Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Settlement of Jamestown

Terms to Know:

Charter→
A founding document or agreement

Headright System→
The Virginia Company's policy of granting 50 acres of land to each settler and to each family member who accompanied him.

Indentured Servant→
A person who has contracted to work for another for a limited period, often in return for travel expenses, shelter, and sustenance.

Joint-Stock Companies→
Businesses in which investors pool their wealth for a common purpose

Levy→
To impose or collect money for a fine or tax

Royal Colony→
A colony under the direct control of the English monarch

The First Permanent British Settlement: Jamestown

Unlike Spain, who funded their exploration and colonization efforts with royal money, England funded colonization with joint-stock companies. A joint-stock company is when investors pool their money together to fund a colony. The investors agree to give their money in hopes, and with the expectation, that the company's colony will make a profit. In order for a joint-stock company to send an exploration team to the Americas and establish a colony, it must have a charter and accept responsibility for the colony it intends to create.

The Virginia Company received its charter from King James I in 1606. The Virginia Company hoped to settle in territory that Sir Walter Raleigh explored during the reign of England's Queen Elizabeth I. Raleigh named his discovered territory Virginia, in honor of Queen Elizabeth (she was known as the Virgin Queen). The Virginia Company, who sent 150 people on three boats, arrived on the Virginia coast on April 26, 1607. They decided to sail upriver to a small peninsula and named their settlement Jamestown, in honor of King James I.

❖ ***What kind of people would a joint-stock company send to establish a colony?***
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Jamestown was built on a swamp. Much to the surprise of the settlers, there was no gold or silver to send home to the joint-stock company investors and the king. To make matters worse, disease and hunger significantly decreased the population. The settlers were primarily businessmen who refused (and some of them just did not know how) to farm or do the necessary hard labor. Not only did these men need to find something of value to send back to England, but they also needed to build, maintain, and protect a fortified settlement for their own survival.

Hard Times in Jamestown

In the winter of 1607, one of the loud, brazen businessmen took control of the settlement. His name was John Smith, and he decided that the colony needed strict leadership to survive their first winter. Smith declared that those settlers who refused to work were not allowed to eat. He persuaded the Powhatan tribe (the Native American tribe neighboring Jamestown) to share their harvest. Unfortunately, John Smith was burned very badly in an accident that winter, and he had to sail back to England for medical care. The settlers were left to survive the winter without his leadership.

Two years later, the Virginia Company sent another 600 men to help revive the Virginia Colony; however, the Powhatan Indians became frightened and destroyed British farms and livestock. Within a year, there was another great famine, which became known as the "Starving Time". The colonists were forced to eat roots, rats, snakes, and shoe leather. Only 60 of the 600 settlers survived the Starving Time.

Jamestown Begins to Flourish

After the famine and hardships with the Natives escalated, the remaining 60 colonists wanted to abandon Jamestown. As the men were sailing downriver, an English ship met them on the James River and stopped them. The new leadership on this new ship convinced the settlers to return. Those settlers who attempted to desert or refused to work were public flogged or hanged. A time of prosperity began as the settlers expanded inland along the James River and as they began to cultivate tobacco.

Tobacco and the Virginia Colony

Christopher Columbus introduced the tobacco plant to Europeans, more than a century before the founding of Jamestown. John Roffe, a settler in the Virginia Colony developed a cross-bread of Brazilian and local tobacco, which created a higher quality product. The Europeans had a high demand for this new form of tobacco. By 1620, the Virginia Colony was exporting 1.5 million pounds of tobacco annually (to put that in perspective, that's the weight of 75 18-wheeler trucks).

The enormous demand of tobacco from the Virginia colony caused a problem for the colonists. Where were they going to get the labor they needed to meet the demand? So, the Virginia Company created the headright system in 1618. This system would pay for a person's travel to Jamestown and allotted them 50 acres of land. Suddenly, there was a huge population increase in the colony!

Large plantations (land grants) were given to those men wealthy enough to pay for large groups to settle and work in the colony. Often times, these plantation owners imported indentured servants from England. An indentured servant was given money to sail to the colony, and then provided with food and shelter once they arrived. In exchange, the indentured servant agreed to work the land for a set period of time, typically 4 to 7 years. After the time passed, the indentured servant was released into society and had to find their own way.

❖ **What was appealing about working as an indentured servant?**

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❖ **What was a concern about working as an indentured servant?**

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The Introduction of Slave Labor in the Virginia Colony

Dutch merchant ships brought the first Africans involuntarily to the Virginia Colony in 1619. There were about 20 Africans, and they were treated as indentured servants. They were

given freedom after their predetermined years of service. These Africans were primarily used to help farm the tobacco plantations. During this era in the early 1600s, it was cheaper for a plantation owner to hire indentured servants than to purchase slaves; however, with the changing economy of the colonies, by the mid-1600s, it was cheaper to purchase a slave. Once the demand for slave labor increased in the colonies, the supply of Africans needed to increase to meet that demand. Suddenly, there was a large huge population increase, due to the increased number of African slaves imported into the colonies.

❖ ***How did the role of Africans evolve in the Virginia Colony?***
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Colonists Relationship with the Native Americans

The Native Americans were afraid of the growing population of Europeans in their homeland. As the colonists wanted to expand westward (further upriver on the James River and then towards to the Appalachian Mountains), the Native Americans' fears worsened. The colonists did not want to live with the Natives, and the colonists would force or fight them off their native land. After the Starving Time, the colonists resented the Natives. So the colonists demanded that the Natives pay food and labor tributes to them. If the Native American tribes refused to pay these tributes, their villages were burned, and their children were kidnapped. One example of this was Pocahontas. She was kidnapped from her tribe and kept in Jamestown. In 1614, in a half-hearted attempt to create a truce with the Powhatan chief, Pocahontas married the English settler John Wolfe.

The House of Burgesses

Establishing a political system in the new Virginia Colony was a big problem, with many "bumps in the road" along the way. In the beginning, the Virginia Company's captain acted as a dictator. This system dissolved as the headright system placed the power in the control of the landowners. To establish law and order within the Colony, the colonists adopted English Common Law (the same basic system used in England).

On July 30, 1619, the colonists held the first assembly for the House of Burgesses. The goal of this assembly was to enact legislation for the Virginia Colony. The members of the assembly were two representatives from each large plantation, and as the colony grew westward, the two representatives came from each county (not plantations). The House of Burgesses could do two things: propose a tax raise and draft legislation. The Governor (who was appointed by the Virginia Company's officials in London) had to approve all proposals and legislation. Once the colony was large enough to send representatives from each county, only white, male landowners, over the age of 17, could elect the representatives.

❖ ***How is the House of Burgesses similar to the United States' Congress?***
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❖ ***How is the House of Burgesses different from the United States' Congress?***
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Virginia Becomes a Royal Colony

After ten years of European exploration and colonization, the relationship between the Native Americans Indians and the colonists was violent. The Powhatan tribe organized attacks along a 140-mile stretch along the James River and killed 340 colonists. The Virginia Company was going bankrupt trying to maintain a population and stop the Indian raids. Since King James I was supposed to be financially benefiting from the Virginia Colony, he was enraged and revoked

the Virginia Company's charter in 1624. He made Virginia a royal colony and reestablished the boundaries of Virginia to include modern Pennsylvania, along the eastern coastline south to Spanish Florida, and "indefinitely westward". As a royal colony, King James sent his troops to Virginia to protect his economic interests. Finally, four years after becoming a royal colony, the king agreed to recognize the House of Burgesses as an official political body within Virginia.

❖ *From 1628 and on, who would appoint the Governor of Virginia?*

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Bacon's Rebellion

As indentured servants earned their freedom, they moved to the westward outskirts of the colony (around here, to the Appalachian Mountains). These men were typically improvised and did not own land (so they could not vote for representatives in the House of Burgesses). They often had to fight for control of land from the Native tribes, since they could not afford to purchase the land from the colony. This only aggravated issued between the Natives and the colonists. To make matters worse, the House of Burgesses and Governor did not care to help these frontiersmen.

After a particularly brutal exchange of attacks in 1675, the colonists pleaded to Governor Berkeley for military assistance. The governor refused. Nathaniel Bacon, a 29-year old son of a wealthy Englishman living in the eastern portion of the Virginia colony, hated the Native Americans and resented Virginia's government for not sending help. Bacon raised his own army (a third of this army consisted of the landless frontiersmen in the western half of the colony) to begin attacking the Native American tribes. Governor Berkeley declared Bacon's army illegal, which only enraged this militia. They marched to Jamestown to confront the governor and the House of Burgesses, claiming the government neglected the needs of these western colonists. However, after arriving the Jamestown, their march turned violent against the government, and the leaders fled Jamestown on ships. Bacon died shortly after this rebellion (due to a sudden illness), and the government quickly returned to subdue the leaderless rebels.

❖ *What is the significance of Bacon's Rebellion?*

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