



JAMESTOWN VIRGINIA

👑 SITE OF THE FIRST PERMANENT ENGLISH SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA 🏰 MEETING PLACE OF THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN AMERICA 🏰 AND FOR 92 YEARS THE CAPITAL OF VIRGINIA 🏰

On May 13, 1607, three small English ships drew near to Jamestown Island in Virginia and moored to trees on shore. The next day, wrote George Percy, one of the party, "we landed all our men, which were set to work about the fortification, others some to watch and ward as it was convenient . . ." By mid-June, Percy continued, "we had built and finished our Fort, which was triangle wise . . . We had also sown most of our Corne on two Mountaines. It sprang a mans height from the ground." Thus began the first permanent English settlement in America, 20 years after the ill-fated attempts to plant a colony on Roanoke Island in Carolina and 13 years before her Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in New England.

Here the Jamestown colonists found a pleasant land, but one whose ways were strange to Englishmen. The first years were a continuing struggle to overcome sickness, hunger, the forest, and an unhealthy location, all made worse by inexperience and disagreements. Yet against these odds the colonists built houses and a fort, planted crops, and began the conquest of an enormous wilderness. Soon the land became their home. Their transplanted church took root, they maintained their rights as free men, and in less than a score of years they evolved representative government.

This settlement was proof of England's determination to share in the rewards of New World colonization. Over a hundred years had passed since Columbus first stumbled on the vast new lands of the Western Hemisphere. For half that time England was unable to contest effectively Spanish claims to this territory. But during Queen Elizabeth's reign a surging nationalism,

new commercial conditions, and the overthrow of Spanish seapower combined to prepare the way for English colonizing ventures in America.

Two early enterprises that failed made it evident that exploitation of America called for more than the fortunes of a few. In 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert tried without success to establish a settlement in Newfoundland. A year later Sir Walter Raleigh made the first of several unsuccessful attempts to plant colonies in South America and at Roanoke Island on the Carolina coast. Trading companies now took up where some of the epic figures of the age had left off.

Encouraged by the success of joint-stock ventures in the East Indies, a group of merchants and investors from London, Plymouth, and elsewhere secured from King James on April 10, 1606, a charter to establish colonies in "Virginia," Raleigh's old territory. The London merchants, assigned the southern part of this area, were the first to take advantage of the grant. Late in 1606 the expedition destined for Jamestown sailed down the Thames from London carrying 144 persons and a cargo of supplies.

The ships were the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery*, and their commander was Capt. Christopher Newport, an able seaman. After a slow start, months at sea, stops in the West Indies, and a brief stay at Cape Henry, the colonists—now only some 105—sailed up a broad river, which they named for their king, and selected Jamestown as the place of settlement.

The Jamestown colony began with bright hopes. Contemporary accounts speak of the land's good soil, abundant timber, and plentiful game. "Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation," declared one writer. But tragedy plagued the colony from the start. Death and disease struck often, the Indians grew distrustful, provisions constantly ran low, dissension became a serious problem.

Out of these troubles arose a forceful leader in the person of Capt. John Smith. His vigorous leadership, more than that of any other, kept the colony together during its first years. He had the church and fort repaired, a well dug, and 20 cabins built. Opposing the craze for gold seeking, he forced the colonists to plant corn and raise chickens and livestock. Yet like those in

authority before him, he never entirely mastered the difficulties facing the settlers.

When Smith sailed for England in October 1609 after being injured by an explosion, he left, in spite of his efforts, a colony divided by quarrels and on the verge of failure. The winter of 1609-10 was the terrible "starving time." Within 6 months, 90 percent of the colonists died. Discouragement became so great that only the timely arrival in June 1610 of the new governor, Lord Delaware, with more men and supplies prevented abandonment of the colony.

The stern but efficient administration of Sir Thomas Dale (deputy to Lord Delaware) gave new life to the floundering colony. Under his leadership martial law was established, more settlers arrived from England, private use of land was recognized, and new areas were settled. Gradually Jamestown took on a look of permanence. By 1614 the settlement, boasting of streets and houses, could well be called a town.

As early as 1612 the colonists—led by one John Rolfe—had begun to cultivate tobacco as a commercial crop. The first shipments left Jamestown in 1613, and within

6 years exports totaled over 40,000 pounds, all sent to England. This crop soon provided a firm economic base for the colony, spurring both expansion of the settlement area and immigration from England.

It was this same John Rolfe who in 1614 married Pocahontas, daughter of the Indian chief, Powhatan, in the church at Jamestown. This union helped bring about a period of peace with the Indians.

As settlements spread outward along the James and other rivers, Jamestown remained the political and economic center of the colony. In 1619 the first representative legislative assembly in America met in the Jamestown Church. That same year the first Negroes arrived in Virginia, brought by a Dutch warship. These were sold to the colonists as indentured servants. Much later the Negro, as slave, would become the mainstay of the colony's labor system.

Industrial, as well as agricultural, beginnings in British America can be traced to Jamestown. The colonists almost immediately sent out expeditions to evaluate the country's natural resources, for the colony was in large measure an economic venture. Soon there were attempts

at making pitch, tar, and soap, producing glass and silk, and harvesting timber. None succeeded in rivaling tobacco as the chief economic activity.

The period of progress that began in 1619 was interrupted briefly in 1622. That year a sudden Indian uprising caused the colony great destruction of life and property. The massacre swept through the outlying settlements, but Jamestown escaped when warned through an Indian boy, Chanco. Nearly a fourth of the population were killed, and the survivors were left panic-stricken. Though the Indians were defeated the next year, the massacre both sharpened King James's dissatisfaction with the Virginia Company and intensified disagreement within the company. By 1624 affairs were in such disorder that James had little difficulty in dissolving the company that had managed the colony since its founding. Virginia now became a royal colony, a status continued until the American Revolution.

The colony prospered under royal rule. Instead of profits for investors the crown emphasized development and expansion. Population rose steadily from 1,275 in 1624 to 5,000 in 1635 to 8,000 in 1642. New territory

was settled, chiefly in the form of plantations along waterways, and new communities sprang up. Though Jamestown did not keep pace with the rest of the colony's growth, it remained, as before, the hub of political and social life in Virginia. When Virginians asserted their right in 1635 and deposed the royal Governor, Sir John Harvey, it was the council, meeting in "James Towne," that performed the act.

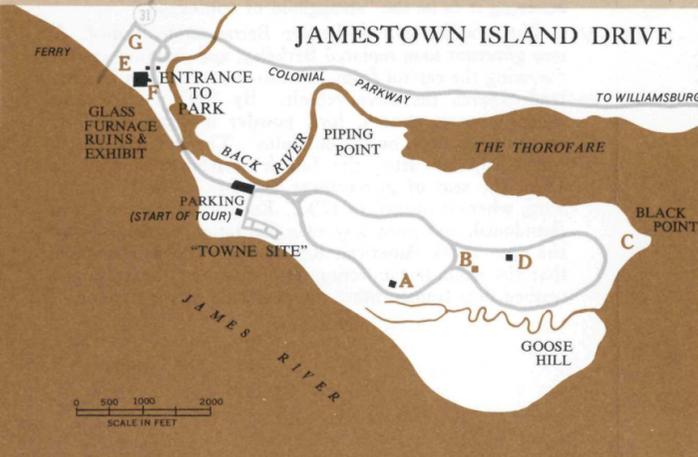
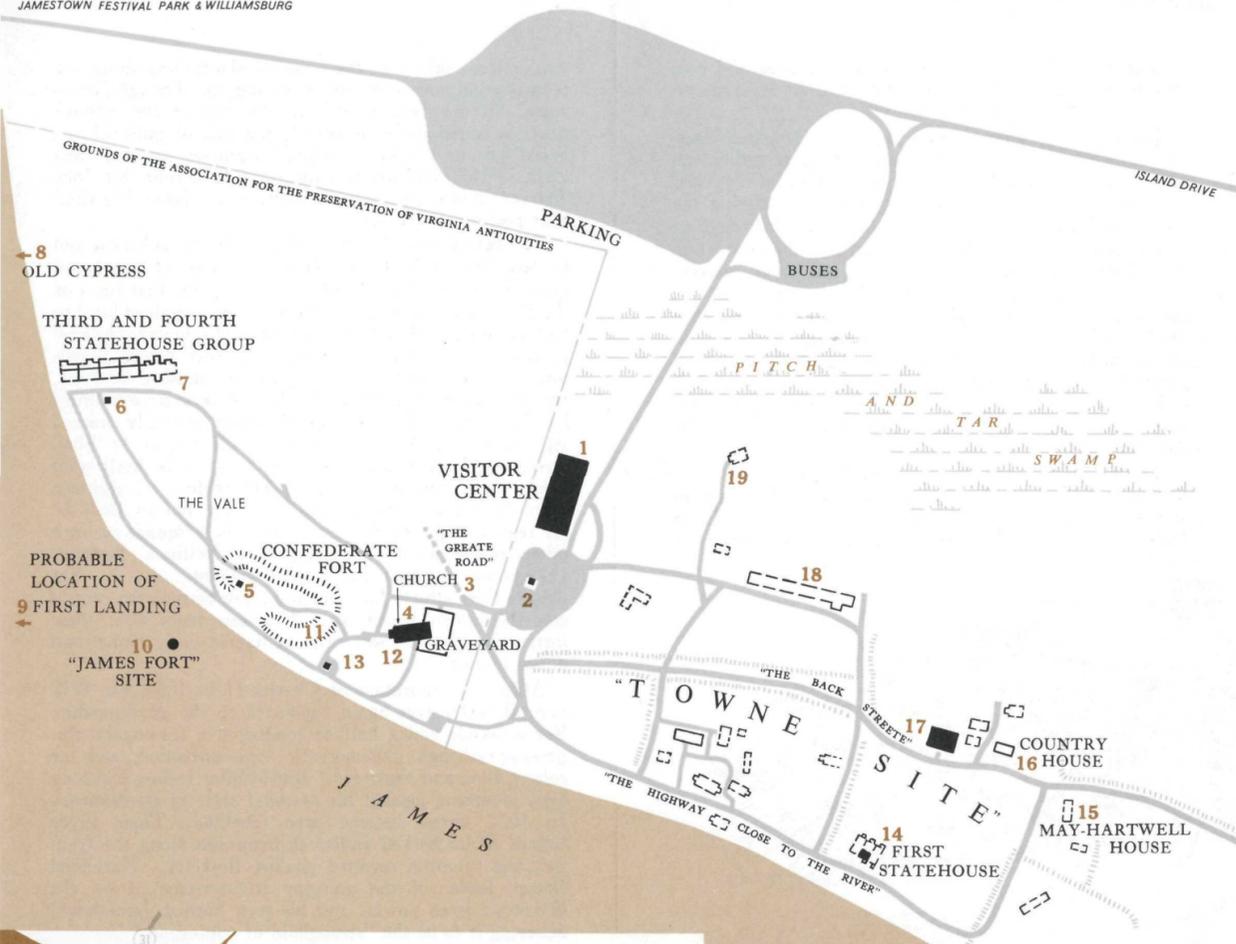
The period 1642-60, marked by political upheaval and Cromwellian rule in England, was one of continued growth for the Virginia colony. During the first years of the English Commonwealth the colonists remained loyal to both crown and church, though they did submit to the new parliament in 1652 after a show of force before Jamestown. Until royal authority was reestablished in 1661, the Governor, council, and other officers were selected by the colony. In 1662 the Virginia assembly framed legislation to guide development of the town. It "shall consist of thirty two houses, each house to be built with brick, forty foot long, twenty foot wide . . . eighteen foote high above the ground . . . the houses shall be all regularly placed one by another in a square or such other forme as the honorable Sir William Berkeley [Governor of the colony] shall appoint . . ." Yet despite these efforts Jamestown did not become the central city the crown hoped for. Fourteen years after these instructions Jamestown still contained only some two dozen houses.

After the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Sir William Berkeley was again appointed to the governorship. For a decade and a half he conducted a reasonably progressive—though undemocratic—administration, and the colony grew and expanded. But popular feeling had long been mounting against his personal style of government. In 1676 unrest became open rebellion. Their anger fanned by unchecked Indian depredations along the frontier, the colonists revolted against Berkeley. Nathaniel Bacon, leader of the unhappy frontiersmen, drove the Governor from power, and his men burned Jamestown, believing it to be the "stronghold of oppression."

The rebellion collapsed when Bacon suddenly died. A new governor soon replaced Berkeley, and deciding against removing the capitol from Jamestown, authorities in England ordered the town rebuilt. By 1697 a statehouse, country house, church, fort, powder magazine, and 20 or 30 houses stood on the old ruins. The end was merely postponed, for after the fourth statehouse burned in 1698, the seat of government was moved to Williamsburg, where it opened in 1700. Eventually the town was abandoned, and gave way to a plantation economy about the time of the American Revolution. It was then, too, that the isthmus connecting Jamestown to the mainland washed out, transforming the peninsula into an island.



COVER: The seal that James I granted to the Virginia Company remained in use until the surrender of Virginia to the Commonwealth in 1652. The front side (top) shows the arms of England, with the Latin inscription "For. His Council of Virginia," and the reverse (bottom) King James in royal robes, with "Seal of the King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland."



Existing Building, Ruin, Etc.
 Exposed Foundation
 Marked Foundation

0 100 200 300 400 500
 SCALE IN FEET
 REVISED AUGUST 1965 JANUARY 1965 NHP COL-17020

JAMESTOWN TODAY

The Jamestown of history, now only ruins, lies along the James River for three-quarters of a mile, backed by a salt marsh called the Pitch and Tar Swamp. The first fort stood on land long since washed away by the river. Gradually the town grew as the colonists built houses, a church, a market place, shops, storehouses, statehouses, and other public buildings along meandering streets and paths. Jamestown was never a city in the modern concept, but more a small town constantly changing in layout and architecture.

At Jamestown the historian, archeologist, and architect have worked closely together to construct a picture of life in the 17th century. Excavations have uncovered all sorts of foundations, countless artifacts, and burial grounds. The objects suggest the manner of living of the first Virginians, while building remains and the terrain trace out the town's development.

The foundations of three of Jamestown's four statehouses mark the beginnings of representative government in America. The Old Church Tower and remains of other early churches speak of the settlers' religious heritage. Evidences of homes and industries portray the Englishman's efforts to bring his way of life to a new continent. Statues and memorials recall bold leaders and important happenings in the struggle for mastery of a new land. This story is recounted at the Jamestown Visitor Center (1), where the walking tour through the town site begins.

JAMESTOWN BY FOOT

From the terrace of the Tercentenary Monument (2) visitors can survey the townsite and its setting. This 103-foot shaft of New Hampshire granite was erected in 1907 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Jamestown.

After passing the Pocahontas Monument (3), the work of William Ordway Partridge, the tour route leads to the Church Area (4). The ivy-covered Old Tower,

the only standing ruin from 17th-century Jamestown, was probably part of the first brick church, begun in 1639. On this site in 1907 the Colonial Dames of America built the Memorial Church. Within are burials, memorials, and the foundations of the earlier church, said to have housed the meeting of the first representative legislative assembly in America, which convened on July 30, 1619. Gravestones in the churchyard witness to the antiquity of the spot.

The walk then leads through a Confederate earthwork to the Rev. Robert Hunt Memorial (5). Here in 1607 Hunt administered the first recorded Holy Communion in America. This was according to the rites of the Church of England.

The Memorial Cross (6) marks the earliest known cemetery at Jamestown, a place associated with the first days of the colony and perhaps even with the "starving time" of 1609-10. On this same ground later stood the Third and Fourth Statehouses, whose foundations still exist (7).

The lone cypress (8), standing several hundred feet off shore, is evidence of erosion that has taken 25 acres of the site's western end. The first landing site (9) and the traditional site of "James Fort" (10) were on this land. A seawall checks further damage here.

The walk now proceeds along the seawall past an exhibit (11) showing layers of Jamestown soil with relics of different occupations. The House of Burgesses Monument (12) lists those who sat in the first representative legislative body in America. Nearby is the Capt. John Smith Statue (13), designed by William Couper.

Near the river in the townsite area are foundations thought to be those of the First Statehouse (14), used between 1641 and 1656. At the east end of the townsite was "New Towne," developed after 1620. Some notable Virginians lived here. One foundation (15) was probably the homesite of Henry Hartwell, a founder of the College of William and Mary. An early "Country House—or government residence—(16) has also been identified.

The Jaquelin-Ambler House ruins (17), a once impressive structure with formal gardens, link Jamestown with the 18th century. The house was built about 1710 when Jamestown, no longer the seat of government, was a private estate. On past these ruins are the Long House

Foundations (18) where an early apartment-like building stood. Farther along is an early industrial area (19).

JAMESTOWN BY CAR

A 5-mile drive (or a shorter loop of 3 miles, if your time is limited) winds through the 1,500 acres of woodland and marsh that is Jamestown Island. Exhibits interpret both the land and its people.

The road passes a Confederate fort (A) and "the pond" (B) where Lawrence Bohun collected herbs for medical experiment in 1610. Black Point (C) at the tip of the island gives a full view of the lower reaches of the James River. On the return trip is the Travis graveyard (D).

On Glasshouse Point are the ruins of furnaces (E) used in 1608 by artisans who came over to produce glass. Nearby is a glassblowing exhibit (F) of a type that might have been used in Virginia and England three and a half centuries ago. Glassware, made each day in demonstrations, is on sale here.

Near the entrance to Jamestown is Jamestown Festival Park (G), administered by the Jamestown Foundation for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Open daily, the park features exhibit pavilions and reconstructions of "James Fort," the three ships, and an Indian "lodge."

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Jamestown, 10 miles from Williamsburg, is easily reached over the Colonial Parkway. Approaching from the south, you should take Va. 10 and 31 to Scotland, where a ferry crosses the James River to Glasshouse Point near the Jamestown entrance. Va. 5 from Richmond also connects with Va. 31.

Jamestown is open daily, except December 25. The 50-cent admission fee is waived for children under 16 and escorted school groups. Special guide service is provided for groups if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

For information—and introductory program, exhibits, and literature—stop by the Jamestown Visitor Center. There are no eating or lodging facilities at Jamestown, but nearby Jamestown Festival Park has a cafeteria and picnic area and 8 miles eastward on the Colonial Parkway is the Great Neck picnic area.

ADMINISTRATION

The Jamestown area is jointly administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. The Association owns the area of the Jamestown National Historic Site, about 20 acres that embrace the western end of the site of old Jamestown. The remainder of Jamestown and of Jamestown Island is a part of Colonial National Historical Park. A superintendent, whose address is Yorktown, Va. 23490, is in immediate charge of the park.

AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

The Department of the Interior—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—bears a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

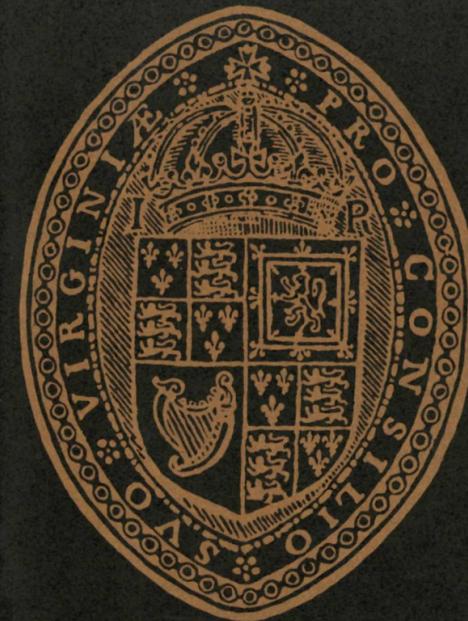
To the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities the Nation owes its gratitude for the first successful organized effort to save the Jamestown site. In 1893 the Association acquired title to 22 acres on Jamestown Island. Later they donated to the United States the tract on which the Tercentenary Monument was erected in 1907. In 1940 the Secretary of the Interior designated the Association's grounds as Jamestown National Historic Site. Since then the whole of Jamestown Island has been developed under a cooperative agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Association.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service



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