When Captain John Smith sailed up the Chesapeake Bay in 1608, American Indians had already lived in the area for thousands of years. The people lived off the land by harvesting the natural resources the Bay had to offer. In the spring, thousands of shad, herring and rockfish were netted as they entered the Chesapeake’s rivers and streams to spawn. Summer months were spent tending gardens that produced corn, beans and squash. In the fall, nuts such as acorns, chestnuts and walnuts were gathered from the forest floor. Oysters and clams provided another source of food and were easily gathered from the water at low tide. Hunting parties were sent overland in search of deer, bear, wild turkey and other land animals. Nearby marshes provided wild rice and tuckahoe (arrow arum), which produced a potato-like root. With so much food available, the American Indians of the Chesapeake region were able to thrive.

Indian towns were found close to the water’s edge near freshwater springs or streams. Homes were made out of bent saplings (young, green trees) that were tied into a framework and covered with woven mats, tree bark, or animal skins. Villages often had many homes clustered together, and some were built within a palisade, a tall wall built with sturdy sticks and covered with bark, for defense. Some villages had a large fire pit in the center where dances and religious ceremonies took place.

Indian men often wore their hair shaved on one side so that it didn’t get in the way when they fired their bows and arrows. Their clothes were made from deer hides that were softened by a process called “tanning”. Earrings, necklaces, bracelets and other jewelry made from shells, bones and feathers were worn for decoration. Body paint and tattoos were also common. While men were responsible for fishing, hunting, trapping wild game and defending the tribe, the women tended gardens, wove mats and baskets, gathered firewood, made clothing and raised the children.

As Europeans flocked to the Chesapeake in the 1600’s, the way of life that local tribes had experienced for thousands of years was changed forever. Invasion, disease and murder greatly lowered their numbers, causing many tribes to disband or move inland. Today, some Maryland tribes - such as the Nanticoke, Piscataway and Accohannock - still inhabit their ancestral lands and work to preserve their culture and traditions.
DIRECTIONS: Read the passage on the previous page, then answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What were some food sources used by local Indian tribes?

2. Why was the Chesapeake region an attractive place for Indian tribes to live?

3. Why did men wear their hair shaved on one side?

4. What jobs did the men do?

5. What jobs did women do?
American Indians of the Chesapeake Bay
Answer Key

Directions: Read the passage on the previous page, then answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What were some food sources used by local Indian tribes?
   Foods used by local Indian tribes included fish, oysters, acorns, walnuts, chestnuts, corn, beans, squash, arrow arum (tuckahoe), wild rice, deer, bear, and wild turkey.

2. Why was the Chesapeake region an attractive place for Indian tribes to live?
   The Chesapeake region was an attractive place for Indian tribes to live because it had such an abundance of natural resources to offer.

3. Why did men wear their hair shaved on one side?
   Men shaved their hair on one side so that it didn’t get in the way when they fired their bows.

4. What jobs did the men perform?
   Men were responsible for hunting, fishing, trapping wild game and defending the tribe from attacks.

5. What jobs did women perform?
   Women were responsible for tending gardens, weaving mats and baskets, gathering firewood, making clothing and raising the children.
TRIBES/CHIEFDOMS
RECORDED BY
JOHN SMITH

SUSQUESAHANNOUGH*

TOCKWOGH

OZINIES

Susquesahannough  Susquehannock
Patawomeck  Potomac
Moyaons  Piscataway
Pawtuxunt  Patuxent
Kuskarawaok  Nanticoke
Wighcocomoco  Pocomoke

NOTE: The following names are now spelled differently or they are known by different names:

Smith’s name/spelling  Modern name/spelling
Susquesahannough  Susquehannock
Patawomeck  Potomac
Moyaons  Piscataway
Pawtuxunt  Patuxent
Kuskarawaok  Nanticoke
Wighcocomoco  Pocomoke
MODERN CITIES ON THE CHESAPEAKE

Havre de Grace, MD
Baltimore, MD
Chestertown, MD
Easton, MD
Denton, MD
Annapolis, MD
Vienna, MD
Solomons, MD
La Plata, MD
Tappahannock, VA
Richmond, VA
Urbanna, VA
Urbanna, VA
Williamsburg, VA
Norfolk, VA
Alexandria, VA
Fredericksburg, VA
Salisbury, MD
Cape Charles, VA
Urbanna, VA
Williamsburg, VA
Norfolk, VA

Handout #3a
AMERICAN INDIANS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY: WHO LIVED WHERE?

NAME/S: ______________________________________  DATE:  ___________________

DIRECTIONS: Work with your group to carefully examine the two maps of the Chesapeake Bay, then answer the questions below.

1. Based on the information found on the maps, which tribe/s lived closest to your school?

2. What tribes lived closest to what is now Washington, D.C.? Give the names that John Smith used and the modern name.

3. What tribes lived at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay? Give the names that John Smith used and the modern name.

4. What tribe lived along three Virginia rivers? Give the name of this tribe and the rivers.

5. What tribe lived near present-day Vienna, Maryland? What is the modern name for this tribe?
American Indians of the Chesapeake Bay: Who Lived Where? - Answer Key

Name/S: ___________________________ Date: ___________________

Directions: Work with your group to carefully examine the two maps of the Chesapeake Bay, then answer the questions below.

1. Based on the information found on the maps, which tribe/s lived closest to your school?

   Answers will vary pending location of school.

2. What tribes lived closest to what is now Washington, D.C.? Give the names that John Smith used and the modern name.

   The tribes that lived closest to Washington, D.C. were the Patawomeck (Potomac) and the Moyaons (Piscataway).

3. What tribes lived at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay? Give the names that John Smith used and the modern name.

   Tribes that lived at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay included the Susquesahannough (Susquehannock) and the Tockwogh (Tockwogh).

4. What tribe lived along three Virginia rivers? Give the name of this tribe and the rivers.

   The Powhatan Indians lived along three Virginia rivers. These rivers included the James, York, and Rappahannock.

5. What tribe lived near present-day Vienna, Maryland? What is the modern name for this tribe?

   The Kuskarawaok lived near present-day Vienna, Maryland. The modern name for this tribe is the Nanticoke Indians.
NATURAL RESOURCES USED BY AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY REGION

In 1608, the Indian villages lining the shores of the Chesapeake Bay were found in areas that provided easy access to food sources. Villages were often located near oyster bars or at the heads of rivers and streams where migrating fish could be caught as they swam up the Bay to spawn. Arrow arum (tuckahoe) and wild rice were harvested from nearby marshes, and corn, beans and squash were grown in the area’s rich soils. The dense forests surrounding the Bay were home to deer, bear and other animals that were hunted for their meat and furs, while the trees themselves produced chestnuts, walnuts and acorns. In a way, the environment acted as a huge supermarket, providing local tribes with everything they needed for survival.

Take a look at some of the natural resources shown on this page. How many items do you recognize? How do you think each item was used?
Box turtles were easy to catch and provided the Indians with meat. Turtle shells were used as rattles and food bowls.

Beavers were hunted for their meat and fur. The Indians considered beaver tails to be a delicacy.

Deer meat was a valuable source of protein. Hides were turned into clothing. The bones and antlers were sharpened to make knives, needles and fish hooks.

In fall and winter, Canada geese were hunted and eaten. Feathers were used for decoration.

Catfish were caught and eaten, providing a valuable source of protein to the Indians’ diet. Catfish bones were used to make sharp tools.

Images of beaver, Canada geese, and brown bullhead catfish courtesy Alice Jane Lippsom, selected from Life in the Chesapeake Bay, Second Edition
Indian villages were often located near oyster bars. At low tide, oysters were gathered and eaten raw or cooked/smoked over an open fire.

In the spring, millions of shad swam up the Bay’s rivers and streams to spawn. Indians netted these fish by the thousands, providing tribes with a valuable source of food.

In the spring, millions of herring swam up the Chesapeake Bay’s rivers and streams to spawn. Indians netted and trapped these fish by the thousands, providing tribes with a valuable source of food.

Huge striped bass (rockfish) came to the Chesapeake each spring to spawn. They were netted and speared, providing local Indian tribes with a valuable source of food.

In the spring, sturgeon arrived in the Bay to spawn. These huge fish could be up to 14 feet long! They were caught by local Indian tribes, who ate their meat and eggs (roe).

All images above courtesy Alice Jane Lippson, selected from Life in the Chesapeake Bay, Second Edition
Mussels were easily gathered at low tide and eaten. The sharp edges of the shells were used to cut hair.

Hickory shad arrived in the Bay each spring to spawn, providing local tribes with an important source of food. Hard clams were easily gathered at low tide and eaten. The shells were used as scraping tools on animal hides and dugout canoes.

Cattail are found in marshy areas. Indian women used the reeds to make mats.

Bald cypress trees grow in swampy areas. In John Smith’s time, these trees grew over 100 feet high. The local Indians used these massive trees to make their dugout canoes.
**Arrow Arum (Tuckahoe)**

Arrow arum grows in marshy areas. Indians dug up this plant and ate the root, which is similar to a potato.

**Wild Rice**

Wild rice was harvested from the marshes and added starch to the diet.

**Soft Shelled Clam (Manninose)**

The soft shelled clam, called *manninose* by the Indians, was a favorite seafood product of the area. They grow up to four inches long and are found on muddy or sandy bottoms in the middle and lower Bay.

**Mallard Ducks**

Migrating ducks were hunted in the fall. The meat was eaten and the feathers were used for decoration.

**Oak Trees**

Oak trees provided the Indians with acorns, which were gathered and eaten in the fall. The wood was used for bows, and the bark was used to cover their homes.

Images of arrow arum, wild celery, mallard ducks and oak tree courtesy Alice Jane Lippson, selected from *Life in the Chesapeake Bay, Second Edition*
Black bears were common in the dense forests surrounding the 17th century Chesapeake Bay. They were hunted for their meat and fur.

Indians hunted the river otter for their meat. Otter pelts were a valuable trade item.

Terrapins were once present in great numbers on the Chesapeake Bay and provided the Indians with meat.

These aggressive predators schooled up in the Bay in great numbers each summer and fall. They were netted, speared and trapped by local tribes, providing them with a valuable source of protein.

Blue crabs were netted in the grass beds of the Bay’s shallow waters, providing a valuable source of protein.

Images of Atlantic blue crab and diamondback terrapin courtesy Alice Jane Lippson, selected from Life in the Chesapeake Bay, Second Edition.
Walnuts were gathered in the fall, providing local Indian tribes with a rich source of protein.

Wild turkeys were hunted and eaten, providing local Indian tribes with an important source of meat. Feathers were used for decoration.

The opossum (an Indian word) was hunted for its meat and fur.

Wild blackberries were picked in the late spring and early summer, adding vitamin C to the diet.
Red raspberries were picked in the early summer months, adding vitamin C to the Indians’ diet.

Minks were once common along the water’s edge. Indians hunted the mink for its meat and fur.

Wild blueberries grow in swampy or marshy areas. They were picked in the early summer months, adding vitamin C to the Indians’ diet.

The gray squirrel was hunted for its meat and fur.

Whelk live in the lower Bay. They were gathered and eaten, and the shells were a valuable trade item.
Fish
Shellfish
Fur-Bearing Animals
Turtles
Marsh Plants
Berry-Producing Plants
Trees
Birds