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## Land Acknowledgement Project Overview and Resource Guide

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# Maryland State Arts Council

## Overview

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.

The Council comprises an appointed body of 17 citizens from across the state, 13 of whom are named by the Governor to three-year terms that may be renewed once. Two private citizens and two legislators are appointed by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House. All councilors serve without salary.

To carry out its mission, MSAC awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects. MSAC also awards grants to individual artists and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC reserves the right to prioritize grant awards.

MSAC receives its funds from an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. and, on occasion, contributions from private, non-governmental sources.

## Authority

MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland under the authority of the Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts.

Larry Hogan, Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford, Lieutenant Governor

R. Michael Gill, Secretary

Signe Pringle, Deputy Secretary

Thomas B. Riford, Assistant Secretary

Steven Skerritt-Davis, Executive Director, MSAC

## Mission and Goals

MSAC's mission is to advance the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.

MSAC's most recent strategic plan outlines five goals:

1. **Increase Participation:** Broaden MSAC's constituency, providing avenues designed to increase pathways to engagement.
2. **Provide Intentional Support:** Embrace thoughtful and targeted approaches to serving known and yet to be known MSAC constituents.
3. **Build Capacity:** Work strategically to further build organizational and governance capacity to ensure that MSAC is capable of vigorously delivering on its mission.
4. **Leverage Connections:** Further enhance current relationships and involve additional collaborators, and constituents who will benefit from and advance the work of MSAC.

5. Bolster Maryland Arts: Showcase the high caliber, diverse and relevant work of Maryland's artists and arts organizations; their contributions to community vitality and MSAC's role as a catalyst.

Visit the About Us page at [msac.org](http://msac.org) to read the full strategic plan and learn more about implementation actions.

## Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) and its supporting collaborators are committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of our organizations and across communities of our state.

MSAC and its grantees are committed to embracing equity and non-discrimination regardless of race, religious creed, color, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, class, language, and/or ability.

The driving goals of MSAC's granting processes are:

- To yield a greater variety of funded projects
- To eliminate biases that may be found in any part of the granting process (e.g., applications, panelist procedures, adjudication systems)
- To acknowledge positions of privilege while questioning practices, shifting paradigms of status quo arts activities, and taking more risks
- To expand deliberations to include criteria beyond current conventions or Western traditions

## Accessibility Policy

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) is committed to making sure all Marylanders can access our programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all events and activities sponsored by or operated within MSAC are fully accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC complies with all applicable disability-related statutes and regulations and seeks to ensure meaningful participation by all Marylanders regardless of need or ability.

### Feedback Procedures

If guests would like to provide general feedback to MSAC about accessibility for MSAC's programs or programs funded by MSAC, contact MSAC at [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov).

### Grievance Procedures

#### **For programs or services provided by MSAC**

If a program or service operated by MSAC, facilities operated by MSAC, or public meetings conducted by MSAC are inaccessible to persons with a disability or is illegally discriminatory and you want to file a grievance:

- If you have any questions or would like to discuss the situation before filing a grievance, contact the Accessibility Coordinator.
- To file a formal grievance, contact Dan Leonard, Director of EEO & Fair Practices and ADA Coordinator: [daniel.leonard@maryland.gov](mailto:daniel.leonard@maryland.gov).

#### **For programs or services that are not provided by, but are funded by MSAC**

- Communicate the grievance to the sponsoring organization.

- If you think your grievance was not handled appropriately by the sponsoring organization, or if you have not received a response from the organization within thirty (30) days, contact MSAC to file a formal grievance at 410-767-6555 or [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov).

MSAC will work with you to provide assistance as appropriate.

### Accessibility Web Page

MSAC has a dedicated accessibility page on [msac.org](http://msac.org) that includes contact information for the accessibility coordinator, federal and state regulations, the organization's Equity and Justice statement, grievance procedures, an emergency preparedness plan, accommodation policies, and other accessibility resources for artists and arts organizations, and PECS images.

### Language Access

MSAC makes language accessibility services available. Services include making translations of grant materials, remote American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, subtitles, braille translation, translation into languages other than English, and more. Please contact [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) for more information.

En Español/Spanish: MSAC pone a disposición servicios de traducción y accesibilidad de idiomas. Contacte [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) para más información.

中文普通话/Mandarin Chinese: 马里兰州艺术委员会(MSAC)提供翻译和语言无障碍服务。请联系 [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) 了解更多信息。

한국어/Korean: MSAC 는 한국어 지원을 돕고 있습니다. 자세한 문의사항은 [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) 로 연락 주시기 바랍니다.

### Staff

MSAC maintains a professional staff to administer its grants programs and Council-initiated programs. Staff members are available to provide technical assistance to the arts community.

# Land Acknowledgement Project Overview and Resource Guide

## Purpose

This resource guide is a public document that derives from MSAC's Land Acknowledgement Project, which was administered by Maryland Traditions, MSAC's traditional arts program. This guide explains land acknowledgment statements, how to create them, why they're meaningful, and how to move beyond them to facilitate Indigenous-led positive change. The guide features tribal histories and a series of land acknowledgement statements for tribes whose lands are claimed by Maryland. Information in this document was shared with MSAC staff by tribal consultants during consultation sessions. Tribal consultants have reviewed tribal information in this document for accuracy.

## Contact

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## Introduction to Land Acknowledgements

Land acknowledgments are statements that recognize Indigenous peoples dispossessed of their relationships with land by settler colonists. These statements bring attention to the Indigenous peoples who are (and/or were once) local to the lands that settler colonists and settler colonial institutions currently occupy. Indigenous erasure, the set of processes that remove Indigenous people from places and narratives, has been exceedingly prevalent in the mid-Atlantic region for much of the past 500 years. Despite still living in the region, most tribal peoples are “disappeared” into the history books and are associated only with their colonial histories. Land acknowledgment statements are a minor way to acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty and correct the inaccurate impression that Native peoples no longer exist in Maryland.

There are many ways to create and deliver land acknowledgments, including speaking the acknowledgment at the beginning of an event, placing it in program notes, publishing it in public spaces, or posting it online. In 2020, Maryland Traditions staff hosted the “Land Acknowledgement in Context” webinar ([Youtube.com/watch?v=hb2A0DlDd\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hb2A0DlDd_4)), which provides an introduction to land acknowledgments and a guide on how to create them.

Land acknowledgments can too easily become performative acts that merely pay lip service and have no substance. As such, land acknowledgment statements can better function as a starting place rather than an endpoint. In 2021, Maryland Traditions staff hosted a webinar entitled “Land Acknowledgement 2.0” ([Youtube.com/watch?v=5WNkijUFLnE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WNkijUFLnE)) featuring tribal leaders and elders from lands claimed by Maryland. This

webinar includes their recommendations on how to make the acts of creating and delivering a land acknowledgment statement the beginning of positive change. Webinar participants recommended:

- Learning about local tribal histories
- Donating to tribes on whose land you live or work
- Returning land to tribes
- Establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or contracts with tribes so they can access land or resources owned by institutions free of charge
- Stewarding the lands you own or control -- for example, by learning about invasive and native plant and animal species and increasing biodiversity



Mervin Savoy (Piscataway Conoy Tribe) appears in support of Piscataway lands, the recipient of the 2013 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

## Project Overview

In response to requests from Maryland residents, Maryland Traditions staff initiated MSAC's Land Acknowledgement Project in April 2020. Staff designed a project to facilitate formal, compensated consultations with tribal peoples whose lands are claimed by the State of Maryland. Staff consulted on project design with the Administrator of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs and Maryland Traditions' Indigenous former grantees. Tribal consultations took place between January and December 2021. Recordings

and notes from these consultations will soon exist as publicly accessible archival materials at the Maryland Traditions Archives housed in Special Collections at UMBC (see the Additional Resources section). Maryland Traditions staff hosted a Convening in November 2021 to answer questions posed by tribal consultants during consultations, and to connect consultants with resources, grants, and staff from MSAC and other State of Maryland agencies.

The Land Acknowledgment Project's goals are to:

- work to undo “Indigenous erasure,” the phenomena through which Indigenous peoples are “disappeared” from landscapes and narratives
- deepen relationships between tribal peoples living in Maryland and MSAC to increase funding going to tribal peoples
- create a publicly accessible series of land acknowledgment statements and resources

Tribal consultants for the project included seven current or former chiefs, tribal chairs, or tribal speakers; six tribal historians or preservation officers; numerous tradition bearers; current and former commissioners from the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs; a retired employee of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian; and a former federal Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Tribes were not required to participate and two declined to take part in the project. Consultants received fiscal compensation for their labor.



From left: E. Keith Colston (Tuscarora/Lumbee), Celest Swann (Powhatan), and Louis Campbell (Lumbee) appear in support of the Baltimore American Indian Center, the recipient of the 2017 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

## Key Concepts

Crafting a historically accurate and respectful land acknowledgement statement requires some culturally-specific information. Arranged alphabetically, this Key Concepts section provides a series of conceptual tools to help craft and deliver land acknowledgement statements, and to understand better the Indigenous histories in the next section. Indigenous worldviews are often quite different from settler worldviews. Understanding Indigenous relations with land, treaties, missing tribes, tribal organization, and cultural groups can clarify worldview differences.

This section also provides answers to questions frequently received by MSAC staff, including the pre-European history of Baltimore; definitions of #LandBack, Indigenous erasure, and “homelands” versus “geographic spheres of influence;” and the inclusion of Black histories in land acknowledgements.

## Baltimore

The pre-colonial Indigenous history of the place now known as Baltimore City is not very clear. The written record begins in 1608 with English explorer John Smith, who stated that the Patapsco River was uninhabited. Archaeological work in and around present-day Baltimore City demonstrates Indigenous living sites dating between 10,000 BCE and 1600 CE, with artifacts that can perhaps be identified as deriving from the ancestors of peoples now known as the Piscataway. Sites at and upstream of the fall line -- the geological dividing line between the piedmont and the coastal plain -- suggest that, like their kin further south, the people of the Patapsco migrated seasonally, planting downstream in the spring and summer at permanent town sites and hunting upstream in the winter at temporary sites.

Piscataway ancestors, Susquehannock peoples, and other local tribal peoples likely collaboratively maintained a prairie landscape in lands currently known as Cecil, Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City. Tribal peoples engaged in regular controlled burns to suppress tree species and maintain a prairie ecology that attracted game animals such as deer and bison for hunting.

Today, American Indians from across North America live in Baltimore. The Baltimore American Indian Center, the 2017 recipient of the Heritage Award in the category of place, provides these Baltimore-based tribal individuals and communities with weekly culture classes, pow wows, meeting space, and more. Of note, the City and County are home to a large diasporic community of Lumbee people, whose traditional lands are in present-day North Carolina. To learn more about the Lumbee and other Baltimore-based urban Indian communities, visit the Ashley Minner Collection in the Maryland Traditions Archives at UMBC.

## Black Histories in Land Acknowledgement Statements

Some people prefer to write land acknowledgement statements featuring both Indigenous peoples and the descendants of enslaved peoples. This practice can be controversial. Some Native peoples express concern that also featuring enslaved peoples in land acknowledgement statements can too easily reinforce Indigenous erasure. Others take a different view, noting that a land acknowledgement statement that features enslaved peoples and their histories more accurately accounts for on-going colonial structures and realities. Enslaved peoples and their descendants have a distinct series of relations to land in contrast to Indigenous peoples and in



contrast to settlers, and some argue that these differences must be acknowledged as part of pushback against ongoing colonial structures. Some institutions have taken a different route, in which they acknowledge enslaved peoples by researching, publicizing, and apologizing for their institutional history of owning enslaved people, and offering reparations to the heirs of those enslaved people. The scope of MSAC's Land Acknowledgement Project facilitated consultation only with tribal peoples.

### **“Geographic Spheres of Influence” versus “Homelands”**

Some land acknowledgement statements refer to tribal “traditional territories” or “homelands.” These and similar phrases can be misleading because they suggest that “land” is the same thing as “property”--something to be “owned.” Many tribal peoples continue to conceptualize land as a relative rather than a resource to own. Land has history and meaning, functions as the basis of cultural practices, and invokes responsibility, rights, sovereignty, and belonging for many tribal peoples.

Prior to the start of European colonization, many tribes moved seasonally between summer cropland and winter hunting grounds. Others, such as the Shawnee, maintained semi-nomadic traditions and maintained relationships with a variety of lands. After Europeans arrived, the rate of movement steadily increased for most tribes as treaties, settler land theft, military actions, and new alliances forced them to relocate. Given these historical facts, it is sometimes difficult to define the precise borders of “traditional territories” or “homelands.” Several MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project tribal consultants critiqued the terms, noting that they inappropriately center Euro-American concepts of land property ownership. The phrase “geographic spheres of influence” perhaps more effectively centers Indigenous worldviews, communicates multi-generational relationships between tribal peoples and landscapes, and accounts for tribal moves and migrations.

### **Historic Indigenous Relationships with Land**

While many tribes legally own land as defined within the U.S. legal system, many tribal peoples continue to conceptualize land as a relative, not a “resource” to “own.” Land acknowledgement statements often inappropriately feature a settler “ownership” narrative. Instead, referring to tribal peoples’ “relationship” or “kinship” with lands tends to be more culturally accurate. Over time, settlers and colonial structures changed or broke many of the relationships Native peoples long maintained with lands. Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee elders noted that their ancestors migrated around the South and the Mid-Atlantic regions. Settler encroachment meant that the Shawnee and other tribes had less and less land through which to move and with which to relate.

Similarly, many Algonquin tribes or bands migrated seasonally between food sources within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. They typically spent the planting season on the coastal plain, where the soils are more fertile; most men and some women and children spent the winters in the forests upriver hunting game animals like wood bison, deer, elk, bear, and turkey. On the Eastern Shore, they hunted closer to the middle of the peninsula; on the Western Shore, they camped at or upstream of the fall line, a geologic boundary between coastal plain downriver and piedmont upriver.

Tribal peoples also hunted in a series of prairie ecologies located in places today known as Cecil, Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City. These prairies centered around a unique environment known as the “serpentine barrens,” a meadow ecology derived from a nutrient-poor mineral called serpentinite. Tribal peoples maintained these ecologies collaboratively via a regular series of controlled burns to maintain the grasslands that attracted bison and other game animals. Early colonists wrote about the “Maryland barrens,” “Virginia barrens,” “Baltimore barrens,” and others. Today, the largest remaining barrens in Maryland can be found at Soldier’s Delight Natural Environment Area in Baltimore County.

## **Indigenous Culture Groups and Language Families**

The lands now claimed by Maryland exist within a transitional zone between two Indigenous language families or culture groups: Algonquian tribes in the south and Iroquoian tribes in the north. Algonquian tribes are the most numerous, including Assateague, Choptico, Lenape, Nanticoke, Pocomoke, Piscataway, and Shawnee, as well as the Accohannock of the Powhatan Confederacy. Of the Iroquoian tribes, the Susquehannock and Massawomeck have or had relationships with lands now claimed by Maryland.

## **Indigenous Erasure**

Indigenous erasure is a series of processes whereby Indigenous peoples are “disappeared” from landscapes and narratives. Indigenous erasure tactics include forced assimilation, such as Indian Boarding School education programs; forced removals of tribal peoples from their lands and other forms of land theft; murder or massacre; the unintentional or deliberate introduction of disease; penalizing the practice of traditional ceremonies or speaking Indigenous languages; destruction of sacred lands; and creating or maintaining national narratives and myths that ignore the presence and contributions of Native peoples. These tactics have combined over the past 500 years to the point that now many people are unaware that Indigenous people are still alive and living in the place commonly called Maryland.

## **Land Back**

The term “Land Back,” typically expressed on social media as #landback, often comes up in conversations about land acknowledgements. The phrase references one form of restitution to Indigenous peoples, in which ownership of a particular land is returned to tribal control. This ownership transfer facilitates tribal political and economic control of their lands. Broadly, land restoration restores Indigenous relationships with their lands, positively affecting tribal culture, language, medicines, ceremonies, sacred items, family, community, kinship, and knowledge. Land return therefore positively affects all aspects of tribal lives. Globally, Indigenous-controlled lands have the highest rates of biodiversity — higher even than parks and wildlife preserves. Land return therefore also positively affects global ecosystem health.

## **Missing Tribes**

While the place now known as Maryland is still home to tribes who maintain relationships with their lands, some tribal peoples were the victims of total genocide. The written record features a number of tribes that no longer exist as distinct groups. For example, there are no contemporary records of several tribes English explorer John Smith documented living on the upper Eastern Shore in the early 1600s: Tockwogh people on the Sassafras River, or the Wicomiss and/or Ozinie people on the Chester River. These two tribes might have been

adopted into Nanticoke communities. Likewise, the Massawomecks -- possibly an Iroquoian tribe living between Lakes Ontario and Erie; possibly a loose confederation of tribes based in present-day Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio -- disappear from the written record after 1634. Still other tribes' populations were decimated through genocide. Often, survivors were adopted into related or neighboring tribes. For example, the Mattapanient of present-day Charles and Prince George's Counties were adopted into the Patuxent of present-day Calvert, Prince George's, and Anne Arundel Counties in the mid-1600s. In turn, the Patuxent were adopted into the Choptico of present-day St. Mary's County during the 1690s, and the Choptico were adopted into the Piscataway in the early 1700s.

## **Treaties**

Treaties are contracts made between sovereign nations, and they became a key way in which colonists officially relate to tribes, increasingly control them, and assume possession of tribal lands. Prior to the creation of the United States, the British Colony of Maryland entered into a number of treaties with tribal peoples. These treaties could be wide-ranging and established rules regarding land use or access, trade, and military alliance. Several treaties resulted in the creation of short-term reservations, such as the Choptank Indian Reservation in present-day Cambridge. Even when they were in positions of comparative power, the treaty-making process put tribes at a disadvantage: the processes occurred in English, terms were typically poorly explained, colonists rarely understood Native cultures, and negotiations often centered on concepts that did not exist in many tribal worldviews, such as land "ownership." Additionally, as one tribal leader noted during the MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project consultations, no treaty with any Indigenous tribe has ever been completely honored by any government.

After the formation of the United States, treaties between the new federal government and tribal nations established the foundation of present-day federal Indian law. However, no treaties between the U.S. federal government and tribes pertain to Maryland. The present-day legal status of treaties made between tribes and the *Colony* of Maryland -- a British political entity that predated the *State* of Maryland -- is unclear. An advice memo from a Maryland Assistant Attorney General suggests that the statuses of colonial-era treaties are most likely a matter for the courts to decide.

## **Tribal Political Organization**

Tribal political organizations have shifted over time; typically, organization exists at three different levels: nations or confederacies, tribes, and bands. Tribes with related cultures and interests sometimes created confederacies or nations for mutual protection. The Powhatan Confederacy, which at the time of European colonization stretched from present-day South Carolina to Maryland, was the largest Confederacy in the region. "Bands" tended to refer to a single village or a cluster of closely grouped villages, such as the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians who continue to live in present-day Dorchester County.

## Tribal Histories, Maps, and Land Acknowledgement Statements

Each of the following tribal histories, maps, and land acknowledgment statements derive from formal, compensated consultations with tribal leaders and elders from tribes whose lands are claimed by the State of Maryland and most of whom have or had a relationship with the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs. Each statement is accompanied by a brief tribal background or history, a description of tribal geographic spheres of influence, and a phonetic pronunciation guide. Statements are primarily written by MSAC staff based on information shared during consultations. In some instances, tribes preferred to create their own statement for use in this project. The origin of each statement is respectively defined below.

MSAC has been unable to consult with several tribes whose lands are claimed by Maryland. Since MSAC does not want to make any statements without tribal knowledge, review, or approval, these tribes are not represented in this section. We look forward to being able to consult with them in the future. One tribe, the Cedarville Band Wild Turkey Clan of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, declined to consult with MSAC, and requests that this "Resource Guide" include the following information: that the Band declined to engage in, and does not endorse, this MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project. Tribal leadership requests that folks learn about paying "Land Tax," giving "Land Back," and what land acknowledgement on Piscataway Conoy lands looks like to them, in their own sovereign words, by visiting their website [www.PiscatawayIndians.com](http://www.PiscatawayIndians.com).

In some instances, two or more tribes have a history or relationship with a particular land. These histories, claims, and counterclaims are not unusual across North America and typically result from the ways colonists and colonial governments pitted tribal peoples against one another for settler gain. When creating a land acknowledgment for contested land, it is recommended to acknowledge all Indigenous communities with connections to that land and to acknowledge the role of settlers and colonial governments in causing breakdowns between Indigenous communities, and between communities and their lands.

The accompanying maps provide a general idea of the locations of tribal people's "geographic spheres of influence" (see Key Concepts). Of course, no single map can accurately portray thousands of years of history. These maps are therefore generalized. To craft these maps, Maryland Traditions staff triangulated between information tribal leaders and elders shared during the MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project consultations, historical research, and archaeological records. MSAC then facilitated the creation of these final copies. Tribal consultants have reviewed and approved them for accuracy.

## Accohannock Indian Tribe



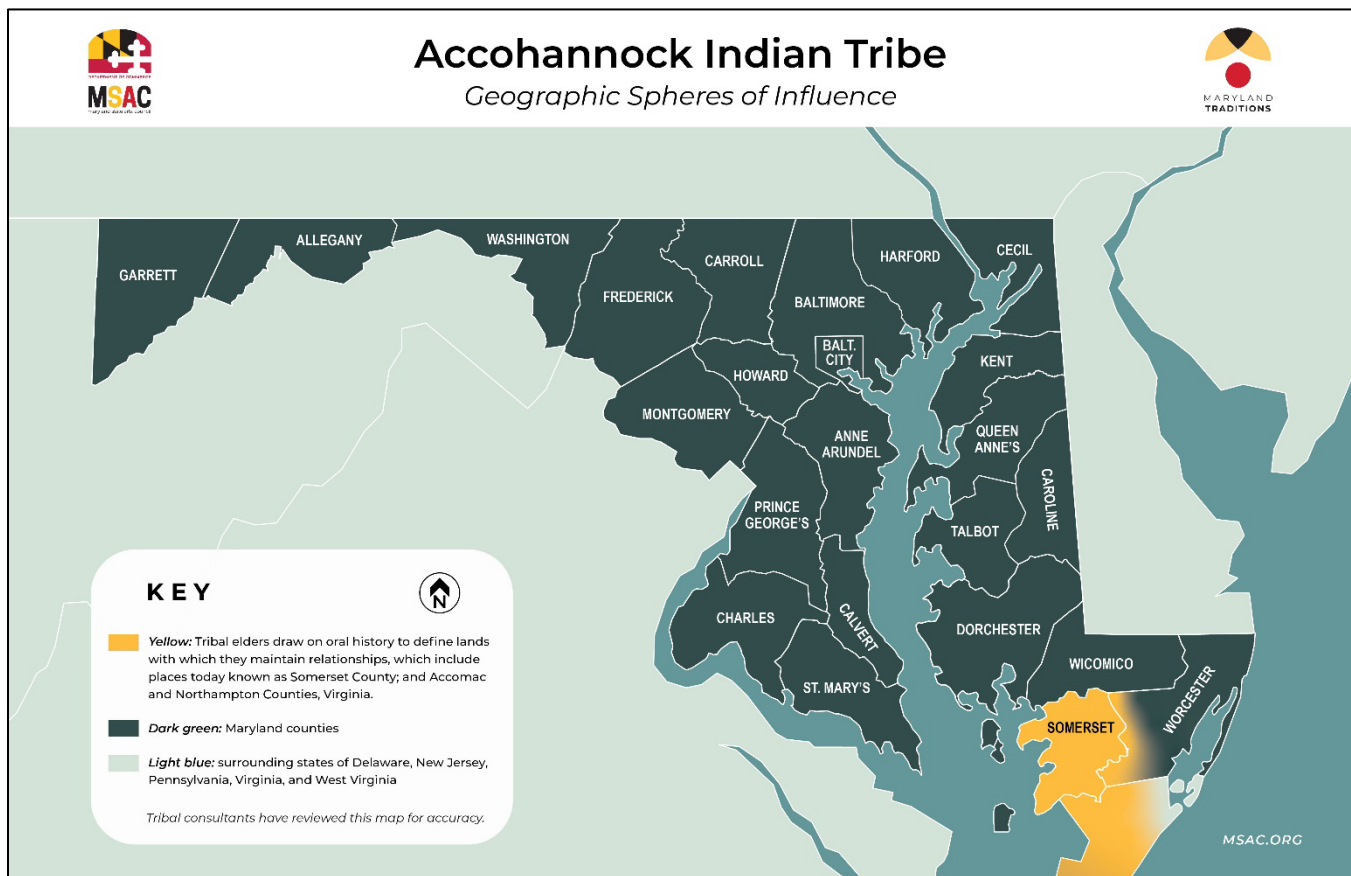
Tribal Council Chairman Mike Hinman (Accohannock) paddles through Bending Water Park and Indian Water Trails on Accohannock lands, the recipient of the 2014 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

### Tribal Background

The Accohannock Indian Tribe is part of the Algonquian culture and language family, and was part of the Powhatan Empire for a period. At the start of European colonization in the 1500s and 1600s, the Powhatan Empire was the largest in the region, and stretched from present-day South Carolina to Maryland. Accohannock people continue to maintain relationships with lands that were formerly covered by forests; elders note that a squirrel could climb a tree at present-day Kiptopeke, Virginia, and not have to descend to the ground prior to reaching the Mississippi River. It is possible that in 1524 the Accohannock encountered Giovanni Verrazzano, an Italian explorer working for the king of France, as he sailed north along the Eastern seaboard. However, there appears to be insufficient historical evidence for historians to say categorically if the land Verrazzano dubbed “Arcadia” referred to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, or to Kitty Hawk in present-day North Carolina.

## Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence

Tribal elders draw on oral history to define lands with which they maintain relationships. These lands include places today known as Somerset and Worcester Counties, Maryland; and Accomac and Northampton Counties, Virginia.



## Pronunciation Guide

“Accohannock:” æ-kɑ-hæ-nɑk (æ as in “bad;” α as in “pod”)

“Powhatan:” paʊ-hæ-tæn (aʊ as in “how;” æ as in “bad”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Accohannock Indian Tribe tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Accohannock Indian Tribe continues to maintain relationships with the lands where we gather today. The Accohannock have stewarded this land for generations. I/we acknowledge their kinship to these lands and waters. I/we acknowledge that we are uninvited visitors on Indigenous lands. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite you to learn more about the Accohannock and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at [MSAC.org](http://MSAC.org) and elsewhere, to consider donating or making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.

## **Assateague People's Tribe**

### **Tribal Background**

The Assateague People's Tribe is part of the Algonquian culture group and language family. In the 1600s, the infamous politician Edmund Scarborough, who lived on what is now the Virginia side of the Eastern Shore, was obsessed with murdering as many Indigenous peoples as possible, notably the Assateague. In what became known as the "Seaside War" of 1659, Scarborough unsuccessfully requested help from the Maryland Colony to commit genocide on the Assateague. He later wrote that the Assateague "were harder to find than to conquer." In 1662, the Assateague and their neighbors the Nanticoke signed a treaty with the Maryland Colony. This treaty included provisions for the ways settlers could exchange "matchcoats," a traditional indigenous garment, for land within Assateague territory. A later treaty forced the Assateague onto five reservations along the Pocomoke River. In 1671, many Assateague tribal peoples moved with their Pocomoke neighbors to Askiminokonson or Indian Town on the north side of the Pocomoke River near present-day Snow Hill. When the provincial Maryland government learned in 1742 that Assateague leaders were participating in a general Native uprising, Maryland leaders "dissolved" the Assateague tribal empire. Afterwards, many Assateague tribal members moved north to Iroquoian lands; some chose to remain. Present-day leadership for local tribal members is based in Delaware.

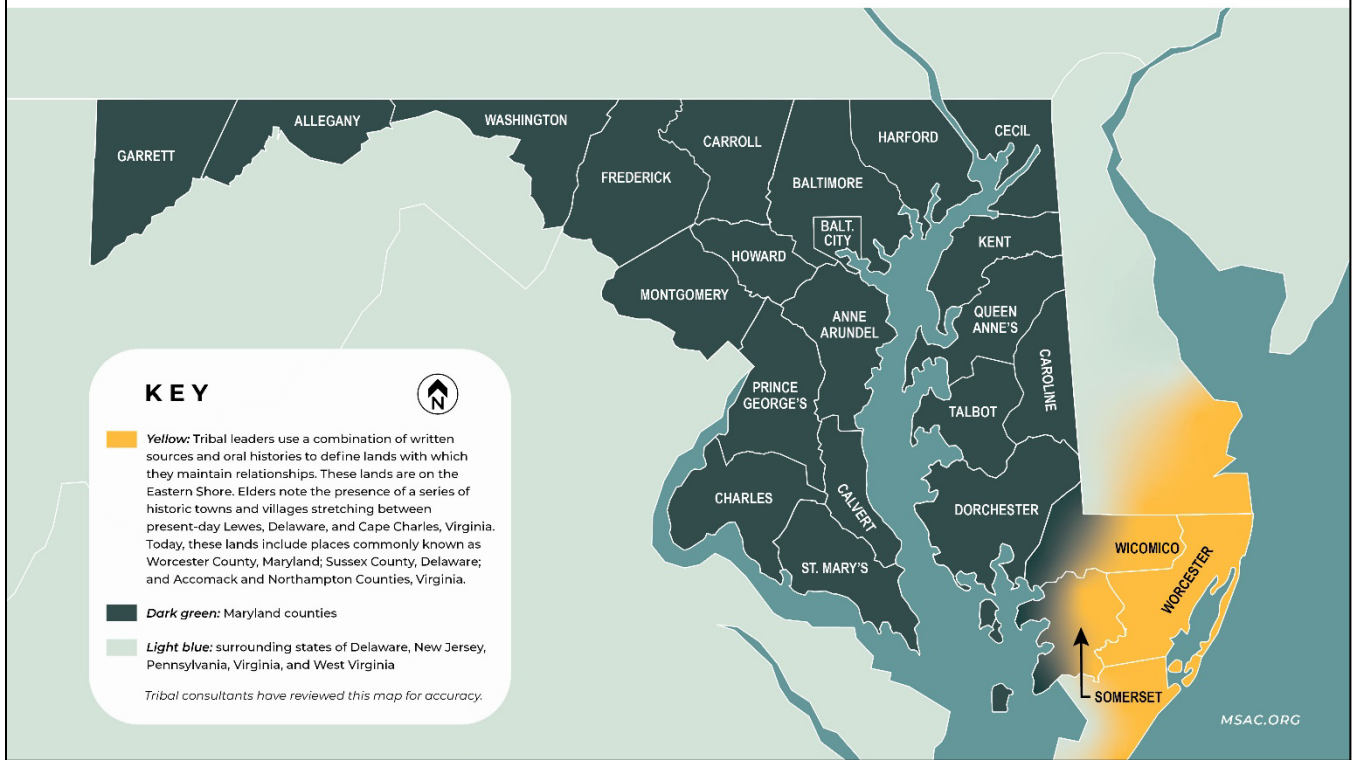
### **Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence**

Tribal leaders use a combination of written sources and oral histories to define lands with which they maintain relationships. These lands are on the Eastern Shore. Elders note the presence of a series of historic towns and villages stretching between present-day Lewes, Delaware, and Cape Charles, Virginia. Today, these lands include places commonly known as Worcester County, Maryland; Sussex County, Delaware; and Accomack and Northampton Counties, Virginia.



# Assateague People's Tribe

## Geographic Spheres of Influence



### Pronunciation Guide

“Assateague:” æs-ʌ-tig (æ as in “bad;” ʌ as in “bud;” i as in “bead”)

### Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Assateague People’s Tribe tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Assateague continue to maintain relationships with the lands where we gather today. The Assateague have stewarded these lands and waters for generations. Assateague peoples successfully avoided the genocide attempt upon them by Edward Scarborough in the 1650s, and later signed several treaties with the Maryland Colony. Although many tribal members moved north into Iroquoian lands in the late 1700s, some remained and continue to steward this land. We acknowledge them and their ancestors and acknowledge that we are uninvited visitors on Indigenous lands. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite you to learn more about the Assateague and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at MSAC.org and elsewhere, to consider donating or making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.



## Choptico Band of Piscataway Indians



Rico Newman (Choptico Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe) appears in support of Piscataway lands, the recipient of the 2013 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

### Tribal Background

Along with other Piscataway tribal peoples, the Choptico Band is part of the Algonquian culture group and language family. Prior to the start of European colonization, the Choptico maintained relationships with many of their neighbors through trade and marriage, and with their lands through hunting and foraging. Following European settlement, Piscataway and other tribal peoples attempted to use the English as a buffer between themselves and the Susquehannocks and other Iroquoian tribes further north. With other tribes, they signed a 1666 Treaty of Peace and Amity with the Maryland Colony, which initiated a colonial reservation system in which Natives were increasingly confined to strictly-defined land bases. In 1680, Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore and Governor of the Maryland Colony, built Zekiah Fort in Zekiah Swamp in present-day Charles County to protect Piscataway and other Native peoples from Iroquoian raids. Archaeologists consulting with Piscataway peoples revealed the Fort during a 2011 archaeological dig. Soon after constructing the Fort, the Colony adapted the English feudal system to establish tribal lands as feudal "manors" partially to protect their Indigenous allies from raids. Of these, "Choptico Manor" was surveyed in 1651, patented in 1671, and confirmed in 1688 on the Wicomico River (the Potomac River tributary on the Western Shore, not the Chesapeake Bay tributary on the Eastern Shore).

Today, Piscataway peoples organize themselves into four different and related groups: the Piscataway Indian Nation; and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, which includes a tribal council, the Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, and the Choptico Band of Indians. Along with the Piscataway Indian Nation, the Piscataway Conoy Tribe received state recognition from the State of Maryland in 2012.

### **Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence**

Tribal elders describe the primary lands with which Piscataway peoples maintain relationships as centered between the Patuxent River in the north, Chesapeake Bay in the east, Potomac River in the south, and the fall line in the west. In the present day, these lands include places commonly known as Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties, Maryland, and part of Washington, D.C.

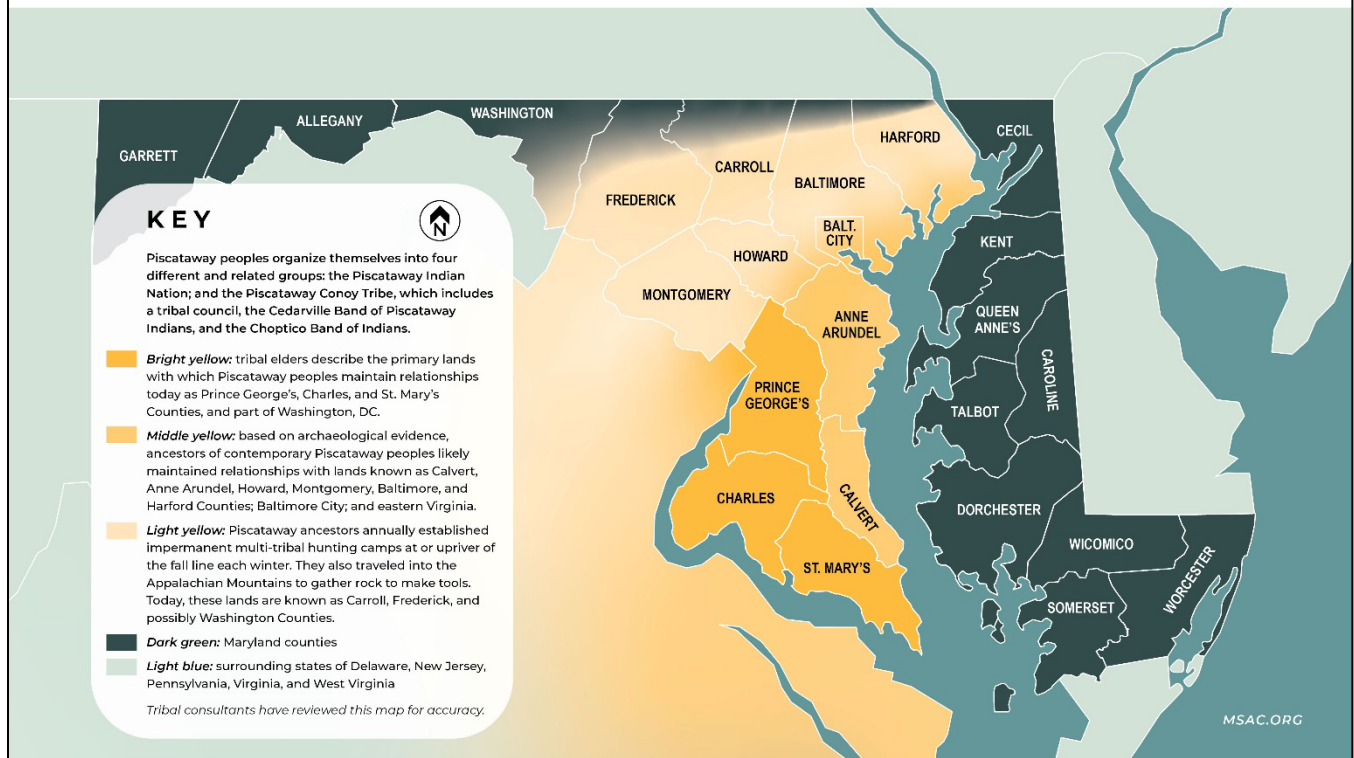
Prior to the start of European colonization, ancestors of contemporary Piscataway peoples likely maintained relationships with additional lands further north and south. Some archaeologists call attention to evidence in prehistoric and colonial Indigenous ceramics. They speculate that the geographic distribution of the ceramic style known as "Potomac Creek" indicates that Piscataway ancestors maintained relationships with lands today known as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City. Potomac Creek ceramics are also found in present-day Virginia south into Charles City County and Goochland County and west into Page County. The distribution suggests that Piscataway ancestors likely maintained relationships with lands including Arlington, Caroline, Charles City, Clarke, Culpepper, Essex, Fairfax, Fauquier, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Loudon, Louisa, Madison, Middlesex, New Kent, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren, and Westmoreland Counties, Virginia; and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Richmond, and Winchester, Virginia.

Additionally, Piscataway ancestors -- like most tribal communities in and around the Chesapeake -- annually established impermanent multi-tribal hunting camps at or upriver of the fall line each winter. They also regularly traveled into the mountains to gather or mine the rock rhyolite to make tools. It is likely, therefore, that Piscataway ancestors also maintained relationships with lands today known as Carroll, Frederick, and possibly Washington Counties, Maryland.



# Piscataway Peoples

## Geographic Spheres of Influence



### Pronunciation Guide

“Choptico:” tʃɑp-ti-co (tʃ as in “chin;” α as in “pod;” i as in “bead;” o as in “boat”)

“Conoy:” kɑ-nɔɪ (ɑ as in “bud;” ɔɪ as in “boy”)

“Piscataway:” pɪs-cæ-tɹ-we (ɪ as in “bid;” æ as in “bad;” ʌ as in “bud;” e as in “bay”)

### Land Acknowledgment Statement

This statement was authored by Choptico elders for MSAC’s Land Acknowledgement Project.

We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples formerly occupying lands known as Choptico, land upon and beyond both banks of water now known as Wicomico, where they lived for untold centuries prior to first European colonization; and,

We acknowledge Native peoples living upon said land, who became known as Choptico Indians by the colonial government, though many natives arrived from other towns and villages to Choptico following displacement by colonists; and,

We acknowledge that those lands and waters relied upon for sustenance, housing, and other considerations, were with intent, methodically decreased to an area that became known as the Choptico Reserve, upon which they were forced to subsist and live upon; and,

We acknowledge Choptico lands were neither ceded nor sold to colonists, the colonial government of Maryland, or the United States, and not ceded by any “Just War” or Treaty; and,

We acknowledge that Choptico lands were overrun by colonists who used their laws, subtle means of indebtedness, and other acts of duress to displace the Choptico from their lands; and,

We acknowledge the graves of Choctico ancestors that were plundered for grave goods and their earthly remains removed and never repatriated for reburial: and,  
We acknowledge the descendants of those displaced from the Choctico Homeland who have for more than three centuries endured forced assimilation, misidentification, intentional omission of existence, and loss of traditions, language, worldview, and lifeways, and been forced into a diasporic existence; and,  
We acknowledge the Choctico Indians' resilience in holding steadfast to their culture and identity and maintaining efforts to recover a portion of their former homeland while recovering from invasion, displacement, and oppression.

## Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians



A view of the Chicamacomico River in the region now known as Dorchester County, the ancestral home of the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, the recipient of the 2020 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

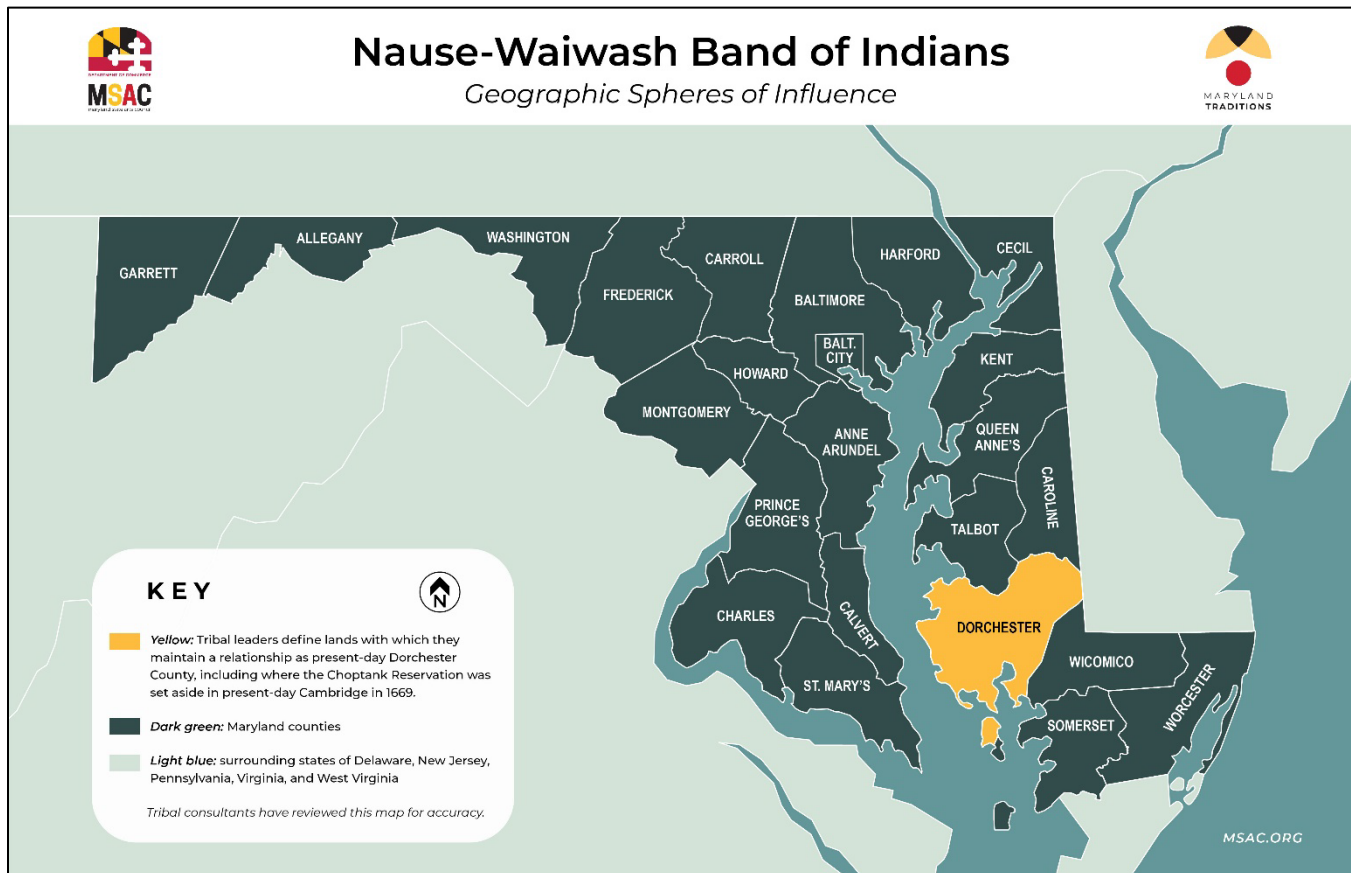
### Tribal Background

The Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians take their name from two Nanticoke villages that encountered English explorer John Smith in the 1600s: Nause and Waiwash. The Band self-defines as the descendants of Nanticoke and other Algonquian Indigenous peoples local to present-day Dorchester County. Prior to the start of European settlement, tribal peoples lived close to the Chesapeake Bay and spent winters further inland hunting. Muskrat trapping continues to be an important winter tradition maintained by many tribal members. Colonial encroachment pushed many Native families into the marshes where they hid.

In the 1980s, Sewell Fitzhugh organized the Band with the support of local Native families and was elected as the first chief by the women of the Band. In the late 1990s, the Band was gifted the Hughes African Methodist Episcopal Chapel, which they now use as a ceremonial and cultural center. Since then, leadership promotes an active schedule of educational and cultural events across Dorchester County. Learn more about them on the Nause-Waiwash website, [TurtleTracks.org/](https://www.turtletracks.org/).

## Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence

Tribal leaders define lands with which they maintain a relationship as present-day Dorchester County, including where the Choptank Reservation was set aside in present-day Cambridge in 1669.



## Pronunciation Guide

“Nause:” næ-su (æ as in “bad;” u as in “bood”)

“Waiwash:” we-wəʃ (e as in “bay;” ə as in “pod;” ʃ as in “shy”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians continues to maintain relationships with the lands where we gather today. Descendants of two Nanticoke villages who encountered English explorer John Smith in the 1600s, today the Band actively works to educate the public about their history. Following the seven directions observed by the Band -- North, South, East, West, Up, Down, and Within -- we acknowledge them and their kinship with these lands and waters. I/we acknowledge that we are uninvited visitors on Indigenous lands. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite you to learn more about the Nause-Waiwash and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at MSAC.org and elsewhere, to consider

donating or making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.

## Piscataway Indian Nation



Leanora Winters (Piscataway Indian Nation) appears in support of Piscataway lands, the recipient of the 2013 Heritage Award in the category of place. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

### Tribal Background

Along with other Piscataway groups, the Piscataway Indian Nation is part of the Algonquian culture group and language family. Prior to European colonization, Piscataway peoples spread their villages and towns across their lands in order not to deplete food sources. Each village was overseen by a single leader who followed the instructions of the people and answered to the clan mothers. During settlement, English settlers compelled Piscataway peoples to convert to Catholicism. While some Piscataway people practice Catholicism today, many tribal members maintain traditional religious beliefs and ceremonies. A 1666 Treaty between the Colony of Maryland and twelve tribes from the Western Shore transformed their respective lands in contemporary southern Maryland into reservations. The treaty negatively affected the Piscataway in many ways. It also established tribal peoples' right to fish, hunt, and crab in the legal code of the Colony. In 2020, the Washington D.C. Council approved a measure honoring those fishing rights by making free fishing licenses available to members of the Piscataway Indian Nation and Piscataway Conoy Tribe.



Colonial machinations to take their lands and destroy their ways of life resulted in Piscataway peoples becoming “beaten down,” in the words of the late Piscataway Indian Nation Chief Billy Tayac (1936-2021), and many families hid or emigrated to nearby tribes. Elders note that settlers used these “disappearances” of tribal peoples as a justification to steal more tribal lands, even going so far as to redefine tribal people as “white” or “black.” The colonial “logic” behind this settler “move to innocence” was that if a distinct Indigenous “race” or ethnic group no longer existed, then settlers could assume ownership of tribal lands.

Reacting to the ways that his people were “beaten down,” the late Piscataway Indian Nation Chief Turkey Tayac (1895–1978) sparked a cultural revitalization movement that connected with and paralleled the national American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Part of his work resulted in the Piscataway Indian Nation’s long-time capitol town, Moyaone, being turned into a federal U.S. park, Piscataway Park in Prince George’s County, also known as the Accokeek Creek archaeological site. Archaeologists note that Moyaone has been intermittently inhabited for at least 4000 years. Chief Turkey Tayac was the 27th generation of hereditary chiefs in the Tayac bloodline to govern Moyaone. U.S. congressional legislation permitted Turkey Tayac to be buried with his ancestors at Piscataway Park, becoming the first American Indian person to be buried in a traditional burial site after it had been designated a federal park. Following Turkey Tayac’s death, his son, the late Piscataway Indian Nation Chief Billy Tayac, and grandson, the current Piscataway Indian Nation Chief Mark Tayac, continued Turkey Tayac’s activist legacy by working within the American Indian Movement.

Today, Piscataway peoples organize themselves into four different and related groups: the Piscataway Indian Nation; and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, which includes a tribal council, the Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, and the Choptico Band of Indians. Along with the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, the Piscataway Indian Nation received state recognition from the State of Maryland in 2012.

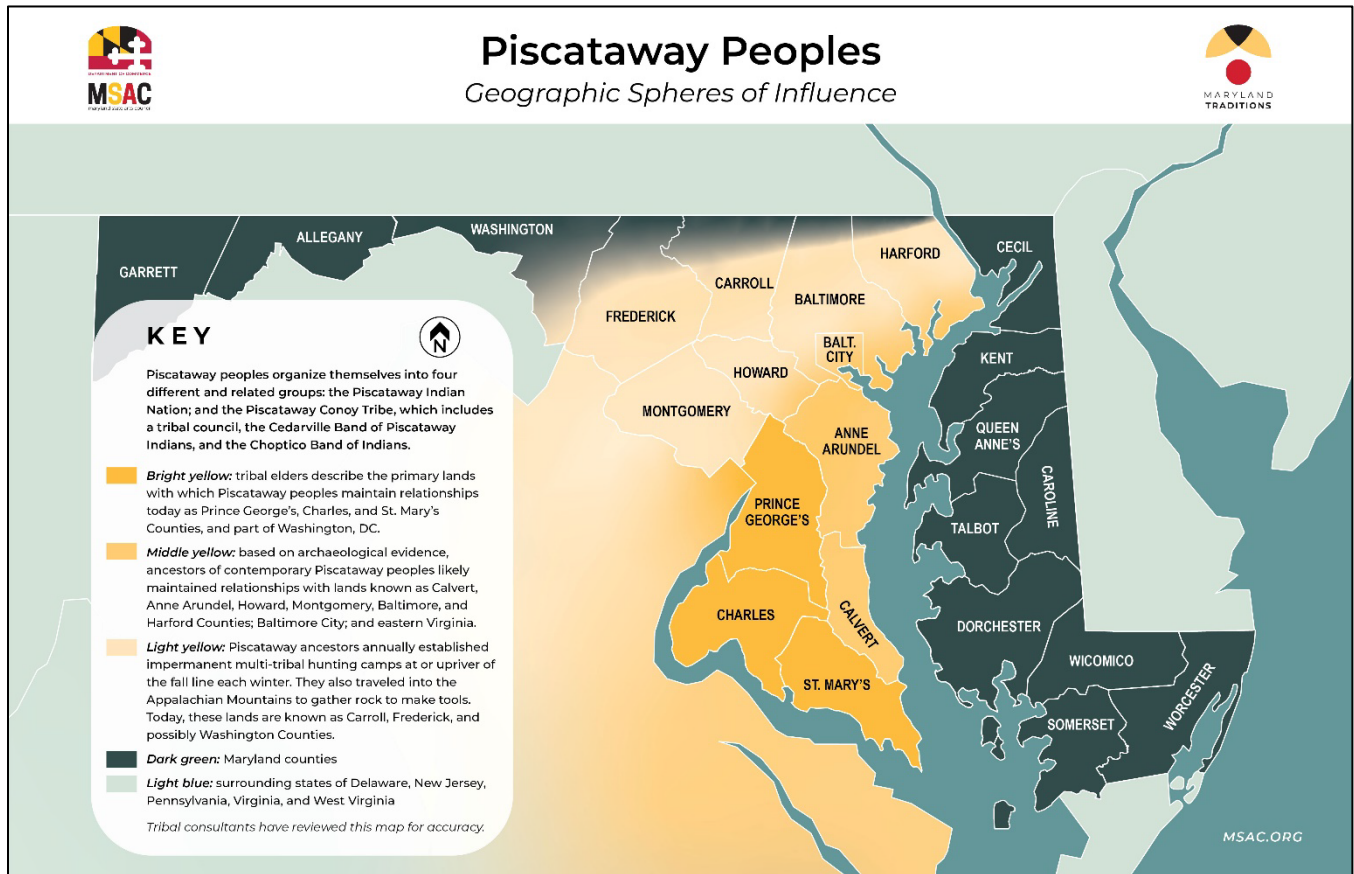
### **Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence**

Tribal elders describe the primary lands with which Piscataway peoples maintain relationships as centered between the Patuxent River in the north, Chesapeake Bay in the east, Potomac River in the south, and the fall line in the west. In the present day, these lands include places commonly known as Prince George’s, Charles, and St. Mary’s Counties, Maryland, and part of Washington, D.C.

Prior to colonization, ancestors of contemporary Piscataway peoples likely maintained relationships with additional lands further north. Some archaeologists call attention to evidence in prehistoric and colonial Indigenous ceramics. They speculate that the geographic distribution of the ceramic style known as “Potomac Creek” indicates that Piscataway ancestors maintained relationships with lands today known as Calvert, Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery, Baltimore, and Harford Counties and Baltimore City. Potomac Creek ceramics are also found in present-day Virginia south into Charles City County and Goochland County and west into Page County. The distribution suggests that Piscataway ancestors likely maintained relationships with lands including Arlington, Caroline, Charles City, Clarke, Culpepper, Essex, Fairfax, Fauquier, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Loudon, Louisa, Madison, Middlesex, New Kent, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren, and

Westmoreland Counties, Virginia, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Richmond, and Winchester, Virginia.

Additionally, Piscataway ancestors -- like most tribal communities in and around the Chesapeake -- annually established impermanent multi-tribal hunting camps at or upriver of the fall line each winter. They also regularly traveled into the mountains to gather or mine the rock rhyolite to make tools. It is likely, therefore, that Piscataway ancestors also maintained relationships with lands today known as Carroll, Frederick, and possibly Washington Counties, Maryland.



## Pronunciation Guide

“Moyaone:” maɪ-on (aɪ as in “like;” o as in “boat”)

“Piscataway:” pɪs-cæ-tɪ-we (ɪ as in “bid;” æ as in “bad;” ʌ as in “bud;” e as in “bay”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Piscataway Indian Nation tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Piscataway Indian Nation continues to maintain a relationship with the lands where we gather today. Along with the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, the Piscataway Indian Nation received recognition by the State of Maryland in 2012. I/we acknowledge their long-standing kinship with these lands and waters and

acknowledge that we are uninvited visitors on Indigenous lands. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite you to learn more about the Piscataway Indian Nation and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at [MSAC.org](https://www.msac.org) and elsewhere, to consider donating or making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.

## Pocomoke Indian Nation



Tribal elder and tradition bearer Bud Howard (Pocomoke Indian Nation; left) demonstrates the range of historic tools that can be made with animal bones in 2018. Photo by Ken Koons and used with permission.

### Tribal Background

Part of the Algonquian culture group and language family, Pocomoke peoples lived along the Eastern Shore rivers and streams that feed into the Chesapeake Bay, often spending the winters hunting further inland before the start of European colonization. It's possible that in 1524 the Pocomoke encountered Giovanni Verrazzano, an Italian explorer working for the king of France as he sailed north along the eastern seaboard. However, there appears to be insufficient historical evidence for historians to say categorically if the land Verrazzano dubbed "Arcadia" referred to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, or to Kitty Hawk in present-day North Carolina. In 1590 the Pocomoke appear on John White's map as "Comokee;" in 1612, the leader's house appears on English explorer John Smith's Map of Virginia mislabeled as "Wighcocomoco." Settlers increasingly encroached on their lands. In 1678, Lord Baltimore set aside a series of reserve lands allegedly for the exclusive use of tribal peoples, including Askiminokonson or Indian Town near present-day Snow Hill, where the Pocomoke lived for a time with other tribal peoples.

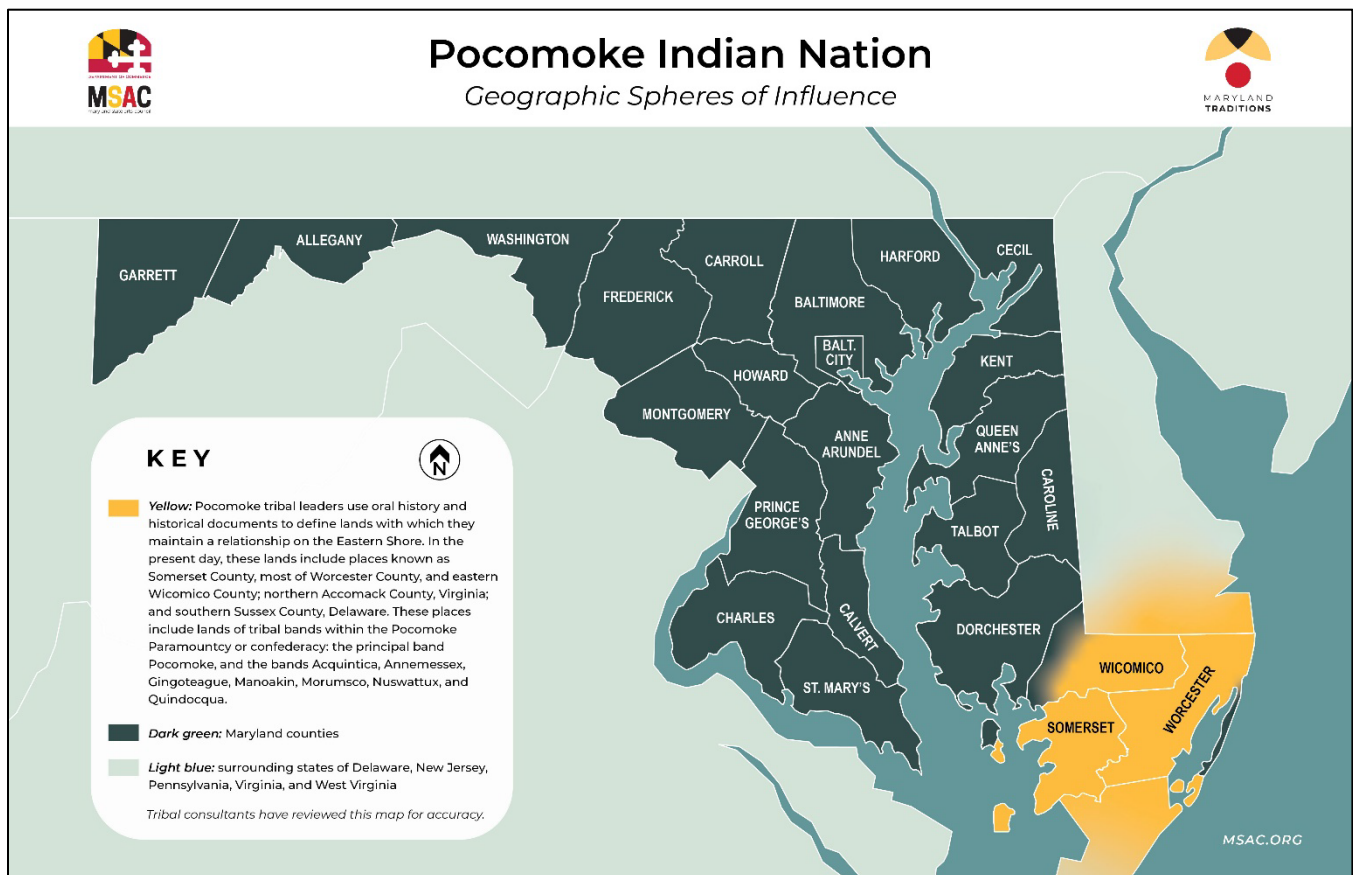
Pocomoke leaders signed four different treaties with the Maryland colony between 1678 and 1742, sometimes in concert with other tribal peoples. These treaties became increasingly restrictive, and variously included

provisions for peace, described Pocomoke hunting and fishing rights, and required tribal people to tell colonial authorities when other Indigenous people were in the area.

The Pocomoke become difficult to trace in historic documents after 1742. Today, Pocomoke members work to educate the public in order to preserve their history and heritage. They maintain an active schedule that includes presentations, demonstrations of pre-colonial skills, and partnerships with museums, cultural centers, and schools on and near their traditional lands. Learn more about them on the Pocomoke Indian Nation website, [PocomokeIndianNation.org](http://PocomokeIndianNation.org).

### Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence

Pocomoke tribal leaders use oral history and historical documents to define lands and waters with which they maintain a relationship on the Eastern Shore. In the present day, these lands include places commonly known as Somerset County, most of Worcester County, and eastern Wicomico County, Maryland; northern Accomack County, Virginia; and southern Sussex County, Delaware. These places include lands of tribal bands within the Pocomoke Paramountcy or confederacy: the principal band Pocomoke, and the bands Acquia, Annemessex, Gingoteague, Manoakin, Morumsco, Nuswattux, and Quindocqua.



### Pronunciation Guide

“Pocomoke:” po-ko-mok (o as in “boat”)

“Acquintica:” α-kwɪn-tɪ-kα (α as in “pod; ɪ as in “bid”)  
“Annemessex:” æn-nɛ-mɛ-sɛks (æ as in “bad;” ɛ as in “bed;”  
“Gingoteague:” dʒɪ-ko-tɪg (dʒ as in “gin;” ɪ as in “bid;” o as in “boat;” i as in “bead;”)  
“Manoakin:” mæ-no-kɪn (æ as in “bad;” o as in “boat;” ɪ as in “bid”)  
“Morumsco:” mɔr-ɛm-sko (o as in “boat;” ɛ as in “bed;”  
“Nuswattux:” nɛs-wæ-tɪks (ɛ as in “bed;” æ as in “bad”)  
“Quindocqua:” kwɪn-dɔ-kwα (ɪ as in “bid;” α as in “pod;”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Pocomoke Indian Nation tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Pocomoke Indian Nation continues to maintain a relationship with the lands where we gather today. These lands include a series of tribal bands within the Pocomoke Paramourncy: the principal band Pocomoke, and the bands Acquintica, Annemessex, Gingoteague, Manoakin, Morumsco, Nuswattux, and Quindocqua. Beginning in the 1600s, settlers increasingly encroached on these lands and restricted the movements of Pocomoke peoples through land theft and treaty. I/We acknowledge that we are uninvited visitors on Indigenous lands. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite you to learn more about the Pocomoke and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at MSAC.org and elsewhere, to consider donating or making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.

## Susquehannock Indians



One of the largest remaining serpentine barrens, an example of prairie ecologies maintained through controlled burns by Susquehannock tribal peoples and others, located at Soldier's Delight Natural Environment Area in Baltimore County on Susquehannock lands. Photo by Ryan Koons and used with permission.

### Tribal Background

The Indigenous confederacy today often known as the "Susquehannock" was part of the Iroquoian language and culture family. The name "Susquehannock" is an English-language transliteration by settlers in the Maryland and Virginia colonies of the Powhatan exonym (a word that derives from outside of a particular place or community) sometimes spelled *Susquesahanough*. English settlers in Pennsylvania called peoples of this Confederacy the "Conestoga" after one of the last remaining Susquehannock villages in present-day Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Dutch and Swedish settlers called peoples of this Confederacy *Minquas*, which derives from an exonym used by the Lenape, a traditional enemy of the Susquehannock.

Many colonial sources on the Susquehannocks describe their raids of Algonquian tribes in contemporary central and southern Maryland. Indeed, Piscataway peoples hoped that the English would function as a buffer between their peoples and the Susquehannock and other Iroquoian peoples further north.

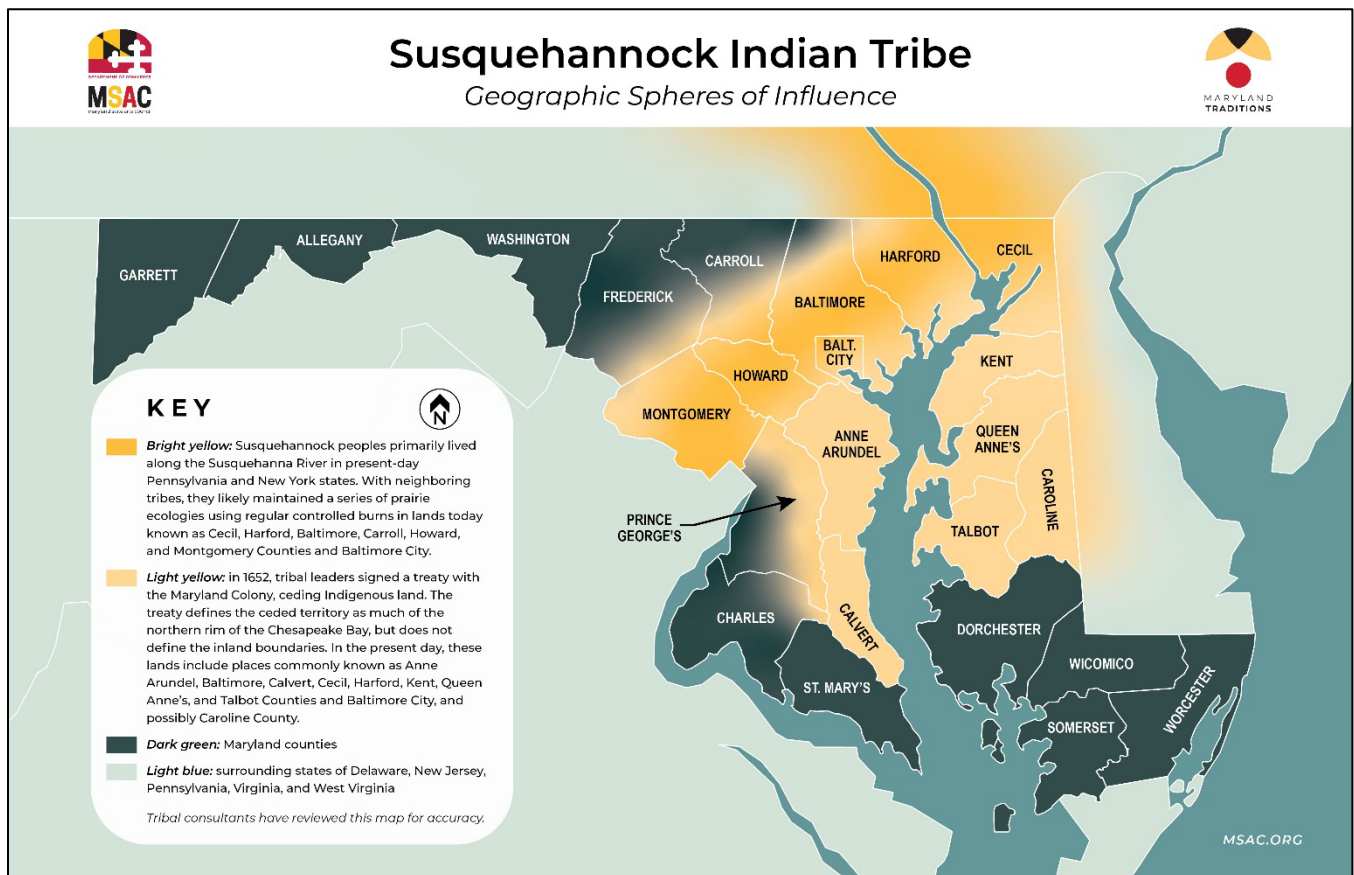
There is currently no Susquehannock polity or governing body; the last Susquehannock government died with tribal members during the Paxton Massacre of the Conestoga in 1763. Today Susquehannock descendants maintain their bloodlines, histories, and relationships with the Susquehanna River from within neighboring tribes, including Cayuga, Lenape, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Shawnee. The Circle Legacy Center ([CircleLegacyCenter.com](http://CircleLegacyCenter.com)) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is the primary Susquehannock-supporting cultural

institution. Some descendants prefer to identify as Susquehanna Indians rather than Susquehannock Indians, citing a deep relationship with the River itself and a preference to avoid using a Powhatan-derived term.

### Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence

Susquehannock peoples primarily lived along the Susquehanna River in present-day Pennsylvania and New York states. Along with neighboring tribes, they likely maintained a series of prairie ecologies using regular controlled burns. Colonists referred to these prairies as “barrens.” They were located in a swath along the piedmont upland in lands today known as Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties and Baltimore City.

Tribal leaders signed a treaty with the Maryland Colony in 1652, ceding Indigenous land. This treaty defines the ceded territory as much of the northern rim of the Chesapeake Bay: on the Western Shore, from the Patuxent River north to present-day Garrett Island; and on the Eastern Shore, from the Choptank River north to the North East Branch near present-day Elkton. The treaty does not define the inland boundaries of the ceded territory. Although five Susquehannock leaders made their mark on the document, other tribal peoples also lived and continue to live in relation with these lands: it was not exclusively the Susquehannock’s land to cede. In the present day, these lands include places commonly known as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Cecil, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties and Baltimore City, and possibly Caroline County.



### Pronunciation Guide

“Susquehannock:” sʌs-kwʌ-hæ-nʌk (ʌ as in “bud;” æ as in “bad;” ʌ as in “pod”)



“Conestoga:” κᾱ-ηλ-sto-gᾱ (α as in “pod;” λ as in “bud;” o as in “boat”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Based on a land acknowledgment statement drafted by a Susquehanna and Shawnee elder for the MSAC Land Acknowledgment Project.

I/we acknowledge that the places today known as Baltimore County, Harford County, and Cecil County exist as the result of duress. In 1652, Susquehannock leaders unwillingly transferred these lands to the English in an unsuccessful effort to stop English settlers encroaching up the Susquehanna River. I/we acknowledge that these places and their Indigenous inhabitants exist without rigid political borders and boundaries maintained by settlers and settler governments.

I/we acknowledge the social, physical, spiritual, and kinship relationships this land continues to share with Indigenous nations of the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay; I/we acknowledge that these relationships have been displaced, damaged, and dispelled by colonists’ insatiable thirst for acquisition and domination. I/we acknowledge a place out of balance with its true purpose in being. I/we acknowledge our occupation of Susquehannock lands. I/we acknowledge the continuing presence of Indigenous nations, and the shelter and nourishment that this place continues to provide all Native peoples who live here today. I/we acknowledge my/our responsibility to Indigenous nations to repair unhealthy relationships and to steward all life.

## Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee



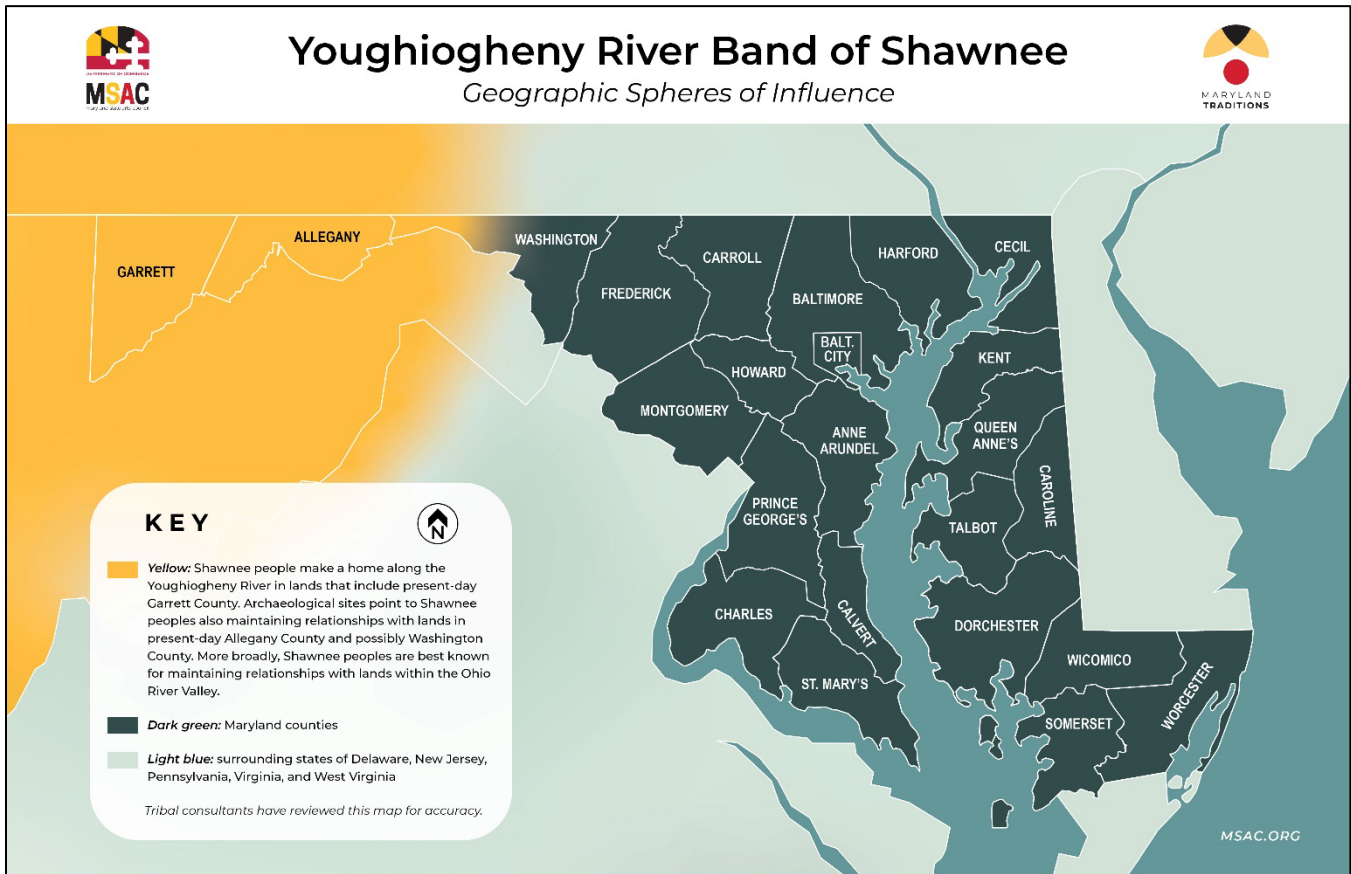
A stretch of the Youghiogheny River near Friendsville. Photo by an elder of the Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee and used with permission.

### Tribal Background

Shawnee peoples are part of the Algonquian culture group and language family. The Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee includes members of three distinct clans (Eagle, Hawk, and Sycamore) of Shawnee. Historically the tribe has twelve total clans and five separate septs that carry out key areas of governance. Perhaps best known for relating with lands in the Ohio River Valley, Shawnee peoples maintained a semi-migratory nomadic tradition prior to the start of European settlement. Sometimes known as the people of the south wind, they traveled across the eastern seaboard, maintaining kinship ties with Muskogee and Lenape peoples. Settlers encroaching on Shawnee lands caused additional migrations and later forced those migrations to cease. In present-day Maryland, Youghiogheny River Band members forged kinship ties especially with settlers in Friendsville, which they still maintain to this day. The Youghiogheny River Band's current ceremonial grounds lie on lands returned to the Band by a former Friendsville mayor.

### Tribal Geographic Sphere of Influence

Shawnee people make a home along the Youghiogheny River in lands that include present-day Garrett County. Archaeological sites such as the Shawnee Old Fields Village point to Shawnee peoples also maintaining relationships with lands in present-day Allegany County and possibly Washington County. More broadly, Shawnee peoples are best known for maintaining relationships with lands within the Ohio River Valley.



## Pronunciation Guide

“Youghiogheny:” jα-kλ-ge-ni (j as in “you;” α as in “pod;” λ as in “bud;” e as in “bay;” i as in “bead;”)

“Shawnee:” jα-ni (j as in “shy;” α as in “pod;” i as in “bead;”)

## Land Acknowledgment Statement

Created by MSAC staff based on information shared by Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee tribal consultants.

I/we acknowledge that the Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee continues to maintain relationships with the lands where we gather today. The Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee has stewarded these lands and waters for generations. Shawnee peoples maintained a nomadic tradition prior to the start of European settlement, regularly renewing relationships with lands across the Eastern Seaboard. The Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee are still here and share this land with all visitors to it. With them, we uninvited visitors honor these lands, which carry the memory of joys and tears and loss. To make this statement more meaningful, I/we invite

you to learn more about the Shawnee and about land acknowledgement statements via resources available at MSAC.org and elsewhere, to consider donating and making institutional resources available to tribal peoples, and to reconsider in what ways you can improve your relationship with the lands you steward.

## State-wide Land Acknowledgement Statement

Employees of the State of Maryland serve residents of Maryland who live across many different tribal lands. This statement acknowledges all tribes who maintain relationships with lands claimed by the State of Maryland.

This statement is based on one drafted by an elder of the Choptico Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe for the MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project.

We acknowledge the lands and waters now known as Maryland are the home of its first peoples: the Accohannock Indian Tribe, Assateague People's Tribe, Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, Choptico Band of Indians, Lenape Tribe, Nanticoke Tribe, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Piscataway Indian Nation, Pocomoke Indian Nation, Susquehannock Indians, Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee, and tribes in the Chesapeake watershed who have seemingly vanished since the coming of colonialism. We acknowledge that this land is now home to other tribal peoples living here in diaspora. We acknowledge the forced removal of many from the lands and waterways that nurtured them as kin. We acknowledge the degradation that continues to be wrought on the land and waters in pursuit of resources. We acknowledge the right of the land and waterways to heal so that they can continue to provide food and medicine for all. We acknowledge that it is our collective obligation to pursue policies and practices that respect the land and waters so that our reciprocal relationship with them can be fully restored.



Rico Newman (Choptico Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe; left) teaches Lisa Thomas (Choptico Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe; right) how to finger weave in the Piscataway style during a 2013-2014 Folklife Apprenticeship. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs.

## Additional Resources

A brief annotated list of books, articles, and archival collections featuring information about land acknowledgements, tribal peoples whose lands are claimed by Maryland, and Indigenous Studies. Materials are listed in alphabetical order. Many of these resources are available at the [Maryland Traditions Archives](#) housed in collaboration with [Special Collections at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County](#).

Ashley Minner collection, Collection 314, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD).

Community-based visual artist Ashley Minner is an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. This collection centralizes research Ashley has conducted on the history and present of the American Indian community of East Baltimore since 2003, along with other materials from tribal peoples living in Baltimore. The collection includes maps, census information, oral history recordings, and community-derived materials.

Akerson, Louise E. *American Indians in the Baltimore Area*. Baltimore: Baltimore Center for Urban Archeology, 1988.

Written by an archaeologist for a general audience, this short piece summarizes historical and archaeological research on pre-colonial Indigenous settlement patterns in the place now known as Baltimore. The author demonstrates that tribal peoples lived in and around Baltimore for centuries prior to European settlement.

Bruyneel, Kevin. *Settler Memory: The Disavowal of Indigeneity and the Politics of Race*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

Authored by a political theorist for an academic audience, this book reveals some of the ways settler colonial memory has historically disavowed Indigeneity. The author examines a series of major episodes, texts, writer, and memories of the political past: Bacon's Rebellion (1670s), Reconstruction (1860s-70s), and present-day case studies. This book challenges readers to refuse settler memory and instead consider alternative routes to memorialize the past.

Edwin Remsberg Photographs, Maryland Traditions Archives, Collection 309, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD).

Edwin Remsberg Photographs was the contract media producer between 2007 and 2021 for Maryland Traditions, the traditional arts program of the Maryland State Arts Council. This archival collection contains photos and audio recordings documenting tribal lands and entities that received the Maryland Heritage Award: Piscataway lands (2013), Accohannock lands (2014), the Baltimore American Indian Center (2017), and Nause-Waiwash lands (2020). The collection also contains media related to Folklife Apprenticeships received by Indigenous grantees: Lumbee regalia making (2010-2011), Piscataway finger weaving (2013-2014), Piscataway Conoy beadwork (2014-2015), Lumbee chicken and pastry (2019-2020), and powwow singing (2020-2021).

[First Nations Development Institute and Eco hawk Consulting. \*Reclaiming Native Truth – Research Findings: Compilation of all Research\*. 2018.](#)

A free, open-access research report from the nonprofit First Nations Development Institute on Indigenous erasure and ways to combat erasure. The report compiles research findings from several different studies to examine the ways that mainstream narratives about tribal peoples too often focus on a romanticized past and an invisible present. It features a series of techniques for dispelling these stereotypes in school curricula, policy, racist Indigenous-themed sports mascots, and other areas.

[Francis 4. Lee, Weshoyot Alvitre, and Will Fenton. \*Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga\*. Philadelphia: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 2019.](#)

An educational graphic novel with story by Lee Francis 4 (Laguna Pueblo), art by Weshoyot Alvitre (Tongva), and edited by Will Fenton to accompany an exhibit at the Library Company of Philadelphia. This teaching tool tells the story of the 1763 Paxton massacre in which a mob of white settlers – the so-called “Paxton Boys” – murdered 20 unarmed Conestoga People in a genocidal campaign that reshaped Pennsylvania settlement politics. The Conestoga were the final remaining Susquehannock tribal town. This graphic novel introduces new interpreters and new bodies of evidence to highlight the Indigenous victims and their kin. The book and accompanying website make available a series of annotated historical primary sources and teaching materials for teachers and students.

[Gram-Hanssen, Irmelin, Nicole Schafenacker, and Julia Bentz. “Decolonizing transformations through ‘right relations.’” \*Sustainability Science\* \(2021\).](#)

A free, open-access, and highly technical article authored by a trio of Danish, Canadian, and German social scientists designed for an academic audience. The authors propose a template for ways non-Indigenous people can facilitate positive change led by Indigenous people. Their template -- through which non-Indigenous people might begin to embody "right relations" -- involves practicing deep listening, self-reflexivity, creating space, and being in action. The article compellingly combines research in the fields of ecology, climate studies, and Indigenous studies to work towards a "decolonized humanity." They suggest that willingness to be affected and altered by "right relations" is key to imagining and working towards decolonization, and that working towards decolonization functions as a way to develop equitable and sustainable responses -- what they call "transformations" -- to climate change.

Kent, Barry C. *Susquehanna’s Indians*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2001.

Authored by an archaeologist, this book is considered the standard reference on Susquehannock Indians. It centralizes information from historical documents, native and colonial objects, and site excavations, broadly tracing the cultural history of this tribe from about 1500 until the Paxton massacre in 1763 that resulted in the genocide of the Conestoga village.

[Maryland Traditions records, Maryland Traditions Archives, Collection 120, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County \(Baltimore, MD\).](#)

This archival collection contains a variety of materials from the MSAC Land Acknowledgement Project, including recordings of consultations with tribal leaders and elders conducted by Maryland Traditions staff. Elsewhere in the collection are a series of oral history recordings with the late Chief Billy Tayac

(1936-2021), former leader of the Piscataway Indian Nation. This collection also contains materials related to tribal lands and entities that received the Maryland Heritage Award: Piscataway lands (2013), Accohannock lands (2014), the Baltimore American Indian Center (2017), and Nause-Waiwash lands (2020). Additional materials relate to Folklife Apprenticeships received by Indigenous grantees: Lumbee regalia making (2010-2011), Piscataway finger weaving (2013-2014), Piscataway Conoy beadwork (2014-2015), Lumbee chicken and pastry (2019-2020), and powwow singing (2020-2021).

[Mayis Indigenous Records Database, Maryland State Archives \(Annapolis, MD\).](#)

A free online searchable database hosted by the Maryland State Archives. Created in consultation with tribal peoples whose lands are claimed by Maryland, this database contains records related to the Chesapeake region's Indigenous Peoples, including searchable digital copies of treaties, government documents, and art. The title "Mayis" (pronounced "mah yees") means "a path; to go on" in Renape, an Algonquian dialect historically spoken on Delmarva Peninsula.

Minner, Ashley. "Standing in the Gap: Lumbee Cultural Preservation at the Baltimore American Indian Center." In *The Routledge Companion to Intangible Cultural Heritage*, edited by Michelle I. Stefano and Peter Davis, 385-395. New York: Routledge, 2017.

A chapter by community artist and scholar Ashley Minner (Lumbee) in a volume co-edited by former Maryland State Folklorist Michelle Stefano. This chapter provides an overview of the history of Lumbee people who emigrated from their traditional lands in North Carolina to Baltimore. It also discusses the importance of the Baltimore American Indian Center, which received the Heritage Award in 2017, to the Lumbee and other urban tribal peoples living in diaspora in Baltimore.

Pendergast, James F. *The Massawomeck: Raiders and Traders into the Chesapeake Bay in the Seventeenth Century*. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991.

The Massawomeck tribe appears in the historical record very briefly in the early 1600s and then vanishes. Written by a historian, this work is one of very few that attempts to piece together their history. The author reviews the little existing historical evidence on the Massawomeck, hypothesizing that they might be a loose confederation of tribes, or that they might be an Iroquoian tribe who lived between Lakes Ontario and Erie east of the Niagara River.

Potter, Stephen R. *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993.

Written by an archaeologist for an academic audience, this book narrates the rise and fall of Indigenous polities in the Potomac Valley. The author takes a case study of the Chicacoan tribe who lived on the south shore of the Potomac River from 200 C.E. to the early 1600s. While focusing primarily on one tribe, he demonstrates the development of Chesapeake-based Algonquian cultures more broadly and tribal responses to the invading Europeans.



Raber, Paul A., ed. *The Susquehannocks: New Perspectives on Settlement and Cultural Identity*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.

Written for an academic audience, the essays in this edited volume examine different aspects of Susquehannock archaeology. The authors draw on new information derived from new archaeological technologies to paint a clearer picture of Susquehannock origins and material culture. This volume provides something of an update to Barry Kent's *Susquehanna's Indians*, which is considered the standard reference guide to the Susquehannock Indians.

Rice, James D. *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009.

A book by a historian designed for an academic audience that focuses on the cultural and environmental history of the Potomac River basin from its earliest known habitation until the 1700s. The book examines the ways that Potomac River ecologies affected how tribal peoples, enslaved people, and settlers lived. The emphasis on the relationships between humans and ecologies brings the reader closer to understandings maintained by many tribal peoples: that the land is not a resource to own, but rather a relative with whom to relate. The author tacks back and forth between different worldviews and their relationships with their ecologies locally within the Potomac River watershed.

Rountree, Helen C. *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

A book for an academic audience by an anthropologist who specializes in the Indigenous cultures of the greater Chesapeake region. Drawing on a variety of historical documents, this monograph provides a description of Powhatan culture dating to 1607-1610. Although focusing on lands today known as Virginia, some of the information pertains to Powhatan tribes elsewhere in the Chesapeake watershed, including the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

Rountree, Helen C, ed. *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993.

A book for an academic audience edited by an anthropologist who specializes in the Indigenous cultures of the greater Chesapeake region. The essays in this volume examine the Powhatan paramount chiefdom and its relationships with both Europeans and with other tribal peoples. One chapter ("The Powhatans and the Maryland Mainland" by Wayne Clark and Helen Rountree) provides insight into the region now known as southern Maryland during the early 1600s. Another chapter ("Relations Between the Powhatans and the Eastern Shore" by Thomas Davidson) attempts to flesh out the connections between Powhatan peoples and other tribal peoples on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake. Broadly, the book provides a useful perspective on 222 years of history in the Chesapeake.

Rountree, Helen C., and Thomas E. Davidson. *Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997.

Authored by two archaeologists for both a general and a scholarly audience, this book is considered the standard reference for the histories of tribal peoples on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Drawing on historical documents and archaeological evidence, the authors trace tribal histories, cultures, and ecologies from 800 C.E. to the early 1800s.

Seib, Rebecca, and Helen C. Rountree. *Indians of Southern Maryland*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2014.

A book by two anthropologists designed for a general audience detailing the histories of Indigenous peoples in what is now called Southern Maryland from the last ice age until the early 2000s. Chapter one treats the archaeological record, chapter two Indigenous cultures at the time of Contact, chapter three the early 1600s, chapter four the remainder of the 1600s, chapter five the 1700s and 1800s, and chapter six the 1900s and early 2000s.

Sleeper-Smith, Susan, Juliana Barr, Jean M. O'Brien, Nancy Shoemaker, and Scott Manning Stevens, eds. *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Edited and authored by some of the leading scholars in Indigenous studies, this book is designed for educators and students alike. It follows the chronological arc of the standard American history survey and considers fundamental questions of what it means to be an American. The essays reassess major events, themes, groups of historical actors, and approaches, consistently demonstrating how Native peoples and questions of Indigenous sovereignty have animated the many ways we typically think about the past of the United States.

[Stewart-Ambo, Theresa, and K. Wayne Yang. "Beyond Land Acknowledgement in Settler Institutions." \*Social Text\* 139, no. 1 \(2021\): 21-46.](#)

An article by two scholars in the field of Indigenous Studies. This piece is one of the very few peer-reviewed publications on land acknowledgements. It explains distinctions between Indigenous versus settler acknowledgements and the importance of land as pedagogy, by which the authors mean learning from tribal tradition keepers. The authors conclude that settler institutions need to move *beyond* performing land acknowledgements and into accountability to the land. They also call for acknowledgement of Black-Indigenous relationships because blackness brings the coloniality of relationships into sharp focus. The authors propose that the practice of creating and delivering land acknowledgement statements function as a beginning to greater institutional responsibility.

Tayac, Gabrielle. "'To Speak with One Voice:' Supra-Tribal American Indian Collective Identity Incorporation among the Piscataway, 1500-1998." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999.

A doctoral dissertation authored by sociologist Gabrielle Tayac (Piscataway Indian Nation). Her dissertation examines "collective identity incorporation," a social psychological process through which individuals adhere to social movements. She uses this analytical lens to survey ethnic renewal and identity among Piscataway peoples over five centuries, 1608-present. As such, her dissertation features important Piscataway historical information.

Teves, Stephanie Nohelani, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja, eds. *Native Studies Keywords*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015.

A book edited by and featuring many Indigenous scholars for an academic audience exploring concepts in Native Studies. The book includes definitions and essays on eight concepts: sovereignty, land, indigeneity, nation, blood, tradition, colonialism, and indigenous epistemologies/knowledge.

[Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is not a Metaphor." \*Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society\* 1, no. 1 \(2012\): 1-40.](#)

A free, open-access article – now considered a classic in Indigenous Studies – authored by Eve Tuck (Unangax - Aleut) and K. Wayne Yang. The authors remind readers that “decolonization” refers directly to the repatriation of Indigenous life and land to tribal peoples. They warn against allowing the term “decolonization” to become a metaphor, which all too often leads to evasion and “settler moves to innocence.” The article provides a useful perspective on ways non-Indigenous people can begin working towards positive change led by Indigenous people.

[Vowel, Chelsea. 2016. "Beyond Territorial acknowledgements." \*Âpihtawikosisân: Law, Language, Culture\*. September 23. <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>.](#)

A free, open-access blog post by legal and cultural scholar Cheslea Vowel (Métis). The author provides an overview of the increasingly popular practice of land acknowledgements in Canada, their purpose, and ways to move beyond the performativity inherent in the practice.

[Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." \*Journal of Genocide Research\* 8, no. 4 \(2006\): 387-409.](#)

A free, open-access article authored by an Australian anthropologist for an academic audience. The author reviews genocide and the goals of settler colonialism in a variety of global contexts, analyzing settler colonialism as an on-going structure rather than a one-time event.