

Life in the South: Chapter 9, Section 2

Geography shapes the physical, economic, and political challenges a region faces. Most of the people in the South worked in agriculture in the first half of the 1800s.

Life on the Small Farms

- Main Idea: Most farmers in the South did not own slaves and lived in poor rural areas.
- Not all in South were rich and lived in large plantations, few could actually afford slaves
- Four categories: yeoman, tenant farmers, the rural poor, plantation owners



Small Farmers & the Rural Poor

- Yeoman
 - made up largest group of whites in South
 - didn't have slaves, owned their land (50-200 acres)
 - mostly in Upper South and hilly rural areas of Deep South
 - Crops for personal use and to sell
 - Traded produce to local merchants/workers for goods/services



Rural Poor



- Most Southern whites didn't live in giant mansions or on large plantations; homes were simple
 - Cottages built of wood or plaster with thatched roofs
 - One story houses or log cabins

Rural Poor

- Not all farmers owned land...
 - Tenant farmers = rented land, worked on landlords' estates
 - Rural poor = lived in crude cabins, planted few crops (i.e. corn) and kept a cow or hog, hunted/fished for food.
 - Some refused to take jobs, didn't want to work like slaves (proud and self-sufficient)

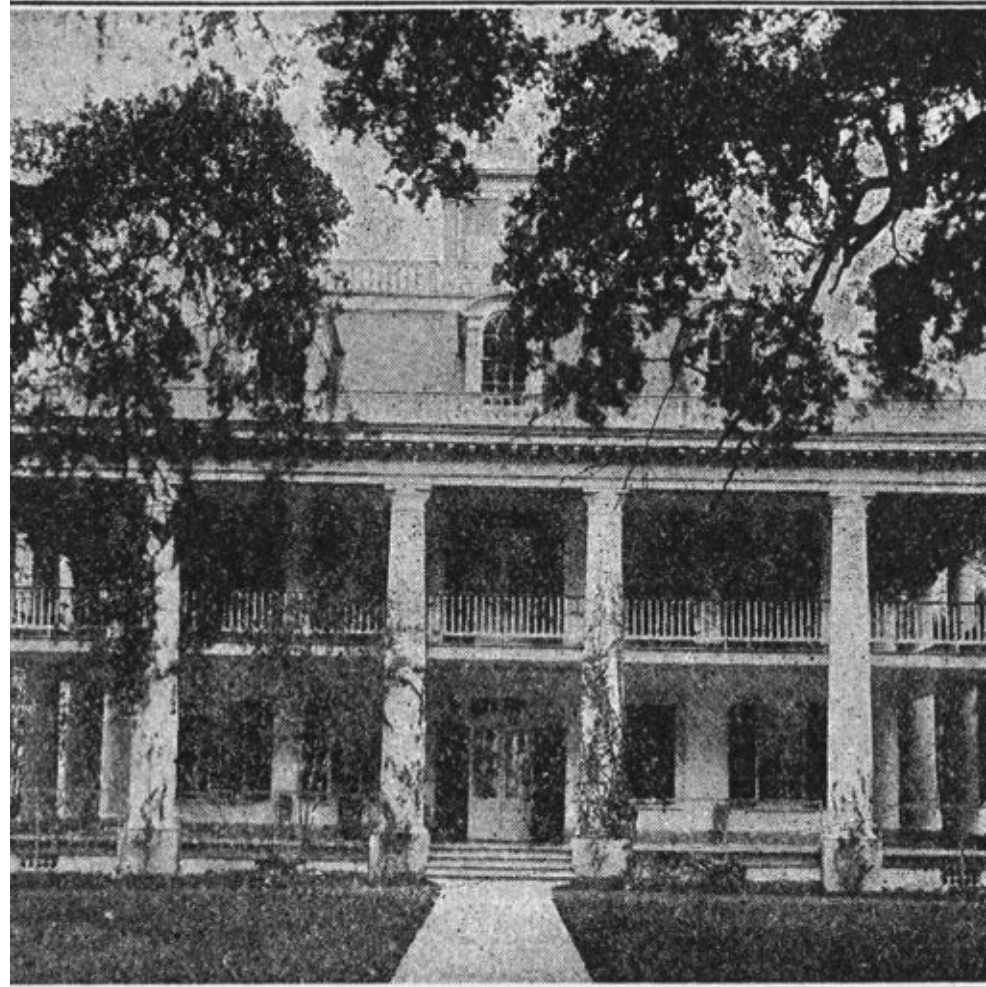




1. What group made up the largest number of whites in the South?
2. How did the position of the poor whites in the South compare to that of the factory workers in the North?

Plantations

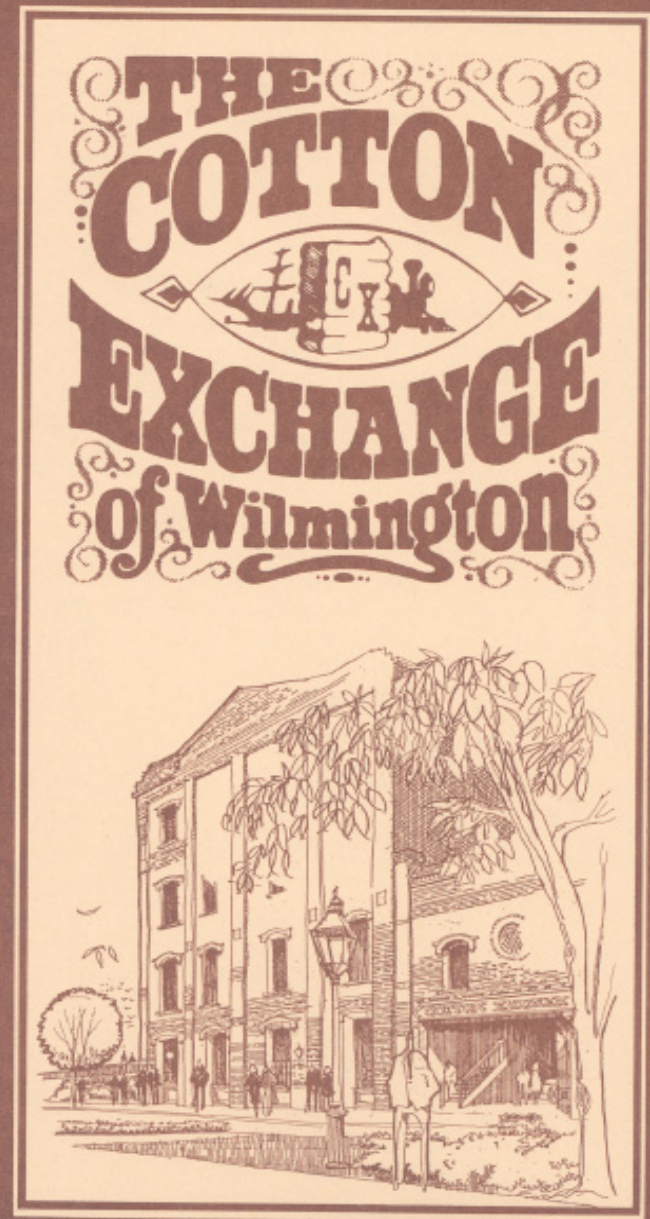
- Main idea: Plantations varied in size and wealth and contained varying numbers of enslaved people.
- Owners lived in comfortable farmhouses, could cover several thousand acres (12% of Southern population)
- Wealth measured by the number of enslaved people they controlled (and homes, furnishings, & clothing)
- Some free African Americans owned slaves (family)



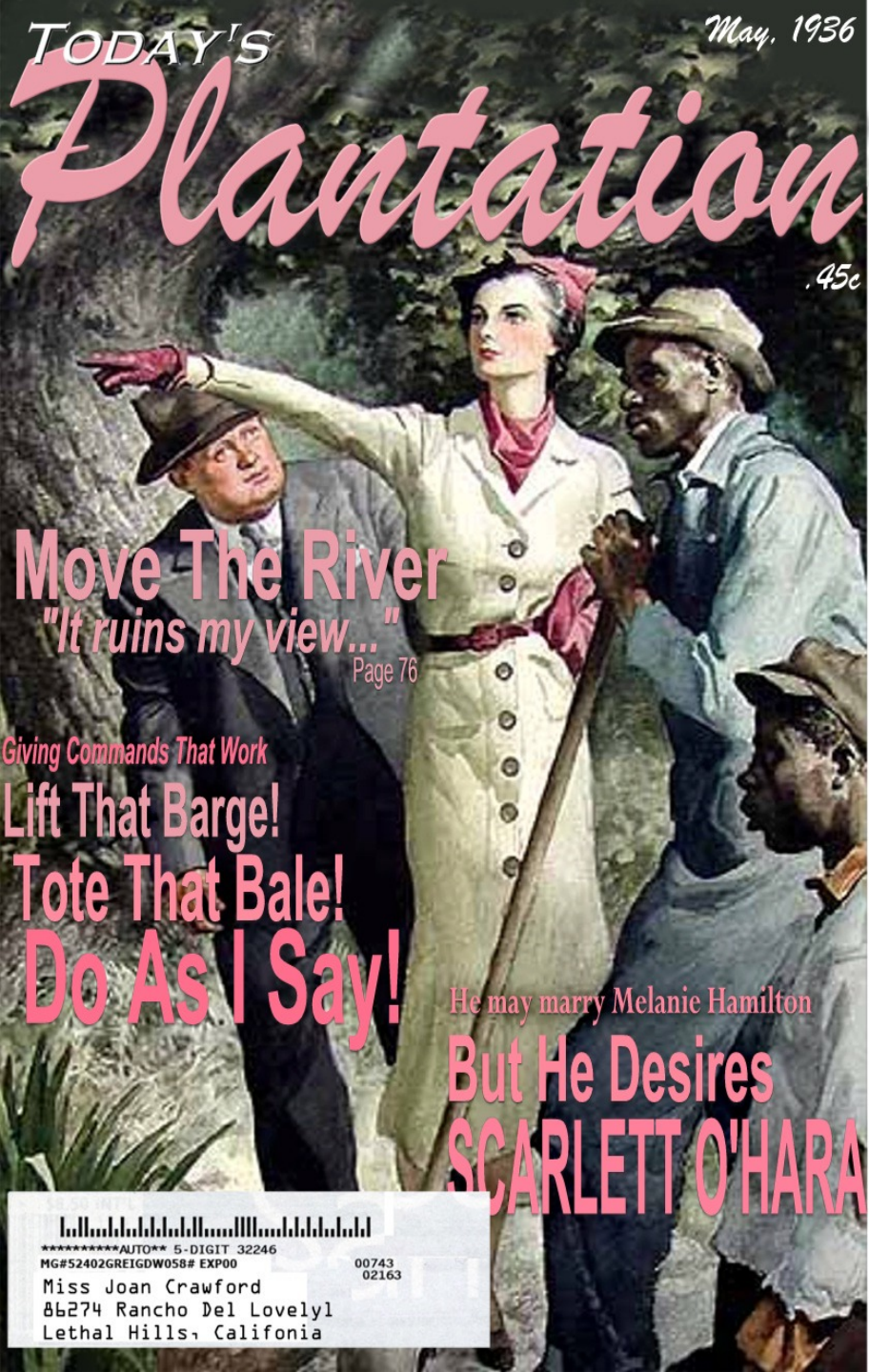
e "Big House" on a great Southern plantat

Plantation Owners

- Goal = earn a profit
- Plantations had **fixed costs** – regular expenses (housing/feeding workers, maintaining cotton gins/equipment)
- Cotton prices varied by season, depending on market
- For best prices, owners sold to agents
- Cotton exchanges/trade centers in Southern cities were vital...extending **credit** (loans) to planters until prices went up, keeping planters in debt until cotton sold for high prices.



An Historic Adventure
in Trade.



Plantation Wives

- In charge of watching enslaved workers in the home and tending to the ill
- Supervised plantation's building and fruit/vegetable gardens
- Some served as accountants, keeping plantation financial records
- Lonely/difficult lives – husbands often away and working

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Plantation Workers

- Slaves – worked in house (domestic slaves: cleaning, cooking, laundry, sewing, serving meals), others trained as blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, weavers
- Other slaves in pastures, tending horses, cows, sheep, pigs
- Most slaves were field hands, working from sunrise to sunset, planting, cultivating, picking cotton
- All supervised by **overseers**

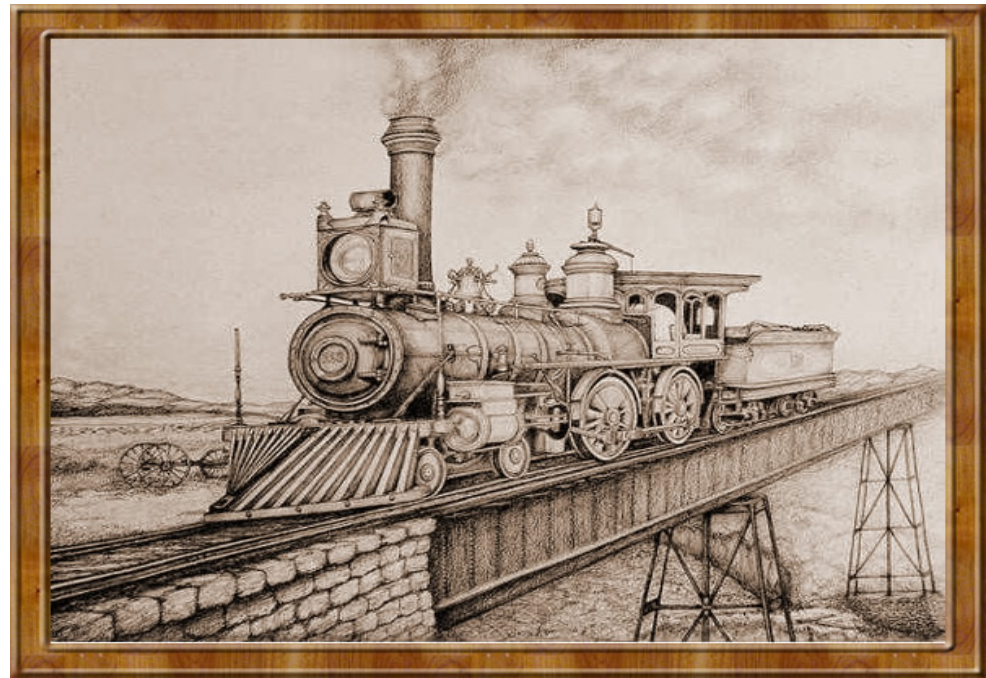




1. What does it mean to buy something “on credit”?
2. Why did the agents want to hold the cotton before selling it?
3. Why do you think that the ten largest cities in the South were ports?
4. Why were so many slaves needed on a plantation?

City Life and Education

- Main idea: The South was home to several large cities, and education began to grow in the mid-1800s.
- 10 largest cities in South were sea/river ports.
- By 1860 Baltimore reached over 212,000 people, and New Orleans exceeded more 165,000.
- With railroad, other cities began to grow as centers of trade...
- Cities at crossroads included
 - Columbia, SC
 - Chattanooga, TN
 - Montgomery, AL
 - Jackson, MS
 - Atlanta, GA



Free African Americans

- Had opportunities to form communities and hold jobs (barbers, carpenters, small traders)
- Founded churches/institutions (opera house, etc.)
 - In New Orleans, many were welcomed and prosperous
- Lives were still far from secure
 - Laws prohibited rights (denied equality, couldn't migrate from other states)



Education

- Those who could afford it (plantation owners) sent kids to private school
 - Attended 6 days a week
 - Studied the Bible, literature, math, religion, Greek, Latin, public speaking
- In smaller, rural areas
 - Classes in churches or one room school houses
 - Terms only 3-4 months
 - Few books available to study due to poverty



Education in South

- No statewide public school system existed yet
- Charleston, Louisville, Mobile established good schools anyway
- North Carolina started opening more schools
- Kentucky set up funding for public schools
- Southern charity schools (for students whose parents couldn't afford to pay)



Education

- Even with growth, literacy in South lagged...
 - Geography played a role (fewer than 15 inhabitants per square mile in VA & NC)
 - Too great of a hardship for families to send their children great distances for school
 - Many believed education to be a private matter, not a state function, and no money should be spent on school





1. Should public funds be spent on education? Why/why not?
2. What Southern city had surpassed 200,000 in population by the year 1860?
3. List two(+) differences between yeoman & plantation owners.
4. Explain why some free African Americans might own slaves.
5. What was life like for free African Americans in Southern cities?