

CHAPTER 6

THE PROPRIETARY REGIME

- A. Introduction. Charles II's granting of the Carolina Charter to eight of his friends was just one of a number of similar actions. The Lords Proprietors of Carolina immediately set about organizing the government and settlement of their new colony. Unfortunately for them and for the colonists, the Lords Proprietors gradually lost interest. By the end of the first decade of settlement, the colonists had divided into political factions and become embroiled in a bitter struggle for control of the colony's government. After factional passions cooled, the settlers united to overthrow the inept, greedy proprietary regime. The internal bickering and the Revolution of 1719 are examples of the "Who Shall Rule?" the desire of South Carolinians to control their own destiny. "Who Shall Rule?" is the major, unifying theme of South Carolina history.
- *B. The proprietary colonies**
- *1. There were six proprietary colonies: Maryland (1632), Carolina (1663), New York (1664), New Jersey (1664), Pennsylvania (1681), and Georgia (1733).**
 - *2. They all had some common characteristics.**
 - *a. They were granted to friends of the King.**
 - *b. The proprietors were given the authority to govern their colonies.**
 - *c. Most proprietors intended to make money on their ventures.**
 - *d. Proprietary charters usually contained some provision for a representative assembly of the "freemen of the province."**
- C. The Government of Carolina
- 1. The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, written by John Locke, created an unwieldy, cumbersome governmental machinery that never really worked.
 - 2. It contained several clauses of interest.
 - a. All who worshipped God (except Roman Catholics) were welcome to settle in Carolina.
 - b. The institution of slavery was recognized and legalized.
 - c. The creation of two titles of "nobility," cassiques and landgraves, was unique in English America; large amounts of land was given to those who held these titles.

- d. There was a vague reference to a “parliament.”
 3. The Commons House of Assembly (the forerunner of our present House of Representatives) first met in 1692.
 4. The Lords Proprietors appointed the governor.
- D. Factionalism was a severe problem throughout proprietary period and caused instability and turmoil.
- E. The Factions
1. The Goose Creek Men was a faction made up primarily of settlers from the West Indies.
 2. The Dissenters were non-Anglicans and lived mainly in the area south of Charleston on the frontier.
- F. Some of the Issues
1. Dissenters favored reforming the Indian trade.
 2. The Goose Creek Men favored making the Anglican Church the official church of South Carolina.
 3. The Goose Creek Men supported the Naturalization Act granting civil rights to the Huguenots.
- G. Collapse of the Proprietary Regime
1. The damage caused by the Yamasee War (1715-1717) and the failure of the Proprietors to assist South Carolina caused great dissatisfaction.
 2. The Proprietors also failed to help eliminate the pirates threatening the coast or to respond to request for assistance against a potential Spanish invasion.
 3. The Proprietors vetoes legislation that the colonists felt was vital for the colony.
 4. During times of trouble, the Proprietors had exhibited a great deal of insensitivity by demanding taxes and taking the best lands for themselves.
 5. The entire history of the proprietary regime was one of incompetence and bungling.

H. Revolution of 1719

1. In South Carolina, the colonists united to overthrow the proprietors.
2. They selected one of their own to be governor.
3. They sent a petition to England asking to become a royal colony.

I. Summary. Proprietary neglect, greed, and maladministration had undermined the proprietary regime. South Carolinians saw the regime as a nuisance and mockery of good government. **The South Carolina Revolution of 1719 was in the tradition of the mother country's "Glorious Revolution of 1689." Also, the actions of the colonists in 1719 – the overthrow of a government that they saw as a threat to their interests – would be repeated in 1775 and 1860.**

J. Readings

1. Edgar, South Carolina: A History, Chapter 6
2. Barck & Lefler, Colonial America, pp. 56, 157-171, 187-188, 193, 196-200, 271-275
1. Horne, South Carolina, 106-112
2. Jones, South Carolina, pp. 97-109, 136-142, 174-193
3. Tindall, America, pp. 45-47, 55-56, 69-84
4. Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 47-104