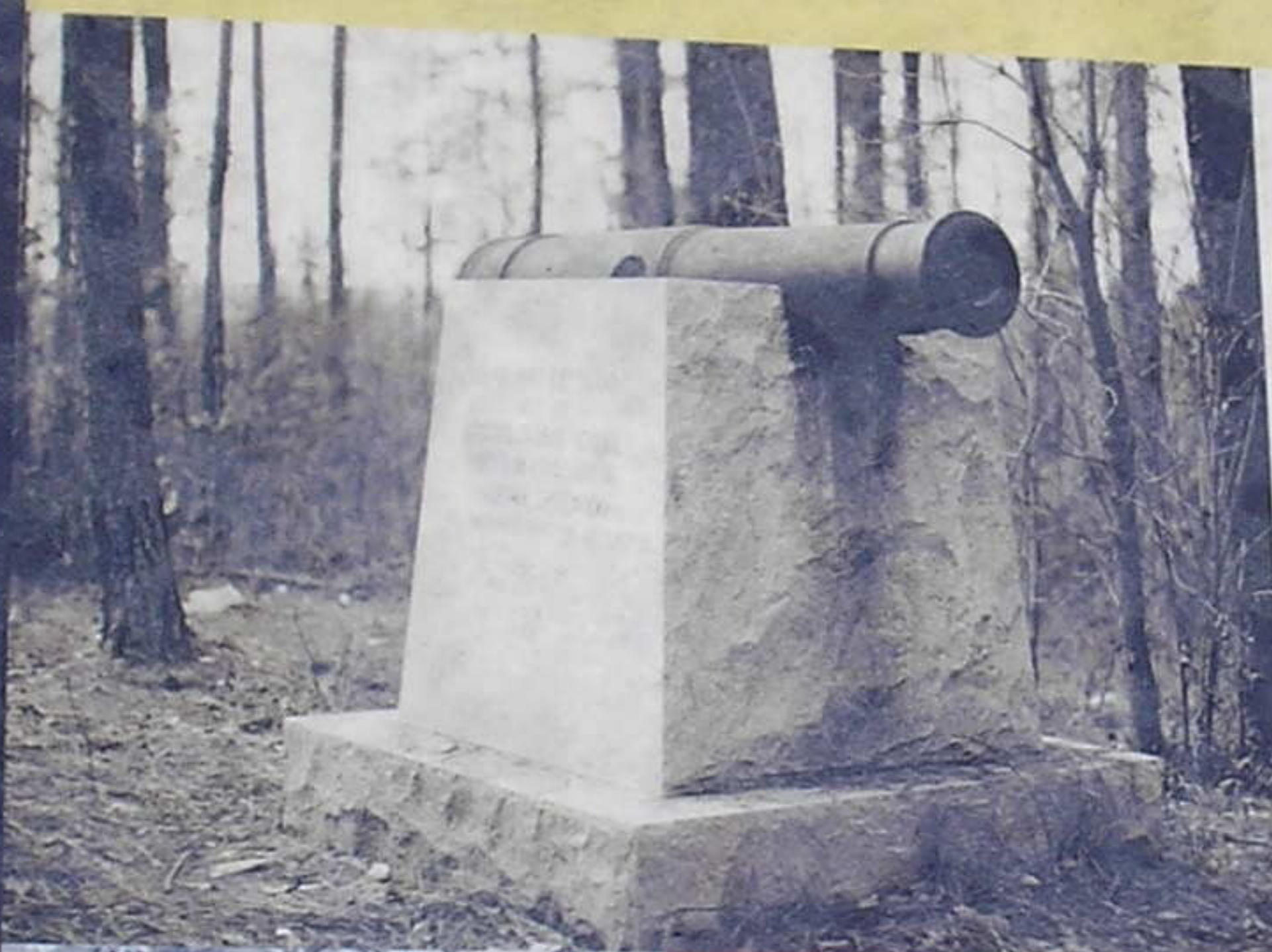


Fort Christanna



IN 1714, AT GOVERNOR ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD'S URGING, the Virginia General Assembly funded the Virginia Indian Company, charged with building a fort on the banks of the Meherrin River in what would become Brunswick County. The fort would provide local settlers both a trading base and safety from Indian attacks. The General Assembly also funded a nearby Indian village to offer shelter and protection to displaced Native Americans, mostly of Sapony tribes.

Recognizing the need to educate the Indian children to prepare them to be future citizens, Governor Spotswood hired North Carolina's Reverend Charles Griffin to be a teacher at the fort, paying Griffin 50 pounds annually from his own money. Griffin successfully taught as many as 77 Native-American children at one time. Courses



included English, reading, writing and math, with students also required to "read the Bible and Common Prayers." After the General Assembly withdrew its financial support of the fort, private investors kept it going for a while, though it was not manned after 1724. Finally, in 1730, the land itself was parceled out to its investors, and Fort Christanna was largely forgotten. In 1924 attention was once again bestowed on the site, when The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Virginia acquired 10 acres of land where the fort once stood and erected a monument in its memory. Recent archaeological excavations have found the perimeter of the original fort, and efforts will continue in order to learn more about this early Brunswick County site.



(Above) In 1924, a monument was erected on 10 acres of land where Fort Christanna once stood.

(Left) Ada McCrae, a descendent of Governor Alexander Spotswood, unveiled the monument at Fort Christanna in 1924 at a large ceremony that included Pamunkey Indians.

(Above Right) Archaeological research at Fort Christanna has unearthed such artifacts as these tools and points typical of 18th century Native American local tribes, and an English-style strap hinge of that era.



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