

**CHEROENHAKA (NOTTOWAY) INDIAN BLOOD LINE  
Of**

**EDY (EDITH, EDIE) TURNER (1754-1838)**

**Native Name: “Wañe Roonseraw”**

**Queen of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe**

**[TRUE NAME OF THE NOTTOWAY – CHEROENHAKA ]**

*Compiled By: Chief Walt “Red Hawk” Brown, Tribal Historian  
(All Rights Reserved)*

- Edith (Edy - Edie) Turner, aka Waně Roonseraw, born 1754, died 1838
- Edith Turner’s probated will in the courts of Southampton County noted that she left her household goods to one of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians by the name of **Edwin Turner** (*Will Book # 12, pg. 106, Southampton County Court House- Date of will 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1838*)
- July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1808 a Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian Special Census listed Edie Turner as a Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian among 17 other Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians living on Tribal Reservation Land in Southampton County VA. The Census was conducted by Trustees of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe: William Blow, Henry Blow and Samuel Blunt (*Executive papers July 1-22, 1808, Library of Virginia, Archives Division*).
- July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1808 Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian Special Census listed one **Celia Rogers** as the **LAST LIVING Nansemond Indian** residing on the Reservation with the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians, having died in 1806.
- A 1819 Marriage License between Edith Turner to William Green listed both as Free People of Color (FPC) (Southampton County Court Marriage Records) **NOTE:** Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians were listed as FPC on many county records and up to the early 1900s were classified as Colored – Walter Plecker first director of the Bureau of Vital Statistics 1912-1946 promulgated Documentary Genocide, by changing ones race to reflect something other than Indian.
- On March 17, 1820, a Petersburg News Paper Article titled *The Nottoway [Cheroenhaka..WDB] Indians* quotes from Thomas Jefferson as he spoke to the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians numbering around 27 men, women and children, occupying a tract of Seven Thousand Acres of fertile land upon the west side of the Nottoway River two miles from Jerusalem [ *Currently Courtland, VA... WDB*] in Southampton County. Article further stated that the principal character among the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) is a woman who is styled their Queen. Her name is **Edie Turner**.

- On July 7, 1820, Thomas Jefferson opened up lines of communication by sending a letter along with the recorded vocabulary of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians to Peter S. Duponceau, a student of Indian Languages, residing in Philadelphia. Jefferson references the **vocabulary** of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Tribe of Indians that he had obtained from John Wood, a former Professor of Mathematic at the College of William & Mary.
- Thomas Jefferson communicates to Peter S. Duponceau that the vocabulary of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian was obtained from an old Indian Woman, who according to Jefferson her intellect was higher than the lower order [slaves... *WDB*], by the name of Edie Turner on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 1820 by John Wood. (*Manuscripts Obtained from the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA*)
- Thomas Jefferson infers in his letter to Peter S. Duponceau that probably the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian Vocabulary is Powhatan [Algonkian Speakers... *WDB*].
  - This assumption by Thomas Jefferson **was proven to be incorrect** as documented in response letters from Peter S. Duponceau to Mr. Jefferson on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 1820.
- Letter from Peter S. Duponceau to Thomas Jefferson dated the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1820 conveys to Mr. Jefferson that the vocabulary of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian as recorded by John Wood from Edie Turner is Iroquoian and **not** of the Powhatans or Lenape, [Algonkian Speakers... *WDB*], but an Iroquois physiognomy. He further states in his letter to Mr. Jefferson that the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Language is essentially Iroquois and is compounded of the different dialects of the Six Iroquoian Nations – the two principal dialects of the Iroquois Nation the Onondaga and the Mohawk.
- Peter S. Duponceau's letter to Mr. Jefferson, on July 18, 1820 quoting Rev. John Heckewelder, of Bethlehem, as being in agreement with him on the language of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians as Iroquoian and not of the Lenape, [Algonquian Speakers... *WDB*], family
- On March 27, 2008, after in-depth research by scholars, The Library of Virginia **recognized** Edith (Edy) Turner as Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indian and posthumously honored her as such, in a "Virginia Women In History" Formal Ceremony, in an open forum, at the Library of Virginia in Richmond, VA. It was documented by the Library of Virginia, that Edith Turner was Chief/Queen of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, having been the only Chief in the 18<sup>th</sup> century having a left a written will directing the distributions of her assets at her death. Her will was probated in the Courts of Southampton County, VA on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1838. (See [www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org](http://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org) will of Edith Turner)

- On November 2, 2011 a State Historical Roadside Marker recognizing the “Hand Site” occupied intermittently 700 AD to 1650, as an Iroquoian Site, was erected at the intersection of General Thomas Hwy (Hwy 671) and Handsome Road in Southampton County VA. The Hand Site Marker reads that the “Hand Site” was long claimed (occupied) by the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indians ([www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org](http://www.cheroenhaka-nottoway.org))

#### DOCUMENTED SOURCE(S):

- Edith Turner’s Will - *Will Book # 12, page 106, Southampton County Court House (Date of Will 26<sup>th</sup> February 1838)*
- *Executive Papers July 1-22, 1808, Library of Virginia, Archives Division - July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1808 Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Special Census*
- *Petersburg News Paper Article dated March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1820, Quotes Thomas Jefferson as stating that Edie Turner was the Queen of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe.*
- Library of Virginia Posthumously honors Edy Turner , March 27, 2008 (Edith Turner-Library of Virginia website)
- Beyond the Blackwater, Comprised by Jane Douglas Summers Brown, states that the Nottoway call themselves Cheroenhaka; *Papers, 1963-1993, Accession 34568, The Library of VA, Archives and Information Services, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219-800*
- An Ethno History of the Nottoway [Cheroenhaka...*WDB*], Meherrin and Weanock Indians of Southeastern Virginia by Lewis R. Binford quoting The Honorable James Tresevant and Albert Gallatin that the Nottoways were Iroquoian Speakers and that the true name of the Nottoway was Cheroenhaka sometimes spelled Cherohakah. [Note: The Honorable James Tresevant, former Judge in Southampton County in 1831 was married to Mary Blount Turner of Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) & Tuscarora decent...*WDB*]. He did a second recording of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Iroquoian Language between 1820 and 1836 that parallel the previous recording made by John Wood and again stated that the true name of the Nottoway was Cheroenhaka.
- *Manuscripts Obtained From the American Philosophical Society Philadelphia, PA, 105 South Fifth Street, Philadelphia, PA, Photo reproduction Agreement, Order no. 02-523, Dated December 11, 2002.*
  - Thomas Jefferson’s letter to Peter S. Duponceau dated July 7, 1820
  - Peter S. Duponceau’s response letter to Mr. Jefferson, dated July 12, 1820
  - Peter S. Duponceau’s letter to Mr. Jefferson, on July 18, 1820 quoting Rev. John Heckewelder, of Bethlehem, as being in agreement with him on the language of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians is Iroquoian and **NOT** of the Lenape family.(Not Powhatan / Lenape / Algonquian the language spoken by the Nansemonds Indians...*WDB*) .
  - Peter S. Duponceau’s letter to Mr. Jefferson dated September 12, 1820 questioning what is the true name of the Nottoway Indians since the word Nottoway [Na-da-wa...*WDB*] is the name that Algonquin speakers gave to

- the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway). Note: (The Nansemond Indians were Algonquian speakers of the Powhatans and not Iroquoian Speakers *WDB* )
- Newspaper Extract, March 17, 1820 Petersburg, VA; The Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Nottoway Indians - author Thomas Jefferson.
  - Vocabulary of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian as obtained from Edie Turner by John Wood, a former professor of Mathematics at William & Mary College, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1820 – documented as an Iroquoian Language.
  - Excerpts from the “Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, Volume I through VI, June 11, 1680 – May 3, 1775. [See Excerpts on the relationship of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) with the Colonial Council...WDB]
- **NOTE:** It is proven that Edie Turner spoke the Iroquoian Language of the Cheroenhaka (**Nottoway**) Indians and not the language of the Powhatans as assumed by Thomas Jefferson. It is also noted that ones language denotes ones culture, traditions and lineage. **Edie Turner did not speak the Algonquian Language of the Nansemond Indians who were of the Powhatan Lineage.** Therefore she was not a Nansemond Indian but an Iroquoian Speaking Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian as proven by Peter S. Duponceau.