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Thomasina E. Jordon Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act, HR1294
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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, and guests: I am Dr. Helen Rountree, Professor Emerita of Anthropology at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. My training and publications are in “ethnohistory,” a combination of cultural anthropology and history. Initially I worked with Shoshone Indian people in Nevada, but I began researching the Native Americans of eastern Virginia, historical and modern, in 1969. I am the only scholar, whether anthropologist or historian, who has been active in the specialty that long. I spent every free moment of the first eight years, when I was not teaching for a living, scouring the published and unpublished records from 1607 onward. That included speed-reading the often unindexed county record books. I have spent substantial periods since then hunting for more records and studying other subjects, like ethnic identity, that are relevant to learning about Indian tribes. Shoehorned into all that work were face-to-face visits and occasional spells of living among the modern Virginia people, the people whose Indianness, compared with the Nevada Indians I knew, impressed me so much.

I am not the first social scientist to work with these six tribes (*see the attached quick-reference chart*). My predecessors’ work goes back nearly 120 years, beginning with James Mooney of the Smithsonian Institution and continuing with Frank Speck of the University of Pennsylvania, among others. Like them, I have written up my findings for others to read; unlike them, I have done it in no less than six books (so far), the most germane of them for this hearing being *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of*

Virginia Through Four Centuries (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990; no. 196 in the Civilization of the American Indian series). Roughly one-third of that volume is devoted to endnotes and bibliography, to prove I didn't make anything up. I have offered to send copies of the documents unearthed in my research to the BAR in the Bureau of Indian Affairs; the BAR has never yet seen fit to respond to my offer, not even when I talked to their representative face-to-face at the Senate committee hearing last summer.

The last thing to say about my work is that I have always supported my research with funds saved back from my own salary and from small university grants. Like the tribes I work with, I don't have backers: I pay my own way. So the testimony you are about to hear is my own; the Indian people are my colleagues, not my employers. And that testimony is literally based upon decades of intensive research.

I have been able to trace the existence of Indian groups across 400 years in eastern Virginia. Many of today's tribes come from refugee communities, meaning reduced Indian populations that merged in order to keep going. But there were elements in them descended from the early seventeenth century tribes that give them their names today.

It was not easy to find records about the tribes. In the 18th century, if a group never had a reservation (the Monacans) or if reservations were lost (the other five), the Commonwealth of Virginia took no further interest in the people. Meanwhile, local governments' records were mainly concerned with property and criminal behavior, neither of which involved many Indians. (If you were poor and law-abiding, you were invisible.) Several of the key courthouses were burned in the 19th century. U.S. Census-

takers did not record the names of family members – only the heads of household – until 1850.

Aggravating the problem in finding Indian records was Virginia's reluctance to let Indians appear in the records as "Indians." One relatively tolerant law of 1833 created a category they could fall into: POMBNBFNOM (Persons of Mixed Blood Not Being Free Negroes or Mulattoes). Needless to say, the people who got certified in that category never subsequently appeared in the records under that jaw-breaking name. Instead before the Civil Rights era, Virginia racial policy became increasingly intolerant of anyone claiming an Indian identity rather than the catch-all "colored" one.

In the first half of the 20th century, anybody claiming to be Indian and any non-Indian cooperating with such persons came in for humiliation that was severe and very public. That was possible because an entire state bureau, the Vital Statistics Bureau, became a policing agency on matters racial, issuing public announcements, sending a circular to all county officials statewide, and mailing pamphlets to thousands of private citizens – at taxpayers' expense. In both the circular and the pamphlet, the Indian tribes were specifically attacked. The effect upon the appearance of "Indian" entries in state, local, and even federal records like the U.S. Census schedules should be obvious. It didn't stop with humiliation. Thanks to the Racial Integrity Law of 1923, anyone insisting upon the "Indian" label in Virginia could legally be sent to jail; several Indian people did in fact go to jail for it.

Therefore like a fieldworking anthropologist, I not only collected all documentary references to Indians, but I also acquired recent lists of Indian *personal names* – several 20th century tribal rolls being available – and then worked backward as

far as I could in the records, constructing genealogies and collecting the records about the people in those genealogies to see how the communities shaped up.

Social scientists like me look for several things in determining whether or not a group is a distinct ethnic group. I searched for the same things that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, later on, expected to see before acknowledging people as Indian tribes. I have found clear evidence that the people before you today meet those criteria as far back as the public records allow me to look: living in geographical clusters, being predominantly in-marrying, and having most of their associations with one another rather than with outsiders. After the Civil War, when free non-whites could openly have them in Virginia, those associations show up as tribal churches, followed by tribal schools. On several occasions, beginning in 1892, the federal Office of Indian Affairs (later the BIA) was contacted for financial help for those schools. The answer was always “no” – not because the people were not Indians, but because the last treaty they signed (in 1677-80) had far predated the existence of the federal government. Washington was uncomfortable with that. The people of these six tribes had possessed *informal* political organizations – like many ethnic groups called “tribes” in the Third World – since the dying out of their chiefs in the early 18th century. When they formalized things in the 20th century, the tribes took out charters with the State Corporation Commission, something the white supremacists could not legally prevent them from doing.

Virginia was most definitely an anti-Indian state in the 19th and most of the 20th centuries, and ironically enough, some of the blame can be laid on Pocahontas. No other state has as many or as socially prominent descendants of that so-called “princess.” Her legend – for that is exactly what it is, a legend – has long blinded most Virginians to the

existence of the modern Indian tribes in their midst. Even now, when I say I work with Virginia Indians, people nearly always start in asking me about Pocahontas. When Virginia wanted to make the “one-drop” rule (i.e., one “drop” of non-white “blood” making a person “colored”) into a law, legislators found that it couldn’t be done without making some of the state’s aristocrats get into the Jim Crow coach. The bill had to be rewritten, making an exception for “the Pocahontas Descendants.” The tone of the defenders of the white race in Virginia was even more strident than elsewhere, as a result, for that exception was seen as a hole in the dyke by the die-hards, one of whom characterized the “Indian” racial category as a “way-station to whiteness.”

I have always found it amusing, how wrong the white-supremacists were in assuming that absolutely everybody would “pass” for white who could. The tribes I work with were not and are not interested in doing that. When Virginia repealed its racial definitions law in 1975, and anybody could claim to be anything, these people went right on saying they were Indian, as they had been doing all along. They had said it to James Mooney in the 1890s, and to the social scientists who followed him. Most of us social scientists have been North American Indian specialists, and we have worked with these Virginia communities because they are *tribes of Indians*. I submit to you that they deserve acknowledgment as such now.

INFORMATION CHART ON SIX INDIAN TRIBES IN VIRGINIA

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Information supplied by HCR's fieldwork or else info. provided for federal recognition effort, 2002-2007
NOTE: distinct early 20th C ethnic groups lived in clusters, organized formally, created own schools and churches, and in-married; ONLY FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS & PUBLIC ACTIVITIES ARE SHOWN HERE.

<u>Name of group</u>	<u>Formally incorporated in</u>	<u>State recognition in</u>	<u>Tribal Church organized in</u>	<u>County support for tribal school received in</u>	<u>Fed. Gvt. asked to help</u>
Chickahominy	1901	1983	1901 (Baptist)	1922	1934, 1946
E. Chickahominy	1924	1983	1924 (Baptist)	[w/ Chickahominy]	1946
Monacan	1989	1989	1908 (Episcopal)	1890s-1908, 1946-63	
Nansemond	1984	1985	1850 (Methodist)	1890s, 1922	
Rappahannock	1921	1983	1964 (Baptist)	1962 (bused to U. Matt. School 1964-65)	
Upper Mattaponi	1923	1983	1942 (Baptist)	1892, 1917	1892, 1946

NOTE: the help asked of federal government was for EDUCATION in these instances. Another instance, in 1943-44, concerned Virginia's hard-line racial policy.

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES BEING OFFERED IN TRIBAL SCHOOLS:

	<u>9th grade</u>	<u>10th grade</u>	<u>11th grade</u>	<u>12th grade</u>
Chickahominy	1948?	1951? (I. Himes)	1952? (L. Adkins)	1958
Eastern Chickahominy – bused to Chickahominy school in next county				
Monacan	never			
Nansemond	never			
Rappahannock	never			
Upper Mattaponi	1960	1961	1962	

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS WORKING WITH TRIBES

James Mooney, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution [anthropologist]

1889 – Circulars to local doctors, officials: replies point to Monacans, Nansemonds, Chickahominy

1899-1901 – visited Chickahominy, Nansemond

Published: journal article in *American Anthropologist*

Frank G. Speck, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

1919-50 – worked with Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, Chickahominies, Nansemond

Published: two books, five journal articles (himself and/or students)

Bertha Pfister Wailes, M.A. student in Sociology Dept., University of Virginia

Early 1920s until her death in 1970s – worked with Monacans

Result: M.A. thesis, U. of Virginia, 1928

Theodore Stern, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

1940-48 – worked with Chickahominies

Result: Ph.D. dissertation, U. of Pa., 1948

Published: revision of diss. pub. In *Proceedings of American Philosophical Society*, 1952

Katherine Seaman, Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology, Sweet Briar College [anthropologist]

Late 1960s-early 1970s – worked with Monacans

Result: journal article with Bertha Wailes (MS, 1972)

Helen C. Rountree, Dept. of Sociology & Criminal Justice, Old Dominion University [anthropologist]

1969 to present – worked with Chickahominies, Nansemond, Rappahannock, Upper Mattaponi

1973 to present – occasional visits to Monacan

Result: Ph.D. dissertation, U. of Wis.-Milwaukee, 1973

Published: 6 books, 13 journal articles/book chapters on the Powhatans across 400 years;
one book chapter involved (and was checked by) the Monacans as well

Sam Cook, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, Virginia Polytechnic University [anthropologist]

1995 to present – worked with Monacans

Result: Ph.D. dissertation, U. of Arizona, 1997

Published: revision of diss. pub. as book, 2000; also 5 journal articles

PLUS:

Historian: Edward Ragan – 1996 – present (Rappahannock)

Result: Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 2006

SINCE SCHOOL INTEGRATION:

Name of group	<u>School closed</u>	<u>Got tribal center</u>	<u>Powwows since</u>	<u>Museum since</u>
Chickahominy	1967/1971	1980	1951	
Eastern Chickahominy		[in new church bldg., 1984]		
Monacan	1963	1981	1993 Bazaar since 1960	1994
Nansemond	1930s?	in planning stage	1988	2002
Rappahannock	1964	1999	1999	
Upper Mattaponi	1965	opened 1987	1987	

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

NOTE: All six tribes are incorporated under Virginia's State Corporation Commission. Dates of incorporation are given above. Titles of the officers in these corporations: Chief, Assistant Chief, Secretary, Treasurer, varying numbers of Councilmen/Elders.

<u>Name of group</u>	<u>Officials elected?</u> <u>/Freq. of elections</u>	<u>Freq. of meetings</u>	<u>Voters</u>	<u>Membership</u> <u>genealogically?</u>
Chickahominy	yes / 3 yrs., Staggered terms	Board/Council: bimonthly All members: annually	Adults 18+	yes
E. Chickahominy	yes / annually	Council: quarterly All members: 2 per yr.	Adults 16+	yes
Monacan	yes / as needed	Council: ca. monthly All members: as needed	Adults 18+	yes
Nansemond	yes / 4 yrs.	Council: monthly All members: monthly	Adults 18+	yes
Rappahannock	yes / 3 yrs.	Council: 4 times/yr.	Adults 18+	yes
Upper Mattaponi	yes / 4 yrs.	Council: monthly All members: monthly	Adults 18+	yes

