

Chapter 16

The South and the Slavery Controversy 1793-1860

In the late 1700s, slavery was starting to die out, but the invention of the cotton gin prompted plantation owners to keep their slaves to support the larger cotton harvests.

"Cotton is King!"

Cotton accounted for half the value of all American exports after 1840. In the 1850s, Britain's most important manufactured item was cotton cloth. Britain imported 75% of its raw cotton from the South. Because of this, the South had a significant influence in Britain.

The Planter "Aristocracy"

The South was more of an **oligarchy**, a government ran by a few. The government was heavily affected by the planter aristocracy. Southern aristocracy widened the gap between the rich and poor because the aristocrats made governmental decisions in their favor.

The Southern plantation wife commanded the female slaves.

Slaves of the Slave System

The economic structure in the South became increasingly **monopolistic**. The Southern economy was very dependent on cotton, which made the economy unstable. Many plantation owners **over-specified** in land and slaves, causing them fall into debt.

The White Majority

The white population of the South was as follows (from smallest to largest): a) Wealthy slave owners. b) Less wealthy slave owners. These people didn't own a majority of the slaves, but they made up a majority of the masters. c) Non-slave-holding whites (3/4 of South white population). These whites supported slavery because they wanted to eventually own slaves and achieve the "**American dream**" of moving up in society. The less prosperous non-slave-holding whites were known as "poor white trash" and "hillbillies." Civilization hadn't reached mountain whites who lived in the valley of the Appalachian range. They supported Abraham Lincoln's Union party.

Free Blacks: Slaves Without Masters

Many free blacks settled in **New Orleans**.

Free blacks were generally not liked in the North and South. In the **South**, free blacks were prohibited from having certain jobs and forbidden from testifying against whites in court. They were known as the "**3rd Race**."

White southerners liked the black as an individual, but they hated the race. The white northerner professed to like the race, but disliked the individual.

Plantation Slavery

Because the price of "**black ivory**" (slaves) was so high, slaves were smuggled into the South even though legal importation of African slaves into America ended in **1808**. Most slaves were the offspring of slaves already in America.

Planters regarded slaves as major **investments**.

Life Under the Lash

"Black Belt": region of the South where most slaves were concentrated; stretched from South Carolina and Georgia into Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Blacks managed to sustain family life in slavery.

Blacks formed their own religions from a mixture of Christian and African elements.

Responsorial: style of preaching in which the congregation responds to the preacher with remarks of "amen."

The Burdens of Bondage

Slaves were not permitted to **read** because reading brought ideas and ideas brought discontent.

Slavery in the South was known as the "**peculiar institution**."

Nat Turner's Rebellion: southern rebellion against slavery led by Nat Turner; the rebellion was defeated.

Enslaved Africans aboard the slave ship **Amistad** 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

American Colonization Society: founded in 1817; focused on transporting blacks back to Africa.

Republic of Liberia: founded in 1822 as a place for former slaves.

By 1860, all southern slaves were born in America, and many did not have a desire to return to Africa.

The Second Great Awakening inspired many abolitionists to speak out against the sins of slavery.

Theodore Dwight Weld: abolitionist who spoke against slavery; wrote the pamphlet *American Slavery As It Is* (1839) which made arguments against slavery; went to Lane Theological Seminary.

Radical Abolitionism

William Lloyd Garrison: wrote a militantly anti-slavery newspaper ***The Liberator***; publicly burned a copy of the Constitution.

American Anti-Slavery Society: founded in 1833 to oppose slavery.

Sojourner Truth: freed black woman who fought for black emancipation and women's rights.

Frederick Douglass: black abolitionist who lectured for abolitionism; looked to politics to end slavery; published his autobiography, ***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass***.

The South Lashes Back

From 1831-1832, Virginia defeated numerous emancipation bills. Other states followed suit, prohibiting all forms of emancipation. This series of emancipation setbacks was known as the **nullification crisis of 1832**. It silenced the voice of white southern abolitionism.

The Southerners argued that slavery was supported by the Bible, and that slavery was good for the Africans because it introduced them to Christianity.

The **Gag Resolution** required all anti-slavery appeals to be tabled without debate in the House of Representatives.

In **1835**, the government ordered the southern postmasters to destroy abolitionist material due to anti-abolitionist mobbing and rioting at a postal office in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Abolitionist Impact in the North

Abolitionists were, for a long time, unpopular in many parts of the North. The southern planters owed much money to the northern bankers. If the Union collapsed, these debts would not be repaid.

Additionally, New England textile mills were supplied with cotton raised by the slaves. If slavery was abolished, then the cotton supply would be cut off, resulting in unemployment.

"Free soilers" opposed extending slavery to the western territories.

