

# 3 The Southern Colonies

BEFORE YOU READ

## Reading Focus

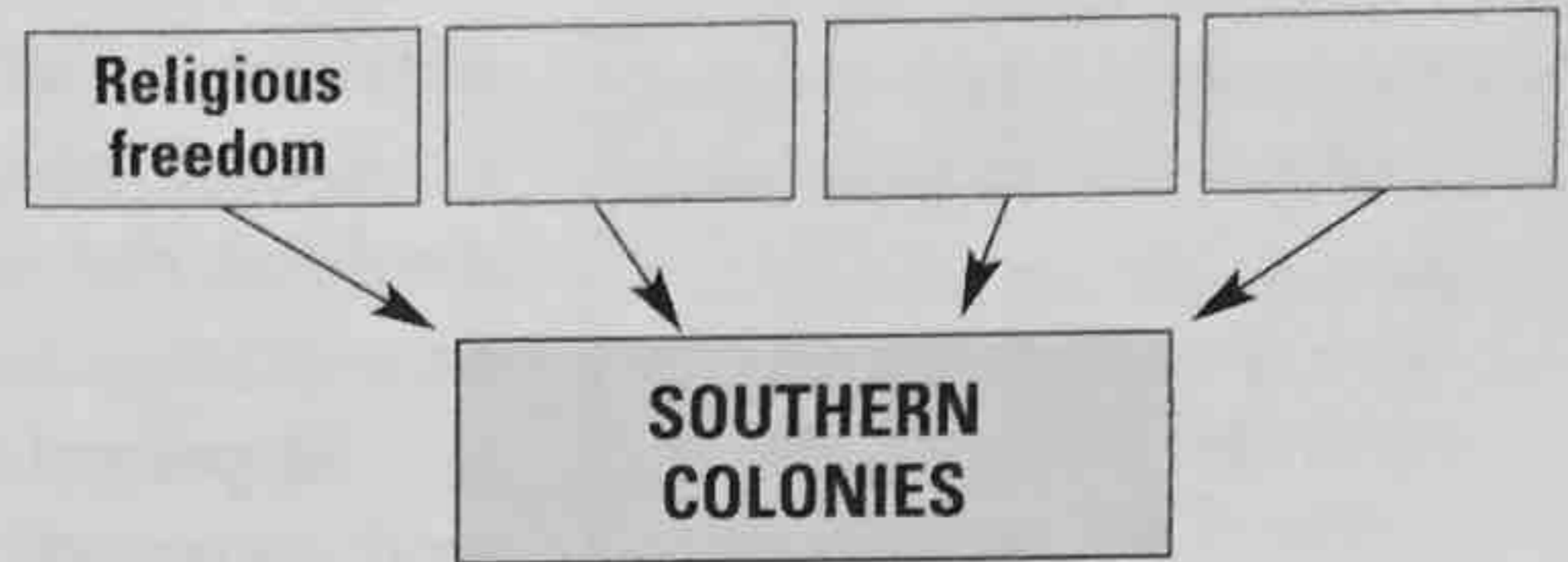
- Why was Maryland important to Roman Catholics?
- How were the Carolinas and Georgia founded?
- What two ways of life developed in the Southern Colonies?
- Why did the slave trade grow in the 1700s?

## Key Terms

- Mason-Dixon Line
- Act of Toleration
- Bacon's Rebellion
- indigo
- debtor
- slave code
- racism

## Taking Notes

Copy the chart below. As you read, complete the chart to show the causes that led to the founding of the Southern Colonies. Add as many boxes as you need.



**Main Idea** The large tobacco and rice plantations of the Tidewater region contrasted with the settlements of hunters and farmers in the backcountry.

**Setting the Scene** In 1763, two English surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, began a remarkable journey that lasted nearly four years. Their mission was to survey the 244-mile boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Mason and Dixon used surveyors' instruments and long chains to map their line. As they went, they carefully laid stone markers on the border between the two colonies. If the line crossed a river, they stretched chains across to measure. If the line went up hills or through swamps, Mason and Dixon followed. More than once, fierce thunderstorms swirled around them:

“The Lightning . . . continued [in] streams or streaks, from the Cloud to the ground all round us; about 5 minutes before the hurricane of wind and Rain; the Cloud from the Western part of the Mountain put on the most Dreadful appearance I ever saw . . .”

—Charles Mason *Journal*, August 4, 1766

The **Mason-Dixon Line** was more than just the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. It also divided the Middle Colonies from the Southern Colonies. South of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Southern Colonies developed a way of life different in many ways from that of the other English colonies.

## Lord Baltimore's Colony of Maryland

In 1632, Sir George Calvert persuaded King Charles I to grant him land for a colony in the Americas. Calvert had ruined his career in Protestant England by becoming a Roman Catholic. Now, he planned to build a colony where Catholics could practice their religion freely.



AS YOU READ

### Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon

**Ask Questions** After reading the journal passage, what questions would you want to ask Mason and Dixon?

He named the colony Maryland in honor of Queen Henrietta Maria, the king's wife.

Calvert died before his colony could get underway. His son Cecil, Lord Baltimore, pushed on with the project.

**Settling the Colony** In the spring of 1634, about 200 colonists landed along the upper Chesapeake Bay, across from England's first southern colony, Virginia. Maryland was truly a land of plenty. Chesapeake Bay was full of fish, oysters, and crabs. Across the bay, Virginians were already growing tobacco for profit. Maryland's new settlers hoped to do the same.

Remembering the early problems at Jamestown, the newcomers avoided the swampy lowlands. They built their first town, St. Mary's, in a drier location.

As proprietor of the colony, Lord Baltimore appointed a governor and a council of advisers. He gave colonists a role in government by creating an elected assembly. Eager to attract settlers to Maryland, Lord Baltimore made generous land grants to anyone who brought over servants, women, and children.

A few women took advantage of Lord Baltimore's offer of land. Two sisters, Margaret and Mary Brent, arrived in Maryland in 1638 with nine male servants. In time, they set up two plantations of about 1,000 acres each. Later, Margaret Brent helped prevent a rebellion among the governor's soldiers. The Maryland assembly praised her efforts, saying that "the colony's safety at any time [was better] in her hands than in any man's."

**Religious Tolerance** To make sure Maryland continued to grow, Lord Baltimore welcomed Protestants as well as Catholics to the colony.

Later, Lord Baltimore came to fear that Protestants might try to deprive Catholics of their right to worship freely. In 1649, he asked the assembly to pass an **Act of Toleration**. The law provided religious freedom for all Christians. As in many colonies, this freedom did not extend to Jews.

**Bacon's Rebellion** Meanwhile, English settlers continued to arrive in Virginia, attracted by the promise of profits from tobacco. Wealthy planters, however, controlled the best lands near the coast. Newcomers had to push farther inland, onto Indian lands.

As in New England, conflicts over land led to fighting between some white settlers and Indians. After several bloody clashes, settlers called on the governor to take action against Native Americans. The governor refused. He was unwilling to act, in part because he profited from his own fur trade with Indians. Frontier settlers were furious.

Finally, in 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, an ambitious young planter, organized angry men and women on the frontier. He raided Native American villages, regardless of whether the Indians there had been friendly to the colonists or not. Then, he led his followers to Jamestown and burned the capital.

The uprising, known as **Bacon's Rebellion**, lasted only a short time. When Bacon died suddenly, the revolt fell apart. The governor

hanged 23 of Bacon's followers. Still, he could not stop English settlers from moving onto Indian lands along the frontier.

## The Carolinas

South of Virginia and Maryland, English colonists settled in a region which they called the Carolinas. In 1663, a group of eight English nobles received a grant of land from King Charles II. Settlement took place in two separate areas, one in the north and the other in the south.

In the northern part of the Carolinas, settlers were mostly poor tobacco farmers who had drifted south from Virginia. They tended to have small farms. Eventually, in 1712, the colony became known as North Carolina.

Farther south, the group of eight English nobles set up a larger colony. The largest settlement, Charles Town, sprang up where the Ashley and Cooper rivers met. Later, Charles Town's name was shortened to Charleston. The colony became known as South Carolina in 1719.

Most early settlers in Charleston were English people who had been living in Barbados, a British colony in the Caribbean. Later, other immigrants arrived, including Germans, Swiss, French Protestants, and Spanish Jews.

**Rise of Plantation Slavery** Around 1685, a few planters discovered that rice grew well in the swampy lowlands along the coast. However, they were unable to grow rich crops until slaves from rice-growing areas of Africa arrived in the colony. Before long, Carolina rice was a profitable crop traded around the world. Settlers in southern Carolina later learned to raise **indigo**, a plant used to make a valuable blue dye.

Carolina planters needed large numbers of workers to grow rice. At first, they tried to enslave local Indians; however, many Indians died of disease or mistreatment, while others escaped into the forests.

Planters then turned to slaves from Africa. By 1700, most people coming to Charleston were African men and women brought against their will. Soon, African Americans in South Carolina outnumbered European Americans by more than two to one. On the mainland of North America, South Carolina was the only English colony where African Americans made up the majority of the population.

## Georgia

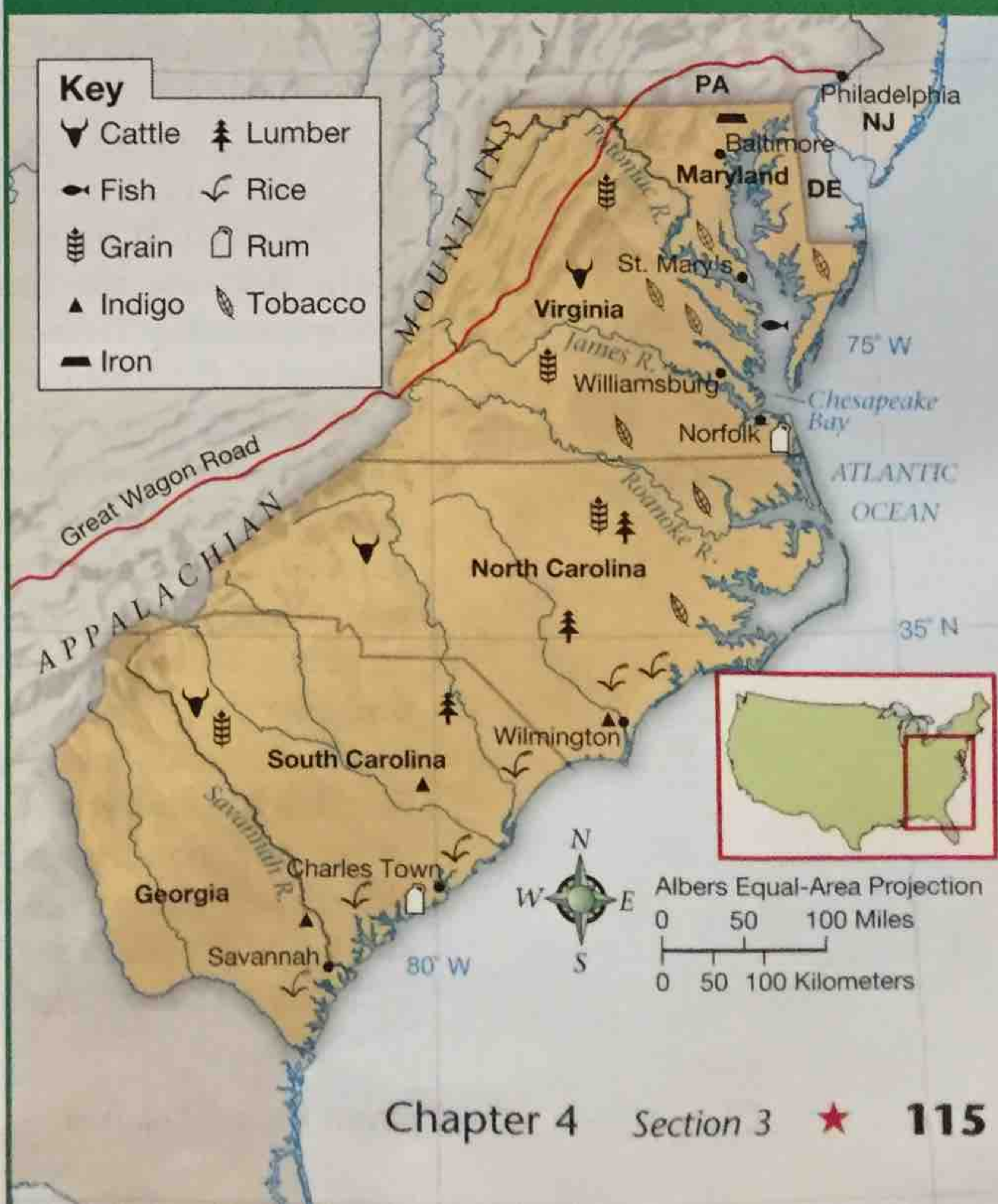
The last of England's 13 colonies was carved out of the southern part of South Carolina. James Oglethorpe, a respected English soldier and energetic reformer, founded Georgia in 1732. He wanted the new colony to be a

## GEOGRAPHY Skills

The five Southern Colonies stretched along the Atlantic coast from Maryland to Georgia. Farm products and lumber were important to the economy of the region.

- Location** On the map, locate: (a) Maryland, (b) Virginia, (c) North Carolina, (d) South Carolina, (e) Georgia, (f) Chesapeake Bay, (g) Charles Town.
- Place** Describe the area where cattle herding took place.
- Critical Thinking Comparing** Compare this map to the maps on pages 103 and 111. (a) What crops were grown only in the Southern Colonies? (b) Why do you think such products were not grown farther north?

## The Southern Colonies



place where **debtors**, or people who owed money they could not pay back, could make a fresh start.

Under English law, the government could imprison debtors until they paid what they owed. If they ever got out of jail, debtors often had no money and no place to live. Oglethorpe offered to pay for debtors and other poor people to travel to Georgia. "In America," he said, "there are enough fertile lands to feed all the poor of England."

In 1733, Oglethorpe and 120 colonists built the colony's first settlement at Savannah, above the Savannah River. Oglethorpe set strict rules for the colony. Farms could be no bigger than 500 acres, and slavery was forbidden.

At first, Georgia grew slowly. Later, however, Oglethorpe changed the rules to allow large plantations and slave labor. After that, the colony grew more quickly.

## Two Ways of Life

Today, we often think of the colonial South as a land where wealthy planters lived in elegant homes, with large numbers of enslaved African Americans toiling in the fields. In fact, this picture is only partly true. As the Southern Colonies grew, two distinct ways of life emerged—one along the Atlantic coast and another in the backcountry.

**Tidewater Plantations** The Southern Colonies enjoyed warmer weather and a longer growing season than the colonies to the north. Virginia, Maryland, and parts of North Carolina all became major tobacco-growing areas. Settlers in South Carolina and Georgia raised rice and indigo.

Colonists soon found that it was most profitable to raise tobacco and rice on large plantations. As you recall, a plantation is a large estate farmed by many workers. On these southern plantations, anywhere from 20 to 100 slaves did most of the work. Most slaves worked in the fields. Others were skilled workers, such as carpenters, barrel makers, or blacksmiths. Still other slaves worked in the main house as cooks, servants, or housekeepers.

The earliest planters settled along rivers and creeks of the coastal plain. Because the land was washed by ocean tides, the region was known as the Tidewater. The Tidewater's gentle slopes and rivers offered rich farmland for plantations.

Farther inland, planters settled along rivers. Rivers provided an easy way to move goods to market. Planters loaded crops onto ships bound for the West Indies and Europe. On the return trip, the ships carried English manufactured goods and other luxuries for planters and their families.

Most Tidewater plantations had their own docks along the river, and merchant ships picked up crops and delivered goods directly to them. For this reason, few large seaport cities developed in the Southern Colonies.

Only a small percentage of white southerners owned large plantations. Yet, planters set the style of southern living. Life centered around the Great House. There, the planter's family lived in elegant quarters, including a parlor for visitors, a dining room, and guest bedrooms.

AS YOU  
READ

**Summarize** Summarize the two ways of life in the colonial South by creating a graphic organizer to take notes.



## Drayton Hall

*By the 1700s, there were plantations in South Carolina that produced cash crops such as rice, tobacco, and indigo. One plantation in Charleston, South Carolina, was Drayton Hall. Completed in 1742, it is one of the oldest surviving plantation houses in the South.*



### **Take It to the NET**

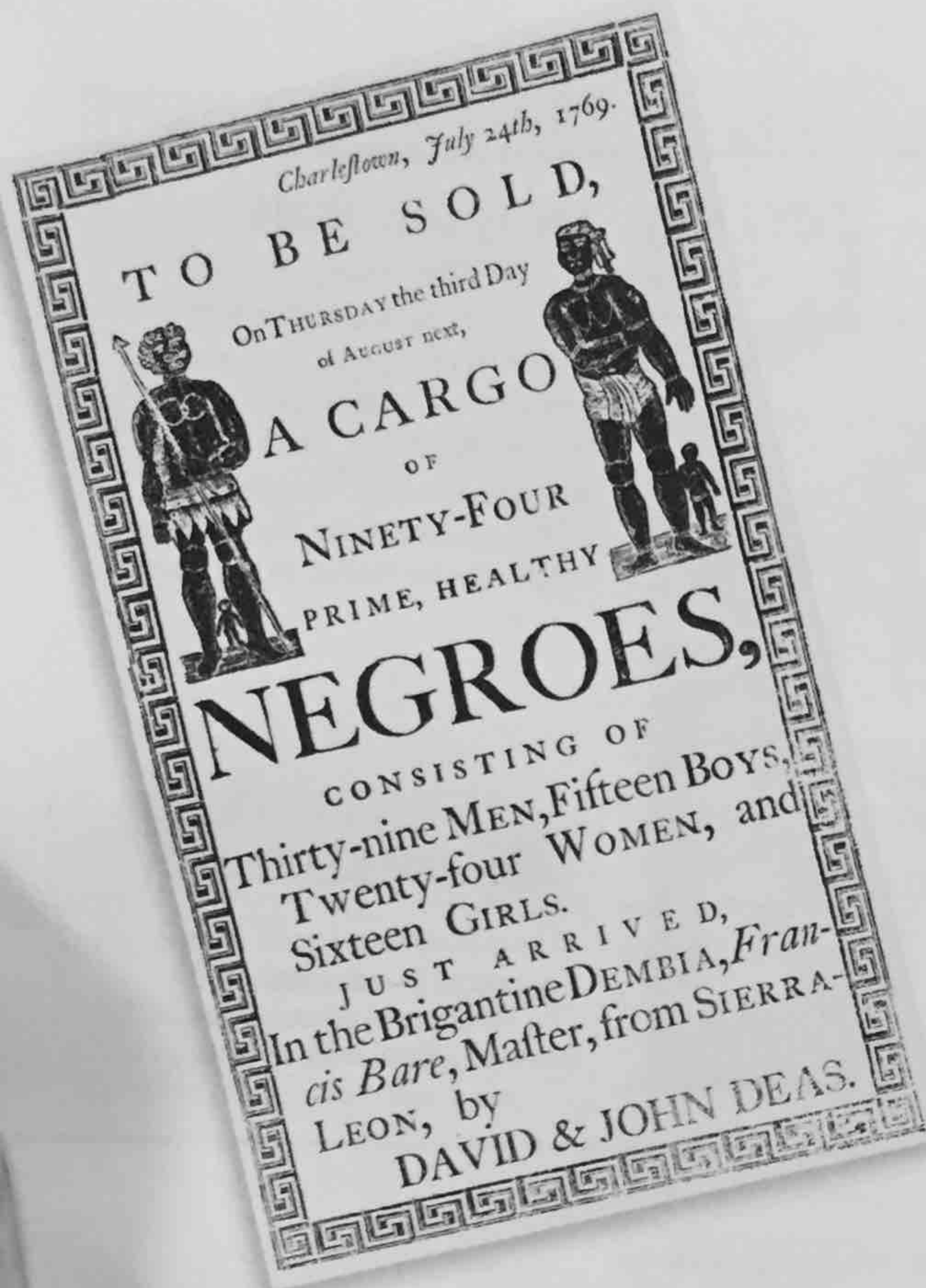
**Virtual Field Trip** For an interactive look at Drayton Hall, visit *The American Nation* section of [www.phschool.com](http://www.phschool.com).

During the growing season, planters decided which fields to plant, what crops to grow, and when to harvest the crops. Planters' wives kept the household running smoothly. They directed house slaves and made sure daily tasks were done, such as milking cows.

Enslaved Africans played a crucial role on many plantations. They used farming skills they had brought from West Africa. With their help, English settlers learned how to grow rice. Africans also knew how to use wild plants unfamiliar to the English. They made water buckets out of gourds, and they used palmetto leaves to make fans, brooms, and baskets.

**The Backcountry South** West of the Tidewater, life was very different. Here, at the base of the Appalachians, rolling hills and thick forests covered the land. As in the Middle Colonies, this inland area was called the backcountry. Attracted by rich soil, settlers followed the Great Wagon Road into the backcountry of Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas.

The backcountry was more democratic than the Tidewater. Settlers there were more likely to treat one another as equals. Men tended smaller fields of tobacco or garden crops such as beans, corn, or peas. They also hunted game. Largely self-sufficient, these farmers provided all the food they needed. Surplus goods were sold at local markets. Women cooked meals and fashioned simple, rugged clothing out of wool or deerskins. Another major difference between the backcountry and the Tidewater was slavery. Few enslaved Africans worked on the smaller farms in the backcountry.



The hardships of backcountry life brought settlers closer together. Families gathered to husk corn or help one another build barns. Spread out along the edge of the Appalachians, these hardy settlers felled trees, grew crops, and changed the face of the land.

## Growth of Slavery and the Slave Trade

In the early years, Africans in the English colonies included free people and servants as well as slaves. Indeed, during the 1600s, even Africans who were enslaved enjoyed some freedom. The first enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619. However, for the next fifty years, since the African population was small, the status of Africans in the colony was not clearly established. Some Africans were enslaved and some became servants. There were instances where enslaved Africans could purchase their freedom. Several Africans during the 1600s, such as Anthony Johnson, became successful property owners. In South Carolina some enslaved Africans worked without supervision as cowboys, herding cattle to market.

By 1700, plantations in the Southern Colonies had come to rely on slave labor. After a time, slaves made up the majority of the population in South Carolina and Georgia. Slaves cleared the land, worked the crops, and tended the livestock. In order to maintain the supply of slaves, southern planters relied on a system of slave trading that stretched halfway across the globe.

**Slavery in Africa** In Africa, as elsewhere around the world, slavery had been part of the social and economic system since ancient times. Usually, slaves were people who had been captured in war. Slaves were part of a community and were often treated as servants rather than property. In Africa, traders often transported and sold slaves as laborers. Muslim merchants also carried African slaves into Europe and the Middle East.

Over a period of less than 400 years, as the transatlantic slave trade grew, millions of Africans were enslaved. Slave traders from many Western European nations set up posts along the West African coast. They offered guns and other goods in exchange for slaves. As the demand for slaves increased, Africans who lived along the coast made raids into the interior, seeking captives to sell to the Europeans. They marched their captives to the coast. There, the slaves were loaded aboard European ships headed for the Americas.

**The Middle Passage** In the 1700s, English sailors began referring to the passage of slave ships west across the Atlantic Ocean as the Middle Passage. Below the decks of the slave ships, slaves were

### Viewing History

#### The Sale of Africans

The selling of Africans as slaves was

legal in the colonies. In this advertisement, the details of the sale are listed. By the late 1700s, nearly 500,000 enslaved Africans lived in the Southern Colonies.

#### Analyzing Information

Where did the slaves advertised on the poster come from?



crammed tightly together on shelves. One observer noted that they were “chained to each other hand and foot, and stowed so close, that they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each in breadth.” The captives were allowed above deck to eat and exercise in the fresh air only once or twice a day.

Many enslaved Africans resisted, but only a few escaped. Some fought for their freedom during the trip. They would stage a mutiny or revolt. The slave traders lived in constant fear of this and were heavily armed. Other slaves resisted by refusing to eat or even jumping overboard to avoid a life of slavery.

Records of slave ships show that about 10 percent of Africans loaded aboard a ship for passage to the Americas died during the voyage. Many died of illnesses that spread rapidly in the filthy, crowded conditions inside a ship’s hold. Others died of mistreatment. The Atlantic slave trade would last about 400 years. During that time, it may have caused the deaths of as many as 2 to 3 million Africans.

**Limiting Rights** As the importance of slavery increased, greater limits were placed on the rights of slaves. Colonists passed laws that set out rules for slaves’ behavior and denied slaves their basic rights. These **slave codes** treated enslaved Africans not as human beings but as property.

Most English colonists did not question the justice of owning slaves. They believed that black Africans were inferior to white Europeans. The belief that one race is superior to another is called **racism**. Some colonists believed that they were helping slaves by introducing them to Christianity.

A handful of colonists spoke out against the evils of slavery. In 1688, Quakers in Germantown, Pennsylvania, became the first group of colonists to call for an end to slavery.

## Primary Source

### Surviving the Middle Passage

*Olaudah Equiano (oh LAW dah ehk wee AH noh), an enslaved African, recalled an incident from his trip on a slave ship:*

“One day . . . two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together. . . jumped into the sea; immediately another . . . followed their example . . . Two of the wretches were drowned, but [the ship’s crew] got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery.”

—Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, 1789

### Analyzing Primary Sources

**How does Equiano use language to express his feelings about the Middle Passage?**

**AFTER YOU READ**

## Section 3 Assessment

### Recall

- 1. Identify** Explain the significance of (a) Mason-Dixon Line, (b) Lord Baltimore, (c) Act of Toleration, (d) Bacon’s Rebellion, (e) James Oglethorpe.
- 2. Define** (a) indigo, (b) debtor, (c) slave code, (d) racism.

### Comprehension

- 3.** Why did Lord Baltimore set up the colony of Maryland?
- 4.** Why was Georgia called a “haven for debtors”?
- 5.** How was life in the Tidewater different from life in the back-country South?

- 6.** What role did Africans play in the economy of the Southern Colonies by 1700?

### Critical Thinking and Writing

- 7. Exploring the Main Idea** Review the Main Idea statement at the beginning of this section. List the reasons why you think tensions might have developed between the back-country and the Tidewater.
- 8. Analyzing Information** Review the discussion of religious tolerance. Did Maryland’s Act of Toleration provide true religious tolerance? Write your answer in a paragraph.

### ACTIVITY

#### Creating Flashcards

Do you get confused about the 13 English colonies? Use the text, including the maps and charts, to create 13 flashcards. On one side, write the name of a colony. On the other, write three facts about that colony. You may later use these cards for review.