

Hardships Faced by the Jamestown Settlers and Changes that Resulted in Survival

While the people of the Jamestown colony thought they picked a good location for their settlement, they still had problems. The site they chose to live on was marshy and lacked safe drinking water. Also, because the land was marshy, there were a lot of mosquitoes that carried diseases. A drought at the time of settlement reduced the amount of food for everyone.

In addition, the settlers lacked some skills necessary to provide for themselves. Many of the men who came to Jamestown were gentlemen in the English society. They were not used to hard work. They had very little knowledge of how to hunt, grow crops or build homes.

As a result, many of the settlers died of starvation and disease. By fall, only 46 of the original 104 colonists were still alive.

However, the settlers were able to survive in Jamestown for four reasons. First, the arrival of supply ships provided fresh supplies and more settlers to help in the colony. Second, was due to the strong leadership and forced work program of Captain John Smith. When John Smith became the leader of Jamestown, he put a huge emphasis on agriculture telling the settlers, "You don't work, you don't eat." He made sure everyone in the settlement worked together to help the colony survive. John Smith also made the settlers rebuild the fort and dig wells for fresh water. Third, new settlements were developed away from the unhealthy environment of Jamestown. Fourth, there was an emphasis on agriculture.