

The Cotton Kingdom: The South and the Slavery (1793-1860)

King Cotton

1. Cotton Gin revived cotton and slavery
2. Cotton accounted for half the value of all American exports after 1840
3. Britain's most important manufactured item was cotton cloth in the 1850s
4. Britain imported 75% of its raw cotton from the South
5. The South had a significant influence in Britain as a result
6. The economic structure in the South became increasingly monopolistic
7. The Southern economy was very dependent on cotton, which made the economy unstable
8. Debt was a way of life
 - a. Many plantation owners over-specified in
 - i. Land
 - ii. Slaves
 - b. Causing them fall into debt.

The Planter "Aristocracy"

1. The South was more of an oligarchy: a government ran by a few
2. The government was heavily affected by the planter aristocracy
3. Southern aristocracy widened the gap between the rich
4. The aristocrats made governmental decisions in their favor

The White Majority

1. Planters
 - a. owned 20 or more slaves
 - b. needed more than 20 to run plantation
 - c. dominated low regions and delta of south
 - d. dealt with merchants and lawyers who depended upon them
 - e. slave traders relied upon them
 - f. plantations incorporated high degree of division of labor
 - g. often owned 500 or more acres
 - h. 1850 Bellmead:
 - i. tobacco plantation on VA James River
 - ii. more than 100 slaves
 - iii. agricultural equivalent of a factory village
 - iv. domestic staff (butlers, waiters, seamstresses, laundresses, maids & gardeners)
 - v. pasture staff (shepherds, cowherds, & hog drivers)
 - vi. outdoor artisans (stonemasons & carpenters)

- vii. indoor artisans (blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, spinners & weavers)
 - viii. field hands
 - ix. immense income of \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year
 - i. most plantations not "Tara"
 - j. constantly worried about profitability
 - k. fixed costs were considerable:
 - i. hiring overseers
 - ii. housing & feeding slaves
 - iii. maintaining cotton gin & equipment
 - l. indebtedness became a way of life
 - m. psychological strains on women
 - i. moving for new land
 - ii. West was a fall from grace for wives
 - iii. bereft of white social peers
 - iv. husbands traveled scouting for new land
 - v. raise children & entertain guests
 - vi. supervised house slaves
 - vii. made carpets & clothes
 - viii. kept plantation accounts
 - ix. dealt with husbands infidelities - humiliation
 - x. realized wealth & position depended upon slavery
2. Small Slaveholders
- a. owned fewer than 20 slaves
 - b. obvious difference between owner of 10 – 19 & one who owned < 5
 - c. by 1860 - 88% of slaveholders owned less than 20 slaves
 - d. most owned less than 10
 - e. essentially family farmers
 - f. some owners not even farmers
 - g. usually younger than planters
3. Yeoman
- a. Non-slaveholding family farmers
 - b. Largest single group of southern whites
 - c. Most were landowners
 - d. Dominant in hilly, upland regions
 - e. Frequently hired slaves at harvest time
 - f. Most grew crops for the market
 - g. Some subsistence farmers
 - h. Most landowners in range of 50 – 200 acres
 - i. Valued self-sufficiency with modest profit
 - j. Often dismissed as "poor white trash" by planters
 - k. Fathers & sons
 - i. cleared & plowed land
 - ii. planted
 - iii. hoed the fields
 - l. Mothers & Daughters

- i. Planted & tended vegetable gardens
 - ii. Helped the harvest
 - iii. Occasionally cared for livestock
 - iv. Cooked & made clothes for the family
 - m. Used crops to barter for services
 - n. Dealt with rural artisans & merchants
 - o. supported slavery
 - i. they wanted to eventually own slaves
 - ii. achieve the "American dream" of moving up in society
- 4. People of the Pine Barrens
 - a. One of the most controversial groups
 - b. Independent whites
 - c. 10 % of southern whites
 - d. Not slaveholders, landowners, nor primarily farmers
 - e. Lived in crude cabins on cleared few acres on which they squatted
 - f. Planted corn between trees & raised hogs
 - g. Simple diet of cornmeal & pork, supplemented by fish
 - h. Did not raise cash crops
 - i. Appeared lazy & shiftless
 - j. Northerners cited them as proof that slavery degraded non-slaveholding whites
 - k. Counter: unlike poor in the North, these people could fend for themselves
 - l. Had Southern Pride:
 - i. Men reluctant to hire themselves out as farm laborers
 - ii. When they did they refused to do "slave" work
 - iii. Women would sew on hire, but refused to be servants
 - m. Many live in pine barrens out of choice
- 5. Other Southern Occupations Included:
 - a. Lawyers
 - b. Physicians
 - c. Merchants
 - d. Artisans
 - e. each dealt with & therefore identified with one of the above groups

Free Blacks: Slaves Without Masters

1. Many free blacks settled in New Orleans
2. Free blacks were generally not liked in the North and South
3. In the South, free blacks were prohibited from having certain jobs and forbidden from testifying against whites in court
4. They were known as the "3rd Race"
5. White southerners liked blacks as individuals, but they hated the race
6. White northerners professed to like the race but disliked the individual

“The Peculiar Institution”: Slaves & Slavery

1. Legal importation of African slaves into America ended in 1808
2. Slaves were smuggled into the South even though
3. Most slaves were the offspring of slaves already in America
4. Planters regarded slaves as major investments
5. "Black Belt"
 - a. Region of the South where most slaves were concentrated
 - b. Stretched from South Carolina and Georgia into Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana
6. Blacks managed to sustain family life in slavery
7. Blacks formed their own religions from a mixture of Christian and African elements
8. Slaves were not permitted to read because reading brought ideas and ideas brought discontent.
9. Slave Rebellions:
 - a. *Gabriel Prosser* – A young slave blacksmith who plotted a massive slave revolt in Richmond in 1800. The revolt was reported before it broke out and 35 slaves were killed, including Prosser, but it struck fear into the hearts of whites.
 - b. *Denmark Vesey* – A free black carpenter who planned an 1822 slave revolt in Charlestown, South Carolina. The conspiracy was reported and 35 of the ringleaders were hanged.
 - c. *Nat Turner* – A slave preacher given to visions who was the leader of the bloodiest slave revolt in American history in 1831. Despite disorganization, Turner's band of 40-odd slaves managed to kill more than 60 whites in Southampton County, Virginia before being stopped. Turner and many of his followers were quickly tried and killed.
 - d. *The Amistad* – Enslaved Africans aboard the slave ship rebelled and took control of the ship in 1839. The ship landed in Long Island, but the Africans were eventually returned to Sierra Leone.

Early Abolitionism

1. American Colonization Society
 - a. Founded in 1817
 - b. Focused on transporting blacks back to Africa
 - c. Republic of Liberia
 - i. Founded in 1822
 - ii. As a place for former slaves
2. By 1860
 - a. All southern slaves were born in America
 - b. Many did not have a desire to return to Africa
3. The Second Great Awakening
 - a. Inspired many abolitionists to speak out against the sins of slavery

4. Theodore Dwight Weld
 - a. Abolitionist who spoke against slavery
 - b. *American Slavery As It Is* (1839)
 - i. Pamphlet
 - ii. Which made arguments against slavery
5. Radical Abolitionism
 - a. William Lloyd Garrison
 - i. Wrote *The Liberator* a militantly anti-slavery newspaper
 - ii. Publicly burned a copy of the Constitution
 - b. American Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1833 to oppose slavery
 - c. Sojourner Truth
 - i. freed black woman who fought for black emancipation and women's rights
 - ii. "Ain't I a Woman"
 - d. Frederick Douglass
 - i. Black abolitionist who lectured for abolitionism
 - ii. Looked to politics to end slavery
 - iii. Published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
6. The Abolitionist Impact in the North
 - a. Abolitionists were unpopular in many parts of the North
 - i. Southern planters owed money to the northern bankers
 - ii. If the Union collapsed, these debts would not be repaid
 - b. New England textile mills were supplied with cotton
 - i. Cotton raised by the slaves
 - ii. If slavery was abolished the cotton supply would be cut off
 - iii. Resulting in unemployment

The South Lashes Back

1. The Southerners argued that
 - a. Slavery was supported by the Bible
 - b. Slavery was good for the Africans
2. Virginia defeated numerous emancipation bills from 1831-1832
3. Other states followed suit prohibiting all forms of emancipation
4. It silenced the voice of white southern abolitionism
5. In 1835
 - a. The government ordered the southern postmasters to destroy abolitionist material
 - b. Due to anti-abolitionist mobbing and rioting at a postal office in Charleston, South Carolina
6. The Gag Resolution
 - a. Passed in House of Representatives in 1836
 - b. Required all anti-slavery appeals to be tabled without debate