

The Great Shellfish Bay

Vocabulary

Algonkian (al-GON-kee-in): The Algonkian people are a language and cultural group that included Native American tribes across much of North America in the 1600s. Most tribes around the Chesapeake Bay were Algonkian-speaking.

Buckskin: Buckskin is a tanned deer hide that can be used to make clothing or an impromptu bag.

Cattail: Cattail is a tall green plant that grows at the edges of ponds, lakes, and marshes. It has long, flat leaves and a brown fuzzy spike on top of a stiff stem. Cattail leaves were woven into mats to use for a variety of purposes around the Algonkian home, like walls, sleeping mats, and shade.

Erosion: Erosion is the process in which land is worn away by natural forces such as wind, water, or storms.

Estuary: An estuary is an area where the fresh water of a river interacts with the tidal salt waters of the ocean. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States.

Furbearer: A furbearer is an animal hunted primarily for their fur. Furbearers from the Chesapeake region include otter, beaver, mink, fox, and raccoon.

Indigenous: Indigenous people are the very first people to live in a place. In these maps and interactives, the focus is on the Indigenous people of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay region.

Mantle: A mantle is a long, loose cloak draped over the shoulders for warmth and protection from the elements. Mantles would have been worn by Algonkian men and women alike.

Marsh: A marsh is low-lying land, full of grasses and small shrubs, that is flooded from time to time. Marshes are important ecosystems for many kinds of plants and animals.

Osprey: An osprey is a large bird commonly called a fish hawk. It eats fish almost exclusively, swooping down to catch them with its talons (claws).

Pinnace: A pinnace is a lighter-weight sailing ship, used especially to travel from larger ships to the shore.

Predator: A predator is an animal that survives by capturing and eating other animals.

Susquehannock: The Susquehannocks are an Indigenous tribe located in Central Maryland and the upper Eastern Shore. The Susquehannocks belong to the Iroquoian language group, making communication with Algonkian-speaking tribes difficult.

Tayac (TIE-ack): The tayac is the most powerful chief in the area; the chief of all village and clan chiefs.

Tributary: A tributary is a body of water (usually a stream or smaller river) that feeds into another body of water. Tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay include the Potomac and Patuxent rivers, among others.

Wampum: Wampum is a string of tube- or barrel-shaped shell beads created by the Indigenous people of the East Coast and Great Lakes regions of North America. It was used as a trade item, given as a sign of respect, carried as a symbol that a messenger had a message of great importance. It was also used as a storytelling device. The most common colors were purple (from the quahog clam) and white (from the knobbled whelk). Messages of peace would always be white, while messages of war or deep emotion were often purple.

Watershed: A watershed is an area of land where all surface and groundwater drain into the same body of water.

Werowance (male), **Weowancesqua** (female): A werowance or weowancesqua is the chief of a village or clan.

Yaocomico (ya-KOM-i-CO): The Yaocomico were the Indigenous subtribe related to the Piscataway who first welcomed the English colonists to the area. They resided on the north bank of the Potomac River and were absorbed by the Piscataway in the 17th century.