

to celebrate the

Debate Over States' Rights
In 1828, John C. Calhoun wrote an anonymous document in response to the high tariff Congress adopted that year. The tariff, known as the Tariff of Abominations to people in the South who adamantly opposed it, meant high prices for goods that southern planters needed.

"So partial are the effects of the [Tariff] system that its burdens are exclusively on one side and its benefits on the other. It imposes on the agricultural interest of the South... That the manufacturing States... bear no share of the burden of the Tariff..." —John C. Calhoun, *South Carolina Exposition and Protests*, 1828

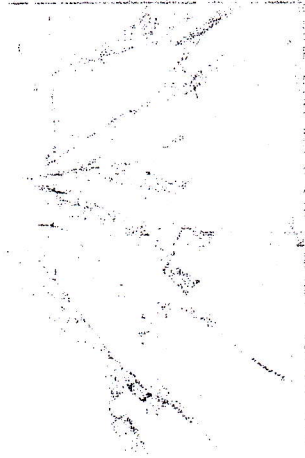
A. What does Calhoun mean when he says that the tariff is "partial"?

Experience Plantation Life

During the decades before the Civil War, and after the invention of the cotton gin, large plantations sprang up across the South as far west as Texas and Arkansas. Contrary to popular belief, very few white southerners led lives of genteel ease on plantations. Three fourths of southern whites owned no slaves at all, and of those who did, most owned fewer than 10 slaves and lived on small farms rather than plantations. Despite being few in number, white plantation owners dominated the South's economic and political life and set the standard to which poorer whites aspired.

Of the 2.5 million enslaved Africans in the United States, 1.8 million of them lived and worked on cotton plantations. Treatment of slaves was often extremely harsh and included beatings, confinement, whippings, and humiliation. The use and threat of punishment was a constant part of life as a slave. Even in cases where an owner was less harsh, slaves did not have control of their lives—they could be sold at any time and taken away from their families.

Some Slaves worked in a specific trade on a plantation. For example, a slave who worked as a blacksmith made these garden tools—a pair of hedge clippers and a sickle.



There were many other jobs for slaves on a plantation. Some worked in the main house cooking and cleaning, and others worked as carpenters, coopers (those who make barrels), or meat curers. The vast majority of slaves, however, worked in the fields for 16 or more hours a day—planting, hoeing, weeding, and harvesting crops under backbreaking conditions. An overseer, who worked for the plantation owner, supervised them and was often demanding and brutal. Although at great human cost, plantation labor produced enormous staple crops such as cotton, sugar, and rice, which provided the backbone for the southern economy.