

## USING THE DVD

This section contains a short synopsis of the DVD and suggested places to pause the video followed by questions to use for a short discussion during the pause.

### Scene I:

- Joan Peirce introduces herself as a long time resident of the colony of Virginia to six imaginary newcomers to the colony (a man, his wife and two children and a young married couple).
- She tells them that she came to Virginia with her husband William and young daughter as part of the “third supply” in June of 1609. She and her daughter sailed on *Blessing* while William sailed on *Sea Venture*. The fleet of nine ships was separated during a terrible storm off the coast of Virginia.
- Six of the nine ships reached James Fort in the middle of August, but *Sea Venture* was not one of them.
- She and her daughter spent the winter of 1609-1610 – the Starving Time – at Jamestown without William.

**Pause line: “By spring there was only sixty of us left alive.”**

### Questions:

What are your thoughts about the voyage to Virginia based upon Mistress Peirce’s account?

How do you think Mistress Peirce and her daughter Joan, felt when *Sea Venture* did not arrive at Jamestown? They could have gone back to England when the fleet sailed in October. Would you have stayed in Virginia if you had been Mistress Peirce? Why or why not?

### Scene II:

- In the spring of 1610 the survivors of *Sea Venture* arrive at Jamestown. They had been shipwrecked on the island of Bermuda. Joan and her daughter are reunited with William.
- Martial law is declared in the colony and harsh punishments for breaking strict rules are imposed on the settlers. Food is scarce for the settlers as there is an ongoing war with the Indians. Still Joan thinks there was no time as bad as the “Starving Time.”
- The Powhatan Indian uprising of 1622 was a bad day, but Joan assures the settlers that the Indians are being dealt with.
- Joan talks about the achievements: prosperity from tobacco, the General Assembly and the promise of English rights to colonists in Virginia
- She compares Virginia in 1624 (when it became a royal colony) to Virginia in the present year of 1638.

**Pause line: “We wish Virginia to be like England and methinks good progress hath been made.”**

### Questions:

Do you agree with Mistress Peirce that the strict rules and harsh punishments “were more a hindrance to survival than an aid to it”? Why or why not?

How important was it to the growth of the colony that English laws and customs were established there in 1619? Would you have been willing to go to Virginia if life there was less fair than in England?

### Scene III:

- Joan describes Jamestown as the center of commerce with merchant ships traveling there with goods to trade for tobacco.
- She talks about the food supply in Virginia
- She describes the industries at Jamestown: potter, brewery (gives advice about drinking water) and apothecary (discusses health issues in the colony)

**Pause line: "...but the apothecary, he doth carry orange water and jasmine water, methinks. Both most acceptable."**

### Questions:

Mistress Peirce talks about the fine things you can buy from the merchant ships. Do you think it was important that luxury items were available in the colony for people who could afford them? Why or why not?

According to Mistress Peirce there was plenty of food in Virginia. Do you think everyone in the colony had enough food to eat? Are there people in our country today who are hungry even though there is plenty of food available?

### Scene IV:

- Joan asks the newcomers if they have come to Virginia for land on which to grow tobacco and become prosperous. Most people do come to Virginia for that reason, she says.
- She then tells them that in addition to land they will need labor to be successful as tobacco planters.
- Joan explains the use of indentured servants to provide the needed labor and how the system of acquiring servants works.

**Pause line: "You will find their chances of living will greatly improve."**

### Questions:

Tobacco is an all-important cash crop for the Virginia settlers. Were they smart to put all their emphasis on one crop? What else did some of the planters do to make money besides planting tobacco? Should the governor have given incentives to people to start industries in the colony?

Do you think the system of using indentured servants as a labor force was practical? Why or why not? Do you think the system was better for the servant or for the master?

### Scene V:

- Joan tells the two gentle men that once they are established as land owners they will be able to vote for a representative in the House of Burgesses. They might even decide to run for office themselves.
- The most successful and important planters may be appointed to the Council of Government in Virginia, Joan points out. The Council is supposed to approve the actions of the governor and to advise him.
- However, all is not perfect in Virginia and Joan complains about the present governor, Sir John Harvey.

**Pause line:** “Wait while I fetch my hat and I will walk a way with you.”

### Questions:

Sir John Harvey, the Governor of the colony of Virginia, was not well liked by the settlers. Was it wise of him to have William Peirce and the four others arrested for treason and sent back to England? How do you think he felt when they were acquitted and returned to Jamestown? Could he hope to successfully govern the colony when he had angered so many people?

### Scene VI:

- Joan bemoans the fact that the death rate in Virginia for English settlers is high, but she wants to assure the women that if they are widowed they will have no trouble finding another husband. Women are not plentiful in Virginia and it seems women have a higher survival rate than the men. Widows are highly sought after as wives.
- She cautions the settlers that they need to protect their reputations. If they are slandered they must go to court. And they also need to be careful how they speak of others.
- She then wishes them well and bids them farewell.

### Questions:

When the General Assembly was established in 1619, a court system was also established based on English Common Law. (Common law is still a part of our legal system today.) After 1619 the colonists were able to settle their differences in a court of law. Do you think it was an advantage to the people in Virginia to be able to go to court with their problems? Why or why not?

### End of DVD

### Questions:

You have heard Mistress Peirce’s description of life in the colony of Virginia in 1638. Can you base your answers to the questions in the **Students’ Objectives** on only her testimony? As investigative reporters do you think it is important that you research the subject to get different points of view? Why or why not?

The teacher should discuss the materials available in the **Supplementary Materials** section, give whatever directions are needed for students to do their projects, set the time frame for completing them and establish the standards for their completion.



## CHART FOR DVD

**Directions:** Fill in the “**Details**” section of the chart (1-5) while watching the DVD “Meet Joan Peirce” or during the pauses. If you wish to add to the “Details” section, you will find more information in **Supplementary Materials**. Once you have completed the chart to your satisfaction, “**Rate**” all the “Details” as either **good (+), bad (-), fair (f) or risky (?)** You will then use the information to decide whether Virginia is a good place to live or not.

Details	Rate: +, -, f, ?
1. <b>Voyage:</b> length, weather, health, food, etc.	
2. <b>Conditions in Virginia:</b> a. Health, climate, environment, etc.	
b. Availability of necessities: food, drink, clothing, housing, etc.	
c. Availability of luxury items	
d. Relation with the Virginia Indians	
e. Government/Rights	

Details	Rate: +, -, f, ?

<p><b>3. Opportunities in Virginia for Gentry (people who pay for their own passage)</b></p> <p>a. Opportunities for Gentry Men</p>	
<p>b. Opportunities for Gentry Women</p>	
<p><b>4. Opportunities and Treatment in Virginia for Indentured Servants (people who agree to work in Virginia to repay cost of passage)</b></p> <p>a. Opportunities for English Servants</p>	
<p><b>b. Treatment of English Servants</b></p>	
<p><b>5. Africans in Virginia</b></p> <p>a. Treatment of Africans</p>	
<p>b. Opportunities for Africans and their descendants</p>	

## TEACHERS' KEY TO DETAILS

### Details

#### 1. Voyage: length, weather, health, food, etc.

On Joan's voyage it took 8 weeks to reach the coast of Virginia. It would have taken another week or more to reach Jamestown. With good weather—about 9 to 10 weeks.. Always a possibility of storms, high winds, rain and the possibility of sinking. Sickness on board ship was also highly probable. (More information on life aboard ship can be found in the *London Gazette* article: *Sea Venture Feared Lost in Storm*.)

#### 2. Conditions in Virginia:

##### a. Health, climate, environment, etc.

Virginia not a healthy place, people advised to come in the fall to get used to the country before the hot summer, which was the season of sickness. Women believed to tolerate the conditions better than men.

##### b. Availability of necessities: food, drink, clothing, housing, etc.

People hunt, fish and grow food to eat, there is a brewery in town and people have fruit orchards and make cider and perry (cider from pears) to drink; plenty of wood for building and merchant ships bring household goods, tools and other necessities to the colony to trade for tobacco.

##### c. Availability of luxury items:

Many luxury items (sugar, fruits, silks, spices, olive oil, wine, etc.) are brought to the colony by merchant ships and are available for those who can afford them.

##### d. Relations with the Virginia Indians:

In the past relations have not been good with the Virginia Indians—massacre in 1622—but relations have improved. By 1638 the settlers feel they are dealing with the Indian situation. (More information about the Virginia Indians can be found in the Geography Exercises and in the Background Information on Namontack.)

##### e. Government/Rights:

All settlers and their children have the same rights as if they had been born and living in England. There is representative government and a court system similar to that found in England. (More information can be found in the *London Gazette* article: *General Assembly Meets at Jamestown*.)

### Details

#### 3. Opportunities in Virginia for Gentry (people who pay for their own passage)

##### a. Opportunities for Gentry Men:

Gentle men have the chance to own their own land, to vote for a person to represent them in the House of Burgesses, to run for office and if they become rich and important enough they can be named to the Council of Government by the king.

b. Opportunities for Gentry Women:

Gentle women have an excellent chance to marry, can inherit a third of husband's estate if they are widowed and as widows have a good chance of remarrying.

**4. Opportunities and Treatment in Virginia for Indentured Servants (people who agree to work in Virginia to repay the cost of passage):**

a. Opportunities for English Servants:

Male servants will gain their freedom, have a chance to own land, to own their own servants, to vote and to become successful while female servants have a chance to marry well. (More information on this subject can be found in the Background Information on Indentured Servants).

b. Treatment of English Servants:

They can be ill-treated and have masters who try to cheat them out of their freedom dues. They can sue in court if their masters do not fulfill the terms of their contracts. (More information can be found in the Background Information on Indentured Servants)

**5. Africans in Virginia**

a. Treatment of Africans:

They can be ill-treated and have masters who try to cheat them out of their freedom dues. They can also sue in court if the terms of their contracts are violated. They may be forced to work longer to gain their freedom than English servants. Africans can also be made servants for life. (This information is found in the Background Information on Indentured Servants).

b. Opportunities for Africans and their Descendants.

In 1638 African indentured servants can gain their freedom, have a chance to own land, to own their own servants and free African men who own property can vote. However, the future for African in Virginia is cloudy. (This information can be found in the Background Information on Indentured Servants).