The Story of the George Shipper Name

By Helen Vaughan Michael, a descendant



Unnamed Iroquois Chief, Early 18th Century

Internet Archive Image

The Story of George Skipper and Mary Bailey © Helen Vaughan Michael 2015-2023 <u>helenmichael347@yahoo.com</u>



"Hiawatha," 1874 painting by Thomas Eakins Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC

Introduction to My Skipper Narratives

When I began to search for my Skipper roots, I had to begin a study of Native America. Happily, my mother heard eye witness accounts of the Skippers from her grandmother, and I was lucky to have a mother who loved to share her family stories. From information I gleaned from her family's oral history I was able to piece together verifiable historical facts surrounding her Skipper great-grandparents, and the story of the two of them led far, far back into Skipper antiquity. As it turned out, the path through Skipper history went right through historical incidents of Native America.

My mother included the Indian heritage of Silas Skipper, her greatgrandfather--that he had descended from a once notable tribe, notable, at least to us, because it was the family's tribe. Silas Skipper happened to be a descendant of the Cheroenhaka, called *Nottoway* by the invading Englishmen, a tribe that was almost pushed out of existence by the early Virginian colonists of Jamestown. The Cheroenhaka were descendants of the Haudenosaunee, the tribe of the authentic Hiawatha.

This, their story, is a remembrance of nameless ancestors who once walked amongst the Haudenosaunee, *aka Iroquois*, natives of the Five Nations—who became the Six Nations of the colonial era--whose proud names were never written in ink on paper and remain as unknown as if they were written on a sandy shore of the Great Lakes. Yesterday, today, and for all tomorrows their names were, are, and will remain a mystery, except for Hiawatha. Yet, as my people, they are not forgotten.

This Skipper narrative is written to save the recollections of my mother, via those of her grandmother, who must not be forgotten, either. Though they never knew, they longed to know how far back reached the shadow of family memories. Nor were they able to tell how near or far to them stretched the lands of their people's origin. Nonetheless, Mama had her stories to tell, and I wish I had listened more carefully to her version of Skipper history, which, as I now recall it, fits exactly into the cracks left by others.

My mother didn't seem to know that her great-grandfather's greatgrandfather had been a tribal leader or that his tribe was the Cheroenhaka, re-named by the British, the *Nottoway*. Her great-grandfather, Silas Skipper, b.1822, Tennessee, happened to be a descendant of the Cheroenhaka's George Skipper, and his Native Americans were people who could say a lot about not getting their history told. So, since they are kinfolk, we are obligated to listen to their voices, to learn the lessons they learned and left us to live by. My great-grandmother, Rebecca Skipper, daughter of Silas, dutifully told her granddaughter what she knew of her family's legacy, and my mama told me enough bits and pieces of her account that I actually found our tribe. In doing so, I also solved a family history mystery. Mama said her grandmother didn't know how, but somehow, there was an Indian in our family who had something to do with a ship captain—that is, a skipper.

The tribe's far back history, is about nameless ancestors who once walked amongst the *Iroquois* natives of the Six Nations, now documented on authentic pages of history books as the *Iroquois* Confederacy. They lived in towns on the shores of the Great Lakes in their Longhouses where they were governed by democratic rules and Christian principles over a thousand years ago. They called themselves the Haudenosaunee. The French called them the *Iroquois*. I call them my ancestors.

At the time the British colonists found a Cheroenhaka branch of them they were farmers, hunters, and traders in the colony of Virginia. The beginning of I-95 was an Indian trade route started by their moccasined feet.



Longhouses, With Palisade Fencing, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Village Diorama, New York State Museum

MY SKIPPERS IN PAPER AND STONE

Rebecca Skipper 1862, Louisiana Silas Skipper 1826, Tennessee Barnabas Skipper, 1776, North Carolina Barnaby Skipper 1727, Colonial North Carolina/Virginia George Skipper 3rd and Mary Bailey, circa 1700, Colonial Virginia, a tribal chief George Skipper 2nd, circa 1668 pre-invasion, Colonial Virginia George Skipper 1st, circa 1644, the Anglicized name of Unknown Cheroenhaka parents

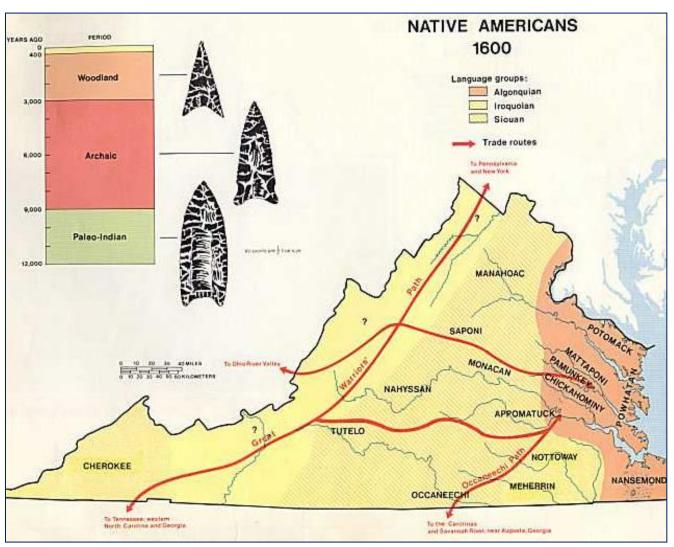
All descend from the Cheroenhaka of pre-Columbia / pre-Colonial America, of the



Haudenosaunee, originating from the Iroquois / Sioux language tribe of the Great Lakes area. Now, their story begins here, at this I-95 marker in southern Virginia. . .

Helen Vaughan Michael

Virginia Welcome Center Interstate 95-N Mile Marker 0, Skippers, VA 23879



Early Native American Trade Routes

1988 Map Published In <u>The Virginia Atlas</u> Showing The Location Of Native American Tribes In 1600, Produced at Radford University

At the time the British colonists found a Cheroenhaka branch of them they were farmers, hunters, and traders in the colony of Virginia. The beginning of I-95 was an Indian trade route started by their moccasined feet. All descend from the Cheroenhaka of pre-Columbia / pre-Colonial America, of the Haudenosaunee, originating from the Iroquois / Sioux language tribe of the Great Lakes area. Now, their story begins here, at an I-95 marker in southern Virginia...

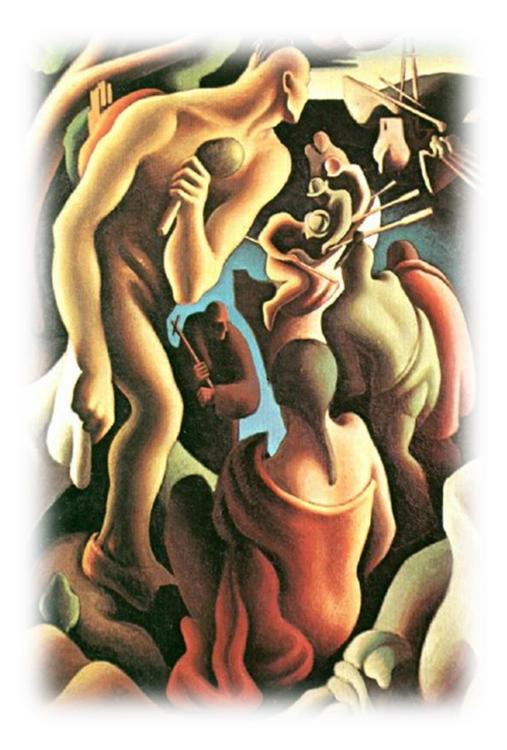
THREE GEORGE SKIPPERS AND THE NOTTOWAY

To tell the story of George Skipper is to tell the story of a *Nottoway* Indian Tribe. It is a story which begins with their names—names that link, but, unfortunately, do not reveal complete identities. The gossamer threads of who they were are loosely woven together in Colonial America's genesis. The mystifying tapestry left hanging in Virginia and the Carolinas is quilted with their names, pictographs, maps, deeds, laws, swamps, battles, and foreign and local governments. Regrettably, clues to unraveling the enigma of individual identities can best be found in this patchwork of monikers. After foreign colonization, *Nottoway* became an Anglicized name for the Cheroenhaka, an ancient people who branched out from the Haudenosaunee, *aka Iroquois*, Nations of the Great Lakes area; George Skipper was the Anglicized name of an 18th century Chieftain of the *Nottoway*, a name handed down from his 17th century forefathers, following the British takeover. Their tribal grounds stretched over pre-colonial Virginia woodlands and into the Carolina District lowlands.

When the British colonists settled Jamestown in 1607 in the Tidewater Region, the Cheroenhaka were already there as longtime residents just inland from the Virginia coast. The intruders discovered the Cheroenhaka in their longhouse towns and villages and renamed the tribe and tribal leaders early on.

In 1650, the exploring party of Edward Bland of Virginia hired a *Nottoway* Indian guide named Oyeocker. The expedition was searching specifically for English people who were rumored to be living among the Tuscarora natives, white people who were survivors from Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony of 1587. Charles II granted a commission for the exploration in the hope that the mystery of earlier English colonization that had gone awry might finally be solved. Other lost explorations had involved Portuguese, Spanish and French men who had also gotten lost.

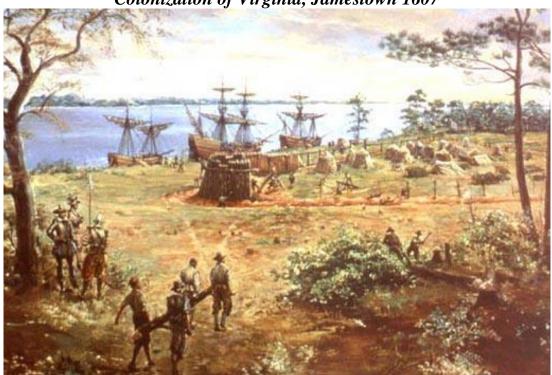
Thus, by 1607, Jamestown, natives of the so-called New World had already encountered other people from across the great salt sea. Just forty years later, the interior barely belonged to the Indians at the time Edward Bland came face to face with them. After that, not twenty years later, the British recorded evidence of George Skipper's existence there. It was 1668, they wrote, and his patent was on land which would one day be surveyed as a border between Southampton, Virginia and Northampton, North Carolina—barely a stone's throw from the Indian town of Skippers, a community that's still standing on Interstate 95 in 2023.



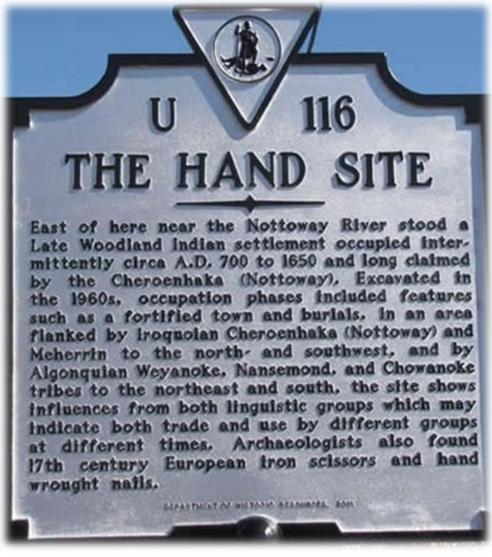
American Discovery Viewed by Native Americans Painting by Thomas Hart Benton (1922) Salem, Peabody Essex Museum. Public Domain Other white people the natives encountered were from a Portuguese slave ship, which included human survivors from Africa, who washed up on the Tidewater Coast. Survivors of that shipwreck found refuge with inland tribes such as the Cheroenhaka. Eventual colonists were treated to stories of these ill-fated explorers-stories that reached the American wilderness as far west as Tennessee which included the European word, "Por-tu-geese."

These earlier foreigners, Africans and Portuguese, evidently had been more gracious visitors than the British who showed up in 1607. Their different cultures may have been peacefully mixing and mingling long before Jamestown. Later, in 1619 the first documented Africans arrived in Jamestown; they sailed in aboard a Portuguese slave ship that the British Navy had captured and brought to the Jamestown region.

When the Englishmen moved in, they took over. Before the Cheroenhaka knew it they were citizens of a fledgling British Empire, subjects of its crowned heads and subjected to the laws of the royal family. They were subjected to his or her Majesty's culture too. The Cheroenhaka were renamed the *Nottoway* and one of their men took up the name, or was assigned the name, George Skipper. Documents, which a later Skipper and his companions signed in the 18th century show that the names of the Natives were commonly Anglicized in this way during the decline of their culture.



Colonization of Virginia, Jamestown 1607



In spite of a well recorded, very prominent Cheroenhakan presence for hundreds of years, the British were soon in charge of their woodlands, and the Cheroenhaka were forced to say goodbye to their way of life. After 1650 the *Nottoway* became accustomed to the colonists and adopted some British ways and adapted to others. Some learned the English language, wore European clothing, and learned the usefulness of domesticated animals. Though no one in their villages and towns chose log housing over their cherished Longhouses, after much coercion, some began practicing the Anglican religion. The British renamed places. They renamed individuals. Or, like freed slaves at the end of the Civil War, the natives gave themselves Anglicized names; at some time, in some fashion, "George Skipper" was assigned to a *Nottoway* male.

Unlike other Native Americans who rejected the idea of owning the land as being as impossible as owning the air in the sky or the waters of a river or the sea, after more than a hundred years, they took up the English concept of property ownership. It took more than a century, but the community Longhouse was eventually replaced by the idea of a log cabin for each individual family. Perhaps because of their adaptation of the right to own property, their descendants would have some success in keeping their real estate and



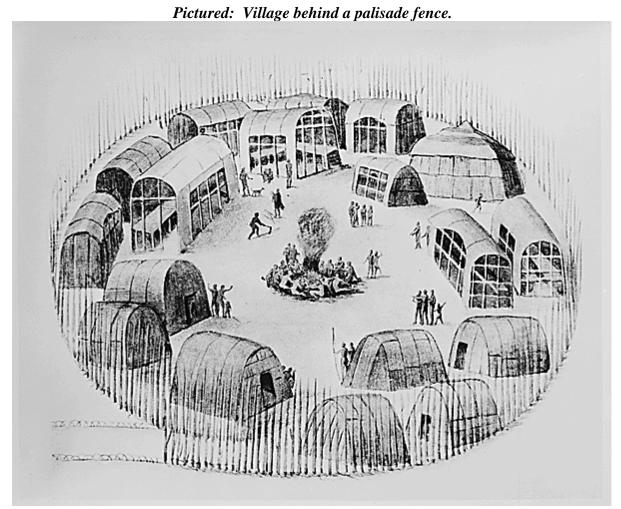
escape such horrors as the Trail of Tears. *PICTURED: Village Diorama. Long* houses with palisade fence, characteristic of the building custom of the Cheroenhaka's Haudenosaunee ancestors, renamed by the French—Iroquois.

Following the loss of their ancient culture, in the future, Indians--George Skipper and other Chieftains--would sign their native symbols, along with their acquired English names, on a number of subsequent deeds to all the lands used in common by the Cheroenhaka.

Not a single English George Skipper has been found amongst the earliest Virginian colonists, so perhaps this *Nottoway* native, adapting to the newcomers, chose the moniker referring to a ship captain to go by. At least one of his comrade chieftains chose, or was called, "Capt." Other titles of rank they used were: King, Scolar, and Old Sam. One Chief's Indian name, Cockerowse, is said to be a title for "one who is brave." Among George Skipper descendants there is a hint in the lore of at least one family that tells of an Indian who was a ship captain, that is, a skipper.

Chiefs certainly were not immune to colonial name-calling. The Stand Alone Treaty of 1713 was signed between Colonial Lieutenant Governor Spotswood and the *Nottoway*'s Chief Ouracoorass Teerheer, who the Colonials called, William Edmund. Additionally, in the area that would become Bertie County, North Carolina, the Tuscarora Chief Blount of 1711, adopted the surname of the white Blount family living adjacent to his Tuscarora village. The Tuscarora with their similar dialect of the Sioux language, like their *Nottoway* cousins, lived in this vicinity long before white men settled there.

A deed transaction in 1748 mentions a George Skipper who owned the land eighty years earlier. Lying on the south side of Potecasi, the acreage was "part of a patent to GEORGE SKIPPER, 1 May 1668." Written long before a border was set between the two colonies of Virginia and North Carolina, the deed's description of its "houses, orchards, gardens, and fences" make the place sound like it was located in an English countryside, without noting that the Natives were more capable of growing lovely gardens and bountiful orchards than the white newcomers. The George Skipper who first tended the place was a well-adapted native with an adopted name. No 17th century European man named George Skipper has shown up yet, nor will he. This man with a green thumb was able to grow gardens and orchards and even able to put a fence around all of it, because that's what the Cheroenhaka did as well, or better, than the colonists.



This item documents the time period of 1585–1786. Life in United States file, National Archives. Original Caption: "The Towne of Pomeioc, North Carolina"

Native American Village of Pomeiooc

Hand-colored version of Theodor de Bry's engraving of the American Indian town of Pomeiooc. De Bry's engraving, ''The Towne of Pomeiooc,'' was originally published as an illustration in Thomas Hariot's 1588 book, <u>A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land</u> of Virginia. In the center of the image stands Pomeiooc, which consists of several Longhouses surrounded by a circular palisade. Outside the palisade in the upper left corner is a field of corn and an orchard. Theodor de Bry was a Flemish-born engraver. . . An unidentified artist applied color to de Bry's engraving. NCpedia



Abstract of Deeds; Northampton County, North Carolina; Public Registry; Deed Book One and Deed Book Two; 1741 to 1759, pg. 358:

EDWARD GOODSON of Northampton Co. to JAMES TURNER of Isle of Wight Co., Va. 23 Nov. 1748 7 pounds Va. money 400 acres more or less on the south side of Potacasa swamp, joining the mouth of the Spring branch and the swamp, part of a patent to GEORGE SKIPPER 1 May, 1668, all houses, orchards, gardens, fences, etc. Wit: JOHN SIMPSON, NICHOLAS MONGER Reg. Northampton Co. Nov. Ct. 1748 J. Edwards, C. Ct.

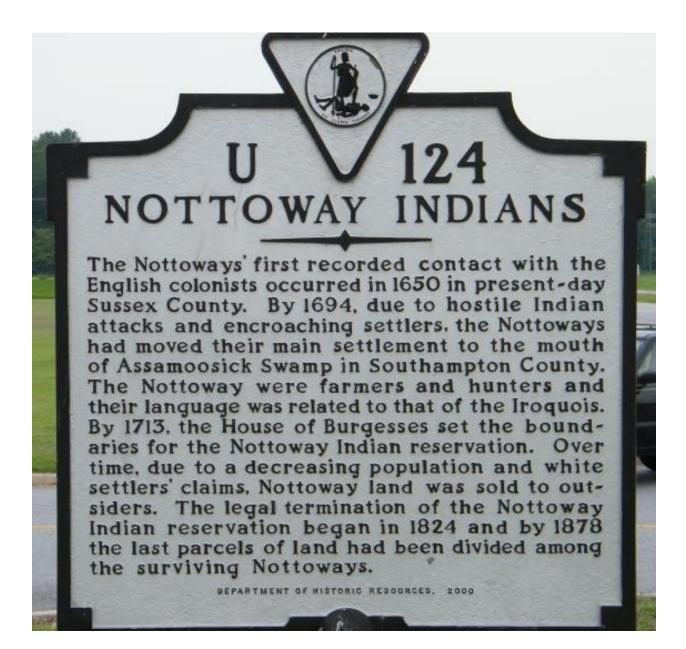
There simply is no way to tell an early English George Skipper, whose existence can't be found, from a *Nottoway* George Skipper, who is all over the pages of southern colonial history. Nor can the birthdays of the early *Nottoway* Skippers be precisely calculated, making it impossible to know how many males, so named, and their sons were born. The only thing for certain about him, or them, is that later in the 18th century a name within a stack of real estate deals made in Virginia said there was a man named George Skipper, and that he was a *Nottoway* Indian Chief.

Based on Virginia's history, its geography and maps, and the names of several of its colonists three Cheroenhaka/Nottoway George Skippers are recognizable. Based on records and accounts in which the name of George Skipper is mentioned, the information can be plotted into three Native American George Skipper narratives. There may have been more but, within reason, there could not have been fewer. So, using the name and places found in chronological data attached to a Native American George Skipper, birth years are improvised for the three Skippers whose existence is certain.

Assuming that the man who once owned the lovely Northampton, North Carolina property in 1668 was the ancestor of some future George Skipper, or Skippers, who put a name and *Nottoway* symbol on paper during the next century, the birth of the first Skipper could be calculated as 1644, probably somewhere in the Nottoway and Nansemond River Basin, which the English labeled, the Isle of Wight, Virginia. Theoretically he was born to a pre-Colonial *Nottoway* couple, grew up, became a landowner, married and had a son, theoretically, in 1668. The 1668 George Skipper would then be old enough to marry and have a son around the turn of the century whose birth would conveniently fit the future exploits of someone they named a third George Skipper.

From behind palisade fences and under the trees in their orchards and in the garden rows of their elders—each of the George Skippers in their tribes' Longhouses in Isle of Wight, Virginia started out as a Cheroenhaka Indian boy. In 1677 the *Nottoway* Tribe signed a critical treaty, just another in a long line of settlements detrimental to the cause of the natives. In desperate response to white encroachment and conflict with other tribes, by the 1690's their people were moving out and those who stayed behind got squeezed into the Nottoway River basin. There, they gathered into what was then, Isle of Wight—in fifty years the area would become Southampton, Virginia and Northampton, North Carolina.

Virginia Historical Marker Department of Historic Resources, 2009

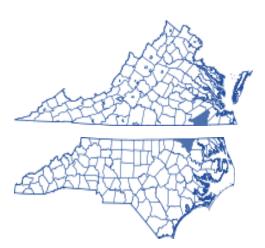




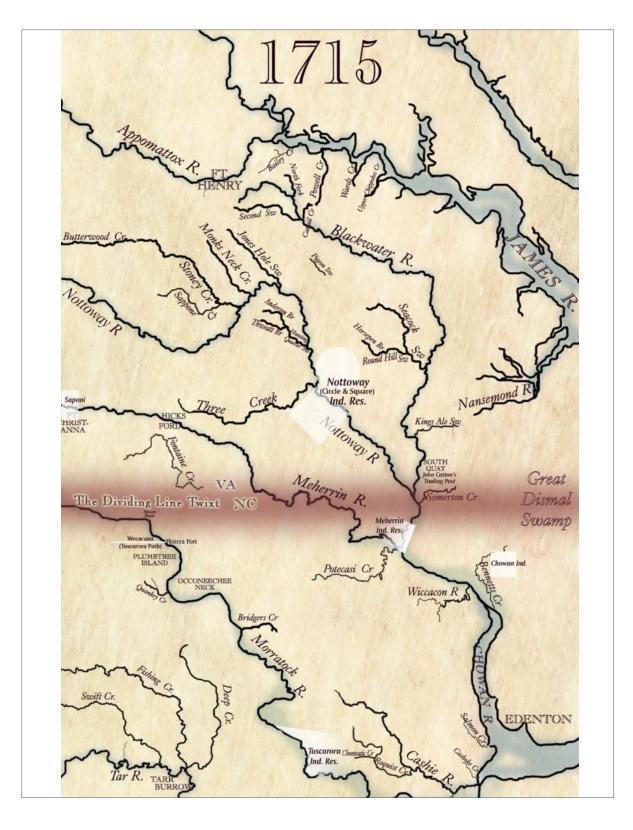
1700, A *NOTTOWAY* FAMILY ALONG THE VIRGINIA-CAROLINA BORDER

By the mid-nineties a second George Skipper would have become a man, and as such, George 2nd could have become a father. Sometime between 1690 and 1700 the calculated birth of a third George Skipper took place. In addition, junior's future wife, Mary Bailey, was also born in the *Nottoway* camp. Mary, future records would show, was from the family of another, much older *Nottoway* Chieftain--Watt Bailey.

Future records that would one day reveal the Anglo names and *Nottoway* symbols of these two chiefs had their beginning in 1705. That year, while the third George and his friend Mary were still children playing at Indian games, the Virginia House of Burgesses granted two tracts of land to the tribes of their *Nottoway* fathers. The two tracts, called the Circle and Square Tracts took up 41,000 acres of Reservation Land in what was then Isle of Wight County–later, Southampton. Southampton was created from Isle of Wight in 1749 and was adjacent to Northampton in the Carolina District.



Top, Left, 2022 Map, Southampton, VA Bottom Left, 2022 Map, Northampton, NC



The Circle and Square Nottoway Reservation Map

In 1706 an Act for Preventing of Misunderstandings between the Tributary Indians and other of His Majesty's Subjects was passed for "Free and open trade." The Act was enacted to allow the *Nottoway* Reservation to be sold. From the rules laid down during the brief reign of Queen Ann to the end of the colonial rule of mad King George III, the colonists laid down the law and laws for the *Nottoway* at the convenience of a horde of land hungry British investors and invaders.

An excerpt from a deed signed by Skipper and Bailey written in 1749 pronounces the success of the white man's 1706 purpose:

... Lands of the Purchasor or Purchasors, his or their Heirs or assigns, shall forever hold and enjoy the same free and discharged from all Claims of the said Nottoway Nation and their Posterity by any thing in an Act of Assembly made in the fourth Year of the Reign of the late Queen Anne intitled an Act for Preventing of Misunderstandings between the Tributary Indians and other of His Majesty's Subjects of this Colony & Dominion and for a free and open Trade with all Indians Now This Indenture Witnessth that the said Sam, Jack Will, Watt Bailey, John Turner, George Skipper, and Frank, Chief Men of the Nottoway Indian Nation Jan 1st, 1749. p49; Excerpt, Transcription by Helen Vaughan Michael.

This Chief George Skipper, as a teenager, along with Mary Bailey, would see his culture dissolve to the point that only a puddle of their identity, here and there, was left for whites to soak up into Anglican history. As noted earlier, not even their Nottoway names were safe. In 1713 even the name of their Chief, Ouracoorass Teerheer—which he used to autograph the Stand Alone Treaty—was pronounced, William Edmund. Other treaties of the era dictated religious beliefs and also decreed where, and how, Indians could live. One decree declared who Indian men could, or could not, marry. White bureaucrats and real estate agents were appointed as Trustees and became profiteering overseers to their land. Again in 1713, the Colonial Council at Williamsburg, in an effort to better coerce the natives into Christianity, ordered other tribes to be incorporated with the Nottoway and forced many of their sons to attend Christian schools. Moreover, white people had reduced their people to poverty and steered them into an addiction to rum, and shippers and merchantsthough prohibited by British law--shamelessly profited from the inevitable alcoholism of the natives.

It is important to note that the 1700 Baileys and Skippers were part of the later leadership of the *Nottoway*, and some of their exploits left a few tracks from the footfall of the waning clan. Several decades into the 18th century, both George Skipper and Watt Bailey signed their names as Chief Men of the Nottoway. Standing hapless in an onslaught of land grabbing white settlers, the despairing leaders began selling what was left of their Circle and Square Tracts. The signatures of both men began to appear on real estate deals in 1749, and Skipper's appears until 1762.

...that the Chief Men of the Nottoway Indians are **impowered to make** Sale of all or any Part of a certain circular Tract of Land of __Six Miles Diameter Lying and being on the North side of Nottoway River in the County of Isle of Wight (which part of the said county of Isle of Wight is since called Southampton)...

... that the said Sam, Jack Will, **Watt Bailey**, John Turner, **George** Skipper, and Frank, Chief Men of the Nottoway Indian Nation, by and with the consent of the surviving Trustees ...

... have set their hands & affixed their Seals

Signed deald & Delivered Samo mark

Sam C his mark Ls Watt his mark t Bailey Ls John his mark O Turner Ls George his m Skipper Ls Jack his mark ψ Will Ls

How Chief Watt Bailey Got his Name

The relationship of the Nottoway to non-Indian planters, such as William Hines and the Quaker Walter Bailey must have conferred an insider-status, as both men purchased Circle Tract lands and Nottoway headmen took their names as honorifics when signing mid eighteenthcentury deeds (DB5:455; DB8:17, Isle of Wight, VA). Marks and signatures of Nottoway leaders suggest the creation of English-style names – some names adopted whole cloth as honorifics, others as hybridized descriptors, and some by descent. The headmen...are listed on Nottoway documents between 1715 and 1749.

FROM: Continuity Within Change: Virginia Indians National Register Project, Under Represented Communities Grant Program –Historic Preservation Fund P15AP00020, "The Millie Woodson-Turner Nottoway Reservation Allotment and Farmstead, 2017," Buck Woodard, Ph.D. and Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Ph.D. College of William & Mary Department of Anthropology, Williamsburg, Virginia



Image of Indian couple from a 1900's era postcard.

YOUNG GEORGE AND MARY

A young George Skipper, presumably born around the turn of the century, married a Mary Bailey about twenty to twenty-five years later. The course of the couple's true love did not run smooth. Mary, as either the daughter or sister of Watt Bailey, had been taken from her people by a planter, George Allen, to serve as an "indentured servant." With Watt's kin enslaved, young George went after her. George was, after all, young and strong, and Mary was a Cheroenhaka Indian. He ran away with Mary in 1719, and he took care of her, kept her safe, and made her happy until mid-1723. That year George found himself in the white man's jail, awaiting trial for rescuing her.

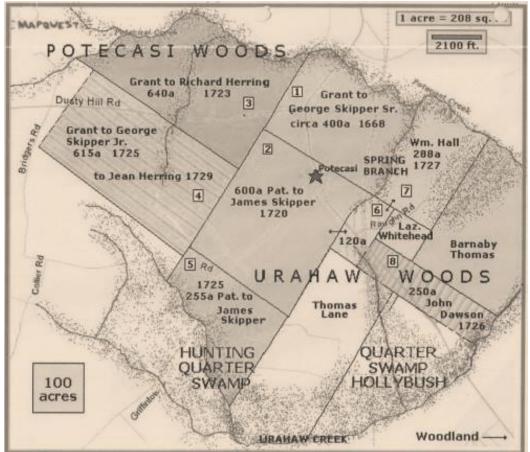
In 1723 he got sued in Chowan County in the Carolina district by George Allen for running away with the girl. The court record says he absconded with Mary Bailey on December 17, 1719 and "harbored and entertained her" until August 30, 1722. The trial began in July, 1723 with George in jail. Allen sued for £493 and won a settlement of £10. The future Indian chief was sentenced to ten days, a fine of £5, and court costs, but he came away with the girl.

Taking depositions in the suit, two justices of the peace were trustees, overseers of *Nottoway* lands, and young George would run into them again: Thomas Cock and John Simmons—or their opportunistic heirs and kin-down the line, bought into the sweetheart real estate deals located in the Circle and Square Tracts. In 1757 the Indians deeded John Browne three hundred and seventy acres in the midst of earlier buys made by three members of the Simmons family, and Chief George Skipper signed it:

Now This Indenture Witnessth that the said Sam, Jack Will, Watt Bailey, John Turner, George Skipper, and Frank, Chief Men of the Nottoway Indian Nation. . . with the consent of the surviving Trustees . . . in consideration of the sum of one hundred Pounds ten shillings . . . have sold, unto the said John Browne three hundred and seventy Acres parcel of the said Circular Tract of Land . . . to wit, Beginning at a white Oak by the Long Branch then . . . to a Lightwood Post in John Simmons land . . . then . . . to a Pine at Corner of William Simmons's Land thence . . . to a Pine in Charles Simmons's Line thence . . . back to the Long Branch. . .

After the trial and troubles with the white man's law were over, George and Mary Bailey Skipper remained in or around Chowan County for at least the next ten years. Though no birth records exist, it can be calculated that a future George, Samuel, Benjamin, and Barnaby Skipper are four of their descendants. Since females are rarely mentioned during this time, it can't even be guessed whether or not the brothers had any sisters, but as a general rule Indians did not have large families the way their European conquerors did, so four boys would have made up a large Indian family. In the case of their son Barnaby, a census in 1787 puts his birth at 1727, thus, a 1720's marriage of George and Mary Bailey could have easily produced the next George Skipper, and three other sons during the twenties and the thirties. When William Byrd visited the *Nottoway* Indian Tribe on their reservation in 1728, he noted in his diary that the *Nottoway* were the only tribe with significant numbers still living in Virginia. Poverty, drink, disease, and old age had taken a toll. The ones holding lands in North Carolina may have been more fortunate. One such landholder may have been the first of the Skipper dynasty—old George, born in 1644, or thereabouts. In 1729 he and his wife Mary bought one hundred and twenty acres of Bertie County, North Carolina from William Hall for £45, 5 shillings:

Colonial Bertie County NC Deed Books A - H 1720 - 1757 George Skipper Sr. & wife Mary to Wm. Hall, 1/11/1728: £45, 5 shillings for 120a on N side of Hollybush or Porter Swamp **adjoining Barnaby Thomas**. Wit: Wm. Johnson, David Herring, May court 1729, Edward Mashborne, clerk of court.



Map of Skipper Land Grants and Patents, Colonial North Carolina

A Herring is said to be the husband of Jean, said to be a sister of a

George Skipper, and perhaps James Skipper is their brother. Neighbor, Barnaby Thomas was someone of importance to this family because in 1727 George 3rd and Mary Bailey Skipper named their new son, Barnaby.

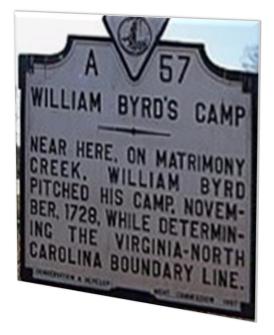
Interestingly, back in 1668 when a George Skipper obtained a land grant in North Carolina, it is said he took his tribe there and founded a Native American Cooperative. This sounds logical, because Cheroenhaka communities were socialistic communes, and since it is in the Potecasi area, swampy and seemingly unworthy of British enterprise, it could well be within Indian territory. Starting in 1720, two men, who were guite possibly his sons with families of their own, began a life in this colonial Bertie County lowland. George Skipper Jr, George 2nd in this text, was granted six hundred and fifteen acres in 1725 about the time his son, George 3rd and Mary Bailey would be starting up their family. James Skipper who might be junior's brother, received two patents-one in 1720 and another in 1725, and he may also be a family man. Chronologically, in 1728 it was their eighty-four-year-old father who bought William Hall's one hundred and twenty acres north of Holly Bush Swamp, adjoining the acreage of Barnaby Thomas, which may have ended up belonging to George 3rd, the future chief, and his family.

Chowan and Bertie are adjoining North Carolina counties, and theoretically, the family that George Skipper 3rd and Mary Bailey raised in this area included Samuel, Benjamin, Barnaby, and yet another George Skipper. It was during this time that Barnaby Thomas lent his name to the Skipper tribe, inaugurating the Barnaby Skipper line. In addition to the name of Barnaby appearing in Skipper homes in the near future, a Needham family mentioned in the 1719 will of a Margaret Bayley, the widow of a North Carolina planter, Quaker Walter Bailey, will link future members of Barnaby Skipper's family back to the Baileys.

It's possible that declining health in the first George Skipper Sr., theoretically born 1644, led him to will this long-held land to his sons after 1728. Among descendants, 1729 is suggested as the year of his death.

Along the south border of the Virginian colony a *Nottoway* tribe carried on, and, one way or another, a future authentic Chieftain named George Skipper lived in their midst. In 1728 William Byrd visited the town of the *Nottoway* tribe on their Circle and Square Reservation. He described the everyday life of the men and women, living in long houses, in his diary. His admiration of their physical appearance--for their colorful and beaded dress, decorative hair styles, and rhythmic dancing—was obvious but overshadowed by his condescending thoughts toward their women: The dark skinned women, he wrote, would make fine wives for the English planters who didn't need to worry about the "sad" color of their skin, because, according to him, it would bleach out in two generations.

Byrd was a useful geographer, however, and in November of 1728, he mapped out the line that would determine the Virginia-North Carolina border. An historical marker is posted on the spot of his camp. By 1730 the handsome *Nottoway* Skippers had worn down a trading trail between the two colonies.





1908 Photo By Roland Reed. Haudenosaunee/Iroquois type dress and decorative baskets.

According to Byrd the tribe plied their wares with skill,

Finely woven mats made of cattails or tule reed were also sold to planters, as were "Baskets of their own making" "of a very fine sort of Bullrushes, and sometimes of Silk-grass, which they work with the figures of Beasts, Birds, Fishes" or dyed in "several sorts of Figures, in imitation of Gorges, Crosses, Stars, or any other odd kind of Figure that their imagination suggests" (Byrd 1967:122; Brickell 1737:338, 349).

FROM: Continuity Within Change: Virginia Indians National Register Project, Under Represented Communities Grant Program –Historic Preservation Fund P15AP00020, "The Millie Woodson-Turner *Nottoway* Reservation Allotment and Farmstead, 2017," Buck Woodard, Ph.D. and Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Ph.D. <u>College of William & Mary</u> <u>Department of Anthropology, Williamsburg, Virginia</u>

The sad apocalypse of these beautiful, noble, mis-labeled people was regulated genocide that had its genesis August 7th, 1735 during a Session of the General Assembly held at Williamsburg. Alcoholism, disease, and pressure from Virginia's invading white hoards had butchered *Nottoway* tribal life. Prodded by Trustees who lined up like vultures over a dying victim, members of the Virginia Legislature seized the opportunity to walk off with the besieged acreage of the natives and passed an act to allow the Nottoway to sell land in Southampton County, "To support themselves," wrote the lawyers. To help the Trustees keep their fists tightly, and legally, closed around the deeds, once the Chiefs had signed them, *Nottoway* Indian Interpreters, Henry Briggs and Thomas Wynn, were dismissed by the same Act. On the same day the interpreters were discharged, the transfer of massive tracts of land began. For the next guarter of a century, the trustees, their families, their friends, and their neighbors kept grabbing and snatching until both Circle and Square Tracts of Land were held almost exclusively in their white hands. It must have been with unbearable sorrow that George Skipper's hand signed many of these deeds.

King Edmonds, William Hines, Sam Cockerowse, James Frank, Tom Cockerowse, Wainoak, Robbin, Jr., Will Cherrino, Peter, Ned, and Scholar were some of the first Chief Men of the *Nottoway* Nation to sign the 1735 document. They sold twenty-three parcels of land—almost seven thousand acres--from the Circular Tract and earned £396, 6 shillings. George Skipper and Watt Bailey were not yet among them, but the two of them were there in 1749 when the sale of the Circular Tract continued, and Chief George Skipper 3rd was signing papers till 1762. As their homes disappeared, *Nottoway* refugees, along with other tribes, began searching for new stomping grounds further and farther south in the Carolinas. Chief George Skipper's father was among the earliest stompers. In the early part of the 1740's George Skipper 2nd moved out of Potecasi, Northampton County, North Carolina and took up a patent for two hundred acres of land in Johnston County, North Carolina. He traveled all the way to the banks of the Neuse River to start up another Cheroenhaka neighborhood.

Potecasi, Northampton Co., NC Deeds [DB1, P20] George Skipper received a patent for 200 acres on the north side of the Neuse River joining the Mouth of a Branch, the fork of a branch, and the river on 21 Mar 1742/43, proved in Johnston County between 1 November 1746 and April 1750 for sale.



From Johnston County, the old man and the Skippers with him would be able to canoe down the Neuse River to trade with the white colonists in Brunswick, Onslow, and Horry on the seacoast. Some of them may have stayed.



Along much of its length, the Neuse River is characterized by loose, sandy banks, muddy water year-round, and a dense tree canopy overhead. **Wikipedia**

According to the Woodard-Moretti-Langholtz study from the College of William & Mary, *Nottoway* women produced ceramics during this period which the colonials bought. The study further concluded that *Nottoway* land sales happened alongside the problems the fur trade and the expanding colonial frontier caused. The study concluded that the loss of territory and, . . . an increase in demand for manufactured goods, resulted in a "viscous cycle" of dependency and debt with James River traders (Binford 1967:163-168; Rountree 1987:198; Woodard 2013:45-48). Equally, competition for land use and trade resources created factionalism among Iroquoians:

"...the Tuskaruroe Indians (being incouraged thereto) do often come in the upper partes of the Countrey, about Appamattox, amongst the English, who furnish them with Gunns and Powder & shott, which enables them to hunt upon and burn up all the their [Nottoway] grounds, whereby their game is destroyed and their hunting spoyled. That the English trust the Tuskaruroes in trade with Rum & other goods which they bring out amongst the Nottowayes, and sometimes set into Play [gambling], and lose all or great parte of those goods, and [the Tuskaruroe] not being able to make satisfaction to the English, they tell them the Nottways take their goods from them, which occasions Differences and dissatisfaccons between the English and the Nottoways" (Palmer 1875:65) The sale of uninhabited lands allowed for the settling of trade deficits and reopening of exchange with local merchants and traders who kept those debts. The Nottoway complained that they were often engaged by "ill disposed and dishonest people" who plied them with alcohol and took "great advantages of them, by first getting them in debt, and then taking their skins, money, cloaths, and ammunition; by which means they defeat the just trader from getting paid, for furnishing them with the necessaries of life" (Hennings V:273). At other times the Nottoway feigned that they were decrepit and unable to maintain themselves without the land sales,

"...reduced by warrs sickness and other casualties, to a small number and among those that remain many are old and unable to labour or hunt...whereas they have petitioned this general assembly to be enabled to sell the first mentioned tract in small parcels, for the payment of their debts, and the better support and maintenance of them and their posterity" (Hennings IV:459).

FROM: Continuity Within Change, College of William & Mary Department of Anthropology, Williamsburg, Virginia

Sadly, competition for land use and trade resources were not the only method white men used to create factionalism among Iroquoians.

Before their exodus from colonial Virginia, the *Nottoway* were seen as a peaceful tribe. It has been said that they adapted to Anglicization and colonization better than other tribes. While their physical demise and that of the other natives was caused coincidentally by the diseases of the whites and by their struggle with alcoholism, from the beginning the colonists stated their hopes of getting rid of the natives. Politically, a few individual *Nottoway* were admired, such as George Skipper, and their tribe was generally known to be friendly to white people--and likeable, but the 1730's remained an unstable time for other Virginia tribes such as their Tuscarora cousins:

December 31 - January 7, 1736 Williamsburg Gazette

By a Letter from Col. James Mikin, in North-Carolina, dated at Roanoak, December the 10th, we have the following Account, That he received a Letter from Mr. Thomas Brown, of the Cutaboes, the chief Trader there, informing him. That on the 9th of October last, Three Indians came to the House of one William Syms, on Pine tree Creek, and (in his Absence) killed his Wife, another Woman, Three Children, and a Negro Man; and then set Fire to the House, Tis suppos'd they carried a White Girl away with them alive, who liv'd at the House, but can't be found. They were followed the next Morning by Five White Men, upon the Track, who found they had stopp'd in the Night, near a Place called Mars-Bluff, on Pedee River, where they had shared the Plunder, and left the bloody Cloaths of the murdered People. The Indians bent their Way Northward, which makes it believ'd they were Tuskaroroes. Mr. Brown wrote the above Account to Col. Millikin, at the Request of the Governor of South-Carolina, desiring him to use his Endeavours to apprehend these horrid Murderers.

Immediately the Commonwealth of Virginia placed a bounty, dead or alive, on the Tuscarora, an act that was like hanging red meat in front of a pack of starving dogs. Indians, barely existing in the calamity into which the colonists had forced them, turned mercenary:

October 15-22, 1736 Williamsburg Gazette

Charlestown, South-Carolina, July 3. - About 6 Weeks ago, 14 of the Cutaboes having been inform'd of ,the Praemium to be given by this Government for bringing Tuscarora Indians dead or alive, went out in Quest of them, and meeting a Party of 100 Men, they laid down in a Swamp to let them pass by, and seeing Three of that Party following at a Distance, they fired upon them, killed Two on the Spot, and wounded the Third. The Noise of the Guns alarming the others, they went to surround the Place, suspecting Enemies, but the Cutaboes having scalp'd the two Men they had kill'd, escap'd, and came to Town on Tuesday last with the rest of their Party, 37 in Number.

Similar atrocities committed by the natives on whites and each other were written up in the Williamsburg paper as they occurred; meanwhile, during the next twenty-five years the British invaders attempted to mitigate their crimes by writing them up as legal acts in legal documents. *The Gazette* most likely did not report on any of them. The land grabbing that began in 1735 was criminal, but George Skipper's signature and *Nottoway* symbol did not appear on any of the deeds until fourteen years later, when it was still criminal. January 1st 1749—the day the land rush extravaganza on the *Nottoway's* Circle and Square Reservation began all over again, George Skipper 3rd signed the tribe's land over to the invading whites.

During the mid-eighteenth century the individual Indian image of George Skipper 3rd is more attainable than that of the George Skippers who came before, because this George Skipper was a certified Indian.

Beginning in 1749 George Skipper 3rd signed his name to many important documents that required a *Nottoway* Indian Chief's signature. His hand made it even more certain that he was an Indian when he attached an Indian symbol to his Anglicized name. Even more convincing is that his fellow Chieftains, or their descendants, who stayed in Southampton, Virginia, continued to be listed as Indians into the nineteenth century. The Skippers had left Southampton, and did not appear on the census their trustees took in1808, but the names of some, linked to the *Nottoway* Skipper chieftain, still carried on in the place of their birth.

The Census of 1808

The "census" taken in 1808 was a report from the white trustees of the reservation to the Governor of Virginia, William H. Cabell. The scanty piece of Virginia occupied by the Tribe was then only about 144 acres, but it was professed to be all high ground—not swampy. "There is no land worked without authority from us that we know of," claimed the Trustees, one of whom was Samuel Blunt, whose family name graced a local swamp mentioned in the papers signed by George Skipper. The other two Trustees were Henry and William Blow, also linked to the *Nottoway* papers. The census report claimed, "The greater part is commonly planted with corn, which is never well cultivated."

So, under the *maintenance* of white people these former botanists of their own corn fields—which were sacred to them—seemingly could no longer get a stalk to grow.

The names of the *Nottoway* still lingering in Southampton are Turner, Scholar, and Step. Their people were under the rule of the trustees who, for a fee, gave them permission to farm, paid them an allowance, and claimed to "Maintain" them and their families. The names of their Indian fathers were once written on the documents alongside the name of George Skipper. Information from the 1808 census tells a sad story of the termination of his tribe:

Littleton Scholar, the census says, occupies 12 acres, and he is 51 years old. He tills the farm a small part of his time, but is mostly idle. **There is no Indian in his family but himself**, his wife being a white woman.

Tom Turner is on 18 acres, and there is, no Indian in his

family but himself, his wife being a mulatto. Tom Turner is 36 years old. Tillage when he works; his employment at present unknown as he has left his farm in the possession of a mulatto woman who has been kept by him as a wife; the greater part of his time has been generally spent in drunkenness and the destruction of what little crop he has made.

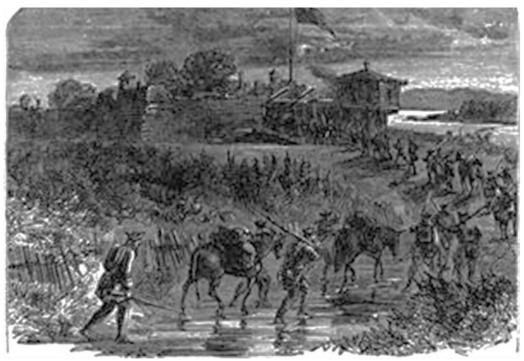
Edy Turner (she had 2 Negroes hired for her last year by the Trustees, and 2 hired for her this year by her husband), Edy Turner, 54 years old. Her employments are knitting, sewing, and what is usual in common housewifery. Her family consists of herself, Polly Woodson whose allowances are paid to her for the maintenance of the said Polly and John. Nancy Turner and her son Henry Turner compose the Indian part of her family, she receives the allowance made to her for his maintenance. Nancy Turner 15 acres, Henry Turner, 16 years old. Employed by his mother in crop making. Nancy Turner, 34 years old. Knitting, sewing, weaving, etc. page 4. The other three acres is part of a plantation occupied by Nancy Turner and is worked by her desire and permission by a free negro. NOTE: Edie Turner would provide former President Thomas Jefferson with the Cheroenhaka Indian vocabulary in1820. The words were those of a people he had known only as Nottoway.

Betsy Step 2 acres, Betsy Step (and her son Tom when at home) compose her family. Tom Step, 18 years old. Sometimes hires himself out as a day labourer, but mostly idle. Betsy Step, 36 years old. Spinning, generally.

There were only six adults and eleven children in the census taken in 1808; "*Nottoway* termination," as it was shamelessly talked about, was all but complete. "No adult Indian was married to or sharing a household with any other adult Indian," wrote Roundtree in, "The Termination and Dispersal of the *Nottoway* Indians of Virginia," VMHB 95:193 – 214. Library of Virginia in Executive Papers, June 21-July 22, 1808, Gov. William H. Cabell, in box 154a.

The Nottoway Reservation—reserved for them in Virginia early on by the sovereign powers of the British Empire--started to disappear in 1735 after land grabs by colonists, especially the trustees, and by 1877—a year after the Sioux and General Armstrong Custer fought the Battle of Little Bighorn--the final 525 acres were divided among surviving tribal members. The census that says **NO OTHER INDIAN** but Turner or Step lived in their houses reveals the sad extermination of their tribe, but at the same time, it unfurls a remaining remnant of proof that once upon a time these kinfolk of the *Nottoway* peers of George Skipper existed, and in 1808 they remained 100% Indian.

In addition, his contemporaries had been known to George Washington.



Battle of Fort Duquesne This engraving by Alfred R. Waud depicts the British occupation of the remains of Fort Duquesne. Wikipedia.

On December 19, 1756, Washington wrote a letter to Robert Dinwiddie Lieutenant Governor of Colonial Virginia asking, specifically, for assistance from *Nottoway* Indians in conducting his campaign in the French and Indian War. Tom Step, Billy Johns, School Robin, and Aleck Scholar answered the call. They served under George Washington in the fight for Ft. Duquesne in the Pennsylvania country. On March 8, 1759 the four *Nottoway* warriors filed a petition for pay. That year Tom Step received a reward for his Ft. Duchesne service.

On the deeds to their Circle and Square Reservation lands, Step, Robin, and Scholar signatures once appeared. The names of these men, like the name of George Skipper, were the names of Chieftains of the Nottoway—more evidence of their tribe and George Skipper's link to it.

The Signatures of Nottoway Chiefs

Detail of Nottoway symbols representing the names of Chieftains Watt Bailey and George Skipper, 1749. The Nottoway chose to Anglicize their names, learn English, wear English clothing, and to accept the British idea of owning the land.

1749 In Presence of J The Coche Lis, Millynay . William Jar Marine Kamilin

Detail of Nottoway symbols representing the names of Chieftains George Skipper and friends, 1757. The marks they made change within the document, change in time, and seem to be somewhat interchangeable between individuals; note the similarity in the symbol of Jack Will 1757 and George Skipper 1749, etc.

1757

Sealed and Deliveredy Hyray 111 Old Sam 111 Jack Will 1101 in the presence of Jun Jaylor 121 Rob! Scholars 121 John y Jurner 1101 Benj Williams How Jaylor 121 Rob! Scholars 121 John y Jurner 1101 Charles Briggs Ho: Comunds 120/ Shiper of 1201 Jom + & Step 1501 At abount the for the County of Southampton the 13 Day of January 1131

Only two Chief Men were present in 1760 . . .

This Indenture Tripartite made the tenth Day of Sept in the first year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, now King of Great Britain and in the year of our Lord Christ One Thousand Seven Hundred and sixty, Between George Skipper and William Pearch--Chief Men of the Nottoway Indian Nation. . . Transcription of Excerpt, pg 84--Nottoway Indian deed of 1760, Southampton County, Virginia, by Helen Vaughan Michael

Colonial greed had nearly gobbled up the Circle and Square Reservation when George Skipper 3rd finally moved out. A stack of real estate deals with a *Nottoway* Indian's name affixed, signed the end of the era of George and Mary Bailey Skipper. After 1760 the signatures and symbols of George Skipper 3rd and William Pearch were put to three more deeds in Southampton County, colonial Virginia on the border of Northampton, Bertie, and Chowan in the Carolina District. Finally, the last of the transactions occurred on November 12, 1762. Afterwards, when there was not much of the reservation left to sell, George Skipper 3rd no longer appeared on the list of Chief Men. After 1762, the George Skipper of the 1700 generation could be found as a planter in Anson County, North Carolina with at least one of his sons—the son he named, Barnaby.

In February 1749, one George Skipper purchased 200 acres on the Pee Dee River in Anson County, North Carolina from John Clark, a powerful landowner of untold acreage. This *Nottoway* George Skipper looks like the Chief's elderly father who had migrated to the Neuse River a few years earlier while his son, Chief George, was still in Southampton, Virginia, signing deeds. In 1763, finished with the deeds, at an estimated age of 63 the Chief turned up in Anson, evidently an heir to his father's land. Two years later he—or his father--sold fifty acres out of the Pee Dee River acreage, which his father had bought in '49, to Barnaby—pronounced, *Barnabay*. He—or his father--had become a planter, just like the white man from whom a young George Skipper had once rescued his young wife.

1765, 13 Feb, Anson, North Carolina. GEORGE SKIPPER of Anson, planter, to BARNBA SKIPPER, for £20 proc. money...50 Acres adj. MR. GRIFFUTHS, granted to JOHN CLARK, 200 Acres on N side Pee Dee, near mouth of Little Creek, conveyed from CLARK to SKIPPER 1 Feb 1749. [Anson Co NC Deed Abstracts 1747-1768, p. 53]



MAP: Anson, North Carolina

The next day for another £ 20 Barnaby Skipper bought two strawberry roan colts and three sorrel colts and three sorrel mares with colts from George Skipper to put in his new pasture.

1765 14 Feb. Anson Co, North Carolina, p. 188. GEORGE SKIPPER to BARNABA SKIPPER, for £20...2 strawberry Rone Horses, 3 sorrel Do., 3 mares & colts...GEO. SKIPPER (SEAL), Wit: John Crawford, Saml. Snead. [Anson Co NC Deed Abstracts 1747-1768, p. 53]

Young Strawberry Roan Horse



White-faced Sorrel Horse



The horse trader Barnaby Skipper was dealing with that February day in Anson was probably his father, who was just in from a term as a *Nottoway* Chief in Southampton, Virginia. Barnaby, in buying land and horses from his dad, or granddad, was making preparations for his family in their new land.

After the Chief's last land deal was signed in 1762 Virginia, he traveled south into the Carolina colonies with some of his family. He may have died soon after because his name disappears, and the elder is replaced by three of his sons, Benjamin, Barnaby, and George. After 1771 no documentation of any George Skipper appears in this distant colonial outpost.

His name on an Anson County, North Carolina tax list is the last word on Chief George Skipper.

*Geoi	ge Skipper, the eldest, 160 acres
1 <mark>721</mark> -	- divided up Chowan/Bertie acreage
betwe	een: George, James, and Jean Skipper
Herrir	ngsiblings in the 1720's.
*Geoi	ge Skipper, Sr., Anson 1763, Father of George,
Barna	by and Benjamin. Nottoway Chieftain from
Virgin	ia
*Barn	aby Skipper, Son, Anson 1763
	amin Skipper, Son, Anson 1763, related.

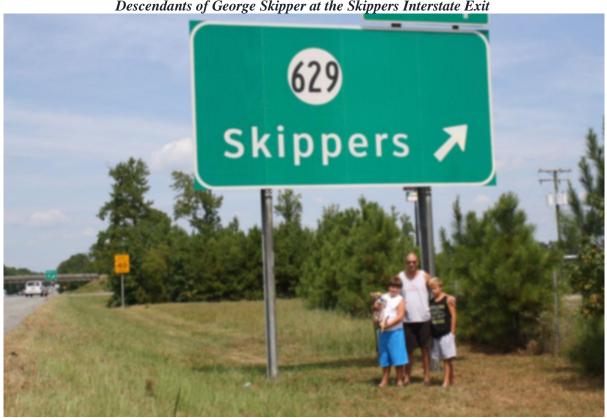
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SKIPPER, E	Barna	aba	Anso	1763
Benjami	Anso	1763		
Clemond	Brun	1772		
Fred			Blad	1763
George	Sr.		Anso	1763
o George	160	acres	Chow	1721
Hardy			Blad	1763
Jacob			Dobb	1779
James			Roan	1720
Joseph			Blad	1763
Joseph			Onsl	1769
Moses			Brun	1772
Robert			Chow	A REAL PROPERTY AND A REAL
Thomas	1102		Roan	1720

While there is no known etching in paper or stone on the death of George Skipper-or, for Mary Bailey-in Anson County, North Carolina, the Skippers did leave behind a Skipper legacy in Virginia.

EPILOGUE

George Skipper 3rd, as one of the chief men, is listed in "Nottoway" tribal documents as he took part in the sale of reservation land from 1749 until 1762. As their reservation disappeared, "Nottoway" refugees began searching for new homes along the North Carolina-South Carolina border. After George Skipper 3rd signed his last document he moved his family from Virginia. He left his name on a community there that still stands in 2024 along the Interstate 95 corrídor of the United States.

Thanks to the Skipper families who sent me the Skipper, Virginia 1-95 road signs. Helen Vaughan Michael



Descendants of George Skipper at the Skippers Interstate Exit

The Last Nottoway Skipper Chief in Southampton

Along a comparatively quiet stretch of VA Interstate-95 there stands a typical green road sign that says, "Skippers." It is a huge sign placed just north of the Carolina-Virginia border, announcing that I-95 is heading for a tiny spot in the world where once lived a Native American family named Skipper.

The Skippers were members of a tribe that was called the Cheroenhaka until British ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean and founded their community of Jamestown in 1607. After arriving, the white immigrants Anglicized the whole countryside, and as they moved out far and wide, they changed the Cheroenhaka tribal name to Nottoway. They also gave members of the tribe English names.

One Cheroenhaka male became known as George Skipper. By 1749 a third generation George Skipper was a Nottoway chief whose people farmed, hunted and fished the landscape which is now in the grip of I-95 and similar but smaller strips of cement, tar, and asphalt. Peanut farmers are the current stewards of area acreage, and Exit 4 at Skippers is now a favorite stop for truck drivers and other travelers along I-95. But, George's family of merchants, traders and artisans were the first to set up shop here.

As white men took over the farms, shops, and towns of the Cheroenhaka they wrote up real estate deals in their favor and brought in the local chieftains to sign their deeds. In what was then Southampton, Virginia, from 1749 to 1762 their stack of deeds proclaimed that George Skipper was a Nottoway Indian Chief:

10 September 1760, Southampton, Virginia

This Indenture Tripartite made the tenth Day of Sept in the first year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, now King of Great Britain and in the year of our Lord Christ One Thousand Seven Hundred and sixty, Between George Skipper and William Pearch--Chief Men of the Nottoway Indian Nation of the first part; Joseph Gray, Wm Taylor and Howell Edmunds of the County of Southampton Gentlemen of the Second Part...

Skippers, Virginia, in what was once Southampton, is where the Skipper branch of the Cheroenhaka tribe lived off the land—farming, hunting, fishing, and trading until 1762. That year Chief George Skipper signed the last of the colonists' deeds and moved his family south to Anson County on what would become the state line of North and South Carolina.

The last of the transactions occurred on November 12, 1762, and afterwards George Skipper no longer appeared on the list of Chief Men. After 1763 Chief George Skipper could be found as "a planter in Anson County."

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Skippers, Virginia, I-95 Map

Virginia Welcome Center Interstate 95-N Mile Marker 0, Skippers, VA 23879

30 Dec 2023



