

# THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

THE OLD SOUTH & SLAVERY  
1820-1860

# Essential Questions

- To what extent was the South becoming a distinctively different region between 1820 & 1860?
- To what degree did slavery shape Southern society?
- *[Why did so many support slavery?]*

*(Consider political, economic, social and intellectual aspects of life in the South)*

# **A. The Southern Economy**

**1. Primarily agrarian**

**2. Economic power shifted from the “upper South” to the Deep South**

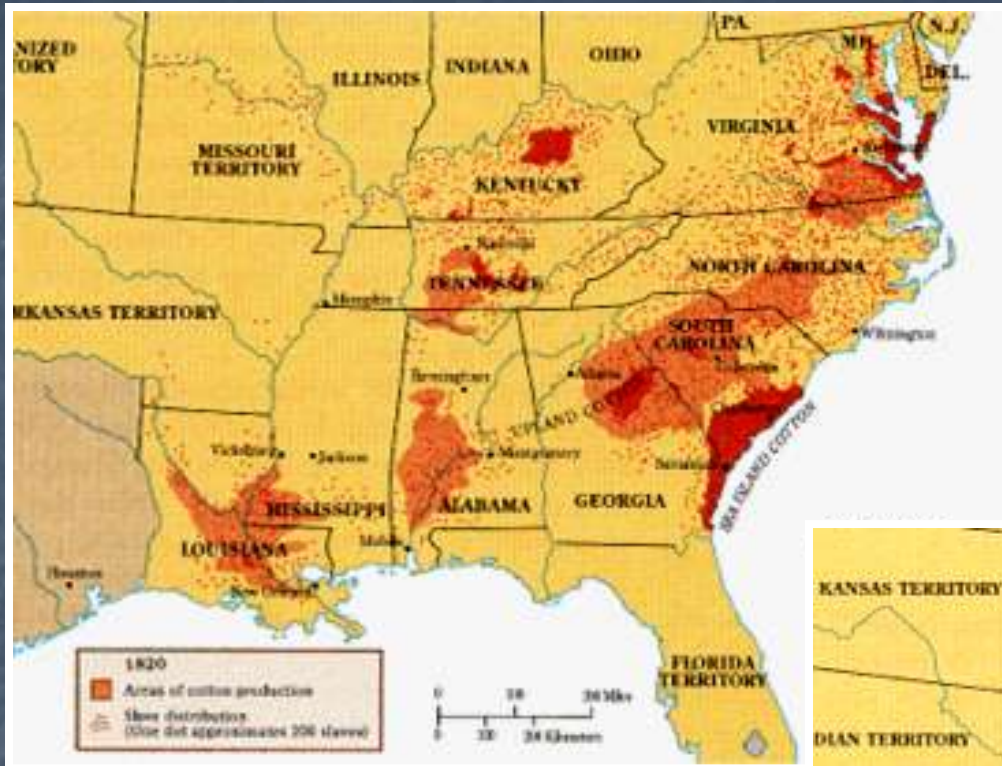
**3. “Cotton Is King!”**

The Agricultural Economy of the South, 1860

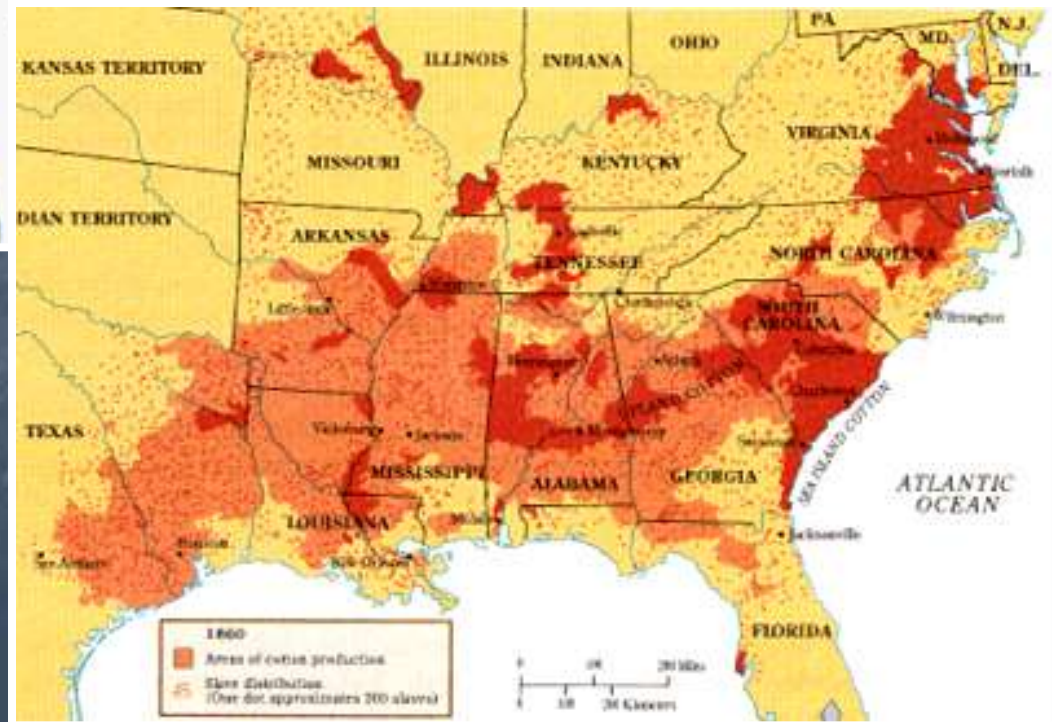




# Changes in Cotton Production



1820 ▲

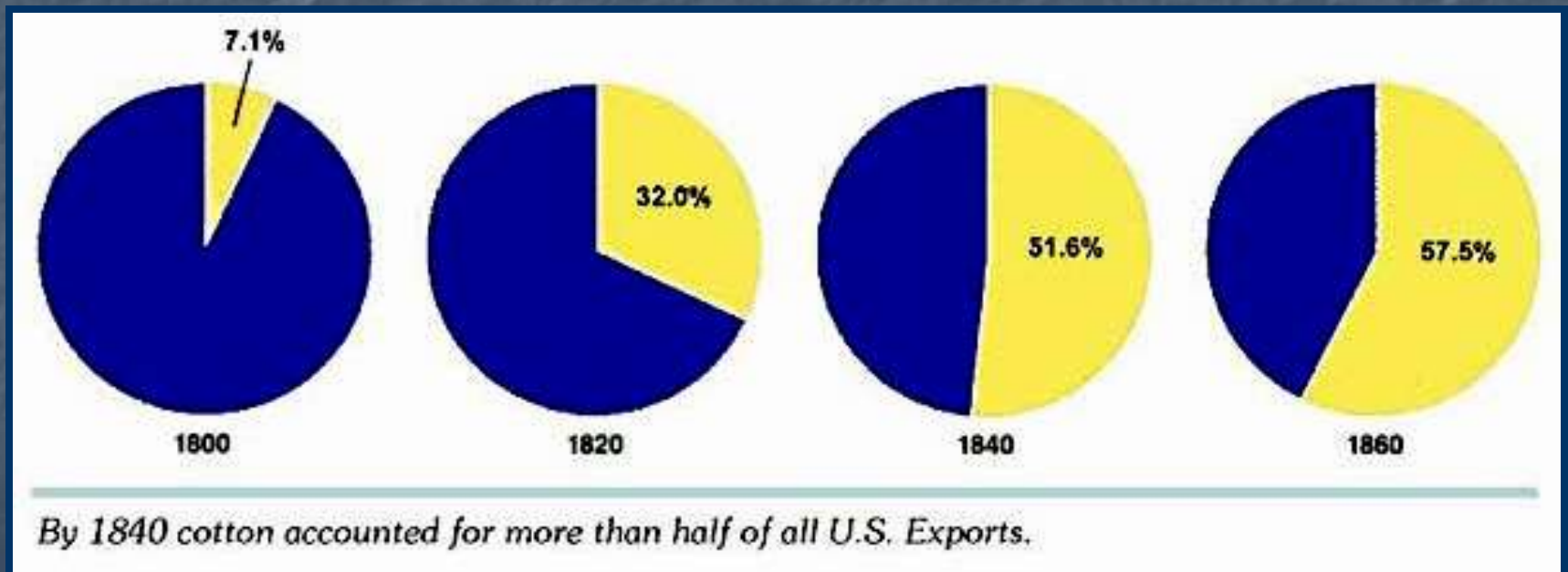


1860 ▼

# A. The Southern Economy

## 3. “Cotton Is King!”

❖ 1860 – **57% of US exports** (*5 million Bales exported per year*)



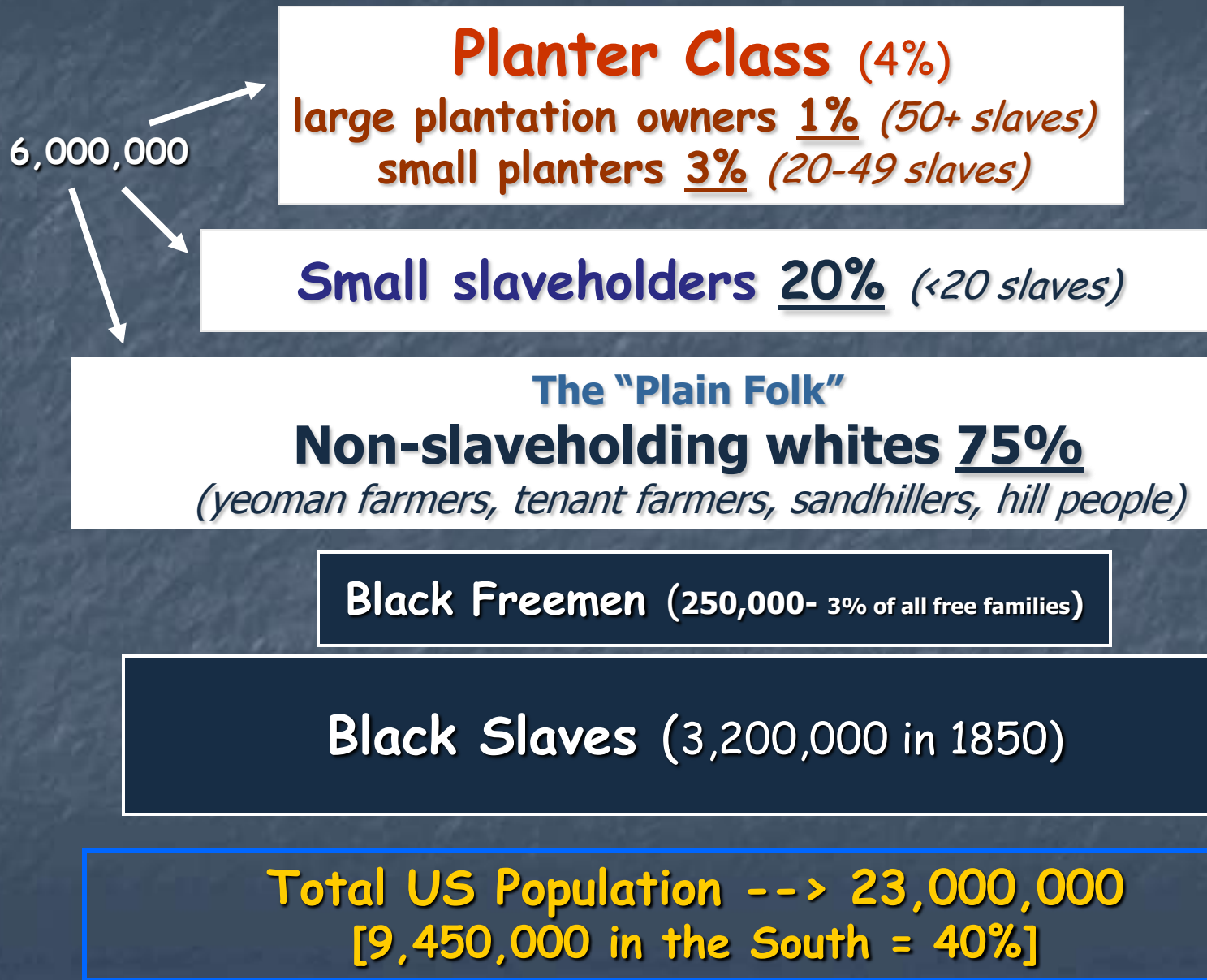
**Value of Cotton Exports As a Percentage of All U.S. Exports**



# **A. The Southern Economy**

- 4. Very slow development of industry
- 5. Rudimentary financial system.
- 6. Economic dependence on North
- 7. Inadequate transportation system.

# B. SOUTHERN SOCIETY (1850)



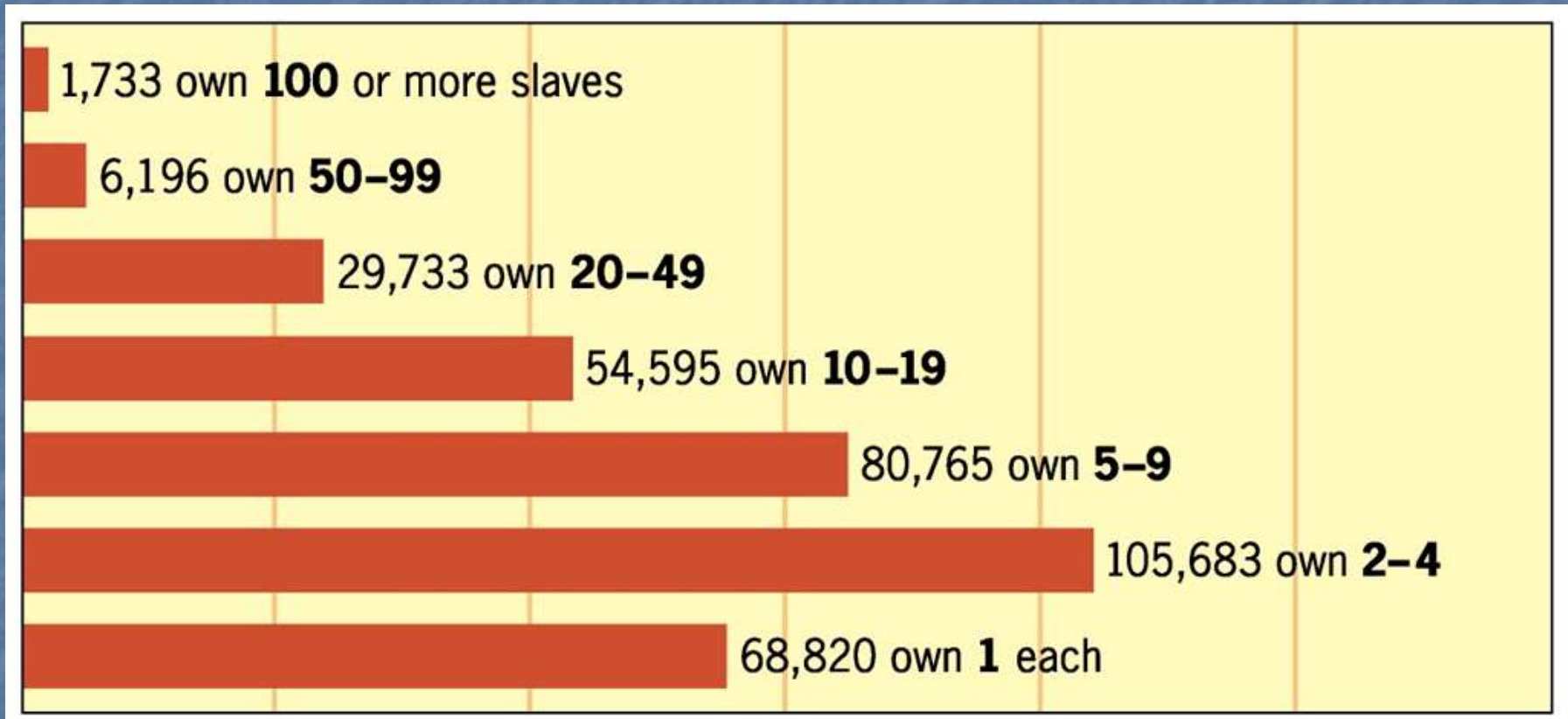
# Southern Society in 1860

Group	Size	Notes
Large planters (1000 or more acres)	Less than 1% of the total number of white families	The wealthiest class in all of America, the large planters exercised social and political power far beyond their percentage of the population. Most owned 50 slaves or more.
Planters (100-1000 acres)	Perhaps 3% of white families	Usually owned 20-49 slaves. Provided many political leaders and controlled much of the wealth of the South
Small slaveholders	About 20% of white families	Owning fewer than 20 slaves, the small slaveholders were primarily farmers, though some were merchants in Southern towns.
Nonslaveholding whites	About 75% of white families	Yeoman farmers. They owned their small pieces of land and produced enough food for the family. 20% did not own either slaves or land and squatted on poor lands where they often grazed livestock or raised corn. Some were day laborers in towns.
Free blacks	3% of all free families	Usually in upper South, such as Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky. Many were either tenant-farmers or day laborers. Legally and socially restricted in terms of mobility and economic advancement.
Slaves	4 million in 1860. In some Southern states, slaves outnumbered whites	Almost all native born, 75% worked on plantations and medium-sized farms. Another 10% were laborers at hard physical labor considered "below" whites.

\*Based on *The American Journey: A History of the United States* by Goldfield, et al.



# Slave-Owning Families (1850)



*What does this reveal about slave ownership??*

## B. WHITE SOCIETY & CULTURE

- Why did many Southerners support the slave system when 75% didn't own slaves?
- Was there a change in attitude re slavery?
- How did they justify slavery?
- Who did NOT support the slave system?



Southern Yeoman farmer's home



Plantation House, St. Mary's, MD (1830s)

## **B.** WHITE SOCIETY & CULTURE

### 3. Defense of Slavery & White Supremacy

- “necessary evil” → “positive good”
- Legal & constitutional
- History
- Religious
- Better than North – “wage slaves”
- Black Inferiority
- [Among Southerners] Elevated poor whites



# Southern Pro-Slavery Propaganda



# C. SLAVERY & SLAVE CULTURE

## 1. “Peculiar Institution”

## 2. Slave trade

- “Middle Passage”
- Internal Slave trade

## 3. Protection under law

- Constitution
- Fugitive Slave Clause (Art IV, Sec 2)
- Fugitive Slave Act (1793)



Paths of the Internal Slave Trade



# C. SLAVERY & SLAVE CULTURE

## 4. Slave Life & Culture

- Black Christianity [Baptists or Methodists]:
  - \* more emotional worship services; negro spirituals.
- Nuclear family with extended kin links, where possible.
- Importance of music [esp. spirituals].
- Slave codes
- Resistance
  - Nat Turner
  - "Sambo"



Slave Rebellions and Uprisings, 1800-1831



# Slave Cabin and Occupants Near Eufala, Barbour County, Alabama





