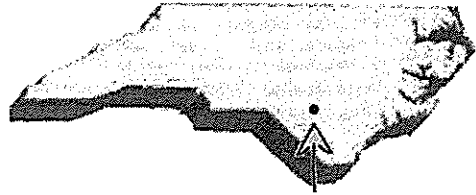


Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe

*The name Waccamaw means
"People of the Falling Star".
It is based on a legend surrounding the
creation of Lake Waccamaw.*



The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe is a state-recognized tribe in North Carolina, consisting of about 2,000 members. Tribe members reside in four main communities, such as St. James, Buckhead, Council, and Chadbourn. The Waccamaw-Siouan people live on the edge of the Green Swamp, about 37 miles from Wilmington and seven miles from Lake Waccamaw.

Council headquarters, located on tribal land in Buckhead, serves as the site of the tribe's community outreach and recreation center, as well as the annual powwow, which has been a celebrated tradition since 1970. The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe represents a little less than three percent of the total combined Native American population of North Carolina.

History

The name "Woccon" first appeared in 1701 by surveyor John Lawson, who had traveled into their territory. This was the first recorded history of the Woccon, who were the ancestors of the Waccamaw-Siouan people. The Woccon tribe lived on the lower Neuse River.

Lawson recorded 150 words of the Woccon tribe's language, which twentieth century linguists have used to identify the Woccon as Siouan speakers. They left their villages after being defeated in the Tuscarora War (1711-1712), splitting into two groups: one traveling north and one traveling south.



The remaining Waccamaw-Siouan Indians received ammunition from the Cheraw tribe, who tried to enlist their support to fight against the English colonists in the Yemassee War in 1715. They engaged in a brief war against the European colonists five years later in 1720. Accounts state that about 60 Waccamaw men, women, and children were killed or taken captive.

In 1755, raiders of the Cherokee and Natchez tribes destroyed members of both the Pee Dee and Waccamaw tribes within white settlements. Many of the leftover Waccamaw may have merged with the Catawba tribe after this incident.

Culture

The actual name "Waccamaw" did not become the tribe's official name until the 1940s.

Oral tradition, story telling, and acts of resistance recorded by non-Indians are our only evidence of how the Indians defined their identity. With the Waccamaw-Siouan, this evidence is difficult to uncover.

The actual name "Waccamaw" did not become the tribe's official name until the 1940s. It was adopted due to the area (they are settled near Lake Waccamaw) and came as a result of a conscious effort by the people in the group to get together and choose a name. Many of the people in the area had been Lumbee, Cherokee, or simply Siouan. Waccamaw-Siouan became the official recognized title of the tribe in that area.

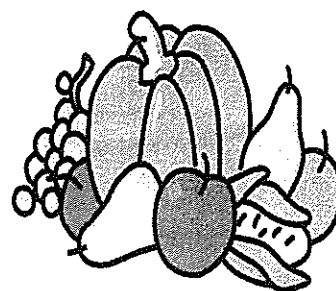
The fact that the official title of the Waccamaw-Siouan people was not created until the 1940s explains the lack of detailed accounts of their historical culture. There is not a lot of recorded information or cultural history on the lives of the traditional Waccamaw-Siouan people due to the fact that this tribal name was only recently reinstated.

The Waccamaw people of today are the remnants of a group that was overlooked or seemed to have disappeared.

Food

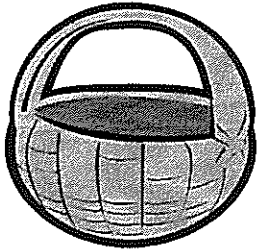
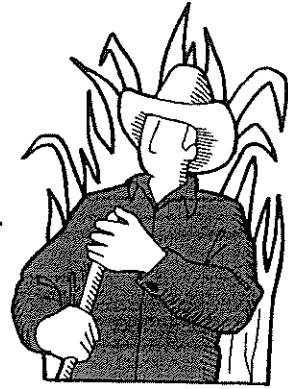


The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe was successful in both agriculture and hunting. They farmed from both private and communal gardens. Everyone worked in the communal garden, including the chiefs, who were seen planting and gathering crops along with their tribe.



Agricultural crops include corn, pumpkins, kidney beans, lima beans, squash, melons, gourds, and tobacco.

The Waccamaw-Siouan tribes were experts in taming animals, through generations of breeding. The animals lived closely with humans as a pet. Many of the animals were used for work animals. The tribes were able to domesticate wild deer! Also they manufactured cheese from a doe's milk. Additionally, the Waccamaw-Siouan kept a variety of chickens, ducks, geese, and other domestic fowl.



Art

Like most traditional Native American tribes, the Waccamaw wove baskets and made pottery. Tribes made their baskets from what was available locally. Because the Waccamaw tribe is located in the southeastern part of the United States, they often used bundled pine needles. The Waccamaw tribe also practiced wood carving.

Clothing

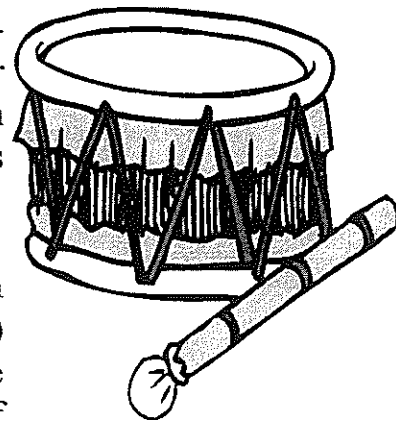
Similar to many of the tribes in the area, the men of the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe wore loin cloths made of deerskin. Women wore knee-length skirts, also of deerskin hides. When traveling and during the winter months, both men and women wore pants, leggings, and capes made of various animal hides.

Music

The powwow is a social dance that is a largely secular event, bringing together men, women, and children from Indian communities. It was not established in the Waccamaw-Siouan culture until 1970.

The powwow is an important event to the Waccamaw-Siouan people because it brings old tradition into their newly established culture. It has become a key Indian institution, reinvigorating new energy into its participants.

Powwows are full of life. The music consists of drum beats, **monosyllabic** (having only one syllable) chants, and occasional sharp cries and shouts. These exciting sounds are mixed with dressings of multicolored feathers and beads.





There are traders who advertise their wooden tomahawks, blue feathers, beaded bands, silver jewelry, leather belts, arrowheads, and an assortment of crafts.

Language

Little is known of their language, but their associations indicate that the Waccamaw people are Siouan. The language they speak is therefore a branch of Siouan.

Wars, Battles, Treaties

The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe participated in two major historical wars: the Tuscarora War from 1711 to 1712 and the Yemassee War in 1715.

There are no known treaties between the United States government and the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe, which made it difficult for them to gain official status with the state of North Carolina.

This formed an initial part of the Waccamaw-Siouan struggle for recognition.

Spirituality

A common trait of the southeastern woodlands culture (the area in which the Woccon and Waccamaw inhabited) is that they practice an **animistic religion** (animism is the belief that natural objects, natural phenomena, and the universe itself possess spirits).

They are shaman-based and practice “rites of passage” from adolescence to adulthood.

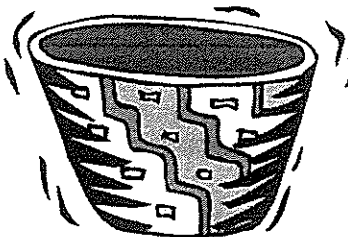
A religion that is shaman-based believes that there is a person who acts as a link between the natural and supernatural worlds.

They believe in using magic to cure illness, to foretell the future, and to control spiritual forces.



Contemporary Life

The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe is recognized as an official tribe in both the states of North and South Carolina. The tribe was never large and was much depleted and dispersed through contact with the European settlers and their diseases.



In 1971, the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe received recognition for its ancestry and became one of eight official tribes in North Carolina.

In 1972, the Waccamaw-Siouan Development Association (WSDA) was created to provide tribe members with an organization that focused solely on the economic development of the tribe. Tribal members are elected to the WSDA council for two years and assist the chief. The organization is located in Bolton, NC and continues to work on the promotion of education, culture, and economic development.

In 1976, the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe formed a government consisting of a tribal council of six members who serve for three years apiece and a tribal chief. Initially, the position of chief of the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe was handed down and the chief served for life. In 1986, Priscilla Freeman Jacobs became the first woman in the 20th century to hold the position of chief in her tribe following the death of her father, Chief Clifton Freeman.

Mrs. Jacobs served until 2005 when the tribal members decided to elect a chief for the first time. Mrs. Jacobs chose not to be on the ballot. The current chief, Roscoe Jacobs represents the tribe and works with the WSDA and the tribal board.



Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe Review

Answer the following:

1. What tribe did John Lawson document in 1701?
 - a. Waccam
 - b. Woccon
 - c. Wakkamaw
 - d. Wikkimaw
2. The ancestors of the Waccamaw Siouan participated in the _____ War from 1711 to 1712.
3. True or false: The name “Waccamaw” did not become the tribe’s official name until the 1940s.
4. How do Native Americans define their identity? What is the problem with this method of identification for the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe?
5. The Waccamaw-Siouan are associated with what language:
 - a. Siouan
 - b. Waccamaw
 - c. Lumbee
 - d. Cherokee
6. Define the following terms:
 - domestication: _____
 - animistic religion: _____
 - powwow: _____
7. The Waccamaw Siouan tribe gained official recognition in the state of North Carolina in the year _____.
8. Imagine you are an ancestor of the Waccamaw-Siouan tribe. Describe your lifestyle. What would you wear? How would food be provided for your family? What kinds of art would you create?