



The Jamestown Adventure: Accounts of the Virginia Colony, 1605-1614 (Real Voices, Real History)

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In December 1606, three ships carrying 144 passengers and crew sailed from London bound for a land that had already claimed more than its share of English lives.

In May of the following year, little more than 100 men would disembark to settle on a small peninsula in a river they called the James. Eight months later, only 38 men were still alive in the fort they had named Jamestown.

Jamestown is well known as the first permanent English settlement in the New World; largely unknown is how fragile that permanence was. Most Americans have a general awareness of the dangers faced on any frontier, but not the particular hardships that confronted the Jamestown colonists—starvation, disease, conspiracy, incompetent leaders, and, of course, intermittent war with the neighboring Native Americans.

This volume collects contemporary accounts of the first successful colony in the first thirteen United States. The earliest text dates from 1605, two years before the first landing; the last describes events up to 1614, when the marriage of Pocahontas and John Rolfe secured a brief measure of peace for the beleaguered colony. Most of the accounts were written by the colonists themselves; others reflect the perceptions and expectations of investors and observers back in England, while two reveal the keen and hostile interest taken in the colony by England's chief rival, Spain. Several of them were written for widespread publication; others were either private letters or reports meant only for certain audiences. These narratives take the reader from the London stage to Powhatan's lodge, from the halls of royal power to the derelict hovels of the Starving Time. They show the modern reader what an adventure the founding of English America was—the desperate battles and fraught negotiations with Powhatan, the political intrigues in Europe and Virginia, the shipwreck that inspired Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the discoveries that thrilled the colonists, the discoveries that broke their hearts.

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