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Virtually Scanning Jamestown 1607-1610

Lauren Volkers
Virginia Commonwealth University

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Abstract

The Virtual Curation Laboratory, located at Virginia Commonwealth University, has been 3D scanning artifacts in collaboration with Jamestown Rediscovery from a very narrow period of time, 1607 to 1610. This short time period includes the founding of the Jamestown colony and the Starving Time, when colonists consumed dogs, their seven horses, and at least one young woman. The intersection of Native Americans and Europeans can also be seen with native-made artifacts found in European contexts or altered by European contact. This poster will feature a butchered dog mandible and a butchered horse tibia from the Starving Time, native-made and European-made pipes and ceramics, a projectile point, and a jeweler’s mold.

Contact Period

This bust is of a young Englishman who died from an arrow wound that occurred during an Indian attack in 1607. Just two weeks after the colonists landed at Jamestown, the young man was between 14 to 15 years old and suffered from an infection that spread from a abscessed tooth into his lower jaw bone. Due to his existing infection from his tooth he did not survive his injuries from the Indian attack.

The Starving Time

This mandible belonged to a dog at Jamestown that dates back to the Starving Time. There are evident cut marks on the mandible that show this dog was consumed by settlers. The Jamestown colonists faced desperation when they ran out of food and turned towards a wide variety of animals they had in their settlement that normally are not consumed.

A Commercial Venture

This arrow point was found still stuck in Arrow Point Boy’s leg when his remains were recovered. This arrow point was shot into the young man’s leg from an Indian attack in 1607 and due to an existing infection he died from his wounds.

This native-made pipe dates from 1608-1610 and was recovered from the “John Smith well” feature.

This vessel was made by pressing clay against the interior of a woven basket made by Native Indians and once it was dry it left the basket impression on the vessel. The vessel was recovered from an “John Smith well” feature that dates from 1608-1610. This vessel was also presumably created by Robert Cotton, since it was made from the same material.

Conclusion

The Jamestown settlement is full of history from the first colonists establishing the palisade fort to the Starving Time and beyond. This project, the Virtual Curation Laboratory here at VCU, is just one way to bring that history to life and allow the public to view and touch artifacts that would either be too fragile to handle or too small to be displayed on a large scale behind secure storage. This poster features several artifacts scanned and printed, including a butchered dog mandible and a butchered horse tibia from the Starving Time, native-made and European-made pipes and ceramics, a projectile point, and a jeweler’s mold. The collaboration between Jamestown Rediscovery and the Virtual Curation Laboratory helps show the public the variety of items and animals that would have been consumed by the people who lived at Jamestown from 1607-1610. 3D scanning and printing of digital models of artifacts are an excellent way to preserve, replica, and display artifacts that would either be too fragile to handle or are deteriorating. Plastic replica help preserve Jamestown’s history and allow the public to make a tangible connection to the past in a way not feasible with the original objects from this important historic site.

I would like to thank Jamestown Rediscovery and the Virtual Curation Laboratory. Citation are available upon request.

For more information visit: historicjamestowne.org, vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com, and virtuallyscanningjamestowne.com/tag/virtual-curation-laboratory/