Section/-

Economic Development in Royal Georgia





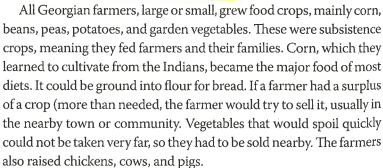
Above: The royal period in Georgia saw an increase in the cultivation and manufacture of indigo; 22,000 pounds were shipped to Britain in 1775.

hs you read, look for

- the economy of early Georgia,
- methods of gaining land in Georgia,
- terms: naval stores, cash crop, headright system, tutor.

The royal period was a time of growth and increasing prosperity for the colony, especially in the Wright years. Georgia's economic base remained agriculture, and farmers introduced new crops to the colony. Some of those crops required a great deal of work to grow, leading to the growing use of slave labor. The land policy changed, making it easier for settlers to get land and allowing them to have much larger land holdings. By the end of the period, Georgia's economy was becoming similar to the economy of its South Carolina neighbor.

Georgia's Early Economy 🗼



The low-lying coastal areas were good for growing rice because that crop requires fields that can be flooded with water at certain periods. Cultivating rice also takes many workers, so family farms did not produce rice. Large rice plantations emerged, some established by South Carolinians who moved to Georgia themselves or who got land

and hired managers to oversee the work.

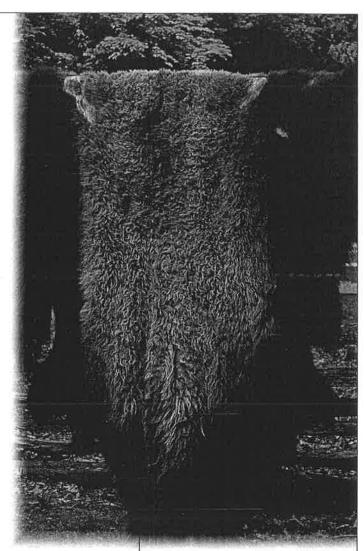
By the 1750s, Georgia planters were also growing the indigo plant, from which they produced the blue dye that buyers in England wanted. Its cultivation had begun in South Carolina with the work of a young plantation

mistress named Eliza Lucas, but it also grew well in Georgia. Georgia's production of the dye peaked in 1775, when 22,000 pounds were shipped to the mother country.

Georgians continued to make money from their native pine trees. The trees were valuable not only for their timber, but also for their gooey sap from which tar, pitch, and turpentine were manufactured for use by the royal navy. Tar and pitch plugged gaps in the wooden ships, and turpentine was used for cleaning. These products were known as naval stores.

In the backcountry, the fur and skin trade with the Indians continued, with Augusta as its center. In 1755, almost 50,000 pounds of deerskins went down the Savannah River for shipment to Great Britain. By 1765, that amount had risen to almost 200,000 pounds of skins; by 1770, it was almost 285,000 pounds. In 1770, almost 1,500 pounds of beaver furs were exported from Georgia.

Over time, problems emerged in the new lands of the backcountry because the new farmers settling in the area resented Indians on their way to Augusta along the well-established trading paths. The farmers had begun to grow tobacco, which was the main cash crop (a crop grown to be sold for income) of Virginia and North Carolina. They did not want Native Americans near their fields.



Above: The backcountry fur trade, centered in Augusta, increased dramatically during the royal period.

Land Policy

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The key to doing well in Georgia was getting land. The restrictions of the trustee period were gone. In the royal period, settlers could acquire land in three ways: (1) They could buy it; (2) They could receive it as a gift or an inheritance; and (3) They could receive it as a grant (gift) from the colonial government.

Every Tuesday, the governor and his council met and made grants of land. The size of a grant was based on the size of the applicant's household, which included not only family members, but also indentured servants and slaves. A head of a household could ask for one hundred acres for himself or herself, and fifty additional acres for each member of the household. This method of granting land was called the **headright sytem**.

While most land grants went to males, many went to women, mainly those who had never married (called *spinsters*) or those whose husbands had died (called *widows*). By the end of the royal period, women had received more than 70,000 acres in grants. If a woman got married, however, all of her property automatically became her husband's under the laws of that time.

In the early years of the royal period, most settlers were attracted to the low-lying lands between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers. In 1763, the

Something Extra!

Once a settler was granted land, he or she was required to "improve" it.
The usual method was to clear the land of trees and plant a crop.

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An Account of the Exports from the Port of Savannah in Georgia to Foreign Plantations for the above Period.

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ALEXANDER THOMSON, Collr.
WILLM. BROWN, Comptr. & Scarcher.

Report of Sir James Wright on the Condition of the Province of Georgia on 20th Sept. 1773.

The Staple Commoditys are Rice, Indico, Deer Skins, Raw Silk, Pitch, Tar, Turpentine, Beef, Pork, Indian Corn, Pease, Tobacco, Staves, Shingles, Lumber of all Sorts, and we have a great deal of fine live oak for Ship-Building and Hemp will grow very well, but little is planted as yet. And besides these, Cattle, Horses and live stock is exported to the "West Indies. And also Bees Wax, Beaver Skins &ca. &ca. The amount of the whole Exports annually for live years past on an Average is £101,240 Sterling.

The Trade of this Province is principally with Great Britain from whence we are supplyed with Linnens and Woolens of all Sorts, Ironware of all sorts Hats, Shoes, Stockings and all sorts of Apparel. Tea, Paper, Paints and a great variety of other articles; and altho' the Negroes are brought here immediately from Africa, yet the Returns in payment for them are made to Great Britain, so that that may also he deemed as a part of our Trade with Great Britain, to which place we export Deer skins, Rice Indico Naval Stores and Sundry other Articles. The annual amount of our Imports from Great Britain is computed at £76.322 on an average for three years past besides the Negroes imported which in the last year amounted to twenty thousand pounds. And our Exports to Great Britain only in the year 1772 amounted to £68.688.10.2 sterling. And besides this we are supplyed with Rum and Sugar from the West Indies and also with Rum Flour and Biscuit and other Provisions &ca. from the Northern Colonys. To the West Indies we send Rice, Corn, Pease, Lumber, Shingles, Cattle, Horses and Live Stock also Barrelled Beef and Pork. But the Northern Trade is an injurious trade as they take of but little of our produce and drain us of every trifle of Gold & Silver that is brought here, by giving a price for Guineas, Moidores Johannes's Pistols & Dollars far above their real and intrinsic value, so that we can never keep any amongst us.

Source: James Wright Papers, MS 884. Georgia Historical Society.