Contents

List of Illustrations ix
Preface xi

Chapter 1. "So Great a Change in a Small Community" 1
Chapter 2. "More Valuable to the Mother Country Than Any Other Province": The Economic Basis for Colonial Growth 10
Chapter 3. "That Remote Part of the Province": Expansion into the Interior 28
Chapter 4. "Those Townships Being the Frontier Places": Strategies for Settling the Backcountry 44
Chapter 5. "The Great Inconveniences of People in Those Remote Places": Forging a Regional Economy 59
Chapter 6. The Pine Tree Store: Commercial Expansion into the Backcountry 91
Chapter 7. "Kershaw & Co's Store, . . . Where All Sorts of Produce Are Sold": Consolidating Commercial Trade in the Backcountry 120
Chapter 8. "Camden's Turrets Pierce the Skies": The Rise of an Urban Center in the Backcountry 152
Chapter 9. "In Consequence of the Above Order": The Revolution Comes to South Carolina 184
Chapter 10. "An Evil Genius about It": Occupation and War in the Backcountry 208
Chapter 11. "To Promote and Enjoy the Blessings of Peace": Rebirth and Change in the Early National Period 240
Chapter 12. "A New Generation and a New Town" 272

Notes 285
Bibliography 385
Index 439
List of Illustrations

2.1 Henry Laurens 11
2.2 South Carolina and its neighbors at the beginning of the eighteenth century 13
2.3 Settlement in the South Carolina lowcountry during the early eighteenth century 17
2.4 Principal nucleated settlements in the vicinity of Charleston 21
3.1 The Wateree River and other major watercourses in eastern South Carolina 29
3.2 Cofitacheque in the sixteenth century in relation to other Mississippian mounds 31
3.3 William Blanding's map of "Ancient Works on the Wateree River" 33
3.4 The townships established in 1731 36
3.5 Plans of the Town of Fredericksburg on Wateree River, by James de St. Julian 39
3.6 The major landform regions of South Carolina 41
3.7 Floodplains along the Wateree and Lynches Rivers in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township 42
4.1 Principal Indian trade routes in eighteenth-century South Carolina 47
4.2 The Catawba Path at Sanders Creek in northern Fredericksburg Township 48
4.3 The expansion of livestock raising in colonial South Carolina during the eighteenth century 50
5.1 A water-powered grain mill in the South Carolina backcountry 61
5.2 Early mills in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township 62
5.3 Samuel Wyly's landholdings in the vicinity of Pine Tree Creek 75
5.4 Sketch of a Catawba warrior, perhaps Capt. Redhead 77
5.5 The Catawba settlements and reservation on the Catawba/Wateree River 80
5.6 The five militia companies in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township in 1737 83
5.7 Topography and soil types in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township 85
5.8 Initial settlement patterning in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township 86
5.9 The early colonial landscape in the vicinity of Fredericksburg Township 88
5.10 Principal overland transportation routes in South Carolina at mid-eighteenth century 89
6.1 Joseph Kershaw 92
6.2 William Ancrum, Lambert Lance, and Aaron Loocoock's initial land acquisitions at Pine Tree Hill in 1758 97
6.3 Plan of the two earthfast structures at Pine Tree Hill 98
6.4 Architecture and archaeological plan of an earthfast structure 99
6.5 Additional tracts acquired by Lambert Lance at Pine Tree Hill in 1761–1762 104
6.6 Tracts acquired by Joseph Kershaw at Pine Tree Hill and vicinity in 1761–1762 105
6.7 Catawba ceramics excavated in York County, South Carolina 113
7.1 Lands acquired by the partnership at Rocky Mount and vicinity 127
7.2 Lands acquired by the partnership at Cheraw Hill and vicinity 129
7.3 Lands acquired by the partnership in the Congarees 133
7.4 Landholdings on the Wateree River in the vicinity of Pine Tree Hill acquired after 1760 141
7.5 Rural agricultural settlements in the vicinity of Gum Swamp Creek 142
7.6 The judicial districts and seats in South Carolina in 1769 150
8.1 Known structures at Camden in the 1760s 156
8.2 The 1771 plan of Camden based on a survey by John Heard 159
8.3 Buildings in Camden in the 1770s 176
8.4 Concentrations of structural materials revealed by archaeological investigations 177
8.5 Joseph Kershaw’s mansion at Camden 178
8.6 The Kershaw mansion and its associated outbuildings in the 1770s 181
8.7 Camden and vicinity in 1780 182
9.1 The American Revolution in South Carolina, 1775–1783 186
9.2 The Camden magazine erected in 1777 and the fortifications added in 1780 192
9.3 The seat of war in South Carolina prior to the British invasion of 1780 198
9.4 The British conquest of South Carolina’s interior 204
10.1 The Earl of Moira, formerly Lord Rawdon 209
10.2 Garrisons occupied by British and Loyalist forces in South Carolina, 1780–1781 211
10.3 Plan of the fortified town of Camden in 1781 212
10.4 Major battles in the vicinity of Camden 214
10.5 The Kershaw mansion surrounded by fortifications erected during the British occupation 215
10.6 William Ancrum 221
10.7 John Chesnut 222
11.1 Camden District in 1785 245
11.2 Kershaw County in Camden District in 1791 246
11.3 Canals constructed in South Carolina between 1792 and 1825 250
11.4 The Kershaw mansion and vicinity in antebellum times 266
11.5 Structures on the site of the original settlement of Camden ca. 1800 267
11.6 The 1798 plan of Camden 269
12.1 Improvements in overland transportation in South Carolina 276
12.2 The network of postal routes in South Carolina in 1792 277
12.3 The network of postal routes in South Carolina in 1810 278
12.4 The vacant Kershaw mansion at mid-nineteenth century 280

x  List of Illustrations
“Ken Lewis’s exhaustive work draws from many disciplines to present a detailed study of a small place in central South Carolina, set on a larger canvas of settlement and expansion on the southern frontier. It ties the story of Camden to contemporary events in Charleston and beyond. The Backcountry Venture will become an essential work for understanding South Carolina’s colonial backcountry before and after the American Revolution.”

Martha Zierden, curator of historical archaeology, Charleston Museum

“The Backcountry Venture is a methodological masterpiece that explores the processes associated with transforming a frontier into part of the larger economic and political entity. Based on his decades-long study of eighteenth-century South Carolina, Lewis takes the reader beyond the Ashley and Cooper Rivers to Camden and the surrounding upcountry region.”

Russell K. Skowronek, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
The Carolina Backcountry Venture


Reviewed by Mark J. Wagner, Associate Professor in Anthropology and Director of the Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Kenneth Lewis has been conducting historical and archaeological research in regard to the South Carolina “backcountry” town of Camden since 1974. In this volume he synthesizes his over 40 years of research into the mid-1700s Euro-American colonial settlement of this part of the Carolinas into an comprehensive study of the economic and social factors that led to the establishment of Camden as an interior market for manufactured goods from Charleston in return for source of the agricultural and other natural produce of the Carolina backcountry. Foremost among these merchant “princes” was Joseph Kershaw, an English-born colonialist whose career mirrored that of the rise and decline of Camden. Lewis’s detailed delineation of the web of economic and social relationships that bound Kershaw and other seacoast merchants together in this mercantilist endeavor, as well as the way they established similar ties with the small farmers of the interior, is simply outstanding. In addition to economic factors, Lewis also examines the role that landscape features such as waterways, roads, soil type, and trails linking individual households and farms together played in the establishment of Camden and its rise to the most prosperous interior settlement in South Carolina prior to the Revolutionary War.

To those interested in 18th and early 19th century British and colonial settlement patterns in the interior Southeast this book should be particularly invaluable. What is striking is how many of the economic, political, and social characteristics of the Upland South region of the Southeast had their genesis in the Carolina backcountry. These include the involvement of local entrepreneurs in a variety of economic activities such as milling, store keeping, farming, and participation in local or county government that enabled them to extend their political and economic influence as the region developed. The barter economy exhibited in Camden, for example, where early merchants took in agricultural produce, hides, furs, and other items in exchange for manufactured goods is also one that typifies early nineteenth century southern Illinois, for example, an area settled by Scotch-Irish emigrants from South Carolina and other interior areas of the Southeast. Also striking is how Lewis ties the emergence of frontier bandits in the Carolina backcountry to the gradual shift to a cash economy and possession of portable wealth (e.g., money) that could be more easily stolen than agricultural produce, farm animals, or hides. This same pattern emerges in southern Illinois some fifty years later, where frontier bandits concentrated their activities on major interior trails and the Ohio River where they could expect to encounter travelers carrying money as opposed to robbing interior settlers who possessed little in the form of portable wealth. Also striking is the identical response to such banditry in the two regions.
in the form of vigilantes known as “Regulators” headed by the leading men in the community that chased down and punished such malefactors.

In closing, I would highly recommend this book to scholars investigating the development of European settlement and economic patterns in interior areas along the southeastern coast of the United States as well as to researchers working in other areas such as interior southern Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky where Scotch-Irish settlers from the Carolinas carried these same patterns a generation later. It represents a classic example of the benefits of a long term (as in decades) research program in identifying and delineating the economic, physical, and social factors associated with 18th century European colonial settlement that smaller short-term studies simply cannot adequately address.