

Nooherooka: Site of decisive battle of the Tuscarora War, March 20-23, 1713 ^[1]

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<https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about-us/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program> ^[2]

European colonists encroached on Native American land as the colony of North Carolina grew; consequently tensions escalated between the two groups. In 1711, the Tuscarora, who controlled most of the land between the Neuse ^[3] and Roanoke Rivers ^[4], began a war with the colonists. In September of that year, the Tuscarora ^[5] captured and killed John Lawson ^[6], whom they believed was the governor. Lawson's capture signaled the beginning of a three-day rampage that left at least 120 colonists dead in Bath ^[7] and the surrounding countryside. Men, women and children were killed and their bodies mutilated throughout the region. Houses, stock, and barns were destroyed.

Colonial leaders failed to formulate a strategy for protection and, instead, sent pleas for assistance to Virginia and South Carolina. In response, South Carolina sent Colonel John Barnwell fortified with white militia and a large army of Native American allies from the Yamassee tribe that were hostile to the Tuscarora. Upon his arrival in January, 1712, Barnwell expected reinforcements from North Carolina but received little assistance. Barnwell first attacked Torhunta ^[8], a network of farms in modern Wayne County. He destroyed all of the forts and villages in the region before leaving the area.

Barnwell continued his trek through North Carolina in efforts to put an end to Tuscarora strength and opposition. His next target was another palisade fort at Catechna ^[9] where he encountered much resistance. Barnwell was forced to call a truce and drew back to construct his own fort ^[10] nearby to force a peace. Barnwell left the colony in disarray later in 1712 and Native Americans continued to attack colonists.

North Carolina again appealed to South Carolina and another force under the command of Colonel James Moore ^[11] entered the colony. Moore marched his combined force of North and South Carolina militia and allied Native Americans to Nooherooka. Moore had been informed that the Tuscarora had placed its largest concentration of warriors at the well constructed fort on a branch of Contentee Creek in modern Greene County. Archaeological investigations of the fort have revealed a series of interconnected bunkers and tunnels supplied by large quantities of food and supplies. The fort covered 1 ½ acres and had high palisades.

Moore laid siege to the fort in March 1713 and defeated the warriors by mining an outer wall and setting fire to the fort and its structures. It took Moore's men three days after the fall of the first wall before the fort was completely overtaken. By that time, 392 Tuscarora were burned or killed inside the fort and another 558 were either killed or captured. The fall of Nooherooka signaled the end of concerted Native American resistance to colonists and, all told, by the end of the Tuscarora War, approximately 200 whites and 1,000 natives were killed with about 1,000 Tuscarora sold into slavery and over 3000 forced from their homes, many eventually migrating northward to Pennsylvania and New York. With Native Americans removed, white colonists flooded into the backcountry ^[12] and extended the frontier farther west.

Educator Resources:

Grade 8: North Carolina's Tuscarora War. North Carolina Civic Education Consortium. <https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2012/05/Tuscaror...> ^[13]

References:

Theda Perdue, *Native Carolinians: The Indians of North Carolina* (1985)

E. Lawrence Lee, *Indian Wars in North Carolina, 1663-1763* (1968)

H. Trawick Ward and R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr. *Time Before History: The Archaeology of North Carolina* (1999)

Map of Tuscarora War from *The Way We Lived*: <https://ncpedia.org/waywelived/tuscarora-war> [14]

Additional Resources:

Nooherooka 300 and Beyond. <http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/nooherooka/> [15] (accessed August 11, 2015).

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11 August 2015 | Howard, Joshua

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