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Selling America in the Seventeenth Century: The Contribution of Ralph Hamor's True Discourse to the Establishment of the English Colony in America

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SELLING AMERICA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF RALPH HAMOR'S TRUE DISCOURSE
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGLISH COLONY IN VIRGINIA

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Sibley Judson Smith, Jr.
November 1992
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Thad W. Tate

Approved, November 1992

Thad W. Tate

Robert Gross

Cary Carson
Vice-President, Research
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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the memory of my father, "S.J." Smith, S.K.C., U.S.N., Ret., my first American Hero, who introduced me to the world of adventure in the history of our country.

S.J.S.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The purpose of this study is to identify the significant contribution to the establishment of the English colony in Virginia made by a piece of literature, Ralph Hamor's *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia*, published in 1615.

In 1614, the colony, which centered around a fort at Jamestown, was on the brink of disaster. English sentiment had turned against the colonization project within only two years of the 1607 landing. There had been an alarmingly high death rate among the colonists, due to disease, starvation, and Indian warfare, and there had yet to be discovered any financially rewarding natural resources. The colony gained a reputation as a deathtrap and a moneypit, and public support, in the form of immigration and investments, drastically declined. This decline continued. The colony desperately needed new colonists and the money to provide for them. Without significant advances in these areas, the colony was threatened by failure and abandonment.

However, during the two years that followed the July 1614 arrival in England of Hamor's *True Discourse* manuscript, the Virginia colony effectively achieved a state of permanency. Immigrants and supply shipments arrived in sufficient numbers to enable the colonial enterprise to continue. It gained enough strength even to survive the serious problems it would later encounter during the final operating years of the Virginia Company of London, the colony's original management organization. Formerly cynical Englishmen were once again adventuring in Virginia.

Several co-dependent factors contributed to this improved state of affairs. The Company's reorganization fostered better colonial administration backed by improved financing schemes. Marketable tobacco, private property, and peace with the Indians insured a livelihood for colonists and profits for investors. Yet, these new advantages had to be made known to and believed by an audience who had grown tired of such promises. However one received word of whichever benefit enticed him to immigrate or invest, that word required a source, and that source required clout. The most current, most informative, and most captivating, yet credible, presentation of the news available was Hamor's *True Discourse*. In the minds of Englishmen, a change had taken place. The *True Discourse* significantly contributed to this change, and thereby, it significantly contributed to the success of the English colonization of Virginia.

In the absence of distribution records and of contemporary commentary regarding Hamor's pamphlet, evidence for this argument is purely circumstantial. This study reviews the circumstances surrounding the presentation of Hamor's report on the state of affairs in Virginia and of that colony's prospects for the future. These circumstances include general audience availability and literary preference, the literary needs of particular audiences already and potentially interested in colonization, the aspects of the pamphlet which could have enabled it to reach those audiences and meet those needs, and a comparison of the pamphlet, as a promotional device, to other available travel accounts. The circumstances of the timing of the pamphlet's distribution and the comparative quality of its execution support the claim that the *True Discourse* influenced Virginia's history.
SELLING AMERICA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF RALPH HAMOR’S TRUE DISCOURSE
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENGLISH COLONY
IN VIRGINIA
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

Captain Ralph Hamor's *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia, and the Successe of the Affaires there till the 18 of June, 1614* was first published in 1615 for the Virginia Company of London, the organization chartered to establish and develop the colony which began with the landing of three ships and one hundred Englishmen at Jamestown in 1607. This *True Discourse* was both a travel narrative and a commercial advertisement, for it described to its English audience a distant land, its people, and events which happened there, while it also solicited that audience's financial contributions to and active participation in the project of colonizing that distant land, Virginia. In these ways, the *True Discourse* was similar to many other contemporary geographic publications; however, because of the particular timing of its distribution and because of the comparative quality of its execution, the *True Discourse* may well have been a determining factor in saving the Virginia colony from virtual ruin. It was a captivating and authoritative document, such as was so badly needed at the time by the Virginia Company to combat a growing cynicism which threatened the survival of the fledgling colony. Evidence suggests that
the narrative was successful, at this critical time, in its expressed purpose of influencing English people to support and participate in the settlement and development of Virginia. In this capacity, the True Discourse can be seen as having been a valuable tool for the Virginia Company of London in its struggle to restore interest and confidence in the enterprise and to achieve permanence for the colonial community. Ralph Hamor's True Discourse was a significant contributor to the establishment of the English colony in Virginia.

The period during which Hamor's True Discourse most contributed to the success of the Virginia colony was from July 1614 to July 1616. Historian Alexander Brown concluded that during the period from Captain Samuel Argall's return from Virginia to England in July 1614 -- which was when Captain Hamor also returned, bearing the manuscript for his True Discourse -- to the return of Virginia Governor Sir Thomas Dale in July 1616, "it became evident that the colony would be more than self-sustaining. Day was breaking. Spain saw that England would never give up her hold on America, and the destiny of this continent was firmly vested in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon."¹ During this period a transformation took place. The colony achieved a condition which assured its permanency. It regained from the English public enough essential support, in the form of manpower and financial

assistance, to continue, when it had been facing failure and abandonment. It became strong enough even to survive the considerable problems it later encountered during the last five years of the Virginia Company's administration of the colony. The future of the Virginia colony was secured during that period which coincided with the distribution of the True Discourse. Several interdependent factors contributed to this fortunate state of affairs, and one among them, worthy of recognition for its part as an effective advertisement of the rest, was Ralph Hamor's True Discourse.

At the time of the publication of the True Discourse, the Virginia colony, which centered around a fort at Jamestown, was on the brink of disaster. It desperately needed new colonists and the financial support to provide for them. Without significant advances in these areas, the colony could not survive. Sir Walter Raleigh's Roanoke colony was abandoned two decades earlier after a much less disappointing record than that of Jamestown, and the Virginia Company

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2 In 1619, Sir Edwin Sandys succeeded the Company's original governor, Sir Thomas Smith. Sandys led a, perhaps, overzealous campaign to increase immigration and fundraising. Ensuing problems and factional disputes led to the Company's dissolution in 1624. The principal source for this topic is Wesley Frank Craven, Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964).

3 The population at Jamestown dropped from over one hundred to only thirty-eight during the colony's disastrous first winter. See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., Captain John Smith: A Select Edition of His Writings (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 5.
colony on the Sagahadoc River in Maine, which was begun in the same year and manner as Jamestown, was quickly abandoned when problems became evident. In its effort to prevent this fate, the publication of the **True Discourse** was one of many measures taken by the colony's founding organization, the Virginia Company of London.

Formed in 1606 as a limited joint-stock company, the Virginia Company relied on public support for its financing. This was achieved through the sale of shares which promised profitable returns. The Company also relied on public interest and confidence for its recruitment of settlers. People without sufficient funds could receive shares by traveling to Virginia and working for the Company for a term of years. The initial success of this program was undermined within a few years by a lack of returns and by news of the extreme hardships suffered by the first settlers. Expectations had not been fulfilled. Abandonment of the colonial project was advocated, and public support drastically declined.

To remedy the situation, the Company reorganized under a new charter, first in 1609 and again in 1612. It established new policies of colonial administration to improve living conditions and productivity, it instituted a lottery

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Because of the similarities of the two colonial experiments, it has been said that it was a miracle that the Virginia settlement ever survived. See Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934) I, 93.
system as an alternate means of raising capital, and it launched a promotional campaign to reverse the negative trend in public opinion towards the colony’s potential. The new, stricter policies in governing the colonists kept the colony alive, but by 1614, the colony had yet to shake free of its reputation as a deathtrap, incapable of producing a profitable return. Better incentives were still necessary if emigration and financial investments were to increase.

The lottery system, adopted by the Virginia Company in 1612, provided additional incentives for making financial investments. It offered prizes in cash and merchandise to purchasers of winning tickets. This, too, was only initially successful, because skepticism regarding the colonial project remained and grew, so the Company continued to have difficulty finding the means to purchase sufficient food and clothing for the new Virginians. The Company began another lottery campaign in 1614, this time employing a new strategy. It distributed its lottery advertisements accompanied by promotional literature about Virginia. Ralph Hamor’s True Discourse was published during this campaign, which proved to be a successful one. The lottery soon became established,

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5Virginia at this time was referred to in this manner by Warren M. Billings, ed. in The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1689. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 10.
until its forced discontinuance in 1621, as the primary source of income for the Company.

The True Discourse, the latest publication in the Company’s promotional campaign, publicized more, new incentives for both investors and settlers. The Virginia Company of London needed favorable reports about the colonial project, such as was Hamor’s True Discourse, because after only two years of settlement, the colony showed signs of failure. These signs did not go unnoticed. Profitable returns were not forthcoming. Not only had gold not been discovered, but no other marketable commodities came from the colony. The colonists could not even provide for themselves. Relentless attacks by the local natives kept colonists virtual prisoners behind the palisaded walls of the Jamestown fort, and this prevented them from hunting, fishing and farming. An alarming number of colonists died from starvation and disease. There were those, such as Ralph Hamor, who had faith that the colony would eventually succeed as long as immigration continued and as long as investors continued to provide for the colony "without backslyding." Unfortunately, there were

6 The Crown withdrew its permission for the Company to employ the lottery, partly because of the public outcry that the lottery’s extreme popularity had become detrimental to society. See Robert Carl Johnson, "The Lotteries of the Virginia Company, 1612-1621," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXIV (1966), 287-89.

7 Ralph Hamor, A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia, and the Successe of the Affaires there till the 18 of June, 1614 (London, 1615; rpt. Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1957), sig. A2v. In quoting from this and
also those who were quite disheartened and even angered by the unexpected difficulties, and their accounts emphasized those misfortunes and urged others to abandon the project. "Cunning and coloured falshoods devised by the enemies of the Plantation"\(^8\) spread, and backsliding happened. Investments dropped to a level insufficient to support the operations of the Colony, and potential settlers abstained. The risks far outweighed the rewards.

To combat this situation, in 1609 the Virginia Company of London began publishing its own reports, yet by 1614, English readers and listeners were quite skeptical about literature regarding the new Virginia colony. Promised riches still had not been discovered; the natives were hostile and had not yet been subdued, let alone Christianized, and the lifestyles of the colonists were far from glamorous. The adventure had diminished considerably. There seemed little hope for success. Hamor's *True Discourse* provided credible evidence to restore confidence in the project, and it presented adventure

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other contemporary sources, I have maintained the original spelling, except, for the sake of clarity, in the following instances: I inserted a "u" where appropriate when a "v" was originally printed, as in "Trve Discovrse"; likewise, a "v" was used when preferable to the original "u" as in "Gouernour", "Aduenturer" and "Riuer"; a "w" replaced the literal "double-u" ("vv"), as in "vvich . . . vve . . followvv"; and I replaced the "i" with a "j" when the latter would have been more appropriate for modern spellings, such as in "the 18 of Iune, 1614", "King Iames" and "Iames towne".

with a happy ending to revitalize public interest in an endeavor which so relied on public support.

Hamor's True Discourse was the last in the Company's series of nine publications designed to refute the negative claims of, as Hamor called it, the "malevolent detracting multitude," while emphasizing the advantages and opportunities present for anyone who would "become a harty and devoted furtherer of an action so noble." Unfortunately, there are no known records regarding specifics of the distribution of the True Discourse, such as who read it, where or when. No documents from the time state whether or not the True Discourse actually motivated people or whether or not it was even liked. However, an examination of Hamor's True Discourse in relation to contemporary circumstances and events and in comparison with other contemporary Virginia reports provides evidence towards answering these questions.

As a piece of travel literature, the True Discourse was part of an already popular genre of reading material in England. The general audience particularly enjoyed travel stories which were adventurous, as well as educational and easy to read. For some, travel literature was important as a source of information beneficial to their interests in trade, patriotism or religion. Through his exciting, adventurous travel narrative, Hamor emphasized to his readers, whatever

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9 Hamor, sig. A3r.

10 Hamor, sig. A2r.
may have been their interest, that there were several new advantages to supporting the colony's continuation.

Within only a few years after the publication of the True Discourse, circumstances appeared to have changed, for investments and immigration increased. By 1618, approximately 167 more Englishmen had made the initial investment necessary to become full members of the Company, and the lottery had become so successful a fundraiser among the general population that it was deemed a public nuisance. Immigration to Virginia increased at such a rate that it was estimated that later, between 1619 and 1621, some 3,500 people made the journey. The concept that there could be a viable English

11 Theodor E. Rabb, Enterprise and Empire: Merchant and Gentry Investment in the Expansion of England, 1575-1630. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), see "List of Names," pp. 224-410. There was a gradual increase from 1615 to 1617, then a jump to 143 new members in 1618. It must be noted that this jump coincided with Virginia Company reforms initiated by stockholders, who, having a renewed belief that colonization of Virginia could be successful, felt that the Company had inefficiently managed the operation. They were impatient to take advantage of the possibilities, and the conviction that mismanagement and negligence had retarded profitable successes has been seen as an incentive for new investments. See Craven, Dissolution, pp. 45-46.


13 Ivor Noel Hume, "First Look at a Lost Virginia Settlement," National Geographic, 155, No. 6 (1979), 747. The author points out, however, that about 3,000 immigrants died within that same three-year period. Wesley Frank Craven also warns against basing population increases in Virginia at this time entirely on immigration totals because of the high death rate, seen also as evidence of Sandys' hasty and reckless settlement program. See Craven, Dissolution, pp. 152-54, 272-
community in Jamestown and its vicinity was apparently once again believed, for actions supported that belief and continued to thereafter. The concept became reality.

What brought about this change? Why did the English decide not to abandon this colony as they had the Roanoke and Sagahadoc colonies? For all the hardships already suffered and yet to come and in spite of the later collapse of the Virginia Company in the 1620's, the permanence of the Virginia colony was assured in the mid-1610's by policies and actions of the Company and, certainly, by changes within the colony itself. The successful cultivation of a marketable strain of tobacco created a valuable cash crop, albeit one discouraged by the Company, and the distribution of private property allowed the raising of this commodity for personal gain. Peace with the Indians had been made, and this permitted a safe resumption of farming and other everyday activities. These were changes that made a difference, but somehow

73. Yet, the point remains that a great number of people left England at that time to live in Virginia.


15 These are generally recognized as having contributed in the long run to the success of the colony, but for the specific period of improvement between mid-1614 and mid-1616, without diminishing their importance, little more can be said of the evidence supporting their direct contribution than can
these changes had to be made known, and believed among a skeptical English audience. Ralph Hamor's True Discourse was the first major publication to announce these changes, and the True Discourse did so with such a power of persuasion that it may well be held accountable for significantly influencing the change in England's attitude towards its American colony. It helped restore the hope that had fostered the settlement's creation. This study will show that the True Discourse was an ideal promotional tract, well suited to contribute to those advances which gave permanence to the English-American community in Virginia, the "First Colony."

be said of that for the True Discourse (ie. it is primarily circumstantial).
CHAPTER II
THE WORK IN ITS WORLD

Ralph Hamor's True Discourse was written to achieve a particular purpose, and it had intended audiences. Its purpose was to encourage support for the continuation of the commercial project of the colonization of Virginia, and its intended audiences were investors, potential settlers and clergymen. The Virginia Company had previously published other papers and pamphlets which solicited "investment and adventure, both of person and of money."\(^{16}\) It had also published sermons which, through moral persuasion, were "intended to arouse both interest and confidence in the undertaking."\(^{17}\) The Company had been chartered to establish the Virginia colony "for the propagation of Christian religion, the increase of Trade and the enlarging of his Royall Empire,"\(^{18}\) and Hamor wrote his True Discourse to appeal to those interested in any of these aspects. By


\(^{17}\)Kingsbury, p. 32.

\(^{18}\)Charles, I, King of Great Britain, "A Proclamation for Settling the Plantation of Virginia" (London, 1625; facsimile, Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1946.)
appealing to all three interests at once, Hamor's *True Discourse* may be seen as a marketing advertisement. Cultural historian Louis B. Wright wrote, "The art of advertising is no new discovery . . . Our ancestors in the seventeenth century were well aware of the value of publicity. The promoters of the first English settlements in the New World were shrewd enough to utilize writers and speakers—poets, pamphleteers, playwrights, and preachers—to advertise the virtues of the new land and to make vivid the profits which subscribers in colonial stock companies as well as emigrants might hope to gain from settlement overseas." With a need to both describe and promote the Virginia colonial project, the Virginia Company's choice of a writer with both knowledge of the land and a personal stake in the project's success can be seen as a logical one.

The author of the *True Discourse* was well-suited to the task of writing a stirring account about the Virginia colony. He was Captain Ralph Hamor, Jr., Adventurer and Planter for the Virginia Company of London. As an adventurer, he had risked, or adventured, his personal finances by purchasing shares in the joint stock company. However, one could be an adventurer and never leave one's comfortable home in England. Hamor was a planter. He had actually journeyed to the colony and settled, or planted, and he was active in this role. He

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explored the area and sought out marketable commodities. He traded, negotiated and fought with the natives as necessary. He built structures, and he literally planted seeds to grow produce for sustenance and trade. He exemplified that which he promoted in his True Discourse, for he helped finance the colony while taking up residency there. He was an eyewitness to and a participant in major events in the colony's undertaking. Such credentials no doubt gave his True Discourse a good measure of necessary credibility. Other aspects of good character would also lend weight to Hamor's argument in England.

The name Ralph Hamor was known among the members of England's commercial middle class, described by historian A.L. Rowse as "the backbone of the support, the driving force of the [colonization] movement," and therefore, a primary targeted audience for the promotional True Discourse. The author's father, Ralph Hamor the elder, was prominent among the members of the Merchant Tailors, one of the livery companies of London, from which the Virginia Company received much of its financing. Ralph Hamor the elder had been an incorporator and director of the East India Company, another joint-stock company into which he had invested a considerable amount, and according to Rowse, he was "one of

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20 Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, p. xii.
21 Brown, p. 908.
the most reliable backers of the Virginia Company."\(^{22}\) He was prosperous. When he died in 1615, he left, through his will, substantial provisions for the Merchant Tailors', Clothworkers' and Silkweavers' Companies, and for the local hospital, parishes and poor. There are implications only of a good standing among his peers, and his namesake could only have benefited by that reputation.

Ralph Hamor, the younger, probably received his education at the Merchant Tailors' School, continuing his education for a while at Oxford. Rowse acknowledges evidence of Ralph Hamor's education, stating, "the Latinized prose of the True Discourse is that of an educated man."\(^{23}\) At the writing of the True Discourse, Hamor, "yo[u]ng though in yeeres and knowledge"\(^ {24}\), was serving as Secretary of the Colony. Apparently, he was a religious man, and the religious tone of his presentation regarding the "holy Businesse" of the colonization\(^ {25}\) hints at this. Historian Carl Bridenbaugh called Hamor a "devout Calvinist," and explained that it was this temperment that drew him initially in support of the Puritan Governor Sir Thomas Dale.\(^ {26}\) Hamor was, no doubt, a

\(^{22}\)Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, p. xii.

\(^{23}\)Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, p. xiii.

\(^{24}\)Hamor, sig. A4r.

\(^{25}\)Hamor, sig. A4v.

man of action, skilled in the military arts. He received his Captaincy title by his appointment as a leader of a band of fifteen men under the military reorganization imposed by Gov. Sir Thomas Gates. He served on expeditions in Virginia to fight with the Indians, and following the Massacre of 1622, he was placed as military commander over Martin's Hundred, a settlement near Jamestown. Captain Ralph Hamor, Jr., was an educated, pious warrior from the commercial middle class. These credentials, if known by his contemporaries, would serve him well in supporting the veracity and authenticity of his True Discourse.

What opinions about Captain Hamor that can be found in contemporary records all appear to be positive. John Rolfe, Hamor's fellow colonist, whose agricultural experiments yielded the tobacco plant which became Virginia's primary commodity, described Hamor as "a gent. of good merit." Virginia's Governor Sir Francis Wyatt, in 1623, sent Hamor on an expedition, and he said he did so "out of the certain knowledge and good opinion which I conceive of Captain Hamor for managing of an employment of such consequence." The available sources have also led modern historians to describe

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27 For more on this incident see Ivor Noel Hume, Martin's Hundred (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

28 Brown, p. 746.

29 Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, pp. xv-xvi.
Hamor as one of "the most important lay leaders of the colony"\textsuperscript{30} - "a serious, hardworking planter,"\textsuperscript{31} whose willingness to risk his life and fortune "in a new venture to Virginia encouraged others to follow."\textsuperscript{32} Such evidence suggests that Hamor did enjoy a good reputation among his contemporaries, a reputation which must have prompted some cynics, who otherwise might have turned a deaf ear, to give the \textit{True Discourse} a fair hearing. According to historian Edmund Morgan, Ralph Hamor "wrote one of the most effective pamphlets in praise of Virginia."\textsuperscript{33} It was effective because it's design enabled it to achieve the necessary popular literary success. The \textit{True Discourse} was simple to read, informative and captivating.

Many Englishmen were willing and able to listen to Ralph Hamor's pitch by reading his \textit{True Discourse}. During the early decades of the seventeenth century, the appeal for literature of travel and exploration was "confined to no class or

\textsuperscript{30}Bridenbaugh, p. 67.


\textsuperscript{32}Wesley Frank Craven, \textit{The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1689} (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1949), p. 121.

\textsuperscript{33}Morgan, p. 121.
group."\(^3^4\) Literacy of all classes in England was at a remarkably high level at this time. Recent studies indicate that an educational revolution, financed largely by charity and by merchants, occurred during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, and this resulted in a uniquely well-educated audience for writers' contemporary with Ralph Hamor.\(^3^5\) Yet degrees of literacy certainly varied according to social standing and opportunity.\(^3^6\) A widespread


\(^{3^6}\) Poorer people would have had the opportunity to learn only the basics of reading. According to one study, reading was being taught to children when they were still too young to join the work force, if that was to be required because of a family's low income. Only the more fortunate could go on to grammar school where writing and Latin were taught. However, this trend, teaching to read before teaching to write, suggests that many more people had the ability to read than was determined previously, when such calculations were based on the ability to write. See Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), pp. 24-37.
popularity of a piece of literature required a writing style that was easily understandable to the majority of people. Hamor's style in the True Discourse, although formal enough to be called "Latinized," as mentioned above, was still more practical than poetic; its simplicity may have added to its popularity. Wright explains that merchants and traders encouraged this style of writing in the geographical and travel literature they promoted for their own convenience and to make the publications available to a wider range of audience. In fact, he added, "the very form of [modern] prose style owes a great deal to the straightforward narratives of practical traders who foreswore unwieldy Ciceronianism and discarded the windy verbage of Elizabethan polite prose in order that their reports and descriptions might easily be understood by the ordinary laymen."

The Virginia Company of London required the support, and therefore, the readership, of commoners as well as noblemen. Captain Hamor revealed in his True Discourse his consciousness of his simple writing style. He modestly commented on his

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37 Wright, Middle Class Culture, p. 510.

38 Wright, Middle-Class Culture, p. 510. For an extensive study on this subject, see Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983); also see comments regarding Richard Hakluyt's prosaic style as being like "the speech of plain folk, direct and easy to follow," in A.L. Rowse, The First Colonists: Hakluyt's Voyages to North America (London: The Folio Society, 1986), pp. 9-10.
work as being "unstudied" and "unworthy" for nobility. He called it a "poor narration," "rich only in truth," rendered through his literary "disabilities." Hamor's comments about his meeting with Chief Powhatan serve as an example of his simple prose style. Hamor reported:

The first thing he offered us was a pipe of Tobacco, which they call Pissimore, whereof himselfe first drank, and then gave it me, and when I had drank what I pleased, I returned his pipe, which with his owne hands he vouchsafed to take from me: then began he to inquire how his Brother Sir Thomas Dale fared, after that of his daughters [Pocahontas] welfare, her mariage, his unknowne sonne [John Rolfe], and how they liked, lived and loved together: I resolved him that his brother was very well, and his daughter so well content that she would not change her life to returne and live with him, whereat he laughed heartily, and said he was very glad of it.

Compare this straightforward storytelling to the more roundabout explanation given by a fictional character regarding her choice of lovers, from John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, 1579, an example of contemporary prose so affected in its Ciceronian style that it earned its own descriptive title, "Euphuistic." Lucilla explains:

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39 Hamor, sig. A3v, A4r.

40 Hamor, sig. A3v, pp. 1, 47.

41 Hamor, p. 39-40.

For as the bee that gathereth honey out of the weed when she espieth the fair flower flieth to the sweetest; or as the kind spaniel though he hunt after birds yet forsakes them to retrieve the partridge; or as we commonly feed on beef hungerly at first, yet seeing the quail more dainty change our diet; so I although I loved Philautus for his good properties, yet seeing Euphues to excel him I ought by nature to like him better. By so much the more, therefore, my change is to be excused, by how much the more my choice is excellent; and by so much the less I am to be condemned, by how much the more Euphues is to be commended."

Of course, stylistic preferences of less-educated, seventeenth-century readers cannot be judged by relying on twentieth-century tastes and understandings; they can only be imagined. However, it is known that regarding the forced balances and antithesis, the frequent alliteration, and the frequent use of similes drawn from natural and mythological history, the characteristics of euphuism, "[Sir Philip] Sidney complained of it and Shakespeare parodied it in a famous passage in I Henry IV [II. iv. 440 ff.]." The language of Hamor's True Discourse was not so flowery. It was written so that all readers could understand and appreciate it.

Readability was not necessarily an uncommon factor among other treatises written about early Virginia. Two other works, for example, that contained comments regarding their own simplicity in style, were, interestingly enough, part of


that same Virginia Company series, which included Hamor's piece, designed to refute previous, negative claims. These were Lord De La Warre's "A Short Relation," 1611, and Alexander Whitaker's *Good Newes from Virginia*, 1613. De La Warre wrote that his report was "plainly, truly, and briefly delivered."\(^5\) Whitaker referred to his recorded descriptions as "my poor endeavors."\(^6\) Such comments imply a self-conscious use of a more vernacular rather than formal writing style.

In contrast, William Strachey's "True Reportory" of 1609 may be seen as an example of a report that was too formal in its style of presentation to have been a widely-read promotional tract. This was not his intent; however, rather it was, as the complete title implies, to give an accurate accounting of the 1609 shipwreck, and perhaps, his only intended audience were the peers of his noble addressee, the "Excellent Lady."\(^7\) Seemingly in an effort to make the report more worthy for their reading, Strachey embellishes his otherwise "straightforward" narrative with allusions to


\(^6\) Whitaker, sig. D2v.

classical myths and poems using many Latin quotes. For instance, regarding the storm which caused the shipwreck, he writes, "For my own part, I had been in some storms before, ... and once, more distressful, in the Adriatic gulf, ... so as I may well say: Ego quid sit alter Hadriae novisinus, et quid albus peccet Iapyx." This elitism in composition style, although proper for that which was considered good literature, would have limited the reading audience. Hamor's True Discourse was written in simple style to benefit readers of simple birth, with apologies to those more gentle and noble.

The simple style of the True Discourse may have allowed for a broad range of readership, but to be of interest and to restore lost hope, the narrative had to be informative and optimistic. By continuing this comparison of the True

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48 Strachey, p. 7. Some other examples include: "And the manner of the sickness [imminent death] lays upon the body, being so unsufferable, gives not the mind any free and quiet time to use her judgement and empire; which made the poets say: Hostium uxores, puerique caecos / Sentiant motus orientis Haedi, et / Aequoris nigri fremitum, et trementes / Verbere ripas" (p. 5); "It is impossible for me, had I the voice of Stentor and expression of as many tongues as his throat of voices to express the outcries and miseries, not languishing but wasting his spirits, and art constant to his own principles but not prevailing" (p. 6); "... All his ambition was to climb up above-hatches to die in aperto coelo "above hatches" ... . It so stunned the ship in her full pace that she stirred no more than if she had been caught in a net, or then if the fabulous remora had stuck to her forecastle" (p. 11); and, "A low level of ground about half an acre (or so much as Queen Dido might buy of King Iarbus, which she compassed about with the thongs cut out of one bull hide and therein built her castle of Byrsa) ... " (p. 79).
Discourse to other accounts regarding the colony and written by contemporaries of Captain Hamor, it may be better demonstrated just how well designed the True Discourse was to be an effective promotional instrument for the Virginia Company's colony. Promotion of the Company's effort was not always the purpose of reports, such as with the case of Strachey's aforementioned "True Reportory" which preceded the True Discourse, for the emphasis towards promotion grew in time as the situation in the colony and with the Company's finances worsened. Yet, for the purposes of this study, certain aspects of these reports are important to note in order to highlight those qualities of the True Discourse which made it effective in its promotional role.

The communication of information about the newly discovered Virginia was essential. Participants in colonial undertakings were noted to be willing "to master a new and increasing body of knowledge."49 Merchants and mariners, colonizers and colonists, private investors, and the royal government itself were all involved in the Virginia colonial enterprise, and participants all needed to know just what that involvement might entail. Participants desired facts about Virginia, but the Virginia Company needed to encourage further participation which required an optimistic presentation of those facts. Virtually all reports about Virginia supplied some relevant information; however, many of these possessed

49 Wright, Middle-Class Culture, p. 510.
certain drawbacks. Only a few of the reports were at least as long as the forty-seven page True Discourse. Short reports were limited in the amount of information that could be presented. A narrow focus of topics made some reports inappropriate as general information sources. Others gave some good exposition of facts, but among the facts reported were unfavorable circumstances seemingly without resolution.

In light of such shortcomings, as far as promotional literature is concerned, by reading a combination of several of these early accounts, one could become adequately informed about the beginning stages of the Jamestown colony.50

Some of the shorter reports furnished details of information valuable to travelers to Virginia. A report attributed to Captain Gabriel Archer provided important facts about shipping in the James River. Archer explained, "Our main river ebbs and flows 4 foot even to the skirt of the downfall. Ships of 200 or 300 ton may come to within 5 mile hereof, and the rest deep enough for barges or small vessels

that draw not above 6 foot water." Governor Lord De La Warre reported on the exploration of the Potomac River
"whereof there are grown the goodliest trees for masts, . . . hemp better than English, mines of antimony and lead." The Reverend Alexander Whitaker wrote of the climate in Virginia stating, "The extremity of Summer is not so hot as Spain, nor the cold of winter so sharp as the frosts of England." Most common among these reports were descriptions of available foodstuffs. John Pory "tasted here of a great black grape as big as a damson that hath a true muscatel-taste," and Captain Samuel Argall "found a kind of water which hath a tart taste much like unto allum-water. It is good and wholesome, for my men did drink much of it and never found it otherwise." Another report submitted by Argall in 1610 was essentially a ship's log of the Captain's attempt to make a round trip from Jamestown to Bermuda to gather provisions.

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52 West, p. 89.

53 Whitaker, p. 39.


55 Samuel Argall, "A Letter of Sir Samuel Argoll Touching His Voyage to Virginia, and Actions there . . . 1613," Purchase, XIX, 92.
Its nautical descriptions would primarily interest other mariners who might venture the same routes. The report consisted mainly of comments such as the following:

From the five and twentieth at noon, to the six and twentieth at noon, five and twenty leagues westerly, the wind shifting between south and south-west. And I had thirteen degrees five and twenty minutes of westerly variation. About six of the clock at night the water changed, and then I sounded and had red sandy ground in twelve fathoms water about twelve leagues from shore.  

Argall barely mentioned the Virginia colony in this letter, save as the origin and destination of his journey. Silvester Jourdain’s description of his journey to Virginia in 1609 similarly mentioned Virginia only briefly. This was to note that he and his fellow travelers had arrived there safely from Bermuda. Yet he did provide, for instance, ten paragraphs of information on what one could find in the Bermuda islands for "relief and sustenation." These reports were good information sources for particular details, but their brevity and narrow topical focus would have inhibited their individual potential as promotional works, had that been their intent. While some reports did not give enough information about Virginia itself, others gave too much.

Perhaps, the most famous of all the earliest First Colony reporters was the most famous of all the first colonists,  

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56 Samuel Argall, "The Voyage of Captain Samuel Argoll from Jamestown in Virginia to Seek the Isle of Bermuda . . . 1610," Purchase, XIX, 83.  

thanks, no doubt, to the autobiographical nature of all his writings.\textsuperscript{58} This, of course, was Captain John Smith. Like Captain Ralph Hamor after him, Smith wrote in a simple style, apologizing for his "owne rough pen."\textsuperscript{59} He wrote extensively about Virginia, but only the first of his works, \textit{A True Relation of Such Occurances . . . in Virginia}, 1608, was ever published by the Virginia Company - and that without Smith's knowledge, permission, or supervision, and with ruthless editing.\textsuperscript{60} Among the omissions in the published form of what Smith intended to be a private letter were details of his capture by the Indian emperor - and father of Pocahontas - Powhatan. Smith included these details later in his \textit{General Historie}, 1624, when he wrote about the Indians "being ready with their clubs, to beate out his brains," and after being rescued from that fate by Pocahontas, how Smith still expected "every houre to be put to one death or other."\textsuperscript{61} Such details were deemed by the Virginia Company "fit to be private" - unsuitable for wide-reading because of the damaging effect they could have on the enthusiasm of potential investors.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} Barbour, \textit{Complete Works}, I, lxiv.

\textsuperscript{59} Barbour, \textit{Complete Works}, I, lx.

\textsuperscript{60} Barbour, \textit{Complete Works}, I, 5.


While Smith's reports are today considered among the major sources of information about the founding of the colony and about the Algonquin Indians of eastern North America, they were not considered by the Virginia Company in their own day to be appropriate for publication. Captain Smith, former president of the Virginia colony, was too outspoken regarding problems in the colony and about his opinions, contrary to Company policies, on how to deal with them. This and the subsequent disaffection between Smith and the London Company forced him to find publishers elsewhere. It may be possible to credit Smith's earliest writings with having positively affected matters within the colony itself, for it is known that by 1623, the Virginia Company owned copies of Smith's *Map of Virginia*, 1612, and his *Description of New England*, 1616, and according to historian Philip L. Barbour, "to some degree . . . the government of Virginia fell into a basic pattern not unlike that which he had proposed." However, his frank portrayal of adverse conditions and his expressed disapproval of the Company's operations negated his reports' ability to effectively promote the Virginia colony in the mid-1610's.

William Strachey, who preceded Ralph Hamor as secretary of the colony, also found the Virginia Company unwilling to publish his accounts. Again, his reports were so informative

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^64^Barbour, *Complete Works*, I, 1x, 125.
as to be considered today among the major sources regarding early seventeenth century Virginia, its original inhabitants and its English immigrants; and again, they were considered too informative by the Virginia Company. Strachey's "True Reportory" gave such details as the description of the palisaded fort at Jamestown, where "in the midst is a marketplace, a storehouse, a corps de garde, as likewise a pretty chapel." However, it also gave details of the shipwreck that deposited him in Bermuda, along with Ralph Hamor, among others, of mutinies that followed, and of the starving, lazy settlers found in Jamestown when the shipwreck survivors finally arrived. Strachey had been asked by the Virginia Company Secretary, Richard Martin, to send the truth, even if only in private, and the manuscript of the "True Reportory" did circulate privately, but it was not published until fifteen years later when Samuel Purchase

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66 Wright, Historie of Travel, pp. xxii, xxx; Barbour, Three Worlds, p. 299.

67 Strachey, p. 79.

68 Barbour, Three Worlds, p. 299.
included it in his compilations. Strachey's later, and lengthier, Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania, 1612, had to wait over 200 years for its first publication. His work was informative, but during a period when it was so important to encourage new settlers, his vivid descriptions of the bleak side of New World colonizing - of the hazards of ocean travel and of the precariousness of life in Virginia - were too informative. The Virginia Company preferred not to advertise such facts to the world.

Other early accounts, which were written with an emphasis on accurate reporting of facts and not on promotion, had seemingly pessimistic aspects which would make them inappropriate for the Company's later advertising campaign. For instance, Henry Spelman, who had lived for some time among the Indians, gave a thorough account, in his "Relation of Virginia, 1613," about the lifestyle of the native Americans near Jamestown, writing thirteen sections about their customs, including such topics as religion, marriage practices, naming of children, government, and armor and weapons in war. However, he also described severely unfortunate circumstances among the English settlers, such as the fact that "vitals were

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69 Wright, Historie of Travell, p. xxii.

70 It was first published in London in 1849 by the Hakluyt Society, ed. R.H. Major. See Wright, Historie of Travell, p. xxx.

71 Wright, Voyage, pp. xiv, xix.
scarce with us,"\textsuperscript{72} and such as his eyewitness report of the slaying of an English exploration party when "the Indians that were hidden in the corn shot the men as they passed by them and so killed them all saving one."\textsuperscript{73} George Percy, who succeeded John Smith as President and served for a short term later as governor, likewise, supplied detailed information about the Indians in an otherwise depressing report about the colonial situation. Describing the physical appearance of the area natives, Percy, in his "Observations" (1606), explained, "There is notice to be taken to know married women from maids; the maids you shall always see the fore part of their head and sides shaven close, the hinder part very long, which they tie in a pleat hanging down to their hips. The married women wear their hair all of a length, and it is tied of that fashion that the maids are."\textsuperscript{74} This description was soon followed by a chronological listing and descriptions of deaths by war, disease and starvation of many of the original colonists. Percy did not gloss over the fact that the colonists were having a dreadful time. He concluded that "there were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were

\textsuperscript{72}Henry Spelman, "Relation of Virginia, 1613," \textit{Travels}, p. cii.

\textsuperscript{73}Spelman, p. cv.

\textsuperscript{74}George Percy, "Observations Gathered out of a discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony in Virginea by the English, 1606," \textit{Purchase}, XVIII, p. 416.
This was the truth, but it was not the positive presentation of information which was necessary for effectiveness in use as promotional literature. Hamor's *True Discourse*, on the other hand, was.

Fortunately, as conditions changed, making promotional literature more valuable to the Company's efforts than strict reporting, facts about the colony changed. Progress was made in important areas, and Ralph Hamor was quick to point this out. Hamor gave quite an optimistic presentation of the relevant information required by prospective participants in the colonial project. He began his report by advertising that he intended to present "the full and unstained reportory of every accident [in the] business so full of piety as is this our Virginia plantation." First, to restore confidence in the colony's safety from Indian warfare, he announced that "a firme peace (not againe easily to be broken) hath bin lately concluded." He explained the cause of the poor state of affairs that had been discovered at Jamestown in 1610 by the new governor, Sir Thomas Gates, laying the blame on the ill-

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75Percy, p. 418.

76Hamor, sig. A4r.

77Hamor, p. 2. The period of warfare which preceded this "firme peace" has been referred to as "the first Anglo-Powhatan War," intimating the resumption of hostilities with the Massacre of 1622. See Frederick J. Fausz, "The Invasion of Virginia: Indians, Colonialism, and the Conquest of Cant: A Review Essay on Anglo-Indian Relations in the Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, CXV (1987), 133-56.
suited first colonists, "which we hiterto and as yet are furnished with, who for the most part no more sensible then beasts, would rather starve in idlenesse . . . than feast in labour." He then told of the methods and success of Governor Sir Thomas Dale and of Captain Samuel Argali in reorganizing and reforming the colony, and he told how they established peace with Powhatan and his Indian confederacy and with the Chickahominy Indians. Hamor explained that he included his observations "for the honor of Captain Argoll whose. endeavors in the action entitled him most worthy. I judge it no whit impertinent in my discourse to insert them, with much brevity as I may, not omitting the circumstances most pertinent and material." 

Not omitting pertinent and material circumstances, Hamor next listed the complete peace terms that had been made with the local Chickahominy Indians, a tribe independent of the powerful Powhatan confederacy. It has been noted that Hamor's presentation was the chief account at the time of these events. Emphasizing the security of the peace made with Powhatan, Hamor told the story, later included by John Smith in his Generall Historie, of the marriage of Powhatan's

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78Hamor, p. 2.

79Hamor, p. 3.

80Craven, Southern Colonies, p. 116.
daughter, Pocohontas, to John Rolfe. Once he established that Englishmen were safe in Virginia, he asserted that they could live well there and even prosper. Hamor directly addressed prospective settlers as he listed the provisions to be issued them and wrote five pages describing local plants and animals available for food and for trade. He also wished to be clear that hard work was necessary. In his expressed opinions, his True Discourse was meant to "not only encourage honest and industrious, but also deter all lazy, impotent, and ill livers from addressing themselves thither, as being a country too worthy for them." Then, to emphasize the orderly advancement of the colonial project in that country, Hamor described the growth of the settlements in Henrico, Bermuda City and Jamestown. These descriptions included all buildings, grounds, and strategically placed fences and forts. This information supported Hamor's opinion that there existed in the colony "most hopeful habitation, whether we respect commodity or security (which we principally aim at) against foreign designs and invasions." Captain Hamor confidently presented an optimistic description of Virginia, "the affairs


82 Hamor, p. 19.

83 Hamor, p. 31.
in the colony being so well ordered." The picture was one of a well-ordered, secure and productive colony - a colony worth living in and worth investing in, whether for the propagation of Christian religion, the increase of trade or the enlarging of the Royal Empire.

\footnote{Hamor, p. 19.}
CHAPTER III

THE APPEAL

The individual reasons for investing in the Virginia enterprise -- whether directly by purchasing shares or indirectly by purchasing chances to win the lottery -- and, particularly, the individual reasons for emigrating to the colony may have been almost as numerous as the total of the individuals who took those actions. However, the most common among the motivations were the expressed purposes for the planting of the settlement originally -- spreading Protestant Christianity, increasing wealth and enhancing national prestige -- plus, the effort was simply a heroic adventure. Hamor's True Discourse catered to all these concerns. It was designed to capture the attention of the widest range of audience interests.

That the establishment of the Virginia colony was extremely important for the spread of Anglican Christianity was a common theme among the promotional tracts. The conversion of the Indians there has even been described as "the most obvious theme" among them.\(^5\) The Virginia Company of London was not above using religion as a means of gaining financial assistance, and it is easy from today's perspective,

to assume that this employment was insincere - that the motive
was strictly profit and religion was used to make the
propaganda more seductive. There may be some measure of truth
to this, particularly in Company publications issued after
1619 when Sir Edwin Sandys won the directorship of the
Virginia Company from Sir Thomas Smith. News of true
conditions in the colony was suppressed while publications
lauded the furthering of the missionary cause, facts which led
Captain John Smith to comment that the company managers made
"religion their colour, when all their aime was nothing but
present profit." 86 However, studies indicate that overall,
the intentions were honorable. Craven wrote that the
description of missionary undertakings in promotional tracts
should not be taken as merely a promotional device, "for there
was a good deal of sincerity as well as policy in this." 87

The managers of the Virginia Company had originally
stated that the main purpose of their enterprise was to preach
and baptize into Christianity and to deliver from the power of
the devil the Indians of Virginia, or, as Ralph Hamor put it,
". . . (if there were no secondary causes) the already
publisht ends, I mean the glory of God in the conversion of
those Infidels," 88 or the "settling and finishing up a
Sanctum Sanctorum, an holy house, a Sanctuary to him, the God

86 Miller, p. 495.
87 Craven, Southern Colonies, pp. 77-78.
88 Hamor, pp. 1-2.
of the Spirits, of all flesh, amongst such poore and innocent seduced Savages." The realization of this goal and the realization of profits were not considered as conflicting interests. Religion was part of everything. Social historian Perry Miller wrote, "The coincidence of the spiritual and the practical . . . was then assumed in every walk of life." He further argues that these promotional tracts, with their emphasis on religion, are important to the understanding of the emerging culture. He states that one may find in them not only illumination of the pattern of mind out of which America emerged, but a profound comment upon the transformation of Western European culture from a medieval to a modern . . . conception of life and society. . . . Whatever were the calculations of the City, the Cosmos expounded in the Virginia pamphlets is one where the principal human concern is neither the rate of interest nor the discovery of gold, but the will of God. . . . Not only in broadsides, but more emphatically in thoughts and reported actions, religion seems the compelling, or at least the pervading force, . . . . Planters and promotors present themselves as only secondarily merchants and exploiters, only secondarily Englishmen; in their own conception of themselves, they are first and foremost Christians, and above all militant Protestants.  

So, when Ralph Hamor gave first billing in his True Discourse to the missionary cause as the reason the colonial project was "so full of honour, and worth," he did so with all

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89 Hamor, sig. A4r-A4v.
90 Miller, p. 494.
91 Miller, pp. 492-3.
92 Hamor, p. 1.
sincerity, and there would have been no cause to suspect him of unfairly taking advantage of people's religious sympathies. However, intentions aside, religion was a marketable theme.

Clergymen were among those targeted as an audience for tracts such as Hamor's *True Discourse*. The Virginia Company of London encouraged clergymen to speak of the virtues of the colony, and it even published four such sermons before it published the *True Discourse*. Fresh and optimistic descriptions of interaction with the natives and of their potential for conversion encouraged clergymen to likewise encourage their congregations to support the colony, all for the glory of God. Hamor's announcement of the peace established with the local natives was a positive step towards Christianizing them. Englishmen could finally communicate with the Indians without fearing for their lives. This was encouraging news to those considering travelling to Virginia to assist with the missionary work. The presentation of the Rolfe/Pocahontas marriage would have been strategically important as it gave hard evidence that the natives could be Christianized, for the marriage took place only after Pocahontas converted to the Anglican faith.

Encouraging support for the colony for religious reasons could also be seen as an effort at soliciting the support of the patriotic. The King was, after all, Defender of the Faith, and England's main enemies and rivals in the New World were Catholics - Papists. Toward such an audience, Hamor
appeared to have directed many of his religious comments. One of the more politically oriented religious statements for supporting the colony which Hamor included with his *True Discourse* came from Deputy Governor, Sir Thomas Dale. Dale emphasized that the colonial enterprise "should not die to the scorne of our nation, and to give cause of laughter to the Papists that desire our ruine."\(^{93}\) The patriotic, religious cause of the Virginia colony was certainly brought home by Hamor in the following passage:

... When these poore Heathens shall be brought to entertaine the name, and glory of the Gospell of our blessed Savior, when they shall testifie of the true and everliving God, and Jesus Christ to be their salvation, their knowledge so inlarged and sanctifie, that without him they confesse their eternal death: I do believe I say ... that they shall breake out and cry with the rapture of so inexplicable mercie: Blessed be the King and Prince of England, and blessed be the English nation, and blessed forever be the most high God, possessor of Heaven and Earth; that sent these English as Angels to bring such glad tiding amongst us.\(^{94}\)

Then, to directly solicit support from religious-minded Englishmen, Hamor implored:

... let not them shrinke backe, and call in their helpes from this so glorious enterprise, ... but let them know the worke, rejoice and be glad in the happie successe of it, proclaiming that it is the everliving God that reigneth in England, and unto the ends of the world.\(^{95}\)

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\(^{93}\)Thomas Dale, "To the R. and Most Esteemed Friend Mr. D.M. at his house at F. Ch. in London," in Hamor, p. 58.

\(^{94}\)Hamor, sig. A4v.

\(^{95}\)Hamor, sig. A4v-A5r.
Scattered throughout the *True Discourse* are other passages which refer to the glorious, religious or pious work of the colony in its conversion of the native savages. Hamor well supported his case for the religious importance of Virginia.

More practical than pious was another reason for the establishment of Virginia. The colony was intended to be a source of new wealth - an outpost for trading, a production center for commodities and a source of valuable real estate. It has been observed that, "reflecting economic changes going on within English society, . . . the term 'colony' came to imply a highly market-oriented overseas settlement."96 A share in the profits from trade and, eventually, ownership of land were the promises for investors, of purse or person, in the Virginia Company of London and its New World colony. Potential financial investors were numerous and were available to joint stock companies which showed promise. This was a relatively recent phenomenon in England - one from which the Virginia Company could benefit. Wright noted that after James I came to the English throne and made peace with Spain, "a new era was dawning. English capital now come out of hiding and sought profitable investments. A period of business

development began." There was an "unmistakable boom" at that time according to Theodore K. Rabb in his study of merchant and gentry involvement in the joint-stock companies. This beneficial transformation took place not only because of England's geographical position and its recent success in World politics, but also because of the freedom the English people were enjoying from the domination of the church and the old nobility. This allowed wealthy merchants to rise into the titled ranks. Because of these factors, England was becoming a business nation. It had surplus wealth to expend in foreign trade, and it had an independent, self-reliant population eager for gain and commercial development. Historians speak of the new willingness "to risk capital in new projects which had at least a moderate chance of success." Although the precise origins of the available capital is not always clear, the bulk of it came from a small group of very rich London merchants who "were growing richer from legitimate, long established enterprises, and they were prepared to sink a substantial part of their accumulated wealth into new ventures which retained an appreciable speculative element." 

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97 Wright, ed., Good Newes, p 2.
98 Rabb, p. 81.
100 Quinn and Ryan, p. 154.
Of the motives for colonization, the economic were the strongest. The New World represented many possibilities for financial aggrandizement; however, the Virginia colony was losing that all important, "appreciable speculative element," retrievable commodities which showed a promise for profit. It, consequently, stood to lose its main targets for solicitations, the merchants, who were "clearly the vital force behind England's expansion."\textsuperscript{101} Perhaps the most important of these was himself the Treasurer and head of the Virginia Company, Sir Thomas Smith, described as "the greatest figure among [London's] trading magnates,"\textsuperscript{102} and as "London's greatest merchant prince."\textsuperscript{103} Smith, who was also Governor of both the East India and the Muscovy Companies, and other wealthy merchant investors, such as Ralph Hamor, Sr., had the faith and patience to wait however long it might take to reap a profitable return on their Virginia investments. However, other investors lost their patience, perhaps because they could not as well afford the wait, and those who had not yet adventured in Virginia saw little reason to do so.

Until such time as profits could be realized, effective literature was essential to the Virginia Company to keep the merchants and business groups, such as the livery companies, interested in the project. These parties sought out tracts,

\textsuperscript{101} Rabb, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{102} Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, p. xii.
\textsuperscript{103} Craven, Southern Colonies, p. 60.
such as Hamor's *True Discourse*, which described investment opportunities, to help them decide which actions would give them the best chances "to further profits" in their "pursuit of wealth."\(^{104}\) Wallace Notestein discusses the effect the companies and their literature had on English life saying, "The hope of making money quickly, ... possibly several hundred percent in a year or two, induced merchants to buy shares in every new company organized and drew in as investors many of the nobility and gentry. They forgot the enormous losses undergone and remembered the few successes. One result was that the investing classes and the whole English public gained a wider outlook upon the world ... The merchants took on a new importance in the mind of Parliament and Privy Councilors and the King. To the public they were becoming almost heroes."\(^{105}\) Merchants were the primary organizers of emigrants to Virginia,\(^ {106}\) so their enthusiasm was important both to the encouragement of small investors and to the increasing of the colony's population, and if it is true that their participation drew in investors from the nobility and gentry, it can be seen that an effective application for

\(^{104}\)Wright, *Middle-Class Culture*, p. 510.


support from them would be an encouragement for all to follow suit.

Hamor, in his *True Discourse*, blatantly stated that he wished to address merchants, for "the worthier sort, I mean those Nobles and others of honorable counsell interested therein, neede no spurre, their own innate virtues drives them a pace."\(^\text{107}\) Of course, this statement may be seen, in light of Notestein's observations, as itself being an encouragement to nobles to participate - that the enthusiastic participation of merchants would be sufficient influence on the nobility and gentry to participate as well. Hamor freely admitted that his purpose was to enlist participation in the project. Once he had made clear that there was a secure opportunity for immigration and the spread of Christianity, he promoted the opportunities that existed for trade. He explained:

Thus far I have applied myself to encourage personal adventurers; I would gladly now by worthy motives, allure the heavy undertakers to persist with alacrity and cheerfulness ... The merchant only wants some feeling and present return of those commodities which he is persuaded the country affordeth; to them therefore I will address my speech.\(^\text{108}\)

Hamor emphasized the wealth of commodities that Virginia held by stating that there were so many commodities that listing them would have been a waste of time, because "many treatises hath them at full, samples have been sent home, and no man

\(^{107}\) Hamor, p. 25.

\(^{108}\) Hamor, p. 25.
disputeth the goodness, or the quantitie there to be had"\textsuperscript{109}. It was the "hopefull, and marchantable commodities of tobacco, silke grasse, and silk wormes"\textsuperscript{110} that Hamor highlighted, plus the establishment of a monopoly on the fur trade with a group of Indians who had formerly only traded with the French.\textsuperscript{111} Hamor wrote that profits were sure to be obtained from such commodities by maintaining the colonial enterprise, and that those who were already united in the undertaking "shall be requited and paid with such treble interests."\textsuperscript{112}

Tobacco, of course, became Virginia's saving grace, as far as money-making commodities were concerned. Once a profitable crop had been developed, tobacco became that appreciable speculative element which encouraged people to invest with confidence, and also, it became the attraction for thousands who would risk the known, high mortality rate among immigrants for a chance to produce a profit.\textsuperscript{113} The popularity that tobacco farming was to achieve was not at all intended by the Virginia Company. Company officials were convinced that the only hope for a profitable return on investments lay in other, more exotic staples, and they were

\textsuperscript{109} Hamor, p. 25-26.
\textsuperscript{110} Hamor, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{111} Hamor, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{112} Hamor, sig. A2v.
\textsuperscript{113} Shammas, p. 151.
aware that the King despised the smoking habit. In fact, the Company eventually issued an order prohibiting individuals from raising more than 100 pounds of tobacco. However, this order was essentially ignored, as were the Company's demands to produce such other commodities as silk and potash, and when it began its policy of allotting acres of land for private ownership, it unwittingly contributed to a tobacco-based economy. Perhaps by endorsing this particular commodity, the growing of which the Virginia Company discouraged, Ralph Hamor was boldly expressing more the opinion of an experienced Virginia planter than that of a London company administrator, such as when he wrote, "... yet are there some now resident there ... I doubt not, will make, and returne such Tobacco this yeere, that even England shall acknowledge the goodness thereof."

The first shipment of John Rolfe's tobacco to arrive in England was accompanied by Hamor's True Discourse which lauded its quality as "answerable to west-Indie Trinidado," the most popular tobacco in England. Tobacco had already

114 Billings, et al., Colonial Virginia, p. 40.
116 Billings, et al., Colonial Virginia, pp. 40-41.
117 Hamor, pp. 34-35.
118 Hamor, p. 24.
been raised in Virginia. Hamor had been growing it, too, but none had been suitable to the English taste. Hamor, who according to historian Philip Alexander Bruce, "seems to have had an accurate knowledge of every grade of this commodity," said of Rolfe's new strain of Virginia-grown tobacco that "no country under the Sunne, may, or doth afford more pleasant, sweet, and strong tobacco." The discovery that this quality tobacco could be raised has been seen as "by far the most momentous fact in the history of Virginia in the seventeenth century." It has been noted that within three years of the arrival in England of John Rolfe's first supply of tobacco, tobacco planting was the colonists' chief preoccupation, utilizing every available acre of ground, including the streets of Jamestown. Rolfe's tobacco lived up to Hamor's marketing attempt, a fact which would have encouraged merchants, and all that followed their lead or took inspiration from it, to believe in Hamor's other premises.

The promise of private ownership of land, on which could be grown the valuable tobacco, was also an encouragement not only to the merchant class, but to the gentry and the working

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119 Bridenbaugh, p. 43.
120 Bruce, I, 218.
122 Bruce, II, 566.
123 Billings, et al., Colonial Virginia, p. 40.
classes, as well. Land was recognized as a commodity, as property, and "the accumulation of property was a paramount drive."\textsuperscript{124} Hamor announced that in 1614, Governor Dale "hath taken a new course" by allotting to each man in the colony "three English Acres of cleere Corne ground."\textsuperscript{125} This may have not been an abundance of land, but the change its allotment had brought was remarkable. With the freedom to grow produce for themselves, the colonists produced ten times as much as before.\textsuperscript{126} The value of this freedom was appreciated and within a year of the publication of the True Discourse, it became Company policy to distribute acres of land as a return for ownership of shares and as a reward for transporting new colonists to Virginia. Accumulation of property became possible.

The private ownership of land was one of the primary contributors to the saving of the Virginia colony for the British Empire. It encouraged investments during a time of underemployment in England. It has been said that

"To get out, even as a servant, was to have some chance at a living . . . Gentry and merchant sons could not easily get lands in England: either it was tied up or it was too expensive. In England, land meant power, and in America, where there was plenty, it might provide power in the end. There was on both sides some hope of wealth. For the


\textsuperscript{125}Hamor, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{126}Hamor, p. 17.
poor there was the hope that eventually they might find a product rich enough on land of their own to be able to be independent and so achieve a degree of upward mobility impossible in England; for the sons of the gentry and merchants there was adventure as well as land, hunting and venturing into new lands with always the hope of gold or some comparable riches to be won on their large new estates."\textsuperscript{127}

The \textit{True Discourse} introduced to the English public the Virginia promise of land to all who would support the endeavor by "addressing themselves thither,\textsuperscript{128} to all who would be "personall Adventurers."\textsuperscript{129} The Virginia Company continued to ease the terms on which land could be acquired, and this has been recognized as a principal device for attracting labor to the colony.\textsuperscript{130} To generate vital revenue, particularly from among those whose business was trade, the \textit{True Discourse} convinced shareholders that productivity and, therefore, profits would only increase. From those who had thus far only made one payment on shares purchased by subscription, the Virginia Company encouraged second and third payments by vesting the subscriber with immediate title to land.\textsuperscript{131} The \textit{True Discourse} convincingly reported to its readers that investments in pursuit of wealth, and whether of purse or

\textsuperscript{127}Quinn and Ryan, p. 168.

\textsuperscript{128}Hamor, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{129}Hamor, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{130}Sigmund Diamond, "From Company to Society: Virginia in the Seventeenth Century," \textit{American Journal of Sociology}, LXIII (1938), 469.

\textsuperscript{131}Craven, \textit{Southern Colonies}, p. 118.
person, were worth the while. Hamor’s Virginia was a lucrative enterprise for all Englishmen who would join the cause.

Proof that the English could build a competitive empire, was a cause of major importance to the image of England, both at home and abroad. The patriotic spirit of the English population was stronger than ever before. There was a national interest in colonies, explorations and new markets, for, as Theodore K. Rabb points out, they "brought more than profits; they also enhanced England’s prestige, particularly vis-a-vis Spain."\(^\text{132}\) The Spanish success in claiming and exploiting New World territories intensified the English sense of patriotism and imperialism. This, and the country’s economic needs, which many English economists felt could only be filled by the establishment of colonies, "gave to the London Company its national character, and made its efforts to establish a colony across the Atlantic a crusade, a movement in which every Englishman was virtually concerned."\(^\text{133}\) Elizabethan literature which catered to these interests is

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\(^{133}\) Wertenbaker, p. 13-14.
known to have been popular at the time, and Hamor's *True Discourse* was designed to appeal to the patriotic spirit.

Private investments, on which joint-stock companies, such as the Virginia Company of London, were dependent, had included investments from the throne. Royal patronage was a coveted source for large amounts of capital. Queen Elizabeth's heavy investments in the joint-stock syndicate that financed Sir Francis Drake's privateering expeditions, insured their success and reaped such a profit for the Queen that she was able to finance other successful military operations against the Spanish and the Irish. Appeals to patriotism and the spirit of imperialism in travel narratives were appeals to ruling monarchs for support of mutually beneficial enterprises. Hamor's *True Discourse* appears to have included such an appeal for royal favor. In fact, historian Edward D. Neill concluded just that when he wrote that Hamor's narrative "bears evidence of having been composed for the purpose of exciting the King . . . to contribute moneys for the use of the colony." However, large contributions of cash for the Virginia Company's needs were not forthcoming from James I. His preference was to receive a proper share of the profits for having contributed other

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135 Notestein, pp. 252-53.

forms of support. Social historian Sigmund Diamond wrote that "under the political and economic conditions of England, speculators in overseas expansion could count on no support from the government except verbal encouragement and some legal protection - and sometimes precious little of these."

Therefore, Hamor's apparent call to the Crown for support backed up by the newly existing advantages in Virginia, may be seen simply as a call to all those of patriotic mind - those who would take on the necessary "furthering" as an emulation of an action worthy of the King.

Hamor inserted many passages which spoke of the nobility and honor of the cause of the Virginia plantation for King and Country. There are some passages that clearly were designed to appeal to imperial pride. As mentioned above, when Hamor wrote about furthering the cause of converting the heathen Indians to Christianity, he claimed that they "shal breake out and cry with the rapture of so inexplicable mercie: Blessed be the King and Prince of England, and blessed be the English Nation." As if to follow through with this thought, Hamor related a decision of the Chickahominys with whom the Virginia colonists had established peace. He wrote that the Indians "should take upon them, as they promised, the name Tassantasses, or Englishmen, and be King JAMES his

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137 Diamond, p. 459.
139 Hamor, sig. A4v.
subjects, and be forever honest, faithfull and trustie unto his deputie in their countrie." Then, reminding his readers of imperial competition in the New World, Hamor asserted "the honor which [Captain Argall] hath done unto our our Nation, by displanting the French, there beginning to seate & fortifie within our limits . . . ." 

If the True Discourse could arouse royal interest, so, too, would it arouse the interest of other nobles, whose reputations would be enhanced by their association with such a patriotic endeavor. More important to the concern of the Virginia Company, "if the leaders of the nation thought it appropriate to become involved in commerce, then gentlemen everywhere could follow suit without any qualm about status." Support from these national leaders was vital to the colony's continuation at that time because, argued Rabb, "although the early prospect of great riches had faded, the landed classes could still be impelled—more easily than could large numbers of merchants—to invest in a great national enterprise." Non-merchant gentry participation brought additional financing to the undertaking while giving it an assurance it otherwise would have lacked. Just as the colony's success added prestige to the nation, participation

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140 Hamor, p. 13.
141 Hamor, p. 36.
142 Rabb, p. 100.
143 Rabb, p. 39.
by that nation's leaders added prestige to the colonial project. These men, when on business in their capital city, became aware of the colonial situation "through the people they met and above all, through the promotors' ceaseless propaganda . . . . And when successes were finally reported from . . . Virginia, their hesitation was overcome."\(^{144}\) It has been calculated that "almost half of all the gentry who contributed to trade during this half-century joined the Virginia Company. The fame and importance of England's first successful colonial venture was unequaled as a means of eliciting commitments to England's expansion."\(^{145}\) Hamor's *True Discourse* was the first full report of successes in Virginia in the areas of Christianity, trade and national honor, so important for gentry participation. It reported all of these areas in such a way as to appeal to the prevalent patriotic spirit. It justified the colonial enterprise as a valid booster of England's status among the nations of the World. For those already involved, Hamor's *True Discourse* was an easy to read, optimistically informative narrative. As a promotional tract, however, it had to be designed so as to entice newcomers to the action. This was best done by eliciting interest through the presentation of adventure.

"The lure of the sea, of adventurous voyages in search of

\(^{144}\)Rabb, p. 101.

\(^{145}\)Rabb, p. 81.
gold or shorter routes to Cathay," wrote historian Louis B. Wright, "touched the imaginations of Renaissance Englishmen," and "the tang of the sea permeated a great body of Elizabethan literature and stirred the interest of a public already eager to hear stories of far places." Among the members of the audience for these travel narratives was William Shakespeare, who apparently found in some inspiration for script material. Scholars agree that Shakespeare's The Tempest was directly influenced by travelers' accounts sent to England which reported the details of the 1609 shipwreck of the Sea Venture...

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Wright, Middle-Class Culture, p. 508. Examples of travel and geographical literature popular at the time of Hamor's True Discourse examined by Wright include: Edmund Scott, An Exact Discourse of the Subtilties, Fashions, Policies, Religion, and Ceremonies of the East Indians (1606); Theophilus Lavender, The Travels of Certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, [seventeen named locations in the Near and Middle East], and to Sundry Other Places... Very Profitable for the Helpe of Traveleurs, and No Lesse Delightful to All Persons Who Take Pleasure to Heare of the Manners, Government, Religion, and Customs of Forraine and Heathen Countries (1609); Thomas Coryate, Coryats Crudities, Hastily Gobbled Up in Five Moneths Travells in France, Savoy, Italy... Helvetia Alias Switzerland, some Parts of High Germany, and the Netherlands (1611); Anthony Shirley, Sir Anthony Shirley His Relation of His Travels into Persia (1613); and William Lithgow, A Most Delectable, and True Discourse, of An Admired and Painefull Peregrination from Scotland, to the Most Famous Kingdoms in Europe, Asia and Afrike (1614). Of literature particularly pertaining to the New World, some of the more popular pieces were: Richard Hakluyt, Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America and the Ilands Adjacent Unto the Same (1582); James Rosier, A True Relation of the Most Prosperous Voyage Made this Present Yeere 1605, by Captaine George Waymouth, in the Discovery of the Land of Virginia (1605); John Smith, A True Relation of Such Occurrances and Accidents of Noate As Hath Happned in Virginia Since the Planting of that Collony (1608); and William Strachey, The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania (1612).
in the Bermudas.\textsuperscript{147} This ship had been destined for Jamestown, and among its survivors was Ralph Hamor, who reported the accident in letters to the Virginia Company in London and mentioned it in his \textit{True Discourse}. The \textit{True Discourse} catered to the English hunger for adventure and achievement, which was "the hallmark of the times."\textsuperscript{148}

Almost any report about travels through dangerous situations or about encounters with strange peoples in strange lands would constitute adventure, and most early Virginia reports included at least one example. An adventure at sea was related by Gabriel Archer. He wrote, "There happened a most terrible and vehement storm, which was the tail of the West Indian hurricane; the tempest separated all our fleet one from another, and . . . being thus divided, every man steered his own course."\textsuperscript{149} The storm was survived, but


Archer’s subsequent presentation of the colonial situation was bleak and unadventurous with its reported lack of food and ineffective government. In another letter Captain Argall reports his adventure with the capturing of Pocahontas, "unresolving to possess myself of her by any strategem that I could use, for the ransoming of so many Englishmen as were prisoners with Powhatan." Governor Sir Thomas Dale followed upon this adventure reporting how he and one hundred fifty men "went unto Pamunkey River, where Powhatan hath his residence, and can . . . draw a thousand men together; with me I carried his daughter who had been long prisoner with us." John Rolfe later added romance to the adventure as he described his marriage to Pocahontas. He said he was "in love with one whose education hath been rude, her manners barbarous, her generation accursed." The problem with using these reports alone for promotional purposes is that they were short and comprised only one adventure. Captain Hamor included these same adventures among others in his lengthier presentation. Ralph Hamor in his relation took full advantage of the frontier setting for the telling of tales of adventure.

Surviving shipwrecks, subduing savages and taming the

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150 Argall, pp. 92-3.


wilderness were themes of adventure Captain Hamor used in his True Discourse. Early on in his report, Hamor reminded his audience of the adventure at sea that was part of his own coming to Virginia. He wrote of the "miraculous delivery of the scattered company cast upon the Bermudas."\(^{153}\) Then, he narrated exciting encounters with the exotic savages of Virginia, the primary cause of the adventure there. Hamor described Powhatan in his home as a kingly character. "On each hand of him," wrote Hamor, "was placed a comely and personable young woman, . . . the outside guarded with an hundred bowmen, with their quivers of arrows at their backs, which at all times and places attend his person."\(^{154}\) Hamor brought an English boy into the adventure story. Thomas Savage was reported to have lived with Powhatan for three years during which time he learned the language well enough to serve as an interpreter. The special relationship between the boy and Powhatan was evident in Hamor's report of his welcome by the chief. He wrote, "His first salutation was to the boy, whom he well remembered after this manner: My child, you are welcome, you have been a stranger to me these four years."\(^{155}\) Hamor made John Rolfe's romancing of Pocahontas even more of

\(^{153}\)Hamor, sig. A5r.

\(^{154}\)Hamor, p. 39.

\(^{155}\)Hamor, p. 38. For an extensive study regarding the service of the English interpreters who lived among the natives see Frederick J. Fausz, "Middlemen in Peace and War: Virginia's Earliest Indian Interpreters, 1608-1632," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XCV (1987), 41-64.
an adventure by explaining that Rolfe undertook the marriage task "merely for the good and honor of the plantation."\textsuperscript{156} Through such presentations, Hamor brought character to the names of the actors in his story.

Hamor's actors participated in exciting adventures. When peace with the natives could not be achieved through conciliation, successful warfare achieved the "revenge satisfying ourselves."\textsuperscript{157} At the sighting of ships supposed to be Spanish, Hamor reported that the governor "had resolved to encounter the supposed enemy, animating his people with the hope of victory."\textsuperscript{158} Certain Indians were reported to have been won over as trading partners with the English, because previously the Indians had "esteemed the French as Demi-Gods, and had them in great estimation, but seeing them vanquished and overcome by us, forsook them."\textsuperscript{159} These actions took place in an adventurous setting, as "the land is stored with plenty and variety of wild beasts, lions, bears, deer of all sorts."\textsuperscript{160} The towns were described as equipped for survival in a land of adventure. They were secured from Indian attack or foreign invasion, with fences, blockhouses, ordinance, and Englishmen who "there keep continual centinal for the town's

\textsuperscript{156} Hamor, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{157} Hamor, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{158} Hamor, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{159} Hamor, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{160} Hamor, p. 20.
security."\textsuperscript{161} The English in Hamor's narrative worried about Spanish attacks, outwitted French traders and fought and conquered the Indians to the accompaniment of "our drums and trumpets."\textsuperscript{162} Hamor's \textit{True Discourse} was not only a positive report on the state of the colony, highlighting remarkable advances benefiting the Church, the nation and the pocketbook, but it was an action packed adventure story capable of capturing the imagination of its English audience. Compared to contemporary accounts, it was ideal for its role as a promotion for the English colony of Virginia.

\textsuperscript{161} Hamor, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{162} Hamor, p. 10.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Even though he originally wrote his narrative "for my owne use and benefit" and "only to delight my selfe," Ralph Hamor expertly combined in his True Discourse all the ingredients necessary to create an effective advertisement. In the absence of records which might tell exactly how successful the True Discourse was as an instrument for promotion, evidence comes from the circumstances surrounding its distribution. Those circumstances which strongly suggest that the True Discourse beneficially affected the colonization of Virginia include the pamphlet's potentiality to do so (ie., the literacy and the literary preferences of its intended audiences and the aspects of the pamphlet which catered to those abilities and interests) and the fact that advances were made in those areas that it was hoped the pamphlet would beneficially affect (ie., immigration and investments). At a time when readership in England was relatively high, the True Discourse, when compared to other available reports of Virginia, was the best-suited document to effectively reach and influence a large segment of the

163 Hamor, sig. A2r.

predominately skeptical population. Although not yet in drastic proportions, colonist recruitment and revenue production did increase sufficiently to give the colony a state of permanency when previously it faced failure. Regarding revenue production, a full accounting should be given of what became the Virginia Company's fundamental source of income, the lottery. To not do so would be, as Ralph Hamor would have put it, omitting the circumstances most pertinent and material. So as not to be misleading, such an accounting would clarify the role the True Discourse played in advancing the lottery while giving due credit to those changes in the lottery itself which even furthered its success.

"Hamor's Discourse was published," wrote Craven, "and another try was made with the lottery." The lottery system was not altogether new to the English as a device for raising money for public or private purposes, for the first public lottery in England had been drawn in 1569. Yet, when the Virginia Company of London received royal permission to hold lotteries in 1612, it was still, according to social historian John M. Findlay, "among the very first such authorizations in English history." The Virginia lottery would eventually become so popular that it would inspire one seventeenth century observer to write, "the Gentry, indeed,

165Craven, Southern Colonies, p. 116.

might make it their Diversion, but the Common People make it a great part of their Care and Business, hoping hereby to relieve a Necessitous Life."\(^{167}\) However, this lottery was not always so popular. When the first Virginia Company lottery was drawn in June of 1612, the chief prize winner, a tailor, won "foure thousand Crownes in fayre plate."\(^{168}\) The Grocer's livery company received a large silver gilted salt,\(^{169}\) and one man received enough money to pay all his debts and obtain release from jail.\(^{170}\) Yet, the second lottery had a noticeable lack of support. This was attributed to the lack of success in Virginia.\(^{171}\) Starting in 1614, the Company began including in its advertisements for future lotteries, which were sent to livery companies and local political leaders, a Declaration of the present state of Virginia.\(^{172}\) The True Discourse, as Craven noted, was also circulated. Favorable reports about Virginia could boost the declining ticket sales if it was thought that even the

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\(^{168}\) Ashton, p. 225.


purchase of losing tickets would support a worthy cause.

The lottery of 1614 had to be postponed because of insufficient ticket sales.\textsuperscript{173} Hamor's \textit{True Discourse} was distributed by the Virginia Company in time for the resumption of the lottery drawings in November of 1615. Records are inadequate to determine just how successful this drawing was, but it certainly was no failure.\textsuperscript{174} Ticket sales were sufficient for this drawing to be held and for the system to continue, escalating each year in popularity. It was during this initial boost in sales, which allowed the lottery to resume after nearly dying due to lack of interest, that the \textit{True Discourse} beneficially affected the lottery. Recognized as having later contributed to the popularity of the lottery were two changes in its operation made in 1616. Lottery tickets were sold in remote areas where they were attractive because of a lack of any other public amusements, and the tickets were designed to reveal instantly, rather than later during a drawing, whether or not the purchaser won a prize.\textsuperscript{175} To those who participated in the lottery only because of these changes, the value of the colonial enterprise may have been of little importance. But for those for whom it


\textsuperscript{174}Johnson,"The Lotteries," p. 281.

\textsuperscript{175}Johnson, "The Lotteries," pp. 282, 286.
was important that the recipient of the revenue from the lottery sales be worthy of the benefit, and for all lottery participants before the 1616 changes were instituted, Virginia Colony promotional material may well have had an effect. The Virginia Company's Declaration, alone, would not have sufficed to sway the skeptical English public towards supporting the Company's fundraising effort. It was merely a one page broadside, primarily describing the lottery operation and its prizes, and only one of the ten paragraphs of text referred to Virginia, making a blanket statement that all the colonists were being well cared for. This report would have been supplemented by the more thorough, more enticing and more effective report about the colony, the True Discourse.

By 1617, the lotteries were quite popular and were bringing in sufficient income to cover the Company's operating expenses. One historian calculated from the scant evidence

176 The second paragraph of the "Declaration for the Certaine Time Drawing of the Great Standing Lottery" reads, "The second poyn for satisfaction of all honest and wel affected minds, is, that not withstanding this our meanes of Lottery answered not our hopes, yet have we not failed in that Christian care of the Colony in Virginia, to whom wee have lately made two sundry supplies of men and provisions, where wee doubt not but they are all in health and in so good a way with corne and cattell to subsist of themselves, that were they now but a while supplied with more hands and materials, we should sooner resolve upon a division of the Country by lot, and so lessen the generall charge, by leaving each several tribe of family to husband and manure his owne." Alexander Brown is convinced that this broadside is the same, but a later issue of "A Declaration of the Present Estate of the English in Virginia, with the Final Resoluccon of the Great Lotterye Intended for Their Supply," 1614, of which no copies are known to exist. See Brown, pp. 684-85, 760-66.
available that if all the tickets were sold in a lottery that was held in Leicester, "the Virginia Company would obtain a profit of more than L900, not counting operating expenses. Such a sum could supply more than one ship sailing to Virginia."\textsuperscript{177} Lotteries became established as the Company's main source of income until 1621. In fact, one of the main reasons that the Company's privilege of holding lotteries was revoked that year was because the lotteries had, in effect, become too popular. They were denounced on the grounds that they drained money from the poor of England.\textsuperscript{178} A contemporary observer wrote that the common people, through their participation in the lotteries "plunge themselves further into an Ocean of Difficulties."\textsuperscript{179} The suspension of the lottery dealt a serious blow to the Virginia Company. Without its revenue, it was extremely difficult for Company officials to keep operations going. This and other pressures caused the collapse of the Virginia Company in 1624. The lottery did not save the Company from doom, but it was necessary to the survival of the colony which the Company began. In 1621, John Smyth of Nibley said that the lotteries "had continued the reall and substantial food by which

\textsuperscript{177}Robert Carl Johnson, "The Running Lotteries of the Virginia Company," \textit{Virginia Magazine of History and Biography} 68 (1960), 158.

\textsuperscript{178}Johnson, "The Lotteries."

\textsuperscript{179}Ashton, p. 228.
Virginia had been nourished."\textsuperscript{180} The lottery was a success, but to achieve that success, it had to overcome an obstacle. Contemporaneously with the circulation of Hamor’s \textit{True Discourse}, there was a recognizable increase in Virginia Company’s revenue - some from the increase in membership, but primarily from the increase in lottery sales. This was used by the Company to purchase provisions and pay for shipping. Hamor’s pamphlet was a contributor to the renewed enthusiasm that helped make this change possible.

The other positive change in circumstances upon which the \textit{True Discourse} had influence was the rate of immigration, which began to increase shortly after the narrative’s publication. Virginia had a "reputation as a deathtrap [which] deterred people from going there."\textsuperscript{181} According to Hamor, "the greatest, and many enemies and disturbers of our proceedings, and that hath hither detered our people to addresse themselves into those parts have been onely two: emnity with the \textit{Naturals}, and the bruit of famine."\textsuperscript{182} Through his \textit{True Discourse}, he removed these obstacles. People afterwards lost their fear to stake claims in the New World. The enormous numbers that left England for Virginia

\textsuperscript{180}Johnson, "The Running Lotteries," p. 160.


\textsuperscript{182}Hamor, p. 16.
during the last years of the Virginia Company's involvement may be attributed to, what had been referred to as, the "hasty and reckless program of colonization" of the last Director, Sir Edwin Sandys. During these years, more new colonists arrived in Virginia than the community there could adequately provide for, so the mortality rate was extremely high. These Englishmen and women had been convinced that they would be safe and secure in the haven of the Virginia colony. So well did they believe that they could live in peace among the natives, a theme introduced by Hamor, that one wrote that "they [the Indians] came unarmed into our houses . . . in some places, sate down at Breakfast." This comment referred to the peaceful morning just before the surprise attack by the Powhatan tribes in March of 1622, so all troubles were by no means over. However, the money and the people so desperately needed by the colony in 1615 and so ably solicited by Ralph Hamor in his True Discourse came to Virginia's aid before the years of the Sandys administration, making it strong enough even to bear all its future troubles. The colony survived the 1610s, the most crucial period in its continuation.

The Virginia Company of London must have believed that Hamor's True Discourse contributed positively to this fruitful state of affairs. It is known that the Company valued Hamor

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183 Craven, Dissolution, p. 272. Also see pp. 152-54, 176, 272-74 regarding this fault as a contributor to the Company's dissolution.

184 Noel Hume, p. 764.
for his service. In recognition of his "valuable service to
the Colony," in 1617 the Company presented him with eight
shares and eight hundred acres of land in Virginia.\textsuperscript{185} He
became the organizer and administrator of a huge tract of land
called Hamor's Hundred. These grants added to his previous
holdings gave Hamor private interest in between 2,400 and
3,700 acres of land in Virginia.\textsuperscript{186} He was made a member of
the Council in 1621, and he served in that office, living in
Virginia, until his death in 1626. He has since been referred
to as one of the "most conspicuous and useful men in the
colony."\textsuperscript{187} The Company rewarded Hamor handsomely after it
survived a crucial time in history. Hamor had made his
appeal, and it was heard. Englishmen bought his American
dream.

Captain Ralph Hamor, Jr.'s \textit{A True Discourse of the
Present Estate of Virginia} was a significant contributor to
the establishment of a permanent English-American community in
Virginia. It was an authoritative and captivating piece of
literature, and it influenced its skeptical English audience
to support the colonial enterprise. The power of such
effective literature on the English mind has been explained as
follows:

[Elizabthans] thrilled to stories of great wealth

\textsuperscript{185}Sams, pp. xiii, 349.
\textsuperscript{186}Sams, pp. xiii, 346-47.
\textsuperscript{187}Sams, p. 347.
from the Indies, of unusual plants and animals, of exotic remedies for common ailments, and even of extraordinarily strange people, who scarcely seemed human because they neither dressed, nor talked, nor worshipped as the English did, and, oddest of all, because their shins were not white. Told and retold, these tales were the stuff of colonial promoters. . . who looked beyond their mere curiosity about unimaginable places and creatures. . . Honor, glory, and profit, their arguments ran, would come to those who took up the cause of overseas expansion, and their stress on these seemingly limitless possibilities helped to determine English thinking about America.  

The English colony, started at Jamestown, had problems which had threatened its survival. It has been said that "America had been oversold. The first colonists were convinced they were coming to a fruitful land in which food could be plucked from the trees and in which man could relax in a latter-day Eden." Hamor's task, through his True Discourse, was to sell what had become an unpopular notion, an English settlement on the James River in Virginia. Evidence suggests that to this end, for the period from mid-1614 to mid-1616, he was successful. Perhaps this was so because he truly believed in his report. His heart was in his work. It was indeed the "true" discourse of an English-American. A.L. Rowse comments on Hamor's American viewpoint when he writes:

"Already he writes from the perspective of the new country begun on the other side of the Atlantic- to achieve what unimaginable fulfillment in the course of time! "Next winter," he writes, "we doubt not to

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188 Billings, et al., Colonial Virginia, p.7.

have three or four ploughs going, which once compassed we shall in short time be able to repay England the corn they have lent us." Again, "no country under the sun may or doth afford more pleasant, sweet and strong tobacco . . . there are now residents there which, I doubt not, will make and return such tobacco this year that even England shall acknowledge the goodness thereof." Is it fanciful to think that in such phrases we hear the accents of the first Virginian, that is, the first American?  

Ralph Hamor stood as a living example of the promise of Virginia to Englishmen, and his True Discourse was the instrument by which he shared that promise.

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190 Rowse, Introd., True Discourse, p. xviii.
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"A Trewe Relacyon of the Procedeinges and Ocurrentes of Momente wch have hapned in Virginia from the Tyme Sr Thomas GATES was shipwracte uppon the BERMUDES an 1609 untill my departure outt of the Country wch was in ano Dni 1612," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Geneological Magazine, III (1922), 260-282.


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