

Chapter Three

Enter Pocahontas

Captain John Smith—former soldier, now an adventurer—was about twenty-seven when he landed at Jamestown in May of 1607 with the 143 other settlers, men and boys.¹

Edward Haile calls Smith “one of history’s extraordinary characters” and the “central figure in the establishment of the Jamestown colony.”² Yet Smith himself was not in charge of the expedition that founded Jamestown. As noted, one-armed Captain Christopher Newport was. En route to America, Smith, “like the rest of the passengers, would have slept on a straw mattress on the decks or in a hammock.”³ He was merely one of the passengers, and a rather unruly one, at that. Only later, thanks to his skills and hardy health, would he become key to Jamestown’s survival.

An adventurer at heart, Smith had invested the minimal nine pounds required to be part of the Virginia expedition. Due to his military and foreign travel experience, he was appointed one of the seven-member Virginia Company council to be set up in America.⁴ Smith later ended up in charge mainly because he was the toughest and most resourceful and far-seeing of the colonists, especially in times of crisis. He was a survivor. In the

1. Several early accounts mention boys among the first Jamestown settlers, though generally no ages are given. Most were likely in the service of “gentlemen” in the group.

2. Haile, ed., *Jamestown Narratives*, 59.

3. Price, *Love and Hate*, 16.

4. Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 47.

twentieth century Hart Crane, in his long poem “The Bridge,” aptly called Smith “all beard and certainty.”⁵

Smith was called “Captain” because of his prior exploits as a mercenary in Europe. In his teens he ran off to become a soldier and was briefly a pirate in the Mediterranean. He eventually joined the army of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in his war against Muslim Turks. Here Smith attained the rank of captain. He was captured and sold into slavery, but eventually escaped. Archduke Ferdinand gave him an honorary discharge. Ever after, he was known as *Captain John Smith*.⁶

He was a tough character, with extraordinary presence of mind. Smith’s farm upbringing and his extensive travels and cross-cultural experiences toughened him physically and emotionally. He constantly scribbled notes, and so provides remarkably detailed accounts. His embellishments and exaggerations have frustrated later historians. Yet he was a keen observer. In the case of Jamestown we have multiple early accounts, so this provides some checks and balances.

The big critical exception, however, is Smith’s earliest encounters with Pocahontas. Here we have only his word. This has led to uncertainty and sharp conflicts in interpretation. Yet much of our story—in fact, *much of the subsequent history of North America*—flows out of the relationship between this unusual Englishman and the young Powhatan lass known to history as Pocahontas.

It was a most unusual, lopsided, upside-down relationship—the reverse of what one might expect. John Smith was a peasant; Pocahontas a chief’s daughter—but Smith was much older. And of course normal social status and social distinctions were all thrown into confusion in the strange and often confusing context of the small, struggling English settlement in Virginia and the poorly understood Powhatans whose unwelcome guests the white men were.

Unlike most of his compatriots, Smith truly tried to understand the Indians, asking questions and taking notes.⁷

5. Quoted in Wachutka, “Myth Making,” lines 165–66.

6. Haile, ed., *Jamestown Narratives*, 59–60; Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 46–47.

7. Price, *Love and Hate*, 7.

FOOD FOR JAMESTOWN

By late fall in 1607, supplies at Jamestown were running alarmingly low. Captain Newport had not returned, and the Indians brought no more food. The settlers who survived illness were saved in part by the cooler fall weather and by huge flocks of migrating birds; even weakened settlers could kill some. With the village's store of grain nearly exhausted, the colonists watched anxiously for Newport's return. Frightened eyes scanned the horizon for first sight of the English ships' "great white wings," as the Indians called their sails.

Finally, John Smith took action. He set off by barge with a few others to try to trade for food with the Indians. Smith had become slightly acquainted with some of the Indians who came to check out the settlers' fort—out of curiosity, perhaps, but also as reconnaissance. At this point neither the Indians nor the English were quite sure what to make of the other. Was it safe to be friendly, or should they be wary and perhaps hostile?

Just upriver was the mouth of the smaller Chickahominy River, still unexplored, and Smith decided to check it out. He soon encountered Chickahominy Indians—an independent tribe not under Powhatan control. Smith found the Chickahominy willing to trade. He acquired a good quantity of Indian corn in exchange for beads and metal implements. Smith brought the supplies back to Jamestown and later returned twice for more. Naturally the Jamestown settlers came to see Smith as a key leader, even a savior.⁸

But then Smith and his band traveled too far. Venturing farther up the Chickahominy, they unwittingly entered Powhatan winter hunting grounds. Powhatan warriors captured Smith as he was onshore. Some of them killed two of his crew, John Robinson and Thomas Emry, as they lay resting in their canoe.⁹

Smith was actually captured by Opechancanough, an important Powhatan chief of the Powhatan confederation. A large and impressive man of about sixty, Opechancanough was a half-brother or cousin to Chief Powhatan, and something like an uncle to Pocahontas. Due to his matrilineal

8. Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 50–51. The fact that Indians were often at first willing to trade for corn, giving up a key resource, suggests that they were economically fairly prosperous and secure.

9. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 67–69; Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 45, 51. Townsend maintains that Powhatan sent Opechancanough specifically to capture Smith, partly to gather intelligence from him.

family connections he was actually Powhatan's heir, and in fact succeeded him as paramount chief when Powhatan died in 1618.¹⁰

Opechancanough first took Smith to the Indians' temporary hunting village. Later—apparently when the Indians had completed their hunting in the area and were ready to move back downriver—Opechancanough took Smith to various Indian towns in succession over several days. “At each place I expected they would execute me,” Smith said, “yet they used me with what kindness they could.” The Indians were in fact rather fascinated with Smith and his equipment, such as his “compass dial.” Smith explained its use and proceeded on “a discourse of the roundness of the earth, the course of the sun, moon, stars, and planets.”¹¹ Smith had facility with languages and had already learned some Powhatan words. Day by day he picked up others, eventually becoming fairly fluent—in marked contrast to almost all the other English.

News of Smith's capture spread quickly through the network of Indian towns. “All the women and children” in each village “came forth to meet” the Indian party and their captive, who was always guarded by armed Indian bowmen.¹² Smith noted that the Indians lived in lodges made of mats stretched over curved poles or branches—shelters easily dismantled and carried to the Indians' next site.¹³

By now it was December and the weather had turned colder. Still Opechancanough and his party kept moving from town to town. At one Paspahugh town the local chief “took great delight in understanding the manner of our ships and sailing the seas, the earth and skies, and of our God,” Smith wrote.¹⁴

Opechancanough led the party to the Indian town of Menapacute on the York (Pamunkey) River where another half-brother, Opitchapam, ruled the populous Pamunkey people. Here Smith counted about a hundred houses spread over a fairly wide plain—and the chief's residence on a “high

10. Cf. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 27–29, 189; Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 24, 44–46. At this point it appears that Opechancanough was third in line in the succession; apparently the first (Opitchapam) and second predeceased Powhatan himself.

11. Smith, “True Relation,” 157.

12. *Ibid.*, 157–58.

13. *Ibid.*, 159.

14. *Ibid.*, 158.

sandy hill” in the town. “More abundance of fish and fowl and a pleasanter seat cannot be imagined,” Smith wrote.¹⁵

Opechancanough now allowed Smith to send a written message to Jamestown via Indian couriers, assuring the English he was safe and well cared for. If the Jamestown settlers thought Smith had been killed by the Indians, Smith warned, they might come seeking revenge.

Not knowing English nor how to read, Opechancanough was unaware that Smith’s note also warned Jamestown of a possible imminent Indian attack. Opechancanough was in fact frustrated in trying to get information about Smith, his people, and their intentions, due to the language barrier.

As Smith traveled from town to town with the Indians, he finally realized their final destination was Werowocomoco, Chief Powhatan’s capital on the York (Pamunkey) River, twenty miles north of Jamestown.

SMITH AT POWHATAN’S CAPITAL

Opechancanough and his party arrived at Werowocomoco with their exotic captive on about December 30, 1607. Here Smith would finally meet Chief Powhatan himself, about whom he had heard so much.

Walking into Werowocomoco in the late afternoon, Opechancanough and his warriors led Smith through the town to Powhatan’s house.

At Werowocomoco Smith was again treated as an honored guest—or so it seemed. Chief Powhatan understood that Smith was a strategic asset and a person of status among the English. It made sense to keep him alive, at least for the time being.

With his bushy beard, short stocky frame, light skin, and strange clothes and smell, Smith was a curiosity. Unsure of his captors’ intent, Smith feared for his life. Maybe the Indians were fattening him to be the main course at a feast! (He later learned the Powhatan weren’t cannibals.)

Though wary of the English, Powhatan and Opechancanough were also “intensely curious” about them, and especially about Smith.¹⁶ Price notes that Opechancanough “was far more skeptical of English intentions, and more eager to be rid of these foreigners, than was his older brother,” Chief Powhatan. Opechancanough “held a more coldly realistic view of the long-term threat from the English.”¹⁷

15. *Ibid.*, 159.

16. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 68.

17. Price, *Love and Hate*, 63.

JOHN SMITH MEETS POWHATAN

When Smith arrived bound at Werowocomoco, little Pocahontas was probably among the children and women who ran out to see him.¹⁸ “There is no knowing what she first thought of the short, stocky man past his youth, with an unkempt beard, bound as a captive. . . . In clothing, coloring, and physical type he looked different from any person she had ever seen,” notes Townsend.¹⁹

Powhatan’s dwelling was the largest house in the town. His longhouse had an elaborate entrance; Henry Spelman, who lived among the Powhatan for two years and learned their language, wrote that kings’ houses were “both broader and longer than the rest, having many dark windings and turnings before any come where the king is.”²⁰

When Smith was led into Chief Powhatan’s royal chamber (an area perhaps twenty feet wide and thirty to forty feet long²¹), he was amazed by what he saw. There was Powhatan, seated like royalty, ready to receive this foreigner who was rapidly becoming famous among them. Townsend describes the scene: Powhatan “was reclining in state on a low platform, with long chains of white beads and pearls around his neck, dressed in a gorgeous fur robe decorated with the extraordinary black-ringed tails of *aroughcun* [raccoons], an animal no Englishman had ever seen before. He was symbolically surrounded by his subject tribes in the persons of his wives—though the political point was lost on Smith, who later referred to them only as ‘wenches.’ After some moments of silence, Powhatan made an elaborate speech.”²²

Chief Powhatan was following tribal protocol for receiving a dignitary. The initial period of silence was intentional, enhancing the sense of awe and of the chief’s authority. Possibly it was accompanied by the smoking of a pipe of tobacco by the chief and passed as well to Smith, before food was served.²³

In his own account a few months later, Smith wrote:

18. Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 46.

19. *Ibid.*, 46. Barbour describes the Smith-Powhatan encounter in some detail in *Pocahontas*, 23–26.

20. Spelman, “Relation of Virginia,” 487.

21. Cf. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 78.

22. Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 51–52. It may not literally be true that no Englishman had seen a raccoon before.

23. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 76.

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[Chief Powhatan was] proudly lying upon a bedstead a foot high, upon ten or twelve mats, richly hung with many chains of great pearls about his neck, and covered with a great covering of [raccoon skins]; at his head sat a woman, at his feet another, on each side sitting upon a mat upon the ground were ranged his chief man on each side [of] the fire, ten in rank, and behind them as many young women [i.e., more of Powhatan's wives] each a great chain of white beads over their shoulders, their heads painted in red, and [Chief Powhatan] with such a grave and majestic countenance as drave me into admiration to see such state in a naked savage.²⁴

Present in addition to Powhatan's "loveliest wives" would likely have been his immediate heirs: his three brothers and two sisters (this being a matrilineal society), some priests and councilors, and some of the tribal chiefs who were subject to Powhatan.²⁵

"Establishing his own high status and power was [Powhatan's] (and his subjects') major concern in this first and very formal meal taken with the outlander," as Rountree notes. "A chief of Powhatan's importance would want his guest to be aware that many of the decorative, nubile ladies he saw were his host's wives."²⁶

As platters of food were carried in, Smith saw he was to be the guest at an elaborate feast.

Where was Pocahontas? The eleven-year-old was probably busy with the other women and girls (her stepmothers and half-sisters, mainly) preparing food and doing chores. Her father's audience with Smith was not a children's event, though during the feasting some of the women and children probably passed in and out, serving food.²⁷

At some point Pocahontas met and briefly interacted with Smith. Later history suggests that from the beginning Pocahontas felt sympathy and perhaps affection for the stranger. They were probably out of doors "when the two sat and tried to converse through the language barrier."²⁸

24. Smith, "True Relation," 160–61.

25. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 78.

26. *Ibid.*, 78.

27. Rountree writes, "Eleven-year-old girls (and boys, for that matter) were not very important on diplomatic occasions, and no historical account mentions any children at any formal Powhatan reception that preceded a feast. . . . The foreigner was going to remain in town for several days, so Pocahontas and her half siblings would have plenty of chances to meet him later on" (Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 77).

28. *Ibid.*, 78.

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Perky and inquisitive as she was, she was curious about him. Mutual affection and fascination started to form a bond; this was not the invention of later romanticizers.

DID POCAHONTAS RESCUE JOHN SMITH?

What happened shortly after the feast has sparked hot controversy for 400 years. The traditional story: Chief Powhatan set about to execute Smith but was thwarted by his compassionate daughter, who rushed forward and threw herself on Smith to save him. Others argue that this presumed harrowing encounter was actually an adoption ceremony through which Powhatan established his authority over Smith as a way of neutralizing the English threat. Smith would now be honor-bound to respect the Indians' rights, and in fact be an adopted member of the tribe—and thus loyal to Powhatan. As Randy Woodley points out, "Everyone in Indian country must have a status of relationship to be clear on proper protocol expectations. Making Smith a relative of Pocahontas would have actually forbade any romantic encounter in the future as marriage between clan members and relatives was strictly taboo."²⁹

The former story is more dramatic and romantic, and ever popular. Many scholars, however, think the latter is historically more plausible. The issue is, did Pocahontas rescue John Smith from death by clubbing, as Smith later told the tale, or did Powhatan in some sense "adopt" Smith in order to pacify the English invaders? Or was the story an invention of Smith's fertile mind?

This is how John Smith first reported the story about fifteen years later, describing himself in the third person:

Having feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was two great stones were brought before Powhatan. Then as many as could laid hands on him [Smith], dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head; and being ready with their clubs to beat out his brains, Pocahontas, the king's dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms and laid her own upon his to save him from death; whereat the emperor was contented he should live

29. Randy Woodley, email to author, January 30, 2014.

to make him hatchets, and [for] her bells, beads, and copper, for they thought him as [capable] of all occupations as themselves.³⁰

Interestingly, one of the most dramatic retellings of this story was by John Marshall, the first US Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in his 1804 five-volume *Life of George Washington*: “There [John Smith] was doomed to be put to death, by laying his head upon a stone, and beating out his brains with clubs. He was led to the place of execution, and his head bowed down for the purpose of death, when Pocahontas, the king’s darling daughter, then about thirteen years of age, whose entreaties for his life had been ineffectual, rushed between him and his executioner, and folding his head in her arms, and laying hers upon it, arrested the fatal blow. Her father was then prevailed on to spare his life.”³¹

Anthropologist Helen Rountree is counted among the skeptics of the rescue story. Her explanation: Smith was in fact never “in any danger”; Powhatan did not yet know the English adventurers’ intentions, and Smith was a significant “potential source of information” (which is certainly true). Although Smith had been taken captive, his “position, on the evening of December 30, 1607, was that of a representative of his country.” Rountree believes the “logical conclusion . . . is that Pocahontas did not rescue John Smith. Even if she had been inside the house at the time, he would not have needed rescuing from anything other than overeating.”³²

Historian Camilla Townsend in her 2004 study similarly dismissed the rescue story as Smith’s self-serving invention. Smith had in fact reported similar unverifiable adventures in other parts of the world. In his travel narratives Smith “never failed to mention that at each critical juncture a beautiful young woman had fallen in love with him and interceded on his behalf.” Rountree similarly points out that if Smith is to be believed, he “had a knack for getting into drastic situations and then being rescued by high-ranking females. He claimed it happened [to] him not only in Virginia but also in Turkey and the Russian steppes.”³³

30. Smith, “General History: The Third Book,” 239. The date was apparently December 30 or 31, 1607, though some scholars who interpret the event as an adoption ceremony place it later. In his many writings, Smith told this story a total of eight times, and it never seems to have been contradicted or questioned by any of the Native Americans who were present. See Lemay, *Did Pocahontas Save*, 58–63.

31. Marshall, *Life of George Washington*, 1:42.

32. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 79–80, 82.

33. Townsend, *Pocahontas*, 52–53; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 80. Townsend quotes examples from Smith’s writings. Barbour concludes that “The ceremony of which Smith

So did Pocahontas's dramatic rescue of John Smith in December 1607 really happen? It still remains an open question. Though the event may seem highly unlikely, it *could* have occurred. Even the Virginia anthropologist Helen Rountree does not positively rule it out, speaking rather of "the rescue that *may* not have happened."³⁴

Price argues that the rescue occurred just as Smith described it, pointing out that Smith hardly comes off as a hero. "To be taken prisoner . . . and then to be saved by a young native girl was hardly an admirable achievement." Price sees no "reason to doubt that Pocahontas was just who she appeared to be that day: a girl acting compassionately toward the pitiable stranger in front of her."³⁵

Smith himself later wrote that Pocahontas's "compassionate pitiful [pitying] heart . . . gave me much cause to respect her" and that she was in fact instrumental in saving Jamestown.³⁶

The veracity of the story hinges finally on the credibility of Smith's reports. Smith was a careful observer and narrator, and if he sometimes exaggerated, his reports generally accord with other reliable documents, where available.

Having weighed the evidence on both sides, I conclude that the rescue may have happened pretty much as Smith describes—adding however some qualifications based on issues of cultural understanding. The simplicity and naïveté of Smith's language argues for it. That the story is improbable is certainly no argument against it; many of the most significant real happenings in history were improbable! That's partly why they are so important. It could indeed have been an adoption enactment however, misunderstood by Smith.

Haile's comment is apt: "For my part, I see in this man, who entitles a chapter 'What happened,' a simplicity and directness bespeaking a fundamental honesty, a vainglory that charms more than it deceives."³⁷ It is

had been the object was almost certainly a combination of mock execution and salvation, in token of adoption into Powhatan's tribe" (Barbour, *Pocahontas*, 24).

34. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 76 (emphasis added); see 76–82.

35. Price, *Love and Hate*, 242, 245. Price discusses the question at some length and finds the historian Lemay convincing (*Did Pocahontas Save*). Regarding Smith's somewhat varying accounts, Haile comments, "Why did Smith keep putting served wine in new bottles? To sell books, for he lived on nothing else unless the charity of his friends" (Haile, ed., editorial comment, *Jamestown Narratives*, 216).

36. Quoted in Price, *Love and Hate*, 5.

37. Haile, introducing Smith's "General History: The Third Book," in Haile, ed.,

also well to remember that Smith, though no scholar, was a prolific author, and the rescue story occupies only a few pages of the thousands that he published.

However one assesses the great rescue account, the rest of the story is clear enough. Chief Powhatan's main concern was to find out more about the English. What were they up to? Native encounters with occasional Spanish incursions in the previous century gave good reason to be wary.

Powhatan asked Smith directly about English intentions. Smith was devious. Rather than saying that the English intended to stay permanently, establish a commercial colony, and bring the Indians under their control, Smith invented a tale. He claimed the English had been attacked at sea by Spanish ships, and then a storm had driven them into Chesapeake Bay. The Jamestown settlement was temporary, he implied; the English were repairing one of their damaged ships and waiting for Captain Newport to return (true) and take them all back to England (false).

Why then, Powhatan asked, had the English gone exploring further upriver? Smith invented another tale: A child of his "father" (King James I) had been killed by inland Indians, probably the Monacans (enemies of the Powhatans), and the English were seeking to avenge the death.

This claim led to an extended discussion, probably dimly understood on both sides, between Powhatan and Smith about North American and European geography.³⁸

Chief Powhatan could see that the English were powerful, with their ships ("floating islands"), guns, and potentially large numbers. Perhaps they could be valuable allies against his inland Indian enemies—his main concern at the moment—and perhaps also against further Spanish incursions.

An alliance with the English as a defense against the Spanish actually made some sense.³⁹ One hundred-fifty years later French alliances with northern and inland Indian tribes became the basis for the so-called French and Indian War (1754–1763).

Powhatan was still wary and suspicious, however. He did not fully trust either the English or Smith's explanations. As Rountree puts it, "Powhatan concluded that the Strangers were worth gathering in as allies against

Jamestown Narratives, 217. Haile adds that Smith "had a reputation for being difficult and he earned it. After many books he died in poverty. . . . [He was] a fascinating character, one larger than anybody but Powhatan" (*ibid.*).

38. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 82–83; Price, *Love and Hate*, 66–67.

39. Custalow and Daniel, *True Story*, 17.

his inland enemies. However, they were also well worth keeping a close watch upon.”⁴⁰

So Powhatan offered a deal. He would give the English the town of Capahowasick, just downriver from his capital on the York (Pamunkey) River and twenty miles or so from the Jamestown site, in exchange for good relations with the English. Smith really had no authority to negotiate, but of course he was the only Englishman present. Smith says Powhatan wanted the English to give up the idea of a more inland site further up the James River “and to live with him upon his river,” at Capahowasick (where of course Powhatan could keep an eye on them). Powhatan “promised to give me corn, venison, or what I wanted to feed us; hatchets and copper we should make for him, and none should disturb us. This request I promised to perform.”⁴¹ Powhatan also wanted Smith to send him “two great guns and a grindstone” as part of the deal.⁴²

Powhatan thought, or perhaps pretended, that Smith agreed to this deal and thus had made a solemn covenant according to Indian practice and culture. (This becomes important later in Smith’s relationship with Pocahontas.) Smith probably took the deal more as an initial arrangement of coexistence. Rountree says, “It is unlikely that [Smith] realized to what extent the alliance was taken seriously by Powhatan,” whom Smith did not fully trust; and in any case Powhatan’s intention “was to assimilate the Strangers, not vice versa.” Smith probably also didn’t realize “the extent to which the alliance was a personal one, between two leaders, in Powhatan’s mind,” and thus of lasting significance.⁴³ In keeping with Powhatan culture, the chief now considered Smith his “son.” Though both men were wary of the other, from Powhatan’s point of view they had entered into a personal honor-bound covenant.

During his brief time at Werowocomoco following his rescue, Smith interacted some with the Powhatan people, including Pocahontas. Rountree writes,

Time probably had to be made to satisfy the curiosity of the townspeople about the exotic visitor. Most had never seen a European before. He would have appeared unearthly pale to them, and they probably wondered if he was white all over. His face was

40. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 83.

41. Smith, “True Relation,” 162.

42. Smith, “General History: The Third Book,” 240.

43. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 83.

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hairier than any native man's could ever be. His clothing was most peculiar and decidedly impractical for the life a 'real man' led. His body odor must have been awful, for it is unlikely that he would have been forced to bathe in the icy York River, as the townspeople did each morning. But his value as a curiosity was inestimable, and he must have been surrounded by a welter of people when he was not visiting with Powhatan.

It would have been during these more relaxed times that Pocahontas made [Smith's] acquaintance. And as she had charmed her father, so she seems ultimately to have made more of an impression upon [Smith] than anyone else in the town. How much of that impression stemmed from their first meeting at Werowocomoco is impossible to say.⁴⁴

RETURN TO JAMESTOWN

With an escort of Indians, Smith started back to Jamestown on January 1, 1608. Chief Powhatan sent Smith back to Jamestown thinking that he had converted Smith "and the country he came from into allies of his own. Sealing the alliance may or may not have been done in some colorful way," such as the more elaborate account Smith gave later, in 1624.⁴⁵

Opposite motives were at work. The English wanted the Indians to be part of the British Empire. Chief Powhatan wanted to make the British "part of the Powhatan nation."⁴⁶

Leaving Werowocomoco on New Year's Day, 1608, Smith and several Powhatan warriors traveled back to Jamestown. The party was led by Rawhunt, Chief Powhatan's "most trusted messenger."⁴⁷ This was normally a one-day walk through the woods, south from the York to the James River. But Smith's Indian escort took their time. The group stayed overnight at an Indian hunting lodge.

The delay may have been intentional. Captain Newport and his supply ships (the "First Supply," as it was called) were about to arrive in Jamestown, and some of Powhatan's scouts may have spotted the white sails on the horizon. A day's delay enabled Smith's Indian escort to arrive in Jamestown on

44. *Ibid.*, 83. Rountree invents the name "Chawnzmit" for Smith, suggesting that this is probably how "Smith" would have sounded to the Powhatans (6).

45. *Ibid.*, 84.

46. Custalow and Daniel, *True Story*, 65.

47. Price, *Love and Hate*, 70.

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January 2, the same day Newport arrived—giving them crucial intelligence to report to Powhatan. Indians from villages along the James River, probably curious, “lined the riverside . . . watching the watercraft with their ‘wings’ spread and speculating about what the ships had brought this time.”⁴⁸

Smith and his Indian escort finally walked into Jamestown early on January 2. Now safely returned, John Smith sent some gifts back to Chief Powhatan, though not the big guns Powhatan requested. Smith cleverly showed the Indians a couple of two-ton cannons, too heavy to carry, fearfully demonstrating one by firing it into an ice-covered tree.

The Indian escort returned to Chief Powhatan with the gifts Smith had sent and with details of Captain Newport’s arrival—including the news that still more Englishmen and supplies had disembarked. Newport brought with him about sixty new colonists and enough provisions to see the colony through the winter.⁴⁹

48. Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 85.

49. Price, *Love and Hate*, 71.