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Colonial Development: The Importance of the Backcountry Frontier in the Protection and Preservation of Lowcountry Power in Colonial South Carolina, 1730-1769

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

by

Dillon Naquin
B.A. Nicholls State University, 2019
B.S. Nicholls State University, 2019

May 2021

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Abstract

In general discussions and teachings about the American Colonies before the Revolution, South Carolina is often oversimplified. Students are presented with a picture portraying the beginnings of American slavery, with large, cash crop plantations being worked by enslaved Africans while the white owners of the enslaved reap the benefits and enjoy a life of relative ease and luxury in their plantation houses and in the city of Charleston. Even when this picture includes extreme measures the planter elite took to enjoy this lifestyle in the form of slave laws and punishments, the more indirect methods of suppression are often left out. Often excluded from the picture is the role the white settlers of the frontier had in the maintenance of this system. The inclusion of the Backcountry in this picture allows all to see just how extensive the efforts to maintain the wealth and power of the planter elite.

Backcountry, Frontier, Colonial South Carolina, Lowcountry, Regulators, Commons House, Slavery, Settlement

Introduction

In the latter half of its colonial life, South Carolina served as one of the more prosperous English North American colonies of the 18th century. By the time of the American Revolution, its largest city, Charleston, was second only to Boston in terms of its population but was far wealthier, with its free population having an average of ten times the wealth of its northern counterpart. As a quick clarification to those unfamiliar, the city was actually known as "Charles Town" throughout the entire colonial period and would not adopt its current name until it was incorporated in 1783. However, nearly all scholarship on the colony refers to the city by its modern name, and so this research will do the same.[1] Walter J. Fraser, Jr.'s book *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* provides an excellent accounting of the city's colonial history. The city served as the funnel through which the vast agricultural wealth of the coastal Lowcountry flowed out into the rest of the British empire.[2] There is, of course, a darker side to this prosperity, as much of that wealth was made possible because of the work of thousands of enslaved peoples, many of whom arrived in the province on the docks of Charleston, on lands once inhabited by the original coastal tribes of Native Americans.

In the early days of the colony, many English planters from colonies like Barbados sought to imitate the systems that had made the colonies of the Caribbean so profitable, including the establishment of plantation agriculture and the use of enslaved labor.[3] The opportunity to create a colony that could supply the wealthy islands with the necessities like foodstuffs so that more land on the island could be dedicated to sugar production led many prominent Barbadian

[1] Walter A. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 169-70.

[2] Carter L. Hudgins, "Backcountry and Lowcountry: Perspectives on Charleston in the Context of Trans-Atlantic Culture, 1700-1850," *Historical Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (1999): 102.

[3] Jeanette Keith, ed., *The South: A Concise History* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002) 1: 38.

planters to invest in lands in a young South Carolina.[4] Similarly to most other European colonies in the New World, those attempting to colonize the lands that would become South Carolina sought to use slave labor as a means to facilitate large scale agricultural production.[5] The Native Americans and Africans forced into bondage were mostly put to work on the large rice plantations that dominated the Lowcountry and aided in the cultivation of indigo, allowing both the slave owners and the merchants of the city of Charleston to become some of the wealthiest men in North America along with generating considerable profits for the British crown. Only a quarter of the white Lowcountry population, typically craftsmen in Charleston or small-scale farmers on the outskirts, owned no slaves at all in the decades South Carolina spent as a Royal Colony.[6]

To gain an understanding of the type of wealth that was seen as typical for the Lowcountry, one can look to the example of John Guerard, a descendant of Huguenot refugees who turned to trading to make their early fortune before investing much of their profits in land and plantations. At the time of his death in 1764, Guerard's estate consisted of four working plantations totaling nearly 4,000 acres and an additional 12,000 acres of land with varying levels of development to go along with his properties in Charleston.[7] The combination of having an ideal climate for rice production and access to an African workforce familiar with the crop allowed individuals who possessed such properties like Guerard to grow their own personal fortunes and make their colony one of importance.[8]

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[4] Jack P. Greene, "Colonial South Carolina and the Caribbean Connection," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 88, no.4 (October 1987): 197-98.

[5] Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2013), 17.

[6] Richard Waterhouse, "Economic Growth and Changing Patterns of Wealth Distribution in Colonial Lowcountry South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89, no. 4 (October 1988): 208-09.

[7] R.C. Nash, "Trade and Business in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina: The Career of John Guerard, Merchant and Planter," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 96, no. 1 (January 1995): 8-13.

[8] Peter Coclanis, "Global Perspectives on the Early Economic History of South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 106, no. 2/3 (April-July 2005): 138-40.

The power of these wealthy landowners was furthered by the fact that land ownership was not only a requirement for voting in local elections but for holding office as well. While the Governor was a position appointed by royal authority, the Commons House of Assembly was the legislative body designed to serve as the political voice for the people of South Carolina and was often the most powerful political entity in the colony.[9] To vote, a man needed to have already cultivated a plantation or have three hundred acres of land to their name. In order to be elected a member of the Commons House of Assembly, the primary legislative body of the South Carolina colonial government, one was required to have at least five hundred acres of land and a minimum of twenty slaves under their ownership.[10] Such practices ensured that those with personal and financial stakes in institutions like slavery could continue with their current means of living and protect their stations.

The backgrounds and qualifications required for those who participated in the ruling of the colony ensured that local officials would make decisions that guaranteed the continuation of the status quo of the colony, and therefore the protection of their own personal property and wealth. The minutes of the Commons House sessions fortunately survived and were later republished by multiple historical associations dedicated to South Carolina history. The numerous volumes of *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly* have been heavily referenced to some degree in nearly all scholarly works on Colonial South Carolina and are heavily referenced in this research as well. A description of the journals, their origins, and how they are organized also exists for those seeking assistance in navigating them.[11]

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[9] Eugene M. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 239.

[10] Max Savelle and Darold D. Wax, *A History of Colonial America*, 3rd ed. (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, 1973), 436.

[11] Charles E. Lee and Ruth S. Green, "A Guide to the Commons House Journals of the South Carolina General Assembly 1721-1775," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 68, no. 3 (July 1967): 165-67.

Additionally, George Edward Frakes' *Laboratory for Liberty: The South Carolina Legislative Committee System, 1719-1776* and Richard R. Beeman's *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* provide valuable insight into the inner workings of colonial South Carolina political theater. One seeking to investigate the lives and policies of some of South Carolina's more influential Colonial Governors when it comes to frontier policy have been put to record. Richard P. Sherman's *Robert Johnson: Proprietary & Royal Governor of South Carolina* and W. Stitt Robinson's *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina* are heavily referenced when historians have referred to the actions of these men relating to English expansion into the frontier.

The potential wealth of such industries attracted more and more prospective elites to establish their own plantations and motivated the already settled planter elite to further invest in more and more land. The Lowcountry itself consisted of a nearly two hundred mile stretch of coast that penetrated roughly fifty miles inland. The plantations of this region that fueled the economic prosperity of the colony often had anywhere from one hundred to two hundred acres dedicated solely to rice production, making each enslaved person on these plantations responsible for working three to five acres of land, further fueling the demand for additional slaves.[12] As for the remainder of the colony, when it comes to discussing what constituted the Backcountry, it can be defined as the areas of limited European settlement sandwiched between the core areas of European settlement like the Lowcountry and territories still firmly in control of the Native Americans.[13] This frontier consisted of the lands that make up the modern-day state of

[12] David B. Ryden and Russell R. Menard. "South Carolina's Colonial Land Market: An Analysis of Rural Property Sales. 1720-1775," *Social Science History* 29, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 602-604.

[13] Joshua Piker, "Colonists and Creeks: Rethinking the Pre-Revolutionary Southern Backcountry," *The Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 3 (August 2004): 503.

South Carolina, as well as some lands on the fringes of Cherokee territory in what is now eastern Tennessee.[14]

Multiple works have become cornerstones of Backcountry literature, but Robert Lee Meriwethers' 1940 book, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729-1765*, has been consistently referenced in even more recent works because of its precise and thorough description of the Carolina Backcountry during the Royal period. Using Meriwether's research, other historians, and their works such as Rachel N. Kleins' 1990 *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* and George Lloyd Johnson Jr.'s 1997 work *The Frontier in the Colonial South: South Carolina Backcountry, 1736-1800* have also risen to become essential readings for anyone seeking to understand the region and its history. Specific regions of the frontier have also been singled out and analyzed by various historians such as Kenneth E. Lewis and his book *The Carolina Backcountry Venture: Tradition, Capitol, and Circumstances in the Development of Camden and the Wateree Valley, 1740-1810*. Another of Lewis' major works, *The American Frontier: An Archaeological Study of Settlement Patterns and Process*, takes much from Meriwether and adds to it by including an archeological aspect to it. Additional works such as *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763* by M. Eugene Sirmans, *South Carolina: A History* by Walter Edgar, and *A History of Colonial America* by Max Savelle cover a broader scope of material relating to South Carolina history but still give considerable attention to the frontier and its settling.

It is this region that will be settled throughout the remainder of the colonial era as a means of safeguarding the prosperity Europeans had already begun to cultivate along the coast. This study aims to not only provide a modern accounting of the settling of the Carolina frontier

[14] Park Rouse Jr., *The Great Wagon Road: from Philadelphia to the South* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 88.

that includes newer scholarly works in tandem with these heavily relied on sources, but also examine how the settling of the frontier not only to protect the Lowcountry from physical threats but ensured that its political dominance would be secure as well. While these sources have long been reliable to the field, revisiting their subjects and combining them with that of more recent works provides future scholars with a more modern interpretation of both the subject and historiography and can aid them in formulating their own interpretations in future works.

As early as 1708, the Board of Trade in London estimated that the black and white populations in the settled areas of South Carolina were roughly the same size, but by 1720, Africans were estimated to make up around 12,000 of South Carolina's 21,000 with the numbers continuing to rise as plantation agriculture became a more and more profitable industry.[15] While having so many enslaved workers was profitable for these European settlers, it also made the possibility of slave revolts a much more realistic threat. Fear of a massive slave uprising was far from the only danger for those who had interests in South Carolina. Sally E. Hadden covers some of the countermeasures designed to keep the enslaved population as such that were put into place in her book *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas*.

[15] Darold D. Wax, "The Great Risque We Run: The Aftermath of Slave Rebellion at Stono, South Carolina, 1739-1745," *The Journal of Negro History* 67, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 136-137.

Britannica Encyclopedia. "Distribution of Southeast American Indian Cultures" https://www.britannica.com/topic/Southeast-Indian#/media/1/667914/332 (accessed February 26, 2021).

Since Europeans had been settling on the coasts of Carolina, they had both competed and collaborated with the vast number of Native American peoples who, for centuries, had called the region home (see *Figure* 1). The original coastal tribes of Carolina were the first to bear witness to European settlement, disease, and enslavement, with many being forced into enslavement in South Carolina before African slavery became the norm, as well as being shipped off to British holdings in the Caribbean. Eventually because of a culmination of issues, the conflict that would be known as the 1715 Yamasee War brought the young European colony into open warfare

against an alliance of nearly every major Native American tribe in the region, with the exception of the Cherokee.[16] While destructive, the European colony managed to scrape a victory over its Native neighbors and in doing so ensured that their established positions on the coast would remain under their control. This conflict was not the end all for Native Americans in South Carolina however, as the tribes who resided further inland like the Catawba, the Creeks, and most prominently, the Cherokee, remained considerable regional powers that South Carolina and the British were reluctant to provoke another war. The Cherokee would eventually come into conflict with the colonists however and that war would have considerable consequences for the colony and the Backcountry in particular. This conflict is explored in incredible detail in *Carolina in Crisis: Cherokees, Colonists, and Slaves in the American Southeast, 1756-1763* by Daniel J. Tortora and *War and Peace on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63*.

Perhaps the largest obstacle faced by colonial administrators came from their more traditional adversaries of France and Spain. As a means of securing their colonial holdings, imperial powers often relied on allied Native Americans to serve as their proxies in order to maintain their established influence in certain regions. The colonial government of South Carolina regularly negotiated different treaties, truces, and other forms of peace with the numerous regional tribes for the dual purpose of gaining new allies that could help secure their colonial holdings while simultaneously depriving the French and Spanish of any potential additional forces that could be used to attack South Carolina should war break out.[17] Europeans competed with one another for Native support by granting prominent Natives gifts and enriching them with European goods through their trade as a means of securing alliances with the more

[16] John Anthony Caruso, *The Southern Frontier* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963), 136-137.
[17] B.D. Barger, *Royal South Carolina: 1719-1763*. (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 29-30.

numerous Native peoples that could be used in future conflicts with other Europeans.[18] Based out of Louisiana, the French constructed numerous forts and outposts across the Mississippi basin to both make inroads with the Natives of the region and as a means of extending French power in the region.[19]

The Spanish threatened British South Carolina in a much different way. Being firmly established in nearby Florida, the Spanish presented a much more realistic threat than that of the French. The proximity of St. Augustine made any potential invasion by Spanish forces much more plausible than one conducted by the French from Mobile or New Orleans. This proximity also allowed the Spanish to antagonize one of South Carolina's most important economic lifeblood and largest weaknesses, its slave population. Being so close to South Carolina allowed the Spanish the chance to both stoke the fires of slave revolts and entice enslaved Africans to run away from their masters and seek refuge in Florida.[20] Both of these outcomes would have weakened South Carolina internally and could have potentially opened up the colony to invasion or at the very least hindered it to the point where the British would have to direct their gaze toward inward matters and away from the Spanish. Being surrounded by and living among so many threats, it would be easy to assume that this British position in South Carolina would be untenable. For the European residents of South Carolina, a solution to all these problems would present itself: increase the number of white people in the colony and settle them in the available lands of the Backcountry.

[18] Neal Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (July 1996): 454.

[19] Cornelius J. Jaenen, "French Expansion in North America," *The History Teacher* 34, no. 2 (February 2001): 156.

[20] Jane Landers, "Spanish Sanctuary: Fugitives in Florida, 1687-1790," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 62, no.3 (January 1984): 298-300.

As the efforts to settle the frontier began to yield results in the subsequent years, Lowcountry security from the previously perceived threats became a reality. The Backcountry continued to fill up with European settlers seeking to carve out a new life for themselves and their families that simultaneously allowed the wealthy and prominent of the coastal areas to maintain their well established political and economic dominance. For insight into the lives of those who ventured into the Backcountry, Richard J. Hookers' 1953 publishing of the letters and accounts of Anglican Itinerant Charles Woodmason provide us with a firsthand account of what the lives of these colonists were like. Woodmason also provides us with an account of what we know as the Regulator Movement, an armed uprising that would engulf the Backcountry as it began to create its own separate identity from that of the Lowcountry and sought to challenge the established order centered around Lowcountry dominance. Richard Maxwell Browns' 1963 book, *The South Carolina Regulators*, is the most well-known and well-regarded account of the movement and both Brown and Hookers works are heavily relied on by any later works related to the Regulator Movement.

This study's analysis of the Regulator Movement will also gauge whether or not the monopoly on power held by the coastal elites was ever in serious danger from the emerging political force of the Backcountry and whether or not it evolved into a legitimate political contender in South Carolina. By analyzing whether or not the Backcountry emerged as a true political challenger to the Lowcountry, the question of whether or not a settled frontier succeeded in its intended goal of defending the Lowcountry from potential threats was actually achieved or if the Backcountry itself undermined this goal through its own rise. In combining this research goal with that of how the Backcountry helped secure coastal political dominance,

this study will showcase how it later emerged as the biggest threat to it as well and potential ramifications for the colony would be for the remainder of the colonial period.

These sources all describe and analyze the settlement of the Backcountry and by covering the processes and conflicts that insured, one is left with the impression that the original purpose for encouraging settlement, the protection of the economically and politically valuable Lowcountry, was achieved. Upon analysis of the historiography, conventional wisdom would tell one that yes, it did as the danger presented by the previously mentioned threats was reduced with the increased population of white settlers. But while the threat to Lowcountry power posed by these original, openly hostile challengers may have diminished, the potential of the Backcountry as their successor was soon realized. In their haste to protect themselves from foreign usurpers, the government of South Carolina funded the creation of a domestic one whose economic, cultural, and social differences would place them at odds with those they were intended to be subservient to. If the Backcountry was supposed to secure Lowcountry dominance, then by developing into its most legitimate regional rival it failed to fulfil the hopes of the Lowcountry elite seeking to maintain their monopoly on power in the colony and in doing so, also failed in its intended purpose. This interpretation is one that has not been the central focus of any previous contributions to the subject matter known to me, but by reanalyzing the existing scholarship and highly referenced primary sources like Woodmason's letters and Journals of the Commons House, I intend to bring this perspective to light. Other historians might acknowledge the political power that the Backcountry would wield after the Regulator Movement and Revolution, but they do not consider that its wielding of that power required the Backcountry to operate counter to its original purpose and thus failing to live up to its desired purpose.

Section 1: Threats to Lowcountry Power

The endeavor of increasing the number of white, European settlers in the colony picked up serious steam with the administration of Robert Johnson, who served as the final governor under the Propriety and returned to the position during the province's transfer to the Crown. As early as 1729, Johnson recognized that the far more numerous populations of enslaved persons, as well as Native Americans and rival European powers, could bring the colony to ruin if any large-scale conflict arose. He noted the deficiency of white settlers to counter them, writing that "Nothing is so much wanted in Carolina as white inhabitants."[21]. In 1730, Johnson introduced his plan to gain those much-desired white inhabitants. His Township plan would establish numerous towns across the frontier populated with white, European, Protestants who could serve in their local militias and be called upon to come to the aid of the coastal Lowcountry.[22]

The coastal areas serving as the economic heart of the colony was dominated by plantations that already took up sizable amounts of the inhabitable land. Johnson thus decided that these townships should be established in the sparsely settled frontier areas along natural waterways and rivers to the west, north, and south of Charleston. Each township would consist of a 20,000-acre grant that would have land both within and around the proposed area of settlement reserved for prospective settlers.[23] This plan addressed three separate problems at the same time the white population would rise and close the gap between them and the enslaved while also establishing settlements that could serve as a barrier and protective force for the Lowcountry from both Native American and European attack.

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[21] Richard P. Sherman, *Robert Johnson: Proprietary & Royal Governor of South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966), 107-08.

[22] Alan D. Watson, "The Quitrent System in Royal South Carolina," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (April 1976): 188-89.

[23] Sherman, 108.

While seemingly a simple solution, the reality of the situation in South Carolina complicated such moves and this idea was not wholly original. A similar strategy of establishing frontier towns to act as buffer zones in Virginia was proposed in the wake of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 but was eventually opposed by the Virginian elite who saw it was dangerous to organize and arm those who might oppose their dominance over the Virginia colony.[24] In Carolina, however, the need for settled white families to act as a defensive line and defend the economic heart of the colony was a gamble Lowcountry elites accepted. Such expansion would further extend British influence over areas of the frontier that had yet to come directly under the imperial fold while allowing the Lowcountry to carry on with and expand its plantations. As these frontier settlements grew over the course of the colonial period, the Backcountry would become the shield that allowed the Lowcountry to maintain its status as a prosperous plantation society.

With such motivations, it is visible that, at least in the case of South Carolina, colonial expansion westward was not undertaken simply for the sake of expansion. The traditional myth of western expansion portrays a continuously advancing wave of settlers pushing into previously Native lands, removing the inhabitants, establishing their farms and towns, and developing the surrounding land to fit their commercial needs so that they can be incorporated and reconnected with already established areas.[25] In the case of South Carolina, this expansion was instead brought on by the need to firmly protect what was already there. There was an exorbitant amount of momentum among those in power to help speed up the rate of white settlement into the frontiers so that what had already been created could continue on.

[24] Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox." *The Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June 1972): 22.

[25] Richard A. Barlett, "Frontier Heritage," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 3: History*, ed. Wilson Charles Reagan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 102.

Slave rebellions have been a constant fear in slave holding societies across both the Old and New Worlds. It is simple math that the more people who are enslaved, the more opportunities arise for them to rise up against their masters. This reality was faced all across the New World and South Carolina was no exception. Unlike slaves in the island colonies of the Caribbean, opportunities to completely escape bondage were much more numerous to the slaves of South Carolina as not being confined to an island offered more places of potential refuge. This geographical luck meant that those seeking to continue subjugating and exploiting the enslaved had to work diligently to keep as many of those doors to freedom closed as possible. Among the many restrictions and regulations placed on the enslaved like curfews and the pass system, by 1740, official slave patrols were organized from white men selected by their militia captains to remain behind and serve as patrolmen on the lookout for any runaways or potential rebels.[26] Even with such countermeasures in place, it was not lost on either slave or master that freedom was still attainable through numerable ways, including through conflict.

Many of the enslaved Africans brought to South Carolina originated from those regions of Western Africa known to produce rice, and that knowledge and experience made the Africans from those regions both very popular and valuable to the point where they made up nearly 40% of the enslaved population.[27] As rice culture expanded, so too did the demand for enslaved Africans who could properly grow the crop. Additionally, slave deaths regularly outnumbered slave births until the end of the colonial period, making the continued importation of new slaves a necessity for planters in order for planters to meet their labor needs and leading to South Carolina becoming the largest importer of enslaved people of all the British colonies of mainland

[26] Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 14-24.

[27] Judith A. Carney, "The Role of African Rice and Slaves in the History of Rice Cultivation in the Americas," *Human Ecology* 26, no. 4 (December 1998): 529-530.

North America.[28] This continual increase of the black enslaved population not only increased the likelihood of conflict, but practically main a revolt all but inevitable.

South Carolina was far the only colony to express fears of a potential slave uprising. Throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, numerous slave uprisings, revolts, and escape attempts would be carried out both in colonies with large slave populations like South Carolina and Virginia and colonies like New York where slave populations were much lower.[29] Despite not being a fear particularly unique to South Carolina, the massive population of enslaved in its territory meant that when a true revolt finally did erupt, its aftermath would leave a lasting impact in the memories of its survivors, both enslaved and free. On September 9, 1739, the planters' worst fear would be realized as around 100 slaves rose up near the Stono River in what was known as St. Paul's Parish, only a few short miles from Charleston. The self-liberated slaves began to march towards St. Augustine in hopes of gaining their permanent freedom with the Spanish. The rebellious slaves ransacked a store in order to obtain arms and ammunition and by the time the local militia put the resurrection was quelled, twenty-three white colonists would already be slain.[30] Following the Stono Rebellion, the Commons House of Assembly, the primary legislative body of colonial South Carolina, took steps to ensure that the next slave rebellion could be easily put down.

On November 10, 1739, the House was presented with a number of proposed additions to a new bill that would fulfill such a purpose. Among the list of recommendations, the first one read that for every ten male slaves over the age of 12, their owner would be obligated to find one

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[28] Peter C. Mancall, Joshua L. Rosenbloom, and Thomas Weiss, "Slave Prices and the South Carolina Economy, 1722-1809." *The Journal of Economic History 61*, no. 3 (September 2001): 625.

[29] Erwin A. Salk, *A Laymen's Guide to Negro History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 3-4.

[30] "*Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Causes of the Disappointment of Success in the late, Expedition Against St. Augustine."* found in J.H Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: May 18,1741-July 10, 1742* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1953): 83.

able bodied white man capable of serving in the militia.[31] Rather than slowing down or ceasing the importation of slaves that could rebel against the colony, the Commons House sought to devise a solution that would allow the continuation of this practice while at the same time increasing the number of people who could potentially fight a rebellion. And this strategy did have merit to it, as increasing the number of white Europeans capable of resisting the ever-growing population of enslaved Africans males did work towards ensuring that any future uprisings would be met with the manpower needed to put it down. The Commons House also took steps to ensure that the Townships could participate in the next uprising.

On the same day as the proposal above, The Commons House was presented the petition of Christian Mote, the Major of the Militia and Magistrate for the Saxe Gotha, Orangeburg, and Amelia Townships. In his petition, Major Mote asked for the House to supply those frontier settlers with the arms and ammunition necessary to defend themselves and their homes. After reading the petition, the House agreed to supply £200 worth of arms and ammunition to these new settlers and even suggested that any settler whose arms were damaged have them sent to Charleston to be mended.[32] The eagerness of the House to supply these newly arrived whites with weapons and ensuring those already armed were fit for usage shows how essential it viewed a sufficiently armed white populace. Being able to project power in the form of a well-armed militia that would meet to drilled and train in the same area would serve as a constant reminder to any enslaved person considering another large-scale rebellion like the at Stono that there was a sufficient force of whites who could counter it. The idea that any force composed of local,

[31] Entry for "Saturday the 10th of November 1739," as found in J.H Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: September 12, 1739-March 26, 1741* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952): 25.

[32] Entry for "Saturday the 10th of November 1739," as found in J.H Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: September 12, 1739-March 26, 1741* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952): 27-28.

Lowcountry whites mobilized to counter any revolt would be further reinforced by the arrival of a militia group from the Backcountry would have been present in the minds of the enslaved and could have acted as an additional deterrent to any large-scale revolt.

Even with such measures, the threat of a slave revolt remained a fact of life in South Carolina so long as slaves continued to pour into the colony. The ever-increasing demands of the plantation economy only made the possibility of rebellion more likely. Many of these slaves were men of fighting ages taken from Central-West Africa, in particular the Christian Kingdom of Kongo in modern day Angola. According to John Thornton, their Catholic ties made them more sympathetic to Catholic Spain and along with their preexisting skills and experiences as warriors, were therefore more likely to rebel against their Protestant masters and seek their freedom through force. Many of the leaders of the Stono Rebellion appeared to have similar roots, thus making their decision to try to flee to St. Augustine all the more reasonable.[33] While not constituting the entirety of the slave population of South Carolina, the presence of many African men with experience in combat and military organization was still incredibly dangerous to white dominance in South Carolina.

Even before the Stono Rebellion, steps were being undertaken to exploit the enslaved for more than just their labor. The sheer number of slaves being imported into the province were seen as just that, an import. These people were already being reduced to commodities, so instituting a tax on such a heavily imported commodity would generate a substantial amount of revenue for the province. On February 1, 1738, the committee of the Commons House of Assembly assigned to the settlement of Poor Protestants in the province recommended that the current funds within the Township Fund were insufficient, recommended that the "properest

[33] John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1103-1109.

way" to aid these new arrivals was by reviving the import duties on enslaved Africans.[34] The taxation of this consistent importation of new slaves from Africa would make available a steady revenue stream that could help fund the settlement of whites in the province. Even if this duty raised the expenses of the planters by requiring them to pay more for their slaves, the increased costs going towards supporting the poor white population that was purposefully brought over to counter rising slave numbers was a necessary expense.

The funds generated from this duty were soon put to use in aiding in the development of the Backcountry. On March 1, 1739, the House received a petition from Joseph Crell of Saxe Gotha Township requesting £150 from the Township Fund to finish the construction of a mill. Crell claimed that once the mill was completed, both Saxe Gotha and the nearby townships could begin producing large crops of wheat. The House agreed that such a mill would be advantageous to everyone and recommended Mr. Crell receive the necessary aid from the Township Fund.[35] The Welsh settlers along the Pee Dee River submitted a similar petition asking for the same amount of money to the Commons House for a mill of their own so they could better improve their agricultural output.[36] The erection of these mills would allow the areas of the Backcountry populated by Europeans to begin producing a substantially larger amount of crops that could help sustain these communities' longevity and allow them to continue to grow. Additionally, in late 1739, the previously mentioned petition for guns to be given to settlers from Major Christian

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[34] Entry for "*Wednesday the 1st day of February 1737/8*," as found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: November 10,1736-June 7, 1739* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952) 439-440.

[35] Entry for "*Thursday the 1st day of March 1738/9*," as found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: November 10,1736-June 7, 1739* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952): 655-656.

[36] Entry for "*Friday the 16th day of March 1738/9*," as found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: November 10, 1736-June 7, 1739* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952): 675-676.

Mote was paid for out of the same township fund, showing that this money was spent on more than just infrastructure for the settlers.[37]

While physical evidence of backcountry growth like these mills and supplies are obvious, the essential role of slavery in the Backcountry's growth can easily be lost even though there were few slaves on the frontier. The money generated from the importation of these enslaved persons allowed such growth to happen. Without that money, the Township fund would likely have been unable to meet the needs of the newly arrived settlers and townships would have had to either adapt to become more self-sufficient or been unable to support themselves and died out and their inhabitants forced to relocate. These outcomes would have left the Lowcountry population even more vulnerable to slave insurrections as they would have lacked the ability to call on the aid of Backcountry whites.

Improvements such as these that were funded through the slave trade meant that the Lowcountry could help improve the lives of the Backcountry's white population and ensure that the white settlers they wanted to attract stayed put. The duty on slave imports allowed the Lowcountry planters to use what was potentially their largest weakness, the reliance on slave labor and an ever-growing number of enslaved being brought to the province, into a useful tool that helped facilitate the survival and prosperity of the people who were expected to enforce the status quo against those same slaves who could potentially decide to resist their status as property.

Since the earliest days of colonization across the Western Hemisphere, European relations with Native Americans fluctuated from friendly to hostile. Throughout nearly all of its

[37] Entry for "*Saturday the 10th of November 1739*," As found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: September 12, 1739-March 26, 1741 (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952):* 27-28.

colonial history, South Carolina often walked along this delicate line as those in power attempted to place their interests and that of the colony in the most advantageous positions. From the founding of the colony in 1670 through the first decades of the 1700s, trading with the local Native peoples served as the most profitable business in South Carolina until large scale, plantation agriculture supplanted it.[38] Merchants based out of Charleston imported a wide range of manufactured goods, from firearms and gunpowder to rum and European-style clothing, all to be traded among their native neighbors and in exchange for primarily deer pelts or other captured Natives to be used as slaves.[39] The profits made from the reselling of these goods elsewhere provided the colony with its first true valuable exports, as well as providing the Europeans who profited from the trade the means that would allow them to become some of the first large scale planters and begin the dominance of the plantation system.[40]

Native American slaves were also acquired by the English through outright conquest. Most of the coastal peoples who did not fall victim to European diseases or flee further inland were enslaved and either used as domestic labor or sold off to the sugar colonies of the Caribbean, acting as just another profitable export to further support the colony. This practice continued throughout the first decades of the 1700s until most of the Native population that could be enslaved had moved too far inland for this to be a profitable practice, but even as late as 1730, nearly a quarter of all slaves in South Carolina were Native Americans.[41] The enslavement and removal of the coastal tribes not only provided the colony with free labor that could be

[38] Philip M. Brown, "Early Indian Trade in the Development of South Carolina: Politics, Economics, and Social Mobility during the Proprietary Period, 1670-1719," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 76, no. 3 (July 1975):118.

[39] Denise I. Bossy, "Godin & Co.: Charleston Merchants and the Indian Trade, 1674-1715," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 114, no. 2(April 2013): 113-118.

[40] Brown, 128.

[41] Alvin M. Josephy Jr, *500 Nation: An Illustrated History of North American Indians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 220-226.

exploited and sold, but also ensured that the people who had the most claim to the lands that were swiftly developing into the Lowcountry would be unable to further dispute or resist the European intrusion into their lands. Such actions would also show the tribes who resided further inland their potential fate should the English continue to grow out from their coastal stronghold.

In spite of the success of the Indian trade, Native relations soon soured to the point where the Native Americans nearly brought about the complete destruction of the young European colony. In 1715, a massive alliance of Native American tribes headed by the Yamasee people nearly wiped out the European presence in the colony. After decades of trading between one another, tensions had been building as Europeans began to introduce more and more exploitive and abusive practices to the trade. The introduction of credit placed many tribes into severe debt to the European traders as well as more personal abuses like traders abusing the Native women they took on as wives to gain greater inroads into certain tribes.[42] Although the English emerged victorious from the war, the fact that Native forces were able to penetrate as deep into the colony as a few miles away from Charleston was reason enough for officials to consider the need for a buffer zone on the colony's southern frontier.[43] Fortunately for the remaining white settlers of South Carolina, their wait for such a buffer would soon begin to come to fruition.

The inclusion of Georgia in this research is a complicated issue. On the one hand, the creation of the colony was done in response to protect the southern colonies, but there was also a myriad of other justifications given for the creation of Georgia as well. James Oglethorpe, the mastermind behind Georgia's creation, envisioned his colony as a place where England could unload some of the large debtor population that overcrowded England's prison system.

[42] William L. Ramsey, "'Something Cloudy in Their Looks': The Origins of the Yamasee War Reconsidered." *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (June 2003): 48-55.

[43] Ramsey, 44-45.

Oglethorpe believed that by resettling these people and aiding them in creating new lives for themselves, he would alleviate some of the poorer populations of Great Britain. After being given this fresh start, they would establish towns that would eventually form a barrier to "render the southern frontier of the British colonies on the continent of America safe from Indian and other enemies."[44] While this plan seems like the plan for the backcountry carried out on a much grander scale, the creation of this buffer zone was seen by Oglethorpe to be a product of the settling of Georgia rather than the sole reasoning.

As a member of the British Parliament, Oglethorpe headed a committee tasked with the investigations of the state of Britain's prison system. The reports delivered by this committee revealed the horrid conditions of the prisons to Oglethorpe and he believed that the suffering of those confined to these prisons could be relieved if they were resettled in a colony where they could find employment and prosperity otherwise unattainable to them in England.[45] These personal motivations by Oglethorpe lead to the separation in this research of the creation of Georgia and the settling of the Carolina frontier as two distinct phenomena rather than two parts of an ultimate plan. This research argues that Oglethorpe's settling of poor debtors from English prisons was not done specifically to aid the Lowcountry elites in the maintenance of their power, even if it was a welcomed gesture.

Even if Oglethorpe's motivations to found Georgia were more of a way to aid the poor of England rather than the elites of Carolina, the Lowcountry elites were more than willing to support the young colony as it was obvious to them that the success of this new colony could be

[44] James Oglethorpe, 1733, as found in David Brion Davis and Steven Mintz, *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty: A Documentary History of America from Discovery to the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 104.

[45] Savelle, 442.

useful in protecting them. To those in positions of power in Charleston, any aid or support they were able to offer the new colony offered a return on their investment, a land settled by Europeans that could be used to defend their own colony. An example of such support can be seen in the "Abstract of the General Account of all Monies and Effects Received and Expended by the Trustees & c.," which briefly goes over the funds raised in South Carolina and how they were spent. As early as June of 1733, the Commons House had approved legislation imposing duties on imported rum with the purpose of raising funds to be used to help financially support South Carolina's new southern neighbors. In 1734, the South Carolina treasurer accounted for over £3,254 raised for "the only, use, benefit and support of his majesty's said subjects of Georgia." An additional £1,164 had been raised from the citizens of Charleston to further support the young colony. With these funds, material aid in the form of cattle, rice, and sheep was delivered to Georgia settlers as well as paying for the work of laborers who went to Georgia to aid in the colony's physical construction.[46] Through aid such as this, South Carolina heavily invested its own limited resources into the success of Georgia. The sacrifice of such resources as well as the increased competition in the Indian trade with merchants based out of Savannah could be recovered later on in a time when the region would be better protected from whatever threats emerged.[47] The investments made were meant to be paid off in the long run as Georgia eventually grew into the role the elites of South Carolina wished for it, a stable buffer zone to protect the Lowcountry from any Native American or European threat that arose further south. Even with Georgia's creation however, these threats were nowhere near eliminated.

[46] "*Abstract of the General Account of All Monies and Effects Received and Expended by the Trustees &c*." as found in J.H Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: November 10, 1736-June 7, 1739* (Columbia, The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1951): 154-156.

[47] Frances Harrold, "Colonial Siblings: Georgia's Relationship with South Carolina During the Pre-Revolutionary Period," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 708.

Even after the Yamasee War in 1715, Native Americans were still a cause for concern for whites in South Carolina. Some smaller, friendly tribes like the Peedee still remained within the official borders of South Carolina and their proximity was still cause for the colonial government to actively try and maintain friendly relations.[48] Even though some of these smaller tribes were perhaps to close for comfort, the Native nations that existed further on the outside of South Carolina's boundaries were of greater concern. The Cherokee were the largest remaining tribe in the immediate vicinity of South Carolina. Despite the fact that they had aided the British in the Yamasee War, there were still those in positions of power who saw continuing to encourage European settlement in the Backcountry, including areas closer to Cherokee lands, as essential in allowing European control to continue. In a 1751 letter to then Governor James Glen, Stephen Crell of Saxe Gotha wrote that "the close settling of a good number of people on the frontiers, being without question the best means to preserve the country this way."[49] Increasing the number of white settlers in these regions would help continue to grow and bolster their strength, which not only allowed these settlers to better defend themselves and by extension, the Lowcountry, in the event that hostilities did break out.

While not a completely harmonious relationship, the Cherokee people and the colonists developed a mutually beneficial trading relationship. Relations between the two groups were good enough that at one point the Cherokees were viewed as the "key to Carolina" as their position as the largest tribe in the region made them a valuable ally in defending the colony from

[48] W. Stitt Robinson, *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996), 39-40.

[49] *Stephen Crell to Governor Glen, Saxe Gotha, May 2, 1751*, as found in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Documents relating to Indian Affairs: May 21, 1750-August 7, 1754* (Columbia, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1958): 45-46.

hostile tribes.[50] In 1758, even with such a prosperous relationship, war eventually did break out after years of rising tensions, caused by more and more European settlers moving into Cherokee lands and increasing competition for natural resources such as the deer population that the Cherokee relied on for subsistence and trade. Blood was spilt on both sides as the Anglo-Cherokee War waged across the frontier.[51] The Colonial government attempted to force the negotiations of a peace by orchestrating a show of force, marching over 1,300 troops into Cherokee territory under the command of Governor Henry Lyttlelton. This gesture failed, however, and hostilities resumed by the time the governor returned to Charleston, and the war would continue until 1761.[52]

Victory for the English did not come from combat alone. After decades of trading with the English, the Cherokee people had become reliant on certain British goods such as guns and began to adjust their societies in ways that made them increasingly reliant on English trade for survival.[53] While the trade in deer skins was a profitable enterprise for Cherokee and colonists alike, the massive demands of the trade lead the Cherokee to alter their hunting patterns to hunt year-round in order to meet said demand. Such pressure on a limited natural resource not only impacted the animal's numbers but influenced the Cherokees method of food production, with tribes relying and investing so much time into the meat from their kills that it diverted time and attention away from certain agricultural aspects like harvests and planting that originally

[50] Gregory Evans Dowd, "The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (July 1996): 531.

[51] John Oliphant, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier: 1756-63* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 41-43.

[52] Alan Calmes, "The Lyttelton Expedition of 1759: Military Failures and Financial Successes,'" *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 77, no. 1 (January 1976): 25.

[53] Daniel J. Tortora, Carolina in Crisis: Cherokees, Colonists, and Slaves in the American Southeast, 1756-1763 (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 16.

provided the Cherokee with most of their substance.[54] With the outbreak of hostilities, this trade was cut off and the Cherokees eventually became so desperate for basic supplies that they began trading captured Englishman for food.[55] Firearms had made hunting easier for the Cherokee and as the years went by, elder hunters with the knowledge to produce their traditional weapons for hunting died, taking their traditional knowledge with them. This cultural loss and the increased reliability on tools that they were unable to produce themselves made hunting, and therefore feeding themselves, all the more difficult for the Cherokee.[56] The war would officially come to an end in 1761 and the Cherokee lost more territory to the English.

In terms of the Backcountry's role in this conflict, the case can be made that it performed perfectly in its task of acting as a buffer to the Lowcountry. Cherokee war parties wreaked havoc on the settlements closest to their territory, but were unable to penetrate deep into the colony like the tribes in the Yamasee War.[57] The Cherokee also focused most of their efforts in trying to secure and hold the various English frontier forts scattered throughout their lands. In 1760 while the Cherokees were trying to capture Fort Prince George, the most immediate danger to Charleston was an outbreak of smallpox.[58] Even after English soldiers killed the Cherokee hostages being held in Fort Prince George, the main reason the fort was besieged in the first place, the Cherokee response was more violence directed to those living on the frontier, not at the heart of the colony on the coast.[59] In keeping the Cherokees' rage focused on those who inhabited the frontier, the Lowcountry was spared from having to relive the near total destruction

[54] Amber M. Van Derwarker, Jon B. Marcoux, and Kandace D. Hollenbach, "Farming and Foraging at the Crossroads: The Consequences of Cherokee and European Interaction through the late Eighteenth Century," *American Antiquity* 78, no. 1 (January 2013): 73.
[55] Tortora, 147.
[56] Oliphant, 18-19.
[57] Tortora, 68. 103.
[58] Tortora, 81.
[59] Tortora, 99-103.

it had experienced during the Yamasee War. Any future settlers would only further strengthen the Backcountry and make it more effective in acting as a buffer.

The final major threat to Lowcountry prosperity came from Britain's two main European rivals, Spain and France. Since the sixteenth century, the Spanish had officially claimed much of the lands that would eventually make up Georgia. The region referred to as *Guale* by the Spanish, comprised the lands north of St. Augustine up to the regions that would eventually make up the southern tip of the South Carolina Lowcountry and Spanish missionaries scattered throughout the region as were the occasional garrison of soldiers.[60] When the English began to arrive en mass in South Carolina and spread out, Spanish officials in Florida began to consider the new colony as a serious threat to Spanish power in the region. Even when the 1670 Treaty of Madrid recognized English ownership of Carolina, Spanish officials in St. Augustine continued to plan and organize potential campaigns with the aim of forcing the English out of the region.[61] Until such campaigns could be carried out, the Spanish had relied on more subtle ways of resistance to hinder the growing colony. One of the most successful methods was the harboring of runaway slaves from the Lowcountry.

As South Carolina became more and more reliant on slave labor, especially enslaved African labor, the promise of potential asylum in Spanish Florida became increasingly dangerous for those who profited from this system. Slaves who escaped south represented serious financial losses for their masters both through the loss of the labor that they were intended to do and also in the cost of lost property. In 1738, only a short distance away from St. Augustine, the Spanish officially established the village of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, a town made up of

[60] J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Spanish Reaction to Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 41, no.4 (October 1964): 464.

[61] Wright Jr., 469-470.

around 100 Africans who had escaped from South Carolina, where these freed men and women could settle an area that would be strategically valuable in the event of an English invasion.[62] When the English did invade Florida during the War of Jenkin's Ear, the residents of Mose organized themselves into militia units and were essential to the Spanish defense of St. Augustine.[63] The efforts of those self-liberated people helped ensure that the possibility of escape remained open for those still enslaved on the plantations of the Lowcountry and that the Spanish could continue to maintain their close presence to the English colonies.

The French did not share the Spanish proximity to South Carolina, but through their interactions with Native Americans, they were able to remain a danger to English goals. The 1690s saw France begin to increase its efforts to expand its influence in the Lower Mississippi as the continued growth of the English in South Carolina as well as the Spanish in Florida made the French fear losing this strategic region to one of their rivals.[64] Ironically, the French did benefit from the English presence in Carolina at first, as French and Native American traders sold many Indian slaves from as far away as the Ohio Valley to English traders who in turn resold them either in South Carolina itself or shipped them to the Caribbean.[65] This cooperation eventually came to an end, however, as imperial rivalries soon became the most paramount issue on the frontier.

In efforts to hinder one another, the European powers began to rely more and more on their Native American allies. French and Englishmen would negotiate alliances with certain

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[62] Jane Landers, "Gracia Real De Santa Teresa De Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida." *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (February 1990): 9-11.

[63] Landers, "Gracia Real De Santa Teresa De Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida." 19-21.

[64] Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue, *Louisiana: A History*, 6th ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 33.

[65] Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 163.

tribes and then use their new allies to attack the native allies of the other power. For example, in 1721, the French offered rewards of firearms and cash to any Choctaw warriors who returned with British-allied Chickasaw slaves or scalps.[66] The threat of such alliances was well known to those in South Carolina and caused them to invest heavily in their own Native alliances. In 1754, Governor James Glen wrote to the Cherokee head men of what was known as the Out Towns about how even though the Carolinians had already gifted a fair amount of arms to these Cherokee, Governor Glen was more than willing to send them more so they could properly defend themselves against French allied tribes.[67] The English also had to contend with French attempts to undermine the English alliances such as when the French tried to sway the Creek to attack the Cherokee and Governor Glen had to organize talks to maintain the peace and alliances.[68] The French were also known to use deception as a tool to instigate chaos such as when they tried to convince the Creeks that the English and Cherokee were planning to destroy them and that the Creek should attack first.[69]

In all of these instances, the French themselves were only ever the driving force behind events, manipulating others into conflict rather than being a main force in the conflict. By engaging in such proxy wars, the largest French threat to South Carolina was the influence wielded by the French, not the French themselves. Negotiating, scheming, and deceiving the Native Americans of the region made the French as serious a threat as those Native groups who

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[66] Daniel H. Usner Jr., *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 65.

[67] "*Governor Glen to the Cherokee Head Men of the Out Towns, November 14th, 1754"* as found in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* (Columbia, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1970) 22.

[68] "*Governor Glen to Old Hop, December 12th, 1754*" as found in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* (Columbia, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1970) 24-26.

[69] "*George Galphun to Governor Glen, March 22nd, 1755*" as found in William L. McDowell, Jr. *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765* (Columbia, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, 1970) 55-56.

opposed the English, even though the French were based far away in New Orleans. Because of their intertwined nature, the threat of conflict between Native Americans and the French could be considered one and the same. The threat of a French army marching across the Backcountry might have seemed like an unlikely one, but the danger that could be done by the negotiations of a handful of French traders could just as easily have placed the Lowcountry in jeopardy.

When simplified, the expansion into the Carolina backcountry is an example of colonial elites seeking to shape the frontier to best suit their own social and economic goals.[70] With so many potential threats to their continued prosperity, the social and governing elite of the Lowcountry certainly showed no lack of agency in hastening white settlement to the frontier areas of the colony. To address each threat, increasing the population of free, Protestant, white settlers was seen as the most likely solution to protect the developed coastal areas. But among all of these various threats, did one in particular contribute substantially more to the agency of settling the backcountry than the others? Although the threats posed by their Native American neighbors and European rivals were major causes for concern, the need to ensure that South Carolina's enslaved black population remained as such provided the most agency to the colonial elites to speed up backcountry settlement. In the eyes of the governing elite of the colony, their slave population was also a domestic enemy that not only posed a large enough threat to the status quo on its own, but an external enemy that would be more than willing to ally itself with any external threats should the opportunity present itself.[71] The results of such a belief would

[70] Gregory H. Nobles, "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750-1800," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (October 1989): 643.

[71] Robert M, Weir, "'The Harmony We Were Famous For': An Interpretation of Pre-Revolutionary South Carolina Politics" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October 1969): 482-483.

result in numerous attempts to restrict and further repress the enslaved population in order to prevent such a fear from being realized.

As discussed previously, numerous measures were taken to directly counter the threats presented by an increasingly enlarging enslaved population. Legislative measures such as white masters finding other whites to serve in the militia or creation of the import duty on the enslaved to support the newly established townships were all designed to counter any potential slave uprising and to keep the enslaved within their master's sphere of control. In the event that any threats originated from other sources such as the Native Americans then these resources could be redirected to that threat, but otherwise they were mostly meant to be directed to the threat closest to home, the ever-increasing slave population.

Additional measures designed to improve the lives of the colony's poor white population, both in the Lowcountry and Backcountry, also contributed towards the subjugation of the enslaved in less direct ways. Local Anglican Church vestries in rural areas often provided the most downtrodden of white settlers with aid in the form of food, clothing, medicine, or by outsourcing their care to a third party.[72] While on the surface this appears as just additional support to settlers or benevolent church work, many of these vestry men were men of significant means who used their charity to help enforce a different message. Such aid was denied to nonwhites, including freedmen. To these elite vestrymen, to allow any significant number of whites to live in conditions too similar to that of the enslaved would have spread the message that those enslaved peoples could be equal to their white oppressors. The potential fallout from such ideals would have been disastrous for white supremacy in the colony, so it was deemed

[72] Lockley, "Rural Poor Relief in Colonial South Carolina," 964.

necessary to provide the poorest of white settlers with just enough aid and support to distinguish them from the largest downtrodden group in the colony, the enslaved. Through these beliefs, "The poor relief system therefore stood, in part, as a testament to white solidarity."[73] This was far from the only measure taken by the South Carolina government to dehumanize their slave population to further justify their enslavement.

In 1740, in the wake of the Stono Rebellion, the South Carolina slave codes were altered to make future rebellions less devastating and likely. Among those amendments was the prohibition of instructing any enslaved person to either read or write. Aside from denying the enslaved skills that could be used to foster rebellion among their ranks and coordinate attempts at freedom, literacy was seen as a sign of cultural and racial superiority to those educated, white elites. In denying slaves access to these skills, elites that profited from slavery also created an additional reason to justify the treatment and discredit the humanity of their workforce.[74]

These examples of legislation, charity, and societal reform point out how the elites of the colonial Lowcountry never relaxed in their efforts to maintain their dominance over their slaves. The agency needed to further repress the enslaved population had already been seen by them as essential to the survival of the colony and could be overlapped with the motivation to settle the backcountry. As a consequence, white immigration and expansion into the frontier was not only an imperial endeavor, but also an additional method of oppression for those who had made South Carolina such a successful colony while reaping none of that success's rewards, its enslaved African population.

[73] Lockley, "Rural Poor Relief in Colonial South Carolina," 971-972.

[74] Birgit Brander Rosmussen, "'Attended with Great Inconveniences': Slave Literacy and the 1740 South Carolina Negro Act," *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (January 2010): 202.

Section 2: The Backcountry as an Apparatus of Lowcountry Power

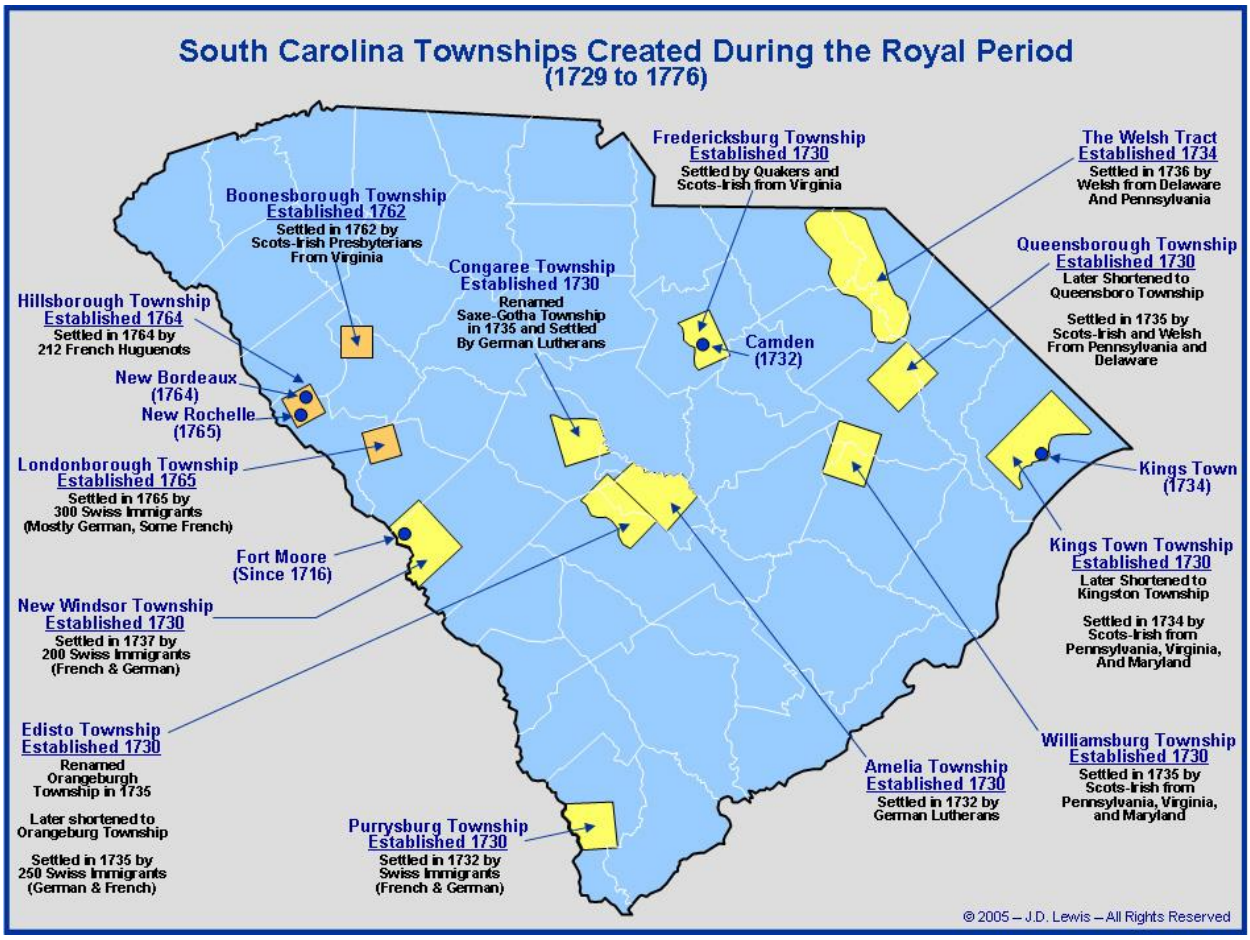
Defense against European rivals, Native Americans, and slave revolts were far from the only benefits reaped by the colony of South Carolina from its expansion into the backcountry. Those Europeans who decided to relocate to the frontier could not only just stand at attention and wait for a threat to emerge, but also meanwhile carve out lives that allowed settlers to live lives prosperous and comfortable enough for them to want to remain in their new homeland. In the process of trying to carve out these new lives, these frontier settlers would make contributions to the economic, social, and political development of South Carolina that would further support the continued prosperity of the Lowcountry.

Since the earliest days of English settlement, the backcountry territories had played a major role in the development of South Carolina. Trade with those Native American tribes that were not destroyed or enslaved was the economic lifeblood of the colony's earliest days and remained prominent throughout the colonial period. Under Proprietary rule, the trading of furs and Amerindian slaves provided traders with the fortunes that they would use to reinvest in developing plantations and go on to become the elite and powerful families that dominated the Lowcountry.[75] This did not mean that agricultural production did not see its fair share of success in the earliest days of the colony, however. Settlement was still largely confined to the coastal regions, but the warm climate allowed for cattle to graze year round in the more fringe areas away from more developed areas and the abundance of land allowed for massive herds to free-range graze year round on often unclaimed lands.[76] Livestock's glory days would soon pass as by 1712, much of the Lowcountry lands were repurposed for rice production and rice soon

[75] Brown, 128.

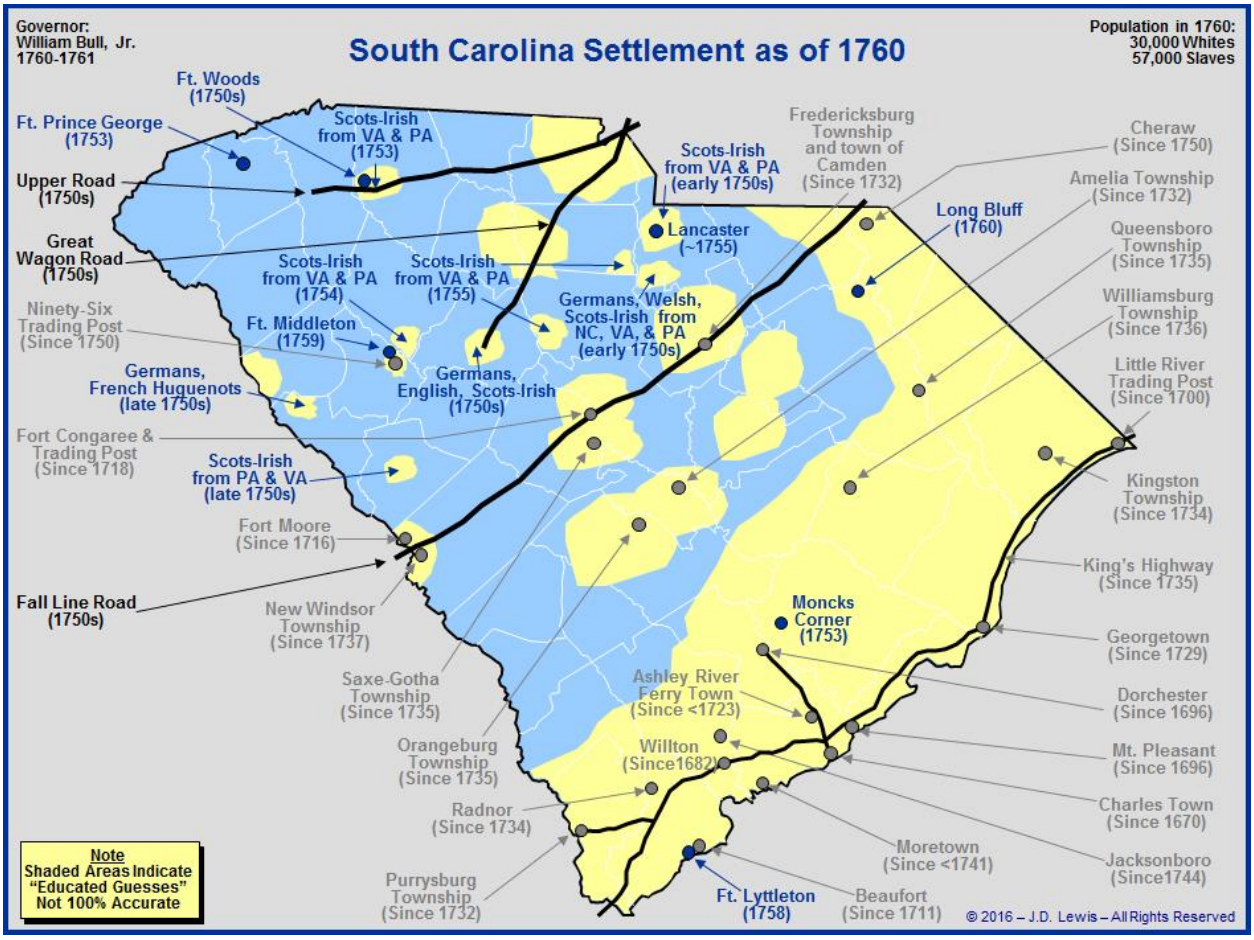
[76] John Solomon Otto, "Livestock-Raising in Early South Carolina, 1670-1700: Prelude to the Rice Plantation Economy," *Agricultural History* 61, no. 4 (Autumn, 1987): 15-16.

dethroned beef as South Carolina's leading agricultural export.[77] As rice continued its takeover, cattle and other forms of agricultural production would need to relocate to more suitable lands, and by opening up and encouraging backcountry settlement, lands for such production would not only become available but have a population large and capable enough to make such industries successful.



J.D Lewis. "South Carolina Townships Created During the Royal Period, (1729-1776)" Last updated 2007. https://www.carolana.com/SC/Royal_Colony/sc_royal_colony_settlements_1760.html (accessed January 15, 2021).

[77] Otto, 23.



J.D Lewis. "South Carolina Settlement as of 1760" Last updated 2007. https://www.carolana.com/SC/Royal_Colony/sc_royal_colony_settlements_1760.html. (accessed January 15, 2021).

As European settlers pushed further and further inland from the coast, the large plantations operated by slave labor gradually gave way to more scattered, small-scale homesteads mostly centered around a specific settlement. In covering the origins of the individual settlements, Robert Lee Meriwether's work is among the most often cited across the literature so therefore his work will be used to introduce the basic information of the townships. Across the province, townships were established to serve as the focal points of European settlement in the region. Settlement in these townships was expected to be rapid at first, followed

by a slow and agonizing growth period while the first settlers worked to establish themselves in their new lands, capped off by another period of continual immigration as the region became more developed and hospitable to newcomers.[78] As European settlers began to move into their newly acquired lands, they began to do what could be done to make life in their new homes viable and sustainable (see *Figure* II & III).

In terms of the primary purpose of backcountry settlement, the western townships of Amelia, Orangeburg, Saxe Gotha, New Windsor, and Purrysburg were among the most critical for defensive purposes as they were situated in areas most likely to come under attack from Native Americans or the Spanish. Purrysburg was populated with a majority Swiss population and guarded the lower Savannah River close to the coast and right across the river from what would eventually be Georgia.[79] Amelia and Orangeburg would be situated in a central region of the colony between the Santee and Edisto Rivers and also had a sizable Swiss population, as well as German-speaking peoples.[80] In Saxe Gotha, German settlers outnumbered English settlers substantially in the upper Congaree Valley. Saxe Gotha would be one of the most successful of the western townships, as by 1746, settlers in the area were producing a substantial amount of agricultural output, primarily in wheat production. Such output allowed the township to aid in the supplying of English forts further out in the interior and by 1759, the largely self-sufficient settlement was seen as capable of continuingly securing the region from any potential threats.[81] The last of the western townships, New Windsor, remained one of the smallest of the townships as it was heavily reliant on the Indian trade for survival and being just across the river from

[78] Robert Lee Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729-1765* (Kingsport, Tennessee: Southern Publishers, Inc, 1940), 25.

[79] Arlin C. Migilazzo, "A Tarnished Legacy Revisited: Jean Pierre Purry and the Settlement of the Southern Frontier, 1718-1739." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 92, no. 4 (October 1991): 240.

[80] Meriwether, 42. 45.

[81] Meriwether, 53-65.

Augusta, Georgia, most of its trade and business was funneled through that town as it rose to be a major trade hub on the frontier.[82] During the same period of development as the western townships, settlement in what would be considered the eastern townships began as well.

The eastern townships would be located primarily in the region between Charleston and the North Carolina border. By the time of the township plan, Native American threats in the region were next to nonexistence and slaves were so few and far between that any serious revolt was highly improbable but was still sparsely populated, leading to its inclusion in settlement plans. This lack of direct threats allowed the townships of the region, Williamsburg, Kingston, Queensboro and Fredericksburg, to rapidly grow and develop beyond more than a simple bulwark of protection for the Lowcountry. Williamsburg was located north of the Santee River on the Black River in an area where neither slave nor Indian revolt was a cause for the Scotch-Irish settlers who moved in.[83] Kingston Township was located along the Little Peedee River but remains one of the smallest and least populated of the eastern townships.[84] Queensboro township came about when the Welsh settlers of what was known as the Welsh Tract petitioned the South Carolina government for a township to be established nearby to where the former Pennsylvania settlers had relocated to.[85] Fredericksburg was established along the Congaree's river basin to help protect the friendly Catawbas peoples and more importantly, their valuable trade.[86] As will be discussed later, the residents of the eastern townships would go on to be among the more prosperous of frontier settlers and even begin to involve themselves in the slave trade as they embraced their role as an agricultural-centered society.

[82] Meriwether, 66. 69.
[83] Meriwether, 79-80.
[84] Meriwether, 86-87.
[85] Meriwether, 90-91.
[86] Meriwether. 99.

The principal attraction of drawing in this new white population was the promise of abundant land for cheap. Nearly all settlers moved in as a family group, with the size of their family determining how much land they were to be given by the state. For every member of the family over the age of twelve, the head of the family was to be given fifty acres of land to settle and develop at their own pace.[87] Regardless of how fast the townships and the backcountry population grew, Charleston still remained the focal point through which life operated. Being the largest port in the colony and the administrative heart of the province made the city the regional entrepot through which everything, from information to trade, had to flow at some point.[88] Settlers in the backcountry were not isolated in the middle of nowhere and left to fend for themselves but were the newest additions to an ever-growing colonial web of Charleston. The exception to this rule was New Windsor, where the community consisted mostly of small farms and what trade did exist traveled through nearby Augusta in Georgia.[89] But even with much of the trade and population of the township relocating to Georgia, those who remained were able to live a comfortable enough life to afford a wide variety of luxury goods not typically associated with the frontier lifestyle, such as silverware, clocks, wigs, and a variety of books both religious and secular in nature, showing that a certain level of wealth was attainable for those who emigrated to the townships.[90] Many in the eastern townships also enjoyed similar fortunes when it came to carrying out a comfortable life in the wilderness.

[87] George Lloyd Johnson Jr., *The Frontier in the Colonial South: South Carolina Backcountry, 1736-1800* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997), 19.

[88] Kenneth E. Lewis, "The Metropolis and the Backcountry: The Making of a Colonial Landscape on the South Carolina Frontiers," *Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 3 (1999): 3.

[89] David Colin Crass, Bruce R. Penner, and Tammy R. Forehand, "Gentility and Material Culture on the Carolina Frontier," *Historical Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (1999): 17.

[90] Crass, 18-21.

When discussing the Welsh in South Carolina, George Lloyd Johnson's work is used in a similar manner to Meriwether, therefore his work will be referenced often when discussing this particular area of the frontier. Arriving in South Carolina in 1736, the Welsh settlers from Pennsylvania relocated to what would come to be known as the Welsh Tract to act as a bulwark to prevent slaves from escaping and joining with the Native Americans.[91] By 1743, this area of the frontier would become among the most profitable and developed. Within a few short years, the Welsh had developed their lands and constructed mills to sell their excess wheat crop in the markets of Charleston.[92] But the true wealth of this region came from the cultivation of what would be South Carolina's second most profitable cash crop, indigo. While the soil of the region was ill suited for expanded rice production, it was perfect for indigo and with the English government offering bounties and subsidizing the crop, production of the crop flourished, even allowing settlers to procure a considerable number of slaves to aid in the production, with some prominent individuals having as many as fifty.[93] The benefits of a second staple cash crop being produced in significant amounts was not lost on the members of the Commons House.

On February 13, 1746, the House heard the petition of Andrew Deveaux, a man who had spent the last three years studying the growth cycle and cultivation of indigo with the hopes of perfecting the process within South Carolina. Upon believing he had mastered the process, he claimed to have shared his knowledge with other prospective indigo planters with the hope that production of the crop would further grow, and he hoped to receive some form of compensation from the House. Although his petition was rejected, the value of the spread of indigo production was seen as a major potential benefit to the colony, especially during times of war when the price

[91] Johnson Jr., 18-19.
[92] Johnson Jr., 23.
[93] Johnson Jr., 40-43. 79.

of rice would fall drastically.[94] An additional valuable export would prevent the critical export market of Charleston to be wholly reliant on a single commodity and lessen any potential financial blows brought about by the reliance on a single crop.

In addition to expanding South Carolina's catalog of exports, the backcountry was also able to produce other staples that supported the Lowcountry directly. By 1770, over 130,000 acres of land in South Carolina was dedicated to the production of rice and indigo alone.[95] Most of this production however was meant solely to be exported to European markets. By the 1760s, South Carolina rice had come to be regarded as some of the best in the world and was the cornerstone of the colonial economy, while Carolinian grown indigo was seen as inferior to its French counterpart, but its production was still encouraged in order to prevent the French from dominating its market.[96] Of the two Carolina staples, indigo is the one that managed to spread outside of the traditional areas dominated by plantation agriculture. The indigo produced in the northern and southern frontiers combined with the crop produced in the traditional coastal areas of production centered around Charleston played a substantial role in Carolina indigo eventually claiming over 50% of the English market for the crop by the 1770s.[97] The true economic value of the backcountry, however, would be realized through other means. With the establishment of the townships, the opportunity for other forms of agriculture centered around non-cash crops could finally be available.

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[94] Entries for "*Thursday the 13th day of February 1745/6,"* and *"Saturday the 15th day of February, 1745-6"* as found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: September 10,1745-June 17,1746* (Columbia, South Carolina Archives Department, 1956) 93.

[95] S. Max Edelson, "Clearing Swamps, Harvesting Forests: Trees and the Making of a Plantation Landscape in the Colonial South Carolina Lowcountry," *Agricultural History* 81, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 399.

[96] S. Max Edelson. "The Character of Commodities: The Reputations of South Carolina Rice and Indigo in the Atlantic World." As found in *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Practice, and Personnel* edited by Peter A. Coclanis. 367-371.

[97] R.C Nash, "South Carolina Indigo, European Textiles, and the British Atlantic Economy in the Eighteenth Century," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 63, no. 2 (May 2010): 382. 366.

Charleston merchants recognized both an increasing number of markets and the potential profits that could be made from such trade with the backcountry and they began making moves to capitalize off the expansion. In the Wateree Valley, the merchant firms of Ancrum, Lance, and Loocock were enticed by the increasing production of wheat in the area and invested heavily in the creation of infrastructure projects like mills and established a store in Pine Tree Hill, the sight that would later become Camden, South Carolina, with their agent Joseph Kershaw in charge of operating it and keeping an eye on their investments. The addition of such investments into the frontier allowed the settlers the means to refine their produce into a valuable commodity and through the store, the access to a much larger domestic market.[98]

Grain production, primarily wheat, was seeing so much success across the frontier that it was believed at the current rate of expansion, the Lowcountry would soon have its own reliable source of domestic food production to feed both free and enslaved populations and would no longer rely on imports from other colonies like Pennsylvania.[99] By 1749, after nearly two decades of organized expansion, the Commons House had to clarify to members of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations in England that such agricultural production had not yet made South Carolina self-efficient in the production of foodstuffs and that the colony was still heavily reliant on imports. The House committee that delivered this report, however, did make a point to mention that they believed with the continued influx of settlers and the passage of time, the backcountry would be able to fulfill such a role and grant the colony a much greater level of

[98] Kenneth E. Lewis, "Frontier Change, Institution Building, and the Archaeological Record in the South Carolina Backcountry," *Southeastern Archaeology* 28, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 187.

[99] Kenneth E. Lewis, *The Carolina Backcountry Venture: Tradition, Capital, and Circumstance in the Development of Camden and the Wateree Valley, 1740-1810* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 53.

self-reliance.[100] Despite the Commons House disproval of this claim, the fact that in the same breath they recognized that such a reality could come true in the near future shows that the members of the House realized that their efforts to settle the backcountry would bear additional fruit.

Despite its denial by the Commons House, it would not take long for this rumor to become reality. As through the 1750s, allowed wheat to develop into the backcountry's own cash crop and by the 1760s, South Carolina crops had replaced northern imports as the primary source of grain and even produced enough surplus to be exported to the British West Indies.[101] Through the continued infrastructure developments that made goods easier to be transported back to Lowcountry markets and the increasing influx of white settlers onto these lands, the small farm frontier economy was able to meet the high demands for a highly demanded product in only a few decades.[102] It is also important to note that much of this growth and development was brought about without an overreliance on enslaved labor.

The white settlers moving into these frontier lands often did so with very limited means, limiting their ability to acquire enslaved labor on the scale of the coastal regions. As settlement progressed however, more and more of these backcountry whites accumulated the necessary capital to acquire slaves of their own. The distance from major slave markets as well as the strong sense of self-reliance meant that many of these frontier farmers had or chose to rely primarily on their own labor to meet their needs rather than investing in slave labor.[103] This did

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[100] Entry for "*Tuesday the 16th day of May, 1749*"as found in J.H. Easterby, *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly: March 28 1749-March 19, 1750* (Columbia, South Carolina Archives Department, 1956) 97-100.

[101] Kenneth E. Lewis, *The American Frontier: An Archaeological Study of Settlement Pattern and Process* (Orlando: Academic Press, Inc, 1984) 40-41.

[102] Lewis, *The American Frontier*, 57.

[103] Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 24.

not mean the backcountry was completely devoid of slave labor. By 1768, nearing the end of the colonial period, enslaved people made up nearly 1/5th of the total population, with this percentage counting towards only 1/12th of the total slave population of the colony.[104] This self-reliant nature of frontier whites proved to be an additional benefit for Lowcountry planters, as by relying mainly on their own labor rather than slaves, the possibility of a large scale uprising would be small enough that should a revolt breakout on the coast, backcountry whites would still be able to mobilize and move out without fear that their own slaves would erupt in an uprising of their own. Had the wide-scale use of slave labor taken off too soon on the frontier, white settlers would have been far more hesitant to answer any calls to suppress any coastal uprisings when their absence could encourage their own slaves to follow with their own revolt. The limited numbers of the enslaved in the backcountry and the distance between them would have made the organization and carrying out of any rebellion far more difficult than it would have been in the densely populated low country, leaving the threat of a large-scale slave revolt in the backcountry as highly unlikely. With the white shield envisioned to safeguard white hegemony from internal and external threats to the Lowcountry forged, the status quo of the planter elite was arguably more secure than it had ever been at any point of the colony's history.

[104] Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 19-20.

Section 3: The Backcountry becomes its own Entity

Through the understanding of the economic, strategic, and imperial motivations that acted as the agency for Lowcountry authorities to push for frontier expansion so heavily, it then becomes possible to ascertain whether or not these goals were able to properly be achieved. When looking at all these contributing factors and the actions taken in response, it becomes possible to surmise one particular endgame of sorts, the preservation and maintenance of the established structures of power. Through settling the backcountry, order was derived in the form of protection from internal and external threats allowed the established status quo of planter dominance to continue in a manner that would become much easier to maintain. With fears of an attack from Native Americans or rival European powers diminished and the forces necessary to quell any large-scale slave revolt on standby, the largest direct threats of social upheaval were now in a manageable position and the society dominated by the Lowcountry elite could now conduct business with the promise of fewer large-scale interruptions. The prosperity and wealth these elite extracted could grow while simultaneously allowing them to grow their political power to further strengthen their hold on colonial affairs. Through this process the backcountry achieved its intended purpose of becoming the newest tool to be used to continue on with the current status quo and ensure that the established order of the realm carried on with as few interruptions as possible.

In solving these previous issues however, a new challenge to coastal dominance would emerge, the backcountry itself. To those who actually lived on the frontiers, their purpose was hardly a secret to them. Charles Woodmason, an Itinerant minister who traversed across much of the settled backcountry, noted exactly that these frontier people were settled in these lands with the purpose of being a barrier between the Native Americans and made note of the difficult lives

white settlers lived. Aside from contending with their relative isolation from the rest of the European world, the people of the Backcountry lived in fear of the numerous bands of bandits that harassed them and lived without institutions like schools, churches, and other hallmarks of European society.[105] Woodmason documented the lives of the people of the backcountry and was often very appalled with what he considered sinful and improper lifestyle choices of those on the frontier. In one of his sermons that he put to paper, he chastises those he considers the elites of Charleston for continuing on with their lives of luxury and enjoying such institutions and privileges of society while at the same time denying the impoverished people of the backcountry those same opportunities and privileges.[106] Woodmason was far from the only one however who began to take issue with the neglect of the backcountry.

Animosity towards Charleston and the Lowcountry had been building for some time and finally cultivated in the form of the Regulator Movement from 1767 to 1769. On the surface, the Regulator Movement was in response to the widespread and out of control wave of criminal gangs that harassed, robbed, and threatened the landed population of the frontier. With no aid from Charleston, many of these landholding men banded together to combat these outlaw bands and dispense their own justice.[107] Such criminality was attributed to a number of reasons. Many of the principal institutions that were standards for European society like courts, schools, or any form of local government existed on the frontier and should any settler wish to utilize these

[105] Entry of "*Journal of C. W. Clerk: Itinerant Minister in South Carolina 1766 * 1767* 1768*" as found in Richard J. Hooker, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1953) 27.

[106] Sermon titled "*The Need for Education: Speak O Ye Charlestown Gentry, who go in Scarlet and fine Linen and fare sumptuously ev'ry day*." As found in Richard J. Hooker, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1953) 118-122.

[107] Richard Maxwell Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), 38-41.

institutions, they would have to venture all the way back to Charleston to do so.[108] The lengthy trip to Charleston also stood as an obstacle for many of the frontier's poorer settlers who immigrated from the northern colonies from acquiring official ownership of their lands, leading to them being legally seen as squatters. Many of these settlers joined the Regulators in the hopes of pressuring the Assembly for the creation of inland land offices that would negate the need for such an expensive trip and give them legitimate ownership of their lands.[109]

The additional presence of wandering hunters and squatters led to more clashes with both large and small landholding settlers who saw ownership of the land as the standard of respectability and success. Once the Regulation began, these people would also become targets.[110] Many in the Backcountry also harbored well known resentments towards certain aspects of Lowcountry political life, especially the usage of lawyers. Many in the Regulator Movement saw lawyers as obstacles actively working to prevent their demands from coming to fruition and saw them as unworthy holders of authority, preferring to show their respect and favor to those who they witnessed work and struggle for their success.[111] With the Backcountry organized and unified in a way it had never been before, it managed to become the most serious threat to dominance of the Lowcountry elite to emerge since the Stono Rebellion.

Despite being largely contained to the Backcountry, the threat the Regulator Movement posed to the Lowcountry was not. In terms of physical threats, Charles Woodmason claimed that nearly four thousand armed Regulators were prepared to march on Charleston itself in order to

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[108] Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators*, 13-18.

[109] Andrew D. Johnson, "The Regulation Reconsidered: Shared Grievances in the Colonial Carolinas," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 114, no.2 (April 2013): 143.

[110] Rachel Klein, "Ordering the Backcountry: The South Carolina Regulation," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (October 1981): 670-672.

[111] Robert E. Shalhope, "South Carolina in the Founding Era: A Localist Perspective," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 89, no. 2 (April 1988): 105-107.

make their demands to the Assembly in person.[112] While such a march never took place, the threat of it and the potential chaos such a march would unleash remained an effective bargaining chip for the Regulators to secure one of their most requested demands, increased representation in the Commons House. Although never marching as far as Charleston, Regulators did organize marches into Lowcountry parishes to vote in mass and ensured that numerous Regulator leaders were elected to the Assembly in 1768.[113] And it is through such elections that the backcountry truly threatened Lowcountry dominance.

What made the demands of the Regulator Movement such a threat towards Lowcountry supremacy was not just that they were seeking to end the monopoly on power held by the coastal planters and Charleston elites, but that that power be redistributed among those who were drastically different from the traditional holders of power. Part of the reasoning for denying the frontier any aspects of local government was due in part to the desire of the Assembly to keep as much power and authority centered around Charleston as possible.[114] By the 1760s, the Backcountry contained over half of South Carolina's white population and by 1770, the year after the Regulation officially ended, it contained over 2/3's with numbers continuing to rise.[115] Such numbers would have made any demands difficult to ignore, despite the obvious fact that agreeing to such demands would mean that Lowcountry interests would soon have to compete with those of the frontier. As the frontier became settled by more and more Europeans, not only

[112] Letter titled "*A Letter to an English Friend: I Now begin to be quite worn out, and cannot go thro' the fatigues I've endured*." As found in Richard J. Hooker, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1953) 191.

[113] Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators*, 60-63.

[114] Richard R. Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 166.

[115]James Haw, "Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 103, no. 2 (April 2002) 106.

did a sense of regionalism emerged between the Back and Lowcountry's, but a class struggle between large, slave owning plantation owners and small, independent farmers.[116] The Lowcountry was not just losing some of its political power, it was also losing it to an interest group whose livelihood and economic realities were so different to their own, leading some to question whether these frontiersmen were even capable and ready for the responsibilities of government.[117]

The field of international relations has a term that fits well with how those of the Lowcountry would have viewed granting such rights and powers to those on the frontier. In that field, a zero-sum situation means that in order for one side or party to gain its goals and power, the other side must also lose some of its own to accommodate those demands.[118] Unlike in other British colonies like those in the Caribbean, many of the plantation owners and prominent merchants who made up the financial and political elite of South Carolina were not absentee owners but resided in or in close proximity to Charleston.[119] This proximity permitted them to remain close to the sources of wealth that allowed them to accumulate their power and enabled them to participate directly in the local government institutions that could be used to better strengthen their already firm grip on positions of power. Inclusion of the backcountry into the political systems of South Carolina would require that grip to begin to loosen in order to accommodate certain demands such as backcountry representatives in the Commons House and for votes cast by the people of the frontier to be considered legitimate.

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[116] David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History, 1520-1948* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1966) 222-223.

[117] James Haw, "Political Representation in South Carolina, 1669-1794: Evolution of a Lowcountry Tradition," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 103, no. 2 (April 2002) 112-113.

[118] James M. Scott, Ralph G. Carter, and A. Cooper Drury, *IR: International Relations* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2016) 67.

[119] David Hancock, "Capital and Credit with Approved Security: Financial Markets in Monserrat and South Carolina, 1748-1775," *Business and Economic History* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 74.

Looking through the lens of zero-sum, the Lowcountry permitting the backcountry to gain access to such powers is equivalent to inviting a new player into the game that has to siphon away some of your own power and influence in order to have its own. By the time of the Revolutionary War, numerous former Regulators were sent as representatives of South Carolina to the numerous continental conventions and legislative bodies while in the Backcountry itself many of the positions of official government and power were now held by actual residents of the frontier rather than Lowcountry residents who were appointed to the positions.[120] Even while the Regulators were still active, new parishes were organized in a way that ensured that three of the forty-eight seats of the Commons House of Assembly would represent that Backcountry.[121] Certain committees established by the Commons House to handle certain matters or state such as the Committee of Indian Affairs had long been solely filled with representatives from the coast with a planter or merchant background. The importance of these committees and the power they wielded still made it difficult for backcountry representatives to gain a seat on them, but certain backcountry men of influence and status could find their way into such positions.[122] While seemingly insignificant gestures given that the Lowcountry parishes still held the majority of seats, in giving the frontier this concession, despite it seeming small and insignificant, it still required those on the coast to sacrifice some of their power to allow the backcountry to have such a platform. A platform in which those elected frontiersmen could now use to directly contest the policies and plans of the Charleston elite.

[120] Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators*, 119-122.
[121] Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 215.
[122] George Edward Frakes, *Laboratory for Liberty: The South Carolina Legislative Committee System, 1719-1776* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1970), 87-88.

The Regulators may have been mostly small planters, but their aspirations did not end there. For many of the Regulators, the ultimate goal was to enter the planter class themselves, which would require a certain level of security in order for slavery to become viable on a scale similar to that of the Lowcountry. The efforts made to eliminate the banditry and squatters that infested the frontier was in the short term about securing the safety of their families and property, but in the long term it would ensure that individual settlers would be able to amass even larger tracts of land and ensure that slavery would be the tool that would cultivate and make the land profitable.[123] The crop that would one day become synonymous with American slavery, cotton, was already being grown in very limited numbers in order to cloth the enslaved population, but the potential for mass production would be realized in the decades following the Revolution.[124] With the literal and metaphorical seeds being planted for the planter class to extend its ranks into the frontier, the power and influence derived from such wealth would also break out of its traditional geographic spheres and extend into the new territories.

Despite the ground being set for future political clashes between Back and Lowcounties, events taking place at the same time across the wider Atlantic world would soon take precedence. The Regulator Movement was just one of a number of organized revolts against established authority taking place in the frontiers and urban centers of the British Atlantic colonies in the years leading up to the American Revolution.[125] By the time the tides of the Revolution reached South Carolina, the political divide between the coast and interior only widened and whichever side individuals chose in the war were ever shifting for a wide variety of

[123] Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 35-51

[124] Joyce E. Chaplin, "Creating a Cotton South in Georgia and South Carolina, 1760-1815," *The Journal of Southern History* 57, no. 2 (May 1991): 179-181.

[125] Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution*, Rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 68-70.

reasons. A number of former Regulators chose to side with the British because they viewed the Patriot cause as one that sought to benefit colonial elites like those on the Lowcountry the most while many others gave their allegiance to whichever side the prominent members of their communities choose.[126]

To delve too deeply into the Backcountry's role in the Revolution is beyond the scope of this research. After the British army captured Charleston, it became the new force of power in the region by maintaining strict control over the city itself and leading to divisions among the planters and merchants of the coast scrambling over which side to continue supporting.[127] The chaos brought on by the war and the internal conflicts it ignited across South Carolina are too numerous to be divided so simply as a conflict between Lowcountry and Backcountry. This does not mean that the frontier was not instrumental to the cause of American freedom. John Drayton, a lawyer and the son of a delegate to the Continental Congress, claimed that through large number of white settlers housed throughout the frontier, South Carolina had the necessary strength that it would need to revolt against British rule while also retaining enough strength close to home to keep the enslaved population under heel.[128] Such a claim being made so shortly after the Revolution provides insight that shows that the significance of the backcountry, as well as its original goal, was never lost on the coastal peoples who benefited the most from the Backcountry s protection.

[126] Rebecca Brannon, *From Revolution to Reunion: The Reintegration of the South Carolina Loyalists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 13-16.

[127] Alexander R. Stoesen, "The British Occupation of Charleston, 1780-1782," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 63, no. 2 (April 1962): 74-77.

[128] John Drayton, *A View of South Carolina: As Respects to her Natural and Civil Concerns* (Charleston: Printed by W.P. Young, no. 41 Broad-Street, 1802) 102-103.

The rise of the Backcountry as a legitimate political rival to the old guard of the Lowcountry creates complications when asking if the frontier achieved its original purpose. The desired buffer zone to protect the Lowcountry from any potential attack from Native Americans and hostile European powers was established and the forces needed to quell any potential slave rebellion were readily at hand. In settling the backcountry for their own purposes however, the Lowcountry unintentionally created the very entity that had the most success in challenging its dominion over South Carolina. In the end however, the argument that the Backcountry did succeed in its intended purpose holds more weight. The simple fact that had one of the perceived threats rose up against Charleston, the complete destruction of the Lowcountry would have been a very real possibility. The Lowcountry might have had to share some of its political power with the Backcountry, but the frontier still carried the burden of its intended purpose while the coastal community still received far more from the relationship.

CONCLUSION

By encouraging white settlement along the frontier of South Carolina, the colonial government in Charleston was able to gain a population that, through the defense of their own lives and property, would simultaneously defend theirs as well. The lifestyles and fortunes being made off the backs of thousands of enslaved persons would now be safeguarded from a number of credible threats and the power that these men were able to derive from such a system would only continue to grow. Be it for reasons of imperial expansion, self-defense, emancipation, or revenge, external and internal forces alike had justified reasons for wanting to bring about the demise of the British colony and the sense of self security created by increasing the population of white Protestant settlers in the colony ensured that the elite of South Carolina could continue to expand their wealth and power.

But in their desire to protect themselves and the wealth and power they amassed, the coastal elite that had dominated the colony for decades laid the groundwork for a new challenger to their rule to emerge. The rise of the Backcountry had led to the creation of a political contender to coastal dominance that, unlike Native Americans or African slaves, could not be brutally suppressed through the violent means that empires typically rely on to secure their power as that contender was the one meant to carry out such tactics. In achieving their goal of starting the new, successful lives that attracted most of the frontier's settlers, the people of Backcountry more or less undermined themselves from fulfilling the intended goal of securing Lowcountry influence.

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