

: ESTABLISHED 1714 “The Farthest Western Outpost of the British Empire”

A Fort Called Christ-Anna

You are standing at the site of Fort Christanna, a colonial fort laid out in 1714 by Virginia's Governor Alexander Spotswood. The fort was built on a tract of land set aside in 1714 for a trading post, as well as a site for rangers to patrol the area and keep peace, and as a home for the Saponie (the most common spelling at that time) people. Spotswood named the fort “Christ-Anna” for his religion and his queen.



First map known to show Fort Christanna
Virginia Marylandia et Carolina, c. 1714
by J. B. Homann, courtesy Library of Congress

The area that is now Brunswick County was then at the frontier of European expansion with settlers looking for new land. In 1714 Governor Spotswood, concerned with the protection of those pioneers as well as to the profits to be gained in the fur trade, received a charter from the General Assembly to build a fort in the wilderness on the Meherrin River. He established the Virginia Indian Company to do so. In addition, Spotswood gathered the remnants of the Saponie tribes in a place of safety, as they had been driven from their homeland by settlers and badly harassed by Iroquoian tribes.

Archaeologists
1978-1981
have determined
of the fort's walls
of some buildings
nature of the
fort. Artifacts
bottle and jar
seen at the
Museum in L



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