

AN OVERVIEW

The Captain John Smith Four Hundred Project



CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH.

June 2, 1608: One year after the founding of Jamestown, Captain John Smith and 14 English settlers set out in a small open boat on one of the most important voyages of exploration in American history. Alone in a foreign land, Smith's expedition spent over three months exploring the Chesapeake in a quest for precious metals and a Northwest passage to the Pacific. Beset by storms, heat, and sickness, the expedition nevertheless managed to map nearly every major tributary of the great estuary while traveling over 2,500 miles. Though Smith and his men failed in their stated quest, they succeed in recording an ecosystem teeming with fish, crabs, oysters, and waterfowl. The explorers also recorded their remarkable encounters with the diverse Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan-speaking peoples that had inhabited the region for over 10,000 years. Smith's expedition ultimately opened the Chesapeake to thousands of European settlers, altering forever the face of the Bay and profoundly changing the lives of those living around it.

On May 12, 2007, a crew of 12 modern explorers will board a replica of Smith's 28-foot open boat, or "shallop," and embark on a 121-day voyage to retrace the 1608 expedition. Propelling themselves by oar and sail alone, the 2007 voyage will follow Smith's route to every corner of the Chesapeake, introducing millions of people to this important episode in America's history while blazing the path for America's first National Historic Water Trail.

Known as the *Captain John Smith Four Hundred Project* this ambitious reenactment is being undertaken by Sultana Projects, a non-profit organization based in Chestertown, Maryland, in partnership with the Friends of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, a group of organizations that includes the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Conservation Fund and the National Geographic Society.