Queen Anne's Revenge
Shipwreck Project

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Proprietary North Carolina:
Politics, Shipping, and Pirates

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Cover photo: Queen Anne coin weight for 1 guinea gold coin. Recovered from site Fall 2006

Introduction

In late May 1718 the citizens of Charles Town, South Carolina awoke to a frightening prospect: the pirate Blackbeard, the "Devil incarnate," lurked off the entrance to their harbor. His powerful flotilla of four ships, crewed by hundreds of pirates, mounted over sixty guns—enough to overwhelm the few scattered Royal Navy vessels in the hemisphere. With Charles Town at his mercy, Blackbeard blockaded the harbor, plundering vessels for a week and accumulating a rich haul of cash and supplies. Closely following a long Indian war, this shocking episode reinforced the sense of helplessness the Carolina authorities felt at being beleaguered by a plague of sea wolves.

Blackbeard then set a course for sparsely populated North Carolina, possibly seeking a place to careen and repair his fleet. Isolated Topsail Inlet, now Beaufort Inlet, and the village of Beaufort appeared to be an ideal location with a large but little used protected anchorage. When the flotilla arrived in early June, the three sloops easily passed through the treacherous inlet, but when the deep draft *Queen Anne's Revenge* reached the bar she shuddered to a dead stop with the sails backed and the yards swinging aimlessly. Sloop *Adventure* slowly tacked back through the shoals to assist the flagship, but shortly *Adventure* too was hard aground. By the end of the day, the crew had abandoned the listing derelicts to the merciless wind and waves. Through the summer and fall the impoverished villagers salvaged what they could from the wrecks, and the vessels gradually disappeared beneath the surface, breaking up in the nor'easters and hurricanes that frequent this coast.

Nearly three centuries later, in November 1996, Phil Masters and Mike Daniel of Intersal, Inc., who were seeking a Spanish treasure ship lost in 1750, found a shipwreck off Beaufort Inlet. The artifacts initially recovered from the wreck identified it as early eighteenth century, opening the possibility that it might be one of the pirate vessels. The state designated the site 31CR314. A landmark agreement between Intersal, the Maritime Research Institute, and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources turned the wreck and its artifacts over to the state for archaeological investigation and recovery.

The *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project was organized under the oversight of the Office of State Archaeology and the Underwater Archaeology Branch. Over the past decade the project has brought to bear on this wreck intense multi-disciplinary historical and archaeological research and scientific analysis that has produced a comprehensive portrait of this vessel and the site. The archaeological record of 31CR314 so far reveals a vessel that is approximately 90 feet in length and 200-300 tons in burden. There is evidence of three masts. So far, 25 cannon have been discovered, the largest being six-pounders. The latest dated artifact is a Swedish cannon of 1713, which provides the current *terminus post quem* date for the wreck—the date after which the wreck occurred. Collectively the datable artifacts span the period from 1690 through the first two decades of the

eighteenth century, with a mean date of 1706. The diverse and eclectic artifact assemblage reflects a vessel that sailed on the North Atlantic trade routes from Europe to the Caribbean.

Vessel Type	Estimated Length	Estimated Tonnage	Number of Guns
3-masted	90 feet	200 - 300	25

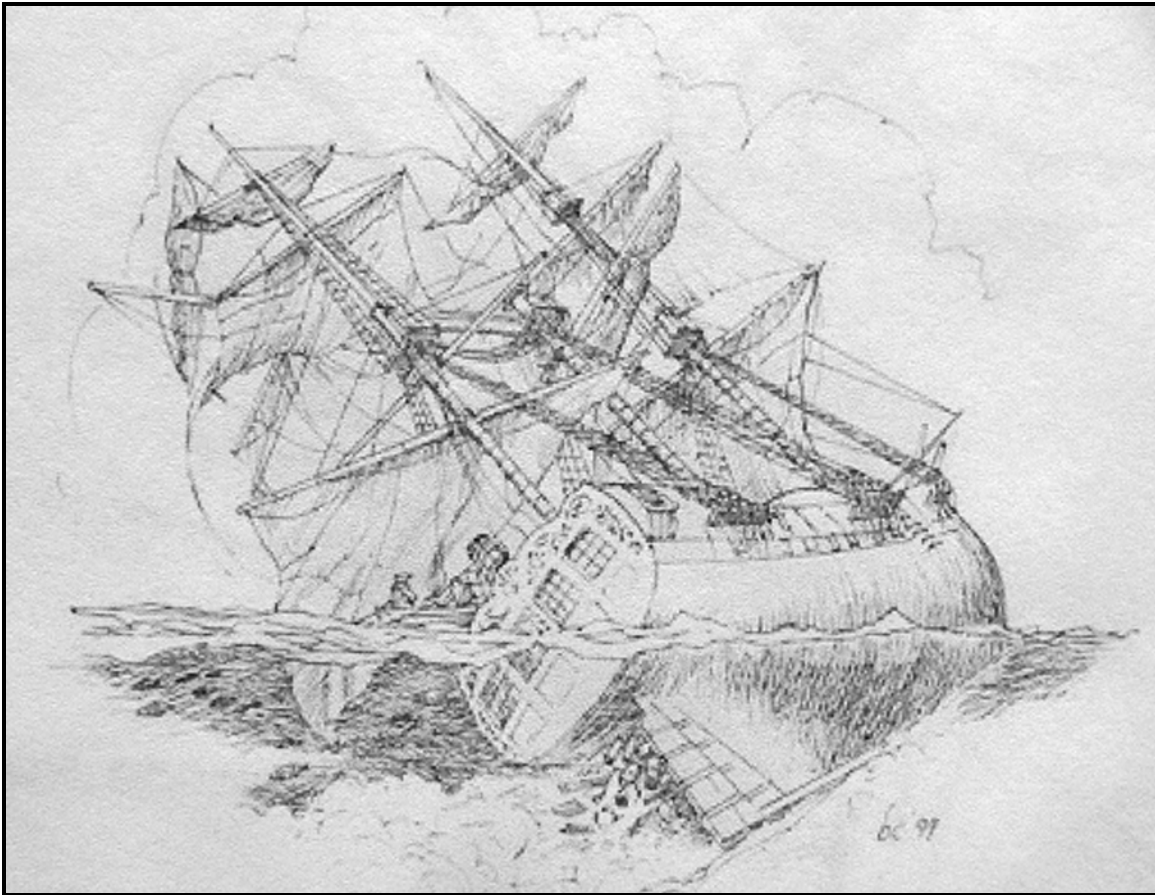**Table 1 Beaufort Inlet Wreck 31CR314**

Figure 1 Artist's illustration of *Queen Anne's Revenge* foundering

Beaufort in 1718 was a tiny fishing village in a sparsely populated area with little trade connection to the interior. Except for an occasional sloop that might pass by, the village saw only local fishing boats. On North Carolina's shallow waters, commerce throughout the eighteenth century was mostly carried by small vessels—shallops, periaugers, sloops, schooners, and occasional brigs. The pertinent question about the wrecked vessel at Beaufort Inlet is, what is a ship of that size doing in that place at that time? The only recorded wrecks at the inlet in the early eighteenth century are the previously mentioned pirate vessels, and the initial artifacts recovered were contemporary with those wrecks.

Accordingly, the project's working hypothesis emerged early on that this vessel might very well be *Queen Anne's Revenge.*

Although colonial North Carolina is accurately described as an isolated backwater frontier that generated minimal commerce, because of the offshore Gulf Stream, most of the intercolonial and trans-Atlantic merchantmen had to brush the treacherous shoals of the great capes of Fear, Lookout, and Hatteras (Stick 1952:2-3). Consequently, it has been argued that there "was too much traffic and the records of shipwrecks too sparse" to attribute the Beaufort Inlet wreck to one of the pirate vessels (Cashion 1998:3). Yet this considerable maritime shipping was normally bound not to North Carolina ports but to ports in her sister North American colonies, in Europe, or in the Caribbean.

Since the Gulf Stream's inner margin is about thirty miles offshore, the numerous north-south-bound ships were over the horizon out of sight of land. In storms, no doubt some were lost on the capes and the Outer Banks without survivors, without a trace, but it is highly unlikely that the Beaufort Inlet wreck was lost without notice. The vessel grounded just offshore in plain sight of the inlet and village, and there surely were survivors. Similar events were the 1698 grounding of HMS *Swift Advice* on remote Currituck Banks and the loss of *El Salvador* at Beaufort in 1750 (Saunders 1886-1890:4:1305). In both cases the wrecks generated considerable official correspondence, and the looting of *Swift Advice* by Outer Bankers led to arrests and a trial in the General Court (Parker 1963-1971:3:191-98). The *Queen Anne's Revenge* incident was recorded in official correspondence, the pirate trials at Charles Town, and the sole colonial newspaper, *The Boston News-Letter.*

Based on Carl Swanson's study of privateering during the wars of 1739-1748 (Swanson 1991), some researchers have claimed that the Beaufort Inlet wreck armed with over two-dozen cannon "would be average or even below strength for a merchantman in these waters during the first half of the eighteenth century" (Rodgers *et al.* 2005:29-30). Since the archaeological record supports the grounding of the vessel at Beaufort Inlet in the early eighteenth century, conclusions drawn from a study of mid-century wartime commerce, when ships were larger and more heavily armed, simply are not valid. The earliest extant port records of Charles Town that record armament are from 1723 – 1724 and reveal that heavily armed vessels are unusual.

Measurements	Ships	Pinks	Snows	Brigs	Sloops	Schooners	Others	Total
No. Vessels	35	19	5	17	34	1	0	111
Mean Tonnage	92	108	47	48	25	12	n/a	65
Mean Crew	11	10	7	8	6	5	n/a	9
Mean Guns	5	5	2	4	4	0	n/a	-

Table 2 Vessels Clearing Charles Town, 1724 (Clowse 1981:112)

The mean number of guns carried by vessels entering Charles Town in 1724, a period of peace, is five. In the first quarter the heaviest armed vessels entering port were a 120-ton ship and a 90-ton ship, each mounting 10 guns. The remainder of the ships and pinks rated from 160 tons to 60 tons and carried from six to two guns (Public Record Office [PRO], London. Colonial Office [CO]. 5/509). It is evident that on the Carolina coast a ship the size and armament of the Beaufort Inlet wreck is unusual even at deepwater Charles Town and extremely unlikely at an obscure newly settled fishing village with no known transatlantic commerce. [See section below on Shipping: Charles Town for more detail on tonnage and armament.]

Another assertion that appears to challenge the evidence of the port records is that at Charles Town in October 1718 the merchant ships *Mediterranean*, 24 guns, and *King William*, 30 guns, were "riding at anchor" (Cashion 1998:4). These notable exceptions to the lightly armed merchantmen usually found in Charles Town harbor were in fact merchant vessels that Governor Robert Johnson impressed to spearhead an attack on pirates lurking off the port. To prepare the ships for the impending battle, "on board the *Mediterranean* was put 24 Guns, and 30 on board the *King William*" (Johnson 1999[1724]: 301). The implication of putting 24 and 30 guns aboard the vessels is that prior to impressments and conversion to men-of-war, *Mediterranean* (100 tons) and *King William* (140 tons) were merchant vessels that carried no armament at all.

Since there have been no studies of early eighteenth century shipping in North Carolina, conclusions about North Carolina's maritime commerce have been drawn from the more numerous port records of the mid-century and later. It is time for a historical reality check based on primary sources that are as close to the period as we can get. It is clear from the colony's port records of the early eighteenth century that a vessel of the size and armament of 31CR314 at Beaufort is not only an anomaly but is in fact extraordinary. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that the identity of a vessel of 200-300 tons, armed with at least 25 guns, which grounded in an inlet near an inhabited port in good weather, would have been unknown. Unless new evidence emerges of other early eighteenth century wrecks at the inlet or a startling discovery is made at the site, the inescapable conclusion from a decade of historical and archaeological research is that 31CR314 is *Queen Anne's Revenge*.

Beyond helping to identify the wreck, however, contemporary records shed significant light on the political, economic and social milieu of proprietary North Carolina. The turbulent Carolina proprietary era covers the fascinating first century of North Carolina's history, its formative years, and sets the course for the colony and state over the next three centuries. While a serious problem for colonial officials, the influx of pirates in the 1710s was only one of several major crises besetting the North and South Carolina governments, which were attempting at that time to recover from divisive rebellions and devastating Amerindian wars. The pirates were drawn to the colony's shores in

part for what had transpired there over the preceding decades, and Carolina became the setting for the last stand of piracy in North America.
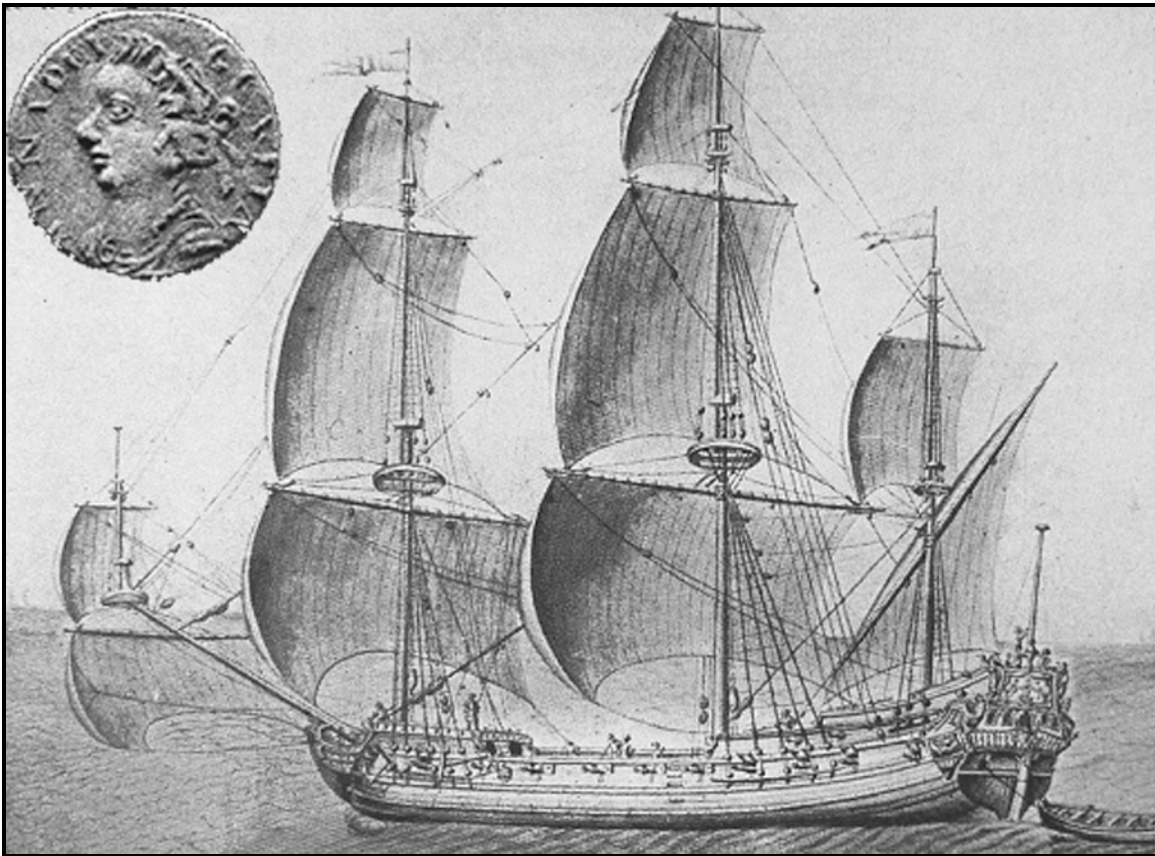

Figure 2 Queen Anne coin weight recovered from *Queen Anne's Revenge* and an eighteenth-century French frigate

Proprietary Colonies

From the days of Sir Walter Raleigh in the sixteenth century, private enterprise had been the vehicle for English colonization. The Crown used proprietary grants to satisfy obligations owed to individuals and to expand the empire at virtually no cost to the royal treasury. The proprieties, or private colonies, included both land ownership and governing authority. After the Restoration in 1660 Charles II more than doubled the area of the mainland American colonies with four vast proprietary grants—Carolina (1663), New York and New Jersey (1664), and Pennsylvania (1681). Carolina was granted to eight Lords Proprietors—noblemen and knights—who had been instrumental in bringing Charles to the throne. In modern terms, the Lords Proprietors were partners in a gigantic real estate venture that was given the dependent sovereign right and the responsibility to govern their vast domain. It has been virtually forgotten but is germane to this study that in 1670 the Bahama Islands, which had been included in the 1629 Carolina propriety, were granted to six of the

Lords Proprietors of Carolina. Henceforth, the Crown considered the Bahamas part of proprietary Carolina (Saunders 1886-1890:1:225; Cheves 2000[1897]: 180n, 207; Craton 1986:61, 63). Ultimately emerging from the Carolina proprieties would be the royal colonies of North Carolina, South Carolina, and the Bahamas.

The Carolina Propriety, 1663 – 1729

In 1663, Charles II awarded eight of his close advisors with proprietorship of Carolina, re-granting the same territory of the vacant Carolina Propriety. The Lords Proprietors of Carolina included five noblemen—the Duke of Albemarle, Aithony Lord Ashley, John Lord Berkeley, the Earls of Craven and Clarendon—and three knights—Sir George Carteret, Sir William Berkeley, and Sir John Colleton. The Duke of Albemarle was the most powerful of these men, but the proprietors who would have more to do with shaping the future colony were Anthony Lord Ashley, the future Earl of Shaftesbury; Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia; and Sir John Colleton, a planter of Barbados.
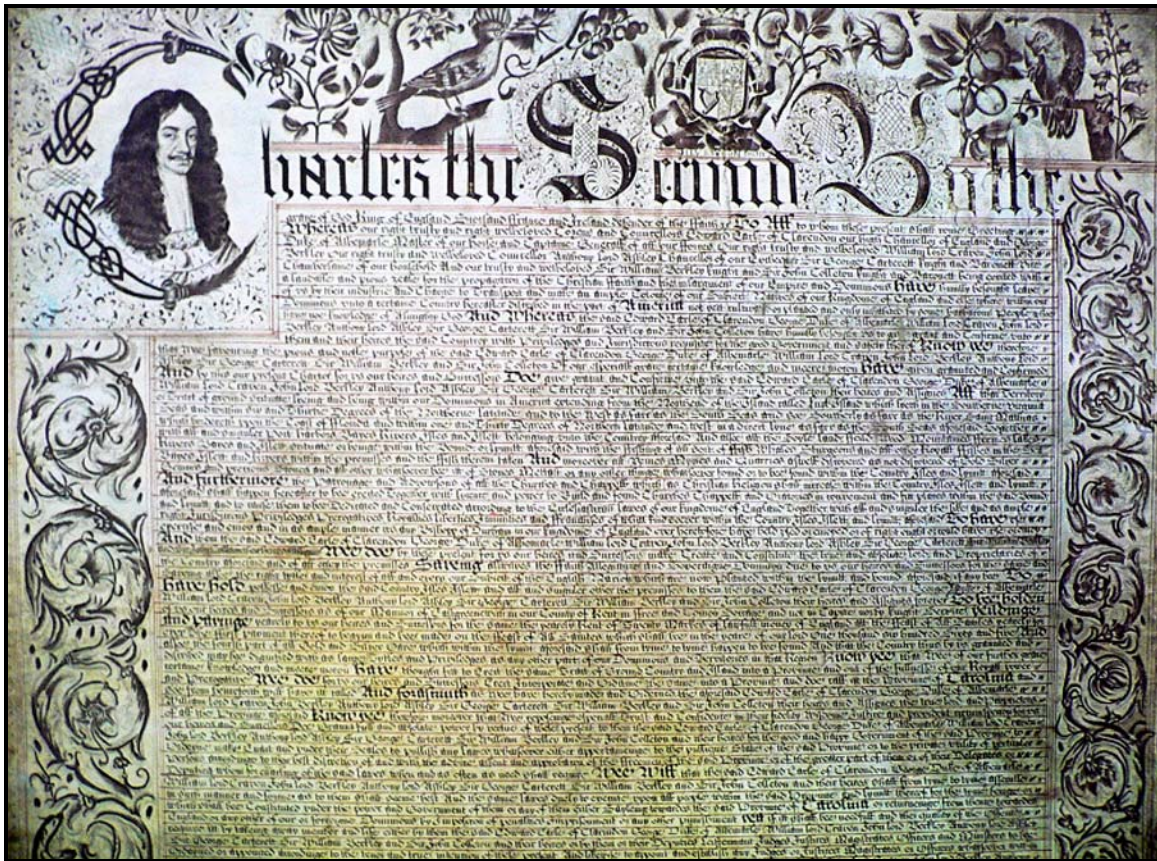

Figure 3 The Carolina Charter, 1663

The Proprietors requested and received an enlargement of their grant in 1665. It was extended north half a degree to 36° 30', near the present state border with Virginia, and two degrees south about a hundred miles into Florida, then Spanish territory. To the legislative assembly of freeholders from the Heath Charter was added a provision for religious tolerance to encourage dissenters to settle in the new colony (Parker 1963-1971:1:74-75, 90; Lefler and Powell 1973:32-33, 36-37).

Carolina was subdivided into three self-governing colonies called counties—Albemarle, where there was already a settlement of Virginians; Clarendon, on the Cape Fear where the first Charles Town was briefly settled by Barbadians 1664-1667; and Craven, on the Ashley and Cooper Rivers where the permanent Charles Town was founded, also by Barbadians, in 1670 (Lefler and Powell 1973:38, 44). With the failure of the Cape Fear settlement, the great distance between Albemarle County on the northern border and Charles Town in the south led over time to the emergence of North and South Carolina.
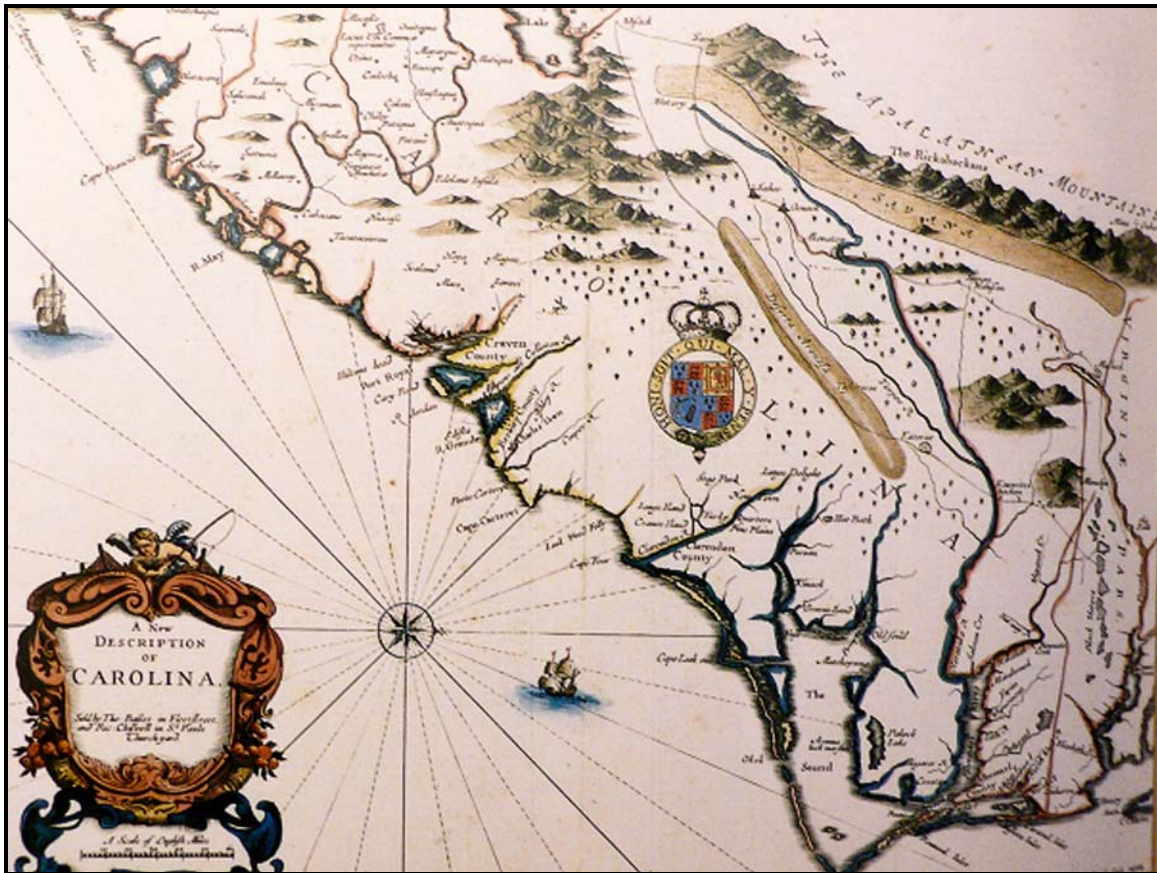

Figure 4 John Speed, 1676

The separation began with the appointment of Philip Ludwell in 1689 as governor of Carolina north and east of Cape Fear. South Carolina was referred to as Carolina south and west of Cape Fear. The next year, Ludwell, who resided in Charles Town, was commissioned governor of Carolina, and a deputy governor was appointed for the northern region of the colony. When the deputy governor's office was vacant, the president of the council served as acting governor (Butler 1969:298). Separate councils and legislative assemblies had been meeting since the founding days. With the appointment in 1712 of Edward Hyde as Governor of North Carolina, the informal separation of the colony became official.

North Carolina

In the Albemarle colony after the upheavals of the Culpeper Rebellion (1677 – 1680), settlement spread south of Albemarle Sound. In 1696 a new county was formed and named Bath for proprietor John Granville, Earl of Bath (Watson 2005:5). Counties were no longer separate colonies by then but had evolved into administrative districts. Bath County stretched from Albemarle Sound south to the Neuse River. The new county attracted new inhabitants to the banks of the Pamlico River and later to the Neuse River. French Huguenots from Virginia settled on the Pamlico and in 1710 some 400 German Palantines and Swiss were established on the Neuse and Trent Rivers (Watson 2005:8).

Because Bath County was separated from Albemarle County by nearly fifty miles of swampy wilderness—this is one of the least populated and most isolated areas in the state to this day—the settlements had to communicate by water using the sounds and rivers. Bath's economy was based on the fur trade with the Tuscarora and smaller Amerindian tribes in the region. The fast growth was related to the better sea communication through the inlets at Ocracoke and Hatteras, which were deeper than Currituck and Roanoke Inlets, then shoaled to about 8 – 10 feet in depth. Only at Ocracoke where there was 13 feet of depth on the bar at low water could vessels of any size enter the colony (Lawson 1967[1709]: 70-72). Having passed through Ocracoke, one still had to navigate Pamlico Sound, which could be treacherous. Of necessity small sloops and schooners of 10 to 30 tons, many of them from New England, carried most of North Carolina's trade in this era.

During Queen Anne's War high shipping costs and low tobacco prices created a depressed economy throughout the Chesapeake region, but the long-established Indian fur trade expanded in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The trade was centered on deerskins but also included pelts from beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, bear, fox, wolf, raccoon, and panther (Price 1974:4, 260-61,420). Bath County on the Amerindian frontier was attractive to newcomers who saw the potential of immediate profit in the Indian trade. Christopher Gale, the colony's future attorney general and chief justice, was an example of an impoverished younger son of gentry who settled on the Pamlico

River in 1703, purchased land with his fur trade profits, and married well (Stevenson1986: 260). John Lawson, Bath County's preeminent citizen, also prospered in the fur trade.

Figure 5 Bath County, from Edward Moseley, 1733

At the other end of the trade network, the London firm Perry and Lane of Micajah Perry was active in North Carolina. Perry was also a director of the New Pennsylvania Company organized in London in 1702 and active in tobacco and the Indian trade in the mid-Atlantic colonies from New York to the Carolinas (Price 1974:4:xx–xxi).

The dominance of the Indian fur trade and provisions early in the century is illustrated by Thomas Pollock's outbound cargo to Boston in 1704. It consisted of 244 barrels of pork, deerskins, furs, and leather, plus another shipment primarily of 2690 dressed deerskins and some furs (Price 1974:4:127-28). On *New Speedwell* in 1707 Edward Moseley consigned to Bermuda a cargo of 100 bushels of Indian corn, four barrels of pork, and a barrel of lard (Price 1974:4:454-55).

The fur-trade based economy was shattered during and after the Tuscarora War by the continuing Indian raids and alarms. The Reverend John Urmstone reported in June 1714 that the New England monopoly of North Carolina trade did not help the situation, saying,

I am now in manifest danger of Starving for want of Bread…. The Sloops from N. England sweep all our provision away. We have twice as many Vessels this Year as ever were wont to Come, there are above 7 now waiting like as many Vultures for our Wheat and more daily expected, they sell their Goods at Exorbiant rates and thus Wee are rendered Poor. (Cain 1981-1999:10:181).

Population

With poor connections to the North Atlantic trade network, North Carolina at first grew very slowly. Hampered from the outset by an apparent limited commercial potential, North Carolina attracted chiefly Virginians of English background who carved out modest farms and plantations and who primarily relied on white indentured servants but also used African and Amerindian labor, both slave and indentured. In stark contrast to South Carolina, which built a plantation society on Amerindian and eventually African slave labor, the North Carolina European population always outnumbered the Amerindian and African laborers. The Amerindian element within the European settlements remains elusive, although there are references to indentured servants and slaves in the court records.

Year	North Carolina			South Carolina		
	White	Black	Total	White	Black	Total
1670	4,000	<1,000	4,000	<1,000	<1,000	<1,000
1680	5,000	<1,000	5,000	1,000	<1,000	1,000
1690	8,000	<1,000	8,000	2,000	2,000	4,000
1700	11,000	<1,000	11,000	3,000	3,000	6,000
1710	14,000	1,000	15,000	5,000	5,000	10,000
1720	18,000	3,000	21,000	7,000	12,000	19,000
1730	24,000	6,000	30,000	10,000	20,000	30,000

Table 3 Population Ratios in North and South Carolina (Clowse 1981:30)

In the second decade of the eighteenth century when pirates were sailing on the coast, Charleston was a substantial city of 2000 whites and 1000 Africans. In contrast, North Carolina's four existing towns—Bath, Beaufort, Edenton, and New Bern—had perhaps a total of about 250 residents. By 1730 the proportion of the African-American population in North Carolina was one-fifth, whereas African-Americans living in South Carolina outnumbered European-Americans two to one. Already at this early date, radically different societies and economies had evolved, setting the course for the future states.

Port Bath

By the early eighteenth century there was a sizable settlement on the Pamlico River centered on Old Town Creek. In 1705 John Lawson, the colony's deputy surveyor, laid out North Carolina's first town on 60 acres on Old Town (Bath) Creek. Lots were sold that fall, and the General Assembly

incorporated Bath-Town on March 8, 1706. The preeminent early resident of Bath was John Lawson—surveyor, naturalist, explorer, founder of both Bath and New Bern, and author of *A New Voyage to Carolina*, published in England in 1709. Lawson's broadly descriptive book, North Carolina's first and only significant contribution to colonial literature, has been widely used as a source of information about the colony from that day to this. Archaeological excavations recently located his home site on the point where he lived with Hannah Smith and their daughter (Watson 2005:9-10,12-13).

Other early property holders in Bath and part-time probable residents were Governor Thomas Cary, a future Chief Justice Christopher Gale, and merchants Thomas Sparrow and James Beard (Paschal 1955:8-9). The new town, providing a commercial center, brought more settlers to the Pamlico-Neuse region. By the fall of 1706 Bath was named the county seat, and the first session of the quarterly court was held in October. The earliest description of the fledgling village in 1709 notes about a dozen houses built along the river, possibly sheltering a population of about 50 to 60 (Cain 1981-1999:10:86).
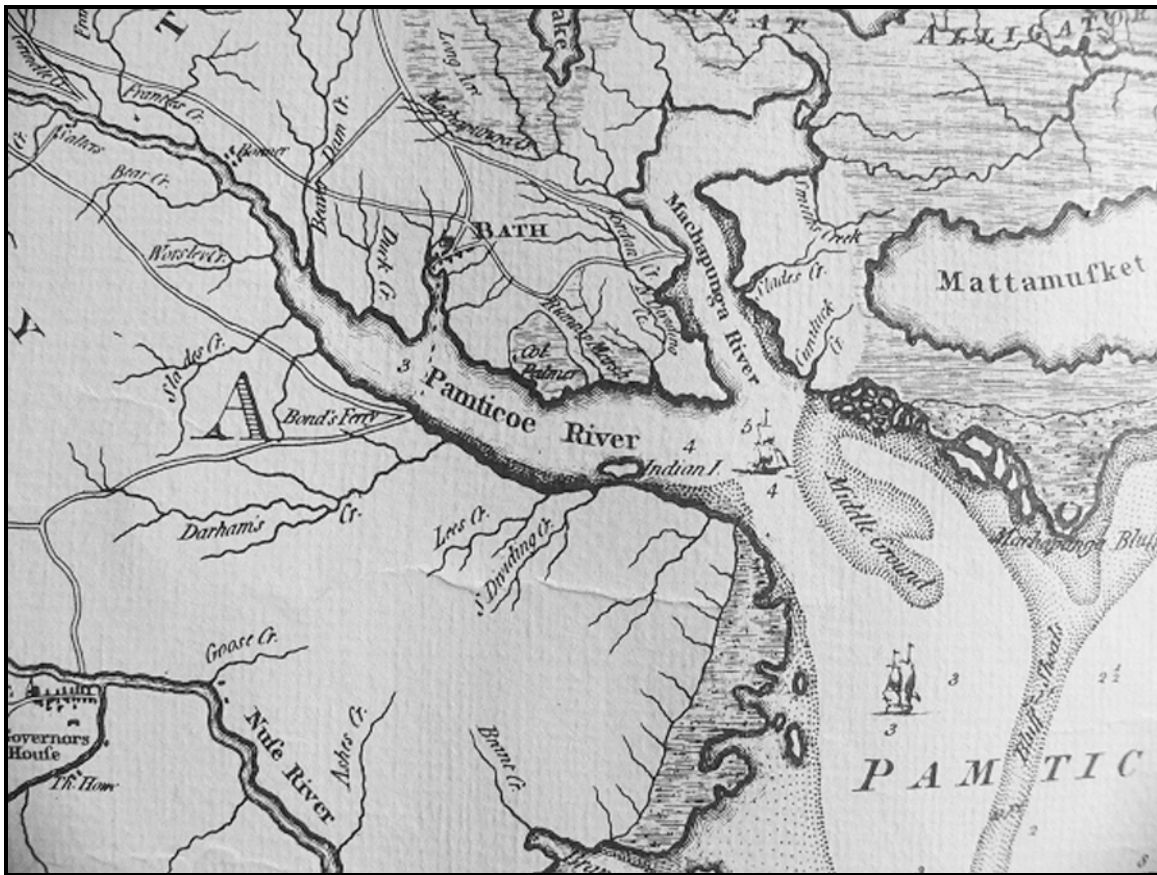

Figure 6 Bath, Henry Mouzon, 1775

The little village of Bath was the administrative and commercial center for a vast wilderness region stretching from Albemarle Sound in the north to the Neuse River in the south. When ships were in harbor and court was in session, the few streets were bustling with mariners, Indians bearing furs, and settlers from many miles away who had come to trade by dugout canoe and the small sailing craft of the sounds—periaugers, skiffs, and shallops. Lawson noted in 1708 that North Carolina's exports, many of which moved through the port of Bath, included products of the forest—lumber, staves, furs and deerskins, ship timbers and masts, and the naval stores of tar, pitch, turpentine, and rosin; diverse agricultural products—hemp, flax, beef, dairy products, pork, hides, tallow, dyes, silk, grains, beans, peas, and wine; and two products from a nascent seafaring industry—whalebone and oil (Lawson 1967[1709]: 166-67). Merchants operated stores and traded from their homes. Describing the limited public accommodations during court sessions, one traveler wrote that "ye ordinary keepers have not beads [beds] to Lodge us," which forced them to stay in private homes or to camp around the village (Paschal 1955:10).

When Bath became a refugee center during the Tuscarora War, a fort was constructed near the end of the peninsula. At war's end the ravaged county was desolate, but settlers returned to rebuild their plantations, farms, and homes. Bath experienced a moderate recovery, stimulated by the re-incorporation of 1715 and a re-survey. New prominent residents were Governor Charles Eden, Maurice Moore, Edward Moseley, Thomas Pollock, and Dr. Edward Travis. Christopher Gale sold his plantation and became a full-time resident. By the next year, new merchants, tradesmen, and artisans were attracted to the town by the establishment of Port Bath, the first port of entry for the colony. The customs collector and naval officer had jurisdiction over Pamlico Sound and the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers (Watson 2005:19-20, 28, 53; Paschal 1955:32).

Port Beaufort

The port of Beaufort looks out to sea through the only inlet on the North Carolina coast that has direct access from the mainland to the ocean. From Beaufort it is less than two miles to the eighteenth-century Topsail Inlet, now Beaufort Inlet. Unlike the unstable inlets through the Outer Banks that capriciously appear and disappear, Beaufort Inlet has been open and in place for hundreds of years, although the channel has moved back and forth until stabilized in the twentieth century by constant dredging. The drawback to Beaufort's developing into a significant seaport is that it has no connection to the hinterland. The two rivers that form the peninsula where the town is located—the Newport and the North—are short and were sparsely settled. Core Sound, the northern connector to the vast interior waters of Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds, is shallow, exposed, and treacherous. Consequently, only the small craft of the eighteenth century—canoes, periaugers, shallops, and an occasional sloop—could safely navigate the sound. Core Sound was discovered very early to be rich

in marine life and from the outset attracted fishermen who harvested oysters, crabs, clams, and a variety of finned fish.
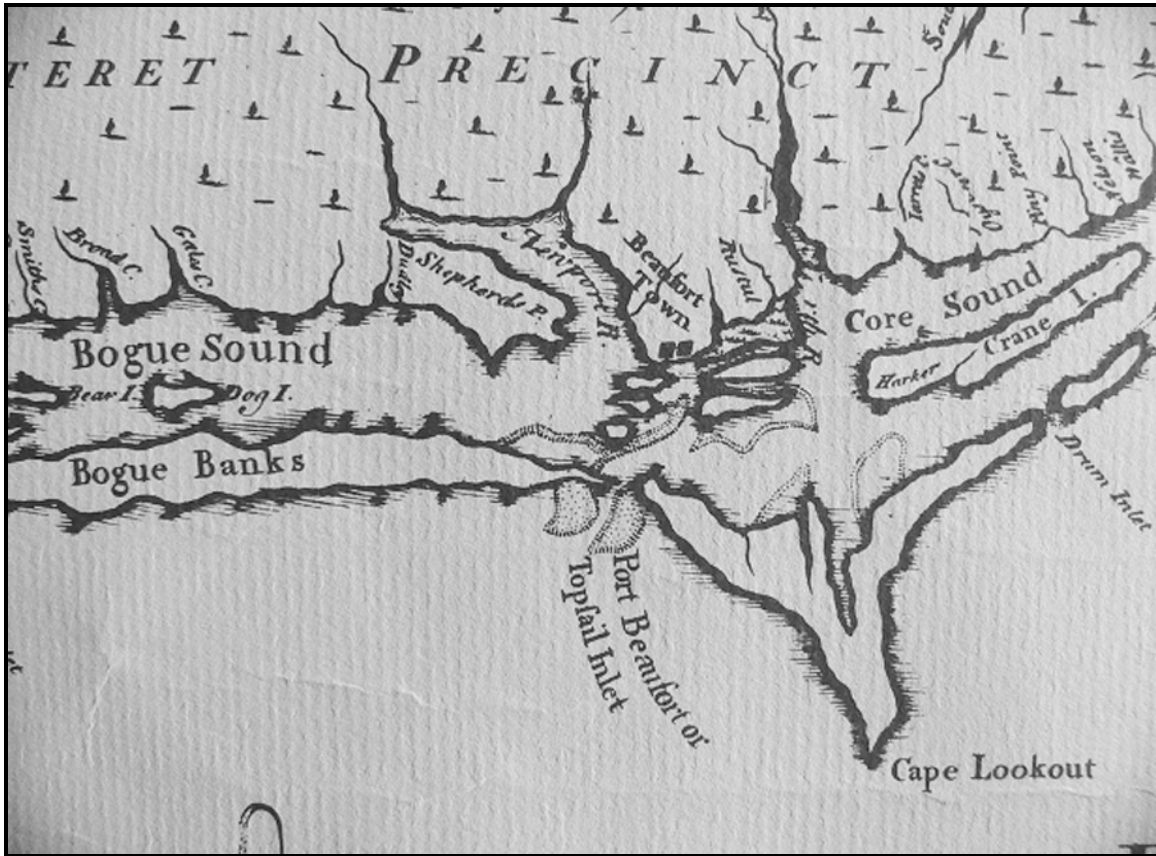

Figure 7 Beaufort and Topsail Inlet, Edward Moseley, 1733

Settlers moved into the Core Sound and North River area in the early eighteenth century. Baron von Graffenried, the leader of the Swiss and German Palatines at New Bern, wrote in 1710 that Core Sound was inhabited by Englishmen who provided seafood for the region. By 1712 the sloop *Core Sound Merchant* was trading in the area and carrying the region's products. A Captain Stone rented nearby Crany Island (now Harkers) for 100 weight in cocoa in 1719, a transaction cited by some as evidence of trade with the West Indies (Paul 1967:131; Saunders 1886-1890:2:388). It is more likely, however, that cocoa found in the area at that date came from the large quantity brought into the colony by Blackbeard the year before. John Lawson described a red drum fishery at Drum Inlet where the fish were salted and packed in barrels for export (Lawson 1967[1709]: 159). Another early maritime activity was shore-based whaling at Cape Lookout and adjacent Shackleford Bank. John Lawson observed whaling on the offshore islands, and by 1715 New England whalers were coming to the Cape Lookout area (Paul 1967:118, 120; Saunders 1886-1890:2:397).

During the Tuscarora War in 1713, the town of Beaufort was surveyed and named for the Duke of Beaufort, a Lord Proprietor. By 1718, the handful of dwellings housing several families was described as a "poor little village" (Johnson 1999[1724]: 97). For a decade it remained essentially a fishing settlement, although the pirates observed a bumboat selling apples and cider there. Bumboats were the convenience markets of a port, providing whatever a ship might need—fresh provisions, rum, tobacco, and personal items (Paul 1965:140,143; SC Vice-Admiralty Court 1719:46).

Beaufort was declared a port of entry in April 1722, and Christopher Gale was named the first collector. Within a year the town became the county seat for Carteret Precinct and was incorporated by the General Assembly (Paul 1967:118,128; Saunders 1886-1890:2:454). Significant as these legal designations were, however, they did not stimulate growth. William Brickell wrote in 1737 that Beaufort was "small and thinly inhabited" (Brickell 1968[1737]:8). As late as 1765 a visitor described Beaufort as "a Small vilage not above 12 houses, the inhabitants seem miserable, they are very lazy and Indolent, they live mostly on fish and oisters, which they have in great plenty" (Paul 1965:148).

The Cary Rebellion, 1711

By the early eighteenth century the colony was on a firm footing but had ahead of it the great trials of the Cary Rebellion (1708 – 1711) and the Tuscarora War (1711 – 1715), which was juxtaposed on a severe drought and crop failure and a yellow fever epidemic. The Cary Rebellion was the culmination of long-term political tension created by the challenge of the upstart and rapidly growing Bath County to the hegemony of Albemarle County. Complicating the political struggle for power was the newly established Anglican Church, whose politicians asserted their power to oust the strong Quaker influence in the General Assembly and the provincial government.

Encouraged by the religious tolerance granted by the proprietary charter, the Quakers had been the first organized church in Albemarle, and other nonconformists, chiefly Baptists and Presbyterians, had been attracted to the colony. Through the influence of proprietor Archdale, Quakers had achieved a majority in the assembly and council of Albemarle. The Anglicans finally succeeded in passing a vestry act in 1703, establishing the Anglican Church. To secure their political ascendancy, the Anglicans included, in accordance with prevailing English ecclesiastical law, requirements that officeholders must take an oath of confirming the articles of faith of the Anglican Church. This was totally unacceptable to the Quakers, who for religious reasons could not swear an oath (White 1986:6-8; Lefler and Powell 1973:194-95).

Deputy Governor Robert Daniel required the oath and was removed by the proprietors at the behest of the Quakers. Thomas Cary, a Charles Town merchant and stepson of Quaker proprietor John Archdale, was named deputy governor of Albemarle in March 1705. Cary unexpectedly backed

the Anglicans, enforcing the test oath, and the Quakers again appealed to the proprietors to remove a governor. While Cary was away, the order for his ouster was received in October 1707, and William Glover was elected president of the council. When Glover openly courted the Anglican support, Cary sensed an opportunity to regain his lost power, expediently switched sides, and gathered a base of power from Bath County, where he was then a resident and colonel of the county militia (White 1986:11-12; Lefler and Powell 1973:195-96).

With the armed support of the Bath County faction, in October 1708 Cary forced Glover out of office and into Virginia and governed the colony as president of the council for over two years. In January 1711, Edward Hyde (1650-1712), a cousin of the queen and the intended new deputy governor, arrived in Albemarle. Although Hyde had not received his commission, he was accepted by the colony and elected president of the council (Paschal 1988:246-247).

Cary's retirement to Bath County might have ended the conflict had not his former enemies in Albemarle convinced Hyde to arrest him and his key supporters, touching off the Cary Rebellion. In May Hyde led an armed force into Bath County but withdrew after a half-hearted attempt against Cary's fortified plantation. In June Cary sailed north in an armed fleet to attack Hyde and overthrow his government but was repulsed in a skirmish on the Chowan River. Hyde secured marine reinforcements from Virginia in July and in a second expedition into Bath defeated Cary. From Virginia, Cary was sent to England to be tried by the Carolina proprietors. Following a desultory hearing over the span of a year, charges were finally dropped for lack of evidence (Paschal 1988:248; Price 1974:5:xxi-xxiii).

The upheaval and division within the white community was clearly visible to the Amerindian inhabitants of North Carolina, who had suffered grievances at the hands of their European neighbors for years and saw an opportunity to rid themselves of these interlopers who were becoming a threat to their way of life.

The Tuscarora War, 1711-1715

In this period European settlers in Bath County began to encroach upon the Tuscarora lands. The Amerindians had endured dishonest traders for years, as well as the granting away of their land, and lately their youth had been kidnapped to be sold into slavery. Unable to bear it any longer, their charismatic leader, King Hancock, urged them to war and forged a coalition with six other tribes. The Tuscarora confederacy struck on 22 September 1711 with the worst massacre in the history of the colony. Several hundred settlers were killed, wounded, and enslaved by the powerful Tuscarora alliance that laid waste the region south of the Pamlico, killing families, looting, and burning farms and plantations (Lee 1963:23-25). Attorney General Christopher Gale wrote "the blow was so hotly followed by the hellish crew, that we could not bury our dead, so that they were left for prey to the

dogs and wolves, and vultures"(Saunders 1886-1890:1:827). Bath, just a handful of houses at the time, was inundated with hundreds of refugees who had fled with little more than their clothes. It was said that about 300 widows and orphans came to the town for safety (Watson 2005:19-20).

Governor Hyde responded swiftly by securing the Assembly's approval of military funding and a draft of the militia, but it took two expeditions from South Carolina to save the colony. The war came to a brutal end two years later with near extermination of the tribe. The remnant of the Tuscarora migrated north to their ancient homeland in New York to rejoin the Iroquois Confederacy (Lee 1963:27-38).
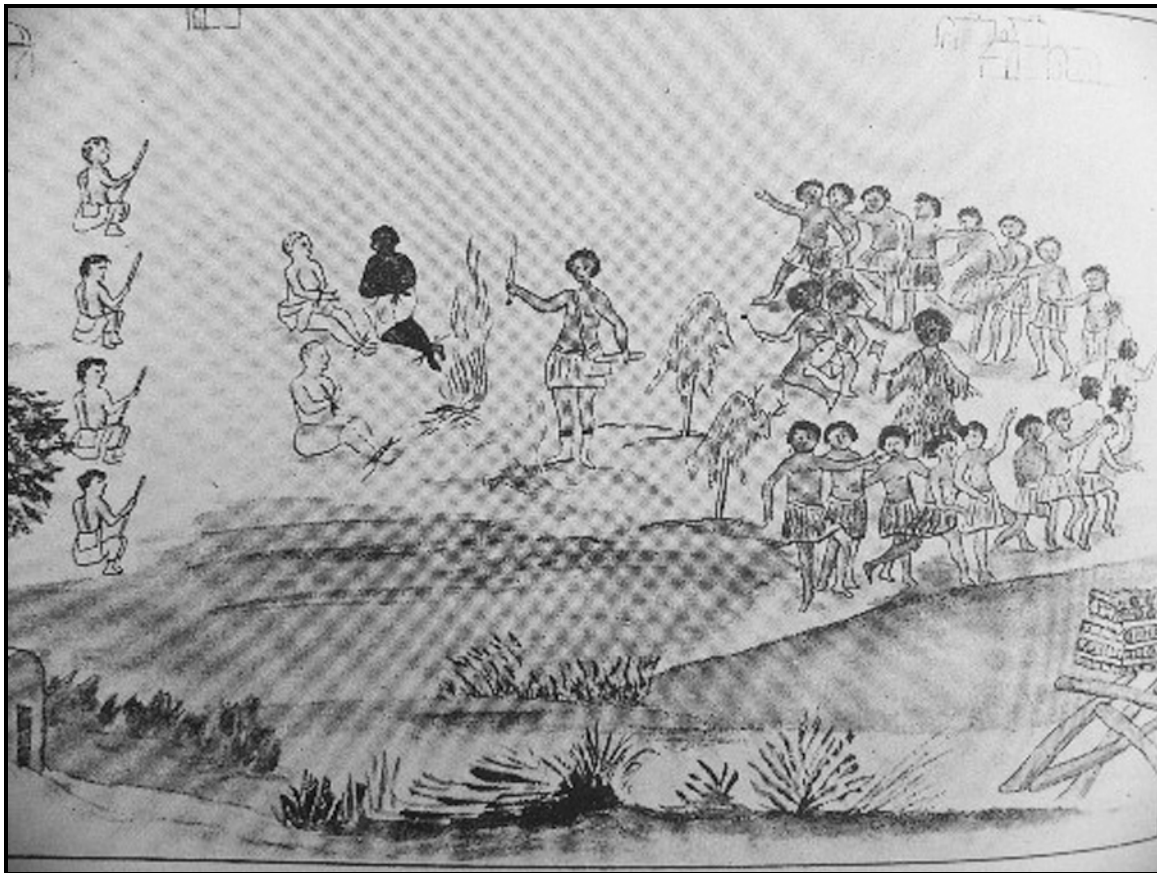

Figure 8 John Lawson was captured and executed by the Tuscarora Indians

The colony, then, just three years before the arrival of a wave of pirates, was in shambles. Large areas of Bath County were ravaged by warfare, with inhabitants barely beginning to rebuild and resettle. The colony's treasury was depleted and the economy was depressed. In September 1714 the Anglican missionary Reverend John Urmstone, wrote,

> The loss of Bath County if not the whol[e] Government is threatened, to prevent which our honest Gouvernor [Charles Eden] was wholly bent but after near a fortnights time spent to no purpose he was forc'd to send them home. We daily hear of families cutt of and destroyed. (Cain 1981-1999:10:185).

The Tuscarora had been dealt a fatal blow, but the various truces and the treaty of 1715 did not end the violence. Renegade bands from the other tribes in the native alliance continued to attack isolated farmsteads and threaten the settlements. In 1718 at the height of the pirate troubles, there were a series of raids in Bath County by a remnant band of eight Tuscaroras. The Reverend Urmstone reported in September that planters were deserting the county. He noted that "Bath Town is unpeopled there is but two families the Governour and an ordinary." Four ranger units, each of ten whites and Indians, were formed to hunt down the renegades and patrol on the Neuse and Trent rivers and on Core Sound (Cain 1981-1995:7:74; 10:255).

Alarming rumors, made credible by these events, magnified the effect of the raiders. The tales were ended by a council investigation in November 1718, which uncovered a "Villainous confederacy" of children, servants, and an Indian slave named Pompey, who were found to have spread "false reports and Alarms and for the Terror of others." Pompey fled, and young John Worsely and a servant were publicly whipped (Cain 1981-1995:7:76-77). Thereafter, the threat to public safety from Amerindians, both real and imagined, subsided.

Trade and Shipping

Initially the economy of Albemarle County, the earliest settlement in North Carolina, centered on the Amerindian fur trade, livestock, provisions, and tobacco. Although tobacco was an important crop, the economy was not based on it. Widely fluctuating prices, trade duties, and the high shipping costs of transshipment required by the colony's isolation kept tobacco's profit margin low.

Bath County, established at the end of the seventeenth century, was a rapidly growing but new frontier society with its economy based on the Amerindian trade, livestock, provisions, and fishing. The French Huguenots on the Pamlico are known to have produced linen and were planning to develop a winery (Lawson 1967[1709]: 90). The Swiss and German Palatines on the Neuse, given time, might have brought different products to market, but the chaotic politics and effects of the Tuscarora War weakened their settlement to the point of simply struggling for survival.

Unlike the Albemarle region, where a half-century passed before the town and port that would become Edenton emerged on Queen Anne's Creek, within a decade of Bath County's establishment two port towns were founded—Bath on the Pamlico and New Bern at the forks of the Neuse. These ports had the colony's best connection to the sea through Ocracoke Inlet and were closer to the inlet than Albemarle's Port Roanoke district. Finally, the fishing village of Beaufort developing at Topsail

Inlet offered a direct outlet to the sea, though it was hampered by poor connections to the interior through shallow Core Sound.

In 1718 Beaufort barely existed as a town and was neither incorporated nor a port of entry. For both Beaufort and Bath the extant port records begin decades later. The only North Carolina colonial port with any significant records of this period is Port Roanoke, and prior to 1725 there are no more than a scattering of miscellaneous papers. Since both Port Roanoke and Port Bath were accessed through Ocracoke Inlet and the exports and imports similar, the Roanoke records provide a portrait of early economic activity in North Carolina. In the oldest surviving Beaufort Port records, twenty-nine different vessels were cleared or entered between January 1760 and June 1761—fourteen schooners, fourteen sloops, and one brig (North Carolina Archives [NCA], Research Branch [RB], Raleigh Port Beaufort Miscellaneous Papers). After almost a half-century the port activity continued to be limited in scope and was largely carried by small sea-going sloops and schooners to other mainland and West Indian colonies.

Shipping: Port Roanoke

Although Port Roanoke, located on North Carolina's Albemarle Sound, has the earliest surviving records, the information, unfortunately, is woefully incomplete. Of the 49 documents surviving from the period 1682 to 1717, 43 date from 1703 – 1704. For these two years the miscellaneous customs paper entries, clearings, permits, bonds, and inventories cite 17 vessels—two brigs, two shallops, and 13 sloops. From 1682 – 1700 three sloops were recorded, and there were several unclassified vessels mentioned from 1710 – 1717.

The largest vessel listed was the North Carolina-registered 40-ton brig *Martha*, which was sailing to and from Boston. Outbound from Port Roanoke, *Martha*'s cargo was pork, deerskins, leather, hides, and furs. Items brought in from Boston were rum, molasses, ship rigging, and shop goods. The other recorded brig, the New England-owned *Speedwell*, was rated at 15 tons (NCA. RB. Port Roanoke Customs House Papers, 1682-1760). The two shallops, rated at four and five tons, sailed for Virginia carrying pork, lard, deerskins, leather, tallow, nails, and beeswax. Imports from Virginia, obviously transshipped, were rum, sugar, and European household goods (NCA.RB. Port Roanoke Customs 1703-1717).

The 13 sloops known to be trading prior to 1717 ranged in size from 5 to 40 tons and as a group were on average smaller than sloops just a decade later. They sailed to other colonial ports, chiefly Boston, Philadelphia, Charles Town, Patuxent River and Annapolis, Maryland, and York, Virginia. The offshore island destinations were Bermuda and Barbados. The cargoes were somewhat different from those being carried on the brigs and shallops. Among the exports were provisions, pork, bacon, lard, deerskins, furs, leather, pitch, staves, beeswax, snakeroot, and feathers. Imports included rum,

wine, beer, molasses, sugar, cloth, shoes, clothing, household and dry goods, nails, salt, grindstones, silverware, and rugs (NCA.RB. Port Roanoke Customs 1682-1717).

In the aftermath of the Tuscarora War between July and October 1715, seven vessels entered the port with powder and firearms. The only recorded transaction involving London was transshipment in 1717 of cloth, clothing, saddles, ironware, nails, and copper kettles, handled by a Virginia merchant (NCA.RB. Port Roanoke Customs 1715-1717).
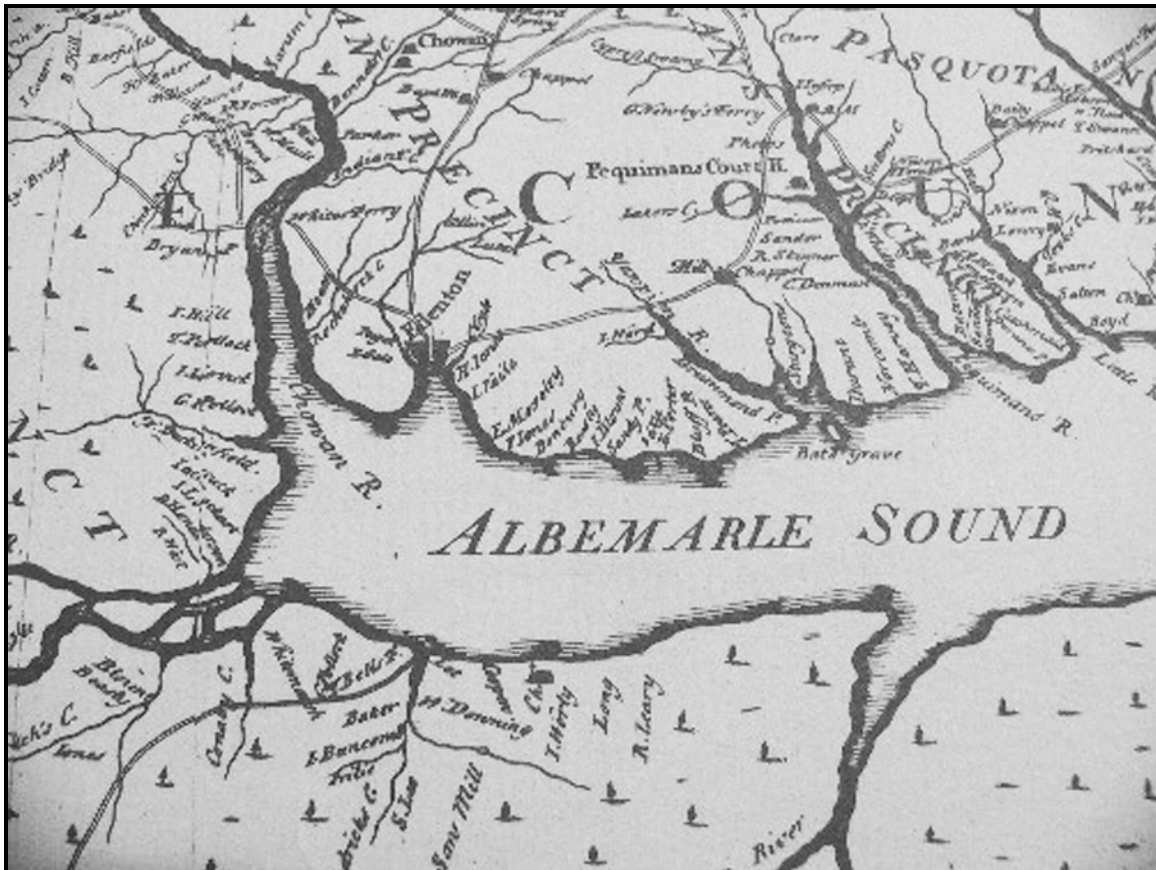

Figure 9 Port Roanoke centered on the capital, named Edenton in 1722. Edward Moseley, 1733

The extant ship registrations began in 1725, by which time tobacco had made a comeback as the major export of Port Roanoke. Schooners had begun to appear in the colonies in the second decade of the eighteenth century and rapidly began to rival the sloop as the workhorse of the colonial trade (Goldenberg 1976:78). For the period 1725 – 1726 vessels paying duties for tobacco included five schooners that ranged in tonnage from 10 to 30, with a mean of 22. There were five sloops with a mean tonnage of 29 that ranged from 20 to 40 tons. The two brigs rated at 30 and 40 tons. All of the vessels except the small 10-ton North Carolina schooner were New England-owned, nearly all from Massachusetts (NCA.RB. Port Roanoke Book of Registers, 1725-1751).

Shipping: Charles Town

The only significant port in the Carolinas was Charles Town, South Carolina, an entrepôt for trans-Atlantic trade with Britain and also transshipment of goods to and from other colonies, including her northern sister. In the early eighteenth century the economy of South Carolina was just beginning to build a base for what would become one of the richest colonies in America. Like its northern neighbor, South Carolina began with provisions—salt beef and pork, corn, and peas—as its first profitable exports to Bermuda and the Caribbean islands, especially Barbados. South Carolina rapidly became a ranching colony with both hogs and cattle roaming on a wooded open range. The deerskin and fur trade developed into key elements of the economy, and the related trade in Indian slaves. In the period 1699 – 1715 an average of 53,000 deerskins were exported to England annually. Other elements of the economy were the export of Amerindian slaves, naval stores of tar and pitch, timber, and the cash crops of rice and indigo. These two crops required a greatly expanded African slave population so that by 1720 there were more African slaves in South Carolina than settlers of European origin (Weir 1997:142-143,145-146).

In the early eighteenth century the largest ships normally entering Charles Town were about 90 tons, and there were few as large as 200 tons. As the century went on, ship size increased so that by the Revolutionary era, vessels were rated on average at 150 tons. The largest known vessel to use Charles Town before 1740 was the 305-ton ship *Eagle* of Bristol (Coker 1987:37).

Charles Town's port records from 1716 through the rest of the colonial period have not only survived but have also been thoroughly analyzed by economic historian Converse Clowse (Clowse 1981). Copies from the port books known as naval lists were forwarded to Britain and include entry and clearing papers, bonds, bills of lading for cargoes being cleared, and the tariffs paid to the customs collector. Fortunately for this project, the earliest extant port register is a record of clearings 1716 – 1721. In the naval lists under entering or clearing were recorded information about the vessel, the cargo, and the crew, the date, the vessel name and type, tonnage, cargo broken down by major commodities, destination or port of origin, master's name, the owner, where the vessel was built, and where it was registered. Beginning in the 1720s, crew size and armament were added.

Measurements	Ships	Pinks	Snows	Brigs	Sloops	Schooners	Others	Total
No. Vessels	34	14	6	5	60	3	4	126
Mean Tonnage	96	97	58	49	24	18	n/a	54

Table 4 Vessels Clearing Charles Town, 1717 (Clowse 1981:112)

Measurements	Ships	Pinks	Snows	Brigs	Sloops	Schooners	Others	Total
No. Vessels	48	10	6	8	48	8	1	129
Mean Tonnage	90	107	59	54	26	11	n/a	59

Table 5 Vessels Clearing Charles Town, 1718 (Clowse 1981:112)

Measurements	Ships	Pinks	Snows	Brigs	Sloops	Schooners	Others	Total
No. Vessels	48	2	4	12	51	4	1	122
Mean Tonnage	86	130	60	44	26	15	n/a	54

Table 6 Vessels Clearing Charles Town, 1719 (Clowse 1981:112)

Measurements	Ships	Pinks	Snows	Brigs	Sloops	Schooners	Others	Total
No. Vessels	35	19	5	17	34	1	0	111
Mean Tonnage	92	108	47	48	25	12	n/a	65
Mean Crew	11	10	7	8	6	5	n/a	9
Mean Guns	5	5	2	4	4	0	n/a	-

Table 7 Vessels Clearing Charles Town, 1724 (Clowse 1981:112)

From these tables it is clear that well over half of the Charles Town trade was carried by vessels averaging 60 tons or less—snows, brigs, sloops, and schooners. The mean tonnage of the larger vessel types—ships and pinks—hovered around 100 tons. The largest vessel to clear Charles Town in 1716 was a 150-ton ship bound to London. The next year the largest vessel was the 300-ton ship *Fortune*, also headed to London. *Fortune* carried 30 barrels of pitch, 1002 barrels of tar, and 229 barrels of rice. Typical of the sloops clearing for North Carolina in 1717 was 10-ton *Alexander*, which carried five hogsheads and one barrel of rum, two hogsheads of molasses, three barrels of sugar, a hundred weight of salt, and European goods (PRO.CO.5/509).

In 1724, the first full year data is available on crew size and armament; the mean number of guns carried on these larger vessels is five. In the last quarter of 1723, a period of peace, the most heavily armed vessels were a 140-ton ship of 11 guns, a 90-ton ship and a 120-ton pink, each of eight guns. In the first quarter of 1724 the heaviest armed vessels were a 120-ton ship and a 90-ton ship, each of 10 guns. All the rest of the ships and pinks rating from 160 tons to 60 tons carried from two to six guns. The breakdown is a 160-ton ship of six guns, a 150-ton pink of four guns, two 150-ton ships of two guns each, a 150-ton pink of two guns, and a 120-ton pink of two guns (PRO.CO.5/ 509). As a result of piratical activity and innumerable appeals of the colonial government, in 1719 the 20-gun HMS *Flamborough* was stationed at Charles Town, the port's first Royal Navy guard ship. Through the following decade the navy maintained a 20-gun vessel in the port (Coker 1987:295).

Piracy in Proprietary Carolina

Piracy in the Bahamas

The caustic royal customs commissioner Edward Randolph observed in 1696 that the Bahamas were a common retreat for pirates and smugglers under Governor Nicholas Trott, whose nephew and namesake ironically would be instrumental in eradicating piracy from South Carolina twenty years later (1886-1890:1:466). After the end of Queen Anne's War in 1714 eliminated the need for

privateers, many turned to piracy. With the Royal Navy harrying them, pirates dispersed throughout the West Indies, finally settling in Nassau on New Providence in the Bahamas, a territory of proprietary Carolina (Saunders 1886-1890:1:225:477; Craton 1986:64, 74, 90). From the outset, the Bahamas were desert islands that attracted the dispossessed and lawless. A sometime base for privateers and buccaneers since the sixteenth century, the islands did not prosper until New Providence became a pirate stronghold.

Since the proprietary governors were never able to control the pirates, hundreds of them moved from the Caribbean into Nassau and were organized under the leadership of Captain Henry Jennings (Johnson 1999[1724]: 41). The Crown responded to this threat to the sea lanes by negotiating with the Carolina proprietors to purchase the colony. In 1718 Captain Woodes Rogers, a long-time privateer and famed navigator, was commissioned as the first Royal Governor of the Bahamas. He was accompanied by Chief Justice Christopher Gale, who earlier had been a Chief Justice of North Carolina (Saunders 1886-1890:2:460, 562; Craton 1986:95; Stevenson 1986:262).

Figure 10 Woodes Rogers, first royal governor of the Bahamas, 1718

Within two months after Blackbeard and Stede Bonnet had left, Rogers arrived in July of 1718 with an offer of a royal pardon—the Act of Grace—for those who would surrender. Most of the pirates took the pardon, but some, including the infamous Charles Vane, sailed north toward the Carolinas (Craton 1986:95-96). The mainland colonies were notorious as a long-time haven with all the characteristics a pirate could wish— a sparse population, war-torn societies, a weak and compliant government divided by recent rebellions, a depressed economy of merchants who routinely dealt with smugglers and would welcome cheap goods, and a hazardous coastline of isolated inlets, remote offshore islands, and the great capes. Commenting on the increased pirate activity, Virginia's William Byrd II wrote that "these rogues swarm in this part of the world, and we are told of 70 sail at least that haunt the several parts of America" (Tinling 1977:1:326).

Piracy in South Carolina

Piracy flourished on the South Carolina coast chiefly in two periods—the early proprietary years (1670-1700) and at the end of the Golden Age of Piracy (1716-1720). Settled in 1670, Charles Town soon became the chief port of Carolina, a region contested by the Spanish, French, and English in the frequent wars of the era. The proprietary government was often weak and sometimes was headed by corrupt officials. Pirates, most of whom began their commerce raiding as legal wartime privateers, thrived in such an uncertain and turbulent setting. The growing trade of Charles Town also attracted raids by foreign privateers who were perceived by the local citizens as pirates.

Like merchants in all of the colonies, Charles Town's traders were accustomed to dealing with smugglers and therefore welcomed the cheap goods and specie that the pirates brought. Customs officers were not above taking bribes to smooth illegal trade, and "consorting with pirates" was not an uncommon charge levied against governors and other officials by their opponents. When the colony's notorious reputation for "harbouring and encouraging of Pirates" reached the Privy Council in England in 1684, the provincial assembly was instructed to pass an act to suppress piracy (Saunders 1886-1890:1:347). Open dealing with pirates caused the expulsion of Council member John Boon in 1686 and peaked in the 1690s under governors Seth Sothel and Philip Ludwell. Governor John Archdale, the Quaker Proprietor, was accused of sheltering smugglers and allowing illegal trade with the Dutch out of Curaçao (Saunders 1886-1890:1:467).

Throughout the colonial period Spanish and French privateers presented Charles Town with a constant threat that reached its zenith during Queen Anne's War 1701-1713. In August 1706 a combined French and Spanish expedition of privateers and naval vessels raided the environs of Charles Town but were driven off by a provincial flotilla led by Colonel William Rhett (Coker 1987:13-16). At the end of the war many of the thousands of unemployed privateers in the West Indies flocked to the new center of piracy, Nassau on New Providence Island in the Bahamas. South

Carolina had just survived a devastating war with the Yamassee Indians in 1715 that left the colony ill-equipped to cope with the pirates swarming onto the coast in 1717-1718. In 1718 about half of the cultivated land had been abandoned and some 400 settlers killed during the war, and it would take years to recover from the destruction of property (Edgar 1998:101-02).

Figure 11 Charles Town harbor

The most notorious of the pirates—Blackbeard, Stede Bonnet, Charles Vane, Christopher Moody, Richard Worley, and Anne Bonney, who was from the colony—were drawn by Charles Town's shipping. Escalating piratical attacks peaked in May 1718 in a raid by Charles Vane and the blockade by Blackbeard and Bonnet that finally aroused the city to take action, and by the end of the year South Carolinians had rid themselves of the worst of their tormentors.

Piracy in North Carolina

Customs commissioner Edward Randolph, who opposed the proprieties, was sent to the colonies to investigate and report evidence of mismanagement against the proprieties to establish a case for their elimination. To Randolph, North Carolina was hopeless. He reported in the 1690s that

he found about 60-70 scattered families, no government to speak of, and the economy in the hands of New Englanders who were illegally engaged in coastal and West Indian trade. Although Randolph grossly underestimated the colony's population, his assessment of the New Englanders' dominance of North Carolina's commerce is not far off the mark. His observation that the colony was a haven for "Pyrats & runaway Servants" (Saunders 1886-1890:1:467,527) led the Board of Trade the following year to admonish the Lords Proprietors that their colony was "too ordinary a Receptacle of Pyrats (Saunders 1886-1890:1:475).

In a 1707 act to encourage settlement in North Carolina it was noted that the colony's desolate coast was a place where "Pyrates in time of Peace have hitherto made use of the Harbours therein to careen and fitt their vessels and also to Wood and Water to the great annoyance of her Majties Subjects trading along the Coast" (Saunders 1886-1890:1:674). This act forgiving debtors of their debts for five years is one of the sources of the colony's notoriety as a refuge for runaways.

After the blockade of Charles Town and the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge* at Beaufort, Bonnet and Blackbeard took the King's Pardon at Bath from Governor Charles Eden and sailed away on separate courses. Bonnet turned north to raid the Virginia and Delaware coast. Shortly thereafter, he returned to the Cape Fear River where he battled and was captured by Colonel William Rhett and a South Carolina flotilla. He and most of his crew were tried and condemned by admiralty judge Nicholas Trott and executed by the end of 1718.

Cruise of Royal James, July 1718

The sworn testimony in the trials at Charles Town from pirates Ignatius Pell and David Herriot and the hostage captains Peter Mainwaring and Thomas Read furnish considerable detail on the prizes Stede Bonnet encountered during a cruise from Topsail Inlet up the coast to Delaware Bay and back to an anchorage for careening and refitting in the Cape Fear River. Although Bonnet had taken the King's pardon and had permission to sail to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands to secure a letter of marque to attack Spanish shipping, he turned north instead toward the Virginia capes and Delaware Bay. In the month of July he stopped and plundered thirteen prizes, sometimes robbing, sometimes trading, never destroying the prizes, and usually allowing them to continue on their way.

Stede Bonnet's well-documented July 1718 cruise offers insight into the practice of piracy in the Golden Age. All vessels were stopped without a fight by either a "shot across the bow" or by boarding anchored vessels from small boats or canoes. All but four—a schooner and three sloops— were allowed to continue their voyages undamaged. Seamen voluntarily joined the pirates from several of the prizes, although on trial later for their lives, some testified that they were forced. There was only one occasion, aggravated by too much rum punch, in which there were minor injuries to captives; at Cape Henlopen a woman and child were set ashore; and all prisoners testified that they

were not mistreated. In several encounters the pirates traded with the prize, to their own advantage, of course, but apparently believing that this transaction would not be considered piracy. Since Bonnet had taken the pardon, he changed the name of *Revenge* to *Royal James* and used several aliases, including Richards, Edwards, and Thomas (Butler 2000:61-63).

Figure 12 Stede Bonnet

Although randomly selected, the vessels Bonnet encountered in July 1718 between Topsail Inlet and the Delaware capes offer insight into colonial trade through two major ports— Philadelphia and Chesapeake Bay. At the Virginia capes Bonnet had stopped a pink, two sloops, three ships, and two schooners. In Delaware Bay off Cape Henlopen two snows and three sloops were boarded. On the

Virginia coast Bonnet seized a 60-ton sloop and a Boston schooner, but the prize crew stole the sloop from him. In Delaware Bay two of the sloops, engaged in the West Indian trade, were kept as store ships. After Bonnet returned his flotilla to North Carolina's Cape Fear River for careening and refitting, an unlucky six-ton shallop sailed into the river where it was seized and broken up for repairs on the pirate vessels.

The three ships sailing from Virginia to Glasgow, Scotland were laden with tobacco. The pirates took 200 weight of tobacco essentially for personal use and some sewing implements. From the two 90-ton snows bound from Philadelphia to Bristol, England, Bonnet's men pillaged specie and personal items.

The pink, sloops, and schooners, the workhorses of colonial trade, were the most valuable prizes, the ship types pirates used themselves and were most likely to keep or loot for replacement fittings. The vessels engaged in the intercolonial trade were either laden with provisions, which the pirates needed, or with precious rum, molasses, or sugar from the Caribbean. From Bonnet's first prize, the pink stopped south of Cape Henry, barrels of pork and bread were exchanged for casks of rice and an old cable. The New England schooner of 30 – 40 tons sailing from North Carolina that Bonnet kept yielded calfskins needed for gun covers and later tar and pitch. The last two prizes of the voyage seized in Delaware Bay were a Barbados-bound fifty-ton sloop laden with provisions and the thirty-five-ton sloop inbound from Antigua with rum, molasses, and sugar. Bonnet kept these two prizes and took them to the Cape Fear refuge where they ultimately became the evidence that sent him and most of his men to the gallows in Charles Town (SC Vice-Admiralty Court 1719:11-14, 46-47, 49-50; Johnson 1999[1724]: 97-99).

The Fate of Blackbeard

In no hurry to resume "pyrating," Blackbeard saw an opportunity in Bath County. He had arrived at a critical juncture in North Carolina politics. The colony had persevered through near chaos in the Cary Rebellion and Tuscarora War, although with the end of the war it began to experience an economic recovery. The years of a long-term political power struggle bitterly divided the colony's leaders. Facing off in 1718 were the opposition headed by Edward Moseley and Colonel Maurice Moore against the government represented by Governor Eden, Chief Justice Tobias Knight, and president of the council Thomas Pollock. Pollock and Moseley had been implacable opponents since the Cary Rebellion, and the pirate imbroglio embroiled them once again in a clash (Butler 2000:40).

Edward Thatch, alias Blackbeard, had landed in an isolated colony on the rebound from a destructive war and a divisive rebellion. With ready cash and abundant inexpensive trade goods, Thatch elicited few questions from the hard-pressed merchants and innkeepers. He further disarmed

his critics by marrying the daughter of a local planter and ostensibly settling into the domestic life of the colony. After his brief sojourn ashore, Thatch left in *Adventure*, returning several weeks later with a French vessel laden with sugar and cocoa. Claiming the vessel an abandoned derelict, he secured salvage rights in the vice-admiralty court. From the cargo—through sale, trade, or gift—both Governor Eden and Chief Justice Knight acquired substantial amounts of sugar (Johnson 1999[1724]: 76-77).

Figure 13 Edward Thatch, alias Blackbeard the Pirate

Over the next four months Thatch was based in North Carolina, rotating from Bath to Ocracoke, and sometimes at sea. He amused himself in the local society; he probably traded; and he may occasionally have pilfered. Although by some accounts no traveler on the colony's sounds was

safe from the "reformed pirates," only one incident was recorded in a hearing before the council. William Bell, a local merchant, testified that his periauger was robbed at night on the Pamlico River by unknown assailants. The crime was initially attributed to petty thieves, and a full ten days passed before Bell implicated Thatch in the affair (Cain 1981-1999:7:85-86).

Enough apprehension was engendered by the pirate presence that merchants and "some of the best of the Planters" became impatient with the governor, who considered the real and imagined threat of Tuscarora raids more pressing and would not take action against the pirates. They secretly appealed to the governor of Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, a tireless enemy of piracy who welcomed the news on the whereabouts of an arch villain. Convinced that Blackbeard had established a rendezvous at Ocracoke Inlet, Spottswood had also heard that a pirate gathering there had attracted the infamous Vane. Pirates based at Ocracoke Inlet could control not only all of North Carolina's trade but would be poised to attack the far more valuable trade of Virginia and South Carolina.
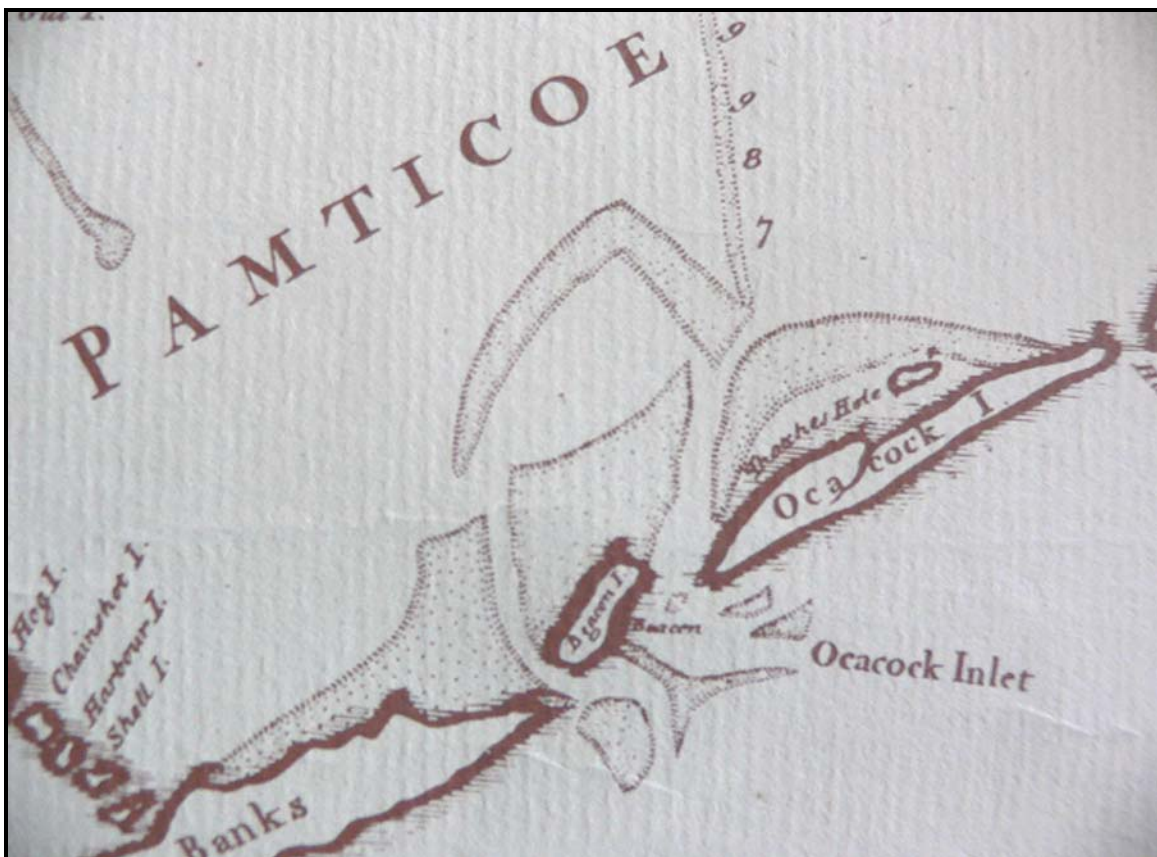

Figure 14 Ocracoke Inlet and Thatches Hole, Edward Moseley 1733

Anxious "to extirpate this nest of pyrates," Spotswood hastily planned a secret land and sea invasion of North Carolina to trap the pirates. Royal Navy Captain Ellis Brand commanded the combined operation and the land contingent. Lieutenant Robert Maynard, first officer of the Virginia guardship *Pearl*, was given command of hired sloops that were manned by naval volunteers. Captain Brand's force, aided by North Carolina guides, reached Bath on November 23. There Brand confiscated a large quantity of sugar and some cotton from Governor Eden and Justice Knight. Meanwhile, Maynard's flotilla defeated Blackbeard in a bloody battle on November 22. Maynard severed Blackbeard's head and sailed back to Virginia with the grisly trophy. Maynard's men ransacked the pirate camp, uncovering a valuable cache of cocoa, indigo, and cotton. The plunder and prisoners were loaded onto their vessels and returned to Virginia. Blackbeard's men were tried in Williamsburg in March 1719, and all were executed except Israel Hands, who gave evidence against his mates (Butler 2000:43-47; Johnson 1999[1724]: 77-83).
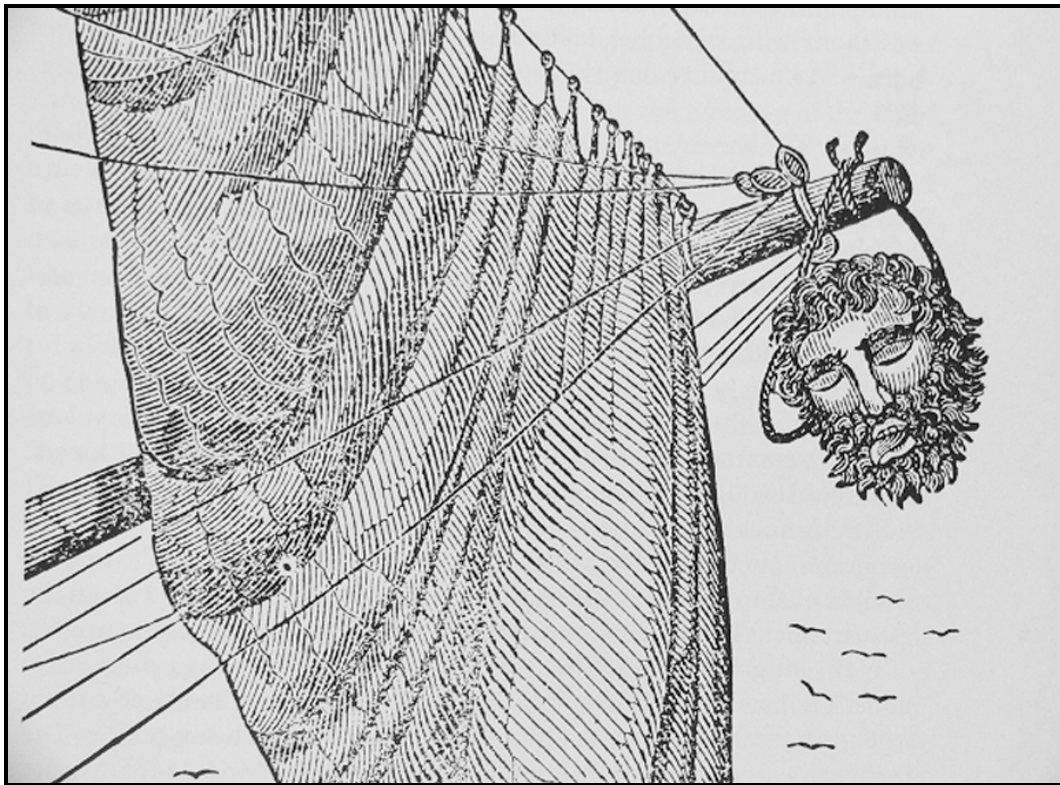

Figure 15 Lieutenant Maynard's trophy

The government in North Carolina was temporarily torn asunder. Certainly to their opponents Governor Eden and Justice Knight had been tarnished by their alleged dealings with Blackbeard. Yet Charles Eden continued as proprietary governor until his death in 1722. He was remembered as an

able governor by his contemporaries who granted him the singular memorial of naming the town on Queen Anne's Creek Edenton (Butler 2000:48-49). Although Captain Johnson had at first described him as virtually a partner of Blackbeard, he subsequently retracted this, stating that the governor did not have "any private or criminal Correspondence with this Pyrate" and that he "bore the Character of a good Governor and an honest Man" (Johnson 1999[1724]: 92).

As Blackbeard, Bonnet, and their crews were paying the ultimate price for their crimes, another pirate threat to Charles Town surfaced. Governor Robert Johnson was informed that the pirate Christopher Moody was heading for the town to blockade the harbor and seize prizes. Soon an unknown ship and sloop were detected lurking off the bar. To bolster the two, armed sloops from the Cape Fear expedition—the prize *Royal James* and *Sea Nymph*—the governor impressed and armed two merchant ships, *Mediterranean* and *King William.*

On November 5 the governor led his fleet out to engage the mysterious vessels, keeping the gun ports closed and most of the crew hidden. Assuming that these were merchant vessels attempting to escape to the open sea, the pirates closed in. At close range the South Carolina flotilla opened fire and in short order cornered the pirate sloop, killing the pirate captain, who turned out to be not Moody but Richard Worley. The pirates' ship fled with the governor in close pursuit. When the pirate ship surrendered well out to sea, Governor Johnson discovered that it concealed 130 male and female convicts whose ship had been seized while they were being transported to the colonies. The captured pirates went to trial, and most were executed. Moody had indeed been in the area but fled the scene upon hearing about Worley's fate (Johnson 1999[1724]: 301-303; Coker 1987:85).

Although there were a few more pirate alarms in the 1720s, the age of piracy was virtually over. On the North American seaboard the brigands had ranged from New England to the Carolinas and the Bahamas. The pirate base at Nassau had been eliminated by Crown intervention. The specter of a pirate stronghold on the mainland was snuffed out by prompt action from Virginia and South Carolina, both of which had the most to lose. The failure of the Lords Proprietors to help end the pirate threat of 1718 was the last in a long list of grievances that brought the end of proprietary rule in the Carolinas.

North Carolina: Pirate Haven

Mystery surrounds the fate of perhaps 200 pirates who disappeared from the record after the pirate vessels grounded in Beaufort Inlet in June 1718. Some sources list Blackbeard as having had nearly 400 pirates and Africans in his flotilla. Fewer than 150 pirates and Africans were known to have sailed away with Blackbeard and Bonnet. Some of the missing may have been lost in the wrecks, and others were reported to be in Virginia, New York, and Philadelphia. Having taken the pardon, the remainder may have faded into the North Carolina marshes and woods, seeking to escape their

past by becoming law-abiding settlers. Their money and goods were welcome on the ravaged frontier of Bath County, and the armed pirates, if truly reformed, likely were viewed as welcome additions to the region's militia.

Nearly three centuries later, numerous individuals whose family roots are deep in coastal North Carolina will tell you with pride that they are descended from Blackbeard. From what we know of Blackbeard's brief sojourn in the colony, that is not likely, but these Carolinians may indeed have a pirate ancestor from Blackbeard's crew. Arriving in the wake of war and rebellion, a pirate would have found ready opportunities to lose his former identity, marry and acquire a family, and take up the respectable life of a farmer, trader, craftsman, innkeeper, fisherman, or seaman, over time helping to build a colony that flourished despite its tenuous beginnings in the proprietary era.

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