The Empire of Cotton
The Constitution and Slavery

The framers of the Constitution, dealing with slavery as an incidental but troublesome circumstance, recognized slavery but provided no national legal status
The Constitution does not mention the Declaration of Independence & seems to embrace principles plainly inimical to the Declaration.

The Constitution does not use the term “slaves” anywhere

The South historically maintained the Constitution sanctioned slavery

The North agreed and disagreed (the Constitution was neutral)
Constitutional Convention

- Summer of 1787
- 55 delegates meet in Philadelphia
- Original goal was to fix the Articles of Confederation
- They realized that the Articles of Confederation could not be fixed. A new government was needed
The Constitution and the Slavery Question

Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America
Constitution Article. I. - Section 2 - The House and the 3/5ths clause

Representatives [the House of Representatives] and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons
Article I, section 3
The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.
Section 9 - Limits on Congress and the Slave Trade

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.
Article. IV. - The States and Fugitive Slaves

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.
Article. IV. - The States

Section 3 - New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union . . . The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.
I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States

— George W. Bush —
Article. VII. - Ratification

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

Convention reps chosen by vote of individual state voters
5th Amendment
No person shall be …… deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation
Points to Consider

25 of the 55 Convention delegates were slave owners.

There was fear of internal dissent and outside influence in 1787.

The Constitution had to be ratified by at least 9 states to be effective.

Most of the convention delegates would have admitted that slavery was going to *wither away* in the next 15 to 25 years.
The Federalist Papers, a series of essays, argued in favor of approving the new Constitution.

One argument made was that unless united, based on European history, the states were more likely to go to war among themselves for competitive economic reasons; and

The enemy of democracy was factions.
The Empire of Cotton

Or

“Where you stand is where you sit.”
In 1857, British economist John T. Danson wrote that in the “connection between American Slavery and the British Cotton Manufacture,” that “there is not, and never has been, any considerable source of supply for cotton, excepting the East-Indies, which is not obviously and exclusively maintained by slave-labor.”
Efforts to cultivate cotton with free labor had largely failed, he observed, lending support to his conclusion that “as far as yet appears, cotton must continue to be grown, chiefly by slave-labor.”
In 1857, a full 68 percent of all cotton arriving in the United Kingdom came from the United States, and slaves grew most of it.

Cotton manufacturing led the Industrial Revolution and it rested on the backs of America slaves.
Between 1830 and 1850 cotton textiles made up about 45% of Great Britain's exports. Exports mostly to India and Ottoman Empire as European continent closed or semi permeable to Britain’s textiles. Between 1840 and 1860 cotton textiles made up 10% of Britain’s national income with the cost of cotton being about 3% for 7% value added.
By 1860, 75 percent of the cotton produced in the United States was eventually exported abroad.

Nearly all the exported cotton was shipped to Great Britain, fueling its burgeoning textile industry and making the powerful British Empire increasingly dependent on American cotton and southern slavery.

Exporting at such high volumes made the United States the undisputed world leader in cotton production.
Between the years 1820 and 1860, approximately 80 percent of the global cotton supply was produced in the United States. The power of cotton on the world market brought wealth to the South and it increased its economic dependence on other countries and other parts of the United States.

FIGURE 10.1 Cotton Exports as a Percentage of All U.S. Exports, 1800–1860

One consequence of the growth of cotton production was its importance in international trade. The growing share of the export market, and the great value (nearly $200 million in 1860) led southern slave owners to believe that “Cotton Is King.” The importance of cotton to the national economy entitled the South to a commanding voice in national policy, many Southerners believed.
Slavery arose by the gap between mechanized Textile manufacturing of the Industrial Revolution and labor intensive of premodern agriculture.
As a subtropical plant, cotton needs a subtropical or tropical climate.

Europe could not grow cotton.

Britain depended on areas it controlled (India and Egypt) and areas it did not control (America) for its raw cotton.

The British Government (Navy and Army) allied with British industry and commerce ships to build its Industrial (including cotton) industry.
Cotton was grown alongside other crops for thousands of years before 1750.

From the earliest time until well into the Eighteenth century, people of the Indian subcontinent were the world’s leading cotton growers and textile manufacturers.
premodern cotton industry was characterized by slow technological change in ginning, spinning, and weaving.

slow technological change was also related to constraints on the supply of raw materials. In most regions of the world, raw cotton could not be transported efficiently very far.
The cotton centers that had emerged in the 19th century Americas, Africa, and Asia all developed increasingly sophisticated networks of trade, connecting growers, manufacturers, and consumers over long transcontinental distances.

As demand grew, Wool and Cotton textile production moved out of the home (Cottage Industry) and into the factory.
Europeans had not competitive in transoceanic markets due to Europe’s poor raw cotton quality and quantity.

Unlike Indian or Chinese producers, Europeans depended on the import of raw cotton from distant regions of the world—regions over which they enjoyed little control.

In 1600, most Europeans continued to clothe themselves in linens and woolens.
The European growth in cotton textile production came from technical and organizational advances and ability and willingness to project capital and power across vast oceans to obtain raw cotton.
European capitalists and rulers altered global networks through multiple means.

The muscle of armed trade enabled the creation of a complex, Eurocentric maritime trade web

forging of a military-fiscal state allowed for the projection of power into the far-flung corners of the world;
Pre Cotton Advancements in Trade institutions

the invention of financial instruments—from marine insurance to bills of lading — allowed for the transfer of capital and goods over long distances.

the development of a legal system gave a level of security to global investments. It did not hurt to have an army present.

the construction of alliances with distant capitalists and governments provided access to local weavers and cotton growers.

the expropriation of land and the deportation of Africans created flourishing plantations.

these alterations were the basis the Industrial Revolution.
Pre 1807, European trading companies purchased cotton textiles in India, to trade for spices in Southeast Asia, and also to bring to Europe, where they might be consumed domestically or shipped to Africa to pay for slaves to work the plantations just beginning to take root in the New World.

Cotton textiles became entangled in a three-continent-spanning trading system
The deportation of many millions of Africans to the Americas increased pressure to secure more cotton cloth.

It was America’s slave trade that established significant European mercantile presence in Africa and gave economic value (e.g., cotton growth) to territories captured in the Americas and overcame Europe’s own cotton resource constraints.
This “War (or coercive) capitalism” relied on the capacity of rich and powerful Europeans to divide the world into an “inside” and an “outside” through violent domination.

“inside” encompassed the laws, institutions, and customs of the mother country, where state-enforced order ruled.

“outside” characterized by imperial domination, the expropriation of vast territories, decimation of indigenous peoples, theft of their resources, enslavement, and the domination of vast tracts of land by private capitalists with little effective oversight by distant European states.
War capitalism also nourished emerging secondary sectors of the economy such as insurance, finance, shipping, public institutions such as government credit, money itself, and national defense.

These institutions originated in the world of war capitalism as advanced industrial techniques and commercial practices migrated from export businesses into the domestic economy.
War capitalism had also provided many learning opportunities:
- how to organize long-distance trade
- how to run domestic industries
- an understanding of the mechanisms to move capital (ships, men, supplies) across oceans
- lessons that informed the development of domestic financial instruments.
- modern labor cost accounting
The “Inside” Technological Jump

In the early 18th century British manufacturers began making improvements in factory construction and cotton textile production.
In 1734, John Kay invented the flying shuttle — one of the first of a series of inventions associated with the cotton woven fabric industry. The flying shuttle increased the width of cotton cloth and speed of production of a single weaver at a loom.

In 1764, James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny which multiplied the spun thread production capacity of a single worker — initially eightfold and subsequently much further.
The steam engine (perfected by James Watt in 1775), which was applied to the power loom transmitted power throughout a factory with screws, cables and pulleys. Previous power was water.

In 1785, an English clergyman named Edmund Cartwright patented the first power loom, refined over the next 47 years by the 1830s two people could operate four looms simultaneously.
Home cottage textile workers suffered as the factories replaced many skilled weavers with unskilled workers at lower wages.

England’s technical prowess enabled the country to excel at mass production for the middle-market consumer, including cotton textiles.
Textile roller printing was first developed in England in the 1780s and was in general use by the first decade of the nineteenth century. By 1860, roller printing machines could print up to eight colors simultaneously.
Between 1780 and 1800, output of cotton textiles in Britain grew annually by 10.8 percent, and exports by 14 percent.

already in 1797 there were approximately nine hundred cotton factories. In 1788, there had been 50,000 mule spindles; thirty-three years later that number had increased to 7 million.

English manufacturers were able to compete in European and Atlantic markets, and after 1830 they even began to compete with Indian producers in India itself.
Cotton and the USA

Almost no cotton was grown in the United States in 1787, the year the federal constitution was written. However, following the War of 1812, a huge increase in production and more liberal trade policies resulted in the so-called cotton boom. By 1850, cotton became the key cash crop (a crop grown to sell rather than for the farmer’s sole use) of the southern economy and the most important American commodity.
By 1850, of the 3.2 million slaves in the country’s fifteen slave states, 1.8 million were producing cotton.

By 1860, US slave labor was producing over two billion pounds of cotton per year.

American cotton soon made up two-thirds of the global supply, and production continued to soar.

By the time of the Civil War, South Carolina politician James Hammond confidently proclaimed that the North could never threaten the South because “cotton is king.”
By 1860, some thirty-five hundred vessels were steaming in and out of New Orleans, carrying an annual cargo made up primarily of cotton that amounted to $220 million worth of goods (approximately $6.5 billion in 2014 dollars).

“That is all you need to know to understand the causes of Slavery.”

John Wilson
May 27 – No class Memorial Day

June 3 - Session 4 – Geographic Expansion and Slavery