

Algonquian speakers, who spent most of their time fighting among themselves. In Tsencommacah the majority of the population by 1607 had already fallen under the control of Powhatan, who held the title of mamanatowick or great king.<sup>3</sup>

After failing in their attempts to establish a colony in the vicinity of Roanoke Island, the Elizabethans paid little attention to Virginia until Ireland had been subdued and relations with the Spanish had normalized under James I. Then the English established a colony in Tsencommacah.

In Virginia the early English adventurers, working for both Walter Raleigh and the Virginia Company, tried to grasp the nuances of Indian politics. The English at Roanoke and Jamestown tried to mimic a technique of Spanish conquistadors by using native political disputes to their advantage. However, instead of fragmenting the native population of Virginia, the English presence allowed Opechancanough to consolidate his control and to launch an attack of unprecedented size against the English colony.

Like the Irish, the Indians of Virginia lived in chiefdoms when the English arrived. How long this had been the case is difficult to determine. There is little

archaeological evidence for the rise of the Powhatan chiefdom, due to its short existence.<sup>4</sup> Although similar, the Indians of coastal North Carolina and coastal Virginia were not identical. The chief of Tsencommacah had more power over a larger area than any chief on the Outer Banks. Within his lifetime, Powhatan had taken the position of chief to a new level of meaning in Tsencommacah. The arrival and later actions of the English allowed him and his successor, Opechancanough, to consolidate political control of Tsencommacah to a level that archaeological evidence indicates was new to aboriginal Virginia.

Southern Algonquian political organization had some similarities to the system practiced by the Gaelic Irish. In Ireland a chieftain demanded goods and services from his clan as tribute.<sup>5</sup> Chiefs among the Virginia Indians also controlled peoples' labor and the results of that labor, ranging from farming to hunting.<sup>6</sup> Another similarity between the Irish and the Indians was the basic role for the ruling caste as warriors. Whether Indian or Irish, the chiefs viewed their reason for being to raid, battle, and increase the number of people from whom they could demand tribute.<sup>7</sup>

When Arthur Barlowe arrived at Roanoke he could not

meet with the local chief, Wingina, due to a wound Wingina had received while in combat with a rival leader.<sup>8</sup> When the English landed at Jamestown, Powhatan was attempting to establish hegemony over the Chickahominy Indians, who resisted at every turn.

The Chickahominy Indians, unlike all of their neighbors, had managed to maintain their independence from Powhatan. Besides not having to pay tribute to Powhatan unless they felt like it, the Chickahominies lived under a different political system from the rest of the Powhatans. The Chickahominies were ruled by a council of eight elders rather than a chief.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the rest of the Powhatan tribes, the Chickahominies did not rank themselves or have caste distinctions.<sup>10</sup>

The English quickly were able to find out that not all of Powhatan's subjects were equally loyal. Those who had only recently come under his control often turned to the English as potential allies. This possibility allowed the English to believe they were helping to liberate the Indians from Powhatan's tyranny.

Based on their contact with Ireland and their dealings with Spain, the Elizabethans believed their form of

government to be the most enlightened. They knew that it protected the "ancient rights of the people" more than either the Spanish monarchy or the chiefdoms they encountered in Ireland and Virginia.<sup>11</sup> Native systems of government were thought to be despotic and arbitrary.<sup>12</sup>

The English believed that it was the Irish political system and its leaders that held the Gaelic Irish populace in thralldom. After the destruction of that system, many English believed that the Irish would be able emulate English living.<sup>13</sup> English adventurers in Virginia thought that the local political leaders were tyrants. Captain John Smith described Powhatan as "very terrible and tyrannous in punishing such as offended him".<sup>14</sup> Ralph Hamor referred "that subtill old reuengefull Powhatan and all the people vnder his subiection."<sup>15</sup>

Where the basis for Irish life was the clan, Southern Algonquian life had at its basis the district, which was an area occupied by a village or two. There were two kinds of villages, the open village and the palisaded or walled village. Archaeological evidence indicates that the palisaded village developed as a result of the rise of horticulture and increasing political complexity. Only after there is a commodity worth protecting do people

develop the means to protect it. Archaeological evidence indicates that there were no palisaded villages during the Middle Woodland period (500 B.C.- A.D. 900). They appeared after A.D. 1000, which coincided with the introduction of maize horticulture.<sup>16</sup> Each district had a leader or werowance, who tried gain power at the expense of his neighbors.

When Thomas Harriot described the political situation on the Outer Banks, he showed that the various chiefs ranged from controlling two districts to the eighteen under the powerful Okisko.<sup>17</sup> Okisko controlled much of the area around the Outer Banks, but his control of eighteen districts pales when compared to Powhatan's control over the Virginia Tidewater. At the beginning of his career (ca. A.D. 1580) Powhatan had inherited control over six to nine districts on the middle York river and upper James river in the vicinity of modern Richmond. At the time of the English arrival in 1607, he had gained control over thirty-one districts, some as far away from his birth place as the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay.<sup>18</sup>

Powhatan's inheritance of political power indicated that the Southern Algonquians had a society based on ascribed rank. Only a limited number could become politically

powerful. One could gain access to power by being born into a "noble" family.<sup>19</sup> As Powhatan attempted to alter the traditional role of chief, he introduced more merit-based positions of power. A position of achieved status, the "cockarouses" or cawcawwasoughs, had been created for men who had not been born to the "better sort" but through personal ability had been rewarded with powerful positions in Powhatan's hierarchy.<sup>20</sup> Since Powhatan's rise to power was a threat to the traditionally powerful, he may have wanted a core of men of ability whose loyalty was to him and the new social order.

That certain Algonquians had more power and authority than others was obvious to the English from their first meeting. In 1584 Arthur Barlowe met Granganimeo, the local chief's brother, and his entourage. In the course of presenting gifts to the Indians, Granganimeo "arose, and tooke all from [the other Indians], and put it in his owne basket, making signes and tokens, that all things ought to be deliuered vnto him, and the rest were but his seruents, and followers."<sup>21</sup> The English referred to the Indians of high rank as the "better sort."<sup>22</sup>

The English could easily identify the "better sort" of Indians. In Southern Algonquian society only persons

of high rank and status wore copper and pearls.<sup>23</sup> On the Outer Banks, Arthur Barlowe recognized high-status individuals by their decorations, as his description of Granganimeo's wife and her associates showed:

She had on her backe a long cloke of leather, with the furre side next to her bodie, and before her a peece of the same: about her forehead she had a broad bande of white Corral, and so had her husband many times: in her eares she had bracelets of pearles, hanging downe to her middle ... The rest of her women of the better sorte had pendants of copper, hanging in every eare.<sup>24</sup>

Besides being allowed to wear special items, the "better sort" of Indians enjoyed other rewards. Only chiefs and councilors went to the afterlife, according to the Powhatans.<sup>25</sup> Thomas Harriot described the religion in Winginadoca, but did not indicate that only high-status individuals had an afterlife. According to Harriot, "they beleve also the immortalitie of the soule, that after this life as soone as the soule is departed from the bodie" a person would be judged and rewarded or punished according to his life.<sup>26</sup> This observation implies that the society on the Outer Banks was not as strictly stratified as that of the Powhatans.<sup>27</sup>

Concepts of status and rank were not alien to the English. The Elizabethans who landed in Virginia came from a socially-ranked society. While the English did

not restrict the afterlife to the elite, being well born had its prerogatives. Sir Richard Grenville received his appointment as leader of the 1585 Roanoke colony due to his social rank.<sup>28</sup> As with the Southern Algonquians, Elizabethans could distinguish high and low status individuals by their attire. In every colony the English founded, they passed statutes called sumptuary laws which forbade individuals from wearing the clothes of their "betters."<sup>29</sup> While only certain Algonquians could wear copper, only certain English were supposed to wear slashed sleeves and silk.<sup>30</sup>

The English and the Algonquians shared a belief that status should be clearly marked on a person, including priests and ministers. In both cultures, religious men wore special costumes. In Tsencommacah, priests wore their hair differently from the rest of the male population, fewer earrings than other men, a medium-length feather cloak, and a special headdress made of snake skin, weasel skin, and feathers.<sup>31</sup> Thomas Harriot described the outfit in his Briefe and true Relation of the New Found land of Virginia: "They weare their heare cutt like a creste, on the topps of thier heads as others doe, but the rest are cutt shorte, sauinge those which growe aboue their foreheads in manner of a perriwigge. They also haue somewhat hanginge



in their ears. They weare a short clocke made of fine hares skinnes quilted with the hayre outwarde. The rest of their body is naked."<sup>32</sup> An Anglican minister or Catholic priest also wore clothing that not only marked him as a cleric, but indicated how important a cleric he might be.

In both Virginia and London, those men who had dedicated their lives to their god or gods affected not only the spiritual realm but the secular. English monarchs often were aided in their decision-making by clerics. One of Elizabeth's most important advisors on overseas expansion was the Reverend Richard Hakluyt. Native tradition demanded that Powhatan consult priests before making major decisions.<sup>33</sup> Powhatan took the advice of a shaman when he attacked the Chesapeake Indians. The priest told Powhatan that a nation would rise from the east to destroy him, so he attacked those Indians who lived to his east.<sup>34</sup> That the "lost colonists" from Roanoke may have been living with the Chesapeakes may also have angered Powhatan.<sup>35</sup> The plan for the "lost colony" was not to settle at Roanoke Island, but rather on the southern rim of Chesapeake Bay. The sponsors of the colony believed that the agricultural colony they planned and the horticultural practices of the Indians would come into

conflict in the small confines of the Outer Banks. So they hoped to move in with the Chesapeake where land was more plentiful.<sup>36</sup> But the idea that an English colony based on agriculture would come into conflict with the Indians also proved tragically true in 1622.

When the English contacted the Southern Algonquians, they hoped that the Indians, unlike the Irish, would willingly submit to English culture. Unfortunately for the Algonquians, the precedent of trying to force those who would not yield to the crown's will had been set in England and Ireland. Some, like Harriot and Hakluyt, hoped that force would not, be needed; others resorted to force only after attempts to convert the Indians into Christian subjects of the English crown.

## Notes for Chapter Two

1) David Beers Quinn (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America Under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584, Hakluyt Society vol 104, (London: 1955, reprint New York: Dover Publications, 1991), 99 n.3.

2) J. Frederick Fausz, "The Powhatan Uprising of 1622: A Study of Ethnocentrism and Cultural Conflict," (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1977), 44.

3) Helen C. Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture, The Civilization of the American Indian vol. 193 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 16.

4) E. Randolph Turner, "The Virginia Coastal Plain During the Late Woodland Period," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges (eds), Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis, Special Publication no. 29 of the Archaeological Society of Virginia (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1992), 115.

5) Steven G. Ellis, Tudor Ireland: Crown, Community and the Conflict of Cultures 1470-1603 (New York: Longman, 1985), 41.

6) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 110.

7) Ibid., 85-87,

Ellis, Tudor Ireland, 43.

8) Quinn (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages, 100.

9) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 8-9.

10) Ibid., 100.

11) Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Settling with the Indians: the Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640, (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 48.

Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia, (New York: Norton, 1975), 6.

12) Nicholas P. Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America," The William and Mary Quarterly, third ser. 30, no.4 (Oct. 1973): 580.

- 13) Ibid..
- 14) Karen Ordahl Kupperman (ed), Captain John Smith: A Selected Edition of His Writings, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 156.
- 15) Ralph Hamor, A True Discourse on the Present State of Virginia, (London:1615, Reprint with an introduction by A.L. Rowse, Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1957), 2.
- 16) Turner, "The Virginia Coastal Plain," 106-114.
- 17) David Beers Quinn, Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1606 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 221.
- 18) Turner, "The Virginia Coastal Plain," 115.
- 19) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 16.
- 20) Ibid., 101.
- 21) Quinn (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages, 100.
- 22) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 100.
- 23) E. Randolph Turner, "Socio-Political Organization within the Powhatan Chiefdom and the Effects of European Contact, A.D. 1607-1646," in William Fitzhugh ed, Cultures in Contact: the Impact of European Contact on Native American Cultural Institutions A.D. 100-1800 (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 199-200.
- 24) Quinn (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages, 101-2.
- 25) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 139.
- 26) Quinn (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages, 373.
- 27) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 138.
- 28) Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Roanoke: the Abandoned Colony, (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1984), 19.
- 29) Kupperman, Settling with the Indians, 3.
- 30) David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 356.
- 31) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 100.

- 32) Quimm (ed.), The Roanoke Voyages, 431.
- 33) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 119.
- 34) Rountree, The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, 120.
- 35) Quimm, Set Fair for Roanoke, 345-353.
- 36) Ibid., 252.

### Chapter Three:

In his 1584 Discourse on Western Planting, the Reverend Richard Hakluyt clearly spelled out the various reasons England needed to begin colonization of the Americas. In this document he prepared for Queen Elizabeth, Hakluyt listed twenty-one reasons for expansion. His primary reason was "that this western dicoverie will be greatly for thinlargement of the gossell of Christie."<sup>1</sup> The next twenty reasons dealt with the political and economic advantages of expansion. A minister would be expected to place the Gospel before worldly concerns; a lawyer would not. Yet, the Reverend Hakluyt's older cousin and namesake did just that.

In his pamphlet entitled Inducements to the Liking of the Voyage Intending Towards Virginia written in 1585, Richard Hakluyt the elder stated as the primary reason for going to Virginia "the glory of God by planting of Religion among the infidels." The second of his thirty-one reasons was "the increase of the force of the Christians"; the third, "the possibilite of the inlarging of the dominions of the Queenes most excellant Maiestie."<sup>2</sup>

Religion and the conversion of the natives acted as a major motivating force in Elizabethan attempts at colonization as religion played some part in almost every aspect of life.<sup>3</sup> These mentions of religion were not the thin veneer of justification a modern reader might assume. They reflect the importance of religion for these men. The welfare of England came second to doing God's work.<sup>4</sup>

Religion did more than motivate the Elizabethans; it justified and legitimized their actions. Doing God's work was good and right. Traveling to the New World and saving souls was a good and easily defended action; traveling there and simply taking over land could not as easily be defended. This is not to say that the Elizabethans were not sincere in their religious beliefs. Heaven and Hell were not abstractions for these men; they were real and tangible places, and saving the native population of the Americas from the Devil and the Pope were duties that needed to be performed.

Interest in and intense dislike of native religion was not unique to the English. In 1493 Christopher Columbus wrote that the Indians he encountered did "not hold any creed nor [were] they idolaters; but they all believe that power and good are in the heaven." Interest in Indian

beliefs continued with Vespucci who wrote in 1505 of the Brazilians he encountered, "they have no church, no religion, and are not idolaters."<sup>5</sup>

By the late sixteenth century the misconception that the Indians had no religion had been modified. The English knew that Indians had religion; however, they believed that Indian religion was devil worship. Henry Hawks, adventurer and slaver, wrote in a 1572 letter to Richard Hakluyt the elder describing what he saw in Mexico: they "use[d] divers time to talke to the Devill to whome they do certaine sacrifices and oblations....and certaine daies in the yeare they did sacrificie, certaine olde men and young children."<sup>6</sup>

The English believed that they had to save the Indians not only from the Devil but also from the Pope. Roman Catholicism represented as great a threat to the Indians' souls as did Devil worship, perhaps more. The Reverend Hakluyt related to the queen a conversation he had with a Spanish Jesuit. When the padre bragged of converting millions of Indians to Roman Catholicism, Hakluyt shot back, "as for the boasting of your conversion of such multitudes of Infidells, yt may just be coumpted rather a perversion, seeinge you have drawn them as yt were oute



of Sylla into Charibdis, that is to say from one error into another."<sup>7</sup>

Hakluyt knew that the English had to start converting the Indians to Protestant Christianity. In order to do that, they first needed a colony.

Nowe the meanes to sende suche as shall labour effectually in this business ys by plantinge one or twoo Colonies of our nation upon that fyrme, where they may remain in saftie, and first learne the language of the people nere adjoining (the gifte of tongues beinge nowe taken awaye), and by little and little acquainte themselves w<sup>th</sup> their manner and so w<sup>th</sup> discrecion and myldenes distill into their purged myndes the swete and lively liquor of the gospell.<sup>8</sup>

Hakluyt hoped that his countrymen would learn Indian languages while in America. Some Elizabethans did, but most did not. Early in their exploration, the English explorers in America tended to kidnap Indians and bring them back to England. During the 1570s Martin Frobisher brought back several Inuits from his unsuccessful journeys in search of the Northwest passage. The Inuits were brought back in order for either the English to learn Inuit languages or so the Inuits could learn English. The Inuits died before either outcome could happen.<sup>9</sup>

The Indians who traveled to England from Roanoke fared

better; both Manteo and Wanchese lived to return home.<sup>10</sup> By the time of the settlement at Jamestown, the Elizabethans were leaving English boys to learn the Powhatan dialects of Algonquian. John Smith left Henry Spelman with the Powhatans in order to learn the language.<sup>11</sup> Spelman always believed that Smith had sold him to the Indians. While more Elizabethans than Spelman learned Indian languages, Hakluyt's goal was never achieved, although some explorers were able to communicate without knowing the language. Arthur Barlowe mentioned how at Roanoke Granganimeo had explained that the English should trade with him and not his escort by "making signes and tokens".<sup>12</sup>

In 1584 Barlowe, who spoke no Algonquian, found himself on the Outer Banks, where he concluded that the people he met were ripe for conversion to Christianity. He described the natives as respectful of their own rulers and betters, true to their word, hospitable, and possessed of a religion although it entailed worshiping the Devil. The Indians Barlowe met were, in a word, "civil." Barlowe described Granganimeo and his retinue as "in their behavior as mannerly, and ciuill as any of Europe".<sup>13</sup> To Barlowe's mind, only civil people could understand the complexities of Christianity and hope to be saved.<sup>14</sup>

Barlowe's description held much hope for future contact between the Algonquians and the English, for two reasons: first, a basic belief was civility was a prerequisite of Christianity; second, civil people make better trading partners. The Elizabethans believed that commerce indicated a basic degree of civility.<sup>15</sup> While noting his hosts' civility, Barlowe also noted their desire and ability to trade with his crew: "A daye or two after this (first meeting) we fell to trading with them...."<sup>16</sup> Barlowe's account held much hope for the conversion of the Roanoke natives to Christianity.

Barlowe intentionally stressed hope and goodwill. Sir Walter Raleigh had Barlowe's report published as an advertisement for his venture in Virginia. There exists the possibility all did not go as well as Barlowe claimed. "An English castaway from the Lane expedition, interrogated by the Spanish in Jamaica, told a garbled version of the 1584 voyage in which he said the English made one landing where they were confronted by 'wild' Indians who ate thirty-eight Englishmen".<sup>17</sup> If this attack actually happened, it apparently transpired after the English had left the Outer Banks and were exploring Chesapeake Bay.

Elizabethans had different ideas about the Indians,

but they all agreed on one point: the Indians had to be converted to Christianity and English-style living. Those who traveled to Virginia believed that both tasks could be achieved with little difficulty because of the Indians' intelligence. Thomas Harriot, Ralph Lane, John Smith, and Alexander Whitaker described the Indians as intelligent humans of great potential.

Lane, military commander at Roanoke, concerned himself with understanding the political and military situation in which he found himself, most likely a habit he picked up in Ireland to help him stay alive. He described his mentor on the subject, the Indian chief Menatonon, as-

for a savage, a very graue and wise man, and of very singular good discourse in matters concerning the state, not onely of his owne Countrey, and the disposition of his owne men but also of his neighbors, ... He gave mee more understanding and light of the Countrey then I had receiued by all the searches and saluages that before I or any of my companie had had conference with....18

Thomas Harriot studied many aspects of Indian life and also reached the conclusion that the Indians were intelligent.

In respect of us they are a people poore, and for want of skill and judgement in the knowledge and use of our things, doe esteeme our trifles before thinges of greater value: Notwithstanding,