

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

- 1 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
- 2 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
- Tobacco, introduced by John Rolfe in 1612, became profitable
- Headright System solved labor issues; immigration expanded significantly

Problems

- Everyone looking for gold and profit
- Disease from bad water
- Starvation - too many people looking for gold, not enough planting crops
- Tense relations with the Powhatan Indians
- "Starving Time" = 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 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, banished their barbarism, changed their customs into humane ones, and taught them various useful arts
- The French: Exceeded in industry, economy, and the arts of conciliating the affections of mankind; focused on commerce rather than agriculture
- The English: Sought to change the native's "barbarous natures," teach them about the true God and salvation, and make them obedient to the king's Majesty and his Governors

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; King James revoked the company's charter
- 1624 - VA became 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 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" (a system in which anyone who paid their own way or another's to the New World received 50 acres of land)
- Length of service: Indentured servants had to labor for 4-7 years before being freed and gain ownership of their 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 led to the demand for African slaves
- African slavery offered a stable workforce resistant to European diseases
- Trans-Atlantic slave trade grew quickly, becoming a key part of the new American economic system

Economic Differences Split Virginia

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

Bacon's Rebellion

- Poor whites in the west, including former indentured servants, revolted against VA gov't due to lack of protection from Native Americans and lack of representation in the House of Burgesses
- The revolt led to more planters choosing African slaves over indentured servants due to the reduced

likelihood of revolt

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)