**READING 2: SENDING WOMEN TO VIRGINIA (1622)**

There was a huge gender disparity between men and women in the Chesapeake region, with many more single men than women. Most of the women came to Virginia as indentured servants in the early 17th century, but the Virginia Company also arranged for several shipments of other women, including those described here.

Source: Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1906-1935), 256-57.

We send you in this ship one widow and eleven maids for wives for the people in Virginia. There hath been especial care had in the choice of them for there hath not any one of them been received but upon good commendations. We pray you all therefore take them into your care, and most especially we recommend that at their first landing they may be housed, lodged, and provided for of diet till they be married, for such was the haste of sending them away, we had no means to put provisions aboard. In case they cannot be presently married, we desire they may be put to several householders that have wives, till they can be provided of husbands.

There are near fifty more which are shortly to come, sent by the Earl of Southampton, and certain worthy gentlemen, who taking into their consideration, that the Plantation can never flourish till families be planted, and the respect of wives and children fix the people in the soil, therefore have given this fair beginning.

For the reimbursing of whose charges, it is ordered that every man who marries one of them gives 120 lb weight of best leaf tobacco, and in case any of them die, that proportion must be advanced to make it up, upon those who survive. We pray you to be fathers to them in this business, not enforcing them to marry against their wills; neither send we them to be servants. And you may assure such men as marry these women, that the first servants sent over by the Company shall be consigned to them, it being our intent to preserve families and proper married men, before single persons.