

TO:

Mr. Wayne Adkins

Mr. Gene W. Adkins

Mr. Lionel W. Custalow

} Recognition Committee, V.C.I.

FROM: Helen C. Rountree

Jan. 24, 1998

Gentlemen,

Here is a copy of my redoing of the "Patawomeck" group's genealogy, which I promised to send to each of you by the time the recognition committee met. Now that the meeting is set for Feb. 1, and my car is running again, I'm making good on the promise.

I used a loose-leaf system of my own that I devised for other tribes, one which could be added to indefinitely as children grew up and became parents and grandparents themselves. In the case of this Stafford/King George Co. genealogy, I've only gone all the way down to the present day with parent-and-child groups that include either current "Patawomeck" enrollees or their immediate ancestors. Lots of pages of Bill Deyo's genealogy cover families whose descendants have not so far chosen to enroll, which makes my sheaf of papers smaller. My system also avoids the repeats (did you notice? Sometimes as much as a thirty-page section was a repeat of earlier pages, since Bill's computer spat out all the descendants of a husband [30 pages' worth], and then all the descendants of his wife [same 30 pages], if both were descended from the same distant Indian ancestor).

As for how the genealogy as a whole grabs me, as well as the other documents submitted, I'll save that for when we all meet. But I've done some homework in published and unpublished sources, and I can add two items to the brew now:

(1) Nobody in the "Patawomeck" group living in the 1920s through 1950s got harrassed by the Vital Statistics Bureau, and Plecker's infamous 1943 "Circular" listing "suspicious" surnames county-by-county does not list anyone in Stafford or King George Co. I checked the U.S. Censuse schedules that Plecker had access to (up through 1860), which are now on microfilm, and all the "Patawomecks'" ancestors were listed in those days as white. Hence the lack of pressure from Vital Statistics in the 20th century. The mid-19th century people may have felt themselves to be Indian (the petitioners give us no documentary proof of that), but the census enumerators had the final say and labeled them white.

(2) The petitioners have not said much about anthropologists' studies and how often their group appears, so let me paint the picture for you. There have been five professional anthropologists who studied and wrote about the Algonquian Indian-descended people of Virginia; I am the fifth. The earliest two, Albert Gatschet and James Mooney from the Smithsonian in the 1880s and 1890s, asked the Pamunkeys and Mattaponis what other Indian groups there were to visit, and Mooney circulated a questionnaire to a lot of non-Indians as well. Thus he and Gatschet learned of the existence of the Chickahominies, the Upper Mattaponis, the Rappahannocks, and the Nansemonds, as well as reputed Indian descendants on the Eastern Shore, in Poquoson, and in Gloucester (but not the Allmonds Wharf group that Frank Speck wrote about). Mooney and Gatschet heard nothing about Indian-descended people in Stafford County, which means that any Indian descendants there were not talking about their ancestry with their neighbors and were also out of contact with other Indian-descended groups.

In 1919-1940 Frank Speck (anthropologist #3) from the University of Pennsylvania made brief visits to various groups that are now organized and possessed of state recognition, and he and his students wrote a couple of books and a raft of journal articles about them. Speck also visited Luther James Newton -- for ONE NIGHT -- and so he wrote in his 1928 book about a possibly "Potomac"-descended group that ought to be checked out. That is the ONLY mention of Indian-descended people in that area before 1950 in the works of professional anthropologists who deliberately went searching for Indians.

[Anthropologist #4 was Theodore Stern, who worked with the Chickahominies and Pamunkeys only, in the 1940s.]

In 1973 I visited Luther Newton's daughter, Grace Pocahontas Newton, for an afternoon, and she told me how short Speck's visit actually had been. She also told me that she and her neighbors "sort of kept to themselves" and had a tradition of Indian ancestry, though she said she had not heard that the ancestry was specifically from the Patawomeck Indians. (Speck himself was responsible for that term for the descendants, just as he was the one who chose the names "Upper Mattaponi" and "Rappahannock" for two other groups.) I then wrote to Christian Feest, who in 1973 was completing the chapter he wrote for the Smithsonian's Handbook of North American Indians (published 1978), and I told him to omit the "Potomacs" because in my opinion the evidence was not good enough for a continuing tribal enclave. Christian chose to include them anyway, because Speck had mentioned them.

That should give us even more to chew on, come Sunday. I look forward to hearing what your "take" on all of this is, since all three of you have grown up in tribal communities while I have not. See you at the meeting.

All the best,

*Ulan*