A few Colonial Indian Traders from the area of VA/NC where the Blackwater and Chowan Rivers meet.

Due to relentless bickering between Virginia and North Carolina over the border between the two colonies, numerous depositions were taken of several individuals. From those depositions it can be determined that several were Indian Traders.

1707

The "big dog" was more than likely Benjamin Harrison... he had the political clout and connections.

Deposition Of Benjamin Harrison In Regard To Indian Affairs, 1707.

Benjamin Harrison, Esq., aged sixty-three years, or thereabouts, being sworn, saith:

That to the best of his remembrance in the year **one thousand six hundred and sixty** three in the month of September, the Waynoak Indians sent in to the Governor and informed him that their king was killed by the Pohick Indians, whereupon a party of men were imediately sent out, who brought in the Queen and severall other Waynoak Indians; and in a few days after, another party of men were sent out of which this deponent was one, the Queen and her Indians went back with them, and they found the rest of the Waynoak Indians by the side of a great Swamp to the Westward of Nottoway River sheltered with a peace of a puncheon fort; about five or six miles from their Town; which was then called Wariecoke, standing near the banke along the South side of Nottoway River, to which place the English and some Indians went to gather corne for theire Journey in, and then they went back to the beforementioned swamp. and brought all the Waynoak Indians (they could find) in amongst the English; where to the best of this deponents remembrance they stayed about two yeares; and then, the English being uneasy at the Indians hunting upon their lands, the Indians went out again, as this Deponent was informed (and verily believes) to the Southward of Meheren River but to what particular place he does not know, they continued out (as well as this Deponent remembers) about two yeares; and then the Tuscarora Indians and they having some difference, the Waynoaks came in to Meheren River where (as they said) the Tuscarora* fell upon them; and then they sent again to the Governor, who sent another party of men out to them, of which this Deponent was one; they found the Indians in an old field called Unotee very near the banke of Mehern River on the North side of it, sheltered with an half moon made with puncheons, and they brought them in a second time amongst the English. In these Expeditions the Deponent Crossed Nottoway River four times, one night they Quartered very near it; and in all the Discourse that this Deponent had or heard about it, it was always called Nottoway River (and by no other name) both by the English and Indians, and whilst the Indians stayed amongst the English they had some Cabbins in the Deponents orchard, where he had severall Discourses with them, and he does verily believe that if ever Nottoway River

had been called by any other name he should have heard something of it from them, but he never did. The second time the Waynoak Indians came in they stayed amongst the English about a yeare or more and then they settled upon the South side of the Black Water Swamp, at a place now called the old town, where they stayed about seven or eight years, and then they removed about four miles down the Swamp on the same side, which was their last Settlement, very near the place where this Deponent now hath a Plantation; upon which Charles Merrit was overseer, who went thither about the year 1691 or 1692, and continued there about five years and then he removed to some land belonging to the Colledge, where as this Deponent was informed, he stole severall of his hoggs, and upon this being known, the sense of his guilt (as the Deponent verily believes) made the said Charles Merrit runaway into North Carolina, and since that time this Deponent hath been severall times told by the Nottaway and Meheren Indians that the said Merrit has desired them to speake to him (this Deponent) that he may have leave to come back again into Virginia, which he was desirous to do if he might be out of fear of being prosecuted for the said hoggstealing. This Deponent further saith that he hath been concerned in the Indian trade both with the English and Indians for about five and thirty years passt or more; and hath many times had Discourse about Meherrin River, Nottoway River, and Blackwater, and he never heard them called by any other name than what they go by at this day. He believes he may have severall times have heard the name Waynoak River or Creek but never knew where it was, till of late the Inhabitants of North Carolina making encroachments upon the Queens land (as this Deponent apprehended). He made inquiry about it of the Nottaway, Meheren, and Nansemond (or Pochiack) Indians and they all said that after they left Mapacre they Waynoaks went to the Southward of Meheren River and setled in a fork between the two great swamps which are the head Branches of a small River that empties itself into Chowan, and that (they say) is Waynoak River, and that they neither knew or ever heard of any other Waynoak River but that.

And this Deponent further saith, that about five and twenty years ago, the Tuscaroro Indians fell upon the Waynoaks, at their last settlement upon Blackwater Swamp; and the Nottoway Indians were said to join with the Tuscaroras: Whereupon the Queen of the Waynoaks complained to the Deponent of the wrong the Nottoways did them, for that the Waynoaks had paid them a yearly acknowledgement for their liberty of living at Warueake (upon Nottoway River) as long as they lived there, and afterwards they paid them for the liberty of living upon the Blackwater, and of late, this Deponent enquiring (about it) of the Nottoways, they confirmed the truth of the Waynoaks having paid them an acknowledgement, till the Articles of Peace were made with the English; and then they looked upon themselves to have no further right to any land than those articles do give them, so they did not receive the Acknowledgement any longer. And further this Deponent saith not.

Benja: Harrison.

Novem" 15, 1707.

Sworn to before us,

N. Harrison, Junr,

Ffran: Mallory.

[The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 5]

So... in 1663 Benjamin Harrison was "dealing" with various Indians and as he puts it "very near the place where this Deponent now hath a Plantation". And at some point Charles Merrit, aka, "the hoggstealer" was his overseer.

The depositions below are from North Carolina...

http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr01-0343#p1-661

North Carolina ss.

Before me Edward Mosely Esgr one of the members of the Council and Authorised to take the Depositions of certain persons relateing to the boundarys of this Government Personally Came and appeared Charles Merritt aged fifty five years or thereabouts, Who on his Oath on the Holy Evangelists taken saith that he Came into Virginia in or about the year 1666. And lived about twenty yeares on the south side James River and then lived on A Plantation of Collo Benjamin Harrisson on Blackwater and within call of the Weyanoake Indian Forte and consumed there five yeares during which time this Deponent had frequent Discourses with the Indians and was by them informed that they never Claimed to the Southward of the Maherine River But at the time that the Appachoukanough was Routed and taken for the Massacre he had committed the Weyanoakes (being his Confederates and fearing the English) removed themselves from that place which is now called Weyanoake in James River to Warraekeeks on Weyanoake River and after when the Poackyacks killed their King they were by the English brought from thence and placed on the Blackwater aforementioned as Tributarys. where this Deponent lived by them and this Deponent further saith that he was informed by the Weyanoaks that the Weyanoke River now Called Nottoway was their bounds and that they never Seated to the Southward of Warr-a-keeks

the mark of

CHARLES P MERRITT.

Capt at Jurat Duodecimo

die Jany Anno Domi 1707

Coram me

Edwd Moseley

As an aside, prior to about 1702 or so, it was essentially illegal (per Virginia colonial law) to reside westward of the Blackwater River. Except, I suppose, unless you were cronies of the Governor... in this case Benjamin Harrison.

North Carolina ss.

Before me Edward Moseley Esqr one of the members of the Council and being authorised to take the Depositions of Certain persons Relateing to the boundarys of the Government personally came and appeared John Smyth aged sixty two yeares or thereabouts borne in Newport Parish in the Isle of Wight Couty abt fourteen miles from Blackwater River who on his Oath on the holy evangelists taken saith that he lived in Newport parish till the year one thousand six hundred seventy three or thereabouts at which time this Deponent came and lived about five miles off Blackwater and about thirty miles off Weyanoake River which was always in this Deponents memory Known to be the first River on the Right hand as you go down Blackwater till within these twenty years or thereabout the Nottoways comeing to live nearer the River than they used to do and the Weyanoakes being all declined it Gained the name of Nottoway and this Deponent further saith that he never knew or heard of any other River that was Called Weyanoak except the abovesaid by the Virginians lately Called Nottoway

JNO SMYTH

Capt and Jurat Vicessimo

primo die Januar anno 1707

Coram me

Edwd Moseley

North Carolina ss.

Before me Edward Moseley Esqr one of the members of the Council and being Authorized to take the Depositions of Certain persons relateing to the boundarys of this Government, personally Came and appeared **Richd Booth aged sixty three years** or thereabouts who on his Oath on the Holy Evangelists taken saith that in or about the year 1661 this Deponent came into Virginia and **served Major Merritt six years (who then lived about Twenty miles from the Weyanoake Indian Town** the Weyanoks **living very near a plantation that now belongs to Collo Harrison betwixt Blackwater River & Weyanoake** River which Weyanoake River by reason of the

Declension of the Weyanoake Indians and the Nottoway Indians removing nigher to it has since in this Deponents memory gained the name of Nottoway River by the Virginians) And this Deponent further saith that in the year 1667 he being employed by one William West to go in a Canoe with Certain goods &c to the Maherine Indian Towns one Jno Browne and a certain Weyanoake Indian called Tom Frusman being in the Canoe with him as they went down Blackwater River this Deponent then being a Stranger in those parts any other than by hearesay enquired what river that was they first mett with on their Right Hand they answered it was Weyanoake and Opposite to the Rivers mouth was a field belonging to the Weyanoakes it being then about one of the Clock in the afternoon this Deponent enquired how far it was to Maherine River they answered they should gett there before sun down which they did accordingly whereby this Deponent Computed it was about thirteen miles by Water and this Deponent further saith that he never understood that the Weyanoake Indians ever lived to the Southward of that River

RICHd BOOTH.

Capt et Jurat Decimo

die January Anno 1707

Coram me

Edward Mosely

Interesting that the "hoggstealer" Charles Merrit had obtained the illustrious moniker of "Major Merritt" in North Carolina. Edward Moseley did the depositions for NC and Nathaniel Harrison and the toady Philip Ludwell did the depositions for Virginia... you don't suppose they were biased?

North Carolina ss.

Before me Edward Moseley Esqr one of the Council and being authorized to take the Depositions of Certain persons relateing to the boundarys of this Government.

Personally Came and appeared **Jno Browne aged sixty eight yeares** or thereabouts who on his Oath on ye holy evangelist taken saith that in the year 1659 or 60 he this Deponent came into Virginia and lived in Henrico County some years and then came to live on Blackwater River and that at that time this Deponent understood and was informed that the first River (as they went down) on the Right hand was Weyanoake River And this Deponent further saith that he never heared it called by any other name till severall years after when the Weyanoakes declining and the Nottoways removing nearer the River, and he this Deponent with severall others usually going to the Nottoways to fish first gave it the Generall name of Nottoway And this Deponent saith that at the mouth of the said river there is an old field Known at this day by the name of

Weyanoake neck And this Deponent further saith that he never knew that the Weyanoake Indians ever lived lower than that River.

JNO BROWNE

Capt et Jurat Decimo

die Januar Anno 1707

Coram me

Edwd Moseley

North Carolina ss.

Before me Edward Moseley Esgr one of the members of the Council and being authorized to take the Deposition of certain persons relating to the boundarys of this Government. Personally came and appeared William Brush aged sixty five years or thereabouts who on his Oath according to the forme of his profession taken saith that in or about the year one thousand six hundred and fifty eight or fifty nine he this Deponent came into Virginia and lived twenty yeares or thereabout within sixteen miles or thereabouts off Weyanoake River and about fifteen years more within twelve miles of Weyanoake River being the first River on the Right hand as you go down Blackwater River and about twelve miles above Maherine River During the Major part of which time the Deponent never heard it go by any other name than Weyanoake and this Deponent further saith that about twelve years agoe (one of this Deponents Neighbours) Nathan King took up a peice of Land Iveing opposite to the mouth of the said River which Land was Commonly said by the neighbours to lye at the mouth of Weyanoake River to distinguish it from other Land the said Nathan had and this Deponent further saith that he never knew or heard of any other Weyanoke River than that aforementioned and which by the Virginians has lately been called Nottoway by Reason the Nottoway Indians having of late been the chief dwellers near it

Capt et Jurat Vicesimo

primo die Januar Anno 1707

coram me

Edwd Moseley

September the 15th 1707

A related deposition... Traders were not limited to the Blackwater River... they came from the Petersburg, VA area also.

A 1707 previously mentioned deposition was made by the immigrant James Thweatt to Virginia, related to the long standing boundary dispute between North Carolina and Virginia, an issue that was not resolved until 1728. This 1666 North Carolina charter defined the boundary as starting on the north end of Currituck Inlet and running due west to 'Weyanoke Creek. By 1707, the name Weyanoke had been lost and there was disagreement as to whether it had later become known as the Nottoway River. Thweatt, among others, was questioned by the Virginia government as a man advanced in years and as one who had been familiar with the river over a period of years. The section was then unsettled and James Thweatt at an earlier time in his life, may have been an Indian trader. Thweatt's Branch, first mentioned in a land grant in 1701, flowing east into Hunting Quarter Creek, and south of the present Sussex County Court House, is a reminder of his early association with the Nottoway River area. James Thweatt settled on Bailey' Run in Charles City County (after 1702, Prince George) near the present city of Hopewell. He was granted 600 acres on Bailey's Creek 22 April 1670 and on 15 Mar. 1673 received an additional 550 acres adjoining the first grant and described as lying on Bailey's Creek and the Blackwater. In both these patents, he himself was listed as an headright, implying he had paid his own passage to the colony and had made a return visit to England. On 22 April 1682, he and Henry Batte took out a 679 acre grant near the lands they both already held. James Thweatt, Sen., he was granted 125 acres 20 April 1689, again near his other holdings. In the Virginia rent roll of 1704, he was listed with 700 acres."

Prince George County interview of James Thweat, aged 64 years or thereabouts, sworn said that he had known the River now called the Nottoway River for the space of about 48 years or more and then it was called by the name of the Nottoway River and by no other name that the deponent knows or has heard. That when this deponent was first acquainted in those parts, the chief town of the Nottoway Indians was on the south side of the River where Major Wynne's Quarter now is, about three miles above the mouth of Monksneck Creek, and some few of them lived at Rowonte, which is about 4 miles up Monksneck creek; and two or three families of them at Tonnatora, which is on the north side of the River. And that they lived at some of these places, and at Cottashowrock, and there abouts, until about 25 or 26 years ago, and then they removed and settled their great town upon Atyamonsock Swamp at the place now called Old Town. That about 48 years ago the Meherrin Indians lived upon the Meherrin River at Cowochahawkon and some of them at Unote, and about 24 years ago they lived some of them at Unote and some at Taurara, but how long they lived there after that time, he cannot particularly remember. And further this deponent said not. James Thweatt, November 12, 1707, sworn before us B. Harrison, Jr., and John Hardyman. another...

Depositions of inhabitants of Nansemond County, Virginia Carolina/Virginia boundary

concerning the North

Plumpton, Henry; Lawrence, Robert

March 25, 1708

Volume 01, Pages 676-677

[B. P. R. O. B. T. Va. 58.]

EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES IN NANSIMUND COUNTY

25 March 1708 (7?)

Virginia—ss:

Henry Plumpton aged eighty six years or thereabouts Deposeth that he hath lived in the County now called Nansemond formerly Upper Norfolk about seventy four years and that after the Right Honble Sr Wm Barkley was made Governor of Virginia he was amongst divers others at sevII times sent out against the Southern Indians Once particularly by land under the Command of Major Genll Bennett and once by Water under Coll Dew which to the best of his Remembrance Was about the year 1646 in which expedition he well remembers that after they had entered Corrotuck, they proceeded up the Sound to Chowan as far as the mouth of Weyanook Creek where they had a fight with the Indians and had a man killed by them And also about two years after a peace being concluded with the Indians the said Deponent with one Thomas Tuke of the Isle of Wight County and severall others made a purchase from the Indians of all the Land from the mouth of the Morratuck River to the mouth of Weyanook Creek aforesaid which the Indians then shewed them, Which the deponent knew to be the same place where the man above mentioned was Killed and Iyes (to the best of his Judgement and remembrance) about twenty or twenty five miles above the mouth of Morattuck River but the Deponent never heard the Blackwater Nottaway or Maherine Rivers or either of them called by the name of Weyanook Creek

Sign'd	
HENRY PLUMPTON	

If I may play "historian", it seems to me we can figure out about where several Indian tribes were living at about 1710 or so...

The so-called Nottoways ranged from the area south of Petersburg (roughly the Rowanty Creek, "Monk's Neck", Stoney Creek areas).... they were basically pressured into the Circle and Square reservations located roughly where the Nottoway River and Three Creeks meet.

The Meherrin Indians were a few miles south of the VA/NC border just west of the Chowan River.

The tribe that would become known as the "Sapponie" were situated around the present town of Emporia and along the Meherrin River east of Emporia. They would be resituated to Christanne, west of Emporia.

The Tuscarora were by about 1710, situated in the area around the western Cashy River area of NC... obviously the "southern" Tuscaroras were soon to be decimated by war.

These were the main tribes that had sustained the majority of the fur trade which had begun roughly 1650. The "Occoneechee" tribe which controlled the "Trading Path" crossing the Roanoke River were pretty much vanquished in 1676 during Bacon's Rebellion. By 1715 the focus of the fur trade had shifted to the Southern tribes such as the Cherokee, Catawba and others in western NC and so southerly and westward.

This guy would become a major player in the emerging Southern fur trade...

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?

first=307&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO

Hix, Robert. grantee.

Land grant 31 October 1716.

Summary Location: Montgomery County.

<u>Description: 1070 acres on the north side of Maherin River, beginning a extending on the bank of the river. Adjoins land of Kavenaugh.</u>

(This is actually the town of Emporia, VA... who knows where the trancriber came up with Montgomery County?)

There are numerous examples in the Libray of Virginia patents mentioning the circumstances of the Sapponies...

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?

first=308&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

<u>Author Thweat, James. grantee.</u>

Title Land grant 31 October 1716.

<u>Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.</u>

Description: 180 acres on the north side of Maherin River. Beg.g &c. or

east side of the Island Swamp.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl? first=342&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

West, Francis. grantee.

Title Land grant 17 December 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 132 acres new settlet. for the Saponie Indians at Christanna &c. on the north side of Maherin River. Being part of that tract of land whereon the said Indians lately dwelt and which they have surrendered to us in exchange for a like quantity of land, which we have assigned at the aforesaid place of Christanna.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl? first=344&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Wall, John. grantee.

Title Land grant 17 December 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 100 acres new settlet. for the Saponie Indians at Christanna &c. on the south side of Maherin River. Beg.g &c. near the lower end of the Dutchman's Meadow. Being part of that tract of land, whereon the said Indians lately dwelt and which they have surrendered to us in exchange for a like quantity of land, which we have assigned at the aforesaid place of Christanna.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?first=343&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Persons, John. grantee.

Title Land grant 17 December 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 76 acres new settlet. for the Saponie Indians at Christanna &c.on the north side of Maherin river. Beg.g &c. on the north side of a Reedy slash. Being part of that tract of land, whereon the said Indians lately dwelt and which they have surrendered to us in exchange for a like quantity of land,.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl? first=342&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Mirack, Owen. grantee.

Title Land grant 17 December 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 180 acres new settlet. for the Saponie Indians at Christanna &c. on the north side of Maherin River. Being part of that tract of land **whereon the said Indians lately dwelt** and which they have surrendered to us in exchange for a like quantity of land, which we have assigned at the aforesaid place of Christanna.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?first=372&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Middleton, Martin. grantee.

Title Land grant 18 March 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 90 acres new settlement for the Saponie Indians. On the south side of Maherin River and being part of that tract of land, whereon the said Indians lately dwelt &c. Beg.g &c. a corner betwixt Edward Brantley and Richard Smith.

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?first=372&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Brantley, Edward. grantee.

Title Land grant 18 March 1717.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 400 acres new settlement for the Saponie Indians. On the south side of Maherin River and being part of that tract of land, whereon the said Indians lately dwelt &c. Bog.g &c. on the said rivers bank (Maherin).

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?first=381&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Guillam, John. grantee.

Title Land grant 12 July 1718.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 390 acres new settlement for the Saponie Indians on the North side of Maherin River, and being part of that tract of land whereon the said Indians lately dwelt &c. **beginning &c. on the river bank.**

http://image.lva.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/GetLONN.pl?first=458&last=&g_p=P10&collection=LO Patent

Smith, Richard. grantee.

Title Land grant 20 February 1719.

Summary Location: Isle of Wight County.

Description: 390 acres new Settlement for the Sapone Indians at Christanna. Being part of that tract of Land, whereon the said Indians lately dwelt. On the South side of Maherin River. Adjoining the land of Edward Brantley.

"In the meantime Robert Hicks was not indifferent to other aspects of life. When leave had been given for taking up land on the south side of Blackwater Swamp in 1705, he and Robert Bolling were among the first to patent together) four hundred acres at the mouth of Stony Creek. Hicks soon transferred his share to Lewis Green. Then on April 20, 1709, he made a purchase of two tracts of land, totaling 1,280 acres, that was to have a bearing on all his subsequent history. Both tracts were on the north side of Meherrin River and one was the site of what would later be known as Hicks' Ford. The land had originally been patented in 1706 by Arthur Kavanaugh "of Meherrin River" who lived in Surry County but "pretending to be of North Carolina" when he ran into some trouble with the Virginia authorities the year before he sold to Hicks. He was accused of purposely creating misunderstanding between the Sapony Indians and the English, signing papers in the name of "Gentlemen of Note in these parts." His conduct was ordered investigated. If found

guilty Kavanaugh was to he taken into custody until he gave bond for his good behavior We do not know the result of the investigation but he seems to have led an orderly life thereafter. He became a close neighbor of Hicks at Hicks' Ford.

It is quite probable that Robert Hicks moved from Petersburg to the Ford in 1709, or shortly afterward. Certainly he was here before 1711. It is also most likely that he established a trading post about the same time, though this is conjecture. Tradition persists that there was a Post (or "Quarter") at the Ford. The location was a strategic one - about half way between Fort Henry and the numerous Tuscarora towns in eastern North Carolina. It would also have been in close proximity to the Meherrin fort (town) and in the midst of a large Indian population. Hicks' experience as a trader makes him the logical one to have established and operated such a Post." Historical and Biographical Sketches of Greensville County, Virginia 1650-1967." Second Ed. 1968-2000. The Riparian Woman's Club, Emporia, VA, 2000 Chapter II. "That Honest Man, Captain Hicks"

Chowan Co., NC DB 1 P. 87 Arthur Kavanaugh of Meherrin River is held and firmly bound unto Robert Hicks of Prince George Co. 11 Apr 1709 in the sum of 96 pds. Sterling a mortgag of 1280 A. Wit: Jacob Collcon, John Evary. Reg. (not given)

There is a lot of history out there...