

Jamestown

VIRGINIA

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



Jamestown

Site of the first permanent English settlement in America (1607), the first representative legislative assembly in the New World (1619), and Virginia's capital from 1607 to 1699.

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 seapower 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 (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 government, 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 "flagship" *Susan Constant*, commanded by Capt. Christopher Newport, the *Godspeed*, commanded by Capt. Bartholomew Gosnold, and the *Discovery*, commanded by Capt. John Ratcliffe—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, compounded by the settlement's 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 after he had been disabled by an explosion 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 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 and 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.

This is the same John Rolfe who married Pocahontas, daughter of the Indian Chief Powhatan, in 1614, in the church at Jamestown. This marriage helped to bring a period of peace with the Indians.

Settlements now spread outward along the James, but Jamestown was the political, social, and economic center of the colony. In 1619 it was the scene of the meeting of America's first representative legislative assembly. In 1619, too, steps were taken to send maidens to Virginia to become wives of the settlers, joining those of their sex already in the colony. The first of them arrived the following spring. The first

Scene at the "Glasshouse."



Negroes, too, were brought to Virginia in 1619 and sold as servants—slavery was not established until later.

In 1622, there was a sudden uprising of the Indians which resulted in wholesale destruction of life and property. Warned through the friendly Indian, Chanco, Jamestown 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 loyal to the British sovereign, were increasingly conscious of their strength and jealous of their rights. In 1635 they temporarily deposed the royal Governor, Sir John Harvey. 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 against Berkeley. Jamestown was involved in the fighting and for a time the Governor was driven from power. Bacon's men then burned the town, believing it to be the "stronghold of oppression."

Bacon soon died, and the rebellion collapsed, leaving, however, a continuing spirit of resistance to tyranny. Berkeley was replaced as Governor, 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. Measures were taken to move the seat of government 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, and gave way to a plantation type of economy. About this time, too, the isthmus connecting Jamestown to the mainland was washed out, making it an island.

Jamestown National Historic Site

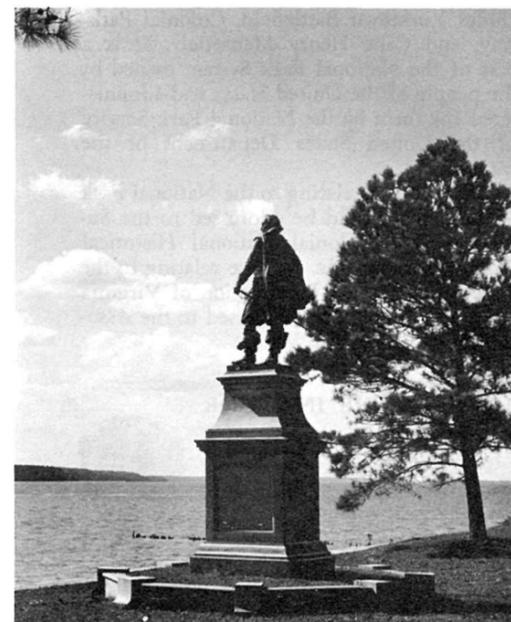
The first organized effort toward saving the Jamestown site came in 1893, when the Association for the Preservation of Virginia

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, and again in 1956 when it provided the site for the Jamestown Visitor Center. The Association's holdings now consist of about 20 acres and include the Old Church Tower. In 1940, the Association area was designated by the Secretary of the Interior as Jamestown National Historic Site. This was a part of a joint agreement between the Association and the Department of the Interior to provide for a unified development for the whole of Jamestown Island.

Points of Interest in Jamestown

From the parking area on the island it is but a short walk over a trestle bridge spanning Pitch and Tar Swamp to the *visitor center* (1), sponsored jointly by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and the National Park Service. A short, slide-illustrated orientation program is given here, and you will find an information desk, literature, souvenirs, and

The Captain John Smith Statue overlooking James River.

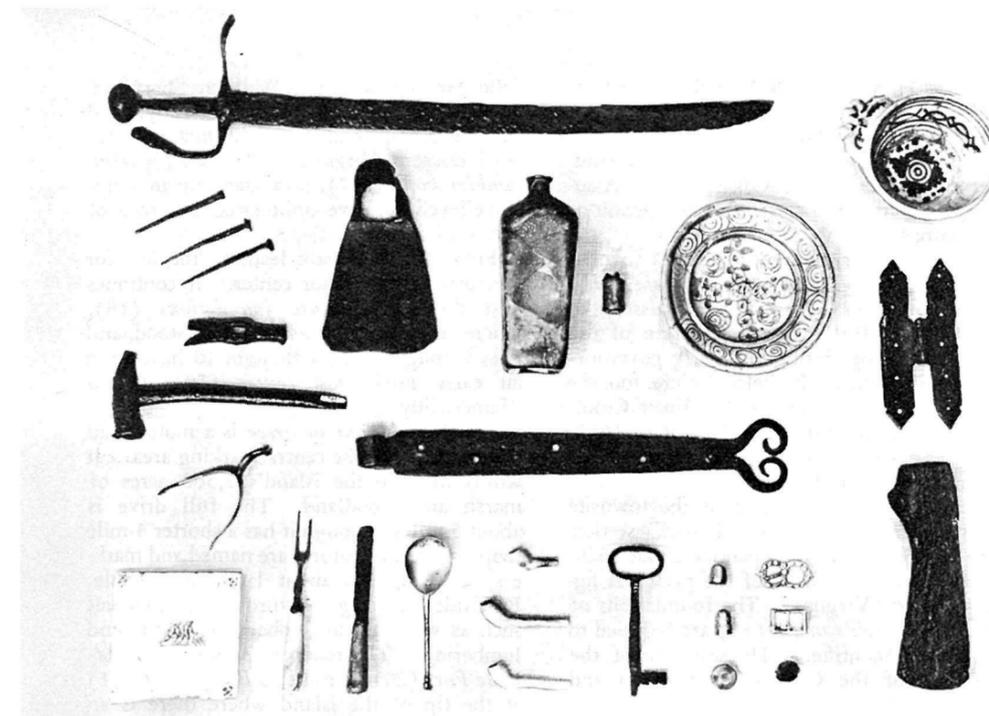


an extensive series of exhibits. These exhibits include many irreplaceable objects such as the earrings of Pocahontas, and many artifacts recovered from the ground. There are dioramas, a large model of the James Fort, illustrated panels, and other displays telling about early Jamestown and explaining how to see the points of interest at the townsite and along the island drive.

The adjacent townsite is easily reached from the visitor center, and a good general view of it may be had from the *Observation Terrace* around the *Tercentenary Monument* (2). This shaft of New Hampshire granite, rising 103 feet above its base, was erected in 1907 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the settlement.

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 the present monument). It was a thin strip of a town about three-quarters of a mile along the river, and extending back to a salty marsh called Pitch and Tar Swamp. At first there was only the fort. Then the town grew with the building of a church, a market place, shops, storehouses, statehouses, and other public buildings along regularly laid out streets and ways. Jamestown was never a city in the modern concept; it was more a village or a small town. Through its history, even its streets changed, as did its architectural pattern. It was, however, the colony's capital for 92 years.

The self-guided walking tour goes first to the *Church Area* (3). Here, within the Association grounds, is the ivy-covered *Old Tower*, the only standing ruin of 17th-century Jamestown. It is believed to have been constructed as a part of the first brick church, begun in 1639. The *Memorial Church*, adjoining the tower, was erected in 1907 by the National Society of 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.



Typical objects recovered in the Jamestown excavations.

From the *Church Area* the walk is toward the James River past monuments and memorials. These include the *House of Burgesses Monument* (4) listing the members of the first representative legislative body in the New World, the *Pocahontas Monument* (5) by William Ordway Partridge, and the *Capt. John Smith Statue* (6) designed by William Couper. Near a turn along the seawall is a special *Site Use Exhibit* (7) showing a slice through the Jamestown soil with different layers of occupation marked.

Just upriver is the traditional *site of James Fort* (8) which, in the first few years, was Jamestown. It stood on land that has since been washed away by the James River as has the *first landing site* (9) nearby. This point, later called "Church Point," was reached on May 13, 1607, and the next day supplies were landed prior to the start of construction of James Fort.

The *Old Cypress* (10) standing in the water several hundred feet from the shore can be seen from the walk. This is visible evidence of the erosion that has taken at least

25 acres of the western section 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. This seawall and the riprap extension later provided by the National Park Service now protect the island from further erosion.

Beyond Church Point is a *Memorial Cross* (11) marking the earliest known cemetery at Jamestown, an extensive one that seems to have been associated with the first days of the colony. On this same ground a half century later, the Third Statehouse was built along with four other buildings all of which were connected in a block of houses with common walls. Later still (about 1685), Jamestown's Fourth (and last) Statehouse was built on the site of the Third. The *foundations of the Last Statehouse Group* (12) are exhibited behind the cross.

The walk now leads back to the Church Area across "the vale," through a *Confederate earthwork*, built in 1861, and passes close to the *Memorial to the Rev. Robert*

Hunt (13), who, in 1607 on the third Sunday after Trinity, administered at Jamestown the first recorded Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England. Beyond the church the walk leaves the Association grounds and enters another section of the townsite.

Near the river the walk leads past foundations thought to be those of *Virginia's First Statehouse* (14). Here were discussed the measures needful for the regulation of the growing colony during the early governorship of Sir William Berkeley. Here, too, the colony gave its submission to Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth government in 1652, and the assembly chose Richard Bennett as governor to succeed Berkeley.

At the extreme east end of the townsite (downriver) is the "New Towne" section into which Jamestown expanded about 1620. In this area lived many of the principal figures of early Virginia. The foundations of *Henry Hartwell's house* (15) are believed to have been identified. He was one of the founders of the College of William and Mary.

An early *Country House* (16) site has been identified and the foundations of the first brick structure here have been bared to view. In "New Towne," too, were the residences of Dr. John Pott and William Pierce, leaders in "the thrusting out" of Governor

John Harvey in 1635; William Sherwood, an attorney general for the colony; and Richard Kemp, builder of the first recorded brick house in Virginia. The later *Jaquelin-Ambler house* (17), now standing in ruins, is believed to have obliterated all trace of Kemp's house.

From here the walk leads to the left for a return to the visitor center. It continues past the *Long House foundations* (18), where an early *apartment building* stood, and goes through an area thought to have been an early *production center* (19) in old "James City."

The *Island Tour or drive* is a motor road connecting with the central parking area. It winds through the island's 1,560 acres of marsh and woodland. The full drive is about 5 miles although it has a shorter 3-mile loop. Natural features are named and markers carry legends about land and people. Roadside *paintings* picture daily activities such as wine making, tobacco growing, and lumbering. The roadway passes a *Confederate Fort* (20) en route to *Black Point* (21) at the tip of the island where there is an excellent view of the lower reaches of the James River. On the return there is the *Travis graveyard* (22). Nearby is "the pond" (23) where Lawrence Bohun collected herbs for medical experiments in 1610.

Just below the entrance gate to Jamestown

is *Glasshouse Point*, so named because the colonists, in 1608, undertook to produce glass here. The *furnace ruins* (24) are exhibited and nearby there is a *working furnace* (25) of the same type that might have been used in Virginia and England three and a half centuries ago. The Jamestown Glasshouse Foundation, Inc., representing a number of leading American glass companies, operates the furnace and, in season, glassblowing in the old manner can be observed. Handmade glass objects can be purchased.

Near the entrance to Jamestown, just west of the "Glasshouse," is *Jamestown Festival Park* (26), administered by the State of Virginia. Here is located the full scale model of "James Fort" of 1607, the three ships, an Indian "lodge," and exhibit pavilions.

How To Reach Jamestown

Jamestown Island is easily reached over the Colonial Parkway from Williamsburg only 10 miles away. Williamsburg is the nearest rail and bus terminal. The approach from the south is over State Routes 10 and 31 to the ferry over the James River from Scotland to Glasshouse Point near the Jamestown entrance gate.

The Colonial Parkway

This 23-mile scenic motor road connects historic Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown. Along its course are descriptive markers that give bits of history which often show the interrelation of Jamestown (where our Nation began), Williamsburg (the 18th-century capital of Virginia where important elements of our Revolutionary leadership were nourished), and Yorktown (scene of the climactic battle of our Revolution).

About Your Visit

Jamestown is open daily, except Christmas Day. A single admission fee of 50 cents per

person is collected at the Entrance Gate on Glasshouse Point. Organized groups of students 18 years of age or under, and children under 12 who are accompanied by adults, are admitted free. Organizations and groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance. You are urged to go first to the visitor center for information, literature, and a special program.

No eating or lodging facilities are available at Jamestown. However, a picnic area and a cafeteria are in the Virginia State Festival Park at Glasshouse Point.

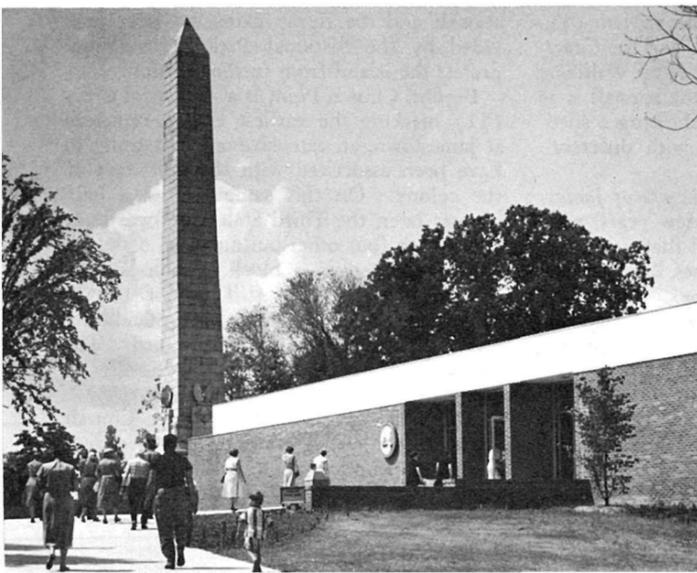
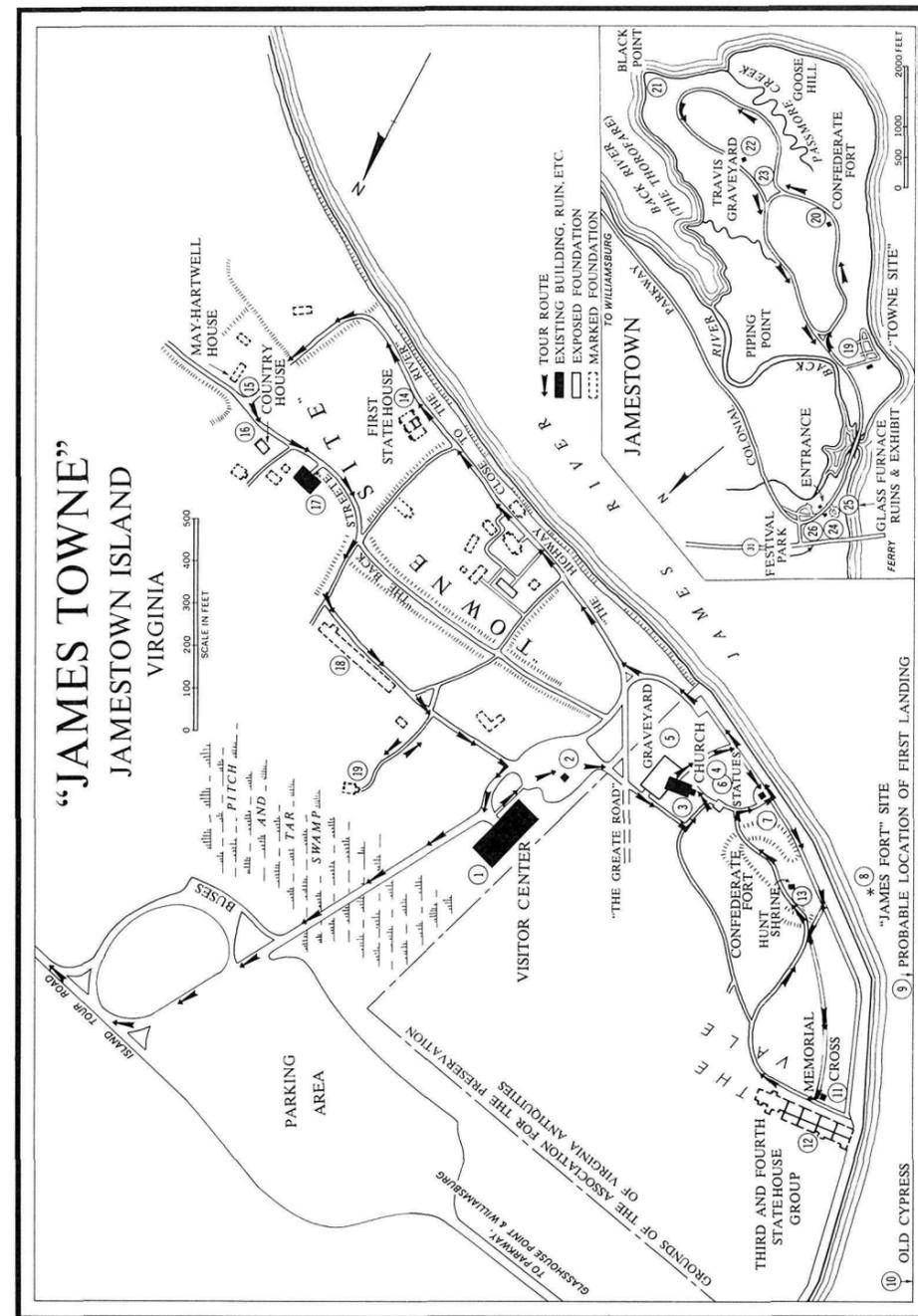
Mission 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Administration

Jamestown Island (except Jamestown National Historic Site administered and maintained by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities) is part of 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.

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



The Tercentenary Monument and Visitor Center at Jamestown.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

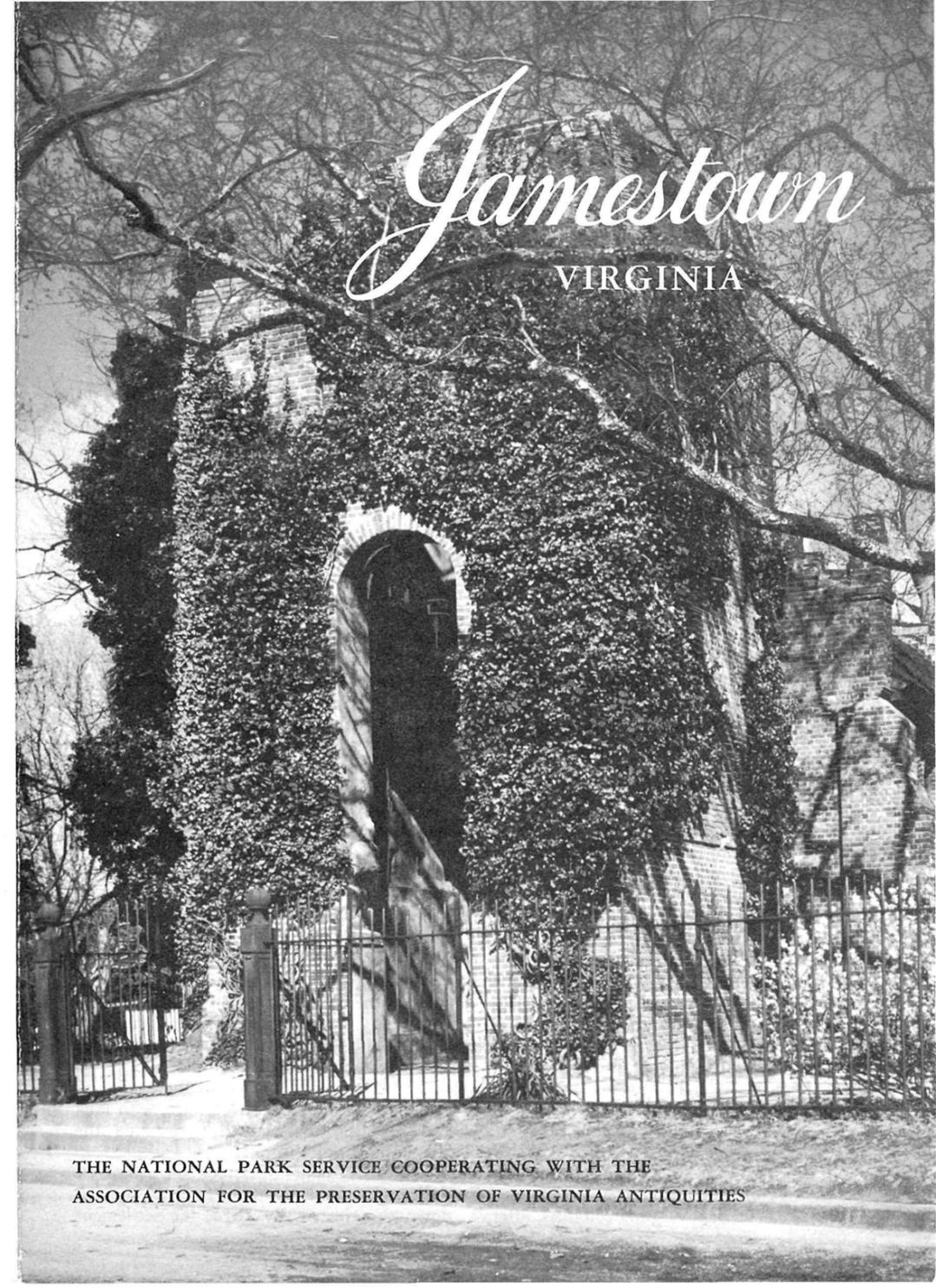
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*

and the

Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities,
Jamestown Committee

Janie Preston Boulware Lamb, *President*; Ellen M. Bagby, *Chairman*



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Cover: The Old Church Tower, standing in the grounds of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, was probably built about 1639.