

Session 2: Exploration and Colonization: The British Southern Colonies

The Southern Colonies

- Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and 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
- 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

- New settlers arrived at the perfect time
- Introduction of tobacco by John Rolfe in 1612
- Headright System solved labor issues by providing 50 acres for any plantation owner who paid for passage of a laborer, leading to increased immigration

Problems

- Everyone looking for gold and profit
- Disease and starvation due to lack of farming
- Tense relations with the Powhatan Indians
- "Starving Time" during the winter of 1609-1610

Early Forms of Government

- The Royal Colonies of the South (VA, NC, SC, GA) 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
- Introduced cultivation of the soil, building houses, living in towns, reading, writing, and other arts
- Source: Juan de Solorzano Pereyra, *Politica Indiana*

The French

- Exceeded in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of mankind
- Had a country where more is to be affected by managing the Indians than by cultivating the ground
- Source: Edmund Burke, *An Account of European Settlements in America*

The English

- Goal was to change the natives' barbarous natures, inform them of the true god, and teach them obedience to the king's Majesty and his Governors
- Source: Sir William Strachey, *The imperial goal of England in History and Travel*

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, leading to the revocation of the company's charter and the establishment of VA as a royal colony

Economy of the South

- Geographic Condition: Low coastal plain in the east and foothills and mountains in the west
- Cash Crops: Tobacco, Rice, and Indigo (no cotton yet)
- Labor Force: Indentured servants and later slaves
- Class Division: The wealthy owned plantations, the 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 gaining freedom and land ownership
- Ethnic Make-up: Poor English, Scot-Irish, and African

African Slavery

- Arrived through the middle passage, part of the triangular trade from Africa to the Americas
- Life-term of service
- Ethnic Make-up: African

Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killed native populations, leading to African slavery being an alternative for labor
- Demand for slaves grew quickly, contributing to the trans-Atlantic slave trade becoming a key part of the new American economic system
- 12 million people were taken from Africa by the early 1800s

Economic Differences Split Virginia

- Wealthy "cavalier" planters in Eastern VA, represented by Governor Berkeley
- Former indentured servants in Western VA and the frontier, represented by Nathaniel Bacon
- Bacon's Rebellion: Poor whites revolted against the VA government due to lack of protection from Native Americans and lack of representation in the House of Burgesses

Social and Religious

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