

America: The Story of US (Rebels)

Film Questions:



1. What was the Powhatan Confederacy and how did this group interact with the British settlers?
2. What were the most difficult challenges faced by the Plymouth and Jamestown settlers? Do you think they could have done anything to prepare more adequately for life in the Americas?
3. What role did disease play in encounters between native groups and the first British settlers?
4. Who was Prince Estabrook and what was his contribution to American history?
5. In this episode, America is referred to as a “social experiment.” What do you think this phrase means? Do you think the “experiment” is still ongoing?
6. What brought early European settlers to America? Do these same ideals bring people here today?

Primary Source:

*Powhatan Address to
Captain John Smith, 1609*

“I am now grown old and must soon die, and the succession must descend in order, to my brothers, Opitchapam, Opechancanough, and Kekataugh, and then to my two sisters, and their two daughters. I wish their experience was equal to mine, and that your love to us might not be less than ours to you. Why should you take by force that from us which you can have by love? Why should you destroy us who have provided you with food? What can you get by war? We can hide our provisions and fly into the woods. And then you must consequently famish by wrongdoing your friends. What is the cause of your jealousy? You see us unarmed and willing to supply your wants if you come in a friendly manner; not with swords and guns as to invade an enemy. I am not so simple as not to know that it is better to eat good meat, lie well, and sleep quietly with my women and children; to laugh and be merry with the English...

I, therefore, exhort you to peaceable councils, and above all I insist that the guns and swords, the cause of all our jealousy and uneasiness, be removed and sent away.”

Discussion Question:

What is Powhatan’s message to John Smith?