

The Southern Colonies

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The settlement in Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in America.
2. Daily life in Virginia was challenging to the colonists.
3. Religious freedom and economic opportunities were motives for founding other southern colonies, including Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia.
4. Farming and slavery were important to the economies of the southern colonies.

The Big Idea

Despite a difficult beginning, the southern colonies soon flourished.

Key Terms and People

Jamestown, p. 36
 John Smith, p. 37
 Pocahontas, p. 37
 indentured servants, p. 38
 Bacon's Rebellion, p. 38
 Toleration Act of 1649, p. 39
 Olaudah Equiano, p. 41
 slave codes, p. 41



HSS 8.1 Students understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.

If YOU were there...

A year ago, in 1609, you moved to the colony of Virginia. But life here has been hard. During the winter many people died of cold or sickness. Food is always scarce. Now it is spring, and a ship has come from England bringing supplies. In a week it will sail home. Some of your neighbors are giving up and returning to England. They ask you to come, too.

Would you take the ship back to England?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Several European nations took part in the race to claim lands in the Americas. Their next step was to establish colonies in the lands that they claimed. The first English colonies were started in the late 1500s but failed. Even in successful colonies, colonists faced hardships and challenges.

Settlement in Jamestown

In 1605 a company of English merchants asked King James I for the right to found, or establish, a settlement. In 1606 the king granted the request of the company to settle in a region called Virginia.

Founding a New Colony

The investors in the new settlement formed a joint-stock company called the London Company. This allowed the group to share the cost and risk of establishing the colony. On April 26, 1607, the first 105 colonists sent by the London Company arrived in America. On May 14, about 40 miles up the James River in Virginia, the colonists founded **Jamestown**, the first permanent English settlement in North America.

A lack of preparation cost a lot of the colonists their lives. Most of the men who came to Jamestown were adventurers with no farming experience or useful skills such as carpentry. Jamestown was surrounded by marshes full of disease-carrying mosquitoes. By the time winter arrived, two-thirds of the original colonists had died.

Jamestown Colony



Jamestown was located with defense in mind. Enemy Spanish ships would have to pass through a narrow channel to reach Jamestown, making the ships easy marks for the settlers' cannons.

Williamsburg

Williamsburg was founded in 1633 as Middle Plantation by settlers from Jamestown.

The forest could provide wood for building and for fuel.

The waters provided fish for food. But the water, so near the sea, was salty.

Jamestown
1607

Marsh

Smith's Fort

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

- Human-Environment Interaction** What were the advantages and disadvantages of locating Jamestown on a river?
- Human-Environment Interaction** What do you think would have been a commonly used method of transportation for people in this region?

Powhatan Confederacy

Jamestown fared better under **John Smith**, who took control of the colony in 1608 and built a fort. He forced the settlers to work harder and to build better housing by creating rules that rewarded harder workers with food. The Jamestown colonists received help from the powerful Powhatan Confederacy of Indians after Smith made an agreement with them. The Powhatan brought food to help the colonists, and then taught them how to grow corn.

In 1609 some 400 more settlers arrived in Jamestown. That winter, disease and famine once again hit the colony. The colonists called this period the starving time. By the spring of 1610, only 60 colonists were still alive. Jamestown failed to make a profit until colonist John Rolfe introduced a new type of tobacco that sold well in England.

War in Virginia

John Rolfe married **Pocahontas**, daughter of the Powhatan leader, in 1614. Their marriage helped the colonists form more peaceful relations with the Powhatan. However, Pocahontas died three years later in England, which she was visiting with Rolfe.

In 1622, colonists killed a Powhatan leader. The Powhatan responded by attacking the Virginia settlers later that year. Fighting between the colonists and the Powhatan continued for the next 20 years. Because the London Company could not protect its colonists, the English Crown canceled the Company's charter in 1624. Virginia became a royal colony and existed under the **authority** of a governor chosen by the king.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas

What problems did the Jamestown colonists face?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

authority
power, right to rule

Daily Life in Virginia

In early Virginia, people lived on scattered farms rather than in towns. Tobacco farmers soon began establishing large farms called plantations.

Headright System

These plantations were made possible in part by the headright system, which was started by the London Company. Under this system, colonists who paid their own way to Virginia received 50 acres of land. A colonist could earn another 50 acres for every additional person brought from England. Rich colonists who brought servants or relatives to Virginia gained large amounts of land.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

factors
causes

Primary Source

LETTER

A Note from Virginia

In this 1619 letter, the secretary of the Virginia colony, John Pory, encouraged people to move to Virginia.

"As touching the quality of this country, three things there be, which in few years may bring this colony to perfection; the English plow, vineyards, & cattle . . . All our riches for the present do consist in tobacco, wherein one man by his own labor has in one year, raised to himself to the value of 200 pounds sterling; and another by the means of six servants has cleared at one crop a thousand pound English. These be true, yet indeed rare examples, yet possible to be done by others."

—from *The Power of Words*, edited by T. H. Breen

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

How does this letter indicate the importance of tobacco in Virginia?

Labor in Virginia

Colonists in Virginia faced a hard life. They suffered very high death rates, which led to labor shortages in the colony. The majority of workers were **indentured servants**, people who received a free trip to North America by agreeing to work without pay for a period of years.

Expansion of Slavery

Not all laborers in Virginia came from Europe. A Dutch ship brought the first Africans to Virginia in 1619. Some Africans were servants; others had been enslaved. Some African servants became successful farmers when their contracts ended.

The demand for workers was soon greater than the supply of people willing to work as indentured servants. Over time, the cost of slaves fell. These **factors** led some colonists to turn to slave labor. By the mid-1600s most Africans in Virginia were being kept in life-long slavery.

Bacon's Rebellion

As plantations grew, the economy of Jamestown began to expand. Soon, colonial officials began to ask for more taxes. During the mid-1600s poor colonists protested the higher taxes. They were also upset about the governor's policies toward Native Americans. They thought the colony was not well protected against attack from Indians. In 1676 a group of former indentured servants led by Nathaniel Bacon attacked some friendly American Indians. Bacon opposed the governor's policies promoting trade with American Indians. He also thought the colonists should be able to take the Indians' land. When the governor tried to stop him, Bacon and his followers attacked and burned Jamestown in an uprising known as **Bacon's Rebellion**.

At one point, Bacon controlled much of the colony. He died of fever, however, and the rebellion soon ended.

READING CHECK Analyzing What factors led to the increased use of slave labor in Virginia?



Southern Wealth

Colonists overcame tough beginnings to create large and wealthy settlements like this one in Virginia. Churches were often the first major buildings in a growing town.

How does the large church in the picture show Virginia's wealth?

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Other Southern Colonies

As Jamestown was developing in Virginia, new groups of colonists began planning their move to America. Many English Catholics came to America to escape religious persecution. English Catholics had long been against England's separation from the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason they were not allowed by the Church of England to worship freely. English leaders also feared that English Catholics would ally with Catholic countries such as France and Spain in conflicts.

Maryland

In the 1620s George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, asked King Charles I for a charter establishing a new colony in America for Catholics. In 1632 Charles issued the charter to Calvert's son, Cecilius, who took over the planning of the colony. Cecilius, known as the second Lord Baltimore, named the colony Maryland in honor of England's queen, Henrietta Maria. It was located just north of Virginia in the Chesapeake Bay area. Calvert intended for the colony to be a refuge for English Catholics. It would also be a proprietary colony.

This meant that the colony's proprietors, or owners, controlled the government.

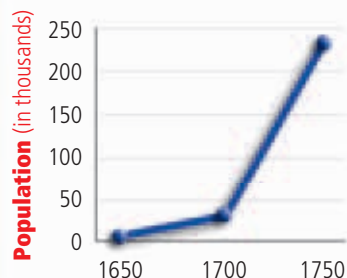
In 1634 a group of 200 English Catholics came to Maryland. Included in the group were wealthy landowners, servants, craftspeople, and farmers. Settlers in Maryland benefited from the lessons learned by the Jamestown colonists. They spent their time raising corn, cattle, and hogs so that they would have enough to eat. Before long, many colonists also began growing tobacco for profit.

Although Catholics founded Maryland, a growing number of Protestants began moving there in the 1640s. Soon, religious conflicts arose between Catholics and Protestants in the colony. To reduce tensions, Lord Baltimore presented a bill to the colonial assembly that became known as the **Toleration Act of 1649**. **This bill made it a crime to restrict the religious rights of Christians.** This was the first law supporting religious tolerance passed in the English colonies.

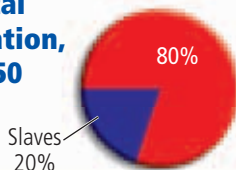
The Toleration Act did not stop all religious conflict. However, it did show that the government wanted to offer some religious freedom and to protect the rights of minority groups.

The Southern Colonies

**Slave Populations
In the Colonies**



**Total
Population,
1750**



ANALYSIS SKILL

INTERPRETING CHARTS

About how many slaves lived in the English colonies in 1700 and in 1750?

The Carolinas and Georgia

Colonies were also established south of Virginia. In 1663 the English king, Charles II, gave much of the land between Virginia and Spanish Florida to eight of his supporters. At first Carolina was a single colony. However, the settlements were far apart, and it was hard to govern them. In 1712 the colony separated into North and South Carolina.

Most of the colonists in North Carolina were farmers who had moved south from Virginia. Colonists primarily from Europe settled South Carolina. Those who paid their own way received large grants of land, and some brought enslaved Africans with them. By 1730 about 20,000 enslaved Africans were living in the colony, compared to some 10,000 white settlers.

South Carolina's proprietors managed the colony poorly, and the proprietary government was overthrown in 1719. The Crown

VIRGINIA

NORTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA

GEORGIA

SPANISH FLORIDA

Charles Town

Savannah

Charles Town was founded in 1670. South Carolina's large land grants encouraged plantation owners to bring in thousands of slaves.

James Oglethorpe tried to prevent slavery in Georgia. But slaves soon provided the labor for the colony's many rice plantations.

then purchased North and South Carolina in 1729, making them royal colonies.

In 1732 King George II granted a charter to James Oglethorpe and other trustees to found Georgia. The king hoped that Georgia would shield Britain's other colonies from Spanish Florida. Oglethorpe wanted the new colony to be a place where debtors, who had been jailed for their debts in England, could make a new start. In 1733 Oglethorpe and 120 colonists, mostly from England, founded the city of Savannah.

Oglethorpe did not want Georgia to have large plantations owned by a few wealthy individuals. He wanted many small farmers. To reach this goal, Oglethorpe outlawed slavery and limited the size of land grants. Soon, however, the settlers grew unhappy with Oglethorpe's strict rules. In 1752 the British government made Georgia a royal colony with new laws. Coastal Georgia was soon filled with large rice plantations worked by thousands of slaves.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What were some of the reasons colonists came to the southern colonies?

Economies of the Southern Colonies

The economies of the southern colonies depended on agriculture. They also exported materials for building ships, such as wood and tar. Some colonies traded with local Indians for deerskins to sell.

The economies of the colonies were agrarian—that is, based on farming. They had many small farms and some large plantations. Farms did well because the South enjoyed a warm climate and a long growing season. Many farms grew cash crops that were sold for profit. Tobacco, rice, and indigo—a plant used to make blue dye—were the most important cash crops.

The southern colonies' cash crops required a great deal of difficult work to grow and harvest. This meant a large workforce was needed. By the 1700s enslaved Africans, rather than indentured servants, had become the main source of labor.

Slavery was a viciously brutal condition for many inhabitants of the southern

colonies. One former slave named **Olaudah Equiano** recorded his experiences.

“Tortures, murder, and every other imaginable barbarity ... are practiced upon the poor slaves with impunity [no punishment]. I hope the slave-trade will be abolished.”

—Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*

Most of the southern colonies passed **slave codes, or laws to control slaves**. Colonies with large numbers of slaves had the strictest slave codes. For example, South Carolina's slaveholders feared that slaves would revolt. As a result, South Carolina's code said slaves could not hold meetings or own weapons. Some colonies did not allow slaveholders to free their slaves.

READING CHECK Summarizing What role did slavery play in the southern plantation economy? How was it regulated?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW In this section you read about life in the southern colonies. In the next section you will learn about the New England colonies.

Section 1 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SS8 HP2

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People **HSS** 8.1

- Describe** How did **John Smith** improve conditions in **Jamestown**?
 - Explain** What events led to a conflict between the **Jamestown** settlers and the Powhatan Confederacy?
- Recall** Why were **indentured servants** necessary in Virginia?
 - Evaluate** What do you think was the most serious problem faced by settlers in Virginia? Why?
- Identify** Which colony was the first to promote religious tolerance?
 - Analyze** Why did more enslaved Africans live in South Carolina than did white settlers?
 - Predict** How might the colony of Georgia have been different if Oglethorpe's plan had succeeded?
- Recall** What was the purpose of **slave codes**?
 - Analyze** Why were slaves in high demand in the southern colonies?

Critical Thinking

- Contrasting** Using a chart like the one below, identify when and why each of the southern colonies was founded.

Colony	Year Founded	Reason for Establishment

FOCUS ON WRITING

- Gathering Some Ideas** As you read this section, take notes on the early colonies of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Be sure to note what advantages they offered to settlers and what difficulties settlers faced. Start to think about the people who would be most likely to settle in the southern colonies.