

Tribal Leadership of the Florida Cheraw-Catawba People

From Jacob SCOTT to La'Micheal V. Eddie (Early 1800s-2026)

The leadership history of the Florida Cheraw-Catawba people reflects a transition from traditional family and clan-based leadership to organized modern tribal government. Throughout this history, leadership remained centered on preserving community identity, protecting families, maintaining kinship ties, and advocating for self-determination. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

1. The Founding Era (c. 1828-1846)

Chief Joseph "Old Chief Joe" SCOTT

The earliest documented leader of the Florida Cheraw-Catawba community was Joseph SCOTT, remembered in historical records as "Old Chief Joe" and described as a well-known Indian chief. He was among the original Carolina Indian migrants who established the settlements that later became known as Scott's Ferry and Scott Town. Along with other founding families, he helped establish a permanent homeland in Florida after migrating from South Carolina. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

The community's early leadership was composed of respected family heads, elders, and warriors rather than a formal tribal council. Chief Joe represented the continuity of the older Catawba and Cheraw leadership traditions brought from the Carolinas. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

In 1846, Chief Joe was killed in an altercation in Calhoun County. His death marked the end of the first generation of Florida settlement leadership. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

2. The Builder and Founder Era (1828-1862)

Jacob SCOTT

Among all early leaders, Jacob SCOTT stands as the most important founder of the Florida Cheraw-Catawba settlements. Historical records identify him as the son of the prominent Catawba SCOTT family and part of the migration from the Catawba homeland. He helped establish the Scott's Ferry community and became one of the most prosperous Indian leaders in the region. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Jacob operated:

- Scott's Ferry
- A grist mill
- Agricultural holdings
- Community gathering areas

His property was valued at approximately \$2,000 in 1860, making him one of the wealthier residents of Calhoun County. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Court records later referred to him as a "headman" of the Catawba people. His leadership was both political and economic, helping secure a permanent homeland for future generations. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

3. Community Elder Leadership (1860s-1920s)

After the deaths of Chief Joe and Jacob Scott, leadership became decentralized and family-based.

Important leaders included:

- Absalom SCOTT
- Isham SCOTT
- John "Captain Jack" Ayers
- Mary Attaway SCOTT
- Elizabeth SCOTT HILL [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Particularly notable was Mary Attaway SCOTT, who emerged as a matriarchal leader of Scott Town. She helped maintain community lands, family connections, and tribal identity during the Jim Crow era. She was instrumental in helping establish the community school that became known as the SCOTT School. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Leadership during this period relied heavily on family elders rather than formal political structures. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

4. The Segregation-Era Leaders (1920s-1960s)

During the height of segregation, leadership shifted toward community advocates who protected tribal identity and educational opportunities.

Key figures included:

- Tom SCOTT
- Mary Attaway SCOTT
- William Ann SCOTT
- David MARTIN
- Mathias PORTER [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

These leaders worked to:

- Preserve separate community schools
- Defend Indian identity
- Maintain social cohesion
- Resist pressure to assimilate into either white or black communities [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

5. The Cultural Revitalization Era (1970s-1990s)

Modern tribal leadership emerged during renewed interest in Native identity and tribal organization.

Early modern leaders included:

- Buck Bryant
- Jewell Dean HILL
- Essie HILL Syfrett [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

These individuals worked with other Native organizations and regional tribal governments to rebuild cultural identity and establish a stronger political voice for the descendants of Scott's Ferry, Scott Town, Woods, and Simmonsville. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

The first annual Indian Community Conference began in 1996 and became the foundation for modern tribal organization. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

6. The ARCITO Era (1996-2026)

S. Pony HILL

Modern governmental leadership began under S. Pony HILL, who served as Tribal Chairman and helped formally organize the tribe.

Major accomplishments included:

- Organizing the annual Indian Community Conference

- Creating a modern governing structure
- Incorporating ARCITO as a 501(c)(3) in 2003
- Beginning the federal recognition process
- Expanding historical and genealogical research
- Advocating for tribal citizens in education, healthcare, and cultural preservation [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Under his leadership, the tribe increasingly documented its identity as descendants of historic Cheraw, Catawba, and related Eastern Siouan peoples. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

7. The Sumter Tribe of Florida Cheraw Indians (2016-2026)

Christopher “Hodalee” Sewell

Modern governmental leadership began under Chris “Hodalee” Sewell, who served as Tribal Chairman and helped formally organize the tribe.

Major accomplishments included:

- Organizing the annual Indian Community Conference
- Creating a modern governing structure

8. The Cheraw-Catawba Band of Florida Era (2026)

La’Micheal V. Eddie

In 2026, the Cheraw Catawba Band of Florida reorganized its contemporary tribal government and reclaimed its historic name, building upon a community history and ancestral presence in Northwest Florida that extends back generations. The name reflects the community's documented historical connections to the Eastern Siouan peoples, including Cheraw and Catawba ancestry. Under the contemporary leadership of La’Micheal V. Eddie, the Tribal Government continues the work of earlier community leaders by strengthening tribal governance, preserving history and genealogy, supporting cultural and language revitalization, reconnecting descendants with their heritage, and increasing community involvement and visibility. [\[CHIRA LANG...2026 final | PDF\]](#), [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Under the contemporary leadership of **La’Micheal V. Eddie**, the Tribal Government continues the work and vision established by earlier community leaders by:

- Strengthening tribal government and governance
- Supporting language and cultural revitalization
- Preserving tribal history, records, and genealogy
- Developing cultural and educational programming
- Reconnecting descendants with their heritage and community
- Expanding community involvement, partnerships, and public visibility [\[CHIRA LANG...2026 final | PDF\]](#), [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#)

Leadership Timeline Summary

Era	Principal Leaders
1828-1846	Chief Joseph "Old Chief Joe" SCOTT
1828-1862	Jacob SCOTT
1860s-1920s	Absalom SCOTT, Isham SCOTT, Mary Attaway SCOTT
1920s-1960s	Tom SCOTT, David MARTIN, Mathias PORTER
1970s-1990s	Buck Bryant, Jewell Dean HILL, Essie HILL Syfrett
1996-2016	S. Pony HILL
2016-2026	Chris “Hodalee” Sewell
2026-Present	La’Micheal V. Eddie

The history of Florida Cheraw-Catawba leadership is ultimately a story of continuity. From Joseph SCOTT and Jacob SCOTT, who led the original migration from the Carolinas, through the matriarchs and elders who preserved the community during segregation, to the modern leaders who rebuilt tribal government and cultural institutions, each generation carried forward the same responsibility: protecting the people, preserving identity, and ensuring the survival of the Florida Cheraw-Catawba community. [\[New Lulu b...5 21 2017 | Word\]](#), [\[CHIRA LANG...2026 final | PDF\]](#)