**GEORGIA HISTORY**

Seventy-five years had elapsed between the founding of Virginia (the first colony) and Pennsylvania, and twelve English colonies were now flourishing in North America. Then came a lapse of fifty years after which Georgia, the last of the famous thirteen, came into existence.

The founder of Georgia was James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe is remembered in history chiefly as the founder of Georgia, but aside from this he was a man of much prominence. While still a youth he served in the European wars.

He became a member of Parliament where his father and two brothers had also served. He would be re-elected to successive terms for 32 years. During his service, Oglethorpe was a staunch defender of the rights of colonists and strongly against any kind of slavery. Oglethorpe was noted as a philanthropist and for his benevolence, including helping children. It was his work on the Prison Discipline Committee that brought him in contact with the idea of creating a colony of debtors in the New World. Oglethorpe became a driving force in the group in 1728. A friend of Oglethorpe's died in Debtor's Prison after contracting smallpox. This event would change Oglethorpe's life.

A charter was granted for twenty-one years to a board of trustees for the land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers and westward to the "South Sea". The new country was named Georgia, from George II who had granted the charter. The liberties of Englishmen were guaranteed to the colonies, and freedom in religion to all except Catholics. There were three reasons for the founding the colony: to create an opportunity to the unfortunate poor to begin life over again, to offer a refuge to persecuted Protestants of Europe, and to establish a military barrier between the Carolinas and Spanish Florida. Oglethorpe was chosen governor and with thirty-five families he sailed from England, reaching the mouth of a river in the spring of 1733, and here on a bluff overlooking the river and the sea he founded a city and called Savannah. The year after the founding of Savannah a shipload of Protestant refugees, sailed into the mouth of the Savannah led by Oglethorpe. This same year the governor sailed for England and soon returned with more immigrants.

Colonial Georgia was formed into the vision of its leader. He would act as doctor and judge to the families that joined him on the venture, and many texts refer to him as a "strict disciplinarian." As more settlers arrived, Oglethorpe returned to England to secure additional funds. The local Indian chief, from whom Oglethorpe had purchased land for the colony, made the journey to England with Oglethorpe. Coming back to Georgia on the return trip were important religious leaders.

Georgia was the only colony of the thirteen that received financial aid by a vote of Parliament . The colony differed from all others also in prohibiting slavery and the importation of intoxicating liquors. The settlers were to have their land free of rent for ten years. The trustees made all the laws; but this arrangement was not intended to be permanent; at the close of the proprietary period the colony was to pass to the control of the Crown.

Oglethorpe's military wisdom was soon apparent. In the war between England and Spain, beginning in 1739, the Spaniards became troublesome and the governor, this same year, made an expedition against St. Augustine with an army of over two thousand men, half of whom were Indians. The city was well fortified and he failed to capture it; but three years later when the Spaniards made an attack on the colony Oglethorpe repulsed the enemy and drove him away.

Oglethorpe was governor of Georgia for twelve years when he returned to England. The settlers in Georgia were greatly dissatisfied. They wanted rum, they wanted slaves, they greatly desired to take a hand in their own government, and they were not content with the land system, which gave each settler a small farm that must descend in the male line. These restrictions prevented the colony from growing. At the end of eighteen years barely a thousand families had settled in Georgia. The people claimed that the prohibition of liquors drove the trade away. A great majority favored having slaves and pleaded that slave labor was necessary to the development of the colony. Parliament changed their mind and in 1749 Georgia became a slave colony; but only under strict laws for the humane treatment of slaves.

Georgia became a royal colony. The people now elected an assembly and the king appointed the governor. The right to vote was extended to Protestant freemen. The English church was made the state church, but religious freedom was extended to all Protestants

The chief products were rice, indigo, and lumber, and there was a very lucrative fur trade carried on with the Indians. It was believed at first that the production of silk would become the leading industry, as the mulberry tree, which furnishes the natural food of the silkworm, grew wild in Georgia; but after a trial of several years the business was abandoned.

The social condition of Georgia resembled that of [North Carolina](http://www.usahistory.info/southern/North-Carolina.html). There were no schools, and mail seldom or never reached the inland settlements. The people were mostly small farmers, with a few rich planters. There was little town life. Savannah was the only town of importance. Settlers saw little of one another.

**GEORGIA HISTORY**

1. Who is credited with the founding of Georgia?

2. What was his family history with Parliament?

3. What is a philanthropist?

4. Which religions was originally banned from Georgia?

5. What were three reasons for starting the colony?

6. How was Oglethorpe described as a leader?

7. What are some things that made Georgia different from the other colonies?

8. What was the role of the trustees?

9. How was Oglethorpe's military experience helpful?

10. Why were the settlers of Georgia dissatisfied with Oglethorpe?

11. What ended up being the chief products of Georgia?

12. How did the social conditions of Georgia resemble North Carolina?