

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## Virginia Before Pocahontas

An April 3 Close to Home piece, "Bring Home Our Native Daughter," suggested that the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown should include DNA analysis to identify the mortal remains of Pocahontas and return her to Virginia. She presently lies in an unmarked grave in England.

That may or may not be a part of the anniversary party, but the relationship between Native Americans and Europeans in Virginia started long before Pocahontas and Jamestown.

For example, in the 16th century, the Native American Paquiquineo — aka Don Luis de Velasco — was taken from his home somewhere near Hampton Roads and spent a decade in Spain and Mexico. He returned to the Virginia area, ostensibly as a guide and translator for a party of Jesuit missionaries, but in 1571 he helped engineer their slaughter somewhere along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

Richmond writer James Branch Cabell dubbed Paquiquineo the "first Virginian." He felt that Paquiquineo's treachery preempted Spanish settlement on the Chesapeake and preserved Virginia and the South Atlantic states for later English occupation.

Spanish-Virginian history actually began 40 years before the massacre of the Jesuits. The first known contact between Virginia Indians and Europeans came in May of 1541, when Hernando de Soto marched up from Florida seeking gold. His marauders reached modern-day Lee County.

The first battle in Virginia was at Saltville in Smyth County in 1567, when a gold-hunting venture of Juan Pardo attacked a palisaded village.

Around that time an Indian princess of the Chisca tribe married a Spanish soldier and moved to the Carolina coast, taking the name Luisa Menendez. Under pressure to justify the cost of maintaining a garrison, the Spanish governor of greater Florida staged an inquiry in 1600 to document the great natural wealth of the Carolinas and their potential value to the Spanish crown. Information about Menendez comes from testimony she and others gave during that inquiry.

As we brace for an orgy of Jamestown celebrations, it's worth remembering that Pocahontas was preceded in Virginia by a long history, not always smooth, of Native American and European relations.

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