

AMERICA'S HERITAGE

Commemorating America's 400th Anniversary

(NAPSA)—From now through 2007, the United States will recognize one of the most unifying experiences in its history—the commemoration of America's 400th Anniversary. In 1607, English entrepreneurs arrived on the shores of the James River, built a settlement they called Jamestown and laid the foundations of our nation. Jamestown, Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in North America, changed the world. Established 13 years before the Pilgrims founded Plymouth in Massachusetts, Jamestown was the site where democracy, free enterprise and a culturally diverse society first took root in America.

America's 400th Anniversary tells the story of our nation's early days and serves as a reminder of the shared struggles and achievements of many cultures. But it also encourages Americans to appreciate how far our nation has come. The commemorative events of the country's 400th anniversary not only place a spotlight on Virginia and its unique role in history, but also recognize and honor the contributions of the European, Native American and African cultures that first came together at Jamestown in the early 1600s.

Americans have observed the anniversaries of Jamestown every 50 years since 1807 in a grand manner. The 1907 Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition drew 1.5 million visitors and featured speeches by Theodore Roosevelt, Booker T. Washington and Mark Twain. In 1957, more than a million visitors came to Virginia for America's 350th anniversary. Queen Elizabeth II addressed thousands of people at Jamestown during her first official trip to the U.S. as monarch.

The events commemorating America's 400th Anniversary also



2007 marks the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in America.

promise to capture the world's attention. Jamestown 2007, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, has planned community programs, signature events and national festivities to showcase the spirit, imagination and diversity of Americans. State, national and international commemorative events that salute the legacies of Jamestown have already begun and will continue into 2008. The premier signature event will be America's Anniversary Weekend, a three-day spectacular held at the Jamestown sites on May 11 to 13, 2007.

The story of Jamestown is one of courage and endurance. Nearly 400 years ago, it took 104 brave men 144 days to sail from England to the shores of the James River. But the journey isn't over, and the world is quite obviously still changing. With 2007 upon us, it's time to reflect on our future by honoring our past, recognizing the nation's many accomplishments and understanding how they set the course for our next 400 years.

For more information about America's 400th Anniversary and its signature events, visit www.americas400thanniversary.com.