
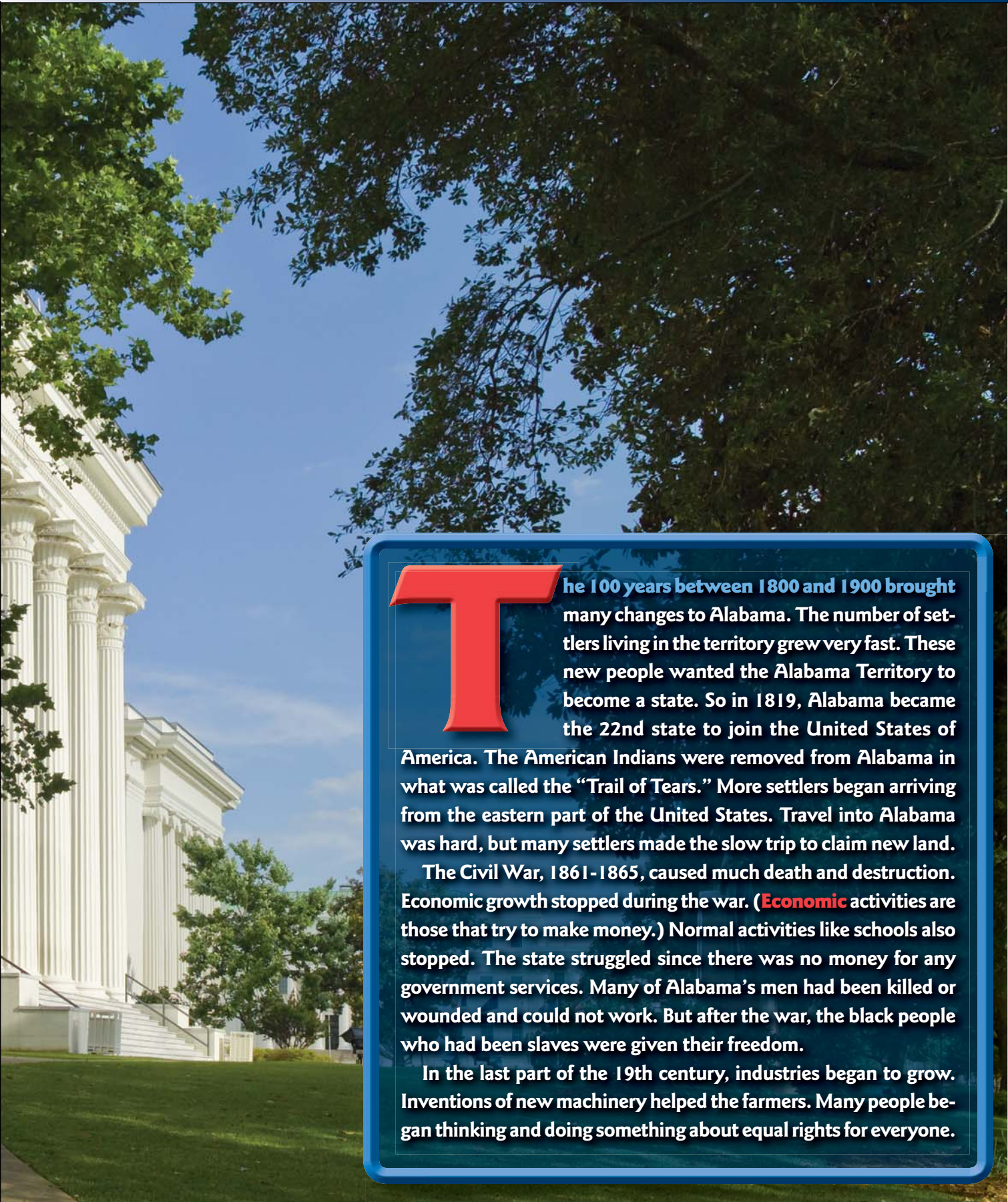


## Unit III

# Alabama in the 19th Century

A photograph of the Alabama State Capitol building in Montgomery. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent portico supported by tall, fluted columns. In the foreground, a large, mature tree with dense green foliage stands to the left of the building. A paved walkway curves through the grass in front of the Capitol. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**Above:** *The Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery was built in 1851. It was the setting for many important events in the 19th century. The state's vote to secede from the Union was made here. Later, Jefferson Davis was sworn in as president of the Confederate States of America in front of the Capitol.*



**T**he 100 years between 1800 and 1900 brought many changes to Alabama. The number of settlers living in the territory grew very fast. These new people wanted the Alabama Territory to become a state. So in 1819, Alabama became the 22nd state to join the United States of

America. The American Indians were removed from Alabama in what was called the “Trail of Tears.” More settlers began arriving from the eastern part of the United States. Travel into Alabama was hard, but many settlers made the slow trip to claim new land.

The Civil War, 1861-1865, caused much death and destruction. Economic growth stopped during the war. (**Economic** activities are those that try to make money.) Normal activities like schools also stopped. The state struggled since there was no money for any government services. Many of Alabama’s men had been killed or wounded and could not work. But after the war, the black people who had been slaves were given their freedom.

In the last part of the 19th century, industries began to grow. Inventions of new machinery helped the farmers. Many people began thinking and doing something about equal rights for everyone.

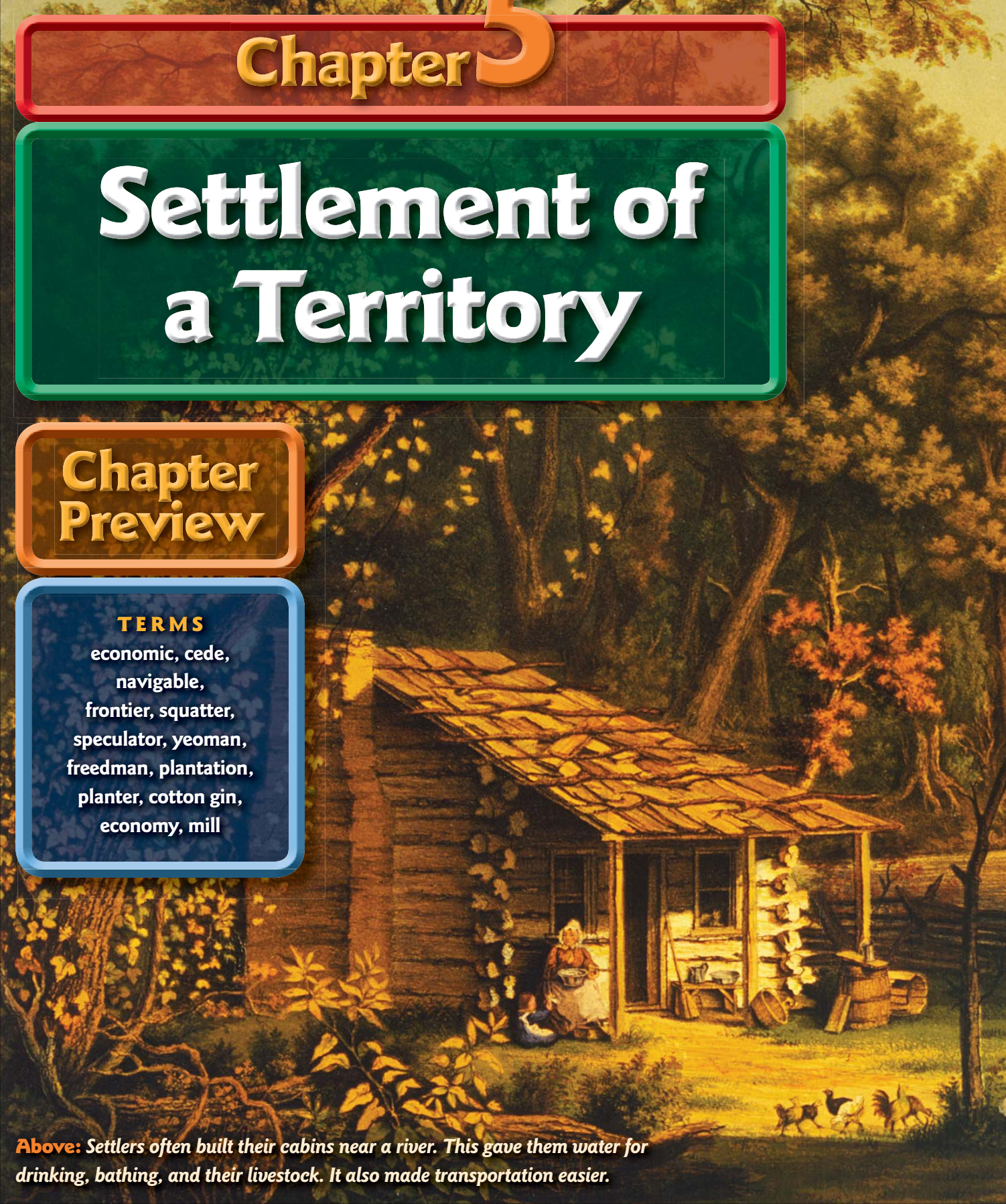
# Chapter 5

## Settlement of a Territory

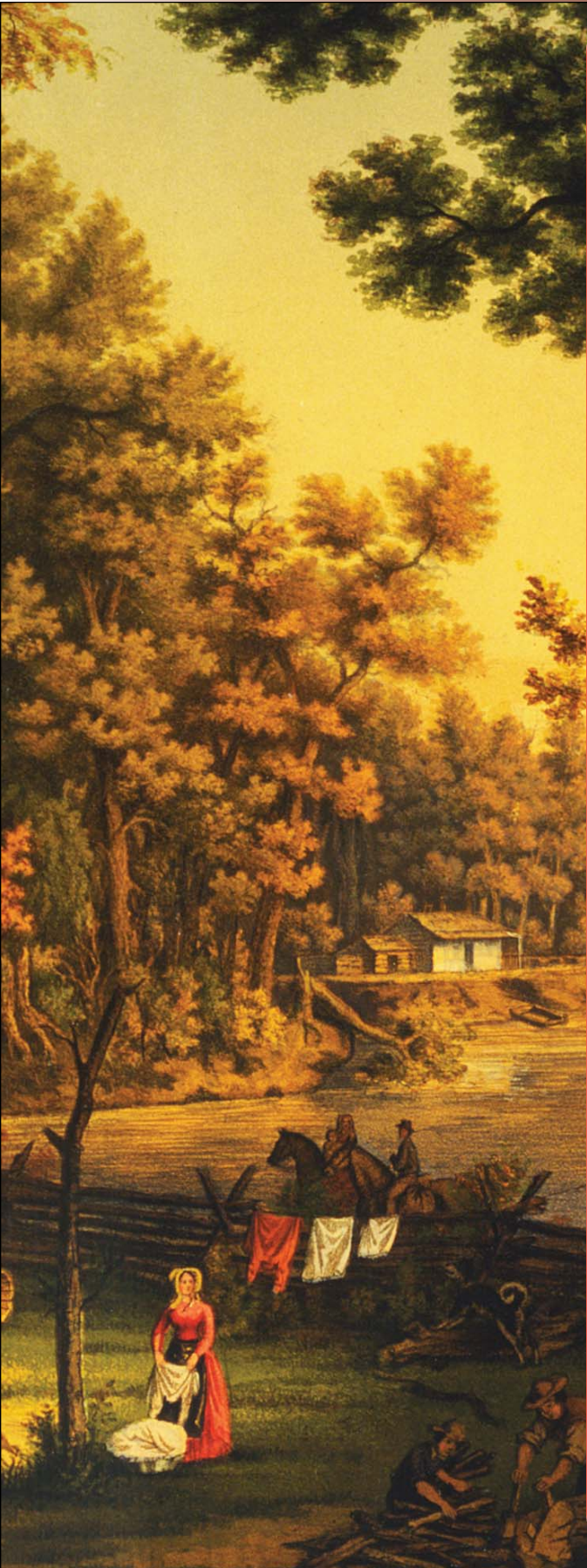
### Chapter Preview

#### TERMS

economic, cede,  
navigable,  
frontier, squatter,  
speculator, yeoman,  
freedman, plantation,  
planter, cotton gin,  
economy, mill



**Above:** Settlers often built their cabins near a river. This gave them water for drinking, bathing, and their livestock. It also made transportation easier.



# A

Alabama fever” struck the southern states after the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Andrew Jackson made treaties with the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chickasaw Indians. The Creek Indians had **ceded** (given up) much of their land in Alabama to the United States government. The U.S. government then sold the land to settlers. By 1820, three-fourths of Alabama was open for settlement. In 1810, there were 9,000 white and black settlers in the territory. By 1820, nearly 150,000 people lived in the state of Alabama.

This migration of settlers into Alabama changed the population from mainly Indian to largely white. It changed the way land was used. Huge fields for farming were created when forests were cleared. It changed the culture of the area from American Indian to American settler.

People like Judge Harry Toulmin wrote about the southern part of the state. The climate in the region provided for a long growing season. Toulmin said land near the rivers was good for growing crops like corn and cotton. He also pointed out the large pine forests in the area. People in other states with worn-out land read this article. Others who were looking for a place to settle read it too. Many people wanted to come to this rich state to live. It had good land for crops and plenty of lumber for building.

The pine forests Toulmin wrote about were of special interest. Many people used pine trees, especially the longleaf pines, for naval stores. Naval stores are products made from the resin taken from pines. These products included turpentine, which had many uses. Settlers used it in folk medicine. They also applied it to cloth and leather to help these items shed water. Camphene, or palmetto oil, was turpentine mixed with alcohol. It was used as a fuel for lamps until kerosene became available. The settlers needed naval stores to use and to sell.

# Focus on Reading Skills

## Main Idea and Supporting Detail

Read this story and answer the questions at the end. You will be looking for the main idea of the story and the details that support the idea.

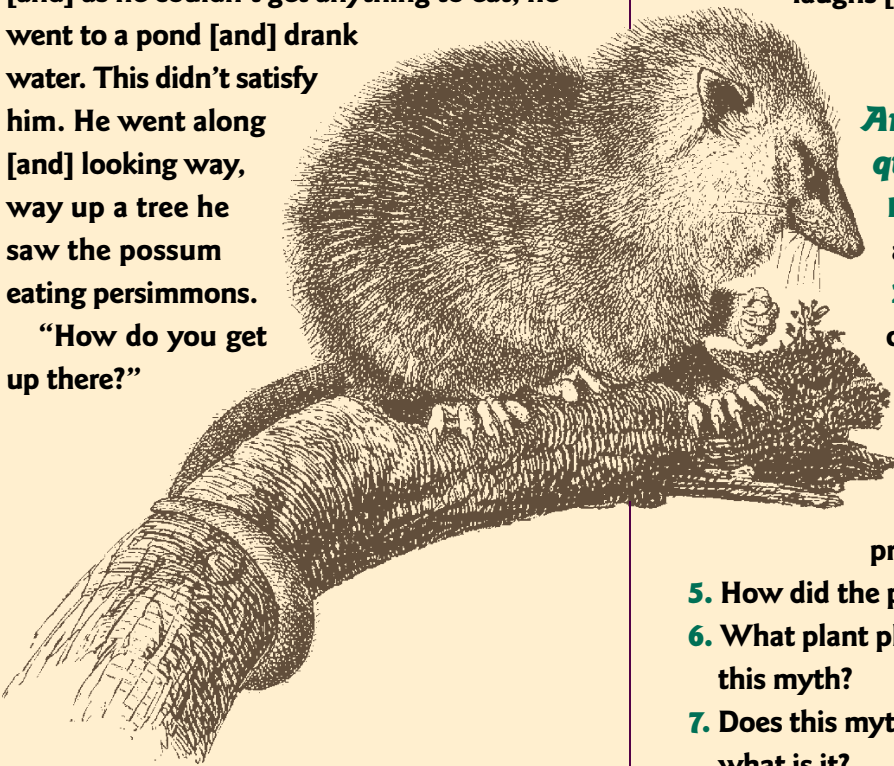
### Why the Possum Grins

*An Indian Myth*

Did you ever hear why the possum grins? No?

Well, the wolf was nearly starved to death [and] as he couldn't get anything to eat, he went to a pond [and] drank water. This didn't satisfy him. He went along [and] looking way, way up a tree he saw the possum eating persimmons.

"How do you get up there?"



"I climb up but sometimes the 'simmons fall down on the ground and I pick them up."

"I wish I had some."

"Well, you go way off yonder [and] run with all your might [and] butt your head against the tree [and] shake some down." The wolf did as directed, came with all his might, hit the tree [and] killed himself. The possum was so delighted at his death he has never stopped laughing. He laughs [and] grins yet.

### Answer the following questions:

1. What is this passage about?
2. Who are the main characters?
3. What was the setting of the myth? Or where were the characters?
4. What was the wolf's problem?
5. How did the possum fool the wolf?
6. What plant plays an important part in this myth?
7. Does this myth teach a lesson? If so, what is it?

# Section I

## Pioneers

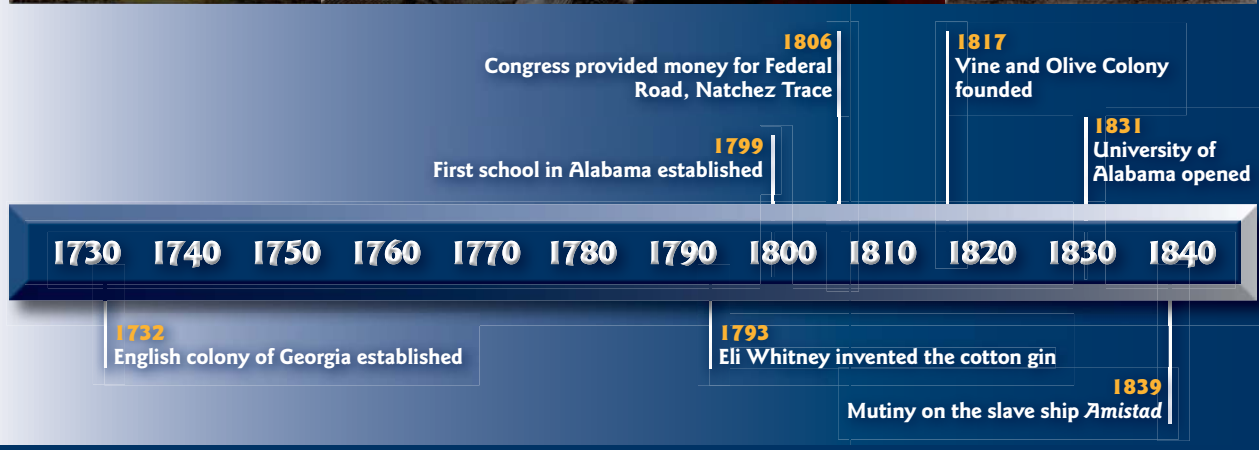
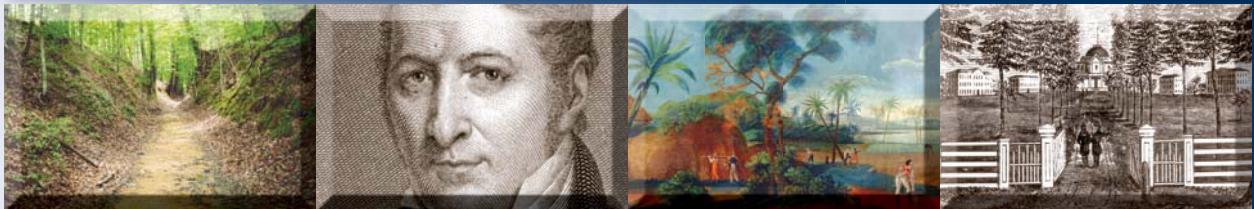
### As you read, look for

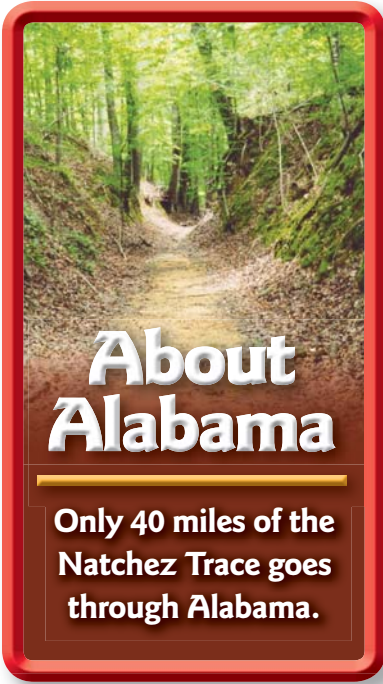
- how the United States got land for settlement;
- travel in early Alabama;
- terms: **navigable**, **frontier**.

Settlers heard reports of rich land, good climate, and **navigable** (passable by ship) rivers in Alabama. They were willing to leave their homes for a new frontier. (A **frontier** is land beyond settled areas.) They had dreams of wealth and a new start in life.

Some were already rich. These well-educated people brought their slaves and belongings to make a new home in richer Alabama. They bought large areas of land. But most of the

### Figure 11 Timeline: 1730 to 1840





## About Alabama

Only 40 miles of the Natchez Trace goes through Alabama.

**Below:** Sections of the Old Federal Road can still be found in Alabama. This one is in Lee County. Thousands of pioneers used the road over the years. This packed down the dirt surface and made the high banks seen here.

newcomers were poor and could only afford small farms. They barely had enough food to get them through a winter. Like the Indians, they hunted for food.

Most of the people who came to Alabama during this time were from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Many families brought everything they owned and came to stay. In just one day, an English geographer counted 1,200 people moving into the area. These pioneers walked or rode over trails and roads made by soldiers and American Indians.

### Pioneer Roads

Pioneers moving into Alabama usually traveled on one of three major roads. Congress provided money for the Federal Road (later called the Old Federal Road) and the Natchez Trace in 1806. These were the first two roads into present-day Alabama. Together, these roads connected Washington, D.C., and New Orleans, Louisiana. The Huntsville Road was also important to the pioneers.

These roads were dangerous to use because robbers attacked travelers. Settlers liked to make the journey in groups for protection.

The Old Federal Road mainly brought pioneers from Georgia and South Carolina. It entered Alabama just below the center of the state and generally followed the Alabama River. It started as a horse path and was improved to a wagon trail. But the road was very rough and had no bridges.

The Natchez Trace was a pioneer road that ran from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi. It crossed Alabama in the

northwestern corner of the state. Today, the Natchez Trace Parkway is a national park. You can travel the entire length of the road and stop at historic spots.

The Huntsville Road was part of a road that started in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In Alabama, it ran from Huntsville through Tuscaloosa to St. Stephens. St. Stephens was the capital of Alabama when it was just a territory.

## Traveling the Roads

Settlers traveled into Alabama in different ways. The poorest settlers pulled their own carts. Others had horses or oxen to pull the carts. Some used packhorses to carry their belongings. Those who could afford covered wagons used them. Pioneers who had slaves used them to drive the farm animals to the new land.

Some roads were paths barely wide enough for a family to walk single file. One woman wrote of her family's journey, "Got along very badly today. Roads rough and muddy, my oxen gave out and little wagon broke down."

Sometimes the pioneers marked the path for people who would follow. One of these roads was marked along the way by three notches cut into tree trunks. It became known as Three Notch Road.

On the well-traveled roads, there were taverns, forts, and stands selling food and supplies. The prices for goods at these roadside places were very high.



## Map 18 Early Settlements of Alabama

**Map Skill:** Which area of the state had the most settlements (SE, SW, NE, NW)? Why do you think that area had more settlements?

### Think It Through!

1. Why were people excited about the news of Alabama's resources?
2. What states did most Alabama settlers come from?
3. What government provided money for two roads through Alabama?
4. Name the routes the settlers used to travel into Alabama.



## Section 2

# Frontiers Open to Settlement

### As you read, look for

- the kinds of settlers who came to Alabama;
- how the pioneers lived;
- early schools in the state;
- terms: **squatter**, **speculator**, **yeoman**.

**Below:** Squatters moved onto land and built cabins without buying the land. They had to move when the land was sold.

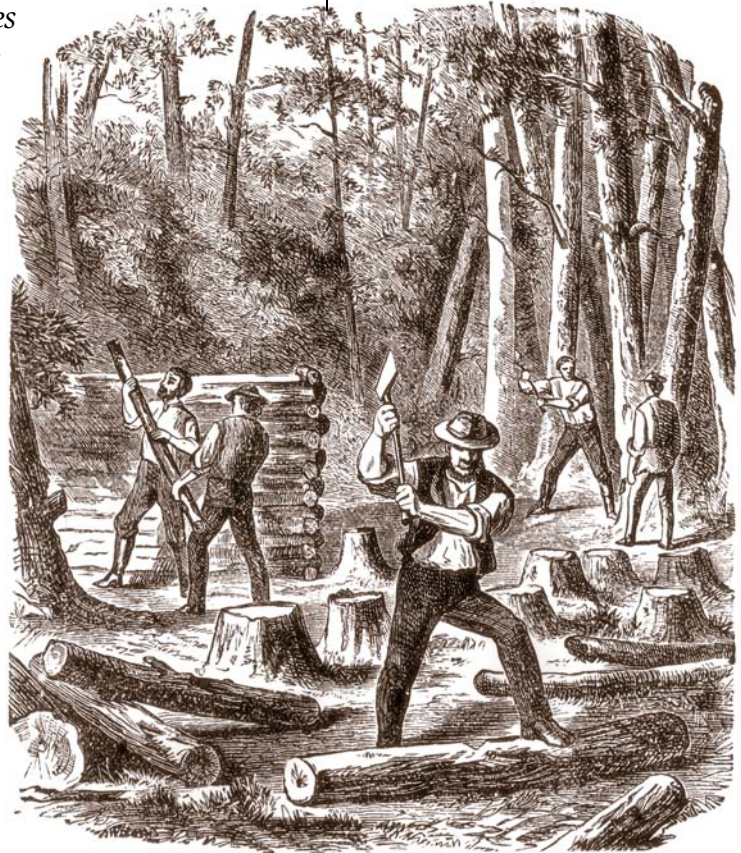
**Some of the earliest settlers came to present-day Alabama before** the government had land to sell. They did not wait to buy land. They just chose a place to live, cleared the land, built log cabins, and planted crops. These people were known as **squatters**.



After the land was surveyed, it was sold to the people who were willing to pay the most money. Most buyers bought 40 to 80 acres of farmland. Many squatters did not have enough money to buy the land they had settled. People with money bought the land, and the squatters were forced to move. Some of the squatters did buy the poorest land, which sold for a few dollars an acre.

Some people formed *land companies* and bought large amounts of land at very low prices. They were called speculators or land investors. (A **speculator** buys something planning to sell it later for a profit.) The speculators then divided the large areas of land into smaller parts. They sold each part for a higher price than they paid.

One of the most important people in early Alabama history was John W. Walker. He was a member of the Broad River Group of land investors. In 1809, the group bought former Creek land from the federal government. They paid about two dollars an acre for the land in Madison County, Mississippi Territory. In 1810, Walker and his wife, Matilda Pope, moved to this area. It was later known as Huntsville.



**Above:** Settlers often helped each other build their log cabins.

## The Life of Yeoman Farmers

Most of the pioneers were neither squatters nor speculators. They were yeoman farmers. (A **yeoman** is a person who owns and works a small farm.) These farmers worked hard to provide for their families. They grew vegetables and hunted animals for food. Their cattle roamed the woods in search of food.

### Building Log Cabins

When the settlers arrived and claimed their land, they needed shelter. Most settlers lived in log cabins. Often, the men in the village or settlement worked together to build the cabins. They chopped down trees and cut off the limbs. Then they cut the trees into logs of the same length. The men cut deep notches



## About Alabama

Filling the cracks between logs is called *chinking*.

**Below:** *This is an artist's idea of life on the frontier. It shows a peaceful scene with plenty of food. But for most settlers, real life on the frontier was hard.*

near the ends of the logs. The logs were then stacked to make the cabin walls.

The roof was made with thick boards. Wooden pegs held some boards in place. On other cabins, big rocks helped hold roofs in place.

When the logs were stacked, there were big cracks between them. Rain and cold wind came in through the cracks. So the settlers filled the cracks with sticks, small rocks, and mud. Even young children in the family helped fill cracks to make the cabin snug and dry.

### **Living in the Cabin**

At one end of the cabin was a large fireplace. It was used for heating the cabin and for cooking. Pots were hung from hooks inside the fireplace to cook vegetables and soups. Bread, potatoes, and meat were cooked in heavy pans over hot coals.

The earliest fireplace chimneys were made of sticks. The sticks were laced together and sealed inside and out with clay. Later, chimneys were made of big rocks held together with thick mud.

Log cabins were built close to a spring or a stream so families could have water to drink. Families also used the streams for bathing and washing clothes.





**Left:** The fireplace was the center of life in a log cabin. It gave light, heat, and a place to cook food. **Below:** Clearing land of trees to make fields was one of the hardest tasks on the frontier. These settlers have “girdled” the trees, which is to cut a ring through the bark all the way around the tree. This will kill the trees and make it easier to cut them down.

Most cabins had only one room. Sometimes the walls were high enough so children could sleep in a loft. A few cabins had two rooms with an open hall between them. A large family might add an extra room or a shed to the cabin. Mattresses were stuffed with hay, grass, cornhusks, or Spanish moss. The hides of deer or bear were often used as blankets.

Rich settlers brought fine furniture with them. Most settlers made their own furniture. Some tables and chairs were just logs with legs on them. A hollow log lined with a soft animal skin became a cradle. Clothes and cooking pots hung on wooden pegs driven into the walls.

### **Farming**

Clearing a field for farming was harder than building a log cabin. First, the settlers had to chop down all the trees. Then stumps, roots, bushes, and vines were dug out. That could take more than a year! Remember that the settlers had few tools and no modern things like chainsaws and bulldozers. After that, the land was ready to plow. Then the settlers could plant crops and grow food. The work was hard, but the whole family helped.

Crops were not easy to grow. The farmer had to worry about freezing weather and drought. He had many problems including



animals eating the crops. Common food crops were corn, potatoes, peas, squash, beans, sugarcane, and melons. Some of the harvest was eaten fresh. The rest was dried and stored for use in the winter.

Corn was the main farm crop. From corn, settlers made cornbread and grits. They made molasses and cane syrup from sugarcane. They also made syrup from a grain called sweet sorghum. These syrups were used for sweetening in place of the costly white, or refined, sugar.

A few families grew cotton, and some had a small patch of tobacco. They did not have cigarettes, but some men and women smoked pipes, chewed tobacco, or dipped snuff. Yeoman farmers had few or no slaves to help with the work. It was difficult for them to make much money growing cotton because their farms were so small. There were almost no slaves or free blacks in the regions settled mainly by yeoman farmers.

### **Fun on the Frontier**

Settlers had to be brave and strong to make a new home on the frontier. Most early pioneers did not have close neighbors. They were often lonely. But as more people moved to the area, social life improved.



**Above:** This very early Alabama quilt was made in the Selma area in the 1820s.

**Right:** Corn shuckin' was a fun way to celebrate the corn harvest with neighbors.





**Above:** Family members and friends came from far and wide for a frontier wedding.

Families who lived near each other helped one another. They worked together to build barns, clear land, and build fences. While the men worked outside, the women cooked a huge meal. As they cooked, they laughed and talked. Sometimes the women worked together to make quilts. These gatherings were called quilting “bees.”

Families had fun too. They visited each other or had parties. Groups usually had a good storyteller who could make everyone laugh. If someone could play a fiddle, people might sing and dance for hours.

A *corn shuckin’* was one of the favorite get-togethers. The settlers gathered to shuck (take the husk off) corn. There would be races to see which team could remove the cornhusks fastest. Music, good food, and games made this get-together great fun. Such happy times were good breaks from the hard work.

### **Education on the Frontier**

The early settlers were busy trying to feed and care for their families. They did not have time to think about education. Later, more families with children moved into the area. Some of the pioneers then began planning schools.

## **About Alabama**

Early schools were sometimes called “blab schools.” The students would read aloud all at once. The first student to arrive began to read aloud, then the others read when they arrived. They recited until all had finished.



**Above:** Philip Henry Gosse was an English naturalist. He spent eight months as a schoolteacher near Pleasant Hill, Alabama, in 1838. Back in England, his *Letters from Alabama* appeared in a magazine. His writings were critical of slavery.

In 1799, William and John Pierce opened the first school in Alabama. It was at the Boat Yard on Lake Tensaw. Here the kin (relatives) of the Scottish trader Lachlan McGillivray—the Taits, Weatherfords, and Durants—and other children learned to read.

Other schools were opened as more families arrived. Early schools were one-room log cabins. Children sat on benches made of logs cut in half. Wide, rough boards hung on the walls like shelves and were used for desks. A table or shelf held a wooden water bucket. Everyone used the same long-handled dipper to drink from the bucket.

Most schools did not have many books. Pupils had no pencils or paper on which to write. Instead, they memorized and recited their lessons. Some wrote with chalk on a slate (a thin piece of rock that can be wiped clean).

One teacher taught all the grades. While one group recited the lesson to the teacher, another group studied. Pupils who did not know their lessons had to stand in a corner. Sometimes the teacher used long switches to help naughty pupils learn to behave!

Philip Henry Gosse taught at Pleasant Hill in Dallas County. He wrote:

*My schoolroom is a funny place, built wholly of round, unhewn logs.... The desks are merely boards.... The pupils are, mostly,... real young hunters, who handle the long rifle with more ease than the goose-quill, and who are more at home in "twisting a rabbit," or "treeing a possum," than in conjugating a verb.*

### Think It Through!

1. What was the difference between speculators and squatters?
2. Why did the pioneers build their cabins of logs?
3. Why were settlers sometimes lonesome?
4. What did settlers do for fun?
5. How did students at school get a drink of water?



*John Looney House, a rare pioneer two-story log house in Ashville, Alabama, 1820*

## Figure 12 Selected Early Towns and Villages

There were few towns and villages in early Alabama and they were far apart. They were usually built near a place where people gathered. These places included mills, ferries, roads or crossroads, Indian villages, forts, or natural resources. These little towns may have had a church, a store, and a school.

County	Town or Village	Date
Autauga	Prattville	1816
Baldwin	Fort Mims	1813
Barbour	Yufala	Creek Indian village
Bibb	Centreville	1819
Blount	Brooksville	1816
Bullock	Chananagi	Lower Creek Indian village
Butler	Fort Dale	1818
Calhoun	Tallaseehatchee	Indian village destroyed by General Jackson's forces
Franklin	Cedar Creek	1815
Jefferson	Ashville	1822
Madison	Hunt's Spring	1802
Marengo	Demopolis	1818

Source: *Historical Atlas of Alabama Volume I*



## Section 3

# Different Cultures Move to the Alabama Frontier

**Below:** This hand-painted wallpaper shows the Vine and Olive Colony. It measures about 22 feet wide and was painted in France by an unknown artist. Do you think the artist had ever been to Alabama? Why or why not?

### As you read, look for

- the reason for another French settlement;
- differences between yeoman farmers and planters;
- terms: **freedman, plantation, planter.**

**As it does today, Alabama had many different cultures long ago.** On the frontier, there were people from American Indian, French, Spanish, and British cultures. There were also yeoman



farmers, slaves, freedmen, and plantation owners. (A **freedman** was a black person who was not a slave.) These different ways of living often went on side by side. One culture would often mix with another. People used foods, words, and clothing styles from other cultures.

### **The Vine and Olive Colony**

A different kind of settler came to Alabama in 1817 from France. These people had been friends of Emperor Napoleon. They came to the United States where they planned to grow grapes and olives. The government gave them some land along the Tombigbee River. They called their town Demopolis, which means “city of the people.”

The French settlers were shocked by life on the frontier. They had never cleared land, built cabins, or farmed. They tried hard, but found that the climate was not good for growing olive trees. Then they learned the land they had worked so hard to clear was outside their land claim.

The French settlers soon moved to cities along the Gulf Coast. Life there was more like what they had known in France. These settlers left behind French names such as Marengo, Bon Secour, and Bayou La Batre.



**Above:**  
*This lady's fan with carved ivory sticks belonged to a resident of the colony.*





**Above:** *Gaineswood, in Demopolis, is one of the most beautiful antebellum houses in Alabama. It was designed and built by its owner, Nathan Bryan Whitfield. He was a planter who moved to Alabama from North Carolina. The house took 18 years to complete. **Opposite page, below:** The ballroom at Gaineswood is considered to be the finest room in the house. This is where Whitfield would have entertained his friends and neighbors. **Opposite page, above:** Kirkwood, in Eutaw, is another example of a fine antebellum mansion.*

## Planters

Most people in Alabama who grew crops were yeoman farmers. But some of the wealthier settlers owned large areas of land. These big farms were called **plantations**, and the people who owned them were called **planters**. Planters owned slaves who farmed the large plantations.

Plantations used slave labor to grow most of the food that they needed. Slaves on the plantation even made the family's clothes. Neither planters nor yeoman farmers bought much from a store. But planters could afford to buy things from Europe and the North. Goods like tools, cloth, and food came by ship through the ports of Mobile and New Orleans.

## Plantation Homes

Planters often lived in beautiful houses. Some were two stories tall with columns. There was usually a wide porch on the front where the family could sit, rock, and talk in the late afternoon.

Rooms in the houses were usually large with very high ceilings. Since heat rises, this helped keep the rooms cool in summer. But the high ceilings made the rooms hard to heat in winter. For that reason, most rooms had a fireplace.

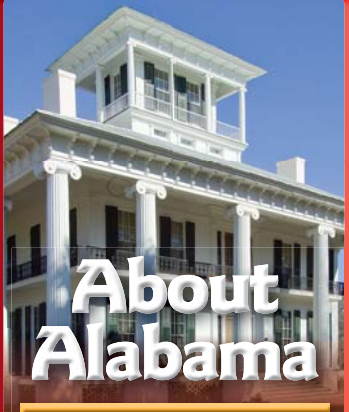
Some plantation families had furniture that came from Europe. Many houses also had fine furniture made in the plantation's carpentry shop. Oil paintings of family members (portraits) often hung on the walls. Artists traveled from one plantation to another painting these portraits. The artist stayed with the family while he painted.

The plantation kitchen was most often in a one-room building separate from the main house. In case of fire, this plan stopped damage to the main house. This also meant that the main house escaped the heat from the cooking fires. Servants carried hot food from the kitchen to the dining room.

### **Social Life of Planters**

Families on plantations got lonesome too. When planters' families visited each other, they often stayed more than a day or two. The men usually traveled on horseback. The other family members rode in a horse-drawn carriage. Women brought their long dresses in small trunks. Men packed their clothes in leather cases.

The men hunted, fished, or rode their horses around the fields. Sometimes they went to horse races. If the guests stayed long



## About Alabama

Old plantation houses are called *antebellum*. That is a Latin word meaning “before the war.” In the United States, the term is used to describe houses built before the Civil War.





## About Alabama

Founded in 1831, the University of Alabama is the state's oldest public university. Women could not attend until 1893, and black students were not admitted until 1963.

enough, the men might go to the nearest town. They could get supplies and learn the latest news there.

The women might sew or embroider (a form of fancy needlework) while they talked. Some painted designs on china or drew pictures. Someone might play the piano or other musical instrument for the group.

Plantation families and their friends had a full social life. It included outdoor parties, weddings, foxhunts, and church services.

### Plantation Children

The children of wealthy planters did not have to go to one-room schools. They did not lack books or paper. Planters hired teachers for their sons. The boys studied Latin, English, history, literature, and mathematics. Many of them went to colleges in the East. Some attended the University of Alabama. Planters expected their sons to help run the family plantation. That was the goal of their education.

Boys were allowed the freedom to roam the fields and woods for the fun of it. When a boy was old enough, he learned how to handle a gun. With it, a young hunter went after deer, turkey, duck, fox, and squirrel. When the weather turned hot, boys enjoyed a swim in the creek.

Some daughters of plantation owners went to special schools in town. One of these schools was Locust Dell Academy. It was located on what is now the University of North Alabama campus at Florence. Girls studied music, French, geography, and literature. At home, girls learned to sew and entertain. Mothers taught their daughters how to manage the household. They learned how to plan everything from small dinners to very large parties. The girls were also taught to direct the people who worked in the plantation house and yard.

### Think It Through!

1. What does the word Demopolis mean?
2. Why did plantation houses have high ceilings?
3. Where was the kitchen in the planter's home? Why?
4. How was a planter's son educated?

# Focus on Agriculture

## Alabama Crops

**Certain crops were native to North and South America.** That is, they grew here before the Europeans came. Important native crops included corn, potatoes, squash, beans, tomatoes, tobacco, and sugarcane. European settlers learned about these crops from the Indians. But the Europeans and Africans also brought crops with them that were new to this part of the world. Cotton, peas, melons, okra, and peanuts were *introduced* crops.

Many crops were grown just so people could feed themselves. Other crops were grown so they could be sold to make money. Crops grown to be sold are called *cash crops*. Cotton (pictured right), sugarcane, and tobacco became important cash crops in the southeastern states. Even today, cotton is an important cash crop in Alabama.

Climate influenced the kinds of crops grown in different regions of the country. Each crop needs a certain length of growing season. Some crops, like cotton, require a longer growing season than others.

In the northern states, farmers could not grow cotton or sugarcane. The growing season was not

long enough there. So those farmers grew wheat and corn to eat and as cash crops. They fed corn to hogs and cattle, which they then sold. Farmers in the South grew all kinds of food crops. Because of the long growing season, cotton and cane were the main cash crops in the South.

Growing cotton or sugarcane was very hard work—a lot harder than growing corn or wheat. A

wheat farm might require only 3 or 4 workers.

A single family could run a wheat farm. The same size cotton plantation needed 20 or more workers. That was more than a family could do, so planters bought slaves to do the work. There were few slaves in the wheat and corn regions

of the North because they were not needed.

There were many slaves in the South where cotton was grown.

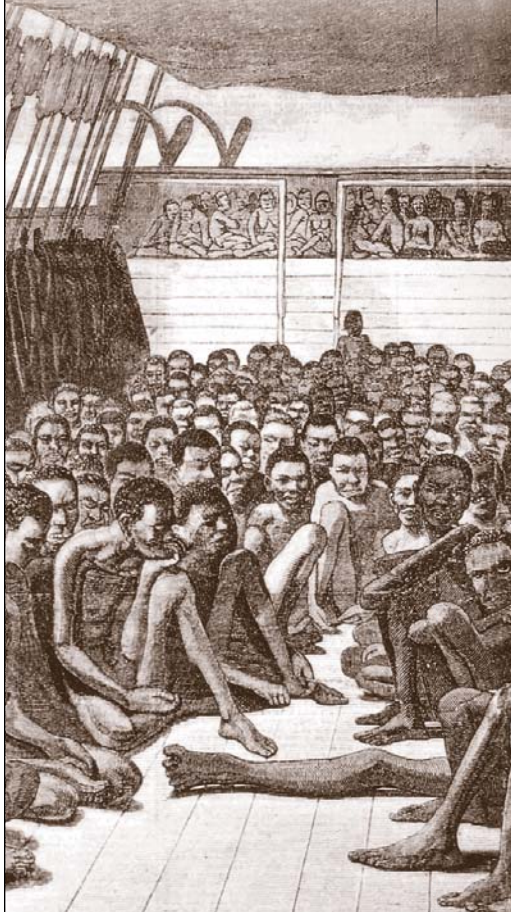
Not all parts of Alabama had the same number of slaves. Plantations were concentrated in the Black Belt and in the broad Tennessee River Valley. The planters needed large areas of flat land. If you look at the map on page 155, you will see that there were large numbers of slaves in those regions of Alabama.



## Section 4

# Slavery in Alabama

**Below:** Slaves were first brought to America from Africa in 1619. Many thousands of African men and women died during the long voyages.



### As you read, look for

- how black people came to Alabama;
- how slaves lived;
- the invention that changed Alabama's economy;
- terms: **cotton gin, economy, mill.**

**The first black people to settle in Alabama arrived** with the Spanish. When de Soto came to this land, he brought African men with him. Later, a few black people settled with the French in Mobile. By the early 1800s, there were thousands of Africans in the South. Almost all of these black people were slaves.

### Slavery

The first slave ship to come to America was a Dutch ship. It brought African slaves to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Slaves were brought into Mobile in 1721 on the ship *Africane*. The slaves were forced to work. They could not quit their jobs or leave the area.

### The Last Slave Ship

The *Clotilde* was the last known slave ship to come to America. Bringing slaves into the United States was against the law after 1808. But in 1860, the *Clotilde* sailed on a bet by the ship's owner. He bet that the ship could bring slaves into Mobile. The plan was to do this right under the noses of federal agents. The slaves were moved to a steamboat and kept hidden. A ship's pilot guided the boat at night up Mobile Bay to Clarke County. They

stopped where the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers meet.

These enslaved people were members of several tribes in West Africa. After the Civil War, some settled in an area near Mobile called AfricaTown, USA. The last survivor of the illegal voyage was Cudjoe Lewis, whose African name was Kazoola.

In 1860, about one-third of Alabama families owned slaves. Half of those owned fewer than 5, and many others owned fewer than 10. However, a planter in Greene County owned 647 slaves. Most slaves worked on plantations. Planters in Marengo, Dallas, Greene, Montgomery, and Madison Counties owned the greatest number of slaves in the state. These counties are in the Black Belt and Tennessee River Valley. Cotton grows well in the rich soil of these areas.

### **The Life of Slaves**

Slaves worked at different jobs. Some worked as field hands in the cotton fields. They planted, plowed, chopped, and picked cotton. They also had to remove the seeds from the cotton. The field hands worked from sunrise to sunset. Other slaves worked in and around the planter's home. Most of these were cooks, carriage drivers, kitchen helpers, garden workers, maids, or

## About Alabama

**AfricaTown, USA, was the first town in the United States that was founded, occupied, and governed by African Americans.**

**Below: These slaves are bringing in the cotton harvest at the end of a long day. Field slaves on cotton plantations worked from “can see” (sunrise) to “can’t see” (sunset).**





# Spotlight on Culture

## AfricaTown, USA

After the trip from Africa into Mobile, the illegal slaves were secretly sold to different people. Then in 1865, the end of the Civil War brought freedom to all of the slaves. Those who had come on the *Clotilde* wanted to go back home to Africa, but did not have the money. They decided to live together and use their own language and customs.

They were on the land of Timothy Meaher, owner of the *Clotilde*. The area was known as Plateau. This land became AfricaTown. The people earned money and bought the land from Meaher. At first, the people made shelter from whatever they could find. They hunted in the forest for food.

The people of AfricaTown practiced their African religion and spoke their African language. They gave their children African names. By 1869, most citizens had turned to Christianity. They built their first church, Old Landmark Baptist Church. By 1880, many of AfricaTown's residents had been born in America. They had never been to Africa. But their parents taught them about Africa and the language. Many of these children lived into the 1950s still speaking their African language.

Two citizens of AfricaTown, Cudjoe Lewis and Gumpa, sued a major company for injuries



**Above:** Cudjoe Lewis was the last survivor of the slaves brought to Mobile on the *Clotilde*.

on a railroad. The case went all the way to the Alabama Supreme Court.

Today, there are thousands of great- and great-great-grandchildren of those slaves from the last slave ship. They know the names and homelands of their ancestors. They are very proud to know their history.

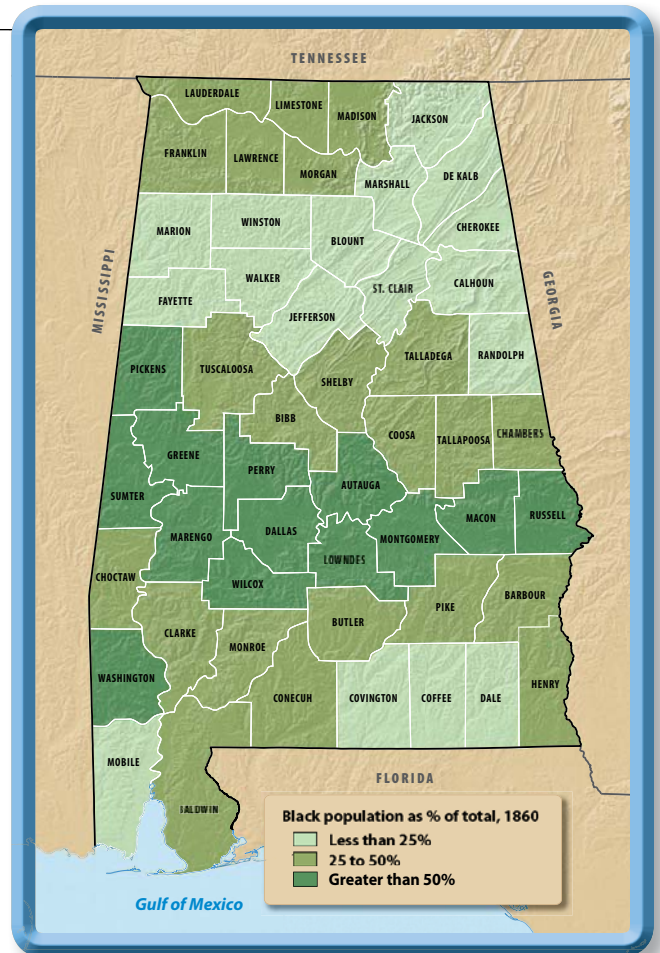
butlers. Older women cared for young children during the day while their parents worked. But even slave children worked. They carried water, gathered eggs, ran errands, and pulled weeds.

Slaves on the large plantations lived in cabins behind the “big house.” The cabins were usually one or two rooms with a fireplace. Instead of glass windows, they had wooden shutters. The floors of cabins were rough boards or just dirt. Furniture might be chairs, a rough table, and beds stuffed with cornhusks or cotton.

Plantation owners provided food for the slaves. They usually had salt pork, sweet potatoes, molasses, dried peas, fresh vegetables, and cornmeal to make bread. Some slaves grew vegetables behind their cabins. Sometimes the slaves killed and cooked squirrels or rabbits. Some slave owners (masters) did not give the slaves enough food.

Masters gave out clothing twice a year. If slaves had shoes, they were rough and often caused blisters. House servants often had better clothes than field hands. Many times the house servants wore hand-me-downs from the planter’s family. Some slaves had to wear the same clothes all year round.

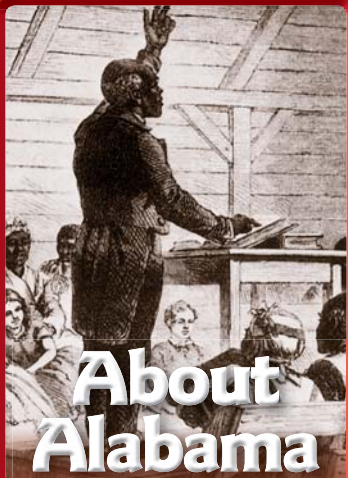
The plantation owner’s wife most often treated sick slaves. She used a thick “home medicine” book to help her know what to do for the sick. Most people depended on herbs and other folk



## Map 19 Slave Population in 1860

**Map Skill:** Study the map to determine why more slaves were in the counties shown. Since they worked growing cotton, could it have to do with the land region and soil?

**Left:** The buildings that slaves lived in were very basic—just a cabin, often with a dirt floor.



**Caesar was a slave belonging to John Blackwell. Caesar spoke so well that the Alabama Baptist Association bought him for \$625.**

**He was tall and a forceful speaker. He preached at Baptist Association group meetings and at the First Baptist Church of Montgomery.**

“remedies.” Some white families had the nearest doctor come out to treat slaves in emergencies.

### ***Beliefs and Customs of Slaves***

When two slaves wanted to get married, the man would ask the master, who often married the couple. There might be a party at the wedding. Sometimes a couple married by doing something simple. One common custom was to hold hands and jump over a broom. Most owners wanted slaves to marry and have large families. The planters wanted more slaves to work on the plantation.

Religion was important in the life of a slave. To die and go to heaven seemed better than being a slave. Some of the songs we know today began when slaves sang about their hope for a good life in heaven. Songs like “I Got a Robe” tell of the slaves’ desire to be in heaven.

Slaves kept many of their African religious practices. These customs included group singing, public ceremonies, and the special use of water. They developed a special style of preaching. These African practices blended well into most Christian churches in the South.

Some slaves had their own church meetings. Others went to the same church as the master’s family. The slaves sat together at the back of the church or in the balcony. Some churches in Alabama had more slaves than whites attending services. Preachers for the slaves might be slaves themselves. Sometimes wives of planters or white clergymen led the services.

### ***Slave Codes***

There were many laws concerning slaves. The Slave Codes were laws made to control the slaves in every way.

It was against the law to teach slaves to read or write. Slave children did not go to school. However, the wives and daughters of some plantation owners taught their slaves to read from the Bible. Sometimes, an owner taught math to a slave so the slave could help the owner keep records. Planters were fined if caught teaching their slaves.

By law, slaves could not carry weapons, own land, or speak against a white man in court. Slaves could not own a dog, a horse, a mule, or a hog. They could not spend time or food caring for an animal. If slaves broke a law, they would be whipped, or worse.

One of the worst things about being a slave was being sold. Buying and selling slaves was a common practice. Some masters sold slave families together. Others sold the father to one planter and the mother and children to another planter. The family might be separated by hundreds of miles. By Alabama law, a mother and her young children had to be sold together. This law was not always obeyed.

### Free Blacks

Not all blacks in Alabama were slaves. When the Alabama Territory became a state in 1819, only 1 black person out of 85 was free. During the next 40 years, the number of free blacks grew, but not nearly as fast as the number of slaves. Some free blacks owned slaves.

Blacks gained freedom in several ways. A small number of slaves bought their freedom. Sometimes, slaves with special skills were allowed to work outside the plantation. Some worked at mining and others worked at construction (building). The owners let them keep a small part of the money they earned. Sometimes a master would give a slave his or her freedom. Children born to a free mother remained free.

When they gained their freedom, most blacks did not stay on the farms. They moved to towns to find jobs and places to live. Some free blacks worked as carpenters, cooks, and barbers. Others worked in factories making mattresses and shoes. Many had learned these trades while they were slaves.

There were also special laws for free blacks. They had to carry passes to prove they were free. They could not vote and had only a small chance to get an education.

### Cotton Gin Increases Amount of Cotton Grown

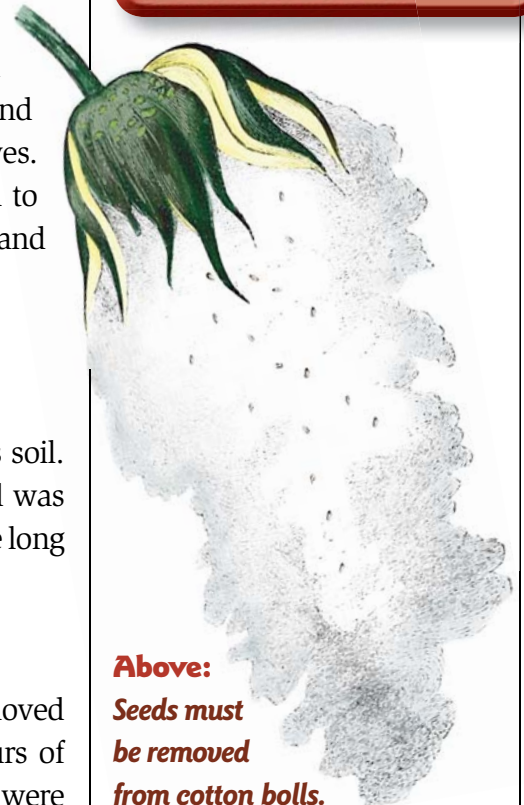
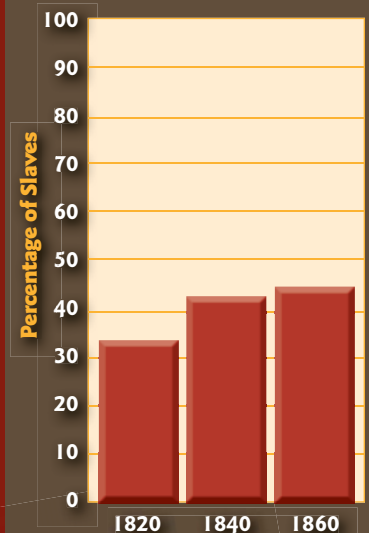
Alabama's Black Belt is known for the dark color of its soil. Early settlers learned that this dark, sometimes sticky soil was good for growing cotton. Alabama's climate gave cotton the long growing season it needed.

### Eli Whitney's Invention

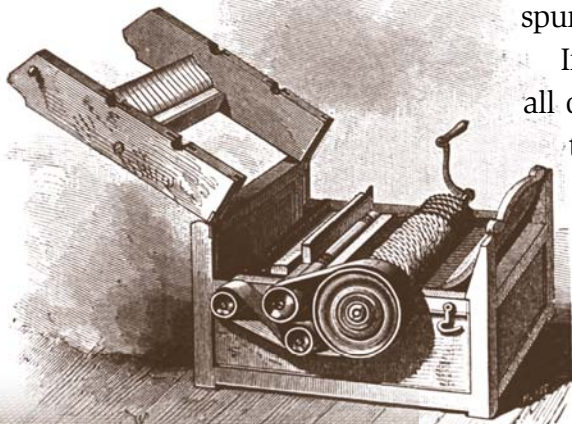
After cotton was picked, the small seeds had to be removed from the bolls. This was done by hand, and it took hours of work. Once the seeds were gone, the short, white fibers were

**Figure 13**  
**Percentage of Slaves in Population**

In 1860, there were 2,690 free blacks and 435,080 slaves in Alabama.



**Above:**  
**Seeds must be removed from cotton bolls.**



spun into thread. Then the threads were woven into cloth. In 1793, a young inventor named Eli Whitney changed all of that. He made a simple machine that could take the seeds out of the fiber. Whitney named his invention the “cotton engine.” That was later shortened to **cotton gin**.

To use a cotton gin, one man turned a crank handle. This action turned rollers with metal teeth on them. When cotton was fed into the machine, the teeth took the seeds out of the fiber. Later, larger gins were built. The large gins used the power of horses or water.

### Cotton Kingdom

In 1820, Alabama grew only a small amount of the United States’ cotton crop. The use of the cotton gin changed that. Alabama’s cotton harvest increased to almost one-fourth of the nation’s total crop. As people wanted more cotton, more workers were needed. This meant more slaves were put to work in the fields.

As use of the cotton gin spread, landowners grew more cotton. Whitney’s invention made a big difference in Alabama’s economy. (The **economy** includes all the things people do to make and sell goods and services.) It helped Alabama become the “cotton kingdom” of the South. The worldwide market for cotton grew rapidly. This was because more cotton was needed for the textile mills of Great Britain and France.

These **mills** were factories built near rivers with swift-flowing water. The water turned a waterwheel that then moved the factory parts. The first mills were gristmills. The waterwheel moved a heavy stone to grind wheat or corn into flour or meal.

Most of Alabama’s cotton was shipped out of Mobile. Cotton grown in the Tennessee Valley was shipped on the Tennessee River. The route was west, then south to the Port of New Orleans in Louisiana.

**Above:** Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin (top) while visiting a cotton plantation in Georgia. This invention led to a large increase in the production of cotton, and the need for many more slaves to grow it.

### Think It Through!

1. Describe the life of a slave.
2. How did slaves practice their religion?
3. How did the cotton gin change Alabama?

# Alabama Portrait

## Horace King

**Horace King (1807-1885) was born a slave in South Carolina. He went on to be a huge success as an engineer, architect, and builder. King was one of the wealthiest former slaves in Alabama.**

John Goodwin, a builder, bought Horace King in 1830. King learned to design and build while working for Goodwin. In 1846, John Goodwin freed his slave, Horace King. After King was free, he and Goodwin became business partners. Together they built a 560-foot-long covered bridge. It crossed the Chattahoochee River at Phenix City (Girard, at that time), Alabama.

In 1839, King married Frances Gould Thomas, a free black woman. Because she was free, her children were free. After Frances died, he married Sarah Jane Jones McManus in 1865. His sons continued in the building business and were very successful. His children were Washington, Marshall, John Thomas, Annie Elizabeth, and George.

After the Civil War, Horace King served two terms in the Alabama Legislature. At this time, many buildings lay destroyed by the war. King helped the state recover from the war. He did this by building many new businesses such as warehouses and mills. King also built bridges and the Lee County Courthouse.

King is best known for his wagon and railroad bridges. Some of the towns with King bridges are Eufaula, Phenix City, Tuscaloosa, Tallassee, and Wetumpka. He also built homes and the



**Above:** *This is one of the freestanding spiral staircases of the Alabama State Capitol. It is believed that Horace King built these beautiful stairs.*

Alabama state mental hospital. King had a very good reputation. Many people wanted Horace King as their builder.

Horace King did not allow his past status as a slave to take away his kindness. When Goodwin died in 1849, King had a marker put on his grave. Some of the words on it are

*This stone was placed here by Horace King in lasting remembrance of the love and gratitude for his lost friend and former master.*

Horace King died in LaGrange, Georgia. His granite headstone reads “Horace King, Master Covered Bridge Builder.”

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

Pioneers moved into Alabama along the Federal Road, the Natchez Trace, and the Huntsville Road. Some people, called squatters, lived on land that did not belong to them. Others, called speculators, bought large tracts of land to sell for a profit.

Most pioneers lived in simple log cabins. They cleared the land and farmed it for a living. They helped each other and got together for fun.

Pioneer schools were usually in log buildings, and they had few books or supplies. The children memorized their lessons.

A group of French settlers came to present-day Demopolis. The settlement was called the Vine and Olive Colony. The people later moved to cities along the Gulf Coast.

Most people who grew crops were called yeoman farmers. Those with larger amounts of land were called planters. Planters owned slaves who worked the land and cared for the planter's family. Life for a slave was very hard. A small number of African slaves were freed and able to work for money.

Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793. It made cotton a very important crop in Alabama.



## Remember

Choose the correct words from the list below to tell the story. Write the words in the correct order on a separate piece of paper. Be careful; not all words are used.

Ceded	Plantations
Cotton gin	Planters
Economic	Speculators
Freedman	Squatters
Mills	Yeoman

After the Indians \_\_\_\_\_ their land to the U.S. government, roads were built. Pioneers were the first settlers to come to the territory. Soon \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ farmers came to make money or new lives.

Eli Whitney's invention of the \_\_\_\_\_ made cotton a moneymaking crop. \_\_\_\_\_ used slave labor on very large farms called \_\_\_\_\_. The slaves led very hard lives because they were owned by another person. They grew cotton for the textile \_\_\_\_\_ in France and Great Britain.



## Reviewing the Facts

1. Name three roads that pioneers used for traveling to Alabama.
2. Most farmers in Alabama grew their own crops without the help of slaves. What were these farmers called?
3. Name some food crops of early settlers.
4. What were the large farms called that used slave labor?



## Using Critical Thinking Skills

1. Compare your life as a student to that of a pioneer student. To a slave child.
2. Why was it important for a pioneer family to clear the land quickly?
3. List some different or unusual things that you might do for fun if you were a pioneer.
4. What are three things Horace King is known for doing?



## Making Decisions

1. Pioneers often risked death and hardship to move to Alabama. Would you have left a home in Georgia to move to Alabama? Why or why not?
2. What questions would you ask before you decided which road to take into early Alabama?
3. Squatters came to Alabama. Why do you think they decided to settle on land that was not theirs? What would you do?



## Project

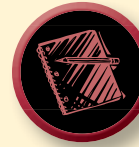
Here are some of the songs of early settlers and/or slaves: “Down in the Valley,” “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Bluetail Fly,” “Steal Away,” and “Little Brown Church.” Choose a song from the list and find the words to it. Find out if any of these songs are still sung today. Then sing a song or two!



## Writing

Pretend that you are a pioneer child who has just moved to Alabama. Write a letter to family or friends in the state or country that you left. Include how the land looks; what your home is like; what you

do, eat, and wear; how you feel about your new home in Alabama. Describe any problems that you have or see.



## Preparing for Tests

**Multiple Choice**—These questions are like those you may see on tests. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Which of the following facts is true for a planter?
  - A. Sold land to make profit
  - B. Owned small amount of land
  - C. Farmed the land with family
  - D. Used slave labor for farming
2. Which of the following facts is true for both the yeoman farmer and the speculator?
  - A. Owned large tracts of land
  - B. Farmed the land
  - C. Used no slaves for farm labor
  - D. Sold land for profit



## Using Technology

In order to understand more about slavery, you should look at some of the laws called the Slave Codes. Using the Internet, go to [archives.state.al.us](http://archives.state.al.us) and find the Slave Code of 1833. Look at Section 31 on page 397 of the code. What could any person not do? What was the fine if a person was convicted of breaking this law?