



Captain John Smith could have been very helpful to the Pilgrims as they left their homeland for America. Because they could not afford his services, however, they were only able to purchase his map.

It was a map, after all, prepared by an Englishman who knew the "new world" better than most. The National Park Service [tells us why](#):

Four centuries ago, when three creaky British ships made landfall on the mid-Atlantic coast of North America in the spring of 1607, a smart, cocky twenty-something adventurer named John Smith stepped onto the stage of history.

Over the next two years, working on behalf of London entrepreneurs who called themselves The Virginia Company, Captain John Smith would play a pivotal role in establishing a tiny, struggling settlement - Jamestown, the first successful English colony in North America.

He would also systematically explore the Chesapeake region, traveling the vast Bay and its major tributaries in what amounted to an oversized rowboat with a single canvas sail. Along the way, Smith and his crew would meet, parlay, and sometimes do battle with the Chesapeake's diverse Native peoples.

Today the story of John Smith's expeditions around the Chesapeake has become the stuff of legend, lore, and intensive research by scholars. Smith's descriptions of the Bay region's dense forests and bountiful wildlife and fisheries in his 1608 account "[A True Relation of Virginia](#) ..." would help fuel the rapid colonization of North America by the English and others.

Within half a century of his journeys, the shores of Chesapeake Bay would be forever changed, studded with growing communities inhabited by thousands of colonial settlers.

Credits:

Image, U.S. National Archives.

Information and quoted reference, National Park Service - [Captain John Smith Chesapeake](#) web site.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at](#):

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Captain-John-Smith-Portrait-and-Bio0>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at](#):

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Captain-John-Smith-Portrait-and-Bio0>



Captain John Smith - Portrait and Bio

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>