
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 30, 2007

THE 2006 MUSEUM TOUR:
AN OVERVIEW

In 1608, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed was a wild, verdant country spanning rich and endless marshlands, towering forests, and thousands of miles of fresh, salt, and brackish waters. Populated by communities of Native American Indians who thrived on the environmental largesse offered by the fertile soils and tidal waters, the Chesapeake John Smith explored was a land of environmental and cultural abundance.

Having left the struggling Jamestown colony behind, Smith and fourteen crewmembers embarked in 1608 on a 1,700-mile journey that would help to redefine the European concept of the "New World". John Smith's voyage of the Chesapeake was the first comprehensive exploration of the region by a European settler, and the detailed, amazingly accurate map of the region he produced in 1612 was the seminal guide to the Bay used well into the end of the seventeenth century.

In commemoration of the 400-year anniversary of Smith's extraordinary voyage of exploration, Sultana, Inc., a non-profit educational organization based in Chestertown, Maryland, has constructed a replica of the vessel Smith and his crew used to navigate the Chesapeake. The recreation of Smith's "Discovery Barge" is a thirty-foot open boat, or "shallop," that was constructed at the Sultana Shipyard under the direction of master shipwright John Swain. The shallop was launched on November 4, 2005 in Chestertown.

The culmination of the *Captain John Smith Four Hundred Project* will take place in May 2007 when fourteen modern-day explorers, historians, naturalists, and educators set out in the shallop to recreate Smith's 1608 voyage. The crew will retrace the route that Smith and his crewmen took, powered only by oar and sail, and stop at over 30 ports in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. along the way to educate the public on Smith's legendary voyage.

Prior to the 2007 reenactment, in 2006 the shallop will travel to museums in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, where the public will have an excellent opportunity to view the shallop up-close and on dry land before it sets off on its epic voyage in 2007. The shallop is accompanied by an educational exhibit illustrating the world of the early 17th century Chesapeake where visitors can read descriptions of the Native Americans of the Chesapeake region in 1608, learn information on the ecology of the Bay during the seventeenth century and today, and find out more about John Smith's legendary journeys.

For more information on the John Smith Four Hundred Project and the 2006 Museum Tour, visit www.johnsmith400.org.