Cattashowrock Town, Indigenous-led Living History Museums, and the Resilience of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe

Whistler Nash Somers
Green Bay, Wisconsin (Oneida Nation)

B.A. in History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2019

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Architectural History

Architectural History Department
School of Architecture

University of Virginia
May, 2024

Sheila Crane
Allison Bigelow
Jim Igoe

Table of Contents

Abstract

Cattashowrock town, a living history Iroquoian Palisade village reconstruction, as described in 1728 by William Bryd the II of Westover, is the focal point of this architectural history thesis about the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe. This thesis begins with an examination of the history of the Cheroenhaka in Southhampton county and their resilience into the present day leading to their reorganization led by Chief Walter David "Red Hawk" Brown in 2002. The history portion is a continuation of the work of scholars Louis Binford and Helen Rountree who documented the ethnohistory of the Cheroenhaka in the 1960s and 1980s. Further chapters examine the architectural design of the living history site of Cattashowrock Town as envisioned and implemented by Chief Brown and the Cheroenhaka tribal members. This thesis further examines the importance of Indigenous-led "living history" museums and how "living history" sites, such as Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown, have the potential to influence the learning of school-aged children, both positively and negatively. There is a focus on the experiences of school-aged children of Virginia and Native American students at the University of Virginia. This is an examination of the importance of Cattashowrock town, powwows, land reclamation, and cultural preservation, with a focus on Cheroenhaka youth who are the future of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, which includes Chief Brown's own young children princess Windsong and prince Red Eagle.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Chief Brown who spent many hours answering my questions and who welcomed me so graciously to Cattashowrock town. I would like to thank my mother, Liz Somers, and my father, Jim Radford, who both accompanied me at different times on my travels to Cattashowrock town. I would like to thank my longtime friend, Elizabeth Baranczyk, who accompanied me to both Heritage Hill in Wisconsin and Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown in Virginia. I would like to thank my longtime friend, Savannah Barry, who accompanied me to historical sites along the Pacific Northwest, some of which are mentioned in this thesis. I would also like to thank my professors, especially Sheila Crane, who helped to encourage and support me throughout my thesis research and writing. And I would lastly, like to thank my cats, Pirate and Mulberry, who were with me at every moment of the writing of this thesis, and who would at times unhelpfully sit on my laptop keyboard as I attempted to type.

Introduction

Before I attended this university, I knew I wanted to complete a thesis on indigenous architecture, motivated in part from being from the Oneida nation. When I was accepted into the program here at the University of Virginia, I found the perfect indigenous-led living history site within the state, Cattashowrock town in Southhampton county. I reached out and connected with Chief Brown of the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe that spring and communicated over email and phone calls that summer. In September of 2022 I made my first visit to Cattashowrock town.

For Native Americans, including Iroquoians, elders are highly valued as teachers, mentors, and the keepers of tribal knowledge. Chief Brown is both an accomplished elder and the elected leader of the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe, and he is the designated tribal historian. I am very grateful for the time he took to speak to me, both in person and in numerous phone calls over the course of two years. Chief Brown has extensive knowledge of his people and history, and from my many conversations with him I was able to gain incredible insight. With this being a project that will be available to a non-native audience, I deferred to Chief Brown as the main source for my interviews on the Cheroenhaka people and Cattashowrock town, as he is the keeper of tribal knowledge.

Part of this research involved comparisons to other living history sites and the perspectives of students. This included travels within the state, and to locations in Wisconsin and the Pacific Northwest during my studies here at the University. Archival materials at special collections were reviewed, including maps. Chief Brown encouraged me to engage with the writings of William Byrd II, and I was able to locate copies of his

works within special collections. My research also led me towards conversations with fellow native students on campus, who happily agreed to let me quote them within this thesis.

During the course of my research, I came across only two journal articles that specifically focused on the history of the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe. A 1967 study by Louis Binford entitled "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia" and a 1987 Helen Rountree article entitled "The Termination and Dispersal of the Nottoway Indians of Virginia." The Rountree article builds upon the Binford study, as a continuation of the history that Rountree determined that Binford failed to include. My thesis is a continuation of that scholarship and timeline, as my paper is dated 2024, which is nearly 40 years since the Rountree article was published. My contribution includes not only information on the timeframe after 1987 including the reformation of the Cheroenhaka Indian tribe, but also a contribution in the framing of the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe. Both Binford and Rountree frame the Cheroenhaka as an "extinct" tribe. Not only that, both scholars blame the Cheroenhaka for what happened to them from the forces of colonization and non-native racism, aggression, manipulation and lies. Rountree even ends her article with a racist quote that she says applies to the Cheroenhaka people, ascribing them as the "lesser race" compared to white colonizers. This harmful framing should not be the only academic scholarship available to future researchers or students interested in learning about the Cheroenhaka people. My framing in this thesis, unlike Binford and Rountree, is one that shines a light on the resilience of the Cheroenhaka people, who are still here.

Chapter one delves into the history, while Chapter two examines Cattashowrock town in detail, with Chapter three framing Cattashowrock town in regard to its

importance as a place of learning for younger students and people of all ages. At the end of the thesis is a section of the photographs and images referenced in the text.

Before starting my overall research for the history chapter, I naively underestimated the emotional toll I would face delving into the history of Iroquoian nations and the harms they each faced during colonization, including at times seeing the names of direct relatives within scholarly accounts of genocide and harm at the hands of colonists during contact into the westward expansion time periods. However, the joy and connection I felt during site visits to Cattashowrock town outweighed the negatives and made this an enjoyable thesis to delve into creating. Most critically, the work of Chief Brown and the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe is far too important not to devote time to focusing on for a thesis project.

Future scholarship, with permission and guidance from Chief Brown, could include interviews with tribal citizens to transcribe family histories, to fill in more gaps in the timeframe between the dispersal up until the reformation in the 21st century. This thesis and other previous scholarship have an indigenous versus colonizer framework, however due to the history of African Americans and the enslaved in the state of the Virginia, there are many research opportunities to have topics that examine and center the connections between African Americans and the Cheroenhaka Indian Tribe throughout history and into the present day. This thesis focuses on the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, future scholarship could examine other tribes in Virginia and their different architectural perspectives and histories.

Chapter One: The History of the Cheroenhaka Nation

The sky is clear, and the sun is shining down at the start of the student organized Powwow at the University of Virginia in the year of 2024. I stand side by side with Liah as we help to set up tables and chairs. Liah is Comanche and Seneca, and like my own Oneida nation the Seneca are also part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. They are both Iroquoian nations.

This Powwow organized by the Native American Student Union is a place for the indigenous community to come together, and with it being open to the public it helps show that Native Americans are still here. This visibility is important as Liah laments to me, "I've had adults say to me when they find out I'm native, I thought you were all dead."

The myth that Native Americans are extinct is not an uncommon belief amongst the general public. However, for the Cheroenhaka, an Iroquoian nation located in what is now known as the state of Virginia, this extinction myth was held about them for decades by scholars who studied Native Americans. These scholars kept repeating that the Cheroenhaka, or as they called them, the Nottoway, were all gone.

The belief by scholars that the Cheroenhaka had vanished stems from several factors. A congressional report in 1825 claims the population was 47 individuals.[1] Another was the real issue of native children who were being taken by non-native european families to be adopted, which alienated them from their culture and living relatives, a harmful practice that continued until the introduction of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978. The third reason requires understanding the history of the Cheroenhaka people.

[1] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 106

What follows is not a comprehensive history, but more of a delve into important parts of their ethnohistorical story of resilience.

The Cheroenhaka reside on what is now known as the Virginia-North Carolina border area in Southampton County, in an area known as the coastal plain lowlands.[2] The coastal plain is twenty percent of the state of Virginia, around 8,161 square feet.[3] The Nottoway River, where the Cheroenhaka resided, connects to the Blackwater River which flows into the Chowan River, which is a northern tributary of Albemarle Sound.[4] The Nottoway River begins in Lunenburg County, Virginia and is 155 miles long moving southeast, with a river bend that is 32 miles long. It crosses over the fall line between the piedmont and the coastal plains *(figure 1)*.[5]

The area in question is now considered two different states, Virginia and North Carolina. However, the correct division within this area, based on geography rather than current political boundaries, is between the coastal plain and the piedmont plateau, which are separated by a fall line. The fall line is a zone in which rapids, waterfalls, and river systems separate the coastal plain from the plateau.

Forty percent of the area where the Cheroenhaka lived was covered by a forest of Southern Pine. The rest was dominated by marshes, black-gum juniper swamps, and broadleaf deciduous type trees.[6] Due to this variation, wild plants would have been available all year round, nuts in the fall and winter from the deciduous trees, edible plants

---

[2] Ibid pg 104

[3] Chester K. Wentworth (Chester Keeler), Geological Survey (U.S.) and Virginia. Sand and Gravel Resources of the Coastal Plain of Virginia. Richmond: University, Virginia. Division of purchase and printing, 1930. pg 1

[4] Edward Bland [-, Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. The Discovery of New Brittaine: Began August 27, Anno Dom. 1650. New York: Reprinted by J. Sabin and Sons, 1873 pg 1

[5] Joseph M. McAvoy "Nottoway River Survey: The 30 Year Study of a Late Ice Age Hunting Culture On the Southern Interior Coastal Plain of Virginia." Courtland, Va: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992. Pg 14

[6] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 113

in the summer and fall from the southern pine region, and edible plants during the late winter and spring from the black gum swamps.[7]

Within Virginia, there are Algonquian, Siouan, and Iroquoian indigenous classified groups. The Cheroenhaka are classified as Iroquoian, and one key criteria for this understanding is language. Peter S. DuPonceau, who studied native languages, conveyed to Thomas Jefferson that the Cheroenhaka language belonged to the Iroquoian language family.[8] The Cheroenhaka were located near another Iroquoian nation, the Meherrins. In a map of the "territories of Ethnic Groups of the South Atlantic Slope Culture Area" the Cheroenhaka are listed as the "Nottoway" and are placed between the Meherrin and the Powhatan on the map *(figure 2)*.

"Nottoway" is the name the colonists chose after they heard Algonquian speakers refer to the Cheroenhaka as "Na Da Wa" which meant snake or enemy in their language.[9] Edward Bland, a colonist merchant, when meeting with Cheroenhaka Chief Oyeker, recorded Oyeker as "NA-DA-WA" due to his Algonquian speaking travel guides.[10] "Nottoway" is considered a derogatory name and is not the name the Cheroenhaka called themselves.[11] Both the Cheroenhaka and the Meherrin were located on the rivers that had been renamed the Nottoway and Meherrin rivers.[12]

---

[7] Ibid

[8] Ibid pg 106

[9] Interview with Chief Brown

[10] Ibid

[11] "The true name of the 'Nottoway' is Cheroenhaka **(Che-ro-en-ha-ka)** meaning **'People at the Fork of the Stream.'** The tribe's lodging area was where the Nottoway River fork with The Blackwater River to form the Chowan River – thus 'People at the Fork of the Steam.' The name Cheroenhaka is noted in the papers of Lewis Binford and in the book by Albert Gallatin and the papers of James Tresevant (Trezevant), Esq.." https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org/about-us/ethno-historical-current-snapshot-of-the-cheroenhaka-nottoway-indian-nation-of-southhampton-county-virginia/

[12] Albert Gallatin and American Antiquarian Society. A Synopsis of the Indian Tribes Within the United States East of the Rocky Mountains, and In the British and Russian Possessions In North America. 1836.

While some believe that Native Americans are a monolith, Iroquoians are even more frequently treated as a monolith or assumed to all be allies. This is not always the case. The Cheroenhaka were not allied or on friendly terms with the Haudenosaunee confederacy, which had territory to the north of present-day Virginia. The Haudenosaunee confederacy is a political alliance of six nations, Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, Mohawks, Cayugas, and later the Tuscaroras. Located in what is now known as the New York State region, the Haudenosaunee confederacy was a strong and influential force in the region, and they often traveled to and interacted with the nations in the piedmont and coastal plains before and during European disruption.

Long before Europeans arrived, during the Paleoindian time, to Early Archaic, to Middle Archaic, to late Archaic, to Early Woodland, to Middle Woodland, the Cheroenhaka people were in North America. The paleolithic, the period from 9500 to 8000 BC, was cold and moist, the early archaic from 8000 to 6000 BC became warmer and drier, the middle archaic from 6000-2500 BC was warmer and moist, the late archaic from 2500 to 1200 BC was very warm and dry, early woodland from 1200 to 500 BC was colder and moist again, the middle woodland from 500 BC to A.D. 900 and the late woodland A.D. 900 to 1600 were closer to the current climate.[13] This shows us that the resilience of the Cheroenhaka people is imbedded in their history, how they have always been able to survive and adapt to the changing conditions of the coastal plain region.

The tributaries of the Nottoway River provided numerous food and resources during the paleolithic time period. Geological study of the Nottoway River shows that the sea level fluctuations from the Pleistocene Ice ages caused dune features to appear along

[13] Keith Egloff, Deborah Woodward (Deborah B.) and Virginia. First People: The Early Indians of Virginia. Richmond, Va: Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources, 1992.

the river as aeolian processes occurred over time.[14] Pollen samples show that 11,000 years ago in the coastal plain, trees such as beech and hemlock were beginning to replace spruce and pine. This shift indicates that, during that time period, the Cheroenhaka were living in spruce boreal forest, which allowed for elk and deer to be present in large numbers.[15]

In paleolithic times, there is a concept known as Clovis culture, which is named from an archaeological site in Clovis, New Mexico where fluted points were excavated.[16] Over 100 sites along the Nottoway River excavated around 1983 revealed clovis points and other paleolithic materials.[17] Clovis technology was made up of fine-grained rock, and the most well known tool is the fluted point.[18]

One of these sites is referred to as the Cactus Hill site, near the northbend of the river, which was researched between 1988 and 1992 and more clovis materials were found to be located there.[19] Another site is the Slade North site, which is 1.5 miles east of Stony Creek and adjacent to the Nottoway River. This site was considered to be more of an Archaic and Woodland period site, before fragmentary clovis points were excavated between 1980 and 1990 there.[20] Scholars concluded that the Slade site was occupied repeatedly by groups of Paleoindians of around twenty to twenty-seven people, before they would leave the area only for a new generation to return later.[21] More evidence of a

---

[14] Joseph M. McAvoy "Nottoway River Survey: The 30 Year Study of a Late Ice Age Hunting Culture On the Southern Interior Coastal Plain of Virginia." Courtland, Va: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992 pg 19

[15] Ibid

[16] Keith Egloff, Deborah Woodward (Deborah B.) and Virginia. First People: The Early Indians of Virginia. Richmond, Va: Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources, 1992. Pg 9

[17] Joseph M. McAvoy Nottoway River Survey: The 30 Year Study of a Late Ice Age Hunting Culture On the Southern Interior Coastal Plain of Virginia. Courtland, Va: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992. Pg 21

[18] Brian M. Fagan Ancient North America: The Archaeology of a Continent. Rev. and expanded ed. New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1995. pg 84

[19] Joseph M. McAvoy Nottoway River Survey: The 30 Year Study of a Late Ice Age Hunting Culture On the Southern Interior Coastal Plain of Virginia. Courtland, Va: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992. Pg 23

[20] Ibid Pg 80

[21] Ibid 85

lack of protection from a north wind indicates this was only a summer camp location.[22] The Sunflower site, which is located only yards east from the Nottoway river near the Southwest Swamp, was another summer camp site where clovis points were found.[23]

The Middle Holocene period from 6500 to 2000 BC, saw a rapid population growth in Eastern North America.[24] The cultivation of native plants took place as part of a dynamic adjustment to the environment. Hunter-gather and farming practices had been constantly adjusted to changing climates and temperatures since the paleolithic time period.[25] The Cheroenhaka during this time period would have constantly been on the move from site to site following along the waterways before returning to a base camp. If some traveled or lived north near the other Iroquoian language groups, they could have hunted caribou.[26] The plant and animal life in the southeast was known for being more diverse than in the western part of North America, which caused the local variation in tools that archaeologists have found.[27]

Before the archaeological evidence of the Clovis sites had been discovered there had been a Bering Strait theory proposed by certain academics. This theory is important to understanding the history of the Chereonahaka people, as this theory has often been used by some scholars and some of the general populace to deny the Cheroenhaka, and other Native American nations and tribes, access to their land and to discount the harms of European colonization.

---

[22] Ibid Pg 87

[23] Ibid Pg 88

[24] Brian M. Fagan Ancient North America: The Archaeology of a Continent. Rev. and expanded ed. New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1995. pg 99

[25] Ibid pg 100

[26] Ibid pg 112

[27] Ibid

This is a theory that Native Americans crossed over a land bridge into North America right before the Clovis time period. The basis of the theory is that Native Americans are not indigenous to North America, but that they "discovered" it just like Europeans did. Native American scholars, such as Anne Waters, believe a theory that promotes the idea that no one is indigenous to the Americas was created in order to boost politically motivated Euro-American land claims.[28] Others like Vine Deloria, Jr. believe the theory was created to ease guilt regarding the brutal colonization by Europeans.[29]

There is limited scientific evidence for the Bering Strait theory, and Deloria sees this as more of a case of scholars accepting the theory at face value.[30] There are harsh mountain ranges that would have blocked travel east towards the tip of Siberia. Then upon arrival in Alaska one would have to traverse more harsh mountain ranges below the Arctic circle. Scholars have previously stated that game was abundant and population numbers were scarce in Siberia during the paleolithic time period, and those that were there are documented as having southern to northern to southern seasonal pathways following hunting opportunities.[31] The plentiful game in Siberia, the treacherous mountain passages, and the scarcity of game on the glacial sheets of Alaska, means a motive for a large group of people to travel east over the Bering Strait land bridge has been missing.[32] Deloria points out the inconsistencies from scholars on the causes of the evaporation of ocean water that would allow for safe travel from Siberia to Alaska. The theory does not match the oral history of the diverse nations of Native Americans, as well as radiocarbon dates on Clovis tools out of Texas that were dated over 38,000 years old

---

[28] Anne Waters, American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004. pg 75

[29] Deloria, Vine. Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact. New York: Scribner, 1995. pg 82

[30] Ibid Pg 87

[31] Ibid Pg 90

[32] Ibid Pg 91

in some cases, before Native Americans were supposed to have arrived from the land bridge.[33]

From 1500, when reports of shipwrecked Spanish ships on the coast began to appear, up to 1607, there was limited contact between Europeans and the Cheroenhaka. We know that the boy kidnapped by the Spanish in 1560 was not Cheroenhaka. Walter Raleigh's group's failed attempt to settle was on Roanoke Island and not on the Nottoway River. Contact began to change when Jamestown was established as an English colony in April 1607, with the arrival of one hundred and five englishmen.[34]

When it comes to accounts from the English before 1650, at times they do not distinguish which Iroquoian nation they encountered or refer to them only as Iroquoian in other Algonquian languages, with words such as "Mangoake" or "Mangoags." As it could have been the Tuscarora, Cheroenhaka, or the Meherrin, and the Ralph Lane encounters in 1586 were within Tuscarora territory, increasing the likelihood it was not the Cheroenhaka that Lane met with.[35] Lane did not refer to those he encountered as fellow visitors, so if it was Tuscarora land then he likely was interacting with Tuscarora people that day. In 1608 at Tomohittion Creek, in what is now Nottoway County, colonists spoke to Cheroenhaka individuals to gain information on the "lost colony," and this is considered the first recorded contact. The next confirmed contact was when Edward Bland met with Chounterounte in 1650, a Cheroenhaka man who occupied a leadership position.[36]

---

[33] Ibid Pg 109

[34] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 115

[35] Ibid pg 121

[36] Edward Bland [-, Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. The Discovery of New Brittaine: Began August 27, Anno Dom. 1650. New York: Reprinted by J. Sabin and Sons, 1873.

When Bland was traveling and documenting his journey south on an exploratory mission without the permission of the governor of Virginia, he stopped at a Cheroenhaka village during his travels. While there Bland had a conversation with Chounterounte, which consisted of him trying to convince Bland not to travel further south without the Virginia governor's permission. This showcases that Chounterounte and the Cheroenhaka were acutely aware of English settlers political and social hierarchies and norms. This was either because they had been in previous contact or had heard about potential dangers from others, such as the Weanock, who had been in disastrous contact with the English previously.[37] The mention of the lack of governor permission was not because the Cheroenhaka saw the Virginia governor as having authority over the region, it was, as Chounterounte explained, because he was worried that if Bland died that they would be blamed and massacred by the Governor of Virginia and his men.[38] At this time the Cheroenhaka had not had any recorded direct conflicts with the English, only visits from the occasional settler.

Bland's route, and by proxy the location of the Cheroenhaka, has been hypothesized by scholars. There are difficulties in deciphering where Bland was during his accounts, as he was known to overestimate the distances he traveled, and scholars now tend to reduce a distance stated by Bland by half when mapping his routes.[39] John Mitchell is one of the scholars and mapmakers who analyzed surveyors and concluded many were easily able to misinterpret distances when walking in the woods compared to

[37] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 135

[38] Edward Bland [-, Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. The Discovery of New Brittaine: Began August 27, Anno Dom. 1650. New York: Reprinted by J. Sabin and Sons, 1873.

[39] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 127

a "strait course."[40] John Mitchell was a known British propaganda mapmaker, and despite misinterpreting English claims to North America, he did care for distance accuracy.

Another method of matching description to place is understanding the geography. For example, when Bland claims that he arrived at what he calls "Blandina River" in now Clarksville, Virginia he describes two islands located at the foot of the falls of the river that runs in a northward direction and mentions seeing Sturgeon fish.[41] However the river there would flow eastward, not northward, and only would make a turn northward at Charles Island. The Sturgeon fish physically cannot reach Clarksville due to barriers.

The two islands described by Bland would match the Weldon-Roanoke rapids location in North Carolina more accurately, to which Sturgeon can travel. Bland made a measurement of 45 feet between high and low water levels. Such a measurement matches anthropologist's Joffre Lanning Coe's measurement of the location in North Carolina, because the Clarksville location has a measurement of 24 feet.[42] Bland also failed to make note of a fork at the mouth of a river, which he would have remarked if he did indeed turn westward from the islands that are in Clarksville, prompting scholars to determine he was actually at the Roanoke River in North Carolina and not the Blandina River in Virginia.[43] Due to these scholarly assertions, the two Cheroenhaka villages that were visited by Bland are placed at two miles from Rowantee Branch for the first one, and then traveling to south-southeast from Rowantee to Stony Creek, then southwest

---

[40] Remarks on the Journal of Batts and Fallam; in Their Discovery of the Western Parts of Virginia in 1671. The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians 1650-1674. By Clarence Alvord andLee Bidgood, pp. 196-205, Arthur H. Clark Co., cleveland.

[41] Edward Bland [-, Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. The Discovery of New Brittaine: Began August 27, Anno Dom. 1650. New York: Reprinted by J. Sabin and Sons, 1873. 123-24

[42] Joffre Lanning Coe "The Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 54, no. 5 (1964): 1–130.

[43]Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 129

along the Nottoway river to the second village in a place slightly north of Jarratt, Virginia.[44]

In 1707 three men, including non-indigenous men, were interviewed by the Virginia-North Carolina boundary commission. Their interview was unrelated to Native Americans, but they described Native Americans living near them. Based on the statements of those men it has been concluded by scholars, like Louis Binford, that in 1707 the Cheroenhaka were living in the same area that they had lived in during the Bland visit in 1650 *(figure 3)*.[45]

The Blackwater swamp near Petersburg, Virginia used to be the southern boundary of the English colony, and the lands south of the boundary were considered land that belonged to Native Americans. Since the Cheroenhaka were south of the boundary, up until 1705 their land was unchallenged by the colonists.[46] In 1705 the Virginia House of Burgess, now the Virginia House of Delegates, stole their land and left the Cheroenhaka with 41,000 acres of reservation land, a circle tract of 18,000 acres and a square tract of 23,000 acres.[47] After the Commonwealth of Virginia relieved the tribal interpreters Henry Briggs and Thomas Whyn, those reservation lands began being sold off by the Commonwealth of Virginia via the colonist tribal trustees.[48] By 1710, colonists had moved into the area and were clearing land for farming three miles from one of the Cheroenhaka villages *(figure 4 and 5)*.[49] Despite the shortfalls of the framing and

[44] Ibid pg 132
[45] Ibid pg 151
[46] Ibid pg 167
[47] Interview with Chief Brown
[48] Ibid
[49] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 168

conclusions of Binford, he was highly trained in composing and analyzing ethnohistory, and his field method work is thorough for his research time period.

Fear of a Tuscarora and Five Nation alliance, due to colonist's perceived or feared friendship between the Tuscarora and the Cheroenhaka, led the Virginia colonists to attempt to ally with the Cheroenhaka against the five nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.[50] The Middle Plantation Treaty caused the movement of the Cheroenhaka to the Assamoosick Swamp until 1733.[51] William Bryd writes of his visit to this location during his travels in 1711 and 1729.[52] Byrd notes and theorizes there was a decline in population between his visits due to alcoholism and smallpox.[53] The ongoing trauma, stress, and mistreatment was one of the main culprits in the rise of alcoholism. Byrd makes additional notes that from his perspective the modes of constructing houses he observed had not been impacted by colonization.[54]

After 1722 *(figure 6)* there are records of appeals from the Cheroenhaka to the Colonist government for help dealing with settlers encroaching on their land, which the colonist government ignored.[55] In 1744, the Cheroenhaka were being taken advantage of by fur traders who claimed they had amassed debt on credit, which forced them to "sell" land to pay off debts.[56] During the seven years' wars in 1757 Governor Dinwiddie wrote that the Cheroenhaka showed up in support with the Tuscarora, Cherokee, and Catawba to aid in the battle against the French at Fort Duquesne.[57] Later in 1776 tribal warriors

---

[50] Ibid pg 169
[51] Ibid pg 174
[52] Ibid pg 179
[53] Ibid pg 187
[54] Ibid pg 188
[55] Ibid pg 185
[56] Helen C. Rountree "The Termination and Dispersal of the Nottoway Indians of Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (1987): pg 197
[57] Lewis R. Binford "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 190

participated in Bacon's rebellion.[58] What followed was more unethical land "sales" and scholars state that by the Revolutionary war, most of the land had been taken.[59] The tribe's queen at the time was Chief Edy (Edith) Turner (1754-1838) who was 5th Great Grandmother of the current Chief Brown.[60]

Scholars claim records show the Cheroenhaka refused to assimilate to colonist farming and economic practices.[61] Scholars then claimed the Cheroenhaka had all vanished, because they assumed that since they were resisting conforming to colonist farming practices and that they had loss of much of their land, making it difficult to maintain hunting practices, those scholars now could not imagine a feasible pathway to feeding everyone in the villages.[62] Scholars further back this theory with deed evidence from 1794 showing the population numbers, which they claim indicated a social breakdown due the majority listed being women and children and not having an equal number of men recorded.[63]

However, none of this evidence is indicative of impending vanishment, but instead an indication of incomplete records or further resilience of the Cheroenhaka to adapt and survive the harsh realities of colonization. Chief Brown has explained that from 1735 to 1877 many of the Cheroenhaka were forced to disperse in all four directions.

---

[58] "Tribal Warriors of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe joined forces with Bacon in what became known as the infamous Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion of May 1776 resulting in the downfall of the Occaneechee Indians at Occaneechee Island / on the Roanoke River. Bacon's Rebellion was a catalyst to the Woodland Plantation Treaty of 1677" https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org/about-us/ethno-historical-current-snapshot-of-the-cheroenhaka-nottoway-indian-nation-of-southhampton-county-virginia/

[59] Helen C. Rountree "The Termination and Dispersal of the Nottoway Indians of Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (1987): pg 198

[60] E*thno-historical / current snapshot of the Cheroenhaka (nottoway) indian nation of Southhampton County, Virginia*. Cheroenhaka Nottoway. (n.d.) https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org/cheroenhaka-nottoway-past-tribal-events-2/home/chief-browns-bio-vitae/

[61] Helen C. Rountree "The Termination and Dispersal of the Nottoway Indians of Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (1987): pg 199

[62] Ibid

[63] Ibid pg 200

They didn't vanish, many just were forced to move away due to the pressure of land sales.[64]

Scholars incorrectly state that due to being matriarchal, children of only Cheroenhaka men could not be Chereonhaka, and thus did not count in population numbers.[65] This is false; a matriarchal society does not mean the father does not count. Just as in our current patriarchal society, where the majority of children in the United States are given their father's surname, they are still considered the child of their mother and the race/ethnicity of their mother in a patriarchal society.

In 1877, five Cheroenhaka families divided the remaining 575 acres of land, then they had to contend with the "paper genocide" that took place in the 1900s in Virginia, where Walter Plecker altered birth and death certificates and marriage licenses to change races from Native American to either black or white.[66] In 1918, the Diamond Grove elementary school was constructed in Southhampton county with partial funding from the Rosenwald fund, before it was closed in 1957.[67] During the 1919 school year the school population was made up of Cheroenhaka students living in and around Artis Town. Many in the Cheroenhaka tribe today can trace their family members attendance back to that school.[68] Chief Brown's own father and his seventeen siblings all attended the school.

In 1953, the last of the Cheroenhaka land was sold for tax reasons from the Sykes family. In 1960, 1965, and 1966 the graves of the Cheroenhaka were evacuated at the Hand Site Settlement, documented by the project field director as a "Cheroenhaka

---

[64] Further scholarship could expand this analysis with data from families.

[65] Ibid pg 201

[66] Max Carocci "Written out of History: Contemporary Native American Narratives of Enslavement." *Anthropology Today*25, no. 3 (2009): 18–22

[67] The building is now being used as the Diamond Grove Baptist Church, as the GEMS Church, for their Fellowship Hall.

[68] A larger research project could conduct oral family histories to learn more about the school.

(Nottoway) Indian Burial Ground and Settlement."[69] The stolen remains were then placed in shoe boxes, and placed on shelves at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.[70] For the past eighteen years the tribe has been working with the repatriation office of the NMNH to have their ancestors bones returned for reburial on tribal land so "Their Spirits Can Finally Walk Easy."[71]

After returning home from the military after 28 years of active duty, Chief Brown called around to all the tribal clans in the area, all the families that he knew to be Cheroenhaka. He and thirty others came together for that first meeting in 2002. This is when the Cheroenhaka reorganized in Southampton County and elected Walt "Red Hawk" Brown to be Chief during that initial meeting. Chief Brown then made the call to other Cheroenhaka families to return home, in response to the dispersal of families from the land takeovers from the colonists from 1735 to 1877. In the twenty two years since that day many have returned to Southhampton county, coming back from states such as West Virginia, North Carolina, California, Ohio, New York, and South Carolina.[72]

Later that year, they tried to gain federal recognition, but due to how many barriers there are to gaining such recognition, they have only been able to get state recognition, which was granted in 2010. Despite continuing difficulties in gaining federal

---

[70] "The Hand Site Excavation (44SN22) – in Southampton County carbon dates the ancestors of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe in Southampton County, Virginia to around 1580. It is believed this site existed in **700 AD**. **NOTE:** On November 2, 2009, a State Historical Marker commemorating the Hand Site (44SN22), was placed on the corner of General Thomas Hwy and Hansom Road in Southampton County. The marker notes that the site was "long claimed" by the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe" *Ethno-historical / current snapshot of the Cheroenhaka (nottoway) indian nation of Southhampton County, Virginia*. Cheroenhaka Nottoway. (n.d.). https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org/about-us/ethno-historical-current-snapshot-of-the-cheroenhaka-nottoway-indian-nation-of-southhampton-county-virginia/

[71] Interview with Chief Brown

[72] In a larger research project oral family history interviews could be conducted

recognition, in 2013 they received a thank you letter from the Queen of England, whose English monarchy recognized that they existed *(figure 7)*.

In 2009 and then in April of 2016, through purchase, the Cheroenhaka regained 100 and then 163 acres of their stolen land. In April of the year 2022, Chief Brown and tribal members, including his own children then ages eight and nine, presented the annual treaty tribute to Governor Glenn Youngkin *(figure 8a and 8b).*

In September of 2018 the Cheroenhaka entered into a partnership with Monument Construction and then established the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Enterprises (CNE), LLC for the purpose to become a SBA Certified Tribal 8a Business. This SBA program allows for assistance with federal contracting for socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.[73] The SBA program has aided in the reconstruction of the palisade village and building of the tribal museum, which shall be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Chapter Two: Cattashowrock Town and Architectural Reconstructions

I arrived in Cattashowrock town *(figure 9),* a reconstructed Cheroenhaka palisade village, on a warm September day in the year of 2022. My mother, who is Oneida like myself, accompanied me to the coastal plains of Virginia. Cattashowrock town resides within 100 acres of tribal land, next to a 155 acre conservation area *(figure 10).* Traveling along a path away from the powwow grounds *(figure 11),* my mother and I were guided to Cattashowrock Town, by Chief Brown *(figure 12 and 13).*

[73] https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/8a-business-development-program#id-program-overview

When the tribal governing council was formed in 2002, it was to this governing council that Chief Brown presented his vision of Cattashowrock Town. He envisioned a site that would include a Tribal Educational and Cultural Center and Museum, an interactive replica of a 17th century palisade village, powwow grounds, and a worship center *(figure 14)*.

Through fundraising efforts and money earned from educational speaking engagements, in March 2009 they reclaimed, via purchase, a hundred acres of the former 41,000 acres of reservation land in pursuit of that vision. Longleaf pine trees *(figure 15)*, as explained by Chief Brown, used to cover the landscape before being cut down by colonists for the lumber industry and then replaced by another tree species that was more profitable. In the month of April in the year 2011 in collaboration with the Virginia department of forestry they replanted 20,000 Long Leaf Pine trees (TAT-CHANA-WIHIE OHAR-RAK OHO-TEE GE-REE) around Cattashowrock town. Longleaf pines have the longest needles *(figure 16)* of any north american pine tree that is native to the region.[74] With needles growing on average around eighteen inches long, they also are known to contain the largest pine nuts.[75]

Chief Brown explained how Cattashowrock town was based on William Byrd II of Westover's description from his visit to the Cheroenhaka village on April 7th and 8th in the year of 1728 *(figure 17)*. William Byrd II, who was born in March of 1674, was part of a surveying expedition in the spring and fall of the year 1728, due to a disputed boundary between Virginia and North Carolina.[76] William Byrd then wanted to publish

[74] Guy Sternberg and Jim Wilson. Native Trees for North American Landscapes: From the Atlantic to the Rockies. Timber Press, 2004. Pg 314

[75] Ibid

[76] William Byrd et al. The Dividing Line Histories of William Byrd II of Westover. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2013. Pg vii

his travel accounts for a British audience, adding to his account botanical and history information as well as anecdotes, offhand remarks, and what is described by scholar Kevin Joel Berland as "erudite jests."[77] Byrd published two different accounts, one in "The History of the Dividing Line," and one for private circulation in "The Secret History of the Line."

Both of these accounts were written after the year 1736, as is evidenced in his offhand remarks and anecdotes referencing over ten events or names that happened after 1728 but before the year 1737.[78] Byrd used his field journal, letters to friends, his report to the board of trade, his surveyors' journals from 1728, and a possible manuscript draft sent to a Lord about an earlier description of Virginia from 1719 in order to construct his travel accounts of 1728.[79] When analyzing his information one must be aware it could be from his reflections of those days' events from ten years prior. However, his descriptions of the Cheroenhaka architecture and town, if pulled directly from his field journal, would be descriptions from memory that took place on or close to those days in April.

William Byrd II writes that they dispatched a runner to notify the Cheroenhaka of their intended arrival to their village, and were greeted by women and men who led them into the fort.[80] Byrd describes the surrounding palisades as being "strong" and "ten feet high" and inside the palisade were "bark cabanes" that were "sufficient to lodge all their people."[81] Byrd makes an estimate of around two hundred people living in the town. He describes the architecture as being made of saplings that are arched at the top and covered

---

[77] Ibid

[78] Ibid, pg 60

[79] Ibid, pg 51

[80] William Byrd et al. The Westover Manuscripts: Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina ; A Journey to the Land of Eden, A.D. 1733 ; And a Progress to the Mines. Printed by Edmund and Julian C. Ruffin, 1841. Pg 34

[81] Ibid

with bark that made it protected against all types of weather.[82] Bryd describes how the dwelling did not contain the furniture he was accustomed to but that the warming fire in the center with clean mats and deer skin located inside created a welcoming and homely environment.[83] Byrd goes on to describe the events of the day and the people, before digressing into an explanation of a topic within the history of the region.

Approaching Cattashowrock town *(figure 18),* there is the sounds of birds in the distance and a soft breeze is felt all around. The sun is shining down and patches of yellow surround the green grasses in areas leftover from the heat of the earlier summer months. My mother and Chief Brown are engaged in a deep conversation as I trail behind them, sketching what I see into my research journal. I try to imagine what the view must look like from a bird's-eye view *(figure 19 and 20)* as I glance upwards towards the surrounding tall trees, that feel like an extra layer of protection for the village.

Palisade poles surround the town *(figure 21)*. Upon entering through an opening in the palisades *(figure 22)*, one of the first types of architecture that catches my eye are the longhouses *(figure 23 and 24)*. Longhouses (TAT-CHANA-WIHIE ONU-SHAG) were historically constructed by women who built the frame of the longhouse out of samplings. Chief Brown says that it was of the utmost importance for the structures to face east during the planning stage. Once the samplings were lashed together, horizontal stringers were tied in tiers in order to strengthen the frame.[84] Woven grass mats *(figure 25*) and bark would cover the structure and were weatherproof and could withstand strong storms, with fire pits burning continuously inside *(figure 26)*. Bark was heavier to transport, and so it was often reserved for winter while mats made from other materials,

[82] Ibid, pg 35
[83] Ibid
[84] Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton. Native American Architecture. Oxford University Press, 1989. Pg 56

such as grasses, were used during the other seasons of the year.[85] Bark would be peeled from the trees in the summer months when the sap was increasing, then flattened under rocks and kept moist as it dried to prevent cracks.[86]

Chief Brown described how when creating the longhouse reconstructions for Cattashowrock Town saplings were cut down to create the natural wood framing. Initially palm mats were used, however palm mats were not weather resistant long term, and the cost of upkeep and replacement did not match the level of funding available. Similar to other living indigenous history museums, they decided that synthetic materials were the more financially stable material to use *(figure 27)*. Chief Brown sent some to visit the Jamestown museum, to learn more about the synthetic materials and suppliers that they were using for their Algonquian architecture reconstructions. Flex bark materials *(figure 28)*, that can last around 18 years, were then purchased for some of the structures at Cattashowrock town *(figure 29)*. There are competing demands between historical accuracy and financial constraints that impact all museums, many with access to more funding opportunities and donors than Cattashowrock town.

In April of the year 2016 they regained, through purchase, 163 acres of their stolen land for further preservation, then later that summer representatives from the Haudenosaunee Onondaga nation attended the Annual "Green Corn Dance" Intertribal Powwow and Gathering at Cattashowrock Town, and they presented them with an Iroquoian Water Drum and tobacco seeds that had been grown on Onondaga land.

After the purchase of those 163 acres, certain non-native locals responded by vandalizing and destroying architectural structures at Cattashowrock town, including the

[85] Ibid, pg 59
[86] Ibid, pg 82

longer longhouse structure *(figure 30)*. Chief Brown showed me a picture of the original longhouse before it was vandalized and destroyed, the architecture now only preserved in a photo. The image of the longhouse remains to this day memorialized in a photo collage at a popular local restaurant within the community, that Chief Brown often frequents with his family. Further fundraising and donations are still needed to finish the repairs and reconstruction of the new longhouse *(figure 31 and 32).*

As we moved about Cattashowrock town we are greeted by signs that help to guide and explain how the architecture and landscape design is connected to Cheroenhaka culture.

The KE-TO-OK-NEH (harvest time) depended on the food source. For centuries detailed planning went into the growth and storage of foods, in order to be prepared with enough for a potential drought or other factors that could cause a shortage the following year. The growth of crops was essential, but they were not the only food source, as the gathering of wild plants, such as acorns and various berries, was a staple in the diet. Acorns were ground with a mortar and pestle. Located next to a longhouse is the threshing booth *(figure 33)*. The top part is used for corn drying before the corn is ground, with this structure being historically operated by women. Corn husks would be carefully and quickly braided together and hung to dry from the rails.

AQUIA-OHO-NAG (Deer Skin) was sought out due to the durability, softness, and availability in the region. Outside of being a food source full of protein and calories, and their bones used in tools, deerskin was also used for clothing. The stretching rack *(figure 34)* is used for the deerskin defleshing and tanning process. Then later dyed porcupine quills and shell beads were used to decorate the deerskin clothing.

OWHER-YA-KUM OHO-TEE GE-REE, the Tree of Peace *(figure 35)* is represented in the reconstructed landscape. The tree of peace is a symbol of the oral constitution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Cheroenhaka are Iroquoian like the six nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which is the reason why it was important for the tree of peace to be located in the Cattashowrock town landscape.

A fire pit *(figure 36)* was used and burned continuously in both the villages and fishing camps. AU-TEUR ORUN-TAG known as Fire Rocks was another important part of daily life. Clean rocks were added with mashed acorns in a pot, after they were washed off to reuse in various dishes such as beans or used in sweat lodges.

The flatlooker design *(figure 37)*, which was part of the everyday landscape allowed for food to cook evenly, such as various animal meats, fish, and shellfish, which would create OK-YER KAIN-TU/KO-HAN, also known as Smoked Fish and Shad.

The Dugout Canoe *(figure 38)* was an important aspect of daily life, as traveling on the waterways was the main form of travel, and fishing was an essential part of life. Each canoe on average would fit 10 to 40 people. TAT-CHANA-WIHIE RAS-SO GE-REE translated to Bald Cypress Tree, which are trees that grew along rivers, streams, and creeks and could live to be 600 years old. This tree is often seen as a symbol for the southern swamp. This was the source material for the dugout canoes. Canoes are constructed preferably from a 50 foot cypress tree. Using fire to create a charred center, the charred wood would then be scooped out using oyster or clam shells.

While the Dugout Canoes were long-lasting watercraft, there were times when a birch canoe would need to be built. While not featured at Cattashowrock town, the birch canoes *(figure 39)* were excellent for forest travel, as they could be easily moved forward with paddle, and being lightweight, they could easily be carried over land for as long of a

distance as needed.[87] Despite being lightweight, they were capable of carrying heavy loads, since these canoes were created using tree materials, any repairs could be made during travels, as needed.[88]

The scholarship on the variations amongst canoe designs and types among the different Native American nations within what is now known as the United States, states that canoes from the Iroquois tended to be larger compared to other nations.[89] For the Haudenosaunee confederacy, some of their canoes were observed to be built within a day if needed in a time of war. These "emergency" birch bark canoes were the type of canoe that would involve quicker construction compared to the more reliable dugout canoe.[90]

As my mother and I stand near the dugout canoe, admiring the design, I hear running water flowing in the distance. This is fitting as SARI-OKA JO-KE translating to Running Water, is on display in the explanation of the fishing weir *(figure 40)*. A fishing weir was constructed with stones, wooden posts, and reeds. It was placed at the edge of a stream or tidal lagoon and was used to trap fish as they swam with the current.

Other food sources are represented and showcased inside Cattashowrock town. Near a garden area is a sign that reads AHE-TA CO-REE translated to Sunflowers. Chief Brown's childhood background of growing up on a farm helped him to determine the best place to position the garden. Sunflowers seeds were important as they were roasted and ground for use in meals and to thicken soups or stews. From the hulls of the sunflower dye was extracted with dried petals and pollen used in face paint. Oil extracted from the boiled seeds was turned into cooking and hair oil. Sunflowers were used to treat medical

---

[87] Tappan Adney, Howard Irving Chapelle and Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983. Pg 3

[88] Ibid

[89] Tappan Adney, Howard Irving Chapelle and Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983 pg 213

[90] Ibid

issues ranging from snake bites, sunstroke, to warts. Archaeological evidence supports the presence of Sunflowers around or before the time of the Three Sisters (Corn, Beans, and Squash) TO-SE ORWIS-AG translated to Cattail, have roots that produced a sweet-tasting flour and when boiled produced a sweet syrup for cooking. Cattails were also used in pillow stuffing, diaper material, moccasin lining. Weaving mats were created from cattail leaves and stalks.

WAT-CHO-KA OS-TER (Briars) Green briar was used to treat muscle aches and cramps, infusions were used for stomach pains, roots were used for everyday food. Poison ivy was added to create poison arrows. OWHER-YA-KUN GE-REE (White Oak) bark was used to treat asthma, mouth sores, coughs, and chapped skin and the acorns were used as a food source. TAT-HA-DA-NUSTE GE-REE (Passion Flower) was used as a food source and to treat anxiety, and roots were used to "draw out" poison from cuts. CHEE-TA GAT-KUM RA-TUNG (Pokeweed) had a growth of up to eight feet, this plant was used as both medicine and the leaves as a food source. The berries were poisonous to humans but were eaten by wildlife. GA-HUN-TEE OS-TER RA-TUNG (Blackberry) was gathered with juniper berries and partridgeberries. These berries were used in dyes and as a food source. Blueberries were called starberries and were dried and pounded into meat to enhance the flavor, with its juice used as cough medicine. Another represented food source was GENUA-QUAST WEES-RUNT, wild Strawberry. Also known as the heartberry *(figure 41*), these plants were consumed only when they were in season and were often the first berries to appear in spring.

Cattashowrock town is not the only place with indigenous architectural reconstructions. Miles away in near Colonial Williamsburg is the Jamestown Museum,

Jamestown is the first English settlement in what is now known as the United States.[91] This reconstruction was not indigenous-led, and the differences were apparent as I explored the area.

I traveled there with one of my childhood friends, and upon our arrival to Jamestown we walked towards "Paspahegh Town" on the map *(figure 42)*. Paspahegh Town *(figure 43)* is described as the village of the Pasaphegh, one of the over thirty Algonquian speaking tribal groups in the Powhatan paramount chiefdom.[92] The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation describes the reconstruction as being based on archaeological findings at Jamestown, oral traditions from state and federally recognized tribes in Virginia, and descriptions recorded by English colonists in the 17th century.[93]

Paspahegh Town has a number of architectural structures *(figure 44)* with differing interiors, so walking through each one provides a different experience. One of my favorite structures *(figure 45)* featured an entrance that led into a hallway passage that divided the entrance from the living space. There is ample height to the structures and items hang from above *(figure 46)* and visitors are invited to sit down on the benches within *(figure 47, 48, 49, 50.)*

Walking around a guide approaches us and offers to answer any questions. I inquire about the building materials of the structure *(figure 51)*, and the guide explains that due to cost and durability they outsource the mats and use replicas instead. To create a more weather resistant structure, they use plastic sheeting under the outsourced mats to have the materials last longer and therefore be in less need of more frequent replacement *(figure 52 and 53)*.

---

[91] John L. Cotter and Edward B. Jelks. "Historic Site Archaeology at Jamestown." *American Antiquity* 22, no. 4 (1957): pg 387

[92] Paspahegh town | Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, VA. https://www.jyfmuseums.org/visit/jamestown-settlement/living-history/paspahegh-town

[93] Ibid

The guide explains that in lieu of using authentic materials, they hang a display of the more accurate mats to show guests what the material would have actually looked like *(figure 54 and 55)*. This display can be moved more easily if it rains to better preserve the material for future guest viewing. The importance of originals is theorized that a psychological experience from viewing original material is distinct compared to viewing a reproduction.[94] Since indigenous architecture, in what is now known as Virginia, was always culturally experiencing replacement of materials, showcasing the correct materials could be argued to be the same as viewing an original, if the reconstruction was indigenous-led.

Similar to Cattashowrock town, a dugout canoe *(figure 56)* and a flatlooker *(figure 57)* are on display as part of the living history site. They are part of fragments of reconstructed history that are scattered around the space. During my visit I witnessed one of the structures in the process of having its older mats replaced with new mats (figure 58 and 59). The staff member working on the structure was replacing parts of the wooden frame as well *(figure 60)*. When I asked about the process he explained that he did this so that when he climbed to add the mats at the top he wouldn't break part of the old frame and become injured falling down.

Different tools, drills, nails, clamps, are used by the staff at Jamestown than what would have been used customarily. The neatly delivered, custom made mats were present on the ground waiting to be unfurled *(figure 61)*. It was a singular man working on the structure that day, when normally it would have been a group of women working together and at a faster pace due to experience and the necessity to have shelter ready before the elements or darkness descended.

---

[94] Sandra H Dudley, Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations. London: Routledge, 2010. Pg 89

As I moved around the site, I could see the difference between the structures before and after the yearly mat replacement *(figure 62)*. The older mats were frayed around the edges of the doorways *(figure 63)*, while the new mats appeared to be nearly flawless *(figure 64)*. The mats come from a supplier that is able to create a replica of the reed mats, and the cost of replacement is covered under the funding that comes from a museum, such as Jamestown, being well known in the community and country. The lack of access to funds and major donors, especially for non-federally recognized tribes, is one of the difficult barriers to indigenous-led living history museums being created and open year-round.

Rivers away in what is now known as Wisconsin near the mouth of the Fox River, there is a "living history" museum called Heritage Hill. After passing by all the other reconstructed architecture and traveling under a bridge one comes upon a 1671 longhouse reconstruction *(figure 65)* from an unspecified nation. The longhouse is filled with crosses and christian religious texts *(figure 66)*. The architecture is explained and framed to schoolchildren and visitors as the living quarters of missionaries who taught the Native Americans about christianity, and is called "The Catholic Bark Chapel" *(figure 67)*. The museum made a choice of framing their one indigenous architectural structure on site, at a museum where children regularly attend to learn about historical lives, as being occupied by the non-indigenous colonizers and being a positive place of worship for a religion that was forced upon Native Americans. This choice by the museum was not one that centered the feelings and perspectives of the Native Americans of the region. Children from Native American nations near Heritage Hill, including members of my own family, were forcefully taken from their homes and families who loved them and

made to attend boarding schools where catholicism was forced upon them. When I visit that site, so close to my own home, I feel a sense of unease and loss fill me.

During the travels in September of 2022 far from home, as we drove further south down Virginia in an area we had never travelled to before, the passing landscape felt unfamiliar and homesickness for the Wisconsin landscape overwhelmed me. However, when we entered the reclaimed land of the Cheroenhaka Indian tribe, there was a feeling of connection and comfort that filled me. Chief Brown was kind, welcoming, and greeted us with warm demeanor. When Chief Brown gave us the in-depth tour of Cattashowrock town, I couldn't help but feel as if I was finally "home" as I entered the palisade village. The immersive experience of being surrounded by Iroquoian architecture was a comfort I will never forget.

Chapter Three: "Living History" Museums and Education

The grand opening of Cattashowrock town takes place on the 16th of November in the year 2012. Nine hundred elementary aged students and teachers visit the newly unveiled reconstruction. There is children's laughter in the air, palpable excitement about learning outside of the classroom, and then there is the feeling of pride from Chief Brown and those who are helping run this event that fills the space. Cattashowrock town became an indigenous-led living history site on that day.

In order to better understand the importance of indigenous-led "living history" sites, one must first be familiar with the decades long academic debates on the potential shortfalls of "living history" sites. "Living History" is a recreation of farms, cityscapes, or villages of the past that incorporates staff members on site who are actively portraying individuals from the past.[95] Some living history sites feature reconstructions of historic architecture while others maintain an original architectural structure. Many employees, who are known as interpreters, are dressed in authentic period clothing and interact with historical artifacts and demonstrate historical events.[96]

What began with some scholars and members of the general public arguing that living history is the best way to teach history, then turned into a closer examination of

[95] David B. Allison Living History: Effective Costumed Interpretation and Enactment At Museums and Historic Sites. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Pg 1

[96] Beverly Sheppard "Interpretation in the Outdoor Living History Museum." *History News* 64, no. 1 (2009): 15–18. Pg 15

popular living history sites. Some scholars stated in response that living history presents merely "imperfect interpretations of the past, not the past."[97] They believe that living history tends to romanticize the past in an effort to recapture the past.[98] They argued that living history tends to celebrate and promote American myths.[99] These myths are in reference to the painting of colonial history and the process of colonization as a wonderful national event, and not one that severely harmed minorities. An example of this specific living history site that promotes American myths is Colonial Williamsburg, with scholars stating its creation was part of the celebration of nation building in the United States.[100]

In a specific critique, one male scholar goes on to explain that living history sites do not accurately teach the public about history because they prioritize visitor enjoyment over showcasing, for example, the smells of the past, or depicting family violence on a farm.[101] Another male scholar is of the same opinion stating that living history fails to represent people being pelted with rotten food, domestic violence, and other quote "unpleasant realities such as women using menstrual products."[102] These scholars are correct in arguing that living history sites historically, and even many today, do not showcase an accurate portrayal of the past. However, they are focusing on incorrect critiques due to their own biases. These scholars have a male perspective, as they both consider systemic male violence towards women, patriarchal structures that impede the

[97] David Peterson, "IN MY OPINION: There Is No Living History, There Are No Time Machines." *History News* 43, no. 5 (1988): 28–30. Pg 28

[98] David Lowenthal.. The Past Is a Foreign Country. Cambridge University Press, 1985.

[99] David B. Allison Living History: Effective Costumed Interpretation and Enactment At Museums and Historic Sites. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Pg 7

[100] Ibid Pg 9

[101] David. Peterson "IN MY OPINION: There Is No Living History, There Are No Time Machines." *History News* 43, no. 5 (1988): 28–30. Pg 28-29

[102] Fred E. H. Schroeder "Living History: Getting Beyond Nostalgia?" *The Journal of Museum Education* 10, no. 3 (1985): pg 20

ability of women and children to escape domestic violence, and women using menstrual products as not being part of the current time period, but instead part of "unpleasant" 18th century history.

If neither scholar can recognize those elements in their own daily "modern" lives, why would they assume those elements would be front and center in the 18th century, as a farm husband and wife welcomed "guests" over to watch them churn butter and show off their farm crops and animals. In addition, why would a demonstration of a historical women's boundaries being crossed be required, when visitors such as one of those male scholars described a time when he asked one of the living history women interpreters how often she washes her clothes because she smelled too nice.[103]

On the other coast, far from coastal plain lowlands of Virginia, resides the Fort Clatsop National Memorial *(figure 68)*, a reconstruction of the Lewis and Clark fort from the 1805-1806 expedition on the northwest coast. A scholar by the name of David Peterson goes on to cite the Fort Clatsop National Memorial, a reconstruction of the Lewis and Clark fort from the 1805-1806 expedition on the northwest coast, as an example of inaccurate living history.[104] He notes the lack of mud, the younger and shorter trees, and summertime visitors in contrast to the cold winter reality of that fort in history. In response to Peterson's observations I traveled to the northwest coast where the mouth of the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean to visit Fort Clatsop myself in the summer of 2023 *(figure 69)*, over 35 years after the visit by Peterson to the same location.

My visit, unlike his, did contain mud, as it was heavily raining that day, and the trees had grown taller in the thirty years since his visit. However, I agree with Peterson in

---

[103] David. Peterson "IN MY OPINION: There Is No Living History, There Are No Time Machines." *History News* 43, no. 5 (1988): pg 29
[104] Ibid

observing that the trees did not reach the height of the older trees of the early 1800s. As Peterson had observed, a single visit to the fort did not immediately provide a visitor with a deep and profound understanding of the history of this site. In terms of learning, one could argue the strongest and most detailed sources of accurate information on site were within the books located in the gift shop. However one cannot downplay the desire of a visitor to buy a book and learn more about the true historical conditions being connected with being able to see, experience, venture within, and touch the reconstructed fort itself.

Many scholars outside the field of architectural history fail to acknowledge the benefits of immersive experiences of architecture in their critiques, whether because they accept this as a baseline principle, or because they do not consider the built landscape to be an important factor in learning at living history sites. Guests often report being fascinated by the feel of fur and bark, the smell of wood smoke, the creaking of an older staircase under their feet, the architecture that differs from their own neighborhoods, the different speech and mannerisms of the interpreters, and the physical and sensory details of a rural setting for the urban guests.[105] This is why despite the critiques and need for improvements, these sites remain open and are part of many family vacation plans and school curriculum based field trips, based on the love or interest in history such experiences can instill in a school-aged child.

Scholar's observations in the 1980s, that historic sites are unable to showcase every part of history and often gloss over the less enjoyable parts of history are correct and have become an accepted academic position when discussing this topic. Many subsequent scholars have developed their critique further by researching exactly what information has been left out of living history sites and publishing papers specifically on

[105] Laura L. Peers (Laura Lynn). Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories At Historic Reconstructions. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007. Pg 129

those subjects.[106] Many living history directors have addressed this very important issue, with a desire to still entertain visitors, by using different approaches in response to critics and scholars reiterating, in various phrasings, that training the interpreters of history to help visitors critically examine history or combining acting out a task with an academic explanation of that activity in its historical context is an important goal for living history museums to pursue.

With that baseline in my mind, when it comes to the issues surrounding Native Americans and living history museums this topic has been part of the broader scholarly research on living history museums. Implementing changes at non-indigenous led living history sites has presented a challenge, as scholar Laura Peers explains, to ensure it is not reminiscent of racist showcases of Native Americans that took place at world fairs, zoos, and buffalo bill shows.[107] For example, in 1896 some Sicangu Sioux lived at the Cincinnati Zoo in Tipi architecture to be exhibited to guests, and were considered by zoo management to be "wild people in line with zoology."[108]

Even when beginning to represent Native Americans, museums tend to showcase Native Americans in a supporting role, compared to the colonists, instead of creating living history demonstrations of Native Americans, for example, engaging in serious political discussions.[109] The contributions of Native Americans are downplayed and there can be a skewing of past events which leads to an unchallenged view of american history

[106] Other scholarship has examined the representation of African-Americans at living history sites, further research could expand on the connections between the representations at these sites of the intersections between the African American and Native American communities

[107] Laura L Peers. (Laura Lynn). Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories At Historic Reconstructions. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007. Pg xvi

[108] Ibid Pg 38

[109] Ibid Pg xxii

as merely being an inevitable progression of anglo-american colonization that was always bound to happen.[110]

Part of the spin that living history sites advertise is the ability to experience the past "as it really was."[111] As established by academics, only one version of history is shown at these sites, and when it comes to Native American representation it is often a version that seeks to legitimize the historic processes of colonization.[112]

A common worldview that is held by the American public is that colonial society was superior to native society.[113] Living history sites can function as a visit to origin myths that perpetuate American society. Often these living history sites are state sponsored or funded by the federal government of the United States. Native Americans are often viewed as relics of the past, exotic, and as mere sidekicks to the non-native historical stars.[114]

Living history sites are not a monolith, and while one can find sites that have made significant strides in Native American representation and agency, there are many other sites that are still practicing the same issues when it comes to Native Americans that have been strongly criticized in the scholarly work of the late 1990s and early 2000s. On top of that, some sites have ended their native interpretation programs due to budget constraints but still host colonial interpretations into the present. While other living history site managers froze and were uncertain how to proceed to balance and reconcile the different cultural perspectives they felt they were expected to showcase on site.[115]

---

[110] Laura L Peers. (Laura Lynn). Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories At Historic Reconstructions. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007. Pg 43
[111] Ibid Pg 31
[112] Ibid Pg 31
[113] Ibid Pg 32
[114] Ibid Pg 41
[115] Ibid Pg 51

Those who are running living history sites in the United States are all humans and products of their society, and many most likely grew up with gaps in their education on Native Americans. As Chief Brown agreed during one of our discussions, there is no set curriculum when it comes to Native Americans, and the majority of public and private schools fail to teach even the basics.[116]

The focus within many critiques remains centered on non-native visitors and how their understanding is dependent on approaching teaching living history in the correct way. However, when centering the native perspective, for native youth, a visit to a living history site can create feelings of incredible isolation when your existence is ignored. Native interpreters report having to spend a lot of time responding to racist chants and whooping noises at the sight of them from guests who believe that is appropriate. Even when most guests appear open to learning more and unlearning stereotypes, daily racist interactions can take its toll on the mental health of native staff members.[117] In addition, native staff are often not trained on how to handle such racist comments and site managers claimed they were unaware it was occurring.[118]

When it comes to the intricacies that go into running a historic living site, budgetary concerns, pressures from higher ups, the stress of training staff, managing logistics, architectural upkeep and safekeeping, guest happiness, on top of the politics of administrative culture, can produce detrimental reactions when bringing concerns or suggestions on native representation to living history management. These factors contribute to the limits of certain critiques that some academics, such as Eric Gable and

[116] In a larger research project there could be further analysis of public education curriculum in the United States

[117] Laura L. Peers (Laura Lynn). Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories At Historic Reconstructions. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007. Pg xvii

[118] Ibid Pg xxvi

Richard Handler have placed upon themselves, commenting that any statements on Colonial Williamsburg would have "political consequences."[119]

Colonial Williamsburg is a museum dedicated to the subject of "social, economic, political, and cultural life of the town and colony of the 17th and 18th centuries."[120] Colonial Williamsburg is a reconstruction of the area around the time of the American Revolutionary war.[121] The site contains five hundred buildings, majority of which were reconstructed, with eighty-eight considered to be restored originals.[122] Colonial Williamsburg has its own research department, and in the year 1990 the annual research budget was 135.5 million dollars.[123] Research supports different projects, such as creating a genealogical profile of Elizabeth Harrison Randolph to better interpret the Peyton Randolph House on site.[124] Scholars Gable, Handler, and Anna Lawson have stated that insiders have joked that Colonial Williamsburg is considered a "Republican Disneyland" because it advertises itself as a patriotic institution that seeks to convey American values, with visitor demographics documenting overwhelming, white guests.[125] Near Colonial Williamsburg is Jamestown.

During my visit to Colonial Williamsburg, my longtime friend who accompanied me, said that she thought the buildings appeared to be too well maintained to be historically accurate, which is a common visitor critique of cleanliness that has been

---

[119] Ibid Pg xxvi

[120] John D. Krugler "Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1991): 347–86. Pg 350

[121] Eric Gable and Richard Handler. "DEEP DIRT: Messing up the Past at Colonial Williamsburg." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 34 (1993): pg 3

[122] Ibid Pg 792

[123] John D. Krugler "Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1991): 347–86. Pg 360

[124] Ibid Pg 363

[125] Eric Gable Richard Handler, and Anna Lawson. "On the Uses of Relativism: Fact, Conjecture, and Black and White Histories at Colonial Williamsburg." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (1992): 791–805. Pg 792

mentioned by scholars since the 1990s.[126] We visited during the winter season, and there were few people around us, which allowed us to have a private guided tour of the Governor's palace *(figure 70)* when it first opened in the morning. The multiple areas of seating for waiting tour guests indicates a high volume of guest traffic during the spring and summer peak season *(figure 71)*. This observation is corroborated by scholarly analysis of the living history area, documenting the fact that the site is very popular with the general public.

The tour was led by a guide in period clothing, which helped to create an immersive feeling within the architectural space, as if we had traveled back in history *(figure 72 and 73)*. We had made the decision to drive down the night before and stay in one of the colonial tavern rooms the night before *(figure 74)*. After checking into our room with authentic looking twin beds *(figure 75)*, we explored the darkening, nearly abandoned streets of Colonial Williamsburg *(figure 76 and 77)*. In the darkness we only came across one other individual, an elderly man in his nineties who offered to take a photo of my friend and I to commemorate our visit (*figure 78)*. I handed him my phone, and his hands shook as he took the photo.

"I've never seen one of these before," the elderly man said, referring to the iPhone as he handed it back to me. After spending time staring up at the crescent moon that had been present during colonial times, my friend and I made our way back to the tavern, as the wind was growing stronger and the temperature dropping. Even though we had both grown up in Wisconsin, the cold can still affect us, and so we sought shelter indoors.

---

[126] Eric Gable and Richard Handler. "DEEP DIRT: Messing up the Past at Colonial Williamsburg." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 34 (1993): 3–16

This was followed by waking up the next morning and taking a morning stroll to our tour at the Governor's Palace on the nearly empty streets as a lone horse-drawn carriage passed by *(figure 79).* All these factors contributed to a feeling of historical immersion. The atmosphere quite possibly would feel less immersive to the average visitor during the peak season, when one would be surrounded by large groups of other visitors in modern-day clothing, and not have had the opportunity spent the night in what is advertised as "authentic accommodations."[127]

During our visit to Pasaphegh Town that same day *(figure 80)*, there is a school group present, composing of third and fourth graders who are divided into smaller groups throughout the site on guided tours with the staff. Due to the coordination needed to divide a large school group, students are constantly approaching the different areas in various orders throughout my visit. A guide in period clothing shows the children clothing material from the time *(figure 81).* The majority of these guides at Pasaphegh town are not indigenous, but are non-native interpreters of indigenous history.

The items in the space became part of the interactive experience for the schoolchildren, as I observed one of the guides encouraging the children to place their hands in the water of the dugout canoe. As one of the groups moves on from the corn grinding demonstration, a young girl is the last one at the station. In her excitement she begins to bang the pestle up and down instead of in circular movements, causing the corn to fly everywhere around her.

---

[127] *Authentic colonial houses in Williamsburg, VA*. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts https://www.colonialwilliamsburghotels.com/accommodations/historic-lodging/

"He specifically told you not to do that!" her teacher admonishes her in a strong tone, "You are getting it everywhere!"

The young girl's face falls, her excitement turning to sadness and embarrassment. She glances up and makes eye contact with me and my friend before turning away as her teacher indicates they should move on. She sets down the tools and slowly follows her teacher, her head down and shoulders slumped. According to scholarly research on childhood memory retention at museums, this will be the specific memory of her visit that will most likely follow her for years to come.

From Paspahegh Town, the view of the English fort was ever present in the background *(figure 82)*. The Jamestown-Yorktown foundation describes the fort as being a recreation of the 1610 to 1614 London military outpost, and has a fort that features thatched roofs, an Anglican church, court of guard, a storehouse, and a governor's house.[128]

Upon approaching the fort (*figure 83),* I overhear a guide telling one of the groups of schoolchildren, "The Powhatans gave the settlers at Jamestown corn, but one day they stopped, and a war started."

The framing of that sentence is geared towards an elementary school audience, but could the guide have said instead, "The Powhatans were kind enough to give the settlers at Jamestown corn, but the settlers were rude and tried to hurt them, so they stopped sharing. The settlers didn't respect their decision and started a war." Perhaps the guide went on to explain this. Not being part of the tour and only overhearing fragments while walking through the living history site, there is much one could miss about the way information is presented. However, at each moment of overheard explanations, the

[128] James Fort | Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation https://www.jyfmuseums.org/visit/jamestown-settlement/living-history/james-fort

framing was consistently downplaying what happened between Native Americans and the europeans who had arrived to colonize the land.

There is ample scholarship on approaches to teaching history to children. When it comes to discussions regarding teaching about atrocities within history, scholarship tends to focus on secondary school aged children.[129] There is scholarship on the seven principles of museum storytelling for children, with the first being that it must be entertaining and factual, the second that the story should be compact in order for a child to grasp the information, the third is using highly-visual language, the fourth is that the story is appealing to children, the fifth is explaining how artifacts are used and made, the sixth is to counter mistaken stereotypes, and the seventh is promoting cross-cultural comparisons.[130]

During the Jamestown fort visit *(figures 84, 85, 86)* I overhear the sixth principle in action as I entered one of the buildings. A guide is posing a question to one of the groups of schoolchildren, "And Pocahontas married John what?"

"John Smith!" an excited child responded loudly.

"Close, it was actually John Rolfe," The guide replies. Evidence pointing towards the child gaining this knowledge from the movie Pocahontas, a film which depicts her falling in love with John Smith, not John Rolfe. As explained in the literature on the seven principles, museum guides often need to find creative ways to challenge knowledge children have gained from pop-culture.[131]

---

[129] Rachel Pawlowicz and Walter E. Grunden. "Teaching Atrocities: The Holocaust and Unit 731 in the Secondary School Curriculum." *The History Teacher*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2015, pp. 271–94.

[130] Susan K. Nichols et al. Museum Education Anthology, 1973-1983: Perspectives On Informal Learning, a Decade of Roundtable Reports. Museum Education Roundtable, 1984. Pg 135

[131] Ibid, pg 137

Research has shown that in order for children to retain vivid memories of their visits to a museum, three factors must be present: a high personal involvement that can be either positive or negative, links to curriculum a teacher taught before or after the visit, and multiple or repeated visits to the same museum.[132] Research shows that powerful memories are linked to the way the child feels about him or herself during the visit and that the personal emotional state of a child is unique to the child. In addition, research shows repeated visits increase a child's concentration and self confidence, replacing preexisting rowdy behavior, thus showcasing a possible explanation for the third factor of museum knowledge retention.[133]

Creative play and imagination are critical driving factors in promoting learning in children, with immersion being a critical part of engaging with children's imagination.[134] Being able to romanticize an experience is essential for children to walk away with a potential love of history, so they'll continue to seek out material, which will expand to more in-depth explanations and critiques as they grow older.

As I am leaving the fort area I overhear another child say to one of their friends, "I wish I was living here back then."

One could interpret that as a child having missed the message within the history lesson that colonization was harmful to Native Americans and that starvation was part of Jamestown life. However, it most likely indicated that the child was enjoying the field trip to a living history museum on a sunny day, that they were in awe of the historic architecture that surrounded them, that their imagination was working overtime

---

[132] Nina Jensen "Children's Perceptions of Their Museum Experiences: A Contextual Perspective." *Children's Environments* 11, no. 4 (1994): pg 302

[133] Ibid

[134] David B. Allison Living History: Effective Costumed Interpretation and Enactment At Museums and Historic Sites. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Pg 9

imagining all the fun they would have had being surrounded by nature and playing with the chickens that were roaming nearby.

When it comes to the format of many living history museums, it is often more beneficial to children rather than adults, as information is often presented in a compact and simplified format, whereas adults often leave these sites feeling as if they did not gain a full and deep understanding of the history, because they often already know the basic history. This one reason is why museums often are accompanied by gift shops with more in-depth books by scholars for purchase. Similarly, for college level class tours such as the ones I have been part of during my course work at the University of Virginia, they are accompanied by special access to areas of the historic home to which the general public does not have access. This is a strategy from the professor to have a visit provide new and exciting learning opportunities for the adult, yet still a student, visitor.

However, due to the intense gap of knowledge adults have when it comes to indigenous history, compact and simplified information tends to still come across as new and exciting. Flashforward to that sunny and clear day in 2024 at University of Virginia's Native American Student Powwow as I am standing near a native vendor[135] as they interact with a potential customer, who is an adult member of the general public.

"What does this shirt mean?" the adult asks, pointing to a t-shirt with an opossum on it that reads *Wow! An opossum eating persimmons wearing moccasins*.

*"*Those are all Algonquian words," The native vendor explains, "they were taken from the Algonquian language in Virginia and are still in use today in the English language."

[135] Native States Project https://www.thenativestatesproject.com

“Wow,” The adult says excitedly, and then laughs at their use of the word wow, “I had no idea! That’s so cool!”

While that was a nice moment of sincere joy and appreciativeness of the new knowledge they acquired, on the other end of the spectrum, it can be jarring when an adult asks an insensitive question or comment you would normally expect to hear from an elementary school aged child.

“They asked if I had ever seen a toilet before,” Liah and Hailee of the Native American Student Union laugh with other members of the Native American Student Union, at the absurdity of the question as they reminisce about a past encounter with the general public.

“Was that an adult or child who said that?” I ask, because in these instances it is never clear or surprising to hear it was an adult.

“A child,” Liah answers. It was a memory from the time they went to give a presentation at one of the local elementary schools during Native History month.

“An adult has said to me though, why aren’t you on a reservation, that’s where you all belong anyway,” Liah’s expression clouding as she recalls the encounter.

“An adult asked if I was from ‘one of those reservations that suffers from poverty and disease.’ That was the first question they asked, they didn’t even know my name yet.”

“An adult asked me if I had to transfer reservations and become a different type of Native American in order to move from another state to attend this university.”

“Another adult said to me, when you put your hair in braids you look straight out of a history book.” As if the only part of indigenous history that adult had retained from their childhood studies was the extinction myth and that Native Americans wear braids.

This conversation begins to remind me of the time during my undergraduate studies when a fellow adult student in my dorm stopped me in the hallway to ask, “Are you glad the trail of tears happened and all those Native Americans were killed, otherwise you wouldn’t have been born?”

I had stared back in shock at the speaker and his question, still not fully awake as it was 8am on a Monday and I was just trying to head off to a class.

Indigenous-led education, whether it be curriculum materials developed by native educators or indigenous-led living history museums, is of the upmost importance for children. An insensitive question from a child is not as harmful to hear for the native listener. As Chief Brown explains, they tell children who visit Cattashowrock town that there is no such thing as a “bad or stupid” question. This is a chance for them to learn and allowing all questions invites opportunities to dispel harmful stereotypes the children may hold from the media, non-indigenous authored children’s books about Native Americans, and from others who have spoken their own assumptions about Native Americans to them. In the early 2000s during one his presentations to a school, a second grade student asked him, “Where are your canoes and horses? How did you get here?” When Chief Brown informed the child that he drove there in his car the child looked shocked. It’s an interaction that Chief Brown vividly remembers to this day.

When a young child says they thought all Native Americans are dead, it comes across as a child-like, and currently harmless, misunderstanding. However, when an adult says they thought all Native Americans are dead, it comes across as a dehumanizing assumption and from a place of harmful ignorance. Adults are the ones who have the potential to vote on policies that impact Native American communities today, and

depending on their career, have the potential to work directly with Native American children, students, nations and tribes.

This is one of the main factors that has led to an increase of books being published with compact and simplified information, marketed towards adults, to help combat assumptions or myths the general public may hold about Native Americans. In an ideal situation, every student would graduate secondary school with a baseline understanding about Native Americans and would know every Native nation and tribe located in their state, and that, most importantly they would understand that Native Americans are still here.

Back in Southampton County, since that opening date in 2012 visits from school children continue to take place at Cattashowrock Town. The state of Virginia follows the Standards of Learning (SOL), and the Cattashowrock school visit days meet the requirements for the Standards of Learning for students, which is one of the many reasons there continues to be classes of students that visit this living history site every year. Elementary students are the main demographic to visit Cattashowrock town *(figure 87).* When they arrive on site, students have guided tours of the area, with some Cheroenhaka guides in regalia who showcase to students what life was like in the year of 1728. In addition, there is the language booth, a place to examine artifacts, hands-on activities for students, and walking trails. Chief Brown proudly shows me a picture of a young Princess Windsong at Cattashowrock town *(figure 88),* the recreation of this palisade village is also for the benefit of her and the other Cheroenhaka youth.

During my visit in September in the year of 2022, the agenda for a school day during the upcoming month of November is shown to me by Chief Brown, and is as follows:

8:45 am- Arrival at Historic Village “Cattashowrock Town”

9:00 am-Visit American Indian Art and Craft Demonstrators

Native Palisade Fort “Cattashowrock Town”

Iroquois Corn Husk Doll Illustration

Hide Tanning

Hand Drum and Corn Grinding

Flint Knapping and Dugout Canoe

Indian Artifacts-ASV Nansemond Chapter *(figure 89)*

10:30 am-Language Booth-Speak Our Iroquoian Tongue (Da-sun-ke)

11:00 am- Luis Salinas and Aztec Dancers

11:45 am - Lunch Break and Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian History with Chief Brown

2:00 pm - Load Buses and Return to Schools

Every visit feels like a success to Chief Brown *(figure 90),* who remarks that students leave having a better understanding of the Cheroenhaka, an Iroquoian Virginia tribe. They make sure to explain to the children that if they have visited the Jamestown Museum on a previous field trip, that Pasaphegh town is a representation of Algonquian Native Americans, and Cattashowrock town is different for they are an Iroquoian nation, and most importantly, it is indigenous-led.

I returned in July of the year 2023 for the 31st “Green Corn Harvest” Powwow *(figure 91 and 92)*. The temperature is very warm and the sun feels piercing. The atmosphere is cheerful and lively. I find my way to a busy Chief Brown who is preparing

for his tribal history educational speech that will take place at 2pm, following the commencement of the Inter-Tribal dancing that will resume after the dinner break. Chief Brown is accompanied by his children, princess Windsong and prince Red Eagle, who are dressed in their regalia as dancers *(figure 93).* He greets me with a smile. His warm smile reminds me of the first time we met in person a year prior *(figure 94)* and how he made my mother and I feel so welcomed on his tribal land that day.

He explains that the Cheroenhaka are still raising funds for the construction of the Tribal Educational and Cultural Center and Museum, and they are hoping to break ground on the construction soon. In another twenty two years he hopes that the Cheroenhaka will continue to thrive, that they will by that time have gained federal recognition, which will open doors to funding for the college education for the children of the tribe. He hopes that the new museum by that time will be built, and along with Cattashowrock town, will allow them to reach more of the general public and future schoolchildren to continue to share the message through education that they are still here.

"Quaker-hun-te EE Sun-ke Was-we-kr, Creator, My Heart Speaks"-Cheroenhaka

Bibliography

- Adney, Tappan, Howard Irving Chapelle and Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.
- Allison, David B.. Living History: Effective Costumed Interpretation and Enactment At Museums and Historic Sites. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Authentic colonial houses in Williamsburg, VA. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts https://www.colonialwilliamsburghotels.com/accommodations/historic-lodging/

- Binford, Lewis R. “An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia.” *Ethnohistory* 14, no. 3/4 (1967) 103–218
- Bland, Edward [-, Abraham Woode, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. The Discovery of New Brittaine: Began August 27, Anno Dom. 1650. New York: Reprinted by J. Sabin and Sons, 1873.
- Byrd, William, et al. The Westover Manuscripts: Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina ; A Journey to the Land of Eden, A.D. 1733 ; And a Progress to the Mines. Printed by Edmund and Julian C. Ruffin, 1841.
- Coe, Joffre Lanning. “The Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont.” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 54, no. 5 (1964): 1–130.
- Cotter, John L., and Edward B. Jelks. “Historic Site Archaeology at Jamestown.” *American Antiquity* 22, no. 4 (1957)
- Deloria, Vine. Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact. New York: Scribner, 1995.
- Dudley, Sandra H.. Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Egloff, Keith, Woodward, Deborah (Deborah B.) and Virginia. First People: The Early Indians of Virginia. Richmond, Va: Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources, 1992.
- Fagan, Brian M.. Ancient North America: The Archaeology of a Continent. Rev. and expanded ed. New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1995.

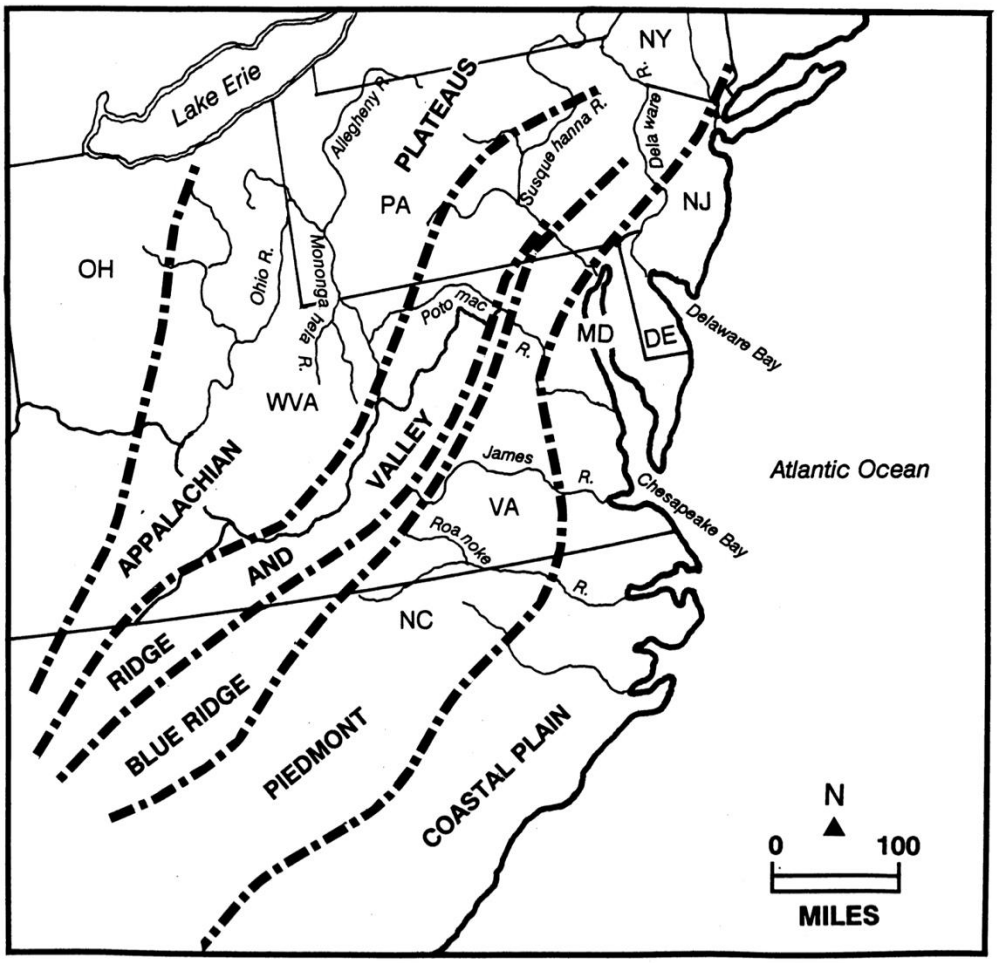
- Gable, Eric, Richard Handler, and Anna Lawson. “On the Uses of Relativism: Fact, Conjecture, and Black and White Histories at Colonial Williamsburg.” *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (1992): 791–805.
- Gallatin, Albert and American Antiquarian Society. A Synopsis of the Indian Tribes Within the United States East of the Rocky Mountains, and In the British and Russian Possessions In North America. 1836.
- Interviews with Chief Redhawk Walt Brown
- James Fort | Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation https://www.jyfmuseums.org/visit/jamestown-settlement/living-history/james-fort
- Jensen, Nina. “Children’s Perceptions of Their Museum Experiences: A Contextual Perspective.” *Children’s Environments* 11, no. 4 (1994)
- Krugler, John D. “Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1991): 347–86.
- Lowenthal, David. The Past Is a Foreign Country. Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- McAvoy, Joseph M.. Nottoway River Survey: The 30 Year Study of a Late Ice Age Hunting Culture On the Southern Interior Coastal Plain of Virginia. Courtland, Va: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992.
- Nabokov, Peter and Robert Easton. Native American Architecture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Native States Project https://www.thenativestatesproject.com
- Nichols, Susan K., Mary Alexander, Ken Yellis and American Association of Museums. Museum Education Anthology, 1973-1983: Perspectives On Informal

Learning, a Decade of Roundtable Reports. Washington, D.C.: Museum Education Roundtable, 1984.

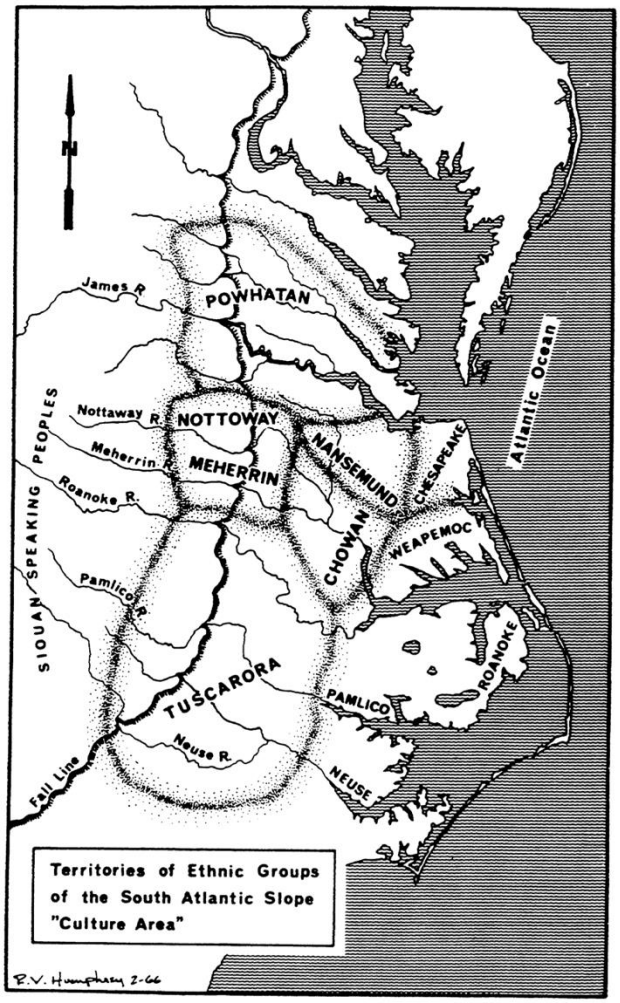
- Paspahegh town | Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, VA. https://www.jyfmuseums.org/visit/jamestown-settlement/living-history/paspahegh-town
- Pawlowicz, Rachel, and Walter E. Grunden. "Teaching Atrocities: The Holocaust and Unit 731 in the Secondary School Curriculum." *The History Teacher*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2015, pp. 271–94.
- Peers, Laura L. (Laura Lynn). Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories At Historic Reconstructions. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007.
- Peterson, David. "IN MY OPINION: There Is No Living History, There Are No Time Machines." *History News* 43, no. 5 (1988): 28–30.
- Remarks on the Journal of Batts and Fallam; in Their Discovery of the Western Parts of Virginia in 1671. The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians 1650-1674. By Clarence Alvord and Lee Bidgood, pp. 196-205, Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland
- Schroeder, Fred E. H. "Living History: Getting Beyond Nostalgia?" *The Journal of Museum Education* 10, no. 3 (1985): 19–20.
- SHEPPARD, BEVERLY. "Interpretation in the Outdoor Living History Museum." *History News* 64, no. 1 (2009): 15–18.
- Sternberg, Guy, and Jim Wilson. Native Trees for North American Landscapes: From the Atlantic to the Rockies. Timber Press, 2004.
- Waters, Anne. American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004.

- Wentworth, Chester K. (Chester Keeler), Geological Survey (U.S.) and Virginia. Sand and Gravel Resources of the Coastal Plain of Virginia. Richmond: University, Virginia. Division of purchase and printing, 1930.

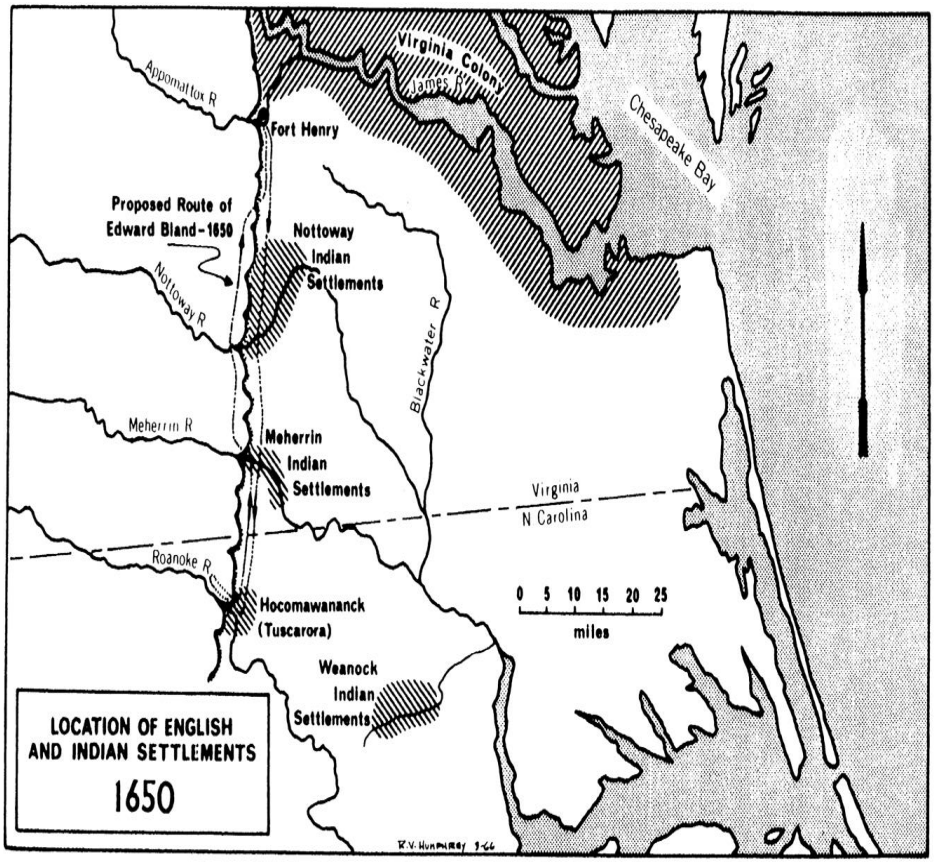
Illustrations



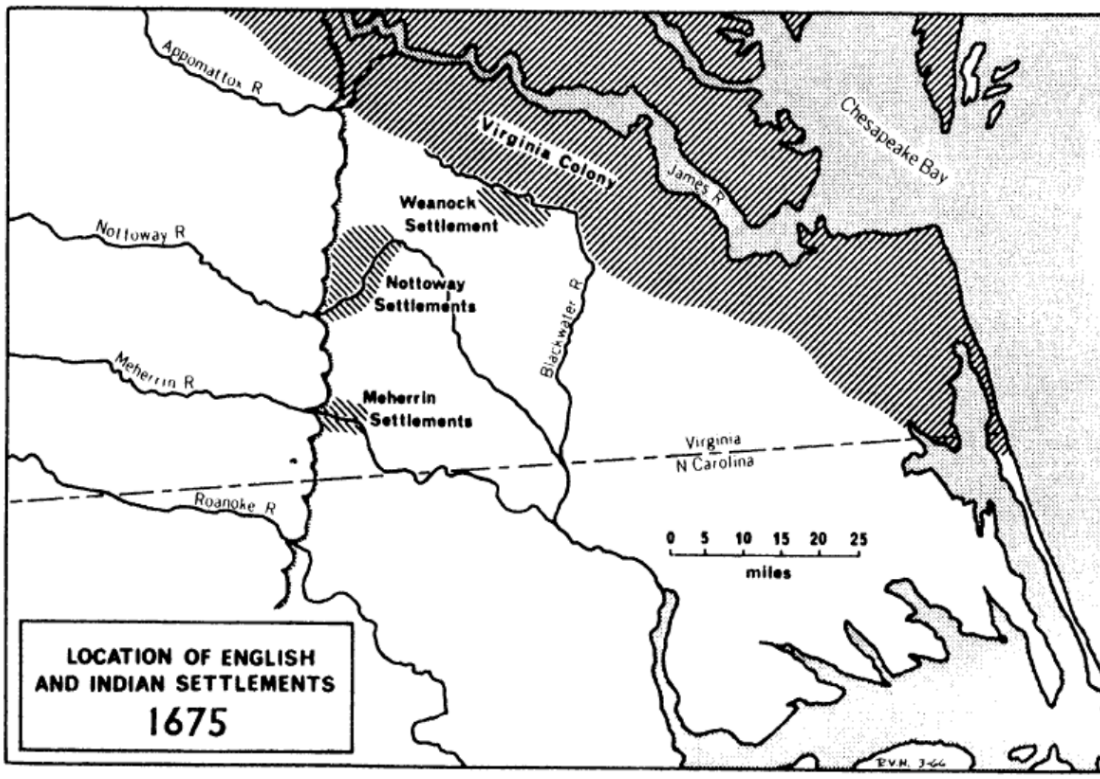
(Figure 1: Stewart, R. Michael. "THE STATUS OF WOODLAND PREHISTORY IN THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION." Archaeology of Eastern North America 23 (1995): 178)



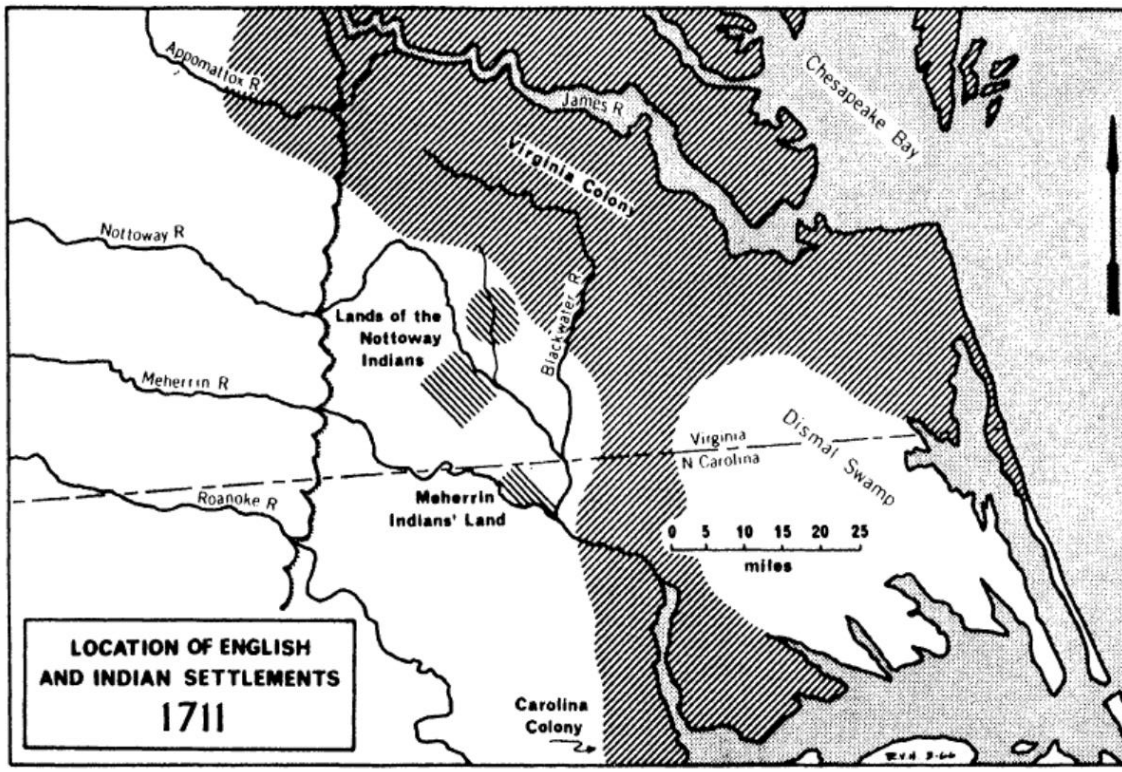
(Figure 2: Binford, Lewis R. "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." Ethnohistory 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 116)



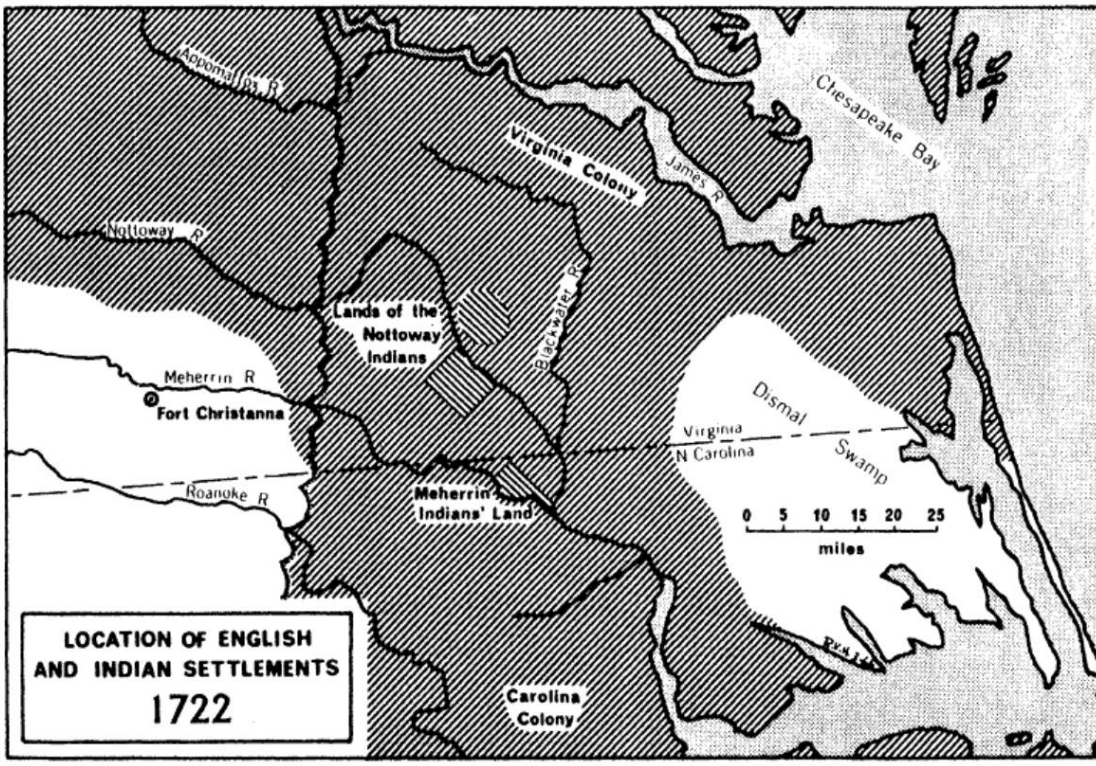
(Figure 3: Binford, Lewis R. "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." Ethnohistory 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 126)



(Figure 4: Binford, Lewis R. "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." Ethnohistory 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 166)



(Figure 5: Binford, Lewis R. "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." Ethnohistory 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 176)



(Figure 6: Binford, Lewis R. "An Ethnohistory of the Nottoway, Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia." Ethnohistory 14, no. 3/4 (1967) pg 186)

(figure 7: 2013 Queen of England letter, image taken by author September 2022)

(figure 8a: April 2022 Treaty Tribute with Governor Glenn Youngkin, image taken from tribal website)

(figure 8b: April 2022 Treaty Tribute with Governor Glenn Youngkin, image taken from tribal website)

(Figure 9: Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 10: 163 acres of purchased Cheroenhaka land, Image taken by author September 2022)

(figure 11: powwow grounds, image taken by author September 2022)

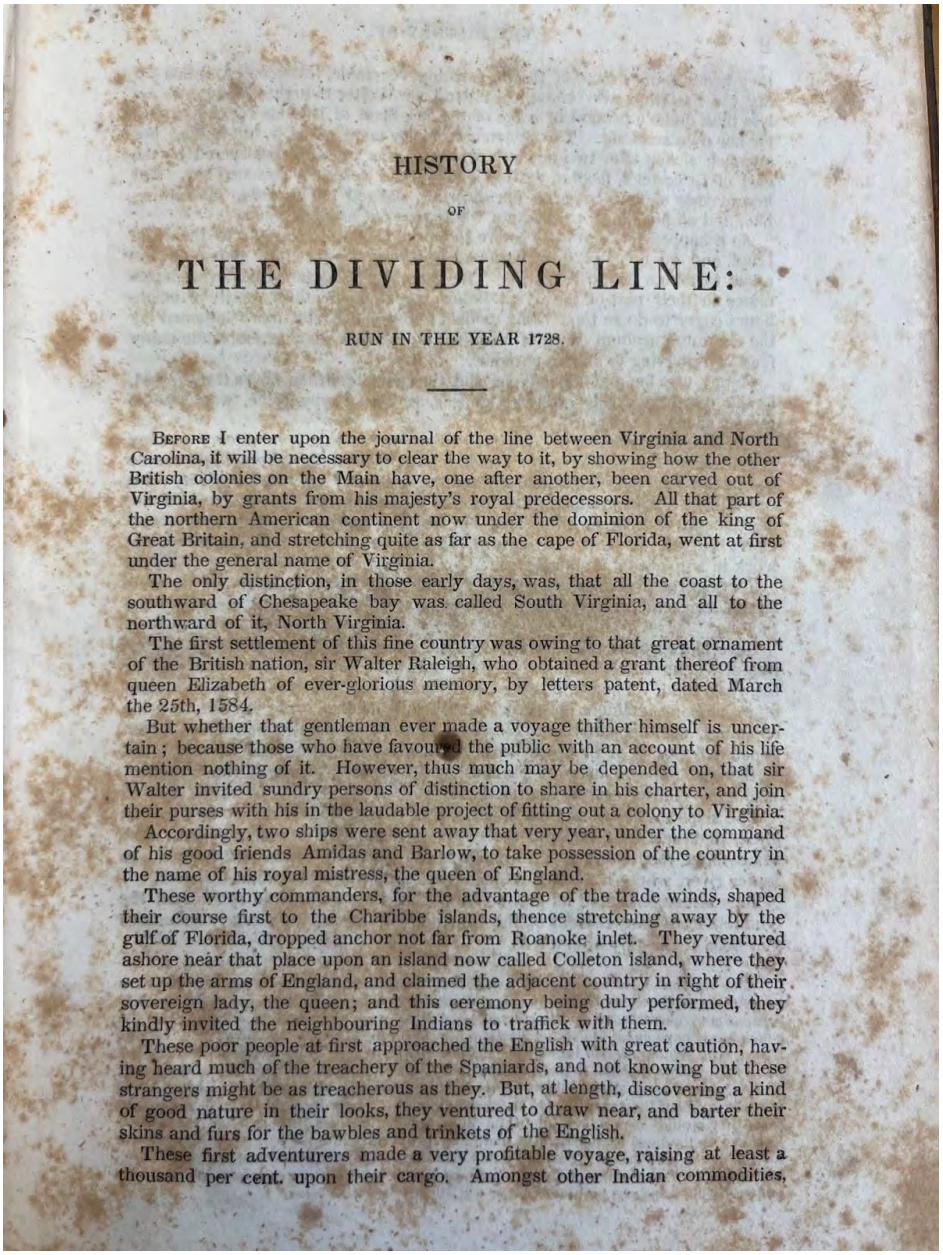
(figure 12: author's mother and Chief Brown, image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 13: Pathway to Cattashowrock Town, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 14: Masterplan concept from Chief Brown, image available at https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org)

(Figure 15: Replanted longleaf pine tree, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 16: Longleaf pine needles, Image taken by author September 2022)



HISTORY

OF

THE DIVIDING LINE:

RUN IN THE YEAR 1728.

Before I enter upon the journal of the line between Virginia and North Carolina, it will be necessary to clear the way to it, by showing how the other British colonies on the Main have, one after another, been carved out of Virginia, by grants from his majesty's royal predecessors. All that part of the northern American continent now under the dominion of the king of Great Britain, and stretching quite as far as the cape of Florida, went at first under the general name of Virginia.

The only distinction, in those early days, was, that all the coast to the southward of Chesapeake bay was called South Virginia, and all to the northward of it, North Virginia.

The first settlement of this fine country was owing to that great ornament of the British nation, sir Walter Raleigh, who obtained a grant thereof from queen Elizabeth of ever-glorious memory, by letters patent, dated March the 25th, 1584.

But whether that gentleman ever made a voyage thither himself is uncertain; because those who have favoured the public with an account of his life mention nothing of it. However, thus much may be depended on, that sir Walter invited sundry persons of distinction to share in his charter, and join their purses with his in the laudable project of fitting out a colony to Virginia.

Accordingly, two ships were sent away that very year, under the command of his good friends Amidas and Barlow, to take possession of the country in the name of his royal mistress, the queen of England.

These worthy commanders, for the advantage of the trade winds, shaped their course first to the Charibbe islands, thence stretching away by the gulf of Florida, dropped anchor not far from Roanoke inlet. They ventured ashore near that place upon an island now called Colleton island, where they set up the arms of England, and claimed the adjacent country in right of their sovereign lady, the queen; and this ceremony being duly performed, they kindly invited the neighbouring Indians to traffick with them.

These poor people at first approached the English with great caution, having heard much of the treachery of the Spaniards, and not knowing but these strangers might be as treacherous as they. But, at length, discovering a kind of good nature in their looks, they ventured to draw near, and barter their skins and furs for the bawbles and trinkets of the English.

These first adventurers made a very profitable voyage, raising at least a thousand per cent. upon their cargo. Amongst other Indian commodities,

(Figure 17: Byrd, William, et al. The Westover Manuscripts: Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina ; A Journey to the Land of Eden, A.D. 1733 ; And a Progress to the Mines. Printed by Edmund and Julian C. Ruffin, 1841, Image taken by author, copy located at UVA special collections)

(Figure 18: Cattshowrock Town from a distance, Image taken by author September 2022)

(*Figure 19: Overview Cattashowrock town 2019, image from Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) 2019 Cattashowrock Ancestral Knapp-In Gathering/BBQ Fundraiser)*

(Figure 20: Overview Cattashowrock town 2019, image from Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) 2019 Cattashowrock Ancestral Knapp-In Gathering/BBQ Fundraiser)

(Figure 21: Palisade poles, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 22: Internal view of Palisade, Image taken by author September 2022)

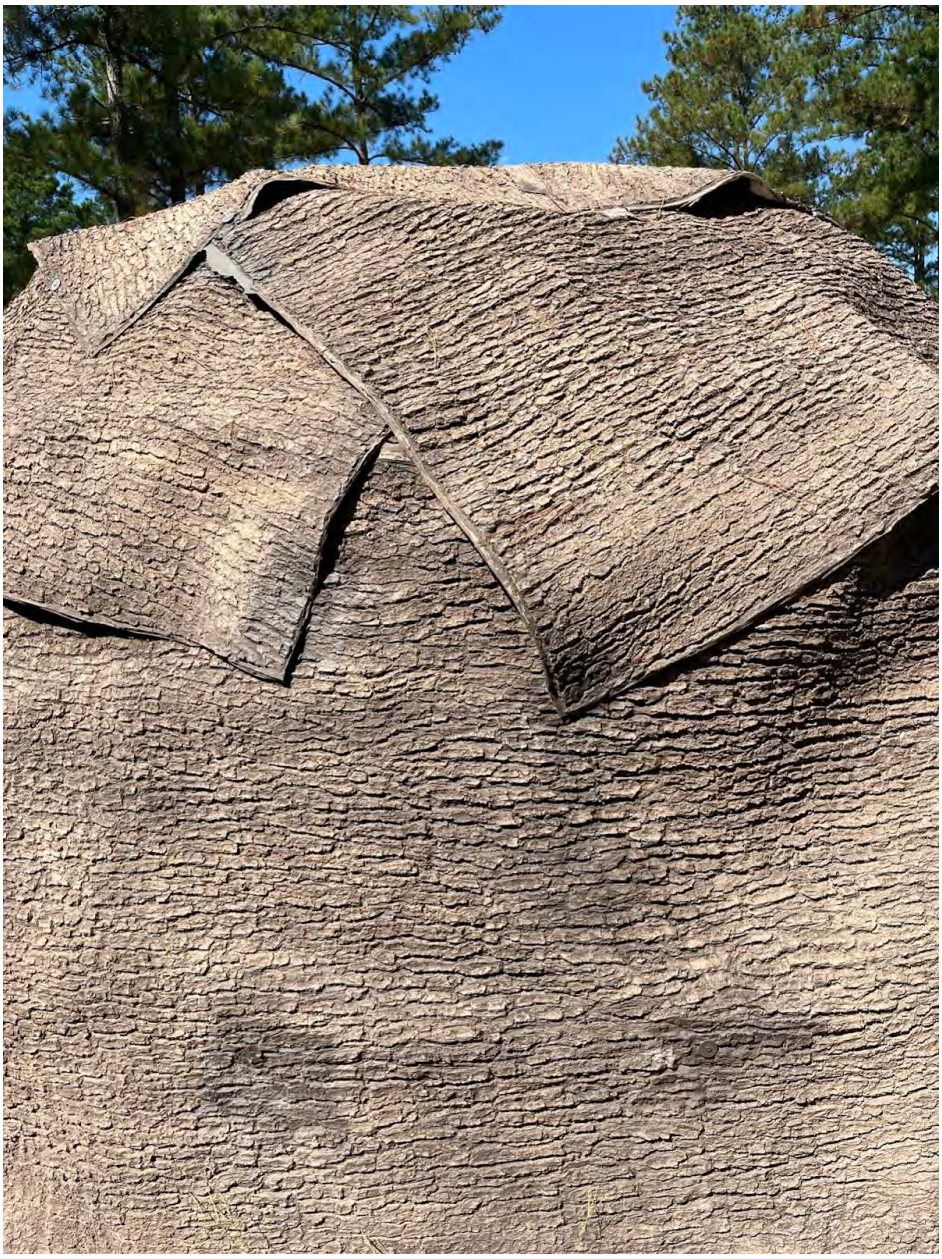
(Figure 23: Image taken by author September 2022)

(*Figure 24: Image taken by author September 2022)*

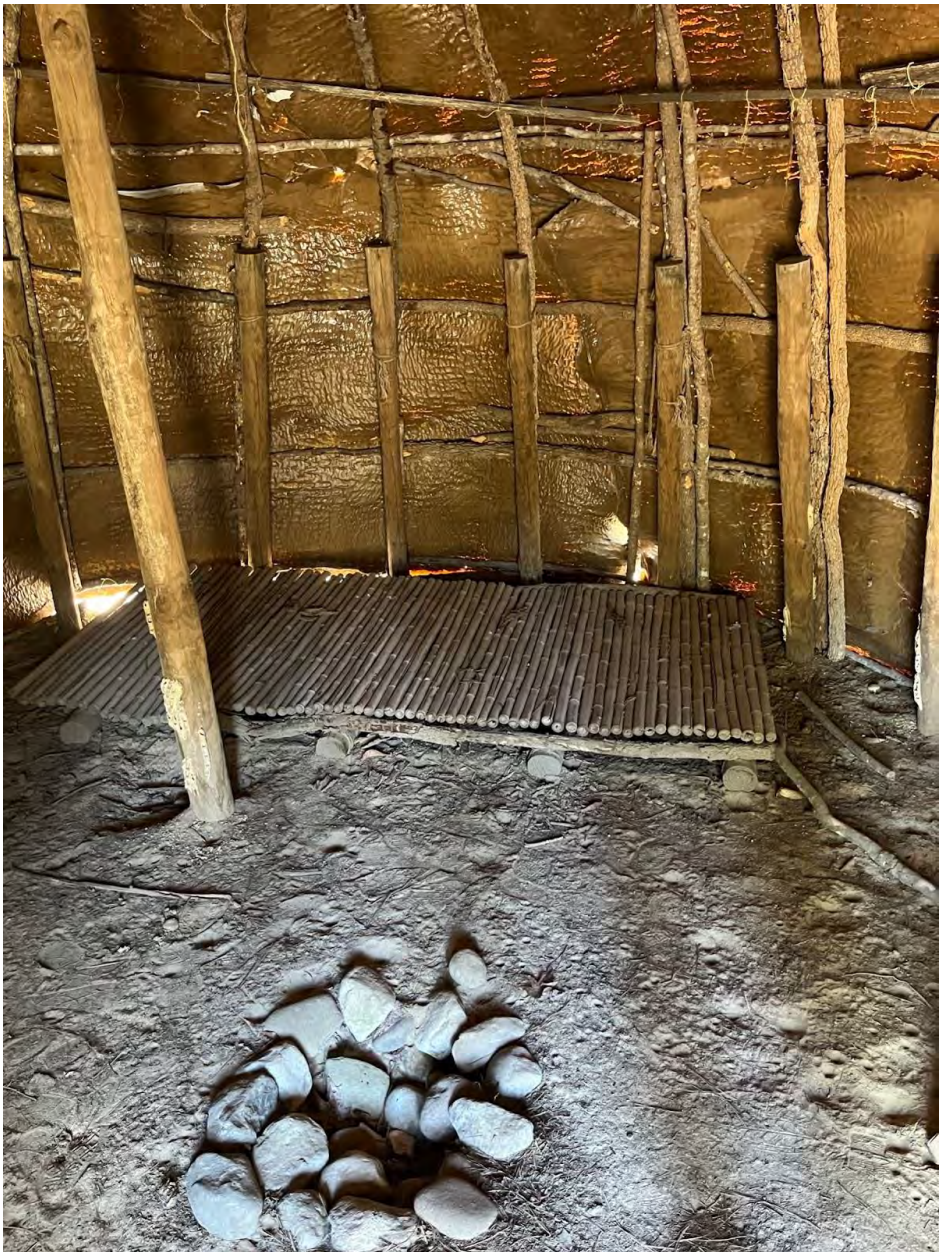
(Figure 25: Woven mat, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 26: Internal view, Image taken by author September 2022)

(*Figure 27****:*** *Image taken by author September 2022)*



(Figure 28: Flex bark, Image taken by author September 2022)



(Figure 29: Internal view of Flex bark, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 30: Longhouse before it was destroyed, displayed in a mural at a local restaurant, Image date Unknown, photo taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 31: Longhouse framing in the process of reconstruction, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 32: Longhouse framing in the process of reconstruction, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 33: Threshing booth, Image taken by author September 2022)

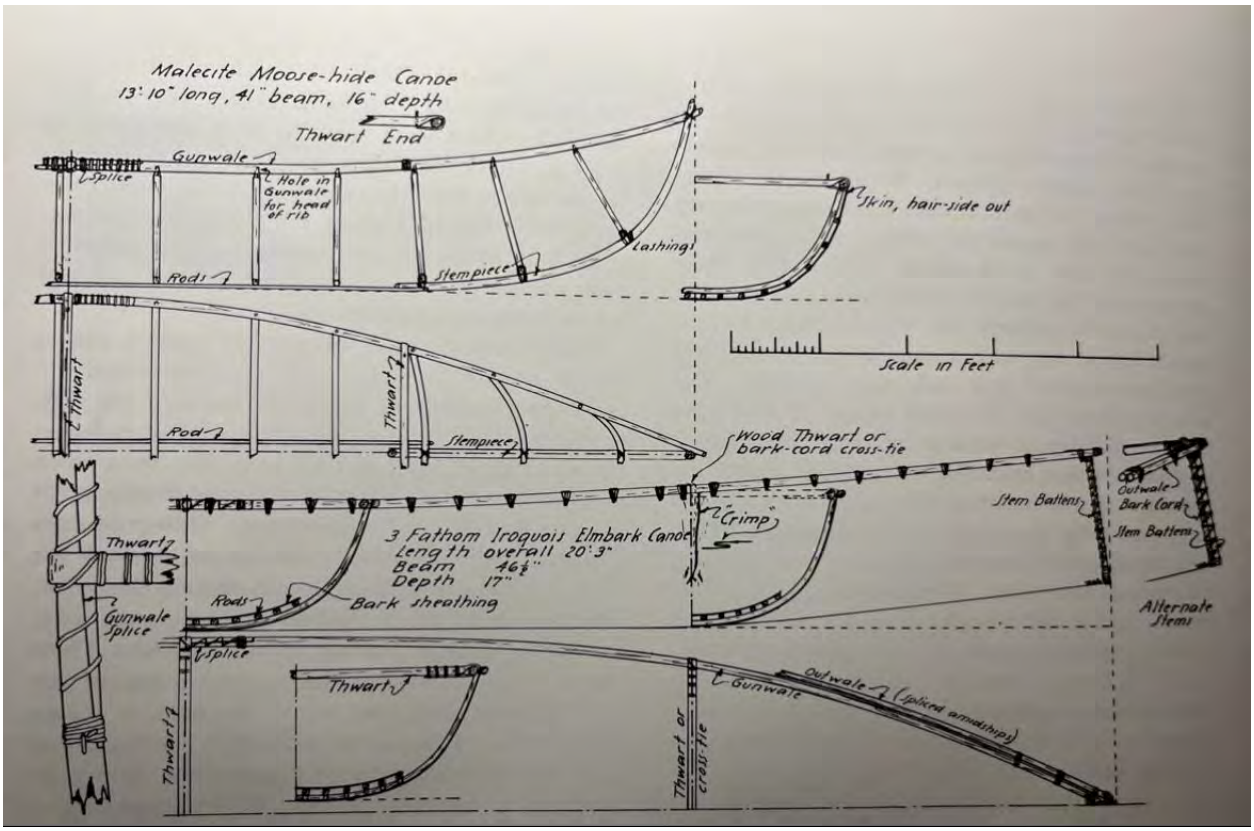
(Figure 34: Stretching rack, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 35: Tree of Peace, Image taken by author September 2022)

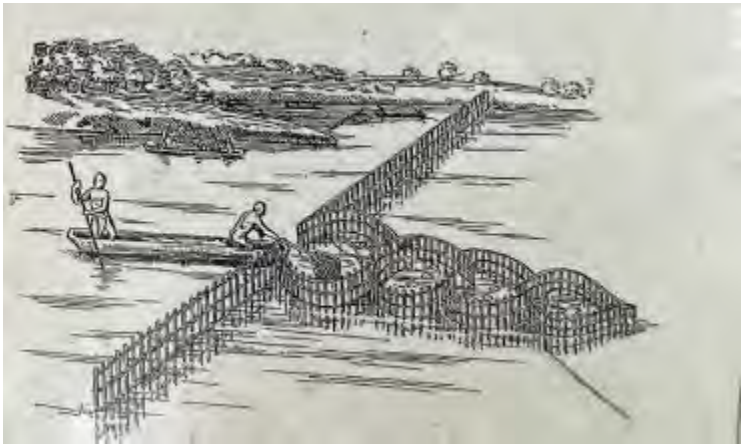
(Figure 36: Fire pit and rocks, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 37: Flatlooker, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 38: Dugout Canoe, Image taken by author September 2022)



(Figure 39: Iroquois temporary bark canoes, Adney, Tappan, Howard Irving Chapelle and Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983)



(Figure 40: fishing weir, image on educational sign at Cattashowrock town, image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 41: Heartberries, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 42: map of Jamestown, photo taken by author)

(Figure 43: Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 44: Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 45: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 46: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 47: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 48: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 49: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 50: interior of structure at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 51: interior of doorway at Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 52: plastic sheets under the mats to help the structure withstand the weather, photo taken by author)

(Figure 53: plastic sheets under the mats to help the structure withstand the weather, photo taken by author)

(Figure 54: reed mats, photo taken by author)

(Figure 55: close up of reed mats, photo taken by author)

(Figure 56: Figure dugout canoe, photo taken by author)

(Figure 57: Flatlooker, photo taken by author)

(Figure 58: structure in the process of mat replacement and maintenance, photo taken by author)

(Figure 59: structure in the process of mat replacement and maintenance, photo taken by author)

(Figure 60: structure in the process of mat replacement and maintenance, photo taken by author)

(Figure 61: new mats for replacement and maintenance, photo taken by author)

(Figure 62: reed mats before replacement, photo taken by author)

(Figure 63: reed mats before replacement, photo taken by author)

(Figure 64: structure after mat replacement and maintenance, photo taken by author)

(Figure 65: longhouse reconstruction at Heritage Hill in Wisconsin, photo taken by author in 2022)

(Figure 66: longhouse reconstruction at Heritage Hill in Wisconsin, photo taken by author in 2022)

(Figure 67: Longhouse reconstruction at Heritage Hill in Wisconsin, photo taken by author in 2022)

(Figure 68: Image taken by author during visit to Fort Clatsop)

(Figure 69: Image taken by author during visit to Fort Clatsop)

(Figure 70: Outside view of the Governor's palace in winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 71: One of the waiting areas for the guided tours, photo taken by author)

(Figure 72: exterior guided tour of the Governor's Palace, photo taken by author)

(Figure 73: interior guided tour of the Governor's Palace, photo taken by author)

(Figure 74: Tavern lodging at Colonial Williamsburg, photo taken by author)

(Figure 75: Tavern lodging at Colonial Williamsburg, photo taken by author)

(Figure 76: Colonial Williamsburg at night in winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 77: Colonial Williamsburg at night in winter, photo taken by author)

(Figure 78: Photo of friend and author at Colonial Williamsburg at night in winter, photo taken by a friendly elderly man)

(Figure 79: Horse-drawn carriage at Colonial Williamsburg, photo taken by author)

(Figure 80: Paspahegh Town during winter, photo taken by author)

(figure 81: guide at Pasapegh town showing clothing items, photo taken by author)

(Figure 82: Jamestown fort reconstruction next to Pasaphegh Town, photo taken by author)

(Figure 83: Jamestown fort reconstruction next to Pasaphegh Town, photo taken by author)

(Figure 84: Jamestown fort reconstruction buildings, photo taken by author)

(Figure 85: Jamestown fort reconstruction buildings, photo taken by author)

(Figure 86: Jamestown fort reconstruction buildings, photo taken by author)

(Figure 87: Children at Cattashowrock town 2019, image from Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) 2019 Cattashowrock Ancestral Knapp-In Gathering/BBQ Fundraiser)

(Figure 88: Princess Windsong at Cattashowrock town, image from Chief Brown)

(Figure 89: Artifacts for school tours at Cattashowrock Town, Image taken by author September 2022)

(Figure 90: Photo of Chief Brown, image available at https://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org)

(Figure 91: Cheroenhaka Powwow vendors, Image taken by author July 1st 2023)

(Figure 92: Cheroenhaka Powwow, Image taken by author July 1st 2023)

(Figure 93: Princess Windsong and Prince Red Eagle, photo from Chief Brown)

(Figure 94: Chief Brown and author, Image taken by author's mother September 2022)