

Maryland Southern Colony

- **Founder** Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore)
- **Settlers** Catholics and Protestants seeking religious and political freedom
- **Climate** Cold, rainy winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Low, fertile land surrounding Chesapeake Bay
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming and ranching (crops, beef, dairy), lumbering, shipping, fishing, iron mining
- **Religion** Various faiths, particularly Catholic
- **Government** Self-governing

3.8 Maryland: A Southern Colony

The founding of Maryland was a family enterprise. Sir George Calvert, named Lord Baltimore by King James I, was an English gentleman who became a Roman Catholic. In England, with its official Anglican Church, Catholics were treated harshly. Calvert wanted to start a colony “founded on religious freedom where there would not only be a good life, but also a prosperous one for those bold enough to take the risk.” As a businessman, he also hoped the colony would make his own family more **prosperous**, or wealthy.

Unfortunately, Calvert died while he was still bargaining with the king. The new king, King Charles I, granted a charter for the colony to Calvert’s son Cecil, the new Lord Baltimore. The charter gave the Calverts complete control of the colony, which was called Maryland.

Armed with these powers, Cecil named his brother Leonard to be governor. To make money from the colony, Cecil needed to attract both Protestant and Catholic settlers. He told Leonard to be “very careful to preserve unity and peace . . . and treat the Protestants with as much mildness and favor as justice will permit.”

Leonard’s expedition arrived in Maryland in 1634. There he and his followers built St. Mary’s City on a high, dry bluff they purchased

from American Indians. The following year, Leonard agreed to let Maryland elect an assembly to govern the colony.

As more and more settlers arrived, Leonard could see that Catholics would always be outnumbered in the colony. To protect their rights, in 1649 he helped pass America’s first law guaranteeing religious liberty, the Act Concerning Religion. This law, however, applied only to Christians. Atheists (people who do not believe in the existence of God) and Jews were not included.

Despite the Calverts’ efforts, Protestants and Catholics remained suspicious of one another and waged a tug-of-war in Maryland for more than a century. During this time, the colony’s founding family lost and regained power several times. Still, George Calvert’s dream was fulfilled. Catholics in Maryland worshiped freely and took part in the colony’s government alongside Protestants.

Sir Cecil Calvert, or Second Lord Baltimore, was the founder of Maryland. Calvert established laws to protect Catholics from persecution in the colony.



The Granger Collection, New York

3.9 Virginia: A Southern Colony

Jamestown, Virginia, was the first successful English settlement in America. After a shaky start, Virginia began to grow and prosper. By 1700, the descendants of those early settlers were wealthy landowners and the most important people in Virginia.

The economy of Virginia was based on tobacco. Tobacco planters needed vast areas of land to be successful. They also needed a large number of workers to grow their crops.

At first, planters tried putting Indians to work. But Indians in this area were not used to farming. Worse, many of them died of diseases they caught from the colonists. The others faded into the forests and disappeared.

Next, tobacco planters tried bringing poor people from England to work their land. In exchange for free passage to Virginia, the workers agreed to become indentured servants for a period of five to seven years. Many men, women, and children came to Virginia as indentured servants. After completing their service, they were given their freedom along with a small plot of land, some clothing, tools, and seeds.

The first Africans brought to Virginia were also treated as indentured servants. At first, they had the same rights and freedoms as white servants. Once their service ended, they could buy land and servants of their own.

Gradually, however, planters turned to slaves to solve their labor problem. Slaves brought from Africa cost twice as much as servants, but they did not leave after a few years.

For the planters, enslaving Africans had other advantages as well. Most Africans were hard workers who were used to farming. And because of their dark skin, it was hard for them to escape from their owners and blend into the rest of the population.

Virginia elected an assembly, called the House of Burgesses, in 1619. In 1661, the House of Burgesses passed a law that made African workers slaves for life. By 1700, Virginia had more than 16,000 enslaved Africans—more than one-fourth of the colony's population. For Virginia, slavery had become a way of life.

Virginia Southern Colony

- **Founders** Sir Walter Raleigh and the Virginia Company
- **Settlers** English landowners, skilled laborers (shoemakers, bricklayers, tailors), people seeking profit
- **Climate** Mild winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Coastal lowlands, wooded mountains
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (plantations and small independent farms)
- **Religion** Church of England
- **Government** Self-governing, with elected assembly (House of Burgesses)

The first Africans were brought to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, the year before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.



James Oglethorpe founded the colony of Georgia. He is shown here wearing Scottish clothing and greeting colonists.



3.10 Georgia: A Southern Colony

Georgia, the 13th and last colony, was founded by a group of English men whose business plan was based on a grand and noble idea. They wanted to help poor people in England stay out of debtors' prison. In England, at this time, people who couldn't pay their bills went to jail. James Oglethorpe inspired wealthy Englishmen to give money to help establish a colony where the poor could build better lives instead of going to jail.

King George II and his government liked this plan because the Georgia colony would help keep the Spanish from moving north out of Florida. Georgia would stand between Spanish Florida and the rest of the British colonies to the north.

The Englishmen's plan depended on getting the cooperation of settlers. But there weren't many poor debtors who wanted to start new lives in the wilderness of North America. Some thought prison would be a safer place.

Instead of an army of poor people, the colonists who went with Oglethorpe to Georgia in 1732 were adventurers much like the settlers in the other colonies. In addition, many Protestants, Catholics, and Jews came to Georgia in search of religious freedom.

As many had feared, life was not easy in Georgia. The Spaniards in Florida wanted to control Georgia, and they continually attacked the new settlements. The Georgians fought them off without any help from the other British colonies. To make matters worse, Oglethorpe had specific ideas about how the colonists should live. He established laws against drinking alcohol and owning slaves. He thought the settlers should live on small farms and learn to farm their land themselves.

Georgia Southern Colony

- **Founders** George II and James Edward Oglethorpe
- **Settlers** Debtors from English prisons, Europeans seeking religious freedom and cheap land
- **Climate** Short, mild winters; long, hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Wetlands and red-clay plains; forested mountains
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (plantations and independent farms), trade, skilled labor
- **Religion** Various faiths
- **Government** Self-governing

The settlers weren't about to go along. They wanted to farm large plantations and own slaves like the wealthy planters in neighboring colonies. They disliked some of Oglethorpe's other rules as well.

After 12 years of governing the colony, Oglethorpe returned to England. In 1752, the people of Georgia elected an assembly.