Excerpts from the Virginia Company’s “Instructions by way of advice” to Christopher Newport and company before setting sail for Virginia in December 1606

“When it Shall please God to Send you on the Coast of Virginia you shall Do your best Endeavor to find out a Safe port in the Entrance of Some navigable River making Choice of Such a one as runneth furthest into the Land. and if you happen to Discover Divers portable Rivers and amongst them any one that hath two main branches if the Difference be not Great make choice of that which bendeth most towards the Northwest for that way shall you soonest find the Other Sea…”

“…Such a place you may perchance find a hundred miles from the Rivers mouth and the farther up the better for if you sit Down near the Entrance Except it be in Some Island that is Strong by nature An Enemy that may approach you on Even Ground may Easily pull You Out and if he be Driven to Seek You a hundred miles within the Land in boats you shall from both sides of your River where it is Narrowest So beat them with Your muskets as they shall never be Able to prevail Against You.”

“Secondly you must in no Case Suffer any of the natural people of the Country to inhabit between You and the Sea Coast for you Cannot Carry Your Selves so towards them but they will Grow Discontented with Your habitation and be ready to Guide and assist any Nation that Shall come to invade You and if You neglect this You neglect Your Safety…”

“You Shall do well to Send a perfect relation by Captain Newport of all that is Done of what height you are Seated how far into the Land what Comodities you find what Soil Woods and their Several Kinds and so of all Other things Else to advertise particularly and to Suffer no man to return but by passport from the President and Councel nor to write any Letter of any thing that may Discourage others.”