

Session 2: Exploration and Colonization

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 Colonists

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 led by John Smith, a former soldier and adventurer
- Established as an economic venture, eventually became a royal colony controlled directly by the British Crown
- Succeeded due to John Smith's leadership and the profitability of tobacco
- Joint-stock companies funded and maintained the first English colonies through private investment and with charters from the English government
- Virginia Company founded Jamestown in 1607

Successes

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

Problems

- Everyone looking for gold and profit
- Disease from bad water
- Starvation due to focus on gold rather than planting crops
- Tense relations with the Powhatan Indians
- "Starving Time" - winter of 1609-1610

Early Forms of Government

- The Southern Royal Colonies (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

European Treatment of Natives

The Spanish

- Raised natives up into social and political life, teaching them useful skills (Juan de Solorzano Pereyra)

The French

- Exceed in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of mankind; peddling commerce flourishes (Edmund Burke)

The English

- Change their barbarous natures, inform them of the true god and salvation, teach them obedience to the king's Majesty and his Governors (Sir William Strachey)

The Settlers Clash with Native Americans

- Relations with American Indians worsened over time
- No intermarriage like the Spanish
- Colonists wanted more land for tobacco, Native Americans resisted
- 1622 - Opechancanough's revolt wiped out 1/3 of VA settlers, King James revoked the company's charter
- 1624 - VA became a royal colony under the direct control of the king

Economy of the South

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

The Indentured Servant

- Arrived through the headright system
- Length of service: 4-7 years before freedom and ownership of land
- Ethnic Make-up: Poor English, Scot-Irish, and African

African Slavery

- Arrived via the middle passage in the 17th century
- Slaves had life terms
- Ethnic Make-Up: African

Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killed native populations, African slavery became alternative labor
- Demand for slaves grew quickly, trans-Atlantic slave trade grew quickly as a key part of the new American economic system

Economic Differences Split Virginia

- Wealthy "cavalier" 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 revolted against VA government
- Resented lack of protection from Native Americans and lack of representation in the House of Burgesses
- Marched on and burned Jamestown
- Led to more 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 controlled the government
- Religious Affiliation: Anglican (Church of England)