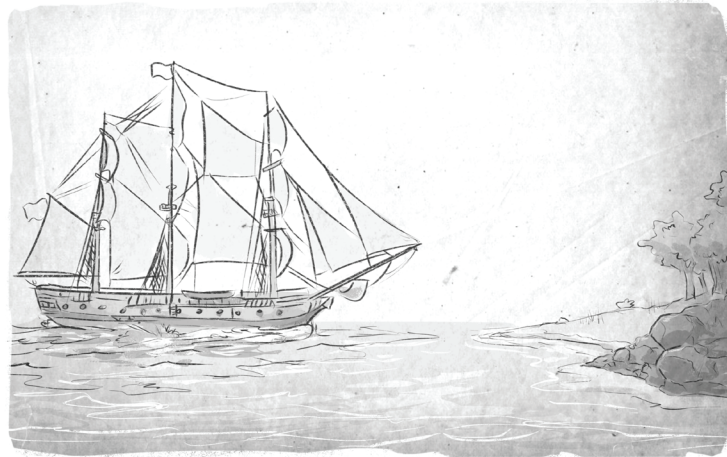


Adventures on the American Frontier

The First American Colonists

Part Three
John Smith:
The Man Who Saved Jamestown



A Royal Fireworks Production

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On the night of April 26, 1607, three ships dropped anchor off Cape Henry on the Virginia shoreline. Morning's light showed that they carried the flag of England.

The next day, the ships found the south end of Chesapeake Bay and began moving in toward a river that the people on board named the James River. They crossed to the north edge of the wide river's mouth. There, they dropped anchor again and found the spot so pleasant that they named it Point Comfort.



Soon the crew lowered a small boat from each of the two smaller ships, and the captains of the ships, with a few other men, were rowed to the largest ship.

“Come aboard, gentlemen,” called Captain Christopher Newport. He was the leader of the colonists during the journey, but this evening would change that. The men were meeting to open the colonists’ sealed orders. The papers would contain the names of the seven men who would govern the colony as a council.





When the men were all gathered in his room on the ship, Captain Newport took the chest that held the orders and unlocked it. He took out a folded piece of paper, sealed shut with wax.

“Gentlemen,” the man said as he broke the wax seal on the paper, “you all know that these names were chosen before we left England. I’m sure they’ll be those of the most able men among us, and we’ll all stand by the choice.”

He began to read the names on the paper. “Christopher Newport.” No one was surprised to hear their captain’s name at the head of the list.

“Bartholomew Gosnold, John Ratcliffe.”

Again heads nodded. Those men were the



captains of the other two ships.

Four more names followed. "Edward Wingfield, John Martin, George Kendall, John Smith."

Captain Newport seemed surprised at the seventh name. He looked at Captain Ratcliffe.

"John Smith!" Captain Ratcliffe said as he jumped to his feet. "Why, he's in irons this minute! He would be king of Virginia if he had the chance! No, I say! He won't be on the council!"