

EARLY
EXPLORATIONS
OF THE
CHESAPEAKE
BAY

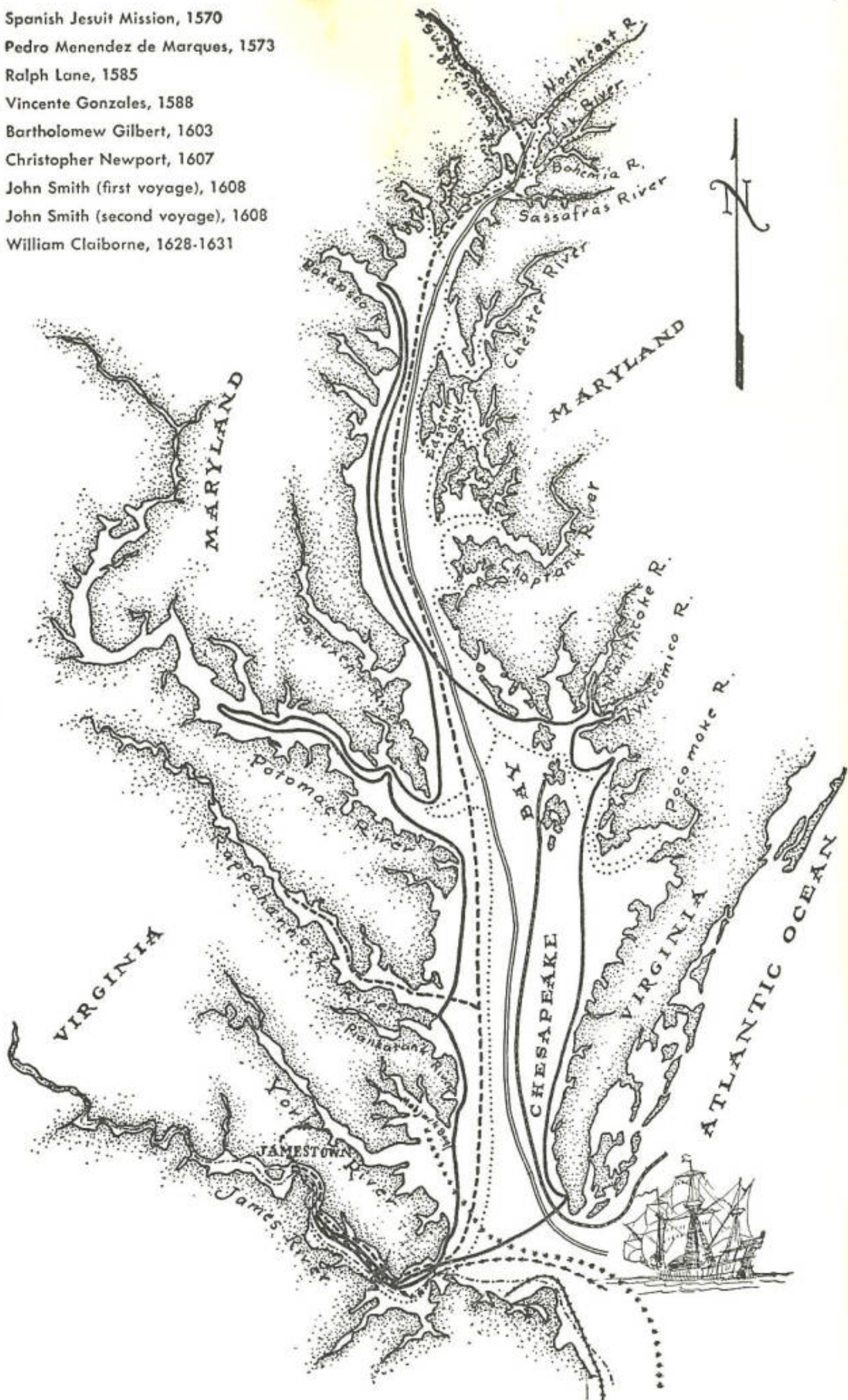


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By
GILBERT
BYRON

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- ←←←← Spanish Jesuit Mission, 1570
- ◆◆◆◆◆ Pedro Menendez de Marques, 1573
- Ralph Lane, 1585
- ==== Vincente Gonzales, 1588
- ▬▬▬▬ Bartholomew Gilbert, 1603
- · — · — Christopher Newport, 1607
- John Smith (first voyage), 1608
- John Smith (second voyage), 1608
- William Claiborne, 1628-1631



Map of the Chesapeake Bay, showing early explorations. Drawn by John Moll.

EARLY EXPLORATIONS OF
THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

By GILBERT BYRON



THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY • *Baltimore* • 1960

Other Works by Gilbert Byron

THESE CHESAPEAKE MEN, 1942 (*Poems*)

DELAWARE POEMS, 1943 (*Poems*)

WHITE COLLAR AND CHAIN, 1945 (*Poems*)

CHESAPEAKE COVE, 1953 (*Poems*)

THE LORD'S OYSTERS, 1957 (*Fiction*)

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Foreword

As a part of its mission to provide informative materials on Maryland history suitable for the use of young people, the Society takes pleasure in presenting this narrative of early explorations of the Atlantic Coast and the Chesapeake Bay.

This account, suggested by Mr. Byron out of his knowledge of needs in the high schools, is also designed for the general public. Nowhere else will be found as concise a statement of the thrilling age of coastal exploration in our area.

Other aids issued by the Society both for school use and for the public have been *My Maryland*, a condensed and well illustrated history of the State by Kaessmann, Wheeler and Manakee; *Indians of Maryland* by Harold R. Manakee; and the Wheeler Leaflets on Maryland History, covering various topics and designed particularly for the elementary grades. Similar pamphlets on other important episodes in Maryland history are in preparation by the Society.

JAMES W. FOSTER, *Director*

EARLY EXPLORATIONS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

A New World

The discovery of America by Columbus opened the doors to a new world, a world inhabited by Indians possessed of great riches, strange animals, and exotic plants. Two hundred years after this discovery, explorers were still searching for a water passage through the Americas or around them to the north. Their objectives were the riches of India, the East Indies, China, and Japan.

In 1492, Spain was the most powerful nation in Europe and claimed all of America on the basis of Columbus's voyages. Spain led the other countries in the exploration of America. The Spanish desired quick riches: gold, silver, pearls, huge profits from the capture and sale of slaves. In quest of wealth, they charted the coastline while searching for a passage to the South Sea that would carry their ships to the Orient.

To accomplish these ends, Spain developed a new breed of fighting men, the conquistadors, and these conquerors were greatly feared for their ruthless efficiency. The Indians were terrified by the sight of armored white men riding horses; the sound of cannon set them fleeing before the volleys of the cross-bowmen and musketeers. The conquistadors even trained dogs to track and kill the wounded.

The gold in Cuba and the islands of the Caribbean was soon appropriated, and the Spaniards turned toward the mainland.

Early Coastal Voyages

Before the Spanish sailed along the coast of North America, John Cabot, an Italian navigator in the employ of Henry VII of England, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and on his second voyage in 1498, explored the coastline as far south as the 38th parallel of North

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Latitude. But the early navigators invariably erred in computing their position at sea, sometimes gaining as much as an entire degree (approximately 60 miles). This correction would place Cabot somewhere along the coast of today's Maryland and Virginia. He may have been the first European to enter the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. His voyages gave England its claim to North America.

Between 1521 and 1525, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, a judge in San Domingo, an island of the West Indies, ordered a number of vessels toward the north to explore the coast. One of his captains, Pedro de Quexos, sailed past Cape Hatteras and charted a bay which was probably today's Albemarle Sound. In 1524-1525, the Portuguese explorer, Estevan Gomez, sailing for the Spanish Council of the West Indies, explored the coast of North America from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland to the Florida Keys. While he left us no written description of the discovery, it would have been difficult for him to miss the broad mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. In 1524, Giovanni Verrazano, a Florentine sea captain in the service of Francis I of France, also explored the east coast and anchored his vessel, the *Dauphine*, in Chincoteague Bay, an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean, near the present boundary line that separates Maryland and Virginia. Ashore, the Frenchmen communicated with the friendly Assateague Indians and marched inland for eight miles, until halted by the swamps along the headwaters of the Pocomoke River, a stream that empties into the Chesapeake Bay. Verrazano was the first white man to set foot on the Eastern Shore, but he did not enter the Chesapeake.

Nearly 50 years passed before Europeans again came to the Chesapeake country. In 1570 Jesuit priests from Havana, Cuba, established a mission on the York River in Virginia. For a few months all went well and trade and communication with the Indians flourished. Suddenly the Indians fell upon the Jesuits and slew all but a boy, Alonso. The next year another Spanish vessel reached the spot but was frightened off by the Indians. In 1572 a larger force, commanded by the Governor of Florida, landed and captured a number of Indians. Some of them, accused of the murders, were brought to trial and those found guilty were hanged.

The natives were compelled to release Alonso, and the vessel sailed away without attempting further settlement.

Brother Carrera, a member of the 1572 party, gave the first description of the Chesapeake. He said that the Spaniards disembarked

in a great and beautiful port, and men who have sailed a great deal and have seen it say it is the best and largest port in the world. So . . . the pilot remarked to me. It is called the Bay of the Mother of God, and in it there are many deepwater ports, each better than the next . . . It was about 3 leagues [9 miles] in the mouth and in length and breadth it was close to 30 [90 miles]. They say that at the end of it the other sea begins.

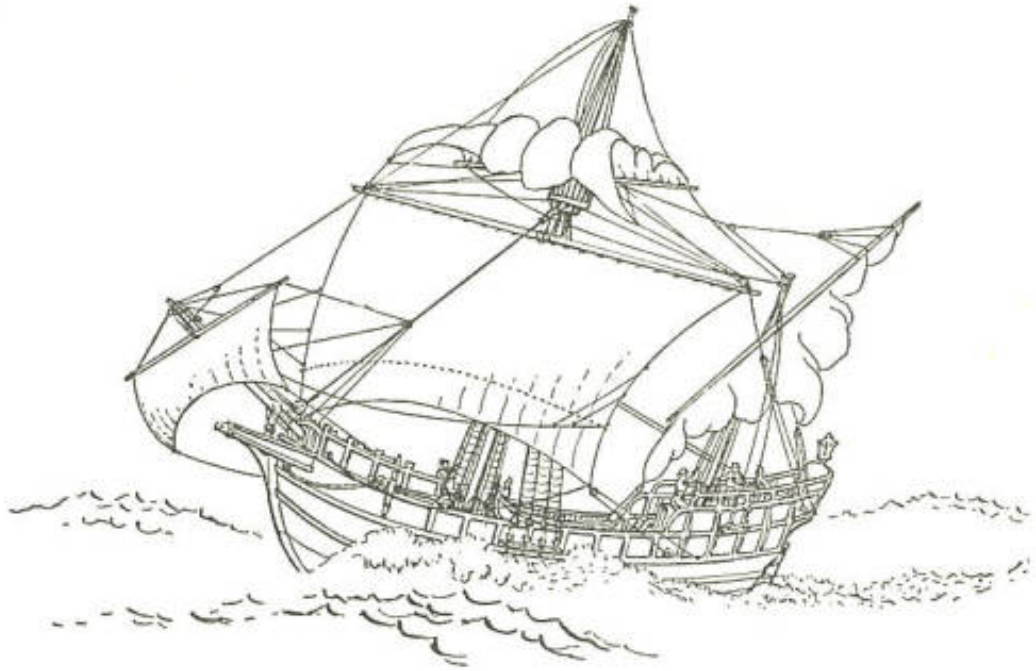
Checking the distance from Cape Charles to Cape Henry on a modern chart, one finds that the Spanish navigators were accurate. It is approximately nine miles across the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

In the following year the Governor of Florida received disturbing reports that the French to the north had discovered a transcontinental passage which threatened the Spanish in Mexico. The Governor sent his nephew, Pedro Menendez de Marques, to investigate the rumors. The latter sailed northward and entered the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, which he called "Bahia de Santa Maria." But he made no settlement there.

These visits to the Chesapeake caused scarcely a ripple of interest in the Spanish court. No one had found a transcontinental passage, gold, or pearls, nor had the French trespassers been located.

The English Enter the Chesapeake

In 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh sent colonists to America, and they established a settlement on Roanoke Island in Pamlico Sound. Soon after coming to Roanoke, Ralph Lane, governor of the colony, sailed northward along the coast and became the first Englishman to enter the Chesapeake Bay. He anchored his small craft in Lynnhaven Bay, just inside the mouth of the bay, and wrote in his log: "To the Northward our farthest discovery was to [a Town of] the Chesepians [Chesapeakes] distant from Roanoak about 130



ENGLISH BARKE, 1588

By R. Hammond Gibson

miles." His mention of the Chesapeake Indians is the first use of the word that was later applied to the entire bay.

Five years later a map based on Lane's observations appeared in Thomas Hariot's book, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. The outline of the bay is vague, and the Indian village on Lynnhaven Bay is called "Ehespiooc," an obvious misprint for "Chespiooc."

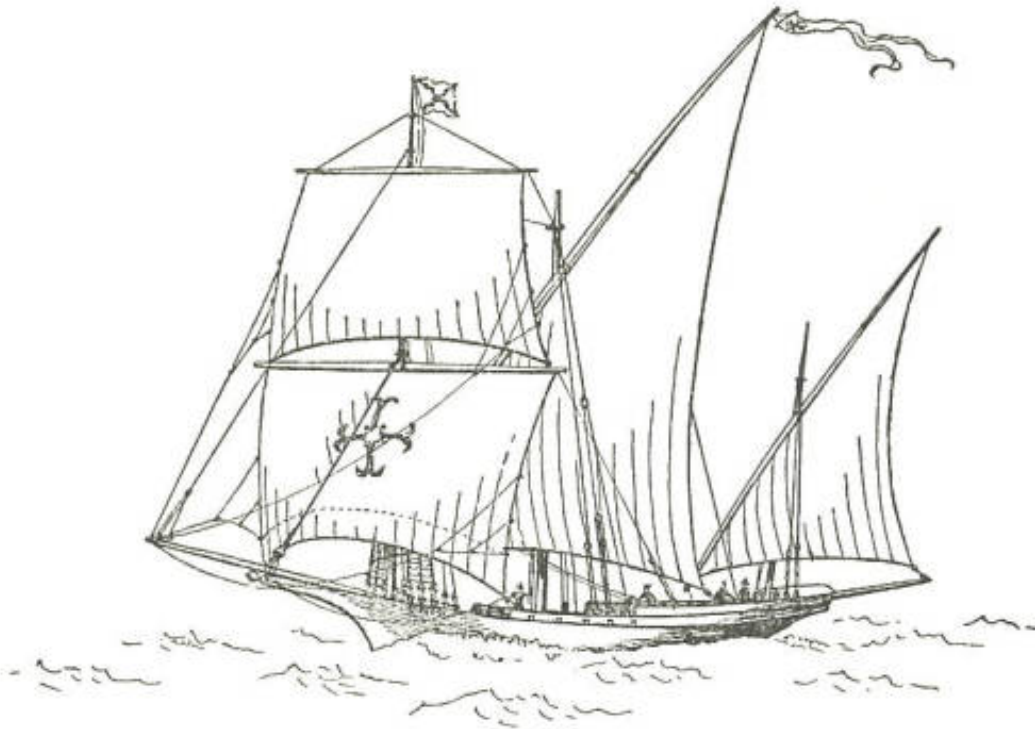
The colony on Roanoke Island did not flourish. The provisions and hopes were so low that when Sir Francis Drake called at Roanoke after raiding the Spanish Main, Governor Lane persuaded him to carry all of the settlers back to England.

Sir Walter Raleigh sent other colonists to Roanoke Island. The group that arrived in 1587 carried specific instructions to move the colony to a new site on the Chesapeake Bay. Richard Hakluyt, the noted English geographer, had advised Raleigh to make the change. But the ship captains refused to make the added voyage and returned to England. When the next English ships called at

Roanoke in 1590, the stockade had been destroyed and all of the colonists had disappeared. The only clue to their whereabouts was the word, CROATAN, carved on a tree. The Croatoans, or Croatans, were a tribe of Indians that lived nearby. What happened to the colonists on Roanoke Island remains one of the unsolved mysteries of American history.

The Voyage of Captain Vincente Gonzales, 1588

While the Duke of Medina Sidonia was supervising the preparations of the Spanish Armada for its attack on England, he received a report that the English had established a settlement on San Juan Island near Newfoundland. This base might interfere with the Basque fishermen who provided the Spanish with an important part of their diet, codfish, and it also threatened the Spanish sea lanes. The Duke's command of the Armada gave him great authority on the high seas. He ordered an expedition sent from Florida to



SPANISH XEBEC, 1588
By R. Hammond Gibson

investigate the strength of the English settlement. How this command was executed is contained in a letter written by the Governor of Florida, the same Pedro Menendez de Marques who had entered the Chesapeake Bay in 1573. The letter is dated July 17, 1588:

I have sent Captain Vincente Gonzales and a nephew of mine [Juan Menendez de Marques] in a vessel, very fast of sail and oar, to go running the coast as high as the thirty-ninth degree of latitude, which is above the Bay of Santa Maria. He took thirty skilled men with him, that, should the English have settled in that direction, he might make discovery of whatsoever existed. He set out at a good time, in the beginning of June . . .

In another letter, written long after by the Governor's nephew, there is the description of a bay that resembles the Chesapeake, although the Spanish called it the bay of "Madre de Dios." If we credit this letter, Captain Gonzales sailed to the headwaters of the Chesapeake before turning toward the south.

Captain Bartholomew Gilbert

In 1603, Captain Bartholomew Gilbert, son of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, entered the Chesapeake Bay while searching for survivors of the lost Roanoke colony. He sailed his tiny bark, the *Elizabeth*, some twenty leagues northward along the Eastern Shore. Near today's Smith Island, in Tangier Sound, Captain Gilbert and three of his men went ashore to renew their supply of fresh water. Indians ambushed the party, killing Captain Gilbert and one of his men. The others escaped to the *Elizabeth* and returned to England.

The English Establish Jamestown

Four years later, in 1607, the London Company established the first European settlement in the Chesapeake country. Three vessels: the *Susan Constant* (100 tons), the *Godspeed* (40 tons), and the pinnace, *Discovery* (20 tons), carried a total of 140 persons, including the sailors. The admiral of the fleet was Captain Christopher Newport, one of Raleigh's men, and on board one of the vessels was Captain John Smith. Only twenty-seven years old, Captain Smith had already survived a series of adventures in Europe, Africa,

and Asia—the retelling of them had taxed the imaginations of his fellow adventurers. In the Chesapeake country, he would soon become a legend.

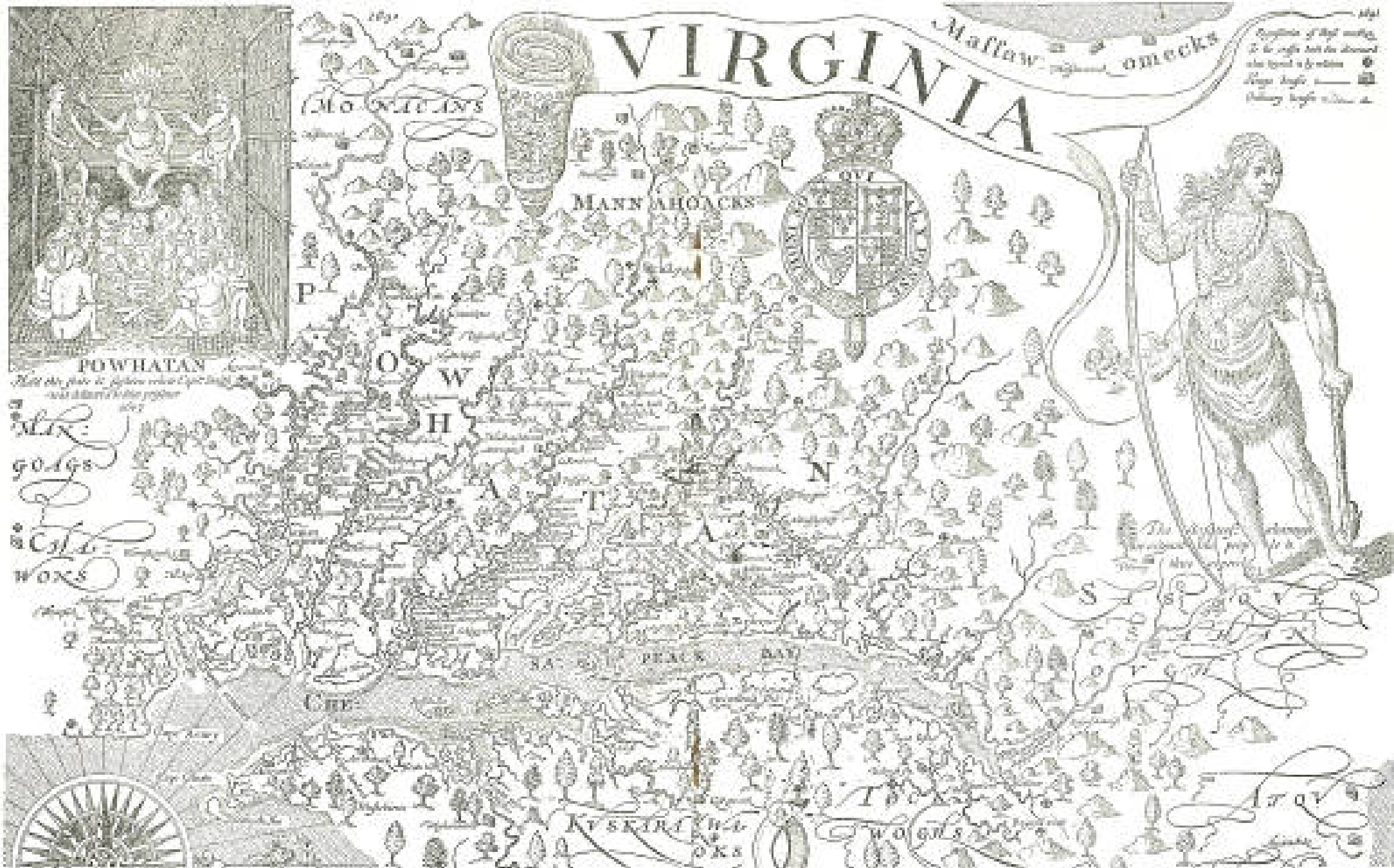
On April 26, 1607, the three vessels entered the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, so named after the Indian word, “K’tchisipik,” meaning “Great Water,” and anchored at Lynnhaven Bight, in the lee of the southern cape. The colonists spent the next day building a great cross which they erected there, and named it Cape Henry, after the king’s eldest son. The Englishmen communicated with the Indians and decided to explore the broad Powhatan River, which they renamed the James after their king. They slowly sailed up the river some fifty miles before choosing a peninsula that was virtually an island, cut off from the mainland except by a narrow sandy neck. The location appeared defensible. The channel was so close to the shore that the ships could be moored to the trees. This became Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement on the continent of North America, and it was situated in the Chesapeake country. The landing was made on May 14, 1607.

Exploration of the James River

A week later, Captain Christopher Newport led a party that included Captain Smith up the James River to the fall line, near the site of the present city of Richmond, Virginia. When they returned to Jamestown, it was to discover that Indians had attacked the colony. Only the cannon on the ships saved the settlers.

The leaders talked of exploring the James River beyond the fall line in search of the South Sea that the adventurers believed stretched beyond the mountains. A sectional boat was built for this adventure, but in June, Captain Newport sailed for England.

Captain Smith was assigned the task of trading with the Indians. As the food which the colonists brought from England was soon exhausted, this was a grave responsibility. Added to the shortage of food was the reluctance of the English gentlemen to plant and cultivate maize, or Indian corn. The adventurers spent their time searching for gold and pearls. They also hunted for game in the woods along the James River.



CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH'S MAP, 1607

From his *General History*, first printed 1612. Early maps of America often placed the west at top instead of the north because European ships sailed toward the west. The figure is that of a giant Sasquatchanock. (Lower part of map has been cut off).

On his first trading mission, Captain Smith took a few men in a small boat down the James to the Indian village of Kecoughtan at the mouth of the river. But the Indians did not have enough corn for their own needs and refused to barter for the trinkets, bells and mirrors, which the white men offered.

Smith and his men leaped from their boat and fired their muskets into the Indians. They fled into the woods, leaving behind their wounded and an Oke, "an idol made of skinnes, stuffed with mosse, all painted and hung with chaines and copper." Later the Indians sued for peace, and Captain Smith forced them to fill the shallop with corn before returning their Oke. With this, they "parted friends."

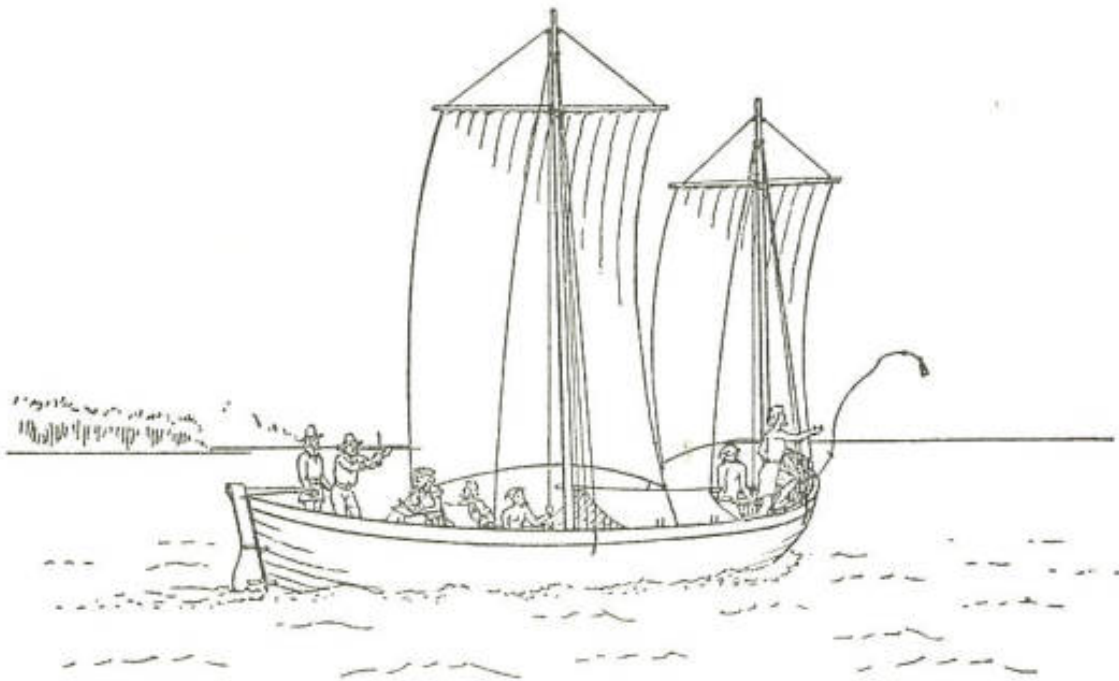
Pocahontas

On December 10, 1607, Captain Smith led a party of nine men in a shallop up the Chickahominy River, a branch of the James. After going as far as possible in the sailboat, he secured a canoe with Indians to paddle it, and continued up stream with two of his men, Thomas Emry, a carpenter, and John Robinson, a gentleman. Smith was eager to find the passage that would carry him to the South Sea.

The men who were left in the shallop decided to do a bit of exploring of their own. They were ambushed by the Indians. One was killed and the others escaped to Jamestown.

Days passed and Captain John Smith was given up for lost. Then Smith sent word to Jamestown. His two companions had been killed, and he was a prisoner living in constant peril. He had been brought before the great chief, Opechancano, where the gift of a compass and bold words had saved his life—at least for a while.

Captain Smith further delayed the Indians by demanding to see the all powerful chief, Powhatan. The Indians took him to Werocomoco, on another great river, the Pamunkey (today's York River), where he met Powhatan. Smith impressed the chief with the gift of another compass, and when asked why he had come to the Indian country, replied that after a fight with the Spaniards, he had been driven ashore. Now he was searching for fresh water



BARGE SURVEYING, 1607

and a passage to the South Sea that stretched beyond the mountains.

Captain Smith and Powhatan traded exaggerated stories. The Indian confirmed the white man's phantasy that the waters of the Chesapeake connected with the South Sea. After other pleasantries, Powhatan allowed Smith to depart. He sent four Indians to guide the captain back to Jamestown and to receive the gifts, including a cannon, that Captain John had promised in return for a safe arrival. At least this is the incident as related by Smith after he returned to Jamestown. Sixteen years later, when his book, *The General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles*, appeared, the author had added a colorful detail—the account of how Pocahontas, Powhatan's daughter, saved his life.

Captain Smith First Explores the Chesapeake

Another spring, the spring of 1608, came to the Chesapeake country. Smith was determined to explore the greater waters of the bay, to search for the outlet to the South Sea, and also the source

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of the glistening white metal which the Indians possessed. He thought that it was silver.

On June 2nd Captain Smith and fourteen companions sailed from Jamestown. A list of the crew follows:

LEADER: Captain John Smith

CHIRURGEON [SURGEON]: Dr. Walter Russell

Gentlemen:

Ralph Morton
Thomas Mumford
William Cantrill
Richard Featherstone
James Bourne
Michael Sicklemore

Fisher:

Jonas Profit

Soldiers:

Anas Todkill
Robert Small
James Watkins
John Powell

Blacksmith:

James Read

Fishmonger:

Richard Keale

A log of this voyage was kept by Dr. Russell and Anas Todkill, while Captain John Smith made a rough map of the bay and its rivers. It was later published in England and became one of the most famous of American maps.

The explorers' boat was an "open barge of two tunnes burden," which must have been approximately thirty feet long. It carried two sails, a tarpaulin to protect them from the rain, corn meal for bread, and gourds of water to drink. There were oars to propel the boat when the wind failed. The men carried guns and pistols, knives and swords.

The adventurers sailed across the bay, and on Cape Charles they met two Indians armed with long spears that had bone tips. They made friends with the Indians and the savages took them to their werowance, or chief, at Accomac. He was a "comely and civill man." Then they sailed northward along the peninsula that Smith called the "Eastern Shore," a name the region still bears. Twice they were caught in sudden thundersqualls. The second broke the foremast and tore the sails. But they rigged a jury-mast, patched the sails with their shirts, and set sail again for the "maine."

The explorers came to a group of low islands that Smith called the Russell Islands after his doctor. They are today's Tangier,

Smith, Holland, Southmarsh, and Bloodsworth islands in Tangier Sound.

While visiting what Smith called the Kuskaranaocke River (this is in the same location as today's Nanticoke River), the Englishmen were greeted with flights of arrows from the tree tops. The next day the Indians came down to the shore, unarmed, with baskets, and danced in a ring, trying to lure the white men ashore. But Smith's men feared villainy, and gave the red men a whiff of "pistoll shot." The Indians scrambled into the marsh. When the white men landed, they found "much bloude." In a nearby deserted village, Smith left "some pieces of copper, beads, bells, and looking glasses." Perhaps he was sorry about the blood. Early next morning, four Indians who were fishing paddled their canoe alongside the barge. They traded fish for a fish hook and glided away to show the other Indians. Soon, two or three thousand men, women, and children collected, exchanging baskets of food and furs for beads and other gifts.

Everywhere the white men went, the Indians told them of a powerful and warlike tribe, the Massawomeks, who lived far to the north of the Chesapeake. The Massawomeks made forays on the Chesapeake, stealing their women and burning their villages. Captain Smith cemented new friendships by vowing that he would find the Massawomeks and teach them how the Europeans waged war. This promise never failed to fill the sailing barge with provisions.

Captain Smith's greatest enemies on the lower Eastern Shore proved to be the mosquitoes. It was also difficult to find fresh water. He sailed through the Straits of Limbo (today's Hooper's Strait), bound for the western shore. Approaching the high cliffs, of what is now Calvert County, he called them "Riccards Cliffs." Here he found water, fertile valleys, thick woods filled with "woolves, bears, dears, and other wild beasts." For thirty leagues (90 miles), the adventurers coasted along the western shore. Captain Smith's map ignores the Severn and the Magothy rivers, but he did explore the Patapsco River, which he called the "Bolus" because of the red clay that was found in its banks.



CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH
From his *General History*

By this time the men were weary of the voyage. They were tired of rowing. The bread was rotten. The crew was downhearted. Whereupon, Captain Smith made a long speech. He recalled the sufferings of Ralph Lane, the first Englishman to enter the Chesapeake, and how when the food was low, he and his crew had eaten a dog, tastily boiled with sassafras leaves. Smith's closing words are classic:

As for your feares that I lose myself in these unknown large waters, or be swallowed up in a stormie gust; abandon these childish feares; for worst than is past is not likely to happen; and there is as much danger to returne as to proceede. Regaine therefore your old spirits, for return I will not, if God please, till I have seene the Massawomeks, found Patawomek [the Potomac River], or the head of this water you conceit [think] to be endlesse.

But the next days produced a wet easterly; four of the crew became sick and crept beneath the tarpaulin in despair. In spite of his brave speech, the Captain made about and set a course for Jamestown. Homeward bound, the sun came out and the sick men took their place at the oars.

On the return trip the little barge sailed into the broad mouth of the Potomac River. Thirty miles up the river the explorers were lured into a creek and encountered an ambushade of several thousand Indians. The situation seemed hopeless, but when the white men fired their muskets and the shots rattled through the leaves, the Indians dropped their bows. Hostages were exchanged—several Indians for one of Smith's soldiers, James Watkins. Soon peace was made. Captain Smith learned from the Patawomeks that the great chief, Powhatan, who lived on the Pamunkey River, had sent messengers urging them to massacre his party.

The Potomac country was a lush valley. The Englishmen saw bears, deer, otters, martin, beaver, minks, and near the river, Smith thought that he had discovered a silver mine. His men carried several bags of the shining powder to the barge before the captain realized his error. It was antimony, the silver-like equivalent of "fool's gold."

But the prize tale of the voyage was a fish story. Near the mouth of the Rappahannock River, the fish were so numerous that their

heads stuck out of the water, so plentiful that the men caught them in frying pans and speared them with their swords. While catching the fish, Captain Smith was poisoned with the barb of a stingray. In four hours, his hand, arm, shoulder, and side were greatly swollen. He ordered that a grave be dug for him on a little island that he called Stingray Island (today's Stingray Point) at the mouth of the Piankatank and Rappahannock rivers. But Dr. Russell applied some "precious oile" and the swelling subsided. Smith ate the fish for supper.

Soon they arrived at Kecoughtan at the mouth of the James River. The Indians crowded around the barge, examining the furs. They saw Smith's bloody arm and the "greene [fresh] wounds" of his men. Had the white men been at war? Had Captain Smith met the Massawomeks? When the barge arrived at Jamestown on July 21st, Captain John was a hero.

Captain Smith Sails Again

Smith was offered the post of council president, but he substituted his friend, Matthew Scrivener. A few days later, he sailed again for the Chesapeake. He must find the outlet into the South Sea and those mighty Massawomeks! Eight of the crew on this trip had accompanied him on his first voyage.

A summer southwester soon carried the barge past the Potomac and Patapsco rivers, and the adventurers reached the head of the bay. Here the Chesapeake divides into four rivers, the Susquehanna, Northeast, Elk, and Sassafras. Here Captain John Smith met the Massawomeks. A description of this meeting is found in Smith's writings:

But in crossing the bay to the other side, wee encountered 8 canowesfull of Massawomeks. We seeing them prepare to assault us, left our oares, and made way with our saile to incounter them; yet we were but five (with our captaine) that could stand—for within two days after we left Kecoughtan, the rest (being of the Last Supply) were sicke almost to death (until they were seasoned to the country). Having shut them under the tarpawling, we put their hats upon sticks by the barge side, to

make us seem many. And so we thinke the Indians supposed these hats to be men; for they fled with all possible speed to the shoare, and there stayed, staring at the sailing of our barge, till we anchored against [near] them.

Long it was ere we could drawe them to come unto us. At last they sent 2 of their company unarmed in a canowe; the rest all followed to second them, if need required. These two being presented each with a bell, brought aboard all their fellows; presenting the captain with venison, beare's flesh, fish, bowes, arrows, clubs, targets, and beare skins.

These Indians were the mighty Massawomeks, on their way home after a raiding party.

Captain John Smith entered the Toghwoh River, today's Sassafras, and found an Indian tribe with the same name as the river. They lived in "pallizadoed towns," long houses roofed with bark, stored with fruits and furs. The Toghwohs told Smith of the tall Sasquehannocks who lived far up a river at the head of the bay, that his barge could not enter because of the huge rocks.

Four days later, sixty of these giant Sasquehannocks appeared on the Toghwoh River. They brought gifts: venison, tobacco pipes that were three feet long, baskets, targets, bows and arrows. Their werowances and medicine men boldly boarded the white men's barge and sailed with them across the bay.

Captain Smith made such a good impression on the Toghwohs that they begged him to stay with them and protect the tribe from the Massawomeks. These warriors, the Toghwohs said, lived on a great water beyond the mountains which some called the "great lake" and others, the "river of Canada." But Smith wished to explore other rivers and to search for the passage to the South Sea. He sailed down the Toghwoh River to the bay and followed today's Northeast River to the mouth of the Susquehannah River. There he was turned back by the great rocks and sailed toward the south without finding an outlet to the South Sea.

While exploring the Patuxent River, Smith met an Indian who could speak English. His name was Mosco. He helped the white men; he carried wood and water; he towed their barge when the wind failed. He advised Captain Smith not to enter the Rappahan-

nock River, saying that the Indians planned to kill all his men. But Smith ignored his counsel and when the Englishmen entered the Rappahannock River, the arrows fell like rain. But the targets, or shields, which were gifts of the Massawomeks and Sasquehannocks protected them. Mosco fought beside the white men. One of Smith's crew, Richard Featherstone, was killed. He was buried beside the river.

The white men captured an Indian shot in the knee, and Mosco was about to kill him when the Englishmen saved their enemy. The surgeon bound the Indian's wound and others fed him.

While Mosco lived with them, the men asked him many questions. Why did the Indians fight the white men? Mosco replied that they thought Smith and his men were from the other side of the world, come to take their world from them. They asked him how many worlds he knew and he said that he knew only the land that was under the sky that covered him, that of the Powhatans, the Monacans, and the Massawomeks. What was beyond the mountains? The sun, he told them.

For this information, the white men loaded Mosco's canoe with gifts. His last bit of advice was that if they were wise, they would leave the Rappahannock River for the bay. That night they tried to slip out of the river unobserved, but the Indians heard the oars. There followed twelve miles of running battle before the barge reached the broad mouth of the river. There they anchored beyond arrow range. The Indian captive was released and swam ashore. He praised the white men so loudly that the chief of the Rappahannocks placed his weapons in a tree and swam to the barge. Soon the recent enemies were having a friendly pow-wow. The Indians offered to buy the Englishmen's pistols, thinking that they were tobacco pipes, until one was discharged. They had to be content with beads and looking glasses in return for their furs.

The season was advanced and the English were eager to return to Jamestown. A few days later, they sailed up the James River and found the settlement much as they had left it. The day was September 7, 1608. Three days later, Captain John Smith was chosen President of the Virginia Council.

The Spanish Return

The Spanish in Florida made a final voyage to the Chesapeake Bay in 1609, when the governor sent Captain Francisco de Ecija in the ship, *Asuncion de Christo*, to search the coast as far north as Maine for European settlements that had been established on the lands claimed by Spain. On July 24th, Captain Ecija entered the Chesapeake and a few days later he was surprised to see a European ship at anchor. From the Indians he learned of the English settlement at Jamestown. Assuming a strong and hostile base, and with only one ship at his command, Captain Ecija turned back toward the ocean. The first of the European nations to discover the Chesapeake, Spain yielded the settlement of the region to England.

Captain William Claiborne

One more adventurer, Captain William Claiborne, belongs on the list of the early explorers of the Chesapeake country. Captain Claiborne was a well educated man who emigrated to Virginia in 1621. Charles I appointed him to the twelve-man council that governed the colony and also named him secretary of the colony. Several years later he was commissioned by Sir John Harvey, the Governor of Virginia, to discover the source of the Chesapeake Bay and extend the knowledge of the country. In accepting this assignment, Claiborne also obtained a license to trade with the Indians. Just how many voyages Captain Claiborne made to the head of the bay is uncertain, but in 1631 he established a trading post on Kent Island. Other smaller posts were established on Poplar and Sharp's islands, and at the mouth of the Susquehannah River.

Claiborne and his lieutenants explored the rivers which Captain Smith apparently by-passed, the Chester, Miles, and Choptank. One of his vessels, the *Long Tayle*, a pinnace, was the first large boat to be constructed on the Eastern Shore.

Three years after Captain Claiborne established the trading post on Kent Island, Lord Baltimore sent more than 200 colonists in the *Ark* and the *Dove* to found the colony of Maryland. The charter

granted to him by the King gave him ownership of all the territory that is now Maryland, formerly considered part of Virginia. Lord Baltimore's brother, Leonard Calvert, was the first governor, and for several years the relations with the Indians were friendly. The early period of exploration had ended.

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD

1492—On the basis of Columbus' discovery, Spain claimed the eastern coast of North America which included the Chesapeake Bay.

1498—On John Cabot's second voyage to America, he explored the east coast and may have entered the Chesapeake Bay.

1524—Giovanni Verrazano, a Florentine navigator in the service of Francis I of France, while exploring the east coast of North America, anchored his vessel in Chincoteague Bay. He was the first European to set foot on the Eastern Shore.

1524-1525—Estevan Gomez, a Portuguese navigator sailing for Spain, explored the Atlantic Coast from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland to the Florida Keys. He may have entered the Chesapeake Bay.

1570-1572—Spanish Jesuits spent 5 months at a settlement on the York River in Virginia but were all murdered. Rescue ships in 1571 were followed in 1572 by other Spanish visitors, but no settlements were made.

1573—Pedro Menendez de Marques, nephew of the Governor of Florida, explored the east coast from the Florida Keys to the Chesapeake Bay. He entered the mouth of the bay and made soundings.

1585—Ralph Lane, Governor of Sir Walter Raleigh's colony on Roanoke Island, was the first Englishman to enter the bay, but he did not explore it.

1587—Sir Walter Raleigh directed his colonists to move the Roanoke Island settlement to a new location on the Chesapeake Bay. Before his orders could be carried out, the colonists disappeared. None was ever heard of again.

1588—Captain Vincente Gonzales, a Spaniard, accompanied by thirty conquistadors, entered the Chesapeake and sailed to the head of the bay.

1603—Captain Bartholomew Gilbert, while searching for survivors of the Roanoke colony, sailed up the Chesapeake Bay to the vicinity of today's Smith Island where he was killed by Indians.

1607—The London Company sent colonists to the Chesapeake who established Jamestown on the James River. They explored the river as far as today's Richmond.

1608—Captain John Smith made two voyages of exploration in the Chesapeake and completed the first detailed map of the region.

1609—The Spanish governor of Florida sent Captain Francisco de Ecija northward in a ship which entered the Chesapeake. Learning of the settlement at Jamestown, he left the bay without challenging the English.

1628-1631—Captain William Claiborne explored the bay and established a trading post on Kent Island.

1634—Settlement at St. Mary's City, Maryland, near the mouth of the Potomac River was the first under Lord Baltimore's charter.

22 EARLY EXPLORATIONS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

For further thought, reading, report, or discussion:

1. Why was Spain far ahead of the other European countries in the early exploration of America, including the Chesapeake Bay?
2. Why were the early computations of a ship's position at sea often incorrect? (Note: Your mathematics teacher can help you with this question).
3. From what other difficulties did the early navigators suffer?
4. The explorers of the Chesapeake country called the Indians, "salvages" (savages). Considering the actions of both the white and red men, do you consider this a fair judgment? What are your reasons?
5. What do you think happened to Sir Walter Raleigh's colony on Roanoke Island? Mary Johnston's book, *Croatan*, gives a fictionalized version of this mystery.
6. The explorers of the Chesapeake used different kinds of boats, including barks, xebecs, pinnaces, barges and shallops. Learn more about these boats that brought the first Europeans to the Chesapeake country. Consult histories of ships or an encyclopedia. Perhaps you would like to make drawings of some of the kinds of boats that explored the Chesapeake.
7. How do you account for the fact that while Captain John Smith was exploring the Chesapeake during the summer of 1608, he met an Indian who could speak English?
8. For a vivid picture of world events during the lifetime of Captain John Smith, read the book, *The World of Captain John Smith*, by Genevieve Foster.
9. Captain William Claiborne established a trading post on Kent Island three years before Lord Baltimore sent settlers to establish St. Mary's. Why do historians consider St. Mary's the first settlement in Maryland?
10. While we live today in a civilized country, without wild Indians, cruel conquistadors, and armed adventurers, Americans spend a great many hours watching wild Indians, desperadoes, and gangsters on TV and movie screens. How do you account for this interest?

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