Study Questions for:
Slavery in the United States

Readings: Class notes & handouts
   Chapter 13, pp 219 - 238.
2) Kornblith, Gary. 2007. Slavery and Sectional Strife in the Early American Republic, 1776-
3) Wright, Gavin. 2003. “Slavery and American Agricultural History”. Agricultural History,

Objective/Short answer questions

1. Which of the following are reasons, discussed in class, why slaves were emancipated in very different
   manners in the U.S. South as opposed to the British Caribbean? Check (✔) each and every blank that
   applies.
   ____ The British Caribbean was a relatively small part of the British Empire. Britain, as a whole,
   could more easily afford to pay slave owners the market value of the emancipated slaves.
   ____ Slaves in the British Caribbean had higher rates of reproduction than in the U.S. South.
   Caribbean slave owners knew they would still have a large supply of cheap labor because of
   natural reproduction. American slave owners, in contrast, worried that low reproductive rates
   in the U.S. would mean no cheap laboring class after slavery.
   ____ Many of the families owning lots of slaves actually lived in Britain rather than the Caribbean.
   Emancipation, to these families, was mostly an economic issue not a social issue.
   ____ The Dutch Republic, Spain, and Sweden threatened to embargo British sugar if Britain did not
   emancipate her Caribbean slaves. In contrast, European nations continued to buy U.S. cotton
   despite the slave system used to produce cotton.

2. _____ How did per free capita incomes in the Southern Cotton Belt compare to much of Western
   Europe on the eve of the U.S. Civil War?
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   c. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

3. _____ How did per free capita incomes in the Southern Cotton Belt compare to that of the U.S. North
   on the eve of the U.S. Civil War?
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   c. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
4. ____ What do the above two questions suggest regarding the profitability of cotton farming and slavery?
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   c. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

5. ____ It’s 1805 and New Avalon, a little known U.S. state, has just passed a “freeborn” emancipation act. What the heck is “freeborn” emancipation?
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   c. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

6. ____ Michael is a slave living in New Avalon. He is 16 years old at the time New Avalon’s “freeborn” emancipation act is passed. When will Michael get his freedom as a result of the act?
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   c. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

7. ____ A possible advantage of freeborn emancipation over immediate emancipation is:
   a. – d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

8. You go back to 1860 and convince the U.S. Congress to pass a law immediately emancipating all slaves in the United States. The law states, however, that the federal government will compensate slave owners for their loss of “property”. About how much (as a % of GDP) will the federal government have to pay?
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

9. ____ You go back to 1860 and convince the U.S. Congress to pass a law immediately emancipating all slaves in the United States. The law states, however, that the federal government will compensate slave owners for their loss of “property” and resettle the former slaves in western Africa. About how much (as a % of GDP) will the federal government have to pay?
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

10. ____ You go back to 1860 and convince the U.S. Congress to pass a “freeborn” emancipating law for the entire United States. The law states that the federal government must set aside enough money (today, i.e. 1860) to pay compensation to a slave owner each time a slave is emancipated. About how much (as a % of GDP) will the federal government have to set aside today to be able to fund the is future compensation?
    a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

11. ____ As a % of U.S. GDP, how costly was the U.S. Civil War?
    a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes. Knowing the range is more important than knowing the value form a single estimate.
12. _____ What does Gavin Wright, in “Slavery & American and Agricultural History”, argue regarding the feasibility of using slaves in wheat production?
   a. Skills required for wheat production meant wheat could never be profitably grown using slaves.
   b. Slaves were profitable in wheat production only within a very narrow range. Too far north and colder weather would cause slaves to get sick. Too far south and soil nematodes would cause the slaves to get sick.
   c. Slaves could help farmers guarantee they had enough labor to meet the high labor demand at harvest time. A farmer could pull all of his slaves off of other projects & into harvesting wheat.
   d. If a system for renting slaves and moving them long distances could have been found, slaves would have been ideal for wheat. An owner’s band of slaves could migrate north to match the different harvest times.
   e. Wheat’s high demand for labor during the harvest, and low demand for labor at other times, made it hard to efficiently use slaves year round.

13. _____ Gavin Wright, in “Slavery & American Agricultural History”, essentially argues that the two main things are required for slavery to thrive were:
   a. 1) steady, year-round labor requirements for the primary crop, and 2) a lack of markets for insurance and other types of risk sharing.
   b. 1) a production process that requires “gang style” labor, 2) a production process that does not require skilled labor.
   c. 1) a high dollar value for what labor can produce (as reflected in high land values), 2) property rights (i.e. laws) which protect the “right” to own slaves.
   d. 1) low transportation costs for goods shipped out of the region, and 2) high transportation costs for goods coming into the region.

14. _____ During what time period did Slave states have a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? (You won’t have to know the exact dates, just the approximate date range.)
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

15. _____ During what time period did Slave states have a majority in the U.S. Senate? (You won’t have to know the exact dates, just the approximate date range.)
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

16. _____ Many have argued that slavery was not economically conducive to wheat production. What do these “Wheat ≠ Slavery” folks say about how well slavery fits (or doesn’t fit) the seasonality of wheat production’s labor demand?
   a. Slaves were, in effect, a year round purchase. Wheat production, however, only used labor intensely during planting and especially at harvest. It did not make sense to buy a slave for a crop that would not use their labor year-round.
   b. Wheat production required working with domestic animals such as horses. Slaves had little incentive to use domestic animals in a way that would keep the animals healthy.
   c. The farming of winter wheat requires planting during the depth of winter. Slaves of African descent were much less well suited to this work than people of European descent.
   d. The farming of spring wheat requires planting during the depth of winter. Slaves of African descent were much less well suited to this work than people of European descent
17–26. Matching. Match each law or event with a description of that law or event.

17. _____ The Dred Scott Case
   a. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   b. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   c. The Continental Congress almost banned slavery in the Southwest Territories (Alabama, Mississippi, etc).
   d. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   e. 1845. Slave states have a decided majority in the Senate … but know they will eventually lose it.
   f. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   g. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   h. Dang! I forgot to put in the options!
   j. Almost decided to emancipate their slave in the early 1800s. Had they done this, Slave states would have soon lost their majority in the Senate.
   m. Abe gets to slaying vampires!!

18. _____ The Northwest Ordinance
19. _____ Texas becomes a state
20. _____ the Missouri compromise
21. _____ the Compromise of 1850
22. _____ the 3/5 Compromise
23. _____ Delaware and Maryland …
24. _____ Bleeding Kansas
25. _____ the Election of Abraham Lincoln

26. In 1784…

27. _____ What is an advantage that long-staple cotton has over short-staple cotton as commodity?
   a. – It has a longer fiber length (staple). It is easier to spin and makes nice fabric.
   b. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

28. _____ What is another advantage that long-staple cotton has over short-staple cotton as commodity?
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

29. _____ What is an advantage that short-staple cotton has over long-staple cotton as commodity?
   a. – e. Dang! I forgot to put in the options! Check out your class notes.

30–34. On the map on the following page, indicate each of the items below.

30. a region that grew a crop other than cotton that was both:  a) a “slave crop”, b) not suitable for growing in the middle and western part of the country. Hint: I’m talking rice.

31. a region that grew a different crop other than cotton that was both:  a) a “slave crop”, b) not suitable for growing in the middle and western part of the country.

32. a region that grew a different crop other than cotton that was both:  a) grown using slave labor “slave crop”, b) and suitable for growing in the middle and western part of the country.

33. a region that grew a crop other than cotton that was both:  a) grown using slave labor “slave crop”, b) and suitable for growing in the middle and western part of the country.

34. an area, within the cotton belt, in which both slavery and cotton growing were particularly profitable.