

# Slavery and Industrialization in Antebellum America

- How did slavery survive in the South and what relation did this have to demand created from the initial industrial revolution?
- What funded the Industrial Revolution in America?
- Was abolition a broadly supported political movement in the North and did it really drive political debate in the Antebellum period?
- What was its relation to the church and other forms of social activism?
- What level of support was there for colonization or deportation?
- Can slavery rightfully be seen as a regional problem or issue or were Free states heavily involved with the financing and logistics of slavery?
- What was life like for free blacks in the North and both free and enslaved populations in slave states?

# The Effect of Industrialization

- Coming out of the Revolution, the nation faced a slave problem that most today could scarcely imagine and that was unemployment
- The importation of slaves continued after the constitutional convention not because there was a strong market but because business engaged in the trade
  - The Duke de Rochefoucault Liancourt, traveling in the States in 1795 described, *“Nearly 20 vessels from the harbors of the northern states are employed in the importation of Negros to Georgia and the West India Isles. The merchants of Rhode Island are the conductors of this accursed traffic, which they are determined to preserve in until the year 1808, the period fixed for its final termination. They ship one negro for every ton burden”*
- Another quote taken from a book from 1850 comprised primarily of statistical data (much of which simply came from census data) goes as follows:
  - *“At the close of the War of Independence, the country was composed of exhausted Colonies, having a population of 3,172,464 whites. The government was heavily in debt and without credit, the channels of trade flooded with irredeemable and depreciated paper that had driven away specie, national bankruptcy and individual insolvency were the rule. The people were destitute and capital and manufactures; the employment of the shipping apparently destroyed, and the future presenting little hope. There were 751,363 black slaves, who were without employment that would earn their own support, and their fate and that of their masters gave ample cause of uneasiness, as well to statesmen as to owners. To abandon the blacks to their fate, under the plea of philanthropy, suggested itself to many. The employment of Northern ships was mostly the slave trade, while the South, having fairly less employment for the blacks, was determined to stop their arrival, - a measure which the north regarded as depriving it of its legitimate business. Thus growing jealousy was added to other evils. The lapse of seventy years has changed all that”*

# Cotton and the Industrial Revolution

- Three inventions changed the world and allowed for rapid and dramatic advancement of industry
  - the steam-engine, allowing for up-river transport of commercial loads and increased railroad capacity
  - the cotton jenny, a multi-headed machine for spinning cotton or wool
  - the cotton-gin, used to mechanically clean seeds from cotton
- These dramatically increased the availability of clothing and textile products, providing employment for millions, and broadly increased the standard of living as opposed to simply impacting the wealthy
  - This was the main pillar of the first industrial revolution which created capital and created disposable income for expanding markets leading to an ongoing string of new and useful innovations.
  - These initial steps very literally and dramatically changed the world for all who came after them
- Prior to Eli Whitney inventing the cotton-gin in 1793 it took a day to clean a pound of cotton by hand
  - *cotton was indeed grown, but the difficulty of cleaning it from the seed was so great that a man could prepare but one pound per day for market*
  - Southern cotton production increased from 5 million pounds a year in 1793 to 500 million in 1835
  - This created great wealth for the planters who owned and managed the land that produced it and the industrialist who oversaw the manufacturing process it fed.
  - The effect on the demand for labor, and in this case predominantly slave labor was dramatic

# What Funded the Industrial Revolution?

- While the Industrial revolution was driven by technology innovations it still required funding in an era that was largely mercantile without fiat currency
  - England preceded America which was the justification to protect infant industries
  - The illegal opium trade to the far east provided a major source of funding for industrialization
- During the 1700's the British and the British colonies developed a taste for tea which was produced in China
  - China on the other hand was relatively affluent and had no need for British products
  - They also controlled access to the Chinese market by foreigners very closely
  - This created large trade imbalance that was rapidly emptying GB of specie
  - To remedy this, Britain had to come up with an export product of equal or greater value (opium)
  - This was done through criminal gangs and military intimidation
  - It further created substantial wealth in England but the colonies were banned from this trade
- As soon as the treaty was signed ending the Revolutionary War, the New England states entered Asian trade
  - Led by Robert Morris who was referred to as the "financier of the Revolution"
  - Immediately led to severe balance of payments problem requiring high value import to cycle specie back to America
  - Opium was grown in British controlled areas which would require a new source to be developed
  - American Opium exports were largely sourced in modern day Turkey (Ottoman Empire)

# The Great Game

- International Power Politics played a major role in many political events in modern history that at first appear to have been principally domestic
  - Here we will look at two major players, Russia and England
- Russia and England engaged in what was referred to in England as the “Great Game” throughout the 1700’s and 1800’s
  - Britain regularly outwitted their Russian adversaries who were frequently somewhat naive
- England
  - Recognized risk of losing power to land based civilizations who did not need to depend on trade
  - Sought to partition these large nations (Russia, America, eventually Germany) into “statelets”
  - Sought to control larger competitors through finance and debt (re-colonize America)
  - Maintained Navy roughly as large as all others combined
  - Needed to maintain Asian trade routes which the empire was heavily dependent on
  - Weaken France and develop it as compliant ally
  - Keep Russia out of Mediterranean by propping up decaying Ottoman Empire
- Russia
  - Gain access to Mediterranean
  - Maintain large buffer area to fend off invasion
  - Develop internal industrial capability and markets
  - Avoid two front conflict (low population density and vast area)

# American Opium Trade to the East

- By 1830 Samuel Russell (Russell & Co, Middletown Conn.) became the largest smuggler of Turkish Opium
  - In the early 1830's he was actively recruiting "ambitious young men"
  - The returns that these recruits typically made were equivalent to a young person today amassing millions of dollars within six years of graduating college
- The Opium trade to China created generation wealth for prominent east coast families including:
  - Delano Family (FDR maternal grandparents), Forbes, Perkins, Cushing, Russell (Yale Univ.), Low (Columbia Univ.), Coolidge
- All sudden wealth created through international trading in the middle and far east during this time period was directly linked or made possible by the Opium trade
  - Traders were commonly presented as honest merchants with knowledge of the East
- British and Americans eventually forced China to accept Anglo outpost cities (like Hong Kong) throughout the far east
- The trade made rapid American industrialization possible
  - *The influence of these opium fortunes seeped into virtually every aspect of American life, The influence was cultural ...It was found in technology (Bell labs). Search the history of any institution or person with the name Forbes attached to it, and there's a good chance you'll see that opium was involved."* Author James Bradley – *The China Mirage*
- Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the trade fixed other investment losses

# Chinese Missions and the China Lobby

- Christian Mission throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century were overall highly effective but this was not the case of the early missionaries to China
  - Successful missions planted the church in the host culture
  - New England missionaries generally attempted to recreate their own culture and “erase” the host
  - The early missionaries to China didn’t penetrate the population and were largely confined to the Anglo trading zones
  - Strategy focused on winning the leaders (“Trickle down Christianity”)
  - Little if any understanding of Chinese culture or history
- The Chinese recognized that the missionaries were deeply tied to the traders and to the American military that had forced the opium imports on the Chinese
  - The traders encouraged the missionaries
  - Sometime out of religious zeal
  - But frequently for business reasons
  - American churchgoers were deeply and sincerely motivated to support the missionaries
- The Chinese missionaries eventually turned into the China Lobby
  - The became very influential in events and decision leading to WWII and the Cold War

# The French Revolution and the Birth of Communism

- After the French supported the independence of the American colonies it became a diplomatic objective for the British to remove Louis XVI from power
  - Demand for Liberal reform created an opportunity, French liberals largely “Anglophiles”
  - Thomas Jefferson, who was ambassador to France at the time, said that the British used “hired pretenders” to “crush in their own councils the genuine republicans” and the “the foreigner overthrew by gold the government they couldn’t overcome by arms.”
  - French Jacobins modeled after the and maintained close ties “London Revolutionary Society”
- Communism developed from the “Revolutionary Societies”
  - “Conspiracy of Equals” led by François-Noël Babeuf was later cited by Marx and Engels as the first modern communist.
  - Predated the Industrial Revolution so it lacked a “worker” base
- Babeuf’s mentor was James Rutledge
  - Regular contributor to radical newspaper (Courrier del Europe) that was published in England and distributed in France.
  - Owned by British wine merchant Samuel Swinton and generally thought to be English front business
- Related to movement in England referred to as “Young Englanders”
  - Blamed problems in society on the growing middle class (Bourgeoise)
  - Sought alliance between landed gentry and lower classes to crush middle class
  - Socialism and (neo-liberalism) have retained this characteristic



# War of 1812

- The reason behind the war that is most emphasized was the impressments of US seamen while the British were fighting a prolonged war against France
- *War was driven by “War Hawks”* in congress seeking territorial expansion which is where the term originated from
  - Not a party or a region, term is difficult to define. The two names that most commonly come up in the regard are John C Calhoun and Henry Clay but others are somewhat uncertain
  - Liberating” Canada was the primary objective but expanding into western territories and displacing Indian population as well as taking Florida from the Spanish were all goals
- England was not in a position to fight a war on the American continent, had limited troops in Canada, and had no plans to retake the colonies.
  - They did, however, desire to create some barriers to American westward expansion largely by way of a proposed Indian territory that would be an independent nation
- The war from the American perspective didn’t appear to be widely supported by the citizenry nor the military which was unprepared to fight it
  - misread Canada’s inclination to see the Americans as liberators along with their willingness to fight
  - Wind down of European war in 1814 created some urgency for Americans to reach negotiated peace
  - the northern tribes the biggest long term losers from this conflict
- War of 1812 marked the beginning of fundamental changes in how war in western civilization was conducted
  - Significant care had historically been taken to avoid impacting civilian populations
  - American troops burned York (present day Toronto) which was largely unprecedented. In response the British eventually burned Buffalo and ultimately Washington DC in retaliation

# The Populating of the South

- Cotton led to the population of the Deep South in a remarkably short period of time
  - Prior to 1820 the cotton producing states of the Deep South were very nearly unpopulated but then grew rapidly in a remarkably short period of time prior to the war.
  - Still the population and population density remained low and the population of the slave states relative to the free states steadily dropped
  - The expansion was funded largely by capital originating from the North and from Europe
- There were attempts made by individual southern states to limit the spread of slavery during this period
  - All states other than South Carolina had banned the importation of slaves prior to the federal ban going into effect in 1808. In the case of South Carolina this was because of the extensive interior waterways it couldn't police them
  - Slavery was decreasing in most states but there are several states where the slave population is more than half the total population and two, Mississippi and South Carolina, where a little fewer than half the households owned slaves (less than 1M people lived in these states in 1860)
- The distribution of plantations was not evenly distributed and was generally along waterways and was frequently somewhat isolated
  - Eastern planters tended to have long ties to the area
  - Western planters were new arrivals to the area (previously unpopulated) and came from a variety of areas that weren't broadly representative of the population
  - Although difficult to analyze based on available data, a significant percentage of plantations were leased, absentee owned, bank owned and could be considered a form of corporate farming

# Slave Ownership

- Roughly 20% of the slave owners in the slave holding states owned only one slave but this accounted for only 1.8% of the slave population
  - Apart from Maryland, Delaware, and Missouri where this value was substantially higher, the 20% figure was largely consistent
- 55% of slave owners own 5 slaves or less (cumulative percentage) but this still only accounts for 12.8% of the slave population
- Moving up to nine slaves that value encompasses 72% of slave owners but still only about 24% of slaves
  - As the ratio of slave to slave owner we are moving away from family farms to larger enterprises and as the ratio rises to 50 or 100, these are businesses that are complex enough to require management tasks that go well beyond management of farm labor
- About 65% of the total slave population was tied to agricultural businesses with 10 to 100 slaves with 20 to 49 slaves being the largest single grouping at about 30%
  - Only 26% of slave owners fell into this category
  - On larger plantation properties a pattern starts to emerge of people owning multiple properties frequently in different counties and states
- At least 75% of the slave population being held by mid-sized to large businesses

# Colonization Movement

- There developed in the early republic a movement to relocate African-Americans to Africa – This was led by the American Colonization Society
  - Initially there may have been mixed motives but ultimately this was aimed at racial separation
  - Henry Clay was a prominent advocate and Abraham Lincoln was the leader of the society in Illinois
  - Broadly supported in the North and Border States
- There were different versions of this concept
  - Voluntary / not voluntary
  - Slaves / freed slaves or all people of African decent
  - Locations also varied with Liberia being the main destination but alternatives were in play
  - Attempt during the war to relocate to central America
  - Proposals to relocate to western territories which were largely uninhabitable at the time
- This was deeply entwined with the Abolition movement
  - There were both supporters and opponents
- Final attempt at colonization targeted the Dominican Republic under the Grant administration
  - Fredrick Douglas actually supported the DR concept

# Slavery and Race in the North

- Slavery eventually died in the North but it was a long, generally unguided, process driven more by economics and demographics than morality
  - While slave ownership (but not transport) was never central to the New England economy, it played a key role in its transformation from subsistence to a manufacturing and trading economy
  - The slave population atrophied due to high mortality, lower birth rates, the ending of the transatlantic slave trade, and slaves being “*sold south*”
  - in 1810, there were still 27,000 slaves in free states and, even as slavery formally was outlawed, it was replaced with other forms of pseudo-slavery.
- The slave population in New England was not spread uniformly across New England but was clustered along the seacoast, in major cities, and in a few agricultural areas
  - Urban slave owners, especially artisans willingly switched to free labor from slave labor (78 p. 237) as it was more economical
  - Arguments against emancipation stressed potential social and economic costs holding that emancipation would create an economic underclass of people who would not be self-supporting
- As slavery waned in the North and also in the upper South the process of emancipation frequently involved a good deal of negotiation.
  - Slave owners had an advantage here but slaves were not entirely lacking in negotiating skills gained from independently hiring out their labor and selling goods in markets

# Life after Slavery in the North

- The conditions of those who exited slavery were frequently not much different from life under bondage
  - Conditional manumissions and indentures were contributing factors to this as was the nature of work
  - Free blacks would commonly continue to reside in the same household with their former owners
  - Domestic service, service jobs, and other marginally skilled roles were the norm including food preparation and catering, cutting hair, cleaning chimneys, and driving coaches
- From the time of the revolution forward the Black population in the north became increasingly urbanized - also impacted by the arrival of Caribbean immigrants
  - There also developed a gender imbalance with many more black women than men in Northern cities
  - In NY City, women from 14 to 26, prime household formation years, outnumbered men 2 to 1.
  - This was due to young men being sold south and others finding work at sea which was the largest employer of free black men
- Economically Free blacks in the North were making some slight progress prior to 1820 which corresponds with the start of mass European immigration
- The Irish and especially the German immigrants were willing to work longer hours for less pay and were preferred by northern employers
  - The new immigrants in turn saw Blacks as posing a threat to their livelihood
  - Although there was a natural labor shortage during this period based on American born labor, immigration completely wiped it out and drove wages down

# Northern Black Codes

- As the New England antislavery movement developed, the term “*freedom*” had significantly different meanings to different people
  - To the slave, freedom aligned most closely with the impression given by the antislavery rhetoric of an independent life with legal rights and economic opportunity
  - To slave owners, it could mean a combination of things including freedom from the newly recognized sin of owning slaves, freedom from managing slaves, and freedom from the presence of slaves
  - For whites who didn’t own slaves, it meant freedom from ongoing political narrative and ultimately freedom from the existence of slaves in their society
  - amongst whites in the north, freedom didn’t mean emancipation and inclusion of slaves but the absence of them
  - “*The abolitionist seeks to abolish slavery, but because he wishes to abolish the black man.*” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Minimizing the Black Population
  - Despite emancipation, the black population while not growing dramatically didn’t decline either.
  - This led to more active steps to remove them including targeting people or “*warning out*” as undesirables under the legal settlement laws, taxing their presence, advocating their deportation
- The final expression of legal steps to effectively ban free blacks from most northern states were the “Black Codes”
  - Varied from state to state but generally denied all normal rights to black citizens
  - Illinois was generally considered to be the worst. The author was a friend of the future president and wound up being a Union general

# Southern Religion

- While Baptists and Methodists were the largest groups, there was a good deal of religious diversity in the South
  - There were Catholic populations in Maryland and Louisiana along the gulf coast. Episcopalians were a significant presence on the eastern seaboard along with a mix of Lutherans, Baptists, Catholics, and Jews. In North Carolina, there were Quaker and Moravian settlements
  - Puritanism and its related concepts of election and the “*city on a hill*” didn’t have an audience in the South until the 1890’s
  - Many churches in the South were integrated but generally had separate seating
- There were some conflicts between the different faiths but nothing on the level that occurred in the North
  - Catholics found an accepting home amongst the predominantly Protestant population as did a significant Jewish population
- Southern religion had a relatively high view of God’s sovereignty and a good deal of skepticism regarding the will of collective man.
  - Southern religion was bounded largely in the traditions of Christendom that was based on Natural Law and Divine Positive Law
- Southern Religion was not activist or political
  - *It did however, oppose anti-Christian teachings or philosophies*



# Economics of Slavery

- Economically slaves were not entirely without bargaining power and had some degree of freedom in conducting basic trade
  - Slave owners were economically responsible for slaves and making the slave as economically self reliant as possible was actually in their best interest.
  - Slaves who were principally agricultural performed work that was not constant and peaked during planting and harvesting times
  - Slaves commonly grew their own food, participated in petty trade at local markets, and hired out their own labor, especially in the North and upper South
  - Their accumulated earnings generally remained small but this did provide the ability to acquire some possessions and to engage in activities that required some level of disposable income
  - The concept of a “*vacation*” where a worker could be gone for multiple consecutive days was not known in the free labor in the North until well after the War Between the States, but it was an established practice in slave culture
- Slaves that developed artisan skills in trades became domestic servants or worked in provisioning trades transporting goods had better and more stable lives
  - It wasn’t uncommon for slaves to pass on trades to their children
  - Provisioning or logistics required a fairly large number of people during this time period.
  - Plantations and farms required not just wagoners but also blacksmiths, saddlers, harness makers, and tanners.
  - Many tanners also learned to be shoemakers.
  - Throughout the Upper South, plantations and farms housed proportionally more skilled workers and fewer field hands

## Economics of Slavery (cont.)

- As overall population density and mobility increased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the slave population also increased
  - It became more mobile making it easier to maintain an active community life in contrast to the relative isolation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in most rural locations
- Economic changes with the decline of slavery in the North and Upper South coupled with its expansion in the Deep South caused domestic dislocation
  - The slave didn't have many effective strategies for dealing with large dislocations on the long term but could sometimes establish some leverage by developing non-agricultural skills.
  - In the case of local movements of people, visiting rights were common which were generally weekly
- Slaves that had skills with high demand were frequently paid and given economic incentives
- Slave Owners didn't necessarily benefit from a system that required them to provide life time support
  - Sometimes support for abolition had more practical economic motives
  - Ira Berlin in *Many Thousands Gone* noted, *"To be sure, some emancipators merely mouthed antislavery rhetoric while ridding themselves of unwanted slaves. Indeed, economic changes seemed to reduce the cost of subscribing to abolitionist principles, as the seeming surplus of slaves allowed for selective manumission without affecting the economy of the region. The growth of a class of free blacks-who who would support themselves most of the year but be available for hire at planting and harvest time-seemed to fit better with the new agricultural regime than with the old monoculture"*

# Plantation Organization

- Plantations were initially isolated but over time populations around plantations increased mainly in eastern states and along the gulf coast
  - Could operate fairly autonomously similar to “company towns” that were to develop later
  - While being isolated from population centers they were not isolated from each other
- Plantations functioned as midsize business with specialization of labor
  - Still plenty to investigate here – much unused first hand information available
- Workers
  - Included enslaved blacks, free black, and free white labor
  - Free labor appears to have been used mainly for construction and artisan tasks
  - Management functions existed and were performed by both free and slave labor and there are also many examples of women filling these roles
  - Medical care was provided but isolated locations posed a challenge – sometimes the owner or lease holder would acquire a certain level of medical training
- Overseers
  - The overseer was the direct management of the labor gangs
  - Could be either free black or white but was generally black except on largest plantations
- Owners
  - This general category includes lease holders and sometimes financial institutions
  - For midsize to larger operations the owner / lease holder was not commonly highly involved in managing daily activities

# Religion amongst Enslaved Populations

- The awakenings were well received by the slave population and changed domestic lives as well along the liturgical faiths were also well represented
- Religious participation appears to be comparable to the overall population
  - As with the overall population Methodists and Baptist had the most followers
  - The liturgical faiths were also represented
  - Different races attended the same church and church services but the seating was generally segregated
  - Catholics are the exception to this general rule and there is also indications that the Anglicans / Episcopalians may, in some instances at least, not been segregated
- While some blacks became church leaders there was enough resistance to having black clergy over white parishioners that this generally didn't happen
  - Led to establishment of separate black congregations after the war
  - Again Catholics seem to have been the exception
- There were frequently laws against educating slaves but these were largely ignored
  - Churches provided education to all races in many cases
  - As an example of this, Thomas (later to be called "Stonewall") Jackson ran a "Black Sunday School" that taught basic reading and academic skills

# Slave Culture

- The “Puritan Work Ethic” wasn’t shared by African-Americans or any of the other ethno-religious groups including the Borderlanders or Cavaliers
  - Viennese immigrant and author, Francis Grund observed this of the puritan saying, *“There is, probably, no people on earth with whom business constitutes pleasure, and industry amusement, in an equal degree with the inhabitants of the United States of America”*
- Abolitionist Theodore Weld saw one of slavery’s greatest evil as the promotion of sloth that denied the incentive to work which produced *“ignorance and stupidity”*
  - They saw the laziness of the slaves and the masters as threatening the hard working puritan culture
- Slave culture was seen as lacking morals
  - This was overstated and probably no different from other groups in the South but was widely held
  - Henry Stanton of Lane Seminary wrote, *“The state of morals among slaves, especially in regard to licentiousness is sickening!”*
  - Slaves and free blacks often dressed better and more extravagantly than their white counterparts
- Slave/Black culture had music, as did that of the Scot-Irish and Irish Catholics
  - while that of the Puritan by in large did not outside of church
  - American music developed as a mixture of those groups with whom music played a significant role in their life and was largely Southern in its origins
- Slave culture had large and regular gatherings, dances, and feasts while these things were rare amongst the white gentry
- Cultural influences were bi-directional

# Abolitionism

- The abolition movement was deeply associated with Northern Evangelicalism
  - Many prominent people were initially clergy or teachers in Northern church affiliated colleges
  - Most had solid Puritan or Yankee backgrounds which would begin as Congregationalists and then evolved to Unitarians or Transcendentalists
- The two most prominent people in northern abolitionism were William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Weld (Lane College / Oberlin)
  - Garrison was the co-publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper, "*The Liberator*"-first printed in 1831
  - Demanded immediate, uncompensated emancipation and encouraged violence
  - When Garrison would travel to speak to Black gatherings, they were largely drawn together to oppose colonization
  - Weld was from upstate New York and was in many ways a counter character to Garrison. His early career as an abolitionist was that of a traveling speaker
  - He was a charismatic figure who drew large crowds and was largely responsible for the early growth of the Anti-Slavery Society but left the movement due to violent tactics
- The abolitionist movement split politically in 1840 when the Garrison wing, won a crucial vote that led to a large part of the membership breaking away
  - The split in Abolitionism also formed around evangelical and non-evangelical factions
  - The evangelical wing was Arminian and emphasized perfectionism and generated mission efforts to the South while the non-evangelical wing had a higher concentration of Quakers, Transcendentalists, and Unitarians and was more political

# Demographics of Abolitionism

- The modern impression of abolitionism is that it was a widely popular movement that drove hundreds of thousands to war – **this couldn't be further from the truth**
- The peaks of the abolitionist movement was app 400K in 1840
- By 1860 it had declined to about 200K or about 1.6% of the adult population
  - This counts everyone over 16 and only includes the Northern states
  - This drop was despite a drastic increase in the northern population
  - Entirely in Yankee regions, largely female, and made up of people who don't fight wars
  - Heavily Unitarian, Congregationalist, and Quaker with some representation from other groups
- Seemed bigger than it was because followers generated so many writings
  - Wealthy – frequently funded by wealth derived from foreign trade (i.e. opium trade)
- Non-protestant population generally opposed abolition for economic reasons
- The abolition movement lacked large numbers and few key leaders
  - many of them women, who would go on to take leading roles in other activist causes
  - While its role in causing the war can be debated, it controlled and hijacked the dialogue. It does stand as an example of the influence a very small group of people can have on the destiny of others
  - *"Perhaps the most amazing—and dismaying—aspect of this raging final stage of the abolitionist disease in the public mind was the relatively small number of men who perpetrated it. One of slavery's best historians estimates that the paranoid phase of the campaign was launched by little more than twenty-five people." Historian Thomas Fleming PBS commentator and host*

# English Emancipation

- In 1807 Britain abolished the slave trade in the West Indies
- On July 26 of 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act was passed three days prior to the death of British abolitionist leader William Wilberforce
  - Garrison was on hand for this momentous occasion
  - Abolition in this case was compensated to a total sum of \$100,000,000 in 1830 US dollars which equates to about \$2 Billion in 2010 dollars
  - British abolition freed 850,000 slaves three thousand miles away and separated by a vast body of water
- The British West Indies were prosperous but slipped into prolonged depression
  - Slavery was stopped without any plan on how to transition away from it
- This resulted in a flow of refugees to east coast cities
  - Included former slaves and free blacks and whites from the islands
  - Heavily impacted New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington
- Garrison thought he would return a hero but was almost hung upon his arrival in NY
  - What had happened in the West Indies was lost on no one at the time in both the North and South as well as in Europe considering the dependencies these economies had on the South.
  - The London Times reported that, *“slave emancipation in the West Indies was a colossal failure that had annihilated millions of pounds of capital and reduced blacks to a degradation lower than they had known as slaves*
  - Northern cities and workers feared a refugee crisis that would destroy their economy and jobs