

4.13 The Society of the South in the Early Republic

Theme: Geography and the Environment

Learning Objective 4. M: Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of the South from 1800 to 1848.

King Cotton

KC-4.2.III.C: Southern business leaders continued to rely on the production and export of traditional agricultural staples, contributing to the growth of a distinctive Southern regional identity.

- Southern regional identity and economy
 - Agriculture
 - Rice, tobacco still grown
 - _____ large cities, economies centered on distribution of agricultural products and slave auctions
 - King Cotton
 - Made up $\frac{2}{3}$ of US exports, Britain
 - Profits encourage more land and more slavery

Slavery in Southern Society

KC-4.3.II.B.ii: In the South, although the majority of Southerners owned no slaves, most leaders argued that slavery was part of the Southern way of life.

- Prevalence of “peculiar institution”
 - From _____ in 1800 to _____ 1860
 - _____ despite barriers to normal family life
- Enslavers
 - _____ of population did not practice slavery
 - Most enslavers had less than _____ people in bondage
 - Classes that practiced slavery were wealthiest and most influential
 - _____ support slavery in hopes of one day attaining wealth

Expansion West

KC-4.3.II.A: As overcultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders began relocating their plantations to more fertile lands west of the Appalachians, where the institution of slavery continued to grow.

- Southerners move west
 - _____ of cotton and pursuit of profits
 - Bound by _____ line
 - By 1845, more southwestern territory added to the Union
 - _____, _____
 - _____ grows
 - Enslavers of upper south sell bondsmen south and southwest

Recap

- Slavery became more ingrained into Southern society in the antebellum period
- The South relied heavily on agriculture and cotton plantation
- As southern farmers moved west they took the institution with them

Part II

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following in AT LEAST three sentences.

1. Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of the South from 1800 to 1848.

George Fitzhugh Argues that Slavery is Better than Liberty and Equality, 1854

Retrieved from: <http://www.americanvawp.com/reader/the-cotton-revolution/george-fitzhugh-argues-that-slavery-is-better-than-liberty-and-equality-1854/>

Liberty and equality are new things under the sun. The free states of antiquity abounded with slaves. The feudal system that supplanted Roman institutions changed the form of slavery, but brought with it neither liberty nor equality. France and the Northern States of our Union have alone fully and fairly tried the experiment of a social organization founded upon universal liberty and equality of rights. England has only approximated to this condition in her commercial and manufacturing cities. The examples of small communities in Europe are not fit exponents of the working of the system. In France and in our Northern States the experiment has already failed... we have conclusive proof that liberty and equality have not conduced to enhance the comfort or the happiness of the people. Crime and pauperism have increased. Riots, trades unions, strikes for higher wages, discontent breaking out into revolution, are things of daily occurrence, and show that the poor see and feel quite as clearly as the philosophers, that their condition is far worse under the new than under the old order of things....

The statistics of France, England and America show that pauperism and crime advance pari passu with liberty and equality. How can it be otherwise, when all society is combined to oppress the poor and weak minded? The rich man, however good he may be, employs the laborer who will work for the least wages. If he be a good man, his punctuality enables him to cheapen the wages of the poor man. The poor war with one another in the race of competition, in order to get employment, by underbidding; for laborers are more abundant than employers. Population increases faster than capital. Look to the situation of woman when she is thrown into this war of competition, and has to support herself by her daily wages. For the same or equally valuable services she gets not half the pay that man does, simply because the modesty of her sex prevents her from resorting to all the arts and means of competition which men employ. He who would emancipate woman, unless he could make her as coarse and strong in mind and body as man, would be her worst enemy; her subservience to and dependence on man, is necessary to her very existence. She is not a soldier fitted to enlist in the war of free competition. We do not set children and women free because they are not capable of taking care of themselves, not equal to the constant struggle of society. To set them free would be to give the lamb to the wolf to take care of. Society would quickly devour them. If the children of ten years of age were remitted to all the rights of person and property which men enjoy, all can perceive how soon ruin and penury would overtake them. But half of mankind are but grown-up children, and liberty is as fatal to them as it would be to children...

Domestic slavery in the Southern States has produced the same results in elevating the character of the master that it did in Greece and Rome. He is lofty and independent in his sentiments, generous, affectionate, brave and eloquent; he is superior to the Northerner, in every thing but the arts of thrift...

But the chief and far most important enquiry is, how does slavery affect the condition of the slave? One of the wildest sects of Communists in France proposes not only to hold all property in common, but to divide the profits not according to each mans in-put and labor but according to each mans wants. Now this is precisely the system of domestic slavery with us. We provide for each slave, in old age and in infancy, in sickness and in health, not according to his labor, but according to his wants. The masters wants are most costly and refined, and he therefore gets a larger share of the profits. A Southern farm is the beau ideal of Communism; it is a joint concern, in which the slave consumes more than the master, of the coarse products, and is far happier, because although the concern may fail, he is always sure of a support; he is only transferred to another master to participate in the profits of another concern...

There is no rivalry, no competition to get employment among slaves, as among free laborers. Nor is there a war between master and slave. The masters interest prevents his reducing the slaves allowance or wages in infancy or sickness, for he might lose the slave by so doing. His feeling for his slave never permits him to stint him in old age. The slaves are all well fed, well clad, have plenty of fuel, and are happy. They have no dread of the future no fear of want. A state of dependence is the only condition in which reciprocal affection can exist among human beings the only situation in which the war of competition ceases, and peace, amity and good will arise....

George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (Richmond: 1854), 226, 230-231, 244-246.

#41 - 4.13 The Society of the South in the Early Republic
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4. Use the document to support the thesis: "The new culture that developed from 1800-1848 was significantly different from the one in the period 1754-1800."

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Mary Polk Branch remembers plantation life, 1912

Retrieved from: <http://www.americanvawp.com/reader/the-cotton-revolution/mary-polk-branch-remembers-plantation-life-1912/>

In the “quarters,” as the negro cabins were called, there was usually a band, which played at night for the “white folks” to dance. “Old Master” always led off in the “Virginia Reel.” Negroes are always fond of music, and as they would play “Jim Crack Corn, I Don’t Care,” or “Run, N----- Run,” or “The Patrolers Will Catch You,” or some other especial favorite, they would become wildly excited and beat the tambourines over their heads.

Our nurses we always called “Mammy,” and it was not considered good manners to address any old negro man or woman otherwise than as “uncle” or “aunt,” adding the name whatever that might be – the surname was always the master’s. We were taught to treat them with respect.

There was such a kindly feeling on both sides between the owners and their slaves – inherited kindly feelings. How could it be otherwise? Many were descendants of those who had served in the same family for generations – for instance, the nurse who nursed my children was the daughter of my nurse, and her grandmother had nursed my mother. My maid, Virginia (I can not recall the time when she was not my maid) was a very handsome young mulatto to whom I was especially attached. When she was married in her white dress and long veil flowing to her feet, the ceremony was performed in our back parlor, and Bishop Otey, the first bishop of Tennessee, officiated.

How great the pride the negroes felt in the wealth and importance of their owners, and interest indeed in all of their affairs, amusingly so, sometimes! I recall an old woman, coal black, a red bandanna handkerchief tied over her kinky locks, and great dignity of manner, she said to me: “Young missis should marry her cousin, Marse Tom, and keep our family likeness in our family.”

Indeed, ours was a gay and free-from-care life. I can recall delightful summers at Old Point Comfort, and the Greenbrier White, in Virginia – winters in which I journeyed from my father’s plantation, near Helena, Arkansas, to New Orleans...

An innocent and ideal life!

Mary Polk Branch, *Memoirs of a Southern Woman “Within the Lines,”* and a Geneological Record (Chicago: Joseph G. Branch, 1912)

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