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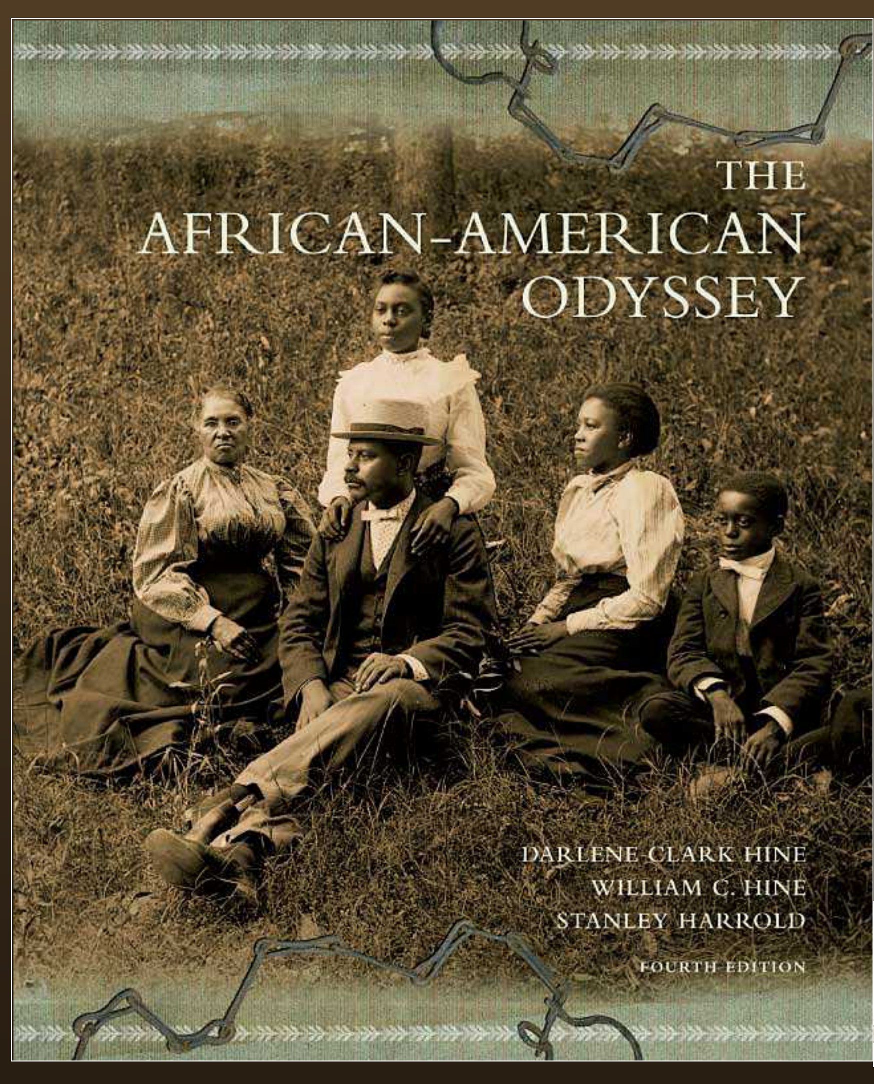
The African-American Odyssey



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The African-American Odyssey

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The African-American Odyssey

From the Preface

"One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body." W. E. B. Du Bois, 1897

. . . **The African-American Odyssey** tells the story of African Americans a story that begins in Africa, where the people who were to become African Americans began their long, turbulent, and difficult journey, a journey marked by sustained suffering as well as perseverance, bravery, and achievement. It includes the rich culture—at once splendidly distinctive and tightly intertwined with a broader American culture—that African Americans have nurtured throughout their history. And it includes the many-faceted quest for freedom in which African Americans have sought to counter white oppression and racism with the egalitarian spirit of the Declaration of Independence that American society professes to embody.

Nurtured by black historian Carter G. Woodson during the early decades of the twentieth century, African-American history has blossomed as a field of study since the 1950s. Books and articles have appeared on almost every facet of black life. Yet this survey is the first comprehensive college textbook of the African-American experience. It draws on recent research to present black history in a clear and direct manner, within a broad social, cultural, and political framework. It also provides thorough coverage of African-American women as active builders of black culture.

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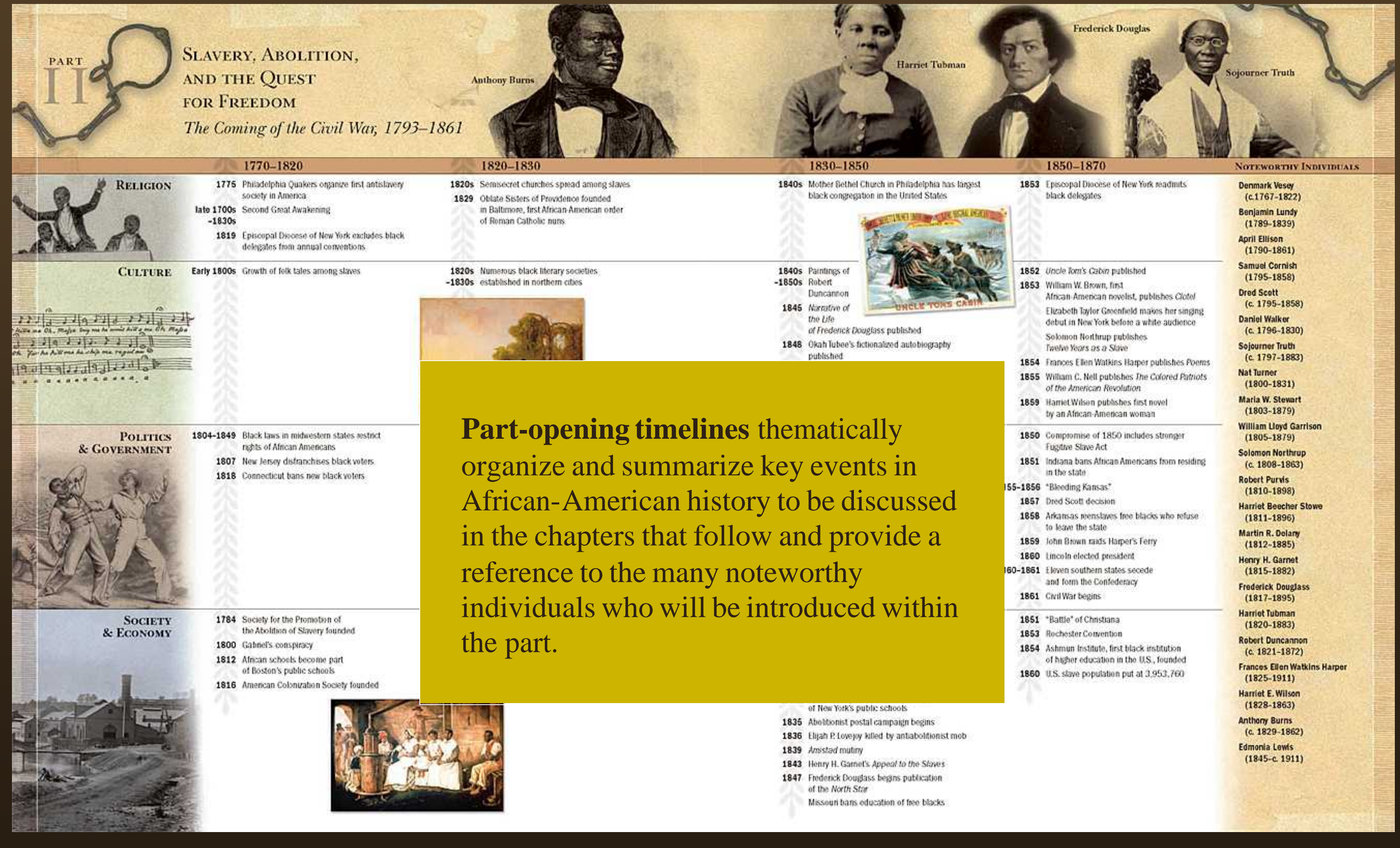

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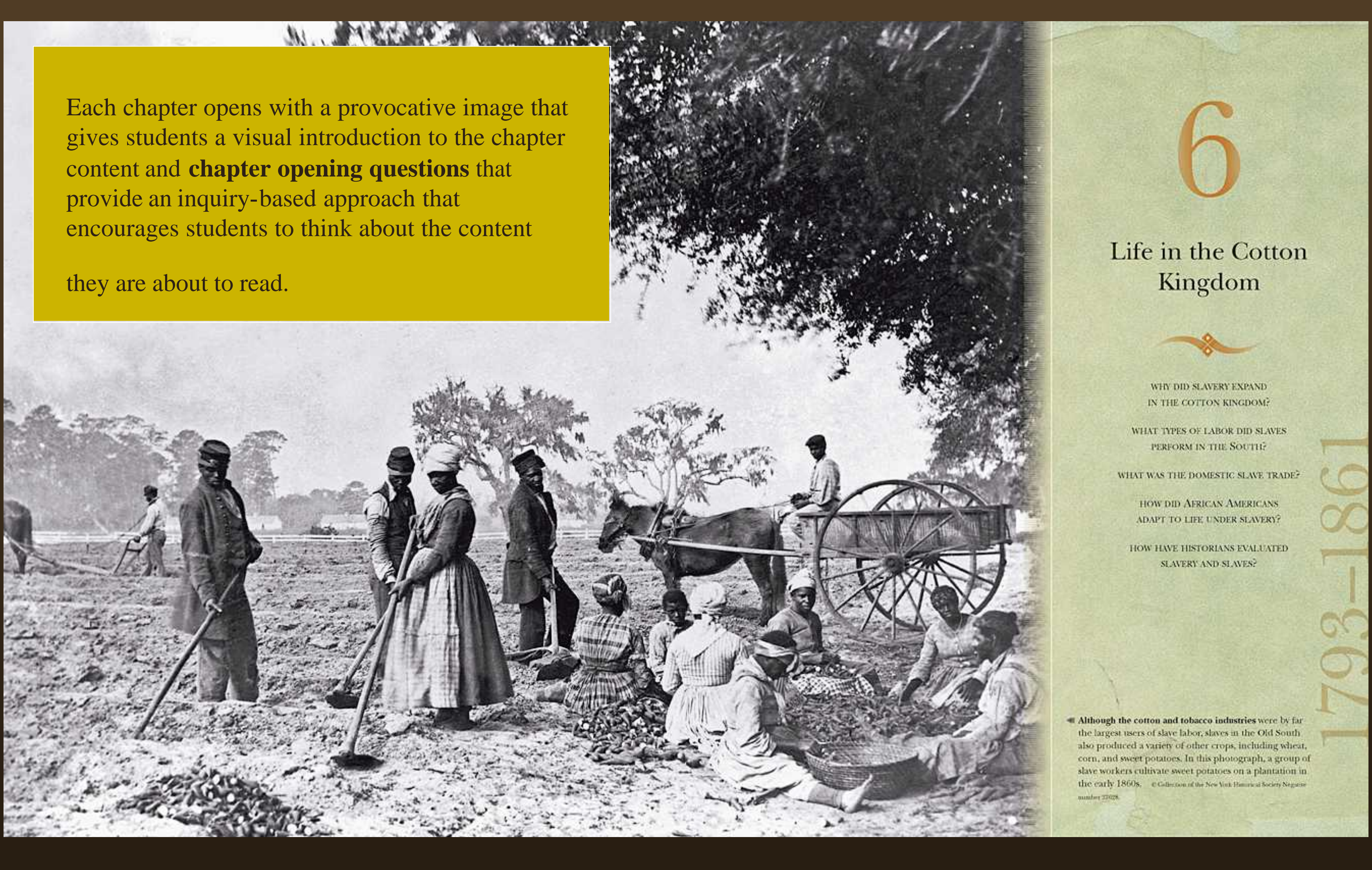

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Compelling **quotations** introduce each chapter and set the stage for the events that unfold within the chapter.

There may be humane masters, as there certainly are inhumane ones; there may be slaves well-clothed, well-fed, and happy, as there surely are those half-clad, half-starved and miserable; nevertheless, the institution that tolerates such wrong and inhumanity . . . is a cruel, unjust, and barbarous one.

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup*

A slave buyer offers cash for men, women, and children in this 1835 advertisement.

Solomon Northup, a free black man, had been kidnapped into slavery during the 1840s. After twelve years in bondage, he finally escaped. In this passage he identifies the central cruelty of slavery. It was not that some masters failed to provide slaves with adequate food, clothing, and shelter while others did. Nor was it that some masters treated their slaves brutally while others did not. The central cruelty of slavery was that it gave masters nearly absolute power over their slaves. The sufferings of African Americans in slavery were not caused by abuses in an otherwise benevolent institution. They were caused by the institution itself.

In this chapter we describe the life of black people in the slave South from the rise of the Cotton Kingdom during the early 1800s to the eve of the Civil War in 1860. As we have indicated in previous chap-

describe the extent of that slave system, how it varied across the South, and how it operated. We investigate the slave communities that African-American men, women, and children built.

The Expansion of Slavery

Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 made the cultivation of cotton profitable on the North American mainland. It was the key to the rapid and extensive expansion of slavery from the Atlantic coast to Texas. By 1811 cotton growing had spread across South Carolina, Georgia, and parts of North Carolina and Virginia. By 1821 it had crossed Alabama and reached Mississippi, Louisiana, and parts of Tennessee. It then expanded again into Arkansas, Florida, and eastern Texas (see Map 6–1). Enslaved black labor cleared forests and drained swamps to make these lands fit for cultivation.

The expansion of the cotton culture led to the removal of the American Indians—some of them slaveholders—who inhabited this vast region. During the 1830s and 1840s the U.S. Army forced the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and most Seminole to leave their ancestral lands for Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. Many Indians died during this forced migration, and the Cherokee remember it as

PROFILE — SOLOMON NORTHUP

Solomon Northup's aspirations as a musician led in 1841 to his kidnapping and sale into slavery. For twelve years, he labored in the cotton and sugar regions of Louisiana, interacted with slaves and masters, and experienced firsthand what it was like to be caught up in a brutal labor system.

Northup was born free at Minerva, New York, in about 1808. His parents were prosperous farmers and he became a farmer as well, although he also worked occasionally as a violinist. He lived in Saratoga Springs with his wife and three children until March 1841 when two white men suggested that he become a musician in their circus, which was performing in Washington, D.C.

Enticed by the prospect of good wages and a chance to perform, Northup left with the two men without informing his wife or anyone else. Within two days of arriving in Washington, he was drugged, robbed of his money and free papers, chained, and sold to slave traders. After experiencing a terrible beating with a wooden paddle and a rope, Northup was shipped to New Orleans and sold to William Ford, who owned a cotton planation and sawmill in Louisiana's Red River region.

As Ford's slave, Northup worked at the mill "piling lumber and chopping logs." Northup liked Ford and regarded him to be a "model master," who treated his slaves well and read scripture to them each Sunday. But when Ford became insolvent and sold his slaves, Northup had to deal with a series of brutal masters. They

physical labor. "There are lumberwomen as well as lumbermen in the forests of the South," he reported. "In fact... they perform their share of all the labor required by the planters. They plough, dray, drive team, clear wild lands, work on the highway and so forth."

Subsequently, Northup spent ten years as a slave of Edwin Epps, a cotton planter, who when drunk enjoyed forcing his slaves to dance. Northup noted that Epps's slaves received a meager diet of corn and bacon. They slept in crude, crowded cabins on planks of wood. During harvest season "it was rarely that a day passed by without one or more whippings" as slaves failed to pick their quota. During a three-year period, Epps hired Northup out to "sugar plantations during the season of cane-cutting and sugar making" for $1.00 per day.

Northup had become Epps's slave driver by 1852 when he was finally able to set in motion the events that led to his rescue. Deeply disturbed by being forced to whip other slaves, he conspired with a Canadian carpenter to smuggle a letter to two white businessmen in Saratoga Springs. The letter led the governor of New York to send Henry B. Northup—a member of the family that had once owned Solomon Northup's father—to Louisiana to present evidence that Solomon Northup was a free man. By January 1853 he had been reunited with his family in New York. In July of that year he published *Twelve Years a Slave*, which sold over 30,000 copies and earned him enough money to purchase a home for his family in Glens Falls, New York, where he died in 1863.

Northup

Biographical sketches, called **Profiles**, highlight the contributions and personalities of both prominent individuals and ordinary people, illuminating common experiences among African Americans at various times and places.

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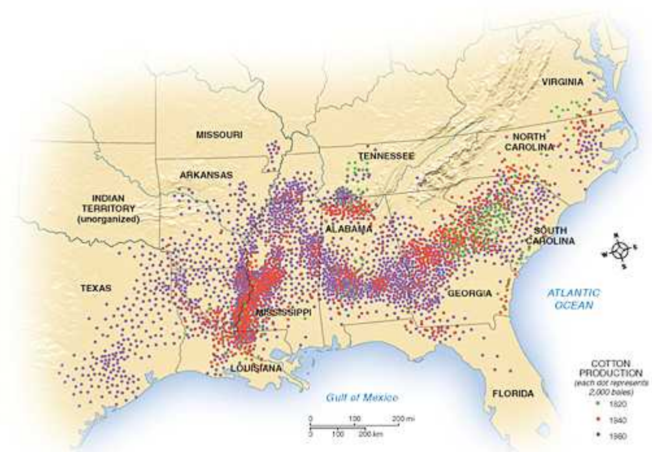

MAP 6–1 COTTON PRODUCTION IN THE SOUTH, 1820–1860

Cotton production expanded westward between 1820 and 1860 into Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and western Tennessee.

Source: Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture* (Louisiana State University Press, 1984) pp. 67–71.

Why did cotton production spread westward?

The text includes an abundance of maps that help students visualize the geographical context of events and grasp significant trends. **Map questions** accompany every map in the text to challenge students to review their understanding of the maps in context.

OWNERSHIP OF SLAVES IN THE OLD SOUTH

Slaveholders were as unevenly distributed as the slaves and, unlike slaves, were declining in number. In 1830, 1,314,272 white southerners (36 percent), out of a total white southern population of 3,650,758, owned slaves. In 1860 only 383,673 white southerners (4.7 percent), out of a total white southern population of 8,097,463, owned slaves. Even counting the immediate families of slaveholders, only 1,900,000 (or less than 25 percent of the South's white population) had a direct interest in slavery in 1860.

Almost half of the South's slaveholders owned fewer than five slaves, only 12 percent owned more than twenty slaves, and just 1 percent owned more than fifty slaves. Yet more than half the slaves belonged to masters who had twenty or more slaves. So although the typical slaveholder owned few slaves, the typical slave lived on a sizable plantation.

Since the time of Anthony Johnson in the mid-1600s, a few black people had been slaveholders, and this class continued to exist. In 1830 only 2 percent, or 3,775 free African Americans, owned slaves. Many of them became slaveholders to protect their families from sale and disruption. This was because, as the nineteenth century progressed, southern states made it more difficult for masters to manumit slaves and for slaves to purchase their freedom. The states also threatened to expel former slaves from their territory. In response to these circumstances, black men and women sometimes purchased relatives who were in danger of sale to traders and who—if legally free—might be forced by white authorities to leave a state.

Some African Americans, however, purchased slaves for financial reasons and passed those slaves on to their heirs. Most black people who became masters for financial reasons owned five or fewer slaves. But William Johnson, a wealthy free black barber of Natchez, Louisiana, owned many slaves whom he employed on a plantation he purchased. Some black women, such as Margaret Mitchell Harris of South Carolina and Betsy Somayrac of Natchitoches, Louisiana, also became slaveholders for economic reasons. Harris was a successful rice planter who inherited twenty-one slaves from her white father. She prospered by carefully managing her resources in land and slaves. By 1849, when she sold out, she had more than forty slaves and nearly 1,000 acres, which produced 240,000 pounds of rice per year.

Somayrac's case shows that economic considerations could override emotional ties between black women and their bond people. In her will, which a parish judge recorded in January 1845, Somayrac wrote that she intended to pass her human property on to her children. She required that "my negro woman named Jane" labor to pay off family debts. She stipulated that one of her sons must own any children that Jane might produce. She even provided that a "negro boy named Solomon," who was her godson, not be manumitted until he had reached the relatively old age of thirty-five.

TABLE 6–1 U.S. SLAVE POPULATION, 1820 AND 1860

	1820	1860
United States	1,538,125	3,953,760
North	19,108	64
South	1,519,017	3,953,696
Upper South	965,514	1,530,229
Delaware	4,509	1,798
Kentucky	127,732	225,483
Maryland	107,397	87,189
Missouri	10,222	114,931
North Carolina	205,017	331,059
Tennessee	80,107	275,719
Virginia	425,153	490,865
Washington, D.C.	6,377	3,185
Lower South	553,503	2,423,467
Alabama	41,879	435,080
Arkansas	1,617	111,115
Florida	*	61,745
Georgia	149,654	462,198
Louisiana	69,064	331,726
Mississippi	32,814	436,631
South Carolina	258,475	402,406
Texas	*	182,566

*Florida and Texas were not states in 1820.

Source: Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: New Press, 1974), 396–97.

Slave Labor in Agriculture

About 55 percent of the slaves in the South cultivated cotton; 10 percent grew tobacco; and 10 percent produced sugar, rice, or hemp. About 15 percent were domestic servants, and the remaining 10 percent worked in trades and industries.

TOBACCO

Tobacco remained important in Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, and parts of North Carolina and Missouri during the 1800s (see Map 6–3). A difficult crop to

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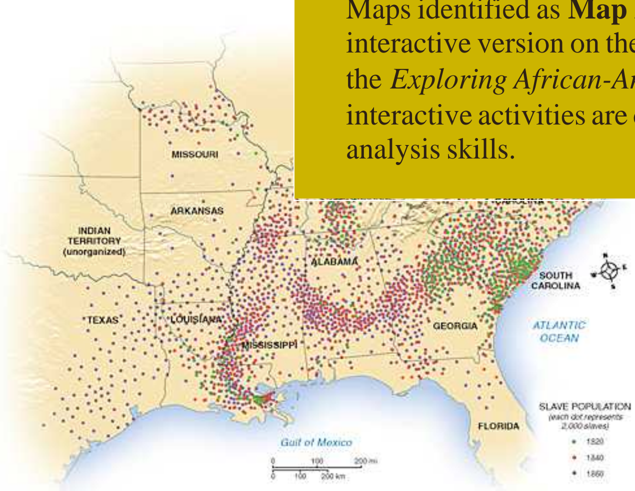
Maps identified as **Map Exploration** are provided in an interactive version on the text's *Myhistorylab* website and on the *Exploring African-American History* CD-ROM. The interactive activities are designed to enhance map reading and analysis skills.



MAP 6–2 SLAVE POPULATION, 1820–1860

Slavery spread southwestward from the upper South and the eastern seaboard following the spread of cotton cultivation.

Source: Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture* (Louisiana State University Press, 1984), pp. 29–34.

What does this map suggest concerning black life in the South?

produce, tobacco required a long growing season and careful cultivation. In the spring slaves had to transfer seedlings from sterilized seed beds to well-worked and manured soil. Then they had to hoe weeds, pick off insects, and prune lower leaves so the topmost leaves grew to their full extent. Slaves also built scaffolds used to cure the tobacco leaves and made the barrels in which the tobacco was shipped to market.

Robert Ellett, a former slave, recalled that when he was just eight years old he worked in Virginia "a-worming tobacco." He "examined tobacco leaves, pull[ed] off the worms, if there were any, and killed them." He claimed that if an overseer discovered that slaves had overlooked worms on the tobacco plants, the slaves were whipped or forced to eat the worms. Nancy Williams, another Virginia slave, recalled that sometimes as a punishment slaves had to inhale burning tobacco until they became nauseated.

RICE

Unlike the cultivation of tobacco, which spread westward and southward from Maryland and Virginia, rice production remained confined to the low country of

rice-producing region. These vast plantations represented sizable capital investments, and masters or overseers carefully monitored slave productivity. Although slaves enjoyed considerable leeway in how they performed their assigned duties, those who missed a day's work risked forfeiting their weekly allowance "of either bacon, sugar, molasses, or tobacco."

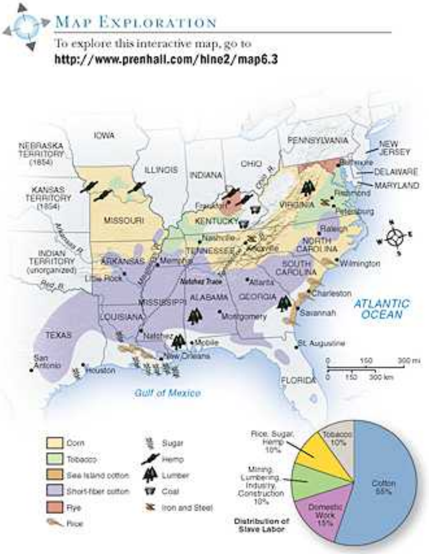
SUGAR

Another important crop that grew in a restricted region was sugar, which slaves cultivated on plantations along the Mississippi River in southern Louisiana. Commercial production of sugarcane did not begin in Louisiana until the 1790s. It required a consistently warm climate, a long growing season, and at least sixty inches of rain per year.

Raising sugarcane and refining sugar also required constant labor. Together with the great profitability of the sugar crop, these demands encouraged masters to work their slaves hard. Slave life on sugar plantations was extremely harsh, and African Americans across the South feared being sent to labor on them. Historian Paul W. Gates details the work of slaves on sugar plantations:

> Fresh land was constantly being cleared, and the wood was used for fuel in the sugarhouses or was sold to steamboats. Levees had to be raised; ditching and draining was never completed. Planting, numerous hoeings, cutting, loading and unloading the cane, putting it through the mill, feeding the boilers, moving the huge hogsheads of sugar and molasses and drawing them to the boat landing, setting aside the seed cane, hauling the bagasse to the fields—all this took much labor.

Slaves did this work in hot and humid conditions, adding to the toll it took on their strength and health. Because cane could not be allowed to stand too long in the fields, harvest time was hectic. As one former slave



MAP 6–3 AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, AND SLAVERY IN THE OLD SOUTH, 1850

The experience of the African American in slavery varied according to their occupation and the region of the South in which they lived.

What does this map suggest concerning slave labor?

recalled, "On cane plantations in sugar time, there is no distinction as to the days of the week. They [the slaves] worked on the Sabbath as if it were Monday or Thursday."

COTTON

Although tobacco, rice, and sugar were economically significant, cotton was by far the South's and the country's

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Icons are included in the text that direct students and instructors to specific documents, interactive activities, and *Living Words* audio resources available on the *myhistorylab* website and *Exploring African-American History* CD-ROM that is included with every new copy of the text.

No other text provides the wealth and variety of compelling images chronicling the African-American experience in a chronological, historical context for students.

most important staple crop. By 1860 cotton exports amounted to more than 50 percent annually of the dollar value of all U.S. exports (see Figure 6–1). This was almost ten times the value of its nearest export competitors—wheat and wheat flour.

Cotton as a crop did not require cultivation as intensive as that needed for tobacco, rice, or sugar. But the cotton culture was so extensive that cotton planters as a group employed the most slave labor. By 1860 out of the 2,5 ... ture in the United ... Cotton drove the S ... expansion. Even i...

Although longs... on the sea islands of ... American cotton w... ety that flourished o... cotton fiber in the t...

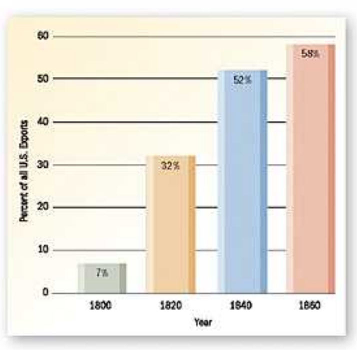

FIGURE 6–1 COTTON EXPORTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL U.S. EXPORTS, 1800–1860

Cotton rapidly emerged as the country's most important export crop after 1800 and key to its prosperity. Because slave labor produced the cotton, increasing exports strengthened the slave system itself.

land stimulated the westward spread of cotton cultivation. This demand increased by at least 5 percent per year between 1830 and 1860. In response—and with the essential aid of Whitney's cotton gin—American production of cotton rose from 10,000 bales in 1793 to 500,000 annually during the 1820s to 4,491,000 bales in 1860. The new states of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi led this mounting production.

Picturesque scenes of ripening cotton fields are

As these large agricultural units drew in labor, the price of slaves increased. During the 1830s, a prime male field hand sold for $1,250 (about 21,000 current dollars) in the New Orleans slave market. Prices dipped during the hard times of the early 1840s. But by the 1850s, such slaves cost $1,800 (about 33,000 current dollars). Young women usually sold for up to $500 less than young men. Prices for elderly slaves dropped off sharply unless they were highly skilled.

The enslaved men and women who worked in the cotton fields rose before dawn when the master or overseer sounded the plantation bell or horn. They ate breakfast and then assembled in work gangs of twenty or twenty-five under the control of black slave drivers. They plowed and planted in the spring. They weeded with heavy hoes in the summer and harvested in the late fall. During harvest season, adult slaves picked about 200 pounds of cotton per day. Regardless of the season, the work was hard, and white overseers whipped those who seemed to be lagging. Slaves usually got a two-hour break at midday in the summer and

an hour to an hour and a half in the winter. Then they returned to the fields until sunset, when they went back to their cabins for dinner and an early bedtime enforced by the master or overseer.

Frederick Law Olmsted, a northern traveler, described a large gang of Mississippi slaves he saw in 1854 marching home early because of rain:

> ...n old driver carrying a ... argest and strongest ... together; they were all ... dress of a bluish ... ts reaching little below ... and feet were bare; ... elves loftily, each ... the shoulder, and ... powerful swing. ... the [plow hands and ... strong, mostly men, but a few of ... A lean and vigilant white overseer,

toes. They also raised cattle, hogs, sheep, and horses. The hogs, and corn and other grains, were mainly for consumption on the plantations. But all the hemp, and much of the livestock and wheat, were raised for the market. In fact, wheat replaced tobacco as the main cash crop in much of Maryland and Virginia. The transition to wheat encouraged many planters to substitute free labor for slave labor, but slaves grew wheat in the South until the Civil War.

Kentucky was the center of the hemp industry. Before the Civil War, planters used hemp, which is closely related to marijuana, to make rope and bagging for cotton bales. This tied Kentucky economically to the Deep South. But, because hemp required much less labor than rice, sugar, or cotton, Kentucky developed a distinctive slave system. Three slaves could tend fifty acres of hemp, so slave labor forces were much smaller than elsewhere. Robert Wickliffe, the largest Kentucky slaveholder during the 1840s, owned 200 slaves—a large number, but far fewer than his counterparts in the Cotton Belt.

In this engraving, which dates to about 1860, slaves harvest cotton under white supervision on a southern plantation. Note the division of labor with women picking and men packing and carrying. The Granger Collection, NY

Enslaved black women often had the responsibility of raising their masters' young children. The women's duties sometimes forced them to neglect the needs of their own children. From the Collection of the Louisiana State Museum.

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House Servants and Skilled Slaves

About 75 percent of the slave workforce in the nineteenth century consisted of field hands. But because masters wanted to make their plantations as self-sufficient as possible, they employed some slaves as house servants and skilled craftsmen. Slaves who did not have to do field labor were an elite. Those who performed domestic duties, drove carriages, or learned a craft considered themselves privileged. However, they were also suspended between two different worlds.

House slaves worked as cooks, maids, butlers, nurses, and gardeners. Their work was less physically demanding than fieldwork, and they often received better food and clothing. Nevertheless, nineteenth-century kitchen work could be grueling, and maids and butlers were on call at all hours. House servants' jobs were also more stressful than field hands' jobs because the servants were under closer white supervision.

In addition, house servants were by necessity cut off from the slave community centered in the slave quarters. Yet, as Olmsted pointed out during the 1850s, house servants rarely sought to become field hands. Conversely, field hands had little desire to be exposed to the constant surveillance house servants had to tolerate. As Olmsted put it,

> Slaves brought up to housework dread to be employed at field-labor; and those accustomed to the comparatively unconstrained life of the Negro-settlement detest the close control and careful movements required of the house-servants. It is a punishment of a lazy field hand to employ him in menial duties at the house . . . and it is equally a punishment to a neglectful house-servant, to banish him to the field-gangs.

Skilled slaves tended to be even more of a slave elite than house servants. As had been true earlier, black men had a decided advantage over black women—apart from those who were seamstresses—in becoming skilled. Slave carpenters, blacksmiths, and millwrights built and maintained plantation houses, slave quarters, and machinery. Because they might need to travel to get tools or spare parts, such skilled slaves gained a more cosmopolitan outlook than field hands or house servants. They got a taste of freedom, which from the masters' point of view was dangerous.

As plantation slavery declined in the Chesapeake, skilled slaves were able to leave their master's estate to "hire their time." Either they or their masters negotiated labor contracts with employers who needed their expertise. In effect, these slaves worked for money. Although masters often kept all or most of what they earned, some of these skilled slaves merely paid their master a set rate and lived as independent contractors.

By the early nineteenth century many slaves in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia were cultivating wheat rather than tobacco. This 1831 lithograph portrays a demonstration of Cyrus McCormick's automatic reaper. It indicates the adaptability of slave labor to new technology.

Urban and Industrial Slavery

Most skilled slaves who hired their time lived in the South's towns and cities, where they interacted with free black communities. Many of them resided in Baltimore and New Orleans, which were major ports and the Old South's largest cities. But there were others in such smaller southern urban centers as Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia; Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia; Washington, D.C.; Charleston, South Carolina; Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Tennessee.

Slave populations in southern cities were often large, although they tended to decline between 1800 and 1860. In 1840 slaves were a majority of Charleston's population of 29,000. They nearly equaled white residents in Memphis and Augusta, which had total populations of 14,700 and 6,000, respectively. Slaves were almost

one-quarter of New Orleans's population of 145,000 (see Map 6–4).

As the young Frederick Douglass found when his master sent him from rural Maryland to Baltimore during the late 1830s, life in a city could be much more complicated for a slave than life on a plantation. When urban slaves were not working for their masters, they could earn money for themselves, and as a result, masters had a harder time controlling their lives. Those who contracted to provide their masters with a certain amount of money per year could live on their own, buying their own food and clothing. "You couldn't pay me," observed one slave woman, "to live at home if I could help myself."

DOCUMENT 6-5 *Excerpt from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, 1845*

Urban slaves served as domestics, washwomen, waiters, artisans, stevedores, drayers, hack drivers, and general laborers. (Douglass was an apprentice caulker in a shipyard.) In general, they did the urban work that foreign immigrants undertook in northern cities. If urban slaves purchased their freedom, they usually continued in the same line of work they had done as slaves. Particularly in border cities like Baltimore, Louisville, and Washington, urban slaves increasingly relied on their free black neighbors—and sympathetic white people—to escape north. Urban masters often let slaves purchase their freedom over a term of years to keep them from leaving. In Baltimore, during the early nineteenth century, this sort of "**term slavery**" was gradually replacing slavery for life.

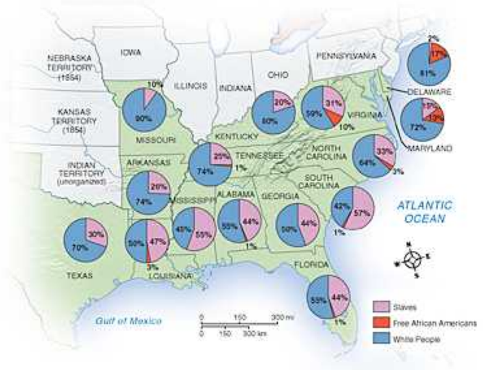
Industrial slavery overlapped with urban slavery, but southern industries that employed slaves were often in rural areas. By 1860 about 5 percent of southern slaves—approximately 200,000 people—worked in industry. Enslaved men, women, and children worked in textile mills in South Carolina and Georgia, sometimes beside white people. In Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, during the 1850s, about 6,000 slaves, most of whom were male, worked in factories producing chewing tobacco. Richmond's famous Tredegar Iron Works also employed a large slave workforce. So did earlier southern ironworks in Virginia, Maryland, northern Tennessee, and southern Kentucky.

The bulk of the 16,000 people who worked in the South's lumber industry in 1860 were slaves. Under the supervision of black drivers, they felled trees, operated sawmills, and delivered lumber. Slaves also did most of the work in the naval stores industry of North Carolina and Georgia, manufacturing tar, turpentine, and related products. In western Virginia, they labored in the

MAP 6–4 POPULATION PERCENTAGES IN THE SOUTHERN STATES, 1850

The percentages of slaves, free African Americans, and white people varied from state to state. In the upper South white populations were substantially larger than black populations. In the Deep South, however, the races were more in balance.

In which two states were there black majorities in 1850, and why?



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Voices boxes include primary source documents that provide first-person perspectives on key events in African-American history. Brief introductions and study questions help students analyze the documents and relate them to the text.

Frederick Douglass on the Readiness of Masters to Use the Whip

This passage from the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, published in 1845, suggests the volatile relationship between slaves and masters that could quickly result in violence. As Douglass makes clear, masters and overseers used the whip not just to force slaves to work but also to enforce a distinction between what was proper and even laudable for white men and what was forbidden behavior for slaves.

It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things of which to make occasion to whip a slave. A mere look, word, or motion—a mistake, accident, or want of power—are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his masters? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to pull off his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence—one of the greatest crimes of which a slave can be guilty. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. Does he, while plowing, break a plough—or, while hoeing, break a hoe? It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped.

What does Douglass imply are some of the motives that led masters and overseers to whip slaves?

Given the behavior by masters that Douglass describes, how were slaves likely to act around white people?

Source: Roy Finkenbine, ed., *Sources of the African-American Past* (New York: Longman, 1997), 45–44.

PH: Note: Didn't run back text--because it would not have saved space.

southern industrialists hired slaves from their masters rather than buying them themselves, and the work slaves performed for them was often dangerous, as well as physically tiring. But, as historian John B. Boles points out, slaves came to prefer industrial jobs to plantation labor. Like urban slaves, industrial slaves had more opportunities to advance themselves, enjoyed more autonomy, and often received cash incentives. Industrial labor, like urban labor, was a path to freedom for some.

Punishment

Those who used slave labor, whether on plantations, small farms, in urban areas, or industry, frequently offered incentives to induce slaves to perform well. Yet slave labor by definition is forced labor based on the threat of physical punishment. Masters denied that this brutal aspect detracted from what they claimed was the essentially benign and paternalistic character of the South's "peculiar institution." After all, Christian masters found support in the Bible for using corporal punishment to chastise servants.

White southerners also believed that African Americans would not work unless threatened with beatings. Olmsted reported that in Mississippi he had observed a young girl subjected to "the severest corporal punishment" he had ever seen. The white overseer, who had administered the flogging with a rawhide whip "across her naked loins and thighs," told Olmsted that the girl had been shirking her duties. He claimed that "if I hadn't [punished her so hard] she would have done the same thing again to-morrow, and half the people on the plantation would have followed her example. Oh, you've no idea how lazy these niggers are. . . . They'd never do any work at all if they were not afraid of being whipped."

Fear of the lash drove slaves to work and to cooperate among themselves for mutual protection. Black parents and other older relatives taught slave children how to avoid punishment and still resist masters and overseers. They worked slowly—but not too slowly—and feigned illness to maintain their strength. They broke tools and injured mules, oxen, and horses to tacitly protest their condition. This pattern of covert resistance and physical punishment caused anxiety for both masters and slaves. Resistance (described in more detail in

…ers to reduce work hours … few slaves escaped being … their lives in bondage.

…e Trade

The expansion of the Cotton Kingdom south and west combined with the decline of slavery in the Chesapeake to stimulate the domestic slave trade. As masters in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky trimmed excess slaves from their workforces—or switched entirely from slave to wage labor—they sold men, women, and children to slave traders. The traders in turn shipped these unfortunate people to the slave markets of New Orleans and other cities for resale. Masters also sold slaves as punishment, and fear of being "sold down river" led many slaves in the Chesapeake to escape. A vicious circle resulted: masters sold slaves south to prevent their escape and slaves escaped to avoid being sold south.

DOCUMENT 6-7 *A Slave Tells of His Sale at Auction, 1848*

Some slave songs record the anxiety of those facing separation from loved ones as a result of the domestic trade. One song laments the sale of a man away from his wife and family:

> William Rino sold Henry Silvers;
> Hilo! Hilo!
> Sold him to de Gorgy [Georgia] trader;
> Hilo! Hilo!
> His wife she cried, and children bawled
> Hilo! Hilo!
> Sold him to de Gorgy trader;
> Hilo! Hilo!
>
> . . .
>
> See wives and husbands sold apart,
> Their children's screams will break my heart;—
> There's a better day coming,
> Will you go along with me?
> There's a better day a coming,
> Go sound the jubilee!

The number of people traded was huge and, considering that many of them were ripped away from their families, tragic. Starting in the 1820s, about 150,000 slaves per decade moved toward the southwest either with their masters or traders. Between 1820 and 1860, an estimated 50 percent of the slaves of the upper South moved involuntarily into the Southwest.

Traders operated compounds called slave prisons or slave pens in Baltimore, Maryland; Washington,

In this 1863 photograph a former Louisiana slave displays the scars that resulted from repeated whippings. Although this degree of scaring is exceptional, few slaves were able to avoid being whipped at least once in their lives. National Archives and Records Administration

D.C.; Alexandria and Richmond, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; and in smaller cities as well. Most of the victims of the trade moved on foot in groups called **coffles**, chained or roped together. From the 1810s onward, northern and European visitors to Washington noted the coffles passing before the U.S. Capitol. There was also a considerable coastal trade in slaves from Chesapeake ports to New Orleans and, by the 1840s, some slave traders were carrying their human cargoes in railroad cars.

DOCUMENT 6-4 *E.S. Abdy, Description of a Washington, D.C., Slave Pen, 1835*

The domestic slave trade demonstrated the falseness of slaveholders' claims that slavery was a benign institution. Driven by economic necessity, profit, or a desire to frustrate escape plans, masters in the upper South irrevocably separated husbands and wives, mothers and children, brothers and sisters. Traders sometimes tore babies from their mothers' arms. The journey from the Chesapeake to Mississippi, Alabama,

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or Louisiana could be long and hard, and some slaves died along the way. A few managed to keep in touch with those they had left behind through letters and travelers. But most could not, and after the abolition of slavery in 1865, many African Americans used their new freedom to travel across the South looking for relatives from whom they had been separated long before.

SLAVE FAMILIES

The families that enslaved African Americans sought to preserve had been developing in America since the seventeenth century. However, such families had no legal standing. Most enslaved men and women could choose their own mates, although masters sometimes arranged such things. Masters encouraged pairings among female and male slaves because they assumed correctly that husbands and fathers would be less rebellious than single men. Masters also knew that they would benefit if their human chattel reproduced. As Thomas Jefferson put it, "I consider a [slave] woman who brings [gives birth to] a child every two years as more profitable than the best man on the farm. What she produces is an addition to the capital, while his labors disappear in mere consumption."

Families were also the core of the African-American community in slavery. Even though no legal sanctions supported slave marriages and the domestic slave trade could sunder them, many such marriages endured. Before they wed, some couples engaged in courting rituals while others rejected "such foolishness." Similarly, slave weddings ranged from simply "taking up" to religious ceremonies replete with food and frolics.

"Jumping the broom" was often part of these ceremonies, although this custom was not African but European. During the 1930s former slave Tempie Herndon recalled her wedding ceremony conducted by "de nigger preacher dat preached at de plantation church." In particular, she remembered that after the religious ceremony, "Marse George got to have his little fun" by having the newlyweds jump backward over a broomstick. "You got to do dat to see which one gwine be boss of your household," she commented. "If both of dem jump over without touchin' it, dey won't gwine be no bossin', dey just gwine be congenial." In fact, more equality existed between husbands and wives in slave marriages than in those of the masters. Southern white concepts of patriarchy required male dominance. But because black men lacked power, their wives were more like partners than servants.

Slave couples usually lived together in cabins on their master's property. They had little privacy because nineteenth-century slave cabins were rude, small, one-room dwellings that two families might have to share. But couples who shared cabins were generally better off than husbands and wives who were the property of different masters and lived on different plantations. In these cases, children lived with their mother, and their father visited when he could in the evenings. Work patterns that changed with the seasons or with the mood of a master could interfere with such visits. So could the requirement that slaves have passes to leave home.

PROFILE — WILLIAM ELLISON

The life of William Ellison, who was born a slave in the Fairfield district of South Carolina in 1790 and named *April* by his master, exemplifies several of the themes of this chapter. He was a skilled slave, used that skill to accumulate enough savings to purchase his freedom, and subsequently became a slaveholder himself. His story came to light in 1935 when three white children, playing in the crawlspace under his former home, discovered his personal papers.

The son of a slave mother and an unknown white father, Ellison received special treatment from his owner, who apprenticed him at age twelve to a broadly skilled white craftsman named William McCreight. Together with several white apprentices, Ellison learned carpentry, blacksmithing, and how to repair cotton gins. He also learned how to conduct a business. He did so well that in 1816, when he was twenty-six, he purchased himself and became a free man.

Once free, Ellison petitioned a court to change his name from his slave name *April* to *William*, in honor of his mentor—or perhaps his father. With freedom, skills, and a new name, Ellison opened a gin-making and gin-repair shop in Statesburg, South Carolina. Like the Natchez, Mississippi, barber William Johnson, Ellison achieved a respectable reputation among his white clients and neighbors as a churchgoing businessman. On the surface at least, his ties to his slave past diminished as he prospered. Because his income depended on white slaveholders, he did nothing to antagonize them.

As a result, Ellison became one of the wealthiest owners of real and personal property in the South. He owned hundreds of acres of farmland and woodland worth at least $8,250 (about 148,000 current dollars). As early as 1820, he owned two slaves. In 1830 he owned four and in 1840, twenty-six. By 1860 he owned sixty-three and was worth in personal property alone $53,000 (about 954,000 current dollars).

Ellison assigned tasks to his slaves according to their gender and age. The field hands—mostly women and children—produced eighty bales of cotton each in 1850. They also raised thousands of bushels of corn, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables each year. The gin shop workers—men and adolescent boys—worked as blacksmiths, carpenters, and mechanics.

When South Carolina seceded from the Union in December 1860 and the Civil War began a few months later, Ellison and his family were caught between two contradictory forces. During the war, South Carolina's state government considered free African Americans potential traitors and curtailed their liberty. Meanwhile, the Union moved relentlessly toward immediate, uncompensated emancipation. Ellison, who died on December 5, 1861, did not live to see the emancipation of his slaves in 1865. But his children did. They also saw the destruction of his business when its newly emancipated workers refused to continue to work for the Ellisons as free men and women.

◀ William Ellison's house near Columbia, South Carolina.

Ellison

CHILDREN

Despite these difficulties, slave parents were able to instruct their children in family history, religion, and the skills required to survive in slavery. They sang to their children and told them stories full of folk wisdom. In particular, they impressed on them the importance of extended family relationships. The ability to rely on grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and honorary relatives was a hedge against the family disruption that the domestic slave trade might inflict. In this manner, too, the extended black family provided slaves with the independent resources they needed to avoid complete physical, intellectual, cultural, and moral subjugation to their masters.

This woodcut of a black father being sold away from his family appeared in *The Child's Anti-Slavery Book* in 1860. Family ruptures, like the one shown, were among the more common and tragic aspects to slavery, especially in the upper South, where masters claimed slavery was "mild." Courtesy of the Library of Congress

During an age when infant mortality rates were much higher than they are today, those for black southerners were even higher than they were for white people. There were several reasons for this. Enslaved black women usually had to do field labor up to the time they delivered a child, and their diets lacked necessary nutrients. Consequently, they tended to have babies whose weights at birth were less than normal. In addition, enslaved infants were more likely to be subject to such postpartum maladies as rickets, tetany, tetanus, high fevers, intestinal worms, and influenza than were other children. More than 50 percent of slave children died before the age of five.

Slaveholders contributed to high infant mortality rates probably more from ignorance than malevolence. It was, after all, in the master's economic self-interest to have slave mothers produce healthy children. Masters often allowed mothers a month to recuperate after giving birth and several months thereafter off from fieldwork to nurse their babies. Although this reduced the mother's productivity, the loss might be made up by the children's labor when they entered the plantation

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VOICES

A Slaveholder Describes a New Purchase

In this letter to her mother, a white Louisiana woman, Tryphena Blanche Holder Fox, describes her husband's purchase of a slave woman and her children. Several things are apparent in the letter—that investing in slaves was expensive, that the white woman's only concern for the slave woman and her children was their economic value, that it was up to the white woman to supervise the new slaves, and that the slave woman showed her displeasure with her situation.

Hygiene [Jesuit Bend, Louisiana]
Sunday, Dec. 27th 1857

Dear Mother,

We are obliged to save every dollar he can "rake & scrape" to pay for a negro woman. . . . She has two likely children . . . and is soon to have another, and he only pays fourteen hundred for the three. She is considered an excellent bargain . . . he would not sell her and the children for less than $2,000. She came & worked two days, so we could see what she was capable of. . . . She was sold by a Frenchman. . . . He has a family of ten & she had all the work to do besides getting her own wood & water from the river. She was not used to do this, and gave them a great deal of trouble. . . . How much trouble she will give me, I don't know, but I think I can get along with her, passable well any how. Of course it increased my cares, for having invested so much in one purchase, it will be to my interest to see that the children are well taken care of & clothed and fed. All of them give more or less trouble. . . .

What does Tryphena reveal about the management of slaves?

What does she indicate about the ability of slaves to force concessions from their masters?

Source: Tryphena Blanche Holder Fox to Anna Rose Holder, December 27, 1857, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

workforce. Unfortunately, many infants needed more than a few months of breast-feeding to survive.

The care of slave children varied with the size of a slaveholder's estate, the region it was in, and the mother's work. House servants could carry their babies with them while they did their work. On small farms, slave women strapped their babies to their backs or left them at the edge of fields, so they could nurse them periodically, although the latter practice risked exposing an infant to ants, flies, or mosquitoes. On larger plantations, mothers could leave a child with an elderly or infirm adult. This encouraged a sense of community and a shared responsibility among the slaves for all black children on a plantation.

As children grew older, they spent much time in unsupervised play, often with white children. Boys played marbles and ball games; girls skipped rope and tended to their dolls. A game of hiding and whipping, similar to the more recent cops and robbers, was a childish commentary on a violent system.

Slave childhood was short. Early on, parents and others taught children about the realities of plantation life. By witnessing whippings—sometimes of their parents—and through admonitions from their elders, slave children learned they had to be extremely careful about what they said to white people. Deceit and guile became survival skills. Slave childhood was also short because children as young as six had to do so-called light chores. Such work became physically more taxing as a child grew older, until, between the ages of eight and twelve, the child began doing adult fieldwork. That slave children were subject to sale away from their families, particularly in the upper South, also accelerated their progress to adulthood.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

As with forced separations, masters' sexual exploitation of black women disrupted enslaved families. Abuse of black women began during the Middle Passage and continued after the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865. Long-term relationships between masters and enslaved women were common in the nineteenth-century South. Such continuing relationships rested not on overt coercion but on masters' implicit power and authority. The relationship between Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings is the most infamous of these. DNA and circumstantial evidence indicate that Jefferson and Hemings had a long sexual relationship that produced four children who survived to adulthood. It began in 1787 when Hemings served as caretaker to one of Jefferson's daughters at his household in Paris, where he was U.S. ambassador to France. At that time Jefferson was forty-four and Hemings was about fourteen. She was pregnant when she returned to Virginia in 1789, although the child probably died in infancy. There is evidence that Hemings and her children enjoyed special privileges on Jefferson's Monticello plantation. But, by modern standards, their relationship began with statutory rape, and Hemings's unfree status and that of her children limited her ability to resist sexual advances. Two of Hemings children, a man named Beverly and a woman named Harriet, were "allowed" to escape in 1821 or 1822. Thereafter they lived as white people in Washington, D.C. Two others, Madison and Eston, gained freedom as young men under Jefferson's will. Jefferson never freed Sally Hemings. Instead his daughter permitted her to leave Monticello shortly after his death in 1826. She lived with Madison and Eston in Charlotte, Virginia, until her death in 1835.

Even more common than relationships like that of Jefferson and Hemings were instances in which masters, overseers, and their sons forced slave women to have sex against their will. This routine conduct caused great distress. Former slave Harriet Jacobs wrote in her autobiography, "I cannot tell how much I suffered in the presence of these wrongs, nor how I am still pained by the retrospect." One of the more notorius antebellum (pre–Civil War) cases of forced sexual exploitation occurred in Missouri during the 1850s. It involved sixty-year-old Robert Newsom and Celia, a fourteen-year-old girl he had purchased in 1850. Newsom repeatedly raped Celia until she killed him in 1855. Celia's attorneys put up a spirited defense at her trial. They argued that an 1845 Missouri law that made it a crime to "take any woman unlawfully against her will and by force, menace or duress, compel her to be defiled" gave Celia a right to defend her virtue. But the white male jury convicted her of murder anyway, and she was executed.

White southerners justified sexual abuse of black women in several ways. They maintained that black women were naturally promiscuous and seduced white men. Some proslavery apologists argued that the sexual exploitation of black women by white men reduced prostitution and promoted purity among white women. These apologists ignored the devastating emotional impact of sexual exploitation on black women. They failed to note that the rape of black women by white men emphasized in the most degrading manner the inability of black men to protect their wives and daughters.

DIET

The slaves' diet hardly raised the moral issues associated with the sexual exploitation of black women by white men. The typical plantation's weekly ration of one peck of cornmeal and three to four pounds of salt pork or bacon was enough to maintain an adult's body

Freed African Americans sit outside old slave headquarters at Fort George island in Florida. "Remains of Slave Quarters, Fort George Island, Florida," ca. 1865, Stereograph. © Collection of The New-York Historical Society, Negative no. 48165.

weight and, therefore, appeared to be adequate. But even when black men and women added vegetables and poultry that they raised or fish and small game that they caught, this diet was (according to modern medical science) deficient in calcium, vitamin C, riboflavin, protein, and iron. Because these vitamins and nutrients are essential to the health of people who perform hard labor in a hot climate, slaves frequently suffered from chronic illnesses. They often complained about being hungry and about the poor quality of their food. As one song went,

> We raise de wheat,
> Dey gib us de corn;
> We bake de bread,
> Dey gib us de crust;
> We sif' de meal,
> Dey gib us de huss;
> We peel de meat,
> Dey gib us de skin

Yet masters and white southerners generally consumed the same sort of food that slaves ate and, in

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Throughout its existence, slavery in America encouraged white men to exploit black women for sexual purposes and to abuse black men and women physically. *Virginian Luxuries*, painted c. 1810, aimed to expose and ridicule these practices.

comparison to people in other parts of the Atlantic world, enslaved African Americans were not undernourished. Although adult slaves were on average an inch shorter than white northerners, they were three inches taller than new arrivals from Africa, two inches taller than slaves who lived in the West Indies, and one inch taller than British Royal Marines.

African-American cooks, primarily women, developed a distinctive cuisine based on African culinary traditions. They seasoned foods with salt, onions, pepper, and other spices and herbs. They fried meat and fish, served sauce over rice, and flavored vegetables with bits of smoked meat. The availability in the South of such African foods as okra, yams, benne seeds, and peanuts strengthened their culinary ties to that continent. Cooking also gave black women the ability to control part of their lives and to demonstrate their creativity.

CLOTHING

Enslaved men and women had less control over what they and their children wore than how they cooked. Although skilled slaves often produced the shoes and clothing plantation workers wore, slaves in general rarely had the time or skill to make their own clothes. They went barefoot during the warm months and wore cheap shoes, usually made by local cobblers, in the winter. Slaveholding women, with the help of trained female house servants, sewed the clothes slaves wore.

This clothing was usually made of homespun cotton or wool. Some slaves also received hand-me-downs from masters and overseers. Although the distribution of clothing varied widely over time and space, and according to the generosity of masters, slaves usually received clothing allotments twice a year. At the fall distribution, slave men received two outfits for the cold weather along with a jacket and a wool cap. At the spring distribution, they received two cotton outfits. Slave drivers wore garments of finer cloth and greatcoats during the winter. Butlers and carriage drivers wore liveries appropriate to their public duties. Slave women received at each distribution two simply cut dresses of calico or homespun. In the winter they wore capes or cloaks and covered their heads with kerchiefs or bonnets.

Because masters gave priority to clothing adult workers, small children often went naked during the warm months. Depending on their ages and the season, children received garments called *shirts* if worn by boys and *shifts* if worn by girls. "I ain' neber had no pants 'till de year befo' de [Civil] war. All de li'l boys wo' shu't-tail shu'ts, jes' a slip to de knees," recalled former Louisiana slave Jacob Branch. This androgynous garb lasted until children reached "about twelve or fourteen," when they began doing the work of adults.

Although they received standard-issue clothing, black women particularly sought to individualize what they wore. They changed the colors of clothes with dyes they extracted from roots, berries, walnut shells, oak leaves, and indigo. They wove threads of different color into their clothes to make "checkedy" and other patterns. Former slave Morris Sheppard remembered that with his mother "everything was stripedy."

To further adorn themselves, young women wore hoops under their skirts fashioned from grapevines, stiffly starched petticoats, intricately arranged turbans, and colorful kerchiefs. On special occasions they braided or twisted their hair, used rouge made from berries, eye shadow made from soot, and perfume derived from honeysuckle. Urban slaves, of course, had access to commercial products, and even plantation slaves often bought clothes, shoes, ribbons, and kerchiefs at local stores or from peddlers.

HEALTH

Low birth weight, diet, and clothing all affected the health of slaves. Before the 1830s various diseases were endemic among bond people, and death could come quickly. Much of this ill health resulted from overwork in the South's hot, humid summers, exposure to cold during the winter, and poor hygiene. Slave quarters, for example, rarely had privies, drinking water could become contaminated, and food was prepared under less than healthy conditions. Dysentery, typhus, food poisoning, diarrhea, hepatitis, typhoid fever, salmonella, and intestinal worms were common and sometimes fatal maladies.

The South's warm climate encouraged mosquito-borne diseases, the growth of bacteria, and the spread of viruses. Interaction between people of African and European descent increased the types of illnesses. Smallpox, measles, and gonorrhea were European diseases; malaria, hookworm, and yellow fever came from Africa. The sickle-cell blood trait protected people of African descent from malaria but could cause sickle-cell anemia, a painful, debilitating, and fatal disease.

African Americans were also more susceptible to other afflictions than were persons of European descent. They suffered from lactose intolerance, which greatly limited the amount of calcium they could absorb from dairy products, and from a limited ability to acquire enough vitamin D from the sunlight in temperate regions. Because many slaves lost calcium through perspiration while working, these characteristics led to a high incidence of debilitating diseases. These included, according to historian Donald R. Wright, "blindness or inflamed and watery eyes; lameness or crooked limbs; loose, missing or rotten teeth; and skin sores. Also, they made African Americans much more apt than whites to suffer from a number of often fatal diseases—tetanus, intestinal worms, diphtheria, whooping cough, pica (or dirt eating), pneumonia, tuberculosis, and dysentery."

However, black southerners constituted the only New World slave population that grew by natural reproduction. Although the death rate among slaves was higher than among white southerners, it was similar to that of Europeans. Slave health also improved after 1830 when their rising economic value persuaded masters to improve slave quarters, provide warmer winter clothing, reduce overwork, and hire physicians to care for bond people. During the 1840s and 1850s, slaves were more likely than white southerners to be cared for by a physician.

Enslaved African Americans also used traditional remedies—derived from Africa and passed down by generations of women—to treat the sick. Wild cherry bark and herbs like pennyroyal or horehound went into teas to treat colds. Slaves used jimsonweed tea to counter rheumatism and chestnut leaf tea to relieve asthma. One former slave recalled that her grandmother dispensed syrup to treat colic and teas to cure fevers and stomachaches. Nineteenth-century medical knowledge was so limited that some of these folk remedies were more effective than those prescribed by white physicians. This was especially true of kaolin, a white clay also used in ceramics, which black women used to treat dysentery.

The Socialization of Slaves

African Americans had to acquire the skills needed to protect themselves and their loved ones from a brutal slave system. Folk tales often derived from Africa, but on occasion from American Indians, helped pass such skills from generation to generation. Parents, other relatives, and elderly slaves generally told such tales to teach survival, mental agility, and self-confidence.

The heroes of the tales are animal tricksters with human personalities. Most famous is Brer Rabbit, who in his weakness and cleverness represents African Americans in slavery. Although the tales portray Brer Rabbit as far from perfect, he uses his wits to overcome threats from strong and vicious antagonists, principally Brer Fox, who represents slaveholders. By hearing these stories and rooting for Brer Rabbit, slave children learned how to conduct themselves in a difficult environment.

They learned to watch what they said to white people, not to talk back, to withhold information about other African Americans, to dissemble. In particular, they refrained from making antislavery statements and camouflaged their awareness of how masters exploited them. As Henry Bibb, who escaped from slavery, put it, "The only weapon of self defense that I could use successfully was that of deception." Another former slave, Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, summed up the slave strategy in rhyme:

"Got one mind for the boss to see; got another for what I know is me."

DOCUMENT 6-10 *A Slave Girl Tells of Her Life, 1861*

Masters tended to miss the subtlety of the divided consciousness of their bond people. When slaves refused to do simple tasks correctly, masters saw it as black stupidity rather than resistance. Sometimes outsiders, such as white northern missionary Charles C. Jones, understood more clearly what was going on. In 1842 Jones observed,

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> Persons live and die in the midst of Negroes and know comparatively little of their real character. The Negroes form a distinct class in the community, and keep themselves very much to themselves. They are one thing before the whites and another before their own color. Deception towards the former is characteristic of them, whether bond or free. . . . It is habit—long established custom, which descends from generation to generation.

Religion

Along with family and socialization, religion helped African Americans cope with slavery. Some masters denied their slaves access to Christianity, and some slaves ignored the religion. In New Orleans, Baltimore, and a few other locations there were Roman Catholic slaves, who were usually the human property of individual Roman Catholic masters. In Maryland during the 1830s the Jesuits, an order of Roman Catholic priests and brothers, collectively owned approximately 300 slaves. But by the mid-nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of American slaves practiced a Protestantism similar, but not identical, to that of most white southerners.

DOCUMENT 6-5 Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, 1842

Biracial Baptist and Methodist congregations persisted in the South longer than they did in northern cities. The southern congregations usually had racially segregated seating, but black people and white people joined in communion and church discipline. They shared cemeteries. Many masters during the nineteenth century sponsored plantation churches for slaves, and white missionary organizations also supported such churches.

In the plantation churches, white ministers told their black congregations that Christian slaves must obey their earthly masters as they did God. This was not what slaves wanted to hear. Cornelius Garner, a former slave, recalled that "dat ole white preacher jest was telling us slaves to be good to our marsters. We ain't keer'd a bit 'bout dat stuff he was telling us 'cause we wanted to sing, pray, and serve God in our own way." At times slaves walked out on ministers who preached obedience.

Instead of services sponsored by masters, slaves preferred a semisecret black church they conducted themselves. This was a church characterized by self-called, often illiterate black preachers. It emphasized Moses and deliverance from bondage rather than consistent theology or Christian meekness. Services were emotional and involved singing, dancing, shouting, moaning, and clapping. According to historian Peter Kolchin, African "potions, concoctions, charms, and rituals [used] to ward off evil, cure sickness, harm enemies, and produce amorous behavior" were mixed in with this black Christianity. European settlers in America during the previous century had also melded Christian and non-Christian beliefs and practices. So it is not surprising that white as well as black people continued to seek the help of African-American conjurers.

LIVING WORDS 7 *Go Down Moses*

British artist **John Antrobus** completed this painting in about 1860. It is named *Plantation Burial* and suggests the importance of religion among enslaved African Americans. John Antrobus, *Plantation Burial*, oil painting. The Historical New Orleans Collection. 1960.46

The Character of Slavery and Slaves

For over a century, historians have debated the character of the Old South's slave system and the people it held in bondage. During the 1910s southern historian Ulrich B. Phillips portrayed slavery as a benign, paternalistic institution in which Christian slaveholders cared for largely content slaves. Slavery, Phillips argued—as had the slaveholders themselves—rescued members of an inferior race from African barbarism and permitted them to rise as far as they possibly could toward civilization. With different emphasis, historian Eugene D. Genovese has, since the 1960s, also placed paternalism at the heart of southern plantation slavery.

Other historians, however, deny that paternalism had much to do with a system that rested on force. Since the 1950s historians have contended that slaveholders exploited their bondpeople in a selfish quest for profits. Although some slaveholders were concerned about the welfare of their slaves, this brutal portrait of slavery is persuasive at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Many masters never met their slaves face to face. Most slaves experienced whipping at some point in their lives, and over half the slaves caught up in the domestic slave trade were separated from their families.

There is also a scholarly tradition of comparing slavery in the American South with its counterpart in Latin America. Historians note that slaves in Latin American countries influenced by Roman law and the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed more protection from abusive masters than did slaves in the United States, where English law and Protestant Christianity dominated. Routes to freedom, through self-purchase and manumission, were more available in Latin America than in the Old South. There was more interracial marriage and therefore, some historians maintain, less racism in Latin America than in the United States. But other historians have established that protections offered by law and religion to slaves in Latin America were more theoretical than practical. They argue that racism there merely took a different form than it did in the United States. Certainly the mortality rate among Latin American slaves was far greater than among slaves in the American South, which implies that the conditions under which slaves labored in Latin America were even harsher than the grim conditions slaves often faced in the American South.

The character of enslaved African Americans has also been debated. Historians such as Phillips, who were persuaded by the slaveholders' justifications of the "peculiar institution," argued that African Americans were genetically predisposed to being slaves and were therefore content in their status. In 1959 Stanley M. Elkins changed the debate by arguing that black people were not inherently inferior or submissive, but that concentration-camp-like conditions on plantations made them into childlike "Sambos" as dependent on their masters as inmates in Nazi extermination camps were on their guards.

DOCUMENT 6-9 *Farm Journal Reports on the Care and Feeding of Slaves*, 1836

Elkins's study stimulated the scholarship that shapes current understandings of the character of African Americans in slavery. Since the 1960s historians have argued that rather than dehumanizing them, slavery led African Americans to create institutions that allowed them some control over their lives. According to these historians, African-American resistance forced masters to accept the slaves' own work patterns and their autonomy in the slave quarters. Slaves built families, churches, and communities. Although these studies may overidealize the strength of slave communities within the brutal context of plantation slavery, they have enriched our understanding of slave life.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN EVENTS		NATIONAL EVENTS
	1810	1812 Louisiana becomes a state
1816 William Ellison purchases his freedom; 1818 Suppression of Charleston's AME Church; 1819 Frederick Douglass born in Maryland	1815	1817 Mississippi becomes a state; 1819 Alabama becomes a state
1822 Denmark Vesey Conspiracy, Charleston, S.C.	1820	1820 Missouri Compromise; 1821 Missouri becomes a state; 1824 John Quincy Adams elected president of United States
	1825	1828 Andrew Jackson elected president
1831 Nat Turner's revolt; 1832 Virginia legislature defeats gradual abolition	1830	
1838 Frederick Douglass apprenticed in Baltimore; 1839 *Amistad* slave revolt	1835	1836 Cherokee Trail of Tears
1841 Solomon Northup kidnapped	1840	
1845 Betsy Somayrac's will	1845	1845 Texas annexed as a slave state; 1846 War against Mexico begins; 1848 Annexation of New Mexico and California
1852 Frederick Law Olmsted's first tour of southern states; 1853 Solomon Northup publishes *Twelve Years a Slave*	1850	1850 Compromise of 1850; 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act
1855 Celia's trial and execution for killing her master; 1857 Supreme Court issues *Dred Scott* decision	1855	1856 Republican Party's first presidential election
	1860	1860 The secession movement begins

Conclusion

African-American life in slavery during the time of the Cotton Kingdom is a vast subject. As slavery expanded westward before 1860, it varied from region to region

End-of-chapter timelines establish a chronological context for events in African-American history by relating them to events in American history and in the rest of the world.

serve their character as a people.

RECOMMENDED READING

Ira Berlin. *Generations in Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. Portrays slavery in the Cotton Kingdom as the product of a series of negotiations between masters and slaves over the terms of captivity.

Charles B. Dew. *Bonds of Iron: Masters and Slaves at Buffalo Forge*. New York: Norton, 1994. Dew offers an excellent account of one type of industrial slavery in the Old South.

Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark. *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South*. New York: Norton, 1984. This book provides a full account of William Ellison and his slaveholding black family.

Norrece T. Jones Jr. *Born a Child of Freedom, Yet a Slave: Mechanisms of Control and Strategies of Resistance in Antebellum South Carolina*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1990. This book explores how masters controlled slaves and how slaves resisted.

Wilma King. *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. This is the most up-to-date account of enslaved black children. It is especially useful concerning the children's work.

Melton A. McLaurin. *Celia, a Slave*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991. This is the most complete study of an enslaved woman's response to sexual exploitation. MacLaurin establishes the social and political contexts for this famous case.

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Roger G. Kennedy. *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Larry Koger. *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790–1860*. 1985; reprint, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

Peter Kolchin. *American Slavery 1619–1877*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Donald P. McNeilly. *The Old South Frontier: Cotton Plantations and the Formation of Arkansas Society, 1819–1861*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000.

John H. Moore. *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

Larry Eugene Rivers. *Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation*. Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Recommended Readings and **Additional Bibliography** lists direct students to more information about the subject of each chapter. These resources provide the most comprehensive bibliography of African-American history available to students in a text.

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THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

John W. Blassingame. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Janet Duitsman Cornelius. *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

Wilma A. Dunaway. *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Eugene D. Genovese. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slave Made*. 1974; reprint, Vintage Books, 1976.

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Charles Joyner. *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Community*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984.

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Leslie Howard Owens. *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South*. 1976; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Todd L. Savitt. *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.

Maria Jenkins Schwartz. *Born in Bondage: Growing up Enslaved in the Antebellum South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

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David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds. *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996.

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Joshua D. Rothman. *Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Families across the Color Line in Virginia 1787–1861*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Deborah Gray White. *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. New York: Norton, 1985.

Jean Fagan Yellin. *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2003.

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John B. Boles, ed. *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740–1870*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988.

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———. *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

Sharla M. Fett. *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Lawrence W. Levine. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Albert J. Raboteau. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

RETRACING THE ODYSSEY

William Johnson House (not currently open to the public) **and Melrose Plantation**, Natchez, Mississippi. Johnson was one of the rare black slaveholders, and John T. McMurrin, the owner of Melrose Plantation, was a northern white man who became a slaveholder.

Hampton Plantation State Park, McClellanville, South Carolina. The plantation house dates to about 1750, and the outbuildings include slave cabins.

Magnolia Mound Plantation, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This historic site includes a plantation house, outbuildings, an overseer's house, and a separate kitchen building.

Zephaniah Kingsley Plantation, Fort George Island, Florida. Kingsley's was an interracial family. Buildings on the plantation include the oldest standing plantation house in Florida and thirty-two slave quarters.

myhistorylab REVIEW, RESEARCH, & INTERACT

Review Questions

1. How did the domestic slave trade and the exploitation of black women by white males affect slave families?
2. Were black slaveholders significant in the history of slavery?
3. How did urban and industrial slavery differ from plantation slavery in the Old South?
4. What impact did housing, nutrition, and disease have on the lives of slaves between 1820 and 1860?
5. How did black Christianity differ from white Christianity in the Old South? How did black Christianity in the South differ from black Christianity in the North?

www.researchnavigator.com

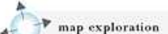
Using the tools available in Research Navigator, consider these questions:

How did blacks resist the oppression of the slave system? What steps did whites take to eliminate resistance?

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

6–1 State Laws Govern Slavery, 1824
6–2 A Muslim Slave Speaks Out, 1831
6–3 Southern Novel Depicts Slavery, 1832
6–4 E. S. Abdy, Description of a Washington, D.C., Slave Pen, 1835
6–5 Charles C. Jones, The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States, 1842
6–6 Frederick Douglass, excerpt from *Narrative of the Life*, 1845
6–7 A Slave Tells of His Sale at Auction, 1848
6–8 Georgia Slave Codes, 1848
6–9 Farm Journal Reports on the Care and Feeding of Slaves, 1836
6–10 A Slave Girl Tells of Her Life, 1861

Interact



map exploration

Agriculture, Industry, and Slavery in the Old South, 1850, p. XX

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Alexis de Tocqueville

Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* accurately discusses the rapid growth of the country and how sectional tensions might endanger the Union.

At the end of every chapter, **Retracing the Odyssey** sections guide instructors and students to educational sites that explore the diverse dimensions of African-American history.

Review, Research & Interact sections at the end of each chapter provide ***Review Questions*** to encourage students to analyze the material they have read and to explore alternative perspectives on that material; ***Research Navigator***™ activities to explore topics in African American history; relevant primary source ***Documents***, and ***Interactive Activities*** both for maps and special topics to enhance deeper understanding of the core content of the chapters. These resources are now available on the ***NEW*** online resource, ***Myhistorylab***, that accompanies the fourth edition as well as on the *Exploring African-American History CD-ROM* included in every new copy of the text.

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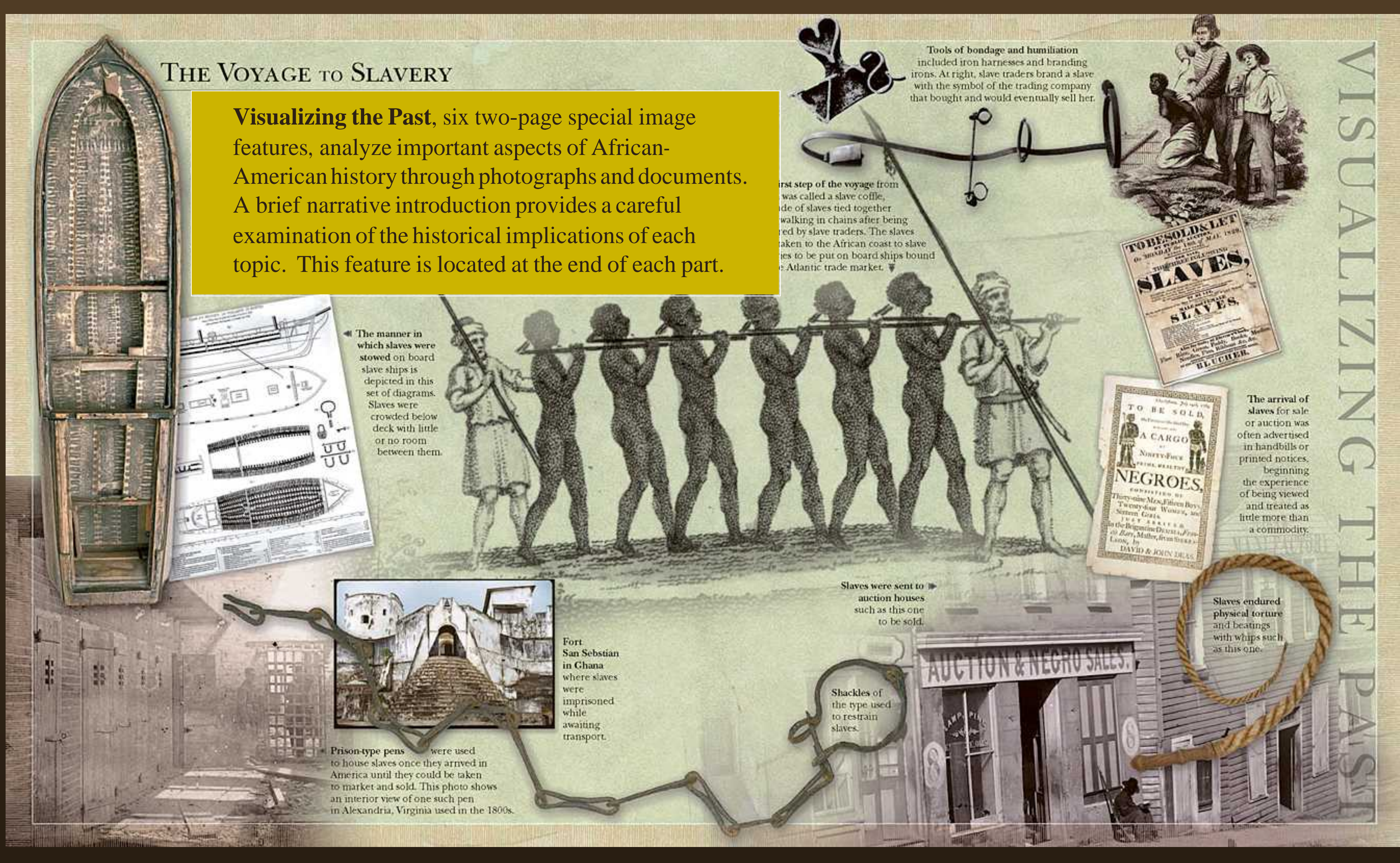

Visualizing the Past, six two-page special image features, analyze important aspects of African-American history through photographs and documents. A brief narrative introduction provides a careful examination of the historical implications of each topic. This feature is located at the end of each part.

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NEW to the fourth edition, **Interpreting the Past** is an exciting feature that includes brief primary source excerpts and visual documents on an engaging topic and provides critical thinking questions for students to analyze the connections between the historical sources in providing understanding of the topic. These six new spreads follow the *Visualizing the Past* features at the end of each part.

INTERPRETING THE PAST

The civil rights movement has been called America's Second Reconstruction because it fulfilled many of the promises made to African Americans in the aftermath of the Civil War. A long time in coming, the civil rights movement was characterized by both "top-down" administrative changes in the structure and practice of American government as well as the committed actions of a grassroots activist movement.

How did these two forces work together to effect change, and did one influence the outcome more than the other?

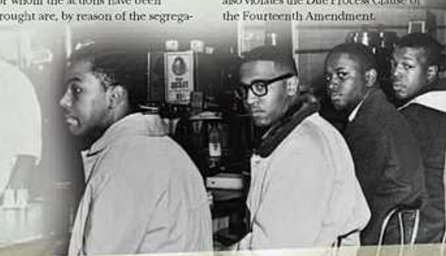
ness in a law school." In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* . . . the Court, in requiring that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students, again resorted to intangible considerations: ". . . his abil-

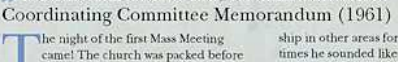
against the Negro plaintiffs:

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it

authority. Any language in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.





SOURCE: Charles Sherrod, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Memorandum (1961)

The night of the first Mass Meeting came! The church was packed before eight o'clock. People were everywhere, in the aisles, sitting and standing in the choir stands, hanging over the railing of the balcony upstairs, sitting in trees outside near windows, and about twenty or thirty ministers sat on the pulpit in chairs and on the floor side by side. There was no bickering. Soon a young doctor of the community took charge of the gathering, leading in the freedom songs which have grown out of the student movement during the last two years. Petitions were laid before Almighty God by one of the ministers and a challenge was directed to the assembly by the young doctor. Then arose a tall, silver-haired, outspoken veteran of the struggle. He spoke [in a] slow and determined [manner]. He referred to attempts last year to unify the community in protest against literary abuse of black men in the local paper and filled in with vivid detail the developments to the date of the Mass Meeting. Appearing also on the program was the indefatigable, only, local Negro lawyer, C. B. King. He stood flatfooted and thundered with his explosively deep voice, striking at both the inaction of the church and its hypocrisy. He also condemned local leadership in other areas for procrastination. At times he sounded like the prophet of doom but before he had finished, in his highly polished speech, he declared that our only hope was unity. This had been the real reason for the Mass Meeting-to weld the community into one bond of reason and emotion. The force to do this was generated by accounts of the released who individually described the physical situation and mental state of each, in jail.

When the last speaker among the students, Bertha Gober, had finished, there was nothing left to say. Tears filled the eyes of hard, grown men who had known personally and seen with their own eyes merciless atrocities committed by small men without conscience. As Bertha, with her small frame and baby voice told of spending Thanksgiving in jail along with other physical inconveniences, there was not a dry eye to be found. And when we rose to sing "We Shall Overcome," nobody could imagine what kept the top of the church on four corners. It was as if everyone had been lifted up on high and had been granted voices to sing with the celestial chorus in another time and in another place.

SOURCE: The Civil Rights Act of 1964

TITLE II

Injunctive Relief Against Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation

SEC. 201. (A) All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.

(B) Each of the following establishments which serves the public is a place of public accommodation within the meaning of this title if its operations affect commerce, or if discrimination or segregation by it is supported by State action:

(1) any inn, motel, or other establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, other than an establishment located within a building which contains not more than five rooms for rent or hire and which is actually occupied by the proprietor of such establishment as his residence;

(2) any restaurant, cafeteria, lunch room, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other activity principally engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises. . . .

(3) any motion picture house, theater, concert hall, sports arena, stadium, or other place of exhibition or entertainment. . . .

(D) Discrimination or segregation by an establishment is supported by State action within the meaning of this title if such discrimination or segregation (1) is carried on under color of any law, statute, ordinance, or regulation; or (2) is carried on under color of any custom or usage required or enforced by officials of the State or political subdivision thereof. . . .

SEC. 202. All persons shall be entitled to be free, at any establishment or place, from discrimination or segregation of any kind on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin, if such discrimination or segregation is or purports to be required by any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, rule, or order of a State or any agency or political subdivision thereof. . . .

SEC. 206. (A) Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that any person or group of persons is engaged in a pattern of practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any of the rights secured by this title, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in the appropriate district court of the United States by filing with it a complaint . . . requesting such preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order or other order against the person or persons responsible for such pattern or practice, as he deems necessary to insure the full enjoyment of the rights herein described.

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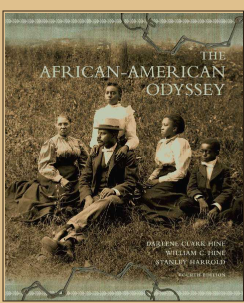

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