

The Antebellum Era

Chapter Preview

Georgia character word:

Loyalty

Terms: antebellum, manifest destiny, annex, skirmish, states' rights, yeoman farmer, overseer, abolition, free state, slave state, Missouri Compromise, sectionalism, Compromise of 1850, Kansas-Nebraska Act, popular sovereignty, free soiler, driver, slave code, arsenal, underground railroad, Know Nothing party, Republican party, platform, secession, ordinance, Confederate States of America

People: William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Dred Scott, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Howell Cobb, Joseph E. Brown, Robert Toombs, John C. Fremont, Abraham Lincoln, Alexander H. Stephens

Places: Texas, Harpers Ferry, Marietta, Crawfordville

Section 1 Manifest Destiny

Section 2 Deepening Divisions

Section 3 Slavery as a Way of Life

Section 4 Antebellum Georgia

Section 5 The Election of 1860



Historians differ as to the dates that make up the antebellum period (the period before the Civil War). For some, it was 1784 to 1860—the years after the American Revolution. Others set the period as 1823 to 1859. For the purpose of this textbook, we will use the period from 1838 to 1860. It was a time filled with turmoil, disagreement, and rapid change.

Below: Callaway Plantation House. Callaway got the last shipment of cotton off to England before the Civil War. His English broker sold the cotton and banked the money. Callaway used the money to finish the house in 1869.



Signs of the Times

1838-1860

Population: In 1840, Georgia's population was 691,392. In 1850, it stood at 906,185.

Life Expectancy: In 1850, it was 40 years for whites and 36 years for slaves.

Wages/Salary: A farmhand in the North earned \$13 a month, a southern farmhand \$9, a shoemaker \$22, a male textile operator \$26, an able seaman \$18, and an ordinary seaman \$14.

Costs of Living: A night's stay at a tavern cost 50 cents; food cost about 25 cents per person per meal. A woolen blanket cost \$2.50. Flour cost \$0.02 a pound, sugar \$0.04 a pound, and salt \$0.06 a pound.

Art/Architecture: Architecture changed drastically in 1848 when a builder constructed a five-story building using cast iron girders. The Hudson River School style of painting became popular.

Literature: Books of this period included James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pathfinder* and *The Deerslayer*, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Improvements in printing presses made magazines and newspapers more popular. The number of magazines jumped from just over 100 in 1800 to over 3,700 by 1860.

Music: The New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the nation's oldest symphony orchestra, was founded in 1842. Popular songs included "Amazing Grace," "Michael Row the Boat Ashore," "Follow the Drinking Gourd," "Yellow Rose of Texas," "I've Been Working on the Railroad," and "Home on the Range."

Leisure Time: In 1839, Abner Doubleday laid out the first baseball diamond in Cooperstown, New York. The first baseball game was held in 1846 in Hoboken, New Jersey. In 1851, the schooner-yacht *America* won a 60-mile race against fourteen British yachts. The trophy became known as the America's Cup. Ted Turner won the America's Cup in 1977.

Fads/Fashions: Fashion arrived in baseball when the New York Knickerbockers began dressing in uniforms in 1851. Matrimonial agencies began to match eligible young women with "deserving" men. P. T. Barnum, known as the Greatest Showman on Earth, opened an exhibit in New York City. Audubon encouraged the fad of birdwatching when he published *Birds of North America*.

Science: Inventions of the period included soap powder, the safety pin, the washing machine, a pencil with an eraser on the end, and postage stamps with adhesive on the back. In 1856, Texan Gail Borden received a patent for condensing milk. Oil was used commercially for the first time—as medicine. The introduction of eyeglasses led some to think they would cure the blind.

Transportation: Charles Goodyear produced vulcanized rubber in 1839. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad linked Chicago to the East. Stagecoach service and mail delivery connected St. Louis and San Francisco, a distance of 2,812 miles. In 1860, the Pony Express began service from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California.

Education: The U.S. Naval Academy opened at Annapolis in 1845. The City of Boston began giving written examinations for elementary children. In 1852, Massachusetts passed the first school attendance law requiring children ages 8–14 to attend school at least 12 weeks a year.

Religion: St. Patrick’s Cathedral of New York was designed by James Renwick; today it remains one of the most famous churches in the nation. Beginning in 1858, religious revivals swept across the nation with daily prayer meetings in all major cities.

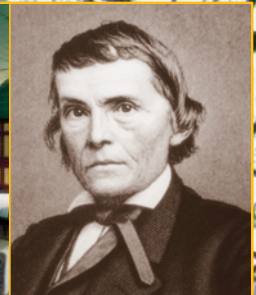
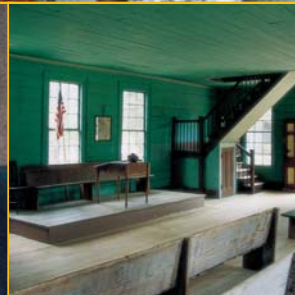
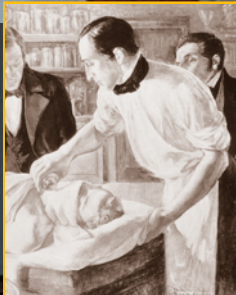
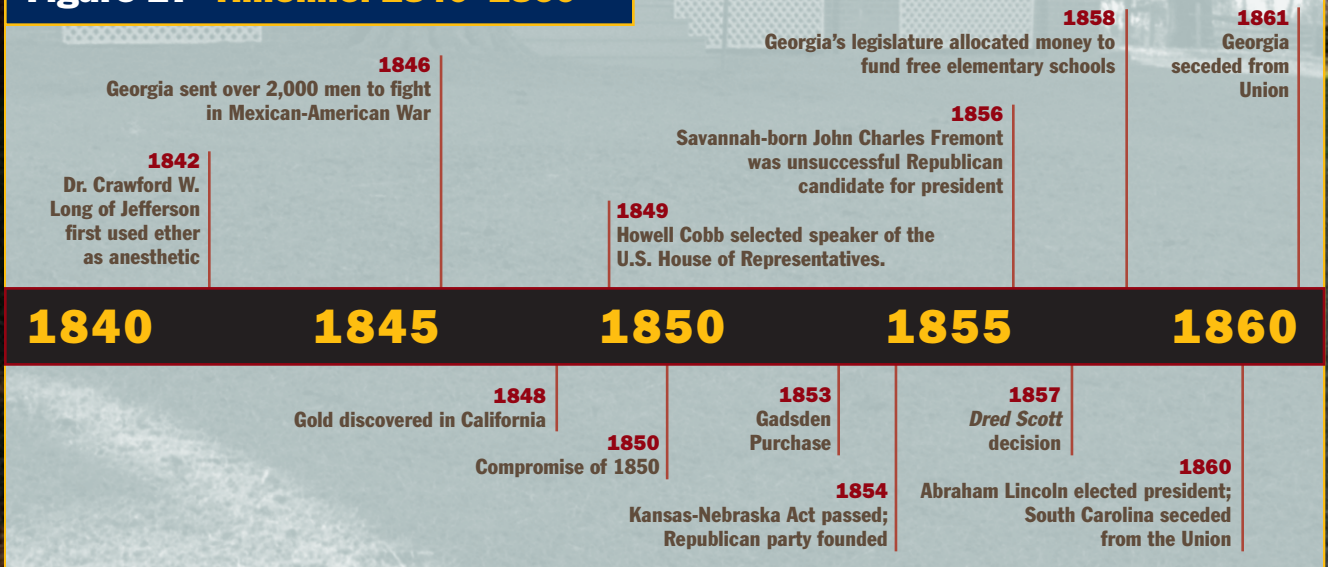


Figure 17 Timeline: 1840–1860



Section Preview

As you read, look for:

- the concept of *manifest destiny*,
- the westward expansion of the United States, and
- **vocabulary terms:** manifest destiny, annex, and skirmish.

Below: Revolting against Mexico's president, Santa Anna, a band of 187 Texans defied a Mexican army of thousands for 12 days. All of the men were killed, and "Remember the Alamo!" became a rallying cry for the Texian settlers.

Manifest Destiny

In 1845, John O'Sullivan, a New York journalist, wrote that it was the **manifest destiny** of our country "to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free descendants of our yearly multiplying millions." Within months, what may have seemed to be greed for more land became instead a doctrine backed by religious zeal. In the words of President Polk, who had been elected in part because of his campaign promises to expand U.S. territory, "the world beholds the peaceful triumphs of . . . our emigrants. To us belongs the duty of protecting them . . . whenever they may be upon our soil." And, the hope was that the soil Polk referred to would be Texas, the Oregon territory, and California.

Texas

Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. Mexican territory included a huge tract of land that started where the Louisiana Purchase ended. The land was called "Texia" by the 30,000 plus Native Americans who lived there and "Tejax" by the few thousand Mexican Spanish inhabitants. Led by Stephen Austin, hundreds of white settlers migrated to the region. They called the area "Texas."



Did You Know?

There were many poplar trees in the San Antonio area. The Spanish word for poplar is *Alamo*.

President John Quincy Adams, who had been elected in 1824, tried to buy Texas from Mexico, but he was refused. After his election in 1828, President Jackson also tried to buy Texas. Again, Mexico refused.

By 1834, so many “Anglos” had moved into the region that they outnumbered the Spanish Mexicans 4

to 1. Most of these white settlers refused to obey Mexican laws about slavery and refused to convert to the Catholic religion. Increasingly, the 20,000 white colonists regarded themselves as “Texians” rather than as Mexican subjects. General Antonio López de Santa Anna, who had been elected Mexico’s president in 1833, was increasingly disturbed by the large numbers of white settlers, and he was determined to take control of the Texians. Under a new constitution, he took away any special privileges in Texas and forbade additional settlers from coming into the area.

Furious over these changes, the Texians declared their independence, knowing that a showdown was inevitable. Santa Anna led about 2,000 troops against the rebellious Texians. He quickly took control of San Antonio but was not able to capture the Alamo, an old Spanish mission where less than 190 Texians were determined to make a stand.

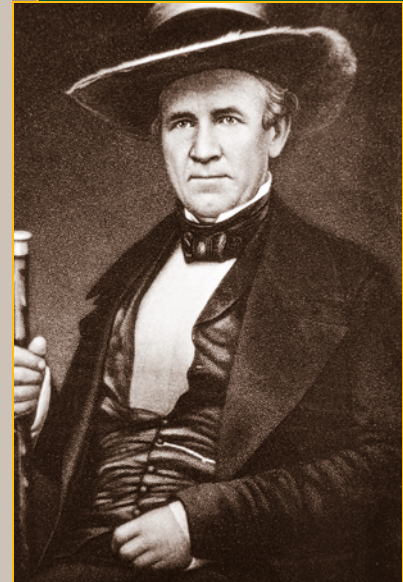
After a siege of twelve days, Santa Anna’s troops stormed the fort. All of the Texas settlers were killed. A few weeks later, Santa Anna ordered the execution of 350 Texians being held at Goliad. These two incidents inspired the Texians. Two months later, Sam Houston led eight hundred men against Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto. With cries of “Remember the Alamo” and “Remember Goliad” ringing in the air, the Texians defeated Santa Anna’s army and gained Texas’s independence from Mexico.

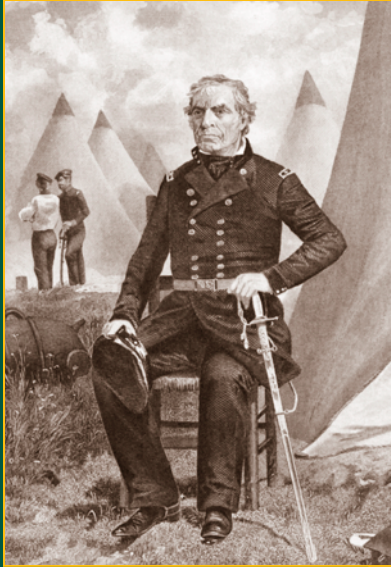
The people of Texas formed the Republic of Texas, also known as the Lone Star Republic. They wanted to become part of the United States as quickly as possible. However, because slavery was allowed in Texas, it was not until December 1845 that it was **annexed** (added on) and became the twenty-eighth state in the United States.

The Mexican-American War

After the annexation of Texas, Mexico angrily cut off all diplomatic ties with the United States. To add insult to injury, U.S. officials demanded that the Rio Grande be the southern border of Texas. As **skirmishes** (minor, short-term battles) broke out, President James Polk offered to buy California and New

Below: Sam Houston led the Texian forces after the Alamo and Goliad. **Bottom:** “News from the Mexican War Front” shows how interested people were in the war.





Top: The Battle of Chapultepec Castle was the last battle of the Mexican-American War. **Above:** In the war, General Zachary Taylor won major victories at Monterrey and Buena Vista.

Mexico and to take on Mexico's debt in order to keep the Rio Grande as the border. Mexico's response was an invasion of Texas.

Polk sent General Zachary Taylor and 3,500 troops to observe the happenings along the Rio Grande. After several of Taylor's men were killed in what some called a staged provocation of the small Mexican army, Polk asked Congress to declare war on Mexico.

The first time the two nations met was at Palo Alto, and the battle provided an indication of what was to come. Taylor, called "Old Rough and Ready" by his troops, easily defeated a force twice his size. Then in a follow-up campaign, 1,700 U.S. troops defeated a Mexican force of 4,500. American losses in both battles were 50 men; Mexican losses totaled more than 1,000.

In September 1847, after six months of hard fighting and as the war drew to a close, General Winfield Scott led 7,000 troops to Mexico City. There they were met by about 1,100 Mexican troops and a small group of cadets who attended the military academy at Chapultepec Castle. Ordered by their commandant to leave, the cadets—boys between the

Did You Know?

As American soldiers marched across the dry, dusty land, they were covered with a thin white film that resembled Mexican adobe. The Mexican soldiers nicknamed the American troops "dobies" or "doughboys." That name stuck for the next one hundred years.

ages of 13 and 17—instead joined the battle. One of the cadets, Juan Escutia, died clutching the Mexican flag to keep it away from American troops. In Mexican history, these cadets are referred to as “Los Niños Heroes,” or the boy heroes of Chapultepec. The event is lovingly commemorated by citizens of Mexico each September 13.

After American forces took Mexico City, the two countries signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty gave the United States more than 500,000 square miles of territory, which today includes California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, most of New Mexico, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado. Mexico agreed to drop its claims on Texas lands at the Rio Grande. In turn, Polk agreed to pay Mexico \$18.25 million, about 20 percent less than he had originally offered for the land. More than 112,000 Americans fought in the war, including over 2,100 Georgians. Although over 1,500 soldiers died in battle, more than 12,000 American soldiers died from diseases and accidents.

In 1853, through the Gadsden Purchase, the United States obtained the southern part of New Mexico for \$10 million. With that purchase, the country’s continental boundaries ran from coast to coast.

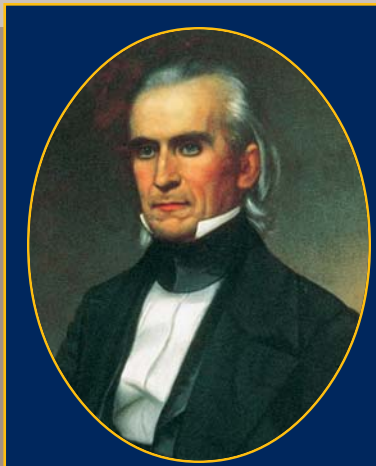
Oregon

Another land area wanted by the United States was the Oregon Territory. This region was west of the Rocky Mountains and north of California. It stretched northward to 54° 40' north latitude, which today is British Columbia’s northern border. Great Britain and the United States had an ongoing dispute over the location of the boundary line between Canada and the United States. Americans claimed it should be drawn at 54° 40' north latitude. The British disagreed, and war was a possibility.

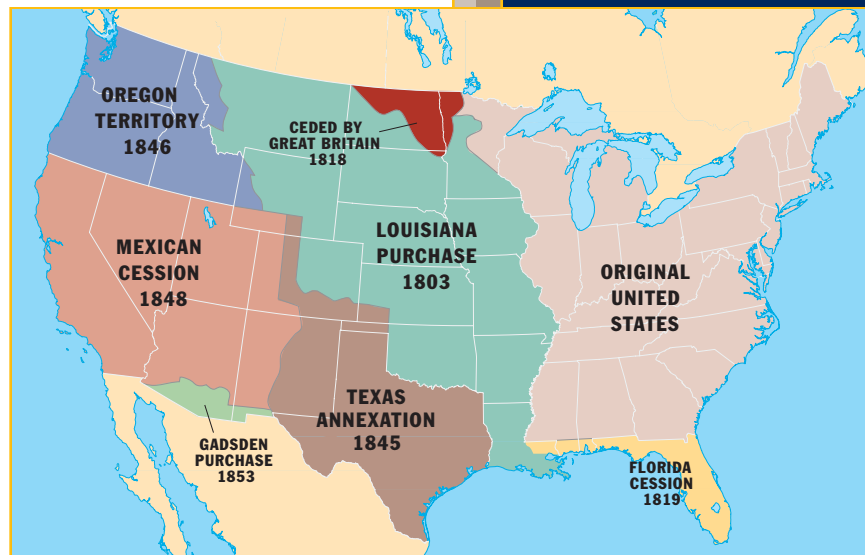
In a 1818 treaty, the United States and Great Britain had set the boundary between the United States and Canada at the 49th parallel (49° north latitude) westward from the Lake of the Woods (in Minnesota) to the Continental Divide. (The *Continental Divide* is a series of mountain ridges from Alaska to Mexico that divides the areas drained by different river systems.) After many negotiations, the two countries agreed to split the Oregon Territory by extending the border along the 49th parallel to the Pacific coast.

California

When the Mexican-American War was over, America’s borders stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Thousands of pioneers heeded Horace Greeley’s advice of “Go west, young man” and moved into the new territories. Their reasons for moving west were many. Some wanted adventure; some were



Above: President Polk believed in manifest destiny and added a vast area to the nation.



Map 30 Expansion of the United States

Map Skill: What states were included—in total or in part—in the Oregon Territory?



Above: Those who came to mine for California's gold were called "forty-niners."

It's Your Turn

1. What was the concept of *manifest destiny*?
2. Did Santa Anna have reason to be angry with the Texians? How would your life be different today if Texas had remained a part of Mexico?
3. What boundary dispute was reflected by the campaign slogan "54-40 or fight"?

looking for riches. Many wanted new lands for farming, mining, or trapping. Some, such as the Mormons, were escaping religious persecution; others just wanted to escape the overcrowded cities of the East.

The Oregon and Santa Fe trails were the favored routes west. Settlers rode months in covered wagons across barren and hostile lands facing Indian attacks, severe weather, the harsh Rocky Mountains, and frontier hardships. Many died along the way and were buried beneath the hardpacked trails. But none of these hardships stopped thousands from leaving hearth and home once they heard the word *gold*.

In 1829, gold had been discovered in Dahlonega, creating the country's first gold rush. Twenty years later, an even greater gold rush took place. In January 1848, John Marshall was building a lumber mill for John Sutter on California's American Fork River. He discovered something shiny in the river. Marshall had discovered the gold in the California hills. The two men tried to keep the discovery secret, but word got out. In December 1848, President James Polk confirmed the presence of gold, and a national stampede toward California got underway. People traveled in wagon trails, on horseback, and on foot to reach the gold fields. They came not just from the eastern United States but also by ship around the Cape of Good Horn and by mule trains from Panama. Mining camps sprang up overnight as over 80,000 people rushed into California. Between 1848 and 1850, the population of the area increased tenfold. Many who traveled west in search of riches never found any gold, but they stayed to settle the frontier territory trapping, ranching, and farming.

Deepening Divisions

During the antebellum period, the nation was basically divided into four sections. Among these four sections were political, economic, social, and cultural differences as well as some specific cause-and-effect events.

While the western territorial boundaries were expanding, differences between the other sections of the country were intensifying, particularly between the North and the South. Look at Figure 18 on page 216 to get an idea of how these differences eventually led to war.

States' Rights

Probably the simplest or at least the clearest difference between the North and South involved the concept of states' rights. **States' rights** is the belief that the state's interests should take precedence over the interests of the national government.

Northern states believed that, in order for the United States to function as one Union, political decisions should be made that would benefit the entire country. They believed that all states should abide by laws made by Congress, signed by the president, or decreed by the courts.

Southern states, on the other hand, believed deeply in the idea of states' rights. They thought that states had the right to govern themselves and to decide what would be best for their own needs and situation. They believed that politicians from a state like Maine or New York could not possibly understand or care about South Carolina or Georgia.

Class Structure

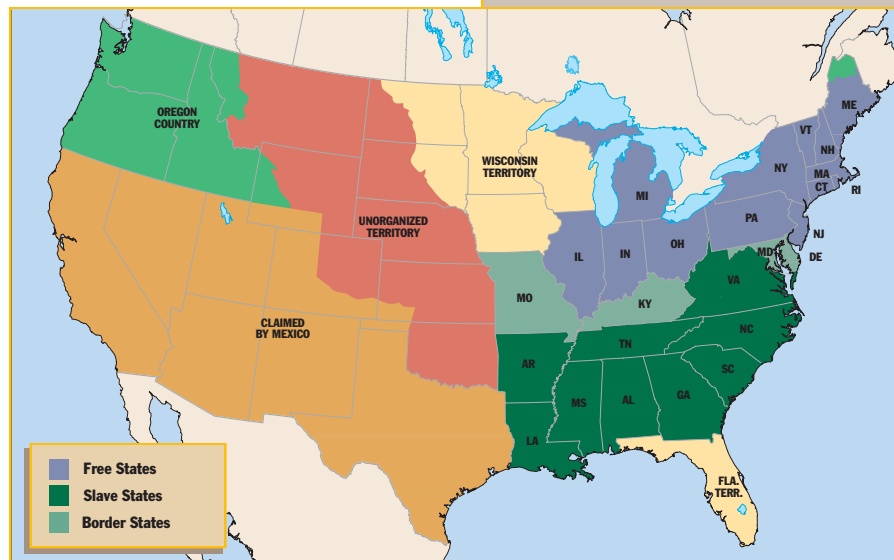
As Figure 18 indicates, class structure in the North was generally based on wealth. That wealth allowed people to move upward from one social class to another. In the South, however, the social structure was based more on class and, even though that included money, being "born into the right family." Southern class differences were quite rigid, and it was far more difficult to move upward from one group to another.

Although there had been a highly defined social structure in America since its beginnings, it became even more rigid during the antebellum era. Georgia's social structure mirrored that of the other southern states.

Section Preview

As you read, look for:

- the differences between North and South during the antebellum period,
- southern class structure,
- slavery and the compromises made in the 1800s,
- differences between the economies of the North and South, and,
- **vocabulary terms:** states' rights, yeoman farmer, overseer, abolition, free state, slave state, Missouri Compromise, sectionalism, Compromise of 1850, Kansas-Nebraska Act, popular sovereignty, and free soiler.



Map 31 Antebellum America

Map Skill: What were the four border states?

Figure 18 North-South Differences

Issue	North	South
Slavery	Wanted to abolish slavery.	Supported slavery.
States' rights	Believed in a strong national government.	Believed that states had the right to rule themselves.
Economy	Based on factories, mining, banks, stores, and railroads.	Based on agriculture, including cotton, tobacco, and rice. Cotton was shipped north to make cloth and thread.
Tariffs	Favored high tariffs on goods from other countries so goods manufactured in North cost less and would outsell foreign goods.	Favored low tariffs because they bought so many goods from other countries.
Culture	Had a number of large cities offering museums, opera, lectures, theaters.	Had few large cities other than Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Augusta.
Education	Many private schools, including church-sponsored schools, accepted both boys and girls. Some public schools were open to both. Private universities such as Brown, Harvard, Yale were opening.	No formal educational system in the South. Private tutors or school abroad were options for upper class. Some community schools but teachers were not usually trained. Some state-chartered universities such as University of Georgia, University of North Carolina, and some private schools such as Suwanee (University of the South).
Sectionalism	Northern states believed that their stand against slavery and their concerns over tariffs, culture and lifestyle made them the favored, and therefore best, section of the country.	Southern states believed that their stand on slavery was just, their concerns over tariffs were fair, and their culture and lifestyle were to be treasured. They believed in the rights of states to determine their own destiny. They knew their section of the country was best.

Planters

Planters were divided into two categories—large and small. Owners of large plantations were those who owned over fifty slaves and over one thousand acres of land. By 1860, although they represented less than 1 percent of white families, planters were the wealthiest people in the United States. Their lives were filled with luxury in magnificently built mansions.

Planters and their families took part in parties, dance balls, picnics, rides in the country, horse races, fine dining with elegant wines, and week-long house parties. Furniture was imported from Great Britain or specially made for their mansions. Fine day clothes were imported or hand-sewn, and evening dress was most elegant. Each household member, from newborn to master of the plantation, had a slave who served his or her needs—from helping to bathe and dress them, to providing hair dressings or make-up, to bringing refreshments. There were even slaves, usually youngsters, who stood near dining tables and waved large fans during meals and slaves who nursed newborns.

Owners of small plantations owned between twenty and forty-nine slaves and between one hundred and one thousand acres. They made up about 3 percent of the white southern families. They controlled most of the wealth in the South and produced most of its political leaders. Their homes, although not as lavish as the larger plantation homes, were still elegant. In the larger cities, like Athens, Augusta, Macon, and Savannah, their favorite entertainments were theaters, trading shows, and lectures.

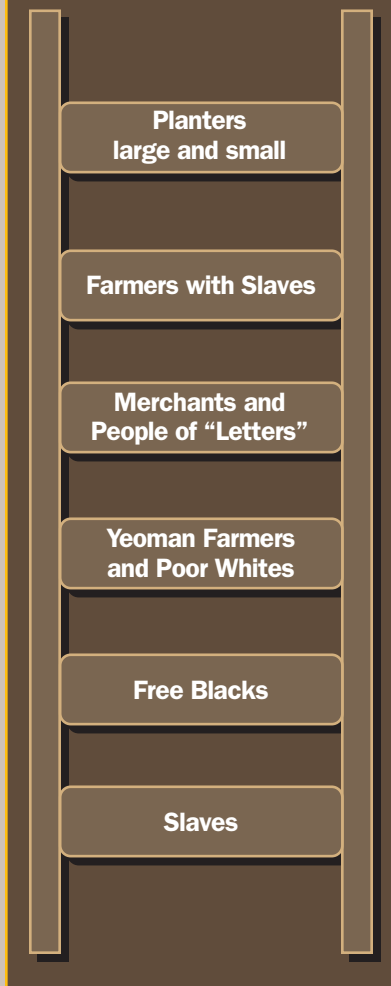
Farmers with Slaves

Farmers who owned fewer than twenty slaves were about 20 percent of the southern whites. Most of these farmers owned five or fewer slaves. They



Above: The dining room of the Dickey House, built in 1840, is a typical plantation home. It was moved to Stone Mountain Park in 1961.

Figure 19
Southern Social Ladder



made up the small middle class around towns and cities. The head of the household took a direct, day-to-day approach to running the farm. Homes were comfortable but not nearly the size of plantation mansions. Women of the house usually worked side-by-side with a household servant. Parties were only held around holidays and special occasions and included close family and friends. Food and clothes were simpler although adequate, and there was little intermingling with the planter class.

Did You Know?

According to the 1860 census, there were 118,000 white families in Georgia. Of these, only 41,084 families, or 35 percent, owned slaves.

Merchants and “People of Letters”

Members of this class were primarily located in towns and cities. The group included cotton brokers, merchants, teachers, doctors, ministers, newspaper publishers, and lawyers. They made up about 1-2 percent of the population of a city. Many merchants were wealthy and lived in fine brick homes with gardens. They were usually quite knowledgeable about the workings of their city or town. They tended to socialize among their own group and enjoyed a very good life.

Within the merchant group were the *artisans*, people who depended on their own talents and recognition. Artisans kept to themselves within their social class. Some artisans, such as carpenters, bricklayers, millwrights (those who put up mills), saddlers, shoemakers, and milliners were considered to be in the same class as yeoman farmers. Others, such as furniture designers and makers, landscapers, and portrait painters were in the same social class as merchants.

Yeoman Farmers and Poor Whites

Yeoman farmers were by far the largest group of white southerners, making up about 75 percent of the white population. These were independent farmers who often lived from season to season. Many were *subsistence farmers*, who literally lived off the land with almost no cash money. What they needed, they grew or made or got by trading their own goods or home-made products. **Overseers** (persons hired to manage slaves on a day-to-day basis) were usually considered part of this class. Some of the “better off” yeoman farmers did have a few slaves, but the majority scrambled just to eke out a living.

Life was very hard, and homes were usually unpainted wood cabins or even shacks. Food consisted of what could be raised, traded, or hunted. Their work days ran from “sun up to sun down,” and children also worked. Many children ran about barefoot and usually had only two outfits. Leisure time was largely a daydream.

Poor whites were the poorest yeoman farmers and might be squatters, day laborers, or those who simply wandered from place to place seeking jobs,



Left: The Rufus T. Smith House, built in the 1850s and now at the Thomas County Museum of History. Smith was a yeoman farmer who owned no slaves. He did, however, have 13 children.

food, and clothes. This group included those known primarily as “white trash.” They seldom worked and depended upon others for survival.

Free Blacks

Free blacks included farmers, day laborers, artisans, or tenant farmers; they were concentrated in the upper South in Maryland and Virginia. A few free blacks owned slaves and small plantations or large farms, but they could not move in the same social circles as their white counterparts. Free blacks who lived in the South were about 6 percent of the total free black population of 500,000.

Although free in name, they were denied most citizenship rights, and in only two northern states did they have the right to vote. They could not lay claim to public land, travel abroad, or even travel freely in the United States without a pass. In most places, they could not get an education. And, regardless of the state, they were relegated to segregated neighborhoods. In the South, free blacks primarily socialized only with each other.

Slaves

Slaves were about 4 million of the total black population in the country in the 1860s. By far, the majority lived in the South, and by 1860, about 11.5 percent of the slaves lived in Georgia.

There were classes of slaves, which, on some plantations, were as rigid as the class structure among whites.

Skin color made a difference in the slave social structure. Slaves with lighter complexions often had positions inside the plantation house, which meant better clothes or hand-me-downs, food, and huts.

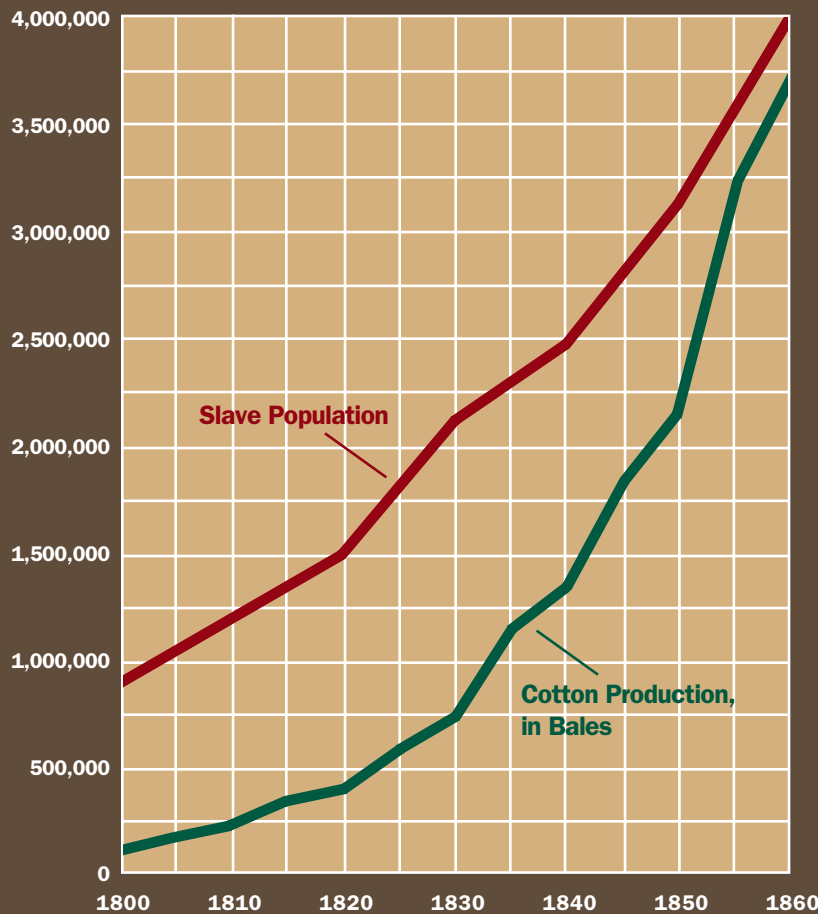
Did You Know?

In 1860, there were 3,500 free blacks living in Georgia.

Figure 20
Slaves' Social Ladder



Figure 21 Cotton Production and Slave Population, 1800-1860



The Issue of Slavery

The most divisive issue that led to the Civil War was the question of slavery. Did one man have the right to own another? In order to answer that question, let us first look back in history.

Much of the antebellum period was about “cause and effect,” the concept that for each event or thing that happens, there is a *cause*. In turn, each cause leads to a result, or *effect*. Then, that result can cause another event, resulting in a chain reaction of cause-and-effect relationships. Several events from the past directly impacted the antebellum period.

By 1800, the South was stagnant (not growing or changing) both in terms of population growth and agriculture. Tobacco had depleted the soil in Virginia and North Carolina. Rice could only be grown in the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia. And cotton was not cost effective. But Eli Whitney’s cotton gin greatly increased the profits of growing cotton in the South. In turn, that led to a dramatic increase in the numbers of slaves needed to cultivate

“King Cotton.” By 1860, the lower South, which became known as the “Cotton Kingdom,” produced most of the world’s supply of cotton and accounted for over 50 percent of America’s exports.

Abolitionists

In the 1820s, a second “Great Awakening” swept the country. One result of this religious revival was increased and interracial support for abolition. **Abolition** was the movement to do away with slavery.

Many northern whites, some southern whites, and free blacks worked to get rid of slavery. These abolitionists made speeches, wrote books and articles, and offered their homes as safe houses for runaway

Did You Know?

When *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was published in 1852, it sold more than **one million copies** in less than two years. This was a **huge number** of books, considering not only the **population** of the country at the time but also the number of **people who could read**.

Spotlight on the Economy

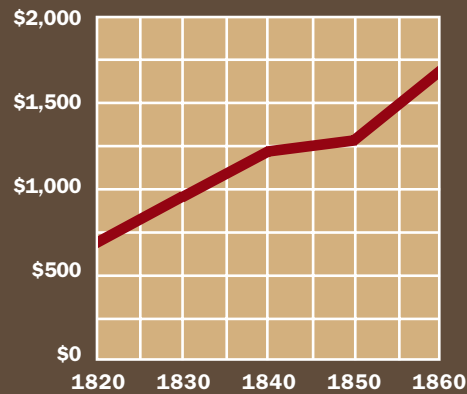
The Cost of Slavery

It is clear that the institution of slavery damaged the overall economy of the South throughout most of the 1800s. In the 1800s, the U.S. economy was changing. The North, which had an economy based on manufacturing, benefited from new mechanical inventions and the system of interchangeable parts. The North relied on free labor, workers who earned wages and spent those wages in the communities where they lived and worked. As workers earned more, they spent more on goods and products. This cycle of earning and buying strengthened the economy of the Northeast.

The South remained an agricultural economy focusing on two main products—food and cotton. On the large cotton plantations (those having over fifty slaves) about 40 percent of the crop value came from food production. But southern cotton was still the nation's number one export. The cotton was sold to northern and European markets. As long as the demand for cotton remained high, the prices of cotton remained high and provided incentives for southern plantation owners to continue to plant cotton.

Cotton was labor intensive, requiring large groups of workers who worked in “gangs” or “teams.” This gave plantation owners an incentive to continue to use slave labor. By 1860, there were about 4 million slaves in the South, although as many as one-half of all farms in the South had no slaves at all. The southern plantation owners who did use slave labor had much of their personal wealth tied up in slaves. By 1860, almost 60 percent of the agricultural wealth of the Deep South was in slaves, and slave prices had risen steadily throughout the early 1800s. The owner of a plantation with fifty slaves could have as much as \$80,000 invested in slave workers. These workers, of

Figure 22 Cost of Slaves



course, produced children who were also slaves to their parents' master. And, of course, plantation owners “invested” additional funds in feeding, clothing, and housing their slaves.

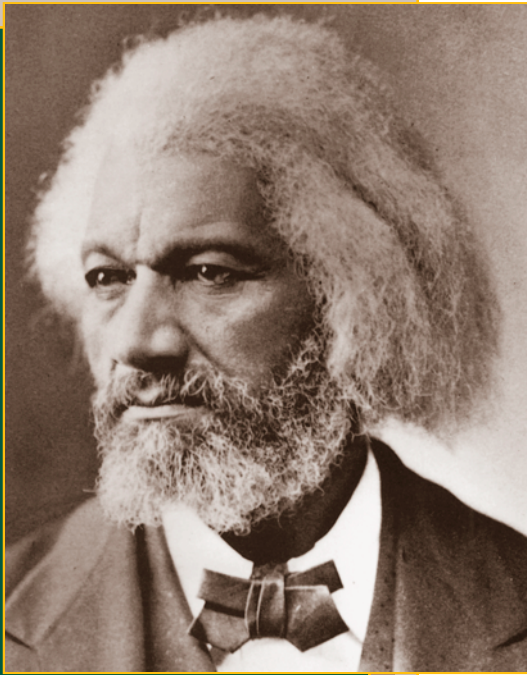
With so much invested in slaves, the large slave owners had little incentive to invest in permanent community improvements such as city infrastructures, transportation systems, public schools, and community health facilities. The plantations did not need local markets for their goods, local

communities for free workers or laborers, or urban areas. This lack of investment in the South outside of the large farms or plantations was a serious cost of slavery.

Another cost of slavery was the lack of emphasis southern leaders (large land owners and politically influential plantation owners) placed on investments in technology and mechanized agriculture. As the costs of owning slaves rose, southern farming would have been more profitable with the use of machines and motivated free labor. However, neither was available in an area that had not encouraged either.

Slavery, as an institution, was profitable only for the largest slave owners. Since at least 80 percent of the adult population of the South were free laborers and did not own slaves, slavery was not profitable for the South as a region. The economy of the South was less prosperous overall because of the institution of slavery.

Historians have estimated that the dollar value of the labor produced by slaves in the South between 1790 and 1860 ranged from \$7 billion to \$40 billion. Without question, that labor would have produced much more for the South had it been the product of free laborers motivated to work hard, to improve themselves, their lives, and their communities.



Above: Frederick Douglass, born a slave, was a leader in the abolitionist movement.

slaves. In 1831, white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison published the first issue of his antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote about slaves as individuals rather than as a group. Although Stowe, who grew up in Connecticut, had seen slaves only once when visiting in Kentucky, her book described some of the worst things about slavery and the fugitive slave laws. The book was a huge success, and the information in it caused northerners to like slavery less and abolition more.

The best-known black abolitionist was Frederick Douglass, a former slave, who published a newspaper called the *North Star*. Douglass was also a spirited orator (speaker) and traveled around the country describing the evils of slavery.

But the abolitionist movement had a backlash in the South. In the 1820s, Charles Fitzhugh published *Positive Good Thesis of Slavery* in which he characterized slavery as an obligation of whites to feed, clothe, and provide church instruction to slaves. The result was that many southerners actually believed that enslavement was a favor.

The Missouri Compromise

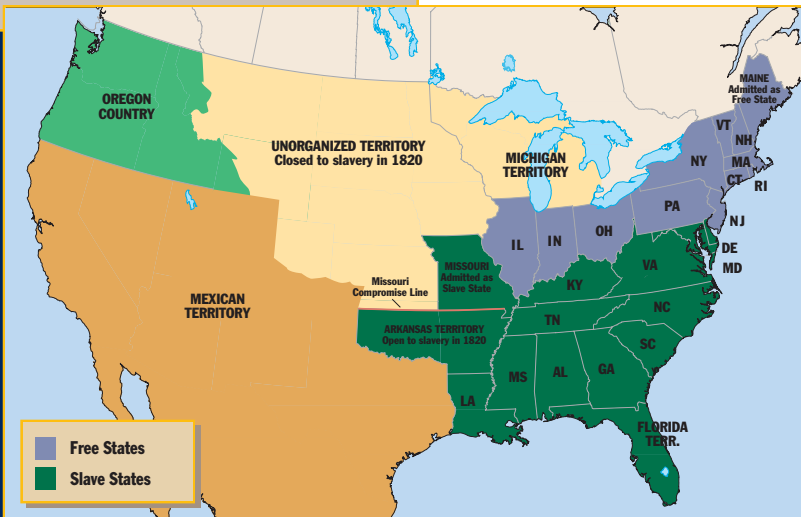
In 1819, the United States had twenty-two states. Eleven were **slave states** (states that did allow slavery), and eleven were **free states** (states that did not allow slavery). This meant that, in the Senate, there was an equal number of

senators from slave states and from free states. In the House of Representatives, the free states had more representatives than the slave states.

In 1819, the territory of Missouri applied for statehood as a slave state. After a great deal of debate, Congress adopted the **Missouri Compromise** in 1820. Maine entered the Union as a free state, and Missouri entered as a slave state. The measure also prohibited slavery north of 36°20' latitude, which was the southern border of Missouri. This included the Louisiana Territory lands west of Missouri. This compromise kept a balance of power between the free states and slave states in

the Senate and provided a temporary solution to the slavery question.

In 1836, the House of Representatives adopted a “gag rule” that placed all antislavery petitions “on the table” (no additional action would be taken). The rule so angered former President John Quincy Adams, who was a congressman from Massachusetts, that he fought vigorously to rally northern support. As a result, in one late session, 200,000 antislavery petitions flooded Washington. The rule was rescinded in 1844, but it had accomplished its purpose—it kept blacks as slaves without legislative intervention.



Map 32 The Missouri Compromise

Map Skill: Where were all of the free states located?

The Dred Scott Decision

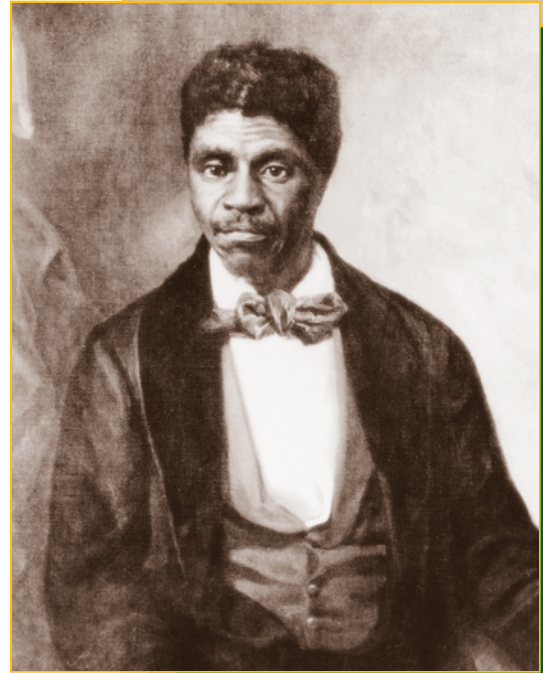
In 1834, Dred Scott, a slave, was taken by his owner from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois. Later they went to Wisconsin, another free state. When Scott and his master returned to Missouri, Scott filed a lawsuit claiming he was free since he had lived in a free state.

Abolitionists from the North raised enough money to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In March 1857, the Supreme Court ruled on the case. The justices said Scott could not sue because he was a slave, and slaves were not citizens. The Court also said Congress had no right to stop slavery in territories. The *Dred Scott* decision further divided the North and South and pushed them closer to war.

Sectionalism

As the chart on the differences between the North and South indicated, sectionalism was fast becoming a national issue.

Sectionalism is the belief by the people in a given region or area that their ideas and interests are better and more important than those of another region or area. As the country expanded westward, it meant that the slavery question had to be answered. Both Congress and the courts tried.



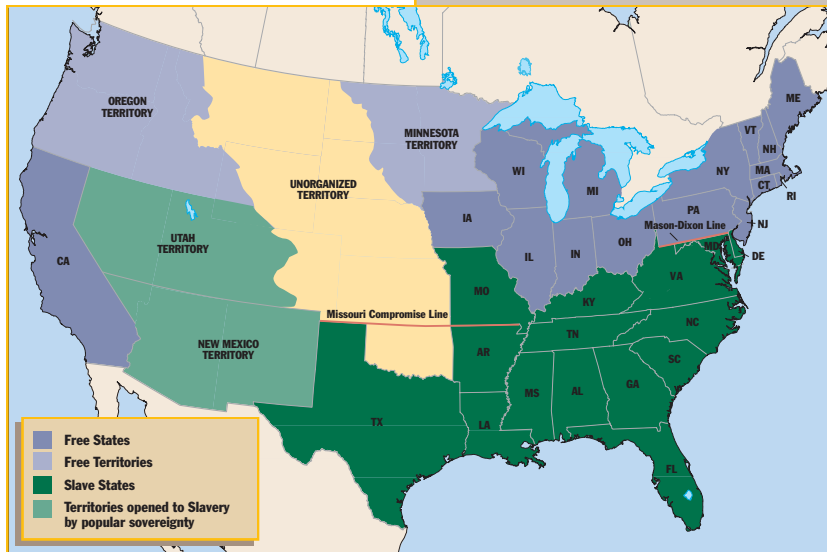
Above: In 1846, Dred Scott filed suit for his freedom.

The Compromise of 1850

After gold was discovered in California, people from all over the world traveled there dreaming of riches. By late 1849, the population of California was over 100,000, enough to ask for statehood.

In 1850, there were fifteen slave states and fifteen free states. California's constitution did not allow slavery. If California became a state, the balance in the Senate between slave states and free states would change. For eight months, what was later called "The Great Debate" raged as Congress tried to agree on what to do about California.

Seeing that these hotly debated issues might disrupt the Union, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed a compromise bill in early 1850. Strong leaders on both sides opposed certain parts of the bill. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina would not accept any limits on slavery. President Zachary Taylor would not sign any bill that tied California statehood to other issues. It looked as though compromise was dead and the Union in danger. Instead, death took both men, Calhoun in March and Taylor in July. The new president, Millard Fillmore, favored the compromise.



Map 33 The Compromise of 1850

Map Skill: According to the Compromise of 1850, should the Utah Territory have been slave or free?



Above: Kentucky Senator Henry Clay is seen here urging his colleagues to accept the Compromise of 1850 to preserve the Union.

Figure 23 The Compromise of 1850

Benefits for the North

- California came into the Union as a free state.
- Slave trading was ended in the District of Columbia.
- Texas gave up its idea of annexing New Mexico, thus taking that territory away from a slave state.

Benefits for the South

- The territories of New Mexico and Utah would determine whether they wanted to be slave or free.
- The residents of the District of Columbia could keep the slaves they already had.
- Congress would pass a law (the Fugitive Slave Act) stating that slaves who ran away to free states would be returned to their owners.

Clay's **Compromise of 1850** was thus passed by Congress. The compromise offered something to please both North and South (see Figure 23).

Kansas-Nebraska Act

The slavery issue, however, would not die. As more people moved into the grassy plains west of Missouri and Iowa, there was a need for a territorial government. In 1854, Stephen Douglas of Illinois brought about passage of the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**, which created the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and which contained a clause on popular sovereignty. **Popular sovereignty** meant that when a territory asked for statehood, the people of a territory could vote on whether they wanted to be a free state or slave state. Northerners were angry because this law changed the Missouri Compromise, which did not permit slavery north of Missouri's southern boundary.

Most people in the new territories belonged to one of two groups: proslavery or free soil. **Free soilers** were against slavery and also wanted land to be given to western settlers for farming. After Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, bloody fights broke out between proslavery and free soil groups. Abolitionists in other states promised to send antislavery

Did You Know?

There was so much **violence** in **Kansas** between the **proslavery** people and the **free soilers** that the territory was called "**Bleeding Kansas.**"

Below: Proslavery "border ruffians" from Missouri on their way to Kansas before the first territorial election in 1855. They took over the polls, prevented free soilers from voting, and ensured the election of a proslavery legislature.





Above: The Butler Plantation, a 19th-century rice plantation on the Altamaha River near Darien. The rice fields used a system of dikes and canals designed by engineers from Holland. The chimney is for a steam-driven rice mill. The plantation was owned by Pierce Butler of Philadelphia, who was married to the famous English actress Fannie Kemble. After a visit here in 1839-40, she wrote “Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation,” which, through its depiction of slavery, was believed to have influenced England against the Confederacy.

settlers with guns into Kansas. Missouri proslavery people promised to send men across the border to fight for slavery. When Congress rejected Kansas’s bid for statehood, southerners again realized that northern votes alone could keep slave states from the Union.

Economic Considerations

In addition to slavery and sectional differences, there were striking economic contrasts between the North and the South, including the major sources of their wealth. Because of these vastly different sources, the North and the South also disagreed on trade policies and restraints.

Agriculture Versus Industry

The economy of the North was based on industry. A cold climate and short growing season in the New England states meant there was little profit in farming. Northerners worked in factories, mines, banks, stores, and on railroads. The railroad system carried their industrial products to other parts of the country.

The South, on the other hand, depended on agriculture. Cotton and tobacco were the two main crops, but there were also rice plantations on the Georgia and South Carolina coasts. Even though cotton was “king” in the South, southerners shipped most of it to northern states where mills made thread and cloth. In 1850, there were 564 mills in New England. These mills employed 61,893 workers and had a value of over \$58 million. In the South, there were only 166 mills, with 10,043 workers and a value of \$7.25 million.

In fact, the antebellum South manufactured only 10 percent of the nation's goods. Few farmers and planters were interested in factories.

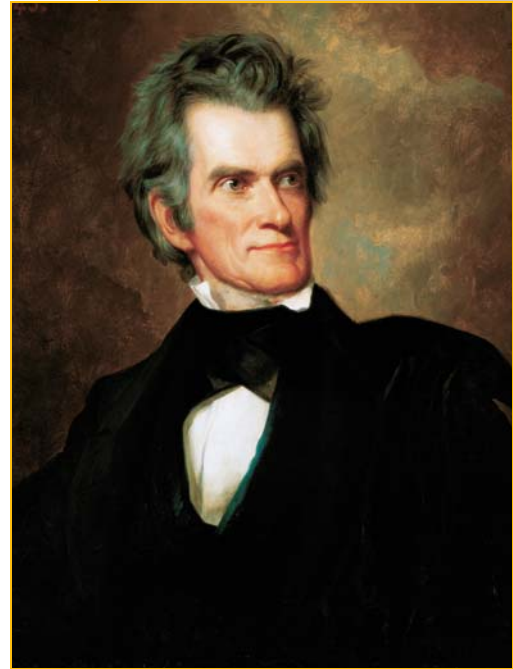
Tariffs

Tariffs, or taxes on imported goods, were another source of conflict between the North and the South. Northern states wanted foreign countries that shipped goods to the United States to pay high tariffs. With high tariffs, items made in the North would cost less than imported ones. For example, a suit made and sold in Boston might cost \$50. With an import tax of \$20, an identical suit made in Great Britain and sold in Boston might cost \$70. Customers would more likely buy the American-made suit.

Southern states had fewer factories and, therefore, bought many manufactured goods from foreign countries. Southerners did not want the prices they paid on imported goods made higher by tariffs.

In 1832, South Carolina threatened to secede from the Union because a new tariff was too high. South Carolinians began to arm themselves and hold practice drills. President Andrew Jackson asked Congress to allow him to take an army into South Carolina and force them to accept the tariff. Instead, Congress passed a compromise tariff law, which reduced the tariff over a ten-year period. The compromise pleased South Carolinians, and their protests ended.

The differences over tariffs became worse when a depression, known as the Panic of 1857, hit the country. Before that time, many northern industrialists built their factories with borrowed money. Nearly five thousand of them went bankrupt during the Panic of 1857. The factory owners asked Congress to pass higher tariffs to stop the British from shipping goods to the United States. Because there were so few factories in the South, the depression did not hurt southerners as badly. Their representatives, therefore, refused to support higher tariffs. The debates that followed further damaged feelings between the North and South.



Above: Vice President John C. Calhoun of South Carolina strongly opposed the tariff Congress passed in 1828. He supported states' rights and believed that the states had a right to nullify any federal law that they thought was unconstitutional. In 1832, he resigned the vice presidency to take a seat in the U.S. Senate where he believed he could better help southern interests.

It's Your Turn

1. What is your opinion of states' rights? Support your opinion with some factual information.
2. Knowing what you know about the rigid social ladder of antebellum society, in which social class would you have been most comfortable? Explain your response.
3. Why was the lower South called the "Cotton Kingdom"?
4. Why was the Compromise of 1850 so important?
5. On what was the economy of the North based?
6. What percent of the nation's industrial goods were manufactured in the South?