**Standard 8-3:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina’s role in the development of the new national government.

**Enduring Understanding:**

Independence from Great Britain made the creation of a new national government and individual state governments imperative. To understand how and why these governments were created, the student will. . .

**8-3.1 Explain the tensions between the Upcountry and the Lowcountry of South Carolina, including their economic struggles after the Revolutionary War, their disagreement over representation in the General Assembly, the location of the new capital, and the transformation of the state’s economy.**

**It is essential for students to know:**

The tensions between the people of the Upcountry and the Lowcountry of South Carolina, evident in the Regulator Movement (8-1.6), were exacerbated by the Revolutionary War as Lowcountry Patriots fought backcountry Loyalists. These tensions continued after the Revolutionary War ended. The Upcountry [after the revolution the backcountry was called the Upcountry] is the area in the northwestern part of the state, originally the home to the Cherokees. The first white settlers to move to the area were traders and woodsmen, so they were viewed by the Lowcountry elite as “uncivilized.” The Lowcountry was the area that surrounded the city of Charleston along the Atlantic coast of the state. The Lowcountry was the first area settled in the state, and eventually the plantation owners in the area grew rich from the export of rice and indigo.

Tension between the regions rested in part on their economic differences. Many of the Upcountry folk were subsistence farmers. Although a few owned slaves, they did not have large plantations and most worked their farms without the assistance of slave labor. The Lowcountry was dominated by the planter elite whose economic well-being and social status depended on their slave holdings. Both groups suffered economically as a result of the war. During the war years, fighting ravaged the countryside and slaves, livestock and goods were taken by the British. Once the war ended, the economy was slow to improve. The Lowcountry suffered because the mercantilist policies of Great Britain that had offered them economic subsidies and protected markets while South Carolina was a colony were now turned against them as part of an independent United States. The planters also owed money to creditors in England which they could not pay. The United States government and the state governments were unable to pay for the goods they had commandeered during the fighting from the citizens. Poor crop yields made it even more difficult to recover economically. Economic problems would persist until the early 1800s when cotton became a new cash crop.

During South Carolina’s early years, the Lowcountry elite had little respect for the people living in the Upcountry. Political representation was a major source of tension. There was a larger white population living in the Upcountry, but most of the political power rested in the Lowcountry. Not only did the Lowcountry have greater representation in the legislature but Charleston was the capital and legal business was transacted there. So the Charleston elite had a greater influence on the government. Upcountry people objected to having to travel so far to present issues to the legislature or argue their legal matters in court. In 1785, counties and county courts were created. The next year, the capital was moved to the newly established city of Columbia in the center of the state and equally accessible to both the Upcountry and the Lowcountry [just as the national capital was moved to the more central location at the District of Columbia (8-3.4)]. These measures helped ease, but did not eliminate, political tensions between the Upcountry and the Lowcountry since the Lowcountry maintained its majority in the legislature.

Lowcountry planters resisted giving the Upcountry more equal representation in the legislature because they feared that the Upcountry farmers did not support slavery. The invention of the cotton gin made cotton a viable cash crop in the Upcountry and, as a result, the Upcountry had a greater need for slave labor. As the numbers of slaves in the Upcountry increased, the willingness of the Lowcountry to share power increased as well. In the compromise of 1808, the legislature agreed to reapportionment. Representation was to be based equally on the white population and the amount of taxable property (including slaves). Consequently, those areas that had the most slaves continued to have disproportionate control over the legislature. But now both the Lowcountry and the Upcountry had their share of slaves and so their share of political power.