



# Slavery & Reform

# Slavery in the Antebellum U.S.

- 4 million slaves in the United States on eve of Civil War
- Cotton—most profitable US crop—1/2 of US exports
- 1808—slave imports ended
- Slave trade within the US increased—2 million slaves sold within the US between 1820 and 1860.

# Pro-Slavery South

- Slavery shaped the lives of everyone—white & black, free & slave, poor & wealthy
- Less industrial development, esp. in Deep South
- Racism trumped class tensions
- Majority of slave owners had 5 or fewer slaves--still plantation owners shaped the image and values of South
- Proslavery arguments
  - Paternalism
  - Racial superiority
  - Guaranteed freedom for whites

# Experience of & Resistance to Slavery

- Slaves were property
  - Could be sold, away from family
  - Physical abuse
- Illegal to teach slaves to read and write by 1830s
- Religion & family sources of strength
- Marriages not legal, but many slaves did consider themselves married

# What were the major forms of resistance to slavery?

- “Silent sabotage”—working slowly or poorly, destroying property (tools, animals),
- Stealing food
- Poisoning or attacking owners or other whites (rare)
- Running away (est. 1,000 a year)
- Revolts
  - Amistad (1839)
  - Nat Turner (Virginia, 1831)
    - Led to even tighter laws

# Antebellum Reform

- Many approaches to improving society in pre-Civil War 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Causes included: temperance, labor reform, women's suffrage, abolition, education, asylums & prisons
- Methods included: speakers, pamphlets, petitions

# Abolition

- Colonization—Freed slaves would be related to Africa, Central America or the Caribbean
  - Liberia in Africa established by the Colonization Society
- Militant Abolition
  - Slavery a sin, must be ended immediately
  - David Walker—*An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829)
  - William Lloyd Garrison—*The Liberator*—1831
  - Black abolitionists both worked with white abolitionist and separately, holding their own conventions
- Abolitionist “schism”
  - 1840—Group splits from American Anti-Slavery Society to form the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
    - Part of controversy—women’s participation to the business committee—& as public speakers
    - Also—debate over immediate emancipation, participation in the political system.

# Women's Rights

- Women involved in the abolitionist movement from the beginning
- 1848—Seneca Falls Convention
- Women's Rights not just about the Vote
  - Dress Reform
  - Property Rights
  - Labor reform