

THE GENESIS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

A NARRATIVE OF THE MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND, 1605-1616, WHICH
RESULTED IN THE PLANTATION OF NORTH AMERICA BY
ENGLISHMEN, DISCLOSING THE CONTEST BETWEEN ENGLAND
AND SPAIN FOR THE POSSESSION OF THE SOIL NOW OCCUPIED
BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; SET FORTH THROUGH

A Series of Historical Manuscripts now first printed

TOGETHER WITH A REISSUE OF RARE CONTEMPORANEOUS TRACTS,
ACCOMPANIED BY BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA, NOTES, AND

Brief Biographies

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WITH 100 PORTRAITS, MAPS, AND PLANS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

M DCCC XCI

1891

LI. LETTER FROM FRANCIS PERKINS [?].

*GENERAL ARCHIVES OF SIMANCAS. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
VOLUME 2586, FOLIOS 112, 113.*

Copy of a letter which is quoted in another written by Don Pedro de Zuñiga, dated June 16, 1608, and is inclosed in that. On the envelope [containing this letter] is said: "Carta of Virginia to be sent to His Majesty."

"March 28th. — Most Illustrious Sir:¹ — After my due respects to you, with thanks for the many favors which you have done me, and the trouble you have taken on my account, I being unable to repay them except by praying God and desiring to serve you in every way that I can, I venture to beg of you another favor on the occasion which at this time presents itself, altho' I have given you just cause to abandon me by not taking leave of so good a friend as you have always been to me on the occasion of my departure. But the confidence I feel in your unfailing kindness will excuse me this time, since that neglect arose only from fear of some impediment in this my long-desired journey. I shall not fail, however, to make amends in part at least for this mistake, because if I do not succeed in securing your favor and in making my peace with "Madama," securing in my absence the success of my wishes, of which I had occasion to speak in petition to you before I left, so much more time being given to solicit this business in person, the whole matter will turn to my great prejudice and injury, but trusting entirely your usual kindness, I pray you will have the goodness to negotiate with Mess^{rs} William Wade, Tomas Smith, Walter Cope, Thomas Chancellor² (Chaloner), George More, and the

¹ The name of the person addressed is not given, but it was probably some member of the Cornwallis household. See the Cornwallis biographies.

² In converting these documents first into Zuñiga's cipher, then having

them deciphered for the benefit of Philip III. into old Spanish script, there is necessarily some confusion in the words, etc., sometimes, and this is, especially the case with the English names, which nearly always "come

others, that I be appointed one of the Council here in Virginia, as much for my honor as that I may be better able to pay my debts. There are some of the Members of the Council here, who understand State-affairs as little as I do and who are no better than I. It will be a matter of great delight to see coming here so many from our Country, so richly gifted and enlightened that I would not be worthy to appear among them.

“Concerning our Voyage and my views of the Country, I will state them to you as well as I can. We left Gravesend on Thursday, October 8. 1607. We reached Plymouth the following Thursday, where we remained 'till Monday, and as the wind was not favorable it became necessary on the next day to make port at Falmouth, where until Friday morning we suffered much from a great storm, after which, continuing our voyage; in five weeks and two days (Nov. 29.) we reached the island of Sancto Domingo, which is in the West Indies, and we were there all that day, trafficking with the Savages, who came on board naked, bringing us potatoes, plantains, pine apples, which are a very savory fruit, bread which they call “casadra” made of certain roots, parrots, cocks and hens, and other things, which they gave us in exchange for iron-hatchets, saws, knives, rosaries, bells and other similar trifles which they esteem very highly, and are of great usefulness to those who carry them with them in like voyages;—and thus sailing along the coasts the whole week past the other neighboring islands, we came near the Island of San Juan towards the Northern part, and fourteen days later, on Sunday (Dec. 20), we came in sight of America. On the following Thursday (Dec. 24) the Ship that kept us company, called the Phoenix, came to lose us in a very dense fog which rose when we were not more than ten or twelve leagues from the entrance to the port and we have not been able up to today to hear any news about it. There were in that ship about forty

out twisted” and are seldom given to give the right names whenever I perfectly correct. I have attempted can do so with any certainty.

men, who were to remain here with us. The ship called the John and Francis, in which Captain Newport was, came on the 2d of January to Jamestown. The river is very beautiful and wide, but full of shallows and piles of oystershells. The land lies low and is full of wood until you reach the coast. [At first] we always had warm weather; afterwards such bitter colds and such severe frosts that I and several others had our feet frost bitten. A month after this we came to a land where there was also great frost and snow. The country around there has a great abundance of wild swans, herons and cranes, wild ducks and other water fowl, with many other birds, as long as the winter continues, with the prettiest parrots that can be seen. So excessive are the frosts, that one night the river froze over almost from bank to bank, in front of our harbour, although it was there as wide as that of London. There died from the ^{ice}_{frost} some fish in the river, which when taken out after the ^{ice}_{frost} was over, were very good and so fat that they could be fried in their own fat without adding any butter or such thing. After our landing — which took place on a Monday (January 4.) there broke out on the following Thursday (January 7.) such a fire that, growing rapidly, it consumed all the buildings of the fort, and the storehouse of ammunition and provision, so that there remained only three, and all that my son and I possessed was burnt, except only a mattress which had not yet been carried on shore. Thanks to God we are at peace with all the neighbouring inhabitants of the country and trade with them in wheat and provisions. They attach very great value to copper which looks at all reddish. Their own great Emperor, or the “Vuarravance” which is the name of their Kings, has sent us some of his people, that they may teach us how to sow the grain of this country and to make certain *tools* [traps?] with which they *are going to fish* [catch fish?]. And certainly, as far as may be conjectured there is a great probability, that the land is very fertile and good, quite sufficient to support a million

of inhabitants in that part which we now occupy ; but it is more in clearing out the wood than in the multiplying of the grain that difficulty arises. I have sent to "Madama," *your wife*, a pair of tortoises, others to "Madama Catalina," and others to William Cornwallis, hoping that when our people make another excursion, I shall have better things to send. I send you an ear of the grain as it grows here, with two bales of our ordinary "flora," and other two to "Madama Catalina," and others to Mr. William [Cornwallis?] the elder. There are found there, many small animals with savory [*illegible*] inside (opossum?); when I meet any by chance I shall send them to you, that you and your friends may see them. There is here the greatest abundance of pasturage for any kind of cattle, especially for pigs and goats, even if there were a million of them. There is also to be found all around the fort, where we have cut down the trees a great quantity of strawberries and other plants pleasant to the taste. And, sir, considering that this misfortune of the fire has caused among us a general want of almost all things, especially as far as I am concerned, having suffered much during these past two years — so much in fact, that I have not even paper and ink to write to our friends! I beseech you to ^{prevent} *see to it that* "Madama Catalina" ^{from getting} *be not* angry with me, but that, yielding to the natural nobility of her heart and to the affection she has been pleased to show me in the past, she will endeavour, jointly with you and Mr. William Cornwallis most earnestly to recommend my claim to be admitted [to the council in Virginia?] especially with Mr. *William* [Thos.?] Smith, since he can do more in matters concerning this State, than anyone else. I beg also Madama Catalina will have the kindness to get Mr. William Cornwallis to send me for the value of ten pounds, such clothes as he may have that are worn out, whether it be large or small garments, doublets, trousers, stockings, capes, or whatever may appear fit to them, since the fire having burnt all we possessed, everything is needed and whatever may be sent

will be useful. I beg also you will ask Madama Catalina to negotiate in conformity with the same arrangement, with Mr. William "Sans,"¹ since I promise I will return to them the value of whatever they may send me, whilst I acknowledge that by her kindness and that of these gentlemen I and my people are still alive — and even if this should fall short of supplying the wants of so many, will "Madama" and those gentlemen do me and my son, at least, this favor out of their liberality to send us such things as are of little use to them and most valuable to myself. I beseech you, Sir, not to be offended by this my candor and daring boldness, but in your great kindness to remember me who am so far away and cut off from my friends, doing me at the same time the favor, in all reasonable things to be kind to my wife, if in any emergency she should have recourse to you. I pray you will communicate the contents of this letter to "Madama Catalina," and let her read it all, if it so please her. And herewith I most humbly commit myself to your protection and that of those gentlemen, in whose kindness and favor I put my entire confidence. I pray God may protect you and all.

"March 28, 1608.

Your servant for life.

"FRANCIS PERQUIN [Perkins?]

"of Villa James in Virginia."

[MEM. — I have only found one letter from Zuñiga (that of June $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁸ L. and the inclosure LI.) written at this time; but it is evident from the letter of Philip III. of July $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁸, (LIII.) that he also wrote others, namely, of June $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁷, $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁸, and ^{June 24} July $\frac{1}{2}$ ³, and sent them all to the King of Spain by Special Messenger Rivas. The news brought by Newport (May 20) evidently caused a stir in the South Virginia Company and they were hastening his return. The

¹ I am not certain who "Mr. William Sans" was.

Newport arrived at Jamestown on Saturday evening January 2, landed on Monday, the 4th, and Jamestown

was burnt on Thursday, the 7th. The date given in Wingfield's Discourse (*Archæologia Americana*, iv. p. 92) as "the viijth of January" should be I am sure "the iijth of January."