I. “Cotton Is King!”

- Cotton Kingdom:
  - Developed into huge agricultural factory:
    - In an economic spiral, planters bought more slaves and land
    - Northern shippers reaped large profits from cotton trade
    - Prosperity of North, South, and England rested on bent backs of enslaved bondsmen
  - So too did nation’s growing wealth:
    - Cotton accounted for half the value of American exports

II. The Planter “Aristocracy”

- South was a planter aristocracy:
  - In 1850 only 1,733 families owned more than 100 slaves:
    - Select group provided political and social leadership
    - Enjoyed lion’s share of southern wealth
    - Educated their children in finest schools
    - Money provided leisure for study, reflection, and statecraft:
      - Notable: John C. Calhoun (Yale), Jefferson Davis (West Point)
      - Felt keen sense of obligation to serve
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II. The Planter “Aristocracy”

– Dominance by a favored aristocracy was basically undemocratic:
  • Widened gap between rich and poor
  • Hampered tax-supported public education
  • Idealized feudalism of medieval Europe

– Plantation system shaped lives of southern women:
  • Mistresses commanded sizable household staff
  • Relationships between mistress and slaves ranged from affectionate to atrocious

II. The Planter “Aristocracy” (cont.)

• Some mistresses showed tender regard for their bondwomen
• Some slave women took pride in status as “members” of household
• But slavery strained bonds of womanhood
• Virtually no slaveholding women believed in abolition

III. Slaves of the Slave System

• Plantation life:
  • Plantation agriculture worrisome, distasteful, and sordid because despoiled good earth
  • Quick profit led to excessive cultivation or “land butchery”
  • Caused population to leave for West and Northwest

– Economic structure of South became increasingly monopolistic:
  • Big got bigger and small smaller

III. Slaves of the Slave System (cont.)

– Financial instability of plantation system:
  • Over-speculation in land and slaves
  • Slaves represented heavy investment of capital
  • An entire slave quarter might be wiped out by disease

– Dominance by King Cotton led to dangerous dependence on one-crop economy:
  • Prices at mercy of world conditions
  • System discouraged healthy diversification
Southern planters resented North growing fat at their expense

13 III. Slaves of the Slave System (cont.)
   – Cotton King repelled large-scale European immigration:
     • Immigrants added to manpower and wealth of North
     • 1860 only 4.4% of southern population was foreign-born as compared to 18.7% for North
     • German & Irish immigration to South discouraged by:
       – competition with slave labor
       – high cost of fertile land
       – European ignorance of cotton farming
     • South became most Anglo-Saxon part of U.S.A.

14 IV. The White Majority
   • Southern life:
     – Only handful of southern whites lived in Grecian-pillared mansions
       • Only 1,733 families owned a hundred or more slaves (see Figure 16.1)
       • Most slave owners had fewer than ten slaves
       • Smaller slave owners didn’t own majority of slaves, but were majority of masters
       • These lesser masters were typically small farmers

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16 IV. The White Majority (cont.)
   • Beneath slave owners was great body of whites who owned no slaves (see Maps 16.1 and 16.2)
   • Only ¼ of white southerners owned slaves or belonged to slave owning family
   • Most whites were subsistence food farmers not part of cotton export economy
   • Whites without slaves had no direct economic stake in slavery, yet they defended slave system:
     – Hoped to buy slaves (“American dream” of upper mobility)
• Took pride in presumed racial superiority
• Logic of economics joined with illogic of racism to buttress slave system

17 IV. The White Majority (cont.)
• In special category of white southerners were mountain whites:
  – Independent small farmers who lived in valleys of Appalachian range
  – Had little in common with whites of flatlands
  – When war came, mountain whites constituted vitally important peninsula of Unionism
  – Played significant role in crippling Confederacy
  – After Civil War, they were only concentrated Republican strength in solid Democratic South

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20 V. Free Blacks: Slaves Without Masters
• South’s free blacks:
  – Numbered about 250,000 by 1860:
    • Some in upper South traced emancipation to idealism of Revolutionary days
    • In lower South, many were mulattoes
    • Some purchased their freedom
    • Many owned property
    • Were a kind of “third race:”
      – Banned from certain occupations
      – Vulnerable to being hijacked into slavery

21 V. Free Blacks: Slaves Without Masters (cont.)
• Hostile northern climate for free blacks (250,000):
  • Several states forbade their entrance
  • Most denied them right to vote
  • Some barred them from public schools
  • Northern blacks were particularly hated by Irish immigrants because two groups competed for menial jobs
  • Antiblack feelings in ways stronger in North than in South:
    – Southern whites liked blacks as individuals, but despised
race
– Northern whites professed to like race, but disliked individual blacks

22 □ VI. Plantation Slavery
• In South of 1860, nearly four million black slaves:
  – Legal importation of African slaves into America ended in 1808 by Congress
  – Britain abolished slave trade in 1807:
    • Royal Navy’s West African Squadron seized hundreds of slave ships and freed thousands of captives
    • Yet three million enslaved Africans still shipped to Brazil and West Indies after 1807

23 □ VI. Plantation Slavery
  (cont.)
• Slavery:
  • In U.S.A., price of “black ivory” so high before Civil War that thousands of blacks smuggled into South
  • Ironically, suppression of international slave trade fostered growth of vigorous internal slave trade
  • Most of increase in U.S. slave population came from natural reproduction:
    – Distinguished North American slavery from slavery in more disease-ridden southerly New World societies

24 □ VI. Plantation Slavery
  (cont.)
• Planters regarded slaves as investments:
  – Worth $2 billion in capital by 1860
  – Slaves were primary form of wealth in South:
    • Cared for as any asset is cared for by prudent capitalist
    • Sometimes spared dangerous work
    • Slavery was profitable, even though it hobbled economic development of region as a whole

25 □ VI. Plantation Slavery
  (cont.)
• Breeding of slaves not openly encouraged, but:
–Women who bore thirteen or fourteen babies were prized as “rattlin' good breeders”
–White masters forced their attentions on female slaves fathering sizable mulatto population, most of which remained enslaved

• Slave auctions were brutal sights:
  – Most revolting aspects of slavery
  – Families separated with distressing frequency
  – Slavery’s greatest psychological horror
  – Abolitionists decried practice
  – Harriet Beecher Stowe 1852 novel: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

VII. Life Under the Lash
• How did slaves actually live?
  – Conditions varied greatly:
    • Slavery meant hard work, ignorance, and oppression
    • No political rights; minimal protection
    • Protection laws difficult to enforce since slaves forbidden to testify in court or to have marriages legally recognized
    • Floggings were common
    • Strong-willed slaves sometimes sent to breakers who lavishly used lash

VII. Life Under the Lash (cont.)
• Savage beatings made sullen laborers & hurt resale values
  • Typical master had too much money invested in slaves to beat them bloody on regular basis
  – Blacks concentrated in black belt of Deep South by 1860:
    • Stretched from South Carolina to Georgia into new southwest:
VII. Life Under the Lash
(cont.)

- Black living:
  - Most lived on large plantations of 20 or more slaves
  - In some Deep South areas, blacks 75% of population
  - Family life relatively stable, and distinctive African American slave culture developed
  - Forced separations more common on smaller plantations or in Upper South
  - Slaves managed to sustain family life
  - Most slave children raised in two-parent households

VII. Life Under the Lash
(cont.)

- Family identity continued across generations
- Displayed African culture when avoided marriage between first cousins, unlike frequent intermarriage of close relatives among planter aristocracy
- African roots visible in slaves’ religion:
  - Many Christianized during Second Great Awakening
  - Yet they molded their own distinctive religious forms that mixed Christian and African elements
  - African practice of responsorial style of preaching—give and take between caller and dancers

VIII. The Burdens of Bondage

- Slavery intolerably degrading to victims:
  - Deprived of dignity and sense of responsibility that come from independence and right to make choices
  - Denied an education
  - Victims of “peculiar institution” devised ways to protest:
    - Slowed pace of labor to bare minimum
    - Filched food from “big house”
    - Pilfered other goods
    - Sabotaged expensive equipment
VIII. The Burdens of Bondage (cont.)

- Slaves universally pined for freedom:
  - Many took off as runaways
  - Others rebelled, though never successfully
- 1800: armed insurrection led by slave named Gabriel in Richmond, Virginia—foiled by informers, its leaders hanged
- 1822: Denmark Vesey, a free black, led rebellion in Charleston, South Carolina; foiled by informers, Vesey & 30 followers hung
- 1813: Nat Turner, visionary black preacher, led uprising that slaughtered 60 Virginians—Nat Turner’s rebellion soon crushed

VIII. The Burdens of Bondage (cont.)

- Enslaved Africans rebelled aboard Spanish slave ship Amistad in 1839
- Slavery also affected southern whites:
  - Fostered brutality of whip, bloodhound, & branding iron
  - Increasingly lived in state of imagined siege, surrounded by potentially rebellious blacks inflamed by abolitionist propaganda from North
  - Such fears bolstered theory of biological racial superiority

IX. Early Abolitionism

- Inhumanity of “peculiar institution” caused antislavery societies:
  - Abolitionist sentiment first stirred during Revolution, especially among Quakers
  - American Colonization Society (1817):
    - Transport blacks back to Africa
    - 1822 Liberia, on West African coast, established for former slaves
    - Its capital, Monrovia, named after President Monroe
    - 15,000 freed slaves transported over four decades

IX. Early Abolitionism (cont.)
• Most blacks had no wish to move to a strange civilization after having become partially Americanized
• By 1860, most southern slaves were native-born African-Americans, with a distinctive history & culture
• Yet colonization appealed to some antislaverites, including Abraham Lincoln, before Civil War

42 □ IX. Early Abolitionism (cont.)
• William Wilberforce:
  • Member of British Parliament & an evangelical Christian reformer ended slavery in West Indies
  • Wilberforce University in Ohio, an African American college, later sent many missionaries to Africa
  – Theodore Dwight Weld:
    • Inspired by Second Great Awakening
    • Appealed with special power to rural audiences of untutored farmers

43 □ IX. Early Abolitionism (cont.)
  – Weld (cont.):
    • Materially aided by two wealthy and devout New York merchants—brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan
    • They paid his way to Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio
    • Expelled with several other students in 1834 for organizing an 18-day debate on slavery
    • Weld and his fellow “Lane Rebels” fanned out across Old Northwest preaching antislavery gospel

44 □ IX. Early Abolitionism (cont.)
  – Weld (cont.):
    • Assembled potent propaganda pamphlet, *American Slavery as It Is* (1839)
    • Compelling arguments made it among most effective abolitionist tracts and greatly influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
X. Radical Abolitionism

• William Lloyd Garrison:
  – Inspired by Second Great Awakening
  – *The Liberator*—his militantly antislavery newspaper started in 1831:
    • Under no circumstances would he tolerate poisonous weed of slavery, but would stamp it out, root & branch
• American Anti-Slavery Society (1833):
  – Founders: Garrison, Wendell Phillips

X. Radical Abolitionism (cont.)

• Black abolitionists:
  – David Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of World (1829)—advocated bloody end to white supremacy
  – Sojourner Truth—fought tirelessly for black emancipation and women’s rights
  – Martin Delany:
    • one of few black leaders who took seriously notion of mass recolonization of Africa

X. Radical Abolitionism (cont.)

– Delany (cont.)
  • In 1859 visited West Africa's Niger Valley seeking a suitable site for relocation
– Frederick Douglass—greatest black abolitionist:
  • Escaped bondage in 1838 at age 21
  • Was “discovered” by abolitionists in 1841 after giving impromptu speech at an antislavery meeting in Massachusetts
  • Continued to lecture, despite repeated punishment
X. Radical Abolitionism (cont.)

–Douglass (cont.):
  • *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass* (1845) his classic autobiography
  • Depicted his remarkable origins, his struggle to learn to read and write, and his eventual escape to North
  • Comparison of Garrison and Douglass:
    –Garrison:
      • Stubbornly principled
      • More interested in his own righteousness than in substance of slavery itself

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X. Radical Abolitionism (cont.)

• Repeatedly demanded that “virtuous” North secede from “wicked” South.
• Never explained how creation of independent slave republic would end “damning crime” of slavery.
• Renouncing politics, he publicly burned a copy of Constitution as “a covenant with death and an agreement with hell” on July 4, 1854.
• Critics charged he was cruelly probing moral wound in America’s underbelly, but offered no acceptable balm to ease pain.

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X. Radical Abolitionism (cont.)

–Douglas:
  • Flexibly practical
  • He and other abolitionists increasingly looked to politics to end slavery
  • Backed Liberty party in 1840; Free Soil party in 1848; Republican party in 1850s
  • Most abolitionists, including Garrison, followed logic of beliefs and supported war as price of emancipation
XI. The South Lashes Back

Antislavery sentiment existed in South

- In 1820s, more antislavery societies south of Mason-Dixon line than north of it
- After 1830 southern abolitionism silenced:
  - Virginia legislature debated and defeated various emancipation proposals in 1831-1832:
    - Marked turning point
    - Slave states tightened slave codes
    - Banned emancipation of any kind, voluntary or compensated

XI. The South Lashes Back
(cont.)

- Nat Turner’s rebellion in 1831:
  - Caused hysteria throughout South
  - Garrison bitterly condemned as terrorist and inciter of murder although he was unconnected with rebellion
  - State of Georgia offered $5,000 for his arrest and conviction
- Nullification crisis of 1832 further implanted fear in white southern minds
- Jailings, whippings, & lynching greeted rational efforts to discuss slavery problem in South

XI. The South Lashes Back
(cont.)

- Proslavery whites responded by launching massive defense of slavery as positive good:
  - Claimed master-slave relationships resembled those of a family
  - Were quick to contrast “happy” lot of their “servants” with overworked northern wage slaves
  - Proslavery arguments widened chasm between South and North
XI. The South Lashes Back (cont.)

Controversy increasingly limited free speech:
– Gag Resolution:
  • Pushed through Congress by southerners
  • Required antislavery appeals to be tabled without debate
– Southern whites resented use of mail for abolitionist literature:
  • Congress (1835) ordered southern postmasters to destroy abolitionist material
  • Called on southern states to arrest postmasters who did not comply

XII. The Abolitionist Impact in the North

– Abolitionists, esp. Garrisonians, unpopular in North:
  • Northerners revered Constitution and saw its clauses on slavery as lasting bargain
  • Ideal of Union had deep roots
– North had heavy economic stake in South:
  • Southern planters owed northern bankers & creditors about $300 million—would be lost if Union dissolved
  • Disruption to slave system might cut off vital supply of cotton to northern mills and thus bring unemployment

XII. The Abolitionist Impact in the North (cont.)

• Abolitionists often suffered violent attacks.
• They had influenced northern opinion by 1850s:
  – Many had come to see South as land of unfree and home of a hateful institution
  – Few prepared to abolish slavery outright, but growing number opposed extending it to western territories