

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# GEORGIA BUSINESS HISTORY INITIATIVE

*Sharing the Stories of the Businesses that Built Georgia*











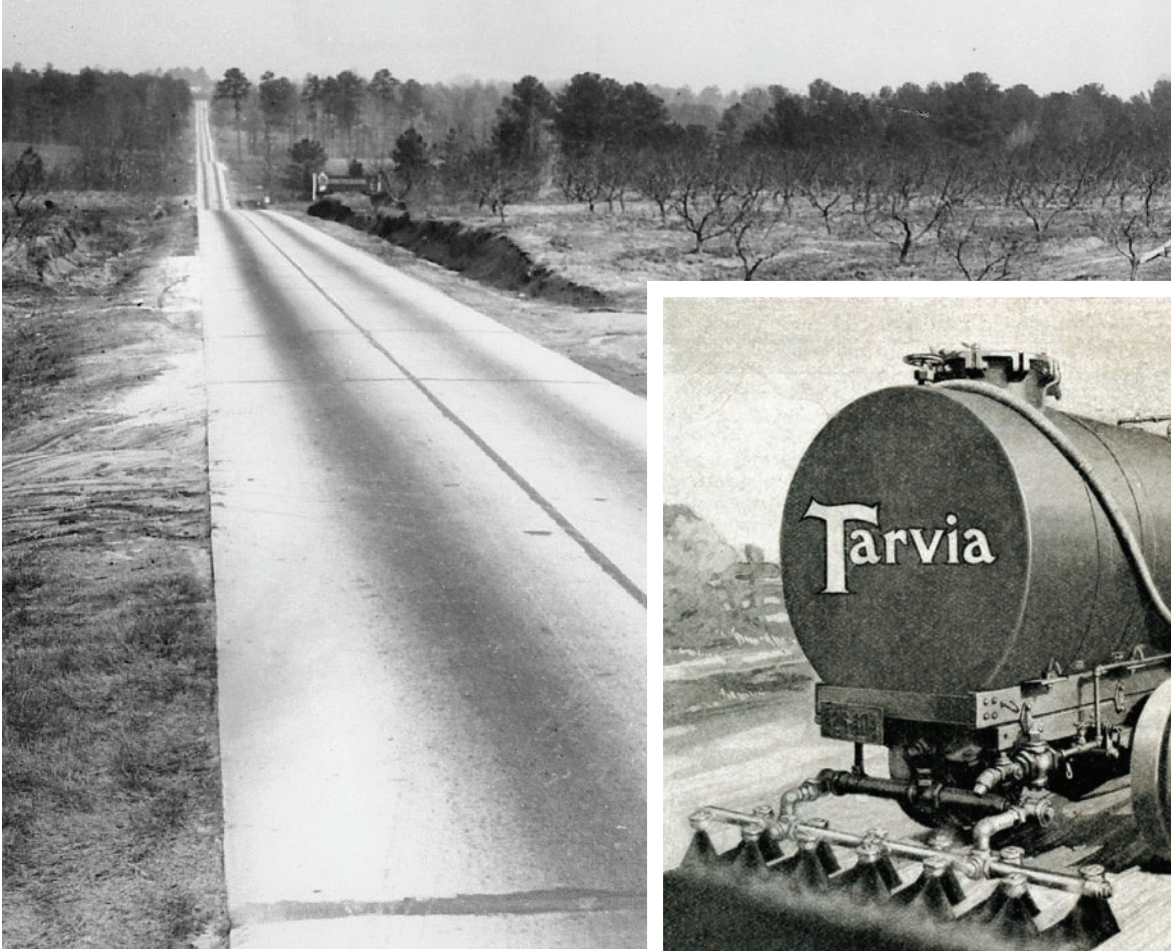
## COLONIAL GROUP, INC.

A PROFILE IN  
GEORGIA'S BUSINESS HISTORY

With annual sales in excess of \$2 billion and over 2,000 employees, Colonial Group is ranked 180th among America's largest *privately-held* companies. This fourth-generation, family-owned *corporation* specializes in diversified energy and port-related activities concentrated in nine separate companies included under the umbrella of Colonial Group, Inc.

Aerial View of Colonial Group site on the Savannah River. *Colonial Group, Inc.*



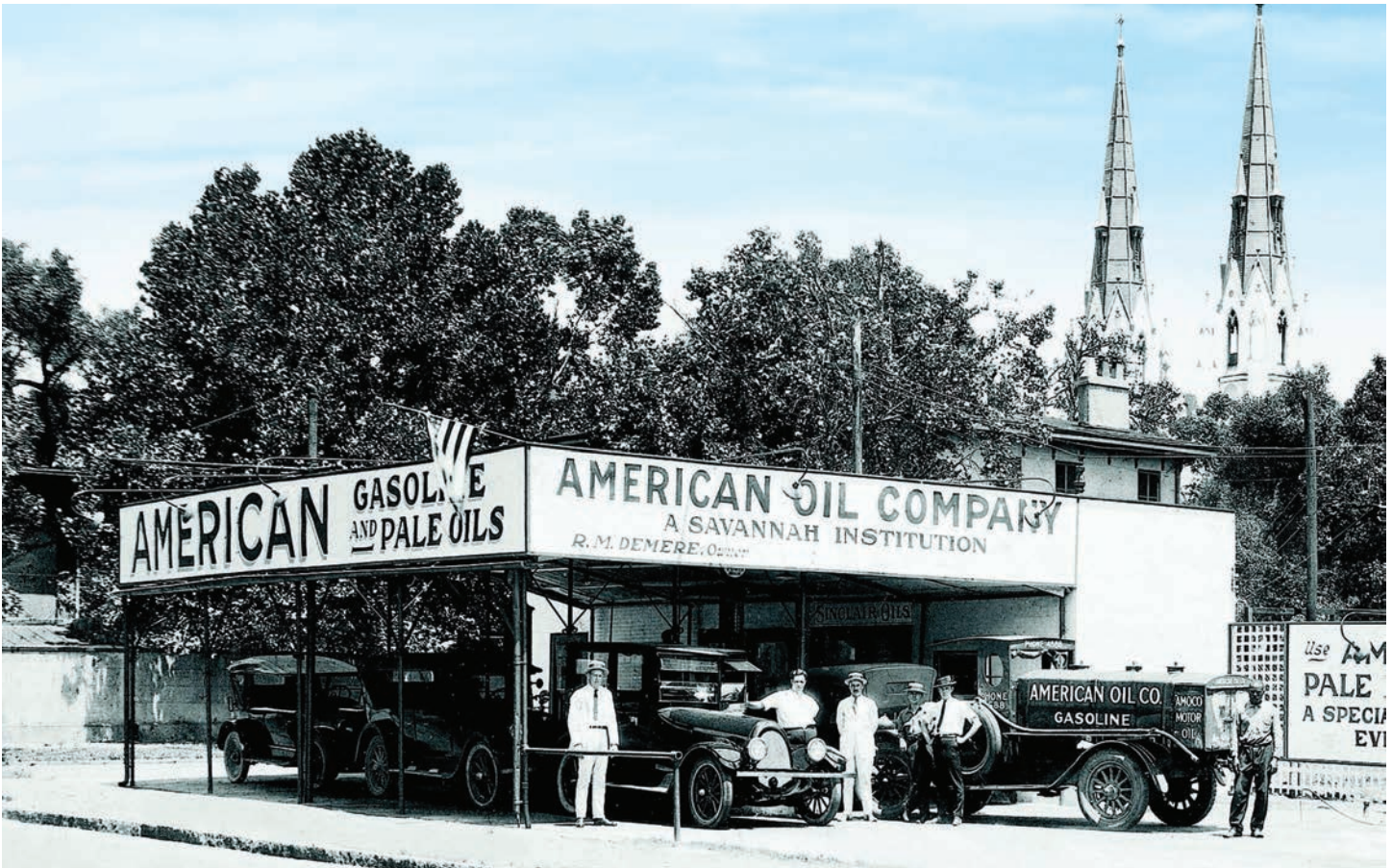


Left: The paved Dixie Highway, 1927.  
Right: A truck spraying tar.  
*Images courtesy of Ed Jackson.*



Raymond Demere in military uniform. *Colonial Group, Inc.*





## The Beginning

At the end of World War I, things were changing in Georgia. Thanks to the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, improvements were being made to the Georgia state road system. During the 1920s, more and more roads were paved. By 1922, Georgia had 5,500 miles of roads, of which 166 miles were paved, and more than 1,400 bridges.

Returning from the war, Raymond Demere saw that the popularity of the automobile was increasing and as a result so was the demand for automotive fuel. In 1921, Demere purchased a 55-gallon barrel of oil and founded Savannah's first independent *wholesale* petroleum company, the American Oil Company, on July 21, 1921, and opened his first *service station* in 1923. In 1933, Standard Oil Company of Indiana purchased the American Oil Company name and Demere renamed his company Colonial Oil.



## Creating Colonial Group

**M**uch of Georgia and the nation suffered during the Great Depression and many Georgia counties lost population. However, the population in Savannah and Chatham County grew significantly more than the state average of 7.4%. The population continued to grow throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In 1934, Demere and his colleagues purchased 21 acres of *frontage* on the Savannah River and built the company's first independent ocean *terminal*. Colonial Group's corporate headquarters and Colonial Terminals continue to operate at this location.



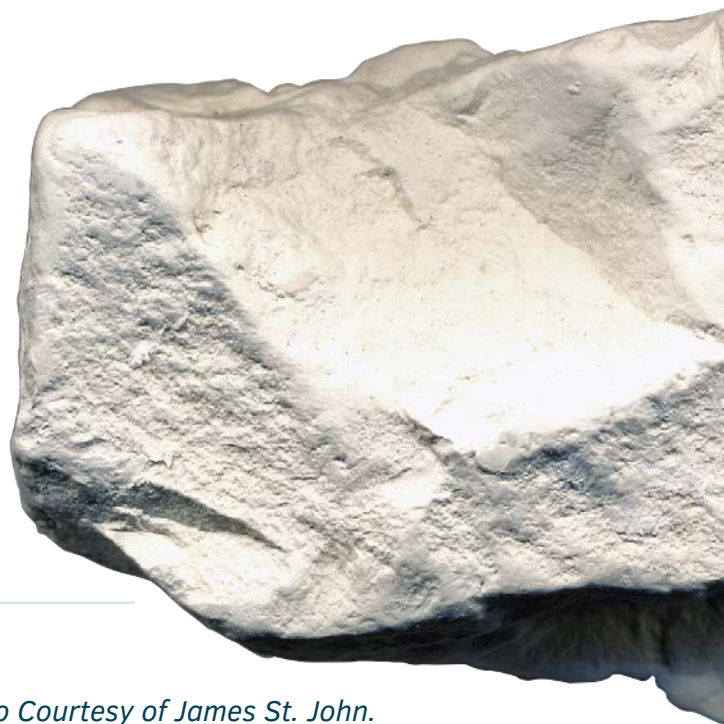
Top: American Oil Company Truck, October 12, 1931. *Foltz Photography Studio, Georgia Historical Society Collection*. Bottom: Colonial Oil Wharf Completed, 1934. *Colonial Group, Inc.*



## Building an Empire

Established as American Oil Company in 1921, today's Colonial Group, Inc. is the largest oil *distribution* company in the Southeastern United States, and has strategic ocean terminals in Savannah, GA, Charleston, SC, Wilmington, NC, and Jacksonville, FL, as well as many terminals along the Colonial (no affiliation) and Plantation pipelines that supply gasoline and diesel fuel to the Southeast.

Colonial Terminals began in 1934 and today is home to Georgia's largest independent liquid and dry-bulk storage facilities that store both dry-bulk goods such as Kaolin and cement, as well as liquids such as solvents, edible oil, and petroleum. Kaolin is a mineral-laden clay that formed over 65-100 million years ago and can be found in Georgia near the *fall line*. It is used as a coating for paper, and in paint, rubber, cable, insulation, films, fertilizers, insecticides, and seed coatings. It is even used to strengthen concrete. Each year Kaolin mining contributes over \$1 billion to Georgia's economy.



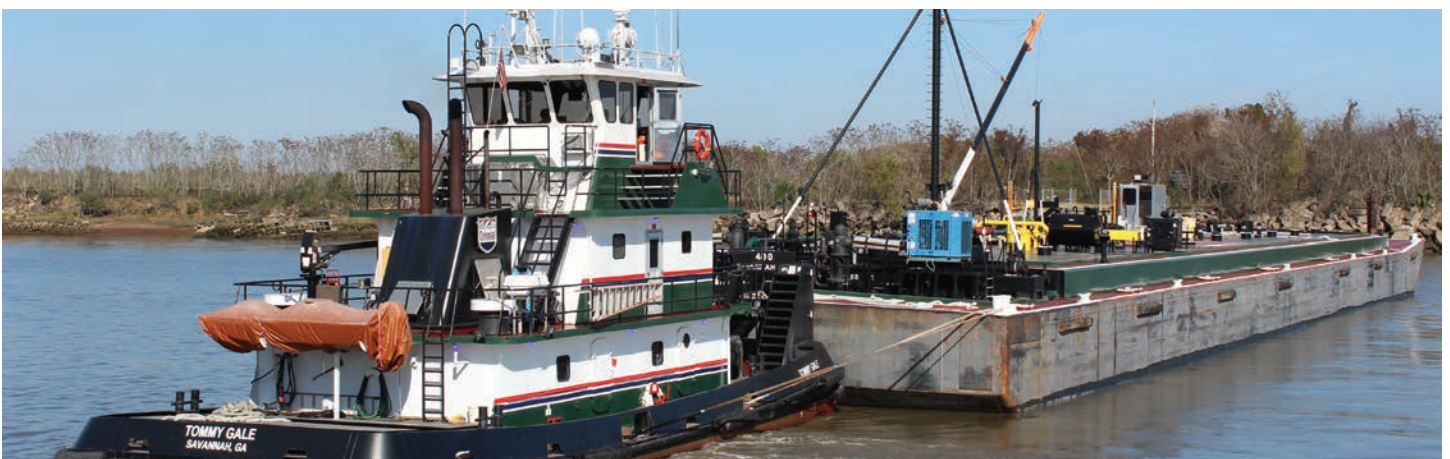
Top: Aerial view of Terminal 2. *Colonial Group, Inc.*  
 Middle: Georgia Kaolin Terminal. *Colonial Group, Inc.*  
 Bottom: Kaolin Sample from Twiggs County, Georgia. *Photo Courtesy of James St. John.*



For 100 years, Colonial Oil Industries has supplied fuel and lubricant products. Today, it also provides pumps, tanks, and transportation services to some of the nation's largest companies and distributes lubricant brands such as Clarion, Citgo, Mystik, Phillips 66, and Shell, along with its own products.

The company's location near the Port of Savannah provided the opportunity for Colonial to expand into the marine towing

business, supplying fuel to vessels navigating in and out of the port. Colonial's first towing company was established in 1951 when Colonial Oil Company founded Chatham Towing Company of Savannah. The company expanded its towing operation in 2002 with the acquisition of another towing business in Jacksonville, FL, forming Colonial Towing. In the years following, environmental regulations became stricter. As a result, Colonial sold its marine fuel oil business and towing companies in 2013, but later reinstated the Colonial Towing name in 2019 and opened for business in 2020. The company utilizes two tugs and three barges in Savannah, GA, and Charleston, SC. The company also provides inland towing and barge service from Morehead City, NC, to Cape Canaveral, FL, along the *intracoastal waterway*.



Top: Colonial Oil Transport Delivery to Enmarket. Bottom: Tug *Tommy Gale* and Barge. *Colonial Group, Inc.*





Interstate Stations was formed in 1964 and grew from service stations to convenience stores. It was renamed Enmark in 1990 and rebranded as Enmarket in 2015. Today, Enmarket has 129 locations in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina that sell high-quality gasoline, oil, snacks, and freshly prepared food.

Beginning in 1989, Colonial Group began providing *compliance* consultation services under the name of EZ Compliance, renamed Colonial Compliance Systems, Inc. in 2018, to assist ship owners, managers, agents, and crews with compliance of environmental, *marine*, and service *regulations*.

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Enmarket Savannah, Ogeechee Road. *Colonial Group, Inc.*



Colonial Energy, Inc. was created in 1995 to provide natural gas to *wholesale* and *retail* customers in the Eastern United States from Maine to Texas. The company utilizes a complex network of pipelines and storage facilities that provide services to industries, hospitals, schools, local governments and small businesses in over twenty states.

Using its location close to Savannah, the nation's fourth busiest and the East coast's second-largest deepwater port, to its advantage in *importing* and *exporting* chemicals, Colonial Chemical Solutions uses a complex transportation network linking ocean terminals, railroads, and trucks to deliver over 484 unique products. The company can custom blend products ranging from 50 gallons to over 6,000 gallons.

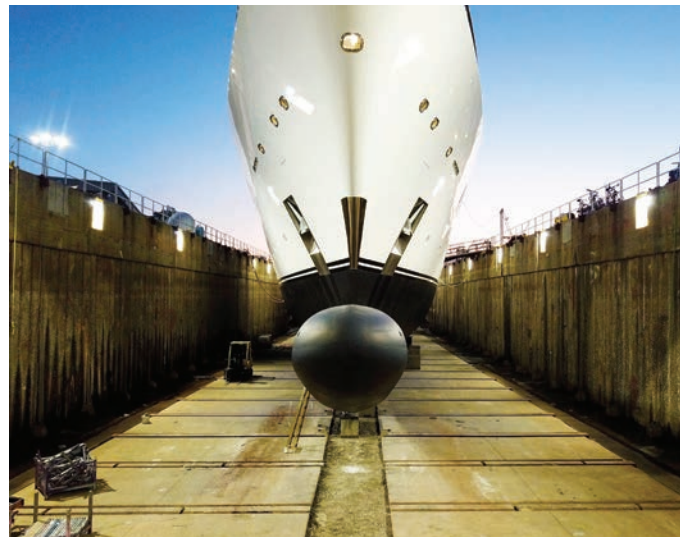
Located also at the port of Savannah, the Savannah Yacht Center refinishes and repairs some of the world's largest yachts. The center is capable of handling yachts up to 400 feet in length, and its shiplift rail can transfer a ship weighing up to 3,240 tons.



Compliance Drill. Colonial Group, Inc.



Custom Blending. Colonial Group, Inc.



Yacht in Graving Dock. Colonial Group, Inc.



In December 2020, Colonial Group purchased the Atlanta-based Aqua Smart company. Aqua Smart produces and distributes a corrosion control product to treat drinking water. The company will help expand the Colonial Group's presence in the *water treatment* industry.

Since its beginning, the company has grown steadily, expanding into new markets and cultivating business relationships that span the globe. Under the diversified umbrella, it has grown to include:

- Colonial Oil Industries**
- Colonial Terminals**
- Enmarket**
- Colonial Compliance Systems**
- Colonial Energy**
- Colonial Chemical Solutions**
- Colonial Towing**
- Savannah Yacht Center**
- Aqua Smart**

## Colonial Group, Inc.'s Presidents



**Raymond M. Demere**  
 Founder of the  
 company–1953  
*Colonial Group, Inc.*



**Charles L. Jarrell**  
 1953–1958  
*Colonial Group, Inc.*



**Robert H. Demere, Sr.**  
 1958–1986  
*Colonial Group, Inc.*



**Robert H. Demere, Jr.**  
 1986–2018  
*Colonial Group, Inc.*



**Christian B. Demere**  
 2018–present  
*Colonial Group, Inc.*





## Case Study

Georgia's economy is dependent on efficient transportation. The state's four transportation systems, which include Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the deepwater ports of Savannah and Brunswick, railroads, and the Interstate Highway System, allow for the exchange of goods and services domestically, as well as internationally. Having access to deep water ports, railroads, and interstate highways has allowed Colonial Group, Inc. to expand both the company and its service area.

It often takes more than one type of transportation to get an item from where it is produced and into the hands of the *consumer*. This is called *intermodal transportation*. For example, a portable generator may be made in India and then placed into a shipping container, after which the container is loaded onboard a large ship. Once the ship reaches the port of Savannah, the container is unloaded, and the generator is placed directly on a truck that then delivers it to a store where it is sold to a consumer. Georgia's transportation systems provide companies with the ability to transport goods efficiently. This saves the companies time and money and ensures that they can provide *goods* and *services* when and where they are needed.

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Enmarket Pooler, Pine Barren Road. *Colonial Group, Inc.*



Enmarket is an excellent example of how a company uses intermodal transportation networks to deliver goods and services to and from multiple destinations. Enmarket is a chain of convenience stores and gas stations across Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. In 2021, there were 129 Enmarket stores across the three states, with 70 stores in Georgia alone, featuring freshly prepared food, snacks including fresh fruit, and a variety of other goods that *consumers* need.

Enmarket understands that you may need something to eat or something for a headache while you are traveling or away from home. Understanding that you may be miles away from the nearest restaurant or pharmacy, Enmarket stocks over 15,000 unique items to provide you with what you need, when you need it. Some of these items are locally sourced, but others are imported. How does Enmarket get all of those items to the store? Let's take a closer look.

Pretend you are on a trip with your family. The car is running low on gas and your father wants a cup of coffee. You are hungry and want a snack. Your father pumps the gas and you all go into the store. Your father gets a cup of [PERC Coffee](#), you pick out [Byrd's Cookies](#), and your mom also makes you get a [Chiquita banana](#). Where did all of those items come from, and more importantly how did they get to the store?

The gasoline that you pump in your car or truck probably came from hundreds or thousands of miles away. Crude oil is found all over the world in places as far away as South America or Southwest Asia. It is then shipped to refineries and then transported by barges or pipelines to product terminals, and then delivered to Enmarket by truck. The PERC Coffee beans came from either Ethiopia or Columbia but were roasted in Savannah, the Byrd's Cookies were baked in Savannah, and the bananas were most likely grown in and imported from either Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, or Panama. So how did they all end up at Enmarket? They were delivered using a network of ships, pipelines, railroads, and trucks using interstate highways. In short, an intermodal transportation network.



# Activity One

*Georgia Standards of Excellence: SS8E1a, Map & Globe Skills 11, & S8P3a*



Use the [Enmarket store locator map](#) to select a store to use as your end location.

1. Use [Google Maps](#) and the Colonial distribution maps below to determine the best route for getting gasoline, PERC Coffee, Byrd's Cookies, and a bunch of Chiquita bananas from their points of origin or where they were made, to the Enmarket station you selected.

- a. [Colonial Terminal Location Map](#)
- b. [Colonial Highway Access Map](#)
- c. [U.S. Rail Access Map](#)

2. Determine how many miles it is from the point of origin to your selected Enmarket station for each of the items below.

Item	Distance from place of origin to your Enmarket location in miles
Gasoline	
Coffee	
Cookies	
Banana	

3. Based on the route, choose the best type of transportation (ships, railroads, pipelines, or trucks) to get each item to its destination. Note: transporting liquids may require different conditions than shipping solids, and some items are more fragile than others. Remember, you may need to use more than one type of transportation.



Item	What are the best types of transportation to get the item to the selected Enmarket station? Why?	Approximate the distance the item will travel using each type of transportation.
Gasoline		
Coffee		
Cookies		
Banana		

4. Using the information below about the speed for each type of transportation, determine how long it will take for each item to reach its destination. Use the following formula:

$$\text{Time} = \frac{\text{Distance}}{\text{Speed}}$$

Type of Transportation	Average Speed
Ship	21-24 Knots (nautical mile) per hour
Railroads	50 miles per hour
Barge	5 miles per hour
Truck	65 miles per hour

Calculate the total time it will take each item to reach the selected Enmarket store. You will need to calculate the time for each type of transportation used. Please write the time in terms of days and/or hours.

Item	Transportation	Distance	Speed	Time
Gasoline	Ship			
Gasoline	Railroads			
Gasoline	Barge			
Gasoline	Truck			
Gasoline	-	-	-	Total:

Item	Transportation	Distance	Speed	Time
Coffee	Ship			
Coffee	Railroads			
Coffee	Barge			
Coffee	Truck			
Coffee	-	-	-	Total:

Item	Transportation	Distance	Speed	Time
Cookies	Ship			
Cookies	Railroads			
Cookies	Barge			
Cookies	Truck			
Cookies	-	-	-	Total:

Item	Transportation	Distance	Speed	Time
Bananas	Ship			
Bananas	Railroads			
Bananas	Barge			
Bananas	Truck			
Bananas	-	-	-	Total:



**Questions: Based on your understanding of economics and transportation systems, answer the following questions using complete sentences.**

- 1.** How does having access to Georgia's deepwater ports, railroads, and interstate highways allow Colonial Group to diversify and expand its service area?
- 2.** Why does Enmarket utilize more than one type of transportation to deliver goods to its stores?
- 3.** What are the benefits of using intermodal transportation to deliver goods and services?
- 4.** How do transportation costs affect the price a consumer pays for a product?
- 5.** How do transportation costs affect a company's ability to make a profit?
- 6.** How can transportation affect supply and demand?

## Activity Two

### “Stock the Store” Board Game

*Georgia Standards of Excellence: SS8E1a, ELAGSE8RL4, ELAGSE8W7, ELAGSE8RW8, ELAGSE8L4, ELAGSE8L1, & ELAGSE8L2*

#### The Project

Create a board game that simulates using the different types of transportation to get items to the Enmarket store. Players will answer questions to earn inventory for their store. Each player will need to collect gasoline, coffee, cookies, and bananas pieces before the end of the game. Players can earn the inventory by correctly answering questions about the Enmarket company, the different transportation systems it uses, and economic terms. You may use the Colonial Group profile, case study, vocabulary, and the articles below to create the questions. You must create a minimum of 32 questions. You may create more if you like.

#### Project Requirements

Please read the directions carefully. Your game must be designed for four players. You must include:

- A unique title - you may NOT use “Stock the Store”
- Game board with all the required elements
- Dice (if needed)
- Game pieces for each player
- 32 question cards (minimum) and a separate key with the correct answers
- Inventory pieces (four each of gasoline, coffee, cookies, and bananas - one set for each player)
- A set of written instructions on how to play the game.



Your game board must have the following items:

- Title of the game displayed somewhere on the board
- An Enmarket store area for each player to place their inventory pieces.
- Game pathway with color-coded squares. You will use four different colors, one for each of the four types of transportation used by Enmarket: ships, railroads, pipelines, and trucks.
- Each square must contain information about a pro or con of the type of transportation and instructions. For example: The blue squares on the board represent shipping. A player might land on a square that says “The Strait of Hormuz is blocked. Your ship cannot move. You lose a turn” or “Your ship arrived early. Please skip ahead two spaces.”

Your instruction sheet must explain how to play the game. When you are creating the rules for your game, please be sure to consider the following:

- Who gets to go first? Is the youngest person in the group? The person with the closest birthday?
- How do you play the game? Do you have to roll a dice or answer a question in order to move? Can you lose your turn or spaces or have to return to the beginning if you answer a question wrong?
- How do you determine the winner? Is it the person who earned the most points? Or is it the person who reaches the end first?

## Questions

Create a minimum of 32 question cards and a separate key with the correct answers.

You may use the Colonial Group profile, case study, vocabulary, and the articles below to create the questions. For example: “Define the term consumer” or “What countries export bananas?” or “How many Enmarket stores are there in Georgia?”

## Additional Resources

Read the following resources to learn more about the different types of transportations and the pros and cons of each.

“Crude Oil by Rail or Pipeline? New Studies Explore the Question.”

<https://energynews.us/2017/09/28/crude-oil-by-rail-or-pipeline-new-studies-explore-the-question/> accessed March 7, 2021.

Georgia Department of Transportation

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/georgia-department-transportation>

Georgia Interstate Highway System

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/interstate-highway-system>

Georgia Ports Authority

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/georgia-ports-authority>

Georgia Ports Authority Profile and Case Study

<https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/historical-markers/business-history-initiative/georgia-ports-authority/>

“How is Oil Moved From One Place to Another?”

<https://letstalkscience.ca/educational-resources/backgrounders/how-oil-moved-one-place-another>

Georgia Department of Transportation accessed February 27, 2021.

“Oil in Motion: Visibility into Crude Oil Transportation”

<https://www.breakthroughfuel.com/blog/oil-in-motion-visibility-into-crude-oil-transportation/> accessed March 1, 2021

Railroads

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/railroads>

“Transporting Oil and Natural Gas”

<https://www.api.org/oil-and-natural-gas/wells-to-consumer/transporting-oil-natural-gas> accessed on March 7, 2021

“Which is Safer for Transporting Crude Oil: Rail, Truck Pipeline or Boat?” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2018/10/11/which-is-safer-for-transporting-crude-oil-rail-truck-pipeline-or-boat/?sh=4d6bc1f77b23>, accessed February 28, 2021



# Vocabulary

Economic terms are italicized

**Compliance** - to follow the rules

**Consumer** - a person who purchases goods and services for personal use

**Corporation** - a group of people authorized to act as a single person and recognized as such by law.

**Deepwater Port** - a port that is thirty or more feet deep and is capable of accommodating ocean-going vessels and is used as a terminal for the loading and unloading of oil for transport across the country.

**Demand** - a consumer's desire to purchase goods or services and a willingness to pay a price for a specific good or service.

**Distribution** - action or process of supplying goods to stores and other businesses that sell to consumers.

**Diversify** - enlarging or varying the range of product or field

**Exporting** - to sell something to another country or to send something out of the country

**Fall line** - the line that marks the farthest inland shoreline of the prehistoric ocean. A narrow zone that marks the geological boundary between an upland region and a plain, distinguished by the occurrence of falls and rapids where rivers and streams cross it.

**Frontage** - the land that lies in front of or adjacent to a building, street, or body of water.

**Goods** - merchandise or possessions

**Importing** - to buy something from another country or to bring something into the country

**Intermodal** - the use of multiple forms of transportation to get an item to its ultimate user.

**Intracoastal waterway** - is a 3,000-mile (4,800 km) inland waterway along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United States, running from Boston, MA, southward along the Atlantic Seaboard and around the southern tip of Florida, then following the Gulf Coast to Brownsville, TX

**Inventory** - goods in stock, or the contents of a building

**Marine** - of, found in, or produced by the sea.

**Pipeline** - a long pipe, typically underground, for conveying oil, gas, etc. over long distances.

**Privately-held Company** - a company that is not owned by the government or governmental agency or publicly traded on the stock exchange. A privately-held company does not have to share or explain how it raises money.

**Profit** - financial gain, especially the difference between the amount earned and the amount of buying, operating, or producing something

**Regulations** - government rules

**Retail** - sale of goods in small quantities to the public

**Services** - the action of helping or doing work for someone

**Service station** - a full-service gas station at which an attendant would pump your gas and clean your windshield for you.

**Supply** - the amount of something available to consumers

**Terminals** - the end of a railroad or other transport route, or a station at such a point

**Water treatment** - the act or process of making water more potable or useful, as by purifying, clarifying, softening, or deodorizing it.

**Wholesale** - selling goods in large quantities to be resold





## Fun Facts

- Colonial Group, Inc. occupies over 100-acres of riverfront property along the Savannah River.
- The company was started with the purchase of one 55-gallon drum of oil.
- The company has been owned by four generations of the same family.
- The Savannah Yacht Center can service yachts up to 122 meters in length (over 400 feet) - that's larger than a football field!
- Colonial Group, Inc. is made up of nine separate companies and the company is still growing!
- The port of Savannah is the fourth-busiest deepwater port in the country and the second-largest on the East coast.

## Significant Timeline Events in Colonial Group's History

**1921:** American Oil Company is founded in Savannah, Georgia, on July 21.

**1934:** Colonial Terminal is established, construction begins on a tract on the Savannah River.

**1946:** Colonial Oil Industries, Inc. is incorporated.

**1951:** Colonial Towing is established.

**1964:** Interstate Stations, Inc. is formed, expanding operations into the retail arena.

**1970:** Plant 2 properties are purchased and developed, expanding operations into the dry bulk business.

**1986:** Colonial Foundation is established as a means for the company to give back to the local community.

**1989:** Colonial Compliance Systems is established under the name of EZ Compliance.

**1990:** Interstate Stations is renamed Enmark.

**1993:** Colonial Terminals Liquid Bulk Terminal in North Carolina is purchased, and Colonial Group, Inc. is formed.

**1995:** Colonial Energy is established.



Top: American Oil Company Truck, October 12, 1931. *Foltz Photography Studio, Georgia Historical Society Collection*. Middle: Enmark Thunderbolt, Victory Drive. *Colonial Group, Inc.* Bottom: Colonial Chemical blending tank and tanker truck. *Colonial Group, Inc.*



**1997:** Georgia Kaolin Terminal is established.

**2000:** Colonial Chemical Solutions is established.

**2001:** Colonial Oil expands with Aectra acquisition in Houston and Jacksonville.

**2012:** Colonial Energy expands to the Southeast.

**2014:** Colonial Chemical expands into North Carolina.

**2015:** Enmark is rebranded as Enmarket.

**2017:** Savannah Yacht Center opens for business.

**2020:** Aqua Smart, Inc. acquisition expands operations into the water treatment industry.



Aerial View of Terminals 1 & 2, 2017. *Colonial Group, Inc.*

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The Georgia Business History Initiative (BHI) series of classroom resources explore a variety of Georgia companies and how they have shaped Georgia's economy. Visit the Georgia Historical Society website at [georgiahistory.com](http://georgiahistory.com) to find more economics classroom activities including primary source sets aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence for eighth grade Georgia Studies and to view the interactive version of this Business History Initiative Profile and Case Study.



