Thirteen Colonies – Southern Colonies

Southern Colonies

Maryland, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia are the states that made up the Southern colonies. In the Southern colonies, the climate was warmer than in the other two regions because these colonies were the southernmost colonies, closest to the equator. The warm climate made it possible to grow crops throughout the year. Also there was a larger area of flat land with good soil for farming. In these colonies, people grew tobacco and rice on large plantations. A plantation is an enormous farm that grows crops. These cash crops were sold to other colonies and to England.

Almost everything a planter, or plantation owner, and his family needed was made on a plantation. The planter lived in a large house with his family. The owner's wife ran the house and often managed the slaves that worked in the house. The southern colonies depended on slaves to do most of the field work. Laws called 'slave codes' were passed to control the slaves. According to these laws, slaves were the property of their owners and had no rights at all. Teaching slaves to read and write was against the law. Although there were some African slaves in the Middle colonies and fewer in the New England, most were located in the Southern colonies. By 1775 slaves were one fifth or twenty percent of the population in the 13 colonies.
Unlike the Middle colonies, most people in the Southern colonies came from England. And unlike the New England colonies, most people belonged to the Church of England. Laws in Virginia required all people to pay taxes to the church.

Most southerners owned small farms. Wealthy plantation owners controlled businesses, slaves, and government.

There was little public education in the Southern Colonies. In the Southern Colonies, wealthy children were taught at home, on the plantation, by a tutor.

**Comprehension Questions about the Southern Colonies:**

1. What states make up the Southern colonies?

2. What was the climate like in the Southern colonies?

3. What ruled the economy in the Southern colonies?

4. Who made up the Southern colonies? What religion did they practice?

5. How did the Southern colonies feel about education?
Summary: The Southern Colonies

Virginia
In 1607, Virginia became the first permanent English colony. Early settlers started plantations. Plantation owners grew rich by growing and selling tobacco and rice. Many workers were enslaved Africans. Early settlers built their plantations on the best farmland near the ocean. Later, settlers moved inland.

In 1619, Virginia became the first colony to have an elected legislature. This assembly was called the House of Burgesses. Colonists elected the burgesses. Only white men who owned land could vote or be elected. Most of them belonged to the Anglican Church. In 1632, the legislature made this church the official church of Virginia. People who were not Anglican had to leave the colony.

New Colonies in the South
England settled four more colonies in the South: Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Maryland began in 1632 when King Charles I gave land to a Catholic named Cecilius Calvert. Calvert wanted Maryland to be a refuge for Catholics. In 1649, Maryland passed the Toleration Act. This law promised that all Christians could worship freely.

In 1663, King Charles II formed a colony south of Virginia. France and Spain claimed this area. The king hoped that an English settlement would keep the French and Spanish away. The settlement was called Carolina. Later it was divided into North Carolina and South Carolina. South Carolina had good farmland and harbors. North Carolina did not.

In 1732, King George II gave land to James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe formed Georgia as a place for English debtors. Oglethorpe made strict rules for the colonists. Later, these rules changed. In time, Georgia became a rich plantation colony.
Lesson 3 Test

Read each item and circle the best answer.

1. Which was the first permanent English colony?
   A. North Carolina
   B. Georgia
   C. Virginia
   D. South Carolina

2. Virginia became the first colony to
   F. create an elected legislature.
   G. pass The Toleration Act.
   H. become a refuge for Catholics.
   J. put debtors in prison.

3. Representatives in the Virginia legislature were called
   A. Anglicans.
   B. debtors.
   C. plantation owners.
   D. burgesses.

4. After Virginia, how many more Southern Colonies did England form?
   F. four
   G. three
   H. two
   J. one

5. What did Calvert want Maryland to be?
   A. a refuge for poor people and debtors
   B. a refuge for servants and enslaved Africans
   C. a refuge for Catholics
   D. a refuge for Anglicans