◆ The first three ships that traveled to Jamestown in 1607 carried a total of one hundred and five men and boys. The second largest, the Godspeed, was 68 feet long and carried a total of fifty-two passengers and crew 6,000 miles across the ocean. A replica of the Godspeed sailed the East Coast in 2006.

◆ Rope was so important to early commercial and war efforts that the British destroyed several Virginia rope works during the Revolutionary War.

◆ Shad, a bony but tasty fish that spawns in rivers in the spring, was a staple of George Washington’s slaves. In 1918, the Pamunkey Indian tribe opened a shad hatchery on their reservation. Today, it helps restore the species to Mid-Atlantic waters.

◆ During the “Oyster Wars” of the late 1870s, fishermen who used long tongs to harvest oysters and those who used large dredges engaged in shoot-outs on the Chesapeake Bay.

Roots of Virginia Culture: 400 Years of Maritime Facts

◆ The Norfolk Southern Railway Company transports 700,000 tons of coal a day. Formed when the Norfolk & Western Railway and other railroad companies merged, Norfolk Southern continues to link rail and shipping lines that existed when steam powered both locomotives and ships.

◆ In 1609, a fleet of nine ships sailing from England to Jamestown hit a terrible storm. The Sea Venture was separated from the others and was wrecked on a beautiful, uninhabited island now known as Bermuda. Today, huge cruise ships regularly sail from Norfolk, Virginia, to deliver thousands of passengers to Bermuda in luxury.

(Clockwise beginning top right)

Virginia apples are loaded onto a ship at the Norfolk and Western Railway Company’s dock around 1920. Photo courtesy DLA/Virginia Tech

A member of the Pamunkey tribe squeezes eggs from a shad for use in the tribe’s hatchery. Photo courtesy Mariner’s Museum

A rope works is still in business at Chatham Historic Dockyard in Kent, England. Photo by George Monger

In 2006, costumed interpreters onboard the Godspeed replica demonstrated seventeenth-century sailing methods to young sailors. Photo courtesy Jamestown 2007