

*“We have beene with the Empeour of  
Pifcattaway, att his forte”:*

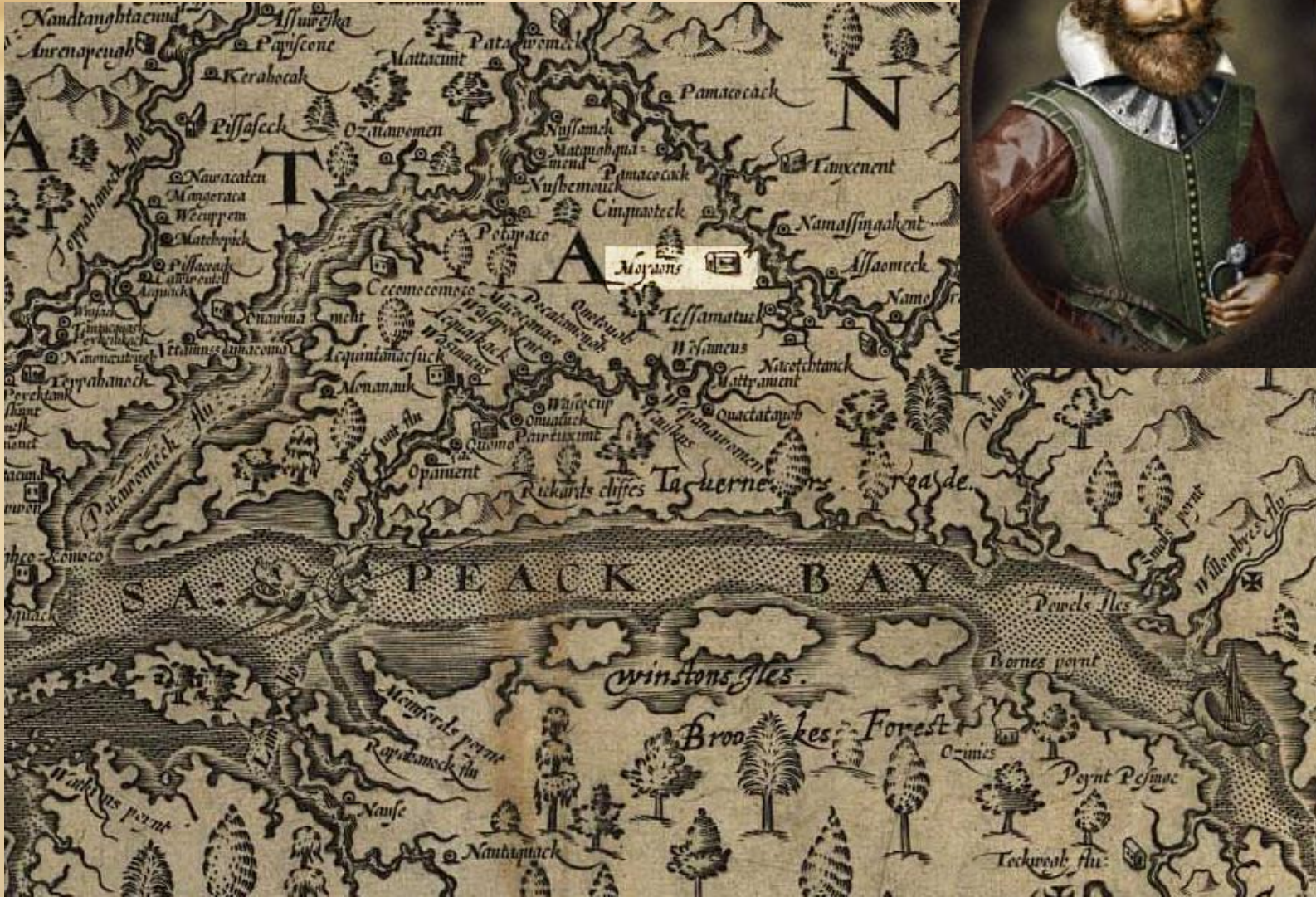
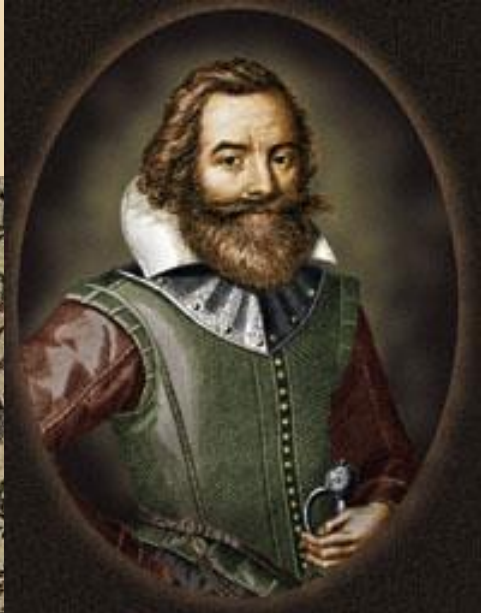
## The Piscataway Indians on Heater’s Island

Dennis C. Curry  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST



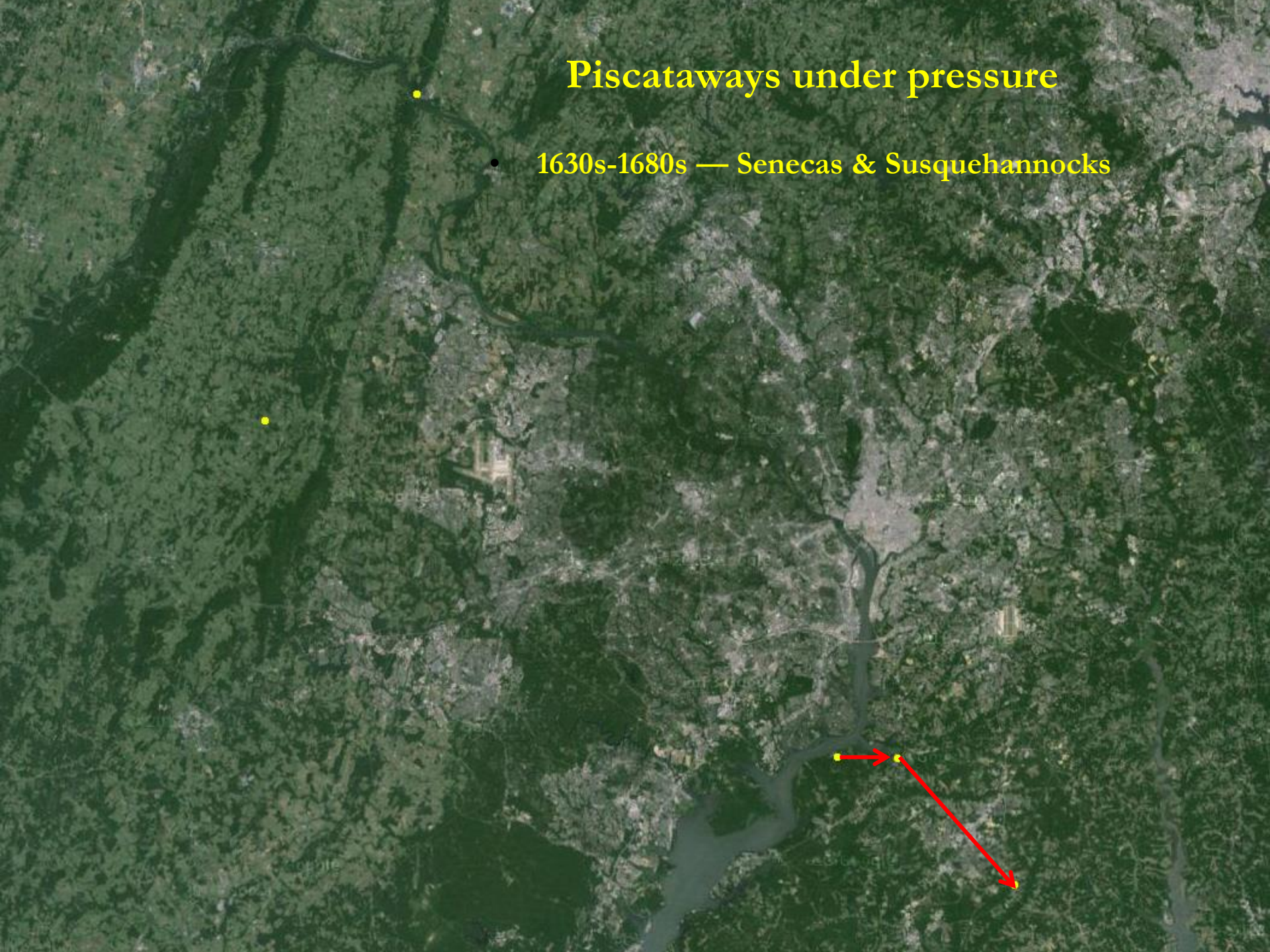
# **The Piscataway Indians in the Colonial Period**

1608



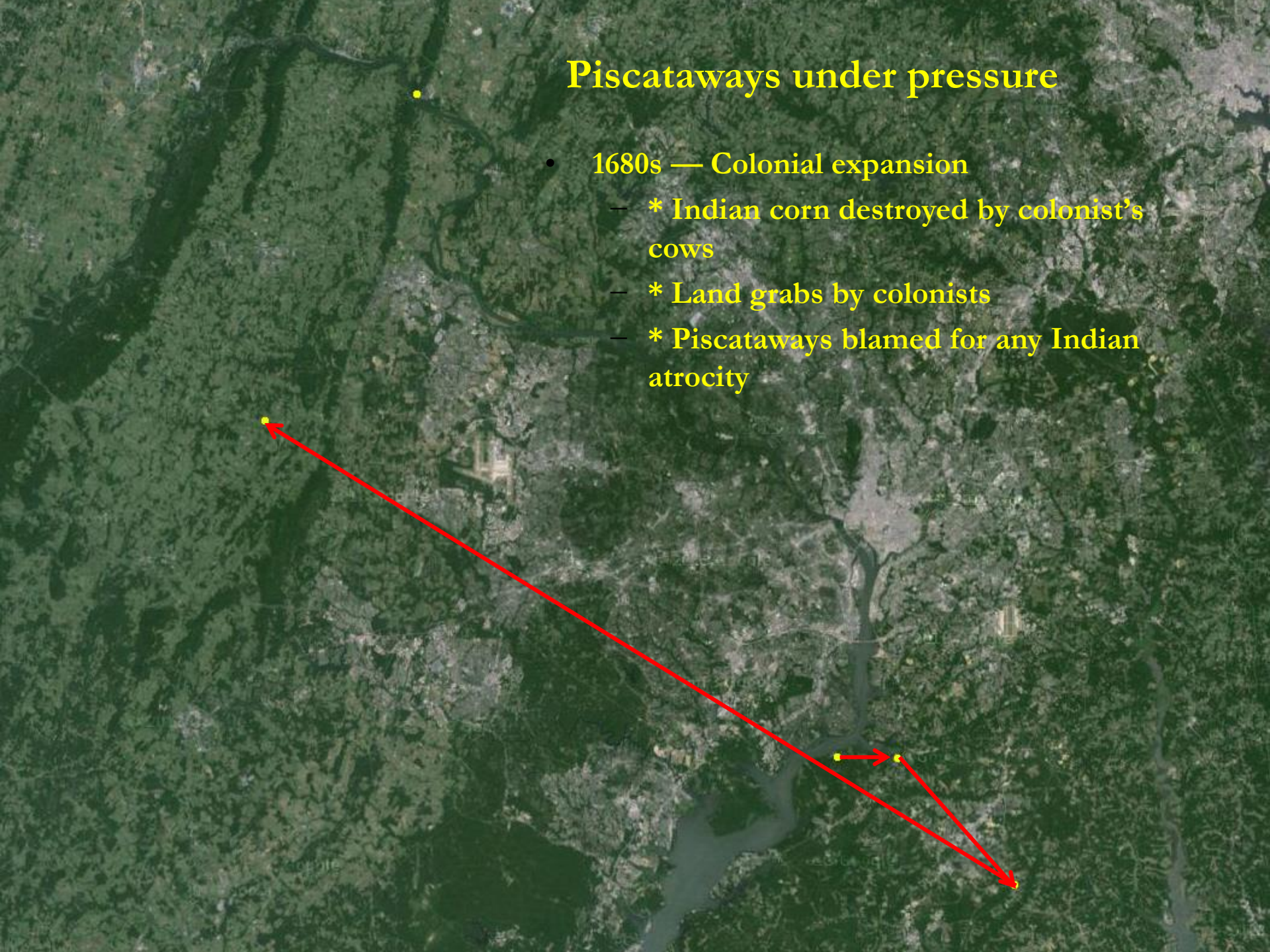
# Piscataways under pressure

- 1630s-1680s — Senecas & Susquehannocks



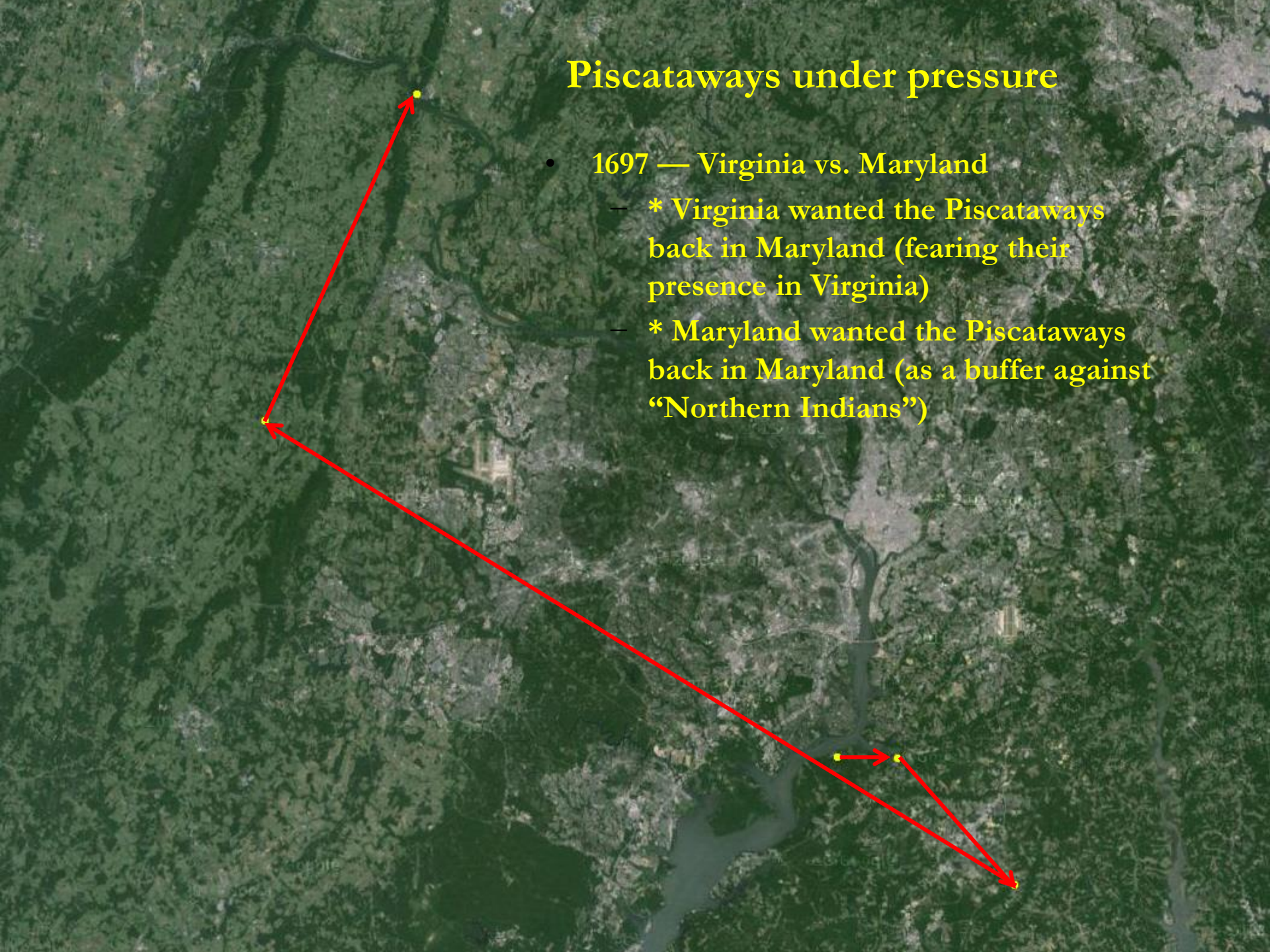
## Piscataways under pressure

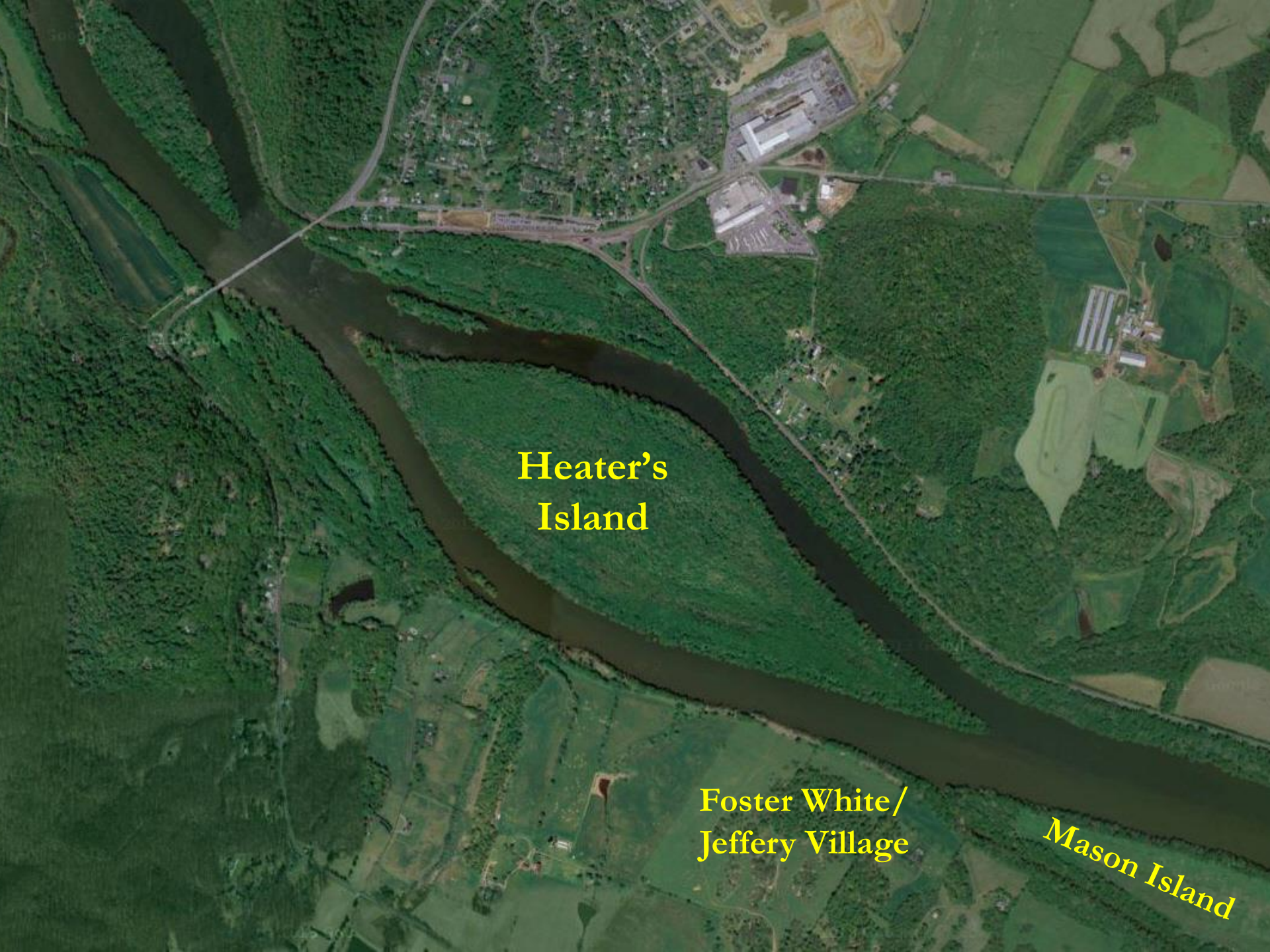
- 1680s — Colonial expansion
  - \* Indian corn destroyed by colonist's cows
  - \* Land grabs by colonists
  - \* Piscataways blamed for any Indian atrocity



## Piscataways under pressure

- 1697 — Virginia vs. Maryland
  - \* Virginia wanted the Piscataways back in Maryland (fearing their presence in Virginia)
  - \* Maryland wanted the Piscataways back in Maryland (as a buffer against “Northern Indians”)

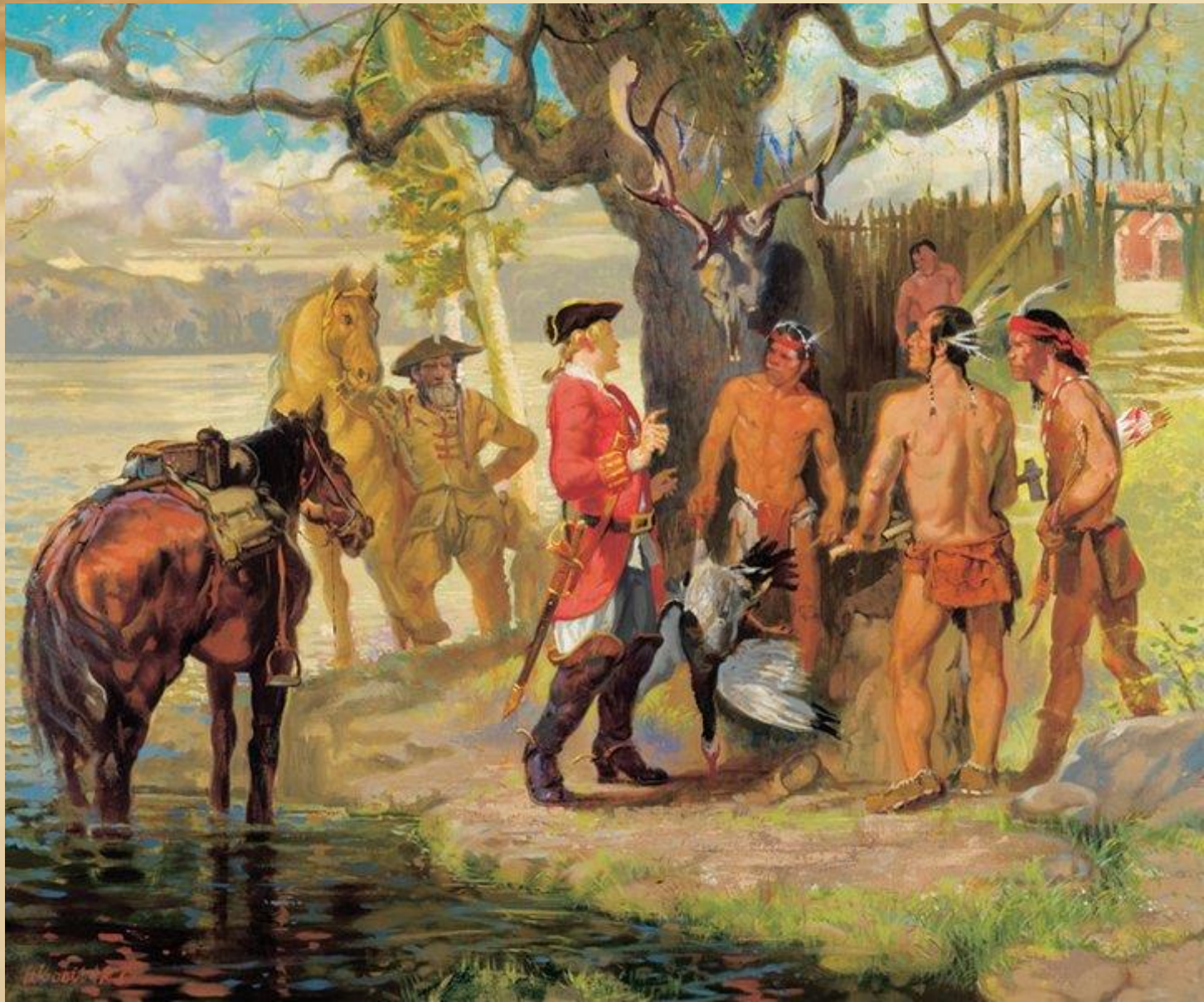




**Heater's  
Island**

**Foster White/  
Jeffery Village**

**Mason Island**



April 21, 1699 — Giles Vandercastle and Burr Harrison



## **April 21, 1699 — Giles Vandercastle and Burr Harrison**

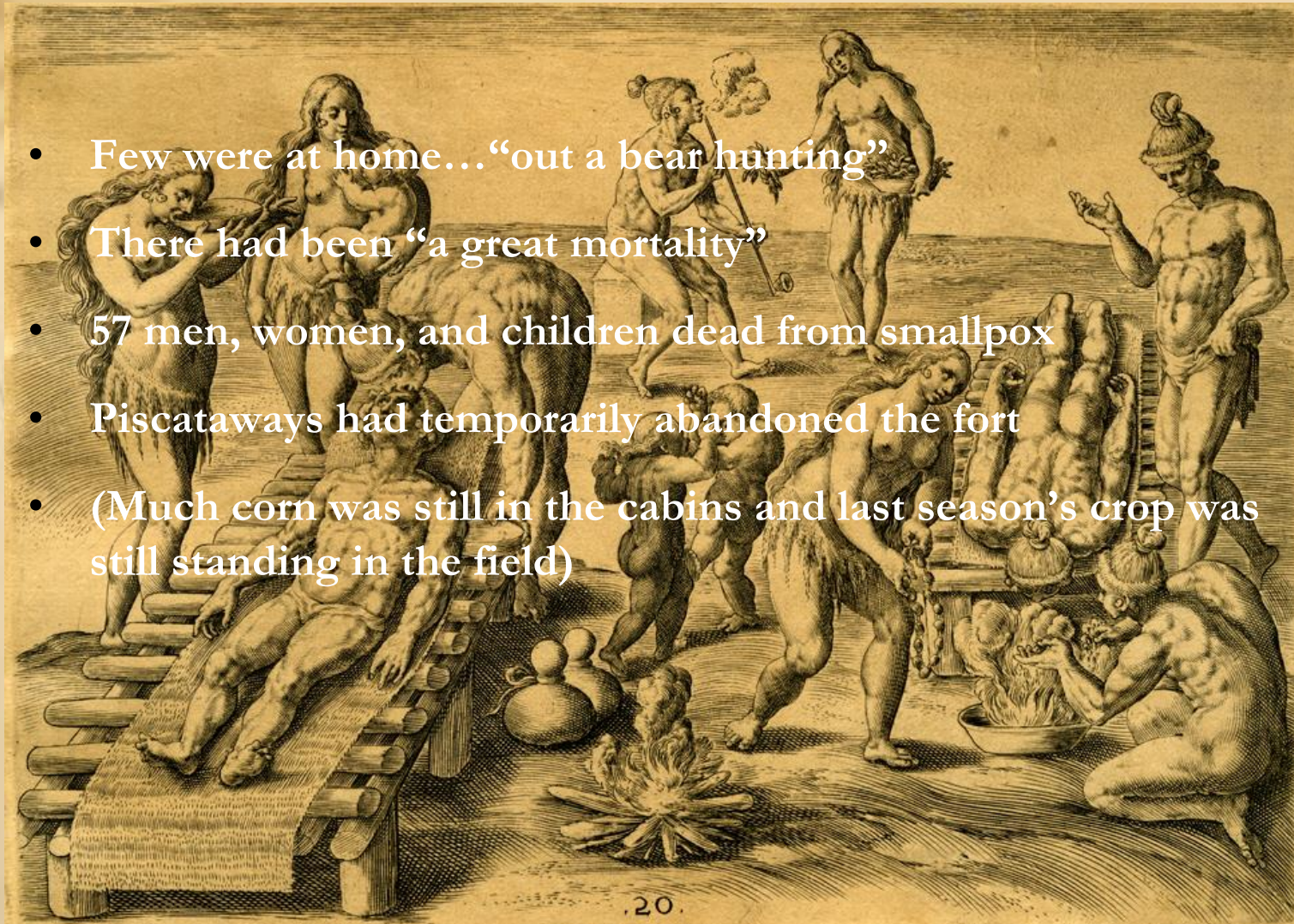
- **Fort is on the upper end of the island, not quite finished**
- **Fort is 50 to 60 yards square**
- **18 cabins inside the fort, 9 outside**
- **Enough corn on hand to spare**
- **Saw about 20 men, 20 women, 30 children**
- **Some were out hunting**
- **But based on the cabins, they estimate 80-90 bowmen**

## November 3, 1699 — David Straughan and Giles Tillett

- Were told there were no canoes, so they rode horses to the island
- Saw about 30 men
- “Fort is slender”
- Piscataways were in fear of “strange Indians”
- Wary of the English

## December 1704 — Colonel James Smallwood

- Few were at home...“out a bear hunting”
- There had been “a great mortality”
- 57 men, women, and children dead from smallpox
- Piscataways had temporarily abandoned the fort
- (Much corn was still in the cabins and last season’s crop was still standing in the field)



## April 10, 1705 — Last mention of Piscataways in Maryland Archives

Tenn or ffifteen Days.

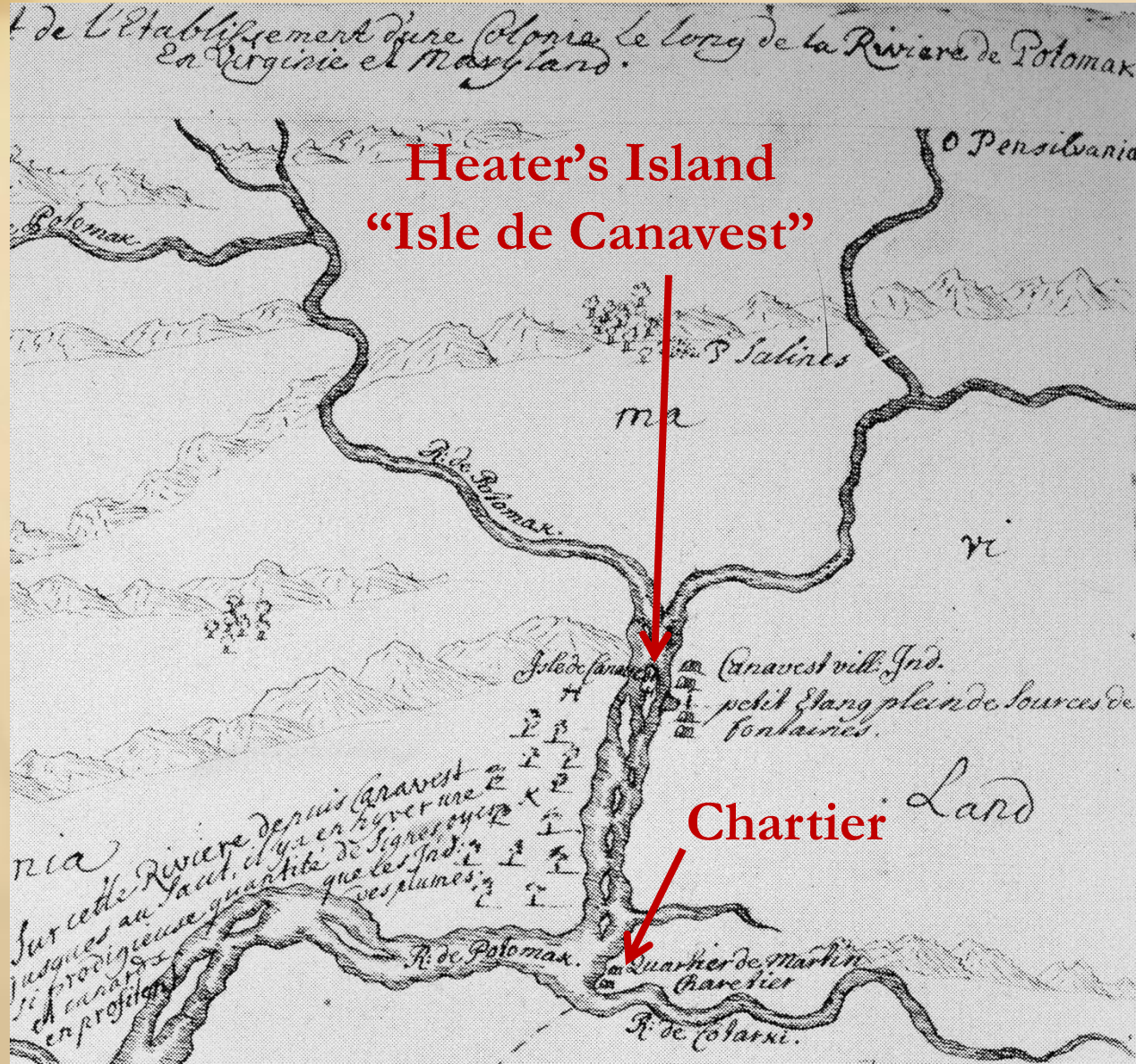
Resolved that Since the Piscattaway Indians have failed to Come in according to Expectation that the Eastern Shore Indians be Advised to confine themselves to the Eastern Shore untill this Matter be Settled And that Coll Ennalls give them Such caution And that Limitts be Sett to the Indians not to come within ffive miles of any the Christian Plantations in Baltimore Ann Arundell & Prince Georges Countys, but if any Such Indians be found without their Limitts they be Seized and brought before his Excellency the Governour, And that Speedy notice be given the Indians to be sent by Maj<sup>r</sup> Wilson

The Abstract of M<sup>r</sup> Tobias Bowles of Deals Letter of the

1707 — Franz Louis Michel



# 1712 — Baron Christoph von Graffenried



## 1712 — Baron Christoph von Graffenried



- Visited Piscataways at Canavest accompanied by Martin Chartier
- Canavest was “ a small village...a very pleasant, enchanting spot about 40 miles above the falls of the Potomac”
- Island was elevated...good country
- Indians had planted some fine corn
- Nearby tract of sugar [maple] trees, abundant geese
- Von Graffenried wanted to establish a trading base on the island

# So when did the Piscataways leave Maryland?


- 1701—received permission to settle in Pennsylvania
- 1705 (after smallpox)—asked permission to settle at Tulpenhocken in Pennsylvania
- October 1705—James Logan saw some Piscataways at Conejoholo
- Ca. 1718—moved from Conejoholo to Conoy Town
- 1743—some Piscataways moved to Shamokin
- 1749—left Shamokin to join other groups (incl. Nanticokes) at Juniata
- October 8, 1758—Piscataways at the Treaty of Easton (Pa.)
- September 1776—Piscataways attended Indian council at Niagara
- August 13, 1797—last formal mention of Piscataways (Conoys) when they were signatories at a conference held at the falls of the Miami River, just outside present-day Toledo, Ohio



84. Brothers, we shall be persuaded that you mean to do us justice, if you agree that the Ohio shall remain the boundary line between us. — If you will not consent thereto, our meeting will be altogether unnecessary: This is the great point, which we hoped would have been explained before you left your house, as our message last fall was principally directed to obtain that information.

Done in general council at the foot of the Miami river, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1793

Chickasaw,  
 Cherokee,  
 Creek,  
 Delaware,  
 Shawnee,  
 Miami,  
 Ottawa,  
 Chippewa,  
 Seneca of the glaire,  
 Pontwatamies,  
 Comoy,  
 Muncy,  
 Nanticoke,  
 Nottoway

- Wyandot, 
- Seven Nations of Canada, 
- Delaware, 
- Shawnee, 
- Miami, 
- Ottawa, 
- Chippewa, 
- Seneca of the glaire, 
- Pontwatamies, 
- Comoy, 
- Muncy, 
- Nanticoke, 
- Nottoway, 



# **Archeology at Heater's Island**

# 1970 University of Maryland Field School



**Bob Schuyler**

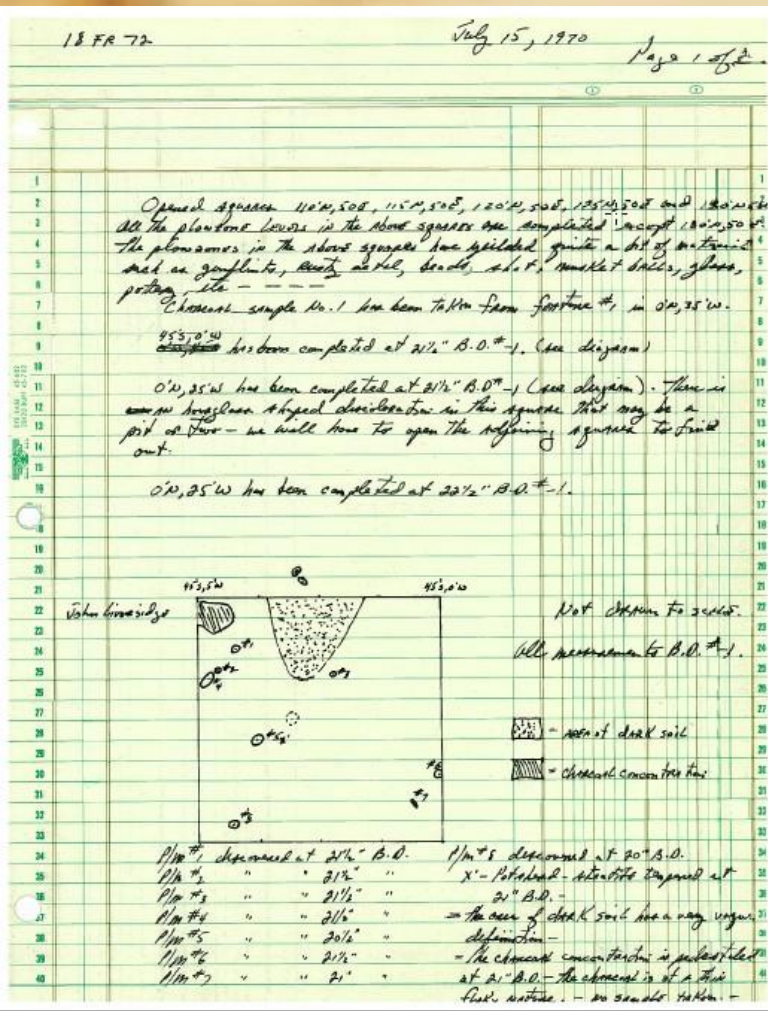
# 1970 University of Maryland Field School



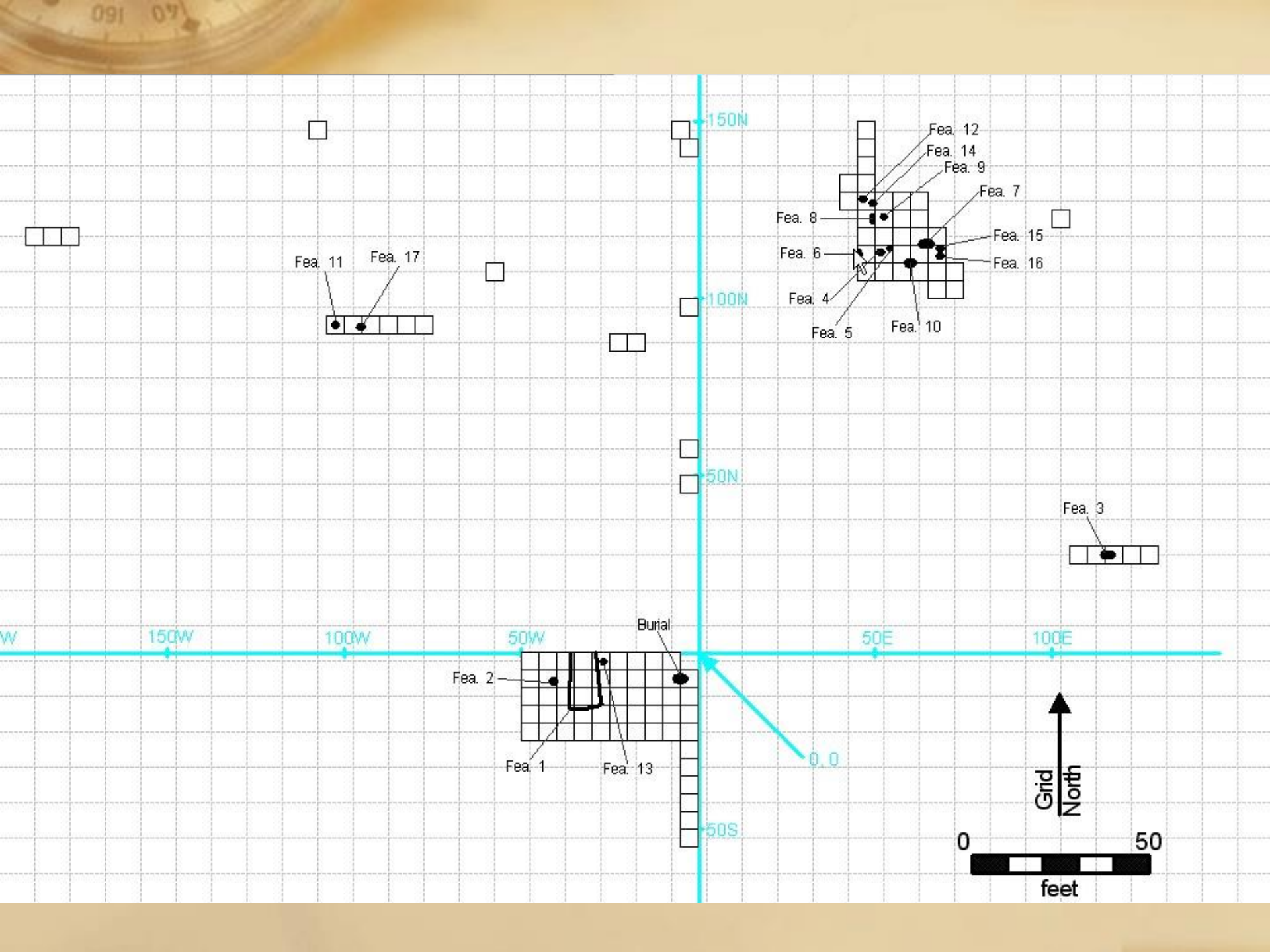
Ivor Gross



# Excavations



- 7 5x5-ft test units (dug in March 1970)
- Late June through August 1970
- 113 5x5-ft units dug during field school
- Much information was taken from Ivor Gross' daily field notes
- Detailed plane table mapping is missing
- Site map reconstructed from Gross' sketch maps of individual squares



# Features

- Feature 1 — trapezoidal trench
- Interpreted as one of the fort's bastions



# Features

- Feature 2 — trash pit with mass of bone (deer, dog/wolf, opossum, turtle)
- Concentration of seed beads (>100 in 3x3-in area) along with hawk's bell and bear tooth
- Embroidered bag? Charm or medicine pouch?





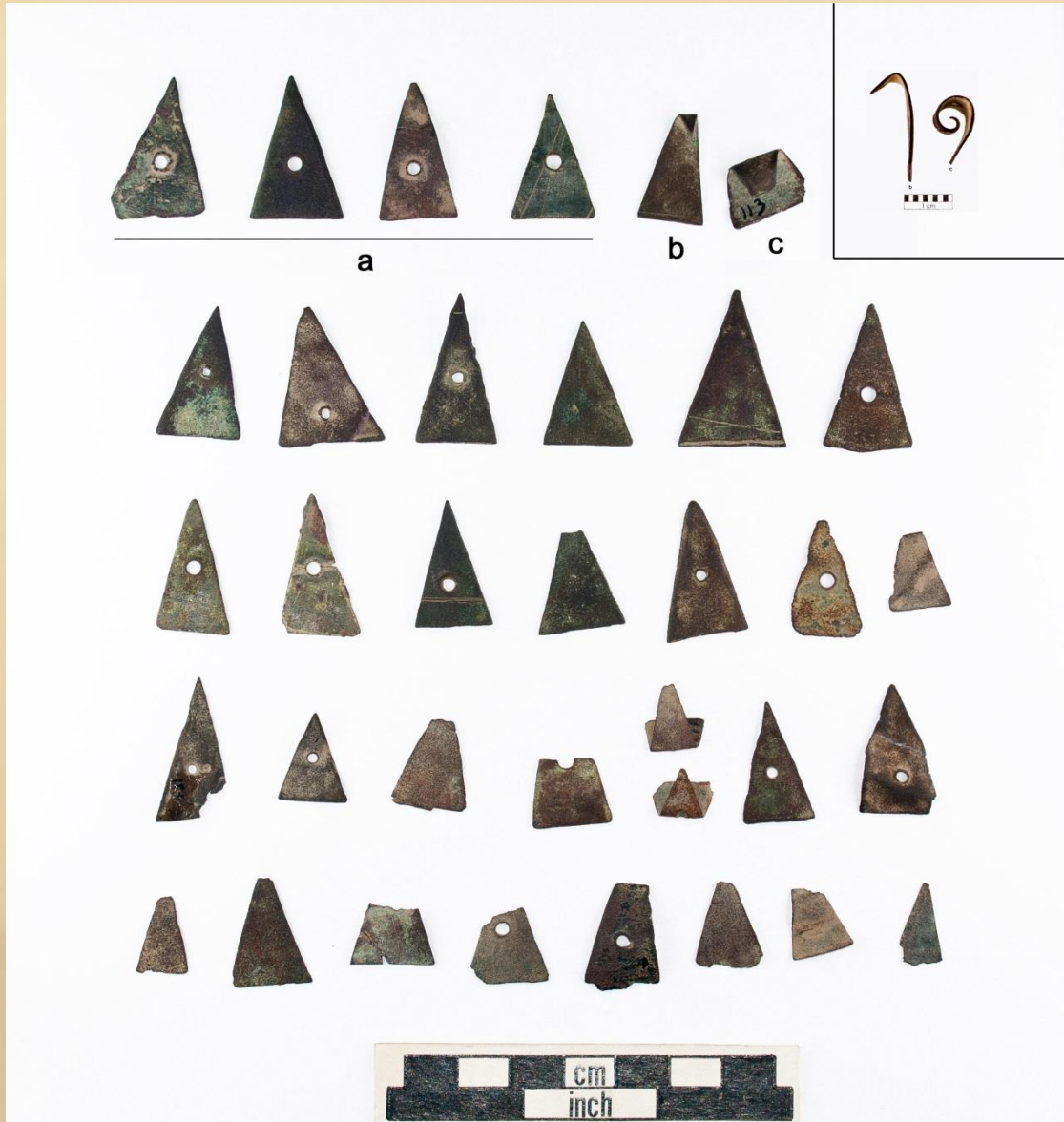
# Artifacts

- Stone projectile points



# Artifacts

- Brass/copper points



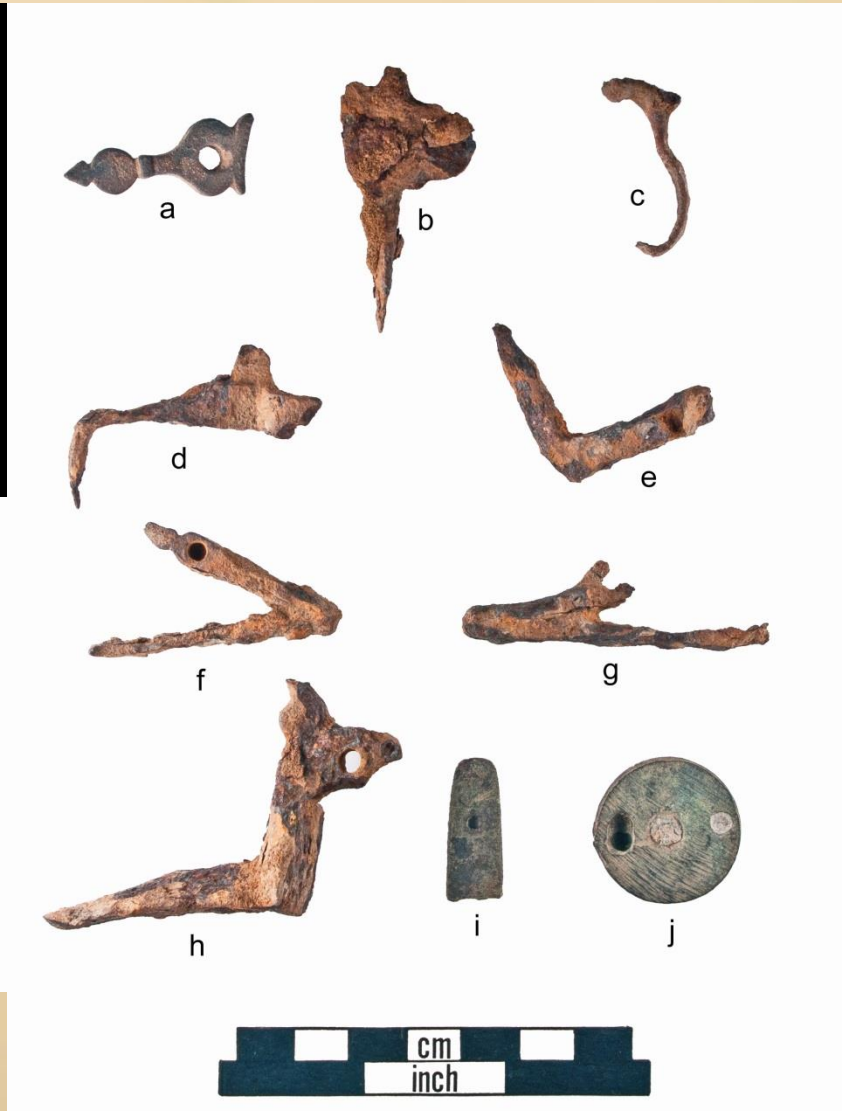
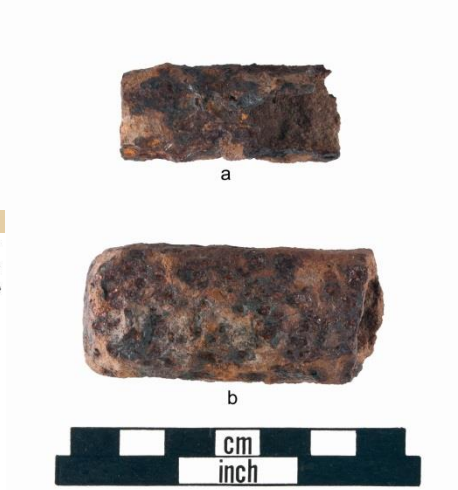
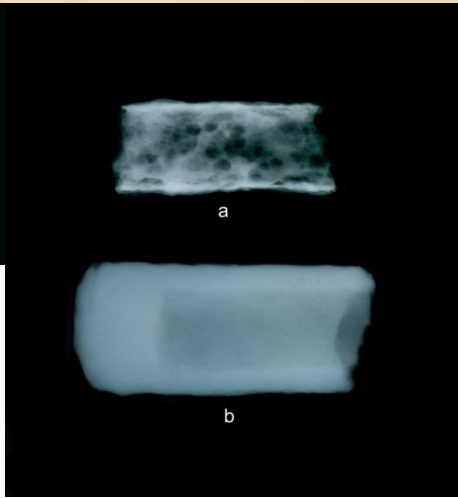
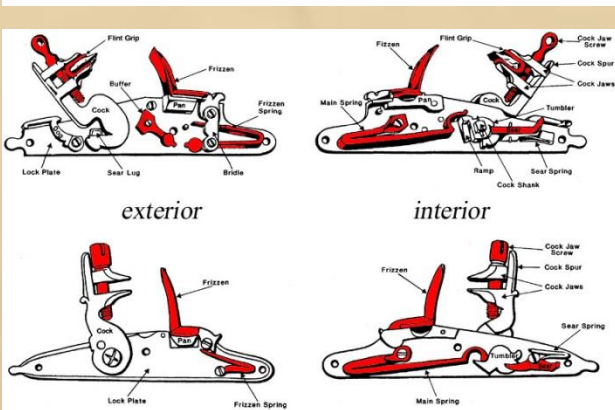
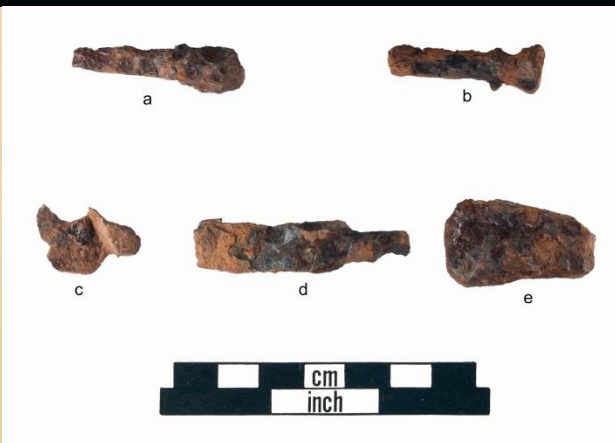
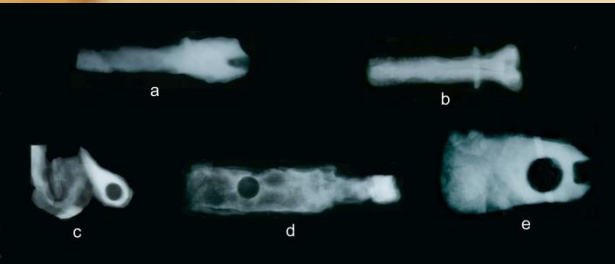
# Artifacts

- Gunflints
- Lead shot



# Artifacts

- Gun parts



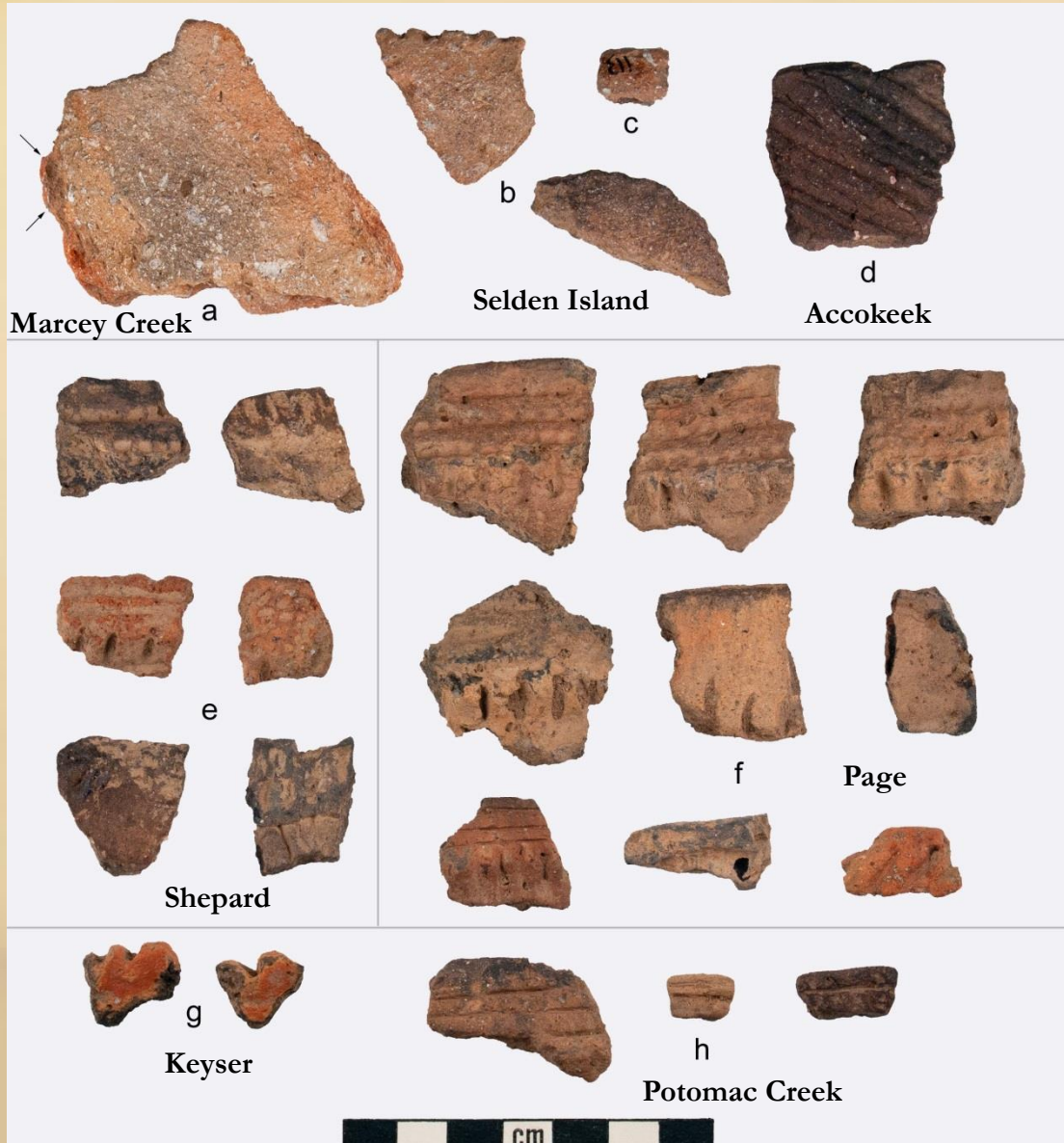
# Artifacts

- Formal stone tools — 1 drill, 1 scraper
  - 4 wine bottle glass scrapers



# Artifacts

- Prehistoric ceramics



# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Manganese Mottled



# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Staffordshire Slipware





# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Lead-glazed Red Earthenware



# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Rhenish Grey Salt-Glazed



# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Rhenish Brown Salt-Glazed



# Artifacts

- European ceramics — Miscellaneous



a

Tin-glazed



b



Olive Jar



c

Grey salt-glaze,  
brown interior



d

Buff-pasted,  
yellow salt-glaze



# Artifacts

- Native American Tobacco Pipes



a



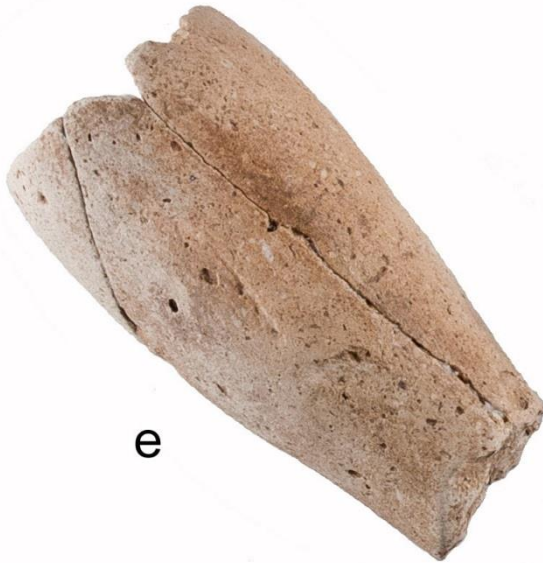
b



c



d



e



f



# Artifacts

- European Tobacco Pipes  
(plus 154 pipestems)



# Artifacts

- Glass Beads



# Artifacts

- Glass Beads





# Artifacts

- Glass Beads



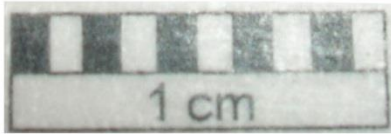
# Artifacts

- Nails and Brick



# Artifacts

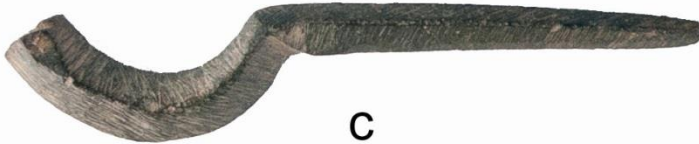
- Miscellaneous Metal and Iron



a



b



c



d



# Artifacts

- Miscellaneous Metal and Iron



a



b



c



d



e



# Artifacts

- Miscellaneous Metal and Iron





# Indian-Colonist Interactions

# The Piscataways and the Jesuits

- Conversion of Kittamaquund in 1640
  - English clothes, English language, monogamy, etc.
  - Example to other Piscataways
- But how “sincere” were these converts?
  - 40 Indian converts threatened renunciation of their baptism if the commemorative shirts given to them at baptism—which had since fallen into disrepair—were not replaced

# Arms to the Indians

- “unless his L<sup>spp</sup>: will please to furnish them for their Defence they must be forced to fall to makeing of Bows and arrows wherein for want of practice they have not that experience as formerly”
  - Piscataways served as a buffer between the colonists and Northern Indians
  - As such, they attempt to extort guns, powder, and shot from the English (lest the Piscataway not be able to provide defenses for the colonists)



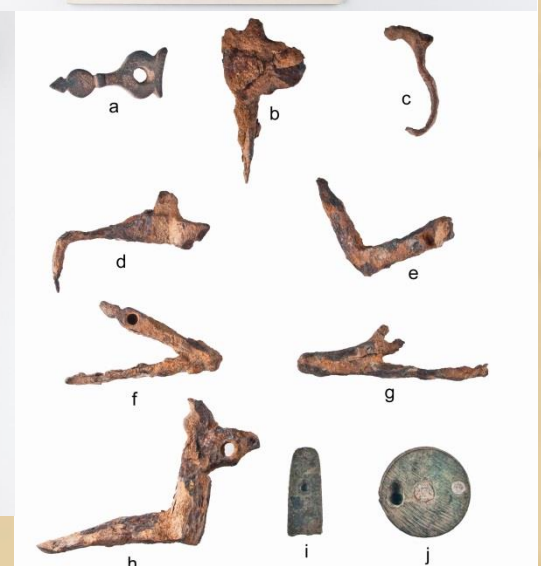
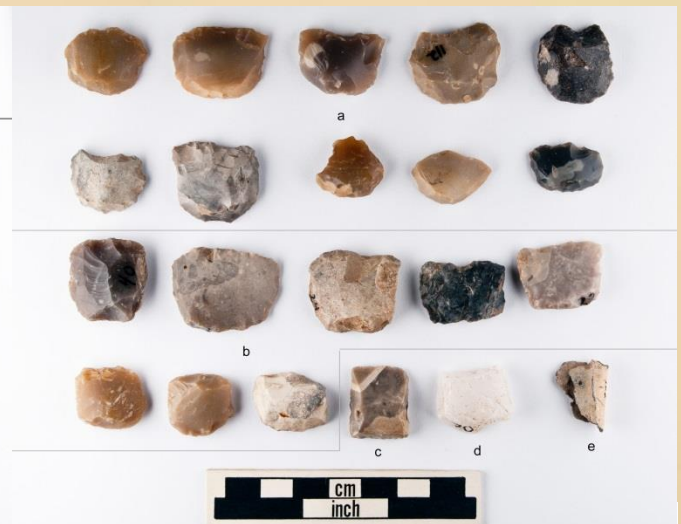
# Isolation of the Indians

- “wee asked them for a Canoe; they told us they had none” [*Straughn & Tillett, November 1699*]
  - A ploy to keep the English away?
  - Or was that reality, perhaps reinforcing their isolation?
    - Were canoes expedient vessels? (The Piscataways made a canoe for von Graffenried in less than half a day)

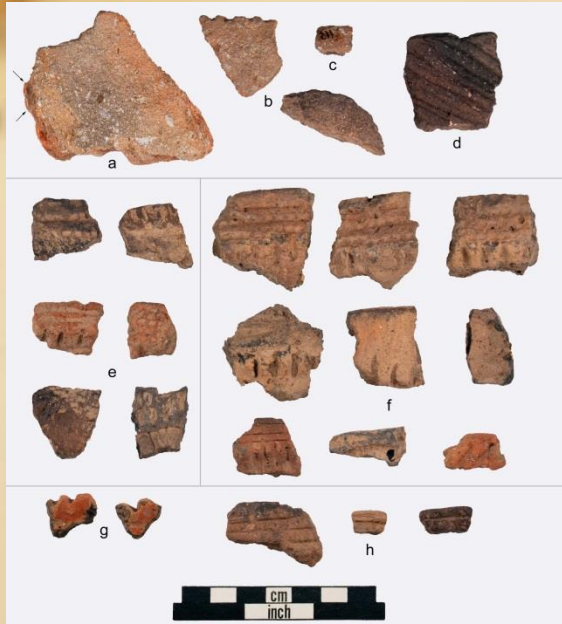


# Summary

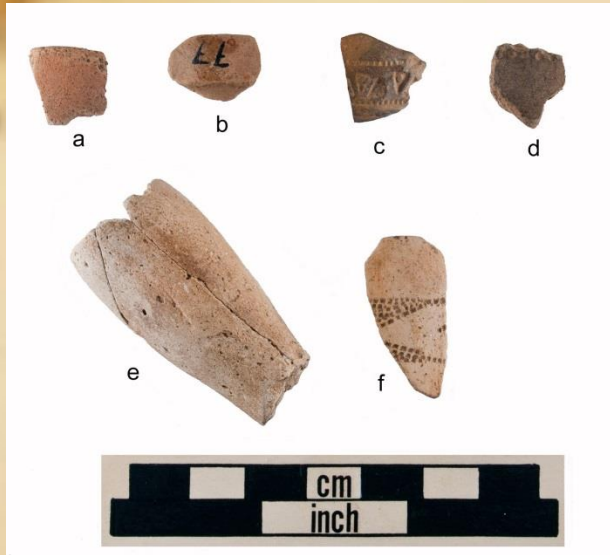
# Material Culture Shift



# Material Culture Shift



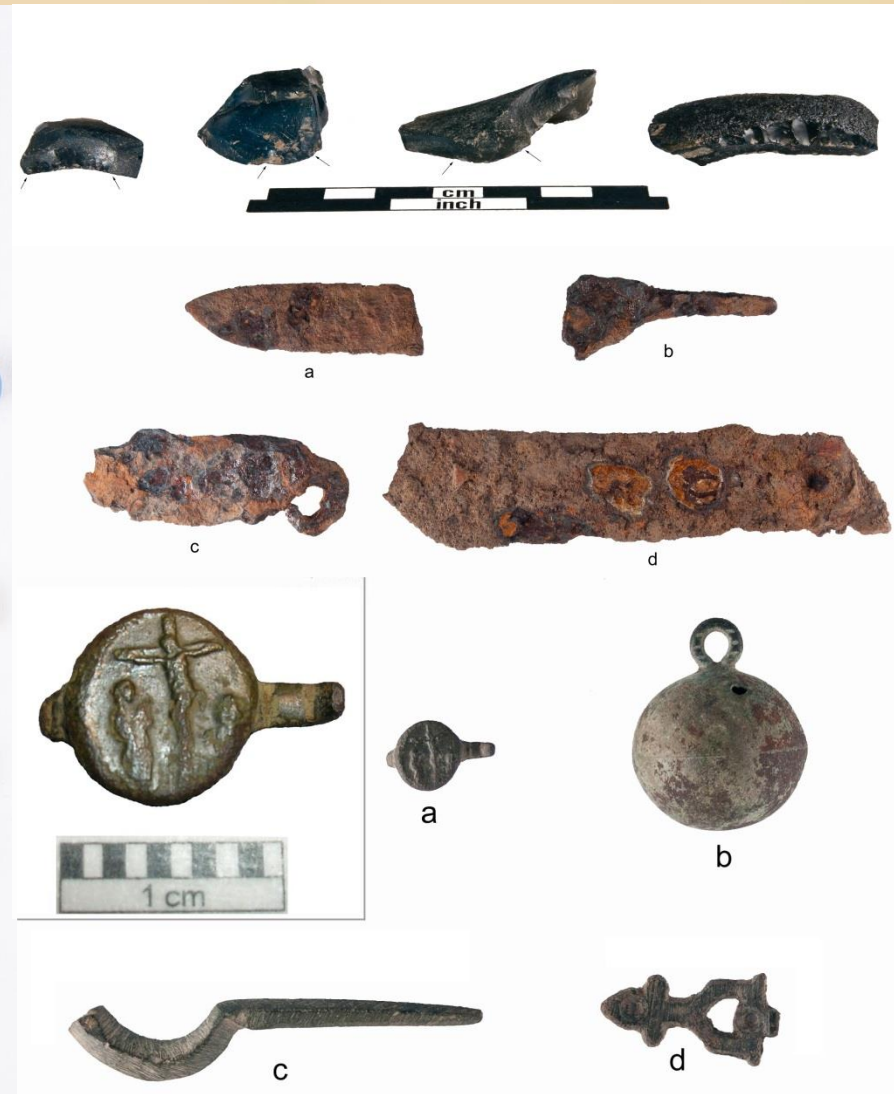
# Material Culture Shift



# Material Culture Shift

Absent

- Shell beads
- Bone beads
- Stone scrapers
- Stone knives



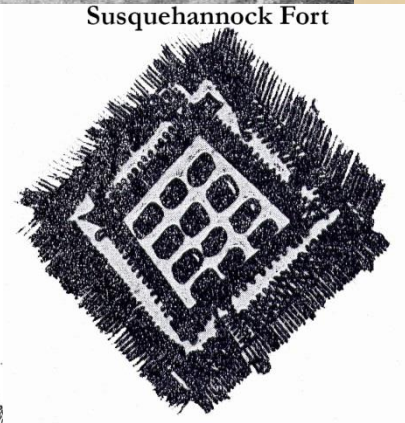
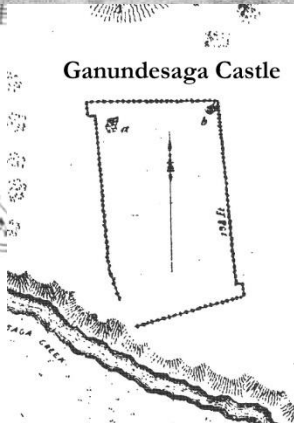
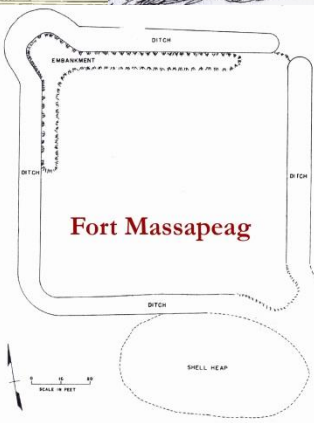
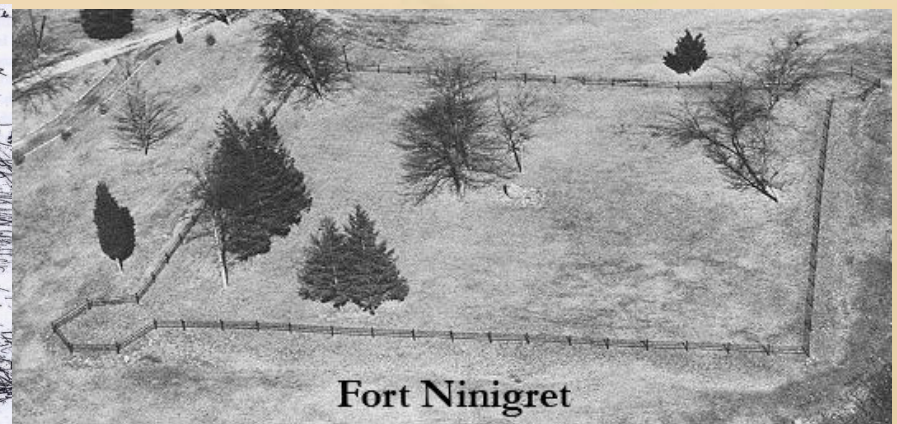
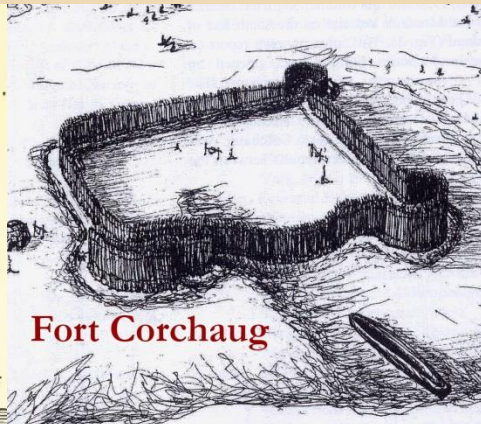
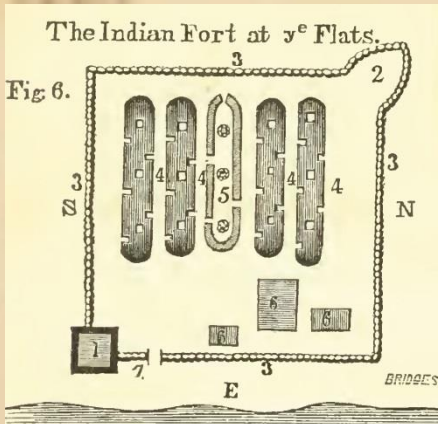
# The Houses

- 27 “cabins” — 18 inside the fort, 9 outside
- Early on, Emperor Kittamaquund wanted “a house like the English” built
  - “Cabin” might imply rectangular, European style houses
  - Presence of nails and brick might support this notion
- Greater amounts of nails and brick/daub at Zekiah expected: colonists helped [taught to?] build that fort and houses (including for their own garrison)



# The Fort

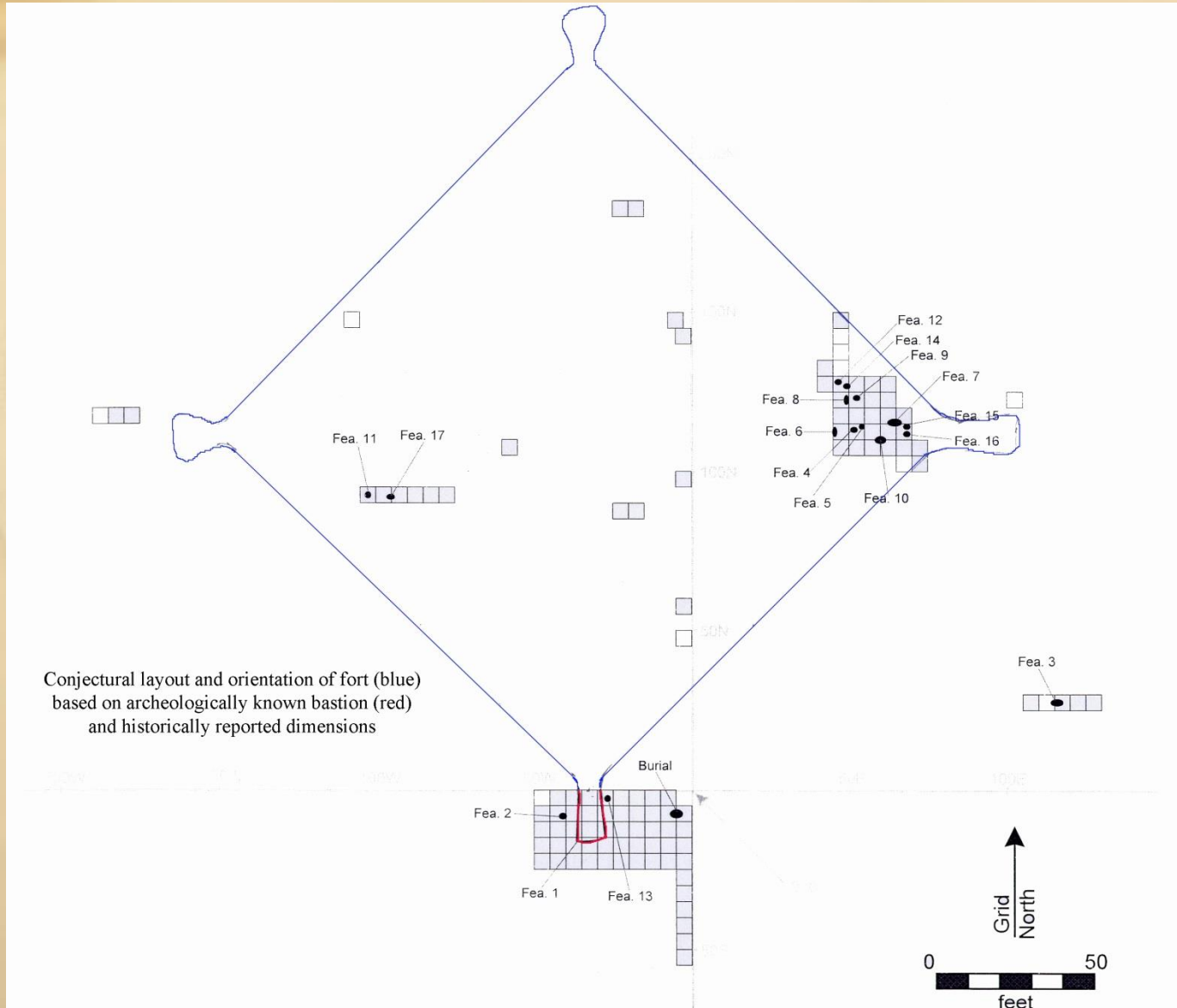
- Written description “50 to 60 yards square”
- These dimensions conform to many of the known Native American forts





# The Fort

- Conjectural reconstruction



# The Fort

- The fort bastion



# The Fort

- Probably pretty similar to Monhantic Fort (1675-1680) in Connecticut

