

Population and slaveholding, United States, 1860

Southern States	Total Population*	Percent of population that was black	Percent of population enslaved	Percent of Black population that was free	Number of Slaveholders	Percent of free families who were slaveholders**
Alabama	964,201	45.4%	45.1%	0.6%	33,730	35.1%
Arkansas	435,450	25.6%	25.5%	0.1%	11,474	20.1%
Delaware	112,216	19.3%	1.6%	91.7%	587	3.8%
Florida	140,424	44.6%	44.0%	1.5%	5,152	34.5%
Georgia	1,057,286	44.0%	43.7%	0.8%	41,084	37.6%
Kentucky	1,155,684	20.4%	19.5%	4.5%	38,645	23.5%
Louisiana	708,002	49.5%	46.3%	5.3%	22,033	31.0%
Maryland	687,049	24.9%	12.7%	49.1%	13,783	14.5%
Mississippi	791,305	55.3%	55.2%	0.2%	30,943	49.2%
Missouri	1,182,012	10.0%	9.7%	3.0%	24,320	12.7%
North Carolina	992,622	36.4%	33.4%	8.4%	34,658	29.1%
South Carolina	703,708	58.6%	57.2%	2.4%	26,701	47.1%
Tennessee	1,109,801	25.5%	24.8%	2.6%	36,844	24.9%
Texas	604,215	30.3%	30.2%	0.2%	21,878	28.5%
Virginia	1,596,318	34.4%	30.7%	10.6%	52,128	27.3%
District of Columbia	75,080	19.1%	4.2%	77.8%		
Total South	12,315,373	34.2%	32.1%	6.2%	393,960	26.8%
Northern States						
California	379,994	1.1%				
Connecticut	460,147	1.9%				
Illinois	1,711,951	0.4%				
Indiana	1,350,428	0.8%				
Iowa	674,913	0.2%				
Maine	628,279	0.1%				
Massachusetts	1,231,066	0.8%				
Michigan	749,113	0.9%				
Minnesota	172,023	0.2%				
New Hampshire	326,073	0.2%				
New Jersey	672,035	3.8%				
New York	3,880,735	1.3%				
Ohio	2,339,511	1.6%				
Oregon	52,465	0.2%				
Pennsylvania	2,906,215	2.0%				
Rhode Island	174,620	2.3%				
Vermont	315,098	0.2%				
Wisconsin	775,881	0.2%				
Kansas	107,206	0.6%				
Total North	18,907,753	1.2%				
Western Territories	220,195	0.2%				
Total population (including states & territories)	31,115,293	14.3%	12.7%	11.0%		

* Also includes people of races other than those listed in this table.

** These percentages were calculated by dividing the number of individual slaveholders by the number of white families in each state.

All data compiled from the 1860 United States Census. The best place to obtain this information is *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C., 1864), pp. 598-99. Regarding the numbers of slaveholders and the percentages of free families owning slaves, see Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), p. 229.

Secession Timetable

- SC 20 Dec 1860--secession through state convention, 169 to 0.
- MS 9 January 1861--secession through state convention, 84 to 15.
- FL 10 January--secession through state convention, 62 to 7.
- AL 11 January--secession through state convention, 61 to 39.
- GA 19 January--secession through state convention, 208 to 89.
- LA 26 January--secession through state convention, 113 to 17.
- TX 1 February--secession through state convention, 166 to 7.
23 February-- secession ratified by referendum, 34,794 (75.6%)
to 11,235 (24.4%).
- NC 28 February--voters reject secession convention by 651 votes,
47,323 (50.3%) to 46,672 (49.7%).
1 May--state legislature votes in favor of a state convention to
consider secession.
20 May--state convention votes unanimously for secession but
against submitting secession to a popular vote.
- AR 18 March--state convention rejects secession 39 to 35.
6 May--reassembled state convention passes secession ordinance,
69 to 1.
- VA 4 April--state convention rejects secession 89 to 45.
17 April--state convention adopts secession 88 to 55, providing
for ratification by popular referendum on 23 May (adopted 96,750 [75.1%] to
32,134 [24.9%]).
- TN 9 February--voters reject referendum to hold a secession
convention, 69,691 (54.7%) to 57,798 (45.3%).
1 May--state legislature approves joint resolution authorizing
governor to appoint commissioners to enter league with the Confederacy.
6 May--state legislature passes secession ordinance, subject to
popular ratification.
8 June--voters approve secession, 104,913 (69.0%) to 47,238
(31.0%).

Uncle Tom's Cabin

1852

The daughter of famous evangelical preacher Lyman Beecher, Uncle Tom's Cabin author Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) herself became a national influence with her success as an author, abolitionist, and social commentator. Powerfully critiquing the hypocritical disconnect between America and both its democratic and Christian ideals, Stowe's voice also reflected the values of womanly virtue and motherhood. Though driven by the spirit of millennialism and social benevolence, Stowe came to reject the Calvinism her father preached. The success of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which sold over 500,000 copies in the 1850's, indirectly helped put the issue of slavery on the national agenda, both politically and socially. Since the Missouri Compromise, politicians had been successful keeping slavery relatively low on the political radar. Uncle Tom's Cabin heightened the existing tensions between the North and South, so much so, that President Lincoln would later credit Stowe for her role in instigating the Civil War. —Benjamin Reiss

Chapter 40: The Martyr

[Tom's vicious third master, Simon Legree, questions Tom's knowledge of the whereabouts of two fugitive slaves. Tom's choices are between saving his self by speaking-up, or facing harsh punishment by remaining silent.]

“Now, Quimbo,” said Legree, as he stretched himself down in the sitting-room, “you jest go and walk that Tom up here, right away! The old cuss is at the bottom of this yer whole matter; and I'll have it out of his old black hide, or I'll know the reason why!”

Sambo and Quimbo, both, though hating each other, were joined in one mind by a no less cordial hatred of Tom. Legree had told them, at first, that he had bought him for a general overseer, in his absence; and this had begun an ill will, on their part, which had increased, in their debased and servile natures, as they saw him becoming obnoxious to their master's displeasure. Quimbo, therefore, departed, with a will to execute his orders.

Tom heard the message with a forewarning heart; for he knew all the plan of the fugitives' escape, and the place of their present concealment;—he knew the deadly character of the man he had to deal with, and his despotic power. But he felt strong in God to meet death, rather than betray the helpless.

He sat his basket down by the row, and, looking up, said, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit! Thou hast redeemed me, oh Lord God of truth!” and then quietly yielded himself to the rough, brutal grasp with which Quimbo seized him.

“Ay, ay!” said the giant, as he dragged him along; ye'll catch it, now! I'll boun' Mas'r's back 's up high! No sneaking out, now! Tell ye, ye'll get it, and no mistake! See how ye'll look, now, helpin' Mas'r's niggers to run away! See what ye'll get!”

The savage words none of them reached that ear!—a higher voice there was saying, “Fear not them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do.” Nerve and bone of that poor man's body vibrated to those words, as if touched by the finger of God; and he felt the strength of a thousand souls in one. As he passed along, the trees and bushes, the huts of his

servitude, the whole scene of his degradation, seemed to whirl by him as the landscape by the rushing ear. His soul throbbed,—his home was in sight,—and the hour of release seemed at hand.

“Well, Tom!” said Legree, walking up, and seizing him grimly by the collar of his coat, and speaking through his teeth, in a paroxysm of determined rage, “do you know I’ve made up my mind to KILL YOU?”

“It’s very likely, Mas’r,” said Tom, calmly.

“I have,” said Legree, with a grim, terrible calmness, “done—just—that—thing, Tom, unless you’ll tell me what you know about these yer gals!” . . .

“I han’t got nothing to tell, Mas’r,” said Tom, with a slow, firm, deliberate utterance.

“Do you dare to tell me, ye old black Christian, ye don’t know?” said Legree. Tom was silent.

“Speak!” thundered Legree, striking him furiously. Do you know anything?”

“I know, Mas’r; but I can’t tell anything. I can die!”

Legree drew in a long breath; and, suppressing his rage, took Tom by the arm, and, approaching his face almost to his, said, in a terrible voice, “Hark ‘e, Tom!—ye think, ‘cause I’ve let you off before, I don’t mean what I say; but, this time, I’ve made up my mind, and counted the cost. You’ve always stood it out again’ me: now, I’ll conquer ye, or kill ye!—one or t’ other. I’ll count every drop of blood there is in you, and take ‘em, one by one, till ye give up!”

Tom looked up to his master, and answered, “Mas’r, if you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save ye, I’d give ye my heart’s blood; and, if taking every drop of blood in this poor old body would save your precious soul, I’d give ‘em freely, as the Lord gave his for me. O, Mas’r! don’t bring this great sin on your soul! It will hurt you more than ‘twill me! Do the worst you can, my troubles’ll be over soon; but, if ye don’t repent, yours won’t never end!”

Like a strange snatch of heavenly music, heard in the lull of a tempest, this burst of feeling made a moment’s blank pause. Legree stood aghast, and looked at Tom; and there was such a silence, that the tick of the old clock could be heard, measuring, with silent touch, the last moments of mercy and probation to that hardened heart.

It was but a moment. There was one hesitating pause,—one irresolute, relenting thrill,—and the spirit of evil came back, with seven-fold vehemence; and Legree, foaming with rage, smote his victim to the ground.

Scenes of blood and cruelty are shocking to our ear and heart. What man has nerve to do, man has not nerve to hear. What brother-man and brother-Christian must suffer, cannot be told us, even in our secret chamber, it so harrows the soul! And yet, oh my country; these things are done under the shadow of thy laws! O, Christ! thy church sees them, almost in silence!

But, of old, there was One whose suffering changed an instrument of torture, degradation and shame, into a symbol of glory, honor, and immortal life; and, where His spirit is, neither degrading stripes, nor blood, nor insults, can make the Christian's last struggle less than glorious.

Was he alone, that long night, whose brave, loving spirit was bearing up, in that old shed, against buffeting and brutal stripes?

Nay! There stood by him ONE,—seen by him alone,—“like unto the Son of God.”

The tempter stood by him, too,—blinded by furious, despotic will,—every moment pressing him to shun that agony by the betrayal of the innocent. But the brave, true heart was firm on the Eternal Rock. Like his Master, he knew that, if he saved others, himself he could not save; nor could utmost extremity wring from him words, save of prayers and holy trust.

“He's most gone, Mas'r,” said Sambo, touched, in spite of himself, by the patience of his victim.

“Pay away, till he gives up! Give it to him!—give it to him!” shouted Legree. “I'll take every drop of blood he has, unless he confesses!”

Tom opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. “Ye poor miserable critter!” he said, “there ain't no more ye can do! I forgive ye, with all my soul!” and he fainted entirely away.

“I b'lieve, my soul, he's done for, finally,” said Legree, stepping forward, to look at him. “Yes, he is! Well, his mouth's shut up, at last,—that's one comfort!”

Yes, Legree; but who shall shut up that voice in thy soul? that soul, past repentance, past prayer, past hope, in whom the fire that never shall be quenched is already burning!

Yet Tom was not quite gone. His wondrous words and pious prayers had struck upon the hearts of the imbruted blacks, who had been the instruments of cruelty upon him; and, the instant Legree withdrew, they took him down, and, in their ignorance, sought to call him back to life,—as if that were any favor to him.

“Sartin, we 's been doin' a drefful wicked thing!” said Sambo; “hopes Mas'r'll have to 'count for it, and not we.”

They washed his wounds,—they provided a rude bed, of some refuse cotton, for him to lie down on; and one of them, stealing up to the house, begged a drink of brandy of Legree, pretending that he was tired, and wanted it for himself. He brought it back, and poured it down Tom's throat.

“O, Tom!” said Quimbo, “we's been awful wicked to ye!”

“I forgive ye, with all my heart!” said Tom, faintly.

“O, Tom! do tell us who is Jesus, anyhow?” said Sambo;—“Jesus, that's been a standin' by you so, all this night!—Who is he?”

The word roused the failing, fainting spirit. He poured forth a few energetic sentences of that wondrous One,—his life, his death, his everlasting presence, and power to save.

They wept,—both the two savage men.

“Why didn’t I never hear this before?” said Sambo; “but I do believe!—I can’t help it! Lord Jesus, have mercy on us!”

“Poor critters!” said Tom, “I’d be willing to bar’ all I have, if it’ll only bring ye to Christ! O, Lord! give me these two more souls, I pray!”

That prayer was answered!

V. A Letter to My Master

A Letter "To My Old Master,"

c. 1865

To my old master, Colonel P.H. Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee

Sir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found in your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to back to the dear home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy—the folks call her Miss Anderson—and the children—Milly, Jane, and Grundy—go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks, but; but I tell them it was no disgrace to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will better be able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for clothing, and three doctors visits to me and pulling a tooth for Mandy and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adam's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for your generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the Negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer for his hire.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rater stay here and starve – and die, if it come to that – than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life is now to give my children an education, and have them for virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting me.

FROM YOUR OLD SERVENT,
JOURDON ANDERSON

Questions

1. What does Jourdon see as "fair" before he would consider going back to work for his old master?

2. Comment on the tone of Jourdon's letter. Why do you think the letter is written in this tone?

3. What does Jourdon calculate as his back wages? Do you think he believes his former master would agree? If not, then why would Jourdon bother writing this letter?

A Portrait of Lynching in The South Post Civil War

From Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930.

There are "2805 [documented] victims of lynch mobs killed between 1882 and 1930 in ten southern states. Although mobs murdered almost 300 white men and women, the vast majority of the almost 2,800 lynching victims were African-American. Of these black victims, 94 percent died in the hands of white lynch mobs. The scale of this carnage means that, on the average, a black man, woman, or child was murdered nearly once a week, every week, between 1882 and 1930 by a hate-driven white mob.

Post-Civil War / Reconstruction Era

Thirteenth Amendment:: Ended legal slavery in the United States.

"Black Codes: Laws passed by southern states that attempted to regain control of the southern black labor force.

Civil Rights Act of 1866: African Americans became citizens of the U.S, under this statute; following this civil rights act, riots erupted in many southern states.

These amendments and laws instilled freed blacks with a high degree of newfound political, social and economic power. Lynching was a means to curb that power in all three arenas. In every southern state there was an assault (i.e. lynching or other violence) on any activity that contested the privileges of whites or threatened to hinder white domination of the black population, including wresting the reins of political power from blacks, northern carpetbaggers, and sympathetic white southerners, known as 'scalawags'.

A Portrait of the Lynching Era, 1880-1930

The lynching era encompasses roughly the five decades between the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of the Great Depression. During these years we may estimate that there were 2,018 separate incidents of lynching in which at least 2,462 African-American men, women and children met their deaths in the grasp of southern mobs, comprised mostly of whites. Although lynchings and mob killings occurred before 1880, notably during early Reconstruction when blacks were enfranchised, radical racism and mob violence peaked during the 1890s in a surge of terrorism that did not dissipate until well into the twentieth century.

In addition to the punishment of specific criminal offenders, lynching in the American South had three entwined functions:

first, to maintain social order over the black population through terrorism and violence

second, to suppress or eliminate black competitors for economic, political, or social rewards

third, to stabilize the white class structure and preserve the privileged status of the white aristocracy – to maintain white supremacy.

Lethal mob violence for seemingly minor infractions of the caste codes of behavior was more fundamental for maintaining terroristic social control than punishment for what would seem to be more serious violations of the criminal codes. Between 1882 and the late 1980s, the annual number of black victims of lynching grew alarmingly: exceeding ninety in 1892 and 1893. From the zenith reached during the bloody 1890s, the number of blacks killed by lynch mobs began a protracted decline over the next three decades, reaching a nadir of fewer than ten victims annually in 1928 and 1929. Lynchings in general were concentrated in a swath running through Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana: the region often referred to as the 'Black Belt'.

Table 2-2. Black Victims of White Lynch Mobs by State, 1882-1930

State	No. of victims
<i>Deep South</i>	
Mississippi	462
Georgia	423
Louisiana	283
Alabama	262
South Carolina	143
<i>Border South</i>	
Florida	212
Tennessee	174
Arkansas	162
Kentucky	118
North Carolina	75

Table 2-3. Black Victims of Lynchings per 100,000 Blacks by State, 1882-1930

State	No. of victims per 100,000
<i>Deep South</i>	
Mississippi	52.8
Georgia	41.8
Louisiana	43.7
Alabama	32.4
South Carolina	18.8
<i>Border South</i>	
Florida	79.8
Tennessee	38.4
Arkansas	42.6
Kentucky	45.7
North Carolina	11.0

Table 2-5. Reasons Given for Black Lynchings

- Acting suspiciously
- Gambling
- Quarreling
- Adultery
- Grave robbing
- Race hatred; Race troubles
- Aiding murderer
- Improper with white woman
- Rape
- Arguing with white man
- Incest
- Rape-murders
- Arson Inciting to riot
- Resisting mob
- Assassination
- Inciting trouble
- Robbery
- Attempted murder
- Indolence
- Running a bordello
- Banditry
- Inflammatory language
- Sedition
- Being disreputable
- Informing
- Slander
- Being obnoxious
- Injuring livestock
- Spreading disease
- Boasting about riot
- Insulting white man
- Stealing
- Burglary
- Insulting white woman
- Suing white man
- Child abuse
- Insurrection
- Swindling
- Conjuring
- Kidnapping
- Terrorism
- Courting white woman
- Killing livestock
- Testifying against white man
- Criminal assault
- Living with white woman
- Throwing stones
- Cutting levee
- Looting
- Train wrecking
- Defending rapist
- Making threats
- Trying to colonize blacks
- Demanding respect
- Miscegenation
- Trying to vote
- Disorderly conduct
- Mistaken identity
- Unpopularity
- Eloping with white woman
- Molestation
- Unruly remarks
- Entered white woman's room
- Murder
- Using obscene language
- Enticement
- Non-sexual assault
- Vagrancy
- Extortion
- Peeping Tom
- Violated quarantine
- Fraud
- Pillage
- Voodooism
- Plotting to kill
- Voting for wrong party
- Frightening white woman
- Poisoning well

Mystery, myth and intrigue: Battle of the Little Bighorn has lasting fascination

June 16, 2001 11:00 pm • ED KEMMICK Of The Gazette Staff

Unless you happened to be there, the Battle of the Little Bighorn was not a particularly important event in the annals of the United States. At the Battle, George Armstrong Custer was killed with 250 members of the 7th Cavalry, the elite unit of cavalry troops tasked by the government with hunting down and eliminating the Plains Indian threat so that Americans could settle the frontier in the aftermath of the Civil War. Custer was known for his daring and aggressive maneuvers during the Civil War and in numerous raids and battles afterwards during the plains Indian Wars, so it came as no surprise to some that he divided his force and was cut off from the rest of his unit. His secondary force, led, by Reno and Benteen, at times was within earshot and eyesight of his last stand, but did not or could not come to his aid. Adding to the drama was the fact that Custer was defeated and killed by a Confederation of Native troops led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, two legendary Native warriors. Although Reno and Benteen offered their accounts and Native oral histories describe the scene of Custer's Last Stand, no one can say definitively what happened there that day, what Custer was thinking or what actions and plans led to his demise.

The battle claimed the lives of as many as 500 U.S. soldiers and Indian warriors — if you accept the high estimates of Indian casualties — but it was nothing compared with the slaughter of the Civil War, which had ended 11 years earlier.

Even in terms of the Indian Wars, it could not compare with the Ohio Valley Battle of Nov. 4, 1791, when Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair's army was ambushed by a confederation of tribes on the banks of the Wabash River. More than 700 soldiers were killed in what would be the worst defeat ever suffered by an American army at the hands of Native Americans.

But the Battle of the Little Bighorn, or Custer's Last Stand, was more than a battle, more than just another chapter in the Indian Wars or an incident in the history of westward expansion.

It has become a romance, a looking glass, a mystery, a myth. It is a story capable of infinite tellings, endless fascination, inexhaustible dispute.

Historian Edgar I. Stewart, writing in 1951 in *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, said: "It almost seems that the blood shed on that historic 25th of June, 1876 has been exceeded many times over by the ink spilled from the pens of writers who have attempted to describe or to explain what happened on those sage-brush covered ridges above the Little Big Horn."

In 1975, author John M. Carroll listed thousands of articles about Custer or the Battle of the Little Bighorn that had appeared in hundreds of periodicals. In his book *Custer Lives!*, James Patrick Dowd counted 659 books and collections of documents and letters as of 1982. He also listed 1,957 articles in journals, gazettes and historical society publications.

In *Custer's List*, published in 1969, Don Russell turned up 967 pictures relating to the battle, everything from full-scale paintings to magazine illustrations and depictions on greeting cards.

No single event in United States history, or perhaps world history, has been the subject of more bad art and erroneous story than Custer's Last Stand, Russell said.

What explains the enduring fascination with that short battle on the high plains of remote Montana Territory?

"It's a large question and one that I don't think will ever be satisfactorily answered", said Robert M. Utley, the author of biographies of Custer and Sitting Bull and a former chief historian of the National Park Service.

Part of the enchantment, Utley said, was that Custer, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were all exotic figures with universal appeal, and Custer in particular was one of those rare historical figures who seems to have the capacity for reflecting the values and attitudes of those who examine his life.

“Fueling that mix is the reality that we can never know what happened there in all the detail we’d like”, he said.

That sentiment was expressed by John D. McDermott, writing in “Legacy: New Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn”, a collection of essays that grew out of a symposium held in Billings in 1994.

“More interpretive possibilities exist in the Little Bighorn story, including its personalities and antecedents, than in any other dramatic episode in the history of the United States in the nineteenth century”, McDermott wrote. John P. Hart, writing in the same collection, noted the work of Richard Slotkin, who produced three large volumes on the history of myth in America.

Slotkin concludes that, “the most important myth to American culture is the myth of the frontier”, and he believes that the most important part of the frontier myth is the last stand, Hart said. Insofar as the last stand has been personalized into Custer’s Last Stand ... the most important mythic figure in American culture is not Abraham Lincoln or George Washington but George Armstrong Custer.

Neil Mangum, superintendent of the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, said the site, like the Alamo and Gettysburg, is more than a battlefield; it is a shrine. “There are people who come here and sob. They didn’t even have relatives here and they sob. ... This place evokes very strong emotions.”

Among foreigners, especially Europeans and Japanese, Utley said, the allure of the Wild West has always been strong, and Custer is a central figure in the history of the American West. It is also important that, “Europeans and Japanese are hooked on American pop culture,” Utley said, and pop culture has been saturated with images of Custer, good and bad, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

McDermott said another reason the story of the battle has had such a lasting importance is its role in reconciliation, symbolized by the passage of federal legislation in 1991 changing the name from the Custer Battlefield to the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

Mardell Plainfeather experienced that reconciliation personally. A Crow Indian who served as the Plains Indian historian at the battlefield from 1979 to 1990, Plainfeather said she was more or less forced to learn more about the Cheyenne and the Sioux, traditional enemies of the Crow, and about the military and the philosophy of manifest destiny as well.

What she learned, she said, broadened her mind, opening up a new world. “I feel like I became a better person for it”, she said.

And that’s a lesson all people can take from the Battle of the Little Bighorn, she said: “We can’t relive history. We can’t impose guilt on anybody. We just try to learn from history.”

Some of history’s lessons are not so much learned as felt. Douglas C. McChristian, another former battlefield historian, said the place is unique and unabated in its sheer power.

Writing in a preface to the collection of essays in Legacy, McChristian continued: “It seems to embody all that was either right or wrong about America’s conquest of the Trans-Mississippi West. The austere scene of life-and-death struggle evokes both pride and sadness. It is a lonely place that haunts the American conscience.”

Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo

(1808-1890)

In a life that spanned the colonial, Mexican and American eras in California, Mariano Vallejo saw himself steadily marginalized in his own native land, despite his efforts to stay at the forefront of change.

Vallejo was born in 1808 to an upper class California Mexican (californio) family in Monterey, then the capital of the province of Alta California. From the beginning of his life, he was groomed for leadership, receiving much of his education directly from Alta California's governor. At age fifteen, barely two years after Mexican independence, he became a cadet in the Mexican army.

Vallejo's first public accomplishment came at age twenty-one, when he led a victorious Mexican and Indian expedition against an Indian revolt at the San José mission. In quick succession the Mexican governor appointed Vallejo the head of the San Francisco garrison, then the military commander of the northern part of the state. The latter task consisted primarily in putting down sporadic Indian revolts and founding more settlements in order to halt Russian expeditions coming down from Alaska.

Despite his high rank, Vallejo was extremely critical of much of Mexican upper class society and government. Much to the horror of his family, at age twenty-three he had been unofficially excommunicated from the Catholic Church for his refusal to turn over banned books to a local priest. He consistently identified with Mexican liberals, who stressed the rule of law and an efficient government with constitutionally limited powers, separate from religious authority. Like many other Mexican liberals, he saw the United States as something of a model form of government. Accordingly, in 1836 he supported a short-lived rebellion led by his nephew, Juan Batista Alvarado, that led to the proclamation of California as a "free state."

Given his attraction to the United States, Vallejo's treatment at the hands of American rebels in 1846 came as a rude shock. General John C. Fremont, the leader of the so-called "Bear Flag Rebellion," imprisoned Vallejo and his younger brother at Sutter's Fort for two months without filing any formal charges. Fighting and looting caused hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage to his estates. After the rebels were replaced by regular U.S. forces under the command of Stephen Kearney, matters improved for a few years. Vallejo was appointed Indian agent for Northern California, a position which effectively continued his earlier work for the Mexican government. In 1849 he was one of eight californios to serve in California's constitutional convention, and was subsequently elected to the first state senate.

Despite the continuation of his political career for several years after 1848, the United States' conquest of California was ultimately as disastrous for Vallejo as for other Californios. Although the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo formally protected the legal rights of Mexicans newly incorporated into the United States, a long legal challenge to Vallejo's land title cost him thousands of dollars in legal fees and finally deprived him of almost all his land. The flood of immigrants into California beginning with the gold rush left the Californios a badly outnumbered minority, unable to protect their political power. By the time of his death in 1890, Vallejo led a modest lifestyle on

the last vestige of his once vast landholdings, a simple two hundred acre ranch he called Lachryma Montis.

Although he was one of the leading members of California's Mexican population, Vallejo's life is in many ways representative of the common fate all Californios faced under American rule. Despite their willing acceptance of democratic government, their new country treated them as foreigners. By the end of the century, almost all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans found themselves a beleaguered minority, with little or no political power, and occupying the lowest rungs of the economic ladder.

MAKERS OF AMERICA



The Californios

In 1848 the United States, swollen with the spoils of war, reckoned the costs and benefits of the conflict with Mexico. Thousands of Americans had fallen in battle, and millions of dollars had been invested in a war machine. For this expenditure of blood and money, the nation was repaid with ample land—and with people, the former citizens of Mexico who now became, whether willingly or not, Americans. The largest single addition to American territory in history, the Mexican Cession stretched the United States from sea to shining sea. It secured Texas, brought in vast tracts of the desert Southwest, and included the great prize—the fruited valleys and port cities of California. There, at the conclusion of the Mexican War, dwelled some thirteen thousand

Californios—descendants of the Spanish and Mexican conquerors who had once ruled California.

The Spanish had first arrived in California in 1769, extending their New World empire and outracing Russian traders to bountiful San Francisco Bay. Father Junipero Serra, an enterprising Franciscan friar, soon established twenty-one missions along the coast. Indians in the iron grip of the missions were encouraged to adopt Christianity and were often forced to toil endlessly as farmers and herders, in the process suffering disease and degradation. These frequently maltreated mission Indians occupied the lowest rungs on the ladder of Spanish colonial society.

Upon the loftiest rungs perched the Californios. Pioneers from the Mexican heartland of New Spain, they had trailed Serra to California, claiming land and civil offices in their new home. Yet even the proud Californios had deferred to the all-powerful Franciscan missionaries until Mexico threw off the Spanish colonial yoke in 1821, whereupon the infant Mexican government turned an anxious eye toward its frontier outpost.

Mexico now emptied its jails to send settlers to the sparsely populated north, built and garrisoned fortresses, and, most important, transferred authority from the missions to secular (that is, governmental) authorities. This “secularization” program attacked and eroded the immense power of the



Mission San Gabriel,
Founded in 1771



Californios
Sykes, 1

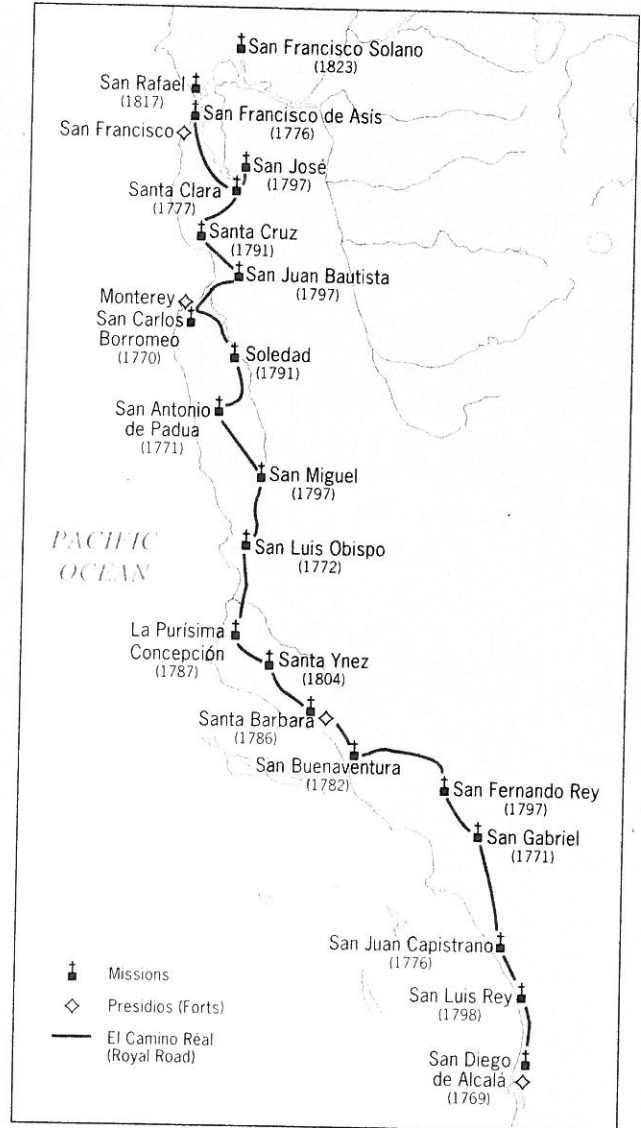
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California Indians Dancing at the Mission in San José, by Sykes, 1806

missions and of their Franciscan masters—with their bawling herds of cattle, debased Indian workers, millions of acres of land, and lucrative foreign trade. The frocked friars had commanded their fiefdoms so self-confidently that earlier reform efforts had dared to go no further than levying a paltry tax on the missions and politely requesting that the missionaries limit their floggings of Indians to fifteen lashes per week. But during the 1830s, the power of the missions weakened, and much of their land and their assets were confiscated by the Californios. Vast *ranchos* (ranches) formed, and from those citadels the Californios ruled in their turn until the Mexican War.

The Californios' glory faded in the wake of the American victory, even though in some isolated places they clung to their political offices for a decade or two. Overwhelmed by the inrush of Anglo gold diggers—some eighty-seven thousand after the discovery at Sutter's Mill in 1848—and undone by the waning of the pastoral economy, the Californios saw their recently acquired lands and their recently established political power slip through their fingers. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, so harshly did the word *Yankee* ring in their ears that many Californios supported the South.



Spanish Missions and Presidios

By 1870 the Californios' brief ascendancy had utterly vanished—a short and sad tale of riches to rags in the face of the Anglo onslaught. Half a century later, beginning in 1910, hundreds of thousands of young Mexicans would flock into California and the Southwest. They would enter a region liberally endowed with Spanish architecture and artifacts, bearing the names of Spanish missions and Californio *ranchos*. But they would find it a land dominated by Anglos, a place far different from that which their Californio ancestors had settled so hopefully in earlier days.