

# Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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## **“ABOUT THE LATTER END OF AUGUST” Uncovering the History of the First Africans at Jamestown**

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“About the latter end of August” in 1619, the prominent planter-merchant John Rolfe reported, “20 and odd” Africans were forcibly brought to Point Comfort, at the mouth of the James River. Taken from their homeland in Angola by Portuguese slave traders and subsequently captured by English privateers in the Gulf of Mexico, these men and women were the First Africans in mainland English America. In their new book *Angela: Jamestown and the First Africans*, the Jamestown Rediscovery team chronicles the life of Angela—one of the Africans dwelling at Jamestown—as revealed through archaeology, history, and historical research.

Listed in the household of Captain William Pierce in Jamestown in 1625, “Angela,” like the other Africans who ended up in the colony, was a victim of brutal wars in West Central Africa. Angela and hundreds of other Angolans were put on board a slave ship bound for Veracruz, Mexico. En route, the ship was attacked by two English privateers who then sailed to Virginia, and afterwards Bermuda, to sell the Africans as enslaved laborers to wealthy tobacco planters. Once in English America, the Angolans survived, persisted, and adapted to an unfamiliar new world and in so doing changed the course of American history.

*Angela: Jamestown and the First Africans* seeks to recover their untold story, a vital part of the shared history of early Jamestown that brought together Virginia Indians, Europeans, and Africans on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

In collaboration with the National Park Service, the Jamestown Rediscovery team set out to learn more about Angela by excavating the site where she lived and labored. Archaeology finds the actual remains of people’s lives, and for marginalized or ignored individuals like the First Africans, it is often the only way to unearth and understand their important stories. Funded by a federal Civil Rights Initiative grant, Rediscovery archaeologists found the places and spaces that formed the landscape of Angela’s everyday life, just in time for the 400th anniversary of the First Africans’ forced arrival in Virginia.

This book is the culmination of that collaborative project. *Angela: Jamestown and the First Africans* presents the archaeological discoveries that uncovered Angela’s home, the technologies that revealed hidden landscapes, and the archival research that illuminated the lives of the First Africans in both Angola and Virginia. “Our books are portable exhibits that weave history, science, and archaeology to discover our shared American past,” said primary author and Director of Archaeology at Jamestown Rediscovery David M. Givens. “The story of Angela and the First Africans is a key part of our collective history that has been hidden for far too long. This new book shines a light on the lives of the First Africans, and explores Angela’s experiences through the physical traces she left behind at Jamestown.”

*Angela: Jamestown and the First Africans* is dedicated to Valarie Gray Holmes, whose powerful portrayal of Angela brought her story to life for thousands of visitors. Authors David Givens, Mark Summers, Mary Anna Hartley, and Sean Romo recently presented Valarie with a copy of the released book. The production of *Angela* was funded by a generous donor from Southlake, Texas.

The book is available online at [historicjamestowne.org](http://historicjamestowne.org) and in-person at the Historic Jamestowne museum store. Proceeds from the sale of the book directly support the Jamestown Rediscovery archaeology program, and its mission to uncover and share America's diverse past.

Photos with captions and crediting information can be found [here](#).

#### About Historic Jamestowne/Jamestown Rediscovery

*Historic Jamestowne (HJ) preserves the original site of the first permanent English settlement in America and is jointly administered by Jamestown Rediscovery and the National Park Service. Entrance tickets are available at the HJ Visitor Center from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and the grounds remain open until dusk. General admission is \$25.00 per adult (which includes both Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield for seven consecutive days). Children 15 & under are free. National Park Passes and Preservation Virginia Memberships are accepted; however a \$10 per person fee may apply. Entrance tickets and passes include admission to the archaeological site, the Memorial Church, the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeological Museum, as well as scheduled daily walking tours and public programs. For opening hours of the Dale House Café and information about special events, please visit [www.historicjamestowne.org](http://www.historicjamestowne.org) or call (757) 856-1250.*