

Pamlico Indians ^[1]

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by Ruth Y. Wetmore, 2006



"Indians Fishing",
watercolor by John
White, created 1585-86.
Depicts a coastal
Algonquian Tribe.
Image courtesy of the
Trustees of the London
Museum.

^[2]The Pamlico Indians lived south of the Pamlico River in present-day [Beaufort](#) ^[3] and [Pamlico](#) ^[4] Counties and were known as the Pomouik by members of the 1585-86 Raleigh expeditions. A smallpox epidemic in 1696 nearly destroyed the tribe. By 1709 [John Lawson](#) ^[5] found the survivors living in a single village with 15 "fighting men." Lawson recorded a small vocabulary from their language, which confirms their Algonquian affiliation.

During the [Tuscarora War](#) ^[6] (1711-13), the Pamlico were one of the smaller tribes that joined the Tuscarora faction. After the [Barnwell expedition](#) ^[7] against Tuscarora strongholds in 1712, the smaller tribes (Coree, Bay River, and Pamlico) continued to attack settlers along the [Neuse](#) ^[8] and Pamlico Rivers. In the treaty that ended the war, the Tuscarora agreed to destroy their former allies, including the Pamlicos, whom the colonists still considered dangerous. Any Pamlico Indians who survived were probably enslaved or incorporated into the Tuscarora tribe.

References:

Christian F. Feest, "North Carolina Algonquians," in Bruce Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15 (1978).

Hugh T. Lefler, ed., *A New Voyage to Carolina by John Lawson* (1967).

Image Credit:

"Indians Fishing", watercolor by John White, created 1585-86. Depicts a coastal Algonquian Tribe. Image courtesy of the Trustees of the London Museum, accessed through the National Park Service. Available from <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/jamesriver/colonization.HTM> ^[2] (accessed May 23, 2012).

Subjects:

[American Indians](#) ^[9]

Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Beaufort County](#) ^[11]

[Pamlico County](#) ^[12]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[13]

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[1] <https://ncpedia.org/pamlico-indians> [2] <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/jamesriver/colonization.HTM> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/beaufort> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/pamlico> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/lawson-john-0> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/node/147> [7] <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bath/tuscarora.htm> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/rivers/neuse> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/american-indian> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/wetmore-ruth-y> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-22> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-23> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->