



America's Children



Richard of Jamestown

by James Otis

This edition published 2023
by Living Book Press
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ISBN: 978-1-76153-038-8 (hardcover)
978-1-76153-039-5 (softcover)

First published in 1910.

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A NOTE TO THE READER

This book was written in the early 20th century, a time when societal attitudes and language were significantly from what we recognize today. As you delve into its pages, you might come across terms and descriptions that our modern sensibilities find offensive or inappropriate. These echo the beliefs and biases of that era, some of which were fueled by ignorance, fear, and misunderstanding.

We've chosen to preserve the original text, providing an unvarnished window into the past. It's essential to approach this reading with an open heart and mind, recognizing the historical context that shaped these terms and views. While we've made progress as a society, the shadows of these old attitudes sometimes persist.

By recognizing and reflecting on the profound impact such perspectives have left on our culture, we can deepen our understanding of history and chart a course towards a more inclusive and compassionate future.

WHO I AM



ES, my name is Richard Mutton. Sounds rather queer, doesn't it? The lads in London town used to vex me sorely by calling, "Baa, baa, black sheep," whenever I passed them, and yet he who will may find the name Richard Mutton written in the list of those who were sent to Virginia, in the new world, by the London Company, on the nineteenth day of December, in the year of Our Lord, 1606.

Whosoever may chance to read what I am here setting down, will, perhaps, ask how it happened that a lad only ten years of age was allowed to sail for that new world in company with such a band of adventurous men as headed the enterprise.

Therefore it is that I must tell a certain portion of the story of my life, for the better understanding of how I came to be in this fair, wild, savage beset land of Virginia.

Yet I was not the only boy who sailed in the *Susan Constant*, as you may see by turning to the list of names, which is under the care, even to this day, of the London Company, for there you will find written in clerkly hand the names Samuel Collier, Nathaniel Peacock, James Brumfield, and Richard Mutton.

Nathaniel Peacock has declared more than once that my name comes last in the company at the very end of all, because I was not a full grown mutton; but only large enough to be called a sheep's tail, and therefore should be hung on behind, as is shown by the list.

LEFT ALONE IN THE WORLD

THE reason of my being in this country of Virginia at so young an age, is directly concerned with that brave soldier and wondrous adventurer, Captain John Smith, of whom I make no doubt the people in this new world, when the land has been covered with towns and villages, will come to know right well, for of a truth he is a wonderful man.

In the sixth month of Grace, 1606, I Was living as best I might in that great city of London, which is as much a wilderness of houses, as this country is a wilderness of trees.

My father was a soldier of fortune, which means that he stood ready to do battle in behalf of whatsoever nation he believed was in the right, or, perhaps, on the side of those people who would pay him the most money for risking his life.

He had fought with the Dutch soldiers under command of one Captain Miles Standish, an Englishman of renown among men of arms, and had been killed.

My mother died less than a week before the news was brought that my father had been shot to death. Not then fully understanding how great a disaster it is to a young lad when he loses father or mother, and how yet more sad is his lot when he has lost both parents, I made shift to live as best I might with a sore heart; but yet not so sore as if I had known the full extent of the misfortune which had overtaken me.

AN IDLE BOY



AT first it was an easy matter for me to get food at the home of this lad, or of that, among my acquaintances, sleeping wherever night overtook me; but, finally, when mayhap three months had gone by, my welcome was worn threadbare, and I was told by more than one, that a hulking lad of ten years should have more pride than to beg his way from door to door.

It is with shame I here set down the fact, that many weeks passed before I came to understand, in ever so slight a degree, what a milksop I must be, thus eating the bread of idleness when I should have won the right, by labor, to a livelihood in this world.

This last thought had just begun to take root in my heart when Nathaniel Peacock, whose mother had been a good friend of mine during a certain time after I was made an orphan, and I, heard that a remarkably brave soldier was in the city of London, making ready to go into the new world, with the intent to build there a town for the king.

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH COMES TO LONDON

THIS man was no other than Captain John Smith, who, although at this time not above six and twenty years of age, had already served in the French, in the Dutch, and in the Transylvanian armies, where he had met and overcome many dangers.

He had been robbed and beaten and thrown into the sea because of not believing in the religion of the men who attacked him; he had been a slave among the Turks; he had fought, one after another, three of the bravest in the Turkish army, and had cut off the head of each in turn.

Can it be wondered at that Nathaniel Peacock and I were filled to overflowing with admiration for this wonderful soldier, or that we desired above all things to see him?

We loitered about the streets of London town from daylight until night had come again, hoping to feast our eyes upon this same John Smith, who was to us one of the wonders of the world, because in so short a time he had made his name as a soldier famous in all countries, and yet we saw him not.

WE had searched London town over and over for mayhap a full month, doing nothing else save hunt for the man whose life had been so filled with adventure, and each time we returned home, Mistress Peacock reproached me with being an idle good for nothing, and Nathaniel but little better.

I believe it was her harsh words which caused to spring up in my heart a desire to venture into the new

world, where it was said gold could be found in abundance, and even the smallest lad might pick up whatsoever of wealth he desired, if so be his heart was strong enough to brave the journey across the great ocean.



The more I thought of what could be found in that land, which

was called Virginia, the stronger grew my desire, until the time came when it was a fixed purpose in my mind, and not until then did I breathe to Nathaniel a word of that which had been growing within me.

He took fire straightway I spoke of what it might be possible for us lads to do, and declared that whether his mother were willing or no, he would brave all the dangers of that terrible journey overseas, if so be we found an opportunity.

To him it seemed a simple matter that, having once found a ship which was to sail for the far off land, we might hide ourselves within her, having gathered sufficient of food to keep us alive during the journey. But how this last might be done, his plans had not been made.