

CHAPTER 8

THE RICHES OF THE PROVINCE

- A. Introduction. The desire for wealth, to make one's fortune, was the primary motive behind the settlement of South Carolina. The colony never struggled for survival as did Virginia and some of the others. And, almost from the beginning, some Carolinians found commodities that brought good prices on the world market. The development of Charleston as a major seaport was a big boost to the colony's commercial development.
- B. The Barbadian Commercial Connection
1. Originally, South Carolina functioned as its founders has hoped it would, as a supplier of foodstuffs and lumber for Barbados and the other islands of the West Indies.
 2. In turn, the islands shipped molasses, rum, sugar, and African slaves to Carolina.
- C. Search for a Cash Crop
1. The Lords Proprietors ordered the planting of an experimental garden at Albermarle Point to find out what crops might be grown profitably.
 2. Rice was the only successful experimental crop.
- D. Rice Culture in South Carolina
1. How was rice introduced into the colony?
 - a. Rice was planted in the experimental garden.
 - b. Some believe that a ship's captain brought seeds from Madagascar.
 - c. Others believe that seeds and cultivation methods came with slaves from West Africa.
 2. By 1690, enough rice was being produced for colonists to petition to pay their taxes in rice instead of money.
 3. South Carolinians tried three methods of rice culture: dry field, inland swamps, and tidal river.
 - a. Of these, the tidal river method proved the most productive.
 - b. Regardless of method of cultivation, rice culture depended upon slave labor. As rice production increased, so did the importation of slaves.

4. Rice is a labor intensive crop.
5. Rice production increase dramatically in the 18th century. By the 1750s, South Carolina exported more than 33 million pounds of rice.
6. South Carolina rice was noted the world over for its fine quality. It was often referred to as "Carolina Gold."

E. Indigo

1. South Carolina planters were looking for another crop because of depressed rice prices in 1740s.
2. The English textile industry was looking for an English-controlled source of indigo for dyeing cloth.
3. Eliza Lucas experimented with indigo in 1741-44.
4. The British government paid South Carolinians a bounty for raising indigo.

F. Other crops such as silk, oranges, grapes, olives, and hemp were tried, but for a variety of reasons were not successful.

G. Cattle ranching produced beef for export to the West Indies.

H. Products of the forest such as deerskins, lumber, tar, turpentine, and pitch were also valuable commodities.

I. Human Cargo

1. Despite law forbidding it, there was a lucrative Indian slave trade with the West Indies and the northern colonies.
2. The African slave trade (see Chapter 5)

J. South Carolina was a wealthy colony

1. By 1712, the value of South Carolina's exports was greater than her imports.
2. South Carolinians invested these profits primarily in land and slaves.
- *3. In 1774 in the Charleston area, the per capita wealth was four times greater than that in the Chesapeake colonies and six times greater than that in New York and Philadelphia!**

K. Summary. Under mercantilism, the fashionable economic theory of the 18th century, colonies were supposed to produce raw materials and export them to the mother country. In turn, the colonies were supposed to import manufactured goods from the mother country. The balance of trade (excess exports over imports) was supposed to be in favor of the mother country. Less than 50 years after its founding, South Carolina's trade balance ran in her favor. Rather than invest their profits in shipping and commercial activities as did New Englanders, South Carolinians opted to invest their profits in land and slaves – and thus created the basis for more profits in the future.

L. Readings

1. Edgar, South Carolina: A History, Chapter 8
2. Coclanis, The Shadow of a Dream, pp. 48-110
3. Heyward, Seed from Madagascar, pp. 3-89
4. Jones, South Carolina, pp. 145-153, 156-160, 167-168, 224-225, 230-232
5. Kovacik & Winberry, South Carolina, pp. 69-76
6. Littlefield, Rice and Slaves, pp. 56-114
7. Rogers, Charleston, pp. 3-25
8. Weir, Colonial South Carolina, pp. 141-172