In Chapter 5, you read about eight European explorers who came to the Americas. In this chapter, you will learn about three groups of English people who came to settle there. They made the hard voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Then they built small communities, or settlements. They faced many challenges.

Roanoke was the first English settlement. Roanoke is an island off the coast of North Carolina. No one knows what happened to the settlers there. Few signs of them remained when ships came to find them. That is why, today, Roanoke is called the “lost colony.”

Shortly after the attempt to settle Roanoke, 105 Englishmen arrived in present-day Virginia. They hoped to find gold and other riches. They
began a settlement called **Jamestown** in 1607. Despite many hardships, Jamestown became the first successful English colony in North America. A few years later, 102 English people arrived in present-day New England. They built a settlement called **Plymouth**, in what is now Massachusetts. Most of these people left England to seek religious freedom. They became known as the Pilgrims. Pilgrims are people who go on a religious journey.

As you read this chapter, think about the hardships faced by these three groups of English settlers. Why did some settlements survive, while others did not?

**Section 2 - The Lost Settlement of Roanoke**

In the 1500s, Spain was a powerful nation. Its ships sailed to the Spanish colonies in the Americas. They brought back riches to Spain. Sir Walter Raleigh was a friend of England’s Queen Elizabeth. He believed that American colonies could make England more powerful. In 1584, he sent two ships to explore the coast of North America. The ships landed on an island near present-day North Carolina. The sailors named the island Roanoke, for the American Indians who lived there. The explorers returned to England. They told Raleigh that the island had fish, animals, fruits, vegetables, and friendly people.
The next year, Raleigh sent some men to start a colony. But few of the settlers were farmers. Supplies ran short because the men could not grow food. When fighting broke out between the English and the Roanokes, the settlers gave up and went home.

In 1587, Raleigh sent over 100 new settlers to Roanoke. This time there were farmers and skilled workers. Later that year, Captain John White went back to England for supplies. Because England was fighting a war with Spain, White’s ships were not allowed to return to the colony.

Three years later, White finally returned to Roanoke. There was no sign of the settlers. Even their houses were gone. The word CROATOAN was carved on the gatepost of a ruined fort. White thought the settlers might have moved to the island of Croatoan or joined an American Indian group with that name. Before he could find out, however, the weather turned bad, and he could not search the area. No one has ever discovered what happened to the colony.

Section 3 - Jamestown Colony
In 1606, England’s King James gave permission to a group of wealthy men to start a colony in North America. The group sent 105 men to settle in Virginia. They hoped the colony would make them richer.

In May 1607, the settlers arrived in Virginia. Most hoped to find gold. They chose a place near a river. The deep water allowed them to anchor their ships close by. The site was upriver from Chesapeake Bay. It was far enough from the river that Spanish ships could not easily attack the settlement. Located on a peninsula, the town would be easy to defend by land. The group built a settlement enclosed by the walls of a fort. In honor of King James, they called their new home Jamestown.

Unfortunately, the settlers built Jamestown on a marsh. The water around the town was dirty and salty. The land was not good for farming. And mosquitoes carried a deadly disease, malaria. By the end of 1607, disease and other hardships had killed many of the settlers.

In late 1607, some American Indians captured a Jamestown settler named Captain John Smith. They took Smith to their chief, Powhatan (pow-uh-TAN). According to the story Smith later told, the chief was about to kill him. But Powhatan’s young daughter, Pocahontas, saved
Many historians, however, think that Smith’s life was never in real danger. After this incident, Pocahontas visited Jamestown several times. She and her people brought food to trade to the few surviving colonists. In January 1608, more men arrived from England. Many had come only to seek gold, so there were not enough people growing the food needed to feed the colony. In September, John Smith became the leader of the colony. He knew that the settlement needed everyone’s help to survive. He said that any man who would not work to maintain Jamestown would not eat. Smith’s leadership helped save the colony.

In the summer of 1609, a new group of settlers arrived, including women and children. The next month, Smith returned to England after having been badly burned by an explosion of gunpowder. The colonists had lost a strong leader. To make matters worse, Powhatan stopped trading with them. Local tribes attacked the people they found outside the settlement. The winter of 1609–1610 was known as the Starving Time. Many settlers had to eat horses and dogs. Hundreds of people died. Only about 60 settlers survived in Jamestown.

The Jamestown settlers never found gold. Therefore, they needed another way to support their colony. Colonist John Rolfe learned how to grow a new kind of tobacco. The settlers planted this cash crop. In 1614, they began to trade their tobacco for money and supplies. People in England loved it. Tobacco became Virginia’s “gold.”
Meanwhile, Powhatan’s people worried about so many settlers coming to their land. In 1614, John Rolfe married Pocahontas. For a time, the colonists and the American Indians were at peace. Pocahontas even went to England and met King James. Before she could return home, she became ill. In 1617, she died.

Meanwhile, Jamestown was growing and changing. In 1619, the men elected representatives to make laws for the colony. This was the first representative government in an American colony. They called this governing body the House of Burgesses. (Burgess is an English word for an elected representative.) Only wealthy men could have this job. Even so, Virginia now had a more democratic government than England. When Powhatan died, his brother became chief and the peace between the American Indians and the settlers ended. In 1622, the new chief and
his men attacked Jamestown and killed 347 colonists. But Jamestown survived to become the first successful English settlement in North America.

Section 4 - The Settlement of Plymouth

The third English settlement in North America was started by people who were looking for religious freedom. King James said that everyone in England had to belong to the Church of England. Some people refused. Among them were people called Separatists. This group wanted to have a separate, or independent, church. The Separatists decided to move to a place where they could be free to practice their own religion. In time, this group came to be known as the Pilgrims.

In September 1620, the Pilgrims sailed from England. They traveled on a ship called the Mayflower. After more than two months at sea, they landed on the tip of Cape Cod in what is now Massachusetts. Before going ashore, the Pilgrims drew up a plan of government. They wrote down rules to help them live together peacefully. Most of the men signed
this agreement known as the Mayflower Compact. Then they elected a governor.

After exploring the area, the Pilgrims decided to sail the *Mayflower* across a bay that separated them from the mainland. They landed at a place they named Plymouth. Soon they began to build houses and a meeting hall called the Common House. The first winter was very hard. The Pilgrims had landed too late in the year to plant crops. The climate was cold and harsh. Nearly half of the 102 Pilgrims died of disease and starvation before spring. Only a few settlers remained healthy enough to care for the others.

In March 1621, a man named Squanto visited the Pilgrims. He was a member of the Pawtuxet tribe but was living with the nearby Wampanoags (wahm-puh-NOH-ags). Some years earlier, Squanto had lived in England and could speak English. Squanto stayed with the Pilgrims and taught them how to plant corn, catch fish, and get sweet syrup from maple trees. The Pilgrims were so grateful that they thought Squanto had been sent by God.

Squanto also told the Pilgrims about the many American Indians who had died from a disease that they had caught from English and French fishermen. While Squanto had been away in England, the members of his Pawtuxet tribe had died from this sickness.

Another American Indian who visited the Pilgrims was Massasoit (MAS-uh-soyt). He was the sachem, or chief, of the Wampanoags. Squanto helped arrange a peace treaty, or agreement, between Massasoit and the Pilgrims. The Wampanoags and the Pilgrims promised not to fight each other. They also agreed to help protect each other against attacks by other American Indians.
The Pilgrims’ corn ripened during the summer. In the fall, they held a feast to give thanks for the harvest—the food they had collected from the plants they had grown. Massasoit and other Wampanoags were at the celebration. They brought deer to cook and eat. The Pilgrims had goose, duck, deer, fish, lobster, and wild turkey. The thanksgiving feast lasted three days. Today, people in the United States still observe this harvest celebration. We call it Thanksgiving Day.

In 1621, William Bradford was elected governor of Plymouth. He held this post for more than 30 years.

In the next few years, ships brought more and more settlers to the colony. In time, other groups would join the Pilgrims in the area we now call New England.

Summary

In this chapter, you read about the first English settlements in North America. You found out why people came to live here. You learned why some settlements survived, while others did not.

The early settlers faced many hardships. One settlement, on the island of Roanoke, disappeared. Another settlement, Jamestown, survived after many bad times. Settlers often did not have enough food. They became sick from unhealthy surroundings. At times, local American Indians helped them. At other times, the settlers and the American Indians fought.

Many settlers were searching for riches. But the Pilgrims hoped to find religious freedom. The Wampanoags helped them survive in Plymouth. These early settlements were the first of what would become 13 English colonies in North America. How did the American Indians react as more and more people arrived? Read on to find out.