



Chapter Ten

The South and Slavery, 1790s—1850s



Part One:



Introduction



Chapter Focus Questions

- ✦ How did the slave system dominate southern life?
- ✦ What were the economic implications of "King Cotton"?
- ✦ How did African Americans create communities under slavery?
- ✦ What was the social structure of the white South?
- ✦ Why was the white South increasingly defensive?



Part Two:

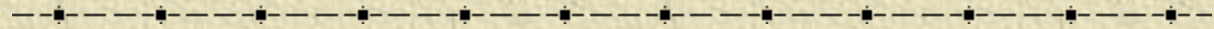
American Community: Natchez-under-the-Hill

Natchez Under-the-Hill

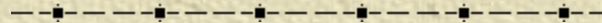
- ✦ Natchez and Natchez Under-the-Hill were adjacent communities.
- ✦ Natchez was an elegant planter community.
- ✦ Natchez Under-the-Hill was a mixed community of rivermen, gamblers, Indians, and
- ✦ blacks that was a potential threat to racial control.
- ✦ Rumors of a slave insurrection plot led the planters to drive the gamblers and other undesirables away.



Part Three:



**King Cotton and Southern
Expansion**



Cotton and Expansion into the Old Southwest

✦ Map: The South Expands, 1790-1850

- ✦ Eli Whitney's and Catherine Greene's cotton gin made cultivating short-staple
- ✦ cotton profitable, revolutionizing the Southern economy.
- ✦ After the War of 1812 Southerners expanded into Western Georgia, Alabama and
- ✦ Mississippi, driving out the Indians who already lived there,
- ✦ A generation later they poured into Louisiana and Texas.
- ✦ Each surge of expansion ignited a speculative frenzy.

Slavery the Mainspring - Again

✦ Map: Slave Population, 1820-1860

✦ Between 1790 and 1860, the slave population grew from 700,000 to four million.

✦ Map: Cotton Production, 1820-1860

✦ The expansion of cotton was concentrated in the rich soil sections of the South known as the black belt

A Slave Society in a Changing World

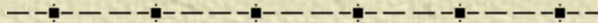
- ✦ The growth of the cotton economy committed the South to slavery.
- ✦ In other parts of the nation, attitudes toward slavery were changing.
- ✦ Congress banned the slave trade in 1808 so the South relied on natural increase and the internal slave trade.



Part Four:



To Be A Slave



The Internal Slave Trade

- ✦ Planter migration stimulated the slave trade.
- ✦ Slaves were gathered in pens before moving south by train or boat.
- ✦ On foot, slaves moved on land in coffles.
- ✦ The size of the slave trade made a mockery of Southern claims of benevolence.

Sold “Down River”

- ✦ Cotton helped finance northern industry and trade.
- ✦ Chart: Cotton Exports as a Percentage of All Exports
- ✦ Cotton and slavery tied up capital leaving the South lagging behind the North in urban population, industrialization, canals, and railroads.
- ✦ Cotton created a distinctive regional culture.
- ✦ The opening of western lands contributed to the instability of slave life.
- ✦ Many slaves were separated from their families by sale or migration and faced new hardships in the West.

Sold “Down River”

- ✦ The slaves’ first challenge was to survive because:
 - ◆ they lived in one-room cabins with dirt floors and a few furnishings
 - ◆ neither their food and clothing was adequate and were frequently supplemented by the slaves’ own efforts
- ✦ To survive, slaves learned how to avoid punishments and to flatter whites.

Life of a Slave

- ✦ Some slaves worked as house servants.
- ✦ Some slaves were skilled workers.
- ✦ Seventy-five percent of slaves worked as field hands, from sunup to sundown, performing the heavy labor needed for getting out a cotton crop.
- ✦ Not surprisingly, many suffered from poor health.



Part Five:

**The African American
Community**

Building the African American Community

- ✦ Slaves created a community where an indigenous culture developed, influencing all aspects of Southern life.
- ✦ Masters had to learn to live with the two key institutions of African American community life: the family and the church.

Slave Families

- ✦ Slave marriages were:
 - ◆ not recognized by law
 - ◆ frequently not respected by masters
 - ◆ a haven of love and intimacy for the slaves
- ✦ Parents gave children a supportive and protective kinship network.
- ✦ Slave families were often split up.
- ✦ Separated children drew upon supportive networks of family and friends.

African American Religion

- ✦ Slaves were not permitted to practice African religions, though numerous survivals did work their way into the slaves' folk culture.
- ✦ The first and second Great Awakenings introduced Christianity to many slaves.
- ✦ In the 1790s, African American churches began emerging.
- ✦ Whites hoped religion would make the slaves obedient.
- ✦ Slaves found a liberating message that strengthened their sense of community and offered them spiritual freedom.

Freedom and Resistance

- ✦ Most slaves understood that they could not escape bondage.
- ✦ About 1,000 per year escaped, mostly from the upper South.
- ✦ Running away and hiding in the swamps or woods for about a week and then returning was more common.

Slave Revolts

- ✦ A few slaves organized revolts.
- ✦ Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey organized large-scale conspiracies to attack whites in Richmond and Charleston that failed.
- ✦ Nat Turner led the most famous slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831.
- ✦ Turner used religious imagery to lead slaves as they killed 55 whites.
- ✦ After Turner's revolt, white southerners continually were reminded by the threat of slave insurrection.

Free African Americans

- ✦ By 1860, there were nearly 250,000 free African Americans, mainly working as tenants or farm laborers.
- ✦ In cities, free African American communities flourished but had a precarious position as their members lacked basic civil rights.

Part Six:

The White Majority

The Middle Class

- ✦ A commercial middle class of merchants, bankers, factors, and lawyers:
 - ◆ arose to sell southern crops on the world market
 - ◆ lived in cities that acted as shipping centers for agricultural goods

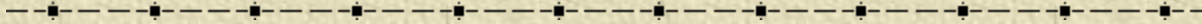
Poor White People

- ✦ Between 30 to 50 percent of southern whites were landless.
- ✦ These poor whites lived a marginal existence as laborers and tenants.
- ✦ They engaged in complex and sometimes clandestine relations with slaves.
- ✦ Some yeomen hoped to acquire slaves themselves, but many were content with self sufficient non-market agriculture.
- ✦ Yeomen supported slavery because they believed that it brought them higher status.
- ✦ Chart: Slaveholding and Class Structure

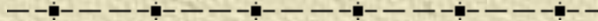
Yeomen Values

- ✦ Two-thirds of all southern whites lived in nonslaveholding families.
- ✦ Most yeomen were self-sufficient farmers.
- ✦ The strong sense of community was reinforced by close kin connections and bartering.

Part Seven:



Planters



Small Slave Owners

- ✦ Most slaveholders owned only a few slaves.
- ✦ Bad crops or high prices that curtailed or increased income affected slave-holding status
- ✦ Middle class professionals had an easier time climbing the ladder of success.
- ✦ Andrew Jackson used his legal and political position to rise in Southern society. Beginning as a landless prosecutor, Jackson died a plantation owner with over 200 slaves.

The Planter Elite

- ✦ Most slaveholders inherited their wealth but sought to expand it.
- ✦ As slavery spread so did the slave-owning elite
- ✦ The extraordinary concentration of wealth created an elite lifestyle.
- ✦ Most wealthy planters lived fairly isolated lives.
- ✦ Some planters cultivated an image of gracious living in the style of English aristocrats, but plantations were large enterprises that required much attention to a variety of tasks.
- ✦ Plantations aimed to be self-sufficient.

The Plantation Mistress

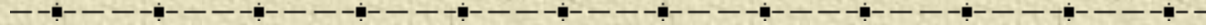
- ✦ Following southern paternalism, in theory, each plantation was a family with the white master at its head.
- ✦ The plantation mistress ran her own household but did not challenge her husband's authority.
- ✦ With slaves to do much of the labor conventionally assigned to women, it is no surprise that plantation mistresses accepted the system.

Coercion and Violence

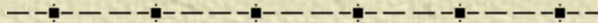
- ✦ The slave system rested on coercion and violence.
- ✦ Slave women were vulnerable to sexual exploitation, though long-term relationships developed.
- ✦ Children of master-slave relationships seldom were publicly acknowledged and often remained in bondage



Part Eight:



The Defense of Slavery



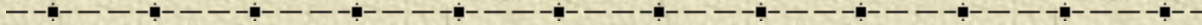
Developing Proslavery Arguments

- ✦ Slavery gave rise to various pro-slavery arguments including:
 - ◆ in the post-Revolution era, Southern whites found justifications in the Bible or classical Greece and Rome
 - ◆ the Constitution recognized slavery and that they were defending property rights
 - ◆ by the 1830s arguments developed that slavery was good for the slaves.
- ✦ George Fitzhugh contrasted slavery, which created a community of interests, with the heartless individualism that ruled the lives of northern factory workers.

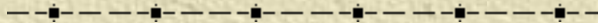
Changes in the South

- ✦ Despite efforts to stifle debate, some southern whites objected to slavery.
- ✦ The growing cost of slaves meant that the percentage of slaveholders was declining and class divisions widening.
- ✦ Hinton Rowan Helper denounced the institution.

Part Nine:



Conclusion

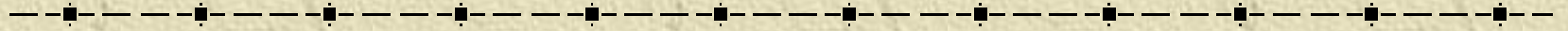


Population Patterns in the South, 1850

✦ Map: Population Patterns in the South, 1850

✦ In six southern states, slaves comprised over 40 percent of the total population.

The South and Slavery



✦ Media: Chronology