CHAPTER 12

The South Expands: Slavery and Society 1800–1860

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

How did the creation of a cotton-based economy change the lives of whites and blacks in all regions of the South?

Life in South Carolina had been good to James Lide. A slave-owning planter along the Pee Dee River, Lide and his wife raised twelve children and long resisted the "Alabama Fever" that prompted thousands of Carolinians to move west. Finally, at age sixty-five, probably seeking land for his many offspring, he moved his slaves and family—including six children and six grandchildren—to a plantation near Montgomery, Alabama. There, the family lived initially in a squalid log cabin with air holes but no windows. Even after building a new house, the Lides' life remained unsettled. "Pa is quite in the notion of moving somewhere," his daughter Maria reported. Although James Lide died in Alabama, many of his children moved on. In 1854, at the age of fifty-eight, Eli Lide migrated to Texas, telling his father, "Something within me whispers onward and onward."

The Lides' story was that of southern society. Between 1800 and 1860, white planters moved west and, using the muscles and sweat of a million enslaved African Americans, brought millions of acres into cultivation. By 1840, the South was at the cutting edge of the American Market Revolution (Figure 12.1). It annually produced and exported 1.5 million bales of raw cotton—over two-thirds of the world's supply—and its economy was larger and richer than that of most nations. "Cotton is King," boasted the *Southern Cultivator*.

No matter how rich they were, few cotton planters in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas lived in elegant houses or led cultured lives. They had forsaken the aristocratic gentility of the Chesapeake and the Carolinas to make money. "To sell cotton in order to buy negroes—to make more cotton to buy more negroes, 'ad infinitum,' is the aim . . . of the thorough-going cotton planter," a traveler reported from Mississippi in 1835. "His whole soul is wrapped up in the pursuit." Plantation women lamented the loss of genteel surroundings and polite society. Raised in North Carolina, where she was "blest with every comfort, & even luxury," Mary Drake found Mississippi and Alabama "a dreary waste."

Enslaved African Americans knew what "dreary waste" really meant: unremitting toil, unrelieved poverty, and profound sadness. Sold south from Maryland, where his family had lived for generations, Charles Ball's father became "gloomy and morose" and ran off and disappeared. With good reason: on new cotton plantations, slaves labored from "sunup to sundown" and from one end of the year to the other, forced to work by the threat of the lash. Always wanting more, southern planters and politicians plotted to extend their plantation economy across the continent.

A Slave Family Picking Cotton Picking cotton—thousands of small bolls attached to 3-foot-high woody and often prickly stalks—was a tedious and time-consuming task, taking up to four months on many plantations. However, workers of both sexes and all ages could pick cotton, and masters could measure output by weighing the baskets of each picker or family, chastising those who failed to meet their quotas. What does this early photograph of a family of pickers, taken on a plantation near Savannah, Georgia, suggest about women's and children's lives, family relations, and living conditions?

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The Domestic Slave Trade

In 1817, when the American Colonization Society began to transport a few freed blacks to Africa (Chapter 8), the southern plantation system was expanding rapidly. In 1790, its western boundary ran through the middle of Georgia; by 1830, it stretched through western Louisiana; by 1860, the slave frontier extended far into Texas (Map 12.1). That advance of 900 miles more than doubled the geographical area cultivated by slave labor and increased the number of slave states from eight in 1800 to fifteen by 1850. The federal government played a key role in this expansion. It acquired Louisiana from the French in 1803, welcomed the slave states of Mississippi and Alabama into the Union in 1817 and 1819, removed Native Americans from the southeastern states in the 1830s, and annexed Texas and Mexican lands in the 1840s.

To cultivate this vast area, white planters imported enslaved laborers first from Africa and then from the Chesapeake region. Between 1776 and 1809, when Congress outlawed the Atlantic slave trade, planters purchased about 115,000 Africans. "The Planter will . . . Sacrifice every thing to attain Negroes," declared one slave trader. Despite the influx, the demand for labor far exceeded the supply. Consequently, planters imported new African workers illegally, through the Spanish colony of Florida until 1819 and then through the Mexican province of Texas. Yet these Africans — about 50,000 between 1810 and 1865 — did not satisfy the demand.

The Upper South Exports Slaves

Planters seeking labor looked to the Chesapeake region, home in 1800 to nearly half of the nation's black population. There, the African American population

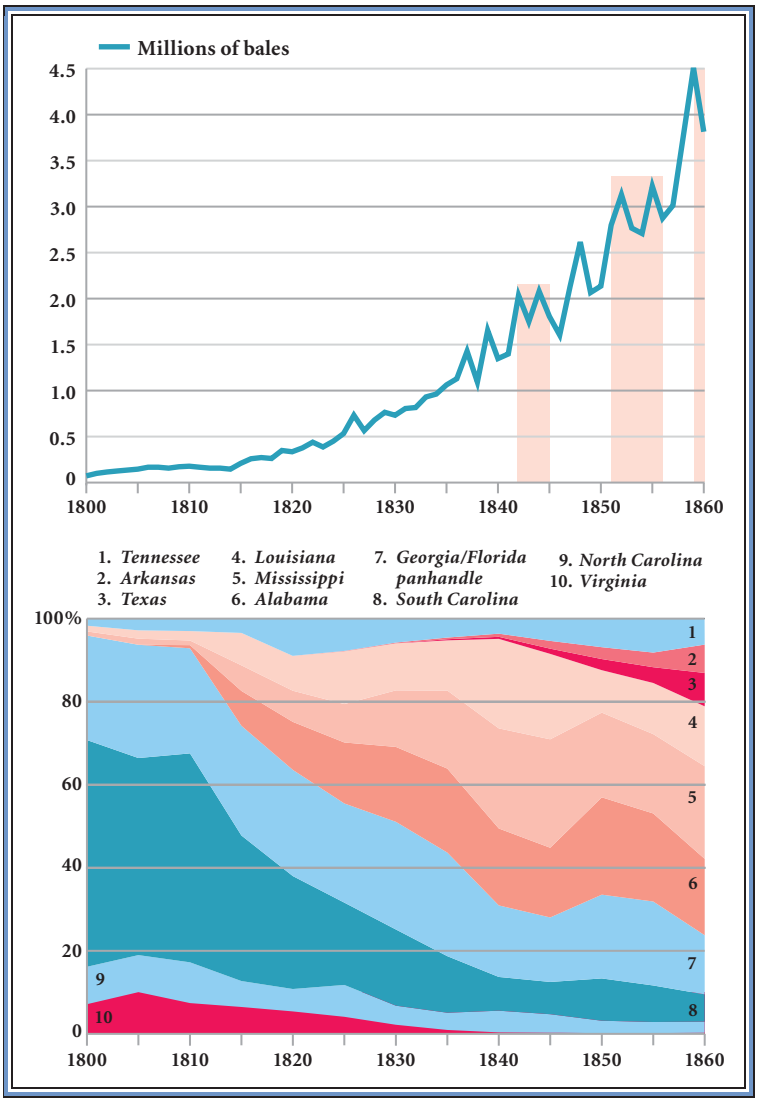
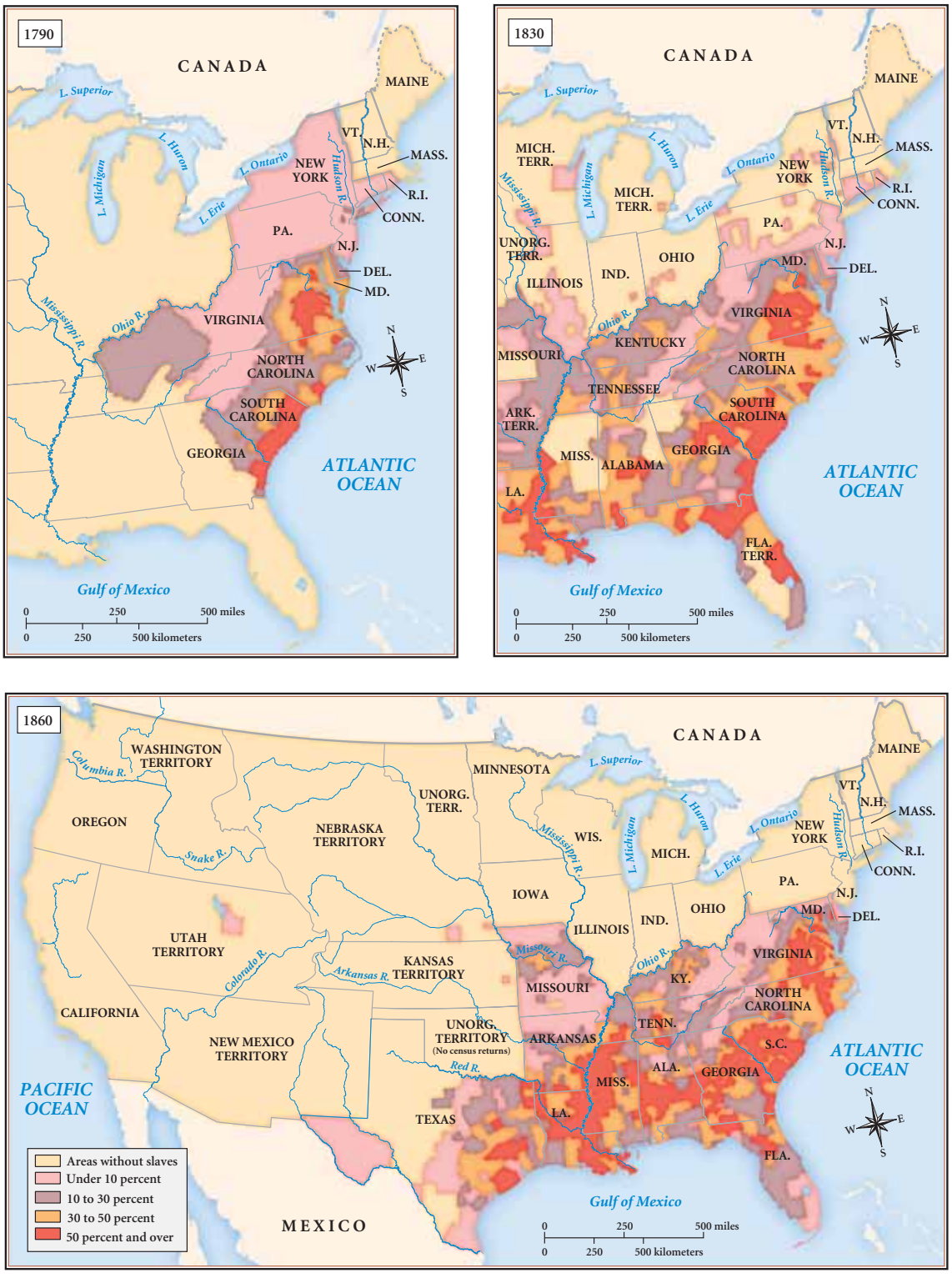


FIGURE 12.1
Cotton Production and Producers, 1800–1860

Until 1820, Georgia and South Carolina plantations (marked #7 and #8 on the right side of the lower graph) grew more than one-half of American cotton. As output increased significantly between 1820 and 1840 (see the upper graph), the locus of production shifted. By the early 1840s, planters had moved hundreds of thousands of slaves to the Mississippi Valley, and Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama (#4, #5, and #6) grew nearly 70 percent of a much larger cotton crop. Simultaneously, production leapt dramatically, reaching (as the red bars show) 2 million bales a year by the mid-1840s, 3 million by the mid-1850s, and 4 million on the eve of the Civil War.

Source: From *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, by Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman. Copyright © 1974 Little Brown.



MAP 12.1

Distribution of the Slave Population in 1790, 1830, and 1860

The cotton boom shifted the African American population to the South and West. In 1790, most slaves lived and worked on Chesapeake tobacco and Carolina rice and indigo plantations. By 1830, those areas were still heavily populated by black families, but hundreds of thousands of slaves also labored on the cotton and sugar lands of the Lower Mississippi Valley and on cotton plantations in Georgia and northern Florida. Three decades later, the majority of blacks lived and worked along the Mississippi River and in an arc of fertile cotton lands—the "black belt"—sweeping from Mississippi through South Carolina.

was growing rapidly from natural increase — an average of 27 percent a decade by the 1810s — and creating a surplus of enslaved workers on many plantations. The result was a growing domestic trade in slaves. Between 1818 and 1829, planters in just one Maryland tobacco-growing county — Frederick — sold at least 952 slaves to traders or cotton planters. Plantation owners in Virginia disposed of 75,000 slaves during the 1810s and again during the 1820s. The number of forced Virginia migrants jumped to nearly 120,000 during the 1830s and then averaged 85,000 during the 1840s and 1850s. In Virginia alone, then, slave owners ripped 440,000 African Americans from communities where their families had lived for three or four generations. By 1860, the "mania for buying negroes" from the Upper South had resulted in a massive transplantation of more than 1 million slaves (Figure 12.2). A majority of African Americans now lived and worked in the Deep South, the lands that stretched from Georgia to Texas.

IDENTIFY CAUSES
What factors drove the expansion of the domestic slave trade, and how did it work?

This African American migration took two forms: transfer and sale. Looking for new opportunities, thousands of Chesapeake and Carolina planters — men like James Lide — sold their existing plantations and moved their slaves to the Southwest. Many other planters gave slaves to sons and daughters who moved west. Such transfers accounted for about 40 percent of the African American migrants. The rest — about 60 percent of the 1 million migrants — were "sold south" through traders.

Just as the Atlantic slave trade enriched English merchants in the eighteenth century, so the domestic market brought wealth to American traders between 1800 and 1860. One set of routes ran to the Atlantic coast and sent thousands of slaves to sugar plantations in Louisiana, the former French territory that entered the Union in 1812. As sugar output soared, slave traders scoured the countryside near the port cities of Baltimore, Alexandria, Richmond, and Charleston — searching, as one of them put it, for "likely young men such as I think would suit the New Orleans market." Each year, hundreds of muscular young slaves passed through auction houses in the port cities bound for the massive trade mart in New Orleans. Because this **coastal trade** in laborers was highly visible, it elicited widespread condemnation by northern abolitionists.

Sugar was a "killer" crop, and Louisiana (like the eighteenth-century West Indies) soon had a well-deserved reputation among African Americans "as a place of slaughter." Hundreds died each year from disease, overwork, and brutal treatment. Maryland farmer John Anthony Munnikhuysen refused to allow his daughter Priscilla to marry a Louisiana sugar planter, declaring: "Mit has never been used to see negroes flayed alive and it would kill her."

The **inland system** that fed slaves to the Cotton South was less visible than the coastal trade but more extensive. Professional slave traders went from one rural village to another buying "young and likely Negroes." The traders marched their purchases in coffles — columns of slaves bound to one another — to Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri in the 1830s and to Arkansas and Texas in the 1850s. One slave described the arduous journey: "Dem Speckulators would put the chilluns in a wagon usually pulled by oxens and de

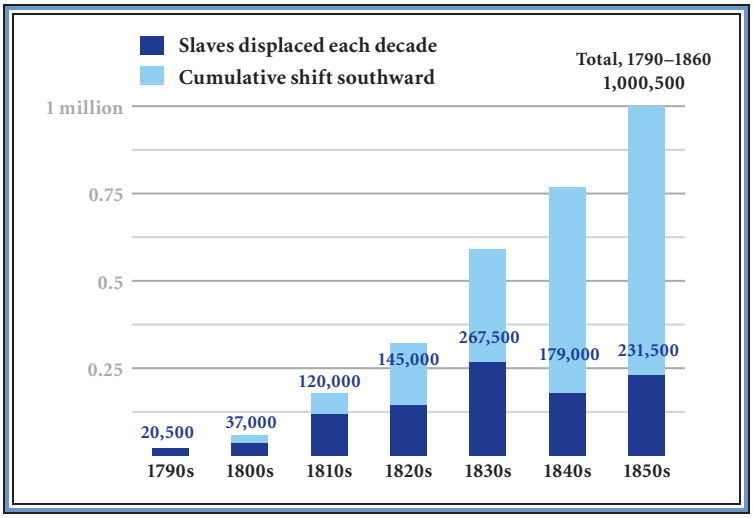


FIGURE 12.2
Forced Slave Migration to the Lower South, 1790–1860
The cotton boom set in motion a vast redistribution of the African American population. Between 1790 and 1860, white planters moved or sold more than a million enslaved people from the Upper to the Lower South, a process that broke up families and long-established black communities. Based on data in Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, by Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman. Copyright © 1974 Little Brown and in *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*, by Michael Tadman, University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

The Inland Slave Trade

Mounted whites escort a convoy of slaves from Virginia to Tennessee in Lewis Miller's *Slave Trader, Sold to Tennessee* (1853). For white planters, the interstate trade in slaves was lucrative; it pumped money into the declining Chesapeake economy and provided young workers for the expanding plantations of the cotton belt. For blacks, it was a traumatic journey, a new Middle Passage that broke up their families and communities. "Arise! Arise! and weep no more, dry up your tears, we shall part no more," the slaves sing sorrowfully as they journey to new lives in Tennessee. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Williamsburg, VA.

older folks was chained or tied together sos dey could not run off." Once a coffle reached its destination, the trader would sell slaves "at every village in the county."

Chesapeake and Carolina planters provided the human cargo. Some planters sold slaves when poor management or their "own extravagances" threw them into debt. "Trouble gathers thicker and thicker around me," Thomas B. Chaplin of South Carolina lamented in his diary. "I will be compelled to send about ten prime Negroes to Town on next Monday, to be sold." Many more planters doubled as slave traders, earning substantial profits by traveling south to sell some of their slaves and those of their neighbors. Thomas Weatherly of South Carolina drove his surplus slaves to Hayneville, Alabama, where he "sold ten negroes." Colonel E. S. Irvine, a member of the South Carolina legislature and "a highly respected gentleman" in white circles, likewise traveled frequently "to sell a drove of Negroes." Prices marched in step with those for cotton; during a boom year in the 1850s, a planter noted that a slave "will fetch $1000, cash, quick."

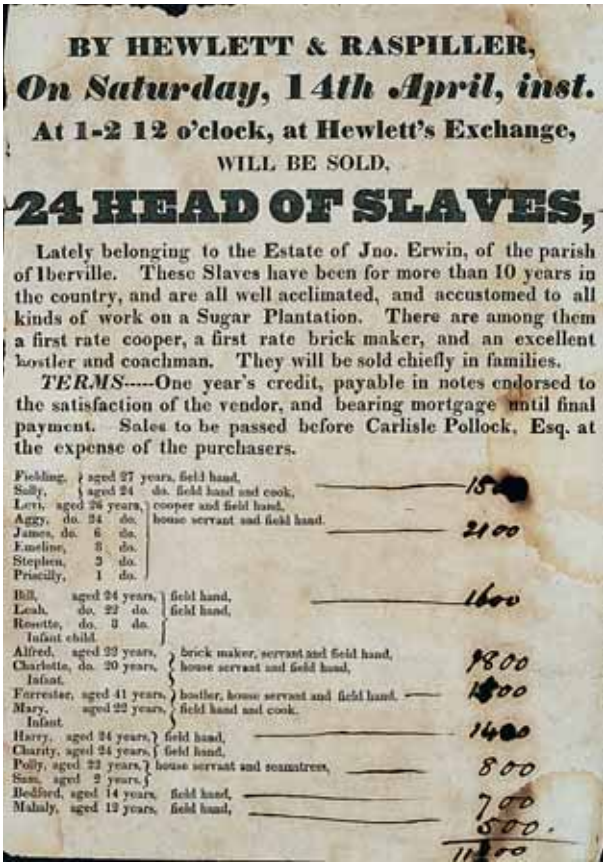
The domestic slave trade was crucial to the prosperity of the migrating white planters because it provided workers to fell the forests and plant cotton in the Gulf states. Equally important, it sustained the wealth of slave owners in the Upper South. By selling surplus black workers, tobacco, rice, and grain producers in the Chesapeake and Carolinas added about 20 percent to their income. As a Maryland newspaper remarked in 1858, "[The trade serves as] an almost universal resource to raise money. A prime able-bodied slave is worth three times as much to the cotton or sugar planter as to the Maryland agriculturalist."

The Impact on Blacks

For African American families, the domestic slave trade was a personal disaster that underlined their status — and vulnerability — as chattel slaves. In law, they were the movable personal property of the whites who owned them. As Lewis Clark, a fugitive from slavery, noted: "Many a time i've had 'em say to me, 'You're my property.'" "The being of slavery, its soul and its body, lives and moves in the **chattel principle**, the property principle, the bill of sale principle," declared former slave James W. C. Pennington. As a South Carolina master put it, "[The slave's earnings] belong to me because I bought him."

Slave property underpinned the entire southern economic system. Whig politician Henry Clay noted that the "immense amount of capital which is invested in slave property . . . is owned by widows and orphans, by the aged and infirm, as well as the sound and vigorous. It is the subject of mortgages, deeds of trust, and family settlements." Clay concluded: "I know that there is a visionary dogma, which holds that negro slaves cannot be the subject of property [but] . . . that is property which the law declares to be property."

As a slave owner, Clay also knew that property rights were key to slave discipline. "I govern them . . . without the whip," another master explained, "by stating . . . that I should sell them if they do not conduct themselves as I wish." The threat was effective. "The Negroes here dread nothing on earth so much as this," a Maryland observer noted. "They regard the south with perfect horror, and to be sent there is considered as the worst punishment." Thousands of slaves suffered



BY HEWLETT & RASPILLER,

On Saturday, 14th April, inst.

At 1-2 12 o'clock, at Hewlett's Exchange,

WILL BE SOLD,

24 HEAD OF SLAVES,

Lately belonging to the Estate of Jno. Erwin, of the parish of Iberville. These Slaves have been for more than 10 years in the country, and are all well acclimated, and accustomed to all kinds of work on a Sugar Plantation. There are among them a first rate cooper, a first rate brick maker, and an excellent hostler and coachman. They will be sold chiefly in families.

TERMS-----One year's credit, payable in notes endorsed to the satisfaction of the vendor, and bearing mortgage until final payment. Sales to be passed before Carlisle Pollock, Esq. at the expense of the purchasers.

Fielding, aged 37 years, field hand,
Sally, aged 24 do. field hand and cook,
Levi, aged 24 years, cooper and field hand,
Aggy, do. 24 do. house servant and field hand.
James, do. 6 do.
Emeline, 3 do.
Stephen, 2 do.
Priscilly, 1 do.

Bill, aged 24 years, field hand,
Leah, do. 22 do. field hand,
Rosette, do. 3 do.
Infant child.

Alfred, aged 22 years, brick maker, servant and field hand,
Charlotte, do. 20 years, house servant and field hand,
Infant.

Forrester, aged 41 years, hostler, house servant and field hand,
Mary, aged 22 years, field hand and cook.
Infant.

Harry, aged 24 years, field hand,
Charity, aged 24 years, field hand,
Polly, aged 22 years, house servant and seamstress,
Sam, aged 2 years,
Bedford, aged 14 years, field hand,
Mahaly, aged 12 years, field hand,

Slave Auction Notice

This public notice for a slave auction to be held in Iberville, Louisiana, advertises "24 Head of Slaves" as if they were cattle—a striking commentary on the "chattel principle" and business of slavery. Library of Congress.

that fate, which destroyed about one in every four slave marriages. "Why does the slave ever love?" asked black abolitionist Harriet Jacobs in her autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, when her partner "may at any moment be wrenched away by the hand of violence?" After being sold, one Georgia slave lamented, "My Dear wife for you and my Children my pen cannot Express the griffe I feel to be parted from you all."

The interstate slave trade often focused on young adults. In northern Maryland, planters sold away boys and girls at an average age of seventeen years. "Dey sole my sister Kate," Anna Harris remembered decades later, "and I ain't seed or heard of her since." The trade also separated almost a third of all slave children under the age of fourteen from one or both of their parents. Sarah Grant remembered, "Mamma used to cry when she had to go back to work because she was always scared some of us kids would be sold while she was away." Well might she worry, for slave traders worked quickly. "One night I lay down on de straw mattress wid my mammy," Vinny Baker recalled, "an' de nex' mo'nin I woke up an' she wuz gone." When their owner sold seven-year-old Laura Clark and ten other children from their plantation in North Carolina, Clark sensed that she would see her mother "no mo' in dis life."

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES
What were the effects of the slave trade on black families?

Despite these sales, 75 percent of slave marriages remained unbroken, and the majority of children lived with one or both parents until puberty. Consequently, the sense of family among African Americans remained strong. Sold from Virginia to Texas in 1843, Hawkins Wilson carried with him a mental picture of his family. Twenty-five years later and now a freedman, Wilson set out to find his "dearest relatives" in Virginia. "My sister belonged to Peter Coleman in Caroline County and her name was Jane. . . . She had three children, Robert, Charles and Julia, when I left—Sister Martha belonged to Dr. Jefferson. . . . Sister Matilda belonged to Mrs. Botts."

During the decades between sale and freedom, Hawkins Wilson and thousands of other African Americans constructed new lives for themselves in the Mississippi Valley. Undoubtedly, many did so with a sense of foreboding, knowing from personal experience that their owners could disrupt their lives at any moment. Like Charles Ball, some "longed to die, and escape from the bonds of my tormentors." The darkness of slavery shadowed even moments of joy. Knowing that sales often ended slave marriages, a white minister blessed one couple "for so long as God keeps them together."

Many white planters "saw" only the African American marriages that endured and ignored those they had broken. Accordingly, many owners considered themselves **benevolent masters**, committed to the welfare of "my family, black and white." Some masters gave substance to this paternalist ideal by treating kindly "loyal and worthy" slaves—black overseers, the mammy who raised their children, and trusted house servants. By preserving the families of these slaves, many planters could believe that they "sold south" only "coarse" troublemakers and uncivilized slaves who had "little sense of family." Other owners were more honest about the human cost of their pursuit of wealth. "Tomorrow the negroes are to get off [to Kentucky]," a slave-owning woman in Virginia wrote to a friend, "and I expect there will be great crying and moaning, with children Leaving there

mothers, mothers there children, and women there husbands."

Whether or not they acknowledged the slaves' pain, few southern whites questioned the morality of the slave trade. Responding to abolitionists' criticism, the city council of Charleston, South Carolina, declared that "the removal of slaves from place to place, and their transfer from master to master, by gift, purchase, or otherwise" was completely consistent "with moral principle and with the highest order of civilization" (American Voices, p. 384).

To see a longer excerpt of the city council of Charleston, South Carolina, document, along with other primary sources from this period, see ***Sources for America's History***.

The World of Southern Whites

American slavery took root in the early eighteenth century on the tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake and in the rice fields of the Carolina low country. However, it grew to maturity during the first half of the nineteenth century on the cotton fields and sugar plantations of the Mississippi Valley. By then, a small elite of extraordinarily wealthy planter families stood at the top of southern society. These families — about three thousand in number — each owned more than one hundred slaves and huge tracts of the most fertile lands. Their ranks included many of the richest families in the United States. On the eve of the Civil War, southern slave owners accounted for nearly two-thirds of all American men with wealth of $100,000 or more. Other white southerners — backcountry yeomen farmers and cotton-planting tenants in particular — occupied some of the lowest rungs of the nation's social order. The expansion of southern slavery, like the flowering of northern capitalism, increased inequalities of wealth and status.

The Dual Cultures of the Planter Elite

The westward movement split the plantation elite into two distinct groups: the traditional aristocrats of the Old South, whose families had gained their wealth from tobacco and rice, and the upstart capitalist-inclined planters of the cotton states.

The Traditional Southern Gentry The Old South gentry dominated the Tidewater region of the Chesapeake and the low country of South Carolina and Georgia. During the eighteenth century, these planters built impressive mansions and adopted the manners and values of the English landed gentry (Chapter 3). Their aristocratic-oriented culture survived the Revolution of 1776 and soon took on a republican glaze

Redcliffe Plantation

In 1857, James Henry Hammond began construction of this house on a 400-acre site in Aiken County, South Carolina. It originally had a double-decked porch in the Greek Revival style, which gave it an even more imposing presence. Fifty enslaved African Americans worked at Redcliffe, and nearly three hundred more on Hammond's other properties, providing the wealth that allowed his family to live in comfort. Hammond lived at Redcliffe until he died in 1864 at the age of fifty-seven, his health undermined by his struggles with Confederate leaders over wartime policies and by mercury poisoning from the laxatives he had taken for nearly forty years. Michael A. Stroud.

The Debate over Free and Slave Labor

As the abolitionist assault on slavery mounted, its rhetoric shaped the debate over the emergent system of wage labor in the northern states. By the 1850s, New York senator William Seward starkly contrasted the political systems of the South and the North in terms of their labor systems: "the one resting on the basis of servile or slave labor, the other on voluntary labor of freemen." Seward strongly favored the "free-labor system," crediting to it "the strength, wealth, greatness, intelligence, and freedom, which the whole American people now enjoy." As the following documents show, some Americans agreed with Seward, while others, such as *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley and South Carolina senator James Henry Hammond (who is quoted often in this chapter and whose house appears on page 383), contested his premises and conclusions.

South Carolina Senator James Henry Hammond

Speech to the Senate, March 4, 1858

In response to New York senator Seward, Senator Hammond urged admission of Kansas under the proslavery Lecompton Constitution and, by way of argument, celebrated the success of the South's cotton economy and its political and social institutions.

In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. . . . Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government. . . . Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves. . . .

The Senator from New York said yesterday that the whole world had abolished slavery. Aye, the name, but not the thing; . . . for the man who lives by daily labor, and scarcely lives at that, and who has to put out his labor in the market, and take the best he can get for it; in short, your whole hireling class of manual laborers and "operatives," as you call them, are essentially slaves. The difference between us is, that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging, no want of employment among our people, and not too much employment either. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated, which may be proved in the most painful manner, at any hour in any street in any of your large towns.

Source: *The Congressional Globe* (Washington, DC, March 6, 1858), 962.

New York Protestant Episcopal Church Mission Society

Sixth Annual Report, 1837

This excerpt demonstrates the society's belief that a class-bound social order could be avoided by encouraging "a spirit of independence and self-estimation" among the poor.

In the older countries of Europe, there is a CLASS OF POOR: families born to poverty, living in poverty, dying in poverty. With us there are none such. In our bounteous land individuals alone are poor; but they form no poor class, because with them poverty is but a transient evil . . . save [except] paupers and vagabonds . . . all else form one common class of citizens; some more, others less advanced in the career of honorable independence.

Source: New York Protestant Episcopal Church Mission Society, Sixth Annual Report (New York, 1837), 15–16.

Horace Greeley

Public Letter Declining an Invitation to Attend an Antislavery Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 3, 1845

This letter from the editor of the *New York Tribune* explains his broad definition of slavery.

Dear Sir: — I received, weeks since, your letter inviting me to be present at a general convention of opponents of Human Slavery. . . . What is Slavery? You will probably answer; "The legal subjection of one human being to the will and power of another." But this definition appears to me inaccurate. . . .

I understand by Slavery, that condition in which one human being exists mainly as a convenience for other human beings. . . . In short, . . . where the relation [is

one] of authority, social ascendency and power over subsistence on the one hand, and of necessity, servility, and degradation on the other — there, in my view, is Slavery. . . . If I am less troubled concerning the Slavery prevalent in Charleston or New-Orleans, it is because I see so much Slavery in New-York. . . .

Wherever Opportunity to Labor is obtained with difficulty, and is so deficient that the Employing class may virtually prescribe their own terms and pay the Laborer only such share as they choose of the produce, there is a strong tendency to Slavery.

Source: Horace Greeley, *Hints Toward Reform in Lectures, Addresses, and Other Writings* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850), 352–355.

Editorial in the *Staunton Spectator*, 1859

Entitled "Freedom and Slavery," this editorial argues that "the black man's lot as a slave, is vastly preferable to that of his free brethren at the North."

The intelligent, christian slave-holder at the South is the best friend of the negro. He does not regard his bondsmen as mere chattel property, but as human beings to whom he owes duties. While the Northern Pharisee will not permit a negro to ride on the city railroads, Southern gentlemen and ladies are seen every day, side by side, in cars and coaches, with their faithful servants. Here the honest black man is not only protected by the laws and public sentiment, but he is respected by the community as truly as if his skin were white. Here there are ties of genuine friendship and affection between whites and blacks, leading to an interchange of all the comities of life. The slave nurses his master in sickness, and sheds tears of genuine sorrow at his grave.

Source: *Staunton Spectator*, December 6, 1859, p. 2, c. 1.

James Henry Hammond

Private Letter to His Son Harry Hammond, 1856

This letter regards the future of Hammond's slave mistress, Sally Johnson, her son Henderson, and her daughter Louisa, who was the common mistress of father and son, and Louisa's children whom they sired.

In the last will I made I left to you . . . Sally Johnson the mother of Louisa & all the children of both. Sally says Henderson is my child. It is possible, but I do not believe it Yet act on her's rather than my opinion. Louisa's first child may be mine. I think not. Her second I believe is mine. Take care of her & her children who are both of your blood if not of mine. . . . The services of the rest will compensate for indulgence to these. I cannot free these people & send them North. It would be cruelty to them. Nor would I like that any but my own blood should own as slaves my own blood or Louisa. I leave them to your charge, believing that you will best appreciate & most independently carry out my wishes in regard to them. Do not let Louisa or any of my children or possible children be the Slaves of Strangers. Slavery in the family will be their happiest earthly condition.

Source: James Hammond to Harry Hammond, February 19, 1856, in JHH Papers, SCL, quoted in Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 87.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Which of these documents argue for slave owners as benevolent paternalists and the institution of slavery as a "positive good"? What other points of view are represented?
2. Given the discussion of "class" and "honorable independence" in the Mission Society statement, how would an Episcopalian reply to Hammond's critique of the northern labor system?
3. How can we understand Hammond's treatment of Sally Johnson and her daughter, as well as his refusal to free his and his son's children, in the context of his 1858 speech and the *Staunton Spectator*'s editorial?
4. Using the principles asserted in his letter, how would Horace Greeley analyze the southern labor system, as described by Hammond and the *Staunton Spectator*? Why does Greeley suggest that the northern system has only "a strong tendency to Slavery"?
5. Consider the sources above in the light of this Abraham Lincoln comment: "although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself."

(Chapter 8). Classical republican theory, which had long identified political tyranny as the major threat to liberty, had its roots in the societies of Greece and Rome, where slavery was part of the natural order of society. That variety of republicanism appealed to wealthy southerners, who feared federal government interference with their slave property. On the state level, planters worried about populist politicians who would mobilize poorer whites, and so they demanded that authority rest in the hands of incorruptible men of "virtue."

Indeed, affluent planters cast themselves as a **republican aristocracy**. "The planters here are essentially what the nobility are in other countries," declared James Henry Hammond of South Carolina. "They stand at the head of society & politics . . . [and form] an aristocracy of talents, of virtue, of generosity and courage." Wealthy planters criticized the democratic polity and middle-class society that was developing in the Northeast and Midwest. "Inequality is the fundamental law of the universe," declared one planter. Others condemned professional politicians as "a set of demagogues" and questioned the legitimacy of universal suffrage. "Times are sadly different now to what they were when I was a boy," lamented David Gavin, a prosperous South Carolinian. Then, the "Sovereign people, alias mob" had little influence; now they vied for power with the elite. "[How can] I rejoice for a freedom," Gavin thundered, "which allows every bankrupt, swindler, thief, and scoundrel, traitor and seller of his vote to be placed on an equality with myself?"

To maintain their privileged identity, aristocratic planters married their sons and daughters to one another and expected them to follow in their footsteps — the men working as planters, merchants, lawyers, newspaper editors, and ministers and the women hosting plantation balls and church bazaars. To confirm their social preeminence, they lived extravagantly and entertained graciously. James Henry Hammond built a Greek Revival mansion with a center hall 53 feet by 20 feet, its floor embellished with stylish Belgian tiles and expensive Brussels carpets. "Once a year, like a great feudal landlord," Hammond's neighbor recounted, "[he] gave a fete or grand dinner to all the country people."

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

Between 1800 and 1860, what changes occurred in the South's plantation crops, labor system, defense of slavery, and elite planter lifestyle?

Rice planters remained at the apex of the plantation aristocracy. In 1860, the fifteen proprietors of the vast plantations in All Saints Parish in South Carolina owned 4,383 slaves — nearly 300 apiece — who annually grew and processed 14 million pounds of rice. As inexpensive Asian rice entered the world market in the 1820s and cut their profits, the Carolina rice aristocrats sold some slaves and worked the others harder, sustaining their luxurious lifestyle. The "hospitality and elegance" of Charleston and Savannah impressed savvy English traveler John Silk Buckingham. Buckingham likewise found "polished" families among long-established French Catholic planters in New Orleans and along the Mississippi River: There, the "sugar and cotton planters live in splendid edifices, and enjoy all the luxury that wealth can impart" (America Compared, p. 387).

In tobacco-growing regions, the lives of the planter aristocracy followed a different trajectory, in part because slave ownership was widely diffused. In the 1770s, about 60 percent of white families in the Chesapeake region owned at least one African American. As wealthy tobacco planters moved their estates and slaves to the Cotton South, middling whites (who owned between five and twenty slaves) came to dominate the Chesapeake economy. The descendants of the old tobacco aristocracy remained influential, but increasingly as slave-owning grain farmers, lawyers, merchants, industrialists, and politicians. They hired out surplus slaves, sold them south, or allowed them to purchase their freedom.

The Ideology and Reality of "Benevolence"

The planter aristocracy flourished around the periphery of the South's booming Cotton Belt — in Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana — but it took the lead in defending slavery. Ignoring the Jeffersonian response to slavery as a "misfortune" or a "necessary evil" (Chapter 8), southern apologists in the 1830s argued that the institution was a **"positive good"** because it subsidized an elegant lifestyle for a white elite and provided tutelage for genetically inferior Africans. "As a race, the African is inferior to the white man," declared Alexander Stephens, the future vice president of the Confederacy. "Subordination to the white man, is his normal condition." Apologists depicted planters and their wives as aristocratic models of "disinterested benevolence," who provided food and housing for their workers and cared for them in old age. One wealthy Georgian declared, "Plantation government should be eminently patriarchal. . . . The pater-familias, or head of the family, should, in one sense, be the father of the whole concern, negroes and all."

Those planters who embraced Christian stewardship tried to shape the religious lives of their chattel.

Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach

The Racial Complexities of Southern Society

In 1825 and 1826, Bernhard, heir to the German principality of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, traveled throughout the United States, and in 1828 he published an account of his adventures. After a military career, the duke ruled his principality from 1853 until his death in 1862.

In New Orleans we were invited to a subscription ball. . . . Only good society is invited to these balls. The first to which we came was not very well attended; but most of the ladies were very nice looking and well turned out in the French manner. Their clothing was elegant after the latest Paris fashions. They danced very well and did credit to their French dancing masters. Dancing and some music are the main branches of the education of a Creole [an American-born white] woman. . . .

The native men are far from matching the women in elegance. And they stayed only a short time, preferring to escape to a so-called "Quarterons Ball" which they find more amusing and where they do not have to stand on ceremony. . . .

A "quarteron" [actually an octoroon, a person of one-eighth African ancestry] is the offspring of a mestizo mother and a white father, just as the mestizo is the child of a mulatto and a white man. The "quarterons" are almost completely white. There would be no way of recognizing them by their complexion, for they are often fairer than the Creoles. Black hair and eyes are generally the signs of their status, although some are quite blond. The ball is attended by the free "quarterons." Yet the deepest prejudice reigns against them on account of their colored origin; the white women particularly feel or affect to feel a strong repugnance to them.

Marriage between colored and white people is forbidden by the laws of the state. Yet the "quarterons," for their part, look upon the Negroes and mulattoes as inferiors and are unwilling to mix with them. The girls therefore have no other recourse than to become the mistresses of white men. The "quarterons" regard such attachment as the equivalent of marriage. They would not think of entering upon it other than with a formal contract in which the man engages to pay a stipulated sum to the mother or father of the girl. . . .

Some of these women have inherited from their fathers and lovers, and possess considerable fortunes. Their status is nevertheless always very depressed. They must not ride in the street in coaches, and their lovers can bring them to the balls in their own conveyances only after nightfall. . . . But many of these girls are much more carefully educated than the whites, behave with more polish and more politeness, and make their lovers happier than white wives their husbands. And yet the white ladies speak of these unfortunate depressed creatures with great disdain, even bitterness. Because of the depth of these prejudices, many fathers send their daughters, conceived after this manner, to France where good education and wealth are no impediments to the attainment of a respectable place.

Source: From *Travels by His Highness Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach Through North America in the Years 1825 and 1826*, edited by C. J. Jeronimus and translated by William Jeronimus. Copyright © 2001 University Press of America. Used by permission of the Rowan & Littlefield Publishing Company.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does this passage suggest about the effect of slavery and the meaning of racial identity on sexual relationships and marriages in America and in France?
2. How does Bernhard's account help to explain the values and outlook of the free black population in the South?

They built churches on their plantations, welcomed evangelical preachers, and required their slaves to attend services. A few encouraged African Americans with spiritual "gifts" to serve as exhorters and deacons. Most of these planters acted from sincere Christian belief, but they also hoped to counter abolitionist criticism and to use religious teachings to control their workers.

Indeed, slavery's defenders increasingly used religious justifications for human bondage. Protestant

ministers in the South pointed out that the Hebrews, God's chosen people, had owned slaves and that Jesus Christ had never condemned slavery. As James Henry Hammond told a British abolitionist in 1845: "What God ordains and Christ sanctifies should surely command the respect and toleration of man." However, many aristocratic defenders of slavery were absentee owners or delegated authority to overseers, and they rarely glimpsed the day-to-day brutality of their regime of forced labor. "I was at the plantation last Saturday and the crop was in fine order," an absentee's son wrote to his father, "but the negroes are most brutally scarred & several have run off."

Cotton Entrepreneurs There was much less hypocrisy and far less elegance among the entrepreneurial planters of the Cotton South. "The glare of expensive luxury vanishes" in the black soil regions of Alabama and Mississippi, John Silk Buckingham remarked as he traveled through the Cotton South. Frederick Law Olmsted — the future architect of New York's Central Park, who during the mid-1850s traveled through the South for the *New York Times* — found that the plantations in Mississippi mostly had "but small and mean residences." Aristocratic paternalism vanished as well. A Mississippi planter put it plainly: "Everything has to give way to large crops of cotton, land has to be cultivated wet or dry, negroes [must] work, hot or cold."

Angry at being sold south and pressed to hard labor, many slaves grew "mean" and stubborn. Those who would not labor were subject to the lash. "Whiped all the hoe hands," Alabama planter James Torbert wrote matter-of-factly in his journal. Overseers pushed workers hard because their salaries often depended on the amount of cotton they were able "to make for the market." A Mississippi slave recalled, "When I wuz so tired I cu'dnt hardly stan', I had to spin my cut of cotton befor' I cu'd go to sleep. We had to card, spin, an' reel at nite."

Cotton was a demanding crop because of its long growing season. Slaves plowed the land in March; dropped seeds into the ground in early April; and, once the plants began to grow, continually chopped away the surrounding grasses. In between these tasks, they planted the corn and peas that would provide food for them and the plantation's hogs and chickens. When the cotton bolls ripened in late August, the long four-month picking season began. Slaves in the Cotton South, concluded Olmsted, worked "much harder and more unremittingly" than those in the tobacco regions. Moreover, fewer of them acquired craft skills than in tobacco, sugar, and rice areas, where slave coopers and engineers made casks, processed sugar, and built irrigation systems.

To increase output, profit-seeking cotton planters began during the 1820s to use a rigorous **gang-labor system**. Previously, many planters had supervised their workers sporadically or assigned them specific tasks to complete at their own pace. Now masters with twenty or more slaves organized disciplined teams, or "gangs," supervised by black drivers and white overseers. They instructed the supervisors to work the gangs at a steady pace, clearing and plowing land or hoeing and picking cotton. A traveler in Mississippi described two gangs returning from work:

> First came, led by an old driver carrying a whip, forty of the largest and strongest women I ever saw together; they were all in a simple uniform dress of a bluish check stuff, the skirts reaching little below the knee. . . . They carried themselves loftily, each having a hoe over the shoulder, and walking with a free, powerful swing.

Next marched the plow hands with their mules, "the cavalry, thirty strong, mostly men, but a few of them women." Finally, "a lean and vigilant white overseer, on a brisk pony, brought up the rear."

The gang-labor system enhanced profits by increasing productivity. Because slaves in gangs finished tasks in thirty-five minutes that took a white yeoman planter an hour to complete, gang labor became ever more prevalent. In one Georgia county, the percentage of blacks working in gangs doubled between 1830 and 1850. As the price of raw cotton surged after 1846, the wealth of the planter class skyrocketed. And no wonder: nearly 2 million enslaved African Americans now labored on the plantations of the Cotton South and annually produced 4 million bales of the valuable fiber.

Planters, Smallholding Yeomen, and Tenants

Although the South was a **slave society** — that is, a society in which the institution of slavery affected all aspects of life — most white southerners did not own slaves. The percentage of white families who held blacks in bondage steadily decreased — from 36 percent in 1830, to 31 percent in 1850, to about 25 percent a decade later. However, slave ownership varied by region. In some cotton-rich counties, 40 percent of the white families owned slaves; in the hill country near the Appalachian Mountains, the proportion dropped to 10 percent.

The Inherent Brutality of Slavery

Like all systems of forced labor, American racial slavery relied ultimately on physical coercion. Slave owners and overseers routinely whipped slaves who worked slowly or defied their orders. On occasion, they applied the whip with such ferocity that the slave was permanently injured or killed. This photograph of a Mississippi slave named Gordon, taken after he fled to the Union army in Louisiana in 1863 and published in *Harper's Weekly*, stands as graphic testimony to the inherent brutality of the system. Library of Congress.

Planter Elites A privileged minority of 395,000 southern families owned slaves in 1860, their ranks divided into a strict hierarchy. The top one-fifth of these families owned twenty or more slaves. This elite — just 5 percent of the South's white population — dominated the economy, owning over 50 percent of the entire slave population of 4 million and growing 50 percent of the South's cotton crop. The average wealth of these planters was $56,000 (about $1.6 million in purchasing power today); by contrast, a prosperous southern yeoman or northern farmer owned property worth a mere $3,200.

Substantial proprietors, another fifth of the slave-owning population, held title to six to twenty bondsmen and -women. These middling planters owned almost 40 percent of the enslaved laborers and produced more than 30 percent of the cotton. Often they pursued dual careers as skilled artisans or professional men. Thus some of the fifteen slaves owned by Georgian Samuel L. Moore worked in his brick factory, while others labored on his farm. Dr. Thomas Gale used the income from his medical practice to buy a Mississippi plantation that annually produced 150 bales of cotton. In Alabama, lawyer Benjamin Fitzpatrick used his legal fees to buy ten slaves.

Like Fitzpatrick, lawyers acquired wealth by managing the affairs of the slave-owning elite, representing planters and merchants in suits for debt, and helping smallholders and tenants register their deeds and contracts. Standing at the legal crossroads of their small towns, they rose to prominence and regularly won election to public office. Less than 1 percent of the male population, in 1828 lawyers made up 16 percent of the Alabama legislature and an astounding 26 percent in 1849.

Smallholding Planters and Yeomen Smallholding slave owners were much less visible than the wealthy grandees and the middling lawyer-planters. These planters held from one to five black laborers in bondage and owned a few hundred acres of land. Some smallholders were well-connected young men who would rise to wealth when their father's death blessed them with more land and slaves. Others were poor but ambitious men trying to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, often encouraged by elite planters and proslavery advocates. "Ours is a proslavery form of Government, and the proslavery element should be increased," declared a Georgia newspaper. "We would like to see every white man at the South the owner of a family of negroes." Some aspiring planters achieved modest prosperity. A German settler reported from Alabama in 1855 that "nearly all his countrymen" who emigrated with him were slaveholders. "They were poor on their arrival in the country; but no sooner did they realize a little money than they invested it in slaves."

Bolstered by the patriarchal ideology of the planter class, yeomen farmers ruled their smallholdings with a firm hand. The male head of the household had legal authority over all the dependents — wives, children, and slaves — and, according to one South Carolina judge, the right on his property "to be as churlish as he pleases." Yeomen wives had little power; like women

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

By 1860, what different groups made up the South's increasingly complex society? How did these groups interact?

in the North, they lost their legal identity when they married. To express their concerns, many southern women joined churches, where they usually outnumbered men by a margin of two to one. Women especially welcomed the message of spiritual equality preached in evangelical Baptist and Methodist churches, and they hoped that the church community would hold their husbands to the same standards of Christian behavior to which they conformed. However, most churches supported patriarchal rule and told female members to remain in "wifely obedience," whatever the actions of their husbands.

Whatever their authority within the household, most southern yeomen lived and died as hardscrabble farmers. They worked alongside their slaves in the fields, struggled to make ends meet as their families grew, and moved regularly in search of opportunity. Thus, in 1847, James Buckner Barry left North Carolina with his new wife and two slaves to settle in Bosque County, Texas. There he worked part-time as an Indian fighter while his slaves toiled on a drought-ridden farm that barely kept the family in food. In South Carolina, W. J. Simpson struggled for years as a smallholding cotton planter and then gave up. He hired out one of his two slaves and went to work as an overseer on his father's farm.

Less fortunate smallholders fell from the privileged ranks of the slave-owning classes. Selling their land and slaves to pay off debts, they joined the mass of propertyless tenants who farmed the estates of wealthy landlords. In 1860, in Hancock County, Georgia, there were 56 slave-owning planters and 300 propertyless white farm laborers and factory workers; in nearby Hart County, 25 percent of the white farmers were tenants. Across the South, about 40 percent of the white population worked as tenants or farm laborers; as the *Southern Cultivator* observed, they had "no legal right nor interest in the soil [and] no homes of their own."

Poor Freemen Propertyless whites suffered the ill consequences of living in a slave society that accorded little respect to hardworking white laborers. Nor could

North Carolina Emigrants: Poor White Folks

Completed in 1845, James Henry Beard's (1811–1893) painting depicts a family moving north to Ohio. Unlike many optimistic scenes of emigration, the picture conveys a sense of resigned despair. The family members, led by a sullen, disheveled father, pause at a water trough while their cow drinks and their dog chews a bone. The mother looks apprehensively toward the future as she cradles a child; two barefoot older children listlessly await their father's command. New York writer Charles Briggs interpreted the painting as an "eloquent sermon on Anti-Slavery . . . , the blight of Slavery has paralyzed the strong arm of the man and destroyed the spirit of the woman." Although primarily a portrait painter, Beard questioned the ethics and optimism of American culture in *Ohio Land Speculator* (1840) and *The Last Victim of the Deluge* (1849), as well as in *Poor White Folks*.

Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio, USA/Gift of the Proctor & Gamble Company/The Bridgeman Art Library.

they hope for a better life for their children, because slave owners refused to pay taxes to fund public schools. Moreover, wealthy planters bid up the price of African Americans, depriving white laborers and tenants of easy access to the slave labor required to accumulate wealth. Finally, planter-dominated legislatures forced all white men, whether they owned slaves or not, to serve in the patrols and militias that deterred black uprisings. The majority of white southerners, Frederick Law Olmsted concluded, "are poor. They . . . have little — very little — of the common comforts and consolations of civilized life. Their destitution is not material only; it is intellectual and it is moral."

Marking this moral destitution, poor whites enjoyed the psychological satisfaction that they ranked above blacks. As Alfred Iverson, a U.S. senator from Georgia (1855–1861), explained: a white man "walks erect in the dignity of his color and race, and feels that he is a superior being, with the more exalted powers and privileges than others." To reinforce that sense of racial superiority, planter James Henry Hammond told his poor white neighbors, "In a slave country every freeman is an aristocrat."

Rejecting that half-truth, many southern whites fled planter-dominated counties in the 1830s and sought farms in the Appalachian hill country and beyond — in western Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, the southern regions of Illinois and Indiana, and Missouri. Living as yeomen farmers, they used family labor to grow foodstuffs for sustenance. To obtain cash or store credit to buy agricultural implements, cloth, shoes, salt, and other necessities, yeomen families sold their surplus crops, raised hogs for market sale, and — when the price of cotton rose sharply — grew a few bales. Their goals were modest: on the family level, they wanted to preserve their holdings and buy enough land to set up their children as small-scale farmers. As citizens, smallholders wanted to control their local government and elect men of their own kind to public office. However, thoughtful yeomen understood that the slave-based cotton economy sentenced family farmers to a subordinate place in the social order. They could hope for a life of independence and dignity only by moving north or farther west, where labor was "free" and hard work was respected.

Expanding and Governing the South

By the 1830s, settlers from the South had carried both yeoman farming and plantation slavery into Arkansas and Missouri. Between those states and the Rocky Mountains stretched great grasslands. An army explorer, Major Stephen H. Long, thought the plains region "almost wholly unfit for cultivation" and in 1820 labeled it the Great American Desert. The label stuck. Americans looking for land turned south, to Mexican territory. At the same time, elite planters struggled to control state governments in the Cotton South.

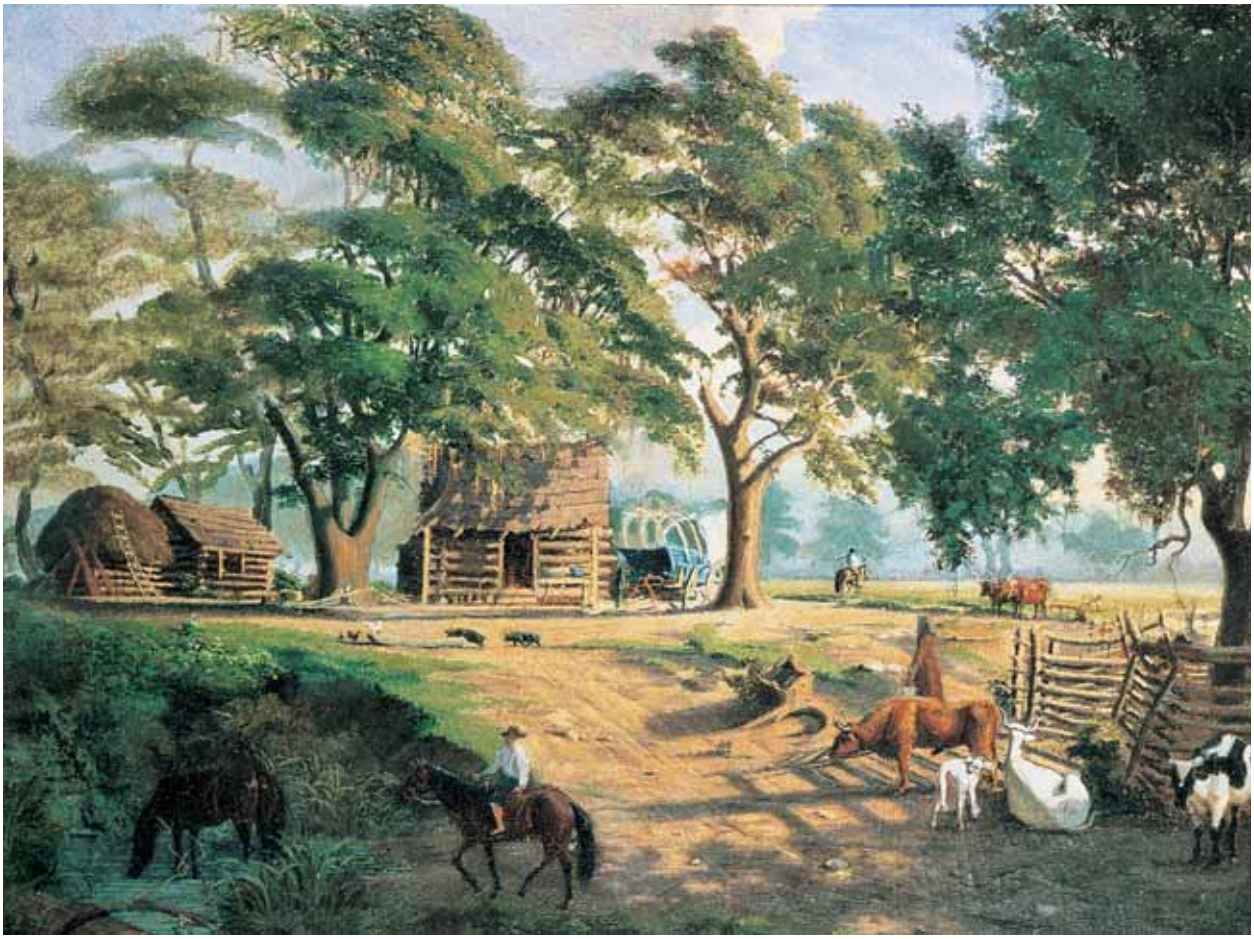
The Settlement of Texas

After winning independence from Spain in 1821, the Mexican government pursued an activist settlement policy. To encourage migration to the refigured state of Coahuila y Tejas, it offered sizable land grants to its citizens and to American emigrants. Moses Austin, an American land speculator, settled smallholding farmers on his large grant, and his son, Stephen F. Austin, acquired even more land — some 180,000 acres — which he sold to newcomers. By 1835, about 27,000 white Americans and their 3,000 African American slaves were raising cotton and cattle in the well-watered plains and hills of eastern and central Texas. They far outnumbered the 3,000 Mexican residents, who lived primarily near the southwestern Texas towns of Goliad and San Antonio.

When Mexico in 1835 adopted a new constitution creating a stronger central government and dissolving state legislatures, the Americans split into two groups. The "war party," led by Sam Houston and recent migrants from Georgia, demanded independence for Texas. Members of the "peace party," led by Stephen Austin, negotiated with the central government in Mexico City for greater political autonomy. They believed Texas could flourish within a decentralized Mexican republic, a "federal" constitutional system favored by the Liberal Party in Mexico (and advocated in the United States by Jacksonian Democrats). Austin won significant concessions for the Texans, including an exemption from a law ending slavery, but in 1835 Mexico's president, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, nullified them. Santa Anna wanted to impose national authority throughout Mexico. Fearing central control, the war party provoked a rebellion that most of the American settlers ultimately supported. On March 2, 1836, the American rebels proclaimed the independence of Texas and adopted a constitution legalizing slavery.

To put down the rebellion, President Santa Anna led an army that wiped out the Texan garrison defending the **Alamo** in San Antonio and then captured Goliad,

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW
What issues divided the Mexican government and the Americans in Texas, and what proposals sought to resolve them?



Starting Out in Texas

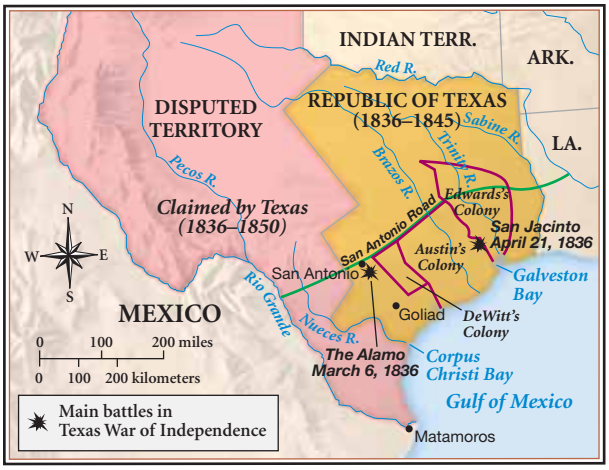
Thousands of white farmers, some owning a few slaves, moved onto small farms in Texas and Arkansas during the 1840s and 1850s. They lived in crudely built log huts; owned a few cows, horses, and oxen; and eked out a meager living by planting a few acres of cotton in addition to their crops of corn. Their aspirations were simple: to achieve modest prosperity during their lives and to assist their children to own farms of their own. Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library.

executing about 350 prisoners of war (Map 12.2). Santa Anna thought that he had crushed the rebellion, but New Orleans and New York newspapers romanticized the deaths at the Alamo of folk heroes Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie. Drawing on anti-Catholic sentiment aroused by Irish immigration and the massacre at Goliad, they urged Americans to "Remember the Alamo" and depicted the Mexicans as tyrannical butchers in the service of the pope. American adventurers, lured by offers of land grants, flocked to Texas to join the rebel forces. Commanded by General Sam Houston, the Texans routed Santa Anna's overconfident army in the Battle of San Jacinto in April 1836, winning de facto independence. The Mexican government refused to recognize the Texas Republic but, for the moment, did not seek to conquer it.

The Texans voted for annexation by the United States, but President Martin Van Buren refused to bring the issue before Congress. As a Texas diplomat reported, the cautious Van Buren and other party politicians feared that annexation would spark a war with Mexico and, beyond that, a "desperate death-struggle . . . between the North and the South [over the extension of slavery]; a struggle involving the probability of a dissolution of the Union."

The Politics of Democracy

As national leaders refused admission to Texas, elite planters faced political challenges in the Cotton South. Unlike the planter-aristocrats who ruled the colonial world, they lived in a republican society with a



MAP 12.2

American Settlements, the Texas-Mexican War, and Boundary Disputes

During the 1820s the Mexican government encouraged Americans to settle in the sparsely populated state of Coahuila y Tejas. By 1835 the nearly 30,000 Americans far outnumbered Mexican residents. To put down an American-led revolt, General Santa Anna led 6,000 soldiers into Tejas in 1836. After overwhelming the rebels at the Alamo in March, Santa Anna set out to capture the Texas Provisional Government, which had fled to Galveston. But the Texans' victory at San Jacinto in April ended the war and secured de facto independence for the Republic of Texas (1836–1845). However, the annexation of Texas to the United States sparked a war with Mexico in 1846, and the state's boundaries remained in dispute until the Compromise of 1850.

democratic ethos. The Alabama Constitution of 1819 granted suffrage to all white men; it also provided for a **secret ballot** (rather than voice-voting); apportionment of legislative seats based on population; and the election of county supervisors, sheriffs, and clerks of court. Given these democratic provisions, political factions in Alabama had to compete for votes. When a Whig newspaper sarcastically asked whether the state's policies should "be governed and controlled by the whim and caprice of the majority of the people," Democrats hailed the power of the common folk. They called on "Farmers, Mechanics, laboring men" to repudiate Whig "aristocrats . . . the soft handed and soft headed gentry."

Taxation Policy Whatever the electioneering rhetoric, most Whig and Democrat political candidates were men of substance. In the early 1840s, nearly 90 percent of Alabama's legislators owned slaves, testimony to the political power of the slave-owning minority. Still, relatively few lawmakers — only about 10 percent — were rich planters, a group voters by and large distrusted. "A rich man cannot sympathize with the poor," declared one candidate. Consequently, the majority of elected state officials, and most county officials, in the Cotton South came from the ranks of middle-level planters and planter-lawyers. Astute politicians, they refrained from laying "oppressive" taxes on the people, particularly the white majority who owned no slaves. Between 1830 and 1860, the Alabama legislature obtained about 70 percent of the state's revenue from taxes on slaves and land. Another 10 to 15 percent came from levies on carriages, gold watches, and other luxury goods and on the capital invested in banks, transportation companies, and manufacturing enterprises.

To win the votes of taxpaying slave owners, Alabama Democrats advocated limited government and low taxes. They attacked their Whig opponents for favoring higher taxes and for providing government subsidies for banks, canals, railroads, and other internal improvements. "Voting against appropriations is the safe and popular side," one Democratic legislator declared, and his colleagues agreed; until the 1850s, they rejected most of the bills that would have granted subsidies to transportation companies or banks.

If tax policy in Alabama had a democratic thrust, elsewhere in the South it did not. In some states, wealthy planters used their political muscle to exempt slave property from taxation. Or they shifted the burden to backcountry yeomen, who owned low-quality pasturelands, by taxing farms according to acreage rather than value. Planter-legislators also spared themselves the cost of building fences around their fields by enacting laws that required yeomen to "fence in" their livestock. And, during the 1850s, wealthy legislators throughout the South used public funds to subsidize the canals and railroads in which they had invested, ignoring the protests of yeoman-backed legislators.

The Paradox of Southern Prosperity Even without these internal improvements, the South had a strong economy. Indeed, it ranked fourth in the world in 1860, with a per capita income among whites higher than that of France and Germany. As a contributor to a Georgia newspaper argued in the 1850s, planters and yeomen should not complain about "tariffs, and merchants, and manufacturers" because "the most highly prosperous people now on earth, are to be found in these very [slave] States." Such arguments tell only part of the story. Nearly all African Americans — 40 percent of the population — lived in dire and permanent poverty. And, although the average southern white man was 80 percent richer than the average northerner in

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES
How did the political power of slave owners affect tax policy and the character of economic development in the southern states?

1860, the southerner's *non-slave* wealth was only 60 percent of the northern average. Moreover, the wealth of the industrializing Northeast was increasing at a faster pace than that of the South. Between 1820 and 1860, slave-related trade across the Atlantic declined from 12.6 percent of world trade to 5.3 percent.

Influential southerners blamed the shortcomings of their plantation-based economy on outsiders: "Purely agricultural people," intoned slave-owning planter-politician James Henry Hammond, "have been in all ages the victims of rapacious tyrants grinding them down." And they steadfastly defended their way of life. "We have no cities — we don't want them," boasted U.S. senator Louis Wigfall of Texas in 1861. "We want no manufactures: we desire no trading, no mechanical or manufacturing classes. . . . As long as we have our rice, our sugar, our tobacco, and our cotton, we can command wealth to purchase all we want." So wealthy southerners continued to buy land and slaves, a strategy that neglected investments in the great technological innovations of the nineteenth century — water- and steam-powered factories, machine tools, steel plows, and crushed-gravel roads — that would have raised the South's productivity and wealth.

Urban growth, the key to prosperity in Europe and the North, occurred primarily in the commercial cities around the periphery of the South: New Orleans, St. Louis, and Baltimore. Factories — often staffed by slave labor — appeared primarily in the Chesapeake region, which had a diverse agricultural economy and a surplus of bound workers. Within the Cotton South, wealthy planters invested in railroads primarily to grow more cotton; when the Western & Atlantic Railroad reached the Georgia upcountry, the cotton

Colonel and Mrs. James A. Whiteside, Son Charles and Servants

James A. Whiteside (1803–1861) was a Tennessee lawyer, politician, land speculator, and entrepreneur, with investments in iron manufacturing, banking, steamboats, and railroads. In 1857, he became vice president of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad. The following year, Whiteside persuaded the Scottish-born painter James Cameron (1817–1882) to move to Chattanooga, where Cameron completed this ambitious portrait of the colonel; his second wife, Harriet; their youngest child, Charles; and two enslaved "servants." The painting shows the family at home, with a view of Chattanooga and of Lookout Mountain, where the colonel had built a hotel. Whiteside died from pneumonia in 1861 after returning home from Virginia with his son James, who had fallen ill while serving in the Confederate army. Hunter Museum of American Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee. Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas B. Whiteside, 1975.7.

crop there quickly doubled. Cotton and agriculture remained King.

Slavery also deterred Europeans from migrating to the South, because they feared competition from bound labor. Their absence deprived the region of skilled artisans and of hardworking laborers to drain swamps, dig canals, smelt iron, and work on railroads. When entrepreneurs tried to hire slaves for these dangerous tasks, planters replied that "a negro's life is too valuable to be risked." Slave owners also feared that hiring out would make their slaves too independent. As a planter told Frederick Law Olmsted, such workers "had too much liberty . . . and got a habit of roaming about and taking care of themselves."

Thus, despite its increasing size and booming exports, the South remained an economic colony: Great Britain and the North bought its staple crops and provided its manufactures, financial services, and shipping facilities. In 1860, some 84 percent of southerners — more than double the percentage in the northern states — still worked in agriculture, and southern factories turned out only 10 percent of the nation's manufactures. The South's fixation on an "exclusive and exhausting" system of cotton monoculture and slave labor filled South Carolina textile entrepreneur William Gregg with "dark forebodings": "It has produced us such an abundant supply of all the luxuries and elegances of life, with so little exertion on our part, that we have become enervated, unfitted for other and more laborious pursuits."

The African American World

By the 1820s, the cultural life of most slaves reflected both the values and customs of their West African ancestors and the language, laws, and religious beliefs of the South's white population. This mix of African- and European-derived cultural values persisted for decades because whites discouraged blacks from assimilating and because slaves prized their diverse African heritages.

Evangelical Black Protestantism

The emergence of black Christianity illustrated the synthesis of African and European cultures. From the 1790s to the 1840s, the Second Great Awakening swept over the South, and evangelical Baptist and Methodist preachers converted thousands of white families and hundreds of enslaved blacks (see Chapter 8). Until that time, African-born blacks, often identifiable by their ritual scars, had maintained the religious practices of their homelands.

African Religions and Christian Conversion Africans carried their traditional religious practices to the United States. Some practiced Islam, but the majority relied on African gods and spirits. As late as 1842, Charles C. Jones, a Presbyterian minister, noted that the blacks on his family's plantation in Georgia believed "in second-sight, in apparitions, charms, witchcraft . . . [and other] superstitions brought from Africa." Fearing for their own souls if they withheld "the means of salvation" from African Americans, Jones and other zealous Protestant preachers and planters set out to convert slaves.

Other Protestant crusaders came from the ranks of pious black men and women who had become Christians in the Chesapeake. Swept to the Cotton South by the domestic slave trade, they carried with them the evangelical message of emotional conversion, ritual baptism, and communal spirituality. Equally important, these crusaders adapted Protestant doctrines to black needs. Enslaved Christians pointed out that blacks as well as whites were "children of God" and should be treated accordingly. **Black Protestantism** generally ignored the doctrines of original sin and predestination, and preachers didn't use biblical passages that encouraged unthinking obedience to authority. A white minister in Liberty County, Georgia, reported that when he urged slaves to obey their masters, "one half of my audience deliberately rose up and walked off."

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT
How did the Second Great Awakening affect the development of black religion?

Black Worship Indeed, some African American converts envisioned the deity as the Old Testament warrior who had liberated the Jews and so would liberate them. Inspired by a vision of Christ, Nat Turner led his bloody rebellion against slavery in Virginia (see Chapter 11). Other black Christians saw themselves as Chosen People: "de people dat is born of God." Charles Davenport, a Mississippi slave, recalled black preachers "exhort[ing] us dat us was de chillun o' Israel in de wilderness an' de Lawd done sont us to take dis lan' o' milk an' honey."

Still, African Americans expressed their Christianity in distinctive ways. The thousands of blacks who joined the Methodist Church respected its ban on profane dancing but praised the Lord in what minister Henry George Spaulding called the "religious dance of the Negroes." Spaulding described the African-derived

Black Kitchen Ball

From time to time, festive celebrations punctuated the demanding work routine of slaves' lives. In this 1838 painting, *Kitchen Ball at White Sulphur Springs Virginia*, African Americans dance to the music of a fiddle and a fife (on the right). Note the light complexions and Europeanized features of the most prominent figures, the result of either racial mixing or the cultural perspective of the artist. The painter, Christian Mayr, was born in Germany in 1805 and migrated to the United States in 1833. After working for years as a traveling portrait painter, Mayr settled in New York City in 1845 and died there in 1850.
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh. Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina.

"ring shout" this way: "Three or four, standing still, clapping their hands and beating time with their feet, commence singing in unison one of the peculiar shout melodies, while the others walk around in a ring, in single file, joining also in the song." The songs themselves were usually collective creations, devised spontaneously from bits of old hymns and tunes. Recalled an ex-slave:

> We'd all be at the "prayer house" de Lord's day, and de white preacher he'd splain de word and read whar Esekial done say — Dry bones gwine ter lib ergin. And, honey, de Lord would come a-shinin' thoo dem pages and revive dis ole nigger's heart, and I'd jump up dar and den and holler and shout and sing and pat, and dey would all cotch de words and I'd sing it to some ole shout song I'd heard 'em sing from Africa, and dey'd all take it up and keep at it, and keep a-addin' to it, and den it would be a spiritual.

By such African-influenced means, black congregations devised a distinctive and joyous brand of Protestant worship to sustain them on the long journey to emancipation and the Promised Land. "O my Lord delivered Daniel," the slaves sang, "O why not deliver me too?"

Forging Families and Communities

Black Protestantism was one facet of an increasingly homogeneous African American culture in the rural South. Even in South Carolina — a major point of entry for imported slaves — only 20 percent of the black residents in 1820 had been born in Africa. The domestic

slave trade mingled blacks from many states, erased regional differences, and prompted the emergence of a core culture in the Lower Mississippi Valley. A prime example was the fate of the Gullah dialect, which combined words from English and a variety of African languages in an African grammatical structure. Spoken by blacks in the Carolina low country well into the twentieth century, Gullah did not take root on the cotton plantations of Alabama and Mississippi. There, slaves from Carolina were far outnumbered by migrants from the Chesapeake, who spoke black English. Like Gullah, black English used double negatives and other African grammatical forms, but it consisted primarily of English words rendered with West African pronunciation (for example, with *th* pronounced as *d*—"de preacher").

Nonetheless, African influences remained significant. At least one-third of the slaves who entered the United States between 1776 and 1809 came from the Congo region of West-Central Africa, and they brought their cultures with them. As traveler Isaac Holmes reported in 1821: "In Louisiana, and the state of Mississippi, the slaves . . . dance for several hours during Sunday afternoon. The general movement is in what they call the Congo dance." Similar descriptions of blacks who "danced the Congo and sang a purely African song to the accompaniment of . . . a drum" appeared as late as 1890.

African Americans also continued to respect African incest taboos by shunning marriages between cousins. On the Good Hope Plantation in South Carolina, nearly half of the slave children born between 1800 and 1857 were related by blood to one another; yet when they married, only one of every forty-one unions took place between cousins. White planters were not the source of this taboo: cousin marriages were frequent among the 440 South Carolina men and women who owned at least one hundred slaves in 1860, in part because such unions kept wealth within an extended family (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 398).

Unlike white marriages, slave unions were not legally binding. According to a Louisiana judge, "slaves have no legal capacity to assent to any contract . . . because slaves are deprived of all civil rights." Nonetheless, many African Americans took marriage vows before Christian ministers or publicly marked their union in ceremonies that included the West African custom of jumping over a broomstick together. Once married, newly arrived young people in the Cotton South often chose older people in their new communities as fictive "aunts" and "uncles." The slave trade had destroyed their family, but not their family values.

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW
In what respects did African cultural practices affect the lives of enslaved African Americans?

The creation of fictive kinship ties was part of a community-building process, a partial substitute for the family ties that sustained whites during periods of crisis. Naming children was another. Recently imported slaves frequently gave their children African names. Males born on Friday, for example, were often called Cuffee—the name of that day in several West African languages. Many American-born parents chose names of British origin, but they usually named sons after fathers, uncles, or grandfathers and daughters after grandmothers. Those transported to the Cotton South often named their children for relatives left behind. Like incest rules and marriage rituals, this intergenerational sharing of names evoked memories of a lost world and bolstered kin ties in the new one.

Negotiating Rights

By forming stable families and communities, African Americans gradually created a sense of order in the harsh and arbitrary world of slavery. In a few regions, slaves won substantial control over their lives.

Working Lives During the Revolutionary era, blacks in the rice-growing lowlands of South Carolina successfully asserted the right to labor by the "task." Under the **task system**, workers had to complete a precisely defined job each day—for example, digging up a quarter-acre of land, hoeing half an acre, or pounding seven mortars of rice. By working hard, many finished their tasks by early afternoon, a Methodist preacher reported, and had "the rest of the day for themselves, which they spend in working their own private fields . . . planting rice, corn, potatoes, tobacco &c. for their own use and profit."

Slaves on sugar and cotton plantations led more regimented lives, thanks to the gang-labor system. As one field hand put it, there was "no time off [between] de change of de seasons. . . . Dey was allus clearin' mo' lan' or sump'." Many slaves faced bans on growing crops on their own. "It gives an excuse for trading," explained one owner, and that encouraged roaming and independence. Still, many masters hired out surplus workers as teamsters, drovers, steamboat workers, turpentine gatherers, and railroad builders; in 1856, no fewer than 435 hired slaves laid track for the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad. Many owners regretted the result. As an overseer remarked about a slave named John, "He is not as good a hand as he was before he went to Alabamy."

Childhood in Black and White

A major theme of Harriet Beecher Stowe's powerful antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the sin of separating black families and denying parental rights to enslaved mothers and fathers. The following documents reveal the dynamics of plantation family life, and particularly mother-child relations.

1. **Ex-slave Josephine Smith, interviewed at age ninety-four by Mary A. Hicks, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1930s.** *Slave children had loving but limited relationships with their mothers, who worked long hours in the fields and were sometimes sold away from their children.*

I 'members seein' a heap o' slave sales, wid de niggers in chains, an' de spec'ulators sellin' an' buyin' dem off. I also 'members seein' a drove of slaves wid nothin' on but a rag 'twixt dere legs bein' galloped roun' 'fore de buyers. 'Bout de wust thing dat eber I seed do' wuz a slave 'woman at Louisburg who had been sold off from her three weeks old baby, an wuz bein' marched ter New Orleans.

She had walked till she quz give out, an' she wuz weak enough ter fall in de middle o' de road. . . . As I pass by dis 'oman begs me in God's name fer a drink o' water, an' I gives it ter her. I ain't neber be so sorry fer nobody. . . . Dey walk fer a little piece an' dis 'oman fall out. She dies dar side o' de road, an' right dar dey buries her, cussin', dey tells me, 'bout losin' money on her.

2. **"Narrative of James Curry, a Fugitive Slave," *The Liberator*, January 10, 1840.** *The abolitionist newspaper* The Liberator *published heartrending accounts of death and separation in slave families and how "fictive kinship" assisted the survivors.*

My mother's labor was very hard. She would go to the house in the morning, take her pail upon her head, and go away to the cow-pen, and milk fourteen cows. She then put on the bread for the family breakfast, and got the cream ready for churning, and set a little child to churn it, she having the care of from ten to fifteen children, whose mothers worked in the field. . . . Among the slave children, were three little orphans, whose mothers, at their death, committed them to the care of my mother. One of them was a babe. She took them and treated them as her own. The master took no care about them. She always took a share of the cloth she had provided for her own children, to cover these little friendless ones.

3. **Former slave Barney Alford, interview for the Works Progress Administration in Mississippi, 1930s.**

Ole mammy 'Lit' wus mity ole en she lived in one corner of de big yard en she keered fur all de black chilluns while de old folks wurk in de field. Mammy Lit wus good to all de chilluns en I had ter help her wid dem chilluns en keep dem babies on de pallet. Mammy Lit smoked a pipe, en sum times I wuld hide dat pipe, en she wuld slap me fur it, den sum times I wuld run way en go ter de kitchen whar my mammy wus at wurk en mammy Lit wuld hafter cum fur me en den she wuld whip me er gin. She sed I wus bad.

4. **"Mrs. Meriwether Administering Bitters," illustration from John Pendleton Kennedy, *Swallow Barn, Or, A Sojourn in the Old Dominion*, 1851.** *Bitters—strong alcoholic beverages flavored with bitter herbs—were administered as medicine in the nineteenth century, as in this depiction of a planter's wife tending to enslaved children. Kennedy's cheerful depictions of Virginia plantation life in this popular book, first published in 1832, reinforced the notion of slavery as a "positive good."*

Source: Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

5. **G. M. J., "Early Culture of Children," 1855.** *This excerpt from a Christian advice manual for mothers reflects the values of the mid-nineteenth-century white Protestant middle class.*

"Train up a child in the way he should go," is a law as imperative in the 19th century, as when first uttered by the lips of the wise man. Mothers are the natural executors of this law to their daughters. Nothing but the most unavoidable and pressing force of circumstances, should wrench this power from their hands. Who will guard with a mother's jealous eye the health, habits, morals, and religion of this most delicate part of creation. . . . How often I have been pained to see mothers place those delicate plants in the nursery with servants, whose tastes, feelings, morals, manners, and language are but a little removed from the lower animals of creation; there to receive impressions, and imbibe habits, which will grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength, until like the branches of the giant oak, they shall expand and deepen into a shade that will forever conceal the parent stock.

6. **Visiting Cards Created by Philadelphia Portrait Painter and Photographer Peregrine F. Cooper, As We Found Them (left), As They Are Now (right), 1864.** *One of the ways to "train up a child in the way he should go" was to inculcate abolitionist sentiments early and often.*

Source: George Eastman House.

Sources: (1) WPA Slave Narrative Project, 1936–38, learnnc.org; (2) "Narrative of James Curry, a Fugitive Slave," *The Liberator*, January 10, 1840, learnnc.org; (3) The MS Gen Web Project, msgw.org/slaves/alford-xslave.htm; (5) *Home Garner; or the Intellectual and Moral Store House*, ed. Mary G. Clarke (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott & Co., 1855), 115.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What do these sources reveal about slave communities? About the extent to which the ideology of "benevolent paternalism" governed the behavior of slave owners?
2. How does the engraving (source 4) compare to the descriptions of the care of slave children (sources 1–3)? What biases, if any, can you detect in these sources?
3. How would a person holding the beliefs described in source 5 react to the engraving of Mrs. Meriwether? To images showing slave "mammies" raising the master's children?
4. How do the images of enslaved children in source 6 pertain to "train[ing] up a child in the way he should go"? How effective are they? What emotions do they play upon?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In the political system, debate over "the peculiar institution" of slavery often focused on property rights and constitutional principles. In the actual world of the plantation, human bondage evoked a range of human emotions—jealousy, resentment, anger, love, fear, tenderness—and human pain. Write an essay that assesses the economic, legal, and political arguments over slavery in light of the experiences of enslaved mothers and children.

Antebellum Slave Quarters

During the colonial period, owners often housed their slaves by gender in communal barracks. In the nineteenth century, slaves usually lived in family units in separate cabins. The slave huts on this South Carolina plantation were sturdily built but had few windows. Inside, they were sparsely furnished. Library of Congress.

The planters' greatest fear was that enslaved African Americans — a majority of the population in most cotton-growing counties — would rise in rebellion. Legally speaking, owners had virtually unlimited power over their slaves. "The power of the master must be absolute," intoned Justice Thomas Ruffin of the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1829. But absolute power required brutal coercion, and only hardened or sadistic masters had the stomach for such violence. "These poor negroes, receiving none of the fruits of their labor, do not love work," explained one woman who worked her own farm; "if we had slaves, we should have to . . . beat them to make use of them."

Moreover, passive resistance by African Americans seriously limited their owners' power. Slaves slowed the pace of work by feigning illness and losing or breaking tools. One Maryland slave, faced with transport to Mississippi and separation from his wife, flatly refused "to accompany my people, or to be exchanged or sold," his owner reported. Masters ignored such feelings at their peril. A slave (or a relative) might retaliate by setting fire to the master's house and barns, poisoning his food, or destroying his crops. Fear of resistance, as well as critical scrutiny by abolitionists, prompted many masters to reduce their reliance on the lash and use positive incentives such as food and special privileges. Noted Frederick Law Olmsted: "Men of sense have discovered that it was better to offer them rewards than to whip them." Nonetheless, owners could always resort to violence, and countless masters regularly asserted their power by demanding sex from their female slaves. As ex-slave Bethany Veney lamented in her autobiography, from "the unbridled lust of the slave-owner . . . the law holds . . . no protecting arm" over black women.

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

How successful were slaves in securing significant control over their lives?

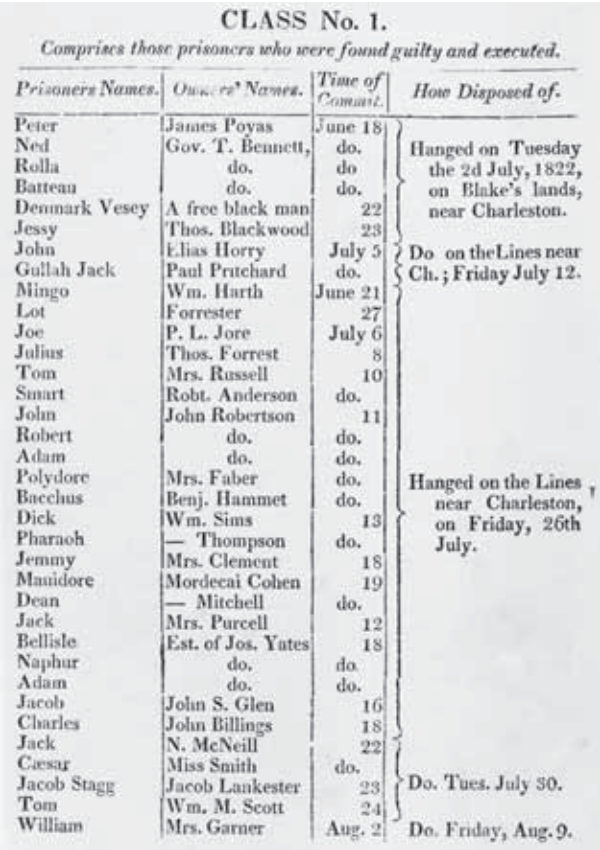
Survival Strategies Slavery remained an exploitative system grounded in fear and coercion. Over the decades, hundreds of individual slaves responded by attacking their masters and overseers. But only a few blacks — among them Gabriel and Martin Prosser (1800) and Nat Turner (1831) — plotted mass uprisings. Most slaves recognized that revolt would be futile; they lacked the autonomous institutions such as the communes of European peasants, for example, needed to organize a successful rebellion. Moreover, whites

were numerous, well armed, and determined to maintain their position of racial superiority.

Escape was equally problematic. Blacks in the Upper South could flee to the North, but only by leaving their family and kin. Slaves in the Lower South escaped to sparsely settled regions of Florida, where some intermarried with the Seminole Indians. Elsewhere in the South, escaped slaves eked out a meager existence in inhospitable marshy areas or mountain valleys. Consequently, most African Americans remained on plantations; as Frederick Douglass put it, they were "pegged down to one single spot, and must take root there or die."

"Taking root" meant building the best possible lives for themselves. Over time, enslaved African Americans pressed their owners for a greater share of the product of their labor, much like unionized workers in the North were doing. Thus slaves insisted on getting paid for "overwork" and on the right to cultivate a garden and sell its produce. "De menfolks tend to de gardens round dey own house," recalled a Louisiana slave. "Dey raise some cotton and sell it to massa and git li'l money dat way." Enslaved women raised poultry and sold chickens and eggs. An Alabama slave remembered buying "Sunday clothes with dat money, sech as hats and pants and shoes and dresses." By the 1850s, thousands of African Americans were reaping the small rewards of this underground economy, and some accumulated sizable property. Enslaved Georgia carpenter Alexander Steele owned four horses, a mule, a silver watch, two cows, a wagon, and large quantities of fodder, hay, and corn.

Whatever their material circumstances, few slaves accepted the legitimacy of their status. Although he was fed well and never whipped, a former slave told an English traveler, "I was cruelly treated because I was kept in slavery."



CLASS No. 1.

Comprises those prisoners who were found guilty and executed.

Prisoners Names.	*Owners' Names.*	*Time of Convict.*	*How Disposed of.*
Peter	James Poyas	June 18	Hanged on Tuesday the 2d July, 1822, on Blake's lands, near Charleston.
Ned	Gov. T. Bennett,	do.	
Rolla	do.	do	
Batteau	do.	do.	
Denmark Vesey	A free black man	22	
Jessy	Thos. Blackwood	23	
John	Elias Horry	July 5	Do on the Lines near Ch.; Friday July 12.
Gullah Jack	Paul Pritchard	do.	
Mingo	Wm. Harth	June 21	
Lot	Forrester	27	
Joe	P. L. Jore	July 6	
Julius	Thos. Forrest	8	
Tom	Mrs. Russell	10	
Smart	Robt. Anderson	do.	
John	John Robertson	11	
Robert	do.	do.	
Adam	do.	do.	
Polydore	Mrs. Faber	do.	Hanged on the Lines near Charleston, on Friday, 26th July.
Bacchus	Benj. Hammet	do.	
Dick	Wm. Sims	13	
Pharaoh	— Thompson	do.	
Jemmy	Mrs. Clement	18	
Mauidore	Mordecai Cohen	19	
Dean	— Mitchell	do.	
Jack	Mrs. Purcell	12	
Bellisle	Est. of Jos. Yates	18	
Naphur	do.	do	
Adam	do.	do.	
Jacob	John S. Glen	16	
Charles	John Billings	18	
Jack	N. McNeill	22	
Cæsar	Miss Smith	do.	
Jacob Stagg	Jacob Lankester	23	Do. Tues. July 30.
Tom	Wm. M. Scott	24	
William	Mrs. Garner	Aug. 2	Do. Friday, Aug. 9.

"An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection, Charleston, South Carolina"

In 1820, Charleston had a free black population of 1,500 and an array of African American institutions, including the Brown Fellowship Society (for those of mixed racial ancestry) and an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. In 1822, Charleston authorities accused a free black, Denmark Vesey, of organizing a revolt to free the city's slaves. Although historians long accepted the truth of that charge, recent scholarship suggests that Vesey's only offense was antagonizing some whites by claiming his rights as a free man and that fearful slave owners conjured up the plot. Regardless, South Carolina officials hanged Vesey and thirty-four alleged co-conspirators and tore down the AME church where they allegedly plotted the uprising. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

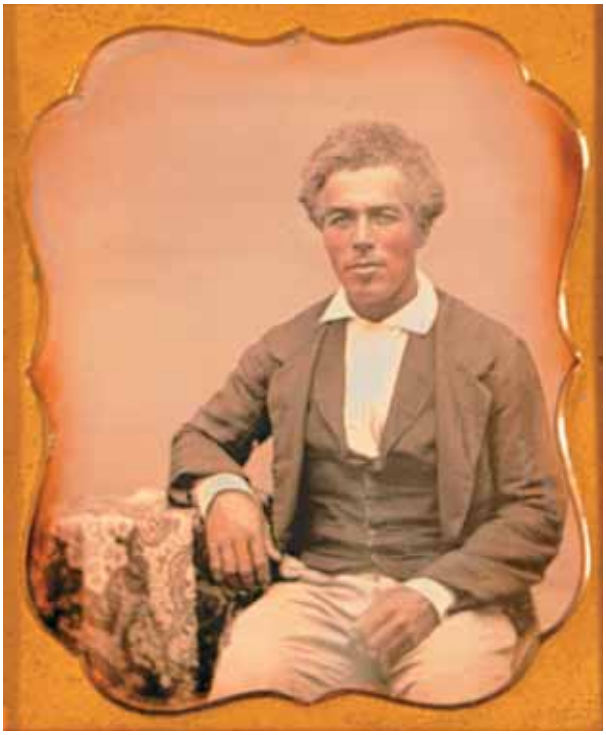
The Free Black Population

Some African Americans escaped slavery through flight or a grant of freedom by their owners and, if they lived in the North, through gradual emancipation laws that, by 1840, had virtually ended bound labor. The proportion of free blacks rose from 8 percent of the African American population in 1790 to about 13 percent between 1820 and 1840, and then (because of high birthrates among enslaved blacks) fell to 11 percent. Still, the number of free blacks continued to grow. In the slave state of Maryland in 1860, half of all African Americans were free, and many more were "term" slaves, guaranteed their freedom in exchange for a few more years of work.

Northern Blacks Almost half of free blacks in the United States in 1840 (some 170,000) and again in 1860 (250,000) lived in the free states of the North. However, few of them enjoyed unfettered freedom. Most whites regarded African Americans as their social inferiors and confined them to low-paying jobs. In rural areas, blacks worked as farm laborers or tenant farmers; in

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How were the lives of free African Americans different in the northern and southern states?



A Master Bridge Builder

Horace King (1807–1885) was a self-made man of color, a rarity in the nineteenth-century South. Born a slave of mixed European, African, and Native American (Catawba) ancestry, King built major bridges in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi during the early 1840s. After winning his freedom in 1846, he built and ran a toll bridge across the Chattahoochee River in Alabama. During the Civil War, King worked as a contractor for the Confederacy; during Reconstruction, he served two terms as a Republican in the Alabama House of Representatives. Collection of the Columbus Museum, Columbus, Georgia; Museum Purchase.

towns and cities, they toiled as domestic servants, laundresses, or day laborers. Only a small number of African Americans owned land. "You do not see one out of a hundred . . . that can make a comfortable living, own a cow, or a horse," a traveler in New Jersey noted. In most states, law or custom prohibited northern blacks from voting, attending public schools, or sitting next to whites in churches. They could testify in court against whites only in Massachusetts. The federal government did not allow African Americans to work for the postal service, claim public lands, or hold a U.S. passport. As black activist Martin Delaney remarked in 1852: "We are slaves in the midst of freedom."

Of the few African Americans able to make full use of their talents, several achieved great distinction. Mathematician and surveyor Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806) published an almanac and helped lay out the new capital in the District of Columbia; Joshua Johnston (1765–1832) won praise for his portraiture; and merchant Paul Cuffee (1759–1817) acquired a small fortune from his business enterprises. More impressive and enduring were the community institutions created by free African Americans. Throughout the North, these largely unknown men and women founded schools, mutual-benefit organizations, and fellowship groups, often called Free African Societies. Discriminated against by white Protestants, they formed their own congregations and a new religious denomination — the African Methodist Episcopal Church, headed by Bishop Richard Allen (see Chapter 8).

These institutions gave African Americans a measure of cultural autonomy, even as they marked sharp social divisions among blacks. "Respectable" blacks tried through their dress, conduct, and attitude to win the "esteem and patronage" of prominent whites — first Federalists and then Whigs and abolitionists — who were sympathetic to their cause. Those efforts separated them from impoverished blacks, who distrusted not only whites but also blacks who "acted white."

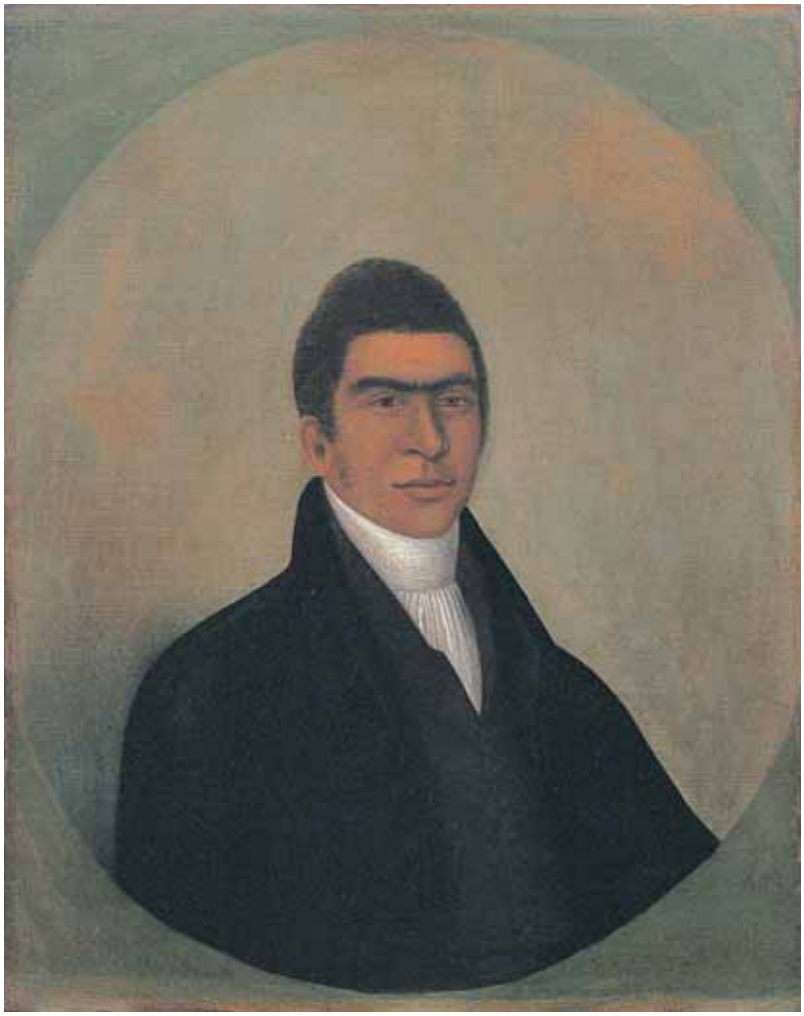
Standing for Freedom in the South The free black population in the slave states numbered approximately 94,000 in 1810 and 225,000 in 1860. Most of these men and women lived in coastal cities — Mobile, Memphis, New Orleans — and in the Upper South. Partly because skilled Europeans avoided the South, free blacks formed the backbone of the urban artisan workforce. African American carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, butchers, and shopkeepers played prominent roles in the economies of Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, and New Orleans. But whatever their skills, free blacks faced many dangers. White officials often denied jury trials to free blacks accused of crimes, and sometimes they forced those charged with vagrancy back into slavery. Some free blacks were simply kidnapped and sold.

As a privileged minority among African Americans in the South, free blacks had divided loyalties. To advance the welfare of their families, some distanced themselves from plantation slaves and assimilated white culture and values. Indeed, mixed-race individuals sometimes joined the ranks of the planter class. David Barland, one of twelve children born to a white Mississippi planter and his black slave Elizabeth, himself owned no fewer than eighteen slaves. In neighboring Louisiana, some free blacks supported secession because they owned slaves and were "dearly attached to their native land."

Such individuals were exceptions. Most free African Americans acknowledged their ties to the great mass of slaves, some of whom were their relatives. "We's different [from whites] in color, in talk and in 'ligion and

An African American Clergyman

This flattering portrait is one of two paintings of African Americans by black artist Joshua Johnson (who also went by the surname Johnston). The son of an enslaved black woman and a white man, who bought his son's freedom in 1782, Johnson described himself in an advertisement in the *Baltimore Intelligence* in 1798 as a "Portrait Painter . . . a self-taught genius deriving from nature and industry his knowledge of the Art." White merchant families in Maryland and Virginia held Johnson's work in high regard and commissioned most of his thirty or so extant works. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine. Museum Purchase, George Otis Hamlin Fund.



beliefs," said one. Calls by white planters in the 1840s to re-enslave free African Americans reinforced black unity. Knowing their own liberty was not secure so long as slavery existed, free blacks celebrated on August 1, the day slaves in the British West Indies won emancipation, and sought a similar goal for enslaved African Americans. As a delegate to the National Convention of Colored People in 1848 put it, "Our souls are yet dark under the pall of slavery." In the rigid American caste system, free blacks stood as symbols of hope to enslaved African Americans and as symbols of danger to most whites.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we focused on the theme of an expanding South. Beginning about 1800, planters carried the system of plantation slavery from its traditional home in the Upper South to the Mississippi Valley and beyond. Powered by cotton, this movement westward involved the forced migration of more than 1 million enslaved African Americans and divided the planter elite into aristocratic paternalists and entrepreneurial capitalists.

We also examined the character of white and black societies in the Cotton South. After 1820, less than a third of white families owned slaves, and another third were yeomen farmers; propertyless tenant farmers and laborers made up the rest. Many whites joined evangelical Protestant churches, as did blacks, who infused their churches with African modes of expression. Indeed, church and family became core institutions of African American society, providing strength and solace amid the tribulations of slavery. Finally, we explored the initiatives taken by the free black population, in both the northern and southern states, to achieve individual mobility and to build community institutions. These efforts resulted in a church-based leadership class and a black abolitionist movement.

CHAPTER REVIEW

MAKE IT STICK Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.

TERMS TO KNOW

Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

coastal trade (p. 380)
inland system (p. 380)
chattel principle (p. 381)
benevolent masters (p. 382)
republican aristocracy (p. 386)
"positive good" argument (p. 386)
gang-labor system (p. 388)
slave society (p. 388)
Alamo (p. 391)
secret ballot (p. 393)
black Protestantism (p. 395)
task system (p. 397)

Key People

Harriet Jacobs (p. 382)
James Henry Hammond (p. 384)
Stephen Austin (p. 391)
Antonio López de Santa Anna (p. 391)
Sam Houston (p. 391)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. Why in 1860 did white southerners remain committed to the institution of slavery and its expansion?
2. Based on what you have learned in Part 4, compare and contrast society in the American South with that in the North. Was America, in fact, two distinct societies by 1860? If not, what bonds, beliefs, and cultural practices united Americans across regional boundaries? If so, what factors contributed to the development of separate regional identities?
3. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** Review the events listed under "Identity" on the thematic timeline on page 283, and then discuss how the end of the Atlantic slave trade in 1807 and the subsequent rise of the domestic slave trade affected the identity of the African American population.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** After reviewing the relevant materials in Chapters 3, 8, and 12, explain how the plantation economy and the system of slavery changed between 1720 and 1860.
2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE** Chapter 12 contains a number of paintings or photographs of enslaved African Americans. In your judgment, do those images, either individually or as a group, capture the reality of slave life? Explain your position while evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of paintings and photographs as historical evidence.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (1998). Recounts Ball's ancestors' ownership of slaves, their illicit sexual unions, and the family's diverse racial identity.

Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity* (2003). Traces the history of slavery in the United States.

Charlene M. Boyer Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display* (2001). Explores the lives of the planter class.

Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds* (1995). Evokes the patriarchal lives of yeomen families.

Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (2005). Analyzes the changing character of slavery and African American society.

For primary documents on the black Christian church, consult **docsouth.unc.edu/church/index.html**.

TIMELINE

Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1810s	• Africans from Congo region influence black culture for decades • Natural increase produces surplus of slaves in Old South • Domestic slave trade expands, disrupting black family life
1812	• Louisiana becomes a state, and its sugar output increases
1817	• Mississippi becomes a state; Alabama follows (1819)
1820s	• Free black population increases in North and South • Entrepreneurial planters in Cotton South turn to gang labor • Southern Methodists and Baptists become socially conservative • African Americans increasingly adopt Christian beliefs
1830s	• Gentry in Old South adopt paternalistic ideology and argue that slavery is a "positive good" • Boom in cotton production • Percentage of slave-owning white families falls • Yeomen farm families retreat to hill country • Lawyers become influential in southern politics
1840s	• Southern Whigs advocate economic diversification • Gradual emancipation completed in North
1850s	• Cotton prices and production increase • Slave prices rise • Southern states subsidize railroads, but industry remains limited

KEY TURNING POINTS: Using the five entries in the timeline for the 1830s, write an essay that describes the economy, society, and polity of the South in that decade and that analyzes the significance of the decade's developments in the evolution of the region between 1800 and 1860.