James Oglethorpe, "Some Account of the Designs of the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia" (1733)

James Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony of Georgia, obtained a charter from the British Crown in 1732. In the document reproduced below, Oglethorpe describes the goals of this new colony.

In America there are fertile lands sufficient to subsist all the useless Poor in England, and distressed Protestants in Europe; yet Thousands starve for want of mere sustenance. The distance makes it difficult to act thither. The same want that renders men useless here, prevents their paying their passage; and if others pay it for Ôem, they become servants, or rather slaves for years to those who have defrayed the expense. Therefore, money for passage, is necessary, but. is not the only want; for if people were set down in America, and the land before them, they must cut down trees, build houses, fortify towns, dig and sow the land before they can get in a harvest; and till then, they must be provided with food, and kept together, that they maybe assistant to each other for their natural support and protection.

The Romans esteemed the sending forth of Colonies, among their noblest works; they observed that Rome, as she increased in power and empire, drew together such a conflux of people from all parts that. she found herself over-burdened with their number, and the government brought under an incapacity to provide for them, or keep them in order. Necessity, the mother of invention, suggested to them an expedient, which at once gave, ease to the capital, and increased the wealth and number' of industrious citizens, by lessening the useless and unruly multitude; and by planting them in colonies on the frontiers of their empire, gave a new strength to the whole; and This they looked upon to be so considerable a service to the commonwealth, that they created peculiar, officers for the establishment of such colonies, and the expence was defrayed out of the public treasury.

FROM THE CHARTER.- His Majesty having taken into his consideration, the miserable circumstances of many of his own poor subjects, ready to perish for want: as likewise the distresses of many poor foreigners, who would take refuge here from persecution ; and having a Princely regard to the great danger the southern frontiers of South Carolina are exposed to, by reason of the small number of white inhabitants there, hath, out of his Fatherly compassion towards his subjects, been graciously pleased to grant a charter for incorporating a number of gentlemen by the name of The Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America. They are impowered to collect benefactions; and lay them out in cloathing, arming, sending over, and supporting colonies of the poor, whether subjects on foreigners, in Georgia. And his Majesty farther grants all his lands between the rivers Savannah and A1atamaha, which lie erects into a Province by the name of GEORGIA, unto the Trustees, in trust for the poor, and for the better, support of the Colony. At the desire of the Gentlemen, there are clauses in the Charter, restraining them and their successors from receiving any salary, fee, perquisite, or profit, whatsoever, by or from this undertaking; and also from receiving any grant of lands within the said district, to themselves, or in trust for them. There are farther clauses granting to the
Trustees, proper powers for establishing and governing the Colony, and liberty of conscience to all who shall settle there.

The Trustees intend to relieve such unfortunate persons as cannot subsist here, and establish them in an orderly manner, so as to form a well regulated town. As far as their fund goes, they will defray the charge of their passage to Georgia; give them necessaries, cattle, land, and subsistence, till such time as they can build their houses and clear some of their land. They rely for success, first on the goodness of Providence, next on the compassionate disposition of the people of England; and, they doubt not, that much will be spared from luxury, and superfluous expenses, by generous tempers, when such an opportunity is offered them by the giving of £20 to provide for a man or woman, or £10 to a child for ever.

In order to prevent the benefaction given to this purpose, from ever being misapplied; and to keep up, as far as human Precaution can, a spirit of Disinterestedness, the Trustees have established the following method: That each Benefactor may know what he has contributed is safely lodged, and justly accounted for, all money given will be deposited in the Bank of England; and entries made of every benefaction, in a book to be kept for that purpose by the Trustees; or, if concealed, the names of those, by whose hands they sent their money. There are to be annual accounts of all the money received, and how the same has been disposed of, laid before the Lord High Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, the Master of the Rolls, the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, or two of them, will be transmitted to every considerable Benefactor.

By such a Colony, many families, who would otherwise starve, will be provided for, and made masters of houses and lands; the people in Great Britain to whom these necessitous families were a burthen, will be relieved; numbers of manufacturers will be here employed, for supplying them with clothes, working tools, and other necessaries; and by giving refuge to the distressed Saltzburgers, and other persecuted Protestants, the power of Britain, as a reward for its hospitality, will be encreased by the addition of so many religious and industrious subjects.

The Colony of Georgia lying about the same latitude with part of China, Persia, Palestine, and the Madeiras, it is highly probable that when hereafter it shall be well-peopled and rightly cultivated ENGLAND may be supplied from thence with raw Silk, Wine, Oil, Dyes, Drugs and many other materials for manufactures, which she is obliged to purchase from, Southern countries. As towns are established and grow populous along the rivers Savannah and Alatamaha, they will make such a barrier as will render the southern frontier of the British Colonies on the Continent of America, safe from Indian and other enemies.

All human affairs are so subject to chance, that there in no answering for events; yet from reason and the nature of things, it may be concluded, that the riches and also the number of the inhabitants in Great Britain will be increased, by importing at a cheap rate from this new Colony, the materials requisite for carrying on in Britain several manufactures. For our Manufacturers will be encouraged to marry and multiply, when they find
themselves in circumstances to provide for their families, which must necessarily be the
happy effect of the increase and cheapness of our materials of those Manufactures, which
at present we purchase with our money from foreign countries, at dear rates; and also
many people will find employment here, on account such farther demands by the people
of this Colony, for those manufactures which are made for the produce of our own
country; and, as has been justly observed, the people will always abound where there is
full employment for them.

CHRISTIANITY will be extended by the execution of this design; since, the good
discipline established by the Society, will reform the manners of those miserable objects,
who shall be by them subsisted; and the example of a whole Colony, who shall behave in
a just, moral, and religious manner, will contribute greatly towards the conversion of the
Indians, and taking off the prejudices received from the profligate lives of such who have
scarce any thing of Christianity but the name.

The Trustees in their general meetings, will consider of the most prudent methods for
effectually establishing a regular Colony; and that it may be done, is demonstrable. Under
what difficulties, was Virginia planted — the coast and climate then unknown; the Indians
numerous, and at enmity with the first Planters, who were forced to fetch all provisions
from England; yet it is grown a mighty Province, and the Revenue receives £100,000 for
duties upon the goods that they send yearly home. Within this 50 years, Pennsylvania
was as much a forest as Georgia is now; and in these few years, by the wise economy of
William Penn, and those who assisted him, it now gives food to 80,000 inhabitants, and
can boast of as fine a City as most in Europe.

This new Colony is more likely to succeed than either of the former were, since Carolina
abounds with provisions, the climate is known, and there are men to instruct in the
seasons and nature of cultivating the soil. There are but few

Indian families within 400 miles; and those, in perfect amity with the English: — Port
Royal (the station of his Majesty's ships) is within 30, and Charlestown (a great mart) is
within 120 miles. If the Colony is attacked, it may be relieved by sea, from Port Royal, or
the Bahamas; and the Militia of South Carolina is ready to support it, by land.

For the continuing the relief which is now given, there will be lands reserved in the
Colony; and the benefit arising from them is to go to the carrying on of the trust. So that,
at the same time, the money by being laid out preserves the lives of the poor; and makes a
comfortable provision for those whose expenses are by it defrayed; their labor in
improving their own lands, will make the adjoining reserved lands valuable; and the rents
of those reserved lands will be a perpetual fund for the relieving more poor people. So
that instead of laying out the money upon lands, with the income thereof to support the
poor, this is laying out money upon the poor; and by relieving those who are now
unfortunate, raises a fund for the perpetual relief of those who shall be so hereafter.

There is an occasion now offered for every one, to help forward this design; the smallest
benefaction will be received, and applied. with the utmost care:—every little will do
something; and a great number of small benefactions will amount to a sum capable of
doing a great deal of good.

If any person, moved with the calamities of the unfortunate, shall be inclined to contribute towards their relief, they are desired to pay their benefactions into the Bank of England, on account of the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America; or else, to any of the Trustees, who are, &c.