

## Native Americans of the Chesapeake Bay: Primary vs. Secondary Sources

**Primary sources** of information are produced by someone who was present at the time an event took place. They are eyewitness accounts of people, places, actions, or natural scenes. Examples of primary sources might include journal entries, letters, diaries, newspaper articles, sketches, paintings, photographs, maps, or physical objects. **Secondary sources** of information come from people who were not present when the event occurred. They are produced after the action took place. As a result, secondary sources are often less accurate than primary sources.

Look carefully at the two images to the right. The top painting was made by John White, an artist who visited the coast of North Carolina in 1585 and made paintings of the people, places and animals that he saw. His image showing how the Indians cooked their fish over a fire is an example of a primary source.

The scene below the painting is an engraving made by Theodor de Bry. This is an example of a secondary source. It shows the same scene, but it was made several years later. Notice that there are a lot of differences between the two images. Look closely. Which image looks more realistic? Which image looks more dramatic? Why do you think de Bry may have made changes in his engraved version of the image?

On the next page, there are two images of a Native American fishing scene. One is a primary source made by John White in 1585, and the other is a secondary source by Theodor de Bry from 1590. Compare the two images, then answer the questions on the last page of this exercise to compare and contrast primary vs. secondary sources.



*"The Broyling of Their Fish Over a Flame of Fire."*  
Image by John White, 1585.



*"How They Cook Their Fish."* Engraving by Theodor de Bry,  
1590, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

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PRIMARY SOURCE



John White, 1585



Theodor de Bry, 1590

SECONDARY SOURCE

## Primary vs. Secondary Sources

1. In the space below, describe what is happening in these two images.

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2. What are the man and woman eating in this picture?

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3. How are these two images similar?

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4. What are some differences between the two images?

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