

A View of Savannah, Georgia, 1734

Introduction

The colony of Georgia was founded in 1733 by James Oglethorpe, a British Member of Parliament. Oglethorpe planned Savannah as a place where the poor could come to make a better life. An attempt to produce a “classless society,” this first settlement in Georgia did not permit slavery and limited how much land could be owned. As Oglethorpe’s involvement in the colony diminished, the colonists in Georgia asked to have slavery allowed in their colony. By 1750, Georgia had become a slave-holding colony like its neighbor South Carolina.

Questions for Discussion

1. Examine the engraving of Savannah. What evidence is there in the engraving that Savannah was a planned city?
2. Why would James Oglethorpe have selected this site for his city?
3. Oglethorpe did not allow slavery in Georgia when he founded the colony. What does this tell us about James Oglethorpe?
4. The motto for Oglethorpe and the trustees of Georgia was the Latin phrase, “Non sibi sed aliis” (“Not for self, but for others”). Explain how the motto illustrates their desire for a “classless society.”

