

**ETHNO-HISTORICAL SNAP SHOT OF THE  
CHEROENHAKA (NOTTOWAY) INDIAN TRIBE  
Southampton County, Virginia**

**Compiled by: Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown, Tribal Historian  
Updated December 15, 2009**

- The Hand Site Excavation (44SN22) – in Southampton County carbon dates the ancestors of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian in Southampton County, Virginia to around 1580. It is believed the site existed in 900 AD.
- The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe made first ethno-historic contact with the English in 1607-1608 in what is now Nottoway County, Virginia. The English were looking for information germane to Roanoke Island -the “Lost Colony.”
- In 1607 the tribe was called Man-goak or Men-gwe by the Powhatan Confederation’s “Algonquian Speakers” and further listed in the upper left hand quadrant on John Smith’s 1607 map of Virginia by the same name in what is now Nottoway County.
- The Colonials gave names to other Indian Tribes based on what the Indians they had first contact with called other tribes; such as, the Algonquian Speakers calling the Cheroenhaka, NA-DA-WA or Nottoway as perceived by the Colonials.
- In the Seventeen Century, Virginia Indians (Natives) were divided into three language groups: Algonquian Speakers, Siouan Speakers and Iroquoian Speakers.
- In the Seventeen Century, the Iroquoian Speaking Tribes occupied lands east of the Fall Line on the inner Coastal Plains of Southeastern Virginia. These tribes were the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), the Meherrin and the Tuscarora.
- In 1650 per the dairy entries of James Edward Bland, the Nottoway Indians were called by the Algonquian Speakers as NA-DA-WA which the Colonials reverted to Nottoway.
- August 1650 Bland encountered two Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Villages: The first town located in what is now Sussex County near Rowantee Branch / Creek was “Chounteroute Town.” At that time Chounteroute (Cho-un-te-roun-te) was king /Chief of the Nottoways. The second town, Tonnatorah, was located on the south side of the Nottoway River where the current Sussex - Greensville County line meets the River.
- The true name of the tribe is Cheroenhaka (**Che-ro-en-ha-ka**), meaning “**People at the Fork of the Steam.**” 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 Stream.”
- The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe signed three treaties: The Treaty of 1646; 1677 and a **STAND ALONE** Treaty of February 27th, 1713. The “Stand Alone” Treaty of 1713 was signed between Colonial Lieutenant Governor Spotswood and the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe’s Chief “Ouracoorass Teerheer”, AKA William Edmund Edmond, as called by the Colonials. Said Treaty has a “Successor Clause.” Our tribal government (Council) contends that the Successor Clause meant that the recognized relationship the tribe had with the Colonials from 1713 to 1775 continued with the Commonwealth of Virginia beginning in 1776 to the present time.
- 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 Occaneechee Island / Indians on the Roanoke River.
- In the mid 1680s, the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, due to encroachment by the Colonials and to avoid war with other tribes, move from the Nottoway Town of Ta-ma-hit-ton / Tonnatorah in Sussex County to the mouth of the Assamoosick Swamp in what is now Surry County and again in the mid 1690s moved further down the Assamoosick toward present day Courtland and Sebrell in what was then Isle of Wight County - currently Southampton County Virginia.

- In 1705 the House of Burgess (now House of Delegates) granted two tracks of land to the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe – the Circle and Square Tracks consisting of some 41,000 acres of Reservation Land. The tracks of land fell within the confines of what was then Isle of Wight County – now Southampton County. Note: Southampton County was annexed from Isle of Wight County in 1749.
- In 1711 Colonial Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood, along with 1600 armed men, met with the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Chief Men, offering “Tribute” forgiveness, referenced in The Treaty of 1677, (Tribute was 20 Beaver Skins and 3 Arrows) if the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Chief Men would send their sons to the “Brafferton,” a school for Indians at the College of William and Mary.
- Even though the Cheroenhaka were **fearful** their sons **would be sold into slavery**, ethno-historic records document that Spotswood reported on November 17, 1711 that two sons of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Chief’s men were attending the “Brafferton.”
- Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians “Surnames” continue to appear on the enrollment roster of the “Brafferton” throughout the 1750s and 1760s.
- March 1713 the Colonial Council at Williamsburg ordered that the Meherrin Indians be incorporated with the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians and that the Nansemond Indians be incorporated with the Saponies. Purpose: remove to a place where they would be less liable to have differences with the English and for the convening of instructing their children in Christianity by missionaries at the two settlements.
- On August 10, 1715 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian “King,” William Edmund and 8 Great Men (Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Chief Men) were invited to the Capital in Williamsburg and put in irons and chains for three days until they consented to send 12 of their children to attend school at Fort Christiana. On August 13, 1715 the chains were removed and they were ordered release.
- On December 10, 1719 a list of names of 8 Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) and 12 Meherrin children were given to the Colonial Council in Williamsburg, Virginia to attend school at Fort Christiana in what is now Brunswick County.
- On November 30, 1720 the Colonial Council ordered that a collection of all transaction with Tributary Indians or Foreign Indians be made and that the clerk of the council make a collection of all negotiations with the Indians from first settlement of the Colony.
- On April 7th & 8th, 1728, William Byrd visited the town of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe on the tribes reservation land in what is now Courtland, Virginia. He described how the men and women looked, sang, danced and dressed, the nature of their Fort, Longhouses and bedding; to include, the colors that the women were wearing – Red, White and Blue. Byrd noted in his dairy that the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe was the only tribe of Indians of any consequence still remaining within the limits of Virginia.
- On August 7th, 1735, the Indian Interpreters, Henry Briggs and Thomas Wynn, for the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians were dismissed by an Act by the Commonwealth and on the same day the “first” of many land transfer deeds for the “Circle Tract of Land” transpired between the Colonials and the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe’s Chief Men and would continue up until November 1953, until both Circle and Square Track of Lands (41, 000 Acres of Reservation Lands), were in the hands of the Europeans.
- On December 19, 1756 George Washington submits letter to The Honorable Robert Dinwiddie expressing and interest among the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians in engaging some assistance from them.
- On March 8, 1759 a petition for pay to Tom Steph, Billy John(s), School Robin, and Aleck Scholar, all of which are Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians, who served under George Washington in the French & Indian Wars until the reduction of Fort Duquesne.
- In July of 1808 the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia mandated a “Special” Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Census be taken of those Indians living on the remaining lands

of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Reservation in what is now Courtland, Virginia. – some 7,000 + remaining acres.

- The Special Census was conducted by “White” Trustees in Southampton County. They were Henry Blow, William Blow, (a descendant of John Blow) and Samuel Blunt. **Note:** Not all Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian living on the Reservation were enumerated.
- In 1816, new trustees were appointed for the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe. These Trustees were empowered to make reasonable rules and regulations for the government of the tribe and for the expenditure of the money held in trust for them, which was to continue so long as any number of the tribe were living. Any funds remaining on hand were then to be paid into the public treasury.
- In 1820 Former President Thomas Jefferson procured a copy of the language of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians as recorded by John Wood. Wood recorded the language on March 4th, 1820, from Edie Turner, (Wana Roonseraw) who lived on the tribe’s reservation in Southampton County, Virginia. Jefferson sent a copy of the language to Peter DuPonceau of Philadelphia who recognized the language as Iroquoian. **On March 17, 1820, Jefferson was quoted in an article that appeared in the Petersburg Newspaper, “that the only remains in the state of Virginia of the formidable tribes are the Pamunkeys and Nottoways [Cheroenhaka...WDB] and a few Mottoponies.”**
- According to writings of Albert Gallatin (Gallatin 1836:82), The Honorable James Tresevant (Trezevant), a former Judge in Southampton County, compiled a second recording of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Language in Southampton County, Virginia, between 1831 and 1836. Tresevant reports that the Nottoway name for themselves was Cheroenhaka, sometimes spelled Cherohakah.
- In 1823-24 William Bozeman AKA Billy Woodson whose name was listed on the Special Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Census of 1808, Note: Billy Woodson’s father was white – Michal Boseman), filed a petition with Court of Southampton County to have remaining Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Reservations Lands divided “Free and Simple” between the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians.
- On February 5th, 1849 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe filed suite within the Commonwealth of Virginia Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the County of Southampton County against Jeremiah Cobb. The suite was filed on behalf of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribal Members and all other members of said tribe by the tribe’s Trustees (white), James W. Parker, G.N.W. Newsom, and Jesse S. Parham.
- On November 8th, 1850 Judge Rich H. Baker, Court of Southampton County ruled in favor of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe and on March 3, 1851, as witness by Littleton R. Edwards, Clerk of said court, awarded the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe \$818.80 with interest from June 1, 1845.
- As a result of the successful Court Case in 1851, the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the County of Southampton County, Virginia RECOGNIZED the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County, as a Tribe and has never, since said time, by way of Law, Act, Bill or Policy negated its Tribal Status.
- In 1825 -1850 as the final bits of Reservation Lands was disappearing into the hands of the Europeans many Tribal members with the surnames of Artis, Bozeman, Turner, Rogers, Woodson, Brown, Boone, Williams, relocated to what became known a “Artist Town” near what is now Riverdale Road in Southampton County, Virginia. Their descendants continue to live there as a tribal communal group up until the late 1990s sharing their Native American Traditions and Customs – hunting, trapping, tanning hides, fishing, farming, and raising Hogs, some of which still own land in said Artis Town.
- **The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe is the only “Iroquoian Tribe” still residing in the Commonwealth of Virginia claiming a documented continual existing “STATE RECOGNIZED” status. [Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Vs Jeremiah Cobb, March**

### **3rd, 1851, Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the County of Southampton County].**

- In 1877 some 575 acres of Tribal Reservation Land in Southampton County was divided between five Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian families whose descendents still reside in Southampton County Virginia.
- In 1965, 66, & 69 an excavation of the Hand Site Settlement (44SN22), in Southampton County, Virginia, off hwy 671 was conducted; wherein, some 131 “Documented” grave remains (Bones) of Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians were removed and placed on a shelf in boxes at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC. All non skeletal remains are housed at the Department of Historical Resources, Richmond, Virginia.
- In February 23, 2002, the Historic Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County, Virginia, reorganized by bringing together family clusters of Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Descendants and families still living in Southampton County Virginia.
- In May 2002 a tribal government was in place with the election of a Tribal Chief and Council Members. Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown was elected as the first modern day Chief. He is the 5th “Foster” Great Grandson of Queen Edith Turner (1734-1838) aka “Wana Roonseraw” and the 4th Great Grandson of Mary “Polly” Woodson Turner aka “Kara Hout” (Foster daughter of Queen Edith Turner) and Pearson Turner.
- The first Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Pow Wow and Gathering took place on the grounds of the Southampton County Agriculture and Forestry Museum, Courtland, Virginia, on July 24, 2002 and has continued annually at the Southampton County Fair Grounds on the fourth weekend of July as a celebration of the “Green Corn Harvest.”
- **On December 7, 2002 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe filed a letter of intent with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) announcing that it would be filing for Federal Recognition. Effective date on BIA Website is December 30, 2002.**
- On July 29, 2003, the Court of Southampton County, Virginia issued a license to Chief Walter David “Red Hawk” Brown, III, as Chief of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, with all legal rights to perform the rites of matrimony for said Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe in accordance with the customs and traditions of said tribe and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- On February 27th 2004, the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribal Shield and Heraldry was copyrighted with the Library of Congress. (VA 1-256-506)
- On July 23, 2004 Issue I of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton County Virginia, the WASKEHEE, was published documenting the ethno-history of the tribe as written and documented by Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown under the title “Creator My Heart Speaks” and has continued annually thereafter. All of which have been archived into the Library of Virginia. Issue I of the Waskehee was copyright with the US Copyright Office on August 3, 2007 – Reg. #: TX 6-627-973.
- On July 24, 2004 the elected official body of Southampton County Virginia, the Southampton County Board of Supervisors, issued under its seal, a Proclamation of Recognition of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe proclaiming July 24 of said year as “Cheroenhaka Day.”
- **On September 21, 2004, the tribe participated, as one of 500 tribes, some 25,000 Natives, in the “Grand Procession” of the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown was interviewed by ABC News, as narrated by Peter Jennings on the “6:30 World News,” giving comments as to what it meant, as a Native American, to be a part of the great celebration – video clip located in the tribe’s historical archives. Vice Chief Ellis “Soaring Eagle” Wright was interviewed by ABC news appearing on the 12:00 O’clock local news.**
- On June 3, 2005, the State Recognized WACCAMAW Indian Tribe of South Carolina voted in favor of a Joint Resolution of the WACCAMAW Tribal Government, Resolution Number: Joint-HH-06-04-05-001, recognizing the sovereignty of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County, Virginia as signed by the Honorable Chief Harold D. Hatcher.

- On June 13, 2005 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribal Heritage Foundation was Incorporated as the Non Profit, 501 ( c ) 3, entity of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe of Southampton County Virginia
- On July 23, 2005 Issue II of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton Virginia, the WASKEHEE, was published depicting Spotswood's Treaty with the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians in February 27, 1713; to include, listing the tribe's vocabulary as recorded by John Wood in 1820. Issue II of the Waskehee was Copywrite with the US Copyright Office on April 23, 2007 – Reg. #: TX 6-595-331..
- On October 14th 2005, the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe's "Elected Officials" along with other tribal members and educators, visited the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC, at the invite of Dr. Dorothy Lippert, Case Officer, Repatriation Programs, and viewed, in a special showing, of Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian "Skeletal Remains" taken from the Hand Site Excavation in Southampton County (44SN22). The skeletal remains "carbon dated," date back to 1580.
- On January 18, 2006 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Offered to the General Assembly of Virginia Senate Joint Resolution (SJ) 152, Title: Extending state recognition to the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe. The SJ 152 was struck by Senator L. Louise Lucas, voice vote, on February 10, 2006, in the Senate Rules Committee without receiving any testimonial from tribal representatives.
- On February 9, 2006, at the recommendation of Senator Thomas Norment, Chairperson of the Senate Rules Committee, the "Tribal Elected Government" of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County Virginia submitted a "Letter of Intent" to the Chairperson and Council members of the Virginia Council on Indians as an official notice of intent to petition the Virginia General Assembly to extend State Recognition to the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe.
- **On July 9, 2006 Chief Walt "Red Hawk" Brown, as Chief of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County Virginia, was the first to appear on the televised documentary "My Hampton Roads," Wavy TV 10, as narrated by Andy Fox. Chief Red Hawk shared the tribes history, televised on site in Southampton County, and the surnames of his family ancestors by way of a televised visit to his family's cemetery and farm; to include, the one room school that he and his ancestors walked two miles to attend, with more than a half million viewers.**
- On July 22, 2006 Issue III of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton County, Virginia, the WASKEHEE, was published capturing the tribe's visit to the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC, on October 14, 2005; wherein, the skeletal remains of the Hand Site Excavation were viewed. The journal also documents the writing of William Byrd and his visit to the tribe's reservation in what is now Southampton County on April 7, 1728. Issue III of the Waskehee was copyright with the US Copyright Office on December 11, 2006 – Reg. #: TX 6-506-719.
- On July 22, 2006 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe published its World Wide Web Site which documents the tribe's Constitution and Bylaws, Ethno historic and current history, Language, Powwow Events, by name tribal 1808 special census, and educational presentations. <http://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org>
- On September 25, 2006 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe conducted a "Public" Peake Belt and Pipe Ceremony by the banks of the Nottoway River on the grounds of the Southampton County Court House, Courtland, Virginia; wherein, elected officials, Board of Supervisors, from five counties (Nottoway, Sussex, Isle of Wight, Surry and Southampton Counties) attended and shared in the tribe's traditional ceremony of passing the Peake Pipe and accepting a Wampum (Ote-ko-a) Belt from Chief Walt "Red Hawk" Brown. All five counties presented Proclamations of Recognition, under their Counties' Seal to the tribe.

- **In February 2007, the National Museum of American Indians (NMAI), in recognition, added the name of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County, Virginia to the “Honor Wall” of the NMAI, Washington DC. The name of the tribe is listed on panel 4.22, Line 20 of the Wall.**
- The tribe’s Six Annual Pow Wow and Gathering took place on July 21st and 22nd 2007 at the Southampton County Fairgrounds, Courtland, Virginia as a celebration of 427 years of documented Ethno-History (1580 to 2007).
- On July 21, 2007 Issue IV of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton County, Virginia, the WASKEHEE, was published as a Jamestown 2007 Special Edition recording Colonial Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood visit to the tribe reservation in 1711 with 1600 armed men inviting the Chief Men to send their sons to the Brafferton. Issue IV also records the first Land Deed of Sale, on November 24, 1735, between Charles Simmons and the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians with actual marks of the tribal Chief Men. Issue IV of the Waskehee was copyright with the US Copyright Office on August 16, 2007-Reg. #: TX 6-820-738.
- On July 26, 2008 Issue V of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton County was published documenting the tribe’s visit to the Library of Virginia to accept an award on behalf Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Queen Edith Turner (Wane’ Roonseraw) 1734-1838. The Journal captures Turner last will and testament; to include a transcribe copy of the 1808 Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian “by name” Special Census.
- **On March 20, 2009, the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County Virginia reclaimed, by purchase, 100 acres of its former 41,000 acre reservation land – formerly the Square Tract. The land will be used to build a combined Tribal Educational Center and Museum, an Interactive “Palisade” Native American Indian Village with “Longhouses” – Cattashowrock Town, a Worship Center and Powwow Grounds.**
- On July 25, 2009 Issue VI of the Journal of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe Southampton County Virginia, the WASKEHEE, was published with a second listing our tribal language as recorded by John Wood in 1820, with copies of letters between Thomas Jefferson and Peter DuPonceau certifying that we are Iroquoian speakers.
- On August 10, 2009, J. Walter D. “Spirit Hawk” Brown, IV, son of Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown, was admitted to Bacone College, Muskogee, Okalahoma, on an American Indian Student of Promise Scholarship – Student ID A000038451. **Bacone College was originally founded in 1880 to educated American Indians; as such, “Spirit Hawk” made history for the tribe in becoming the first recorded Tribal Member, since 1711 (The Brafferton) and 1878 (Hampton Normal School), to attend College at a school originally set aside for the education of American Indians.**
- On November 20 and 21, 2009 the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe entered into a partnership with First Landing Foundation Historical Villages at Cape Henry, Fort Story, Virginia Beach Virginia and the Archeological Society of Virginia, Nansemond Chapter, and conducted a Native History School Day and a Corn Harvest Fall Festival Powwow.
- May 2009 through December 2009 Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown, along with the support of other tribal members and the Archeological Society of Virginia, Nansemond Chapter, gave Native American Ethno Historical Educational Presentations (SOL Specific) to more than 2,500 students from different public school throughout Hampton Roads, Richmond, Southside and Western Virginia; to include sharing the history, Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian and other Prehistoric Artifacts, and the spoken language of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County.
- **From July 2002 through December 2009 Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown, along with other members of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe; to include, the support of the Archeological Society of Virginia, Nansemond Chapter, have addressed more than 500,000 people throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia consisting of students, educators,**

**historical societies, libraries, professional organizations, the general public, and military audiences at different post, bases and installations, (Army, Navy, Air force Marines) by way of onsite classroom presentations, historical lectures, Powwows, television documentaries, sharing the history and language of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Southampton County Virginia.**



Chief Walter D. "*Red Hawk*" Brown, III,  
Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe  
Southampton County, Virginia

Obtained online from: <http://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org/nottoway-history/snap-shot.htm>