

Jamestown: The First Successful English Colony



► **JAMESTOWN** For one year, John Smith (left) served as the leader of Jamestown. Today, a reconstruction of Jamestown (above) stands near the original site.

Jamestown

3 In 1607, three ships sent by the Virginia Company sailed into the deep bay now called the Chesapeake. The 105 colonists aboard sailed up a river they named the James, in honor of their king. Along the shore, they built the settlement of **Jamestown**.

England's First Permanent Colony

4 Jamestown was a poor choice for a settlement. The swampy land was not good for farming. The colonists had no interest in farming anyway. Most came to Virginia to find gold and get rich. No one bothered to plant or gather food. More than half the colonists died the first year.

Jamestown might have failed without Captain **John Smith**. As the leader of Jamestown, Smith made an important

rule—anyone who did not work did not eat. The colonists were soon busy planting crops and building a fort.

The Powhatan Confederacy

Most of the Native Americans living in Virginia at this time belonged to the Powhatan (POW•uh•tan) Confederacy. Its tribes were united under one main chief. Colonists gave the name *Powhatan* to all the tribes as well as to the chief.

From the start, there was trouble between the Powhatan and the colonists, as hungry colonists often stole the tribes' crops. Chief Powhatan's daughter **Pocahontas** (poh•kuh•HAHN•tuhs) helped bring about a short time of peace between the groups. During this time, both groups cooperated by trading goods.

READING CHECK MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS

How did John Smith help save Jamestown?
He helped get people working by making a rule that anyone who did not work did not eat.

Growth and Government

For all of its troubles, Jamestown grew. A leader named **John Rolfe** brought tobacco plants from the West Indies to the colony. The colonists were soon growing tobacco as a **cash crop**—a crop that people grow to sell. The Virginia Company sold tobacco all over Europe and made huge profits. A **profit** is the money left over after all costs have been paid.

5

Newcomers Arrive

Growing tobacco required many workers. The Virginia Company paid for people's passages, or trips, to Virginia. In return, the people agreed to work without pay for a length of time. These workers were called **indentured servants**. They usually worked from four to seven years. After that time, they were freed.

6

► **AFRICANS ARRIVE IN JAMESTOWN** Dutch traders sold Africans as enslaved workers.

In 1619, the first Africans were brought to Jamestown. No one knows whether they were treated as indentured servants or as enslaved people. Over time, more Africans were brought to the colony. They came as enslaved workers. Unlike indentured servants, they were rarely freed. Their hard work helped Virginia prosper.

The House of Burgesses

By 1619, the Virginia Colony had more than 1,000 people. Laws were needed to keep order. The Virginia Company said the colonists could have the same rights as people living in England. So colonists chose to set up a **legislature**, or lawmaking branch of the government.

Virginia's legislature, the House of Burgesses (BER•juhs•iz), met in 1619.



7

It was the first representative assembly in the English colonies. Now some colonists could elect members to **represent**, or speak for, them in the government.

Only men who owned property could become members and vote in the House of Burgesses. Women, indentured servants, and enslaved people were not allowed to hold office or to vote.

The Powhatan Wars

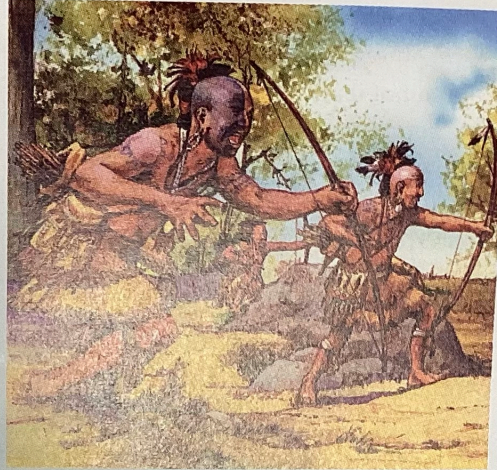
As more colonists came to Virginia, they took over more Powhatan land. In 1622, the Powhatan fought back. This started years of fighting. The Powhatan Wars led King James I to make Virginia a **royal colony** in 1624. This meant that the king owned the colony. To help run the colony, the king picked a governor, who shared power with the House of Burgesses.

8

READING CHECK **MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS**

What cash crop helped Virginia grow?

tobacco



► **POWHATAN WARS** The Powhatan tried to defend their lands against colonists.

Summary

Starting in the 1580s, England set up colonies in North America. The Virginia Colony developed slowly. As the colony grew, slavery was introduced and the Powhatan Wars were fought.