

Jamestown Location Choice- Center 1

Primary Source Study

Using the map of Jamestown that John Smith created in 1612 as well as a map of Virginia found on Google Maps, you are going to analyze some of the instructions that were given to the settlers about how to pick a location for the settlement. These instructions were taken from an actual primary source called "Instructions for the Virginia Colony, 1606" (found at this website: http://www.historyglobe.com/jamestown/instructions_q1.html#a1).

While you are reading the excerpts from the primary source, stop after each bullet point and have a group discussion about what you think the excerpt means.

Discuss and write on a piece of notebook paper why you think they included each item in their instructions. Refer to the map and talk about whether or not you feel the settlers followed each of the directions- why or why not?

1. "When it shall please God to send you to the coast of Virginia, you shall do your best endeavor to find out a safe port in the entrance of some navigable river, making choice of such a one as runneth furthest into the land. And if you happen to discover divers portable rivers, and amongst them any one that hath two main branches, if the difference be not great, make choice of that which bendeth most toward the northwest, for that way shall you soonest find the other sea."
2. "But if you choose your place so far up as a bark of fifty tons will fleet, then you may lay all your provisions ashore with ease, and the better receive the trade of all the countries about you in the land. And such a place you may perchance find a hundred miles from the river's mouth, and the further up the better. For you to sit down near the entrance, except it be in some island that is strong by nature, an enemy that may approach you on even ground may easily pull you out."
3. "You must take especial care that you choose a seat for habitation that shall not be overburthened with woods near your town; for all the men you have, shall not be able to cleanse twenty acres a year, besides that it may serve for a covert for your enemies round about"
4. "Neither must you plant in a low or moist place, because it will prove unhealthful."
5. "First, erect a little sconce at the mouth of the river that may lodge some ten men, with whom you shall leave a light boat, that when any fleet shall be in sight they may come with great speed to give you warning. Secondly, you may in no case suffer any of the natural people of the country to inhabit between you and the seacoast; for you cannot carry yourselves towards them but they will grow discontented with your habitation..."