

## Captain Spelman in Colonial Virginia

**Capt. Henry Spelman**, was the third son of the distinguished antiquary, Sir Henry Spelman, of Congham, Norfolk, England. He was about twenty-one years of age when he came to Virginia, in 1609, for which he accounts as follows: "Being in displeasure of my friends, and desirous to see other countryes. After three months' sayle we cum with prosperus winds in sight of Virginia." Afterwards he says, "I was carried by Capt. Smith, our President, to ye Fales, to ye litell Powhatan, wher, vnknowne to me he sould me to him for a towne called Powhatan."—Spelman's Relation, pp. 15, 16. Dr. Simons, in Smith's General Historie, says: "Captain West and Captain Sickelmore sought abroad to trade; Sickelmore, upon the confidence of Powhatan, with about thirty other as careless as himselfe, were all slaine, onely Jeffrey Shortridge escaped, and Pokahontas, the King's daughter, sau'd a boy called Henry Spelman, that liued many yeeres after, by her meanes, among the Patawokes;" this occurred in 1609.—Smith, p. 105. He remained with the Indians but little more than one year, for in 1610 Capt. Argall being sent to the "riuier Patawomeke to trade for corne," where finding him, used Spelman's influence to secure the loading of his vessel with corn, and Spelman returned with him to Jamestown.—Smith, p. 108. Spelman adds, "and brought into England." We then lose sight of him until he is arraigned before the Assembly at Jamestown in 1619. He makes his final appearance in 1623, when we are told, he was sent with a bark and twenty-six men to "trucke in the River Patawmeke," where at some place, the name of which was to his companions unknown, he landed with twenty-one of his companions, when the savages made hostile demonstrations "and presently after they" (the five left in the bark) "heard a great brute amongst the Saluages ashore, and saw a man's head thrown downe the banke, whereupon they weighed Anchor and returned home, but how he was surprised or slaine is vncertaine."—Smith p. 161. Spelman wrote a short account of his observations while among the Indians, and it laid in obscurity until the sale of Dawson Turner's library, in 1859, when it was bought by Mr. Joseph Lilly and, by accident, again lost; and at the sale of Mr. Lilly's library, in 1871, it was again discovered and purchased for James F. Hunniwell, Esq., who has had one hundred copies printed for private circulation.

Spelman was not the only Englishman with the savages. In the same year that Spelman was sold for a town, or saved by Pocahontas—whichever version being correct—Admiral Newport gave Powhatan a boy, named Thomas Salvage, in exchange for "Namontack, his trustie seruant." Spelman says Savage was murdered by the Indians, but there is a tradition that he lived nearly all his life with them; became possessor of a tract of land on the eastern shore by gift and that it remained in his family until within the last ten years, when it was sold by some of his descendants then living in Philadelphia. The authority for this statement is obtained in correspondence with Hon. Hugh B. Grigsby, LL. D., President of the Virginia Historical Society.

To note to Jordan's Journey it may be added that a reference to this place is doubtless made when Smith says: "After the massacre many of the inhabitants fortified themselves against

other attacks, and Master Samuel Jorden gathered but a few about him at Begger's Bush" (the title of one of Fletcher's comedies) "where he fortified."—Smith, p. 150; Campbell, p. 164.

Source: Colonial Records of Virginia by various authors

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