

Colonial Virginia Module Jamestown Later

After looking for gold the English try lots of different resources to send back. What they really discover is that tobacco will grow and tobacco becomes this much sought-after item in the 1620s. You can get really rich off tobacco, assuming that you can control enough land and enough labor to work it. Over the next decades, as it turns out that Virginia's going to become a plantation economy, a society which grows tobacco, it changes the relationships tremendously with the Indians.

Within a couple of decades, there are plantations up and down the James River and it causes great conflict with the different Powhatan groups because those are lands that they use. They may not live on them in settled houses, but they use them for farming or they use them for hunting or they use them to fish along the river.

And the English have no understanding of, or respect for, the Indians' ideas of ownership and use of the land. So over time, it becomes really clear to the Powhatans that there are more and more English. They're here to stay. They want more and more land. And so you get a series of wars in the 1620s up through 1640s, when the Powhatans are pushed back.