

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 perfect time.
- Introduction of tobacco by John Rolfe in 1612.
- Headright System solved labor issues.
- Immigration expanded significantly.

Problems

- Everyone looking for gold and profit.
- Disease from bad water.
- Starvation due to lack 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 (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia) 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 the natives up into social and political life.
- Banished their barbarism and changed their customs.
- Taught them various useful arts and skills.
- Introduced cultivation of the soil, building houses, living in towns, reading, writing, and more.

The French

- Exceeded in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of mankind.
- Managed the Indians for personal gain.
- Flourished in peddling commerce and obedience to wise government.

The English

- Planned to change the natives' barbarous natures, inform them of the true god and salvation, and teach them obedience to the king's majesty and 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, while Native Americans resisted.
- Opechancanough's revolt in 1622 wiped out 1/3 of VA settlers and led to the revocation of the company's charter.
- Virginia became a royal colony 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 to work 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 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: 4-7 years before being freed and gaining ownership of their own land.
- Ethnic Make-up: Poor English, Scot-Irish, and African.

African Slavery

- Slaves arrived in the 17th century from Africa via the "middle passage" of the triangular trade.
- Slaves had a life term of service.
- Ethnic Make-up: African.

Impact of the Slave Trade

- Disease killed native populations and African slavery became an alternative for labor.
- Demands for slaves grew quickly, leading to the growth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- By the early 1800s, 12 million people had been taken from Africa.

Economic Differences Split Virginia

- Wealthy "cavalier" planters in Eastern VA - had land and money, represented by Governor Berkeley.
- Former indentured servants in Western VA and the frontier - had no land, no money, and no protection from Natives, represented by Nathaniel Bacon.

Bacon's Rebellion

- Poor whites in the west revolted against the VA government.
- Reasons for the revolt: Resented lack of protection from Native Americans and lack of representation in the House of Burgesses.
- Resulted in the burning of Jamestown and increased the use of 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)