

# Southern Plantation Owners

IT SEEMS THAT EVERYONE WHO IS NOT a southerner wants to destroy your way of life. Just last year, that lunatic criminal, John Brown, tried to start a slave uprising in Virginia. It failed miserably. But you know there are lots more crazy abolitionists where he came from. Brown even got financial support from church people in the North.

The coming election of 1860 is perhaps the most important election in the short history of this country. Here is your situation. As you know, your livelihood depends on growing crops like tobacco, rice, sugar, and especially cotton. A plantation requires a great deal of labor—slave labor. Above all, you want the South to remain open to slavery. However, you believe that in a free country you should also have the right to bring your slaves to wherever you choose to live. Fortunately, the Supreme Court seems to agree with you. In the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, the Court decided that if a slave were taken to a “free” state, it didn’t mean the slave got his freedom. To you, the logical conclusion is that you should be able to own land in western territories like Kansas and Nebraska and bring your slaves to work that land. However, there are many in the North and West who want to outlaw slavery in the territories—in direct violation of the Constitution. These people must be defeated at all costs. (For that matter, many in the South would

like to take over Cuba and Nicaragua to open up more territory for the expansion of slavery. To them you have one thing to say: Good.)

To make matters worse, many in the North and West propose to give “free” farmers homesteads in the territories—excellent land they can move onto. Nobody says anything about giving *you* free land and allowing you to bring your slaves. Why not? Because they are afraid that they won’t be able to compete. So they demand unfair government protection.

The rich owners in the North are happy to take your cheap cotton grown with slave labor, but their representatives in Congress have always voted for high tariffs—a tax on imports—so that they don’t have to compete with cheaper goods from Great Britain and her colonies. They make cotton shirts for less in India, but they cost more here because of the tariffs. In 1857, Congress lowered the tariffs to 24 percent. At one point they’d been over 100 percent. You want to keep them low—even lower than 24 percent.

The government also wants to take your tax money and give it to people who will build a railroad all the way to California. This will cost tens of millions of dollars. The railroad might help northerners sell cloth and iron tools in Kansas and California. But you have good rivers in the south. A northern railroad won’t help you.