



AMERICA

The Story of Us

TERMS TO KNOW:

Before or after watching this episode, encourage students to define and review the terms below. Students may also want to make their own lists of new vocabulary words and identification terms as they watch.

- Alluvial
- Aristocratic
- Coercion
- Contraband
- Fledgling
- Infringements
- Labyrinth
- Pre-emptive
- The Proclamation Line
- Wampanoag



America The Story of Us is useful for American History, Social Studies, and Media courses. It is appropriate for 7th grade students and above, and is an excellent resource for professional development.

EPISODE 1: REBELS

INTRODUCTION

In 1607 a small group of English travelers lands in Jamestown. Thirteen years later, religious Puritans settle in New England. These men and women are all driven by the promise of a new life; they face the perils of disease, starvation and war with native groups.

They are very different, yet in time both grow. One man's entrepreneurial dream, tobacco, and the backbreaking work of the first African slaves, turn the disease-ridden swamps of the South into a land of opportunity. The hardworking and resourceful Puritans forge the North into a trading powerhouse with shipbuilding at its core. Yet success and wealth prompt British jealousy, taxation, resistance and then war.



This is the story of how, over 20 generations, a group of English subjects survive against all odds, and then ignite a revolution against the colonial power of Great Britain. A diverse group of men, women and children are on the path to becoming Americans.






DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was the Powhatan Confederacy and how did this group interact with the British settlers?
2. What were the most difficult challenges faced by the Plymouth and Jamestown settlers? Do you think they could have done anything to prepare more adequately for life in the Americas?
3. What role did disease play in encounters between native groups and the first British settlers?



4. Who was Prince Estabrook and what was his contribution to American history?
5. In this episode, America is referred to as a “social experiment.” What do you think this phrase means? Do you think the “experiment” is still ongoing?



Primary Source:

POWHATAN ADDRESS TO CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, 1609

"I am now grown old and must soon die, and the succession must descend in order, to my brothers, Opitchapam, Opechancanough, and Kekataugh, and then to my two sisters, and their two daughters.

I wish their experience was equal to mine, and that your love to us might not be less than ours to you. Why should you take by force that from us which you can have by love? Why should you destroy us who have provided you with food? What can you get by war? We can hide our provisions and fly into the woods. And then you must consequently famish by wrongdoing your friends.

What is the cause of your jealousy? You see us unarmed and willing to supply your wants if you come in a friendly manner; not with swords and guns as to invade an enemy. I am not so simple as not to know that it is better to eat good meat, lie well, and sleep quietly with my women and children; to laugh and be merry with the English...

I, therefore, exhort you to peaceable councils, and above all I insist that the guns and swords, the cause of all our jealousy and uneasiness, be removed and sent away."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think was Powhatan's overall message to John Smith?
2. What do you think Powhatan meant by "you must consequently famish by wrongdoing your friends"?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

What else was going on during this time period? Educators and students can explore the sites below to learn more about the era of U.S. history covered in this episode.

History of Santa Fe
www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/santa-fe

Early California History
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbintro.html>

PLACES TO VISIT:

Interested in what you saw in this episode? Visiting historic sites is a great way for teachers, students, and families to learn more about the past. Explore these historic sites, or look for local historic sites in your town or city to visit.

Plimoth Plantation
www.plimoth.org

Historic Jamestown
www.preservationvirginia.org/rediscovery/page.php?page_id=1

Historic Santa Fe
www.santafe.org