

# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Topics of Discussion

- I. Virginia Company of London: Jamestown
- II. John Smith and the Pocahontas Story
- III. Fiasco; Reorganization; Royalization
- IV. Sir William Berkeley and his Virginia Elite
- V. The Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century Social Order
- VI. Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
- VII. The Move to Slavery
- VIII. Political development, 1680-1720



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Virginia Company of London: Jamestown

- A. 1606: VA Company of London received charter from James I (r. 1603-1625)
- B. May 1607: Susan Constant, Godspeed, Discovery arrive in Virginia
- C. 105 settlers select site for Jamestown
- D. Encounter Powhatan Confederacy







*POWHATAN held this state & fashion when Capt. Smith was delivered to him prisoner, 1607.*

- 1 Mantapoyck
- 2 Topohanock
- 3 Onquackock
- 4 Mannough
- 5 Opahaock
- 6 Quosauock
- 7 Doghtacot
- 8 Matlahum
- 9 Iquonock
- 10 Matlharrens
- 11 Potawunkack
- 12 Weanock
- 13 Capahowasak
- 14 Cantanack
- 15 Samquonock
- 16 Iaspahigh
- 17 Ansatock

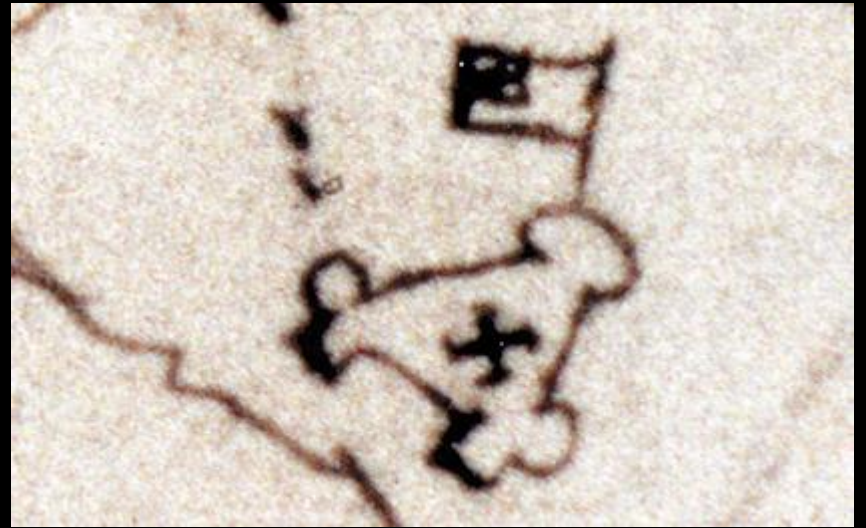
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INDIAN VILLAGE OF SECOTON (no. 38A, cf. pl. 135)



INDIAN IN BODY PAINT (no. 52A, cf. pls. 83 (a), 123 (b))



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Virginia Company of London: Jamestown

E. Plant experimental crops; malaria; starvation

F. January 1608: only 38 of 105 settlers alive

G. New Arrivals: No preparations in place



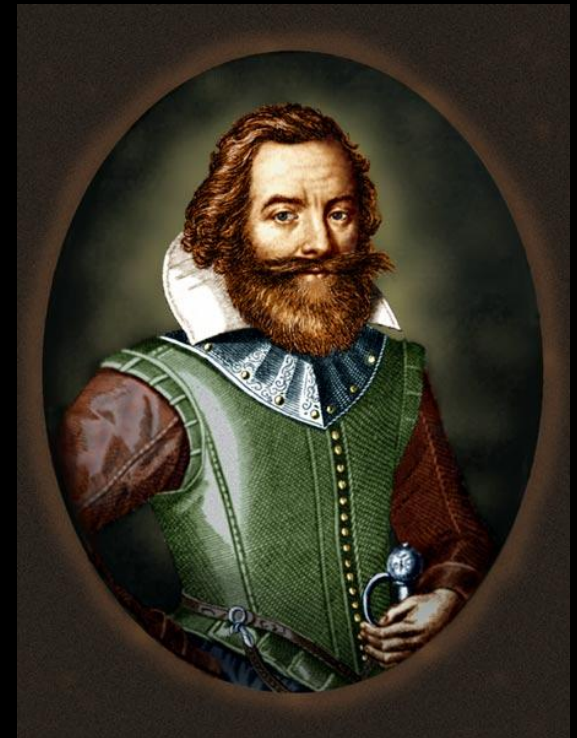
# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

### Emergence of John Smith (1580-1631)

- Autobiography, *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captaine John Smith* (1630).
- Smith claimed that he went to sea at 16. He was shipwrecked in the Mediterranean, fought in Transylvania, was captured by the Turks, enslaved in Tartary, and escaped to travel across Russia and Europe back to England by 1604.
- 1606-07: Smith traveled to Jamestown on first voyage
- 1608: Smith traveled through Virginia and mapped it.
- Smith elected president of council in September 1608  
strict discipline: "He who does not work, will not eat."
- Smith injured and returns to England 1609.



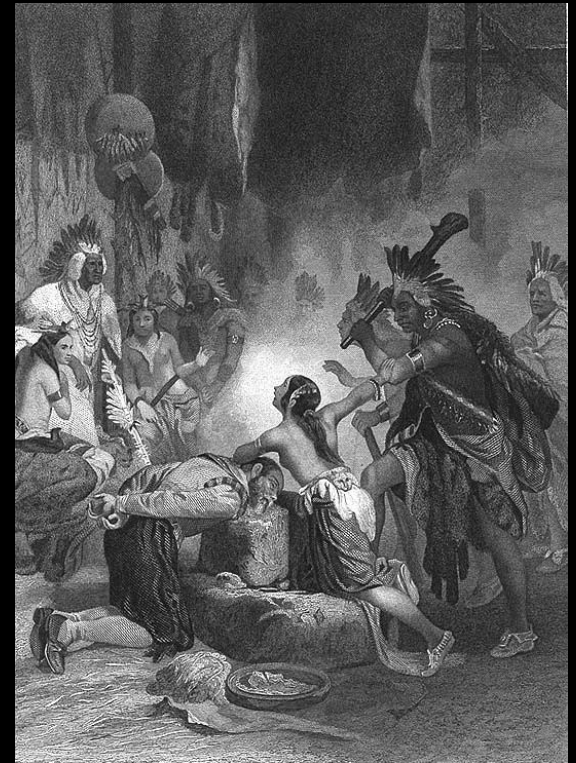
# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

### The Traditional Pocahontas Story

- December 1607: while seeking food along the Chickahominy River, Smith was captured by Opechancanough and taken to meet Powhatan at Werowocomoco, the chief village of the Confederacy.
- Pocahontas story: “At the minute of my execution, she hazarded the beating out of her own brains to save mine; and not only that, but so prevailed with her father, that I was safely conducted to Jamestown.”









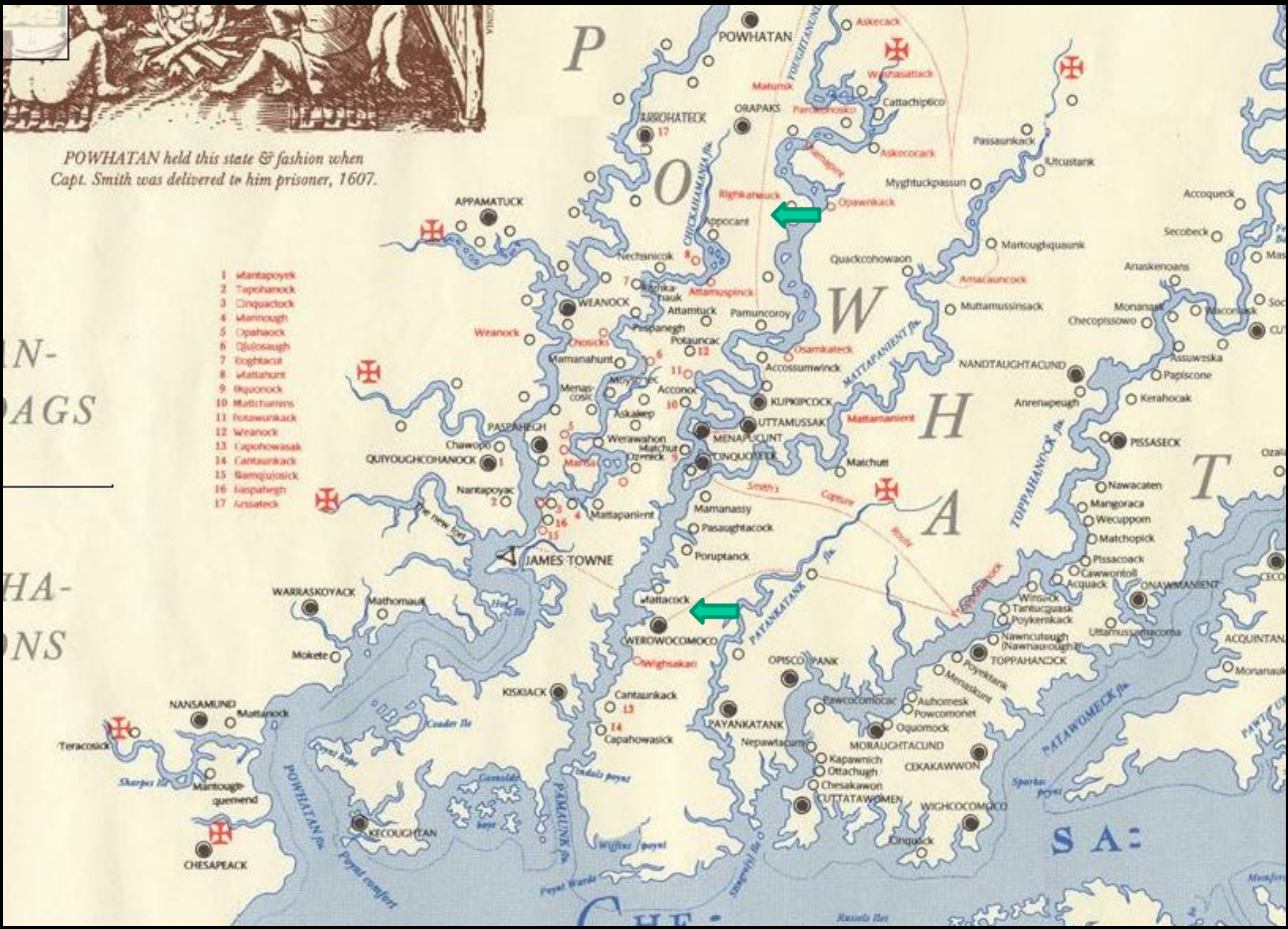


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# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720

## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story



### First Problem with the Pocahontas story

Does NOT appear in Smith's first three accounts of VA

- *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Hath Hapned in Virginia . . .* (1608)
- *A Map of Virginia* (1612)
- *The Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia* (1612)





# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720

## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

### Second Problem with the Pocahontas story

Initially appeared in print in Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England & the Summer Isles . . .* (1624)

AFTER Pocahontas had married John Rolfe (1614), traveled to England (1616-17), and become a celebrity

Jan 1617: Pocahontas before King at Whitehall Palace.

March 1617: She died in England (pneumonia or tb)

THEN, Smith's *General History* is published in 1624

Claims to have written about Pocahontas in a letter to Queen Anne (1616), but original has never been found.



Simon van de Passe's 1616 engraving of Pocahontas

# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

### Third Problem with the Pocahontas story

Smith was a notorious braggart, and it was common for people to adopt the stories of others at the time.

One such story: Spaniard Juan Ortiz and maiden Ulele

1528: Indians captured Ortiz and 3 others searching for missing explorer Panfilio de Narvaez near Tampa Bay.

Indian chief had a score to settle with the Spanish because Narvaez cut off his nose and killed his mother

Ortiz to be roasted alive, but Ulele saved him.

Story published in English in 1605.



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

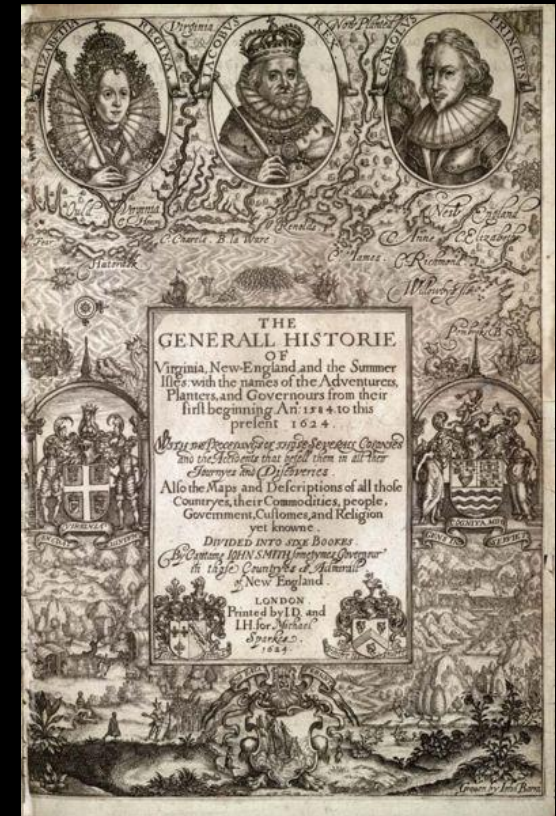
### Fourth Problem with the Pocahontas story

Smith's engraver definitely copied earlier works on Virginia for his *General History* (1624).

Most obvious example: visual depiction of events.

On the same page as the Pocahontas story, we find a creative reproduction of John White's depiction of a fertility festival.

Smith has refashioned the event as a "savage dance of triumph" - "Their triumph about him"









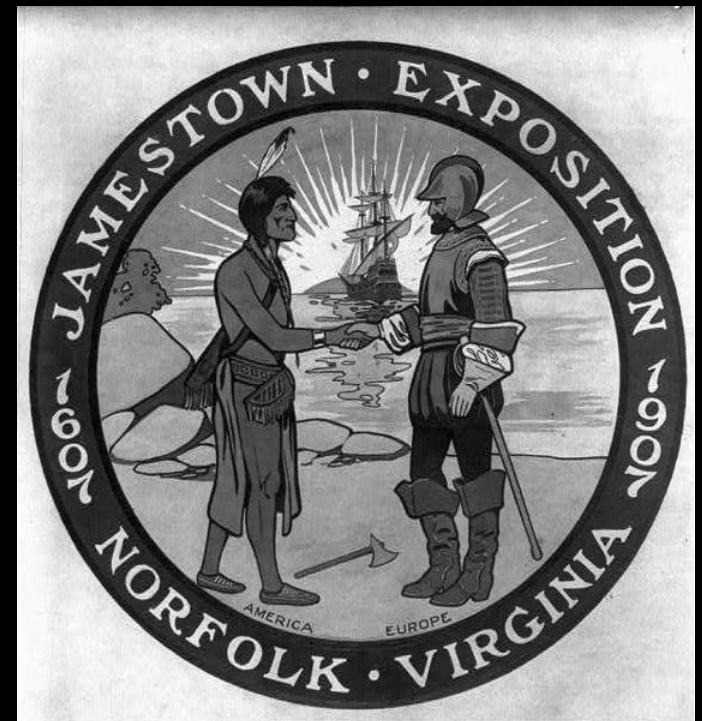


# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## John Smith and the Pocahontas Story

What is the significance of the Pocahontas story?





# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Fiasco; Reorganization; Royalization

### Jamestown Fiasco (1607-1618)

- John Smith left colony in 1609
- Starving Times, 1609
- First Anglo-Powhatan War (1610-14)
- Explaining the Fiasco

Date	Population
May 1607	105, first landing
October 1608	200, from new arrivals
Summer 1609	131, death from disease
August 1609	381, from new arrivals
October 1609	280, death from Indian attack
May 1610	90, "starving time"
June 1610	375, from new arrivals
December 1610	250, death from disease and Indian war
Late March 1611	152, departures, death from Indian attack
Early May 1611	482, from new arrivals
August 1611	752, from new arrivals
December 1611	600, death from Indian attacks
May 1615	400
1619	700, approximate

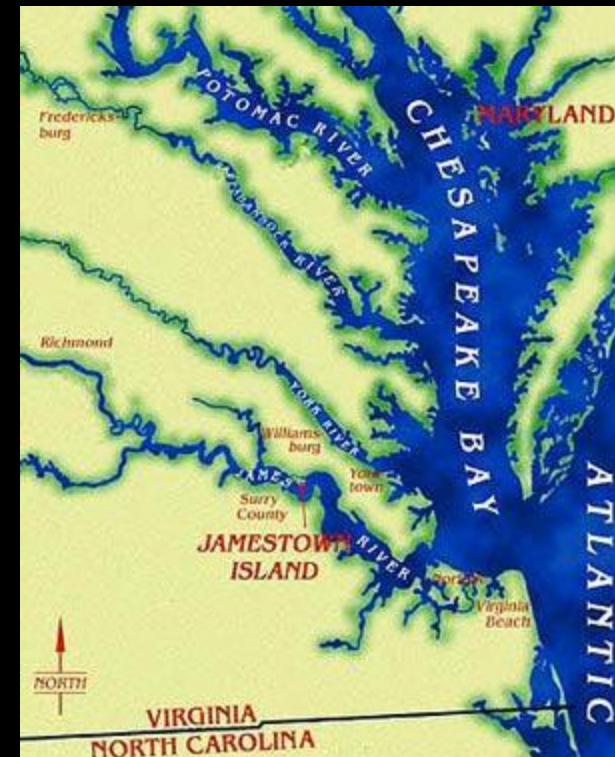
# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



Fiasco; Reorganization; Royalization

## Reorganization of 1618-1619

1. Headright system
2. House of Burgesses





# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



Fiasco; Reorganization; Royalization

## Royalization of 1624

- Introduction of tobacco: boomtown
- The Indian Attack of 1622
- In May 1624, James I royalized colony



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Sir William Berkeley and his Virginia Elite

### Virginia 1642 - When William Berkeley arrives

- 8,000 people living in Virginia
- Reputation: “none but those of the meanest quality and corruptest lives went there.”
- Like a modern military outpost or lumber camp
- Its leaders were rough, violent, drinking men.
- The colony was in a state of chronic disorder.



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Sir William Berkeley and his Virginia Elite

### Sir William Berkeley and Virginia

- Governor William Berkeley's (1642-1676) transformed the colony of Virginia.
- Population grew from 8,000 to 40,000.
- Virginia developed a coherent social order, a functioning economic system, and a strong sense of its own special folkways.
- Acquired a governing elite which Berkeley described as "men of as good families as any subjects in England."





# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Sir William Berkeley and his Virginia Elite

### Berkeley and his Cavalier elite

- Royalist Cavalier elite comes to Virginia
- Who were the Cavaliers?
  1. James I, 1603-1625
  2. Charles I, 1625-1649
  3. Politics: Petition of Rights, 1628
  4. Religion: High Church Anglicans v. Puritans
  5. Eleven Years of Tyranny, 1629-1640
  6. England's Civil War 1640-1649
  7. Cavaliers and Roundheads
  8. English Commonwealth 1649-1660
- Many Cavaliers came to Virginia



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Sir William Berkeley and his Virginia Elite

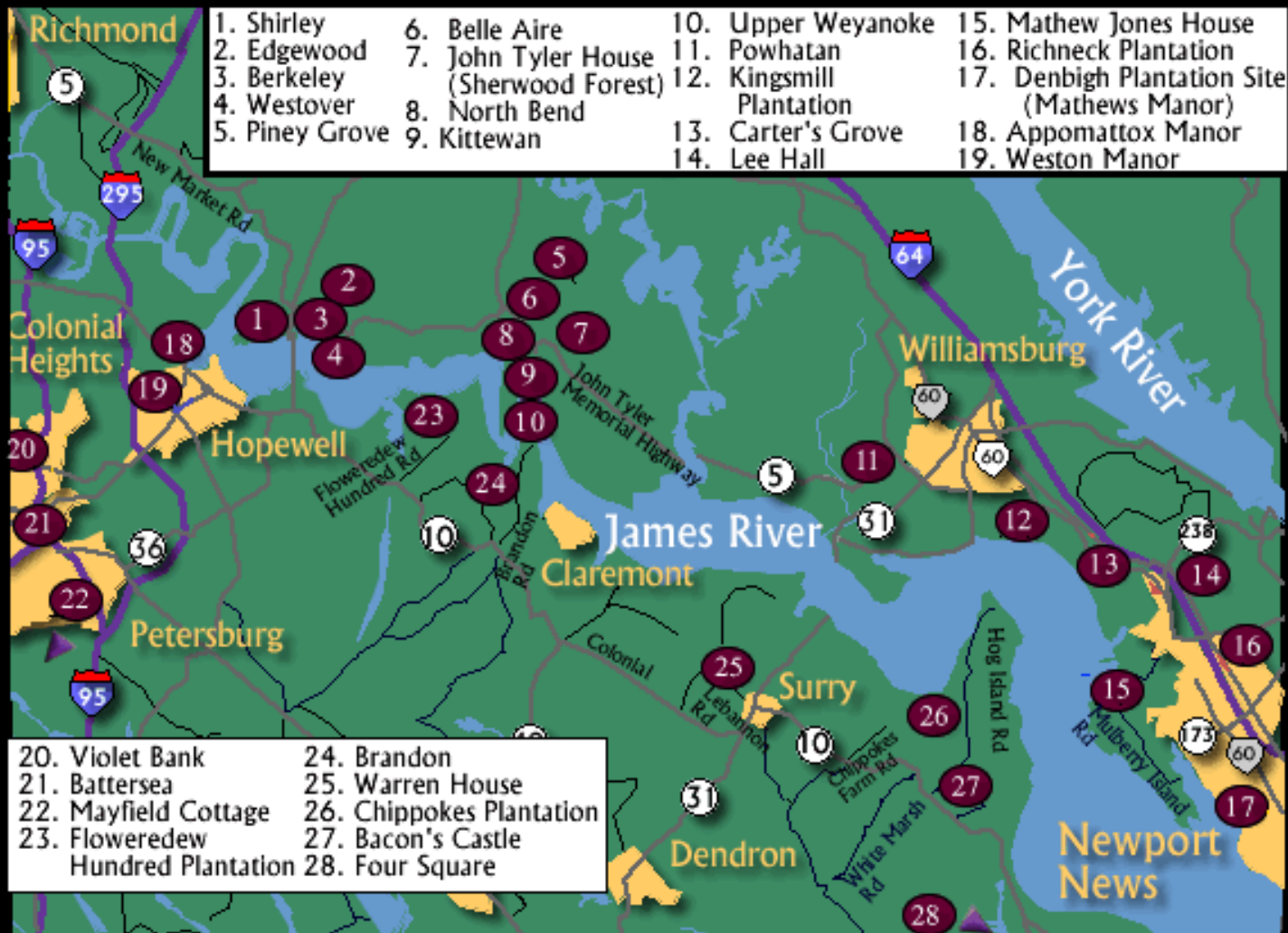
### Elite Domination

- Political Domination
- Economic Domination
- Cultural Domination









<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/jamesriver/sitelist.htm#essays>

# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## The Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century Social Order

### Social Order Based on Tobacco Economy

- Land and Labor were essential commodities
- Structure

Outside: Indians Second Anglo-Powhatan War (1644-46)

Bottom: Slaves, at most 1,000 in 1660.

Above Slaves: Indentured servants

Top: Elite

Below Elite: Established householders

Middle: Freedmen



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## The Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century Social Order

### The Problems Posed by Freedmen

- Indentured servitude worked: 1607-1640
- After 1640, circumstances changed:  
little prime land; few freedom dues; Indian frontier
- Freedmen looked very dangerous:  
young, frustrated, un-married, armed
- Presence of this growing group of  
freedmen frightened the elite





# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Bacon's Rebellion (1676)

- Freedmen volunteered to fight the Indians
- Governor Berkeley refuses offer
- Nathaniel Bacon leads men anyway - they turn on their rulers
- Largest popular rising in the colonies before the American Revolution.
- Burn Jamestown - 1676
- Rebellion produced no real program of reform
- Ended when Bacon died suddenly
- Life-changing experience for Virginia's elite.



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## The Move to Slavery

- Virginia's elites turned to African Slavery to replace indentured servitude
- As African slaves entered Virginia, elites created different laws for them
- As the number of slaves increased, the Assembly passed laws that set them apart.
- Slave laws for people without white skin.
  1. No assembly
  2. No weapons
  3. Savage punishments permitted.
  4. Limitations on punishment of white servants



# Colonial Virginia, 1607-1720



## Political development, 1680-1720

### Freedmen & Elite Come Together

As the number of servants fell off, freedmen became more “respectable.” They grew closer to the elite because both groups were free and white, and both were surrounded by a large number of Africans who were held in bondage.

### Political development, 1680-1720

As slavery rose, white Virginians adopted a government in which freedmen had a larger share. In the House of Burgesses, whites developed egalitarian ideas of liberty. Elite Virginians could allow these ideas now because reckless freedmen no longer threatened them. Freedom was for people with white skin.

