The Antebellum South

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Early Emancipation in the North

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE, 1803

OLD NORTHWEST
(Slavery prohibited by Ordinance of 1787)

PA. 1780

N.Y. 1799

N.J. 1804

SLAVE STATES

By state constitution

By state statutes in force (gradual emancipation)

MASS. 1780

R.I. 1784

CONN. 1784

VT. 1777

N.H. 1783
Changes in Cotton Production

1820

1860
Antebellum Southern Society
Characteristics of the Antebellum South

1. Primarily agrarian.
2. Economic power shifted from the “upper South” to the “lower South.”
3. “Cotton Is King!”
   * 1860 $\rightarrow$ 5 mil. bales a yr. (57% of total US exports).
4. Very slow development of industrialization.
5. Rudimentary financial system.
6. Inadequate transportation system.
Value of Cotton Exports As % of All US Exports

By 1840 cotton accounted for more than half of all U.S. Exports.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Slave Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>697,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>893,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>1,191,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>1,538,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2,009,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>2,487,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3,204,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>3,953,760</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Southern Population

NOTE: States with no indicated percentage of free blacks had a very small number, less than one percent.
Economics binds us all!

Northern Merchants participated in Slave economy in the South

– Slave Money financed industry and banking in North

– Northern companies used cotton to make textiles
  • “Lords of Lash” → “Lords of Loom”

– Northern companies even insured slaves property!

– New York’s rise as main port city is directly connected too!
What percentage of Southern families do you think owned absolutely no slaves?
Plain Folk of the South...

• ___% didn’t own slaves
• Subsistence farmers untouched by market revolution
  – Home production → No need to industrialize!
• Higher rates of illiteracy than north
• Many rented slaves on a regular basis but

• ...but why support a system that doesn’t directly benefit you?
Racism, kinship ties, common participation in a democratic political culture, and regional loyalty in the face of outside criticism all served to cement bonds between planters and the South’s “plain folk.” – Foner

– Still voted for slaveholders for public office and “like other white southerners, most small farmers believed their economic and personal freedom rested on slavery.
Southern Planters:

• Atypical slaveholders... big plantations
• “Planters not only held the majority of slaves, but they controlled the most fertile land, enjoyed the highest incomes, and dominated state and local offices and the leadership of both political parties.” –Foner
• Idealized in Southern Society
A Real Georgia Plantation
Slaves posing in front of their cabin on a Southern plantation.
Slaves Picking Cotton on a Mississippi Plantation
Slaves Using the Cotton Gin
Virginian Luxuries.
Fitzhugh vs. Northrup!

- A clash of perspectives on slavery!
- First Reading:
Paternalistic Ethos

“The paternalistic outlook both masked and justified the brutal reality of slavery. It enabled slaveowners to think of themselves as kind, responsible masters even as they bought and sold their human property— a practice at odds with the claim that slaves formed part of the master’s “family.”
A pre–Civil War engraving depicting the paternalist ideal.

God bless you massa! you feed and clothe us. When we are sick you nurse us, and when too old to work, you provide for us.

These poor creatures are a sacred legacy from my ancestors. While a dollar is left me, nothing shall be spared to increase their comfort and happiness.
Pre-Civil War Engraving

“God Bless you Massa! You feed and clothe us, ... and when too old to work, you provide for us!”

The Master replies:

“These poor creatures are a sacred legacy from my ancestors while a dollar is left me, nothing shall be spared to increase their comfort and happiness.”