



Georgia Studies

**Unit 2: Exploration and
Georgia Colonization**

**Lesson 3: Georgia as a
Royal Colony**

Study Presentation

The background of the slide is a faded image of the Georgia state flag, which features a red field with a white saltire (St. Andrew's cross) and a blue canton with white stars. In the center of the flag is the coat of arms of the state, depicting a figure holding a bow and arrow, with a banner above it.

Lesson 3: Georgia as a Royal Colony

- **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**
 - How did Georgia change as it transitioned from the Trustee Period to the Royal Period (i.e. land ownership, government, and slavery)?
 - What impact did the three Royal Governors (Reynolds, Ellis, and Wright) have on the development of Georgia?

End of the Trustee Period and a Change in Government

- Georgia became a Royal Colony when the Trustee Period ended in 1752.
- Definition: Royal Colony – Colony overseen by the crown of England.
- The British Parliament had to pass a charter in order for Georgia to become an official Royal Colony. This process took two years. Georgia would not get its first official royal governor until 1754.
- The government of Georgia would change drastically as the people, under the leadership of the Royal Governors, would have to learn to govern themselves.

Three Royal Governors: John Reynolds

- John Reynolds – Georgia's first royal governor.
- Governed from 1754 to 1757.
- Governor Reynolds introduced the idea of self-government to the colonists and assisted in the creation of a bicameral (two houses) legislature and the creation of a court system.
- Eventually, due to a disagreement between Governor Reynolds and the legislature the legislature was sent home. Reynolds tried and failed to rule Georgia himself.
- The British Parliament recalled Reynolds in 1757 and said that he was ineffective.

Three Royal Governors: Henry Ellis

- Henry Ellis – Georgia's second royal governor.
- Governed from 1757-1760.
- Governor Ellis tried to learn from the mistakes of John Reynolds. Ellis set up a budget and regulated trade with the Native Americans.
- Henry Ellis also worked to increase the size and productivity of the colony of Georgia. By 1759, the population of the colony had increased to over 10,000, including 3,600 slaves.
- In 1759, Henry Ellis became ill and returned to Great Britain. He was replaced as the governor of Georgia in 1760.

Three Royal Governors: James Wright

- James Wright – Georgia's third (and last) royal governor.
- Governed from 1760-1776.
- During Governor Wright's term in office the size of Georgia increased. After the French and Indian War ended in 1763, Georgia gained a large amount of land. Governor Wright believed Georgia could be even more profitable for England by allowing farmers (and their slaves) to live and work on this land.
- James Wright continued to serve as the Royal Governor of Georgia until the beginning of the American Revolution.

Land Ownership

- Settlers who came to colony of Georgia during the Trustee Period were limited in the amount of land they could own.
- People who came by way of the Trust's charity were limited to 50 acres of land. People who paid their way could have up to 500 acres of land.
- During the Trustee Period of Georgia's history only men could own or inherit land. Many colonists were angry about this and wanted women to be able to own/inherit land.
- As Georgia continued to develop as a Royal Colony citizens were given the opportunity to purchase more land (and use slaves to work the land) and women were allowed to inherit land.

Slavery

- During the beginning of the Trustee Period, Georgia's state law prohibited slavery (slavery was not allowed).
- Wealthy colonists who could afford to buy enslaved people demanded to be allowed to bring them to Georgia. Many farmers believed that in order to compete with neighboring states (like South Carolina) they had to be allowed to own slaves.
- Between 1750 and 1775, the number of Africans living in slavery increased from 500 to 18,000. These slaves had no rights, were not allowed to marry, were not allowed to live where they wanted, and were not allowed to learn to read or write. Slaves who broke these rules were punished, including beatings, whippings, separation from friends and family, and even death.