

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

The Sarah Constant

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May, 1951

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Newport

Presentation and unveiling of picture of Sarah Constant, the "good ship" that brought Admiral Christopher Newport and party from England to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 (344 years ago) and the City of Newport, Kentucky was named in his honor and memory.

Program for presentation and unveiling of picture of the Sarah Constant to the City of Newport, Kentucky by the Christopher Gist Historical Society, at 8 p. m. Monday, May 14, 1951, in the Library Auditorium, fourth and Monmouth Streets, Newport, Kentucky.

Presentation address given by the Hon. Gilbert W. Kingsbury, Washington, D. C. newspaper columnist, radio commentator, and Administrative Assistant to United States Senator Earle C. Clements. (Mr. Kingsbury is a charter member of the Christopher Gist Historical Society and represented the Society in the presentation and unveiling of the picture.)

We here in Northern Kentucky have been criticized from time to time. Some publicity has not been good. And some among us--may become discouraged.

But Northern Kentucky has much of which to be proud. Great men have sprung from our soil to serve the State and Nation. Our forefathers built well. And--to them we owe a duty--to leave this community to our heirs better than we found it.

We can find inspiration for this task in a glorious past.

The founders of Covington--in selecting General Covington to honor--gave our contemporaries inspiration. Fort Mitchell can reflect in the glories of General Mitchell. Fort Thomas can gain similar inspiration in the famed Rock of Chickamauga. And the city of Newport--in Admiral Newport--has, perhaps, the greatest of heroes to furnish light for guidance.

The good ship, Sarah Constant, the picture of which we have tonight, was but a tiny vessel, a craft of 100 tons. But--to these shores--she brought the first permanent English settlement. And truly--we can say--The Sarah Constant and Admiral Newport brought to America the foundations of our Nation.

The picture we see here tonight--is a picture made by an artist. He obtained his details through research, not only of the Sarah Constant but of her sister ships, the 40 ton Goodspeed and the 20 ton Discovery. It is difficult to understand the courage of those ancient pioneers. The Sarah Constant displaced 100 tons. Why, our Ohio River packets are larger, and the average ocean-going vessels in this day and age is measured in the thousands and tens of thousands. But--I'd rather speak--at this time--of Admiral Newport, a man who deserved much more that history has given him. We identify John Smith and Powatan and Pocahontas with the Jamestown Colony. But--without Admiral Newport, Smith, a trouble maker, might have died at the hands of his fellow colonials. And the Indians might have put to an ignoble end--those who remained.

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Admiral Newport was a seaman, one of the best. He was an administrator, one of the best. He was a diplomat. And he was a warrior.

Before he made the first of five journeys to Jamestown, he sailed the coast of Florida, Cuba and the islands. He captured the Spanish treasure ship, "Madre de Dios," and he raided scores of other Spanish vessels and towns in the new world.

It was in December 1606, that Admiral Newport set sail down the Thames with the Sarah Constant for the New World. Four months later, in late April, Newport and his men made a landfall. And--today 344 years ago--they disembarked at Jamestown. Storms had beset Newport but it is a tribute to his seamanship that the three tiny vessels remained together.

In spite of these hardships, only one man died during the crossing. This is in contrast to the terrible toll of the first year at Jamestown when half of the colony was laid to rest. It may be significant that Admiral Newport was not there to direct his countrymen. After setting the colony ashore, and after brief service as a member of the council, the first legislative body in this country, Admiral Newport returned to London.

There's an amusing story they tell about the Admiral and how he gained fame as a physician. The Indians have been given liquor. And--so legend tell us--they fell ill. Admiral Newport assured them that on the next day they would be better. And--when it happened as he said--Newport gained in the sight of the natives.

He used a persuasive tongue to pacify Powhatan. He had erected a cross, near the present site of Richmond, Virginia, to claim the land for King James. And--he told the puzzled Indians that the arms of the Cross represented the kindly arms of King Powhatan stretching a fatherly hand over the new world.

His second and third trip to Jamestown in January and October of 1608 were uneventful--if such trips to a strange land could be so classified.

The fourth trip for Newport contained all the elements of drama. He was shipwrecked in Bermuda and for a year he and his companions remained on that tropical isle. With him at that time--was John Rolfe, who later was to marry Pocahontas. The Admiral--during his enforced stay on the island--became the godfather of Rolfe's child. Rolfe's wife ~~****~~ later died.

Literary historians say that Shakespeare based his story, The Tempest, on this Bermuda storm and subsequent wreck. For the truth of that story, I'll let others decide.

Finally, after a year in Bermuda, Admiral Newport reached the Jamestown Colony again. He returned to London in 1610 and made but one other trip to Jamestown--in March of 1611.

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In 1615--Admiral Newport sailed for the Far East and--just as historians claim that the Admiral brought the foundations of our nations to the New World in the Sarah Constant--so some also claim he established the base for British India during his journeys to the other side of the world. He died at sea sometime around 1621.

For many reasons--but especially because it is symbolic of our glorious past and gives promise of inspiration for a bright future--it gives me great pleasure to present to the City of Newport--on behalf of the Christopher Gist Historical Society--a picture of the Sarah Constant in which the famed Admiral Newport came to the New World with a new torch of freedom, ambition and tolerance.

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