“Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. Somehow, it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summer’s day; bony mules hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men’s stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o’clock naps, and by nitefall were like soft teacakes of sweat and sweet talcum.”

Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

The South has a deep, rich literary tradition tying the region of today with its past. That past often seems set in eternal summer, with its shimmering heat, lazy days, and sudden rainstorms. It may be hard for Yankees to understand, but to Southerners the heat of summer was not simply something to be endured; rather, the season’s languid pace helped define the special character of the region, a character that made it somehow better than the rest of the country. “People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty four hours long, but seemed longer” (Ibid). The South in literature is also a place of small towns, courthouse squares, and farmers. Urban America with its Atlantas might have intruded upon the reality of the modern South, but the South of the region’s literary imagination remains firmly fixed on its more rural past.

“As to Dikanka, I think you’ve heard more than enough about it...as to its gardens, this goes without saying: even in Petersburg, you would not find anything like that.”

These words belong to a simple Ukrainian beekeeper, a character in Gogol’s famous series, “Evenings on the Croft Near Dikanka.” with plots that mix the realities of rural life in the Ukraine with fantastic folklore stories.

Thanks to standard school courses on Russian literature, fictional Dikanka is a well-known place and an easily recognizable one: the Ukrainian village has not changed much in the one and a half centuries that have elapsed since Gogol’s times. Gently rolling picturesque landscapes of benevolent South and the rural way of life in the Dikanaks of today convey an image of a country idyll. To the Slavic ear, the very placename Dikanka sounds cozy and lyrical. It seems to resonate with the softness of melodious Ukrainian speech and evokes the sounds of folk songs, which are still often heard in these parts. The impression is conveyed not only by the whitewashed daubed brick cottages engulfed by the green of cherry tree gardens and by the gold of ripe grainfields, but also by the richness of the local harvest. Moscow’s farmers’ markets overflow with Ukrainian lard, early potatoes, fruits, and honey. Today, much more than in the past, the southern village appears to be colorful and full of life, in stark contrast to the emptied and drab villages of the North.
THE SOUTH: MORE THAN UKRAINE

The South spills more definitively across a new international border than any of our other regions, and outlining a “south” without Ukraine would be unthinkable. Yet the South incorporates more than the elusive southerness of Ukrainian and southern Russian culture. The region has been largely “made” by its warm climate and fertile soils. In the 17th-18th centuries, the rewarding environment helped make the South Russia’s granary, but its bounty was based even more so on the backbreaking labor of bonded peasants, the serfs. Only in the South was the low productivity of forced labor (in comparison with free labor) offset by the high efficiency of nature itself. The origin of the Russian derogatory word for people at the bottom of society, “chern’” (literally “the black ones”) may have been in the South, where the rich black soil collaborated with serfdom. The heritage of serfdom has left a lasting imprint in the region’s social conservatism and persistent ruralism.

The economy of the South is still firmly rooted in the soil: 45 percent of the working population are farmers, while another 15 percent are employed in processing farm products. Life revolves around very large villages, while most towns are small service centers and themselves in essence glorified villages. Cozy village-like wooden cottages are surrounded by fruit and vegetable gardens, and even “cityfolks” cultivate plots of land to provide for their tables. A surprising 80 percent of the region’s territory is under plow, which accounts for the breathtaking open landscapes of rolling fields.

To a large extent, the parochial agrarian society of the sleepy South is the living past. Its conservative culture is permeated with the ideals of peasantry, quite literally bent to the soil. In the outsiders’ stereotypical view, southerners are “country bumpkins” with limited horizons. Yet today’s provincial periphery has ample reason to be proud of its historic glory. The South was one of the two cradles of Slav statehood and culture, while its later frontier history largely shaped the two major successor peoples of ancient

THE SOUTH: MORE THAN DIXIE

Everybody knows the South: it is Dixie, the land of cotton and confederate flags! Yet the reality of regional identity is much larger and more complex. In attempting to define the South, the Southern historian Ulrich B. Phillips wrote about the region in 1929, suggesting “Let us begin with the weather. [It] has been the chief agency in making the South distinctive. It fostered the cultivation of the staple crops, which promoted the plantation system, which brought the importation of negroes, which not only gave rise to chattel slavery but created a lasting race problem.” One might include the additional legacies of cultural conservatism and poverty. The war that ended slavery was fought nearly 130 years ago, but the triad of race, conservatism, and poverty (all easily and directly attributable to the culture and economy of the region’s pre-Civil War plantation system) continue to be defining regional themes. By almost any measure of regional poverty, Southern states rank at or very near the bottom.

But defining the area by these characteristics alone gives an incomplete story. Change is a seemingly contradictory but almost equally well recognized component of the South’s identity. “The New South” is heard so often across the region that it has become a cliche. Prior to this century the South was a strikingly rural place, another consequence of its historic agricultural economy. Large cities were few and widely scattered. As late as 1940 nearly half the population of states like Georgia and South Carolina were classified as farmers by the Census. Today the typical Southerner is far more likely to live and work in a city, and the South leads the nation in the share of its population employed in manufacturing. But then again, manufacturing is no longer synonymous with progress in a service-based economy. Is it perhaps a region permanently trapped in a race to catch up with the rest of the nation?
I grew up in orchards
where warm pears ripened,
where a leaf was covered with dust,
and juicy stalks were fragrant.
I grew up in fields
where the sunrise was like a flare,
where disturbed tillage
soiled centered at noon.
I grew up in forests,
where pine trees splayed up so far,
where dew fell heavily
on light blue sylvan glades.
I grew up on the Dnieper,
where blue slopes tower above,
I grew up in orchards
where warm pears ripened,
where a leaf was covered with dust,
and juicy stalks were fragrant.

Kievan Rus, Russians and Ukrainians, who share the region. If today the South has been cut in two by the line between Ukraine and Russia, the split is actually again about history - an offset of the old dispute over who is more senior. Reliving old glories and quarrels, the South remains trapped in the past.

Ukraine - Hearth or Periphery?

From the 9th to the 12th centuries, the Ukrainian segment of our region was the southern hearth of that loose federation of Eastern Slavs' principalities known as Kievan Rus. As with Novgorod, Kiev's ascendancy was due to trade carried on the Dnieper along the route from the Varangians (Vikings) to the Greeks. But while the North was in many ways a transmitter of influences from Northern Europe, Kiev became the major way station for introducing Byzantine cultural models and Orthodox Christianity into Russia. The area was formally baptized in 988, and the temple of Sophia was erected in Kiev as a replica of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. By the 13th century, Kiev was one of the largest and most resplendent cities of Europe. The mixed forest-steppe environments of the South proved conducive to farming that was far more productive than in the barren forest zone to the north, while scattered riparian forests provided protection from the warlike nomads who roamed the open grasslands farther south. After centuries of uneasy coexistence with the steppe nomads, the South was overrun and utterly destroyed by Chenghis Khans' in 1240, and it never managed to recover its focal role.

When the South reemerged from protracted obscurity in the 16th century it was no longer a hearth, but merely a periphery to northern Slavic culture and a bone of contention between Poland and the young heir to ancient Rus, Muscovy. As with Novgorod, the South remained a buffer zone between the North and East, and remained largely unaffected by the religious and political turmoil of the time. The South did not seek religious freedom, but material gain. The east coast of North America, from the Chesapeake Bay southward was, by comparison with northwest Europe, an area of long, hot summers, mild winters, and substantial precipitation. It offered the opportunity for an agricultural economy complementary to that of Europe, taking advantage of crops that could not be grown in Europe but were nevertheless in great demand there.

In contrast to most of colonial North America (where agriculture was based on the individually owned and family operated farm), the South shared an agricultural style with other areas of tropical and semi tropical crops in the Caribbean Basin and along the margins of Middle America- the plantation.

The plantation was a large-scale business enterprise, encouraged by the combination of cheap land and economies of scale, its goals were cash return and export. The labor requirements of the plantation generated a tremendous demand for field hands. At first, and especially in the Chesapeake Bay colonies, that need was met by indentured servants, individuals from Great Britain who signed away their labor for a period of years in return for transport to America and the eventual promise of obtaining their own land. Well over 100,000 indentured servants migrated to Virginia alone during the 17th century. By the end of that century, however, the indentured servant labor force had been largely replaced by slaves from Africa.

The first Africans had come into Virginia as slaves back in 1619. Their forced migration route was the infamous triangle trade among Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean. By the early 18th century slavery was legally established as an acceptable form of
colonial plantations developed, owned by Polish landlords and worked by enserfed Ukrainian peasants. What an irony that the harshest variety of serfdom evolved in Ukraine in direct response to the development of European capitalism. While the North served as Russia’s window onto dynamic Northern Europe, the South recreated the social order that was a throwback to Medieval Europe.

Since the immense wealth accrued by the new landlords lured the old Ukrainian nobility into adoption of Polish ways, the resistance to Polish atrocities and attacks against Slavic Orthodox culture was led by Ukrainian Cossacks. These freebooters gathered beyond the southern boundary of the region to live by plunder. On the great bend of the Dnieper, the Cossacks created a sort of anarchic independent republic (Zaporoz'ye Sich). At first completely opportunist in the choice of their victims, the Cossacks gradually came to see themselves as protectors of Orthodoxy and the common man, and during the uprising of 1648 they briefly established a virtually independent Ukrainian state. Unable to stand on their own in the squeeze between Poland, Russia, and the Ottoman Turks, the Cossacks chose the lesser evil and applied for Muscovy’s protection, granted in 1654. From then on Ukrainian fate was intricately linked with that of Russia.

Although the realm created by the Cossacks on the east bank of the Dnieper was for a century an autonomous part of Russia, it was fast losing its distinctively Ukrainian character. Wooded into the wider imperial culture and service, the self-styled Ukrainian nobility (of former senior Cossacks) was thoroughly Russified and actually became the greatest opponent of Ukraine’s political separateness. For a second time Ukraine lost its intellectual and political leaders: first to Polonization and now to Russification.

The Ukraine was clearly quite different from the rest of Slavic lands, and yet it seemed permanently reduced to peripheral status. Under the Poles, it was merely an economic appendage to Europe. Polish Catholics, who saw non-Catholics as inferior semi-property rights for citizens. In 1790 slaves constituted 43 percent of the population of South Carolina, 39 percent in Virginia, and a third of the populations of Maryland and Georgia.

The plains of the lowland South created a pattern of broad, slow moving, lazy rivers along which export products from the plantations were shipped downstream to the coast where they could be transferred to ships. The goal was to export those crops as efficiently and inexpensively as possible. The transport system, and thus the pattern of cities, emphasized the rapid movement of goods to the coast; overland connections between cities were few, and less important than direct economic links to Europe. The elite also maintained close cultural ties with Europe. They sent their children there for education, purchased their fine furniture from European craftsmen, and long clung to the coast to maintain close transport ties with the continent.

The society and economy that emerged in the South was in many ways a world of its own, with attitudes and aspirations quite different from those of the northern colonies. Many Southerners still insist that the terrible war between the North and the South should be properly called the War Between the States, not the Civil War. In the South, Europeans did not come to create a new world as did the Puritans, but rather to recreate the old European one and in a form that was by then disappearing in Europe itself. The chivalry and aristocracy of Southern society were almost a recreation of medieval Europe, just as slavery carried European serfdom to the logical extreme. At the same time, African traditions expressed in such diverse areas a food, architecture, and speech became part of the broader Southern culture, helping to further differentiate it from the North.

Only after the Civil War was the South integrated (forcefully) into the all-American economic fabric instead of being a mere appendage to European markets. Yet the region long remained something of a semi-colonial periphery, this time to the industrial
barbarians, were the first to call the South the Ukraine, a word that literally means “borderland” or “periphery.” Under the Russians the Ukraine was a periphery again and fittingly enough Russians called it Malorossiya, Little Russia. From the time that Peter the Great obtained a direct “window to the west” in the North, Russia was fast becoming far more westernized and secular than Ukraine, which was sinking into provincialism. No longer just a geographic term, the name Little Russia began to acquire condescending overtones.

The Central Chernozem Region, the South Claimed from the North

The South thus grew from two segments: a Ukrainian part that was acquired by Moscow as it gathered former Kievan lands under Orthodox rule and a Russian part that was an extension of the new Muscovite Core, conquered and settled from the north.

After the Mongol conquest, the forest-steppe south of the Oka river remained practically deserted, and came to be known as the Wild Field, disputed between Russians and the nomads. While Russians gradually moved south along the river valleys, the nomads annually made plundering raids north along the dry watersheds. Moscow itself was last burned by the Tatars in 1571, finally spurring the government into decisive southward expansion. To obstruct the advance of mounted Tatars, fortified margins pushed south to the Belgorod line, coinciding with the present southern boundary of the region, completed in the 1650s at the same time as the acquisition of Ukraine. Since the area was settled by Russians from the Core, a sharp ethnic boundary separates it from Ukraine even to present day. Yet the original capitals of both the Ukrainian realm (Baturin) and the Soviet Ukraine (Kharkiv) were located on this boundary which stitched together this Russian portion of the South and the “Old” Ukrainian South.

North. With the region’s defensive withdrawal into Dixie nostalgia about past glory, the rest of the U.S. increasingly came to view the South somewhat condescendingly: a place doubtlessly colorful and touchingly romantic yet certainly provincial. The Old South became “Down South” - a name defining the region in relation to its marginal nature in the eyes of northerners.

The Piedmont, the South Claimed from the North

To the west of the southern coastal lowland from Virginia to Georgia lies the rolling upland of the Piedmont, an area once regarded as the rough, interior wildlands by the coastal southerners. The zone of contact between the young, relatively soft, and easily eroded rocks of the coastal plain and the older, harder, and less easily eroded rocks of the Piedmont is marked by a stretch of waterfalls or series of rapids which bar the upstream movement by river boats. One consequence is that for much of the colonial period this Fall Line served as an effective barrier to the westward expansion of the plantation economy and its demand for cheap water transport. The line is straddled by a series of towns (from Richmond to Montgomery) initially established to deal with the transfer of goods shipped across the line or to take advantage of the water power generated by harnessing the tumbling streams.

In the first half of the 17th century, the uplands were occupied substantially by settlers who wandered southward from Pennsylvania down the Great Valley (called the Shenandoah in Virginia) and then through gaps in the Blue Ridge. By the 1730s the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road marked the route. The result was that the Piedmont population was largely white, and often German, into the early national period. With comparatively few slaves the Piedmont had notably lower black percentages than the coastal plain areas of the old cotton and tobacco belts. In the late 18th and first half of the 19th century thousands of white migrants from the region, seldom rich but usually individualistic, carried the distinctive Upper Southern culture westward.
This Russian part of the South has been called the Central Chernozem region, the epithet "Central" reflecting the region's key economic role and central location. The area "made" by the Core was also central in the sense that it helped shape Russian serfdom. The southern frontier attracted thousands of peasants who fled the tax burden imposed by the centralizing state (not least for the purpose of guarding this same southern frontier). The drain bled Russia, which needed both money and armies. The attachment of peasants to the land became the answer to military challenges of the frontier, and little wonder that it occurred between the 1550s and 1649 - exactly the period of southward expansion. Ironically, the very freedoms of the frontier reinforced the emerging system of universal serfdom. The region that had been the Wild Field became the Russian Field, the outwardly serene stronghold of landowning gentry that was the pillar of the conservative political and social system of pre-capitalist Russia.

THEME 1: ECONOMY BASED ON HERITAGE OF INJUSTICE

By the early 18th century the South had lost its frontier character, and its lands were occupied by larger estates. While serfdom existed over all of European Russia, its forms varied and were nowhere so entrenched as in the South. In the less fertile northern regions, the labor duties of serfs were reduced to payment of a money rent, which the peasants were free to generate by pursuing any trade. The system paved the way for the eventual growth of commercial enterprise in villages and towns. In the South, on the other hand, an obligation to provide actual labor prevailed, and a number of days every week had to be devoted to work in the landlord's fields rather than on the serf's own plot. Normally a whole village would belong to a single landlord, and the strong institution of the village commune enforced collective compliance, while at the same time stripping the individual of responsibility and initiative. A high southern culture may have developed among the landowning class, but it was paid for by serfs who lived in poverty and ignorance.

In the decades after the American Revolution plantation the economic life of the country rushed into the Piedmont, led by cotton production. With a rapidly growing population, the region eventually surpassed the coastal lowlands in economic and demographic clout. In a symbolic severing of the umbilical cord to the Old World, state capitals were relocated from lowland (and thus colonial) to piedmont (by definition non colonial) locations Virginia's from Williamsburg to Richmond, North Carolina's from New Bern to Raleigh, South Carolina's from Charleston to Columbia, and Georgia's from Savannah to Atlanta. When the dominant focus on agriculture in the South began to erode in the 1880s, the development of manufacturing focused on the Piedmont. The lead was taken by the relocation of the cotton textile industry away from New England to the rolling hill country from south central Virginia across the central Carolinas to northern Georgia. In part this resulted from the local availability of abundant water power resources.

In many ways the Piedmont became "another" South, largely shaped by the North which first sent down its settlers; a century later, northern carpetbaggers and companies presided over the birth in the Piedmont of the industrial South. The Piedmont can perhaps be seen as the formative area for the New South, a South which was already more than just the old Dixie.

THEME 1: ECONOMY BASED ON HERITAGE OF INJUSTICE

For over three centuries Southern culture was dominated by the legacy of the plantation system. Virginians began exporting tobacco from their James River settlements in the early 1620s. Despite the lament of many that it was a "noxious weed" that was sure to damage the health of its users, the acquired taste and demand for tobacco swept the continent. By the end of the 17th century the coastal swamps of South Carolina and Georgia had become a major source for rice and indigo. Long staple (or Sea Island)
CHICKEN, KIEV-STYLE

6 chicken breasts halves, boned and flattened
1/2 cup cold butter cut into six pieces
3 tbsp chopped green onions
1 cup bread crumbs
Salt and pepper

Place butter in middle of each chicken breast, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and green onion. Roll up, dredge in flour, dip in egg, roll in bread crumbs. Fry in hot oil.

FRIED CHICKEN, SOUTHERN-STYLE

1 chicken cut into pieces
2 eggs
bread crumbs seasoned with salt and pepper
flour for dredging, oil for frying

Dry on paper towels. Coat with flour, dip in beaten egg, roll in bread crumbs. Fry in hot oil. Serve with cream gravy.
cultivated lands owned by the Russian nobility were in the South, and only their resistance delayed the final abolition of serfdom until 1861. In a sense, the emancipation of serfs was a victory of the industrial-capitalist North of Russia over the retrograde South, and it dealt the region a deadly blow.

Decline and Conservatism

Neither the serfs nor their masters could easily adapt to Emancipation. Freed serfs received little land, but had to pay heavy "redemption debts." Many estate owners (such as described in Chekhov’s classic “Cherry Orchard”) proved to be lousy entrepreneurs and went bankrupt. In Chekhov’s play the nobleman returns to his dilapidated hereditary estate to sell it to a nouveau riche capitalist, who has already scheduled the destruction of the pride of the estate - the cherry orchard with all its nostalgic memories. The fragmented fields of southern peasants could not compete with the huge, flat geometric fields of the new national granary that developed in the once empty grasslands of southern Ukraine. The fertility of the long mercilessly exploited soils sharply declined, while in the more southerly steppes rich virgin black earth abounded.

The old estate economy relied on the serfs’ numbers, but the emancipated South found itself overpopulated. Industrial growth was as phlegmatic as the proverbial southern character and provided no outlet for landless peasants. Although the South acquired a widely dispersed sugar-refining and grain-milling industry, most of the development impetus came from the North. In Ukraine, Ukrainians hardly participated in the city-based commerce and industry at all. While northerners moved hundreds of miles south to the local factories, land-craving southerners preferred massive exodus to new agricultural frontiers thousands of miles east. The southerners, and especially Ukrainians, made up the majority of migrants into the newly opened southern grasslands of Russia all the way to the Far East, and even to the USA.

Virginia. The South was the major region of export economy during much of the country’s early national period. On the eve of the Civil War cotton, exported almost entirely from the South, accounted for to-thirds of total exports from the United States by value.

Decline and Conservatism

With the end of the Civil War and the advent of slave emancipation in 1863, the South, which had been one of the wealthiest regions, was suddenly the nation’s poorest. Plantation owners found their assured labor force gone and their property often destroyed, while freed African-Americans were assured of political rights and quickly gained many elected positions. This period of change was short lived, and a decade after the war the region had returned to something remarkably like its old self. As sharecropping replaced slavery after 1865, control shifted from slavery to the crop lien system, where a merchant (also often a land owner) provided basic needs of the sharecropper’s family in return for a portion of the crop. The system encouraged eternal indebtedness. For decades after the war many landless rural southerners, both black and white, never had the opportunity to accumulate the capital needed to improve their circumstance.

Blacks, while now free, found that slavery had been replaced by institutionalized segregation enforced by a series of “Black Codes” that restricted access to economic opportunity outside agriculture and to educational opportunities. In the 1890s the states of the South began passing so called “Jim Crow laws” that legalized the segregation of the races in a wide variety of areas. In education, southern states provided separate systems for whites and blacks. While the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) had given its approval to the separation provided the two systems were equal, the reality soon became white systems with vastly superior resources
Following a brief breathing spell after the 1917 revolution, the region suffered a near-complete resurrection of serfdom in the guise of the collective farm (kolkhoz). Under Stalinist socialism, labor duties reappeared in the form of obligatory work to be done on the collective fields. Until the 1970s, the peasants were even denied freedom of migration. Little wonder that once “the second emancipation” of the later Soviet period arrived, a new exodus followed, and Southerners made up the majority of high wage-seeking migrants to Siberia. Today the population of the South is a staggering 11 million less than it was in 1897, but even so its heavily rural population is second only to the industrial-urban Core of the country. Farming gives proof of the relative immutability of the South. Although its productivity today is among the highest in Russia, it still lags behind the Breadbasket in terms of scale and specialization. The region itself essentially consumes its agricultural bounty. But then self-sufficiency is exactly its ideal. The South always tended to revert to comfortable subsistence whenever central power was weakened. The latest such period arrived in the 1970s when the more laissez-faire policy of Moscow allowed southern peasants to farm private plots. The southerners’ creative tendency to circumvent the system helped them to work out a comfortable modus vivendi with the kolkhoz. A few pigs secretly fattened by fodder stolen from kolkhoz fields bring the southerner a good annual income on top of guaranteed pay. Stripped of initiative by centuries of serf labor, southerners are not eager to assume the insecurities of private farmers. The region lags behind the rest of Russia in the spread of private farms, as the kolkhozes carry on. The region spawned a corps of collective farm chairmen, a strongly conservative lobby in new Russian politics and worthy successors to the big landowners of the South who once dominated the Emperor’s ultra-conservative Private Council.

The southerners’ conservative political culture largely rests upon a respect for the existing order and reliance on the wisdom of traditional superiors. During the first Soviet free elections in 1988, the region overwhelmingly elected the old communist compared to their black neighbors. Segregation eventually permeated nearly every aspect of southern life.

Blacks were excluded from some urban occupations and industries (such as cotton textiles) or confined to the lowest paying jobs. This trend was to dominate Southern industrialization until well into the last half of the 20th century. Manufacturing was located in areas of largely white populations, sections away from the centers of the plantation economy. Stranded Black populations had no option but to migrate to the industrial centers of the north, sparking the great exodus that so altered the racial composition of the northern metropolis.

The institution of slavery, and later the widespread availability of cheap labor (often black) limited European immigration to the South, as reflected in the insularity of ethnic identities in the region (largely English and Scots-Irish). Shunned by new immigrants and losing its own population, the South rapidly slipped down on the scale of population that had given it so much political leverage in the past. In 1810, Virginia was the nation’s most populous state, and Virginia and North Carolina together accounted for one-third of all U.S. population, by the time of the Civil War the share of these two states had declined to 10 percent. With a growing local sense that the area had been treated poorly, the two terms best defining southern culture were conservatism and loyalty. To many in the region, the two have a close meaning, defining loyalty to the past and to tradition.

Former President Lyndon Johnson, proudly Texan, referred to himself as a “Yellow Dog Democrat” given a choice, he would rather vote for a yellow dog than for a Republican. That statement was one most southerners clearly understood and supported. Democrats presided over a period when black disenfranchisement and segregation were institutionalized. For decades state legislatures were prohibitively Democratic. The system that developed placed most real power in the hands of a small group of elected
party functionaries and emerged as a bastion of political conservatism. Outwardly conformist, southerners actually seem indifferent to politics, as long as they are left alone to quietly enjoy fruits of the land. Even the political tempest of Ukrainian independence left most southerners cool: within a one-year period a strong majority of Ukrainian residents (including Russian-speakers) voted first for the preservation of the Soviet Union and then for independence. Be it in politics or modernization, the South came to stand for conservatism as much as the North stands for experimentation.

THEME 2: HOW INDEPENDENT IS AN INDEPENDENT SOUTH?
Change has not completely bypassed the South. Its economic rebirth started in the 1960s when the North again reached into the south with new industrial enclaves such as the metallurgical complex of the Kursk Magnetic Anomaly. The two largest cities of the South, Kiev and Voronezh, have emerged as economic capitals of respectively Ukrainian and Russian parts of the region, and were chosen as sites for many labor-intensive, high-tech industries such as electronics and aircraft building. Yet industrial centers are few, and the share of the South in Soviet national industrial output was still below its share of population. With urban population barely one half of the total, the South remained the least urbanized of the Slavic regions of the former USSR.

Maybe a more valid sign of the recent revival of the South is the fact that the southern villager is now better off than those in the north, the reverse of previous patterns. Surreptitious farming on private plots, with the produce of the fertile South carried to markets in the North, brought a modicum of prosperity. Statistically speaking, the southern standard of living still lags behind that of more northerly parts of Russia, particularly with inflation problems in post-independence Ukraine, but few southerners would agree that their quality of living is inferior. In the USSR, where the chronic food problem made the easy availability of good food a major yardstick of well-being, the South acquired a new stereotypical image of the land of satiety. Actually, support of Ukrainian independence among common people largely rested on the premise that officials and party leaders, tended to encourage lengthy stays in office, and gave the South a powerful say in national politics through seniority control over many Congressional committees. Only in the 1940s did the Democratic Solid South (at least at the national level) begin to erode, as the increasing liberalism of the party scared off many whites while attracting black voters. Former Southern Democrats fiercely loyal to the tradition argue that they have not left the Democratic party - the party left them. The South’s white voters often support Republicans now, favoring conservative values reflected in their religious as well as political lives. Southerners of most stripes are much more likely to attend church regularly than are people in most other sections of the country; their Sunday mornings, and at least one evening each week, are given over to church activities. Southern white Protestants are more likely than other white Protestants to listen to religious shows on radio and television and to name a religious person (usually Billy Graham) as their most admired individual. Most southern religion is conservative, evangelical, and democratic. Northerners were often surprised by the strong church involvement on both sides of the Civil Rights movement; in fact, it was just part of the participatory nature of southern religion.

Over nine in ten southerners identify themselves as Protestants. Fully half of those are Southern Baptists, and a majority of the remainder are Methodists. Blacks are even more likely to be members of (usually all black) Baptist or Methodist churches. The Southern Baptist Convention was created in 1845 in a dispute with northern Baptists over slavery and sectionalism. It emerged from the war as one the most important molders and carriers of southern culture. A map of Southern Baptists today is very much a map of the South and of those places to which southerners have migrated in large numbers.

THEME 2: HOW NEW IS THE NEW SOUTH?
The last half of the twentieth century has seen a remarkable integration of the South into the national economy, coupled with the breakdown of racial segregation. Some
Ukraine is a cornucopia feeding “hungry” Russia, and it would be even better fed if left alone.

On a different plane, Ukrainian independence can be seen as the culmination of a long southern resistance to peripheral status, and easily the most important harbinger of the arrival of some “New” South. What had been grievances related to geographic discrimination became a sense of national consciousness in Ukraine, following a pattern typical for Eastern Europe. Since local loyalties of the traditional elites were lost to wider political entities, the future nation had to be bound by ethnicity, the path beginning with the “reinvention” of language and culture. For centuries, the Ukrainian language was considered a lowly peasant dialect unfit as literary medium. The best known writer produced by Ukrainian soil, Gogol, refused to consider Ukrainian a fit language even for his burlesque novels. Only by the 1850s was the new Ukrainian (constructed as a sum of several regional dialects) becoming recognized, largely due to the efforts of Ukraine’s greatest poet, Shevchenko. Yet Ukrainian national consciousness is a very recent phenomenon: even three generations ago, most Ukrainians still called themselves “Little Russians”, khokhols, or “locals.” Ukrainians, rather than Russifiers from Moscow, demanded Russian-language schools for their children, so that they could advance beyond the limited opportunities existing in the rural South. Throughout recent decades the use of the Ukrainian language in schools, publishing, and even daily life has been steadily declining.

In Russia, the establishment of the protectorate over Ukraine in 1654 has been viewed as the reunification of peoples sharing common descent from Kievan Rus. Since Russians were the only surviving political heirs to “the glory that was Kiev,” they felt themselves to be the elder brothers, or Greater Russians. Because the Ukrainian and Russian culture and language are very close, it seemed logical to see their differences as the result of a temporary separation. Ukrainians were Little Russians, or younger brothers that could be expected to blend eventually with “true” Russians of Muscovy. viewed the revitalized economy and social changes as evidence that a “New South” was emerging. In 1880, 90 percent of the nation’s textile production was centered along the streams and coastlines of New England, but in the following decades what had been a trickle of economic change developed into a flood. By the 1910s half of the cotton textile industry was in the South, and by 1940 the industry was largely southern. Cotton textiles were a low skill, low wage industry, and a prime attraction of the South was the availability of a large and poor labor force.

World War II brought a new level of economic change to the South. The federal government invested billions in new and expanded military bases and defense plants in the region. The farm population fell 20 percent while farm incomes flourished. For the first time in recent history, much of the region’s people, especially in whites, had a disposable income. The boom continued after the war, as entrenched politicians in Washington used their influence to send development into their districts. Georgia legislators, for example, helped make defense contractor Lockheed the largest private employer in their state. Huntsville, Alabama, emerged as a major center for space exploration and research. In North Carolina, the state’s governor encouraged the creation of what became the highly successful and emulated Research Triangle Park. Many national and international manufacturers established southern plants in response to the region’s new wealth and demand for products. Atlanta especially boomed with a concentration of a broad spectrum of firms choosing to establish regional management centers in the South’s centrally located economic capital. Perhaps nothing better symbolizes the “arrival” of the New South than Atlanta’s success, personified by the election of President Jimmy Carter in 1976 and the selection of the city as the host of the 1996 summer Olympic games. Meanwhile, a combination of local civil rights demonstrations and actions of federal courts and the U.S. government eroded much formalized segregation. In 1940 only five
The provincialism of Ukraine gave the Russian view some credence. Ever since “Evenings on the Croft near Dikan’ka” Ukraine has been seen as a picturesque and romantic ethnographic corner of Russia, the preserve of lyrical folklore and songs. In the Soviet “family” of peoples, Ukraine was the privileged but junior partner, second among equals.

The Ukrainian counterargument to Russian claims of seniority is that the true Kievan heritage was passed on to future generations not through Muscovy (peripheral to Kievan Rus) but Ukraine. In Russians such claims cause fits of laughter: imagine a family where a younger brother declares himself to be elder! This laughter is true to the long Russian tradition of seeing Ukraine as a humorous place. Following the lead of Gogol, Ukraine came to be seen as almost a parody of Greater Russia. This Russian amusement is all the more offensive to Ukrainians because of its family-like, condescending nature. Since Ukraine was in no way discriminated against or lagging behind Russia economically, such condescension is the major irritant that provokes Ukrainian anti-Russianism. Russia and Ukraine seem to be tragically unable to understand each other. It may be unavoidable for such closely related peoples that antagonism toward Russia becomes almost the sole basis for shaping Ukrainians’ separate identity. Even Russian laughter is used to Ukrainian advantage: the first president of newly independent Ukraine once said that “it’s better to appear crafty, than ominous.” People are not afraid of what is funny, and while Russians refused to take it seriously, Ukraine slyly emerged as Eastern Europe’s second-largest state, gaining more territory from the Soviet dissolution than any other successor republic.

percent of voting age black southerners were registered, but by 1955 the share had increased to 25 percent. By 1969, after the Voting Rights Act eliminated nearly all special barriers to black registration and voting, nearly two thirds of African-American adult Southerners were registered. Blacks have been elected mayors in several large southern cities and scores of smaller ones, governor of one state, and to the supreme courts of most states in the region. Federal Supreme Court decisions in the late 1980s concerning proportional representation resulted in the 1992 election that sent southern blacks to state legislatures at the U.S. House of Representatives in numbers approximating the black share of their state’s population.

Although inherited racism is still a vibrant theme in Southern life, the erosion of the institution of segregation and the impact of that erosion have been real. More blacks now hold public office in the South than in any other section of the country. In the 1980s the average income of black southerners increased while declining nationally, and surpassed that in the Midwest. Most dramatically, perhaps, more blacks now migrate to the region than leave it, a change reversing a dominant trend of much of the century that would have been unimaginable at the time of the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Economically, the region may still rank at the bottom in most measures of well-being, but the bottom is not nearly so far from the top as it once was. In 1910 a poor Southern state might have an income half that of the average for non Southern states, but by 1990, it was more likely to be 85 percent of the average for the rest of the country. However, it is important not to overstate the real meaning of this change. While many Southerners consider the upward trend momentous, it unfortunately in part reflects the opposite: progress looks good because the starting level was so low. The region is still the poorest in the country, and its overall rate of economic growth compared to the national average has slowed after the spurt of the 1960s and 1970s.
One South or Many?

Even at its zenith (1648-1667) the historic forerunner of independent Ukraine included only the Ukrainian portion of the South, less than half of the area of the modern Ukrainian Republic. Interestingly enough, this historic Ukraine played little part in the independence movement fermented by the aggressive nationalism of Galicia (the westernmost part of Ukraine that had a completely separate history from the 13th century until 1939) and emboldened by the economic muscle of southern Ukraine, which belongs to the Breadbasket region. The Russian Empire wrested the southern grasslands from the Ottomans and nomads and largely settled the region with Russians. The historic separateness of Breadbasket Ukraine is well highlighted by a language division in which Russian-speakers even slightly outnumber Ukrainian-speakers. Adding Breadbasket ethnic statistics into all-Ukrainian figures is routinely used as false proof of Ukraine's Russification. In reality, the Ukrainian language prevails in the historic Ukraine, where 90 percent of the population call Ukrainian their mother tongue.

Deep historic and cultural cleavages persevere even within this Ukrainian portion of the South. The Dnieper remains a major divide. The East Bank is the most “authentically” Ukrainian part of Ukraine. Due to a relatively short period of serfdom and the absence of the village commune system, East Bankers have a reputation as the most thrifty and entrepreneurial of all Southerners. The East Bank experienced only a short period of Polish rule, while centuries of almost unperturbed control had strongly Polonized the West Bank. The West Bank’s villages were dominated by Polish nobles, and its cities by Jewish merchants, while the East Bank was long dominated by native Cossack elite and developed an egalitarian ethos. Through ties of common history, East Bank Ukraine has a strong kinship with Russia, while the West Bank gravitates to the West. Only Kiev serves as a unifying link for these two parts of Ukraine.

One indicator that the South may be stuck in its relatively poor economic situation is its persistent ruralism. The plantation South had little need for towns and cities, and small market centers or the coastal plantations were enough to serve as local collection and transshipment points; larger cities were not needed, and therefore few in number. Today in such states as Georgia and South Carolina, fewer than one person in 25 can be thought of as farmers. But even though most Southerners have urban occupations they preserve a strong link with the countryside. The Carolinas, and the South in general, lead the nation in what the census calls the “rural non farm” population, i.e. people who live in the country but have a city job, people who love their family farms but now earn a living elsewhere.

One South or Many?

Change has created a Southern economic (and, in many ways, social) geography that looks a bit like a wildly distorted checker board. “Integration into the national economy” in fact means the growth of cities with activities that are not much different from cities elsewhere in the U.S. Large cities have dominated the South’s economic surge, while much of the rest of the South has experienced far less change. The traditions of Georgia, however lacking they may seem in Atlanta, are alive and well across much of the rest of the state.

Is there more to the “South” than the geographic south itself? The region defined here may be only part of a wider southern cultural entity, yet perhaps the divisions may well be more visible than factors which bind the region together. In the United States, we speak of many Souths: thus, Appalachia was settled by southerners, but this Upland South was so opposed to the social system of planters’ domination in the Lowland South that it took the side of the Union in the Civil War. The area consisting of adjoining parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri, known as the Border South, combines cultural proximity to the South proper with economic orientation to...
The scale of differences between parts of Ukraine is comparable to that between the Ukrainian and Russian parts of the South. The customs and ways of life of Ukrainians and Russians in the region are strikingly similar, and this close proximity seems obvious to outside observers. Thus the southern dialect of Russian language seems to speakers of standard Russian to be almost Ukrainian and just as "funny." At the same time the majority of Ukrainians in reality speak the so-called surzhik, a Russo-Ukrainian mixture driving the purists to apoplexy. The traditional Ukrainian pejorative for Russians, moskali, literally means Moscovites, and conveys very southern resentment toward big government and northerners rather than toward fellow-Russians in the South. In fact, among those who hail from the South itself, the feeling of a common southern culture is stronger than ethnic divides. A good example is Nikita Khruushchev, a typical mercurial southerner who first brought southern speech into the Kremlin halls. Born in a Russian village in the south of Kursk Oblast, he made his political career in Ukraine and favored the republic in many ways, including the generous transfer of the Crimea from Russia to Ukraine in 1954. Today the dispute over the Crimea is among issues that antagonize the two states, but among common people relations are as cordial as ever: after all, according to the 1988 data, about half of all marriages in Ukraine were between mixed Russo-Ukrainian couples. While irresponsible politicians quarrel over maps, the people of the South know better. The North, and characteristically tried to stay neutral in the Civil War. Both areas never had high proportions of black population. Even the remaining "South proper" is a territory of great physical and cultural diversity. Its pattern of internal variation can perhaps best be thought of as the joint beat of two rhythms: the Lowland Piedmont economic dualism on the one hand and the east west extension of the original southern hearth on the other. The Old South embraces the Virginian and South Carolinian core areas linked by North Carolina. Although it was the cultural metropolis of the Old South, in terms of the plantation economy Charleston may be thought of as the easternmost point of the Deep South extending to Mississippi. The newest parts of the South are the Yazoo Delta area, the agricultural lowland between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers in Mississippi (often simply called locally "The Delta") and the Pinney Woods. Both were not developed until after the Civil War, but were important parts of the cotton belt and strong supporters of the Confederacy. Today, the "Delta" is a productive agricultural region dominated by large, often corporate farms producing huge quantities of soybeans, rice, cotton, and pond grown catfish. The Pinney Woods, where the South reaches into East Texas and Oklahoma is today a densely wooded, economically marginal region famous for its wildlands. However distinct, the flamboyant Texan culture is unmistakably southern in its foundations, and the strong native American ingredient to Oklahoma's mix reminds one that Oklahoma territory was a receptacle for Indians deported from the South.
are as likely as Southerners to say “right here.” They may well dislike the obvious
disadvantages of their region (low wages, poverty), but southerners still have a special
fondness for the South, and are likely to say that the best state is their own. Money is
important, but the sense here is that it is not the only important element in a region’s
quality of life.

“American by birth, Southern by the grace of God” is an often seen bumper sticker
proclaiming a strong regional allegiance. The common opinion of people living
elsewhere in the country is that the region is separate and somehow different, and no
other section of the country possesses such regional persistence. Southerners know they
are a people set apart in their own country, and gain a regional solidarity from their
own sense of distinctiveness.