



# Chapter Ten

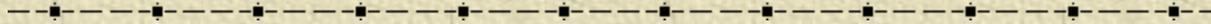
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## **The South and Slavery, 1790s—1850s**

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Part One:



**Introduction**



# Chapter Focus Questions

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- ✦ 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:

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## **American Community: Natchez-under-the-Hill**

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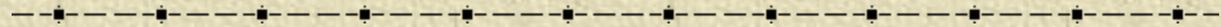
# Natchez Under-the-Hill

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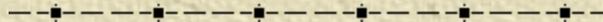
- ✦ Natchez and Natchez Under-the-Hill were adjacent communities.
- ✦ Natchez was an elegant planter community.
- ✦ Natchez Under-the-Hill was a mixed community of rivermen, gamblers, Indians, and blacks that was a potential threat to racial control.
- ✦ Rumors of a slave insurrection plot led the planters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



Part Three:



**King Cotton and Southern  
Expansion**



# Cotton and Expansion into the Old Southwest

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## ✦ 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

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## ✦ 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

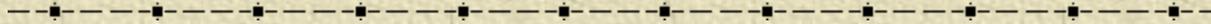
# A Slave Society in a Changing World

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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”

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- ✦ 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”

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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:

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**The African American  
Community**

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# Building the African American Community

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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:

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## **The White Majority**

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# The Middle Class

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- ✦ 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

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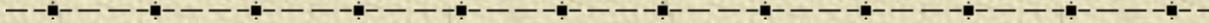
- ✦ Between 30 to 50 percent of southern whites were landless.
- ✦ These poor whites lived a marginal existence as laborers and tenants.
- ✦ They engaged in complex and sometimes clandestine relations with slaves.
- ✦ Some yeomen hoped to acquire slaves themselves, but many were content with self sufficient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

# Yeomen Values

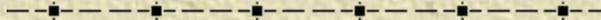
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- ✦ Two-thirds of all southern whites lived in nonslaveholding families.
- ✦ Most yeomen were self-sufficient farmers.
- ✦ The strong sense of community was reinforced by close kin connections and bartering.

# Part Seven:



# Planters



# Small Slave Owners

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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.

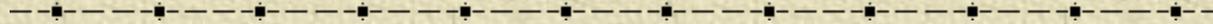
# Coercion and Violence

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- ✦ 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

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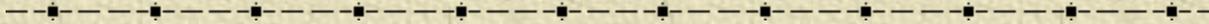
- ✦ Slavery gave rise to various pro-slavery arguments including:
  - ◆ in the post-Revolution era, Southern whites found justifications in the Bible or classical Greece and Rome
  - ◆ the Constitution recognized slavery and that they were defending property rights
  - ◆ by the 1830s arguments developed 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

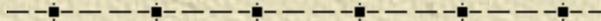
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- ✦ Despite efforts to stifle debate, some southern whites objected to slavery.
- ✦ The growing cost of slaves meant that the percentage of slaveholders was declining and class divisions widening.
- ✦ Hinton Rowan Helper denounced the institution.

# Part Nine:



# Conclusion



# Population Patterns in the South, 1850

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## ✦ 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