



Savage Kingdom: The True Story of Jamestown, 1607, and the Settlement of America

Benjamin Woolley

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Four centuries ago, and fourteen years before the *Mayflower*, a group of men—led by a one-armed ex-pirate, an epileptic aristocrat, a reprobate cleric and a government spy—left London aboard a fleet of three ships to start a new life in America. They arrived in Virginia in the spring of 1607 and set about trying to create a settlement on a tiny island in the James River. Despite their shortcomings, and against the odds, they built Jamestown, a ramshackle outpost that laid the foundations of the British Empire and the United States of America.

Drawing on new discoveries, neglected sources and manuscript collections scattered across the world, *Savage Kingdom* challenges the textbook image of Jamestown as a mere money-making venture. It reveals a reckless, daring enterprise led by outcasts of the Old World who found themselves interlopers in a new one. It charts their journey into a beautiful landscape and a sophisticated culture that they found both ravishing and alien, which they yearned to possess but threatened to destroy. They called their new home a "savage kingdom," but it was the savagery they had experienced in Europe that had driven them across the ocean and which they hoped to escape by building in America "one of the most glorious nations under the sun."

An intimate story in an epic setting, Woolley shows how the land of Pocahontas came to be drawn into a new global order, reaching from London to the Orinoco Delta, from the warring kingdoms of Angola to the slave markets of Mexico, from the gates of the Ottoman Empire to the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

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