

Summary: People of the South

First Peoples in the South

Native Americans lived in the South for thousands of years before Europeans came in the 1500s. They planted crops and became skilled farmers. Europeans later grew rice and tobacco. They used the South's rich soil and warm weather. Tobacco became an important export. In 1619, the first enslaved Africans were brought to the colony of Jamestown. They were forced to work for free in the colony.

A Plantation Economy

Some Europeans started huge farms called plantations. Most plantations only grew one crop. The main crops were rice, tobacco, cotton, hemp, indigo, and sugar. Inventions helped planters reduce costs and make bigger profits.

Plantations were like small villages. The owners lived in big houses. They had fine clothing, jewels, and art. Enslaved Africans lived in rough cabins and had few belongings. Most southerners did not enslave people.

Northern states passed laws that made slavery illegal. Many southerners said their economy depended on slavery. In 1861, eleven southern states left the United States to start their own country. A Civil War between the North and South began. After four years, the South lost. Slavery was outlawed. More than 4 million African Americans were freed.

Civil Rights and Progress

One hundred years after the Civil War, African Americans still struggled for their civil rights. **Slavery had ended, but they did not have equal treatment. Many Americans worked to win equality for all people.**

In 1954, separate schools for white and black children were outlawed. Martin Luther King Jr. helped organize a bus boycott after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white person. The bus company finally agreed to treat all riders equally.

Other groups, including women, American Indians, and Latinos began to demand their civil rights. Women won the right to vote in 1920. Today, people from different backgrounds hold important positions in all areas of American life.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

export *noun*, a product that is sent out of the country to be sold or traded

boycott *noun*, a protest in which people refuse to do business with a person or company

civil rights *noun*, the rights that every citizen has by law



After You Read

REVIEW Why did farmers in the South grow tobacco and rice? Highlight words that tell about the land and climate.

REVIEW In what ways were the lives of plantation owners and enslaved workers different? Circle the paragraph that tells about plantation life.

REVIEW Why did African Americans boycott and protest in the 1950s and 1960s? Highlight words that tell what people wanted.