

Table 1. Population estimates, 17th century

	1608 <sup>a</sup>	1621	1632	1634	1648	1697 <sup>i</sup>
Accomac	400 <sup>b</sup>	2,000 <sup>a</sup>				335 <sup>j</sup>
Assateague						— <sup>k</sup>
Choptank						— <sup>k</sup>
Conoy	1,000 <sup>c</sup>		2,500 <sup>f</sup>	1,665 <sup>g</sup>		265-300 <sup>l</sup>
Nanticoke	665					10 towns <sup>m</sup>
Patuxent	665 <sup>d</sup>					
Pocomoke	335					— <sup>k</sup>
Tockwogh	335					
Wicocomoco						
Wicomiss	200				235 <sup>h</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> These estimates, by John Smith (Barbour 1969:341-344), are given in terms of warriors. Smith's own ratio of 3:10 is used throughout the table for computation of total population.

<sup>b</sup> Including the Accomac (Gingaskin) and Acohanock.

<sup>c</sup> Including the Yaocomaco, Potapaco, Pamunkey, Piscataway, Anacostank.

<sup>d</sup> Including the Acquitanacsuck, Patuxent, Mattapanient.

<sup>e</sup> John Pory's estimate (Smith 1884:570) of Eastern Shore total population probably refers to Accomac population only.

<sup>f</sup> Henry Fleet (Neill 1876:26, 35) estimates a total population of 5,000 persons along both sides of the Potomac River. The distribution of villages on the Smith map suggests about equal distribution of population on both sides.

<sup>g</sup> Father White (Hall 1910:41) says that 500 bowmen greeted the colonists at Piscataway. While this may be too high for village population, it certainly does not represent total Conoy fighting strength.

<sup>h</sup> The Wicomiss is mentioned as one of two tribes, tributary to the Susquehannock, who had together 140 warriors (Marye 1938-1939: 150).

<sup>i</sup> The Accomac estimate is by Gov. Edmund Andros (Sainsbury 1860-1912, 15:456); the other estimates, by Sir Thomas Lawrence (Md. Arch. 25:256). Both were replying to queries from the Board of Trade.

<sup>j</sup> 100 bowmen living in 9 unnamed towns. Nicholson (1699) lists 5 towns and another report to the Board of Trade in 1702 lists 8 towns, both without population figures, while Beverley (1705:232) names 10 towns with notes on population that imply a total slightly higher than 100 bowmen.

<sup>k</sup> The existence of Eastern Shore Indians besides the Nanticokes is acknowledged but "tis almost impossible to have the Exact number of men or Towns."

<sup>l</sup> 80 or 90 bowmen including the Piscataway, Choptico, and Mattawoman. The Pamunkey are mentioned but not included in this figure. Two years later, the refugee Conoy at Harrison Island were also estimated at 80 or 90 bowmen (Palmer et al. 1875-1893, 1:64-65).

<sup>m</sup> The Nanticokes themselves claimed to have 7 towns in 1696 and again in 1707, so 10 perhaps includes towns of neighboring groups as well (Md. Arch. 20:434; Pa. Col. Recs. 2:387).

### Demography

Data on the population of the Nanticokes and their neighbors at contact time and throughout the colonial period are incomplete and unreliable. John Smith's figures (table 1) are the only ones relating to the whole area at a given time; but his estimates for Accomac cover only two tribes out of many more, and from later figures and evidence on depopulation it can be seen that the total he gives is at least four times too low. The same applies to his other Eastern Shore estimates. For southern Maryland, Smith is not so far off, primarily because he did not miss so many groups. However, in view of Fleet's estimate (Neill 1876:26, 35) of 5,000 persons on both sides of the Potomac River (excluding the Patuxents) and other evidence, even these figures could conservatively be doubled (Feest 1973). An informed guess for the population of the tribes here described during early contact times would be upward of 12,000 persons.

By 1700 Accomac population was said to have decreased by 90 percent, even though there were few armed conflicts in this subarea. Although only one epidemic has been recorded for Accomac during that century, smallpox and other diseases introduced by Europeans were primarily responsible for population decline in the whole area (Feest 1973; Md. Arch. 23:247, 25:256). The use of poisons by the Nanticokes has been likewise blamed for depopulation, but ruthless wars of extermination as waged by the English colonists against the Wicomisses, as well as early quarrels with Iroquoian groups, probably had a greater impact (Marye 1938-1939; Neill 1876:26).