

Session 2: Exploration and Colonization - THE BRITISH SOUTHERN COLONIES

The Southern Colonies

- Made up of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (and sometimes Maryland)
- The first established British colonies in North America
- Founded for purely 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.
- The colonists were led by John Smith, a former soldier and adventurer.
- Established as an economic venture, the settlement eventually became a royal colony controlled directly by the British Crown.

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 the focus on gold instead of crops.
- 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) 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.
- The Virginia House of Burgesses 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 up into social and political life, changed customs, and introduced useful arts and knowledge.

The French

- Excelling in industry, economy, and conciliating the affections of the Indians.

The English

- Intend to change the natives' barbarous nature, introduce them to the true god, and enforce obedience to the king's Majesty and his Governors in those parts.

The Settlers Clash with Native Americans

- Relations with American Indians got worse 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 King James revoking the company's charter in 1624.
- Virginia became a royal colony.

Economy of the South

- Geographic Condition: Low coastal plain in the east and foothills and mountains in the west.
- Charleston, SC became one of the few major trade ports in the South.
- Cash Crops: Tobacco, Rice, and Indigo (NO COTTON YET!)
- Labor Force: Indentured servants and later slaves worked on large plantations.
- Class Division: The wealthy owned plantations, the poor hunted and relied on subsistence farming and trade with the natives.

The Indentured Servant

- Arrived through the headright system.
- Served for 4-7 years before gaining ownership of their own land.
- Ethnic make-up: Poor English, Scot-Irish, and African.

African Slavery

- Arrived via the middle passage in the 17th century.
- Enslaved for life.
- Ethnic make-up: African.

Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killed native populations, making African slavery a more stable workforce.
- Demand for African labor grew quickly, leading to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- By the early 1800s, 12 million Africans were taken from Africa.

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 in the west revolted against the VA government.
- Reasons for revolt:
 - Lack of protection from Native Americans
 - Lack of representation in the House of Burgesses
- Resulted in burning of Jamestown and influenced more planters to choose African slaves.

Social and Religious Structure

- 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: The aristocracy controlled the government.
- Religious Affiliation: Anglican (Church of England)