

Listed On:
VLR 11/20/1979
NRHP 07/16/1980

Form No. 10-300 REV. (9/77)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED 7/16/80

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Fort Christianna; Fort Christanna (preferred)
AND/OR COMMON Fort Christianna Archaeological District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Lawrenceville
STATE Virginia
VICINITY OF V
CODE 51
COUNTY Brunswick
CODE 025
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 5th (W.C. Daniel)

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

NAME (1) Lawrenceville Chapter Colonial Dames of America
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Lawrenceville
STATE Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Clerk's Office, Brunswick County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Lawrenceville
STATE Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) (See Continuation #1)

TITLE (1) Virginia Research Center for Archaeology Preliminary Archaeological Survey

DATE 1977-78-79
_FEDERAL STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS VRCA, Wren Kitchen, College of William and Mary

CITY, TOWN Williamsburg
STATE Virginia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated [REDACTED] near Lawrenceville, Virginia, are the three major archaeological complexes of the Fort Christianna Archaeological District. These archaeological remains and the sites associated with them are located in a densely wooded area within a sharp bend of the Meherrin River, [REDACTED]. They consist of the sites of Fort Christianna, an elaborate frontier military and trading facility, constructed ca. 1714; a sizeable Sapony Indian village, built ca. 1714-1716; and the personal residence of Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood, constructed ca. 1717.

According to documentary evidence, the nominated area also contains the remains of warehouses and other buildings constructed by the Virginia Indian Company, which operated its Indian trade monopoly through Fort Christianna, and the sites of two forges and the numerous residences belonging to the frontier community which grew up in the vicinity of the Fort.

In a 1977 archaeological survey conducted by the VRCA, two sections of the Fort Christianna palisade line were positively identified in an area overlooking the river where tradition and historical research alleged Fort Christianna to be located. The Fort Christianna complex has been designated 44Br3 in the state inventory of archaeological sites (Figures 1 & 2).

Diarist John Fontaine had described the fort as being "built upon a rising ground. It is an enclosure of five sides, made only with palisadoes, and instead of five bastions, there are five houses which defend the one and the other - each side is about one hundred yards long."¹

The palisade trench in the test areas excavated by the VRCA consisted of a nine-inch-wide slot which extended eighteen inches below grade. A four-foot section of this trench contained four post stains averaging five inches in diameter with clay packed between each of the posts. Cross sections of these post stains revealed that the palisade posts terminated several inches above the flat-bottomed trench floor. Both the post configurations and the fill dirt, which contained a high concentration of charcoal, were similar to the archaeological remains of Fort Toulouse, Alabama, built ca. 1717. Pipestem fragments found in this fill dirt, based upon the J.C. Harrington dating formula, have a manufacturing date of ca. 1680-1710, an artifact date appropriate to a fort constructed in 1714 (Figures 3 & 4).

A turn in the palisade line was found as it was traced to the west. Further testing of other portions of the palisade line yielded additional data regarding construction depth and post size. In one test area the presence of locally made brick suggests that brick was used to shore up palisade posts, perhaps when the fort was repaired in 1718 by the Virginia Indian Company (Figure 5).

In the vicinity of the two palisade lines were numerous one-foot-by-one-foot stones which appear to have been modified for use as architectural material. These rocks may have been used as footings for the five log houses described and recorded by visitors to Fort Christianna. It should be noted that according to John Fontaine's journal, each side of the pentagonal fort was one hundred yards long, terminated at each turn by a log house which served as a bastion.

¹ John Fontaine, The Journal of John Fontaine, ed. Edward Alexander, pg. 79 .
(See Continuation Sheet #2)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1714-1732

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Alexander Spotswood

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On an expanse of rising ground overlooking the Meherrin River [REDACTED] Virginia lie the substantial archaeological remains of Fort Christianna, built in 1714 by Governor Alexander Spotswood. Adjacent to the fort, on the plain by the river, is the site of the Sapony Indian village complex, residence of the approximately 300 Sapony Indians who chose to live under the protection of the Colonial government. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] All three major archaeological components were contemporaneous and relate to a previously unexplored but well documented phase of American history.

In the first ten years of the eighteenth century, prior to the construction of Fort Christianna, Virginia settlers in the more remote frontier areas experienced many difficulties with the Indians, particularly those tribes to the west and north, whose raiding parties made occasional incursions and posed a constant threat. To the south, in the area along the North Carolina-Virginia border, which was a source of contention to both colonies, resentment between white settlers and Indians grew as settlers took up Indian land and often cheated them in trading. The Indians retaliated with raiding parties and isolated murders along the frontier.

By September 22, 1711 North Carolina Indians, notably the Tuscaroras, joined forces in an all out offensive against the white settlers. They had come to believe that neither colonial government would defend the relatively few British inhabitants in that area. Word of this onslaught, popularly known as the Tuscarora War, officially reached Williamsburg when Governor Hyde of North Carolina appealed to Virginia's Governor Spotswood for military aid. Thus, with warring Indians on three sides, Governor Spotswood was forced to consider some practical means of defending the inhabitants along a lengthy, sparsely settled frontier.

Spotswood assembled his Council on October 9, 1711 to discuss the gravity of the Indian problem. This session was attended by Tributary Indians, tribes which by means of treaty had agreed to live in peace with the British and who pledged their faithfulness to the Governor annually by presenting him with animal skins and other trade goods. The Tributary Indians attending the Executive Council meeting agreed to adhere to their treaty.

Peter Poythress, an Indian trader and interpreter, was dispatched directly to the Tuscaroras, who posed the most immediate threat, to seek a peace treaty. Spotswood authorized him to offer to those Tuscaroras who would sign a treaty a bounty of forty shillings for the head of every tribesman who was guilty of killing the English in North Carolina and the price of a slave for every similarly guilty tribesman taken captive.

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

S.A. Ashe, History of North Carolina, (Greensboro, 1925).

William Byrd, The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712, (Richmond, 1941).

Alexander Spotswood, The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Vols. I and II, (Richmond, 1932). (See Continuation Sheet #13)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 662 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Powellton and White Plains

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

[Redacted] All natural boundaries are used to delineate this district, which is a distinct geographical entity. See Continuation Sheet #14 for amendments.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Martha W. McCartney and David K. Hazzard

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Research Center for Archaeology

DATE

10/1/79

STREET & NUMBER

Wren Kitchen, College of William and Mary

TELEPHONE

(804) 253-4836

CITY OR TOWN

Williamsburg,

STATE

Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

NOV 20 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/16/80

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 4,6

PAGE 1

Item 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

2. Butler Lumber Company
Lawrenceville, Virginia

ITEM 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

2. Fort Christianna Archaeological Survey, Local
1979
c/o Mary Beaudry, Department of Anthropology
College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia 23186

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Archaeological testing at Fort Christianna in the summer of 1979 by Mary C. Beaudry, contract archaeologist for Brunswick County, revealed that there are many sealed features in the vicinity of these five log houses. The testing of thirty-five feet of palisade line indicated that the palisade had, in some areas, been disassembled prior to its eventual deterioration.

Areas tested within the fort site yielded woodworking tools, roseheaded nails and T-headed nails, the latter being indicative of the use of wooden floors. Additionally, window glass fragments and various architectural hardware elements such as strap hinges and pintles were found. These items may be related to the house of Charles Griffin, the schoolmaster, who lived within the fort.

Also found within the confines of the palisade were trade beads, trade gun parts, a horse harness, and buckle fragments. Ceramics of British origin were represented by fragments of North Devon gravel-tempered earthenware milk pans and Fulham stoneware tankards. In addition, fragments of ceramics imported by the British, such as Westerwald stoneware and delft, were found within the walls of the fort. Native Colono-Indian ware was also present in quantity.

An examination of soil samples by the Brunswick County archaeological team in 1979 has indicated the general location of the Sapony Indian village within 1,000 yards. According to John Fontaine, this village lay within musket range of the fort on a plain by the river.

During the 1977-78 archaeological survey by the VRCA, a backfilled area, 44Br2, presumably a root cellar, was located six tenths of a mile east of the fort site in the location where the personal residence of Governor Alexander Spotswood was indicated to be according to documentary research. This feature appeared to be part of a dwelling house. A test sample from this feature contained a combination of historic and prehistoric artifacts including Colono-Indian ware, indicative of the cultural contact which would have been expected to occur at the Spotswood home. A spoonbowl marked "(DI)" was found which has a manufacturing date of 1663-1714; the period 1714-1716 was the time during which Governor Spotswood constructed his home. Other artifacts date to the period 1740-1760 (Figure 6).

About 150 feet west of the root cellar is what has been tentatively identified as a nineteenth-century graveyard. This cemetery contains a number of graves, only one of which is marked by a headstone, itself devoid of inscription. Early nineteenth-century ceramics and nails in the area suggest the date for this graveyard. The single marked grave site has been disturbed by apparently recent vandalism to a depth of two and one-half feet.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 3 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Thus, archaeological testing in the vicinity of Fort Christianna has identified three major archaeological complexes, all of which remain essentially undisturbed. In addition, the fact that the Fort Christianna area was the presumed habitation of several Indian tribes invited there by Governor Spotswood, as well as the documented location of the warehouses, roads, bridges, and other structures erected by the Virginia Indian Company further justifies the nomination of this acreage as an archaeological district. Moreover, the forges, church, and residences of other frontier settlers who were attracted to the Fort Christianna area are expected to be located within the nominated acreage. The fact that recent vandalism has occurred at at least two sites within this tract indicates that the invaluable cultural resources at Fort Christianna are vulnerable and therefore need the protection afforded by National Register status.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET

4

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

At the same time that he negotiated with the Tuscaroras, Spotswood advanced his personal belief to the Executive Council that the only means of securing a permanent peace was to educate the Indians and convert them to Christianity, thereby giving them an appreciation of British mores. He also believed that this constructive interaction between Indians and colonists would be economically fruitful. It would foster a dependency upon English merchandise, thereby greatly facilitating the flow of trade. Spotswood proposed that these Indians be educated at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Three Tributary tribes in attendance at the meeting, the Nansemonds, Nottoways, and Meherrins, agreed to send two men each to the College. The Tuscaroras were asked to send one or two children of the great men from each of their towns.

By December 1711 a treaty had been signed with some of the Tuscaroras. Even so, a secret plan was formulated by Spotswood to take the militia and march to the Tuscarora towns. Toward that end, funds were allocated to support his strategy. However, due to the arrival of Captain John Barnwell in North Carolina, who with his troops and 500 mercenary Indians launched a successful military offensive against the warring Tuscaroras, the plan to send Virginia militia was abandoned.

Spotswood again pursued his idea of educating and converting the Indians to Christianity. In July 1712 he asked the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury to use their influence with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to provide one or two of their missionaries and a clerk for each of the principal Indian towns. These men would establish a chapel at each location, instruct the Indian children in religion, and operate a school there. Spotswood indicated that these frontier clergymen would also serve British inhabitants in the more remote areas. He recommended bringing the clergy to the Indians rather than transporting the Indians to Williamsburg because he felt that more Indian children needed educating than could be absorbed by the College's endowment for Indian schooling. No clergy were dispatched.

In a September 1713 letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, Spotswood wrote that the warring Tuscaroras, driven out of North Carolina, had settled at the heads of the rivers in Virginia. He claimed that they, joining with the northern Indians, were slaughtering settlers along the frontier. Spotswood complained that so great was the settlers' fear of ambush that they refused to obey his orders to send out search parties. Moreover, he stated that there was not one officer in the entire colony who had seen any military action. He therefore decided to assemble 200 men and personally lead a military expedition intended to rout the Indians from the frontiers or to force them to a peace.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 5 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

However, before this military venture got underway, a March 1713 treaty was concluded with the Tuscaroras and the Tributary Indians. Under this treaty Spotswood was able to put into practical application his principle theories on how to achieve permanent peace with the Indians. He promised that trade would be conducted on a just and equal footing with a fair administration of justice, thereby preventing the inevitable clashes between Indians and white traders. He also agreed that young men from each tribe would be educated and taught Christianity, in that manner civilizing them.

To convince the Executive Council and his superiors back in England of the wisdom of this treaty, Spotswood argued that by placing clergy and small parties of rangers at each Indian town the English would gain ready surveillance of all Indian activities, thus preventing sneak attacks. Moreover, he felt that this approach would be much more economical than maintaining the eleven companies of rangers required to protect the frontier adequately.

The plan of establishing church schools at each principle Indian town was somewhat modified by Spring, 1714. Spotswood resolved to construct two forts, one on the Rapidan River, above the falls of the Rappahannock at what later become known as Germanna, in modern-day Orange County, and the other on the Meherrin River, Fort Christianna, in what is now Brunswick County. He intended to place Tributary tribes at each fort where they would "serve as a barrier to the inhabitants of this country against the incursion of the Indians."¹ The tribes and rangers would be provided with a tract of land to which they held exclusive hunting rights.

Spotswood's scheme included settling the Tuscaroras at the fort on the Rapidan. However, those Indians elected to return to North Carolina instead. Therefore, Spotswood placed a number of Protestant German immigrants in that location, built them a fort, and provided them with work in his nearby iron mines.

To the south Spotswood [redacted] put an officer and twelve men in charge of that area. He urged the Nottoway and Meherrin Indians to settle on the north side of the river and the Saponies, Oonechee, Stukarax and Tottero tribes to settle on the south side. It was there on the southern shore, in a prominent bend of the Meherrin River [redacted] that Spotswood built Fort Christianna, or Christ-anna, which he named in honor of Christ and Queen Anne.

According to Spotswood, construction was begun at Fort Christianna in August 1714 and was completed by February 1715. The total cost of building Fort Christianna was less than 200 £.

According to the journal of John Fontaine, who visited Fort Christianna in April 1716, the fort consisted of "an inclosure of five sides, made only with palisades,

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET

6

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

and instead of five bastions, there are five houses which defend the one the other-- each side is about one hundred yards long. There are five cannon here...there are twelve men continually here to keep the place."² The writings of the Reverend Hugh Jones in 1717 echo Fontaine's description.

Further detail on the construction of Fort Christianna can be found in a July 4, 1716 letter to Richard Beresford of England, written by an anonymous man in North Carolina. He states that "the Fort consists of five large pentagonal log houses which serve for bastions and a curtain of mauld wood with earth on the inside from one house to another, aft of the four closed. Each house has a great gun ab.^w 1400 lb. each."³ It should be noted that the word "mauld" in an eighteenth century context meant wood which had been hewn or split with a maul or heavy hammer and a wedge. It also meant wood which had been hammered or driven into place.

During the period that Fort Christianna was under construction, Governor Spotswood persuaded the Assembly to pass an Act regulating Indian trade. This Act confined all such commerce to Fort Christianna, under the auspices of the Virginia Indian Company, which was established specifically for that purpose. Although the Company would have a twenty-year monopoly on Indian trade, it would, in turn, be obliged to build a school house at Fort Christianna and to apply some of its profits toward the maintenance of the Indian school.

Thus, at Fort Christianna, Alexander Spotswood constructed an Indian school as he had promised in his May 1711 treaty. He hired Charles Griffin, a young, highly-regarded layreader from the West Indies, to be schoolmaster and resident clergyman. He paid Griffin 50 £ a year. William Byrd, in describing Griffin, wrote that his gentle temperament and innocence made him perfectly qualified for his position. John Fontaine wrote that when he visited Fort Christianna, Griffin was teaching the Indian children to read and write English and to read the Bible and Common Prayers; he noted that the Indian chiefs were well pleased.

Many latterday references to Governor Spotswood's establishment and support of the Fort Christianna Indian school claim that he was altruistically motivated, whereas Spotswood's own letters consistently refer to the Indian students as "hostages." His insistence that the sons of the Indian great men of various tribes come to Fort Christianna to become educated and converted to Christianity is clearly demonstrated in his correspondence as being military strategy rather than missionary zeal.

In addition to supporting the Indian school, the Virginia Indian Company was obliged to bear the cost of maintaining the fortifications and guard at Fort Christianna after December 1716. The Company also was required to contribute to the construction and maintenance of a powder magazine in Williamsburg and to draw all of its powder from that source, replacing it with an equal amount of fresh powder. In later correspondence Spotswood indicated that the Virginia Indian Company stockholders,

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET

7

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

in addition to their specified obligations, had expended considerable funds constructing buildings and warehouses, at Fort Christianna and in clearing roads and building bridges.

The letters of Alexander Spotswood reveal that he firmly believed that the establishment of a trade center as the conduit for all Indian trade would have many merits. He blamed the mutual frustration of Indians and settlers over fraudulent trade practices as the primary provocation of most Indian hostilities. He felt that by governmentally regulating Indian trade, the sale of all ammunition to the Indians could be curtailed at any designated time. Moreover, he felt that the establishment of a major trade center would revitalize trade with "foreign Indians," or extra-colonial tribes, a market which had been neglected for many years.

Archaeological evidence of an early eighteenth-century domestic site [REDACTED] containing artifacts which date to the first quarter of the eighteenth century, is believed to be the extant remains of the house constructed by Governor Spotswood ca. 1716.

According to Richard Beresford's 1717 correspondent, Alexander Spotswood's residence at Fort Christianna was of fine proportions. He wrote that "the Governor is now building a handsome house near Christ Anna where he intends to live when he shall be out of government. It will cost him about five or 600 £ sterling."⁴ John Fontaine's journal described this residence as being [REDACTED] at the end of an avenue through the forest which he and Spotswood personally laid out.

That settlement grew up in the area adjacent to Fort Christianna and Governor Spotswood's residence is indicated by Richard Beresford's anonymous correspondent who wrote that many people were locating there, that a couple forges had already been set up, and that the community was expected to become sizeable. Spotswood himself wrote the Bishop of London and requested that a church be built and a clergyman assigned to serve the residents in the Fort Christianna area.

By the end of March 1715 Spotswood claimed that "this new method for guarding the Frontiers" had succeeded so well that there had not been "the least mischief this year and a half to our outward Inhabitants."⁵ He even hoped to add three or four more nations of Indians to the tributary group.

At the time of Spotswood's writing the Sapony Indians were living in a village which they had constructed near the fort. According to John Fontaine, this village was only "a musket shot away" and was situated on a plain by the riverside. He described this Indian town in great detail. It consisted of a number of houses joined together in a circle which had three entranceways into its center. Each of these houses had a central doorway which opened into the circle. Each house was constructed of large, squared timbers which were stuck at least two feet into

(See Continuation Sheet #8)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET

8

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

5

the ground and extended upward about seven feet. The roof rafters were covered with oak or hickory bark. A hole in the roof of each house emitted the smoke from a central hearth which was used for cooking and warmth. Each house was partitioned into bedrooms by bullrush mats. Fontaine described the Saponies as utilizing bedsteads, elevated about two feet off the ground, and cooking pots, wooden dishes and trays, which they had fabricated themselves. He described their living conditions as "miserable."

Between the Sapony town and the river were several little oven-shaped huts built of wattles and plastered with clay and having an entrance on one end. These structures, called sweathouses, were used by sick persons as a sauna bath. After hot stones were placed in the sweathouse, the invalid was enclosed in the sweathouse until he endured all the heat he could bear. He then plunged into the waters of the Meherrin River, hopefully effecting a cure. Thus, the Sapony Indians were elaborately established at Fort Christianna.

In spite of Spotswood's progress toward peace, fear of Indian hostilities flared anew in the summer of 1715. Although at that time about 300 Sapony Indians were settled in the town at Fort Christianna and the king of the Tuscaroras had pledged his tribe to peace, a surprise attack in South Carolina by a great confederation of Indians previously assumed to have been subjugated reminded the Virginia government not to grow overly complacent. In addition there was reportedly considerable communication taking place between the hostile northern tribes and the tribes to the south.

Two thousand weight of biscuit for the subsistence of the forces considered necessary in the event of an attack by southern Indians was moved to Fort Christianna. Settlers were cautioned about permitting Indians from coming near their dwellings. Small pieces of cannon were sent to Fort Christianna and ammunition was dispatched to Fort Germanna. It was ordered that the cannons at both forts be manned.

An ambush by northern Indians upon unarmed, peaceful Catabaw Indians camped outside Fort Christianna further added to the general uneasiness along the frontier. According to William Byrd, the corruption of the morality of the Indian community by the local white settlers, who too liberally supplied them with liquor and further debauched them, added considerably to the accelerating ill feeling. Many of these border area settlers were freed indentured servants or runaways who lived beyond the reaches of law.

In the spring of 1716 Spotswood learned that a move was afoot to dissolve the act which had established the Virginia Indian Company. He was personally maligned by an anonymous accuser in a widely distributed letter which alleged that he had established Fort Christianna and the Virginia Indian Company as a means of financial self-aggrandizement.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET

9

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 6

Although Spotswood attempted to defend himself against all the allegations leveled at him and vigorously argued the rationale behind and success of the establishment of both the fort and the Indian Company, the Fort Christianna project began to falter. The men assigned as guards at Fort Christianna refused to range the woods. Men hired to transport trade goods to and from the fort refused to venture out even though they traveled in groups of forty.

Many people concluded that attempts to civilize the Indians were, at best, of short term value. Mark Catesby wrote that it was not uncommon for "civilized" Indians to revert to their native lifestyle, making no further use of their learning. Hugh Jones, in 1718, recounting a conversation with Cattabaw Indians, said that they thought it unreasonable that they be asked to exchange their manners and customs, since they did not desire the British to "turn Indian."

William Byrd, in his 1727 History of the Dividing Line, while commenting sympathetically about Spotswood's intention of promoting peace through his Fort Christianna project and alluding to its success, said that "all the Pains he [Spotswood] had undertaken among the Infidels had no other Effect but to make them something cleaner."⁶

Therefore on May 24, 1718, in spite of Spotswood's most earnest efforts to see Fort Christianna continued, the House of Burgesses voted to abandon the fort and send the Indian children home. Charles Griffin was removed to the College of William and Mary. However the Burgesses voiced their encouragement for the Virginia Indian Company to maintain the fort and school at their own expense if they so desired. The Indian Company responded by rebuilding the fort, perhaps hoping that the House would change its opinion. The effort was to no avail.

Later, when the project had been totally abandoned by the Virginia Indian Company, Spotswood, out of loyalty and affection toward the Saponny tribe who had been so enduringly cooperative, moved them into the safety of the rebuilt fort when they were threatened by northern Indians. They resided there until 1732.

On December 10, 1730, Henry Harrison, Thomas Cocke, Thomas Ravencroft and Joseph Allen conveyed the 1,000 acres on the north side of the Meherrin and 1000 acres on the south side, equidistant from the center of Fort Christianna, to Benjamin Edwards. This deed refers to the land as that which had formerly belonged to the Virginia Indian Company.

After Fort Christianna was totally abandoned by the Saponies, it fell into obscurity. The road near Christianna is named Fort Road as early as 1748 in Brunswick County records. Peter Fontaine, a Lunenburg County surveyor and descendant of diarist of John Fontaine, sketched the Fort's location on a detailed chart he drew at the head of a letter he wrote in 1752. He described it as being deserted. The Fontaine map, which contains longitude and latitude readings, when

(See Continuation Sheet #10)

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 10 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 7

compared with the appropriate modern U.S.G.S. topographic map, depicts the fort to be situated almost precisely where it has been located archaeologically (Figure 7).

When cartographer Herman Boye mapped Brunswick County in 1823 he labelled the Fort Christianna site as "Old Fort" and depicted it precisely where the archaeological remains of Fort Christianna have been found. (Figure 8).

The 1920 U.S.G.S. survey map, "White Plains," defines the general area as Fort Hill (Figure 9). A March 11, 1924 deed conveying three and three-fourths acres of land to the Colonial Dames of America states that the acreage is a "portion of the tract of land known as 'Fort Hill Plantation' which includes the site of the frontier fort erected in the year 1714 during the administration of Alexander Spotswood, Governor of the colony of Virginia, and known as 'Fort Christianna.'" A plat is included which depicts the location (Figure 10).

Thus, archaeological, cartographic, and documentary evidence precisely coincide with respect to the identification of Fort Christianna during the 1977-78 VRCA survey.

The Fort Christianna Archaeological District derives its significance from the unique research potential inherent in the nominated acreage. The site of Fort Christianna itself is the only known, conclusively identified, military site of its type in Virginia. The fact that three contemporaneous visitors to Fort Christianna documented in detail the appearance and construction of Fort Christianna provides an excellent opportunity to verify the identity of what is found and to view what survives in the ground. Since this is a tightly-dated contact period site, archaeological excavations of Fort Christianna would provide considerable insight into the cultural interaction between two diverse ethnic groups, the British and the Indian, at a given time. Much valuable information about daily life in a frontier environment could be gained. Trade patterns may also be demonstrated by a study of the material culture at Fort Christianna. Excavation of the buildings located within the palisade should provide architectural and artifactual information on frontier academic and ecclesiastical structures and practices. Additionally, an understanding of the schoolmaster's everyday life at Fort Christianna should be attainable.

John Fontaine's detailed description of a contact period Indian town located in close proximity to British settlements provides a unique opportunity for archaeological research into the impact of British culture on the Virginia Indian. In addition to describing the Spony Indian town, Fontaine also noted carefully Indian dress, lifestyle, and mode of government. He recorded phonically many Indian words, with their English equivalents. Thus, archaeological excavation of the Spony Indian town site would provide an opportunity for detailed anthropological research.

(See Continuation Sheet #11)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 11 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 8

Excavation of Governor Spotswood's Fort Christianna residence would provide considerable insight into the material culture of a colonial Governor, in particular, his response to a frontier environment. The presence of "a handsome house" costing 500-600 £ in a frontier wilderness is intrinsically unique. Much architectural information could be derived from its scientific excavation. As well, data could be gathered about Spotswood's earlier life, in the years prior to his marriage.

Numerous opportunities for research parallels exist between the site of Germanna in Orange County and Fort Christianna. At both locations, toward the same military objective, Spotswood contemporaneously constructed frontier forts, described in the documentary evidence as markedly dissimilar, and placed what he considered lower status ethnic groups at each site to be a human frontier barrier. As well, he built personal residences in both localities and attempted to encourage settlement in the vicinity. He also undertook to establish churches at both localities. Thus, careful archaeological and historical research on both sites would yield much information about the variability of frontier life, early eighteenth-century military fortifications, cross-cultural contact and the personal response of a Royal Governor to the Frontier.

Inclusion of the Fort Christianna Archaeological District in the National Register of Historic Places would assure the preservation of many unique, interrelated archaeological components, all of which remain essentially intact.

M.W.M.

(See Continuation Sheet #12 for footnotes)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Fort Christianna Archaeological District)

CONTINUATION SHEET

12

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 9

1. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 13, p.36.
2. John Fontaine, The Journal of John Fontaine, p. 91.
3. Colonial Papers of America and the West Indies, January 1716 - July 1717, item 243.
4. Ibid, Item 243.
5. Alexander Spotswood, The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Vol. II, p. 108.
6. William Byrd, William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina, p. 118.
7. Brunswick County Deed Book 77, p. 217.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fort Christianna Archaeological District

CONTINUATION SHEET 13 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Herman Boye, "Brunswick County," 1820.

Brunswick County Deed Book 77, p. 217,218.

E.P. Buford, "Fort Christianna," (Lawrenceville, 1924).

William Byrd, William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina, ed. W.K. Boyd, (Raleigh, 1929).

Calendar of State Papers, (Richmond).

Colonial Papers of America and the West Indies, January 1716-July 1717, ed. C. Headlan, (London, 1930).

John Fontaine, The Journal of John Fontaine, ed. Edward Alexander, (Charlottesville, 1972).

J.F. Gilmer, "Brunswick County," 1863.

B.J. Hillman, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, 1714-1718, (Richmond, 1966).

Hugh Jones, The Present State of Virginia, ed. r.l. Morton, (Chapel Hill, 1956).

J.P. Kennedy, Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1712-14, 1718, (Richmond, 1956).

James Madison, "Virginia," 1807.

Ann Maury, Memoirs of a Huguenot Family, (Baltimore, 1967).

C.J. Milling, Red Carolinians, (Columbia, 1969).

Martha McCartney, "History of Bath Town, North Carolina," 1978 n.p.

Gay Neale, Brunswick County, Virginia, 1720-1975, (Brunswick County, 1975).

Alexander Spotswood, Iron Works at Tuball...1739, ed. l.j. Capon, (Charlottesville, 1945).

Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, (Richmond).

John Wood, "Brunswick County," 1823.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
14	10	1

Acreege of nominated property: 436.

UTM references:

- A. [REDACTED]
- B. [REDACTED]
- C. [REDACTED]
- D. [REDACTED]
- E. [REDACTED]

Verbal Boundary Description:

[REDACTED]