

# Early Colonies Have Mixed Success

## MAIN IDEA

Two early English colonies failed, but Jamestown survived—partly through individual effort and hard work.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Jamestown's survival led to more English colonies and a lasting English influence in the United States.

## TERMS & NAMES

joint-stock company  
indentured servant  
charter  
House of Burgesses  
Jamestown  
Bacon's Rebellion  
John Smith

## ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

In 1585, John White traveled with the first English expedition to Roanoke, an island off North Carolina. White sailed back to England in 1586 and then returned to Roanoke as governor the next year, bringing with him more than 100 settlers. Soon White's daughter Elinor gave birth to a baby girl. John White described the event.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

On August 18 a daughter was born to Elinor, . . . wife of Ananias Dare. . . . The child was christened on the following Sunday and was named Virginia because she was the first Christian born in Virginia.

John White, *The New World*

In 1587, White was forced to sail back to England a second time to get needed supplies. He left the colonists, including his granddaughter, Virginia, in Roanoke. White was delayed and did not return to Roanoke until 1590.

To his shock and grief, he found no trace of the colonists or his granddaughter, all of whom had disappeared. The only clues to their whereabouts were the letters *CRO* carved in a tree and the word *Croatoan* carved in a doorpost. White never discovered the fate of his family and the other colonists. In this section, you will learn why English settlers such as White came to America despite such hardships.



Drawing by John White of an old man of the Pomeiock tribe.

## The English Plan Colonies

As you read in Chapter 2, religious and political rivalries increased between England and Spain in the late 1500s. Spain had many colonies in the Americas, but England had none. England began directing its resources toward establishing colonies after its defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

### Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about the early colonies.

Virginia  
1607



Richard Hakluyt (HAK•LOOT), an English geographer, urged England to start a colony. Hakluyt thought that colonies would provide a market for English exports. They also would serve as a source of raw materials. By having colonies, England hoped to increase its trade and build up its gold supply. This is the economic theory of mercantilism (see page 62). In mercantilism, the state controls trade and attempts to transfer wealth from colonies to the parent country. Hakluyt also thought that English colonies would help to plant the Protestant faith in the Americas.

The earliest English colonists had many reasons for going to America. The lack of economic opportunity in England forced many to seek their fortunes abroad. Stories of gold mines lured some to leave England. Others left to escape religious persecution.

### ReadingHistory

**A. Summarizing**  
Why did English colonists settle in America?

## Two Early Colonies Fail

Sir Walter Raleigh was a soldier, statesman, and adventurer who served under Queen Elizabeth I of England. She gave him permission to sponsor the colony at Roanoke. He named England's first colony Virginia after the unmarried, or virgin, queen. Financed by Raleigh, the colony began in 1585 on Roanoke Island. The colonists relied on the Native Americans for food. But when the Native Americans realized that the settlers wanted their land, they cut off the colonists' food supply. Those who survived returned to England in 1586.

In 1587, artist John White convinced Raleigh to try again to establish the Roanoke colony, with the disastrous results described in *One American's Story* (page 85). To this day, no one knows for sure what happened. Some historians think that the colonists mingled with the neighboring Native Americans. Others believe that they moved to Chesapeake Bay and were killed by Native Americans defending their land.

### Vocabulary

**financed:** paid for; raised funds for

In 1607, the Plymouth Company sponsored the Sagadahoc colony at the mouth of the Kennebec River in Maine. Some of the settlers were English convicts. One colonist wrote of George Popham, the governor, "He stocked or planted [the colony] out of all the jails of England." Within the first year, arguments among colonists, a harsh winter, fights with Native Americans, and food shortages forced most of the colonists to return to England.

## Financing a Colony

Raleigh had financed the colony at Roanoke. When the colony failed, he lost his investment. The English learned from Raleigh's financial loss at Roanoke that one person could not finance a colony. To raise money, they turned to the **joint-stock company**. Joint-stock companies were backed by investors, people who put money into a project to earn profits. Each investor received pieces of ownership of the company called

### Now and then

#### THE LUMBEE AND THE LOST COLONISTS

The Lumbee tribe lives mainly in North Carolina. Some of the Lumbee believe they are descendants of the lost colonists of Roanoke. Among the evidence cited is the fact that 41 of the 95 last names of the Lumbee were last names of the colonists.

Other Lumbee don't believe that they are descended from English ancestors. The Lumbee are trying to win federal recognition as a Native American tribe. English ancestry might weaken their claim for federal financial support.

shares of stock. In this way, the investors split any profits and divided any losses.

Merchants organized the Virginia Company of London and the Virginia Company of Plymouth. King James I of England granted charters to both companies in 1606. A **charter** was a written contract, issued by a government, giving the holder the right to establish a colony.

## Jamestown Is Founded in 1607

In 1607, the Virginia Company of London financed an expedition to Chesapeake Bay that included more than 100 colonists. They sailed up the James River until they found a spot to settle. They named the first permanent English settlement **Jamestown** in honor of King James.

From the start, the Jamestown colonists endured terrible hardships. The site of the colony was swampy and full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. This disease made the colonists sick with fever. Many also became ill from drinking the river water. To make matters worse, the London Company had incorrectly told the settlers that the colony would be rich in gold. They spent their days searching for gold rather than building houses and growing food.

The climate was also a hardship. The colonists soon learned that the summers were hot and humid and the winters bitter cold. As one colonist recalled, "There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this newly discovered Virginia."

## Jamestown Grows

By January 1608, only 38 colonists remained alive. Later that year, **John Smith**, a soldier and adventurer, took control. To make sure the colonists worked, Smith announced, "He that will not work shall not eat." Smith's methods worked. He ordered an existing wall extended around Jamestown. He also persuaded the Powhatan tribe to trade their corn to the colonists. In 1609, Smith was injured in a gunpowder explosion and returned to England. That same year, 800 more English settlers arrived in Jamestown.



This is a computer reconstruction of the face of Mistress Forrest, believed to be the first English woman to come to Jamestown.

### Background

Historians used to believe that the colony's original site had been flooded by the James River. Recent archaeological digs, however, have discovered the site on higher ground.

### Reading History

**B. Solving Problems** If you had been John Smith, how would you have forced the colonists to work?

### Early English Settlements, 1585–1607



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Maps

- 1. Location** Which colony was located northeast of Jamestown? How many miles northeast was it?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** Why did the colonists settle near the coast?



Because of growing tensions between the settlers and Native Americans, the Powhatan stopped trading food and attacked the settlers. The settlers did not dare leave the fort. During the “starving time,” the colonists ate rats, mice, and snakes. Only 60 of the colonists were still alive when two ships arrived in 1610. Lord De La Warr, the new governor, imposed discipline, and the “starving time” ended.

In 1612, John Rolfe developed a high-grade tobacco that the colonists learned to grow. It quickly became very popular in England. The success of tobacco growing changed Jamestown in many ways. The Virginia Company thought of the colonists as employees. The colonists, however, wanted a share of the profits.

The company responded by letting settlers own land. Settlers worked harder when the land was their own. The company offered a 50-acre land grant for each man, woman, or child who could pay his or her way to the colony. In 1619, the first African Americans arrived in Jamestown. The

population of Virginia jumped from about 600 in 1619 to more than 2,000 in 1621.

Even more laborers were needed. Those who could not afford passage to America were encouraged to become **indentured servants**. These men and women sold their labor to the person who paid their passage to the colony. After working for a number of years, they were free to farm or take up a trade of their own.

The colonists soon became annoyed at the strict rule of the governor, who represented the Virginia Company’s interests back in London. To provide for more local control, the company decided that burgesses, or elected representatives, of the colonists would meet once a year in an assembly. The **House of Burgesses**, created in 1619, became the first representative assembly in the American colonies.

## Conflicts with the Powhatan

Cultural differences put the Powhatan and the English on a collision course. At first, the Powhatan traded food with the colonists. Then, as more colonists arrived and wanted land, relations grew worse. In an effort to improve relations between the English colonists and the Powhatan, John Rolfe married Chief Powhatan’s daughter, Pocahontas, in 1614.

For a time, there was an uneasy peace. The colonists learned from the Powhatan how to grow corn, catch fish, and capture wild fowl. However, the expanding tobacco plantations took over more and more Powhatan land. In 1622, in response to land grabs by the colonists, the Powhatan killed hundreds of Jamestown’s residents.

### ReadingHistory

#### C. Analyzing

**Causes** What was the main reason for the various arrangements the Virginia Company came up with to bring people to America?

### ReadingHistory

#### D. Finding Main

**Ideas** What was the central dispute between the Powhatan and the settlers?

## AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS

### POCAHONTAS

1595?–1617

Pocahontas met John Smith when she was about 12 years old. Smith taught her English and admired her spirit. She admired Smith’s bravery and saved his life twice. After Smith returned to England, she married the colonist John Rolfe in 1614. Shown below is a portrait of Pocahontas, done in 1616.

Two years later, the Rolfes went to England to raise money for the Jamestown colony. While getting ready to sail home, Pocahontas died of smallpox.

**How did Pocahontas show that Native Americans and white settlers might live in peace?**



## Bacon's Rebellion in 1676

As you have seen, many of the English colonists who came to Virginia during the 1600s fought with the Native Americans. They also battled one another. By the 1670s, one-fourth of the free white men were former indentured servants. These colonists, who did not own land, resented the wealthy eastern landowners. The poor settlers lived mostly on Virginia's western frontier, where they battled the Native Americans for land.

Nathaniel Bacon and a group of landless frontier settlers opposed Governor William Berkeley. They complained about high taxes and Governor Berkeley's favoritism toward large plantation owners. Bacon demanded that Berkeley approve a war against the Native Americans to seize their land for tobacco plantations. Governor Berkeley's refusal of Nathaniel Bacon's demand sparked **Bacon's Rebellion** in 1676.

Bacon marched into Jamestown, took control of the House of Burgesses, and burned Jamestown to the ground. Bacon's sudden illness and death ended the rebellion. Berkeley hanged Bacon's followers. Angered by Berkeley's actions, King Charles II recalled the governor to England. After that incident, the House of Burgesses passed laws to prevent a royal governor from assuming such power again. The burgesses had taken an important step against tyranny. In the next section, you will read about the New England colonies and their steps toward independence.



Nathaniel Bacon (right) confronts Virginia governor William Berkeley at Jamestown in 1676.

### Vocabulary

**tyranny:** a government in which a single ruler has absolute power

## Section 1 Assessment

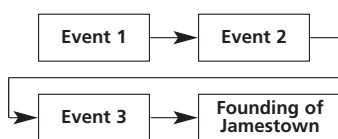
### 1. Terms & Names

**Explain the significance of:**

- joint-stock company
- charter
- Jamestown
- John Smith
- indentured servant
- House of Burgesses
- Bacon's Rebellion

### 2. Using Graphics

Use a series-of-events chain to review events that led to the founding of Jamestown.



What were reasons England wanted colonies in America?

### 3. Main Ideas

- Why did the first English settlement at Roanoke fail?
- How did the English finance their colonies after 1606?
- What was the outcome of Bacon's Rebellion?

### 4. Critical Thinking

#### Drawing Conclusions

What were the main reasons that Jamestown survived and prospered?

#### THINK ABOUT

- how, after the "starving time," Lord De La Warr took control
- John Rolfe's development of a high-grade tobacco plant

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

#### ART

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

You need indentured servants to work on your plantation. Draw a **poster** or write an **advertisement** that will attract people to your plantation.