



BY RICHARD PUCHYR FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Justin and Terry Langston lead their beagles in search of a deer. Justin, 13, later bagged a five-point buck.

Va. Indians Observe a Traditional Tax Day

By Donald P. Baker
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KING WILLIAM, Va.—William P. Miles took a couple of days off from work this week to pay his property taxes, and so kept intact a 350-year-old family tradition.

In Richmond, Bill Miles helps supervise rent subsidy programs for federally financed apartment developments. But here at home in King William County, where he is known as Swift Water, he is the chief of the Pamunkey Indians, one of two

tribes that have reservations in Virginia.

Miles and about a dozen fellow tribesmen went hunting Monday for game to give to the governor in lieu of paying real estate taxes on their scenic, 1,200-acre reservation. It is about an hour's drive east of Richmond on a fertile peninsula bounded by the Pamunkey River.

A treaty signed in 1646 and amended in 1677 calls for the Pamunkeys and the Mattaponi, the other Virginia tribe, to make an annual offering to the governor, tra-

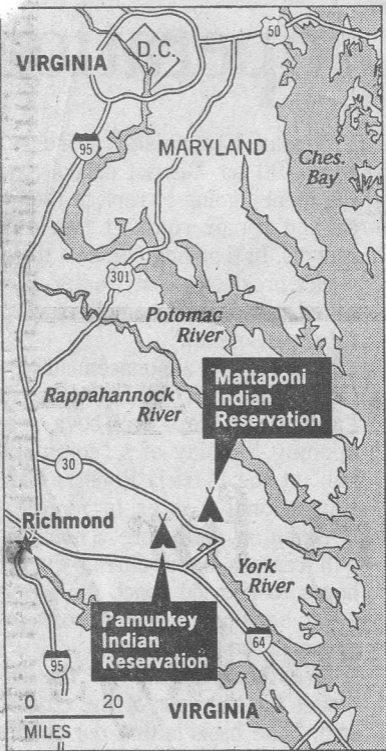
ditionally on the day before Thanksgiving.

Originally the gift was 20 beaver pelts, but more often now it consists of deer and turkey killed on the two reservations. Today's presentation, for the first time in years, included the beaver pelts, in addition to two deer.

Although there is no formal census, Miles estimates that 75 people, in about 30 families, live on Pamunkey land, many of them in mobile homes such as the one

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BY DAVE COOK—THE WASHINGTON POST

With Game, Va. Indians Pay Taxes

TRIBES, From C1

where he set up housekeeping about 15 years ago.

Reservation residents pay no property tax on the land or the homes. They also may hunt and fish anywhere in the state without a license.

The same rules apply to the Mattaponi, whose smaller reservation is about 10 miles northeast.

Miles, a native of New Jersey and a liberal arts graduate of Central College of Iowa, visited the reservation each summer as a child. He was born and raised in Colts Neck, N.J., where over the years his father served as postmaster, mayor, fire chief and civic leader.

The elder Bill Miles was born on the reservation. But during the Depression, the Miles family, like many Pamunkeys, moved north to find work. The New York-New Jersey area was familiar territory to the Pamunkeys. Some from the tribe annually follow migrating shad from the waters around Cape Hatteras, N.C., to the Hudson River.

Today, most of the 500 to 1,000 Pamunkeys still live in the Northeast.

Miles's father, known as Swift Eagle, retired to the reservation from New Jersey in 1976 and became chief in 1984. He succeeded Chief Tecumseh Deerfoot Cook, who led the tribe for 42 years. Cook, now 97, played a drum at today's presentation ceremony at the Governor's Mansion.

The younger Miles, 53, moved to the reservation in 1982 after working as a financial analyst in a succession of southern and midwestern cities. Dubbed Swift Water by his father and wife, Sue, he was named chief by his father a few months before the elder Miles died in 1990.

Miles won election in 1992 and was reelected this month. Instead of going into a voting booth, tribal members are given a kernel of corn (yes) or a pea (no) to place in a basket passed among them.

The Pamunkeys, who Miles said "greeted the boat when the first Europeans arrived" at Jamestown in 1607, were part of the 32-tribe Powhatan Confederacy. It was named for the most famous Pamunkey, Chief Powhatan, the father of Pocahontas. He is believed to be buried in a mound on the Pamunkey reservation.

Originally, the Pamunkeys hunted with bows and arrows—and they still do occasionally—but for the governor's hunt, when a kill is imperative, they use modern firepower.

One year, Miles recalled, the governor's hunt was unsuccessful. To avoid embarrassment, his father went to a turkey farm, bought a live bird, brought it back to the reservation "and wrung its neck so we could tell the governor it was killed on the reservation."

The five-point buck presented by the Pamunkeys to Republican Gov. George Allen today was killed Monday by 13-year-old Justin Langston, who used a shotgun.

It was shortly after 11 a.m. when the seventh-grader, riding a small four-wheel-drive vehicle along a reservation road, spotted a deer scampering toward the woods adjoining the reservation's museum.

Justin, wearing a Virginia Cavaliers T-shirt, camouflage jacket, knee boots and blaze orange cap, crept to the edge of the clearing and felled the deer with a single shot.

Chief Swift Water, arriving in his Dakota pickup bearing Virginia license plate "Chief SW," congratulated Justin and asked if it was his first deer.

"Nah," the longhaired boy replied, "it's my third. I got one last year, too."

"He's been hunting since I carried him on my shoulders into the woods," said his proud father, Terry, who owns and trained the four beagle hounds that flushed game out of the woods. Later, one of the men got a second deer.

Justin wasn't on hand when his prize was awarded to the governor today, along with one from the Mattaponis. Chief Swift Water explained to Allen that Justin's father "wouldn't allow him to skip another day of school—he missed Monday for the hunt."

Allen, who called today's annual ceremony "our favorite day at the Governor's Mansion," donated the deer to Hunters for the Homeless.