

COPYRIGHT / USAGE

Material on this site may be quoted or reproduced for **personal and educational purposes** without prior permission, provided appropriate credit is given. Any commercial use of this material is prohibited without prior permission from The Special Collections Department - Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore. Commercial requests for use of the transcript or related documentation must be submitted in writing to the address below.

When crediting the use of portions from this site or materials within that are copyrighted by us please use the citation: *Used with permission of the University of Baltimore.*

If you have any requests or questions regarding the use of the transcript or supporting documents, please contact us:

Langsdale Library
Special Collections Department
1420 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201-5779
<http://archives.ubalt.edu>

The Maryland Indians.

When a lad, I heard that my ancestor in this colony had been Military Officer for Anne Arundel County during the 1670 - 80's, at the period when the wars were being waged between the Susquehanocks and the Senecas, and as Anne Arundel was one of the frontier counties of Maryland, and it was the duty of the Military Officer to protect the settlers, my youthful imagination clothed this Stephen Hancock in the role of an heroic Indian fighter, only to learn, as I grew older, that while the War between the Susquehanocks and the Senecas was the worst Indian conflict on Maryland soil, nevertheless, the Indians of Maryland were generally very different from the tribes with whom Boone and the others had to fight their way. The interest that was developed in the Indians, however, ^{and} created a fondness for the subject that became a very pleasing hobby when your Chairman, Mr. Sanford asked me to fill in a gap in his program of addresses, I was pleased to consent, if only to talk on the subject that was so little understood. The idea of the Indian that is usually held by the average man is based on the tales of the troublesome savage article with whom our people came in contact in opening up the West, while the Indians of Maryland were far from being such a ferocious and blood-thirsty set. The tribes with whom our early settlers came in contact were comparatively amiable and courteous and they gave the colonists very little trouble. This was generally so with the tribes that peopled the Atlantic Sea coast.

Without exception, the records of the early explorers tell of the hospitable qualities of the Aborigines, and probably no record is more significant than that of Columbus himself, who described their innocent happiness in these words: "They were no wild savages, but very

gentle and courteous, without knowing what evil is, without stealing and without killing" and then later we find this same Columbus writing to his Spanish Majesty, that he would be able to furnish them with gold, cotton, spices and slaves, "as many as your Highness shall command to be shipped". Indeed, in Columbus' record alone lies the epitome of the tragedy that transformed this primeval Paradise into a land of bondage, desolation and death for its natives. Sir Ralph Lane, describing his welcome by the Indians, tells of how they came with tobacco corn and furs and kindly gestures to befriend the strange white men, but as he adds, "one of them stole a cup, wherefore we burnt their town and spoiled their corn." And so the early records of the Spanish, the French and the English explorers read, including those of Capt. John Smith and Father White, who came in contact with the Maryland Indians.

Father White, speaking of the Yocomocos with whom our Maryland Colonists lived, says "The natives are very tall and well proportioned, their skin is naturally dark and they make it uglier by staining it, generally with red paint mixed with oil, to keep off the mosquitos; thinking more of their own comfort than of appearances. They disfigure their countenances with other colors too, painting them in various, and truly hideous and frightful ways, either a dark blue above the nose and a red below, or vice versa. They generally have black hair, which they carry around in a knot to the left ear. They adorne their neck with glass beads, strung on a thread like a necklace.

They are clothed for the most part in deer skins, which hang down behind like a cloak. They wear aprons around the middle and leave the rest of their body naked. The soles of their feet are as hard as horn, and they tread on thorns and briars without being hurt. Their arms are bows and arrows, three feet long, tipped with stag's horn or a white

flint, sharpened at the end.

They live in houses built in an oblong oval shape. Light is admitted through a window in the roof - a foot and one half long, which also serves to carry off the smoke, because they kindle the fire in the middle of the floor and sleep around the fire.

The race are of a frank and cheerful disposition, and they live for the most part on a kind of paste, which they call "pone^h and ominy" both of which are made from Indian corn and sometimes they add fish or game. They are careful to refrain from wine and warm drinks and cannot be persuaded to taste them, except those whom the English have corrupted with their own vices. With respect to chastity, I must confess that I have never observed in any man or woman, any act which savored of levity. They marry several wives, yet they keep inviolate their conjugal faith. The women present a sober and modest appearance.

They cherish a generous feeling towards all, and make a return for whatever kindness is shown them. They resolve upon nothing rashly or while influenced by a sudden impulse of the mind; but they act deliberately and when anything of importance is proposed at any time, they think it over for a while in silence; then they speak briefly for or against it and are very tenacious of their purpose.

They acknowledge one God in heaven, yet they pay Him no outward worship. But they strive in every way to appease a certain imaginary spirit, which they call "Ochre" that he may not hurt them. They worship corn and fire as gods that are bountiful to the human race.

They have some things among them, which may well become Christian, to imitate, as their temperance in eating or drinking, and their justice

to each other, for it is never heard that those of one nation will rob or steal from another. Also their conversation with each other is peaceable and free from scurrilous words that may give offense. They are very hospitable to one another and to strangers and are of grave comportment. In their assembly no man can expect to find as much time pass with more silence and gravity."

When the early colonists came to these shores, they found the country peopled by a race who differed from themselves, not only in physical appearances but also in their manners of living, and what I believe is more important, their mental attitudes were very different from those of the Europeans. The reports of these early navigators gave varying accounts of their habits and customs. Cortez and other early explorers told of the Aztecs and the Incas who had developed a system of government that compared favorably with the governments of Europe and who were acquainted with astronomy and were efficient in sculpture and architecture. Their religion was based on sun worship but was well defined and they irrigated and cultivated great tracts of arid land. Those who landed on the North Atlantic coast came in contact with another branch of the same race, which in turn was divided into nations and tribes of varying types. DeSoto, in his march to the Mississippi, tells of his soldiers making their way through a corn field 30 miles long - a vast wilderness of a cultivated foodstuff.

Whether the Indians were or were not native to America does not matter. They had no written records, but they were here when the Europeans came. Geological deposits show ^{his} ~~its~~ remains at a very early period and many authorities claim that the Indians had emerged from savagry into barbarism in America long before Darwin's ^{flava} ~~fain~~ simian had lost its tail on the plateaus of Asia. It is conclusive too that the races

of America came from a common stock. The Indians have a legend of the Great Spirit sowing seeds in the earth from which sprang the races of man. Some went to the nearby streams to wash the soil from their body and washed themselves so clean that they became pale and weak, the white men. Some were so lazy, that they would'nt wash at all, the negro, but others washed just enough and they were the strong Indian. Populating America as in Europe, was a matter of migration but with this difference. Because of Geographical condition the migrations in America were from North to South, a question of latitude, while in Europe, the migrations were from East to West, a matter of Longitude. The traditions of all the Atlantic Coast Indians speak of their people of having come from North or Northwest and when the early explorers came to this country, they found the several nations of Indians, more less definitely located; although because of tribal movements some of these nations occupied overlapping territories, whose boundary it was impossible to fix with any degree of exactness. The Algonquins occupied most of the western plains and the whole of the country south of Hudson Bay to the latitude of Georgia, excepting the wedge occupied by the Iriquois, who held the territory immediately bounding the Great Lakes and upper St. Lawrence. Their land included most of what is now the State of Ohio, and the western and central parts of New York and Pennsylvania. The Sioux occupied what is now North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Missouri. This gave the Algonquins control of the Atlantic Coast, from Newfoundland to the Carolinas, except where the Tuscaroras an Iriquoian tribe and the Catawbas, a Siouan tribe had filtered through, both of which had become located in the Carolinas. The Muskegans lived in the swamps of the Southland, Except the Susquehanocks, who were also Iriquoians, who had come down from New York through the valley of the river that now bears their name, the Indians of Maryland were of Algonquin stock, apparently descended from the Delawarees, the Leni Lenape, genuine

Patapsco to the Susquehanna, the Indians of Maryland are called Fishing Indians, although the men also went on occasional hunting trips, but left their wives and children in the villages to return within a few days. Living from the water was easy, and their fields of corn and beans were permanent around their village. This manner of living produced a gentler nature than most of us attribute to the Indians and tradition says that they rarely quarrelled or fought, save when the more savage Susquehanocks made their forays against them. The country around abounded in deer, rabbits, squirrels, turkey, partridge and other small game and the men did all the hunting, trapping and fishing. The men alone bore arms and to them belonged the chances and dangers of war. The men made their implements for hunting and for war and for work in the fields, and these being made from stone, the occupation took considerable time. They made canoes that met their needs and except for size, have never been surpassed by any other people. The men made the laws, conducted the treaties and undertook the general regulation of tribal affairs, although in these domains the women also had an important prerogative. The men, through their clans, had charge of religious affairs with the immense task of memorizing rituals and tribal records. The women cared for the habitations, nurtured their children and worked in the fields. While it is true that the position of women in Indian society was sub-ordinate with that of the men, and a very sharp diversion was made between the work of the sexes, nevertheless, as you can see, the women were not slaves as is generally understood, and frequently tribal laws permitted them to become property owners both in land and animals. The men supported their families by hunting and fishing made the utensils, cut down the trees and stripped the bark to build the homes, while the women reared the children, smoked the meat and fish for future uses, gathered rushes and made them into baskets and other incidentals for household use. You will see that the division of labor is much

the same as that among the Europeans. As for working in the fields, you have only to go to certain sections of Maryland and Pennsylvania today to see white women working in the fields, although with the Indians there was a religious reason for it. The Indians believed that it meant greater fertility for the crops when the women sowed the seed and cultivated the land. The general policy of this division of labor seems the best possible adjustment to protect the welfare and perpetuate these little communities of the Indians. It might be well to say something here about the Courtship and marriage among the Maryland Indians. Here the women seem to have clearly defined rights. Although the young men sometimes took matters in their own hands, the parents generally arranged the matches and gifts took the place of purchase. The mother of the man would bring some game that had been killed by her son to the girl's relatives and would receive an appropriate gift in return. If the marriage was agreed upon, the girl would cook a meal for the man and he in turn would give her a beaver or some other animal that he had killed. This constituted the ceremony. The marriage bond itself was somewhat loose and a warrior would put aside his wife if he wanted to, but a woman could also leave her husband if she wished. Divorce was discreditable but it could be arranged and the children always went with the mother. The economic factor made one wife the rule, although it would appear that a hunter could have several wives if he could provide for them.

The houses in the villages were most frequently community houses, oblong with domes like roofs, 40 to 60 ft. in length, supported by beams, and accommodated several families, possibly in close relationship although individual loges were frequent. These community houses were formed of poles fixed in the ground at regular intervals which were bent over at the sides to form an arch at the top. Pieces running

horizontally were fastened to these uprights which served as braces and supports for mats, barks or other coverings, with vents at the top to let out the smoke. These arbor like houses were very warm and were sufficient protection against wind and rain. Generally their homes were grouped into towns which were palisaded and surrounded by posts ten or twelve feet high. The Indians of Maryland have made considerable advance in agriculture and cultivated several kinds of corn and peas as well as melons and pumpkins and even two or three kinds of fruit trees.

Except for a deference paid to the headmen of the several clans, who ruled in time of peace, and who attained their positions because of their heridity through their maternal line, or because of their wisdom, each man in these communities considered himself as good as another and in times of war, the fighting men established themselves as volunteers under some popular leader who might or might not be their village chief. Around the village council fire every man had the right to be heard, but when there was need of an active deliberative assembly of a tribe or a confederacy, the old men or the orators were selected by the various villages to attend these assemblies. Nor did the judgment of these councils bind the entire village or tribe. Any one might refuse to obey its rulings if it pleased them and it was this weakness of organic law that frequently urged on tribal jealousies that caused the Indians to give way to the whites. Lacking self control and the child of impulse, he refused lengthy military operations and yielded to any sustained resistance that the colonists made, who better understood the need of compact obedience before a common foe.

In fishing, the Indians had little to learn from the Europeans. Their hooks made of carved shell or bone were very much like those of metal brought over by the settlers and Capt. John Smith speaks of the vast numbers

of fish in the Chesapeake and its tributaries, telling particularly of one experience in the Potomac when they were so thick that they impeded the passage of his boat and he could not make a landing. When one says that the Indian was barbarous, we must remember that he was so from choice. It suited his liberty loving nature. He had a sense of personal honor that was highly developed and he was intellectually active. He could plan with an excellent logic. The chase gave him food that he craved and he was an agriculturist within his wants. When the Europeans came, they brought many ideas of social developments that clashed with their ideas. At first the Indians regarded the Europeans as a supernatural origin, and they gave every evidence of hospitality and confidence to them, but the Spaniards, and afterwards, the English sold them into slavery or murdered them at the slightest pretext. And when the trader came who travelled from tribe to tribe and traded furs and often cheating and robbing the Indians and encouraging them in the use of intoxicants, it completely demoralized their native life. One difference between the races that made untold discontent was the conflicting idea of property rights, especially that of land tenure. The clothes that they wore belonged to the Indian. The household effects, including the children belonged to the women, the land belonged to the tribe and no Indian had a right to sell it, except with the consent of his tribe. In the purchase of land, the policy of the Maryland Colony was unique and most honorable and although it antedated the fame of Penn's purchase by many years, it has not been so well advertised.

Their years were numbered by winters - cohanks - in imitation of the call of wild goose which came to them in cold weather. Their months were counted as moons and their days were divided into three parts - the rise of the sun, the power of the sun, and the lowering of the sun. Their years were divided into five seasons - the budding time, the earing of the corn, the heat of the summer, the harvest season, and the winter.

Like all primitive people, the religion of the Indians was based on their conception of the relationship between natural forces and their influences on the individual. It included a somewhat confused sun worship with fear of thunder and lightning. They carried these relationships between the animated and the inanimated into their mythology in their attempt to explain causes and events, until these relations of the individual of the outer world and the forms created by his imagination and emotion may be defined as the principal of their religion. They believed in the Great Spirit, who influenced the life of man and which in turn could be influenced by propiciation and magic. Their Medicine Men or Magicians were frequently their priests, and while every object was endowed by them with magic power, animals, especially the larger ones, were feared because of their natural influence. This magical influence of the animal accounts for their clan conception, whether of the bear, the wolf, the turkey, the tortoise, or others. The Indian did not attempt to explain the beginning of the world, that was eternal, without beginning and without end, but he did attempt to account for almost everything else that has happened since then, even to the causes of the markings on animals, as when, for instance, the bear one day attempting to catch a chipmunk, only scratched his claws over him and the marks that were left on his fur were the markings of the chipmunk for ever-more. With the Indian, whatever was once settled was settled for all times, whatever was not controlled by the will - dreams, sickness and death, for instance - was a matter of magic and could be controlled by outside causes. The nature of disease was very mysterious to him and he attributed it to supernatural causes and it was their belief that they were caused by offended or malevolent being and through secret practicing by an enemy. In every tribe, there were men, and sometimes women who exorcised these powers by placating opposing powers which they were induced by prayers and songs to the spirits of the dead, mythical

animals or by the sourcerer's art. They also practiced blood-sucking, poulticing and sweating. They dieted to the point of total absence to starve out the devil. Early writers have even included hypnotism and telepathic influences among the arts practiced.

The Indians looked on the earth as the mother from which came all created things. The mother who produced food for the children. From this primitive religious sense of the earth, land was not regarded by them as property. Like the air, it was necessary to the livelihood of the race, and therefore was not to be appropriated by the individual. As he developed out of savagry, and began to cultivate the soil and range the hunting and fishing places contiguous to his villages he established tribal rights over such land for the use of the tribe, but this occupancy of the land never gave him the conception that he had individual rights, or that the land was merchantable. During the early settlement of the country by the whites, absolute title to the land was vested in the crown by right of the discovery and conquest and this difference of conception of land rights, led to many frictions between the races, but Lord Baltimore, with the breadth of vision unusual in those days, and beyond the ideas of personal rights in land that had been developed by the Europeans, he acknowledged the Indian rights of tribal occupancy as is shown by this purchase of these tribal rights from the Indians in 1635. This policy was followed by William Penn in 1683, although both parties were operating under Royal Charters. In other colonies, individual whites would frequently purchase land from individual Indians, only to find that under the tribal laws of the Indians, the individual had no right to sell it and many conflicts resulted from such misunderstanding. Lord Baltimore, however insisted that all such purchases should be made through the tribe and with tribal sanction. In consequence of which, much friction was avoided in the Maryland Colonies, and pleasanter

This treaty of 1692 ^{caused the enmity} caused the enmity of the Senecas,
and the Senecas, who ^{perceived} perceived the ^{enlightened} peacefully inclined
Algonquin tribes, ~~and they began to leave Maryland after~~
~~this treaty~~; but in ~~1705~~ 16 or 1705 or 1716 ^{after}
treaties were made or finally in 1742 treaties
were made with the ^{Delaware} Delaware tribes that ^{insured}
their help ^{against} in the ~~land~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~

The Indians ^{began} began to ^{leave} leave Maryland after
these treaties. Because of the encroachment of the
Whites ^{from} from all sides, they ^{saw} saw the ^{game} game being
destroyed or ^{driven away} driven away, and their youths were
being ^{contaminated} contaminated by contact with the white traders
and trappers, whose ^{ways} ways they ^{imitated} imitated. It was
a matter of self ^{preservation} preservation for them. The ^{Company} Company
moved ^{westward} westward through the valley of the Potomac, the
Nanticoke joined the Six Nations, which may
others of the ^{weaker} weaker tribes, too ^{discouraged} discouraged by their
^{experience} experience to hope for anything in the future, ^{remained} remained
with the negroes and became extinct.