

*The Old Church Tower
at Jamestown*

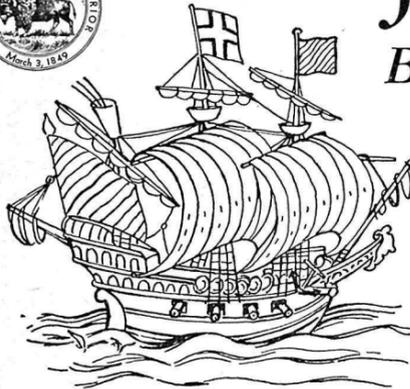


Jamestown

VIRGINIA

THE NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE
COOPERATING WITH THE
ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF
VIRGINIA ANTIQUITIES





JAMESTOWN

Birthplace of the Nation

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR
DOUGLAS McKAY, *Secretary*
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*
*Cooperating with the Association for the
Preservation of Virginia Antiquities*

At Jamestown, site of the first permanent English settlement in America (1607), first representative legislative assembly in the New World (1619), and Virginia Capital (1607-99), many of our most cherished traditions of freedom were born.

The first permanent settlement in America by the English was proof of their determination to establish themselves in the New World. The defeat of Spanish sea power by the English during the reign of Queen Elizabeth had paved the way for English colonization of America. Enterprising Britons had already established their influence in India, the Near East, and Russia. Sir Walter Raleigh had made several unsuccessful attempts to establish an enduring settlement along the Carolina coast at Roanoke Island—a movement now commemorated by Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park System. It remained for the Virginia Company of London, under its charter of April 10, 1606, to found the first permanent English settlement in America.

Jamestown is the site of this settlement. The first settlers landed in May 1607, built houses and a fort, planted crops, and began the struggle for the conquest of the continent. They brought with them their Church and respect for God. They established homes, maintained trial by jury and their rights as free men, and soon they were developing representative govern-

ment, intent upon the realization of Raleigh's dream of a great English nation beyond the seas.

17th-century Jamestown

The story of Jamestown began on May 13, 1607, when the first Virginia colonists, after several months of voyaging out of England and a brief stay on Cape Henry, sailed up the James River and selected Jamestown Island, then a peninsula, as a place for settlement. They disembarked from their three small ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery*, on the following day. Virginia was a pleasant land, but its ways were strange to Englishmen, and the first years at Jamestown were trying ones—a continual struggle against sickness, hunger, and inexperience, in addition to the disadvantages of its unhealthy location.

Within a few months Capt. John Smith became the dominant personality at Jamestown. His vigorous leadership did much to keep the colony together during its first 2½ years. His departure for England in October 1609, seemingly under duress and after he had been disabled by an explo-

sion of gunpowder, marked the beginning of the terrible "Starving Time," when nine-tenths of the colonists died. Discouragement was so great that the survivors planned to desert the colony. It was only the timely arrival of the newly appointed governor, Lord Delaware, with fresh men and supplies, that actually prevented the abandonment of Virginia.

Gradually, Jamestown took on a look of permanence, and plantations spread up and down the rivers. By 1614, the settlement could boast of streets and houses and could well be called a town.

The efficient, yet necessarily stern, government of Sir Thomas Dale did much to stabilize the Colony, particularly through his assignment of private holdings and his rigid enforcement of a stringent disciplinary code of laws. About 1610-11, experimentation in tobacco culture, ably advanced by John Rolfe, proved successful. This established the economic basis on which the colony became prosperous.

In 1614, Pocahontas, the daughter of the Indian Chieftain Powhatan, married John Rolfe, bringing 8 years of peace with the Indians. Two years later, in 1616, she went to England and was presented to the Court of James I as Lady Rebecca. She died in England in 1617, leaving a son, Thomas Rolfe, who later came to Virginia and left many descendants.

The year 1619 was truly a momentous one for the colony. Maids arrived from England to become wives of the settlers and to join with those of their sex already in Virginia. In this year, too, the first Negroes were brought to the colony. More significant still was the meeting of the House of Burgesses, which convened in the church at Jamestown in what was the first representative legislative assembly in the New World.

In the year 1622, there was a sudden uprising of the Indians which resulted in wholesale destruction of life and property. Jamestown, warned through the friendly Indian, Chanco, escaped the massacre,

though for a time the whole life of the colony was threatened. Partly as a result of these events, the Virginia Company of London, which had directed the affairs of the settlement since its founding, was dissolved, and Virginia became a royal colony in 1624.

The Virginians, though as yet loyal to the British sovereign, were increasingly conscious of their strength and jealous of their rights. Under the administration of Sir William Berkeley, popular feeling against personal government mounted for a time to the pitch of open rebellion as a result of his high-handed acts, and of Indian depredations on the frontier. In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, the younger, emerged as the popular leader in a revolt which brought hostilities to Jamestown and momentarily drove Berkeley from power. Bacon's men burned the town, believing it to be the "stronghold of oppression."

Bacon soon died, and the rebellion collapsed, leaving, however, an undying spirit of resistance to tyranny. Berkeley

was replaced, and Jamestown was partially rebuilt; but the town had suffered a blow from which it never quite recovered. The burning of the statehouse in 1698 brought the end. The seat of government was moved to Williamsburg in 1699, and, before many years had passed, Jamestown was practically abandoned. The town ceased to exist about the time of the American Revolution. At about this time, too, the isthmus connecting Jamestown to the mainland was washed out, making it a true island.

The Jamestown Archeological Project

With the exception of the Old Church Tower, there are today no remains above ground at Jamestown that date from the 17th century. Underground, however, there is a wealth of information regarding the life of that period. To conduct the work of archeological investigation the Jamestown Archeological Project was set up by the National Park Service



Typical objects recovered from Jamestown excavations.

in 1934. The work of the project is not continuous, but when actually in progress the excavations are open for visitors to see.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities

In 1893, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities acquired title to 22½ acres of land on Jamestown Island. This area was slightly reduced in 1907 when the association donated to the United States the tract on which the Tercentenary Monument was built. The association's holdings now consists of about 21 acres and include the Old Church Tower. In 1940, the association area at Jamestown was designated by the Secretary of the Interior as Jamestown National Historic Site.

The association, often referred to as the APVA, was chartered in 1889. The objectives for which the organization was formed, and for which it continues to function, are "to restore and preserve the ancient historic buildings and the tombs in the State of Virginia, and to acquire,

by purchase or gift, the sites of such buildings and tombs with a view to their perpetual preservation."

Points of Interest at Jamestown

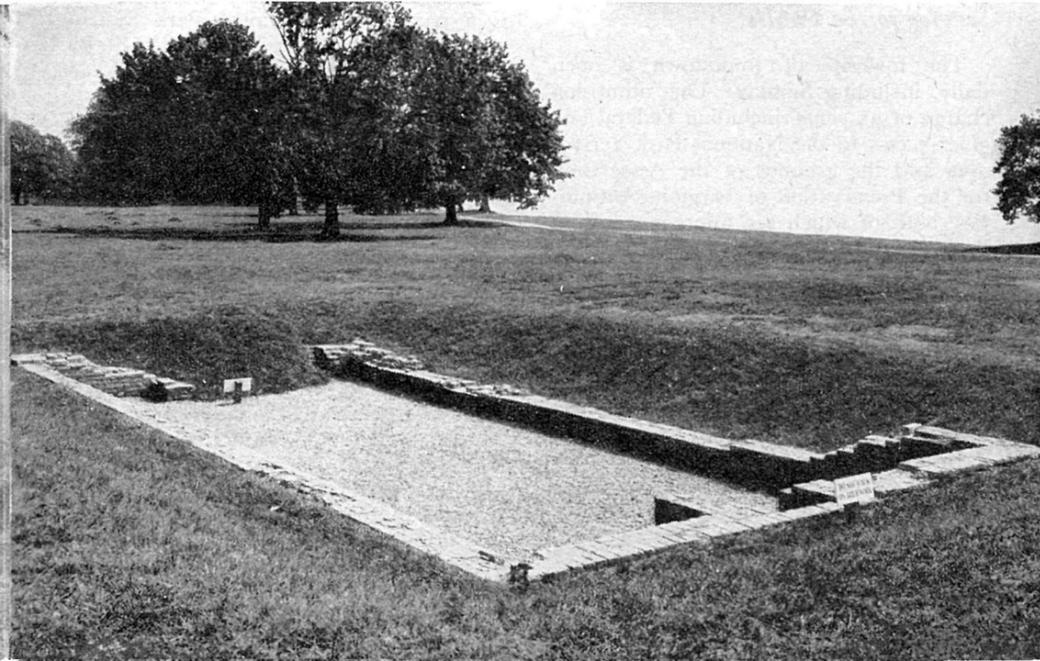
The principal area of the town of Jamestown, which grew out of the settlement in 1607, was along the James River on both sides of, and including, the present highway and parking area. It was approximately three-fourths of a mile long and extended from the river back to the salty marsh, called Pitch and Tar Swamp. At first there was only the fort. Then, as the town grew, there were houses, a church, a market place, shops, storehouses, statehouses, and other public buildings along regularly laid out streets and ways. This was the capital of Virginia until 1699.

The *first landing site*, which the colonists reached on May 13, 1607, and where, the next day, they landed supplies, has been fixed by tradition as a point now in the river approximately 125 feet from the present seawall, almost directly out from the Old Church Tower. The *first*

Statue of Captain John Smith.



Seventeenth century house foundation.



fort, triangular in shape, by tradition was located in front of the tower and likewise on land that has been washed away by the James River.

The ivy-covered *Old Church Tower*, within the APVA Grounds, is the only standing ruin of the 17th century town of Jamestown. It is believed to have been constructed as a part of the first brick church, begun in 1639. The walls of handmade brick, 3 feet thick, laid in English bond, have been standing for more than 300 years. The *Memorial Church*, adjoining the tower, was erected in 1907 by the Colonial Dames of America over the foundations of this early brick church. Within the building are burials, memorials, and the foundations of an earlier church said to have housed the first representative legislative assembly in America which convened on July 30, 1619. In the *Churchyard* countless dead are buried and the few remaining gravestones are witness to the antiquity of the spot. These carry the names of Berkeley, Blair, Harrison, Ludwell, Beverly, Lee, and others.

Northwest of the church area, still within the APVA Grounds, is a group of excavated foundations of buildings of importance in the later years of the town of Jamestown. These include the *Last Statehouse*, the *Last Country House*, and three houses of Philip Ludwell. The *Lone Cypress Tree* standing in the water several hundred feet from the shore can be seen from these foundations. This tree once stood on the island and is visible evidence of the erosion that has taken at least 25 acres of the northern portion of the townsite. Through the efforts of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the United States, in 1900-1901, built a concrete seawall to check further damage. Col. Samuel H. Yonge, author of *The Site of Old "James Towne,"* was the engineer in charge. This seawall and the riprap extension later provided by the National Park Service now protect the island from further erosion.

From the National Park Service Exhibit Rooms, adjacent to the parking area, it is possible to walk over the eastern portion of the townsite following the courses of "Back-Streete," "the high way close to the river," and others of the original streets.

The walk traverses the area of "New Towne" where Jamestown expanded about 1620. In "New Towne" lived many of the principal figures of early Virginia. The *Country House*, the foundations of which have been located, was used by the governor as his residence. In it lived Governors Sir Samuel Argall, Sir George Yeardley, and Sir Francis Wyatt. In this section were the residences of Richard Kemp, builder of the first recorded brick house in Virginia; Dr. John Pott and William Pierce, leaders in "the thrusting out" of Gov. John Harvey in 1635; and William Sherwood, an attorney general for the colony. Here have been excavated the foundations of the house of *Henry Hartwell*, one of the founders of the College of William and Mary.

Near the river the foundations of the *First Brick Statehouse* of Virginia have been discovered. Here, during the early governorship of Sir William Berkeley, were discussed the measures needful for the government of the growing colony. Here, too, the colony submitted to the government of the Commonwealth of England in 1652, and Richard Bennett, chosen by the Assembly, succeeded Berkeley as governor.

In the immediate vicinity of the parking area is the *Tercentenary Monument* erected by the United States in 1907 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the settlement. Built of New Hampshire granite, it rises 103 feet above its base. Other monuments and memorials, all of which are within the APVA Grounds, include the *Captain John Smith Statue* designed by William Couper; the *Pocahontas Monument*, by William Ordway Partridge; the *House of Burgesses Monument*, listing the members of the first representative legislative body in the New World; and the *Memorial to the Reverend Robert Hunt*, who in June 1607, on the third Sunday after Trinity, administered at Jamestown the first Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England.

The ruined walls of the *Jaquelin-Ambler House* stand as testimony of the late colonial period when Jamestown Island ceased to be the location of a town and became the estate of two families—Ambler and Travis. A reminder of a later period is the *Confederate Fort*, near the Old

Church Tower, built in 1861. This is one of several such fortifications on the island.

In the NPS Exhibit Rooms, there are illustrated panels giving the history of Jamestown in abbreviated form and displays of objects which have been recovered from the ground and which were used by early Jamestown residents. In the APVA Relic House (a combined exhibit room, souvenir shop, and resthouse), displays include objects which were recovered in excavations at the church, in the churchyard, and around the last Statehouse group, as well as the Pocahontas earrings.

How to Reach Jamestown

Jamestown Island is easily accessible from Williamsburg over State Route 31 and from Richmond by State Route 5. The approach from the south is over State Routes 10 and 31 to the ferry across the James at Scotland. The ferry docks at the island. Sightseeing tour buses operate from Williamsburg, the nearest rail and bus terminal.

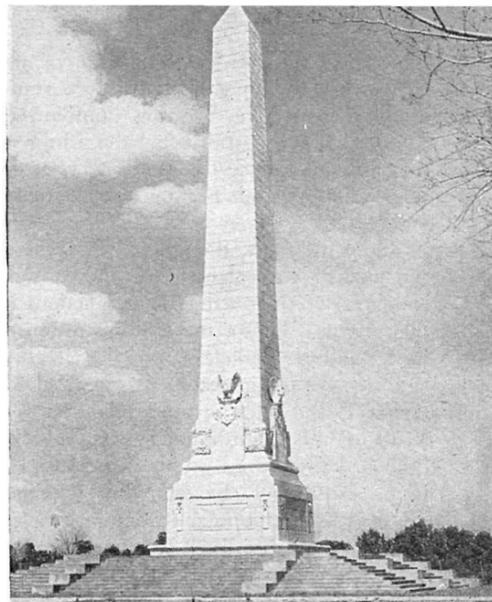
The Colonial Parkway, now connecting Yorktown and Williamsburg, is expected to be completed to Jamestown by 1957.

Service to the Public

The townsite of Jamestown is open daily, including Sunday. One admission charge of 35 cents, including Federal tax, gives access to the National Park Service area and the grounds of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, both of which are approached from the central parking area. All school students 18 years of age and under, when in groups, and all children under 12 are admitted without charge when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their orderly conduct. Organizations and groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance.

Information is available in the NPS Exhibit Rooms and at the APVA Gate House where tickets are on sale.

No eating or lodging facilities are available at Jamestown.



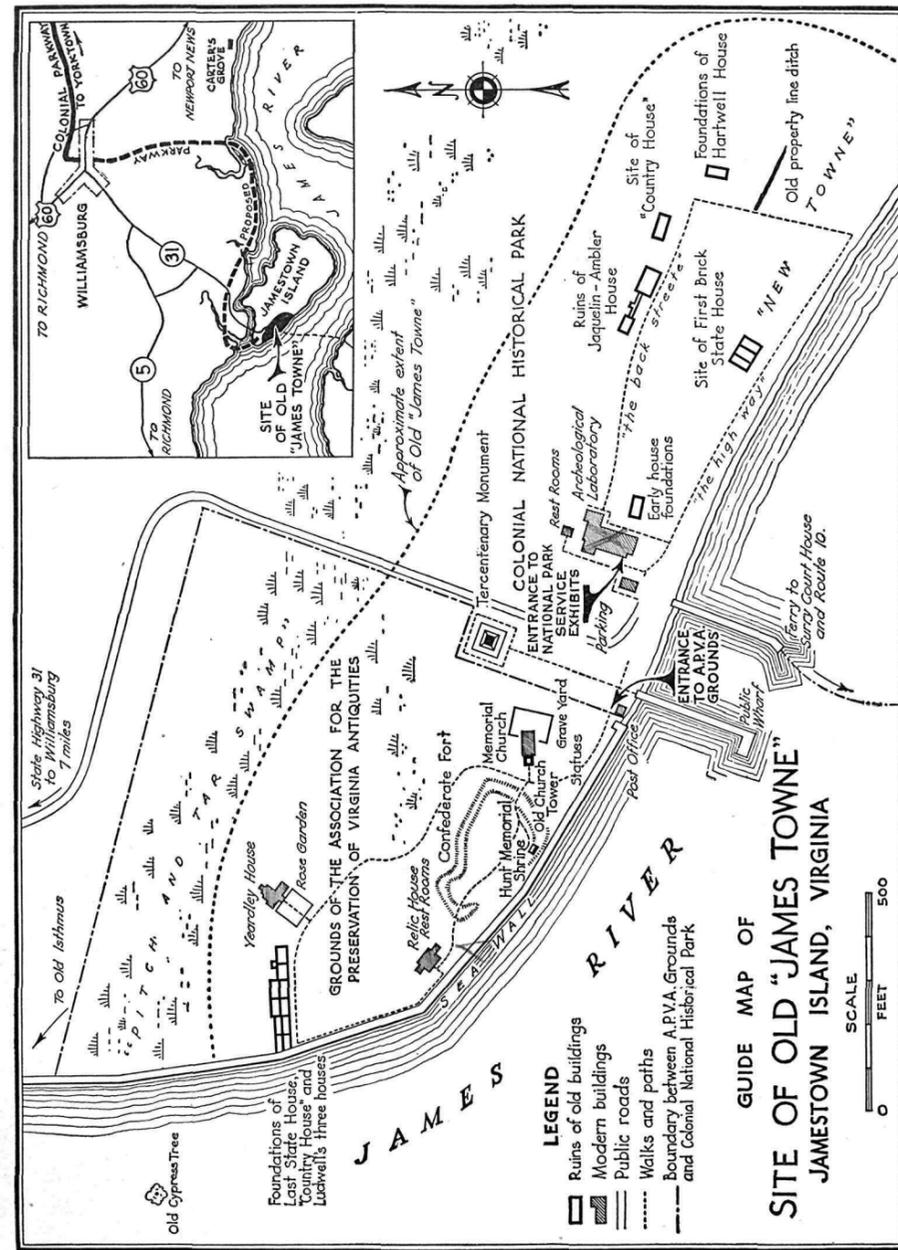
Tercentenary Monument at Jamestown.

Administration

Jamestown Island, except Jamestown National Historic Site, is in Colonial National Historical Park. The park also includes Yorktown Battlefield, Colonial Parkway, and Cape Henry Memorial. It is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Jamestown National Historic Site is administered by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. A cooperative agreement between the association and the Department of the Interior has been in effect since 1940 providing for a unified program of development for the whole Jamestown Island area.

The island, made up of marsh and dry land almost evenly divided, includes 1,559.5 acres.

All inquiries relating to the National Park Service area should be addressed to the Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park, Box 548, Yorktown, Va. Those relating to the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities should be addressed to the association, Jamestown, Va.



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