

## **Forts and The Granting of Land**

After the Indian massacre of 1644, land was granted on a large scale for the establishment of forts.

By an Order of the Assembly in 1645 blockhouses or forts were established at strategic points: Fort Charles at the falls of the James River, Fort Royal at Pamunkey, Fort James on the ridge of Chickahominy on the north side of the James, and in the next year Fort Henry at the falls of the Appomattox River.

Since the maintenance of these forts was so expensive, the officials decided to prevent the draining of the public treasury by granting forts with adjoining lands to individuals who would accept the responsibility of their upkeep as well as the maintenance of an adequate force for defense. Fort Henry, located at present-day Petersburg, was granted to Captain (later General) Abraham Wood with 600 acres of land plus all houses, edifices, boats, and ammunition belonging to the fort.

Wood was required to maintain and keep ten persons continuously at the fort for three years. During this time he was exempted from all public taxes for himself and the ten persons.

The same terms were provided to Lieutenant Thomas Rolfe, son of Pocahontas and John Rolfe, who received Fort James and 400 acres of land; Captain Roger Marshall, Fort Royal and 600 acres. Since there was no arable land adjoining Fort Charles at present-day Richmond, other inducements were made for its maintenance. All of these forts served as the first line of defense against possible attacks by the natives. Being the center of the varied activities of the frontier, they also were the starting point for expeditions against the Indians and became the center of trade for the outlying regions.