**Government**:

Royal Georgia’s government included a powerful governor and a bicameral legislature. The governor had the power to call the legislature into session and he could also dismiss it. The governor was in charge of granting land, commissioning ships, and spending funds. He was authorized to pardon criminal offenders and veto laws and served as the commander-in-chief of the colony.

The bicameral legislature included a 12-member council appointed by the king. The council was the “upper house” and included prominent local leaders (remember *aristoi*). The Council had the power to propose and vote on laws.

The lower legislative body was called the “Commons House” and was composed of two members from each of Georgia’s counties (originally called parishes). This house also had the power to vote on and propose laws, and they also had the sole power to initiate bills pertaining to money.

**Economy:**

Georgia’s colonial economy was basically agricultural. Farmer grew subsistence crops such as corn, garden vegetables, potatoes, beans, etc. Farmers also raised chickens, cows, and pigs. Cotton had not yet become profitable, but planters from South Carolina moved into the colony after slavery was allowed and introduced rice and indigo. These two crops were the most important cash crops of the Royal period. Georgians also made money from their pine trees. Naval stores (pitch and tar used to plug holes in ships) were produced from the sap, and pine timber was a valuable resource. Some Georgians also engaged in fur and skin trading with the Indians.

**Land Policy**

Settlers in Royal Georgia could acquire land in three ways” they could buy it, receive it as a gift or inheritance, or receive it as a grant from the colonial government. Grants of land were given by the governor and his council every Tuesday in Savannah. The size of the land grant depended on the size of the applicant’s household. The head of the family could request 100 acres for himself and 50 additional acres for each member of his family. Grants were issued to women as well, and women were allowed to inherit land and other property. However, once a woman married, her property was transferred to her husband.

**The Growth of Towns**

While most Georgians were farmers or planters, towns and villages became more populated and supported other occupations. Professionals such as doctors and lawyers began setting up practices in places like Savannah and Augusta. Communities had artisans such as coopers, cartwrights, blacksmiths, carpenters, tanners, bakers, tailors, and tutors. Georgia’s first newspaper was printed by James Johnston, and the *Georgia Gazette* became the primary source for current events. Some men and a few women operated taverns-places that served as social halls for men and would become important meeting places during the American Revolution. Most Georgian children did not attend school. There were no public schools in the colony, and the little education children did receive was given in the home. Boys were usually instructed in farming and girls learned how to sew, cook, and run a household.

**Slavery**

Indentured servants from Europe had always been a part of Trustee Georgia, but they were no longer desirable in the Royal Period. Those desiring servants chose instead to invest in slaves who lived longer and were relegated to slavery for life instead of a brief period of time. Slaves were expensive, and Georgia’s first slaves often arrived as their masters resettled in Georgia from South Carolina. These first slaves worked on rice and indigo plantations in coastal areas where most of them remained until the 1770s. Working on rice plantations was dangerous due to infected water, mosquitoes, alligators, and poisonous snakes. Not long after Georgia transitioned to Royal rule a slave code (borrowed mostly from South Carolina) was passed. The code was a set of laws governing what slaves and slave masters could and could not do. For example, slaves were not allowed to gather in large groups, so many colonial church congregations consisted of black and white members.

**Backcountry Crackers**

The epithet cracker has been applied in a derogatory way, like redneck, to rural, non-elite white southerners, more specifically to those of south Georgia and north Florida. Folk etymology claims the term originated either from their cracking, or pounding, of corn (rather than taking it to mill), or from their use of whips to drive cattle. The true history of the name, however, is more involved and shows a shift in application over time. Linguists now believe the original root to be the Gaelic *craic*, still used in Ireland (anglicized in spelling to crack) for "entertaining conversation." By the 1760s the English, both at home and in colonial America, were applying the term to Scots-Irish settlers of the southern backcountry, as in this passage from a letter to the earl of Dartmouth: "I should explain to your Lordship what is meant by Crackers; a name they have got from being great boasters; they are a lawless set of rascalls on the frontiers of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia, who often change their places of abode." The word then came to be associated with the cowboys of Georgia and Florida, many of them descendants of those early frontiersmen.