed a similar service for the erratic Sir Alexander Cuming, and by virtue of his acquaintance with the young Ucounacou of Tunisee, who about 1756 became Chuconunta, and then Atta Kulla Kulla, persuaded him to accept Sir Alexander's invitation to visit "the Great King George Over the Water." Wigan, whom the Cherokees called "the old Rabbit" accompanied the seven Overhill warriors to England as interpreter.

Another example of the trader as diplomat occurs in the picturesque incident of Christian Priber, self-appointed Cherokee Prime Minister, who flourished at Great Tellico or Tellico in 1736 and for several years thereafter. When the government at

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:97-101, Scheme relating to the Indian Trade.

²⁹ Chicken's 1725 Journal in Mereness, p. 163. Wigan, sometimes spelled Wiggan, with Alexander Long, was convicted in 1711 of having instigated a raid by the Overhill Cherokees upon the Euchees, as a result of which he expected to secure "a fine parcel of slaves." Their licenses withdrawn and their bonds put in suit, both men seem to have fled to the mountain and Overhill Towns of the Cherokees. Four years later, Wigan, apparently in good standing again, was a member of the Chicken party during its stay in the Valley Towns. See Chicken's 1715 Journal in Charleston Yearbook, 1894, p. 334.

Charles Town became alarmed at his activities, Ludovick Grant, the trader there, was instructed to apprehend him and send him to Charleston. Priber, well knowing Grant's design, and well knowing too that the Cherokees would never surrender their Secretary of State to the English, "laughed at me, desiring me to try [to capture him] in so insolent a manner yt I could hardly bear with it and I told him that altho I know the Indians would not permit me to carry him down to be hanged, yet they would not find fault I hope if I should throw him into the fire, which I certainly would do if he gave me any further provocation."³⁰

Winter was the hunting season. Throughout these months the Indians would go out for weeks at a time, making their hunting lodges in the woods, there to kill their game and dress the skins. By late spring or early summer, when all the hunting parties had returned to their villages and had applied their skins to the payment of their debts with the trader, the latter tied the peltry in bundles, averaging 150 pounds weight, loaded his horses and started off for the factory. Usually the traders from several different villages went down at the same time in one long train. Then in the late summer or early fall they were ready for the return to the Indian country, with a varied assortment of goods for the savage customers.

These goods consisted of guns, powder, bullets, flints, knives, tomahawks, hatchets, hoes; clothing of all sorts, especially blankets, which Indian etiquette required for all dress occasions, even in the warmest weather, match-coats, ruffled shirts, laced hats, petticoats, stockings,—red and blue preferred—ribbons; bracelets, anklets, beads, hawks-bells, scissors, and awls. In the earlier days of the trade, there was such a great demand for salt, gunpowder, tea-kettles and looking-glasses that no price was set but each trader was allowed to get whatever he could for them. The looking-glasses were for the men, for a warrior's costume was not complete without his mirror slung by a rawhide string over his shoulder. "Double-jointed babies" too, are listed among the trading goods.

From the coming of white traders among the red men the liquor question occupied a prominent place. Lawson³¹ asserts that the Indians bought rum so many mouthfuls for a buckskin, and the

³⁰ *S. C. Mag. of Hist.* X, 54.

³¹ Lawson, *Hist. of N. C.* (1903, ed.) 134.

buyer brought a man with the biggest mouth he could find, and a bowl to put it in, and stood beside him, waiting watchfully. If, in the course of his measuring, his thirst got the better of him and he swallowed some, the buyer promptly knocked him down. The Indian headmen frequently pleaded with the Governor not to allow the traders to bring rum into the nation, citing it as the cause of quarrels and ill-feeling among themselves and toward the traders. The scheme for regulating the Indian trade drafted in 1751 provided: "that no trader shall carry rum into the nation, unless it be a few bottles for his own use, but that a quantity be lodged in the fort sufficient to supply each district with two kegs in the year, and that it be given to them gratis at two different times; to wit, one Keg at the Green Corn Dance and one Keg when they return from their Winter Hunt."³² The records are full of indications that this prohibition was far from effectual; but at least an attempt was made to promote temperance by diluting the drink—two kegs of prime rum made three of "dashed," which was discovered to be much better for the Indians and not inconsistent with the profits of the trader.

Rates of exchange varied from time to time. A schedule of values was agreed upon in 1717 between James Moore, second, for the Board of Indian Commissioners and Charite Hayge, chief of the Lower Towns,³³ as follows: a gun was to be equal in value to thirty-five skins; one yard of strouds cloth to eight skins; a white duffil blanket to sixteen skins; a hatchet to three; a narrow hoe to three; a broad hoe to five; thirty bullets to one; a pair of scissors to one; a knife and string of beads to one each; twelve flints to one; a laced broadcloth coat to thirty; an axe to five; a pistol to twenty; a sword to ten; a shirt to five; a piece of steel to one; a calico petticoat to fourteen and a red girdle to two.³⁴

The trader's journey from Charleston to the Indian country required from ten days to six weeks, about three or four weeks to the Overhill towns. His train seldom consisted of fewer than fifteen or twenty horses, and when two or three traders traveled together a caravan of a hundred or more horses was not unusual. William Bartram's description of a caravan of Creek traders with

³² *S. C. Indian Books*. V. 2:97-101.

³³ The Conjurer, of Tugalo. According to Adair, the traders called the priests or medicine men "Cheera- ta- he- ge," "possessed of the Divine Fire." See also Chicken's 1715-16 *Journal*.

³⁴ Logan, p. 254.

which he traveled in 17 Cherokee traders of this

"They seldom decam having a whip made o once, the horses having the veteran in the van driver with the crack rings through the forest them to proceed, which start at once, keeping incessantly urged and co are able to move forw quently in the middle time of the day for which being stopped v of grass or leaves, so again during the day. bells, smacking of the these miserable quad fusion, inexpressibly d

Thus speaks the G of traveling in this n and he could not kee gratitude, "I had the packhorsemen carried humanity and friends and saying I must no

Arrived in his villa and even backwoods smoke-house, the cus women and children his habitation stood "like a tower in a ci poultry ranged wild threatened the peac cornfields. His smol bear; and his store- and vegetables. He

³⁵ Bartram, *Travels* (1

which he traveled in 1777 unquestionably is true in essence of the Cherokee traders of this earlier period:

"They seldom decamp until the sun is high and hot; each one having a whip made of the toughest cow-skin, they start all at once, the horses having ranged themselves in regular Indian file, the veteran in the van and the younger in the rear; then the chief driver with the crack of his whip and a whoop or shriek which rings through the forests and plains, speaks in Indian commanding them to proceed, which is repeated by all the company, when we start at once, keeping up a brisk and constant trot, which is incessantly urged and continued as long as the miserable creatures are able to move forward; and then come to camp, though frequently in the middle of the afternoon, which is the pleasantest time of the day for traveling; and every horse has a bell on, which being stopped when we start in the morning with a twist of grass or leaves, soon shakes out and they are never stopped again during the day. The constant ringing and clattering of the bells, smacking of the whips, whooping, and too frequent cursing these miserable quadrupeds, cause an incessant uproar and confusion, inexpressibly disagreeable."

Thus speaks the Quaker Naturalist. When, after three days of traveling in this mad manner, Bartram's own horse gave out and he could not keep up with the train, he records with gentle gratitude, "I had the comfort of observing that the traders and packhorsemen carried themselves toward me with evident signs of humanity and friendship, often expressing sentiments of sympathy and saying I must not be left alone to perish in the wilderness."³⁵

Arrived in his village, the trader lived in comparative comfort and even backwoods luxury. With his store-rooms, his ample smoke-house, the customary hot-house which was occupied by the women and children of his family, and his own living quarters, his habitation stood out imposingly above the Indian structures, "like a tower in a city," said Adair. His horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry ranged wild over the limitless hills and meadows, and often threatened the peace of the colony by trespassing in the Indian cornfields. His smoke-house was well stocked with venison and bear; and his store-room filled with dried fruits, nuts, wild honey, and vegetables. He brought from Charles Town tea, sugar, salt

³⁵ Bartram, *Travels* (1928 edition) p. 350.

and spices. His Cherokee wife was a neat housekeeper, an attentive companion, a faithful mother, and an ingenious cook.

As soon as a trader had won the confidence and admiration of his Indian acquaintances, he was chosen by some warrior as a "particular friend." This was a generally recognized and well defined relationship, which was symbolized by a complete exchange of clothing and sometimes of names as well. It lasted throughout life, binding the Indian, at least, in loyalty to his special friend; and often it was the means of saving the white man's life. This custom is reflected in the name "Judd's Friend" which was applied to the great warrior Ostenaco; and it may be hazarded, too, that the devotion of Atta Kulla Kulla, to which Captain John Stuart owed his escape from the Fort Loudoun massacre, was an exhibition of Indian loyalty to a "special friend."³⁶

With the passing of time, more and more traders came into the Cherokee towns, and competition for the peltry grew keener. Traders naturally located in the towns which had the greatest number and the most expert hunters, with the result that such towns were over-supplied with goods and that smaller villages had limited supplies or were neglected altogether. The former condition brought about price-cutting and competitive bidding for skins which was ruinous to the prosperity of the traders, and made the Indians independent and arrogant in their dealings; while the villages which were neglected, actually suffered for want of the goods on which they had come to depend, so they naturally were aggrieved and resentful at this neglect. With a view to remedying this situation it was proposed in 1751 that the Nation be divided into thirteen hunting districts each of which should contain about two hundred gun men and three towns be in charge of one reputable trader. The seven Overhill towns were to compose three districts, as follows: Great Tellico and Chatuge, one district; Tenisee, Chote and Toquo, one district; and Settiquo and Tallassee, one district. Robert Gowdy, who lived at Ninety-Six but traded at Great Tellico and Chatuge, Anthony Deane of Chote, and Samuel Benn of Tenisee were to have charge, respectively, of these three districts. Cornelius Doherty of Euphasee [Hiwasee] and Ludovick Grant of Tomattly were assigned the two districts com-

³⁶ In his 1715 journal Chicken mentions that the Indians of Tugalo village had just killed twelve Creeks, among them "a Cricke fellow that Conil Hastings called his frind." Charleston Yearbook, 1894, p. 345. Adair also refers to this custom.

prising the seven Valley Towns: Little Tellico; Cotocanal

In order to insure justice provided that the trader and furnished by the government Charles Town, however, was hills. Ludovick Grant in t

"There has not been observed by a trader: M have continued but find stranger, soon found he n his own safety or find so dent there will be many Excellency concerning th prices of goods . . . of f sures. . . . They may a your Excellency appointe appointed to be left in t never brought up, but le still if not lost; and few brought up, the traders to carry them. . . ."³⁸

Grant's fear was well the passing of the good bitterly of abuses and in and Gowdy who held trad The aggressive entrance o ever-present French bid vated the situation. The ised to improve, and for in the Overhills. But th was the advance of the w of the hunting-grounds. pressed in on the Chero came John Finley, the fr the "runnagade Alleghen Cherokee war which cul

³⁷ *S. C. Indian Books*, 2:97.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:41-47.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:160.

prising the seven Valley Towns: Euphasee or Euforsee, Conostee and Little Tellico; Cotocanahut, Nayowee, Tomattly and Cheeowhee.³⁷

In order to insure just and equal weights and measures it was provided that the traders should use only those officially branded and furnished by the governmental commissary. To enact laws in Charles Town, however, was easier than to enforce them in the Overhills. Ludovick Grant in the spring of 1755 reported to the Governor:

"There has not been one single article [of the late ordinance] observed by a trader: Mr. Elliott begun well and I believe would have continued but finding himself to be the only man, and a stranger, soon found he must either follow the multitude, endanger his own safety or find some other way of living. . . . I am confident there will be many and grievous complaints made to your Excellency concerning the trade, in cheating the Indians in the prices of goods . . . of false stilliards, short yards and little measures. . . . They may and ought to have the yard and measure your Excellency appointed; the iron yards which were made and appointed to be left in the respective towns of the Nation were never brought up, but left at McGregor's House where they are still if not lost; and few or none of the powder measures were brought up, the traders pretending they had no punctual orders to carry them. . . ."³⁸

Grant's fear was well founded. The veteran traders lamented the passing of the good old days, and the Indians complained bitterly of abuses and injustices, particularly of Elliott at Chote and Gowdy who held trading licenses for Great Tellico and Chatuge. The aggressive entrance of Virginia into the Cherokee trade and the ever-present French bid for friendship with the Cherokees aggravated the situation. The building of Fort Loudoun in 1756 promised to improve, and for a while did improve, the state of trade in the Overhills. But the fundamental and inescapable trouble was the advance of the white man and the ever-diminishing reach of the hunting-grounds. From Carolina and Virginia the traders pressed in on the Cherokees. Even from distant Pennsylvania came John Finley, the friend of Daniel Boone, and Aaron Price, the "runnagade Allegheny trader."³⁹ The climax came with the Cherokee war which culminated in the fall of Fort Loudoun.

³⁷ *S. C. Indian Books*, 2:97.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:41-47.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:160.

The events, though scarcely the course, of history were affected vastly by the personnel of the traders who dealt with the Overhill Cherokees. A reading of the records restores Eleazar Wigan of Tunisee, "the Old Rabbitt," Robert Bunning; bluff, crude, voluble Cornelius Doherty—"a willing composer of difficulties" always in debt, and usually in a wrangle with a fellow-trader; Ludovick Grant, seemingly scion of a noble Scottish family, perhaps the most intelligent and influential of them all, and the most devoted to the public welfare; steady Samuel Benn of Tennessee, "a very honest man" beloved by his Indian neighbors; Anthony Deane, of Chote, a Jesuit and a very learned man; James Adair, who left his own full-length portrait in his delightful book, "*The History of the North American Indians*"; Robert Gowdy of Ninety-Six, reputed to be a very hard bargainer; and John Elliott, the little Scotchman of Chote, whom the Indians greatly disliked, and ultimately killed, of whom Demere said, "I take that little fellow to be crack-brain'd for he does not know or care what he does"; and many others—hardly a company of saints, but still a dramatic and enterprising crew, Tennessee's earliest merchants.

THE OLDEST COLLEGE

ROBERT

The title of the oldest college claimed by three colleges, Washington College and Tusculum in Tennessee. All three of the history for they were located when the explorer had just given of this article is to ascertain which deserves the above title.

It must be remembered that at that time, along the front "University," "College" and for the sake of euphony rather. However we may conclude "College" referred to schools of degrees while "Academy" a lower rank that were unable

Martin Academy, of which outgrowth, and Transylvania College was the successor, Both schools claim however institutions before the chartered inary was chartered in 1783. Later in 1789 the school was removed to this new location Academy and the new institution University in 1798. After changed its name to Transylvania

Martin Academy was chartered in 1783. It was founded to the school valuable presence the year 1795 when it was

¹ An illustration of this point is shown by diplomas from Tusculum Academy considered his diploma equal to an university. Yet no matter what the quality of his school was only an academy.