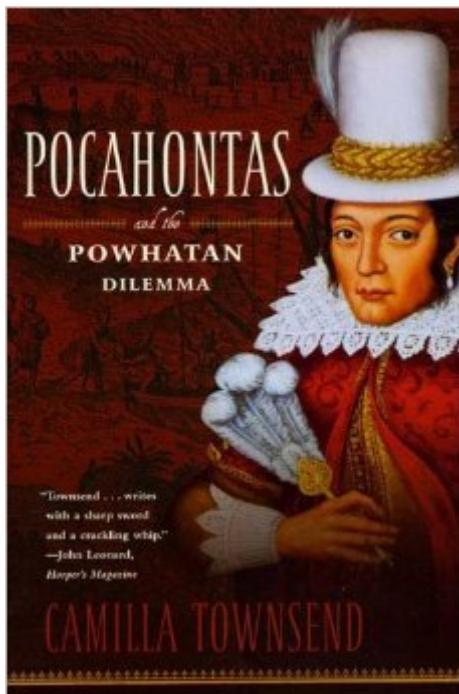


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Pocahontas And The Powhatan Dilemma: The American Portraits Series



Synopsis

Camilla Townsend's stunning new book, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*, differs from all previous biographies of Pocahontas in capturing how similar seventeenth century Native Americans were--in the way they saw, understood, and struggled to control their world---not only to the invading British but to ourselves. Neither naïve nor innocent, Indians like Pocahontas and her father, the powerful king Powhatan, confronted the vast might of the English with sophistication, diplomacy, and violence. Indeed, Pocahontas's life is a testament to the subtle intelligence that Native Americans, always aware of their material disadvantages, brought against the military power of the colonizing English. Resistance, espionage, collaboration, deception: Pocahontas's life is here shown as a road map to Native American strategies of defiance exercised in the face of overwhelming odds and in the hope for a semblance of independence worth the name. Townsend's Pocahontas emerges--as a young child on the banks of the Chesapeake, an influential noblewoman visiting a struggling Jamestown, an English gentlewoman in London--for the first time in three-dimensions; allowing us to see and sympathize with her people as never before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have finally come to the end of this fine book and am delighted to share my views. Unlike the one other reviewer here at (Mohroy), I found the book to be richly rewarding on every possible level. Camilla Townsend's academic background is well known and she is highly respected in her field. Her ability to write a compelling narrative is smartly coupled with a rich list of footnotes, so many of

which come from original documents. In some cases highly academic books can be a bother when you are flipping back to the footnotes; not with this book. Each note was worth the attention and always added a deeper dimension. When you consider that Townsend was building a picture of these people that was not always the mainstream her reliance on her research more than convinced me of her perspective. What is the overall impression of the story she paints? I'll tell you, that when I first discovered this story, through the lens of the very emotionally moving movie, "The New World", I had very little knowledge of the real story. In following up on my initial reactions to the movie I endeavored to read what modern historians have to say. I read one book which I can also highly recommend and then I found Townsend. The first was "Captain John Smith: Jamestown and the birth of the American Dream" by Thomas and Dorothy Hoobler, November 2005, published by Wiley. This was a sensational revelation and spurred me on to know more. Townsend has filled in the missing pieces and is essential in my view for anyone who wants to know the story shed of all of its mythology. "The New World" is a fine movie and entertainment and I will always treasure it.

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