

Indian Man and Woman Eating

THEIR manner of feeding is in this wise. They lay a matt made of bents one the grownde and sett their meate on the mids therof, and then sit downe Rownde, the men uppon one side, and the woemen on the other. Their meate is Mayz sodden, in suche sorte as I described yt in the former treatise of verye good taste, deers flesche, or of some other beaste, and fishe. They are verye sober in their eatinge, and drinkinge, and consequentlye verye longe lived because they doe not oppress nature.

Indian Woman and Young Girl & Indians Dancing Around a Circle of Posts

They are a people clothed with loose mantles made of Deere skins, & aprons of the same rounde about their middles; all els naked; of such a difference of statures only as wee in England; having no edge tooles or weapons of yron or steele to offend us withall, neither know they how to make any: those weapons that they have, are onlie bowes made of Witch hazle, & arrowes of reeds; flat edged truncheons also of wood about a yard long, neither have they any thing to defend themselves but targets made of barcks ; and some armours made of stickes wickered together with thread.

Indian Village of Pomeiooc

Their townes are but small, & neere the sea coast but few, some containing but 10 or 12 houses: some 20. the greatest that we have seene have bene but of 30 houses: if they be walled it is only done with barks of trees made fast to stakes, or els with poles onely fixed upright and close one by another.

Their houses are made of small poles made fast at the tops in rounde forme after the maner as is used in many arbories in our gardens of England, in most townes covered with barkes, and in some with artificiall mattes made of long rushes; from the tops of the houses downe to the ground. The length of them is commonly double to the breadth, in some places they are but 12 and 16 yardes long, and in other some wee have seene of foure and twentie.

In some places of the countrey one onely towne belongeth to the government of a Wiróans or chiefe Lorde ; in other some two or three, in some sixe, eight, & more; the greatest Wiroans that yet we had dealing with had but eightene townes in his governmet, and able to make not above seven or eight hundred fighting men at the most: The language of every government is different from any other, and the farther they are distant the greater is the difference.

Indian Religion

Some religion they have alreadie, which although it be farre from the truth, yet beyng as it is, there is hope it may bee the easier and sooner reformed. They beleeve that there are many Gods which they call

Montóac, but of different sortes and degrees; one onely chiefe and great God, which hath bene from all eternitie. Who as they affirme when hee purposed to make the worlde, made first other goddes of a principall order to bee as meanes and instruments to bee used in the creation and government to follow; and after the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, as pettie goddes and the instruments of the other order more principall. First they say were made waters, out of which by the gods was made all diversitie of creatures that are visible or invisible.

Indian Charnal House

For the confirmation of this opinion, they tolde mee two stories of two men who had been lately dead and revived againe, the one happened but few yeres before our comming in the countrey of a wicked man which having beene dead and buried, the next day the earth of the grave beeing seen to move, was taken up againe ; Who made declaration where his soule had beene, that is to saie very neer entring into Popogusso, had not one of the gods saved him & gave him leave to returne againe, and teach his friends what they should doe to avoid that terrible place of torment.

The other happened in the same yeere we were there, but in a towne that was threescore miles from us, and it was tolde mee for straunge newes that one beeing dead, buried and taken up againe as the first, shewed that although his bodie had lien dead in the grave, yet his soule was alive, and had travailed farre in a long broade waie, on both sides whereof grewe most delicate and pleasaunt trees, bearing more rare and excellent frutes then ever hee had seene before or was able to expresse, and at length came to most brave and faire houses, neere which hee met his father, that had beene dead before, who gave him great charge to goe backe againe and shew his friendes what good they were to doe to enjoy the pleasures of that place, which when he had done he should after come againe.

Indians Fishing

For foure monethes of the yeere, February, March, Aprill and May, there are plentie of Sturgeons: And also in the same monethes of Herrings, some of the ordinary bignesse as ours in England, but the most part farre greater, of eighteene, twentie inches, and some two foote in length and better; both these kindes of fishe in those monethes are most plentiful, and in best season which wee founde to bee most delicate and pleasaunt meate.

There are also Troutes , Porpoises, Rayes , Oldwives, Mulletts, Plaice, and very many other sortes of excellent good fish, which we have taken & eaten, whose names I know not but in the countrey language; wee have of twelve sorts more the pictures as they were drawn in the countrey with their names. The inhabitants use to take then two maner of wayes, the one is by a kind of wear made of reedes which in that countrey are very strong. The other way which is more strange, is with poles made sharpe at one ende, by

shooting them into the fish after the maner as Irishmen cast dartes ; either as they are rowing in their boates or els as they are wading in the shallowes for the purpose.

There are also in many places plentie of these kindes which follow.

Sea crabbes , such as we have in England.

Oystres , some very great, and some small; some rounde and some of a long shape: They are founde both in salt water and brackish, and those that we had out of salt water are far better than the other as in our owne countrey.

Also Muscles, Scalopes , Periwinkles, and Creuises.

Seekanauk, a kinde of crustie shell fishe which is good meate, about a foote in breadth, having a crustie tayle, many legges like a crab; and her eyes in her backe. They are founde in shallowes of salt waters; and sometime on the shoare.

There are many Tortoyses both of lande and sea kinde, their backes & bellies are shelled very thicke ; their head, feete, and taile, which are in appearance, seeme ougly as though they were membres of a serpent or venemous: but notwithstanding they are very good meate, as also their egges. Some have bene founde of a yard in bredth and better.

And thus have I made relation of all sortes of victuall that we fed upon for the time we were in Virginia, as also the inhabitants themselves, as farre fourth as I knowe and can remember or that are specially worthy to bee remembred.

Indian Village of Secotan

Native American farming methods:

All the aforesaid commodities for victuall are set or sowed, sometimes in groundes apart and severally by themselves; but for the most part together in one ground mixtly : the manner thereof with the dressing and preparing of the ground, because I will note unto you the fertilitie of the soile ; I thinke good briefly to describe.

The ground they never fatten with mucke, dounge or any other thing; neither plow nor digge it as we in England, but onely prepare it in sort as followeth. A fewe daies before they sowe or set, the men with wooden instruments, made almost in forme of mattockes or hoes with long handles; the women with short peckers or parers, because they use them sitting, of a foote long and about five inches in breadth: doe onely breake the upper part of the ground to rayse up the weedes, grasse, & old stubbes of corne stalkes with their rootes. The which after a day or twoes drying in the Sunne, being scrapte up into many small heapes, to save them labour for carrying them away; they burne into ashes. (And whereas some may

thinke that they use the ashes for to better the grounde ; I say that then they woulde eyther disperse the ashes abroad ; which wee observed they doe not, except the heapes bee too great: or els would take speciall care to set their corne where the ashes lie, which also wee finde they are carelesse of.) And this is all the husbanding of their ground that they use.

Then their setting or sowing is after this maner. First for their corne, beginning in one corner of the plot, with a pecker they make a hole, wherein they put foure graines with that care they touch not one another, (about an inch asunder) and cover them with the moule againe : and so through out the whole plot, making such holes and using them after such maner : but with this regard that they bee made in rankes, every ranke differing from other halfe a fadome or a yarde, and the holes also in every ranke, as much. By this meanes there is a yarde spare ground betwene every hole: where according to discretion here and there, they set as many Beanes and Peaze : in divers places also among the seedes of Macocqwer, Melden and Planta Solis.

The ground being thus set according to the rate by us experimented, an English Acre conteining fourtie perchess in length, and foure in breadth, doeth there yeeld in croppe or of-come of corne, beanes, and peaze, at the least two hundred London bushelles : besides the Macocqwer, Melden, and Planta Solis: When as in England fourtie bushelles of our wheate yeilded out of such an acre is thought to be much.

A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia
of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the natural inhabitants. Discovered by the English
Colony there seated by Sir Richard Grenvile, Knight in the year 1585. Which remained under the
government of twelve months, at the special charge and direction of the Honorable Sir Walter Raleigh,
Knight, Lord Warden of the Stanneries who therein had been favored and authorized by her Majesty and
her letters patents.
By Thomas Hariot, Servant to the abovenamed Sir Walter, a member of the Colony, and there employed in
discovering.
directed to the investors, farmers, and well-wishers

of the project of colonizing and planting there.

Imprinted at London in 1588

<https://www.nps.gov/fora/learn/education/thomas-hariots-a-brief-and-true-report.htm>

GOALS AND DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN HARRIOT'S PREFACE TO HIS TREATISE below.

My purpose in these remarks is merely to give a brief explanation of the opinions of these men. I do not mean to trouble you with details of these judgments and their envious, malicious, and slanderous reports; they are trifles not worthy of consideration. But I shall pass to a description of the marketable commodities of the country, which are the subjects of this discussion.

I will divide my treatise on the commodities into three separate parts, so that it may be easily read and understood. In the first I will enumerate commodities already found there, or which could be raised there to serve the ordinary needs of you who will be the planters and inhabitants of that country. A surplus of these can be provided by experienced men for trade and exchange with our own nation of England. It will enrich you, the providers, and those who will deal with you and will greatly profit our own countrymen by supplying them with many things which they have had to procure in the past either from strangers or from our enemies. These commodities, for distinction's sake, I call *marketable*.

In the second, I will set down all the goods that we know grow naturally there for food and sustenance of life, such as were commonly eaten by the inhabitants of the country as well as by us while we were in Virginia.

In the last part I will list such other general commodities as I am able to remember. Here I shall also give a brief description of the nature and manners of its inhabitants.

Full text of Description on Natives

CONCERNING THE NATURE AND MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE

It remains to speak a word or two about the native inhabitants, their nature and manners, leaving detailed discourse about them until a later, more convenient time. Now it is only necessary to reassure you that they are not to be feared. I do not think they will trouble our living there or obstruct our farming. I rather believe that they will have cause both to fear and to love us.

The clothing of the natives consists of loose deerskin mantles and aprons of the same fur which they wear around their waists; they wear nothing else. In stature they differ one from another, much as we do in England. They have no edged tools or weapons of iron or steel to attack us with, nor do they know how to make them. The only weapons they possess are bows made of witch hazel, arrows made of reeds, and flat-edged wooden truncheons, which are about a yard long. For defense they wear armour made of sticks wickered together with thread, and they carry shields made of bark.

Their towns are small and few, especially near the seacoast, where a village may contain but ten or twelve houses-some perhaps as many as twenty. The largest town we saw had thirty houses. In many cases the villages are walled with stakes covered with the bark of trees or with poles set close together.

The houses are built of small poles attached at the top to make them round in shape, much like the arbors in our English gardens. The poles are covered from top to bottom either with bark or with mats woven of long rushes. The dwellings are usually twice as long as they are wide; sometimes they are only twelve or sixteen yards long, but we have seen them as much as twenty-four yards in length.

In one part of the country a *Weroans*, or chief, may govern a single town, but in other parts the number of towns under one chief may vary to two, three, six, and even to eight or more. The greatest *Weroans* we met governed eighteen towns, and he could muster seven or eight hundred warriors. The language of each chief's territory differs from that of the others, and the farther apart they are, the greater the differences. Their manner of making war against each other is by a surprise attack, either in the dawn of day or by moonlight, by ambush, or by some such subtle trick. Set battles are very rare. When they do take place, it is always in the forests, where the natives may defend themselves by leaping behind a tree after they have shot their arrows.

If we should ever fight the inhabitants, the results can easily be imagined. We have great advantages over them, for we have disciplined soldiers, strange weapons, devices of all sorts, and especially we have large and small ordnance. So far we found their best defense against us was to turn on their heels and run away. Compared with us, the natives are poor. They lack skill and judgment in using the materials we have and esteem trifles above things of greater value. But if we consider that they lack our means, they are certainly very ingenious. Although they do not possess any of our tools, or crafts, or sciences, or art, yet in their own way they show excellent sense. In time they will find that our kinds of knowledge and crafts accomplish everything with more speed and perfection than do theirs. Therefore, when they realize this, they will most probably desire our friendship and love, and, respecting our achievements, they will try to please and obey us. Whereby, if we govern them well, they will in a short time become civilized and embrace the true religion.

They have already a religion of their own, which is far from the truth, yet for that reason there is hope that it may sooner and more easily be reformed.

They believe in many gods, which they call *Mantoac*. These gods are of different kinds and degrees. Their chief god has existed from all eternity. They affirm that when he created the world, he first made the other principal gods, in order to use them in the creation and government to follow. Then he made the sun, the moon, and the stars. The petty gods act as instruments of the more important ones. The natives say that the waters of the world were made first and that out of these all creatures, both visible and invisible, were formed.

As to the creation of mankind, they think that the woman came first. She conceived and brought forth children fathered by one of the gods, and in this way the natives had their beginning. But how many ages

or years have passed since then, they do not know, for they have no writing or any means of keeping records of past time, only the tradition, passed on from father to son.

They believe that all the gods have human shapes; therefore they represent them by images in the form of men and call the images *Kewasowok*. A single god is called *Kewas*. These images are set up in temples which they call *Machicomuck*. Here the natives worship, pray, sing, and make frequent offerings to the gods. In some of these temples we saw only one *Kewas*, but others had two or three. Most of the natives think that the images themselves are the gods.

The natives believe also in the immortality of the soul. They say that after this life the soul departs from the body, and, according to its works in life, it is either carried to heaven, where the gods live, or else to a great pit or hole. In heaven it enjoys perpetual bliss and happiness, but in the pit, which is situated at the farthest part of their world toward the sunset, it burns continually; this place they call *Popogusso*.

In confirmation of this belief, they told me stories about two persons who had lately died and revived again. One occasion was but a few years before we came to Virginia and concerned a wicked man who died and was buried. The day after the burial the natives saw that the earth of his grave had begun to move, and took him up again. The man made a declaration, saying that his soul had been about to enter into *Popogusso*, when one of the gods had saved him and given him leave to return to earth to teach his friends what they should do to avoid that terrible place of torment.

The other event happened during the year we were in Virginia in a town only about threescore miles away. Again a dead man had been buried and had returned to the earth. He related that his soul had travelled far along a wide road, on both sides of which grew the most delicate and pleasant trees, bearing rare and excellent fruits of such fine qualities that he could scarcely describe them. At length he came to some beautiful houses, where he met his dead father. The father instructed him to go back to earth and to tell his friends that he was enjoying the pleasures of heaven, and after he had done so to return.

Whether or not the *Weroans* and priests use subtle devices with the common people, the belief in heaven and the fiery pit makes the simple folk give strict obedience to their governors and behave with great care, so that they may avoid torment after death and enjoy bliss. Evil-doers have to pay for their crimes in this world, nevertheless. Thievery, whoremongering, and other wicked acts are punished with fines, beatings, or even with death, according to the seriousness of the offense.

This sums up their religion. I learnt of it from some of their priests with whom I became friendly. They are not fully convinced of its truth, for in conversing with us they began to doubt their own traditions and stories. They expressed great admiration for our religion, and many showed an earnest desire to learn more than we, with our small knowledge of their language, were able to tell them about it.

They marvelled at all that we had, such as mathematical instruments, mariner's compasses, the loadstone, which attracted iron, a perspective glass³, in which they saw many strange sights, burning glasses⁴, fireworks, guns, books, and spring clocks that seemed to go by themselves. All these things were beyond their comprehension, just as reading and writing were utterly strange to them. They could not understand

how they were constructed and how they worked and thought all these things must have been made by the gods or that the gods must have presented them and taught us how to make them. Therefore they began to admire us and thought it wise to learn the meaning of the true God and the true religion. Seeing our abilities and possessions, they believed more readily in our words.

Many times and in every town I came to I described the contents of the Bible as often as I could. I told the natives that there was set forth the only true GOD and His mighty works, with the true doctrine of salvation through Christ. I related the miracles and the chief points of religion to them, as many as I thought fit and could recount at the time. And although I told them that the book itself had no great virtue, but only the doctrine it contained, still they wished to touch, embrace, and kiss it, and to bold it to their breasts and heads and stroke their whole bodies with it. Thus did they show their hungry desire for its knowledge.

Wingina, the chief with whom we lived, and many of his people joined us often at our prayers. He called upon us many times, both in his village and in other villages where he accompanied us, to pray and to sing Psalms, hoping thereby to benefit from the effects we also expected from those means.

On two different occasions this *Weroans* was so seriously ill that he seemed likely to die. As he lay languishing, he doubted that his own priests could help him; therefore he sent for us and asked us to pray to our God that he might either live or dwell in bliss with Him after death. And not only he but also many other natives asked us to pray for them.

Another time their corn began to wither because of an unusual drought. They feared that this had come to pass because they had displeased us in some way. A few of them came to us asking that we should pray to our English God that he should preserve their corn, and they promised that when it was ripe they would share the harvest with us. Whenever they suffered from some sickness, loss, accident, or other misfortune, they believed that this came to pass because they had offended or displeased us.

Before I come to the end of my narrative I want to mention one other rare and strange occurrence which moved the inhabitants of the whole country to a wonderful admiration for us. When trickery was practiced against us in any town, we were careful to leave it unpunished, because we wanted to win the friendship of the natives through gentleness. But strangely it happened that within a few days of our departure the people began to die very fast. In some towns twenty people died, in some forty, in some sixty, and in one sixscore; this was a large portion of the inhabitants. And the strange thing was that this occurred only in towns where we had been and where they had done some mischief against us, and it happened always after we had left. The disease with which they were stricken was so strange a one that they did not know anything about it or how to cure it. Even their elders could not remember the like ever having happened before. After this disease had struck in four or five places, some of our native friends, especially Chief Wingina, were persuaded that it was we who brought it about, helped by our God. They thought that through Him we were able to slay anyone at any place and without the use of weapons.

From that time on, whenever they heard that any of their enemies had abused us on our journeys and that we had not punished them, they begged us to let our God bring about the death of these enemies. This they alleged would be to our credit and profit, as well as to theirs, and they hoped we would grant their request because of the friendship we professed for them. We explained that such entreaties were ungodly and that our God would not be ruled by such prayers and requests from men; rather, all things are done according to His pleasure and as He ordains. We said that we ought to pray to Him, on the contrary, to show ourselves His true servants and ask that these enemies might know His truth and serve Him in righteousness, so that they could live together with us. And we told them that everything would be done in accordance with the divine will and pleasure of God, as He ordained to be best in His wisdom.

It happened that shortly after this the disease struck their enemies just as they had desired. They thought we had brought it about, disguising our intentions from them. They thanked us profoundly for fulfilling their wish even though we had not promised to do so.

Because of this marvelous accident all the natives throughout the country began to have a wonderful opinion of us, and they were not sure whether to consider us gods or men. Their wonderment increased when they saw that not one of our number became ill during their sickness, nor did any of us die. They also noted that we had no women with us, nor did we care for any of theirs. Some of them were of the opinion that we were not born of woman and were therefore not mortal but were men of a past generation who had risen again to immortality.

They prophesied that more of our generation would yet come to this country to kill them and to take away their homes. They imagined that these men who were to arrive they shot invisible bullets into the victims who died in their villages, after us were already in the air, invisible and without bodies, and that inflicting this punishment at our instigation because they loved us.

And as their medicine men could not cure the strange disease, they tried to excuse their ignorance by shamefully encouraging the simple people to believe that the death was caused by invisible bullets. To prove it they sucked strings of blood out of the sick bodies and said these were the strings to which the bullets were attached.

Yet some of the natives did not believe in the invisible bullets. They thought that we shot our enemies from a distance, killing anyone who offended us, no matter how far away he was. Still others said it was the work of God for our sakes, and we ourselves had reason to agree with them, no matter what other causes there might be. Astrologers believed that the reason of these strange happenings might be the eclipse of the sun which we saw during our outward voyage, or it might be caused by a comet which appeared a few days before the sickness began. But I do not myself think that these outward causes brought about these special accidents. There must have been other reasons, on which I will not speculate at present.

Thus, I have given the opinions of the native inhabitants in detail to show you that there is good hope that they may be brought to embrace the truth through discreet handling and wise government and

consequently will come to honor, obey, fear, and love us. Although towards the end of the year some of our men were too harsh with them and killed a few of their number for offenses which might easily have been forgiven, still the natives thought the punishment just and did not change their friendly attitude toward us. I do not believe that they are likely to change their general good opinion of us, and if we are careful at all, they need not be feared. Nevertheless, we must hope for the best and try to do our best, taking care to remove the causes for any discontent among them.

THE CONCLUSION

I hope I have related enough about the country so that those who have been indifferent to it will like it, even if they do not know any more than I have mentioned. Without doubt there is much still to be discovered, as to both the commodities and the soil itself.

Everything I have spoken of was found not far from the seacoast where we lived. Sometimes we made journeys farther into the mainland, and there we found the soil richer, the trees taller, the ground firmer, and the topsoil deeper. We saw there more and larger fields and finer grass, as good as any in England. In some places the ground was high, rocky, and hilly, fruits grew plentifully, beasts lived in greater abundance, the country was more thickly populated, the towns and houses larger, and the communities better ruled.

Why, then, may we not expect even more and greater plenty from the inland parts? The Spaniards found this to be the case when they discovered the mainland of the West Indies. I am sure that the mainland of this country, Virginia, extending in some directions many hundreds of leagues, will yield many excellent commodities which we have not yet seen. We have certain knowledge that the country is vast-and this is not only from the tales of the inhabitants-although no Christian ruler has any trade or possessions there. From the nature of the climate we gather that the land is similar to Japan, China, Persia, Jerusalem, the Islands of Cyprus and Candy, the southern parts of Greece, Italy, and Spain, and other famous countries. Not to be tedious, I leave to your own consideration what hopes this gives us.

The air is much warmer there in all seasons than it is in England, yet it is always temperate, never so violently hot as near the tropics. As to the wholesomeness of the climate, I need say only that we lived entirely on the food and water of the country for all but twenty days.

The foods were at first very strange to us and might have been expected to change our body temperatures and to bring about grievous and dangerous diseases, yet this was not so. Nor did we have our own means of catching beasts, fish, and fowl, and we had to depend upon native devices. Therefore we could not quickly and easily procure these foods in sufficient quantities or choice as would have satisfied and contented us. We also suffered for lack of clothing. Furthermore, in all our travels, even in winter, we lived in the open and slept on the ground. Yet despite all these discomforts, out of the hundred and eight men of our company only four died during the entire year of our stay. These four men died toward the end of the year, and none because of privation and hardship. They had all been sickly when we left England, and the wonder was that they ventured to travel and lived as long as they did.

I hope there no longer remains any reason for disliking the Virginia project. The air is temperate and wholesome there, the soil is fertile and yields the commodities I have listed, and the voyage over the ocean has been so many times performed that we now know it can be done three times a year in any season.

Moreover, Sir Walter Raleigh has been liberal in granting large tracts of land there. The least he has given to any man has been five hundred acres, besides many other aids.

Those travelling to Virginia to live and plant there need carry only provisions for the first year, as the last expedition did. Then, with reasonable diligence and care, they can easily supply themselves with plenty of excellent food thereafter. More English cattle should be transported; likewise our varieties of fruits, roots, and herbs may be planted there. Some of them have already been sown and have grown well. And in a short time the planters may raise the commodities I have described. These will enrich themselves and those who trade with them.

This is all the fruits of our labors that I have thought necessary to tell you at the present. As to more concerning the nature and manners of the inhabitants of Virginia, the number and particularities of the voyages made thither, the undertakings of the men employed there and in the project by Sir Walter Raleigh, this matter I shall publish later.

Many of the men of our company are worthy to be remembered: the first discoverers of the country; Sir Richard Grenville, our General at that time; Ralph Lane, his successor and our Governor; and others who worked under their government. Besides these, the captains of our vessels and the masters of the supply ships should be mentioned, as well as the present Governor and Assistants. I have a discourse ready, written in the manner of a chronicle, dealing with all these and many other persons and occurrences, and when the time is convenient it will be published.⁵ Thus, referring my discourse to your favorable reception, awaiting the good success of the project from Him who is the acknowle