

Document A: "True Relation" (ORIGINAL)

Arriving at Weramocomoco [? On or about 5 January 1608], their Emperor proudly lying upon a Bedstead a foot high, upon ten or twelves Mats, richly hung with many chains of great pearls about his neck, and covered with a great Covering of Rahaughcums. At head sat a woman, at his feet another; on each side sitting upon a mat uppon the ground, were ranged his chief men on each side of the fire, ten in a rank, and behind them as many young women, each a great Chain of white Beads over their shoulders, their heads painted in red : and with such a grave and Magestic countenance, as draw me into admiration to see such state in a naked Savage .

He kindly welcomed me with such good words, and great Platters of sundry Victuals, assuring me his friendship, and my liberty within four days....He asked me the cause of our coming....He demanded why we went further with our BoatHe promised to give me Corn , Venison, or what I wanted to feed us: Hatchets and Copper we should make him, and none should disturb us.

This request I promised to perform: and thus, having with all the kindness he could devise, sought to content me, he sent me home, with 4 men: one that usually carried my Gown and Knapsack after me, two other loaded with bread, and one to accompany me.

Source: Smith's own words, from A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of note as hath happened in Virginia Since the First Planting of that Colony, published in 1608.

Document B: "General History" (ORIGINAL)

At last they brought him [Smith] to Meronocomoco, where was Powhatan their Emperor.... [T]wo great stones were brought before Powhatan: then as many as could laid hands on him [Smith], dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beat out his brains, *Pocahontas* the Kings dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms, and laid her own upon his to save him from death: whereat the Emperor was contented he should live....

Two days after, Powhatan having disguised himself in the most fearefullest manner he could, caused Capt. Smith to be brought forth to a great house in the woods...then Powhatan...came unto him and told him now they were friends, and presently he should go to Jamestown, to send him two great guns, and a grindstone, for which he would give him the Country of Capahowosick, and forever esteem him as his son *Nantaquoud*.

Source: From Smith's later version of the story in General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles, published in 1624.

Paul Lewis
Historian, Interpretation A (ORIGINAL)

Author, The Great Rogue: A Biography of Captain John Smith (1966)

[Pocahontas] first steps onto the stage in 1617, a few months after she and her husband, John Rolfe, arrived in England. A charming, attractive, and exceptionally intelligent young woman, she created a sensation everywhere she went. Not only was she the daughter of a king and the first Indian woman ever to visit the British Isles, but as a convert to Christianity she aroused interest in circles that otherwise would have ignored her.

She discussed theology with bishops and with those learned scholars who were engaged in the monumental task of translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek for King James, who had ordered a new edition published. She proved to the doubting dons of Oxford and Cambridge that she was an independent, stimulating thinker. Her beauty and sweetness endeared her to the court, where Queen Anne became her patroness, and even the sour James unbent and chatted with her by the hour.

While Pocahontas was enjoying her triumph, a new edition of John [Smith]'s *True Relation* was published. It was substantially the same book that had been printed eight years earlier, and the text was not altered. But there was something new in the form of a series of running footnotes in the section that dealt with his capture by the Chesapeake late in 1607. These notes tell the story, subsequently learned by generation after generation of children, of Pocahontas' courage and heroism. . . . Without making the claim in so many words, he hints that he taught her to speak English and that she acquired her love of the Bible from him. . . .

A longer, more smoothly written version of the story appears in *The General History of Virginia*, which John completed in 1624 and published in that same year. In it he expands on the theme that she rescued him at the risk of her own life. "Princess Pocahontas hazarded the beating out of her own brains to save mine," he declares. "Not only that, but she so prevailed with her father that I was safely conducted to Jamestown." . . .

The alleged ire of Powhatan and his order condemning John to death do not jibe with the consistently friendly attitude he had displayed previously.

Source: Excerpt from The Great Rogue: A Biography of Captain John Smith, written by the historian Paul Lewis in 1966, (pp. 172-173).

J.A. Leo Lemay
Historian, Interpretation B (ORIGINAL)

Author, The American Dream of Captain John Smith (1991)

No one in Smith's day ever expressed doubt about the episode, and many persons who must have known the truth—including John Rolfe, Pocahontas, her sister, and brother-in-law—were in London in 1616 when Smith publicized the story in a letter to the queen. As for the exact nature of the event, it seems probable that Smith was being ritualistically killed. Reborn, he was adopted into the tribe, with Pocahontas as his sponsor. But Smith, of course, did not realize the nature of the initiation ceremony.

Source: Excerpt from The American Dream of Captain John Smith, written in 1991 by historian J.A. Leo Lemay.