

The Popham Colony was a little known English colony that was founded just months after the Jamestown Colony in 1607. Unlike the Jamestown colony, however, the Popham Colony settled in present-day Maine rather than Virginia. The Popham Colony was the first settlement in what would become New England.

On May 31, 1607, 120 settlers left Plymouth, England, on their way to the New World. They were sponsored by the Plymouth Company, which was a rival of the Virginia Company – the company that sent settlers to Jamestown. The colonists headed to New England planned to harvest metals, furs, and spices from the region's forests to make profits. It was named the Popham Colony because of its leader was George Popham. The first boat carrying settlers arrived on August 13, followed three days later by a second ship. The colonists, who were gentleman, artisans, farmers, and traders, began construction on a star-shaped fort they named Fort St. George along the Kennebec River. They also built a chapel, guardhouse, a storehouse, and a cooperage where they could build barrels.

The colony failed to thrive at first. Because the settlers arrived late in the summer, there was no time to farm for food and the colony had not yet established relations with the local Abenaki tribe. Half of the settlers decided to sail back to England, and the other half decided to remain at Fort St. George through the bitter Maine winter. Of the 45 remaining colonists, 44 survived the winter. The single colonist to die was George Popham.

In the spring of 1608, the colonists built a 30-ton ship called a pinnace, to show that the colony could be useful in shipbuilding. The ship, which they named *Virginia*, was the first European ship to be built in the New World. By this time, the colonists had established trade with the Abenaki, and sent a cargo ship back to England with furs and bundles of wild sarsaparilla. When the cargo ship returned, it brought news that the brother of the colony's new leader, Raleigh Gilbert, had died and that Gilbert was the heir to a magnificent estate. Gilbert decided to return to England as did the remaining colonists almost a year after they landed. Many of them returned on the *Virginia*.

**1. What was a similarity between the Popham Colony and Jamestown?**

- A. Both colonies were sponsored by the same company
- B. Both colonies were founded in the same year
- C. Both colonies were founded in the same region
- D. In both colonies, many of the original settlers died in the first year

**2. What is not true about the Popham Colony?**

- A. It thought it could make money from the region's forests
- B. It eventually established trade with the local Abenaki tribe
- C. The colonists built a star-shaped fort which they named Fort St. George
- D. The colony seemed to succeed immediately

**3. What was the effect of the colonists' arrival date?**

- A. They'd be unsuccessful in growing crops
- B. They'd have conflict with the Abenaki
- C. They wouldn't be able to survive the winter
- D. Most would be forced to sail back to England

**4. Which of the following is not explained in the passage?**

- A. What crops did the colonists eventually grow?
- B. Why did Raleigh Gilbert decide to return to England?
- C. What is a cooperage?
- D. Why did the colonists build a pinnace?

**5. The *Virginia*...**

- A. was built to prove something.
- B. was used as a means to sail to Jamestown.
- C. was the name of a 30-ton pinnace built in England.
- D. was destroyed in a fire.

**6. Which of the following best describes the Popham Colony?**

- A. The Popham Colony was unsuccessful because the colonists proved they could not survive in the harsh environment
- B. The Popham Colony was successful because it sent furs and sarsaparilla back to England
- C. The Popham Colony was successful because only one colonists out of 45 died
- D. The Popham Colony was unsuccessful as its settlers remained only one year before abandoning the colony

**7. When did the Popham Colony establish trade with the Abenaki?**

- A. In the summer of 1608
- B. When they first arrived in 1607
- C. In the spring of 1608
- D. In the winter of 1607-1608