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The three ships shown in the picture are replicas of the three which in 1607 carried colonists from England to what is today's state of Virginia. There the new arrivals began their colony with the settlement of Jamestown. The ships are based today on the James River near the site of Jamestown. More of the story of the three ships begins on page 2.

THE JAMESTOWN SHIPS OF 1607

There have been stories from time to time in “Knots & Splices” about vessels which have been built as replicas of historic ships. They can be accurate by reason of being built using the actual plans of the original as was the case with *Bluenose II* or they can be built using only some specific knowledge of the original, plus knowing how typical ships of the era were constructed, such as *Mayflower* of 1620.

The three ships which are the subjects of this article are the *Susan Constant* (or *Sarah Constant*), the *Godspeed* and the *Discovery*. Their replicas definitely fit into the second category because not too much of their history has survived. They were the ships which in 1606 were chartered by the Virginia Company of London to carry settlers to North America where they would establish an English colony to compete with the French, Spanish and Dutch. The stockholders expected to become rich from the profits of the enterprise. This article won't go into the corporate details or the difficulties faced by the colonists, though the subject is an interesting one.

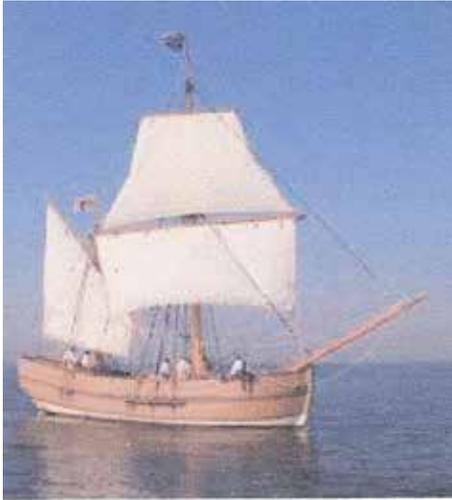


Pictured above are the replicas of the two largest ships. On the left is *Susan Constant* at the moorings for all three vessels near the Jamestown restoration. She was the flagship of the expedition and a full rigged ship of the day. On the right is *Godspeed* sailing in New York harbour as part of the 400th anniversary of the 1607 voyage. She is referred to as a “bark”, a general term referring to a small sailing vessel rather than the larger three masted “barque” that we usually think of.

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THE JAMESTOWN SHIPS OF 1607

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Discovery was the smallest ship in the fleet and was described as a pinnace. The picture on the left is of the *Discovery* replica.

The three ships were fairly new and in good shape; in fact *Susan Constant* was only about a year old. The fleet left London in December, 1606, with 105 men as passengers and a crew of 39. They arrived at Chesapeake Bay in April, 1607, having lost one passenger who died on the voyage. After the colonists and cargo were safely ashore *Susan Constant* and *Godspeed* returned to England to get more supplies in order to keep the colony alive. *Discovery* was left at Jamestown under the control of the colonists. They used her to explore the

waterways around Jamestown and to trade with the local Indians (when they weren't at war with them).

What ultimately became of the three ships is not known. *Susan Constant* and *Godspeed* appear in the records of the colony for a few years, presumably until their charter expired. During that time they were employed in a number of transatlantic crossings to resupply the colony with goods and people. After that there is no certain information. *Discovery* continued to work for the colony for several years until references to her ceased.

The table below presents some statistics about the three ships.

DIMENSIONS OF JAMESTOWN 1607 SHIP REPLICAS

	<u><i>Susan Constant</i></u>	<u><i>Godspeed</i></u>	<u><i>Discovery</i></u>
Sparred Length	116'	88'	66'
Length on Deck	82'	65'	50' 10"
Beam	24' 10"	17'	14'
Draft	11' 9"	7' 3"	6' 6"
Sail Area, sq ft	3902	2420	1160
Burthen, tons	120	40	20

When it became apparent to the London proprietors that their fleet didn't have enough capacity to keep the colony supplied they had a ship built specifically for that job. This was the *Sea Venture* which was designed to carry passengers as well as freight. At 300 tons burthen she was significantly larger than any other ship in the fleet and she could carry 150 passengers and crew in relative comfort. In 1609 *Sea Venture* as flagship with six other ships set sail for Virginia.

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THE JAMESTOWN SHIPS OF 1607

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Unfortunately the fleet was hit by a terrific storm. *Sea Venture* was so new that her timbers were not set, the caulking was driven out of the seams and she started to leak. Separated from the others, she came in sight of the uninhabited islands of Bermuda and her captain decided to run the ship aground on a reef near shore. All 150 on board made it to the island safely, and from there it is a whole other story, perhaps to be told in another newsletter.

Unfortunately there are no kits available for any of the Jamestown ships. Specially built models do exist, such as the model of *Sea Venture* shown at the left, which is in the museum in Bermuda.

Albert Ship Model Society

Society Website – www.albertashipmodelsociety.ca