

Two sites chosen for historical markers

Published 8:22am Friday, July 1, 2011

Written by Gwen Albers, Tidewaternewsdotcom

RICHMOND—The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has chosen two Southampton County sites for historical markers.

One is of slave Dred Scott's childhood home in the Capron area. The other is an archeological site from the mid-1960s of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe of Southampton County.

Jeff Hines, a board member of the Southampton County Historical Society, was pleased to hear the news about a marker for Scott's home. Scott unsuccessfully sued for his freedom. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a landmark decision that "he was property, not a citizen" and, hence, could not file a lawsuit.

"He's such a national figure," said Hines, who applied for the historical marker.

Although Scott's homestead is believed to be on or near the farm of Cliff Fox, the marker will be placed about two miles away on Route 58 where Peter Blow owned a plantation.

"He was the owner of Dred Scott and had a plantation in an area called Bethlehem Crossroads," Hines said. "What we're finding out is he (Scott) moved out of there in 1818 to go to Alabama. We think he was born in 1805."

Blow apparently purchased some land and secured it with a note, using his slaves as collateral. Most of the slaves were from Scott's family.

"He (Dred Scott) was listed on the note and we have found traces of his mother (living here)," Hines said.

Lynda Updike, president of the Southampton County Historical Society, also was pleased about the designation.

"Nat Turner, Dred Scott and Anthony Gardner — all three contributed to the abolition of slavery," Updike said. "Nat Turner through violence, Dred Scott through legal means and Anthony Gardner, a free black who was president of Liberia."

As for the second marker, Walt "Red Hawk" Brown, chief of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian tribe of Southampton County, hopes it's the first of more to come.

"We're very excited," Brown said. "This is just one of many markers we're hoping to get throughout Southampton County that relates directly to the tribe."

The marker will go at Handsome Road and General Thomas Highway to commemorate finding the remains of some 131 ancestors, dating back to 1580. Some of the remains were turned over to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian tribe of Southampton County will pay for 74 percent of the marker's cost, while the Archeological Society of Virginia, Nansemond Chapter, will pick up the balance.