

## Topic 3.12

# Movement in the Early Republic

*I have long since given up the expectation of any early provision for getting in the extinguishment of slavery among us.*

Thomas Jefferson letter to William Burwell, 1805

**Learning Objective 1:** Explain how and why migration and immigration to and within North America caused competition and conflict over time.

**Learning Objective 2:** Explain the continuities and changes in regional attitudes about slavery as it expanded from 1754 to 1800.

The founding of the Republic increased the movement of people, mainly westward. The uncertainties of rebellion and war had ended. With peace and the removal of British control came a re-ordering of government and life. At the same time, however, hostile forces remained on the borders of the new nation. The British to the north and west, and the Spanish to the south and west, both threatened the young country's existence. In addition, both within and on the borders lived Native Americans who resented the expansion of European settlers onto their lands.

## Migration and Settlement

The people who moved west, whether they were born in America or came as free immigrants or indentured servants or enslaved Africans, faced a range of forces, both friendly and hostile. This movement was recognized and accepted from the very beginning of the nation. The **Northwest Ordinance** (Topic 3.7), enacted under the Articles of Confederation, provided a mechanism for migration and settlement. It planned for the sale of government land, an orderly adoption of western territory into new states, public education, and outlawed slavery in the territory. While the government had foreseen migration, it still could not eliminate the disputes and conflicts that developed.

## American Indians

By the end of the 18th century, Native Americans found themselves losing conflicts with settlers. As a result, they were increasingly either living on reservations or forced to migrate west.

**Laws** In 1790, the **Indian Intercourse Act** was one of the first laws passed by the new nation. The act placed the federal government in control of all legal

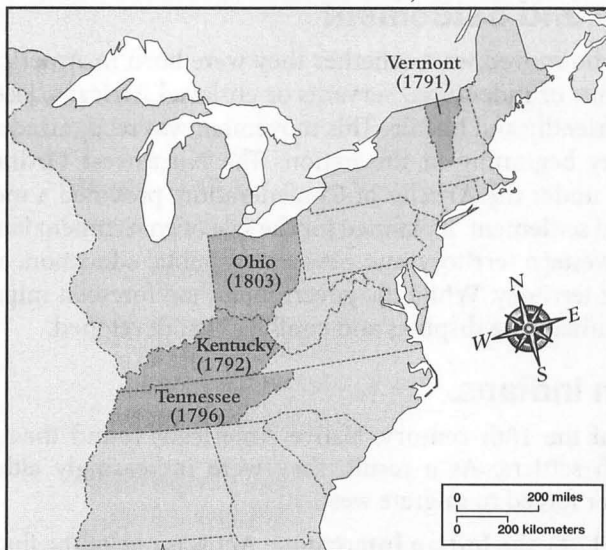
actions with Native Americans. Only the federal government, not the states, could purchase their land and regulate any trade and traveling over their lands. These laws were largely ignored by the traders and settlers migrating westward.

**Resistance** While the settlers ignored laws and treaties intended to maintain peace with the American Indians, the government usually supported the settlers when disputes turned violent. For example, in the Northwest Territory in the 1790s, a confederation of Shawnee and other American Indians twice successfully defeated government troops. In response, a larger government force defeated the confederation at the **Battle of Fallen Timbers** in what is today northwestern Ohio (Topic 3.10). The American Indian position was further weakened in this area as the British, who had supported them, gradually closed the trading forts that they had maintained there in the years immediately following the Revolution.

**West of the Mississippi** Migration was a survivable option for many tribes. They faced overwhelming force, fatal foreign diseases, and the destruction of their hunting grounds depriving them of food and furs to trade. Some did remain where their ancestors had settled. They were unwilling to leave their traditional lands despite being surrounded by hostile settlers. The Iroquois stayed on reservations or moved north to Canada. Many, including the Shawnee in the north and Cherokees further south (Topic 4.8), moved across the Mississippi River. These journeys were perilous as those tribes native to the west resisted these incursions into their traditional lands.

**The Southern Frontier** Further south, near New Orleans and in Florida, the Spanish were primarily concerned with stopping the incursion of settlers from the United States. As a result, they allowed Native Americans more freedom.

NEW STATES IN THE UNION, 1796 to 1803



## Population Change

The population increased for several reasons.

- Europeans continued to immigrate to the United States, but in small numbers. The flow increased or decreased in reaction to political and economic upheavals in Europe.
- Enslaved Africans continued to be brought into the country. Slaveowners recognized that the Constitution allowed this trade to end after 1808.
- The largest population gain was natural, as births exceeded deaths. The high birth rate was tied to a plentiful food supply and the desire of families to have children who could help on the farms.

The westward movement was aided by scouts and early settlers who blazed trails through the wilderness for others to follow. Men such as the legendary **Daniel Boone** led the way across the Appalachian Mountains and established the early White settlements in the old northwest.

## Slavery

By the late 18th century, some people openly opposed slavery. Many of these were Quakers, Mennonites, or other people motivated by their Christian faith. Some were influenced by the Enlightenment ideals about equality and liberty. They saw no place for slavery in a democratic republic. In addition, many people, including slaveowners such as James Madison, disliked slavery, hoping it would fade away as it had in Europe and was beginning to do in parts of Latin America. They believed that increasing immigration would provide low-cost free labor to replace enslaved workers.

**Cotton** Slavery, though, grew rather than declined beginning in 1793. In that year, **Eli Whitney** invented the **cotton gin**, a device for separating cotton fiber from the seeds. This turned a slow, costly process into a quick, inexpensive one. The change transformed the agriculture of the south. Suddenly, growing cotton became immensely profitable and the demand for enslaved African Americans increased dramatically.

Mechanization of the textile industry also increased the value of cotton. The British were the first to mechanize. To protect their advantage, they passed laws against taking knowledge of their factory designs outside the country. However, a young apprentice named Samuel Slater broke the British law. He memorized a factory design, moved to the United States, and built his own factory. This launched the a new, more efficient textile industry in the United States.

The combination of the cotton gin and mechanization of the textile industry made cotton cloth less expensive and more plentiful than ever before. The production of cotton goods became a potent global industry.

**Conflict Over Expansion of Slavery** Within the United States, plantation owners eager to increase cotton production based on enslave labor looked westward for more land. After 1800, they quickly settled in Alabama and Mississippi, which each had excellent climate and geography for growing

cotton. However, their desire for lands farther west and north would soon face resistance. The growing number of northerners who opposed slavery or who hoped to settle these land themselves without competition from enslaved workers reflected an increasing regional conflict over slavery.

**The Movements of Enslaved African Americans** Some enslaved people were able to escape bondage. They might find liberty by reaching a free state in the north, although the Constitution included a clause that required states to return fugitives to their owners. Some went to Canada. More settled in land controlled by Indians or in Florida, which belonged to Spain until 1821.

Most enslaved people who moved did so because of their owners' search for greater profits. By the 1790s, the Chesapeake area planters had more enslaved people than they wanted. A decline in the uncertain tobacco market combined with a growing enslaved population through natural increases and expanded importation created a surplus of enslaved people. Efforts to train enslaved people in skilled trades or lease them as servants in the growing cities did not meet the owners' financial desires. In addition, moving enslaved people from the fields to towns, where they could more easily board boats and carriages, added to the risk of people escaping to freedom in the north.

The growing demand for workers in cotton fields provided Chesapeake planters a new opportunity. They could sell their enslaved African Americans to cotton planters in newly settled lands farther south and west, such as Alabama and Mississippi. This interregional slave trade became very large, with between 500,000 and 1 million people transported before the Civil War began in 1861. This trade was particularly cruel because it often broke families apart. Many of the enslaved people who were sold never saw their parents, children, or other relatives again.

STATES WITH AT LEAST 20 PERCENT OF PEOPLE ENSLAVED, 1790				
State	White	Free Nonwhite	Enslaved	Percent Enslaved
Maryland	208,649	8,043	103,036	32
Virginia	442,117	12,866	292,627	39
North Carolina	140,178	4,975	100,572	25
South Carolina	140,178	1,801	107,094	43
Georgia	52,886	398	29,264	35

Source: U.S. Census, 1790

## REFLECT ON THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Explain the reasons and ways the movement to and within North America caused rivalries and clashes during this period.

## KEY TERMS BY THEME

### Expansion (MIG, POL)

Northwest Ordinance  
Indian Intercourse Act

Battle of Fallen Timbers  
Daniel Boone

### Slave industry (MIG, WXT)

Eli Whitney  
cotton gin

## MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Questions 1–3 refer to the following excerpt.

“ARTICLE I. *No person* demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments...

ARTICLE II. *The inhabitants* of said territory shall always be entitled to the benefits of the writs of habeas corpus and the trial by jury...

ARTICLE III. *Religion, morality, and knowledge* being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent...

ARTICLE IV. *The said Territory*, and the states which may be formed therein, shall forever remain a part of this Confederacy of the United States of America...

ARTICLE VI. *There shall be* neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory.

Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787

1. Which of the following processes provided the best model for how the principles expressed in Article III could work?
  - (A) The treatment of the Aztecs by the Spanish in the 16th century
  - (B) The negotiations between American Indians and colonists in Pennsylvania in the 17th century
  - (C) The relationship between American Indians and settlers in New England in the 17th century
  - (D) The reaction by colonists to the line created by the British in the Proclamation of 1763

2. Articles I and II most closely reflected ideas expressed in which of the following documents?
  - (A) Declaration of Independence
  - (B) Articles of Confederation
  - (C) Constitution as ratified
  - (D) Bill of Rights
3. The Northwest Ordinance established both an immediate and long-lasting process for which of the following?
  - (A) Methods for reaching agreements among states
  - (B) Policies toward American Indians
  - (C) Formation of new states
  - (D) Procedures to end slavery

### SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION

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Use complete sentences; an outline or bulleted list alone is not acceptable.

1. “Sir, suffer me to recall to your mind that time, in which the arms and tyranny of the British crown were exerted. . . .

This, Sir, was a time when you clearly saw into the injustice of a State of slavery . . . that you publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine. . . . ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . . .’

But, Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which he hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity, and cruel oppression.”

Benjamin Banneker, African American scientist and surveyor,  
letter to Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, 1792

Using the excerpt, answer (a), (b), and (c).

- (a) Briefly explain ONE specific reason for Banneker’s letter to Jefferson.
- (b) Briefly explain ONE critic’s response to Banneker’s position.
- (c) Briefly explain ONE specific way Thomas Jefferson might have responded to Banneker’s questions about slavery.