

## **The First Permanent English Settlement: Jamestown**

1. In 1606, England, like many other European countries, was searching for more wealth and power. One way to accomplish this goal was to start a new colony in America. The Virginia Company of London wanted to finance a settlement in America for England. This venture was primarily an economic one because the Company and King James I hoped to find silver and gold in the new lands. They were also looking for materials that could not be grown or were in short supply in England such as wood, furs, and new foods. In addition, they hoped that they would be able to increase their trade with other countries and peoples.

2. The King of England had the power to grant charters or royal permission allowing settlement in North America. In 1606 James I issued a charter to the Virginia Company of London. This first charter gave the Virginia Company the right to establish a settlement in North America. The charter also ensured that the settlers would have all the rights and privileges of free Englishmen back home.

3. It was under the 1606 charter that the London Company sent out its first settlers to Virginia. In 1607, three ships arrived from England with 104 men and boys. The ships were named the Godspeed, the Discovery, and the Susan Constant. Captain Christopher Newport was in charge. The settlers named the nearby river James after their king. Then they chose a narrow peninsula on this river for their new home. They chose this spot for three reasons: it could easily be defended from Spanish attack by land and sea, the water close to shore was deep enough for ships to dock, and they *thought* that it had a good supply of fresh water.