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**"WE HAVE FOUND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN
LOOKING FOR!" THE CREATION OF THE MORMON
RELIGIOUS ENCLAVE AMONG THE CATAWBA,
1883-1920**

DANIEL LIESTMAN*

NOW, AS MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, THE CATAWBA RIVER sweeps southward near Rock Hill, and winds its way around an area locally known as "The Bend." Along this bow overlooking the banks of the river that bears its name is the remnant of the Catawba tribe, living on a 630 acre fraction of what was once their domain. By 1881, the once large and powerful tribe was reduced to an estimated 100-120 people.¹ Clustered on their small reservation, the Catawba were all but overlooked by their neighbors. But in 1883, events began which changed how the Catawba saw themselves and how their white neighbors perceived them as well. For as anthropologist Frank G. Speck notes, the Catawba are unique "in the history of evangelical mission labors among Indians of North America," in that theirs is the only case among American Indians "where conversion to the religion of the white man shifted a whole group from paganism to Christianity in the Mormon path."²

Indeed the Catawba tribe is unique, both in South Carolina and among other Native American people for their high proportion of adherents to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)—the Mormons. In spite of this distinction, there is little written on this topic.³ This article seeks to

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¹"Remnant of the Catawbas," *Fort Mill Times*, June 18, 1925, 1; J. Hurtle, "Indians in South Carolina," *Yorkville Inquirer*, August 3, 1882, 1; Jerry D. Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina, 1882-1975, (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976), 24; *South Carolina Stake, Twenty-fifth Anniversary*, 20.

²Frank G. Speck, "Catawba Religious Beliefs, Mortuary Customs, and Dances," *Primitive Man* 12 (April 1929): 24; Frank G. Speck and C. E. Schemer "Catawba Kinship and Social Organization with a Resume of Tupelo Kinship Terms," *American Anthropologist* 44 (October-December 1924): 562.

³There is a considerable corpus of primary and secondary literature on the history of the Catawba, much of which has been capably compiled by Thomas J. Bloomer. Thomas J. Bloomer, *Bibliography of the Catawba*, Native American Bibliography series No. 10 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1987). Brown provides a general introduction to the tribe, while Hudson emphasizes the mid-twentieth century and Merle's history of the tribe up to removal is an exceptionally solid work. Douglas Summers Brown, *The Catawba Indians: People of the River* (Columbia:

this latter evangelical stance, for much more than revealing a widespread sense of guilt over the practice of slavery, such measures illustrate the threat that class antagonisms posed to the southern war effort. It was the latter, much more so than the former, that played the more significant role in the demise of the Confederacy.

provide a focused account of how the Catawba became a Mormon religious enclave by very briefly reviewing Protestant missionary activity among the Catawba prior to the arrival of the Mormons, examining how Mormonism became established, and explaining the extraordinary success of the LDS Church among the Catawba.

The traditional beliefs of the Catawba centered on animism, which had a panoply of good and evil spirits. With the arrival of the English in 1670 came Christian proselytizing. The clergyman Richard Ludlam wrote in 1725 that the Catawba, "are wholly [sic] addicted to their own barbarous and Sloathful [sic] Customs.... It must be the work of time and power that must have a happy Influence upon em [sic]."⁴

Still, the Catawba were not completely disinterested in Christianity. Contemporary accounts indicate some Catawba irregularly attended white religious services, albeit never in great numbers. Charles Woodmason, an itinerant Anglican clergyman acknowledged the Catawba listened to him preach, but lamented their drinking and fighting. In 1757 the Catawba headmen asked Governor Dobbs to teach Catawba children "to fear and love God as you do."⁵ William Richardson, a Presbyterian minister who was dispatched to preach to the Catawba, found they were more interested in the corn he brought with him than in conversion. In 1773 the Catawba requested a Christian missionary be sent them, but none came.

The Catawba, nonetheless, drew the attention of some evangelical luminaries. Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke visited the Catawba in 1791. Although none converted, Asbury sought to establish a school and send an extra preacher to the Catawba, but these efforts came to naught. In 1803 John Rooker settled near them and began preaching and teaching. A Revolutionary War veteran and skilled hunter and fisher, Rooker thought

University of South Carolina Press, 1966); Charles M. Hudson, *The Catawba Nation*, University of Georgia Monographs No. 18 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1970); James H. Merrill, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). What little research there is on the religious beliefs of the Catawbas emphasizes their traditional beliefs. Speck, "Catawba Religious Beliefs, Mortuary Customs, and Dances," 21-57; Thomas J. Bloomer, "Wild Indians and the Devil: The Contemporary Catawba Indian Spirit World," *American Indian Quarterly* 9 (Spring 1985): 149-168. Two masters-level theses nicely contrast one another in terms of competing missionary activity among the Catawba. Lee's BYU work emphasizes the LDS perspective while Pallor's Columbia Bible College piece discusses some of the more recent evangelical Protestant work among the Catawba in the mid-twentieth century. Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina;" William Clyde Palmer, "The Catawba Indians, A Mission Field," (MA Thesis, Columbia Bible College, 1964).

⁴Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 99-100.

⁵Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 165.

he had much in common with the tribal members. To aid him he sought the assistance of Robert Marsh, another veteran and a Baptist preacher. Marsh was also a member of the Pamunkey tribe and married to a Catawba woman. The pair hired a teacher and built a school that doubled as a church. By 1806, however, the mission had ended in failure with Rooker quitting and Marsh admitting he was unable to convert his own wife. Their experience set the tone for a series of failed missions. In 1870 Dr. Maurice Moore wrote that he heard that all members of the tribe understood English and had been preached to by missionaries of all denominations, but not one converted.⁶

In spite of the seemingly steady stream of failed evangelization, some elements of traditional Christianity were among the Catawba prior to 1883. A few of the Catawba were at least nominally Protestant, maintaining membership in local churches such as the Flint Hill Baptist Church of Rock Hill. In addition, Speck speculates the Catawba received "garbled notions of Christianity from the vernacular of the Carolinian backwoodsmen." Still, the Catawba hardly seemed likely candidates for conversion to Mormonism, when in May 1883 two missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, entered the Catawba Reservation and became the catalyst for events that define the Catawba to this day.⁷

Since its founding in April 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has had a long history of evangelism and missionary activity among Native Americans. According to The Book of Mormon, a band of Israelites left the Middle East circa 600 BCE and made a trans-oceanic voyage, landing in the western hemisphere. In the new world they eventually split into two antagonistic factions; the Nephites who generally followed the Lord, and the Lamanites, who generally did not and were cursed by God with dark skins for their evil ways. The Lamanites, nonetheless, succeeded in annihilating the Nephites and are, according to Mormon belief, the ancestors of the Native American Indians—a "loathsome," and "filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations."⁸ The Book of Mormon prophesies that the Lamanites would be brought back into the fold and would again become a "white and delightsome people," when the gospel is declared among them and "they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers."⁹ The Mormons, in their desire to fulfill scripture, sought to convert the remaining Lamanites.¹⁰ As early as October 1830 Oliver Cowdery, one

⁶Maurice Moore, *Reminiscences of York*, Elmer Oris Parker, ed. (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1981), 11.

⁷John Richard Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, n.d.), 304, 353.

⁸I Nephi 12:23, II Nephi 5:24.

⁹II Nephi 30: 5, 6.

¹⁰Dean L. Larsen, *You and the Destiny of the Indian* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966).

of Joseph Smith's inner circle, was told to "go unto the Lamanites and preach."¹¹ It would, however, be more than half a century before they reached the Catawba.

In 1883 Mormon Elders Henry Miller and Charles E. Robison met with a number of other missionaries at King's Mountain, North Carolina. It was there that the pair discerned an opportunity in York County, South Carolina to work among the Catawba tribe. They first visited the Catawba Reservation in May and held a meeting at the home of a Catawba woman, Mrs. Nancy Harris Brady, where they sang the Mormon hymn, "We Thank Thee O God, For a Prophet," and expounded on their beliefs. Later that month, Robison wrote, "We have been to see a remnant of a tribe of Indians called the Catawba Indians; they are almost run out and badly mixed with the whites; they all speak English, but he added a positive note, "we have held two meetings with them; they seem very much taken with us."¹² But, just four months after beginning his work among the Catawba, Robison fell ill with chills and fever. On September 26, 1883 he died in the presence of Joseph Willey, another missionary from King's Mountain, who was then appointed to work with Miller.¹³

Robison's passing only temporarily slowed efforts to convert the Catawba. On October 14, 1883, Miller and Willey preached to fifty Catawba near Fort Mill who invited the pair to return, which they did two weeks later. After this second meeting, James Patterson, a Catawba, applied for baptism which the Mormons agreed to do four weeks later. At a November 4 meeting four more applied and all were baptized with Patterson a week later in the Catawba River. As all the parties requesting baptism were living with persons of the opposite sex—a sin in the eyes of the Mormons—the

¹¹*Doctrine and Covenants*, 28: 8.

¹²"By Courtesy of Bro. D. Osborn...." *Journal History*, May 28, 1883, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

¹³Robison is the only missionary to die while on his mission to the Catawba. Although he probably was the victim of malaria, his death may be the source to a persistent rumor that a mob killed two elders preaching to the tribe. "Death of Bishop Robison," *Salt Lake City Deseret Evening News*, October 3, 1883, 3; "The Catawbas," *Rock Hill Record*, February 11, 1915, 4; "Few Catawbas Are Left," *Fort Mill Times*, February 11, 1915, 1.

elders performed five marriages prior to the baptisms.¹⁴

The Mormons soon found more converts. Within a year of arriving among the Catawba, the Mormon missionaries baptized eight more; organized the Rock Hill branch of the Church, with Miller, the oldest elder as president; established a Sunday School and held weekly sacrament meetings. The pair was pleased with their work among these Lamanites.¹⁵ The missionaries' efforts were further aided by the conversion of Robert Harris, Pinckney Head, John Saunders and Jim Harris who were considered men of influence among the tribe. Others quickly followed their example. By June 1, 1884, Rock Hill branch of the Church listed thirty-one members, twenty-five of who were Indians, and James Patterson, a Catawba, was presiding. This was the first Indian branch in the Mormon Church to be entirely staffed by Indians and is not only the oldest branch in South Carolina, but also the oldest Native American branch.¹⁶

In spite of their success among, and interest in, Native-Americans, the Mormons were not interested in working among the region's principle minority. The missionaries did not actively proselytize blacks as the Church denied full membership to all members of the race. The rationale for this discrimination stems from the interpretation of a verse in Mormon scripture (Abraham 1: 23-26) denying the priesthood to the descendants of Ham. This stricture was not lifted until 1978. Nevertheless, some Blacks attended the meetings held by the missionaries apparently out of curiosity. But, as one white observer noted, "the exclusiveness of the Mormon Church prohibits social equality; or in other words, 'no colored sisters need apply.'"¹⁷

As word of the so called "Indian Preachers" activities among the Catawba made its way around to the local white community, opposition began to grow. The itinerant missionaries began to notice a change in attitude. One wrote, "We find it the hardest to get a place to stop overnight."

¹⁴William Bradford, "Catawba Indians of South Carolina," mss# 1644, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, p. 21-22; Hudson, *The Catawba Nation*, 78; Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina, 1882-1975," 37-40; William Claude Anderson, "Establishment of the Church among the Catawba Indians," Manuscript # 9224, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 1; Roger S. Trimnal, "Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at the Catawba Indian Reservation in South Carolina," Manuscript # 13646, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 1.

¹⁵Manuscript # 1644, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, 45; "Missionary Experiences," *Deseret Evening News*, May 20, 1884, 2.

¹⁶Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina," 1976, 46, 50-52.

¹⁷"The Mormons," *Yorkville Enquirer*, June 15, 1882, 2.

He also noted, "we find the [Protestant] ministers worst of all, for they have an influence over the people. One preached last Sunday openly that we ought to be mobbed out of the country."¹⁸ As with other minority sects, the Mormons were enthusiastically evangelical in promoting their message. This coupled with the fact that their traveling missionaries were outsiders, with no loyalty to the region, served to alienate them from the dominant culture. Mormonism doubtless appeared alien and threatening to southerners particularly with regard to their differing views on Native Americans and women. Especially as Wyatt-Brown notes, the South has an "anxiety and dread of social change beyond popular comprehension."¹⁹

The Mormons presented a worldview that elevated the Catawba to being among God's chosen people—a significant threat to a race conscious people. Hill also notes that for southern religious conservatives, "the essence of social responsibility is the preservation of orthodoxy, primarily religious, but with social orthodoxy in a supporting role." He adds, "southern mores are accorded a certain divine quality."²⁰ Indeed, South Carolina, in the view of some commentators, is legendary in its resistance to change.²¹ As will be discussed later, Mormon polygamy was perceived as a potential threat to the virtues of southern womanhood. Gorn says the South was knit together by the primal concept of "male valor," and southern culture valued clan loyalty and protection of women.²² At the same time, Hill notes it is typical of "folk-cultures" to "build figurative walls around their own, and to be uncomfortable over awareness of alternatives."²³ If such alternatives threatened the balance of power, he adds, retaliation was a strong possibility for a people with feelings of inferiority and criticized by outsiders.²⁴

¹⁸Manuscript # 1644, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 23; History of Southern States Mission, Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, entry for June 9, 1883; *The Catawba Nation*, 78.

¹⁹Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 202.

²⁰Samuel S. Hill, *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 28, 45.

²¹Robert Calhoun, "Religion Confronts the Social Order," in *Religion in South Carolina*, Charles H. Lippy, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 168.

²²Elliot J. Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair, and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry," *American Historical Review* 90 (February 1985): 40.

²³Hill, *Religion and the Solid South*, 31, 41-42.

²⁴*Ibid.*

Hackney suggests that a "paranoid perception of the environment" could be the cause of the pattern of violence in the South as a whole.²⁵

Indeed, some research indicates that more than northerners, southerners view violence as a legitimate means of maintaining order and social control. The South has a strong tendency to favor violence for social order and hierarchy maintenance purposes.²⁶ This part of South Carolina was no exception in its willingness to resort to violence as the 1882 lynching of John Johnson, the "Rock Hill Ravisher" indicates. Not surprisingly, initial anti-Mormon hostility was typically mob-based. For example, a band of local whites sent a threatening letter to the Rock Hill Branch demanding the Mormons cease their activities. Hostility was so great the elders felt compelled to hide out in the woods for their own safety. They lived off whatever food and water the Catawba smuggled out to them. Some Catawba further helped missionaries hide in the woods across the river by swimming it with missionaries on their backs.²⁷

In the face of such adversity, the missionaries temporarily disbanded the Rock Hill Branch on November 30, 1884. Twenty-two Catawba Mormons went with them to Spartanburg. James Russell, a Mormon, let them stay on his farm there in exchange for tending his crops.²⁸ The move was hard for the Catawba as their beloved Elder Willey was appointed South Carolina conference president and did not accompany them. In addition, many fell ill with chills and fever.²⁹

Others went to a plantation owned by John S. Black near Cowpens. Although Black never joined the Church, he considered himself a friend to the Mormons. The isolated expanse served the Mormons well as a base of operations and it became the headquarters of the South Carolina Conference. Black's plantation allowed the Mormon elders to live safely and teach the Catawba.³⁰ In spite of its remote location, this settlement was not isolated from strife. Among locals, it became known as the "Mormon Nest." Black heard a rumor that one-hundred fifty men were planning to clear out the "Nest." Armed with this information, Black took his guns to town and made

²⁵Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *American Historical Review* 74 (February 1969): 922-923.

²⁶Richard E. Nisbett and Dove Cohen, *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996): xv, 2, 27-28, 59, 72-73.

²⁷"H. Shelby Berry, Oral History Transcript," LDS Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, mss # 200 735, 23.

²⁸"More Mobocracy in the South," *Deseret Evening News*, July 2, 1885, 2; "South Carolina," *Journal History*, May 17, 1887, 4.

²⁹Manuscript # 1644, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 113

³⁰"South Carolina," *Deseret Evening News*, May 17, 1887, 2.

a visible display of purchasing ammunition and getting the weapons cleaned. He also let it be known that the first person to leave the public road and step on his land would be shot. As a result the mob never materialized. Although Black's wife, Mary, converted to Mormonism, he did not. He maintained he needed to keep up his rough image, which included drinking, swearing, and fighting, to intimidate the elders' opponents.

The departure from the reservation was short-lived and within a few months most Catawba went back to their homes. The return of the Catawba hardly meant the opposition to Mormonism abated. Elders John Gordon and W.E. Bingham went to the Catawba from King's Mountain on December 13, 1886, but fled two days later to escape a threatening mob. In 1887, seventy-five to one-hundred men mobbed Elder Richie Hartness at his York County home stripping him and giving him 20 lashes and a warning that unless he left in ten days the same would be done to his family. He fled to Alabama. The same mob visited an Elder Gordon who was not home, but left a warning that he had ten days to leave or suffer the consequences. Gordon took the hint and moved to Cleveland County, N.C., but returned two years later.³¹

Such attacks were fueled by reports circulated throughout the South of corrupt and licentious missionaries engaging in lewd and lascivious activities while seeking to establish polygamy in the region. Locals charged Mormons with luring young women and girls into prostitution and "deliberately seducing Southern womanhood in order to build up the harems of Utah."³² Particularly titillating were reports of nude baptisms. "It seems almost incredible that such heathenism can be practiced here under our eyes... but these Mormon missionaries admit that this is their role of baptism and express surprise that anyone should find fault with it," exclaimed the editor of the *Rock Hill Herald*, who then told an account of two white women whom missionaries converted and took to a neighboring creek and baptized them after "the usual fashion." The girls then left for Utah the following day.³³ The greatest objection to Mormons centered on the practice of polygamy. Widely perceived as an excuse for licentiousness and at variance with the conservative moral traditions of the region, the popular perception in South Carolina, and the rest of the South, was that the elders preached polygamy and sought to establish it in the region.

Among the Catawba a controversial picture emerges regarding polygamy. Mrs. R. E. Dunlap, a Presbyterian teacher who lived among the

³¹Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina," 51-53.

³²William Hatch, "A History of Mormon Civil Relations in the Southern States, 1865-1905," (MA thesis, Utah State University, 1965), 9-10.

³³"Baptized and Sent on to Utah," *Rock Hill Herald*, June 7, 1883, 2.

Catawba, said the Mormons openly preached polygamy.³⁴ While her credibility could be called into account as she was never friendly to the Mormons, two well known ethnographic studies of the Catawba corroborate the practice. Speck reported the Catawba accepted Mormonism and were continuing their own earlier practice of polygamy.³⁵ Six years after the Woodruff manifesto ostensibly ended the practice of polygamy, a Catawba known as Uncle Billy George revealed the same to Scaife in 1896, remarking, "We can't have but one wife, and that ain't right."³⁶ In a 1940 *Lancaster News* article, an older Catawba man also noted polygamy was no longer practiced on the reservation.³⁷

Lee says Speck is in error about Catawba accepting Mormonism and continuing polygamy.³⁸ He suggests Speck misunderstood the Catawba construct of kin to construe polygamy. He adds that careful examination of early records does not show polygamy occurred.³⁹ Lee, however, does not address or refute either Scaife, or the *Lancaster News* article. Moreover, it seems unlikely that a people who sought so ardently to identify themselves with Mormonism would not practice what was, until 1890, one of the Church's central tenets.

Whether polygamy was practiced or not, whites actively sought to curtail the Mormon influence on the Catawba reservation even though they had not previously exhibited any great concern or compassion for the Indians. Perhaps they feared being bested at their own game of evangelization. Possibly they saw the Mormons as such a threat that they were not to be tolerated wherever they went, even among the Indians. As the Mormon presence and influence increased, local Protestant church

³⁴R.E. Dunlap to McDonald Furman, February 28, 1902, McDonald Furman Papers, Sec. A, FF:1287, OC:I:15, Special Collections Department, William Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

³⁵Frank G. Speck and C. E. Schaeffer, "Catawba Kinship and Social Organization with a Resume of Tutelo Kinship Terms," *American Anthropologist* 44 (October-December 1924): 562.

³⁶Lewis H. Scaife, *History and Condition of the Catawba Indians of South Carolina* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Office of Indian Rights Association, 1896), reprinted in US Senate Document no. 92, 71st Cong. 2nd sess., Washington: 1930, 14.

³⁷"The Former War-like Catawbas Now Live in a Land of Desolation," *Lancaster News*, March 15, 1940, 4.

³⁸Frank G. Speck and C. E. Schemer, "Catawba Kinship and Social Organization with a Resume of Tupelo Kinship Terms," 562, in Jerry D. Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina, 1882-1975, (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976), 54.

³⁹Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina, 1882-1975," 54-55.

leaders made tardy efforts to subvert the Latter-day Saints and their activities. Several went to the reservation asking the Indians not to have anything to do with the missionaries and offered to build a church or school house and send a full time teacher on the condition that the Mormons be turned out. The Indians turned down the offer with the reply, "We have found what we have been looking for!"⁴⁰

The Mormon missionaries continued to experience threats and assaults. On the night of May 26, 1885, twenty-five men on horseback confronted Elders R. M. Humphrey and Heber Wright as the pair were walking through a forest. They recognized some of the assailants as having attended one of their earlier meetings. One of those, the Reverend J. H. Hauge, told them, "we want you to promise that you will leave and never again attempt to teach or preach... 'Mormonism' to any of the inhabitants of this county." After parlaying for two hours, the missionaries fled into the thick woods where their mounted pursuers could not follow. On another occasion, a mob headed by three Baptist preachers broke up a missionary schoolhouse meeting—the elders hid in the woods all night without being found.⁴¹ Elders Franklin A. Fraughton and Wiley G. Cragun were baptizing a number of Catawba in May 1885 when a deputation of seven white men appeared with a petition with seventy signatures warning them to leave the state. The seven charged the elders with preaching and practicing polygamy among the Indians. As the two refused to go, the house in which they were staying was surrounded by a mob a few nights later. The leader of the gang ordered them out. Amid a hail of gunfire Cragun fled shoeless into the woods. A round grazed his head and as he fell, another load struck him on the jaw and came out his chin. Amazingly he was not captured. Fraughton was not so fortunate. The throng took the captive Fraughton, who was in his forties, to a house about a mile from the reservation, stripped him to the waist, and gave him forty lashes with a large hickory switch. They also tried to force whiskey down his mouth which he spat out. They then began to choke him until a member of the crowd begged for him to be set loose. He was cut loose with a warning that if the pair did not leave the reservation the next day they would be killed. The two reunited and walked the sixty odd miles back to the Black plantation, where Mary Black nursed them back to health. They later left for Spartanburg.⁴²

⁴⁰*Columbia South Carolina Stake, Columbia South Carolina Stake Fortieth Anniversary, 199-200.*

⁴¹"From South Carolina," *Journal History*, December 17, 1885, 4; "Missionary Incident," *Deseret Evening News*, August 7, 1885, 2.

⁴²Palmer, "The Catawba Indians, A Mission Field," 49; *Columbia South Carolina Stake, Columbia South Carolina Stake Fortieth Anniversary, 200-201*; "More Mobocracy in the South," *Deseret Evening News*, July 20, 1885, 2.

After the shooting of Cragun, local whites warned they would kill the next elder they caught.⁴³ The missionaries, nevertheless, continued to go to the reservation, albeit under cover of darkness, and live in the woods. Again, the Catawba kept the elders hidden and fed. They also watched over the missionaries with shotguns while they slept at night.⁴⁴ The Catawba worked steadfastly to protect the missionaries. A Mormon Catawba told a gathering mob he would shoot anyone who tried to get the two missionaries he was protecting, and the crowd dispersed.⁴⁵ Hampered by not being able to work on the reservation openly, the elders organized a Sunday School with "one of the Lamanite Brethren to superintend it."⁴⁶ Although this move was born of practicality, it was an important step in developing an independent branch. Elder W. N. Anderson commented on this saying of the Catawba, that, "some of them are the best we have got, being full of faith and integrity, and have taken hold with a zeal not commonly manifest with those who receive the truth nowadays." He added while the elders had to "slip about and be watchful," they wrote regularly to encourage the Catawba who managed on their own.⁴⁷

By October 1885, Elders reported that things had calmed down and the "mobocratic spirit has abated 'right smart'."⁴⁸ As hostilities ameliorated, missionaries were free to do house-to-house visitations again and realized continued success, for by 1887 three-quarters of the Catawba identified themselves with the Church. By the 1890s they established themselves in residence, living and working in a closer relationship with the Catawba.⁴⁹ In 1894 the continued efforts of the Mormons among the Catawba seemed to be further assured when Southern Mission President J. Golden Kimball and Elder W. G. Patrick met with South Carolina Governor, Benjamin Tillman,

⁴³William Claude Anderson, "Establishment of the Church among the Catawba Indians," Manuscript # 9224, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 1; *South Carolina Stake*, South Carolina Stake Twenty-fifth Anniversary (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Stake, 1972): 20-21; Brown, *The Catawba Indians*, 341; Landrum L. George, "Chief Blue of the Catawbas," *Indian Liahona* n.v. (Winter 1963-1964): 2.

⁴⁴Palmer, "The Catawba Indians," 50-51.

⁴⁵"South Carolina," *Deseret Evening News*, May 17, 1887, 2.

⁴⁶"South Carolina," *Journal History*, May 17, 1887, 4.

⁴⁷"Correspondence," *Journal History*, October 17 [sic], 1885, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁴⁸"The Catawba Nation," *Deseret Evening News*, March 31, 1887, 3; Palmer, "The Catawba Indians, A Mission Field," 48-9; *South Carolina Stake*, South Carolina Stake Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 20-21.

⁴⁹"History of the Southern States Mission," *Latter-day Saints Southern Star* 2 (January 20, 1900): 63.

who assured them that "all should enjoy their rights as American citizens"—including, presumably, freedom of religion.⁵⁰

Even though this was a period of relative calm, a number of Mormon Catawba left South Carolina and moved west to be nearer the center of their religion. The Church, at this time, practiced the concept of gathering—drawing all believers together in the Great Basin—the Mormon promised land. Several Catawba converts moved to Salt Lake City as early as 1884. In September 1885, Southern States Mission President John Morgan indicated he planned to secure legislation from the state empowering the Catawba to sell their lands so they could join the gathering. Morgan wrote there were only ninety-three Catawba and about two-thirds "embraced the Gospel" and most, if not all, appear "earnest and zealous and are endeavoring to make good Latter-day Saints." Initially, a large portion of the tribe moved west. So many went that the Catawba Branch was again temporarily discontinued.⁵¹ For some, this move too was short lived as they missed their South Carolina homes, and by the turn of the last century, the Church was de-emphasizing the gathering.

By 1900 there were approximately 125 members of the Catawba Nation Branch, including 100 baptized Mormons and 25-30 children who had been blessed. This was about three-fourths of the tribe.⁵² The non-Mormon Catawba found themselves a minority among their own people and increasingly at odds with members of their own tribe. Billy Harris, a non-Mormon, complained that ever since the first missionaries came, "they have kept coming." They built a church, and "got one of these elders, or teachers or preachers, as they may be called, to live among them and preach or teach the members." While Harris was making collections for a Presbyterian preacher, a Mormon Catawba "undertook to attack me with his doctrines...he tried to argue with me [and] called me an ignorant person, but I would like to know which is the more ignorant, he or I?" Harris concluded, "I had nothing to do with him as I know something of his belief and I do not know if he had anything to do with my belief."⁵³ The case of Susan (Harris) Owl

⁵⁰Arthur M. Richardson, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan* (Salt Lake: Nicholas G. Morgan, 1965), 418-19.

⁵¹"Invasion of the Mormons," *Rock Hill Herald*, June 26, 1885, 2; "The Catawba Nation," *Deseret Evening News*, March 31, 1887, 2; Maurice A. Evenson to Ezra Taft Benson, January 5, 1959, Church Historian's Office, mss # 5777; Roger S. Trimnal, "Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at the Catawba Indian Reservation in South Carolina," Manuscript # 13646, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 1; Cal Harrison, "Catawba Wants Name on Tribal List," *Rock Hill Herald*, February 14, 1994, 1.

⁵²Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina," 55.

⁵³Billy Harris, "Mormonism," *Rock Hill Herald*, September 15, 1909, 6.

is even more extreme. She too disagreed with the Mormon influence on the tribe and left to live among the Eastern Cherokee, where she married Samson Owl. She then renounced her ties with the Catawba and became a Baptist.⁵⁴ In spite of such dissention, the tribe remained overwhelmingly Mormon.

The turn of the century saw a wave of legislative and mob attacks on the Mormons. In late 1899 a petition from Hampton County appeared before the General Assembly. On the pretense of combating "lawlessness," the appeal urged lawmakers to pass legislation to "extirpate the elders." Such prompt legislation, it was said, may "save them from having mob violence that some sister states have had in trying to rid himself or herself of this sect."⁵⁵ Nothing came of the matter, but Mormons saw "the hands of jealous ministers" as the impetus for the proposal.⁵⁶

This signaled a new wave of violence that appears to have involved the Ku Klux Klan. The Mormons long suspected the Klan was involved in opposing them. The man who led the mob against Elder Cragun was believed to be a former KKK leader.⁵⁷ John Morgan of the Southern States Mission wrote, "Many of the people were members of the Ku Klux Klan which often mistreated and occasionally murdered the Elders" in the South.⁵⁸ The Mormons believed the Klan was involved in a number of attacks including flogging a woman for housing missionaries. These actions occurred as part of a statewide effort to terrorize Mormons. Ironically, the Catawba were left unscathed as the troubles swirled about them, even though a chapel at Rodgerway in Fairfield County burned to the ground the night after nine of them visited it.⁵⁹ Klan attacks were, of course, not solely racially based, as white-on-white violence also occurred in an effort to maintain social control.⁶⁰ In his work on Southern railways and Klan violence, Scott Reynolds Nelson draws a connection between the KKK and Baptist in the area. The Reverend John Ezell, reportedly a "Cyclops," also pastored a Baptist congregation on the border of Union and Spartanburg counties. The Broad River Baptist Association, Wilson speculates, linked

⁵⁴Speck, "Catawba Religious Beliefs, Mortuary Customs, and Dances," 25-26.

⁵⁵"To Keep Out Mormons," *Deseret Evening News*, December 22, 1899, 3.

⁵⁶"To Extirpate the Elders," *Latter-day Saints Southern Star* 2 (December 30, 1899):

34.

⁵⁷"Proselytizing in the South," *Deseret Evening News*, (Salt Lake City, UT), February 27, 1886, 2.

⁵⁸Richardson, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan*, 128.

⁵⁹"A Mormon Church Burned," *Rock Hill Herald*, July 10, 1897, 2.

⁶⁰Raymond D. Gastil, "Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence," *American Sociological Review* 36 (June 1971): 417-418.

upcountry Klans as prominent figures in the Association such as The Reverends Nathan Shotwell and Thomas Dixon, each of whom reportedly had links to the Klan.⁶¹ Whether the KKK was actively opposed to Mormonism, or if the missionaries attributed such actions to the Klan as a result of their own regional stereotyping is unclear. Still, it would not be surprising that KKK and Protestant interests merged in seeking to rid the region of meddlesome Mormons. This linkage was underscored by the arrest of an unnamed Klan member, who was also a Baptist minister, along with thirteen other men as part of a 1900 state crackdown on anti-Mormon violence.⁶²

The missionaries even experienced at least one conversion among the Klan. James Allen Smith confessed that when the Mormons first came, "I heard such bad things about them that I wanted to go and drive them out.... I had driven out many a Negro out of the country when I was connected with the Ku-Klux [sic]." However, when a friend challenged him to see if "those things are true," Smith sent for two missionaries, who stayed with him two days and nights. After reading their tracts, he was convinced "Mormonism had been revealed by a higher Power than man" and was baptized.⁶³

This marked the last phase of anti-Mormon violence. By the 1910s most of the local white community lost interest in the Mormon influence among the Catawba. What anti-Mormon activity followed was educational and evangelical in nature and sought to win the hearts and souls of the Catawba rather than to expel the Mormons, *per se*.⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that during this period, the focus of the violence against the Mormons was the missionaries and not the Catawba. Southerners saw the incoming elders as interlopers and threats to the established social order. It is not surprising, therefore, that they were subject to abuse. Anti-Mormon passions seemed to have run especially strong across the South, not just against those working with the Catawba. Between 1865 and 1900, eight Mormons were killed for their religious convictions in the southern states. Many others were assaulted for the same reason, and much Mormon property was destroyed. Among the local whites near the Catawba

⁶¹Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 134.

⁶²"After the Mormon Elders," *Rock Hill Herald*, August 25, 1897, 3; "History of the Southern States Mission," *Latter-day Saints Southern Star* 3 (June 2, 1900), 213.

⁶³"Reformatory Power of the Truth," *Journal History*, December 31, 1886, 4.

⁶⁴"A Day With the Catawba Indians," *Rock Hill Herald*, May 1, 1910, 1; "History of the Southern States Mission," *Latter-day Saints Southern Star* 2 (December 9, 1899): 11; "History of the Southern States Mission," *Latter-day Saints Southern Star* 2 (May 26, 1900): 201.

reservation, the activities of the Mormon missionaries appeared threatening to the old order of things, particularly since the Mormons presented a world view that placed the Catawba in an elevated if not a proto-exalted position, as God's chosen people—a significant threat to a race conscious people already in the throes of racial and social upheaval. Given this antipathy, it is not surprising, that local whites lashed out at the Mormons. Unexpectedly, when whites entered the reservation, it was not to teach the Indians a lesson, but to expel the white Mormon pariah. This may be a testament to the otherwise long history of good relations between the whites and the Catawba.

Education of the Catawba marked the next phase of the local white Protestant and Mormon struggle for the minds, hearts, and souls of the tribal members. This was a critical area of concern. Although by 1895 at least two Catawba girls had attended the famous Carlisle Indian School, they were an exception, as most of the Catawba were illiterate. Organized instruction by the Mormons began in March 1888 when Elders Johnson and Clark began teaching spelling and reading to Catawba children as part of their other missionary duties. By May they were meeting twice a week even though attendance was sporadic.⁶⁵ In 1890 the Church assigned Orlando Barrus and his wife as full time teaching missionaries.⁶⁶ The Catawba built a house for the Barruses and their five children. In keeping with his role as a missionary, Barrus declined a salary, but accepted tribal money for desks and paint to fix up the school. The couple stayed until 1911 and were followed by other LDS teachers. Mormons controlled the Catawba educational system until 1943 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs opened a new school.⁶⁷

The Barruses experienced some competition for the attention of the Catawba. In 1896 local Presbyterians took an interest in the education and religious training of Catawba children. In December the Bethel Presbytery negotiated with the tribe to appoint Mrs. R. Eli Dunlap as teacher and to construct a schoolhouse. Under Chief James Harris the Catawba also erected a house for her and her husband with the Dunlap's own money and

⁶⁵Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina," 61.

⁶⁶*Columbia South Carolina Stake, Columbia South Carolina Stake Fortieth Anniversary*, 201.

⁶⁷Merrell, *The Catawbas*, 88-89; Lee, "A Study of the Influence of the Mormon Church on the Catawba Indians of South Carolina," 63-65.

donations from their friends.⁶⁸ Mrs. Dunlap actively sought to improve the circumstances of the Catawba. She encouraged the women to make pottery, which she sent to Charleston to be sold to buy children's clothing. She spoke out against co-habitating couples and denounced a white owned store for selling whiskey and allowing gambling on its premises. She also stood firmly against Mormonism. Though she never mentioned it, she let it be known that she would try "with all my might to uproot error."⁶⁹ She saw the missionaries as an impediment and wished she could send "the poor ignorant creatures back to their families."⁷⁰ She was also concerned about the "curious influence" they seemed to have over "the poor ignorant Indian," who "is so easily led astray."⁷¹ She also declared that if the school closed it would be due to the "pernicious influence" of the Mormons. The constant antagonism took a toll and by 1898 Dunlap felt discouraged and persecuted. In November 1900 she acknowledged that the school was "not very full."⁷² Five years later, after surviving an attempt by the local Indian Agent to remove her, Mrs. Dunlap and her family departed the reservation, because their presence continued to be a divisive issue among the Catawba.⁷³

Although Dunlap's activities marked the high point of Protestant incursions among the Catawba, the evangelical Christians never completely lost interest in the Catawba. In 1910 the Baptists built a sizable wood framed church, which could seat 200, near the reservation. Local York County Baptist preachers took turns delivering messages. Two Catawba families eventually joined the Baptist Church but left a number of years later to join

⁶⁸"Report of the Catawba Indian Agent," Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina at the Regular Session Commencing June 10, 1899, vol. 1 (Columbia SC: R.L. Bryan, 1899), 775; "To Educate the Catawbas," *Rock Hill Herald*, December 5, 1896, 2; "Fight With the Indians," *Rock Hill Herald*, March 29, 1905, 2; "Airing Indian Affairs," *Rock Hill Herald*, April 1, 1905, 3; "The Indian Controversy," *Rock Hill Herald*, April 5, 1905, 3; William Claude Anderson, "Establishment of the Church among the Catawba Indians," mss # 9224, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, UT, 3.

⁶⁹R. E. Dunlap to McDonald Furman, July 29, 1897, McDonald Furman Papers, Duke University Special Collections.

⁷⁰R. E. Dunlap to McDonald Furman, November 21, 1900, McDonald Furman Papers, Duke University Special Collections.

⁷¹R. E. Dunlap to McDonald Furman, May 28, 1897, McDonald Furman Papers, Duke University Special Collections.

⁷²R. E. Dunlap to McDonald Furman, November 13, 1900, McDonald Furman Papers, Duke University Special Collections.

⁷³"Fight with the Indians," *Rock Hill Herald*, March 23, 1905, 3; Mrs. R. E. Dunlap, "Airing Indian Affairs," *Rock Hill Herald*, April 1, 1905, 3; "The Indian Controversy," *Rock Hill Herald*, April 5, 1905, 3.

the Mormons. Rev. S.R. Brock and five members organized a Catawba Indian Baptist Sunday School on January 26, 1913. By 1918 the Baptists realized the ineffectiveness of their work and sold the building to the Men's Evangelistic Club of Rock Hill. This interdenominational group sponsored Sunday and special services, but again with little success, eventually conceding that virtually the whole tribe was Mormon.⁷⁴

Some scholars disagree with this assessment that the tribe was predominantly Mormon. They maintain that like many converted indigenous people, the Catawba have a syncretic belief system combining their traditional beliefs with Mormonism.⁷⁵ Whether this is true or not, the lack of interest in Protestant efforts is inescapable. Although this was hardly the last time Protestants attempted to convert the Catawba, it does mark the last time a non-Mormon group sought to build a facility to evangelize the Catawba and marks a closing point in the religious history of the tribe.⁷⁶

From the outset, Mormon missionaries realized extraordinary success among the Catawba. The reason for this escapes easy explanation, but can be attributed to a number of factors. For some, *The Book of Mormon* fit well with Catawba history. Chief Samuel Blue said the Mormon missionaries brought a book that is the "direct history of our forefathers which we had no other history [of] before this book came along."⁷⁷ Another noted, "in studying *The Book of Mormon*, we find our true identity, the history of our forefathers."⁷⁸ Also, given the nature of their scripture, Mormons gave the Catawba a dignity and respect granted by few others. This, in turn, gave the Catawba a unique sense of collective identity—that of being a chosen people.

Mormonism also provided the Catawba with an appealing way to redefine their racial identity and attain classification as whites, particularly since the *Book of Mormon* says that if Lamanites (Indians) came back to their long forsaken faith, they would again become a "white and delightsome people." In this teaching, many Catawba saw an opportunity for upward

⁷⁴"Seek to Solve Problem," *Rock Hill Evening Herald*, October 6, 1923, 7; "Church Building for Catawba Indians," *Rock Hill Record*, March 2, 1916, 3; *South Carolina Stake, South Carolina Stake Twenty-fifth Anniversary*, 20-21.

⁷⁵Speck, "Catawba Religious Beliefs, Mortuary Customs, and Dances," 22-28; James Merrell, "Reading 'An Almost Erased Page': A Reassessment of Frank G. Speck's Catawba Studies," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 127 (no. 4, 1983), 255; Blumer, "Wild Indians and the Devil," 149-168.

⁷⁶"Conducts Meetings At the Indian Reservation," *Rock Hill Herald*, June 24, 1922, 1; Palmer, "The Catawba Indians, A Mission Field;" J. C. Davis. "The Catawba Indians," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* n.v. (June 26, 1934): 33.

⁷⁷Brown, *The Catawba Indians: People of the River*, 341.

⁷⁸*South Carolina Stake, South Carolina Stake Twenty-fifth Anniversary*, 20-21.

mobility while socially distancing themselves from blacks.⁷⁹ The idea of distancing themselves from African Americans seemed to be particularly appealing to the Catawba, as they embraced the Church's teaching on the inferiority of blacks.

There were, in fact, reports of the Catawba becoming whiter, thereby fulfilling the prophecy.⁸⁰ Still, not even all Mormons were convinced they were witnessing such a super-natural transformation. As early as 1884, Elder Willey offered another explanation for the lighter complexions and hair common among the Catawba; "They married and intermarried with Whites, which accounts for the light eyes and hair," he noted.⁸¹ Indeed, other accounts confirm a high level of exogamy among the Catawba.⁸² Leola Blue confirmed this in 1919, when she told Frank Speck there were not more than six full blood Catawba left.⁸³ Nonetheless, Elder H. Shelby Berry said he saw a Catawba gradually become whiter in a matter of months rather than generations. "One thing I noticed the week I got there...was [sic] white spots all over his face, as if he had some disease that left its mark." He observed, "those spots keep getting bigger and bigger, until one spot met the next spot, so that by the end of that year he was a shade whiter, right before my eyes.⁸⁴ Beyond the miraculous, another explanation for this is vitiligo, a skin disease characterized by irregular white patches of various sizes giving the appearance of milky white skin due to a loss of the cells which give color to the skin. Faces, hands and other sun-exposed areas are most often affected by this condition.⁸⁵

Beyond this, the Catawba and Mormons established a strong rapport with one another based on their common experiences. Both suffered

⁷⁹II Nephi 30:6; Davis, "The Catawba Indians," 33; Merrell, *The Catawbas*, 78; "The Racial Education of the Catawba Indians," *Journal of Southern History* 50 (August 1984): 383; Milling, *Red Carolinians*, 260; George L. Hicks, "Catawba Acculturation and the Ideology of Race," in Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion, *Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, June Helm, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964): 85-91, 119; Martha Bentley, "The Slaveholding Catawbas" *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 92, No. 2 (April 1991): 85-98.

⁸⁰*Deseret Evening News*, May 1, 1954 7.

⁸¹"Missionary Experiences," *Deseret Evening News*, May 20, 1884, 2.

⁸²"Remnant of the Catawbas," *Fort Mill Times*, June 18, 1925, 1.

⁸³Leola Blue to Speck, October 27, 1919, Speck papers, Box 18, Section IV. E2, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia; "A Day With the Catawba Indians," *Rock Hill Herald*, May 1, 1910, 1.

⁸⁴ "H. Shelby Berry, Oral History," 23-24.

⁸⁵*Mosby's Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Dictionary*, 5th ed. (St. Louis: Mosby Book, 1998), 9466; Dorothy Eleanor Stonely, "Vitiligo," *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine* (Detroit: Gale, 1999), 3044.

discrimination, persecution, and as minority groups, forced relocation. Speck observes that both were oppressed by the dominant Protestant-white society and "harbored resentment against the same sources of misery." The outcome, he says, could be expected; "the harried elders found friends among the outcast Indians."⁸⁶ In particular, both shared sharply negative views of the major Protestant bodies of the day. For the Mormons, these denominations were responsible for persecuting them. For the Catawba, the local Baptists and Methodists were easily seen as those who defrauded them of their land. The Mormons, of course, were never associated with such problems, as such issues predated their arrival in South Carolina.

Geography and language both played a role in the Mormon success among the Catawba. As the Catawba were both segregated and secluded, the Mormons were able to concentrate their efforts on a relatively small area and a largely homogeneous audience. The relative distance of the reservation from Rock Hill or Columbia further precluded continual contact by Protestants. Also, as Elders Joseph Willey and R.M. Humphrey noted, "many of them [the Catawba] have forgotten their mother tongue," adding "they all talk the English language."⁸⁷ This passing observation is significant, as it means that the elders did not have to work through a translator, learn Catawba, or teach the tribe English. As a result, Willey wrote that he found the Catawba more conducive to the missionaries' message than the Cherokee, among whom he had previously worked, who had their own language.

Socially, the Catawba particularly appreciated the willingness of the Mormon missionaries to stay and live among them. One Catawba recalled grandparents saying the Mormon missionaries would come and stay with the people, noting that "they were the first Christians to come in and try to do anything for the Indians."⁸⁸ Not only did the missionaries work and teach among the people, but some of their activities reportedly were of a divine nature. Accounts of miracles performed by the early elders among the Catawba are still recounted. Such a level of constant contact created a closeness and affinity with which Protestant denominations simply could not compete, as they contented themselves with making relatively brief visits to the reservation.

The Catawba also saw benefits in Mormon morals. By the mid-nineteenth century, alcoholism was taking a toll on the tribe. The strict Mormon prohibition on all alcohol was incorporated by many converts and set the tribe on the road to recovery. The nineteenth-century Mormons also ended

⁸⁶Speck, "Catawba Religious Beliefs, Mortuary Customs, and Dances," 25.

⁸⁷Joseph Willey and R. M. Humphrey, "Missionary Experiences," *Journal History*, May 10, 1884.

⁸⁸Hudson, *The Catawba Nation*, 117.

the forced sexual encounters between Catawba women and local white juveniles and adults, who prior to the arrival of the Mormons were in the habit of entering the reservation and having sexual relations with Catawba women on the pretense that they welcomed such encounters with Caucasians. The closing of such sexual outlets may too have accounted for much of the local hostility to the Mormons.⁸⁹ In short, Mormonism became an "alternative source of proper values, correct behavior, and tribal identity on the reservation."⁹⁰

The considerable success of Mormonism is also due in part to the shortcoming of Protestants. As Milling says, "it must be admitted that the Latter Day Saints have succeeded where other sects have failed dismally."⁹¹ Whatever tactics they adopted, the white Protestants never overcame the stigma of being unable to establish significant rapport with the objects of their evangelization. Moreover, they were unable to present their beliefs as a viable alternative to Mormonism theologically or socially. In presenting their message, they too often come across as overtly anti-Mormon and lacking in Christian charity. Moreover, for a Catawba to leave Mormonism was to invite social ostracism, especially as there is not a strong social network among the non-Mormon Catawba.

Although the Latter-day Saints have a long history of mission work among many tribes of Native-Americans, several of these factors account for their singular success among the Catawba. Foremost among these is that the Catawba spoke English as their first language. Elder Willey's remark is telling in that the reason the missionaries enjoyed much more success with the Catawba rather than the Cherokee is that the latter had their own language. The language barrier was a considerable challenge for even the most zealous Mormon missionary who desired not only to preach in a tribe's own tongue, but to translate the *Book of Mormon* as well. Without a communication gap to bridge, the Mormons were much more effective demonstrating the differences between them and the local religious bodies. The Catawba were particularly impressed with the Elders' desire to live and work among them. This allowed the Mormons to establish a rapport with the tribe, against which the local Protestants could not compete. Finally, the Mormons had no history with the Catawba. While local churches were tainted by the racist activities of some in their congregations, the Mormons

⁸⁹Hudson, *The Catawba Nation*, 80; "South Carolina," *Deseret Evening News* (Salt Lake City, UT) May 17, 1887, 2; *Rock Hill Herald*, April 5, 1905; Hicks, "Catawba Acculturation and the Ideology of Race," 118; "The Catawba Nation," *Deseret Evening News*, March 31, 1887, 3.

⁹⁰Merrell, *The Catawbas*, 79.

⁹¹Milling, *Red Carolinians*, 264-65.

had no such baggage. As the ranks of the Mormon missionaries were small and focused, they were able to control the image they presented to the tribe. As a result the Catawba only saw Mormonism in the best possible light as the devoted members of the Church represented it. Protestants, on the other hand were lumped with words and deeds of their most nefarious adherents.

In conclusion, perhaps the irony of the Catawba's conversion is that they saw conversion to Mormonism as a means of assimilating into the dominant white society. Instead Mormonism is largely defining their identity, and as a result, they remain a people apart from the mainstream. Nonetheless, the match between the Catawba and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has proven successful over the course of time in creating a unique religious enclave. While the relationship between the Catawba and the Church may be strained over the modern issue of gambling, it appears the Catawba remain steadfastly in the Mormon fold.⁹²

⁹²Lyn Riddle, "Tribe Gambles it Can Turn a Profit Without Bingo," *Rock Hill Times*, May 19, 1993, 5; "Focus on Gambling Issues; S.C. Tribe Milking Bingo Cash Cow," *Atlanta Constitution* (September 7, 1998), 8A.