

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.

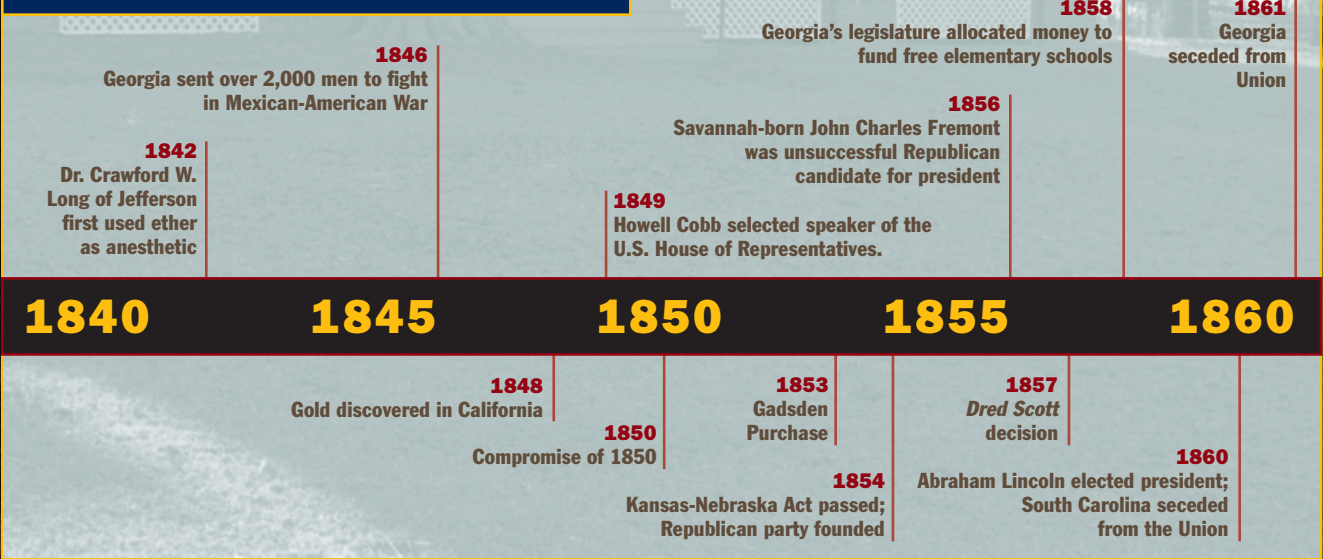
Transportation: Charles Goodyear produced vulcanized rubber in 1839. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad linked Chicago to the East. Stagecoach service and mail delivery connected St. Louis and San Francisco, a distance of 2,812 miles. In 1860, the Pony Express began service from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento,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

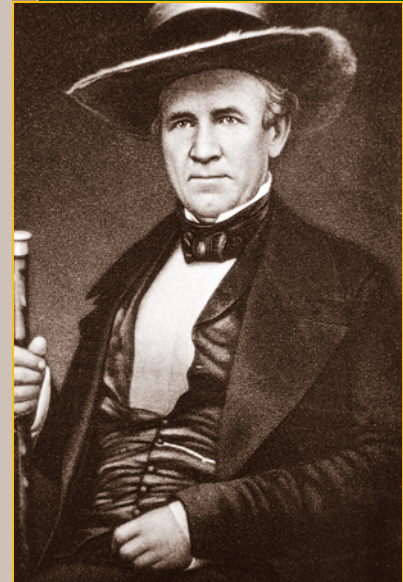
After a siege of twelve days, Santa Anna’s troops stormed the fort. All of the Texas settlers were killed. A few weeks later, Santa Anna ordered the execution of 350 Texians being held at Goliad. These two incidents inspired the Texians. Two months later, Sam Houston led eight hundred men against Santa 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.

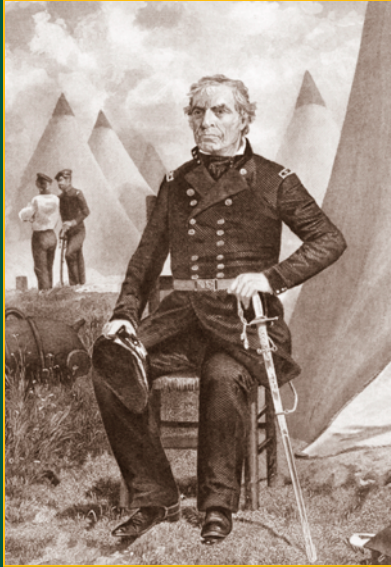
The people of Texas formed the Republic of Texas, also known as the Lone Star Republic. They wanted to become part of the United States as quickly as possible. However, because slavery was allowed in Texas, it was not until December 1845 that it was **annexed** (added on) and became the twenty-eighth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

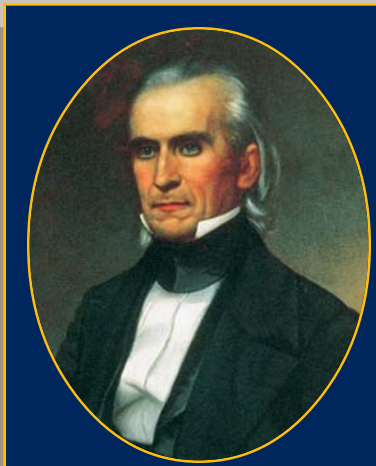
Oregon

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.

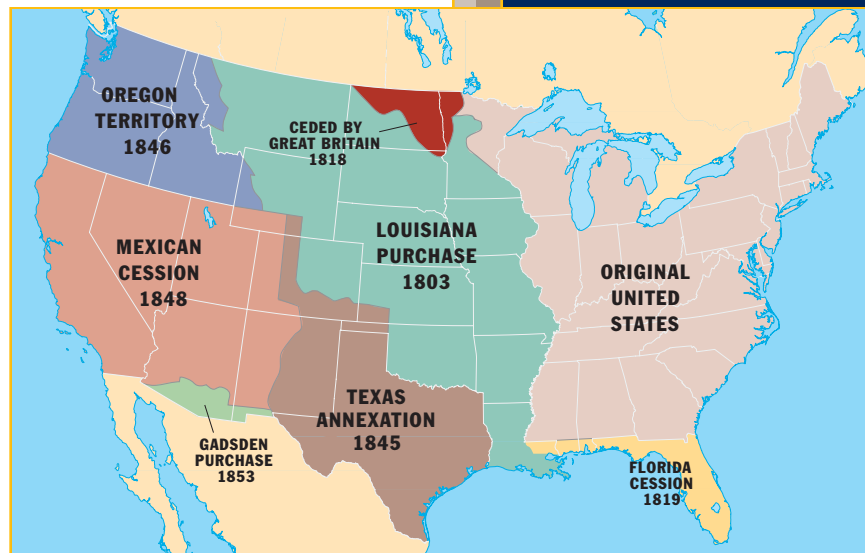
In a 1818 treaty, the United States and Great Britain had set the boundary between the United States and Canada at the 49th parallel (49° north latitude) westward from the Lake of the Woods (in Minnesota) to the Continental Divide. (The *Continental Divide* is a series of mountain ridges from Alaska 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

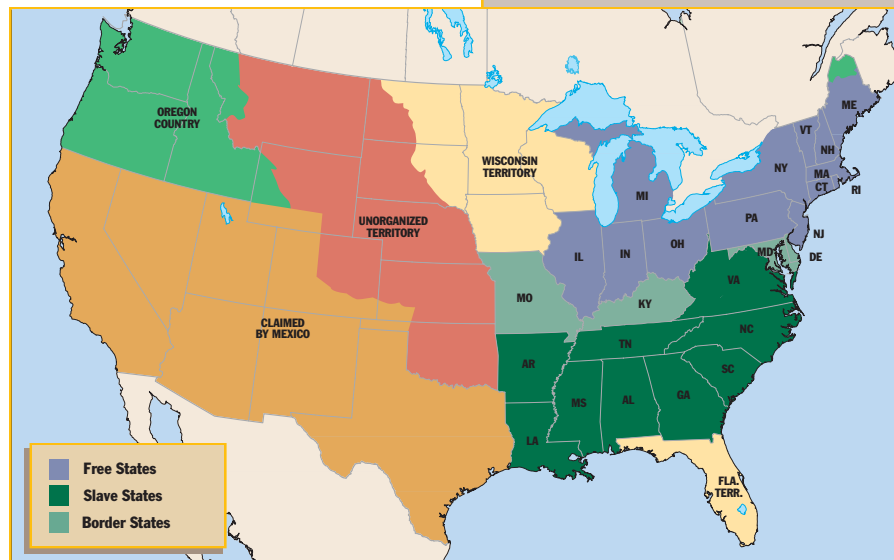
As Figure 18 indicates, class structure in the North was generally based on wealth. That wealth allowed people to move upward from one social class to another. In the South, however, the social structure was based more on class and, even though that included money, being "born into the right family."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

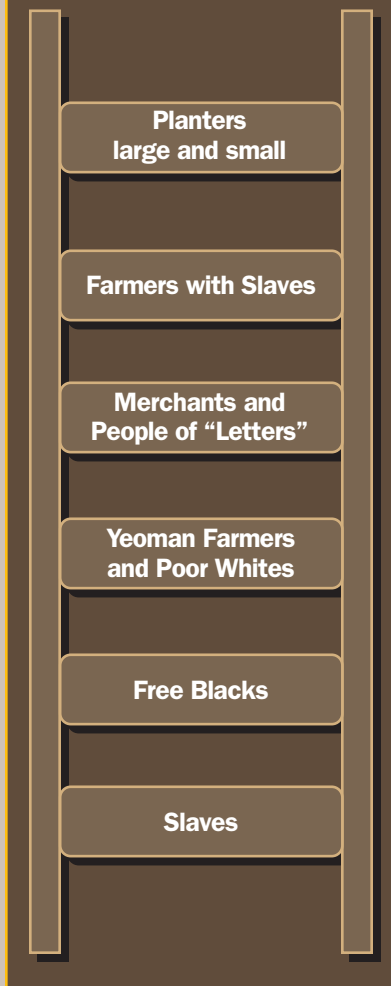
Farmers with Slaves

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.

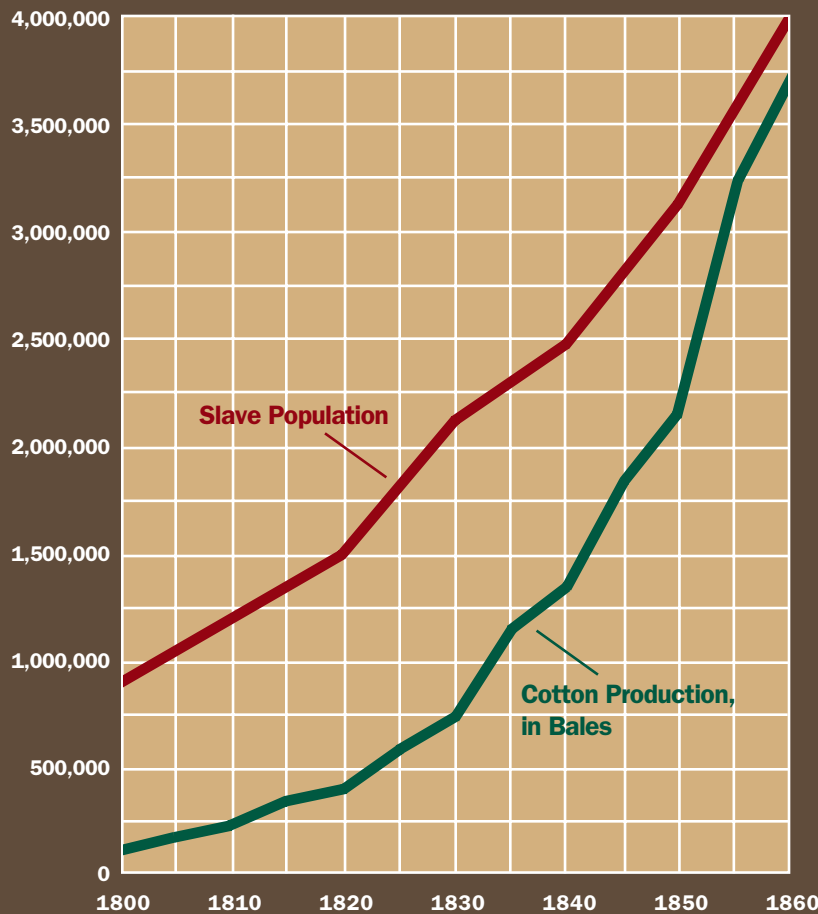
Did You Know?

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

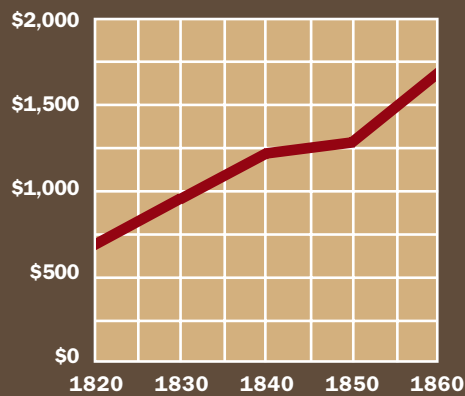
The Cost of Slavery

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.

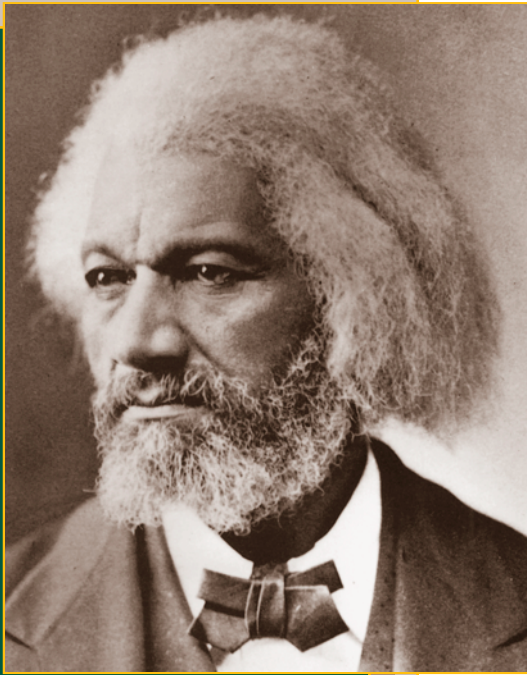
With so much invested in slaves, the large slave owners had little incentive to invest in permanent community improvements such as city infrastructures, transportation systems, public schools, and community health facilities. The plantations did not need local markets for their goods, local

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

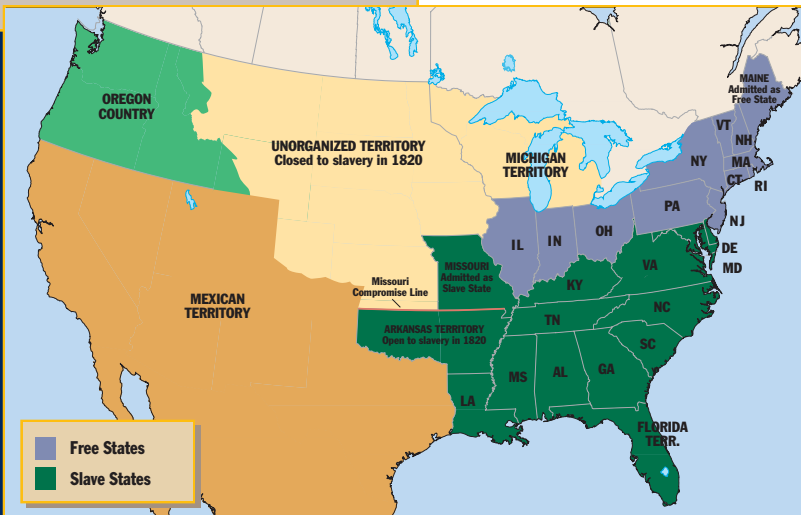
In 1819, the United States had twenty-two states. Eleven were **slave states** (states that did allow slavery), and eleven were **free states** (states that did not allow slavery). This meant that, in the Senate, there was an equal number of

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

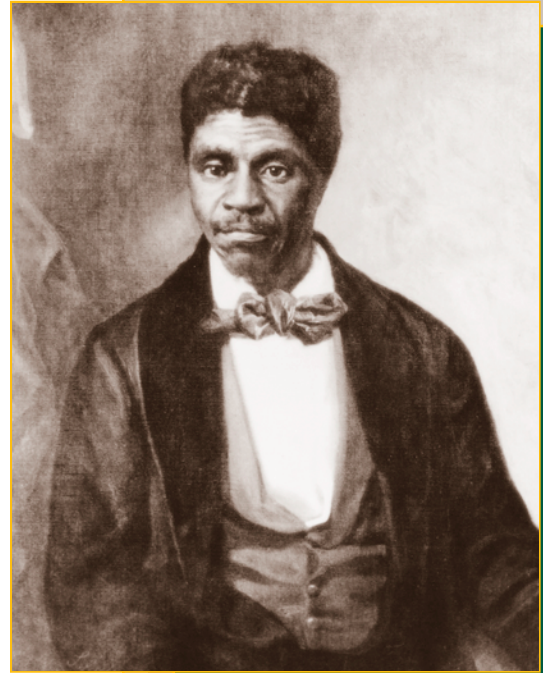
In 1834, Dred Scott, a slave, was taken by his owner from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois. Later they went to Wisconsin, another free state. When Scott and his master returned to Missouri, Scott filed a lawsuit claiming he was free since he had lived in a free state.

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.



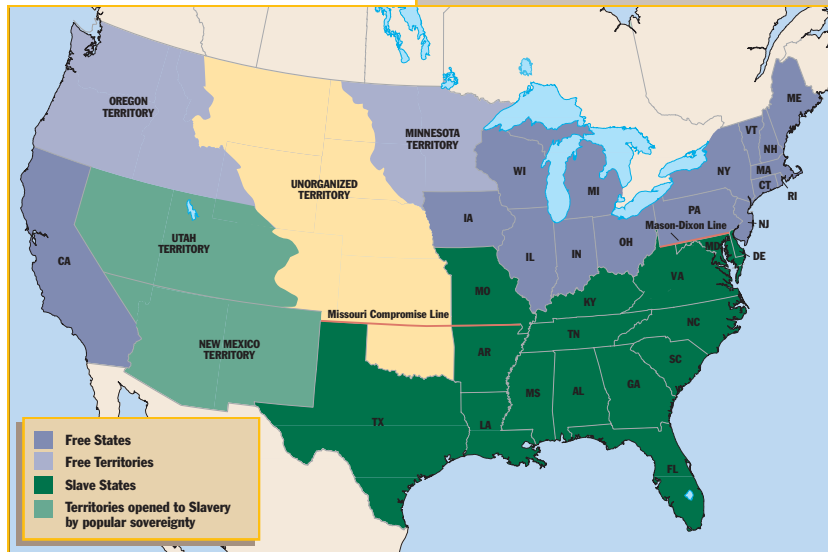
Above: In 1846, Dred Scott filed suit for his freedom.

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.

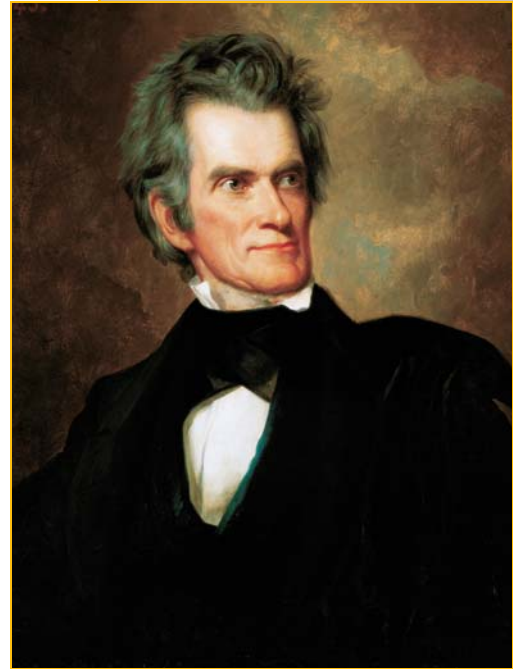
Tariffs

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?

Section Preview

As you read, look for:

- daily life for slaves in Georgia,
- how slaves fought back against slavery, and
- **vocabulary terms:** driver, slave code, arsenal, and underground railroad.

Below: Slave housing offered only the most basic shelter and furnishings. Visitors can see these reconstructed slave cabins at Stone Mountain Park.

Section 3

Slavery as a Way of Life

As you have read, the slavery issue had been emotionally charged for some time. But that did little to make daily life for slaves more bearable.

Daily Life for Slaves

While the arguments over slavery intensified, the daily lives of slaves became even more harsh. Most slaves who worked on plantations lived in one-room huts with fireplaces for heating and cooking. They had little furniture—perhaps a table, some chairs, and pallets to sleep on. Slave housing was poorly built with inferior materials or with timber and stone found nearby. The house usually had stick-and-dirt chimneys, one door, and one window without glass. These slave huts were often small, crowded, and smoky. Some slaveholders did provide sturdier housing for their workers, but this was more the exception than the rule.

Slaves wore clothing made from materials that would last a long time. Usually there was only one set of clothing for a slave—heavy pants or skirts, shirts or blouses that rarely fit, along with wide-brimmed hats, heavy-duty



shoes, socks or stockings, and undergarments. Slaves frequently worked barefoot in the fields. House slaves fared better and often were given clothes that members of the plantation family no longer wore.

Slaves' diet usually consisted of fatback, molasses, and corn bread. On some plantations, slaves could have a vegetable garden and fish in streams and ponds. Sometimes, plantation owners gave the slaves rabbits, opossums, squirrels, or other small game they had killed.

Work Routines

The jobs done by slaves varied according to the crops grown in different parts of the state. Those who worked for rice planters were said to have the "hardest work" that slaves could have. The slaves worked long hours in flooded, swampy fields and were bent over most of the time. Each was expected to produce four or five barrels of rice a season. (A barrel weighed about 500 pounds.) It took two acres of land to produce the four or five barrels.

Cotton and tobacco were equally demanding crops. Slaves spent many hours in the hot summer sun "chopping cotton" to remove the never-ending weeds. From August to November, slaves had to pick the cotton by hand, stooping over each plant. Sometimes there were as many as six pickings during the season, because the cotton ripened gradually instead of all at once.

Field hands worked in the cotton, tobacco, or rice fields six days a week. They started before the sun came up and stayed until sundown. When it was time to harvest the crops, both adults and children had a set amount to bring in each day. If a slave did not harvest enough, the owner or overseer might punish him or her. Owners and overseers always watched slaves to make sure they stayed busy.

Besides working in the fields, the slaves also cut down and sawed trees, rolled logs, and cleared vines and underbrush. They loaded crops on vessels, repaired ditches, and built dikes. Anytime the overseer was displeased in any way, a lashing on



Above: This rare portrait of a slave is of Nancy, a house servant owned by Dr. Tomlinson Fort of Milledgeville.

Did You Know?

Rice is still grown in Georgia at the Maryfield Plantation in Camden County.



Above: Cotton had to be picked by hand, as illustrated in this engraving entitled “Picking Cotton on the Coast.” There could be as many as six pickings during the season.

a bare back was the likely punishment. Frequently, **drivers** (older slaves the plantation owner thought were loyal) were also used to supervise the field hands.

Slave women worked just as hard as slave men. When not working in the fields, they spent time spinning, sewing, weaving, preparing food, and minding children. Even the children worked, sometimes starting as young as five years old. They shooed chickens out of the garden and flies off the table. The children carried water to the workers in the field, gathered nuts and berries, and collected kindling for fires. They continued working until they were either too old or too sick to be of any use in the fields or the “big house.”

Slave Families

Given the harshness of their lives, the black family proved remarkably strong. The slave community extended far beyond a particular plantation. Slaves who could not find marriage partners on their own plantations often found them on other plantations. Masters encouraged slave women to marry men on adjoining farms or plantations because any children that came from such a union became the property of the woman’s master.

Unfortunately, the law did not recognize slave marriages. Even though many masters tried not to separate black families, that tragedy often happened. Changes in a master’s life made slaves especially vulnerable. Marriage, death, or relocation in the slaveholder’s family were the greatest threats to a slave

family's stability. Planters often made presents of slaves to newly married children. In their wills, planters divided slaves among white family members. Slaves were also sold to pay off debts or to remove black troublemakers.

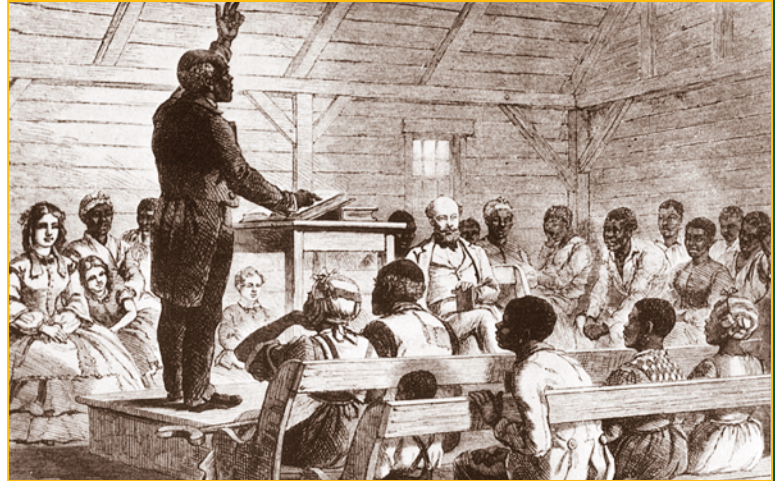
Religion and Education

Religion played a key role in the lives of slaves. During the Great Revival of the early 1800s, most blacks—free and slave—converted to Christianity.

Many large plantations had a church where both slaves and the plantation family attended services on Sunday mornings. The white ministers of these churches gave sermons on the theme “Servants, obey your masters.” In the slave quarters, black preachers delivered a far different message. Here, and wherever slaves were allowed to have church meetings of their own, the black preachers voiced a strong desire for freedom and justice.

Spiritual songs were an important part of slave life. Slaves sang them at church, home, and work. The words gave them comfort and spoke of faith in God and belief in freedom. Spirituals such as “Go Down Moses,” “Swing

Below: During the early 1800s, black preachers often delivered sermons to mixed audiences. **Bottom:** These slaves are waiting to be sold at a slave auction.



Low Sweet Chariot,” “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See,” and others all spoke of the need for comfort. Some songs were written to send a message. For example, “Follow the Drinking Gourd” gave directions for the underground railroad. The song “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore” was also a song about slavery and escape.

Education was almost nonexistent for most slaves. It was against the law for a slave owner to teach any slave to read or write. Some owners, however, recognized that it was useful to have slaves who could read well enough to distinguish labels on barrels of foodstuffs or to be able to write simple messages. In these instances, the slave owner or his wife used the Bible to teach their slaves the basics of reading and writing. However, the slaveholders also feared that slaves who could read and write might also use their talents to stir up discontent among other slaves and lead to uprisings.



Above: Nat Turner, a slave preacher from Virginia, believed God wanted him to end slavery in America. In 1831, he led a revolt that resulted in the deaths of over fifty whites and numerous slaves. Turner was captured and hanged.

Rules and Rebellions

Some slaves fought their enslavement. In 1800, Gabriel Prosser gathered as many as 1,000 slaves in Richmond, Virginia, and planned to carry out the largest slave revolt in U.S. history. Betrayed by two slaves, word of the rebellion was passed to slave owners. Prosser did not know he had been betrayed, but a severe thunderstorm stopped the rebellion. Prosser was arrested and executed for his plans.

In 1822, free black carpenter Denmark Vesey’s failed slave rebellion involved over 5,000 blacks in Charleston, South Carolina. As a side

effect of that incident, the eminent South Carolina A.M.E. leader Morris Brown (for whom one of our colleges in Atlanta is named) was named as a suspect in the rebellion. He moved north, where he later succeeded Richard Allen as bishop of the A.M.E. Church.

In 1831, Nat Turner led the bloodiest slave revolt in American history in Virginia. Between fifty-seven and eighty-five people were killed. After Nat Turner’s insurrection in 1831, strict laws were passed throughout the South to curtail slave movements, meetings, and efforts to learn to read and write. These laws applied to both slaves and freed blacks. The latter were considered a threat because they might help educate slaves or help them escape.

It was hard for a group of slaves on one farm to get messages to groups in other places. When slaves left their plantation, they either went with the owner or overseer or had to have a pass. Because passes stated where slaves could go and when they must be back, secret meetings were almost impossible. In addition, the fugitive slave laws required that runaway slaves be returned to their masters.

By 1833, another literary law in Georgia provided that any teaching of people of color would result in fines and public whippings. That same year, an employment law prohibited people of color from working in any job that even involved reading or writing. That law, and similar restrictions throughout the South, was passed to cut down on the number of runaway slaves who moved into large cities and towns and use forged papers to get jobs as free blacks. A few years later the job prohibition extended to drug stores and by 1845, Georgians were prohibited from making any contact with black mechanics.

Other laws, called **slave codes**, took away nearly all the rights of slaves. It was against the law for them to testify against whites, show disrespect to white persons, make any type of contact, hit a white, or carry a weapon. On some plantations, overseers counted hoes, pitchforks, and shovels at the end of the day so they could not be kept for use as weapons. Slaves had little time to talk together. They were watched every day except Sundays, and on holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, and the Fourth of July. Even some free blacks who owned slaves kept a careful eye on them.



Above: John Brown was a fiery abolitionist. He is best known for his campaigns on behalf of free soilers in Missouri and Kansas and his attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. He was tried and convicted of treason for his raid on Harpers Ferry. His death made him a martyr to many northerners.

Did You Know?

One of John Brown's prisoners was Lewis Washington, the great-grandnephew of George Washington. Brown took him prisoner in order to obtain a sword that had been given to George Washington by Frederick the Great of Russia and inscribed "From the oldest general in the world to the greatest."

Even with additional laws and restrictions, there were still instances of rebellion on plantations. Actions such as breaking farm equipment, pulling down fences, damaging boats, ruining clothing, and setting fires to barns or stables were gestures of rebellion. So was careless work in fields. While such rebellion did not end slavery, it did add a sense of purpose to a slave's endless drudgery and feelings of hopelessness.

Another incident added to the fears of slave owners. White abolitionist John Brown hated slavery. In 1859, he decided to try to help slaves

in the South become free of their owners. To do this, Brown needed guns and ammunition.

Brown led a party of twenty-one men, blacks as well as whites, in a raid on the federal **arsenal** (arms storehouse) at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now in West Virginia). They made prisoners of a number of prominent citizens. Then Brown and his men took over the building where the guns were stored.

Within twenty-four hours, troops led by Colonel Robert E. Lee had captured Brown. Two months later, the state of Virginia tried Brown for treason and sentenced him to be hanged. Not long before he died, Brown wrote to his family and said he was as content “to die for God’s eternal truth on the scaffold as in any other way.”

Southerners thought John Brown was a murderer, and they were afraid others would try to lead slaves to rise up against owners. Many northerners opposed Brown’s tactics but they saw Brown as a hero. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, “This will be a great day in our history, the date of a new revolution. . . . As I write, they are leading old John Brown to execution. . . . This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind which will come soon. . . .” Longfellow was so right.



Map 34 The Underground Railroad

Map Skill: Through which free states did most of the routes run?

Riding the Underground Railroad

As abolitionists did what they could to end slavery, other groups took a different approach by helping slaves escape. They helped slaves flee the South and travel to selected northern states or to Canada. One of the most notable groups was a mixture of whites and blacks who operated the **underground railroad**.

The underground railroad was responsible for helping thousands of slaves escape into freedom. But it was not easy. Technically, the underground railroad was a network of roads, houses, river crossings, boats and wagons, woods and streams that provided a trail of flight. Trips, by horse-drawn carts, carriages, or even a real rail car, could take weeks or even months. Stops along the way were called *stations* where a lantern or a candle in a window meant warmth, a hot meal, or even a change of clothes at the homes of station masters. Underground railroad workers also gave directions and help for the next leg of the journey, while conductors led groups to freedom. According to some reports, even quilts hanging on a line could provide instructions

American Spotlight

Sojourner Truth

Isabella Baumfree was born a slave in New York around 1797. She was freed in 1827 when New York abolished slavery. She moved to New York City and worked as a housekeeper, spending her spare time in religious instruction and prayer at a white Methodist Church. Later, she joined the A.M.E. Church. After about fifteen years, she emerged a “remade woman” and became a traveling preacher, taking on the name “Sojourner Truth.”

With little more than the clothes she wore, Sojourner walked throughout Long Island, New York, and Connecticut sharing her beliefs with all she met. This six-foot-tall, deep-voiced woman was said to bring an audience to tears with her stories and teachings. In 1843, she went to live at the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Florence, Massachusetts, which was dedicated to the abolition of slavery, equality, and the betterment of society. She worked alongside William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of *The Liberator*, and influential abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Douglass referred to Sojourner Truth as “a strange compound of wit and wisdom, of wild enthusiasm, and flintlike common sense.”

Her published memoirs, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*, made her a popular speaker on the anti-slavery and woman’s rights lecture circuits. For ten years, she mesmerized audiences with her speeches, and none was more famous than her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, which was delivered before a woman’s rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851.

Truth moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where she lived and continued her abolitionist work. She traveled to Washington, D.C., during the Civil War years, meeting twice with President Lincoln and once with President Grant. According to reports, during the meetings with Lincoln she begged him to allow black soldiers to fight on the Union side in the war.

After the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Sojourner Truth moved to Washington where, in her late 60s she worked tirelessly with former slaves through the National Freedmen’s Relief Association and the Freedman’s



Above: Sojourner Truth, an extraordinary woman.

Bureau. She also spoke constantly about the promise of the government to grant free lands in Kansas, but this goal was never met. However, many former southern slaves known as *Exodusters*, did move to Kansas in 1879, an action she applauded and in which she assisted. She believed that property ownership and education were the two keys to the advancement of blacks.

Finally, in 1882, at the age of 83, she was forced to give up her preaching and teaching. She retired to Battle Creek, where she lived with her daughter until her death three years later. She is remembered as one of the notable women in our nation’s history.



Top: Fugitive slaves on their way to an underground railroad depot in Delaware.

Above: Capture of a fugitive slave in Cincinnati.

through different patterns, although recent historians have doubts about that.

Before 1850, escaped slaves were safe when they reached such cities as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New York, or Boston. But after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, slave trackers could go into these cities, capture the escaped slaves, and return them to their owners in the South. The underground railroad then extended its line into Canada.

Although there were white abolitionist conductors, such as James Fairfield who posed as a slave trader and traveled into the Deep South, perhaps the best known conductor was ex-slave Harriet Tubman.

She was named “Moses” and, like the Biblical figure, she brought her people—more than three hundred—out of bondage and into the promised land.

It's Your Turn

1. Why would religion have been so important in the life of a slave?
2. Why did the southern slaves pass slave codes?
3. Based on your reading, sketch a portrait of slave life.

Section 4

Antebellum Georgia

As you learned in the last chapter, during the early part of the antebellum period, Georgians worked hard to remove Native Americans from the state in order to obtain their land. After that was accomplished, the citizens of the state turned their full attention to other interests.

Georgia's Economy

The backbone of Georgia's economy was agriculture. By 1860, there were 68,000 farms in the state, and cotton was the main crop. The farms produced 700,000 bales of cotton in 1860. This was a 115 percent increase from 1839. Most of Georgia's farms were less than one hundred acres. Only 3,500 farms had five hundred acres or more and could be called plantations. Because the land itself did not cost much, a plantation owner's worth was largely measured by the number of slaves he owned. Only 236 Georgians owned more than 100 slaves, and 60 percent had no slaves at all.

Just before the Civil War, half of Georgia's total wealth, or \$400 million, was in slaves. In 1845, a good field hand cost \$600; by 1860, the price had risen to \$1,800. In major slave markets, such as those in Augusta, Louisville, Macon, or Savannah, the value of a slave was determined by the cost of a pound of cotton. A planter had to sell 16,500 pounds of processed cotton to buy such a slave, and he bought the slave to increase his cotton production.

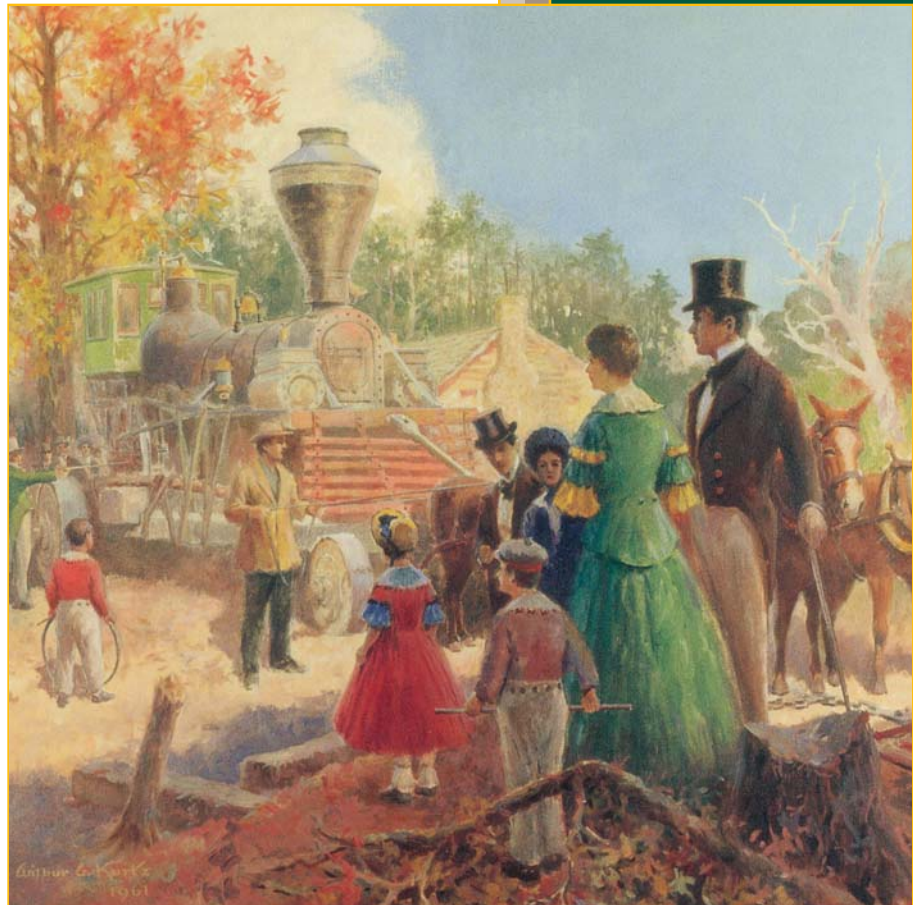
Most manufacturing in Georgia grew out of agriculture. The state had about 40 cotton mills in the area where cotton was grown. There were also a few tanneries, shoe factories, iron foundries, grist mills, and brick and pottery factories. All told, Georgia had 1,890 factories by 1860 with a value of about \$11 million. Even so, Georgia's industrial base was far smaller than that of a comparable northern state.

Section Preview

As you read, look for:

- Georgia's antebellum economy,
- Georgia's antebellum political leaders, and
- **vocabulary term:** Know Nothing party.

Below: The first train to arrive in Terminus had to be pulled into town by sixteen mules hitched to a wagon.



Of Special Interest

A Discovery

In 1842, John Tyler was president, the question of Texas becoming a state was still being debated in Congress, and the Civil War was nineteen years away. There was, however, one thing on which all Americans could agree—the mere mention of the word *surgery* instantly brought feelings of horror. In those days, surgeons were known for their speed in operating. A good surgeon could amputate a leg in ninety seconds. Why was that important? Because, in those days, patients were awake during the entire surgery!

Before any surgery was started, patients were given several swallows of alcohol or opiates (pain-killing drugs). Physicians' assistants stood over the patients holding down their legs and arms. Some patients were simply knocked unconscious. Many men, women, and children died from infections rather than face surgery. Who could blame them? But in 1842, 27-year-old physician Dr. Crawford W. Long, who had been born in Danielsville, Georgia, began the process of freeing people from the excruciating pain of surgery's knife.

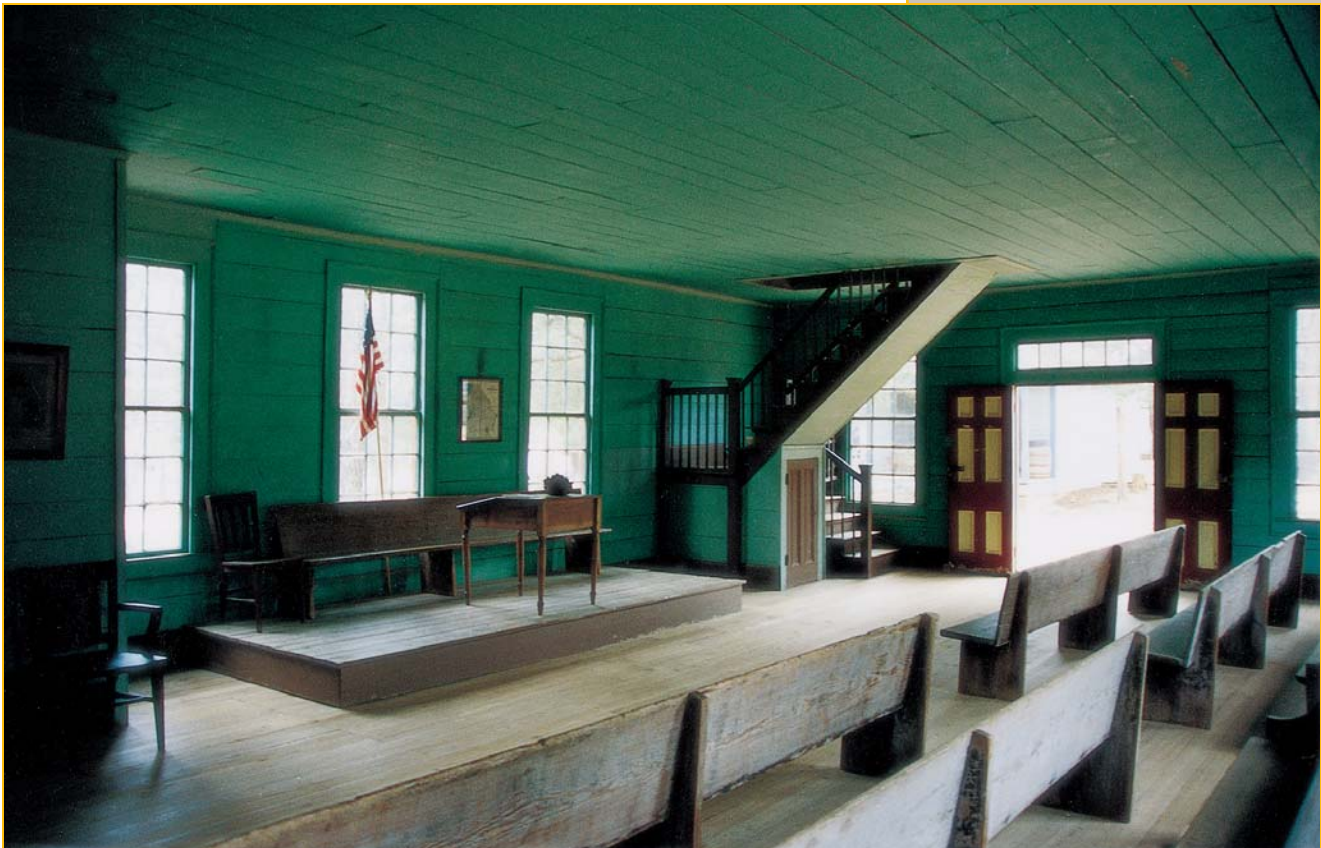
Dr. Long entered Franklin College (later the University of Georgia) when he was only fourteen. After training at Transylvania University and the University of Pennsylvania and interning in New York, the young doctor returned to Georgia to set up his medical practice in Jefferson. After observing how people at parties reacted to taking ether,



Above: In 1842, Dr. Crawford Long operated on James Venable and used ether to make him unconscious. Venable felt no pain during the operation. Dr. Long continued to use ether to perform other surgeries using ether.

he decided to conduct some experiments with sulfuric ether. One day, James Venable asked Dr. Long to remove a painful cyst, or tumor, on his neck. Dr. Long decided to use ether on his patient as an anesthetic. It worked!

Although Dr. Long was excited about his discovery, he failed to publish his findings. As a result, Dr. William Morton, who publically demonstrated the use of ether in tooth extractions, was given credit for discovering the anesthesia. But we in Georgia know, don't we!



Education

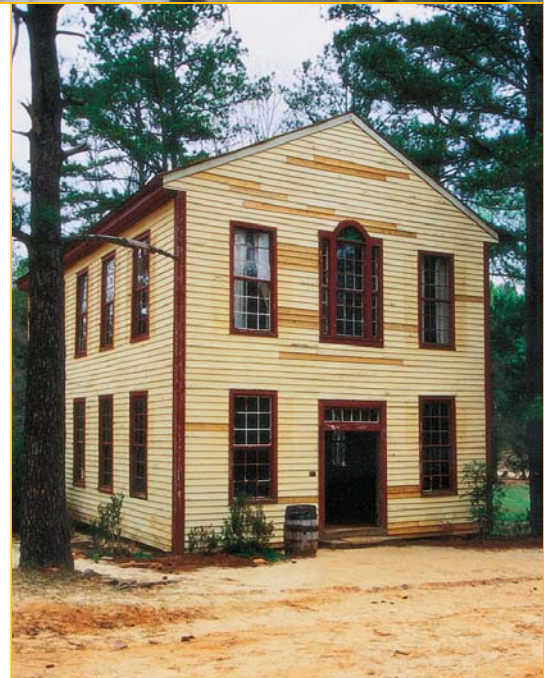
Education was not an important element in the life of most antebellum Georgians. The sons of some wealthy planters had tutors (private teachers) in their homes or went to private academies. However, most Georgians had little education.

In 1850, about 20 percent of Georgia's whites could not read or write. About half of Georgia's children were black and did not go to school at all. In 1858, the state legislature, using income from the state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad, set aside \$100,000 to begin free schools. But before plans were finished, the Civil War started and education was put aside.

There were other developments in the field of education during the 1850s. In 1851, Georgia Military Institute was founded in Marietta. In the same year, the Georgia Academy for the Blind was begun in Macon. Later, in 1859, Joseph Lumpkin and Thomas Cobb founded Georgia's first law school in Athens.

Religion

Like many others in the South, Georgians were caught up in the Great Revival movement of the early 1800s. Religious revivals, often in the form of camp meetings, were popular, especially among Methodists. Sometimes people came from miles away and camped while attending a two- or three-day meeting. Often, the camp meetings lasted for a week or longer.



Top and above: The Stewart County Academy at Westville. Visitors can see what school was like in the 1850s.

On the Road Again

Westville



The idea for Westville came from former history professor and college president John Ward West. The reconstructed Westville was first brought to life in 1968. Today, you can get a feel for life in the 1800s by wandering through over thirty-five structures such as the blacksmith shop, country doctor's office, cotton gin, churches, cabinet shop, and shoe-making workroom. You can also visit the log cabin homes of the early residents and see the "showplace" homes where the town's wealthier citizens lived. And be sure to see the old school house. You will find it very different from your classroom.

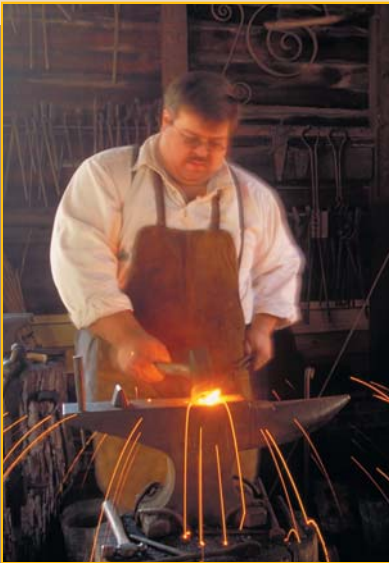
Another unique aspect of a trip to Westville is a tour of an 1854 Chattahoochee County courthouse, which was moved into Westville in 1975 to save the historic structure. It is the only antebellum wood-frame county courthouse in our state that has not undergone structural changes. It fea-

Above: Westville is a living history village. The buildings were all built before 1850. This is a merchant's house.

tures entrances on all sides, twin stairways to the second floor courtroom, and original courthouse furnishings. Because of this courthouse, Westville is on Georgia's Historic Courthouse Tour.

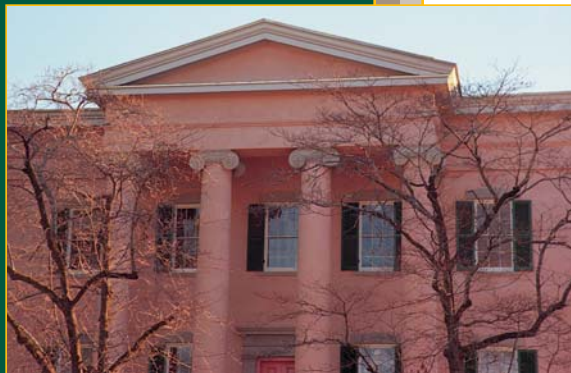
During a visit to Westville, you will find the townspeople going about their business on the dirt streets. You can ask them questions about life in the 1800s, and you can observe the craftspeople as they show you how to cobble shoes, make candles or furniture, or cook biscuits.

On July 4, the people of Westville celebrate as people did in the mid-1800s. There is a fall festival to celebrate the harvest season and a spring festival when the restored nineteenth-century town is in full bloom.



Top left: Townspeople practice traditional skills. This is the blacksmith. **Top right:** The potter uses local clay. **Above left:** The store for Johann G. Singer Boots and Shoes. **Above right:** This basketmaker displays his skills. **Left:** The Chattahoochee County courthouse occupies a special place on the town square.

Below: The Old Governor's Mansion in Milledgeville was home to eight of Georgia's governors from 1839 to 1868. **Bottom:** The Old Capitol Building sits on the highest point in Milledgeville. Today it is part of Georgia Military College.



During the 1850s, church membership grew in Georgia; by 1860, there were 2,393 churches in the state. In the South, Georgia was second only to Virginia in the number of churches. Methodist and Baptist were the two largest denominations, but the Episcopal, Catholic, and Presbyterian churches also grew during this period. Jews, one of colonial Georgia's earliest religious groups, were few in number, but they added to the state's religious diversity. There were a few segregated churches, but slaves usually attended the same churches as their masters.

Slavery caused great divisiveness among some denominations. Methodists in the South pulled out of their national organization and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1845, southern Baptists met in Augusta to form the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptists in the South left the American Baptist Union when its foreign mission board would not accept slave owners as missionaries.

Georgia Politics

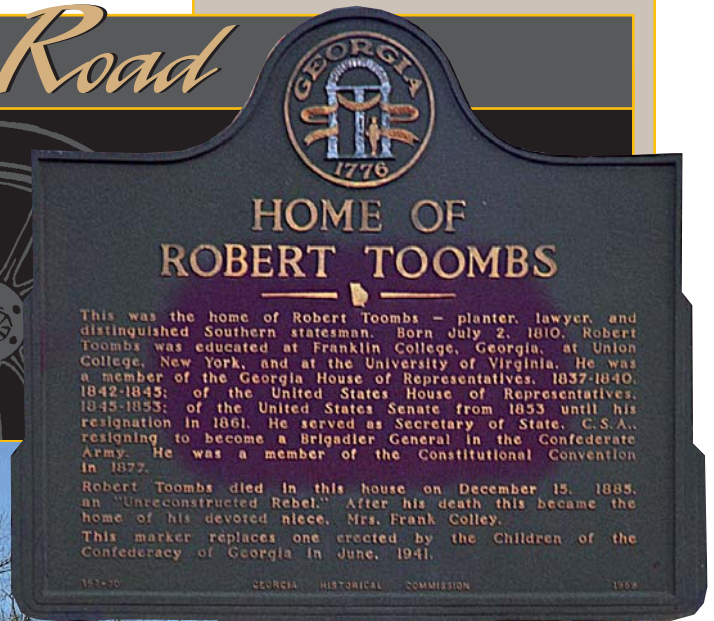
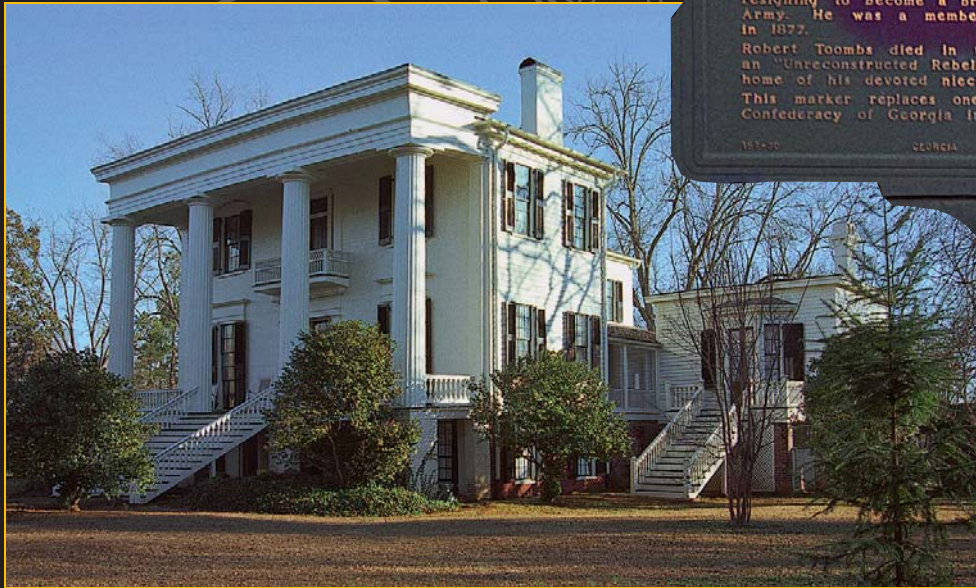
It was hard to keep up with political changes in Georgia during the antebellum period. In the 1840s, the two major political parties were the Democrats and the Whigs.

Democrats supported states' rights and took a strong stand for slavery. Their leaders were Herschel V. Johnson, Joseph E. Brown, and U.S. Congressman Howell Cobb.



By the Side of the Road

As you visit historic sites in Georgia, be sure to travel to Washington in Wilkes County where several historical markers identify places of interest. One marker describes the home of Robert Toombs and is located at 216 East Robert Toombs Avenue in Washington. Toombs bought the home in 1837.



Whigs were mostly members of the upper social classes. They favored a moderate protective tariff and federal help for the South. Robert Toombs and Alexander H. Stephens, both congressmen from Georgia, led the Whigs.

Although there was little real difference in what the two parties believed, each wanted to govern the state. During the 1840s, most governors were Democrats, while most members of the legislature were Whigs. In larger Georgia towns, there were two newspapers: one for Democrats and one for Whigs.

The 1850s brought about a change for both parties. Many Georgians did not like the Compromise of 1850. However, Democrat Cobb and Whigs

Stephens and Toombs asked the citizens of Georgia to accept it. All three had strongly supported the measure in the U.S. Congress. In part because of the persuasiveness of these congressmen, the "Georgia Platform" supporting the compromise was adopted at a convention held in the

Did You Know?

Howell Cobb was the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1849 and 1850.



Above: As governor of Georgia from 1851 to 1853, Howell Cobb approved the leasing of the state-owned Western and Atlantic Railroad and worked for increased state funding for education.

want immigrants to become citizens or anyone not born in the United States to hold political office. It was a secret group whose members answered questions with, "I don't know," thus the name Know-Nothing.

After all the changes, the Democrats became the leading party. In 1856, James Buchanan, the Democratic presidential candidate, carried Georgia with no trouble. The next year, Democrat Joseph E. Brown became governor. Brown believed in states' rights and was also a good manager. He brought about railroad reforms and used money from state-owned railroads to begin a common school fund for public education. Brown was re-elected in 1859, and he served two more terms during the Civil War.

state capital of Milledgeville. It was clear even to those Georgians who did not approve of it that the compromise was necessary if the state were to stay in the Union.

Not long after the platform was adopted, some Georgians formed the Constitutional Union party. Howell Cobb, an Athens lawyer who had been a Democrat, joined the new party along with former Whigs Stephens and Toombs. Cobb was elected governor in 1851. While he was in office, Cobb encouraged the growth of Georgia's railroad system and state support for schools.

At the same time, Joseph E. Brown, Herschel V. Johnson, and C. B. Strong gathered together some Georgians who did not agree with the Compromise of 1850. This group formed the States' Rights party. The party did not want to leave the Union, but its members thought southern states should not accept the Compromise until Congress agreed to protect slavery and states' rights.

The Constitutional Union party broke up in August 1852. It had done what it set out to do: get Georgians to accept the Compromise of 1850. Toombs and Stephens joined the Democrats, while other Whigs joined the Know Nothing party. The **Know Nothing party** did not

It's Your Turn

1. Where was Georgia's first law school opened?
2. What were the two largest denominations in Georgia during this period?

The Election of 1860

By 1860, the division between the North and the South had become sharper on a number of major issues, and the outlook for reconciling those differences was poor. In addition to the other problems that separated the North and South, new events on the national scene increased the tensions between the two sections. Chief among these was the rise of a new national party and the election of 1860.

The Rise of the Republican Party

Up to this time, the major parties had been national ones. But this was soon to change. Just as it had in Georgia, the Whig party began to break up nationally after the election of 1852. The northern wing of the party had become more antislavery and was less willing to compromise with the southern wing to keep internal peace.

The result was the creation in 1854 of a new political party—one that existed only in the free states. This new party was called the **Republican party**. It grew quickly, drawing antislavery Whigs and Democrats as members. In 1856, the Republicans nominated Savannah-born John C. Fremont for president on a platform that opposed the spread of slavery. (A **platform** is a statement of the principles and policies the party supports.) Democrat James Buchanan won, but Fremont managed to get 1.3 million votes.

The Election of 1860

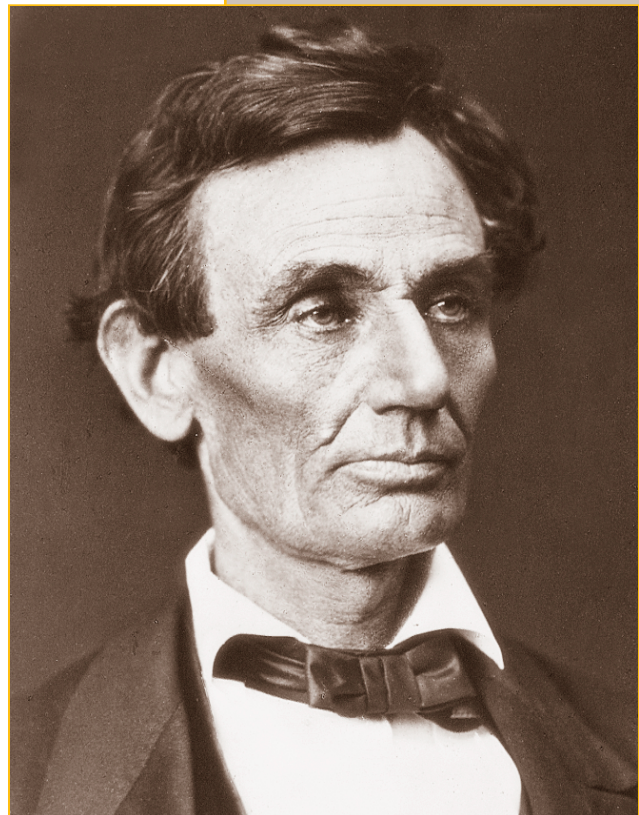
When the Democrats met in Charleston, South Carolina, for the national convention in 1860, a fight over the party platform brought matters to a head. The supporters of Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois controlled the platform committee. They wanted to campaign on the issue of popular sovereignty. Southern Democrats did not agree and believed slavery should be allowed in all the territories. The two groups split over the issue. Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas for president. Southern Democrats met separately in Baltimore and nominated Vice President John Breckenridge of Kentucky for president. Whigs from the border states also met in Baltimore to form the Constitutional Union party. They supported the Union and named John Bell of Tennessee as their presidential candidate.

At the same time, the Republicans met in Chicago, where they nominated Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The Republican platform was not just against

Section Preview

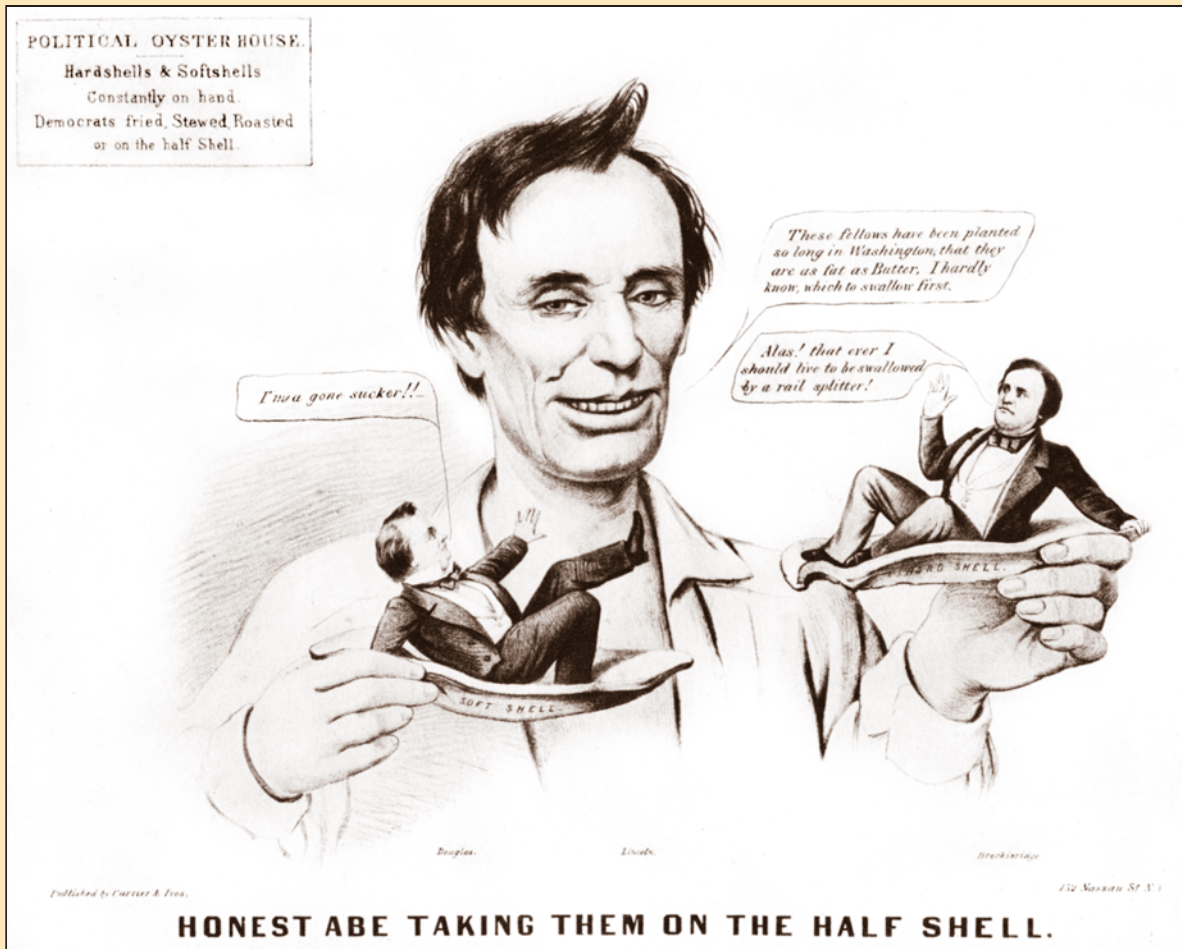
As you read, look for:

- the birth of the Republican party,
- the election of 1860,
- the steps leading to Georgia's secession, and
- **vocabulary terms:** Republican party, platform, secession, ordinance, and Confederate States of America.



Above: This photograph of Abraham Lincoln was taken in 1860, before he was elected president.

The Art of Politics



In this 1860 political cartoon, Republican nominee Lincoln is shown in a “Political Oyster House,” preparing to swallow two of his Democratic opponents for the presidency—Douglas (left) and Breckinridge (right).

slavery, although the party said it would not try to end slavery in the slave states. It also supported a protective tariff, proposed a plan to give free western land to settlers, and called for the construction of a transcontinental railroad with one end in the North. None of these measures would benefit the South. The Republican party and its presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln, appeared to be against everything southerners wanted.

The election amounted to a revolution in politics. For the first time, a party getting votes from only one section of the nation won the election. Abraham Lincoln received 1.9 million votes (a minority of the votes cast) and was elected president. Almost all of Lincoln’s electoral votes were from the free states. He won without receiving a single electoral vote from the states in the South.

Georgia Reacts to Lincoln's Election

After Lincoln's election, talk of **secession** (the act of pulling out of the Union) and war swirled around every barbecue, quilting bee, and picnic. Wherever Georgians gathered in a group, passionate debates took place. For eighty-four years, the nation had lived with the concept of a union of all states. Now southerners had to deal with questions over the conflict between states' rights and Union rights. Could they believe in the concept of the Union while maintaining a state's right to pass laws for the good of that state rather than to accept laws forced on it by the federal government? There was no easy answer to the question. Georgians were, for the most part, for the Union; however, they were even more strongly for states' rights. Now they were suddenly forced to make a choice, and many households in Georgia found themselves in the midst of a bitter split.

The Call to the Legislators

Immediately after Lincoln's election, Georgia's Democratic governor, Joseph E. Brown, called a legislative session to determine whether a special convention should be held to decide the question of secession. The special session could also suggest that Georgia bide its time and see what South Carolina did. The legislative chamber was buzzing with activity as arguments resounded off the walls and memos and notes were passed back and forth. Speakers rose in quick succession to argue their views. Alexander Stephens of Crawfordville was especially stirring with his arguments against seceding.

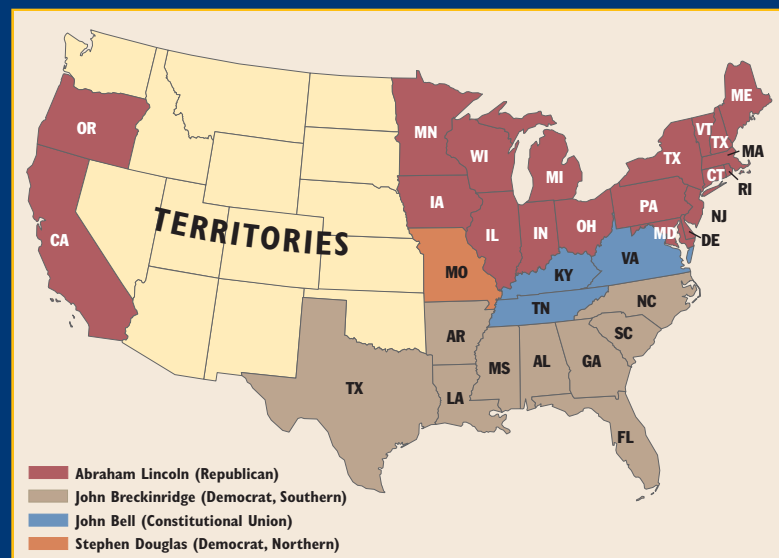
Did You Know?

Abraham Lincoln received only 16,388 votes from the slave states.

The first question that presents itself is, shall the people of Georgia secede from the Union in consequence of the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States. My countrymen, I tell you frankly, candidly, and earnestly, that I do not think they ought.

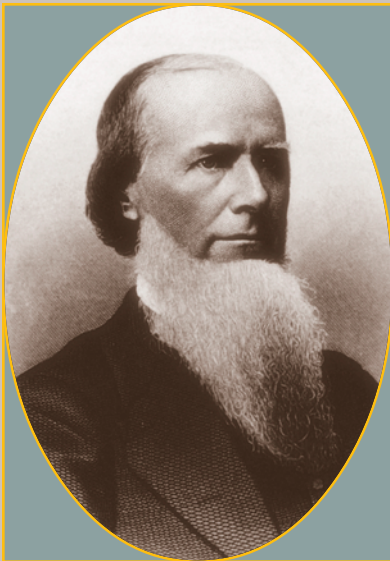
Figure 24 The Election of 1860

Candidate	Popular Vote (Georgia)	Popular Vote (National)	Electoral Vote
Bell	42,960	592,906	39
Breckinridge	52,176	848,356	72
Douglas	11,581	1,382,713	12
Lincoln	0	1,865,593	180
Totals	106,717	4,689,568	303



Map 35 The Election of 1860

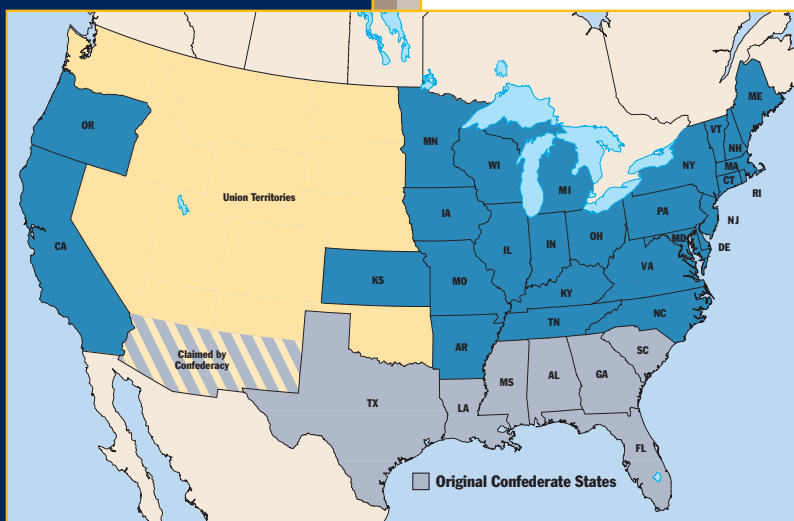
Map Skill: Which candidate won Tennessee?



In my judgment, the election of no man, constitutionally chosen to that high office, is sufficient cause to justify any State to separate from the Union. It ought to stand by and aid still in maintaining the Constitution of the country. . . .

Whatever fate is to befall this country, let it never be laid to the charge of the people of the South, and especially the people of Georgia, that we were untrue to our national engagements. Let the fault and the wrong rest upon others. If all our hopes are to be blasted, if the Republic is to go down, let us be found to the last moment standing on the deck with the Constitution of the United States waving over heads.

Stephens's speech was interrupted many times by Robert Toombs, who along with Thomas Cobb, strongly supported immediate secession. Other conservative legislators, however, loudly applauded Stephens's pleas for caution. But his eloquence was no match for the fiery leadership of Toombs, Cobb, and Governor Brown. On November 21, 1860, Governor Brown called for a secession convention.



South Carolina Secedes

Other southerners, convinced that, with the election of Lincoln, Congress would not allow slavery in the territories, were also calling for action. South Carolinians had repeatedly said that they would secede if Lincoln won the presidency. In December 1860, South Carolina held a secession convention. On December 20, 1860, a little more than a month after Lincoln's election, South Carolina left the Union. Soon after, extremists in every other southern state were loudly yelling for their states to follow South Carolina's lead.

Most Georgians supported South Carolina's action. On January 16, 1861, the special convention requested by Governor Brown was held in Milledgeville. When Eugenius Nisbet proposed a secession **ordinance** (bill) to the 297 delegates, 208 voted in favor. On January 19, 1861, Georgia was declared an independent republic with the following words: "The people of Georgia, having dissolved their political connection with the Government of the United States of America, present to their confederates and the world, the causes which have led to the separation."

By February 1, 1861, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas had also voted to secede from the Union. On February 4, 1861, delegates from each of these states met in Montgomery, Alabama, and formed a new nation called the **Confederate States of America**. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was elected president, and Robert Toombs of Georgia was chosen secretary of state. Georgian Alexander Stephens, who had argued so passionately against secession, was named vice president.

War was only two months away.

Map 36 The Original Confederate States

Map Skill: What can you say about the location of these seven states?

Top: Governor Joseph E. Brown favored secession and used his terms as governor to prepare the state for war.

It's Your Turn

1. Why were southerners against Lincoln's election to the presidency?
2. What was the name the seceding states gave to their new nation? Which states made up the group?
3. Why was Georgia's Alexander Stephens so against seceding and why do you think he was elected vice president of the new group of states?

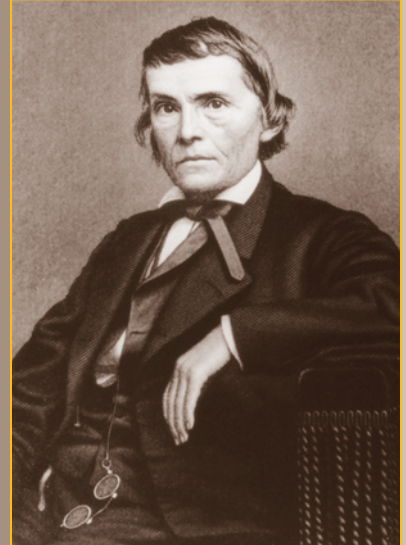
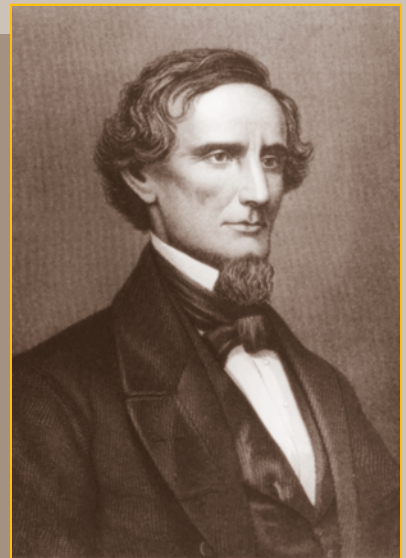
A Final Note

Historians all agree that slavery, sectionalism, and states' rights led to the first and only war within our nation's boundaries. But, there was also another underlying feeling for both sections—a sense of loyalty. One of your Georgia character words, **loyalty** means a person's devotion or feeling of attachment to a person, group, or idea. You have read that most southerners of this period did not own slaves. In addition, some were very much opposed to slavery. Even so, southerners were intensely loyal to their region. When it became apparent that South Carolina would secede from the Union, southerners chose to fight alongside, and die for their friends, neighbors, and strangers.

What are some things or people to whom you feel loyal? Make a list of these ideas or people and beside each, indicate why you are loyal to them. In what ways are you loyal to your school? Be specific. Can loyalty be taken too far? Give at least four examples.

Chapter Summary

- During the antebellum period, the United States followed a doctrine of manifest destiny, expanding its boundaries from ocean to ocean.
- As the antebellum period drew to a close, differences between the North and South intensified.
- The issue that aroused the strongest passions was slavery.
- The daily life of slaves was one of hard work and harsh treatment.
- Several slave revolts were attempted, but none were successful.
- Other issues that divided North and South were sectionalism, economic considerations, cultural differences, and states' rights.
- Finally, national events, especially the election of Abraham Lincoln, caused southern states, including Georgia, to secede from the Union and form the Confederate States of America.



Top: As a senator, Jefferson Davis worked to keep the Union together. He resigned from the Senate in January 1861 and was elected president of the Confederacy one month later. **Above:** Many southerners opposed Alexander Stephens's election as vice president of the Confederacy since he had spoken against secession.

Chapter Review

Reviewing People, Places, and Terms



Match each word or phrase with the correct definition below.

antebellum

driver

overseer

platform

slave code

1. A person responsible for seeing that slaves performed their assigned tasks
2. A set of laws that defined what slaves could or could not do
3. The period before the Civil War
4. A slave placed in charge of a group of slaves
5. A statement of the principles and policies that a political party supports



Understanding the Facts

1. What \$10 million purchase completed the physical boundaries of the United States from ocean to ocean?
2. What border dispute led to the Mexican-American War?
3. What abolitionist published the newspaper called *The Liberator*?
4. How many free states were there in 1850?

5. What was meant by the term *popular sovereignty*?
6. In what ways might slaves have learned to read in spite of the conditions that existed at the time?
7. Why did southerners not want higher tariffs?
8. In what year was the Republican party created?
9. Besides slavery, what were the major issues dividing North and South?

Developing Critical Thinking



1. How does social mobility in the South today compare with the social mobility of the antebellum period?
2. How do you think the diets of slaves affected them?
3. If rice, cotton, and tobacco were so difficult for slaves to produce, why do you think slave owners wanted to grow these crops?
4. Why do you think the slave codes were so effective in keeping blacks enslaved?

Checking It Out



1. A *maverick* is a person who stands apart from the crowd or goes her or his own way. The word came from Texas cattleman Samuel A. Maverick, who ranched in San Antonio in the 1840s. Check it out and find out why he became a maverick's Maverick!

2. During the California gold rush, Levi Strauss planned to sell tents and wagon covers to the prospectors. When they were not interested in his tents, he decided to make pants out of the canvas he had. Research to find out more about this German immigrant and the product he created.



Writing Across the Curriculum

1. Prepare a report on the history and operation of the underground railroad, which helped slaves escape to free states and Canada.
2. Write a news article about one of the slave rebellions described in the text. Be sure to use the five *W*'s and *H*: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.



Exploring Technology

1. In 1841, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that rebellious Africans on board the slave ship *Amistad* were free, not slaves. Using the Internet, research the *Amistad* incident and tell the story of what happened on board the ship.
2. Few events from the past have created as much current interest as the Donner Party, which, in 2003, was verified through an archaeological dig. If you want to learn exactly what happened to this small group of freezing and starving settlers and you do not mind grizzly stories, use your favorite search engine to research the Donner Party and answer the following questions: In your opinion, were members of the group justified in what they did? How do you think they felt afterward?
3. The Mormon Trail and the settlers who traveled it were different from the other explorers in that they were escaping religious persecution. Using the Internet, find out why they traveled to Utah

and read about the “hand carts” used by later Mormons making the trip. Using your geography and math skills, determine how far these hand-cart settlers had to walk.



Applying Your Skills

1. Draw two pictures that represent the differences between the North and the South during the antebellum era.
2. About how many slaves lived in Georgia in 1860?



Photo Question

To which social class do you think the owner of this house would have belonged?

