

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy words and high  
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which melt along our sky:  
Yet, not one brown, hard hand forgoes it honest labor here,  
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends his axe in fear.

What asks the Old Dominion? If now her sons have proved  
False to their fathers' memory, false to the faith they love;  
If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great charter spurn,  
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and duty turn?

All that a sister State should do, all that a free State may,  
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our day;  
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must stagger alone,  
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

We wage no war, we lift no arm, we fling no torch within  
The fire-damps of the quaking mine beneath your soil of sin;  
We leave ye with your bondmen, to wrestle, while ye can,  
With the strong upward tendencies and godlike soul of man!

But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given  
For freedom and humanity, is registered in heaven;  
No slave-hunt in our borders—no prate on our strand!  
No fetters in the Bay State—no slave upon our land!

John Greenleaf Whittier,  
"Massachusetts to Virginia," 1843

#### DOCUMENT D. IN DEFENSE OF SLAVERY

After the slave revolt in Virginia led by Nat Turner, Virginia's legislature conducted a lengthy debate (1831–1832) on the morality of slavery. Commenting on the debate, Thomas Dew, a professor at the College of William and Mary, wrote a defense of slavery that was to have widespread influence on public opinion in the South. Following is an excerpt from Dew's essay.

It is said slavery is wrong, in the *abstract* at least, and contrary to the spirit of Christianity. . . . With regard to the assertion that slavery is against the spirit of Christianity, we are ready to admit the general assertion, but deny most positively, that there is any thing in the Old or New Testament [of the Bible], which would go to show that slavery, when once introduced, ought at all events to be abrogated, or that the master commits any offence in holding slaves. The children of Israel themselves were slaveholders, and were not condemned for it. All the patriarchs themselves were slave-

holders; Abraham had more than three hundred; Isaac had a "great store" of them; and even the patient and meek Job himself had "a very great household." . . . When we turn to the New Testament, we find not one single passage at all calculated to disturb the conscience of an honest slaveholder. No one can read it without seeing and admiring that the meek and humble Saviour of the world in no instance meddled with the established institutions of mankind; he came to save a fallen world, and not to excite the black passions of men, and array them in deadly hostility against each other. . . . He was born in the Roman world—a world in which the most galling slavery existed, a thousand times more cruel than the slavery in our own country; and yet he no where encourages insurrection; he no where fosters discontent; but exhorts *always* to implicit obedience and fidelity.

Thomas R. Dew,  
*Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature  
of 1831 and 1832, 1832*

#### ANALYZING THE DOCUMENTS

1. Based on the documents presented, how do you think Lydia Child or John Greenleaf Whittier would respond to Thomas Dew's defense of slavery?
2. "Although there were differences between the North and the South, the racial attitudes of both sections were not far apart, nor is it correct to call the northern economy 'industrial' and the southern economy 'agrarian.'"

Referring to the documents, tell how you would either defend or refute the position taken by the above statement.

3. "Growing sectional differences in the United States during the first half of the 19th century made a breakup of the Union inevitable."

Referring to the documents, take a position either supporting or criticizing this statement.

compare and contrast the experiences of two immigrant groups, the Irish and the Germans, in the 1840s and 1850s.

Why did people in TWO of the following sections reflect the belief in 1826 that there were good reasons to expect continued growth and prosperity in America?

North West  
South

4. Compare and contrast the North and the South in terms of both economic and cultural characteristics in the pre-Civil War era.
5. Analyze the extent to which southern society in the mid-1800s was hierarchical.

#### DOCUMENTS AND READINGS

To what extent were economic and social differences in the North and the South increasing in the first half of the 19th century? As evidence of sectional differences in this period, you will read four documents (A–D), written by southerners and northerners.

#### DOCUMENT A. AN ARGUMENT AGAINST A SINGLE-CROP ECONOMY

Thoughtful southerners realized that there was an economic danger in dependence on a single crop, cotton. The anonymous author of the following newspaper editorial was one of a number of southerners who urged, largely unsuccessfully, economic diversification as a means of strengthening the South.

... Let us manufacture, because it is our best policy. Let us go more on provision crops and less on cotton, because we have had everything about us poor and impoverished long enough. This we can do without manifesting any ill nature to any of the members of the same great family, all whose earnings go to swell the general prosperity and happiness.

Much of our chagrin and ill nature on this subject may be justly, because truly, ascribed to a sense of shame which we of the Southern states feel, that we have been so long behind our Northern neighbors in the production of everything that substantially administers to the elegance or the comforts of life. It has been our own fault—not theirs. If we have followed a ruinous policy and bought all the articles of subsistence instead of raising them, who is to blame?

Let us change our policy, but without that spirit and those expressions which leave a festering sore in the hearts of those who should be brothers. . . . We have good land, unlimited waterpower, capital in plenty, and a patriotism which is running over in some places.

*Georgia Courier*, June 21, 1827

#### DOCUMENT B. RACIAL PREJUDICE

Just as some southerners could be critical of their own section, some northerners called attention to faults within their region. The novelist Lydia M. Child was a northern white who pointed out that African Americans faced racial prejudice in northern cities no less than on southern plantations.

While we bestow our earnest disapprobation on the system of slavery, let us not flatter ourselves that we are in reality any better than our brethren in the South. Thanks to our soil and climate and the early exertions of the Quakers, the *form* of slavery does not exist among us; but the very spirit of the hateful and mischievous thing is here in all its strength. The manner in which we use what power we have gives us ample reason to be grateful that the nature of our institutions does not entrust us with more. Our prejudice against colored people is even more inveterate than it is at the South. The planter is often attached to his Negroes, and lavishes caresses and kind words upon them, as he would on a favorite hound; but our coldhearted, ignoble prejudice admits of no exceptions—no intermission.

The Southerners have long-continued habit, apparent interest and dreaded danger to palliate the wrong they do; but we stand without excuse. The intelligent and well-informed have the least share of this prejudice; and when our minds can reflect upon it, I have generally observed that they soon cease to have any at all. But such a general apathy prevails, and the subject is so seldom brought into view, that few are really aware how oppressively the influence of society is made to bear upon this injured class of the community.

Lydia M. Child,

*An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, 1833

#### DOCUMENT C. A NORTHERN POET'S VIEW OF SLAVERY

Sectional views were voiced in every available medium: in literature and art as well as in political speeches and debates. The poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the following poem in response to southern demands for the return of a fugitive slave, George Latimer.

The blast from Freedom's northern hills, upon its Southern way,  
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachusetts Bay;  
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle bugle's peal,  
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor clang of horseman's steel.