

Names On Original Land Grants

By LOUISE PETTUS

According to long tradition, Thomas "Kana-wha" Spratt (1731-1807) was the first white man to live in the Catawba Indian Land after it was set aside as Indian land by the Treaty of Augusta in 1763.

Certainly there were other white men living in the Indian Land before 1763. Letters and reports from Indian traders and Provincial agents make references to these early settlers. Some of these settlers held land grants from the Governor of North Carolina. The Province of North Carolina granted land in

1763.

A few of the pre - 1763 North Carolina grants still survive. The locations are not very specific. Trees were commonly used as markers and to read that a line ran from a buttonwood tree, to a poplar, to a rock in the middle of a branch, and on to a "dead cotton wood" is not very helpful to researchers. Fortunately, the phrase "located on the waters of" was used to suggest a proximity to the Catawba, Steel Creek, or Sugar Creek, even when the grant did not directly front on those streams. References to lesser waters such as Johnny's

the Catawba Indian area down to the 35th parallel and to the east bank of the Catawba River. The South Carolina governors, to no avail, attempted to prevent white settlement within 30 miles of the Catawba villages.

Increasingly, land hungry settlers without grants pushed into the area. The danger of conflict and increasing anxiety about their hunting grounds caused the Catawbas to seek out a treaty with the Crown that would exclude all white settlers. The result of the Catawba pleas was the Treaty of Augusta in

help to locate early settler's claims.

Christian Erwin filed a claim for 400 acres "including the Catawba River and the waggon road at the Catawba Nation..." on Aug. 30, 1753 in Anson County, N. C. This, presumably, was land on both sides of the river at the historic Nation Ford just back of the Celanese Plant today.

When Thomas Spratt's father, also named Thomas Spratt, wrote his will in Anson Co., N. C. he left "to my only son Thomas, plantation on Twelve Mile Creek ... to daughter Martha, plantation on Sugar Creek ..." The will was filed in 1751. Sometime around 1755 Spratt settled in Fort Mill district.

The first officially recorded Catawba Indian lease was made with Samuel Knox in March of 1783. According to testimony in an 1831 court case, "Alex. Sutton and wife vs. John Jackson," Knox's lease was the first one in the first Indian book long kept by Charles Miller, the first agent. This first lease book was lost before 1831.

Information on the early leases and earliest settlers in Fort Mill District is very skimpy. The Indian leases were held in private hands and not recorded in the courthouse as were land deeds. The S. C. Department of History and Archives holds about 120 leases dated between 1785 and 1841. These leases came from all over the Catawba Indian Land, not just Fort Mill. For the Fort Mill District about 250 leaseholders can be identified by name through various records spanning the 66 year

graves," James Moore, Mrs. Kendrick, William T. Hart, William E. White on whose property the Camden Road crossed Nation Ford, Dr. J. J. Suggs, John Parks, Sarah Parks, William Parks who had land on both sides of Steel Creek, by Dr. William Clawson's property, John Springs, John McCoy, and then along the dividing line of Nancy Meacham and Joshua P. Smith. After going through a portion of Smith's land, the road passed through the land of James Glover, William Boyce, and Samuel Ruddock. Leaving Ruddock's property, the road went into North Carolina.

The "Great Road to Camden," also known as the Tuckaseegee Road, entered South Carolina on the west side of Steele Creek at Edmond Smith and Boswell Partlow's property and then passed the land of the old Revolutionary hero, the Rev. Robert Mursh, a Pamunkey Indian. On Thomas Newton Pettus' property the Camden Road crossed over the Thorn Ferry road and continued in a southeasterly direction through property of Stephen Pettus, T. Ferrell, Alex Sutton, Archibald Graham, Mark Mitchell, Sarah Smith, Robert Collier, Thomas Merritt, Silas Felts, Benjamin Patterson, Elizabeth Kimbrell, William E. White and Solomon Kimbrell.