

Section 4

Building the Jamestown Colony

VOCABULARY

charter a legal document giving certain rights to a person or company

representative government a system of government in which voters elect representatives to make laws for them

SUMMARY

Jealous of Spain's American empire, England tried desperately to establish colonies in North America. One, in Roanoke, Virginia, failed when all of the settlers disappeared without a trace. In 1607, a **charter** was granted to establish a colony at Jamestown, Virginia. The colony struggled for years. It did not thrive for several reasons. Early settlers were more interested in searching for gold than in raising food. When food ran out, settlers made enemies of the local Native Americans by taking their supplies by force. Also, the swampy climate and bad water caused outbreaks of disease.

The Jamestown colony began to succeed economically only when settlers learned to plant tobacco. To attract new settlers to the colony, a **representative government** was

put in place. Settlers were promised the same rights as any English citizen.

Burgesses, or representatives, met in an assembly called the **House of Burgesses** to decide matters that affected the colony. The new assembly had roots in the *Magna Carta*—a charter signed by King John in 1215, that limited the power of the monarchy—and Parliament, the representative assembly of England.

After 1619, the Jamestown settlement grew with the addition of women who married, worked, and raised families in the colony. African slaves also arrived at this time. They were brought to Virginia to work in the tobacco fields and on the farms.

REASONS FOR JAMESTOWN'S STRUGGLES	REASONS FOR JAMESTOWN'S SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swampy climate causes disease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A representative government is established.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Settlers are more interested in gold than in farming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tobacco proves easy to grow and is popular in Europe.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Settlers have poor relations with local Native Americans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women and African slaves arrive to increase population and to work.

REVIEW

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why was a representative government put into place in Jamestown?
2. **Chart Skills** To what did the Jamestown settlement owe its success?