



**JAMESTOWN - JOURNEY OF DEMOCRACY**  
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**Arrival at Jamestown: The Need for Leadership**  
Prepared by the University of Virginia Center for Politics

**Purpose:** This lesson introduces students to the economic factors that influenced emigration to Jamestown in 1607. Using the provided materials, students will be able to examine the choices and challenges facing those first settlers and how those challenges created a need for order and leadership within the colony. Students make a modern connection by examining the need for leadership in modern America by examining the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other citizens who have enacted change in American society.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will identify the economic, social, and political reasons for emigrating to Jamestown in order to describe the need for leadership and order in the colony.
2. Students will identify the characteristics necessary for effective leadership in order to identify strategies that citizens can use to become leaders in their communities.

**Key Words:**

Indenture	Council	Commodities	Conscription
Gentleman	Charter of 1606	Virginia Company	

**Materials:**

1. Teacher Transparency, *A Briefe and True Report* (The Novia Anglia Co., Hinesville, GA)
2. Student Resource, *A Colonial Con Job* (Southern, Edward. *The Jamestown Adventure*. John F. Blair: Winston-Salem, 2004.)
3. Teacher Resource, *Original Settlers at Jamestown*
4. Teacher Transparency, *Categories of Settlers at Jamestown*
5. Student Resource, *Reasons for Emigration to Virginia*
6. Teacher Resource, *Building a Tower*
7. Glue Sticks and Index Cards
8. Student Handout, *The Council*
9. Student Handout, *Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address*
10. Student Handout, *I Have a Dream*

**Procedure:**

1. Prior to the beginning of class, take the Teacher Resource, *Original Settlers at Jamestown* and cut it into strips. Distribute one slip of paper per student by taping

the slip beneath the students' chairs or placing them in an envelope. Do not allow students to look at the paper until instructed.

2. **Warm Up/Motivation.** Display the transparency, *A Briefe and True Report*. Inform students that this document was used to convince English citizens to settle in Jamestown. It was created by the Virginia Company in order to make its investment of a colony in Virginia a success. Inside there were descriptions of many **commodities** that could be found in Virginia.

- What was the purpose of this publication?
- Who would have read this document in the 17<sup>th</sup> century?
- What type of person would be attracted to traveling to Virginia?
- What about the design of the cover would interest people in adventure?
- The title of the document is, *A Briefe and True Report*. Do you think the Virginia Company was honest in its description of Virginia? Why or why not?

If time allows, read the play, *Colonial Con Job*. Have students identify the strategies used to convince adventurers to go to Virginia. This play was written in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and reflects the views of Englishmen from that time period. It will provide students insight into the way 17<sup>th</sup> Century Europeans viewed the world.

- How is this play representative of seventeenth century European views towards non-Europeans?
- Would these attitudes promote or hinder cooperation between the English and Indians?

3. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of reasons why a person would choose to emigrate to Virginia in the seventeenth century. Possible answers include:

- Economic Opportunity
- Unemployment in England
- Adventure
- Religious Freedom
- Opportunity for Political Power

4. Have the students look under their seats or open their envelopes. Explain that the person that they see recorded on their paper was an actual settler at Jamestown in 1607. (Note: There were 105 settlers to land in Jamestown. For this activity there are only forty. The ratio of settlers is approximate to what there would have been at Jamestown.) Ask the students to assume the role of the settler and imagine the motivation that they would have had to emigrate to Virginia. Students should look at the occupation or description of the person as this will help them to hypothesize about the motivations for emigrating.

Group the students according to their occupation. Distribute the student resource, *Reasons for Emigrating to Virginia*. Ask each group to read the reasons for emigrating and hypothesize as to which reason would have been the most likely.

Distribute chart paper and markers and have the groups justify their decision for the class.

Have the “gentlemen” stand. Ask students to comment on the amount of gentlemen in the group. Does the high number of gentlemen seem strange? What is a gentleman? What are the advantages/disadvantages of having so many gentlemen? Would it be better to have fewer gentlemen and more laborers? Why or why not?

Note: Gentlemen were usually second or third sons of wealthy men. Their opportunities were limited in England and thus were likely to travel to Virginia.

Working in the same groups, ask the students to brainstorm a list of challenges that would face the settlers at Jamestown. After a few minutes, ask the group to prioritize the challenges in order of most challenging to least challenging. Discuss those challenges with the class.

- Are all of the lists the same? Why or why not?
  - What would be difficult in deciding how to prioritize the tasks of the settlers?
  - How could these difficulties be resolved?
5. Distribute five index cards and a glue stick to each group. Divide the directions from teacher resource, *Building a Tower*. Instruct the students that they have five minutes to build a tower using only the materials supplied and following the directions provided. Allow the students a minute to read the instructions and then allow them to build the tower.

After the students have completed their towers have them discuss their experience by asking each group to read their directions aloud and commenting on the following questions:

- What were the advantages/disadvantages of working with the directions you received?
  - Under what circumstances would following those directives be appropriate? Inappropriate?
  - Do you think your strategy for solving the problem would have worked at Jamestown? Why or why not?
  - Which strategy do you think would have been most successful?
6. Based on the discussion of the activity ask students to predict how decisions might have been made in the colony of Jamestown. Distribute the handout, *The Council*. Ask the students to read the article and complete the activities provided.

As an assessment have the students complete the summary activity included on *The Council* resource sheet. Students are asked to reflect on the social, economic and political reasons for emigration and the importance of establishing order and leadership in the new colony.

7. To continue the discussion about the need for leadership, ask the students to identify individuals in American history who exemplify good leadership. List their responses

on the board and discuss what characteristics these leaders had in common. Distribute the student resource, *Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address*. Students should read the address and identify what in the address identifies Lincoln as an effective leader.

- Lincoln's address comes at the end of the Civil War. How does his speech reflect a need for forgiveness and reconciliation between the North and South?
- What in his speech is representative of a good leader?
- How important is good leadership to the survival of a democracy?

8. To answer the question of why leadership is necessary in a Democracy, use Lesson Plan 3 of the Youth Leadership Initiative's *Democracy Corps*. The lesson is entitled, *What Does a Democracy Demand of its Citizens?* For those who do not have access to *Democracy Corps*, a shortened activity is included.

Ask the students to brainstorm a list of individuals that they feel have been leaders in modern times. After the list has been generated, have them identify the characteristics these individuals share and compare them with the characteristics of Virginians in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. For this activity, Martin Luther King, Jr. will be used as an example.

Have the students read the background information provided in Democracy Corps or have them read a short excerpt about the accomplishments of Dr. King. Most students will have some knowledge of MLK's accomplishments so just a discussion of this might be all that is necessary.

Distribute a copy of the *I Have a Dream* speech. Ask a student to read it aloud to the class or play an audio version. When the class is finished reading the speech, discuss the summary questions.

To summarize, ask the students to describe what skills citizens will need to have to be active members of a democracy in the next twenty or thirty years. Students should write a short paragraph that they will share with the class. As a final discussion point, ask the students to describe the type of leaders they expect to see in the next thirty years.

### **Extension Activity:**

To continue the idea of leadership at Jamestown, ask the students to evaluate the leadership of John Smith, Sir Thomas Gates, Sir Thomas Dale and Powhatan. What skills did they have that enabled them to lead? Why were they successful as leaders?

- Discuss the idea of leadership today. What does it mean to be a leader in modern society? Are the skills similar or different to the ones necessary in the colonial period?

# A Briefe and True Report



## A Colonial Con Job

From *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston

*Eastward Hoe* was performed by the Children of Her Majesty's Revels at the Blackfriars Theater in London sometime after Christmas 1604. The plot of the comedy borrows heavily from the story of the Prodigal Son, but the second scene of the third act involves a blowhard "Captain" who seduces two Londoners with fantastic stories of the fabulous riches of Virginia.

### Characters:

Seagull

Drawer- A servant working in the tavern responsible for serving wine.

Spendall

Scapthrift

### From Act 3, Scene 2

*Enter Seagull, Spendall, and Scapthrift in the Tavern with a Drawer.*

Seagull: Come Drawer, pierce your neatest hogshead, and let's have cheer, not fit for your Billingsgate Tavern, but for our Virginia Colonel; he will be here instantly.

Drawer: You shall have all things fit, sir; please you have any more wine?

Spendall: More wine, slave? Whether we drink it or no, spill it, and draw more.

Scapthrift: Fill all the pots in your house with all sorts of liquor, and let 'em wait on us here like soldiers in their pewter coats; and though we do not employ them now, yet we will maintain 'em, till we do.

Drawer: Said like an honorable captain; you shall have all you can command, sir.

*Exit Drawer.*

Seagull: Come, boys, Virginia longs till we share the rest of her maidenhead.

Spendall: Why, is she inhabited already with any English?

Seagull: A whole country of English is there, man, bred of those that were left there in '79. They have married with the Indians, and make 'em bring forth as beautiful faces as any we have in England. And therefore the Indians are so in love with 'em, that all the treasure they have, they lay at their feet.

Scapthrift: But is there such treasure there, Captain, as I have heard?

Seagull: I tell thee, gold is more plentiful there than copper is with us. And for as much red copper as I can bring, I'll have thrice the weight in gold. Why, man, all their dripping pans, and

their chamber pots are pure gold; and all the chains, with which they chain up their streets, are massive gold. All the prisoners they take are fettered in gold; and for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holidays and gather 'em by the seashore, to hang on their children's coats, and stick in their caps, as commonly as our children wear saffron-gilt brooches, and kernels wit holes in 'em.

Scaphrift: And is it a pleasant country withal?

Seagull: As ever the sun shine on, temperate and full of all sorts of excellent viands. Wild boar is as common there as our tamest bacon is here; venison, as mutton. And then you shall live freely there without sergeants, or courtiers, or lawyers or intelligencers... Then for your means to advancement, there, it is simple, and not preposterously mixed: you may be an official there, and never be a scavenger; you may be a nobleman, and never be a slave; you may come to preferment enough, and never be a pander; to riches and fortune enough, and have never the more villainy, nor the less wit.

Spendall: Gods me! And how far is it thether?

Seagull: Some six weeks' sail, no more, with any indifferent good wind. And if I get to any part of the coast of Africa, I'll sail thether with any wind. Or when I come to Cape Finister, there's a fortnight wind continually wafts us till we come at Virginia.

Southern, Ed. *The Jamestown Adventure: Accounts of the Virginia Colony, 1605-1614*.  
John F. Blair: Winston-Salem, NC. 2004.

**Original Settlers at Jamestown**

Assign each of the following to a student in your class.

Master Robert Hunt, Preacher	Councill
John Smyth	Councill
Master Edward Maria Wingfield	Councill
Anthony Gosnoll	Gentleman
Master George Percie	Gentleman
John Martin	Gentleman
Nicholas Houlgrave	Gentleman
George Flower	Gentleman
Dru Pickhouse	Gentleman
Ustis Clovill	Gentleman
Nathaniell Powell	Gentleman
Jeremy Alicock	Gentleman
Benjamin Beast	Gentleman
John Pennington	Gentleman
William Laxon	Carpenter/Craftsman
Anas Todkill	Carpenter/Craftsman
James Read	Blacksmith/ Craftsman
Thomas Couper	Barber/ Craftsman

John Herd	Bricklayer/ Craftsman
John Laydon	Labourer
Ould Edward	Labourer
William Wilkenson, Surgeon	Labourer
George Golding	Labourer
Nathaniel Peacock, Boy	Labourer
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant
Diverse Other	Servant

Adapted From: "Original Settlers (May 14, 1607) at Jamestown, Listed by Occupation."  
<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/census2a.html>

Categories of Settlers at Jamestown  
1607

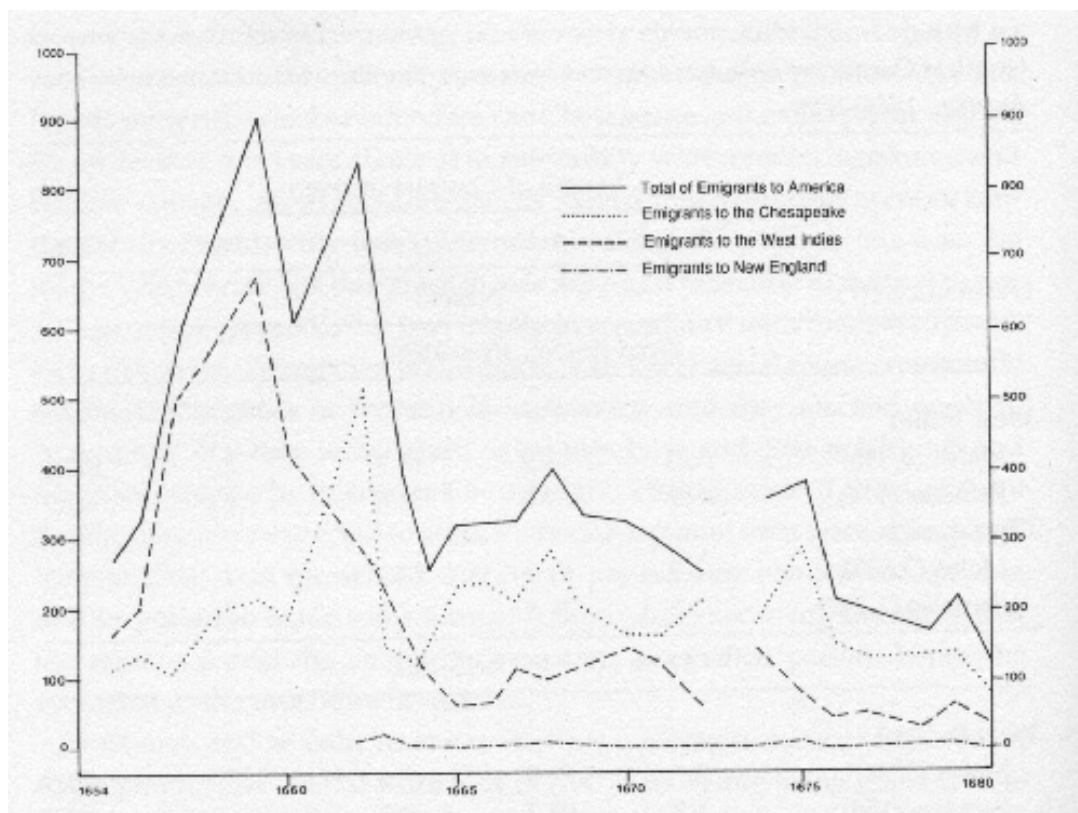
Total Number: 105	Number	Percentage
Council Members	6	5%
Preacher	1	1%
Gentlemen	29	25%
Carpenters	6	6%
Blacksmiths	1	1%
Sailor	1	1%
Barber	1	1%
Bricklayers	2	2%
Masons	1	1%
Tailors	1	1%
Labourers	12	11%
Boys	4	4%
Surgeon	1	1%
Diverse Others (Probably indentured servants)	36	34%

\* Percentages are estimated to the closest hundredth.

## Reasons for Emigrating to Virginia

**Examine** the chart below. Using the information presented on the chart answer the following questions about emigration to Virginia.

- During what time period did emigration from England to North America Peak?
- What do you think would cause so many to emigrate during these years?
- What would motivate a person to leave England behind and start a new life in such a dangerous environment?
- Why do you think the numbers decrease drastically after 1663?



## Emigrating to Jamestown

Between 1520 and 1630, the population of England doubled. This huge increase in population produced strains on the English economy. Many people from poorer sections of society could not find work and could not provide for themselves. Conditions all over the country worsened for the average or poor man. The poor took either to living in the forests, or in cities. In some cases, half of a city's population lived in poverty.

To deal with these awful conditions, the poor began moving around the country in order to look for work, food, and shelter. Finding necessities was often difficult as such the poor often moved from place to place in rapid succession. Crime worsened dramatically as finding even the barest of life's necessities became nearly impossible. The voyage to America was merely another move with the hope of finding better living conditions. Emigration peaked during 1650 and 1680, a period of great uncertainty and hardship, when between 16,000 to 20,000 immigrants arrived in North America.

Many of the original settlers at Jamestown came as indentured servants. An **indentured servant** was a free person who agreed to work for another for a specified time in return for payment of travel and living expenses in Virginia. Indentured servants were expected to remain unmarried during their terms of indenture, which could vary according to age, sex, and race. Indentures could be shortened or lengthened but generally consisted of seven-year terms. At the end of the indenture, the servant was given a set of clothing and something with which they could start their new life. This was referred to as "freedom dues." Sometimes it was money but more often it was a gun, tobacco or some other commodity.

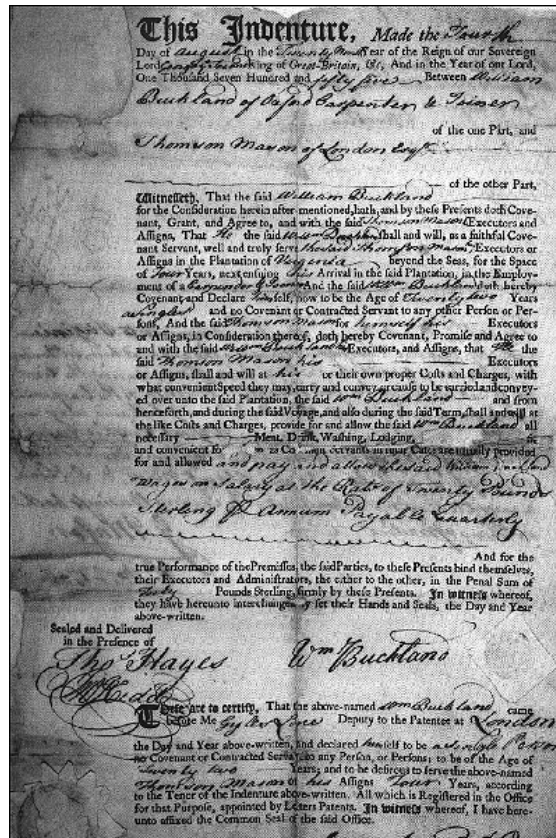
Indentured servants were essential to the colony. They ensured that the tobacco crop would be successful. If even one servant ran away, an entire crop could be lost. Many of these indentured servants had been convicts in England. An act by the British Parliament decreed that a criminal charged with a felony could choose either a term of 14 years as an indentured servant or receive a death sentence. This practice is known as **conscripture**. Many of the convicts sent to Jamestown as servants were in prison as a result of their desperate poverty and this gave them the opportunity to begin again in America.

The example of James Collins illustrates the motivation that might have convinced many to risk the dangers of life in Jamestown for a chance at a somewhat brighter future. James was orphaned as a boy and lived on the streets. He had two choices: a life in prison for petty crimes, or a voyage to America. Although like most, he understood that life in Virginia would be dangerous and that he would most likely die from disease or starvation, he chose to sign a twelve-year indenture. Indentured servants were not looking to become wealthy or prosperous. For the most part they were looking for a slightly better existence than they had in England.

Those of the middle and upper classes came to Virginia for different economic reasons. The lure of gold and instant wealth attracted many to Virginia. Craftsmen came to Virginia looking for higher earnings and a new market for their craft. Gentlemen Adventurers came in search of a fast buck and wanted to make their fortunes and quickly return to England. Others were second or third sons of wealthy landowners in England who needed to establish fortunes of their own.

The ability to acquire land cheaply was attractive to many men. If they could afford to pay for travel, men could come to the Americas and own their own land. In addition, by paying for their own travel and investing in the colony, these men were likely to gain positions of power within the colony. These motivations applied to those Englishmen who could afford their own travel and living expenses. Therefore, only those of means were emigrating for these reasons.

### Indenture of William Buckland



**This Indenture, Made the Fourth Day of August in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second King of Great Britain, & And in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and fifty five** \_\_ Between *William Buckland of Baford Carpenter & Joiner* of the one Part, and *Thomson Mason of London, Esq.* of the other Part, Witnesseth, That the said *William Buckland* for the Consideration herein after-mentioned, hath, and by these Presents doth Covenant, Grant, and Agree to, and with the said *Thomas Mason* Executors and assigns, That *He* the said *William Buckland* shall and will, as a faithful Covenant Servant, well and truly serve *the said Thomas Mason his* Executors and assigns in the Plantation of *Virginia* beyond the Seas, for the Space of *Four* Years, next ensuing *his* Arrival in the said Plantation in the Employment of a *Carpenter and Joiner*. And the said *William Buckland* doth hereby Covenant and Declare *him* self, now to be the Age of *Twenty two* Years *Single* and no Covenant or contracted Servant to any other Person or PerSons, And the said *Thomas Mason* for *himself his* Executors Or Assigns, in Consideration thereof, doth hereby Covenant, Promise And Agree to and with the said *William Buckland his* Executors, and Assigns, that *He* the said *Thomas Mason his* \_\_\_\_\_ Executors or Assigns, shall and will at *his* or their own proper Costs and Charges,

with what convenient Speed they may, carry and convey, or cause to be carried and conveyed over unto the said Plantation, the said *Wm Buckland* \_\_\_ and from henceforth, and during the said Voyage, and also during the said Term, shall and will at the like Costs and Charges, provide for and allow the said *Wm Buckland* all necessary \_\_\_\_\_ Meat, Drink, Washing, Lodging, \_\_\_\_\_ fit and convenient for *Wm* as Covenant Servants in such Cases are usually provided for and allowed *and pay and allow William Buckland Wages on Salary at the Rate of Twenty Pounds Sterling per Annum Payable Quarterly* And for the true Performance of the Premises, the said Parties, the these Presents bind themselves, their Executors and Administrators, the either to the other, in the Penal Sum of *Forty Pounds Sterling*, firmly by these Presents. ***In witness*** whereof, they have hereunto interchanged by set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year above-written. Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of ***Tho Hayes Wm Buckland W Kidd***

([www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org))

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[www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org).

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Horn, James. *Adapting to a New World*. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1994.

## Building a Tower

**Directions:** Divide the students into groups. Inform students that they will be building a tower using the glue sticks and index cards only. The towers will be assessed on height, strength and attractiveness. Give each group a unique set of directions by cutting this sheet into strips. Students must follow the directions written on their strip of paper. Give students five minutes to build their tower.

Determine who is the oldest in your group. This person is responsible for making all decisions regarding the building of the tower. All other group members must obey his direction.

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All group members have an equal say in the decision making process. All ideas must be included in the construction of your tower.

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Determine the oldest and youngest member of the group. They are in charge of building and design. They will assign jobs to other group members but do not actually build the tower.

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In your group assign jobs based on individual talents. Everyone in the group must have a job.

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Elect a leader for your group. This leader will listen to the group's ideas but make the final decision regarding the design and construction of the tower.

## The Council

The **Charter of 1606** created both the **London Company** and the **Plymouth Company**, giving each a right to part of Virginia (originally all of the present day eastern coast of the United States.) The colony at Jamestown was under the control of the London Company or **Virginia Company**. The government of the colony of Virginia was to be by **council**. Three councils were created by the charter: one in England and one in each of the two colonies; Jamestown and Plymouth. The council seated in England was called the **Royal Council for Virginia** and governed both colonies. The crown appointed its thirteen members, however later the number of members was increased. This council was truly under the direct authority of the king, following his every wish. The other two councils located in Virginia also had thirteen members. These members were appointed by the Royal Council but the local council was given the authority to appoint its own president.

And wee doe alsoe ordaine, establishe and agree for [us], our heires and successors, that eache of the saide Colonies shall have a Counsell which shall governe and order all matters and causes which shall arise, growe, or happen to or within the same severall Colonies. (*Charter of 1606*)

Once the Virginia Company's three ships, the Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery, were in sight of land, **Christopher Newport** opened a sealed package listing the names of those men appointed to the council. **John Smith** was listed, but was not allowed his position, as he had been unruly and detained on board the ship. He later became president in 1608, shortly before returning to England in 1609. The other colonists had no say in the appointment of council members or of its president. Since the Royal Council for Virginia was far away in London, it could not manage the everyday affairs of the colony, so the local council was given the right to regulate its internal affairs. These included directing the erection of a fort, managing supplies and trade, keeping the peace, among others. The charter of 1606 specifically instructed the councils to find gold and other precious metals, a task at which they failed. This failure contributed to the crown's increasing disinterest in the colonies.

- Which members of Jamestown society would have been able to select council members?
- If you were a settler at Jamestown what would you look for in a council president?

### Resources:

"Governing the Colony of Virginia" <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/government/govcolony.html>  
"Virginia"

<http://www.usahistory.info/southern/Virginia.html>

The First Charter of Virginia, 1606

<http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/va-1.htm>

Herbert L. Osgood, "The Corporation as a Form of Colonial Government" *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 11 no. 2 (Jun. 1896), 259-277 [JSTOR.org]

## Assessment

### The Need for Leadership in Virginia

For this class period you have been examining the role of a specific settler at Jamestown. Imagine that you are this settler and create a journal or diary entry that chronicles your motivations and experiences upon arriving in Virginia. Your journal entry can be a narrative, a song, a poem or a series of detailed illustrations. In order to convey your message to future generations you will want to describe the following topics:

- Your experiences in England
- Your motivations for emigrating from England to Virginia
- The opportunities for social, economic and political advancement in the Virginia.
- Describe the government of the Jamestown settlement.
- Propose future changes that will make the colony run more efficiently.

## Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war--seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

**"I Have A Dream"**  
**by Martin Luther King, Jr,**

Delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963. Source: Martin Luther King, Jr: The Peaceful Warrior, Pocket Books, NY 1968

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity. But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free.

One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land.

So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition. In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.

This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.

So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights.

The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges. But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. we must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" we can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and

walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring." And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania! Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Summary Questions:

- What was Dr. King's purpose for writing the speech, "I Have a Dream?"
- How did Reverend King's actions impact public policy?
- What personal strengths did Martin Luther King, Jr. use to impact change?
- What do you think motivates a citizen to become involved in civic issues?
- Is anyone exempt from being an involved citizen in a democracy?