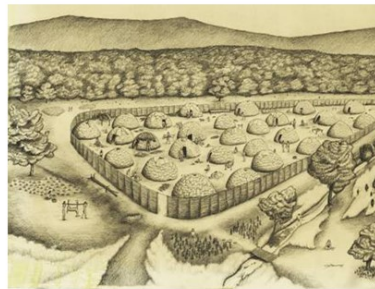


***Native American
Communities
of the
Shenandoah Valley:
Constructing a
Complex History***

***Dr. Carole Nash
July 2020***



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Top image: John Eckman

Bottom Image: Thomas Whyte, Appalachian State University

Purpose of this Document



This document is intended to raise awareness of the long history of Native Americans in the Shenandoah Valley. It is part of a larger project to create formal statements of land acknowledgement honoring Indigenous peoples whose history is tied to the areas where modern institutions like colleges and universities are located. Such statements recognize and show respect for Indigenous peoples as stewards of the land, reinforcing the enduring relationship that exists between these inhabitants and their traditional lands. Land Acknowledgement Statements are read to open gatherings, giving voice to histories that have been erased through colonization and genocide. They are catalysts for the deeper work necessary to act with and on behalf of Indigenous communities to fight the systematic erasure of their history and identity. In the coming months (Fall 2020), James Madison University is engaging in a process to draft such a statement.

Indigenous people historically occupied the lands that eventually became the JMU campus. Several Indigenous sites -- thousands of years old -- remain.

Our current understanding of Indigenous cultures of the Shenandoah Valley points to complex interactions between different groups across thousands of years. Because there have been no identified Indigenous communities here since the early 18th century to claim the Valley as their ancestral home, the process of writing a Land Acknowledgement Statement is different than in locations with a strong continuity between past and present Indigenous peoples. Thus, it is very important that the information contained here explains not only what is known, but how it is known.

For more information on Land Acknowledgement:

U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, <https://usdac.us/nativeland>

Native Governance Center, <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Image: U.S. Department of Arts and Culture

Some terms and a question:

*** Native American, American Indian,
First People, Indigenous, First Nations
-- which is correct?**

*** What tribes lived in the Valley?**

“What tribes lived in the Shenandoah Valley?” This is the question I am most often asked. It is important to know the names of the Indigenous people who lived here, but it is also important to recognize that identifying them as ‘tribes’ can reinforce stereotypes about Indigenous social structures. It is common to see this term used because it may be the only one we know from our limited education on the subject. In anthropology, ‘tribe’ was introduced to describe a level of social evolution that included extended family networks (clans) united under a leader. It also connotes the exotic. ‘Tribalism’ has emerged in our time as a descriptor for groups that closely conform to a particular viewpoint or identity and guard it from opposing views.

I use the term ‘Indigenous’ throughout this document. The United Nations identifies Indigenous Peoples as distinct communities: the land on which they live and the natural resources on which they depend are strongly linked to their identities and cultures. They are people who inhabit a geographic region with which they have the earliest known historical connection and who inhabited that region before colonization or annexation. They are also people who are made ‘ethnic’ by their minority status in that region after colonization by later peoples who came in larger numbers. In many cases, they have been forcibly removed from their lands by the colonizing power. The U. N. estimates 370 million Indigenous world-wide, comprising 5.5% of the world’s population and 90% of the world’s cultural diversity. See *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/publications/state-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples.html>.

You will see ‘tribe’ in this presentation in the section on state/federal government-Indigenous interactions, as both Virginia and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have adopted its use. The State of Virginia uses the term ‘Indian’ to describe Indigenous communities, and various groups also use it (e.g. ‘Monacan Indian Nation,’ ‘Pamunkey Indian Reservation’). ‘Native American’ is now more commonly used in popular culture, but you will also see ‘Indigenous’ or ‘First People.’ In Canada, you will see ‘First Nations’ used by the government to describe groups that fall under the Canadian Indian Act.

Whenever possible, however, Native people prefer to be identified by their specific cultural name (e.g. Patawomeck or Chickahominy). The literature on this topic is extensive. For Virginia, see S. Waugaman and D. Moretti-Langholtz (2006), *We’re Still Here: Contemporary Virginia Indians Tell their Stories* and K. Wood (2009), *The Virginia Indian Heritage Trail*.

Shenandoah

Sample of spellings in historic documents:

Chanador
 Chanandowa
 Gerando
 Genantua
 Gerundo
 Ifanundowa
 Isanandowa
 Jonontore
 Senantona
 Senedo
 Shannandoah
 Shenando
 Shennandoa
 Shenondore
 Sherando
 Sherrando
 Shevanoll
 Tschanaator
 Zynodoa

“DAUGHTER OF THE STARS”

“Shenandoah! Crystal water!
 All majestic rolling by;
 Lovely river, queenly daughter—
 Daughter of the stars on high!”

“Shenandoah” is one of the very few Indian names that have been preserved in Northern Virginia. It means, according to tradition, “Daughter of the Stars,” or “Daughter of the Sky”; and it was first applied, we may believe, to the river whose sparkling waters reflect at once the light of twinkling stars and the blue of heaven’s canopy; but for many years past the Valley as well as the river has borne the beautiful name, “Shenandoah.”

MYTH

A Beautiful Place and a Troublesome Word

At the beginning of our work, we should consider the storied name of the place where we live: SHENANDOAH. It is common to see references to ‘Shenandoah’ meaning ‘Daughter of the Stars’ in an ‘Indian language,’ but we have no evidence for this claim, which regularly appeared in 19th/early 20th century histories of the region and was used by early tourism groups to promote automobile travel to the Valley. J. Wayland’s *Scenic and Historical Guide to the Shenandoah Valley* (1923) was one such popular book; his paragraph on Shenandoah is included in the slide.

There are many spellings of the name in early historical documents, indicating phonetic transcription. Linguists have long puzzled over Shenandoah’s Indigenous origin. Today, ‘Shenandoah’ refers to the watershed, the physical valley, and the cultural region. See W. Hofstra (2004), *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley*.

This presentation on the Native communities of the Shenandoah Valley is based on archaeology, published histories, and oral traditions.

Focus: Late Woodland/Contact/Colonial Period
(2000-250 years ago)

The work that follows is the result of many decades of archaeological and ethnohistorical research in the region. A multi-disciplinary, science-based practice, archaeology considers material culture (artifacts), archaeological sites and their features, landform and environmental history, and the distribution of sites. Collaborative research with Indigenous communities is reshaping and enriching the practice. Historical documents are used as a separate stream of evidence and compared to those listed above.

Much of the information in the first part of this document is filtered through the scientific lens. The temporal focus of the presentation is what archaeologists refer as the three periods of settled Indigenous communities in the Valley: Late Woodland, Contact, and Colonial Period. I review the available information and place it in a larger regional context of alliances with Indigenous communities from outside the Valley.

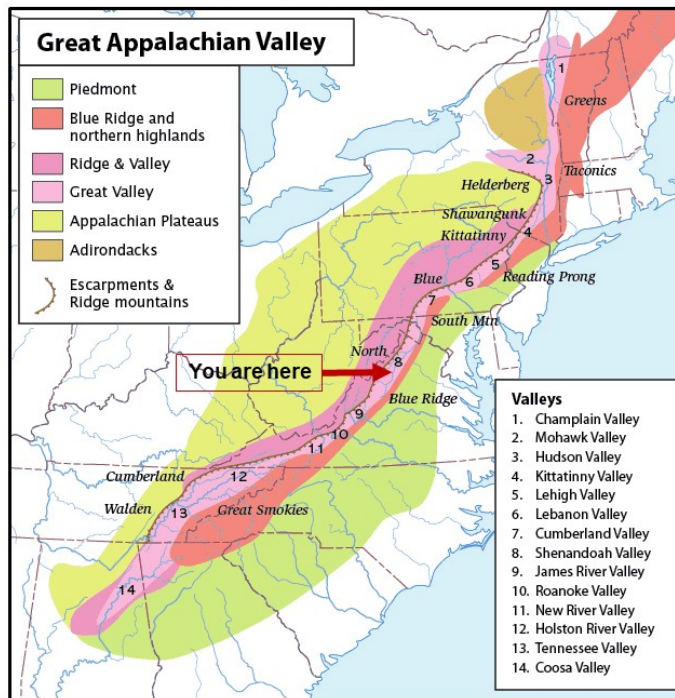
I do not speak for Indigenous communities. I am a 21st century white academic archaeologist, engaged in Middle Atlantic archaeology for almost 40 years, who looks to consultation and partnerships with members of Virginia's Indigenous communities to piece together the foundational history of the Shenandoah Valley.

The relationship between archaeologists and Indigenous peoples is complex. The control of the archaeological study of Native American cultures by white archaeologists, for example, is seen as a continuation of the colonization mentality, laws, and actions responsible for the disruption and destruction of Indigenous societies. The development of Indigenous Archaeology -- where indigenous knowledge, values, and goals frame the research --- is changing the questions, methods, and interpretations of a discipline in the process of decolonizing. For a recent bibliography of writings on Indigenous Archaeology, see G. Nicholas (2020), *Indigenous Archaeology*.

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0073.xml>

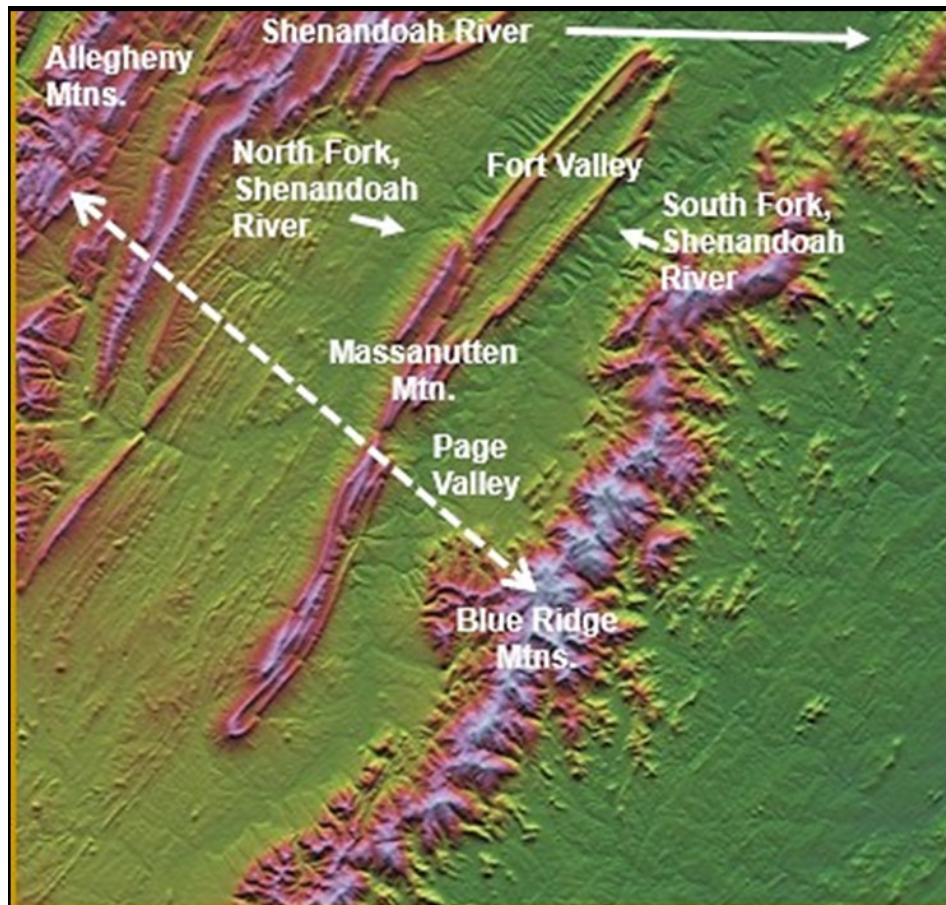
I am humbled by this work and recognize that it a small contribution. One of the challenges of doing this work in the Shenandoah Valley – as will be seen below – is the loss of Indigenous voices. An important goal is to find them, hear them, and ensure their stories are told.

First, a little geography...



The Shenandoah Valley is a regional name for our section of the Great Valley system that stretches from Quebec to Alabama. Sometimes called the ‘Great Appalachian Valley,’ or the ‘Ridge and Valley,’ the Great Valley has served as a corridor of human movement for thousands of years.

Image: Wikimedia Commons (2010), “Map of the Appalachian Mountain physiographic regions, highlighting the Great Appalachian Valley, naming the main valleys making it up and the main mountains on either side,”
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greatvalley-map.png>



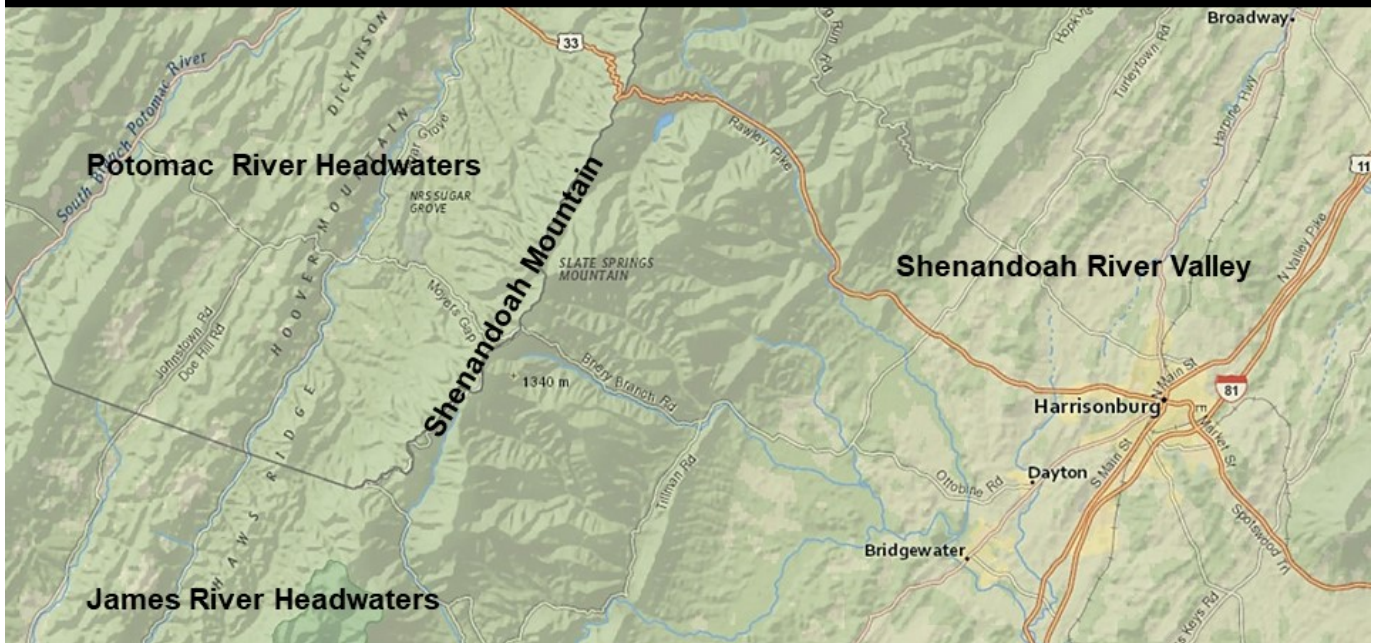
The Shenandoah Valley is located within the temperate forest biome of the mid-latitudes, at the interface of two global climate sub-zones. From the Blue Ridge Mountains (east) to the Allegheny Mountains (west), within 30 miles (as the crow flies) elevations shift from over 4,000 feet to less than 1,000 feet above sea level, and back again. This elevational change, combined with seasonal change, results in a rich mosaic of natural resources and high biodiversity. In our region, for example, there are 20 globally-rare forest ecological communities. Massanutten Mountain in the center of the Central and Northern Shenandoah Valley, provides even greater topographic relief. For more information on environmental history, see Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (2020), *The Natural Communities of Virginia: Classification of Ecological Groups and Community Types, Version 3.2*. <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/>

I invite you to learn about the environmental history of this place, its physical landmarks, and its seasonal changes as a pathway to the history of the Indigenous peoples of the Shenandoah Valley.

Image: NASA Earth Observatory, "Shenandoah National Park,"
<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/3286/shenandoah-national-park-virginia>

Shenandoah Mountain, 20 miles west of Harrisonburg, is more than the state line between Virginia and West Virginia. It also marks the watershed divides of three major river systems that were very important to Indigenous peoples:

***Shenandoah *James *Potomac**



The proximity of river systems that connect different regions, combined with the physical 'flow' of the Valley from north to south, create a complex spatial network that links communities. While we may think of the Shenandoah Valley as being somewhat isolated by the mountains (which today are largely public lands), people throughout history have found ways to be connected across the mountain-valley landscape.

When the English settled Jamestown in 1607, Indigenous families had been in Virginia for 500 generations -- at least **15,000 years.**



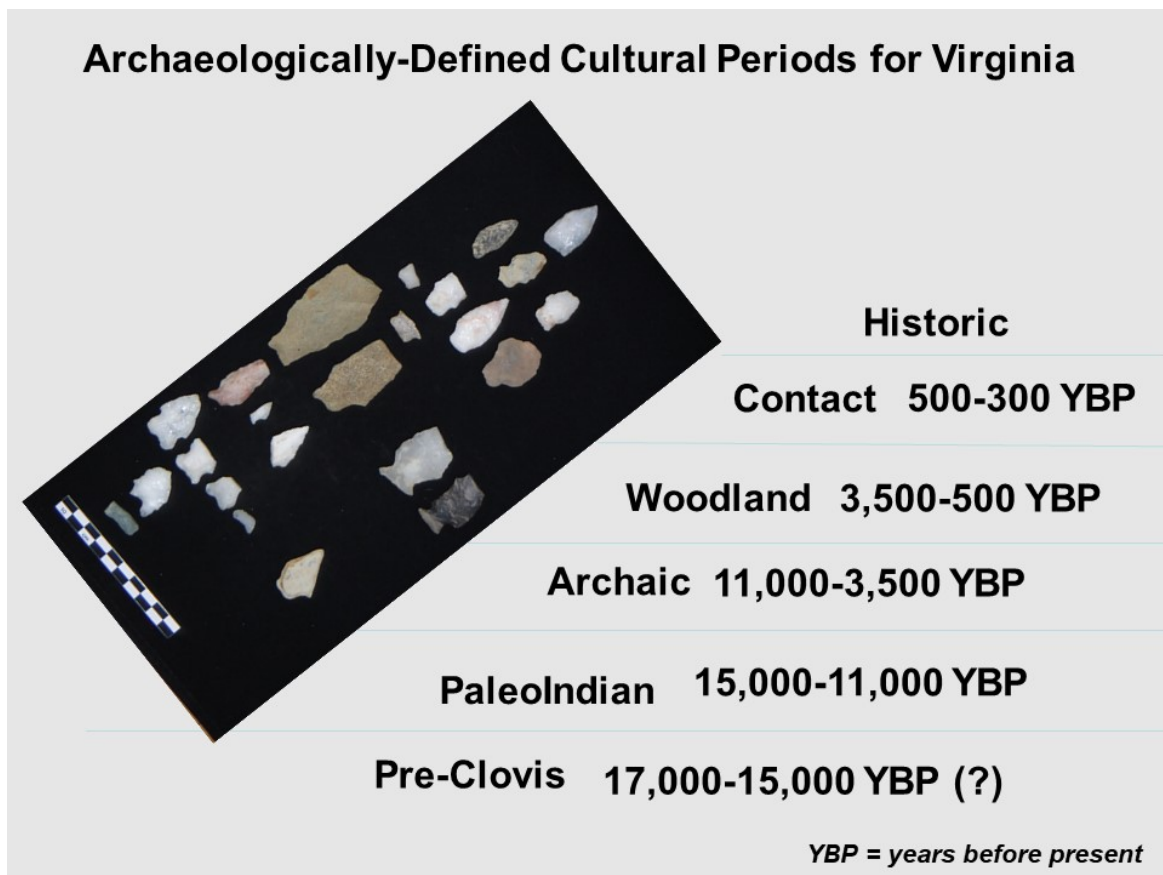
For roughly 13,000 of these years, these cultures practiced a lifeway that was based in hunting and gathering.

How far back can you trace your family?
Do the records that tell the story exist?

My father's family came to Virginia from England in 1625 (395 years ago). That time span, regardless of how long ago it seems, is only 13.5 generations.

Compare that to **500 generations** and try to imagine what such longevity means to the Indigenous peoples of Virginia.

Image: <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/es/encampments.html>



While a common racist stereotype of Indigenous people is their timelessness, the 15,000 years of Indigenous communities in the Shenandoah Valley was filled with cultural change. Archaeologists identify chronological periods based on major cultural changes as visible in (mainly) the archaeological record. The names of the periods used in the Eastern Woodlands – **Pre-Clovis**, **PaleoIndian**, **Archaic**, **Woodland**, **Contact**, **Historic** – do not represent names of Indigenous groups, but rather, generalized ways of living.

For example, the **Pre-Clovis** and **PaleoIndian Periods** refers to the lifeway of the First People who came to this region toward the end of the Ice Age. Their material culture, group size, and settlement pattern indicate a fairly high level of mobility, like that seen in cultures with a hunting-focused livelihood. The **Archaic Period** represents the long span of hunting and gathering that focused on seasonally-available wild foods (see below), growing populations, and more complex and negotiated interactions with neighboring groups. The **Woodland Period** was the time of more settled lifeways organized around domesticated food sources. The **Contact Period** generally refers to European invasion/colonization, but in the interior of Virginia, this pre-dates the actual settlement of Europeans, as Indigenous communities here were connected to those who first experienced the impacts of colonization. The **Historic Period** represents the dominance of the colonizers.

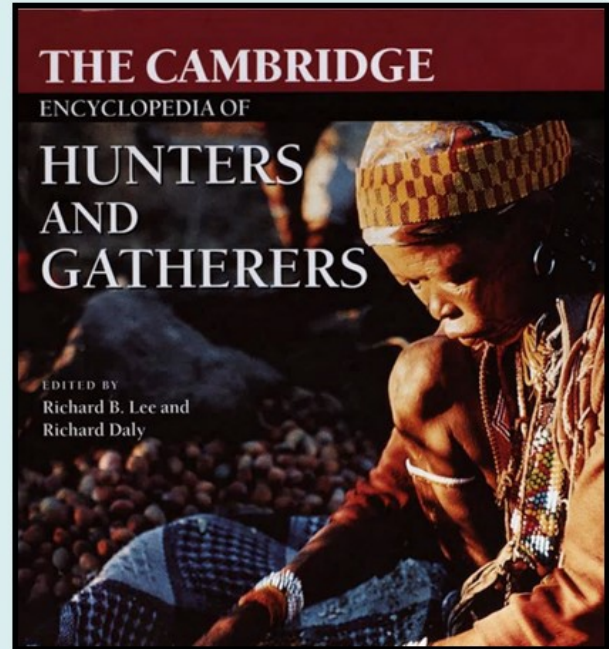
Prior to the Woodland period, it is very difficult to attribute specific Indigenous cultural identities to the groups we know through archaeology. The large-scale movements and interactions of the groups, as well as widely shared material culture, is a challenge for such identification.

See K. Egloff and D. Woodward (2006), *First People: The Early Indians of Virginia*.

Image: Spearpoints from a Blue Ridge archaeological site, ranging in age from 15,000 YBP to 1,500 YBP.

What are hunter-gatherer societies?

- Small-scale, egalitarian societies mediated through kinship
- Subsistence based on hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants
- World view based in sharing
- Mobility a key to social organization
- Cosmology that joins self-community-physical world-spiritual world

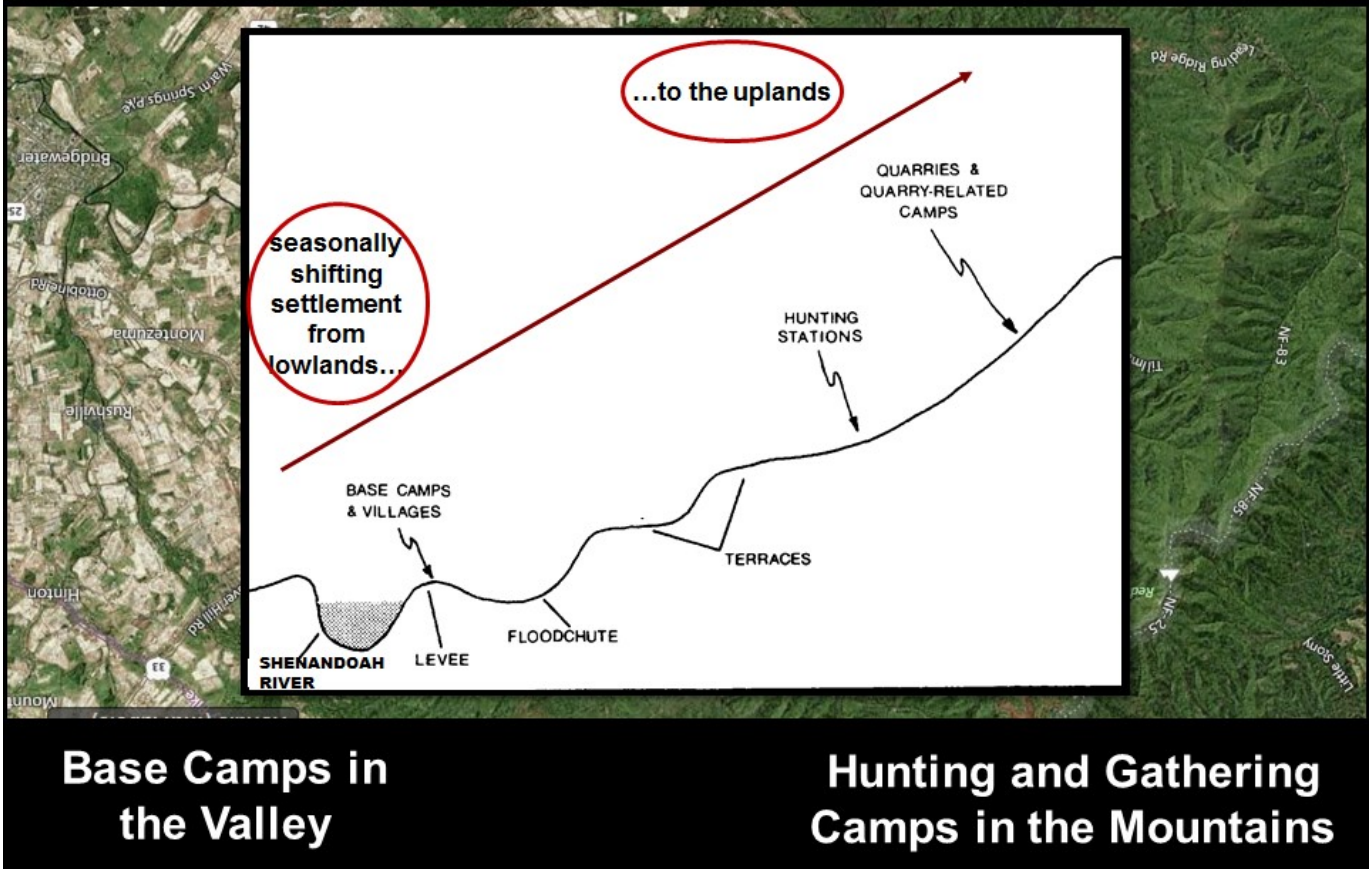


More on hunter-gatherers:

Anthropologists spent the better part of a century organizing human societies into normative categories that have been used to facilitate comparisons, as described above in the discussion of 'tribe.' Here, the term 'hunter-gatherer' is used as a contrast to the more settled, horticulturally-focused communities that filled the Shenandoah Valley for the last two thousand years prior to European colonization. A comprehensive treatment is found in the *Hunters and Gatherers Series* (Berg Publishers) and C. Panter-Brick et al (2001), *Hunter-Gatherers: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Cambridge University Press).

Image: McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Tennessee,
<https://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/exhibitions/archaeology-the-native-peoples-of-tennessee/>

Seasonal Movements in Rich Forests



Seasonal movement was a hallmark of hunter-gatherer lifeways in the Ridge and Valley. With the warmer temperatures of the early Holocene, beginning at ~11,000 years ago, the four seasons as we know them today were established in the mid-latitudes. For the Indigenous Peoples who lived here, seasonal changes meant a variety of sets of plant and animal resources at different times of the year. The movement from lowlands (river-based camps) in the winter/spring to the uplands (mountain-based camps) in the summer/fall became a pattern that continued for thousands of years. Hundreds of sites that were home to the Indigenous families are recorded, and these are believed to represent a small portion of their presence here. See W. Gardner, *Lost Arrows and Broken Pottery: Traces of Indians in the Shenandoah Valley* (1986).

Image: J. Custer et al (1986), "Prehistoric Settlement-Subsistence Systems in Grayson County, Virginia."



Evidence of Early Indigenous Peoples from JMU's Campus

At present, four small sites – camps that were occupied by a family or two of hunter-gatherers are documented on JMU's campus. These sites are associated with the Late Archaic Period, 4500- 3000 years ago. Based on our understanding of site locations in the region, much of campus land is considered 'low probability' for large Indigenous sites. The small streams and rolling topography most likely limited the size and number of sites.

Information about the locations of these sites is protected, as is information about archaeological sites, in general. Once disturbed, the context of these sites – the connection of artifacts in place and their relationship to each other –is also disturbed, disrupting the meaning of the sites and limiting what we can learn from them. As a State-owned property, archaeological sites on JMU's campus are protected under the Virginia Antiquities Act (10.1-2301-2303).

Inset Image: Side-notched spear point made out of gray chert, recovered from a JMU Campus site. This type of spear point dates to 4500-3500 years ago in the Shenandoah Valley.

Background Image Source: JMU Creative Media

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipMj66T48cA8vZNvZ_TnbqH0atURrC6x_GR6nDpca_-p8XKLB-L-Dt8p2PbtrV0JnGg/photo/AF1QipOa5tUKEKmCSxiN-w89xHEs_shufpZj69Isy1yC?key=cEg5bEpLYk43UXZQM2J1b3hPNjZZeXdzV3NñoMVP

Settled horticultural communities were established during the Middle Woodland cultural period, as early as 2000 years ago.



A discussion of 13,000 years of Indigenous cultures in only a few slides cannot begin to present the details of their rich existence here. However, the focus of this presentation is the more recent Indigenous presence in the Ridge and Valley. The next section discusses these more settled communities and their interactions with each other.

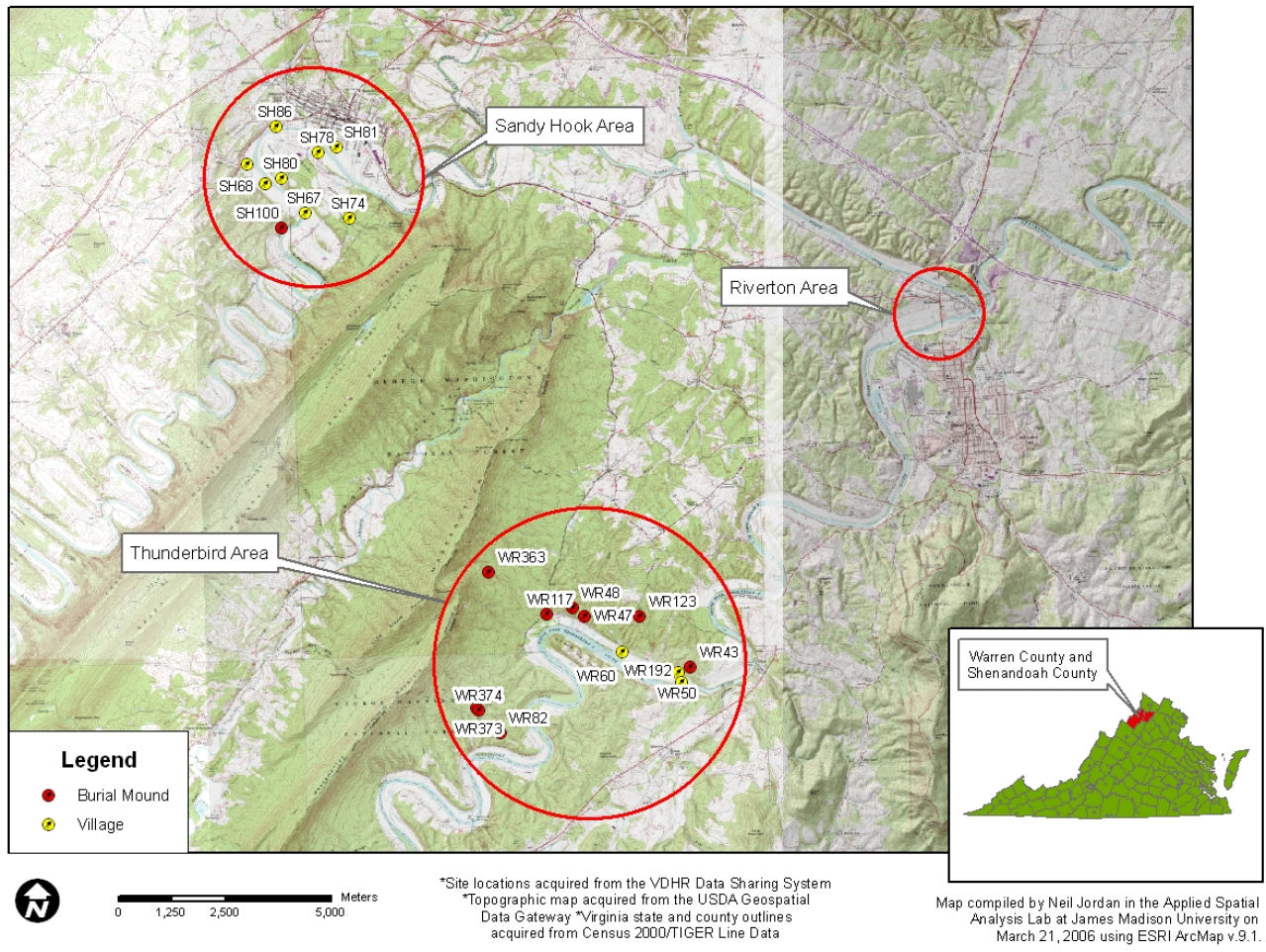
The Indigenous Shenandoah Valley villages that were known to the Europeans of the late 17th/early 18th centuries had their roots in settlements dating to the period identified by archaeologists as the Middle Woodland Period. This is an 1100-year period, from 2000 years ago to 1100 years ago. During this time, extended family groups joined to create larger settlements on the floodplains of the major rivers. There is evidence of greater experimentation with wild plant species. Hunting and gathering provided most of the diet, with an increased emphasis on fishing and shellfish gathering (freshwater mussels). In some parts of Virginia, there is evidence of matrilineal societies during this time period.

A striking feature of the Middle Woodland period is the stone burial mound tradition (image from Warren County near the South Fork of the Shenandoah River). Located on bluffs overlooking the settlements below, these sacred places are believed to represent the resting places of ancestral leaders. About 20' in diameter, they contain the cremated remains of one or two people who were buried with stone gorgets or other objects from beyond the region.

Burials are now protected under the Virginia Code and can be investigated only with a permit issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. They require consultation with descendent communities. Unfortunately, many mounds were looted in the past; if you look carefully at the photo of the mound, you will notice a depression in the middle that indicates this destructive act.

Image, Middle Woodland Burial Mound, Thunderbird Research Corporation

Massanutten Middle Woodland Communities



This map shows three Middle Woodland communities, each organized around a stone burial mound, on the western (North Fork) and eastern (South Fork) sides of Massanutten Mountain. At the apex is an area north of Front Royal – Riverton – where the North and South Forks join to create the main stem of the Shenandoah River. While no stone burial mounds are documented at Riverton, it is one of the largest known Middle Woodland settlements in the Shenandoah Valley and may represent a site where the communities on either side of Massanutten joined for feasting or other ceremonial community renewal activities. Large pits, up to 4 feet in diameter, indicate surplus food production and storage, which would have been needed to support large groups.

See C. Nash (2020), "Middle Woodland Research in Virginia: A Review of Post- 1990 Studies in *The Archaeology of Virginia's First Peoples*.



1000-700 years ago (A.D. 1000-1300): Late Woodland Albemarle Culture

The Late Woodland Period is identified in the archaeological record by a further turn toward plant cultivation and, ultimately, the introduction of maize agriculture and more permanent settlements. By 1000 years ago, the pattern of Indigenous settlement included larger hamlets spread out along the rivers. Distinctive styles of material culture, especially pottery, developed. The most well-known feature of the culture is large-scale mortuary ceremonialism' the creation of above-ground cemeteries in the form of large burial mounds on floodplains.

Image: Thomas Whyte, Appalachian State University

Accretional Burial Mounds

- *found on floodplains near the confluence of streams
- *community cemeteries

Indian Mound, Shumate Farm, 4 miles south of Monterey, VA. "This mound is about 130' in circumference, is covered with rocks, with a layer of rocks around the outer edge."



The above-ground cemeteries, or accretional burial mounds, were positioned between groups of hamlets, usually where a perennial stream joined the North or South Fork. Based on their geographic distribution, archaeologists believe that they were shared by communities who lived within a ~30-mile radius of each other.

Unlike the stone burial mounds, these were large features; some were 180' across, 10'-12' high, and held the remains of upwards of 1500 individuals. They represent the practice of *community-based, secondary burial* that brought together the exhumed remains of people in the related communities who had died during a ritual cycle of perhaps 20 years. They were placed together on a floor of prepared clay and covered with soil. During the next cycle, individuals who died during that period would be exhumed from their hamlets, buried together in the mound, covered with soil, and so on. Thus, the mound grew, or accreted, over time. Collective burial is a powerful cultural statement of continuity and unity, and accretional mounds may represent the cemetery of a clan whose related members were spread across different hamlets.

The image of the Shumate Farm Mound in Highland County, taken in 1936, shows what remained of the mound after 200 years of European settlement. The mound is not the hill in the background; the mound is the low rise in the foreground, delineated by the red dashed line.

Because of their locations in floodplains, the mounds were removed or plowed over by 18th and 19th century farmers who cultivated the bottomland for wheat and corn. In 1833, only 100 years into European settlement, historian Samuel Kercheval wrote of the mounds, *"It appears to the author that no reflecting man can view so many burying places broken up, their bones torn up with the plow, reduced to dust, and scattered to the winds, without feeling some degree of melancholy regret."* As burial places, what remains of these sacred places are now protected under Virginia law.

See G. Dunham, D. Gold, and J. Hantman (2003, "Collective Burial in Prehistoric Virginia: Excavation and Analysis of the Rapidan Mound.")

Image: Virginia Historical Inventory, File HI-196, Library of Virginia.

The first written description of an Indigenous site in the Shenandoah Valley identified an accretional burial mound in what is now Waynesboro.

From Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1784-1787):

Query X (Aborigines)

"There is another barrow...in the low grounds of the South branch of Shenandoah, where it is crossed by the road leading from the Rock-fish gap to Staunton. Both of these have, within these dozen years, been cleared of their trees and put under cultivation, are much reduced in their height, and spread in width, by the plough, and will probably disappear in time."

NOTES on the state of VIRGINIA;

written in the year 1781, somewhat corrected and enlarged in the winter of 1782, for the use of a Foreigner of distinction, in answer to certain queries proposed by him respecting

1. Its boundaries	-	-	-	page 1
2. Rivers	-	-	-	3
3. Sea ports	-	-	-	17
4. Mountains	-	-	-	18
5. Cascades and caverns	-	-	-	33
6. Productions mineral, vegetable and animal	-	-	-	41
7. Climate	-	-	-	134
8. Population	-	-	-	151
9. Military force	-	-	-	162
10. Marine force	-	-	-	165
11. Aborigines	-	-	-	166
12. Counties and towns	-	-	-	191
13. Constitution	-	-	-	193
Laws	-	-	-	235
Colleges, buildings, and roads	-	-	-	275
Proceedings as to slaves	-	-	-	285
Religion	-	-	-	287
Amusements	-	-	-	298
Manufatures	-	-	-	301
of commerce	-	-	-	304
Measures and Money	-	-	-	311
Revenue and expences	-	-	-	313
Monuments, and state-papers	-	-	-	322

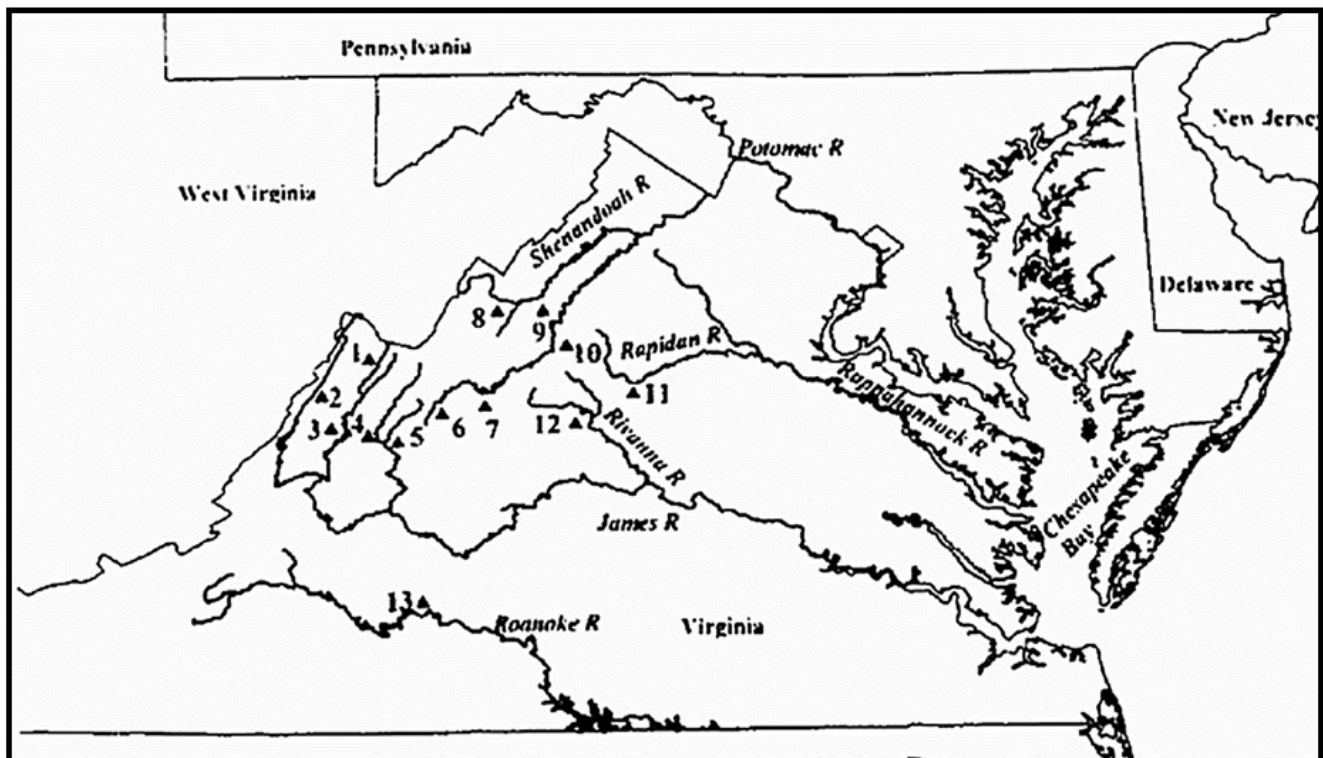
CLXXXII.

Fifty years before Kercheval bemoaned the loss of burial mounds in the Valley, Thomas Jefferson had already documented the practice of removal for cultivation in *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

See J. Hantman (2016), "Jefferson's Mound Archaeological Site,"

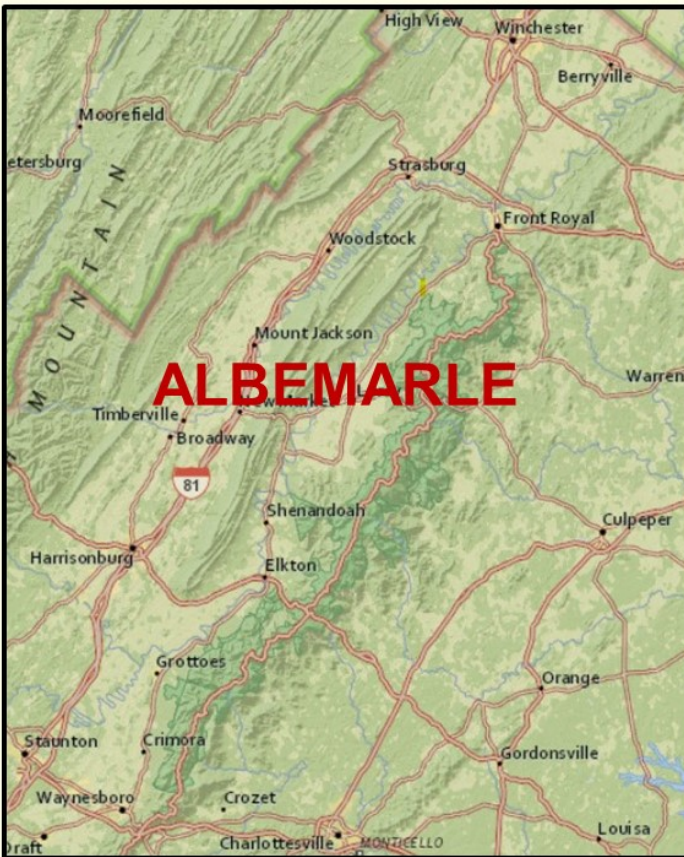
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Jefferson_s_Mound_Archaeological_Site#start_entry.

The accretional burial mound tradition is found in Western Virginia, on both sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains.



This map shows the distribution of the known accretional burial mounds in Western Virginia. They are located on both sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains, primarily in the Shenandoah and James River drainages, although a few are known in the headwaters of the Rappahannock and Roanoke Rivers. One is located within 6 miles of the JMU campus.

Image from "Collective Burial in Prehistoric Virginia: Excavation and Analysis of the Rapidan Mound," by G. Dunham, D. Gold, and J. Hantman. American Antiquity 68(1): 109-128.



replica Albemarle ceramic vessel

What does this geographic distribution mean for the effort to identify the Indigenous Peoples who lived in this area? Answering this question requires details from the archaeological record. **Albemarle** is the archaeological culture identified for this time period for the Shenandoah Valley and Rappahannock and James River Piedmont to the east and named by archaeologists for the county where these sites were first documented.

In addition to the accretional mound burial tradition, the culture is identified based on settlement layout and material culture -- specifically pottery, which is seen as an important indicator of cultural identity.

As a malleable raw material, clay can be shaped in many ways, reflecting the ideas or traditions of the maker. In addition to design, the temper – the ‘non-plastic’ material (e.g., crushed rock or shell) added to the clay to help distribute the heat and prevent cracking – is also recognized as a cultural choice. The focus on ceramics as important cultural identifiers is also tied to their ability to withstand the wet, acidic soils of the Eastern Woodlands, unlike other kinds of objects made from perishable materials.

Albemarle ceramics were hand-built with coils, tempered with crushed rock, and decorated with wooden paddles wrapped with cordage or woven fabric. They varied in volume from a quart to a half-gallon. This way of making pottery was created during the Middle Woodland Period as a cultural expression that blanketed sites on both sides of the Blue Ridge. A few hundred years later during the accretional mound-building era, more highly decorated types of this pottery were made throughout the region.

See Hantman, J. *Monacan Millennium: A Collaborative Archaeology and History of a Virginia Indian People* (2018).

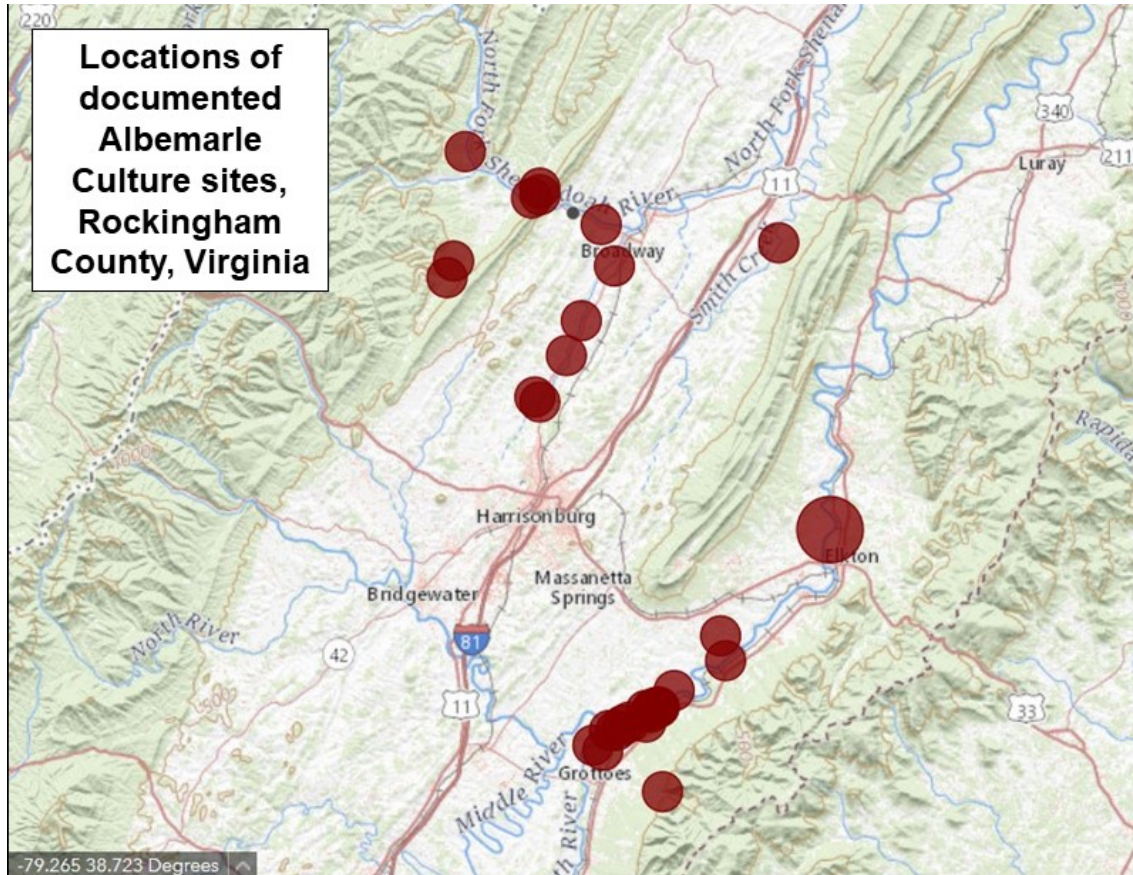
Image courtesy of Monacan Living History Program, Natural Bridge State Park.



Model family house, Monacan Indian Living History Program, Natural Bridge State Park.

Our understanding of the spatial organization and size of Albemarle communities is limited, as only a handful of their sites have been excavated to the degree necessary to understand this. Based on the work that has been done, communities of this time period continued to be linear, with settlements of 5-7 houses spread along rivers. Thirty to forty people may have lived in each settlement.

The experimental work of Victoria Persinger Ferguson and Dean Ferguson at the Monacan Indian Living History Program, Natural Bridge State Park, demonstrates the size and configuration of a small round house from this period.



Albemarle Culture sites in Rockingham County were positioned along the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River, as well as several tributary streams. Archaeologists have worked with landowners, many of whom are farmers, to document these sites.



**At the time of European contact, in the Piedmont east of the Blue Ridge:
MONACAN and MANAHOAC**

Picking back up with the history, the Albemarle tradition was shared by Indigenous Peoples on both sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains for approximately 600 years, from A.D. 700-1300. The Albemarle connection across the Blue Ridge ended in the Shenandoah Valley around A.D. 1300. In addition to changes in material culture, burial in accretional mounds ended as a region-wide practice around 700 years ago (A.D. 1300).

The Albemarle tradition continued for several hundred years longer on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge where it is identified at archaeological sites matching the locations of Contact Period towns, such as the ones depicted on John Smith's *Map of Virginia* (1612).

The towns were very large, home to several hundred people who were more heavily focused on maize agriculture. On this map, the upper Rappahannock area (right) is the home of the **Manahoac**, and the upper James River area (left) is the home of the **Monacan**. They are the descendants of the Late Woodland burial mound builders.

In 1608, Smith led an exploratory party up the Rappahannock River as far as the falls (present-day Fredericksburg, where they were attacked by Manahoac men

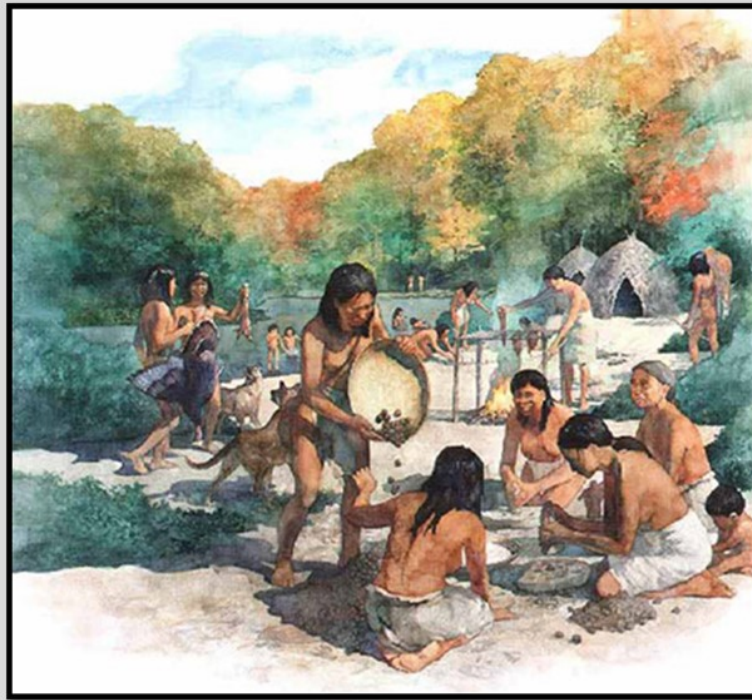
from the town of Hassinnunga who were at the river to fish. In perhaps one of the most prescient statements in colonial history, a wounded and captured Manahoac warrior, Amorolek, told Smith that his men attacked because “they heard we were a people come from under the world, to take their world from them.” When pressed for information about Indigenous settlements beyond the Blue Ridge, Amorolek replied that the region was occupied by “The Sunne, but of anything els he knew nothing because the woods were not burnt.” See C. Nash (2012), “Blind Tom, Foolish Jack, and the Never-Ending Contact Period of Western Virginia: Searching for the Historic Manahoac of the Piedmont and Blue Ridge.”

The Monacan and Manahoac were speakers of Eastern Siouan languages. Based on historic documents from the English, the two were allies and may have been related through clan-based marriage. As discussed below, the Monacan Nation survived and is now a Federally Acknowledged Tribe. See, J. Hantman (2018), *Monacan Millennium: A Collaborative Archaeology and History of a Virginia Indian People* (2018). The Manahoac, however, are not mentioned in historic texts beyond the mid-18th century. For more information, see C. Nash (2012).

For purposes of a Land Acknowledgement Statement for JMU, the Eastern Siouan-speaking ancestors of the Monacan and Manahoac lived in the Shenandoah Valley. The story does not end with them, though. True to its geographic nature as a conduit of movement, the Valley saw two major cultural changes during the period from A.D. 1300-1700, when different Indigenous groups from outside the region came here.

Image: *Virginia discovered and discribed by Captayn John Smith*; graven by William Hole, 1612.

Page Culture: 750-550 years ago (A.D. 1250-1450)

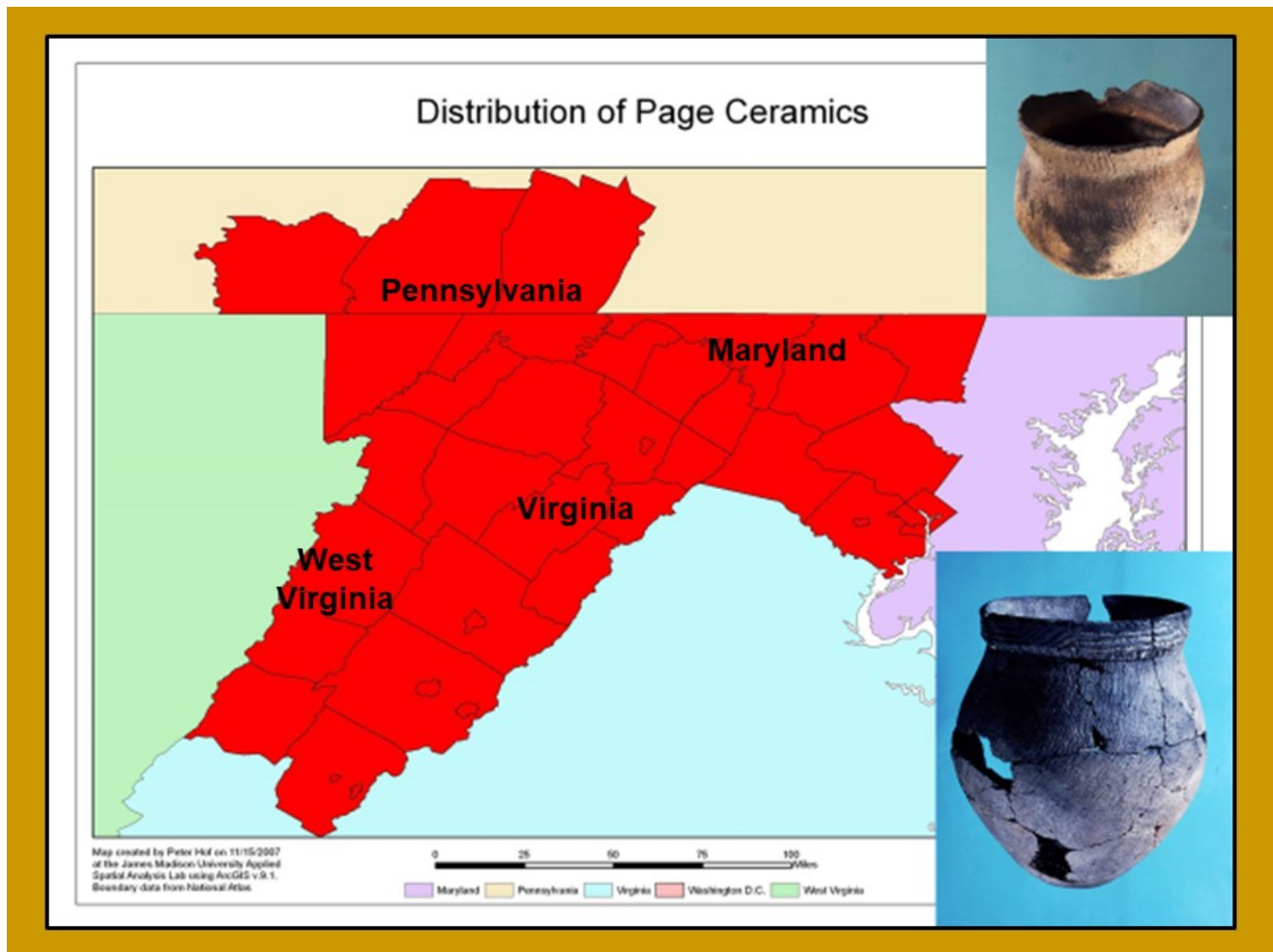


By A.D. 1250, the cultural patterns described above began to change, signaled by the introduction of new material culture and village patterns. This culture is identified by archaeologists as **Page** for the county where it was first scientifically documented in the Shenandoah Valley, West Virginia Panhandle, and Maryland/Pennsylvania Great Valley. It is also found in the Maryland Potomac Piedmont where it was named 'Mason Island' for the site first excavated there.

The people who brought this tradition to the Valley may have been associated with groups living in the Pennsylvania Piedmont (Susquehanna River Valley), where artifact styles and village lay-outs were similar. They were most likely speakers of an Iroquoian language, possibly associated with the Owasco Culture. See R. Wall (2001), "Late Woodland Ceramics and Native Populations of the Upper Potomac Valley."

Why the migration? Researchers have implicated environmental change, and especially the onset of The Little Ice Age around A.D. 1300. The Northern Hemisphere experienced a significant cooling trend at this time, severely disrupting societies in North America and Europe. Groups that had come to rely on maize as the basis of the diet were particularly impacted. Perhaps the Valley provided more resources for people whose diet was strongly supplemented by wild foods, or perhaps there were fewer people west of the Blue Ridge. (see D. Blanton (2014), "The Climate Factor in Late Prehistoric and Post-Contact Human Affairs.")

The Albemarle tradition did not disappear from the Valley. Archaeological evidence indicates continued interaction between Page and Albemarle groups, but by A.D. 1400, Albemarle artifacts were in the minority at Shenandoah Valley sites.



Page Culture ceramics varied in size, shape and decorative treatment, but all were tempered with crushed limestone and the bodies marked with cord-wrapped paddles. Small circular houses, large enough for ~6-8 people, were established in groupings, with storage and trash pits near each house. There is evidence of limited maize/bean agriculture at Page sites. In the Maryland Piedmont, the Mason Island settlements were organized in a circular pattern with an open, central plaza. In the early decades of the Page settlement, the population of each hamlet would have been small – approximately 30-40 people – but there are many such groupings recorded for the Valley. Later settlements increased in size to 10-12 houses. Instead of reburying their dead in burial mounds, they placed them near their houses in individual graves.

The map above identifies the geographic distribution of the Page/Mason Island culture based on ceramics. Members of this culture spread across much of the Shenandoah Valley and had a dominant presence here for ~150 years (roughly 5 generations). **A Land Acknowledgement Statement for JMU should include the Iroquoian speakers of the Page Culture.**

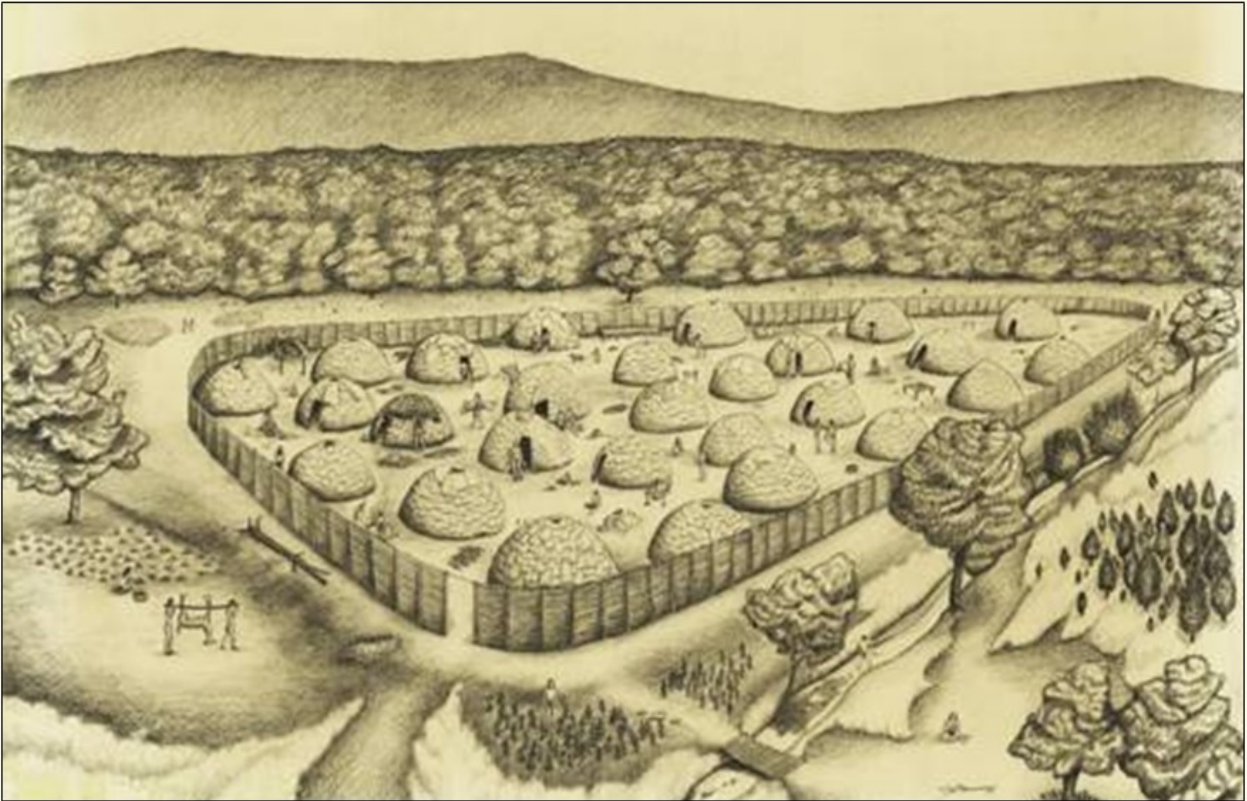
Images of ceramics: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, "Native American Ceramics of Virginia." <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/Ceramics/DHRNACeramics.html#>



Sample of charred beans (left), maize cob fragments (center), and walnut shells (right) excavated from a Page Culture site in northern Rockingham County. These were recovered from a storage pit filled with food waste and broken stone tools and pottery as the inhabitants lived at the site. The mixture of domesticates and wild foods is regularly seen at Late Woodland Period sites in the Shenandoah Valley. See J. McKnight and M. Gallivan (2007), "The Virginia Archaeobotanical Database Project: A Preliminary Synthesis of Chesapeake Ethnology."

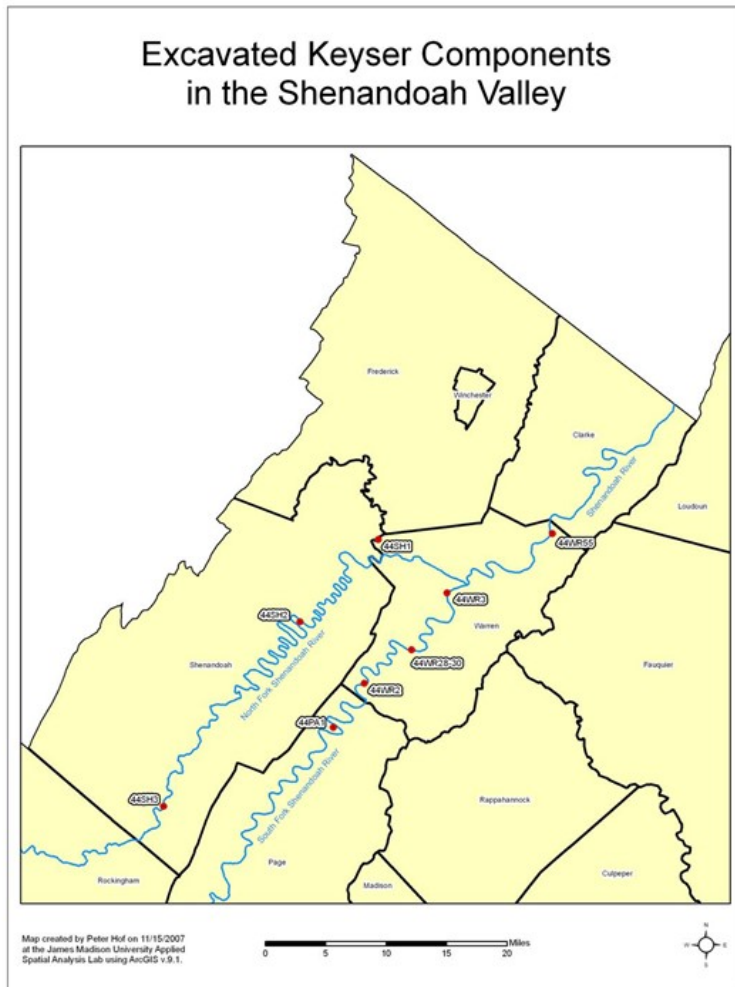
Another Change, But From Where?

The Keyser Culture, 550-350 Years Ago (A.D. 1450-1650)



The archaeological record shows that, by A.D. 1450, Page Culture communities experienced a major change with the arrival of another new cultural tradition – **Keyser**. Named for the site where it was first studied (Keyser Farm, Page County), the Keyser Culture people brought a different way of life to the Shenandoah Valley and Upper and Middle Potomac River Valleys. See R. Dent (1995), *Chesapeake Prehistory: Old Traditions, New Directions*.

Image: Thomas Whyte, Appalachian State University



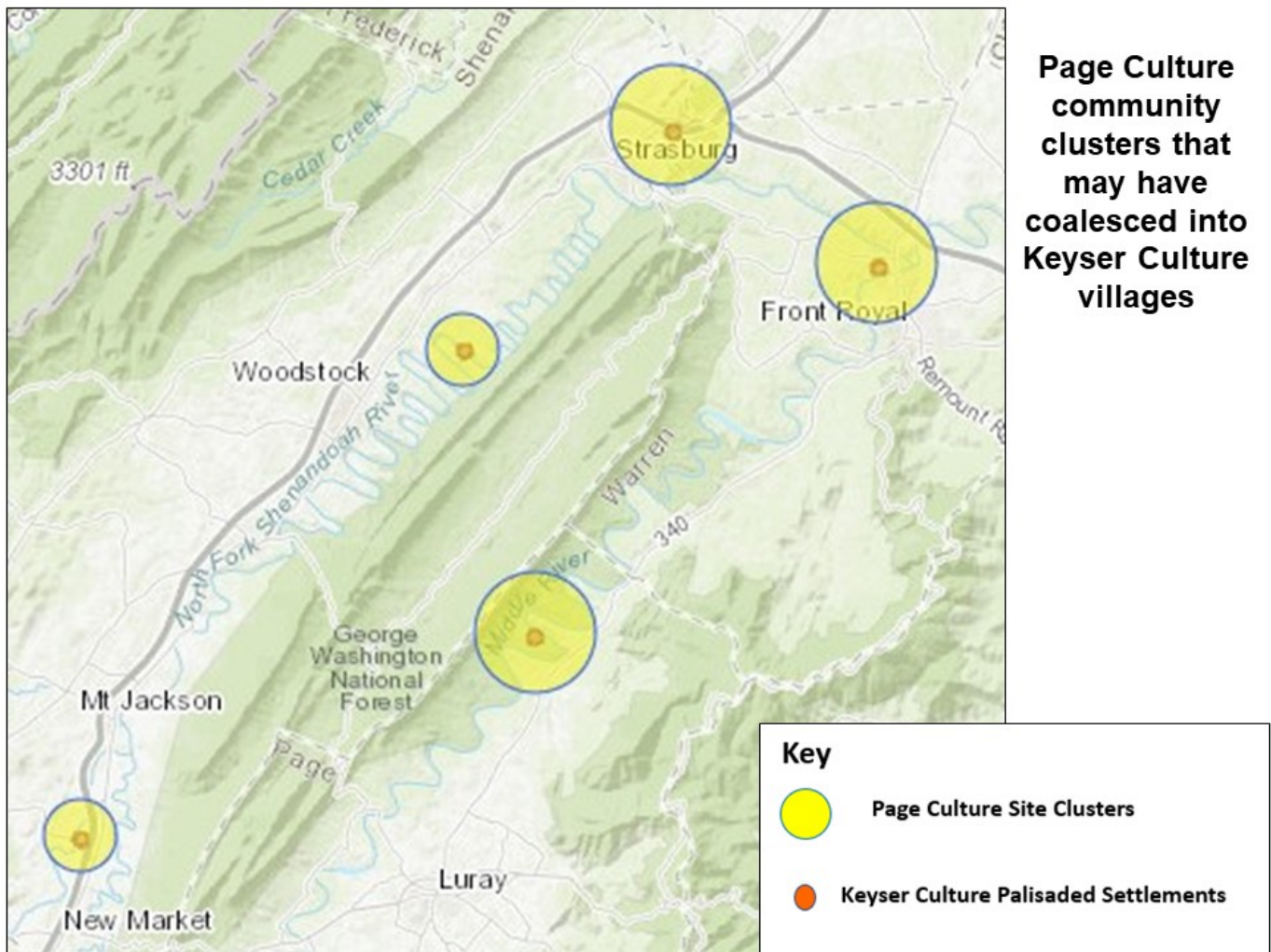
**The Keyser Culture
sites in the
Shenandoah Valley
are located on both
the North and South
Forks.**



**Keyser Ceramic
Vessel**

The Keyser Culture in the Shenandoah Valley is known through testing and excavation at seven large sites, primarily found in the lower (downstream) region. Keyser sites are not documented in the Valley south of the New Market area, but fewer field projects have been undertaken in this portion of the Valley.

*Ceramic image: Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland: Keyser Ceramics
(<https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/diagnostic/PrehistoricCeramics/PrehistoricWareDescriptions/Keyser.htm>)*



Where did the Keyser Culture originate? The earliest radiocarbon dates for Keyser sites are found in the Upper Potomac Valley of western Maryland. This indicates a migration route that started in the Ohio Valley where archaeological sites have similarities to Keyser sites. They came through the Upper Potomac, continuing south over the next fifty years into the Shenandoah Valley. Researchers have debated their cultural affiliation, but some evidence points to their being ancestral to the historic Shawnee, speakers of a Central Algonquian language. **A Land Acknowledgement Statement for JMU should include the Algonquian speakers of the Keyser Culture.** See S. Potter (1993), *Commoners, Tribute and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley*.

Members of the Page Culture may have dispersed as this new group arrived, but the analysis of the location of Keyser sites relative to Page sites, as seen in this slide, indicates that the Keyser villages were established in central locations around clusters of Page settlements. Perhaps Page Culture families joined the new communities, making it possible that Keyser Sites were multi-lingual (Iroquoian and Central Algonquian).

The dynamics of the Shenandoah River system add to the challenge of locating Keyser Culture sites. The South Fork was 200 feet from the Keyser Farm site (below) when Indigenous families lived there. Today, the river has migrated over 700 feet from the site. Floods have covered the floodplain with several feet of deposits.



The possibility that there are undiscovered Keyser Culture sites is real. They are difficult to locate for the reasons enumerated in this slide. Over the past 400 years, the Shenandoah River and its tributaries have migrated, and significant flooding associated with deforestation has resulted in the deep burial of sites. At Keyser Farm, the A.D. 1600 occupation is buried below 2.5 feet of flood deposit.

Characteristics of Keyser Culture sites:

- *Large (2-acre) palisaded villages located on floodplains at the confluence of major stream and river;**
- *More intensive incorporation of maize and bean domesticates into diet;**
- *Large storage pits;**
- *Shell-tempered, globular ceramics;**
- *Regular contacts with cultures beyond the Shenandoah Valley.**

Hypothesis for Keyser Origin and Affiliation: Upper Ohio Valley (Central Algonquian)

Keyser Culture sites in our region parallel changes seen across the Middle Atlantic on the eve of the European invasion: very large Indigenous sites that represent the coalescence of groups. These large villages were 'fenced in': they all exhibit evidence of palisades made from saplings pushed into the ground and latched together. They included at least twenty houses, with a total population of over 200. The large villages may have been supported by small, outlying hamlets. See J. Walker and G. Miller (1992), "Life on the Levee: The Late Woodland Period the Northern Great Valley of Virginia."

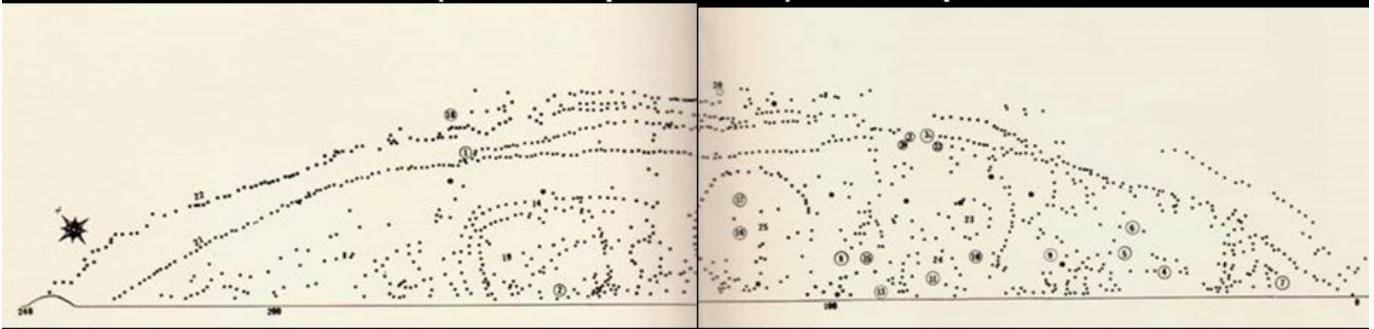


Left: Round house outlines in grass, where decomposed posts created organic-rich soil, resulting in darker grass.



Right: excavation the posts in a palisade line.

Below: Map of excavated portion of the Miley Site, near Strasburg, showing houses (circles of post stains) inside a palisade.



The majority of Keyser Culture site excavations were undertaken in the 1960s. These images are from the work undertaken the Miley Site on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

Images: H. MacCord and C. L. Rodgers (1973), "The Miley Site, Shenandoah County, Virginia."

Excavations at Keyser Farm, 2003-2007



The Keyser Farm Site, located on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River near Luray, was first studied in the early 1940s. Sixty years later, archaeological field schools were sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and several Virginia universities (including JMU) for the purpose using modern methods to better recover information about the Keyser Culture. In this photo, an archaeologist is excavating a large food storage pit at Keyser Farm.

Image, M.B. Barber, Virginia State Archaeologist (ret.)

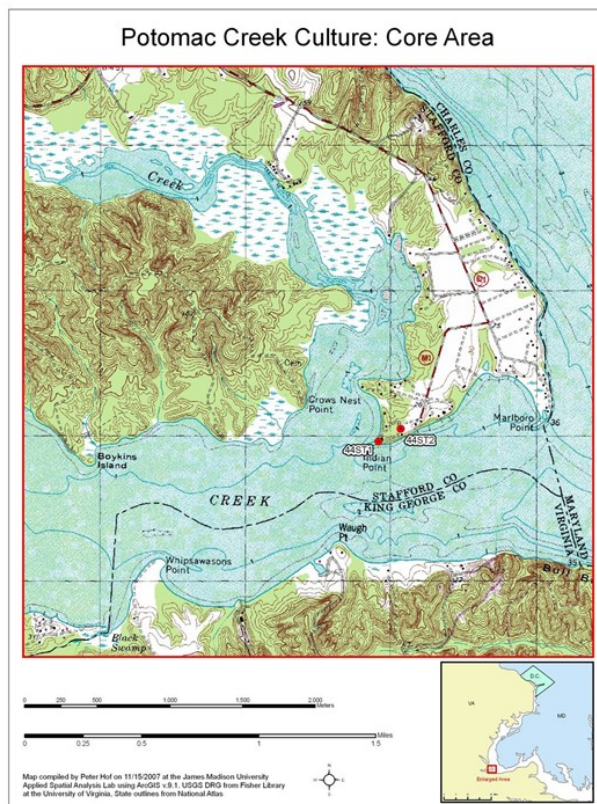


A hallmark of Keyser Culture was trade with groups living beyond the region. The 2003-2007 excavations yielded new evidence of such activities. During the time of the Keyser people, the South Fork of the Shenandoah River was home to significant populations of a freshwater mussel species, *Elliptio camplanata*. A food source, the discarded shells were also used to manufacture shell beads. Thousands of beads and hundreds of drilled shells were recovered, along with beads produced from the shells of ribbed mussels (*Geukensia demissa*), a saltwater species from the Chesapeake Bay area. The exchange of shell beads was an important activity throughout the pan-Chesapeake region. The findings at the Keyser Farm site indicate exchange between the interior and coast. See M.B. Barber (2008), "The Keyser Farm Site (44PA1), Page County, Virginia: Evidence of an Interior Shell Bead Industry."

Images: Dr. Michael B. Barber, Virginia State Archaeologist (ret.)



Another interesting finding concerns the processing of deer hides for trade. Grasslands expanded in the Valley during the Little Ice Age, providing increased habitat for white tailed deer. The 2003-2007 Keyser Farm excavations discovered areas of the site where deer hides were cleaned and smoked for preservation. Beamerers (scrapers) made from sharpened deer leg bones and used to clean the hides were found in abundance. Also excavated were bone weaving tools used for making large baskets, which are believed to have been made for transporting the finished hides. Together, these point to members of the Keyser Farm community who were hunting and processing for trade. With whom? See M. B. Barber (2008), "Excavations at the Keyser Farm Site (44PA1), Page County, Virginia: Deer Skins, Shell Disk Beads, and a View to the North."



A Strong Connection to the Potomac Valley and ancestors of Patawomeck?



Potomac Creek Ceramic Sherds



quartz arrowheads

The connections of the Keyser culture people to groups outside the region is seen in material culture, and especially ceramics. All excavated Keyser Culture sites contain the ceramics of the Potomac Creek culture, whose core area of large palisaded villages was the lower Potomac Valley below modern Washington, D. C. Conversely, all excavated Potomac Creek sites contain Keyser ceramics. Also, in the Shenandoah Valley where high quality quartz is not readily available, a high percentage of arrowheads were made from this material, which is commonly found closer to the Potomac Creek area.

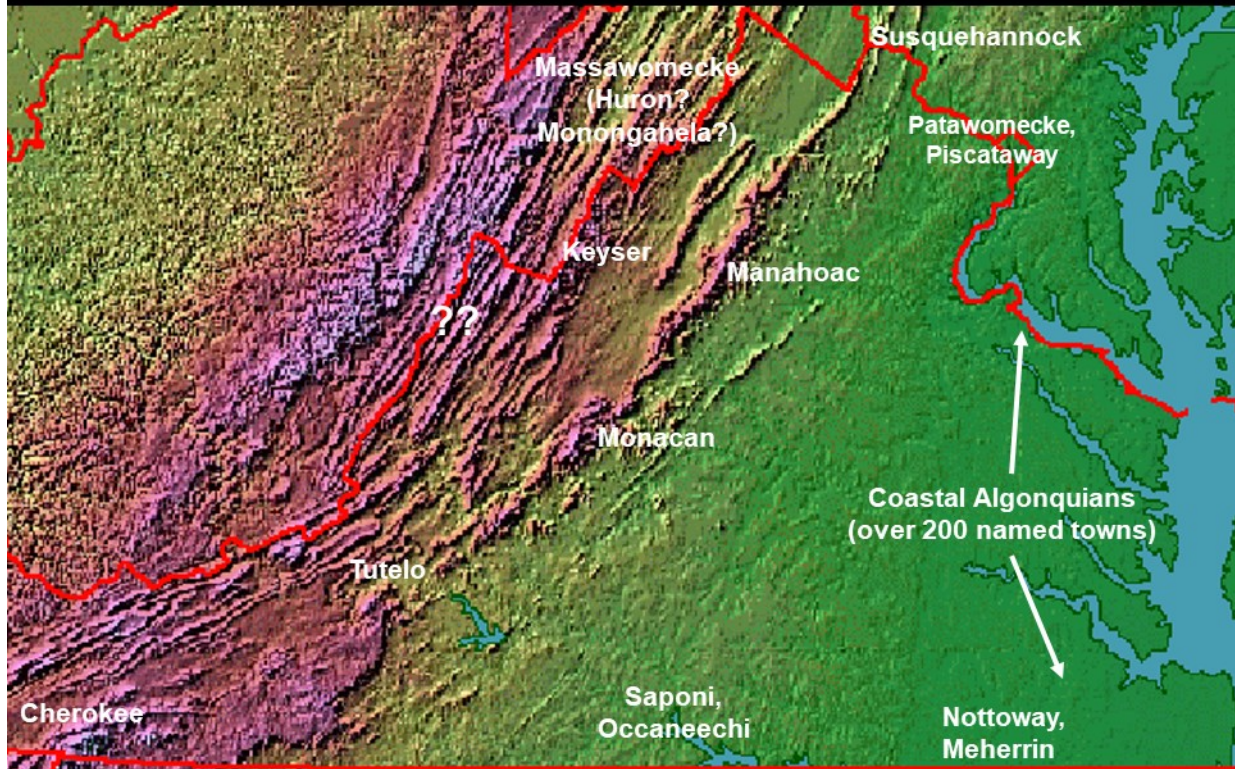
Interactions between Potomac Creek and Keyser communities were in place for ~150 years and may have been formalized through inter-group marriage, cyclical feasting events, or exchange. As with Page Culture sites, Keyser Culture and Potomac Creek Culture sites may have been multi-lingual. See S. Potter, *Commoners, Tribute and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (1993) and D. Blanton (1999), *The Potomac Creek Site (44ST2) Revisited*. The Potomac Creek culture is ancestral to the Patawomeck, one of eleven state-recognized tribes in Virginia today.

The discovery of marine shells at sites in various parts of western Virginia lends support to the idea of exchange networks connecting the interior and coast before European invasion. While the deer hide trade is well-documented as a catalyst for European-Indigenous interactions of the 17th and 18th centuries, there may have been older alliance and exchange system between the Shenandoah Valley, Potomac Valley, and Coastal Plain – a system that was overtaken by the colonial invaders.

In the first quarter of the 17th century, the Potomac Creek people were heavily involved in trade with Europeans, as seen in Continental trade goods (glass beads, brass pots, scissors, copper disks and bells) excavated from Potomac Creek sites. Such items are rare in the Shenandoah Valley, however, giving support to the idea that the Potomac Creek people were intermediaries in the deer hide trade, controlling European items. See H. Lapham, *Hunting for Hides: Deerskins, Status, and Cultural Change in the Protohistoric Appalachians* (2006).

Images of Ceramics: <https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/diagnostic/PrehistoricCeramics/Thumbnaillmag ePages/Keyser-Images.htm>

Indigenous In Virginia: Cultural Traditions at the time of European Colonization



Estimates vary widely, but there were perhaps 50,000 Indigenous Peoples in Virginia at the time of English settlement in the early 17th century. The Middle Atlantic region was a highly dynamic setting for shifting alliances and interactions between different communities and traditions. The Shenandoah Valley was a complex cultural landscape, and the Indigenous peoples who lived here created networks to negotiate that complexity.

See M. Gallivan (2011), "The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations."

Three post- A.D. 1600 (Contact Period) Shenandoah Valley archaeological sites are confirmed through radiocarbon dating:

Cabin Run (Warren County)

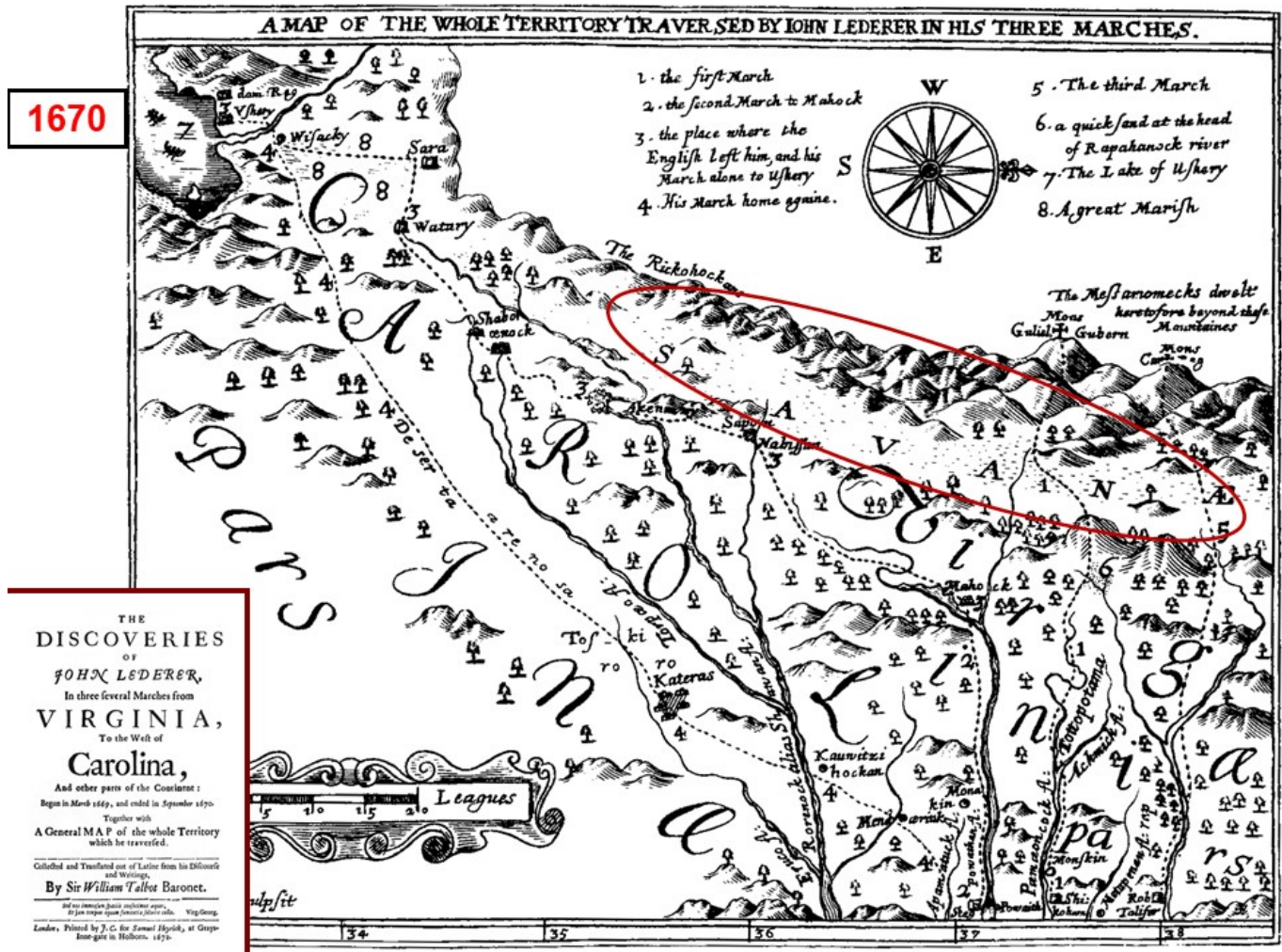
Bowman (Shenandoah County)

Keyser Farm (Page County)



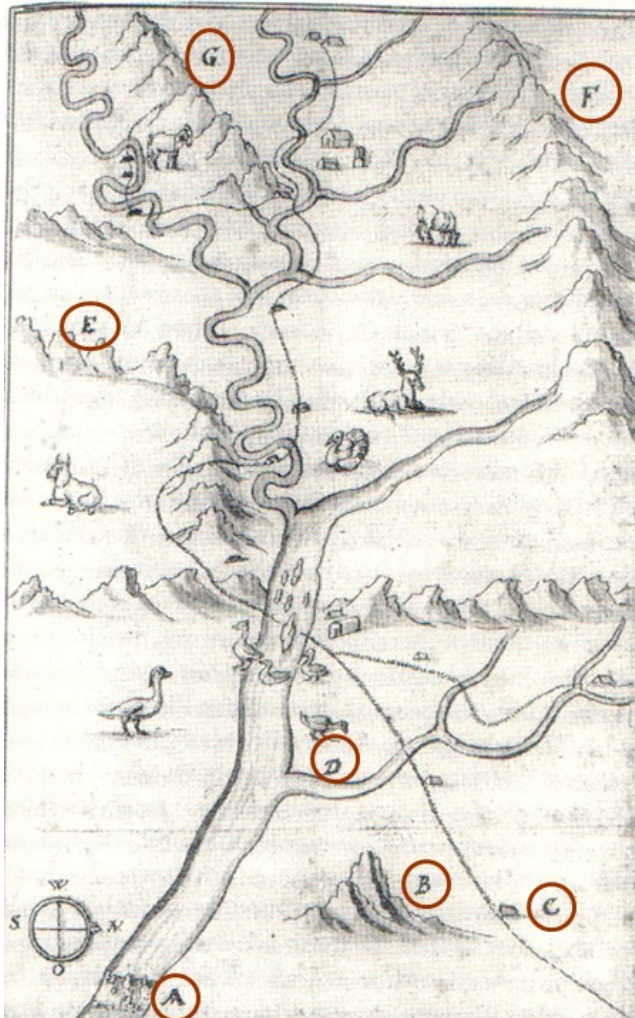
What happened to Indigenous communities of the Shenandoah Valley post-A.D. 1600? Based on radiocarbon dates, three Keyser Culture sites remained occupied during the invasion of the Chesapeake by Europeans. All were located in the lower Valley: one on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (Bowman); one on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River (Keyser Farm); and one on the main stem of the Shenandoah River (Cabin Run). For reasons that are not understood, the other Keyser villages were abandoned. See W. Gardner, *Lost Arrows and Broken Pottery: Traces of Indians in the Shenandoah Valley* (1986).

In Virginia and Maryland, colonial records from the early-mid 17th century were focused on the Coastal Plain region, with limited descriptions of interaction with interior Indigenous Peoples. The English described conflict between Tsenacommacah (Powhatan chiefdom) and the Monacan, identifying the latter as “enemies.” There was also concern of the growing presence of the Five Nations Iroquois, and especially the Massawomeck, in the Ridge and Valley because of the threat they represented across the interior and coastal Chesapeake. See J. Hantman (1993), “Powhatan’s Relations with the Piedmont Manahoacs.”



German explorer John Lederer, commissioned by William Berkeley, colonial governor of Virginia, undertook three 'marches' from Williamsburg westward to the mountains in 1669 and 1670. Lederer described the Shenandoah Valley as a 'savanna' and noted the lack of Indigenous people in the region. However, from the description of his travels, he never set foot in the Valley. He did record visiting with a number of Indigenous communities in the Piedmont east of the Blue Ridge, including the Monacan.

Image: <http://rla.unc.edu/Archives/accounts/Lederer/LedererText.html>



Frantz Ludwig Michel

Map of the Shenandoah Valley, 1707

Key:

- A. *Rocks in the River called Potomack, as far as one can ascend in barques and beyond in small boats (Great Falls)*
- B. *A spring which flows 60 miles from Annapolis (Sugar Loaf Mountain)*
- C. *First hut which was made to sleep on the trail of their route*
- D. *A river called Quattro (Monocacy)*
- E. *Mountains of Virginia (Blue Ridge)*
- F. *Region of the Mesesipi*
- G. *Mountains of Cenuntua (Massantten)*

In the early 1700s, Swiss colonist Frantz Ludwig Michel (Fran Louis) journeyed into the Shenandoah River by way of the Potomac River to identify lands for the establishment of a Swiss colony. Accompanying the map was the claim that “all this country is uninhabited except some Indians. From one hut to another marks a day’s journey.”

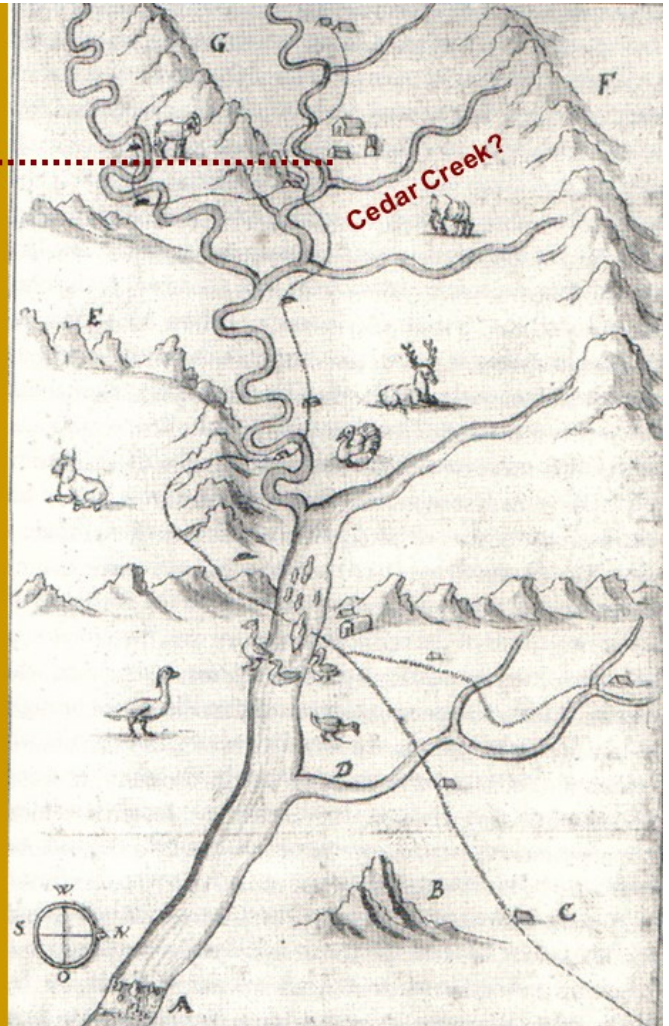
This slide shows the geographic features identified by Michel. The map is oriented so that the Shenandoah Valley is at the top (south).

Image from C. Kemper (1921), “Documents Relating to Early Projected Swiss Colonies in the Valley of Virginia, 1706-1709.”



Bowman Site of the Keyser Culture?

Following Michel's path and the geographic features identified, it appears that he encountered an Indigenous settlement near modern-day Strasburg at one of the Keyser Culture sites (Bowman).



The dwellings positioned on the map at the confluence of Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River are in the correct location for the Bowman Site. Radiocarbon dates for the Bowman Site confirm an Indigenous occupation there as late as 1650. Were the descendants of the Keyser Culture still living at the village when Michel arrived in the area? Was this the last Indigenous settlement in the Shenandoah Valley?

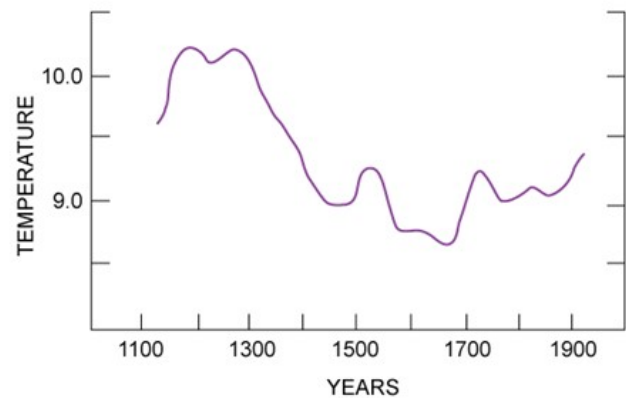
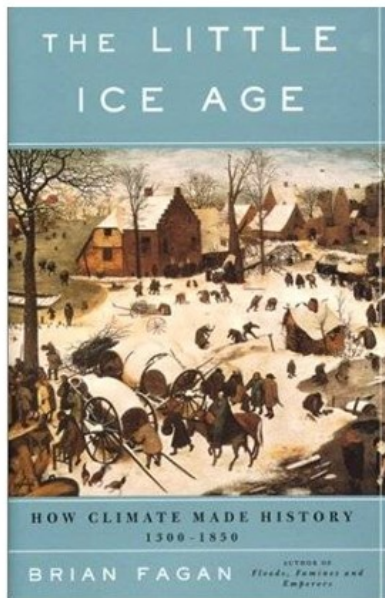


**From large villages to isolated groups in fewer than 80 years
... what happened?**

Five hypotheses ...

Left image: W. De Hass (1851), *History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of West Virginia*.
Right image: Thomas Whyte, *Appalachian State University*.

I. The Impact of the Little Ice Age



Hypothesis I: As noted earlier, the Little Ice Age, with its average temperature drop of 2-3 degrees Celsius, is hypothesized to have created food shortages among communities reliant on maize, a crop that could not produce well in the cooler conditions. The response was the formation of large villages with fortifications (palisades) as defensive structures. Inter-village conflict reduced their numbers so that, when the Europeans pushed west, they reported seeing few Indigenous communities.



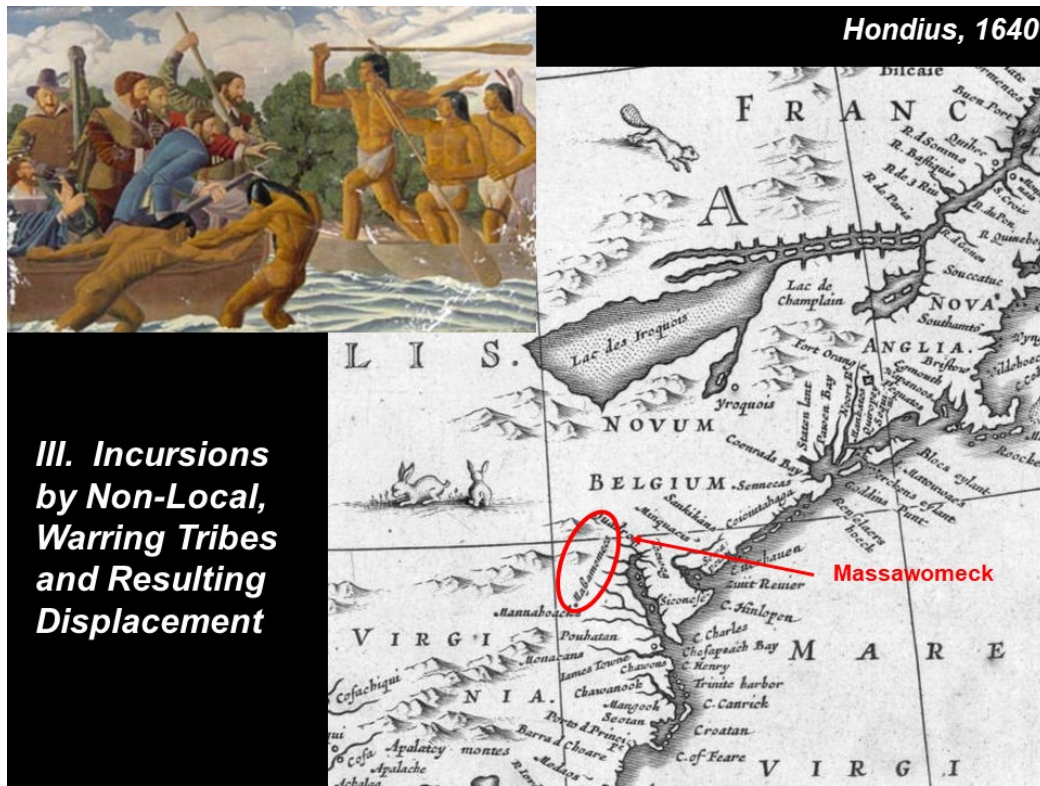
II. Epidemic Disease: were Valley communities infected through indirect contact (trade), decades before Europeans colonized western Virginia?

Hypothesis II: The magnitude of epidemic disease in the Americas and its lasting impact on Indigenous communities is an important part of the story of the European invasion, and there have been many attempts to understand microbes as agents of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Smallpox, measles, influenza, and other diseases spread through the Americas as Indigenous communities directly interacted with European carriers or other infected Indigenous. Recent research (J. Ostler (2019), *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*), shows how the ‘virgin soil epidemic’ hypothesis – the initial impact of disease on populations with no immunity -- minimizes the way in which diseases continued to impact Indigenous communities for decades and centuries after the microbes were first introduced.

Some historians have assumed that disease was the primary cause of Indigenous depopulation in interior Virginia. See P. Kelton, M. Green, T. Perdue (2007), *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492-1715*.

Determining population decline is very difficult. Scholars have argued this for many years because there is limited information in historic records or archaeological evidence. As a result, estimates vary widely. Current literature, for example, includes ranges from 1.8 million to 18 million for America north of Mexico. However, there is agreement that the Indigenous population of the United States was only 250,000 by the end of the 19th century. See National Museum of the American Indian, “Did You Know?,” <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/didyouknow.cshtml>.

Image: public domain, Wikimedia Commons. Aztec drawings of victims of smallpox and measles.



III. Incursions by Non-Local, Warring Tribes and Resulting Displacement

Hypothesis III: 19th century histories of the Shenandoah Valley, such as Kercheval's (1833) perseverated on the idea of 'hostile Indians': "the author believes it will not be uninteresting to the general reader to have a brief history of the long and bloody wars carried on between contending tribes of Indians."

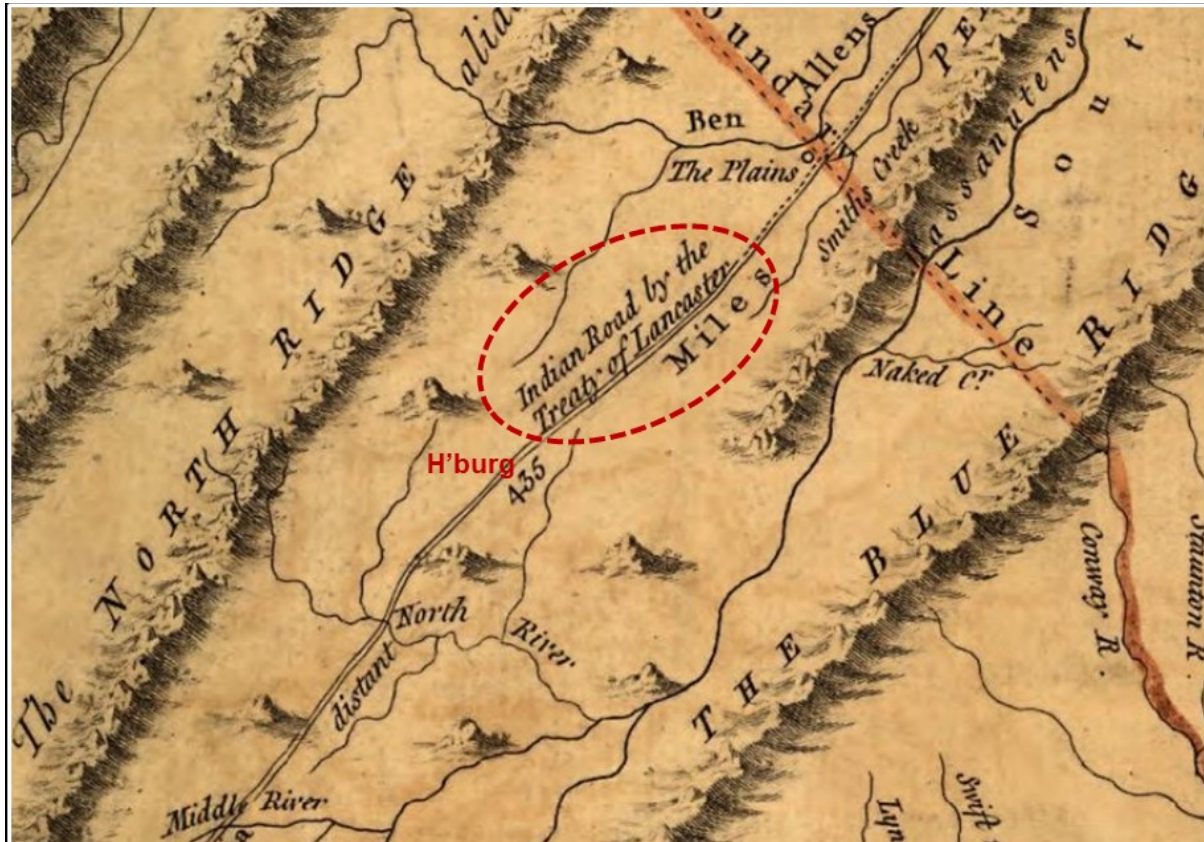
Significant scholarship has been undertaken on the question of Indigenous conflict during the 17th century. For a comprehensive overview, see J. Boback (2007), *Indian Warfare, Household Competency, and the Settlement of the Western Virginia Frontier*. The Five Nations Iroquois (Haudenosaunee), enmeshed in trading relationships with the Dutch and French, sought control of the central Appalachian interior, including the Shenandoah Valley, and its fur-and hide-bearing animals. Colonial records of Virginia and Maryland contain descriptions of conflict between the Massawomeck and regional Indigenous communities as early as 1608. Conflict between the Iroquois and Susquehannock during the Beaver Wars of the 1640s resulted in members of the latter group moving their villages to the West Virginia Panhandle. See C. Nash, 1988, "When there are no Sites Left: Ethnohistory, Archaeology and the Nacostines of the Anacostia River Valley."

There are many such examples, resulting in descriptions of the Shenandoah Valley as an 'Iroquois Hunting Ground' (Wayland, various), devoid of permanent Indigenous settlements. The Great Wagon Road through the Great Valley system – portions of modern Route 11 in our area – is identified by some scholars as having its origin as the Great Indian Warpath, a.k.a. Great Indian War and Trading Path, used by the Iroquois in the 17th and early 18th centuries for long-distance travel. Intent on controlling Anglo-Indigenous trade, Iroquois and Catawba Nation war parties fought each other along the path for decades.

See W. Hofstra and K. Raitz (2010), *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*.

Left Image: A. Bessemer (WPA Muralist), 1939, *Captain John Smith Meets the Massawomeck Indians*, Arlington, Virginia Post Office.

Right Image: J. Hondius (1640), *America noviter delineata*, Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/87690704/>



In 1722, the Virginia Colonial government, led by Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood, brokered the Treaty of Albany with the Haudenosaunee (then the 6 Nations Iroquois with the acceptance of the Tuscarora). One of the provisions was the renewal of the Covenant Chain: a series of agreements with the colonies to promote trade while controlling the movements of the Haudenosaunee. The Treaty of Albany recognized the Blue Ridge Mountains as the demarcation between the Virginia Colony and the Haudenosaunee, promising that white settlers would not move west of this boundary. However, land speculators and settlers did not respect this line, and by the 1730s began to settle the Valley in earnest.

It became clear to the Haudenosaunee that the treaty was more about preventing them from moving east of the Blue Ridge than keeping the Valley open for them. See W. Hofstra (1998), "The Extension of His Majesty's Dominions': The Virginia Backcountry and the Reconfiguration of Imperial Frontiers."

In 1744, with the Treaty of Lancaster, the Haudenosaunee sold the Shenandoah Valley lands to the English for 100 pounds sterling, 200 pounds gold, and 200 pounds in trade goods. In today's currency (U.S. dollars), this translates to less than \$100,000.

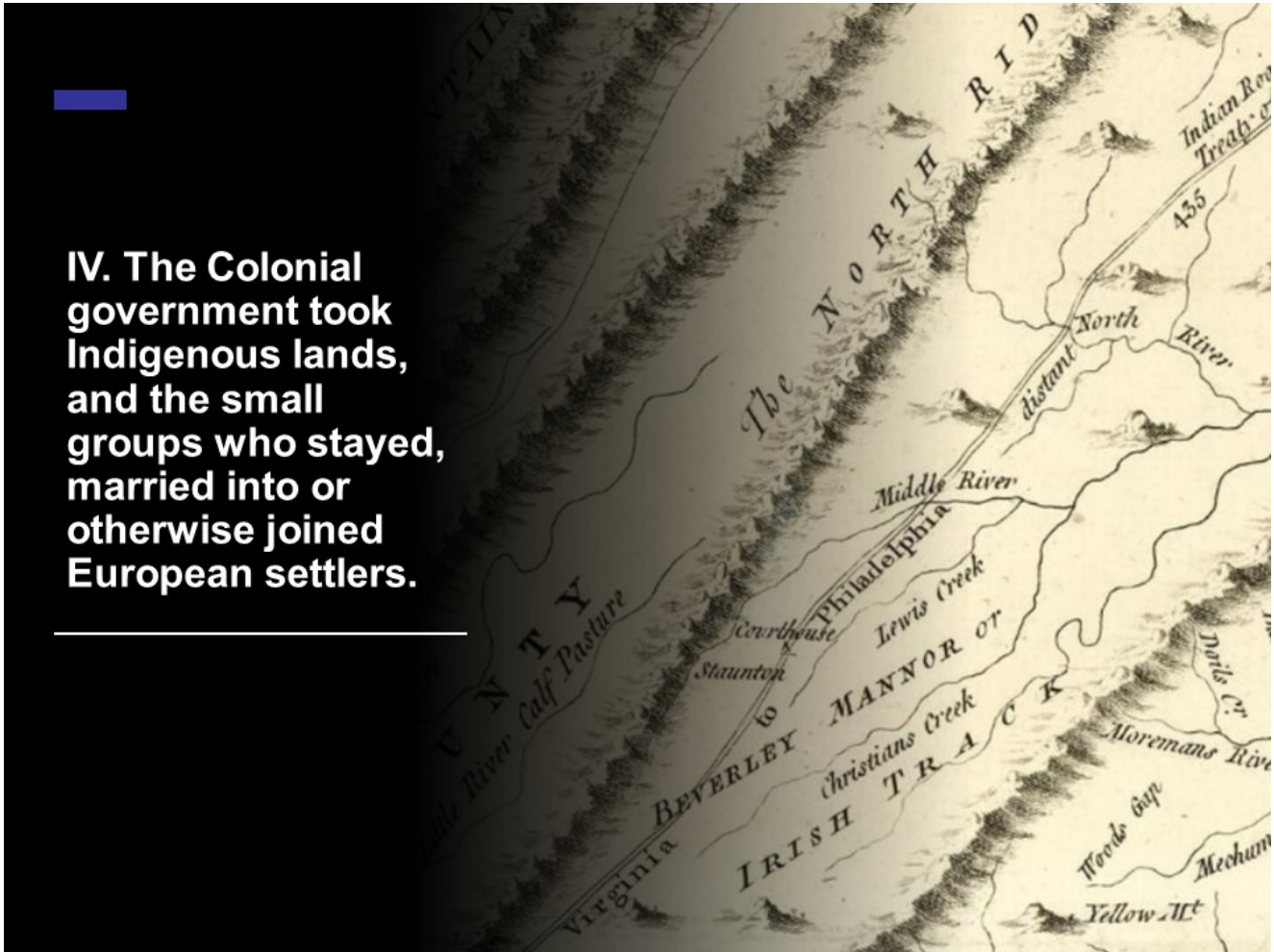
To read the text of the Treaties of Albany and Lancaster, see University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, *Early Recognized Treaties with American Indian Nations*. <http://treatiesportal.unl.edu/earlytreaties/index.html>

Image: *The Fry-Jefferson Map of Virginia (1753)*.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3880.ct000370/?r=0.358,0.197,0.174,0.081,0>.

The location of Harrisonburg is marked for reference. The town was a crossroads settlement on the Valley Road at this time.

IV. The Colonial government took Indigenous lands, and the small groups who stayed, married into or otherwise joined European settlers.



Hypothesis IV: Local histories of the Shenandoah Valley (Wayland 1912, 1927; Peyton 1882; Waddell 1901; Morton, 1920) written between 1880 and 1920, reinforce the image of the region as ‘empty’ when the first European immigrants came here. In this narrative, the Indigenous abandonment of the Valley served as a justification for the Colonial government granting large patents to land speculators responsible for bringing German, Scots-Irish, and English settlers here, along with a growing population of enslaved Africans. Kercheval’s 1833 work, however, was not so clear on the emptiness of the Valley. Relying on local informants, Kercheval documented several instances of “Indian Old Fields” (land cleared for cultivation) in the Winchester area, as well as stories of “aged Indians” who frequented European settlements. Such stories are often recorded for the western edge of the Valley, in the foothills of Shenandoah Mountain.

In addition, writings on the French and Indian War (1754-1763) conflate Valley Indigenous communities with the Shawnee raiding parties led by French military officers. That Valley settlers actually saw few such raids is overshadowed in the writing by the omnipresent fear of Indigenous – people who were warlike before the Europeans arrived and whose actions during the War were proof of their savage nature. See C. Nash (1998), “Archaeological Studies of Fort Hinkle, Germany Valley, West Virginia.”

V. Combination of events, plus movement based on long-term relationships with groups from beyond the Valley: Evaluating the Hypotheses



Hypothesis V: The impact of the Little Ice Age on Indigenous societies is clear. The stresses that it placed on growing populations resulted in shifts among groups all through the Eastern Woodlands. There remain questions, however: the timing and severity of the change in climate: the function of palisades – defensive structures, or simple fences for controlling wildlife; and the reliance on maize as a staple food. Evidence of conflict has not been found.

Virgin soil epidemic disease is not visible in the documented archaeological record of the Shenandoah Valley. This does not mean that Indigenous groups were not affected by disease, but the model of ‘virgin soil epidemics’ is not supported by current work. Virgin soil epidemics usually leave very distinct evidence that is not seen in the Shenandoah Valley: mass burials and abandoned and/or burned structures. The question of the role of disease in the depopulation of the Valley remains open.

The question of external Indigenous groups in destabilizing Shenandoah Valley communities, as well as the role of the Colonial government in encouraging this, may have pushed the Keyser Culture communities to shift their settlements elsewhere or to join other groups. Based on the archaeological record and radiocarbon dating, four of seven Keyser Culture villages – the four to the south -- were abandoned after A.D. 1550. The three northern villages were occupied for another hundred years, and the relationship with the Potomac Creek communities also continued during this time. It is reasonable to ask whether the members of the last Keyser communities left the Valley during the mid-17th century, joining with the Potomac Creek communities, in response to the unrest in the interior.

Once the European presence in the Valley was formally established after 1720, the Colonial government looked to Valley settlements as both a way to fill tax coffers and serve as a buffer between the Coastal Plain plantations and the Haudenosaunee on the frontier. Neither the Treaty of Albany nor Lancaster acknowledged any Indigenous Shenandoah Valley communities.

Image: Homepage, Patowomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia <http://patowomeckindiantribeofvirginia.org/>

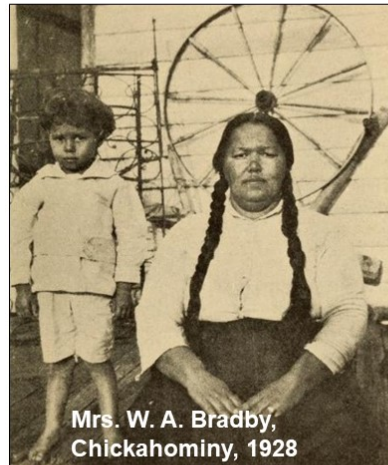


***Lt. Gov. Alexander Spotswood's policies toward interior Indigenous**

***Loss of lands**

***Rupture of community memory**

18th-20th centuries: Government Betrayal



**Mrs. W. A. Bradby,
Chickahominy, 1928**

***Racial Purity Law of 1924
and Paper Genocide of
Virginia's Indigenous
Communities**

The process of reclaiming Indigenous community identity and history are made more difficult by Virginia laws and practices that further undermined that identity, and in the 20th century, attempted to obliterate what remained.

In 1714, Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood initiated a campaign to control trade, maintain English dominance over the frontier, and convert and educate Virginia Indigenous peoples of the interior. This culminated in the 1714 construction of a trading and military outpost, Fort Christanna, in modern Brunswick County, Virginia. Members of Siouan communities were enumerated in the school's records, including several from Manahoac, Monacan, and Saponi villages. The school closed by 1717, with several students taken to Spotswood's holdings at Germanna in Orange County, Virginia. By the mid-18th century, Virginia Governor Francis Fauquier wrote to the London Board of Trade that there were still interior communities "who tho' they live in peace in the midst of us, lead in great measure the lives of wild Indians." Within a generation, reference to Indigenous peoples in western Virginia were non-existent in colonial records, but stories of "Indians who married in" are found among Black families living near the Blue Ridge, and tax records list 'mulattos' whose surnames match the few surviving Indigenous names from the 18th century. See Nash 2012.

This rupture of community memory allowed the descendants of Colonial settlers to engage in myth-making about the First People of the Valley, resulting in textbooks identifying western Virginia as occupied by "Unknown Tribes of the Interior." Had Indigenous communities survived the invasion and its aftermath, they would have struggled to survive – as did all of Virginia's Indigenous Peoples the Virginia Racial Purity Act.

Passed by the General Assembly in 1924, the law created unimaginable pain for Virginia's surviving Indigenous communities. Called "paper genocide," the Act was used to deny the very existence of Indigenous peoples, making it even more difficult to demonstrate their identities and claims to land.

Upper Left Image: Alexander Spotswood, <https://colonialvirginiaportraits.org/portrait/alexander-spotswood-1676-1740/>

Lower Right Image: "Mrs. W. A. Bradby, Chickahominy," In F. Speck (1928), Chapters on the Ethnology of the Powhatan Indian Tribes of Virginia.

“The Claims of the Indian No Longer Exist”: Eugenics and Virginia Indians in the 20th Century



By the late 19th century, Indigenous communities throughout the eastern United States were greatly harmed by the Eugenics Movement, a pseudo-scientific endeavor tied to the social goal of ‘racial purity.’ See Cold Spring Harbor, “Image Archive of the American Eugenics Movement,” <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list3.pl>.

The title of the slide comes from a 1943 letter written by Virginia Registrar of Vital Statistics, Walter Plecker, to all County Clerks in Virginia. See https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/plecker_letter.

Image: Bear Mountain Mission School (Monacan), 1914, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/slide_player?mets_filename=sld1533mets.xml.



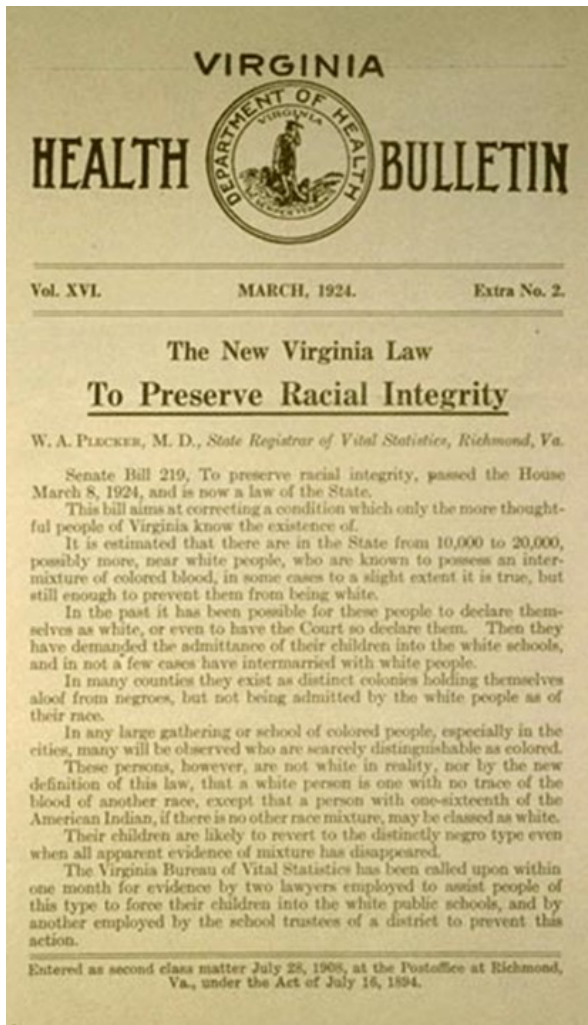
Walter Ashby Plecker and “Paper Genocide”

Registrar, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1912-1946,

White Supremacist (Anglo-Saxon Club of America) and Eugenicist

In the early 20th Century, the State of Virginia would implement the most sweeping racial integrity laws in the United States. These laws were conceived and implemented by Walter Plecker, a medical doctor and eugenicist from the Shenandoah Valley who began a position with the Bureau of Vital Statistics in 1918. Plecker, a founder of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America and rabid proponent of the separation of the races, used his government position to enact "paper genocide." With the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, the General Assembly passed the law prohibiting marriages between individuals of different races. It mandated that all official government documents relating to personal identity (birth, marriage, death records) be marked with one of two racial classifications: "white" and "colored," essentially erasing "Indian." See B. Wolfe (2015), "Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

Image: *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Jan. 8, 1935.



The Racial Integrity Act of 1924
was the country's most famous
miscegenation ban.

**It was passed by the Virginia
General Assembly on the same
day as the legislation providing
for the sexual sterilization of
inmates of State institutions.**

“Miscegenation,” from the Latin *miscere* (to mix) and *genus* (kind or type) replaced “amalgamation” during the Civil War, when it was used to describe interracial marriage. In the 20th century, anti-miscegenation laws were passed in 30 states to shore up white supremacy. See American Civil Liberties Union (2020), “The Leadup to Loving,” <https://www.aclu.org/other/map-leadup-loving>.

Plecker's view of Virginia's Indigenous:

“...a vanished race...”



**Family of Chief George Major Cook
(Pamunkey), 1899**

The Racial Purity Law was subject to the "Pocahontas exception": a person could be considered white with as much as one-sixteenth Indian ancestry. Unless you were Indian.

Plecker believed that because members of some Indigenous communities married the descendants of Africans, there were no 'pure' Indians remaining in Virginia. This was a common belief in the eastern United States concerning Indigenous people, drawn from the 'one drop' rule that identified a person of any known African ancestry as Black. This racialized view of culture led to Plecker's edict that there were but two races in Virginia: colored or white. Because Indians to him were "mixed-blooded Negroes," the meaning of this was clear – segregation and denial of identity for the Indians. See A. Coleman (2013), *That the Blood Stay Pure: African Americans, Native Americans, and the Predicament of Race and Identity in Virginia*.

Because of Plecker's belief that Indians were Black, anyone who claimed Indigenous ancestry could be classified as Black. Ironically this created a challenge to the whiteness of some of Virginia's elite families (First Families of Virginia) who claimed Pocahontas, daughter of Tsenacommacah (Powhatan) and John Rolfe as ancestors. In 1887, former Virginia Governor Wyndham Robertson published *Pocahontas and Her Descendants* to provide genealogical proof of descent for elite whites. To ensure passage by the General Assembly, the language of the act was revised to include the 'Pocahontas Exception': people who had less than one sixty-fourth part Indian and no African American heritage would still be considered white. See B. Wolfe (2015), "Racial Integrity Laws, 1924-1930," *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

Image: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/media_player?mets_filename=evr6852mets.xml

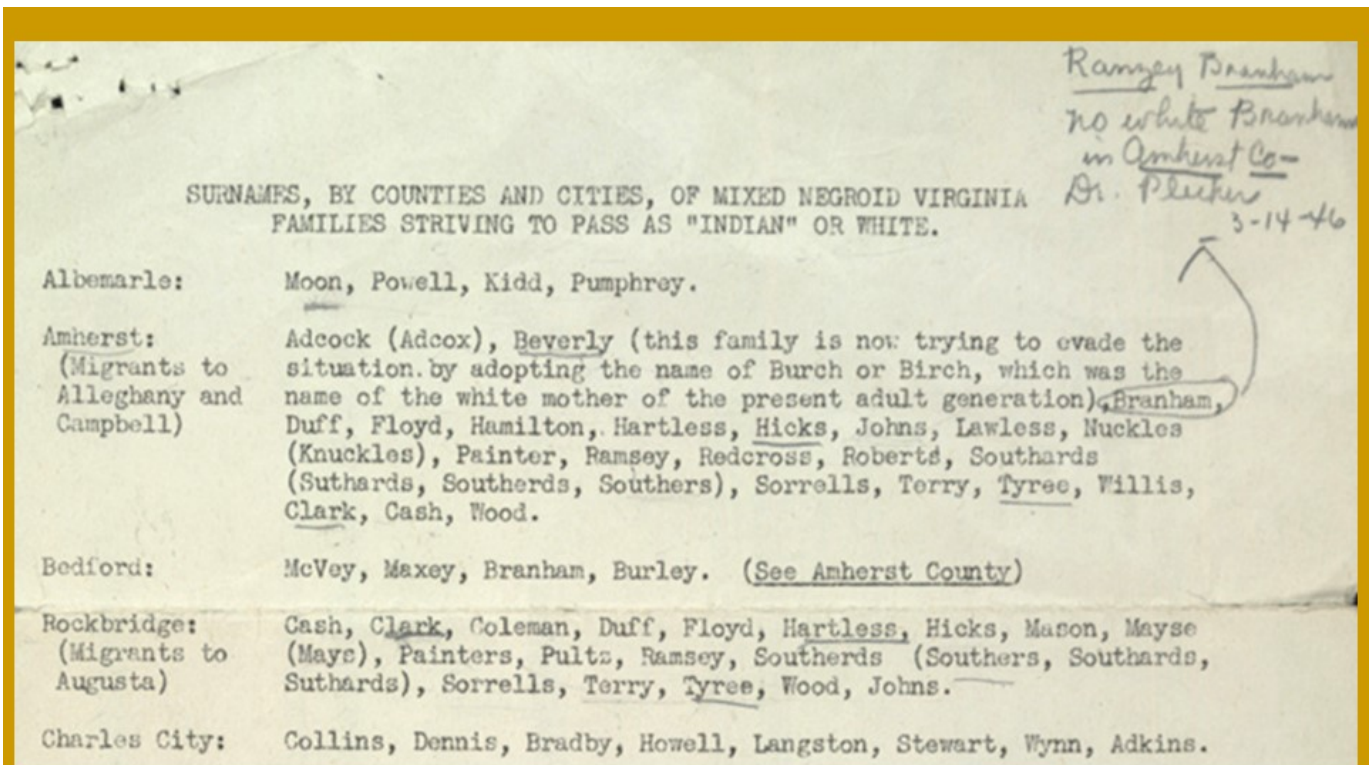
I want to warn you that the Racial Integrity Law of 1924 makes it a penitentiary offense for anyone with a trace of negro to marry a white person or to register in the Bureau of Vital Statistics as white. All midwives or heads of families who attempt to register "free issues" or colored births or deaths as white, are liable to be indicted on a felony charge.

***Yours very truly,
W.A. Plecker
State Registrar***

As the government official in charge of official documents of identity, Plecker was systematic and thorough in his application of the Racial Integrity Law. Midwives, local officials, and medical personnel were threatened with jail if they registered any “free issues,” a term originally used to refer to freed slaves who had been *issued* emancipation papers. During the Jim Crow era, the term was used in Virginia to refer to Indigenous persons. See Haimes-Bartolf (2007), “The Social Construction of Race and Monacan Education in Amherst County, Virginia, 1908-1965: Monacan Perspectives.”

Plecker had contacts with Nazi leaders: In 1932, he gave a keynote speech at the Third International Conference on Eugenics in New York. Among those in attendance was Ernst Rudin of Germany who, eleven months later, would help write Hitler's eugenics law. In 1935, Plecker wrote to Walter Gross, the director of Germany's Bureau of Human Betterment and Eugenics, outlining Virginia's racial integrity laws and asked to be put on a mailing list for bulletins from Gross' department. Plecker complimented the Third Reich for sterilizing 600 children in Algeria who were born to German women and Black men.

See A. Gonzales, J. Kertesz, and G. Tayac (2007), “Eugenics as Indian Removal: Sociohistorical Processes and the De(con)struction of American Indians in the Southeast.”



Portion of the Plecker 'Hit List'

Since there were no Indians in his vision of Virginia, Plecker was convinced that some Blacks were trying to pass as Indian or white, creating what historians today call the 'Plecker Hit List': the list of surnames, by county, of families believed to be Black. This document was sent to county clerks with the warning that individuals with these names could not be documented as white. The list included most of Virginia's Indigenous families. Plecker also altered formal government documents that he believed misclassified the race of individuals involved.

<https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/upload/Documentary-Genocide.pdf>

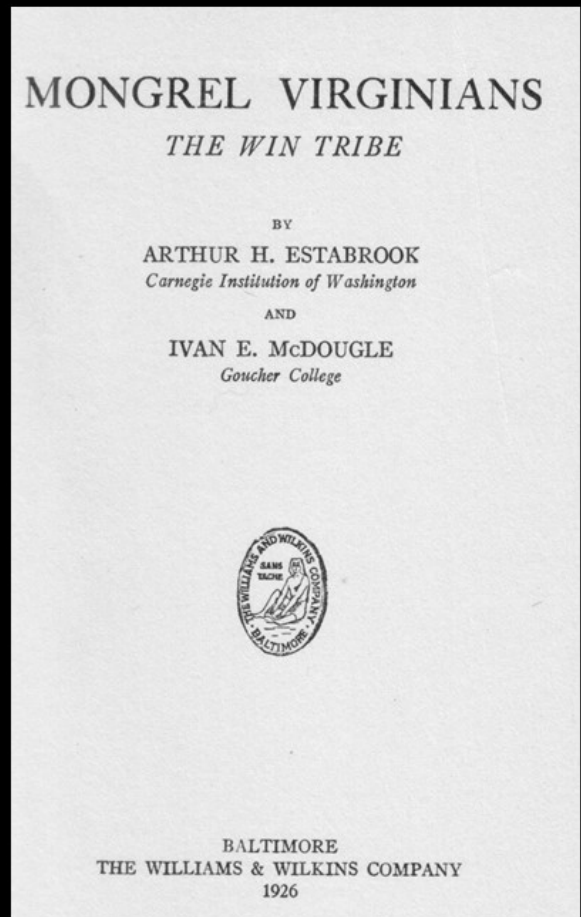
http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/lewisandclark/students/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/letter.html

Plecker's methods were effective.

1930 U.S. Census: 779 Native Americans living in Virginia.

1940 U. S. Census: 198 Native American living in Virginia.

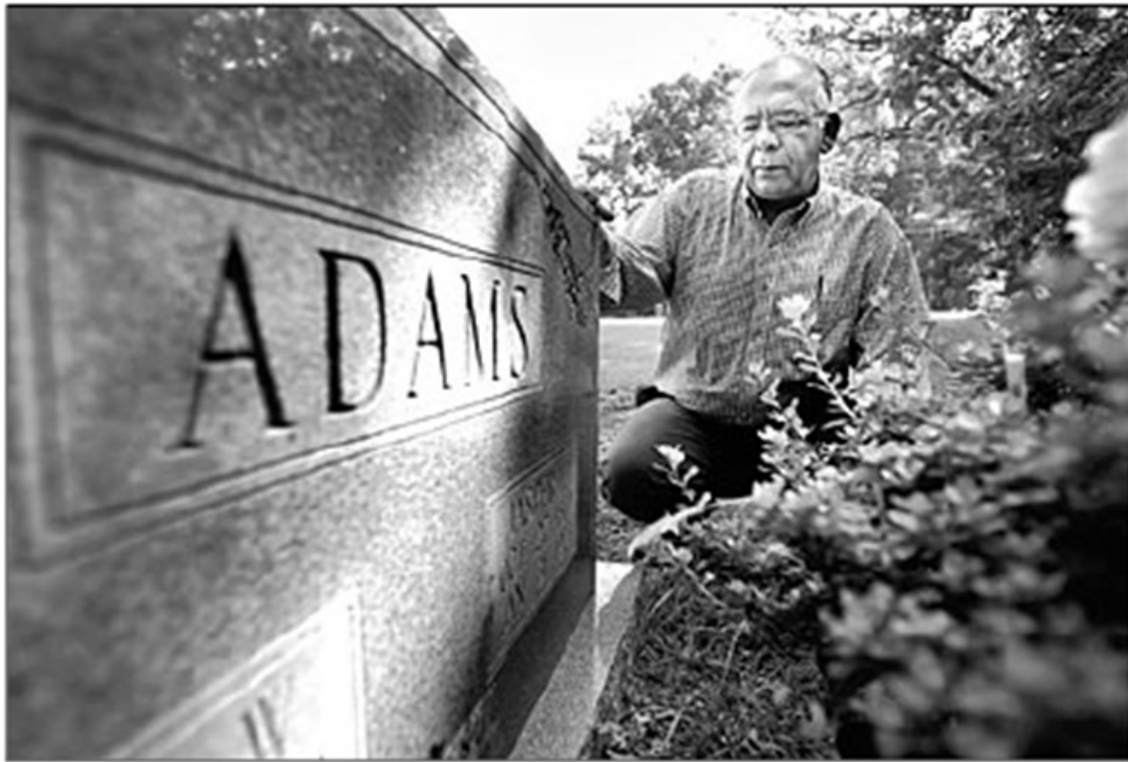
Plecker's work was furthered by the 1928 publication of *Mongrel Virginians*, a 'scientific study' of the Win Tribe.



Academics were also involved in the 'study' of Virginia Indians using eugenicist principles. The thinly veiled 'Win Tribe' of Estabrook and McDougale's *Mongrel Virginians* were the Monacans of Amherst County. Estabrook, a PhD from Johns Hopkins, worked for the Carnegie Institution's Eugenics Records Office and came to Amherst County in 1924 to serve as an expert witness in the forced sterilization case of Carrie Buck. His co-author, Ivan McDougale, was a sociologist from Goucher College.

Mongrel Virginians can be downloaded here:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015046825702&view=1up&seq=7>

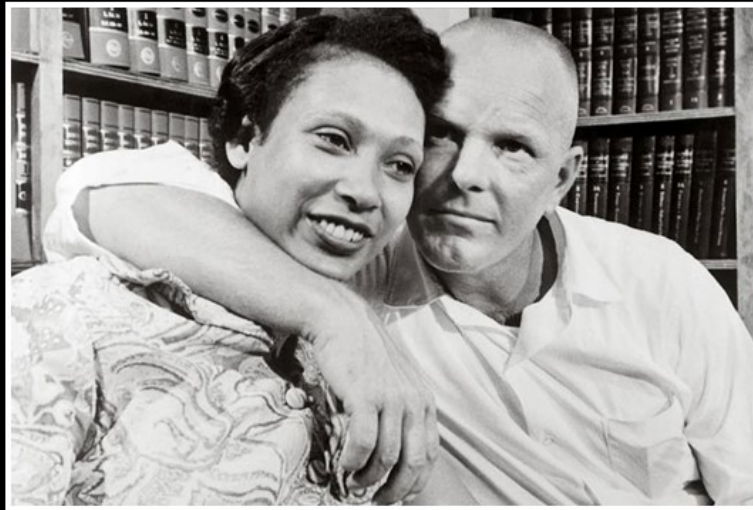


Kenneth Adams, chief of the Upper Mattaponi tribe, visits his grandfather's grave. The worst thing about Plecker's work, he said, was that it tore families apart. "People just left," he said, to seek out life in other states that did not deny Indians their heritage. *lisa billings*

Virginia Indigenous communities look to organizations such as churches and schools as fundamental to their cultural survival during this time. One-room elementary schools existed in several communities. The State did not offer high school courses for Indigenous students before 1962. Some families sent their children to Bacone Indian University in Oklahoma to complete high school. Half the Monacan families relocated to Baltimore so their children could attend secondary classes. See Virginia Indian Archive (2020), "American Indian Education in Virginia," <http://www.virginiaindianarchive.org/exhibits/show/american-indian-education-in-v/integration-and--->

Image: "The Black and White World of Walter Ashby Plecker," The Virginian Pilot, 2004

<https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/upload/The-Black-and-White-World-of-Walter-Plecker.pdf>



The section of the Virginia Racial Integrity Act concerning interracial marriage was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*). The Chief Justices ruled in favor of Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple, in their case against Virginia.

Mrs. Loving was a member of the Rappahannock Tribe.

The remainder of the Racial Integrity Act was repealed in 1975.

The Sterilization Act was repealed in 1979.

For an overview of the case, see
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/loving_v_virginia_1967#start_entry.

Gov. Robb signing Virginia State Recognition Resolution, 1983, for the Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Band Chickahominy; and Rappahannock. Nansemond followed in 1985; Monacan in 1989; and Nottoway, Patowomeck, and Cheroenhaka Nottoway in 2011. The Pamunkey and Mattaponi were recognized by the colonial government in the 17th century.



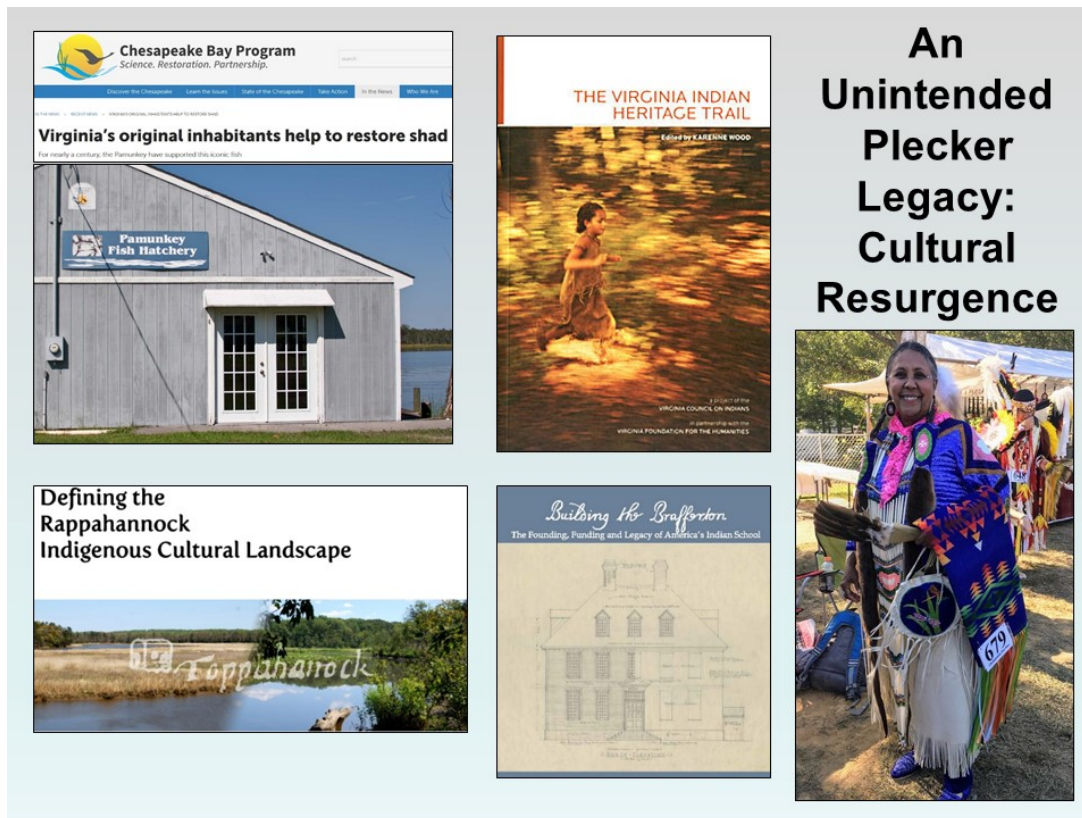
State recognition is the formal declaration of recognition to an American Indian tribe located in Virginia. Nine of the Recognized Tribes were confirmed by the state legislature. Two tribes, the Pamunkey and Mattaponi, were recognized through a 17th Century treaty between the tribes and colonial government. See <https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/virginia-indians/state-recognized-tribes/>

Plecker's policies harmed Virginia's Indigenous communities in ways that continue to impact them. In the 1930s, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs queried Plecker about Virginia's tribes that would be eligible for Federal Acknowledgement, Plecker contended that there were no Indians in Virginia. Recognition did not come until 2015 for the Pamunkey and 2017 for six other tribes.

In 1997, the Virginia General Assembly passed a law entitling any Virginia-born Native American whose certified copy of a birth record filed in Virginia before July 1, 1960 contains a racial designation that is incorrect, to obtain, without paying the \$10 fee, a certified copy of the birth record from which such incorrect designation has been removed.

See: "How a Long-Dead White Supremacist Still Threatens the Future of Virginia's Indian Tribes"

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/how-a-long-dead-white-supremacist-still-threatens-the-future-of-virginias-indian-tribes/2015/06/30/81be95f8-0fa4-11e5-aded-e82f8395c032_story.html



An Unintended Plecker Legacy: Cultural Resurgence

With the State Recognition process underway in the 1980s, Indigenous communities became more visible to the public. The Virginia Council on Indians (VCI) was established in 1983 as a reporting agency to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. In 2016, the Virginia Indian Advisory Board was empowered to advise the Legislature and Governor on matters pertaining to Indian recognition.

Other Indigenous-organized groups, such as the Virginia Indian Tribal Alliance for Life (VITAL) and the United Indians of Virginia (UIV) grew out of the period of Recognition. In addition to establishing museums and heritage centers (Mattaponi, Monacan, Pamunkey, Rappahannock), tribal members began to partner with scholars to develop interpretive programming at heritage tourism sites. A model for this is the Monacan Living History Program at Natural Bridge State Park. Former Director, Victoria Persinger Ferguson (right), has advised on the History and Social Science Standards of Learning that guide public school curricula in Virginia. The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities established the Virginia Indian Heritage Program (upper right – VIH Trail), which has now transitioned to the Virginia Indian Archive (<http://www.virginiaindianarchive.org/>). Almost every Tribe sponsors an annual Pow Wow, a homecoming for members and open to the public.

Higher Education in Virginia has been slower to respond to the need for courses and programs devoted to Indigenous Studies. Currently, Virginia Tech, the College of William and Mary, and George Mason University offer a minor in American Indian Studies or Native Studies, while the University of Virginia offers a cluster of courses on Native American and Indigenous Peoples of the Americas in its Anthropology Department. JMU faculty are members of a consortium evaluating higher education curriculum for the study of Virginia's Indigenous communities.

Images not identified in text:

Top Left: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/virginias_original_inhabitants_help_to_restore_shad and <http://pamunkey.org/reservation/fish-hatchery/>

Lower left: <https://www.nps.gov/chba/learn/news/upload/rappahannockreport-final.pdf>

Lower center: https://muscarelle.wm.edu/exhibition_record/building-the-brafferton-the-founding-funding-and-legacy-of-americas-indian-school/



Ten of eleven tribes live on ancestral lands in the Coastal Plain, east of the Fall Line. Only one tribe, the Monacan Nation, resides close to the Blue Ridge. Formally recognized by the State of North Carolina, the Haliwa-Saponi tribe has members who live in Virginia near the North Carolina border.

Given the complexity of cultural interactions during the Contact and Historic Periods, Indigenous peoples of western Virginia, like those of the Shenandoah Valley, were displaced. As Indigenous scholars and families lead collaborative work, perhaps the stories of the Doeg, Nyhassan, Tutelo, Occaneechi, and Cherokee in Virginia will re-emerge.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019 persons identified as “Native American or Alaska Native alone” in Virginia comprise .5% of the total population. Many of these are members of Tribes or Nations from outside Virginia who now live here.



7 Federally Acknowledged Tribal Governments (2018)

Left to Right: Chief Gerald Stewart, Eastern Division Chickahominy; Chief Robert Gray, Pamunkey; Chief G. Ann Richardson, Rappahannock; Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke; Chief Dean Branham, Monacan; Chief Stephen Adkins, Chickahominy; Chief Lee Lockamy, Nansemond; Chief W. Frank Adams, Upper Mattaponi

In 2016, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe received notification of Federal Acknowledgement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Federal Acknowledgement. Living on one of the oldest reservations in the, the Tribe began the recognition process in 1982. The BIA process is onerous and expensive, requiring reams of documentation to satisfy the criteria: the applicants are distinct, autonomous communities, existing as such since historical times and recognized as such prior to 1900. See National Congress of American Indians, "Federal Recognition," <http://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/tribal-governance/federal-recognition>.

The Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017 was signed into law in 2018, extending Federal Acknowledgement to the Eastern Division Chickahominy, Chickahominy, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, Nansemond, and Monacan Tribes. The act is named for Thomasina Elizabeth Jordan, the first chairperson of the Virginia Council on Indians, who helped author the Acknowledgement Bill that was first considered by Congress in 2000. The legislative process (rather than the BIA process) was used because Plecker's work was so thorough that records proving claims of longevity no longer exist.

Federal Acknowledgement recognizes a government-to-government relationship between the Tribes and the United States. They possess inherent rights of self-government (tribal sovereignty) and nationhood status. They comment as Consulting Parties on federal agency actions that could affect them, gain access to federal services and resources (education, housing, health care), and pursue repatriation of cultural artifacts. See Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Frequently Asked Questions," <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>.

Image: <https://www.indianz.com/News/2019/02/04/bureau-of-indian-affairs-publishes-annua.asp>

Additional Resources:

Virginia Indian Research References

<https://www.wm.edu/as/anthropology/research/centers/airc/references/index.php>

Secretary of the Commonwealth, Virginia Indians

<https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/virginia-indians/>

Virginia Indian Archive

<http://virginiaindianarchive.org/>

The Virginia Indian Heritage Trail

<https://www.virginiahumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/VA-Indian-Trail-Guide.pdf>

A Study of Virginia Indians and Jamestown: The First Century

<http://npshistory.com/publications/colo/moretti-langholtz/index.htm>

Honor Native Land

<https://usdac.us/nativeland>

I ask the reader to consider this document a starting point for committing to the hard work of learning about and with Indigenous Peoples. This work demands a reckoning with the systematic erasure of their presence and the harm and pain it causes. Honoring the complex history of the Shenandoah Valley must be a collaborative effort led by Virginia's Indigenous communities. As members of the local community, we must speak up, open doors, and acknowledge our power to give voice to the First Peoples of this place. We cannot be silent.