**WINTER 1609-1610\_\_The “Starving Time”**

Now all of us at James Town, beginning to feel that sharp prick of hunger which no man truly

describe but he which has tasted the bitterness thereof, a world of miseries ensued as the sequel will

express unto you, in so much that some to satisfy their hunger have robbed the store for the which I

caused them to be executed. Then having fed upon horses and other beasts as long as they lasted, we

were glad to make shift with vermin as dogs, cats, rats, and mice. All was fish that came to net to satisfy

cruel hunger as to eat boots, shoes, or any other leather some could come by, and, those being spent

and devoured, some were enforced to search the woods and to feed upon serpents and snakes and to

dig the earth for wild and unknown roots, where many of our men were cut off of and slain by the

savages. And now famine beginning to look ghastly and pale in every face that nothing was spared to

maintain life and to do those things which seem incredible as to dig up dead corpses out of graves and to eat them, and

some have licked up the blood which has fallen from their weak fellows. And among the rest this was most lamentable, that one of our colony murdered his wife, ripped the child out of her womb and threw it into the river, and after chopped the mother in pieces and salted her for his food. The same not being discovered before he had eaten part thereof, for the which cruel and inhumane fact I ajudged him to be executed, the acknowledgement of the deed being enforced from him by torture having hung by the thumbs with weights at his feet a quarter of an hour before he would confess the same. . . .

By this time being reasonable well recovered of my sickness, I did undertake a journey to Algernon

Fort, both to understand how things were there ordered, as also to have been revenged of the savages

at Kekowhatan who had treacherously slain divers of our men. Our people I found in good case and well,

liking having concealed their plenty from us above at James Town, being so well stored that the crab

fishes where with they had fed their hogs would have been a great relief unto us and saved many of our

lives. But their intent was for to have kept some of the better sort alive and with their two pinnaces to

have returned for England not regarding our miseries and wants at all, wherewith I taxed Captain Davis

and told him that I had a full intent to bring half of our men from James Town to be there relieved and

after to return them back again and bring the rest to be sustained there also. And if all this would not

serve to save our men’s lives I purposed to bring them all unto Algernon Fort, telling Captain Davis that

another town or fort might be erected and built but men’s lives once lost could never be recovered.