

N.C. State Parks Junior Ranger Program

WHO WERE THE MAROONS?

DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK POCKET ACTIVITY

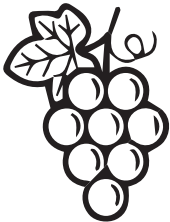
Hundreds of years ago, enslaved people were forced to dig the Dismal Swamp Canal you crossed to enter the park. The work was very hard—they had to dig by hand! Some of these people made the brave decision run away from the people holding them captive into the Swamp and build their own communities where they could be with their families and make their own choices. They became known as “maroons.”



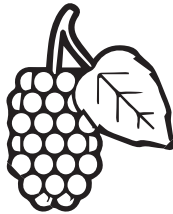
FOOD AND SHELTER

We all need the same basic things to survive: water, food, and shelter. Before cars and highways, Swamp water was very safe to drink despite its distinct brown color. Many things grow in the Swamp that people can eat.

Look for these:



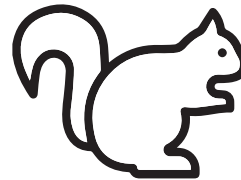
Grapes



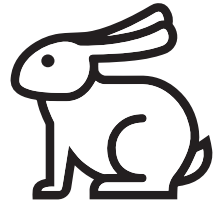
Blackberry



Paw Paw



Squirrel



Rabbit

Two types of trees commonly grew in the Swamp at the time of the maroons that offered durable wood to build cabins. Can you find each?



Atlantic White
Cedar



Bald Cypress



LIFE IN THE SWAMP

Maroons most likely farmed some plots near their homes and may have traded with other maroons or maybe even people outside the Swamp. Back then, the Swamp was much wetter than what you see today, so the maroons had to look for areas of high ground called “mesic islands.” See if you can find a place that might have been a good place to build a home and draw it below.

Because their existence depended on secrecy, there is much we do not know about the maroon colonists. What is one thing you could study to learn more about them?

