

Before Jamestown

Introduction

Jamestown, Virginia — it was founded by the English in 1607. It was the first permanent English settlement in America. Remember the beginning of Disney's *Pocahontas* when they arrive on the continent, start building a fort, and singin' songs? That was Jamestown.

It was a turning point in American history, it signaled that the English were here to stay. I'm speaking English right now. In a way, that's because the English succeeded in Jamestown. If you're going to begin a podcast that surveys U.S. history, it's a good place to start, right?

Actually, no.

You see, Jamestown was not the first English settlement, only the first successful one. Before Jamestown, the English tried to colonize America and failed, and they failed hard.

Also, the English weren't the only European power with colonies in America.

The Spanish had been in Florida for decades. They founded St. Augustine in 1565 and Santa Fe, New Mexico just a few years after the British founded Jamestown. The French founded Quebec in 1608, and a year later, the Dutch began colonizing the Hudson River in modern day New York State, calling the region the New Netherlands.¹

Far from being a lone colony in the New World, the English founding of Jamestown represents an event that was part of a global trend as European nations reached outwards across the globe.

And the continent was not empty when Europeans arrived on its shores. There have been people here for a long time.

To understand the complexity of the situation, we need to take a step back and look at how and why Europeans began to colonize the Americas. So today we are going to explore the story of colonization Before Jamestown.

— *Intro Music* —

[Welcome to American History Remix, the podcast about the overlooked and underexplored aspects of American history. We're glad you're here!]

Natives

The story of colonization in America actually begins about 15,000 years ago. And that's the conservative estimate. The first people to reach the New World crossed the Bering Strait, the

¹ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Before 1607," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2015), 3.

land bridge from Siberia to Alaska that was exposed during the Ice Age while ocean levels were low. Migration was slow as peoples drifted farther and farther south, finally reaching the tip of South America around 10,000 years ago.²

Like their counterparts in the Old World, Native Americans developed farming. They cultivated crops such as corn, squashes, and beans. But they differed regionally. In northern Alaska and Canada, the growing season was too short to foster agriculture. On the Pacific Coast, wild plants and fish were so abundant that Native Americans in the region never had a need to develop farming.³

You see, Native Americans were not a unified group any more than Africans, Asians, or Europeans. They spoke thousands of different languages lived in separate regions and had different cultures. The Native Americas had a long and dynamic history before Europeans arrived.

So, let's cover a few of the highlights. The Mayan culture of Central America reached its height from 250 to 950 CE. They built pyramids, temples, and observatories for watching the skies, created a complex calendar, and developed a writing system.⁴

The Inca of South America ruled an empire that stretched along the Andes Mountains from modern-day Ecuador to central Chile. The Inca ruled from Cuzco, Peru and built cities like Machu Picchu. They had a system of roads that totaled over 40,000 km which crossed their empire and allowed for the movement of people, information, trade goods, and armies.⁵

Another civilization, which is generally less well known, arose along the Mississippi Watershed. Numerous cities populated the region but the largest was called Cahokia, near present day St. Louis and reached its peak from 900 to 1100 CE. Like other cities in the region, the inhabitants of Cahokia built a large earthen pyramid that was the third largest in North America. At its height, the city housed ten thousand people. The native population in North America was generally dispersed, not concentrated in one location. So, for the time and region, this city was huge.⁶

As we'll see later, successful European colonies needed assistance from or cooperation with Native Americans. But Native communities were also reshaped after contact with Europeans. The history of the two groups will become intertwined.

² Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 5-6.

³ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 10-12.

⁴ T. Patrick Culbert, *Maya Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1993), 58-63, 71-77, 34-37.

⁵ Mark Cartwright, "Inca Civilization," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, last modified September 15, 2014. https://www.ancient.eu/Inca_Civilization/; Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: Volume B: 1300-1815* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), 423-34; L. D. Burnett et al., "The New World," in *The American Yawp*, eds. Joseph Locke and Ben Wright (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), accessed April 23, 2019, <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/01-the-new-world/>.

⁶ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 14-17.

The World in the 15th Century

Now let's turn to the Old World. One trap we can fall into as modern observers is to look at a region as it is today and assume that is how it has always been. But that can be very misleading. An outside observer in the early 1400s probably would not have expected that Europe would colonize the world. More likely they would have picked China. That's because between 1405 and 1433 Chinese admiral Zheng He led seven naval expeditions through the Indian Ocean. His voyages reached as far as India, the Arabian Peninsula, and even the coast of Africa. Without question, China was the naval power of the era.⁷

Or, perhaps the outside observer would expect Africa to dominate the globe. The continent at the time was known for its wealth. Islamic society had more advanced technology, scientific discoveries, and preserved the knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome that had been lost in the West. The trade routes across Eurasia and Africa were all controlled by Muslim kingdoms. And Arabic was the language of trade and law.⁸

Europe meanwhile was still recovering from the Plague that in the mid-1300s killed one third of the population.⁹

Reasons for Expansion

With all this against it, why did Europe expand outwards? There isn't one single answer to this but rather a combination of reasons.

New naval technology to start. Europeans developed a new kind of ship called the Caravel which was capable of traveling longer distances than previous ships.¹⁰ Likewise, increased knowledge of wind patterns and the invention of the Astrolabe helped sailors navigate the seas in ways previously impossible.¹¹

Other technology also helped this process. The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg, lowered the cost of books expanded readership in Europe beyond just the elite. And of particular interest to this new readership were travel narratives. Have you heard of Marco Polo? In the year 1300, he published an account of his 24 year-long journey overland to China. His writings became incredibly popular. Europeans even read fake travel logs which detailed the wealth and wonders of imaginary kingdoms. These accounts, both true and false, helped popularize interest in the Far East.¹²

There was also an economic push for European expansion which was fanned by religious rivalry. While Europeans desired goods from China such as silk and spices, and the gold and ivory of sub-Saharan Africa, the trade routes were controlled by Muslims. Europeans were bitter that Muslim merchants benefited from the same trade that drained wealth from Europe. On top of

⁷ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 16-17.

⁸ Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 18; Taylor, *American Colonies*, 24-25.

⁹ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 25-26.

¹⁰ Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 17.

¹¹ Spielvogel, *Western Civilization*, 415.

¹² Taylor, *American Colonies*, 26.

this, the failure of the Crusades was still fresh in the minds of Europeans. Rulers in the continent began dreaming of ways to circumvent the Muslim controlled overland routes.¹³

So, new technology, growing popular interest in far-off places, religious rivalry, and economic self-interest. All of these were factors that drove Europe to expand outwards.

Story of Expansion

But these motivations and developments didn't facilitate expansions all at once. Rather, naval exploration began with Portugal and Spain and grew gradually. Using the new technology, Portuguese sailors probed down the coast of Africa, reaching farther and farther south till in 1487 Vasco da Gama sailed around the southern tip of Africa and entered the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese had found a new route to the East.¹⁴

Soon other nations followed suit, hoping to gain access to the wealth of China.

While the Portuguese were sailing around Africa, one Italian sailor was convinced he could find another way to the East—by going west. Here we reach Christopher Columbus.

But first, let's dispel one popular myth. Columbus knew the earth was round. Everyone at the time knew the earth was round, the ancient Greeks knew the earth was round. I hope everyone listening knows the earth is round. No one thought that Columbus was going to sail off the edge of the world. What Columbus got wrong was the size of the Earth. He drastically underestimated the size of the globe and believed he could reach India and China via the Atlantic. What no European knew at the time was that there were two large continents in the way.¹⁵

Columbus sought funding for his ambitious plan from a number of sources. The French, English, and Portuguese courts all turned him down before the Spanish agreed to sponsor him.¹⁶ That's how Columbus, and Italian, ended up sailing on behalf of Spain.

Columbus and his three ships set sail from Spain in 1492, stopped off at the Canary Islands to restock their supplies and turned west into the unknown. A month later he landed in the Bahamas. He then turned south and arrived on the Island he called Hispaniola. Convinced that the island was just off the coast of Asia he called the native peoples "Indians."

He returned to Europe in 1493 and word of his journey spread rapidly. Columbus sailed to America three more times and explored the coast of Central America. He died in 1506 convinced that he had reached a land near Asia. Other explorers, however, soon began to realize that this was another land. In 1497, John Cabot, another Italian sailor, this one sailing on behalf of the English crown, crossed the North Atlantic and reached Canada.

¹³ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 26; Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 16.

¹⁴ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 32.

¹⁵ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 34.

¹⁶ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 34.

In 1500, Portuguese sailors arrived on the shores of Brazil. Eventually, another sailor, explored enough of South America to declare that it was not Asia at all but a continent previously unknown to Europeans. This explorer was Amerigo Vespucci, and it's from him that America gets its name.

Themes of Expansion

Before moving on, I want to point out a few important themes in the early history of European colonization.

How did Europeans, and especially the Spanish, create such large empires in America? One reason is that Europeans possessed superior military technology such as steel weapons, horses, and guns. They also exploited inter-native rivalries, drawing subjugated peoples to their side as they overthrew the ruling Natives.

But the single greatest advantage to European invaders was disease. Africa and Eurasia had more long-distance trade routes, increased urbanization, and more pack animals. Accumulatively, these factors allowed new diseases to develop to which Native Americans had no immunity.

We don't know the exact population of the Americas prior to Columbus. It was probably somewhere between 50 and 90 million. For comparison, the Black Plague which decimated Europe in the 1300s, killed about 1/3 of Europeans. In the 150 years after first contact between the Old and New Worlds, about 1/5 of all humanity died. This is the greatest loss of human life in history and the psychological effect is unimaginable.

From the Caribbean, to Central and South America, from the Great Plains to the Atlantic Coast, diseases such as smallpox and influenza destroyed entire communities. And as Natives fled these epidemics, they unknowingly brought the pathogens with them, spreading them to communities who had no direct contact with Europeans.¹⁷

Nothing about the colonization of America makes any sense if we don't understand the impact of disease. It was present in first contact and it will be present in Jamestown.

The second theme in European expansion is the slave trade. As they explored the African coast, Portuguese sailors reached the Canary, Madeira, and Azores islands. Portuguese and Spanish explorers used the islands as a base where they could resupply their ships on longer expeditions. But the islands had another significance as well. Europeans realized the value in growing sugar there. They established large plantations and forced the native inhabitants to work them. Toiling on sugar plantations, however, was difficult work and the local population began to die off. To supply new labor for the plantations, the Portuguese and Spanish brought African slaves to the islands.¹⁸

¹⁷ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 39-45- 54-57; Foner, *Give me Liberty*, 22-24; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 163.

¹⁸ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 29-32, 34.

Present from the very beginning of European colonization was a devastating pattern: First contact, death of the native population, large plantations to supply goods for European markets, and African slavery.

This was a horrific process. We can celebrate the Age of Expansion, the process of connecting the globe, an age of increased knowledge and discovery. But at the same time, we have to recognize that this had devastating consequences.

The third theme I want to emphasize is that European expansion was tied to the consolidation of power within Europe. Prior to 1469, Spain was not Spain. The independent kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were united by the marriage of their monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand. The monarchs also completed the Reconquista, which was the expulsion of Moors who were African Muslims that had controlled parts of the region for centuries. In 1492, the same year Columbus set sail, the last Moorish kingdom fell, and Spain became a unified and officially Catholic kingdom.¹⁹

Britain followed a similar pattern of internal consolidation. More on that in a bit.

Finally, there is the theme of European competition. Remember that an early motive for exploration was to undermine Muslim control of trade and resources. Very quickly, however, Europeans began to compete with each other. Portugal and Spain fought over control of those islands we mentioned earlier, the Canaries, Madeiras, and Azores.

This rivalry continued in America. The Pope had to mediate between the two powers in 1494. The two sides agreed to the Treaty of Tordesillas which drew a line in the Atlantic and gave Portugal the right to colonize in Africa and the Indian Ocean. It gave the westward lands to Spain. But knowledge of the coast of South America was still poor, and they later realized that the continent reached east of the dividing line. Thus, giving Portugal the right to colonize Brazil.²⁰

This is why today the majority of South America speaks Spanish but in Brazil they speak Portuguese.

Soon, other nations would join in the colonizing effort. This brings us closer to understanding the situation in the early 1600s, where four empires claimed parts of North America.

Multiple Empires

So, let's look at what was going on here.

With the Spanish control over Central and South America, other European powers who desired to establish footholds in America had to look elsewhere. As we mentioned earlier, the Spanish were in New Mexico and Florida.²¹ But they were unconcerned with Europeans settlements

¹⁹ Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 19.

²⁰ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 36; Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 123-24.

²¹ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 82; Kupperman, "Before 1607," 3.

farther to the North. They believed the region wasn't all that valuable. But Europeans found other resources in the region—namely fish and fur.²²

The French began to explore the St. Lawrence river in modern-day Canada, which connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes. After a series of failed colonies, they successfully founded Quebec in 1608.²³

French colonizers had different aims than their English counterparts. The French were not interested in displacing Native Americans to settle in large groups. Rather than land, they wanted furs. And for this they needed cooperation with Native Americans. Their colonies were more like outposts to facilitate trade.²⁴

The Dutch were also present in the region. Since 1609, Henry Hudson, an Englishman sailing on behalf of the Dutch, had been sailing up the river that now bears his name. In 1614, to support Dutch trade in the region, he established Fort Nassau in what is today Albany, New York. At the mouth of the Hudson River, the Dutch founded a fort on the southern tip of Manhattan and named it New Amsterdam.²⁵

English in America

Now, finally, we turn to the English.

Britain, like Spain, also consolidated its power as it expanded outwards. London gained control of Wales in 1536. And in 1603, James VI of Scotland succeeded Queen Elizabeth I of England, and ruled over both kingdoms. They were formally united a century later. This is the James for whom Jamestown is named.

Many of the early settlers and colonial promoters were also active in the English wars with Ireland in the 16th century. In these cases, the English justified their expansion by portraying local Irish communities as savages who misused the land, while they portrayed themselves as spreading civilization.²⁶ Does this sound familiar? Because it is the same rhetoric the English will use in America. But it was developed first within the British Isles. Historians call this process “Internal Colonialism.”

Rivalry with other empires was a crucial motivator for English settlement. Richard Hakluyt was a contemporary promoter of English colonization. In 1584, he wrote to Queen Elizabeth on a variety of reasons to support “western planting” as he called it. His arguments show he was keenly aware of England’s place among other European empires. He argued for colonization in the north Atlantic because it was not near any other countries but was near enough to the Spanish

²² Taylor, *American Colonies*, 92.

²³ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 99-100.

²⁴ Kupperman, "Before 1607," 13.

²⁵ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 251-52.

²⁶ Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 1-12.

that English settlers could raid their ships.²⁷ Growing crops in the colonies would be great, and he supported that. But Hakluyt knew the real money was in stealing from the Spanish.

Hakluyt claimed that the Spanish ruled with “pride and tyranny.” Spanish treatment of Natives Americans and Africans was already well known in Europe and it served as a powerful rhetorical weapon that many European empires used to justify their own imperialism.²⁸ By characterizing the Spanish as brutal oppressors, the English claimed their own imperial gains were bringing civilization and spreading true religion. In reality, the English weren’t any less oppressive than the Spanish. But they liked to claim they were.

With all these motivations and rhetoric in mind, what did colonization in North America actually look like? Well, it didn’t come easy for the English. Many early settlements failed. Like really failed. In 1578, Queen Elizabeth granted a patent to Sir Humphry Gilbert allowing him to establish a colony in Newfoundland. Humphry set sail, but his fleet soon encountered a storm in the Atlantic and was forced back to England without ever seeing Newfoundland.²⁹ In 1583, Gilbert tried again to found a colony in Newfoundland. This time he even reached it, landing in St. John’s Port. He claimed the land for England, but after only a few weeks, Gilbert left to return home. On the way, he encountered another storm. This one destroyed his ship and he drowned at sea.³⁰ It wasn’t a great start.

Sir Walter Raleigh, Gilbert’s half-brother, had a little more success. Among the favorites in the court of Queen Elizabeth, Raleigh was able to raise funding and receive patents to establish his own colonies. The first of these was established on Roanoke Island in present-day North Carolina in 1585.

The English chose the site because it was near enough to the West Indies that it could be used as a base for raiding Spanish ships as they left America on their way back to Europe. Spain and England entered into formal war the same year. Roanoke would essentially serve as a military outpost, manned by young soldiers.³¹ It got off to a rough start, however. As settlers neared the island, one of the ships ran aground and much of the food that was meant to feed the colony was lost.³²

And who did the Roanoke colonists encounter when they showed up? Native Americans. The people who had been on the continent for 15,000 years. Natives in the region were Algonquin. This was not a unified group but a language family with many independent groups within it.³³

²⁷ Eric Foner, *Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 21-24.

²⁸ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 51-52.

²⁹ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* (Savage, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1984), 10-11; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971): 568-69.

³⁰ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 94; Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 30; Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 574, 576-78.

³¹ Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 13.

³² Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 22.

³³ Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 45.

Initially, relations between the colonists and Natives were peaceful and they traded goods back and forth.³⁴ The lost food, however, made the colonists extremely dependent on Native support. Relations broke down over that year when the English raided a nearby Native village for food. Conditions in the colony were so bad that when a supply ship came in 1586, the colonists just decided to return to England with it. The first Roanoke colony lasted only one year.³⁵

But Raleigh, like his half-brother, decided to try again. A new expedition to Roanoke arrived a year later in 1587. This colony differed greatly from the first. Instead of soldiers intent on raiding the Spanish, it was made up of families and was supposed to be based in agriculture. The first child of English descent born in America was born in Roanoke.³⁶

The fate of the second Roanoke colony is even stranger than the first. After a year on the continent, aid ships came to visit the colony found the site abandoned. On a door was carved the word "CROATOAN." At first this was not a great concern, the colonists had agreed that if they left for any reason, they would carve the name of their destination for others to find. And Croatoan was a region to the south. But when the ships set off to search Croatoan, storms blew them off course and they were not able to reach the area. The Spanish, disliking the idea of an English colony in the region, also searched for the people of Roanoke. But they never found them either.³⁷

Two decades later, at the founding of Jamestown, English settlers heard rumors from Native Americans of a group of Europeans living among them. Other rumors circled of Europeans killed by Native Americans. But these were just rumors, with no evidence. To this day, historians don't know what happened to the colonists.³⁸ It's possible they were killed by Native Americans, it's possible they lived among them, it's possible they lived among them but then were killed by Native Americans. We don't know.

So, if you're counting, between the brothers Gilbert and Raleigh there were four failed colonies. Or at least attempted colonies. Between my brothers and I, we have zero failed colonies.... Anyway, Raleigh, eventually fell out of favor with Queen Elizabeth and was beheaded by her successor, James I.³⁹

Movin' on.

Jamestown

Here we reach Jamestown, the colony that succeeded. I know this episode is called BEFORE JAMESTOWN, but we got to give you something about the place. War with Spain ended in 1604 and was followed by a renewed interest in colonization. The Virginia Company was granted the charter for the region and planned to settle in the Chesapeake Bay. The region was

³⁴ Kupperman, Roanoke, 70.

³⁵ Kupperman, Roanoke, 81, 83.

³⁶ Kupperman, Roanoke, 107.

³⁷ Kupperman, Roanoke, 131-32.

³⁸ Kupperman, Roanoke, 138.

³⁹ Kupperman, Roanoke, 146-47, 157.

home to over 24,000 Algonquin Native Americans, belonging to over 30 tribes but all under the control of a powerful chief named Powhatan.

Powhatan was able to bring these tribes under his authority, forging peace between competing groups and channeling their hostility outward to rival tribes. When Europeans arrived in 1607 and founded Jamestown, Powhatan hoped to bring them under his control as he had with so many other tribes. The English had the reverse plan.⁴⁰

Subordinating the Natives was not so easy; the colonists could barely stay alive. Of the 104 colonists arrived in 1607, only 38 survived winter. The Virginia Company continued to send reinforcements to the site, but they died off too. In 1609, there were 220 colonists, after winter there were 60. In the first 15 years, 80% of the colonists who arrived in Jamestown died. The location of Jamestown was near a swamp. This served as protection against Native attacks. But it also bred disease. Furthermore, the colonists refused to work. The English gentry who arrived believed they were above manual labor and, inspired by the Spanish, preferred to search for gold. The English vagrants who were rounded up and forced to settle in the colony were also unfamiliar with agricultural work. The result was a massive shortage in food.⁴¹

One historian has offered another interpretation of Jamestown's early history. She argues that the colonists' behavior—their apathy, lethargy, and unwillingness to work—all match the symptoms of malnutrition. Because the colonists didn't have food, they didn't have the energy, focus, and drive, to grow food. It was a feedback loop. But whatever the reason for their behavior, the conditions in the colony were awful.⁴²

Tensions with Powhatan remained high until the English were able to capture his daughter Pocahontas and force him to make peace. Afterwards, she was brought to England to promote colonization and to show that Natives could be indoctrinated into English ways. And she died there at age twenty-one.⁴³ This stuff wasn't in the movie.

After the death of Powhatan in 1618, his brother succeeded him and the violence between Natives and colonists reignited. In one episode, Natives encouraged the English to spread out, to settle on unused lands. But it was a trap. In a coordinated attack, they killed 347 colonists spread throughout the region. The colonists responded by attacking Natives just before harvest and destroying their crops. Disease and warfare ultimately took its toll on the native population. Between 1607 and 1669, their numbers dropped from 24,000 to only 2000.⁴⁴

And after over a decade of death and misery in Jamestown, the Virginia Company began to change its tactics. It offered free land to men who emigrated from England, including land for each indentured servant. These servants received free passage across the Atlantic if they agreed to work for their masters for seven years. When their service was done, they too would receive

⁴⁰ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 127-28.

⁴¹ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 130-131.

⁴² Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Apathy and Death in Early Jamestown," *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 1 (1979): 24-25.

⁴³ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 133.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 135-36.

land. It was a sweet gig if they didn't all die a few years into their term. Still, the change helped the colony, as the men showed much more interest in working if it was on their own private land.

The colony became the primary supplier of tobacco for Europe. The crop was well suited for growing in the Virginia climate. Smoking had caught on in Europe and brought in tremendous wealth to the colony and finally give it stability.⁴⁵ And in the 1650s the death rate in Jamestown finally stabilized.

Meanwhile, the English expanded their colonial efforts. The Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth in 1620. In 1632, the Crown established a second Chesapeake colony north of Virginia, called Maryland. In 1664, the English captured the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam and renamed it New York.⁴⁶

So, from Jamestown onwards, English claims in North America only grew stronger...until the Revolution, but we'll talk about that later.

Conclusion

So, what have we learned? First, English colonization was not isolated. But rather was part of a larger process of European expansion. The colonizers competed with each other. There were the Spanish, French, Dutch, English, all vying for North America. And they were all interacting with Native Americans who had different and changing relationships with the Europeans that arrived on their shores.

Second, English colonization was anything but certain. It was a system of trial and error. There were multiple failed colonies. And Jamestown was a deathtrap for its first few decades. They failed for a long time before they succeeded.

The story is messy. Complex. Brutal. And I think more interesting.

This is what we will be doing on American History Remix. We'll revisit the past, take familiar stories, adjust our perspective and see what we find. We'll examine forgotten elements of America's story and bring them to the forefront. We'll also emphasize themes like social and cultural change, the evolution of ideas, and the role the environment played in shaping American history.

It's going to be a fun ride. We hope you join us. Thanks.

[American History Remix is written and produced by Will Schneider and Lyndsay Smith. Be sure to follow us on Instagram and Twitter @americanhistoryremix. For more on this subject and others, visit AmericanHistoryRemix.com where we have full episode transcripts with citations and recommended reading. That's AmericanHistoryRemix.com. If you like what you heard here, then please tell a friend! If you use iTunes, then please rate and review us! Remember to

⁴⁵ Taylor, American Colonies, 133-34.

⁴⁶ Taylor, American Colonies, 136, 259-60.

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