

James town



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During 1607-1611 of Early Jamestown, Why Were So Many Colonists Dead?

King James I sent 110 people over for a new start of life. The Englishmen arrived to Jamestown believing that they would find gold and a new way of freedom with government and religion. Most of the colonist died during the early years of 1607-1611. No skills for the New World later made the colonist have a hostile relationship with the Native Americans and the environment that they weren't immune for lead to their deaths. Many colonists died because they had no skills to survive in a new place.

According to the " First and Second Jamestown Ship List" in Document C, 47 of the 110 colonist were Gentlemen in May 1607. These Gentlemen came to Jamestown with the belief that they would find wealth. The Gentlemen, including other colonists, didn't know how to farm or hunt. They traded with the Powhatan Confederacy for food but that got old, and the Indians later put a stop to the trade for the Englishmen to " Starving Time" in 1609. Also, there was only 1 doctor. Therefore, if someone got sick they would have a way bigger chance of dying than seeing that 1 doctor.

The evidences helped explain why so many colonists died because the inexperience of the colonist led to them not being able to support themselves. The Native Americans were antagonistic to the colonists. " The Virginia Adventures" in document D says, " Though West was able to load his (small ship) with grain, the success involved some harsh and Crewell dealing by cutting towe of the Salvages heads and other extremetyes. " Instead of the colonist finding and growing their own food they killed 2 Indians. This was probably one reason why the Indians would attack the colonists.

On document E, "Chronology of English Mortality in Virginia, 1607-1610" there was a first ever Indian attack at Fort James and 2 people died. If the colonists and the Indians had a different start of relationship, there wouldn't be that many people dead. The Englishmen could've learned skills from the tribes. The Englishmen and the Indians would perhaps have a different relationship. The environment had a big effect on the death of many colonists in early Jamestown. In "The Lost Colony and Jamestown Droughts" in document B it shows that there was a drought around 1605-1615.

There wasn't enough water to drink, let alone grow crops or livestock. People also died because of diseases including malaria, scurvy, and dysentery. There were also other sicknesses that the Englishmen weren't immune to. When illness struck the colonists, there was only one doctor and that was the same as not having any. The water was really filthy. Document A states that, "Because of the adjacent river and creeks became brackish as water levels rose, reliable sources of fresh water would have been scarce by the seventeenth century..." This made the risk of getting a disease higher than not having water at all.

The environment was a major death factor even if they learned how to plant or grow livestock. If the colonists were able to support themselves then more would have survived. The death of so many colonists in early Jamestown was mostly cause by the environment and the unfriendly relationship between the early settlers and the Native Americans that was triggered by the colonists not being able to support themselves.