

ECONOMIC REGULATIONS OF GEORGIA
1733-1743

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

1939

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

The individuals responsible for the establishment of the colony of Georgia had three objectives in mind: "(1) the relief of poor subjects who through misfortune and want of employment were reduced to great necessity; (2) the increase of the trade and wealth of the realm; and (3) the establishment of a barrier for the defense of South Carolina and the provinces further north against the ravages of the Indians."¹ Those interested in the project from an economic point of view wished to produce certain commodities needed in England to make that country independent of foreign imports and commodities that would bring remunerative returns to the individuals who invested capital in the colony. On the other hand, those who had philanthropic motives desired to establish a colony in order that many unfortunate people of England might find refuge, thereby making themselves useful citizens again. It was this group who was instrumental in getting the colony under way and by their arguments soon gained the support of the aforementioned persons in the formation of the Georgia Trust.

The settlement of Georgia was accomplished through the tireless efforts of James Oglethorpe. This settlement, however, did not take place as rapidly as the Trustees wished. Therefore, they resorted to humanitarian and economic arguments. They stated that about four thousand individuals of London were imprisoned each year because of unpaid

¹Allen R. Candler, (comp.), The Colonial Records of Georgia, (Atlanta, Ga., 1904), Vol. I, p. 11.

debts. Lending them to establish a colony would be a solution to this problem. From an economic standpoint, it was pointed out that there would be a possibility of developing a new colony which would be useful to England in many ways.¹

These arguments produced the desired results, for late in 1733, settlers began the long trek to Georgia in rather large numbers.

The settlement of Georgia by a corporation was not an innovation in the establishment of colonies. Virginia, the first successful English colony in America, had been established similarly.

The Trustees of the corporation for establishing the colony of Georgia in America were granted a seven-eighths interest in all the land lying between the northernmost part of the Savannah River, along the coast to the southernmost stream of the Altamaha River. This was part of a grant made to the Eight Proprietors of Carolina by Charles II in 1660. The Trustees were to hold this grant for twenty years after which time the colony was to be subjected to royal authority. This grant was made in pursuit of the new policy recently adopted by the royal government of attempting to increase the government's control of colonies.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the fact that the colony was settled by individuals of the debtor class and by those individuals who were more fortunate, certain regulations had to be adopted to prevent the latter group from taking advantage of the former. To that end, the writer's problem will be that of listing the economic regulations laid down concerning the

¹John Ross McCain, Georgia, A Proprietary Province, The Execution of a Trust, (Boston, 1917), p. 18.

three topics, land, the silk industry, and financial problems; the reasons for enforcing these regulations, and the hardships forced on the settlers by the adoption of these regulations.

Authorities Consulted

Most of the data used were obtained from the Colonial Records of Georgia, volumes I, II, III, IV, and V, compiled by Allen D. Candler, and the Georgia Historical Collections, volume I, edited by the Georgia Historical Association. Both of these are primary sources.

CHAPTER II

LAND

This chapter deals with the conditions upon which land was granted to prospective settlers of the colony; why it was necessary to adopt these conditions; why and how these conditions led to dissatisfaction among the settlers, and how the Trustees attempted to modify their regulations in order that this dissatisfaction might be removed.

In accordance with the provisions of the charter, the Trustees were given a seven-eighths interest in the land previously described in the first chapter. This grant also included a seven-eighths interest in all the islands along the eastern coast to a distance of twenty leagues from the shore. Similarly, a seven-eighths interest was granted in the sharing of the royal rights of whatever fisheries and mines were discovered in the colony. In order to gain full control of the land making up the colony of Georgia, the Trustees had to obtain a one-eighth interest which was held by Lord Carteret. This was accomplished when Lord Carteret turned his one-eighth part of the colony over to the Trustees in trust, probably in 1733.¹

The Georgia corporation and its successors constituted absolute proprietors of the land which was to be held in free socage* and not in capite*, paying, therefore, the sum of four shillings per hundred acres yearly to the crown for all the land granted by the corporation, payments to begin ten years after the land grant was settled.² This system

¹James Ross McCain, Georgia, As a Proprietary Province, The Execution of a Trust, p. 226; C.R., Vol. II, pp. 19-20. The exact date of Lord Carteret's is in doubt, but sufficient evidence exists pointing to the fact that his one-eighth part was turned over during 1733.

*See glossary for definition.

²Allen D. Candler, (comp.), The Colonial Records of Georgia, (Atlanta, 1904), Vol. I, p. 18. (Hereafter cited as C. R.).

of paying quit-rents was adopted because the Trustees were of the opinion that it would be ten years before the settlers would be able to realize any profit from their grants.

The details of granting lands to the settlers were left to the common council of the Trustees. They were, however, restricted in two particulars. First, under no pretense whatever might lands be granted to a Trustee for his benefit directly or indirectly; and secondly, restrictions were placed on making grants of land exceeding five hundred acres in the aggregate. These restrictions were in accordance with the philanthropic objectives of those establishing the colony. The Trustees were anxious that every settler should have equal opportunities and for that reason prohibited the granting of unequal plots of land.

Having gained control of Lord Carteret's one-eighth part of Georgia, the Trustees were faced with the problem of drawing up a permanent land policy. They agreed that all land in Georgia should be free, that no profit should be gained either from sale or lease of any land in the colony. In addition, it was decided that grants should be entailed* and that they should be small in extent. A quit-rent was to be levied on such lands as granted by the Trust¹. These rules were not put in printed form but the deeds to frequent grants indicated with sufficient definiteness the conditions upon which the settlers secured their grants. The Trustees followed closely the principles set up.

The following is typical of the conditions under which an applicant might secure land:

- (1) That the grantee be a male twenty-one years, or more, of age.

*See glossary for definition.

¹McCain, op. cit., p. 228.

- (2) That he come to Georgia within twelve months and establish a settled abode;
- (3) That he does not leave the colony within a period of three years without a written license;
- (4) That fifty acres be granted him in tail to his male heirs;
- (5) That the land be speedily cleared and cultivated;
- (6) That the grantee plant and cultivate one hundred white mulberry trees;
- (7) That the land could not be alienated, transferred, or assigned without special license from the common council;
- (8) That the Trust could reenter on any grants concerning which the condition had not been met within the ten years' period;
- (9) And, that a quit-rent of four shillings per hundred acres be paid annually after a lapse of ten years from the date of the grant.¹

The provision that land be held in tail male* aroused the greatest objection among those settlers going to Georgia. The method of inheritance was a hangover from the feudal period, a system that had grown out of date in England. Attempts to enforce it in the English colonies in North America had created much bitterness on the part of the settlers. The Trustees, on the other hand, felt that conditions in Georgia compelled them to make and enforce such a regulation. The colony was established for military as well as economic and philanthropic purposes. With this in mind, the Trustees regarded each grant made as a military fief; thus the holders of each grant paid, in addition to a quit-rent, a military service. In tail male* produced some things that in tail general* could not have done. Had the latter system been adopted, the military strength of the colony would have been greatly threatened and reduced because the female children of deceased holders might have inherited their

¹McCain, op. cit., p. 228

*See glossary for definition.

parents' grants, thereby taking from the garrison a soldier.¹

Tenure in tail male further operated to prevent the accumulation or division of lots. Had the system been abolished, intermarriage would have occasioned the union of several lots into one; or, the division of the inheritance among several daughters would have limited each portion to a very few acres. Moreover, the granting of land in fee simple would have become a possibility. Too, the system would allow the accumulation of lands into the hands of a few individuals, and even into the hands of those individuals who had poorly managed property in England. The Trustees were not disposed to let either of these results occur, especially the latter. Leases and mortgages were prohibited for similar reasons.²

Settlers planning to settle in Georgia also objected to the small size of the lot given each family. The Trustees stated that the amount of land given was sufficient to meet the immediate needs of the settlers and their families. The plan outlined by the Trustees was such that an industrious man who put fifty acres into good shape might secure more land, while an idler who neglected his grant would not be considered deserving of a larger estate. To preserve such a democratic system of equality in landholding, and to prevent both the accumulation of larger tracts of land into the hands of a single landholder and division of lots into parcels too small to support a soldier-planter and his family, various rules were adopted.³

The Trustees outlined other reasons for prohibiting the granting

¹C. R., Vol. III, pp. 373-374.

²Ibid., p. 374.

³Ibid., pp. 373-374.

of land in fee simple:

- (1) It would have enabled the settlers to sell the plots granted them;
- (2) It would have rendered impossible the matter of determining whether or not an applicant for settlement in the colony was a fit subject;
- (3) It would have made possible the entrance of Catholics to the colony.

This was a fear that constantly faced the Trustees, and their determination to save the colony from people of this religious faith served as additional impetus to the non-adoption of the fee simple policy.¹

Fully cognizant of the fact that some of these regulations would cause discontent and work hardships in special cases, the Trustees arranged to give relief when it was deemed necessary. By making application to the Trustees, a man might secure the privilege of renting, leasing, or even selling his land if he had a fairly plausible reason for wanting to do so. In a similar manner, a wife or daughter might become heir to a lot upon presentation of facts showing the need for such an arrangement. Actual relief was given in several cases.

For the first three years of settlement, these regulations were not drawn up into written form but were, in most cases, generally followed. In 1735 the Trustees deemed it wise to arrange these requirements in definite form. Few changes were made, but one noticeable change was in the Trustees' agreement "... that all persons sent to Georgia at the expense of the Trust would be settled either in towns or in smaller villages, being assigned fifty acres for their support. It was provided that widows might hold grants made to their husbands during the remainder

¹C. R., Vol. III, pp 374-375

of their lives and at their death the holding would revert to the Trust."¹

In March, 1733, the Trustees resolved that no more Italians be brought to England for the purpose of being sent to the colony at the expense of the corporation.² The Italians had agreed to come to the colony to aid in getting the culture of silk under way. The resolution drawn up was to the effect that the corporation should pay the expenses of the Italians no longer, that those who had come would be given the amount of money needed to pay the costs involved in their journey to the colony and a specified amount of supplies for the first year spent in the colony. A Mr. Amatis was to be given one hundred and fifty acres of land, and ten pounds for the first year spent in the colony. The other men were to be given one hundred acres each.³ Of Mr. Amatis, more will be said in the chapter dealing with the silk industry.

Though Georgia was settled in the main by persons making up the debtor class in England, many persons came to the colony who were not quite as unfortunate and who were economically secure. They were lured to the colony by fantastic stories told by individuals who had visited Georgia and returned to England, or by the desire to make money. The population of the colony, nevertheless, did not increase as rapidly as the Trustees had hoped. This placed the defense of the colony in a most precarious predicament. The unpopular land policy adopted by the Trustees may have been, in a sense, responsible for the slow increase in population. To relieve this situation, the Trustees on March 21, 1733, drew up a

¹McCain, op. cit., pp. 232-233.

²No reason could be found for this action on the part of the Trustees. One might possibly believe that the expense involved could better be put to use in transporting a native born Englishman to the colony.

³C. R., Vol. II, p. 21.

resolution to the effect that any person carrying six able-bodied male servants, bearing all the expenses involved, be entitled to five hundred acres in accordance with the same terms agreed to by the others settling in the colony. At the expiration of these servants' terms of service, they were entitled to no more than twenty acres of land each.¹ The Trustees, on April 30, 1733, asked that an account be prepared and laid before the Board of Trade giving the number of acres granted to persons who had gone to the colony at their own expense. This account was ordered in an effort to find out how much available land existed for the purpose of making further grants as a means of increasing the population of the colony.²

On July 11, 1733, the Trustees visited the Board of Trade and asked that instructions be sent to the Governor of South Carolina to the effect that any person or persons deserting the colony of Georgia and going to South Carolina be deprived of the right of obtaining land grants in the said colony.³

In accordance with the regulation granting licenses to those persons desiring to leave the colony without forfeiting the grants given them, the Trustees in November, 1733 invested in the Common Council of the Colony of Georgia the power to grant such licenses, with the provision that such persons intended to return to the colony within a reasonable period of time.⁴

The Trustees had made possible the retention of grants by the

¹C. R., Vol. II, pp. 23-24.

²Ibid., p. 30.

³Ibid., Vol. I, p. 124.

⁴Ibid., Vol. II, p. 45.

widows of deceased holders.¹ The evident discontent existing in the colony forced the Trustees to extend this measure.² This extension permitted female survivors of holders of grants to inherit the grants of their deceased fathers through their husbands.³ Of course, if an heiress was unmarried, the grant reverted to the Trust according to the regulation drawn up in 1733.

In order that the Indians near the colony might be kept on friendly terms with the colonists, the Trustees in November, 1735, petitioned the King "for his Royal Instructions to the Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, not to suffer any person to have lands run out beyond the River Savannah pursuant to the Treaty with the Yamasee Indians."⁴

The Trustees were concerned with enforcing the regulation drawn up only so far as they could be enforced without causing undue hardship to the settlers. They did, however, assume an attitude of strictness toward the possessors of land who did not, in accordance with regulations, cultivate their lands in the twelve-month period allotted to them by the Trustees. A letter was sent to one Mr. Depuk instructing him that the Trustees had no intention of supporting any persons in the colony who were not industrious enough to make an attempt to make the lands granted them productive. DePuk had gone so far as to leave the colony. He was questioned as to whether or not he intended to return and informed that the grant of land made to him on October 7, 1735, would be vacated if he did not return in six months. In addition, it was emphasized that failure to cultivate

¹See footnote 1, page 10 for reference.

²This measure was extended on March 13, 1734.

³C. R., Vol. I, p. 164; McCain, op. cit., p. 234.

⁴McCain, op. cit., p. 238.

⁵Ibid., p. 292.

the grant in its entirety in the allotted ten years would result in the reversion of the grant to the Trustees.¹

The existing situation was a precarious one. Many of the leading men in the colony threatened to leave if some relief were not granted. This threat came as the result of their failure to obtain credit outside the colony because their estates were held in tail male instead of fee simple.² William Stephens, secretary to the Trustees in the colony, in 1738, began to refer frequently to the situation in his letters to the Trustees. The Scotch settlers at Darien protested in a body against the tenure and a universal defection among them seemed evident.³ To obtain fee simple, a formal complaint was addressed to the Trustees by this group toward the close of 1738, setting forth the need of fee simple tenure for their land and advancing the opinion that this would result in the immigration of many new settlers from other colonies to Georgia. The petition was rejected and the Trustees severely rebuked the magistrates who had taken the lead in formulating it.⁴

The earliest modifications of the land laws were passed in the beginning of the year 1739. It is probably safe to say that the Trustees were moved to action by the reports of dissatisfaction sent so frequently, by the increase in population, and by the presence of a regiment within the colony which served to guarantee greater security than when the colony was established so that the settlers were no longer so dependent on their own numbers for defense.⁵

¹C. R., Vol. III, p. 410.

²Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 11, 15, 29.

³Ibid., p. 239.

⁴Ibid., Vol. III, p. 422 et seq.

⁵Ibid., p. 394; McCain, op. cit., p. 237.

The Trustees, on March 15, 1739, passed a resolution allowing any daughter and her male heirs to inherit the grants of their deceased fathers or relatives. In the event the grantee had no daughter, he had the right to appoint any one male or female relative as his successor provided they appeared in court personally within eighteen months, claiming the grant. In default of such appearance and claim of the grant, the Trustees were vested with power to reclaim the grant and make regrants.¹ This measure repealed an act set up by the Trustees when the colony was established, prohibiting the reversion or inheritance of lands by female children or relatives of deceased grantees. It was, indeed, a wise move on the part of the Trustees because, with the change, provision was made for the support and inheritance of the female survivors of deceased parents and relatives, whereas heretofore, these individuals had been placed at the mercy of charity.

Another modification of the same year in relation to tenure of land reads as follows:

- (1) Widows of tenants in tail male holding eighty acres or under (not having forfeited) shall enjoy the dwelling house, garden, and half the land for life; the other half, with the reversion after the widow's death to be held in tail male by any one of her daughters;
- (2) If tenant holds above eighty acres, he shall leave his land by will to his daughters, provided they are unmarried, or are not entitled to any land in their own right;
- (3) Should the tenant die without having made a will, the eldest daughter should come into possession of the land, if unmarried and having no land in her own right;
- (4) Should the tenant die daughterless, then the widow should be entitled to the whole for life;

¹C. R., Vol. I, pp. 345-346.

- (5) Should the tenant die leaving neither widow, nor children, he was granted the right to bequeath his land to anyone he pleased provided he possessed only eighty acres, and if he held more than eighty acres, he should bequeath it to more than one person;
- (6) Should the tenant die widowless, childless, or without a will, his heir-at-law should succeed and hold by tail male, provided the same be claimed within a year if residing in America, and eighteen months if not in America, after such tenant's death;
- (7) No appointment of lands exceeding eighty acres should be made in less quantity than fifty acres to one person;
- (8) In grants to be made exceeding eighty acres, the grantee should have the power of giving the same by will to his or her son in tail male, but not in any lot or portion under fifty acres;
- (9) In default of such devise, the land to descend to the eldest son in tail male.

This abstract was received on April 7, 1740 by Colonel Stephens, who acquainted the people with the contents.¹ This modification was in accord with the wishes of the settlers, but at the same time, it did not endanger the democratic system of land holding created by the Trustees when the colony was established. The accumulation of large amounts of land by a single individual was still not permitted.

During the same year, 1739, the Trustees received a petition to the effect that married daughters be allowed to inherit land left by deceased fathers or relatives. The petition was denied on August 23, 1739 by the council and a resolution adopted stating that since provision had been made whereby married daughters whose husbands, as well as fathers, had died, there was no need for allowing these individuals to inherit any of the land left by their fathers. The provision, or relief, made for the benefit of such persons was that they be given a house and half of their

¹C. R., Vol. V, pp. 210-211.

deceased husband's land for life.¹ To have allowed them to inherit this in addition to that of their deceased fathers, would have made possible the accumulation of vast areas of land into the hands of single individuals which would undoubtedly have defeated the objectives of the Trustees.

Dissatisfaction was still existent in the colony. The Trustees received a petition in June, 1739, from the settlers asking that the tenures of land be enlarged but the Trustees denied the request. Several months later the Trustees decided to modify their opinion, and to that end, in August a series of "ponderous resolutions" were passed and ordered published in the London Gazette and the Charleston Gazette of South Carolina. In effect, the resolutions stated that provisions had been made enlarging tenures as a means of providing for the widows of deceased grantees; allowing daughters to inherit the grants of their deceased fathers; and in the absence of any survivors, the survivors-at-law were allowed to inherit the grants. Widows were to enjoy the grants inherited for the remainder of their lives. These measures fell short in complying with the requests preferred in the petition just considered.²

Despite the several modifications in land tenure made by the Trustees, the colonists continued their agitation for further change. The existing conditions in the colony of Georgia did not conform to the eighteenth century policy adopted in the other twelve American colonies. The Trustees were so anxious to carry out their idealistic objectives that they were not cognizant of the fact that the colony was destined to fail

¹C. R., Vol. V, p. 216; C. C. Jones, History of Georgia, (New York, 1883), Vol. I, p. 313.

²C. C. Jones, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 312-313.

if relief was not granted.¹ The settlers had reached the point where they realized the advantages that would be theirs if they resided in any one of the other twelve colonies and many of them began to desert the colony and emigrate northward.

Becoming aware of this migration, the Trustees, early in 1741, made another change. An order was sealed on March 16, 1741, granting the possessors of land in Georgia the right to lease part of their land for a term not exceeding twenty-one years from the date of the lease. These leases were to be made to any persons residing in the colony provided they intended to occupy and cultivate the lease during the twenty-one year period.² The granting of the right to lease part of land grants was certainly a step contrary to the original policy adopted by the Trustees.³

The Trustees were equally interested in the industrial development of the colony. To that end, the Common Council was notified on November 28, 1741, that it was the opinion of the Trustees that an additional grant of fifty acres of land to each settler would greatly encourage the development of the colony. They further suggested that to any free holder of a fifty acre lot, who should attempt to fence and cultivate that already granted him, be given an additional grant of the same amount. This was done in pursuit of the economic motive for establishing the colony.

¹By this statement is meant that lands should be granted in fee simple and the use of Negro slaves should be allowed since there were no restrictions on these two measures in the other colonies.

²C. R., Vol. I, p. 381.

³When the colony was established the leasing of grants was prohibited but in the face of constant unrest and evident disruption of the colony, the Trustees were forced to reshape the policy adopted to a certain extent.

⁴C. R., Vol. I, p. 389. The reference made to the development of industry in the colony was made concerning the silk industry.

It was pushed, in the main, by a group of Trustees interested in the success of the colony merely for their own economic gains and who were equally interested in making possible England's self-sufficiency.

The next year the Trustees were forced to modify their policy still further to satisfy the desires of the settlers. On July 12, 1742, the Trustees drew up resolutions recommending that (1) from that date, lands be granted in fee simple to persons carrying servants to the colony at their own expense, (2) that a yearly rent of _____ shillings per hundred acres be paid by these persons, and (3) that the conditions of forfeiture be only for non-payment of rent, or for not carrying out the requirements set up within the ten year period.¹ This was another deviation from the policy adopted by the Trustees and without a doubt was prompted by the constant agitation on the part of the colonists for fee simple grants.

As an incentive to further immigration to the colony by persons able to bear their expenses and the expenses of others, the Trustees made it possible for such persons and their heirs to hold grants of land in fee simple. Definite rent rates were set, under which and over which no more could be charged or collected. Conditions for forfeiture were restricted to the non-payment of the rent assessed; for not fencing and enclosing the land granted; and for not clearing, planting and cultivating one-eighth part of the grant from the date of the grant. Only such parts were to be forfeited as were not under cultivation by the tenth year after the grant was made.² This is another example illustrating the

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 398. The rental charge was left blank because of the fact that a reduction in the original fee was contemplated.

²Ibid.

effect of the colonists' constant demands.

While giving in to some of the demands of the settlers, the Trustees were not inclined to veer too far from their principles in an effort to maintain the democratic land system which they had created in Georgia. In pursuance of this objective, the Trustees, in 1742, recommended that no person be allowed to hold estates exceeding two thousand acres. A proviso was attached, stating that should any person become entitled to more than two thousand acres by will, that person might legally sell the land two years after he comes into possession of it. If the individual did not comply with the terms of the ordinance or its proviso, the land so acquired was subject to forfeiture.¹

The Trustees, for some time, had been of the opinion that if the quit-rent charged on land in Georgia were reduced, it would hasten the development of the colony, therefore a petition was sent to the King on July 14, 1742, asking that the quit-rents be released to the Trustees in order that lands might be granted on cheaper terms.² The petition was presented November 22, 1742, before the Lord Commissioners for Plantations and Trade. In discussing the petition this body declared that the King would gladly reduce the quit-rents reserved by His Royal Charter from four shillings to two shillings proclamation money for every one hundred acres, and even hinted that the King would surrender his right to the quit-rents to the Trustees. Such a reduction, the Lord Commissioners felt, would serve as great encouragement to persons anxious to go to Georgia.³

¹C. R., Vol. I, pp. 398-399.

²Ibid., p. 400.

³Ibid., p. 406.

Moved to action by the opinion expressed by the Lord Commissioners, a new draft of an act for establishing the tenures for reducing the quit-rents from four shillings to two shillings proclamation money for every hundred acres was ordered.¹ To render the reduction of quit-rents possible throughout the entire colony, the Trustees had to get Lord Carteret's sanction of the act since they held his one-eighth part of Georgia in trust. The same reduction granted by the King was asked.² On November 30, 1742, the draft for quit-rent reduction was read. It provided for the following:

- (1) That quit-rents be reduced from four shillings to two shillings per hundred acres;
- (2) That quit-rents or new grants begin ten years from the date of the grants;
- (3) That tenure to those going to the colony on charity be made in tail general, to those going at their own expense, in fee simple with conditions of clearing and cultivating one-eighth of the grant in ten years; and,
- (4) That the land be forfeited only in cases of non-payment of rent and non-performance of the conditions of cultivation.

The draft was sent to Lord Carteret on December 6, 1742³. The Earl of Shaftesbury made his report to the Board, December 21, concerning a conference held with the King and Lord Carteret (with reference to quit-rent reduction in the colony). He stated that both the King and Lord Carteret approved the bill. He reported also, that the Trustees desired the two parties (Lord Carteret and the King) appoint someone to collect the quit-rents as they considered it too great a responsibility in their

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 407.

²Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 407-408.

³Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 408-409.

cooperate capacity, which was done in compliance with the request of the Trustees.¹

Though the Trustees had drawn up resolutions granting settlers the right of alienating their grants, they had not drawn up a formal set of rules by which such right might be accomplished. Thus on August 17, 1742, the Trustees recommended that no person be invested with the power to alienate any part of the land granted till the expiration of ten years from the date of the grant. During this ten-year period it was made compulsory, according to the rules set up by the Trustees, that the grantee cultivate one-eighth part of the land granted him. When the grantee justly convinced the President and court of assistants for the northern part of the colony, or the magistrates of the southern part that he had complied with all requirements, then his land could be alienated.²

Early in 1743 the Trustees received a letter from a group of indentured servants whose period of indenture had expired.³ The letter requested that they be granted land in accordance with resolutions drawn up by the Trustees when the colony was established. According to these resolutions, at the expiration of their terms of indentured service they were to receive grants of land and be recognized on equal footing, socially as well as economically, with the other settlers. The Trustees sent a letter to the colonial officials in Georgia ordering that a sufficient amount of good land be surveyed and divided into lots of fifty acres and disposed of in grants to indentured servants. To provide for their upkeep until their grants became productive, they were to be given an allowance

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 410.

²Ibid., p. 405.

³Ibid., p. 414. The names of the indentured servants sending the letter were not revealed.

of eight pence per day for men, or six pence per day for women; a calf and a sow; and the usual working implements for each man. This applied to all groups of indentured servants, those indented to the Trust and those to other parties. The latter group, however, were to receive the advantages of this recommendation only if they proved themselves industrious.¹

As has been previously mentioned, the Common Council had passed legislation reducing the quit-rents from four shillings to two shillings per hundred acres. Towards the end of 1743, three laws were brought before the Lord Commissioners for Trade and Plantations by the Trustees. These acts were concerned with the prohibition of intoxicating liquors in the colony, the prohibition of Negro slavery in the colony, and the reduction of quit-rents in Georgia.² It was requested that these acts be repealed. With reference to the repeal of the act reducing quit-rents, it might be guessed that this action was prompted by a group of wealthy colonists who wished to advance their own interests at the expense of the less fortunate of their fellow settlers and that recognition of this may have prompted the Board's rejection of the request.

Such were the conditions upon which settlers in Georgia held land up to 1743, and probably up to the mid-century. Failure on the part of the Trustees to recognize the mistakes they were making and the hardships they were placing on the settlers as the result of their idealistic principles led finally to the extinction of the Trustees' control over the colony. From this date (1750) down to the American Revolution, Georgia was transformed into a royal colony controlled by the appointees of the crown.

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 414.

²Ibid., p. 433.

CHAPTER III

SILK INDUSTRY

This chapter is an attempt to show why England was so desirous of developing the silk industry in Georgia; why the Trustees had the impression that silk could be successfully produced in the colony; the hardships forced on the colonists by the attempt to produce silk successfully rather than commodities which were better suited to the climate and soil of Georgia; and the reasons for the failure of the silk industry.

The geographical location of Georgia was suitable to the cultivation of the silk worm mulberry, and in view of the fact that an excellent quality of silk had been produced in the neighboring colony of South Carolina, it was believed that the finest quality of raw silk could be produced in Georgia.¹ If the production of silk in Georgia proved successful, England would be largely relieved of her dependence on foreign imports of the commodity. The advocates of the Georgia silk industry pointed out that in trading with the Italians each year, a balance of over three hundred pounds per year was accumulated against her.² According to those interested in the idea, the production of silk would benefit England in three particulars: (1) it would lessen her dependence on foreign imports, (2) it would provide employment for many of the laborers in the country who were out of work; and, (3) it would lower the price of silk in England.³

In order that the industry might become an accomplished fact,

¹Ralph Betts Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1933), p. 5.

²Georgia Historical Society, The Georgia Historical Collections, (Savannah, 1840), Vol. I, p. 206. (Hereafter cited as G. H. C.)

³G. H. C., Vol. I, p. 206.

the charter of the colony required that each grantee of land from the Trustees plant and preserve one hundred white mulberry trees.¹ On February 14, 1733, an interesting occurrence happened. One Nicholas Amatis, an Italian, presented himself to the Trustees. He informed them that he and one Giacomo Ottone, a man of wide experience in the manufacturing of silk machines, Jacques Camuse and his wife, both experienced winders of silk, and their family would agree to go to the colony to aid in the development of the silk industry.² This was an excellent offer and a service needed by the Trustees, as the art of producing raw silk was unknown in England. Amatis and his associates could help to educate the settlers in the production of silk and care of the worms. The offer was unanimously accepted by the Trustees with the understanding, however, that if the silk industry failed, the Italians were to be given transportation to England at the Trustees' expense.³ This marked one of the most significant events in the beginning of the silk culture in the colony.⁴ Final agreement was reached between Amatis and the Trustees in April, 1733, when the following resolutions were drawn up:

- (1) That the expense involved in transplanting Amatis and his servants to the colony be borne by the Trustees. Likewise, the expense of the Camuse family.
- (2) That a house be allotted for him and his family; that one hundred acres be granted him with fifty acres to Camuse at the expiration of his term of services.
- (3) That provisions be allotted him for the term of one year, the same as was done for other settlers.

¹McCain, op. cit., p. 238.

²C. R., Vol. I, p. 100.

³Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 22-23. This agreement was drawn up on March 15, 1733.

⁴This event was significant when one considers the fact that no one in the colony was acquainted with the industry.

- (4) That the proper material be furnished him for carrying on the work of making raw silk.
- (5) That the profits of his labor be for his own use.
- (6) That he be given a salary for four years at the rate of 25 pounds per annum on condition that he deliver as many machines and coppers as the Trustees or their agents shall require on the payment of 3 pounds for each machine and copper, and instructions for using them, and for giving to those persons appointed for the silk industry the secret of making raw silk.
- (7) That the charges of all their passages from Georgia to any port in England or Italy, be defrayed, if required and that he in turn would relinquish all rights and pretensions to the grant of houses and land, with the exception of that part cultivated at the end of five years, which is rightfully to be at his own disposal with the consent of the Trustees...and further, that he would leave all machines, coppers and materials furnished him at the expense of the Trustees.¹

With the conclusion of these regulations and a few final steps, the Italians were sent to the colony and the silk industry was started at once.

As a means of building up the domestic trade in silk, in cases where there were several members of a family desirous of enjoying in the culture or production of raw silk, licenses were granted allowing one or more members of the family to remain in England to build up trade in the commodity while the other members journeyed to the colony to get the production of the commodity under way.²

The Trustees ordered the first machinery for winding silk on May 11, 1733. To render this possible, a sum of money not exceeding three pounds 6s6d. was ordered to be advanced to Giacomo Ottone, the maker of the machinery.³

¹C. R., Vol. II, p. 26.

²Ibid., pp. 24, 33. A specific example of such a case is that of the Lacy Brothers.

³Ibid., p. 32. . . .

The encouragement given by the Trustees and the Board of Trade to the production of silk in Georgia brought favorable results at first. From time to time, samples of raw silk were sent to England and a specimen was exhibited to Queen Carolyn in May, 1735. The queen ordered it fabricated and the finished product pleased her so well that she had it made into a costume in which she appeared at court on her birthday.¹

Encouragement was given to the settlers cultivating the white mulberry trees in the form of bounties in land and in cash. In the rules laid down in July, 1735, all settlers going to the colony who were able to carry ten or more servants were compelled, after a period of ten years had elapsed after receiving their grants, to cultivate two hundred acres of the grant and plant two thousand mulberry trees thereon. On each one hundred acres remaining, one thousand mulberry trees were to be planted.² This later proved to be a waste of energy, time, and soil in view of the fact that the industry failed. Intent upon the cultivation of silk, the Trustees did all that they could to discourage the cultivation of rice, cotton, and indigo, commodities which were more suited to Georgia's soil and climate.³ Profit from these commodities could have been more readily obtained but the Trustees were so involved in the effort to produce silk that they were unaware of the hardships they were forcing upon the colonists.

The cultivation and production of silk progressed at a rather slow rate but the progress made was sufficient to mislead the Trustees

¹Jones, History of Georgia, Vol. I, pp. 190-191.

²Ibid., p. 197. These plants were to be furnished by the Trustees.

³Ibid., p. 371.

into believing that the industry would succeed and so the industry was continued. The inhabitants of New Ebenezer were the earliest and most persevering in their efforts to carry into practical operation the Trustees' and Oglethorpe's wishes in regard to the production of silk. New Ebenezer was a settlement composed, in the main, of German Saltzburghers who had been sent to the colony to serve as substitutes for Negro slaves. They were indentured servants. In 1736, each Saltzburgher was presented a mulberry tree and two of the congregation were instructed by Mrs. Camuse in the art of reeling silk.¹

In spite of the energy expended by the settlers in the cultivation of silk, the desired results were not obtained. The Trustees failed to see that the silk, while small quantities were produced, was not produced in quantities large enough to bring returns sufficient for taking care of the needs of the settlers. In a letter written by James Oglethorpe, October 19, 1738, giving the economic conditions of the colony at that time, he stated that the colonists lacked the bare necessities of life and if these necessities were not granted, the colony was destined to destruction. He informed the Trustees that had it not been for the advancement of funds taken out of his pockets, the colony could not have survived thus far. The bad economic conditions of the colony could not alone be attributed to the slow development of the silk industry, he added, but also to the refusal of the Trustees to permit the importation and sale of rum, to sanction the introduction of slave labor, to enlarge the tenure of land, and to the failure of crops.²

¹ Jones, History of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 372.

² Ibid., pp. 272, 370.

In a petition presented to the Trustees during the early existence of the colony asking for the introduction and use of Negro slaves, the usefulness of the female slaves in the industry once they had received the necessary instructions in the art of reeling silk from silk balls or cocoons was stressed.¹ The petition also declared that in order that the cultivation of silk might be more effectively carried out, each planter would be required to plant and cultivate five hundred mulberry trees on every five hundred acres of land he held in the colony. To protect these trees from cattle, each planter would also be required to erect fencing. Failure to comply with the terms of the ordinance would mean the forfeiture of ten pounds in the money of Great Britain.²

Five years after the establishment of the colony, even in the face of serious handicaps, the Trustees clung tenaciously to the conviction that the production of silk would be successful. It seems apparent that after five years filled with constant failures they would have given up the idea. Of course, at the time the letter from Oglethorpe previously mentioned³ had not as yet been received. In a meeting of the Common Council it was stated that all energy should be exhausted in the encouragement of the silk industry. Until the industry did succeed, it was decided that some means should be provided for the maintenance of the inhabitants. From the opinions expressed in a letter written by Hugh Anderson,⁴ the

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 60.

²Ibid.,

³See page 26.

⁴Hugh Anderson was one of the minor officials in the colony.

idea was set forth that the land in the colony was not as fruitful as represented. This was an obstacle that could not be overcome.

Of the silk industry he stated that during the preceding year the mulberry trees in the Trustees' gardens produced very few leaves as the result of severe pruning and transplanting, thereby causing a shortage of food for feeding the worms, resulting in their death. He added that during the present year, a severe frost killed the leaves and again many worms died. Despite these handicaps, however, he stated that a considerable quantity of silk was produced during the year.¹

From Anderson's letter to his brother, the conclusion may be drawn that many people in the colony felt that the silk industry could be developed in Georgia in spite of the many set-backs in its production and were not willing to cease trying to develop the industry. The occurrence of these disastrous events should have been sufficient to show the Trustees that while the climate for the most part was suitable to silk culture, it was also subject to changes which could be most detrimental to the welfare of the industry. For that reason, it was, therefore, destined to failure.

James Lewis Camuse, supervisor of the silk industry in Georgia, made an appeal to the Trustees for assistance on August 28, 1733. He informed them that the soil of Georgia was favorable to the cultivation of mulberry trees but the inhabitants must expend greater efforts to take care of them. He added that there was a sufficient supply of worms to begin the next year's production provided enough leaves could be obtained

¹C. R., Vol. V, p. 39.

to furnish the proper nourishment for them.¹ It was alleged that the introduction of Negro slave labor would reduce the hazards involved because of the settlers' laziness. Negroes in other colonies, it was claimed, were accustomed to enduring hardships and could be driven, which was not true of the indentured servants. This was the argument advanced by the disgruntled settlers.

In September, 1738, the Trustees were greatly encouraged by a report on the silk industry sent them by the Camuse family who stated that more silk had been produced during that year than at any other time, and that many trees in the garden were recovering from recent mishaps and would provide food enough for a great quantity of worms.²

Oglethorpe sent the Trustees twenty pounds of silk in July, 1739. He told them that an infection set in among the worms, thus reducing the chances of producing more than twenty pounds. Some of the silk sent was part of the 1738 crop, but a larger portion was of the 1739 production.³ The amount of silk was not sufficient to bring any monetary returns great enough to compensate its producers for the time and energy spent in its production, but the government officials and the Trustees failed to realize this, and the colonists continued.

As a means of preventing discouragement among the settlers because of the slowness in the development of the silk industry, a small bounty was offered.⁴ This was not sufficient to provide the necessities for the subsistence of a family until the industry should

¹C. R., Vol. V, p. 67.

²Ibid., p. 71.

³Ibid., p. 209.

⁴Ibid., p. 237.

reap the expected returns. In addition, no one in the colony had any idea when that time would present itself, and the Trustees did not possess sufficient funds to continue such a policy indefinitely.

The opinion that the silk industry would thrive in the colony provided it was inhabited with a sufficient number of settlers was still prevalent in England. To provide the colony with the needed labor supply for the successful production of silk would have involved a considerable expense, white labor at that time costing eight pence a day. Yet, if this step were not taken, the industry was destined to fail. On the other hand, there were those who offered other means of solving the problem. It was pointed out that under ordinary circumstances, the silk season for gathering leaves lasted six weeks and the fact that it was the business of the women and children to wind silk would reduce the cost of production. With such conditions prevailing, a woman and two children could wind from thirty to forty pounds of silk per year, which would produce a handsome remunerative return in pounds sterling. This assumption was based on the last shipment of silk to England.¹

It was soon disclosed that of the amount of silk last sent to England from the colony, only five pounds were produced in Georgia, the rest coming from South Carolina. The definite source of this statement was not revealed but was considered reliable. The Trustees were amazed that Oglethorpe would allow this to occur.²

¹C. R., Vol. V, p. 305, from the conversation of Robert Walpole.

²From a conversation with a woman from the colony, the impression was gained that if Oglethorpe had remained in the colony, conditions would have grown worse. C. R., Vol. V, pp. 305-306. Oglethorpe was quite unjustly accused for he had proved himself a good administrator in more than one way.

Later on during the same year, 1739, the Rev. George Whitfield informed the Trustees that the bounty offered by them to encourage the production of raw silk was not adequate remuneration for the care and pains involved.¹ This opinion was justified because the production of silk was an expensive and intricate process.

When the Trustees were confronted with the matter of introducing Negro slavery into the colony and a request that the Negro slaves might be used in the production of silk,² Horton, one of the officials in the colony, expressed the opinion that this would not be necessary. He stated that it was true that the processes used in the production of silk were new to the settlers but this shortcoming could be removed by placing a number of apprentices under the supervision of Mrs. Camuse.³

Up to 1740 there was still optimism in England that the silk industry would prove successful in the colony.⁴ Although the desired quantities were never obtained, there remained hope up to the time of its abandonment, that at some time in the near future the colonists would succeed in producing enough to reap a fair return. The economic conditions of the colony and the spirit of the settlers, in the meantime, still remained at a low ebb.

In May, 1741, twenty girls succeeded in winding seventeen pounds of cocoons which were sold at Savannah for 3.8 pounds sterling. During the same year, five pounds sterling was advanced by Oglethorpe to the Rev. Mr. Bolzius, principal pastor of the Ebenezer parish, for the purchase

¹C. R., Vol. V, p. 349.

²That is, in case the introduction of slavery was sanctioned by the Trustees.

³C. R., Vol. V, p. 381.

⁴Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 361-362.

of trees. With this amount twelve hundred trees were procured and distributed among the families.¹ From experiences in the past both men should have known that this was a wasteful way in which to spend funds that could have been put to better use.

In 1750, one thousand cocoons and seventy-four pounds, two ounces of raw silk were produced, bringing a return of 110 pounds. This was the largest amount obtained from cocoons in the colony.

Nevertheless, Georgia's climate, though a bit similar to that of southern France and Italy, was, as has been shown, subject to such changes that the successful cultivation of mulberry trees and care of the silk was at length proved impossible, and it was at this time, or shortly afterwards, that England relinquished all efforts toward making Georgia a silk-producing colony, and remained dependent on foreign importation of silk.

¹Jones, op. cit., p. 372.

²Ibid., p. 373.

CHAPTER IV
FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

This chapter concerns itself with the financial problems facing the colony of Georgia; how they were met; and the difficulties involved in meeting the problems presented.

The establishment of the colony of Georgia was made possible, in the main, by individual contributions made by those persons interested in the project from both a philanthropic and an economic angle. These contributions, in addition to funds supplied by the corporation, aided in getting the colony started. To insure the fulfillment of the idea, funds were received throughout the interval from 1732 through 1733. These funds were used for various purposes. In some instances they were used to pay the costs of transporting those settlers to the colony who were financially unable to bear their own expenses; in others, the funds were used for supporting the settlers upon their arrival in the colony until they were able to support themselves.

In order that the public might be given reasonable assurance of the benevolent character of the undertaking, and assurance that the funds contributed were faithfully applied, a commission of leading citizens in England was organized to solicit subscriptions. To prevent misappropriation of funds, an account was opened with the Bank of England. There a register was kept of the names of all the benefactors and the amounts donated. Parliament donated liberally the sum of 10,000 pounds.¹ Those persons interested in the colony purely from the economic gain to be received in return were also liberal contributors.

¹Jones, History of Georgia, Vol. I, pp. 97-98.

A resolution adopted by the Trustees on March 21, 1733, made possible the formation of a committee including Lord Percival, Mr. Hacks, Mr. Heathcote, and all the gentlemen who were in the Trust before March 15, 1733, for the purpose of preparing an account of the proceedings of the Trustees for establishing the colony of Georgia.¹

The Trustees were anxious that the colony should be rapidly settled. Persons financially able to transport themselves to the colony without calling on the Trustees for aid, were, in the early stages of settlement, reluctant to leave their homes in England for a land with which they were totally unacquainted, regardless of the advantages offered. The Trustees, therefore, had to depend on the debtor classes of England as a means of getting the colony settled. These people were willing to go to the colony but lacked the funds needed to bear transportation expenses.² To that end, appeals were made to the Trustees for aid. These appeals were so numerous that the funds allotted for that purpose were rapidly exhausted. In April, 1733, the Trustees found it necessary to ask Parliament for aid and on April 30, Lord Tyrconnel, Messers. Hacks, Heathcote, and White were deputed to apply for a sum of public money to be used for that purpose.³

English currency in the colony was rare and found in limited amounts. This shortage of currency rendered the business transactions of

¹C. R., Vol. II, p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³This group of people were anxious to go to Georgia to begin life anew, thereby making useful citizens of themselves once more. The philanthropic motive of the Georgia Trust was that of transporting these groups to the colony.

the colony and its settlers virtually impossible. To facilitate the performance of these functions, Oglethorpe was invested with the power to draw bills of exchange upon the Trust's account. On May 11, 1733, 200 pounds were ordered to be paid George Heathcote to meet bills of exchange drawn by James Oglethorpe on the account of the Trustees for the amount.¹

Since the early settlers consisted of the down-trodden class, the corporation was interested in the religious well-being of the colonists also. Among the Trustees were individuals who had become a part of the Trust solely for the purpose of trying to save the souls of many debtors, who, because of their numerous hardships, had strayed from the chosen path of Christianity. A resolution was drawn up to the effect that Mr. Vernon and his associates, who had been appointed to collect funds for the purpose of transporting the Saltzburghers² to the colony, deposit with the Trustees 1,250 pounds. These funds were to be used in providing the needed religious guidance of the German settlers until lands could be cultivated in the colony for the support of a minister.³ The same provision was made for the English settlers. Many subscriptions were obtained for the purpose of erecting churches, purchasing Holy Bibles, and for the establishment of religious institutions for the education of the settlers. The Wesley brothers, founders of Methodism, were leaders in these religious and educational movements.

As has already been stated, the transporting of settlers to the

¹C. R., Vol. II, p. 33.

²Ibid., p. 35. The Saltzburghers were sent to the colony as indentured servants to be used in the place of Negro slaves.

³See Chapter III, p. 26, f.n. 1.

colony at the Trustees' expense had resulted in a constant drain on the funds set aside for that purpose. With this in mind, the Trustees had to take steps to adjust their account with the Bank of England. The council was empowered in May, 1733, to order the issuing and paying out of any sum or sums of money needed to discharge debts incurred by the corporation.¹ In this way, the Trustees managed to adjust the account of the corporation with the Bank of England.

But steady withdrawals necessitated the making of another appeal to Parliament for money and early in 1735 the Trustees asked Parliament for additional funds. The petition met the approval of the House of Commons, which was eager to make the colony secure, and on February 26, the funds requested were granted.² Three months later, another appeal was made in a memorial read before the Lord Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury. The petition, asking for the sum of 26,000 pounds was approved and on June 18, 1735, the accountant received a letter empowering him to receive it from the Exchequer in the presence of Oglethorpe.³

Shortage of a circulating medium of exchange in the colony rendered difficult many small business transactions in the colony. To alleviate this condition, an appeal was made to the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury for the sum of 1,000 pounds in silver coin. This appeal was read July 31, 1735. It was granted at a subsequent meeting of the commissioners.⁴

Continual withdrawals of funds from the account of the corporation

¹C. R., Vol. II, p. 36.

²Ibid., Vol. I, p. 206.

³Ibid., pp. 215, 218-219.

⁴Ibid., p. 224.

for the purpose of "enabling the Trustees to provide for the further establishment and security of Georgia" was gradually reducing the funds of the Trustees.¹ Year after year assistance was asked of Parliament and the King.² This was continued until the Trustees were relieved of all responsibility for the colony. In 1736, an additional grant of 10,000 pounds was made by Parliament to be used in the colony. On June 23, 1736, the Recorder in the colony was ordered to make up an account of the proceedings of the town court from the date of the last correspondence to the Trustees in his next letter. From that date on, he was directed to send a detailed account every three months showing the amount of money taken in and the purposes for which it had been paid during the period. Similarly, he was ordered to make a report estimating the amount of fees taken in at the jail upon the arrest and discharge of prisoners from that date on.³

Among a group of laws prepared for the colony of Georgia in 1737, was one providing for the regulation of the system to be used by individuals giving credit to fellow citizens and the basis upon which they might sue for the debts owed them. This was a needed ordinance in view of the fact that there were among many enterprising individuals like Dr. Telfair and his associates who had in mind furthering their own interests at the expense of the less fortunate settlers.⁴ In this group

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 248.

²Ibid., pp. 253, 271, 289, 307.

³Ibid., p. 257.

⁴Dr. Telfair and his associates had long been leaders of the settlers in their attempts to obtain the introduction of slavery. Their interests, however, was purely personal. They were cognizant of the fact that the settlers would not be able to pay for the slaves and with the debts incurred, Telfair would take their land.

of regulations was also one regulating the use of gold and silver, in wearing apparel and furniture, and for preventing extravagance and luxury. These ordinances were approved April 4, 1737.¹

At intervals the Trustees had sent orders and instructions to the colony concerning the use and disposition of funds in the colony, but to these orders and instructions no reply had been received, and the Trustees were greatly disturbed because of this carelessness on the part of the officials in the colony making and sending the requested reports. On July 13, 1737, the secretary and accountant were ordered to make an extract from the books belonging to the office of all the orders and instructions sent to Georgia and a copy of it was ordered sent to the Trustees' secretary in the colony, Mr. William Stephens, who was instructed to make an inquiry as to why no report or returns had been made to the Trustees concerning such orders and instructions.²

In spite of the fact that a supply of coins had been sent to the colony to aid trading and the performance of civil functions, financial conditions still remained in a bad state. There occurred serious shortages in the circulating paper currency of the colony. To remedy this situation, the Trustees were allowed to issue a specified amount of sola bills to be used as substitutes for pounds sterling currency.³ They

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 281.

²Ibid., p. 292. The writer could find no report of the results obtained.

³In the absence of a sufficient amount of paper currency, many of the large money transactions in the colony were hampered. In an effort to remedy this situation, the English government allowed the Trustees to issue sola bills to be used as a circulating paper medium. These sola bills were backed by an equal amount of pound sterling currency so as to give them a monetary value.

were to be used in meeting the financial obligations of the colony and in those transactions involving inter-colonial trade. The issue of sola bills proved advantageous in the early stages of their use but was destined to lead to trouble, for in time, they were over-issued and as a result, were almost worthless.

The Trustees became very much alarmed on June 7, 1738, at the great number of certified accounts presented, totalling 1,401.132d pounds. Mr. Causton, in charge of financial affairs in the colony, had received a number of cargoes of certain commodities without authorization from the Trustees. In view of this fact, the Trustees called a meeting to consider the methods by which Causton might be forced to answer for his conduct. The certified accounts up to that date amounted to 5,236.0.6d pounds. Sola bills, provisions, and effects received by Causton since midsummer of 1737 amounted to 13,086.9s.9d. pounds, for which he had given the Trustees no account. Thus, it was mandatory that the Trustees take steps to correct this state of affairs as quickly as possible. Causton's seizure was ordered, and furthermore, he was instructed to be prepared to present the necessary evidence to show cause for his arbitrary action.¹ If an examination of his effects should prove unsatisfactory to the officials in the colony, he was to be sent to London with his accounts and examined by the Trustees.²

Causton, realizing the seriousness of the matter made strenuous efforts to rally the support of Oglethorpe to his cause. Oglethorpe,

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 324; Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-270.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 321-322; *Ibid.*, p. 271.

however, was informed that the grand jury in Savannah had prepared a representation of grievances of the inhabitants in which they complained bitterly of the misconduct of Causton, alleging that larger sums than had been authorized had been spent; that through his fraudulent methods, debts had been brought on the colony; that he had exceeded the powers granted him as first bailiff; that he was arbitrary and oppressive in the discharge of his official duties; and that he had shown partiality in the distribution of the public stores. It was further alleged that he had utilized his position for his own advancement and the benefit of special friends. He was accused of keeping from the Trustees many just complaints made by the colonists at Savannah.

On the basis of the evidence presented and after a careful examination of his papers, Causton was dismissed from the office he held. The examination failed to meet the approval of the colonial officials, and in compliance with the Trustees' orders, therefore, he was prepared for his journey to England. Reaching England he failed to produce the necessary vouchers to prove his innocence. He was sent back to the colony. Fortunately, Causton died at sea. One of the most notorious cases in the history of the colony came to an unexpected end.

In a letter to the Trustees, dated October 19, 1738, Oglethorpe, having made an allusion to Causton's carelessness in spending the public money, informed the body of the alarming financial status of the colony. He stressed the fact that the active service and watchfulness of the scoutboatmen, rangers, and others were necessary to the safety of the

¹Jones, op. cit., pp. 267-271.

colony. These groups had not been paid for a long period of time and were actually starving although, through their loyalty to the Trustees, they had continued their service in spite of the seriousness of the existing conditions. Shortage of funds to be used in paying these groups had forced Oglethorpe to cut their numbers, thus greatly endangering the security of the colony. Oglethorpe informed the Trustees that he had paid the boatmen one month's salary from his own pocket, which amount he did not expect to receive again. This was not the first instance in which Oglethorpe had used his personal funds toward the continuance of the colony. If the outstanding debts of the colony were paid, Oglethorpe estimated 5,000 pounds the lowest sum practicable for carrying on the civil affairs of the colony. This would only be made possible, he believed, with the successful production of wine and silk during the ensuing year and with the maintenance of a definite form of colonial government.¹ With the silk and wine industries developing as slowly as they were, Oglethorpe could not possibly have obtained the estimated amount needed for the support of the colony for the financial year 1738-1739. The only way out, therefore, would be to make an appeal to Parliament for funds since the Trustees, at this point, possessed very little and financial aid from them was almost impossible.

On January 3, 1739, the Trustees designated three of their number to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer and request a grant of 8,000 pounds to cover the expenses of the colony for the year 1739-1740. Instructions were given them to inform the Chancellor that during 1738 many unforeseen accidents had occurred and to prevent their recurrence during the

¹Jones, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

coming year, it would be necessary to increase the military forces in the colony, which would involve added expense. During 1738, the colony had been involved in several skirmishes with the Spanish at St. Augustine. In addition, the colony during 1738 had been forced to support many inhabitants for a period longer than customary since the general drought occurring during that year had caused numerous crop failures. The expenses incurred as a result of this misfortune they estimated at 3,000 pounds.¹

In the Chancellor's reply to this appeal, he stated that military affairs were out of his authority but he would lend his assistance in pushing the measure.²

While making strenuous efforts to obtain the grant of 8,000 pounds asked for, the Trustees received correspondence from William Stephens, their secretary in the colony, describing conditions in the colony which necessitated making an appeal exceeding the 8,000 pounds previously asked for. Conditions had grown steadily worse and there was serious need for increasing the military strength in the colony.³ On July 4, 1739, a grant of 20,000 pounds was made.⁴

Even with these grants, however, funds were not sufficient for defraying the necessary expenses of and providing for ample military defense in the colony. In the face of these serious difficulties, the Trustees drew up a resolution encouraging the production of certain commodities in the colony as a means of removing the expense involved in

¹C. R., Vol. I, p. 331.

²Ibid., pp. 335-336.

³Ibid., p. 338.

⁴Ibid., p. 352.

supporting it. They believed that England would be much benefitted in the future by the products produced in the colony. The natural fitness of the soil and climate of Georgia which were believed suitable to the production of silk, wine, indigo, and other commodities gave rise to this opinion. On the basis of this, an appeal for an additional grant of 4,000 pounds was made which if not granted, they declared would render impossible further improvement and cultivation of Georgia.¹ The tenacity with which the Trustees clung to their dream of making Georgia a silk producing colony prevented the realization of the resolution just mentioned. If they had been conscious of the fact that the silk industry in Georgia was doomed and had allowed the settlers to relinquish their efforts to produce silk and turn to those products such as rice, cotton, and other staples, which were better suited to the geographical and climatic location of Georgia, the colony would have thrived greatly and become self-supporting. Not only this, but those individuals, who had joined the corporation purely for the advancement of their economic positions, would have obtained larger remunerative returns from the sale of those commodities. The settlers in the colony would have obtained security much earlier.

In 1741 there occurred a change in the personnel of the colony. Colonel William Stephens replaced Oglethorpe as administrator, Oglethorpe having departed for England on orders of the Trustees. In association with the members of the council, Stephens was directed to hold in Savannah, each year, four terms of the general court for the regulation

¹C. R., Vol. I, pp. 364-365.

of public affairs and the accomodation of all differences affecting persons or property. Public money could be distributed only under warrant, signed and sealed by the president and a majority of his assistants in council. Monthly accounts were to be exhibited to the Board of Trustees showing the amounts disbursed and the particular purposes to which they had been applied.¹ The colony, however, remained at a low ebb financially. The distractions caused by the Spaniards' continued attacks; the Trustees' refusal to permit the importation and sale of rum; to sanction the introduction of slave labor and to enlarge the tenure of land; and crop failures subsequently disheartened many. These conditions induced the settlers to avail themselves of the greater privilege existing in South Carolina where the restrictions prevalent in Georgia were unknown. "The chief trouble, however, lay in the fact that the English colonists, not a few of whom were unaccustomed to agricultural pursuits and manual occupations, were easily discouraged and could suppress their feelings of disappointment."² Financial conditions in the colony grew steadily worse from 1740 until taken over by royal authority.³

Late in 1743, the Trustees were discussing the grounds upon which settlers could be arrested for using public funds for purposes other than the designated one. Following is a list of some of the points discussed:

- (1) If a person in Georgia received public money from the Trustees as a means of enabling them to settle in the colony and cultivate land but used it otherwise, he would be subject to imprisonment.
- (2) If on the other hand an individual used these funds for the

¹Jones, op. cit., p. 370-371.

²Ibid.

³C. R., Vol. I, pp. 419, 427, 421.

purpose designated and found it unprofitable and thereupon decided to leave the colony, would be subject to arrest.

- (3) Could the Trustees arrest any person or persons for the public money they had received of the Trustees; and, at the same time, prevent said person or persons from selling their lands and improvements as the only means of reimbursing the Trustees?
- (4) In the event the land could be sold but no suitable purchaser could be found willing to pay the price asked for the land with improvements having been made with one-fourths of the public money granted, were the Trustees in this case invested with the power to arrest such individuals and compel them to give security for the payment of the money expended on the lands mentioned?

A copy of the proceedings of this discussion was ordered sent to the President of the council in Georgia and his assistants to examine the circumstances and send their answer to the Trustees. The officials in the colony were instructed to make a strict inquiry into the conduct of the magistrates in Georgia, and to examine the accounts between these individuals and the Trustees involved in the controversy in order that justice might be done.¹ The President and his assistants had not answered the Trustees by the end of 1743, which is the last year covered in this study.

Such were the financial problems facing the colonial officials and the Trustees through 1743. The colony progressed and developed very little until around 1750 when it was made a royal colony subject to royal and parliamentary control.

¹C. R., Vol. I, pp. 428-429.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages, the writer has made an attempt to list the economic regulations laid down by the Trustees of the Georgia corporation; reasons for adopting these regulations; the advantages and the serious disadvantages to the settlers created by their adoption.

In an effort to create a model colony, those Trustees interested in the colony from a philanthropic point of view drafted numerous regulations, some good and some bad, to be enforced in the colony. In order that a democratic land system might be improvised and maintained, a system giving to every settler an equal opportunity, grants of land, not exceeding two thousand acres at the most, were made to male recipients only. Upon the death of these individuals, the land could be inherited by the male survivors only. As a result, the women were left with one alternative, a dependence upon charity. The adoption of the in tail male system was therefore a bad one in so far as women were concerned.

Confronted with constant agitation, the Trustees were forced to alter the land policy which they had adopted. Provision was made whereby female survivors might inherit the grants left by deceased male relatives. Strong arguments were presented by the colonists against the in tail male system. The system made the obtaining of credits outside the colony extremely difficult as they possessed nothing to put up as collateral. These arguments did not produce the necessary impetus to bring about the desired change. With the slow increase in the population and evident disruption of the colony, the needed impetus was obtained to bring about a modification in the land policy. With these modifications,

land grants were made in fee simple, the quit-rents were reduced, and additional grants were given to those individuals able to pay the expenses of others as well as theirs to the colony. Thus many of the desired modifications in land tenure were obtained, but it was not until the crown assumed control of the colony that conditions similar to those in the other twelve colonies prevailed.

Among the Trustees were many persons interested in the project merely with a view to enhancing their personal economic interests. This group outnumbered the philanthropists. They were deluded by the numerous fantastic stories told of Georgia's economic possibilities. To that end, they sought to develop an industry that was destined to failure in the very beginning. In an effort to make Georgia a silk producing colony, many unnecessary obstacles were placed in the paths of the colonists. Repeated attempts to produce the quantities sufficient to net remunerative monetary returns failed. In spite of the many setbacks suffered, the Trustees were not cognizant of the fact that silk production was an impossibility. Agricultural products that would have netted the desired returns were prohibited. Money and land that could have been more profitably invested in the successful development of these commodities were thrown away in bounties given to the settlers in an effort to maintain peace and harmony in the colony. This was continued until the colony was converted into a royal colony.

The colony of Georgia was settled, in the main, by persons of the debtor class of England. Consequently, Georgia could not make rapid strides of progress economically. Its very establishment was financed through subscriptions made by individuals interested in the scheme from

either a philanthropic, or economic standpoint. The expenses involved in transporting the prospective colonists to Georgia had to be assumed by the Trust. This necessitated the spending of huge sums of money, and larger amounts were expended in bounties offered to keep down dissatisfaction, as has previously been mentioned. To obtain the funds needed for the successful performance of civil and military functions in the colony, numerous appeals had to be made to Parliament for financial aid. Corruption among the colonial officials made financial conditions in the colony worse. Had it not been for the goodness of Oglethorpe who used much of his personal money in the colony, the project would have probably failed in its infancy. But, even Oglethorpe did not possess sufficient funds to continue such a process. There was no source from which funds could be obtained, other than Parliament. As a result, the colony remained in a bad state financially until the assumption of its control by the crown.

GLOSSARY

1. free socage - Land held free of any military, spiritual, or servential attachments.
2. capite - Grants of a specified amount of land to each individual.
3. in tail male - Land grants made to and subject to inheritance only by male recipients.
4. in tail general - Land grants made to persons regardless of sex.
5. entailed - The rule by which descent is fixed.
6. fee simple - The granting of land to the grantee and his heirs upon the fulfillment of a contingent qualification.

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