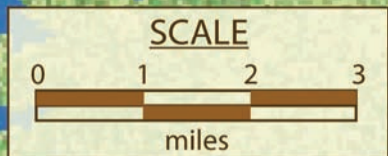


Nanticoke River

History, Heritage and Culture



Map Legend

█ Land █ Water
■ Indian Commoner village
● Indian Chief village
▲ Indian Trade location

Capt. John Smith's Route

— Day 1
— Day 2
✕ End of exploration

CHICONE RESERVATION

The Chicone reservation of 1698 was located on the mainstem of the Nanticoke. This reservation, along with several others established on the Lower Eastern Shore, provided some protection to traditional Native American culture over the next 50 years. By the end of the 18th century, most Nanticoke, moved away from the reservation seeking land to the north and west, away from encroaching settlers.

Broad Creek Nanticoke Reservation 1711 - 1768

BROAD CREEK NANTICOKE RESERVATION

As the number of English settlers along the Nanticoke River grew in the century following John Smith's voyage, the Nanticoke people were pushed east and north into less accessible areas. While the Chicone reservation of 1698 was located on the main stem of the river, the 1711 Broad Creek reservation was located on a tributary near present-day Laurel, Delaware. When the Nanticoke reservations were terminated by the Maryland provincial government in 1768, some of the remaining Nanticoke families joined with other Indian peoples along the Indian River in Delaware, where they remain today.

PUCKAMEE INDIAN RESERVATION, MD

The area along the east side of the Nanticoke from the mouth of Barren Creek up to Riverton once marked the part of Wicomico County that was set aside by the Colonial Maryland Assembly as the Reservation for the Puckamee Indians -- part of the Nanticoke Tribe. This ended in 1698 as more white settlers moved into this upper part of the Nanticoke River watershed.

Capt. John Smith's Explorations of the Nanticoke River

Captain John Smith conducted two major voyages around the Chesapeake Bay during the summer of 1608, both starting from Jamestown, Virginia. On his first voyage he traveled north along the eastern shore, exploring the mouth of the Pocomoke River and then traveling some distance up the Nanticoke River. He continued as far north as present-day Baltimore, before heading south along the western shore. On his second voyage, Smith went straight up the Bay to the mouth of the Susquehanna, and present-day Havre de Grace, exploring the Patuxent and Rappahannock Rivers on his return trip south.



The map that Smith made of the Chesapeake in 1612, resulting from his explorations, was the first accurate depiction of the Chesapeake and served as the definitive map of the region for nearly a century. The trail blazed by Smith and his men opened the Chesapeake to thousands of European settlers, altering forever the face of the Bay and profoundly changing the lives of those around it.

John Smith wrote about five towns he encountered along the Kuskarawaok (Nanticoke) with approximately 850 inhabitants. This estimate is considered conservative and did not include the Monie and Wicomico chiefdoms which may have been part of the paramount Nanticoke chiefdom.

Day One:

- Landing somewhere between present day Bivalve and Tyaskin, Smith had a hostile interaction with the Native Americans.
- Smith explored the environs of Fishing Bay and southern reaches around Elliott's Island but did not come ashore.
- He encountered the village of Nause on the lower western shore of the Nanticoke. This area was used as a summer fishing village for the Native Americans.

Day Two:

- After establishing peaceful trade, Smith explored the village of Nantaquack which was located just south of the modern town of Vienna in Dorchester County. This was a commoner's village, no chiefs lived there until much later.
- Smith explored Kuskarawaok which was located north of the village of Nantaquack. This was the chief's town in 1608 and the river name is derived from here.

