Chapter 3
Colonial America 1587-1770

William Penn meets with Native Americans in his colony of Pennsylvania.

1587 English establish first permanent settlement at Jamestown
1607

1612 Tobacco planted in Virginia
1620 Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock
1630 Puritans begin settling Massachusetts Bay

1550

1585 Hideyoshi becomes dictator of Japan
1588 England defeats Spanish Armada

1605 Shakespeare writes King Lear
1609 Tea from China arrives in Europe
Section 1: Early English Settlements  
**Essential Question** Why did the English settle in North America?

Section 2: New England Colonies  
**Essential Question** Why did the Separatists and Puritans leave England and settle in North America?

Section 3: Middle Colonies  
**Essential Question** How did the Middle Colonies develop?

Section 4: Southern Colonies  
**Essential Question** How and why did the Southern Colonies grow?

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**Foldables Study Organizer**

**Summarizing Information**

Make this Foldable to help you summarize what you learn about the early American colonies.

**Step 1** Fold a sheet of notebook paper into thirds.

**Step 2** Label the three sections as shown.

**Reading and Writing**

As you read the chapter, take notes about the important people and events in the American colonies under the correct headings.

Mission church, San Diego, California
If you read, use a diagram like the one below to list the hardships faced by the Jamestown settlers.

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**American Diary**

Captain John Smith, a leader of England’s Jamestown colony, told an amazing tale of his capture by Native Americans. According to Smith, the Native Americans were prepared “to beat out his brains.” Just then, Pocahontas, the 11-year-old daughter of Chief Powhatan, “got his head in her arms, and laid her own upon his to save him from death.” The gesture moved the chief to spare Smith’s life.

—from The Generall Historie of Virginia
England in America

Main Idea After defeating the Spanish Armada, England became more interested in establishing colonies in North America.

History and You Do you like reading mystery novels? Read to learn about the disappearance of the English colonists on Roanoke Island.

The story of Smith and Pocahontas, whether true or not, comes from the earliest period of English settlement in America. Compared to the Spanish, who were their economic rivals, the English were slow to seek colonies.

The Spanish Armada

Trading rivalry and religious differences had been pushing England and Spain toward war for years. King Philip II, the powerful ruler of Spain, wanted to put a Catholic ruler on the throne of England. He did not consider Queen Elizabeth, a Protestant, the rightful ruler of England.

Also, English adventurers, such as Sir Francis Drake, had attacked Spanish ships and ports. Philip thought that Elizabeth should punish Drake for his raids. Instead, she honored Drake with knighthood. Philip sent the Spanish Armada, Spain’s fleet of warships, to conquer England, but it failed completely. Although war between England and Spain continued until 1604, the defeat of the armada marked the end of Spanish control of the seas. The way was clear for England to start colonies in North America.

The Lost Colony of Roanoke

The English had made several attempts to establish a base in North America. Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth in 1583. However, before he could find a place for a colony, Gilbert died at sea.

The following year, Queen Elizabeth gave Sir Walter Raleigh the right to claim land in North America. Raleigh sent an expedition to find a good place to settle. His scouts made an enthusiastic report of Roanoke Island, off the coast of present-day North Carolina.

The first settlers, 100 men, had a difficult winter on the island and returned to England. In 1587 Raleigh then sent 91 men, 17 women, and 9 children to Roanoke. John White, artist and mapmaker, led the group. Shortly after arriving on the island, White’s daughter gave birth. Virginia Dare was the first English child born in North America.

Settling America Most of the early English settlements were founded by private investors who asked the English monarch for charters, or documents, that granted the right to establish colonies in America. Later, England’s government placed direct controls on the American colonies.

1590 Settlers at Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth

1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert claims Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth

1607 Colonists settle at Jamestown

1590 Ships arrive at Jamestown, Virginia.

Critical Thinking

Theorizing Why do you think people in England invested in the founding of colonies in America?
White explored the area and drew pictures of what he saw. In a book illustrated by White, another colonist described the Native American towns the settlers encountered:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

"Their towns are small ... a village may contain but ten or twelve houses—some ... as many as twenty."

—from *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*

Nine days after his granddaughter’s birth, White returned to England for supplies. Although he had hoped to be back within a few months, the war with Spain delayed his return for nearly three years. When he returned to Roanoke, White found it deserted. Finding the word *Croatoan* carved on a gate-post, White believed the colonists had gone to Croatoan Island, about 50 miles to the south. Bad weather kept White from investigating, or examining further. The Roanoke colonists were never seen again.

**Reading Check**

Explain why were England and Spain at war in the late 1500s?

**Jamestown Settlement**

**Main Idea** The first permanent English settlement in North America was at Jamestown.

**History and You** What obstacles would you have to overcome to create a home in the wilderness? Read to learn about the hardships of the Jamestown settlers.

For a time, the failure of the Roanoke colony discouraged others from planning English colonies in North America. However, the idea emerged again in 1606. Several groups of merchants sought charters, documents granting the right to organize settlements in an area, from King James I.

**The Virginia Company**

One group of merchants, the Virginia Company of London, received a charter. The Virginia Company was a **joint-stock company**. Investors bought stock, or part ownership, in the company in return for a share of its future profits. Settlers in America were to search for gold and establish trade in fish and furs.
In December 1606, the company sent 144 settlers in three ships to build a new colony in North America. In April 1607, the ships entered Chesapeake Bay and then sailed up a river flowing into the bay. The colonists named the river the James and their new settlement Jamestown to honor their king.

**Jamestown Survives**

The colonists faced hardships of disease and hunger. The colony survived its first two years because of 27-year-old Captain John Smith, an experienced explorer. Smith forced the settlers to work, explored the area, and sought corn from the local Native Americans led by Chief Powhatan. When John Smith returned to England, Jamestown lacked a strong leader. The winter of 1609–1610 became known as “the starving time.” Fighting also broke out with the Native Americans.

The Virginia colonists finally discovered a way to make money for the investors by growing a type of tobacco using seeds from the West Indies. Soon planters all along the James River were raising tobacco. The colony of Virginia began to prosper. Relations with the Native Americans improved after a colonist, John Rolfe, married Pocahontas, the daughter of Chief Powhatan. Land ownership was expanded when the Virginia Company gave a headright, or land grant, of 50 acres to settlers who paid their own way to the colony. Colonists also participated in government. The House of Burgesses first met in 1619. The burgesses were representatives of the colony’s towns, and they could make local laws for the colony.

When the Virginia Company sent women to Jamestown, marriage and children became a part of life in Virginia. Another part of that life was slavery, first recognized in Virginia law in the 1660s. By the 1620s, the Virginia Company faced financial troubles with Jamestown returning little profit. In 1624 King James canceled the company’s charter and made Jamestown England’s first royal colony in America.
Jamestown

On May 14, 1607, English colonists began work on a settlement near the James River. They built a triangular fort of upright logs, about an acre in size, in just 19 days. Made of a storehouse, a church, and a number of houses, the fort was near water deep enough for ships to anchor. It also was in a secure place, where enemy ships could not fire directly into the fort. Relations with the local Native Americans were often difficult, although at times the colonists were able to trade copper and iron goods for badly needed food.

How Did Geography Affect Jamestown?

The Jamestown settlers faced the hardships of an unfamiliar climate—colder winters and warmer, humid summers. They also discovered that they had built their fort beside the dirtiest part of the James River. River water was drinkable only part of the year; in the summer, it turned salty and slimy. By autumn, disease, salt poisoning, and starvation had killed almost half the colonists.
The Scope of Suffering

Master George Percy was 27 years old when he helped establish the Jamestown Colony in 1607. He was one of the 38 aristocrats in the expedition and later served twice as the colony's governor before he returned to England.

"There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this new-discovered Virginia."

Analyzing Geography

1. **Location** Why did the colonists choose Jamestown as their settlement site?

2. **Analyzing** In what ways was the fort's location a poor choice?