

The South and the Slavery Controversy (1693-1860)

- South was split about slavery
 - Some, like Thomas Jefferson, wanted for slavery to be abolished
 - Others thought the end of slavery meant the collapse of the Southern economy
- Cotton gin made the South extremely prosperous with cotton
 - Slavery boomed during this time, abolitionist movement was very weak
 - Cotton even more prosperous than tobacco, rice, and sugar planting in the U.S.

“Cotton is King!”

- Cotton cultivation was very prosperous in the U.S.
 - In the South, prosperous production made farmers look for more land and slaves
 - In the North, trade of cotton with Europe (especially Britain) was very prosperous
 - Money from this trade was used to buy manufactured goods from Britain
 - Cotton made up for *half* of value of U.S. exports after 1840, was *half* of total cotton production in the world
- Great Britain depended on U.S. cotton supply
 - Britain was major industrial power, and much of its industry was making cloth from cotton
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ of Britain's population worked in cotton cloth manufacture
 - If North and South went into war about slavery and Britain's supply of cotton was slowed, then Britain would probably help the South to protect its economy
 - **This loyalty from foreign countries helped protect slavery from the North for its economic benefits**

Work, Exchange, and Technology: Cotton production became the predominant economic driver of the U.S., making up half of the value of U.S. exports and half of the amount of cultivated cotton in the world. For the United States, it was also a binding factor between the North and the South and therefore a source of stability, because the North had a large economic stake in the South and because the South needed the North to export their goods and import manufactured ones from Europe. Britain's economy was also heavily dependent on cotton now that the cultivation of cotton had skyrocketed in America; its increased dependence on the industry further saw that it was a source of stability. Because the cotton industry—an economic system of work in the fields and exchange with Great Britain—was so well-established by the mid-1800s, slavery was also very prominent (needed to manually harvest the huge amounts of cotton) and would be very hard to abolish because of its ties to a stable economy. In other words, if slavery was abolished in the U.S., the South's and Great Britain's economies would be crippled, which they would not allow.

The Planter “Aristocracy”

- **South was mostly an oligarchy (rather than a democracy) before the Civil War**
 - Rather than people mostly being equal in social and political status like in a democracy, an oligarchy is when a select few rule
 - Southern social and political structure split into the “big house” of the very few very wealthy plantation owners and the “cottonocracy” of the poor farmers and the slaves

- Very wealthy plantation owners had the resources to pay for a much better life: had good education, “leisure for study, reflection, and statecraft”; resulted in higher educated political figures from South before Civil War (e.g., Jefferson Davis and John Calhoun)
- Harder to get public education because the wealthy could send their children to private schools and did not want to pay for others
- The Southerners liked the image of a feudal society, one that is capitalistic and not very democratic
 - Sir Walter Scott was one of the favorite Southern writers, who idealized feudalism
 - People took to jousting, which probably gave them memories of the medieval age (with the medieval sport)
- Women in large plantations had a different role
 - Now had to give “daily orders to cooks, maids, seamstresses, laundresses, and body servants” — not doing housework but ordering around slaves
 - Most house servants were women
 - Some women kind to slaves, some extremely vicious
 - Slave-owning women rarely spoke out against slavery

Culture and Society: The societal structure of the South was similar to that of a feudal system, which mostly comprised of a class of small farmers with very few large plantation owners at the top. Rather than having a more equal distribution of power like in the North, which was largely lacking in aristocracy, the South was ruled by the minority wealthy group. This led to the conservatism and relative stagnancy of society, with its lingering hold on slavery and the lack of public education that differentiated the more liberal North from the South. In this kind of society, the economy that was based on cotton production was ruled by the very wealthy families in power, which had large numbers of slaves; because these large plantations owners, who were in power, were supported by the prosperous cotton economy, the social structure that they dominated was difficult to change.

Slaves of the Slave System

- **Cotton cultivation was somewhat risky, caused negative effects**
 - Extreme cultivation ravaged the land (like tobacco), forced people to keep pushing west and north (to the West and Northwest) for new lands to plant in
 - As people moved west for land, they sold to rich planters, who got richer and made the society more like an oligarchy or monopoly of power in the hands of a few—less democratic
 - Slave system was risky financially to slaveowners
 - Over-speculation of land caused some landowners to go bankrupt
 - Slaves could be very expensive, and could be injured or could die (which means a loss of that money spent to buy the slave)
 - Sole cultivation of cotton made economy of U.S. a one-crop economy
 - Prevented diversification of economy (which would be useful if cotton cultivation suddenly had a problem such as a blight)

- Prevented diversity of Southern demographics
 - Immigration was discouraged in South; most Europeans went to the North to help out with industry
 - 4.4% foreign-born in South in 1860, 18.7% foreign-born in North
 - South became a very British-American- (Anglo-Saxon-) dominated society
- **Large profits of Northerners from cotton cultivation angered Southerners**
 - Fees paid for acting as the middlemen and shipping for the South gave North much money for a lot less work (than physical harvesting)
 - Northern industry was dominating the everyday products used in the South

Work, Exchange, and Technology: Cotton farming was prosperous, but it was a regular business just like any other that involved financial risk. In this system, slaves were often treated like assets, cared for only because of their financial worth to their master. That being said, sometimes the more dangerous jobs were given to immigrants that were paid wages. It was also a risky business because it made the U.S. highly dependent on a single crop; if the cotton plant were compromised by a blight similar to that of the Irish potato famine or if a strong competitor suddenly popped up, the U.S. economy might quickly decline, especially because both the North and the South depended on the cotton industry. Likewise, if slavery became abolished (which it did) it would be much harder to find a suitable labor system to power this complex and labor-intensive economic system. This prosperous economic exchange of cotton also made the demographics of the South less diversified because they only wanted white slave masters and their black slaves; immigrants did not really participate as much in the agricultural process but more in the industry up in the North. As a result, the South became a predominantly white community, and it still has less diversity than the North.

The White Majority

- ½ of white families with slaves had ten or more slaves, and ⅓ had fewer than ten slaves
 - Smaller slaveowners were like Northern small farmers, very unlike the very wealthy upper class of the South; these small farmers toiled on the land with their slave(s)
- **Only ¼ of whites had slaves: ¾ (6.1 million) did not, were landless**
 - Usually lived in backcountry and mountains and valleys
 - Had small subsistence farming and were very isolated from rest of Southern society and politics
 - Looked down upon by wealthy slaveowners and even by slaves: “known as ‘hillbillies,’ ‘crackers,’ or ‘clay eaters,’ they were often described as listless, shiftless, and misshapen” and were also often ill because of poor living conditions and lack of money
- **Even non-slave-owning whites (which made up the majority of the population) were strong supporters of the anti-abolition idea**
 - They thought positively about the American Dream and social mobility—believed that they could one day be among wealthy plantation owners
 - Believed in white supremacy and racial superiority; their pride would be crushed if slaves were not subservient to them

- **Also felt good about not being the lowest class in society (always above slaves)—beginnings of racism**
- There was a group of Southerners in the North Carolina region (marooned in the valleys of the Appalachian range that stretched from western Virginia to northern Georgia and Alabama)
 - Lived in a largely untouched life, still frontier conditions
 - Retained old British ways from time of Revolution
 - Were small, independent farmers that hated planters and slaves, and didn't support the Civil War
 - Were a strong power for the Union in the South during the Civil War

Free Blacks: Slaves Without Masters

- Free blacks in both the North and the South were generally despised by society
 - In the South, free blacks showed what emancipation would look like (hated by slavery advocates) and were sometimes stolen and taken back into slavery illegally; also prohibited from some jobs
 - In the North the right to vote and to public education denied to most blacks
 - Irish were especially hostile because they competed for the same, menial jobs
 - Strong racial prejudice (went against their "humanitarian idealism")
- In the South, free blacks were mulattoes (mixed white and black races) or had paid for their freedom by extra work
 - Many also owned land, and a few even had slaves themselves
- About 250,000 free blacks in South and North (each) by 1860

American and National Identity: The distinct divide between the white slave owners and the black slaves widened into more than a simple master-slave relationship. The slaves were mistreated to more than the extent that they needed to be pushed in order to work; even free blacks were heavily discriminated against, with some even thrown back into slavery. They also had much lower legal rights than white men. This was some of the first racism: white men harassing "free" black men for nothing they had done now. The legacy of this discrimination, even after strongly being amended during the civil rights movement and desegregation, continues strongly to today, with racist violence common in the U.S. The American identity became a monster of insensible racism fueled by selfish white people's desires to stay in control of the African Americans, free or not.

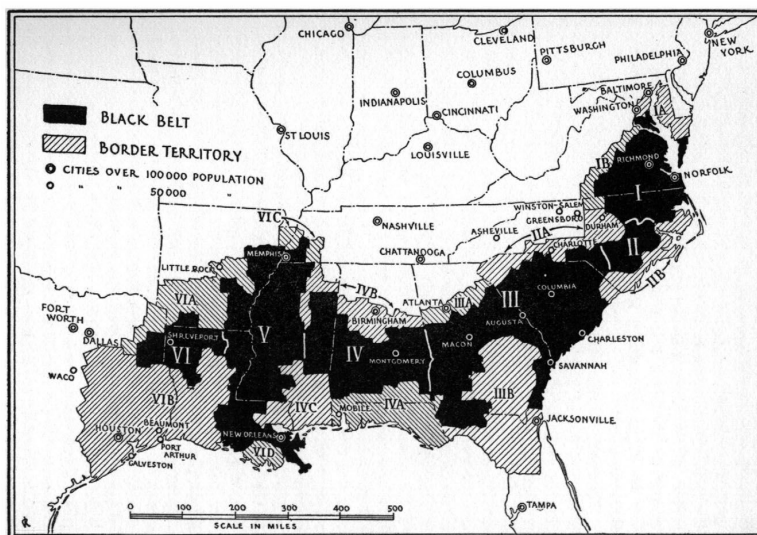
Plantation Slavery

- **Legal international trade of slaves was ended by 1808**
 - Slave importation outlawed by Congress in 1808
 - In Britain, slave trade abolished by 1807
 - The West Africa Squadron of the Royal Navy captured many slave ships and freed many slaves for decades after the abolishment of the slave trade
- Internal slave trade fostered
 - **Slave population mainly grew through reproduction, only a little illegal smuggling done**

- This was different than other slave systems that thrived only on importation, and it led to the horrors of family life (and separation) as slaves
- Women slaves encouraged to have many children, some given freedom for ten children
 - Slave auctions were held
 - People sold like cattle
 - Families were often separated
- Slaves were the main form of capital (money) in the South
 - \$2 billion invested in slaves by 1860
 - Slaves cost \$1800, easier to get an Irishman being paid wages to do dangerous work (no risk of losing investment, but rather expendable labor)
- Slaves were concentrated in the deep (southern) South

Life Under the Lash

- White slaveowners often romanticized life of slaves as “singing, dancing, banjo-strumming, joyful”
- Slavery worked long hours (usually all the light hours) with “minimal protection from arbitrary murder or unusually cruel punishments” and occasionally laws preventing separation of families with young children
 - The latter was difficult to enforce because of black’s limited rights in court
- White masters often flogged (whipped) their slaves
 - Slaves sometimes sent to the breakers, people who liberally flogged the slaves, for harsh discipline on touch slaves
 - Flogging wasn’t too much of an everyday thing, however, because it hurt the slaves physically and morally and lowered resale prices
- Most slaves in the black belt of the South “that stretched from South Carolina and Georgia into the new southwest states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana”



BLACK BELT AND BORDER TERRITORY

- Most slaves in the black belt lived on larger plantations that formed communities

- Family life more stable than in the northern South, with smaller plantation and more common separation of families
- Slaves managed to continue family life
 - Showed continuity of family by inheriting grandparent's name or using surname of previous slave master
- Some slaves kept religious practices
 - Mixed Christian and African religiosity
 - Often had a responsorial style of preaching, where "the congregation frequently punctuated the minister's remarks with assents and amens"

American and National Identity: The lives of the African American groups were very difficult. Families were often separated, women were encouraged to have many children just to increase slave population, and slaves were punished by flogging and had to work long hours on a regular basis. On the other hand, they managed to form communities to survive and maintain a reduced but viable familial and religious life, assimilating African culture with American culture to form the unique African-American mix. This shows the American identity as very hardy, especially of these slaves, and their ability to survive even under the highest duress. On the other hand, the gradual improvement of slavery by the abolishment of the international slave trade and by crude laws against harsh punishments against the slaves showed slowly improving conditions and a more mindful national identity.

The Burdens of Bondage

- Slaves were degraded and not allowed the right to education
 - Whites thought that education would foster dissent
 - 90% of black population by 1860 was illiterate
- Slaves often sabotaged work
 - They were not being paid, so they did the least that they had to do without getting whipped
 - Sometimes stole food, broke equipment, even poisoned their masters
 - Created the mental image of blacks as lazy in the white people's minds
- Slaves had few but unsuccessful rebellion attempts
 - Some slaves ran away to find lost family member
 - Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner (Nat Turner's Rebellion) led three different rebellions; all failed and the leaders were hanged
- Africans revolted on Spanish slave ship Amistad (1839)
 - John Quincy Adams (former president) ruled for the slaves' freedom in the Supreme Court, slaves returned home
- Slavery left a legacy of brutality with the whites
 - The whip, the bloodhound, and the branding iron were used extensively on slaves for the first time
- Whites were worried about insurgence by the slaves, who sometimes outnumbered them

Early Abolitionism

- First attempt at abolition was the American Colonization Society (1817)

- Designed to send Africans back to Africa
- Congress created country, the Republic of Liberia, where the slaves could be resettled
 - Over 15,000 blacks were shipped back to America this way
- Culture of black slaves distinctly African-American
 - No completely African culture — always a mix
- Abolitionist movement revitalized in 1830s with new group of speakers
 - William Wilberforce, Theodore Weld were the most prominent influential anti-slavery abolitionists of this time period
 - Wilberforce was inspired by First Great Awakening
 - Many people listened to him, and he received wide acclaim
 - Books such as *American Slavery as It Is* (1839) and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Stowe, 1839)
 - Books all have to do with horrors of slave trade

Politics and Power: The first physical actions towards abolition were in slave revolts and re-colonization of Africa. The first was highly unsuccessful: no slave rebellion was successful. However, the slaves did succeed with sabotage of their work, which impaired the process of cotton production and gave them more rest. The only mildly-successful slave revolt was by those in a slave ship that had not yet been sold to slavery, in which the slaves were allowed back to their native country. The white abolitionists worked to re-colonize Africa with the American Colonization Society. However, this was not too successful either, because they only re-colonized about 15,000 slaves out of the millions that were in the U.S., and because they dropped them all off together in Liberia, which was not their homeland. Another attempt by the abolitionists was by words: through speech and through writing. The speeches carried dramatic effect like those of the Second Great Awakening, and the books were widely distributed to a great audience, as with the best-seller of the 1800s in America, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. All of these abolitionist and rebellious movements were experimentations with power to try and get leverage over the powerful slave owners. The most powerful attempts were in those of words and civilized diplomacy, which is still the preferred method of settling disputes.

Radical Abolitionism

- **William Lloyd Garrison was young abolitionist influenced by the Second Great Awakening**
 - Published *The Liberator* (Boston, 1831) that condemned slavery and asked for a complete abolishment of slavery
 - Very idealistic and impractical: simply condemned slavery as “evil” and the North as “good” — no good solution offered to stop slavery
- American Anti-Slavery Society (1833) was founded
 - Wendell Phillips (“abolition’s golden trumpet”) was one of them, didn’t even use Southern products to protest slavery
- David Walker wrote *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829) that “called an end to white supremacy”
- Sojourner Truth fought for emancipation and women’s writes
- Martin Delany tried to recolonize Africa
- **Frederick Douglass was the most influential abolitionist**
 - Escaped from slavery and was a great orator

- Was threatened by pro-slavery people many times, but continued to speak
- Published Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an autobiography that detailed his complex history: “his remarkable origins as the son of a black and a white father, his struggle to learn to read and write, and his eventual escape to the North”
- More practical than Garrison’s view: looked to diplomacy
 - Supported Liberty Party (1840), Free Soil Party (1848), Republican Party (1850s)

Culture and Society: The abolitionist movement was supported by several strong voices with differing views. On the one hand, abolitionists like Garrison promoted a militaristic and straightforward approach to dealing with slavery, advocating for its quick and complete removal. On the other hand, abolitionists like Douglass wanted diplomacy and a more gradual, more stable removal. Douglass’s view was more practical and less violent; this was similar to Wendell Phillips’s passive revolt against slavery by not using products created by slavery in the South. While the Civil War was used to legally abolish slavery, it was truly this form of passive resistance that allowed for the end of segregation. This shows how cultural views in terms of conflict differed between different groups, and how both of these views, although very different, were effective in solving the issue of slavery.

The South Lashes Back

- Many antislavery societies in the South
 - More below Mason-Dixon Line (southern border of Pennsylvania) than North of it
- Virginia government stopped many abolitionist proposals in 1831-2
 - Slave codes were tightened
 - Any emancipation was stopped (whether by goodwill or by being paid)
- Nat Turner’s rebellion (in 1831) scared the Southerners of slave rebellion
 - Garrison’s support of abolitionism at same time made him look like a terrorist to the South; states offered bounties for his arrest
 - “Jailings, whippings, and lynchings now greeted rational efforts to discuss the slavery problem” — people were okay with inhumane methods because they were in great fear of abolition
- Pro-slavery whites tried to show slavery as a positive system
 - They claimed it helped the blacks by removing them from the primitive and barbaric life in Africa and giving them Christianity to save their souls
 - They claimed that “master-slave relationships really resembled those of a family”
 - They believed the open air and relative freedom (no “slack times or unemployment” to worry about) of the slaves were better than the stuffy, strict conditions of a “wage slave” in the factories of the North
- **Southern white slaveowners became super defensive as more and more anti-slavery requests came in; culminated in the Gag Resolution (1836) that tabled (rejected) any bill towards emancipation in government**
 - Endangered right of petition
 - John Quincy Adams fought this resolution and eventually got its appeal eight years later
- Pro-slavery people also raided post-offices to remove abolitionist material
 - Pressured federal government to disallow abolitionist material

- This endangered freedom of the press and of speech

The Abolitionist Impact in the North

- At first, abolitionists unpopular in the North as well
 - Northerners wanted to respect the Constitution and allow slavery to happen (nothing against slavery in Constitution)
 - **North had a lot of money (\$300 million) invested in Southern agriculture**
 - If the Union separated into North and South, owed money would be lost
 - “Antislaveryites” were too radical, would break economic bonds
- Mobs angrily broke out against abolitionists
 - Lewis Tappan’s house was sacked
 - Garrison was dragged through Boston (but escaped)
 - Reverend Elijah P. Lovejoy was an abolitionist with a printing press, which was destroyed four times, and he was killed in pro-slavery mob gun fight
- By 1850s abolition idea was becoming more favorable in the North
 - People began to see slavery hatefully
 - People didn’t want sudden emancipation, but slow transition
 - These people were called “free-soilers,” became much more common before Civil War

Politics and Power: Both the North and the South were opposed to anti-slavery movements at first. The South bluntly rejected any forms of anti-slavery legislation with the “Gag Resolution,” which was passed due to the extreme pressure from the South but unconstitutional in that it limited right to speech, to the press, and to petition. The federal government also forbade abolitionist material in the press for similar reasons. These Southerners were motivated by the need to preserve slavery as their main economic income. The North also depended on the South’s cotton industry, and therefore were similarly opposed to the antislavery movements. They ransacked, humiliated, and even killed abolitionist leaders for this reason. It was only around mid-century that popular sentiment in the North began to become anti-slavery, as people began to deem themselves “free-soilers” for support of free blacks toiling the land. Before this change to anti-slavery movements, however, the hateful anti-abolitionist movements were simply meant to keep power in the hands of the slave owners. It showed that the pro-slavery advocates were willing to do whatever necessary to keep slavery and the economy intact through the aforementioned methods.