Development of the British Colonies

(Geographic Influences on Colonial Economic Developments)
England’s Renewed Interest in North America

- Queen Elizabeth granted the first charter to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1578.
- He died after two failed attempts to colonize North America.
- In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh led 100 men to establish a colony on Roanoke Island.
- He named the new territory Virginia after Queen Elizabeth, “The Virgin Queen.”
- When an English ship returned in 1590, the colonists were all gone: No Bodies were found; only a settlement of empty buildings.
The Chesapeake Colonies

- The first permanent English settlements in North America were located around the Chesapeake Bay region.
- The colony’s location was due to its large bay, numerous coastal inlets and direct access to the Atlantic.
- The two primary colonies in this region were Virginia and Maryland.
- Virginia was originally established as a Self-Governing Colony.
- London Investors formed the Virginia Company with the hope of making Instant Profits from the colony’s raw materials.
- In 1607 they established Jamestown, which was England’s first settlement.
England’s First Permanent Colonial Settlement

- The Jamestown Colony was not successful due to the lack of:
  1. Leadership
  2. Work Ethics
  3. Survival Skills
  4. Sanitary Practices

- Captain John Smith emerged as the most capable leader
- He eventually established trade with the Native Americans (out of necessity)
- However, after he was forced to return to England, the Jamestown colony declined
- Due to cold weather, disease, and conflict
England’s First Permanent Colonial Settlement

- The Winter of 1609-1610 was known as the “Starving Time”

- Due to the lack of food, the Colonists ate:

1. Dogs
2. Rats
3. Snakes
4. Toadstools
5. Horsemeat
6. Human Remains
Virginia Grows from a Settlement to a Colony

- Eventually, Virginia Farmer John Rolfe created a blend of Tobacco that was hearty enough to grow in Virginia.
- The popularity of the new tobacco in the English Market gave Jamestown a Cash-Crop economy.
- From 1616 to 1619, Jamestown's Tobacco Crops grew nearly twenty-fold.
- Labor shortages in Jamestown led the British to establish the Headright System.
  - This system offered 50 acres of land to those who would come and settle the colony.
- Indentured Servitude and a limited use of Slaves emerged.
Developments in New England

• In 1620, 120 settlers sailed from England to the Plymouth Bay Colony on the ship *Mayflower*.

• Most of these settlers were English Separatists (Pilgrim, Quakers, and Baptists) who had broken ties with the Anglican Church of England.

• The colony’s location was due to its large bay and direct access to the Atlantic.

• In 1630, 900 English Puritans under John Winthrop establish a Colony under a King’s Charter at Massachusetts Bay.

• From 1630 to 1640 approximately 20,000 colonists came to New England.
Developments in New England

Like Virginia, the New England Colonies established good Trade Relations with the local Native American tribes out of necessity to survive.

Numerous colonists died during the first year due to lack of food, disease, and the severe winter cold.

Puritans and Native Americans shared their bountiful harvests by celebrating a day of Thanksgiving.

However, eventual disputes over territorial lands erupted between the settlers and their Native American neighbors.
Economic Development of the New England Colonies

- New England’s economy was greatly influenced by a Puritan belief known as the Puritan Work Ethic:
  ✓ Based on the idea that God commanded six days of work a week.

- Agriculture actually played a minor role in Colonial times because the soil was too rocky and thin to support many large farms.
  - Rock walls were built dividing limited farm land from grazing land.
  - Clearing fields for farming involved removing trees that produced lumber that was often exported to England, where it was in short supply due to their depleted forests.
Economic Development of the New England Colonies

- However, fishing and whaling were actually the main supporters of the region’s economy.

- Lumber created by clearing lands for farms and settlements was used in building ships.

- New England also became a center for early sawmills and factories where manufactured goods were produced.

- Businesses like the Saugus Iron Works near Boston used water power as a source of energy to run the equipment.

- As a result, new mills and factories were built along the many rivers and streams in New England.
Economic Development of the New England Colonies

- New England Shipbuilding was a key influence on the growth of the new oceanic trade.
- Large numbers of ships manufactured in New England sailed the Trans-Atlantic Trade Route creating a prosperous region trade system.
- Ships leaving the American colonies carried manufactured goods, such as tools and rum, as well as raw tobacco, to ports across the Atlantic.

Development of the Triangular Trade Routes

- Eventually, the Colonial shipping trade followed certain, three way, Triangular Trade Routes, linking England, Africa, and the Americas.
Establishing the Middle Colonies

• The Dutch Colony of New Netherlands was originally established to exploit the rich Fur Trade in North America.

• The location of the Dutch settlement on Hudson Bay allowed New Amsterdam fur traders to use the coastal rivers to access the interior.

• Dutch and French Fur Trade supported the clothing industry in Europe.

• Eventually, in 1674, after several Anglo-Dutch Wars, the colony was formally turned over to the British and was renamed New York.

• The acquisition of the colony of New York linked the New England Colonies to the Chesapeake and Southern Colonies.
Establishing the Southern Colonies

- Originally Chartered in 1629, the Province of Carolina was reissued as a Charter to eight noblemen as the Lord Proprietors in 1663, and eventually divided into North and South Carolina by 1712.

- A Rebellion against the Lord Proprietors resulted in the appointment of a Royal Governor in 1720.

- The last of the Thirteen Original British Colonies was the Province of Georgia, established under a Corporate Charter granted to General James Oglethorpe in 1732.

- He envisioned the colony as a haven for the resettlement of English debtors.

- The British Government saw the colony as a “Buffer State” between the British Colonies and Spanish Florida.
Economic Development of the Southern Colonies

- Tobacco became the main crop grown in Virginia and most of the Southern Colonies.

- Most southern farms were not large plantations since they usually contained only about 200 acres.

- Southern farmers grew tobacco as a cash crop to make it possible to buy the other things they really needed.

- Although tobacco farming was a very labor intensive and long process, most Virginia farmers would have only two or three slaves.

- The southern climate (mild winters and warm summers) facilitated the ability to grow and dry the tobacco.

- The tobacco growing season started in January and lasted until August.
Economic Development of the Southern Colonies

- Once the tobacco hogshead was full, it would be taken to town where it would be inspected and stored in a warehouse near the port.

- The numerous tidewater rivers and inlets along the Georgia and Carolina coasts allowed ships to sail directly up rivers to the plantation docks.
Economic Development of the Southern Colonies

- Other southern colonies made attempts to grow:
  - Indigo
  - Rice
  - Cotton

- However, these crops proved to be much more costly and labor intensive requiring them to be grown on much larger plantations.

- Obviously, the greater need for labor on the large plantations facilitated the development of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
Development of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

- The need for cheap labor and the proximity of the American colonies to the Atlantic Ocean facilitated the development of the African Slave trade.

- Ships from the American colonies sailed to England carrying sugar, tobacco, tea, and cotton.

- These goods were traded for textiles, gunpowder and rum and carried to West Africa.

- In Africa, these items were traded for slaves and carried to both the West Indies (Caribbean) and the American Colonies.

- The African Slave Trade, by the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and British became the most dominant Triangular Trade Route in Colonial History.