



CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH 400 PROJECT  
CURRICULUM UNIT

NATIVE AMERICANS  
OF THE  
CHESAPEAKE BAY:  
USING PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY  
SOURCES

**TITLE:** Native Americans of the Chesapeake Bay: Using Primary vs. Secondary Sources

**DEVELOPED BY:** Chris Cerino, Sultana Projects, Inc.  
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**GRADE/S:** 4/5

**CLASS PERIODS/DURATION:** 2

**VSC STANDARDS/INDICATORS:**

**SOCIAL STUDIES GRADE 4**

**2.A.1.** Describe the various cultures of early societies of Maryland  
c. Examine and describe the early Native American societies

**6.F.** Analyze Social Studies Information

1. Interpret primary and secondary sources of information
- b. Interpret information from field studies and surveys

**SOCIAL STUDIES GRADE 5**

**F.** Analyze Social Studies Information

1. Interpret primary and secondary sources
- b. Interpret information from field studies and surveys

**OBJECTIVE:**

Students will be able to:

- interpret primary and secondary sources to gather information about the American Indian tribes present in the Chesapeake Bay region in the 16th and 17th centuries
- identify basic elements in American Indian culture at point of first contact in the Chesapeake region such as clothing, agricultural practices, architecture, cooking techniques and diet

**VOCABULARY:**

<i>culture</i>	a dynamic system which enables people to satisfy their wants, needs, beliefs and values; a learned behavior of people which includes their belief systems and languages, their social relationships, institutions or organizations, and their material goods – food, clothing, buildings, tools and machines
<i>weir</i>	a type of fish trap made out of sticks and cordage used by the Indians of the Chesapeake region
<i>palisade</i>	a wall surrounding an Indian village made of sturdy sticks and often covered with bark and/or clay
<i>primary source</i>	a source of information that comes from an eyewitness; these sources might include paintings, journal entries, letters of correspondence, etc.
<i>secondary source</i>	a source of information that comes from an individual who was not present at the time the event took place

## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

Students:	Handout #1	<i>The broyling of their fish over the flame of fier</i> (one per student)
	Handout #2	<i>The manner of their fishing</i> (one per group of five)
	Handout #2a	<i>The seething of their meate in potts of earth</i> (one per group of five)
	Handout #2b	<i>The towne of Pomeiock . . .</i> (one per group of five)
	Handout #3	<i>Native American Fact Strips</i> (one set per group of five)
	Handout #4	<i>Secoton</i> (one per student)
	Handout #4a	<i>Using Primary and Secondary Sources: Secoton</i> (one per student)

## **TEACHER BACKGROUND:**

Primary sources help students develop knowledge, skills, and analytical abilities. By working with primary sources, students engage in asking questions, thinking critically, making intelligent inferences, and developing reasoned explanations and interpretations of events and issues in the past and present.

A primary source is first hand evidence. It was written or drawn by a person who was there at the time of an event. It is contemporary to the period being studied. Primary sources are actual records that have survived from the past, such as letters, photographs, paintings and maps. When analyzing primary sources, consider the type of primary source under study. Different primary sources were created for different reasons. Questions to ask:

- Who created the source and why?
- Did the recorder have firsthand knowledge of the event? Or, did the recorder report what others saw and heard?
- Did the recorder produce the source for personal use? for one or more individuals?

There are very few primary documents from the late 1500's and early 1600's that describe or depict the American Indian cultures that existed in the Chesapeake region at point of first contact. One of the most valuable collections that did survive is a series of watercolor paintings made by artist John White. White was one of the founding members of Sir Walter Raleigh's doomed colony of Roanoke, established on the present day Outer Banks of North Carolina in 1585. His matter-of-fact interpretations of the Carolina Algonquian Indians provide viewers with a fascinating glimpse into the daily life of the indigenous cultures that inhabited this part of the country.

The lifestyle and culture of the Indians living around the Roanoke colony was very similar to that of the tribes living in and around the Chesapeake Bay. Historians and archaeologists regularly use White's paintings as a point of reference for clothing styles, hunting and fishing techniques, village structures, economic activities and cooking techniques. Today your students will be examining five of John White's paintings to gather information about the American Indian tribes that inhabited the Chesapeake region when Captain John Smith sailed up the Bay in 1608.

Accompanying each of John White's paintings is an engraving made by Theodor de Bry. The engravings were made in Europe nearly five years after White's paintings were created, and they are examples of secondary source materials. When one carefully compares a de Bry engraving to White's original image, many differences can be noted. In most cases, de Bry adds action scenes in the background to make the image more exciting to the viewer. This is because he was trying to promote interest in the "New World". Another striking difference is that de Bry often changes the facial features of the Indians to make them look more European/Anglican. This is a classic case of cultural bias affecting the recording of a historic event/scene.

Today your students will learn about the American Indian cultures of the Chesapeake region while comparing and contrasting these primary and secondary sources.

## LESSON DEVELOPMENT:

1. Tell your students that today they will be learning about the American Indian tribes that inhabited the region when Captain John Smith sailed up the Chesapeake Bay in 1608. Inform them that they will be studying five paintings made by artist John White, who visited the coast of North Carolina in 1585. Mr. White's paintings are the only known renderings of the indigenous people of the area made by an eyewitness living in the New World. His art work is an example of a primary source.
2. Next, tell the students that each of White's paintings has an accompanying engraving made five years later by Theodor de Bry. Since Mr. de Bry never set foot in the "New World", and since the engravings were made in Europe five years after the original events took place, his images are secondary sources. Let the students know that for the rest of the class period they will be comparing and contrasting these primary and secondary sources to learn basic information about the American Indian tribes that inhabited the Chesapeake region.
3. Give each student a copy of the handout entitled "*American Indians of the Chesapeake Bay: Primary vs. Secondary Sources*" (Handout #1). Give the students five minutes to examine the two images, then read the accompanying text as a class. The text explains the difference between a primary and a secondary source, and the images at the top of the handout provide examples of each. Begin a class discussion about the images using the following questions:
  - What is happening in the image on the left hand side?  
*The image shows four corner stakes, forked at the top, that enclose a wood fire and support four sticks, across which six others are laid from front to back to form a simple grill or barbecue. On this are laid to cook, from right to left, two large fish occupying the full width of the grill. At the right-hand side two fish, each impaled by the gills on a small upright stick, are also being broiled. From the fire reddish tongues of flame arise but little more than the smoke reaches the grid.*
  - What is happening in the image on the right hand side?  
*The plate is in reverse of the primary source. Two Native American men have been added, one on the left, holding a long stick forked at the end, the other approaching from the right with a basket of fish on his back. The grill has only five cross pieces and the smoke and flames have been accentuated.*
  - How are the two images similar?  
*Both images show how the Indians of the Chesapeake region met their basic need for food and how they dressed. These are examples of elements of culture.*
  - Why do you think the artist who created the image on the right took the liberty to add so many extra details to his engraving?  
*When Theodor de Bry made his engravings in England in 1590 - five years after John White's paintings had been created - he was trying to generate interest in the New World. As a result, he often added scenes to the original watercolor paintings to make the images more exciting and viewer-friendly. De Bry also had a tendency to make the natives' facial features more Anglican than White did and he sometimes modified the way that they were dressed. This is a classic example of cultural bias influencing the way an event or image is perceived.*

4. Divide the students into small groups (4-5 students per group). Give each group the following handouts: *The manner of their fishing* (Handout #2), *The seething of their meate in pots of earth* (Handout #2a), and *The towne of Pomeiock . . .* (Handout #2b). Explain to the students that their mission is twofold:
  - to obtain as much information as possible about the Indians of the Chesapeake region from the two images
  - To compare and contrast John White's painting (primary source) to Theodor de Bry's engraving (secondary source)Give the students five minutes to closely examine the images.
5. When five minutes is up, give each group the worksheet/s entitled "*Native American Fact Strips*" (Handout #3). Tell the students that their job is to read the facts together as a group, then cut out each "fact strip" and match it to the set of images that it describes.
6. When the students are finished with this task, call on volunteers from each group to share their information.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

Provide each student with a copy of the handout entitled *Secoton* (Handout #4) and the accompanying worksheet entitled *Using Primary and Secondary Sources: Secoton* (Handout #4a). Have each child work independently to compare and contrast the White/De Bry images and come up with new facts they learned based upon their observations.

#### **CLOSURE:**

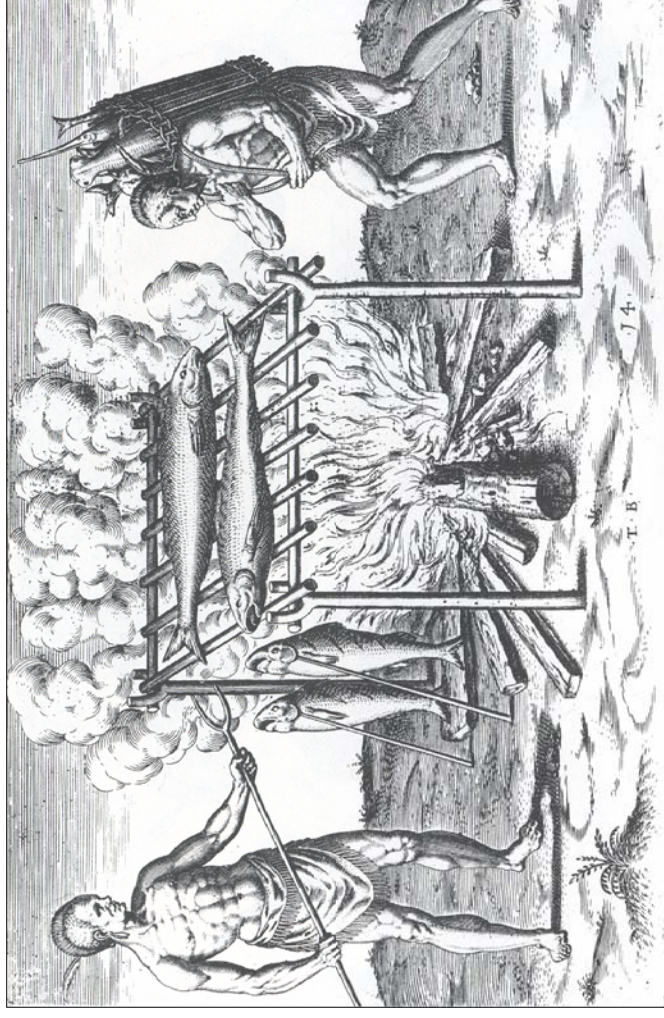
Call on students to have them share the new facts that they learned about the American Indian tribes of the region using John White's paintings and Theodor de Bry's engravings.

#### **EXTENSION:**

Ideas to extend this lesson include:

- Visit the Virtual Jamestown web site at [http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white\\_debry\\_html/white.html#s34](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white_debry_html/white.html#s34) to view the complete set of John White paintings and Theodor de Bry engravings. There is also a three dimensional virtual tour that takes the viewer inside the village of Pomeiock.
- Have the students create their own primary documents by having them draw a caricature of a fellow student in class or a scene that is happening at school.
- Have the students build dioramas that attempt to replicate the scene/s in John White's paintings

# AMERICAN INDIANS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY: PRIMARY VS. SECONDARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION



**Primary sources** of information are produced by someone who was present at the time an event took place. They are eyewitness accounts of people, places, actions, or natural scenes. Examples of primary sources might include journal entries, letters, diaries, newspaper articles, sketches, paintings, photographs, maps or physical objects.

**Secondary sources** of information come from people who were not present when the event occurred. They are produced after the action took place. As a result, secondary sources are often less accurate than primary sources.

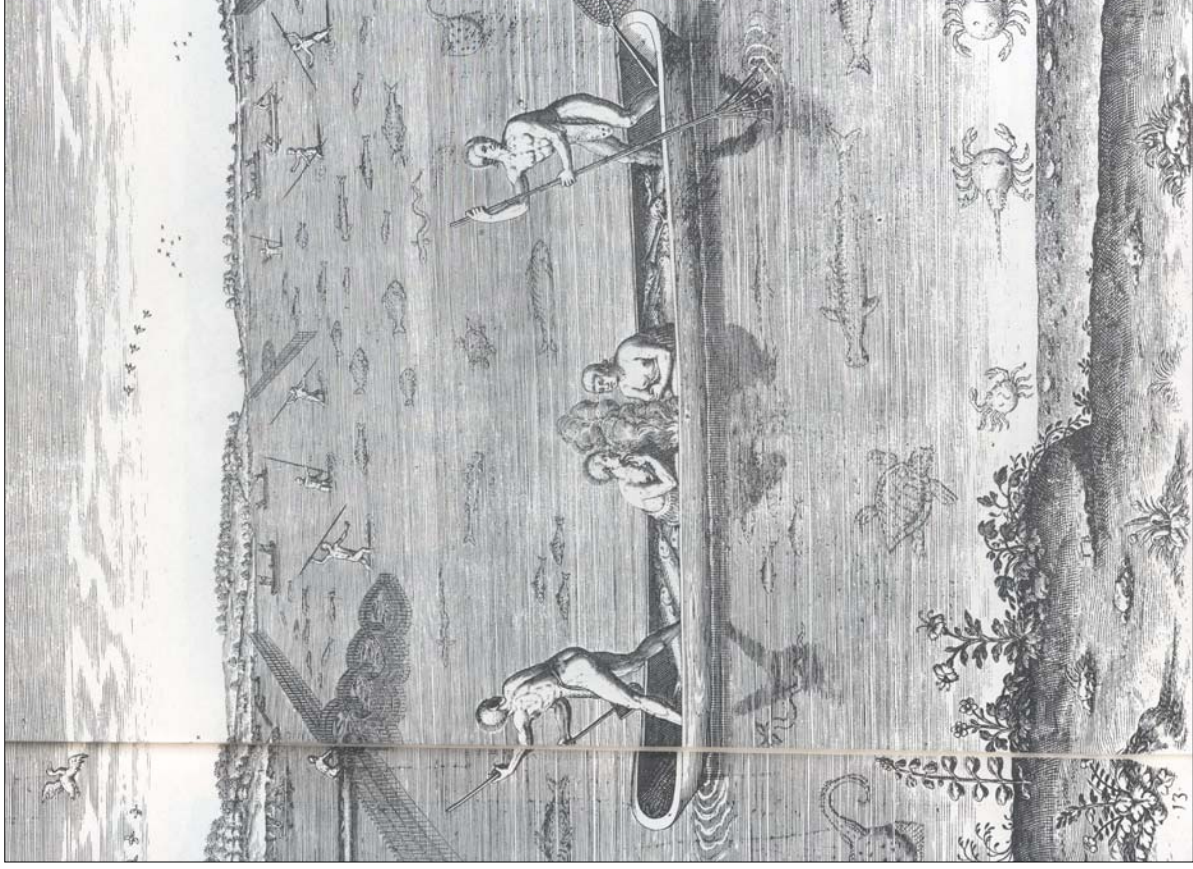
Look carefully at the two images above. The painting on the left was made by John White, an artist who visited the coast of North Carolina in 1585 and made paintings of the people, places and animals that he saw. His painting showing how the Indians cooked their fish over a fire is an example of a primary source.

The image on the right is an engraving made by Theodor de Bry. This is an example of a secondary source. It is showing the same scene, but it was made several years later. What differences can you see between the painting on the left and the engraving on the right?

# The manner of their fishing

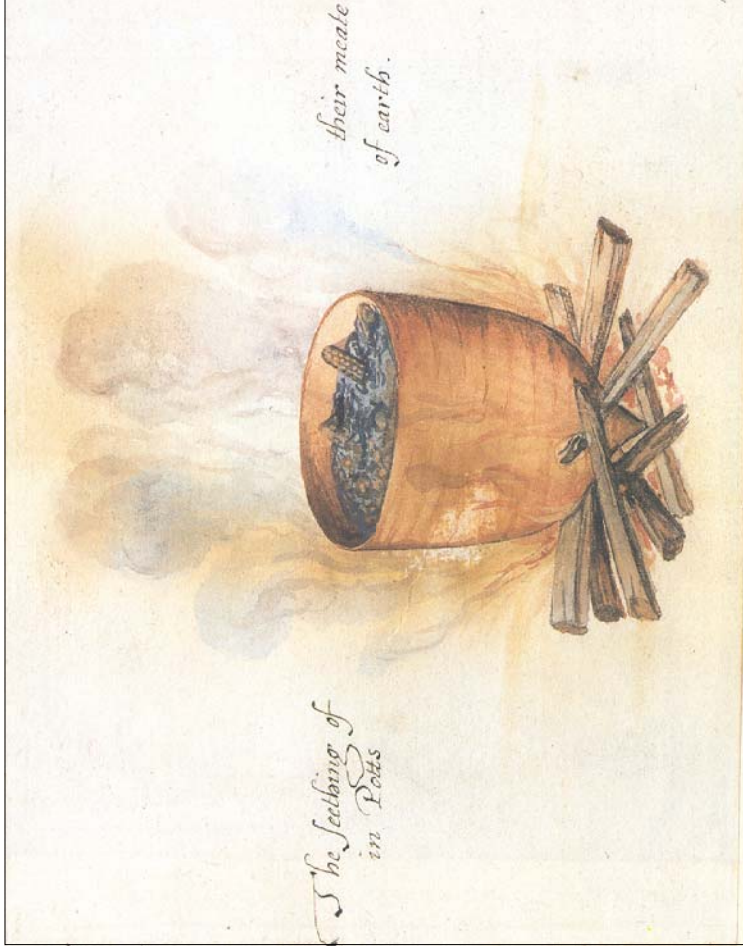


PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585

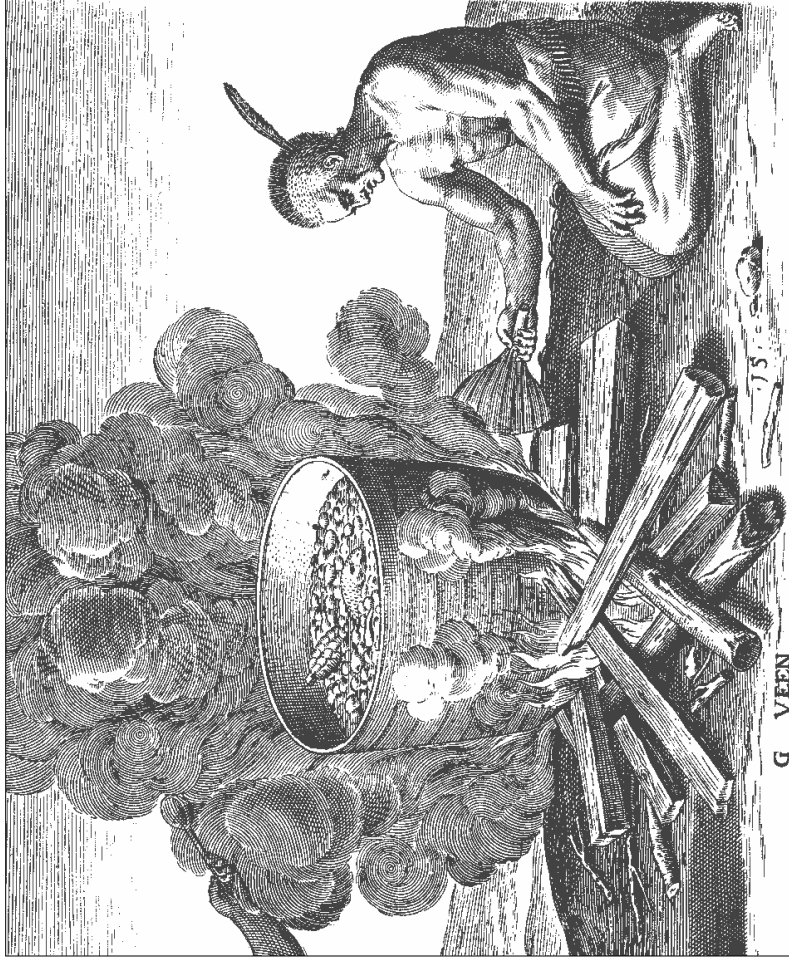


SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

# The seething of their meate in Potts of earth



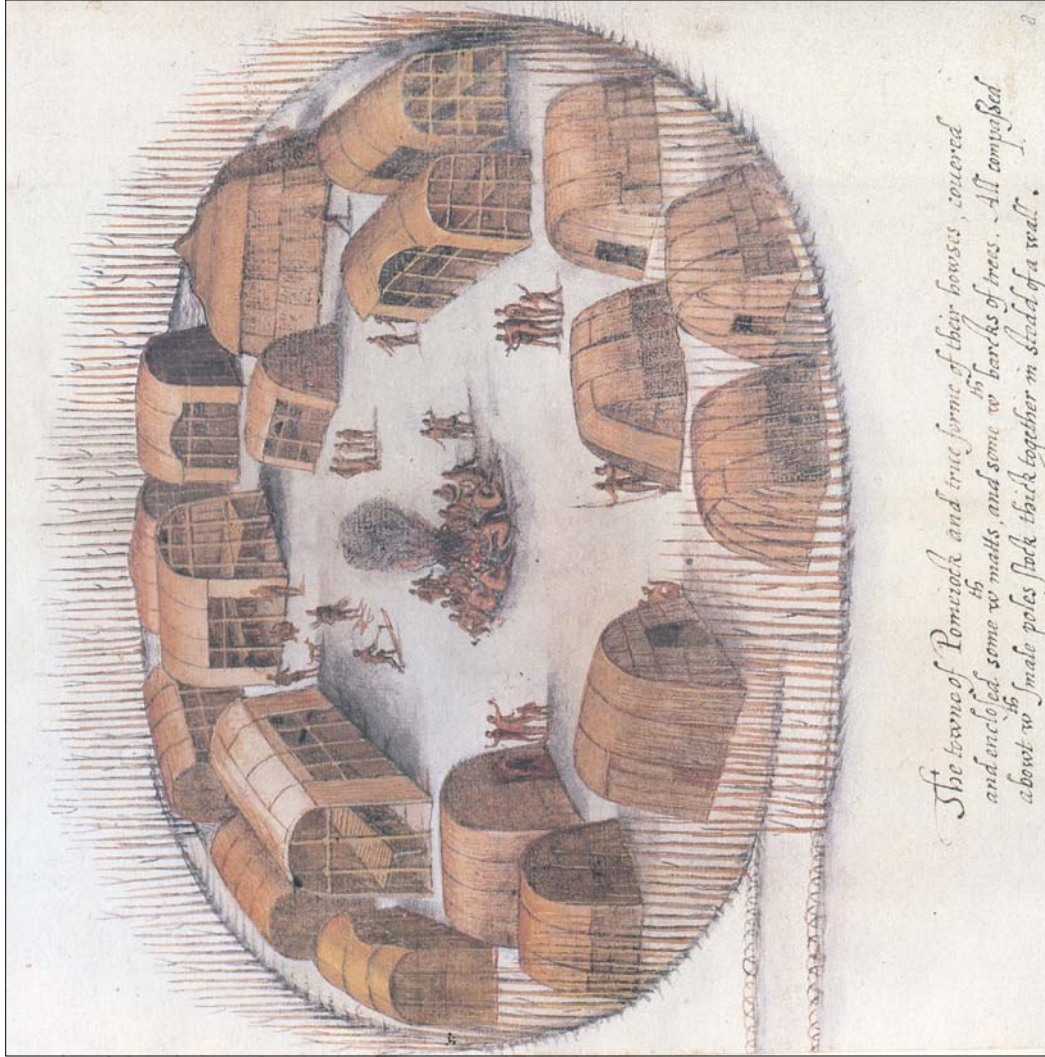
PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



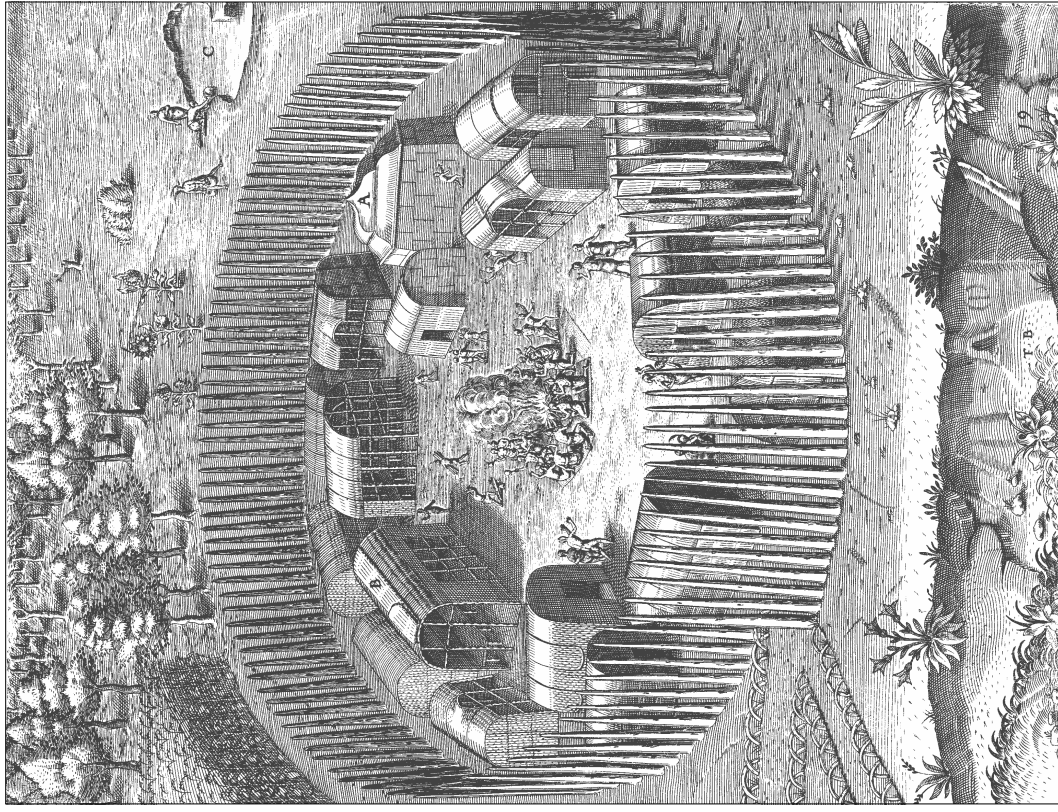
SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590



# The towne of Pomeiock . . .



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

## NATIVE AMERICAN FACT STRIPS

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your group to carefully read each fact listed below, then cut out each “fact strip” along the dotted line and match it to the primary and secondary source drawings it describes.

Indian towns often had a central fire pit that was used for ceremonies and as a gathering place.

Indian women did most of the cooking. They often kept the fire hot by stoking the coals with fans made from wild turkey wings.

Indian men did much of their fishing from dugout canoes that were made from bald cypress trees. The largest dugouts were four feet deep, fifty feet long and capable of holding up to forty men!

Homes were built by the women and children of the tribe. Most houses were 50’ or 60’ long and had one large room. Usually six to 20 people lived inside a single home.

Native people ate from a community pot that was placed on the outside fire pit. There were no standard meal times and people ate whenever they were hungry.

Seafood products that were harvested by Indians of the Chesapeake region included fish, crabs, and turtles.

Indian homes were made from small, green trees called saplings. The saplings were bent over and tied together to form a framework, which was covered with bark or mats woven from straw and grass.

Indians of the Chesapeake region caught fish by spearing them in the shallows.

Houses had high rounded ceilings. This allowed room for storing food and other items over people's heads.

Cooking pots were made by the women from clay, dug from a creek bank. Crushed oyster shells were added to the clay to give it strength.

Indian men caught fish at night by lighting a fire in the middle of their dugout canoes. When the fish were attracted to the light, they were netted or speared.

Tribes fortified their village by digging a circular ditch around it, into which they drove round pilings close together to make a wall. These defensive walls were called palisades.

Clever traps called weirs were used to catch fish. Weirs were made of sticks that formed a long wall in the water. When the fish tried to swim around the wall, they were led into a funnel that emptied into a large box, from which they could not escape.

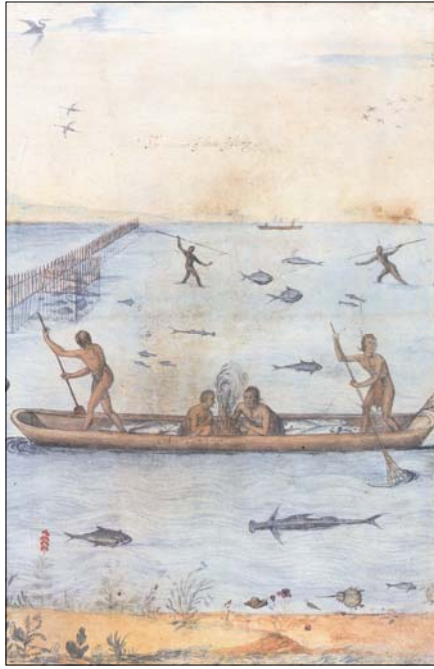
Pots were made with a cone shaped pointed bottom and left to dry for one or two days. They were then placed in a fire and covered with wood and sticks. This process made the pots very durable.

Fish nets were made from deer sinew, tree bark and a type of grass called pemmenaw. Indian women made the nets.

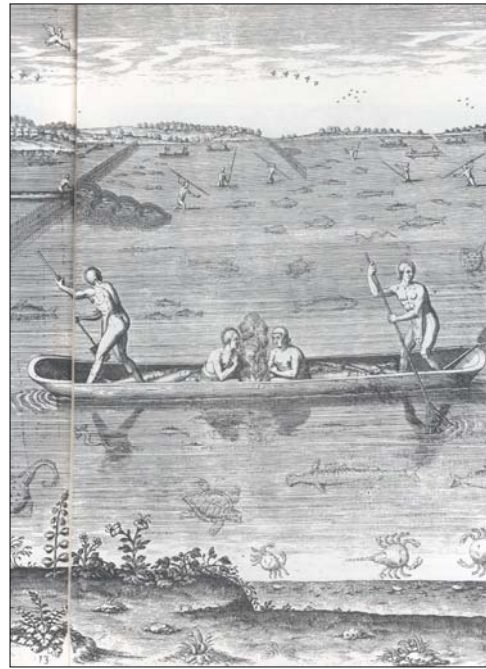
Corn, beans, squash, wild greens, meat and fish were cooked in pots. The pots were replenished throughout the day so there was always something to eat.

# NATIVE AMERICAN FACT STRIPS

## ANSWER KEY



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

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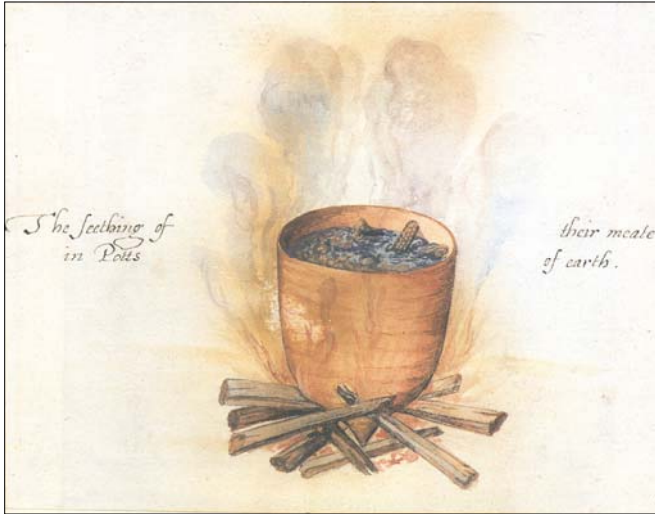
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Indian women did most of the cooking. They often kept the fire hot by stoking the coals with fans made from wild turkey wings.

Native people ate from a community pot that was placed on the outside fire pit. There were no standard meal times and people ate whenever they were hungry.

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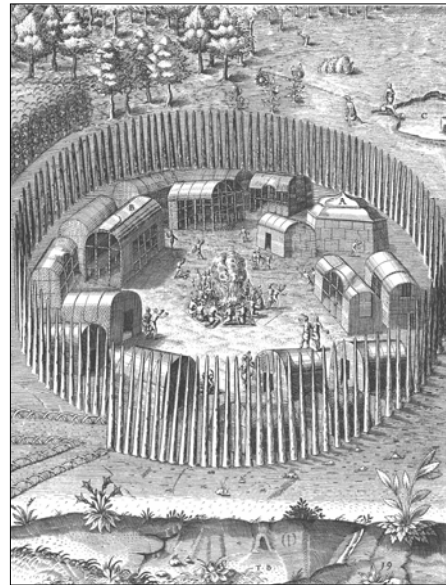
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## NATIVE AMERICAN FACT STRIPS

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PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving

Indian towns often had a central fire pit that was used for ceremonies and as a gathering place.

Homes were built by the women and children of the tribe. Most houses were 50' or 60' long and had one large room. Usually six to 20 people lived inside a single home.

Indian homes were made from small, green trees called saplings. The saplings were bent over and tied together to form a framework, which was covered with bark or mats woven from straw and grass.

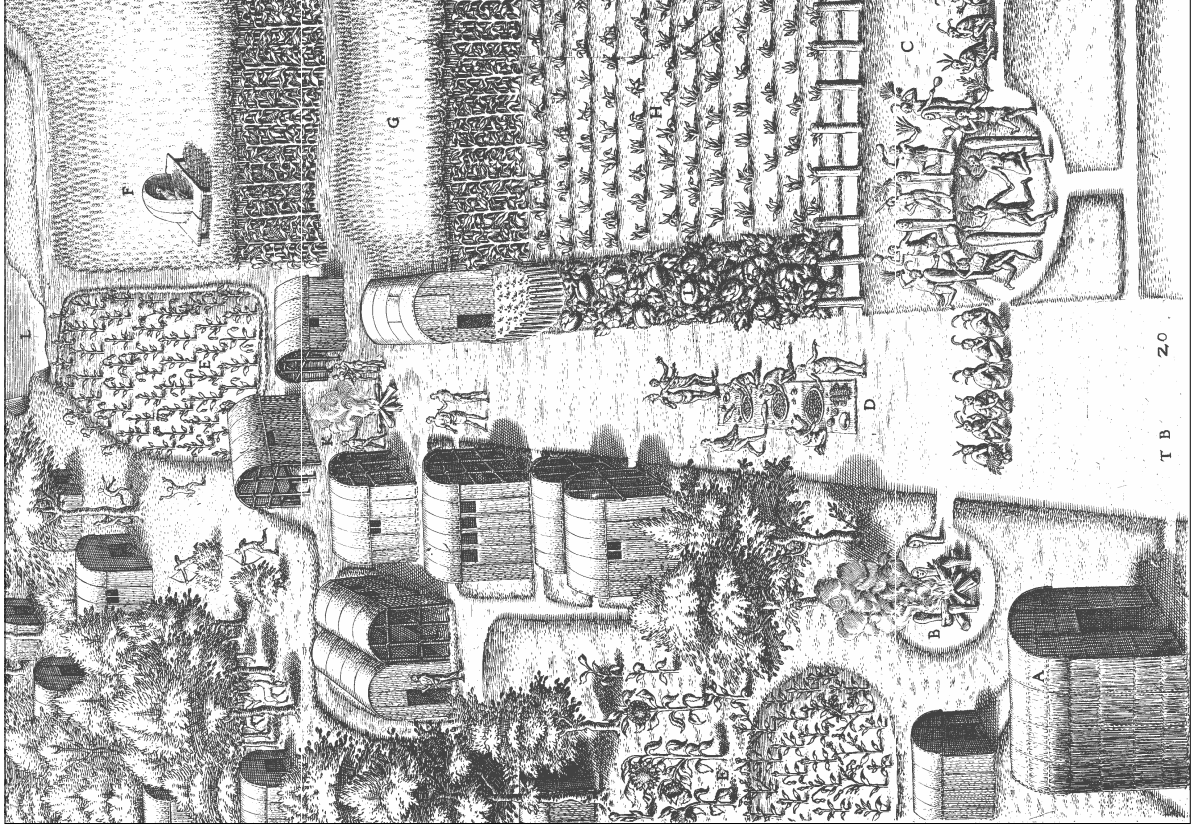
Houses had high rounded ceilings. This allowed room for storing food and other items over people's heads.

Tribes fortified their village by digging a circular ditch around it, into which they drove round pilings close together to make a wall. These defensive walls were called palisades.

# Secoton



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

# USING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

## *Secoton*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Look carefully at the two images on the previous page, then answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe what is happening in the two images. What do the Indians' homes look like, and how are they constructed? Do they all look exactly the same? What are the natives doing in the middle of the village? What is going on in the lower right hand corner? How many homes are there? How are the people dressed? What is going on in the fields around the village?

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
2. How are the two images similar?

- 
- 
3. How are the two images different?
- 
-



# USING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

## *Secoton - Answer Key*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Look carefully at the two images on the previous page, then answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe what is happening in the two images. What do the Indians' homes look like, and how are they constructed? What are the natives doing in the middle of the village? What is going on in the lower right hand corner? How many homes are there? How are the people dressed? What is going on in the fields around the village?

The images depict an Indian village with 13 homes. The homes have rounded roofs and are covered with mats. The Indians in the middle of the main "road" are sitting around baskets of food. The men in the lower right hand corner are dancing around a ring of posts. On the right hand side there are three corn fields, each in a different stage of growth. In the upper left hand corner Indians are standing in the woods with bows.

2. How are the two images similar?

Both images depict similar aspects of Indian culture: village structure, agricultural practices, architecture, clothing styles, and religious ceremonies.

3. How are the two images different?

The engraving is drawn from a closer perspective and includes more detail. Specifically, there are more trees and crops pictured, and more Indians have been added to the scenes.

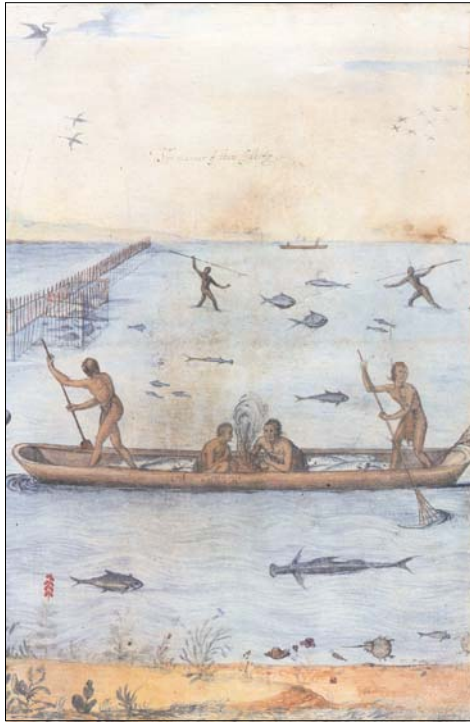


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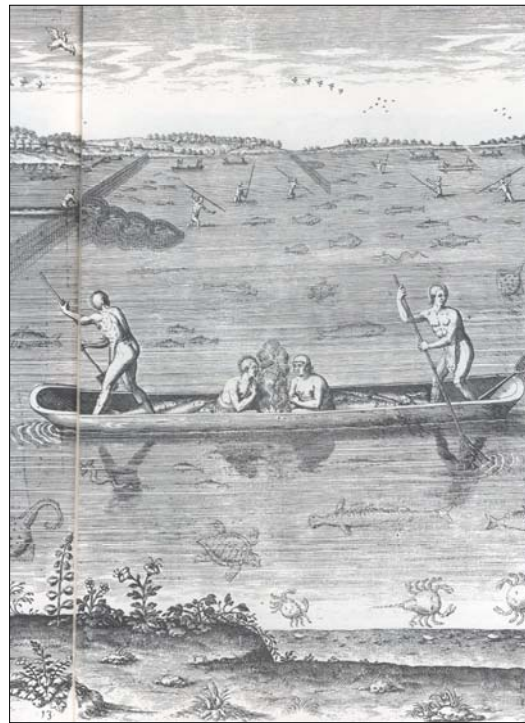
TEACHER BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION  
FOR  
JOHN WHITE'S PAINTINGS  
&  
THEODOR DE BRY'S ENGRAVINGS

# The manner of their fishing

## Background Information



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

### PRIMARY SOURCE: John White's watercolor (circa 1585)

*A wide stretch of water is shown as a channel between two shorelines, one in the immediate foreground, one in the distance. On the foreground grasses and flowering plants can be seen. Close to the edge of the sand in the water there is a hammerhead shark and a large fish. A dugout canoe is in the center of the drawing. A Native American is standing at the bow holding a long shovel-bladed paddle to starboard and another Native American is standing at the stern holding a long handle with a fan-shaped end. In the middle of the canoe are two Native Americans crouching over a small fire surrounded by piles of fish. To the left there is a fish trap made from sticks called a weir. Two Native Americans are about to throw long fishing spears. Near them are large and small fish. In the distance, near the far shore, is another canoe with two Native Americans in it.*

### SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving (circa 1590)

*The canoe and the Native Americans are as in the painting. The sea life in the water vary. There are many more fish beyond the canoe. In the background are more canoes and Native Americans spearing fish and there is a different type of weir. There are two other weirs in the background, in the center and on the right.*

# *The seething of their meate in potts of earth*

## Background Information



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

**PRIMARY SOURCE:** John White's watercolor (circa 1585)

*A large cylindrical earthenware pot with a pointed bottom is resting on a small fire. It contains liquid in which corn, beans and fish are cooking.*

**SECONDARY SOURCE:** Theodor de Bry engraving (circa 1590)

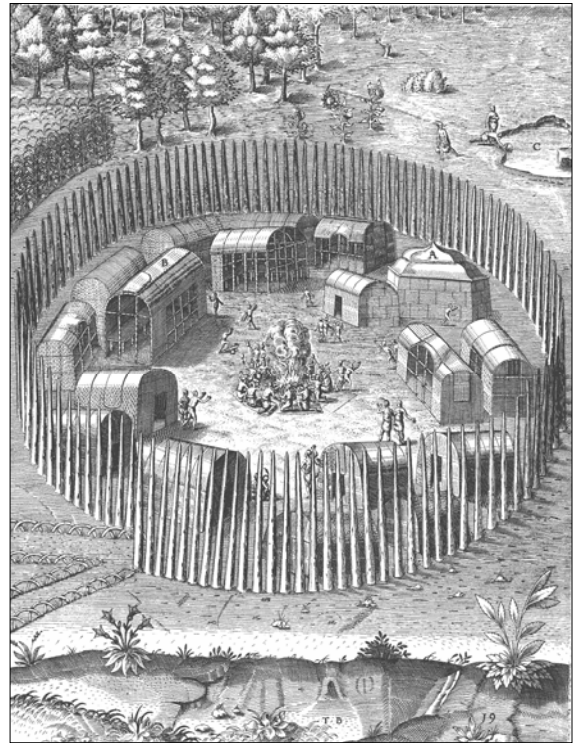
*The engraving shows a Native American kneeling on the right side of the fire, fanning the flames. The earthenware pot is similar to the primary source. The amount of smoke and the flames are more obvious and accentuated. The engraving also adds topographical features, including a horizon, in the background.*

# *The towne of Pomeiock . . .*

## Background Information



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving

### PRIMARY SOURCE: John White's watercolor (circa 1585)

*This painting shows a bird's-eye view of an Indian village enclosed by a circular palisade of irregular poles. The village consists of eighteen buildings, many with open ends or sides. The houses have arched roofs. They are grouped irregularly about a large open space in the center where a fire is burning and Native Americans are sitting with rattles in their hands. Other groups of Native Americans are standing or walking near the houses, several of them making signs with their hands towards the fire. Behind the fire one man is splitting timber with an axe, another is carrying wood on his back, and yet another carries a bow.*

### SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving (circa 1590)

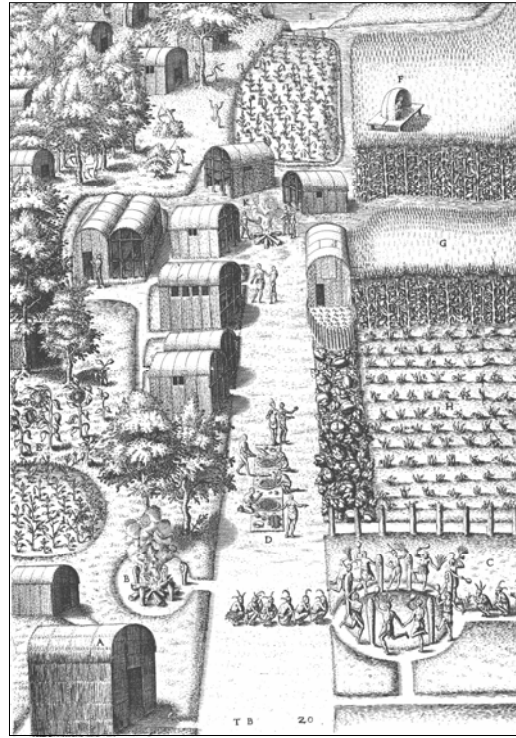
*There are few variations in the village itself. The palisade poles are larger, more regular, and taller. There are fewer Native Americans in the engraving. Many details have been added to the background: trees, part of a cornfield on the left, sunflowers, and a small pond on the right with two Native Americans getting drinking water. Flowering plants and grasses have been added in the foreground. The entrance to the village has two paths leading to the main entrance, while White's painting shows a single trail leading to the opening of the palisade.*

# Secoton

## Background Information



PRIMARY SOURCE: John White painting, 1585



SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving, 1590

### PRIMARY SOURCE: John White's watercolor (circa 1585)

*This painting shows a bird's-eye view of an Indian village containing 13 houses. There is a path in the center of the village. On the left side of the path is a group of houses, and at the top of the path two Indians are standing next to a fire. Down from the path are mats spread out on which three large round baskets filled with food and other small objects are placed. Three sitting people are eating and one person with a bow is standing. To the right of the path are three cornfields, each at a different stage of growth. The top field has a small hut, open at one side, which is used by Indians to keep animals and birds from eating plants. There are trees on the left side of the drawing. Among the trees are two houses with three people nearby, two of which are carrying bows. At the bottom right there is a ceremonial area with seven carved posts. Around the posts are nine Indians with feathers in their hair, waving rattles, and dancing. Just above the word "Secoton" are six Indians crouched in a sitting position. To the left of the path there are four posts with a fire burning in the center; a fifth post is located to the right of the circle near the path.*

### SECONDARY SOURCE: Theodor de Bry engraving (circa 1590)

*De Bry's engraving is drawn from a closer perspective and contains more details. More Indians are near the mat in the center of the path, and additional items are laying on the mats next to the baskets of food. On the left side of the engraving there is a circular field of tobacco and large sunflowers. The lowest field of corn has a border of pumpkins along the path. In the upper portion of the engraving a field of tobacco has been added. There are only six posts around the dance circle and there are Indians in sitting positions on both sides of it. In the upper left hand corner two Indian men have their bows drawn on deer that are standing in the woods. Two other men are running towards the fields to scare away birds and vermin that eat their crops.*