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"The earth, gentle and indulgent, ever subservient to the wants of man, spreads his walks with flowers, and his table with plenty, returns with interest, every good committed to her care."

Pliny the Elder

The after effects of hurricane Floyd are still being tallied throughout Virginia and along the East Coast. Farmers report that the peanut, corn, and soybean crops were damaged and production was low and the quality of the cotton crop suffered as well. We experienced our first frost of the season on November 3, but since that day our temperatures have occasionally reached into the 70s. The foliage with its vivid hues has been signaling the approach of winter and I expect we will be welcoming coldest weather any day now.

November is an interesting month because it offers so many important, special occasion days.

November 11, Veterans Day, commemorates the sacrifices of military veterans in our country. In the past, it was called Armistice Day, celebrated on the anniversary of the armistice of World War I in 1918. The name was changed to include the servicemen of all branches of the military of our country. The same day, November 11, has for centuries been observed as Martinmas or St. Martin's Day. St. Martin of Tours is a patron saint of France. He was the son of a military officer and he had himself enlisted in the military at age 15. He is known as the patron saint of military chaplains. It is most significant that the two celebrations are observed on the same day. We presented a program here, in Colonial Williamsburg, on Veterans Day to include and honor our visitors who in the past have served or are presently serving in any of our military forces.

November 1999 has been proclaimed by President Clinton as *National American Indian Heritage Month*. We recognize the many contributions of the American Indians, our first environmentalists. In Virginia there are 20,000 Native Americans today. There are eight tribes and two Indian Reservations in the Commonwealth, the Mattaponi and the Pamunkey. The Mattaponi Reservation was established in 1658 along the borders of the Mattaponi River in King William County, Virginia. Only 75 members still live on the Reservation. The Upper Mattaponi tribe of 100 members are non-reservated Indians located in the Mechanicville area.

The Pamunkey Indian Reservation serves as the home for approximately 100 members who still live on the 1,200 acre reservation located in King William County. The Pamunkey tribe was among the 34 tribes of the Powhatan Confederacy of the 17th century. Another tribe of the Confederacy is the Nansemond Tribe of Chesapeake, Virginia. It has a population of 300.

Approximately 1,000 members of the Chichahominy Tribe live in Charles City County with 150 members in the Eastern Chichahominy Tribe in nearby New Kent County.

There is the United Rappahannak Tribe which owns 21 acres of land in Indian Neck, King and Queen County, Virginia.

The eighth tribe is the Monacan Tribe which today numbers 700 members. It is the most western of the eight tribes, located in Bear Mt, in Amherst County and was not ever a member of the Powhatan confederacy.

All of these tribes observe separate heritage festivals throughout the year. Some of the ceremonies are rituals that relate to the three crops known as the three sisters of Indian lore, maize, bean, and squash. The word squash derives from an Indian word, asquutasquash, which means uncooked or raw. Some of the Indian tribes observe Fall harvest festivals.

As I write this, members of the Mattaponi Tribe are in the woods hunting a deer to present to our Virginia Governor. This Thanksgiving custom began in 1646, when the Mattaponi Indians first presented a gift of game or fish to the Governor of the Commonwealth and the custom has been carried on ever since, as a gesture of Thanksgiving and good will.

"The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forest, plains, pueblos, or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that fashioned the continent, also fashioned the man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers. He belongs just as the buffalo belonged."

Luther Standing Bear
Oglala Sioux Chief

Janet Guthrie