

# MILESTONES AND KEY FIGURES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

## 1619–1865

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### FROM SERVITUDE TO SLAVERY IN THE CHESAPEAKE REGION, 1619–1690

#### A. INDENTURED SERVANTS

1. The “headright” system enabled Chesapeake tobacco farmers to obtain both land and labor by importing workers from England.
2. English indentured servants were the chief source of agricultural labor in Virginia and Maryland before 1675. They accounted for 75 percent of the 130,000 English immigrants to Virginia and Maryland during the seventeenth century.

#### B. BACON'S REBELLION, 1676

1. The rebellion exposed tensions between backcountry farmers and the tidewater gentry.
2. The rebellion prompted the tidewater gentry to reevaluate their commitment to the system of indentured servants.



*Bacon's Rebellion has been featured in a number of multiple-choice and essay questions. Be sure you study the role Bacon's Rebellion played in the transition from indentured servants to slave labor.*

#### C. THE BEGINNING OF SLAVERY

1. The profitable cultivation of tobacco required inexpensive labor.

2. Slave labor in colonial Virginia and Maryland spread rapidly in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, as Blacks displaced White indentured servants in the tobacco fields.

### GROWTH OF PLANTATION ECONOMIES AND SLAVE SOCIETIES, 1690–1754

#### A. THE SLAVE TRADE

1. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the vast majority of Africans who survived the transatlantic passage ended up working on plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.
2. The fewest slaves were brought into British North America.

#### B. SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES

1. Slavery was legally established in all 13 colonies by the early 1700s.
2. Although enslaved, Africans maintained cultural practices brought from Africa.
3. Tobacco was the most important cash crop grown in the Chesapeake colonies. Rice was the most important cash crop grown in South Carolina.
4. Factors responsible for the development of slavery in the Southern colonies included the following:
  - ▶ *The supply of indentured servants from England became insufficient by the late seventeenth century.*
  - ▶ *The spread of tobacco cultivation westward created a demand for labor.*
  - ▶ *Few seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century White colonists viewed human bondage as morally unacceptable.*
  - ▶ *As its maritime power increased, England wanted to compete in the profitable slave trade begun by the Portuguese and Dutch.*

#### C. THE STONO REBELLION, 1739

1. The Stono Rebellion was one of the earliest known acts of rebellion against slavery in America.

2. It was organized and led by slaves living south of Charleston, South Carolina. The slaves tried unsuccessfully to flee to Spanish Florida, where they hoped to gain their freedom.



*The Stono Rebellion and Nat Turner's slave revolt (1831) were two of the most significant slave rebellions. Perhaps because it is much better known, Nat Turner's slave revolt has yet to attract attention from APUSH test writers. In contrast, the Stono Rebellion has been a frequent subject of questions.*

### GROWTH OF SLAVERY AND FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES, 1776–1815

#### A. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

1. The Declaration of Independence did *not* call for the abolition of the slave trade.

#### B. THE NORTHWEST ORDINANCE OF 1787

1. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 excluded slavery north of the Ohio River.
2. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was the first national document containing a prohibition of slavery.

#### C. THE CONSTITUTION

1. As written in 1787, the U.S. Constitution explicitly guaranteed the legality of slavery in every state.
2. The Three-Fifths Compromise was an agreement between the Southern and Northern states. Under the terms of this compromise, three-fifths of the population of slaves would be counted for enumeration purposes regarding both the distribution of taxes and the apportionment of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives.
3. The Fourteenth Amendment invalidated the Three-Fifths Compromise. The amendment specifically states, “Representatives shall be apportioned . . . counting the whole number of persons in each state.”

**D. THE HAITIAN SLAVE REBELLION**

1. The Haitian slave rebellion of the 1790s prompted an increased fear of slave revolts in the South.
2. The rebellion was led by Toussaint L'Ouverture.

**E. FREE AFRICAN AMERICANS**

1. The following factors contributed to the growth of the free African American population:
  - ▶ *The gradual emancipation laws of individual states*
  - ▶ *Manumission granted for Revolutionary War service*
  - ▶ *Manumission granted by slaveholders' wills*
  - ▶ *Natural increase among free African Americans*

**IV PLANTERS AND SLAVES IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH, 1816–1860****A. KING COTTON**

1. The following factors contributed to making cotton the South's most important cash crop:
  - ▶ *The invention of the cotton gin made it possible and profitable to harvest short-staple cotton.*
  - ▶ *Rich new farmland in the Deep South was opened to the cultivation of cotton. By 1850, the geographic center of slavery was moving southward and westward.*
  - ▶ *The rise of textile manufacturing in England created enormous demand for cotton.*

**B. SOUTHERN SOCIETY**

1. It is very important to remember that a majority of White adult males were small farmers rather than wealthy planters.
2. The majority of White families in the antebellum South owned no slaves.
3. Nonetheless, a small minority of planters who owned 20 or more slaves dominated the antebellum South.
4. The cost of slave labor rose sharply between 1800 and 1860.

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**C. SLAVE SOCIETY**

1. Despite forced separations, slaves maintained social networks among kindred and friends.
2. The dramatic increase in the South's slave labor force was due to the natural population increase of American-born slaves.
3. During the antebellum period, free African Americans were able to accumulate some property in spite of discrimination.
4. Although Southern legal codes did not uniformly provide for the legalization and stability of slave marriage, slaves were generally able to marry, and the institution of marriage was common on Southern plantations.
5. The majority of slaves adapted to the oppressive conditions imposed on them by developing a separate African American culture.
6. Slave revolts were infrequent. Most Southern slaves resisted their masters by feigning illness and working as slowly as possible.

**V TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND SLAVERY, 1820–1860****A. THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE OF 1820**

1. Provisions of the Missouri Compromise included the following:
  - ▶ *Maine would enter the Union as a free state.*
  - ▶ *Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state.*
  - ▶ *The remaining territory of the Louisiana Purchase above latitude 36° 30' would be closed to slavery.*
2. Consequences included the following:
  - ▶ *The number of Northerners and Southerners in the Senate remained the same.*
  - ▶ *Most of the Louisiana Purchase was closed to slavery.*
  - ▶ *The first major nineteenth-century conflict over slavery was settled.*
  - ▶ *Slavery was temporarily defused as a national political issue.*

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**B. TEXAS**

1. President Jackson resisted the admission of Texas into the Union in 1836, primarily because he feared that the debate over the admission of Texas would ignite controversy over slavery.
2. Following a joint resolution of Congress, Texas joined the Union in December 1845.

**C. THE WILMOT PROVISIO**

1. The Wilmot Proviso specifically provided for the prohibition of slavery in lands acquired from Mexico in the Mexican War.
2. Congress did *not* pass the Wilmot Proviso.

**D. THE COMPROMISE OF 1850**

1. California was admitted to the Union as a free state.
2. Slave trade (but not slavery) was abolished in the District of Columbia.
3. Territorial governments were created in New Mexico and Utah without an immediate decision as to whether they would be slave or free.
4. A stringent measure—the Fugitive Slave Act—was enacted. The act proved to be the most controversial and divisive component of the Compromise of 1850.

**E. OSTEND MANIFESTO, 1854**

1. The manifesto was a proposal to seize Cuba by force.
2. Enraged antislavery Northerners prevented it from being implemented.

**F. THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT, 1854**

1. Provisions of the act included the following:
  - ▶ *The proposed Territory of Nebraska would be divided into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska.*
  - ▶ *The status of slavery would be settled by popular sovereignty.*
  - ▶ *Popular sovereignty meant that the settlers in a given territory would have the sole right to decide whether or not slavery would be permitted.*

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▶ *Senator Stephen A. Douglas was the leading proponent of popular sovereignty. Here is how Douglas explained the doctrine of popular sovereignty: "The great principle is the right of every community to judge and decide for itself whether a thing is right or wrong. . . . It is no answer to this argument to say that slavery is an evil, and hence should not be tolerated. You must allow the people to decide for themselves whether it is a good or an evil."*

2. Consequences included the following:
  - ▶ *The Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise, thus heightening sectional tensions.*
  - ▶ *The Kansas-Nebraska Act led to the demise of the Whigs.*
  - ▶ *The Kansas-Nebraska Act led to the rise of the Republican Party and Abraham Lincoln.*
  - ▶ *Kansas became the first test of popular sovereignty.*

**G. THE DRED SCOTT DECISION, 1857**

1. The Supreme Court ruled that Black people were not citizens of the United States and therefore could not petition the Court.
2. The Dred Scott decision established the principle that national legislation could not limit the spread of slavery into the territories.
3. By stating that Congress had no right to prohibit slavery in the territories, the Dred Scott decision repealed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise of 1820.
4. The Dred Scott decision became a contentious issue during the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

**H. THE POSITIONS OF THE REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ON SLAVERY**

1. The Democratic Party was divided on the issue of expanding slavery into the territories.
2. The Republican Party opposed the extension of slavery into the territories. However, the Republicans acknowledged that slavery should be protected in the states where it already existed.

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**VI ABOLITION AND THE ABOLITIONISTS, 1830–1860****A. THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING**

1. The religious spirit of the Second Great Awakening increased public awareness of the moral outrages perpetuated by slavery.
2. The Second Great Awakening contributed to the growth of the abolitionist movement.

**B. AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY**

1. The goal of the American Colonization Society was the return of freed slaves to Africa.
2. The leaders of the American Colonization Society were middle-class men and women.

**C. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON**

1. Garrison issued the first call for the “immediate and uncompensated emancipation of the slaves.”
2. Here is a famous quote from the first issue of *The Liberator*: “Let Southern oppressors tremble . . . I will be as harsh as Truth and as uncompromising as Justice . . . I am in earnest—I will not retreat a single inch—and I WILL BE HEARD!”

**D. FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

1. Frederick Douglass was the most prominent Black abolitionist during the antebellum period.
2. Published in 1845, Douglass’s autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* exposed Americans to the horrors and inhumanity of slavery.
3. Although best known as an abolitionist, Douglass championed equal rights for women and Native Americans. He often declared, “I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong.”

**E. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE**

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.
2. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* intensified Northern opposition to slavery. Only the Bible sold more copies.

**VII EMANCIPATION AND THE ROLE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CIVIL WAR, 1861–1865****A. THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION, 1863**

1. President Lincoln refrained from taking action to emancipate slaves until the Civil War had been in progress for almost two years. Lincoln delayed because he wanted to retain the loyalty of the Border States.
2. The Union victory at Antietam gave Lincoln the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.
3. The Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves in the rebellious states.
4. The Emancipation Proclamation did *not* free slaves in the Border States.
5. The immediate effect of the Emancipation Proclamation was to strengthen the moral cause of the Union.

**B. AFRICAN AMERICANS AT WAR**

1. For most of the Civil War, African American soldiers were paid less than White soldiers of equal rank.
2. The South considered African Americans serving in the Union army as contraband.