

## Chapter Outline 10 - The Rise of the South, 1815–1860

- I. Introduction

Between 1815 and 1860, the South emerged as the world's most extensive commercial agricultural economy—an economy built on a foundation of slave labor. Southerners—white and black, slaveholders and nonslaveholders—developed a culture quite different from their northern counterparts. Slavery influenced not only southern economics, values, customs, and laws, but also the region's relationship to the nation and to the world.

- II. The “Distinctive” South?

- A. South-North Similarity

North and South were similar in geographic size. Both regions shared the experience of the American Revolution, had a common language, lived under the same Constitution, and believed in the American mission. Both regions also shared in the economic booms and busts of the nation.

- B. South-North Dissimilarity

North and South had different climates and growing seasons. The South emerged as a biracial society in which there was brutal inequality, and it became a society in which the wealth of whites was based on slave labor. The North was far ahead of the South in industrial growth. Although both northerners and southerners were influenced by the Second Great Awakening, evangelical Christianity in the North gave rise to major social-reform movements while in the South religious leaders adopted a hands-off policy toward slavery and reform focused on personal behavior.

- C. A Southern World-View and the Proslavery Argument

The southern world-view was one of its most distinctive characteristics. At the heart of the South's defense of slavery was a

deep and abiding racism. By the 1820s, southerners defended slavery as a “positive good” and as part of the natural social order.

- D. A Slave Society

By the 1830s the South had become a slave society as opposed to merely a society with slaves. Slavery and race affected everything in the South from the social structure to politics.

- III. Southern Expansion, Indian Resistance, and Removal

- A. A Southern Westward Movement

After the 1820s, the heart of cotton cultivation shifted from the coastal states to Alabama and the Mississippi valley. As white southerners carried slaves and the slave system westward, they believed, as did white northern migrants, that they had a natural right to displace the native inhabitants of the land onto which they moved.

- B. Indian Treaty Making

Although the federal government followed international protocol in entering into treaties with Indian leaders, treaty making was in reality simply a tactic to acquire Indian land.

- C. Indian Accommodation

As many Indian nations attempted to adjust to the market economy, they fell into a cycle of debt, land cessions, and dependency. The government initially followed a policy of assimilating American Indians through education and Christianity, but the pace of westward expansion continued to put Indian lands at risk.

- D. Indian Removal as Federal Policy

The southeastern tribes had maintained much of their land after the War of 1812. The government eventually forced these tribes to move

to the West.

- E. Cherokees

During the Cherokee renaissance, the tribe became economically self-sufficient and politically self-governing. However, the Cherokees faced removal when the state of Georgia declared sovereignty over them.

- F. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*

Chief John Ross successfully sued Georgia in federal court, but President Andrew Jackson ignored the decision.

- G. Trail of Tears

The government forced the southeastern Indians to move West, and nearly one-quarter of them died along the way.

- H. Seminole Wars

When Seminole Indians under the leadership of Osceola resisted removal, federal troops moved to subdue them. Eventually, many Seminoles migrated West, but a number of them remained in the Florida swamps.

- IV. Social Pyramid in the Old South

- A. Yeoman Farmers

Yeoman farmers made up the majority of the white southern population. Although a numerical majority, they did not control the political or economic direction of the South.

- B. Yeoman Folk Culture

Yeoman folk culture was based on family, church, and local region.

- C. Yeomen's Livelihoods

John F. Flintoff serves as an example of a yeoman farmer who aspired to become a slave owner. Ferdinand L. Steel serves as an example of a more typical yeoman farmer. He never became a slave owner; family and religion remained the focus of his life.

- D. Landless Whites

Depending on the state, some 25 to 40 percent of white southerners owned no land.

- E. Yeomen's Demands and White Class Relations

In the 1820s and 1830s, many small farmers worked to enact electoral and other reforms in the planter-dominated government. As a result, southern government became more democratic.

Despite the unequal distribution of wealth, the dream of upward social mobility tended to prevent class conflict. However, after 1830, as the gap between the classes widened and land became less available, nonslaveholders had fewer economic prospects of upward social mobility. Although planters became more fearful of the loyalty of nonslaveholders, they remained relatively secure because of their control over government in the Old South.

- F. Free Blacks

The lives of free blacks were worse than that of yeomen and little better than that of slaves, although some prospered and even owned slaves.

- G. Free Black Communities

In some regions the mulatto population was recognized as a distinct class, and in many southern cities free black communities formed.

- V. The Planters' World

- A. The Newly Rich

The planter class stood at the top of the social pyramid in the South.

Although the richest planters attempted to model a life of genteel sophistication, most planters in cotton-boom states such as Alabama and Mississippi were newly rich and of humble origins.

- B. Social Status and Planters' Values

Slavery served as the basis of wealth and social standing, and the institution therefore had a profound influence on southern values and mores.

The aristocratic values of lineage, privilege, pride, and refinement gained a substantial foothold among all levels of southern society. In the recently settled areas, however, frontier values of courage and self-reliance remained the norm.

- C. King Cotton in a Global Economy

The fate of southern planters depended on the continuation of world demand for cotton.

- D. Paternalism

Slaveholding men accepted a paternalistic ideology to justify their dominance over white women and black slaves.

With regard to their slaves, slaveholders saw themselves as the benevolent guardians of an inferior race.

Women of the planter class were raised to be wives, mothers, and subordinate companions to men.

- E. Marriage and Family Among Planters

Young white women often approached marriage and childbearing with anxiety. Women also had to play “the ostrich game” with regard to sexual liaisons between white men and slave women.

- VI. Slave Life and Labor

- A. Slaves’ Everyday Conditions

Although slaves usually received adequate nourishment, they had a plain and monotonous diet. They owned few clothes, and typically they lived in small, one-room cabins.

- B. Slave Work Routine

Long hours in large work gangs characterized the slave work regime. Planters aimed to keep their hands busy all the time. In South Carolina and Georgia, slaves worked under the task system.

- C. Violence and Intimidation Against Slaves

Whippings occurred throughout the South, although generally more so on large farms than on small ones. The mental cruelty of slavery—the hopeless sense of bondage and coercion with no hope for the future—provided the cruelest element of the system.

- D. Slave-Master Relationships

Most slaves felt antagonism and hatred toward whites, feelings that bred resistance, bitterness, and distrust.

- VII. Slave Culture and Resistance

- A. African Cultural Survival

Their culture was the resource that allowed slaves to maintain an attitude of defiance.

African influence remained strong in the slave community, with slaves' appearance, entertainment, and superstitions helping to provide them with a sense of their past. Increasingly, slaves began to view themselves as a single group unified by race.

- B. Slaves' Religion and Music

Christianity offered slaves an important means of coping with bondage, and their faith helped them attain a sense of racial identity. Music, with its rhythm and with physical movement, became central to slaves' religious experience.

- C. The Black Family in Slavery

Despite the fear of separation, slaves attempted and often succeeded in forming stable and healthy families. Kinship networks and extended families often held life together in many slave communities.

- D. The Domestic Slave Trade

Family provided a central part of slaves' existence, and they lived in the fear that members of their families might be sold to other masters.

Many white southerners made their living from the slave trade.

- E. Strategies of Resistance

Despite some examples of violent rebellions, most slaves practiced nonviolent forms of resistance, such as occasionally stealing food, negotiating for better working conditions, or temporarily running away.

- F. Nat Turner's Insurrection

An educated black preacher, Nat Turner led a bloody but unsuccessful rebellion. In the aftermath of this rebellion, the state of Virginia held a

legislative and public debate over the possibility of gradual emancipation.