American Indians

Powhatan

* Powhatan was chief of many tribes, headquartered in Werowocomoco, a large Indian town used by Indian leaders for hundreds of years before the English arrived.
* At first, he allowed his people to trade with the English. They traded food for tools, pots, and copper.
* At first, he allowed his people to teach the colonists how to successfully grow corn and tobacco.
* Eventually, he saw the colonists as invaders.

Pocahontas, his daughter, was a contact between the English and the Indians.

Jamestown

Why start a colony?

The English wanted to start a colony in America for gold and glory!
- England would gain power (glory) by expanding it’s empire.
- They hoped to find gold, silver, and raw materials (natural resources) to make $$. $$$. (gold)
- They wanted to open new markets for trade. (more gold)

How did they do it?

- The king of England issued a charter to the Virginia Company of London to start a colony.
- The Virginia Company paid for the settlement in hopes of making money later.
- Later, the king issued another charter giving the colonists English rights.

Why there?

- It was on a peninsula, safe from Spanish attacks.
- Good harbor - deep water, good for ships.
- Fresh drinking water...or so they thought.

Hardships

- Marshy location (good for mosquitoes, bad for humans)
- Unsafe drinking water
- Poor survival skills
- Many died of starvation and disease

How they survived

- Supply ships arrived
- Emphasis on agriculture (A.K.A. growing food)
- Leadership of John Smith who traded with the Indians and made people work.
Making Money

Because of the rich soil, agriculture (farming) was the colony’s primary source of wealth.

The most profitable cash crop was tobacco.

They sold it to people in England. To make even more money, they began using slaves to work in tobacco. It was a steady source of inexpensive labor.

Government in Jamestown

Virginia Assembly

Called by the governor in 1619

Two “burgesses” from each area met to make laws.

They were men elected by the people.

Settlers controlled their government.

Virginia House of Burgesses

By the 1640’s it became separate from the Governor’s Council.

Government Today

General Assembly of VA

Dates back to 1619 and is the first elected legislative body in English America.

Women

In 1620, a large group of unmarried women were sent to Jamestown to start families.
Whenever people settle an area, they bring their culture with them. Architecture changes: Things like homes, barns and churches. Names of places reflect culture. Richmond is English Roanoke is Indian.

Who settled Virginia?
English and Africans settled the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Germans and Scots-Irish settled the Valley and Ridge Region Indians lived all over the state.

Most people lived in one room houses with dirt floors. A few people (farmers) lived in large houses.

- If you are white, you make your living as a small farmer.
- If you are a free African, you have a few civil rights. You may own land or a business.
- If you are a slave, you have no rights at all! You work in tobacco fields or raise livestock.

Food choices were limited. You had to make do with produce and meat that was available locally.

Most people made their own clothes out of cotton, wool, and leather.