

About Your Visit Cape Henry, on the south side of Chesapeake Bay, is 10 miles east of Norfolk and 3 miles north of Virginia Beach. U.S. 60 leads from Norfolk to the cape. U.S. 13 connects the eastern shore of Virginia with the Norfolk area by a bridge-tunnel.

The memorial is open all year without admission fee. Entrance is by visitor pass issued by military personnel at Fort Story Military Reservation, which completely surrounds the memorial. The site is unattended by the National Park Service, and there are no facilities or special services available.

Memorial Site Cape Henry Memorial, marking the approximate site of the first landing of the Jamestown settlers, consists of a quarter acre of ground and a memorial cross erected in 1935 by the Daughters of the American Colonists. The memorial is a part of Colonial National Historical Park, which includes Jamestown, Yorktown Battlefield, and Colonial Parkway connecting both with Williamsburg.

Cape Henry Pilgrimage Each year the Order of Cape Henry, 1607, aided by Colonial National Historical Park, sponsors religious and patriotic services at the memorial. This anniversary usually is on the Sunday closest to April 26.

Old Lighthouse Near the memorial, but not part of it, is the first lighthouse authorized and built by the Federal Government. It was begun in 1791 and lighted in October 1792. An octagonal tower of cut stone, the lighthouse served until 1881 when a new one was built nearby. The tower, a Registered National Historic Landmark, is administered by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

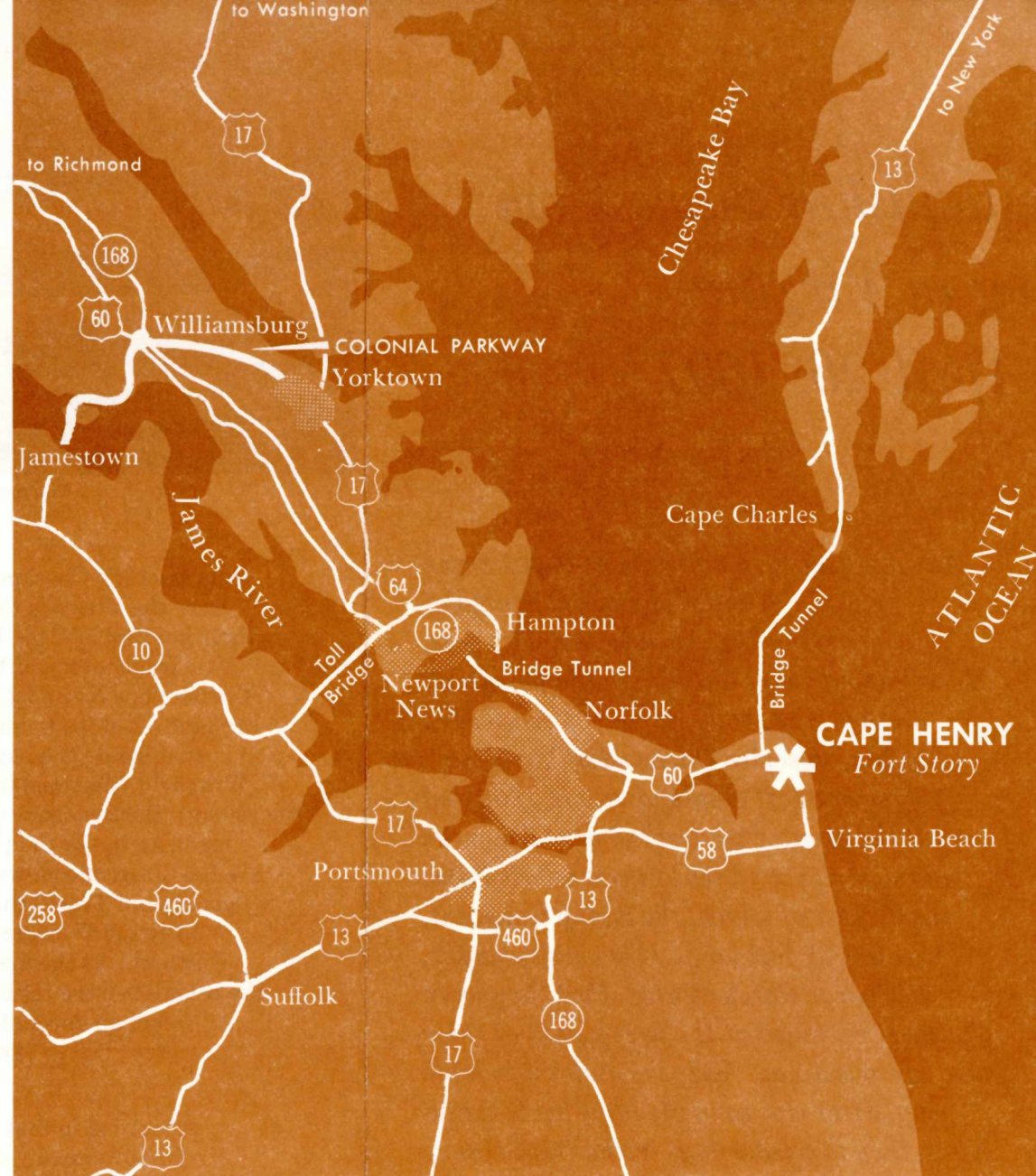
Administration Cape Henry Memorial is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this memorial is a part, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of the people.

The superintendent of Colonial National Historical Park, whose address is Box 210, Yorktown, Va. 23490, is in charge of the memorial.



The old lighthouse.



CAPE HENRY

MEMORIAL
VIRGINIA

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—
the Nation's principal natural resource agency—
has 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.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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The colonists who established Jamestown made their first landing in Virginia at Cape Henry on April 26, 1607

At Cape Henry, Englishmen staged Scene I, Act I of their successful drama of conquering the American wilderness. Here, "about foure a clocke in the morning" on April 26, 1607, some 105 sea-weary colonists "descried the Land of Virginia." They had left England late in 1606 and spent the greater part of the next 5 months in the strict confines of three small ships, the largest of which, the Susan Constant, was but 75 feet long. It is small wonder, as George Percy related, that they were "almost ravished at the first sight" of their new surroundings. And it is understandable why, after claiming the land for God and King, they tarried 4 days in the Cape Henry area before going on to establish at Jamestown the first permanent English settlement in America.



The memorial cross, erected in 1935.

Approaching Chesapeake Bay from the southeast, the Virginia Company expedition made their landfall at Cape Henry, the southernmost promontory of that body of water. Capt. Christopher Newport, in command of the fleet, brought his ships to anchor in protected waters just inside the bay. He and Edward Maria Wingfield (destined to be the first president of the colony), Bartholomew Gosnold, and "30 others" made up the initial party that went ashore to see the "faire meddowes," "Fresh-waters," and "goodly tall Trees" that lay back of the "white hilly sand" suggestive of "the Downes" in England. As the first day neared its end and the colonists were returning to their ships, they had an encounter with Indians that left two of the party wounded.

Aboard ship that night, as directed by the Virginia Company of London, they opened a locked box and read their instructions and the identity of the councilors for the colony. But the seven men listed were not sworn in, nor was the president selected until May 13 when

the settlers reached Jamestown. In the interim, Captain Newport remained in charge.

On April 27 a second party was put ashore. They spent some time "recreating themselves" and pushed hard on assembling a small boat—a "shallop"—to aid in exploration. The men made short marches in the vicinity of the cape and enjoyed some oysters found roasting over an Indian campfire.

The next day the "shallop" was launched, and exploration in the lower reaches of the Chesapeake Bay followed immediately. The colonists scouted by land also, and reported: "We past through excellent ground full of Flowers of divers kinds and colours, and as goodly trees as I have seenē, as Cedar, Cipresse, and other kinds . . . fine and beautiful Strawberries, foure time bigger and better than ours in England."

On April 29 the colonists, possibly using English oak already fashioned for the purpose, "set up a Crosse at Chesupioc Bay, and named that place Cape Henry" for Henry, Prince of Wales, oldest son of King James I. Here on the windswept shore, led by their Chaplain, Robert Hunt, they must have knelt in prayer and thanksgiving for this new land, and their safe voyage. Thereafter, they were ready and prepared to follow their instructions to push deeper into Virginia to seek a site for settlement.

Early on April 30 they moved to a new anchorage at a place named "Cape Comfort" (now Old Point Comfort). Following this they entered the James River. After 2 weeks of searching along both sides of the river, they established a permanent settlement at Jamestown, for 92 years Virginia's capital.