

# Native Americans of the Southeast





Their world was full of natural resources.



# Southeast Native Americans



From the Chesapeake Bay,  
south to the  
Gulf of Mexico,  
and west to the  
Mississippi Valley,  
the southeast tribes  
lived well off the land.



The land was a mix of  
low mountains,  
dense forests,  
with a warm, wet climate  
and long summer seasons.  
This provided two corn  
crops each year!







The warm season  
was the time  
to plant  
and to harvest  
from April to October.





The cold season was time to gather nuts, hunt for deer, bear, and turkeys to store for the winter months.





Most farmers planted bean and corn seeds together on small hills. As the crops sprouted, beans helped replace the nutrients the corn took from the soil.

In almost all southeast communities, the most important holiday each year was the Green Corn ceremony. It celebrated the harvesting of the corn crop.

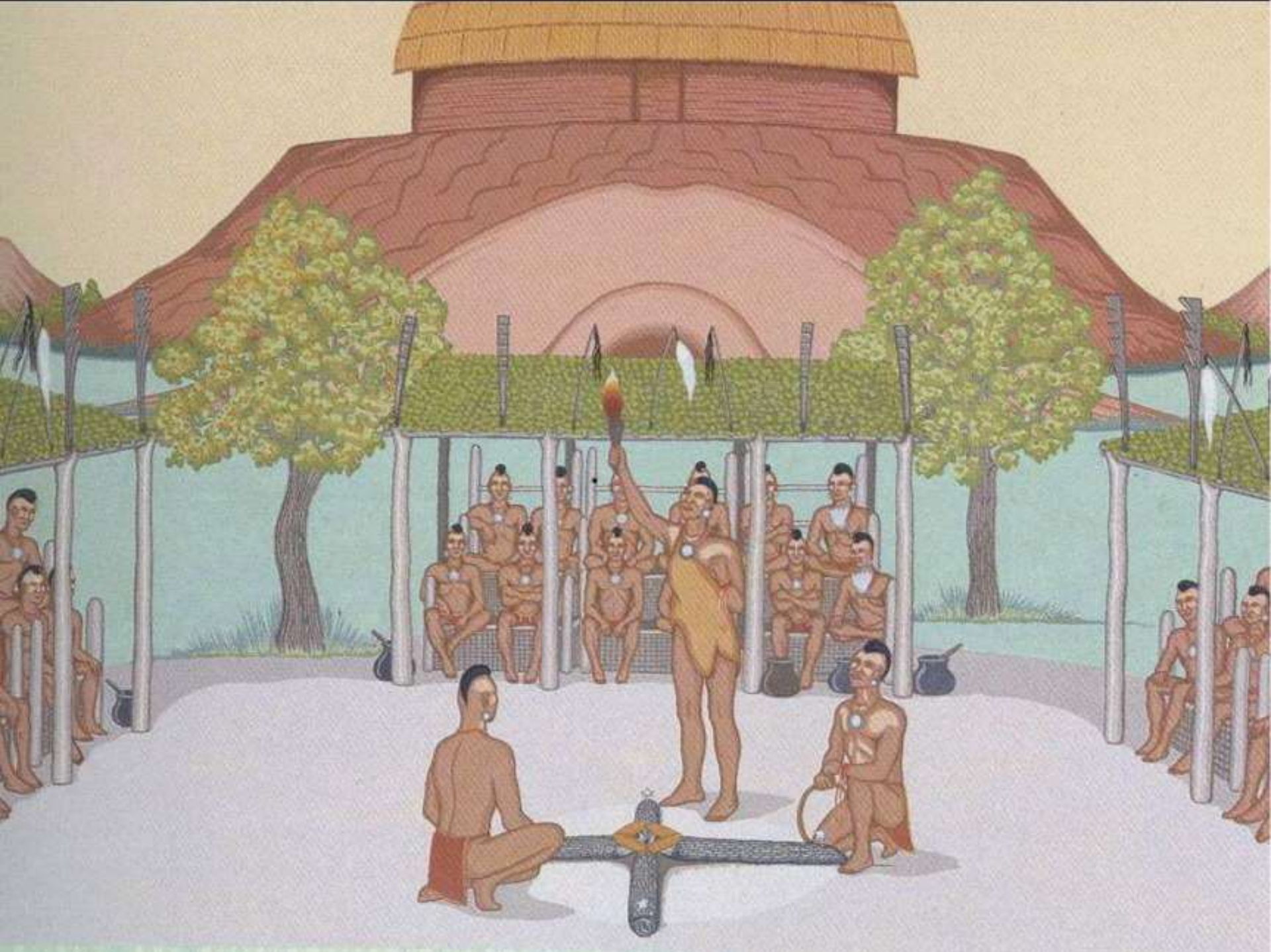


Preparations included  
cleaning the homes  
and putting out  
household fires.  
These fires would be  
re-lit by a new fire.

The new year  
had begun!



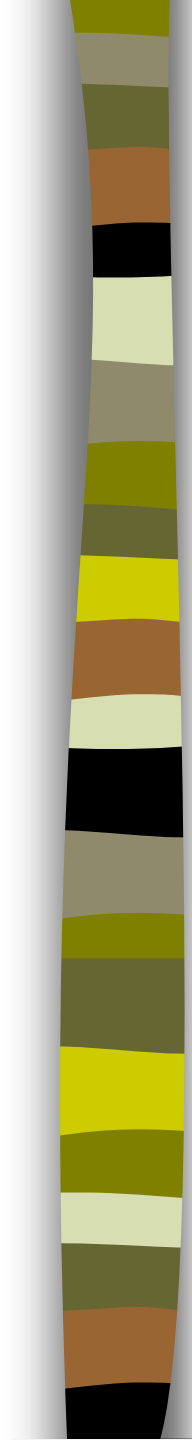






Each tribe,  
clan, and  
village often  
had to  
defend  
its territory  
against  
hostile  
neighbors.





The first face-to-face  
encounter with Europeans  
did not occur until the  
spring of 1513.

Ponce de Leon  
landed on the eastern coast  
of a peninsula the  
Spaniards called  
"the Flowery Land"  
(La Florida).

*Ponce  
de Leon*









Ponce de Leon was greeted by  
the native Calusa warriors.



Frightened by one another,  
fighting broke out.  
An arrow wounded  
Ponce de Leon. Later he  
would die from this injury.



Europeans  
abandoned  
their plans  
for  
colonizing  
Florida for  
a while...





But in 1539,  
a Spanish  
explorer called  
Hernando  
de Soto  
began a  
journey  
across the  
southeast.







UNITED STATES

Trinity

Mississippi

Gulf of Mexico

De Soto Expedition

Havana  
departed May 1539

Tampico  
arrived September 1543



DeSoto's goal was  
to discover wealth  
north of Florida.

With a huge army of  
200 horses and 600 men,  
he was a surprise to every  
tribe he encountered.





Across the Blue Ridge Mountains, he found himself in an area controlled by people who would later be known as the Cherokee.



They spoke an Iroquoian language similar to tribes of the northeast.



# Southeast Native Americans

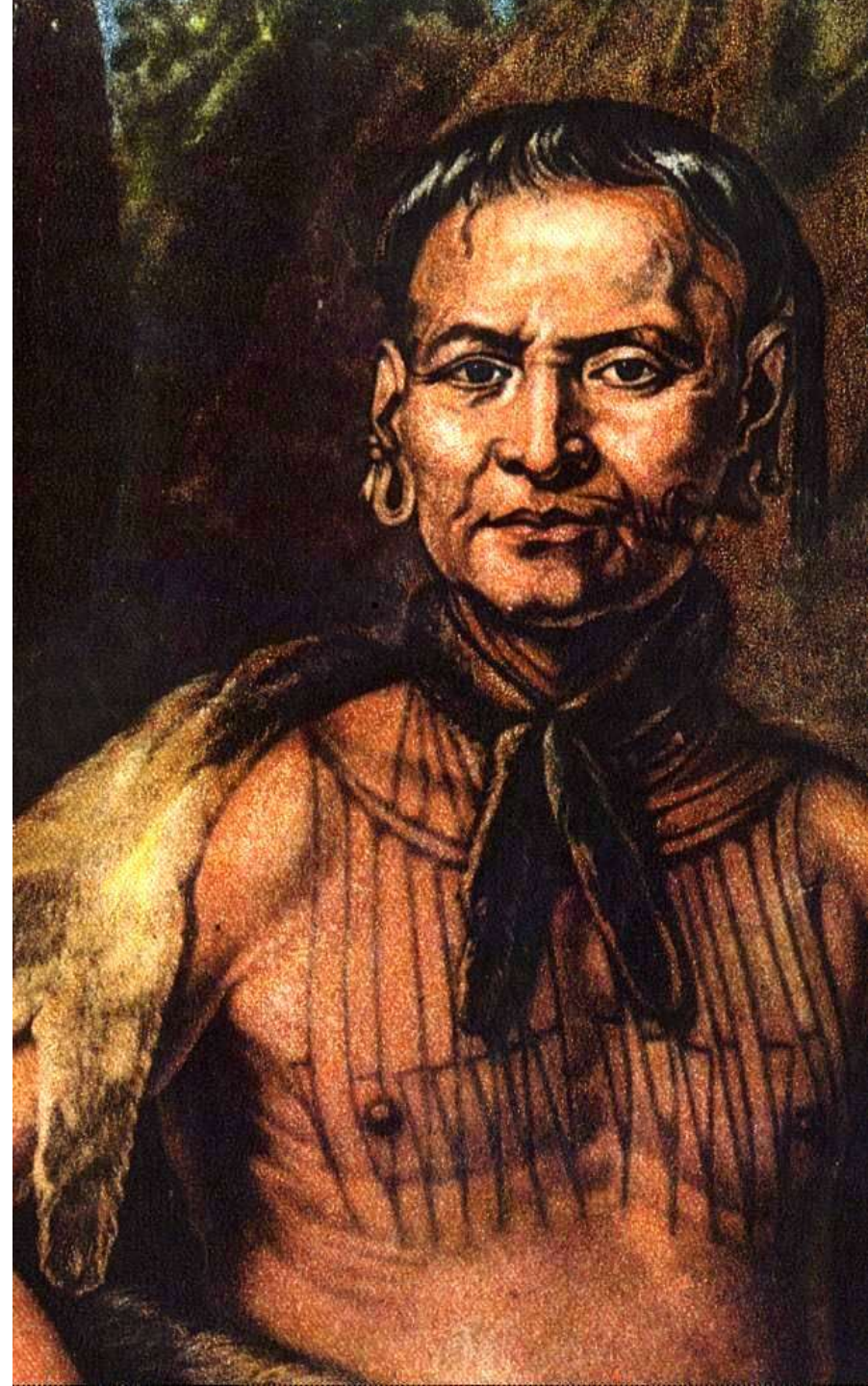




Pushing west,  
De Soto spent a month  
with the powerful  
Muskogean villages...



...which would  
later be known  
as the  
Creek Nation.









# Southeast Native Americans





Throughout many villages,  
he noticed unusual features-  
earth mounds that were used for  
burials and religious ceremonies.





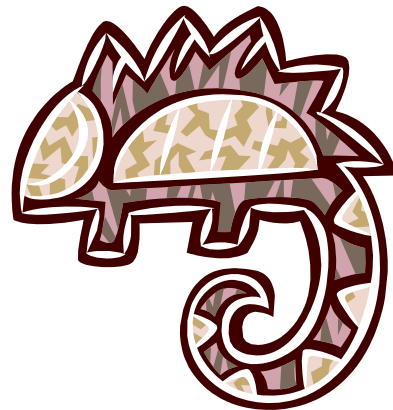




These ancient mound-building communities passed on their traditions. But their people actually died out by the late 1600s.



DeSoto never discovered  
the riches of gold or silver  
he sought...



Farther  
north,  
other tribes  
would soon  
experience  
encounters  
with  
Europeans.





English explorers landed at  
Roanoke Island in 1584.

But two attempts at  
settlement were failures.

The mysterious  
disappearance of some  
settlers gave Roanoke its  
name as the "Lost Colony."



# Southeast Native Americans



In many ways, the native people of Virginia were similar to other people up and down the eastern seaboard.



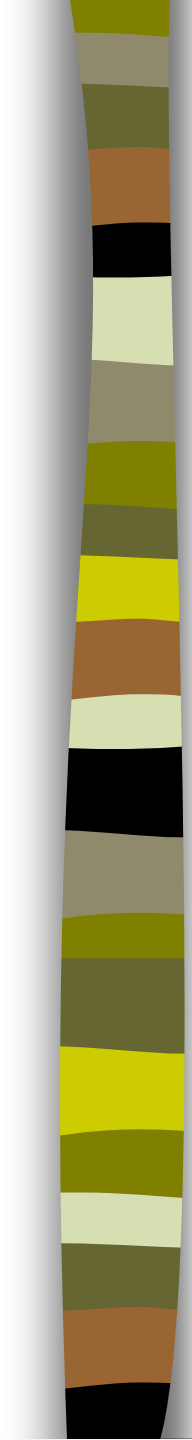


Along the Chesapeake Bay  
and its rivers, some  
15,000 people lived under  
a single ruler who the  
English called...





Powhatan, the  
"Great King."



Powhatan would welcome the Englishmen who settled in Jamestown.

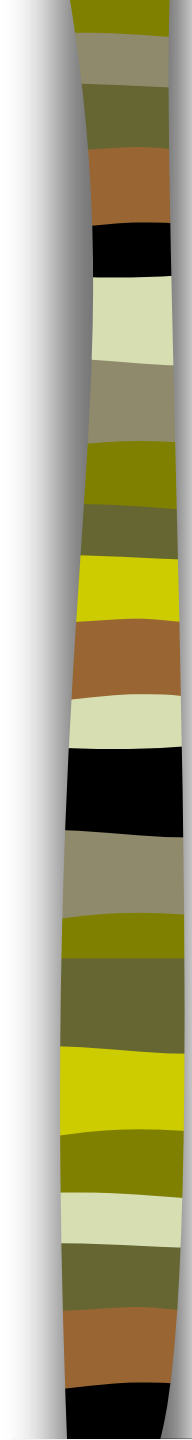
Like other native rulers, he made peaceful greetings to the newcomers.

The English may not have survived without the Powhatan's assistance.









Powhatan negotiated a  
friendship- an alliance-  
with the English when  
his daughter,  
Poncahontas,  
married an English  
settler, John Rolfe.



The English settlers also discovered  
a money-making opportunity  
by growing and selling a native  
plant- tobacco..





They began exporting it,  
claiming it as a  
healthful herb.

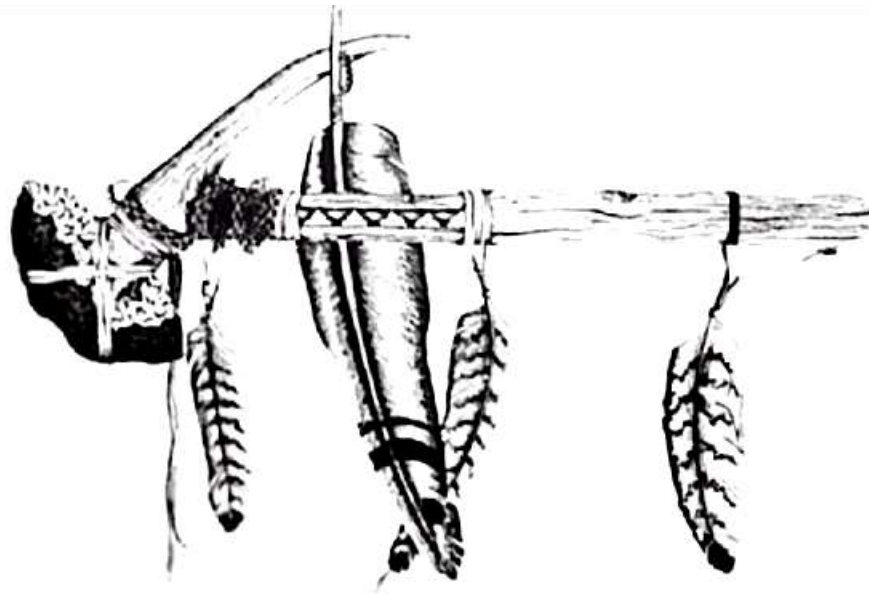
For the Powhatan,  
growing tobacco  
for profit  
offended their  
religious beliefs.



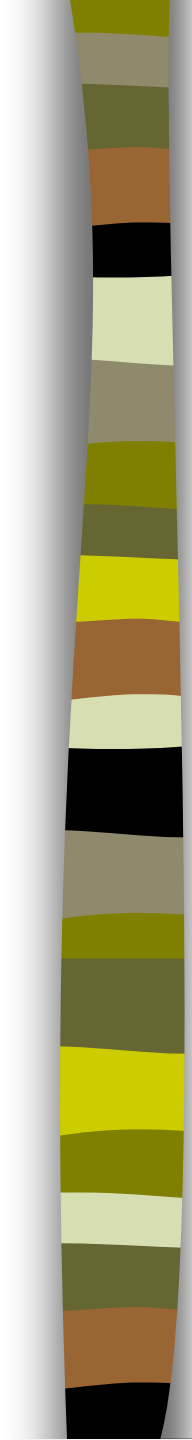
But, soon the large tobacco fields were planted on more and more of the Powhatan hunting grounds and corn fields.



On and off during the next 20 years, the English and Powhatan warriors clashed over use of the lands.







Much time passed since the first Europeans arrived in the southeast.

Indian territories had been reduced to small communities surrounded by white settlements.





Many  
southeast  
people  
now wore  
European-  
style  
clothing...



and lived in houses  
alongside the white settlers.



Some became Christians  
and many educated their children  
in the English language.





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*Created for  
OCSS*

*Source:  
“Through Indian Eyes”  
and the National Museum of Art*