

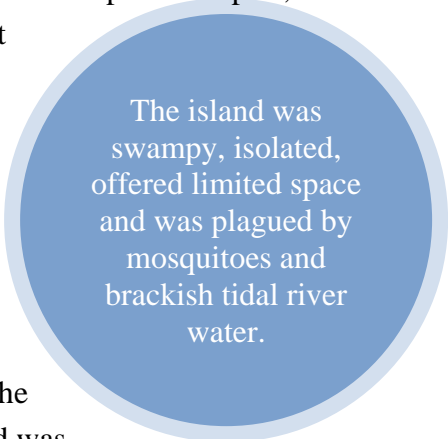
Thanksgiving & The Jamestown Settlement

Most of us are familiar with the traditional story of Thanksgiving where William Bradford, of Plymouth Rock, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to celebrate the survival of the Pilgrims in their second year in the new land, as well as the abundant harvest that they had reaped with the aid of the Indians. However, I believe that the very first Thanksgiving didn't occur with this group of Pilgrims in 1621. I believe that what was truly the first true thanksgiving took place in Virginia more than 11 years earlier and it was not a feast. The winter of 1610 at Jamestown had reduced the group down to 60 folks. The survivors prayed to God for help, without knowing when or how it might come. When help arrived, in the form of a ship filled with food and supplies from England, don't you know that a prayer meeting was held and great thanks were given to God. In most cases around today, you would think that after seeing so many loved ones die due to the endured hardships of the New World, they would not feel very thankful. However just the opposite was true. They celebrated because they knew that they had so much to be thankful for.

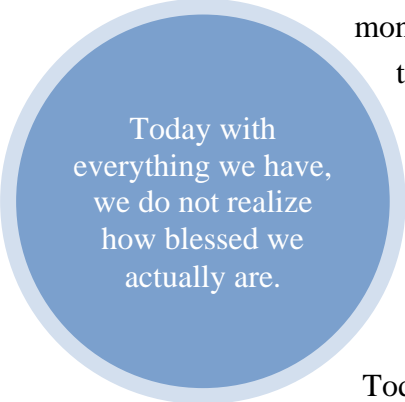
The Wikipedia account of the Jamestown settlement goes like this...

“Late in 1606, English entrepreneurs set sail with a charter from the Virginia Company of London to establish a colony in the New World. After a particularly long voyage of five months duration, the three ships, named *Susan Constant*, *Discovery*, and *Godspeed*, under Captain Christopher Newport, made landfall in May 1607 at a place they named Cape Henry. Under the first settlement orders to select a more secure location, they set about exploring what is now Hampton Roads and a Chesapeake Bay outlet they named the James River in honor of their king, James I of England.

“On April 26, 1607, Captain Edward Maria Wingfield, elected president of the governing council the day before, selected Jamestown Island on the James River, some 40 miles (67 kilometers) inland from the Atlantic Ocean, as a prime location for a fortified settlement. The island was surrounded by deep water, making it a navigable and defensible strategic point. However, the island was swampy, isolated, offered limited space and was plagued by mosquitoes and brackish tidal river water unsuitable for drinking. In addition to the malarial swamp the settlers arrived too late in the year to get crops planted. Many in the group were gentlemen unused to work, or their manservants, equally unaccustomed to the hard labor demanded by the harsh task of carving out a viable colony. In a few



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months, fifty-one of the party were dead; some of the survivors were deserting to the Indians whose land they had invaded. In the "starving time" of 1609 - 1610, the Jamestown settlers were in even worse straits. Only 60 of the 500 colonists survived the period. Perhaps the best thing about it from an English point of view was that it was *not* inhabited by nearby Virginia Indian tribes, who regarded the site as too poor and remote for agriculture.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamestown_Settlement)

Today with everything we have, we do not realize how blessed we actually are. We have more than all others in the world. We have hospitals, doctors, food, clothes, lights, AC, transportation in many forms, fast foods, places to shop and money to pay for things. We often do not realize how blessed we are or thankful we ought to be until someone is trying to take it away from us. Of all the folk in the USA that should get down on our knees and thank our Lord and God for all we have it should be us Christians! If all we had was taken from us, we still have eternal life in Glory with Our Savior Jesus! What a blessed people Christians are! So this Thanksgiving and Christmas, let us truly celebrate and be thankful for that small child, born in a manger!