• Northern and Southern interests had developed differently
  o North wanted high tariffs on imports to protect its infant industries
  o South favored free trade because they wanted to import British goods in exchange for cotton that they provided to Britain
• In a last ditch effort to preserve slavery, eleven southern states seceded from the nation
  o Abe Lincoln preserved the Union through Civil War

The Old South

❖ What were the dominant industries and forms of agriculture in the Old South?
❖ How did the dependence upon agriculture and slavery shape southern society?
❖ How did the anti-slavery movement emerge, and what were the South’s reactions to it?

• Myths and stereotypes of the south
  o Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin
    ▪ portrayed planters as arrogant aristocrats who raped women and abused slaves
  o Gone with the Wind
    ▪ Paternalistic societies, rural values of independence, Jeffersonian values
• Distinction of the South rely on two lines of thought
  o Impact of the environment
    ▪ Warm climate ideal for cultivation of tobacco, cotton, rice, sugarcane
    ▪ Plantation system and slavery
  o Effects of human decisions and actions
    ▪ Sectional conflict over the extension of slavery

The Distinctiveness of the Old South

• Distinctiveness arose primarily from slavery
  o Racial unity bridged class divisions among whites
  o Biracial influence
• High proportion of native-born Americans
  o Immigrants were not drawn, shipping lines went mainly to northern ports
  o Immigrant-slave competition
  o Christian orthodoxy after the Revolutionary War era
    o Blacks found refuge in their own version of Christianity
• Differences in architecture
  o Pecunset for fighting and the agrarian ideal

Staple Crops

• Stereotypical Cotton Kingdom
  o Tobacco was the first staple crop, cotton came after
• Indigo in South Carolina, rice in the coastal states,

• Sugar required heavy capital investment—limited to the Deep South
  • Sugar needed prop of protective tariff—anomaly in southern politics
  • Hemp in Kentucky and Missouri had similar necessity

• Cotton essentially replaced other staple crops
  • Two factors accounted for dramatic growth of cotton market
    • Voracious market for American cotton in Britain and France
    • New lands in the Old Southwest (Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana)
  • Migration to fertile black belts of Mississippi and Alabama

Agricultural Diversity

• Corn, wheat, oats, rye, potatoes, livestock
  • Plantations commonly raised livestock for consumption

• Cash crops exhausted the soil
  • Migration west toward more fertile soil

• Southeast and Old Southwest faced economic crisis
  • Proposals to deal with crisis followed two lines:
    • Reform vs. economic diversification through commerce and industry
  • Edmund Ruffin stands out as a reformer—studied chemistry of soils
    • Essay on Calcareous Manures: seashell deposit could re-fertilize drained soils

Manufacturing and Trade

• Many thought that the south needed its own industry and trade
  • Increasing dependence on north for shipping and imports
  • South was economically dependent

• Dependence on North prompted interest in a more diversified economy
  • Industry balanced by agriculture
  • Great resources: raw materials, labor, waterpower, wood, coal, markets
  • South still lagged despite emerging manufacturing—Tredegar Iron Works

Economic Development

• Lag in southern industry development
  • Blacks were presumed unsuited for factory work
  • Ruling elite of the Old South had developed aristocratic disdain for industrial production
  • Factory owners bought and hired blacks

White Society in the South

• Short-term gains at the cost of long-term development
  • Focus on agriculture hindered innovation
  • Isolation from the world
  • Decreasing demand for Southern cotton was devastating

Planters

• Plantations set the tone of economic and social life
Plantation vs. farm

- Plantation is larger, more slaves, separate control and supervision, grew staple crops for profit
- Management and labor set the planter apart

- 4% of population own slaves, 25% of population benefit from slaves
- 1 in 30 whites in the south were planters
  - Privileged elite—class interests were interests of the entire South
  - Small farmers aspired to be planters
- Planter life was not as good as it is portrayed
  - Less leisure

The Plantation Mistress

- Seldom led a life of leisure
- Supervised domestic household
- Manage slaves
- Exemplars of Christian piety but male authority

The Middle Class

- Overseers of plantations emerged from middle class
- Highest management position a slave could aspire was that of a “driver”: director of other slaves
  - More numerous white southerners were small farmers (yeomen)
    - Lived in cabins instead of mansions
    - Few slaves
    - Mobile folk
    - Independent and suspicious of government
    - Identified with Democratic party and Protestantism
    - Supported slave system

“Poor Whites”

- Poor whites were limited to the worst land, fishing, hunting
  - Lankness and sallowness
  - Descended from indentured servants or convicts
  - Infections and dietary deficiencies
    - Lazy diseases: hookworm, malaria, pellagra
  - Dirt eaters—urge to chew clay was fatal

Honor and Violence

- Moral code flourished in hierarchical rural societies
  - Loyalty to family, locality, sensitivity, deference of elders, hospitality
- Hunting, riding, gambling, cockfighting—masculine camaraderie
- Reckless manliness apparent in all classes
- Dueling

- To what extent was Southern culture distinctive?
- What role did violence and honor play in the culture of the Old South?
Black Society in the South

- In 1790 there were fewer than 700,000 enslaved blacks in the US
- By 1830 there were more than 2 million and by 1860 there were almost 4 million
- Slavery was largely an uncodified system of forced labor practiced in most New World colonies
  - Before revolution: Black slaves were treated like indentured servants
  - After revolution: slavery became highly regulated, limited to the South
- Slavery was the most important force shaping American history in the first half of the nineteenth century.

“Free Persons of Color”

- Free blacks were of uncertain status
  - Subject to racist legal restrictions
  - Freedom obtained in many ways:
    - Purchase freedom
    - Military service
    - Freed by masters
  - 26,000 free blacks in the slave states by 1860
- Large number of mulattoes among free blacks
  - 412,000 people of mixed parentage, 10% of black population
  - Black slaveholders were few in number—most in South

The Trade in Slaves

- Rise in the slave population occurred mainly through a natural increase
- Expansion of cotton economy kept slavery alive despite outlawed slave trade in 1808
  - End of foreign slave trade gave rise to flourishing domestic slave trade
  - Slave trade peaked just before 1837
  - Slaves moved south and west with planters
- Worst aspect was separation of children from parents and husbands from wives
  - Only Louisiana and Alabama forbade separating child under ten from his mother

Plantation Slavery

- Most slaves labored on plantations
  - Preferred jobs were as household servants, skilled workers, special assignments, field hands
  - Most planters only resorted to doctors mainly in cases of severe illness
  - High mortality rate among slave babies
  - 50,000 slaves a year escaped to Mexico, northern states, or Canada

The Experience of Slave Women

- During colonial period, there were more female slaves than male slaves
- By mid-century, there was a balance
- Fertile female slaves were profitable: babies were sellable
  - Incentives to reproduce
  - Workload increased after age 40
- Threat of sexual abuse
  - Resistance
Seduction of master

- Women had fewer opportunities to escape slavery
  - Lacked physical strength and endurance
  - Mother’s responsibility to children
  - Feigned illness, hid, sabotaged food or crops, started fires

Celia

- Celia was purchased as a sexual slave by Newsom but secretly had affair with another slave, George
- Celia killed her owner, George accused Celia
  - Celia was not allowed to testify at her trial because she was a slave
  - Public opinion justified that white rape of a slave was not a crime
  - Celia was hanged at 19 years-old
- Shows skewed power structure of the South

Slave Rebellions

- Organized slave resistance was rare due to white supremacy
- 1800: Gabriel hatched plot to seize key points near Richmond and kill whites—failed
- 1822: Denmark Vesey plot in Charleston planned to assault whites, seize ships, burn city—failed
  - Anti-slave insurrection legislation tightened as a result
- 1831: Nat Turner insurrection in Southampton County professed divine mission
  - Most slaves retaliated by malingering and sabotaging
  - Slaves and masters were mutually dependent
  - Restrictions tightened

Forging a Slave Community

- Slave culture incorporated many African elements, especially in areas with few whites
- Elements of African culture survived, adapted, interacted with those of the other cultures

Slave Religion and Folklore

- Most important manifestation of slave culture was dynamic religion
  - Mixture of African and Christian elements
  - Concept of Creator, Jehovah, and lesser gods
  - Belief in spirits, magic, conjuring
- Slaves found comfort in religion
  - Hope of a better world
  - Slaveholders encouraged Christianity
  - Songs eased strain of labor
- Worship in secret—“bush meetings”
- Humor became means of psychological release
- African-American folklore tended to be realistic in its images of wish fulfillment and reflected weak triumphing over the strong

The Slave Family

- Marriages had no legal status but owner accepted
- Nuclear family was the norm—father was head

Ishmam Ahmed; Ishmam.com
Childhood was short—work assigned early
- By age 10, full time field hands
- Often sold to new masters

❖ How common were slave rebellions in pre-Civil war America?
❖ What role did religion, folklore, and family life play in the lives of slaves?

The Culture of the Southern Frontier
- Old Southwest: Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida
  - Settlers were lured from Virginia, Georgia, Carolinas
  - Migrants brought new culture

The Decision to Migrate
- By the late 1820s the agricultural economy of the upper South was suffering from depressed prices and soil exhaustion
  - Planters wanted to be “self-made men”
- Women were underrepresented among migrants
  - Few were interested in relocating
  - The new region did not offer them independence or adventure
  - Fear that life on the frontier would dissipate morals and family ties
- Enslaved blacks felt the same way as women
  - Feared harsh working conditions
  - Didn’t want to break family ties

The Journey and Settlement
- Most migrants headed to Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee
  - Parcels of land were purchased
  - Alabama’s fertile black belt was more expensive
  - Hot climate, contaminated water, poor sanitation, disease
    - Malaria
  - Tents and rude cabins

A Masculine Culture
- Frontier environment prompted sex roles
  - Young men indulged in activities that would be disapproved of on the coast
  - Most Old Southwest plantations had their own whiskey manufacture
  - Violence was commonplace
  - White men took sexual advantage of women
    - Women were dependent on husbands, so they had to endure
Anti-Slavery Movements

Early Opposition to Slavery

- First organized emancipation movement appeared with American Colonization Society in 1817
  - Proposed to return freed slaves to Africa
  - Supporters: Madison, Monroe, Clay, Marshall, Webster
  - Some saw it as a way to bolster slavery while others saw it as a humanitarian effort
  - Leaders of free black community denounced it
    - They stressed that America was their native land
  - Free slaves were deported to allocated land (Liberia) in Africa in 1822—uncertain purpose
- African colonization movement received meager support from abolitionists and slavery supporters

From Gradualism to Abolitionism

- Initial anti-slavery efforts: promoting probation of slavery in new western territories, encouraging manumission—gave way into abolitionism
  - 1831: William Garrison wrote in Liberator—anti-slavery newspaper
  - Garrison: pacifist, but bellicose language
- Southerners were outraged by Liberator
  - Blamed Garrison for Nat Turner rebellion
- Garrison was most fervent foe to slavery
  - Established New England Anti-Slavery Society
  - Arthur and Lewis Tappan founded American Anti-Slavery Society
  - Hoped to emulate Parliament’s successful abolition of slavery
- American Anti-Slavery Society sought to convince people that slavery was a crime against God
  - Promoted immediate abandonment of slavery
  - Promoted racial equality in addition to emancipation
  - Propaganda was issued

A Split in the Movement, 1840

- Debate over anti-slavery tactics
  - Garrisonians, mainly New Englanders, were radicals who felt that American society had been corrupted from top to bottom and needed universal reform
    - Garrison embraced many reform movements, refused to vote, opposed Constitution
  - Other reformers saw American society as fundamentally sound and concentrated on purging of slavery
    - Showdown in 1840 over women’s rights: women joined abolition movements
- Grimké sisters brought issue of women’s rights to center stage
  - Joined anti-slavery organization under Theodore Weld
  - Set out speaking to audiences of women, and later, men and women
  - Their behavior prompted Congregational clergy of Massachusetts to chastise sisters for engaging in unfeminine activity
    - Chairman of Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society declared that no woman shall speak or vote
    - Angelina Grimské opposed cult of domesticity—woman’s right to have a voice in law
- Garrisonians supported women’s right to participate equally
Black Anti-Slavery Activity

- African-American leaders were active in white societies from the beginning
- Former slaves were primary agents of anti-slavery—spoke from experience
- **Fredrick Douglass**: best-known black man in America
  - *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*
  - Bought his freedom—admirers in Britain
  - Started abolitionist newspaper for blacks: *North Star*
- Harriet Tubman: facilitated escape efforts
- **Sojourner Truth**: intersection of abolitionism and women's rights

Reactions to Abolition

- There were pro-slavery elements in the North too
- 1817: mob in Illinois killed anti-slavery editor, Elijah Lovejoy—martyr for abolition and free press
- 1830s: Congress was deluged with abolition petitions—voted to ignore them
  - Seen as violation of First Amendment, repealed in 1844
- 1840: Abolitionist national convention in New York
  - Launched *Liberty Party*—James Birney nominated for president
    - Purely anti-slavery party

The Defense of Slavery

- Growing hostility in the South
  - Gradual emancipation was defeated in Virginia legislature
- Christian churches became pro-slavery in the South
  - Biblical passages cited slaveholding
  - *Split*: formation of Southern Baptist Convention and Methodist Episcopal Church
- Racial inferiority of blacks
- Slavery was socially necessary—Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*
- Slavery was profitable
- Blacks could not assimilate into free society
- White workers feared competition
- **George Fitzhugh**: work argument (pg 562)

❖ How did women’s rights groups both help and hinder the abolitionist movement?
❖ What do you think were the South’s two most effective arguments for slavery?