

Name: _____

Date: _____

The First Successful English Colony of Jamestown



In 1606, England was ruled by King James I. The English people did not choose him as their leader because England was a **monarchy** (a type of government with a king or queen, where the ruler's power is handed down to them).

During this time, King James I gave a group of wealthy men, called the London Company, permission to start a colony in North America. The group sent 105 men to settle in Virginia. They hoped a colony would make them richer.

The settlers arrived in Virginia in May 1607, hoping to find gold. They chose a place near a river, where the deep water allowed them to anchor their ships close by. The site was upriver from Chesapeake Bay, but far enough from the river that it would be difficult for Spanish ships to attack. Located on a peninsula, the town was easy to defend by land. The group built a settlement surrounded by the walls of a fort and named it **Jamestown** in honor of King James I.

Unfortunately, the settlers built Jamestown on a marsh. The water around the town was dirty and salty and the land was bad for farming. Worse still, mosquitoes in the marsh carried a deadly disease called malaria. By the end of 1607, disease and other challenges had killed many of the settlers.

In late 1607, some American Indians captured a Jamestown settler named Captain John Smith. They took Smith to their chief, Powhatan (pronounced; pow-uh-TAN). According to the story Smith later told, the chief was about to kill him when Powhatan's young daughter, Pocahontas, saved his life. Many historians *really* think that Smith's life was never in actual danger. After this incident, Pocahontas visited Jamestown several times. She and her people brought food to trade to the few surviving **colonists**.

In January 1608, more men arrived from England. Many had come only to find gold, so there were not enough people growing the food needed to feed the colony. In September, John Smith became the leader of the colony. He knew that the settlement needed everyone's help to survive. He said that any man who would not work to maintain Jamestown would not eat. Smith's leadership helped save the colony.

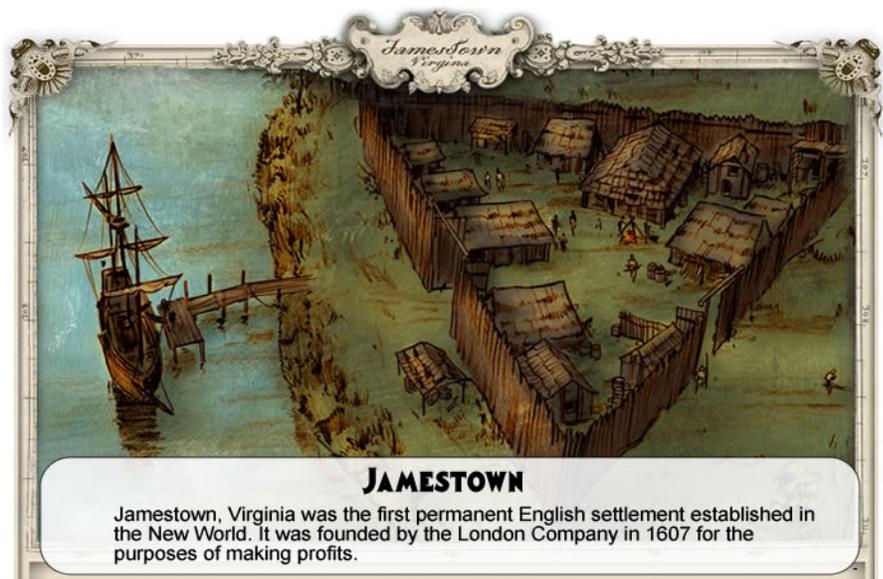
In the summer of 1609, a new group of settlers arrived, including women and children. The next month, Smith returned to England after having been badly burned by an explosion of gunpowder. The colonists had lost a strong leader. To make matters worse, Powhatan stopped trading with them. Local tribes attacked the people they found outside the settlement. The winter of 1609–1610 was known as the “Starving Time” because they couldn’t hunt and it was too cold to harvest crops for food. Many settlers had to eat horses and dogs. Hundreds of people died. Only about 60 settlers survived in Jamestown.

The Jamestown settlers never found gold. Therefore, they needed another way to support their colony. Colonist John Rolfe learned how to grow a new kind of tobacco. The settlers planted this cash crop. In 1614, they began to trade their tobacco for money and supplies. People in England loved it. Tobacco became Virginia’s “gold.” It wasn’t *actually* gold, but selling tobacco made the colony wealthy.

Meanwhile, Powhatan’s people worried about so many settlers coming to their land. In 1614, John Rolfe married Pocahontas. For a time, the colonists and the American Indians were at peace. Pocahontas even went to England and met King James. Before she could return, she got sick. In 1617, she died.

Meanwhile, Jamestown was growing and changing. In 1619, the men elected representatives to make laws for the colony. This was the first **representative government** in an American colony. The people choose their leaders in this government. They called the governing body the House of Burgesses. (*Burgess* is an English word for an elected representative.) Only landowners could have this job, but now Virginia’s government was more **democratic** than England’s.

When Powhatan died, his brother became chief, and the peace between the American Indians and the settlers ended. In 1622, the new chief and his men attacked Jamestown and killed 347 colonists. But Jamestown survived to become the first successful English settlement in North America.



Jamestown

- American Indians captured Captain John Smith. **Pocahontas**, Chief Powhatan's daughter saved him.

Late 1607

- More settlers arrived, including women and children.
- Smith left** to go to England. Natives stopped trading and people started to starve. It was called the "**Starving Time**" because hundreds died.

1609-1610

- Land-owning men voted** (elected) leaders to make laws for the colony.
- It was the first **representative government** in an American colony (Democracy).
- They called the government the **House of Burgesses**.

1619

May 1607

- Settlers (men only) arrived in Virginia looking for gold.
- They called their colony Jamestown.
- The colony was built on a marsh with mosquitos that carried malaria so at first **many colonists died**.

Sept. 1608

- John Smith became the leader.** He said that any man who would not work would not eat. He saved the colony.

1614

- John Rolfe** knew how to grow a new kind of **tobacco**.
- Settlers planted the crop and it became a **cash crop** that they sold for money and supplies. It made the colony wealthy.
- John Rolfe married Pocahontas** and the colony was peaceful with the Natives

1622

- Peace between colonists/natives ended when Chief Powhatan died.
- The new chief and men attacked and killed 347 colonists.
- The colony still survived and became the **first successful English settlement in North America**.

January 1608

- More men arrived from England looking to find gold.
- There weren't enough people to grow food.

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Jamestown Colony



What year was Jamestown founded?

1607

What was the name of the company, which sponsored Jamestown?

The Virginia Company of London

Who were the men who caused Jamestown to be successful?

John Smith and John Rolfe

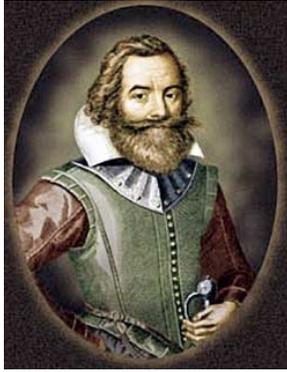
John Smith saved the colony from starvation. He told colonists that they must work in order to eat.

John Rolfe had the colony plant and harvest tobacco, which became a cash crop and was sold to Europe.

What was the crop that was sold to Europe for Jamestown to make a profit (make money)?

Tobacco

Goals, Problems, and Successes of Jamestown



What were the goals of the Jamestown colony?

1. **Find a route to Asia**
2. **Search for gold**

What were some of the problems that Jamestown faced?

- **Colony was built on a marsh, which had mosquitos that carried malaria and made the colonists sick**
- **The colonists didn't bring many farmers and so they couldn't eat and suffered from starvation**
- **Nearby Native Americans were unfriendly and didn't help them farm/hunt/fish**
- **Didn't find any gold.**

Who saved John Smith when Native Americans captured him?

Pocahontas

Who had the colonists grow tobacco to be sold to Europe?

John Rolfe

What happened on July 30, 1619? What is the House of Burgesses?

The House of Burgesses was the first "representative government" in the new world.

It was a group of land-owning men who were elected (voted for) by the colony. The group of men could make laws.