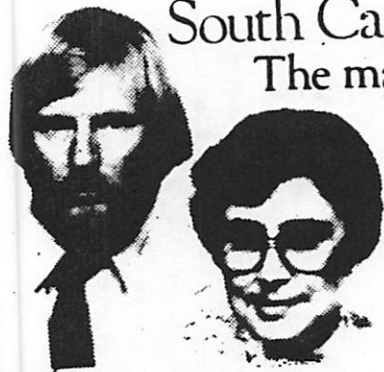


English Late Starters

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South Carolina's Story The making of a state



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Compared to the Spanish and French, the English were late starters in establishing successful colonies in the New World.

It was not until the early 17th century that the English began to lay plans for the land they called Carolina. Carolina was much larger than it is now, as it encompassed all of Georgia and most of North Carolina and extended westward to the Pacific.

In 1603 Charles II issued a charter and granted eight of his noblemen and royal supporters the right to develop Carolina. The king called the grantees the "lord proprietors." The names of these noblemen now dot the map of South Carolina: the Earl of Clarendon, the Duke of Albemarle, Lord Ashley (later the Earl of Shaftesbury), Sir John Colleton, Sir William Berkeley, Lord John Berkeley, Lord Craven, and Sir George Carteret.

The getting together of the eight noblemen was purely a business venture. By bringing in settlers they hoped to make a lot of money from the sale and rent of land and the trade with the Indians.

They felt certain that they would be successful. Reports from various English explorers were excellent: the land was fertile, the climate good, and the Indians seemed friendly.

The proprietors selected Port Royal as the site of their first settlement, although previous expeditions had been unsuccessful in establishing a site there.

Three ships — the Carolina, the Port Royal, and the Albemarle — were chosen to carry settlers and supplies across the Atlantic. Enough provisions to last 18 months were stored on board, and 148 men, women and children were chosen to make the voyage.

In August 1669, the three ships, under the command of Joseph West, left England and made it to the Barbados without much difficulty. There they were to pick up additional settlers and supplies.

While the ships lay anchored in Barbados Harbor, however, a violent storm destroyed the Albemarle and severely damaged the Port Royal and the Carolina. A ship named the Three Brothers was purchased to take the place of the Albemarle. The expedition was delayed while the other ships were repaired.

The three vessels eventually set sail and reached the island of Nevis in the West Indies where they met Henry Woodward who told them the most incredible tale involving his capture by Spaniards, an encounter with English buccaneers, escape by sea, shipwreck, and refuge on the island of Nevis. Woodward joined the expedition when it once again set sail.

Bad luck seemed to pursue the expedition; the ships encountered another violent storm. This time they were separated.

The Port Royal was wrecked and replaced by another ship which joined the Carolina. Both arrived at Bull's Bay on March 15, 1670. A landing party was organized and went ashore where it was welcomed by the local Indians, the Kiawah. It was helpful to the expedition that Henry Woodward had met the tribe's chief earlier and developed a friendship with him.

The chief boarded the Carolina and accompanied the English to Port Royal harbor. The chief was a cunning man, and he saw that the English would be a useful ally against the Keawahs' feared enemy, the Westoes.

He talked the English into going to his own land on the Ashley River. The two ships arrived on the western shore of the river in April 1675. There a settlement was established across the river from the present site of the Citadel. It was called Albemarle Point in honor of the lord proprietor, the duke of Albemarle.

Meanwhile, the Three Brothers, which had been given up for lost, sailed up the Ashley and was reunited with the expedition. Those aboard the ship had quite an adventure to tell.

The ship had been driven as far north as Virginia and, when it managed to sail south again, it missed the entrance to Port Royal harbor and ended up off the coast of Georgia near St. Catherine's Island.

Ten men were sent ashore to find food and water, but they were attacked by the Indians. Eight were killed and the other two were eventually turned over to the Spanish. The Three Brothers set sail without them.

Thus, after nine months, the three ships finally had reached Carolina. But Charles Town, and not Port Royal, was to become the colony's first permanent settlement.