



## BRITAIN'S QUEEN ELIZABETH TO VISIT HISTORIC JAMESTOWN AT 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

April 30, 2007

*Britain's Queen Elizabeth II will visit Virginia this week to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World, which shaped the America of today.*

The queen will be accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, the duke of Edinburgh, during the May 3-8 visit, which also will include visits to the state capital Richmond to address the General Assembly; Williamsburg, home of colonial Williamsburg and the College of William and Mary; and to the White House in Washington, D.C., for a state dinner.

This will be the royal couple's second visit to Jamestown. Their first visit was 50 years ago to celebrate the famous settlement's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1957.

### **Archeological discoveries**

Since the last visit, archeologists have made several important discoveries about Jamestown Settlement, including unearthing the site of James Fort where the first settlement was located.

"On their last visit in 1957, it was commonly believed that the 1607 James Fort site had eroded into the James River," Elizabeth Kostelny, executive director of APVA Preservation Virginia, said in a statement, the Washington Post reported.

"Since then, we have discovered almost the entire outline of the fort and we will be able to share with them evidence of the buildings, wells and other archaeological features, as well as objects last used by the colonists and the Virginia Indians they encountered."

### **Jamestown Settlement history**

The history of the Jamestown Settlement begins with King James I of Britain, who granted a charter to the Virginia Company, a group of London businessmen, to establish an English settlement in the Chesapeake region of North America in June 1606.

Those early settlers arrived on Jamestown Island on the banks of the James River on May 14, 1607, where they eventually built a wooden triangular fort that encased a storehouse, church and several houses.

The new colony was governed by a council of seven men, including the famous Capt. John Smith. Eventually Smith became the sole leader of the struggling group.

The new settlers were plagued with harsh weather, attacks by indigenous Algonquian Indians, disease, and shortages of food, water and other supplies. But under Smith's tough rule the colony survived through 1609, when he returned to England following a gunpowder accident.

### **Historical significance**

For many historians, the ability of the Jamestown Settlement to endure determined the eventual creation of an English-speaking America. The Spanish, who hoped to spread Roman Catholicism, were twice repelled from the area.

"There's no question that Jamestown throws down the gauntlet to the Spanish," James Horn, who wrote "A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America," told the Associated Press.

This is also the area where Pocahontas, daughter of Algonquian Chief Powhatan, was kidnapped and eventually married tobacco grower John Rolfe.

Tobacco, which became one of the first successful exports for the fledgling colony, remains important to Virginians today.

Many sociologists and authors trace the American desire to economically succeed to these first European entrepreneurs who were seeking a more prosperous future in the fledgling colony.

"The colony that developed from those beginnings was, in many ways, more quintessentially American since it was all about making money," wrote Nathaniel Philbrick, author of "Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War," according to the AP.

By 1619 the first representative assembly in the New World was established at Jamestown. This was also the year in which Africans first came to Virginia, exchanged for food by a Dutch slave trader to become indentured servants.

The king revoked the Virginia Company charter in 1624 and Jamestown became a crown colony.

The land where the fort was located, which was eventually privately owned by the mid-1700s, was also home to a military post during the American Revolution and occupied by Confederate soldiers during the American Civil War.

Today Jamestown is operated and maintained by both the National Park Service and APVA Preservation Virginia.

### **Rediscovering Virginia's Indian heritage**

This year's anniversary events involved the region's Native Americans in more ways than at past celebrations. Members of local tribes served on planning committees to help shape the way their history is shared with the public.

"We want our story to be told," Steve Adkins, chief of the Chickohominy tribe, who serves on the official Jamestown commission, told the Washington Post. "And we want to be the ones to tell it."

They hope to instill in visitors that the Powhatan were part of a complex civilization with agriculture, trade and political systems long before the English arrived, Adkins said.

-- *Compiled by Annie Schleicher for NewsHour Extra*

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