

# The Carolinas

**KEY QUESTION** What attracted settlers to the Carolinas?

During the 1640s England was torn by civil war and colonization stopped. In 1649, a Puritan republic was set up in England. Then, in 1660, the monarchy was restored, and Charles II became king. He rewarded eight supporters by giving them land for a new colony named Carolina.

**Proprietors Plan Their Colony** The proprietors, or owners, hoped to attract settlers by offering religious toleration, large land grants, and political representation. The northern part of Carolina was already populated by colonists from Virginia. The southern area was settled by English colonists who had been living in the West Indies. It was in this region that English settlers from Barbados built Charles Town (later called Charleston) in 1670.

The proprietors offered religious toleration to all Christians and Jews. After 1685, Charleston became a refuge for **Huguenots**, or French Protestants. Many Huguenots fled France to seek religious freedom in America.

**Rice and Slavery** In the 1690s, Carolina's colonists started exporting rice. They learned how to cultivate this crop from enslaved Africans, who had grown it in West Africa. Growing rice required a large labor force. So planters imported more enslaved Africans to do the work.

## PRIMARY SOURCE

“Our Staple Commodity for some years has been Rice, and Tilling, planting, Hoeing, Reaping, Threshing, Pounding have all been done merely by the poor Slaves here.”

—letter from a South Carolina doctor, quoted in *American Colonies*



Reenactors portray slave life in the South.

Slave labor helped make Carolina planters the richest **elite**, or high-ranking group, on the eastern seaboard. However, because they were so outnumbered by their slaves, this elite lived in constant fear of revolt.

Colonists also captured and enslaved Native Americans. As a result of this, and the taking of tribal lands, wars broke out between the settlers and Native American tribes, including the Tuscarora and Yamasee. The wars killed so many Native Americans that more lands were opened for the settlers.

**The Colonists Rebel** In 1691 a group of settlers forced the proprietors to establish a separate government and assembly in “North Carolina.” Colonists were unhappy that the proprietors did not provide enough military protection from the Spanish and Native Americans. To gain more military support from the king, in 1719 the colonists overthrew the colony’s proprietary rule. In 1729, both North Carolina and South Carolina became royal colonies, ruled by governors appointed by the king.

**CAUSES AND EFFECTS** Explain what attracted settlers to the Carolinas.