Chapter Five

Contact and Colonization, A.D. 1500 to 1775

Initial European Contacts A.D. 1492 to 1607		Colonial Period 1607 to 1775			
1524	1571-1585	1607	1634	1750	1775
Earliest written record of contact	Initial attempts at colonization	Jamestown, Virginia established	Saint Mary's City, Maryland established	Colonial population reaches 380,000	Colonial population reaches 700,000

AN ECOLOGY OF PEOPLE AND PLACE

□ PEOPLE

As it had been for more than 12,000 years, the Chesapeake was an exclusively Indian world when European navigators began making their first tentative landings on North American shores in the early 1500s (see Map 6, page 52). Unlike their ancestors, who lived at the mercy of the climate and the seasons, Late Woodland people used their abilities to produce food, develop ever more sophisticated tools and weapons, and organize larger, more efficient social and political organizations to free themselves from complete dependence on their environment. They built their communities in clearings, surrounded by dense forests and bordering fresh and salt water wetlands. The larger of these towns were fortified communities of as many as a hundred roundhouses and long houses. These houses consisted of bark or grass covered sapling frames (see Figure 17, page 53).

All Late Woodland towns were located on or close to well-drained, fertile soils. Such soils were required by farmers growing corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. As in earlier Woodland times, their small fields had been slashed and

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- □ 1524–Giovanni da Verrazano pens the earliest written record of contact in the region
- □ 1550 to 1575–Susquehannock immigrants from the upper Susquehanna River supplant Shenks Ferry culture people in the lower Pennsylvania Piedmont
- □ 1571 to 1585–early Spanish and English colonization attempts fail
- □ 1600–Powhatan chiefdom develops along the James River Coastal Plain
- □ 1607–first successful English colony established at Jamestown, Virginia
- □ 1612–Demand for Virginia tobacco grows in Europe
- □ 1619–enslaved Africans first brought to the region
- □ 1634–Maryland founded at Saint Mary's City
- □ 1638–Virginian trader William Claiborne forcibly ejected from Maryland
- □ 1642 to 1649–Puritan Parliamentarians and Crown fight the English Civil War; Charles I is executed and England is declared a Commonwealth in 1649
- □ 1645–Protestant Parliamentarians led by Richard Ingles seize and plunder Maryland during English Civil War.
- □ 1649–Maryland's Act of Toleration protects Catholic, Protestant, and Quaker worship; Act repealed in1654
- □ 1650–war and disease reduce regional Indian population to 2,400, one-tenth of pre-contact size; Colonial population rises from zero to 13,000 during the same years
- □ 1665–Charles II restores royal prerogatives throughout his domain
- □ 1675 to 1676–Susquehannocks dispersed and Jamestown burned during Bacon's Rebellion
- □ 1677–Treaty of Middle Plantation (now Williamsburg) reduces Virginia's Native American population to tributary status
- □ 1681–William Penn granted charter for Pennsylvania
- □ 1688–authority of Commonwealth's parliamentary system affirmed after James II deposed during the Glorious Revolution
- □ 1690 to 1720–Georgian architecture first becomes model for high-style housing
- □ 1693–College of William and Mary founded in Williamsburg
- □ 1695–Maryland moves capital to Annapolis
- □ 1699–Virginia's capital moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg
- □ 1700–African Americans comprise half the region's workforce and forty percent of its population
- □ 1707–Act of Union joins Scotland with England, Wales and Ireland as United Kingdom of Great Britain
- □ 1717–America's first theater opens in Williamsburg
- □ 1729–Baltimore, Maryland founded
- □ 1730–Lancaster, Pennsylvania established
- □ 1738 to 1745–Great Awakening religious revival sweeps region
- □ 1742–Richmond, Virginia is founded
- □ 1748–Petersburg, Virginia founded
- □ 1749–Alexandria, Virginia established
- □ 1750–colonial population rises to 380,000 (African Americans comprise more than one-third of population); Cooler and wetter climatic regime, known as Little Ice-Age, begins around this time
- □ 1762–Charlottesville, Virginia founded
- □ 1764–first tax levies, collectively known as Intolerable Acts, arouse discontent throughout region
- □ 1767–survey completed on Mason-Dixon Line between Maryland and Pennsylvania
- □ 1775–regional population reaches 700,000

Map 6: Tribal Locations and Contact Archeological Sites

KEY LOCALES (MAP 6)

CONTACT ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

District of Columbia
- Nacochtank

Maryland
- Arrowhead Farm
- Broadneck
- Burle
- Chicone
- Compton
- Cumberland
- Ferguson
- Heater's Island
- Jefferson-Patterson
- Locust Neck
- Nottingham
- Piscataway Complex
- Port Tobacco
- Posey/Indian Head Complex
- St. Mary's City
- Thomas

Pennsylvania
- Billmyer
- Brand
- Byrd Leibhart
- Conestoga
- Conoy Town complex
- Frey-Haverstick
- Lancaster County Park
- Oscar Leibhart
- Roberts
- Schultz-Funk
- Shenks Ferry
- Strickler
- Washington Boro complex
- Wrightsville

Virginia
- Chicacoan complex
- Chickahominy complex
- DeShazo
- Downing
- Flowerdew Hundred
- Hatch
- Indian Point
- Indian Town Farm
- Jordan's Journey
- Kiser
- Lazy Point
- Leedstown Bead Cache
- Little Marsh Creek
- Maycock's Point
- Mount Airy
- Owings
- Pamunkey Indian Reservation
- Pasbehegh/Governor's Land
- Potomac Creek
- Taft
- Powhatan/Tree Hill Farm
- White Oak Point
- Woodbury Farm
- Wright

burned from the forest floor. Groups of families and friends from these towns moved periodically to smaller camps to fish, hunt game, and gather shellfish and wild plants in season. And entire communities relocated every ten or twenty years to new lands, when they had used up the resources at their former site. Concentrated within strictly defined areas and surrounded by vast, uninhabited borderlands, these Native American heartlands were widely separated islands of settlement in the otherwise unbroken expanses of the northeastern woodlands.

Along the coast, many of these settlements were linked into political units held together by powerful chiefs. Among the more influential of these units were the Powhatan chiefdom along the James and York Rivers and the Potomac chiefdom in the Rappahannock and Potomac Valleys. Supported by priests and warriors, these chiefdoms held sway over territories measuring many hundreds of square miles. Farther west in the Piedmont, Iroquoian speaking Susquehannock people moved south from the upper Susquehanna River. By the late 1500s, they occupied the lands of a nation known to archeologists as Shenks Ferry people. To the south of these lands, Monacans, Manahoacs, and other Piedmont people found themselves increasingly at war with expanding Coastal Plain chiefdoms and the newly arrived Susquehannocks. These wars came about when coastal chiefdom and Susquehannock warriors and hunters pressed into upland Piedmont forests in search of white-tailed deer, black bears, and other game animals far less numerous in their own homelands farther east.

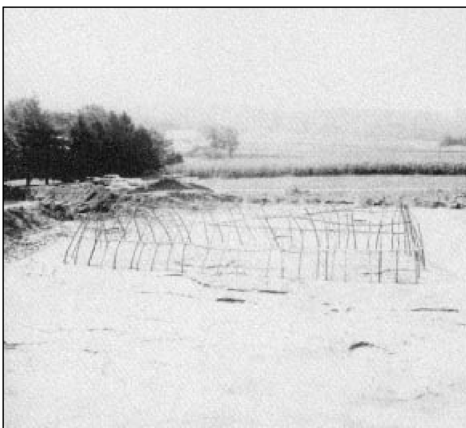
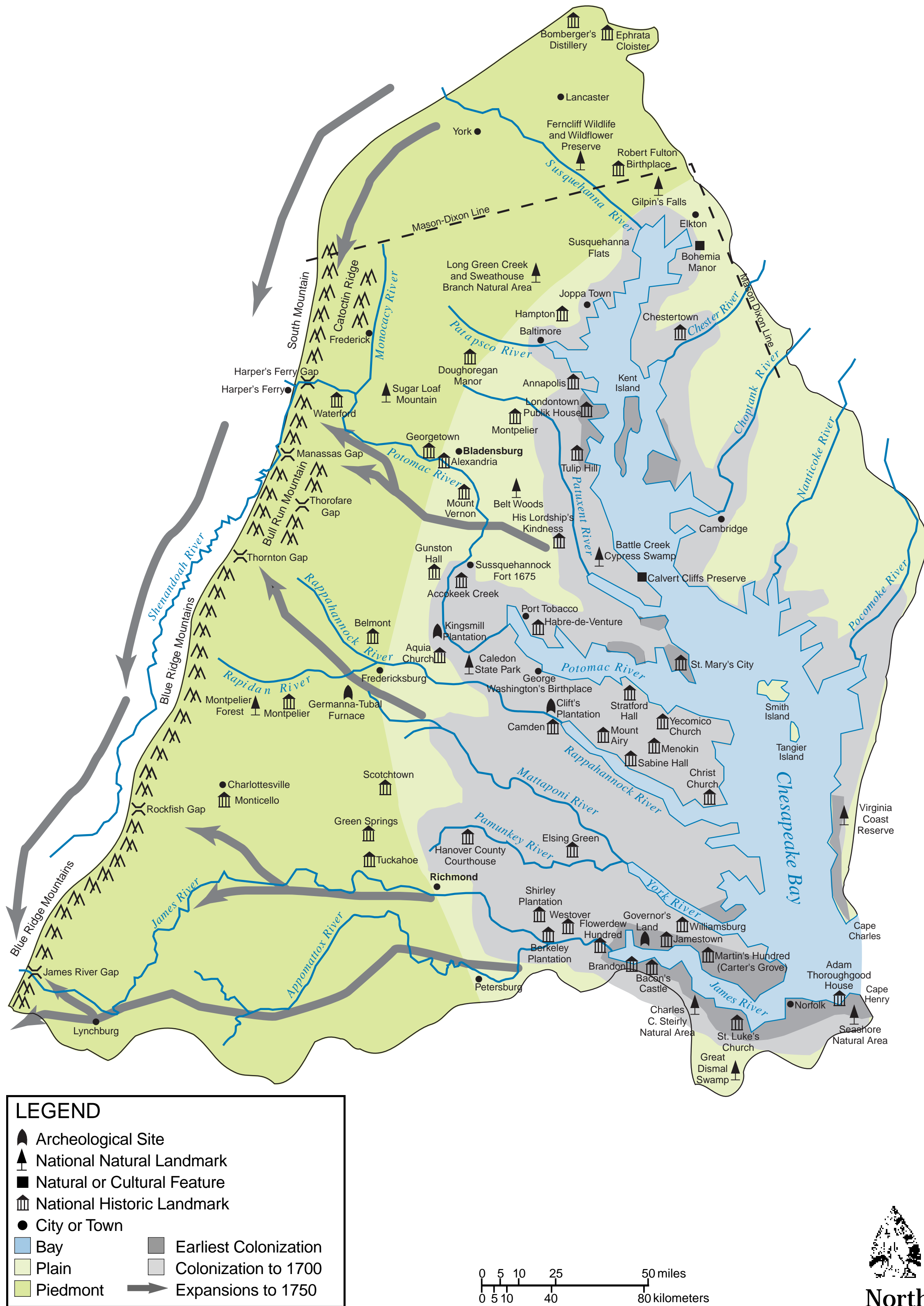


Figure 17: Filling in a Post-Mold Pattern: Reconstructed long house at the Strickler archeological site, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1969. (Photograph from *Susquehanna's Indians* used by permission of the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission, ©1984.)

This wholly Indian world changed forever with the coming of Europeans (see Map 7, page 54). The open waters of Chesapeake Bay became the stage for the earliest direct contacts between these peoples in the region. The earliest written record of contact in the region is a chronicle of the 1524 voyage of Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian captain sailing in the service of King Francis I of France. Other early impressions were recorded by Spanish priests from Florida, who tried to establish a mission at what they called *Ajacán* on the James River in 1570, and English Roanoke colonists,

Ajacán, Virginia

Map 7: Contact and Colonization, A.D. 1500 to 1775



KEY LOCALES (MAP 7)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

District of Columbia

Georgetown Historic District [18th-19th centuries]

Maryland

Accokeek Creek Site [A.D. 1000-1675], Prince George's County

Chestertown Historic District [18th-19th centuries], Kent County

Doughoregan Manor [ca. 1727], Howard County

Habre-de-Venture [1771], Charles County

His Lordship's Kindness [ca. 1735], Prince George's County

London Town Publik House [ca. 1750], Anne Arundel County

Montpelier [ca. 1745], Prince George's County

Mount Clare [ca. 1763], Baltimore City

Tulip Hill [1756, 1790], Anne Arundel County

Annapolis Landmarks

Brice House [1773]

Chase-Lloyd House [1774]

Colonial Annapolis Historic District [17th-18th centuries]

Hammond-Harwood House [ca. 1774]

Maryland State House [ca. 1772]

William Paca House [1765]

Peggy Stewart House [1764]

Whitehall [ca. 1765]

St. Mary's City Landmarks

Resurrection Manor [ca. 1660], Saint Mary's County

Saint Mary's City Historic District [1634-1695], Saint Mary's County

West Saint Mary's Manor [18th century], Saint Mary's County

Pennsylvania

Bomberger's Distillery [1753, 1840], Lebanon County

Ephrata Cloister [1746], Lancaster County

Robert Fulton Birthplace [ca. 1765], Lancaster County

Stiegel-Coleman House [1758], Lancaster County

Virginia

Aquia Church [1757], Stafford County

Bacon's Castle [ca. 1655], Surry County

Belmont [1761], Stafford County

Berkeley Plantation [1726], Charles City County

Brandon [ca. 1720], Prince George County

Camden [17th-19th centuries], Caroline County

Christ Church [1732], Lancaster County

Elsing Green [1758], King William County

Green Springs Historic District [18th-19th centuries], Louisa County

Greenway Court [1762], Clarke County

Gunston Hall [1758], Fairfax County

Hanover County Courthouse [1735], Hanover County

Martin's Hundred Carter's Grove [17th-18th centuries], James City County

Menokin [ca. 1769], Richmond County

Monticello [1770-1789], Albemarle County

Montpelier [ca. 1760], Orange County

Mount Airy [1762], Richmond County

Mount Vernon [1743, 1792-1799], Fairfax County

Sabine Hall [ca. 1730], Richmond County

Saint John's Episcopal Church [1741], Richmond County

Saint Luke's Church [1682], Isle of Wight County

Scotchtown [1719], Hanover County

Shirley Plantation [1770], Charles City County

Stratford Hall [1730], Westmoreland County

Adam Thoroughgood House [ca. 1640], Virginia Beach

Tuckahoe [ca. 1712], Goochland County

Waterford Historic District [18th-19th centuries], Loudon County

Westover [1734], Charles City County

Yecomico Church [ca. 1706], Westmoreland County

Alexandria City Landmarks

Alexandria Historic District [18th-19th centuries]

Christ Church [1768]

Gadsby's Tavern [1752, 1792]

Fredericksburg City Landmarks

Kenmore [1752]

James Monroe Law Office [1758, 1786-1789]

Rising Sun Tavern [1760]

Williamsburg City Landmarks

Bruton Parish Church [1715]

Peyton Randolph House [1715]

James Semple House [ca. 1770]

Williamsburg Historic District [1633-1779]

Wren Building, College of William and Mary [1702]

Wythe House [ca. 1755]

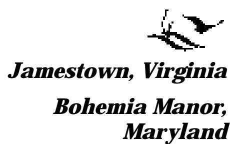
who attempted to settle along the nearby North Carolina coast in 1585. The Europeans marveled at what they considered the strangeness of the inhabitants' customs, the temperate nature of the climate, and the lushness of the land.

The native subjects of these observations paddled their log dugout canoes into the Bay to visit the ships anchored off their shores and watched the strangers scribble on pieces of paper. Attracted first by the calm waters of the sheltered bay, European mariners soon charted the deepest channels, where oceangoing sailing ships could drop anchor within coves and inlets.

Trade and commerce dominated initial contacts on these waters. The local inhabitants exchanged furs, food, and facts for metal tools, glass beads, and other European items brought by the growing and diversifying group of visitors. Most of these were men of different nationalities and faiths who only stayed for a few days or weeks. Others tried to remain longer, but they were inexperienced and poorly supplied. Initial colonial efforts, such as the ***Ajacán mission*** on the James and Roanoke, collapsed quickly. But the English learned from past mistakes, and their Virginia Company managed to establish the first permanent

Ajacán mission, Virginia

Figure 18: Imagining a Colonial Landscape: 1660 Jamestown street scene based on written records, museum artifacts, and archeological research.
(Illustration by Keith Rocco, courtesy of the National Park Service)



Jamestown, Virginia

Bohemia Manor, Maryland

European settlement at ***Jamestown*** in 1607 (see Figure 18). Colonists led by captains John Smith and Christopher Newport soon fanned out along the Coastal Plain. They were searching for gold, fur, potent ginseng roots, and a hallucinogenic plant they called Jimson (Jamestown) weed. No gold was found, the fur trade proved unreliable, the ginseng roots were not potent enough to satisfy consumers, and Jimson weed never caught on. Two other plants, growing not wild in forests but cultivated in Indian fields and gardens, would become the economic mainstays of English colonization along the Chesapeake. One of these, sweet or Indian corn, would ultimately feed much of the world. The other, tobacco, would soon become the region's wildly popular and uniquely irresistible export.

Word of the riches to be had in the Chesapeake soon attracted settlers. Thousands began sailing to the region from southern English ports. Malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery killed many of these men and women during their first years of seasoning, as the process of acclimatization was known in the region. In fact, far more people died from these diseases than in the seemingly endless wars fought with the region's native inhabitants between 1610 and 1675. But neither the threats of disease nor the dangers of attack discouraged settlers searching for trade, wealth, and deeds to pieces of the region's land.

A continual stream of English immigrants replenished the numbers Jamestown lost to disease and war. First brought to the Chesapeake in 1619, a small, slowly growing number of enslaved Africans added to the region's population. Other people attracted to the Chesapeake's bounty settled at various places in the region. For example, the Eries and other Great Lakes native people driven from their homelands by Iroquois warriors during the second quarter of the seventeenth century tried to settle in the Piedmont. And traders traveled south from the Dutch New Netherland colony along the Hudson and Delaware Rivers in search of pelts and plunder. One of them, a central European named Augustine Hermann, established a settlement, christened ***Bohemia Manor*** in honor of his homeland, at the northeast end of the Bay in 1662.

Virginian claims to the region did not go unchallenged. Powhatan leaders resisted Jamestown colonists until their final defeat in 1646. Susquehannocks fought too, armed with muskets obtained from Dutch traders and Swedish colonists, who were settling their own colony on the banks of the Delaware River between 1638 and 1655. The Susquehannocks challenged anyone asserting authority over their upper Bay domain. And the Spanish authorities issued protests from their capital at Saint Augustine, continually threatening to drive Virginians away from a region they considered part of Florida.

English Catholics established the proprietary colony of Maryland in 1634, led by a favorite of the king named Leonard Calvert, or Lord Baltimore. This marked the most significant challenge to Virginia's authority in the region. Maryland colonists–traveling on transports named the Ark and the Dove–established their first

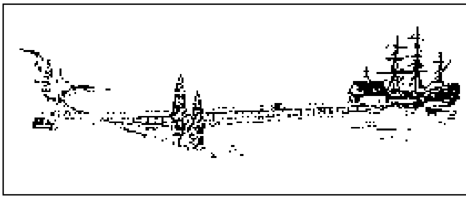


Figure 19: Moving Goods by Water along the Coastal Plain Landscape: Reconstruction of a Chesapeake landing during colonial times. (Sketch by Edwin Tunis, used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers ©)

settlement on the banks of a deep Potomac River bay at a place they christened *Saint Mary's City.* The new settlers purchased land there from the local Yeocomico people, but they soon found themselves embroiled in disputes with both Susquehannock warriors and Virginian colonists, who resented their presence and claimed their land.

These disputes periodically broke out into open warfare. In 1635, for example, the Calverts confronted a Virginian settler named William Claiborne. In 1631, Claiborne had set up a trading post at the southern tip of Kent Island, near present-day Annapolis, to dominate trade with Susquehannocks controlling access to fur sources from the interior. He was defeated by Marylander's in a noisy but relatively bloodless naval skirmish on the Pocomoke River in 1635, but he continued the fight to remain on Kent Island. Though driven from Maryland in 1638, Claiborne carried on the contest from Virginia.

Over-hunting and warfare caused the collapse of the fur trade by mid-century. Plantations such as *Martin's Hundred, Clift's Plantation,* and *Governor's Land* replaced trading posts as the most important settlements on the Bay. Planters first erected hastily constructed, earthfast structures whose wooden support posts were sunk directly into the ground rather than in stone, brick, or cement foundations. Although earthfast construction allowed settlers to build houses quickly and cheaply, such foundations rotted swiftly in the wet soils of the region. More substantial structures, known as great or manor houses, only began appearing in large numbers later in the seventeenth century. Most of these buildings were frame and brick edifices resting on stone or masonry foundations and constructed in the high-styles then popular in England.

Whatever their size or level of style, houses and surrounding plantations were situated on rich, black soils along navigable stretches of waterways coursing through the Coastal Plain. Planters living along shallower stretches had long wooden wharfs built out into deeper waters to accommodate ocean-going ships (See Figure 19). Colonists quickly revealed a preference for home sites, fields, and other tracts already cleared by Indians as they moved onto lands purchased or seized from their original owners. These colonists depended on Coastal Plain waterways to link their scattered sites–plantations, farms, factories, tobacco storehouses (also known as rollhouses, a reference to rollwagons (see Figure 20), large, barrel-like hogshead casks drawn by horses, mules, or oxen, used to store and convey tobacco from farms to docks), shops, churches, courthouses, taverns, and inns (called ordinaries)–with the few small cities established during the first century of colonization. These included *Jamestown, Williamsburg*, and *Saint Mary's City.*

Saint Mary's City, Maryland

Jamestown and Williamsburg, Virginia

Saint Mary's City, Maryland

Settlers milled lumber cut from local forests to build small shallow drafted one or two masted sailing ships, known as shallops, and other small craft. These were used to ply the shallower tidewater bays and inlets, where English colonists located most of their settlements. Slowly, the Bay grew into an important commercial artery. Oceangoing sailing ships carrying settlers, slaves, and imports from Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean laid up alongside various docks to take on

Martin's Hundred, Clift's Plantation, and Governor's Land, Virginia

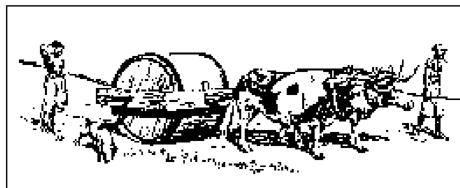


Figure 20: Moving Goods Overland Across the Coastal Plain Landscape: Reconstruction of an ox-drawn hogshead roll wagon used to convey tobacco on rolling roads. (Sketch by Edwin Tunis, used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers ©)

cargoes of lumber, grain, tobacco, and other Chesapeake products. On shore, small fishing communities grew up alongside major port towns. Tidal water and wind powered mills and pumps began draining more accessible wetlands for fresh groundwater.

European settlers faced challenges they could not have predicted. For example, the tidewater soils–well watered and highly organic–were initially too rich for European crops. Wheat planted in new fields grew extravagantly abundant foliage, but produced little grain. Tobacco, however, thrived in such soils (see Figure 21). But tobacco was a demanding crop, requiring constant care and exhausting even the richest ground after three or four years. Large amounts of cow, horse, pig, and chicken manure spread on these spent fields could restore the degree of fertility needed for wheat, corn, flax, and other crops, but manuring was time consuming and expensive. Instead, because the expanses of land in the tidewater seemed limitless, most planters abandoned their old fields and temporary support structures and moved on. Such practices soon produced the tidewater landscape that colonial observers decried–one of broken down farms and weed-strewn, exhausted fields.

Demand for labor increased as cultivation consumed ever-larger expanses of new lands. Plantation owners used indentured servants, free laborers, and, increasingly, enslaved Africans to grow tobacco for export and to raise corn, cotton, flax, cattle, and pigs for local consumption. African Americans made up fully half the region's workforce by 1700. Not all Africans coming to Chesapeake Bay labored as slaves. And, most of the region's first laborers were impoverished Europeans who agreed to work for a stipulated number of years for landowners willing to pay their passage. African servants of frontier traders occasionally played important roles, establishing close relationships with Indian clients. By learning Indian languages and becoming familiar with their customs, several became significant culture brokers, go-betweens possessing skills essential to conduct business and diplomacy among people belonging to vastly different cultures.

As conflict continued to plague the region, diplomatic skills became increasingly important. Intercolonial struggles and wars with Indians devastated communities everywhere. Conflicts between rich and poor and between those favoring local control and those defending royal privilege sometimes broke out into open warfare. And a combination of economic competition, border disputes, and religious disagreements kept Virginia, Maryland, and their provincial neighbors to the north and south in constant conflict.

Old World struggles, too, spilled across the ocean to ensnare Chesapeake people. These included the English Civil War of 1642-1649, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the four European imperial wars fought in the Americas by Britain, France, and Spain between 1689 and 1760. The first shots of this last war, known as the Seven Year's or French and Indian War, were fired in 1754 by troops led by a young Virginian militiaman named George Washington. Sent beyond the Blue Ridge by Virginia's royal governor, Robert Dinwiddie, Washington and his troops were contesting French expansion into western lands claimed by his province.

Other disputes dragged on for years. The protracted boundary dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland, which had begun when Pennsylvania received its charter in 1681, was only settled with the

Figure 21: Agricultural Landscape: Maryland tobacco field and barns.
(Photograph courtesy of the Maryland Historical Trust)

completion of the ***Mason-Dixon survey line*** in 1767. Protestants periodically tried to drive away Catholic colonists, as when Puritans supported Parliamentary partisan Richard Ingle's seizure of Maryland from the Catholic Calverts in 1645, during the English Civil War. At other times, Maryland Catholics tried to suppress Protestant denominations. And Protestants also fought among themselves in these years. Anglicans supporting the king periodically clashed with militant Puritans; Maryland Catholics allied themselves with one Protestant faction or another when political struggles swept through the region. Finally, but not in an eager or an organized manner, contending provinces and factions had to band together to resist both Indian attacks and the threatened invasions of rival European powers.

Native and new diseases continued to ravage communities without regard to their politics, religion, or race. Indian nations, unable to replenish populations devastated by war and new diseases such as smallpox, were forced to submit to English rule. The English were able to replace losses with a seemingly endless flow of new immigrants and supplies from the mother country and other colonies. Drawing on their vast support network, which stretched across the North Atlantic world, the English finally managed to consolidate political control over Chesapeake Bay's Coastal Plain by 1700.

The English employed a variety of frameworks to govern their colonies. Virginia began as a charter colony under the control of the Virginia Company. The Crown granted charters to boards of corporate stockholders extending rights to colonize and govern often vaguely demarcated areas not yet reduced to royal control. In 1624, Virginia also became the first English province to become a royal colony under the direct control of the Crown. Maryland and Pennsylvania, by contrast, were organized as proprietary colonies under the control of influential proprietors granted authority over particular areas by the English crown. The Penn family was given control of the government and all lands within Pennsylvania; the Calvert family, whose successive heads held the title Lord Baltimore, had the same rights in Maryland. Both families held monopolies on the sale and rental of all provincial lands within their proprietary bounds, and both zealously maintained these rights up to the time of the Revolution.

Mason-Dixon survey line, Maryland and Pennsylvania

The English organized their colonies into political units, each with its own boundaries, rights, and responsibilities. They called these units provinces, counties, parishes, townships, municipalities, and hundreds. The origin and meaning of hundreds–and the exact amount of land they included–are only vaguely understood today. We do know that hundreds were judicial districts, larger than parishes and smaller than counties. An area could be considered a hundred if it either contained a hundred eligible voters or could mobilize a like number of militiamen.

Social boundaries, too, became more pronounced, as profits from free and slave labor concentrated wealth in the hands of influential families and, depending on the type of colony, proprietary authorities, corporate directors, or placemen appointed to positions of power and influence by the Crown. Governors-general, appointed by the Crown and responsible for both the governance and defense of their colonies, consulted with provincial councils and assemblies made up of these new elites. By 1700, these groups had established new state capitals at ***Annapolis*** in Maryland (1695) and at ***Williamsburg*** in Virginia (1699). Several Chesapeake cities were laid out in accordance with carefully designed ground plans. Others developed in a somewhat more haphazardly spontaneous manner. Many population centers grew up around county courts, community churches, river fords, and important crossroads. The legal and religious needs of isolated communities were served by judges and ministers making regularly scheduled circuits through thinly populated districts.

Annapolis, Maryland
Williamsburg, Virginia

Numbers and densities of English and African populations increased dramati-

COLONIAL ANNAPOLIS HISTORIC DISTRICT. *Designation as an historic district preserves the distinctive street plan and buildings constructed after Annapolis was made Maryland's capital in 1695 (see Figure 22) Unlike the earlier capital at Saint Mary's City, which was built alongside a relatively small, shallow harbor that was close to the mouth of the Bay and vulnerable to sudden attacks from the sea, Annapolis was located in a more secure position farther up the Bay on the banks of a well-sheltered deepwater harbor. Easier to reach by its citizens, it was also much farther from Virginian rivals.*

Provincial governor Francis Nicholson planned the city. Naming it for his sovereign, Queen Anne, he used the Baroque layout of the French court at Versailles and adapted by architects Christopher Wren and John Evelyn during the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666. The provincial State House and the state-supported Anglican church were located in circles on high ground dominating the town and the harbor. Narrow streets stretched from these circles like the spokes of a wheel. Although the plan was designed to provide clear vistas of city's twin centers of authority, lack of expertise resulted in misalignment of several streets.

Construction of the current State House began in 1772 and was completed twelve years later. The Continental Congress met in session in the building from 1783 to 1784. During that time, Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War and accepted Washington's resignation of his commission as commander in chief of the Continental Army. The city's oldest standing building, the Old Treasury (built between 1735 and 1737) stands near the State House. Although some streets have been widened and others renamed, the modern-day street plan is little altered from the original design.

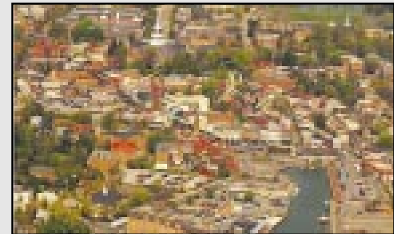


Figure 22: Urban Landscape Preserved: Colonial Annapolis Historic District, 1995. (Photograph courtesy of the Historic Annapolis Foundation)

Port Tobacco and Baltimore, Maryland

cally in most parts of the Coastal Plain in the 1700s. Population expansion and the closing of established harbors, such as ***Port Tobacco*** after it filled with silt eroded from cleared fields and forests, required construction of new cities and towns. Many, such as ***Baltimore*** (established in 1729), were built alongside wide harbors providing sheltered deep water anchorages for large numbers of oceangoing vessels. Others were constructed on mostly level plots of land near rapids. Such plots were highly valued, as they could both accommodate warehouses and be near the fall of water needed to power mill wheels. The larger of these towns were built at the heads of navigation of rivers (the uppermost limits of oceangoing boating) in fall line locales such as ***Richmond*** on the James (founded at the site of ***Shoccoe's Warehouse*** in 1742), ***Petersburg*** on the Appomattox (established in 1748), and ***Alexandria*** on the Potomac (founded at the ***Hunting Creek Warehouse*** in 1749).

Richmond, Shoccoe's Warehouse, Petersburg, Alexandria, and Hunting Creek Warehouse, Virginia

Although swamps and pine barrens were hard to penetrate, farms grew on clear cut, arable land throughout the Coastal Plain as more enslaved Africans were brought into the provinces of Maryland and Virginia. Larger farms relying on the labor of large numbers of slaves grew into opulent plantations. Slaves cut timber into fence rails to enclose ever larger fields, to demarcate their master's property, and to protect crops from free ranging livestock. Much more than fences came to separate people living side by side as slaves and freemen. These social divisions created a new world in tidewater areas, a world marked by increasing extremes of wealth and poverty.

As the most favorable Coastal Plain locales were taken up, tidewater speculators began staking claims to lands above the fall line in the Maryland and Virginia Piedmont. Although European explorers traveled up the rivers coursing through the Piedmont by the 1650s, no permanent English settlements had yet been built in the interior. This situation changed dramatically after Bacon's Rebellion broke out in 1675. Named after its leader, Virginian Nathaniel

Bacon, this revolt broke out when poorer settlers, resenting the government's failure to protect them from Indian attack (among other grievances), rebelled against royal authority. Fighting started after colonists attacked Susquehannocks, who had been ordered by Maryland authorities to settle on the Potomac to protect provincial frontiers from attacks by other Indians. Retaliating Susquehannock war parties soon devastated farms along the Blue Ridge frontier. Unable to avenge themselves on the Susquehannocks and resenting the prerogatives of powerful, well placed landowners whose privileges came in part from royal favor, angered colonists ransacked the homes of wealthy planters and captured and burned the city of ***Jamestown,*** After gaining control over much of the colony, Nathaniel Bacon died suddenly (probably of dysentery), and the revolt was quickly suppressed. Taking advantage of the situation, Virginian authorities reduced all remaining Indians in the province to tributary status at the 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation (present-day ***Williamsburg)*** regardless of whether or not they had supported the Susquehannocks in the fighting. Wealthy tidewater families soon claimed the lands of the Susquehannocks and those of other Indian nations driven out by the fighting.

Tidewater residents and new immigrants from Europe purchased the first Piedmont lands and established farmsteads near the banks of the James and other major rivers. They dammed fast running streams flowing into these rivers and erected mills to grind grain, saw wood, run bellows, and crush iron and other ores extracted from nearby mines and quarries. An influx of Scots-Irish and German refugees, forced from their own homelands, quickened the pace and scope of penetration in the early 1700s. These immigrants began moving southwest from Pennsylvania's Delaware Valley into unsettled portions of the Piedmont.

They and other settlers encountered a Piedmont landscape dominated by dense, tangled forests. These had not existed before warfare, disease, and dislocation virtually ended Indian burning practices that cleared undergrowth from large areas of woodland. Armed with steel axes and using water driven saw mills, colonists soon began clearing timber from the richest, best drained soils. They used whole trees, sawn planks, and split shingles to build log cabins and frame houses and barns. And, using river cobbles, quarried stone, and bricks fired from riverbank clay, they built homes, churches, and other structures. They fashioned split wooden rails

Jamestown, Virginia

Williamsburg, Virginia

SOTTERLEY PLANTATION. *The plantation was built in 1710 on a bluff providing a commanding view of the Patuxent River in Maryland's Saint Mary's County. Like most other tobacco plantation houses of the period, Sotterley's manor house was originally constructed as a vernacular wood-frame earthfast/false plate structure. Later modifications transformed the building into an opulent Georgian show place, complete with a majestic winding Chinese Chippendale staircase and a wood-paneled drawing room and parlor.*

Further modified in more recent years into a Colonial Revival country seat, this building today stands within a ninety-acre farming tract. Planting fields, a formal garden, a brick necessary and stable, a river wharf, the rolling road running from the wharf to the plantation's tobacco barns, and one of the few slave cabins (built around 1840) surviving to the present day (see Figure 23), are preserved on the property.

Figure 23: Preserving a Landscape of Servitude: Slave cabin at Sotterley Plantation, 1998.
(Photograph courtesy of the National Park Service)

and piled fieldstones into fences surrounding fields and pens. Earthen dams impounded ponds that watered their free ranging livestock and provided power to drive mill wheels. Laboring on their own holdings, Piedmont settlers created a patchwork of miniature environments that increasingly transformed the region's landscape. Level, graded sunken roads bordered Piedmont fields, forests, and millponds. Hard packed dirt paths soon grew into a network linking communities throughout the area. Before long, town centers began growing in places such as ***Lancaster,*** Pennsylvania (1730); ***Frederick,*** Maryland (built as a county seat in 1748); and ***Charlottesville,*** Virginia (made a county seat in 1762).

Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Frederick, Maryland
Charlottesville, Virginia

Almost the entire Chesapeake Bay region was intensively settled by the mid-1700s. In the Coastal Plain, a small number of established families and the newly rich acquired more and more slaves and erected ever larger and more lavish plantation houses. Most Coastal Plain landowners lived more modestly, in small frame or brick houses on holdings rarely over two hundred acres. Farther inland, the few larger estates of powerful families (such as ***Monticello,*** begun by Thomas Jefferson at Charlottesville in 1769) were surrounded by the more modest homesteads of newcomers from the tidewater and those of even newer immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, and the German states. Seeking new lands and new profits, tidewater natives and Piedmont pioneers soon began staking claims to Indian territory beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Monticello, Virginia

Social tensions proliferated between rich and poor, male and female, slave and free, old settler and newcomer. These provided fertile ground for the Great Awakening, a religious revival movement that swept through the British American provinces between 1738 and 1745. Promoting social and racial equality in the eyes of God, its leading lights–including Presbyterian minister Samuel Davies, New England immigrant Baptist preacher Shubal Stearns, and African American missionary John Marrant–encouraged a more personal, emotional form of worship that freed participants from the restraints of more controlled church hierarchies. Also on the religious front, forerunners of today's Plain Sect communities and members of other pious orders persecuted in Europe established settlements in the Piedmont country, drawn by promises of religious tolerance. These immigrants were meticulous craftspeople, and their experiments with existing technologies resulted in the development of such improvements as the Conestoga wagon and the Pennsylvania long rifle.

Although they were growing more and more able to produce life's necessities themselves, Chesapeake Bay colonists relied on trade for products that were locally unavailable for luxury items, and for new ideas and fashions. The British attempted to limit provincial development and raise their colonial income by regulating this trade and imposing new taxes. These tactics caused increasing unrest throughout the region in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. By 1775–the end of the period covered by this chapter–a rebellion had broken out in British America. Feeling threatened by the extension of imperial authority, powerful families such as the Washingtons, Lees, and Jeffersons led large numbers of Chesapeake Bay colonists in revolt.

☐ PLACE

As in all earlier periods, geological research supplies much of the available information about the environment in the Chesapeake Bay region between 1500 and 1775. Like archeologists, geologists use radiometric techniques to date bits of organic matter in naturally buried soil strata recovered from core samples, drilling at sites throughout the region. But such techniques must be used with care. Single assays sometimes render date ranges extending over several hundred years. The broadness of such date ranges requires the testing of multiple samples from deposits less than five hundred years old.

Archeologists, too, continue to uncover floors of living spaces as well as pits,

shell heaps, and other deposits containing bones, charred wood and plants, pollen, and other indicators of past environments. All plants and animals require specific environmental conditions. Comparative analyses of remains of biological communities in a single locale can reveal the range of climate conditions at a particular time.

Written records first begin to supplement geological and archeological evidence as sources of environmental information during this period. Ships' logs, settlers' diaries, more detailed observations by contemporary naturalists such as John Banister and John Clayton, and other manuscripts produced by European colonists preserve the earliest written records of the region's plants, animals, geology, weather, and climate. And several English herbarium collections preserve to this day the plant specimens gathered by botanists such as Hugh Jones and William Vernon. Lacking precise instruments, these observers of nature were generally limited to impressionistic statements regarding soils, winds, waves, or weather. Although their writings document an environment generally resembling current conditions, scholars continue to assess the ecological impact of deforestation, intensive cultivation, and other environmentally transforming colonial practices.

According to both archeological evidence and colonial observations, the region's climate in the 1500s was somewhat wetter and cooler than it is today. Weather moderated between 1650 and 1750. Then, from 1750 to 1800, temperatures cooled into what is often called a Little Ice-Age. But the form and content of Chesapeake Bay itself largely resembled its current condition. Very little is known about plant life in the Bay's open waters during this period. But archeological evidence affirms written accounts noting that oysters and many species of fish, mammals, shellfish, and plankton lived in these waters. Sea grasses, juvenile fish, crabs, and migratory waterfowl made their homes in shallower portions of the Bay.

Figure 24: Nature's Hand on the Landscape: A wind-blown sand dune advances on a Coastal Plain forest, Cape Henry, Virginia, ca. 1905. **(Photograph courtesy of the Detroit Publishing Company and the Library of Congress)**

Then as now, sandy and gravelly beaches lined Bay shores. Beaches covered by tidewaters supported communities of shellfish, insects, and migratory birds. Salt marsh and salt meadow cordgrasses, American holly, saltgrass, and other plants resistant to salt spray supported a wide variety of insects, mammals, and birds; these plants also stabilized dunes and bluffs above the high tide mark (see Figure 24). Preserved pollen samples affirm colonial accounts of extensive salt, brackish, and freshwater marshes and swamp lands alongside the region's watercourses. An abundance of species such as wild celery, coontail, common waterweed, eelgrass, southern naiad, and curly pondweed (an early introduction from Europe) were noted by contemporary observers.

Neither Indians nor colonists spent much time in Chesapeake swamp lands, aside from using them as places for refuge during conflict or for brief hunting, fishing, and gathering excursions. Mosquitoes, flies, and other pests deterred visitors in warmer months. Early colonial activities altered wetland habitats–small landfills undergirded docks and wharves in sheltered harbors, and dikes enclosed salt marsh grasses serving as cattle pasture–but did not have an extensive impact on water plants or their environments. This situation changed when deposits of iron nodules were discovered in bogs during the 1730s and 1740s. This discovery stimulated the development of iron furnaces and mills at Coastal Plain locales to smelt bog ore into pig iron ingots and

cast iron stove plates, fire backs, and other wares. And soils eroding from forest lands cleared to fuel these furnaces washed ever greater amounts of soil sediment into Bay waters, decreasing the amount of light reaching submerged plants. Although direct evidence is lacking, such changes almost surely damaged plants not adapted to lower light levels.

Mature, old growth forests covered as much as 95 percent of the region in 1500. Southern mixed hardwood forests grew throughout the Coastal Plain. Oaks and hickories dominated higher ground, while red maples, gums, Atlantic white cedars, and bald cypresses grew in swampy lowlands. Loblolly and other pines occupied poor or sandy soils. Farther inland in the Piedmont, American chestnuts and a variety of oaks, poplars, and hickories dominated the forests. Shrubs, berry bushes, sedges, and grasses grew on forest margins, meadows, swamps, and other sunny clearings opened by flooding, windfalls, or fires. Some of these fires occurred naturally or by accident; others were deliberately set to clear underbrush and drive game during group hunts.

Tubal Furnace, Virginia

By 1775, colonists had cut and burned as much as 30 percent of the Coastal Plain forests. Tidewater bog iron furnaces also consumed increasing quantities of wood. Farther inland, Piedmont forests also began falling to the axes of settlers clearing lands for farms, firewood, fencing, and charcoal to fuel their new iron works at Virginia's ***Tubal Furnace*** and other locales. Ironically, slaves forced to clear-cut old-growth trees to fuel the Tubal Furnace created the huge tangled expanse of snarled undergrowth south of the Rapidan River that later entangled contending Union and Confederate armies at the battles of Chancellorsville (fought in early May, 1863) and the Wilderness (fought in the same place one year later).

Because of the rapid loss of open space and the sixty or so species of exotic Old World plants brought in by settlers, some native species declined in number. Many of the new species were deliberately introduced. Some were cultivated plants such as wheat, apple trees, and grape vines. Johnny jump-up (the ancestor of the modern pansy), mallows, and oxeye daisy were among the many European plants imported for their medicinal value. Ornamental plants, such as lilacs (first brought to England from Persia during the 1500s) were carried to Virginia by early settlers and fostered in garden beds. Dandelion leaves were prized as salad greens and brewed to make diuretic teas. Other plants, such as Queen Anne's Lace, were weeds spread from seeds accidentally brought into the country in bales of fodder, seed bags, livestock hides, or manure. Newly introduced tropical plants, such as oranges, only flourished in the artificial environments of greenhouses.

Both natives and newcomers took care to protect desirable plants. Indian people practiced rituals respecting plant spirits; colonists used laws to protect white oaks and other economically valuable trees from overcutting. Other native plants were cultivated in colonial gardens, such as poison ivy, which was prized for its shiny leaves. But the most significant impact on regional vegetation patterns were the new uses for established crops such as tobacco and the introduction of exotic, Old World field crops. We still do not fully understand the ecological effects of field agriculture. But, as mentioned earlier, tobacco cultivation quickly used up soil fertility, requiring frequent moves to new and ever-larger expanses of land. Abandoned farmsteads and fields created a messy, depleted physical landscape that encouraged the growth of weeds and pests. And contemporary descriptions remark on the increasing murkiness of many regional rivers and streams, affirming that ground-clearing caused growing amounts of sediment to pour into regional rivers.

As for diet, Indian people ate shellfish and crafted their shells into beads and other ornaments. The first European colonists also depended on shellfish for subsistence. At first, they even adopted shell beads (known as wampum, peake, or roanoke) as their currency, until enough

of their own coinage was available. Shell heaps and other archeological evidence confirm what the earliest colonial written records document: the presence of extensive oyster beds in Chesapeake Bay waters. Crabs, shrimp, hard and soft clams, and other shellfish were also abundant. At first, people collected most shellfish from shallow waters. Later, they used metal tongs mounted on long wooden poles, which enabled them to exploit oyster beds in deeper waters. But despite these harvesting activities, neither group had the technology nor the desire to exhaust the riches of Chesapeake Bay shellfish communities during this period of contact and colonization.

Those trying to exploit the Chesapeake Bay region's natural environment faced significant challenges. Early European chroniclers wrote of the clouds of mosquitoes and flies that rose over Bay shores in warmer months, and they chronicled the struggles of farmers with the many kinds of worms, beetles, and other insects that preyed on their garden plants and field crops. These writers also complained of the fleas, lice, and other small insects that infested their homes, clothes, and bodies. Early attempts to put insects to economic uses met with mixed success. Beekeepers successfully extracted honey from hives, but attempts to raise silkworms on mulberry trees failed.

Indians and settlers used nets, traps, spears, and hooked lines to catch numerous types of fish–deepwater fish such as striped bass, shad, and herring; smaller saltwater fish such as smelts and eels; and freshwater fish such as trout, bass, and pickerel. Both peoples also valued the large runs of shad and other fish that spawned in freshwater streams in the spring. Many settlers converted dugout log canoes into fishing vessels with sails. Many Indians, for their part, adopted the shallow draft sailing ships with plank hulls and the metal ship furnishings introduced by colonials. As with the shellfish, neither natives nor newcomers had the technology or the desire to devastate Bay fish stocks during this period. Even so, by 1680, Virginian legislators felt compelled to enact a law preventing wasteful harvests of fish stocks in the Rappahannock River. By the 1700s, seafood became more of a supplement than a staple in the colonists' diet, as domestic animals were their chief food source. Still, commercial fishing for herring and shad began in the 1760s and 1770s.

Colonial chroniclers noted the various species of snakes, frogs, toads, salamanders, lizards, and turtles residing in the region today. Observers were most impressed by venomous reptiles, such as the eastern rattlesnakes and copperheads in the Piedmont and the eastern cottonmouths along the Coastal Plain. Indians regarded these reptiles with respect. Colonists treated them as economically useless pests and killed them when they ventured into settled areas. Turtles, such as freshwater common snapping turtles and saltwater northern diamondback terrapins, were hunted for their flesh, shells, and eggs. Free ranging pigs and other animals introduced by colonists were avid hunters of snakes. Still, contemporary evidence suggests that most populations of snakes and other cold blooded animals were not significantly disturbed by people in these years.

Both archeological evidence and colonial writings affirm the presence of great flocks of herons, ducks, geese, and other migratory waterfowl in Chesapeake Bay waters. Least sandpipers, common terns, and other shorebirds flourished on Bay beaches. In the forests and fields of the Coastal Plain and Piedmont, pigeons, songbirds, birds of prey, scavengers, and many other kinds of birds made their homes. Colonists seeking meat for their tables and feathers for their beds used nets, traps, and muzzle loading shotguns to take large numbers of waterfowl. Farther inland, Piedmont farmers hunted partridges, wild turkeys, and other game birds. Grain from farm fields and the many fruit and nut-bearing trees planted by colonists may have helped increase the numbers of passenger pigeons, which lived in vast flocks in the region.

Many large and small mammals lived in the region during this period of contact and colonization. Porpoises and other sea mammals swam regularly into

Chesapeake Bay. Indians and colonists hunted and trapped beavers, muskrats, otters, and other furry mammals. Farther inland, both peoples frequently used dogs to help them hunt the white-tailed deer, black bear, raccoon, elk, wildcat, woodland American bison, and other animals for flesh and fur. Powhatan and other Coastal Plain people regarded rabbits as a holy animal and refrained from hunting them, but colonists had no such reservations.

Settlers introduced horses, sheep, cattle, pigs, and other domestic animals to the region. Although some were penned, many ranged freely on unfenced lands. Free ranging animals tended to feed on acorns, nuts, and other forest products that colonists called mast. These animals also broke into unfenced or untended gardens and fields. The bobcats, cougars, and wolves that preyed on these animals were viewed as pests. Colonial governments sponsored extermination campaigns and offered bounties for animals killed, resulting in the virtual extinction of these creatures in settled portions of the tidewater area by 1750. Game also began to grow scarce as population grew and forests shrank. Alarmed, provincial legislators began declaring certain seasons off limits for hunting. Farther inland, hunters had all but eradicated woodland American bison from Piedmont forests by 1775.

Overall, the archeological, geological, and archival evidence suggests that native species, having adapted to local conditions over several thousand years, continued to live in the region's waters, wetlands, and forests. Indians only introduced exotic domesticated plants such as corn, beans, squash, and tobacco in small clearings that had been slashed and burned out of the forest. Until driven away or restricted to small reservations, they also continued to deliberately burn other portions of woodland during seasonal game drives to create the clear, open park-like forest floors recorded by impressed colonial chroniclers. The colonists cut, burned, plowed, and fenced ever larger tracts of land as they introduced new species of wild and domesticated plants and animals to the region and deliberately tried to exterminate wolves, panthers, and other native animals considered dangerous or bothersome. Although few native species completely disappeared from the region in this period, those that remained shared a vastly transformed environment, one containing new land forms and uses as well as imported life forms.

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF CONTACT AND COLONIZATION

□ PEOPLING PLACES

The population of the region changed as never before in the period of contact and colonization. The territories of Coastal Plain chiefdoms rose, grew, and shrank with their leaders' changing fortunes. Further inland, war and disease caused entire Piedmont native communities to disappear or move elsewhere. European invasion significantly quickened the pace of demographic change. New diseases such as smallpox ravaged Indian communities. Warriors armed with guns fought with their Indian and European enemies in wars, suffering heavy losses in lives and lands. Indian population throughout the region may have declined by as much as 90 percent between 1500 and 1650, from an estimated peak of 24,000 in 1500 to less than 2,400 by 1650.

By contrast, the combined population of English colonists and enslaved Africans rose from zero to nearly 13,000 in the same period. Beginning in 1607, colonial population in the region doubled every twenty years. It rose to 380,000 in 1750. Total colonial population in the Chesapeake Bay area reached 700,000 in 1775. More than a third of this number were Africans, mostly enslaved. Although English settlers still made up the majority of the region's population in this period, the number of Scots-Irish and German immigrants grew significantly in the decades after 1775.

Indians of several nations were the region's sole inhabitants in 1500. This situation had changed dramatically by 1775. By 1650, the Coastal Plain nations had lost many people to war and disease. Those who remained were restricted to small tracts around their traditional core communities. Farther inland, most aboriginal Piedmont populations were forced to move away, or were scattered or destroyed during these same years. To the north, Susquehannock immigrants erected their towns on the banks of the lower Susquehanna River, in and around present day Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Farther south and east, English colonists and enslaved Africans quickly moved outward from colonial centers such as Jamestown. By the mid-1600s, many lived on farmsteads on easily cultivated stretches of riverbank in the Coastal Plain. As mentioned above, much of the English population and nearly all Africans remained in the Coastal Plain throughout the period. In the later decades of the period, tens of thousands of German and Scots-Irish immigrants settled in the Piedmont area.

☐ CREATION OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Although archeologists and scholars disagree about their identity and social development, most agree that the Indian cultures of the region were already experiencing dramatic cultural change by 1607, nearly a century after the first Europeans traveled into Chesapeake Bay. As mentioned earlier, Susquehannocks fleeing Iroquois enemies and seeking new lands near rich resources moved south onto the Piedmont lands of the Shenks Ferry people by 1575. Farther south, members of what archeologists call the Potomac Creek culture evidently pressed eastwards, for reasons still unknown, down the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers onto the Coastal Plain, where they became known as Potomacs, Rappahannocks, and Nanticokes. And everywhere, Indian communities came together in new combinations and developed new cultural identities.

Many Chesapeake Bay native people, then, were driven into exile. But those who were not had to adopt new cultural practices to better resist European invasion and, eventually, adjust to life on small reservations surrounded by newcomers from Europe and Africa. These newcomers also adopted new cultural patterns, adjusting old customs and beliefs to fit new realities. This nearness to foreign cultures affected everyone. Native people struggling to survive often created new identities that set them apart from neighbors and newcomers. Formerly independent nations on the Potomac and Eastern Shores, for example, merged together during the 1600s to form more unified communities today known as the Piscataways and the Nanticokes. And both they and other Indians in the region integrated European dress, technology, religions, and other foreign introductions into their cultures.

Indians, Europeans, and Africans also came more and more to consider themselves and each other as distinct races. Free, enslaved, and indentured people distinguished themselves from one another, while rich merchants and farmers claimed the privileges and respect accorded nobility in their mother countries. In the Piedmont region, many immigrants from Scotland and Ireland established what scholars refer to as a backwoods cultural identity, which was closely tied to an emerging frontier ethos. In contrast, the tidewater society was dominated by the same kinds of Englishmen as those ruling the home country. And whatever their race, class, or caste, people in particular provinces began to form provincial identities. Eventually, all became Americans.

The social lives of all Chesapeake Bay people centered on the family. Indian families tended to be large groups of kin tracing relations back many generations. These were linked to other families and communities by bonds of marriage and alliance. By contrast, colonial families generally consisted of a single set of spouses, their children, and a few other relatives, all living in a single household.

Both natives and newcomers hoped for many children. Children shared household chores, and a large number assured that the family would continue, as many of those born did not live to reach maturity.

Both Indians and colonists divided labor along gender lines. Although particularly talented women could rise to leadership positions in both societies, men usually dominated public life. Women took care of domestic responsibilities and played prominent roles in religious life, food processing, and marketing. Men's first responsibility was to protect the community from harm, but they also hunted game and performed heavy labor. Both colonial men and women did farmwork, but only women cultivated planting fields in native communities. Although colonial women could and did own property, customs limiting their right to vote resulted in legal codes favoring men. Indian law focused on matters of concern to families and communities, and it allowed both men and women to voice their concerns and interests.

College of William and Mary, Virginia

EXPRESSING CULTURAL VALUES

All Chesapeake Bay Indian societies believed in a Great Spirit, in the presence of a spiritual essence in all matter, and in an afterlife. Each honored these beliefs with their own rituals, ceremonies, and traditions. Organized priesthoods drew members from influential families. These priests ran religious ceremonies in Coastal Plain chiefdoms. Piedmont people, in contrast, followed the guidance of individual medicine men and women blessed by visions. Indian families oversaw the education of their young and the assimilation of adopted war captives, foreign spouses, and other outsiders.

Protestant ministers and Catholic priests urged Indian people to convert to Christianity. Although most native people who chose to remain in their homelands did convert, many also continued to practice their traditional religions. Exiled from home and isolated from their countryfolk, enslaved and free Africans also did what they could to maintain their traditional beliefs. Indians and Africans were not the only people whose spiritual traditions were challenged by change in this period; members of different Christian denominations found themselves at odds with one another as well. Political changes in the home country resulted in struggles pitting Catholic, Anglican, and Puritan colonists against one another. And the Great Awakening challenged the authority of established Protestant denominations. This religious revival, as mentioned, swept across the region in the mid- to late 1700s. Ministers preached what became known as New Light doctrines, promoting social equality in the eyes of God. This reflected and stimulated desires for freedom that found expression when the War for Independence broke out in 1775.

As with the Indians, European and African families saw to the education of younger children. For further study, churches or church societies operated schools of higher learning, such as the ***College of William and Mary,*** which was opened in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1693. These schools educated the children of colonial elites and small numbers of Indian converts.

Indian people in the region made many objects to represent the spiritual powers underlying their beliefs. These included masks and regalia, carved posts, charms, tobacco pipes, and line drawings cut into or painted on rocks, cliffs, and boulders. Coastal Plain priests managed temples, shrines, dancing grounds, and group burial sites. Piedmont people worshiped on town dance grounds, in the houses of chiefs, and at hidden, sacred places at rapids, caves, and other locations they regarded as passages to the spirit world. Piedmont families buried their dead individually or in cemetery enclosures. They marked graves with wooden posts, offerings, and mementos.

Colonists also left cultural imprints on the landscape of this period. Protestant and Catholic settlers marked many of their settlements with the spires of frame, brick, or stone churches. Most were narrow structures containing rows of pews

divided by a central aisle. Ministers and priests ran the services from altars and speaking platforms at the end of this aisle; baptismal fonts were generally on the side of the building. The steeples at the tops of the buildings held crosses, and these steeples housed bells rung to call congregations to worship. Those living in or near settlements buried their dead in graveyards next to places of worship. Plantation and farm families in remote locations tended to bury family members and slaves in separate graveyards on their property (see Figure 25). Today, we can see the beliefs, values, and traditions of the colonists of this period most visibly in their churches, graves, and college campuses.

Chesapeake colonists also supported more secular cultural institutions as time went on. Many settlers expressed themselves through what we now call folk painting and carving. Theater first came to the colonies when Scottish merchant William Levingston opened the first playhouse in Williamsburg in 1717. Limited by the region's lack of suitably trained actors, Levingston solved the problem by offering indentures to actors and actresses willing to bring British theater skills to the colonies.

☐ SHAPING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Coastal Plain Indian societies were ruled by chiefs born to leadership. Farther inland, Piedmont communities chose chiefs according to their abilities and merit. Whatever system was used, all Chesapeake Bay Indian people relied on consensus to make decisions throughout this period. Community members responded cooperatively to problems and opportunities, working collectively whenever possible to shape their political landscape. But the shape of this political landscape changed dramatically through contact with Europeans. Europeans used a complex political system that balanced inherited leadership positions with leaders appointed for their abilities to lead. Effectively using this system combining prerogative and skill, Europeans managed to seize control of the region by the third quarter of the seventeenth century.

Figure 25: Memorial Landscape: Family grave plot at Wye House, Maryland, 1998. (Photograph courtesy of the National Park Service)

Provincial governors and their lieutenants were appointed or approved by the Crown. They were advised by councils made up of influential colonists. Each province had a legislature, whose members were periodically elected by property owning freemen who represented voting districts such as counties and parishes. This legislature was responsible for enacting laws and raising revenues to pay the governor's salary and cover other costs of government. During this period, provincial legislators–all men–did not extend voting rights to Indians, Africans, Jews, indentured servants, or their wives and most other colonial women. Some people supported the concept of autocratic rule by hereditary nobilities. Others favored opening government to all people of proven ability regardless of background. People were further divided by differences in class, religion, locality, ethnicity, and opinion. Tensions between such groups flared up often, but open violence of the type briefly acted out in Bacon's Rebellion did not become widespread until the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775.

☐ DEVELOPING THE CHESAPEAKE ECONOMY

Indian economies centered on hunting, fishing, foraging, and cultivating gardens at the beginning of this period. Deer, bear, and other animals provided meat and fat for food, bone and sinew for tools, and skin for clothing and shelter. Fish, shellfish, wildfowl, wild berries and nuts, corn, beans, and squash appeared on menus in season. Since they depended mostly on resources available at certain times and locations, Indian people periodically moved from place to place to harvest economically important minerals, plants, and animals. Although some long distance trade occurred, most Chesapeake Bay people depended on local systems of production and exchange.

In early contacts with Europeans, Indians began participating in an exchange economy in which they traded furs, food, and information for metal tools, glass beads, cloth and woolen textiles, and other manufactured goods. Pressing ever westward to new markets and supplies, the fur trade played a significant role in the changing economic fortunes of Indians and those doing business with them. It continued to do so in later years, as we will see in the next chapter. Indians in the Chesapeake Bay region grew dependent on trade with Europeans in this period, but they lost neither the ability nor the desire to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves.

The English settlers also valued self sufficiency. To attain it, they quickly developed agricultural economies able to sustain their new colonies. At first they adopted Indian crops. Then they used their growing numbers of slaves to clear enough land to grow wheat and other Old World grains. Their imported, free ranging pigs and cattle provided meat and leather and ravaged unfenced Indian gardens. Horses and oxen drew plows and pulled wagons on new dirt roads. Dammed Piedmont streams and Coastal Plain winds and tidal waters powered grinding stones, pumps, presses, and hammers in the region's mills.

The colonists also grew and processed tobacco in increasing quantities. Tobacco became the export item that moved the colonial economy beyond basic subsistence. Used as a medium of exchange in the cash-starved region, tobacco was shipped overseas, and its value was returned in the forms of manufactured goods, slaves, and other imports. Many Coastal Plain planters soon started buying and selling goods, thus becoming merchants. Merchants traded imported items for the timber being cut and milled in the Piedmont. They soon began building ships, docks, and warehouses in ports along navigable stretches of Chesapeake Bay waterways. This trade became so important to the region's economy that the Crown's efforts to regulate it played a major role in convincing many Chesapeake Bay colonists to resist extension of royal authority in the region.

☐ EXPANDING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chesapeake Bay Indian technology consisted primarily of stone, bone, shell, horn, wood, clay, fiber, and unsmelted copper implements at the beginning of this period. They fashioned clay into cooking and storage pots and tobacco pipes. They spun milkweed and hemp into cordage and knitted it into baskets and bags. They quarried stone from outcrops or gathered cobbles in streams, then chipped or ground them to fashion hatchets, knives, scrapers, spearheads, and other tools that they tied, glued, or inserted into handles of wood, bone, or horn. Chipped stone projectile points also tipped arrow shafts, while ground stone hatchets cut down trees and chipped charred wood from the hearts of logs hollowed out to fashion canoes.

Europeans brought other forms of technology to the region, ones based on smelted metal, glass, and spun fabric. Unlike Indians, who relied mostly on fire and their own muscles for power, colonists also harnessed the energies of wind, water, and domesticated animals. Indians adopted those aspects of

European technology that fit their needs and tastes. Far from destroying their cultures, this gradual adoption of aspects of European technology helped native people adapt to the stresses of contact in this period.

Potters and other colonial artisans along the Coastal Plain kept abreast of technological developments in Europe, and great changes also came from Europe to the interior. German and Scandinavian immigrants built log houses in the Piedmont that resembled those common in their home countries. Piedmont immigrants tended charcoal fired furnaces to smelt iron ore quarried from nearby mines. And, as noted, these immigrants even improved on existing technologies. Immigrant artisans developed glassworks near exposed outcrops of sand, transformed smoothbore musket technology into the highly accurate long ranged Pennsylvania long rifle, built sturdy Conestoga wagons from the region's abundant wood and iron resources, crafted cast iron plows, and produced other implements using local materials to create tools adapted to cope with American conditions.

□ TRANSFORMING THE ENVIRONMENT

Most scholars agree that the first centuries of contact between Indians, Europeans, and Africans resulted in the greatest environmental change in the region since the last Ice-Age. As mentioned earlier, ecological relationships in forest communities had long been maintained by periodic burning, but this stopped when Indians were forced from entire areas. Leaving unused woodlands unmanaged, Europeans cut all of the trees from increasingly vast areas to create planting grounds, mill lumber, and produce charcoal.

The colonists' actions resulted in the exposure of formerly forest-covered soils and in new bodies of standing water impounded behind mill dams. Conditions in these new miniature environments differed from those surrounding them. They were characterized by changed temperature, humidity, and groundwater levels, as well as by increased erosion. River-borne sediments and nutrients rose as the overall volumes of dammed rivers fell. And nutrient-rich, slow moving or still water provided ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other insects. These insects carried malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases affecting people and other animals. And when these altered waters flowed into Chesapeake Bay, they changed conditions in spawning grounds, hatcheries, shellfish beds, and other habitats.

Bladensburg, Joppa Town and Port Tobacco, Maryland

Further inland, sediments washing into waterways from deforested lands gradually made smaller rivers unnavigable. Early port towns, such as ***Bladensburg,*** on the Anacostia River across from present-day Washington, D.C., ***Joppa Town*** on the Gunpowder River above present-day Baltimore, and, most notably, ***Port Tobacco*** at the mouth of the lower Potomac tributary of the same name, fell into decline after silt filled their waterways and closed them to commerce.

Contact also resulted in the introduction of many new species and the reduction or disappearance of others. Mostly because Europeans valued the furs of certain animals highly and Indians trapped these animals to sell them, the populations of these animals fell drastically. And because Old World domesticated animals such as pigs, cattle, and horses were allowed to forage freely in forests and salt meadows, they altered environments and competed with native animals for food and shelter. As mentioned earlier, settlers in the region all but eradicated wolves, panthers, and other predators because they preyed on these domestic animals. Accidents also influenced the environment; unintentionally introduced plants and animals such as honeysuckle vines, blue grasses, Norway rats, and domestic cats also transformed regional ecologies. And, as mentioned, some scholars believe that the large amounts of fruit hanging on newly planted orchard trees in this period may have helped raise the population of passenger pigeons to unstable levels. Passing flocks of these birds were said to

blot out the sun for hours at a time, until hunters slaughtered them to extinction a century later.

Larger environmental shifts, such as the Little Ice-Age that lowered temperatures throughout the world in the second half of the 1700s, also affected ecological relationships in ways that are still not clearly understood. Although greater changes would occur in subsequent years, the beginnings of many transformations in the regional environment can be traced to this period.

□ CHANGING ROLE OF THE CHESAPEAKE IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

Contact between Indians, Europeans, and Africans in the Chesapeake Bay region opened a wider world than any of these groups had ever known. Each discovered people, practices, and possibilities never imagined. And, forced to live together, all were transformed. Because they needed to bend somewhat to survive in this new social setting, new beliefs, customs, and identities emerged. In the Chesapeake, these accommodations created several new sorts of society. One, centered on the Coastal Plain, was a slave-based economy of large and small tidewater plantations, rationalized by a new ideology of race. Another was a new Piedmont backwoods culture that valued self reliance, innovation, and dominance over Indians, who were forced into isolated reservations in remote, barren lands and swamps.

At first the Chesapeake Coastal Plain was a frontier on the borders of Indian, European, and African worlds. Gradually, it combined elements of these worlds to create a unique cultural identity. Tidewater people built, sailed, and erected harbor facilities for oceangoing vessels capable of making an Atlantic crossing in as little as six weeks. Such vessels permitted the importing and exporting of goods and ideas quickly and with relative ease. Farther west, the Piedmont became a frontier to this cosmopolitan tidewater culture. When war broke out in 1775, then, locally born Chesapeake residents and new immigrants fought the war as people who had grown apart from their mother countries and transformed themselves into a new society.

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