The South & Slavery

The South remained politically, culturally, and ideologically distinct from the north. As overcultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders relocated their agricultural enterprises to the new Southwest, increasing sectional tensions over the institution of slavery. States’ rights, nullification, and racist stereotyping provided the foundation for the Southern defense of slavery as a positive good. African Americans developed both overt and covert ways to resist the dehumanizing nature of slavery. Abolitionists, although a minority in the North, will develop a variety of strategies to campaign against slavery.

BIG IDEAS

- Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia (1676) leads to shift from indentured servants to black slavery.
- 1780s: Slavery issue of debate at the Constitutional Convention
  - 3/5th Compromise
  - Slave Trade ends in 1808
  - Fugitive Slave Act
Following the American Revolution slavery slowly ends in Northern and middle states. Slavery banned in Northwest Territory with Northwest Ordinance 1787.

MISSOURI COMPROMISE

1. North and South were able to postpone major sectional crisis with the MO Compromise in 1820.

2. Southern economy reliant on cash crops such as tobacco, rice, and cotton.
   - Eli Whitney cotton gin makes the cash crop economy profitable.
   - Demand for land for cotton production leads to huge increase in demand for slave labor.


“KING COTTON”

- Prosperity of North, South, and England built on backs of slaves.
Increase in Cotton Production

Western expansion and the issue of slavery will cause an increase in sectional conflict

• Missouri Compromise (1820)
• Compromise of 1850
• Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
Antebellum South:

- Primarily agrarian society: “King Cotton”
  - Lack of industrialization
  - $$$ invested in slave labor
- 25% of population owned slaves
  - Majority of southerners were not slave owners
    - Southern whites support and defend institution of slavery
      - Hopeful they will one day own slaves
- Southern politics was in many ways an oligarchy
  - Government by the few wealthy
    - Plantation owners
  - Southern large slave holders control southern politics
- Contrast with the north
  - Lack of immigration to the south
  - Lack of public schooling reforms

Southern Population

Deep south states had a majority black population

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

- African American population in the North
  - About 250,000
  - Tensions with Irish immigrants
    - Competition over low skilled jobs
- Free black population in the South
  - About 250,000
  - Many restrictions on daily life
    - Especially after Nat Turner’s rebellion in 1831
SLAVERY

- Chattel slavery
  - Slaves were treated as property
  - "Uncle Tom's Cabin": brought the issue of families being broken up to a mass audience
- By the eve of the civil war most slaves were in the deep south
- Slaves were not afforded any social, political, or civil rights
  - Illegal to learn to read or write

African American culture emerged as a blending of African and American cultural influences

- African American religion (especially after 2nd GA)
  - Black Christianity [Baptists & Methodists]:
    - African practice of responsorial style of preaching.
    - Drawing on West African traditions
  - Importance of music in black culture. [esp. spirituals].

RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY

Forms of resistance

- Work slowdowns
- Negligence
  - Break equipment
  - Run away: Underground RR
- Slave revolt
  - Slave revolts were not common
    - Stono Rebellion (1739): South Carolina slaves runaway to Florida
    - Denmark Vesey (1822): massive revolt planned in South Carolina
    - Nat Turner (1831): Revolt in Virginia killed 60 people
- Southerners react
  - Harsher laws: "Black codes"
  - Slave patrols
**Abolitionist Movement**

- Quakers were earliest opponents of slavery
- American Colonization Society: transport freed slaves back to Africa (1822 Monrovia, Liberia)
- David Walker: “Appeal to the Colored Citizens of World” (1829) called for violent uprising
- Sojourner Truth & Frederick Douglass: former slaves who advocated for abolitionism
- Liberty Party (1840)

**SOUTHERN REACTION: DEFENSE OF SLAVERY**

- Gag Resolution in Congress (1836-1844)
  - Ban on anti-slavery petitions being discussed in Congress
  - Repealed by John Quincy Adams in 1844
- Bans on teaching slaves to read or write
- Southern states adopt strict slave codes
  - Nat Turner revolt
- Anti-slavery messages banned from Southern mail
- Pro-slavery argument by George Fitzhugh
  - Slaves as family
  - Better than “wage slavery”
  - Civilized inferior people

**See Key Concept 4.1 / II**

D) Enslaved blacks and free African Americans created communities and strategies to protect their dignity and family structures, and they joined political efforts aimed at changing their status.

**See Key Concept 4.1 / III**

B) Abolitionist and antislavery movements gradually achieved emancipation in the North, contributing to the growth of the free African American population, even as many state governments restricted African Americans’ rights. Antislavery efforts in the South were largely limited to unsuccessful slave rebellions.

**See Key Concept 4.2 / III**

B) Increasing Southern cotton production and the related growth of Northern manufacturing, banking, and shipping industries promoted the development of national and international commercial ties.
C) Southern business leaders continued to rely on the production and export of traditional agricultural staples, contributing to the growth of a distinctive Southern regional identity. See Key Concept 4.3 / II

A) As over-cultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders began relocating their plantations to more fertile lands west of the Appalachians, where the institution of slavery continued to grow.

B) Antislavery efforts increased in the North, while in the South, although the majority of Southerners owned no slaves, most leaders argued that slavery was part of the Southern way of life.

C) Congressional attempts at political compromise, such as the Missouri Compromise, only temporarily stemmed growing tensions between opponents and defenders of slavery.