**The Defense of Slavery**

**Overview** How did white southerners defend the institution of slavery?   
  
After the American Revolution, many white southerners defended slavery as a "necessary evil." The criticisms of abolitionists and Nat Turner's slave rebellion forced slavery's defenders to reconsider that argument. Thomas Dew, George Fitzhugh and others fashioned a pro-slavery argument in which they maintained that slavery was beneficial to slaves and masters, and was superior to the North's system of free labor.