The Southern Colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries

Chapter 2
Objectives

• I can explain why English colonization began late.
• I can describe the development of Jamestown from the “starving time” to its economic prosperity.
• I can describe the roles of Indians and African slaves in the early history of England’s southern colonies.
• I can describe changes in the economy and labor system in Virginia and the other southern colonies.
• I can compare and contrast the southern colonies Of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.
Southern Plantation Colonies

• Dominated to a degree by a plantation economy: tobacco & rice
• Slavery in all colonies; mostly indentured servants until late 17th century in Virginia and Maryland; increasingly black slavery thereafter
• Large land holdings in the hands of a favored few
• Sparsely populated
• All practiced some form of religious toleration
• Expansionary attitudes resulted from need for fresh land to compensate for the degradation of existing lands from soil-depleting tobacco farming
The Chesapeake (Virginia & Maryland)

- Virginia founded in 1607 by the Virginia Company (Joint-Stock company)
  - Jamestown, 1607- first permanent British colony in the New World
  - Founded by the Virginia Company that received charter from King James I
  - Main goals: Gold, conversion of Indians to Christianity, and a new passage to the Indies
  - Virginia Charter: Overseas settlers given same rights of Englishmen in England
  - Captain John Smith organized colony beginning in 1608; kidnapped in Dec. 1607 by Powhatans; “Saved” perhaps by Pocahantas
  - John Rolfe and tobacco crop economy
  - House of Burgesses created in 1619
Powhatan & Opechancanough
Pocahontas & English
Portrayal of Powhatans
Four Faces of Pocahontas
Powhatan Uprising
of 1622
Jamestown The London Company, 1606

Get rich quick!
Jamestown Fort & Settlement Map
Jamestown Housing
The Chesapeake (Virginia & Maryland)

• Maryland
  - Charles I gave Sir George Calvert, the first Lord of Baltimore, a portion of Virginia for Catholic haven and profit
  - Act of Toleration (1649); guaranteed toleration to all Christians but instituted death penalty for anyone denying the divinity of Jesus

• Life in the Chesapeake
  - Disease devastating early on
  - Most immigrants single men in late teens and early 20s
Why Was There Such High Mortality?

**POPULATION:**
- 1607: 104 colonists
- By spring, 1608: 38 survived
- 1609: 300 more immigrants
- By spring, 1610: 60 survived
- 1610 – 1624: 10,000 immigrants
- 1624 population: 1,200
- Adult life expectancy: 40 years
- Death of children before age 5: 80%
Widowarchy

High mortality among husbands and fathers left many women in the Chesapeake colonies with unusual autonomy and wealth!
What finally made the colony prosperous??

John Rolfe

Virginia's Gold and Silver = Tobacco
Indentured Servitude & the “Head right System”
Indentured Servitude

- **Headright System:**
  - Each Virginian got 50 acres for each person whose passage they paid
  - First Families of Virginia
- **Indenture Contract:**
  - 5-7 years.
  - Promised “freedom dues” [land, $]
  - Forbidden to marry.
  - 1610-1614: only 1 in 10 outlived their indentured contracts!
Nathaniel Bacon’s Rebellion: 1676

Nathaniel Bacon

Gov. William Berkeley
Importance of Bacon’s Rebellion

• **Bacon’s Rebellion (1676)**
  – Governor Berkeley
  – Nathaniel Bacon

• **Was Bacon's Rebellion the First American Revolution for Liberty?**
  – Bacon's Rebellion present him as a revolutionary seeking liberty, fighting a benevolent despot who had turned into a tyrant and who, at the end, was a cruel reactionary

• **Effects of Rebellion**
  – Berkley temp removed
  – Tribes realized the weapon superiority of colonists and signed peace treaty in 1677
  – Tidewater gentry realized the unemployed former indentured servants were a threat to social stability
  – Turn toward slaves for safer, more stable less expensive work force
The Carolinas

• Impact of the British West Indies
  - Sugar plantation economy
  - Many farmers left the crowded British West Indies and came to Carolina with their slaves to farm

• American colonization interrupted during English Civil War (1640s) and Cromwell’s Protectorate (1650s)
  - New colonies not founded until restoration of Charles II (1660-1685)
  - New restoration colonies included Carolinas, New York, and Pennsylvania
The Carolinas

- Carolina created in 1670
  - Goals: grow foodstuffs for sugar plantation in Barbados and export non-English products like wine, silk, and olive oil
  - Rice became main cash crop; by 1710 blacks outnumbered whites
  - Charles Town became most active seaport in South
- North Carolina created officially in 1712 as a refuge for poor whites and religious dissenters from Carolina and Virginia
Georgia (Last British American colony 1733)

- Founded by James Oglethorpe
- Founded as a Haven for debtors as well as a buffer state against Spanish and Indian incursions from the South
- Savannah emerged into a diverse community
English Migration: 1610-1660

- From England: 189,000
- To New England: 25,000
- To Chesapeake: 50,000
- To Bermuda: 4,000
- To West Indies: 110,000
Colonial Slavery

• Most slaves came from West African coast (African Creoles)
  – African Creoles were typically Christians
  – Under English law Christians could not be enslaved for life.
  – Were at first servants (Indentured Servitude to Racial Slavery Pt 1 and 2)
  – Conditions of the Middle Passage (Excerpt from Alex Haley’s Roots) Part 2
• Of about 10-15 million African sent into slavery in New World, 400,000 came to North America
  – Most Slaves came after 1700 (non-Christian Africans)
• Slave Codes
  – Most common codes stated:
    • Were derived from Barbados slave codes
    • Blacks and their children were property for life of white masters
    • It was a crime to teach literacy to slaves
    • Conversion to Christianity was not grounds for freedom
Triangular Trade

- Slaves to the Americas
- Sugar, tobacco, and cotton to Europe
- Textiles, rum and manufactured goods to Africa

Map showing the triangular trade route between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.
Colonial Slavery

• Slavery became the root of racism in America as a distinct color line was drawn
• Slave Culture became a mixture of American and African folkways
  – Gullah language evolved on islands of South Carolina coast
• Slave rebellions show that slaves were not always docile
  – Stono Rebellion (1739): largest revolt in history of 13 colonies
Colonial Slavery

• Effects of Stono Rebellion
  – All put to death (the laws were less important than the threat of immediate violence that lurked behind them.
  – SC passed a series of laws that sought to ensure the subordination of slaves, both subtly and overtly
  – giving incentives to other slaves and to American Indians who would give word to the planters if a revolt was planned
  – The fear of future and possibility of slave revolts would always be in the minds of slave owners
Southern Society – 18th Century

- Southern class structure
  - Plantation at top of social ladder
  - Small farmers comprised largest social groups
  - Landless Whites—most were former indentured servants
  - Indentured Servants (lowest of whites)
  - Constituted about 20% of colonial population by 1775
Questions to Consider

• Was Indian relations, plantation economy, or slavery the most important factor in the development of Southern colonies?

• How did the search for a viable labor force affect the development of the southern colonies?