

The Southern Colonies in the 17th and 18th Centuries

- I. Southern Plantation Colonies -- general characteristics
 - A. Dominated to a degree by a plantation economy: **tobacco & rice**
 - B. Slavery in all colonies (even Georgia after 1750); mostly indentured servants until late 17th century in Virginia & Maryland; increasingly black slavery thereafter
 - C. Large land holdings in the hands of the favored few = aristocratic atmosphere (except North Carolina and parts of Georgia)
 - D. Sparsely populated: churches & schools too expensive for very small towns.
 - E. All practiced some form of religious toleration
-- **Church of England (Anglican Church)** most prominent
 - F. Expansionary attitudes resulted from need for new land to compensate for the degradation of existing lands from soil-depleting tobacco farming.

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- II. The **Chesapeake** (Virginia & Maryland)
 - A. **Virginia** (founded in 1607 by Virginia Company)
 - 1. **Jamestown, 1607**: 1st permanent British colony in New World
 - a. Founded by **Virginia Company** that received charter from King James I.
 - i. Main goals: Promise of gold, conversion of Amerindians to Christianity (just like Spain), and new passage through North America to the East Indies (Northwest Passage).
 - ii. Consisted largely of well-to-do adventurers
 - b. **Virginia Charter**
 - i. Overseas settlers given same rights of Englishmen in England
 - ii. Foundation for American liberties; rights extended to other colonies.
 - 2. Colony wracked by tragedy during early years: famine, disease, war with Indians
 - a. By 1625, only 1200 of the nearly 8,000 colonists survived
 - b. Only 60 out of 400 settlers survived "**starving time**" of 1610-1611
 - 3. **Captain John Smith** organized the colony beginning in 1608: "He who will not work shall not eat."
 - a. Smith kidnapped in Dec. 1607 by **Powhatans** led by Chief Powhatan who subjected Smith to a what may have been a mock execution.
 - b. Smith perhaps "saved" by **Pocahantas**, Powhatan's daughter, when she was only 12-years old

4. Pocahontas eventually a central figure in preserving peace in early Jamestown
 - a. Provided foodstuffs to settlers.
 - b. Became hostage of colonists in 1613 during military conflicts.
 - c. Later married **John Rolfe** & taught him Amerindian way of curing tobacco.
 - d. Died of small pox at age 22
5. **John Rolfe** and tobacco crop economy: "Colony built on smoke"
 - a. Rolfe introduced new tough strain of tobacco
 - b. Tobacco industry became cornerstone of Virginia's economy.
 - c. Plantation system emerged
6. **House of Burgesses** (a legislative assembly) created in 1619.
 - a. 1st colonial parliament in the British American colonies.
 - b. Representative self-government
 - i. However, most representatives substantial property owners
 - ii. Created to attract settlers to Virginia (by offering more liberty)
7. Virginia Charter revoked by James I in 1624
 - a. King believed assembly too seditious but he also loathed tobacco.
 - b. Virginia became a royal colony directly under his control

B. Maryland

1. Charles I gave **Sir George Calvert** (the first Lord Baltimore), a portion of Virginia for Catholic haven and profit.
2. Eventually, growth of Protestants meant Catholics became a minority; Catholics feared loss of religious freedom.
3. **Act of Toleration** (1649)
 - a. Guaranteed toleration to all Christians but instituted death penalty for anyone denying the divinity of Jesus (e.g. Jews & atheists)
 - b. Motive: Catholics sought to protect their faith by granting a certain degree of religious freedom.
 - c. Maryland became largest haven for Catholics in British American colonies

C. Life in the Chesapeake

1. Disease devastating early on (10 yrs off life exp.): Malaria, dysentery, typhoid
 - a. Half of all born in early Virginia and Maryland did not live past age 20.
 - b. Less than 25% of men lived to see 50 -- women only 40

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2. Most immigrants single men in late teens/early 20's; most died soon after arriving
 - a. Surviving males competed for extremely scarce women; women married early (some came over as "tobacco brides")
 - b. Most men could not find mates.
 3. Region stabilized eventually due to increased immunities to disease and rising influx of women
 - a. By 1700, Virginia was most populous colony (about 50,000 colonists)
 - b. By 1700, Maryland third most populous colony (about 30,000 inhabitants)
- D. The Tobacco Plantation Economy
1. First Africans arrived in 1619; largely indentured servants in early 17th century
 - White English indentured servants more predominant until late 17th century
 2. **"Headright" System**
 - a. A person who paid for the passage of a white indentured servant received 50 acres of land.
 - b. Some planters used system to acquire huge tracts of land.
 - c. **Indentured servants** agreed to years of servitude in exchange for transatlantic passage (term of servitude usually 5-7 years)
 - d. Early 17th c., after contract expired the servant was often given some money, maybe some land, and other supplies to start their own farms.
 - Later, former indentured servants given little; could not succeed
 - e. By 1700, planters brought in about 100,000 indentured servants, about 75% of all European immigrants to Virginia and Maryland.
- E. **Bacon's Rebellion** (1676)
1. By late 17th c., large numbers of frustrated former indentured servants (freedmen) existed
 - a. Most lived in western Virginia; resented planter aristocrats from the east.
 - b. Many too poor to own land; could not find wives (men still greatly outnumbered women)
 - c. Freedmen did not gain access to large land grants in the east; forced to squat for lands in western part of the colony.

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- d. Amerindians resisted white expansion in western Virginia. Freedmen angry that gov't of Virginia didn't protect white settlers from Amerindian attacks.
 - i. **Governor Berkeley** was generally friendly toward Amerindians who traded with the colony.
 - ii. House of Burgesses did not usually order attacks on Amerindians that cooperated with gov't.
- 2. **Nathaniel Bacon**, an aristocrat in western Virginia and member of House of Burgesses began mobilizing a militia to protect whites from Indians.
 - a. In 1676, Bacon's militia massacred Amerindians and set fire to Jamestown, forcing Governor Berkeley out of the city.
 - b. Bacon's rebels opposed to aristocrats and Indians.
 - c. Bacon subsequently died of disease and Berkeley crushed the rebellion
 - d. Significance of Bacon's Rebellion
 - i. Planters saw white indentured servants as too difficult to control and significantly increased importation of black slaves while reducing number of indentured servants.
 - e. Planter elite increasingly played the "race card": encouraged poor whites to discriminate against blacks. Planters feared blacks and poor whites could form an alliance again in the future.
 - Planters effectively controlled poor whites psychologically by emphasizing that poor whites, despite poverty, would always be "superior" to blacks.

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III. The Carolinas

- A. Impact of the **British West Indies**
 - 1. West Indies (Caribbean), especially Barbados, developed sugar plantation economy
 - 2. Slaves in British West Indies outnumbered whites 4 to 1.
 - 3. Slave codes adopted in Barbados to control slaves.
 - 4. West Indies increasingly relied on mainland British America for foodstuffs.
 - 5. As sugar plantations began to crowd out small farmers, many came to Carolina with their slaves to farm.
 - 6. Carolina adopted slave code in 1696
- B. American colonization interrupted during English Civil War (1640s) and Cromwell's Protectorate (1650s)
 - 1. New colonies not founded until restoration of Charles II (1660-1685)
 - 2. New restoration colonies included the Carolinas, New York and Pennsylvania

- C. **Carolina** created in 1670 after restoration and named after King Charles II.
1. Goals: grow foodstuffs for sugar plantations in Barbados and export non-English products like wine, silk, and olive oil.
 2. Exported Amerindians as slaves to West Indies and New England colonies (perhaps as many as 100,000).
 3. **Rice** became main cash crop in Carolina for export; by 1710 blacks outnumbered whites.
 4. **Charles Town** (Charleston) became most active seaport in the South.
 - a. Became a center for aristocratic younger brothers of English aristocrats (who inherited father's fortune due to primogeniture laws)
 - b. Religious toleration existed.
 5. Amerindians and Spanish soldiers attacked southern Carolina settlements as they opposed English settlement.
- D. **North Carolina** created officially in 1712 as a refuge for poor whites and religious dissenters from Carolina and Virginia.
1. Became most democratic, independent and least aristocratic of original 13 colonies (similar to Rhode Island).
 2. Yet, treated Amerindians ruthlessly and sold many into slavery.
- IV. **Georgia** became last British American colony founded (1733).
- A. Founded by **James Oglethorp**
 - B. Founded as a haven for debtors as well as a buffer state against Spanish and Indian incursions from the South.
 - C. Savannah emerged into a diverse community (included German Lutherans & Scottish Highlanders; but no Catholics)
- V. Colonial Slavery
- A. Most slaves came from West African coast (Senegal to Angola)
 1. Originally captured by African coastal tribes who traded them to European and American buyers.
 - About 40% of slaves captured by Africans in interior died en route to coast.
 2. About 50 million Africans died or became slaves during 17th & 18th century
 - B. Of about 10-15 million Africans sent into slavery in New World, 400,000 came to North America. (Majority sent to Spanish & Portuguese colonies in the Caribbean and South America)
 1. Between 20% to 1/3 of slaves died during the "**Middle Passage**"

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2. Horrific conditions:
 - a. Slaves often chained by neck and extremities to deck floor
 - b. Packed into spaces about the size of a coffin; lay in own excrement
 - c. In some cases, next deck only 18" above deck floor; slaves could not turn over; lay on their back the entire voyage.
3. Survivors eventually sold at auction blocks at ports like Newport, RI, or Charleston, SC (giant slave market)
4. Most slaves came after 1700
 - a. Some came to Jamestown as early as 1619 but only 2,000 in Virginia in 1670
 - Accounted for about 7% of southern plantation population in mid-17th century
 - b. Rising wages in England in 1680's reduced immigration to America.
 - By 1680's, black slaves outnumbered white servants.
 - c. 1698, Royal African Co. lost its monopoly on the slave trade.
 - i. Some Americans, esp. from RI, took advantage of lucrative slave trade
 - ii. Numbers of slaves in America dramatically increased.
 - Accounted for over 1/2 Virginia population by 1750
 - In SC, outnumbered whites 2 to 1.
5. A few slaves gained their freedom & some even became slave owners.
 - However, this fact should not be over-exaggerated! They were minuscule in number relative to entire slave population.

C. Slave Codes

1. As Africans grew in numbers, threatened whites passed laws to severely control the slave population.
2. Most common codes stated:
 - a. blacks and their children were property for life of white masters.
 - b. it was a crime to teach literacy to slaves.
 - c. conversion to Christianity was not grounds for freedom.
3. South Carolina's inherited Barbados slave codes influenced codes in other colonies.

D. Slavery became the root of racism in America as a distinct color line was drawn.

- The notion of inferiority based on skin color embedded in U.S. law until 1960s!

E. Slave Life

1. Slavery harshest in lower South (esp. SC); least harsh in middle colonies.
 - a. Brutal & isolated conditions in rice and indigo farming led to many deaths
 - b. Fresh import of slavery needed to sustain productivity

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2. Tobacco-growing in middle south less deadly
 - a. Plantations larger and closer together
 - Afforded slaves more contact with friends and relatives
 - b. Increase of female slave populations made family life more possible by 1720.
 - i. Slave pop. increased through higher birthrate.
 - ii. America became one of few slave societies in history to grow by natural reproduction.
 - F. Slave culture became a mixture of American and African folkways
 1. **Gullah** language evolved on islands off South Carolina coast.
 - Blended English with several African languages
 2. Banjo and bongo drum imported to America from Africa
 3. Ringshout dance contributed to development of Blues & Jazz.
 4. Religion a combination of Christianity and African rituals
 - A free afterlife became a beacon of hope; Book of Exodus very appealing
 - G. Slave rebellions show that slaves were not always docile.
 1. About 250 revolts
 2. **Stono Rebellion** (1739): largest slave revolt in history of the 13 colonies
 - a. Slaves in South Carolina tried to march to Spanish Florida after Spanish authorities offered freedom to any slave who reached there.
 - b. Stopped by militia after 25 whites killed; eventually scores of slave rebels killed by militia and settlers.
 - c. Significance: slave system became more strictly controlled.
- VI. Southern Society -- 18th century
- A. Southern class structure (from most powerful to least powerful)
 1. Plantation owners at top of social ladder
 - Ruled region's economy and monopolized political power.
 2. Small farmers comprised largest social group.
 - a. Considered far below the prestige and power of planter class
 - b. Most lived meager existences; some owned 1 or 2 slaves
 - c. Modest sized plots
 3. Landless Whites -- most were former indentured servants
 4. Indentured Servants (lowest of whites)
 - a. Decreased as black slavery increased (after Bacon's Rebellion)
 - b. Only black slaves were lower in the class structure
 5. Constituted about 20% of colonial population by 1775
 - B. South remained underdeveloped
 1. Few cities emerged
 2. Life revolved around southern plantations.
 3. Poor transportation: waterways were principal means of transportation

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C. Why did the colonies differ from England?

1. Demand for labor of indentured servants in the South (indentured servants)
2. Women came in much smaller numbers
3. Importation of slaves from Africa

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Terms to Know

Church of England (Anglican Church) Chesapeake Virginia Jamestown, 1607 Virginia Company Virginia Charter "starving time" Captain John Smith Powhatans Pocahontas John Rolfe tobacco House of Burgesses Maryland Lord Baltimore Act of Toleration, 1639 "headright" system	indentured servants Bacon's Rebellion, 1676 Governor Berkeley Nathaniel Bacon Carolinas "Restoration" colonies British West Indies Restoration colonies Rice and indigo Charles Town North Carolina Georgia James Oglethorpe Middle Passage slave codes Gullah Stono Rebellion
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Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 3 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. Compare and contrast the Chesapeake and Carolina regions. Were there actually two "Souths?"
2. What role did geography play in the development of the Southern colonies in the 17th century economically, socially, and politically?
3. Trace the development of indentured servitude and black slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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