

VS.4 LIFE IN THE VIRGINIA COLONY

STANDARD VS.4A AGRICULTURE & SLAVERY

The success of tobacco as a cash crop transformed life in the Virginia colony and encouraged slavery.

Terms to know

- **Cash crop:** A crop that is grown to **sell for money** rather than for use by the growers
- The economy of the Virginia colony **depended on agriculture** as a primary source of **wealth**.
 - **Tobacco became the most profitable** agricultural product because it was sold in England as a **cash crop**.
- The successful planting of **tobacco** depended on a **steady and inexpensive source of labor**.
 - The Virginia colony turned to **enslaved labor** to make **money** and expand their resources.
 - This **dependence** lasted for more than two hundred years, until the **end of the Civil War**.
 - For this reason, **African** men, women, and children were **forcibly brought to the Virginia** colony and **enslaved** to work on the **plantations**.
 - The Virginia colony became **dependent on slave labor**, and the dependence lasted a **long time**.



- American Indian - Roanoke



Settlement areas

- **English and other Europeans** settled primarily in **Coastal Plain** (Tidewater) and **Piedmont** regions.
- Germans and Scots-Irish settled primarily in the **Shenandoah Valley**, which was along **the migration route**.
- **Africans** were brought primarily to the **Coastal Plain** (Tidewater) and **Piedmont** regions to work in **tobacco** fields which required a great deal of **labor**.
- Prior to the arrival of the settlers, **American Indians** lived **throughout Virginia**.
 - After the settlers arrived, most were **forced inland**.

Migration and living in new areas caused people to **adapt** old customs to their new environment.

STANDARD VS.4C CAPITAL MOVES TO WILLIAMSBURG

A variety of factors explain the reasons for moving Virginia's capital.

Reasons why the capital was moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg

- **Drinking water** in Jamestown was contaminated by seepage of salt water.
- **Unhealthy living** conditions caused diseases.
- **Fire** destroyed wooden and brick buildings at Jamestown.
- Williamsburg was an already **established town**.

STANDARD VS.4B CULTURE REFLECTS ORIGINS

The culture of colonial Virginia reflected beliefs, customs, and architecture of Europeans, Africans, and American Indians living there.

Although a colony of England, Virginia developed a unique culture different from that of England.

Culture of colonial Virginia

Whenever people settle an area, they change the landscape to reflect their **culture and customs**. Examples of **architecture** that reflect different cultures include

- barns
- homes
- places of worship (e.g., churches)

Place names reflecting culture

- English—Richmond

STANDARD VS.4D MONEY, BARTER, CREDIT

Money was not often used in the early Virginia colony.

*Because farmers could not pay for goods until their crops were harvested, **credit** was important in Virginia.*

Terms to know

- **Money:** A medium of exchange (currency, which includes coins and paper bills)
- **Barter:** Trading/exchanging of goods and services without the use of money
- **Credit:** Buying a good or service now and paying for it later
- **Debt:** A good or service **owed** to another
- **Saving:** Money put away to save or to spend at a later time



Few people had **paper money** and coins to use to buy goods and services.

- **Barter** was commonly used instead of money.
- **Tobacco** was used as **money**. A tobacco farmer could use his tobacco to pay for goods and services.

Farmers and other consumers could also buy goods and services on **credit** and pay their **debts** when their crops were harvested and sold.

Colonial Virginia had **no banks**

STANDARD VS.4E EVERYDAY LIFE

***Resources** were used in colonial Virginia to produce the goods and services that people needed.*

***Everyday life** was **different** for whites, enslaved African Americans, and free African Americans in colonial Virginia.*

People living in **colonial Virginia** depended on **natural, human, and capital resources** to produce the goods and services they needed.

Food:

- **Food** choices were limited
- Meals were made of **local** produce and meats

Housing:

- Most people lived in **one-room homes** with dirt floors
- Some **wealthy** people (farmers) lived in large houses

Clothing:

- **Women** in households made clothes for family members
- Most clothing was made of **cotton, wool**, and/or **leather**.

Most **white Virginians** made their living from the land as **small farmers**.

- A **few** owned **large farms (plantations)**.

Enslaved Africans worked tobacco, crops, livestock, and in **industries** including shipping, construction, and other trades.

- Africans came to America with **prior knowledge** of skilled trade.
- Enslaved Africans were **denied basic rights**.
- Some **free Africans** in America owned land but were **denied basic rights**.
- Africans began to have **families** born in America, **increasing their population**.