

A History Mystery



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Matoaks als Rebecca daughter to the mighty Prince Powhatan Emperour of Aitanoughkomouck als Virginia converted and baptized in the Christian faith, and Wife to the wor.th M^r Tho: Rolff.

Work with a partner to answer the questions about this image:

1. What do you think is happening in this scene?
1. What evidence from the drawing supports your conclusion?



An excerpt from the movie *Pocahontas*

How does this scene from the movie provide clues to what the drawing is supposed to illustrate?



Historians' Disagreement

Historian A

The evidence clearly shows that Pocahontas did save John Smith's life. John Smith wrote about it in his book called *A General History of Virginia*.

Historian B

The story that Pocahontas saved John Smith's life is simply not true. All you have to do is read John Smith's 1608 book entitled *A True Description of Things That Happened in Virginia Since the First Planting of That Colony*.

John Smith's Accounts of His Experiences in Jamestown

Source 1

When I arrived, the Native American leader named Powhatan welcomed me with kind words and a large plate of food. He promised me his friendship and my freedom in four days. He asked me why we came. He also promised to give me what I wanted, and to feed us if we made him axes. I promised to do this. And so, with all this kindness, he sent me home.

A True Description of Things That Happened in Virginia...
By John Smith (1608)

John Smith's Accounts of His Experiences in Jamestown

Source 2

The Native Americans brought me [John Smith] to their leader whose name was Powhatan. Two large rocks were brought to Powhatan. They dragged me by their hands and laid my head on the rocks where they were going to smash my head in. Powhatan's dearest daughter Pocahontas took my head in her arms and laid her own head down on the rock to save me from death. Then, Powhatan said that I would live.

Two days later, Powhatan met me and said we were friends. He told me to bring him two guns and a grindstone that his people could use to sharpen weapons. Then he would consider me his son.

A General History of Virginia...
By John Smith (1624)

Check for Understanding

Check the source that answers each of the questions in Column 1.

| | Source 1 | Source 2 | Both Sources |
|--|----------|----------|--------------|
| 1- Which source was written by John Smith? | | | |
| 2- Which source says that Pocahontas saved John Smith? | | | |
| 3- Which source was most likely used by the creators of the Pocahontas movie? | | | |
| 4- Which source is a primary source? | | | |

Based on the information that
you have read and seen so far...

**Do you think Pocahontas
actually did save John Smith
way back when Jamestown was
started?**



| Year | Event |
|------|--|
| 1595 | Pocahontas was born |
| 1607 | English colonists arrived at Jamestown. Powhatan's people capture John Smith |
| 1608 | Chief Powhatan set John Smith free |
| 1608 | John Smith wrote a book called <i>A True Description of Things that Happened in Virginia</i> |
| 1609 | John Smith was seriously injured and returned to England. |
| 1614 | Pocahontas married an Englishman named John Rolfe |
| 1616 | Pocahontas went to England where she became very popular |
| 1617 | Pocahontas died |
| 1622 | Native Americans attack and kill 347 English colonists at Jamestown |
| 1624 | John Smith wrote a book called <i>A General History of Virginia</i> |