

Alabama: Our Beautiful Home

A photograph of the Alabama State Capitol building, a large white neoclassical structure with a prominent dome and a portico supported by columns. The building is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. Lush green trees are visible on both sides of the building, and a well-manicured lawn with some pink flowers is in the foreground.

Chapter 5: Settlement of a Territory STUDY PRESENTATION



Section 1: Pioneers
Section 2: Frontiers Open to Settlement
Section 3: Different Cultures Move to the Alabama Frontier
Section 4: Slavery in Alabama



Section 1: Pioneers

- Essential Question: How did settlers move around in the Alabama territory?



Section 1: Pioneers

- What terms do I need to know?
 - navigable
 - frontier



Introduction

- Good land, good climate, and **navigable** rivers attracted settlers to Alabama.
- Some settlers were wealthy and brought their own slave workers.
- Most were poor and had to fish, hunt, or grow their own food to live.
- Most settlers were from Virginia, the Carolinas, or Georgia travelling on paths made by Indians or soldiers.



Early Settlements in Alabama



Pioneer Roads

- The Federal Road and Natchez Trace (1806) were the first real roads into Alabama.
- They connected Washington, D.C. to New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Settlers traveled in groups for protection.
- Roads were rough and had no bridges.
- The Huntsville Road connected St. Stephens, Alabama's capital, with Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Traveling the Roads

- Poor settlers pulled their own carts with all their belongings. Wealthier settlers had horses or oxen to pull wagons.
- Some roads were simply a path.
- Well-traveled roads might have a tavern, fort, or food stand along the way, but prices were high.



Section 2: Frontiers Open to Settlement

- Essential Question: How did settlers survive on the frontier?



Section 2: Frontiers Open to Settlement

- What terms do I need to know?
 - squatter
 - speculator
 - yeoman



Introduction

- Some settlers called **squatters** did not wait to buy land; they just came, cleared land, and built a cabin.
- Lands were surveyed and then sold in 40 or 80 acres sizes.
- Land investors (**speculators**) bought large amounts of land with plans to sell it for a profit.



The Life of Yeoman Farmers

- Most of the pioneers were **yeoman** farmers (small farms).
- They grew their own vegetables and hunted animals for food.
- Their cattle roamed the woods for food.



Building Log Cabins

- Most settlers built log cabins for shelter.
- Tree trunks were cut and stacked to build walls. Roofs were made of thick boards.
- Chinking was the process of filling the gaps in the wall with mud, rocks, and sticks to keep out the winds and rain.



Living in the Cabin

- A fireplace kept the cabin warm and was used for cooking.
- Streams were used for water.
- Most cabins had one room and maybe a loft for the children.
- Mattresses were made of hay, grass, cornhusks, Spanish moss, etc. and deer or bear hides were blankets.
- Most settlers built their own furniture.



Farming

- Forests covered Alabama, so farmers had to clear areas to make farmland which might take a year!
- Farm families grew peas, corn, beans, potatoes, sugarcane, and melons. They had to store enough food for the winter.
- Tobacco and cotton might be grown to sell for money.



Fun on the Frontier

- Settlers often lived lonely lives, but neighboring families helped each other.
- They might work together to build a barn or to make quilts.
- Storytellers and musicians helped others have a fun evening.
- Corn shuckin's were events to take the husks off corn. Contests, music, and games made the event fun.



Education on the Frontier

- Survival on the **frontier** was hard so there was little time for education of children.
- The first school opened in 1799 and others slowly followed – usually in one-room log cabins.
- Schools had no paper, pencils, or books. Some students wrote with chalk on slate.
- A single teacher taught all grades.



Section 3: Different Cultures Move to Alabama

- Essential Question: How did people with different cultures live together in Alabama?



Section 3: Different Cultures Move to Alabama

- What terms do I need to know?
 - freedmen
 - plantation
 - planter



The Vine and Olive Company

- In 1817, French settlers came to the Tombigbee River area to grow grapes and olives.
- The group had many problems and failed to grow the crops they wanted.
- They moved to the Gulf Coast but left behind some French names such as Marengo, Bon Secour, and Bayou La Batre.



Planters

- A few people, called **planters**, had large farms called **plantations**.
- Slaves were used as workers.
- Plantations usually grew or made everything that they needed to survive.
- Extra money was used to buy goods from Europe brought through ports at New Orleans and Mobile.



Plantation home in Lowndesboro



Plantation Homes

- Planters often had very large, beautiful homes.
- High ceilings in the homes kept them cooler in summer but hard to heat in winter.
- Artists would visit to paint portraits of the family.
- The kitchen was a separate building in order to protect the main house from accidental fires.



Social Life of Planters

- Families visited other planter families traveling by horse or carriage.
- Men might travel to a nearby town for supplies and news.
- Women sewed or embroidered while they talked to each other. Some painted or played music.
- Outdoor parties, foxhunts, weddings, and church services filled the social life of planters' families.

[Click to see Alabama plantations](#)



Plantation Children

- Planters hired teachers for their sons to teach them Latin, English, history, literature, and mathematics.
- Some attended east coast universities and others the University of Alabama.
- Boys were allowed the freedom to roam the fields and forests, learn to use a gun, hunt, and swim.
- Some daughters of planters were allowed to attend special girls' schools. Girls studied French, music, geography, and literature. At home they learned to sew and entertain.
- The girls also learned to direct the people who worked in the house and yard.



Section 4: Slavery in Alabama

- Essential Question: How did slaves contribute to the growth of Alabama?



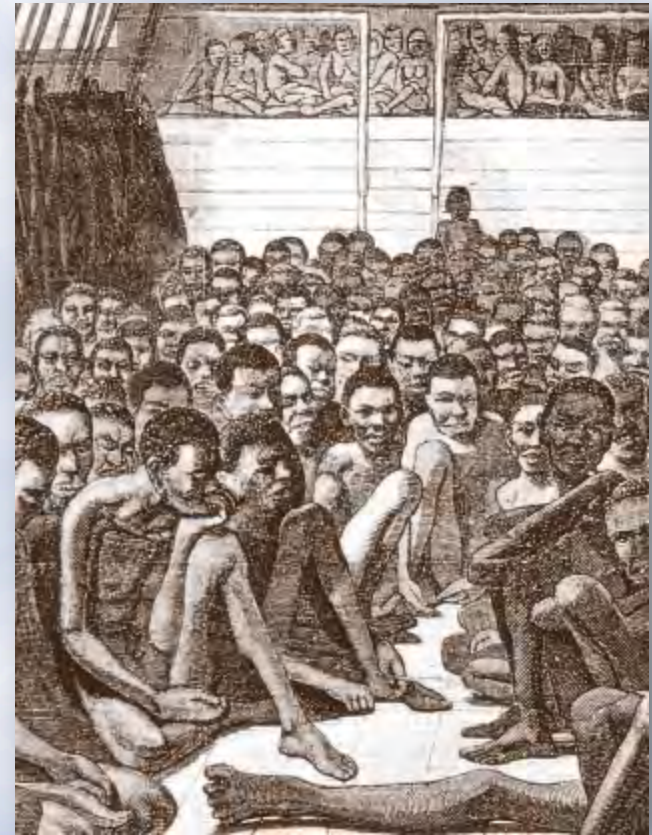
Section 4: Slavery in Alabama

- What terms do I need to know?
 - cotton gin
 - economy
 - mill



Slavery

- Black slaves had been a part of the Spanish and French settlements.
- The British started bringing Africans to America in 1619 to work as slaves on Virginia plantations.
- The first slaves to come to Mobile arrived in 1721.
- Slaves were forced to work and could not quit their jobs or leave the area.



The Last Slave Ship

- A law was passed in 1808 to stop slaves from coming into the United States.
- The *Clotilde* arrived in Mobile in 1860 with a load of slaves to sneak in and sell. Descendants of this group later started a settlement near Mobile called AfricaTown, USA.
- In 1860, about 1/3 of Alabama families owned slaves. Most owned less than five slaves.
- The Black Belt and Tennessee River Valley were good for growing cotton and so had the most slaves.



The Life of Slaves

- Field slaves worked outdoors on the farm from sunrise to sunset.
- House slaves worked as servants for the family in the house. Slaves lived in cabins, often with dirt floors.
- Masters (owners) gave food and clothing to the slaves. His wife would often serve as nurse to sick slaves.



Beliefs and Customs of Slaves

- Slaves had to ask permission to marry.
- Slaves sang song of heaven where life seemed better than their earthly life.
- African traditions of singing and preaching blended with the traditions of southern churches.
- Slaves could attend church with their white masters but sat in the back or in the balcony.



Slave Population 1860



Slave Codes

- Slave Codes were laws meant to control the lives of the slaves.
- One law made it illegal to teach slaves to read or write.
- Slaves could not carry weapons, own land or animals, or speak against white man in court.
- Slaves who broke a law could be whipped or worse!
- Slaves could be sold which might break up their families.



Slave cabin, Hale County, AL



Free Blacks

- There were some free blacks in Alabama – some even owned slaves!
- Slaves might buy their freedom or have it given to them by their masters.
- Most free blacks moved to towns where they could work as carpenters, cooks, barbers, or factory workers.
- Free blacks had to carry passes to prove they were free, but they could not vote. Most could not get an education.



Cotton Gin Increases Amount of Cotton Grown



- The dark soil of the Black Belt was good for growing cotton.
- The state's long growing season was good for the crop, too.



Eli Whitney's Invention

- Cotton bolls are filled with small seeds that must be removed.
- Pulling these out by hand was a slow process.
- Eli Whitney invented a **cotton gin** (1793) to pull the seeds from the cotton.
- The invention, first powered by a man, was later powered by water or horse power.



Cotton Kingdom

- The invention of the cotton gin encouraged farmers to grow cotton.
- Alabama moved from growing 4% of America's cotton to 23%.
- Growing more cotton required more slave workers and made many people wealthy.
- Alabama's cotton was shipped to mills in Europe through the ports of Mobile and New Orleans.
- This trade made Alabama a "cotton kingdom."





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