

RACIAL CHOICES: THE EMERGENCE OF THE HALIWA-SAPONI INDIAN TRIBE,  
1835-1971

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Department of History.

Chapel Hill  
2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

MARVIN M. RICHARDSON: RACIAL CHOICES: THE EMERGENCE OF THE  
HALIWA-SAPONI INDIAN TRIBE, 1835-1971  
(Under the direction of Malinda Maynor Lowery)

This dissertation explores how the Native American group now known as the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North Carolina emerged and formed itself into an American Indian nation between 1835 and 1971 after enduring social and legal systems that denied their separate racial and ethnic identity as Indians by enforcing a black-white binary, limited their civic participation and rights, and dispossessed them from their lands. I use the term “Meadows Indians” to describe the Indians of the geographical area traditionally called the Meadows, which recalls their homeland and their distinct community before they adopted the name Haliwa-Saponi. In this work I use the term “racial choices” to signal when Meadows Indians have shaped their society in dialogue with the racial hierarchy; some chose to distance themselves from an Indian identity and pursue opportunities available to African Americans or whites, while others attempted to circumvent the hierarchy and carve out a separate sphere for themselves as a distinct Indian people. By using “racial choices” Haliwa-Saponi Indians accepted or rejected their sense of themselves as a distinct people or “peoplehood.” Some Meadows Indians maintained kinship ties, protected their traditional homelands, and expressed a distinct Native culture to uphold the values of peoplehood, while others pursued other economic, social, and political opportunities and rejected peoplehood.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This dissertation would not have been possible without the encouragement, support, love, and advice from a number of individuals, many who have passed on. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the family, friends, scholars, teachers, tribal leaders, and consultants, who helped me through this journey.

I would not have the opportunity to narrate the history of the Meadows Indians and Haliwa-Saponi Indian people if it were not for the many struggles, set-backs, challenges, and sacrifices our ancestors and elders endured and made to survive. Our ancestors and elders fought tremendous odds to remain a strong people. Many of the Haliwa-Saponi elders have shared their wisdom and stories with me, and their life experiences are a major part of this dissertation.

I would like to thank my academic advisor Malinda Maynor Lowery for believing in me and encouraging me to apply to UNC Chapel Hill to pursue my PhD. She has been an inspiration and mentored me in so many ways. She has edited and commented on my work, been a true friend, and been so helpful because she understands the challenges we Native scholars face, especially when focusing your research and writing on the indigenous peoples we love.

I would like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee and other faculty members—Dan Cobb, Harry L. Watson, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, and Dorothy Holland for agreeing to assist me in my academic endeavors. They each have contributed to this dissertation and my academic progress in their own way. They have written letters for me, served as mentors in my teaching, edited my writing in its early forms, and helped form my thoughts about Native American, American, and southern history. Thanks also to Kathleen DuVal who mentored me through teaching and exams.

Without the generous financial support given to me by various organizations, departments, and individuals, I would not have been able to do the research that encompasses this dissertation. I would like to thank Sandra Hoeflich and the UNC Graduate School for awarding me summer research funds and the Sequoyah Fellowship, which allowed me to focus an entire year on writing and research. I am grateful to Kathy Wood and the Initiative for Minority Excellence, the Center for the Study of the American South, the North Caroliniana Society, the American Indian Graduate Center, the UNC History Department, and the Newberry Library for their contributions. I would be remiss not to mention scholarships and funds that came from my own Haliwa-Saponi community. I will always appreciate the scholarships I received from the Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, and my family who supported the Glen A. Richardson Scholarship. Though not directly connected to my academic pursuits at Carolina, funds provided through the North Carolina Arts Council (thanks Sally Peterson) and the North Carolina Humanities Council helped support much of the oral history research included in this dissertation.

While at UNC I have tightened bonds with old friends and made many new friends who helped and encouraged me along the way. I would like to thank Warren Milteer, Jr. for his help and for the many references and talks about Indians and free people of color in Virginia, North Carolina, and Ohio. Many of the discussions and documents we shared led to the narratives and conclusions I have drawn here. Brooke Bauer, Liz Ellis, and Meredith McCoy, thanks for sharing the struggle of being Native scholars with me and being such great friends. I would like to thank the staff of the American Indian Center and other administrators on campus, Amy Locklear Hertel, Randi Byrd, Christina Theodorou, and Marcus Collins for all of your support and for providing a safe, caring, and loving space for Indian students at UNC. Thanks to Theda Purdue for the one meeting that sent me in the right direction. I would like to thank Rose Stremlau, Mikaëla M. Adams, and Clyde Ellis for being such a huge support in my academic career. I would like to thank Ray DeMallie, Phillip LeSourd, Anya Royce, and Doug Parks for mentoring me while at Indiana University. I would like to thank Stanley Knick and Linda Oxendine for being lifelong mentors since my days as an undergraduate at UNC Pembroke.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the research of other scholars and others who have committed their time to Haliwa-Saponi research. I would like to thank Wes Taukchiray, Arnold Richardson, Jack Campisi, Stuart Berde, Michelle Francis, Cynthia Hunt, Robert Lynch, Christopher S. Everett, Earl Evans, Atlena Evans, Forest Hazel, Troy Richardson, Kianga Lucas, and Deloris Williams for all of the hard work they have done on Haliwa-Saponi research. I would like to thank the Haliwa-Saponi staff for allowing me to use the tribal archives.

I would like to thank the many family and friends who have encouraged and pushed me for the last five years. First of all, I would like to thank my loving wife Melissa Silver Richardson. She has made many sacrifices for me go back to school. When I would complain about the amount of work or the long drives back and forth to Chapel Hill she would remind me that I am living my dream. She has listened to me as I rambled on and on about my latest finds or ideas and offered helpful advice. I would like to thank my parents, Barry Richardson and Brenda Lynch for their love, advice, and conversations about Haliwa-Saponi history. They have been tremendously supportive. I would like to thank my grandparents Jesse Ray Richardson (deceased), Clarine Ruby Richardson, Gilbert Marvin Lynch, and Pattie Louise Richardson Lynch (deceased) for their thoughts and wisdom about Haliwa-Saponi history. Grandma Ruby and Granddaddy Gilbert especially were amazingly helpful in helping me sort out the historical complications of the Haliwa-Saponi story. I would like to thank my twin sister Stacey for being my life partner and my brother Adam for being an amazing inspiration with his creative writing and strong support. I would like to thank my in-laws McConnel and Lori Silver for their tremendous support and their prayers. I would like to thank my uncle/brother Wakoda “Cody” Richardson for helping me to remain positive and for helping me realize my talents and worth to the Haliwa-Saponi community. Thanks to Archie Lynch for being like a second father and mentor to me. I would like to thank Brett and Samantha Dale, Sandon and Brandi Jacobs, and Vince and Anne Richardson for providing me a place to stay when I needed it for research or to keep me from driving the long distance back home to Hollister from Chapel Hill. Finally, I would like to thank all of my cousins, uncles, aunts, Stoney Creek family, and my other friends for their encouragement. I love you all.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On April 14-19, 2015, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe hosted a series of events to celebrate and commemorate their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Blooming of the Dogwood” Powwow. Hosted along the border of Halifax and Warren counties in northeastern North Carolina, the Haliwa-Saponi Powwow is the most significant event of the year for the tribe’s 3,900 citizens. Powwow offers the tribe a chance to share and commemorate their heritage among tribal members as well as with members of other tribal nations and non-Natives. To mark the fiftieth year of this annual celebration, the week of events started with an elder’s appreciation banquet. Tribal members adore the Haliwa-Saponi elders for the wisdom they have shared with the younger generations and the many sacrifices they have made for the benefit of the tribe. Dozens of elders and their supporters attended the event and were treated to a beautiful program and a delicious meal. Two days later, the tribe sponsored a memorial to honor those deceased tribal members who have gone on to the Spirit World over the last fifty years. Greg Richardson, tribal member and Executive Director of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, gave remarks, while musician and tribal member Arnold Richardson played an original composition on a traditional-style wooden flute. Members of the Stoney Creek Drum, an award-winning, nationally-known Northern-style powwow singing group, presented a memorial song to honor tribal members who had left their relatives.

While the special events for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Powwow unfolded, many tribal members were also getting that Powwow “feeling.” The powwow “feeling” is an extraordinary emotional experience that Haliwa-Saponis get every year before their primary cultural celebration. Leslie Richardson described the feeling: “I mean it was just in the air. You could smell it in the air, the week of the powwow, like it’s almost here. Everybody’s excited. It’s just like it gets in your blood, it’s in your system.”<sup>1</sup> In 2015, struck with the significance of a half-century of Haliwa gatherings, community members felt a heightened, more powerful sense of pride, enhanced by the special events meant to mark the occasion.

On Friday through Sunday of that week, Haliwa-Saponis and their Native and non-Native guests from across the United States and Canada participated in the marquee event of the celebration: the powwow. Eight thousand spectators descended on a meticulously groomed, grassy green arena in a very rural spot in eastern North Carolina, close to the Haliwa-Saponi government headquarters and other historic sites still treasured by tribal members. Visitors witnessed three hundred dancers and eight drum groups participate in a variety of dances and songs drawn from traditions all over the country. These activities, while borrowed and learned from other Indian peoples, have become particularly “Haliwa,” because Haliwas use them to tell their own story. The powwow “feeling” goes beyond pride; it also reinforces tribal members’ commitment to speak back to forces that, for much of the previous two centuries, have declared them invisible. Every year, the powwow renews the tribe’s demand to be recognized, not only as American Indians in a

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Mecheal Mills Richardson, interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, January 22, 2015, 50th Anniversary Haliwa-Saponi Powwow Performance and Documentation Project, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

region dominated by white and black Americans, but as a people who can—and do—control their own affairs.

The powwow included other presentations that displayed the multi-tribal and multi-racial characteristics of the event, alongside what Haliwas themselves value. Chief Dr. Ogletree Richardson, the tribe's first female chief, honored her family's role in her leadership and her career as an educator. Officials from the Eastern Band of Cherokee, Coharie, and Sappony tribes, as well as Native and non-Native politicians, expressed their gratitude for the invitation to attend such a historic event. A highlight of the day's events was a traditional Lakota naming ceremony, sponsored by the Sparks family. Members of the legendary Porcupine Singers of South Dakota conducted the ceremony. Most of the Miss Haliwa-Saponi Princesses over the past fifty years participated in a special ceremony, while Tiera Nichole Lynch, Miss Haliwa-Saponi 2014-2015, crowned Jamia Destiny Richardson as Miss Haliwa-Saponi 2015-2016. An Exhibit Subcommittee organized large printed pictures and captions to document the tribe's fifty years of powwow. Attendees were able to purchase a commemorative powwow program, which featured an extensive Haliwa-Saponi powwow and tribal history, a discussion of the tribe's indigenous language, and an acknowledgement of the tribe's past leaders and representatives.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Powwow was undoubtedly a celebratory occasion, and as a Haliwa-Saponi tribal member myself, I was honored to help plan, coordinate, and participate in it. I know that powwow “feeling” well; I have attended and participated, through singing, dancing, presenting, or organizing, ever since I was a small child. At this half-century mark, however, I could not help but see the events in light of my people's extraordinary challenges to maintain our community and identity. My major contribution

to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Powwow came through a speech I delivered to the thousands of Natives and non-Natives in attendance, entitled “Tragedy to Triumph.” I wanted to present a narrative of Haliwa-Saponi history that encompassed the tragic events and policies that shaped our community up to this point, as well as the remarkable adaptations and changes our people made in order to survive and gain recognition of our heritage and our distinctiveness. I explained our multi-tribal lineage and how settlers encroached upon our lands. I described how Europeans isolated our ancestors into the red rocky soils of the area we now call home, a place that became known as “the Meadows.” Further, I described how whites classified us as “free persons of color,” attempting to erase our identity as indigenous peoples. Finally, I told the audience how our people sought and eventually gained recognition as an Indian people and reclaimed our heritage.

This dissertation explains that history of unity and belonging but articulates it further as an ongoing process that includes conflict, debate, and struggles for power. The Haliwa-Saponi people transformed from a group largely rendered invisible in a white-black hierarchy to a distinct and visible Native nation. I argue that this transformation occurred through racial choices made by Haliwa ancestors, people I refer to as “Meadows Indians;” a name that recalls their homeland and acknowledges their distinct community before they formally adopted Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe as their name. A name does not sum up an identity, however; “identity” is comprised of social, cultural, and physical characteristics which distinguish one group from another. Sometimes those characteristics are projected by group members themselves, and sometimes outsiders project those characteristics onto the group. The maintenance of identity depends on a group’s active participation in drawing ethnic, political, racial, or other boundaries around itself. That

practice of boundary creation and maintenance is influenced by outsiders, but is also hidden from them.<sup>2</sup> Between the American Revolution and the Civil Rights Movement, outsiders generally regarded Meadows Indians simply as non-whites living in a system that valued white supremacy. Indians themselves fought this over-simplification of their identity, and in doing so, experienced a particularly complex form of boundary maintenance and survival in dialogue with the racial hierarchy.

Scholars have summarized the persistence of Indian communities as the pursuit of “peoplehood,” a term coined by anthropologist Robert K. Thomas and others, and expanded upon by historian Tom Holm. Peoplehood, or a group’s sense of themselves as distinct Indian people, is a state that must be constructed or nurtured, but it can also be undermined or abandoned. Holm described four basic elements which sustained Native communities amid outsiders’ challenges to their integrity: language, place, Native religions, and sacred history, including oral traditions which defined the group’s kinship structure and served as a resource for tribal political organization.<sup>3</sup> For the Haliwa-Saponi people, long-standing maintenance of kinship ties and a strong sense of place were the most consistent aspects of their peoplehood in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Haliwas have expressed other aspects of peoplehood, including religion and language, through the formation of Indian-controlled institutions, including Christian churches and schools in the late nineteenth century and, after World War II, a tribal government that could support the reclamation of an indigenous language and cultural celebrations like the

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<sup>2</sup> Frederik Barth, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans & Whites in the Progressive Era*, (Austin Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005): x-xvii.

powwow. The pursuit of peoplehood accounts for the resiliency of Native communities through their dispossession and removal, forced assimilation, and other impositions of colonial settlement.

The concept of peoplehood offers a valuable framework to discuss how and why Meadows Indians maintained their Native identity, despite intense pressure to discard it. Meadows Indians built their homesteads and livelihoods with consistent and deep attachment to geographic locations where they could buy and sell land amongst themselves and their neighbors. Over decades, they passed land and property down to their heirs, in most cases without wills. In addition to farming, Meadows Indians subsisted largely as their ancestors had, by hunting, gathering, and fishing. Women maintained the household, gathered food, spun and made clothes, and helped on the farm when needed, while men farmed, hunted, and worked. They made use of their natural resources for their healing and medicine. While their lifeways may not have seemed different from other rural Southerners, their maintenance of what Holm calls a “sacred history,” rooted in oral tradition, affirmed their difference. As a strategy to maintain separation, especially from African Americans, Meadows Indians regulated marital relations with outsiders, and preferred to establish kinship ties with other Native peoples. Meadows Indians shared a strong oral tradition of their Indian ancestors, as well as a collective story of tragic events, oppression, social relations, and cultural expression which worked to mold them into a people. Maintaining peoplehood through kinship, place, and history prepared them to build distinctive institutions of their own, when afforded the opportunity. Early on Meadows Indians attended church with whites and African Americans, but later built churches and schools for their own religious and educational needs.

Assimilation, forced culture change, and dispossession can all threaten a Native group's sense of themselves as an Indian people. In the case of Meadows Indians, the imposition of a white-black racial hierarchy and their corresponding racial classification as non-Native has profoundly affected how Meadows Indians embraced or rejected peoplehood. Throughout this history, Meadows Indians have pursued peoplehood in a sustained conversation with race and racial categories. In this work I use the term "racial choices" to signal when Meadows Indians have shaped their society in dialogue with the racial hierarchy; some chose to distance themselves from an Indian identity and pursue opportunities available to African Americans or whites, while others attempted to circumvent the hierarchy and carve out a separate sphere for themselves as a distinct Indian people. Over time, local and national ideas about Indian authenticity factored into Meadows Indians' racial choices as well. These ideas shaped their choice to assert a racial and political identity as Indians, or to express an identity as "colored," African American, or white. Depending on the historical and personal context, these choices were not always mutually exclusive. The historical forces that contributed to the emergence of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, and which made landmark celebrations of identity like the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Powwow possible, shed light on the contradictory and conflict-producing processes of Native nation-building within the United States' systems of racial classification, systems which have determined a great deal about the fortunes of American settlers and American Indians.

Members of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe have origins in several different indigenous communities which resided in coastal, eastern, and piedmont Virginia and

North Carolina during the earliest decades of European settlement. Specifically, Haliwa-Saponi ancestors were found among the Nansemond, Saponi, and Tuscarora peoples who survived the cultural, physical, and economic challenges brought on by contact with Europeans and the economic and social systems they established in the region. Native peoples endured disease, intertribal and inter-ethnic warfare, and encroachment by white settlers, relocation, and heavy depopulation. They adapted to the introduction of new goods through trade and inter-marriage with Europeans and Africans. These social, cultural, and economic contacts encouraged the creation of Native and non-Native alliances, migration, and the creation of new communities that retained aspects of their Native peoplehood—especially knowledge of the land, value of historic and contemporary kinship ties, and a desire to survive as a distinct group.

The ancestors of the Meadows Indians migrated from nearby Indian towns, reservations, and plantations to the area traditionally described by Natives and non-Natives alike as “the Meadows.”<sup>4</sup> The Meadows encompasses most of the southwestern area of rural Halifax County and the southeastern portion of rural Warren County. Traditional areas of Haliwa-Saponi residence also include southeastern Franklin County and northwestern Nash County. Meadows Indian descendant Robert Lynch described the Meadows as notoriously red, rocky land that many whites did not desire, “hidden in piney woods.” Lynch further noted that the land is still “not considered desirable or valuable” to

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<sup>4</sup> G. Branch Alston referred to the Indian community as The Meadows in his circular response to James Mooney of the Bureau of American Ethnology, G. Branch Alston, Circular Response, 1889 National Anthropological Archives (NAA), MS 2190, James Mooney Circulars and other material concerning Indians and traces of Indians in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina, 1889-1912, Folder North Carolina Circulars 1889, Suitland, MD; a 1914-1915 map of Halifax County plots The Meadows as an area between between Essex and Ringwood and between Powells Creek, Little Fishing Creek, and Falling Creek, see <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/305/rec/1> [accessed 26 May 2016].



outsiders, simply because Indians occupied it.<sup>5</sup> Devastated by the effects of colonial contact, Meadows Indian ancestors may have seen the place as an imperfect sanctuary and refuge where they could maintain their identity and adapt at their own pace.

More than one-third and as much as half of the Haliwa-Saponi membership descend from the so-called Christianized Nansemond tribe, part of the Powhatan Chiefdom of Virginia. As one of the tribes to first encounter Europeans in Virginia, the Nansemonds experienced war, smallpox, alcoholism, and land theft. In 1646, the Nansemonds, along with other Virginia tribes, signed a treaty with the English and became a tributary of the Virginia colony.<sup>6</sup> Interracial marriages between the English and the Nansemonds and others tightened bonds with the English, but also worked to further divide the Native communities. These cultural contacts helped fragment the Native communities into groups who preferred lifestyles away from the English and others who more readily adopted English customs. The Haliwa-Saponis' most well-documented connection to the Nansemond tribe derives from the 1638 marriage of a Nansemond Indian, Elizabeth, and an Englishman named John Bass near Norfolk County, VA.<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth and John's

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Lynch, "Red Roots: 'The Meadows,'" in Leslie H. Garner, Jr. and Arthur Mann Kaye, eds., *The Coastal Plains: Writings on the Cultures of Eastern North Carolina* (Rocky Mount: North Carolina Wesleyan College Press, 1989): 63-64; Haliwa-Saponi is the contemporary name of the tribal political organization. The organization has gone through various name changes since at least 1953. I also refer to the organization and individuals as Haliwa or Haliwas. When discussing individuals or the group of Indian-descended families before 1953, or for those that are not enrolled members or politically affiliated with the modern organization, I use Meadows Indian or Meadows Indians, which refers to the Indian descendants that resided in or had origin in the geographical area called The Meadows.

<sup>6</sup> Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 89.

<sup>7</sup> Bass Family Bible Record, Norfolk County, 1613–1699. Accession 26371, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Kianga Lucas, "The Nansemond Indian Bass Family of Granville," <https://nativeamericanroots.wordpress.com/2015/05/22/the-nansemond-indian-bass-family-of-granville/> [accessed 7 June 2016].

grandchildren had a variety of encounters with the English's notions of race and racial classification. Descendants of the couple who stayed in Virginia received certificates of Nansemond descent in the eighteenth century. The certificate of William Bass, Jr., for example, noted that he was "of English & Indian descent with no admixture of negro blood, numbered as a Nansemun by his own Choosing."<sup>8</sup> The Basses and other Indians faced an early challenge to maintain a separate identity from African Americans, and they chose to make it clear that they were Nansemond Indians.

Another branch of the Bass family did not receive such certificates, however, because they moved to North Carolina. John and Edward Bass, grandchildren of John and Elizabeth Bass, purchased lands in areas inhabited by American Indian groups including Nansemonds, Meherrins, and Tuscaroras who stayed in the colony following the Tuscarora War.<sup>9</sup> Most of Edward Bass's descendants moved to Granville County and married into Native descendants there, or they merged with the general population. John Bass's children continued to reside in Northampton County and the neighboring Bertie and Edgecombe Counties. John's granddaughter Mary and his great-granddaughter Sarah married two Richardson men, and much of the current membership of the Haliwa-Saponi tribe descends from these marriages.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid; Edward Moseley, "New and Correct Map of the Province of North Carolina," 1733, East Carolina University Digital Collections, <https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/1028> [accessed 7 June 2016].

<sup>10</sup> Mary Richardson, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, Benjamin Richardson, Record Group 15, NARA M804, North Carolina, Pension No. W.4,061, Fold3.com [accessed 29 July 2015]; John Richardson to Sarah Bass, marriage bond, Granville County, North Carolina, 22 March 1802, North Carolina County Registers of Deeds. Microfilm. Record Group 048. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC; Benjamin Richardson to Mary Bass, marriage bond, Granville County, North Carolina, 19 Feb 1783, North Carolina County Registers of Deeds. Microfilm. Record Group 048. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

The Saponi, an indigenous community who spoke a language part of the Siouan language family, represents another ancestral tribe of the modern Haliwa-Saponi people. The Saponi were linguistically and politically affiliated with the Occaneechi and Tutelo Indians. By 1675, English explorer John Lederer reported that these tribes had relocated to the Meherrin River. Another branch of the group went west towards the Yadkin River and Catawba territory, but by 1701 they moved back to eastern North Carolina, having joined forces with Keyauwee and Eno-Shakori Indians. The group numbered only 750 people, evidence of the depopulation linked with European settlement. After the Tuscarora War, the Saponi and others signed a peace treaty with Governor Spotswood of Virginia in 1714. Spotswood placed the Saponi and their allies at Fort Christanna, in modern-day Brunswick County, VA, which served as a major trading station and Christian mission. By 1717, the Lords Proprietors shuttered the fort, but the Saponi resided in the area for at least ten more years. Some bands of Saponis, along with the Tutelo and Occaneechi, joined the Iroquois in New York in 1722, migrated north and many eventually settled at the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Canada. Given the geographical proximity of the Tuscarora Reservation, located in western Bertie County adjoining Halifax County, as well as common surnames, Haliwa-Saponi oral traditions, and historical relations between Haliwa and Tuscarora leaders, the Tuscarora Indians also represent likely aboriginal ancestors of the Meadows Indians. According to maps and other historical references, the area directly south of the Meadows was old Tuscarora territory and at least one band of Tuscaroras, as noted above, lived near the Meadows in 1761.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Moseley, 1733.

After 1730 the Saponis and other allied bands moved closer to settlements near the Tuscarora Reservation.<sup>12</sup> References to Sapona Town and other territorial names in the area indicate a strong Saponi presence between the Tuscarora Reservation and the Meadows community. Around 1739, for example, Sheriff Thomas Kearney arrested a Saponi Indian on suspicion of murder in Edgecombe Precinct, an area that included what is now Halifax County, North Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Saponis also took up residence with prominent white landowners, including Colonel William Eaton, a white trader who acquired thousands of acres in what are now Halifax, Warren, Vance, and Granville Counties. In 1754, twelve to fourteen Saponi men and as many women and children were living on the lands of Colonel Eaton. A list of Eaton's Granville County militia regiment includes several individuals with Haliwa-Saponi surnames.<sup>14</sup> During the Seven Years War, the colonial government took special notice of Natives in the area to assess their potential as allies or enemies. In 1761, North Carolina Governor Arthur Dobbs reported that the Tuscaroras, Saponis and Meherrins, comprised over 120 fighting men, "situated in the Middle of the Colony upon and Near Roanoke [River]." Dobbs further noted that the Indian tribes "have by Law 10,000 acres of Land allotted to them in Lord Granvilles

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<sup>12</sup> My history of the Saponi and allied Indian tribes relies heavily on the work of anthropologist Raymond J. Demallie, my academic advisor at Indiana University. His account uses extensive colonial documents to narrate the history of these Indian tribes in Virginia and North Carolina from first contact in 1650 to 1736. Afterwards, however, Demallie discusses the northern migration and incorporation of the Saponi, Tutelo, and others with the Iroquois in the North and largely ignored or was unaware of the extensive history of the Saponi who remained in the South, see Raymond J. Demallie, "Tutelo and Neighboring Groups," in William C. Sturtevant and Raymond D. Fogelson, eds., *Handbook of North American Indians: Southeast* Vol 14 (Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Institution, 2004): 286-300.

<sup>13</sup> Loose Papers, Edgecombe Precinct, North Carolina 1740, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>14</sup> Military Collections, Troop Returns, Box 16, Folder 1, N.C. Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; Colonial Records of N.C., Vol 5 (1887), p. 162; Military Collections, Troop Returns, Box 16, Folder 38, North Carolina Archives.

District,” where “they live chiefly by hunting and are in perfect friendship with the Inhabitants.”<sup>15</sup> According to historian Christopher Everett, present-day Warren County, or possibly western Halifax County, was the only part of Granville’s District that was situated on or near the Roanoke River. Governor Dobbs’s description of the Indian population’s location situates them in the places where the Haliwa-Saponi people trace their ancestors. The closest point from the modern unincorporated town of Hollister in the Meadows community to the Roanoke River in Warren County is approximately twelve to fifteen miles. How Tuscarora, Saponi, and Meherrin people lost this allocation of 10,000 acres of land is unknown, but settlers still reported Indians living in the area until after the American Revolution.<sup>16</sup> The Saponi maintained a strong presence near the Meadows for decades and were documented in the same general area as known Meadows Indian ancestors.

Many ancestors of the Meadows Indians adopted the English land tenure system and accommodated the new American political system. Meadows Indians fought and some died in the Revolutionary War. Survivors of the war, including Benjamin Richardson and others, received land grants, which added to the territorial base of the Natives in the Meadows. After the Revolution, whites began referring to Natives who had formerly lived on reserved lands as free people of color. As free people, Natives initially enjoyed the

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<sup>15</sup> William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C., 1888) Vol. 6, 616; Christopher Everett, personal communication to Marvin Richardson, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> *American Historical Review* No. 20, Vol. 4, 1915: 815; Walter Clark, ed. *State Records of North Carolina*, Published Under the Supervision of the Trustees of the Public Libraries, By order of the General Assembly, XXII, (Goldsboro North Carolina: Nash Brothers, 1907): 866; “Bill for quieting & securing the Tuscarora Indians; and others claiming under the Tuscaroras in possession of their Lands,” General Assembly Session Records, Box 2, Apr-May 1778, House Bills, Apr 22, 1778; Robert A. Jones Account Book, 1819-1829, Southern History Collection, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Meadows Indians paid taxes, voted, utilized the court system, and participated in the economy; some even owned slaves. These Natives occupied a social status nearly equal to whites and above enslaved African Americans. As historian Warren Milteer, Jr. has shown, post-Revolution free men of color had more political rights than white women.<sup>17</sup>

As the United States matured, Northerners and some Southerners attacked the institution of slavery, which caused slaveholders to shift their defense of slavery from one rooted in wealth to one that protected white supremacy. Slaveholders feared slave uprisings and collaborations between slaves and free people of color which would challenge white superiority. As a result, lawmakers in North Carolina and other southern states developed laws and policies to restrict the movement, rights, and relationships between people in bondage and free people of color. These legal restrictions culminated with an amendment to the 1835 North Carolina Constitution, which took away the rights of free people of color to vote. The specific language of the amendment effectively defined all free people of color as descendants of Africans, whether they possessed African ancestry or not.<sup>18</sup> Though race and white supremacy had long been a factor in the lives of Meadows Indians, the 1835 North Carolina Constitutional amendment abrogated Natives' distinctiveness when it effectively assumed that all free people of color possessed African

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<sup>17</sup> Warren Eugene Milteer, Jr. "The Complications of Liberty: Free People of Color in North Carolina From the Colonial Period Through Reconstruction" (Dissertation, UNC Chapel Hill, 2014): 3.

<sup>18</sup> "Slaves and Free Persons of Color. An Act Concerning Slaves and Free Persons of Color: Electronic Edition; 1830 c.9 s2 "Emancipated slaves to leave the state in 90 days;" 1830 c.9 22 "Emancipated slaves not leaving the state or returning to be arrested and sold;" 1830 c.4 s3 "Free negroes not to inter marry with slave," <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/slavesfree/slavesfree.html>; Proceedings and debates of the Convention of North Carolina [electronic resource]: called to amend the Constitution of the state, which assembled at Raleigh, June 4, 1835: to which are subjoined the Convention Act and the amendments to the Constitution.

ancestry. Government policies that increasingly essentialized Southerners into two races, black and white, and removed the civic participatory rights of all non-whites, initiated Meadows Indians' racial choices to maintain their separate identity as an Indian people.

Chapter One explains this transition in race-based limits on civic participation in the early nineteenth century and examines how Meadows Indians made racial choices, sought civic engagement, and maintained or rejected peoplehood in response to racial restrictions. Resident Meadows Indians chose to accentuate an identity as indigenous people separate and apart from African Americans in order to maintain peoplehood. They regulated relationships with African Americans and sought relationships with whites to sustain their place in the racial hierarchy. Others, however, chose to migrate to Ohio, where they took advantage of less restrictive laws and policies and enjoyed more civil rights. Their primary goals were not to create a Native community, maintain peoplehood, or disavow relationships with African Americans. Even so, they acknowledged their Native ancestry and their home territory in North Carolina. Resident and migrant Meadows Indians displayed these divergent strategies and priorities during the Civil War, when migrant Indians fought for the U.S. Colored Troops in an effort to change the conditions of their southern brethren. Those who stayed in the Meadows considered their economic and political status among whites in the racial hierarchy, when deciding which side they supported. Most remained neutral, but others supported the Confederacy or were impressed into Confederate service. After the war, Meadows Indians debated whether to take advantage of social, political, and economic opportunities in concert with non-Indians and how those interactions would threaten their separate identity and peoplehood.

Chapter Two examines how, following Reconstruction, Meadows Indians projected a situational and strategic identity as both “colored” and “Indian” to take advantage of social, political, and economic opportunities available to African Americans, while still maintaining Native peoplehood. Indians built schools and churches, which they controlled, and participated in politics with whites and African Americans, most often identifying as “colored” people, a label which provided a place in the political debates about populism, education, and local governance. Meadows Indians maintained peoplehood by regulating their marital relationships with African Americans and continuing distinct lifeways. Some Meadows Indians pursued literacy to help protect community assets and assist their economic and political goals. Whites did not explicitly acknowledge the Meadows Indians’ separate heritage. Still, Meadows Indians sought racial distinctiveness from African Americans, and whites did acknowledge a difference between Indians and former slaves. Nevertheless, as Democratic white supremacists made moves to seize the state government from Republicans, Meadows Indians turned to the federal government’s definitions of Indian identity to seek recognition. A large group of Indians submitted applications for citizenship in the Five Civilized Tribes through the Dawes Commission in 1896, and another group submitted claims as Eastern Band Cherokees in 1906. Meadows Indians made efforts to maintain peoplehood by both embracing an identity as “colored” and as “Indian,” depending on what political cooperation with local whites seemed to require.

In Chapter Three, I explain how Meadows Indians developed new ways to maintain peoplehood and a distinct identity, even as the lumber industry brought a large number of African Americans and white outsiders into their homeland to take advantage of their vast timber resources. Outside whites organized a new town, Hollister, and organized the



lumber industry to their advantage, marginalizing resident Indians. African Americans attended Indian-dominated schools and churches, while Indians pursued a separate identity through trying to control their schools and churches. Newcomers abhorred the so-called “uncivilized” nature of the Meadows Indian community, but ignored the ways in which Indians conformed to, even led, the social and political growth hoped for by the Progressives. Some Meadows Indians reacted to these new conditions by moving out of the community to find economic and social opportunities. Some who left tended to embrace stereotypes of a “savage” Meadows Indian community and rejected it, while others who left chose to promote peoplehood through ongoing service to their relatives who stayed.

Chapter Four discusses the Meadows Indians’ transition from a community focused on enforcing racial separation to a community that envisioned its own potential as an autonomous, self-governing entity. Between the end of World War I and the 1950s, Meadows Indians made racial choices to maintain or reject peoplehood as whites sustained Jim Crow segregation by further essentializing people into black and white racial categories. Meadows Indians supported Native-dominated religious and educational institutions. Indians with land supported themselves and other Native families financially. Others worked outside the community, but still sustained social and kinship relations with their home. Some Meadows Indians migrated to northern cities where they sought economic opportunities and at times projected non-Indian identities; even so, the opportunities afforded by travel back and forth to the Meadows helped these migrants sustain a sense of themselves as Indian people. Some Meadows Indians continued the trend of situational and ambiguous identities as “colored;” they supported institutions which

were Native-led and did not question the place of those institutions in the segregated racial system. Others, however, foreclosed the possibilities of a situational identity as “colored” and favored claiming an unyielding identity as Indian. This group created a tribal organization, the Haliwa Indian Club, along with a segregated school and church: the Haliwa Indian School and Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church. By creating exclusively Indian institutions, Meadows Indians embraced outsiders’ notions of Native authenticity and tailored their ideas about identity to meet those demands. These divergent strategies caused controversial and violent divisions amongst Meadows Indians.

In my final chapter I describe how the Haliwa Indian Club made racial choices to maintain its peoplehood by forming itself into a Native nation, by seeking official recognition as an Indian tribe, revitalizing its culture, and seeking greater autonomy to manage its own affairs. They participated in the Red Power and self-determination movements with other tribes, through the American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 to authenticate their aboriginal heritage, culture, and nationhood. These actions solidified them into an American Indian nation, not just a unified people based on racial identity and shared ancestry. The Haliwas gained state recognition in 1965 and successfully sued the state of North Carolina to effectively end the practice of racial misclassification. After governmental desegregation policies closed its school, the Haliwa Indian Tribe adopted the powwow as a means to preserve their peoplehood and draw a sharp distinction between themselves, African Americans, and other Native-descended people of the Meadows. Within North Carolina, the Haliwa Indian Tribe cooperated with other Indian tribes to create the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, which allowed the tribe to

address its social, economic, and health needs as an Indian nation and manage its own affairs.

This nearly two-hundred year history of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe makes four main contributions to scholarship on American Indian and Southern history. First, it introduces Indians to the nineteenth-century history of racial classification and construction. Second, it explains how families divided and reformed under specific, changing sets of conditions to create new communities based on race. Third, it describes how outsiders' notions about Native authenticity have been influenced by race, while Indians themselves use those same notions to acquire power and disenfranchise others within their group. Finally, it describes how Indians in the twentieth century shifted their community boundaries from those based on race and ancestry to ones rooted in autonomy, principles articulated by the Red Power and self-determination movements.

While Tom Holm's explanation of Native persistence through peoplehood is useful, especially in the Southern United States, where historians have largely overlooked Native people's presence after Removal, he largely ignores the impact race had on the relationship between Native nations and the state and federal governments. He notes that Native nations retained certain rights as sovereign nations with a protectorate status with the United States. He writes, "Native Americans, provided that they are members or citizens of those Native nations that have this particular relationship with the federal or even various state governments, possess certain rights that other Americans do not and cannot hold." In his opinion, "this relationship has nothing to do with race, even though most Americans tend to place it in that context."<sup>19</sup> Although the government-to-government relationship between

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, xvii.

the federal and state governments and Native nations is not determined by racial ancestry, race has been a tremendous factor in judging the authenticity of the Native groups seeking this government-to-government relationship. As historian Mikaëla M. Adams has demonstrated, race was important to determining membership in southern state-recognized tribes such as the Pamunkey and Catawba, as well as the federally recognized Eastern Band of Cherokee and Seminole. Adams observed that “Indians fought for status as a third race in this world, and, more importantly, asserted their separate political identity in a society that classified people based on skin color. Their efforts to do so challenged the entire basis of Jim Crow racial classification.”<sup>20</sup>

Marginalized Natives like the Meadows Indians held no formal relationship with the state or federal governments as an indigenous nation, and at first had to demonstrate their distinctiveness from African Americans in order to gain recognition and autonomy as Native peoples. My analysis of Haliwa-Saponi history accounts for the division inherent in the racial hierarchy and emphasizes how Meadows Indians made racial choices to persist as a Native community. My consideration of both the elements of peoplehood as a means of indigenous resilience, and the racial choices southern Natives made in the face of a black-white racial binary, helps us understand how and why Native people survived into the twentieth-century, the contemporary forms their societies take, and in particular, the current debates over legitimacy and the federal acknowledgement process.

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<sup>20</sup> Mikaëla M. Adams, “Who Belongs?: Becoming Tribal Members in the South (Dissertation, UNC Chapel Hill, 2012) 22; Both the Catawba Indian Nation and the Pamunkey Indian Tribe have been federally acknowledged after the time period Adams covers in her dissertation.

Meadows Indians' racial choices expand historians' understanding of how racial categories developed. The "making and unmaking" of racial categories, to paraphrase Warren Milteer, is best seen in the histories of free persons of color in the nineteenth century and in the categorization of mixed-race people. While historians such as John Hope Franklin and Ira Berlin have homogenized these groups as African in origin, Milteer's work, as well as the work of historian Jack Forbes, Ariela Gross, Peggy Pascoe and others demonstrates that racial labels and categories could be changed and manipulated to suit a local or national political agenda.<sup>21</sup> The erasure of Indian identity that I explain in Chapter One is evidence of this trend, as is Meadows Indians' own habit of trading "colored" and "Indian" labels and identities in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

The Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe's history also illuminates non-whites' strategies to seek equality and autonomy under slavery and segregation. As historian Steven Hahn demonstrates, former slaves and free African Americans pooled their resources and mobilized grassroots efforts to gain political power and seek equality. During and after Radical Reconstruction, freedpeople rallied around collective and organizational life such as churches, militia-like drilling companies, fraternal lodges, and mutual aid societies.<sup>22</sup> Meadows Indians participated in some of the same strategies, campaigns, and institutions, which served as opportunities for mutual help and cooperation with African Americans.

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<sup>21</sup> See Milteer, 4-5; John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943); Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: The New Press, 1974); Jack D. Forbes, *Black African and Native Americans: Color, Race and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Ariela Gross, *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," *The Journal of American History* (1996), 44-69.

<sup>22</sup> Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

But they were also sites of contestation and presented opportunities to make racial choices or follow a path towards Meadows Indian autonomy.

I also situate my work within scholarship that examines the power dynamics of the racial classification system and racial choice in the South. The transformation of the Meadows Indians illuminates how racial and ethnic groups outside of the black-white binary have challenged the system to assert a separate identity. Virginia Domínguez, in her study of southern Creoles, found that “the individual exercise of choice takes place within sociohistorical environments that deem only certain kinds of choices possible.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, in many cases, choice was not unlimited; instead, society and the law afforded individuals a limited set of racial or identity choices. How Domínguez perceives identity among Louisiana Creoles illuminates Haliwa-Saponi history, because Meadows Indians have articulated an American Indian identity within a classification system in North Carolina that recognized only black or white, an ambiguous “colored” category, or a mixed-blood, “mulatto” designation. In North Carolina, unlike in Louisiana, this classification system did not distinguish between racial phenotype and identity. At various times, Meadows Indians fought this racial classification system and demanded they be recognized as Indian in the official record.

Meadows Indians continued to make racial choices during the Jim Crow period, an era when racial difference was even more strictly defined in terms of “white” and “colored.” In *Partly Colored*, Leslie Bow describes how ethnic groups outside of the black-white binary negotiated Jim Crow segregation and resisted the binary, both before

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<sup>23</sup> Virginia R. Domínguez, *White By Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 9.

and after *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.<sup>24</sup> Like Bow, my work expands historians' vision of the South as a predominately black-white landscape with fixed or assumed rules of racial classification and identity. Before World War II, in fact, Meadows Indians acknowledged that outsiders regarded them as "colored," defaulting to a racial choice that mainstream systems of racial classification readily afforded. Between 1940 and the 1960s, new types of racial choices revealed themselves as Meadows Indians worked both with and against the dominant strategies of the civil rights movement. Community organizing and outside assistance combined powerfully to stimulate local action, as they did across the South.<sup>25</sup> But Indians also worked against some of the avowed goals of the civil rights movement, such as school integration, by developing and supporting Indian-only political and social institutions, such as a segregated Indian school, church, and tribal organization.<sup>26</sup>

Racial choice emerged to create internal political disagreement, which resulted in Meadows Indians pursuing several different political strategies after 1954, when school desegregation became an issue throughout the nation. One group of Meadows Indians embraced an ambiguous identity as "colored" and worked within the existing black-white political system, while another group eschewed the "colored" designation and, when necessary, asserted a separate political identity as Indians (beginning with the formation of

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<sup>24</sup> Leslie Bow, *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2007); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Malinda Maynor Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, & the Making of a Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), xii.

the Haliwa Indian Club). In this regard the Haliwa faction empowered themselves to take advantage of the segregated status quo. In some ways, Meadows Indian forms of political activism conformed to the larger pattern of North Carolina politics identified by William Chafe, where disagreements were largely polite and functioned in different ways to preserve relationships with both black and white outsiders, as well as Indian community members.<sup>27</sup> In other cases, violence did erupt between the factions of Meadows Indians, and between Indians, African Americans, and whites. Perpetrators of the violence often attempted to stop members of the Haliwa faction from exercising a racial choice, similar to Charles M. Payne's description of racial repression during the civil rights movement.<sup>28</sup>

While throughout their history Meadows Indians adapted to whites' belief in the racial hierarchy and took advantage of their middling status, their associations with African Americans did not always forfeit their Indian identity or indigenous political goals. Their adaptations and strategies changed over time and they made political alliances and the best decisions for themselves and their community. Meadows Indian history expands our knowledge about the ethnic diversity of the South and how non-whites both resisted and enforced race-based restrictions.

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<sup>27</sup> William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Payne, 270.



## **CHAPTER 1: LOSING CITIZENSHIP: RACIAL CLASSIFICATION, MIGRATION AND PEOPLEHOOD**

The establishment of the United States and the conflict over slavery and freedom between the 1790s and the 1870s brought a new racial classification to Meadows Indians: “free persons of color.” Lawmakers passed various restrictive laws to reduce the power and influence of free colored peoples in order to prevent cooperation between free and enslaved persons and to protect the institution of slavery. They presumed that all free persons of color including those with Indian ancestry also possessed African American ancestry and this association between non-whites ultimately dispossessed Indian people of many of their rights and much of their property. But Meadows Indians did not follow or accept all the rules of a proslavery South that depended on the removal of indigenous peoples for its success. In this legal and social system, Meadows Indians’ main concern was to maintain a Native identity separate from African Americans and enjoy the limited rights of citizenship they retained. To achieve this goal, they responded in one of two ways: some stayed in the Meadows to collectively protect their identity, property, and limited civil rights, and others left for Midwestern states like Ohio, where they took advantage of less restrictive laws and policies in order to more freely enjoy the rights of American civic and social participation.

Between the American Revolution and Reconstruction, Meadows Indians experienced two major turning points in their quest to maintain indigenous peoplehood,

keep control of the Meadows territory, and to sustain some legal rights. In 1835, North Carolina passed a new constitution to justify slavery and strengthen white supremacy; delegates narrowly abrogated the rights of free colored persons to vote and legally classified them all as descendants of Africans. A large group of Meadows Indians migrated to Ohio after 1835 and took advantage of fewer race-based restrictions. Their migration provided more economic opportunities, education, freedom of movement, and inspired Civil War military service as part of the U.S. Colored Troops. Those who stayed in the Meadows faced another challenge in 1865, after the end of the Civil War and emancipation. They developed social and religious institutions to maintain their distinct identity as Natives, while also exercising rights as Americans. Using institutions such as landownership, family, the military, and church, Meadows Indians debated the consequences of these changes and how they could keep their core identity markers alive.

In the period between the North Carolina Constitutional amendment in 1835 and Reconstruction, Meadows Indians made varied racial choices, which contributed to or rejected Native peoplehood. Those Meadows Indians who migrated to Ohio and other Midwestern states did so primarily to maintain civil rights and economic and political opportunities; maintaining peoplehood was not necessary to accomplish their goals. They did not sustain an exclusive indigenous community or limit their social or marital relationships to Indians. Resident Meadows Indians, on the other hand, adopted social, cultural, and political strategies to keep a distinct community and identity, and regulated their interactions with outsiders. Even so, they debated whether to take advantage of political and social relationships with non-Indians and how those alliances might threaten their separate identity and peoplehood.

In the 1830s at least 700 Indians resided in the Meadows, including about thirty families, who represented several factions, but nevertheless maintained kinship across family lines and shared similar lifeways and experiences. The Halifax County population consisted of approximately 5,000, whites, 12,000 slaves, and 2,000 free persons of color. The Indian population consisted of less than one percent of the county, yet the Indians held substantial landholdings and earlier “practically owned half a county,” remembered one Indian migrant.<sup>1</sup> These Natives maintained peoplehood by marrying almost exclusively among themselves, upholding cordial relations with whites, and keeping plots of land within the Native community. Meadows Indians utilized a number of economic and subsistence strategies, including hunting and gathering, as well as farming to meet their own needs.

Meadows Indians maintained a distinct Native community by adopting English forms of landownership, but local whites and government officials enforced white supremacy to threaten their legally owned lands. After the American Revolution, white

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Hillyard, “To Whom This May Concern,” Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, Eastern Cherokee Application, RG 123, Roll 0272, Application #34532 George W. Hillyard or Hilliard, a Native of Halifax County recalled that the Waldens, Byrds (or Birds), Joneses, Locklears, Hilliards, Burts, and Revels were “mixed blood” Indians and comprised a “sort of colony” that was “practically a tribe.” P.A. Richardson spoke in similar terms, when he noted “there were in the colony of these many families,” including the Richardsons, Lynches, Hedgpeths, Mills, Rudds, Wests, Hawkins, Cordells, Greens, Howells, Bibbets, Boones, Silvers, Dales, Copelands, Ansell, Evans, Manlys, Scotts, and Colemans,” as well as the Pettifords and Taborns. Their lists of Indian families do not overlap but demonstrate the close ties Meadows Indians had to each other, and the existence of several factions of families. I estimated the number of Indians living in the Meadows in 1830 by enumerating these families and examining evidence from a number of sources including Haliwa-Saponi genealogies, Dawes Applications, Eastern Cherokee Applications, Civil War Pension Applications, oral histories and other historical documents which purport the Indian ancestry of Meadows Indians. It is likely that others listed as free colored persons in the 1830 census and even some slaves shared Indian ancestry as well; United States. Dept. of State. *Fifth census, or, Enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, 1830*. Washington [D.C.], 1832. 363pp. *Sabin Americana*. Gale, Cengage Learning. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 12 July 2016 <http://galenet.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY109437785&srchtp=a&ste=14>, p. 90-91.

officials living in areas adjacent to the Meadows found opportunities to exploit the property and lives of Indians through extortion and other means. In 1795 Indian landowner John Richardson was arrested because he had allegedly harbored an escaped slave who belonged to his neighbor, a white man named William Brinkley. Richardson offered bail and summoned two other landowners; he asked the sheriff to take him to his father's house so he could enlist others to raise the bail necessary to secure his release. Richardson maintained that he could raise five times the bail required, but at William Brinkley's urging, the county sheriff left Richardson a prisoner overnight and for half of the next day. In Brinkley's mind, only one thing would satisfy him and release Richardson: land. Under "these circumstances of confinement and terror," Richardson executed a deed of bargain and sale to Brinkley for 100 acres of his property on the north side of Falling Creek, adjoining the lands of Brinkley and Richardson. Upon deeding the land to Brinkley, the sheriff discharged Richardson.<sup>2</sup>

Although Brinkley usurped land from Richardson and his family under the pretext that Indians provided aid to African American slaves, Richardson sued William Brinkley in Halifax County Superior Court. He claimed that Brinkley obtained the deed and the land without "a valuable consideration," and that the deed's registration was therefore fraudulent. Brinkley, on the other hand, argued that Richardson offered the land to satisfy Brinkley's demands. After Brinkley's death, Richardson sued Brinkley's heirs. Three years after his first arrest, the court ruled in favor of Richardson and re-conveyed his lands to

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<sup>2</sup> John Richardson Vs. Estate of William Brinkley, 1798 Halifax County District Superior Court Minutes, Court of Equity, 1797-1805. 1798: 25-31: Friday, May 4, 1798.

him and his family. Even though the court was used against him, John Richardson understood how to use the law to his own advantage and protect his land.<sup>3</sup>

Richardson's struggle to maintain his lands as a home place and refuge of the Meadows Indian community, and Brinkley's attempt to confiscate them, highlights the early American debate over citizenship and hardening of racial attitudes towards non-whites. Historian Warren Milteer, Jr. observed that in the early American period, free status, gender, servitude status, and personal wealth competed with race as the determiners for one's "place" in society.<sup>4</sup> Gradually, slaveholders began to believe that this customary treatment of free persons of color had to be changed for the protection of slavery.

In order to protect their human property and enforce white supremacy, pro-slavery whites argued for a "natural affinity" between enslaved and free non-whites, including marginalized Native peoples. Slaveholders touted slavery as a benevolent institution and claimed that slavery was the natural status for African Americans because of their alleged intellectual deficiencies.<sup>5</sup> Amidst intense challenges from Northerners and Southerners who questioned whether slavery matched the nation's economic needs and founding principles, pro-slavery ideologues sought allies among those who did not benefit from the economics of slavery. To persuade non-slaveholders of the institution's value, pro-slavery advocates shifted the purpose of slavery away from a means to gain wealth and towards a means to protect white superiority. In response, lawmakers developed laws and policies to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Eugene Milteer, Jr. "The Complications of Liberty: Free People of Color in North Carolina From the Colonial Period Through Reconstruction" (Dissertation, UNC Chapel Hill, 2014): 107-145.

<sup>5</sup> Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005): 218-219.

prevent rebellion from non-whites.<sup>6</sup> Some whites ignored the ethnic, social, and political differences among free non-whites and assumed that all free persons of color were allied with slaves and would assist them in a fight against the slave power. Natives in the Meadows held no legal status as Indians and whites threatened their distinct community by assuming that Indians shared the same political goals as enslaved persons.

Other legal practices, such as labor apprenticeship, threatened the Native community as well. Apprenticeship took Indian children away from their families and often placed them in white households, making near-slaves out of otherwise free people.<sup>7</sup> Contractual agreements for apprentices were made with the county government, who served as the child's legal guardian. Masters provided food, clothing, and shelter until the expiration of service and provided protections and punishments. The apprenticeship law was supposedly designed for the betterment of orphans (defined as children without fathers) and to help with the security and management of their estates, but the law was steeped in English ideas about patriarchy. According to historian Karin Zipf, the law was designed to "deny single women, poor widows, and free blacks their rights as parents."<sup>8</sup> Courts took children away from single mothers and broke up families.<sup>9</sup> Several Meadows Indian children were bound to local white residents between 1797 and 1801. Edwin Clifton apprenticed sixteen year old Gilford Mills, who's father had died, along with six year old

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<sup>6</sup> Milteer, 107-108.

<sup>7</sup> Karin L. Zipf, *Labor of Innocents: Forced Apprenticeship in North Carolina, 1715-1919* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005): 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 15, 10-11; 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

Mariah Locklier, “to learn the art and calling of famers.”<sup>10</sup> Records did not mention the mothers of the Mills and Locklier children, which demonstrates how the county preferred men to dominate the legal relationships to their children.

Though the apprenticeship and indenture systems worked to remove children from their families, some Meadows Indians reconstituted apprenticeship practices to maintain community kinship and a measure of control over their families. Martha “Patsy” Lynch took steps to protect her parental rights and her children’s livelihood in 1798 when the court charged James Weaver with bastardy concerning their children, Charles and Mary Lynch. Martha was “full and entirely satisfied” with the “bond in the sum of one hundred pounds with two securities” gained from Weaver. The court bound Charles (aged two months and 11 days) and Mary (aged two years and four months) to their father as apprentices as a cooper and a spinster, respectively.<sup>11</sup> When Lynch took Weaver to court and he took legal responsibility for them, Lynch protected her children and kept authority as well. Records indicate that in 1800 Lynch and Weaver maintained separate dwellings but that their children lived with Lynch; by 1810 the family lived with Weaver. Lynch and Weaver eventually married.<sup>12</sup> In 1835, Mima Boon asked the court to bind her children to

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<sup>10</sup> Halifax County Court Minutes, Tuesday 21 Nov, 1797; Wednesday, 24 May 1798; Thursday 23 May 1799, p. 37; Tuesday 20 May 1800, p. 105 Monday 25 Nov. 1800, p. 143; Tuesday, 18 Aug 1801.

<sup>11</sup> Halifax County Court Minutes, Volume 1, Thursday, May 25, 1798.

<sup>12</sup> Patsy Lynch, “4 other free,” Year: 1800; Census Place: *Halifax, Halifax, North Carolina*; Series: M32; Roll: 30; Page: 324; Image: 326; Family History Library Film: 337906 James Weaver “5 other free” Year: 1800; Census Place: *Hallifax, Halifax, North Carolina*; Series: M32; Roll: 30; Page: 350; Image: 352; Family History Library Film: 337906; The couple married by May 27, 1817, because Lynch is called “Patsey Weaver” as bondswoman for Charles Lynch’s first marriage to Lizzy Coley, see Ancestry.com. *North Carolina, Index to Marriage Bonds, 1741-1868* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000., bond #000061429, Halifax County, North Carolina [accessed 23 May 2016].

their uncle James Boon, since their unnamed father was “of insane memory.”<sup>13</sup> Knowing their father was not fit to parent, Mima took it upon herself to insure the safety of her children against apprenticeship to a white master. In February of 1836, the court filed “Bonds and Indentures” on behalf of Reese Richardson, who took responsibility for Joe Silver and Bob Lynch. Silver’s presumed parents were not married at the time and they may have asked Richardson to take in his cousin.<sup>14</sup> Meadows Indians used apprenticeship to adapt to the restrictions placed on their labor and property and keep their community intact.

In the 1830s, the North Carolina state government passed a series of controversial laws that instituted legal restrictions on non-whites. For example, the legislature passed a law that required emancipated slaves to leave the state within 90 days. In addition, free Negroes and free persons of color could not marry or cohabit with slaves.<sup>15</sup> Not everyone was in favor of the restrictions; in fact, the state’s free white citizens disagreed about the threat posed by potential relationships between free non-whites and slaves. These debates intensified at the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835, where delegates hotly debated the issue of free non-white voting privileges and civic participation. The language used to describe free non-whites was important; the state legislature charged the delegates to abrogate or restrict “free negroes or mulattoes to vote for members of the House of

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<sup>13</sup> Halifax County Court Minutes, Volume 1,, Tuesday 18 August 1835, p. 292.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Tuesday, 16 February 1836; after page 339, page numbers no longer listed.

<sup>15</sup> “Slaves and Free Persons of Color. An Act Concerning Slaves and Free Persons of Color: Electronic Edition; 1830 c.9 s2 “Emancipated slaves to leave the state in 90 days;” 1830 c.9 22 “Emancipated slaves not leaving the state or returning to be arrested and sold;” 1830 c.4 s3 “Free negroes not to inter marry with slave,” <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/slavesfree/slavesfree.html>



Commons.”<sup>16</sup> Delegates proposed to ignore free non-whites’ diverse ancestry—African, Native American, and white—and equated “non-white” with “Negro.” Nathaniel Macon, for example, alternately called free non-whites “free persons of color” and Negroes, and argued that “the negroes were originally imported in the way of other trade, like other merchandize.”<sup>17</sup> Some of the most outspoken proponents on both sides of the debate resided in the principal counties of Meadows Indians: Halifax and Warren Counties.

These delegates, in particular, may have objected to the way the convention denied free people of color the right to vote because of their contributions to society, wealth, and social status. Joseph J. Daniel and John Branch of Halifax County generally supported continued voting rights for free non-whites. Daniel and Branch favored making a distinction between free non-whites and those in bondage. The delegates argued that many free persons of color, which included Indians and blacks, in their home county were already voting, were industrious members of society and had earned their right to vote because they served in the Continental army during the American Revolution. Perhaps seeking a compromise, Daniel proposed to allow a “free person of color” to vote for members in the House of Commons if “he shall be possessed of a freehold estate of the value of \$250, from all incumbrances [sic].” Those free persons of color who held substantial land holdings would be able to vote. He believed that allowing free persons of color to vote would incentivize them “to use exertions to raise themselves in the public estimation” and “to leave the door open to all colored men of good character and

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<sup>16</sup> Proceedings and debates of the Convention of North Carolina [electronic resource]: called to amend the Constitution of the state, which assembled at Raleigh, June 4, 1835: to which are subjoined the Convention Act and the amendments to the Constitution, p. 60. Friday, June 12, 1835

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

industrious habits.” Daniel also thought that cultivating a “good understanding with the most respectable portion of our free persons of color” might help prevent a slave insurrection by making them “very serviceable to us.”<sup>18</sup> He wished to avoid collaboration between free people of color and slaves, and stave off a slave revolt. Branch agreed with his colleague from Halifax and noted, “the county of Halifax has at present two or three hundred voters” who were Indians and free blacks. Perhaps fearing the loss of a portion of his constituency or a valuable political alliance with free non-slaveholders, Branch said that “telling them that the Convention had wholly abrogated their right of voting...would not be well received” by Indian and free black voters.<sup>19</sup>

Branch and Daniel may or may not have specifically understood that Indians did not want their rights taken away, nor their identity erased and replaced, but they certainly knew that these “most respectable,” “industrious,” tax paying, former soldiers of good character were members of Meadows Indian families. In 1784, for example, Meadows Indians Benjamin Richardson, William Richardson, and James Weaver paid taxes on a combined 1,000 acres in Halifax County.<sup>20</sup> Some Meadows Indian landowners regularly participated in civil affairs and conducted business with whites. Meadows Indian ancestors Benjamin Richardson, Lewis Boone, Cato Copeland, and a few others also served in the Revolutionary War.<sup>21</sup> Mary Bass Richardson and family applied for a widow’s pension

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 61-62.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 70-71.

<sup>20</sup> Halifax County Records, List of Taxables 1784-1834, Part I, 1784-1786, North Carolina State Archives, C.R. 047.701.1, p. 6

<sup>21</sup> Lewis Boon, RG 15, NARA M804. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, North Carolina, Pension No. S. 6683. Fold3.com [accessed 29 July 2015]; Cato Copeland, RG 15,

based on the Revolutionary War service of her late husbands Elijah Bass and Benjamin Richardson. Elijah Bass died at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina and Benjamin Richardson served in the army for six months. Several neighboring white men, possible relatives of convention delegate Joseph J. Daniel, vouched for Mary and her family. Echoing the sentiments of his relative, J.R.J. Daniel testified that the “Richardsons are a family of fine persons of color & generally are industrious & well behaved people.”<sup>22</sup> Local whites of Halifax County who knew Meadows Indians and other free persons of color recognized that their contributions to the county, state, and nation made them worthy of citizenship.

To the contrary, convention President Nathaniel Macon of Warren County downplayed the rights and services of “free colored persons,” questioned their citizenship, and associated them with African Americans, in order to enforce white supremacy and exploit their labor. Macon believed that “free persons of color” had never been citizens and that only citizens possessed the right to vote. As far as their Revolutionary War service, he reasoned that many slaves and “free Negroes” entered the service, and were employed to fight, “but were never made citizens” and “made no part of the political family.” In Macon’s mind, African Americans and Indians only had one purpose: to work for white men. Macon and others absolutely depended on non-white labor; for instance, he doubted “whether our Southern country can ever be cultivated by white men; or that the

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NARA M804. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, Pension No. W. 17665, Fold3.com [accessed 29 July 2015].

<sup>22</sup> Mary Richardson, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, Benjamin Richardson, Record Group 15, NARA M804, North Carolina, Pension No. W.4,061, Accessed through Fold3.com [accessed 29 July 2015].

vast quantity of our Swamp land can ever be drained; or other Internal Improvements be made without [free people of color].”<sup>23</sup> Macon and other pro-slavery advocates preferred to only provide Indians and free blacks a status that allowed them to labor for the benefit of white landowners. When the final votes were tallied, the pro-slavery ideologues won by a close margin.

The 1835 North Carolina Constitution, as amended, repealed the voting rights of “free persons of color,” denied them some civil rights, and also legally equated their ancestry with descendants of Africans. The amendment read: “No free negro, free mulatto, or free person of mixed blood, descended from negro ancestors to the fourth generation inclusive, (though one ancestor of each generation may have been a white person,) shall vote for members of the Senate or House of Commons.”<sup>24</sup> While acknowledging that some of the group affected by this amendment possessed white ancestry, the convention delegates determined that white family would not give North Carolinians a political voice if they also possessed non-white family. The Constitution as passed legally suppressed locals’ appreciation of the qualities of a good resident—wealth, industriousness, and compliance with the law, regardless of race—in favor of a racial hierarchy headed by whites. Locally for Meadows Indians, the new Constitution not only took away their right to vote, but also legally eroded the distinctions between segments of the free colored population and assumed a natural affiliation with African American slaves.

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<sup>23</sup> Proceedings and debates of the Convention of North Carolina , 69-70.

<sup>24</sup> *Journal of the Convention Called by the Freemen of North Carolina to Amend the Constitution of the State: which assembled in the City of Raleigh, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 1835, and Continued in Session Until the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of July Thereafter*, 98.

As Branch and Daniel returned home from the convention and told Meadows Indians that the state had snatched their right to vote from them, Indians may have felt betrayed by their white neighbors, like other indigenous peoples in the South and elsewhere during this period. Meadows Indians adopted English law to protect their territory and owned individual deeds to land. They supported American independence by fighting with the settlers in the Revolution. Meadows Indians were good neighbors; they paid their taxes, helped survey lands, built infrastructure, and contributed to the economy. These laws not only abrogated their civil rights, but also threatened their separate identity as indigenous peoples and legally made them like other non-whites.

Despite the passage of laws, which classified them as African Americans and brought their status closer to that of slaves than of free people, Meadows Indians still maintained a distinct identity separate from African Americans. They adapted their lifestyles to this new order of racial inequality. Apparently wishing to marginalize them further, white neighbors who had previously regarded Indians highly began to characterize them in stereotypically primitive terms. The Natives of the Meadows acquired a reputation as a “wild,” exclusive “colony” or “tribe” that “lived the life of bushmen” wearing “skins and scraps of cloth.” Meadows Indians may not have agreed with these judgments, but they probably did “live without outside interference,” as one white resident remembered. They survived by logging and shingle-making, fishing and hunting, and gathering herbs, berries, and such other plants, as well as farming and gardening. They likely made their own clothes and shoes, as other farm families did.<sup>25</sup> While doubtless they resembled their

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<sup>25</sup> George W. Hillyard, Eastern Cherokee Application; P.A. Richardson, “To Whom This May Concern,” 1940-1943, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.; Thomas W. Adickes, “A Practical Demonstration of Theoretical Resettlement Project,” Mrs. Charles A. Cannon [Ruth C. Cannon] Papers (#2551), Southern

neighbors in many respects, they also kept largely to themselves, continuing to marry among each other, protected their territory, and were strategic in their relationships to outsiders.

As Indians themselves remembered it, their classification as “free negroes” after 1835, the abrogation of their right to vote, and other race-based restrictions encouraged some members of the community to migrate to states with fewer race-based limitations. George W. Hilliard, an Indian migrant to Indiana, remembered that Halifax County Indians left the state because “they passed a law down there that all free born people and the mixed bloods would have to get out inside of 90 days or they would be put back into slavery”<sup>26</sup> Hilliard probably remembered that the 1830 laws which forced emancipated slaves to leave the state or provided for their reenslavement applied to free-born Indians, though in reality they did not.<sup>27</sup> P.A. Richardson remembered that “after the restrictions of 1835 in North Carolina, many [Indians] emigrated on ox carts and wagons...to the State of Ohio, and a large settlement was made near Chillicothe [sic], Ohio.”<sup>28</sup> The restrictive laws enacted in 1835 marked the breaking point for many Meadows Indians who chose to leave their

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Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1937, Series 3, Folder 137, P.1; George C. Stoney “River Mansion Saw Procession of Nation’s Great.” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 12 September 1937.

<sup>26</sup> Hilliard, “Eastern Cherokee Application.”

<sup>27</sup> “Slaves and Free Persons of Color. An Act Concerning Slaves and Free Persons of Color: Electronic Edition; 1830 c.9 s2 “Emancipated slaves to leave the state in 90 days;” 1830 c.9 22 “Emancipated slaves not leaving the state or returning to be arrested and sold;” 1830 c.4 s3 “Free negroes not to inter marry with slave,” <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/slavesfree/slavesfree.html>

<sup>28</sup> Richardson, “To Whom it May Concern.”

indigenous territory in North Carolina and seek more freedom and better lives in other states, especially Ohio.

Ohio was as an anti-slave state with fewer restrictions on free persons of color, but was nevertheless initially committed to white supremacy. Ohio's first constitutional convention in 1802 prohibited slavery and limited indentured servitude, but lawmakers discouraged free black migration and enforced race-based restrictions by passing the Black Laws in 1804 and 1807. For example, free blacks were required to prove their freedom by registering with county clerks and producing "free papers," or proof of their freedom.<sup>29</sup> Out-of-state free persons of color obtained free papers by going to their home county clerk of court and asking a white person to vouch for their free status. The clerk of court drew up a certified paper describing the free person, including their age, and noting their physical condition such as height, complexion, scars or blemishes, eye color, genealogy, and other descriptive information. Upon entering a free state those free colored persons wishing to register produced those papers at local courthouses. In Ross County, Ohio, registrants presented the free papers to the clerk of court, who made a copy and gave the document back to the family.<sup>30</sup> In addition to presenting free papers, the laws required free blacks to find an Ohio resident to sign a surety bond to guarantee their good behavior and financial resources to avoid reliance on local government for support.<sup>31</sup> Like North Carolina, Ohio prohibited free blacks from testifying against whites in court and blacks could not serve on

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Finkelman, "Race, Slavery, and Law in Antebellum Ohio," in Michael Les Benedict and John F. Winkler, *History of Ohio Law* (Ohio University Press, 2004): 750.

<sup>30</sup> Enumeration of the Black and Mulatto Population in Ross County, Ohio 1804-1855, Ross County Common Pleas, Clerk of Courts, Ross County, Ohio.

<sup>31</sup> Finkleman, 750.

juries or vote. Though Black Laws were on the books, Ohio did not strictly enforce registration policy or attach a penalty for not registering.<sup>32</sup>

Even with its Black Laws, Ohio still offered policies and laws attractive to Meadows Indians and other free non-white migrants. Ohio prohibited the kidnapping of free blacks and mulattoes, which promoted security for its citizens, and outlawed “involuntary servitude” or apprenticeship, which helped keep families together and allowed non-whites to enjoy the fruits of their own labor and hard work.<sup>33</sup> Ohio permitted private black education, but initially encouraged segregation. The opportunities for non-white public education improved; in 1825 Ohio passed its first comprehensive public education law, which did not mention race. In 1848 lawmakers allowed school integration if the district consented. Finally, in 1849 an alliance of Free-Soilers from the Whig and Democratic parties allowed integration and also repealed the Black Laws.<sup>34</sup> With the Black Laws repealed, non-whites could testify against whites in court, enter the state without providing free papers, and obtain an education in a state-supported school, even though most schools were segregated.<sup>35</sup> Years after lawmakers repealed the Black Laws, however, local custom still barred non-whites from voting and jury service. While white Ohioans advocated their own supremacy in their laws and practices, many citizens believed in some civil rights for free people of color, and the laws reflect the gradual crumbling of the extreme racial inequality that Southerners endured.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 756.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 751.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 767.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 751.



For Meadows Indians and other “free colored” migrants to Ohio, the absence of slavery, slaves, and forced labor made an enormous difference in their economic, social, and political lives. Without slavery, whites could not classify free colored persons and those in bondage together as a means to enforce restrictions. In the absence of slavery, free people of color did not face restrictions on freedom of movement or race-based fines and physical punishment. Ohio did not prevent free people of color from marrying who they wanted. Meadows Indian migrants, therefore, did not necessarily concern themselves with socially distancing themselves from African Americans in order to preserve limited civil rights, as they did in North Carolina. For Meadows Indians the lack of restrictions on their movements or social relationships did not initially alter their Indian identity, but in this environment racial boundaries mattered less, which left them the ability to focus on individual achievement rather than maintaining community ties and protecting an indigenous territory.

Shortly after the 1835 North Carolina Constitutional Convention, several groups of interrelated Meadows Indian and associated families migrated to Ohio to take advantage of these more favorable conditions. John Richardson moved with his family to Ross County, Ohio in 1845. He was born in Halifax County about 1816, a descendant of the older John Richardson, who years earlier had his lands seized by William Brinkley in the Meadows. Hardy Manly, Jr. and John Manly, both with families of ten from Halifax County, settled in Fayette County, Ohio by 1840. Wiley Dempsey of Halifax resided in Ross County, southeast of Fayette County, with his small family of four.<sup>36</sup> The families of cousins

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<sup>36</sup> Hardy Manly and John Manly, Year: 1840; Census Place: *Union, Fayette, Ohio*; Roll: 393; Page: 5; Image: 14; Family History Library Film: 0020164; Wiley Dempsey, Year: 1840; Census Place: *Union, Ross, Ohio*; Roll: 424; Page: 345; Image: 698; Family History Library Film: 0020175.

Thomas E. Johnson and Thomas Francis arrived in Galia County in 1843. There they stayed until the following spring when they moved to Ross County.<sup>37</sup> In 1850 Howard Johnson and family, including his son Thomas had moved to Ross County and they worked as farm laborers for local whites.<sup>38</sup> Starling Scott and family, including his son Edward Scott, also made their way to Chillicothe, Ross County, Ohio from North Carolina by 1845.<sup>39</sup> Their connections to the Meadows Indian Scott families are unclear, but Northampton County adjoins Halifax County, N.C. and various families, including the Scotts, are known to have relocated from Northampton County and other parts northeast to the Meadows earlier in the nineteenth century. In 1850, the Scotts lived in Ohio near other “mulatto” and black migrants from North Carolina and Virginia, including the family of Edward Bird. Members of the Bird family lived in the in the Meadows and migrated with the others. These families had belonged to a longstanding kinship network in North Carolina, and they re-created that network, to a certain extent, in Ohio.

Meadows Indians may have taken advantage of the sporadically enforced registration laws of Ohio. These migrants do not appear in the enumerated records of

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas E. Johnson, “General Affidavit” Thomas Francis Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert No. 688662, 21 June 1904.

<sup>38</sup> Year: 1850; Census Place: Union, Ross, Ohio; Roll: M432\_725; Page: 136A; Image: 280; Johnson neighbors included Isaac Mace, who owned \$11, 500 worth of real estate, and Andrew Mace, who owned \$5,300 worth of real estate.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas E. Johnson, Deposition, Edward Scott, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert No. 726126, H.4.U.S.C. Inf October 26, 1897.

blacks and mulattos of Ross County, while some of their close neighbors and associates do. Pheriby Low and family, described as free persons of color having a “light mulatto coulour [sic],” received their free papers on June 29, 1844 in Northampton County, N.C. and registered them in Ross County, Ohio.<sup>40</sup> In 1850 the family lived next door to the Sterling Scott family, but yet the Scotts do not appear on the register, nor do any of the Meadows Indian migrants. It is entirely possible that these families registered in other counties before moving to Ross County. Another possibility is that county officials and their neighbors recognized that they were not “free negroes” or emancipated slaves and did not require them to register. Meadows Indian migrants may have decided that the laws did not apply to them because they were Native and not of African descent. Most Meadows Indians migrated just shortly before the Black Laws were repealed and their absence on registers may also reflect the lessening of restrictions on non-whites within the state. In any case, limitations on free persons of color in Ohio were less rigid than the southern state from which they migrated.

Ohio’s legal and social climate allowed Meadows Indian migrants to become industrious and productive members of society. In 1850 John Richardson made his living as a laborer and by June 1856 accumulated the \$1,300 needed to purchase 101 acres of land from local whites.<sup>41</sup> By 1860 Richardson, now a farmer, owned \$800 worth of real estate and \$200 worth of personal property.<sup>42</sup> His sons John D. Richardson and William

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<sup>40</sup> Enumeration of the Black and Mulatto Population in Ross County, Ohio 1804-1855, Ross County Common Pleas, Clerk of Courts, Ross County, Ohio, p. 164.

<sup>41</sup> John Richardson from John N. Hurst and Sally Hurst Ross County Ohio, Deed Book, Vol. 58, 444-445, 23 June 1856.

<sup>42</sup> Year: 1860; Census Place: Union, Ross, Ohio; Roll: M653\_1031; Page: 390; Image: 247; Family History Library Film: 805031

Richardson lived and worked on the nearby farm of white man William Cook.<sup>43</sup> In 1870 John Richardson continued farming and his real estate values increased to \$3,000, which was more than most local whites in the community.<sup>44</sup> Meadows Indian migrants overwhelmingly worked as farm laborers or farmers who rented land from others. Richardson, however, demonstrated that with hard work and dedication, non-white migrants to Ohio had opportunities to build new lives without the same race-based restrictions they faced in North Carolina.

For instance, Meadows Indian migrants took advantage of educational opportunities in their new home when they became available. At first, education for Ross County residents was virtually non-existent; in Union Township, mostly the children of well-to-do white farmers attended school.<sup>45</sup> Though Ohio law did not prohibit non-white education, not many had the opportunity or could afford to send their children to school. However, the children of Sterling Scott and Edward Bird, along with a handful of other non-whites, did attend school in 1850.<sup>46</sup> In 1860, formal education was still limited to

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<sup>43</sup> “Disability Statement” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922,503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf. September 1891

<sup>44</sup> Year: 1870; Census Place: *Union, Ross, Ohio*; Roll: *M593\_1263*; Page: *902A*; Image: *420*; Family History Library Film: *552762*.

<sup>45</sup> Lucian Chapin was a white school teacher Year: 1850; Census Place: *Union, Ross, Ohio*; Roll: *M432\_725*; Page: *113A*; Image: 231 as well as John Brown Year: 1850; Census Place: *Union, Ross, Ohio*; Roll: *M432\_725*; Page: *115B*; Image: 236.

<sup>46</sup> Norflic Scott a son of Starling Scott attended school in 1850 as well as Eliza Bird, Mercy A. Bird, and Caroline Bird, children of Edward Bird Year: 1850; Census Place: *Union, Ross, Ohio*; Roll: *M432\_725*; Page: *114A*; Image: 233.

whites in Union Township, but John Richardson helped lead an effort to provide educational opportunities for non-whites. In 1861 he deeded one-fourth of an acre of land to the Ross County, Union Township Board of Education for use of a school in Colored District No. 2.<sup>47</sup> No such opportunity existed for the relatives they left behind in the Meadows.

After 1835 Meadows Indians made racial choices to migrate to Ohio and other Midwestern states primarily to preserve or gain civil rights and economic opportunities, while resident Meadows Indians made the racial choice to stay in their home territory to maintain and protect peoplehood. Migrant Native families left North Carolina for the same reasons as other free non-whites because they believed they deserved the best opportunities. Even in Ohio, these families held a strong bond to each other and recognized their common origins and distinct identity. Many of them initially married into the same families and other Native-descended peoples, but their political, social, and cultural lives were not focused on creating or maintaining an exclusive Indian community. Their actions show that they did not try to avoid contacts with African Americans. Resident Meadows Indians, on the other hand, sought strategies to distinguish themselves from African Americans to gain favor from whites and seek economic, political, and social opportunities. They practiced traditional subsistence methods, married and associated with other indigenous peoples, and used whatever means necessary to protect their lands and maintain peoplehood.

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<sup>47</sup> John Richardson et al to Board of Education of Union Township, Ross County, Ohio, January 23, 1861, Vol 64, p. 538.

Perhaps the most meaningful opportunity available to Meadows Indian migrants came with the Civil War. Many of them served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) after 1864. Thomas E. Johnson enlisted in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, U.S. Colored Infantry at Chillicothe, Ohio for one year. John D. Richardson, son of landowner John Richardson, also joined the 4<sup>th</sup>, as did Edward Scott, an uncle to Richardson by marriage. Thomas Francis enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Frankfort in Ross County. Therygood Manley of Xenia in Greene County enlisted at Montgomery, Ohio for a three-year term in the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment.<sup>48</sup> Richard Hedgepeth, who was a late migrant to Ohio compared to the others, enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops as well. In 1860 the thirty-seven year old Hedgepeth lived in Halifax County, North Carolina with his brother and sister, along with the family of Emanuel Ash.<sup>49</sup> Hedgepeth and the Ashes left the Meadows sometime after September 1, 1860.<sup>50</sup> Hedgepeth migrated to Ohio and married Martha A. Ash, Emanuel's daughter, in 1861.<sup>51</sup> In 1864, Richard Hedgepeth enlisted in the 27<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry at Camp Delaware, Ohio, in the same regiment as Therygood Manley.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Therygood Manley, RG 94, United States NARA M1824. Compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers in the 26th through 30th infantry units, and the 29th Connecticut Infantry (Colored), Roll:0025, 27th US Colored Infantry, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Year: 1860; Census Place: *Western District, Halifax, North Carolina*; Roll: M653\_899; Page: 445; Image: 271; Family History Library Film: 803899.

<sup>50</sup> Emanuel Ash to James Evans Halifax County DB 35 September 1, 1860, p. 122.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Hedgepeth to Martha A. Ash "Certified Copy of Marriage Record," Athens County, 22 April 1861, Richard Hedgepeth, Civil War Pension for Minor Child, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Certificate No. 420986.

<sup>52</sup> Other "Meadows Indian" migrants who served, included George Haithcock, James R. Locklear, John Locklear, and Andrew Manley, a probable cousin or brother of Therygood Manley.

As residents of Ohio, Meadows Indians supported the Union cause against the Confederate slave power. The Richardsons, Manleys, Dempseys, Francis, Johnsons, Scotts and others enjoyed life as free state residents; perhaps they sought an opportunity to affect change for their southern brethren. Indian migrants remembered or heard about how whites treated their relatives and ancestors through forced apprenticeships, taking of their lands, nullification of their voting rights, and implementation of other race-based restrictions. They may have sympathized with African Americans in bondage or heard stories of their own Indian relatives bound to white families. Meadows Indian migrants appreciated the schools for colored people in Ohio and may have wanted the same opportunities for their kin in North Carolina. They may have feared losing their newfound freedoms if the Confederacy prevailed in the war.

Meadows Indian migrants endured great sacrifices as part of the USCT. Shortly after enlistment, the soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> USCT regiments marched southeast and were put into immediate action. After mustering in early September, 1864, John D. Richardson remembered that “we went almost directly to the front” and marched from Bermuda Hundred, Virginia to Deep Bottom on the James River.<sup>53</sup> Early in the morning on September 29 the 4<sup>th</sup> USCT Infantry, along with the 6<sup>th</sup> regiment, advanced on a Confederate position two or three miles away from their encampment at Deep Bottom. The soldiers were “cut to pieces” and after the regiments fell back, Edward Scott, Thomas E.

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<sup>53</sup> “Disability Statement” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf. September 1891; John D. Richardson, Deposition, Edward Scott, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 726126, H.4.U.S.C. Inf October 27, 1897.

Johnson, and John D. Richardson were probably among the 75 of 375 soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> who could answer the next roll call. The rest were killed or severely wounded in the battle. Thomas Francis saw combat at Deep Bottom as well.<sup>54</sup> By October 1, 1864 the soldiers were sent to Dutch Gap, VA. John D. Richardson recalled “we were sent there... to work and fight over a canal [sic] that gen. Butler was having cut across the bend of James River about nine miles below old Richmond Va.”<sup>55</sup> The Dutch Gap was a canal of five hundred feet long that cut across a bend in the river; building it was an important strategy for the Union, but it required grueling amounts of work. The canal took the labor of at least seven U.S.C.T. army regiments. The work lasted longer than expected and physically tested the soldiers, who labored in two shifts, each for seven and a half hours a day.<sup>56</sup>

Meadows Indian USCT soldiers suffered from physical ailments caused by the heavy workload and unhealthy conditions. Diarrhea and rheumatism commonly plagued the soldiers. Thomas Francis, John D. Richardson, and Edward Scott all contracted diarrhea and rheumatism in Virginia in 1864. Scott remembered, “we were doing hard manual labor opening up a canal and I was working with a shovel and pick. My right hip gave out but I never felt rheumatism very seriously in service, never went to hospital but

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<sup>54</sup> William A. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862-1867* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013) 373-376.; Thomas Francis, RG 94, United States, NARA M1820. Compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers who served with the United States Colored Troops, 2nd through 7th Colored Infantry, 1861-65, Roll: 0055, 1864, p. 2.; Alexander Haman “General Affidavit” 24 December 1890, Thomas Francis Pension Application Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 688662.

<sup>55</sup> “Disability Statement” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922503, September 1891.

<sup>56</sup> Dobak, 390.



was excused many a time.”<sup>57</sup> At New Bern, North Carolina, while on guard duty in the hot July sun, Edward Scott acquired an ailment that would debilitate him the remainder of his life. Scott remembered, “the weather was hot enough to roast eggs in the sand and I was right out in the sun. I went on duty at 8’oclock in the morning and about ten o’clock that morning I was carried to my quarters unconscious.”<sup>58</sup> At Fort Warren, near Petersburg, Richard Hedgepeth suffered a neck injury and contracted asthma.<sup>59</sup> Hedgepeth added to his ailments when he later injured his back and right knee on a night march near Fort Harrison, VA.<sup>60</sup>

Meadows Indian migrants initially operated in northern areas such as Maryland and Virginia, but eventually made their way south into North Carolina, close to their old home territories. While John D. Richardson lay in a hospital, his friends and relatives Edward Scott, Thomas Francis, Thomas E. Johnson, and other comrades of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Regiments continued the fighting, laboring, and marching in Virginia and North Carolina.

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<sup>57</sup> Alexander Haman “General Affidavit” December 24, 1890 Thomas Francis, RG 94, United States, NARA M1820. Compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers who served with the United States Colored Troops, 2nd through 7th Colored Infantry, 1861-65, Roll:0055, 1864; Edward Scott, Deposition,

Edward Scott, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 927711, H.4.U.S.C. Inf October 25, 1897; “Hospital Statement,” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922,503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf., April 1892.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Scott, Deposition, Edward Scott, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 927711, H.4.U.S.C. Inf October 25, 1897.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Hedgepeth Pension Application, “Original Invalid Claim,” Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 420986.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Throughout November of 1864, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> regiments dug trenches while awaiting orders to head south into North Carolina.<sup>61</sup> Johnson, Scott, and Francis took part in the first and second Fort Fisher Expeditions, which captured an important Confederate stronghold and fort. Johnson was shot in his left forearm near Fort Fisher in February 1865 and rejoined his unit in July or August of 1865.<sup>62</sup> He and Scott were bunkmates and remained close throughout the war.<sup>63</sup> After capturing Fort Fisher, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Regiments went on the Campaign of the Carolinas through March and April 1865, including advances on Kinston, Goldsboro, and Raleigh. John D. Richardson was “absent sick” throughout all of these campaigns, but returned to service in late April and rejoined his regiment at Goldsboro in early May. From Goldsboro the regiments marched to New Bern.<sup>64</sup>

Weeks and months of marching close to their old homelands may have afforded Meadows Indian migrants an opportunity to reflect on and discuss their family history and identity amongst themselves and with their non-Indian comrades. Their physical characteristics and later assertions of Native ancestry suggest that they were keenly aware of their heritage and recognized themselves as different from African Americans.<sup>65</sup> As

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=UUS0005RI00C>

<sup>62</sup> Thomas E. Johnson, RG, United States, NARA M1820. Compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers who served with the United States Colored Troops, 2nd through 7th Colored Infantry, 1861-65, Roll 0039, 4th US Colored Infantry, Jac-Jon, 1864, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas E. Johnson Civil War Pension Application, Edward Scott, Deposition A, April 21 1892.

<sup>64</sup> “Hospital Statement,” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922,503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf., April 1892.

<sup>65</sup> In his Civil War Pension Application, John D. Richardson noted that he was “half-breed Cherokee” “Surgeon’s Certificate,” John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivals certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922,503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf. 18 May

they marched in North Carolina did they enquire about Halifax County or wonder about their relatives left in the Meadows? Did any of them slip away and visit the community? Richard Hedgepeth was a full-grown man when he left the Meadows and his memories of his former community would have been fresh. Since they were in the same regiment, did Hedgepeth and Manley discuss their family and community history or recognize each other as from the same origin community? Undoubtedly, the war brought them back closer to home.

In the meantime, their kin who never left the Meadows dealt with the war's challenges in a variety of ways. They made racial choices in order to maintain peoplehood, cordial relationships with whites, and to protect their territory. The majority of resident Meadows Indians remained neutral during the war. Some Indians, like Richard Hedgepeth, packed up and moved to Union areas and joined the USCT. North Carolina state law prohibited people of color from voluntarily serving in the Confederacy.<sup>66</sup> With the number of prohibited laws and practices the state imposed on Meadows Indians, they most likely supported Union ideals, others may not have. However, fighting for or openly supporting the Union cause might have worsened their situation. After all, whites previously used an alleged affinity between African Americans and free persons of color as a justification to limit their civil rights; fighting for the USCT would risk further erosion of their social,

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1904; Thomas Johnson noted that he and his cousin Thomas Francis and "family were free born of Indian & Mongolian descent" Thomas E. Johnson, "General Affidavit" July 16, 1908, Thomas Francis, Co. A 5 Regt

U.S.C. Inf Vols Inf. Certificate No. 688.662; Therrygood Manley was described as having "a light-brown color, with straight brown hair and a kind of gray eyes."

<sup>66</sup> Milteer, 186.

economic, and civil liberties. Among the liberties Meadows Indians maintained was the ability to own land and to work the land for their livelihood.

Other resident Meadows Indians supported the Confederate cause as way to maintain cordial relationships with local whites, profit economically, and protect the community. Prominent Meadows Indian Alfred Richardson, son of Hardy Richardson, helped the C.S.A. throughout the war. In October of 1861 the C.S.A. provided Richardson railroad transportation on official business from Richmond to Barksdale Depot in Halifax County, VA. Perhaps Richardson was transporting goods or meeting with government officials to discuss the products he could provide to the Confederates. In January 1863, the C.S.A. paid Richardson \$21.00 “for services of self as agent in baling [sic] forage...at \$30 per month.” Later in November of the same year, the C.S.A. paid Richardson \$69.60 for 174 “beef,” or cattle. We do not know if Richardson sold the commodities voluntarily or under duress, but Richardson’s labor undoubtedly helped the Confederate side. His actions worked to preserve cordial relationships with whites, distinguished him and his family from African Americans and may have helped maintain the limited social and legal liberties some Meadows Indians enjoyed. By helping the Confederates, Richardson gained some financial reward, but on the other hand his actions could have strained family resources. Either way, he chose to assist the Confederates as a way to retain some small degree of distinctiveness.

Meadows Indians also entered the service through Confederate impressment and saw the front lines under challenging circumstances. In 1860, twenty-six year old Jesse Lynch of Halifax County worked as a ditcher on the lands of white farm owner Lewis

Brown in Duplin County, one hundred miles south of Halifax.<sup>67</sup> In May 1863 the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the N.C. Calvary impressed Lynch into the service as the captain's cook.<sup>68</sup> The C.S.A. regularly employed free persons of color as laborers and cooks.<sup>69</sup> The Union Army, under the command of Major General J.G. Foster, captured Lynch and other prisoners of war in Carteret County on May 4, 1863. The Union army then sent Lynch to Lieutenant Colonel W.H. Ludlow, Commissioner of Prison Exchange. Lynch arrived at Newbern, N.C., on May 23. While other prisoners were sent to City Point, VA, Lynch was "not sent."<sup>70</sup> Instead, the twenty-nine year old, light-complexioned Lynch enlisted in the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the USCT at New Bern on May 30, 1863.<sup>71</sup> Lynch switched sides. As an insider-outsider traveling with the Confederate army, Lynch observed the inner workings of the Confederate war machine and ideology. If Lynch were treated badly by the Confederates, he may have sought revenge, or service in the Union Army may have simply offered better pay.

Jesse Lynch served the USCT well and rose through the ranks as a leader of his company. A little over a week after enlistment as a Private, he was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Year: 1860; Census Place: Southern Division, Duplin, North Carolina; Roll: M653\_896; Page: 124; Image: 247; Family History Library Film: 803896.

<sup>68</sup> Jesse Lynch, RG 109, North Carolina, NARA M270. Compiled service records of Confederate soldiers from North Carolina units, labeled with each soldier's name, rank, and unit, with links to revealing documents about each soldier, Roll 0035, Fifth Cavalry (63d State Troops), 1863.

<sup>69</sup> Milteer, 189-90.

<sup>70</sup> Jesse Lynch, RG 109, North Carolina, NARA M270. Compiled service records of Confederate soldiers from North Carolina units, labeled with each soldier's name, rank, and unit, with links to revealing documents about each soldier, Roll 0035, Fifth Cavalry (63d State Troops), 1863, p.2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Jesse Lynch, The National Archives at Washington, D.C.; Washington, D.C.; *Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops: Infantry Organizations, 31st through 35th*; Microfilm Serial: M1992; Microfilm Roll: 75; Ancestry.com. *U.S., Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1865*.

Sergeant. Lynch participated in all of the military operations of the 35<sup>th</sup> USCT, including expeditions at Olustee, FL, 10 Mile Station, FL, Darly's Station, Honey Hill, S.C. and others. He was demoted from 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant to Sergeant on November 7, 1864 and further demoted to Private "for absence without leave" on June 23, 1865. Apparently, he felt as ambivalent about service in the USCT as he did about service in the CSA. He remained a Private until the war's end, but he stayed in the army and by April 30, 1866 had achieved the rank of Sergeant again. Lynch mustered out as a Sergeant on June 1, 1866 at Charleston, S.C.<sup>72</sup>

The Civil War-era stories of Alfred Richardson and Jesse Lynch demonstrate the various strategies Meadows Indians employed to gain and maintain civil liberties in a white-dominated South. Richardson and most of his family desired to stay in their home territories and maintain cordial relationships with whites, while drawing a distinction from African Americans, especially those in bondage. While Meadows Indians endured the strict policies set by lawmakers for free persons of color, they still enjoyed some civil liberties, including landownership and the ability to make their own living. Providing goods to the Confederates or even outright service would have protected that status. Lynch, on the other hand, was most likely forced into Confederate service and when given the opportunity switched sides to fight for the USCT. He experienced the horrors of war firsthand and knew the inner workings of the Confederate army. Nevertheless, Lynch became a leader in his unit and made choices to promote his own individual survival. Richardson, on the other hand, likely considered not only his own immediate family's welfare, but also perhaps the future of an entire community.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

The end of the Civil War and emancipation ushered in a new opportunity to escape the restrictions that pro-slavery ideologues imposed. At the same time, the society's dependence on racial categories and white supremacy did not change. Indians developed new strategies to maintain distinctiveness. Meanwhile, African American freedmen entered the political and social sphere and engaged in their own struggle to build institutions of equality. Meadows Indians became part of this story even as they tried to maintain their separate identity. They acknowledged the potential benefits of working closely with African Americans to realize additional civil rights and social and economic opportunities, but they also recognized how doing so might change, or even erode, their separate identity as Indians. Meadows Indians carried on important debates amongst themselves about these changes and opportunities, and with whom they should ally themselves to help maintain an identity as Indian people. The choices they made had consequences not only for the cohesion of their community, but for how outsiders categorized them racially. Their disagreements were complicated by the close kinship ties Natives had to each other, their budding partnerships with African American neighbors, and the new presence of northern whites who helped free persons of color develop social and political institutions. All of these factors influenced Meadows Indian strategies to deal with a new racial order.

After the Civil War, with the presence of a larger number of African Americans, outsiders marked racial distinctions between Indians and blacks, but did not frequently classify them as "Indian." For example on the 1870 and 1880 censuses of Halifax, Warren, and Nash Counties census enumerators most frequently categorized Meadows Indians as mulatto. One exception was the families of Abner Richardson and Spencer Boone who

were listed as white or 7/8 white and 1/8 Indian in Bailey's Township, Nash County in 1880.<sup>73</sup> The 1880 mortality schedule for Halifax County, Brinkleyville Township suggests that racial classifications were in flux, since the races of Meadows Indians Mary E. Boone, Gideon Richardson, Robert Silver, and others were changed from Indian or mulatto to black. The enumerator marked a bold "B" over the original designation.<sup>74</sup>

Organized religious institutions served as sites of both unity and contestation; in churches we see examples of the complications and consequences brought on by a new racial climate after the war. Before they established organized churches, Meadows Indians worshiped at their individual homes, under brush arbors, and sometimes with both whites and blacks. Meadows Indians likely worshipped with whites at Bethlehem Church, which was located in Warren County near the Halifax County line in the heart of the Indian community.<sup>75</sup>

After the Civil War, however, Indian leaders such as Jeremiah Richardson, Charles Lynch, and Abner Richardson set about building and organizing churches for Indians, with the help of northern whites and pastors from various denominations. P.A. Richardson remembered, "when the question of what denomination the church should affiliate with

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<sup>73</sup> Ab Richerson, household 56, family 57; Spencer Boon, household 57, family 58, Year: 1880; Census Place: Bailey, Nash, North Carolina; Roll: 974; Family History Film: 1254974; Page: 527B; Enumeration District: 178; Image: 0160.

<sup>74</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Non-population Census Schedules for North Carolina, 1850-1880: Mortality and Manufacturing*; Archive Collection: M1805; Archive Roll Number: 4; Census Year: 1880; Census Place: Brinkleyville, Halifax, North Carolina [accessed on Ancestry.com, 23 May 2016].

<sup>75</sup> An 1874 map of Warren County shows the location of Bethlehem Church at the current location of Old Bethlehem in eastern Warren County near the Halifax County line., see <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ncmaps/id/222> [accessed 25 May 2016]; this church was later moved to Arcola a few miles north of Bethlehem.



arose, there was division among the members.” White African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church minister Reverend Lewis Benjamin (L.B.) Clark migrated from Maryland around 1870. He helped establish and then pastored Jeremiah Methodist Church, named after church organizer Jeremiah Richardson. An itinerant minister, he also worked with several emerging churches at nearby Spring Hope and Nashville in Nash County, N.C.<sup>76</sup> An unnamed white Baptist minister influenced another group of Indians, along with some African Americans, to start Pine Chapel Baptist Church. The white minister ordained Rev. Harry Alston, an African American, as pastor of Pine Chapel.

Meadows Indian elders remembered Jeremiah Methodist Church as the first “tribal” or Indian church, which makes its affiliation with a white A.M.E. minister puzzling. A.M.E. missionary work among Native peoples is not unprecedented. Independent scholar Christina Dickerson-Cousin uncovered the story of John Hall, an Ojibwa Indian of Michigan, who joined the A.M.E. church, regarded black A.M. E. members as kin, and served as a missionary himself to several Michigan Ojibwa communities, including the Saginaw Chippewas.<sup>77</sup> Church attendees kept Jeremiah “isolationist,” according to P.A. Richardson, and “no one but the Indian group joined its communion for many years.” Jeremiah Church leaders used race as a way for their kin to gain control over their own affairs. P.A. Richardson’s phrase “the Indian group” may signal a time period when some Meadows Indians began developing a Native-centered

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<sup>76</sup> “SH Church Celebrates Its 112th Anniversary,” *Spring Hope Enterprise*, 19 Sep 1982 <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1105&dat=19820919&id=QUNIAAAAIBAJ&sjid=i5MNAAAAIBAJ&pg=2779,6708343&hl=en> [accessed 24 June 2015]; Amanda Clark, “Galatia AME Church celebrates 140 years,” *The Nashville Graphic* 7 July 2010, <http://www.ncgenweb.us/nash/church-histories/galatia-ame-church-at-140/> [accessed 24 June 2015].

<sup>77</sup> Christina Dickerson-Cousin, “‘I Call You Cousins’: Kinship, Religion, and Black-Indian Relations in Nineteenth-Century Michigan,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol 61, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 79-98.

political consciousness that went beyond acknowledgement of their indigenous ancestry. They wanted outsiders to recognize their racial distinctiveness, beyond the stereotypes of “wild bushmen” that had dominated perceptions in previous decades. A new consciousness as Indians, expressed through the A.M.E. church, specifically helped draw a new distinction between them and their non-Indian neighbors. Jeremiah Church is an example of how Meadows Indians utilized post-Civil War opportunities available to African Americans to maintain peoplehood.

Disagreements over denominational affiliation, racial segregation, and the components of Indian identity fueled a rivalry between old friends and relatives among Meadows Indians. While Jeremiah Church remained “Indian-only,” Indians and a few African American families attended Pine Chapel Baptist Church. The white minister assisting Pine Chapel objected to L.B. Clark’s outsider status, and Pine Chapel’s preacher told Jeremiah Church members “that no one could be saved in the Methodist church.” As a result, many members of Jeremiah withdrew and joined Pine Chapel or other churches.<sup>78</sup> Jeremiah Richardson, after whom the Jeremiah Church was named, and his cousin and business associate Abner Richardson, disagreed over these issues for many years, even prompting relocation. Abner promoted an association with the Baptist denomination, but by 1870, he moved to Nash County; he may have wanted to distance his family from the rivalry with Jeremiah. Abner and his wife even sold their Warren and Halifax County lands in January of 1872.<sup>79</sup> It is likely that race was a factor as well, because as previously noted,

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<sup>78</sup> P.A. Richardson, “Tilman Parsons Lynch 1858-1944,” Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>79</sup> Abner Richardson and wife Jane Richardson of Nash County to James Richardson, Warren County Register of Deeds, Book 50, p. 254, 12 Jan 1872; Abner Richardson and wife Jane Richardson of Nash

Abner Richardson and the family were counted as mostly white on the 1880 census, and showed strong relationships with whites in the future. Perhaps post-Civil War, passing for white represented the best racial choice the Richardsons could make given the racial complications brought on by closer associations with African Americans.

Even though each church became a pillar of the Meadows Indian community, the origins and policies of these institutions exemplify a complicated process of negotiation around race and identity based on a white-black racial hierarchy. The members of Jeremiah sought recognition as Indian, and through its church organization, they openly challenged the black-white racial binary. Pine Chapel, on the other hand, embraced inclusiveness with African Americans, at least at church.

Active participation in both religious and political affairs was a common strategy that southern non-whites implemented for the betterment of their people.<sup>80</sup> During Reconstruction, Meadows Indians used institutions meant to assist freedmen to meet their own religious and social needs. For example, white AME minister L.B. Clark encouraged Meadows Indians to participate in the Union League. According to historian Mitchell Snay, the league mobilized the votes of freedmen to build a viable Republican party in the South.<sup>81</sup> Several Meadows Indians participated, including Harry Pryor, an A.M.E. preacher who served as a drillmaster, Bryant Rudd, an A.M.E. pastor and Union League

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County to Wade Richardson of Halifax County, NC, Halifax County Register of Dees, Book 71B, p. 547, 13 Jan 1872.

<sup>80</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863-1877*, Francis Parkman Prize Edition (New York: History Book Club, 2005): 112.

<sup>81</sup> Mitchell Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 18.

fifer, and Ambrose Hawkins, a drummer. These individuals “led in the organization of the colored people of this community to participate in the state and National elections just after the war of the Rebellion.”<sup>82</sup> Meadows Indian League members used their skills as musicians to recruit Republican voters at rallies, parades, and other events. Democratic southern whites, however, despised Republican whites that encouraged non-whites to vote, participate in civil affairs, and grow economically. These acts threatened the power of former slave owners and white supremacists who wanted non-whites to “know their place” in the racial hierarchy. Participation in the Union League may have helped provide resources and political involvement, but may have also weakened outsiders’ recognition of their distinct Indian identity due to the close associations with African Americans.

While the end of the Civil War brought a new level of control over one’s own labor, indentures and apprenticeships still affected Meadows Indians. In September 1866, Freedmen’s Bureau Superintendent A.G. Brady received a complaint that the children of Meadows Indian, Wiley Manley, were being held by their “former master.” Brady referred the matter to his Assistant Superintendent, John M. Foote, to determine “if the children are as Stated held as slaves or unlawfully held without being properly Indentured according to law.” Brady ordered Foote to take “prompt measures” to “restore these children to their parent or parents” if the children were being held illegally.<sup>83</sup> Upon investigation, however, Foote found that Wiley Manley was one of the “old issue”—meaning that neither he nor his family had ever been slaves—and that the court had recently legally indentured his

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<sup>82</sup> P.A. Richardson, “Tilghman Parsons Lynch 1858-1944,” Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>83</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Records of the Field Offices for the State of North Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872*; Microfilm Serial: M1909; Microfilm Roll: 22 [accessed on Ancestry.com 25 April 2015].

children to Mr. Hunter. Since the Halifax County court secured the indenture, Foote determined that “they do not come under my jurisdiction.”<sup>84</sup> Foote’s findings affirm Meadows Indians’ claims that they could not be classified with slaves, but they also suggest that Reconstruction-era institutions designed to help non-whites could not, in fact, help those who had always been free. Meadows Indians still occupied a precarious social, legal, and economic position, with little assistance from the outside, after the Civil War.

The legal restrictions placed on “free persons of color” through the amended 1835 North Carolina Constitution solidified a new racial order, eroding an earlier social hierarchy built on wealth and reputation. Meadows Indians had prospered as landowners and civic participants under the earlier regime, but the later one forced new kinds of adaptations and consequences for their separate identity as Indians. For Meadows Indians who stayed, kinship networks, land ownership in the local community, and contribution to community life identified someone as Indian. Some chose a strategy that emphasized social boundaries, collaboration with whites, and distinctiveness from African Americans, while others were willing to associate with African Americans in a church setting, at least when Indians remained in the majority, and in political organizations. Resident Meadows Indians hoped that by building on the racial hierarchy established by the State of North Carolina, and acquiring a separate identity within it, they could continue to maintain some of their rights and remain in their indigenous territory.

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<sup>84</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Records of the Field Offices for the State of North Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872*; Microfilm Serial: *M1909*; Microfilm Roll: 22, 12 September 1866 [accessed on Ancestry.com 25 April 2015].

On the other hand, Meadows Indians who migrated to Ohio chose a place without the institution of slavery and fewer race-based restrictions, allowing them to enjoy rights and opportunities not available to their relatives in the South. But their movement to Ohio, their establishment of schools, and their military service introduced alliances and labels that brought their Indian identity into question. Meadows Indians demonstrated, however, that racial classification was more than a matter of ancestry, and they insisted on greater control over their identity when they saw how easily events like the 1835 Constitution and the Civil War could change how others perceived them. Nevertheless, migrant Indians who never returned to the Meadows chose to leave their former territory to seek greater civil, political, and economic participation; they largely dissolved their connection to the peoplehood nurtured in their home territory of North Carolina.

Between 1835 and the Reconstruction era, both Indians who stayed in the Meadows and those who left made racial choices that called racial categories into question. For resident Meadows Indians, identity markers included kinship networks, land ownership in the Meadows community, and association with religious institutions. But the racial categories attached to these markers are complicated, as when a white official of an African American institution organized the Indian-only Jeremiah church, an institution which reflected the values of Native peoplehood. While some Meadows Indians favored relationships with whites over associations with African Americans, others did not think that church attendance or participation in organizations including African Americans dissolved their connection to peoplehood. Indians insisted on greater control over their identities and weighed all of the options.

## **CHAPTER 2: BEING “COLORED” AND “INDIAN”: RACIAL CHOICES IN THE AGE OF ASSIMILATION AND WHITE SUPREMACY**

Although the societal changes brought by Civil War and Reconstruction allowed Meadows Indians to once again legally participate in civil affairs, whites continued to use the law to impose their own supremacy and reinforce a segregated black-white (or colored-white) binary, with no explicit room for a third race of Indians. Meadows Indians, however, continued to insist on equal treatment as well as racial distinctiveness from their African American and white neighbors. Part of this quest depended on whites' recognition of that distinction. While Meadows Indians strove to maintain friendly relationships with local whites, and those whites typically acknowledged their difference from most former slaves, newcomers (both white and black) struggled to understand how Meadows Indians fit into the area's entrenched racial binary. After 1898, when whites expanded their enforcement of racial segregation, this struggle also intensified. Whites' enforcement of a colored-white binary ensured that the terms Indian and colored were not mutually exclusive. Whites regarded anyone not white as colored. In the absence of legal rights for Indians, Meadows Indians utilized rights available to colored people. In other words, Meadows Indians wanted to remain distinct from African Americans in the eyes of whites, but they also wanted to capitalize on the opportunities available to African Americans after Reconstruction.

Meadows Indians therefore strategically projected a situational identity that took advantage of their status as both “colored” and Indian. “Identity” is comprised of social,

cultural, and physical characteristics which distinguish one group from another. Sometimes those characteristics are projected by group members themselves, and sometimes outsiders project those characteristics onto the group. Between Reconstruction and the early 1900s, Meadows Indians protected their separate identity as Indians by creating schools and churches for their own community member under “colored” systems, while they also participated in political and economic movements like the populist Farmers’ Alliance as “colored” members. Because whites required two categories (colored and white), and Indians were obviously not white, Indians had to assume a colored identity if they wanted to join these larger efforts and elevate their own circumstances. Yet for some Meadows Indians, embracing a “colored” identity in certain situations did not mean the abandonment of their Indian identity—rather, they attempted to maintain both, depending on with whom they interacted and the purpose of that interaction.

In each situation, however, a “colored” or “Indian” identity allowed Indian families to either perpetuate or reject peoplehood. Despite Natives’ acceptance of some aspects of Anglo-American culture, such as literacy, participation in the market economy, and the fact of a racial hierarchy, they also continued to practice distinct lifestyles, including an insistence on the value of kinship and attachment to their homeplace.<sup>1</sup> Between the end of Reconstruction and World War II, Meadows Indians made choices based, in one way or another, on the preference to maintain or reject peoplehood.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans & Whites in the Progressive Era*, (Austin Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005).



These choices were complicated by the foremost intrusion of Anglo-American culture in this period, the insistence that only two types of people existed in the South—black and white. For some Meadows Indians, maintaining peoplehood helped them diminish the damage done by non-Natives’ attempts to classify them as African Americans. Pursuing formal education, representing their community on governmental committees and boards, donating land and other materials to build schools, and establishing a town and businesses all represented efforts to maintain their own distinct community and lifeways. Building and maintaining their own schools and churches also furthered their sense of themselves as a distinct community. They astutely cooperated with both Republicans and Democrats to deliver services to their community that they, in large measure, then controlled without interference from local government. In this period, a large group of Meadows Indians interacted with federal definitions of Indian identity as well, and they repurposed the federal government’s tools of assimilation by seeking recognition as Indians through applications for citizenship in the Five Civilized Tribes in 1896 and for claims of the Eastern Band of Cherokees in 1906. Some of these efforts to maintain peoplehood required Indians to embrace an identity as “colored,” while others allowed them to articulate themselves as “Indian.”

Maintaining peoplehood occurred in the context of the white-colored hierarchy, and the Indians of Halifax and Warren Counties used literacy and education, as well as forming alliances with other sympathetic non-whites, to build separate institutions for themselves. Literacy seemed to be an intense focus of the generation who came of age during Reconstruction. They pursued the ability to read and write as adults, in the 1870s and

1880s, with no recorded access to formal schooling. For instance, Alfred Richardson, Jr., son of Confederate supplier Alfred Richardson, became a valuable asset to the community because of his literacy and leadership. Richardson had learned to read and write by the age of 22 in 1870.<sup>1</sup> When his father died in July of 1874, Alfred, Jr. served as his executor.<sup>2</sup> Dudley Lynch, born in 1850, also learned to read by the age of 30.<sup>3</sup> Tilman Parsons (T.P.) Lynch, born in 1858, learned to read and write through personal contact with literate neighbors.<sup>4</sup> Plummer Alston (P.A.) Richardson was descended from the founders of both Jeremiah Methodist and Pine Chapel Baptist Church and also learned to read and write.<sup>5</sup> Emmanuel Richardson was a farmer who took his education a step further; he sold his horse and buggy for \$75.00 and used the money to attend school outside of the community.<sup>6</sup> Probably because of their pursuit of literacy, these individuals and a few others became the most prominent leaders in the community after Reconstruction.

Meadows Indians also welcomed allies who could assist in achieving their goals. For instance, Norman L. (N.L.) Keen and his wife, Virginia S. Hall, were born within Native-descended communities in Hertford County, North Carolina, not within the

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Richardson, household 350, family 350, Ancestry.com Year: 1870; Census Place: *Formosa, Halifax, North Carolina*, p. 44 [accessed 25 May 2016].

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Richardson, Will, Halifax County Will Book 6, p. 106, 4 Aug 1874.

<sup>3</sup> Dudley Lynch, household 137, family 137, Ancestry.com, Year: 1880; Census Place: *Brinkleyville, Halifax, North Carolina*; Roll: 966; Family History Film: 1254966; Page: 561D; Enumeration District: 135; Image: 0590 [accessed 25 May 2016]

<sup>4</sup> P.A. Richardson, "Tilghman Parsons Lynch 1858-1944," November 1944, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, North Carolina.

<sup>5</sup> P.A. Richardson, "Tilman Parsons Lynch 1858-1944," November 1944, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, North Carolina.

<sup>6</sup> Jessie Willard Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Thursday 16 October 2008, Hollister, North Carolina, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

Meadows.<sup>7</sup> Keen learned to read and write by the age of 13, probably from a relative who taught school and lived with him and his family in 1870. Sometime between 1875 and 1880 Virginia Hall attended Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. and studied in the classical department along with her sister, Norman's brother, and others from their home community.<sup>8</sup> Keen and Hall married in 1882 and moved shortly thereafter to the Meadows community in order to take advantage of cheap land and to start a new life outside of their home community. Virginia became a teacher at schools in the Meadows, and Norman became a politician and businessman in the community.<sup>9</sup> Their descendants and those who knew them considered them Indians, but like others accepted the colored racial designation.

Building schools for the community became an urgent priority after Reconstruction. Everyone lacked access to education, and Meadows Indians used their resources to work with Northern and local whites to build schools for Indians, whites and African Americans in the area. Following the 1868 state law to establish universal public schools, the Warren County Board of Education (WCBE) organized school committees in each township and ordered them to determine the boundaries of school districts. The committees also obtained, by purchase or donation, "two sites for free public School

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<sup>7</sup> The areas of Ahoskie and Winton, Hertford County, North Carolina is home to the state-recognized Meherrin Indian Tribe. A complete genealogical investigation has not been completed, but the Keen and Hall families lived within the community. The enrolled members of the Meherrin Indian Tribe and their ancestors have several surnames in common with the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, including Manley, Copeland, Melton, Boone, Jones, and Weaver.

<sup>8</sup> *General Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Shaw University, 1875-1882* (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton & Co., 1882), <http://www.shawu.edu/Archives/Di%20Copy%20of%20LSTA%20Grant%20Project/Catalog%201875-1882.pdf> [accessed 24 May 2016].

<sup>9</sup> Irene and Norman Fitz, interview by Marty Richardson and Jackie Lynch, Warrenton, NC, 2001, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

Houses in each Township, one for the white race and one for the colored race, which are to be paid out of the public school fund.” Citizens and the public school fund would fund the schoolhouses equally using locally generated funds.<sup>10</sup> The board supported a colored-white school system in which Indians would presumably attend schools with African Americans. The public school law also divided the Meadows Indian community, with one part living in Warren County and the other part in adjoining Halifax County. The districts separated Indian schoolmates who otherwise lived close to each other into different districts and schools. By creating a public segregated school system, county officials disrupted a long-standing strategy of some Indians to align with whites in order to maintain a distinct identity from African Americans.

These changes were not immediate, however, and some Indians continued to attend school with whites. In November of 1873 the school board appropriated ten dollars for one acre of land in Fishing Creek Township to build a free public school house. The board did not indicate if the school would be for the white or colored citizens of Fishing Creek, suggesting that both whites and Indians, and possibly blacks as well, attended school together. In the meantime, the board appropriated tax dollars separately for white and colored citizens in the district. We have no precise record of all the early school committeemen in Fishing Creek, but African Americans Solomon B. Williams, Albert Burgess, and William H. Brehon served between August 1874 and 1877. These appointments most likely reflect the dominance of the Republican Party in school committee appointments, though it may also indicate that the one school in that township

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<sup>10</sup> William A. Link, *North Carolina Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 2009): 228-229; Warren County Supt of Schools Minutes Board of Education, Book 1, 10 June 1872, 10; Ibid, September 1872, 11.

was for “colored” people. On the other hand, nearly all of the whites in Fishing Creek could read and write by 1880, leaving one to deduce that at least for a period of time, whites and non-whites attended school together. One white farmer, William King, even helped erect a public school in Fishing Creek in 1874. King lived in a mixed neighborhood of whites, Indians, and blacks. Perhaps he believed he had an opportunity to equalize the availability of education for the three races.<sup>11</sup>

Within a few years, Warren County expanded the number of districts within its townships, allowing Meadows Indians to exercise more control over education. In August of 1877 the Democrat-led Warren County Board of Education appointed three white men to the School Committee of Fishing Creek Township.<sup>12</sup> Less than a month later the board appointed Meadows Indian Alfred Richardson, Jr. as a School Committeeman for the same district to replace one of the whites originally appointed.<sup>13</sup> In these early years of school committee appointments, both white and non-white men served together and the districts and representatives frequently shifted.

As a school committee member, Alfred Richardson, Jr. exploited his position to create new opportunities for his people’s education. In 1882 Richardson persuaded the WCBE to support a public school situated on one acre donated by his brother Reese Richardson, near Bethlehem Church. Several factors indicate that the Richardson family

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<sup>11</sup> See 1880 U.S. Census for Brinkleyville Township, Halifax County, North Carolina and Fishing Creek Township, Warren County, North Carolina. The census was not always accurate however. According to the Fishing Creek, Warren County census Alfred Richardson (Jr.) could not read or write, which is false. See Household 49, Family 49 Year: 1880; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: 985; Family History Film: 1254985; Page: 155B; Enumeration District: 287; Image: 0680

<sup>12</sup> Warren County Superintendent of Schools Minutes Board of Education, 3 Aug 1877, p. 31, Warren County Board of Education, Warrenton, NC.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 5 Nov 1877, p. 33.

intended this to be a school primarily for Indian students. As with the first Fishing Creek school, the deed did not acknowledge the site as a place for a colored or a white school, evading the question of affiliation with one group or another.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the process of building a public school in Fishing Creek (District 27) was unlike that of other districts in the county. In most cases, the Board of Education instructed members of the local committee to survey a suitable site for a public school. The committee would assess the value of the land and report to the Board. Virtually every other district in the county provided similar reports, but not District 27. The value of the land in District 27 also seemed low compared to other districts. The school paid District 26 twenty dollars for their acre of land, while the public school committee paid Reese Richardson and family just seven dollars. The county may have expedited the process for Meadows Indians; even though Reese Richardson received less, he may have agreed to the price in order to start the school more quickly. In any case, the trade-off was worth it for Indians who wanted to educate their children close to home; the Richardsons' land was closer to other Indian families, and perhaps they felt that the proximity gave them more influence.

In the community of Bethlehem, Meadows Indians worked within an explicitly “colored” school system. In 1883 the former white committeemen for the colored district began serving on the committee for the white school. One Indian, Emmanuel Richardson, along with two blacks, replaced them.<sup>15</sup> The county may have seen this arrangement as a

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<sup>14</sup> Reas Richardson et. al. to School Committee District No. 27, 14 Feb 1882, Warren County Register of Deeds, Vol. 47, p. 453-454.

<sup>15</sup> Warren County Board of Education Minutes, Book 1, P. 104, 2 October 1883, Warren County Board of Education, Warrenton, N.C.; William Burgess, HH 140, F 140, Year: 1880; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: 985; Family History Film: 1254985; Page: 160D; Enumeration District: 287; Image: 0690; James H. Williams, HH 24, F 24, Year: 1880; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: 985; Family History Film: 1254985; Page: 154C; Enumeration District: 287; Image: 0677.

compromise, knowing that the school had had at least one Indian committee member before. But Richardson and his Indian constituents wanted a school of their own, and apparently were unhappy with the agreement. When county officials sent a former slave to teach in the school, it seems that many Indian parents withdrew their children. A few years later the county appointed Virginia S. Keen, a community ally and wife of N.L. Keen, to teach at Bethlehem. Then former school committeeman Emmanuel Richardson taught between 1888 and 1890.<sup>16</sup> Indians protested and seemed to engineer other arrangements when whites attempted to put African Americans in charge of their schools, but they did not seem to protest the label “colored” itself. Instead, they embraced and used it. Other solutions emerged as well. T.P. Lynch helped established Secret Hill, an exclusively Indian school located near the current Haliwa-Saponi administrative offices. The school was hard to sustain and eventually consolidated with Pine Chapel School, which fell under the public school system.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1890s, Meadows Indians had found a voice in their education in Halifax County schools, receiving regular appointments as committeemen. In 1892 Alfred Richardson Jr. served as a school committeeman in Brinkleyville Township, along with two white men.<sup>18</sup> Then Dudley Lynch replaced Richardson briefly in July of 1894, when Halifax County realized that Richardson did not actually live in the district.<sup>19</sup> Like other

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<sup>16</sup> Warren County Suptinent of Schools Minutes Board of Education, Years 1885-1919, “Teacher Report District 27”, Book 2, p. 373, 375, 377, 379.

<sup>17</sup> Haliwa-Saponi Petition, p. 112

<sup>18</sup> “Public School Matters” *The Roanoke News* (Weldon, NC) Thursday 15 September 1892

<sup>19</sup> “Board of Education” *The Commonwealth* (Scotland Neck, NC) 5 July 1894

Native landowners, Richardson owned land on the border of Halifax and Warren Counties, but also frequently moved to Nash and Franklin Counties to work. A year later Richardson regained his position as a committeeman representing the town of Essex.<sup>20</sup> These schools provided an opportunity for Indians to receive an education, and they afforded a degree of control, or at least the perception of it.

Meadows Indians accepted that their children would have to attend school with African Americans if they wanted an education, so they created relationship guidelines to keep the groups separate. Some Meadows Indians chose to keep their children home if they had to attend school with blacks, but most knew that asserting a separate identity among their black neighbors was a delicate situation, so they exercised polite avoidance. Avis Lynch Green remembered her father saying, “now y’all got to go to school with them, feed them out of a long handle spoon, do I’m gonna feed you out of a short one. That meant speak to them, treat them right, but don’t go marrying them”; the consequence would mean ostracism from her parents.<sup>21</sup> Meadows Indians were the most populous group in their immediate neighborhood, but still were close neighbors to a few African Americans and whites who also lived there. Indians did not aim to ostracize their neighbors, but they clearly wanted their distinct identity recognized.

Meadows Indians exercised leadership in a number of other civil, governmental, and business areas. Before the age of thirty, T.P. Lynch circulated a petition in the community to establish a post office at the town of Essex, which opened in September

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<sup>20</sup> “School Committees,” *The Commonwealth* (Scotland Neck, NC), 4 July 1895.

<sup>21</sup> Avis Lynch Green and Marcellous Green, Interview with Marvin Richardson, 2002.



1886; Lynch served as its first postmaster.<sup>22</sup> Though he had no degree, Lynch was often described as a “lawyer” for the Indians and non-Indians in the community, assisting residents in legal and social matters with the town and county governments. Lynch’s name appears frequently on wills, deeds, marriage licenses, and other documents. Edgar Ransom Lynch served the county as a constable in 1886. Meadows Indians frequently appeared as witnesses in court cases and were paid for labor services on behalf of the county during this period.<sup>23</sup> In an area where professional medical services were rare, community residents often had to tend to their own healthcare. T.P. Lynch was a dentist and Dudley Lynch practiced bloodletting on community members, a procedure believed to release impurities and disease.<sup>24</sup> Meadows community members also used home remedies and herbs to tend to their needs. Most of all, they simply relied on each other, cultivating community and interdependence as they had for hundreds of years.

Meadows Indian civic participation utilized rights available to “colored” people to bring resources and opportunities to the community, while other practices were internal and promoted peoplehood. During favorable political times, non-whites, including Indians were allowed to serve on local school committees and held other governmental positions. Meadows Indians utilized this opportunity to represent their community and worked to

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<sup>22</sup> P.A. Richardson, “Tilman Parsons Lynch 1858-1944,” November 1944, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, North Carolina; Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-September 30, 1971, NARA RG 28, M-841, Roll 93, p. 168.

<sup>23</sup> “Board of Commissioners Halifax County. Halifax, N.C. Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1886,” *The Commonwealth*, Fri 7 Jan 1887. For example Daniel Coleman was paid for waiting on the Grand jury, WH Lynch was paid for removing a raft from Culpeper’s Bridge, and T.P. Lynch, Phil Richardson, Nancy Richardson, and J.H. Boone served and were paid as witnesses.

<sup>24</sup> Avis Lynch Green and Marcellous Green, Interview with Marvin Richardson, 2002; Gilbert Lynch, personal communication to Marvin Richardson, October 2015.

organize local “colored” schools, under the segregated school system. Since mostly Natives populated the local community, Indian leaders facilitated peoplehood by donating land, materials and labor to exercise control and authority over their children’s education. African Americans attended these institutions as well, so Meadows Indians limited their relationships to other Indian people. Literacy allowed them to bring needed services to their community and teach others to read and write. Meadows Indians allied with both Democrats and Republicans in these efforts.

Meadows Indians struggled through the economic and political reorganization of the South alongside whites and blacks. The Civil War ravaged the southern economy and left many southerners without a means to take care of their families.<sup>25</sup> Around 1880 many small farmers in North Carolina and across the South switched to cash crops to earn a living. However, the absence of banks, the crop-lien system, and the fallen prices of cotton made growing cash crops a risky venture.<sup>26</sup> Many small farmers suffered no matter their race. Discontent among small farmers grew and they strategized about how to make ends meet.

Republicans ruled during the Reconstruction era, but the federal government retreated from their efforts to actively guarantee the rights of non-whites.<sup>27</sup> Even so, Indians such as Emmanuel Richardson and Edgar Ransom Lynch retained their civil posts during this time. The Republican Party remained strong in North Carolina, but aristocratic

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<sup>25</sup> Link, 217.

<sup>26</sup> Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1985): 85, 172, 174, 175.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 226.

Democrats worked to wrest power from non-whites and poorer whites.<sup>28</sup> Meadows Indians faced a dual threat of racial oppression, and as farmers, economic hardship.

Starting in the late 1880s small farmers of the South formed the Southern Farmers' Alliance in order to gain strength against southern political and economic elites. By 1888 the southern alliance quickly grew to over ten thousand sub-alliances and over 400,000 members. Dr. V.N. Seawell, of Duplin County, organized the Essex Alliance in Halifax County in 1888; originally founded with fourteen members, by December membership had grown to forty. According to the local newspaper, the farmers saw "the necessity of organizing against monopoly [and] trusts." They hated that "the profits of our labor are slipping through our fingers, and every day we are growing poorer, while the moneyed few are growing richer." Like the larger Alliance, the Essex Alliance worked through cooperation amongst members managing farms, manufacturing and stores.<sup>29</sup> Farming supplies were expensive so Alliance members purchased supplies in bulk to make them affordable.<sup>30</sup> Initially the Alliance and many sub-alliances were made of largely white members and few non-whites, with local differences among chapters.

Prominent Meadows Indians and their non-Native associates worked together in the Essex Alliance. Meadows Indians had substantial landholdings and as farmers, they had long cooperated with local whites and wielded political power during this period as

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<sup>28</sup> Escott, 181. 185; James M. Beeby, *Revolt of the Tar Heels: the North Carolina Populist Movement, 1890-1901* (2008): 1-6.

<sup>29</sup> "An Earnest Appeal for Cooperation," *The Progressive Farmer*, Tuesday, 18 Dec 1888; That Dr. V.N. Seawell lived in Duplin County is confirmed by the 1880 United States Census, Year: 1880; Census Place: Island Creek, Duplin, North Carolina; Roll: 962; Family History Film: 1254962; Page: 520A; Enumeration District: 075; Image: 0042.

<sup>30</sup> Beeby, 15.

constables, justices, educators, and businessmen. Three years after establishing the alliance, Native and white residents of the community founded the town of Essex. R.L. Stokes served as the town mayor, while William Stokes, H.W. Stokes, Sidney Williams, N.L. Keen, and Dudley Lynch, were the commissioners; T.P. Lynch served as constable. The Stokeses and Williams were white, while Keen and the Lynches were Natives. The town was tiny, but it served the community's purpose—its limits consisted of 800 yards north, south, east, and west of a stone planted in the ground.<sup>31</sup> R.L. Stokes also served as the Essex Alliance Secretary by 1893, which suggests that the incorporation of Essex and the Essex Alliance were linked and perpetuated the same goals of economic opportunity and cooperation.<sup>32</sup> Town commissioner Sydney Williams established a store at the crossroads, which sold farming supplies to members of the Alliance and others.<sup>33</sup> Meadows Indians and their white neighbors worked together to achieve those goals; it seems that their identities as “colored” did not always mean that whites marginalized them.

Farm supplies were not the only products entrepreneurs sold to sustain themselves during tough economic times; Meadows residents made and sold whiskey, which brought profits and problems as well. A town neighbor complained of how the “whiskey traffic is being managed at the little cross-roads store of Essex.” According to this observer, residents of Essex had not made an effort to organize a government “until the county commissioners gave notice that they would not grant license to barrooms outside of incorporated towns.” The complainant believed that “the town government amounts to

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<sup>31</sup> Private Laws of NC Session 1891 Part 2, p. 1256-1257.

<sup>32</sup> “Essex Alliance Speaks Out” *The Progressive Farmer*, Tuesday 21 Mar 1893.

<sup>33</sup> Haliwa-Saponi elders say that Sydney Williams's general store was located at the exact location of where the “Stop and Shop” owned by Cleophus Richardson currently stands in Essex, Halifax County.

nothing—only in name” because the government had passed no ordinances and was unable to keep a constable for more than a few days at a time. The whiskey traffic contributed to crime and violence in the area and “one man lost his life at this place several years ago,” a reporter wrote.<sup>34</sup> N.L. Keen noted that even church leadership got in on the whiskey trade; he complained about a deacon at Harris Chapel, a white Baptist church, who appeared to be the “most active in this game.”<sup>35</sup> Keen probably complained because of the competition the deacon gave his own liquor business and not necessarily because of morality.<sup>36</sup> One Alfred Richardson, very likely the same community leader and school committeeman, pled guilty for moonshining in federal district court. He served thirty days and paid a \$100.00 fine.<sup>37</sup> Meadows leaders straddled a line between economic stability, morality, and criminality in order to sustain themselves economically. Whites and Indians collaborated readily when it came to economic matters, if not so easily around education or other social connections. Local whites most likely regarded Meadows Indians as Indians, or at least recognized a distinction between Indians and African Americans. The record shows that blacks did not participate in these economic ventures.

Throughout the 1890s North Carolina Democrats gradually regained power by pushing white supremacy and exploiting the white supremacist beliefs of Populists and

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<sup>34</sup> J.C. Hardy, “The Dispensary at Essex,” *The Commonwealth*, Thursday 31 August 1905.

<sup>35</sup> N.L. Keen “Church Folks and Whiskey,” *The Commonwealth*, Thursday 17, 1905.

<sup>36</sup> N.L. Keen operated his own general store in Hollister at the area now occupied by Evans Car Wash across from Pine Chapel Baptist Church. Haliwa-Saponi elders remember that the store was in part a “juke joint” that served alcohol.

<sup>37</sup> “The Federal Court: A lot of Moonshiners and Retailers Confess Their Sins” *The Morning Post*, Fri 8 Dec 1899, p. 8.

white Republicans as well; as such Democrats reignited the bi-racial society and expanded white supremacy against all non-whites and weakened Indian attempts at distinctiveness and peoplehood. Democrats rallied against “Negro rule” and touted whites’ natural role as political leaders. “Negro rule” referred to the alleged domination of African Americans and other non-whites in politics and the fear that they would wield more power than whites. These threats were notable in eastern North Carolina, which had a large non-white population. Democrats used the threat of “Negro rule” to rally white people, intimidate white Republicans and non-whites in order to gain leverage over Republicans and Populists.

Just a few years after whites and Indians began cooperating in Essex, local white Democrats turned against them. An anonymous writer to the Scotland Neck (Halifax County) *Commonwealth* believed “it is contrary to the very laws of nature and the writing of all history that a race as ignorant and devoid of morals as the American slaves, should rightly and logically so soon be pushed into position and power over such a race as [the] Anglo-Saxon.” The writer’s object of ridicule was the white members of Republican Party who had “traded principle for place and position” by putting colored men in offices such as, he said, the postmaster in Halifax County, Norman Keen.<sup>38</sup> Another writer corresponding from Ringwood, in the heart of the Meadows, issued a warning to white people in Halifax County and complained that most of the postmasters and other noted positions in Brinkleyville Township were “colored.” The writer noted that the colored officeholders had gained their positions “through the kindness of his brethren of the populist persuasion.” He called on his white comrades to come together to “rid itself of this

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<sup>38</sup> “Yes, After Thirty Years,” *The Commonwealth*, Thursday 30 Sept 1897.

miserable misrule and African supremacy.”<sup>39</sup> White supremacists ignored the ethnic diversity of people of color, just as they had sixty years earlier during the North Carolina Constitutional Convention. At least some of these local Democrats probably did in fact recognize the diversity amongst people of color, but ignored the differences in favor of a campaign that targeted all non-whites in positions of power as a threat to white supremacy. By claiming that all non-white people, including Indians, were descendants of African slaves, racist Democrats touted the unsuitability of non-whites for political authority. These racist rants worked to dissolve the political participation of Meadows Indians who used their positions to maintain peoplehood amongst their people.

Using Meadows Indians and their associates as examples, North Carolina Populists recognized the hypocrisy of the Democratic white supremacy campaign. After all, Democrats had elected blacks and Indians to office while in power. In an issue of *The Progressive Farmer* in October of 1898 the publishers printed a number of articles that charged the Democrats with selective memory when it came to race relations. In one article the publisher named the “colored” School Committeemen appointed by the Democrat-dominated Warren County Commissioners in 1879 and 1881. Among the names mentioned was Alfred Richardson. The Populist newspaper criticized the Democratic Party for suddenly “spasmodically, hysterically and desperately and despairingly” discovering “negro domination.” Democratic efforts at ending “Negro domination” was “all done for the purpose of hiding the record of debauchery, pillage and plunder made by the Democratic party in past years, and to obscure its intentions and purposes of robbing the

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<sup>39</sup> “Declares for White Supremacy” *The Commonwealth* Thursday, 4 Nov 1897.

people of the future—if it gets power.”<sup>40</sup> The Democratic white supremacy campaign and the Populist counter-offensive demonstrate how politicians manipulated race and conflated ideas about racial groups to gain power in the post-Reconstruction South. Meadows Indians may have felt betrayed by whites who had seemed to value Indians’ progressive actions and contributions to the Essex Alliance and other economic and political ventures.

White supremacist domination entered a new phase after the party recaptured the legislature in November of 1898, when the Wilmington Massacre launched their takeover. In Wilmington, 400 or more whites violently removed blacks from office, ended black political participation, and expelled prominent African Americans from the city. Whites killed as many as sixty African Americans in the coup d’état. The Wilmington Massacre showcased exactly what white Democrats were willing to do to regain power and stamp out non-white political rights.<sup>41</sup>

Democratic consolidation of power effectively minimized Meadows Indians holding offices in their area, but they still participated in the local government. In July of 1897 the Warren County Board of Education consolidated the school districts by township and appointed five committeemen per district, three white and two “colored,” but no Indians. Though Meadows Indians no longer served as school committeemen, the Warren County Board of Education did employ former committeeman and teacher Emmanuel Richardson as a census-taker for Fishing Creek’s non-white students in October of 1899. Bennett Richardson worked with Emmanuel Richardson as a census taker in October of

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<sup>40</sup> “White Man’s Party” Democrats Elect Negro School Committeemen Galore in Warren County, *The Progressive Farmer*, Tuesday 25 October 1898, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Link, p. 273-274.



1900 as well. In Halifax County, Meadows Indians served in local government positions before whites usurped all positions. In September of 1898, the Halifax County Commissioners appointed Meadows Indian Dudley Lynch as an election registrar, along with white men R.L. Stokes and B.Y. Harris.<sup>42</sup> The county paid Lynch's son Archibald "Baldy" Lynch and Solomon Evans \$8.25 for registering voters in the precinct.<sup>43</sup> After the 1898 election cycle when the Democrats wrested overwhelming control of the legislature and destroyed the Fusionists, Halifax and Warren Native leaders held no significant official positions in county government. By July 1901 the WCBE had totally eliminated black and Indian representation on school committees; they appointed only white men to "have control of all schools white and colored in their respective township."<sup>44</sup> The transition to white domination on the school committee was complete. Meadows Indians lost their seat at the table and the ability to directly influence the decisions made on their peoples' behalf. They would have to work through their white representatives to affect policy and provide resources for their community.

Several Meadows Indians registered to vote, however, under North Carolina statute and the so-called "grandfather clause." After the Democrats regained control of the North Carolina State Government, they implemented measures to curb or eliminate black voting, mainly through a poll tax and a literacy test. To ensure that illiterate whites could vote, however, lawmakers instituted the "grandfather clause," "which exempted anyone eligible

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<sup>42</sup> "Registrars Appointed," *The Commonwealth*, Thursday 15 September 1898.

<sup>43</sup> "County Commissioners" *The Commonwealth*, Thursday 8 Dec 1898.

<sup>44</sup> Warren County Supt of Schools Minutes Board of Education, Years 1885-1919, Book 2, p. 118-119.

to vote, or whose ancestors had been eligible to vote, on [or before] January 1, 1867.”<sup>45</sup>

Some Meadows Indians in Halifax and Warren Counties registered to vote under the grandfather clause. Emmanuel (M.L.) Richardson of Fork Township, Warren County, registered to vote in 1902 and stated that his grandfather, Gideon Richardson, was a voter on or before January 1, 1867. Dudley S. Lynch and his son, Doctor Mark Lynch, also registered in Halifax County in 1902 and invoked the name of Henry Hawkins to register.<sup>46</sup>

While the White Supremacy campaigns of the 1890s and early 1900s strove to reinforce the idea that there were only two races, instead of three, Meadows Indians continued to pursue acknowledgement as a separate group. Instead of looking only to local whites for help, however, they turned to the federal government’s policies for verifying Indian identity. The engineers of these policies did not speak with a unified voice, however; two streams of thought competed to control the federal government’s approach to American Indians. On the one hand, assimilationists hoped Natives would vanish, join mainstream society, and abandon their distinct cultures and communal lands. Congress responded to these advocates and in 1887, passed the Dawes Severalty Act. Under that law, individual Indians would receive an allotment of reservation land and become citizens of the United States, making the remainder of the reservation available for purchase by whites.<sup>47</sup> Anthropologists, on the other hand, documented and intended to actually

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<sup>45</sup> Link, 276-277.

<sup>46</sup> N.C. Secretary of State, Voter Registration: Voter Registration Records, 1902-1908, North Carolina State Archives, Microfilm.

<sup>47</sup> Rose Stremmlau, *Sustaining the Cherokee Family: Kinship and the Allotment of an Indigenous Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011): 4-6; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians, Abridged Edition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986): 224-228.

preserve indigenous customs. The Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) led this effort in "salvage ethnography," documentation meant to capture what anthropologists believed were remnants of formerly robust Indian societies. While ethnography could work to save indigenous customs, the studies also assume that authentic Native societies demonstrated static, unchanging cultures; salvage ethnographers ignored the existence of Indians as modern people who have adapted to and endured colonialism.<sup>48</sup> As scholars such as Frederick Hoxie, Tom Holm, and Rose Stremlau have argued, and Native peoples themselves have demonstrated, the assimilation movement did not work and Indians continued to insist on the preservation of their peoplehood.<sup>49</sup> Indians' resiliency forced policy makers to invent new strategies to deal with the Indian problem.

In 1889 James Mooney, an amateur researcher, expressed an interest in Native groups in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, as part of the BAE's work on linguistic classification. Mooney sent 1,000 questionnaires to prominent people in the states of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina. He hoped to find informants, especially Natives, for future research. In his letter, he asked about local names of Indian origin and the names and addresses of individuals of "pure" or "mixed" Indian blood and their tribal affiliation. He particularly wanted know about concentrated settlements of Native people. Finally, Mooney asked about Indian material cultural items and the names of other individuals who may be able to provide additional information.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Holm, xiv; Stremlau, 2011; Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> Lester George Moses, "James Mooney, U.S. Ethnologist: A Biography" (Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1977): 52-53; National Anthropological Archives (NAA), MS 2190, James Mooney Circulars and

Respondents near the Meadows noted the presence of individuals of indigenous ancestry, but they possessed very different ideas about the authenticity of Meadows Indians' culture. For example, Joseph J. Davis of Louisburg, Franklin County, NC reported that he knew of no individuals of pure or mixed Indian, but then said he did know of "several negroes, who were not slaves, who [have] marked characteristics of Indian origin, but they are ignorant."<sup>51</sup> He may have meant that they were uneducated, generally, or that they were ignorant of what he believed was a distinct, tribal culture. F. Brown wrote from Warren County stating: "this County was once inhabited by Indians 25 years ago." He also referred to artifacts found on his father's farm, which adjoined Fishing Creek Township. Brown did not mention what happened to the Indians, but referred Mooney to G. Branch Alston, who could give him "some information" about the Indians.<sup>52</sup> Alston lived on the Halifax and Warren County border north of the Meadows and had a close up view of the community, compared to Mooney's other respondents. He wrote that at Shocco Creek & Shocco Springs in Warren County "a tribe or family of Indians at an early day lived in said creek." In his opinion these Indians were the same as the "Shackory or Shackor Indians" mentioned by John Lederer in 1670. Alston continued, "not far from the mouth of said creek in Halifax County is now a settlement of half breed Indians numbering three- to six hundred, in a poor district called the meadows." Alston described the Meadows Indians as "fine formed—straight black hair" and "fond of intermarrying" within

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other material concerning Indians and traces of Indians in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina, 1889-1912, Folder North Carolina Circulars 1889, Suitland, MD.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph J. Davis, Circular Response, n.d., NAA MS 2190.

<sup>52</sup> F. Brown, Circular Response, 3 June 1889, NAA MS 2190.

the group.<sup>53</sup> While all of Mooney's respondents indicated that individuals of Native ancestry were present in and near the Meadows, respondents disagreed on what constituted the kind of Indian community for which Mooney searched.

The respondents' replies exhibited how, for outsiders, ideas about authentic Indian identity could not escape the racial hierarchy. Joseph J. Davis saw individuals who possessed stereotypical "Indian" physical features and had no history of enslavement, but he still labeled them "Negroes." He also suggested that they knew nothing of their Native ancestry, further calling their status as a separate community into question and dismissing signs of ethnic diversity in his midst. Brown did not question the Meadows Indians' authenticity, but instead believed that actual Indians had lived in the area in the past, suggesting that they had moved on. He did not elaborate on his criteria for determining how he defined those individuals as Natives, however, and it remains a mystery how this community vanished so recently. Alston's description matched Meadows Indians' own definitions most closely, but again harkened back to the past, not the present, to explain their peoplehood; they were Indians because they lived in a settlement or community near a known place of tribal origin (rather than because of the cultural ways they continued to practice). Though Alston called them "half-breeds," Meadows Indians possessed the physical and cultural markers he attributed to Indians by having "straight black hair" and being "fond of intermarrying." Thomas B. Wilder, a Louisburg lawyer who also responded to Mooney and mentioned some Indian relics in the area, actually fell silent on the issue of surviving Native peoples. The inquiry itself may have motivated Wilder to investigate an Indian community, however, because just a few years later he became an advocate for

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<sup>53</sup> G. Branch Alston, Circular Response, 1889, NAA MS 2190.

Meadows Indians in their claims to citizenship in the Cherokee Nation.<sup>54</sup> Non-Natives held contradictory notions of authentic Indian peoplehood, some of which supported Meadows Indian own definitions, and some that did not.

This kind of ethnographic information became useful as Meadows Indians pursued other strategies to maintain recognition as a separate community. After white supremacists consolidated power and lumped Indians together with African Americans as “colored,” Meadows Indians sought recognition as Indian by appropriating the federal government’s methods of assimilation. Initially, the Dawes Act excluded the Five Civilized Tribes, including the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.<sup>55</sup> But in 1896 Congress amended the policy and directed the Dawes Commission to prepare tribal membership rolls for the Five Civilized Tribes in order to divide up their lands.<sup>56</sup> Either through their own research or through the influence of white neighbors, Meadows Indians learned of the open enrollment in the Cherokee Nation and quickly prepared applications within three months of the June 1896 legislation. Alfred Richardson, Jr., Dudley Lynch, Cofield Richardson, and Solomon Evans served as principal sponsors and submitted applications on behalf of approximately 300 individuals.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas B. Wilder, Circular Response, NAA MS 2190, 8 August 1889.

<sup>55</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians Abridged Edition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984): 226.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Richardson, et. al., Application No. 693, Applications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Muskogee Area Office relating to enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes under the Act of 1896 [microfilm], reel 26; Dudley Lynch, et. al, Application No. 982 Applications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Muskogee Area Office relating to enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes under the Act of 1896 [microfilm], reel 28; Cofield Richardson, et. al. Application No. 2653 Applications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Muskogee Area Office relating to enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes under the Act of 1896 [microfilm], reel 36; Solomon Evans, et. al., Application No. 3180 Applications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Muskogee Area Office relating to enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes under the Act of 1896 [microfilm], reel 40.

Meadows Indians enlisted the help of an attorney, justice of the peace, and other affiants in their applications to the Cherokee Nation and Dawes Commission. Thomas B. Wilder, whom six years earlier had noted no presence of Natives in the area, served as the group's lawyer and notarized many of the documents the group submitted. Norman L. Keen, himself a Native descendant and longtime ally of Meadows Indians, notarized many documents and served as a witness to affidavits submitted by local white people. In the applications, Meadows Indians asserted that they were "Cherokee Indian by blood" and "entitled to all rights and privileges pertaining to such citizenship in accordance with the laws and treaties with said Nation of Indians." To prove these statements, Meadows Indians had to demonstrate that they or their family members had been citizens of the Cherokee Nation since Removal.

The fact that Meadows Indians decided to attempt enrollment as Cherokees demonstrates the relationship between the identity requirements imposed by federal Indian policy and by the Southern racial hierarchy. Meadows Indians knew that their ancestors were from a variety of tribes; a specific tribal identity attached to a historic group was not relevant to their contemporary indigenous identity in the 1890s. Historical circumstances had led Meadows Indians to create a new kind community that preserved peoplehood, if not an attachment to a specific tribe. They also knew that many Indians had been removed to Indian Territory, and that the Eastern Band of Cherokees remained in North Carolina. Cherokee would have been the most logical, obvious tribe to affiliate with because the name was well known to local whites. The Dawes applications for citizenship provided them the first opportunity to claim a specific tribal group since the loss of their communal

lands in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Against the region's black-white binary and policies to enforce non-white inferiority, a well-recognized name like Cherokee clearly articulated a separate identity.

Furthermore, claiming Cherokee ancestry had been a long-standing practice of migrant Meadows Indians and their other Native neighbors. In his Civil War pension application, Ohio migrant John D. Richardson told the examining surgeon that he was a "half-breed Cherokee."<sup>58</sup> Descendants of the Chowan Indians in Gates County, who lived on and near their former reservation lands, claimed to be Cherokees as well. Many whites were ignorant of the aboriginal tribes that inhabited eastern North Carolina and believed that "Indian" was simply synonymous with "Cherokee." One of the respondents to James Mooney's 1889 questionnaire informed Mooney of two Hertford county residents who supposedly possessed Cherokee ancestry. The respondent ignored or was unaware that he and the so-called Cherokee Indians lived in traditional Meherrin territory.<sup>59</sup> If Meadows Indians indeed believed they were Cherokees, they used a strategy to seek recognition as Cherokees as a means to escape the South's black-white binary.

Affidavits from local whites supported the claims of Meadows Indians; to do so they engaged the language and criteria of Native authenticity as they understood it, including "Indian blood," phenotype, and affiliation with a "tribe." William Stokes, a longtime neighbor and business associate of Meadows Indians witnessed that he knew Dorcas Boone Richardson and her husband Hardy Richardson. "[Dorcas] was a full

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<sup>58</sup> Surgeon's Certificate," John D. Richardson, Pension Record Group 15, NM 17, entry 23, Civil and later survivors certificates – Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Cert. No. 922,503, C.4.U.S.C. Vol. Inf. 18 May 1904.

<sup>59</sup> Anonymous, N.d., NAA, MS 2190.



blooded Cherokee Indian and her husband was also of Indian blood,” he said. N.C. Gupton also lived in the Richardson’s neighborhood and he had “always understood that they were of Indian Blood their appearances shows this to be the case.” Further, “the old people of the neighborhood speak of their Indian ancestors.”<sup>60</sup> Discussing a Meadows Indian ancestor named Weaver Lynch, James J. King declared that he “was a pure Indian of the Cherokee Tribe. His shape face and hair was the very image of the Indian Tribe.”<sup>61</sup> Even though Meadows Indians were consistently classified as non-Indians on official records, their non-Native neighbors told a different story. Whites felt confident that, at least for the purpose of tribal citizenship if not local affairs, Meadows Indians comprised a distinct group.

Meadows Indians themselves also used this language of authenticity in their applications. Frances (Mills) Hedgepeth claimed she derived her Indian blood from Sallie Dales, her grandmother, and her father Nathan Mills, also part Cherokee. Dock Anstead claimed Indian blood from his grandmother Kizzie Evans who was ¼ blood Cherokee Indian. Alfred Richardson, Jr. included two tintype pictures of his brothers, sister, aunt, and himself “for the purpose of showing their Indian blood as can plainly be seen from said pictures.”<sup>62</sup> The set of applications submitted by Cofield Richardson included an elaborate hand-written genealogy chart to display the ancestry and interconnectedness of Meadows Indians. The Natives stressed attributes that would satisfy the government’s

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<sup>60</sup> N.C. Gupton, Affidavit, 12 August 1896, Alfred Richardson, et. al., Application No. 693.

<sup>61</sup> Members of the Lynch family alternately refer to this Indian ancestor as Weaver Lynch, and James Lanier/Lonney/Lennier. Genealogically, this individual is probably James Weaver, a known Meadows Indian ancestor and male progenitor of the Lynch family. The surname Lanier may have been an alias or his mother’s name.

<sup>62</sup> Alfred Richardson, 17 August 1896, Alfred Richardson, et. al., Application No. 693.

criteria of authentic Indians and Cherokees. Their successful engagement in this policy would legitimize their indigenous heritage and demonstrate to the government and locals that they were in fact different from African Americans. They hoped that by adopting the name Cherokee they could effectively combat how white supremacy categorized them as “colored” after Reconstruction.

However, the Native applicants from Halifax, Warren, and adjoining counties could not sufficiently prove their claims; the Cherokee Nation and the Dawes Commission rejected them. In a typical “Demurrer and Answer” from the Dawes Commission and S.H. Mayes, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, and their attorneys, the group ruled that the applications did not “state facts sufficient, if true, to show that the applicants are entitled to citizenship.” Further, the ancestors that Meadows Indians claimed were Cherokee Indians had not been citizens of the Cherokee Nation. Their names did not appear on any of the authenticated rolls of the Nation, nor had their ancestors resided in the Cherokee Nation and Indian Territory as citizens.<sup>63</sup>

Though having been rejected by the Dawes Commission and Cherokee Nation for citizenship, Alfred Richardson, Jr. and his immediate family once again sought an opportunity to gain recognition as Indian by applying for a share of money Congress appropriated for the Eastern Cherokee Indians in 1906. Eligibility for these funds included those living individuals who could provide evidence that they were members or

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<sup>63</sup> “Demurrer and Answer,” 28 September 1896, Alfred Richardson, et. al., Application No. 693.

descendants of the Eastern Cherokees tribes as of the 1835 Cherokee Removal Treaty or on various rolls of Eastern Cherokees from 1851, 1854, and 1884.<sup>64</sup>

Richardson and family hired Washington, D.C.-based lawyer William H. Robeson to represent the group. Robeson possessed a great deal of influence, as he had successfully litigated the case that led to Congress's appropriation of the funds to the Eastern Band of Cherokees. The Court found that the United States had not lived up to its treaty obligations to the Cherokees and awarded the Eastern Band \$4.5 Million, the largest judgment ever made against the United States.<sup>65</sup> Robeson was a very prominent attorney who also litigated on behalf of Indians who had been removed to Indian Territory, including members of the Six Nations who had left New York.<sup>66</sup> Dozens, if not hundreds, of applicants from across the South hired Robeson to prepare their Cherokee claims.<sup>67</sup>

Similar to his Dawes Commission application, Alfred Richardson, Jr. wasted no time sending his paperwork to the court of claims, which received it by September 1906. Richardson claimed his right to share in the fund from his grandparents Hardy Richardson and Dorcas "Elizabeth" Richardson, who in 1851 resided in Halifax County. Richardson

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<sup>64</sup> Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S Court of Claims, Finding Aid, <https://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m1104.pdf>, p.2-3 [accessed 28 October 2015].

<sup>65</sup> "Cherokee Indian Award: Largest Judgment Ever Rendered Against the United States, *The Washington Post*, 26 March 1905 p. E12 Proquest Historical Newspapers [accessed 27 Sept 2015].

<sup>66</sup> The Court of Claims of the United States of the Term of 1904-5, With Abstracts of Decisions of the Supreme Court in Appealed Cases, From October, 1904, to May, 1905 Reported by Charles C. Nott and Archibald Hopkins, Vol. XL. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905): 450, <https://books.google.com/books/reader?id=DAQcAQAAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&pg=GBS.PR5> [accessed 19 September 2015].

<sup>67</sup> Applicants submitted thousands of claims to the U.S. Court of Claims. A search for the name of William H. Robeson in Fold3.com results in a dozen or so applications under the Eastern Cherokee. The case of Alfred Richardson does not come up in the search although he and his family hired Robeson. This indicates that potentially dozens more hired Robeson as well.

once again relied on local whites and influential associates to back up his claims of authenticity. In his application remarks, Richardson called on a group of white neighbors, including many of the same people who bore witness to the Dawes Commission claims. Others had collaborated with Richardson and other Meadows Indians in the Essex Alliance. All had known Richardson's family for over two decades. John A. Wood knew Richardson's grandparents Hardy and Elizabeth Richardson, and said "[everybody] that knew them regarded them as Cherokee Indians. Elizabeth Richardson was a very old woman and known as an old Indian Doctor Woman and served in that capacity until her death."<sup>68</sup>

Whites' support of the Meadows Indian Cherokee claims reflects the complications of race, situational identity, and the maintenance of white supremacy. Local whites recognized a "colored"-white racial binary, but also acknowledged ethnic and racial differences between non-whites. Still, whites wielded tremendous power and held economic, political, and social control over Indians and others in many aspects of the community. On the other hand, whites were the minority in the community and may have supported the Cherokee claims to maintain cordial relationships. They may have seen an economic benefit to supporting the Meadows Indians in their endeavor. That whites produced affidavits on behalf of the claimants also demonstrates the power whites had to legitimize Meadows Indians' claims and vouch for their authenticity as indigenous peoples by drawing a distinction between the Indians and other colored peoples. Whites enforced

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<sup>68</sup> John A. Wood, "Affidavit," N.d., Alfred Richardson, NARA M1104. Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, No. 442, Roll 0006 [accessed on Fold3.com, 19 Sept 2015].

the racial binary and in turn could acknowledge instances where Indians were distinct from other non-whites.

Richardson and his attorneys labored to prove his case to a suspicious and doubtful special commissioner. Through Richardson's attorney, William H. Robeson, the Special Commissioner asked Richardson "whether his parents or grandparents were ever enrolled as Eastern Cherokee Indians: if not why?" The Special Commissioner also wanted Richardson to "further state on what grounds he claims the right to participate in this fund."<sup>69</sup> Richardson responded by stating: "from the year 1835 to 1865 we had no one to vouch for us and by being cut Short from all our privileges. We was behind down there to our Selves and failed to have our names enrolled by not knowing anything about it." He pleaded with his attorneys when he noted: "we have been called Indians by the Oldest white people in this country and have never known to be anything else. We can give you references from any of the leading white people of this community to witness that we are Indians."<sup>70</sup>

Richardson's invocation of the Removal era as the reason why his people had not been enrolled in the Eastern Cherokee Tribe drew attention to a particularly traumatic time period for Meadows Indians. During that same period, Meadows Indians lost their right to vote and were legally categorized with African Americans. Subsequently, Meadows Indians worked to distinguish themselves from African Americans, including supporting

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<sup>69</sup> Special Commissioner to William H. Robeson, Esp. 23 November 1907, Alfred Richardson, NARA M1104. Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, No. 442, Roll 0006 [accessed on Fold3.com, 19 Sept 2015].

<sup>70</sup> Alfred Richardson to Battle & Cooley, 16 December 1907, Alfred Richardson, NARA M1104. Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, No. 442, Roll 0006 [accessed on Fold3.com, 19 Sept 2015].

Confederates in the Civil War and maintaining strict relationship boundaries within the Native community. The Dawes Commission and Eastern Cherokee claims represented an opportunity to assert a separate racial identity and affiliate with a recognized Indian Tribe. Recognition as Indian and as Cherokee would finally legitimize their separate identity in the eyes of whites and perhaps provide them with a social distinctiveness that could promote greater opportunity and autonomy.

Like his campaign to be recognized through the Dawes Commission, Richardson's bid to be recognized as an Eastern Cherokee failed. Richardson could not prove that his ancestors, mainly Dorcas Boone Richardson, appeared on Cherokee tribal rolls. In March 1908, Richardson wrote directly to the Court of Claims and professed that his family had made a mistake and that his grandmother's name was not Dorcas Richardson, but rather Elizabeth Richardson; he asked if her name was on the roll. Richardson further complained that previous attorneys had mishandled their cases: "in 1895 we hired Mr. Wilder to work for us and he [did] nothing." He had recently heard from Wilder for the first time in eleven or twelve years. Richardson told government officials that Wilder was "trying to get the commissioners to send a man down here to take the evidence in our case." In response, the Special Commissioner told William H. Robeson that Richardson's new appeal "contained practically no information" and that his statements were "not satisfactory." The Special Commissioner asked Robeson to direct Richardson to "file an affidavit embodying all the facts which lead him to believe that he is entitled to share in this fund." Richardson responded by submitting a totally new application, in which he included a remark that mentioned affidavits gathered in 1895 by Norman Keen from "two very old white men living in that neighborhood who were well acquainted with Hardy Richardson & Elizabeth

his wife, & knew that they were both full blooded Cherokee Indians.” The two men were dead. By July 1909 Richardson had not heard back from the Special Commissioners and asked for a reply from his applications. He once again reiterated “we are Indians, and can prove it and if my application is not accepted I would like to know what is necessary for me to do.” Richardson thought he had “thoroughly proved my blood as Eastern Cherokee Indian.” He asked “why should I not be entitled to a share in the funds that is due the Eastern Cherokees.”<sup>71</sup> But Richardson’s application was rejected because he had not proven that any ancestor was ever enrolled or that any ancestor was party to the treaties of 1835-6 & 1846. Furthermore, none of Richardson’s ancestors lived “within 250 miles of the Cherokee domain.”<sup>72</sup> The criteria for a share in the Eastern Cherokees’ claims did not include percentage of Indian ancestry, as Richardson thought. Instead, the requirements focused on political elements of tribal identity—citizenship and residence within a territory historically regarded as belonging to the Cherokees. In the end, the U.S. Court of Claims favored treaty-based enrollment and a geographical connection with Cherokee homelands over purported claims of Indian “blood” or cultural traditions.

Meadows Indians’ immersion in the racial hierarchy and racial binary encouraged their explanation of distinctiveness as Natives based on Indian ancestry, phenotype, culture and other commonly held stereotypes because race was the primary battleground for proving a separate identity. Their inability to be recognized as Indians was in part based on an assumption that they possessed African ancestry, but also due to the racial hierarchy

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<sup>71</sup> Alfred Richardson to the Special Commissioners of the Court of Claims of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1909, Alfred Richardson, NARA M1104. Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, No. 442, Roll 0006 [accessed on Fold3.com, 19 Sept 2015].

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Anonymous, N.d., p. 1.

which privileged whites. Meadows Indians maintained their distinct identity by maintaining peoplehood without enrollment or citizenship traditions of their own. Indians needed whites to affirm their separate racial identity and tried hard to highlight the stereotypical markings of Indian identity that whites would recognize.

The Court of Claims and Dawes Commission demonstrated that in the eyes of the federal government, “Indian” and “Cherokee” were not, in fact, synonymous. Seeking enrollment as Cherokee was not a successful strategy for Meadows Indians to pursue recognition as a distinct ethnic and racial group. As historian Mikaëla Adams has pointed out: “tribal membership confers political rights and thus is distinct from racial, ethnic, and cultural identities.”<sup>73</sup> If enrolled in the Cherokee Nation or Eastern Band of Cherokees, Meadows Indians would have gladly accepted the political rights conferred to them, but what they primarily sought was an official acknowledgment of their separate identity. Without a formal ruling or a relationship with the federal government, they continued to exist under a hierarchal white-colored racial system. Even so, Meadows Indians pursued a separate identity by allying with whites, enforcing strict relationship boundaries, and maintaining aspects of peoplehood, which displayed some notions of authenticity, including kinship among Natives, cultural traditions, and a sacred history tied to their traditional homeplace.

Following Reconstruction, Meadows Indians adapted to a changing political, social, and economic environment in order to maintain peoplehood and a separate identity as Native peoples. By adopting literacy, Meadows Indians could affect change in their educational, political, and economic lives, provide services to their people, and protect

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<sup>73</sup> Mikaëla M. Adams, “Who Belongs?: Becoming Tribal Members in the South, 2.



their lands. They used their status as “colored” people to achieve these goals. They sought control over local institutions and enforced social isolation from African Americans when possible, which worked to maintain a distinct identity. Meadows Indians joined the Essex Alliance and founded the town of Essex, in an interracial coalition to gain political and economic power. As an answer to the Democrats’ white supremacy campaign and as a strategy to gain recognition as Indian, Meadows Indians used the tools of Native assimilation to assert a separate identity. Indians were affected by and participated in whites’ competing approaches to American Indians: assimilationists who hoped Natives would vanish and anthropologists who sought to preserve and document indigenous culture. Though unsuccessful, their strategy demonstrated their political resourcefulness, as well as their resolve to garnish a distinct Native identity.

### **CHAPTER 3: RACIAL CHOICES IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Meadows Indians adapted their lifestyles to maintain distinctiveness from African Americans, while nurturing cordial relationships with white neighbors. Taking steps to separate themselves from African-Americans was logical, given how heavily they relied on whites for their financial means. To outsiders, the Meadows was on the margins; a dense forest with intermittent family farms and the occasional mid-sized farm growing cash crops. But for Meadows Indians, their home was more complex—it was both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, their extreme rural environment insured their population dominance, which fostered relationships between and among Native families, and helped sustain a stable community and a Native identity. Conversely, the Meadows offered few opportunities to progress economically and socially. Between the white supremacy political campaigns of 1898 and World War I, industrialization, segregation, and attitudes about Indians converged to institute a new set of choices. Whites and African Americans migrated into the Meadows with an emerging lumber industry that disrupted Indians' community life and presented new challenges for a distinct Native identity. Some Indian families profited by selling timber to the growing lumber industry around them, but the industry also changed their community and increasingly pushed the original residents to the side.

Some Meadows Indians moved out of the community to find work and to participate in a wider economic, social, political, and religious world. Others stayed to control educational and religious institutions and regulated relationships with outsiders.

Whether at home or away, the decision to promote peoplehood sometimes depended on exclusively claiming an Indian identity, but not all Indians made this choice. Both “Indian” and “colored” could be useful labels. Outsiders and some Meadows Indians themselves abhorred the so-called “uncivilized” nature of the Meadows and its original residents. Those Meadows Indians who wanted to distance themselves from their homelands sought economic opportunities outside of the community and rejected the efforts to sustain peoplehood that other Indians had pursued in the previous century. Others found success in profitable and fulfilling ventures away from the Meadows but still promoted peoplehood through service to their family and friends back home. The community’s absorption into the lumber industry instituted changes that gave these decisions deep consequences for the community’s ability to unify amidst challenges from white supremacy.

Fosburgh Lumber Company fundamentally altered the context in which Meadows Indians had negotiated their racial choices. The company’s arrival significantly strained Meadows Indian lifestyles and strategies for maintaining a distinct identity as Indians. Fosburgh employed a large number of African American laborers. By going to school with Indians and joining predominately Indian churches, these new arrivals challenged whites’ perceptions of Meadows Indian distinctiveness. In addition, wealthy whites arrived to exploit and tame the vast natural resources of the Meadows while enforcing the bi-racial hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Fosburgh Lumber Company and the new town of Hollister brought industrialization to the doorsteps of Meadows Indians and, in combination with the efforts

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<sup>1</sup> Haliwa-Saponi Petition for Federal Acknowledgment, p. 74.

to disenfranchise non-whites discussed in the previous chapter, introduced new challenges—and opportunities—to promote a distinct Indian identity.

Fosburgh Lumber Company relocated to the Meadows in the first decade of the twentieth century. Fosburgh was founded by businessmen from Michigan, including Edgar C. Fosburgh who moved the company's headquarters to Norfolk, VA in 1902.<sup>2</sup> Fosburgh recognized the huge timber resources available in eastern North Carolina, and in May of 1903 began negotiating deals for timber in Warren County.<sup>3</sup> In January of 1906 the company reached a deal with the Seaboard Air Line to build a thirty-mile long railroad that ended at the Meadows.<sup>4</sup> By November 1908 the company bought rights of way and timber rights from Meadows residents, including Natives, and it moved its main camp from Warren County to the area around Essex in Halifax County.<sup>5</sup> Richard "Jake" and Leah Hedgepeth sold land to Fosburgh Lumber Company for the president's house.<sup>6</sup> During the first few years of operation in the area, workers for the lumber company occupied small

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<sup>2</sup> *American Lumbermen: The Personal History and Business Achievements of Eminent Lumbermen of the United States, Volume 1* (Google ebook) (1905) 83-86; Fosburgh Lumber Company is written both as Fosburgh or Fosburg. Here, unless directly quoted in the record, I use the spelling Fosburgh, which reflects the most common spelling used for Edgar C. Fosburgh.

<sup>3</sup> "Local Items" *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, NC) Friday 22 May 1903.

<sup>4</sup> Friday, 26 Jan 1906, *The Warren Record*, P. 4

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Della and Phillip Richardson to Fosburgh Lumber Company, Halifax DB 200, Dec 3, 1908, P. 290-292; Mary & RG Wilson to Fosburgh Lumber Company, Halifax DB 200, Dec 3, 1908, P. 295-296; Gid & Linsey Richardson to Fosburgh Lumber Company, Halifax DB 200, Dec 22, 1908, P. 356-359; Sam Richardson & Lizzie Richardson to Fosburgh Lumber Company, Halifax DB 201, January 27, 1909, P. 53-56; Sam Richardson & Lizzie Richardson to Fosburgh Lumber Company, Halifax DB 201, January 27, 1909, P. 53-56; Dudley & Minnie B. Lynch to Fosburg Lumber Company, Halifax DB 218, P. 511; "Local and Personal," *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, NC) Friday 13 Apr 1906 (newspapers.com).

<sup>6</sup> Hollister Community Club, "Highlights of Hollister History," compiled for patriotic Hollister Day, April 25, 1976, document found in Harris Chapel Baptist Church and donated by Reverend Edward West, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

camps and shanties, but around 1909 they began erecting more permanent dwellings and buildings to serve the needs of workers, including a large African American population.<sup>7</sup>

Fosburgh's industrial activity and the coincident renewal of white supremacy were consistent with what much of the South experienced during the Progressive Era. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, North Carolina had fallen behind other areas of the nation socially, economically, and politically. White North Carolinians branded their own type of reform, with white supremacy as one of its chief components. The state's political leadership carved a path to reform and modernization without the political participation of non-whites. These leaders blamed the state's backwardness on black emancipation and blacks' political participation in the Republican Party.<sup>8</sup> The ideal Progressive modern state thus enshrined white supremacy and limited social, economic, and political opportunities for non-whites. As white North Carolinians sought reform and modernity, non-whites were left behind or acquired new opportunities at a slower pace.

Meadows Indians made choices as a result of their treatment in this racial hierarchy. After failing to gain recognition as Indians through the Dawes Commission and U.S. Court of Claims, Meadows Indians continued to fight misclassification in subtle ways; in a few instances, they succeeded in being identified as Indians. In most cases, however, government agencies and writers enforced white supremacy by insisting that there were only two types of Southerners—black and white—and they classified Meadows Indians as “colored” and increasingly as “Negro.” Non-Indians—especially the new

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<sup>7</sup> “Fosburg Camp” *The Warren Record*, Friday, 3 April 1914.

<sup>8</sup> William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2009): 286-289.

arrivals to the Meadows—believed that this most rural of places, considered savage wilderness even by some who knew it well, would only thrive if an unique Indian ethnic identity was set aside. After all, “Indians,” as least as most outsiders understood them, belonged to a different time and place—to the frontiers of the West, not the timber forests of the South.

Prior to the arrival of Fosburgh Lumber Company, Meadows Indians’ insistence on drawing social distinctions between themselves and blacks was consistent with the Southerners who William A. Link called “traditionalists”; they tended to focus their politics on local issues, exalt autonomy, and resist outside interference.<sup>9</sup> And even after white supremacy became institutionalized after 1898 and whites replaced Meadows Indians as public school committee members, they still wielded some influence through their representatives. But the arrival of new people, both black and white, changed these strategies.

For example, Meadows Indians and their associates turned their attention to increasing their control over Indian-dominated schools. In 1912, longtime ally Norman L. Keen asked the Halifax County Board of Education to consolidate the schools in the Pine Chapel district.<sup>10</sup> Pine Chapel was an older school district established (and still dominated) by Meadows Indians. By enumerating a list of schools in Pine Chapel and suggesting that they be consolidated, Keen may have implied that longtime community residents wanted to concentrate their students in one institution over which they could, theoretically at least, exercise greater control. After all, they themselves had built and funded these schools, even

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<sup>9</sup> William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992): xii.

<sup>10</sup> Halifax County Minutes, Board of Education 7 October 1912, p. 26.

though they were part of the public school system. The board's decision concerning Keen's request is unknown, but it appears that Meadows residents still sought some influence over institutions they had maintained for over forty years.

Despite their request for greater control, Meadows Indians who wanted an education could not avoid attending school with African Americans, so they maintained a separate identity by regulating their social contacts with blacks. Inez Lynch remembered that when she could barely walk and had just started school at Pine Chapel, her grandfather, Indian leader T.P. Lynch, frequently sat down and talked with her and her siblings. He often told the children, "you know you are nothing but just an Indian people." He instructed them, "when you go to school we want you to be nothing but an Indian child." Inez Lynch remembered that at Pine Chapel "the other race was there too, but it was about thirty or more Indian children, may have been more." Indian students were the most populist group at the school. Further she recalled, "when we come out at 12:00 to eat lunch we would go to the end of the school... a crowd of us Indian children. And that other race they'd go to the other...down there was a tree, a shady tree and they would go set down under that, and that's where they would eat their lunch. They didn't bother us and we didn't bother them." At the end of the day "they'd go to their home, and we'd go to ours."<sup>11</sup> Lynch's memories of her grandfather's message and her experiences at school reflect how Meadows Indians used social restrictions when they could not avoid legal classification with blacks.

Because churches were privately governed, Meadows Indians controlled attendance

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<sup>11</sup> Inez Lynch, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, December 4, 2000, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

and their relationships with members of the congregation more easily. When newly-arrived blacks began attending Pine Chapel Baptist Church before 1916, some Meadows Indians pulled out and built an exclusive Indian church, St. Paul's Baptist Church. William and Roxanna Harris, an Indian family, donated the land to the church trustees, including brothers John R. and Daniel Richardson, along with Shulas Richardson and William Harris.<sup>12</sup> Other church leaders included Emanuel Richardson, Charlie Richardson and Norman Richardson; Norman served as the pastor for thirty-five years. St. Paul's patterned itself after Jeremiah Methodist Church as an "Indian-only" place. Many of the congregants had formerly attended Jeremiah Church, were related to other Jeremiah members, or they were Dawes applicants—sometimes all three. Shulas Richardson, for example, was the son of Isham Richardson, who attended Jeremiah Church and applied to the Dawes Commission in 1896. John R., Emanuel, and Daniel Richardson were all sons of Dawes applicant Cofield Richardson. Sustaining family ties through churches and schools, and rejecting associations with African Americans, was one strategy to cope with change brought by outsiders.

In 1916, Fosburgh Lumber Company built a town in the Meadows, which became a symbol of progressivism, segregation, and the racial hierarchy. Founders named the town Hollister after investor Clay H. Hollister, son of company executive Harvey J. Hollister. After a fire destroyed the company's main mills in Norfolk, VA, company executives decided to move their main plant to Hollister. They intended to hire 500 to 700 people,

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<sup>12</sup> William Harris and wife Roxy Harris to J.R. Richardson, Shulas Richardson, Daniel Richardson, William Harris and others, Warren County Book 98, p. 45, 9 Dec 1916.



while the new “city” would house 1,500 to 2,000 people. Company and town leaders advertised the economic benefits of the growing town, but clearly the most beneficial and profitable opportunities were for white people. The Halifax County Board of Education catered to the new town residents and built a school for white students in the area.<sup>13</sup> Town residents and organizers advertised land for sale, which was located on the “Main Road leading from Fosburg [sic] Camp to Essex.” The land, though, was to be “sold to white people only.” Town promoters pitched Hollister as a town with “a real future” and the “town to tie to;” they enticed potential white residents and investors with excursions, barbeque dinners, and descriptions of the modern amenities, such as lights, electricity, sewer and water, and a hotel complete with its own chef.<sup>14</sup> Hundreds of new non-Native migrants invaded a space already occupied by families who had lived there for over a century, and using the logic of segregation they excluded many of the oldest residents from participating in the life of the town.

To new migrants, Hollister represented progress and a counterweight to the primitive and wild existence of the Meadows and its inhabitants. Before the lumber company arrived to the area, according to businessmen and observers, the area was “nothing but a jungle for the purposes of sheltering the workmen of the company.”<sup>15</sup> One observer noticed a stark difference between the values and lifestyles of new white residents and individuals already living in town: “the people [in town] are greatly interested in good

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<sup>13</sup> Halifax County Board of Education Minutes, 6 July 1914, p. 42, C.047.94001 (microfilm) North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>14</sup> “Free Excursion, Halifax Co., From Vaughan and Liles Camp, Nash Co. to Hollister, NC,” *The Warren Record*, Friday 17 November 1916.

<sup>15</sup> “Fosburg Camp” *The Warren Record*, Friday, 3 April 1914 [accessed on Newspapers.com 7 December 2015].

schools and good churches, two institutions that are not taken to with very much interest by the uncivil and ignorant people. They are doing all that is reasonable to make Hollister attractive for the best citizenship.”<sup>16</sup> The “best citizens,” of course, were whites with money and a progressive attitude that would transform the so-called primitive wilderness into a civilized ground.

Yet in light of Indians’ concerted, ongoing support for schools and churches in particular, these characterizations were false. It seems that, to paraphrase historian Phil Deloria, in order for whites to appear modern and progressive, they presented Meadows Indians and other longtime Meadows residents as uncivilized and ignorant.<sup>17</sup> Hollister’s development also fit Link’s characterization of reformers in that they functioned “with an assumption of the superiority of their new, modern culture over rural culture—or over the culture of southern blacks,” in this case blacks and Indian peoples. Moreover, reformers were often contradictory in their actions and beliefs since “they were fervent advocates of democracy, yet also endorsed measures of coercion and control.”<sup>18</sup>

The thoughts and actions of Hollister town organizers also aligned with the federal government’s “vanishing policy” (a term coined by historian Tom Holm) towards American Indians. Part of the vanishing policy proposed “to integrate an indigenous group into the colonial socioeconomic structure,” according to Holm.<sup>19</sup> For Meadows Indians and other marginalized Natives of the South, “integration” could mean many things—accepting

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<sup>16</sup> *The News Reporter* (Littleton, NC) Friday, 10 March 1916, p. 2, [accessed on Newspapers.com 7 December 2015].

<sup>17</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Nebraska Press, 2004): 9.

<sup>18</sup> Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism*, xii.

<sup>19</sup> Holm, 3.

racial segregation as natural and inevitable; denying ethnic differences among the non-white population; or the appropriation of Native labor and resources. All of these strategies achieved the purpose of white supremacy. Because of the reform efforts at play in racial segregation and industrial development, the vanishing policy worked as well in the South as it did in the West. In both places, reformers created a narrative of primitiveness and backwardness that ignored Natives as modern peoples who also possessed distinct cultures and goals of their own.<sup>20</sup>

Natives, however, adapted to these pressures while resisting assimilation. For Meadows Indians, maintaining peoplehood through concerted efforts to monitor socializing, church attendance, and school control served as a mechanism to overcome both the vanishing policy and the white supremacy campaign's way of maintaining racial order in the South. Meadows Indians sustained their community by creating their own churches as well as their own schools at Pine Chapel and Bethlehem. They also played major roles in the incorporation of the town of Essex in 1891, founding the area's first U.S. Post Office, manned by T.P. Lynch and Normal Keen. The resources and civic participation of Meadows Indians made both the town and the lumbering operation possible, but advertisements for "white only" real estate sales glossed over that fact. Even as area Natives provided access to the railroad and sold timber rights and land to support the lumbering operations and town creation, white residents further characterized Indians as destructive, implying that they were trying to damage the town's prospects. For example, Sydney Williams, a longtime white resident and business partner with Meadows Indians, offered a reward for information that would identify and convict those who

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 8.

“willfully cut and injured...posters advertising lots for sale in Hollister.” He and his new business partners probably blamed the “uncivil and ignorant” people of the Meadows.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Meadows Indians may have been the ones responsible for this vandalism; they had embraced change when they were included and possessed a greater ability to determine their own futures. When excluded, they found ways to protest.

Not everyone was happy with the town of Hollister or the changes it brought. For instance, Meadows Indians must have felt cheated when they learned that the land they sold to Fosburgh for around \$.60 an acre brought \$100 to \$280 for a twenty-five foot front lot in Hollister. On one occasion, Fosburgh sold less than eight acres for \$9,000.<sup>22</sup> The company’s profit margin must have seemed unbelievable, and Indians knew whites were now able to enjoy not only land, but considerable wealth.<sup>23</sup> The federal government’s vanishing policy did not cause these events, but whites’ attitudes towards the land and culture of Meadows Indians was similar to those attitudes held by whites who promoted allotment in Indian Territory. In both places, Indians had resources whites desired and hosted a culture that whites abhorred. Among Natives who faced allotment of their lands in Indian Territory, “the reform movement played into the hands of the railroads, land companies, farmers, and ranchers as well as the timber, coal, petroleum, and steel industries.”<sup>24</sup> As the development of Hollister demonstrated, new arrivals to the Meadows

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<sup>21</sup> “Wanted,” *The News Reporter* (Littleton, NC) Friday, 10 March 1916, p. 3, Newspapers.com [Accessed 7 December 2015].

<sup>22</sup> “Local & Personal,” *The News Reporter* (Littleton, NC) Friday, 24 March 1916, p. 3, Newspapers.com [accessed 7 December 2015].

<sup>23</sup> On June 12, 1909 David and Alice Lynch sold 28 acres to Fosburgh Lumber Company for \$50.00; see Halifax DB 203, P. 261-265.

<sup>24</sup> Holm, 9.

saw the Natives and their land in a similar fashion and justified their actions for the same reasons.

On the other hand, the company did provide new economic and employment opportunities for Indians. Hollister promoters boasted that the growing town was “backed by a splendid farming section,” worked mostly by Meadows Indians.<sup>25</sup> Some Indians farmed directly for the lumber company, while others farmed for nearby whites or for themselves if they owned or rented land. A few Meadows Indians worked for the lumber company as laborers.<sup>26</sup> When asked about the affect Fosburgh had on the community, Marcellous Green responded: “well it helped the community. Had jobs, man. The railroad, working the railroad. Cutting logs. Just like you see the log trucks going now, that’s what folks had—a job.”<sup>27</sup> Milo Evans remembered a relative named Ken and other community members that worked for the railroad. They would walk to Hollister to catch the train and then ride to Nash County and other places to cut logs and bring them back to Hollister to be processed at the sawmill.<sup>28</sup> The lumber company needed a labor workforce and Meadows Indians and African Americans provided the majority of those needs.

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<sup>25</sup> “Free Excursion, Halifax Co., From Vaughan and Liles Camp, Nash Co. to Hollister, N.C.” *The Warren Record*, Friday 17 November 1916, Newspapers.com [accessed 7 December 2015].

<sup>26</sup> Coffie Richardson, United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, Registration State: *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765649* [accessed on Ancestry.com 27 May 2016].

<sup>27</sup> Avis Lynch Green and Marcellous Green, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Milo Evans and Gerta Silver Evans, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson and Jackie Evans Lynch.

Some Meadows Indians may have been content and appreciated the jobs Fosburgh and the town of Hollister brought to the area, but others were undoubtedly suspicious. Most resident Meadows Indians could not build sustainable wealth in those occupations. Even those Meadows Indians who owned their own farms and rented land to others could not maintain their land in this new economy. For instance, Gordon Solomon Hedgepeth farmed his own land, but by 1910 he apparently acquired some debts and mortgaged the farm.<sup>29</sup> It's also possible that because of the lumber industry, the tax value of the land may have risen to an amount higher than what he earned from the land, and he had to borrow or sell to pay the taxes. In 1911 Hedgepeth borrowed over four hundred dollars from Sydney Williams, the Hollister booster who indirectly accused Meadows Indians of sabotage; Hedgepeth used 280 acres of his land for collateral. A few months later, Hedgepeth and his wife Alvana sold an eight-acre strip of land to another lumber company for \$200.00, along with a timber deed to the same company for \$1,575.00. In December of the same year, Hedgepeth again mortgaged 164 acres of land to pay off a \$650 debt. Hedgepeth's land was obviously valuable, but under this new economy, he could not maintain it debt-free; the opportunity to sell or borrow on the land may have made it possible for his family to stay afloat, but it put their most precious resource, their land, at risk.

As William Link has illustrated, the establishment of Hollister and the response of the area's longtime rural residents represented a clash between outsider-reformers and insider-traditionalists. Like Southerners elsewhere, Indians protected their institutions,

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<sup>29</sup> See Gordon S. Hedgepeth, family 104, Year: 1910; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: *T624\_1133*; Page: *7A*; Enumeration District: *0091*; FHL microfilm: *1375146*; Gordon Solomon Hedgepeth was a Dawes applicant. In 1910 his entire family and his immediate Native neighbors were listed as Indians. Oral tradition within the family states that Hedgepeth insisted on being classified as Indian. Hedgepeth was known as one of the foremost Indian leaders in the community.

such as churches and schools. But unlike elsewhere, Indians were not able to force or persuade the outsiders to cooperate with them to achieve the reformers' goals.<sup>30</sup> Before the town was built, Meadows Indians partnered with whites in the Essex Alliance and directed their own political, educational, and economic futures as well as whites did. But now they found themselves strangers in their own home with limited economic opportunities. In other places, new arrivals needed buy-in from locals in order for a town to be sustainable, but Hollister's founders sought no such cooperation. As a result, the huge expectations for the town were not realized.

Just two years after its founding, Hollister showed signs of decline. In April of 1918, a bank auctioned off a corner lot, which contained "a new store and all the fixtures." Racial tensions alone did not account for the town's demise; timber prices also dropped. At a joint session of lumber and shook manufacturers in 1920, John M. Gibbs of Hollister Lumber Company (which had recently bought out Fosburgh) told jokes to the attendees to delay the bad news. He kept the "audience in an uproar of laughter by telling funny anecdotes and reciting 'cute' verses of poetry demonstrating that things that are not so bad that they could not be much worse."<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately the situation in Hollister was no laughing matter, and it did get much worse for outside white investors. In 1924, owners failed to pay taxes on 71 lots, and they went up for sale. Back in 1920, lumber conference

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<sup>30</sup> Link, xii.

<sup>31</sup> "Lumber and Shook Manufacturers in Joint Session." *The New York Lumber Trade Journal*, Vol. 69, 1 December 1920 <https://books.google.com/books?id=rzdPAAAAIAAJ&pg=RA10-PA42&lpg=RA10-PA42&dq=%22Hollister+Lumber+Company%22+%22North+Carolina%22+fire&source=bl&ots=c8L1kVY6Sj&sig=2duYSy0uukZgU8C1EULfv2wPM88&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiyneDAt6nKAhWDRyYKHsQlDcwQ6AEIJDAC#v=onepage&q=%22Hollister%20Lumber%20Company%22%20%22North%20Carolina%22%20fire&f=false> [accessed 14 January 2016], p. 42.

speakers cited fire as one of the major threats to the industry. That threat became a reality when Hollister's lumber plant burned down in April of 1925, resulting in a loss of \$150,000.<sup>32</sup>

For those Native people who maintained a permanent residence in the Meadows, life was difficult, eased by strong kinship and ties to churches and schools. By the 1920s, most Meadows Indians had lost what land they possessed, while those who did own land often mortgaged it to keep their farms afloat. Fosburgh Lumber and other companies invaded the Meadows and made longtime residents feel like outsiders in their own community. Hardship focused their energies on maintaining peoplehood in a way that would have been familiar to their ancestors—sustaining social ties within the community and distancing themselves from outsiders.

Yet the bi-racial hierarchy showed no signs of disintegration. Distancing themselves from African-Americans and collaborating with whites had enabled Indians to build some of their own institutions, but it had also resulted in marginalization from the opportunity that the lumber industry might have represented. Labels like “colored” or “Negro” became inescapable, and Meadows Indians found themselves able to use such labels to their advantage at times. In other cases, Indians objected to any label that did not clearly denote their Indian identity. Depending on the situation, labels like “colored” or “Negro” might be useful or derogatory. Making such choices offered a new method of

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<sup>32</sup> Notice of Sale of Land for 1923 Taxes, *The Progress* (Enfield, NC), Newspapers.com [accessed 14 January 2016]; “North Carolina Losses By Fire: Increase Attributedd [sic] By Commissioner To Rural Risks,” *The North Wilkesboro Hustler* (North Wilkesboro, NC), newspapers.com [accessed 27 May 2016], p. 2.



preserving distinctiveness, alongside the pursuit of economic, political, and social opportunity. As with earlier generations, those who did not choose to adapt to the racial pressures around them moved away, sometimes permanently. But in an age of increasingly available transportation, Indians could exercise the option to return home, and explore new ways to maintain peoplehood.

Amidst this abrupt and severe economic upheaval, Meadows Indians found other ways to build their community institutions. But rather than distance themselves from blacks, as they had done in schools and churches, Indians used their designation as “colored” to take advantage of outside resources. Natives in the Meadows worked cooperatively through “colored” divisions of secret societies and organizations that were dominated by African Americans. For example, Meadows Indians formed a Freemason organization and affiliated themselves with African American Freemasons. Their motivation may have been similar to what scholar Corey D.B. Walker found among African American Freemasons, that the “symbols, rituals, languages, and structures of Freemasonry” provided a way for African Americans to form “a contingent sense of communal identity, racial solidarity, and national belonging.” Meadows Indians led the development of the Essex Masonic Lodge, which counted among its members N.L. Keen, T.P. Lynch, and Dudley Lynch, and some of their close relatives and friends.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Proceedings of the fifty-fifth communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, F.A.A.M. : held at Rocky Mount, North Carolina, December 8-9, 1925.* Durham, N.C.: Seeman Printery, 1926, 51, 147 [accessed on Ancestry.com 6 January 2016]; As early as January 27, 1920 Meadows Indians Daniel Richardson, C.H. Richardson, Hawkins Carter G.L. Hedgepeth, and a few others established a lodge at Bethlehem in Warren County. According to Haliwa-Saponi elders the lodge was located across the road from Bethlehem School, see Daniel Richardson and C.H. Richardson, et. Al to Knights of Gideon Bethlehem Stone Lodge #335 by Trs. January 27, 1920, Warren County Deed Book 108 p. 428; Members of this lodge consolidated with Essex Lodge or with other local lodges.

In the context of World War I, white neighbors suspected that lodge members were planning to revolt against the racial establishment. In October of 1918, an anonymous Essex area resident asked the military intelligence to send a “Hot Letter to some negroes around Essex N.C. [T]here are 5 or six that have meetings at each other’s house every Thursday night.” The writer claimed that the individuals were “heard one night saying that they would not help in the war a bit and that they wished that Germany would whip us and they said if Germany whipped us they would be over us and...[that] they would not work for the white people of this country.”<sup>34</sup> The “Negro” individuals in question were all local Indians or their allies—N.L. Keen, Doctor Mark Lynch, Rob Cyrus, Charlie Hawkins, T.P. Lynch, and Dudley Lynch. The anonymous letter offers clues to Meadows Indian frustrations with white supremacy and the status of race relations in the Essex-Hollister area, but it also suggests that whites dismissed Indians’ efforts to hold on to their separate identity. After all, the timber industry had brought a kind of social and economic structure that required the labor of “negroes,” rather than a distinct community of Indians who could control their own affairs. But from the perspective of Meadows Indians and other non-white residents, outsiders moved into their community, established a racially-exclusive town, exploited their land and labor, limited their opportunities for economic, political, and social advancement, and enforced a rigid racial hierarchy. Perhaps the “colored” Freemasons wished to protest white supremacy and exclusion from the political process and economic opportunities.

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<sup>34</sup> Military Intelligence Division-Negro Subversion, Case Number 240, “Anonymous Letter from Essex” October 1918 (Fold 3.com, accessed December 31, 2015).

Other times, Indians did not embrace the “colored” or “Negro” label, but outsiders imposed it directly upon them. When Meadows Indians registered for the draft during World War I, local registrars overwhelmingly classified them as “Negro” and “African.” Registrar N.M. Harrison, Jr. labeled Lamar Lynch, son of Indian leader T.P. Lynch, as “Negro” on his draft registration card, while R.L. Capps registered Alphonso Richardson, son of Alfred Richardson, Jr. as an “African.” In some cases, Indians known to be literate signed their cards with an “x,” indicating that perhaps the registrar filled out the cards for them, giving them no opportunity to declare their identity accurately. Alphonso Richardson could certainly read and write in 1900, and Emanuel Richardson, classified as an “African” on his card, was a schoolteacher.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, when Meadows Indians were classified as Indians in official records, they likely insisted on it and in many cases were living outside of their home territory. In 1900 the families of Alfred Richardson, Jr. and his son Alex W. Richardson, who lived next door, were listed as Indian on the census in Nash County. The bold marks on the “race” column suggest that the Richardsons demanded that their racial label be changed, perhaps

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<sup>35</sup> Lamar Lynch, United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, Registration State: *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765649* [accessed on Ancestry.com 27 May 2016]; Alphonso Richardson, United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Warren*; Roll: *1766038*; Notable exceptions to these classifications include individuals with Haliwa-Saponi surnames who lived outside of the community and were listed as “white” or “Negro,” citizen Indians. Some had a direct connection to Meadows Indians families and others’ ties are tenuous. These individuals include Johnnie Daniel, Eddie Hawkins, John Stewart Hedgepeth, and Moses Lynch, all of Halifax County, North Carolina. Johnnie Daniel is related to the tribally enrolled Haliwa-Saponi Daniels and was a son of Andrew Willow Daniel and Therina Jones Daniel. Hawkins, Hedgepeth, and Lynch have unverified ties to Haliwa-Saponi Indians, although they resided in neighboring Faucett’s Township, Halifax County, North Carolina. see Johnnie Daniel, United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. , *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765648*; Eddie Hawkins, Registration State: *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765649*; John Stewart Hedgepeth, Registration State: *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765649*; Moses Lynch, Registration State: *North Carolina*; Registration County: *Halifax*; Roll: *1765649* Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509.

from “Negro” to “Indian.”<sup>36</sup> In 1910, the households of Hardy Richardson, Gordon Solomon Hedgepeth, and Joseph C. Boone, were all listed as Indian in Warren County, but the majority of Meadows Indians were not labeled that way.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, county officials did agree to classify a few Natives as Indians on their death certificates. The death certificate of outspoken Indian leader Alfred Richardson, Jr. listed his race as Indian; the recorded informant was his son, Raymond, who made sure his father’s race was recorded correctly.<sup>38</sup> Most Indians were called “colored” or “Negro” on their death certificates, perhaps because the public official did not ask, or faithfully record, the information provided by family members. Other Meadows Indians may have simply avoided the confrontation entailed in correcting their race and allowed themselves to be classified as non-Native.

Others, however, looked outward from their home community and realized that the hardships of their area hindered their economic, political, and social success. For these people, isolationism meant missed opportunities to make alliances with people of other ethnicities. Some came to resent their own people and territory. For instance, Joseph Silver, a Meadows Indian, grew up much like his Native relatives, but rejected his home community, seeking to create opportunities for himself and others. Silver, born in 1856, was brought up on the farm of a white man named Thomas Wilcox. His father, Willis

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<sup>36</sup>Households/families 28 and 29, Year: 1900; Census Place: *South Whitakers, Nash, North Carolina*; Roll: 1208; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 0065; FHL microfilm: 1241208, Ancestry.com [accessed 27 May 2016].

<sup>37</sup> Families 103-105, Year: 1910; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: T624 1133; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 0091; FHL microfilm: 1375146, Ancestry.com [accessed 27 May 2016].

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Richardson, death certificate, Warren County, NC, 8 March 1917, North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. *North Carolina Death Certificates*. Microfilm S.123. Rolls 19-242, 280, 313-682, 1040-1297. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina, Ancestry.com. *North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976* [accessed 27, May 2016].

Silver, was a farm laborer and his mother, Eliza Wilkins Silver, a spinner. Neither could read nor write. At age sixteen, Joseph left the Meadows and worked on the farms of formerly wealthy plantation owners who lost their fortunes after the Civil War; he learned to read and write and became a successful farmer. By 1894 he had accumulated enough wealth to purchase his own land and to farm for himself near the community of Enfield in Halifax County. Silver became an evangelical preacher, a calling that also inspired him to help his fellow man. At the same time, he seized the opportunity to become an entrepreneur by capitalizing on the relatively cheap land available from whites that no longer turned a profit on their farms and wanted to sell. With several business partners, he purchased a 2,000-acre farm at \$5.00 an acre in 1904. He and eight others founded their own farm resettlement project, thirty years before the federal government helped rural residents do the same during the Great Depression. All of the investors were descendants of free people except for one, and all were former loggers with little farming experience of their own; Joseph Silver, in fact, taught them how to farm. When times got tough, E.L. Travis, a white lawyer in the town of Halifax and president of the Halifax County Democratic Party, lent the group money.<sup>39</sup> Travis's actions demonstrated that Democrats could assist non-whites economically, and that white supremacy did not necessarily foreclose interracial cooperation. With Travis's help, the farmers paid off their debt by cutting enough timber to yield a profit the investors could divide evenly.

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<sup>39</sup>Thomas W. Adickes, "A Practical Demonstration of Theoretical Resettlement Project," Mrs. Charles A. Cannon [Ruth C. Cannon] Papers (#2551), Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1937, Series 3, Folder 137, P.3; The eight original incorporators were Joe Silver, Dudley Jones, Robert Jones, Robert Copeland, Willie Jones, Jackson Scott, Edward Scott, and Elijah Jones, with James Francis joining the group a short time later.

Silver made the racial choice to move away from his own community and rejected the type of peoplehood that his ancestors—and many of his Indian contemporaries—nurtured. He went so far as to declare that he intended the resettlement project to benefit the “savages,” as he called Meadows residents. While he used a term that whites had been using about Indians generally, and Meadows Indians specifically, Silver offered an explanation for their condition; the residents of the Meadows “were savage folk because they had been abused.”<sup>40</sup> Joseph Silver, in contrast, possessed an above average drive to succeed, but he rejected certain cultural aspects of peoplehood; he had left the community at an early age with the expressed intention to alter his level of opportunity. Silver and others like him saw traditional practices as a hindrance to social and economic progress, and as a testament to poor conditions and abuse. He acknowledged his Native ancestry, but he did not build Native-centered institution as a means to economic prosperity.<sup>41</sup> Though Silver and his colleagues relied on help from whites in times of trouble, they were largely self-made and self-motivated. Silver rejected his place of origin and the culture associated with it, but he embraced progress by combining his partners’ skills from the timber industry with his own agricultural prowess to pursuing economic activities with an entrepreneurial spirit. Through their actions, Silver and his associates made a racial choice and provided the financial stability and encouragement to seek higher-level economic and

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid,1; George C. Stoney “River Mansion Saw Procession of Nation’s Great.” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 12 September 1937; Interview with Joe Silver, Enfield, N.C. R#3, 81 Years old, 15 July 1937, Mrs. Charles A. Cannon [Ruth C. Cannon] Papers (#2551), Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1937, Series 3, Folder 137.

<sup>41</sup> Silver noted in his interview that his grandparents on his father Willis’s side were Buck Shearin and “Sucky Silver (3/4 Indian and the other part negro.)” He stated that his mother Eliza Wilkins Silver’s parents were “Tom Hervey (white man) and Katie Wilkins (also half white.)” His mothers half brothers were “part white, part Indian,” which suggests that his mother was also half Indian.

educational opportunities. Some of Silver's children moved to Washington, D.C., Pittsburg, PA, and New York. One son, Samuel Silver, studied civil engineering at N.C. A&T and at Howard University.<sup>42</sup> At the time the only higher-level educational and economic opportunities available to non-whites were in African American-dominated institutions. Some resident Meadows Indians may have rejected interactions with African Americans to maintain a separate identity, while others accepted an identity as black if it accompanied higher-level prospects.

While Silver rejected his home community and Native culture to seek economic and social opportunities, Plummer Alston (P.A.) Richardson found alliances with outsiders and embraced an identity as "colored" to serve, rather than reject, peoplehood. P.A. Richardson was born in January of 1868 and grew up immersed in Reconstruction-era activism, civil engagement, and Meadows Indians' church factionalism. P.A.'s grandfather, Jeremiah Richardson, started Jeremiah Methodist Church with the help of white A.M.E. evangelist L.B. Clark, and P.A.'s great-grandfather Abner Richardson led the Baptist group that started Pine Chapel. Other influential mentors to Richardson were L.B. Clark, Bryant Rudd, and Ambrose Hawkins. Clark, Rudd, and Hawkins served in the Union League and, P.A. remembered, "led in the organization of the colored people of this community to participate in state and National elections just after the war of the Rebellion."<sup>43</sup> Rudd was also an A.M.E. minister, who officiated weddings and other

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Joe Silver.

<sup>43</sup> P.A. Richardson, "Tilghman Parsons Lynch 1856-1944," Eulogy, November 1944, copy on file at the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

ceremonies within the community.<sup>44</sup> After the disintegration of Jeremiah Methodist Church, most Meadows Indians converted to Baptist, but others stayed Methodist and moved to Spring Hope, Nashville, and other areas in Nash County. P.A. Richardson was among the Methodist group who relocated. Meadows Indians disagreed over religious affiliations, which may have spurred the moves outside of the community. Others moved out of the Meadows due to the poor rocky red soils, which inhibited productive farming.

By age twenty, P.A. Richardson had moved to Nash County and immediately became an entrepreneur.<sup>45</sup> He started out as a small farmer in the suburbs of Nashville, North Carolina and on the weekends he worked as a barber.<sup>46</sup> By 1890, Richardson established his own barbershop on Main Street in Nashville and regularly advertised his services in *The Graphic*, a Nashville-based newspaper.<sup>47</sup> Richardson continued his farming operations, which steadily grew. In 1890 he married Laura Battle, the daughter of a white slave owner and former slave.<sup>48</sup> In October 1891 he and his wife attended the Raleigh Exposition, which included “a special department for the colored people, wherein they may exhibit in material form the progress they have made in the industrial and esthetic arts, in literature, and science.” The motive for the colored exhibit was to “arouse the colored

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel Richardson to Susan Richardson, 9 October 1881, Halifax County Marriage Register, 1867-1903, Vol. 1-5, microfilm C.047.63002, accessed from Deloris Williams, “My North Carolina Roots,” <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=dwilliams%2D1&id=I4248> [accessed 1 February 2016].

<sup>45</sup> “Van B. Batchelor is No More: Hundreds Bow in Tears of Deepest Sorrow” *The Graphic* (Nashville, North Carolina) 4 Dec 1902, p. 3 [accessed on newspapers.com 9 January 2016].

<sup>46</sup> Jessie Williard Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, 16 October 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Advertisement – P.A. Richardson Barber, Main Street, Nashville, N.C., Two doors east of T.W. Battle’s, *The Argonaut* (Nashville, North Carolina), Thursday, 26 June 1890, p.2.

<sup>48</sup> Deloris Williams, My North Carolina Roots, <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=dwilliams%2D1&id=I11480> [accessed 25 Jan 2016].



people to self-help and self-respect, and to excite some educational ambition among the redeemed slaves by a promise of fair play.” Sixty or seventy prominent non-white individuals signed a document entitled “Appeal to the Colored People of the South,” which endorsed the effort.<sup>49</sup> They hoped to bring Northern capital investment into the region, along with economic opportunities for non-whites.<sup>50</sup> Not to be ignored, the advertisement suggested that all “colored” people were “redeemed slaves” which ignored ethnic, racial, and social differences among the non-white population. Certainly Richardson represented one of those diverse non-white individuals and seized the opportunity to enhance his reputation, make connections, and gain experience from others. Richardson’s attendance and the fact that *The Gazette*, a Raleigh-based newspaper, noted his attendance provided an indication of his early economic and political resourcefulness.<sup>51</sup>

By the age of twenty-five Richardson distinguished himself as a valuable community leader. At a Republican Party meeting in Nashville in the fall of 1892, Nash County delegates nominated him for the House of Representatives.<sup>52</sup> Following his

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<sup>49</sup> M.M. Trumbull, “The New Invasion of the South,” *The Open Court*, Volume 5, No. 211, 10 September 1891, 2944-45,  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=vazQAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA2944&lpg=PA2944&dq=%22Raleigh+Exposition%22+1891&source=bl&ots=LhKTNacaGx&sig=fJnqq-lD-D886PaxyYyFOaeYIL0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKFwiXlMSeh7LKAhVI5yYKHYg\\_BcEQ6AEIITAB#v=onepage&q=%22Raleigh%20Exposition%22%201891&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=vazQAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA2944&lpg=PA2944&dq=%22Raleigh+Exposition%22+1891&source=bl&ots=LhKTNacaGx&sig=fJnqq-lD-D886PaxyYyFOaeYIL0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKFwiXlMSeh7LKAhVI5yYKHYg_BcEQ6AEIITAB#v=onepage&q=%22Raleigh%20Exposition%22%201891&f=false) [accessed 17 Jan 2016].

<sup>50</sup> “An Appeal to the Colored People of the South, *The Christian Recorder* 10 Sept 1891, “Local and Personal” *The Gazette* (Raleigh, North Carolina), Saturday, October 24, 1891, Accessible Archives, <http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/preLog?LinkType=SERIALSSOLUTIONS&ArticleID=THECHRISTIANRECORDER.FR1891091011.154795> [accessed 17 Jan 2016].

<sup>51</sup> “Local and Personal” *The Gazette* (Raleigh, North Carolina), Saturday, October 24, 1891, Accessible Archives, <http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/preLog?LinkType=SERIALSSOLUTIONS&ArticleID=THECHRISTIANRECORDER.FR1891091011.154795> [accessed 17 Jan 2016].

<sup>52</sup> “Nashville Notes,” *The Wilson Advance* (Wilson, North Carolina) Thursday, 8 Sept 1892, p. 2 [accessed at newspapers.com 18 Jan 2016].

paternal grandfather's side of the family, Richardson was very active in the A.M.E. Church, an organization that met the religious needs of the community, but also served as a catalyst for political and economic advancement. He was a trustee at Galatia African Methodist Episcopal Church in Nashville, a church founded by L.B. Clark in 1870—the same pastor who founded Jeremiah Methodist Church.<sup>53</sup> Richardson held various offices in the A.M.E. church, including the chief recording secretary of the general conference for more than three years. He was a thirty-second degree Freemason and also held several district offices in that organization.<sup>54</sup> In 1900, the Richardson family house caught on fire, and a large group of neighbors helped save his home. *The Graphic* newspaper thought highly of him and reported, “Richardson is an industrious colored man and by hard work and close attention to business has built a very nice two story residence on North Boddie street, and our people are glad to know his loss was only a slight one.”<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, Richardson and his allies chose accommodation as one of three strategies to deal with white supremacy. The other strategies were to leave the South for places more favorable for non-whites and the other strategy was to “protest, openly and vigorously, against violence, injustice and discrimination.” According to historian Adam Fairclough

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<sup>53</sup> Amanda Clark, “Galatia AME Church celebrates 140 years,” *The Nashville Graphic* 7 July 2010, <http://www.ncgenweb.us/nash/church-histories/galatia-ame-church-at-140/> [accessed 24 June 2015]; VB Batchelor to Galatia A M E Church by Trustees, Nash County Book 83, 5 Sept 1892, p. 519-520.

<sup>54</sup> Centennial Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume 1 [https://books.google.com/books?id=mL0vAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA187&lpg=PA187&dq=%22P.A.+Richardson%22+Nashville+North+Carolina&source=bl&ots=UJJGoZpDUo&sig=fDnY9oRHY0w6J\\_wJwUTh1qmKSbl&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj7wM\\_Z19nJAhVHLyYKHb0HB90Q6AEIWjAK#v=onepage&q=%22P.A.%20Richardson%22%20Nashville%20North%20Carolina&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=mL0vAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA187&lpg=PA187&dq=%22P.A.+Richardson%22+Nashville+North+Carolina&source=bl&ots=UJJGoZpDUo&sig=fDnY9oRHY0w6J_wJwUTh1qmKSbl&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj7wM_Z19nJAhVHLyYKHb0HB90Q6AEIWjAK#v=onepage&q=%22P.A.%20Richardson%22%20Nashville%20North%20Carolina&f=false) [Accessed 13 December 2015]; *Proceedings of the fifty-fifth communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, F.A.A.M. : held at Rocky Mount, North Carolina, December 8-9, 1925*. Durham, N.C.: Seeman Printery, 1926, 51, 147 [accessed on Ancestry.com 6 January 2016].

<sup>55</sup> “Conflagration Narrowly Averted” *The Graphic* (Nashville, North Carolina), Thu 11 Jan 1900, p. 3 [accessed on newspapers.com, Sunday 10 January 2016].

non-white accommodationists accepted their new status in the racial hierarchy and made the most of existing opportunities for self-improvement through literacy and economic self-sufficiency. Middle class non-whites, including teachers and religious figures supported this strategy. Others chose to leave the South and move north or west, while other non-whites openly protested disenfranchisement, lynching and Jim Crow laws, and/or formed equal rights organizations. Richardson and his colleagues' accommodation strategy can be seen in his work with the Freemasons and other organizations.<sup>56</sup> In September 1919, colored Freemasons of Nash County and the vicinity adopted a resolution to promote "the peace and harmony between the races which are so essential to maintain law and order, and for the social and economic well being of all the people." These relations had been "disturbed by radical propaganda in some sections of our country," they added. Fraternal and religious organizations had been "criticized and censured by some for their alleged dissemination of unpatriotic propaganda among the colored people." The group condemned these acts and pledged to maintain law and order and to perpetuate the friendly and peaceful relations that have been maintained among whites and colored people. Both, P.A. Richardson and his son, Plummer Benjamin Richardson, signed the resolution.<sup>57</sup> Richardsons' position was squarely at odds with the members of the Essex Lodge accused of sedition in the Meadows. The two groups' economic and social situations were different, however—P.A. Richardson and his colleagues in Nashville and other areas had

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<sup>56</sup> Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Viking Press, 2001): 17-18.

<sup>57</sup> Colored Masons Condemns Practice, *The Graphic* (Nashville, North Carolina) Thursday 25 Sep 1919 [accessed on newspapers.com 11 January 2016].

taken advantage of economic opportunities available to “colored” people, while Indians and others faced raced-based restrictions in the new town of Hollister.

Though Richardson gained success and prominence as a “colored” man operating in African American dominated institutions, he also acknowledged his Native identity. In April of 1910 the Census Bureau selected him as the only colored enumerator of Nash County; had he fulfilled his duties, he would have been in charge of District No. 67, Griffins Township.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, Richardson held some sway over census enumerators since he and his children were listed as Indian, after having been originally classified as mulatto. The census schedule clearly shows “mu” for mulatto crossed out and “In” for Indian written to replace it. Richardson most likely initiated the change himself. His wife Laura remained classified a mulatto, following her white and black parentage.<sup>59</sup> P.A. Richardson believed himself, his ancestors, and other Meadows Indians the descendants Cherokee Indians, but he was not among the Dawes or U.S. Court of Claims applicants.<sup>60</sup> His absence from the rolls represented a difference in strategy to achieve social, economic,

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<sup>58</sup>“Nash Census Enumerators: Will Soon Be Making Their Rounds Securing Data,” *The Graphic* (Nashville, NC) 14 April 1910, p. 2, Newspapers.com [accessed 28 May 2016]; Richardson either declined the position or was otherwise not allowed to fulfill his duties since Joseph H. Strickland and John D. Battle enumerated District No. 67. For Joseph H. Strickland see, Year: 1910; Census Place: *Griffins, Nash, North Carolina*; Roll: T624\_1123; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 0067; FHL microfilm: 1375136 [accessed on Ancestry.com 20 Jan 2016]; For John D. Battle see, Year: 1910; Census Place: *Griffins, Nash, North Carolina*; Roll: T624\_1123; Page: 10A; Enumeration District: 0067; FHL microfilm: 1375136 [accessed on Ancestry.com 20 Jan 2016].

<sup>59</sup> Year: 1910; Census Place: *Nashville, Nash, North Carolina*; Roll: T624\_1123; Page: 7A-7B; Enumeration District: 0072; FHL microfilm: 1375136, [accessed on Ancestry.com 20 Jan 2016].

<sup>60</sup> P.A. Richardson wrote in 1940: “Tradition handed down by our fathers is all the records we have to identify us, but it is understood by white and colored people in that community, that the family is decended [sic] from Cherokee Indians and white people, and had no negro blood.” He further stated: “the decendants [sic] of Jon Richardson, Stephen Hedgpeth, Sooky Silver, Dorcas Boone, Joel Evans, James Lynch are of the Cherokee Indian Decent,” P.A. Richardson “To Whom This May Concern, 1940, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

and political opportunities, not necessarily a reflection of his Native identity or connection to peoplehood.

Around 1910, Richardson founded Richardson Funeral Home, which had branches in Nashville and Louisburg, North Carolina. One of the first funerals that Richardson directed was that of his first cousin, Epsey A. Richardson Lynch, Dudley Lynch's daughter-in-law. Richardson directed the services or served as informant for the deaths of a number of family and friends who still resided in the Meadows or were otherwise strongly connected. His level of engagement indicated his attachment to his home community and indicated his support for Native peoplehood that reflected a different idea about what it meant. His life pursuits did not preclude an alliance or affiliation with other non-whites to provide resources and services to his home community. His businesses served the needs of all community members.

Like Joseph Silver, however, P.A. Richardson remained critical of his home community's isolationist choices, which were an impediment to social, political, and economic opportunity. In a eulogy for his friend T.P. Lynch, Richardson criticized the community's adoption of one church denomination, Baptist, which in his opinion had limited political and economic opportunities. He wrote, "any community that has only one church denomination is unfortunate, and it means that progress and advancement in the community will be slow. Thats [sic] what has happened to this community." In Richardson's opinion having only one denomination prohibited "free thinking; free choice; [and] free action." Richardson called the people of the community "isolationists for over a hundred years" and he continued, "when you set up a organization, you build a wall around it and isolate yourselves." Although Richardson's words suggested frustrations with the

condition of the Meadows community, they also alluded to the racial choices Meadows Indians made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some Meadows Indians like T.P. Lynch resided in his home community and developed strategies to maintain Native distinctiveness, while P.A. Richardson moved out of the community to “advance in civilization,” in his words.<sup>61</sup> Through his work with the A.M.E. church and other “colored” organizations, Richardson worked with non-whites, mostly African Americans, through local, regional, and national networks. Even so, his actions and writings reflect a close attachment to his home community and his Native people.

From the time of the white supremacist-Democratic takeover to shortly after World War I., Meadows Indians made varied racial choices and debated strategies to maintain or reject peoplehood and to provide economic, social, and political opportunities. The invasion of Fosburgh Lumber Company and the town of Hollister brought economic exclusion and exploitation, while outside non-whites worked to erase distinctions among the colored population. Meadows Indians fought to maintain their peoplehood by controlling age-old Indian dominated schools and churches and building new ones. They regulated relationships with African Americans and at the same time utilized a situational identity as colored to seek a political voice in their community through secret organizations. Meadows Indians endured factional division over whether to employ isolationism or seek accommodation as a strategy to enjoy limited civil, economic, and social prospects. Joseph Silver recognized his indigenous roots, but rejected peoplehood and chose to separate himself from his home community to sustain his livelihood. P.A.

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<sup>61</sup> P.A. Richardson, “Tilghman Parsons Lynch,” Eulogy, November 1944, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

Richardson, on the other hand, became very successful in civic, religious, political organizations and business as a “colored” individual. However, he kept a close relationship with his Native community and contributed to peoplehood utilizing a different strategy from his home relatives. Finally, Meadows Indians fought to have their racial designation corrected on vital documents and census records, by insisting they be labeled “Indian” instead of mulatto, colored, or Negro. These debates and divisions would increase in the future as Meadows Indians struggled to maintain peoplehood, fight racial classification as non-Native, and seek better political, economic, and social opportunities. They would go on to create Indian organizations, migrate to other areas, and pursue civil rights, and continue to separate themselves from the black-white racial binary.

## **CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZING AND DIVIDING A PEOPLE**

Between the end of World War I and the 1950s, Meadows Indians made bold and sometimes controversial racial choices when outsiders continued their efforts to essentialize people into black and white categories. Natives responded to this intensification of Jim Crow segregation by developing particular strategies of inclusion and exclusion to monitor their boundaries and sustain themselves economically and socially. Inclusive strategies resulted in alliances with both Natives and non-Natives, while exclusion limited the involvement of non-Natives in the affairs or lives of Meadows Indians. Many Indians spent time living and working away from home, acquiring exposure to ideas and opportunities outside the Meadows, while others stayed to nurture long-standing ways of promoting peoplehood by maintaining land ownership, church and school attendance, and kinship ties. Some continued to claim a situational identity as “colored” and supported existing institutions that had a Native affiliation but were nonetheless part of a bi-racial hierarchy.

Others fostered an Indian identity more explicitly, by drawing Indian-only boundaries around schools, churches, and a new tribal organization—the Haliwa Indian Club—that sought official control over their own affairs. The Haliwa Indian Club organized after World War II to build on previous efforts to gain separate recognition as Indians. Club leaders exhibited a racial choice as Indians by embracing some of the twentieth century’s ideas about Indian authenticity and demonstrating their legitimacy to outsiders. These outside expectations set the tone for internal Club policies about



membership, and forced some Indians to make uncomfortable racial choices. By pursuing tribal autonomy, not only racial separation, Meadows Indians expressed a new aspect of peoplehood that embraced racial division even as it avoided entanglement in a bi-racial hierarchy. These divergent strategies created traumatic and violent divisions amongst Natives in Halifax, Warren, and surrounding counties.

Living outside the immediate area prompted a variety of identification strategies. Many Indian families sharecropped the more fertile farms of whites in areas outside the Meadows, but still maintained strong connections to their home community. Lewis H. Lynch, for example, moved his family to White Oak, an area approximately seven miles southeast of Hollister in Halifax County, to sharecrop on a white-owned farm. The move forced the Lynch children to attend a school dominated by African Americans. When it came to relationships with blacks, Lewis instructed his children to date and marry only Indians.<sup>1</sup> By 1930, Lynch moved back into the Silvertown section of the community. There the family rented its land from local landowners. Avis Lynch followed her father's instructions and married an Indian, Marcellous Green, in 1932. Unlike other Indians, for whom public officials recorded their marriages, deaths, and births as "colored" or "Negro," Marcellous and Avis's marriage license listed them both as Indian. Apparently they had an early opportunity to publically proclaim an Indian identity, and they did so without objection from the authorities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Avis Lynch Green and Marcellous Green, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Marcellous Green to Avis Lynch, marriage record, Halifax County 26 December 1932.

While peoplehood could be facilitated through social expectations, landholding also continued to uphold community values. Unlike the Lynch family, who moved in and out of the community to provide for themselves, the Silvers of Silvertown staked their livelihood on their substantial landholdings, which also facilitated peoplehood on behalf of the community. Richard F. “Ricks” Silver and his wife Betty owned approximately 200 acres of land where they farmed.<sup>3</sup> In November of 1923 the Silvers deeded one half acre of land to the Halifax County Board of Education and built Silver Hill School themselves.<sup>4</sup> Besides two African American families, only Indian people attended the school. When Ricks Silver died in September of 1924, he left an estate worth \$5,600 to his heirs.<sup>5</sup> Land ownership afforded a degree of protection during hard times and provided a legacy for future generations. Norman Silver, one of his sons, most likely “rented” his farm from his mother Betty, as a way of keeping land and families together.<sup>6</sup> Norman’s family worked both his mother’s land and rented land from a nearby white neighbor. Isabella, Norman’s daughter, stated, “as long as I could remember way back, there wasn’t a black person or a white person [who rented] on that land where grandpa Ricks had.”<sup>7</sup> Not only did farming one’s own family land provide financial security, but it also made it possible for the

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<sup>3</sup> Also spelled as “Rix” Silver; Isabella Silver Mills, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, February 9, 2016, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>4</sup> Archable Davis Lynch and Ruth Lynch, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, June 28, 2007, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>5</sup> Deloris Williams, “My North Carolina Roots” <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=dwilliams%2D1&id=I5359> [Accessed 20 April 2016].

<sup>6</sup> Norman Silver, Household 54, Family 54, Year: 1930; Census Place: *Brinkleyville, Halifax, North Carolina*; Roll: 1696; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 0001; Image: 781.0; FHL microfilm: 2341430 [accessed on ancestry.com, 22 April 2016].

<sup>7</sup> Isabella Silver Mills, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, February 9, 2016.

community to draw boundaries around who belonged and who did not. Ricks Silver could rent to only Indians, and did. In doing so, he created a kind of community within the larger Meadows community that was not only dominated by Indians, but was exclusively Indian. By living in the community, Indian families could attend school together, socialize, and help each other on the farm. But even families as different in wealth as the Lynches and the Silvers could use land to foster education, family ties, and economic self-sufficiency. They did so by maintaining attachments to the community (even if they had to leave), and by making choices to work with and marry other Indians.

For some Meadows Indians, the challenging economic times before and during the Depression era necessitated more permanent residence outside of the community, but their ties to the land were contingent, even if they wanted to maintain kinship ties. For example, Alfred Richardson, Jr. and family had periodically moved in and out of the Meadows community to Nash and Franklin Counties in order to find land to farm. In 1900 the family lived in South Whitakers Township and rented land.<sup>8</sup> After Richardson's death his heirs continued that pattern, even though they owned land in Warren County. In 1929, Warren County placed a lien on a tract of twenty-two acres of land belonging to the children of Alfred Richardson, Jr., because the family had not paid their tax bill, which amounted to \$3.81. Son Alex Richardson may have died by this time, while daughter Georgianna lived with her husband in Halifax County; son Raymond Richardson also lived away from the community, renting a farm with his wife and family. Their brother Alphonso probably

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<sup>8</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: *South Whitakers, Nash, North Carolina*; Roll: 1208; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 0065; FHL microfilm: 1241208 [accessed on Ancestry.com, 20 April 2016].

migrated out of the area to work after the death of his wife.<sup>9</sup> White Meadows resident R.L. Capps, who thought of Alphonso as an “African” during World War I, took advantage of the situation and aggressively pursued the property; he paid the taxes and they sued the family to recover those expenses. Because the siblings chose not to pay the debt, the county foreclosed on the land in October of 1932, then sold it to R.L. Capps. Julius Banzet, an attorney and Warren County commissioner, represented both Capps and the county in the court case and property acquisition—a flagrant conflict of interest. In the sale, Capps purchased the property for thirty-five dollars and eighty cents, and then transferred the land to his son.<sup>10</sup> When the Richardsons and other Meadows Indians chose to leave the community and avoid the risk and expense of maintaining their own land, their connection to peoplehood and community diminished. Whites with more political and economic power took advantage of those choices to gain for themselves.

Meadows Indians held a deep connection to the land, but made tough choices to maintain peoplehood, provide educational opportunities, and sustain themselves economically. But while landownership might have provided a sense of belonging and community security, it did not always provide economic security. In 1932 Norman Silver borrowed one hundred dollars in “money, merchandise and supplies” from a white creditor, I.B. Gardner. The Silvers mortgaged twenty-one acres for the advance and were

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census 1930, Nash County, North Carolina, Griffins, District 2, household 280, family 285, page 17 A, Image 33, Ancestry.com [accessed 15 February 2016]; Perley Richardson, Death Certificate, Fishing Creek, Warren County, North Carolina, 7 February, 1923, Warren County Courthouse, Warrenton, North Carolina.

<sup>10</sup> Julius Banzet, Commissioner to Clarence B. Capps, Commissioner’s Deed. Warren County Deed Book 136, page 518, November 7, 1932 ; For confirmation that Clarence B. Capps was the son of R.L. Capps see U.S. Census 1920 Warren County, North Carolina, Fishing Creek, District 87, Household 235, Family 238, page 16 B, Image 32, Ancestry.com [accessed 15 February 2016].

expected to repay Gardner by November 1, 1932. If they did not pay, Gardner could sell their land “on the premises or at the Courthouse door in the town of Halifax after giving twenty days of said sale.”<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, the Silvers paid their debt and avoided foreclosure, but the high stakes of the loan itself indicated that even landowners struggled.

Those Meadows Indians who could keep their land sustained viable economic ventures and provided opportunities to other Indians exclusively. The Silvers donated land for a school, which allowed local Indian students to attend school with other Indians. Other Indians like the Lynches who did not have their own land were forced to move outside of the community to find work and attend majority African American schools. To sustain peoplehood, they adopted strategies to limit their associations with blacks and attended Indian-dominated churches. Still others like the Richardsons were duped by a corrupt legal system and lost their lands due to poor economic conditions. They were forced to rent land from whites to farm. Their diminished ties to the land and the community weakened their connection to peoplehood.

Others found the economic limitations of the South unbearable; they discovered better-paying jobs in Northeastern cities. Windsor Richardson and his wife Jessie “Jersey” Belle struggled to make a life for themselves and four children on rented land in the Meadows.<sup>12</sup> In July of 1921, tragedy struck the family when Jersey Belle died of

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<sup>11</sup> Norman and Annie Silver to IB Gardner, Mortgage Deed, 4 April 1932, Halifax County Deed Book 241, p. 241-242, Halifax, North Carolina; the deed contains a note indicated that Silvers paid back their debt to Gardner.

<sup>12</sup> Windsor Richardson, World War I. Draft Registration Card, 5 June 1917.

consumption at the age of 34.<sup>13</sup> Nine years later, Richardson had moved to Philadelphia and remarried. Two of his daughters accompanied him to Philadelphia, but he left two sons, William Robert (W.R.) and Samuel in the care of his deceased wife's sister, Penny, and her husband.<sup>14</sup>

W.R. Richardson would later rise to be the primary leader of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe. He was born on April 23, 1915 in Warren County, three miles from the Bethlehem School, which only offered elementary education.<sup>15</sup> The town of Warrenton hosted the closest high school, approximately fifteen miles away. The school system only provided white children with public transportation to high school. So after he achieved the highest possible grade at Bethlehem, Richardson quit school and did odd jobs while living with his aunt and uncle. W.R. remembered that jobs were not plentiful in the community, and at age eighteen he “walked three mile per day and put up three cords of wood per day with an axe.” Richardson set his sights on Philadelphia, where his father and siblings had moved, not because “I liked the city so well, [but] I went there for better job

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<sup>13</sup> Jessie Belle Richardson, Death Certificate, Griffins Township, Nash County, N.C. 28 July 1921, Ancestry.com. *North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007 [accessed 6 Feb 2016].

<sup>14</sup> Jim B. Richardson and Pennie Richardson, household 180, family 185, Year: 1930; Census Place: *Fishing Creek, Warren, North Carolina*; Roll: 1726; Page: 11B; Enumeration District: 0001; Image: 882.0; FHL microfilm: 2341460, Ancestry.com [accessed 1 June 2016], Robert W. [W.R.] Richardson and Samuel Richardson are called “adopted sons;” W.R. Richardson, Interviewed by Helen Maynor Scheirbeck, September 20, 1977, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526.

<sup>15</sup> According to John D. Hedgepeth, Bethlehem School when he attended only went to the fourth grade; see John D. Hedgepeth and Connie Lynch Hedgepeth, Interviewed by Marty Richardson, 25 July 2011, interview on file at the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

opportunities.”<sup>16</sup> He moved in the early 1930s, and his brother Samuel also ventured up north to find work.<sup>17</sup>

Richardson and many other Meadows Indians who prospered from diversified and better-paying jobs up North also kept strong ties to peoplehood as they found better economic opportunities. Horn and Hardart Baking Company first hired him as a kitchen helper; eventually he became a chef-cook. During World War II, W.R. worked at the Philadelphia Navy Yard as a machinist trainee, then as a first-class machinist. But “being a home boy,” as he remembered, Richardson “liked the girls back here at home,” and he married his girlfriend Annora Lynch on May 23, 1935. Annora was Indian leader T.P. Lynch’s granddaughter. Later Annora’s older brother Marcellous Lynch and his wife Pattie Bet Richardson Lynch (who was also W.R.’s first cousin) later moved in with the family in Philadelphia.<sup>18</sup> Marcellous worked as a dishwasher, most likely at Horn and Hardart.<sup>19</sup> Like other Meadows Indians who moved out of the community, they exhibited a strong desire to maintain peoplehood by marrying other Meadows Indians. Meadows Indians continued to help each other find employment and provided social support away from home. For example, Jessie W. Richardson’s sister lived in Philadelphia, prompting him to seek employment there also. Like W.R., he worked in the Navy Yard and made

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<sup>16</sup> W.R. Richardson, Interviewed by Helen Maynor Scheirbeck, September 20, 1977, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526.

<sup>17</sup> Arnold Richardson, Interview by Marty Richardson and Karen Lynch Harley, Hollister, NC, March 6, 2010, Haliwa-Saponi, Haliwa-Saponi Arts Documentation and Promotion Project, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>18</sup> Marcellous Lynch and Pattie Bet Richardson were married on July 30, 1938 in Warrenton, Warren County, North Carolina. They are listed as Indians on their certificate. Pattie Bet Richardson was a granddaughter of Dawes applicant Della Richardson.

<sup>19</sup> William R. Richardson, house no. 5831, Year: 1940; Census Place: *Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*; Roll: *T627\_3725*; Page: *644*; Enumeration District: *51-1204*.

\$18.00 a week, a huge salary at the time. When the war ended his company laid him off, but he found a job at the ROC radio plant, where he worked for two years before being laid off again. He then returned home to the farm, married another Indian, Bertha Mae Daniel, and started a construction company.<sup>20</sup> In 1946, W.R. and Annora purchased a three-story building in Philadelphia and converted it into five apartments to, in his words, “help the needy people that could not get houses or places to rent.” After the war, he went back to Horn and Hardart and eventually became the manager. Meanwhile, the Richardsons always planned to move back home permanently, and they regularly returned home to North Carolina for Christmas and vacations. In 1941 they purchased sixty-five acres of land in the Meadows and another one hundred acres in 1946.<sup>21</sup>

The actions of the Richardsons and Lynches up North demonstrate that Meadows Indians could maintain peoplehood when living outside of the community through kinship relations and a connection to their Native territory. In the North they could take advantage of a less restrictive racial climate to seek better economic opportunities. A city like Philadelphia was much more ethnically diverse and did not have as rigid of a bi-racial system as in the South. Meadows Indians could seek opportunities on an individual basis to get promotions and higher paying salaries. In the North individual ambition, more so than race, encouraged economic and social success.

Meanwhile, families within the Meadows used schools and churches to sustain peoplehood through larger gatherings and smaller, though more frequent, socializing

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<sup>20</sup> Jessie Willard Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, Thursday 16 October 2008, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>21</sup> W.R. Richardson, Interviewed by Helen Maynor Scheirbeck.



between siblings, cousins, and neighbors. By the 1930s, Indians predominated at small schools located near their own settlements, and children gathered and formed everyday bonds at Bethlehem, Pine Chapel, Hollister, Silver Hill, and Old Well School. All provided elementary grades, but high schools were not available to Indian children, except the “colored” school in Warrenton. While Indian leaders had not gained complete control over their schools, they possessed greater influence over their children’s education and social experiences at these particular elementary schools by virtue of families’ proximity and the majority-Indian student population. Still, the schools operated under a bi-racial segregated system, which worked to erode the separate identity of Meadows Indians.

Churches were more distant from one another, but also offered opportunities to nurture social connections that were vital to supporting a distinct identity in a bi-racial society. Most Indians attended Pine Chapel or St. Paul Baptist Church and both served as central meeting places. Because of the distance from each family settlement, attendance was sporadic and churches did not hold services every Sunday. Inez Lynch remembered that “we didn’t have no way to go except like on a wagon or something like that. And, at times we couldn’t hardly get to the church. [When] we went, it would be like once a month.”<sup>22</sup> Jessie W. Richardson also recalled that Pine Chapel only held service once a month. When the individual churches were not holding service, members of one church would visit the other, especially at Pine Chapel and St. Paul.<sup>23</sup> Church facilitated peoplehood amongst Meadows Indians and kept kinship bonds tight. Still, even the

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<sup>22</sup> Inez Lynch, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, December 4, 2000, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>23</sup> Jessie Willard Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, Thursday 16 October 2008, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson; Gilbert Marvin Lynch, personal communication, 2015.

churches operated in a bi-racial system. Both Pine Chapel and St. Pauls were part of the “colored” Reedy Creek Baptist Association. The Meadows Indian dominance at these churches was a reflection on local population and local control.

Even though kinship, territory, and social institutions like the school and church fostered internal bonds amongst Meadows Indians, dealing with outsiders brought the racial hierarchy to the forefront of community concerns. Since World War I, government officials had increasingly classified Meadows Indians as “Negro” on official documents. For years Meadows Indians had reluctantly accepted the ambiguous racial term “colored,” or even used the colored status when it was advantageous to meet their political and social needs. But Indians found new ways to combat these pressures and locally assert an Indian identity, as opposed to a generic “colored” designation. In order for Meadows Indians to gain recognition as Indians and challenge the black-white binary of the South, they emphasized outsiders’ definitions of Indianness, which included Indian “blood,” ancestry from a historic, distinct tribe, and a clear separation between themselves and African Americans. These efforts began the process of drawing more explicitly exclusive boundaries, which ultimately limited the involvement of non-Natives in the affairs of Meadows Indians.

World War II marked a turning point and opportunity for Meadows Indians to promote an Indian identity and to strongly reject African American ancestry or identity. Meadows Indians could be forced to serve in African American military units, so establishing an accurate identity label as Indian became paramount. For instance, Vernon Lynch, T.P. Lynch’s grandson, registered for the draft in 1940 in Hollister and may have

had some difficulty recording his race as Indian. His draft card clearly shows how “Indian” was checked; “Negro” was also checked but partially erased. Lynch probably ordered the erasure of the check mark himself. In 1942, white registrar T.C. Qualls listed Indian James W. Mills as a Negro. On the same day, however, Qualls registered Jimmie Hawkins and Horace Lynch as Indians. Perhaps Qualls and others judged the physical appearance of Meadows Indians to discern the race of registrants or the registrants themselves either objected to the registrar’s mark, or they chose not to. Jessie W. Richardson remembered making sure his race was listed correctly on official documents. “I always watched, if I been signing for anything, I always watched my race, all the time,” he said. “If you don’t they’ll get you mixed up with somebody else.”<sup>24</sup> Horace Lynch’s entire family was listed as Indian on the 1920 Halifax County Census, which probably reflected their stereotypical Indian features or their insistence on being identified as Indian. These attempts to distinguish their identity from African Americans in official records fueled a wider effort to gain recognition as Indian.

Beyond local authorities, Natives of Halifax, Warren and surrounding counties also sought acknowledgement of their Indian identity from the federal government. Two years after he ordered the erasure of Negro on his World War II draft card, Vernon Lynch wrote the federal Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) to “ask [if] you would you search up and see if I have any Indian relatives.” Lynch noted, “I am told by my Grandfather that my foreparents was Indian, I am registering as a Indian now.” Lynch needed verification of his Indian identity and asked the OIA “if it is possible for me to have my blood tested and see if I am

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<sup>24</sup> Jessie Willard Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interview.

a Indian;” he was willing to “pay whatever the charge is to get a certificate of the Indian race.”<sup>25</sup> Lynch took an extra step to obtain credentials to verify his Native heritage.

Elder T.P. Lynch, with the assistance of P.A. Richardson, himself contacted the OIA and addressed the major issues of racial classification and confusion over the status of Meadows Indians. He told federal officials that his people were descendants of Indians and had always been free. He spoke to the heart of the matter: “they Want us to Register Say negro when we have always been free American citizen now I Want to know will you have our Rac [sic] put on Record So we can give our Rac [sic] as free Refugees when we apply for a job also when we Register.”<sup>26</sup> Lynch enlisted the help of his old friend and relative P.A. Richardson, who wrote an affidavit on behalf of the family. Richardson spoke of his ancestors as a community of Indians who had some white ancestors and no African American “blood.” Further, he noted: “none of them were ever slaves, and in fact, some of them owned slaves in former days.” Trying to explain recent racial classification practices, Richardson stated: “these people have been classed as colored, because of their Indian blood, and in recent years, many of them have permitted their names to be registered as Negro, for want of a better description.” Richardson acknowledged racial classification practices that labeled colored people Negro, but insisted that, “except in a few cases, there is no intermixture of [negro] blood.”<sup>27</sup> Richardson intended to support Indians’ draft registration under the racial category of “Indian,” as opposed to “colored” or “Negro.”

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<sup>25</sup> “Vernon Lynch to United States Department of Interior Office of Indian Affairs” 22 March 1942, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 75, General Service 053, Box 258, File 13195-1942.

<sup>26</sup> “T.P. Lynch to the Superintendant of Indian Affairs” 24 Apr 1942, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 75, General Service 053, Box 258, File 20081-1942.

<sup>27</sup> P.A. Richardson, “To Whom This May Concern,” 1940, document on file at the Chief W.R. Richardson Tribal Government Complex, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

Just as Meadows Indians assisted one another economically, they shared the responsibility of obtaining accurate records of their identity. Both Richardson and Lynch assisted James Mills when he contacted the Bureau of the Census to get copies of his ancestors' records in order to verify his race as Indian. Mills hoped he could verify that his ancestors had been classified as Indians on the census in order to correct his birth certificate. J.C. Capt, a bureau official, advised Mills that "there are no records in the Census Bureau upon which a regular birth certificate can be issued by this Bureau." P.A. Richardson wrote an affidavit on behalf of James Mills, attesting to Mills' Indian identity and that he had "never known of any negroid intermixture." While he was unable to use census records to change his birth certificate, Mills' efforts may have paid off, because his racial category was changed when he registered for the draft a second time in 1944. The first time, in 1942, "Negro" was listed—in 1944 he was classified as an Indian. Native leaders adopted vital statistic correction as a major strategy to be recognized as Indians. If they could put Indian on their records, then they would have a documented paper trail of their Indian identity.

Similar to relatives and other Natives back home, Meadows Indians in the cities of the North and mid-Atlantic South desired to be recognized as Indian or were otherwise prone to change their racial classification in order to take advantage of economic and social opportunities. In 1940, W.R. Richardson lived in a widely African American community and he and his household members were classified as Negroes. Richardson probably had no proof of his Indian ancestry and needed documentation to share with employers and to transact business. Several years later, W.R. enlisted the help of his father-in-law, Lamar

Lynch to write an “affidavit for the express purpose of creating a correct record of the birth of the said William Robert Richardson.” Lynch claimed that he was a descendant of Indians and that Richardson’s parents were as well.<sup>28</sup>

Others personally confronted outsiders’ attempts to classify them as black or white. James “Jimmie” Hawkins, who worked at the Norfolk Navy Yard, saw an opportunity during the war to gain employment preference by having his race accurately described. In December of 1941 Hawkins wrote to the Office of Indian Affairs and told the agency that “my mother Essie Hawkins was [an] Indian woman I am desirous [sic] of obtaining full information as how to obtain Indian preference.”<sup>29</sup> Milo Evans knew Hawkins and remembered that he had strong Indian features, “pretty hair” and “could have went for white, just as much as Indian.” Evans recalled how Hawkins went in a white barbershop in Newport News and a white man from Hollister named Mabry was there as well. Mabry told the white barber “I didn’t know y’all cut colored people’s hair,” according to Evans. “[Mabry] come in after Jimmy left and the [barber] told him, he ain’t no colored man, he’s a white man.” After debating the subject, the barber told Mabry, “he ain’t colored, says he’s an Indian.” At the Naval Yard, where Mabry worked as well, Hawkins told Mabry, “now you stay out of my business, you lay off on me, or me and you both gonna have trouble.” Away from the Meadows community, Hawkins was able to use his appearance to gain entry into white establishments. Among his neighbors and friends in Portsmouth he lived as a white man, but also acknowledged his Indianness. When he died at the age of 52

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<sup>28</sup> Lamar Lynch, “Affidavit for William Robert Richardson,” 16 March 1943, Jack Campisi Papers, UNC-Pembroke.

<sup>29</sup> “Jimmie Hawkins to Commissioner of Indian Affairs” Received 18 Dec. 1941, RG 75 Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files 1940-1957, General Service, Box 257 *File 73013-1941*, NARA, Washington, D.C.

in 1956, his Indian wife Idell Lynch Hawkins, listed his race as white.<sup>30</sup> Apparently, Hawkins saw fit to explain that he was Indian in certain circumstances, but he also allowed people to believe he was white in other situations. Although some Indians in the Meadows had accepted an affiliation with “colored” people, Hawkins demonstrated that “colored” was not the only racial choice available to Indians. Depending on their appearance and their social situation, they could affiliate with whites as well.

Racial ambiguities in the World War II era inspired much more organized efforts to gain recognition as Indians. In the 1940s, Meadows Indian men met informally to discuss how they could solidify their unique identity as Indians. By 1949 even the media acknowledged their organizing efforts. Journalist Bill Sharpe reported that the Indians in Halifax County numbered about 1,000 individuals and that non-Natives referred to them by the derogatory term “free issues.”<sup>31</sup> According to one Haliwa-Saponi tribal member yellow or free issues meant “colored folks” who were “light-skinned.”<sup>32</sup> Designating Indians “free issues” implied knowledge of a difference between Indians and other colored people, but did not exactly acknowledge their Native identity. Sharpe mentioned Indians’ earlier efforts to seek separate recognition and noted: “many of them insist on registering for the draft or for taxes as Indians.”<sup>33</sup> Jessie W. Richardson was present at the early meetings, which were held at schools, places of significance for the peoplehood of

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<sup>30</sup> James J. Hawkins, Certificate of Death, Portsmouth, Norfolk County, VA. 2 July 1956.

<sup>31</sup> Bill Sharpe, “Lost Indian Tribes of State Seek Identity,” *The News and Observer*, 3 July 1949.

<sup>32</sup> Clarine Ruby Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, phone interview, Bethlehem, NC (Warren County), October 27, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Bill Sharpe.

Meadows Indians. Richardson recalled, “three or four of them got together at...a little school down in Silvertown called Silver Hill [and they said] ‘Let’s have a meeting [to] try to do something about ourselves.’” Leaders held another gathering in the yard of Bethlehem School, on lands donated by Meadows Indians. While Indians chose these places because of their historic significance, they also knew that the schools were public places and belonged to a system segregated by two, not three, races. Fearing interference from local non-Natives, the organizers moved the meetings to the homes of James Mills and Jessie W. Richardson.<sup>34</sup> This group started an association, what they called an “Indian club,” which carried various names in the beginning, including HaliwarNash Croatan Indian Club, Essex Indian Club, and finally the Haliwa Indian Club. Around 1953, the Haliwa Indian Club found a more semi-permanent meeting place in the pack house, or farm storage house, of Bell Brother (B.B.) Richardson.

By most accounts, John Conrad (J.C. or Johnsy) Hedgepeth was the visionary founder of the Haliwa Indian Club. He reached out to recognized Indian groups in the state, and spearheaded efforts to correct the Haliwas’ race on vital records. Hedgepeth’s parents were Cherokee Nation applicants under the Dawes Act, and they insisted on being listed as Indians in the 1910 census. He heard about the successful efforts of North Carolina’s Lumbee Indians to gain recognition and wanted to duplicate their efforts. The Lumbees were state-recognized, controlled their own Indian school system, and founded an association of Indian churches called the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association. Further, the Lumbees organized their own college, which was state supported. Around 1952 Hedgepeth

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<sup>34</sup> Jessie W. Richardson, , Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project Public Forum, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, 9 June 2009; Lonnie A. Richardson, “To Whom it May Concern,” 18 February 1955, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe.



and a few other leaders travelled two and a half hours south to meet with influential Lumbee leaders, including Judge Lacy Maynor, Rev. R.W. Maynor, Earlie Maynor and others.<sup>35</sup> From the beginning of the Haliwa Indian Club, these Lumbee leaders served as mentors to the Haliwa leadership. Hedgepeth was obsessed with Indian affairs and made himself visible and known by traveling house-to-house recruiting members and helping Indians correct their vital records.<sup>36</sup>

Meadows Indians joined the Haliwa Indian Club in order to seek recognition as Indians, a process that had begun much earlier. Chief W.R. Richardson recalled that the Meadows Indians had “attempted to band themselves together many, many years ago, but without much success, so they go scattered again.” The people maintained that “they were Indian blood and sometimes that they would have to accept a title that they did not agree with, but that was put up on them by non-Indians.” Further, he noted: “we called the people together and told them that we were being misrepresented. We knew that we were Indians, but when we checked our records, our records didn’t agree to that.”<sup>37</sup> The Haliwa Indian Club consisted of individuals who were no longer willing to accept racial misclassification or portray a situational identity as “colored” to seek political, educational, or economic opportunities.

The Club initially included a dozen or so leading men who held secret meetings and eventually allowed Native families to join after the Club became more organized.

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<sup>35</sup> W.R. Richardson, Interviewed by Helen Maynor Scheirbeck, 20 September 1977, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526.

<sup>36</sup> John Daniel Hedgepeth and Connie Lynch Hedgepeth, Interview by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC July 2011, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>37</sup> W.R. Richardson to Helen Maynor Scheirbeck.

According to early club member Chief (Brucie) Ogletree Richardson, the club “was made up of people who were truly committed to being recognized as Indian people,” which meant: “you could stand up and just openly say that I am Indian.”<sup>38</sup> The early Haliwa Indian Club meetings incorporated Christian songs and prayers, which helped to unify the Indians and gave them hope in their cause. Meetings started with opening hymns like “Where Could I Go?” or “Leaning on the Ever Lasting Arms” before the Club President would take the floor and begin conducting business. The Club accepted new members and periodically dismissed members for associating with non-Natives, especially African Americans, because of the fear that associating with blacks could challenge the authenticity of their Indian identity. The Club Treasurer took up a free will offering, which went toward Club activities or to members in need.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1940s and 1950s non-Natives carried expectations of Indian authenticity by which they judged whether or not the Haliwas were “real Indians,” but also influenced how Indians portrayed themselves to outsiders and the internal policies and goals the Haliwas set for themselves. Indians were expected to have stereotypical Indian physical features—had Indian “blood”—and associated and related to Indians exclusively. Indians retained indigenous culture and lived in an Indian community. Finally, Indians were members or descendants of an Indian “tribe.” Haliwa Indians portrayal of these Native stereotypes and expectations of authenticity could help demonstrate their legitimacy as Indians to outsiders

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<sup>38</sup> Dr. Joseph O. Richardson and Dr. Brucie Ogletree Richardson, Interviewed by Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell, Hollister, NC (Warren County), August 3, 2009, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase I, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>39</sup> See Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

and assist them in maintaining peoplehood and attaining more control over their own affairs.

Leaders of the Haliwa Indian Club adopted policies and goals, which helped with club organization, but also expressed notions of authenticity and outside expectations of indigenous identity. Club leaders prohibited interracial marriages and associations with African Americans and made their policies known publically. In a newspaper article, the Club president declared that he “deplores any marriage of his people with members of the Negro race.” Interracial marriages with African Americans were rare, but “the girl who makes such a marriage is apt to be ostracized by her people.”<sup>40</sup> Men were susceptible to the same degree of degradation if they associated with a black person. Meadows Indians believed their racial isolation was both a sign and a tool of authenticity. To meet outsiders’ expectations of blood purity, they strived “to keep their strain undefiled by future intermarriages with whites and Negroes” and maintain “relationships with members of the Richardsons, Copelands, Silvers, Evanses, Rudds, Reids, Hedgepeths and others.” They accepted their “self-imposed isolation as vital to the perpetuation of their strain,” according to the newspaper. At least in the eyes of this reporter, Meadows Indians expressed other characteristics that conformed to outsiders’ stereotypes of Indian culture. “Their habits, like their beliefs, are peculiar,” the journalist wrote. Perhaps intending to exaggerate his belief in their authentic Indianness, he continued, “The men hunt and fish to extreme and delegate more labor to their women folk than is usually considered proper.” Some white people called the old Indian men lazy and ignored traditional lifeways and gender roles the

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<sup>40</sup> Bignall Jones, “The Haliwars: Tribe of Mystery,” *The News and Observer*, 29 January 1956.

Haliwas still maintained.<sup>41</sup> Though the reporter seemed very judgmental in the characterization of Haliwa Indians, the Indians likely welcomed these stereotypes, because the descriptions acknowledged cultural differences between themselves and non-Natives, acknowledged peoplehood, and showcased their authenticity as Indians.

Haliwa Indians' public claims of an Indian identity required other pronouncements of indigenous authenticity that non-Natives could identify, such as origins in an aboriginal tribe. In particular, Meadows Indian claims of a separate identity from African Americans required proof of authentic Native origins and distinct characteristics. Although Indians had claimed descent from Cherokees in 1890s and early 1900s, they understood that non-Indians, and other Indians, would reject that version of their tribal origins. In the 1950s, Haliwa Indians claimed to be descendants of the Lost Colony and the Croatan Indians, which provided an authentic adopted name and, in their minds, a plausible theory of origins, which accounted for their mixed Indian-white ancestry, but distanced them from associations with African Americans. Haliwa Indians may have borrowed their theory of origin from Lumbee Indians, who also claimed descent from the Lost Colony going back to the 1880s and had an oral tradition of migration from northeastern North Carolina, to areas relatively near the Meadows. In addition to Croatan, Meadows Indians discussed descent from Cherokees, Tuscaroras, and other regional or well-known indigenous tribes. Seeking a public identity as Indians forced the Haliwas to define their distinctiveness for outsiders, but also encouraged group members to study their historical origins more closely.

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<sup>41</sup> Charles Crockett, "Indians of Warren County Apparently Have 'White' Blood In Their Veins," *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, NC), Fri 12 June 1953.

In addition to establishing an origin story, the Haliwas created an organized leadership structure to govern Club activities and enforce policies and goals. Members elected Percy Richardson as the Club's first President; he conducted Club meetings as his primary duty. J.C. Hedgepeth served as the first Chairman of Committees. The committee that Hedgepeth chaired was like a tribal council, composed of Club leaders who represented geographic areas of the community. The first committee members included James Mills, Cleveland Richardson, Horace Hedgepeth, Dennis Copeland, and (Willie) Garland Richardson. These men represented the towns of Hollister and Arcola, and the Shearin and Bethlehem communities. Haliwa elders recalled that Vernon Lynch served as Secretary for the earliest meetings, but Blanche Copeland Mills replaced him, along with Lonnie A. Richardson, who served as Assistant Secretary. In September of 1953 the Haliwas also elected a Chief, Jerry Rodnell Richardson, whose ancestors had applied for citizenship in the Cherokee Nation.<sup>42</sup> W.R. Richardson, still living in Philadelphia, was among the early club members, but initially, he was not one of the leaders. In 1954, he and his wife Annora moved back home permanently to actively participate in this Indian movement. Within months, Richardson rose to lead the group and was elected the Club President on January 17, 1955.<sup>43</sup>

Many Meadows Indians did not agree with Haliwa Indian Club policies; the Club's adoption of strict codes of conduct forced some Indians to make controversial racial choices. Immediately these choices became a source of division in the community. While

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<sup>42</sup> Jessie Willard Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson; Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, September 28, 1953, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>43</sup> Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 17 January 1955, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

generations of Meadows Indians preferred and encouraged marriages among Native families, on rare occasions Indians did marry African Americans, whites, or individuals who did not claim an Indian identity. Depending on the family, some Meadows Indians rejected their non-Native family members, while some tolerated or accepted them. The Haliwa Indian Club's zero tolerance policy made it impossible for those married to African Americans or others to join the Club. These policies forced otherwise proud Natives to make a choice between upholding family ties—a constant source of the peoplehood that had sustained the community—and joining the Club. Thomas Olival Hedgpeth, for example, acknowledged his Indian ancestry and had two sisters who joined the Club; both corrected their vital records to read "Indian," but Hedgpeth remained "colored." Although W.R. Richardson encouraged him to join the Club, he chose not to, telling Richardson, "I can't join you, 'cause you all are separating people against people." To Hedgpeth, the Club caused divisions "that didn't need to happen, because we were getting along fine and I felt like everybody ought to be recognized."<sup>44</sup> In particular, the outright rejection of relationships with blacks made it seem as if Indians thought they were better than blacks. African Americans and many Natives resented the stance of Haliwa Club members; they wished to preserve their relationships with non-Native friends and family. Pine Chapel, St. Paul, and other area churches did have a few African American attendees; St. Paul belonged to the colored Reedy Creek Baptist Association.

Meadows Indians had long struck a delicate balance between racial separation, a distinct ethnic identity, and social opportunity. Some Indians saw Haliwa Indian policies as

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Thomas Olival Hedgpeth by Marvin M. Richardson, March 7 2012 U-0604, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

a threat to social and political balance and cooperation reached between non-whites in the community. Haliwa Indian Club members, on the other hand, saw the Club as a unifying organization that boldly challenged the “colored”-white racial classification system and transformed efforts to maintain racial separation into a conscious attempt to control their own affairs. Unlike any other institution, it provided Indians a safe place to discuss Indian business. The Club allowed Indians to be “recognized and be comfortable,” according to one early club member.<sup>45</sup> Club organizers felt that terms like “colored” and “free issue” used to describe the community had become synonymous with “Negro;” continuing to allow others to use those labels defied Meadows Indians’ long-standing practice of distinguishing between themselves and blacks. More recently, this practice had become an effort to correct public records and openly proclaim an Indian identity. The Haliwa Indian Club was a way to build awareness among the indigenous descendants in the area as well as let others know about the Native community.<sup>46</sup>

Donations collected at early Club meetings went to conduct research on the group’s Indian ancestry and to pay white lawyers to correct their vital documents. In November of 1953 the Club authorized the Board of Committees to hire lawyer and state representative, William W. Taylor, Jr., for \$100.00, in order to do research on their Indian background.<sup>47</sup> B.B. Richardson corresponded with Taylor and the Club paid for Richardson’s trips to

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<sup>45</sup> Dr. Joseph O. Richardson and Dr. Brucie Ogletree Richardson, Interviewed by Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Odenia Lynch Brayboy, Interview by Marty Richardson, Hollister, NC (Warren County), July 16, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 9 November 1953, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.; William W. Taylor, Jr. to Dr. Guy B. Johnson, 29 July 1954, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Subseries 1.2. 1930-August 1969, Folder 6.

Warrenton to meet with Taylor.<sup>48</sup> Taylor, in turn, travelled to Washington, D.C. and Chapel Hill and spoke with a variety of scholars, including Calvin Beale, a demographer in the U.S. Department of Agriculture who conducted research on communities deemed to be “mixed-race.”<sup>49</sup> Taylor also reached out to sociologist and anthropologist Dr. Guy B. Johnson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who had conducted research with the Lumbees, and asked him whether he had any more information on Haliwa Indians. He seemed to have genuinely worked hard for the Haliwas and even found some documents that listed them as Indian.

When Calvin Beale visited the Meadows in April of 1954, he interviewed Haliwa leader B.B. Richardson and some whites, including Howard Jones, the editor of the Warren County’s newspaper, William B. Terrell, the Superintendent of Warren County Schools, and William W. Taylor himself. Terrell brought up the possible Lost Colony connections to the Haliwas, while Jones and Taylor were skeptical of that story, even though Jones had published an article highlighting those origins. Rather, Jones and Taylor noted that they “were aware that this territory had been the home of the Tuscaroras before their migration to New York.” B.B. Richardson, meanwhile, expressed to Beale that he had no “Negro blood in him” and that his people were not trying to pass for white. Richardson told Beale “having to attend colored schools” was “the greatest source of irritation to them, but they are also unhappy about being identified as Negro on such personal records as drivers’ licenses.” Indians were not allowed to eat at white restaurants “and the colored restaurant

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<sup>48</sup> Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 23 November 1953, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor to Johnson.



owners make them feel uncomfortable if they come in for food.”<sup>50</sup> Taylor summed up the Meadows Indians’ situation this way: “their physical characteristics and many things about their way of living impress one with the fact that they are more than mere mulattoes.”<sup>51</sup>

While the Haliwa Indian Club and its leaders demonstrated an exceptional amount of leadership, political savvy, unity, and determination to meet their goals, they also worked to disenfranchise their Native relatives and created a climate of fear. John Daniel Hedgepeth, son of club founder J.C. Hedgepeth remembered, “one particular night they [some blacks] had said they was coming down to kill him because he [J.C. Hedgepeth] was more or less spearheading the movement.”<sup>52</sup> Founding Club members recalled that once the Club became a divisive and controversial issue, open expressions of contempt and worry trickled down to school children. B. Ogletree Richardson recalled an incident at school when “one of the students who did not wish to be recognized as Indian [said that] someone in his family had found out where those people were meeting to organize ‘that old club.’ ...His relatives ...said that they were going to burn that house down.” Ogletree’s father, Randolph Green, was one of the original leaders of the club and so Ogletree thought to herself, “Oh they’re gonna kill my daddy.”<sup>53</sup> Club members took the threats seriously and gave Chief Jerry Richardson the task of “holding the door [and looking] after the yard

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<sup>50</sup> Calvin Beale “Notes on Visit to the Warren County, North Carolina, Mixed-Racial Community,” In *A Taste of the Country: A Collection of Calvin Beale’s Writings*, ed. Peter A. Morrison (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 132-134.

<sup>51</sup> Taylor to Johnson.

<sup>52</sup> John Daniel Hedgepeth and Connie Lynch Hedgepeth to Marvin Richardson, Interview 25 July 2011, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Joseph O. Richardson and Dr. Brucie Ogletree Richardson to Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell.

[to] see that nobody is on the yard,” according to Club meeting minutes.<sup>54</sup> The Haliwas kept an armed guard to protect the Club activities and members.

Violence demonstrated the extent of the ideological and political divide among community residents. Chief Jerry Richardson himself became embroiled in perhaps the most polarizing and tragic acts. Richardson owned a “juke joint” or hangout store called the Loan Eagle Club in Warren County. In December, 1957, Richardson’s son-in-law Sam Richardson asked an African American friend, John Willie Pitt, to accompany him to the store. Richardson and Pitt entered the store, and Jerry told Pitt that he did not serve Negroes in his establishment. Pitt said, “O.K., there’s no hard feelings, I’ll go” and “walked on to the door.” Sam, on the other hand, protested to Jerry and told him “you’re playing a Negro’s record, then why do you say ‘ain’t no Negros allowed in here.’” Probably intending to insult Jerry, Sam said that the store “was just an Indian reservation” and was only for Indians. Sam then allegedly told Jerry that he, his wife, and his whole family were Negros, not Indians. Sam, who may have been drinking, went on a cursing tirade and leaned up against the store counter, threatening Jerry and others in the store, including young children and teenagers, ages 3, 8, and 16, who were in the back room dancing. Some observers said that Sam had reached in his pocket and they saw a shiny object, perhaps a gun or a knife. After asking Sam to leave four or five times and believing Sam had a weapon, Jerry reached under the counter, pulled out a .22 pistol, and shot his son-in-law twice. Sam Richardson stumbled out of the store into the woods and died.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 7 Dec 1953, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>55</sup> State of North Carolina vs. J.R. Richardson, North Carolina Superior Court, Warren County, No. 1142; the narrative is written using the testimony of witnesses to the incident, including John Willie Pitt, Blanche

Leaders and members of the Haliwa Indian Club came to the aid of Jerry Richardson and bailed him out after the police arrested him; they also collected \$17.51 to help with the Chief's legal fees.<sup>56</sup> The court convicted Richardson of manslaughter and he served several years in prison.

This tragic incident between a divided family represented a microcosm of the fragile state of affairs between Indians and African Americans in the community, as well as the ideological differences amongst Meadows Indians. Jerry Richardson and his Haliwa Indian allies believed in order to insure their authenticity as Indians, and push their political agenda for recognition as a separate group, they needed to refrain from all relations with African Americans. Richardson and many other Club members were the descendants of Indian advocates whose parents taught them that they were different from other colored people. Other Indians, however, did not have the same priorities; they embraced a situational and ambiguous identity as colored—an identity that did not carry the authenticity burden of a separate, Indian identity. Simply put, being “colored” was easier for some Meadows Indians because no one would question that identity or scrutinize their claim to it. Furthermore, by this time, many regarded members of the Haliwa Indian Club as prejudiced, and they rejected and challenged the social restrictions of Club membership. Other factors illuminate this division, including the maintenance of political influence, ego, and the protection of family-dominated and controlled “colored” institutions. Finally, many Indian descendants in the area thought of the Club as a short-

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Lancaster, Garland Lancaster, Rosa Mae Richardson, Tina Richardson, Joe Albert Richardson, B.Q. McDonald, W.E. Brown, Perry Nicholson, and A.H. Floyd.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid; the court documents show that B.B. Richardson, Elzie Richardson, Joseph Douglas Richardson, and Courtney Evans posted bond for Jerry Richardson; Haliwa Indian Club Minutes , 27 December 1957.

lived phenomenon, given the overwhelming power and influence of whites and blacks in the area. Bertha and Jessie Richardson recalled people, including some of their own family, who did not support the Club saying, “they ain’t never gonna amount to a hill of beans.”<sup>57</sup> Regardless of which side Meadows Indians took, the tentacles of white supremacy, domination, inferiority, and an enforced racial binary were the root cause of the racial choices the indigenous peoples of Halifax, Warren, and surrounding counties made.

In this highly racialized and fragile environment, Meadows Indians’ racial choices could contribute to or undermine peoplehood, or both. On one hand, the Haliwa Indian Club worked to maintain peoplehood by unifying Indian descendants who carried a strong Indian identity and wanted to erase the racial ambiguity implied by the term colored. They recognized that the term “colored” was increasingly being merged with “Negro.” Haliwas took steps to authenticate themselves to outsiders and within the Indian community by hiring lawyers to research their indigenous roots and embrace and accentuate the stereotypes non-Natives placed on them to uphold a separate identity and maintain peoplehood. By doing so, however, Haliwa Indians upset other pillars of Native peoplehood, including kinship within the Meadows Indian community. Other Meadows Indians rejected those stereotypes and chose to continue situational and ambiguous identities to maintain cordial relationships between Natives and non-Natives. Sam Richardson’s negative characterization of the Lone Eagle Club as an “Indian Reservation,” for example, demonstrates that for some “Indian” carried a negative connotation. They

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<sup>57</sup> Jessie W. Richardson and Bertha Mae Daniel Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson.

were not willing to play the authenticity game, because it would only divide the community and alienate their non-Native friends and family in some cases.

Meadows Indians who became members of the Haliwa Indian Club experienced attacks from African American teachers and students at their schools. Daisy Richardson Mills recalled an incident at Bethlehem School, when the black teacher questioned her Indian identity by saying, “old lady Jones, she was the teacher, she used to say ain’t none of ya Indians around here, all of us is Negros. I says...my daddy told me I was Indian.”<sup>58</sup> Willis James Richardson remembered, “I had a lot of racial experiences at Hollister....they would call you a Yellow Ish. I don’t know what it [was] really, but I was always told that they were calling you black. That would be a no-no and I’d fight.” If Haliwa students wanted to attend high school in Warren County, they had to go to the town of Warrenton. B.B. Richardson told Calvin Beale that Indian children were “‘dogged’ by the Negro children about their race.”<sup>59</sup> The bi-racial segregated schools became untenable for Haliwa Indians and many parents did not send their children to high school because of this treatment.

Education had long been a battleground for racial separation and Indian distinctiveness. For over seventy years, Meadows Indians had seen schools as an opportunity for some degree of control over their own affairs. The problems associated with a “colored” identity were most present in the schools, and Club members wanted to

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<sup>58</sup> Daisy Richardson Mills and Murzie Mills, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, May 9, 2011, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project Phase II, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>59</sup> Beale, 133.

address this problem. In 1957, Haliwa leaders decided to start their own segregated Indian school. Haliwas wished to mimic the Lumbees who had operated a state-supported Indian school system since 1885 and implemented an Indian-only Normal School to teach Indian teachers who could in turn teach Indian students. By 1957, the Lumbees had over a generation's worth of educators and administrators, and their Normal School had become Pembroke State College.

In May of 1957, Haliwa leaders met with Halifax and Warren County Commissioners seeking assistance to open their own Indian School. Their request was for Warren County to designate Bethlehem School, an institution founded and built by Meadows Indians, as an Indian school. W.R. Richardson, accompanied by Lumbee Indian R.B. Jacobs and a fifteen-man delegation, told Halifax County Commissioners that he would pledge land, labor, and money for the school building. Though Halifax County responded favorably, Indian attendees would come from both Halifax and Warren Counties, and Bethlehem was in Warren County, not Halifax. The counties would have to coordinate the expense to assist the Indians.<sup>60</sup> Commissioners of both counties initially rejected the idea; Warren County would not allow the Haliwas to use the historic Bethlehem School building as an exclusive Indian school. Although funding the school and cooperation between the counties was an important issue for the boards to consider, the Haliwas' Indian identity was the essential issue for county and state officials. Were the Haliwas really Indians and did they deserve their own school? The question was so important that shortly after the Haliwas' request, Representative John Kerr of Warren County introduced a joint resolution to the North Carolina General assembly calling for a

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<sup>60</sup> "Want Own School," *The Daily Herald* (Roanoke Rapids, NC), 7 May 1957.

five-member commission to “study the racial status of the Haliwa Indians in the Hollister area.”<sup>61</sup>

While the counties and state mulled over their racial status, Club members made up their minds to take a stand and have a school of their own. The previous year, the Haliwas had scraped up their meager funds and built a permanent clubhouse in Warren County on one acre of land purchased from Club President W.R. Richardson. Since they were unable to use the Bethlehem School site, the Haliwas used their clubhouse, within sight of Bethlehem School, for their new Indian institution. In September 1957, Club members met the first principal, C.D. Brewington, and Lumbee Indian with probable Coharie ancestry and first teacher, Lela Jane Clark (Lumbee), and voted to fund school operations themselves.<sup>62</sup> To make their building ready for a school, Haliwa men added another room. Dorthess “Bill” Lynch did not have school-age children at the time, but he remembered the tremendous personal and financial sacrifice: “We'd work all day and we'd go down there and didn't have no money much. We'd put in... What you could get rid of, you put whatever you could spare in the hat, when they took up donations.”<sup>63</sup> In addition to building materials, fundraising went towards paying Lumbee teachers.

The timing of the Haliwa Indians’ opening their own segregated school could not have been more awkward—or beneficial—depending on one’s perspective. First, a segregated Indian school ignored the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which banned segregated schools and mandated integration. The Haliwas’

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<sup>61</sup> “Study May Be Made of Haliwa Indian History,” *The Littleton Observer*, 13 June 1957.

<sup>62</sup> Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 7 September 1957, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe.

<sup>63</sup> Dorthess “Bill” Lynch, Interviewed by Senora Lynch, July 25, 2009, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase I, Hollister, NC.

white lawyers and advisors supported segregation and knew that North Carolina lawmakers were developing strategies to keep schools segregated, while seeming to abide by the court decision. North Carolina politicians took a conservative approach to integration, hoping to maintain racially separate schools. Lawmakers designed the Pearsall Plan to ameliorate the impact of the Supreme Court's decision for whites. The Haliwas, through the advice of their legal counsel, applied to fund their school through the state's Pearsall Plan. Some of those who opposed the Haliwa Indian School were more invested in simultaneous plans to renovate the facilities and expand the staff of Hollister School, which served both Indians and blacks. The timing of both of these events tested the commitment of Club members, brought forth scathing opposition from Hollister School supporters and civil rights groups, and generated national media coverage.

The Pearsall Plan expanded the North Carolina General Assembly's Pupil Assignment Act of 1955, which "authorized local school units to set up administrative procedures regarding school transfers and reassignment requests."<sup>64</sup> The procedures required black parents who wanted to transfer to another school to fill out lengthy forms and participate in a series of interviews, making it very difficult to actually integrate a white school. Governor Luther H. Hodges believed the state needed to take greater action to protect white-only schools, and he appointed an all-white committee, headed by state Senator Thomas Pearsall, to enact a plan to "Save our Schools." The Pearsall Plan adopted three major provisions in addition to the Pupil Assignment Act: first, a district could close its schools by popular vote; second, the state funded grants "to private schools for children

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<sup>64</sup> Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, "Reactions of Segments of the Black Community to the North Carolina Pearsall Plan, 1954-1966," *Phylon* 48, no. 2 (1987), 113.



whose parents objected to attending school with the child of another race;” and third, a district could stop requiring children to attend school if they objected to desegregation and did not have a “segregated school experience... immediately available.”<sup>65</sup> Whites conceived the plan to prevent integration and to help whites continue controlling their own schools; no one predicted that a group of virtually unknown Indians would attempt to use the plan to fund their own segregated education.

In early September 1957, W.R. Richardson and other leaders of the Haliwa Indian Club announced the opening of their private Indian school and their intention to use the Pearsall funds. Their statement brought national attention to Indians and a firestorm of controversy. Richardson told the Warren County Board of Education that Indians had enrolled 200 students from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 12th grade. He also claimed that he awaited approval from the state Attorney General to use Pearsall Plan funds.<sup>66</sup> North Carolina denied the application, however, “because the question of whether they are members of the Indian race is not settled,” according to a news report.<sup>67</sup> Non-Natives determined identity by racial associations, and since Haliwas had long attended schools and churches classified as colored or Negro and sometimes alongside African Americans, then many outsiders simply assumed they were African Americans. After all, the Pearsall Plan was designed to benefit whites, not blacks, and the state would not allow anyone to perceive that non-whites could actually control their own education. Of course, outsiders’ practice of classifying Indians as non-Native had obscured Meadows Indian identity for at least one

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<sup>65</sup> Peebles-Wilkins, 114.

<sup>66</sup> “Haliwar Tribe Hopes to Get Pearsall Funds,” *News and Observer*, 11 September 1957.

<sup>67</sup> “Indian School Denied Pearsall Plan Money: Race Issue Not Settled” *The Littleton Observer*, 19 September 1957.

hundred and fifty years, and state officials seemed surprised that a separate group of non-whites existed in that part of the state, and, furthermore, wanted the state to pay for them to control their own school. But Haliwas only saw a double-standard; other Indian tribes throughout the state, including the Lumbees, Indians of Person County, Coharies, and Waccamaw-Siouans, had operated their own Indian school or school system over the previous decades, with varying degrees of state support. Haliwas did not have this history, though they were no “less Indian” than these other groups.

If tensions in the community were already high because of the Haliwa Indian Club, the Haliwa Indian School made the controversy boil over; two brothers-in-law, W.R. Richardson and Vernon Lynch, came to represent polar opposites in the Haliwa Indian debate. The rift between the two in-laws first occurred when Club members allegedly selected Richardson over Lynch as President of the Haliwa Indian Club. Richardson, though not very well-educated, was knowledgeable, clever, and not easily intimidated. “And if he found out something, or if he was determined to do something, he didn’t care if anybody was against him, he was gonna do it,” according to his nephew Arnold Richardson.<sup>68</sup> His business and life experiences in Philadelphia made his leadership skills attractive to Club members. Vernon Lynch had also spent time away from the community, working in the Norfolk, Virginia shipyards in the 1940s. His grandfather, T.P. Lynch, encouraged him to write a letter to the Office of Indian Affairs during that time, seeking documentation of his Indian ancestry. Vernon served as President of the Hollister School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and held leadership positions at Pine Chapel Baptist Church. Lynch may have felt slighted by Club members when they selected his brother in-

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<sup>68</sup> Arnold Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, February 23, 2012.

law as President, and he stopped attending the meetings.<sup>69</sup> Lynch may have also opposed the Club's policies on racial associations. Some of Lynch's family had married African Americans and he and others would not turn their backs on family members to support Club activities.

The dispute between W.R. Richardson and Vernon Lynch also concerned school resources and a financial threat to Hollister School. By November of 1957, approximately 70 pupils withdrew from Hollister School and enrolled at the Haliwa Indian school. Members of the Hollister PTA, led by Lynch, presented a resolution to the Halifax County Board of Education asking them to deny the Haliwas' request for financial aid for their school, because those students, they argued, were legitimately served by the Hollister School. Further, the resolution stated that the Haliwas were "representing themselves to be members of the Indian race," implying that they were pretending to be Indians. To PTA members, the Haliwas' action was "unchristian in nature" and created "a spirit of ill will" in the churches. The PTA was afraid of losing teachers and pupils at Hollister, and they asked the Halifax Board of Education to "go forward with our new building" despite the withdrawal of the Indian students.<sup>70</sup> Lynch and the Hollister PTA lobbied the Halifax County Board of Education for a new school, but the board halted construction until the Haliwa Indian School issue was settled.<sup>71</sup> The resolution insinuated that the Haliwas were "playing Indian," which indicates that Lynch and his followers believed that an identity as

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<sup>69</sup> Avis Lynch Green and Marcellous Green, Interview by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, 2000, interview in the possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>70</sup> "Hollister Group Petitions Board," *Daily Herald* (Roanoke Rapids, NC), Tuesday, 8 Oct. 1957, p.1.

<sup>71</sup> Howard Lindsay, "Opinions Differ On Issue of Private Haliwa School." *Scotland Neck Commonwealth*, 8 November 1957.

“colored”—or, increasingly, “Negro”—would better serve their educational goals. In another article, Lynch confirmed the leadership squabble between he and Richardson and Lynch’s previous involvement in the Haliwa Club: “everything was going along lovely until Richardson come back [from Philadelphia],” he said.<sup>72</sup>

The Haliwas found allies in white segregationists in the campaign to fund their Indian school. Originally, the Haliwas’ white attorneys devised the plan to use Pearsall funds to operate the private school. Contrary to the convictions of many non-whites following the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board*, the Haliwas supported segregation, highlighting a noticeable variation in political strategy from other non-whites, but also implying support for white supremacy. At a meeting in August of 1958, Halifax County Board of Education attorney Joe Branch stated, “this board has always stood for separation of the races and will continue to do so.” The Haliwas’ attorney, Julian Allsbrook, gave an impassioned plea to the board to convince them that the Haliwas deserved a school of their own:

Who are the people who want to integrate?...People who have lost their pride of race and do not want to improve it...This state and the South gave people the right, I say the right, to stand apart. These people say to you, you can have your own, the colored man can have his own, and we as Indians want our own.<sup>73</sup>

Haliwas benefited from the whites’ endorsements, a strategy they had employed at other times in Meadows Indian history.

County and state boards of education still questioned their Indian identity, however, so the Haliwas continued to research their history to address these questions. Mrs. Leon

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<sup>72</sup> “Haliwa Indians in Hassle Over Going to NC Negro School: Negros Who Want to Be “Indians”,” *Jet Magazine*, 5 December 1957, 26-29.

<sup>73</sup> “Race Designation Problem is Pondered,” *The News and Observer*, (Raleigh, NC) 21 August 1958, 3.

W. Anderson of Halifax, recognized as a historian and genealogist, researched the Meadows Indians and spoke on their behalf at the Warren County Board of Education meeting. Anderson traced their surnames back to the 1790 census and noted their distinctiveness from African Americans by reporting that Haliwa ancestors owned land, married within certain families and may have served the Confederacy in the Civil War. She told the board members, “the Haliwas have been referred to as ‘those Indians up in the meadows.’”<sup>74</sup> Haliwa Indian School Principal C.D. Brewington published a book *The Five Civilized Indian Tribes of Eastern North Carolina*, which included a brief article about the Haliwas, calling them “Haliwas – Saponas.” Brewington reported that the Haliwa “territory extends down to the Sapony Creek near Nashville, North Carolina.” The researchers found “the Saponas was a tribe identified with Cherokee and Eno Chicora and other small tribes in the Carolinas. The Meherrins were close neighbors to the Saponas. They also lived in close proximity with the Tuscaroras.”<sup>75</sup>

Indians from Robeson County also helped to bolster the legitimacy of the Haliwas by vouching for their Indian identity. In early August 1958, Haliwa attorneys wrote a letter to several Lumbee Indians, including C.D. Brewington, Lacy Maynor, Rev. R.W. Maynor, Rev. D.F. Lowry, and Dr. Clifton Oxendine. Also among the correspondents was Roy (or Ray) Holy Elk, a Lakota who was stationed in the military in North Carolina and married into the Lumbee tribe. The letter informed them that the Haliwas had been denied assignment to the Indian school under the Pupil Assignment Act, and that the state had

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<sup>74</sup> Zed Denny, “Haliwas Seeking Recognition,” *News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC) 18 August 1958.

<sup>75</sup> C.D. Brewington, “Haliwas – Saponas,” in *The Five Civilized Indian Tribes of Eastern North Carolina* (Clinton: Bass Publishing Company, 1959): 17-19.

assigned them to Negro schools. The attorneys asked if the Lumbees would send a delegation to a school board hearing, held to consider the matter of the Haliwas' Indian origins, and provide "an opinion as to the merits of the Haliwa's contentions that they are Indians or of Indian descent," as well as their views on the merits of an Indian-only school.<sup>76</sup> The Lumbee and Lakota men accepted the invitation and appeared in person at the hearing. Carl Maynor and Rev. R.W. Maynor of Pembroke College told the school board that the college "would accept the graduates of a school set up for the Haliwas as bona fide Indian students." Ray Holy Elk said that "the Haliwas showed the features of the Indian race as much as any similar group to be found anywhere in the United States."<sup>77</sup> County officials were still skeptical of the Haliwas, however, since they had always gone to Negro schools and attended churches labeled as colored.

While the Haliwas benefitted from relationships with white segregationists and Native mentors, other Meadows Indians and non-Natives drew the support of African American civil rights groups who promoted their own political and educational agendas. Since the Haliwas were the first to attempt usage of Pearsall Plan funds, black civil rights groups opposed their overall effort. Reverend A.D. Moseley, who represented the Progressive Civic Union of Northampton, Warren, and Halifax counties, described as a "Negro 'betterment' union," warned the State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Charles F. Carroll, that "granting tuition funds for private education would be 'one step closer toward liquidation' of the North Carolina public school system." The Union asked the State Board

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<sup>76</sup> Allsbrook & Benton Attorneys at Law to Mr. C.D. Brewington, Mr. Roy H. Elk, Mr. Lacy Maynor, Rev. R.W. Maynor, Rev. D.F. Lowry, Dr. Oxendine, Re: Haliwa Indian Matter Halifax and Warren Counties 5 August 1958; Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Series 6. Judge Lacy W. Maynor Papers, 1939-1972.

<sup>77</sup> Zed Denny.

of Education to “refuse to accredit or even consider private schools set-up for segregated educational purposes.” Carroll, however, responded that the board would be “‘within the law’ in approving the Haliwa Indian School for private educational purposes.” Reverend Moseley noted “‘we’ve [got] nothing against the Indians. We just oppose splitting of the schools.’” While the Progressive Civic Union did not necessarily oppose the merits of the Haliwas’ objective to seek a separate identity, they opposed state government strategies to ignore the Supreme Court ruling.<sup>78</sup>

The Haliwas’ political, legal, and historical strategy, alongside their sheer determination to have their own school, paid off in early 1959, when the state and counties began funding their school. Halifax and Warren County boards of education voted to cooperate and place the Haliwa Indian School within the Warren County school system. All parties waited to get final approval from the state board of education, which finally came on January 13. After two years, the Haliwas had finally realized their dream to have their own Indian school; further, public funds lifted some of the financial strain from Haliwa parents and other school supporters.<sup>79</sup> County and state approval of the school not only provided a segregated educational facility for Indians, but also served as tacit recognition of their Indian identity. The Haliwas needed to formally close the school down and perform some administrative tasks before the county and state could take it over. Chief W.R. Richardson recalled “a very happy day that I called the teachers together, and told them, I says, ‘I have some sad news and good news, I’m ordering the school closed

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<sup>78</sup> “Negroes Hit Indian Plea For Schools,” *The News and Observer*, Friday 17 October, 1958.

<sup>79</sup> Even after the counties took over the school, Haliwas continued to raise funds to supplement school operations.

down.” He remembered, “some bad looks got on their face for a second and I said cheer up, I got something better coming. The state and county is taking over our school.”

While the Haliwas fought to fund their segregated Indian school, civil rights groups, namely the NAACP, assisted other Meadows Indians and their supporters in their plight to protect and expand Hollister School. In late February and early March of 1959, Hollister Elementary School parents and children boycotted the school in order to force the State to build a new facility.<sup>80</sup> By that time, approximately 75 students withdrew from Hollister to attend the Haliwa Indian School and the parents of the children who stayed worried that the county and state would scrap their new building, already two years in the planning.<sup>81</sup> Shortly after a meeting the striking parents held with the county board of education, NAACP Field Secretary Charles A. McLean met with the PTA officers, led by Vernon Lynch. McLean told them what the NAACP had found, which was that the county board had used money meant for Hollister School “to build classrooms for a few former Negroes who had had themselves declared Indians.” In his field report, he claimed: “the newly made Indians were nothing more than light complexioned Negroes, all of whom had attended the Hollister School for generations.” McLean tried to convince the PTA that pursuing integration with whites was the best way to fix their issue, but the striking parents did not wish to integrate schools. Rather, they wanted to block the Haliwa Indian School so that the county and state would revert resources back to Hollister School and the students would return. The Hollister PTA told McLean that they were not interested in

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<sup>80</sup> “N.C. School is Boycotted by Negroes: They Are Attempting to Get State to Build New Structure,” *The Sun*, 27 Feb 1959.

<sup>81</sup> “New Hollister School Discussed at Meeting,” *The Littleton Observer*, Thursday 5 March 1959.



reassignment to white schools because it would contradict “their expressed determination to never ... [identify] with any other race” other than Indian. McLean later wrote that members of the Hollister PTA and others were “trying hard to convince their sisters, brothers and other relatives that they have done very wrong and disgraced their ancestors by establishing a Haliwa Indian Tribe.” Yet, McLean said, the parents ultimately yielded to his advice to pursue integration. Supporters of the Hollister School started a local NAACP branch and met with NAACP officers for advice, including Thurgood Marshall.<sup>82</sup>

Ironically, members of the Hollister PTA were willing to pursue an alternate strategy than the Haliwas—association with African American organizations and use of situational identities as “colored” and even “Negro”—to control their own educational affairs. The Hollister PTA essentially made a racial choice to use the NAACP to meet its own needs to maintain peoplehood. To some members of the Hollister PTA, the Haliwa Indian School not only threatened Hollister School financially, but also divided families. The strategy they pursued, however, only worked to drive a wider wedge between Meadows Indians.

Even in the midst of the controversy, many Haliwa Indians continued attending Pine Chapel Baptist and other Indian and black churches, but they began to feel uncomfortable due to their political and educational goals. In the early days of the Club, tensions over membership ran so high that Club leaders intentionally left church officials

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<sup>82</sup> Activity Reports of Charles McLean, North Carolina State Conference Field Secretary Covering Period of March 1, to June 30, 1959, and Beginning July 1, 1959  
Kelly M. Alexander and Charles McLean, “North Carolina State Conference of Branches National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. A Program of Action Toward Greater Racial Equality in North Carolina.” Prepared by Kelly M. Alexander, President and Chris McLean, Field Secretary Library of Congress, MSS34140, Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Group III Box C: 115, p. 4-6.

off of official Club rolls to hide their participation in Club activities.<sup>83</sup> John Daniel Hedgepeth recalled, “I got the same treatment at the Pine Chapel Church that I got at the school. In fact there were two particular young [black] men who were bigger than I was and if I came outside [the church] they would be out there and say ‘that old Injun.’” The tension at church grew into outright hostility; Haliwa Indians faced a choice, to stay at Pine Chapel and other churches, or leave. Marcellous and Avis Lynch Green were torn over supporting an organization that represented their identity and a church they had attended all their lives. The couple decided to follow Marcellous’s brother Allen Randolph and his wife Lily after some of their relatives and congregants told them that “Lily and Avis is going to Hell, cause [there] ain’t no Indians.”<sup>84</sup>

Both members of Pine Chapel and government officials skeptical of the Haliwas’ Native authenticity questioned why the Haliwas were attending churches with African Americans, but operated an Indian school, if they were indeed a separate race. Vernon Lynch told the media “a lot of us can’t understand why some of our people feel like they can’t send their children to the same school [that] ours attend five days in the week, but on Sunday, [they can] send them to Sunday School to be taught the Bible by a Negro.”<sup>85</sup> Some Indian Pine Chapel members attempted to designate the church an Indian Church, but some church leaders and the colored church association resisted the Indian

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<sup>83</sup> See Haliwa Indian Club Minutes, 9 November 1953, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>84</sup> Avis Lynch Green, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, May 29, 2000, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>85</sup> “Hollister PTA Protests Operation of Haliwa Indian Private School,” *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, NC) Friday, 1 November 1957, p.8.

classification.<sup>86</sup> Avis Lynch Green remembered a county official asked the Haliwas, ““why you ask for an Indian school and still in a colored church?’ ...We had to get out there and go build a church to get the government to [support] the school.””<sup>87</sup> To some members of Pine Chapel and government officials, the attendance of Haliwa Indians who supported a policy of non-association with African Americans, while still attending church with African Americans, was inconsistent. Some Indians held deep roots and leadership positions at their historic church, and believed that they could still regulate their relationships with African Americans. Vernon Lynch and his supporters, however, believed the damage had been done and forced the Haliwa Pine Chapel members out of the church.

Indeed, members of the Haliwa Indian Club decided that rather than face continued scrutiny and threats, they would build their own church. Haliwa Indian Club founder John C. Hedgepeth and his wife Ruth R. Hedgepeth donated two acres of land in Warren County to the Trustees of the Saponi Indian Church on March 25, 1958. The trustees included Haliwa Indian leaders B.B. Richardson, Allen Randolph Green and Elzia T. Richardson.<sup>88</sup> The church represented the first formal, institutional use of one of the Meadows Indians’ historic tribal ancestors, the Saponis. C.D. Brewington influenced the use of the Saponi tribal name through his research and believed that “the most likely antecedents [to the

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<sup>86</sup> Avis Lynch Green to Marvin Richardson; Almorris Lynch, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, September 27, 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Avis Lynch Green, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, May 29, 2000, interview in possession of Marvin Richardson.

<sup>88</sup> John C. Hedgepeth and Ruth R. Hedgepeth, John H. Kerr Jr. to B.B. Richardson, Allen R. Green, and Elizia T. Richardson, Trustees of The Saponi Indian Baptist Church, Warren County Deed Book 190, p. 240-245, 25 March 1958.

Haliwas] were the Saponas and Meherrins.”<sup>89</sup> Brewington along with Mrs. Leon Anderson researched the North Carolina Colonial Records and discovered that the Saponis, Meherrins, and Tuscaroras lived in close proximity to each other “on and near the boundary line of North Carolina and Virginia.” The record counted “one hundred men of the Saponas tribe.” Brewington relied on the geographical location of these historic tribes to the Meadows, but also relied on physical descriptions as well. He noted that the “Saponas Indians were described as tall, handsome men, and the women were well favored and modest in their apparel.” He compared these descriptions of Saponi Indians to Haliwa men at a Club meeting and “counted sixteen men in the audience who were upwards of six feet tall. They are of olive-brown complexion, and as a rule they weigh from 175 to 240 pounds, with black, straight hair and dark eyes.”<sup>90</sup> Yet Haliwa leaders knew of the multi-tribal origins of the Meadows Indians and they did not wish to claim descent from one historic tribe, so the church changed its name to Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church. When it came time break ground on their new Indian sanctuary, the Haliwas marched 200 yards from the Haliwa Indian School to their new site. Mount Bethel’s groundbreaking was widely attended by Haliwa Indians living in Philadelphia, supportive Lumbee Indians, and representatives from the Coharie tribe of Sampson County.<sup>91</sup>

From the end of the World War I era into the beginnings of the civil rights and anti-segregation movements in the late 1950s, Meadows Indians made varied racial choices in reaction to non-Natives’ renewed efforts to essentialize people into black and white

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<sup>89</sup> Howard Lindsay, “Opinions Differ.”

<sup>90</sup> C.D. Brewington, “Haliwas – Saponas.”

<sup>91</sup> “Haliwas Begin Hollister Church,” *Daily Herald (Roanoke Rapids N.C.)*, 10 April 1958.

categories, and the limited economic, social, and political opportunities that accompanied segregation. Some Meadows Indians found economic opportunities outside of the immediate community, but still maintained peoplehood by regulating their relationships with African Americans and supporting Indian-dominated churches. Others used their land resources to sustain peoplehood by erecting schools and supporting their Native neighbors economically. Migration to northern cities provided valuable opportunities not available in the South and Meadows Indians portrayed situational identities to gain economic resources and keep ties to their home communities. Some of these migrants later utilized their experiences up North to lead the charge for Indian recognition. They fought racial classification as non-Native by insisting on an Indian category during the World War II era; further, they reached out to the federal government for assistance in authenticating their Native heritage. Meadows Indians attended historically Indian-dominated schools and churches, which facilitated peoplehood, but were nevertheless part of a bi-racial social system.

The prevalence of the racial binary prompted some Meadows Indians to create separate Indian organizations, schools, and churches, but by doing so exposed Meadows Indians to scrutiny over their Native authenticity. With help from Lumbee Indians, Meadows Indians organized the Haliwa Indian Club to seek Indian recognition, as well as the Haliwa Indian School and Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church, which were pillars of Native peoplehood. Haliwa Indians accentuated and adopted characteristics and policies that aligned with non-Natives expectations of Native authenticity, such as avoidance of relationships with African Americans. Club leaders hired lawyers and researchers to help provide evidence of their indigenous roots and created a narrative of Haliwa Indian origins.

These actions exposed a deep ideological divide amongst Meadows Indians and caused division within and between families, some of which had collaborated in previous decades to secure a separate identity as Indians. While Haliwas worked with white segregationists and other recognized Indians to accomplish their goals and maintain peoplehood, other Meadows Indians used African American organizations to sustain and maintain older institutions of Native peoplehood, such as the Hollister School. Both methods offered different routes to peoplehood, but with racial choices intensifying amid the possibility of integration and equal rights, racial division became part and parcel with peoplehood and tribal autonomy.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDIAN NATION**

By establishing the Haliwa Indian Club, Meadows Indians rejected an ambiguous and situational identity as “colored” people and disavowed relationships or connections to African Americans and other Indian descendants who did not join the Club. The development of the Haliwa Indian Tribe continued older pillars of Native peoplehood, such as kinship and place, as well as a merger of internal and external influences, processes, and experiences. Haliwa Indians founded their own school and church, the Haliwa Indian School and Mt. Bethel Indian Baptist Church, which strengthened the bonds and cooperation between and among Haliwa Indian families and fortified their outward expression of Indian identity. Meadows Indians had always considered themselves a people, connected by kinship and attachment to land, and outsiders had long recognized their distinctiveness as a race, even as they debated whether Indians should have the right to separate recognition of that distinctiveness. In previous decades, those Meadows Indians who became members of the Haliwa Indian Club began expressing themselves not only as a separate community, but also as an autonomous group that exerted control over its own affairs.

Following the organization of the school and church, Haliwa nation-building began in earnest. Indians from other tribes encouraged an already strong desire among Haliwas to practice distinctive cultural traditions that created both another way of expressing an Indian identity and a sphere for autonomy. Club members adopted a formal name for their tribe, the Haliwa Indian Tribe, and began cooperating politically with Natives on both state and

national levels. Haliwas showed a strong commitment to tribal government and pushed for recognition by the state of North Carolina. They worked on the forefront of the Red Power Movement and self-determination policies. These actions solidified the Haliwa Indian Tribe as not just a unified people based on racial identity and shared ancestry; they also shaped an identity as a Native nation with its own government, working to address the Haliwas' economic, social, health, and cultural needs. Their long-standing emphasis on peoplehood became a movement towards nationhood.

Between the early 1960s and early 1970s, Haliwa Indians represented themselves as a Native nation, further establishing themselves as racially Indian according to a complex set of criteria that emerged through their activism during the civil rights, Red Power, and Indian self-determination movements. In dialogue with other tribes, and the state and federal governments, Haliwa Indians maintained a sense of themselves as a people by working towards full control over their own affairs. To build a nation that strove for autonomy, they continued to battle outsiders' attempts to categorize them as non-Native in public records, they gained official recognition as an Indian tribe and revitalized their culture. Their participation in the multi-tribal American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 authenticated their origins in a historic tribe, which in turn encouraged outsiders to recognize their heritage and community as distinctly Indian. During this time they also adopted the powwow as a means of cultural, social, and political expression of Indian identity, and they created the North Carolina Commission of Indians Affairs as a way to advocate for tribal members in state policy, based on their status as a distinct Indian nation, rather than as a racial minority.



The Haliwas' intertribal interactions, political goals, cultural revitalization, and push for autonomy encouraged a distinct identity not only between themselves and people of other races, but between themselves and other Indian descendants in their community, and between themselves and other tribes. "Haliwa" became a distinct tribal identity on its own. The political and cultural identity as Haliwa became the sole legitimate Indian identity among Indian descendants in the community. Peoplehood among the Haliwas shifted away from those who were simply Meadows Indian descendants and became exclusive to Haliwa Indian Tribe members. By emphasizing self-governance and relations with other tribes, Haliwa Indians rejected the racial choices that the white-colored hierarchy in the South had placed upon them. Peoplehood became much more than separating the group from African Americans and gaining recognition for their Indianness—it also entailed the pursuit of political autonomy and a political and cultural identity as Haliwa Indians. At the same time, Haliwas adopted outsiders' standards of Indianness and in so doing, expressed their own racial choice—they maintained ethnic and political separation from their African American neighbors and their Native-descended relatives.

Haliwa Indian Club leaders became involved in the American Indian Chicago Conference (AICC) of 1961 to articulate their distinctive community and gain recognition as an Indian tribe. The AICC was part of the nationwide Indian self-determination and Red Power movements, which aimed to restore tribal rights and change Natives' relationship to the federal government, so that they might use policy to identify their own needs and manage their own affairs. Sol Tax, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago,

conceptualized and organized the conference, which he intended to update the 1928 Meriam Report.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Meriam Report was to assess the economic, health, and education conditions of Native peoples. While the report itself supported a stronger push for assimilation of Native Americans, the New Deal-era programs that followed it used its recommendations to launch early efforts at Native self-determination. Nevertheless, scholars have generally agreed that policymakers during the New Deal failed to heed input from tribes, contributing to the failure of many policies to sustain tribal self-determination.<sup>2</sup> Tax's new initiative wanted Indian communities to state their own needs and solutions, and he brought together 467 Native individuals from 90 different communities throughout the United States. Diverse tribal groups contributed to the *Declaration of Indian Purpose*, which summarized the policy objectives of the conference. Tax asked the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to assist in his efforts. The NCAI acted as a representative voice for federally-recognized tribes, but Tax stipulated that all Indian peoples, including non-federally recognized tribes and those who lived in urban areas, have the opportunity to participate fully in the conference.<sup>3</sup>

While marginalized Indian groups like the Haliwas struggled to gain legitimacy from non-Indians, other tribes also discussed the authenticity of these groups. Tribes debated using the criteria for Indian identity that both the federal government and non-Indians had typically used: federal recognition, a distinct and obvious "Indian" culture, and

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<sup>1</sup> Laurence M. Hauptman and Jack Campisi, "The Voice of Eastern Indians: The American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 and the Movement for Federal Recognition," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 132, No. 4 (Dec., 1988): 317.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians, Abridged Edition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986): 278-279.

<sup>3</sup> Hauptman and Campisi, 317.

the racial ancestry of group members. These issues came to the forefront at the AICC, as tribes and scholars disagreed over whether or not to allow “self-identified Indians,” in the words of Tax, to participate in the conference. Tax thought it was necessary to capture the needs and representation from a wide range of Native peoples, including groups who resided in the Eastern United States. Some Indian tribes, such as those of the Iroquois in New York, believed that practicing traditional religion and ceremonies was important evidence of Indian identity. Members of federally-recognized tribes, especially western reservation-dwelling Indians, judged authenticity by whether or not Indian groups shared a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Still other Indian leaders, such as those from the “Five Civilized Tribes” and others who had experience with slavery and the Old South believed that non-federally recognized tribes were mixed with African Americans and were not legitimate Indians. Haliwa leaders were aware of these concerns about their authentic claims to Indian identity. These concerns influenced their strategies to gain official recognition, revitalize their culture, identify their indigenous roots, maintain their racial identity separate from African Americans, and represent themselves as an Indian tribe or nation.<sup>4</sup>

The Haliwas and other non-federally recognized Indian groups in the South participated in the AICC through the leadership of Judge Lacy W. Maynor, their initial spokesman. Judge Maynor, a Lumbee Indian, was one of the representatives from eastern Natives to help plan and coordinate the AICC. Maynor was the first American Indian judge in North Carolina, serving on the recorder’s court in Maxton, North Carolina. As early as 1958 Maynor was involved in NCAI, even giving a speech at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

in Missoula, Montana.<sup>5</sup> He also mentored and worked alongside his daughter Helen, who was an intelligent and aggressive advocate in her own right. With his leadership abilities and connection to NCAI, Maynor was an excellent bridge between eastern tribes that he knew well and the federally-recognized tribes that dominated NCAI. In particular, Maynor encouraged the Haliwas to participate.

Haliwas immediately benefited from the AICC through the southeastern regional meeting, which included members of other southeastern Indian communities who faced similar social, political, economic, and racial circumstances as the Haliwas. Sol Tax appointed Maynor to head the southeastern regional meeting, which was held at Pembroke State College, a college founded by the Lumbee Indians, in April of 1961. Maynor reached out to several federally-recognized Indian nations in the southeast, including the Eastern Band of Cherokee, but only the Mississippi Band of Choctaws attended.<sup>6</sup> Non-federally acknowledged tribes represented included the Alabama and Florida Creeks<sup>7</sup>, the Florida Choctaw, the Chickahominy, Rappahannock, and Mattaponi of Virginia, and the Haliwa, Waccamaw, and Lumbee of North Carolina.<sup>8</sup> Members of the Person County, North

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<sup>5</sup> Judge Lacy W. Maynor, "The Trail of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Brave," 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, Missoula, MT, 15-19 September 1958, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Series 6. Judge Lacy W. Maynor Papers, 1939-1972, folder 513.

<sup>6</sup> Judge Lacy W. Maynor to "Fellow American Indians" 15 March 1961, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Series 6. Judge Lacy W. Maynor Papers, 1939-1972, folder 514; Judge Lacy W. Maynor to Nancy O. Lurie, 17 March 1961, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Series 6. Judge Lacy W. Maynor Papers, 1939-1972, folder 514.; Hauptman and Campisi, 322.

<sup>7</sup> Probably the tribe now known as the Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Atmore, Alabama. The Poarch Band of Creeks has since become federally acknowledged.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Indian Chicago Conference, April 13-15, 1961, enclosed within Chief O. Oliver Adkins to Sol Tax, 24 May 1961, American Indian Chicago

Carolina Indian community and others received correspondence and participated in the activities as well.<sup>9</sup>

Attendees of the southeastern regional meeting contributed to the *Declaration of Indian Purpose* and identified their concerns, some unique to the southern Native experience. Tribal leaders noted an “overriding concern with education,” including a lack of qualified teachers, inadequate facilities, and a need for vocational and industrial arts training. They desired adult education to learn the “basic skills of reading and writing,” and non-reservation groups expressed a “need for long term loans for higher education of Indian children.” All of the participating tribes attended “‘segregated or separate’ school facilities,” some by choice and others by force, but all wanted education that was equal to their white counterparts. The group concluded that they experienced discrimination most acutely “in education, public accommodations, and job opportunity.” In addition, they expressed that “American Indians had not been afforded first class citizenship” and believed “first Class citizenship for American Indians should become a reality.” Finally, Indian communities cited the need for better housing.<sup>10</sup> While the southeast regional meeting was just a warm-up for the national conference in Chicago, the Haliwas forged long-term relationships with Indian tribes and gained valuable knowledge about Indian

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Conference (AICC) MSS 4806, Box 4, Folder A: General, (Smithsonian) National Anthropological Archives (NAA), Suitland, MD.

<sup>9</sup> Judge Lacy W. Maynor to Nancy O. Lurie, 20 March 1961, American Indian Chicago Conference (AICC) MSS 4806, Box 2, Folder Southeast Regional Meeting, (Smithsonian) National Anthropological Archives (NAA), Suitland, MD.; “Declaration of North Carolina Indians,” n.d., American Indian Chicago Conference (AICC) MSS 4806, Box 4, Folder: Miscellaneous Materials Used During Conference, (Smithsonian) National Anthropological Archives (NAA), Suitland, MD.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Indian Chicago Conference, April 13-15, 1961.

policy, issues and organization. As southern Indians, the participants, especially the non-reservation dwelling and non-federally recognized tribes, shared experiences with racism and segregation, many having adopted strategies to maintain a separate identity from African Americans. Most attendees also shared another problem: lack of official recognition as Indians from their states or the federal government. For the Haliwas, the lack of official governmental recognition and racial classification as non-Indian were their most pressing issues.

The Haliwas sent delegates to the national AICC, where they focused on enhancing their recognition efforts and boosting the way other tribes regarded their authenticity as a Native nation. Their first opportunity to do so came through developing an alliance with members of the Tuscarora Nation. Most Tuscaroras who survived the eighteenth-century Tuscarora War had left North Carolina and joined the Iroquois League in New York. William (Bill) “Fighting Bear” Rickard was among the first Tuscaroras to form a relationship with the Haliwa delegation. Haliwa Chief W.R. Richardson first met Rickard at the AICC in Chicago.<sup>11</sup> William served as a steering committee member for the AICC and chaired the eastern regional meeting at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. Like Sol Tax, Rickard wanted to include non-federally recognized Natives in the east, but coordinating the viewpoints of his constituents, especially the Iroquois Defense League and the Iroquois Longhouse, was delicate and difficult. Other Iroquois leaders were not as passionate about helping non-recognized tribes as Rickard, but he convinced them to

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<sup>11</sup> Ruth Mincher, “Tuscarora Chief Feels Right at Home in This Area,” *The Littleton Observer* (Littleton, North Carolina) 11 April 1963.

participate anyway.<sup>12</sup> From the beginning of the relationship between the Haliwas and Rickard, Rickard demonstrated that he was willing to help the Haliwas authenticate their historic tribal origins and assist them in their recognition efforts.

At the AICC, Rickard relayed what he knew of Tuscarora history to W.R. Richardson, including an explanation of the Haliwas' Tuscarora origins. According to a story passed down through the Rickard family, during the Tuscarora War, English settlers recruited Seminoles and Cherokees to fight against the Tuscaroras. The two tribes cornered Tuscarora families at the Roanoke River, and the Tuscaroras attempted to escape by floating underneath brush piles in the river. "Most all escaped, but a few were trapped when a baby cried out, and the remaining were fired upon," Rickard said.<sup>13</sup> In a further telling of the story, W.R. Richardson claimed that in the fray, "those that were not wounded too bad continued their flight on to the present-day Tuscarora Reservation where they are today. But those that were wounded too bad to continue their flight had to remain in the community of Halifax and Warren County."<sup>14</sup> Though the story was somewhat embellished and in many ways historically inaccurate—the Seminoles were not a separate tribal group during the Tuscarora War for example—it nevertheless tied the Haliwas' origins to the Tuscarora Indians and strengthened the contemporary ties between the two communities. The story became part of the Haliwas' oral tradition of Native peoplehood and authenticated Haliwa Indian identity.

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<sup>12</sup> Hauptman and Campisi, 320-321.

<sup>13</sup> William Rickard, "Affidavit" American Indian Chicago Conference, June 1961, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Subseries 3.1 Lumbee Education and Federal Recognition Files, 1975-2007, Folder 306 Haliwa Indians 1982.

<sup>14</sup> W.R. Richardson, interviewed by Helen Maynor Scheirbeck.

Beyond the AICC, the relationship between Haliwas and Tuscaroras through Rickard and others tightened through visits. Shortly after the AICC, delegations of Haliwa Indian leaders, including W.R. Richardson, Edward Richardson, William McGee, Raleigh J. Daniel, Elsie “Tom” Richardson, and Percy Richardson, visited the Tuscarora Reservation in New York possibly twice between 1961 and 1962.<sup>15</sup> When William Rickard visited Morehead City, North Carolina, in 1962, he invited W.R. Richardson to join him there. Others in attendance were Tuscarora Chiefs Elton Green, Walter Printup, Clinton Rickard (William’s father), and their families.<sup>16</sup> William Rickard then visited the Meadows in 1963, and, in his words, “felt right at home” in Haliwa territory. He and W.R. Richardson visited Magazine Springs near Halifax, a spring thought to be used by Tuscarora Indians. William Rickard attended a Haliwa Indian Club meeting and the two leaders exchanged gifts. Rickard gave Richardson a drum and several ears of corn, while Richardson gave Rickard a book. Rickard told reporter Ruth Mincher that the Haliwas and Tuscaroras are “very similar types of people” and “if they were mixed with the Indians on the reservation, I do not believe you could tell them apart.” Even though Rickard travelled widely throughout Indian country in his various capacities, he believed that the Haliwas were the “first groups of Indians I have met that have the same living modes, customs, and languages” of his people.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Gilbert Marvin Lynch and Pattie Louise Richardson Lynch, interviewed by Marvin Richardson, July 16, 2004, Hollister, NC.

<sup>16</sup> Resolution of the Haliwa Indian Tribe to Tuscarora Tribal Council, October 1978, document on file at the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

<sup>17</sup> Ruth Mincher, “Tuscarora Indian Chief Feels ‘Right At Home’ In This Area.”



The visits and camaraderie between the tribes resulted in a formal endorsement and acknowledgment of Haliwas' Tuscarora ancestry from the Rickards. In an affidavit, William Rickard noted that he "had the pleasure of meeting many Indian Families and observed their methods of living and studied traits that pertain[ed] to Indian people only." Haliwas shared similar methods of preparing corn, he noted, and "family names are the same, physical features in many families are very similar." Most importantly, Rickard observed "that the Indians of the Haliwa Indian community are the direct descendants of remnant groups of Tuscarora, Cherokee, and other Indian tribes and nations occupying their territory many years ago."<sup>18</sup> William Rickard struggled his whole life with emphysema, due to his beating as a child by other Tuscarora children over his father's political stances, and died early and suddenly in September 1964.<sup>19</sup> In Rickard, the Haliwas lost a strong advocate and friend who supported their recognition efforts and acknowledged them as an authentic Indian people. The Haliwas continued their relationship with William's father, Chief Clinton Rickard, and others, and they visited the Tuscarora reservation several more times into the late 1970s on formal tribal business and even later as individuals. The Haliwas' experiences through AICC and their relationship with the Tuscarora Nation encouraged the Haliwas to push harder for official tribal recognition and correction of their race on their vital records.

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<sup>18</sup> William Rickard, "To Whom It May Concern," 8 April 1963, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Subseries 3.1 Lumbee Education and Federal Recognition Files, 1975-2007, Folder 306 Haliwa Indians 1982.

<sup>19</sup> Ewen Alexander and Jeffrey Wollock. "Rickard, William." *Encyclopedia of the American Indian in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2014. *American Indian History Online*. Facts On File, Inc. <http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE43&iPin=ENAIT435&SingleRecord=True> [accessed May 2, 2016].

Regardless of the strides Haliwas made through their contacts with other Indian nations, and their operation of Native-centered educational and religious institutions, the North Carolina state legislature did not officially recognize them as Indians, and most still carried the burden of racial classification as non-Native on their vital records. Since the early 1900s, some Meadows Indians had demanded to be classified as Indian on their birth certificates, other vital records, and the U.S. Census. Starting in the 1940s, J.C. Hedgepeth and other leaders helped their people correct vital documents, which was a primary goal of the Haliwa Indian Club. Sometime around 1965, the Haliwas asked the North Carolina State Attorney General's Office to correct their vital records, but Attorney General Ralph Moody, refused to make the corrections without a court order. But Moody told the tribe how to file a lawsuit against the Department of Vital Statistics, and approximately 500 Haliwa Indians became involved in the suit. A typical complaint read as follows:

That Beaufort Ethlyn Richardson was born on September 19, 1933, in Fishing Creek Township, Warren County, North Carolina, and there is now on file in the Bureau of Vital Statistics a birth certificate showing that the parents of the said Beaufort Ethlyn Richardson, namely: Cleveland Richardson and Ella M. Lynch, are members of the colored race, when in truth and in fact, they are members of the Haliwa Indian race.

Chief W.R. Richardson recalled that he and others took tremendous pains to find and copy all of the birth certificates and records; in court the Department's attorneys put him on the stand and "grilled [him] like a criminal being tried." Continuing an older practice, tribal leaders also obtained affidavits from local whites attesting to their Indian identity. In April of 1965, the judge ruled in the Haliwas' favor and ordered the Department of Vital Statistics and local counties to correct the records.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Arvell Richardson, et. al vs. Dr. J.W.R. Norton, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer of the State Board of Health, and Glenn A. Flinchum, Chief of Public Health Statistics Section of North Carolina, 15 April 1965,

Simultaneously, the Haliwas successfully gained official recognition from the state legislature as an Indian tribe, an acknowledgement of the extraordinary leadership of Chief W.R. Richardson. The Haliwas were already partially state-recognized because North Carolina, and Halifax and Warren Counties, supported a segregated Indian school. The lawsuit meant that the Haliwas had satisfactorily demonstrated their Native ancestry and identity to state and county officials. In 1965 attorney Julian Allsbrook, a North Carolina state senator, sponsored recognition legislation.<sup>21</sup> On April 15 of that year, the North Carolina Senate passed Bill No. GS 71-7 and the Haliwas were officially recognized as the Haliwa Indian Tribe. On the same day the members of the Haliwa Indian Club elected Club President W.R. Richardson permanent Chief of the tribe.<sup>22</sup> State recognition unified the Haliwas and authenticated their peoplehood.

After having been state-recognized, the Haliwa Indian Tribe set its sights on federal recognition and sought closer relations with federally-recognized tribes. By 1969 the Haliwa Indian Tribe had joined the National Congress of American Indians and ramped up its efforts to gain support for its federal recognition from NCAI and individual tribes. The Haliwa leadership, now formed into a tribal council, sent a resolution to NCAI requesting support for the tribe's federal recognition. The resolution mentioned that the Haliwas were

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Documents on file at the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.; Lumbee River Legal Services, "Haliwa-Saponi Petition for Federal Acknowledgment," 1989, 143.

<sup>21</sup> Resolution 64, Senate Joint Resolution 702, General Assembly of North Carolina 1983 Session Ratified Bill, "A Joint Resolution Honoring the Life and Memory of Julian R. Allsbrook," <http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Resolutions/PDF/1983-1984/Res1983-64.pdf> [accessed May 10, 2016]; Jack Campisi, et. al, *Haliwa-Saponi Petition for Federal Acknowledgment*, Lumbee River Legal Services, Inc. in Cooperation with Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Inc. (1989): 139.

<sup>22</sup> Haliwa Indian Tribe Minutes, 15 April 1965, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, North Carolina.

a “small group of mix tribal bloods” numbering 2,500 and urged the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help the tribe get federal recognition.<sup>23</sup>

Since their formal reorganization in the Haliwa Indian Club, the Haliwas made political and social moves that resulted in relationships with people and groups that could understand, verify, and authenticate the Indian identity they had sustained for so long. With help from Lumbee Indians and others, the Haliwas created institutions for Indians that communicated their own criteria and what others understood as Indian. Through the AICC Haliwa Indians met other tribes from around the country, which exposed them to ideas and issues that were shared across the nation. As had happened in other times when Meadows Indians sought recognition as Natives, outsiders, including non-Natives and federally recognized Native nations, projected their notions of indigenous authenticity and forced Meadows Indians to express their community in terms those outsiders could understand. When the Tuscaroras acknowledged, in part, their kinship with the Haliwas, Haliwas lived up to some of the expectations set forth by recognized Natives and non-Natives as well, such as the thought that legitimate Indian peoples were members and descendants of aboriginal tribes. On the other hand, many recognized tribes from Indian Territory and the West, especially, questioned the legitimacy of non-recognized tribes. They dismissed their Indian identity based on their lack of status with the federal government and their presumed African American ancestry. These challenges to Haliwa Indian identity strengthened the Haliwas’ resolve to be officially recognized by the state and federal governments. Haliwa Indians began seeing and representing themselves as an

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<sup>23</sup> Haliwa Indian Tribe “Resolution #1,” 26 September 1969, Helen Maynor Scheirbeck Papers, UNC Chapel Hill, Southern History Collection Number 05526, Subseries 3.1 Lumbee Education and Federal Recognition Files, 1975-2007, Folder 306 Haliwa Indians 1982.

Indian nation, not just as a race of people. These experiences and interactions with other tribes encouraged a political consciousness and identity distinct from the Haliwas' African American neighbors, their Indian-descended relatives in the Meadows and other tribes as well. Through their actions Haliwas further distanced themselves from situational identities and created their own historical narrative of indigenous origins based on a blend of old and new knowledge, which transformed their peoplehood away from dependence on outsiders' racial categories and towards control of their own history.

Education continued to be a primary focus of Haliwa nation-building. Intertribal interactions with Chickahominy Indians from Virginia encouraged post-secondary educational opportunities, giving Haliwas another option to provide more independence from the segregated education system they faced. At the 1961 AICC regional meeting, the Haliwas and the Chickahominies formed a political, social, and cultural alliance. Like the Haliwas, Chickahominies struggled to provide educational opportunities for their students as non-whites in a segregated South, where race determined much about educational options. Chickahominy Indians had attended high school and college at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, starting in the early 1940s. Bacone College began as Indian University, and was founded to provide educational and Christian guidance to Indians of Indian Territory, separate from the federal government's boarding school and assimilation efforts.<sup>24</sup> Virginia's Indian Schools did not offer high school education and Native students were not allowed to attend white schools; they also refused to attend schools with blacks. In its early days, Bacone offered a high school division and eventually became a junior

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<sup>24</sup> Maurice C. Wright, "Bacone College a History," (Thesis, Butler University, 1968), *Graduate Thesis Collection*, Paper 25, 6-13, <http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses/25/> [accessed 16 May, 2016].

college. Dozens of Chickahominy, Mattaponi, and other Virginia Indians attended Bacone College throughout the 1940s and into the present day.<sup>25</sup> Chickahominy Chief O. Oliver Adkins most certainly assisted Chief W.R. Richardson in getting Haliwas enrolled at Bacone in the 1960s.

The Haliwas' relationship with the Chickahominy demonstrated how the Haliwas managed their own affairs and provided their children with an opportunity to attend college, while still maintaining their distinct identity as Indians. Chief Adkins and Chief Richardson worked as representatives of their own individual Indian nations to provide those opportunities for Haliwas. Through their relationship with the Chickahomines, the Haliwa students were allowed to attend a mostly-Indian school at Bacone. In order for Haliwas to attend Bacone, however, they first had to demonstrate to school administrators that they were a legitimate Indian people. Having a racial identity as "self-identified Indians," in the words of Sol Tax, was not enough; students had to be members of a tribe. Like the Lumbees and Tuscaroras, the Chickahominies validated their tribal status and encouraged Haliwas to seize autonomy.

Haliwa students experienced multi-tribal cultural and social events at Bacone, along with Chickahominies and other Natives from the southeast and Oklahoma, but they also represented their identities in terms that non-Natives and Natives alike expected. Pattie Richardson and Melva Richardson were the first Haliwas to attend Bacone in the fall of 1961. The next year a quartet of Haliwa students, Ernestine Evans, Harvey Green, Rosa Jean Richardson, and Lillian Richardson, attended Bacone as well. Pattie Richardson Jones

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<sup>25</sup> For a list of "non-federal" Bacone students, see Cedric Sunray, H.E.L.P. (Haskell Endangered Legacy Project), <http://www.helphaskell.com/non-rec-student-list.html> [accessed 16 May 2016].

remembered attending stomp dances and other social gatherings held by local tribes, which added to her cultural knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Chickahominies had attended Bacone for years and older students mentored the newer Haliwas. Bacone College, an institution founded to educate Indians, legitimized the Haliwa Indians as Natives and exposed them to other southeastern Indians, including federally-recognized Indian tribes. Through their experiences students learned from other Indians what it meant to belong to a distinct tribe, with its own cultural expressions that were similar or different from other tribes. Being Indian became defined by belonging to a tribal community, not just belonging to a separate race. Yearbook records from Bacone show that Haliwa students internalized and communicated a “tribal” identity to students and school administrators, but also demonstrated that Haliwas acknowledged their multi-tribal origins. Pattie Richardson, for example represented herself as a “Tuscarora” in 1961 and as a “Tuscarora-Sapony” in 1962. Melva Richardson represented herself as a “Cherokee-Sapony” in 1961 and a Tuscarora-Sapony in 1962. Lillian Richardson and Ernestine Evans were both “Haliwa-Cherokee-Tuskararas.” Harvey Green and Rosa Richardson did not add another moniker to their tribal affiliation and were just “Haliwa.”<sup>27</sup> Haliwa attendance at Bacone was short-lived, however, because students wanted to be closer to home, or found educational opportunities elsewhere. In 1962 Pembroke State College began admitting Haliwa students and Pattie Richardson and Melva Richardson enrolled there.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Pattie Richardson Jones, personal communication to Marvin Richardson, September 2006, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>27</sup> Cedric Sunray, H.E.L.P. (Haskell Endangered Legacy Project), <http://www.helphaskell.com/non-rec-student-list.html> [accessed 16 May 2016].

<sup>28</sup> Glenda Chavis Adkins, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson.

Natives from other tribes further encouraged the revitalization and continuance of community events and institutions that expressed a distinct Haliwa identity and offered them another sphere within which to exert autonomy. These new activities quickly became traditions that demonstrated the authenticity of Haliwa identity to non-Natives. Ray Holy Elk, an Oglala Lakota from Pine Ridge Reservation, was one of the first teachers at the Haliwa Indian School.<sup>29</sup> Holy Elk came to North Carolina with the military during World War II, married a Lumbee, and settled in Robeson County. He entered Pembroke State College, majoring in elementary education and art.<sup>30</sup> In 1958, when Holy Elk taught at the Haliwa Indian School, he also served as assistant scoutmaster for the Haliwa Boy Scout Troop 406, which had started a year earlier. He began instructing Haliwas in aspects of Plains Indian culture. Though the Plains culture was not indigenous to eastern North Carolina, it was nevertheless “Indian” and communicated a message of authenticity to Haliwas and non-Natives as well. The scout troop, under the tutelage of Holy Elk, occasionally performed at Boy Scout events and other festivals. Holy Elk and Willis James Richardson, a student at the Haliwa Indian School, and son of Haliwa Indian Club founder Lonnie A. Richardson, were pictured in a news story wearing Indian regalia for the performance.<sup>31</sup> Richardson remembered of Holy Elk and early Haliwa dancing: “He taught me to dance. I had started dancing some before him and he taught me, told me...to do a little bit of dancing.” Richardson was the only early Haliwa Indian to dance publically, and Randolph Green, Jr. drummed for him. The two even appeared together on a local

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<sup>29</sup> Ray Elk, Interviewed by Dexter Brooks, University of Florida Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Lumbee Oral History Collection, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00007100/00001/2j> [accessed 24 April 2016].

<sup>30</sup> Ibid; Zed Denny, “Haliwas Seeking Recognition,” *News & Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.) 18 August 1958.

<sup>31</sup> “Shades of the Past,” *Daily Herald* (Roanoke Rapids, NC), 16 February 1959.



television station.<sup>32</sup> Richardson, before attending the Haliwa Indian School, frequently got into fights with non-Natives at Hollister, but after the cultural renaissance experienced at the Haliwa Indian Club and Haliwa Indian School, Richardson felt free to express himself as a Native person publically. The performances not only increased the Haliwas' pride in their Native identity, but also elevated their authenticity for non-Natives as well.

Haliwas took this adoption of Indian rituals a step further in the mid-1960s. After 1965, the Haliwas instituted a similar annual celebration to commemorate its state recognition—the event became known as a powwow and quickly grew into an important symbol of Haliwa identity and peoplehood, cultural revitalization, nationhood, and facilitated intertribal relationships. The Chickahominies again served as role models; the Western Chickahominy tribe had held an annual fall festival since 1951, which featured speeches and Indian dancing.<sup>33</sup> The Haliwas' first festival, held in April of 1965, was not open to the public. The event featured games, food, and general fellowship. The next year, however, the event featured dancing by the Chickahominy tribe's own dance group. The second annual celebration was also private and included games, food, and other competition-style events such as logrolling. Clifton Holmes, a Bacone attendee, and other members of the Chickahominy dance group taught Haliwas how to dance and make regalia. Some of the dances were adapted from Boy Scout dances and others may have originated from original Powhatan traditions.<sup>34</sup> At least one source found the origins of

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<sup>32</sup> Willis James Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, October 27, 2009, Hollister, N.C., Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase I., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>33</sup> Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 239.

<sup>34</sup> Arnold Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, N.C., January 4, 2001.

Chickahominy powwows and dancing with the Nanticoke-Lenni Lenape Indians of New Jersey.<sup>35</sup> By having such a lengthy connection to Oklahoma via Bacone College, Chickahominy Indians most certainly picked up dances and songs from Oklahoma Natives who had extensive powwow and ceremonial activity. Like other eastern Natives, the Chickahominy had lost many of their heritage traditions and adopted forms of cultural expression from other tribes and groups in order to take pride in their Indian identity amongst themselves and to outsiders. Nevertheless, Chickahominies taught Haliwas how to dance, and Haliwas in turn transformed those dances into their own unique dance forms. By transforming those dances, Haliwas created cultural expressions that were distinctly Haliwa and were incorporated to project a Haliwa identity separate and apart from other tribal cultures.

The Haliwa tribe held its first public powwow on April 15, 1967, two years after receiving state recognition. Members of four tribes, the Haliwas, Chickahominies, Lumbees, and Cherokees participated in the event. Chief O. Oliver Adkins gave The Lord's Prayer in Indian Sign language and Arthur Junaluska, Cherokee director, writer, actor, and lecturer, among many other talents, and a descendant of two Cherokee Chiefs, gave a keynote address to the crowd. Junaluska "spoke of the origin of the Indian tribes, their customs and beliefs [and] their contributions to American culture." Glenda Evans was crowned the tribe's princess as Miss Haliwa and the Chickahominy dance troupe performed. Haliwa Indian Edward (Running Bear) Richardson and his son Schron performed a war dance. The three-hour program also featured a pony parade, the Haliwa

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<sup>35</sup> David Adkins with Glenda Chavis Adkins, interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Charles City, VA, September 3, 2009, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project Phase I., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, North Carolina.

majorettes, and Wanda Richardson walking the barrel in her regalia.<sup>36</sup> The Saturday festivities were open to the public, but Friday nights were reserved for Natives only, who gathered into the early hours of the morning. The 1968 powwow program featured much of the same activities as the year before, including Arthur Junaluska as the principal speaker. Junaluska shared important wisdom about the plight of Native peoples, including how despite adopting white ways and being progressive, whites still took Native lands and placed indigenous peoples on reservations.<sup>37</sup> By 1968, the Haliwas had formed their own dance group and they performed alongside the Chickahominy dancers.<sup>38</sup> By having a separate spot on the powwow program, Haliwa dancers could perform dances that represented a distinct Haliwa identity and cultural expression.

At the same time Haliwas adopted the powwow as an important social and cultural event to celebrate their official state recognition and display their autonomy, another institution of peoplehood, the Haliwa Indian School, declined and eventually closed due to federally mandated integration through *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other U.S. Government education policies. During the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, congress enacted the Civil Rights Act in July of 1964, which ended public segregation, banned employment discrimination, and forced integration of public

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<sup>36</sup> Rita Mills Harris, Interviewed by Karen Lynch Harley, Hollister, N.C., November 8, 2011, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase II., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC; “Haliwa Indians Hold Pow Wow Saturday,” *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, N.C.) 21 April 1967; a surviving picture of Wanda Richardson shows that she wore a Native regalia at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Powwow.

<sup>37</sup> Billy Stancil, “Junaluska Challenges Indians To ‘Gain Awareness Of Life,’” *Rocky Mount Telegram* (Rocky Mount, N.C.), April 1968.

<sup>38</sup> “Haliwa Tribe To Host Pow Wow At Hollister, Apr. 13,” *The Enfield Progress* (Enfield, N.C.) 11 April 1968.

schools with a federal obligation to oversee the process.<sup>39</sup> County school boards attempted to satisfy the law by adopting “freedom-of-choice” plans whereby non-whites were assigned to white schools in order to actively integrate.<sup>40</sup> In Warren County, African American leaders filed a civil suit against the Warren Board of Education, which prompted the Board to reassign some black students to white schools in the county. Warren County became the scene of school boycotts and racial tension.<sup>41</sup> In the summer of 1965 the U.S. Office of Education made a ruling “forbidding the transfer of pupils across district lines.” This ruling affected both the Littleton High School, which had students from Halifax and Warren Counties, as well as the Haliwa School. In its bid to bring its school policies into compliance with the Civil Rights Act, Halifax County ruled that no new students, including first graders would be allowed to attend the Littleton or Haliwa Schools for the 1965-1966 term.<sup>42</sup>

Chief W.R. Richardson and the Haliwa leadership engaged state and county education leaders, as well as U.S. Congressmen to assist them in keeping their school open in order to maintain it as an important symbol of their autonomy and peoplehood. The Haliwa School was under attack because of its poor facilities—the health department had condemned the building— and the pressures of integration. In a letter of distress to U.S. Congressman L.H. Fountain, Chief Richardson told Fountain that the tribe wanted “Halifax, and Warren County Boards of Education to join hands and replace this old

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<sup>39</sup> Link, 406.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 410.

<sup>41</sup> “School Integration Top News Story of 1964,” *The Littleton Observer* (Littleton, N.C.), 31 December 1964, p.1.

<sup>42</sup> “Meeting Scheduled on School Problem,” *The Littleton Observer* (Littleton, N.C.), 22 July 1965, p.1.

building with a new one.” The tribe was “not trying to evade Desegregation” and “realize if this school continues it must Desegregate, We are willing to do that.” He alluded to the advocacy strategy the Haliwas had employed over the years: “We have not put on any demonstration, or had any set [sic] ins, or created any trouble at all. Even tho [sic] we has beg[ged], and pleaded for help.” Chief Richardson and the Haliwas wanted the Halifax County families to continue to attend the school and if not the tribe would “suffer a great hardship on our children to be split up.” In a postscript the Chief told the Congressman that just today he had received word from Warren County Superintendent that the Haliwa School would close after the current term. Richardson again begged Fountain for help so that “we the Haliwa Indian might survive.” Similar to the arrangement Meadows Indians made in the 1880s at Bethlehem School, the Haliwas realized they could not operate an exclusive Indian school, but by being in the Indian community, the school would be predominantly Indian and the Haliwas could exercise some control and maintain unity amongst the Indian people. With Fountain’s help the counties struck a deal with each other and the U.S. Office of Education allowing Halifax County students to attend Littleton High School for the 1966-1967 school year and the same for the Haliwa School. However, only grades one through eight were taught at Haliwa and the high school was closed.<sup>43</sup>

Closure of the Haliwa High School dealt a blow to the confidence and psyche of Haliwa Indian high school students and pushed them back into a world of discrimination and denial of their Indian identity—Haliwas reacted through protests, displaying outward signs of their identity, and by choosing schools to keep Indians separate from African

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<sup>43</sup> “Agreement Is Reached on School Problem: Present Enrollment Plan To Be Retained,” *The Littleton Observer* (Littleton, N.C.), 21 April 1966, p. 1.

Americans. Haliwa high school students had a choice of school and the Warren County students attended John Graham High School, while most of the Halifax County students chose Aurelian Springs High School over Eastman. Aurelian Springs was initially a white school and Eastman a “Negro” school, which was attended mostly by African Americans and Indian descendants who chose not to identify with the tribe. In Halifax County, W.R. Richardson struck a deal with the county board and school administrators to allow the Indian students to attend Aurelian Springs to increase the numbers and to limit the number of blacks who attended.<sup>44</sup> Glenda Evans was among the first group of Indians who integrated schools and remembered at Aurelian Springs “we didn’t want to be there. They didn’t want us there, so you know, we were forced on each other.” She described her group as “icebreakers” that set the tone for Haliwas to come after the first group. At Aurelian Springs, Evans felt like a second-class citizen and school was no longer enjoyable. She and a cousin protested the new arrangement by playing hooky for the first time, because she did not enjoy school as much as she did at Haliwa.<sup>45</sup> On the Warren County side of the community, Haliwa Indians attended John Graham in Warrenton, which was much more diversely integrated with white students and a few black students as well. Barry Richardson, one of the first waves of high school students, remembered a lot of racial tension at John Graham and fighting. “The students would say ‘woo, woo, woo, woo’ you know and like that and we took to wearing our regalia, part of our regalia, beadwork, anything that would let us stand as Indians.” Both white and African American students

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<sup>44</sup> Archie Lynch, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, N.C., January 11, 2012, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase II., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>45</sup> Glenda V. Evans, Interviewed by Cynthia Greenlee-Donnell, Hollister, NC, October 24, 2009, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase I., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

and faculty teased the Haliwa Indians and did not want to believe the Haliwas were real Natives. Many of the Haliwa students could not handle being in an integrated school and dropped out.<sup>46</sup> Archie Lynch explained the devastating effects integration had on the education of Haliwa students: “we lost a lot of intelligent, very intelligent people during the time of our school being closed.” Like people of other racial groups, many Haliwa Indians did not react positively to integration after having attended schools with their own race exclusively. Their racial experiences at integrated schools encouraged Haliwa youth to learn more about their cultural heritage and share outward signs of Indianness to their classmates. As their ancestors had done previously, Haliwa Indians adapted their practices to maintain autonomy and a distinct identity as Indians.

After having lost the high school due to integration and poor facilities, Chief Richardson and members of the Haliwa P.T.A. used the Haliwa students’ treatment at county public high schools to desperately try to keep their school open for the remaining grades. Haliwa leaders W.R. Richardson and Merzie Mills charged that non-Indian students at Aurelian Springs sent Haliwa students ““threatening notes”” and the teachers and students had “discriminated against them for a long, long time.” Mills and Richardson asked once again for the counties to work together and build a new Haliwa School, which would be integrated. A federal civil rights official, Ken Haddock, recommended the closure of the school due to “deficiencies in equipment and curriculum.”<sup>47</sup> Despite the challenges, the Haliwas still held on to its elementary-middle school and actually added a

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<sup>46</sup> Barry McCray Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC,, July 11, 2011, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase II, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>47</sup> Roy Parker, Jr. “Guidelines Threaten Indian School,” *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.) 21 May 1967, p. 9.

kindergarten class to its grades as well in 1967-1968. Through Warren County the Haliwas operated the only kindergarten in Warren County with funds provided by the federal government through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). By the end of the 1969 school year, however, the Haliwas could not keep their school open and Warren County decided to close it.<sup>48</sup> The Haliwas may have continued operating their facility as a private school, but the financial burden would have been too great.

Closing the Haliwa Indian School was the most devastating setback to the Haliwas' organizational goals and its efforts to move forward as a Native nation. With the closing of the school, starting in 1967, Haliwa students were once again divided by county and could not go to school together. The Haliwa Indian School facilitated Native peoplehood and cooperation since Haliwa Indians contributed their finances, time, and labor to building and operating the facility. Through their school, Haliwa Indians gained recognition of their separate identity and strengthened connections with other recognized Native peoples, especially the Lumbees. Outsiders' skeptical views of Haliwa Indian identity and ancestry during the school controversy prompted historical research about Haliwa aboriginal origins and struggle for recognition. The knowledge gained provided a deeper insight into their tribal origins and fostered pride in their heritage. The Haliwa Indian Club, Haliwa Indian School and Mt. Bethel Indian Baptist Church eliminated the need for situational identities as colored or secret identities as Native peoples. Haliwa Indian School teacher, Roy Holy Elk assisted the Haliwas in reclaiming and practicing Native culture and displaying it to non-Natives as well. Native teachers nurtured Haliwa students and allowed the students to be comfortable as Indian people. Finally, the progress made through the Haliwas'

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<sup>48</sup> "Young Are Taught at Haliwa," *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, N.C.) 1 February 1968.



organizing efforts and associations with other tribes, mainly through the AICC provided an opportunity for Haliwa students to get a secondary education at historic Indian colleges Bacone College and Pembroke State College.

Closure of the Haliwa Indian School heightened the importance of the powwow as an event that facilitated peoplehood and nationhood through cultural practices, political activism, and Native nationhood. With the closure of the Haliwa Indian School, Halifax and Warren Counties separated Haliwa students again, but the powwow and cultural practices the Haliwas reclaimed, brought unity and pride, especially to Haliwa youth. Haliwa youth, with the support of their parents formed a culture group, which included about thirty Haliwas. Clifton Holmes and other Chickahominies taught and mentored the Haliwa youth in dance and regalia. Rita Mills Harris, one of the original members of the group remembered: “we would teach each other, we would help each other.” “It was a closeness that I [will] never forget. We loved it. We would have our little culture class; we’d meet every Tuesday evening, about 7 o’clock at night up at the school.” Older Haliwa leaders like James Mills, Robert Mills, and Chief W.R. Richardson encouraged the young people and would “go back and tell about how things were when they were young, their culture, what they used to do.”<sup>49</sup> Barry Richardson, one of the earlier Haliwa dancers, remembered that dressing in regalia made him “feel like an Indian.”<sup>50</sup> In the absence of the Haliwa Indian School, the powwow and other cultural practices kept the people unified across county boundaries.

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<sup>49</sup> Rita Mills Harris, Interviewed by Karen Lynch Harley.

<sup>50</sup> Barry Richardson, personal communication to Marvin Richardson 19 January 2001.

The powwow also incorporated and facilitated the Haliwas' political goals, which were to become federally recognized, in order to seek greater autonomy, solidify their nationhood, and gain needed resources for the community. W.R. Richardson convinced Walter S. Jackson, principal chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, to serve as guest speaker at the powwow. Forrest Gerard, a Blackfeet citizen of Montana and a staff member of the BIA, introduced Jackson.<sup>51</sup> Other guests of the Haliwas in the early powwows included Tecumseh Cook and Curtis Custalow Chiefs of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi, respectively.<sup>52</sup> In 1971 Chief Wendall Chino, president of the Mescalero Apache Tribe of New Mexico served as guest speaker for the most well-attended Haliwa Indian Powwow to date.<sup>53</sup> Haliwa Indians often complained about the long speeches, because they disrupted the fun activities, especially the dancing, but they served a wider political purpose. Out of town guests who had travelled a long distance often stayed with Chief Richardson, who certainly took advantage of the time to gain support and strengthen ties to powerful people, especially government officials and members of federally recognized tribes.

Through their adoption of the powwow and other efforts of cultural revitalization, the Haliwas incorporated cultural traditions, which displayed a distinct identity separate from African Americans and their Indian-descended relatives in the Meadows. The

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<sup>51</sup> "Indian Heritage Displayed At Pow Wow," *Rocky Mount Evening Telegram* (Rocky Mount, N.C.) 22 April 1969; "Forrest Gerard, Blackfeet, Architect of Indian Self-Determination Has Walked On, *Native News Online.Net*, 30 December 2013, <http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/forrest-gerard-blackfeet-architect-indian-self-determination-walked/> [accessed 13 May 2016].

<sup>52</sup> "Haliwa Indians Hold Annual Pow-Wow," *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, N.C.) 23, April 1970.

<sup>53</sup> "Miss Lynch Crowned Princess During Pow Wow Ceremonies Held Saturday," *The Warren Record* (Warrenton, NC) 22 April 1971.

powwow was an “Indian-only” activity though the public was encouraged to watch. Through dance and music, much like religious practices or other beliefs, the powwow became a pillar of Haliwa Indian peoplehood and nationhood. Regardless of the origins of the dances and songs, powwow culture was Indian and Haliwas adopted it as their own. In the absence of the Haliwa Indian School, the powwow and the arts and crafts associated with it facilitated social interactions amongst Haliwa Indians on both sides of the county line. The powwow culture also accommodated public displays of Indianness to non-Natives through the public powwow itself and through performances, parades, reenactments and other events. Chief W.R. Richardson regularly took dancers to various places around the state. Bobby Jones Richardson remembered that the performances communicated to non-Natives the survivability and viability of the Haliwas as an Indian people, despite their status as a non-federally recognized Indian tribe: “my motivation was simply, we’re here, deal with it. We don’t live on a reservation, no. But that doesn’t mean that we’re not Indian. That was my feeling on the matter. The people that live on the reservation aren’t the only Indians in this country.”<sup>54</sup>

The Haliwas’ cultural and political activities continued their push to be recognized as indigenous peoples, which began in the late nineteenth century. The Haliwas’ longer fixation on recognition as Native peoples more closely fits what Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler have called “the politics of survival.” The “politics of survival” was in process before the classic Red Power Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and is part of “an American Indian political tradition that preceded, spanned the full breadth of,

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<sup>54</sup> Bobby Jones Richardson, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, Hollister, NC, February 24, 2012, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase II, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

and extends past the close of the twentieth century.”<sup>55</sup> As with other time periods of major Native policy or political movements, the Haliwas and other similar tribes were sometimes on the periphery of these movements, but used these activities to further their own organizational and political goals.

In the 1960s through the early 1970s, experiences gained through the AICC also encouraged tribal leaders to pursue self-determination and autonomy as a way address the economic, political, and health needs of their communities. On the federal level, tribes benefitted from programs to fight poverty built on self-determination, but state-recognized and non-recognized tribes in North Carolina were not directly eligible for those programs.<sup>56</sup> In 1963 Governor Terry Sanford established the North Carolina Fund, which was a five-year program to deal with discrimination and economic deprivation. The program started with private dollars, from local philanthropies, but after the passage of the federal Economic Opportunity Act and creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) in 1964, became the agency to administer those funds in North Carolina.<sup>57</sup> North Carolina focused much of its time and resources to the rural areas, which were the poorest communities in the state. Native Americans lived in rural areas and benefitted indirectly from the North Carolina Fund and spin-off programs after the North Carolina Fund ended. Alton Bruce Jones, a Lumbee Indian, worked for Manpower Development Cooperation

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<sup>55</sup> Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds., “Introduction” in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (Santa Fe: 2007): xii.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel M. Cobb, “Talking the Language of the Larger World,” in Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds., *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (Santa Fe: 2007): 168-169.

<sup>57</sup> Robert R. Korstad, James L. Leloudis, and Billy Barnes, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (North Carolina Scholarship Online: July 2014): 1-2.

and its director George Altry. Altry had previously worked for Senator Sam Erwin, who also employed Helen Maynor Scheirbeck, daughter of Judge Lacy Maynor. Although Erwin worked closely with the Eastern Band of Cherokee, Scheirbeck convinced Erwin to help the Lumbees and other tribes of North Carolina. Through these connections, several Lumbee leaders such as Rod Locklear, Alton Bruce Jones, Horace Locklear, and anthropologist Gerald Sider founded the Regional Development Association (RDA), which turned into the Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA) in 1968. LRDA was a non-profit organization to tackle the economic, housing, social, and cultural issues of the Lumbee people, as well as vehicle to gain funds for those purposes. LRDA was a de-facto “government” for the Lumbee Indians.<sup>58</sup>

As with other actions of Native self-determination in North Carolina, the Lumbees inspired and worked with other tribes to create an organization, the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, to provide services and programs to combat the terrible economic, political, and social conditions of North Carolina’s Natives. In the late 1960s, Alton Bruce Jones and Helen Maynor Scheirbeck consulted with Clarence McCoy who had directed the Indian commission in New Mexico, to help develop a statewide agency for Indians.<sup>59</sup> Tribal leaders, including Chief W.R. Richardson, Chief Clifton Freeman (Waccamaw-Siouan), Early Maynor (Lumbee), and James Brewington (Coharie), lobbied Governor Robert Scott and state legislators about creating the Commission.<sup>60</sup> Through his

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<sup>58</sup> Alton Bruce Jones, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson, February 25, 2011, Raleigh, NC, Haliwa Indian School Documentation Project, Phase II., Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, N.C.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher Arris Oakley, *Keeping the Circle: American Indian Identity in Eastern North Carolina, 1885-2004* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005): 97.

lobbying efforts to gain state recognition for the Haliwas, Chief Richardson had also built up political clout with legislators and was a dominant leader in the negotiations to establish the Commission.<sup>61</sup>

On July 20, 1971, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified S.B. 642 to establish the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs (NCCIA). The purpose of the commission was to “deal fairly and effectively with Indian affairs: to bring local, state, and federal resources into focus for the implementation or continuation of meaningful programs for Indian citizens of the State of North Carolina.” In addition, the Commission was created to provide protection for Native peoples, assist in social and economic development and “to promote recognition of and the right of Indians to pursue cultural and religious traditions considered by them to be sacred and meaningful to native Americans.” Initially only four tribes were members of the Commission, including the Lumbee, Haliwa, Coharie, and Waccamaw-Siouan.<sup>62</sup>

Through the establishment of the NCCIA, the Haliwas were able to solidify their governmental structure and gain access to resources to tackle the bad economic, social, health, cultural, and housing issues their people faced. The Commission served as a pass-through organization for grants and services, which were provided to the Haliwas and other member tribes. These experiences allowed greater self-determination and encouraged the Haliwas and others to seek resources on their own. Eventually the Haliwa Indian Tribe incorporated as a non-profit organization and began seeking grant funds on its own. The

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<sup>61</sup> Alton Bruce Jones, Interviewed by Marvin Richardson.

<sup>62</sup> State of North Carolina 1971 Session Laws and Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly at the Regular Session Held in the City of Raleigh Beginning on Wednesday, the Thirteenth Day of January, A.D. 1971, Published by Authority, Lithographed by Winston Printing Company, Winston-Salem, N.C., U.S.A., p. 1591-1593.

tribe built an administrative office and with help from the Commission established a day care. The tribe also gained funds to enhance its cultural program and offered arts, crafts, singing, and dancing classes. The Haliwas were cultural and political leaders in the state and helped the Coharies and Waccamaw-Siouans organize their own powwows, with Haliwas largely the entertainment in the first initial years. The Haliwas even participated in cultural events sponsored by the Eastern Band of Cherokees.

In the late 1950s through the 1970s, Haliwa Indians sought greater autonomy as a Native nation by adapting to southern social, legal, and political circumstances, as well as participating in the cultural and political renaissance of the self-determination and Red Power movements. The Haliwa Indian School served as the center of the Haliwas' peoplehood, but the final disintegration of segregation through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 closed the school, forcing the Haliwas to adopt other strategies to keep the Haliwas unified. The American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 facilitated Haliwa intertribal relationships with the Tuscarora and Chickahominy Indians, which helped boost Haliwa recognition efforts, educational opportunities, and cultural revitalization. Haliwa students were enrolled at the Indian-centered Bacone College in Muskogee Oklahoma and the Lumbee-founded Pembroke State College. Through the leadership of Chief W.R. Richardson the Haliwas gained recognition as a tribe in 1965 and successfully litigated the legacy of racial classification as non-Indian by suing the state and having their vital records corrected from colored or Negro to Indian. The Haliwas' adoption of the powwow helped them display a distinct Indian identity to outsiders' and became an important symbol of peoplehood, especially after the closure of their school. The Haliwas largely led a coalition of North Carolina tribes to establish the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs in

order work with the state and address the social, cultural, economic, and health needs of the North Carolina Native population. Through these efforts, the Haliwa Indian people transformed themselves from a group of racial Indians to an American Indian Nation.



## **CONCLUSION**

Enrollment, or the official acknowledgment of citizenship in an Indian nation by that Indian nation, is perhaps the most important task, duty, right, and obligation that tribes inherently have. Enrollment is an expression of self-governance and belonging, and a way to distinguish a citizen from a non-citizen. Tribal citizens have certain rights that non-citizens do not share. This is no less true for the contemporary Haliwa-Saponi people and their tribal government. As a tribal citizen, I have the right to vote in tribal elections, attend tribal meetings, express my opinions, and make recommendations to the tribal council. I can also seek office on the tribal council as a general council member, chief or vice-chief. If I attend the monthly tribal meeting, I can vote to accept or reject an applicant for tribal citizenship. Finally, I and other tribal citizens are eligible for certain tribal programs and services not provided to non-citizens.

My citizenship in the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe is perhaps the most important aspect of my life. I was enrolled in the tribe as a small child “automatically,” based on my family’s connections and involvement in tribal affairs. Tribal membership and involvement was important to my parents and both sets of grandparents and great-grandparents. It is who I am; it is the identity I possess and project to others. Almost my entire social, cultural, employment, financial, political, and academic life has revolved around my identity as a Haliwa-Saponi. I have travelled all across the United States and Canada singing with the Stoney Creek Singers and dancing representing my people and heritage. It is an identity that others have accepted, or rejected, in me; I have gotten into fistfights and

arguments with Natives and non-Natives to defend my identity as a Haliwa-Saponi. I upheld Haliwa-Saponi values when I married my wife, Melissa Silver Richardson, who is also a Haliwa-Saponi Indian. Throughout my teenage years and adult life, I regularly participated in conferences and involved myself in tribal politics and Indian affairs. I see myself as a bridge between older and younger generations, and I have tried to uphold the values and obligations of being a tribal citizen.

This dissertation grew out of my desire to understand how and why hundreds, if not thousands, of Meadows Indian descendants in the Haliwa-Saponi community and outside of the community are not citizens of the tribe and why many do not identify as Indian. During my childhood and teenage years, my family lived in Baltimore, MD; we kept a strong connection to home and visited often for holidays, summers, and especially powwow. My social relationships at home in North Carolina were limited almost exclusively to family and friends who are members of the tribe. When my family moved back to Hollister during my senior year of high school, I realized that many people in the community do not “go for” Indian or were not “part of the movement,” as people say at home. I found it odd that people that looked like me, shared the same surnames as tribal members, lived in the same neighborhood, and were even some of my own extended family members, did not share a common identity. My longing to understand why that is, and how it happened, has heavily influenced my historical research.

Through my talks with tribal elders, elder Meadows Indian descendants, and non-Natives as well, I began to understand more clearly that Haliwa-Saponi citizenship and

identity is largely shaped by historical processes, power, conflicts, disagreements, and debates. Research in the documentary record also showed me that Meadows Indians made racial choices based on white supremacy and the racial hierarchy, access to resources, and social, political, and economic opportunities. Indian identity, cultural involvement, and political action was, and still is, shaped by outsiders' expectations of Native authenticity and Natives' willingness to accept or reject those expectations. The complications of race and racial classification largely fueled my historical inquiry as well. I wondered why so few documents classified our people as Indian, but cited colored, Negro, black, mulatto, free persons of color, and even African. I asked why some individuals, even leaders of the tribe, used the words colored and Indian to describe themselves at the same time. Historical processes and structures shaped racial classification, sometimes apart from racial or tribal identity, and sometimes alongside it.

Haliwa-Saponi history contributes to American, Southern, and Native American history in a variety of ways. It explains how outsiders' notions of race shaped Native Americans' interactions with the Republic and how Natives employed particularly interesting strategies to maintain autonomy as distinct Indian communities. While Native American and American histories usually portray Indian associations with African Americans or African American-dominated institutions as a negative practice that threatened Indian authenticity, Haliwa-Saponi history demonstrates that Natives could and did interact with African Americans to protect their communities. Finally, while generally the United States policies of Indian assimilation threatened the autonomy of Native nations, Haliwa-Saponis used those policies to project a distinct indigenous identity.

Tribal citizenship and enrollment began with the start of the Haliwa Indian Club, when leaders kept a membership roll. Since its inception, tribal enrollment has been influenced by and based on a combination of outsiders' notions of authenticity and the right of Indian nations to determine their own membership based on their own criteria. Starting in 1953, the Haliwa Indian Club limited its membership to those Indian families who shared a kinship relationship to other members and actively supported the goals and policies of the Club. One policy included not associating with or even disavowing relationships with African Americans. Club leaders vetted potential members, gave them a good "talking to," and decided if they met the requirements to join. Club leaders exercised their right to control decisions about members who did not uphold Club standards, but their policies were based, in part, on outsiders' notions of Indian authenticity. In order for outsiders to accept that the Haliwas were authentic Indians and maintained a distinct identity as Indians, they expected Indians to not associate with African Americans. These policies were based on whites' stereotypes, racism, and their historic denial of Haliwas' longstanding occupation of their homeland. Though the early organization was called a Club, its political goals and its exercise of self-determination both challenged the assumptions and hierarchies of the dominant society. In this way, their earliest formal political organization more resembled an Indian tribe. Through their participation in the American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 and their association with other tribes, the Haliwa-Saponi began to represent itself as a tribal nation which practiced a form of self-governance that extended beyond racial classification. In chronicling the transformation of American Indian people from members of a distinct race to members of a distinct tribe,

historians acknowledge self-governance, a right that Indian people have possessed because their communities pre-date the existence of the United States.

The fairly informal enrollment policy for tribal membership began to change into a formalized process in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the Haliwa-Saponis petitioned for federal acknowledgment through the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA). To become a federally-acknowledged tribe, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe had to adopt formal criteria for enrollment and develop membership rolls. Lumbee River Legal Services (LRLS), a charitable law firm based in Pembroke, NC, assisted the tribe in formulating their criteria and compiling tribal rolls to meet the requirements of the OFA. This process entailed historical research while it verified that tribal members consented to being citizens of the tribe. The Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Council had to decide how to create criteria that included the current membership, but also met the requirements of the OFA.

The current Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe's enrollment process requires applicants to successfully navigate a tangle of historical red tape so that tribal officials can verify the applicant's genealogical connections to the base rolls, a set of historical documents that identify community members from the late eighteenth century through 1989. The base rolls include individuals who appear on the "ancestral couples document," which is a list of documented Indian ancestors. The base rolls also consist of those classified as "Indian" on the 1880-1930 United States Censuses for Nash, Warren, and Halifax Counties, individuals who appear on the rolls of the Haliwa Indian Club in 1955, and those included in the 1965 racial classification court case. Finally, the rolls include a membership list dated March 10, 1989.

The process also includes determining whether the applicant shares social ties to the tribe. Social ties include documented membership and regular attendance at an “Indian Church” as identified by the tribe, participation in tribal functions and events with enrolled family members, a documented relationship to the Old Haliwa Indian School or the current Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School, participation in federal Indian education programs operated within the Haliwa-Saponi tribal communities, and participation in tribal activities, functions, and programs.<sup>1</sup> One way of participating in tribal activities is at the annual powwow. Much like enrollment and tribal citizenship, the Haliwa-Saponi powwow is a contemporary expression of Haliwa-Saponi autonomy, belonging, and draws a boundary between Haliwas and outsiders. Though the powwow is not an original Haliwa-Saponi practice and is inclusive of other tribal nations and visited by non-Natives, it nevertheless demonstrates to outsiders that the Haliwa-Saponi are a distinct Indian people. Haliwa-Saponis reserve the right to present their culture in the manner they see fit; the powwow is evidence of their self-determination. While much has changed in the powwow structure, Haliwa-Saponis have preserved and incorporated elements into their powwow that are authentically Haliwa-Saponi. For example, since its inception the Haliwa-Saponi powwow gives tremendous honor to the outgoing and incoming Haliwa-Saponi tribal princess every Saturday at its powwow. On Friday nights the Haliwa-Saponi light what we call the sacred fire—to Haliwa-Saponis the fire represents a connection to our ancestors and the future generations. Haliwa-Saponi singers perform original songs in the Tutelo-Saponi language; in particular, songs have encouraged a revitalization of the language in spoken form. In the 1980s, tribal members reached a consensus that language revitalization was critical to

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<sup>1</sup> By-Laws of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, September 21, 2015, as amended, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Hollister, NC.

identity maintenance. They chose to emphasize Tutelo-Saponi language as their primary indigenous language. Learning the language and using it in song has become a primary marker of belonging. Still, while the contemporary powwow has been elevated to the status of an annual homecoming and ceremony for Haliwa-Saponi Indians, like tribal citizenship and enrollment policies, its roots lie in a combination of outsiders' historical expectations of Native authenticity and the Haliwa-Saponis' goal to maintain autonomy and a distinct Indian identity. These strategies represent Haliwa-Saponis' continuing goal to manage change and adaptation.

Haliwa-Saponi enrollment and the powwow are two distinctive political and cultural markers of self-governance and identity; they therefore create boundaries between citizens and non-citizens. But how they function is complicated by past and current enrollment policies and the existence of unenrolled Meadows Indian descendants within and out of the community. During the period of tribal reorganization in the 1950s and 1960s, many Meadows Indians chose not to join the Club, or were not allowed to join, because they did not uphold Club policies. Some did not join because they disliked tribal leaders and did not feel that they had to belong to a tribe to consider themselves Indian. Others did not join because they were poor and could not pay the taxes levied to build tribal institutions or support tribal goals. Many of these individuals and families were largely excluded from the rights and responsibilities of tribal citizenship. Some individuals and families chose not to identify as Native and continued to attend "colored" institutions such as Pine Chapel Baptist Church and Hollister School. Strong-willed tribal members insisted that their children marry an enrolled tribal member or face ostracism, which encouraged others who met the requirements to join the tribe. In 1997 the tribe briefly

opened its rolls to allow Meadows Indian descendants to join if they met the requirements. Since the conclusion of that process, the tribal rolls have been closed except for children or grandchildren of tribal members who submit an application before the age of six. The Tribal Council instituted this policy in order to ready the tribe for federal acknowledgment, which has still not been achieved since they first began the process in 1978. In some cases, due to social situations or lack of awareness by parents, children who were otherwise eligible for citizenship have missed their chance.

The boundaries of citizenship, powwow participation, and peoplehood are permeable, but are also a source of tension within the tribal community. Non-enrolled individuals of Haliwa-Saponi descent regularly participate in the tribe's cultural class and other tribal programs, and they are accepted by tribal members, while others attend the Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School or one of the community's Indian churches. Some Meadows Indian descendants, who are not enrolled, are married to tribal members and volunteer for and attend tribal social and cultural events. Even though technically participants in the tribe's powwow are required to be members of a state or federally-recognized tribe, many who are not are still included in the dancing and singing. These individuals share social ties with tribal members and are considered Haliwa-Saponi or at least connected to the Indian community. Some Haliwa-Saponi descendants within and outside the community view the tribe's enrollment and social policies with suspicion; they believe that tribal leaders and tribal members are racists. Some of these issues are rooted in fact and are part of an ongoing conflict between racial classification, which would seem to mandate excluding people who do not conform to the tribe's racial expectations, and the process of nation-building, which would seem to demand inclusion of as many potential tribal



members as possible. Race in and of itself is increasingly important for tribal members, because of the racial choices Haliwa-Saponis make.

Intermarriage has increased exponentially in the past twenty years and will continue to be a factor going forward. For approximately ten years, the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe instituted a one-fourth “descendancy” rule, basically a blood quantum restriction, requiring applicants to possess at least one-fourth descendancy, based on a calculation of “blood” degrees, from individuals on the base rolls to be tribal citizens. The tribal council, like other tribes throughout the United States, surmised that the descent rule would diminish the tribal population. Forecasting the eventual disintegration of the tribe due to the policy, the tribal council abolished the rule in 2015, amidst great debate and controversy. These issues of citizenship intersect with the themes of nationhood, peoplehood, Native authenticity, and racial choices.

Though the enrollment process has changed, the criteria has largely stayed the same: membership is still based on a combination of outsiders’ expectations of Indianness and Natives’ own values. In many ways, the modern Haliwa-Saponi Tribe’s enrollment policies and the powwow reflect and are influenced by the historical patterns I have discussed in the previous chapters. They demonstrate the changing power dynamics Haliwa-Saponi Indians have endured, and sometimes capitalized on, to maintain a distinct Native community. Racial classification as non-Native, segregation, standards of Native authenticity and white supremacy reveal the strategies whites employed to deny the Indian identity of the Haliwa-Saponi and limit their political, economic, and social opportunities. On the other hand, racial choices, peoplehood, nationhood, and autonomy describe the

strategies Haliwa-Saponi Indians employed to resist these practices in order to sustain themselves as a Native people and gain opportunities.

The base rolls, the documents used to verify an applicant's eligibility for citizenship, sometimes represent the imposition of outsiders' standards for Indian identity. For example, by using the United States census as one of the documentary sources for tribal enrollment, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe uses a verifiable source, required by federal acknowledgement procedures, but it also endorses a racial classification system that more often than not worked to deny the Indian identity of Meadows Indians rather than confirm it. Since the American Revolution, Haliwa-Saponis dealt with a racial classification and a bi-racial system that denied their separate Indian identity, assumed an affiliation with African Americans, and abrogated their rights as American citizens. This process began in 1790, when Indians were classified on the census as free people of color. As free people of color, Meadows Indians initially exercised the rights of American citizenship, and adopted and participated in many modes of American economic and political life. In their quest to protect their right to human property and white supremacy, however, pro-slavery whites stripped the civil and social rights of free persons of color, including Indians, in the 1830s, based on an assumed affiliation and kinship with enslaved African Americans. Afterwards, whites enforced a racial hierarchy that assumed that only two races existed in the South: black and white. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20th century, Haliwa-Saponi ancestors were classified as free people of color, mulatto, Negro, black, and sometimes as white. Very rarely before the 1950s did government officials list Haliwa-Saponis as Indian or recognize their distinct Indian identity. Meadows Indians also endured limited civil and

social rights alongside African Americans, but found strategic ways to draw a distinction between themselves and their non-white neighbors.

The institution of social ties as a requirement for tribal enrollment reflects how Indians have made racial choices to reject or embrace peoplehood. After the North Carolina Constitutional amendment of 1835, some Meadows Indians packed up their belongings and moved to Ohio and other Midwestern states where they could enjoy the rights of American citizens and fulfill their potential. By making this racial choice, however, migrant Meadows Indians largely rejected peoplehood and did not work to sustain a distinct Indian identity or community, nor did they disavow relationships with African Americans. Haliwa-Saponis still encounter these issues today as tribal members move out of the community to find work, go to school, and find other opportunities. In doing so, they choose between disengaging from tribal affairs and community or maintaining peoplehood; the latter is now easier, thanks to transportation, social media, and technology. Still, some choose not to maintain a connection with the community or a sense of their membership in the tribe.

Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resident Meadows Indians maintained peoplehood by regulating their relationships with outsiders, protecting their lands, and continuing Native cultural practices. To keep their place in the racial hierarchy, they favored political and economic alliances with whites. After the Civil War, when former slaves became a political force, Natives debated amongst each other whether or not to work in concert with African Americans and how those decisions would affect their distinct identity. Often Meadows Indians projected a situational identity as “colored” in order to participate in civil affairs and build educational and religious institutions. Today, Haliwa-Saponis work

in concert with African Americans and other non-whites when it most benefits their political causes and the groups' political views align. African Americans have gained powerful positions in government, and Haliwa-Saponis work with them on the local, state, and national levels. Unlike in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these collaborations do not threaten the Haliwa-Saponis distinct racial and political identity, because the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe has achieved a recognized status, not just as a separate race, but as a political entity that governs itself, at least to a certain extent.

Using the “ancestral couples document” to verify tribal membership speaks to the issue of Native authenticity and how outsiders projected their expectations of Indianness and Haliwas internalized them. The “ancestral couples” include documented or presumed Nansemond, Saponi, and Tuscarora ancestors of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe. In order to achieve federal acknowledgment, Haliwa-Saponis must affirm their aboriginal descent with a genealogical paper trail, reflecting the federal government’s notions of authentic evidence that verifies claims of Indian identity. In 1896, and again in 1906, Meadows Indians applied to the Dawes Commission and the U.S. Court of Claims to enroll in the Cherokee Nation and Eastern Band of Cherokees. They sought to prove that their Indian ancestors, and they themselves, had stereotypical Indian physical features and possessed Indian “blood.” The government, and the Cherokee tribes, expected legitimate claimants to descend from members of an aboriginal tribe, and for that descent to be reflected in a documentary record that other governmental agencies, such as the census and vital records bureaus, washed away. Questions of Native authenticity emerged again when Meadows Indians organized the Haliwa Indian Club and the Haliwa Indian School in 1953 and 1957, respectively. Meadows Indians had long attended segregated schools labeled as “colored,”

and they needed to demonstrate to outsiders that they were authentic Indians to meet their political goals. Haliwa Indians adopted strict policies, such as prohibition against relationships with African Americans, to maintain peoplehood and display their distinct identity from other non-whites. Members of the Haliwa Indian Club rejected a situational identity as “colored” and developed an exclusively-Indian identity. Through researching their history and the support of recognized tribes, such as the Lumbees, as well as whites, Haliwa Indians successfully organized their own segregated Indian school. Meadows Indians divided over these policies and some Meadows Indians continued supporting segregated “colored” schools and churches.

Determining tribal membership through the 1965 court case when Haliwa Indians sued the state to correct their vital records reflects the legacy of the racial binary (and outsiders’ practice of mislabeling Indians), but it touches on Haliwas’ efforts to participate in the civil rights, Red Power, and self-determination movements. Just a few years earlier, in 1961, Haliwa Indians contributed to the American Indian Chicago Conference, which inspired them to intensify their quest to themselves as a Native nation, not just an Indian racial group. At the time, federally recognized Indian tribes shared their own ideas about Indian authenticity and questioned the participation of “self-identified” Indians, whom many considered inauthentic because they believed their ancestors were African Americans or they associated with African Americans. Haliwa Indians boosted their authenticity and autonomy through alliances with recognized Indians. Using the court case as part of the base rolls for tribal citizenship reflects an era when Haliwas asserted their own notions of authenticity and autonomy.

Throughout their history, Haliwa-Saponis have employed racial choices to maintain or reject peoplehood in order to move from a group of people that saw itself as a distinct race within a bi-racial society to a self-governing tribe that strives to control its own affairs in a multicultural society of different races and tribes. “Race” is a socially-constructed marker of belonging—or exclusion—that is not the sum total of any group’s story. In the case of the racial classification of Indians in the South, white supremacist agendas have enforced a racial binary that only identified two races: white and black. “Identity,” on the other hand, comprises social, cultural, and historical characteristics which distinguish one group from another. Haliwa-Saponi tribal identity developed within “practices and activities situated in [a] historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed world,” in the words of Dorothy Holland and others.<sup>2</sup> The forces of racial classification, the black-white binary, and notions of Native authenticity shaped Haliwas’ Indian identity, and encouraged them to maintain a sense of themselves as a distinct Indian people. They have transformed that identity by pursuing greater autonomy and a sense of themselves as a Native nation, and they will continue to do so.

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<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Holland, William Lachicotte Jr., Debra Skinner, Carole Cain, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998): 7.

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