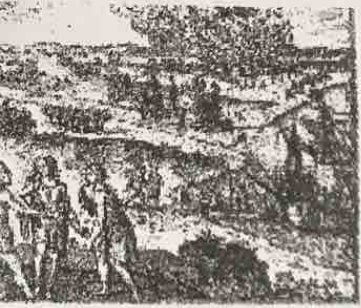
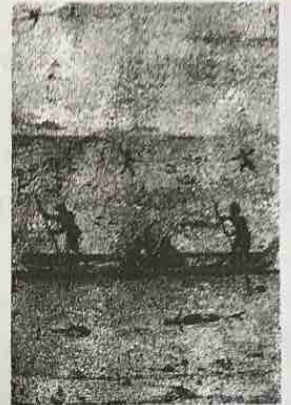


## John Smith's Maryland

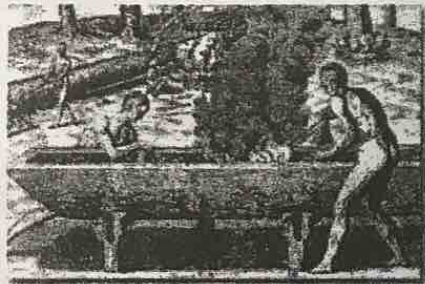


When John Smith explored the Chesapeake Bay in 1607, he did not arrive to an empty land. He found many Native American tribes that depended upon the bay's land and water. These people survived by hunting and eating wild animals such as bear, deer, beaver, otters, bobcat, elk, and raccoon. Ducks, geese, and swans were also so numerous that the early Americans would eat these for food too.

The Native Americans also fished the rivers for food. They caught and ate crabs, clams, shad, herring, terrapins, striped bass and other aquatic life. Sturgeon, a giant fish that lives in the bay was known to be up to 14 feet long and weigh over 800 pounds. There were so many of these fish that the Native Americans would catch them with their bare hands. Oyster reefs were known to be so tall that they sometimes stuck out of the water. Ships sailing on the bay would sometimes crash into these reefs and sink, creating a dangerous situation for early sailors.



The marshes were lush and full of wild rice and duck potato. These plants were used for food by the native people. From the land, the Native Americans gathered many acorns, blueberries, chestnuts, cherries, persimmons, mulberries, wild grapes, and serviceberries for food. Cypress trees and Atlantic white cedar trees were used to make canoes to travel from place to place. Along with using the plants and animals, the native people also plowed the land and farmed squash, pumpkins, gourds, beans, and corn. New fields were cleared yearly by cutting down or by burning the large forests that covered the land. The soil lost important nutrients needed for crops to grow. Instead of replacing nutrients, the Native Americans cut down more trees to make new farm land.



An account from Smith's journals described the Native Americans found in the bay region this way: *"In March and April they lived much upon ... fish, turkeys, and squirrel. In May and June they plant their fields and live most on acorns, walnuts, and fish. But to alter their diet some disperse themselves in small companies and live upon fish, beast, crabs, oysters, land tortoises, strawberries, mulberries and such like. In June, July, and August, they feed upon roots, berries, fish and green corn."* (adapted from *The Changing Chesapeake*).