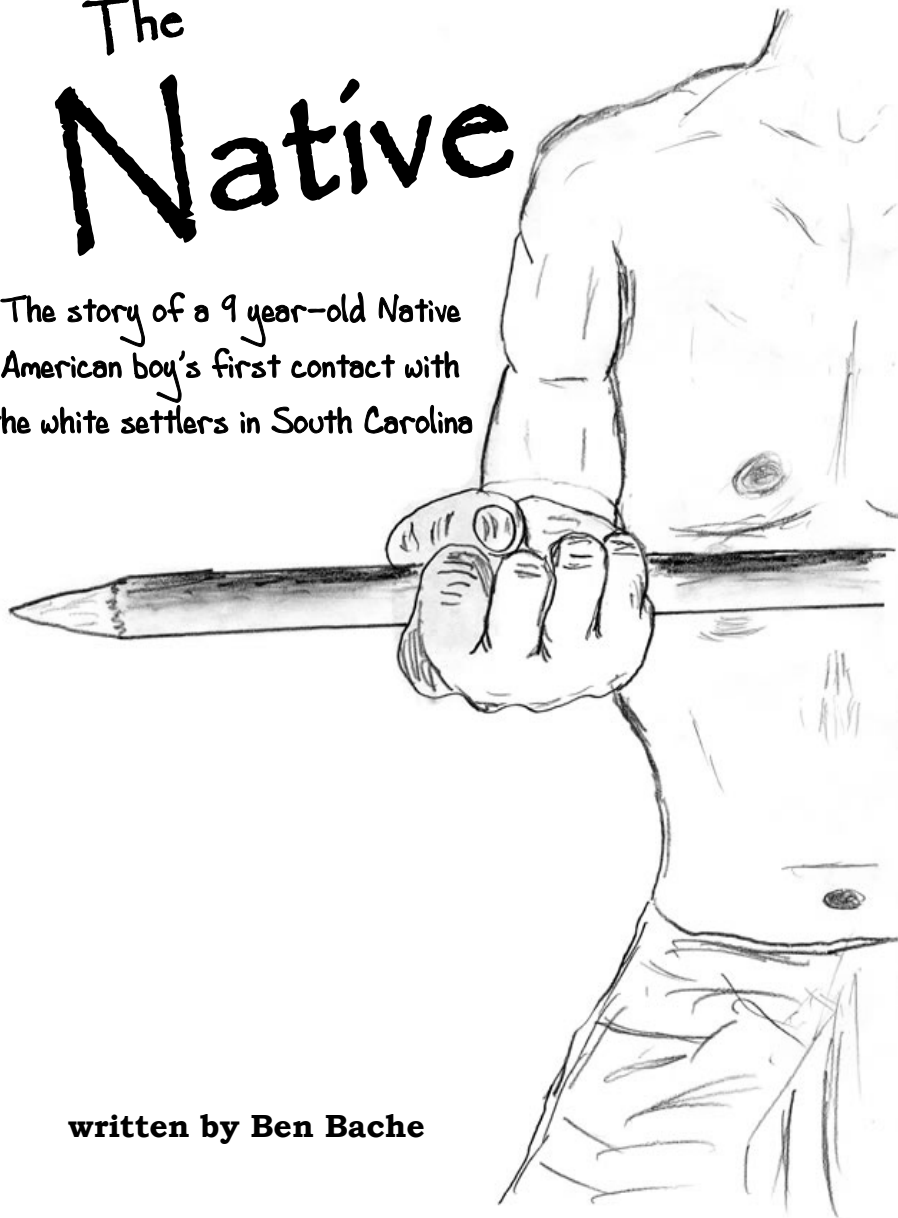


The Native

The story of a 9 year-old Native
American boy's first contact with
the white settlers in South Carolina



written by **Ben Bache**

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Nobody in my
clan could
agree on what
to do about
the white man.

6 — A Warning

The people in my village were angry. Yoholo and I had told them of our run-in with the white men. Several other clansmen told stories of similar situations.

Many of the warriors – including Yoholo – said that our clan had to start fighting back against the white man. Others weren't so sure.

“You don’t understand the white man,” argued a clansman named Kono. “I go into the white village every day to trade my animal skins. I do business with them, I talk to them, and some of them I would even call my friend.”

Yoholo glared at Kono when he said this. I thought about my white friend on the beach.

“The white man is not our enemy,” Kono continued. “He just doesn’t understand us — just as we don’t understand him.”

The arguments continued, and finally the Chief of our clan decided to call a meeting. He met with a few of the elders to decide what to do. The warriors were not allowed to attend.

“But I have just escaped from the white man,” objected Yoholo, “and I can tell you what I’ve seen.”

“We know what you’ve seen, and we know how you feel,” the elder said as he walked into the hut and left Yoholo standing at the entrance.

The elders
held a meeting
to decide the
right course
of action.



It seemed like the elders were in the hut forever. I sat with the rest of the clan and waited nervously.

When they finally came out, the elders walked over to where the warriors were standing. I guess they felt that I was too young to care about what was going on. But I couldn't wait.

I tried to run over to the group, but my leg still hurt, so I was really hopping. I squeezed into the middle, standing beside Yoholo. I was expecting someone to tell me to go away while the adults talked, but everyone

had too many other things on their mind to notice me.

“We have come to a decision,” one of the elders was saying. “We can no longer pretend that the white man will just go away – but it would not be wise to rush to action.”

“If the white man wants to live in peace – we will live with him in peace. If he wants to take away our land, then we will fight him.” We all nodded in agreement.

The elder continued. “But we must be careful if it comes to fighting. Our clan is too small, and the white man has powerful weapons and strong forts.”

He paused to let his words sink in. I could see the faces of the warriors growing tense. “We are not the only ones who are worried about the white man.” the elder finally said. “There are other clans and other tribes who are in the same situation. We will be much stronger if we all work together – but we must speak with the others before rushing into action.”

I could tell that Yoholo and the rest of the warriors were frustrated, but the decision had been made. We would have to wait.

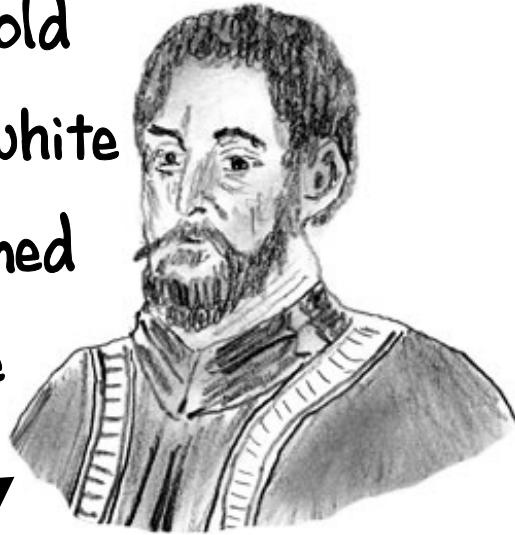
The following day, a clansman named Cetto was sent out to travel to the nearby villages. He planned to meet with the clans in the other tribes to see what action should be taken against the white man.

Cetto stayed gone for several days. Everyone in the clan talked about what he might learn during his journey. We waited eagerly for him to return with news from the other tribes.

Finally a young boy yelled that Cetto was coming down the trail to our village. When he came into view, everyone in the clan gasped at what they saw.

Cetto wasn't alone. He was walking alongside another man, who seemed old and slow by the way he moved. I guessed that the man must have been an elder from another clan.

The elder told
us about a white
explorer named
Hernando de
Soto.



Everyone gathered around as Cetto and the old man entered into the village. Finally, Cetto said, "This man has something to say that I think we all should hear."

The old man looked around, a little surprised by the number of people waiting tensely to hear him speak. He cleared his throat and said, "My name is Notakuh, and I am from the Edisto tribe."

The way he talked and the words he used were strange to me. I had to pay close attention just to understand him, and it was clear that he was not from my clan.

“When I was much younger,” the old man continued, “I met a Spanish man, just like the white men who live in Santa Elena. The man’s name was Hernando de Soto.”

I had never heard that name before, but some of the clansmen who often traded with the white men nodded their heads as if they had.

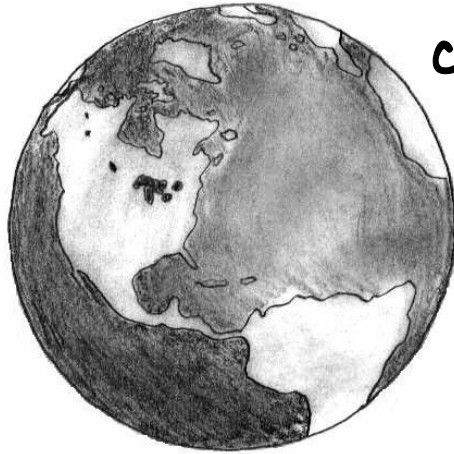
“He was an explorer, and I became his guide,” the old man said. “We traveled to the west, and we came to a mighty river. Hernando de Soto died on that river, but I returned with the other white men to their homeland across the ocean.”

Everyone let out a gasp. This old man was saying that he had seen where the white men had come from.

“I have seen their homes,” he continued. “I have been to cities built by the white man. They are empires with names like Madrid, Paris, Rome, and London. And I know why the white man is here.”

The old man had the full attention of everyone in our clan.

The old man said that he had



crossed the
oceans to the
white man's
world.

“These cities,” he said, “are like nothing you’ve ever seen. There are white men everywhere, walking along on paved trails. Their dwellings are built to the sky, and the clothes they wear are softer than any animal skins you will ever find.”

The image of these massive cities came into my head. I began to wonder, though, what it had to do with the white men who lived in Santa Elena. The old man soon answered my question.

“These white men have everything you could ever imagine,” he explained, “but they

are never satisfied. They always want more. That is why they are here — to gain more, to build a new empire, and to make us pray to their gods. We cannot believe that the white man will be content only staying in the white village. It is not his way.”

For a few moments there was silence as we all thought about what the old man had said. Then one of the warriors shouted, “If you have been to the white man’s world, how can you be here talking to us?”

“I stayed in the white man’s world for twenty long years,” said the old man sadly. “They treated me kindly, although they thought of me as no more than a child — or even an animal. There was nothing that a man could want that the white world did not have, but I could not stay. I missed my home.”

“How did you get back?” someone in my clan shouted, and we were all wondering it.

“The same way I arrived,” the old man explained. “All of the Spaniards — like those that are here now — believed that our land was paved in gold and riches. They were willing to

cross the mighty ocean to make a fortune. I was willing to cross it with them — only I was looking for home.”

The old man bowed his head. He looked tired. I tried to imagine all of the things this old man must have seen. He had traveled across the ocean to the white man’s world, and back again.

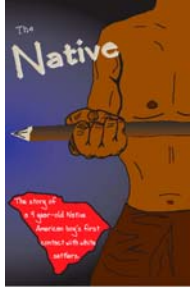
Then I realized that his story had a more important message. If what he said was true, then the white men would eventually come away from their village and take over our lands. I looked around and could tell that the warriors of my clan were thinking the same thing.



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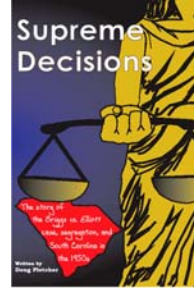
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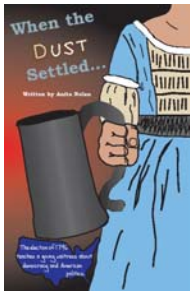
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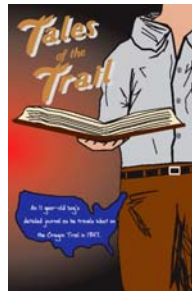
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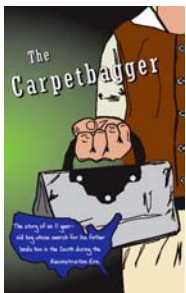
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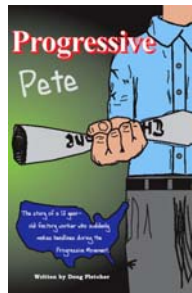
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