The African-American Odyssey
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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.
Part-opening timelines thematically organize and summarize key events in African-American history to be discussed in the chapters that follow and provide a reference to the many noteworthy individuals who will be introduced within the part.
Each chapter opens with a provocative image that gives students a visual introduction to the chapter content and chapter opening questions that provide an inquiry-based approach that encourages students to think about the content they are about to read.
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Compelling quotations introduce each chapter and set the stage for the events that unfold within the chapter.

The Expansion of Slavery

Ellis Whittier's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 made the cultivation of cotton unprofitable on the North American mainland. It was the key to rapid and extensive expansion of slavery from the Atlantic coast to Texas by 1860, consuming about 30% of the native American population. By 1861 it had crossed Alabama and reached Mississippi, Louisiana, and parts of Texas. It then expanded again into Arkansas, Florida, and eastern Texas (see Map 6-1). Emancipated 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 African Americans—some whom white planters had imported in the past. In 1835 and 1836, the U.S. Army forced the Cherokee, Chickamaugas, and Creeks from their ancestral lands to Indian Territories in what is now Oklahoma. Many Indians died during this forced migration, and the Cherokees remember it as one of the worst days of their history. The Cherokees were the first Americans to be removed from their homeland and forced to relocate to Indian Territories in what is now Oklahoma. Many Indians died during the forced migration, and the Cherokees remember it as one of the worst days of their history.

Solomon Northup, a free black man, had been kidnapped into slavery during the 1840s. After he was emancipated, he finally escaped in this passage. He identifies the central reality of slavery. It was not that some masters failed to provide clothes, with adequate food, clothing, and shelter, while others did. Nor was it that some masters treated their slaves harshly while others did not. The central reality of slavery was that it gave masters absolute power over their slaves. The suffering of African Americans to slavery were not caused by choices as an unwise or foolish 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 end of the Civil War in 1866. As we have indicated in previous chapters, the expansion of slavery, the Civil War, and the reconstruction period had a profound impact on African Americans.

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.

Profile

Solomon Northup

Solomon Northup was a free black man when he was kidnapped into slavery during the 1840s. After he was emancipated, he finally escaped.

Northup was forced to work on a cotton plantation and eventually in Louisiana's Red River region. He wrote about his experiences in a book called "Twelve Years a Slave," which was published in 1861.

Northup had to deal with a series of financial matters. He had little money to pay off his debts and was forced to work to support his family and pay for his education. He was eventually able to save enough money to purchase a farm for his family in Clinton, New York, where he died in 1896.
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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.

**Map 9-1: Cotton Production in the South, 1820-1860**

This map shows the expansion of cotton production between 1820 and 1860 into Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and western Tennessee. It highlights the growth of cotton as a major crop in the South, illustrating how the region became increasingly dependent on slave labor for its economy.

**Table 6-1: U.S. Slave Population, 1820 and 1860**

This table compares the slave population in the United States in 1820 and 1860.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1820 Population</th>
<th>1860 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>417,113</td>
<td>1,504,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>92,580</td>
<td>1,242,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>110,571</td>
<td>340,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>610,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ownership of Slaves in the Old South**

Slaves held on plantations were usually divided as follows: 39 percent of all slaves were owned by one percent of the population. This pattern was repeated throughout the South. The wealthiest planters owned the most slaves, and those with the smallest farms owned the fewest.

**Map Questions**

1. Why did this pattern persist?
2. What factors contributed to the concentration of slaves in the hands of a few wealthy planters?
3. How did this system affect the lives of enslaved people?

**Tobacco in the South**

Tobacco was the most important crop in the South, providing income to many planters and contributing to the region's economic growth. The cultivation of tobacco required a significant investment in labor, and the crop was susceptible to diseases that could devastate entire fields. Despite these challenges, tobacco remained a staple of the Southern economy until the Civil War.
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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 5.2 SUGAR POPULATION, 1820–1860
Maps of the regions 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 5.3 AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, AND SLAVERY IN THE OLD SOUTH, 1860
Maps of the regions 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.

RICE
Unlike the cultivation of tobacco, which spread westward and southwest from Maryland and Virginia, rice production remained confined to the low country of the southeastern region. There vast plantations supported slave labor, capital investment, and resources or resources carefully measured for production. Although slaves enjoyed considerable freedom in how they performed their assigned duties, those who missed a day’s work risked losing their workdays. The often-frequent tornadoes caused damage to tobacco, sugar, rice, corn, and cotton.

SUGAR
Another important crop that grew in a warm, wet climate was sugar, which was cultivated on plantations along the Mississippi River in northern Louisiana. Commercial production of sugar cane did not begin in Louisiana until the 1830s. It required a warm climate, a long growing season, and a stable labor force. Slaves and free African Americans managed to work the sugar plantations and make sugar. By the 1850s, sugar production was expanding, and African Americans worked on the plantations.

COTTON
Although tobacco, rice, and sugar were economically significant, cotton was by far the South’s and the country's premier crop. Cotton required a warm climate, a long growing season, and a stable labor force. Slaves worked on the cotton plantations, and the cotton gin, invented by Eli Whitney, made cotton production efficient. The cotton gin allowed enslaved African Americans to process large amounts of cotton, which was then shipped to the North and sold as raw cotton. This cotton was then processed into finished cotton goods, which were exported to Europe and elsewhere.
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No other text provides the wealth and variety of compelling images chronicling the African-American experience in a chronological, historical context for students.
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House Servants and Skilled Slaves

About 75 percent of the slave workforce in the slave-owning South consisted of field hands, but because masters wanted to make their plantation as self-sufficient as possible, they employed some slaves as house servants and skilled craftsmen. Slaves who did not work in the field labor were on elite. Those who performed domestic duties, drove carriages, or learned a craft considered themselves privileged. However, they were also subjected to the same discipline.

House slaves worked as cooks, maids, butlers, nurses, and gardeners. Their work was less physically demanding than field work, and they often received better food and clothing. Nevertheless, mistresses’ kitchens were often small and dirty, and bathroom space was limited. House slaves’ jobs were more varied, and their premises depended on field hands’ or other slaves’ performance. Skilled slaves tended to be more secure than house slaves, as they had more contact with black leaders. Many slaves were knowledgeable about the plantation’s needs. For example, skilled slaves knew when to plant crops or when to harvest them. Skilled slaves were often given more responsibility than field slaves.

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Urban and Industrial Slavery

Most skilled slaves who lived in the South’s towns and cities, where they interacted with free black communities. Some of them worked as carpenters or blacksmiths, while others were gardeners or maids. Urban slaves worked in city or town markets, and their earnings were used to buy food, clothing, and other necessities.

By the early nineteenth century, the number of urban slaves in the South had increased significantly. A 1846 manuscript describes the experience of one African-American man who had lived in a large city. He notes that the streets were crowded with people, and that he had to run for his life to escape the violence. Despite these challenges, urban slaves were able to build their own communities and maintain their cultural traditions.

In conclusion, urban and industrial slavery played a significant role in the development of African-American society. It provided a blueprint for the future of African Americans in the United States, and it continues to be an important part of our history today.
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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.

**Punishment**
Those who used slave labor, whether on plantations, small farms, in urban areas, or in the mining of coal and iron, faced severe consequences if they tried to resist or escape. The threat of physical punishment, whether lashes, branding, or amputation, was a constant reminder of the power of the slave owner. The punishment was not only a means of control, but also a way to maintain the system of slavery. The fear of punishment was used to keep slaves in their place and to prevent them from thinking of escape. The example of Frederick Douglass, who escaped from slavery and became a prominent abolitionist, is a testament to the power of the written word. His story of escape and his advocacy for freedom continue to inspire generations today.

**Trade**
The expansion of the cotton industry in the South was closely tied to the domestic slave trade. The demand for cotton led to the growth of the South, and the South became dependent on the labor of slaves. The slave trade was not just a means of supplying labor, but also a source of profit. The profits from the sale of slaves were used to invest in the growth of the South, and to sustain the plantation system.

**Conclusion**
The African-American Odyssey is a fascinating journey through the history of African Americans. From the early days of slavery to the present day, the struggle for freedom and equality has been a constant theme. The voices of the enslaved and the free alike have been heard, and their stories have been documented. The African-American Odyssey is a testament to the resilience and strength of the African-American people, and a reminder of the struggle that continues to this day.
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 visitors, but most could not, and after the abolition of slavery in 1863, many African Americans met their new freedom scattered across the South looking for relatives from whom they had been separated before.

PROFILE

WILLIAM ELLISON

The life of William Ellison, who was born a slave in the Fairfield parish of South Carolina in 1794 and remained a slave after the War of 1812, offers a revealing example of the tenacity of African American slaves. He was described as being "a slender fellow, about 5 feet 4 inches tall, with a lean, sunburned face, and a ready smile." His master's name was William McCourt, and he was employed as a laborer. Ellison was known for his skill as a carpenter and for his ability to understand the needs of his master.

Ellison was able to read and write, which was unusual for a slave. He used these skills to help his master with his farm and household chores. Ellison was also a devout Christian, and he often attended church services with his master.

In 1812, Ellison was emancipated by his master, and he was able to begin a new life as a free man. He worked as a carpenter, a blacksmith, and a laborer, and he eventually became a successful entrepreneur. He owned a farm and a store, and he was able to support his family and provide for his children.

ELLIOT, William Ellison, a blacksmith and laborer, was born in 1794 in the Fairfield parish of South Carolina. He was the son of a slave mother and a white father. Ellison was emancipated by his master in 1812, and he was able to begin a new life as a free man. He worked as a carpenter, a blacksmith, and a laborer, and he eventually became a successful entrepreneur. He owned a farm and a store, and he was able to support his family and provide for his children.
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A Sharecroppers Describes a New Purchase

In 1865, at age 14, the writer of this piece, John Hope Franklin, describes how he came to own a sharecroppers' home on the African-American plantation where he lived.

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Sexual Exploitation

As with forced separations, masters' sexual exploitation of black women was rampant and common. Many masters and mistresses used their power to control and dominate their slave women. These relationships were not only exploitative but also often abusive and violent.

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Bret

The story of Bret, a young boy who was sold into slavery, provides insight into the harsh realities faced by African-American children during this time period.

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Steve African-American American to estimate the number of black slaves in the United States during the Civil War period. The number of slaves was estimated to be around 4 million, with the majority being African-American.

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Chapter 6

The Socialization of Slaves

African Americans had to acquire the skills needed to perform the chores and tasks that were expected of them. Told to hunt and gather wild food, to clear fields, and to help with farm chores, they developed their own ways of coping with the harsh realities of slavery. One</the end>
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CHAPTER 6

Religion
Along with family and social relations, religion helped African Americans cope with slavery. Many mastered
their slaves and learned to read and write. In New Orleans, Baltimore, and a few other locations, there were Roman Catholic churches, where slaves were often buried in Catholic cemeteries. In Maryland during the 1850s the
Church, an order of Roman Catholic priests and brothers, collectively owned approximately 300 slaves. By
the mid-nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of American slaves practiced Protestantism, but not identical, to
that of most white southerners. Both Baptists and Methodists congregations per
sisted in the South longer than they did in northern cities. The southern congregations usually had socially segregated seating, but black people and white people joined in community and church discipline. They shared commemoratives. Many masters denied for
necessity, country sponsored plantation churches for slaves, and white missionary organizations also sup
ported such churches.

In the plantation churches, where ministers told their black congregations that Christianity must be
treated with the utmost respect, some slaves continued to practice their own
African traditions, such as Voodoo, and incorporated these into their Christian worship.

The Character of Slavery and Slaves
For over a century, historians have debated the character of the slave system and the people held in bondage. During the 1830s, northern historians such as T. Phillips argued that slaves were not mere animals, but human beings who had been reduced to a state of servitude. Southern historians, such as J. F.Choate, believed that blacks were inherently inferior and incapable of self-government.

Other historians, however, have shown that slaves were capable of organizing and resisting their oppression. Some scholars have argued that slaves were able to maintain their own culture and traditions, even in the face of brutal treatment. Others have pointed to the role of the church in providing a source of comfort and hope for slaves.

The African-American Odyssey has been a constant theme in American history. From the first African-American communities in the South to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the African-American experience has been marked by struggle and resilience. The African-American Odyssey has been a journey of faith and resistance, of hope and despair, of triumph and tragedy. It is a story of the human spirit, of the power of the human will, and of the indomitable spirit of the African-American people.
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.

**RECOMMENDED READING**


**ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**SLAVERY AND ITS EXPANSION**

*Shirlese M. Eckert, Memory & Politics in American Intellectual and Political History, 1st Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).*


*Shirlese M. Eckert, Memory & Politics in American Intellectual and Political History, 1st Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).*

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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.
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.

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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 coming, the civil rights movement was characterized by both “top-down” administrative changes to the structure and practice of American government as well as the concerted actions of a grassroots activism movement.

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

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

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The riot of the last Mass Meeting ended. This has a sign that has before eight o’clock. People were everywhere in the streets and in leading to the shows, in every one of the first-class windows, and about twenty or thirty minutes on the people in the streets and on the force to ride. There was no disorder. Some young doctors of the community took charge of the people, leading to the free movement which was going on from the student movement toward the last two years. People were left and turned the street in to one of the main streets and a challenge said to the assembly by the young doctor. There was a tall, dark-shanked, easy-moving African of the struggle. He spoke of the work that he had seen and done in the work of closing down. He said, to the people that he had seen in the work of the Movement, that he had not seen and done, that the work had been done by the people. He said, to the people that he had seen, that the work had been done by the people, to the people that he had seen.

public opinion is the barometer of “es- pect but equal” to the place, separate educational facilities will be observed. This is where we hold that the “equal benefts” and others will ensure that the actions have been taken in a way to provide the propo-

sion (continued)
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Available Formats

Combined edition (Chapters 1-24)
  Volume I (Chapters 1-13)
  Volume II (Chapters 13-24)

Supplementary Package

For Instructors
  Instructor’s Resource Manual
  Test Item File
  Test Generator
  Overhead Transparencies
  Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM
  Myhistorylab website

For Students
  Study Guides (Volumes 1 and 2)
  Primary Sources in African-American History (Volumes 1 and 2)
  Exploring African-American History CD-ROM (bound into text)
  Myhistorylab Website
  Research Navigator