

# The Jamestown Exposition of 1907 and the U.S. Navy Social Studies Lesson Plan



## Introduction

Naval Station Norfolk dominates the waters of Hampton Roads, Virginia. It is one of the largest and most important military installations in the world. But ten years before construction began on Naval Station Norfolk, much of the land that the base is located on was the site of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907. The story of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 is intimately tied to the origins of Naval Station Norfolk and the development of America becoming a world power in the early twentieth century.

The Hampton Roads Naval Museum, under the command of the Naval Historical Center, has produced this lesson plan as a companion educational resource to the DVD film, *Enduring Legacy: The Jamestown Exposition and the U.S. Navy*. The lesson plan also complements a series of interactive education presentations on the Museum's website (<http://www.hrnm.navy.mil/1907exposition/index.htm>.) These education resources were developed as a result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of the Navy, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia concerning the Department of the Navy's historic preservation plans at Naval Station Norfolk.



# Lesson Objectives

## Unit Objectives and Understandings:

- The Jamestown Exposition of 1907 was a national and international world's fair which heralded America coming of age as an industrial and world power.
- The Exposition had a major impact on the Hampton Roads region by establishing a long term relationship between the region and the Navy.
- A major component of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 was showcasing the growth of America's new navy.
- The growth of the Navy and its role in America's rise as a major world power in the early twentieth century started in Hampton Roads at the Jamestown Exposition of 1907.
- The Great White Fleet and its voyage around the world signaled America's entrance onto the world stage as a major power.
- Naval Station Norfolk, located on the former site of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, grew into one of the most important military installations in the world.

## Instructional Objectives

Students will analyze and explain the importance of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, the Great White Fleet and the origins of Naval Station Norfolk in Hampton Roads.

## Overview

The students will be given an overview of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, the role of the Great White Fleet in projecting America's rise as a world power and how these events resulted in the establishment of Naval Station Norfolk. The instructor will then link these three series of events into a general discussion on the rise of America as a world power in the early twentieth century.

## Preparing the Lesson

- Review the enclosed historical material.
- Review the material presented on the Hampton Roads Naval Museum's Enduring Legacy interactive web site in the Architectural heritage section (<http://wwwhrnm.navy.mil/1907exposition/index.htm>).





### **Conducting the Lesson**

- Present a short overview of the historical material and introduce the web site material from HRNM's Enduring Legacy presentation.
- Question the students throughout the class to insure a high level of class participation.
- Have students take notes during the presentation and discussion period.
- Review the student's notes and ideas in a discussion period while emphasizing the lesson's objectives.
- Have students complete the quiz and problem solving questions.
- View the film, Enduring Legacy- The Jamestown Exposition of 1907 and the U.S. Navy.

### **Evaluating the Lesson**

Evaluate the students through their responses to a short series of follow-up questions the next day. Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, the Great White Fleet and the origins of Naval Station Norfolk as factors in the rise of America as a world power.





# Historical Background

Between 1876 and America's entry into World War I in 1917, over 100 million people across the United States attended world's Fairs and Expositions. These events were held in cities all over the United States. While partially focused on popular entertainment activities, these fairs also carried a deeper meaning. They became reflections of how Americans had come to view themselves in the new and changing twentieth century world.

Virtually every aspect of American life was celebrated at these events. While the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 was no exception, it went further by establishing a long term relationship between the Norfolk area and the United States Navy. This relationship would grow stronger through the years and into the present day. Typical of this link are the many surviving Exposition buildings on Naval Station Norfolk, which form a rich, significant and enduring link between past and present.



As the twentieth century arrived, Virginia sought ways to honor the impending 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jamestown, England's first permanent settlement in North America. Founded in 1607, Jamestown was crucial to the state's and nation's historical heritage. Jamestown was considered the site of the beginning of representative government, private land ownership and free economy in America. As America grew, it saw its colonial past as a foundation of a

great civilization moving into the new industrialized era that defined a future America as a proud nationalistic nation. These thoughts and ideas resulted in what was known in the early twentieth century as the "American Way of Life". Virginia choose to honor these concepts with an exposition which looked to the past and celebrated an imagined future.

The Exposition would also be a showcase for the Navy of a nation that had just become a player on the world stage. The nation and its Navy was brimming with optimism, with feelings of nationalism, purpose, and pride thanks to an expanded fleet building program and the major role it had played in a decisive war with Spain.

To support this idea of a world-class Exposition, many important businessmen and citizens in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Norfolk County and Old Point Comfort were anxious to contribute their time and money toward making the event a reality. A committee was formed to create a proposal that





would bring the Exposition to the Norfolk area. With the Norfolk area and the Chesapeake Bay as selling points, the entrance to Hampton Roads was picked as the perfect setting for the Exposition and what would turn out to be an inspiring international naval display.

The committee convinced the Virginia State legislature and Governor A. J. Montague on March 10, 1902, to convert the Norfolk Exposition Committee into the Jamestown Exposition Company. Three years later, popular President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation investing the Exposition with a global character, placing emphasis on the “international naval, marine and military.” The committee then began the arduous task of finding funding for the project. Unfortunately, appeals to civic organizations, labor unions and merchants largely went unanswered. Then congress appropriated almost a million and a half dollars of construction, entertainment and exhibits. Twenty-one states also voted funds to construct their own buildings and exhibits. A host of other countries then pledged participation which included military and naval contingents along with exhibits.

### Plans Into Reality: The Jamestown Exposition

Turning plans into reality proved challenging. By early 1906, very little of the 340 acre site at Sewells Point outside Norfolk had been developed. However, legions of workers toiled to drain salt marshes, clear scrub woods, put in a water reservoir, and have electric, telegraph and telephone lines strung. A railroad network was also built to bring in materials and exhibits. As the design and construction of the buildings, concessions and entertainment venues grew, the site began to resemble a small city.

Despite frantic and strenuous efforts, when the Exposition opened, much of the site remained incomplete. Regardless of the site’s state, the Exposition was opened on time by a rousing speech from President Roosevelt. With the Navy’s new fleet in attendance, the Exposition opened with the allure of evening lit buildings and a promise of showing the world that America had arrived. The Exposition’s grounds were filled with exhibits, state houses, government buildings, restaurants and an amusement arcade called “The Warpath.” The Warpath drew more visitors than any other venue with its rides, shows and attractions. Most popular was the “Spectatorium” which contained

## 100 Popular Persons to Visit Jamestown Exposition at the Expense of The Washington Post

**Cash Prizes in Addition Will Be Given to the Successful Contestants**

NINETY persons are to be selected in a popular voting contest from the Districts of Columbia and ten from the adjacent counties in Virginia and Maryland, and sent on a ten-day tour of the Jamestown Exposition. All we ask is that you make your selections. The Washington Post stands the expense and will take care of the 100 winners.

<p><b>Open to All</b></p> <p>Persons who are citizens of the United States, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age, are eligible to vote.</p> <p>Persons who are citizens of the District of Columbia, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age, are eligible to vote.</p> <p>Persons who are citizens of any of the States of Virginia or Maryland, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age, are eligible to vote.</p> <p>Persons who are citizens of any of the States of Virginia or Maryland, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age, are eligible to vote.</p>	<p><b>From City of Washington</b></p> <p>Any person who has been three months a resident in the District of Columbia at the time of the opening of the Exposition, and who is at least 21 years of age, is eligible to vote.</p> <p>Persons who are citizens of any of the States of Virginia or Maryland, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age, are eligible to vote.</p>	<p><b>Outside the City of Washington</b></p> <p><b>VIRGINIA</b></p> <p>To go into Alexandria County</p> <p>To go into Stafford County</p> <p>To go into Loudoun County</p> <p>To go into Prince George County</p> <p>To go into Stafford County</p> <p><b>MARYLAND</b></p> <p>To go into Prince George County</p> <p>To go into Stafford County</p>	<p><b>Contest Begins Sunday, March 24</b></p> <p><b>Contest Ends Sunday, June 30</b></p>
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**\$300 in Cash Prizes**

To the person receiving the highest number of votes . . . \$100.00  
 To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . . . \$75.00  
 To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . . . \$50.00  
 To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . . . \$25.00  
 To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . . . \$15.00  
 To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . . . \$10.00  
 To each of 5 persons receiving the next highest number of votes \$5.00

<p><b>Rules Governing Contest</b></p> <p>1. The contest shall be open to all persons who are at least 21 years of age and who are citizens of the United States, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age.</p> <p>2. The contest shall be open to all persons who are at least 21 years of age and who are citizens of the District of Columbia, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age.</p> <p>3. The contest shall be open to all persons who are at least 21 years of age and who are citizens of any of the States of Virginia or Maryland, or who have been citizens for at least one year, and who are at least 21 years of age.</p>	<p><b>Value of Special Ballots</b></p> <p><b>Daily Only</b></p> <p>Paid in advance for 1 month . . . \$5.00 extra        Paid in advance for 2 months . . . \$10.00 extra        Paid in advance for 3 months . . . \$15.00 extra        Paid in advance for 4 months . . . \$20.00 extra</p> <p><b>Daily and Sunday</b></p> <p>Paid in advance for 1 month . . . \$10.00 extra        Paid in advance for 2 months . . . \$20.00 extra        Paid in advance for 3 months . . . \$30.00 extra        Paid in advance for 4 months . . . \$40.00 extra</p>
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moving models of the historic Hampton Roads battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* (CSS *Virginia*). Many areas were in a more serious vein directed toward America's technological and industrial achievements. Other exhibits spotlighted history, social reform, food products and foreign countries.

Other daily activities at the Exposition revolved around military parades and technology exhibits that showed how American industry was in the process of remolding life for the twentieth century. During the Exposition's seven month run, many well known American personalities participated in events and special day celebrations. Attending celebrities included Mark Twain, Booker T. Washington, and William Randolph Hurst. To generate more interest, every day honored someone or observed something.

Gradually the twenty-one State Houses also opened to the public. Most, but not all were copies of famous buildings that existed in their home states. Colonial period reproductions were built on a larger scale than the originals, reflecting their purpose as exhibit halls.

One, the Pennsylvania Building, was nothing less than a replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall. Physically, the Exposition was unified by two over-riding themes. The first was the line of American warships anchored impressively in the Hampton Roads Harbor during the entire Exposition run.



The second, more subtle, was the Colonial Revival architecture evident in virtually every building on the Exposition site. It was a style that embodied the idea that colonial architecture was a distinctive American contribution which paid homage to an era representative of the American core values that united and defined the United States as a nation.

Cultural diversity was also highlighted. For the first time in a national Exposition, African-Americans were formally included. Five acres of Exposition ground were set aside for the location of the "Negro Building" and exhibits built and run by African-Americans. African-American educators, schools, universities and exhibitors participated in events scheduled throughout the Exposition.

So, early in what became the "American Century", the Jamestown Exposition sought to shine a pleasing, reassuring and optimistic light on the national experience, past and present. Overall these goals were achieved to the delight of some three million people who visited the Exposition. Yet,



even with these high attendance figures, when the Exposition closed on November 30, 1907, it was a complete financial flop and failure. Promptly, the Jamestown Exposition company declared bankruptcy right after the Exposition closed.

## **The Great White Fleet**

**T**he U.S. warships that visited the Exposition had provided a dramatic backdrop for the Exposition's visitors. After the Exposition had shut down, the U.S. fleet again gathered at the site of the Exposition to begin an epic and dangerous endeavor which had been ordered by President Roosevelt. Leaving Hampton Roads, the fleet embarked on a history making around the world voyage. The fleet contained over 14,000 sailors and marines. It was nicknamed the "Great White Fleet" thanks to all the ships being painted white.

During its voyage around the world, the "Great White Fleet" logged over 43,000 miles and visited twenty ports. The fourteen month trip included stops in Japan and a passage through the Suez Canal. When the ships arrived back in Hampton Roads, President Roosevelt was there to greet their return at the site of the now closed Exposition.

The "Great White Fleet's" cruise had breathed life into one of the President's bedrock beliefs and in a sense had also been a demonstration of one of the major Exposition's themes. The idea that the United States was now a force to be reckoned with in world affairs along with being able to project its strength and prestige overseas through a strong Navy became an established fact that the rest of the world could not deny.

Since the ships that made up the "Great White Fleet" on its world tour had first convened at the Jamestown 1907 Exposition, both events would forever be linked.



## **Naval Station Norfolk**

As the Great White Fleet was circumnavigating the globe showing America's colors, the bankrupt Jamestown Exposition Company was busily trying to divest itself of the land that housed the event. Eventually, most of the land was bought by the Fidelity Land and Investment Corporation. Many states also sold their buildings to individuals, who turned them into private residences. Fidelity did nothing to improve or develop the Exposition site. And so, for years the site lay essentially dormant. It became a nostalgic victim of benign neglect.

With the coming of World War I, things began to change for the site of the former Exposition. Although World War I broke out in August 1914, the United States was not involved. As the United States realized that conflict was an eventuality, work at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia began to speed up.

When America entered the war in early 1917, it was very apparent that such a large global conflict would make unprecedented demands on America's limited East Coast naval installations. Naval installation expansion along the East Coast became a priority for naval planners.

Hampton Roads had always wanted and lobbied for a Naval Base to be built at Sewells Point, the site of the former Exposition. Now with the impetus provided by America's entry into the war, the lobbying finally paid off. The United States Navy bought the site of the Jamestown 1907 Exposition and began its conversion into an indispensable naval facility.

Congress appropriated just over a million and a half dollars to build the naval station and slightly more than a million dollars to buy the land on which it would sit.

Four hundred and seventy four acres of Sewells Point were purchased. The purchased land included all of the land and structures that had been part of the Jamestown 1907 Exposition. Under the direction of Captain A.C. Dillingham, a long time champion of putting a naval station at Hampton Roads, construction began in July 1917.

Thousands of military and civilian workers set about creating a facility devoted to aviation, recruit training, supply facilities and servicing the Navy's new submarine fleet. By the end of January, 1918, the facility formally became known as the "Naval Operating Base" or "NOB" for short. By integrating all of the original Jamestown Exposition buildings with new Navy construction, the main elements of a significant new addition to America's war effort was soon in place and operational. Former exhibit halls were soon filled with Navy people and Navy functions.

Today Naval Station Norfolk has grown into one of the largest Naval facilities in the world. All of the Jamestown 1907 Exposition buildings that still exist are used by the Naval commands on the Base. The remaining exhibit buildings house Naval fleet and regional commands. The former State buildings serve as residences for flag officers (admirals and generals).

Through the years since 1917, what was originally called the Naval Operating Base, Hampton Roads, Virginia has assumed a variety of functions and been known by a variety of names. Currently it is officially named "Naval Station Norfolk." But whatever its function or designation, this facility





has become one of the U.S. Navy's most vital shore installations and an icon of American's military landscape.

And true to the spirit of the Navy's defining respect for heritage, history and tradition, the Station has kept alive its past by carefully preserving the remaining Jamestown Exposition buildings. For example, in 1932, rather than demolish some of the former state buildings, the Navy relocated them along Dillingham Boulevard near the rest of the remaining state buildings. These historic preservation efforts are typical of the Navy's desire to preserve its history through maintaining the unmatched treasure of Colonial Revival Architecture structures associated with the former Exposition site. This dedication to the Navy's history has ensured that the former Jamestown Exposition site, which is the only surviving site with more than one Exposition building from the 1876 -1917 era left in America, will remain an enduring legacy for all Americans. The remaining Jamestown Exposition State Houses and buildings are now a treasured component of the Navy's cultural and architectural identity and at the same time, an integral part of the modern Naval Station Norfolk.



# Suggested Exercises

## Suggested Quiz Questions

- Where was the Jamestown Exposition of 1907 held? Norfolk, Virginia
- How many states built state houses at the Exposition? 21
- What are the surviving state houses on Naval Station Norfolk now used for? Flag Officers housing (Admirals and Generals)
- What was the basic architectural building type used at the Exposition? Colonial Revival
- Name some of the famous personalities that visited the Exposition. Booker T. Washington, Mark Twain and William Randolph Hurst
- Which President backed building the Exposition, visited it and is considered the father of the Great White Fleet? President Theodore Roosevelt
- Where did the Great White Fleet sail to? Around the world!
- Why was it called the Great White Fleet? All the ships were painted white.
- What world event made the Navy decide they needed to make a naval base in Norfolk on the grounds of the former Exposition? World War I
- What does N.O.B. stand for? Naval Operating Base, the first name for Naval Station Norfolk.

## Problem Solving Exercises

### A. The Jamestown 1907 Exposition - Missed Opportunities

The Jamestown Exposition was operated by the Jamestown Exposition Company. As any business, the Company had hoped to make a profit from the revenue that the Exposition had been projected to generate. The average price of admittance which included a wide range of ticket options was \$.47 per person. Although attendance figures for the Exposition reach at grand total of 2,908,988 visitors, the Exposition proved to be a financial failure. One of the major reasons for the Exposition's financial failure was that over one half of the people that visited the Exposition were admitted free of charge.

How much more revenue could the Exposition have made if they had charged admission to everyone that was admitted free?

A. Total paid visitors	1,401,409
B. Total visitors admitted free	1,507,579
C. Per visitor cost	\$.47





1. Multiply average cost for a paying visitor times the number of visitors admitted free:  
 $1,507,579 \times \$0.47 = \$708,562.13$

2. Answer - \$708,562.13 more revenue would have been made if all Exposition visitors would have paid an admission fee. Reaping this extra funding would have resulted in the Exposition being a financial success.

### **B. The Great White Fleet – Feeding the Fires**

The Great White Fleet covered over 43,000 miles in its fourteen month long voyage around the world. All sixteen battleships in the fleet were powered by coal fueled engines. On an average, each battleship carried around 2,000 tons of coal. The voyage was planned so that the fleet would make twenty port calls or visits which allowed the battleships to be re-coaled at around two week intervals. So, to say that each battleship used around 4,000 tons of coal a month is pretty accurate.

1. How much coal was required for one battleship to make the trip?

Solution:

A = 4,000 tons of coal per month

B = 14 months, the length of the voyage

$A \times B = C$

2. How much coal did the entire sixteen battleship fleet use on the trip?

Solution:

C = 1 battleship total usage

D = 16 battleships

$C \times D = F$

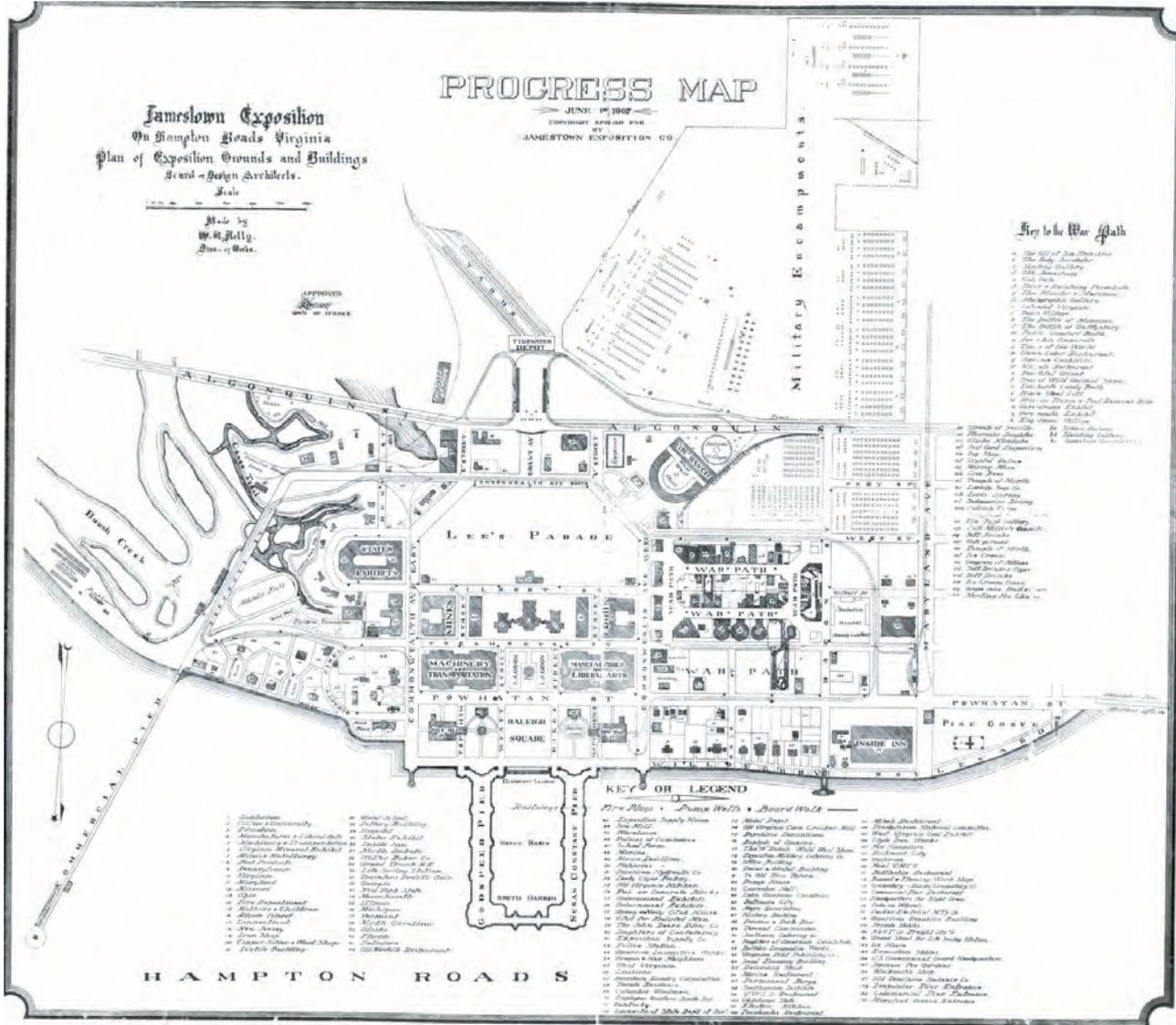
Answer:

1. C = 56,000 tons per battleship

2. F = 896,000 tons of coal (56,000 x 16)



# Illustration Resources



Map of the Jamestown Exposition





**History Building, Auditorium, and Education and Social Economy Building, Jamestown Exposition, 1907**



**Silver and Gold Medal Issued  
by the Jamestown Exposition Company**



**The “Great White Fleet” leaving Hampton Roads, 1907**





**Former Jamestown Exhibition Exhibit Building converted to Navy administrative offices, Naval Operating Base, 1917.**



**View of Naval Operating Base Hampton Roads 1918**



**Exposition State Houses 1918, now flag officer quarters**