

Jamestown Island

Captain John Smith, leader of the 1607 Jamestown Settlement in Virginia (1580-1631), was both Governor and Admiral.

His famed bronze statue, executed by William Couper in 1907, is a short distance from the 1638 Jamestown church and tower. Of recent vintage, an historical marker adjacent to Captain Smith's statue states that he was, "arrogant, boastful and brutal."

However, in describing Virginia's earliest history, Thomas Jefferson cites the reputed historian Sir William Keith as a foremost authority. Keith gives us this account of Captain Smith's bold testimony to Powhatan, Emperor of the Indians, after his imprisonment:

Powhatan, please to know that I worship only one God and serve but one king. I am not therefore here as your subject but as a friend to serve you in what I can.¹⁰

Keith's narrative of Captain Smith's imprisonment and near execution by the Indians continues thus:

A prisoner of Powhatan

...The captain was conducted to a long room, where forty tall fellows were appointed for his guard; and soon after that a great quantity of bread, venison, and other eatables were set before him; and when the prisoner had done eating as much as satisfied him, the remainder was carefully put by 'til midnight, when they brought in a fresh quantity, eating only themselves what was left at noon; and thus they continued to do every twelve hours, which made the Captain suspect that they intended to fatten him up for a sacrifice; and while under this desperate uncertain condition, he was ready to perish with cold, an Indian called Mancassater brought him his gown, in grateful return for some beads, and other toys he had received from the Captain, at his first arrival in Virginia...Last of all, the prisoner was carried to Weronocomaco, the seat of their great

Emperor Powhatan, to whom they were formally introduced, as he sat, in a solemn manner, on a wooden bench before a great fire, covered with a robe of raccoon skins. There sat on each side of the Emperor a young woman, and on each side of the room, two rows of men, and as many women behind them, with all their hands and shoulders painted red; at the Captain's entrance before this prince, all the people gave a shout, and the Queen of Appomattock was appointed to bring water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, instead of a towel, to dry them. After this, having feasted the prisoner in the grandest manner they could, a long consultation was held amongst them; at the conclusion whereof, two great stones were placed before the Emperor Powhatan; then as many as could, laid hands on the prisoner, and dragging him towards the stones, they put his head on them, and immediately prepared themselves with great clubs to knock out his brains; but at this very instant, Pocahontas, the king's favourite daughter, after she found no entreaties could prevail, flew to the block; and taking Captain Smith's head in her arms, she laid her own upon it to save him from death; which surprising event moved the Emperor to tell the prisoner that he should live to make hatchets for him, and bells and other ornaments for his daughter Pocahontas... He told him that now they were good friends together, he intended to send him to Jamestown, from whence he desired the Captain would order two great guns and a grindstone to be sent to him; for which Powhatan would give him in return the country Capahowosiak, and forever esteem him as his son Nantaquand...¹¹

We also read of the practise of child sacrifice among the Indians. Captain Smith relates this fact for posterity in these terms:

...Their solemn sacrifices of children, which they call Blackboyes.¹²

In his *Historie of Virginia*, Smith gives a narrative on the Indians' "strange" religion:

Their god: ...But their chief god they worship is the devil. Him they call Okee, and serve more of fear than love. They say they have conference with him, and fashion themselves as near to his



Above: Captain John Smith's Map of Virginia, 1612 . Below: Jamestowne, Virginia, enlarged from map.

shape as they can imagine...

How the world was made: ...They believe there are many gods, which they call Mantoac, but of different sorts and degrees. Also that there is one chief god that hath been from all eternity, who as they say when he purposed first to make the world, made first other gods of a principle order, to be as instruments to be used in the creation and government to follow: And after the sun, moon and stars, as petty gods; and the instruments of the other order more principal. First (they say) were made waters, out of which by the gods were made all diversity creatures that are visible or invisible.

How man was made: For mankind they say a woman was made first, which by the working of one of the gods conceived and brought forth children; and so they had their beginnings, but how many years or ages since they know not; having no records but only tradition from father to son.

How they use their gods: They think that all the gods are of human shape, and therefore represent them by images in the forms of men; which they call Kewasowok: one alone is called Kewasa; them they place in their temples, where they worship, pray, sing, and make many offerings. The common sort think them also gods...

Their consultations: When they intend any wars, the Werowances usually have the advice of their priests and conjurers, and their allies and ancient friends, but chiefly the priests determine their resolution. Every Werowance, or some lusty fellow, they appoint Captain over every nation. They seldom make war for lands or goods, but for women and children, and principally for revenge.

Their enemies: They have many enemies, namely, all their westerly countries beyond the mountains, and the heads of the rivers...

Their charms to cure: They have many professed physicians, who, with their charms and rattles, with an infernal rout of

words and actions, will seem to suck their inward grief from their navels, or their grieved places...¹³

Captain Smith's *Historie of Virginia* also describes the settlers' first church upon arrival at Jamestown Island in 1607:

Wee did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or foure trees to shadow us from the sunne, our walls were rales of wood, our seats unhewed trees, till we cut plankes, our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to tow neighbouring trees, in foule weather we shifted into an old rotten tent.¹⁴

The Indians' Desire of Salvation

Under the subtitle *Their Desire of Salvation*, Smith relates that even the natives were in awe and admiration of the colonists' Christian lives, which drew them to the true God of the Bible:

...**The King Wingina** where we dwelt would oft be with us at prayer. Twice he was exceeding sick and like to die. And doubting of any help from his priests, thinking he was in such danger for offending us and our God, sent for some of us to pray, and be a means to our God, he might live with Him after death. And so did many other in like case. One other strange accident (leaving others) will I mention before I end, which moved the whole country that either knew or heard of us, to have us in wonderful admiration. There was no town where they had practiced any villany against us (we leaving it unpunished, because we sought by all possible means to win them by gentleness) but within a few days after our departure, they began to die; in some towns twenty, in some forty, in some sixty, and in one a hundred and twenty, which was very many in respect to their numbers. And this happened in no place (we could learn) where we had been, but where they had used some practice to betray us. And this disease was so strange, they neither knew what it was, nor how to cure it; nor had they known the like time out of mind; a thing specially observed by us, as also by themselves, in so much that some of them who were our friends, especially Wingina, had observed such effects in four or five towns, that they were persuaded it was the work of God through our means: and that we by Him might kill and slay whom we would, without weapons, and not come near them. And thereupon, when they had any

understanding, that any of their enemies abused us in our journeys, they would entreat us, we would be a means to our God, that they, as the others that had dealt ill with us, might die in like sort: although we showed them their requests were ungodly and that our God would not subject Himself to any such requests of men, but all things as He pleased came to pass: and that we, to show ourselves His true servants, ought rather to pray for the contrary. Yet because the effect fell out so suddenly after, according to their desires, they thought it came to pass by our means, and would come give us thanks in their manner, that though we satisfied them not in words, yet in deeds we had fulfilled their desires...¹⁵

The above accounts point out the contrast between Christianity as embraced and practiced by **Captain John Smith** and the 1607 settlement in Virginia, and the false religions practiced by Indian tribes such as the Werowances. Once again, we find that these original historic documents of early Virginia dispel the modern mythological historical markers and textbook accounts, of the “noble savage;” indoctrinated, exploited and massacred by the colonists.



The famed bronze *Robert Hunt Memorial*, Jamestown Island, depicting the first Jamestown church, described by Captain John Smith (Governor and Admiral) in his *Historie of Virginia*, 1632: “Wee did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or foure trees to shadow us from the Sunne, our walls were rales of wood, our seats unhewed trees, till we cut planks, our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighbouring trees, in foule weather we shifted into an old rotten tent.” The wording beneath the bas-relief re-enactment of their partaking of the Lord’s Supper, reads: “1607. To the glory of God and in memory of Robert Hunt, Presbyter, appointed by the Church of England. Minister of the Colony which established the English Church at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. His people, members the Colony, left this testimony concerning him. He was an honest, religious and courageous Divine. He preferred the Service of God in so good a voyage to every thought of ease at home. He endured every privation, yet none ever heard him repine...We all received from him the Holy Communion together, as a pledge of reconciliation, for we all loved him for his exceeding goodness. *He planted the First Protestant Church in America and laid down his life in the foundation of America.*” Photograph: Christian Heritage Ministries. Excerpted from, *The Rewriting of America’s History, Updated*, copyright 1991; 2011 by Dr. Catherine Millard.

“O God of Nations, by Thy guiding hand
 Were our forefathers led to this blest shore,
 When they were seeking for some friendly land
 Where they Thy praise, from fervent hearts might pour
 In deep libations. They had naught to fear
 from persecution’s rack, or bitter strife.
 Or gross exactions, often hard to bear,
 Which compassed all their daily round of life.
 Their first famed act on Cape Henry’s shore
 Was planting of the Cross, with grateful mien,
 Then with loud voice, above the ocean’s roar
 Proclaimed their faith in what was yet unseen.”

—From *The Official Hymn of the Jamestown Exposition*, 1907
 Wilberfoss G. Owst, composer, and William M. Pegram, lyrics



The Pious Pilgrimage Monument commemorates the visit on October 15, 1898, of 300 Episcopal bishops and clergymen from a convention in Washington, D.C., to the then deserted and desolate Jamestown Island. The monument was photographed by Harry C. Mann, c. 1907, as part of a series of historic pictures Mann would take of Virginia's prize historic sites around the commonwealth. The monument takes a few lines from Psalm 102, lines 26 and 27: "They shall perish / but Thou shalt endure; / Thou art the same / Thy years shall have no end."



"The Pious Pilgrimage Monument" as it now appears on Jamestown Island, *minus* its historic base with scriptural verses from Psalm 102: 26, 27: "They shall perish but Thou shalt endure; Thou art the same, Thy years shall have no end." Photograph: Christian Heritage Ministries.



"The Pious Pilgrimage Cross" on Jamestown Island, Virginia in 1995.
Photographer: John W. Wrigley. Copyright 1995.



The 1907 Captain John Smith statue – Governor of Virginia, 1608, a short distance from the original 1638 Old Jamestowne Church in the background. Sculptor: William Couper. Of recent vintage is the Department of Interior’s “historic” marker (to the immediate right), stating that he was “arrogant, boastful and brutal.” Photograph: copyright Christian Heritage Ministries.



1907 famed Plaque honoring Captain John Smith, and bearing his Coat of Arms, within the original 1638 Old Jamestowne Church, Jamestown Island, Virginia. It is a replica of the tablet at *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, London, England where Smith is buried. Photograph: copyright Christian Heritage Ministries.



Pocahontas saving Captain John Smith's Life - U.S. Capitol frieze by Constantino Brumidi. In this famous frieze encircling the Main Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol fifty-eight feet above the stone floor, we see Pocahontas, the Indian Christian Princess, aged twelve, saving the life of Captain Smith after her father Powhatan's decree that his chieftains "beat out the prisoner's brains" with clubs. As described by historian Sir William Keith's *"History of the British Plantations in America."*
Photographer: John W. Wrigley, copyright 1995.



The Captain John Smith stained-glass window, *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, London, England. A Description of the Window by Francis W. Skeat: "The window provides a memorial to one of our most courageous and brave colonists, Captain John Smith, and also to his distinguished and learned biographer, the late Bradford Smith. The intention was to accompany the figure of Captain Smith with those of two of his most loyal and faithful friends. Accordingly, a portrait of Robert Bertie, Earl of Lindsey, Lord Willoughby is shown in his Garter Robes and holding a wand as Lord Great Chamberlain, in 1628. He and Captain Smith were neighbors in the County of Lincoln. Behind Lord Willoughby's figure is part of the Palace of Whitehall as it was at this period and opposite stands the Gateway of St. James Palace. Captain Smith stands surrounded by a few of his nautical instruments of the time, including the hour glass, lodestone, the quadrant and the backstaff. At his feet is a volume with initials of Thomas Hariot who compiled a small *dictionary of the Indian Language*. Smith himself holds a small copy of *his famous map of Virginia*. The other loyal friend and Patron is Sir Samuel Saltonstall, son of a Lord Mayor of London. He it was who bore the costs of printing *Smith's Sea Grammar*. Not only did he undertake this but he also held open house for Smith at his home in Snow Hill, to the west of this Church. In this house a room was reserved for Smith who had a trunk standing there, no doubt for his personal books and belongings. Sir Samuel's first cousin, Sir Richard Saltonstall, founded the Massachusetts branch of the family which continues to this day. The

Tower of the Church stands behind his figure and is shown as it was before restoration not long after Smith died. Below these three figures is the trio of vessels which, on a dark December night in 1606, sailed down the Thames River to arrive on April 26th of the following year on the coast of Virginia.”