

Karen G. Rehm

## Five Years of Jamestown

This issue of *CRM* focuses on the Jamestown Archeological Assessment that began in 1992. The articles represent the major aspects of this five-year project that focused on a holistic approach to taking a third look at an archeological site of international significance. Testing innovative methodologies and applying an analysis of the natural environment to the understanding of the historical events were primary objectives of the Assessment, as presented in the first article written by Marley Brown and David Orr. Although major archeology was conducted in the 1930s and 1950s, reopening the town sites and examining the historical documentation with the current knowledge of the time period, as discussed in Audrey Horning's article and Martha McCartney's essay, provide greater insight into a time period that is essential to understanding Jamestown and its role in establishing British North America.

Conducting a Phase I survey of the entire Jamestown Island was critical to this understanding. Dennis Blanton's article on this aspect of the survey emphasizes the need for all parks to take a comprehensive look at their history. The discovery of the Clovis points pushes back the timeline of human occupation to 10,500 BP. The tree ring study drastically alters the basic facts of those early years at Jamestown and enables us to understand the relationship between the English settlers and Powhatans in a different light. David Riggs' examination of the Civil War and its impact on Jamestown demonstrates the need to push the timeline forward as well.

The articles by Douglas Owsley and William Kelso look at other aspects of archeology and challenges federal policies and methodologies. Dr. Owsley presents the findings of re-examining skeletal remains discovered at Jamestown more than 40 years ago. Dr. Kelso provides a view of archeology as applied by the Association for the Preservation of

From time to time over the past half century or so, my late old friend Pinky Harrington and I have eyed the Jamestown archeological potential in the perspective of archeology accomplished and to come, and spoken of our hopes for future research and investigation. The theme has always been conservation, caution in ground investigation, employing state-of-the-art technology, recognizing that it will be infinitely improved in the future, and a comprehensive, holistic, interdisciplinary address to all research, above and below ground, archival and living history resources included.

The accomplished five-year investigations and studies have addressed these needs. The whole island has been surveyed, and the whole archeological potential has been conserved for future and more sophisticated and complete research resources. I personally thank all those who have participated in this effort, and welcome generations of future investigations that will continue to tell the story of Jamestown Island from the Paleoindian to the ever-arriving present.

*John L. Cotter*

*Don Linebaugh (The College of William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research), Superintendent Alec Gould, and Greg Brown (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation) at the ground breaking ceremony for the survey, spring of 1993. Photo courtesy NPS.*



Virginia Antiquities in rediscovering the very early years of Jamestown.

Finally, the application of these new findings and providing this information to the public is examined in the article by Karen Rehm and Diane Stallings. Americans are fascinated by the process of uncovering the past and how the new discoveries provide a fuller and maybe a different twist to what they learned so many years ago in school. Through this new appreciation, support for continued research and preservation will grow.

The establishment of Colonial National Historical Park in 1930\* marked a turning point for the cultural resource management program in the National Park Service. Nearly 70 years later, it is still demonstrating the need for sound resource management guided by scholarly research and investigation. Colonial wishes to thank Kate Stevenson, Associate Director, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, NPS, for her support of this project.

\* Originally designated Colonial National Monument.

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*John L. Cotter, Ph.D., was the Jamestown archeologist from 1953–1957. He developed a grid system for New Towne that identified all the known structural ruins, resulting in a historical base map that is still used today and was essential to the Jamestown Archeological Assessment.*