



Native North Americans

What was early contact like between Europeans and Natives?

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Introduction

In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean, unlocking what Europeans quickly came to call the 'New World'. Columbus 'found' a land with around two million inhabitants. He thought he had found a new route to the East, so he mistakenly called these people 'Indians'. Within a hundred years, Europeans were trying to settle in the Americas. With Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the south, English explorers focused on North America.

This snapshot examines what happened between early English settlers and Native Americans in North America. Using primary source evidence you will investigate what the early contact was like. Were the Native Americans savage and vicious hosts? Were the Europeans unreasonable and unfair? Or did they all just get along fine? You need to find out what happened.

The evidence comes from 1607. This was the year that the first permanent English settlement was established in North America, known as Jamestown. These first settlers - and those who sent them - were keen to find out about the area, keen to see how they could benefit. These settlers began to explore and they soon encountered the Native people. Using the information they recorded, you are going to examine their initial thoughts and feelings.

Tasks

Look at Source 1

1. This is an extract from one of the settlers diaries.
 - a) What did the 'Dyscoverers' (explorers) take with them?
 - b) How many people went on the exploration?

Look at Source 2

2. This is another extract from the diary seen in Source 1.
 - a) How welcome were the men made? [Think about how they were 'entertained']
 - b) What was done to show respect for Captain Newport?
 - c) What did the native people give them? [3 things]
 - d) What did the Captain get?
 - e) How do you think these explorers felt about their treatment?

Look at Source 3

3. This extract describes how the explorers were missing two bullet-bags and the contents.
 - a) When the loss was reported, how quick and effective was the Native Americans response?
 - b) Why do you think the materials were taken by the Native Americans?

- c) How is the situation resolved?
- d) From the evidence so far, how would you describe the relationship between the Europeans and the Natives? Make sure you explain your ideas - use the questions below to help:
 - Have both groups shown themselves to be friendly? How?
 - Has respect been shown to each other? How?
 - How well have problems been resolved?
 - Are there any sign of nerves or worries?

Look at Source 4

4. This extract explains the natives showing the settlers how they lived..

- a) What are the explorers shown how to do? [Think about what 'manner of setting' actually means]
- b) If the Natives are willing to do this, what does this suggest about them?
- c) Which of the following sentences best describes this early contact? Write a paragraph to explain your choice.
 - The Natives were warning them off - showing they didn't welcome 'strangers' bringing disease.
 - The Natives were enormously friendly to the Europeans - helpful in every possible way.
 - The Europeans were extremely scared but had nothing to worry about - they all got along fine!

Look at Source 5

5. This extract describes how the natives appeared to the settlers.

- a) Write as much as you can about the following things:
 - Clothing:
 - Footwear:
 - Hair / hairstyle:
 - Skin:
 - Differences between men and women:
- b) Using this information, why do you think some settlers felt uncomfortable with Native Americans?.

Look at Source 6

6. Imagine you were amongst these first settlers.

Write your own journal entry describing your first contact with the Natives.

Look at the source to get an idea of a journey entry. Make sure you cover:

- a) Your fears before you arrived
- b) How you felt about the native people after first contact
- c) How accurate your fears were
- d) What you feel you can gain from these people
- e) What you feel you and others must be careful of doing

Background

The first English explorers to North America arrived five years after Columbus in 1497, led by the Italian Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot). However the English did not try and establish permanent settlements in the 'New World' until much later.

In 1585, English colonists attempted to settle at a place called Roanoke. The settlement lasted only for a short time. After initial friendly relations, fighting broke out with the Native Americans when they refused demands for food from English soldiers. The colonists fled.

On May 14, 1607, the first lasting English settlement in North America was established. The settlement was named 'Jamestown' after the current King of England, James I. Captain Newport led the expedition, staying until June 22nd, when he sailed back to England for supplies. The source material in this Snapshot comes from the time between May and June, when Newport was in America. The report was probably written by Captain Gabriell Archer (CO 1/1).

104 settlers were left, with Captain John Smith placed in charge. These settlers were unprepared, and did not even plant the right crops or eat the right foods. They soon encountered starvation and famine, despite stealing food from the Native Americans. In the first three years, despite new arrivals, more than 80% of the settlers died - mostly from illness such as malaria. Thousands of Native Americans were also killed, either in fighting or by outbreaks of European diseases to which their bodies had no immunity.

Those settlers that survived, together with new arrivals, began to cultivate the land, growing tobacco. As more settlers arrived, more Native American hunting grounds were taken, and the Native Americans began to fight back. Any chance of peaceful relations were at an end.

Teachers Notes

This lesson asks pupils to investigate the early contact between Europeans and Native Americans. Using primary source diary extracts, pupils are able to understand and appreciate the first encounters between European settlers and the indigenous people of North America. Pupils are asked to explore both positive and negative aspects of these encounters, which can then be developed further in a number of ways. Some may prefer to extend this to a comparison between later feelings and actions taken against the Native Americans, examining when the European 'stereotype' of the Native Americans emerged.

Sources

Source 1 : MPG1/284 : This is a contemporary map engraved by William Hole based on descriptions by the discoverer of Virginia, Captain John Smith. The map uses a mix of English and Native place names.

Source 2-7 : CO1/1 : These are extracts from the diaries of one of the Virginia settlers, possibly Captain Gabriel Archer, and show the life of the settlers as well as their interaction with the native Americans.

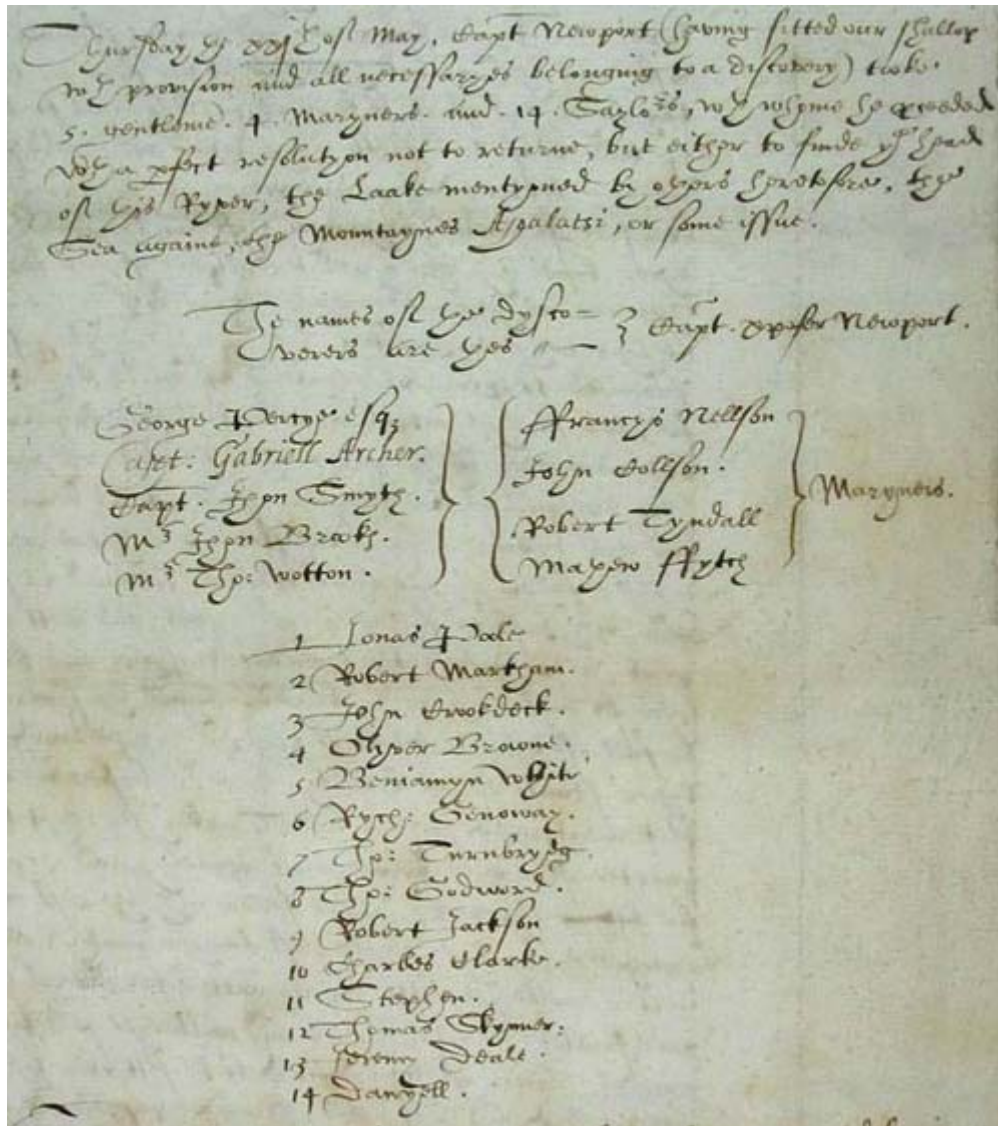
The lesson could form a background to the teaching of the History Scheme of Work Unit 19: What were the effects of Tudor exploration? The lesson also covers breadth of study National Curriculum requirements through investigation of a world study before 1900, specifically indigenous peoples of North America. The final written task offers a clear literacy opportunity, and further links with citizenship and PSHE issues could be made with teacher development.

Schemes of Work

Unit 19: What were the effects of Tudor exploration?

Key Stage 1 & 2 Unit 19

Source 1 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO 1/1)



Source 1 : Transcript of extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO 1/1)

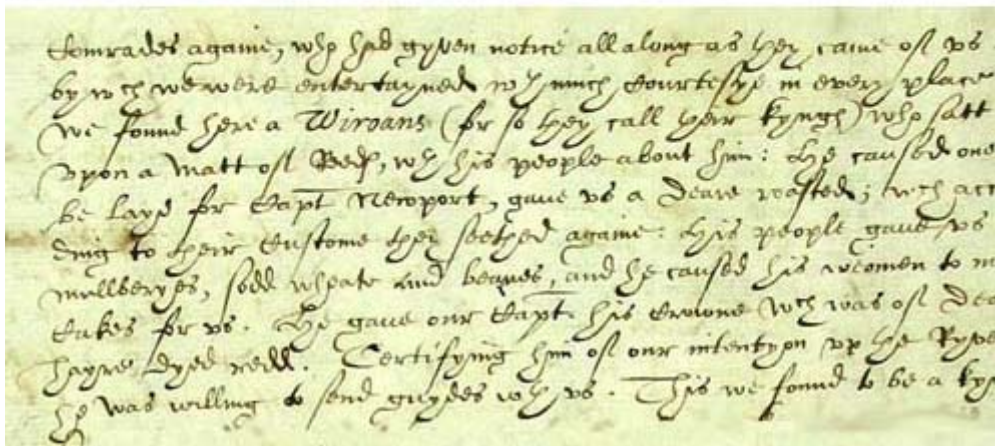
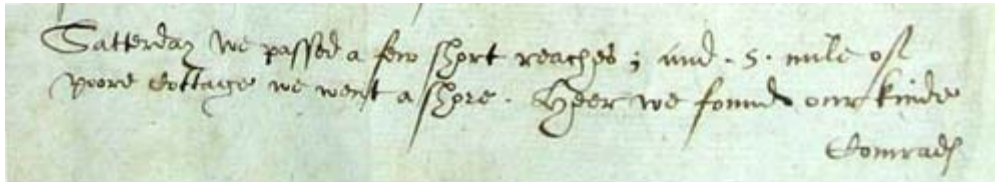
Thursday the xxith of May, Capt[ain] Newport (having fitted our shallup with provision and all necessaries belonging to a discovery) tooke 5 . gentleme[n]. 4 Maryners . and 14 Sal[ours], with whome he [proc]eeded with a [per]fect resolutyon not to returne, but either to find ye head of this Ryver, the Laake mentyoned by others heretofore, the Sea againe, the Mountaynes Apalatsi, or some issue

The names of the Dyscoverers are thes : Capt[ain] Christopher Newport

- George Percy esq.
- Francys Nellson
- Capt[ain] Gabriell Archer
- John Collson.
- Capt[ain] Ihon Smyth
- Robert Tyndall
- Mariners
- M[aster] Ihon Brookes
- Marrhew Fyche
- M[aster] Thomas Wotton

Jonas Poole.
Robert Markham.
John Croockdeck.
Olyver Browne.
Beniamyn White.
Rych[ard] Genoway
Tho[mas] Turnbrydg
Tho[mas] Godword
Robert Jackson
Charles Clarke
Stephen
Thomas Slymer
Jeremy Deale
Danyell

Source 2 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

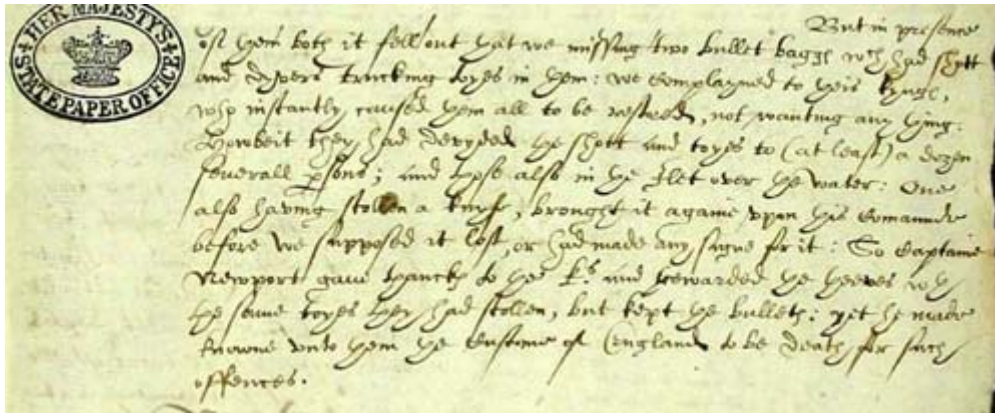


Source 2 : Transcript from extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

Satterday we passed a few short reaches; and . 5. mile of Poore Cottage we went a shore. Heer we found our kinde

Comrades againe, who had gyven notice all along as they came of us: by which we were entertayned with much Courtesye in every place. We found here a Wiroans (for so they call their kynges) who satt vpon a matt of Reedes, with his people about him: He casued one to be layd for Captaine Newport, gave vs a Deare roasted; which according to their Custome they seethed againe: His people gaue Vs mullberyes, sodd wheate and beanes, and he caused his weomen to make Cakes for Vs. He gaue our Captaine his Crowne which was of Deares hayre dyed redl. Certifying him of our intentyon vp the Ryver, he was willing to send guydes with vs.

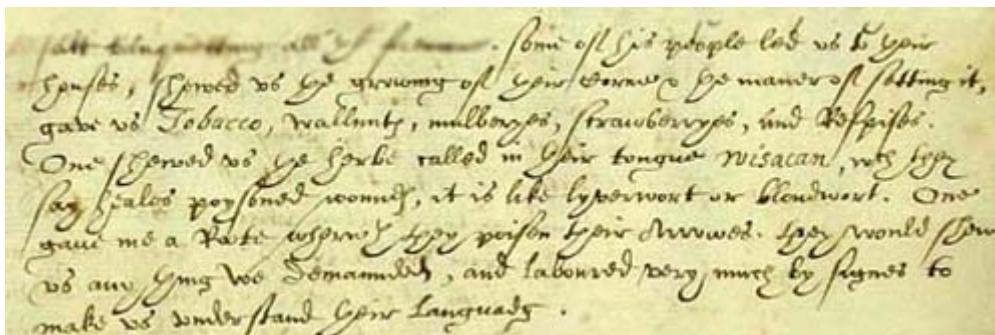
Source 3 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)



Source 3 : Transcript of extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

But in presence of them both it fell out that we missing two bullett-baggess which had shott and Dyvers trucking toyes in them: we Complayned to theis kynges, who instantly caused them all to be restored, not wanting any thing. Howbeit they had Devyded the shott and toyes to (at least) a dozen seuerall persons; and those also in the llet over the water: One also having stollen a knyfe, brought it againe vpon this Comaunde before we supposed it lost, or had made any signe for it: so Captaine Newport gaue thanckes to the Kinges and rewarded the theeves with the same toyes they had stollen, but kept the bullettes: yet he made knowne vnto them the Custome of England to be Death for such offences.

Source 4 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)



Source 4 : Transcript of extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

some of his people led vs to their houses, showed vs the growing of their Corne & the maner of setting it, gave us Tobacco, Wallnutes, mullberyes, strawberryes, and Respises. One shewed vs the herbe called in their tongue wisacan, which they say heales poysoned woundes, it is like lyverwort of bloudwort. One gaue me a Roote wherewith they poison their Arrowes. they would shew vs any thing we Demanded, and laboured very much by signes to make vs understand their Languag.

Source 5 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

are to be to have. The boy, you all, naked save
 your privities, yet in roole wear your
 waies Idare I know, w^{ch} the sayre on
 loof: some have water storknights up to
 your swifts, & sandalls on their feet, your
 sayre is black generally, w^{ch} the wear
 long on the left side, tyed up on a knott,
 about w^{ch} knott of knits and soft lincous
 they have a kind of Coronett of Idares
 sayre w^{ch} is redd, some have regiments of
 long lincous roppie about their waies, and
 some regiments of pearls, of women set
 their long hair in the knott, I found
 not a gray eye among them all. your
 sayre

sayre is having not so borne, but w^{ch} they
 and sayre they are, in w^{ch} they
 delight greatly. The women here like the
 men, only they differ; your sayre
 growing long all over their heads save
 somewhat set afore, they do all the lab^r
 and the men hunt and goe at their pleasure.

Source 5 : Transcript of extract from a journal of one of the settlers (CO1/1)

They goe all naked save their privities, yet in coole weather they weare deare skinns, with the hayre on loose: some have leather stockinges vp to their twistes, & sandalls on their feet, their hayre is black generally, which they weare long on the left side, tyed vp on a knott, about which knott the kinges and best among them have a kind of Coronett of deares hayre coloured redd, some have chaines of long linckt copper about their neckesm and some chaines of pearle, the common sort stick long fethers in this knott, I found not a grey eye among them all. their

skynn is tawny not so borne, but with dying and paynting them selues, in which they - delight greatly. The women are like the men, onely this difference; their hayre - groweth long al over their heads save clipt - somewhat short afore, these do all the labour and the men hunt and goe at their plesure.

Source 6 : Extract from a journal of one of the settlers. (CO1/1)

in Grubbed. The women are very orderly
in making fire bread and preparing meat.
I found the account after death to goe into
the other world pointing eastward to St. Elmo,
and when they saw us at prayer they stood
with great pleasure and respect, especially
to witness I had imparted the meaning
of a reverence. To conclude they are a very
witty and ingenious people, apt to
understand and speak a Language, so
that I hope in god as I have miraculously
prevented the danger to both
of the land and the fur, so I will
make

make to support of the Holy will in subverting
you to a true Christian faith by the same
inspiring grace and knowledge of the Holy Spirit.

Source 6 : Transcript of extract from a journal of one of the settlers. (CO1/1)

The wemen are very cleanly in making their bread and prepareing meat. I found they account after death to goe into an other world pointing eastward to the Element, and when they saw vs at prayer they observed vs with great silence and respect, especially those to whome I had imparted the meaning of our reverence. To conclude they are a very witty and ingenious people, apt both to vnderstand and speake our language, so that I hope in god as he hath miraculously preserved vs hither from all dangers both of sea and land & their fury so he will

make vs authors of his holy will in converting them to our true Christian faith by his owne inspireing grace and knowledge of his deity.