VIRGINIA STUDIES 2015 CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (CONDENSED) – STUDY GUIDE

# VS.4 LIFE IN THE VIRGINIA COLONY

## STANDARD VS.4A Agriculture & Slavery

The success of **tobacco as a cash crop** transformed life in the Virginia colony and **encouraged slavery**.

### Terms to know

- **Cash crop**: A crop that is grown to **sell for money** rather than for use by the growers
- The economy of the Virginia colony **depended on agriculture** as a primary source of **wealth**.
  - Tobacco became the most profitable agricultural product because it was sold in England as a cash crop.

The successful planting of tobacco depended on a steady and inexpensive source of labor.



For this reason,
African men,
women, and
children were

An overseer supervises two enslaved girls

**brought to the Virginia** colony and **enslaved** to work on the **plantations**.

The Virginia colony became dependent on slave labor, and the dependence lasted a long time.

**STANDARD VS.4B** CULTURE REFLECTS ORIGINS

The culture of colonial Virginia reflected beliefs, customs, and architecture of Europeans, Africans, and American Indians living there.

Although a colony of England, Virginia developed a **unique culture** different from that of England.

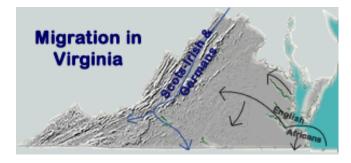
### **Culture of colonial Virginia**

Whenever people settle an area, they change the landscape to reflect their **culture and customs**. Examples of **architecture** that reflect different cultures include

- barns
- homes
- places of worship (e.g., churches)

Place names reflecting culture

- English—Richmond
- American Indian Roanoke



#### Settlement areas

- English and other Europeans settled primarily in Coastal Plain (Tidewater) and Piedmont regions.
- Germans and Scots-Irish settled primarily in the Shenandoah Valley, which was along the migration route.
- Africans were brought primarily to the Coastal Plain (Tidewater) and Piedmont regions to work in tobacco fields which required a great deal of labor.
- Prior to the arrival of the settlers, American Indians lived throughout Virginia.
  - After the settlers arrived, most were forced inland.

**Migration** and living in new areas caused people to **adapt** old customs to their new environment.

## **STANDARD VS.4C** CAPITAL MOVES TO WILLIAMSBURG

A variety of factors explain the reasons for moving Virginia's capital.

## Reasons why the capital was moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg

- **Drinking water** in Jamestown was contaminated by seepage of salt water.
- Unhealthy living conditions caused diseases.
- Fire destroyed wooden and brick buildings at Jamestown.
- Williamsburg was an already established town.

## STANDARD VS.4D MONEY, BARTER, CREDIT

**Money** was not often used in the early Virginia colony.

Because farmers could not pay for goods until their crops were harvested, **credit** was important in Virginia.

### Terms to know

- Money: A medium of exchange (currency, which includes coins and paper bills)
- **Barter**: Trading/exchanging of goods and services without the use of money



- Credit: Buying a good or service now and paying for it later
- Debt: A good or service owed to another
- Saving: Money put away to save or to spend at a later time

Few people had paper money and coins to use to buy goods and services.

- Barter was commonly used instead of money.
- Tobacco was used as money. A tobacco farmer could use his tobacco to pay for goods and services.

Farmers and other consumers could also buy goods and services on **credit** and pay their **debts** when their crops were harvested and sold.

Colonial Virginia had no banks

## STANDARD VS.4E

### **EVERYDAY LIFE**

**Resources** were used in colonial Virginia to produce the goods and services that people needed.

*Everyday life* was *different* for whites, enslaved African Americans, and free African Americans in colonial Virginia.

People living in **colonial Virginia** depended on **natural, human, and capital resources** to produce the goods and services they needed.

Food:

- Food choices were limited
- Meals were made of local produce and meats

Housing:

- Most people lived in **one-room homes** with dirt floors
- Some wealthy people (farmers) lived in large houses

Clothing:

- Women in households made clothes for family members
- Most clothing was made of **cotton**, **wool**, and/or **leather**.

Most white Virginians made their living from the land as small farmers.

A few owned large farms (plantations).,

Most enslaved African Americans worked tobacco, crops, and livestock.

- Enslaved African Americans were denied basic rights.
- Some free African Americans owned land but were denied basic rights.