

# Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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## **Jamestowne Society Sponsors James Fort Barracks Rebuild at Historic Jamestowne**



*(Left: 2020 barracks reconstruction project underway. Right: “mud-and- stud” style building in Lincolnshire, England)*

JAMESTOWN, Va. (September 28, 2020)- In 1996, Jamestown Rediscovery archaeologists discovered evidence of a 55 foot by 18 foot structure while excavating the southeast corner of the Fort. Twenty-six aligned postholes as well as evidence of a room division, cellar, and timber chimney were uncovered at the site. Further archaeological finds paired with historical documentation confirmed that this was the site of a barracks, housing for many of the Fort’s earliest male settlers. To prepare for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jamestown’s founding in 2007, the team constructed a partial interpretation of the barracks in the precise location where the original was found. Now, more than a decade later, it is in need of replacement. Thanks to a generous contribution of \$78,000 from the Jamestowne Society, the team began reconstruction efforts of the barracks this summer.

The original structure, dating to approximately 1607 or 1608, was constructed using “mud-and-stud” architecture, a style common in the county of Lincolnshire, England during the fort period. Construction of such buildings begins with a framework of slight timbers, either seated in the ground or based on stone pads. Crosspieces are added between the upright timbers and vertical slats or studs are nailed to the crosspieces. The resulting interior skeleton-like frame gives support to the wet mud walls until they can dry enough to stand on their own. Once dry, the clay would be covered in a waterproofing plaster to provide protection from the elements. The barracks likely had a dirt floor, wooden doors, and open windows.

The 2006 reconstructed barracks frame was built using these 17<sup>th</sup>-century techniques, materials, and tools and lasted 14 years *without* its mud walls and thatched roof. Construction of the new barracks will follow the same approach while employing some modern advancements to ensure the frame lasts longer. The Jamestown team is once again partnering with renowned architects, Edwin Pease and David Stemann of Stemann-Pease Architecture and expert historic preservation contractors of Black Creek Workshop LLC. Together, this talented group developed a comprehensive building plan to ensure the new barracks will appear as it did when first constructed in 1607 and survives upwards of 15 years.

“Reconstructions such as this provide a tangible representation of the power of archaeology in illustrating the lost landscape of Jamestown and are critical to our educational mission,” said Jamestown Rediscovery president, Dr. James Horn. “We are truly grateful for the longstanding friendship and collaboration with the Jamestowne Society, whose generosity makes this possible.”

Members of the Jamestowne Society trace their lineage back to some of Jamestown Island’s earliest settlers. The Society has contributed to many Jamestown projects over the past several years, including archaeology in and around the Memorial Church. “We are pleased to make this contribution for the barracks reconstruction, which we know will have a meaningful and lasting impact for many years to come,” shared Jamestowne Society Executive Director, Bonnie Hofmeyer. Future visitors to Historic Jamestowne will soon see a more substantial reconstruction of the barracks due to be completed in October.

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*Historic Jamestowne preserves the original site of the first permanent English settlement in America and is jointly administered by Jamestown Rediscovery and the National Park Service. Entrance tickets are available at the Visitor Center from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and the grounds remain open until dusk. General admission is currently \$12.50 per adult. Children 12 & under are free. Entrance tickets include admission to the archaeological site, the Memorial Church, the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeological Museum, as well as scheduled daily walking tours and public programs. Please visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org) or call (757) 856-1250 for the most up to date visitor information.*