



# North Carolina Studies Weekly

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## THE ALGONQUIAN TRIBES OF THE COASTAL PLAIN

Welcome to another exciting issue of *North Carolina Studies Weekly*. There were many tribes on the Coastal Plain, but one thing most of them had in common was that they spoke similar Algonkian languages. It was sort of the way French, Italian and Spanish people today all speak Latin-based languages. Because their languages were similar, the tribes of the Coastal Plain also had many cultural similarities. This week, let's take a look at some of the culture that is common among the natives of North Carolina's Coastal Plain. Hold on tight because you're gonna love it!

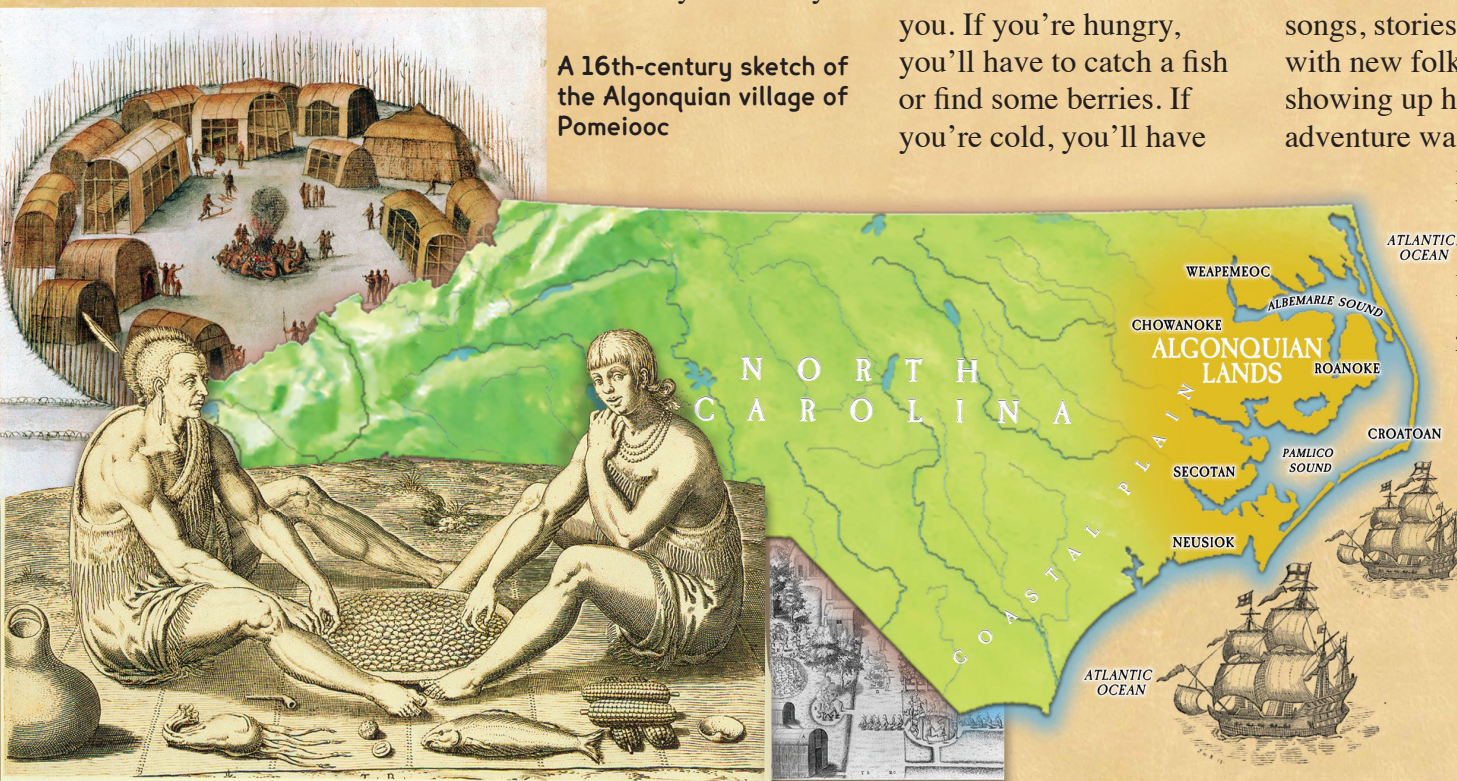
Have you ever been to the beach? Ah, just imagine it now: the sun on the sand, the sea gulls overhead and the sailboats on the water. Imagine little seaside restaurants where you can go for a bite to eat when you're hungry, and there's nothing for you to do but play and relax. Does that sound fantastic? Now think of that same picture, but take away the sailboats and the restaurants. Take away the supermarkets in town and the beach-side hotels. Take away the cars, radios, surfboards and lifeguards. Most of all, take away the PLAY. All that should be left in the picture now is you, your family and the natural world around you. If you're hungry, you'll have to catch a fish or find some berries. If you're cold, you'll have

to build a fire. If it rains, you'll have to make a house out of whatever you can find. Now the picture in your imagination should look like the land where North Carolina's coastal natives lived for thousands of years. But don't think that they were miserable or unorganized. No way! Early drawings and reports by European explorers show that coastal American Indians were people who knew how to survive in harmony with the land. They built complicated fish traps that stretched across entire rivers and could catch enough fish to feed an entire village. They lived in strong houses made of wood, mud and reeds. They had games, governments, songs, stories and strong families. And with new folks from European countries showing up here and there in their big boats, adventure was around every corner. In this

issue of *North Carolina Studies Weekly*, learn a little about what it might have been like to live on the Coastal Plain of our great state hundreds of years before it was a state at all.

When it came to meeting new people, no one had more practice than the natives of the Coastal Plain. The ocean was like a big freeway, with ships from all over the world traveling up and down the coast all of the time. If you lived near the coast, you pretty much got to see anyone who came by.

A 16th-century sketch of the Algonquian village of Pomeiooc



### Connections

### Pick a Name.... Algonquian? Algonkian? Algonkin? Algonquin?

Go to the library and look for books about American Indians who lived along our coast. The largest group is called the Algon\_\_\_\_\_. That's right—the last part of the name was left off on purpose. That's because writers of books, including the textbooks in your classroom, disagree on how to spell and pronounce the name of this important group of American Indians. The "Handbook of North American Indians" gives the following

definitions, which may be helpful to you:

- Algonquian—the tribes or communities of the Algonquian nation
- Algonkian—the name of the language family. Each tribe spoke/speaks a different language, but members of each nation spoke/speak the same family of languages, just like French, Italian and Spanish are considered the "Romance" languages, and English, German, Dutch and

Afrikaans are called the "Germanic" languages.

- Algonquin—an out-of-date form of the word "Algonquian"
- Algonkin—an out-of-date form of the word "Algonkian"

Maybe you thought that grown-ups had everything figured out. But even after reading dictionaries and textbooks, you'll often find that you still have to decide for yourself. Go ahead, fill in the blank: Algon\_\_\_\_\_.





# A Typical Scene of the Early Algonquians

*The Algonquians—What Were Their Lives Like?*

## Family History

Here in this village, a woman explains the family history to her daughter — but through the father’s line only.

## Marriage

This young man is explaining to this girl what he will do for her if she agrees to become his wife. In this culture, there wasn’t much courtship or ceremony. Marriage was often just an agreement between two people to become man and wife. A man gave a woman an animal bone to show that he would provide for the family. She gave him an ear of corn as a vow that she would grow the crops. Some tribes allowed a man to have two wives as long as the women came from two different clans.

## Wigwam

The women were in charge of building their shelters. The wigwams were constructed with thin young trees. They were bent into semi-circles and set into the ground by the men. The bent trees were then covered with available materials. This included birch bark, animal skins, cornhusks and reeds or grasses. They were woven into mats. The cooking was done indoors in the winter time. A hole was left in the roof to allow the smoke to escape.

## Learning for Survival

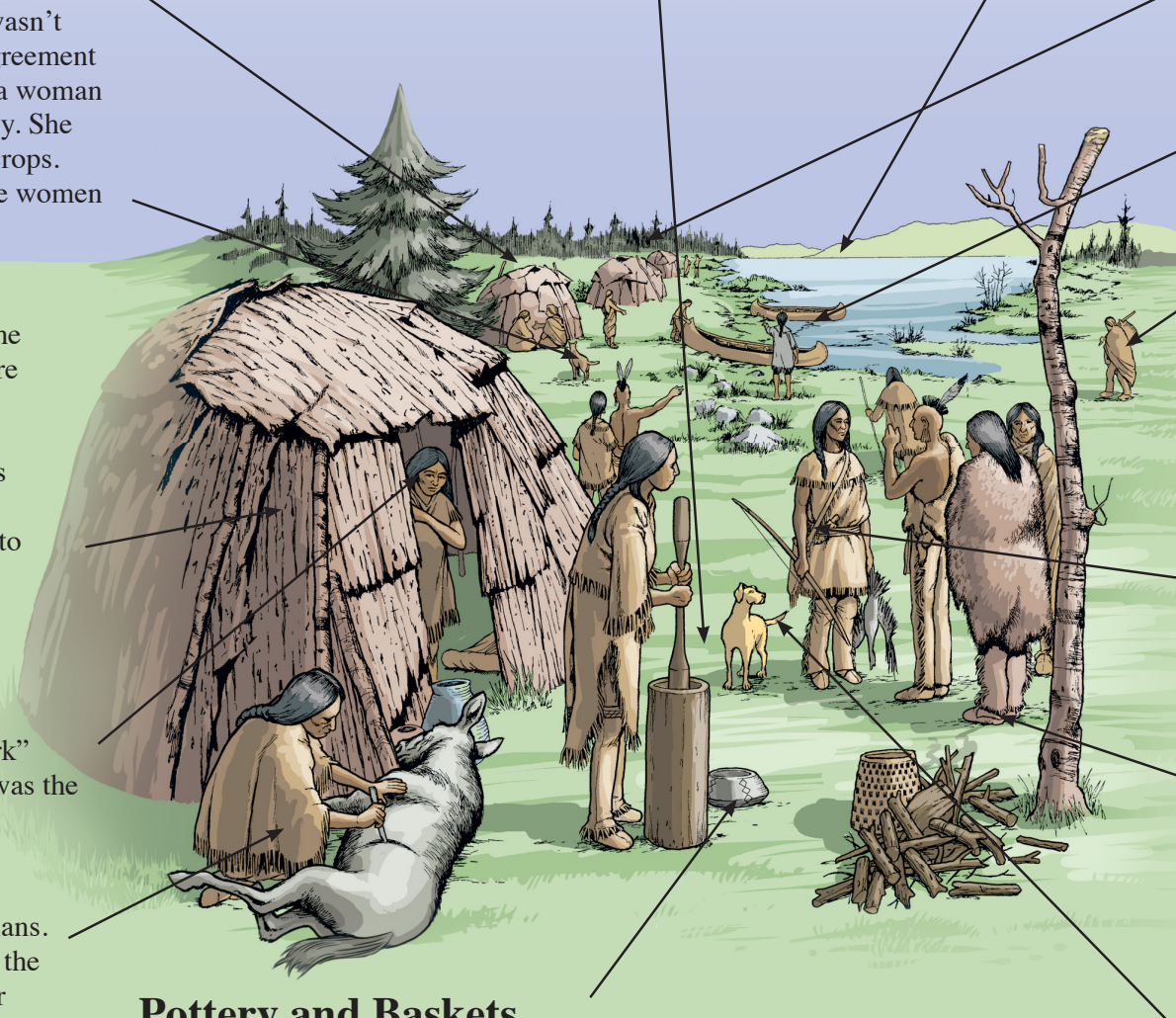
This young girl is watching her mother prepare an animal. It is being prepared for its many uses. Everyone helped in the way of life. “Woman’s work” and “men’s work” were well defined. There were times for play, but survival was the most important thing in the minds of all tribe members.

## Deer, Elk and Moose

Wild game of any size was very useful to American Indians. They were used in every part of the country. They believed the Great Spirits had blessed them with these creatures for their survival. They never killed more than they could eat. The spirit of each animal had special meaning to them. They used all the parts of each animal for many things. The animal was used for food, shelter and clothing. It was also used for tools, toys and decorations.

## Corn

This food was a staple of all tribes everywhere. When it was ground, as this woman is doing, it was used in bread, soup, ash cakes and foods for the trail. A favorite way to eat corn was right off the cob or as popcorn, as we do today.



## Pottery and Baskets

The American Indian people made pottery from clay. This clay was powdered and mixed with shells, gravel or sand. They used the coil method. This was common to many American Indian cultures. Baskets were constructed mainly of reeds found near streams. They were often very beautiful in addition to being functional.

## Canoes

In Maryland, many American Indians built their canoes of the prized birch bark. What if there were no big birch trees? They constructed their canoes of the heavier elm, sycamore or hickory bark. Sometimes they made dugout canoes from logs. The canoes were so well designed that today the design is still used.

## Home of the Shaman or Powwow

A spiritual leader is called a “Shaman” or “Powwow.” One lived in every village. This man’s magic helped him make journeys to the underworld. He went to visit the spirits of those who had died. By going into a trance, a shaman could visit the land of the spirits. He must not accept food from them. If he did, his spirit would be captured and his entranced body on Earth would die. It was the reports of these shaman which convinced the American Indians that there was life after death. The name given to the Great Spirit by the natives was “Manitou.”

## Visitor

This is a visitor from the Piscataway tribe to a Nanticoke village. The people were peaceful and made all visitors, even white men, feel welcome. Are they speaking some Algonquian language they both know or using the more universal sign language?

## Maple Sugar

This man is carrying back to camp the final batch of maple sugar. The tribe made this in the maple groves. This was a great treat. It was well loved by all people. A feast will be held soon to celebrate the end of winter. The same methods of sap gathering are used today. It is used to make fine maple syrup and candies.

## Bow and Arrow

A wood craft learned from boyhood was bow and arrow making. Bows were made by Eastern Woodlands tribes from springy wood such as shagbark hickory, white ash, cedar or white oak. Even young boys became expert shots and were able to kill a bird in flight at a young age. Their lives depended on how well they could hunt.

## Moccasins

This footwear is a true American Indian invention. Styles varied with the tribes, yet, all were soft-soled and came up to the ankles. Depending on the tribe, the tops could be puckered. They may have long side flaps reaching to the ground instead. Many were decorated with flattened porcupine quills. “Moccasin” is an Algonquian word we borrowed into English.

## Dogs

These animals were as common among American Indian tribes as they are today. They were used as pets, beasts of burden, sacrifices to Manitou and, under extreme starvation circumstances, as food.

## Upcycling

## Arts & Crafts

upcycling (v.) – a process for recycling something into something better: When you upcycle, you recycle and reuse something for a new purpose.

You have read about how early American Indians used natural resources to survive. They used bison, traded fur and farmed. The American Indian way has always been “green.” This means that they used things in nature without hurting or polluting the environment. They used every part of an animal, vegetable or other food source and did not waste anything.

So what does that have to do with upcycling? Take a look at the following items that usually are thrown away, and upcycle them into useful things kids will like! The first ones are done for you. Use your imagination and be creative! (Just be sure to check with a responsible adult before digging for recyclables, and clean the items well!)



Here’s a real-world example: A student saved her juice pouches for about a month. She cleaned them and sewed them together to make a great new purse! She gave it to her aunt as a gift.

Juice boxes can be made into:
a pretend cell phone

Tissue boxes can be made into:
a guitar (with rubber bands)

Milk cartons can be made into:
a rocket ship

Egg cartons can be made into:
a jewelry box

Notebook paper can be made into:
a ball to practice shooting baskets

Tin cans can be made into:
stilts with string (an adult can help punch holes in the cans)

## North Carolina Regions

### The Coastal Plain Region

The Coastal Plain Region is the eastern part of the state. The region includes the Outer Banks, a chain of islands along the coast, and three capes—Cape Fear, Cape Lookout and Cape Hatteras.

The Inner Coastal Plain is the part of the region farther away from the coast. It has excellent farmland. The Sandhills are also part of the Inner Coastal Plain. Long ago, the Atlantic Ocean reached all the way to the Sandhills, and the rest of the Coastal Plain was underwater!

The Coastal Plain is a great part of our state, but it usually gets the most damage from hurricanes. In 1999, Hurricane Floyd killed 52 North Carolinians and did more than \$6 billion in damage.



Kayaking the Cape Fear River

## North Carolina Adventures

### Chased Rabbit Goes Hunting

*Realistic Fiction: The following story is written with facts about the Algonquian Indians you are studying. Although the people are fictional, the events could have happened just as you read them.*

Chased Rabbit was an Algonquian boy. He lived in the mountain area of what is now western North Carolina. This was a long time before the white settlers came. There were a lot more deer in North Carolina back then.

When he was 4 years old, he could run very quickly. The chief said that he should be called Chased Rabbit. Before this, his name had been Handsome Baby. As the years passed, an American Indian might change his or her name many times.

The Algonquian men were known as good hunters. The boys learned to use the bow and arrow when they were quite young. Chased Rabbit practiced every day. At last, he was ready to go out on a hunt. He went to the woods with his grandfather, Man-Who-Likes-Berries. The bow that his grandfather had was as tall as Chased Rabbit, and it was very stiff. Chased Rabbit could not bend it, but his grandfather was strong. He could shoot arrows far and straight. Before



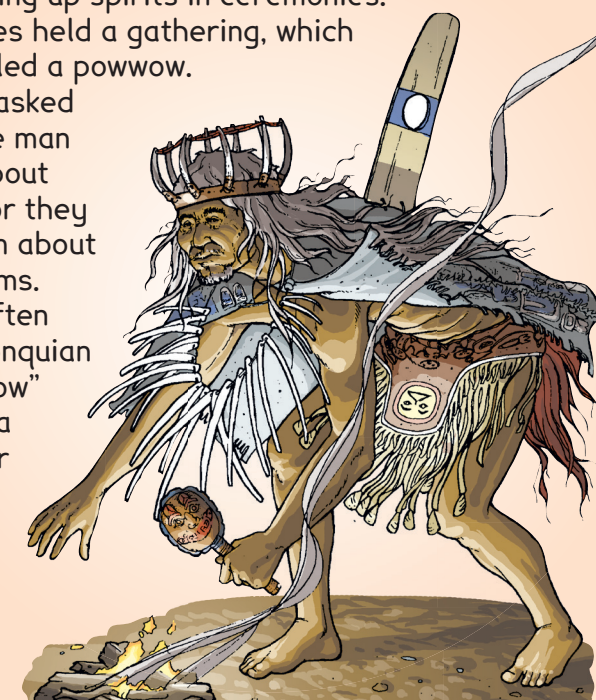
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### What was a powwow?

### This Week's Question

A powwow was the medicine man in an Algonquian tribe. The powwow’s job included healing the sick and calling up spirits in ceremonies. He sometimes held a gathering, which was also called a powwow.

The people asked the medicine man questions about the future, or they talked to him about their problems. Today, we often use the Algonquian word “powwow” to describe a discussion or meeting.



## North Carolina Wildlife

### Wild Turkey

Wild turkeys are classified as big game. With wingspans of 4 to 5 feet, wild turkeys can fly for short distances, but they mostly wander about on foot, looking for food with other turkeys. They eat fruits, buds, seeds, insects, nuts and acorns. Turkeys nest on the ground, but they roost at night in large trees.

During the spring mating dance, males fan out their beautiful tails to attract females to a clearing. Usually, three to five females drop by to see what’s going on. When the chicks are hatched, the males pay no attention to them. It’s a good thing for the females that the young turkeys learn to look for food almost as soon as they’re hatched. After only one month, the hatchlings can fly to Mama’s favorite tree roost by themselves.

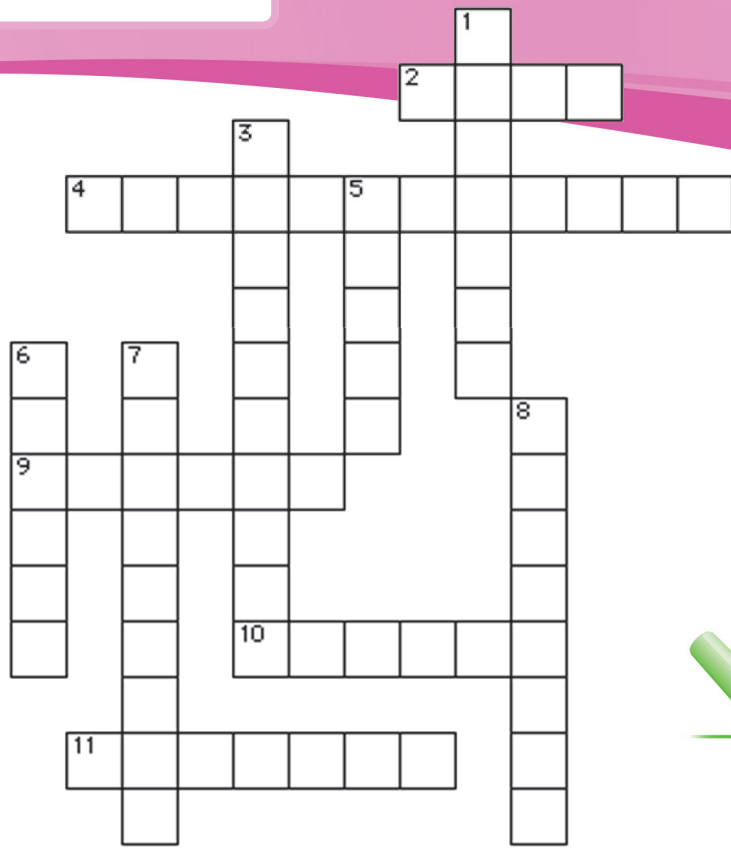
The turkey is mostly black with a red gullet, a white head and red markings down the front.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Let's Write

Pretend you are an American Indian. Your tribe needs meat, and they've asked you to come to the rescue. Write a 200-word story about your hunting adventure. What weapon do you take? Who goes with you? What kind of game (animals used for meat) do you hunt? Is this game hard to find? How do you do it?



#### ACROSS

- 2. food staple of all American Indian tribes
- 4. American Indians make a \_\_\_\_\_ to hang above a bed.
- 9. constructed out of thin, young trees bent into a semi-circle
- 10. another name for a priest or powwow
- 11. Algonkian name for the Great Spirit

#### DOWN

- 1. Algonquian people made this from clay
- 3. paintings of natural scenes
- 5. the Algonquian people built a \_\_\_\_\_ out of prized birch bark
- 6. another name for a medicine man that is also used as a name for a meeting
- 7. the name of the Algonquian language family
- 8. an out-of-date form of the word Algonkian



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

## Francis Speight *Our Heroes*

Francis Speight was one of North Carolina's best artists. He was born in Windsor in 1896. He received many honors and prizes during his lifetime, but he was especially proud to be the first person to receive the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts.

In 1921, Francis moved to Philadelphia to study art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. After he graduated, he began teaching there. Although he spent almost 40 years of his life teaching and painting in Philadelphia, he always loved his native state. Many of his best paintings are North Carolina landscapes. (Landscapes are paintings of natural scenes.) He painted several landscapes of a place on the Cashie River. He painted that same place as it looked in every season. He also painted scenes in Philadelphia and areas outside the city.

Francis liked to paint on location. Painting on location means taking your brushes, paints and canvas to the place you want to paint instead of working in an art studio. In 1936, he took his art tools to Gastonia, North Carolina, and painted a mural in the post office. That was the same year he married Sarah Blakeslee, who was also an artist.

In 1961, Francis and Sarah returned to North Carolina. Francis began teaching at Eastern Carolina University in Greenville. Every summer he went back to Philadelphia to teach summer classes at the Fine Arts Academy.

Francis was the first artist born in North Carolina whose paintings are on permanent exhibit in the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. His art is also displayed at the Greenville Museum of Art and the Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington. Francis lived to be 93 years old.



## Rumination and Contemplation: Bacon's Rebellion

*rumination (n): a thought; a pondering*

*contemplation (n): a deep thought; reflection*

Were you ever in a situation where you reacted quickly without thinking the problem through? What happened? Let's look at Bacon's Rebellion in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1676. As you read, think about whether the leaders used rumination and contemplation during the events.

Most people in the Virginia colony were farmers who had to deal with high taxes, low tobacco prices and problems trading with Europe. Hailstorms, floods and hurricanes destroyed many crops, and some American Indian groups attacked plantations.

Governor William Berkeley ignored the farmers' call for help, and a young Englishman stepped forward. Nathaniel Bacon asked for permission to lead the army to drive all Indians out of Virginia. Gov. Berkeley refused. He didn't want to upset the friendly Indians who traded with them. Bacon took a group of volunteer soldiers anyway and led a raid. They attacked American Indians who had not even been part of the earlier attacks.

Gov. Berkeley declared Bacon a rebel guilty of treason, but Bacon gathered almost 500 soldiers and took over Jamestown. They controlled the town from July to September of 1676. When Gov. Berkeley and his army took back control, Bacon was furious. His troops burned Jamestown to the ground.

Suddenly, Bacon got very sick and died. Gov. Berkeley arrested and hanged many of Bacon's men. However, King Charles II of England was not happy with Berkeley and chose a new governor.

Find examples when both leaders acted without rumination and contemplation. What might have been different if they had thought about the situation carefully? Imagine that you were Gov. Berkeley or Nathaniel Bacon. What would you have done differently?

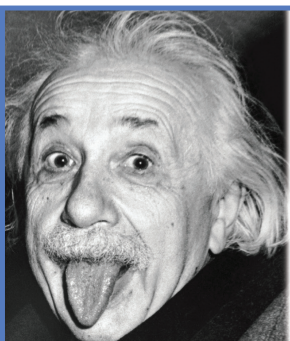
## Chased Rabbit Goes Hunting CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Chased Rabbit and his grandfather started to hunt, they washed themselves. The Algonquian had learned to take baths before a hunt because wild beasts have a keen sense of smell. When they smell people, they may run off. Thus hunters washed off as much of their human smell as they could.

Chased Rabbit brought his lunch with him. His food was called pemmican. It was a mixture of dried venison and dried berries that was delicious and kept him from feeling hungry. Deep in the mountain woods, Chased Rabbit and his grandfather hid near a path made by deer. They were quiet and patient. At last, a deer came. Silently, the old man took aim. The arrow struck the deer. For the first time, Chased Rabbit helped bring meat home for his family. Deer were important to Chased Rabbit and his people. Sometimes a man ate as much as four pounds of meat in one day.

Chased Rabbit and his grandfather were greeted warmly when they returned home with their kill.

*Adapted from "The First Book of Indians" by Benjamin Brewster*



As a student,  
he was  
no Einstein.

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