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Shipping between England and Virginia 1606-1630

Susan Elizabeth Hillier

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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SHIPPING BETWEEN ENGLAND AND VIRGINIA

1606-1630

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By

Susan Hillier

1970

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Susan E. Hillier.
Author

Approved, May 1970

Richard M. Brown
Richard M. Brown, Ph. D.

David B. Quinn
David B. Quinn, Ph. D.

Thad Tate
Thad Tate, Ph. D.

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ABSTRACT

Since the Virginia Colony was, in the first years, dependent on supplies from England, shipping is an important factor in any discussion of early Virginia. The major part of the study deals with the organisation that was established to deal with the ships and their cargoes in England and in Virginia both during the period of Company rule and in the first six years of Crown control. One chapter concerns the actual voyage to Virginia.

The number of ships that were dispatched to Virginia in these years varied widely in each year. Many difficulties were encountered in all stages of organisation, some of which were beyond the control of the Company or the Crown. These difficulties were common to all those engaged in shipping in this period or stemmed from the fact that the organisation of a colony was still a relatively novel experience. However, many difficulties and delays were caused, during the Company period, by the deficiencies of this organisation. There was never sufficient capital to allow the members to plan ahead and thus to prevent delays in the dispatch of ships. Such delays were almost fatal to the survival of the colony.

As far as the voyage itself was concerned, considering the length of the passage and the inexperience of many of the seamen, of such a voyage, accidents were surprisingly rare. The main problems of the voyage were caused by insufficient planning on the part of the Company, adventurers or the Crown. In the case of the Company, the difficulties were created by the common problem of the lack of capital.

SHIPPING BETWEEN ENGLAND AND VIRGINIA

1606-1630

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Company, chartered in 1606, was first and foremost a commercial organisation. Its main purpose was to promote trade between itself and the colony it established in Virginia and thus reap a rich reward for its members. This profit was to be gained from the exploitation of raw materials or the establishment of industry much on the lines that Richard Hakluyt had set down in his Discourse on Western Planting. In exchange for these raw materials or industrial products, the Company would send essential supplies to the colony. However the reality was somewhat different. It was found in the early years that instead of obtaining a profit from trade with Virginia the Company was running at a loss due to a failure of the colonists to produce goods in any quantity for exchange. Instead there was an extreme reliance on England for supplies of food, clothing, household goods, implements and arms. It was only towards the end of the period under surveillance that trade between England and Virginia began to show a favourable balance towards the former, caused by the establishment of tobacco as the staple crop.

Until the colony became self-supporting its very existence depended upon the prompt arrival of provisions. The early accounts of Jamestown reveal that the colonists measured time by the intervals between supplies. The ships which brought out colonists and transported cargoes back and forth were the most important connecting links between the colony and its proprietors as later they became the link between Virginia and the Crown. The ships also served as the only means of communication of messages,

orders, and complaints. Often the masters or captains of the ships would not only deliver the written information but would themselves report on the situation in the colony or on the needs of the plantation and on the situation in England. There are many references in the records to testify to the reliance of the colony on the speedy dispatch of shipping with instructions from England. In 1625 the Governor and Council went so far as to say that the failure of one ship to bring letters of directions was a greater inconvenience than the failure of the same ship to bring adequate provisions.¹ Alderman Robert Johnson, onetime Deputy Treasurer of the Company, believed that the lack of frequent correspondence between the Company and the colony was the reason that the former could not appreciate the difficulties experienced by the latter, and conditions were deteriorating as a result.² The distance between England and Virginia was great enough to be a major factor in the delay in correspondence without exacerbating the difficulty by inefficient communication. Thus the passage of shipping across the Atlantic Ocean is an important factor in any consideration of the early years of the Virginia Colony. This is, therefore, the purpose of the present paper. The study has been broken down into three parts, organisation of shipping in England for the dispatch of the vessels, the actual voyage and provisions for dealing with the ships in Virginia and on their return to England.

¹Governor and Council in Virginia. A Letter to the Commissioners for Virginia, January 4, 1625, Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., Records of the Virginia Company of London (4 vols., Washington, 1906-1935), IV, 568.

²Parts of a Draft of a Statement Touching the Miserable Condition of Virginia, May or June 1623, ibid., 175.

CHAPTER I

ORGANISATION OF SHIPPING IN ENGLAND

Between the years 1606 and 1619 trade was limited to those ships sent by the adventurers of the Company. The latter was given power in the charter of 1606 to arrest any vessels found trading in the confines of the colony and was allowed to impose fines for the violation of this. Two and one-half per cent of goods traded if the offenders were English and five per cent if they were foreigners.¹ This duty was increased to five per cent and ten per cent respectively by the charter of 1609.² Trade within the Company was to be confined for the first five years to two or three stocks at the most.³ Supplies were purchased with the money contributed and transported as the property of the subscribers as a body. The commodities were to be returned from Virginia to England for sale and the proceeds divided among the adventurers in proportion to their shares. In the 1609 charter membership of the Company was widened and fifty-six corporations of the city of London and more than 650 individuals united themselves into corporations of private adventurers for the advancement of the plantation. In some instances trade

¹Samuel M. Bemiss, ed., Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London (Williamsburg, 1957), 7-8.

²Philip Bruce, The Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols. (New York, 1907), II, 268.

³Bemiss, Three Charters, 18.

associations contributed not only money but also merchandise.⁴

The organisation of purchase and collection of supplies for the colony was left in the hands of the Deputy Governor, who was the chief administrative officer of the Company. He was also responsible for the dispatch of shipping and passengers. At all times he was to act in accordance with the instructions from the Court, Council and the Treasurer. For his assistance he had a committee of sixteen chosen by the Court of the Company.⁵ It was this organisation that was responsible for sending out all the shipping to Virginia until 1616. It appears that the Company decided when a ship would be sent out and publicly announced this fact. In 1609 the members declared their intention to send out supplies under De La Warr.⁶ Often such a declaration was in the form of a broadside signed by the Council. Attached to this would be a plea for men as in the case of the broadside of January 1611 which urged all interested skilled tradesmen to gather at a certain London address by the end of the month so that they might go to Virginia in the expedition of Sir Thomas Gates in the following March.⁷ More usual however was a plea for money which could either be attached to the broadside or published separately. The Council sent out a circular letter on February 20, 1611 urging people to adventure money for the proposed expedition. They stated that £30,000 was needed of which £18,000 had

⁴Bruce, Economic History, II, 260-267.

⁵Wesley F. Craven, The Virginia Company of London, 1606-1624 (Williamsburg, 1957), 42.

⁶A True and Sincere Declaration, December 14, 1609, Alexander Brown, ed., Genesis of the United States, 2 vols. (Boston, 1890), I, 337-353.

⁷Broadside by the Council, January 1611, ibid., 445.

already been collected.⁸ Sometimes the Privy Council would interest itself in raising money to supply the colony. This body wrote to the City Companies of London in 1614 urging them to adventure sums.⁹ Once cash had been raised, the Deputy Governor and the Committee could then fit out the ships for the voyage. Such arrangements appear to have been unsatisfactory. In the years 1612 to 1616 nine vessels were sent out. Thus it was decided by the charter of 1616 to revise the procedure for the dispatch of shipping.

After 1616 the Company allowed certain groups of private individuals within the Company to send out vessels. Thus in 1617 the Edwin arrived in Virginia with goods for trading under the patent issued to John Martin.¹⁰ The goods dispatched by the Company as a whole were sent out in the Magazine Ship, the first of these, the Susan, left England in late July 1616.¹¹ However this monopoly seems to have been very unpopular with the colonists who wanted free trade so that they could obtain a more varied selection of goods at more competitive prices.¹² In 1618 a petition was presented to Lord Zouch, the Warden of the Cinque Ports, in which permission was sought by a Captain Andrews of the Silver Falcon to make a trading voyage to barter fish caught off the Canadian coast

⁸ A Circular Letter of the Virginia Council, February 20, 1611, ibid., 463-465.

⁹ Privy Council to the City Companies, April 7, 1614, ibid., II, 685-686.

¹⁰ Alexander Brown, The First Republic in America (Boston, 1898), 258.

¹¹ Bruce, Economic History, II, 281.

¹² John S. Bassett, "The Relation between the Virginia Planter and the London Merchant," Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1901), I, 554.

for commodities in Virginia. Zouch granted this request.¹³ On November 17, 1618 a debate was opened in the Council of the Company as to whether the magazine should be maintained or dissolved and free trade allowed.¹⁴ Arguments followed and on January 12, 1619 dissolution was agreed upon and a few weeks later the Treasurer informed the Court that the Magazine had voluntarily dissolved itself and free trade had been declared.¹⁵ Part of the reason for this was the precarious nature of the Company finances and some of the more serious charges brought against the administration of Sir Thomas Smith related to the mismanagement of the Magazine.¹⁶ Investigation of its finances was still taking place in 1623.¹⁷

From 1619 to the dissolution of the Company in 1624 shipping between England and Virginia took on a dual aspect. First, there were those ships sent out by the Company members entering into a joint stock. Such ships retained the old name of the Magazine. Second, there were those dispatched by adventurers who applied to the Company for a commission. It appears that the Company concerned itself more with these licenses than with the magazine ship. In 1623 the Company wrote to the Governor and Council in Virginia and informed them, "we procured an underwriting of £700 to be sent in meal by way of a magazine; as for all other commodities we found by the undertaking of private persons you would be

¹³ Brown, First Republic, 284.

¹⁴ Records of the Virginia Company, I, 272-273.

¹⁵ Ibid., I, 293 and 302.

¹⁶ Craven, Virginia Company, 42.

¹⁷ Records of the Virginia Company, I, 218.

supplied even to superfluity."¹⁸ The magazine ship tended to arrive in Virginia after the best of the tobacco crop had been taken care of by private traders. In 1621 the entire crop had been sent out of the colony.¹⁹ The basic cause of such a situation was the constant financial difficulties which the Company found itself in. These problems seemed to have had a profound effect on the efficiency of dispatch of shipping.

A complicated organisation was set up to deal with the ships. A committee was established in June 1620 to work with the Deputy Governor (John Farrar) for dispatching the ships and for buying provisions for Virginia. At least two men were to be elected to deal with the latter one of whom was usually the Husband. They were to bring their accounts and bills to be examined by the auditors. This committee was also to take care of the invoices of provisions to be sent to Virginia.²⁰ These invoices were to be kept in an account book.²¹ Apparently a copy of the invoice was sent along with the goods.²² The account books were to be kept by the secretary.²³ The minute attention to detail in these provisions was probably a direct result of the bad bookkeeping during the time that Sir Thomas Smith was Treasurer. Perhaps the finances of the operation were better supervised in this later period, but this did not

¹⁸Ibid., IV, 263.

¹⁹Bassett, Virginia Planter, 555.

²⁰Orders and Constitutions for the Better Governing of the Actions and Affairs of the said Company here in England Residing, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 351.

²¹Ibid., I, 356.

²²Ibid., III, 527.

²³Orders and Constitutions etc., ibid., 352.

seem to make the Company any more efficient in dispatching ships.

It is possible, through the records of the Company, to trace the procedure whereby ships were obtained and victualled for the colony. On November 4, 1620, at a meeting of the General Court, the members were urged to think about the preparation of ships to be sent out the following spring.²⁴ There then began a search for suitable vessels. The task was left in the hands of Farrar's committee who later reported on the availability of ships and negotiated terms with the owners. Thus the committee reported in April 1621 that they "had made enquiry and had already found out a very good ship called the George very fitting for their purpose."²⁵ Most of the ships seemed to have been in the ownership of adventurers of the Company which made the search for shipping somewhat easier. In the case of the George the committee were able to report that they had already made enquiries and had found this ship which belonged to a Mr. Wiseman, a member of the Company.²⁶ The owner of the ship and the committee would then negotiate terms for her employment and present these to the Court of the Company. The Court urged the owner to have the ship ready for loading on a certain date at a specified location. A typical agreement was that made between the owners of the Abigail and the Company in 1620. "To transport in her 200 persons and 50 ton of goods, for £700 in hand and £600 upon certificate of arrival in Virginia."²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., I, 410.

²⁵ Ibid., 455.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 410.

To gain money to send out the ships the Company issued a list of victuals and goods to be sent. On the inner leaf was written, "I will adventure," leaving a blank space for the names of the adventurers and the amounts they were willing to venture. The signatories bound themselves to pay the sum within ten days.²⁸ The particular list cited here does not appear to have been particularly successful. Of the £1,800 needed only £727 was collected. However, a fair amount must have been obtained on other occasions. In December 1621 the Company writes informing the colonists that almost £1,000 has been gathered, "for the sending of Shipwrights and Housecarpenters; and so far has the business already proceeded, as we may assure you, and you the colony, that by God's Blessing, they shall by the end of April at the furthest have the necessary supply among you."²⁹

Judging by the records of the Company the bulk of the time of the members when they were not arguing among themselves was spent dealing with the requests of private adventurers for commissions. The adventurers' ships were usually loaded with supplies and passengers before a commission was applied for. Often several such individuals would get together and form a charter party for the provisioning of a ship. One such was that between Richard Berkeley and Associates and William Ewens for the ship the Supply.³⁰ This seems to have been a common practise in England at the time. Ralph Davis notes that large partnerships, often of ten or twelve, and sometimes of more than twenty members were formed.

²⁸W. N. Sainsbury, ed., Calendar of State Papers Colonial (Kraus Reprint, 1964), first published 1860, I, 49.

²⁹Records of the Virginia Company, III, 530.

³⁰Ibid., 382.

Affairs would be managed on behalf of them by one or two partners or even by the master of the ship. It was the duty of the latter to see that the terms of the charter were observed and to protect the interests of the owners.³¹ Sometimes the adventurers would send over a ship destined only for their particular plantation. For example the adventurers of the Society of Truelove sent a ship in July 1623 for the sole benefit of their plantation.³² Similarly the Gift was sent by the Society of Martin's Hundred in 1619.³³ The adventurers then informed the Company of their intentions to send out a ship, and often the latter would send men or provisions on the vessel. In December 1619 the Court was informed that the committee had agreed, if the Court was willing, to give Captain Thompson £1,200 to transport for them two hundred men and £100 for fifty tons of freight. Of this sum £700 was to be paid at once and £600 when the ship landed in Virginia. Thompson agreed to these terms if the Company would lay in half a ton of aqua vitae for their sick men (obviously he was none too optimistic about a smooth passage).³⁴ The Court gave its consent to such arrangements, and a warrant for payment was drawn up.³⁵ The Company would then draw up a covenant promising to pay the requisite sums.³⁶ The Company also informed other adventurers of the impending departure of ships so that they might be able to send

³¹Ralph Davis, The Rise of England's Shipping Industry (London, 1962), 106.

³²Ibid., IV, 252.

³³Ibid., I, 277-278.

³⁴Ibid., II, 465.

³⁵Ibid., 289.

³⁶Ibid., III, 499-500.

passengers and goods on them. If so they were to give notice to the Company in order that a commission might be drawn up.³⁷ To some extent merchants and adventurers spread their goods on different vessels as a precaution against loss at sea. Many commissions were granted by the Company before its dissolution. On August 6, 1623 five were granted at one meeting of the court.³⁸ Several of these commissions have survived and the format for each is very similar. The ship is named and her tonnage given. The captain is urged to depart as soon as possible and to take the most direct course to the colony with the one provision that he does not interfere with the shipping of other nations except if he were provoked.³⁹ The captain of the ship would then enter into a covenant with the Company to promise to abide by his commission.⁴⁰

By 1622 the Company was a little confused about the numbers of people and amounts of goods being shipped. In October of that year John Ferrar informed the Court that some of the Company had recently observed that there were some errors and defaults in the transporting of people and goods which if not stopped would cause some harm. He was particularly worried about the lack of proof that passengers had been put on board and there had been cases in which the goods of a person that had died had been embezzled by the sailors.⁴¹ The following month a committee reported and recommended certain points for the redressing of such grievances.

³⁷Brown, First Republic, 285.

³⁸Records of the Virginia Company, III, 624.

³⁹Commission to Captain William Tracy, ibid., III, 368-369.

⁴⁰William Ewens, Covenant with the Company for Virginia, ibid., 365-366.

⁴¹Ibid., II, 112.

Persons who wished to go to Virginia should by law give their names to the Company and no ship's master should carry anyone without first giving the names of the people to the Company.⁴² Two of these lists have survived. One refers to the passengers shipped from Bristol in the Margaret under Captain Woodleefe on September 15, 1619. It records the names of the thirty-six passengers.⁴³ On the arrival of the ship in Virginia, a similar certificate was issued on December 4, 1619 which contained the information that thirty-five passengers had arrived, "in safety and in perfect health." This was followed by a list of the fortunate survivors.⁴⁴

The organisation of shipping seems to have continued on similar lines after the dissolution of the Company. This is not surprising since the Crown was content to follow the lines of conduct established by the Company. There was still a recognised company of adventurers enjoying rights with reference to Virginia trade.⁴⁵ Commissions were still granted. On September 11, 1626 one was given to the Peter and John and it is of similar format to those issued by the Company.⁴⁶ The Privy Council also sent out letters to various ports asking the ships be dispatched to the colony. Such was sent to the Mayor and Aldermen of Southampton. The reply to this letter has been preserved. They assure the Privy Council that one ship is setting out and another is

⁴² Ibid., 125.

⁴³ Ibid., III, 213.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁵ Wesley Frank Craven, The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1689 (Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 150.

⁴⁶ Acts of the Privy Council of England-Colonial Series (Kraus Reprint, 1966), first published 1908, Vol. I, 110.

being prepared at Plymouth.⁴⁷ In fact the former was the first to be sent out under the control of the Crown. The King facilitated the passage of ships by forbidding the interruption of their voyages by impressment or any other impediment.⁴⁸ This action was necessitated because one ship, the Elizabeth, had been arrested and taken into the service of the King. She managed to procure a discharge.⁴⁹ The Crown was generally successful in fostering trade with Virginia. In 1628 John Preen testified that in two years he had transported supplies to the colony on four separate occasions.⁵⁰ Most of the trade in this period was in the hands of private individuals, since tobacco had been well established as the staple commodity. It has been estimated that by 1629, 1,500,000 pounds was being shipped to England.⁵¹

There was one further factor, customs. By the first charter the Company had been granted an exemption from duties for seven years.⁵² This was repeated in the second charter.⁵³ It also was reiterated in the 1612 charter, for the Crown began to enforce duties in 1619. Early in 1620 this was fixed on tobacco at one shilling per pound. What is important to the present discussion is that duties were placed on goods outwards which was the cause of further delays to the ships. However, it

⁴⁷Calendar State Papers Colonial, I, 76.

⁴⁸Acts of the Privy Council-Colonial, I, 96.

⁴⁹H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia (Richmond, 1924), I, 71.

⁵⁰Brown, First Republic, 298.

⁵¹Charles E. Hatch, Virginia and Trade (Williamsburg, 1957), 18.

⁵²Bemiss, Three Charters, 8.

⁵³Ibid., 49.

does appear that the ships went through customs at the same time as a commission was being granted. In the case of the Peter and John in 1626, customs were checking from September 6 to September 23 and the commission was granted on September 11.⁵⁴

The various steps necessary before a ship could be dispatched to Virginia all took a considerable amount of time. On the basis of accurate figures that are extant, some estimation of times has been attempted. The time between the drawing up of a charter party and the granting of a commission varied a great deal. The Margaret in 1619 was granted a commission seventeen days after her charter party and yet the Supply in 1620 received hers fifty days before her charter party. Forty-four days was the average time between the drawing up of a charter party and the date of sailing, although this varied. The Supply in 1620 left London on the 27 September, the charter party having been drawn up on August. Whereas the charter party of the Abigail was settled on November 13, 1620 and she did not sail until the February of the following year.⁵⁵ Usually a commission was granted after the ship had been prepared as in the case of the Peter and John. There is also some discrepancy in the time between the grant of the commission and the date that the ship left. Since the Company seems to have issued commissions in batches, perhaps ships in varying stages of readiness would apply at the same time. From the five commissions given on August 6, 1623, the ships set out on dates ranging from August 14 (the George) to sometime in November (the Jacob).⁵⁶ The

⁵⁴ Port Book, Port of London, Searchers Book Overseas Exports, Christmas 1625-Christmas 1626, P.R.O. E 190/29/4, fol. 129.

⁵⁵ See Appendix A, page 72.

⁵⁶ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 624.

average time between the granting of a commission and the estimated date of sailing was forty-two days. The shortest time was the eight days taken by the George and the longest was the 101 days taken by the Jacob.⁵⁷ It also seems to have taken an average of thirty days from the time that a ship left customs to the time that she sailed. Thus considerable delays could be experienced.

Delays were also the result of unintentional causes. Often there is an apology in letters to Virginia about some delay or other without any explanation as to why this occurred. Sir William Throckmorton wrote to Sir George Yeardley in September 1619 and noted that "we have somewhat dispatch of our business by reason of some hindrance that unexpectedly arose . . ."⁵⁸ Another cause of delay must have been the failure of supplies to arrive or to be loaded on board ship at the time that they were scheduled. In one case the failure of silkworm seed to arrive was blamed for the ship's delay.⁵⁹ Another interesting reason quoted for delay was that there was insufficient space in a ship for all the goods that people wished to transport. The only way to avoid this was to provide more ships which the Company was unable to do. In 1623 the master of the George was "not able to take in all the goods of private men that are ready to be transported but hath refused as he affirmeth above thirty ton which is 120 heads."⁶⁰ In 1621 the Council writes another apologetic letter to Virginia: "The adventurers had purposed to have sent some

⁵⁷ See Appendix B, page 73.

⁵⁸ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 212.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 527.

⁶⁰ Ibid., IV, 253.

quantity of beans and peas for trade, but the ships hold (the ordinary calamity of Virginia voyages) proves too scant."⁶¹ This type of delay can only be attributed to bad management on the part of the Company. It would also add to their costs. Since there was no available shipping to transport convicts to the colony in 1619, the Company decided to maintain them until there would be shipping provided.⁶²

More fundamental reasons caused perhaps the greatest delays to shipping during the lifetime of the Company. There was never sufficient cash within the coffers of the Company to allow the luxury of planning the shipping in advance. From reading the records one is left with the impression that the Company lived from day to day rather than from year to year. Thus there were constant excuses of lack of money when new plans were being suggested or supplies needed to be dispatched. Apparently the members even found difficulty in securing funds for the second supply in 1608.⁶³ The disturbing delay in the arrival of the Lord De La Warr in 1610 is easily explained. The joint stock subscription of 1609 had been the product of a high pressure sales campaign and many subscribers had hardly put their names to the list before doubts and regrets beset them. They were slow in paying up and some paid only in part or not at all. Reports reached London in the autumn of 1609 of the apparent loss of Somers, Gates and Dale and of the resulting confusion in the colony, making the prospect of equipping another expedition even more unlikely. In the winter a special appeal to delinquents was circulated

⁶¹Ibid., III, 527.

⁶²Ibid., I, 271.

⁶³Bruce, Economic History, II, 246.

by the Council. It put the best possible face on the situation and ended with a simple appeal to conscience. Men had promised money and on this assurance other men had staked their lives; to abandon them in their misfortune was to bear the guilt of their deaths.⁶⁴ One captain informed the Company that he would undertake to ship to Virginia six men skilled in making glass and beads.⁶⁵ He asked for financial help in July 1621, and by November it was decided that the Company was unable to finance such projects since the common stock was "totally exhausted."⁶⁶ Often, as in the case of De La Warr's ship, it was difficult to get money from adventurers, especially if news of the poor state of the colony or some disaster reached England. The members of the Company seemed to have spent much time in covering up bad news. Inevitably certain information did become common knowledge. Thus, "the rumour of Lord De La Warr's death has discouraged some who promised to adventure money and dettered others who offered to go in person."⁶⁷ The Company tried to make the best of these difficulties and often applauded themselves that they managed to achieve so much under such adversities. In 1615, the members state that, despite the fact that the lottery had not measured up to expectations," yet have we not failed in the Christian care in the colony of Virginia, to whom we have lately made two sundrie supplies of men and provisions."⁶⁸

⁶⁴Craven, Southern Colonies, 101.

⁶⁵Records of the Virginia Company, I, 483.

⁶⁶Ibid., 557.

⁶⁷Calendar of State Papers Colonial, I, 19.

⁶⁸A Declaration for the Lottery, February 22, 1615. Brown, Genesis, II, 162.

However by far the greatest deterrent to the speedy dispatch of shipping was the dissolution of the Company. As soon as rumours of trouble began to circulate there was a natural reluctance of people to venture money in what looked suspiciously like a dying cause. This came to the notice of the Privy Council which issued a proclamation in October 1623 to order people to speed up their arrangements to go to Virginia:

It is therefore ordered by their lords and thought fit to be published to the Company. That 'tis his majesties absolute command that the ships which were intended to be sent at this time to Virginia, and are in some readiness to go, be with all speed sent away for the relief of those that be there and the good of that plantation, and this be presently done without any step or delay.⁶⁹

These ships seem to have been sent out. However, immediately after the Crown took over control there are complaints by the members of the old Company about the state of shipping in 1625. This was undoubtedly engendered to some extent by the feeling that they had been shabbily treated, but there is some truth in the statement that people were discouraged from going because of events in England: "As for adventuring hence, what by the disgracings of the action itself, and the undeserved sufferings of the late Company, the business is brought to such a stand, as seems incredible: there being no preparacon that we can heare of not only of any ship but of any man to go to Virginia."⁷⁰ In fact, as has

⁶⁹ Entry Book of Letters, Commissions, Instructions, Charters, Warrants, Patents and Grants concerning Virginia and the Bermudas and especially relating to the Companies of these Colonies. P.R.O. Class C.O. 5/1354 fol. 199-200.

⁷⁰ Discourse of the Old Company, Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., Narratives of early Virginia, 1606-1625 (New York, 1957), first published 1907, 442.

been seen, plans were afoot to dispatch ships to the colony.

These delays tended to breed other difficulties which could lead to even further postponements. There was often trouble with the passengers. One group who were waiting on the Isle of Wight (the customary place from which passengers were collected) for their ship complained to the Company about the delay in leaving to the Company and sent a messenger to procure the dispatch of the ship since they had laid out all that they were worth in providing for the voyage and had nothing left to maintain themselves whilst on shore.⁷¹ Passengers were known to leave the ships whilst they were waiting. The delay must have allowed them to think twice about 3,000 miles of ocean. One boy servant ran away from the Marmaduke in 1626.⁷² Two men absconded from the Truelove in 1628.⁷³ There are also instances of a fight on board ship, and one crowd of passengers got so bored that they enlivened their wait by piercing and drawing on a butt of wine which was originally intended for consumption of the colonists.⁷⁴ Naturally such delays also increased the cost to the Company and adventurers for the hire of the ship and provisioning of the crew and the passengers.

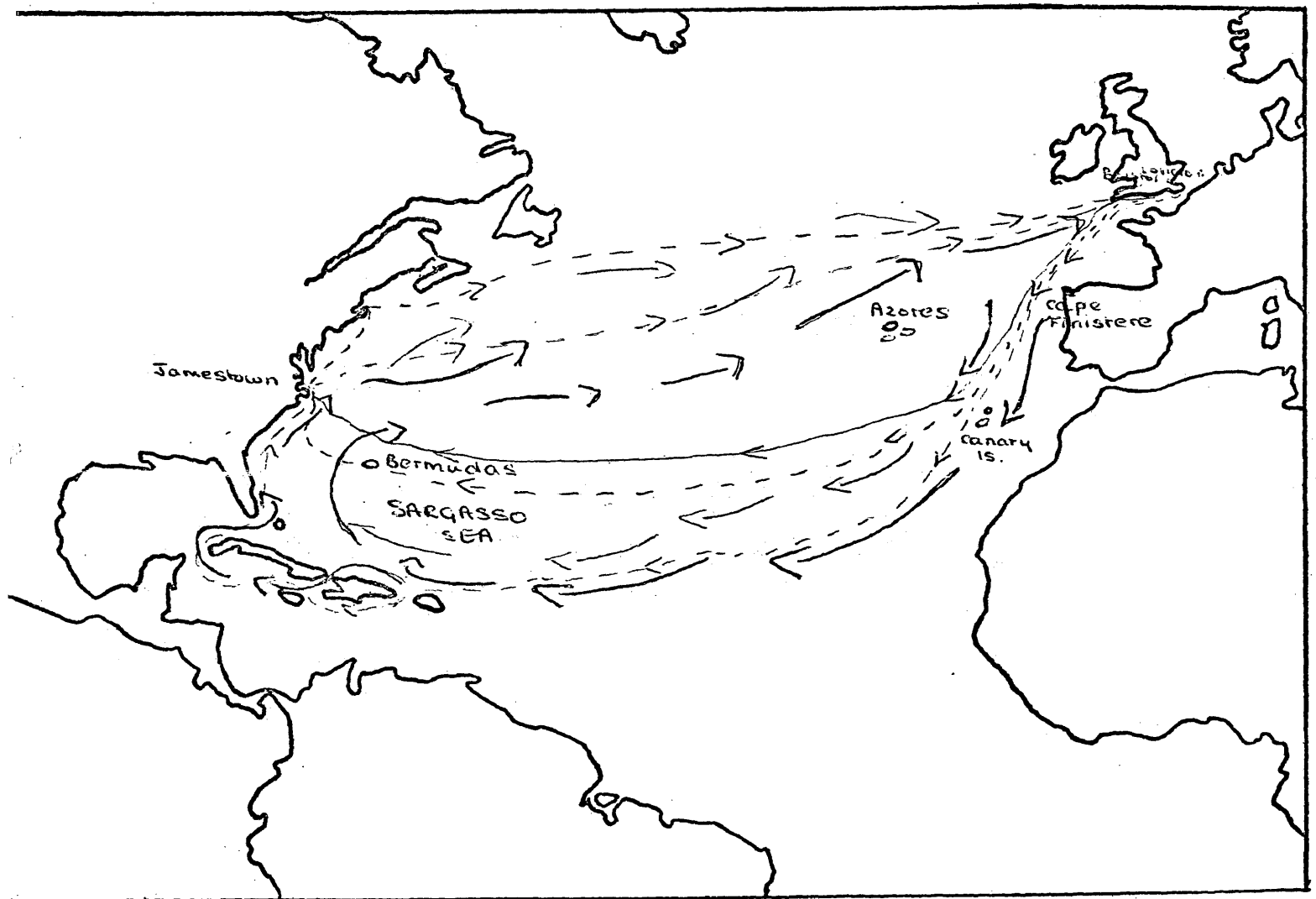
⁷¹Records of the Virginia Company, I, 379.

⁷²Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 134.

⁷³Ibid., 160.

⁷⁴Ibid., 144.

THE MAJOR ROUTES TO VIRGINIA TAKEN IN THE PERIOD 1606-1630.



KEY.

- > Winds.
- > Currents.
- - - Outward voyage via the West Indies.
- > - Outward voyage via the Bermudas.
- > - Outward voyage north of the Sargasso Sea.
- - - Inward voyage direct.
- > - Inward voyage via New England.

CHAPTER II
THE VOYAGE TO VIRGINIA

Between 1606 and 1609 ships for Virginia travelled by way of the West Indies. Newport, in taking out the first colonists, followed the accustomed route which had been used many times before by earlier voyagers to North America. Newport himself was very conversant with the route to the West Indies. At the age of forty-six when he took command of the first Virginia expedition, he had what was at that time probably among Englishmen an unrivalled experience of the Atlantic crossing.¹ In fact he had made eleven voyages to the West Indies for the purposes of privateering between 1590 and 1605.² Newport sailed from London through the English Channel heading for Cape Finistere, the North West tip of the Iberian Peninsula. Often, as Alexander Brown points out, this was the most unreliable part of the route because of the prevailing winds which frequently held up progress.³ For twenty-three of the ships crossing to Virginia in the years 1606 to 1630 there are records of the dates that they left London and the dates they cleared the channel. Naturally, the total time taken varied with each ship. The Discovery in 1609 took only nine days whereas the first three vessels, the Susan Constant, the Godspeed and the Discovery took a total of fifty. George

¹Kenneth B. Andrews, "Christopher Newport of Limehouse, Mariner," William and Mary Quarterly, 3 Ser., Vol. XI (1964), 40.

²Ibid.

³Brown, First Republic, 23.

Percy, a passenger on one of these, states that they anchored in the Downs on January 1607, having left London on December 20. He then notes, "the winds continued contrary so long that we were forced to stay there some time, where we suffered great storms."⁴ The average time taken to clear the channel seems to have been fifteen days,⁵ although Alexander Brown erroneously believes it to have taken ten.⁶

From Cape Finistere the route south of the Sargasso Sea was a natural one. There is a fairly constant wind towards the Canary Islands, southwards of which the ships enter the regular trade wind belt.⁷ Taking advantage of these winds it was possible to sail from the Canaries to the West Indies in twenty to thirty days, thence through the Mona Passage via the Gulf Stream to Florida in fifteen to twenty days.⁸ There were not only advantages of favourable currents and winds with the route by the West Indies but also ships often relied on their visits to the islands to obtain much needed supplies of water, wood and provisions. Also, the passengers would be given a chance to air themselves and stretch their legs. Sometimes passengers who became disillusioned with life on board ship would leave here. In April 1623 one passenger, Richard Norwood, wrote to his father from Virginia and noted the bad conditions on board ship which caused ten of the passengers to remain

⁴Observations by Master George Percy, Tyler, Narratives, 5.

⁵See Appendix C.

⁶Brown, First Republic, 23.

⁷See map on page 21.

⁸Brown, First Republic, 23-24.

on St. Vincent.⁹ John Rolfe, writing from Virginia in 1620, comments that the passengers on the Bona Nova came, "lusty and in good health. They came by way of the West Indies which passage at that season doth much to refresh the people."¹⁰

However the passage was a long one by this route. The average length of time spent was 111 days, although this varied according to the favourability of the winds and the length of time spent provisioning in the islands. The Starr in 1611 managed the voyage in fifty-seven days, whereas the Phoenix, part of the first supply, spent a total of 194 days en route to the colony.¹¹ The sojourn in the islands added to the difficulties of supply. Misunderstandings could and did occur, and goods were often left behind in the West Indies which should have been taken to Virginia. Edward Hurd of London complained in 1628 that three hogsheads of meal were missing when his ship reached Virginia. There was the suspicion that these had been left in the West Indies.¹² There was added danger for ships taking this route. Although peace with Spain had been made in 1604, there was still constant fear of Spanish intervention in the colony and interference with the shipping. This fear was perhaps exaggerated; as far as can be ascertained only one ship was attacked in the islands. This was the Margaret and John which left England in February 1621. She stopped at Nevis for the passengers to refresh themselves and was attacked by two Spanish ships flying Dutch

⁹Notes taken from letters which came from Virginia on the Abigail, Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 245.

¹⁰John Rolfe to Sir Edwin Sandys, ibid., III, 245.

¹¹See Appendix D.

¹²Minutes of the Council and the General Court, I, 170.

colours. A two day battle ensued with damage on both sides. Eleven Englishmen were killed, including Doctor Bohun, and sixteen were severely injured. The ship managed to extricate herself and arrived in Virginia in April.¹³ It would seem at first glance surprising that a merchantman was able to withstand the attack of two Spanish warships. However, in the early years of the seventeenth century, the distinction between the two types of vessels was not so clean cut. "That a ship, any ship, must fight on occasions was almost as axiomatic as she should float."¹⁴ Although the Virginian ships were usually under one hundred tons this did not automatically mean that they were defenceless. Thus, although there was a constant fear of a Spanish attack most ships would have been equipped to put up some sort of a fight. There was also the fear of piracy, a common danger in this period of history.

Hence it seemed to the Company that it would be expedient to find a quicker, safer route to the colony. A shorter passage would also ease the sufferings of passengers and reduce the expense for victuals for the voyage. This was felt to be especially necessary in 1609. It was recognised that the size of that years project for the development of the colony constituted a new challenge to Spain.¹⁵ Samuel Argall was thus instructed in 1609 that after leaving the Canaries he was to sail directly west. This route had been taken by Sir Richard Grenville in 1586. It was possible that the Company did not know of this for it was

¹³A Desperat Sea-Fight Betwixte Two Spanish Men of Warre and a Small English Ship at the Isle of Dominica, Tyler, Narratives, 340-344.

¹⁴Violet Barbour, "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century," Economic History Review, Vol. 12 (1929), 261.

¹⁵Craven, Southern Colonies, 92.

only reported in Spanish sources. Certain members could have gained knowledge of this from Grenville's sailors.¹⁶ His voyage was successful since he reached Virginia in nine weeks, two of which were spent in dead calm no progress being possible.¹⁷ This was a disadvantage of this route, it was always possible to get into the Doldrums.¹⁸ This route seems to have been taken with increasing frequency in the period under survey. On average the ships taking this route spent eighty-two days at sea, although there were variations. The shortest time taken was that of the Edwin in 1617, thirty-five days, and the longest the Supply in 1620 and the Furtherance in 1622, both of which took 126 days.¹⁹ However, Argall's voyage by no means permanently settled the question of sailing routes which was destined for a long time to remain the subject of debate. Thomas Dale wrote to the Council in England in 1611 and put in a plea for the West Indies route, "a passage which I could heartily wish might not be declined by those our English fleetes which should in any time make unto Virginia probable enough, as many appeare by this our tryall to be most speedie. And I am right well assured most convenient for our peoples refreshing and preserving of our cattle."²⁰

There was the possibility of taking the route North of the Sargasso Sea, although this passage was not so well known to the navigators of the day. Alexander Brown calls this part of the ocean, "that vast and

¹⁶David B. Quinn, The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590 (London, the Hakluyt Society, 1955), 788-789.

¹⁷Bruce, Economic History, II, 623-624.

¹⁸See map on page 21.

¹⁹See Appendix D.

²⁰Dale to the Council, May 25, 1611, Brown, Genesis, I, 488-494.

trackless waste," which had to be sailed, "in the wind's eye and in the set of the current."²¹ This route was taken by several of the ships.²² John Pory wrote in June 1620 to Sir Edwin Sandys, discussed the various passages that could be taken and noted that, "those by the West Indys and by the North beinge the two extremes of that Golden Medyum which I hope will be of profitable use, verify the saying Medio tutissimus ibis." He recites the complaints of John Damyron, master of the Dyana, which followed the Northern passage and vowed he would never take it again. The route was apparently too long and resulted in the loss to the colony of, among other things, the silkworms given by King James. He finishes with a plea to Sandys as Treasurer of the Company not to send ships by this route.²³ Yet here he is in conflict with the opinion of the Council in Virginia, writing in 1622, who urge that the ships be sent by the Northern route.²⁴

In the letter quoted above, Pory declares that the best passage is by way of the Somers Islands (the Bermudas). He notes that a Mr. Elford took his ship by this way and, since he had a short passage, he brought all his passengers in good health.²⁵ The Bermudas had been rediscovered by accident in 1609. Sir Thomas Gates in the Sea Venture left for Virginia in charge of a fleet of eight other ships in June of that year.

²¹ Brown, First Republic, 23.

²² See map on page 21.

²³ John Pory; a Letter to Sir Edwin Sandys, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 301-302.

²⁴ Council in Virginia; Letter to the Virginia Company of London, ibid., II, 582.

²⁵ Ibid., III, 302.

The ships ran into a storm of great ferocity, described by one commentator:

There arose such a storm, as if Jonas had been flying into Tarshish: the heavens were obscured, and made an Egyptian night of three days perpetually horror; the women lamented; the hearts of the passengers failed; the experience of the sea captains was amazed; the skill of the mariners was confounded.²⁶

Amazing as it may seem from the above description, the ship came to land on the Bermudas. The survivors spent some time there, constructing two ships to take them to Virginia, and were very impressed with the land. A small colony was established on the islands and this became quite a popular route to take.²⁷ Ships for Virginia would often carry some passengers for the Bermudas. One ship, the Garland, never did reach Virginia but remained on the islands for two to three months rather than go further.²⁸ On his return to England the captain of the ship, William Wye, was charged by the Company because he did not call in on Virginia as he had been ordered.²⁹ Unfortunately there are only incomplete sets of figures for the time taken in this passage. The only set is for the Elizabeth which left England on January 30, 1613 and arrived in Virginia on May 24. Thus she took 115 days in all. Hence it would seem that as far as length was concerned the passage by way of the Bermudas was not particularly advantageous.³⁰

²⁶ A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia, Peter Force, ed., Tracts and Other Papers, 4 vols. (New York, 1947), first published 1884, III, 10.

²⁷ See map on page 21.

²⁸ Brown, First Republic, 341.

²⁹ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 281-289.

³⁰ See Appendix D.

There were many routes which could be taken to Virginia. The one chosen by each ship would be dependent on a number of factors not the least of which would be the knowledge and personal preference of the master. There was less variation in the route taken from Virginia to England. There was, especially in the latter part of the period under survey when tobacco became established, as much pressure on the master of the ship to take the shortest, speediest and safest route home. Bailyn makes the point when discussing the early days of the New England colonies, "to the merchants, operating on a delicate balance between investments and profits, accidents on the homeward voyage meant severe reverses--the capture of the Pilgrims' Little James by a Turkish man of war in 1625 was the coup de grace to the staggering New Plymouth Company."³¹ It does seem as if conditions were more favourable on the return journey and thus the time taken was less. The ships could pick up the Gulf Stream along the East coast of the present United States and then take the North Atlantic Drift to the North of the Sargasso Sea which would carry them east to England.³² There was little trouble getting through the English Channel on the return journey. This part could be travelled in eight days or under. However, this did not prevent some anxieties in London. Sir Edwin Sandys wrote to John Ferrar in 1619, "I merveil we have not yet heard of the Diana from the Isle of Wight, unles this north east wynd have stopt hir there."³³ The average time taken for the total voyage was forty-six days although there were variations to this. In

³¹ Bernard Bailyn, The New England Merchants of the Seventeenth Century (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 12.

³² See map on page 21.

³³ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 192.

1608 the Phoenix took only twenty-one days and the Elizabeth in 1614 took seventy-one days.³⁴

In the early twenties there was some deviation from this practice. For some time reports had been circulating of the great abundance of fish off the New England coast, and the establishment of the Plymouth colony in 1620 gave added impetus to ideas of exploiting the fishery. Thus many of the ships commissioned by the Company also received permission to fish after they had visited the colony. On November 19, 1621, in the General Court of the Company, it was moved that commissions be drawn up for ships intending to go to fish and trade after they had delivered their passengers to the colony.³⁵ Two days later these commissions were granted to the Bona Nova, the Discovery, the Hopewell and the Darling.³⁶ This would lessen the reliance for profit on any cargo that Virginia could provide, since tobacco was not fully established as the staple crop. There was a further advantage to the fishery. The ships would be coming out to America virtually empty, and thus the Company could hire them to take out passengers. This served to cut the cost of the passage from £12 10s to £6. Thus both parties gained an advantage.³⁷ However, it also served to increase the length of the return voyage. The Swan of Barnstable took 191 days and the Bonaventure took 196 days, both in 1620.³⁸ Some ships called in on the New England

³⁴ See Appendix E.

³⁵ Records of the Virginia Company, I, 551.

³⁶ Ibid., 554.

³⁷ Ibid., 269.

³⁸ See Appendix E.

coast on their way to the colony and thus increased the time of the passage. The Ann in 1623 took 134 days. In 1624, the Unity set sail for Virginia but arrived in New England, tarried there until the end of December and never did reach the southern colony.³⁹ Two ships were unintentional visitors to the coast. The Bona Nova and the Elizabeth were carried by the current past Virginia. The latter remained there until the spring of 1621 whilst the former arrived in Virginia in January 1621. Both had left England the previous August.⁴⁰ Another result of the fishery was that several of the ships which were sent to the colony remained in America to be utilised by the colony to obtain fish for it from New England. Such a vessel was the John and Francis which arrived in Virginia in early December 1622. She was dispatched the following year to "Canadaye" (the name for New England employed by the colonists) but was scheduled to return to the colony.⁴¹ There is even an instance of a ship receiving a commission to go to Virginia and then to go north to investigate the activities of the Dutch on the Hudson River. The author of the letter containing this information estimated that the ship would take two years for the round trip.⁴²

It does appear that, as the masters and pilots of the ships became more accustomed to taking one or another of the passages they became more expert at negotiating them. Thus the time of the voyages was cut. Edward Waterhouse writing from the colony in 1622 makes the following

³⁹ Beale and Leonards v. Rastell and Griffiths, High Court of Admiralty, Oyer and Terminal Records, 1622-1625, P.R.O. H.C.A. 1/49 fol. 128.

⁴⁰ Brown, First Republic, 409.

⁴¹ Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 221.

⁴² Ibid., 165-166.

observation:

and for the passage hither and trade there, it is free from all restraints by forren princes whereunto most of our other accustomed trades are subject: there is neither danger on the way through the encountering of any enemy of pyrate nor meeting with Rockes or Shoales (by reason of the fayre and safe passage throw the maine ocean) nor tediousness of journey, which by reason of better knowledge than in former yeares (the fruit of time and observation) is oftner made and in fewer weeks than formerly it was want to be in moneths . . ."43

There was also much debate in the correspondence between England and Virginia as to the most propitious time to arrive in the colony. For the first few years, although complaints were made about the failure to dispatch supplies speedily, no effort was made to decide on the best time for passengers to arrive in Virginia. Obviously, the arrival of new colonists would be of prime importance, but there were certain seasons when it would be unwise for them to land. Governor Argall seems to have been the first to consider the problem. In 1618 he advocated September as the best month. If they had insufficient supplies, it was harvest time and the colony could support them in the initial period. In a sense this was only a minor argument to support his view, since he was primarily concerned with the best season for trade.⁴⁴ Governor George Yeardley went into the problem as it concerned the colonists in more detail. He quarrelled with the practise of the Company in sending out ships in spring and insisted on autumn sailings. He argued that the excessive heat of summer, to which the new arrivals were unaccustomed, would aggravate any illness they might have acquired during transit.

⁴³A Declaration of the State of the Colony . . . and a Relation of the Barbarous Massacre., ibid., II, 245.

⁴⁴Memoranda of Governor Argall, ibid., III, 78.

Even those who were in good health could rarely get acclimatized before the planting season was over, and therefore had to rely on supply from England or surplus from other planters for their provision. In the autumn the climate was better and the harvest was in so that surplus food was more likely to be available.⁴⁵ His views were echoed by others in Virginia. Pory in the aforementioned letter declared that the fittest season to arrive was "in the leafefall and the winter having found the spring and somer both fatall and unprofitable to new comers."⁴⁶ A study of times of arrival in Virginia reveal that between the years 1617 and 1624, when there are the most detailed figures for shipping, the most popular month for arrival was April followed by May, July, December and November, although ships arrived in almost every month of the year.⁴⁷ This refutes the opinion of Wesley Frank Craven who declared that, after 1620, most of the sailings were timed for the late summer and early fall.⁴⁸

Thus the Company in London seems to have ignored the pleas of the colonists. The difficulties involved in the collection of sufficient supply and in the dispatch of shipping seem to have increased along with the financial difficulties of the Company. Thus, one suspects, the adventurers were so pleased to see a ship leave for the colony that they were not prepared to dictate times for sailing. One could argue that if a ship was prepared to set off in the spring and was told to delay until the autumn, the financiers and potential colonists might become discouraged

⁴⁵ Wesley F. Craven, The Dissolution of the Virginia Company (New York, 1932), 160-161.

⁴⁶ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 300.

⁴⁷ See Appendix F.

⁴⁸ Craven, Dissolution of the Company, 162.

and change their minds about going.

After the dissolution of the Company the most important factor determining the date of arrival was the tobacco harvest. This had been considered before. In his memoranda, Argall dwells at length on this. He notes that the best tobacco would be ready in the fall and if the ships return after April the heat in the hold would hurt the tobacco.⁴⁹ After 1624 when the primary reason for going to Virginia was to acquire tobacco rather than to sell supplies, this factor became of paramount importance. The planters were eager to get their crops on to the market in the best possible condition, and in this feeling they were joined by the shippers and the merchants. This is borne out by the available figures for shipping in the period 1624 to 1630. Most ships arrived either in November or in December or in March, the latter would transport any tobacco that remained in the hands of the planters.⁵⁰

The Virginians also concerned themselves with the state of the passengers and goods on their arrival in the colony. This is allied with conditions on board ship as it crossed the Atlantic. As has been noted, delays before setting off from England were frequent and once at sea the passage, even by the shortest route, was on average eighty-two days. If one also takes into account the size of the vessels (a ship of over one hundred tons being the exception rather than the rule) and the superstitious state of mind of the passengers (most of whom had never been to sea before), even if a ship was well supplied with victuals and not overcrowded, the journey cannot have been very pleasant. From the various

⁴⁹Memoranda of Governor Argall, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 78.

⁵⁰See Appendix F.

records of the voyages, it appears that the least of the worries of the passengers were the storms which the ships often encountered. Very few mention this factor. Among those who do are the recorders of the initial voyage to Jamestown. George Percy makes note of "vehement tempest which lasted all night with winds, rain and thunder in a terrible manner."⁵¹ Ferdinando Yate mentions the difficult weather conditions on his voyage in 1619. Having overcome a series of storms, in which the ships had been left to "the plesur . . . of the almitie God in the surging and overgrowing seas," the final note of this unpleasant voyage was added when they lost a capstan as they were attempting to anchor in Chesapeake Bay.⁵²

The passengers seem to have been more concerned with actual conditions on board ship. In the records there are many complaints about overcrowding on the ships. Lady Wyatt wrote to Lady Sandys in 1623, describing her passage. She states that "there never came a ship so full to Virginia as ours." Perhaps she was expecting too much from her voyage for she adds, "I had not not so much as myne owne cabin."⁵³ If she had managed to get her own cabin it would have been a rare luxury. The cause of this overcrowding is not difficult to discover. In the same letter Lady Wyatt notes that the captain of the ship seemed troubled with the conditions on board and he laid blame on the two Mr.

⁵¹Observations of Master George Percy, Tyler, Narratives, 9.

⁵²The Voyage to Virginia, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 109-114.

⁵³Notes Taken from Letters which came from Virginia in the Abigail, ibid., IV, 232.

Ferrars.⁵⁴ Her husband, who had suffered on the same voyage, declared that the reason for "the stuffing of their ships in their passages with too great a number" was "for the lucre and gain it seemes of the owners of the ships."⁵⁵ The blame must therefore lie on the owners of the ships who overcrowded them for profit and also on the Company in London which seems to have had little control over the numbers to be sent. Craven, in evaluating the reasons for the dissolution of the Company, charges Sir Edwin Sandys with a shortsighted policy as regards the number of colonists being dispatched in the early 'twenties. As far as Sandys was concerned the best case he could present to the adventurers for the continuation of investment in the colony as evidence of progress was a large emigration.⁵⁶ In this policy he failed to appreciate the pleas of the established colonists. What they desired was "rather a few able sufficient men well provided than great multitudes."⁵⁷ Lady Wyatt refers to the part of the Ferrar brothers. As the men charged by Sandys with equipping the passengers, they must take some share of the blame. There was an additional complaint from the colonists that not only were there too many men being sent out but they were of the wrong type. In 1624 the members of the House of Burgesses reviewed the ships which had arrived in the first twelve years. The general charges were few or no tradesmen were sent out and too many gentlemen.⁵⁸ In 1623 Christopher

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., IV, 162.

⁵⁶ Craven, Dissolution of the Company, 158.

⁵⁷ Councils, Letters from Virginia, Tyler, Narratives, 345.

⁵⁸ H. H. McIlwaine and J. P. Kennedy, eds., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1766 (Richmond, 1905), I, 28-37.

Davison wrote to John Ferrar and expressed his hope that the "Company will consider the great loss by the want of fourteen or fifteen tenants promised two years ago."⁵⁹

Allied to the problem of overcrowding on board ship was that of the lack of or the poor state of victuals to sustain the passengers through the voyage. This was caused by similar reasons to those that accounted for overcrowding with the additional factor being the lack of money on the part of the Company, especially in the latter stages of the administration of Sir Thomas Smith and in the months prior to dissolution. Even after the Crown took over control, owners and masters of ships bent on reducing the costs of the voyage victualled meanly. There was a constant flood of complaints to England about this. Christopher Davison in the letter quoted above also noted, "the Margaret and the John, accounted a lost ship (after a long and tedious passage much distressed for want of sufficient provisions) arrived here about the 7 or 8 April."⁶⁰ The voyage of this ship occasioned three separate complaints from the passengers which took the form of petitions to Governor Wyatt. All were concerned with the poor provision made for victuals. In the review of the first twelve years of the colony there is a constant complaint that the ships were "very meanly furnished with victuals."⁶¹ Perhaps worse than insufficient supply was the bad state of much of what there was. Both Christopher Norwood and Lady Wyatt complain about the "stinking beare"; the latter declared that she could not stand the deck

⁵⁹ Calendar of State Papers Colonial, I, 43.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Journals of the House of Burgesses, I, 28-37.

for it.⁶²

Attempts seem to have been made, at least by the Crown, to control the numbers of passengers and the quantity of their provisions. Sir George Yeardley's instructions as Governor in 1626 contain two points relevant to this. He was to examine the charter parties that the ships entering the colony brought with them for the specific purpose of discovering whether the ships had been packed with passengers and whether the latter had been given sufficient and wholesome food. He was also to make certain that the Anne, the ship on which he was to leave for the colony, had sufficient victual and was not overcrowded.⁶³ However, this type of instruction seems to have had little effect in practise.

The major complaint of the established planters as they watched the new arrivals disembark was that the latter had insufficient provisions for their initial period of settlement. Governor Yeardley became very bitter about this state of affairs. In his first term as governor, he had been promised by John Ferrar not only an adequate supply of food but also three suits of apparel for every man, full equipment of arms, and competent provision of "household stuff." He found only two suits for each man, one of which was so unserviceable that it gave poor protection against the extreme cold of winter, thirty musketts, five iron pots, and one kettle which was supposed to last fifty men for four months. Yeardley pleaded for more adequate provisions but the conditions the following year were apparently worse. He therefore sent the following eloquent plea to Ferrar:

⁶².....
Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 232-233.

⁶³.....
Entry Book of Letters, etc., fol. 260.

I protest before God, I run myself out of all provision of corn I have for the feeding of these people . . . the people are ready to mutiny for more affirming that more by him (Ferrar) was promised . . . suffer me, I pray you to advise you that you do not run into so great matters in speedy and hasty sending so many people over hither and undertaking so great works before you have acquainted me and have truly been informed by me of the state of the plantation and what might be done here.⁶⁴

However, conditions appear not to have improved. The compilers of the Discourse on the Old Company note that the ships on their way to Virginia at the time of writing (1625), "will not only bring any comfort and supply to the colony: but only add to their calamity, to their grief. The first ship went in August victualled for only three months the next in October: neither were arrived the 25 February last."⁶⁵ Perhaps Delepheus Canne sums up the situation best, "would to God that the apparel and freize which came in the Success were turned into meal, oatmeale and peas."⁶⁶ The situation was little better after the dissolution. In January 1626, Wyatt writes to the Lords Commissioners for affairs in Virginia, pleading that better care be taken with provisions for the new arrivals.⁶⁷ Part of the problem was due to communication difficulties. There was little time to give warning of the impending arrival of colonists in order that the authorities in the colony could be given adequate time to make preparations. Usually there was a letter with the first ship sailing to inform of the arrival soon afterwards of

⁶⁴Craven, Dissolution of the Company, 157-158.

⁶⁵Discourse on the Old Company, Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 537.

⁶⁶Calendar State Papers Colonial, I, 48.

⁶⁷Ibid., I, 77.

the others.

Often such provisions as were bought were in a bad condition because of the voyage. The authorities in the colony were so tired of this that in 1622 the Council wrote to the Company and urged that corn and seeds not be stored in the hold but between the decks, for the heat of the former tended to spoil the goods.⁶⁸ A further cause of provisions arriving in Virginia in a poor state was leaking in the ships. Captain Jones arrived in Virginia in July 1625 with his vessel leaky so that, "some few raw hides which by negligence lay sunke in the shipp and were spoiled."⁶⁹ It appears, however, that those in Virginia must take some share of the blame for the poor state of many of the supplies. Complaints were made about the provisions for unloading and storage in Jamestown. From the statement of seamen visiting the colony in 1623, it seems that some goods were landed and left for up to two weeks uncovered and so near to the river that they were "overflowed with water and the trunks ready to be swallowed." Whilst other goods were "sunk and covered with sand, the water daily overflowing them."⁷⁰ There is also the case of the fire in the cargo of the first supply in 1608 which destroyed victual and clothing.⁷¹

The problems of overcrowding and insufficient victuals joined together to produce a third that of disease. The latter would have probably been rife in any case because of the inevitable lack of fresh

⁶⁸ Records of the Virginia Company, III, 582.

⁶⁹ A Letter for the Commissioners for Virginia, ibid., IV, 569.

⁷⁰ Statement of Seamen as to the Conditions in Virginia, ibid., IV, 93.

⁷¹ Bruce, Economic History, II, 263-264.

provisions and the heat of summer voyages, but its incidence was certainly made more frequent by the presence of the other two factors. In her letter Lady Wyatt apologizes for not having written sooner but states that she had been ill, "for our ship was so pestered with people and goods that we were so full of infection that after a while we saw little but throwing folks overboard."⁷² William Box tells of his experiences in Lord De La Warr's ship in 1611, "fortie of us were neare sick to death of the scurvie, callenture and other diseases: the Governor being an Englishman kindly used us, but small relief we could get but oranges of which we had plenty whereby within eight daies we recovered."⁷³ Apparently he was lucky. On the ships that left England in June 1609, both yellow fever and the London Plague appeared making it necessary to throw overboard thirty-two unlucky dead passengers.⁷⁴ William Capps writing to John Ferrar in 1623 suggests preventive measures against disease on the ships. When he came over to Virginia in 1609, despite the heat of summer and a passage of fifteen weeks, not one man died because regular cleaning of the ships was undertaken:

Then were appointed swabbers for the cleansing of the orloppe and every part of the ship below: then everyman was forced in fair weather to bring up his bed to ayre in the shrowdes: In the meantime every quartermaster was busied in the swobbing of every cabin below with vinegar as also between the decks which cast such a

⁷²Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 232.

⁷³The General History of Virginia by Captain John Smith, 1624; the fourth book, Tyler, Narratives, 301.

⁷⁴Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Virginia under the Stuarts (Princeton, 1914), 13.

savour of sharpness to the stomach that it bred health.⁷⁵

It is difficult to estimate the number of passengers that died in transit. Only a few records mention the number of fatalities. The thirty-two noted above seems to have been an unusually high number in that it was worth recording. John Rolfe noted that on his voyage in 1619, only one man died.⁷⁶ It seems that it was usual to have at least one or two deaths on every trip, but considering the length of the voyage and the hazards which accompanied it the number is not excessive. What was more important to the colony was the effect on the health of those already in Virginia of the arrival of a disease-ridden ship. William Capps declared his belief that the high mortality rate in the colony in the winter of 1622 was caused by a plague brought in the ships.⁷⁷ By 1624 when the effects of such arrivals had been observed for several years, the Council and the Governor wrote to the Company expressing their view that the mortality in the colony was chiefly caused by the "pestilent ships which reach Virginia victualled with musty bread and stinking beer, heretofore so earnestly complained of." They urged that the newcomers should bring their own provisions so as not to make a sudden change in their diet.⁷⁸

It was not that the Company totally ignored the complaints from the colony about these matters. In 1622 the members issued a broadside advising of the necessities to be taken by each passenger for their

⁷⁵Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 77.

⁷⁶John Rolfe: Letter to Sir Edwin Sandys, ibid., III, 70.

⁷⁷William Capps: Letter to John Ferrar, ibid., IV, 77.

⁷⁸Calendar of State Papers Colonial, I, 56.

better support on the first landing.⁷⁹ The Company was unable, by lack of finance, to improve the position. Thus the complaints of the colony were reiterated in January 1624.⁸⁰ Organisation under Crown control seems to have been little better. In January 1626 the Governor and Council wrote to the commissioners for Virginia and reported that half the passengers came without provisions.⁸¹

Much of the blame for the reliance on supply which in part engendered these complaints can be blamed on the lack of provision in the colony itself. This was especially true in the early days. George Percy declared in 1607 that they were left after the departure of Newport with scanty victuals but that Newport promised them supply within twenty weeks.⁸² It was nearly twenty-eight weeks before the John and Francis arrived. There seems to have been a failure to appreciate the fact that there was a possibility that the supply ships might be delayed. One observer admits that the misjudgment of the time of the passage was part of the reason for the poor condition of the colonists during the first year.⁸³

However, perhaps the picture painted of the unpleasantness of the voyage is a little black. Undoubtedly many survived to see Virginia, and the records contain many references to ships arriving with healthy passengers. John Rolfe made note of four ships arriving in June 1618

⁷⁹ Brown, First Republic, 486.

⁸⁰ Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 451.

⁸¹ Ibid., 567.

⁸² Observations of Master George Percy, Tyler, Narratives, 20.

⁸³ Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia, ibid., 128.

and two in November 1619 with their passengers well and their goods undamaged.⁸⁴ There are even instances of letters from Virginia to England in which thanks are expressed for provisions received in good condition, but admittedly such instances are few compared with the multitude of complaints. One such letter was written by Robert Bennett in June 1623. He lists the extensive number of goods that he received and notes, "all these goods came safe and well condisioned into my hands and are the best that I received since I came into this lande."⁸⁵ However, this does not detract from the fact that the journey to Virginia was beset by difficulties, many of which were inevitable but some, such as bad provisioning and overcrowding, could have been avoided by stricter control by both Company and Crown.

Despite the constant fears of attacks by the Spanish, the Turks, and pirates and the perilous nature of the passage, there were relatively few serious accidents recorded. Only one ship was attacked by the Spanish, the Margaret and John in 1621.⁸⁶ Periodic panic was felt about an attack from the Turks. In 1625, the Naval Commissioners at Plymouth wrote to the Privy Council of "affrigitments and daily terrors by reason of the infesting of the coasts by Turkish men of war." They suggest that warnings should be sent to the ships returning to Virginia and other places.⁸⁷ In fact one vessel was captured by the Turks. This was the

⁸⁴ John Rolfe: Letter to Sir Edwin Sandys, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 245.

⁸⁵ Robert Bennett: Letter to Edward Bennett, ibid., IV, 220.

⁸⁶ See page 22.

⁸⁷ Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I (Kraus Reprint, 1967), first published 1858, I, 77.

pinnacle, the Tiger, which was blown off course some two hundred miles but managed to free herself and eventually arrive in Virginia.⁸⁸ There is only one recorded instance of any trouble with pirates. This occurred off the English coast to the Hercules which was returning from Virginia in 1611. She was stopped off the Lizard by a squadron of ships commanded by Captain Peter Easton in the Concord of London, which took from them all their arms, powder and two men but nothing else.⁸⁹

A couple of ships were in trouble before leaving English coastal waters. The Elizabeth in 1625 broke her mast in bad weather and had to turn back to Dover.⁹⁰ In December 1606, the Susan Constant was involved in an accident before leaving her berth in the Thames. According to evidence in a case before the High Court of Admiralty, she was moored too close to another ship, the Philip and Francis, and the two ships managed to hit one another. Both crews blamed the other for negligence. The master of the Philip and Francis declared that the company of the Susan Constant "sate tiplinge and drinkinge and never looked out or endeavoured to clear the ships."⁹¹ Probably both sides were guilty of neglect.

Once at sea there are few cases of serious trouble. Occasionally, a ship would lose an anchor, such as two of those in the fleet of Lord De La Warr in 1610.⁹² Or perhaps a ship suffered from leaks such as the

⁸⁸Records of the Virginia Company, III, 640.

⁸⁹High Court of Admiralty Examinations, P.R.O. H.C.A. I/47.

⁹⁰Calendar of State Papers Colonial, I, 71.

⁹¹Case of the Susan Constant, High Court of Admiralty Examinations, P.R.O. H.C.A. 13/18.

⁹²Calendar of State Papers Colonial, I, 10.

ship that brought Sir John Harvey to the colony in 1630. This ship was forced to go to the Cape Verde Islands.⁹³ Several vessels were blown off course, notably the Phoenix, one of the first supply ships. This vessel was in sight of Cape Henry but was forced so far out to sea by contrary winds that the West Indies was the nearest land for the repair of her masts.⁹⁴ The instance of the wreck of the Sea Venture on the Bermudas has already been noted.⁹⁵ Apart from these there was only one notable accident. This occurred to the Sea Flower whilst at anchor in the Bermudas. Apparently some of the crew of this ship were in "the great cabin and sum in the Gunroome a drinkeinge tobacco by neclygense of ther fyre Blue uppe the ship to the death of about fourteen persons besydes many spoyled."⁹⁶

A few ships ran into trouble as they were entering the waters of the colony. In 1626, the Marmaduke ran aground on Mulberry Island.⁹⁷ In the previous year a ship belonging to Sir Ferdinand Gorges ran aground on Bowier Bay due to the negligence of the master, Stallinge. However he paid for this later. The ship being extremely leaky, he was forced to have the rest of the sailors row him up the Southampton River in a small boat where he put ashore and was killed by some Indians.⁹⁸

Hence it can be seen that serious accidents en route to Virginia

⁹³Ibid., 113.

⁹⁴Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia, Tyler, Narratives, 132.

⁹⁵See page 28.

⁹⁶Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 119.

⁹⁷Ibid., II, 217.

⁹⁸Ibid., IV, 512.

were rare. Over 180 ships can be traced of which less than ten met with any serious accident. One suspects that perhaps in the period between 1624 and 1630 there must have been some trouble in the passage, but data on this period is very scattered and hence no comprehensive picture can be constructed. However, in the period from 1607 to 1624 it is safe to say that considering the length of the passage and the inevitable hazards to shipping, relatively few accidents occurred.

CHAPTER III

THE SHIPS IN VIRGINIA AND ON THEIR RETURN TO ENGLAND

Once a ship had landed in Virginia, the task of dealing with her cargo was in the hands of the officials in the colony. Throughout the period in question there appear to have been several experiments concerned with the most efficient way to deal with the supplies brought in. From the first settlement it was agreed that all goods exported to the colony should be stored in the Magazine from which they could only be drawn for distribution on the warrant of the President and Council or of the Cape Merchant and two clerks. One of the latter was to keep a book containing information on the goods that arrived in the colony and the other was to take care of a similar book in which were to be registered all the goods taken out of the Magazine for the use of the colonists. Details of these arrangements were laid down in the first charter.¹ The duties of the Cape Merchant were at first to guard the goods in the Magazine whether they were imported commodities or those produced by the labour of the inhabitants. Later he became more an agent for the colony in exchanging goods of the Company or of private adventurers for the commodities, tobacco in particular, owned by the settlers.² This latter duty became more important after the opening of the colony to free trade in 1619. The Cape Merchant sent back his accounts to England at frequent

¹Bemiss, Three Charters, 18-19.

²Bruce, Economic History, II, 262-263.

intervals so that they could be examined.³ Strict regulation of his activities was observed throughout the period, illustrating the importance attached to the position and the great trust placed in the hands of the occupant. The sternest regulation was enforced by the Martial Laws introduced during the rule of Gates and Dale, 1612-1617. Law seventeen dealt with the duties of the Cape Merchant:

No Cape Merchant . . . shall at any time embezzell, sell, or give away anything under his charge to any favourite of his, more than to any other, where necessity shall require in that case to have extraordinary allowances of provisions, nor shall they give a false account unto the Lord Governor and Captain General.⁴

This law seems to have been strictly enforced, for the preservation of supply was particularly effective at this time. Precautions were taken to prevent fraud on the part of the Cape Merchant. Two invoices had to be drawn up for the goods, one to be kept by him and the other to be given to the Governor.⁵

Trouble did arise between the colonists and the Cape Merchant over the prices of the goods in the Magazine. This was especially prevalent when Abraham Peircey held the office between 1617 and 1621. The prices of goods were fixed by the Company in London. In 1619 Peircey complained and stated that he wanted to sell articles forwarded to him at such rates as he could secure without regard for any fixed price.⁶ He had to appear before the first assembly where the prices on goods were limited to

³Records of the Virginia Company, I, 506.

⁴For the Colony in Virginea Brittania: Laws Divine, Moral and Martial, Force, Tracts, III, 13.

⁵Bruce, Economic History, II, 286.

⁶Ibid., II, 295.

twenty-five per cent in the hundred on the original cost. The colonists complained that Peircey was inclined to set higher values on the articles than was authorized by the Assembly.⁷ The Governor and the Council were commanded to examine his invoices to find out if this was true, but it seems that he was merely trying to obtain a legitimate margin of profit.⁸ The outcome of these disputes was favourable to the cause of Peircey. In July 1621 the Company instructed the authorities in Virginia to give the Cape Merchant full liberty to sell the goods at the highest prices offered without regard for the rates established.⁹

However not all the goods arriving in the colony found their way into the Magazine. Both legally and illegally they were sold outside. In the first assembly a law was passed providing that if any person had need for a commodity which could not be found in the Magazine he could obtain it from any trader who could supply him.¹⁰ The only reservation to this was that the price should be the same as in the cases when the Cape Merchant was the seller of such an article.¹¹ This practise was especially frequent if the Magazine ship was deficient in supply. The Cape Merchant himself was often constrained to purchase goods from private ships. He would give the trader bills of exchange which would be reimbursed by the Company in London.

The problem of illegal trading in the colony was serious. It

⁷Records of the Virginia Company, I, 133.

⁸Bruce, Economic History, II, 288-289.

⁹Ibid., 289.

¹⁰Journals of the House of Burgesses, I, 11.

¹¹Bruce, Economic History, II, 287.

appeared very early in the history of Jamestown. Apparently the sailors on board ships moored in the James and the other rivers found a ready market for the goods they had. This continued despite the orders of the Council to the contrary. Observers in 1608 reported their belief that it was the policy of the sailors to report to England that the colonists were plentifully provided and then to bring men without provisions so that their own trade would benefit.¹² This was undoubtedly an exaggeration, but illegal trading was seemingly widespread. The fault lay in part with the Company in London; if the colony had been sufficiently provided with goods there would have been no market for the wares offered by the sailors. The problem was dealt with by the martial laws of 1612. Private trading outside the Magazine was totally prohibited and heavy penalties were laid down for violation by the sailors "upon pain of loss of their wages in England confiscation and forfeiture of such their monies and provisions and upon peril beside of such corporal punishment as shall be inflicted upon them by verdict and censure of the martial court."¹³ Penalties were also laid down for those of the colony who traded what goods they had with the seamen.¹⁴ It was this latter problem that was of greatest harm to the colony. Goods were so difficult to obtain from England in sufficient quantity that to allow them to leave the colony was sheer suicide in regard to the survival of the colony. The problem seems to have eased during the rule of Gates and Dale, when the excessive

¹²Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia, Tyler, Narratives, 158.

¹³For the Colony in Virginiae Brittania, Laws Divine, Moral and Martial, Force, Tracts, III, 20.

¹⁴Ibid.



penalties seem to have deterred people from engaging in such activities. Under Argall illegal trading was again prevalent. According to Herbert L. Osgood, Argall allowed masters and seamen of vessels to traffic freely and thus destroy the market for imports brought over into the Magazine.¹⁵ Yet there is evidence that Argall did attempt to regulate the activities of the sailors in part by invoking the Martial Laws.¹⁶ The latter is probably nearer the truth. After 1619, the problem was rather one of goods being sold by the sailors at excessively high rates. As late as December 1623, the Governor, Francis Wyatt, writes to Captain William Tucker and urges him to make enquiries about the activities of the sailors of the Truelove who had sold commodities at rates higher than those established by the Governor and the Council.¹⁷ Similar problems were encountered in Massachusetts Bay. The lack of sufficient provisions and manufactured goods meant that the settlers would pay almost any price to obtain them. Naturally the sailors took advantage of such a situation.¹⁸

The authorities in Virginia used two methods to try to secure a fair deal for the colonists in the question of illegal supplies. The first of these is revealed in a series of proclamations aimed at preventing people going aboard ships without special authority and license from the Governor. The earliest of these found is dated May 10, 1618.¹⁹

¹⁵ Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), first published 1904, I, 59.

¹⁶ Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1960), I, 49.

¹⁷ Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 444.

¹⁸ Bailyn, New England Merchants, 14-25.

¹⁹ "The Randolph Manuscript," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 15 (1907-1908), 405.

However, this appears to have been ineffectual for a further edict was issued on November 30, 1621 which stated that despite previous warnings "they do yet continue this disorderly going aboard of ships unto the great abuse of themselves and scandal."²⁰ Such warnings were repeated by Governor Francis Wyatt in July 1625. He was anxious to stop, "the unlawful engrossing of commodities into the hands of some particular persons, it being to the great detriment and hurt of the colony in general." He also desired to prevent "other doubtful and suspicious dangers, which by bold and unlawful going aboard ships, may often happen by reason of some perfidious plot which may be to the ruin and destruction of the colony."²¹ This latter point was also stressed in the proclamation of Governor Yeardley of July 28, 1626 which was essentially a reiteration of that of Governor Wyatt. He was more specific as to the dangers to the colony. If people were free to go aboard any ship arriving in the colony, they might be surprised by some foreign enemy "which we must daily expect."²² This proclamation was the direct result of the clause in his instructions which warned of "the daily possibility of the arrival of the Spaniards."²³ It is uncertain how effective these proclamations were. Presumably if they had to be repeated at least three times then the measures had not proved successful. There is one conviction as a result of Wyatt's proclamation recorded in January 1626. It was ordered by the Council and General Court that "John Swode, Thomas

²⁰ Governor and Council in Virginia, *ibid.*, III, 528.

²¹ Wyatt Manuscripts in Possession of the Earl of Romney. William and Mary Quarterly, 2d Ser., vol. 8 (1928), 48.

²² Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 48.

²³ Entry Book of Letters, etc., vol. 261.

Thornberry and Paul Horwood for their offence in going aboard contrary to the proclamation shall each of them enter into a bond of twenty pounds for their good behavior and each of them to pay 20 pounds weight of good merchantable tobacco towards the building of the bridges at Elizabeth City."²⁴ There is also one conviction recorded against Yearley's proclamation. Michael Wilcox was fined one hundred weight of tobacco and twelve pounds of tobacco for buying twelve pounds of sugar aboard the Charity and an additional thirty pounds of tobacco for going aboard the ship.²⁵ A similar situation was also found in the early period of the New England colonies. Bailyn notes that for a brief period goods were acquired by going directly to the side of the occasional ships that arrived and negotiating with the captain for part of the cargo.²⁶ The solution attempted followed the Virginia pattern. By a law of March 1635, certain individuals were given the right to board ships and decide on the prices whilst all others were forbidden to enter the ships.²⁷

The second method was allied to the first. This was to prevent the ships entering the colony from breaking bulk until they tied up at Jamestown. Then special permission could be granted for them to unload by the Governor and the Council. The first proclamation to this effect was issued in March 1624. It was to be read on every ship and afterwards to be fixed to the mast.²⁸ The instructions to Yearley also ordered him

²⁴ Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 91-92.

²⁵ Ibid., 147.

²⁶ Bailyn, New England Merchants, 33.

²⁷ Ibid., 34.

²⁸ Council and Assembly, Laws and Orders, Records of the Virginia Company, III, 538.

to enforce such rules "to avoid that intolerable abuse of ingrossing the commodities and forstalling the market."²⁹ Thus a proclamation of July 1626 reiterated the one of March 1624.³⁰ No record of any prosecutions under these proclamations has been found but it would be fair to assume that some violation did occur, since it is certain that the colony had insufficient executive officers to ensure that the provisions were carried out.

It appears that, prior to 1624, before the goods of a ship could be unloaded the authorities in Virginia required a copy of the commission from the Company. This system seems to have run smoothly, since there is only one reference to it in the records consulted. Presumably, therefore, it was an accepted necessity and not worth mentioning. The one reference concerns a ship which arrived in Virginia without a copy of her commission. In December 1624 the Flying Hart of Flushing landed in the colony lacking a commission because a Mr. Huett who was to be the pilot "being imployde in London for the procuring of a commission returned not, though they staide for him a long time to their great hindrance." The authorities were a little worried as to what to do with this ship, especially since she was Dutch registered and therefore technically forbidden to trade, but because of their pressing need for supplies, they decided to unload the vessel.³¹

Once a ship had landed in Virginia it was necessary to inform the authorities in England of her arrival. This was done in the form of a

²⁹ Entry Book of Letters, etc., fol. 261.

³⁰ Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 104.

³¹ Governor and Council in Virginia: Letter to the Commissioners for Virginia, Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 567.

certificate given three or four days after the arrival of a vessel by the governor of the colony. The certificates, few of which have survived, seem to have contained details of the date of departure from England, the date of arrival in Virginia, and an enumeration of the passengers who managed to survive the voyage.³² Such certificates were the "dispatched to England on the first available ships. Certain payments to the owners of the ships depended on the certificate as proof of safe arrival. Thus Mr. Bland and Mr. Wiseman and others would be paid £600 by the Company when the certificate of the Abigail arrived in England.³³ Several references to these certificates appear in the records of the sessions of the Company. In the meeting of March 27, 1622 it was noted that the certificate confirming the safe arrival of the Warwick had been received.³⁴ The Warwick had landed on December 19, 1621, thus it had taken over three months for the information to reach the Company. Sometimes it took even longer. The Swan of Barnstable landed in Virginia on May 15, 1620, yet the Company was not officially informed until December 13 of the same year.³⁵ Often a ship would land in England with the news of safe arrivals before the certificates were received. In the case of the Swan the Earl of Southampton signified to the Company on 4 November 1620 that he had received brief letters of her safe arrival.³⁶

Once the cargo of supply had been unloaded and the inward cargo,

³²Brown, First Republic, 413.

³³Records of the Virginia Company, I, 410.

³⁴Ibid., 618.

³⁵Ibid., IV, 430.

³⁶Ibid., I, 409-410.

usually tobacco in the later stages of the period, stored in the ship, a bill of lading was drawn up to indicate what was contained in the vessel. One such bill has been preserved. For the Elizabeth of London, the bill contains details of the cargo that the ship contained and to whom it was being delivered in London.³⁷ Many ships had to deliver up invoices of their goods before departure and it also appears that they had to give some sort of security that they would land their cargo at the port specified on the invoice.³⁸ No further references to such bills or invoices have been found so it cannot be said whether every ship required one or the other before leaving the colony. Presumably some record of each cargo would be needed, especially as the tobacco trade increased.

The authorities in England were concerned with the speedy and efficient handling of shipping in Virginia. The Company was particularly concerned with this problem because of excessive charges for freight and wages. As early as 1611, Sir Thomas Dale wrote to the Council in London stressing the need for speedy unloading and reloading of vessels.³⁹ In 1621 the members ordered the Governor and Council in Virginia that no ship of the Company should remain in the colony for more than thirty days.⁴⁰ Typical of many messages is the one that the Company wrote to the Governor in October 1622 which urged the latter "to take into

³⁷Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 96.

³⁸Governor West and the Council to Sir Robert Heath, W. N. Sainsbury, ed., "Virginia in 1628," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 7 (1899-1900), 258.

³⁹Brown, Genesis, I, 491.

⁴⁰Bemiss, Three Charters, 125.

consideration the continuall maintenance of good shipping in the river, which may easily be effected."⁴¹ It was for this purpose that a motion was put in front of the Company's Quarter Court on July 10, 1621 that Mr. John Pountis should be made Vice Admiral in Virginia to take care of the Company's ships.⁴² They declared such a position to be necessary because "the want of such an official had been no small loss and prejudice to the Company's ships and provision and other public service."⁴³ Land was allotted to the new officer near to Jamestown because the ships arrived there first, and it was decided that Pountis should execute the office provisionally for one year until the commission might be confirmed by the next Quarter Court.⁴⁴ There are several references in the Company records to the activities of Pountis in the colony as a member of the Council. However, his main concern seems to have been with dispatching vessels to trade in Chesapeake Bay and there is no mention of his duties concerning vessels arriving from England or departing from the colony.

Thus little was done to reduce the time that a vessel spent in Virginia. This varied from ship to ship, but the average figure is roughly 122 days, which when compared to the average time for a direct outward passage of eighty-two days, is a considerable length of time. The shortest stay was that of the Eleanor in 1619 but her figure of four days is exceptional, since she was sent to Virginia with the specific task of taking Governor Argall back to England. The longest sojourn was that of

⁴¹Records of the Virginia Company, III, 658.

⁴²Ibid., I, 506.

⁴³Ibid., 557.

⁴⁴Ibid., 549-550.

the Treasurer, 1612 to 1614, which remained for 639 days. However, she was involved in subsidiary enterprises whilst in America. Argall took the ship up to Mount Desert on the New England coast to remove some Frenchmen who had settled in the area and who were regarded as a threat to the colony. He broke up the settlement and brought back fifteen of the settlers. Later in 1613 he turned and destroyed the buildings and fortifications of Mount Desert, St. Croix and Port Royal.⁴⁵ Such delays could be caused by many factors both planned and unintentional. Of the former, mention has been made of the habit of ships being used by the colony to procure fish off the New England coast. Ships also remained in order that they might be utilised by the colony to trade with the Indians in the confines of the Chesapeake Bay. This practise seems to have been particularly prevalent during the governorship of Wyatt (1621-1626). In October 1621 he gives "full power and absolute authority" to Captain Tucker of the Eleanor"to set sail with the first wind and opportunity into the bay, to go into any rivers, creeks, harbours, there to trade with the savages."⁴⁶ In the years 1621 to 1623, out of the 61 vessels which arrived in Virginia seventeen were engaged in subsidiary enterprises, most commonly fishing off the New England coast or in Newfoundland. Some estimation of the time taken on such a venture can be gauged from the experiences of the George in 1619. She departed from Virginia on July 9 and arrived back on September 10 having spent three weeks at sea on the outward voyage, fourteen days fishing on the

⁴⁵Morton, Colonial Virginia, I, 35-36.

⁴⁶Documents of Sir Francis Wyatt, 42.

Newfoundland banks and a further three weeks on the return trip.⁴⁷

Unintentional causes of delay were many and various. Perhaps the most frequent, especially in the early days of the colony was the lack of a ready cargo to take back to England. In 1623 Francis Wyatt speaks of this problem in a letter to his father. He notes that excessive demands were made by the Company for tobacco to fill the Abigail, "whereas in truth there was not so much made in the whole colony." He also states that there were seven or eight other ships waiting to be freighted, "which must have gone home empty to their great discontentment and discouragement . . . if the Abigail alone had been freighted, not to speak of hindereing all men from making their best mett with speedy sending home."⁴⁸ More than one ship seems to have returned with an empty ballast. The authorities in the colony apologised for such a state of affairs but failed to find any remedy for it until there was sufficient tobacco to satisfy everyone.⁴⁹ Even when there was a cargo ready, trouble could still arise. A load of pine trees had been cut and were ready to be loaded into the Starr in 1611. Although she had been sent with the specific purpose of picking up the trees, it was found that half of them were too long for her hold.⁵⁰ A further cause of delay, especially in the latter part of the period under survey was the habit of the planters and merchants of distributing their tobacco among several vessels. For

⁴⁷Records of the Virginia Company, III, 242-243.

⁴⁸Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 263.

⁴⁹Ibid., 101.

⁵⁰William Strachey, The Historie of Travell into Virginia Brittania, Luis B. Wight and Virginia Freund, eds. (London, Hakluyt Society, 1952), 130.

instance, when the Thomas and John reached the Thames early in May she carried 42,626 pounds of tobacco for no less than thirty-three merchants.⁵¹ In several harbours it took a long time to get cargoes together; the actual loading which need only take a few days was accompanied by weeks and often months of haggling and arguments and waiting for the general level of freight to settle.⁵²

The Edwin was delayed in Virginia in 1617 to 1618 because she was forbidden to trade under her patent, "upon pains of death" because of an insistence that all tobacco and sassafras should be transported to England only in the Magazine ship. Her captain, John Bargrave, complained, saying that his ship was absent from England for thirteen months. Eventually he was allowed some trade.⁵³ Many ships would need some time in Virginia to carry out repairs to damage incurred on the outward voyage and to make certain that the ship was seaworthy for the return journey. Such damage seems to have been quite frequent. Gabriel Archer notes that two of the ships in the 1609 fleet lost their main masts and one of these had a severe leak.⁵⁴

Another cause of delay was the disputes that arose between the crew of a ship and the captain. Such a quarrel took place between the captain of the Furtherance and two of his sailors over wages.⁵⁵ Even worse than

⁵¹Neville Williams, "England's Tobacco Trade in the Reign of Charles I," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 65 (1957), 416.

⁵²Davis, Shipping Industry, 194.

⁵³Records of the Virginia Company, III, 599.

⁵⁴Gabriel Archer from Virginia, to an unknown friend, August 31, 1609, Philip Barbour, Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609, 2 vols. (Cambridge, England, Hakluyt Society), II, 282.

⁵⁵Records of the Virginia Company, III, 362.

this, Captain John Harvey, commander of the same ship in 1624, was faced with a mutiny. Apparently the men refused to go on a fishing voyage to New England.⁵⁶ Such delays seem to have stemmed from a common cause, lack of understanding between the Company or the Crown and the authorities in the colony. The former, especially in the cases of excessive demands of tobacco, seem to have been unaware of the conditions existing in the colony.

These extended sojourns in the colony caused much inconvenience to the Virginians. Obviously the presence of the sailors would mean that supplies intended for the colonists would be in part utilised by these men, and supply was always insufficient. The authorities in Virginia complained about this in 1623. They talked of the excessive numbers of people being sent to the colony and declared that if fewer had been sent "then had we saven not only many men's lives but the colony had likewise been better furnished with victuals and provisions: much whereof the mariners of those ships lingeringe there for poor freight of tobacco have been a means to waste and consume even in this tyme of dearth and scarcitie which nowe raignes among them."⁵⁷ Such a problem had been faced from the earliest days of the colony. Thomas Studley and Anas Todkill described the sojourn of the first supply ship in 1607, "now though we had victual sufficient, I meane only of oatmeale, meale and corn, yet the ship staying there 14 weeks (when she might as well have been gone in 14 days) spent the beefe, pork, oile, aquavita, fish, butter and

⁵⁶Minutes of the Council and General Court, I, 8.

⁵⁷An answer to the Declaration of the Present State of Virginia, Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 150.

cheese, beere and such like, as was provided to be landed us."⁵⁸

An additional burden on the colony was the cost of employing a ship on a fishing or trading voyage. Not only did the Virginians have to feed the sailors, but apparently they had to pay them for their services. Captain Francis Nelson in 1608 refused to assist in exploration of the James River unless the colony paid for the hire of the seamen and the ship.⁵⁹ Some idea of the cost of such employment can be gauged from the following figures that Governor Wyatt submitted to the General Assembly in 1623:

For Captain Tucker's ship for three months. . . £800
For staying the Seaflower one month £600.⁶⁰

These costs are high when one considers that in 1630 freight from Virginia cost £12 per ton.⁶¹

The responsibility for goods arriving from Virginia was, under the Company, in the hands of the Deputy Governor. He dealt with the receipt, marketing and storage of the cargoes.⁶² In the orders and constitutions of 1620, further provisions were made. The committee set up to deal with such matters was to elect two officers, one of whom was customarily the Husband to aid the Deputy Governor. As with supplies being shipped to Virginia, all accounts and invoices of goods being returned were to be

⁵⁸Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia, Tyler, Narratives, 136.

⁵⁹True Relation of Captain John Smith, ibid., 65.

⁶⁰Documents of Sir Francis Wyatt, 125.

⁶¹Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States, 2 vols. (Washington, 1933), I, 223.

⁶²Craven, Virginia Company of London, 42.

registered in a book which was to be examined by the auditors.⁶³ Thus when the George returned from Virginia in March 1620, it was ordered that the Husband should examine her cargo. The freight should be discharged and wages paid to see what profit the Company had made on this voyage.⁶⁴ It appears that the ships returning weighed anchor in the Channel (often off the Isle of Wight) and awaited instructions from the Company as to where to land their cargo.⁶⁵ Some ships landed in Ireland at such ports as Kinsale from whence a profitable trade had been established with Virginia. This was done under the auspices of the Company.⁶⁶ The latter had even appointed a factor to deal with the goods, notably tobacco, which were discharged there.⁶⁷ Most ships did discharge their cargo in London, although whenever convenient other ports were used. Nicholas Ferrar wrote to his brother William in Virginia and urged him to land any tobacco he might send home at the first port they touch thus avoiding any trouble in England.⁶⁸ Neville Williams has made some estimation of the quantity of tobacco landed at the outports and concluded that it fluctuated wildly. In 1626-1627 it was as little as twelve per cent of the total for the whole country; in 1628-1629 as much as sixty per cent.⁶⁹ In January 1628 Charles I decided that trade could only be regulated by

⁶³Records of the Virginia Company, III, 351.

⁶⁴Ibid., I, 624.

⁶⁵Ibid., 503.

⁶⁶Ibid., II, 325.

⁶⁷Ibid., 169.

⁶⁸Ferrar Papers, Box V, no. 482.

⁶⁹Williams, Tobacco Trade, 417-418.

concentrating it on London and issued a proclamation ordering all tobacco to be unloaded at the Port of London. However, the inconveniences and impossibility of enforcement led to a relaxation on March 14.⁷⁰

After 1619, when the earlier exemptions had expired, the ships arriving from Virginia had to go through customs so that their cargoes could be examined and duties levied. This included a levy on tobacco of one shilling per pound in 1620. To avoid paying such duties it was resolved by the Company in July 1620 that no tobacco should be brought into England that year but that it should be sent to Flushing, Middleburg, or any other Dutch Port. A committee was appointed to see to this and to provide a magazine or storehouse in these ports and to consider the best means to sell the tobacco at the most profitable rates.⁷¹ Ships were therefore ordered to take their cargoes to these ports where Company agents such as Arthur Swayne in Flushing would deal with the tobacco.⁷² This practise led to complaints from the Crown which was deprived of the revenue. On October 15, 1621 there was read at the Court of the Company a complaint from some of the lords of the Privy Council about the trade that the Company has sent to Amsterdam.⁷³ This was followed nine days later by a proclamation stating that "from henceforth all tobacco and other commodities whatsoever to be brought and traded from the aforesaid plantation (Virginia) shall not be carried into any foreign port until

⁷⁰Ibid., 407-408.

⁷¹Records of the Virginia Company, I, 406.

⁷²Ibid., II, 482.

⁷³Ibid., I, 526.

the same hath first been landed here and his Majesty's custom payed."⁷⁴ However, this order had to be repeated on March 4, 1622, since it had not been obeyed.⁷⁵ It seems that the second order was also ignored, for in October 1622 the Company was still sending tobacco to Middleburg.⁷⁶ The dispute dragged on for several months, the Company was prepared to bring tobacco into the country and to pay the customs if they were granted the sole right of importation as the Spanish King had done with the products of his colonies.⁷⁷ Since the average price of tobacco at that time was two shillings a pound, the Company regarded the rate to be high. Eventually in March 1623 it was agreed to the mutual satisfaction of both parties that all tobacco from Virginia and the Bermudas was to be brought into England and would pay a duty of nine pence in the pound. In addition Virginian tobacco would have a virtual monopoly of the home market except for a limited quantity of Spanish tobacco.⁷⁸ Thus the common practise became that of shipping the tobacco to England and from thence to re-export it, usually to Holland. Thus in the London Port Books, between Christmas 1626 and Christmas 1627, thirty-six ships re-exported tobacco mainly to Holland.⁷⁹ Naturally all this took time and if a ship was intending to return to Virginia in the same year the delay could have been important. In 1630 Nathaniel Musgrove complained to Sir John

⁷⁴Entry Book of Letters, etc., fol. 201.

⁷⁵Ibid., fol. 203.

⁷⁶Records of the Virginia Company, II, 108.

⁷⁷Ibid., 315-316.

⁷⁸Craven, Dissolution of the Virginia Company, 250.

⁷⁹Port Books, Port of London, Searchers Book Overseas Exports, Christmas 1626-Christmas 1627, P.R.O. E190/31/1 fol. 3-167.

Wolstenholme that his ship was kept in London for an excessive length of time waiting for a customs officer to come on board to check his tobacco so that it could be transferred to a ship going to Holland. He was seeking damages for the stay of his ship and goods.⁸⁰ From the studies of the port books it appears that on average a ship spent sixty-nine days being examined. Some took much longer. The George and Elizabeth in 1630 took 328 days. One presumes that she was not intending to return to Virginia in the near future. However, Neville Williams points out that although the unloading of vessels was spread over a lengthy period, it cannot have taken as long as the documents might lead us to imagine. The dates on the customs records are the ones on which the merchant concerned cleared his goods by paying to the collector the sums due for impositions. Portions of the cargo not immediately required were left in something akin to a bonded warehouse until they were collected.⁸¹ Nevertheless customs delays appear to have been common.

There were other difficulties which led to ships being delayed in discharging their cargoes. In May 1620 the Treasurer was directed to discharge the freight of the Magazine ship, the George, but this could not be done at once because the account could not be made up to the shippers since the treasury was empty of cash.⁸² Allied to this was the problem faced by the Company in June 1623. The owners of the Abigail wanted money for freight according to their charter, since the sailors wanted paying. A committee reported on their request and noted that the

⁸⁰Calendar State Papers Domestic, Charles I, IV, 283-284.

⁸¹Williams, Tobacco Trade, 417.

⁸²Records of the Virginia Company, I, 365.

ship had returned with less tobacco and sassafras than had been promised, and thus they felt that the Company had been cheated. However, the Company was forced to reimburse the difference. Part was paid at once and the rest as soon as money was available.⁸³ Some ships were delayed on their passage through the Channel, whilst waiting for instructions about what to do with their cargo. The Dyana was delayed from before August 16, 1619 until September 29 when she arrived in London.⁸⁴ Delays could also be caused by disputes between the owner of the ship and the master. A petition was presented to the Privy Council in July 1626 from the passengers returning from Virginia on the Temperance. They complained that

by reason of some difference grown between Marmaduke Raynor master and Captain William Sacar owner of the said ship; their several goods and proportions of tobacco aboard the said ship are detained from them by the said Sacar to their great damage in particular and to the prejudice of the plantation, for that there being now, two ships ready to go to Virginia the petitioners intended to have sent thither some supplies by them, wherein they are now disabled and hindered⁸⁵ by having their tobacco detained from them.

Obviously these men had intended to use the profit from the sale of the tobacco to send supplies to the colony.

There were many difficulties encountered by the ships on their return to England. The lack of available money during the period of Company rule contributed in no small way to delays since it proved difficult to pay the owners of the ships to enable a speedy discharge of the cargo. The

⁸³ Ibid., II, 444-445.

⁸⁴ Ibid., III, 192.

⁸⁵ Acts of the Privy Council Colonial, I, 104.

delays continued after the dissolution since customs always posed a problem. However, after 1624, it was not so imperative to the colony that ships should be discharged quickly so that they might be employed again. By 1630 at least the colony was on a more secure footing and was not so reliant on the prompt arrival of supply from England. The delays however did prove frustrating to the owners of the ships and merchants engaged in the tobacco trade since they often wished to use the profits from sale of tobacco to re-equip the ships for immediate return to the colony for a fresh cargo.

CONCLUSION

Any estimate of the amount of shipping between England and Virginia in the period 1606 to 1630 has to be tentative. Some 188 separate voyages can be traced. Perhaps the apologists for the Company were exaggerating when they wrote in 1625 that there was "such an abundance of shipping coming and going continually to Virginia that there hath bin sometymes told seaventeen sail together coming into the river."¹ However it is estimated that in 1623 thirty ships were dispatched, and before 1630 several planters became deeply indebted to the different persons who traded in Virginia.² This could mean that there was a considerable trade. The number of ships arriving in the colony fluctuated wildly during this period. In the years 1608, 1614 and 1616 only one ship arrived in each, whilst the high number in 1623 has been noted above. During the period of Company control a correlation can be made between the numbers of ships arriving and the state of Company finances. At the time of the charters of 1609 and 1619 when additional funds were raised by means of appeal to the London Companies in one instance and the declaration of free trade on the other, the number of ships dispatched to Virginia showed a corresponding increase. Ten were sent out in 1609 and sixteen in 1619. Susan M. Kingsbury, in her brief study of the Company, notes that between 1619 and 1623 there were something like fifty-one ships dispatched to the

¹The Discourse of the Old Company, Tyler, Narratives, 142-143.

²Bruce, Economic History, II, 299.

colony. She compares this with the registers of the East India Company which show that only twenty-six ships were sent out by it between 1601 and 1612.³ However, it must be remembered that, unlike the Virginia Company, it had no colonists to worry about. Thus, after the first three years of the colony when ships visited only infrequently, it would be correct to say that there was considerable traffic across the Atlantic, although not quite the abundance the apologists for the Company would have the reader believe.

Some ships did manage to achieve two voyages in the same year, the Elizabeth in 1613, the George in 1619, and the William and John in 1617, and there could have been more. Nine ships have been traced which left for the colony almost immediately after their return. The time taken to turn round in the home port showed great fluctuations. The Treasurer in 1612 took about 205 days whereas the Bona Nova in 1619 managed to unload, refit, and take on a cargo within 53 days. The average turn round time of the nine ships was roughly 123 days. Technically, it was possible to achieve two visits in one year, considering that the outward passage and the return journey together took on average approximately 128 days. This would leave 109 days for the organisation of freight and passengers in between the two trips. However, this appears to have been too short a time if one takes the figure of 123 days to be the average time needed to deal with a ship in England, and this does not take into account any time spent in Virginia. Davis, in discussing the trade with the Western Hemisphere in general, arrives at the same conclusion. He notes that it

³Susan M. Kingsbury, "A Comparison of the Virginia Company with other English Trading Companies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1906), I, 169.

was difficult for a ship to make two voyages in a year, and in practise the voyage out and home, added to the loading and refitting time and the collection of cargo at the home port rarely took as little as six months and more commonly occupied nine or ten. Thus a great many West Indian and American operators regarded one voyage out and home as a proper year's employment of the ships.⁴ In fact the Company was probably quite correct in being proud of sending out some ships several times in a given number of years. The members announced with some self satisfaction that "the Bona Nova, the Hopewell, the Furtherance and the Abigail etc., some of these ships have gone twice or thrice within these four years."⁵

Despite inexperience of the Atlantic crossing very few ships met with any serious difficulties. Of the 188 vessels that have been traced only five met with any serious accident on the outward journey and two of these, the Tiger and the Margaret and John managed to arrive in the colony. On the return journey only two ships had any recorded trouble, the Hercules which was captured by pirates but released and the Diamond which was wrecked off Ushant on 1609. The losses on the voyage compare quite favourably with the losses incurred by the Portuguese vessels engaged in trade between Lisbon and Goa. In the years 1620 to 1623 of the thirty-four ships which took this route, eight were wrecked, two were captured, and nine were forced to return to port in Lisbon.⁶ The main difficulty as regards the actual voyage seem to have been caused by

⁴Davis, Shipping Industry, 190.

⁵Records of the Virginia Company, IV, 185.

⁶John H. Parry, "Transport and Trade Routes," E. E. Rich and C. H. Wilson, eds., Cambridge Economic History of Europe, 4 vols. (Cambridge, England, 1967), III, 195.

administrative inefficiency which resulted in overcrowding and insufficient and poor victuals which led to disease.

Turning to the major problem of speed and efficiency, it seems as if there were considerable delays experienced in all stages of organisation. Many of these can be attributed to factors beyond the control of the Company, private adventurers or the Crown. These problems were common to all those engaged in shipping during this period, such as delays in customs. Particular delays experienced by the Virginia Company were to be expected, most notably those that occurred in Virginia. As has been seen a high proportion of vessels (as many as one in every four in some years), were engaged in subsidiary enterprises in the colony. Thus a certain amount of the time that some ships spent in American waters was to some extent planned. However this does not detract from the fact that many delays were caused by sheer inefficiency on the part of those in charge of shipping and, sometimes, as in the case of the Seaflower, gross stupidity. There was abundant realisation of the added difficulties that delays in shipping could bring to the infant colony and innumerable complaints were made by the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic. However there appears to have been little done that was constructive to relieve the situation. The whole problem, at least in the period of the Company, rested on two factors. Firstly the lack of experience of colonising ventures of such magnitude for such extended periods of time. Many of the problems encountered, not only as regards shipping, by the Company, had not been foreseen by the propogandists or by the writers such as Richard Hakluyt. The practise of running a colony was somewhat different from the theories expounded. Secondly there was the perpetual lack of funds, which in some respects stemmed from the first factor. The Company

could never allow itself the luxury of planning ahead since it could never be certain that funds to meet arrangements would be forthcoming. Undoubtedly, if some forward planning had been possible, much needless expenditure could have been curtailed and perhaps been used for additional supplies for the colony.

The fact remains that the inefficiency for whatever causes, must be regarded as a contributory cause to many of the difficulties experienced by the colony in this period. Not only were requisite supplies denied to the colonists for unreasonable lengths of time but the work of administration was hindered by delays in the communication of messages and instructions between the governments in England and Virginia. When the Elizabeth arrived in England around July 30, 1613 she brought the first news from the colony since the Susan Constant had returned in September 1612.⁷ In 1609 the new charter for the Company which changed the form of government for the colony was carried to Virginia along with the first governor, Thomas Gates. By gross mismanagement Gates and all copies of the charter were put on the same ship, the Seaventure, which was wrecked on the Bermudas. Thus when the other ships of the fleet arrived, no one knew who was in charge of the colony. Gates, for all anyone knew, was lost, and the members of the Council technically no longer held power. Some of these problems could have been solved had the copies of the new charter and instructions been distributed among the ships.

⁷Velasco to Philip III, August 2, 1613, Brown, Genesis, II, 645-646.

APPENDIX A

TIME TAKEN BETWEEN THE DRAWING UP OF A CHARTER PARTY
AND THE DATE OF SAILING

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name of Ship</u>	<u>Charter Party</u>	<u>Date of Sailing</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
1619	<u>Margaret</u>	August 18	September 16	29 days
1620	<u>Supply</u>	August 31	September 27	27 days
1620	<u>Abigail</u>	November 13	February	ca. 94 days
1620	<u>London Merchant</u>	February 16	March	ca. 27 days

APPENDIX B

TIME TAKEN BETWEEN THE GRANTING OF A COMMISSION
AND THE DATE OF SAILING

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Ship</u>	<u>Date of Commission</u>	<u>Date of Sailing</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
1619	<u>Trial</u> <u>Garland</u> <u>Margaret</u>	February June 17 September 4	March 27 August September 16	<u>ca. 41 days</u> <u>ca. 59 days</u> <u>12 days</u>
1620	<u>Supply</u> <u>Falcon</u>	July 12 February 15	September 27 February	<u>77 days</u> <u>ca. 8 days</u>
1621	<u>Warwick</u> <u>Bona Nova</u> <u>Hopewell</u> <u>Discovery</u>	August 24 November 21 November 21 November 21	mid-September November November November	<u>ca. 22 days</u> <u>ca. 3 days</u> <u>ca. 3 days</u> <u>ca. 3 days</u>
1622	<u>James</u> <u>John and Francis</u>	July 17 November 22	August 22 early December	<u>36 days</u> <u>ca. 13 days</u>
1623	<u>Godsgift</u> <u>George</u> <u>Hopewell</u> <u>Marmaduke</u> <u>Great Hopewell</u> <u>Jacob</u> <u>Bonny Bess</u> <u>Southampton</u> <u>Ann of Virginia</u> <u>William and John</u> <u>Truelove</u> <u>Due Return</u>	April 30 August 6 August 6 August 6 August 6 August 6 February 5 July 9 February 5 February 5 July 17 June 9	early June August 14 August September October November May October April 23 May July July	<u>ca. 36 days</u> <u>8 days</u> <u>ca. 14 days</u> <u>ca. 40 days</u> <u>ca. 70 days</u> <u>ca. 100 days</u> <u>ca. 99 days</u> <u>ca. 98 days</u> <u>77 days</u> <u>ca. 99 days</u> <u>ca. 9 days</u> <u>ca. 36 days</u>
1626	<u>Peter and John</u>	September 11	September 23	<u>12 days</u>

APPENDIX C

TIME TAKEN BETWEEN LEAVING LONDON AND LEAVING THE CHANNEL

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name of Ship</u>	<u>Date Left London</u>	<u>Date Left Channel</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
1606-1607	<u>Susan Constant</u> <u>Godspeed</u> <u>Discovery</u>	December 30	February 18	50 days
1607	<u>John and Francis</u> <u>Phoenix</u>	October 18	November 2	15 days
1609	<u>Discovery</u>	May 6	May 15	9 days
1609	<u>Sea Venture</u> <u>Falcon</u> <u>Blessing</u> <u>Unity</u> <u>Diamond</u> <u>Swallow</u> <u>Lion</u> <u>Virginia</u> <u>Catch</u>	May 25	June 18	24 days
1610	<u>De La Warr</u> <u>Blessing</u> <u>Hercules</u>	March 12	April 11	30 days
1611	<u>Starr</u> <u>Prosperous</u> <u>Elizabeth</u>	March 2	March 27	25 days
1617	<u>George</u>	March 31	April 21	21 days
1619	<u>George</u>	January 5	January 29	24 days

APPENDIX D

OUTWARD VOYAGE

<u>Route</u>	<u>Average Time</u>	<u>Longest Time</u>	<u>Shortest Time</u>
West Indies	For 16 ships 111 days	<u>Phoenix</u> 1608 194 days	<u>Starr</u> 1611 57 days
Bermudas	<u>Elizabeth</u> 1613 114 days		
New England	<u>Ann</u> 1623 134 days		
Direct	For 3 ships 82 days	<u>Supply</u> 1620 126 days	<u>Edwin</u> 1617 35 days

APPENDIX E

INWARD VOYAGE

<u>Route</u>	<u>Average Time</u>	<u>Longest Time</u>	<u>Shortest Time</u>
Direct	For 6 ships 46 days	<u>Elizabeth</u> 1614 77 days	<u>Phoenix</u> 1608 21 days
New England	<u>Bonaventure</u> 1620 191 days		

APPENDIX F

MONTHS OF ARRIVAL IN VIRGINIA

<u>Year</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>
1607				3						1		
1608				1					1			
1609						1		6				
1610						4			1			
1611				1	3			3	1			
1612	1					1			1			
1613					1							
1614		1										
1615		1					2					
1616										1		
1617					3							
1618					1			2				
1619	2			5	2		1				2	
1620					4	1		2				1
1621	2	1		2		1					4	3
1622	1	1		3			4			1	2	2
1623				2	1	1	1		2			
1624		1	2	4			1					
1625			1						1	3		1
1626			1								1	1
1627	1		2	1								1
1628		1	1									
1629												
1630												

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Christmas 1618-Christmas 1619, P.R.O., E. 190/22/9.
- c. Searcher Overseas Outwards.
Christmas 1620-Christmas 1621, P.R.O., E. 190/24/1.
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- e. Surveyor of Tunnage and Poundage, Imports by Aliens.
Christmas 1620-Christmas 1621, P.R.O., E. 190/25/6.
- f. Controller of Customs, Export of Cloth by Denizens.
Christmas 1621-Christmas 1622, P.R.O., E. 190/25/1.
- g. Surveyor of Customs, Imports by Aliens.
Christmas 1621-Christmas 1622, P.R.O., E. 190/28/5.
- h. Searchers Book, Overseas Exports.
Christmas 1625-Christmas 1626, P.R.O., E. 190/29/4.
- i. Overseas Exports by Aliens.
Christmas 1626-Christmas 1627, P.R.O., E. 190/30/1.

- j. Controller of Tunnage and Poundage, Imports by Denizens.
Christmas 1625-Christmas 1626, P.R.O., E. 190/31/3.
- k. Searcher.
Christmas 1626-Christmas 1627, P.R.O., E. 190/31/1.
- l. Controller of Customs, Overseas Exports by Denizens.
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VITA

Susan Elizabeth Hillier

Born in Nottingham, England, April 5, 1947. B. A. the University of Liverpool, July 1968. Ph. D. candidate the University of Liverpool, having completed one year of research for this degree.

In September 1969, the author entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant in the Department of History.