

Document A

Source: Dennis B. Blanton, "Jamestown's Environment," Center for Archaeological Research, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2000.

Many people have commented over the last four centuries on the qualities of Jamestown's environment....

Because the adjacent river and creeks became brackish as water levels rose, reliable sources of fresh water would have been scarce by the seventeenth century.... English colonists dug shallow wells to supply themselves with sources of drinking water, but these were vulnerable to drought and salt water intrusion. Also, historian Carville V. Earle attributed ... disease in the early years to Jamestown's position at the salt-fresh water transition, where filth introduced into the river tended to fester rather than flush away.

The island is not situated at a point of great natural food abundance, especially relative to other locations very close by.... Fish are present in local streams, but only in the spring and early summer are they there in impressive abundance....

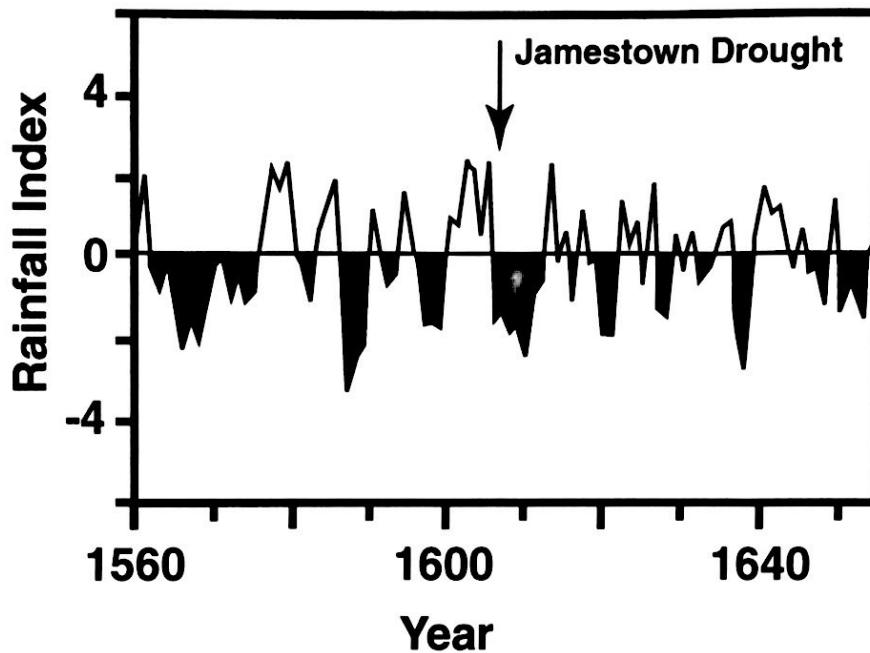
Document Analysis

1. Using context clues, what do you think is meant by brackish water?
2. What twice daily event would cause water levels around Jamestown to rise and cause wells and fresh water streams to become brackish? (Hint: The moon)
3. According to Carville Earle, what happened to human waste that got dumped into the river?
4. What inference can you make about the effect of tides on health in Jamestown?
5. Consider the last paragraph. What time of the year do you think starvation was most likely to happen?

Document B

Source: Adapted from "The Lost Colony and Jamestown Droughts," *Science*, April 24, 1998.

Note: This study determined rainfall amounts by examining tree-ring patterns in old cypress trees growing near Jamestown. Every year leaves a growth ring inside the trunk of a tree. A wider ring indicates plenty of rainfall and good growth. A narrow ring usually means less rain. "0" on the chart means average tree-ring size and therefore average rainfall.



Document Analysis

1. What does the "0" line represent on the chart? What is indicated by a sharp spike below the "0" line?
2. Look at the years 1580 to 1640. During which period did Jamestown suffer its longest unbroken period of drought?
3. In the winter of 1609-1610, Jamestown experienced what settlers called the "starving time." Based on this document, what inference can you make about the cause of this "starving time"?
4. Is there any way lack of rain might strain English relations with the Powhatans? Explain.

Document C

Source: Adapted from John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, Book III, 1624.

| First and Second Jamestown Ship Lists | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Occupation | Original Settlers May 1607 | 1st Resupply January 1608 |
| Council (governors) | 6 | 1 |
| Gentlemen | 47 | 28 |
| Labourers | 12 | 21 |
| Cooper (barrel maker) | 0 | 1 |
| Carpenter | 4 | 0 |
| Blacksmith | 1 | 1 |
| Sailer (sail maker) | 1 | 0 |
| Barber | 1 | 0 |
| Bricklayer | 1 | 0 |
| Mason | 1 | 0 |
| Tobacco pipe maker | 0 | 1 |
| Tailor | 1 | 6 |
| Drummer | 1 | 0 |
| Preacher | 1 | 0 |
| Boyes | 4 | 0 |
| Jeweler | 0 | 1 |
| Refiners and goldsmiths | 0 | 4 |
| Gunsmith | 0 | 1 |
| Perfumer (wig maker) | 0 | 1 |
| Apothecaries (druggists) | 0 | 2 |
| Surgeon | 1 | 1 |
| Occupation unknown | 28 | 51 |
| TOTAL MALE | 110 | 120 |
| TOTAL FEMALE | 0 | 0 |

Note: A gentleman was a person of wealth who was not used to working with his hands.
Boyes were young servants.

EV

Document Analysis

1. How many settlers arrived in May 1607? 1608? How many had known occupations?
2. How many of the settlers from either group were female? Why do you suppose this was the case?
3. What is a "gentleman"? Approximately what percentage of this first group of settlers were gentlemen?
4. Of the 110 settlers who arrived in May 1607, nearly 70 were dead by December. Is there anything in the ship lists that helps explain why?

Document D

Source: Ivor Noel Hume, *The Virginia Adventure*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.

[In 1609] Francis West and thirty-six men [sailed] up the Chesapeake Bay to try to trade for corn with the Patawomeke Indians.... Although still part of Powhatan's Confederacy, the tribe had seen less of the English than had those closer at hand and with luck might be more friendly. And so it proved.

Though West was able to load his [small ship] with grain, the success involved "some harshe and [cruel] dealinge by cutting of towe [two] of the Salvages heads and other extremeties." The [ship] and her lifesaving cargo returned to [Jamestown].... No one doubted that this new supply of grain would help, but it would not be enough to last the winter. On the other hand, decided the ship's crew, it was plenty to get them fatly home to England. So it was that Francis West "by the perswasion or rather by the inforcement of his company hoysed up [sails]" and headed out into the Atlantic, leaving the colonists to the Indians and to God.

Document Analysis

1. Is this a primary source or a secondary source?
2. Why did Francis West sail up the Chesapeake?
3. Is there any evidence that the English forced the Indians to trade their grain?
4. What eventually happened to the shipload of grain?
5. How might the events described here relate to your findings in Doc B?
6. In what ways can you use this document to help answer the question: Early Jamestown: Why did so many settlers die?

Document E

Source: Adapted from J. Frederick Fausz, "An Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides: England's First Indian War, 1609-1614," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, January 1990.

| Chronology of English Mortality in Virginia, 1607-1610 | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| | 1607 | Total Population |
| 14 May | 104 colonists disembark at Jamestown Island | 104 |
| 26 May | 2 die in first Indian attack on Fort James | 102 |
| June-Aug. | At least 3 more die in Indian ambushes | 99 |
| Aug.-Oct. | Summer sickness kills half the colonist | 49 |
| Nov. | Capt. George Kendall is executed for mutiny | 48 |
| Dec. | Pamunkeys kill 2 colonists in capturing Capt. John Smith, and, at year's end, the English in Virginia "were but fortie in all" | 40 |
| 1608 | | |
| 2 Jan. | Capt. Newport arrives with 100 men (1st Supply) | 140 |
| 10 Apr. | Capt. Nelson brings 20 in Phoenix; 2 depart | 158 |
| 7 Sept. | Smith reports "many dead, some sick" | 130 |
| 8 Oct. | Newport arrives with 70 colonists (2nd Supply) | 200 |
| 1609-1610 | | |
| Winter 1608-09 | Only 8 die during well-provisioned winter | 192 |
| Mid-Jan. | 11 colonists die in boating accident | 181 |
| Summer | Disease returns, 100 at Jamestown "sickened and half the number died" | 131 |
| 11-18 August | 6 ships bring some 250 people (3rd Supply) | 381 |
| Aug.-Oct. | Of 120 men stationed near the falls, the Indians kill "neere halfe" | 330 |
| Aug.-Oct. | Of 100 men at Nansemond, Indians kill 50 | 280 |
| Nov.-May 1610 | Powhatan's siege of Jamestown (the "Starving Time") kills some 110 colonists from famine and disease; another 33 slain; 37 desert | 90 |

Document Analysis

1. What is the total number of colonists to arrive at Jamestown by summer of 1609?
2. In 1607 and 1608 how many settlers died from disease? How many were killed by Indians?
3. What generalization can you make about the numbers and causes of settler death in 1609?
4. What can you infer about settler – Indian relations from 1607 to 1609?