

PART THREE: Testing the New Nation, 1820–1877

DBQ 6

Slavery and Sectional Attitudes, 1830–1860

Directions: In this DBQ, you must compose an essay that uses both your interpretation of Documents A–I and your own outside knowledge of the period mentioned in this question.

In the years 1830–1860, many northern Americans came to see slavery as an evil, while many southerners defended the institution as a positive good. Why did the North and South come to such different views of slavery in the years prior to the Civil War?

Use these documents and your knowledge of the period from 1830 to 1860 to compose your answer.

Document A

Source: Governor George McDuffie to the South Carolina legislature, 1835.

In all respects the comforts of our slaves are greatly superior to those of the English [factory] operatives, or the Irish and continental peasantry, to say nothing of the millions of paupers crowded together in those loathsome receptacles of starving humanity, the public pookhouses. . . . From this excess of labor, this actual want, and these distressing cares, our slaves are entirely exempted.

Document B

Source: William Harper, *Memoir on Slavery*, 1837.

Supposing finally that the abolitionists should effect their purpose. What would be the result? The first and most obvious effect would be to put an end to the cultivation of our great Southern staple [cotton]. . . . The cultivation of the great staple crops cannot be carried on in any portion of our country where there are not slaves.

Document C

Source: *The American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1838*, N. Southard, Editor.



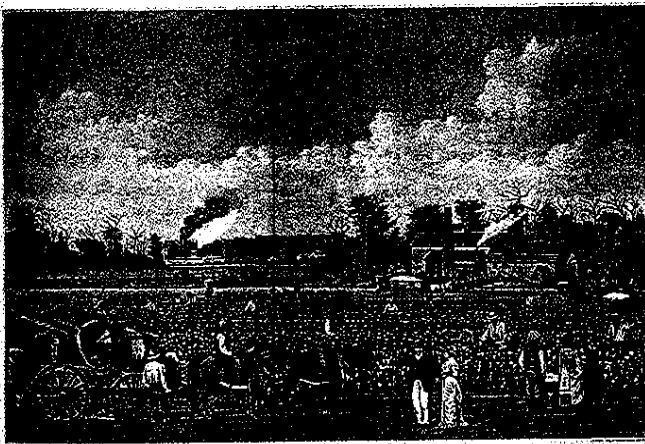
Document D: Henry Highland Garnet, "Address to the Slaves of the United States of America," National Negro Convention, Buffalo, New York, 1843

Source: Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, eds., *Let Nobody Turn Us Around*, 60.

SLAVERY! How much misery is comprehended in that single word. What mind is there that does not shrink from its direful effects? Unless the image of God be obliterated from the soul, all men cherish the love of Liberty. . . . In every man's mind the good seeds of liberty are planted, and he who brings his fellow down so low, as to make him contented with a condition of slavery, commits the highest crime against God and man. Brethren, your opponents aim to do this. They endeavor to make you as much like brutes as possible. . . .

TO SUCH DEGRADATION IT IS SINFUL IN THE EXTREME FOR YOU TO MAKE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION. The divine commandments you are in duty bound to reference and obey. If you do not obey them, you will surely meet with the displeasure of the Almighty. . . . The forlorn condition in which you are placed does not destroy your moral obligation to God.

Document E: "Harvesting Cotton," Currier and Ives print



A COTTON PLANTATION ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

Document F

Source: Abraham Lincoln, speech, Peoria, Illinois, October 1854.

Already the liberal party throughout the world express the apprehension "that the one retrograde institution in America is undermining the principles of progress and fatally violating the noblest political system the world ever saw." This is not the taunt of enemies but the warning of friends. Is it quite safe to disregard it, to despise it? . . .

In our greedy chase to make profit of the Negro, let us beware lest we "cancel and tear in pieces" even the white man's charter of freedom.

Document G: A Catechism for Slaves, 1854

Source: Belmonte, *Speaking of America*, vol. 1, 272 (Frederick Douglass's Paper, 2 June 1854, from *The Southern Episcopalian* [Charleston, South Carolina, April 1854]).

Q: Who gave you a master and mistress?

A: God gave them to me.

Q: Who says you must obey them?

A: God says I must.

Q: What book tells you these things?

A: The Bible.

Q: How does God do all his work?

A: He always does it right.

Q: Does God love to work?

A: Yes, God is always at work.

Q: Do the angels work?

A: Yes, they do what God tells them.

Q: What does God say about your work?

A: That they who will not work shall not eat.

Q: What makes you lazy?

A: My wicked heart.

Q: How do you know your heart is wicked?

A: I feel it every day.

Q: Who teaches you so many wicked things?

A: The Devil.

Q: Must you let the Devil teach you?

A: No, I must not.

Document H

Source: Poster for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, c. 1860.

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Document I: Stephen F. Hale, commissioner from Alabama, to Governor Beriah Magoffin of Kentucky, 27 December 1860, encouraging Kentucky to secede
 Source: Excerpted from Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion*, 92–98.

African slavery has not only become one of the fixed domestic institutions of the Southern States, but forms an important element of their political power, and constitutes the most valuable species of their property, worth, according to recent estimates, not less than \$4,000,000,000; forming, in fact, the basis upon which rests the prosperity and wealth of most of these States, and supplying the commerce of the world with its richest freights, and furnishing the manufactories of two continents with raw material, and their operatives with bread. It is upon this gigantic interest, this peculiar institution, that the Northern States and their people have been waging an unrelenting and fanatical war for the last quarter century. . . .

[Abraham Lincoln] stands forth as the representative of the fanaticism of the North, which, . . . acknowledges allegiance to a higher law than the Constitution striking down the sovereignty and equality of the States, and resting its claims to popular favor upon one dogma—the equality of the races, white and black.

Therefore . . . the election of Mr. Lincoln cannot be regarded otherwise than a solemn declaration, on the part of a great majority of the Northern people, of hostility to the South . . . ; nothing less than . . . [inaugurating] all the horrors of a Santo Domingo servile insurrection, consigning her citizens to assassinations and her wives and daughters to pollution and violation to gratify the lust of half-civilized Africans.