

Jamestown Primary Source Quotations

Quotation 1

We came with our ships to Cape Comfort, where we saw five [Virginia Indians] running on the shore. . . . [After] rowing ashore, the captain called to them a sign of friendship, but they were at first very [fearful] until they saw the captain lay his hand on his heart. Upon that they laid down their bows and arrows and came very boldly to us, making signs to come ashore to their town, which [they call] Kecoughtan.

George Percy, “Observations Gathered Out of a Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony of Virginia by the English, 1606,” as quoted in Haile, p. 91.



Quotation 2

Our men were destroyed with cruel diseases . . . but for the most part they died of mere famine. . . . Thus we lived for the space of five months in this miserable distress. . . . It pleased God after a while to send [the Virginia Indians] which were our mortal enemies to relieve us with . . . bread, corn, fish, and flesh in great plenty, which was the setting up of our [weak and starving] men; otherwise we had all perished. Also, we were frequented by [many] kings in the country bringing us [supplies] to our great comfort.

George Percy, “Observations Gathered Out of a Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony of Virginia by the English, 1606,” as quoted in Haile, pp. 99–100.



Quotation 3

[Chief Powhatan said] . . . ‘Therefore lay me down all your commodities together. What I like I will take, and in [return] give you what I think fitting their value.’ . . . He fixed his humor upon a few blue beads. A long time he . . . desired them, [and] Smith . . . [described the beads] as being composed of the most rare substance of the color of the skies, and not to be worn but by the greatest kings in the world. . . . [Before] we departed, for a pound or two of blue beads [John Smith] bought . . . 2[00] or 300 bushels of corn, yet parted good friends.

John Smith, *The General History of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*, as quoted in Haile, p. 246.



Quotation 4

Our captain caused a gentleman to discharge his [gun] soldier-like before [the Virginia Indian chief], at which noise he started, stopped his ears, and expressed much fear, so likewise all [of the Virginia Indians around] him. Some of his people being in our boat leapt overboard at the wonder [of this]. . . . [After telling him] that we never use this thunder but against our enemies, yea, and that we would assist him with these [guns] to terrify and kill his [enemies], he rejoiced the more; and we found that it bred better affection in him towards us.

Gabriel Archer, “A Relation of the Discovery of Our River from James Fort into the Main, Made by Captain Christopher Newport,” as quoted in Edward Wright Haile, ed., *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Accounts of the Virginia Colony, the First Decade, 1607–1617* (Champlain, Va.: Round House, 1998), pp. 111–112.