A Ground Model and Opechancanough's Peace

Hiroyuki Tsukada
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Ph.D. Candidate

Abstract

This study explores the character of the Powhatan Chief Opechancanough. Characterized later by English colonists and even some of his own people as a hostile leader, this image of Opechancanough is far too simplistic. To discuss how Opechancanough and other Powhatan chiefs adjusted to and handled the circumstances of the arrival of Europeans on their shores, a more sophisticated model is needed. A ground model of the negotiations, interchanges, and even hostilities that occurred between the Powhatan paramount chiefdom and the English colonists presents the complex shift from native dominance, through a middle ground of conciliation, to one of colonial dominance.

Introduction

Over decades, early Americanists accumulated an inconsiderable number of influential works on the history of Native Americans, bidding farewell to the Frontier paradigm. Of these, Richard White and Kathleen DuVal presented monumental views on Native diplomacy. In 1991, White invented the concept “middle ground,” in which neither Native Americans nor Europeans were dominant but negotiated and compromised. This concept became popular rapidly, but its most notable critic, Kathleen DuVal, advocated “native ground” as a counter-concept to middle ground. According to her, only relatively weak groups sought compromise; cohesive groups considered themselves “native” to their region and wanted to maintain their sovereignty.¹ One group of later scholars announced that both concepts (middle ground and native ground) risked falling into an oversimplified dichotomy of either assimilation or resistance in the Native response to European colonization;² yet another group understood that native ground was a condition that preceded the transition to middle ground.³ The latter viewpoint, which I propose developing into the “ground model,” describes the three stages of the transformation of the balance of power from Native ground through middle ground to settler ground (a ground in which settlers are dominant). This model clarifies a pattern of diplomacy and behavior, especially of Native Americans, at each stage.

This concern for changing relations between the two peoples is consistent with a current adaptation of settler colonial studies in early America. Since the 1990s, Early American historians have acknowledged the strong presence of Native Americans and have stopped depicting them as mere victims. The invention of the concept of middle ground and the idea of native ground promoted this trend. Most recently, however, the tide has been shifting toward a framework of settler colonialism, in which, as Patrick Wolfe formulated, Native-settler relations are viewed as a “structure” and settlers’ logic of elimination of Natives are elucidated. In July 2019, the *William and Mary Quarterly* discussed settler

¹ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), esp. 5.

² Saul Schwartz and William Green, “Middle Ground or Native Ground? Material Culture at Iowaville,” *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 537–65.

³ Russell Dylan Ruediger, “Tributary Subjects: Affective Colonialism, Power, and the Process of Subjugation in Colonial Virginia, c.1600–c.1740” (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2017), 11–12.

colonialism in early America, in which Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker modified Wolfe's static formulation into "a process, not a structure."⁴ Thus, early American history should be approached not only as a narrative of Native Americans' presence, but also of Europeans' gaining power.

Analyzing seventeenth century Virginia from the perspective of the ground model, current interpretations of the diplomacy of the leadership of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom collapses. In the mid-1610s, Opechancanough replaced Wahunsonacock (another name: Powhatan), playing a leading role in diplomacy and the maintenance of peaceful relations with the Virginia settlers for several years until his assault in 1622. Contemporaneous records, including the letters of colonial leaders and the writings of Samuel Purchas,⁵ reveal Opechancanough's peaceful and compromising manner. After the assault, however, the English loudly decried the "treachery" of the Native Americans. For example, Edward Waterhouse bemoaned that the colonists "fell vnder the bloody and barbarous hands of that perfidious and inhumane people" and that "our hands which before were tied with gentlenesse and faire vsage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Sausages [Savages], not vntying the Knot, but cutting it." After his second assault in 1644, Opechancanough was called a "bloody Monster."⁶ Historians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries established the interpretation that Opechancanough had waited for several years for the best opportunity to attack the colonists. In 1747, William Stith wrote that "*Opechancanough* was a haughty, politic, and bloody Man, ever intent on the Destruction of the *English*" (italics in original). John Fiske wrote in 1897 that "it is a traditional belief that Opekankano had always favoured hostile measures towards the white men, and that for some years he awaited an opportunity for attacking them."⁷ This interpretation has persisted among current scholars. James Horn claimed that "Opechancanough waited six bitter years for the right moment to strike against the English," and even scholars who are less explicit have accepted that Opechancanough's intentions were hostile compared to those of Wahunsonacock.⁸

⁴ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 163; idem, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (2006): 387–409; Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism in Early American History: Introduction," *William and Mary Quarterly* (hereafter *WMQ*) 3rd ser., 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 364.

⁵ Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906–35) (hereafter *RVCL*); Samuel Purchas, *Pvrchas His Pilgrimage* (1617), reprint, 2 vols. (Whitefish: Kessinger Pub., 2003).

⁶ *RVCL*, 3: 551, 556; Anonymous, *A Perfect Description of Virginia*, in *Tracts and Other Papers*, 4 vols., ed. Peter Force (New York: Peter Smith, 1947), 2 (8): 7.

⁷ William Stith, *The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (Williamsburg: William Parks, 1747), 209; Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1860), 6: 98; John Fiske, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1897), 1: 189–90; Hiroyuki Tsukada, "The Pocahontas Myth and Settler Colonialism of the British Empire," *Language, Area and Culture Studies* (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) 27 (2021 forthcoming).

⁸ Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York: Knopf, 2012), 97; Carl Bridenbaugh, *Jamestown, 1544–1699* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 29; idem, *Early Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 38–39; Alfred A. Cave, *Lethal Encounters: Englishmen and Indians in Colonial Virginia* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 106; J.

This hostile image of Opechancanough has been accepted not only by these historians but also by Native Americans themselves. Mattaponi oral tradition, which is allegedly passed on by select religious leaders, claims that Wahunsonacock was “a leader who tried to work things out with diplomacy” and “Opechancanough was more of a warrior who would stand up and defend his country” and who replaced the former because religious leaders “believed the time had come for a different approach.”⁹ The publication of this oral history has received both positive and negative responses. Lisa Heuvel and Madoka Sato claimed that the oral history put an end to the European monopoly on historical writing,¹⁰ but J. Frederick Fausz cast doubt on the accuracy of its content.¹¹ Certainly, oral tradition is not immune to alteration over generations, and most historians have disregarded this publication. Historians can, however, pay attention to the transformation of that content. Considered alongside instances in which Powhatan people took care of their relationships with the English on settler ground, the hostile interpretation of Opechancanough in this oral tradition might indicate a transformation of the oral history. Below, the transition of the diplomacy of Powhatan chiefs through three grounds are analyzed and the settler-colonial process is elucidated.

Native Ground, until 1614

The most powerful indigenous group in the mid-Atlantic region, the Powhatans, lived near Chesapeake Bay, and their leader was Wahunsonacock, who had been enhancing his authority and enlarging his territory since the latter half of the sixteenth century. By the time of the arrival of the English in 1607, Wahunsonacock ruled approximately 30 chiefdoms that were bordered by the Potomac River in the north, Fall Line in the west, and the Atlantic Sea in the east. To the south were the Chowanocs and Mangoags. Wahunsonacock maintained peaceful but competitive relationships with the Piscataways in the north and had an

Frederick Fausz, “Opechancanough: Indian Resistance Leader,” in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, eds. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 28; James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 262; Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), chap. 15; Ethan A. Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early Virginia* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), 66.

⁹ Linwood “Little Bear” Custalow and Angela L. Daniel “Silver Star,” *The True Story of Pocahontas: The Other Side of History* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2007), 87.

¹⁰ Lisa Heuvel, review of *The True Story of Pocahontas: The Other Side of History*, by Linwood “Little Bear” Custalow and Angela L. Daniel “Silver Star,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (2007): 240–43; Margaret Williamson Huber, “Pocahontas and Rebecca: Two Tales of a Captive,” in *The Art of Anthropology / The Anthropology of Art*, ed. Brandon Lundy (Knoxville: Newfound Press, 2013), 75–102; Madoka Sato, “A Re-Examination of Disputes on Captain John Smith’s Rescue by Pocahontas,” *Shien: Journal of Historical Studies* (Rikkyo University) 76, no. 1 (December 2015): 81–94 (in Japanese).

¹¹ J. Frederick Fausz, review of ... *The True Story of Pocahontas: The Other Side of History*, by Linwood “Little Bear” Custalow and Angela L. Daniel “Silver Star” ..., *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter *VMHB*) 115, no. 4 (2007), 576–81. Also critical: Kevin Miller, “Meeting in the Middle: Myth-Making in the True Story of Pocahontas: The Other Side of History,” *Bulletin of Tsurumi University Part 2, Studies in Foreign Languages and Literature* 55 (2018): 1–27.

antagonistic one with the Monacans and Monahoacs in the west.¹² Wahunsonacock's policy toward the English was based mainly on his two past experiences with Europeans: Spanish efforts to build a mission and Paquiquineo's destruction of that mission in the 1560s and 1570s and the English colonial venture of Roanoke in the 1580s. These settlements were short-lived because of a lack of supplies and conflicts with Natives.

Some researchers have hypothesized that Paquiquineo, who led an assault on Spanish priests in 1571, is Opechancanough. From 1561 to 1570, Paquiquineo travelled with Spaniards to Spain, Havana, and Mexico City and was given Christian name Don Luis de Velasco. Spanish priests returned with him as part of a mission in September 1570, but Paquiquineo soon returned to his people. Thereafter, he broke with Christian doctrine and took multiple wives. The priests, who had intended to rely on his support, were troubled by the failure of their mission and a lack of food. In February 1571, Paquiquineo led his fellow Natives in an attack on the priests. The next year, Spain took its revenge. Carl Bridenbaugh is the historian who promoted the opinion that Paquiquineo and Opechancanough were one and the same person, based on the mistaken belief that Opechancanough had always been antagonistic to Virginia colonists. Bridenbaugh admitted that there was no direct evidence and Helen C. Rountree disagreed, insisting that Opechancanough was born near Fall Line of the James or Pamunkey rivers; and Paquiquineo was from the lower area of these rivers.¹³

Walter Raleigh's Roanoke venture consisted of one exploratory expedition by Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe in 1584 and two colonies from 1585–1590. The first colony was led by Richard Grenville and Ralph Lane and the second by John White. The colonists explored the North Carolina area and the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, and built a friendly relationship with Croatoan Natives. However, a hostile relationship developed with the Secotans for three reasons: infectious diseases, English overreliance on the Natives' food, and English belligerence toward the Native people. Violent confrontations sometimes occurred, but the colonial venture finally ended with the mysterious disappearance of the colonists sometime between 1587 and 1590, during which White could not access the colony due to the intensification of the conflict between England and Spain. Many researchers have studied the traces of these English colonists; the most probable main route is from Roanoke Island through Metocuem and Ocanahonan along Albermale Sound and the Roanoke river to Pakerakinick on Core Sound. Around April 1607, Wahunsonacock attacked the Natives on his Carolina frontier and the lost Roanoke colonists were involved.¹⁴

In these two cases, Europeans near Chesapeake Bay had been only marginal players on ground over which Native people were dominant. Wahunsonacock believed that the newly arrived Virginians were no real threat but useful for enhancing his authority with the surrounding Natives through the acquisition of unusual ornaments and weapons. In December 1607, after several months of observation, the Powhatans captured the English leader John

¹² Jeffrey L. Hantman, "Powhatan's Relations with the Piedmont Monacans," and Wayne E. Clark and Helen C. Rountree, "The Powhatans and the Maryland Mainland," both in *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500–1722*, ed. Helen C. Rountree (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 94–111, 112–35.

¹³ Bridenbaugh, *Early Americans*, 7–17; Bridenbaugh, *Jamestown*, 11–17; Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 15–20. For more on the Spanish mission in the Chesapeake, see Clifford M. Lewis and Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia, 1570–1572* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

¹⁴ Hiroyuki Tsukada, "Powhatan and the Fate of the Lost Colonists of Roanoke: Decoding William Strachey's Imaginary Geography," *North Carolina Historical Review* (2021 forthcoming).

Smith and performed rituals meant to incorporate the Virginia colony into the Powhatan paramount chiefdom. One such ritual was Pocahontas's rescue of Smith before his execution, during which the young woman played the role of intermediary. The rescue symbolized Smith's death as an English person and rebirth as a Powhatan. Wahunsonacock hoped that Smith "should live to make him [Wahunsonacock] hatchets, and her [Pocahontas] bells, beads, and copper."¹⁵ Wahunsonacock's interest in European goods is apparent in this statement.

In the next meeting, held in February 1608, between Wahunsonacock and English leaders Smith and Christopher Newport, Wahunsonacock reiterated the incorporation: "with a lowd oration he [Wahunsonacock] proclaimed me [Smith] a werowanes of Powhatan, and that all his subjects should so esteeme us, [...] and that the Corne, weomen and Country, should be to us as to his owne people." In this message, Wahunsonacock clearly considered Smith one of the chiefs in the paramount chiefdom and the colonists of the same status as Powhatan Natives. Moreover, Wahunsonacock rejected English commodity trade and taught Newport how the Natives themselves traded: "lay me downe all your commodities together; what I like I will take, and in recompence give you what I thinke fitting their value." This manner of trade was based on gift giving, a system in which one gave to another in an ostensibly generous attitude and expected reciprocity. Indeed, reciprocity was obligatory and any negligence meant a break in the relationship between the two parties. Also importantly, during this conference, there was an exchange of the two leaders' alleged sons, Namontack and Thomas Savage, "in full assurance of our loves." Wahunsonacock's intention, however, was not only to extend a token of friendship but to gather information. In a subsequent meeting with colonial leaders in 1614, he revealed to Ralph Hamor that he sent Namontack "to King James his land, to see him and his country, and to returne me the true report thereof."¹⁶

For several months after the incorporation, Wahunsonacock considered the English members of the paramount chiefdom. When a fire destroyed most of newly arrived English supplies, Wahunsonacock mercifully sent food to the colony. The following spring, the Powhatans instructed colonists how to raise crops and fish.¹⁷ Smith was, however, angry at the outrageous trading protocol that Newport had accepted. As soon as Newport left for England in April 1608, Smith ceased gift trading. Thereafter, Wahunsonacock ordered

¹⁵ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 2: 151. Pocahontas would continue her peaceful role in diplomacy for several months until relationships between the Powhatans and the settlers deteriorated. On the insistence that Pocahontas's ritual rescue occurred and Pocahontas's peaceful diplomatic role, see Hiroyuki Tsukada, "Pocahontas's Two Rescues and Her Fluid Loyalty," *Language, Area and Culture Studies* (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) 26 (2020): 103–16.

¹⁶ John Smith, *A True Relation* (1608), idem, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), and William Symonds, ed., *The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia* (1612), all in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580–1631)*, 3 vols., ed. Philip L. Barbour (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 1: 67–69, 216–17, 2: 156; Ralph Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia* (1615), in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn (New York: Library of America, 2007), 1147. On the gift trading, see: Seth Mallios, *The Deadly Politics of Giving: Exchange and Violence at Ajakan, Roanoke, and Jamestown* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 25–31.

¹⁷ Smith, *True Relation*, 61; Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Jamestown Voyages under the First Charter, 1606–1609* (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1976), 160.

English goods to be stolen, which was a compulsory measure to accomplish the expected reciprocity, as Martin H. Quitt stated.¹⁸ In addition to this break with proper trade practices, two other actions displeased Wahunsonacock. First, from summer to autumn of 1608, Smith visited several Native peoples on the periphery and beyond the Powhatan paramount chiefdom, including enemies of Wahunsonacock, the Massawomecks and Monacans. Wahunsonacock was concerned that the colonists might establish relationships with these groups.¹⁹ Second, a ceremony of coronation for Wahunsonacock was performed by the English in October that signified Wahunsonacock's subordination to King James, a highly illustrative contrast to the Powhatan rituals of incorporation in December 1607.

At the coronation ceremony, Smith invited Wahunsonacock to come to Jamestown, but Wahunsonacock refused, saying, "If your king have sent me presents, I also am a king, and this my land, 8 daies I will stay to receave them." During the ceremony, further, colonists tried to induce Wahunsonacock to kneel. Wahunsonacock resisted, but finally acquiesced and became "a little stooped." In return for the crown, Wahunsonacock gifted "his old shoes and his mantle" to Newport.²⁰ This mantle has caused some dispute among historians as to whether it is the same "Powhatan's Mantle" exhibited at the Ashmolean Museum. Powhatan's Mantle is a garment on which are depicted a human being, two animals, and 34 circles. It is first recorded in 1638 as part of a collection of Londoner John Tradescant, but how it was acquired is unknown. Some researchers, including Cynthia J. Van Zandt, who believed that the two mantles are one and the same, hypothesized that the circles on the mantle represent the number of districts under Wahunsonacock's control and that Wahunsonacock displayed his territory to resist the English claim to sovereignty. Though only a hypothesis, it is consistent with Wahunsonacock's statement "this [is] my land" and his reluctance to kneel.²¹

After the coronation and the expeditions, Wahunsonacock ordered that the Natives under him not supply food to the Virginia colonists. As a result, Smith had no choice but to threaten them.²² Their relationship deteriorated and, at a January 1609 meeting, Smith repudiated Wahunsonacock's incorporation and gift trading.

[Wahunsonacock:] Captain Smith, I never used anie of Werowances, so kindlie as your selfe; yet from you I receave the least kindnesse of anie. Capitaine Newport gave me swords, copper, cloths, a bed, tooles, or what I desired, [...]

¹⁸ Smith, *True Relation*, 81–83; idem, *Generall Historie*, 159; Symonds, *Proceedings*, 220; Martin H. Quitt, "Trade and Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607–1609: The Limits of Understanding," *WMQ* 3rd ser., 52, no. 2 (April 1995): 246–47.

¹⁹ Symonds, *Proceedings*, 224–38; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 162–84; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, chap. 8.

²⁰ Symonds, *Proceedings*, 235–37; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 182–84.

²¹ One opponent is Christian F. Feest, who speculated that Powhatan's Mantle was looted after the 1622 assault. Christian F. Feest, "Powhatan's Mantle," in *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum 1683 with a Catalogue of the Surviving Early Collections*, ed. Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 130–35; Cynthia J. Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations: The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80; Gregory A. Waselkov, "Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast," in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, 2nd ed., eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 453–57.

²² Symonds, *Proceedings*, 239–42; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 186–87, 191–92.

[Smith:] Powhatan, you must knowe as I have but one God, I honour but one king; and I live not here as your subject, but as your friend, to pleasure you with what I can: by the gifts you bestowe on me, you gain more then by trade; yet would you visite mee as I doe you, you should knowe it is not our customes to sell our curtesie as a vendible commoditie. [...] ²³

Wahunsonacock could not accept Smith's statement, and while Smith continued a conversation with the Powhatan Natives, Wahunsonacock himself left quietly and his men surrounded the house. Soon becoming aware of the situation, Smith was able to avoid the ambush. Afterward, Smith visited Opechancanough's house to conduct a trade. On the appointed day, however, Smith received a cold welcome, and the next day, "at least 6. or 700" armed Natives surrounded Smith's small company. Smith observed that Opechancanough "seemed kindly to appease Smiths suspicion of unkindnesse, by a great present at the doore, [...] where the bait was guarded with at least two hundred men." Rountree described the door of the Native house as so low that one became defenseless in passing through it. Smith detected Opechancanough's strategy and, further, snatched Opechancanough by the hair and pressed a pistol against his breast, announcing "if you shoot but one arrow, to shed one drop of blood of any of my men, or steale the least of these beades, or copper, [...] I will not cease revenge, [...] so long as I can heare where to find one of your nation that will not deny the name of Pamaunke." Smith concluded, "if as friends you will come and trade, I once more promise not to trouble you."²⁴

This confrontation developed into the First Anglo-Powhatan War, which began in earnest in the late summer of 1609, when English settlers attempted to establish new settlements other than Jamestown and Powhatan Natives countered them with military resistance. At first, the war proceeded with Native successes. After Smith returned to England to convalesce in September 1609, Wahunsonacock extended an offer to trade, and the colonists, taking no precautions, were attacked. The Native people "Surprysed Capteyne Ratlief alyve who he caused to be bownd unto a tree naked with a fyer before, and by [Native] woemen his fleshe was skraped from his bones with Mussell shelles and before his face throwne into the fyer." During the winter, the Powhatans continued to ambush colonists near Jamestown, and the colonists suffered from starvation. The colonists sustained themselves on roots, nuts, and herbs. Their condition was so extreme that one Englishman killed and ate his own wife. Thomas Gates, who was shipwrecked and spent the winter in the Bermuda Islands, arrived in late May 1610, but decided to abandon the miserable colony on June 7. At this time, the population of the colony, near 400 at its height, had dwindled to less than 100.²⁵ Wahunsonacock could not induce the colonists to play a proper role as members of his paramount chiefdom, but his power still surpassed theirs.

The arrival of Lord De La Warre on June 10 with 300 settlers, however, reinvigorated the colony and perpetuated the war with the Powhatans. In one battle, Paspahugh Chief Wowinchopunck's children were thrown into water, and the colonists shot them in the head. In another incident, Opossunoquonuske, an Appamattuck woman leader, invited the colonists

²³ Symonds, *Proceedings*, 248–49; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 197.

²⁴ Symonds, *Proceedings*, 249–53; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 197–202; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, 125.

²⁵ Symonds, *Proceedings*, 275; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 232–233; William Strachey, "A True Reportory" (1625), and George Percy, "A Trewe Relacyon," both in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives*, 1035–36, 1098–100. The population transition of the Virginia colony is estimated in J. Frederick Fausz, "An "Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides": England's First Indian War, 1609–1614," *VMHB* 98, no. 1 (January 1990): 55–56.

to a feast. The colonists obeyed her request to bring no weapons so as to not threaten the Native women. Colonial leader George Percy later criticized the party for being “greedy fooles [...] esteameinge of a Little foode th[a]n their owne lyves and safety” and recorded that the Native people attacked and wounded all of them and killed “dyvers.” A furious exchange of words occurred between De La Warre and Wahunsonacock. De La Warre referred to the coronation ceremony as a reminder that “Powhatan himself had formerly vowed, not only friendship but homage [...] upon his knees,” and Wahunsonacock expressed his displeasure at the colonists’ disobedience to him, saying “either we [the English] shuld depart his Country, or confine our selves to James Towne only, without searching further up into his Land, or Rivers.”²⁶

After May 1611, when Thomas Dale arrived at Jamestown with many other settlers and arms, the war became a deadlock. At a battle with the Nansemonds in June 1611, the Powhatans were “not acquainted nor acustomed to encownter with men in armour mutche wondered thereatt especyally thatt they did nott see any of our men fall as they had donne in other Conflictts.” The English, however, did not necessarily gain ascendancy over the Native people, either. In August 1611, Dale demanded that 2,000 more settlers should be sent to the colony by the following April to attain “the full possession of Powhatans Countrie,” but the Virginia Company did not comply.²⁷ In 1613, during this stalemate, Samuel Argall visited the Patowomecks to trade and kidnapped Pocahontas, who was present there at the time. Argall asked Iapazaws, one chief of the Patowomecks, for cooperation in return for “a Copper Kettle,” and the latter accepted.²⁸ The Patowomecks were a member of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom but only loosely because of their remoteness. They had observed the progress of the Anglo-Powhatan war and preferred a relationship with the English.

In the early stage of negotiations to free Pocahontas, Wahunsonacock had shown a reluctance to meet English requests, especially to surrender his arms. In March 1614, Pocahontas criticized Wahunsonacock for valuing “her lesse th[a]n olde swords, peeces, or axes.” By that time, however, Wahunsonacock’s policy had changed to one of accommodation. According to a Native envoy, his message was that his “peeces, swords, and tools within fifteen daies, should be sent to James towne, with some corne, and that his daughter [Pocahontas] should be my [Dale’s] childe, and ever dwell with mee, desiring to be ever friends.” This indicates that Wahunsonacock no longer demanded that Pocahontas be freed. Opechancanough also extended an offer of friendship to Dale, sending friendly messages and presents “every eight or ten daies.” Further, during or just after these parleys, Dale learned of John Rolfe’s love for Pocahontas and agreed to their intermarriage. Wahunsonacock consented and sent relatives to the wedding in April 1614. With this marriage, the War finally ended, and an amicable atmosphere prevailed among the English people.²⁹ Wahunsonacock relinquished Native ground and accepted a transformation to the middle ground. Thereafter, Opechancanough made efforts to keep peaceful relations with the English.

²⁶ Percy, “Trewe Relacyon,” 1098–109; Strachey, “True Reportory,” 1029–36; idem, *Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia*, ed. R. H. Major (London, 1849), 56.

²⁷ Percy, “Trewe Relacyon,” 1109–10; Thomas Dale, letter to Robert Cecil, August 17, 1611, in *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606–1700*, ed. Warren M. Billings (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 41–44.

²⁸ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 243–44.

²⁹ Dale and minister Alexander Whitaker, in their letters to their friends in England, noted the intermarriage as a symbolic event of the peaceful relations between the two peoples. Smith, *Generall Historie*, 245–46; Hamor, *True Discourse*, 1126, 1158–59, 1162.

Middle Ground, from 1614 to 1646

Historical sources for Opechancanough are fewer than those on Wahunsonacock and Pocahontas. According to Smith's book, Wahunsonacock was "near sixtie" in 1607. This would mean that Wahunsonacock was born around 1550, around the same year as Opechancanough. A contemporary English source recorded that Opechancanough was nearly 100 years old in 1646. Studies on life expectancy clarified that nearly all Native men died by age fifty.³⁰ Therefore, when Wahunsonacock died and Opechancanough replaced him in the 1610s, both were older than that age. The image of a young Opechancanough in John Gadsby Chapman's paintings for the U.S. Capitol rotunda in 1840 is a fiction invented by later generations.³¹

How political power transferred from Wahunsonacock to Opechancanough remains unclear. At the negotiations in March 1614, the English intended to negotiate with Wahunsonacock, but he was "three daies journey off." Instead, the colonists spoke with Opechancanough. Wahunsonacock's messenger said that "what he [Opechancanough] agreed upon and did, the great King [Wahunsonacock] would confirme." Hamor observed, "[Opechancanough] has already the commaund of all the people."³² The formal succession from Wahunsonacock to Opitchapam, the second eldest brother, and Opechancanough finally occurred in or around 1618, when Wahunsonacock died.³³ A widely accepted view is that Opechancanough acted practically or unofficially as the paramount chief because Opitchapam was already "decrepit and lame."³⁴ However, Frederic W. Gleach insisted that the Powhatan paramount chiefdom adopted a dual leadership system of internal and external chiefs and that Opechancanough was merely in charge of diplomacy; the contemporary colonists simply did not understand this arrangement.³⁵ If so, the beginnings of Opechancanough's diplomatic tenure indicates that the paramount chiefdom abandoned the incorporation of the colony. Regardless, it is certain that the transition of power was not caused by or coincident with a change of policy from appeasement to hostility. In 1617, Purchas mentioned that Wahunsonacock feared "Opechancanough his yonger brother, a man very gracious, both with the people and the English, jealous lest He [Opechancanough] and the English should conspire against him [Wahunsonacock]," which indicates that Opechancanough was more favorably inclined to the Virginia colonists than was Wahunsonacock.³⁶

From the mid-1610s to 1621, Opechancanough attempted to exercise greater authority over the Chickahominies, who were independent, and the Patowomecks and the Accomacs, who enjoyed relative freedom on the periphery of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom.

³⁰ John Smith, *A Map of Virginia* (1612), in *Complete Works*, 1: 173; idem, *Generall Historie*, 126; Anonymous, *Perfect Description*, 7; Helen C. Rountree and E. Randolph Turner III, *Before and After Jamestown: Virginia's Powhatans and Their Predecessors* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 30.

³¹ John Gadsby Chapman, "Baptism of Pocahontas," Architect of the Capitol, accessed at March 5, 2020, <https://www.aoc.gov/art/historic-rotunda-paintings/baptism-pocahontas>; idem, *The Picture of the Baptism of Pocahontas: Painted by Order of Congress, for the Rotunda of the Capitol* (Washington, 1840), 6.

³² Hamor, *True Discourse*, 1126, 1158.

³³ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 265; *RVCL*, 3: 73–74.

³⁴ Purchas, *Pvrcas His Pilgrimage*, 2: 956–57; Horn, *Land as God Made It*, 249–50; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, 191.

³⁵ Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 34–35, 142–43.

³⁶ Purchas, *Pvrcas His Pilgrimage*, 2: 956.

Rountree persuasively explained Opechancanough's tactics toward them. The Chickahominies felt isolated after the reconciliation of the Powhatans and the English and immediately sought an agreement with the English in which they vowed homage to King James. However, in 1616, Opechancanough spread a rumor that Chickahominy Natives had killed colonists' livestock. When George Yeardley took revenge on the Chickahominies, Opechancanough intervened in order to sever the agreement between the English and Chickahominies and ensure that the Chickahominies would enter into his paramount chiefdom. As for the Accomacs, Opechancanough intended to kill Thomas Savage, an Englishman who served as a middleman, but Opechancanough's failure strengthened the relationship between the Accomacs and the English.³⁷ The paramount chiefdom and the colony certainly competed for influence over or intimacy with some Native groups, but Opechancanough demonstrated an appeasing attitude toward colonists and a desire to maintain a middle ground of peaceful coexistence.

The two main issues at this time were Opechancanough's handling of English pressures regarding land and religion. Following the establishment of Jamestown in 1607, the English had been establishing additional settlements since 1609. This was further spurred on by the beginning of tobacco cultivation in the mid-1610s and the establishment of the headright system in 1618, through which the English received property rights when they purchased transportation across the Atlantic. Some colonists established large plantations, and the colony expanded along the James River. The conversion of Native Americans to Christianity was one of the major concerns of English colonization from the beginning. After Pocahontas's conversion and her voyage to England, King James asked Bishops for donations for missions. Thereafter, under Edwin Sandys, the plan to create a college for Native education progressed. George Thorpe actively worked on the project. Thorpe gave Opechancanough "a faire house after the English fashion" and Opechancanough was especially pleased with the lock on the door: he enjoyed "locking and unlocking his doore a hundred times a day, he thought no device in the world comparable to it."³⁸

In circumstances during which English territorial expansion worried the Native people, Opechancanough told Argall that he would give his "country to [Mr.] Rolfe Child and that they [would] reserue it from all others till he comes of years." As Camilla Townsend insisted, Opechancanough sought a means to reach an agreement with the colonists. Similarly, Yeardley allocated land to colonists "with a Proviso to compound with Opachankano." The Virginia Company were angered by this conciliation: "a Soneraignty [sovereignty] in that heathen Infidell was acknowledged, and the Companies Title thereby much infringed."³⁹ Colonists, who were confronted by Native people realistically had to compromise in contravention of the Company's policy. Moreover, at a meeting in 1619, Yeardley demanded that some Native children be left in English care for conversion to Christianity, but Opechancanough requested a modification to include entire families because Native parents might be concerned about harsh treatment by the English. Yeardley considered this alteration the best result possible at that time.⁴⁰ Thus, in this instance, Opechancanough and Yeardley

³⁷ Hamor, *True Discourse*, 1127–30, 1160; Smith, *Generall Historie*, 246–47, 256–57, 289–91; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, 194–97, 204–5.

³⁸ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 295; Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1964), 54–63. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 295–99.

³⁹ *RVCL*, 2: 52–53, 95; Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and Powhatan Dilemma* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 161.

⁴⁰ *RVCL*, 1: 319, 588, 3: 128–29.

reached a compromise. Furthermore, in November 1619, Opechancanough proposed a joint military expedition against his enemies outside the chiefdom. His intention was to share the captured children and conquered land, which would divert English pressure for land and missions to other Native nations.⁴¹

After the First Anglo-Powhatan War, Opechancanough's diplomatic efforts focused on actively seeking amicable relations and a middle ground of peaceful coexistence. This period was not necessarily peaceful from the Native perspective because the territorial and religious pressures of the English increased. In fact, from summer to autumn 1619, the colonists became "doubtfull" about their relationship with the Natives because Opechancanough "stood aloof upon terms of dou[b]t and Jealousy [fury] and would not be drawne to any treaty at all."⁴² Nonetheless, there is no clear evidence of Opechancanough's planning for an assault upon the English in this period. Rather, English primary sources indicate that a major change in Opechancanough's diplomacy occurred in 1621.

Powhatan ambassadors, who went to England with Pocahontas in 1616, came back in 1617 and provided Opechancanough insights into the character of England as a nation. The ambassadors were surprised by the size of England's population and its agriculture. At first, their religious leader, Uttamatomakkin, tried to count the people by notching a stick but soon gave up. Before this trip, the Native people had believed that the English lacked food in England as well and had come to Virginia to acquire it. They believed this because Namontack, a Native boy who was exchanged for Thomas Savage in 1608 and spent time with the English, had only visited urban areas of England and reported the lack of agriculture to Wahunsonacock.⁴³ Because of these reports and the rapid increase in the number of colonists after 1619, Opechancanough realized that power balance would shift decisively and so began to plan a massive attack in 1621.

At a conference around November 1621, Thorpe noticed that Opechancanough had changed his name to Mangopeesomon and Opitchapam to Sasawpen. Current scholars have unanimously interpreted this renaming as a change of status or a manifestation of a special intention, that is, a resolution to carry out a large-scale attack against the English people.⁴⁴ At the conference, Opechancanough spoke about religion, stating oddly that "theirs [the Native's religion] was nott the right waye, desiringe to bee instructed in ours [Christianity] and confessed that god loved us [the English] better than them." Moreover, according to Purchas, "[Opechancanough] gave the English leave to seate themselves any where on his Rivers where the Natives are not actually seated."⁴⁵ Opechancanough had seemingly changed his attitude regarding religious and territorial matters, an indication that his policy had become hostile and a pretense of friendship for the first time.

The Powhatan peripheral nations such as the Accomacs and Patawomecks declined to participate in Opechancanough's hostile policy, valuing their relationships with the English. In the summer of 1621, Opechancanough plotted to poison colonists at a ceremony where the Native people paid their respect to the late Wahunsonacock. Many colonists were also invited to the ceremony. Opechancanough asked the Accomacs to supply the poison, giving them a "great store of Beades, and other presents," but the Accomacs refused and revealed the plot to

⁴¹ *RVCL*, 3: 228.

⁴² *RVCL*, 3: 161, 228.

⁴³ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 261; Purchas, *Pvrchas His Pilgrimage*, 2: 954; idem, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), reprint, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1906), 19: 119.

⁴⁴ Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia*, 146; Kupperman, *Jamestown Project*, 304–5; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, 211.

⁴⁵ *RVCL*, 3: 584; Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 19: 153.

the colonists.⁴⁶ At the assault in March 1622, Opechancanough sent his message to Patowomecks that “before the end of two moones there should not be an Englishman in all their [Natives’] countries” and asked the Patowomecks to kill Raleigh Crawshawe, an English man who was with them at the time. The Patowomecks refused and returned a gift.⁴⁷ Further, immediately before the assault, one Native person, a servant of the English colonist Richard Pace, revealed the plan and saved his master from the attack. Powhatan Natives and colonists had lived together as “one people” for eight years, and some Natives had become sympathetic to the English.⁴⁸

The Second Anglo-Powhatan War (1622–1632) seriously harmed the Natives. According to English calculation and Native confession in January 1623, “we [English] have slayne more of them [Natives] this yeere, th[a]n hath been slayne before since th[e] begininge of [the] Colonie.” Moreover, colonists gravely injured Opechancanough with poison at a conference in May 1623, and during a battle in 1624, the colonists cut down corn that could have sustained 4,000 people for a year. Furthermore, according to Joseph Mead’s letter of January 1630, thanks to a Native man who “offered himself, his wife and four children, wholly to become English both in affection and religion” and who revealed the location of secret Native dwellings as a token of fidelity, colonists “wrought more spoil and revenge than they had done since the great massacre.”⁴⁹ Yet, the colonists were sometimes confronted with a limited supply of weapons. In 1625, they worried about “a most dangerous want of Powder, so great” that, if known by the Natives, it could lead them to “easily in one day destroy all our people.” They failed to completely conquer the Powhatans and peace came true in 1632.⁵⁰

In the 1630s, after the war, the power balance between the Powhatans and colonists increasingly favored the latter. The population of the colony outstripped that of the paramount chiefdom in Virginia and increased to more than 8,000 by 1640. The population of Powhatan Natives living in the Chesapeake area declined to below 5,000 and migration and integration of Native tribes increased.⁵¹ In response, Opechancanough led another assault in 1644 and began the Third Anglo-Powhatan War.

Settler Ground, since 1646

Many historians have concluded that Opechancanough’s 1644 assault was “a desperate, almost hopeless, course of action.”⁵² Lars C. Adams recently revised this interpretation by focusing on three points: Opechancanough’s enhanced authority over the Carolina area, the opportune timing of the attack during the tumult within the English camp, and the colonists’

⁴⁶ *RVCL*, 3: 556, 4: 10.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 308.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Generall Historie*, 246, 257, 297–98.

⁴⁹ *RVCL*, 4: 10, 221–22, 507–8; Joseph Mead, letter to Martin Stuteville, January 23, 1630, in *The Court and Times of Charles the First*, 2 vols., ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1848), 2: 53–54.

⁵⁰ *RVCL*, 4: 528; H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1622–1632, 1670–1676, with Notes and Excerpts from Original Council and General Court Records, into 1683, Now Lost* (Richmond, 1924), 480; William S. Powell, “Aftermath of the Massacre: The First Indian War, 1622–1632,” *VMHB* 66, no. 1 (January 1958): 44–75.

⁵¹ Rountree, *Pocahontas’s People*, 78–79, 82.

⁵² Cave, *Lethal Encounters*, 134; Frances Mossiker, *Pocahontas: The Life and the Legend* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 311; William L. Shea, *The Virginia Militia in the Seventeenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 59.

serious deficiency of food and ammunition during the third war.⁵³ According to a Native captive who was taken during the war, Opechancanough observed that English parliamentarians and royalists were skirmishing with one another on the James River, and he took advantage of the English civil war originating across the Atlantic. Opechancanough's assault in April 1644 killed approximately 400 colonists. English reprisal soon began, targeting the Powhatan people, including the Carolina indigenes. During the war, Deputy Governor Richard Kemp reported that Natives attacked colonists (Virginian royalists) who lacked supplies, and parliamentarian merchants rescued in spite of the conflict between them. Although the war may not have been necessarily "hopeless" for the Native people, it cannot be denied that the war proceeded in favor of the English in general. The result of the war is clearer: in 1646, Opechancanough was killed and a peace treaty was concluded, with which the Chesapeake area finally became settler ground.

The first article of the treaty stipulated that Necotowance, the successor of Opechancanough, "acknowledge to hold his kingdom from the king's Majesty of England," and that "his successors be appointed or confirmed by the king's governors from time to time." It continued that Virginia colonists would "undertake to protect him or them against any rebels or other enemies whatsoever," and that Necotowance should pay tribute in return for the protection. Further, an exclusive area for the English was drawn up, and Necotowance would have to surrender any Native who entered there.⁵⁴ Thus, Necotowance would maintain his authority over the Powhatan paramount chiefdom. However, his "kingdom" disintegrated shortly thereafter. Martha W. McCartney and Gleach have explained the disintegration by noting that only five chiefs accompanied Necotowance when they visited the governor to pay tribute in 1649 and that, in the early 1650s, land was allocated to each Native chief by the English authority without the mediation of Necotowance.⁵⁵ The reason for the disintegration seems to be in the system of reciprocity in the paramount chiefdom, which consisted of each chiefdom providing tribute to and being protected by the paramount chief. The defeat in the Third Anglo-Powhatan War proved that the paramount chiefdom lacked the power to protect its members, and so, the Natives ceased paying tribute.⁵⁶

Thereafter, the English and Powhatan Natives established some cooperative relationships in exploration and war. The English relied on the geographical and linguistic knowledge of the indigenous people. When Necotowance visited the Virginia governor to pay tribute in 1649, he explained the geography of west of the region known to the colonists.

⁵³ Anonymous, *Perfect Description*, 11; James Kendall Hosmer, ed., *Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England," 1630–1649*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 2: 167–68; "Acts, Orders and Resolutions of the General Assembly of Virginia," *VMHB* 23, no. 3 (July 1915): 230; Richard Kemp, letter to William Berkeley, February 27, 1645, in *The Papers of Sir William Berkeley, 1605–1677*, ed. Warren Billings (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2007), 62–66; Lars C. Adams, *Breaking the House of Pamunkey: The Final Powhatan War and the Fall of an American Indian Empire* (Crofton: Backintyme Publishing, 2017).

⁵⁴ William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619*, 13 vols. (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants, 1809–1823), 1: 323–26.

⁵⁵ Gleach *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia*, 184–85; Martha W. McCartney, "Cockacoeske, Queen of Pamunkey: Diplomat and Suzeraine," in *Powhatan's Mantle*, 244–45.

⁵⁶ This explanation is supported by the fact that Powhatan Natives spoke critically of the tribute in later years. Philip Ludwell, letter to Sir Joseph Williamson, June 28, 1678, in *Lee Family Papers, 1638–1867*, Section 8 (Mss1 L51 f8, Virginia Historical Society).

Abraham Wood and Edward Brand (1650) and Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam (1671) employed Native guides for hinterland explorations.⁵⁷ Further, Powhatan Natives and Virginians participated in joint military actions. In 1656, 100 Natives under Pamunkey Chief Totopotomoy fought with colonists against the Richahechians, who had moved into the vicinity of the colony. In the battle of Bloody Run, however, most of the Natives, including Totopotomoy, were killed as the result of an ill-conceived order of Colonel Edward Hill's. Approximately twenty years after the battle, succeeding Chief Cockacoeske, a descendant of Opechancanough, complained of a lack of recompense for the support given and damage sustained in the previous battle and expressed reluctance to cooperate with colonists again in Bacon's rebellion. She expressed that she would contribute to the colonial army only "'Twelve," tho' she then had a hundred and fifty Indian men in her Town."⁵⁸

Cockacoeske, however, made efforts to maintain good relations with the English people during Bacon's rebellion. In 1675, a dispute over trade occurred between Doeg Natives, who lived north of the Potomac River, and Thomas Matthew, a Virginian who lived south of the river. The Native people stole his livestock in compensation for a lack of return on a trade, and Virginians avenged the theft militarily. The attacks were partly mistakenly carried out against the Susquehannocks, which resulted in retaliation. In this tense climate, Governor William Berkeley believed that military cooperation with Powhatan Natives was indispensable, but Nathaniel Bacon and other hardliners viewed all Natives as enemies, claiming that those Natives had been "for these Many years enemies to the King and Country, Robbers and Theeves and Invaders of his Ma[jesties] Right and [our] Interest and Estates, but yet have by persons in authority [i.e. Berkeley's circle] bin defended and protected even against His Ma[jesties] loyall Subjects [i.e. Virginia colonists]." Certainly, in the third quarter of the century, Virginians and Powhatan Natives had encountered troubles, including intrusions on their land, and in September 1675, Bacon arrested an Appamattuck person who allegedly stole some corn. In the attacks against the Pamunkeys in 1676, the rebels killed several Natives (including an elderly woman who had led the rebels in the wrong direction), took forty-five Natives captive, and stolen precious belongings from Cockacoeske. Cockacoeske, however, instructed her Natives not to counterattack and barely escaped.⁵⁹

After suppressing Bacon's rebellion, the English authorities repaired their relationships with the Natives by concluding the treaty of Middle Plantation in 1677. The first article confirmed that indigenous kings and queens "acknowledge to have their immediate Dependency on, and owne all subjection to, the great King of England" and "pay their tribute to the Right honorable His Majesties Governour." Article 12 is quite notable: "each Indian King & Queene [shall] have equal power to Governe their owne people & none to have greater power than other, Except the Queenne of Pamunkey [i.e. Cockacoeske], to whom several scattered Nations doe now againe owne their ancient Subjection, and are agreed to come in, & plant themselves under her Power & Government." In other words, Powhatan Natives would be reunited under the authorities of Cockacoeske and the King of England.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Perfect Description*, 13; Alan Vance Briceland, *Westward from Virginia: The Exploration of the Virginia-Carolina Frontier 1650–1710* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987).

⁵⁸ Hening, *Statutes at Large*, 1: 402–3, 422–23; T[homas] M[atthew], *The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, in the Years 1675 and 1676* (1705), in *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690*, ed. Charles Andrews (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 25–27.

⁵⁹ "Nathaniel Bacon Esq'r His Manifesto Concerning the Present Troubles in Virginia," *VMHB* 1, no. 1 (July 1893), 57; "A True Narrative of the Late Rebellion in Virginia" (1677), in *Narratives of the Insurrections*, 125, 127; Rountree, *Pocahontas's People*, chap. 5.

McCartney and Ethan A. Schmidt ascribed this distinct status of Cockacoeske to her intimacy with the English. Around 1655, she had a sexual relationship with English leader John West and gave birth to a son. At that time, Cockacoeske's husband, Totopotomoy, was still alive, and West had an English wife. However, this intercourse was not sexual violence and did not indicate sexual depravity, but rather was a political strategy to strengthen her relationship with the English. The son, who was then over 20 years old, endorsed the treaty along with other Native leaders.⁶⁰ Some Natives, however, strongly opposed to the 12th article, articulating especially their reluctance regarding the "great tax" that had never been paid "since the death of Appechankino."⁶¹

There was one record that Powhatan people viewed their former leader in a negative light. In his 1705 book, Robert Beverley reported that some Powhatan Natives called Opechancanough the "Prince of a Foreign Nation." This statement indicates that the Natives distanced themselves from Opechancanough. As Rountree claimed, Opechancanough, who fought against the English to preserve his paramount chiefdom, was no longer esteemed highly by Powhatan Natives in later years who lived peacefully on settler ground.⁶²

Conclusion

Opechancanough was a peaceful leader from 1614 to 1621. He directed diplomatic negotiations with colonists in the middle ground after Wahunsonacock failed to incorporate them into his paramount chiefdom on Native ground. Opechancanough's diplomacy was initially actively amicable and seeking appeasement for the sake of peaceful coexistence with the colonists. When he recognized that his efforts to minimize English territorial and religious pressures did not work and anticipated the disappearance of this middle ground with the significant influx of English settlers, clear hostile intentions toward the English people arose in him in 1621, which resulted in an assault in 1622. On settler ground, Cockacoeske focused on preventing conflicts with the colonists. The difference in these policies was not due to a difference in styles of leadership, but to a difference in power relationships: both Wahunsonacock and Opechancanough were belligerent in 1608 on Native ground but conciliatory during the period of transformation from Native ground to the middle ground.

After the 1622 assault, the English began to consider Opechancanough a traitor. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians established the interpretation that Opechancanough had been waiting for several years for an opportunity to attack the colonists.

⁶⁰ Samuel Leroy Oberg, ed., *Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion, 1676–1677* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 134–41; M[athew], *Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion*, 25; McCartney, "Cockacoeske, Queen of Pamunkey," 243–66; Ethan A. Schmidt, "Cockacoeske, Weroansqua of the Pamunkeys, and Indian Resistance in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 288–317; Kristalyn Marie Shefveland, *Anglo-Native Virginia: Trade, Conversion, and Indian Slavery in the Old Dominion, 1646–1722* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016), chap. 3; idem, "Cockacoeske and Sarah Harris Stegge Grendon: Bacon's Rebellion and the Roles of Women," in *Virginia Women: Their Lives and Times*, 2 vols., eds. Cynthia A. Kierner and Sandra Gioia Treadway, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 1: 33–54.

⁶¹ According to Strachey, Wahunsonacock collected from the natives under his authority "eight parts of ten tribute of all the commodities which their country yeldeth." Strachey, *Historie of Travaile*, 81; Ludwell, letter to Williamson, June 28, 1678.

⁶² Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia* (1705), ed. Susan Scott Parrish (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 47; Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough*, 237.

The Mattaponi oral history also agreed with the warlike character of Opechancanough. Since Powhatan Natives who lived a politically pro-English life on settler ground held negative views of the former Powhatan authority, Mattaponi's hostile interpretation of Opechancanough may be the result of a transformation of the contents of its oral history.