

THE ANTEBELLUM ERA



CHAPTER

PREVIEW

PEOPLE: Thomas Cooper, John C. Calhoun, William Gilmore Simms, Washington Allston, William Ellison, William Gregg, Dave, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Robert Y. Hayne, James Hamilton Jr., James L. Petigru, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Sumner, Preston Brooks, Dred and Harriet Scott, John Brown, Robert E. Lee

PLACES: Abbeville; York; Gaffney; Stateburg; Graniteville; Pottersville; Harpers Ferry, Virginia

Let me tell you a love story. Margaret Bettingall and Adam Tunno, a Charleston couple, lived in a mansion on East Bay Street from 1790 until Adam's death in 1831. Adam was a Scotsman who grew wealthy as a wine dealer. Adam and Margaret's love produced a daughter, Barbara. Adam treated both Barbara and Hagar—Margaret's daughter from an earlier marriage—with affection. Margaret and both daughters inherited substantial wealth at Adam's death.

So far—a normal story of a loving couple. What is remarkable is that Margaret was a *mulatto* (a person of mixed black and white ancestry). Her black heritage was easily recognizable, yet she functioned within Charleston society and the elite St. Philip's Church community. Interracial marriage was not illegal at the time, just very uncommon. Whether they ever formally married is unclear.

Barbara and Hagar both married into the free black community and prospered as businesswomen with connections to powerful white men. Both became slave owners. Barbara became involved in a famous lawsuit. She loaned money to a white planter to buy a plantation. He didn't repay and she sued. As a woman of color, it was not surprising that she lost the suit. But she won her case on appeal and got her money. Her victory was a tiny fragment of justice within a system built on injustice for nonwhites.



Race relations were complicated. The state's economy and social structure were built on the institution of slavery and the suppression of people of color. Yet, here is this love story—and a black woman's victory in court over a prominent white man.

TERMS: yeoman farmer, camp meeting, blue laws, states' rights, mill village, nationalism, internal improvements, sectionalism, protective tariff, Missouri Compromise, abolitionist, nullify, secession, manifest destiny, Compromise of 1850, Fugitive Slave Act, fire-eaters, Kansas-Nebraska Act

Opposite page, above: This view of East Battery Street and the busy Charleston harbor was painted by S. Bernard in the 1830s. **Above:** The Hampton-Preston Mansion in Columbia was completed in 1818. **Left:** The wealth of South Carolina was built on the labor of slaves. This cabin is at Magnolia Plantation.



SIGNS of the TIMES

EXPANSION OF THE U.S.

Between 1845 and 1853, the United States achieved its “manifest destiny.” With the addition of Texas (1845), the Oregon Territory (1846), the Mexican Cession (1848), and the Gadsden Purchase (1853), the United States controlled all land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. During this period, sixteen states were added to the Union, beginning with Louisiana in 1812 and ending with Oregon in 1859.

INDIAN RELATIONS

In 1816, the Cherokee signed a treaty with the United States giving up the westernmost corner of South Carolina to the state. President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830. Some Native Americans moved west of the Mississippi River peacefully; U.S. troops forced most of the Cherokee on the “Trail of Tears” to Oklahoma.

RELIGION

Reform Judaism, one of the major branches of the Jewish faith, was formed by the Beth Elohim congregation in Charleston in 1824. The Methodist Church split into separate northern and southern churches in 1844 over slavery. Baptists split in 1845.

Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) in 1830. Mormons suffered several forced moves and the murder of Joseph Smith before finally settling in Utah.

LITERATURE

Edgar Allan Poe served a year of duty at Fort Moultrie. His later short story, “The Gold Bug,” was set on Sullivan’s Island. South Carolinian William Gilmore Simms wrote several popular historical novels. Other popular books were *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* (1812); Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818); and Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831). Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) was one of the best-selling books in American history and an effective resource for the antislavery cause.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

In 1818, the *Savannah* became the first steam-powered ship to cross the Atlantic. Cyrus McCormick invented a mechanical reaper for harvesting grains in 1831. The world’s longest railroad, from Charleston to Hamburg, was completed in 1833. Samuel F. B. Morse first demonstrated a practical telegraph system in 1844. Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859.

FIGURE 11

Timeline: 1810 to 1860



<p>1835 A Charleston mob attacked the post office to halt abolitionist pamphlet distribution</p> <p>1833 Railroad completed from Charleston to Hamburg</p> <p>1832 South Carolina declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 null and void</p> <p>1828 John C. Calhoun's <i>Exposition and Protest</i> published anonymously</p> <p>1822 Denmark Vesey slave revolt plot in Charleston</p> <p>1820 Free black persons were forbidden entry into the state</p>	<p>1848 Columbia and Charleston connected by telegraph</p> <p>1837 College of Charleston became first city-funded college in America</p> <p>1839 Erskine College founded</p>	<p>1850 John C. Calhoun died</p> <p>1851 Cornerstone of present State House laid</p> <p>1856 Columbia hosted the first South Carolina State Fair</p> <p>1858 Senator James H. Hammond declared to the Senate that "Cotton is king!"</p>
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1810 1815 1820 1825 1830 1835 1840 1845 1850 1855 1860

<p>1812 U.S. declared war against Great Britain</p> <p>1814 British troops captured Washington, DC, burned Capitol and White House</p> <p>1815 Andrew Jackson defeated British at New Orleans</p> <p>British defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in Belgium</p> <p>1820 The Missouri Compromise admitted Missouri as a slave state, Maine as a free state</p>	<p>1819 Spain ceded Florida to the United States</p> <p>1824 Now totally deaf, Beethoven composed his <i>Symphony No. 9</i></p> <p>1830 Hayne-Webster debate in the U.S. Senate</p> <p>1831 Nat Turner slave revolt in Virginia</p>	<p>1836 Texas gained independence from Mexico</p> <p>1845 First baseball game on record played in Hoboken, NJ</p> <p>1847 The Palmetto Regiment lost about half its men in the Mexican War</p> <p>1850 Nashville Convention met to oppose Compromise of 1850</p> <p>1833 Slavery abolished in the British Empire</p>	<p>1859 John Brown's raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia</p> <p>1857 <i>Dred Scott</i> decision</p> <p>1856 Preston Brooks attacked Charles Sumner in the U.S. Senate</p> <p>1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act</p>
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The Economy and Everyday Life

DID YOU KNOW?

Arthur and Edward Middleton came to Carolina in the first few years of the colony and obtained large land grants. By 1860, Middleton descendants owned a network of 28 plantations in the state, totaling 63,000 acres of land and about 3,500 slaves.

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- the ups and downs of cotton production in the antebellum era;
- the classes of people in antebellum South Carolina;
- the importance of religion and the impact of the Second Great Awakening;
- developments in literature, the arts, science, and education;
- improvements in transportation and industry;
- terms: **yeoman farmer, camp meeting, blue laws, states' rights, mill village.**



The planter class of South Carolina lived in large, well-furnished houses like the Bratton Plantation House (above and opposite page, above), built in 1823. You can visit it at Historic Brattonsville.

The wealth of South Carolina in

the nineteenth century depended upon two staple crops grown on large plantations and exported to other states or overseas. Rice was still important, but the new staple crop, cotton, soon surpassed it as the state's main producer of wealth. Cotton could be grown on almost any land, and the cultivation of cotton took over agriculture in the Upcountry. Food crops and livestock were raised, but only for local use.

Cotton production and income from cotton boomed in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The number of cotton gins multiplied and their efficiency improved from hand-cranked to steam-powered machines within a few decades. Gin efficiency was needed to match the demand of rapidly developing *textile* (cloth) industries in England and New England.



Classes in Antebellum South Carolina

The cotton boom affected every class of Carolinians. The planters prospered; the slaves survived a brutal forced-labor system; the “middle class” of landholding farmers and most town dwellers made an adequate living; but the “poor white class” barely hung on at the fringes of society.

The Planter Class

The planter class was composed of families who owned several hundred acres of land and at least twenty slaves. If you were a planter, you were likely to prosper. You had a large house, wore nice clothes, ate well, and owned horses to ride. You might get an adequate or even an excellent education. With a gristmill, sawmill, and blacksmith shop manned by slaves on your plantation, you ran a fairly complex business. Your prosperity was based on the labor of those twenty, fifty, or three hundred slaves.

South Carolina in the antebellum era was a deferential society. The people of each class were expected to show proper *deference* (respect) to their “betters” in the class above them. At the top of the social ladder, you could expect members of all other classes to defer to you in social and business dealings. The code of honor was important to the upper crust. If your honor as a gentleman were questioned by your social equal, you might challenge him to a *duel* (a fight with weapons between two people, following strict rules). South Carolina recorded more duels than most states.

HAVE YOU SEEN...

the historic homes in Beaufort? Beaufort's wealth was built on Sea Island cotton and rice. Most of its mansions survived the Civil War. Houses among live oaks draped with Spanish moss make a picturesque sight.





The Slave Class

Slaves belonged to a rapidly growing class as the Cotton Kingdom expanded. Many slaves were imported from farther north, especially Virginia. Nearly forty thousand slaves from Africa passed through Sullivan's Island in the four years before Congress shut down the trade for good in 1808. If you were one of these forty thousand, you likely walked in chains to an Upcountry plantation. Your sweat and labor produced the white fiber that made your owner rich. You made the tools, wove the baskets, sewed the clothes, and cooked the food—your African influence creating soul food.

Creating a family was of great importance to you as a slave. Your well-being and status within the slave community depended on the productivity of your entire family. More importantly, the family provided the emotional shelter you would need to survive the cruel and dehumanizing qualities of slavery. Slavery was built on a foundation of violence or threat of violence. You were not paid to work, so your reason to work was fear of physical punishment. The family was your refuge and comfort. Your family might



Top: Not all slaves worked on plantations. The slaves of the Rhett-Aiken House in Charleston lived in the upper level of this wing at the back of the house. **Above and right:** Brick slave cabins like this one at Historic Brattonsville were unusual and probably reserved for house servants. Field hands lived in wooden cabins with dirt floors.





come to feel like its work had earned a rightful ownership to part of the land. Your wedding probably consisted of jumping over a broomstick with your mate, while your friends watched and celebrated with you, though legally the marriage was not recognized. The shadow always looming over the slave family was the fear that children or spouse could be taken suddenly and sold to another planter hundreds of miles away, never to be seen again.

Your religion was, like your family, a refuge and comfort. In the nineteenth century, most slave owners actively tried to convert their slaves to Christianity. They thought it would keep slaves more contented, and would instill the biblical teaching that slaves should obey their masters. You, as a slave, would more likely be drawn to the promise of Moses leading the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. In the master's church, you heard many sermons on the obedience theme. In secret services in the woods with fellow slaves, you talked a lot about deliverance. And you sang and danced and dreamed of a better tomorrow—either in this life or the next.

The White “Middle Class”

Between the planter aristocracy and the black slaves were the majority of whites who generally fit into two broad groups, the “middle class” and the “poor whites.” The middle class consisted of artisans and mechanics in the towns and **yeoman farmers** (small landowning farmers) in the rural

Above: Field hands prepare for their day's work at the Hopkinson Plantation on Edisto Island. During the harvest, they would work from dawn until dusk.

DID YOU KNOW?

Interviews in the 1930s with former slaves recorded that many reported being treated like livestock. Historian Mia Bay summarizes their memories of “being fed like pigs, bred like dogs, sold like horses, driven like cattle, worked like dogs, and beaten like mules.”



Above: In the Upcountry, many yeoman farmers still lived in log houses, though larger than log cabins, and with a second story. This house at Kings Mountain State Park dates to the 1820s.

Opposite page, above: Slave owners encouraged their slaves to go to church, where the virtue of obedience was preached. The Beaufort Baptist Church had more than 3,500 slave parishioners.

Opposite page, below: During the Second Great Awakening, camp meetings were a popular way to bring religion to rural areas where churches were scarce.

areas. If you were a yeoman farmer, your own farm produced most of your necessities. You did not live in great comfort, but neither were you threatened with starvation. You owned some farm animals, tools, and a barn or a couple of sheds. Your house was small, perhaps two rooms with a hallway between, with a fireplace in each room. A front porch gave you more living space. You grew your own food—corn, beans, okra, and chickens and pigs. But you devoted most of your land to growing cotton. You were selling cotton to *factors* (brokers) in Charleston, who sold it to buyers in England and New England. You were part of a world market that sometimes paid you well and sometimes did not—and you had no control over it.

Your life, like the slaves' lives, was one of hard work. Farm work was heavier during planting and harvesting seasons, but there was plenty of work year-round: milking cows twice a day, feeding animals, repairing tools and equipment, drying vegetables and fruits, and salting and smoking meats. Chopping cotton—cutting out weeds and excess cotton plants with a hoe—had to be done in the heat of summer.

Picking cotton in the fall was perhaps the most backbreaking work of all. Stooping to reach the low-growing plants and dragging the heavy bag full of cotton strained the back. Cotton bolls had sharp spines that pricked your hands, adding to the pain of the experience.

A successful crop year might enable you to buy a slave or two. The slaves would add to your farm's productivity, but would not reduce your work. If you were a female, the slaves might relieve you of some field work and allow you more time to make and repair clothes; prepare food; and tend the garden, orchard, and animals. Operating a farm was a family affair. You prized your children not only as objects of love, but also as additional workers. And they took care of you when you grew old or became disabled.

The "Poor White Class"

Whites who were not members of the planter aristocracy or the middle class could be categorized as poor whites. As a member of this class, you worked for wages on someone else's farm or in a *menial* (lowly) job in town. Your wages were low; after all, you were competing with unpaid slave labor. You lived in a shack that was no better than a slave cottage, and sometimes worse.

Widows and the children of widows were often the poorest of the poor. As a widow without property, you would have to take whatever scraps of

work you were offered, at whatever wage. You and your children might have to hope for charity. Charleston, Beaufort, and Georgetown had several social service associations to help the poor.

Religion

All classes were affected by more than just cotton. In the early nineteenth century, a religious revival movement called the Second Great Awakening swept across the nation like wildfire. All denominations benefited, but the Methodists and Baptists grew the most. Slaves were attracted to the emotion-filled religious services and were encouraged by their owners to become members. The Beaufort Baptist Church, for example, by the 1850s had 166 white and 3,557 slave members. The message of white pastors to their mixed audience was this: slaves, obey your masters; masters, be kind to your slaves. The institution of slavery was not to be questioned.

One of the long-lasting customs emerging from the Second Great Awakening for white believers was the annual **camp meeting**. Hundreds gathered for several days, lived in tents or small shacks on camp meeting grounds, and participated in multiple worship services. Ministers preached emotional sermons designed to convert the wicked and revive the faith of those whose enthusiasm had cooled. Camp meetings were great social experiences for isolated rural dwellers, young and old. Many marriages, as well as many broken hearts, no doubt, came out of camp meetings.



The Second Great Awakening brought **blue laws** (regulations enacted by state and local governments to restrict activities on Sunday), many of which still exist. Buying and selling, playing games, engaging in sports, and doing nonessential work on Sunday were made illegal.

The major religious denominations operating in South Carolina were national organizations with membership in all sections of the country. In the 1840s, first the Methodist Church, then the Baptist Church, split into southern and northern churches over the issue of slavery. During the 1850s, several other major churches did the same. This was bad news for the unity of the nation.



Above: South Carolina's best-known writer of the antebellum era was William Gilmore Simms. Edgar Allan Poe called him the best novelist that America had ever produced.

Literature, the Arts, and Science

As the South, including South Carolina, isolated itself more and more from the rest of the nation, its intellectual leaders became more outspoken in their defense of southern institutions and customs. Thomas Cooper, president of the College of South Carolina in Columbia, was a leading writer, along with John C. Calhoun, for the causes of slavery and **states' rights** (the belief that the rights and powers of the states are more important than the rights and powers of the federal government). William Gilmore Simms was probably the state's best-known author nationally. Famous for his historical romance novels about the colonial era and the American Revolution, he also wrote a history of South Carolina for use in schools in 1840. Simms and other Charleston writers of the time, including poets Paul Hamilton Hayne, Henry Timrod, and William J. Grayson, were defenders of slavery and the South's rural way of life.

South Carolina produced some great artists and architects in the antebellum era, but most of them left the state to earn a better living. Washington Allston of the famous rice planters of Waccamaw Neck in Georgetown District became one of the great American painters. He left the state as a young man and spent most of his artistic career in Europe and Massachusetts, painting romantic landscapes and seascapes. English-born Thomas Sully spent several formative years in Charleston, but most of his extraordinary career, which included portraits of Queen Victoria and Abraham Lincoln, was spent in Europe and Philadelphia.

Robert Mills became a nationally known architect. Born in Charleston, he designed many public buildings and projects in South Carolina. He was important in the growing popularity of Greek Revival architecture, a style that imitated the architecture of ancient Greece. His buildings included sixteen county courthouses, twelve jails, and many churches. He designed Charleston's Fireproof Building, and Columbia's Ainsley Hall Mansion (commonly called the Robert Mills House) and South Carolina Lunatic Asy-



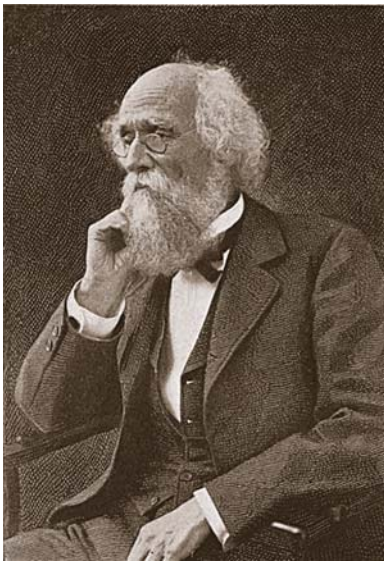
lum. He also designed several canals, including one around the rapids in Columbia. In 1830, he moved to Washington, DC, where he had a distinguished career designing public buildings and establishing a style for federal buildings. His creations include the Treasury Building, the Patent Office, and the Washington Monument.

The painter Charles Fraser and the painter/playwright John Blake White chose to make their careers in Charleston. Fraser is considered a master of miniature portraits. White specialized in painting large, dramatic scenes from the American Revolution. Four of White's paintings are on display in the U.S. Capitol. He also painted portraits of prominent Carolinians, including John C. Calhoun and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.

Scientists were exceptions to the isolation of South Carolina intellectuals. Several were well respected in their fields and maintained wide connections to the international science community. Perhaps most famous were John and Joseph LeConte of South Carolina College. John was a chemist; Joseph was a geologist. Both were outstanding teachers and wrote highly respected scientific books, bringing great distinction to the college. John Bachman, a Lutheran minister, was an intellectual leader and *naturalist* (a person who studies plants and animals, often as an amateur) in Charleston. During the



Top: The Ainsley Hall House in Columbia was designed by Robert Mills, and is now called the Robert Mills House. **Above:** Four of John Blake White's historical paintings hang in the U.S. Capitol. This one depicts *General Marion Inviting a British Officer to Share His Meal*.



Top: The Old Horseshoe of South Carolina College is now the heart of the campus of the University of South Carolina. Above: Geologist Joseph LeConte, along with his brother John, a chemist and physicist, were among the best-known members of the South Carolina College faculty. After the Civil War, both brothers moved to California, where they served on the faculty of the new University of California.

1830s, he wrote the scientific descriptions for John James Audubon's beautiful bird paintings. Bachman also debated other scientists about the nature of race. Some argued that different races were different species. Bachman said that all humans were of one species. Even so, he strongly defended slavery.

Education

Education in the antebellum era continued to be largely a family matter. The state government did not accept responsibility for educating children. Private academies were the norm. There were over two hundred of them in South Carolina by 1860, and some of them were excellent. Early in the century, Dr. Moses Waddell's Willington Academy near Abbeville—or after 1854, Kings Mountain Military Academy in York—could prepare young males for South Carolina College, Yale, Princeton, or even an English university. Barhamville Academy near Columbia, Limestone Springs Academy in Gaffney, or Madame Talvandé's French School for Young Ladies in Charleston could prepare young females in music, languages, and the arts. Learning these skills would make them more delightful companions for planters, lawyers, or businessmen.

Most white families could not afford the private academies; therefore, fewer than half the white children in South Carolina in this era received even an elementary education. Charleston was an exception. By the 1850s, the city provided schools that were good and popular with all classes of white citizens.

South Carolina's efforts in higher education were more vigorous and successful than at lower levels. Though the state's white residents were below average in literacy, a higher percentage of its population got a college education than in most states. South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina), chartered in 1803, provided a good education within the state for a leadership class. The College of Charleston was mainly a

preparatory school from 1790 until 1837. Then it became a city college with a liberal arts curriculum. It enjoyed a good local reputation.

Near the end of the antebellum era, several religious denominations founded colleges. In the early years, many were little better than secondary schools. The Associate Reformed Presbyterians established Erskine College in Due West in 1839. In the 1850s, the Methodists founded Wofford College in Spartanburg for males and Columbia Female College (later simply Columbia College) in the capital city. The Baptists created Furman College in Greenville for males and Greenville Female Baptist College (later merged with Furman). The Lutherans formed Newberry College for males in Newberry.

The Ups and Downs of Cotton

In the 1820s, the world price of cotton went down and so did South Carolina's prosperity. The price decreased because the supply increased from the new richer soils of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In the first decade of the century, South Carolina was producing one-half of all cotton grown in the United States each year. By 1821, the state's production amounted to only 29 percent.

Unfortunately, Carolina farmers and planters had not taken good care of their land. They grew cotton until the land was worn out. Instead of fertilizing the soil and preventing erosion, it was easier to clear more land and start over. Many simply pulled up stakes and moved west.



Above: South Carolina's economy was affected by a drop in cotton prices in the 1820s, due in part to increased production from other states. **Below left:** South Carolina's reliance on cotton ensured that slaves would remain more than half the population of the state.

DID YOU KNOW?

One Carolinian in the 1820s said that fertilizing and rebuilding the soil was like Christianity. Everybody thought it was a good thing, but very few practiced it!

HAVE YOU SEEN...

Redcliffe Plantation in Aiken County? This mansion, completed in 1859, was the home of James Henry Hammond, governor and U.S. senator. The house museum is open to the public.



Despite the low points, cotton continued to grow in importance in South Carolina and in the whole South. In the 1840s and 1850s, another cotton boom brought more prosperity. Senator James Henry Hammond warned the United States Senate in 1858 that no one should threaten the South or slavery because “Cotton is king!” Harming slavery would ruin the economies of America and Britain, Hammond suggested.

King Cotton was not a kindly monarch. In addition to rapidly wearing out the land, cotton resulted in a renewed dedication to slave labor. At the end of the American Revolution, many serious discussions questioned whether the institution of slavery went against the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the teachings of Christianity. Northern states gradually freed their slaves. In 1787, Congress outlawed slavery in the Old Northwest Territory. Even in South Carolina, Quakers and the new Methodist Church expressed reservations about slavery. The state outlawed importing more slaves into the state for several years. After the invention of the cotton gin, however, King Cotton washed away any doubts about the necessity of slavery.

A Revitalized Slavery

Slavery experienced a spurt of growth in the 1790s that continued throughout the antebellum era. By 1820, the slave population was again in the majority in

South Carolina. Blacks were to remain the majority for the next century. By 1810, slavery was spread all across the state. Many of the smaller slaveholders lived in the Upcountry. Most of the largest slaveholders were still concentrated near the coast. Nearly half the white population belonged to slaveholding families—the highest proportion of slaveholders of any state. The majority of slaveholders owned fewer than ten slaves. But the majority of slaves were owned by the planter class—owners of twenty or more slaves.

One astounding fact is that a few free blacks owned slaves, such as Margaret Bettingall Tunno and her daughters. In 1860, 171 of the nearly 10,000 free blacks in the state owned slaves. Most owned only 1 or 2. A notable exception was William Ellison of Stateburg in Sumter District who owned 63. Ellison was born a slave, but earned extra money building cotton gins and bought his freedom. His profitable gin business enabled him to invest in land and slaves and become a large planter. He bought a pew in Stateburg’s Episcopal Church and a fine home once owned by Governor Stephen D. Miller. The story of slavery and slaveholding in South Carolina takes many unusual twists.

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution brought great change to Europe beginning in the late eighteenth century. It shifted work from humans to water- or steam-powered machines. Productivity skyrocketed. Large numbers of people worked outside of agriculture for the first time in recorded history. New England was the only section of America that developed much industry early in the nineteenth century.

Except for cotton gins and rice mills, South Carolina almost totally missed out on the early Industrial Revolution. In this state, wealth and prestige had always come from owning land and slaves. Though the state did not become industrialized, it was still affected by the technological advances in Europe and New England. As those areas adopted power machinery to make cotton textiles, they needed more and more cotton from the fields of the South.

Transportation

The magnificent river systems in South Carolina needed some human help to make them serve transportation needs more effectively. Canals were built to connect rivers and bypass rocky rapids at the fall lines in several rivers. The first and longest, the Santee Canal, connected the Santee and Cooper Rivers. By 1800, this provided easier access of Upcountry products, like cotton, to the port at Charleston. The state government got excited about canals in 1818 and built several in the Upcountry over the next ten years. The canals improved river transportation, but the state needed a flexible system that could connect all the main towns to one another.

The solution to the problem was the railroad. In the late 1820s, inventors began to experiment with steam engines on wheels that would pull cars on tracks. Charleston leaders built a railroad from Charleston to Hamburg (today's North Augusta). It was 136 miles long, the longest in the world at the time. Completed in 1833, the railroad was a success. Within three decades, railroads crisscrossed the state and connected most of the main towns. By the 1850s, one could travel from Columbia to Charleston in less than eight hours. Cotton shipment from the Upcountry to Charleston and slave transport to the Upcountry became cheaper.

A Little Bit of Industry

South Carolina's dedication to its staple crops delayed industry getting a foothold. William Gregg and others argued for a diverse economy—a mix of agriculture, industry, commerce, and banking. Few listened. Gregg's investment in a large Graniteville mill in 1849 was successful, but very few followed



MAP 29

South Carolina's Early Railroads

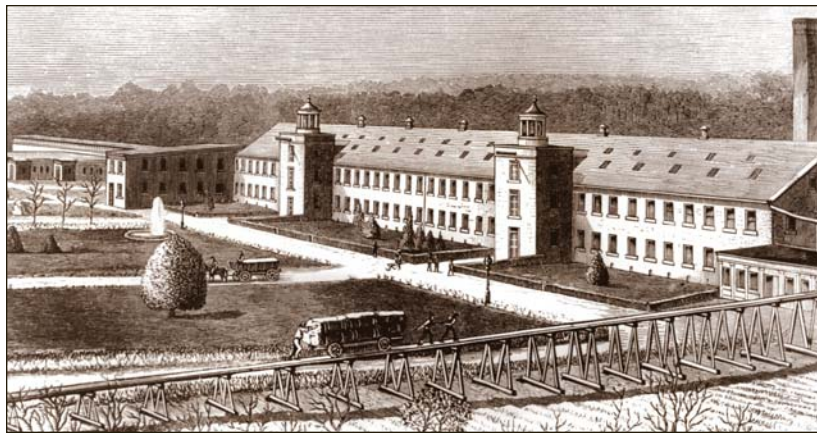
Map Skill: Which cities in other states were connected to South Carolina by railroad?

Right: William Gregg was an advocate of industrialization in the South to diversify the economy and to counter the dominance of the Northern economy. In 1849, he opened South Carolina's first major textile mill at Graniteville. It was a success, but not many people followed his example.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pots or jugs made by Dave, the slave potter, are on display at museums in Columbia, Charleston, and Washington, DC. On one of his twenty-gallon jugs, Dave wrote:

*This noble jar—will hold, 20
Fill it with silver—then
you'll have plenty.*



his lead. By 1860, there were 17 other cotton mills in South Carolina, all much smaller than Graniteville. For his 325 workers, Gregg built a **mill village** (a company-owned cluster of houses near a mill or factory), the model for many to come. He also provided stores, two churches, and a school for children under 12. He thought industry would be the salvation for poor whites.

Pottery, an industry that had ancient roots, arose in Edgefield District. The area had fine clay and artistic potters. A slave named Dave produced some of the finest and largest pottery. Some held forty gallons. Very hot *kilns* (ovens used for firing pottery) at Pottersville produced extra dense and hard stoneware. The containers were finished with distinctive and beautiful glazes. Dave was literate and often carved two-line poems on his creations. (If you find one of Dave's pots today, sell it and pay your way through college.)

Gold mining attracted some attention in the antebellum era. As many as one hundred small gold mines operated in the South Carolina Piedmont in the 1830s. But the amounts of gold never equaled that found in both North Carolina and Georgia. All three states were totally overshadowed by California after 1849.

South Carolina, unfortunately, continued to put almost all its eggs in the agriculture basket. Carolinians tended to see the movement of northern states toward more industry and commerce as a threat to the southern "way of life." They felt the nation was turning against them and their institutions, particularly the institution of slavery.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Define in sentence form: yeoman farmer, camp meeting, mill village.
2. What four classes of people lived in South Carolina in the antebellum era?
3. What effects did the Second Great Awakening have on South Carolinians?



Railroads in South Carolina

By Dr. Rodger Stroup

On Christmas Day in 1830, a steam locomotive named the “Best Friend of Charleston” departed the station at Line Street in Charleston.

The American-made locomotive pulled the two passenger cars to a station six miles away at unbelievable speeds. The *Charleston Courier’s* description of the event caught the excitement: “The one hundred and forty one persons flew on the wings of the wind at the speed of fifteen and twenty-five miles per hour, annihilating (destroying) time and space...leaving all the world behind.... [We] darted forth like a rocket, scattering sparks and flames on either side...and landed us all safe... before any of us had time to determine whether or not it was prudent (wise) to be scared.”

This trip was the first regularly scheduled train service in the United States. By 1833, the line had extended to Hamburg (now North Augusta), making it the longest railroad in the world at the time. Charleston grew as a result, with new buildings going up and property values increasing. Since that time, railroads have played an important role in the development of South Carolina. In 1838, construction began on the branch line to Orangeburg and Columbia, and the town of Branchville became the first railroad junction in the United States.

South Carolina proved a challenge to railroad construction and maintenance. The Charleston and Savannah Railroad, completed just before the Civil War, required conquering swamps and marshes. At the same time, Charleston’s businessmen sponsored construction of a railroad through the mountains to Cincinnati, Ohio. Completion of that railroad would have allowed Charleston to tap the commerce of the Midwest and to rival New York City as the most important port city in the United States. But construction crews were never able to complete an almost mile-long tunnel through Stumphouse Mountain in Oconee County.



A replica of the “Best Friend” is on display at the South Carolina State Museum.

During the Civil War, most of the railroads were disrupted or destroyed. After the war, rebuilding and extending railroad lines was big business. By 1920, the railroads reached a peak of 3,814 miles of track in South Carolina.

In 2007, there were 2,283 miles, reflecting the reduction in track mileage seen across the nation. Most of the remaining service was dedicated to hauling freight.

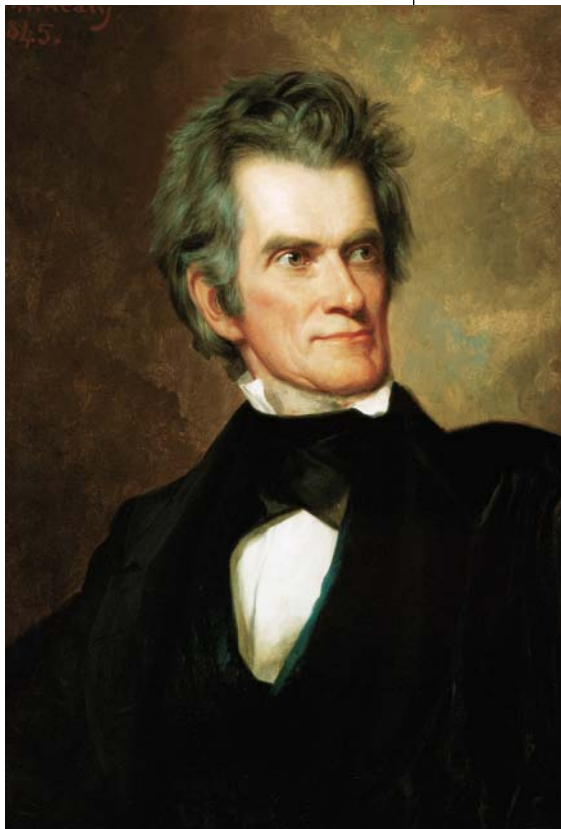
From the 1840s until after World War II, railroads were the primary movers of people and freight over long distances. However, the creation of the Interstate Highway System in the 1960s and the rapid expansion of airline travel drastically reduced the number of passengers on the railroads. By the late 1960s, most railroads had stopped passenger service, leading to the creation in 1970 of Amtrak, a corporation dedicated to passenger service. This company, owned partly by private investors and partly by the federal government, continues to provide passenger service to five hundred locations in the country.

Nationalism, Sectionalism, and States' Rights

Below: As a young congressman, John C. Calhoun was a member of the “war hawks,” who were in favor of a second war with Britain. They got their wish with the War of 1812. **Opposite page, above:** The most famous battle of the War of 1812 was actually fought after the war had ended. In 1815, General Andrew Jackson and his outnumbered Americans defeated a professional British army at the Battle of New Orleans.

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- the contrast between the rise in nationalism and the rise in sectionalism;
- different economic interests of the Northeast, the Old Northwest Territory, and the South;
- the importance of the Missouri Compromise of 1820;
- the rise in antislavery sentiment and in states' rights;
- the Nullification Crisis and the Great Reaction;
- terms: **nationalism, internal improvements, sectionalism, protective tariff, Missouri Compromise, abolitionist, nullify, secession.**



The story of South Carolina in the antebellum era plays an important part in the story of America in the same period. Early in the era, the state expressed a strong sense of national unity and patriotism. However, by 1830, South Carolina politicians and voters had decided that the federal government had turned against them. How does a state challenge the authority and power of the central government? That question dominated much of American history in the antebellum era.

The Era of National Enthusiasm in South Carolina—1790-1825

Nationalism is the sense of pride in one's country, its people, its institutions and government. It is the patriotic glue that holds people in a nation together. Often that nationalism is most noticeable when a country is threatened by enemy nations. American nationalism was born in resistance to Great Britain during the American Revolution. In its first twenty-five years under the new Constitution, 1789-1814, Americans were brought closer together by violations of the rights of American ships by both Great Britain and France.



The United States avoided war until the British began stopping our ships, seizing cargo, and forcing some of our sailors into the British navy. In 1812, the Congress declared war on Great Britain, in the conflict known as the War of 1812. Four of the strongest advocates for war in the Congress were John C. Calhoun, Langdon Cheves, William Lowndes, and David R. Williams. These South Carolinians were among a group of young congressmen called war hawks. Nationalism, at its best, inspires unity and helps a diverse people accomplish great things. At its worst, it insists on fighting every nation with which there is a quarrel.

The war was a near disaster for the young United States. In 1814, British troops captured Washington, DC, and burned the White House and other public buildings. The war was basically a draw, and a treaty was signed in December 1814 with nothing really accomplished for either side. But the biggest battle of the war was fought in January 1815 before news of the treaty arrived in America. In that Battle of New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson and a ragtag American force aided by a few pirates defeated a large, well-trained British army. This victory gave Americans the feeling they had won the war that some called the Second War of American Independence. We would not be pushed around; we were truly independent now.

Americans rode high on the wave of national pride for the next decade. The overwhelming election of James Monroe, a Democratic-Republican

DID YOU KNOW?

John C. Calhoun's home, Fort Hill, on the Clemson University campus, was willed to the people of South Carolina as a shrine to Calhoun by his son-in-law, John Green Clemson, founder of the university.





Above: South Carolina's John C. Calhoun was perhaps the most famous and influential southern politician of the antebellum era not to be elected president. He served as secretary of war under President James Monroe, secretary of state under President John Tyler, and vice president under Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. He ended his career as a U.S. senator.

from Virginia, in 1816, ushered in an “Era of Good Feelings.” After the 1816 election, the Federalist Party died, leaving only one organized political party, the Democratic-Republicans.

John C. Calhoun, the major South Carolina political leader of the nineteenth century, was at first a part of this sense of national unity. He wanted to strengthen the nation with **internal improvements** (government projects to improve transportation and trade). These included building roads, bridges, and canals, and improving harbors. A tariff on imports provided the money. Calhoun also wanted to charter a new United States Bank to help stabilize the *currency* (money) system and improve the economy. Calhoun supported all these national projects in Congress, as President Monroe's secretary of war, and finally as vice president under President John Quincy Adams (1825-1829).

Rising Sectional Sentiment

Sectionalism is allegiance to one region of the country as opposed to loyalty to the broader interests of the whole

country. By the 1820s, the United States had developed into three rather distinct sections with different economic interests.

In the Northeast, farming was still important, but towns and cities based on industry were becoming even more important. That section wanted the federal government to promote industry, especially with a protective tariff. A **protective tariff** is a duty (tax) on imports that protects American manufactured goods from competition from cheaper goods made in other countries. All these states had abolished slavery within their borders and were becoming increasingly opposed to slavery elsewhere in the nation.

The Old Northwest Territory became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This section became the breadbasket of the nation, producing an abundance of corn, wheat, and livestock. Many of its settlers were immigrants, and most were opposed to slavery. Congress had prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory in 1787.

The South was becoming more dedicated to producing cotton, though certain regions continued to produce rice, tobacco, or sugarcane. These

staple crops were dependent on slavery. The South had a much stronger sense of being unique than the Northeast or the Northwest. The southern states became very defensive because the other two sections together had a much larger population and because the attacks on slavery became louder and more forceful.

The 1820s was a decade of great change for South Carolina. Carolinians tended to blame the federal government—specifically the 1824 protective tariff—for their troubles. They argued that the tariff only helped the North and hurt the South. Southerners exported agricultural products and imported many necessities. The tariff forced them to pay higher prices for imported goods. The government was favoring the North and discriminating against the South, they felt, and they were also becoming more worried about national attitudes toward slavery.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820

The issue of slavery was raised dramatically in 1819 when Missouri applied for admission to the Union. Northern opposition to slavery in the new state set off a furious debate over whether Congress had the authority to limit the spread of slavery. This question would eventually tear the nation apart.

Congress settled the issue temporarily by adopting the **Missouri Compromise** of 1820, which allowed Maine into the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. This kept the number of states, and thus the number of senators, balanced between free and slave states. This would prevent either section from overpowering the other. But another provision of the compromise ruled that all the northern territories of the Louisiana Purchase were to be free of slaves. Apparently Congress *did* have the authority to limit the expansion of slavery. Southerners were not convinced.

The Denmark Vesey Plot

Whites in South Carolina lived in constant fear of slave uprisings. There had not been a real slave revolt since the Stono Rebellion of 1739, but rumors of plots were common. Five slaves were executed for a conspiracy in Camden in 1816. In 1822, two slaves in Charleston revealed a plot by Denmark Vesey, a former slave who had bought his freedom with money won in a lottery. He was a skilled carpenter and taught Bible lessons at night at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Dozens of slaves and



MAP 30

The Missouri Compromise

Map Skill: Name the twelve slave states after admission of Missouri in 1821.

DID YOU KNOW?

Emanuel AME Church in Charleston was rebuilt by Denmark Vesey's son after the Civil War and became a center of black political activity.



free blacks were arrested. Vesey and thirty-four others were hanged, thirty-seven were deported, and twenty-three were *acquitted* (found not guilty).

Slaveholders across the South were frightened and angry. Much of the anger in South Carolina was directed toward the free blacks in their midst. Whites burned Emanuel AME Church. Charleston organized a municipal guard of 150 men to control free blacks. The General Assembly passed an act of revenge against all free black seamen on ships coming into Charleston. They were to be locked in the city jail and only released when their ship was ready to depart. The captain had to pay for their room and board or they could be sold as slaves. As might be expected, fewer ships visited Charleston.

White Carolinians Closing Their Minds

The white people of the state began to close their minds to any ideas from outside that were contrary to their notions of white superiority. The military began to take an even greater place of honor in society. Writers made virtual saints of Sumter, Marion, Pickens, the Pinckneys, and George Washington. The leaders created the Citadel, first in 1822 as a guardhouse and arsenal, then in 1842 as the South Carolina Military Academy.

South Carolina was alarmed in 1831 by news of the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia. Turner led a small band of slaves in a revolt they hoped would sweep across the South. Before the revolt was crushed, fifty-five whites and as many slaves had died. The Turner rebellion reconfirmed southern whites' fear of the slaves in their midst. It also made them more certain that **abolitionists** (people who wanted to do away with slavery) from the North were stirring up trouble with their propaganda.

The Rising Tide of Antislavery Sentiment in the Country

Opposition to slavery had always existed in America, even in the South. By the end of the 1820s, though, almost all opponents had been driven out of the South or silenced. The most famous exiles from South Carolina were Sarah and Angelina Grimke, daughters of a prominent Charleston family. Instead of enjoying a life of privilege and plenty, they chose to leave the state and join the antislavery cause in the North. Both became prominent writers and speakers for abolition and women's rights.

As angry as South Carolinians were with free blacks and rebellious slaves, they were even angrier with northern antislavery advocates, who grew more numerous and aggressive each year. In the 1820s, nine states passed resolutions in favor of the gradual freeing of slaves in the United States. The American Colonization Society asked the federal government for money to purchase slaves and free them in a colony in Africa. Slaveholders were outraged. Most of the antislavery advocates before 1830 had aimed at the gradual freeing of slaves and compensation for the slaveowners. After 1830, the emphasis of many antislavery advocates shifted to outright abolition of

slavery—immediately and without pay for the owners. William Lloyd Garrison and former slave Frederick Douglass led the way, along with the Grimke sisters. Abolitionists based their arguments on moral objections. Slavery was simply wrong and must be ended. Their cause was boosted by the abolition of slavery in the worldwide British Empire in 1833. The tide of history was turning against slavery.

States' Rights as a Defensive Strategy

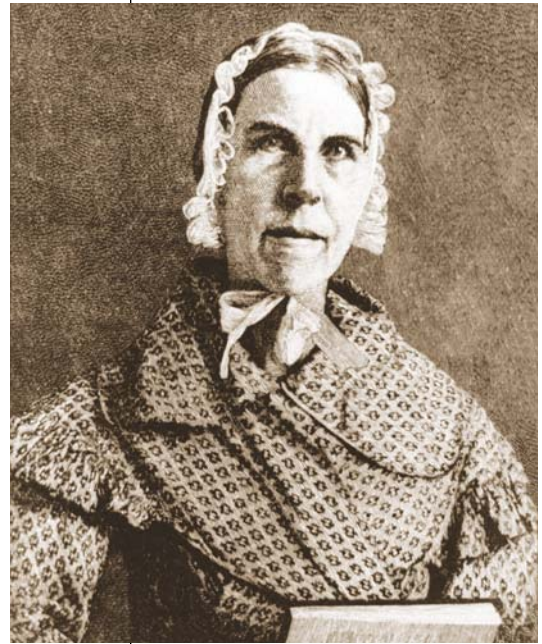
Carolínians were feeling pushed into a corner in the 1820s and 1830s. The state's economy seemed on the slide while the Northeast and Northwest were booming. The population of all the northern states was growing rapidly. Most immigrants preferred to settle in the North rather than compete with slave labor in the South. And agitation against slavery was increasing.

These developments had political consequences. The North got a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, while slaveholding southern states still had equal votes in the Senate. But the North had been able to pass a protective tariff in 1824 despite South Carolina's opposition. Then in 1828, the Congress passed an extremely high tariff that the South labeled the Tariff of Abominations.

How could South Carolina protect its interests from the growing northern majority? If the North could impose an *abominable* (horrible, detestable) tariff, would it be long before that section could push through legislation against slavery? Even the nationalistic John C. Calhoun, who was vice president in 1828, became a defender of states' rights and proposed a way for South Carolina to protect itself against the majority in the nation. He wrote the *South Carolina Exposition and Protest*, which the General Assembly published without using Calhoun's name.

In the *Exposition*, Calhoun argued that a state could declare an act unconstitutional and **nullify** the law (that is, declare it invalid and of no effect within the state). He was wrestling with a central problem in a democracy: How can the rights of a minority be protected against violations by the majority? Carolínians thought it was urgent to find a method before the North started interfering with slavery in the South.

South Carolina leaders like Robert Barnwell Rhett advocated **secession** (dissolving the state's connection to the nation and becoming a separate nation) with or without the company of other southern states. Calhoun might have been willing to consider secession as a last resort, but it seems clear he was using nullification to develop a way to work within the Union. Rhett saw nullification as a step toward secession.



Although the Grimké sisters, Sarah (top) and Angelina (above), were raised in a slave-owning family in Charleston, they became ardent abolitionists. They left the South, and became active writers and speakers in the antislavery movement. They were also early advocates of women's rights.



The Nullification Crisis

What happened next was high drama in national politics. One scene in the drama took place in the U.S. Senate in 1830—in one of the most famous debates in Senate history. Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, an ally of Calhoun, took on Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, the Senate’s most famous orator. The Hayne-Webster Debate was a series of speeches over nine days. Hayne supported nullification and declared that the southern states would never tolerate “any interference, whatever, in their domestic concerns.” Webster asserted the strong nationalist position that we could only have liberty within the Union. He finished his argument with a flourish: “Liberty *and* Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

A second scene in the drama—a political struggle between Nullifiers and Unionists—took place across the map of South Carolina from 1830 to 1832. *Nullifiers* were in favor of nullification. They believed that the state could

refuse to obey or enforce a federal law that the state thought was unconstitutional or violated its states’ rights. *Unionists* believed that the state could best deal with political issues *within* the Union, rather than in defiance of federal law. Governor James Hamilton Jr. led the Nullifiers in a well-organized drive to elect Nullifiers, call a convention, and nullify the tariff. Calhoun added his support from Washington, where he was vice president, this time under Andrew Jackson. The Unionists, supported by small Upcountry farmers, were led by James L. Petigru, Joel Poinsett, and William Drayton. The two-year campaign produced a big win for the Nullifiers in 1832. They called the Nullification Convention and declared null and void both the tariff of 1828 and a new one passed in 1832.

The confrontation with the federal government was set, a confrontation like the young nation had never experienced before. The General Assembly elected Robert Y. Hayne governor, and he appointed outgoing governor Hamilton a brigadier general in the state militia to prepare armed forces to resist the federal government if necessary. Unionists also recruited volunteers to assist the United States Army if necessary. Once again, as in the American Revolution, South Carolinians were divided over issues for which they were willing to fight among themselves.

The scene shifted back to Washington. Calhoun resigned as vice president in December 1832. He and President Jackson, both born in South Carolina,



were at opposite poles on the issue of nullification. The General Assembly immediately elected Calhoun to the U.S. Senate to replace Hayne. Jackson's response to South Carolina's nullification was a very strong statement that nullification was unconstitutional. Secession he labeled as treason. He was determined to enforce the law in every state, and Congress passed a Force Act to reinforce Jackson's authority.

The possibility of a bloody showdown between the federal government and South Carolina was defused by a compromise in Congress worked out by Calhoun and Henry Clay of Kentucky. The tariff would be gradually reduced, and South Carolina would drop its nullification. South Carolina repealed its nullification of the tariff—but nullified the Force Act. President Jackson wisely ignored this meaningless act of defiance, and the crisis was over. South Carolina got tariff reduction, but failed to establish nullification as a means of protecting a state from federal authority.

The drama could have ended in civil war. South Carolina would have stood alone, because other southern states considered its action unwise. The drama ended with South Carolina in social chaos, divided and bitter, with deep scars. The Nullifiers continued to inflict wounds by insisting on conformity within the state.

The Great Reaction

In the years after the Nullification Crisis, South Carolina leaders imposed what historians label the Great Reaction. The General Assembly enacted severe restrictions on Carolinians' freedom. The state censored the U.S. mail to prevent distribution of abolitionist literature. In one historian's judgment, "The Great Reaction achieved the most thoroughgoing repression of free thought, free speech, and free press ever witnessed in an American community." It is *ironic* (an unexpected outcome) that leaders who tried to protect a minority from the majority in the nation felt comfortable crushing out minority views within their state.

South Carolina leaders continued military preparation, strengthened the night slave patrols, and tightened the slave codes. They defended slavery as a positive good for both whites and blacks. These harsh measures brought more attention and sympathy to the antislavery cause in the North than abolitionists could have generated on their own.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Define in sentence form: sectionalism, protective tariff, nullify.
2. What national offices did John C. Calhoun hold?
3. What causes did Sarah and Angelina Grimke support?

DID YOU KNOW?

Joel Poinsett (below) was a remarkable statesman who served in the legislature, the Congress, as secretary of war, and as ambassador to Mexico. He is best known for bringing from Mexico the Christmas flower that came to be called the poinsettia.



Opposite page, above: Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina was a leader of the Nullifiers. During the Nullification Crisis, he resigned his U.S. Senate seat to become governor of South Carolina. John C. Calhoun, also a Nullifier, resigned as vice president to take Hayne's Senate seat. **Opposite page, below:** Robert Y. Hayne and others drafted the nullification papers at the Thomas Bee House in Charleston in 1832.

The March toward Catastrophe

MAP 31

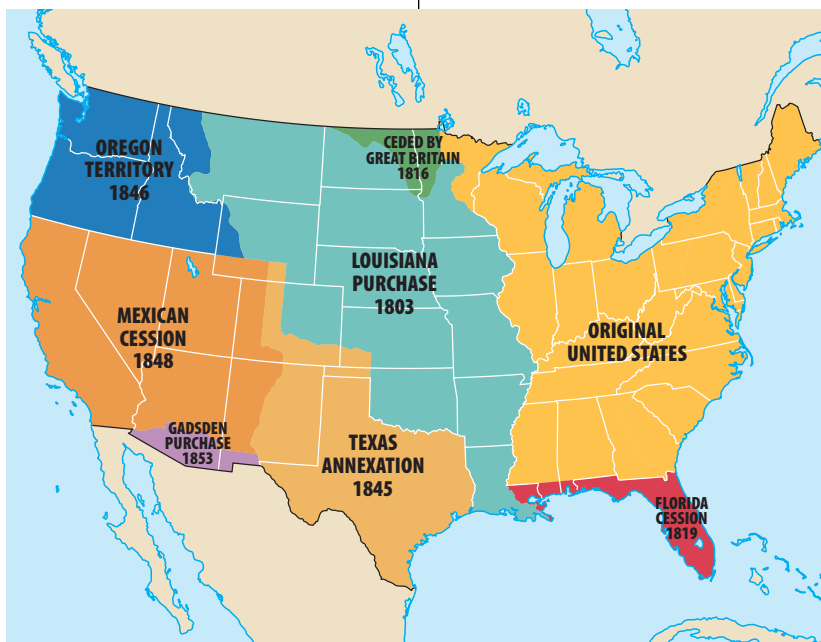
United States Territorial Acquisitions

Map Skill: Which states were included, in whole or in part, in territory annexed after the Mexican War?

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- Americans' belief in manifest destiny;
- the South's reaction to the Compromise of 1850;
- how the Kansas-Nebraska Act led to "Bleeding Kansas";
- the Brooks-Sumner affair;
- the impact on the North and the South of the *Dred Scott* decision and John Brown's raid;
- terms: **manifest destiny**, **Compromise of 1850**, **Fugitive Slave Act**, **fire-eaters**, **Kansas-Nebraska Act**.

With abolitionists attacking slavery as a moral evil and slaveholders defending it as a positive good, the grounds for finding a solution for the "problem of the century" were slipping away. Increasingly, the North and the South were marching in different directions. Could the unity of the nation survive? In the decades of the 1840s and 1850s, a string of events seemed to conspire to make reconciliation of the sections more difficult.



Manifest Destiny

A constant in American history since 1607 was the expansion of the population westward. By the 1840s, most white Americans believed that expansion of the nation across the continent to the Pacific Ocean was our God-given right, our **manifest destiny**, as a journalist put it in 1845. But there were obstacles. Much of the land west of the Louisiana Purchase was claimed by either Mexico or Great Britain. And there was also Texas. Once owned by Mexico, Texas had won its independence in 1836. The



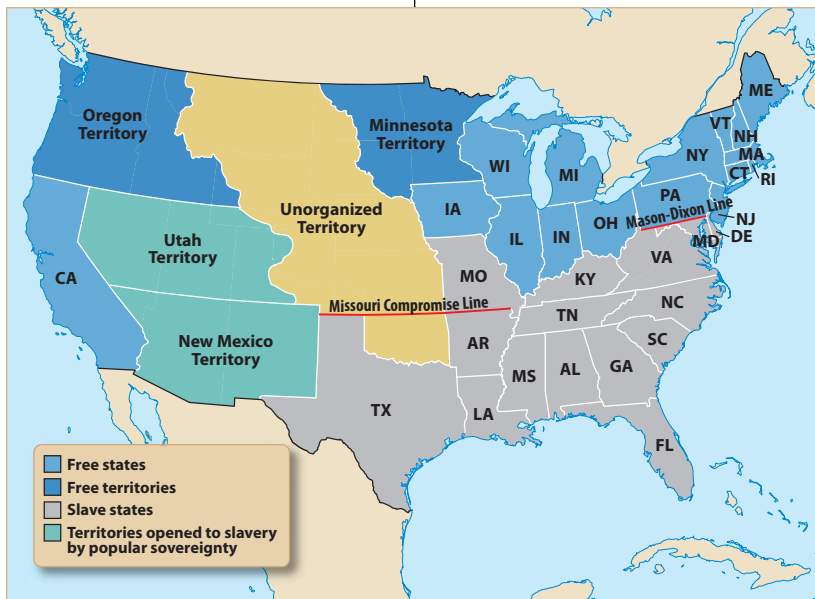
Republic of Texas wanted annexation to the United States, but Americans feared annexation would cause war with Mexico.

In the expansionist fever of the 1840s, the United States did bring Texas into the Union as a slave state in 1845. And war with Mexico did break out in 1846. David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced legislation in Congress that would prohibit slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico as a result of the war. The Wilmot Proviso never passed, but it alarmed southerners. The Proviso strengthened the Secessionists (those who wanted to withdraw from the Union) in South Carolina. They were urging the state to get out of the Union before Congress could take action against slavery.

The Compromise of 1850

At the end of the Mexican War in 1848, the triumphant United States annexed the enormous territory from Texas west to the Pacific. Almost immediately California became a prize possession because of the discovery of gold. The population grew so rapidly that California could apply for statehood in 1850. The South opposed the addition of a new free state because it would give free states a majority in the U.S. Senate. John C. Calhoun spent the last days of his life opposing California statehood. He thought the only way the Union could be saved was by giving each major section of the country a veto power so it could protect itself. He called the new concept the “concurrent majority.” He was still struggling with the problem of protecting the minority from the majority, a problem no democracy has totally solved.

Above: The American capture of Chapultepec Castle, guarding the western approach to Mexico City, was a significant victory in the Mexican War. It is mentioned in “The Marines’ Hymn” as the “Halls of Montezuma.” Many famous military leaders on both sides in the Civil War saw their first military action in the Mexican War.



The crisis concerning California was solved, after Calhoun's death, by another Henry Clay compromise. In the **Compromise of 1850**, California was to be admitted to the Union as a free state—a big victory for the North. A new **Fugitive Slave Act** was passed that required all citizens, North and South, to assist in catching and returning runaway slaves to their owners. This was supposed to be a big victory for the South, but it angered many northerners and strengthened abolitionists.

At the Nashville Convention of southern states in 1850, delegates considered responses to the compromise. The radical Secessionists of South Carolina argued for secession of southern states immediately. But the radicals were largely ignored as the other southern delegates were not yet ready to break with the Union.

The First Secession Crisis

Unlike other southern states, South Carolina embraced its Secessionists and gave them a majority in the General Assembly in the 1850 election. The Assembly elected a Secessionist, John H. Means of Fairfield District, as governor, and the most radical and outspoken Secessionist, Robert Barnwell Rhett, to the U.S. Senate. But Rhett could not convince the state to secede immediately so he resigned within two years. By the early 1850s, South

MAP 32

The Compromise of 1850

Map Skill: What slave states had been added to the Union in the years after the Missouri Compromise?

FIGURE 12

South Carolina Factions Concerning Secession

The Secessionists thought South Carolina should secede immediately, with or without other states. Major leaders were Rhett, Means, and Maxcy Gregg.

The Cooperationists thought the state should secede, but only after other southern states agreed to cooperate. Major leaders were James L. Orr, James Chesnut, and Christopher Memminger.

The Unionists were just as proslavery as the other two factions, but they thought the state could, and must, defend its rights *within* the Union. Major leaders were James F. Petigru and Benjamin F. Perry.

Carolina whites were divided into three factions on the only issue **fire-eaters** (the name given to southerners who actively advocated secession) like Rhett thought was important: secession.

The First Secession Crisis ended in frustration for the Secessionists, but the decade of the 1850s was filled with events that fueled their cause. One was the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 by Harriet Beecher Stowe. This blockbuster, one of the best-selling books in American history, thrilled antislavery advocates, but infuriated southern whites. It described in terrifying detail some of the worst aspects of the slave system. The accusations were not new, but the story's heartbreaking description of the breakup of slave families was most effective for the antislavery cause.

Bleeding Kansas

Westward expansion continued, and so did the controversy over whether slavery would be allowed in the new territories carved out of the northern section of the Louisiana Purchase. Congress had banned slavery there in the Missouri Compromise. The South appeared to have won a great victory when Congress passed the **Kansas-Nebraska Act** in 1854. The act allowed the people who moved into these two territories to decide the issue of slavery for themselves. Now, suddenly, it was possible that new slave states could be brought into the Union.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act played havoc with the American political system. The Whig Party, which had arisen in the 1830s, was already weak. It

Below: The Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed the voters in the two territories to determine the question of slavery. These proslavery "border ruffians" are on their way to Kansas ahead of the first territorial elections in 1855. They were successful in preventing their opponents from voting, ensuring a proslavery legislature.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Democratic-Republican Party came to be called the Democratic Party during the time of President Andrew Jackson.



Above: On May 22, 1856, while writing at his desk in the Senate chamber, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was brutally attacked and beaten by Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina for remarks Sumner had made in a speech two days earlier. Brooks continued to beat Sumner even after he lay unconscious on the floor. He was fined \$300. **Opposite page, above:** The *Dred Scott* case was front-page news in 1857. This article features portraits of Scott, his wife, and two daughters. **Opposite page, below:** John Brown was a fanatical abolitionist who had already been involved in the violence in Kansas before he led the raid on Harper's Ferry.

split on the slavery issue and fizzled out. A new major party, the Republican Party, arose in place of the Whigs and several smaller parties. It was entirely a northern party—the first major party without a nationwide membership and appeal. The Democratic Party of Jefferson and Jackson was deeply damaged by a split into northern and southern wings or factions.

As settlers began to move into Kansas and take up land to farm, northerners sent antislavery families to settle and southerners sent proslavery families. Each side tried to gain the majority. Both factions formed governments, and soon fighting broke out. Attacks on communities by one faction were answered by massacres of villages by the other. “Bleeding Kansas” became a national issue and a symbol of growing tensions between North and South.

The Brooks-Sumner Affair

In a debate on the Senate floor in 1856 about the conflict in Kansas, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts insulted Senator Andrew Butler of South Carolina by associating him with killers and thugs in Kansas. Two days

later, Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina, Senator Butler’s nephew, came into the Senate chamber and beat Sumner senseless with a sturdy walking cane. Sumner was severely injured and could not return to the Senate for three years.

Brooks was hailed as a hero in the South. Supporters sent him hundreds of canes, commemorating his “heroic” act. Civil debate was giving way to physical force. Nationalism was giving way to sectionalism. The two sections were growing farther apart on their understandings of the nature of freedom, democracy, and honor.

The Dred Scott Decision

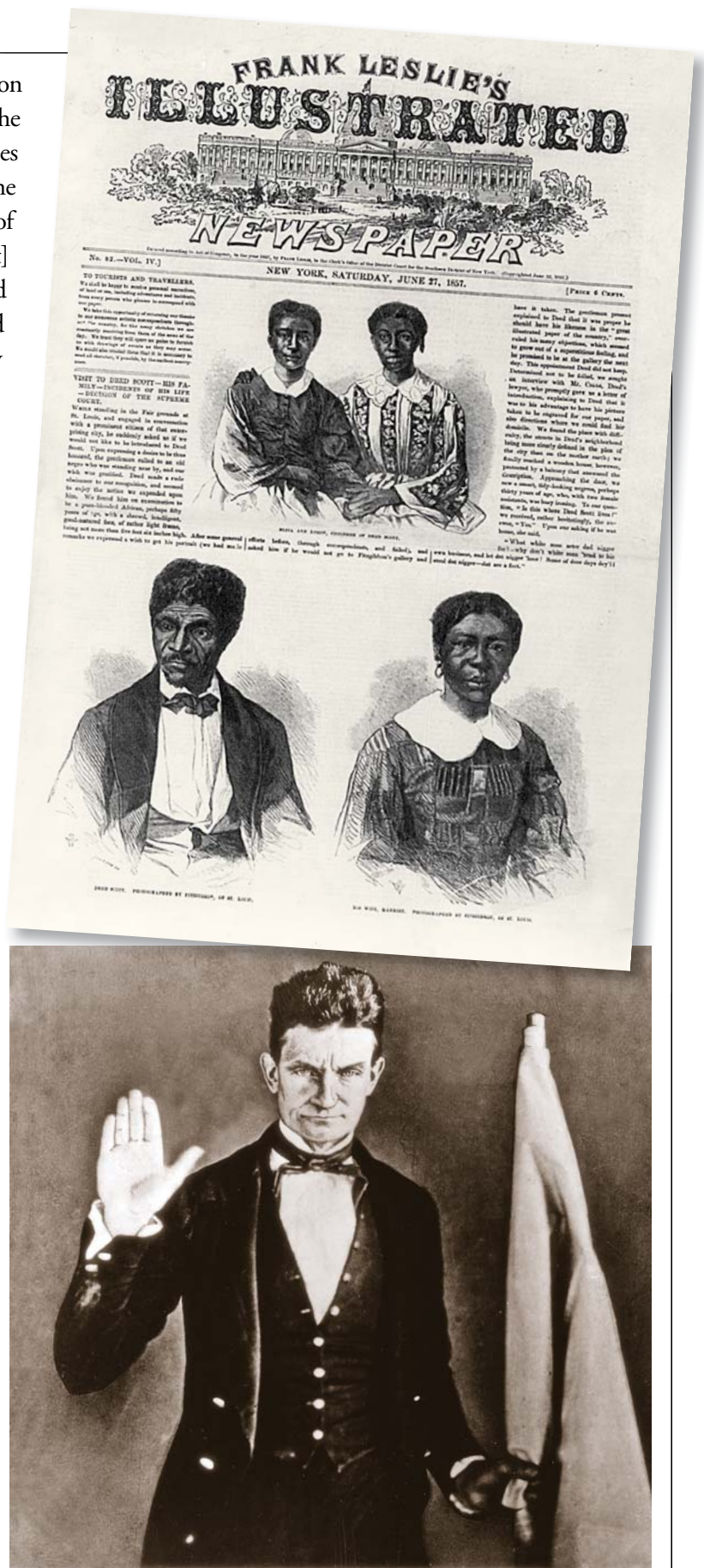
As a result of the struggle in Kansas, many people hoped a case in the Supreme Court would settle the matter of slavery in the western territories once and for all. The case was about Dred and Harriet Scott, slaves who had been taken by their owner into free states and into territories where slavery was banned by the Missouri Compromise. The Scotts sued in the courts, claiming that being taken into free states and territories made them free. The Supreme Court finally ruled in 1857. The seven-to-two vote tells us much about what racial attitudes were acceptable to many people, North and South, at the time.

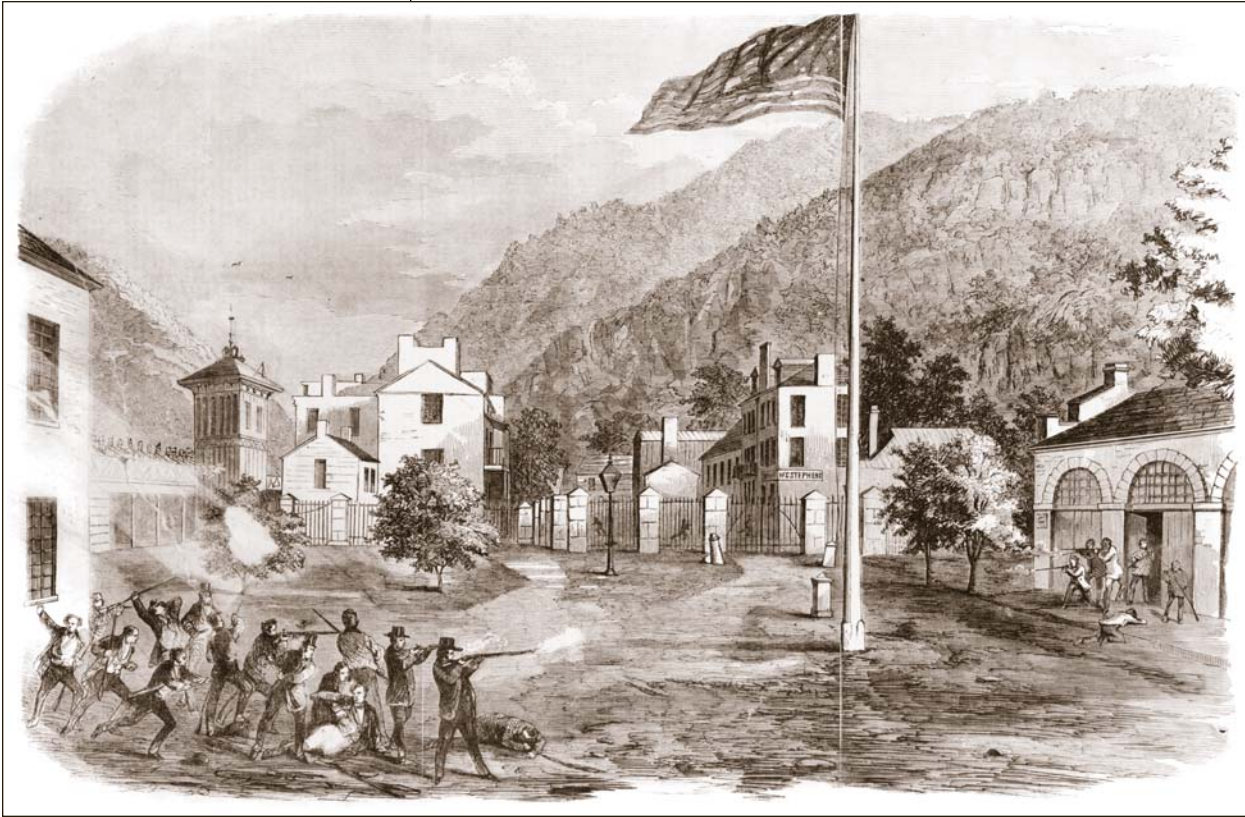
Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote the decision for the majority. The first part stated that the Scotts were not citizens of the United States and thus had no right to bring a case before the federal court. He further asserted that people of color were “beings of an inferior order [that] had no rights which white men were bound to respect.” In the second part, Taney ruled that Congress had no authority to ban slavery from the territories; therefore, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was unconstitutional. The third part stated that being transported into free states did not change the Scotts’ status. This seemed to raise the question of whether any state could prohibit slavery. Southerners were thrilled over the *Dred Scott* decision, never mind that the third part ran roughshod over any concept of states’ rights.

Most sentiment in the North was strongly opposed to the decision. Many northerners were convinced of a great conspiracy to impose slavery on the whole country. The new president, Democrat James Buchanan, approved the decision and thought it had put the slavery question to rest. With both the presidency and the U.S. Supreme Court controlled by proslavery men, antislavery groups in the North were becoming more anxious about the future.

John Brown's Raid

Some individuals within the antislavery ranks were willing to take drastic measures. One such person was John Brown. In October 1859, he led a band of men in a raid on a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), hoping to capture arms for a great slave rebellion. They captured the arsenal, but a company of federal troops commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee quickly crushed the insurrection. Brown was captured, convicted of treason, and hanged.





Above: John Brown's attempt to capture arms for a slave revolt from the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry failed, and ten of his men were killed. The raid so enraged the South that it was a contributing factor to secession and the Civil War, which, ironically, ultimately freed the slaves.

John Brown's impossible mission stirred up emotions between the sections. Many in the North hailed him as a hero, and he became a *martyr* (a person who suffers or dies for a cause) in the antislavery cause. In South Carolina, John Brown's raid was a godsend to the radical Secessionists. It supported their claim that the North was prepared to do *anything* to rid the nation of slavery. Their solution of immediate secession was beginning to appeal to more people. Throughout the state, communities organized vigilante committees to harass any strangers who might come through. South Carolina was nearly closing itself off from the rest of the world.

Sectional tensions in the nation were at a fever pitch after John Brown's raid. The stage was set for perhaps the most dramatic election in American history—and the one with the most consequences.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Define in sentence form: manifest destiny, Fugitive Slave Act, fire-eaters.
2. How did the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* help the abolitionists' cause?
3. What was the main purpose of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

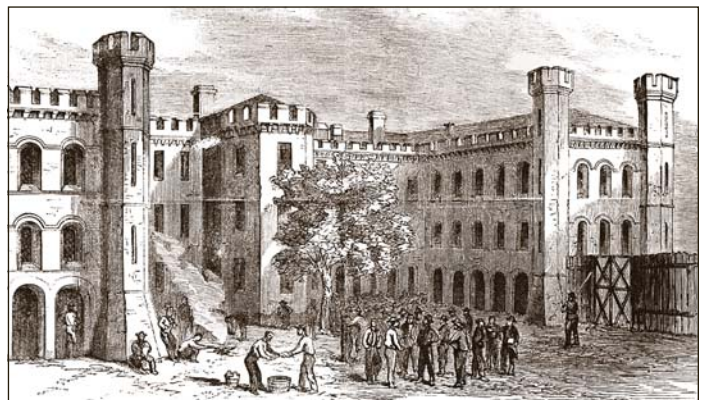
Of SPECIAL INTEREST

A “House of Blood” in Antebellum Charleston By Dr. John J. Navin

The Charleston Workhouse was established in 1738 by St. Philip’s Episcopal Church to provide assistance to the poor and to punish “Rogues, Vagabonds, and other lewd, idle and disorderly persons.” It started out as an integrated facility where paupers, lawbreakers, or fugitives of any nationality, color, or gender might end up. No sooner had its doors opened than a slave uprising known as the Stono Rebellion occurred. New laws passed in 1740 required that any runaway slaves whose owners could not be identified should be delivered to the workhouse where they would be whipped and then held until the owners claimed them. For more than a century, the workhouse would play an important role in the ongoing effort by white South Carolinians to maintain control over the growing black population, both slave and free.

A 1767 petition described the workhouse as a place where people in debt and “idle persons” were locked up with thieves and murderers. Some whites objected to the mixing of races in the workhouse, so Charleston’s lawmakers decided to build three separate facilities: a hospital, a poorhouse, and a building to confine troublesome sailors and disobedient or runaway slaves. South Carolinians could even send their slaves to the workhouse to be whipped for a fee or placed on a large treadmill or “stepping wheel” that forced them to climb plank steps for hours each day. In 1769, two slaves were burned alive outside the workhouse for poisoning a white child.

Conditions in the workhouse were terrible. One slave wore leg irons so tight that “his toes rotted and one of his



feet dropped off entirely.” By the 1800s, a new workhouse was built to confine blacks convicted of assault, theft, violating the city curfew, or other crimes. Among them were Denmark Vesey and his fellow plotters. In the 1830s and 1840s as the abolitionist movement grew in the North, the Charleston Workhouse became a target for criticism and a symbol of southern inhumanity. One publication described the workhouse as a temple “dedicated to torture and reeking with blood.” Frederick Douglass’s newspaper, the *North Star*, described the workhouse as “a house of blood, of cruelties and of murders . . . far more horrible than any Spanish Inquisition.”

During the Civil War, captured Union soldiers were imprisoned in the workhouse. Exactly when the last slave was punished within its walls is not known, but certainly no later than 1865 when Union troops occupied Charleston. The building was destroyed by an earthquake in 1886. During its 125 or so years of operation, the Charleston Workhouse demonstrated the racism, inhumanity, and violence inherent in a slaveholding culture.



Chapter Summary

After the War of 1812, a feeling of nationalism drew Americans together as they enjoyed prosperity brought about by internal improvements made throughout the country. This was an “Era of Good Feelings.” Unfortunately, that era would come to a close in the mid-1820s. The United States would begin a move from nationalism to sectionalism, which would begin tearing the nation apart.

The two major sections of the United States were developing differently. The North was becoming more industrial and was manufacturing goods that could be sold at home. This meant that the need to import goods from Europe would decline. The South was still producing staple crops for exportation. Plantation owners saw no way to continue raising cotton and rice without the slaves to work the fields. The issue of slavery would be a major reason for strained relations between these two sections of the United States.

Although compromise worked for a while to appease proslavery and antislavery Americans, events would happen in the 1850s that made many realize that living under one government might not be possible.

Activities for Learning

Reviewing People, Places, and Things

Match the following with the correct description that follows.

Preston Brooks

Robert Mills

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Dred Scott

John C. Calhoun

John Brown

Frederick Douglass

Missouri Compromise

Kansas-Nebraska Act

nationalism

Compromise of 1850

sectionalism

1. the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a book that angered many southerners and northerners but for different reasons
2. an architect from South Carolina who is well known for designing the Washington Monument in Washington, DC, and the Ainsley Hall Mansion in Columbia
3. a South Carolinian who was vice president of the United States until his resignation in 1832
4. brought the state of Maine into the Union as a free state
5. a sense of pride in one's country, its people, its institutions, and its government
6. an abolitionist who led a raid on a federal arsenal in Virginia hoping to incite a great slave rebellion
7. a freed slave who became a well-known abolitionist
8. a representative to Congress from South Carolina who beat Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner with a cane for insulting his uncle, Senator Andrew Butler, also from South Carolina
9. a slave whose owner took him and his wife to live in free states and territories, all the while keeping them as slaves
10. brought the state of California into the Union as a free state

Understanding the Facts

1. How did the cotton boom affect poor whites in South Carolina prior to the Civil War?
2. Why were private academies rather than public schools the norm in South Carolina prior to the Civil War?
3. Why was the spirit of nationalism so strong in the United States during the first quarter of the nineteenth century?
4. What caused the spirit of sectionalism to replace the spirit of nationalism after the mid-1820s?
5. Why did South Carolinians dislike the protective tariff in 1824?
6. How did the Missouri Compromise maintain the balance of free and slave states?
7. Why did immigrants prefer settling in the North rather than in the South?
8. Why did some Americans oppose the annexation of Texas in the 1840s?
9. Why did the Whig party fizzle out?
10. What new political party was created as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

1. What kinds of problems did westward expansion create for the U.S. government in the 1840s and 1850s?
2. The Brooks-Sumner attack in 1856 involved a physical confrontation over differing political views. What kinds of attacks do politicians use today when they disagree on issues?

Writing across the Curriculum

William Ellison was a slave who was able to buy his freedom through the profits he made building and selling cotton gins. Defend his ownership of sixty-three slaves after he gained his freedom.

Exploring Technology

1. Use the Internet to compare the original Republican Party formed in 1854 to today's Republican

Party as far as its goals and issues are concerned.

2. What South Carolina college or university is nearest your home? Find out when it was founded and if it is a public or a private institution. If private, indicate what kind of private school it is.

Applying Your Skills

1. Based on your knowledge of the sectional beliefs of most Americans concerning slavery, which section do you think Chief Justice Roger B. Taney was from? Explain your answer.
2. Looking at a map showing the territories affected by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, explain how the *Dred Scott* decision, in effect, declared the terms of that compromise unconstitutional.

Building Skills: Reaching Compromise

You are undoubtedly familiar with making compromises with your parents, your sisters and brothers, or your friends. It is not always something that is easy to do. Can you imagine how difficult it must be for thousands of people to agree on one point? In American history, the federal government had to reach a number of compromises to satisfy the majority of American citizens during the first half of the nineteenth century. Parties involved in a compromise have to make concessions, which means giving up something they want. It is important to remember, however, that there are some things that cannot be compromised.

Try This:

1. What are some of the issues in our society that are not open to compromise?
2. What are examples of recent issues on which you have seen the U.S. government make compromises?
3. What are some of the qualities people or governments must have in order to be effective when trying to compromise with each other?