

Colonial

National Historical Park
Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



His Majesty James the First of England did not like tobacco. In the year 1604 he wrote a pamphlet against "this base and vile use of taking tobacco in our kingdom." He found it "lothsome to the eye, hatefull to the nose, harmful to the braine, and dangerous to the lungs."

Historians have not recorded what His Majesty said when he found, a few years later, that a settlement of his subjects in the New World across the Atlantic had embarked upon an economy based upon the raising and sale of that noxious weed. According to a visiting ship captain, they were planting it along the streets, in the marketplace "and all other spare places." It brought in ready money. It was money.

Ever since that day in 1607 when they anchored their ships in deep water off of what was then a peninsula in a land of "savages," the colonists had been struggling against adversity. In one year nine-tenths of the original settlers perished from starvation and disease. They envisioned a livelihood from glassmaking, from silkworm culture, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Their hopes of finding gold were dashed when they sent back to England a keg of earth full of shiny yellow flakes. It was examined and scornfully appraised as "dirt." The pretty colors were iron pyrites, long known as "fool's gold."

So, let us say, the scene is Jamestown, and the year is 1619—the twelfth after the landing on the soil to be named "Virginia." The Governor and Council could report that "all our riches for the present doe consiste in Tobacco." The larger scene around us is that of the smiling Virginia Peninsula, that thrust of tidewater land which lies between the waters of the James River and the York estuary.

But Jamestown no longer exists as a living assembly of artisans and householders except insofar as the loving labors of the archeologists, delving into the foundations and middens, have brought it to life again in the imagination of the visitor. Perhaps more vitally than the best written records could do, the Jamestown museum shows us not merely how the colonists were housed, but what they ate, the dishes they used, the pets they had, how they worked, and how they played.

Yes, in a narrow sense, Jamestown is a dead city. But in reality, no city ever dies. It may be reduced to rubble, and farmers may later plow and crop the soil over it, but before all that has occurred, it has sent the roots of new growth into the hinterlands, to carry on the ways and spirits of the fathers—a new phase of old history in the making.

Take the time to see this process in action as you visit Colonial National Historical Park and move over a beautiful path of access—the Colonial Parkway—from the now quiet Jamestown through re-created Williamsburg to the peaceful but active Yorktown. It is a unique feature of this particular historical preserve of the National Park System that within a few miles you can set foot on three areas of cardinal importance in the history of the Republic. At the risk of stating it too simply, it is substantially true that here the British Crown acquired a vast empire, debated it, and lost it. Jamestown—Williamsburg—Yorktown—the United States of America!

At Jamestown, the time finally came when it was obvious that the first immigrants had not chosen the best possible site for a settlement. The desire to have their escape-ships moored close by in deep calm waters of the river was natural. And in the month of May the soft air and sunshine

must have seemed alluring. But, as it turned out, this was not a healthful spot. Long before the destruction caused by Bacon's rebellion against the King's governor, there had been thoughts of moving inland. The burning of the final statehouse settled the matter. Middle Plantation, a crossroads, became the seat of government and was renamed Williamsburg.

When the people moved to Williamsburg, something intangible but very real moved with them. It was the spirit of self-government that had been developed in the struggling years. The first shiploads of pioneers had been composed of rather unruly bachelors; soldiers of fortune were among the sounder men! But leaders like John Smith and John Rolfe had finally infused a spirit of order in the town. And what happened is perhaps inevitable in colonialism. Outlanders cling to old ways, but they develop new ways. They retain loyalties, but the loyalties are no longer blind. Self-reliance and the struggle for existence take effect. They look like the same men, they talk like the same men, but they are stubbornly themselves, and want the fact acknowledged. It is a period of coming of age.

Williamsburg, the new capital—munificently restored by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and a host of creative minds—marks the adult period in Virginia history, a term of economic prosperity that saw the rise of a group of men who were to leave a lasting impression not only upon American history, but upon the political concepts of Western civilization: Washington, Jefferson, George Mason, George Wythe, Patrick Henry.

"The purpose of Colonial Williamsburg," the visitor is told, "is to create accurately the environment of the men and women of the 18th-century capital—to the end that the future may learn from the past." It is a worthy

hope, which everyone wishes can be achieved. It may be that the ultimate value of history comes through the mere contact with historic preservations such as the visitor to Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown may have today. In a place of great historical importance, the visitor subtly becomes part of that history. We are microscopic, but history is in us all. We find in history the explanation of why we are we, why I am I, why you are you.

You will not, for instance, fail to sense something of this when you follow that gracious highroad, the Colonial Parkway, with its soothing changes of landscape to Yorktown. Here, in the early autumn days of 1781, Americans aided by the soldiers and sailors of France under Rochambeau and De Grasse fought the last important conflict of the War for Independence. The heights above the York River, carefully chosen by the British commander for its favorable position in regard to sea support, had proved to be a trap. As the British prisoners of war marched from the town along the York-Hampton Road, tradition has it that a military band played an oldtime favorite called "The World Turned Upside Down." Perhaps the British bandmaster had a grim sense of humor.

You will have the feeling of "belonging" as you view the battlefield from the visitor center, or drive the marked route through that scene of the defeat of Cornwallis. In the eye of the mind, you look back over the long past. You even feel, as part of your history, the great triangular contest among England, France, and Spain for possession of the New World. All that you see flowed from that source. And it is your history—you are a droplet in that stream.

—Freeman Tilden

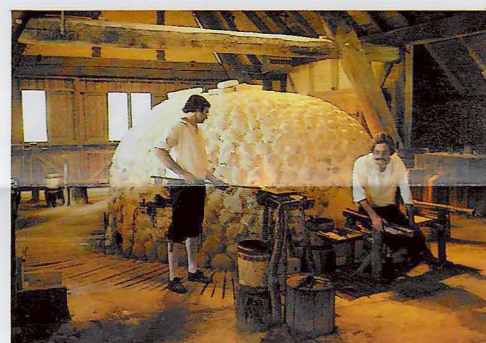
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Exploring Jamestown

Jamestown lies at the western end of the Colonial Parkway. The town itself no longer exists except in the pages of history books and in the imagination. During its brief life, however, it wore many faces: a tiny fort at the edge of the wilderness; a small community growing to meet the needs of the land; the center of religious, economic, social, and political life in a prospering colony; and the scene of violence and suffering



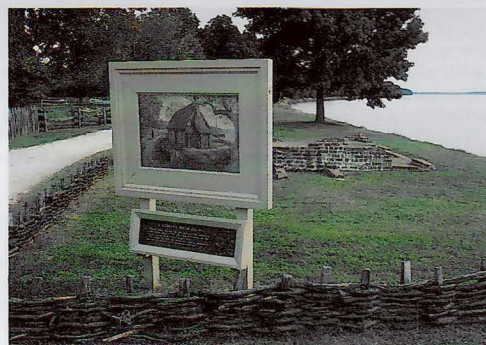
The first glass manufactured by Englishmen in the New World was produced at the small glass factory at Jamestown in 1608. Today, at the reconstructed Glasshouse near the park entrance, craftsmen show visitors how it was done.

amidst an atmosphere of hope and success. These are things to keep in mind during your visit.

The Jamestown Visitor Center, containing a theater, museum exhibits, and a gift shop, is at the edge of the original townsite. National Park Service personnel are available to help you plan your visit. The gift shop is operated by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. An admission fee to Jamestown Island is charged at the entrance station.

From the visitor center paths lead through the site of "James Cittie." Explore them at your own pace. Only one original 17th-century structure, the Old Church Tower, remains, yet many visi-

ble "clues" suggest a fascinating story of growth, decay, death, and rebirth. Try to imagine what it was like for the first settlers who landed on this isolated shore, the future uncertain, confronted by so many frightening unknowns. Try to imagine how they felt in their relentless struggle to overcome hunger, sickness, and the ever-present wilderness. Try to imagine how they felt during "The Starving Time" in 1609-10, when 440 of the 500 inhabitants perished. And try to understand how the survivors, nourished by the belief that their settlement would succeed despite the hardships, mastered the hard lessons of frontier living and made the new land their home. The answers won't come easily, but the questions need to be asked as you walk around the townsite. The brick foundations in the townsite are 20th-century bricks covering the original 17th-century



The foundations of many Jamestown houses and other buildings have been excavated and covered by a protective layer of whitened brick. Paintings and recorded messages provide additional interpretation.

foundations. Please do not walk on the bricks—they are fragile.

For your safety, please stay on the paths and watch your children. Also, stay away from the river, which is deep here.

You may explore Jamestown Island on the 5- or 8-kilometer (3- or 5-mile) loop drives. The wilderness here is much like that seen by the first colonists. Oil paintings and markers along the way help to tell the story of the island. Trails lead from the tour road to the Travis Graveyard and Black Point.

As you leave the island, plan to visit the reconstructed *Glasshouse*, where craftsmen demonstrate the art of 17th-century glass-blowing, one of Virginia's first industries. On the left, just beyond the entrance station, is *Jamestown Festival Park*, administered by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Here can be seen speculative reconstructions of the first fort and the three ships, *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed*, and *Discovery*. There is an admission fee to the Festival Park.

There are no eating or sleeping accommodations at Jamestown. A cafeteria is located at the nearby Festival Park, and both food and lodging are available at Williamsburg and Yorktown. Privately owned campgrounds are located nearby, and picnic areas, open in season, can be found along the Colonial Parkway.

The speed limit on the parkway is 72 kilometers (45 miles) per hour. There are no service stations and the roadway is closed to commercial traffic, except buses, for which permits are required.

Jamestown is jointly administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. Inquiries should be addressed to the Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, VA 23690.

Jamestown photographs by Dr. Edward R. DeGinger, reproduced through the courtesy of Eastern National Park and Monument Association.

Seeing Yorktown

Yorktown lies at the eastern end of the Colonial Parkway. Though smaller today than during colonial times, the town continues to function as an active community. Several of the houses and other structures of the colonial period are still standing and give the town much of the character of a long-vanished era. The Yorktown Victory Monument, erected by the United States to commemorate the French alliance and the victory



Here on October 18, 1781, in the home of Augustine Moore, peace commissioners drafted the terms by which Cornwallis' British army was surrendered to Washington's allied French and American forces.

over Cornwallis, stands near the east end of Main Street. The cornerstone of this monument was laid in 1881 at the celebration of the centennial of the surrender.

Close around Yorktown lie the remains of the British earthworks of 1781, as modified and strengthened by Confederate forces during the Civil War. A few hundred yards beyond them are reconstructed parts of the French and American lines. The original allied works were leveled on Washington's orders immediately after the siege, but reconstruction of the more significant parts has been possible through careful archeological investigations and documentary research. The earthworks are priceless treasures. Please

help us preserve them by walking only on designated walkways.

The events of the siege and the story of the Town of York are set forth in a theater program and exhibits at the visitor center. Among items on display are military tents used by Washington during the Yorktown campaign, part of a reconstructed British frigate with objects recovered from the York River, and dioramas depicting aspects of the siege. The *Siege Line Overlook* on the roof of the visitor center affords a panoramic view of strategic points on the battlefield. National Park Service personnel are available to help plan your visit and answer questions. Admission to the visitor center is free.

The red and yellow self-guiding auto tours



Each year on October 19, the anniversary of the British surrender, Yorktown Battlefield is the scene of patriotic festivities and exercises commemorating the last major battle of the American Revolution.

shown on the map below begin at the visitor center and lead to various points of interest on the battlefield, including the Moore House where the terms of surrender were drawn up. The red tour is 11 kilometers (7 miles) long and the yellow tour is 14.5 kilometers (9 miles). Mark-

especially designed to provide access to the many historic spots in this section of Virginia's tide-water country and to show off the area's natural beauty. Parking turnouts or overlooks have been provided at various points along the way so that you may drive to the side and pause in safety. At each turnout, signs tell of the area's history and its natural features.

A word of caution: Please drive carefully and considerately and stop only in designated areas.

Yorktown and the surrounding area offer a variety of eating and lodging facilities. The park has



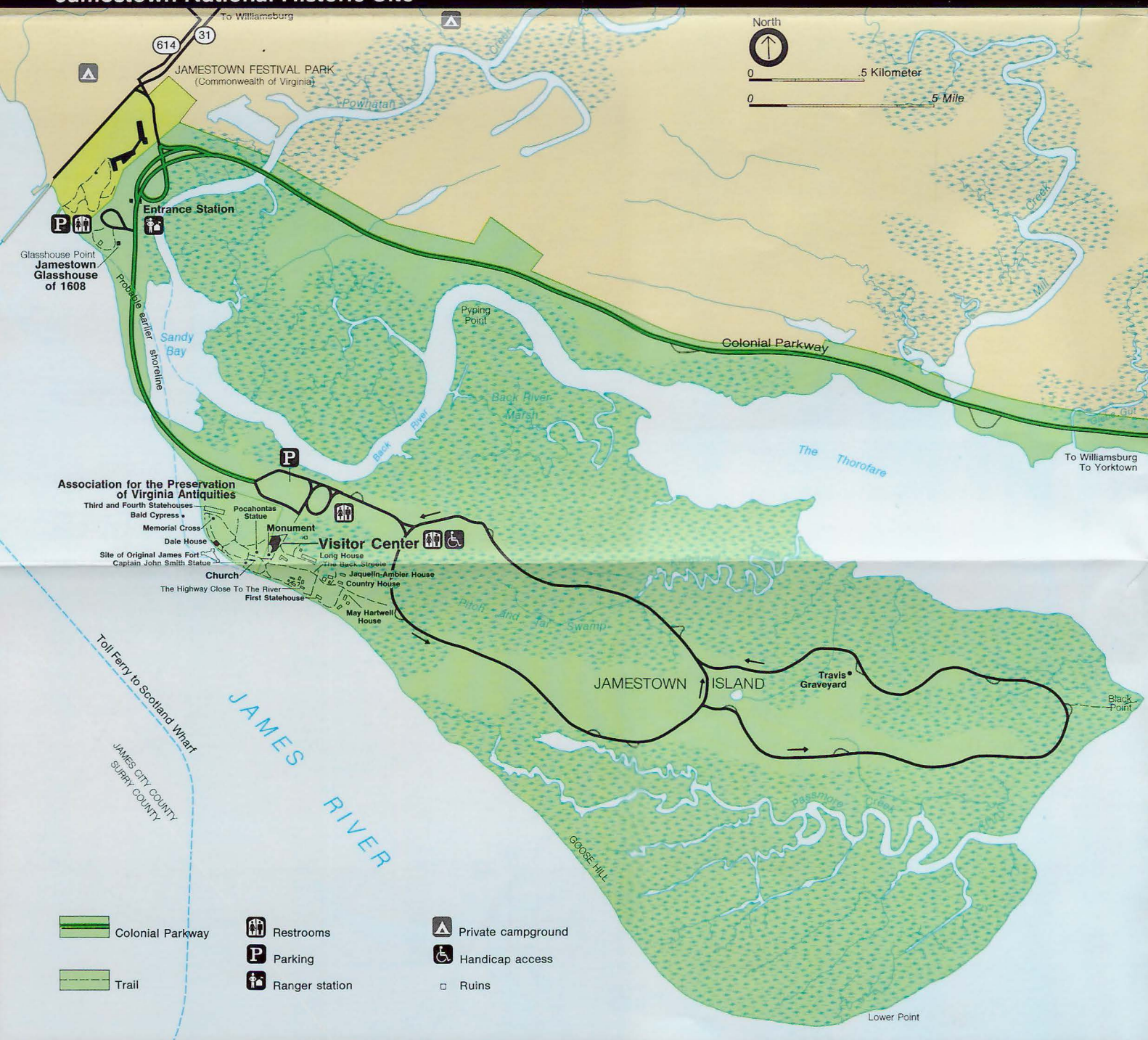
Cannon of the American Revolution period are mounted in several of the reconstructed redoubts and batteries. Cannon actually surrendered at Yorktown are on display at Surrender Field overlook and the visitor center.

no campgrounds, but there are several privately owned campgrounds nearby. Picnic areas, open in season, may be found in Yorktown and along the Colonial Parkway. At the western edge of Yorktown, on Va. 238, is the Yorktown Victory Center, administered by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The center offers exhibits, a museum, and a film, "The Road to Yorktown." An entrance fee is charged.

Yorktown Battlefield is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Inquiries should be addressed to the Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, VA 23690.

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Jamestown National Historic Site



Yorktown Battlefield

