

English Colonization, Part 1: Chesapeake Colonies

Types of Colonies

- Joint Stock – colonies granted to private companies in the hopes of creating profits from colonization
- Proprietary – land granted to individuals for the purpose of creating colonies; the individuals had the right then to grant land to whomever they chose
- Royal – colonies headed by the English crown/government itself

Virginia

- Was the first English colony in the New World
- Was a joint stock colony granted to the Virginia Company of London
- The first settlement was Jamestown, and was established on the James River in 1607

Disadvantages of Jamestown

- Climate and environment
 - The climate of VA was that of very hot summers and very cold winters
 - The environment along the James River that Jamestown was established was a swampy region that bred disease-spreading mosquitos

Disadvantages of Jamestown

- The Profit Dilemma
 - VA was a joint stock colony, and therefore the Virginia Co. of London demanded immediate profits
 - Settlers were pressured to look for gold and silver rather than farm and hunt
 - This bungling of priorities led to times of starvation

Disadvantages of Jamestown

- The VA colony and its early settlements were predominantly male
 - Very few intact families made the early journey to VA
 - The lonely existence for the males did nothing to help attitudes/moral, and only increased competition and crime between male settlers

Captain John Smith

- With most of the settlers not surviving the first winter, the Virginia Company of London sent Cpt. John Smith to command the colony
- John Smith
 - Was handsome and shrewd, young soldier of fortune
 - Instilled a policy of “If you do not work you will not eat”...
 - Though he was hated he did get the colony into enough shape to survive the first couple of years

The Powhatan Indians

- Were the original inhabitants of the James River area
- Were a group of several neighboring tribes all held together by Chief Powhatan
 - Father of the famous native girl Pocahontas who was credited with saving the life of John Smith
- Their early relationship with the settlers was one of wariness
- They did teach the settlers to grow crops (corn)

The Starving Time

- Even with stern leadership the Jamestown settlement almost disappeared during the winter of 1609-1610
- That winter the population of Jamestown went from 450 to 60
- The people were reduced to eating leather, rats, and in some cases each other (though this was of course illegal)...

The English Get Serious...

- In 1609 Lord De La Warr was put into charge of the VA colony
- He immediately sent hundreds of new settlers and soldiers to the colonies with fresh supplies
- Lord De La Warr also put into policy a new plan for the Natives, to wipe them out of the James River area...
 - By 1624 this goal was mostly achieved

A Source of Money... Finally...

- John Rolfe and Tobacco
 - Around 1613 Rolfe would develop a process for curing tobacco that would remove most of its bitterness, making it much more pleasant to smoke
 - The demand for tobacco would quickly grow throughout England and Europe
 - The tobacco plant was very easy to grow in the VA climate and environment
- Rolfe would also marry Pocahontas, bringing a very brief period of peace between VA and the Powhatans

Who's Going to Grow the Tobacco...?

- As most of the early VA settlers were either English gentlemen or soldiers of fortune, everyone wanted to grow tobacco for profit but no one wanted to do the work
- The most common source of labor in the early VA colony was indentured servitude
 - Indentured servant – someone whose passage to the colonies was paid for in turn for an agreement to be a source of labor for an agreed period of time (usually 5-7 years)

The Rise of the Estate (Plantation)

- In order to get more indentured servants into VA to grow more tobacco the headright system was developed in 1618
 - The headright system – for every person who paid for someone to come to VA (even if it was himself) that individual, the one that paid, would receive 50 acres of land
 - The headright system would be a great advantage for the wealthy as it allowed them to gain very large estates of land (they paid for a bunch of servants to come over); however, the small farmers were pushed to the worst lands while the large landowners had first dibs on the best lands

Early American Government

- With pressures being placed on the royal governors the VA settlers were granted a representative assembly, the Virginian House of Burgesses, in 1619 to work with the governor in running the colony
- The House of Burgesses would remain in constant conflict with the royal governor...
 - It would pass its own laws without consulting the governor and act as a sovereign power
 - It would withhold the governor's pay in order to force him to make the decisions that it wanted

Becoming a Royal Colony

- In 1624 the Virginia Company of London was dissolved and made into a royal colony
 - By this time over 14,000 had made the journey to VA... however, only 1,132 still survived

Another Colony in the Chesapeake

- Maryland
 - In 1634 a large area of land just north of Virginia was granted by the king to the Calvert family, headed by Lord Baltimore
 - Lord Baltimore was a Catholic and had long dreamed of a place where English Catholics could worship without fear of prosecution from Protestants... → Maryland was to be this Catholic haven

How to Get Settlers to Maryland?

- Lord Baltimore immediately granted large estates to wealthy English Catholic families, but many of his settlers were Protestant freemen from Virginia and Protestant indentured servants from England
- Tensions would quickly grow between the Protestant majority and the elite, plantation-owning Catholic minority (who also held the political power of Maryland)

Religious Toleration?... In Early America?...

- Maryland Act of Toleration
 - To solve growing religious disputes, in 1649 the Act of Toleration was passed in the Maryland Assembly
 - This granted religious freedom to all ***Christians***
 - This toleration did not extend to religious groups who did not recognize Jesus Christ as savior (i.e. Jews, Moslems, etc...) → this lack of recognition was punishable by death

Tobacco... Again...

- Since the Maryland environment was nearly identical to that of VA, and money was definitely needed by its residents, the colony of Maryland quickly became dependent upon tobacco just as VA was...