

SLAVERY in AMERICA



What was it like?

By 1850, there were more than 3 million enslaved people in the United States. Fifteen of the 31 states allowed slavery. These states were all located in the South. By 1860, the number of those in bondage increased to nearly 4 million.



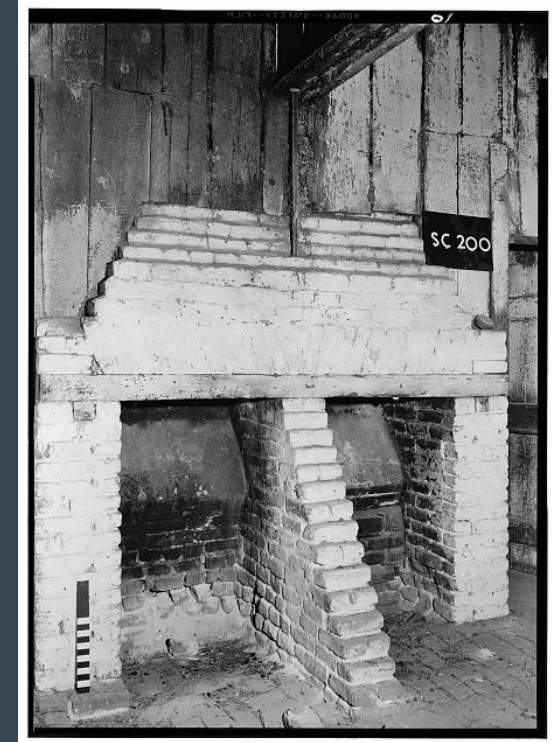
If you were enslaved, what was your living space like?

Maryland



North Carolina

South Carolina



Slave Quarters Described

- Poor quality
- Small
- Primitive

Usually, slave quarters...

- Were wooden, made of logs
- Had dirt floors
- Contained a fireplace
- Had a small garden area where enslaved people grew their own food



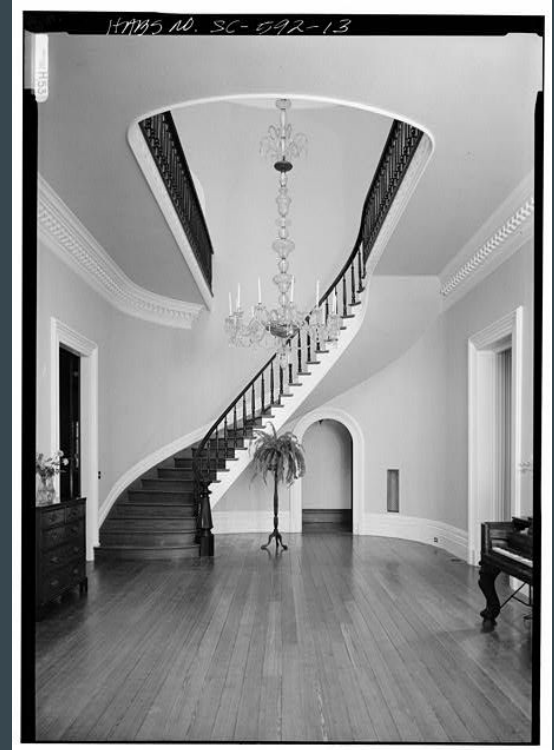
Where did the masters live? The master's home was called the Big House.

South Carolina

Virginia



Alabama



What did slaves eat?

Slaves were given the parts of animals that the master would never eat such as pig intestines (chitterlings), pigs' feet, and chicken necks. The diet of the enslaved mostly consisted of these animal parts plus cornmeal, dried beans, wheat flour, peas, and vegetables. Vegetables included greens, okra, and cabbage and could be grown in small gardens by the slave cabins.



What did slaves wear?

Slaves were usually given new sets of clothes twice a year. Field hands received inferior garments compared to what was given to those who worked in the Big House. The fabric was primarily made from cheap wool and cotton.



The Importance of Cotton



The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 increased the production of cotton in the South. More cotton was grown because it was easier and cheaper to clean with Whitney's new machine..

It is estimated that the southern United States produced 3/4s of the world's cotton by 1860.

Cotton became king in the South where the economy was dependent on its cultivation and, consequently, the use of slave labor on a scale larger than ever before. As cotton production increased, slavery also increased.



From *Twelve Years a Slave* - the true story of Solomon Northup

In the latter part of August begins the cotton picking season. At this time each slave is presented with a sack. A strap is fastened to it, which goes over the neck, holding the mouth of the sack breast high, while the bottom reaches nearly to the ground. Each one is also presented with a large basket that will hold about two barrels. This to put the cotton in when the sack is filled. The baskets are carried to the field and placed at the beginning of the rows.

When a new hand, one unaccustomed to the business, is sent for the first time into the field, he is whipped up smartly, and made for that day to pick as fast as he can possibly. At night it is weighed, so that his capability in cotton picking is known. He must bring in the same weight each night following. If it falls short, it is considered that he has been laggard, and a greater or less number of lashes is the penalty.

An ordinary day's work is two hundred pounds. A slave who is accustomed to picking, is punished, if he or she brings in a less quantity than that. There is a great difference among them as regards this kind of labor. Some of them seem to have a natural knack, or quickness, which enables them to pick with great celerity, and with both hands, while others, with whatever practice or industry, are utterly unable to come up to the ordinary standard. Such hands are taken from the cotton field and employed in other business. . .

The cotton grows from five to seven feet high, each stalk having a great many branches, shooting out in all directions, and lapping each other above the water furrow.

From *Twelve Years a Slave* - the true story of Solomon Northup

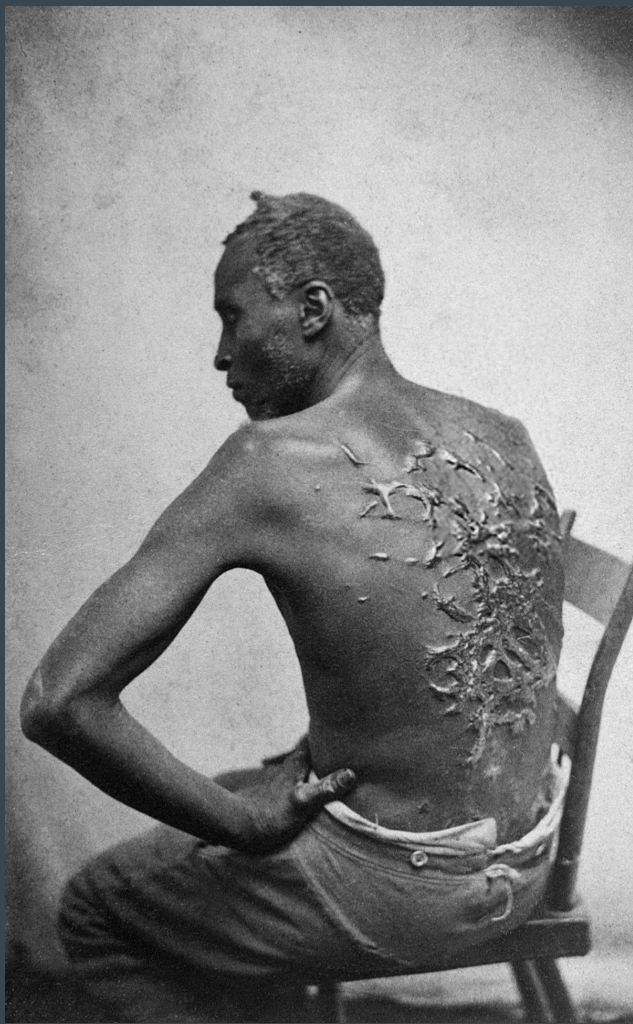
There are few sights more pleasant to the eye, than a wide cotton field when it is in bloom. It presents an appearance of purity, like an immaculate expanse of light, new-fallen snow.

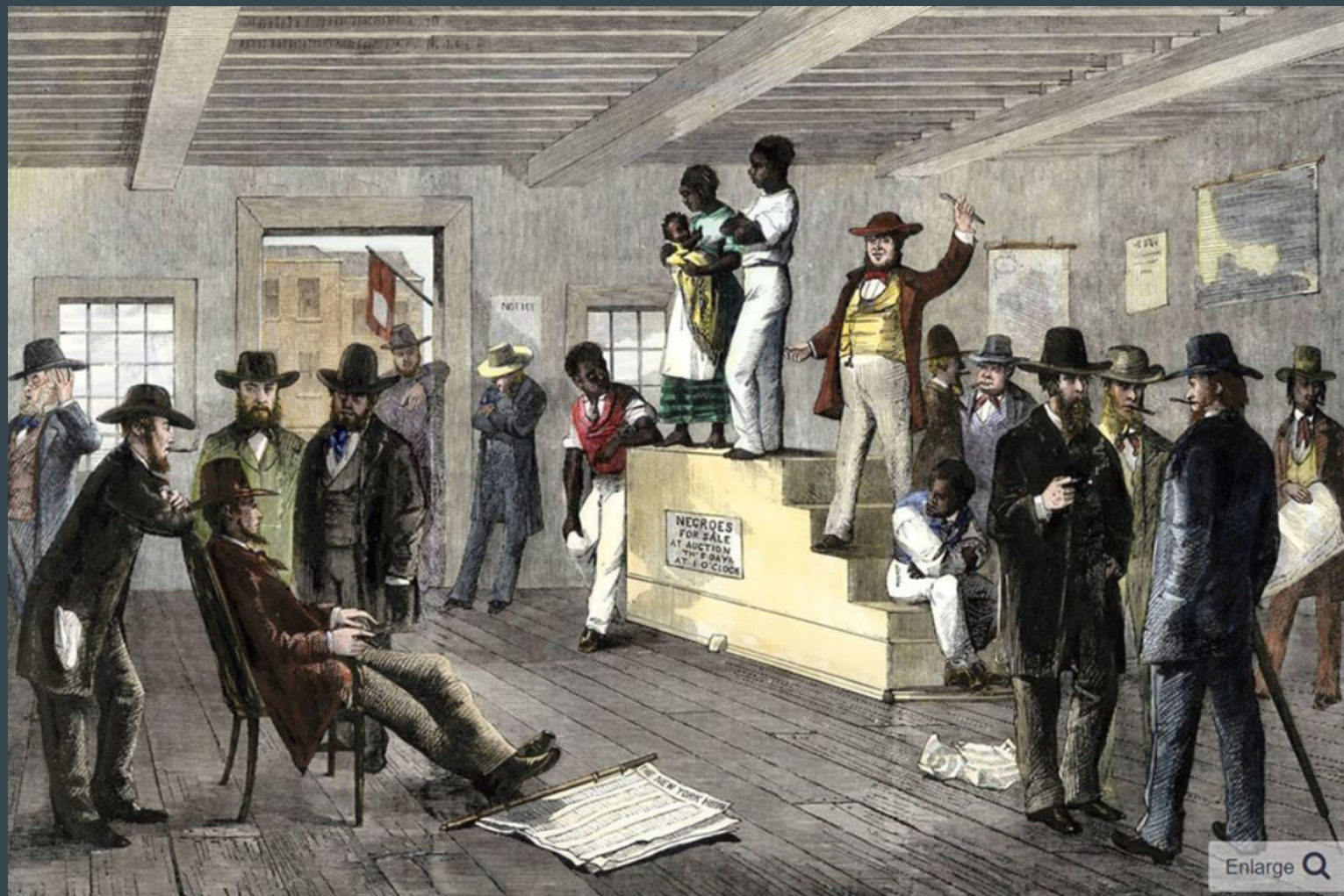
Sometimes the slave picks down one side of a row, and back upon the other, but more usually, there is one on either side, gathering all that has blossomed, leaving the unopened bolls for a succeeding picking. When the sack is filled, it is emptied into the basket and trodden down. It is necessary to be extremely careful the first time going through the field, in order not to break the branches off the stalks. The cotton will not bloom upon a broken branch. Epps never failed to inflict the severest chastisement on the unlucky servant who, either carelessly or unavoidably, was guilty in the least degree in this respect.

The hands are required to be in the cotton field as soon as it is light in the morning, and, with the exception of ten or fifteen minutes, which is given them at noon to swallow their allowance of cold bacon, they are not permitted to be a moment idle until it is too dark to see and when the moon is full they often times labor till the middle of the night. They do not dare to stop even at dinner time, nor return to the quarters, however late it be, until the order to halt is given by the driver.

The Life of the Enslaved

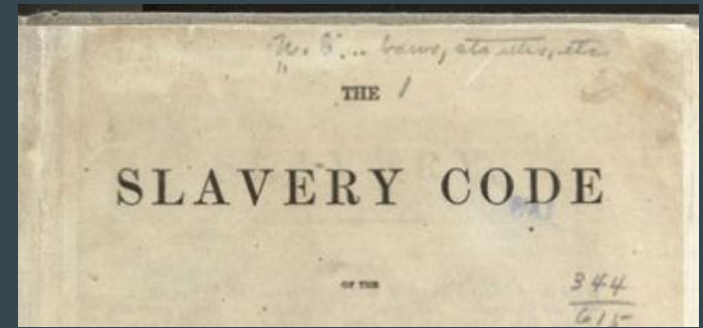
- Field hands worked to produce crops like cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, rice, etc. Not all slaves worked on cotton plantations. Some slaves were domestics and worked in the Big House cooking, cleaning, mending, etc. for the master, his wife, and their family.
- All enslaved people worked from sunrise to sunset six days a week. They did not have to work for the master on Sundays.
- In addition to their regular work, slaves had to take care of their own needs. They grew gardens, took care of their children, and did their own chores.
- Slaves got little sleep, lived in uncomfortable conditions, and were provided unhealthy food.
- Worst of all, enslaved people had no rights and were considered to be the property of their owners instead of treated as human beings.





Slave Codes

- A set of rules to treat the enslaved as property instead of humans.
- The condition of being a slave was passed from the mother. If your mother was a slave, you were born a slave.
- Slaves had no rights and could not testify against a white person. They also could not fight back, even in self-defense and could not have weapons. Whites could do anything to the enslaved, including rape and murder, and not face punishment.
- Slaves were not allowed to leave the plantation without permission.
- It was illegal to teach slaves to read and write.
- Slaves could not own property or make contracts. Slave marriages were considered illegal because of this rule.
- Slaves could be sold by the choice of their owners.



Slave Revolts of the Nineteenth Century

...

Times when slaves violently rebelled in order
to get their FREEDOM

1 - Gabriel's Rebellion

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO?
1800	Richmond, Virginia	Gabriel Prosser, a deeply religious slave who worked as a blacksmith. Unlike many slaves, Prosser could read and write.



Prosser planned to enter Richmond, Virginia by force using a slave army. He then intended to hold Governor James Monroe hostage until the slaves were given their freedom.

However, a huge rain storm caused a delay in Prosser's plan. During this delay, some slaves tattled on Prosser. Governor Monroe was warned of the revolt. As a result, things did not end well for Prosser and his followers.

Gabriel Prosser's Motto was "Death or Liberty"



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GABRIEL'S REBELLION

Gabriel, a slave of Thomas Prosser of nearby Brookfield plantation, planned a slave insurrection against Richmond on 30 Aug. 1800. The slaves intended to kidnap Governor James Monroe and compel him to support political, social, and economic equality but intense rains delayed the insurgents' scheme. Mosby Sheppard, of Meadow Farm, informed of the plot by family slaves Tom and Pharaoh, dispatched a warning letter to the governor. Monroe called out the militia and Gabriel, his plans foiled, fled to Norfolk. Authorities there captured and returned him to Richmond. Convicted of conspiracy, Gabriel was hanged on 10 Oct. 1800, the last of twenty-six conspirators executed.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES, 1997

2 - Charles Deslondes - Leader of the Biggest Slave Revolt

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO?
1811	New Orleans, Louisiana	Charles Deslondes, a slave imported from Haiti and hundreds of his followers



Before being stopped, the rebellion led by Deslondes resulted in burnt plantations, destroyed crops, and captured guns and ammunition. Somehow only two whites died.

However, Deslondes and 100 of his followers were killed. Their heads were cut off and put on poles to frighten other slaves who might want to rebel.

3 - Denmark Vesey

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO?
1822	Charleston, South Carolina	Denmark Vesey, a former slave who had purchased his own freedom. He knew how to read and write.



Though Denmark Vesey purchased his own freedom, his wife and children were still slaves. As Vesey preached in the AME Church in Charleston, he began to plot a slave revolt. Before he could lead this rebellion, however, some slaves who knew about the plan told their masters about it. Denmark Vesey and 35 others were hanged and the AME church burned down. In addition, stricter laws were passed in Charleston to keep slaves in bondage.



Charleston,
SC



4 - Nat Turner - Leader of the Most Deadly Slave Revolt

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO?
1831	Virginia	Nat Turner, a slave preacher who read his Bible and saw visions. He believed that he was chosen by God to free slaves.

Nat Turner's Rebellion

In 1831 there was a solar eclipse. Nat Turner believed it was the sign that he should start a slave revolt. With an army of about 70 men, Nat Turner was responsible for killing about sixty whites. Turner's owners were the first to die as the entire family was killed while they were sleeping. The slaves next went from house to house killing every white they encountered. Nat Turner's rebellion ended when the militia arrived. Turner's men were captured and most were killed. After several months of hiding, Nat Turner was found and sentenced to death by hanging.



Why did slave revolts fail? Why didn't they happen more often?

- Slaves worked from can to can't (time you can see at dawn until time you can't at dusk)
- Other slaves tattled (They did this to get more food, clothing, etc. and/or to avoid punishment.)
- Slaves lacked weapons
- Slaves were brainwashed into thinking that the master was always right
- Punishments for rebelling were severe (DEATH)

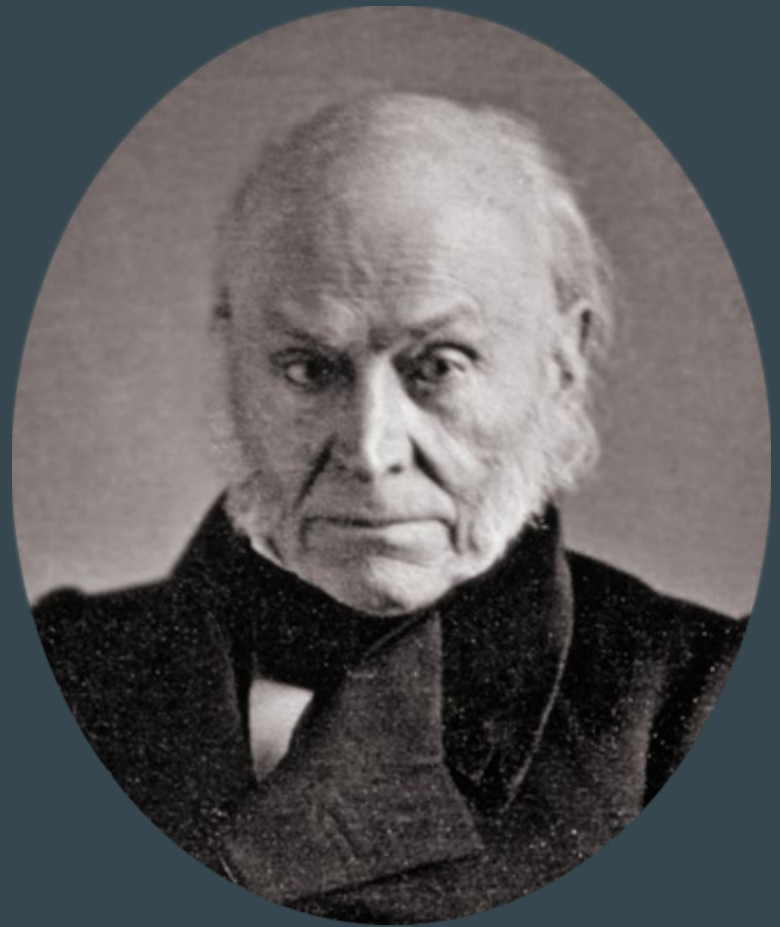
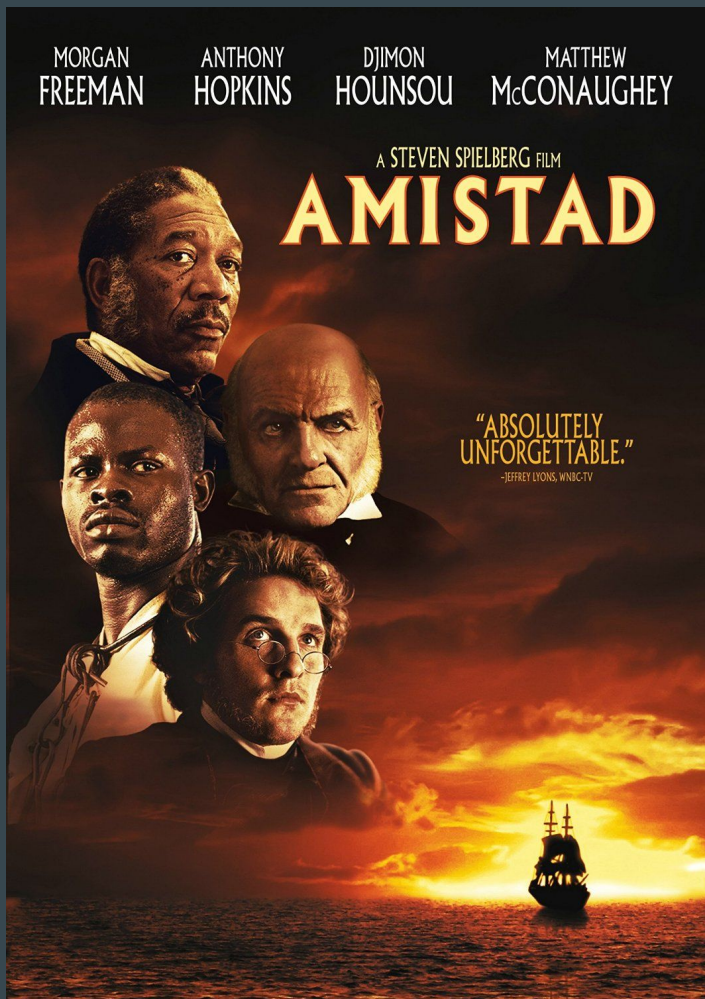
5 - The Amistad Rebellion - The Only Successful Revolt!

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHO?
1839 (Supreme Court Case in 1841)	Atlantic Ocean	Cinque, leader of the Africans who were illegally captured by the Spanish aboard a ship ironically called the Amistad (friendship)

Amistad Presentation







John Quincy Adams



