

Chapter 10: Georgia in the Royal Period

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.

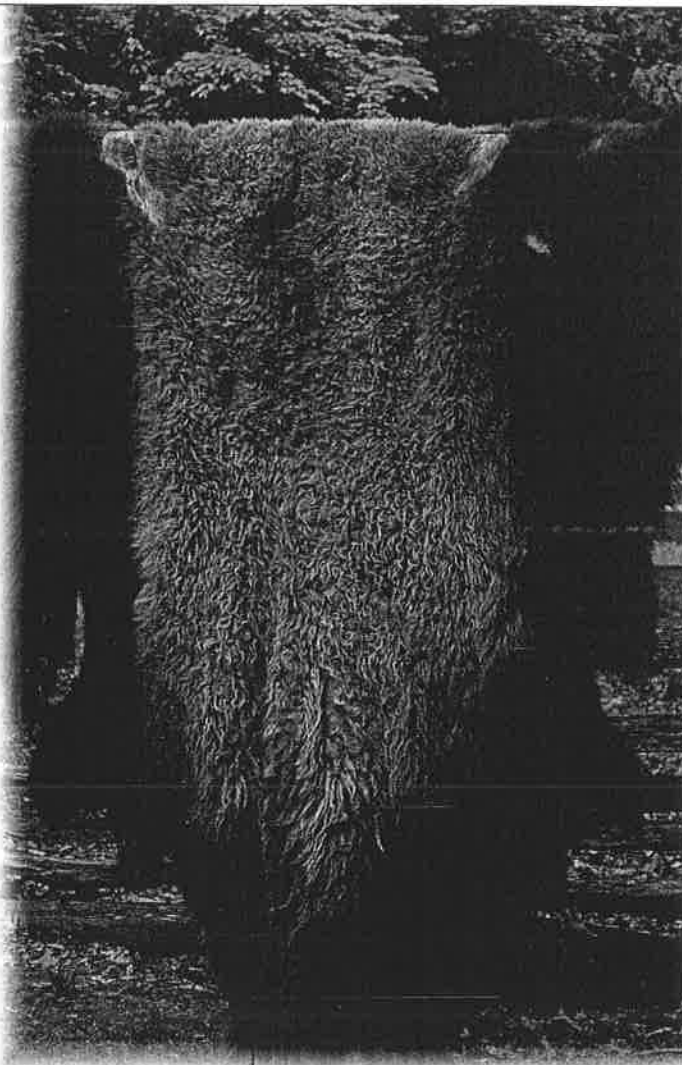
Land Policy

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



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

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.

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

The Staple Commodities 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 supplied 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 be 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 supplied 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.