

From England to America ^[1]

After Spain gave up its efforts to control territory as far north as North Carolina, England, which was envious of Spain's wealth and power, had a try at colonizing the New World. This chapter tells the story of England's first attempts — bleak failures that hardly suggested the success of the colonies that could come later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

We'll start with two perspectives on England at the end of the sixteenth century. First, the good news: England was on the rise, becoming more proud and powerful than ever before under Queen Elizabeth I. Then, the bad news: life in "Merrie Olde England" was pretty rotten for most people! As you read, ask yourself whether the two articles contradict each other. Can a nation be proud and powerful while so many of its people are miserable?

Then we'll look at the colony on Roanoke Island — the famous "Lost Colony" that disappeared without a trace and has fascinated people ever since. You'll read the story of the Roanoke settlement and the reports of three of the men who tried to make it a success, the explorers Amadas and Barlowe and Roanoke's governor, John White. Ask yourself what the English could — or should — have done differently. Could they have planned better, or were there lessons they had to learn the hard way? Was there hope for Roanoke, or was the Lost Colony simply doomed from the start?

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