COPPER-COLORED CHRONICALS

FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION

WOMEN WHO OWNED THEIR HUSBANDS



In early Virginia, free Indigenous women labeled “free women of color” often married men who were legally enslaved. These marriages created complex legal realities — and powerful examples of women using the courts to protect their families.

One of the most striking cases is Jane Webb, a free woman who married an enslaved man named Left. Their marriage was legally recognized, and their seven children were born free under the doctrine partus sequitur ventrem — “status follows the mother.”

For over twenty years, Jane Webb fought in court to free her husband. Her case reveals a truth rarely taught: free Indigenous women often had to “own” their husbands on paper to protect them from being sold, seized, or separated from the family.

This was not domination — it was survival.

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

CHIEF POWATHA: THE REAL FACE OF POWHATAN LEADERSHIP



This statue is located at the **Virginia Museum of History and Culture**, and it's one of the few public representations that reflect the **actual descriptions** from early English accounts — not the later whitewashed versions.

You'll notice:

- **Broad nose and full lips**
- **Dark brown skin**
- **Strong, regal posture**

This aligns with what colonists described in the 1600s — that Powhatan people had:

- **dark brown to black skin**
- **coily or woolly hair in some groups**
- **features that colonists compared to Africans**

The statue at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture is one of the few public representations that matches early English descriptions of Powhatan people:

- dark brown to black skin
- broad noses and full lips
- coily or woolly hair in some groups
- strong, regal posture

These features were documented repeatedly in the 1600s — long before later whitewashed depictions replaced them.



RESEARCH & RECORDS

Who Oversees Encyclopedia Virginia? Many readers ask who updates entries like Free Blacks in Colonial Virginia. The answer: Virginia Humanities, headquartered at the University of Virginia.

Key staff include:

- Patti Miller, Managing Editor
- Peter Hedlund, Project Director
- A team of scholars, editors, and fact-checkers

Updates follow a formal editorial process — not random changes. Contact options include:

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LEGAL HISTORY

Courts of Virginia (1600s–Early 1700s)

Understanding early Virginia courts is essential to understanding how Indigenous people were reclassified, controlled, and erased.

Council Court (1607)

- Located in Jamestown
- Operated inside Powhatan territory
- English authority existed only because Powhatan allowed it

General Court (1619–1699)

- Jamestown → Williamsburg
- Handled major criminal cases and appeals

County Courts (1634 onward)

- Located in every county seat
- Run by wealthy white planters
- Handled contracts, family matters, slavery cases, and disputes
- These are the courts where cases like Jane Webb's were fought

House of Burgesses (1619)

- Created laws that courts enforced
- Passed racial integrity laws, marriage restrictions, and labor statutes

Special Courts

- Oyer & Terminer (serious crimes)
- Admiralty Courts (maritime law)

INDIGENOUS TRUTH SERIES

Why Large-Scale African Importation Into 1600s–1700s Virginia Was Impossible? This section corrects one of the most misunderstood parts of American history.

1. POWHATAN SOVEREIGNTY CONTROLLED THE LAND

- The English did not control Virginia.
- They controlled coastal pockets.

THE POWHATAN CONFEDERACY CONTROLLED:

- the rivers
- the roads
- the interior
- the trade routes

The English could not move large groups of Africans inland.

2. The "20 and odd" of 1619 were the only documented Africans for decades. There is no record of thousands of Africans entering Virginia in the 1600s.

3. Most people labeled "Negro," "mulatto," or "free people of color" were Indigenous Reclassification erased tribal identity on paper.

4. The English used racial labels as tools of control. "Negro" in the 1700s often meant:

- dark-skinned Indigenous
- mixed Indigenous communities
- Indian families refusing English rule

5. Importing Africans into Indigenous territory made no political sense. The English did not control the land. They controlled paperwork.

CAROLINAS TRUTH SERIES

Why Africans Could Not Be Imported Into Indigenous-Controlled Carolinas. The Carolinas were dominated by Indigenous nations:

- Catawba
- Yamasee
- Tuscarora
- Pee Dee
- Waccamaw
- Saponi
- Occaneechi
- Cherokee
- Waxhaw
- Cheraw
- Saponi
- Cape Fear Tribes
- Lumbee Ancestors

The English controlled Charleston, a port — not the land. Africans arriving at Charleston were not marched inland. The interior remained Indigenous territory well into the 1700s.

IDENTITY RESTORATION

Reclaiming Your True Indigenous History, Federal recognition is not required to reclaim identity. Your community can begin by:

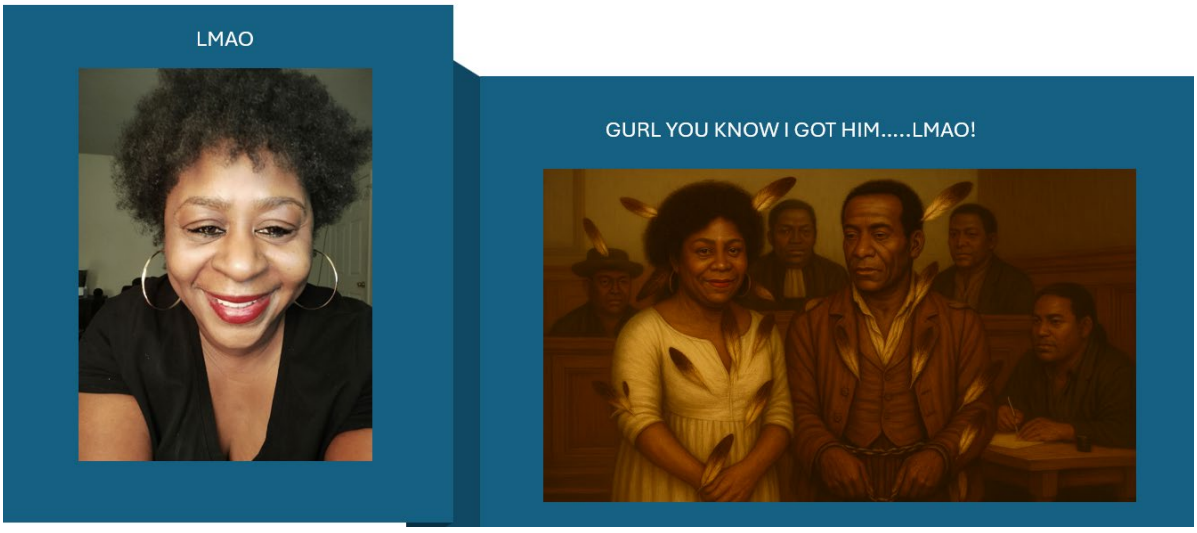
- forming a 501(c)(3)
- documenting erased histories
- restoring family records
- researching local archives
- teaching your own story
- challenging colonial misclassification
- Identity restoration is not a trend — it is a return home.

CLOSING MESSAGE FROM SISTER BETHY

"Our ancestors were reclassified, renamed, and erased on paper — but not in spirit. This newspaper exists to restore what was taken, correct what was distorted, and return our people to themselves."

EDITORIAL NOTE:

These resources support the central argument of this issue: Modern terminology updates do not repair the original structural harm created by the Indian Removal Act and state racial codes. **Eastern Indigenous nations were not lost — THEY WERE RENAMED/RECLASSIFIED.**



RESEARCH & RESPONSIBILITY NOTICE

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Court	Primary Locations	Citations
Council Court	Jamestown	Wikipedia
General Court	Jamestown → Williamsburg	Wikipedia
County Courts	Every county seat (e.g., Northampton, King William)	DHR – Virginia Department of Hist
House of Burgesses	Jamestown → Williamsburg	Wikipedia
Manorial/ Plantation Courts	Individual plantations across Virginia	Virginia Places
Oyer & Terminer	Jamestown → Williamsburg	Wikipedia
Admiralty Court	Jamestown, Williamsburg, port towns	Wikipedia

Court	Established	Who Ran It	What It Handled
Council Court	1607	Virginia Company council	All justice in early Jamestown Virginia Places
General Court	1619	Governor + Council	Major crimes, appeals ead.lib.virginia.edu
County Courts	1634	Justices of the Peace	Everyday cases, contracts, family, slavery JSTOR
House of Burgesses	1619	Elected colonists	Made laws courts enforced
Manorial/ Plantation Courts	early 1600s	Plantation owners	Labor discipline, disputes
Oyer & Terminer	late 1600s	Governor-appointed judges	Serious criminal trials
Admiralty Court	late 1600s	Crown-appointed officials	Maritime law

THIS MONTH'S CULTURAL FOOD DISH

SHARED BY

- **Chief Alease Jones, Vice President Waya Nation "aka" THE VEGAN QUEEN!**



VEGAN FRIED FISH

Vegan Fried Fish

INGREDIENTS

- 1 to 2 14 oz Jars of Hearts of Palm

Rinse hearts of palm thoroughly . Use a fork to slightly go down the hearts of palm to open lay flat on plate

SEASONINGS

- Old Bay
- Seasoning Kelp for the Fish flavor
- Garlic Powder
- Onion Powder
- Paprika
- Small amount of pink Himalayan salt
- Season both sides lightly season
- Use cornmeal or Louisiana Fish fry

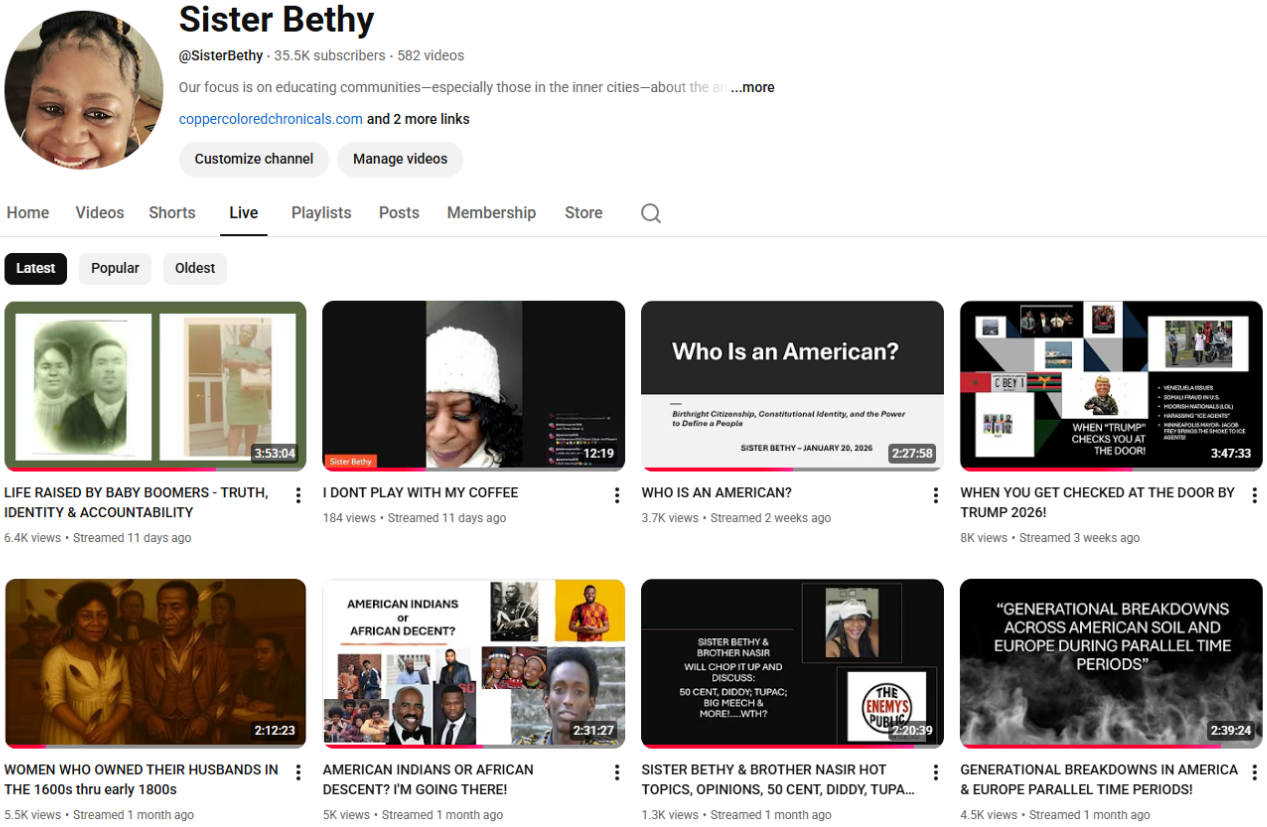
Use a medium skillet, add extra virgin olive oil and fry for 3 to 5 minutes on each side

Serve with 🥗 Fries , bread

Enjoy 💜

Enjoy 💜💜💜





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