



“And Divers Others”: The Early Occupants of Jamestown

Grade: 7th-12th

Subjects: History, Virginia Studies, English

Time: 60 minutes

Class Size: Adaptable

Skills: Using historical documents, non-fiction, interpretation

Strategies: Have students read and interpret primary sources to gain understanding of historical events. Compare and contrast primary sources with archaeological evidence.

Student will:	SOLs
VS.1 Students will demonstrate skills for historical thinking and geographic analysis by: a) analyzing and interpreting artifacts and primary and secondary sources to understand events in Virginia history d) recognizing points of view and historical perspectives VS.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between physical geography and the lives of native peoples of Virginia by: f) describing how archaeologists have recovered new material evidence at sites including Werowocomoco and Jamestown VS.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the first permanent English settlement in America by: e) identifying the impact of the arrival of Africans and English women to the Jamestown settlement g) describing the interactions between the English settlers and the native peoples, including the role of the Powhatan in the survival of the settlers VS.4 Demonstrate an understanding of life in the Virginia colony by b) describing how the culture of colonial Virginia reflected the origins of American Indians, European immigrants, and Africans e) describing everyday life in colonial Virginia	VS.1, VS.2, VS.3, VS.4
9.5, 10.5, 11.5, 12.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts a) Recognize an author’s intended purpose for writing f) Evaluate clarity and accuracy of information i) Differentiate between fact and opinion	English 9.5, 10.5, 11.5, 12.5

Background

When recounting the history of Jamestown, traditional accounts focus on the original English colonists who originally established the settlement in 1607. However, thousands of other individuals lived in and around the settlement. This diverse group included women, children, Native Americans, Spanish, Germans, Polish, and, in 1619, Africans.

By using historical accounts and archaeological excavations, scholars can understand more about the Jamestown occupants and their daily lives. Yet first-hand accounts of Jamestown were written by the



white, male, European colonists. While these records do offer insight into life at Jamestown, they contain the author's bias regarding important people, events, and subjects and may even omit them entirely. Archaeology helps fill in these gaps. By studying the objects the individuals living at Jamestown left behind, archaeologists can understand more about who was in and around Jamestown and what they were doing every day.

Instructors are encouraged to review the following for additional information on the historical documents and artifacts used within this lesson. Please note that this content is written for adult audiences and is intended as a guide to enhance instructors' background knowledge prior to the lesson.

Cheese Strainer: This small ceramic vessel is probably a strainer for making individual portions of cheese. Dairying was traditionally a women's job in 17th-century England, thus making this strainer one of the few artifacts that could directly reflect female colonists' daily tasks. Learn more:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/cheese-strainer/>

Goffering Iron: Clothing was a way for gentlemen to distinguish themselves at Jamestown. Goffering irons were used to crimp or frill the fashionable ruffs. Traditionally, servants would insert a smaller, heated iron rod into the goffering iron and press the starched ruff around it to frill it. Learn more:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/goffering-iron/>

Mussel Shell Beads: Evidence suggests that these beads were made by Virginia Indian women living and working in James Fort. Archaeologists have recovered evidence of each step of the bead-making process, including over 5,000 of the beads themselves. Learn more:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/mussel-shell-beads/>

Potomac Creek Pot: The pieces of this Virginia Indian pot still contained food residue that, when tested, indicated a prepared stew of meat and maize. The pot is an indicator of the essential food provisions the Powhatan brought to the colonists, and may reflect the tasks of Powhatan women. Learn more:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/potomac-pot/>

Toy House: Archaeologists believe this tiny house was a toy windmill. A rod and string likely passed through it; by pulling on the string, its owner could make the now-missing blades spin. This toy could have been used by children or soldiers to pass the time. Learn more:

<https://historicjamestowne.org/collections/artifacts/toy-house/>

Resources and materials: Lesson includes a student worksheet. Instructors and/or students will need to access the following on personal or shared screens:

"Digital reDiscovery" Platform: <https://historicjamestowne.org/digital-rediscovery/>

Mussel Shell Beads 360 Animation: <https://youtu.be/g6oiINbUJQs>

Procedure

In this lesson, students will learn about the diverse group of individuals who lived in and around Jamestown. Using the "Digital reDiscovery" StoryMap, students will analyze historical documents and archaeological evidence to gain a greater understanding of who these individuals were and their daily lives at the settlement. Students will also be prompted to question why these individuals are often not recorded within historical accounts.



Before the lesson begins, open and display the “Digital reDiscovery” and “Shell 360 Animation” video on a projected or shared screen. Have the students use the StoryMap and video to complete the following worksheet. If time allows, review their answers in groups or together as a class using the discuss questions below.

Discussion Questions

- Were students surprised at the types of individuals living in and around Jamestown? Why? *Answers will vary. Students may be surprised because of the traditional emphasis on the original English male settlers. Students may reflect on the bias within historical documents.*
- Have students elaborate on their answers to Question 3 in Part 2. What sources did they list? How would those sources work with European accounts to show the larger picture of life at Jamestown? *Answers will vary. Students may list oral histories, artwork, archaeological investigations of Powhatan settlements, or recorded speeches by Powhatan people. Such evidence can provide a different point of view on events, people, and subjects recorded in European accounts. Similarities and differences between accounts can serve to verify or call into question what has been recorded.*
- Why do students think the lives of the many Jamestown occupants were not always recorded in historical accounts? Which aspects of the Jamestown occupants’ lives do students wish to know more about, and what kinds of archaeological evidence might help them do so? *Answers will vary. Students may list the various social biases influencing historical authors. They may wish to know more about foodways (studied through ceramic vessels, animal bones, or pollen), trades at the fort (tools), or trade (beads, copper).*

To learn more and view additional lesson plans visit *Jamestown Rediscovery* at <https://historicjamestowne.org/>



Name: _____

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Vocabulary

Archaeologist: a scientist who studies how people lived within the past

Artifact: an object made or used by a person in the past

Context: where an object is found on an archaeological site including how deep in the ground

Excavation: the scientific removal of soil and artifacts from an archaeological site

Feature: a non-moveable part of an archaeological site, such as pits or building walls

Site: a place used by people in the past, often containing artifacts

Background

On May 14, 1607, around 100 English settlers landed on Jamestown Island to establish a colony. Among them were the gentlemen leaders, skilled craftsmen, and young boys. They would soon be joined by hundreds of other individuals. The people living in and around Jamestown would eventually include women, children, Virginia Indians, Germans and Polish craftsmen, captured Spanish, and “divers others.”

While first-hand accounts of Jamestown can offer evidence of life at the fort, they were written by white, male, European colonists. They contain the author’s personal bias concerning important people, events, and subjects, and may omit them entirely. Archaeology helps fill in those gaps. By studying the objects that the Jamestown occupants left behind, archaeologists can understand more about who was at the fort and what they were doing every day.

Part I

The Accounts

Read the quotes below from John Smith’s 1624 book *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* and use them to answer the following questions:

All this time we had but one Carpenter in the Countrey, and three others that could do little, but desired to be learners: two Blacksmiths; two sailors, & those we write labourers were for most part footmen, and such as they that were Adventurers brought to attend them...that never did know what a day’s work was, except the Dutch-men [Germans] and Poles, and some dozen other...

...Mistress Forrest, and Anne Burras her maide; eight Dutch-men and Poles, with some others, to the number of seventy persons [aboard the 1608 Second Supply] ... About this time [winter 1608] there was a marriage betwixt John Laydon and Anne Burras; which was the first marriage we had in Virginia...

Now this our young Common-wealth in Virginia, as you have read once consisted but of 38 persons, and in two years increased but to 200. Yet by this small means so highly was approved the Plantation in Virginia, as how many Lords, with worthy Knights, and brave Gentlemen pretended to see it, and some did...



1. Along with the tradesmen Smith lists, there were also coopers, tailors, glassmakers, goldsmiths, apothecaries, and others at Jamestown. Why did the Virginia Company recruit so many different types of tradesmen?
2. Notice the gentry Smith mentions. These men would not have been trained in daily labor. How might this have caused conflict at the fort? (Smith himself was the only member of the Council who was not born a gentleman. Note his tone.)
3. Until 1608, there were no English women at Jamestown. What might the arrival of women and children signal about the settlement's permanence?
4. Historical accounts list some of the women and children's names but do not mention their daily actions at the fort. What kinds of objects might an archaeologist look for to learn more about their lives?

From Anas Todkill

Look at the "Digital reDiscovery" StoryMap. Click on the Anas Todkill tour and scroll down to The Tradesmen stop. Watch the video of Todkill discussing the various tradesmen at James Fort.

Todkill originally came to Jamestown as an attendant to Captain John Martin, and is credited with several chapters of Smith's book. How do his tone and comments illustrate the varying relationships between the gentry and tradesmen at the fort?

The Archaeology



In the early 17th century, English women were often responsible for making dairy products such as butter and cheese. This ceramic strainer was used to make cheese from fresh milk.



This toy windmill likely once had blades that attached to its roof, and a rod passing through it. Its owner would pull a string attached to the rod to make the blades spin.



This goffering iron was used to crimp or frill fashionable ruffs worn around the neck. A hot iron rod was inserted into it and the starched ruffs pressed around it. Servants traditionally performed this work for their gentlemen masters.

1. How does the cheese strainer illustrate English women's daily tasks at James Fort?
2. Think about the strainer, toy windmill, and the objects you listed in Question 4 above. If these artifacts were found on a site near Jamestown, does it necessarily mean that women and children were there? Why or why not?
3. This iron is one of several expensive items found at Jamestown. Think about who owned such items and the social messages they sent. How do these objects signal their owners' reliance upon the traditional English social caste system? Why would the colonists have brought such items with them to Jamestown?



Part II

The Accounts

Read the quotes below and use them to answer the following questions:

Their manner of trading is for copper, beads, and such like, for which they give such commodities as they have, as skins, fowl, fish, flesh, and their Country Corn... (John Smith, 1624)

The men bestow their times in fishing, hunting, wars, and such man-like exercises...The women and children do the rest of the work. They make mats, baskets, pots, mortars, pound their corn, make their bread, prepare their victuals, plant their corn, gather their corn, bear all kind of burdens, and such like... (John Smith, 1624)

...the Indians brought us great store both of Corn and bread ready made... (John Smith, 1608)

I have been told by a friend...that there are already 40 or 50 [colonists and Powhatan women] thus married... (Letter from Pedro de Zuñiga to King Philip III of Spain. August 1, 1612.)

1. Why do you think Smith recorded the daily tasks of the Powhatan? (Think about who was reading these accounts and why.)
2. Are you surprised by Zuñiga's statement of marriage between the colonists and the Powhatan? Why or why not?
3. How does his letter contradict Smith's statement of the "first marriage in Virginia" between Anne Burras and John Laydon? Why might the marriages between the Powhatan and the colonists not be recorded in English accounts?
4. Note who wrote these accounts. What kinds of evidence might offer a Powhatan perspective on the people and events at Jamestown? (Keep in mind that descendant communities still live in the Chesapeake Bay area today.)

The Archaeology



Watch the video of the mussel shell bead animation. Thousands of these beads have been found at Jamestown. Evidence suggests that Powhatan women were making these beads inside of the fort. The beads could be used for trade, as personal accessories, or symbolic items exchanged during Powhatan marriage ceremonies.



This mended pot once had a rounded bottom that helped it rest in continual fires (cooking was traditionally the job of Powhatan women). Molecular analysis showed that it still contained food residue likely from meat and maize. The Powhatan may have brought the pot holding a prepared stew into Jamestown for the colonists.

1. Why do you think archaeologists found so many mussel shell beads at Jamestown?
2. Review the various meanings these beads could have. How can they and the pot shed more light on the lives of Powhatan women?
3. Think about how scientific analyses such as the food residue analysis and dendrochronology (the study of tree rings) be used to understand more about life at Jamestown. Why might having these independent pieces of evidence be important?



The Quarter

Look at the “Digital reDiscovery” StoryMap. Click on the Archaeology tour. Scroll down to the Quarter Site stop. Watch the video “Quarter Site.”

1. What two artifacts were found on the floor of the Quarter that indicate a Powhatan woman may have been there? How do these artifacts and their context provide evidence for Zuñiga’s claim?

2. Think about the varying amounts of agency women had in the 17th century. If there was a Native American woman living at this site, do you think she was there by choice? Why or why not?

3. Review the artifacts and historical accounts featured in this lesson. How do those two pieces of evidence work together to show the many types of people living in James Fort and their daily lives? How do they supplement what you already knew about Jamestown?