

Jamestown



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Why Did So Many Colonists Die? Jamestown had been one the first English settlements in the New World. The English had settled here before the Pilgrims' predestination. Jamestown is known for its hard living conditions and its difficulty to grow crops. During the spring of 1607, King James I sent out over 100 passengers to sail into the Chesapeake Bay. John Smith was a dominant figure that helped the colonist get through their first year in the wilderness. But as time went by, not all of those settlers would be alive.

The environment and climate, food source, and different occupations were the few seasons why so many colonists died during 1607-1612. The English settlers settled in James River, known as Jamestown, because it has met the requirements of the London Company instructions. They settled, not knowing that the environment in Jamestown would be tough. Jamestown had brackish water, water that had become salty over time. The water had become brackish due to the moon causing water waves to move and eventually those tides took over their fresh water.

The environment of Jamestown was also affected due to many settlers dumping their waste in the water thinking it would flush away, but in reality it would just sit there, causing the water to become fester and making people sick. Document A describes how Jamestown environment became a hard obstacle. Although John Smith was a leader, he was not able to prevent the settlers from becoming sick. Sir Thomas Gates and other survivors from the Sea Ventures arrived at Jamestown from Bermuda and found the 60 remaining colonist at their death points. Document E describes the chronology of English Mortality.

The numbers and cause of settler deaths in 1609 were caused because of bad weathers and diseases. During 1607 and 1608, a variety of settlers died because they were killed by Indians, and about 50 died because of the towns' diseases. During the period of 1609, Jamestown colony almost failed again. John Smith had left to England because of an injury he had suffered. He left his people 10 weeks' worth of supplies, and he also expected the Indians to continue trading with them, but unfortunately they did not. Therefore, the settlers had to eat different things such as rats, mice, cats, and dogs.

Document B has a description of the drought that Jamestown had during 1607-1612. During the winter of 1609-1610, Jamestown experienced a period of no rain; that was considered the starving time. In 1610, Sir Thomas Gates left due to the lack of supplies, but as he was on his way back to England, he heard that Lord De La War was arriving with new settlers and supplies. Eventually, Lord De La War assumed control as Governor of Virginia. Furthermore, Document D is a primary source which describes the trading that was happening between the Phaeton Indians and the English settlers. It also mentions how Francis

West left the English settlers to the Indians and to God. Any who, the English settlers had no luck and the only food they had for the winter, unfortunately did not last. Therefore, the period of 1607-1612 had many deaths because of the lack of food and leadership. Although, time went by and new leadership occurred as well as the progress of the town. John Rolfe grew tobacco, which helped the town severely due to trade. When colonists first arrived to the settlements many had known occupations and others did not. Document C

describes the way the occupations were given and gives the numbers of the exact settlers who had a role.

An occupation during that time was a big role in history because some of those jobs caused deaths. In 1607 there were a total of 110 people and in 1608 there were a total of 120 people. Only 79 people in total had unknown occupations and about 145 had known occupations. During 1607, there was a high percentage of gentleman's, which were men who did not use their hands to do work, such as Nathaniel Powell and Robert Ford. In contrast, there were laborers who did the dirty work such as William Rods. Of the 110 settlers who arrived in 1607, nearly 70 were dead by December.

Most of those dead settlers were laborers. Their hard work made them catch different diseases and sickness. In conclusion, many colonists died during the early Jamestown because of environment and climate, food, and occupations. Life in early Jamestown was harsh and dangerous due to the obstacles that had passed through their way and the lack of supplies through the winter. The environment and climate was not something they were capable to control, but an obstacle that they must have been prepared for, although they were more interested in finding gold.

Food was hard to get at Jamestown. They could not grow crops due to bad soil and no rain. Therefore, the settlers got help from the Indians, who taught them how to grow crops and get food. Furthermore, occupations played a big role in the deaths of many settlers, due to them having to work hard jobs such as laboring, and dying because of diseases they got. Overall,

Jamestown was a hard place to live in because of harsh environment and climate, lack of food, and risky occupations.