

Section 1

JAMESTOWN

Multimedia Connections

Explore these related topics and materials on the CD-ROM to enrich your understanding of this section:



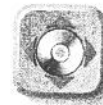
Gazetteer

- Virginia
- Jamestown
- Roanoke Island



Readings

- Colonial Narrative Accounts



Media Bank

- John Smith
- Woodlands Indian Pipe
- Population of Jamestown



Simulation

- Building a Colony



Profiles

- John Rolfe
- John Smith
- Pocahontas

Before returning to England, Captain Newport made sure that the colonists were settled into the place they had named Jamestown. Just a few days after Newport left, the colony's president, Edward Wingfield, wrote that "an Indian came to us from the great Powhatan with the word of peace." The Powhatan messenger reassured Wingfield "that he desired greatly our friendship . . . that we should sow and reap in peace." Whether the colonists and American Indians could live together peacefully remained to be seen.

As you read this section you will find out:

- ▶ **How Jamestown was financed.**
- ▶ **What hardships early settlers faced.**
- ▶ **What the relationship was between the colonists and the local American Indians.**

Merchant Adventurers

Despite the setback of the failed Roanoke colony, many people in England, particularly wealthy merchants, remained interested in colonization. The experiences of men like Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh had proven that founding a colony was expensive and risky. Most English merchants and manufacturers were cautious businesspeople, not daring adventurers or court favorites. Instead of outfitting expeditions as individuals, they organized what they called **joint-stock companies**. These companies were ancestors of modern-day corporations. They were owned by many stockholders who shared in the profits and losses.

In 1606 James I, who had become king after the death of Queen Elizabeth I, gave the joint-stock London Company a charter to

develop a huge area of North America. The region was named Virginia in honor of Elizabeth, who, because she had never married, was known as the Virgin Queen. By 1609 the London Company's grant of land extended along the Atlantic coast from the Hudson River in present-day New York to North Carolina, and west "from Sea to Sea"—that is, all the way to the Pacific Ocean!



• New Hopes in America

The Settlement of Jamestown

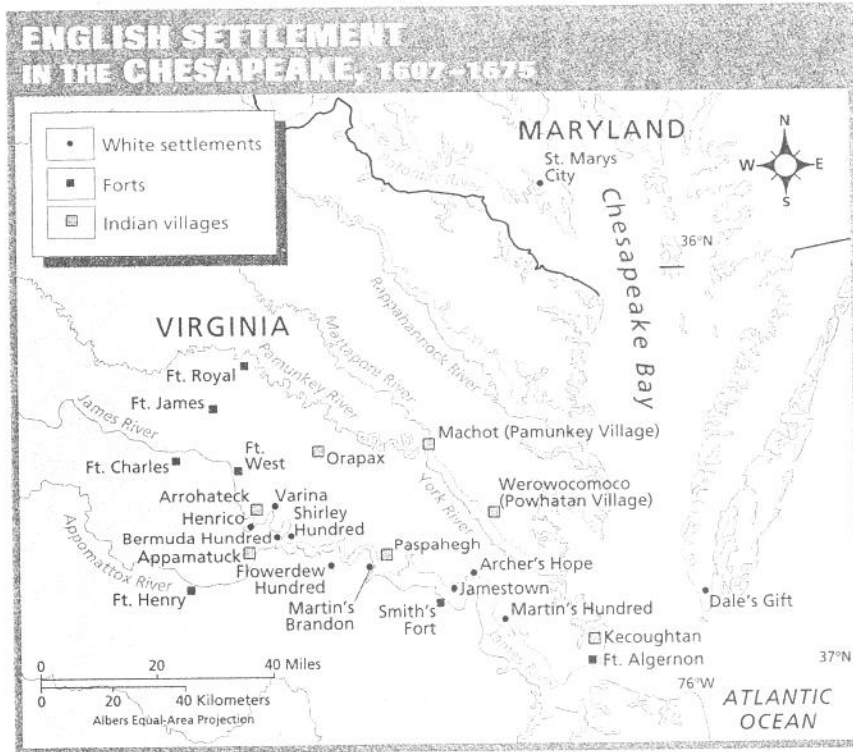
A few days before Christmas 1606, three London Company ships set sail for Virginia. The voyage had three purposes—to prepare the way for larger groups of colonists, to

search for precious metals, and to find a trade route to East Asia. The ships reached the coast of Virginia in April 1607. They sailed up a river, which the settlers named after King James. Then the 105 men who decided to stay in the new colony built a fort, which they called Jamestown.

From the start, life at Jamestown was an endless series of troubles. The settlement was easy to defend, but it was also swampy and infested with disease-bearing mosquitoes. Illness soon struck the colonists who were already weak and sick from the long ocean voyage. By the end of the summer, almost half of the settlers were dead, and many of the rest were sick with malaria. When the first supply ship arrived in December, fewer than 40 colonists were alive to greet it.

The ship brought 120 more English settlers to Jamestown, but few of the newcomers survived for very long. They were poorly prepared for the challenge of living in a wilderness, and they had few of the practical skills needed by pioneers, such as carpentry and farming. Expecting to find that wealth practically grew on trees, they did not realize that it was necessary to work hard merely to stay alive.

John Smith. Luckily, one colonist, John Smith, had the courage to take command. Smith was a short, bearded man of action. Although he was only in his mid-twenties, Smith had seen far more of the world than had the other settlers. He had fought in several wars against the Turks in



Learning from Maps. Early English settlements and forts often were located near Indian villages. This brought the cultures into close contact, and conflicts frequently erupted.

► **Movement.** How did the English settlers transport goods to the Atlantic Ocean?



• Maps

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The London Company continually tried to rebuild Jamestown's declining population by recruiting new settlers. Posters such as this one appealed to potential colonists' hope of financial gain and sense of adventure.

eastern Europe. In one battle, he was captured and sold into slavery. However, he managed to kill his master and escape. After many other remarkable adventures, he found himself in Virginia.

Smith put all his worldly experience and resourcefulness to work in Jamestown. After becoming president of the colony's council in 1608, Smith made hard work and strict discipline the rule. He stopped the colonists from searching for gold and obtained food for them by trading with the 32 tribes of the powerful Powhatan Confederacy.

The Powhatan. The Powhatan possessed the food and knowledge of the land that the colonists lacked. The Indians showed them how to catch fish and how to grow corn. Without this help, Jamestown might not have survived.

In spite of the colonists' need for friendship with the Powhatan, relations between the two groups soon became strained. When the Powhatan no longer wanted to help Jamestown, the settlers forced their cooperation by threatening them. Smith even took food from them at gunpoint! The Powhatan responded by

raiding Jamestown and killing settlers who ventured too far into the forest.

Hard Times in Jamestown

In 1609 the London Company again tried to help the struggling colony. It sent about 500 more settlers, including the first women, to Jamestown. This did not solve the colony's problems, however.

The starving time. Conditions in Jamestown continued to worsen. The winter of 1609–10 became known as the "starving time." As Smith described it, there remained only:

"sixtie men, women and children, most miserable and poore creatures; and those were preserved for the most part, by roots, herbes, acornes, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish . . . yea, even the very skinnes of our horses."

At one point, the colonists almost decided to abandon the settlement and return to England.

Things began to improve in 1611 when Thomas Dale, a military man with a reputation for sternness, arrived to run the colony. During the next five years, Jamestown was more like a military camp than a civilian community.

Around 1619, women started coming to Jamestown in greater numbers. Single women often married male settlers in mass wedding ceremonies.

The Granger Collection, New York



The colonists disliked Dale, but under his leadership they did essential work like plant corn and repair the fort. The colony survived but remained unprofitable.

New hopes. Among their other problems, the colonists struggled to produce something they could sell in Europe. They had hoped to find gold, but there was none. Instead, they found another type of “gold”—a native plant called tobacco.

American Indians had been growing and smoking tobacco for centuries. In the late

1500s Sir Walter Raleigh had made smoking fashionable in English high society. Many people, however, argued that smoking was unhealthy. King James published *Counterblaste to Tobacco*, which criticized smoking as:

“This filthie noveltie . . . a custome loathsome [disgusting] to the eye, hatefull to the Nose, harmefull to the braine, [and] dangerous to the Lungs.”

Thousands of English people ignored his warning, and the demand for tobacco soared.

The type of tobacco native to Virginia was too bitter for English taste. Colonist John Rolfe solved that problem in 1612 when he introduced a sweeter variety from the West Indies. The settlers now had something they could sell in England. Large farms called **plantations** gradually developed because of the great profits made by growing tobacco.

Bloodshed in Jamestown

The tobacco economy grew partly because of the relatively peaceful relations with the Powhatan. The tensions between the settlers and the Powhatan had eased in 1614, when John Rolfe married Pocahontas, a daughter of the Powhatan chief. Tobacco farming and the arrival of new settlers in Virginia, however, resulted in demands for more and more Indian land.

The strained relationship between the English and the Powhatan began to worsen, particularly after the deaths of Pocahontas and her father. Pocahontas’s uncle, Opechancanough (OH-puh-chan-kuh-noh), then became the new Powhatan leader.

Historians have attempted to piece together Opechancanough’s long and fascinating life. They believe that in 1561, when Opechancanough was a

History Makers

Pocahontas

Pocahontas, also known as Matoaka, was one of Jamestown’s most famous figures. The daughter of a Powhatan chief, Pocahontas led a life of adventure.



Detail from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC/Art Resource, NY

In 1608 her father captured John Smith. The Powhatan were ready to kill him, but Pocahontas begged her father to spare Smith’s life. Smith lived to tell the tale of his rescue by the daring 13-year-old.

Later, in 1612, English settlers took

Pocahontas hostage to ensure peace with the Powhatan. In Jamestown she converted to Christianity and took the name Rebecca. She also fell in love with tobacco planter John Rolfe. Their marriage in 1614 brought a truce between the Powhatan and the colony. When the newlyweds visited England, Pocahontas was treated with the respect due a princess and was presented to the English king and queen. Tragically, Pocahontas died of smallpox in England at the age of 22.

teenager, Spanish explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilés stopped in the Chesapeake area. Menéndez was impressed by Opechancanough and persuaded his father to let the youth sail to Spain. He promised that the boy would return with riches.

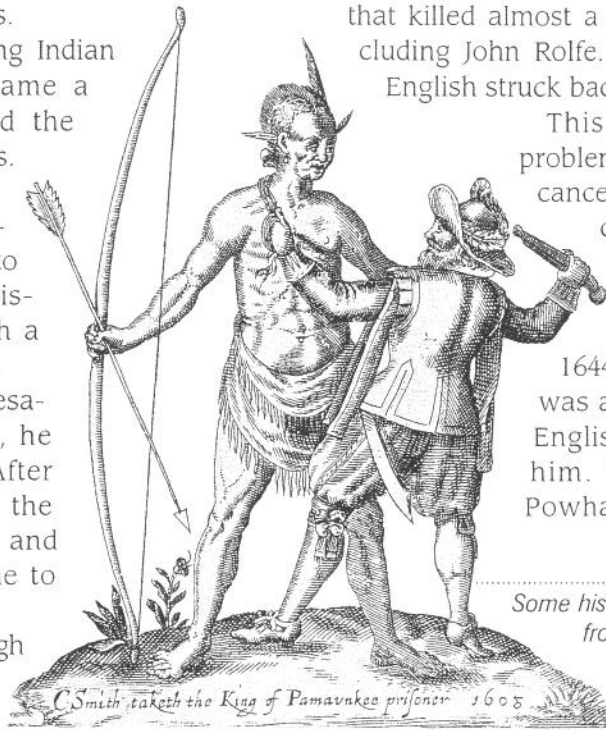
Over time, the young Indian learned Spanish, became a Catholic, and acquired the Spanish name Don Luis. After many years, he persuaded the authorities to send him back to his homeland as a missionary. He arrived with a group of priests in 1570.

Once back in the Chesapeake area, however, he gave up Christianity. After several conflicts with the priests, he killed them and then changed his name to Opechancanough.

Later, Opechancanough watched the growth of Jamestown with deep

concern. By 1620 there were more than 2,000 settlers in the colony. Their increasing numbers were beginning to threaten the Powhatan's control of the region. In 1622 Opechancanough launched a sudden attack that killed almost a third of the settlers, including John Rolfe. War followed, and the English struck back with equal fierceness.

This bloodshed and other problems caused King James to cancel the London Company's charter in 1624. He put Virginia under royal control, but the fighting continued. Finally, in 1644, when Opechancanough was about 100 years old, the English captured and killed him. This ended the last Powhatan resistance.



Some historians believe this sketch—from John Smith's account of his life in Virginia—shows him threatening Opechancanough.

Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

Section 1 Review



• Glossary

IDENTIFY and explain the significance of the following: joint-stock companies, James I, John Smith, John Rolfe, plantations, Pocahontas, Opechancanough



• Gazetteer

LOCATE and explain the importance of the following: Virginia, Jamestown

REVIEWING FOR DETAILS

1. How was settlement in Jamestown financed?
2. How would you describe the relationship between the Virginia colonists and American Indians?

REVIEWING FOR UNDERSTANDING

3. **Geographic Literacy** What hardships did early settlers in Virginia face?
4. **Writing Mastery: Persuading** Imagine that you are a leader of Jamestown during the "starving time." Write a speech convincing the settlers not to abandon the colony.
5. **Critical Thinking: Generalizations and Stereotypes** What ideas or opinions might the Virginia colonists have held about American Indians that would have led them to believe they had a right to Indian land?