

## The Point of View of the South

### The Southern Plantation System



Life in the Southern states moved at a slower pace than other regions. The heat and humidity of the region made for a difficult life. Far fewer education opportunities were available across the vast agricultural and plantation lands that spread across Southern states.

The warm and humid climate, fertile soil, and wide rivers of the South contributed to the creation of large cotton and tobacco fields. A Southern agricultural system called **plantations** developed. Large plantations had a wealthy landowner who usually hired an over-seer to manage and supervise workers in the fields. Because of the need for many people to work the land, the South used a system of slavery to force enslaved people into the hot fields. The invention of the cotton gin made it easier to remove the tiny dark seeds from cotton. This sped up cotton production in the South and led to even more enslaved people working fields. Some small farmers, however, did the work themselves, helped one another, or hired workers.

Southern states grew increasingly concerned about the role of the national government in their day-to-day lives. Some landowners worried that the national government would end slavery while believing their local and state governments would continue to allow it. Additionally, many plantation owners strongly disagreed with tariffs on the raw materials they were producing. They were concerned the national government and Northern states were interfering too much in their lives.

The demand for more and more cotton, tobacco, and even sugar caused the farmers to plow more Southern lands. Even though the soil was becoming depleted from growing cotton and tobacco, plantations had become extremely successful shipping cotton to Great Britain. In addition, many people had successful small businesses such as fishing the coastal waters.

Image credit: Walker, W. A. (Artist). (1881). *Cotton plantation on the Mississippi*. [Print Graphic]. Retrieved from <http://www.definitivecivilwar.com/art/600/0000007254c.jpg>