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During the colonial period, South Carolina became more democratic. Originally, the King of England gave eight Lords Proprietor all the political control of the land that is now North and South Carolina and Georgia to repay money the King owed them. The eight Proprietors then gave large tracts of land to encourage settlers to come to the Carolinas. The Proprietors also shared the political control with the elite largest plantation owners. The other colonies also developed a politically elite class based on economic status.

South Carolina had a legislative assembly similar to the other colonies that was established to make laws, especially tax laws, for the colony. Most of the colonies were based on England's government which meant a two house (bicameral) assembly. The Proprietors and the elite had a greater influence and representation than did the common people in South Carolina.

The Grand Council (which had ten members elected by the proprietors and landowners), decided that everyone—representatives of the Proprietors, colonial elite and the common people—deserved an equal voice in the government. This equality was not equal to the population. As a result, a separate house was established as a Commons House of Assembly to represent the people. The backcountry of South Carolina, however, was not as well-represented as the Lowcountry.

At the end of the 1600s, most English colonies became royal colonies instead of joint stock companies and therefore lost their right to name their governors. In most cases, this occurred because the King of England wanted to control the wealth in these colonies or limit the independence of the colony. In South Carolina this change occurred at the request of the colonists.

By this time in history, the Proprietors had collected rent and felt the colonists were not making enough money for them and were absentee landlords. The colonists in South Carolina believed they were not getting anything in return for their rent, including protection. The King had to reach a financial agreement with the Proprietors, and Carolina became a Royal Colony in a bloodless revolution. It was at this time that North and South Carolina were created out of Carolina.

South Carolina continued to have self-governance with the representative assembly, but now the King could appoint the governor. However, the salary of the governor was paid by the colonial assemblies because the assemblies controlled the taxes. In many cases, the governor left the colonies alone to control their own government.

There were some economic advantages for becoming a Royal Colony. Subsidies were increased for the naval stores and merchants could sell rice directly to other foreign countries. Townships were established in the backcountry to encourage people to locate to these areas. The majority of people who immigrated to the backcountry were traders and woodsmen. These people were thought to be uncivilized by the elites that lived in the Lowcountry, who were wealthy plantation owners due to rice and indigo. There was extreme animosity between the two areas of South Carolina.

Many immigrants came from Pennsylvania and were of Scottish, Irish and German ancestry. The white population in the backcountry grew to outnumber that of the Lowcountry. Still the backcountry continued to have less representation in the Assembly. They paid taxes but got very little in return from their government.

There was no law enforcement, so the settlers were forced to take the law into their own hands. This became known as the Regulator movement. The Regulators enforced their own justice and this quickly led to vigilante justice and lawlessness. The guilty were hanged, or beaten to death, without a trial which violated their rights as Englishmen.

The government of South Carolina had to step in to help the people of the backcountry. Seven circuit courthouses were established to provide justice, law and order in the colony. This did nothing to decrease the hostilities between the people of the backcountry and Lowcountry, however, since the backcountry was still underrepresented.

Footnotes:

- 1) Tyer, Charlie B. and Young, Richard D. , The South Carolina Legislature, The South Carolina Governance Project, Dec/31/1969, Jun/09/2015, <http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/grs/SCCEP/Articles/legislature.htm>
- 2) Croft, Donna , Life on Two Colonial Plantations in South Carolina, Cario Middle School, South Carolina , Dec/31/1969, Jun/09/2015, http://www.teachingushistory.org/lessons/2Colonial_over.html
- 3) unknown, Eighth Grade Support Document, SC Dept of Education , Jun/09/2015, Jun/09/2015, <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/documents/Grade8SupportDocument.pdf>

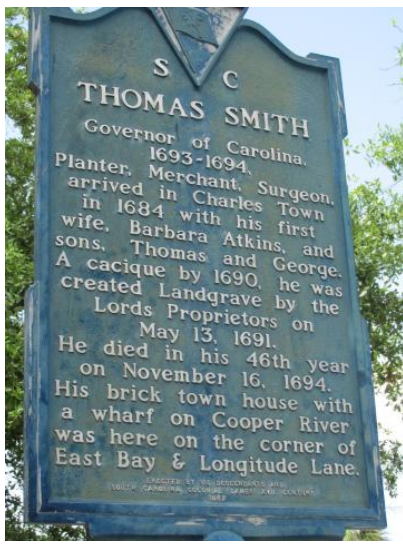
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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Pre-Revolutionary-Period-South-Carolina-History>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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