

## Native Americans in Amelia

**A**rcheological evidence for early man in what today is Amelia County dates to as early as 15,000 years ago. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources records thirteen Clovis points found in the county, which suggests an ancient Paleo-Indian (15000-9000 BC) presence. Stone artifacts from the later Archaic (8000-2000 BC) and Woodland Periods (1200 BC-AD 1500) are found more plentiful in Amelia.

Most local indigenous artifacts—clay pipes, scrapers, axes, pottery, stone points, etc.—come from areas heavily farmed over the centuries and thus cannot be placed into a ready context of daily tribal life. Only a few undisturbed potential sites remain here, but could add usefully to the record if uncovered. Almost no written “first contact” accounts of Virginia Indians in Amelia exist from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the late 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Most of what is known about the first peoples of Tsenacomoco, the land the English named “Virginia,” comes from scientific deduction. Anthropologists assess that the tribes of the Piedmont lived mainly along the waterways and nearby promontories in open villages and sites. Amelia likely was in a transition zone of sparse indigenous populations between the Monacan and the Powhatan tribes. The fall line, or “Paquachowng” (an Algonquian, or Powhatan,

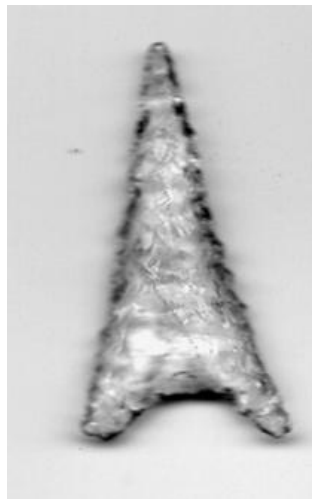
term), marked the buffer zone between the Powhatan “confederation” to the east and the Monacan-Mannahoac “alliance” to the north and west.

Studies suggest that the Monacans inhabited the Amelia area until about 1730, usually in small seasonal hunting areas or other migratory sites. They were Siouan-speakers whose ancestors likely migrated from the Ohio Valley into the Virginias by way of the westward extending New River Valley.

The Monacans became more agrarian after about AD 1000. They traded with their neighbors, possessed jewelry of native copper and semiprecious gems (possibly from digs in Amelia), and over time resided more and more in palisaded villages of reed- and bark-matted, domed huts.

The Monacans largely avoided the English after the latter’s arrival in 1607. They succumbed with relative quickness to disease, war, neglect, and persecution. A

secondhand report in 1669 noted about 100 native Monacans, including 30 bowmen, near the Blue Ridge frontier. Less than 2,000 Siouan speakers remained in Virginia by 1700. And only the Tutelos remained as a full-blooded indigenous group in Virginia by 1800. Monacan mixed descendants started an enclave on Bear Mountain in Amherst County in 1833, where today their Nation officially remains centered.



Ornate stone point  
found in Amelia

*Studies suggest that the Monacans inhabited the Amelia area until about 1730.*

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## President's Message

Summer almost has passed as I write this. I have been busy this season on numerous Society and community projects, after a lengthy, post-lockdown car trip to California and back, essential family visits, a late bout of COVID, and the attendant writer's block. Excuses, excuses! But I had intended to get this out in July.

The official Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the American Revolution is now upon us. As noted on page 5, I will chair the county's committee that seeks widespread involvement and worthwhile output, including gathering the talents of a number of Society volunteers and Board members. One of these is Peggy Figlar, my Nottoway County Historical Association counterpart, who will help with key "Amelia" Revolutionary events that occurred in what is now Nottoway County. I envisage also using advisory and liaison persons from local entities that will help us "spread the word" and ideals of the American Revolution. We have been asked by VA250, the General Assembly-created body that will oversee the Commonwealth's commemoration, to involve grassroots players (including even Brits and Tories!) and to objectively portray local history, which I hope has been our mode in recent decades. Amelia observances and activities will extend beyond purely academic endeavors, so if you have experience with such things as "end-of-the-world, once in a quarter millennium" fireworks displays as July 4, 2026, approaches, we may have need of your services. We shall see.

Meanwhile, our Amelia logo contest for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary remains underway, but with no community input so far. I believe the Board can come up with monetary reward for the top three submissions. More info to follow.

Our July 16 Ice Cream Social, a trial run fund-raiser held in conjunction with Amelia Masonic Lodge 101, was rained out shortly into the proceedings. While Mother Nature literally (or was it figuratively?) put a damper on the event, it still proved successful as the donated baked goods profits exceeded our expenses. I

would like to thank Ann Clarke, Debbie Orr, Peyton Anderson, Margaret Lam, Bob Smith, and Glen Henkle for their efforts on this, and to Masonic Lodge 101, and all our other friends and members who donated their time, money, goods, and perspiration to set up and host the outing. We shall try again next summer.

Finally, we shall return with our Annual Christmas Shoppe on Saturday, December 3, for one day (9 a.m.-1 p.m.). It will operate out of our space rented from the Amelia Christmas Parents' Craft Fair in one of the exhibition halls at the County Lot (Joe Paulette Park). I hope that I may count on your help in planning and transporting our operation, conducting sales, donating baked goods and money, and tearing down. The July ice cream rainout means that we shall have only 3½ major fundraisers this year, but I trust that our budget yet runs in the black and erases our past string of deficits.

Look to your autumn newsletter in mid-fall for more particulars.

Sincerely,

*Michael F. Whitaker, President*

**Directors Wanted.** The Society's Board of Directors has begun its annual search for new Directors to assist in the management of our organization. Directors need not be Society members to serve a three-year term, but must join for at least one year in order to become an officer. The Society seeks diverse (including younger) Board members whose administrative, communications, financial, and research expertise, etc., will productively lead in the fulfillment of its non-profit mission "to preserve, protect, and promote the natural, civic, architectural, literary, and other history of Amelia County..." If you desire to serve, or can recommend a dedicated community person who would usefully curate Amelia history, please contact one of the Officers or Directors listed in this newsletter or call (804) 561-3180. Formal nominations will be made in November with floor nominations and elections at the December open membership meeting.

*Miss Mary Frances Rand, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Age 14*

## An Amelia History, 100 Years Ago

The Jackson Memorial Library and Museum contains many interesting documents and artifacts. It also houses a number of old curios of local interest: photos of damage from the 1924 Amelia tornado; various legal papers; war souvenirs; and many others. One unique item of interest is a history report

dated May 19, 1922, from 14-year-old Mary Frances Rand, a freshman (back then an 8<sup>th</sup> grader) at Amelia High School. Below are extracts from her handwritten assignment, offered here as a minor snapshot of Amelia County 100 years ago.

The territory now called Amelia County was first settled about 1685. Hunters and trappers coming up the Appomattox River and Flat Creek discovered that the wild pea vine grew abundantly here. It was considered by the colonists to indicate great fertility, therefore they settled. The first settlements were on Flat Creek at the Egglestetton place. These plantations still exist and the houses, being built of the heart timber, which then covered the whole county, are still in a good state of preservation.

Amelia is well watered, being chained by the Appomattox and its tributaries. There are four large creeks, and quite a number of smaller ones... The surface is agreeably diversified. The soil varies from red clay to grey slate and sandy loam, which under proper cultivation, produces good crops of corn, wheat, tobacco, oats, rye, and grasses. The bottom lands are fertile and highly productive. Tobacco is the chief staple crop, and its raising, curing, and management have been carried to great perfection...

The county is graciously supplied with mineral springs of great value and health-giving properties. The Amelia Sulphur Springs years ago had great notoriety, as a resort for all Eastern and Southside Virginia. The Otterburn Springs was also a great summer resort.

There are several manufacturing flour mills. The principal mills are: Clementown, Bridgeforth's, Rowlett's, and Gregory's. There are any number of corn mills, run by water or steam, in convenient localities.

Amelia Court House, the county seat, is immediately on the line of the Southern Railroad, thirty-six miles from Richmond and seventeen miles from Burkeville. This is a growing village with seven stores, and houses are being built right along. There are two tobacco warehouses here.

At the Court House there are four churches: Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Baptists. There is a large hotel (kept by Mr. O. C. Hooker). There are also two banks, the Amelia County Bank and the Farmers' Merchants Bank. The Amelia High School was built in 1911 (*sic*) and it has sent students to many of the normal schools and colleges of Virginia.

The Grand Old County has done her part exceedingly well in the aid of the United States. She has produced some of the most noted men, and she has never been found lacking in anything.

If Amelia has done all of these things in the past years, she will certainly do more than this in years to come.

### About the Author

*Frances Rand*, daughter of prominent local businessman James D. (and Martha Holman) Rand, and a 1925 Amelia High School graduate, was an Amelia native. She became a very accomplished accountant and eventually, the head bookkeeper at Miller & Rhoads in Richmond. She never married. On retirement from Miller & Rhoads, she moved back to Amelia Court House and worked in her father's lucrative transport business, Pickett Services Company, which later became James River Transportation. Frances also is said to have been "Virginia's best woman golfer" at her playing peak and frequently competed with male golfers at "The Amelia Country Club." Ms. Rand passed away in 1980.

*-Thanks in part for this biographic summary to the recollections of Mr. Bo deKrafft.*

## Alabama's First U.S. Senator Was Amelia Born

His Father Was an Influential Virginia Baptist Pastor.

John Williams Walker, one of seven siblings, was born in Amelia County in 1783. Son of Pastor Jeremiah Walker, Sr., and Mary Graves Walker, he served as Alabama's first United States Senator before his death in 1823. The Walkers lived in Amelia until John was seven, when the family moved to Georgia. There, the future legislator attended a noted preparatory school. He matriculated at Princeton College, New Jersey, soon after the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, graduating with honors in 1806. Afterwards, he was admitted to the practice of law. He married Matilda Pope of Georgia in 1808. They moved to Huntsville, Mississippi Territory, two years later.

*The Dictionary of Alabama Biography* describes Walker's political career as follows: "He was elected Speaker of the Territorial House of Representatives in 1818, and served as President of the first Constitutional Convention that framed the laws of the new state of Alabama. He was one of the nineteen eminent Senators mentioned by Thomas H. Benton in his *Thirty Years in the U.S. Senate*. In person, Senator Walker was described as being tall, a well-formed slender figure, with manners and address graceful and prepossessing. He had blue eyes, brown hair, a fine complexion with handsome features. His literary attainments increased his efficiency as a jurist and orator... Two counties were named in his honor, one in Alabama and one in Texas. He died in Huntsville on 23 April 1823."

Although the sources of the senator's leadership abilities are hard to pin down, the example of his father, Pastor Jeremiah Walker, was a likely wellspring. A descendant of Scots-Irish Anglican clergymen who had been in the New World since 1740, the senior Walker was born in North Carolina. Prior to his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, he had converted to the Baptist faith at a revival meeting in Guilford County. Shortly afterwards, he "was conducting religious services as an ordained minister for the Separatist Baptist groups in North Carolina and Virginia."



John Williams Walker  
Photo from Wikipedia

Pastor Walker moved "for the first time" to Amelia in 1768, conducting "illegal services" for his "rapidly growing denomination." That November, Amelia officials "refused to license Walker's gathering." Not only were Baptists then considered a more common class of congregants than the wealthier families of Grub Hill and other nearby Churches of England, the Separatists themselves also strongly objected to paying the legally requisite tithe (one-tenth) to the royal colonial church.

The senator's father, called a "Baptist preacher extraordinary," was jailed in Chesterfield in August 1773 for "'sundry misdemeanors,' the most heinous of which was preaching to the people without ordination in the Church of England." He was acquitted in September, partly because of his deft speaking ability (and because of behind-the-scenes maneuvering by his friend Patrick Henry), but also because he was being held in rural Virginia during a time of growing anti-royalist fervor.

Pastor Walker's main congregation was at the Nottoway Church, possibly "Nottoway Meeting House," in Amelia's Nottoway Parish (which became Nottoway County in 1788). As was usual, he also ministered to "a half dozen other infant [non-Anglican] churches" in the area. He was considered rather moderate in his faith, learned, and not as strident as other rural Baptist pastors of his time. His Nottoway flock prospered from its inception, and he helped plant congregations in Prince Edward, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Charlotte Counties. He often conducted revivals.

Before he died in 1793, Walker was a leader in the formation of the Virginia Association of Separatist Baptist Churches, which first featured twelve churches in eleven Virginia counties. "[He] served as a messenger to [its establishing] meeting [where he] preached to crowds estimated at 4,000 to 5,000 persons."

## Marion Harland “Receipts”

Amelia’s Mary Virginia Hawes Terhune, *nom de plume*: Marion Harland, died 100 years ago last June. Recognized for both fiction and works on domestic arts and travel, her career as a Southern female author uniquely spans the American *antebellum* era through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While Ms. Harland’s culinary skills developed as a young newlywed in Charlotte County, she produced the standard tome of American cooking and household management starting in 1871, and eventually sold some 50 million copies of her *Common Sense in the Household*, after moving to New York City. To honor this famous daughter of Amelia, we present two of her (rather detailed) late-1800s recipes:

### To Make Coffee (*boiled*)

1 full coffee-cup (½ pint) of ground coffee  
1 quart of boiling water  
White of an egg, and crushed shell of same  
½ cup of cold water to settle it

Stir up the eggshell and the white (beaten) with the coffee, and very little cold water, and mix gradually with the boiling water in the coffee-boiler. Stir from the sides and top as it boils up. Boil pretty fast twelve minutes; pour in the cold water and take from the fire, setting gently upon the hearth to settle. In five minutes, pour it off carefully into your silver, china, or Britannia coffee-pot, which should be previously well scalded.

Send to table *hot*.

### Milk Bread

1 quart milk  
½ teacupful of yeast  
¼ lb. butter, one tablespoon white sugar

Stir into the milk, which should be made blood-warm, a pint of flour, the sugar, lastly the yeast. Beat all together well, and let them rise five or six hours. Then melt the butter, and add with a little salt. Work in flour enough to make a stiff dough; let this rise four hours, and make into small loaves. Set near the fire for half an hour, and bake.

In warm weather, add a teaspoonful soda, dissolved in warm water, to the risen sponge, as all bread mixed with milk is apt to sour.



~Amelia Revolution!~  
*250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution*

### Amelia County American Revolution 250<sup>th</sup> Committee

In August, the Board of Supervisors asked Society president Michael Whitaker to chair the county’s *Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the American Revolution* Committee. He is now assembling group members who will coordinate actions with VA250, the Commonwealth’s oversight body. VA250 has asked all Virginia jurisdictions to commemorate the Revolution at least through the 2026 anniversary of the *Declaration of Independence*. Our local grassroots committee has been asked to educate county citizens on the history and ideals of the Revolution, to highlight local places, events, trends, and personages of the period (1772-76), and to encourage inclusive participation in edifying and celebratory events in the county, state, and nation. The committee will first convene in upcoming weeks. The committee continues to seek especially minority group and younger participants. If you feel you may contribute to this work, please contact the Society at [ameliahistoricalsociety@tds.net](mailto:ameliahistoricalsociety@tds.net) or Michael at [lucolmfw@aol.com](mailto:lucolmfw@aol.com).



We shall conduct our traditional **Fall Namozine Church Service** on Sunday, November 13, 2022, at 3 p.m. The Reverend Jeffery Schroeder of the Friends of Sailors Creek will preside.

### Thanks to Our Latest Donors, 2022

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