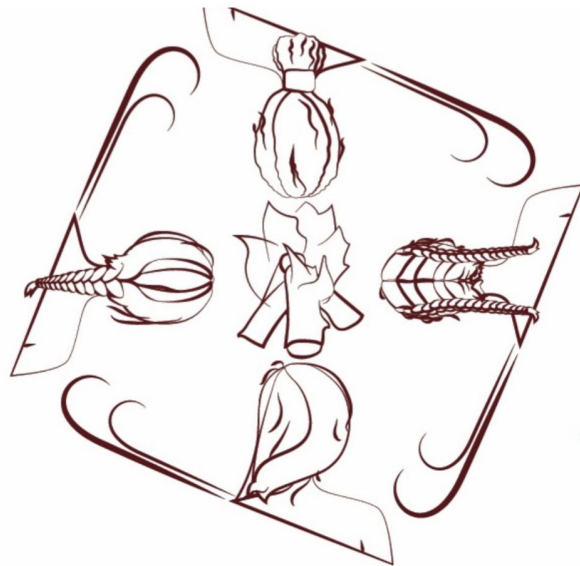


2023 Yesáh Tribal Gathering

Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA



Who We Are

Yesá is the name of the eastern Siouan peoples otherwise called the Tutelo, Saponi, Occaneechi, Monacan, Eno, Cheraw, and others, who live contemporarily in tribal nations and communities throughout North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio and in diasporic hubs or urban communities elsewhere.

We originated from the Ohio River Valley and were pushed down to Brunswick, Virginia and held at Fort Christianna under the Treaty of Peace in 1712. There was estimated about 300 people that made up all the individual tribes with the largest group being Saponies; hence we were stripped of our individual tribal names and put under the name Saponi; children were given English names and were taught English. We have since reclaimed our individual tribal names while maintaining connection with each other collectively through the Yesáh name.



Traditional Foods

- Ma: ta: xe (corn) (70-80% of our diet)
- Ha:dine (beans) (high protein foods)
- High fat foods (nuts, but butter, bear fat, etc)
- Meat (deer, bear, buffalo, etc.)
- Lambsquarter
- Wayuká ogičąkaí (sunchokes)
- Wihoi (fish)

KNOWN FOODS FOR THE EASTERN SIOUAN DURING THE WOODLAND PERIOD		
Wild Edibles (Plants)	Animal Food Sources	Domesticated Crops
Acorns, Various Species	Deer (<i>wita:i</i>)	Tutelo Strawberry Corn (<i>ma:ta:xe aču:ti</i>)
Hickory Nuts, Various Species	Turkey (<i>ma:ndahka:i</i>)	White Corn (<i>ma:ta:xe</i>)
Black walnuts,	Elk (<i>mąp'o</i>)	Kurshaw Pumpkins (<i>mądamaj</i>)
Beech Nuts	Beaver (<i>ya:op</i>)	Cimlin Squash (<i>mądamaj yili:p</i>)
Hazel Nuts	Groundhog	Beans (<i>ha:dine</i>)
Chinquapins	Rabbit (<i>tąy:p-yaha</i>)	Sweet Potatoes (<i>č'ıkp: yōwayugą</i>)
Butternuts	Grey Squirrel (<i>nista:ıkai</i>)	Lima Beans (<i>ha:dine</i>)
Chestnuts	Black Bear (<i>mu:nti</i>)	
Amaranth (pig weed),	Dog (<i>č'anga</i>)	
Chenopod (Lambs Quarter)	Raccoon (<i>mika</i>)	
Dock	Grey Fox (<i>to:ıkai</i>)	
Sump Weed	Skunk	
Jerusalem Artichoke (Sun Choke)	Bob Cat	
Plantain	Mountain Lion	
Yellow Sorrel	Bald Eagle	
Spring Onions	Canada Goose (<i>he:istą:)</i>	
Ramps	Ruffed Grouse	
Clover	Bob White	
Mushrooms	Passenger Pigeon (<i>mayu:tkai</i>)	
Cattails	Turtle	
Strawberries (<i>haspahinuk</i>)	Fish (<i>wihoi</i>)	
Mulberries	Duck (<i>i:štai</i>)	
Service Berries		
Cherries (2) (<i>yosąkrota</i>)		
Black Berries		
Huckleberries		
Blue Berries (<i>hasiaso:ti</i>)		
Grapes (2)		
PawPaw		
Persimmon		
Current		

Using Fat for Calories

- ▶ Fat provides more calories per gram than protein and carbohydrates
- ▶ Fat is necessary for the body to absorb vitamins A,D,E, and K
- ▶ Each family needed at least one large bear every year maybe two
- ▶ Render approximately 3 gallons of lard from a large bear
- ▶ A gallon of lard will last a family of 6 42 days at 1 TBSP of lard each /day

Black Walnuts, Hickory Nuts, Butter Nuts, and Acorns



- ▶ Nut Milk from Hickory nuts
- ▶ Nut and Acorn oil to dip bread
- ▶ Acorns were leached to remove the tannic acid and used to make bread
- ▶ One half cup acorn flour 351 calories

Traditional “agriculture”



-Our homes were purposely built to last about 10 years so we would migrate to new hunting grounds to keep from over hunting and foraging

-Once a group reached about 100 people, there was split for one group to migrate to new grounds

-Corn was planted in mounded rows

-Burnings were the only fertilizar we used, we did not add anything else

-Food pits

-Seed survival through sharing (strawberry Tutelo corn)

Why does it matter?/How does this help now?

-NE KS and Virginia have similar climates with flood rains and hot, humid summers

-My ancestors used raised mounds due to floods and the need to conserve water. The mounds support corn, promote longer root systems, and are easily formed into irrigation systems to lead water away or to specific foods. There has been a push by Native and non-Native community members in Lawrence to learn and utilize dry farming and water conservation due to water prices and environmental changes.

-Burnings are the most natural way of fertilization that community gardens and others can use as shown in the picture, which was the Indigenous Community Center/Common Ground Incubator Farm's spring burning



Why it matters cont.

-The huge push for planting, harvesting, cooking, and eating native plants; many Kansas native plants are also Yesàh traditional foods (I e., lambs quarter, sunchokes); and how we eat our traditional foods can bring additional awareness to these plants and different ways how people can eat them in this area.

-Ways to solve vitamin deficiencies such as calcium (fish bones)

-Indigenous flour/bread substitutions (acorns, walnuts, lambsquarter etc.)

-Indigenous Food Study



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