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# THE MARRIAGE OF POCAHONTAS

Grade Levels: 4-10

30 minutes

AMBROSE VIDEO PUBLISHING 1995

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## DESCRIPTION

English colonists first settled in the New World at Jamestown in 1607. Reenactments, maps, and historic paintings retell the story of the ill-equipped colonists' struggle to survive, and their relationship with the local Native American tribes. Emphasizes Pocahontas' role in the colony's continuation, her meeting and marriage to John Rolfe, and the "peace of Pocahontas" that resulted in a permanent, thriving settlement.

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## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Historical Understanding

- ◆ Standard: Understands the historical perspective
  - Benchmark: Understands that specific individuals had a great impact on history
  - Benchmark: Understand that specific decisions and events had an impact on history

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## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate how the first colony in America survived.
2. To depict Pocahontas as the unifying tool between the two different nations.
3. To review why the Native American tribes felt threatened by the new settlers.

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## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Why was the first settlement established on the eastern seacoast?
2. Who were the Algonquins?
3. Why did the settlement nearly die out?
4. The Virginia Colony was saved by Pocahontas, but at what cost to her own people?
5. Why did both sides threaten war?
6. How was the indentured Negroes' situation different from that of later blacks in America? What was the *triangular trade*?
7. How does this story compare with Disney's film about her?

## SUMMARY

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In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the English, Spanish, French, and Dutch vied for territory in the Americas. Spain, with dominion over most of Central and South America, was advancing northward. Parliament, looking for profit and wishing to head off the Spanish, created the Plymouth and London (later, Virginia) Companies and sent small groups to establish May 14, 1607, at "James Towne" near the site of an abandoned Spanish mission. There, 150 settlers constructed a fortified trading post on the land of the Algonquins, a confederation of 30 tribes whose chief was Powhatan.



The Indians had become increasingly suspicious of the white man's interest, so travel outside of the fortification was hazardous. By summer of 1607, 50 had died. John Smith emerged as a leader, advising alliances. He spent time among the Indians and learned their language. He promised that the colony was temporary, a lie the Indians saw through.

Smith was captured and displayed as a trophy. He was brought before Powhatan and was about to be stoned to death when Pocahontas intervened. The 13-year-old was a favorite among Powhatan's hundred children. Powhatan allowed Smith to return to the settlement and Pocahontas spent much time there, learning English and developing a curiosity about England.

The Indians had had enough and Powhatan decided to eliminate the colony. The following spring, ships arrived to save the colony. On one of them was John Rolfe.

Indian attacks continued and both sides threatened war. Pocahontas, now 18, returned from exile and was kidnapped by the colonists, her ransom being peace and the return of hostages. A truce followed and she remained with the settlers. In 1613 she visited Henrico, one of three new settlements where she met and fell in love with Rolfe. Their marriage in 1614 was permitted by Governor Dale and Powhatan, hoping for peace.

The colony flourished in the tobacco trade and, by 1624, thousands more had emigrated. Indians resumed their attacks too late, though they wiped out a third of the settlers. They thus created a labor shortage which opened the door wider for the introduction of slavery.

## RELATED RESOURCES

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### Captioned Media Program

- Jamestown: The Beginnings #3146
- The New World Colonized #3490
- Pocahontas: Ambassador of the New World #8174

## World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid-safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **THE REAL POCAHONTAS**

<http://www.geocities.com/broadway/1001/arrow.html>

Explains the differences between the real-life Pocahontas and the Disney movie. Links to “Pocahontas Descendants,” “Visit Jamestown Settlement!” and others.

- **POCAHONTAS**

<http://www.apva.org/history/pocahont.html>

From the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, gives a biography of this Native American princess.

