

Summary: Roanoke and Jamestown

The Lost Colony

The English wanted a colony in North America. They wanted to find gold and silver there. In 1585, about 100 English men arrived in Roanoke Island, near North Carolina. In 1587, more settlers came to Roanoke. Their leader, John White, returned to England to buy supplies. When he returned to Roanoke, the colonists were gone. No one ever found them.

The Jamestown Colony

In 1606, English merchants started the Virginia Company. They wanted to build a settlement in North America. The king gave the company a charter for their colony. The merchants asked people to invest in the company. If the colonists found treasure, the people who bought stock would make money.

In 1607, more than 100 men and boys sailed to present-day Virginia. They named their colony Jamestown. The settlers looked for gold. They did not know how to farm. Jamestown was damp and hot. The insects carried diseases. The water wasn't good for drinking, and the settlers ran out of food. Many died from hunger and disease.

John Smith, a new leader, ordered the men to stop looking for gold and plant crops. Life was hard in Jamestown. In 1609, most of the colonists died in the winter. It was known as the "starving time."

In 1612, a settler named John Rolfe found that tobacco grew well in Jamestown. Soon tobacco became a cash crop. Settlers sold tobacco to England. They bought food and supplies from England. In 1619, the first women and Africans arrived. The first Africans probably came as indentured servants.

Powhatan Indians also lived in the area. The Powhatans saw that the English wanted their land. They fought. The two sides made peace when John Rolfe married Pocohantas, daughter of the Powhatan leader. The peace was short. The English tried to take more Powhatan land. They fought again. In 1646, the English killed many of the Powhatan and took control of most of their land.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

charter *noun*, a document giving permission to a person or group to do something

invest *verb*, to put money into something to try to earn more money

stock *noun*, a piece of ownership of a company

cash crop *noun*, a crop that people grow and sell to earn money

indentured servant *noun*, someone who agreed to work for a number of years in exchange for the cost of the voyage to North America



After You Read

REVIEW Why did the Jamestown colonists run out of food? Underline the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW Why did colonists in Jamestown fight the Powhatans? Highlight the words that say what the English wanted.