



Shoreline

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In Their Own Words: 18th Century Native American Language

By Virginia R. Busby, U.S. Army Environmental Command

While John Smith failed to navigate the Choptank River and encounter the Native American people residing along its banks during his 1608 explorations of the Eastern Shore, 180 years later another prominent Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, succeeded in procuring an amazing fragment of their language through his nation-wide request for Anglo-American residents to visit Native American settlements in their areas to record a selection of Indian vocabulary according to his standardized word list.

In 1792, William Vans Murray visited *Ama namp quum* (Locust Neck Indian Town) near Cambridge, MD, to elicit vocabulary words. Locust Neck was the last vestige of the formerly 9,000-acre Choptank Indian Reservation, where around only nine people still lived. At Locust Neck, Murray collected over 250 words from Mrs. Mulberry, the wife of the deceased chief. This language fragment represents

the Algonquian language as spoken by all Eastern Shore native peoples including the Nanticoke Indians, close relatives of the Choptank Indians.

Many types of evidence can be used to explore the lives of people in the past. Archaeology, oral history, historic documentary research, and linguistic information all tell part of the story. Language can provide clues into the material existence of people—what they ate, the tools they used, what their landscape looked like. Language can also provide clues into how people related to each other, to the world and to indicate something about their values. Below are some words from the vocabulary that include terms for places, colors, seasons, family, social activities, plants and animals.

Note: Dashes are used to indicate syllable breaks; whereas, exclamation points are used to indicate forceful enunciation of the syllable.

PLACES

Ama namp quumLocust Neck Indian Town
Matt appenen...Nanticoke Indian Town (presumably Chicone)

COLORS

waap-pau-uwhite
oaskag-ublack
puh-squai-loaublue
psquai-ured
wee-sa-way-uyellow
ah!skaah-tuck-qui-agreen

SEASONS

pooponuwinter
see-qui-ospring
mashaquapau-usummer
wee-saw-panuautumn

FAMILY TERMS

nicquemy mother
nowozemy father
auwauntetchild
hunt tawndaughter

nucks-quahmy son
nimpzolder sister
neighsumyounger sister
ne-ee-matmy brother
nee-eeswah! wife or "my woman"
nups-soh!soh!my husband
acquahiquewoman
wohackiman
pukquahgirl
wahocki-a-wauntitboy

SOCIALLY-RELATED WORDS

ne kitt-o-wasspeak
nuck-und-ohsing
e-kitt-cofalsehood
ko-o-lamtruth
cuip-shee-in quofoolish
wee-eegood
mattittbad
ne man-nin-nowto hate
n!wummoito love
lapp!-poi o-weesreligion
ne quee quaaawklife
ungue-lackdeath

PLANTS

petuicquetree
pamp tuck-kioskwoods
kla-one-nahqlocust tree
whie-in-quaquemulberry tree
wee-seek-e-mintzoak tree
mee-eentsberries
munck-qui-suckblackberry
cawl-na-woopcorn
oh-pucquetobacco
pah!scho-hook-quicksnakeroot

ANIMALS

ah!shao-pawn-topeagle
anasupraccoon
ash quokesnake
attquedeer
i-e-apebuck
kaw-sheh!oysters
nataquebeaver
pah! quunturkey
tah!quahcrab
wammassfish
weak-keh!muskrat

"We're History... Without You"

Mapping Vienna Using GIS

On June 2, the *Sultana*, a 30-foot replica of the shallop used by Captain John Smith in 1608 to explore the Chesapeake Bay, stopped off at Vienna, MD, as part of its voyage celebrating the 400th anniversary of Jamestown. This was a fitting tribute for the town as it winds down its own 300th anniversary celebration. In preparation for these events, the town of Vienna inquired the services of Dr. Michael S. Scott, geography professor at Salisbury University, to conduct a study on the town in relation to certain historical events. In the past, Scott worked with the Nabb Research Center on its "American Origins" project. A component of that project involved the digitalization of the 1877 Atlas and overlaying it onto a present-day map with a searchable database. This would be the type of work used on the Vienna project as well.

In conjunction with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) at Salisbury University, Scott began work on the project in the summer of 2004. Titled "A Digital Historical Geography of Vienna, Maryland: The Digitalization of John Smith's 1612 Map of the Chesapeake Bay and Thomas Ennals' 1706 of 'Vienna Towne,'" the project had a two-fold purpose. First, determine the approximate



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location of the town on the Smith map in proximity to features indicated on the map. Second, compare the current layout of the town with the original layout contained in the Ennals' plat. Both maps had been converted from a paper format into a digital format. Using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technology, the conversion will allow these maps to overlay onto other data layers, such as a map containing present-day features like roads and structures.

In each case, both maps presented problems for the researchers. The John Smith map included measurement errors, changes in shoreline and exaggeration in river courses while the Thomas Ennals' map lacked sufficient landmarks. The final report and conclusions, along with maps created by the project, can be found at www.esrgc.org/smith.htm. To learn more about ESRGC and other local projects by the organization, visit www.esrgc.org ☺

*Shallop under full-sail off Vienna
June 2, 2007. (photo by Pat Taylor)*