

Jamestown Revisited / A Survivor: Capt. Thomas Harris

(1)

After more than a year of lobbying by Londoners Richard Hakluyt, Sir Thomas Gates, Edward Wingfield, Sir Thomas Smythe and Sir John Popham, King James granted a charter 10 April 1606 for a privately funded and managed joint-stock company: the Virginia Company of London. The King promised all colonists:

"shall have and enjoy all liberties, franchises and immunities ... as if they were abiding within our realm of England." The Virginia Co. was organized with Sir Thomas Smythe, Secretary, and Sir Henry Montague, Sir William Wade, Sir Walter Cope, Sir George Moore, Sir William Hamney and John Elred its board. Three ships: Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery were fitted with supplies and 120 men & boys, with Captain Christopher Newport (Newport News is named for him) in command, sailed 20 Dec.

1606, stopping in the Canary Islands for fresh food and water, they sighted & named Cape Henry 26 April 1607. John Rolfe led the exploration party which chose an island in the James River, 60 miles inland. The colonists landed 13 May 1607, the Rev. Robert Hunt "hung an old sail over an outdoor altar" and celebrated Holy Communion according to the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer, thanking God for their safe arrival. Governor John Smith headed the Council. He estimated 5000 Indians in the area, including 1500 able men living in 36 tribes ruled by Powhatan. They

raised beans, corn, melons and tobacco. - Stone ...
hunted & fished
A second expedition arrived in October 1608 with 70 new colonist (half gentlemen), & a brew lady, Mrs. Forest, who was determined to join her husband. She brought her maid, Anne Burrows, Virginia

from its first wedding when her maid married John Laydon. (2)

King James issued a new charter for the Virginia Co. in 1609 when more than 600 people bought shares, including our hero, Thomas Harris who invested £25. Thomas Harris was born at Creetree in Essex in 1586, (it then extends eastward from London, along the north shore of the Thames to Suffolk in East Anglia.) a son of Edward Harris of Shellow Bowells, Willingale Dor, Essex and his 2nd wife, Anne Janselyn of Torvel Hall, Willingale Dor (married 9 July 1583). As a representative of the Company, young Thomas was aboard the flag ship of the 3rd Expedition, composed of 9 ships with 500 male colonists, 90 young women seeking husbands, and Sir Thomas Gates, who would replace Gov. John Smith recently seriously injured in a gun powder explosion. One ship, Discovery, was a floating "zoo", a sort of Noah's Ark, having aboard about every kind of domestic animal available, including a pair of peafowls. The fleet was hit by the first tropical hurricane experienced by Englishmen, the Sea Venture with Gov. Gates and Harris aboard cast up on Bermuda, finally reaching Virginia in 1610; one ship with 100 colonists having sunk. This storm was discussed at the Virginia Co. meeting back in London with young Harris telling his story as William Shakespeare listened, in wide-eyed amazement, so impressed that he used the incident in writing "The Tempest" with Bermuda as the setting.

Also aboard for the return voyage were Mr. & Mrs. John Rolfe. Rebecca Rolfe, formerly known as Pocahontas, would make a big splash in London's high society before dying of tuberculosis, leaving a son Thomas, ancestor of many Americans.

via mostly the Bolling family.

The Virginia Co. still hadn't made any money as the 4th Expedition came and went in 1610, only 60 of the 500 colonists of the 3rd Expedition survived the "starving time" of 1610. Jamestown was barely holding on.

The 5th Expedition arrived 10 May 1611 with Sir Thomas Dale to replace Gates as Governor. Aboard the ship Prosperous was Thomas Harriot, now 25, ready to make Virginia his home. A new day was about to dawn. John Rolfe, the same who married Pocahontas, saw his Indian relatives smoking a native weed identified as nicotiana rustica, similar to nicotiana tabacum which was already being grown in the West Indies. If it grew ^{there}, why not in Virginia? He stole a few plants, experimented with them and by 1614 sent 4 barrels to England. Instant financial success. Ralph Hamor wrote: "Every man may plant tobacco, and with the least part of his labor, tend and cure, will return him food, clothes and other necessities."

In 1613 private land tenure was put into effect, 50 acres per resident and 50 acres for each indentured servant one recruited and paid his fare to Jamestown, the only official port of entry. By 1618 fifty thousand pounds ^{of tobacco} @ 3 shillings were exported. That year Chief Powhatan died and the attitude of the Indians began to change slowly but surely.

On 13 July 1619 at the call of Governor Sir George Yearely the first meeting of the House of Burgesses, 22 of the outstanding gentlemen, met with the Council (six men appointed by the King) in the choir of the church still a wooden frame building, as were the homes of all

gentlemen. There never were any "log cabins" in Jamestown. Poor colonists and indentured servants lived in "wattle and daub" structures as they find in England. The Church was the only public building. No state house, no inns, no pubs. The Council met in the Governor's house, as did the quarterly court. Life was hard: flies, mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, malaria, typhoid, Indians and more. That fall a Dutch ship auctioned off twenty black slaves.

In Nov. 1621 the ship Marumaduke arrived with a cargo of English girls seeking husbands. Among them: Audrey, baptized 28 Aug. 1604 in St. Mary's Church, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, daughter of shoemaker Thomas and Julia Tripplet Hoare. Audrey could do "plain work, block work and make all kinds of button". She also attracted the attention of Captain Thomas Harris, a certified "Ancient Planter" by order of Virginia Co. Treasurer, which entitled him to 100 acres. He had received 650 acres 18 Nov. 1615 for having transported 13 persons to Virginia. His father Edward had advanced him £1500 and his brother, ^{a lawyer at Lincoln's Inn.} William had given him £400. He had his plantation at "ye Trench of Land", Charles City and was a member of the House of Burgesses that year. In the Massacre at Martin's Hundred on Good Friday 22 March 1622 the Indians under Chief Opetchamough had murdered more than a third of the colonists and Thomas Harris had fought valiantly in the defense of Jamestown, winning that captain's rank. During his engagement to Audrey, Mrs. Joan Wright told Thomas that he would bury his wife at the birth of their child. Nevertheless, he married her and at the first muster of the

colonists on 24 Jan. 1624 he reported he was 38, had (5)
come to Virginia in 1611, his wife Andrey was 23, had come
to Virginia in 1621. Their daughter Mary Harris was born
that summer, her mother dying in childbirth. Mrs. Joan
Wright was arrested and brought to trial in Sept. 1624
for witchcraft. A Mrs. Rebecca Gray testified against her.
Mrs. Wright was found guilty of witchcraft and fined 100 lbs.
of tobacco. Captain Harris married (2) Joan, daughter of his
good friend Maj. Thomas Osborne. She raised Andrey's
daughter who would marry 1648 Col. Thomas Ligon and become
the progenitrix of a numerous Ligon family.

Meanwhile, King James revoked the charter of the Virginia
Co. and died 27 March 1625, whereupon Charles declared
Virginia a royal colony with English social values,
government and law. Capt. Thomas and Joan Harris
moved to his plantation called Longfield but later was
called Curles in Bermonda Hundred on the north bank
of the James. They had two sons: Thomas born 1627 and
William born 1629. In 1630 the General Assembly (Gov.,
Council and Burgesses) were still meeting in the Church
choir. Still no inns, no pubs, no other public building in
Jamestown. In 1638 Richard Kemp built the first brick
house and in 1641 Ex-gov. John Harvey sold his home
to be converted into Virginia's first State House. In 1644

a brick Church with walls 3 ft. thick was completed, (6)
a 3 story tower in 1647. By 1650 Jamestown boasted
no less than six pub-like "brew-houses" - taverns.
Despite Virginia's staunch loyalty to King Charles
and resistance to the Puritan regime, in 1652 Gov.
William Berkeley was compelled to surrender to
highly unpopular Parliamentary control. In 1655 the
State House and much of Jamestown was burned in a
disastrous fire from which recovery was slow.

Capt. Thomas Harris continued to serve in the
House of Burgesses 1639-47 and 1652-1657. His
estate had grown to 3,520 acres when in 1649 he
made his Will, now lost, but referred to in his ^{only} daughter
Mary Harris Wigon's ^{will} Thomas died at his Curles Plantation
in 1658 and was buried there. His only surviving son
was Major William Harris, born 1629 in Henrico
County, killed in battle with the Indians between
28 April 1678 when he made his Will, and 1 Feb. 1679 when
his Will was probated. He and his wife Alice Stewart
Harris are the progenitors of a numerous family among
whom is my loving wife, Miss Cora.

In 1698 Jamestown was burned for the 3rd time and the
capital of Virginia was moved to the Middle Plantation,
now known as Williamsburg.

John de Lacy — Margaret de Quincy
 Earl Lincoln 1232
 + 22 July 1240
 Magna Carta Surety
 Mand de Lacy 1238
 1223 + 10 Mar. 1241

Margaret de Quincy
 Countess Lincoln
 + 30 Mar. 1266

Amicia Countess of Gloucester — Richard de Clare
 + 1217
 Magna Carta Surety

Isabel Marshal¹²¹⁷ — Gilbert de Clare
 1182 - 25 Oct 1230
 Magna Carta Surety

Richard de Clare
 4 Aug 1222
 + 15 July 1262
 Earl Gloucester, Hereford & Clare

Thomas de Clare 1275
 1245 + 29 Aug 1287

Julian Fitz Maurice
 1249 - 1310

Maud de Clare — Robert de Clifford
 1274 - 24 June 1314

Henry de Percy
 6 Feb 1301
 27 Feb 1352

John de Clifford
 1303 - 24 Aug 1365

John de Therrilla July 1357
 1328 - 17 Apr 1385

Maud de Percy
 1335 - 18 Feb 1398

Philip + Edward III
 13 Nov 1312 - 21 June 1377

John of Gaunt

Sir Ralph de Neville
 1364 - 21 Oct 1425
 Earl Westmorland

John Beauchamp
 1379 - 13 Nov 1440

Eleanor Neville 1407 - — Henry Percy

Thomas Percy 1455
 29 Nov 1422
 10 July 1460

Eleanor Harbottle
 1438 -

Joan Percy 1460 - — John Harris
 + 8 June 1508

Anne Rutter 1536
 1524 -

William Harris
 1505 - 16 Sep 1556

Edward Harris 1583
 Essex 1541 -

Anne Josselyn
 Essex 1572 -

Henry Josselyn
 n. 1550 Torrel Hall, Wellingdale Do Essex

Joane Osborne 1626
 Essex 1582 -

Thomas Harris
 born 22 May 1611 ship "Prosperity"
 Essex 1582 - 1658 Henrico Co. Va.
 3520 acres Capt. Va. 1611; Burgess 1623, 1639, 1646.

Maj. William Harris 1648
 Chas. City Va. 1629 - 1 Feb. 1678
 Justice Henrico
 Burgess 1652; 3; 6; 8

Lucy Stewart
 Va. 1629 - 1679

William Harris ^{28 July 1694} Mary Giles
Henrico Va. 1672-1743 Va. 1675-1757 Louisa Co. Va

William Harris ^{24 Mar 1725} Judith Hudson
Henrico Va. 1710-1770 Va. 1708-1796

Sherrwood Harris Elizabeth Tillman
Va. 1733-1805 Va. 1733

John Milam
P.S.

John Harris
1765-1838 NC

Thomas
James Leake
R.S.
Elizabeth Coleman
wife

John Harris ¹⁸¹⁷ Sarah
NC 1794-TN 1852 NC 1797-

Martha Luiza Milam ¹⁸⁴¹ William Coleman Harris
11 1822-6 July 1922 Ark. 13 Oct 1818-19 May 1881 Ark.

Marquaritz Ellen Harris ¹⁸⁷⁴ John William Shelley
21 Feb. 1855-14 May 1944 14 July 1853-4 May 1906

Alexander Francis McKenzie ^{20 Oct. 1913} Ola Francis Shelley
5 July 1895-14 Oct 1975 14 Oct 1895-25 July 1957

Cora Zelma McKenzie ^{18 Dec. 1948} Rev. Dr. Robert
Ark. 6 Dec. 1919 Epting Howard Peoples
Sr 13 Jan. 1918