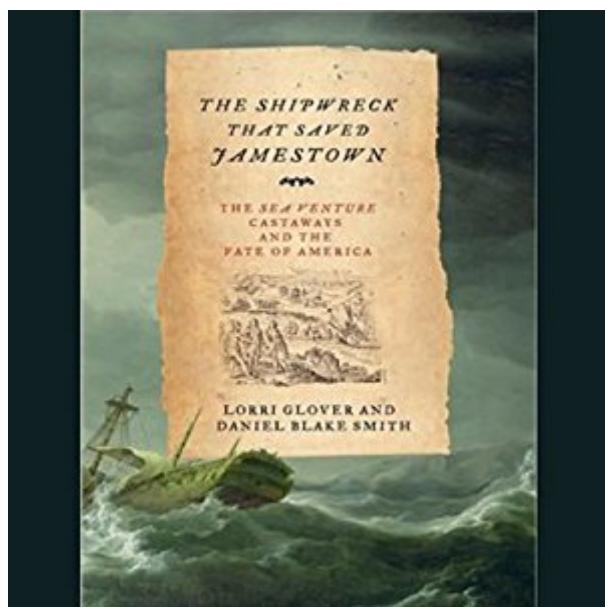


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# The Shipwreck That Saved Jamestown: The Sea Venture Castaways And The Fate Of America



## **Synopsis**

The English had long dreamed of colonizing America, especially after Sir Francis Drake brought home Spanish treasure and dramatic tales from his raids in the Caribbean. Ambitions of finding gold and planting a New World colony seemed within reach when, in 1606, Thomas Smythe extended overseas trade with the launch of the Virginia Company. But from the beginning the American enterprise was a disaster. Within two years, warfare with Indians and dissent among the settlers threatened to destroy Smythe's Jamestown just as it had Raleigh's Roanoke a generation earlier. To rescue the doomed colonists and restore order, the company chose a new leader, Thomas Gates. Nine ships left Plymouth in the summer of 1609-the largest fleet England had ever assembled-and sailed into the teeth of a storm so violent that "it beat all light from Heaven." The inspiration for Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the hurricane separated the flagship from the fleet, driving it onto reefs off the coast of Bermuda-a lucky shipwreck (all hands survived) that proved to be the turning point in the colony's fortune. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I had recently read a history of the Jamestown settlement, and learned about this episode in that. While this book also covers some of the history of Jamestown, it is much more. Besides the story of the wreck itself, it goes into the political and religious reasons behind the settlement idea, looks at what is known of the backgrounds and personalities of many of the principals involved, and describes both a ship of that time period, and what an ocean voyage was like. It has a very readable

style, so that I found myself often deciding to read "just one more page", and finishing a chapter instead. Too many times I have walked away from a book with an otherwise interesting subject, simply because the writing style was too hard to follow or hold my attention. This book is anything but that. An excellent story, and very well written. As a fan of almost any American history, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and learned a new chapter of it.

I picked up this book before a trip to Bermuda hoping to find a fun history of the Sea Venture expedition. In the end, the story of the Sea Venture was every bit as exciting as advertised. The book followed the truly amazing and gripping story of the Virginia colony and the accidental colonization of Bermuda. In addition to being a great story the author also does a good job of drawing from an enormous amount of primary sources and gives large parts of the story in the words of the castaways or colonists themselves. My only criticism of the book (and the reason I only gave it 3 stars) was the writing itself. The writing was so repetitive I found myself skimming large portions of the book in an attempt to avoid dÃ©jÃ vu. For example, when describing the marketing campaign of the Virginia company, the book has to cite close to 25 different sources all saying the same thing (i.e. God wants England to colonize Virginia; we must colonize Virginia in the name of God and King; if you colonize Virginia you will go to Heaven). We get it ... the campaign was marketed using religious and patriotic rhetoric... And beyond sometimes providing too many examples, the language used by the author was also repetitive. Often entire sentences would be largely identical to sentences you'd already read. For example, the author describes the colonists as motivated by a combination of "ambition" and "desperation" at least 15 times. Using exactly the same phraseology. If, however, you can get over this repetition (or skim through the portions that you feel like you've already read) you can learn about a truly remarkable adventure!

Most of us remember the story of Jamestown from high school history and maybe even from a visit to the Jamestown site. But I never knew more than that the English settlers had a hard winter! The authors have documented and put together a clearly written . . . and disturbing . . . story about how really difficult it was to gain a foothold in the New World. As usual those in charge were driven by greed and poor planning so that hundreds died unnecessarily. But then again, without the funds and big egos of the "leaders", we might all now be citizens of Spain. Reading about the horrors the colonists endured, especially the cannibalism, caused me to have nightmares! But the saving of the souls on the Venture, which eventually saved the whole colony, was thrilling. This is stuff movies are made of. I'd give the book five stars except that there is some redundancy, especially the final

chapter that seemed to just reminding me what they had already said. Don't read it if real life makes you nervous. Do read it if you want the whole story of our country's feeble beginning.

Stephen Hopkins was/is one of my ancestors. He survived this event, went back to England with knowledge of the Indians and the new world. He used that knowledge later, when he returned to the new world on the Mayflower to help his fellow pilgrims to survive the harsh world they had landed in. This is a great book, that deals with the Jamestown problems and how this shipwreck that saved Jamestown. If they had failed, I know that my family before me and up to my current family would not be here. A historian on tv surmised that the Mayflower might not have come over. That might have meant that another European country might have been the founders of what we call America.

This book is very well written by people that have been very careful to investigate the details knowing that this is very different from the version of history that is so widely known. The sources are very well documented and provide a much stronger case for what actually happened than what I remember learning in school. That being said, this is a book that reads like a novel. There are so many twists and turns, comedy and tragedy, heartwarming and horrific times that keeps the reader on the edge of their seat for the entire book. I couldn't wait to continue to read it and every time I did it was extremely hard to put down. I highly recommend this title to anyone who wants a good read. You won't be disappointed.

This book reads like a thriller novel, but it's all well-documented and tied together. Glover and Smith have produced an outstanding account of the Virginia Company's efforts to raise a colony in Virginia, centered around the rescue mission launched in 1609. This book brings together all the stories and events that led up to the Sea Venture's mission, with the leaders and crews attempts to reach Virginia following their survival through a fierce early-season 5 day Atlantic Ocean Hurricane. The characters involved in the Virginia Company's efforts jump off the page. The authors have managed to avoid hyperbole while bringing the amazing story of the Sea Venture's role in turning the course of history out in all it's detail. I loved this book, and wish I had obtained a copy while it was in hardcover edition.

Detailed and well researched, I bought the book to know more of ancestors who were on that trip. I was delighted to get as a bonus a well painted history of the beginnings of the Jamestown colony as well

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