

**VIRGINIA VETUSTA DURING
REIGN OF JAMES I. CONTAINING
LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS
NEVER BEFORE PRINTED**

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Virginia Vetusta during Reign of James I. Containing Letters and Documents Never before
Printed by Edward D. Neill

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EDWARD D. NEILL

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// VIRGINIA VETUSTA //

DURING THE REIGN OF JAMES THE FIRST.

CONTAINING

LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS NEVER BEFORE PRINTED.

A SUPPLEMENT TO

THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA COMPANY.

BY

Duffield

EDWARD D. NEILL.

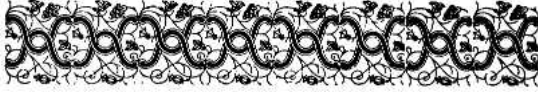
NEC FALSA DICERE, NEC VERA RETICERE.



ALBANY, N. Y.:
JOEL MUNSELL'S SONS, 82 STATE ST.

1885.

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P R E F A C E .



IN the belief, that there was need of such a contribution, to the documentary history, of the early colonial period of Virginia, this work has been prepared. It is intended to supplement the *History of the Virginia Company of London*, which was published several years ago, and has proved of some value to the students of American history.

It is quite remarkable, that for two centuries, historical writers chiefly depended upon a book compiled by an adventurer, for a knowledge of the early English colonization in North America. The once Deputy Governor of Virginia, George Percy, in a letter, to his brother Henry the 9th Earl of Northumberland, refers to a publication, "wherein the author hath not spared to appropriate many deserts to himself, *which he never performed, and stuffed his relations with so many falsehoods, and malicious detractions.*"

As yet no document of the period of James the First, has been discovered, which tells where the church was situated, in which John Rolfe was married to Pocahontas, and the name of the officiating clergyman. There is

evidence however, that Rolfe, in 1609, left England with a white wife, and that she gave birth to a daughter at Bermudas, who soon died. Hamor writes, that "about the fifth of April," 1614, Rolfe began to live with the Indian woman, and he is supposed, then, to have been a widower. With Pocahontas he went to England, and in March, 1617, she died at Gravesend. Rolfe returned to Virginia, and soon married Jane, a daughter of William Pierce, Governor of Jamestown, "inferior to none in experience, industry and capacity" who in 1609, had left England, in the same vessel, with Rolfe. Early in 1622 Rolfe died, leaving his widow Jane, and in the words of his will "two small children of very tender age," a son Thomas, about three years old, and a daughter Elizabeth, one year of age.

In 1623, the father of the widow went to England¹, and as Jane Rolfe, and her son Thomas, are not mentioned in the census, of January, 1624 (O. S.), while the daughter, now four years old, is noted as residing with a Captain Roger Smith of Jamestown, an officer who had served twelve years in the wars of the Netherlands, now one of the Virginia Council, it seems probable, that Capt. William Pierce had taken his daughter, and grandson Thomas with him. At Sculthorpe Rectory, Co. Norfolk, England, there is a portrait of a wife of John Rolfe, with

¹ Sometimes written Peirse, Piers, Perce, Peirce.

² On Nov. 19, 1623, the Virginia Company issued a commission for William Peirce, Master of the good ship, called the "Return" of 100 tons, bound for transportation of passengers, to Virginia. *History of Virginia Company*, p. 382.

a son, by her side. Her hair is parted in the middle, there is no head ornament, and the face has a natural expression. It represents a woman in the dress of the period, about thirty years of age.¹ This portrait once belonged to the Rolles of Norfolk. In Manning and Bray's *History of Surrey* it is mentioned that Thomas Rolfe married in England, had a son Anthony, whose daughter Hannah married Sir Thomas Leigh.

Since Chapter Eighth was printed, by the courtesy of Lord Leconfield, of Petworth House, the following copy from the original Percy manuscript has been received, which is worthy of being incorporated with the prefatory note.

RELATION OF GEORGE PERCY.

“To the right honorable, the Lorde Percy

“My Lorde, This relacyon I have here sente your Lordshipp, is for towe respects, the one, to shoue howe mutche I honor you, and desyre to doe you service, the other, in regard that many untreuthes concerneinge theis p̄cedinges have bene formerly published, wherein the Author hathe nott spared to aproprate many deserts to him selfe w^{ch} he never p'formed, and stuffed his relacyons wth so many falseties, and malcyous detractyons. nott onely of this p'ts and tyme, w^{ch} I have selected to treat of, Butt of former occurrentes also: So thatt I coule nott containe my selfe, but expresse the Treuthe unto your Lordshipp

¹London *Notes and Queries*, VI Series, Vol. X, p. 296.

concerninge these affayres, and all w^{ch} I ayme att is to
manfyeste my selfe in all my actyons bothe now and
alwayes to be

“ Your Lordshipps humble and
faithfull servante

“ G. P.”

“ A Trewe Relacyon of the p'cedeinges and ocurentes
of momente w^{ch} have hapened in Virginia, from the Tyme
S^r Thomas Gates was shipwrackte upon the Bermudas
An^o 1609, untill my dep'ture out of the Country w^{ch} was
in An^o 1612.

“ If we Trewly consider the diversety of miseries,
mutenies, and famishmentte w^{ch} have attended upon dis-
coveries, and plantacyons in theis our modern tymes, we
shall nott fynde our plantacyon in Virginia, to have
suffered aloane.

“ Ladoniere had his share thereof in Florida, nextt
neighbour unto Virginia, where his sowldiers did fall into
mutenies, and in the ende wears allmoste all starved for
want of foode.

“ The Spanyard Plantacyon in the River of Plate, and
the Streightes of Magelene suffered also, in soe mutche
that haveinge eaten upp all their horses to susteine
themselves withall, mutenies did aryse, and growe
amongst them for the w^{ch} the Generall Diego Mendosa
cawsed some of them to be executed, extremety of hunger
inforceing others secretly in the nighte to cutt downe
their deade fellows from of the gallowes, and to bury
them in their hungry Bowelles.

“The Plantacyon in Carthagena was also lamentable, that wante of wholesome foode wherewth for to mainteyne lyfe, weare inforced to eate toades, snakes, and sutche lyke venomous wormes, sutche is the sharpnes of hunger.

“To this purpose, many other examples mighte be recyted butt the Relacyon ittselfe being briefe I have noe intente to be tedyous, butt to delyver the trewth briefly, and plainely the w^{ch} I dowte nott butt will rather lyke than loathe the reader, nor doe I purpose to use any elloquent style or phrase the w^{ch} indede in me is wantinge. Butt to delyver thatt trewly w^{ch} myselfe and many others had bitter experyense of. Many other woes and miseries have hapned unto our Collonie in Virginia bothe before and since that Tyme, w^{ch} now I doe intende to treatte of, having selected this p^{te} from the reste for towe respectts, firste, in regard I was moste frequente and acquaynted wth their p^{ced}inge, being most part of the tyme presy-dentt and Governour, nextt, in respectt the leaste p^{te} hereof hath not been formerly published.

“In the yere of our Lorde 1609 S^r Tho: Gates and S^r George Somers accompanied wth divers Gentlemen, Sowldiers, and Seamen, in nyne goode-Shippes did beginne their voyage for”

[Here there is a gap in the original manuscript. It contained 41 pages, but a portion of 3d page, and all subsequent pages to the 38th are missing. Purchas in writing his “Pilgrimage” in 1614, had used one of the manuscript relations of George Percy. Before he published his four volumes of “Pilgrimes” in 1625, he may have taken the portion of this Relation which is missing. The 38th page begins as follows:]

“S^r Tho: Dale haveinge allmoste finished the foarte, and settled a plantacyon in that p^{te} dyv^m of his men being idell, and not willinge to take paynes, did runne away unto the Indyans; many of them beinge taken againe, S^r Thomas in a moste severe manner cawsed to be executed, some he appointed to be hanged, some burned, some to be broken on wheels, others to be staked, and some to be shott to deathe, all theis extreme and crewell tortures he used, and inflicted upon them, to terrefy the reste for attempteinge the lyke, and some wth robbed the store, he cawsed them to be bowned faste unto trees, and so starved them to deathe.

“So leaveinge S^r Thomas busely employed in furnishinge the foarte and settlinge their habitacyons, lett us retourne to James towne againe, where, our Governour S^r Tho: Gates was resydentt. Onely by the waye houlde a little att Algernoune’s foarte¹ the wth was accidentally burned downe to the grownde, except Captⁿ Davis howse, and the store howse, Whereupon Captⁿ Davis fearinge to receive some displeasure, and to be removed from thense, the same beinge the moste plentiffullest place for food; he used sutche expedityon in the rebuyldinge the same againe that itt is allmoste incredible.

“Dyv^rs Indyans used to come to our foarte att James Towne bringinge victuals wth them butt indeede did rather come as spyes then any good affectyon they did beare unto us. Some of them S^r Tho: Gates cawsed to be apprehended and executed for a terrour to the reste, to cause them to desiste from their subtell practyses.

¹ At Point Comfort.