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Early English Settlements in North America

Early English Settlements in North America	Jamestown	Plymouth
Location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Traveling aboard the Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery, 104 men landed in Virginia in 1607 at a place they named Jamestown. 2- Jamestown offered anchorage, a good defensive position, warm climate and fertile soil. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Thirteen years later, 102 settlers aboard the Mayflower landed in Massachusetts at a place they named Plymouth. 2- Plymouth provided good anchorage and an excellent harbor. 3- Cold climate and thin, rocky soil limited farm size. 4- New Englanders turned to lumbering, shipbuilding, fishing and trade.
Reasons for Settlements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Economic motives prompted colonization in Virginia. 2- The Virginia Company of London, organized in 1606, sponsored the Colony. 3- Organizers of the company wanted to expand English trade and obtain a wider market for English manufactured goods. 4- They naturally hoped for financial profit from their investment in shares of company stock. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Freedom from religious persecution motivated the Pilgrims to leave England and settle in Holland. 2- However, the Pilgrims felt that their children were being corrupted by the liberal Dutch lifestyle. 3- News of the English Colony in Virginia motivated them to leave Holland and settle in the New World. 4- Rough seas and storms prevented the <i>Mayflower</i> from reaching its intended destination in the area of the Hudson River, and the ship was steered instead toward Cape Cod. 5- Because of the change of course, the passengers were no longer within the jurisdiction of the charter granted to them in England by the Virginia Company.
Early Setbacks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Inexperience, unwillingness to work, and the lack of wilderness survival skills led to disagreements and inaction at Jamestown. 2- Poor Indian relations and disease compounded the problems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Cooperation and hard work were part of the Pilgrim's lifestyle. 2- Nevertheless, they too were plagued with hunger, disease, and environmental hazards.
Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- In 1619, the first representative legislative assembly in the New World met at the Jamestown church. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Since New England was outside the jurisdiction of Virginia's government, the Pilgrims established a self-governing agreement of their own, the "Mayflower Compact."
The Fate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- The Powhatan Indians stopped bartering for food. 2- Hunting became highly dangerous, as Powhatan Indians also killed Englishmen. 3- Long reliant on the Indians, the colony found itself with far too little food for the winter. 4- As the food stocks ran out, the settlers ate the colony's animals – horses, dogs, and cats – and then turned to eating rats, mice, and shoe leather. 5- In their desperation, some practiced cannibalism. 6- Winter of 1609- 10: the Starving Time. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Though more than half the original settlers died during that grueling first winter, the survivors were able to secure peace treaties with neighboring Native American tribes and build a largely self-sufficient economy within five years.

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Identify ten differences between the settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth:

Jamestown	Plymouth

The Article: Starving Settlers in Jamestown Colony Resorted to Cannibalism; Smithsonian Magazine, Joseph Stromberg, May 1, 2013

The harsh winter of 1609 in Virginia’s Jamestown Colony forced residents to do the unthinkable. A recent excavation at the historic site discovered the carcasses of dogs, cats and horses consumed during the season commonly called the “Starving Time.” But a few other newly discovered bones in particular, though, tell a far more gruesome story: the dismemberment and cannibalization of a 14-year-old English girl.

“The chops to the forehead are very tentative, very incomplete,” says Douglas Owsley, the Smithsonian forensic anthropologist who analyzed the bones after they were found by archaeologists from Preservation Virginia. “Then, the body was turned over, and there were four strikes to the back of the head, one of which was the strongest and split the skull in half. A penetrating wound was then made to the left temple, probably by a single-sided knife, which was used to pry open the head and remove the brain.”

...It’s long been speculated that the harsh conditions faced by the colonists of Jamestown might have made them desperate enough to eat other humans – and perhaps even commit murder to do so. The colony was founded in 1607 by 104 settlers aboard three ships, the Susan Constant, Discovery and Godspeed, but only 38 survived the first nine months of life in Jamestown, with most succumbing to starvation and disease (some researchers speculate that drinking water poisoned by arsenic and human waste also played a role). Because of difficulties in growing crops – they arrived in the midst of one of the worst regional droughts in centuries and many settlers were unused to hard agricultural labor – the survivors remained dependent on supplies brought by subsequent missions, as well as trade with Native Americans.

By the winter of 1609, extreme drought, hostile relations with members of the local Powhatan Confederacy and the fact that a supply ship was lost at sea put the colonists in a truly desperate position. Sixteen years later, in 1625, George Percy, who had been president of Jamestown during the Starving Time, wrote a letter describing the colonists’ diet during that terrible winter. “Haveinge fedd upon our horses and other beastes as longe as they Lasted, we weare gladd to make shifte with vermin as doggs Catts, Ratts and myce...as to eate Bootes shoes or any other leather,” he wrote. “And now famin beginneinge to Looke gastely and pale in every face, thatt notheinge was Spared to mainteyne Lyfe and to doe those things which seame incredible, as to digge upp deade

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corpes outt of graves and to eate them. And some have Licked upp the Bloode which hathe fallen from their weake fellowes.”

Despite this and other textual references to cannibalism, though, there had never been hard physical evidence that it had occurred—until now.

...Owsley speculates that this particular Jamestown body belonged to a child who likely arrived in the colony during 1609 on one of the resupply ships. She was either a maidservant or the child of a gentleman, and due to the high-protein diet indicated by his team’s isotope analysis of her bones, he suspects the latter. The identity of whoever consumed her is entirely unknown, and Owsley guesses there might have been multiple cannibals involved, because the cut marks on her shin indicate a more skilled butcher than whoever dismembered her head.

It appears that her brain, tongue, cheeks and leg muscles were eaten, with the brain likely eaten first, because it decomposes so quickly after death. There’s no evidence of murder, and Owsley suspects that this was a case in which hungry colonists simply ate the one remaining food available to them, despite cultural taboos. “I don’t think that they killed her, by any stretch,” he says. “It’s just that they were so desperate, and so hard-pressed, that out of necessity this is what they resorted to.”

Questions:

1- What does the article reveal about life in Jamestown?

2- Why are forensic anthropologists essential for studying certain aspects of the path? And for what aspects of the past are forensic anthropologists particularly important?

3- Could any actions on the part of settlers have prevented this tragedy (think particularly about decisions made by settlers before the tragedy)?

4- What conditions or factors in particular led to this tragedy?
