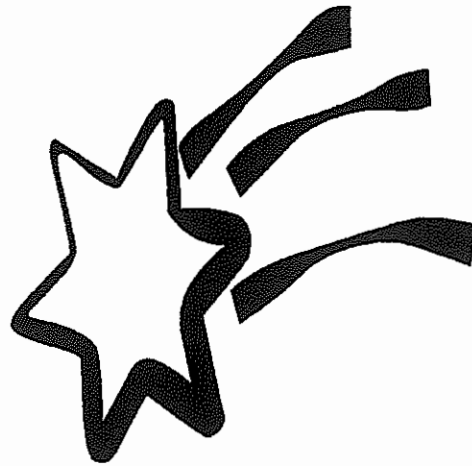


“People of the Falling Star”

The main Indian legend of the Waccamaw-Siouan people surrounds the creation of Lake Waccamaw in southeastern North Carolina.

The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe believes that countless years ago a massive meteor appeared in the sky toward the southwest. It flamed in the atmosphere to a brilliance of many suns. It sped towards earth, lighting up the sky.



As suddenly the meteor appeared, it struck the land, and burned itself deep into the ground. The meteor created an **impact crater** (a circular or oval indent on a surface that is caused by the crash of a mass, typically a meteor, into the surface)

The waters of the surrounding swamps and rivers flowed into the crater and cooled it, creating a lake in the midst of what was once land. That lake is known today as Lake Waccamaw.



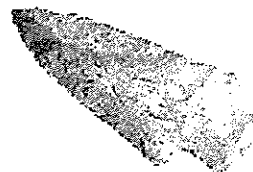
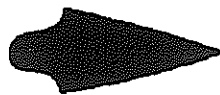
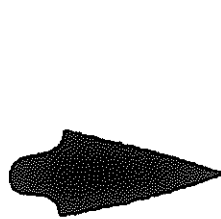
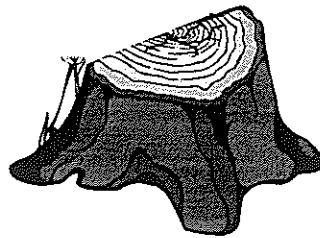
Lake Waccamaw is oval in shape and measures roughly 5 miles by 7 miles in size. It has an average depth of 7.5 feet and is the largest of the natural Carolina Bay Lakes. The lake is estimated to be about 250,000 years old.

Lake Waccamaw belongs to the Bladen Lake group, which, similar to the Waccamaw-Siouan legend, is believed to have been formed by **meteorites** (stony or metallic masses of matter that have fallen to the earth's surface from outer space). Some geologists, however, have a different theory.

Many support the idea that Lake Waccamaw is a basin left by a prehistoric peat fire. This theory is based on the evidence of charred tree stumps found in **dredging expeditions** (the process by which earth is removed, as from the bottom of a river, by means of a scoop, a series of buckets, a suction pipe, or similar methods).

Though the original language of the Waccamaw-Siouan is now lost, there is reason to believe, based on what is known of the language of the Catawba Indians, that their name is an English translation of part of the phrase that told of the ball of fire which knocked into the earth and created the lake.

The conclusion is that the Waccamaw Indians are the "People of the Falling Star."



People of the Falling Star Review

Answer the following:

1. True or false: This legend is about the creation of Lake Waccamaw.
2. The Waccamaw-Siouan tribe believes that a massive _____ appeared in the _____ and it _____ the land.
 - a. meteor, lake, painted
 - b. meteor, sky, struck
 - c. meteor, earth, struck
 - d. meteor, sky, painted
3. What is an impact crater? Define.
4. Describe Lake Waccamaw.
5. Do you think the Waccamaw-Siouan legend is a plausible theory for how Lake Waccamaw was created?
6. Some scientists believe that Lake Waccamaw was formed from a prehistoric peat fire. Do you think that this fire could have been caused by a meteor or meteorites? Explain.
7. What evidence supports the theory of a peat fire?
8. True or false: After the meteor struck the land, the waters of the surrounding swamps and rivers flowed into the crater, which cooled the area and created a lake.
9. Lake Waccamaw is located in _____.
 - a. southern, North Carolina
 - b. southeastern, North Carolina
 - c. northern, North Carolina
 - d. eastern, North Carolina
10. What is the English translation for the name Waccamaw-Siouan?