

2-3 Checklist for Virginia-Bound Colonists (1624)

John Smith

When John Smith sat down to write his *Generall Historie* in 1624, he had already led Virginians through their “starving times” and the Indian massacre of 1622 (see text pp. 49–50). He also had helped the Virginians overcome their reluctance to work. But it was from London that he kept a keen eye on the colonization of the North Atlantic coastline, including the settlement of New England. Although there is no evidence that John Smith met John Winthrop, the leader of the Puritan exodus to Massachusetts, Winthrop probably was familiar with Smith’s *Generall Historie*.

Source: Captain John Smith, *The Generall Historie* (1624), edited by Edward Arber and reprinted in his *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith* (Edinburgh: J. Grant, 1910), book 4.

A particular of such necessaries as either private families, or single persons, shall have cause to provide to go to Virginia, whereby greater numbers may in part conceive the better how to provide for themselves.

Apparel

A Monmouth cap.	1s.	10d.
3 falling bands [collars].	1s.	3d.
3 shirts.	7s.	6d.
1 waistcoat.	2s.	2d.
1 suit of canvas.	7s.	6d.
1 suit of frieze [coarse wool].	10s.	
1 suit of cloth.	15s.	
3 pair of Irish stockings.	4s.	
4 pair of shoes.	8s.	8d.
1 pair of garters.		10d.

1 dozen of points [for lacing clothes].		3d.
1 pair of canvas sheets.	8s.	
7 ells of canvas to make a bed and bolster, to be filled in Virginia, serving for two men.	8s.	
5 ells of coarse canvas to make a bed at sea for two men.	5s.	
1 coarse rug at sea for two men.	6s.	
<i>Victual for a whole year for a man, and so after the rate for more.</i>		
8 bushels of meal.	2£.	

2 bushels of peas.	6s.	
2 bushels of oatmeal.	9s.	
1 gallon of aqua vitae.	2s.	6d.
1 gallon of oil.	3s.	6d.
2 gallons of vinegar.	2s.	
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	3£.	3s.

Arms for a man; but if half your men be armed it is well, so all have swords and pieces.

1 armor complete, light.	17s.	
1 long piece five feet and a half, near musket bore.	1£.	2s.
1 sword.		5s.
1 belt.		1s.
1 bandolier.		1s.
20 pound[s] of powder.		18s.
60 pound[s] of shot or lead, pistol and goose shot.		5s.
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	3£.	9s. 6d.

Tools for a family of six persons, and so after the rate for more.

5 broad hoes at 2s. apiece.	10s.	
5 narrow hoes at 16d. apiece.	6s.	8d.
2 broad axes at 3s. 8d. apiece.	7s.	4d.
5 felling axes at 18d. apiece.	7s.	6d.
2 steel handsaws at 16d. apiece.	2s.	8d.
2 two-handsaws at 5s. apiece.	10s.	
1 whipsaw, set and filed; with box, file and wrest [screw key].	10s.	
2 hammers [at] 12d. apiece.	2s.	
3 shovels at 18d. apiece.	4s.	6d.
2 spades at 18d. apiece.	3s.	
2 augers at 6d. apiece.	1s.	
6 chisels at 6d apiece.	3s.	
2 percors stocked [at] 4d apiece.		8d.

3 gimlets at 2d. apiece.		6d.
2 hatchets at 21d. apiece.	3s.	6d.
2 froes to cleave pale [make staves or shingles] [at] 18d. each.	3s.	
2 hand bills [at] 20d apiece.	3s.	4d.
1 grindstone.	4s.	
nails of all sorts to the value of	2£.	
2 pickaxes.	3s.	
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	6£.	2s. 8d.

Household implements for a family and six persons, and so for more or less after the rate.

1 iron pot.	7s.	
1 kettle.	6s.	
1 large frying pan.	2s.	6d.
1 gridiron.	1s.	6d.
2 skillets.	5s.	
1 spit.	2s.	
platters, dishes, spoons of wood.	4s.	
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	1£.	8s.

For sugar, spice, and fruit, and at sea for six men. 12s.6d.

So the full charge after this rate for each person, will amount to about the sum of 12£.10s.10d.

The passage of each man is 6£.

The fraught of these provisions for a man, will be about half a ton, which is 1£.10s.

So the whole charge will amount to about 20£.

Now if the number be great; [not only] nets, hooks, and lines, but cheese, bacon, kine and goats must be added.

And this is the usual proportion the Virginia Company doe[s] bestow upon their tenants they send.

Questions

1. Can you tell from this list of necessary items what kind of colony Smith hoped Virginia would become?
2. What kind of lifestyle do you imagine early Virginians had?
3. What is missing from this list that colonists might obtain from Virginia's environment?

Questions for Further Thought

1. Based on your reading of these three documents (2-1 through 2-3), which of the New World colonies would seem to have the best prospects for long-term prosperity? Why?
2. Do you see any significant differences among the Spanish and English colonies in their attitudes toward the native inhabitants?