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AP US History, Mr. Mills

Essay Test Preparation: September 2, 2006

Topic A: How did the economic, geographic, and social factors encourage the growth of slavery as an important part of the Southern economy from 1607 to 1775?

Topic B: Analyze the ways in which Britain's policy of salutary neglect influenced the development of American society before 1750, as illustrated by the following: legislative assemblies, commerce, and religion.

Topic A

The importance of growing crops in the Southern colonies was established from the very beginning. Jamestown, formed in 1607, was populated by about 500 men who were eager to find fortunes of gold in the New World. By 1611, the population had declined to only 60. The people quickly learned that to eat, they had to work. John Rolfe saved the colonies when he perfected methods of growing tobacco, which they could produce in large amounts and sell for large sums. However, the large amounts of tobacco required a large amount of work. The colonists invited many indentured servants, who worked for a period and then received their own farms. As indentured servants lessened, plantation owners found it much easier and more rewarding to buy slaves, who could be forced to work with less demands.

Geographically, the Southern colonies had rich soil and a lot of it. People hungrily grabbed any land they could find and tried to make every bit of it a profit. The larger the plantations got, the more workers were required. Slavery seemed to be the answer to their problems.

Social situations between the indentured servants and plantation owners grew more rigid. The owners wanted to pay the indentured servants less and less for more and more work, and soon the indentured servants stopped coming. This lack of servants was also caused by better opportunities that were growing in England.

Topic B

The legislative assemblies in the colonies were formed mainly because of the small influence of the English legislative bodies. The colonies were more or less allowed to be independent, and the colonies needed governments to regulate and enforce social harmony.

Because of England's salutary neglect, the colonies traded with countries other than England. This caused the American economy to grow greatly.

England did not have freedom of religion, but it allowed the colonies to practice whatever they wanted to. The colonies thus became a very diverse place.