locations, sizes, and contours of Jamestown's early houses and taverns, known as ordinaries. Running near the seawall along the James River is the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, a 3,000-mile, three-state-plus Washington, D.C., water route in and around the Chesapeake Bay that marks Smith's 1608 explorations. Gravestones mark the resting places of some of the earliest Americans. Remains of buildings loom. The New Towne Viewer at the Tercentenary Monument presents computer-generated images that depict the historic appearance of the Jamestown landscape, using archeological objects to reinforce the experience of stepping back in time. The Viewer also incorporates videos showing the remains of buildings and artifacts as they were being excavated.

The first order of business for the English settlers in the spring of 1607 was building a triangular fort for protection, a task they accomplished in a mere nineteen days. More than 90 percent of the fort's land area has been located by experts from the Jamestown Rediscovery Project. More than a million and a half artifacts have been collected from the site since 1994, when the project started. Visitors to Old Towne can see the reproduced fort walls consisting of sharpened stakes—archaeologists have pinpointed the locations of the original stakes below the ground by analyzing changes in soil color caused by their decomposition.

The Voorhees Archaearium, home to more than a thousand artifacts discovered in the soil of the Jamestown fort, is a monument to the settlement. Operated by Preservation Virginia, it stands on the site of the third and fourth state houses, whose foundations are visible under glass in the building's entrance. A striking specimen is the skeleton of an English colonist with a bullet embedded in his leg. A 3-D digital facial reconstruction of the skull of Bartholomew Gosnold, captain of one of the three ships that landed in 1607, generates an image of his face. Other artifacts include cooking utensils, coins, and weapons.

The winter years of 1609–1610 are known as the "Starving Tyme." The colony's population of 500 had dwindled to a mere 60 people, according to one eyewitness account; those colonists survived by eating dogs, cats, roots, and snakes, and were driven to boil the starch from shirt collars to make porridge. Settlers ate "what vermin or carrion soever [they] could light on," wrote one. Though George Percy recorded that "Our