

West Helped Colony Survive

The beginning of South Carolina can be traced back to 1663 when King Charles II of England granted large tracts of land to eight noblemen. Although the noblemen or lord proprietors, as they were called, wanted to begin settling the area immediately, seven years passed before the first group of settlers landed near the present city of Charleston. The colony was named Charles Town in honor of the king.

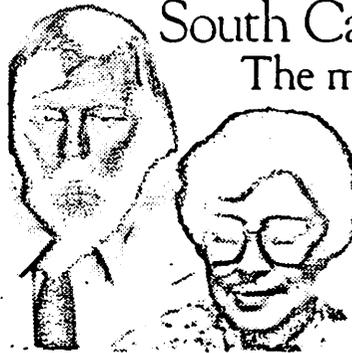
Joseph West directed the expedition. He left England for Carolina in August 1669 in three small ships named the Carolina, Port Royal and Albermarle. When West reached Barbados in the West Indies, he turned his authority over to Sir John Yeamans, a man who had had much experience settling plantations in the West Indies.

After their safe arrival in Barbados, the would-be settlers suffered one misfortune after another. Before the ships had a chance to leave the West Indies, a severe storm destroyed the Albermarle and caused damage to the Port Royal and Carolina.

Even after the two ships were repaired and the Albermarle was replaced with another ship, there was more bad luck. The Port Royal was destroyed in another tremendous storm, drowning several passengers.

After nine months of hardship, the fleet managed to reach its destination. In April 1670 the expedition landed on the west bank of the Ashley River, 10 miles from the present site of Charleston. Close to 150 settlers survived the voyage.

Soon after landing, work was begun to establish a permanent colony. The ships were unloaded and fortifications and dwellings were built. Joseph West proved to be a capable colonial manager. Fair and honest, he became very popular with the colonists and was largely responsible for the



South Carolina's Story The making of a state

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early survival of the colony. The lord proprietors looked upon the colony as a business investment and expected to make money from it. West was expected to spend wisely the 125,000 pounds allotted him by the noblemen.

Farming was one way the lord proprietors hoped to make money. They were willing to experiment with all types of crops, hoping that eventually their efforts would pay off.

In the early days of the colony, many of the crops

failed, being more suited to a warmer climate. Eventually, however, the situation improved. Crops grew, fish were abundant and trade was established.

Besides crop failure, other problems concerned the colonists. The Spaniards not

only had colonized Florida but also claimed Carolina as their own. They had even sabotaged one earlier Carolina settlement.

The Indians in the area also posed a danger to the colony. Many were allied to the Spanish, and the colony was soon under attack. But the colonists managed to fend off the attacks, killing many Indians and taking others prisoner.

Despite all of these early troubles, the settlement prospered. Within the first

year 300 more settlers were added to the original settlement. Ten years later there were more than 2,000 settlements at Charles Town.

Much of the credit for the establishment of the colony must go to Joseph West. Few South Carolinians today know about his important contribution to the early history of the state.

Honest and fairminded, he skillfully managed the colony for the lord proprietors. He distributed the food and clothing, served as commercial and agricultural agent, registrar, and as temporary and actual governor of the colony. Because of his important work during the earlier days of the colony, he can easily be called "the father of South Carolina."