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**Before and After Jamestown: Virginia's Powhatans and Their Predecessors.**

By Helen C. Rountree and E. Randolph Turner III. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. 272 pages. \$39.95 cloth.

Few histories of East Coast Indians cover an entire millennium. Even fewer do so well. Most authors either lack the broad interdisciplinary knowledge necessary to carry out such an endeavor or can't discover the sources or narrative thread to unite such a long period. Two of our most seasoned scholars of Virginia's eastern Algonquians have overcome such obstacles and produced an admirable synthesis of Powhatan history from 900 to the present that will please scholarly and, especially, general readers. All will glean a lesson in Powhatan persistence from this work.

The book synthesizes scholarship over a large time span from different disciplines. Rountree's background as an anthropologist and Turner's as an archaeologist allow the two to bring together a wide array of sources. Excavations of recent years have transformed our understanding of the Powhatans' settlement patterns, subsistence, life expectancy, and relations with other Indians and the English. Rountree and Turner shed light on these artifacts with oral and written sources, ethnographic analogies, and living history. They also explain in lay terms the strengths and weaknesses of their sources and their reasons and techniques for using all of them.

Although scholars have for decades paid at least lip service to the need to draw on at least three of these sources—oral, written, and material—under the umbrella of ethnohistory, few have integrated them into their work as well as Rountree and Turner. Their book draws heavily on detailed excavations from the English fort at Jamestown and three diverse Indian towns in existence before this fort's establishment in 1607. Numerous photographs and diagrams pepper the text and clarify the nature and importance of postholes and potsherds. The richness of the artifacts is juxtaposed with an equally rich documentary trail left by early English colonists.

Most ethnohistorians would hope to see such cross-fertilization of sources. But Rountree and Turner have also demonstrated the need to take living history more seriously. Only by actually building a dugout canoe, harvesting a tuckahoe plant, or weaving a mat can we determine how long these tasks took and what daily life was like for the Powhatans, especially because they appear so rarely in historical documents. The inclusion of living history also makes for lively, even humorous reading as Rountree describes herself flailing in the mud to harvest tuckahoe and learning in the process that pulling up the plant requires the physique of a piano-mover and is best done in the buff. Her reward for this hard labor was to chew on a "raw one for the good of science," only to discover that the Powhatans must have cooked tuber because otherwise it tastes "exactly like a beesting" (pp. 99, 98).

Rountree and Turner have done a superb job of demonstrating physical and even some cultural persistence among Algonquians in Virginia. Unfortunately the sources make it difficult to capture the intellectual world of early Powhatans. The authors cannot convey a full picture of early Powhatan religion or trace the exact nature of Powhatan identity through time. Is it

more accurate to think of the “Powhatans” as an ephemeral alliance among such disparate tribes as the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and Chickahominy, or an enduring ethnic identity, or both? What, exactly, makes the modern-day members of these tribes “Powhatans” other than a distant and ephemeral period in their tribes’ history when they were allied under the paramount chiefdom?

Had the Virginia colonists carried a strong missionary impulse and urged the Powhatans to produce written sources, as the Nahuas of central Mexico or southern New England Algonquians did shortly after colonization, scholars might be able to figure out if individuals felt a strong loyalty to Powhatan’s paramount chiefdom or if it was just a necessary evil to cope with external threats. The problem of scant sources persists into the nineteenth century. There was no Powhatan equivalent to William Apess, the Pequot who wrote extensively in the early nineteenth century about his people’s history and in doing so gave historians clues as to how New England Algonquian identity changed over time.

Even though Powhatan-produced writings are relatively slim, the written and archaeological sources for understanding the Powhatans’ foreign relations at the time of European colonization are impressive. The nature of the sources leads Rountree and Turner to focus primarily on the generation that had to deal with early English contact, and more than half of the book is devoted to the centuries before and after Jamestown’s establishment. In these chapters Rountree and Turner adopt a unique approach in their presentation of Powhatan culture. Rather than describe parts of this culture in isolation, they take a man and woman—Machumps and Winganuske—who appeared in the historical record around 1610 and reconstruct the chronological phases of their lives from birth to death. The approach, which gives readers an integrated view of Powhatan culture and the narrative structure, with a beginning, middle, and end, will appeal to general readers more than most ethnographic writing. It also makes these figures seem more human than the subjects of impersonal ethnographic tracts.

Much of the broader political picture emerges through discussion of such items as unearthed palisades and pottery. These show that a large, hierarchical confederacy of tribes formed under the paramount chief Powhatan in response to outside threats from other Indian groups before the arrival of the Spanish or English. Tree rings spotlight an additional threat that these Powhatans faced just at the same time the English established a permanent settlement in the region—drought. And skeletons show that even though the English colonists were not as lazy as once thought, keeping busy crafting copper ornaments to exchange with the Powhatan for food, they did indeed suffer from much poorer health than their Indian neighbors. Written sources document the wars that erupted between the two dramatically different cultures in 1609, 1622, 1644, and 1675. A treaty in 1677 then established several tribes that were once under Powhatan as recognized reservation communities, a status that has lasted to this day.

In the eighteenth century, the Powhatans experienced considerable cultural change that stemmed from significant land loss. Powhatan settlements came to resemble small islands in a sea of white settlement, and this eroded away many aspects of their traditional culture. But the greatest threat to

Powhatan survival came in the nineteenth and, especially, the twentieth century. Although they never had to face physical removal like some eastern Indians, the Powhatans had to confront laws that pressured them to melt into Virginia's free black population. For example, the notorious "one-drop rule" of 1923 deigned any individual with the slightest trace of African ancestry simply "colored."

Some Powhatan groups, such as the Chickahominies, Rappahannocks, and Upper Mattaponis preserved their communal identity against this onslaught by virtue of their having incorporated under the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Following the decline of segregation in the 1950s and 1960s, many Powhatan groups successfully fought a "public relations struggle" to be perceived, popularly and legally, as Indians (p. 221). Annual powwows and successful repatriation struggles characterized a resurgence of Powhatan culture in the 1990s. Today there are seven state-recognized Powhatan-descended tribes, two with reservations. Until now, the extended history of these Powhatan-descended peoples could only be gleaned by reading many different works. Rountree and Turner have simplified the task, and created a work that's greater than the sum of its parts. It should make a much wider swath of the American public familiar with the long story of Virginia's Algonquians.

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**Cherokee Voices: Early Accounts of Cherokee Life in the East.** By Vicki Rozema. Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John F. Blair Publisher, 2002. 180 pages. \$9.95 paper.

*Cherokee Voices* is crafted entirely from primary source materials, including accounts, journals, treaties, and contemporary correspondence. These span the ages from the first formal relations with Britain to the post-Removal late nineteenth century. The "Early Accounts" of the subtitle seems a misnomer, however, considering that the Cherokee entered into formalized relations with South Carolina and Virginia shortly after 1700 and that the excerpts in *Cherokee Voices* stretch nearly into the twentieth century. That's a minor quibble, though, as the accounts and letters culled together here provide notable glimpses and valuable insights into Cherokee thought and culture for a substantial portion of the known history of this indigenous nation.

Vicki Rozema's structure for *Cherokee Voices* is basic, more chronological than anything else, with representative documents speaking and standing on their own. While providing brief instructive introductions for each of the book's twelve sections, Rozema does not inject the presentations of Cherokee life with blocky narrative or overwrought interpretation. She provides just enough to leave the reader with some sense of context and so there is little to interfere with the reader's own gleanings.

To anyone familiar with Cherokee documents it will be obvious that the various excerpts which make this book a whole have been published