

# Session 2: Exploration and Colonization of the British Southern Colonies

## The Southern Colonies

- Made up of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (sometimes Maryland)
- First established British colonies in North America
- Founded for economic reasons

## The Southern Colonist

### The English Cavalier

- Economic Status: Wealthy landowning nobility
- Ethnic Background: English
- Where they Settled: Coastal lowlands in the east with the best land for large plantation farming

### The Frontier Settler

- Economic Status: Poor former indentured servants
- Ethnic Background: Scotch-Irish, and poor English
- Where they settled: Small subsistence farms in the west near the Appalachians

## The Jamestown Colony: 1607

- First successful English colony in North America
- Originally founded by the Virginia Company, a British joint-stock corporation
- Colonists were led by John Smith, a former soldier and adventurer
- Established as an economic venture, eventually became a royal colony controlled by the British Crown

## Successes of Jamestown

- New settlers arrived at the perfect time
- Introduction of tobacco by John Rolfe in 1612
- Headright System solved labor issues, increased immigration significantly

## Problems of Jamestown

- Everyone focused on gold and profit
- Disease from bad water
- Starvation due to lack of crops
- Tense relations with the Powhatan Indians
- "Starving Time" in winter of 1609-1610

## Early Forms of Government

- The Royal Colonies of the South (VA, NC, SC, GA) were governed by wealthy, land-owning aristocrats under the supervision of the King of England and Parliament
- The Virginia House of Burgesses, established in 1619, was the first elected colonial legislature in the Americas and still exists today as the Virginia Assembly, making it the oldest legislative system in the United States

## European Treatment of Natives

### The Spanish

- Raised natives into social and political life
- Brought useful and necessary things from Spain
- Taught cultivation, building houses, reading, writing, and other arts

### The French

- Excelled in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of the Indians
- Managed trade and commerce with Indians
- Obedience to a wise government served for personal wisdom

### The English

- Planned to change the natives' barbarous nature and teach obedience to the king
- Introduce true god and salvation
- Claimed stratagems were allowed against all enemies

## The Settlers Clash with Native Americans

- Relations with Native Americans worsened over time
- No intermarriage like the Spanish
- Colonists wanted more land for tobacco, Native Americans resisted
- Opechancanough's revolt in 1622 wiped out 1/3 of VA settlers and led to revocation of the company's charter

## Economy of the South

- Geographic Condition: Low coastal plain in the east and foothills and mountains in the west
- Major trade port Charleston, SC
- Cash Crops: Tobacco, Rice, and Indigo (no cotton yet)
- Labor Force: Indentured servants and later slaves
- Class Division: Wealthy owned plantations, poor relied on subsistence farming and trade with natives

## The Indentured Servant

- Arrived through the headright system
- Had to labor for 4-7 years before being freed and gaining ownership of their own land
- Ethnically made up of poor English, Scot-Irish, and African

## African Slavery

- Arrived from Africa via the middle passage in the 17th century
- Slavery for life
- Ethnically made up of Africans

## Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killed native populations, making them an unstable workforce
- African slavery became an alternative for labor
- Demand for slaves grew quickly
- Trans-Atlantic slave trade grew quickly, becoming a key part of the new American economic system

## Economic Differences Split Virginia

- Wealthy planters in Eastern VA represented by Governor Berkeley
- Former indentured servants in Western VA and frontier represented by Nathaniel Bacon

## Bacon's Rebellion

- Poor whites (including former indentured servants) revolted against VA gov't
- Resented lack of protection from Native Americans
- Resented lack of representation in the House of Burgesses
- Marched on and burned Jamestown
- Led to planters choosing African slaves over indentured servants

## Social and Religious

- Social Structure: Dominated by family status and land ownership
- Land Ownership: Wealthy owned plantations with slaves, poor lived on the frontier
- Political Structure: Aristocracy (wealthy elites) controlled the government
- Religious Affiliation: Anglican (Church of England)