

Almost from the first, settlers other than Englishmen shared in the tribulations. Late in 1608, Capt. Newport brought in eight skilled Poles and Germans to manufacture glass, pitch, tar, and potash. Italian glassblowers and German sawmill operators followed.

Just in time to avert the abandonment of the colony by the survivors of the "starving tyme," a new governor, Lord Delaware, arrived with reinforcements and supplies. Soon martial law was established, more settlers were brought in, private use of land recognized, and the area of settlement expanded. John Rolfe began the cultivation of tobacco about 1612, and by 1619, a lucrative trade was well underway. Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas, daughter of Indian Chief Powhatan and a friend to the white settlers, eased tensions between the races for a time.

The year 1619 was portentous for the colony in several ways. A Dutch ship from the West Indies landed with more than 20 blacks, the first to arrive in British North America. They were promptly sold as servants. Another ship sailed from England with 100 young women to be wives for the men. And in the same year, as a result of a new company charter, the first representative assembly in America convened at Jamestown. By arranging for family-oriented homesteads, for a source of servant-labor for the gentry, and for a representative government body, the company ensured a permanent, relatively English society in a raw, new land.

Relations between the native Americans and the white invaders had been strained for years, when in 1622, after the death of Powhatan, a violent Indian uprising cost the lives of nearly one third of the colonists, triggering vicious retaliatory attacks. Following the massacre, King James I dissolved the Virginia Company and created a royal colony in 1624, after which Virginia grew steadily.

During the English Civil War, Governor William Berkeley remained loyal to the

crowns even after the Cromwellians had seized power. In 1652, however, a British fleet sailed to Jamestown, ending the resistance. With Berkeley deposed, the Assembly elected a new governor.

Following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Berkeley was again commissioned governor. A series of disasters, including "the most dreadful hurry cane that ever the colony groaned under," a precipitous decline in tobacco prices, and more frontier conflicts, fanned political discontent. In 1676 dissident frontiersmen rebelled under the leadership of Nathaniel Bacon, Jr. With strong popular support, Bacon won a commission as commander-in-chief of the anti-Indian forces from the governor. He persuaded the Assembly to pass what became known as "Bacon's laws," increasing local control over government. Next, learning that the governor was raising troops to use against him, Bacon took over Jamestown and burned it.

The town was rebuilt on the old ruins. But in 1698, the statehouse burned for the fourth time, and the next year the capital was moved to Middle Plantation and renamed Williamsburg. After that, Jamestown became a plantation, its public buildings and houses crumbling into decay. But the site has an enduring significance as one of the places where American history began.

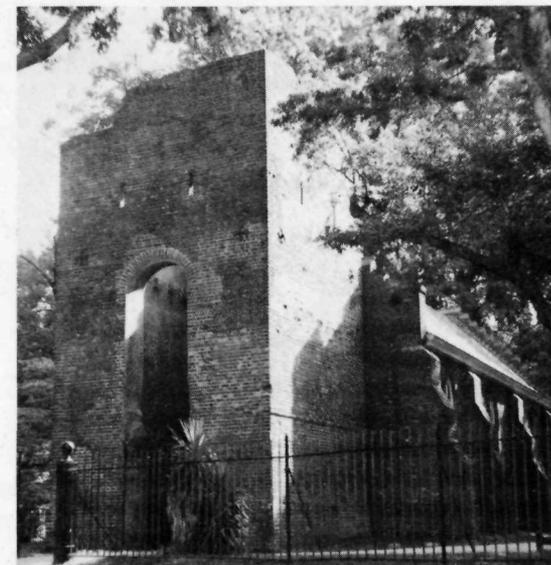
Administration

In 1893 the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities acquired 9.3 hectares (23 acres) on Jamestown Island. The remainder of the 600-hectare (1500-acre) island became a part of Colonial National Historical Park in 1934. Jamestown has been jointly administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the APVA since 1940. Inquiries should be directed to the superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, VA 23690.

National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

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jamestown island 1607



The only standing ruin of 17th-century Jamestown is the Old Church Tower, believed to be part of the first brick church, begun in 1639.

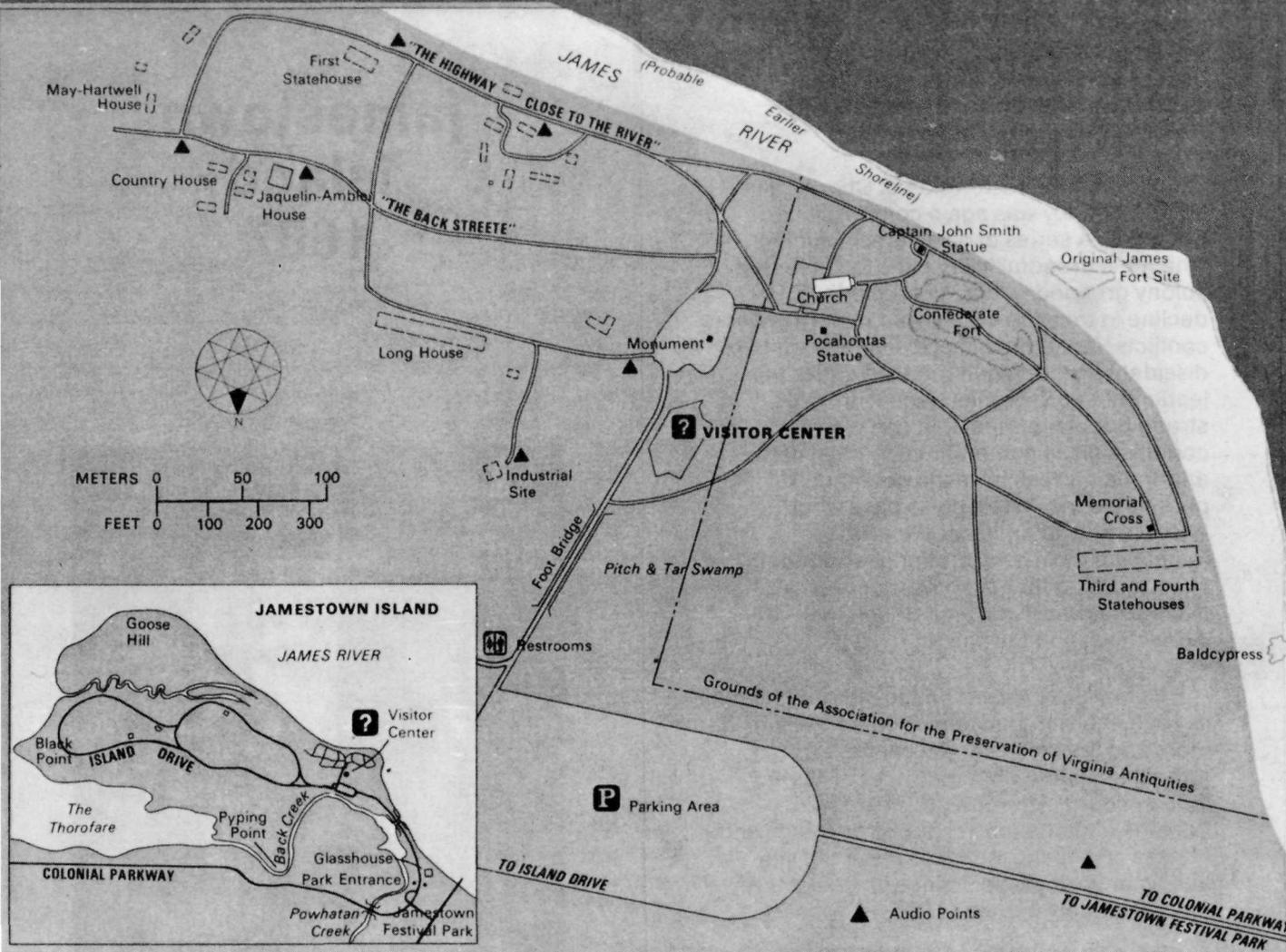
Colonial National Historical Park

The Jamestown Story

The founding of Jamestown, the first successful English settlement in America, grew out of the rising tides of nationalism and capitalism in the Western World. Spain and France had already established colonies in North America by 1607, but earlier English expeditions under Sir Walter Raleigh had failed. The "Adventurers", or shareholders, of the Virginia Company of London epitomized their own nation's determination to pursue the world's wealth through trade, conquest, and colonial settlement. The company secured a royal charter in 1606, recruited settlers, and outfitted three small ships under the command of Capt. Christopher Newport: The Susan Constant, 100 tons; the Godspeed, 40 tons; and the Discovery, 20 tons,—frail craft for an awesome undertaking.

"The fleet fell from London" on December 20, 1606, according to George Percy, a member of the party, with 144 men aboard. From the first, stormy weather and conflicts among the leaders plagued the expedition. The ships called in the West Indies and finally landed at Cape Henry on April 26, more than four months out of London. After preliminary explorations and an Indian encounter, 104 colonists stepped ashore at Jamestown on May 13, 1607, their vessels "so neere the shoare that they are moored to the trees."

By mid-June, a triangular fort had been constructed and a small grain crop planted. But life on land proved to be no smoother than the storm-tossed voyage had been. Food shortages, political quarrels, and disease took a heavy toll. One forceful leader arose in the early years, the young Capt. John Smith, who wisely insisted that planting, building, and discipline take precedence over prospecting for gold. Smith handled contacts with the native Americans peacefully, if sternly, but an injury forced his return to England late in 1609. His departure was followed by a nightmare winter, known ever after as the "starving tyme" during which 90 percent of the colonists died.



Jamestown Today

From the Jamestown visitor center, paths lead throughout "James Cittie." Explore them at your own pace in any direction. Only one original structure remains, yet many visible clues suggest a fascinating story of growth, death, decay, and rebirth. Try to imagine how the colonists felt when they landed on this isolated shore, at the mercy of frightening unknowns.

You may further explore the island on the Loop Drive. As you leave the park, visit the

reconstructed **Glasshouse**. Just outside the entrance station is Jamestown **Festival Park**, where replicas of the first fort, an Indian house, and the ships may be seen.

There are lodging and eating facilities at Williamsburg and Yorktown, and a cafeteria at the Festival Park. Private campgrounds are nearby. There are picnic areas along the Colonial Parkway, but no service stations.

For your safety, please keep on the paths and watch your children. Stay off the ruins and away from the river, which is deep here.