Pocahontas (Matoaka). An engraving by Simon Van de Passe, London, 1616. *Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC*

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In Search of Pocahontas

Kathleen Brown

Pocahontas (c. 1596–1617), the most widely known Native American woman, proves not to be known very well after all. Kathleen Brown invites us to join in sifting and weighing the secondhand and fragmentary evidence about Pocahontas's life. Captain John Smith's self-serving accounts of Pocahontas are at once essential and highly suspect. In addition to offering her own measured judgments on the sources, Brown leaves the reader free to consider several alternative readings.

In the first months of 1617, Pocahontas and Squanto were both in London; the two are not known to have met, but their stories bear some comparison. Both facilitated the peaceful coexistence between English settlers and Native American powers. Both became suspect in their own communities for doing so. Pocahontas became a Christian, married into the English community, and bore a son, Thomas. As the daughter of Powhatan, a powerful chieftain, and as the Christian wife of John Rolfe, an English gentleman, Pocahontas was given a "gentlewoman's" status and tried to behave accordingly (*see* frontispiece); Squanto was a refugee trying to find his way home. Pocahontas contracted a fatal respiratory ailment while visiting England; Squanto's community was destroyed by a European disease carried to New England. The uneasy "peace of Pocahontas" ended with a Powhatan surprise attack of March 1622, in which her widower was among the 350 persons killed. Thomas would return to a different Virginia and later serve as the militia commander who defended Fort James against his mother's people.

Have both Pocahontas and Squanto been celebrated in American history not so much because they reached beyond their own communities, but because their doing so could be construed as evidence that English settlers were welcome in the land that they then confiscated?

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people, but for wit, and spirit, the only
Nonpariel [*sic*] of his Country.[1]

John Smith's description of Pocahontas in 1608 marks the beginning of one of the most powerful and enduring legends about the founding of the British colonies in North America. For nearly four centuries, the story of the Indian princess who showed compassion for the English settlers at Jamestown has inspired paintings, music, poetry, plays, and historical scholarship. In the 1990s, Pocahontas made her debut as a character in a Disney movie, which was accompanied by a line of children's toys. In these latter-day incarnations, Pocahontas is not the ten-year-old girl who captivated the crusty Captain Smith, but a mature, sexually attractive beauty whose feelings for Smith blossom into a mutual romance.

Just who was Pocahontas, and why is her story so important to us? Part of her appeal, both for those who knew her in Virginia nearly four hundred years ago and for us today, undoubtedly is the mystery surrounding her. Having left no firsthand written account of her life, her motives, and her feelings, Pocahontas is historically at the mercy of people like John Smith, who did leave extensive written accounts, and of generations of historians, whose speculations have helped to construct her legend. Everyone connected with Pocahontas in the seventeenth century wanted a piece of her for themselves. Her father Powhatan, John Smith, John Rolfe, Ralph Hamor, the Virginia Company, and the English Crown all had their own versions of who she should be. Later, Pocahontas's image was seized by Euro-Americans telling stories about their beginnings on the North American continent. Much of the interest in the Indian girl whom John Smith described as peerless, the "Nonpareil" of her country, thus derives from the adaptability of her life story to serve the needs of others.

The main source of our fascination with Pocahontas, however, is very likely her brief, action-packed life. She lived probably only twenty years, yet in that short space of time she served as an emissary for her people, witnessed an important agreement between her father and the leader of the English settlers, was kidnapped, became a religious convert, learned an entirely new language fluently, entered a culturally mixed marriage, bore a child, crossed an ocean, and visited the court of an English king and queen. Pocahontas was a central player not just in the culture of her birth, as might have been the case for any other precocious or well-born Indian or English woman, but also in the strange world of Anglo-Indian conflict and exchange at a time when the rules of such encounters were not yet established. All of the significant events in her short life took place within the framework of this cultural meeting and conflict; all took place within the span of a single decade, from 1607, when she was approximately ten years old, until her death in England in 1617. Hers was an extraordinary life, lived at an extraordinary time in the history of the Atlantic world.

This essay reexamines the evidence for Pocahontas's unusual life. The emphasis in most accounts has been on her relationships with John Smith and John Rolfe, the two Englishmen who did so much to change her life and create her historical identity. Very little attention has been given to her relationships with other Indian people, including her father, or with other children, for instance, the young English boys at Jamestown. After an attempt to assess all these relationships through close readings of the most reliable texts about Pocahontas, some counterfactual questions about her role in early Atlantic and early American history are raised.

Like all other accounts of Pocahontas's life, this one remains constrained by the lack of evidence from Pocahontas herself. Thus, this essay still relies on the written evidence supplied by Smith and Rolfe. By necessity, Pocahontas's relationships with the men who wrote about her become part of her story.

Daughter of Powhatan

Pocahontas's world changed forever in April 1607 when three English ships sponsored by the Virginia Company touched land at the base of the Chesapeake Bay. Repulsed by an Indian attack, the ships continued upriver to what the English would call Jamestown Island, a protected and easily navigable location that seemed ideal for a fort. Initially, the English planned to use Jamestown as a base for mining and trade. They soon discovered that there was little gold to be mined and that the Indians in the region were not willing to labor as their counterparts in Mexico had for the Spanish. After several years of widespread disease and high mortality, a few of the pioneers also realized that Jamestown was possibly the most unhealthy place they could have settled.

Although the English described the countryside surrounding Jamestown as "uninhabited" or "virgin," they could not have been more wrong. Several thousand Algonquian-speaking Indians, including the Powhatans, had lived in the region for thousands of years. Their subtle and complex uses of the land included agriculture but left different marks upon the landscape from those familiar to the English. Indians did not regard land as property in the way

the English did, a fact that only encouraged the Virginia Company to claim the territory as its own. Despite their denigration of the Indians for naked savagery, sexual immorality, and laziness, the English settlers who survived the first years in Jamestown owed these native peoples their lives. Although they were technologically more sophisticated than the Indians, the settlers simply did not have enough supplies to last through the winter, nor could they manage to grow enough wheat or corn to make up the difference. Without the Indian corn procured through trade and plunder, the English would have starved.

Chief among those wrangling for corn to feed the hungry residents of Jamestown was the savvy adventurer John Smith. Born of the yeomanry rather than the gentry, Smith felt that his social superiors never gave him the credit he deserved for his leadership as president of Jamestown. Until 1617, Smith and his successors negotiated, threatened, and skirmished with Powhatan, the dominant *werowance* (district chief) of the region. Since the 1590s, perhaps in reaction to previous contact with Europeans, Powhatan had been strengthening and adding to his tributary chiefdom until it included over half a dozen tribes and several thousand people. By the time that John Smith arrived in 1607, Powhatan was without question the most powerful Indian in the region and the one who controlled the largest supplies of corn.

Powhatan was Pocahontas's father. He was probably already elderly when she was born in 1596 or 1597. As was customary for powerful *werowances*, Powhatan had fathered children by several different women, a practice that strengthened his hold over his paramount chiefdom. Pocahontas could thus count dozens of half brothers and sisters living throughout the area, many of them considerably older than she. The identity of Pocahontas's mother remains a mystery. If she was anything like Powhatan's other wives, she was young and among the most beautiful women of her tribe before her marriage. She might have spent a few years living at the paramount chief's house until she had borne a child. At that point, she would either have returned to her own people or, if she was a great favorite, remained near Powhatan's court so that the *werowance* could enjoy the company of his wife and daughter.

The first written evidence of Pocahontas's existence is John Smith's mention of her in his *True Relation*, a letter describing his adventures in Virginia that was published in 1608 without his permission or knowledge. Brief though the mention may be, it is a potentially rich and relatively reliable source of information about the young Indian girl. Historians have generally considered *True Relation* to be the most informal and least embellished of Smith's several publications on his adventures in Virginia. It is also the only

commentary on Pocahontas published before she became known in England as the "Nonpareil" of Virginia.

The occasion for Pocahontas's appearance in Smith's letter was her father Powhatan's attempt to secure the release of over two dozen Paspahegh Indian prisoners being held by Smith at Jamestown. Smith had seized the Indian men allegedly to retaliate against Indian theft and harassment of the English settlement. He subsequently tortured several of the captives to gain information about Powhatan's plans to ambush Jamestown. He had also refused to exchange the prisoners either for an English boy whom Powhatan had been holding as a hostage or for the stolen tools and supplies that the paramount chief had recently returned to him.

Smith introduced Pocahontas into his narrative in the context of this political chess game with her father: "Powhatan, understanding we detained certaine Salvages, sent his Daughter, a child of tenne yeares old, which not only for feature, countenance, and proportion, much exceedeth any of the rest of his people, but for wit, and spirit, the only Nonpariel of his Country." Accompanying Pocahontas to Jamestown was Powhatan's "trustie messenger," Rawhunt, whose "subtill wit," "crafty understanding," and "deformitie of person" presented a striking contrast to the young Indian girl. The messenger, who probably also served as a translator, explained Powhatan's purpose in sending his daughter to meet with Smith: "He with a long circumstance told mee how well Powhatan loved and respected mee, and in that I should not doubt any way of his kindnesse, he had sent his child, which he most esteemed, to see me." Lest the point be lost on the Englishman, Powhatan had sent "a Deere and bread besides for a present."[2]

According to Smith, Pocahontas functioned as both an emissary for her father and a token of his goodwill. Unlike the boy hostage whom the English gave to Powhatan as a pledge of their good word, Pocahontas was not being exchanged for peace or the release of men. Nor was she a gift, like the venison and corn bread given to Smith. Rather, she seems to have been sent by her father to soften up the tough Englishman. Perhaps knowing that Smith would find his daughter's wit and beauty appealing, Powhatan sent her to the English settlement to convince the leader of Jamestown of the Indians' affection and good faith.

Throughout the brief appearance recorded in Smith's *True Relation*, Pocahontas behaved more like an adult than a little girl. Smith believed that she had been instructed by her father not to take "notice at all of the Indeans that had beene prisoners," an order she seems to have obeyed dutifully until the relatives of the captive men arrived to negotiate for their release. Rather than freeing the men individually and reuniting them with the kin who had come for

them, however, Smith released the prisoners as a group, placing them in the custody of the young girl as a way of acknowledging her "fathers kindnesse in sending her." In a special effort to please Pocahontas, Smith gave her "such trifles as contented her, to tel that we had used the Paspaheyans very kindly in so releasing them."[3]

What can Smith's first account of Virginia tell us about the young Pocahontas? In the pages of the *True Relation*, Pocahontas is a self-possessed, self-disciplined ten-year-old, capable of charming the deeply suspicious Smith and carrying out her father's orders. Her charisma was such that it crossed cultural boundaries, earning her a special place in her father's heart and captivating Smith, who found her without peer among the Algonquian Indians. What the document fails to tell us is also interesting. Smith made no mention of a previous relationship with Pocahontas, yet his impassioned declaration of her superiority to all other Indians suggests an acquaintance deeper than this brief meeting. It is possible that Powhatan chose to send Pocahontas to resolve the conflict over the Indian prisoners because the Englishman and his daughter had already met (Smith would later claim this in a subsequent publication about Virginia). Ultimately, to get a sense of Pocahontas's personality beyond the narrow depiction in Smith's first text on Virginia, we must turn to other sources.

References to the youthful Pocahontas appeared in two other published accounts in 1612, four years after Smith first wrote about her in *True Relation*. In both of these texts, Pocahontas was portrayed as an energetic and lovable girl who moved easily between the world of her own people and that of the English. Indeed, one gets the impression from these two accounts that Pocahontas herself was an important bridge between the two cultures.

William Strachey's *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania*, completed in 1612, offered a detailed account of the English encounter with Virginia Algonquians that borrowed heavily from Smith, the main authority about the region's Indians. Strachey had been in Virginia since 1609, when Pocahontas was about twelve years old, but had not finished his history until she was close to fifteen. Thus, much of Strachey's information about Pocahontas's childhood probably came from other settlers. He noted, for example, that she had been accustomed to visiting the fort at Jamestown "in tymes past." He also used her as an illustration of the freedom that Indian boys and girls enjoyed before they reached puberty, recalling that Pocahontas had been known to "gett the boyes forth with her into the market place and make them wheele, falling on their hands and turning their heeles upwardes, whome she would follow, and wheele so her self naked as she was all the Fort over." Lest the respectable English reader get the wrong impression about Indian

women's modesty, Strachey observed that upon turning twelve, Indian girls began wearing aprons "before their bellies" and became "very sham-fac'd to be seene bare."[4]

Strachey's description of Pocahontas organizing the Jamestown boys to do cartwheels around the fort and then joining in the fun herself provides a vivid example of the "wit" and "spirit" that Smith found so delightful. We can imagine a group of pale Jamestown boys, overdressed in wool, being goaded into turning cartwheels by a brown-skinned Indian girl, scantily dressed by European standards, whose acrobatic skills probably put them to shame. What Strachey manages to capture in this anecdote (which no other author save Smith evokes) is Pocahontas's energy and zest for life. She stood out among Powhatan's children not simply because she visited the English at their fort, but also because she seemed unfazed by the cultural distance between the two groups. At least for a time, Pocahontas found that crossing cultural boundaries involved little stress or sorrow. Leadership skills, athleticism, and perhaps not a little charisma made it possible for this prepubescent Indian girl to make a group of English boys do her bidding. Strachey's account thus lends credence to Smith's claims in 1608 about Pocahontas's unique charms.

Strachey offered one other tidbit of information about Pocahontas that no other writer thought to mention. After observing that Indians typically were given several names, including an "affectionate Title" usually chosen by their mothers, he presented the example of Pocahontas, who was known to the English by the pet name given to her by her father. Strachey speculated that "Pochahuntas" might mean "Little-wanton," a term which in the seventeenth century implied mischievous, willful, or promiscuous behavior. That Powhatan could have chosen such a label for his favorite daughter is not only suggestive of Pocahontas's personality, but it also reveals a great deal about Indian culture. Imagining a young Elizabeth I, known in later life as the Virgin Queen, being affectionately called "little strumpet" or "wild thing" by her father Henry VIII, is a helpful device for highlighting the differences between the two cultures' attitudes toward female personality and sexuality. What Powhatan might have considered a humorous reference to Pocahontas's affectionate, energetic, and uninhibited manner, an English king could only have seen as shameful or undesirable.[5]

Strachey's discussions of the youthful Pocahontas reveal a great deal about seventeenth-century Algonquian attitudes toward rearing girls. Although Pocahontas was very likely born with her open, risk-taking, adventuresome personality, nothing in her upbringing had repressed that spirit or energy. In the fragments of information that

remain, we glimpse a girl who felt comfortable crossing the boundaries of gender and culture to cavort with English boys and enchant men of her father's generation. Coming from a society in which little girls were paid little mind, Strachey's contemporaries might have been amazed to discover that Algonquians in Virginia tolerated, perhaps even encouraged, such qualities in the young daughter of Powhatan. Indeed, to the degree that little girls are still seen as relatively insignificant members of society, readers in the present day might also find this extraordinary.

Pocahontas appeared in another text published in 1612. Smith's *Map of Virginia*, a guide to the land and its resources, contained a brief list of Indian vocabulary in which Pocahontas made a cameo appearance. Amid the Indian words for communicating hunger, geographic location, and elapsed time, Smith included the following sentence: "Bid Pokahontas bring hither two little Baskets, and I wil give her white beads to make her a chaine."[6] By the time this phrase appeared in print, it was already outdated, as Pocahontas would have been at least fifteen years old, well beyond the age of childhood antics around the fort. Yet Smith would not have known this fact from personal experience, having left Virginia in 1609 after suffering a severe injury. In his mind, Pocahontas remained perpetually childish, ready to do favors for him in exchange for pretty trinkets. Pocahontas's perpetual youthfulness in Smith's guide to Virginia captured the initial promise of Anglo-Indian relations in the region and of his own rising fortunes in the colony.

Rescuer of John Smith

The incident for which Pocahontas is best known is her alleged rescue of Smith in December 1607, just seconds before Indian executioners would have dashed out his brains with their clubs. Although Smith claimed that this dramatic rescue occurred before he met with Pocahontas in Jamestown in 1608 to discuss the fate of the Indian prisoners, curiously he had failed to write about the incident until 1624, seven years after her death in England. None of the accounts published before 1624 by Smith, or any of the Jamestown chroniclers who borrowed from him, made any mention of a dramatic rescue. In light of Smith's knack for self-promotion and his ceaseless efforts to be appreciated by his superiors in London, many historians wonder whether the rescue actually took place. It seems highly unlikely that the boastful Smith could have managed to remain silent about this incident for seventeen years. Some scholars have hypothesized that in 1624, two years after the Indian attack upon English settlements that led to the dissolution of the Virginia Company, Smith was hoping to restore his reputation as a brave and effective opponent of the Powhatan Indians. He may also have been trying to capitalize on Pocahontas's posthumous popularity in England by exaggerating the length and intimacy of their relationship. Yet another point against believing Smith's revised version of the story is that, in several previous accounts of his adventures around the globe, he claimed to have been rescued from certain death by beautiful young women.

Despite these grounds for skepticism, Smith's 1624 account of the 1607 rescue by Pocahontas is difficult to dismiss altogether. Indeed, there are several reasons for taking the account seriously. First, although Smith could have added Pocahontas to the tale for effect, the basic outline of the captivity story remained the same through several retellings. Second, what Smith described in 1624 as a rescue from execution bears some similarity to Indian adoption rituals in the northeast. Third, as already noted, his 1608 letter describing his meeting with Pocahontas leaves open the possibility that they had already met and developed a friendship. Fourth, in light of Pocahontas's relationship with her father and the respect accorded to her by other Indian people, it is reasonable to think that she might have participated actively in an important event such as a tribal adoption. Finally, and perhaps most compellingly, Smith's accounts of his relationship with Powhatan, including those written soon after the alleged near-death experience, suggest that Powhatan had begun to treat the Englishman like a kinsman, much as he might have done if Smith had been adopted by the Powhatans.

The basic outline of Smith's captivity story remained consistent throughout several retellings. In *True Relation* (1608), *Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia* (1612), and *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624), Smith recounted the tale of an English scouting mission gone awry. Having divided his men into two groups to reconnoiter better the upper James River and search for food, he returned to the canoes to find himself ambushed. All of his companions were slain, but Smith, who used his Indian guide as a human shield, managed to escape the barrage of arrows with only a minor wound to his leg. The fact that Powhatan's warriors, whose aim was otherwise deadly accurate, fell short of injuring Smith with nearly thirty arrows suggests that Powhatan wanted Smith brought to him alive. Taken back to Powhatan, Smith was imprisoned and fed huge quantities of food, which made him suspect that he was being fattened up to be eaten, a fate he had probably read of in Spanish accounts of the New World. In all three versions of the tale, Smith claimed that he charmed and entertained his captors with stories of European technology and the majesty of King James.

Where the versions part company is in Smith's addition in 1624 of a near-death scene. In the 1608 account, his own charm and growing

friendship with Opechancanough, brother of Powhatan, resulted in his kind reception by the paramount chief, who had apparently already decided that Smith would be set free. In the 1624 rendition, however, Smith's favor with Powhatan resulted from Pocahontas's timely intervention. After being urged to wash his hands and eat abundantly, Smith witnessed a "long consultation" that resulted in "two great stones" being "brought before Powhatan." While Indian men and women seized Smith to lay his head on one of the stones, Pocahontas begged for his life. Just as he was about to be clubbed to death, the daughter of Powhatan "got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death."[7] This poignant display of affection, according to Smith, persuaded Powhatan to let Smith live to serve him and his daughter.

Smith's account of his rescue by Pocahontas has many credible features as well as many curious ones. It was not unheard of for Indians elsewhere in eastern North America symbolically to "kill" an individual whom they planned to adopt, nor would it have been inappropriate for a woman to be involved in incorporating the adoptee. Pocahontas would have been a bit young for this role, but her status as a favorite daughter of Powhatan and her precocious character may have made up for her youth. Powhatan's decree that Smith be spared to manufacture tools and trinkets for him and his daughter is consistent with other Indian adoption practices. What little we know of Powhatan's view of the newly arrived English settlers and his subsequent efforts to deal with their presence also fits with an interpretation of this story as an adoption. Powhatan initially pursued an incorporative rather than a defensive strategy with the English, attempting to strike advantageous bargains for the corn that he knew they needed and reminding them of their dependence upon him. Following the near-death ritual, Powhatan referred to Smith as a son and a *werowance*, a likely outcome of a tribal adoption. It is plausible, in light of these consistencies with Indian practice, to interpret Smith's story as mistaking an adoption ritual for an interrupted execution.

What does not make sense about the 1624 version of Smith's captivity is why he might have omitted it from both his 1607 letter and his 1612 *Proceedings*. Was he embarrassed about being saved by a ten-year-old girl? Did he feel that the rescue made him appear less rather than more heroic? Had he not yet fabricated the event? It is also hard to fathom Pocahontas's motive for wanting to adopt a man who would have been a total stranger to her. Perhaps she found the hirsute and solidly built Smith intriguing and exotic looking. If she had taken a liking to him and played an active role in his adoption, performing what he believed to be a rescue, it is not surprising that he would describe her a few months later as the "Nonpareil" of her country.

The 1624 *Generall Historie* contained several other new or embellished references to Pocahontas that had not appeared in Smith's previous publications. He recounted one incident in which the young girl attempted to ease the fears of a group of Englishmen who had come to visit her father. Soon after the arrival of the second supply ship in the early autumn of 1608, Smith journeyed to the Pamunkey River with four companions to present Powhatan with gifts and royal regalia sent by King James. Anxious about the danger of an ambush, Smith waited to receive a reply from the *werowance* about the most suitable site for a coronation. While the Englishmen waited, they were entertained by Pocahontas, who calmed the edgy captain by "willing him to kill her if any hurt were intended."[8] The addition of this new reference to Pocahontas, which was missing from the 1612 version of the story, might have reflected Smith's desire in 1624 to portray himself as an intimate friend of the by-then famous Indian princess.

Smith's claim that "Pocahontas and her women" entertained the Englishmen with a "Virginia Maske" was also new to the 1624 account. In England, a masque was a theatrical performance that included music, pageantry, costumes, and dancing. Smith's use of the term to describe an Indian entertainment both commented on the similarities between the two cultures and highlighted the great differences between the allegedly civilized English and the reputedly savage Virginia Indians. Although Smith had described the masque in detail in 1612, he had neither called it by that name nor linked it to Pocahontas. He attributed it instead to Powhatan's women, a sexual inference reinforced by his description of the event. The Indian performers were thirty young women, he noted, "naked . . . onely covered behind and before with a few greene leaves, their bodies all painted." Wearing animal skins and carrying tools and weapons, the women proceeded to sing and dance in a fashion that Smith found strange. Following the masque, they invited Smith and his men back to their lodgings where they "tormented him . . . with crowding, pressing, and hanging about him, most tediously crying, Love you not me?"[9] In all likelihood, the women were offering sexual hospitality to the men, as was customary during the visits of honored guests and foreign diplomats.

Upon retelling the story in 1624 to include Pocahontas, Smith left her role in the masque and the sexual hospitality that followed ambiguous. He noted her presence before the masque began but then failed to mention her again. This could possibly reflect the fact that Pocahontas was not among the performers. In September 1608 she was probably still a girl on the verge of sexual maturity. It is doubtful that she would have been old enough to be among those

crowding around Smith and demanding his love. Smith simply may have added her to the story in 1624 without stopping to consider whether she was too young to have participated in the masque.

Smith wrote of one other incident in the 1624 *Historie* that demonstrated the Indian girl's special affection and loyalty to the English captain. He had previously mentioned this incident briefly in his 1612 *Proceedings*, but the 1624 version was much more elaborate. The fact that this story was not newly introduced in 1624 makes it somewhat less suspicious than Smith's other attempts to connect his name to that of Pocahontas.

During the icy winter of 1608-09, Smith traveled to Powhatan's winter camp to negotiate with him for corn. The two men wrangled over whether the corn was a gift to keep the English from starving or tribute to keep them from attacking. Powhatan reluctantly agreed to give Smith the provisions he needed but then disappeared from the camp, leaving Smith and his men to load the corn on their barges and pick their way through the frozen river back to Jamestown. While they waited for the high tide to float their boats from the frozen ground, Smith was warned by Pocahontas that her father was planning a surprise attack: "For Pocahontas his dearest jewell and daughter, in that darke night came through the irksome woods, and told our Captaine great cheare should be sent us by and by: but Powhatan and all the power he could make, would after come kill us all, if they that brought it could not kill us with our owne weapons when we were at supper. Therefore if we would live shee wished us presently to bee gone."[10] According to Smith, Pocahontas delivered the warning with great emotion, yet she remained capable of thinking logically about her relationship with the father whom she had betrayed: "Such things as shee delighted in, he [Smith] would have given her: but with the teares running downe her cheekes, shee said shee durst not be seene to have any: for if Powhatan should know it, she were but dead, and so shee ranne away by her selfe as she came."[11]

Can Smith's account of this warning from Pocahontas be trusted as evidence of her affection for her father's enemies? Smith's failure to describe this incident in detail in 1612 casts some doubt on the exact language of the warning and Pocahontas's state of mind. The alert reader cannot help but be suspicious of Smith's decision to quote Pocahontas at length only after she was no longer alive to contradict him. As in the case of the alleged rescue, it is tempting to dismiss this story entirely as the fabrication of the publicity-hungry John Smith.

Smith's brief mention of the incident in 1612, however, makes it more likely that Pocahontas did warn the Englishman of impending danger. If we compare the 1624 depictions of the young Pocahontas with Smith's earliest description of her in 1608, moreover, interesting continuities and contrasts emerge that strengthen the possibility that Smith's story contains a grain of truth. In both accounts, for instance, Powhatan's power over his young daughter is apparent. In Smith's 1608 account of his first meeting with the girl, Pocahontas was a dutiful daughter who carried out her father's orders. One year after making Smith's acquaintance, according to his 1624 account, she had betrayed Powhatan and was fearful of the consequences. In both accounts, there is also evidence of Smith's desire to please the young girl with presents. Whereas in 1608, Pocahontas openly accepted gifts from the Englishman, in 1609 she feared that gifts would mark her as a traitor to her people, who had come to view the English as enemies.

The warning scene in the 1624 *Generall Historie* illustrates the transformation of Pocahontas's role as a cultural go-between. In the short year since her meeting with Smith as her father's emissary, Pocahontas has been transformed from an official representative who travels by day, escorted by her father's messenger, to a shadowy figure who enters the woods alone at night. In sharp contrast to her triumphant return to her father in 1608 with the newly released prisoners, in 1609 she runs, crying and alone, through the dark woods after delivering her warning to Smith. Only twelve or thirteen years old, Pocahontas has already lost her innocence. She is caught between her loyalty to two men who have become enemies. As a consequence, she no longer fits as seamlessly or as unselfconsciously into her own culture.

Wife

Pocahontas's loss of cultural innocence was accompanied by her coming to sexual maturity. Once she was no longer a little girl doing cartwheels around the English fort, she became a potential pawn in the political game being played by her father, John Smith, and the subsequent leaders of Jamestown. Feminist scholars have described the social usefulness of sexually mature women as occurring through "the traffic in women" conducted by fathers, brothers, and husbands. By exchanging women in marriage, men form social bonds with other men, thereby turning enemies and competitors into allies. Ultimately, this traffic in women helps to bind men together to form the foundations of society. Both patrilineal European and matrilineal Native American societies engaged in marriage customs that could be interpreted as an exchange of women among men, but it was unclear when the English settled Jamestown whether a traffic in women would eventually bind Englishman and Indian together into one society.

The first evidence of Pocahontas approaching marriageable age

comes in 1612, the year William Strachey reported that she was "now marryed to a pryvate Captayne called Kocoum some 2 yeares synce."[12] Strachey's report suggested that Powhatan had chosen to marry his daughter to a high-ranking Algonquian-speaking Indian, perhaps with an eye toward strengthening his ability to resist the English settlers. If Strachey was correct, Pocahontas married when she was thirteen or fourteen years old, a year or two after donning the modest aprons of a sexually mature woman. Assuming that her courtship and marriage were similar to those of other young Indian women, Pocahontas might have received gifts of poultry, fish, venison, bear meat, fruits, and berries from her prospective husband. This was the traditional way to convince a woman and her father that a man was a good hunter, capable of providing a wife with food throughout the year. As a very young woman, just entering puberty, Pocahontas would probably have needed her father's permission to marry. As the favorite daughter of the paramount chief, moreover, her marriage would have been politically important to the future of the Powhatan people. Curiously, Strachey was the only Jamestown chronicler to mention this marriage. If Pocahontas's first husband really was an Indian, he died soon after they were wed or the marriage was annulled, for he is never mentioned again in any subsequent publication on Virginia.

In the same year that Strachey reported Pocahontas's marriage to Kocoum, John Smith boasted in his *Proceedings* that he could have married Powhatan's daughter himself:

> Some propheticall spirit calculated hee had the Salvages in such subjection, hee would have made himselfe a king, by marrying Pocahontas, Powhatans daughter. It is true she was the very nomparell [*sic*] of his kingdome, and at most not past 13 or 14 yeares of age. Very oft shee came to our fort, with what shee could get for Captaine Smith, that ever loved and used all the Countrie well, but her especially he ever much respected: and she so well requited it [by warning him of an ambush by Powhatan]. . . . But her marriage could no way have intitled him by any right to the kingdome, nor was it ever suspected hee had ever such a thought, or more regarded her, or any of them, than in honest reason, and discreation he might. If he would he might have married her, or have done what him listed [what he wanted].[13]

Smith purposely repeated gossip about his relationship with Pocahontas to refute charges that he had been attempting to make himself the king of Virginia. He also minimized both her political usefulness to him and his interest in marrying her, although he suggested that she would have been available to him as either a wife or a lover had he wanted her. Like his previous references to Pocahontas, Smith's speculations about a possible marriage reveal

his underlying respect for Powhatan's daughter. But his tone had changed significantly now that Pocahontas had become a woman. Reports of her frequently visiting the fort combined with Smith's own claim that he could "have done what him listed" to create an impression of Pocahontas's vulnerability to the desires of Englishmen. In seventeenth-century England, a woman who allowed herself to become vulnerable to sexual exploitation risked losing her respectability. That Pocahontas did not become his wife or his concubine had little to do with her own will, as Smith saw it, but instead reflected the integrity and "discreation" of John Smith.

Two years after Strachey's and Smith's comments on Pocahontas's marital status, Ralph Hamor published *A True Discourse of the Present State of Virginia*, an account of the settlement that detailed Pocahontas's central role in the conflict between the English and the Powhatans. According to Hamor, Pocahontas was in the midst of a three-month stay at Patawomeck in the spring of 1613, conducting some business for her father and visiting with friends, when English Captain Samuel Argall arrived at this northern Virginia location. Hamor claimed that Pocahontas's purpose was to "exchange some of her fathers commodities" with her Patawomeck friends, which suggests that her father still trusted her to act as his representative. If she had been married, in all likelihood her husband was now dead or they were divorced, making it possible for her to stay in Patawomeck for such a long period of time. Hamor described Pocahontas as "desirous to renue hir familiaritie with the English," "delighting to see them" and "fearefull perhaps to be surprised."[14] Despite trepidations, she did not hesitate to visit the English captain, although clearly she no longer felt as carefree among his people as she had in her youth.

When he heard of her impending visit, Argall concocted a plan to kidnap her, hoping eventually to ransom her for the Englishmen being held prisoner by Powhatan as well as for weapons and tools recently stolen from Jamestown. Enlisting the help of two Patawomeck Indians, Iopassus and his wife, by promising them a copper kettle and some other goods, Argall schemed to lure Pocahontas to his ship, where he would hold her prisoner until her father met English demands. The plan called for Iopassus's wife to express interest in going aboard the English ship. Iopassus, in turn, would pretend to refuse her request, until she became tearful. At that point, Iopassus would relent and persuade Pocahontas, the only other woman present, to accompany his wife.

After an evening of fine entertainment and a night spent in the gunner's room of Argall's ship, Pocahontas became "most possessed with feare, and desire of returne." She awoke the sleeping Iopassus, requesting that they leave the ship immediately, only to be informed

that she was now a hostage. Upon receiving the news, she "began to be exceeding pensive, and discontented," until gradually, "with extraordinary curteous usage," she seemed to accept her predicament with patience and resignation.[15] The ship returned to Jamestown, where Argall dispatched a messenger to inform Powhatan of his daughter's captivity and the terms of the ransom.

Powhatan's reaction to the news of the kidnapping was somewhat curious. Smith and Hamor claimed that he made no response for three months while he sought advice from his councillors, a claim that at least one historian finds doubtful. When at last he did respond, he returned the seven captive Englishmen along with broken and unserviceable muskets. Deeming this inadequate, the English once again gave Powhatan an ultimatum for the return of the other weapons he held. This time, several months elapsed without any response from the paramount chief.

By March 1614 the English had become impatient and decided to travel to Powhatan's village with Pocahontas in tow. Adding insult to injury, several of the men previously ransomed had run away from the English settlement to return to their Indian captors. Sir Thomas Dale's plan was to force Powhatan either to fight for his daughter or to return the goods and men demanded by the English. When news reached Powhatan's village that the English had brought Pocahontas with them, two of Powhatan's sons asked to see their half sister to determine whether her captors had been treating her well. Pleased with what they learned about her condition, at least according to Hamor, or possibly even more determined to rescue her, the two brothers left the ship declaring their willingness to redeem Pocahontas and negotiate a permanent peace with the English.

At least one English chronicler reported that the long months of captivity had taken their toll on Pocahontas, leading her to doubt her father's affection for her. Dale claimed that when she initially went ashore near her father's village, Pocahontas "would not talke to any of them scarce to them of the best sort, and to them onely, that if her father had loved her, he would not value her lesse then olde swords, peeces [firearms], or axes: wherefore she would stil dwel with the English men, who loved her."[16] Dale's recollection of Pocahontas's words were undoubtedly self-serving, yet it does resonate with what we call today the "Stockholm syndrome," in which a hostage identifies with the needs, political agenda, and interests of her or his captors. After spending nearly a year living among the English, Pocahontas would likely have begun to question her father's handling of the situation and to see the world in the way the English did. Her refusal to talk to her own people, except to complain about her father's failure to ransom her, hints at the resentment that she might have felt at continuing to be a pawn in the conflict between the two groups.

Although bitter feelings toward the father whom she believed had abandoned her may have accounted for much of Pocahontas's growing sympathy for her captors, several other factors also played a role. First, while she waited to be ransomed, Dale seized the opportunity to instruct her in the principles of Christianity. According to the Reverend Alexander Whitaker, who probably carried out much of the actual instruction, Pocahontas "openly renounced her countrey Idolatry, confessed the faith of Jesus Christ, and was baptised; which thing Sir Thomas Dale had laboured along time to ground in her."[17] Dale, who clearly saw Pocahontas's conversion as a political coup, was quick to point out that "she desired" to be baptized. "Were it but the gayning of this one soule," he wrote, "I will thinke my time, toile, and present stay well spent."[18] Taken together, Whitaker's and Dale's comments suggest that Pocahontas was under considerable pressure to make them feel that their time was "well spent." Cut off from her father and her people, she would have found it increasingly difficult to resist such pressures as the months of her captivity wore on.

One of the most tangible ways to display Pocahontas's conversion to Christianity and to imprint her new identity even more deeply was to transform her outer appearance to that of a respectable Englishwoman. Sometime after her kidnapping, the daughter of Powhatan relinquished her deerskin aprons and beads for the confining petticoats, bodice, and overskirts that comprised a genteel Englishwoman's outfit. For this to take place, Pocahontas would undoubtedly have been turned over to one of the small number of Englishwomen in Jamestown for advice and assistance in wearing her new clothing. Perhaps even more than being able to recite prayers and the catechism, this transformation of her appearance offered compelling evidence of what the English hoped to accomplish with their allegedly uncivilized neighbors if given a chance.

Forming affective ties with particular Englishmen was yet another factor influencing Pocahontas's views of her captors and their culture. Hamor, Dale, and Whitaker all noted that, even before the English went on the offensive and brought Pocahontas to Powhatan's village to press for their ransom demands, she had fallen in love with John Rolfe, a member of the lower gentry who was then twenty-eight years old. All three chroniclers noted that Rolfe's interest in marrying Pocahontas resulted not only from his admiration for her, but also from his love of the Virginia plantation and his interest in furthering his experiments with tobacco. Both of these projects were likely to benefit from a peaceful alliance with

the neighboring Indians who had grown the plant for hundreds of years. In addition, Rolfe believed that by becoming Pocahontas's husband, he could secure her soul for Christianity, a victory that would ultimately be for her own good. Although he denied that his marriage to Pocahontas was grounded in "the unbridled desire of carnall affection," a sinful passion that would have reminded many English adventurers of the excesses of the Spanish conquistadores, Rolfe did admit to enjoying the company of the woman "to whom my hartie and best thoughts are, and have a long time bin so intangled, and inthralled in so intricate a laborinth, that I was even awearied to unwinde my selfe thereout."[19] What Pocahontas saw in Rolfe is less well documented, although as a hostage bereft of contact with family and friends for an entire year, she could easily have become emotionally dependent on the attentions of an "inthralled" Englishman. What we do know is that she was willing to renounce or displace much of her heritage and identity to marry him according to English standards. Dale recounted that her baptism took place before the wedding, most likely accompanied by her adoption of the name Rebecca.

Pocahontas's previous participation in Smith's adoption may have made her more receptive to efforts to acculturate her to English ways. If she believed that her marriage to Rolfe was somehow equivalent to Smith's incorporation into Powhatan society, she may have been more willing to cooperate with English attempts to transform her. Valuing reciprocity and balance, as any Powhatan Indian would have, Pocahontas might have found it easier to accept her fate if she viewed it as but one of many cultural exchanges within the larger context of Anglo-Indian relations.

The final factor to consider in assessing the impact of Pocahontas's year of captivity is her age. Only sixteen or seventeen when she was taken hostage, Pocahontas faced a barrage of pressures to participate in her own cultural transformation. The people who wished to change her were not total strangers, moreover, but from a culture she had known since the age of ten. That few Indian women could claim as much firsthand knowledge of the English as Pocahontas does not negate the impact of her youth. Being a seasoned veteran of the Anglo-Indian conflict in Virginia did not exempt her from the emotional trials and tribulations of being a young adult.

One cannot help but wonder if Pocahontas would have been as quick to judge her father as unloving and her English captors as her friends if she had been able to read what they wrote about her. Unlike John Smith, who had described the young girl as the "Nonpareil" of Virginia, John Rolfe wrote of his wife-to-be as "one whose education hath bin rude, her manners barbarous, her generation accursed."[20] Hamor repeated Rolfe's words in his account of Virginia, using Pocahontas's barbarous state before her marriage as evidence of Rolfe's character and commitment to the Virginia settlement. In these descriptions, Pocahontas was no longer the self-possessed girl capable of charming wary Englishmen, but merely a savage indebted to the English for the gifts of Christianity and civility. The main attractions that she held for her husband-to-be and his advisers were the political capital they could reap from the marriage and the prosperity that might flow from an alliance with Powhatan.

News of Pocahontas's impending union with John Rolfe reached her father at about the same time that Thomas Dale presented Powhatan with one last ultimatum: He would allow Powhatan's people to resume their spring planting and give them additional time to decide how best to satisfy the English demands, but if a final agreement between the two groups was not reached by harvesttime, the English would "returne againe and destroy and take away all their corne, burne all the houses upon that river, leave not a fishing *Weere* [net trap] standing, nor a *Canoa* [canoe] in any creeke therabout, and destroy and kill as many of them as we could."[21] Meanwhile, Pocahontas had told her brothers of her plan to marry Rolfe, and they had, in turn, told Powhatan that his favorite daughter was about to become the wife of an Englishman. According to Hamor, Powhatan signified that he found the match "acceptable" by giving his "sudden consent thereunto."[22] Dale similarly noted the paramount chief's "approbation" of his daughter's union with Rolfe.[23] The threat of an imminent attack and the long separation from his favorite daughter may have made Powhatan think that agreeing to the marriage was the only means of securing his daughter's safety and his people's future happiness, but "approbation" is probably too strong a word to describe Powhatan's acquiescence in the first official Anglo-Indian marriage in Virginia.

Pocahontas's wedding took place in the chapel in Jamestown on April 5, 1614, less than a year after she was kidnapped. Dale, Whitaker, Pocahontas's two brothers, and Opachisco, an old uncle who acted as her father's deputy, attended the ceremony. Powhatan did not travel to Jamestown to see his daughter married. Soon after the event, he vowed never again to set foot on an English plantation, perhaps fearing that he, too, might be the victim of kidnapping. As Hamor explained it, the union between Pocahontas and Rolfe accomplished what seven years of theft, murder, destruction, gifts, and negotiation could not: "ever since [the wedding] we have had friendly commerce and trade, not onely with *Powhatan* himselfe, but also with his subjects round about us."[24] The exchange of Pocahontas from Powhatan to Rolfe, however grudgingly conceded by the paramount chief, had effectively brought about an end to the undeclared war between the men of both groups.

The "Peace of Pocahontas," as the temporary cessation of hostilities came to be known by the English, seemed to hold such promise that Dale attempted to arrange another marriage between a daughter of Powhatan and an Englishman. Six weeks after the Rolfe-Pocahontas wedding, he sent Ralph Hamor, accompanied by a former boy hostage as his interpreter, to visit Powhatan. According to Hamor, the paramount chief asked first after Thomas Dale, whom he referred to as his brother, and then after Pocahontas and his "unknowne sonne" John Rolfe. Hamor's reply, intended to set the stage for the request of another daughter, probably struck Powhatan as rude; Pocahontas was "so well content that she would not change her life to returne and live with him," Hamor claimed, to which Powhatan "laughed heartily, and said he was very glad of it."[25] Hamor then asked to be allowed to return to Jamestown with Powhatan's youngest daughter, a girl not yet twelve years old, so that she could become the wife of Dale and further cement the bond of love between the two peoples. Almost as an afterthought, Hamor mentioned Pocahontas's desire to see her sister. Powhatan refused Hamor's request respectfully and firmly, informing him that the girl was already married to a nearby *werowance*. Hamor's offer of beads, copper, and hatchets would not budge him; the chief informed the Englishman that he wished to retain the ability to see this beloved daughter, something he could not do if she went to live among the English.

We have very little direct evidence of Pocahontas's daily life in Virginia after her marriage to Rolfe, other than this plaintive secondhand request to see her sister. Dressed in Englishwomen's clothes, she likely experienced Virginia completely differently from the way she had as a young woman clad in moccasins and unconstricting deerskin aprons. Heat, dusty earth, and the need to make long treks through the woods raised nearly impossible obstacles to travel for a woman whose dress limited her physical mobility. Being the Indian wife of an Englishman and a recent convert to Christianity also made Pocahontas unusually vulnerable to scrutiny, not only by her English neighbors but also even by her own husband. From all accounts, she bore these changes in her life with a grace and poise that impressed those who met her. Thomas Dale, in particular, praised her for "liv[ing] civilly and lovingly" with Rolfe. So confident was Dale in her ability to act the part of the respectable English lady that when he made plans in 1614 to return to England in 1616, he had already decided that "she will goe into England with me."[26] It is clear from the historical record that most English people were happy with Pocahontas's transformation. What remains unknown is how Pocahontas herself felt about her new life as the wife of an Englishman.

Mother and Transatlantic Traveler

Sometime during 1615 or early 1616, Pocahontas gave birth to Thomas, her only known child. Thomas's birth was in many ways an auspicious event. The grandson of the paramount chief and the son of a prominent English settler, the younger Rolfe was well situated to make a life for himself in Virginia and to bring the Indians and the English closer together. Events conspired to keep him from his rich bicultural heritage, however. Dale's plan to return to England triumphantly with Pocahontas and Rolfe, with Thomas in tow, which finally came about in 1616, resulted in Pocahontas's son being raised as an Englishman, with only a secondhand knowledge of his mother's culture.

Unfortunately, we have few details of Thomas's birth. He was born to a mother whose people were reputed to give birth with little pain, yet she had, by the time he arrived, already been acculturated to many English ways. We have no way of knowing whether she had the assistance of other Indian women when she went into labor, or whether she was compelled, even during the most intense phase of pain, to continue her performance of Englishness. Whatever her experiences of the birth itself, Pocahontas prepared to travel with her son to his father's homeland.

It is possible only to speculate about the complex set of feelings that Pocahontas must have had as she sailed to England in the spring of 1616. English ships had announced the presence of the settlers off the Virginia coast in 1607. An English ship had carried away her friend, John Smith. It was aboard an English ship, moreover, that Pocahontas ultimately lost her freedom and began her cultural journey away from her father's people. Nothing in her own experiences of canoe travel on Virginia's rivers could have prepared her for the size and scale of an English ship and the duration of the journey. That she was also probably still nursing her son could only have added to the physical and emotional strain of the Atlantic crossing.

The ship arrived in Plymouth, England, in June 1616, carrying Pocahontas, Rolfe, their son, and ten or twelve Indian people, including Uttamatomakkin, Powhatan's councillor. Upon reaching London, Pocahontas and her retinue began a whirl of social activity. Many of the expenses of clothing, entertainment, and hobnobbing with London society were absorbed by the Virginia Company, which hoped to use Pocahontas's transformation to respectable Christian womanhood as an advertisement for investors. Although it is not clear whether Pocahontas brought significant new investment to the Company, she certainly gave its experiment in Virginia great

publicity. Her grace and ease at social events impressed her genteel hosts, eventually earning her an invitation to the Twelfth Night masque in January 1617. Company investor John Chamberlain noted in his diary that "the Virginian woman, Poca-hontas, with her father-counsaillor, hath ben with the King and graciously used, and both she and her assistant well placed at the maske."[27] To be well placed at a masque performed for the king was to be given seating saved for a privileged favorite.

By inviting them to the masque, however, James I may have been treating Pocahontas and Uttamatomakkin to a special send-off. According to Chamberlain, plans had already been made for their return voyage to Virginia, much against Pocahontas's will. Either she or her son was already ill, or she was simply enjoying life in London too much to go back to her marginal and isolated place in the Jamestown settlement.

Some time before she left London, Pocahontas sat for a portrait that has become the basis for all the images we have of her at present. It reveals a well-dressed and genteel, if not aristocratic, woman whose collar, hat, and coat were all somewhat androgynous, as was the fashion among London gentlewomen during the late 1610s. Eyes that seem slightly almond shaped offer a clue that the subject might not be a typical Englishwoman, along with extra shading of the face in engravings of the portrait to indicate a ruddy complexion. Only the label clearly identifies the subject as Pocahontas, alias Matoaka, daughter of Powhatan. Of the near-complete transformation of the Powhatan woman suggested in the portrait, John Chamberlain commented snidely, "Here is a fine picture of no fayre Lady and yet with her tricking up and high stile and titles you might thincke her and her worshipfull husband to be somebody."[28] Better than a more persuasively English likeness, the engraving of Pocahontas reflected the Virginia Company's investment in her gentility, representing her as an Indian indebted to the English for the gift of civility.

Pocahontas herself might have depicted the debt differently. Although we have only John Smith's 1624 version of his meeting with her during the final weeks of her stay, it suggests that she had finally become embittered about the way that English people cava-lierly put aside their promises and their obligations. Angered that Smith had not visited her during the whole of her stay in London, after having not seen her for eight years, Pocahontas refused at first to speak to him. Smith's initial and somewhat predictable reaction to her silence was mortification; apparently he feared that her unwillingness to speak might somehow reflect badly upon him, since he had attested to her fluency in English. When she did speak, according to Smith, it was to upbraid him for his rudeness and to

remind him "of what courtesies shee had done."[29] She also reminded Smith that he had betrayed his promise to share with Powhatan all that he had and failed to live up to his obligations as Powhatan's adopted son.

Smith's version of his final interview with Pocahontas ended with their conflict over what to call each other. To Smith's dismay, the daughter of Powhatan insisted on calling him Father, despite his supposedly modest demurrals that he could never be a father to a king's daughter. Pocahontas reminded Smith that in Virginia he had been fearless (one senses that Smith embellished his account here) and questioned his fear of being called Father now that they were in England. She informed him that she still planned to call him Father and expected him to call her Child, "and so I will bee for ever and ever your Countrieman."[30]

Having lost her close affectionate bond with her Indian father as a consequence of her conversion to Englishness, Pocahontas aggressively claimed paternal affection and protection from the one man who behaved as bravely as herself when confronted with a strange new culture. Although Smith's version of this final interview was undoubtedly engineered to emphasize his own heroic qualities, her anger, her "well set countenance," and her demands upon him are all consistent with the responses of a woman who had not only lost her innocence through her interaction with the English but had also finally lost her faith in the Englishman for whom she had taken the greatest risks.[31]

By the time the winds were right for Dale's ship to return to Virginia, both Pocahontas and her son were too ill to travel. Left behind in Gravesend, she succumbed to a respiratory ailment in March 1617. She was probably just twenty years old when she died, yet during her short life she had been part of one of the most significant interactions in the Atlantic world. Changing her name, converting to Christianity, marrying an Englishman, bearing a biracial child, and crossing an ocean—all of these decisions, including those over which she had little choice, reflected her fearlessness about crossing cultural boundaries. Had she lived longer, perhaps there would have been less bloodshed in Virginia and more intermarriage. Perhaps, instead of killing Indians to gain access to land, a creative leader with the surname Rolfe might have crafted a more just policy for cooperative Indian and English land use. In light of her final conversation with Smith, however, one has to consider that Pocahontas's sense of betrayal might finally have tipped the scales, sending her back across the cultural frontier to rejoin her people.

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Smith's version of his final interview with Pocahontas ended with their conflict over what to call each other. To Smith's dismay, the daughter of Powhatan insisted on calling him Father, despite his supposedly modest demurrals that he could never be a father to a king's daughter. Pocahontas reminded Smith that in Virginia he had been fearless (one senses that Smith embellished his account here) and questioned his fear of being called Father now that they were in England. She informed him that she still planned to call him Father and expected him to call her Child, "and so I will bee for ever and ever your Countrieman."[30]

Having lost her close affectionate bond with her Indian father as a consequence of her conversion to Englishness, Pocahontas aggressively claimed paternal affection and protection from the one man who behaved as bravely as herself when confronted with a strange new culture. Although Smith's version of this final interview was undoubtedly engineered to emphasize his own heroic qualities, her anger, her "well set countenance," and her demands upon him are all consistent with the responses of a woman who had not only lost her innocence through her interaction with the English but had also finally lost her faith in the Englishman for whom she had taken the greatest risks.[31]

By the time the winds were right for Dale's ship to return to Virginia, both Pocahontas and her son were too ill to travel. Left behind in Gravesend, she succumbed to a respiratory ailment in March 1617. She was probably just twenty years old when she died, yet during her short life she had been part of one of the most significant interactions in the Atlantic world. Changing her name, converting to Christianity, marrying an Englishman, bearing a biracial child, and crossing an ocean—all of these decisions, including those over which she had little choice, reflected her fearlessness about crossing cultural boundaries. Had she lived longer, perhaps there would have been less bloodshed in Virginia and more intermarriage. Perhaps, instead of killing Indians to gain access to land, a creative leader with the surname Rolfe might have crafted a more just policy for cooperative Indian and English land use. In light of her final conversation with Smith, however, one has to consider that Pocahontas's sense of betrayal might finally have tipped the scales, sending her back across the cultural frontier to rejoin her people.

Notes

1. John Smith, *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia*, 1608, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith, 1580–1631*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), 1:93.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 1:95. Smith's *Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia*, 1612, in *Complete Works*, 1:220–21, tells essentially the same story with more emphasis on Pocahontas's position as her father's favorite and on Smith's efforts to please her.
4. William Strachey, *The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britiania* (London, 1612), 62, 72.
5. Ibid., 113.
6. John Smith, *A Map of Virginia*, 1612, in *Complete Works*, 1:139.
7. John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, 1624, in *Complete Works*, 2:151.
8. Ibid., 182–83.
9. Ibid., 183.
10. Ibid., 198.
11. Ibid., 199.
12. Strachey, *Historie of Travell*, 62.
13. Smith, *Proceedings*, in *Complete Works*, 1:274.
14. Ralph Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present State of Virginia* (London, 1615; reprint ed., Richmond, VA, 1957), 4.
15. Ibid., 6.
16. Ibid., 53–54, Letter of Sir Thomas Dale.
17. Ibid., 59–60, Letter of Alexander Whitaker.
18. Ibid., 55, Letter of Sir Thomas Dale.
19. Ibid., 63, Letter of John Rolfe.
20. Ibid., 64.
21. Hamor, *True Discourse*, 10.
22. Ibid., 11.
23. Letter of Sir Thomas Dale, in *True Discourse*, 56.
24. Hamor, ibid., 11.
25. Ibid., 40.
26. Letter of Sir Thomas Dale, in *True Discourse*, 55.
27. John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1939), 2:50.
28. Ibid., 56–57.
29. Smith, *Generall Historie*, in *Complete Works*, 2:261.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.

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