



THE REAL POCAHONTAS



Pocahontas is most famous for saving the life of Captain John Smith. Disney's *Pocahontas* was their first story based on a historic event, not another fairy tale. Of course, Disney changed the facts to make it more suitable for children, but here is the original story.

Her real name was Matoaka and she was the beautiful and lively daughter of Powhatan, ruler of the land that the English named Virginia. "Pocahontas" was her childhood nickname, translated as "little playful one,". She was her father's favourite child, "the apple of his eye".

In 1607 the English established a colony at Jamestown, Virginia. One day, during 1608, Captain John Smith and some of his men were captured by Indians while they were out searching for food. Captain Smith's men were all killed and he was taken to Chief Powhatan. The mighty Indian Chief ordered that Smith be killed. At the last moment, the Chief's daughter, 13 year old Pocahontas, saved Captain Smith's life.

Over the next years, Pocahontas often went to visit John Smith at the British colony at Jamestown. One winter, when the harvest was particularly bad and the British men were almost starving, Pocahontas brought them food so they could survive.

In 1613, when she was 18 years old, Pocahontas was baptized as a Christian. She also took the "Christian" name of Rebecca. During this time, Pocahontas was engaged to Kocoum, but she fell in love with British tobacco planter John Rolfe and he with her. They got married and she got the name of Lady Rebecca Rolfe. Pocahontas and John had a child named Thomas. In 1616, John, Pocahontas and their son all traveled to England where they met King James and Queen Anne. As they prepared to come back home to Virginia in 1617, Pocahontas became ill and died. She was buried in England.



1 Portrait of the real Pocahontas