



Georgia's Colonial History

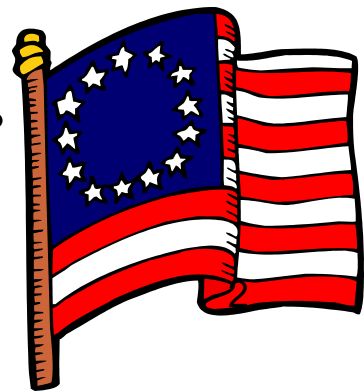
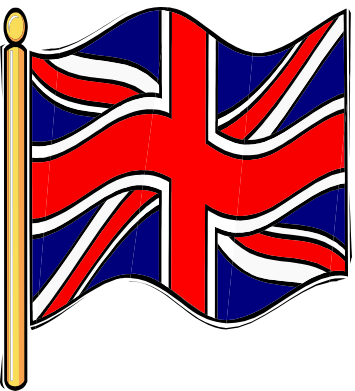
SS8H2 The student will analyze the colonial period of Georgia's history.

c. Explain the development of Georgia as a royal colony with regard to land ownership, slavery, government, and the impact of the royal governors.

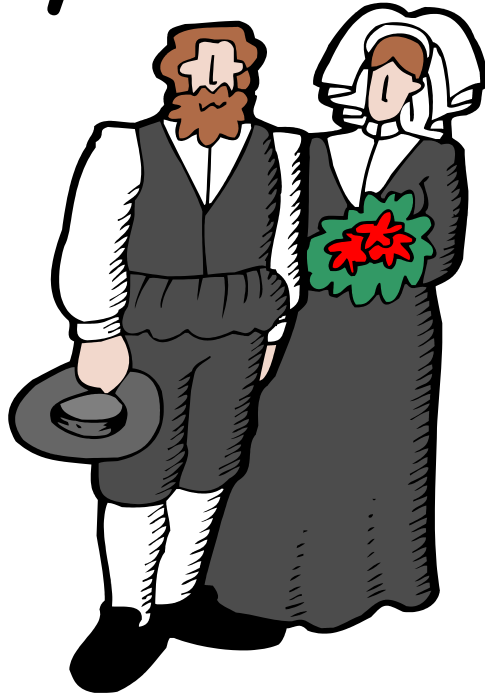


Impact of the Royal Governors

The period after Georgia returned its charter and became a British royal colony until the end of the American Revolution was a time of unrest and turmoil in Georgia and in the other colonies.



In 1752, Puritans from South Carolina bought 32,000 acres of land at Midway in present-day Liberty County.



They moved there bringing their slaves with them. Soon they began growing rice and indigo. A port was built nearby at Sunbury so the planters could ship their crops.





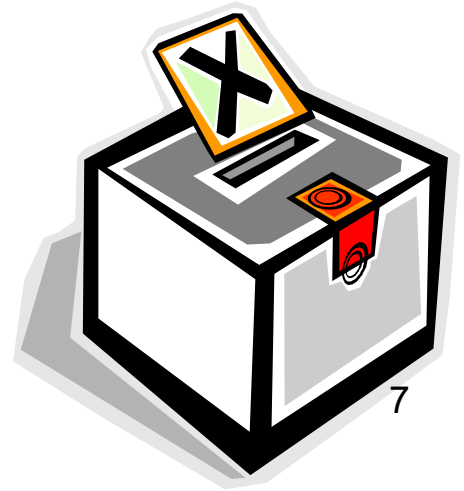
Georgia as a Royal Colony

Governor John Reynolds

On October 1, 1754,
Georgians cheered when
John Reynolds, their first
royal governor arrived.



Because the trustees had believed that the first Georgia settlers weren't able to govern themselves, they had not given them the right to vote, hold elections, or collect taxes.



Reynolds, a Navy captain, introduced the idea of self-government. Unlike the trustees, Gov. Reynolds wanted the colonists to help run the government.



A bi-cameral, or two-chambered legislature was set up to represent the eight parishes of the colony. A parish was a British government district.



The lower house of the legislature was called the Commons House of Assembly; the upper house was called the Governor's Council.



Those wishing to become a member of the Assembly had to own at least 500 acres of land. The king of England (at left) appointed the members of the Governor's Council.



Governor Reynolds also set up a court system. When the colonists had differences with each other, they went before the Court of Conscience over which presided a local justice of the peace.



Georgia's new government met for the first time in 1755 in Savannah, the colony's capital and largest city. The delegates

reorganized for the state militia and passed bills so roads could be built and repaired¹³.

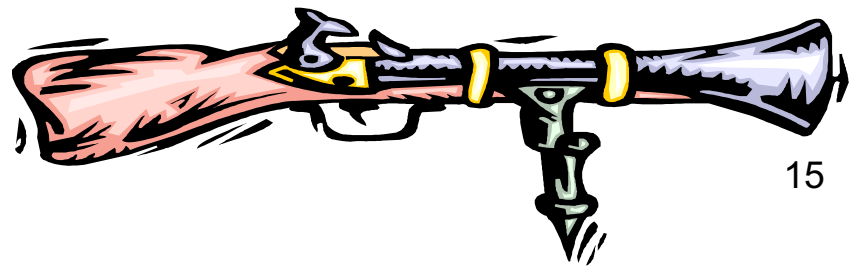
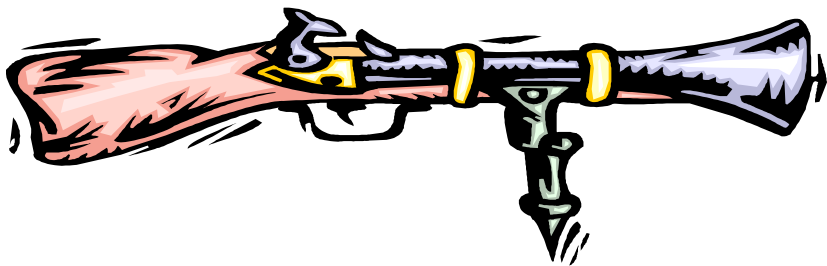


The colonial assembly also drew up codes that restricted the rights of slaves.



- (left) Two small slaves houses still standing in Savannah

For a while, Gov. Reynolds and the colonial assembly worked well together. However, during one legislative session, members of the Governor's Council couldn't agree on how much was needed to improve the military defenses of the colony.

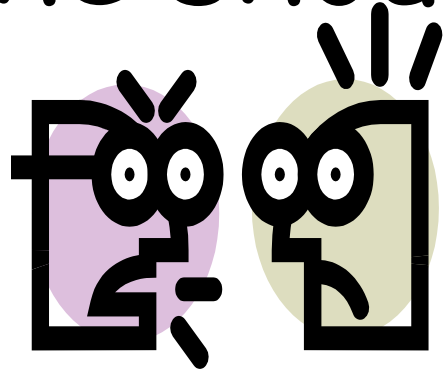


Gov. Reynolds became so angry at their failure to agree that he stopped the meeting and sent the legislators home.



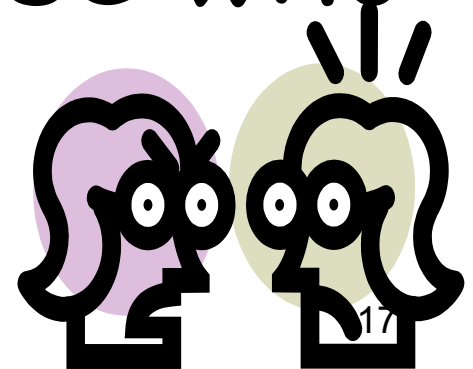
During the months that followed, Reynolds tried to govern Georgia by himself, leaving the colonists angry.

There were arguments between those who thought he should leave and those who

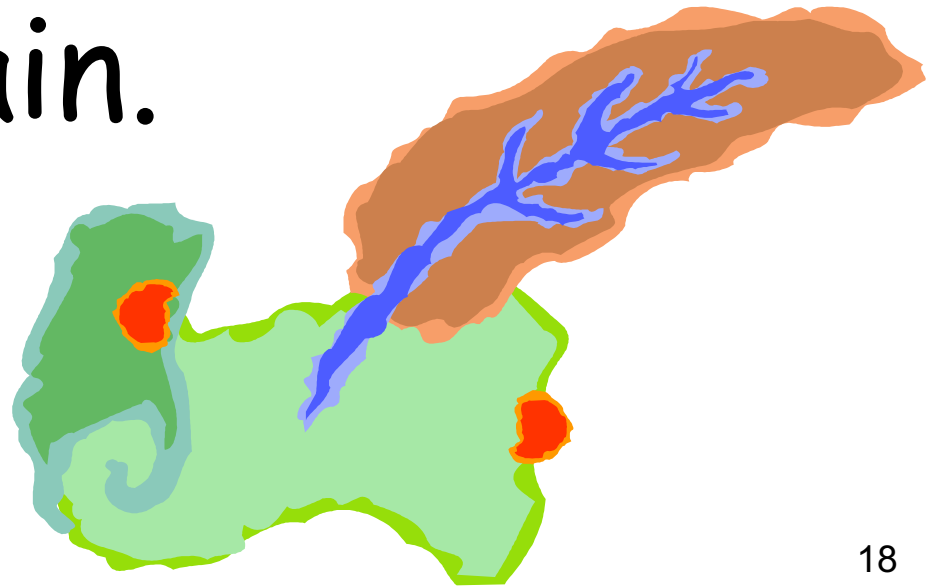


wanted

him to remain.

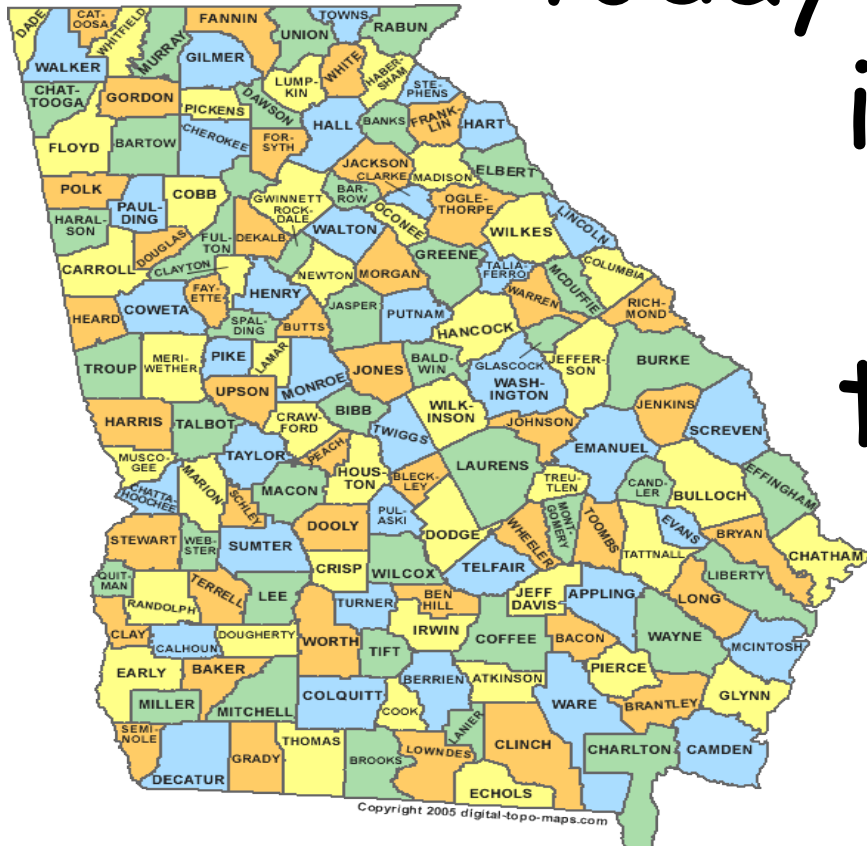


Many Georgians didn't like having their right to self-government taken away and wrote to King George II to complain.

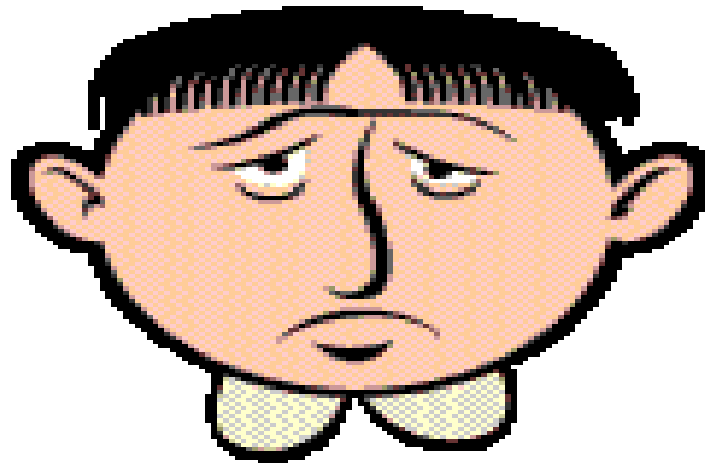


However, when Reynolds recommended moving Savannah to the Ogeechee River close to today's Richmond Hill in Bryan County,

we can guess that most of his limited support evaporated.



Finally after two years, the group who wanted self-government won. Georgia's first royal governor was replaced.



Gov. Henry Ellis

In February 1757, the king chose Cap. Henry Ellis as the next royal governor. Gov. Ellis was a naturalist and a scientist who had led voyages to different parts of the world.



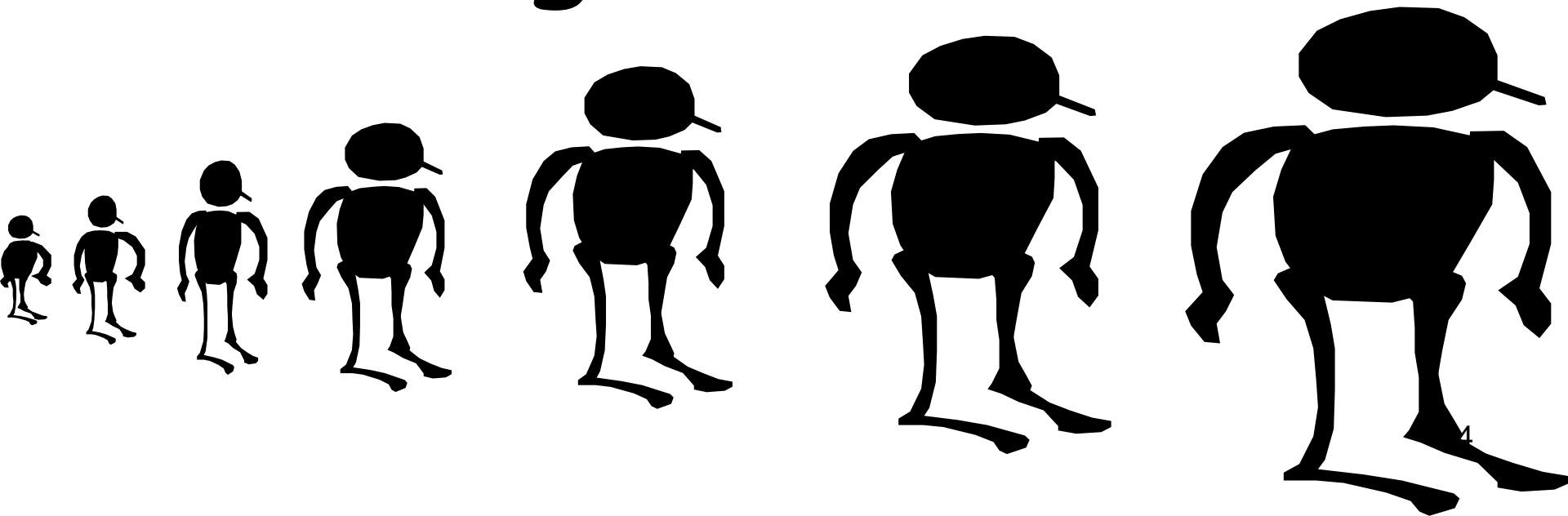
Gov. Ellis learned quickly from Gov. Reynolds' mistakes. During his three years as governor, Ellis brought together people of many different political groups.



He sought the advice of the governor of South Carolina and the West Indies. Many of these new settlers brought slaves with them, and the governor granted the newcomers large amounts of land.

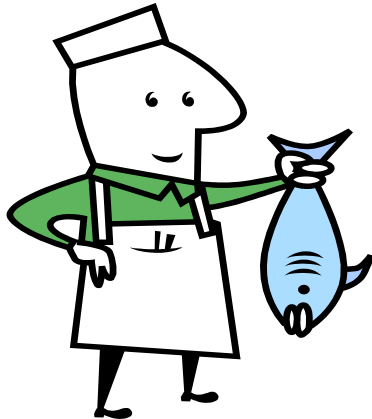


By 1759, the population of the colony as grown to about 10,000, including 3,600 slaves.

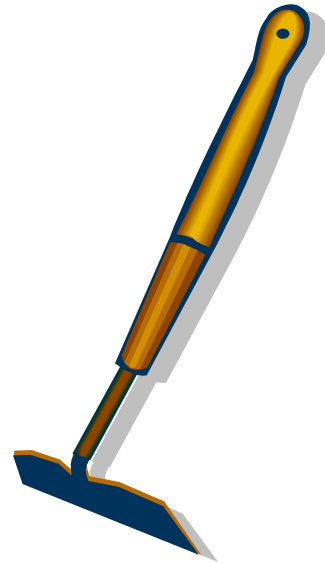
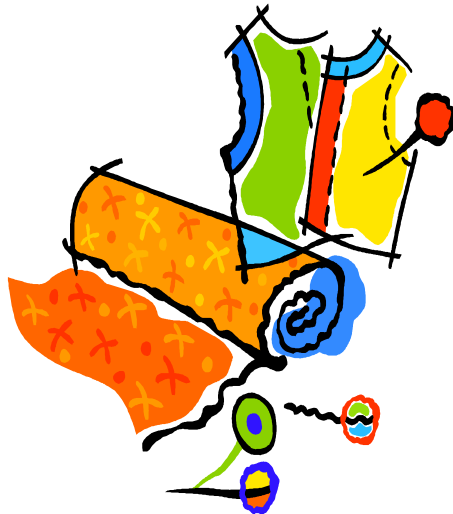
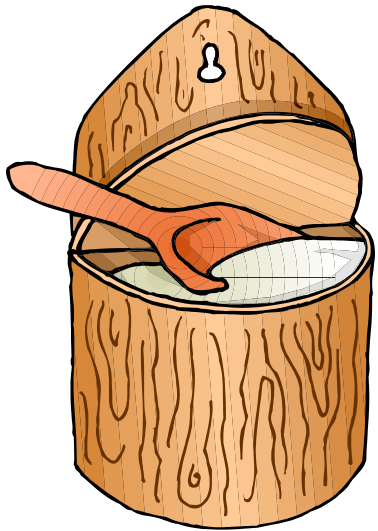


Ellis was a popular governor under whose direction the colony made economic gains.

There were more and more profitable farms. There were more merchants.



As a result, the colonists could buy the things they couldn't grow or manufacture like cloth, sugar, farming tools, and seeds for planting.



In 1759, Gov. Ellis became ill, perhaps from heat-related problems and asked to return to Great Britain. However, he was reassigned to Nova Scotia as its royal governor in 1761.



Gov. James Wright

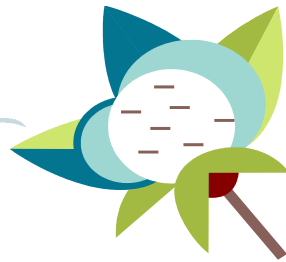
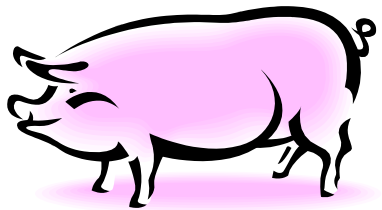
After Gov. Ellis left, the Hon. James Wright became governor. Wright was born in Charleston, but educated in Great Britain.



Gov. Wright arrived in Georgia on October 11, 1760 to serve as lieutenant governor. Before coming to Georgia, he'd been the attorney general of South Carolina for twenty-one years.



Wright was loyal to the king, but he also wanted the colonies to do well. He believed that Georgia would continue to grow if large farms were even bigger, if trading were expanded, and if the western lands of the colony were opened to the settlers.



Wright agreed with the self-government program Gov. Reynolds had started, and the colonists were pleased with him at first.



During his early years as governor, Wright completed the defenses around Savannah. Savannah was surrounded with palisades, and the area forts were made stronger.



The town of Sunbury grew and became the colony's official port of entry for ships arriving from other countries and colonies. Both houses of the colonial legislature worked together to promote Georgia's economic growth.



Farmers were allowed to borrow more money, so they bought more land. The amount of owned land grew from 1 million acres to 7 million acres.



Rice and indigo became profitable crops. Enough silk was being produced so that by 1767, almost a ton of it was exported to Great Britain each year.



There were more schools,
and more and more people
were reading. Many books
were sold, and in 1763 the
colony's first newspaper, *The
Georgia Gazette*, was
started.



Many of the small frame houses were taken down. In their place, two-story houses were built of wood or tabby.

Tabby is a mixture of lime, crushed shells, sand and water.



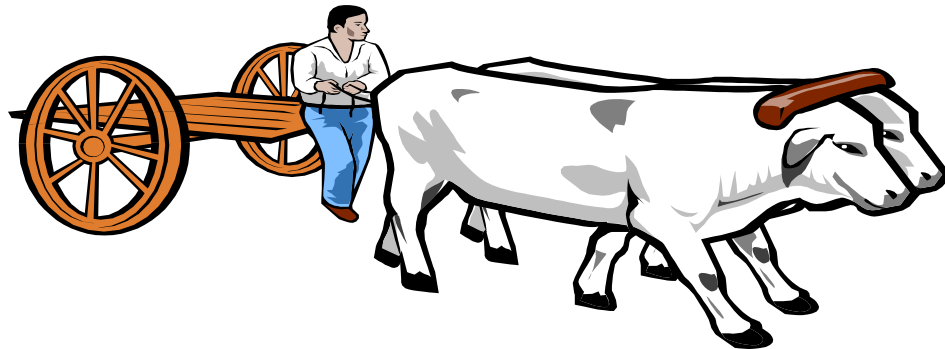
There was, however, another side to Georgia during these early years. Many mothers died in childbirth. School was mostly for children in the upper economic class.



A group of what plantation owners called "undesirable people" moved from Virginia and the Carolinas to settle in the middle and western parts of the Georgia colony. These people became known as "crackers."



The term "crackers" may have come from the cracking sounds of whips used on oxen or horses as these new settlers went to market to sell their goods or from the cracking sound of corn as they prepared corn meal.



Some say the term came from a Scottish word that meant "boasters." Now matter how it started, the term was meant as an insult for the lower classes. The crackers were thought of as people who didn't obey the law and weren't welcome in the colony.

