**Jamestown**

In June of 1606, King James I granted a charter to a group of London entrepreneurs, the Virginia Company, to establish a satellite English settlement in the Chesapeake region of North America. By December, 104 settlers sailed from London instructed to settle Virginia, find gold and a water route to the Orient. Some traditional scholars of early Jamestown history believe that those pioneers could not have been more ill-suited for the task. Because Captain John Smith identified about half of the group as "gentlemen", it was logical, indeed, for historians to assume that these gentry knew nothing of or thought it beneath their station to tame a wilderness. Recent historical and archaeological research at the site of Jamestown suggest that at least some of the gentlemen and certainly many of the artisans, craftsmen, and laborers that accompanied them all made every effort to make the colony succeed.

On May 14, 1607, the Virginia Company explorers landed on Jamestown Island, to establish the Virginia English colony on the banks of the James River 60 miles from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. By one account, they landed there because the deep water channel let their ships ride close to shore; close enough, to moor them to the trees. Recent discovery of the exact location of the first settlement and its fort indicates that the actual settlement site was in a more secure place, away from the channel, where Spanish ships, could not fire point blank into the Fort. Almost immediately after landing, the colonists were under attack from what amounted to the on-again off-again enemy, the Algonquian natives. As a result, in a little over a months' time, the newcomers managed to "beare and plant palisadoes" enough to build a wooden fort. Three contemporary accounts and a sketch of the fort agree that its wooden palisaded walls formed a triangle around a storehouse, church, and a number of houses. While disease, famine and continuing attacks of neighboring Algonquians took a tremendous toll on the population, there were times when the Powhatan Indian trade revived the colony with food for copper and iron implements. It appears that eventual structured leadership of Captain John Smith kept the colony from dissolving. The "starving time" winter followed Smith's departure in 1609 during which only 60 of the original 214 settlers at Jamestown survived. That June, the survivors decided to bury cannon and armor and abandon the town. It was only the arrival of the new governor, Lord De La Ware, and his supply ships that brought the colonists back to the fort and the colony back on its feet. Although the suffering did not totally end at Jamestown for decades, some years of peace and prosperity followed the wedding of Pocahontas, the favored daughter of the Algonquian chief Powhatan, to tobacco entrepreneur John Rolfe.

The first representative assembly in the New World convened in the Jamestown church on July 30, 1619. The General Assembly met in response to orders from the Virginia Company "to establish one equal and uniform government over all Virginia" which would provide "just laws for the happy guiding and governing of the people there inhabiting." The other crucial event that would play a role in the development of America was the arrival of Africans to Jamestown. A Dutch slave trader exchanged his cargo of Africans for food in 1619. The Africans became indentured servants, similar in legal position to many poor Englishmen who traded several years labor in exchange for passage to America. The popular conception of a race-based slave system did not fully develop until the 1680's.

The Algonquians eventually became disenchanted and, in 1622, attacked the out plantations killing over 300 of the settlers. Even though a last minute warning spared Jamestown, the attack on the colony and mismanagement of the Virginia Company at home convinced the King that he should revoke the Virginia Company Charter. Virginia became a crown colony in 1624. The fort seems to have existed into the middle of the 1620s, but as Jamestown grew into a "New Town" to the east, written reference to the original fort disappear. Jamestown remained the capital of Virginia until its major statehouse, located on the western end of the APVA property, burned in 1698. The capital was moved to Williamsburg that year and Jamestown began to slowly disappear above ground. By the 1750s the land was owned and heavily cultivated primarily by the Travis and Ambler families.

A military post was located on the island during the American Revolution, and American and British prisoners were exchanged there. In 1861 the island was occupied by Confederate soldiers who built an earth fort near the church as part of the defense system to block the Union advance up the James River. Little further attention was paid to Jamestown until preservation was undertaken in the twentieth century.

In 1893 Jamestown was owned by Mr. And Mrs. Edward Barney. The Barneys gave 22 1⁄2 acres of land, including the 1639 church tower, to the APVA. By this time James River erosion had eaten away the island's western shore; visitors began to conclude that the site of James Fort lay completely underwater. With federal assistance, a sea wall was constructed in 1900 to protect the area from further erosion. The remaining acreage on the island was acquired by the National Park Service in 1934 as part of the Colonial National Historical Park. Today, Jamestown is jointly operated by the APVA and NPS.

Source: http://www.apva.org/history/

 

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**St. Augustine**

First Contacts:

From 1513 onward, Spanish and French explorers and would-be colonizers had attempted to establish a permanent European settlement in “the lovely, deadly land of Florida”. It would take more than half a century, however, before this ambition would be realized by Pedro Menéndez de Aviles of Spain. Menéndez came to Florida in pursuit not only of wealth, but also of the French Lutherans under Rene de Laudonniere, who had built a settlement called Fort Caroline near what is today Mayport, Florida, in 1564. After eliminating the French Protestant presence and taking over their fort in September of 1565, Admiral Menéndez and Chief Seloy of the Florida Timucua Indians met one another at what is today St. Augustine. Menéndez and his group of some 800 colonists (including 26 women and an unknown number of African slaves) made their first settlement at Seloy’s town, and used Seloy’s council house as the first Spanish fort.

On September 8, 1565, Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles came ashore and named a stretch of land near the inlet in honor of Augustine, a saint of the Roman Catholic Church on whose feast day - Aug. 28 - land was sighted. The location has been pinpointed in recent years by archaeologists from the University of Florida as being where the present-day Mission of Nombre de Dios and the Fountain of Youth stand, several blocks north of the City Gate and the Castillo de San Marcos.

The emphasis on "first European settlement" acknowledges that the Timucuan Indians were here first and observed Menendez and his party of about 1,500 soldiers and colonists. Since, the city has been under the governments of Spain, 1565 to 1763 and 1784-1821; Britain, 1763-1784, and United States, 1821-present. Florida became a state in 1845. It was part of the Confederacy from 1861-1862 when it returned to Union control.

St. Augustine in the late 1880s had its birth as a resort community with the arrival of Standard Oil co-founder Henry M. Flagler. He built two hotels and took over another to serve as the base of his Flagler System hotels. He founded the Florida East Coast Railway as a means of transporting guests to and from the north to his hotels in St. Augustine, Palm Beach, and Miami.

Three of his former St. Augustine hotels are in use today as Flagler College (Hotel Ponce de Leon), Ligntner Building/City Hall (Alcazar) and Casa Monica, redone as a county courthouse in the 1960's. In February 1997 Richard C. Kessler of the Kessler Enterprise, Inc. of Orlando purchased the Courthouse. On December 10, 1999 Richard C. Kessler opens the doors to the restored Casa Monica Hotel. Flagler also developed a neighborhood of 19th and early 20th century homes, two blocks west of the Plaza called the Model Land Company tract.

The heart of the city is its downtown Plaza de la Consitucion with most of the historic buildings located within a block or two of the Plaza, to the north and to the south. The Castillo de San Marcos, built of coquina by the Spanish in 1672, anchors the city's north end of the bay front. The Bridge of Lions, built in 1927, links the downtown with Davis Shores, a residential community dating back to the 1920s and St. Augustine Beach.

Today's city has 12,000-plus residents. It is the county seat of St. Johns County which has 160,000-plus residents.

Sources: http://www.staugustine.com/history; http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/Staugustine/index.asp?unit=1

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**New Amsterdam**

Colonial America, the Dutch in New York

In the late 16th century, the Dutch had thrown off Spanish control in Europe and entered into a period of frantic economic expansion. Amsterdam was the world financial center and the Dutch fleet the greatest in the world. Dutch ships were found in most ports of the known world and Dutch captains were responsible for taking control of the Spice Islands, or the Moluccas, in eastern Indonesia, and for discovering Australia and New Zealand.

The Dutch East India Company was the powerful engine behind much of this activity, which included the voyage of Henry Hudson. With his crew of the Half Moon, Hudson explored the coastlines of northern North America in search of a Northwest Passage. His voyage up the Hudson River helped to change the European conception of the New World; to this point most explorers regarded America as simply an impediment that blocked them from the riches of the East. Hudson found a beautiful landscape, ample harbors, fertile valleys and, most importantly, an abundance of fur-bearing animals. The New World had riches of its own.

In 1621, a new trading firm was established, the Dutch West India Company, which was more willing to capitalize on the resources of North America than the East India Company had been. While expending most of its energy wresting colonies and riches from the Spanish, the West India Company began to systematically develop a fur trade. Outposts established on the Hudson, Mohawk, Delaware and Connecticut rivers served as centers of trade with the Native Americans. Probably the most successful trading post was established at Fort Orange, site of latter-day Albany.

In 1626, the settlement of New Amsterdam was established at the mouth of the Hudson River. Peter Minuit, director general of the company, purchased all of Manhattan Island from the local natives for 60 Dutch guilders, which some have calculated to equal $24. The village's growth was slow, but the population was diverse from the beginning. Since Holland of the day was one of the most prosperous and desirable places in the world, only a limited number of Dutch were attracted across the ocean. Instead, people of different nationalities searching for economic opportunities found new hope in New Amsterdam. From its earliest times, the town was a melting pot. No one ever confused early Boston with New Amsterdam; the latter was a seafarers' town, complete with a full complement of taverns and smugglers.

Dutch control of the New Netherland lasted only about 50 years, but remnants of that time remain. Dutch settlers erected a stockade wall at what was then the northern edge of New Amsterdam, which later evolved into Wall Street. Dutch villages of Haarlem and Breukelen would later become New York boroughs. Early Dutch farms, called bouweries, provided the name for the section of the city that would later become the Bowery.

In the countryside outside of New Amsterdam, things were somewhat different. To bolster Dutch control in the area, the West India Company created a patroon, or landowner, system that granted huge parcels of land and feudal rights to individuals who could finance the settlement of 50 adults. Land ownership was denied to common workers, who became tenant farmers. One of the most famous patroonships was along the Hudson River; it was maintained by Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, a Dutch diamond merchant. The result of this system was the concentration of large blocks of land and exclusive political power in the hands of a few. This society was immortalized in Washington Irving's History of New York. The patroon system lived on in New York into the early 19th century.

In 1647, Peter Stuyvesant was sent to New Amsterdam to replace an unpopular governor, but his dictatorial style proved to be equally distasteful. Meanwhile, English settlers were expanding into the New Netherland, forcing the Dutch out of New Hope in the Connecticut Valley and establishing new settlements on Long Island. In 1664, James, Duke of York and brother to King Charles II, asserted his claim to the entire region between the Connecticut and Delaware rivers. English troop ships arrived in New Amsterdam harbor and prepared for battle. Stuyvesant bellowed orders to the citizens to defend the colony, but could not motivate them. The New Netherland became New York without a shot fired.

Source: http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h561.html

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**New Orleans**

The French:

LaSalle claimed the territory of Louisiana for the French in the 1690’s. The King of France awarded a proprietorship to the Company of the West, owned by John Law, to develop a colony in the new territory. Law appointed Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville Commandant and Director General of the new colony. Bienville wanted a colony on the Mississippi River, which served as the main highway for trade with the new world. The Native American Choctaw Nation showed Bienville a way to avoid the treacherous waters at the mouth of the Mississippi River by entering Lake Pontchartrain from the Gulf of Mexico and traveling on Bayou St. John to the site where the city now stands.

In 1718, Bienville’s dream of a city became reality. The city streets were laid out in 1721 by Adrian de Pauger, the royal engineer, following the design of Le Blond de la Tour. Many of the streets are named for the royal houses of France and Catholic saints. Contrary to popular belief, Bourbon Street8 is named not after the alcoholic beverage, but rather after the Royal House of Bourbon, the family then occupying the throne in France.

The Spanish:

The city remained under French 9rule until 1763, when the colony was sold to Spain. Two major fires and the sub-tropical climate destroyed many of the early structures. Early New Orleanians soon learned to build with native cypress and brick. The Spanish established new building codes requiring tile roofs and native brick walls. A walk through the French Quarter 10 today, shows that the architecture is really more Spanish than French.

The Americans:

With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 came the Americans.11 These newcomers to New Orleans were viewed by the French and Spanish Creoles as low-class, uncultured rough and tumble people who were not suited to the high society of the Creoles. Although the Creoles were forced to conduct business with the Americans, 12 they did not want them in the old city. Canal Street was built at the upriver edge of the French Quarter to keep the Americans out. So, today, when you cross over Canal Street, notice that all the old "Rues" change to "Streets" with different names. It is in the section that the old streetcars13 roll.

The arrival of the Haitians

Late in the 18th century a revolt in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) brought a number of refugees and immigrants to Louisiana. They were skilled artisans, well educated and made their mark in politics and business. One such successful newcomer was James Pitot, who later became the first mayor of incorporated New Orleans.

Free People of Color:

Because the Creole codes were a bit more liberal toward slaves than that of the Americans, and under some circumstance, allowed a slave to buy freedom, there were many "free people of color" in New Orleans. Because of its geographical location and the mix of cultures, New Orleans is a most unique city. Her past is never far from her future and her people are devoted to keeping her a one of a kind city.

Source: http://goneworleans.about.com/od/tours/a/historyofno.htm?p=1

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**Plymouth**

The Virginia Company of Plymouth, a group of English merchant investors, had failed to establish permanent colonies in the northern reaches of what was then known as Virginia.

The stockholders' spirits were further dampened when they noticed that their chief rival, the Virginia Company of London, had established a settlement at Jamestown, where a lucrative tobacco economy began to develop in the late 1600s. Sir Edwin Sandys, a major figure in the Plymouth group, hoped to salvage some of his investment by convincing James I that he should allow a group of religious dissenters to settle on the company’s lands.

Earlier, in 1608, group of religious separatists from the English town of Scrooby had moved quietly to Amsterdam and Leiden, Holland, in pursuit of religious freedom. Their journeys earned them the name "Pilgrim."

Despite their enjoyment of religious toleration, the separatists were denied entry to the lucrative Dutch guilds and found it hard to support themselves. They also were concerned about the fact that their children were growing up as young Dutch people and not adhering to their parents’ religious dictates.

Separatist leaders secured a land grant from Sandys in 1620, and embarked in the ship Mayflower for the New World in September. They arrived in November initially at Provincetown Bay and later settled at what became Plymouth.

The Pilgrims had intended to settle near the mouth of the 1146: Hudson River], but had been blown off course in stormy weather. Since they were well outside of the confines of Virginia, the colonists sought to legitimize their venture by forming the Mayflower Compact.

The Pilgrims established their first home in an empty Indian village where the inhabitants had recently been wiped out by an epidemic. With typical religious certainty, the leaders concluded that God had cleared the site for his chosen people. During the first winter, adverse weather conditions and lack of food took a heavy toll among the original 102 colonists.

In 1621, the Pilgrims concluded a peace treaty with Chief Massasoit of the neighboring Wampanoag tribe. The natives provided critical instruction on adaptation to the new environment, particularly in the cultivation of corn. That fall, following a successful harvest, the Pilgrims feasted with the Wampanoag in the first Thanksgiving celebration.

The Plymouth economy developed around trade in fish and furs. The sandy and rocky soil had made agriculture difficult, but basic crops were grown successfully.

Plymouth was never a prosperous settlement, but the religiously faithful were content to be ignored by English officials and left to direct their own affairs.

Plymouth remained a separate political entity until it was absorbed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1691.

Source: http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h522.html