



HoMMUNC

Virginia Company

Chair: Jordan Sitomer

Moderator: Miranda Bannister

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jordan Sitomer, and I'm pleased to be chairing your committee, Virginia Company. I am currently a senior at Horace Mann School, and this is my fourth year of Model UN. Please feel free to approach me with questions relating to committee or to get tips on being a better delegate. I am currently serving as co-President of Horace Mann's Habitat for Humanity club and co-President of the Youth Board of my synagogue, Temple Israel. I also organize and lead community events for the Autism Awareness club at HM. I hope you share my enthusiasm for vigorous debate and meaningful collaboration. Along with those two things, research will make committee fun and successful, so please, use the background guide as a starting point, but delve deeper into the topics and your characters. Be ready to address the Jamestown settlers' relations with the Powhatan tribe, and the economic interests of the Virginia Company. If you are new to MUN, my best advice is to come to committee ready to jump in the middle of things and soak up everything that goes on.

Sincerely,
Jordan Sitomer

Committee Procedure

Jamestown will operate in the format of a standard crisis committee. Every member of the committee will have an assigned character with a stated opinion on at least one of the possible topics of discussion. Most will be members living in Jamestown, because much of the governance of the Virginia Company of London resided in England. However, all will have the same power and act as though they are living in the settlement.

The committee will begin in 1618, immediately after the death of Powhatan and Lord de La Warr. Members should be prepared to discuss changing relations with the Powhatans, indentured servitude, and the economic interests of the Virginia Company, although the focus of the committee will change frequently throughout the day with the introduction of various crises. While the background guide discusses Jamestown history leading up to the time of the committee, delegates should research some of the major events that happened shortly after the setting of the committee, to anticipate what sorts of crises they may face.

Additional research before the conference is strongly encouraged. Each member of the committee should organize a few thoughts on each of the suggested topics, while remaining in character. If the character has no stance on an issue, which may occur for many of the characters because most records from the time period have been lost, then the delegate should choose an interesting and creative stance and defend it regardless.

British and Merchant Interests in the Founding of Jamestown

The founding of Jamestown marked the start of English colonialism in North America. From its conception, Jamestown was a beacon of hope for all strata of English society. King James I granted a charter for the Virginia Company of London in 1606, with the intention of expanding foreign interests, as mercantilism had been the governing economic principle in European states since the 15th Century.¹ For Sir Thomas Smythe, the leader and treasurer of the Company, and for the merchants and investors supporting the company, the examples set by English joint stock companies and other European nations promised lucrative results.

Seeking out the New World was an important endeavor for national recognition and wealth. Mercantilism had been the governing economic principle in Europe since the fifteenth century, but England had not yet explored the Americas with any success as its political rivals the Portuguese, Spanish, and French had. While the royal government did not establish the colony at Jamestown, the Virginia Company, a joint stock company, promised a new region under the general governance of England. In the past the Muscovy Company and the East India Company had operated in the same way as the Virginia Company, as joint stock ventures. Wealthy merchants and citizens had invested their money in these ventures, and the colonies had profited, paid taxes to the King, and established new regions under English dominion.² The Virginia Company promised to do the same thing for King James.

¹ <http://www.historyisfun.org/history-jamestown.htm>

² <http://www.nps.gov/jame/historyculture/the-virginia-company-of-london.htm>

The Virginia Company represented the economic interests of many wealthy Englishmen, and operated as such. The cost of only one share in the company was priced at 12 pounds and 10 shillings, over six months' worth of salary for a working class Englishman. However, the 1700 investors represented citizens not just from the upper echelons of society.³ Those who purchased the most stocks, such as Lord De La Warr, the first governor of Virginia, held the greatest control over the fate of the company and the colony, but many depended on the success of the venture.⁴

The relationship between the company and the royal government evolved during the few decades with the updating of the Company's charter. The first charter granted self governance, consisting of a committee of thirteen councilmen; they could elect a president from amongst themselves.⁵ The most prominent among these was the third, John Smith, who successfully established more positive relations with the Powhatans and continued to advocate for the Virginia Company till his death in England. However, the second charter, signed by the King in 1609, allowed the Company the additional privilege of appointing the governor of Virginia, who oversaw all affairs of the company and the governing body. After all, Jamestown was the entirety of Virginia, and this new specification allowed the Company greater control over its affairs.⁶ With the second and third charters, the King also expanded the control of the company to Bermuda and most land in the Americas, a large span of land though sparsely populated.⁷

³ <http://www.nps.gov/jame/historyculture/the-virginia-company-of-london.htm>

⁴ http://www.historyisfun.org/pdf/Laws-at-Jamestown/VA_Company.pdf

⁵ <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/MARTIN/2008-05/1211164733>

⁶ http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/va02.asp

⁷ <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1600-1650/the-third-virginia-charter-1612.php>

Early Jamestown: Economic Set Up, Strife, and Success

Though Jamestown was a great source of hope for many, conditions proved dire in the early years. Though the settlers were dealing with Native American push back, the greatest problems facing them were often hunger and disease. For the first few years, the small population of 144 men and boys decreased steadily.

However, under John Smith's presidency, conditions were at their best. John Smith established several policies and divided up the population, a move that his successor would mimic. Smith sent half of the colony to fish at present day Hampton, and the rest to create a fort in present day Richmond; while historians still dispute whether the men at the fort were slaughtered by Native Americans, those at Hampton flourished until winter denied safe fishing. An accident with gunpowder wounded Smith badly in 1609, and he returned to England leaving the colony to descend into its coldest, worst months in history, called the "Starving Time."

Starving Time happened as the result of several disasters combining to make one crippling winter for the colonists. A fleet of supply ships on its way from Bermuda was ruined during a storm, leaving 500 hundred survivors without supplies for George Percy, the new president, to house. Famine seized the settlers and the newcomers; one man infamously killed, cooked, and ate his wife.⁸ Though relations with the Powhatans had been positive prior to that winter, under Smith's control, Percy was unable to negotiate with the Native Americans for food to relieve the conditions in Jamestown. In fact, when

⁸ <http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter07/starving.cfm>

he sent John Ratcliffe, a leading councilman since the foundation of the colony, Native American women burnt him alive and sent the remnants of the troop back to Percy, obviously without corn.⁹ With famine came disease. In fact, a recent excavation of the burial grounds at Jamestown shows such hurried burials, with corpses having left in mass graves, face down, and in the clothes in which they died, has eliminated the severity of disease that winter.¹⁰ About 80% of the population at the start of the winter was dead by the time spring arrived. With spring came a new governor for Virginia, appointed under the 1609 charter to assist President Percy by insisting that they abandon Jamestown.¹¹ Fortunately for future generations, a supply ship intercepted the departing settlers and saved the colony from a fate like that at Roanoke.

Several industries failed in Jamestown before tobacco took hold as the colony's official cash crop. Of course the dream of finding gold, as the Spanish had found in Mexico, died almost as quickly as the settlers did. However, there were some attempts to produce everything from silk to shipyard products. Although the land was rich in timber and the materials for tar and rope, these products were in ample supply in English shipyards. John Rolfe was the first to establish a successful source of revenue in Jamestown.¹² Rolfe planted and grew the first seeds of Caribbean tobacco in Jamestown. Previous attempts had failed, because North American tobacco was less palatable than the Trinidadian blend that Rolfe cultivated and shared in Jamestown.¹³ Because of the

⁹ <http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter07/starving.cfm>

¹⁰ <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=98660>

¹¹ <http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter07/starving.cfm>

¹² http://www.historyisfun.org/pdf/Economics-of-Tobacco/Early_Industries.pdf

¹³ http://apva.org/rediscovery/page.php?page_id=27

tobacco trade, which expanded beyond the hugely successful plantations of Rolfe, indentured servitude became the backbone of the workforce in the colonies.

Indentured Servitude Prior to 1618

Indentured servants were indeed more easily attained than any other form of labor. England had become overpopulated and poverty ridden by the sixteen hundreds. The number of citizens in England had risen by a third. Countless workhouses existed as the only means for impoverished vagabonds to avoid arrest and imprisonment. Since 1530 law permitted for those without licenses to beg who were found roaming in the streets to be bound, whipped, and sent by force to their birthplace. Since 1601, parishes had appointed “overseers” of the welfare of the impoverished; those who refused to obey the overseers and work were beaten. From this setting, men fled England as indentured servants, working for periods of four to six years in exchange for passage to the New World.¹⁴

However, the life of an indentured servant was no better than the life of a pauper in England. There were few laws that protected indentured servants and certainly few benefits to servitude, though indentured servants composed up to two thirds of the population in Jamestown.¹⁵ Often times indentured servants died of disease or starvation before they became free. Masters used their services with a ruthless inconsideration for health, since the servant was of no use to them after their term was done anyway.

¹⁴ <http://www.localhistories.org/povhist.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/indentured-servants-in-the-us/>

Native American Relations Until 1618

The English had the unpleasant surprise of landing in a region with a unified Native American force. The Powhatans numbered at about 14,000, divided through 30 different tribes under the control of Chief Powhatan.¹⁶ However, the original government expected as little resistance from the Native Americans as the Spanish found riding into Tenochitlan nearly three hundred years before. Much to the surprise of the colonists, within the first two weeks of settling at Jamestown, the Powhatans had made an attack on the new settlement. Relations with the Powhatans would never improve permanently.

Smith cultivated a short-lived, but positive relationship with the Powhatans during his years as president, from 1608 to 1609. He was adopted as a member of the Powhatan tribe, after having been kidnapped by Powhatan's brother and later successor, Opechancanough.¹⁷ Smith later wrote about his stay with Powhatan that "though [eight men] ordinarily guarded me, I wanted not what they could devise to content me. And still our longer acquaintance increased our better affection."¹⁸ The adoption happened when Pocahontas, the daughter of Powhatan, saved Smith from being tomahawked. However, unfortunately for Disney fans, his being saved was part of a customary and staged ceremony that the Powhatans often used to admit members into the tribe. He remained in the care of the Powhatans for an extended period of time. He and Pocahontas became

¹⁶ <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/nativeamerican/anglopowhatan.html>

¹⁷ http://historyisfun.org/pdf/Leadership-at-Jamestown/Powhatans_Challenge.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.virtualjamestown.org/Opechancanough.html>

communicators between the settlers and Powhatans and Jamestown flourished until the Starving Time.

Powhatan had attempted to use food supplies and isolation of the English from other tribes as a means to control the English. He valued the possibility of trade with Europe and hoped to funnel English goods to the surrounding Native American groups through his own tribe, thereby increasing the scope of his own political reach. However, the English were too difficult to manipulate, constantly reaching out to the Manahoacs and Monacans in the region and burning Indian crops in mobs of poor; often times the worst off in the colonies lived on the outskirts of the region, in groups of indentured servants¹⁹. Powhatan and the settlers could not meet eye to eye, because each wanted dominance in the region.

Shortly after John Smith departed from Jamestown, the First Anglo Powhatan War began. With the irreconcilable differences and contradictory goals of each people, warfare was inevitable. The English had traded few weapons to the Powhatans, but the use of bow and arrows was swifter than British muskets, though somewhat less powerful. Powhatans were skilled in surprise attacks, fighting in short bouts and with surprise attacks. The English burnt fields and slaughtered tribes at a time. Without hesitation on either part to kill women and children, the Anglo Powhatan war persisted²⁰ until Rolfe, just as he rescued the colony from economic demise, saved the region from violence. The Powhatans had taken a number of English captives, inspiring an English captain in Jamestown to kidnap Pocahontas during the wars. While she was in English care, she

¹⁹ <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/nativeamerican/anglopowhatan.html>

²⁰ <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/nativeamerican/anglopowhatan.html>

converted to Christianity and took the name Rebecca. Rolfe, having asked permission of the governor and her father Powhatan, proposed to her. The union, though the newlyweds returned to England where Pocahontas soon died, was responsible for four years' worth of peace, until the death of Powhatan.²¹ Peace would not last much longer for them.

The relationship stayed tentatively peaceful for several years after Pocahontas' death, but Powhatan died in 1618. His successor was Opechancanaugh, who did not overlook the ever-expanding land demands of the English as his deceased brother had.

Native American Leadership Under Opechancanaugh

Opechancanaugh was paramount chief of the Powhatans and possibly several other tribes during the setting of this committee. He was the younger brother of Powhatan, and though he already held significant power in the region, upon the death of Powhatan in 1618 he became the most significant Native American leader in the region.

Opechancanaugh ascended to the Powhatan throne quickly after the death of his brother. In the years preceding Powhatan's death, Opechancanaugh had gained more and more power in the area. In 1616 he became chief of the Chicahomineys, adding to the various groups under his control. Powhatan's poor health led him to surrender much of his power to Opechancanaugh and another of his brothers, named Itoyatan. While Powhatan retained the title Peace Chief during the years before his death, it was actually

²¹ http://apva.org/rediscovery/page.php?page_id=27

Opechancanough who led most military affairs for the Powhatans.²² Though little is known about Itoyatan, Opechancanough had little to no power struggle with Itoyatan while asserting himself in Powhatan's place.

Unfortunately for the English, Opechancanough was not as committed to maintaining good relations with the English as Powhatan. Opechancanough suffered a traumatic experience with Europeans as a child.²³ Philip the II of Spain granted permission in 1560 for a group of explorers to investigate the Virginia area. The explorers' ship, the Santa Catalina, was blown off course during a storm and landed in the region of the Powhatans. The captain, Antonio Velazquez either kidnapped or traded for the son of the Powhatan chief, a boy then called Paquiquineo, who many historians hypothesize was the man later known as Opechancanough. After travel through Portugal and Spain and presentation before the court of Philip II, Paquiquineo landed in the care of Dominican friars. The friars christened the boy as Don Luis. Don Luis spend years sailing around the Americas with the Spanish, but ultimately returned to the Chesapeake Bay with the Jesuit order. While living with the Jesuits, he reestablished his relationship with his family, broke his Christian vows, and turned his back on the order. According to many, he assisted or even led the massacre of the Jesuits in 1571.²⁴ The experiences he had as a child contaminated his views about Europeans and cast a shadow over the future of Jamestown.

²² <http://www.virtualjamestown.org/Opechancanough.html>

²³ http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Opechancanough_d_1646#start_entry

²⁴ http://encyclopediavirginia.org/don_lua#start_entry

A better documented and more probably explanation for Opechancanaugh's distaste for European settlement is an offense committed by John Smith during the early years of Jamestown's existence. It was 1709 when Opechancanaugh became a true enemy to Smith. The settlers were starving, and Smith entered Opechancanaugh's camp and held Opechancanaugh at gunpoint till his demands for food were met. Such humiliation before his entire tribe permanently soured Opechancanaugh's opinions of Smith and the settlers.²⁵

Issues To Consider

Among other research, it is highly recommended that the delegates read a little about the Great Charter. That was the collection of policies that we will be debating at the start of the day, encompassing all of the issues below. The massacre of 1622 is also an important moment that the delegates should consider discussing; if their actions at the start of committee fail, the settlers could head towards the same fate as actually occurred in Jamestown.

1. How will the committee deal with the rise of Opechancanough? Powhatan has agreed to a number of land treaties, yet with new leadership these are coming into question.²⁶ Will the committee reach out to them and avoid the massacre of

²⁵ http://historyisfun.org/pdf/Leadership-at-Jamestown/Powhatans_Challenge.pdf

²⁶ <https://teacher.ocps.net/michael.callahan/resources/microsoftwordslaveryinamerica09.pdf>

1622? How will the company balance the tobacco trade's rising land demands with Native American relations?

How will the government maintain the growing populace of poor, unrepresented indentured servants and impoverished free workers? Many, because the poorest citizens and indentured servants live on the outskirts of the colony, were responsible for starting violence with the Native Americans over the past two decades.

2. Will the company institute the headwright system? One headwright is 50 acres of land. The proposed headwright system awards two of these plots to any person who funds the passage of an indentured servant into the colonies. However, considering the recent power transition and the potential instability of the lower classes, incentivizing the growth of the indentured population may be unwise.
3. Members should consider instituting a democratic system of government. In 1619, in actual history, Jamestown saw its first General Assembly for free citizens. There were eleven burgesses, or important regions in Jamestown, each with two representatives nominated to sit in the General Assembly.²⁷

²⁷ http://www.historyisfun.org/pdf/Laws-at-Jamestown/The_Great_Charter.pdf

Will this committee see all the settlers represented? Should indentured servants have a voice through one representative or equal representation or be excluded from the proceedings?

If the committee votes to institute a democratic system such as the General Assembly that was created in 1619, then all members of the committee will automatically become a representative of a burgess in that council, while remaining the same character.

In 1621, the Crown confiscated self government from the Virginia Company, eliminating the right of the company to have the original council set up in the First Charter. As a committee, you wish to govern successfully enough that this does not happen.

Characters

Captain Christopher Lawne- Lawne, interestingly, was a Puritan. He founded a plantation that housed over a dozen Puritans. He served in 1619 as one of the burgesses in the General Assembly.²⁸

Ann Burrass Layden- Burrass was not a governing figure in Jamestown, but she was the first woman to arrive in Jamestown. While her death was not recorded, she was certainly alive past the time of this committee. Therefore, she will represent the voice of women in

²⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Lawne

the community, who were growing in number; women in Jamestown were outnumbered six to one by men, but they were in high demand and scores traveled to the new world to be wed immediately to the workers. It was highly contested whether women should receive land, just as their male counterparts, upon arriving in Jamestown; many, including Burrass presumably, thought that it should. As the wife of a laborer, she will perhaps consider the needs of indentured servants, as well as women.²⁹

William Capps- Capps, an early settler and longtime resident of Jamestown, supported the integration of English values into Native American culture. As one of the representatives in the General Assembly, from the same district as Captain William Tucker, he pushed on one occasion to have locations with native American names given more formal English ones. That may be an indication of a larger appreciation for Prostheletizing Native Americans.³⁰

Captain Thomas Graves- Graves was one of the first settlers and investors in Jamestown and the Virginia Company respectively. The scope of his power grew throughout his years in Jamestown. In 1618 he was appointed to be the head of Smythe's Hundred, an area where he owned land, because there had been a murder in the area and leadership seemed necessary. Graves will take a firm stance against too much freedom for indentured servants, because he was a defender against civil unrest in the colonies.³¹

²⁹ http://www.historyisfun.org/chronicles/ann_more1.html

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Capps#Ancient_Planter

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Thomas_Graves

Captain John Martin- Martin was a powerful man in the Jamestown community. He was arrived at the colony with the first flight of settlers. He was an appointed councilman during the first few years, though he returned to England for a brief interlude. His property was not granted under the same conditions as the rest of the colony, exempting him from several laws. Therefore, the representatives in the 1619 general assembly that came to represent his burgess were denied a place in the council for a short period of time.³²

Captain William Pierce- Pierce was an affluent man of many talents. He was a successful merchant, he owned a store in Jamestown, and he also ran his own plantation. His title comes from his appointment to head the governor's guard. His daughter married John Rolfe shortly after the death of Rolfe's second wife, Pocahontas.³³ Pierce should consider trade opportunities with the Native Americans, not just the wellbeing of his plantation.

John Pory- Pory was the speaker during the 1619 General Assembly, but served as a Secretary to George Yardley beforehand. He was fascinated with journalism later in life, but in Jamestown one of his most notable endeavors was an exploration to surrounding

³² http://www.historyisfun.org/pdf/Laws-at-Jamestown/The_Great_Charter.pdf

³³ <http://www.nps.gov/jame/historyculture/new-towne-a-diverse-jamestown-household-1620-1640.htm>

areas yet untouched by the English; this curiosity indicates a preference for expansion, perhaps with less consideration for delicacies with Opechancanaugh.³⁴

Dr. John Potts- Potts, though he did not arrive in Virginia until 1619, will be included as an important member of this committee. Indeed, Potts was a famous man in Jamestown history, because he devised the successful plot to poison 200 Indians, in retaliation for the 1622 massacre. Naturally, he will take a more harsh stance when dealing with conflict that arises with Opechancanaugh.³⁵

Captain William Powell- Powell was an early settler in Jamestown. He came to the colonies shortly before Starving Time, unfortunately for him and his wife. However, he owned a large plantation by the 1618. He served as one of the burgesses in the General Assembly of 1619. Though he was the first in Jamestown to hear news of Opechancanaugh's 1622 plot to massacre the settlers, he died along with much of the rest of the population.³⁶

John Rolfe- John Rolfe had returned to Jamestown by 1618, though Pocahontas had died by this point in time. He will support the expansion of indentured servitude through the headwright system, but will also consider the relationship between the Powhatans and the

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Pory

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Pott

³⁶ <http://www.easleygenealogy.com/genealogypowell2.html>

English as of paramount importance. During the timeframe of the committee, he was serving as the secretary and recorder of Jamestown.³⁷

Sir Edwin Sandys- Sir Edwin Sandys was adamantly in favor of the headwright system and all of the other reforms instituted in the New Charter. However, he stood for the expansion of agriculture outside of the tobacco trade.

Sir Thomas Smith- This treasurer of the Company was opposed to the headwright system, though he was committed to the economic success of his colonies. He had used a lottery system to jumpstart the company's investment, and built up its popularity. Through pamphlets, advertizements, books, and even the presentation of Pocahontas and John Rolfe at court, he sought to ensure the financial wellbeing of the company.

George Thorpe- Thorpe held the most positive stance towards the Indians. He took an enthusiastic optimistic approach to the Christianization of Native Americans.³⁸ He controlled about 10,000 acres of land in Richmond, Virginia, a plot partially intended as a university and center for conversion of Native American children.³⁹ He wrote to Sir Edwin Sandys that there was "Scarce any man amongst us that doth so much as afford "The Native Americans" a good thought in his heart ... in my poor understanding if there

³⁷ <http://www.virtualjamestown.org/jrolfe.html>

³⁸ <http://books.google.com/books?id=555CzPsGLDMC&pg=PA215&lpg=PA215&dq=george+thorpe+jamestown&source=bl&ots=WNITHRAIN5&sig=bsVT1wTiPYv4VKspcajQoAJYiSY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=nFTcU-PuKImTyASR9IKwBA&ved=0CDQQQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=george%20thorpe%20jamestown&f=false>

³⁹ http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Thorpe_George_bap_1576-1622

be wrong on any side it is on ours, who are not so charitable to them as Christians ought to be.”⁴⁰

Captain William Tucker- Tucker was a wealthy planter and owner of many indentured servants. Tucker was one of the representatives in the General Assembly. After the 1622 massacre, hopefully avoidable in our committee, his hard line policy towards the Native Americans was apparent when he helped construct and carry out a plot to poison 200 Powhatans during a peace talk.⁴¹ He also worked closely with William Capps, before that incident, because they represented the same district.

Captain John Warde- Ward captained a ship that was very successful in procuring supplies for the colonies. In fact, while his membership as a burgess in the General Assembly was originally questioned, he had proved his usefulness to the colony so well by 1619, that he was admitted to represent himself and his plantation.⁴²

Governor Sir George Yeardley- Yeardley served as a deputy governor for two years, but in 1619 he actually led the General Assembly, the first democratic gathering in Jamestown. In 1618, because the former Governor Lord de La Warr had died, Yeardley was appointed as the new governor. He became instantly active, bringing a series of

⁴⁰ <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/thorpe-george-1575-1622>

⁴¹ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=12800115>

⁴² <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=bhreed&id=I56698>

reforms known as “The Great Charter” upon his return to England. He will advocate for all of the policies popular in the Charter.⁴³

⁴³ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/652387/George-Yearley>