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### The Jamestown Colony

In 1606, King James I granted a charter to colonize Virginia. This charter was granted to a company called the Virginia Company of London. The primary motivation for colonization was the promise of gold. Secondary motivations included finding a sea passage through the New World to Asia and the Indies, establishing colonies to demonstrate English power and influence, and spreading Christianity to the native people.

The Virginia Company set sail on May 24, 1607. They had three ships that landed near the Chesapeake Bay area on the banks of the James River. This is where they founded Jamestown, which was the first permanent English colony in the New World.

The settlers had a difficult time when they founded Jamestown. The land was hot, humid, and mosquito-infested. The people that settled Jamestown were primarily aristocrats, so they did not know how to farm, fish, or hunt. They actually spent most of their time searching for gold that did not exist. Many died from disease, malnutrition, and starvation.

The local Indians helped the colonists with food during their first hard winters and taught them how to farm and live off the land.

The directors of the Virginia Company of London did not lead effectively and the settlers continued to struggle.

One colonist, John Smith, came to Jamestown after a career as a soldier and was able to provide the leadership that the settlers needed. The Virginia Company was impressed with Smith's military experience. They appointed him a member of the resident council to manage the colony in America. John Smith became famous for his statement that "he that will not work shall not eat." This rule was effective and helped to motivate the colonists.

Smith bargained with the Indians so that he could explore and map the Chesapeake area. In 1607, Smith was kidnapped by the Powhatan Native Americans. According to legend, he was rescued from death by an appeal from Pocahontas, who was the daughter of the Indian Chief. This act of mercy preserved the wavering peace, and Pocahontas became an ambassador between the Indians and the settlers.

Despite the Indian's help and Smith's leadership, the colony was failing. The winter of 1609-1610 was especially difficult. It was called the "starving time," and most of the settlers died of hunger and pestilence. After this harsh winter, there were only roughly 60 settlers remaining out of the 400 that had originally come to Virginia. When spring arrived, the remaining colonists decided return to England. As they travelled down the James River, they were met by a new governor named Lord De La Warr. He took them back to Jamestown.

The hardships continued for the colonists and the cultural clashes with the Indians increased. De La Warr's troops raided Indian villages. In 1614, a peace agreement ended the First Anglo-Powhatan War. Like many agreements of the time in Europe, this one was sealed with a marriage. A settler named John Rolfe married Pocahontas. In 1616, Pocahontas and Rolfe went to England. In 1617, Pocahontas died while they were still on their trip. She was buried in Gravesend, England.