# 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 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
- Led by John Smith, a former soldier and adventurer
- Established as an economic venture and eventually became a royal colony controlled by the British Crown

## 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 was the first elected colonial legislature in the Americas, established in 1619
- 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
- Taught them the real cultivation of the soil, how to build houses, live in towns, read, write, and other arts they were previously unfamiliar with

## The French:

- Exceeded in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of mankind
- Managed Indians to affect more than cultivating the ground

## The English:

- Planned to change native's barbarous natures, make them ashamed of their savage nakedness, and teach them obedience to the King's Majesty

# 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, and Native Americans resisted
- In 1622, Opechancanough's revolt wiped out 1/3 of VA settlers, causing the company to go into debt and have their charter revoked in 1624

# 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 working 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

- How they arrived: Most indentured servants came over via the "headright system" (anyone who paid their own way or another's to the New World received 50 acres of land)
- Length of service: Indentured servants labored for 4-7 years before being freed and gaining ownership of their own land
- Ethnic Make-Up: Poor English, Scot-Irish, and African

# African Slavery

- How they Arrived: Slaves began arriving in the 17th century from Africa via the "middle passage" (part of the triangular trade from Africa to the Americas)
- Length of Service: Slaves had a life term
- Ethnic Make-Up: African

# Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killing native populations made them an unstable workforce
- African slavery became an alternative for labor as the demand grew quickly
- The trans-Atlantic slave trade grew quickly and became 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 the frontier represented by Nathaniel Bacon

# Bacon's Rebellion

- Poor whites in the west revolted against the VA government
- Resented lack of protection from Native Americans
- Resented lack of representation in the House of Burgesses
- Revolted, marched on, and burned Jamestown
- Bacon died, Berkeley took over
- Led to more planters choosing African slaves over indentured servants

# 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: The aristocracy (wealthy elites) controlled the government
- Religious Affiliation: Anglican (Church of England)