

1993

A Southern Social Ethic: Political Economy in the Nineteenth-Century South. Mississippi, 1840-1910. (Volumes I and II).

Bradley G. Bond

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

Bond, Bradley G., "A Southern Social Ethic: Political Economy in the Nineteenth-Century South. Mississippi, 1840-1910. (Volumes I and II)." (1993). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 5486.
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/5486

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9401507

A Southern social ethic: Political economy in the nineteenth-century south. Mississippi, 1840–1910. (Volumes I and II)

Bond, Bradley G., Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1993

Copyright ©1994 by Bond, Bradley G. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

A SOUTHERN SOCIAL ETHIC:
POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH;
MISSISSIPPI, 1840-1910
VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by
Bradley G. Bond
B. A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1985
M. A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1987
May 1993

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and institutions made possible the completion of this dissertation; I wish to acknowledge gratefully their assistance.

By helping to identify and use resources under their care, librarians and research assistants at the following institutions facilitated my work: the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; the Baker Library, Harvard University; the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. Bill Erwin of the Perkins Library, Duke University, was especially hospitable; at Louisiana State University, Robbie Ruiz of Interlibrary Loan and Faye Phillips of the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Hill Memorial Library, offered their professional assistance, as did the staffs of the government documents and microfilm divisions at Middleton Library. The Department of History has been most generous in supporting my research through graduate assistantships, but most notably through a year of study as T. Harry Williams Fellow. It also underwrote the cost of my work at the Student Network Computing Center. The Graduate School provided a travel grant.

Professors and fellow graduate students made innumerable suggestions for improving the dissertation. Professor William J. Cooper, Jr., who chaired the dissertation committee, guided my research from beginning to end. Other committee members, Professors Charles Royster, Gaines Foster, Benjamin F. Martin, and Vernoica Makowsky offered their critiques of the manuscript. Although not formally a member of the committee, Professor Paul Paskoff expended untold energy assisting me. Fellow graduate students Sam Hyde, Henry Robertson, and Kevin Yeager always permitted me to interrupt their labors with reports of my research; Mary Jane Smith shared her insight into the Women's Christian Temperance Union and late nineteenth-century women in general; Elizabeth Hines, a former graduate student in the Louisiana State University Department of Geography, unselfishly made available computerized census data.

Debts are owed friends and family, too. Two old friends, Jay Henderson and Max Draughn, who opened his home to me for a long period, made my stay in Jackson, Mississippi a pleasant one; my sister and brother-in-law, Shannon and Richard James, offered lodging as I passed through Alabama headed north to conduct research. Familiar faces in strange places are always welcome.

Throughout my tenure as a graduate student, and even before, my parents, M. E. and Ione G. Bond, and my wife, Deborah, have supported and encouraged me. The

dissertation is theirs as much as it is mine, for they have lived with it as long as have I.

Table of Contents

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
VOLUME I	
INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: The Way Things Were	7
Chapter	
1. Vagaries of the Backcountry	13
2. The Web of the Market Economy	90
3. Liberty and Virtue in a "False Republic"	183
PART TWO: The Agencies of Change	263
Chapter	
4. The Distressing Influence of War	269
VOLUME II	
5. The Political Culture of Racism	337
6. Of Merchants and Railroads	417
PART THREE: Accepting and Rejecting Change	500
Chapter	
7. To Create an Homogeneous Society	505
8. Another Version of Homogeneity	584
9. Postscript: The World the Rednecks Made	658
BIBLIOGRAPHY	674
APPENDIX: Calculating Foodstuff Production	713
VITA	721

List of Tables

Table 1.1:	Average Monthly Precipitation, by Season: 1851-1853 (in inches)	19
Table 1.2:	Mortality in Mississippi: 1860, 1880, 1914; Deaths Per 100,000	51
Table 2.1:	Percentage Population Change, by Region, 1830-1860	111
Table 2.2:	Percentage Heads of Household Born in Various Locations, 1850 and 1860 . .	117
Table 2.3:	Rates of Persistence in Antebellum Mississippi	130
Table 2.4:	Rates of Persistence, by Age: 1850 to 1860	134
Table 2.5:	Median Value of Real Estate of Those Reporting, 1850-1860	137
Table 2.6:	Percentage Surplus or Deficit Food- stuffs, by Farm Size Cohort, 1850 and 1860	165
Table 2.7:	Percentage Farms Deficit in Grain, 25% Increase/Decrease in Grain Needs . . .	169
Table 2.8:	Percentage Farms Deficit in Meat, 25% Increase/Decrease in Meat Needs	170
Table 6.1:	A Statistical Portrait of Postbellum Business Owners	444
Table 6.2:	Occupations of Postbellum Business Owners	447
Table 6.3:	Railroad Mileage and Percentage Change, 1860-1910	472
Table 6.4:	Estimated Merchantable Pine Timber In Mississippi, 1880	488

Table 8.1:	Mississippi Livestock: Population and Value by Farm, 1860-1890	593
------------	---	-----

Abstract

As a study of the southern social ethic, this work discusses some of the most lasting themes of southern historiography: race and class, continuity and discontinuity. The social ethic might best be defined as a collection of ideas, at times contradictory, that suggest southerners' concepts of life in a good republic, citizenship, and proper economic behavior. It also examines the reality of life in a rural state as it experienced the process of modernization.

The first third of the dissertation offers a definition of the social ethic. Liberty and virtue, white southerners believed, inhered in all who avoided enslavement, the variety known to African-Americans as well as that experienced by debtors. Good citizens also participated in the market economy and politics; they eschewed governmental encroachment on community affairs; and they supported the institution of slavery, tacitly or otherwise.

The middle third of the study examines the changes to the social ethic and social changes between 1861 and 1900. During the Civil War and Reconstruction, the social ethic experienced significant challenges: first from

wartime policies and later from the emancipation of slaves. But, white southerners rescued the racist underpinnings of the ethic through the sharecropping system, the crop-lien law, vote fraud, and violence. Although they believed that the social ethic had been resuscitated, railroads, the rise of a merchant class, and industrialization altered the social setting for the ethic.

The final third of the dissertation addresses two groups' responses to the social changes of the postbellum period. Middle-class reformers proposed alternately to elevate those left behind by the commercial revolution of the late nineteenth century and to classify them as undeserving of liberty and virtue. Agrarians, on the other hand, harkened back to the antebellum period and proposed a variety of remedies designed to restore white cultural homogeneity. In the rise of the political rednecks of the early twentieth century, the agrarian and middle-class critiques of the commercial order based on class, but mostly race, flowed together.

Introduction

Published within a decade of each other, W. J. Cash's The Mind of the South and C. Vann Woodward's Origins of the New South outlined the debate that would animate southern historiography for nearly fifty years. As pioneering interpreters of the South, their understandings of the region stood in sharp contrast. In Cash's South, time stood still. The characteristics that had lent the region its antebellum distinctiveness persisted after the war and even extended into the twentieth century, while in Woodward's South, great changes followed closely on the heels of the Civil War.¹ Neither interpretation entirely satisfies; neither sufficiently accounts for the complexity of the changes experienced in the nineteenth-century South. Where Cash failed to consider the fullness of the postbellum transformation (the very transformation that in part permitted him to write his critical book about the South), Woodward neglected to explain the

¹W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (1941, reprint; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Vintage Books, 1969); C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951).

continuation of certain attitudes common among white southerners.

No state better represents the nineteenth-century South than Mississippi, and none offers historians such an uncrowded field of study. Under the rubric of political economy, the interaction of politics, society, and economics, this study seeks to account for the transformation that occurred between the middle of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Specifically, the work attempts to define and describe white southerners' social ethic, a collection of ideas, at times contradictory, about the nature of a good republic and proper economic behavior. It addresses what might be identified as civic identity and points out the contradictions that existed between the social ethic as an ideal and the reality of life in a rural southern state undergoing modernization. To treat the developments influencing the evolution of the social ethic over a broad period of time, the work has been divided into three parts.

In Part One, "The Way Things Were," I offer an initial definition of the ethic.² Isolated, bound by communitarian values to their neighbors, and often the

²The titles of the first two parts of the study are taken from Eugen Weber's Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), and the title of the final section is a slightly altered version of Weber's third section title.

victims of nature's exigencies, Mississippians throughout most of the period under study lived in an environment seemingly more wild than tame. Yet Mississippi was not merely a state on the frontier. The environment that gave Mississippi its backcountry aura made possible the production of staple crops and the conduct of a variety of other market-oriented activities. Upper South farmers who rushed into the state in the 1830s sought not the isolation of the frontier but prosperity via market production. Oddly, however, they brought to the old southwestern cotton frontier a civic identity that demanded self-sufficient production, too. As self-described independent men who also produced for the market, antebellum Mississippians claimed to possess the varieties of liberty and virtue that accrued to citizens of Arcadia and to citizens of the sixteenth-century commercial revolution. In matters of politics, the ability to participate in the process of governing and the willingness to perpetuate African-American slavery defined southerners' notions of the social ethic. The antebellum ethic, then, demanded that the possessors of liberty and virtue practice self-sufficiency within the context of market production; it also required the creation of an underclass that could neither produce for the market nor participate in politics. Developments during the late 1840s and the 1850s, tested Mississippians' devotion to the social ethic, but

they determined to defend their civic identity, which founded white cultural unanimity and freedom in the presence of black slavery.

The second part of the study, "The Agencies of Change," examines the influence of Civil War, Reconstruction, and the advent of the commercial order upon the social ethic and society. One of the first victims of the war was the social ethic itself. The concepts of liberty and virtue that white southerners fought to protect quickly faded as the Confederate and Mississippi governments enacted policies contrary to prewar ideals. Furthermore, during the second phase of the war to defend the social ethic, the war against free labor, the federal government and ex-slaves attempted to disrupt whites' closely held notions of civic identity. The appearance of three post-war amendments to the federal constitution testify to their success; the emergence of the crop-lien law, however, testifies to these amendments' failure to destroy the racist foundation of the social ethic. Under the sway of the crop-lien law and political violence white Mississippians recreated aspects of their antebellum ethic and denied freed persons the full measure of economic and political liberty promised under the northern social ethic. Whites continued to define their claims to liberty and virtue by pointing to the presence of a black underclass. Even though they preserved some of their notions

of civic identity based on African-American subservience in the political economy, they could not completely halt the transformation of the postbellum South. The emergent commercial order, epitomized in Mississippi by railroads, the lumber industry, and country merchants, destroyed antebellum notions of economic liberty, as it necessitated economic interdependence without the pretense of individual autonomy and self-sufficiency. In the process, the new commercial order undermined a central tenet of the antebellum social ethic.

Part Three of the work, "Accepting and Rejecting Change," discusses Mississippians' responses to the New South commercial order. While middle-class whites and agrarians refused to relinquish aspects of the ethic, the beneficiaries of the commercial order attempted to protect the new order. Agrarians sought to destroy it. To recreate the homogeneous social order of the pre-war South as they envisioned it and to remove from society those left behind by the state's advance, middle-class reformers advocated prohibition and disfranchisement, as well as the eradication of disease and ignorance. Agrarians, on the other hand, advocated the creation of a homogeneous order founded on antebellum notions of a liberal economic and political order. Returning to the ideal of self-sufficient production within the context of market participation and the broad participation of plain folk in the

process of governing promised to restore to all whites the liberty and virtue known to antebellum whites. Neither the undiluted middle class nor agrarian versions of the social ethic triumphed during the nineteenth century. The rednecks who ascended to power in the early twentieth century curiously combined middle-class affection for the commercial order with agrarian class-conscious rhetoric denouncing the new order.

By the early 1900s, the social ethic had been redefined. Where once citizens who wished to proclaim themselves possessors of liberty and virtue believed that they had first to practice self-sufficiency and market production, postbellum claimants were clerks and farmers, planters and industrial boosters. All would admit, with joy or sadness, that they were inexorably bound to the market economy. Yet, despite the changes in the political economy of the state and the subtle alterations in concepts of civic identity, white Mississippians, just as had their ancestors, insisted that liberty and virtue belonged only to their race. African-Americans, their economic and even political gains notwithstanding, could not claim to be rightful heirs of citizenship.

Part One

The Way Things Were

"For all of us there is a twilight zone between history and memory; between the past as a generalized record which is open to relatively dispassionate inspection and the past as a remembered part of, or background to, one's own life." Eric Hobsbawm

On a cool, crisp January day in 1840, Andrew Jackson visited the Mississippi city named after him. Even though he was three years into retirement and no longer a maker of others' political fortunes, a retinue of officials greeted the hero of the Battle of New Orleans and former president. After a brief visit with Governor Alexander G. McNutt, Jackson's admirers whisked him to a ball offered in his honor. On the following day, a Saturday, townspeople and farmers from the countryside joined state legislators at the capitol to cheer a chorus of speakers as they sang the general's praise. Pomp and "the usual strain of exaggeration" were the order of the day.¹ Anxious to hear a denunciation of the political opposition, the crowd, which flowed onto the hillside grounds of the state house, heard only perfunctory and courteous

¹Woodville Republican, 23 January 1840.

remarks. Jackson seemed old. His voice was weak, hardly befitting a man known for vitriolic outbursts. Yet, so great was his appeal that despite his physical frailty few who saw him considered the day a disappointment.

At the time of his visit, Mississippians counted Jackson a champion of common folk. His war against the privileged power accorded banks resonated with Mississippians, who had only recently embarked upon a decade-long struggle to repudiate state debts accrued in support of two financial institutions. In the charged atmosphere of the late antebellum sectional crisis, some southerners came to question Jackson's action during the Nullification Crisis of 1832-1833, but, in others' eyes, he remained a saint. The reverential treatment that "the soverigns [sic]" bestowed upon Jackson prompted one Alabama wag to note of his contemporaries in the early 1850s, "It is somewhat dangerous to tell them that the Jin'al is not a candidate this election, or they would consider it a reflection upon the old Gen.'s democracy."² His military exploits aside, Jackson's progress from humble origins and orphanage to the White House offered ambitious fathers and their southern children a portrait of success.

²William S. Powell to Cordelia Powell Mansfield, 28 July 1853, John Lipscomb Johnson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Like many who migrated to the Deep South, Jackson was by birth a South Carolinian. Compensating for the deprivations of his youth, he exhibited a frontiersman's desire for material success, which was facilitated by an eye for judging the future value of land and a keen political acumen. Largely through his law practice, he secured substantial land-and slaveholdings before acquiring his martial reputation. However alluring was Jackson's transition from penury to prominence and his dogged insistence upon individual autonomy, Deep South men-on-the-make most admired him for his philosophy of governing, which granted to all-comers what historian Mary Elizabeth Young has designated the zeitgeist of the age: "freedom, frugality and equality of opportunism."³

Young's epigraph incorporates the broadly-held ideas underpinning the antebellum social ethic--a collection of ideas, at times contradictory, about government, citizenship, and economic behavior. In 1861, no less than in 1840, Mississippi was a product of its history. The actual events that had occurred in the past, as well as myths about the past, informed concepts of the good republic. Jackson, who at once stood for success in the market

³Mary Elizabeth Young, Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 193. Robert Remini's Andrew Jackson (1966; reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1969), offers insight into Jackson's early life.

economy and the independent man of the frontier, embodied the contradictions of the social ethic. Mississippians' apotheosis of Jackson signalled their refusal to recognize the inherent conflict between the myths and realities of life in the Deep South.

The image of the farmer who depended upon himself and his family alone for survival frequently appeared in the contemporary literature of the antebellum South. According to Mississippians, scores of just such men had invaded the old southwestern frontier. They hacked from the wild their farms and homesteads. By refusing to brook governmental intrusion into private matters, by practicing self-sufficient habits of production, and by bowing their backs at the plow, they created little fiefdoms all their own. From time to time, the best among them were asked to sit in positions of authority. Such Arcadian ideals, however, had little to do with the reality of Mississippi's political economy. That solitary figure working solely for himself more than likely cultivated cotton, cut timber, or raised livestock for the market. When he achieved self-sufficiency at all, he did so to bolster his savings and to expand his market production as measures of material success. Neither was the Arcadian man often alone at his labor; slaves contributed to Mississippi's antebellum economy. Concepts of white political liberty owed much to the perpetuation of African-American slavery,

an institution to which all free and virtuous whites felt obliged to pay homage. The free and independent man of Arcadian mythology actually owed his understanding of liberty to the creation of an underclass defined primarily by skin color. Despite the inconsistencies and conflicts of competing notions of political economy, the institution of slavery served to create in the white South a sense of cultural homogeneity.

Three forces, each the subject of a chapter in this third of the dissertation, played significant roles in shaping the southern social ethic, a strange combination of myths and realities. The environment, which went far toward determining the nature of Mississippi's economy also permitted illusions of the state as an isolated Arcadia to persist. The market economy, which by 1840 penetrated into every region of the state, contradicted myths of Arcadia and nurtured a thirst for material success. Finally, institutional forces and ideal notions of the good republic founded white's claims to liberty and virtue in the identification of an underclass. Taken together, these forces created a complicated political economy that celebrated both white liberty and black enslavement, market production and self-sufficiency, traditional values and modern ones. In 1861, Mississippi, still a relatively young state, occupied a twilight zone

in its history, willing neither to surrender its mythological past nor to reject firmly the emerging modern world.

Chapter One

Vagaries of the Backcountry

"I suppose dirt and rags are always in part the emblem of this wild state of society," observed the dyspeptic English traveller Mrs. Basil Hall upon her arrival in Natchez in 1827. Freshly washed by a shower when the English aristocrat visited, Natchez appeared new and clean, but the rain transformed the streets into a dough-like muck that claimed one of her shoes. More disturbing to her than the city's streets were its children. "The children are not in rags and their outer garments, altho' of the worst make and most unbecoming fabric, are still whole. All that is below the upper part of the apparel is dirty and slovenly to a degree that the lower classes in England would scorn to allow their families to wear."¹

One need not turn to travellers' accounts of the 1820s to find portrayals of Mississippi as a poor man's country, isolated and dangerous; a variety of eye witnesses (visitors, residents, and government officials)

¹Mrs. Basil Hall, The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall Written During a Fourteen Months' Sojourn in America, 1827-1828, ed. Una Pope Hennessy (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 268.

testified that frontier conditions, bordering occasionally on savagery, prevailed well into the twentieth century. Bears, panthers, and wolves prowled the pine forests and canebrakes; irregularly maintained roads and river channels made travel difficult and, at times, impossible; dysentery, malaria, and yellow fever touched, in varying degrees, most of Mississippi; and levees, if built at all, rarely performed according to design.

Few Mississippians, not just the ill-clad children that Hall observed, were familiar with the feel of silk. Even at the epicenter of planter-class culture, street urchins, plain farmers, and folk "common as hell" outnumbered the grandees.² Such an observation is not intended to suggest that slaveholders, especially that rarefied and aristocratic group known as planters, failed to wield in political matters a degree of influence far greater than their number justified, or that those outside the planter class looked with contempt upon the ideals of their planter neighbors. Instead, the proliferation of just such conditions and folk as alarmed Hall suggests that the large majority of Mississippians' lives were, in Hobbesian terms, truly nasty, brutish, and, not infrequently, short.

²The reference to folk "common as hell" derives from William Alexander Percy, Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son (1941; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 62, who bemoaned the passing of Mississippi's aristocracy.

Wealthy Mississippians, of course, insulated themselves from some of the vagaries of the backcountry, but regardless of the assets an antebellum planter or a postbellum businessman might acquire, never mind the sophistication that he might project, the perils of the backcountry might suddenly rise up and take his property, perhaps his life.

When in 1890 the superintendent of the census announced the disappearance of a frontier line of settlement, he had in mind the trans-Mississippi West; the old Southwestern frontier, which included Mississippi, had closed in the 1830s, as large numbers of settlers filled the newly opened lands of the Choctaw and Chickasaw cessions that stretched from the Alabama border to the Mississippi River. By 1840, the northern portion of Mississippi, once the domain of Indians, succumbed to cotton and corn.³ Between 1840 and 1900 vast and readily apparent changes altered the state's landscape. Any Mississippian could point them out, and many frequently did. Cities, with a partial complement of services, appeared. Railroads steamed through the state linking producers and

³Frederick Jackson Turner made perhaps the most famous statement about the closing of the frontier. See, Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in Frederick Jackson Turner: Wisconsin's Historian of the Frontier, ed. Martin Ridge (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 26-47. For an introduction to Mississippi on the old southwestern frontier, see, Thomas D. Clark and John D. Guice, The Old Southwest, 1795-1830 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

markets. The levee system guarded the Delta against Mississippi River floods, and the lumber industry opened the Piney Woods to an influx of settlers. But, in some ways little had changed. Crevasses occasionally appeared along the levee line; exotic diseases borne by foul-water, mosquitoes, and ignorance claimed thousands each year; and the economy remained firmly colonial with production based on extractive and resource-depleting activities. In 1900, the state, although far removed by time and progress from the old southwestern frontier, nonetheless exhibited evidence of its backcountry past; gains made in taming the physical frontier--the elimination of native wildlife and the amelioration of Mississippians' health--outpaced the erosion of frontier habits of mind, particularly the persistence of communitarian values.

"Let us begin by discussing the weather, for that," according to the South's first great historian, Ulrich B. Phillips, "has been the chief agency in making the South distinctive." Employing a methodology that would later be identified with the Annales school of historical study, Phillips, in the first chapter of his Life and Labor in the Old South, ascribed to southern environmental peculiarities a host of political and economic contingencies: the cultivation of staple crops, the plantation system, the importation of slave labor, and the sectional crisis. Additionally, "the tedious heat" of the

South explained, at least to Phillips, characteristics associated with southerners such as indolence, mild mannerisms, and slow, slurred speech. W. J. Cash agreed that the physical world, "itself a sort of cosmic conspiracy against reality in favor of romance," bred into southerners a carefree temperament. Unlike New Englanders, who confronted a lack of arable land and harsh winters, Southerners found subsistence easy, materials to construct shelter plentiful, and leisure, due to the torpid heat, an exercise in hedonism, as Cash would have it.⁴ Although some historians trace southern distinctiveness to phenomena other than the environment, Phillips and Cash accord it a key role in nurturing the South's agricultural economy. But, the environment also accounted for a fierce malevolence in the physical world.⁵

⁴Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (1929; reprint, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937), 3-5; W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (1941; reprint, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Vintage Books, 1969), 46-50, quoted 48.

⁵For an overview of environmental determinism in southern historiography, see A. Cash Koeniger, "Climate and Southern Distinctiveness," Journal of Southern History 54 (February 1988): 21-44; David Hackett Fischer, "Climate and History; Priorities for Research," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 10 (Spring 1980): 827-829. For other discussions of environmentally induced peculiarities, see, Raymond Arsenault, "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture," Journal of Southern History 50 (November 1984): 597-628; Charles P. Roland, "The Ever-Vanishing South," Journal of Southern History 48 (February 1982): 13-14; Clarence Cason, 90 Degrees in the Shade (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, (continued...))

Accurate measurements of precipitation and temperature for antebellum Mississippi are at best spotty, but available records suggest insignificant climatic variations between the mid-nineteenth century and the twentieth century. The geographer Sam Hilliard, who used modern data to construct precipitation and thermal maps, has estimated that most of Mississippi received an average annual rainfall of forty-eight to fifty-nine inches; south of thirty-one degrees latitude, near the warm atmospheric conditions of the Gulf of Mexico, the amount of precipitation averaged sixty inches per year. Rainfall measurements recorded by the antebellum scientist B. L. C. Wailes at three sites in Jefferson, Hinds, and Lafayette counties

⁵(...continued)

1935); Tamara Miner Haygood, "Cows, Ticks, and Disease: A Medical Interpretation of the Southern Cattle Industry," Journal of Southern History 52 (November 1986): 551-564.

Historians who have seen forces other than environmental ones as influential in creating southern distinctiveness include Grady McWhiney, Forest McDonald, and Perry D. Jamieson. See, especially, McWhiney and Jamieson, Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982); McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," American Historical Review 85 (December 1980): 1095-1118. See, too, John Hope Franklin, The Militant South, 1800-1861 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Honor and Violence in the Old South (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

confirm the accuracy of Hilliard's data.⁶ (See Table 1.1).

(Table 1.1)
Average Monthly Precipitation,
by Season: 1851-1853
(in inches)

Season	1851	1852	1853	1851-1853*
Winter	6.75	4.37	4.39	5.17
Spring	3.96	2.65	3.56	3.03
Summer	1.83	2.86	5.18	3.28
Fall	4.54	5.28	3.20	4.34

Source: B. L. C. Wailes, Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi: Embracing A Sketch of the Social and Natural History of the State (Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1854), 305-308.

*Average monthly rainfall by season.

Rainfall alone, though significant, had to occur in sufficient amounts and at appropriate times to nurture crops and garner farmers' praise. During the wettest months of the year, November through February, few crop-related jobs demanded farmers' attention. Plowing under the previous year's crop stubble and seed-bed preparation began in the cold, wet month of February and continued in earnest through March. Farmers reserved early April for

⁶See the precipitation map in Sam Bowers Hilliard, Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1984), 17; B. L. C. Wailes, Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi; Embracing a Sketch of the Social and Natural History of the State (Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1854), 305-308.

cotton planting. During the late spring and summer as temperatures soared, precipitation tapered off but fell regularly enough to keep moist cotton plants' root systems. As precipitation diminished, cotton bolls began to appear. Wailes, an avid recorder of crop data, observed limited numbers of blooms, predecessors of the white bolls, as early as mid-May; cotton picking, which might begin in June, continued until the first frost. In the late summer and early fall, nature conspired with cotton planters as average monthly rainfall amounts dropped to their lowest level. Drier weather not only made easier the strenuous work of picking but also ensured that "rust" caused by rain would not lessen the value of the crop.⁷ Beating the rain and frost to the cotton became in autumn cotton cultivators' overriding ambition.

Sustained dry conditions in Mississippi such as the state-wide droughts of 1845 and 1860 and the 1854-1855 drought in northeastern Mississippi, while rare, caused farmers financial loss and brought isolated areas to near starving times. Yet, the state's clay-based soils, all classified by geographers as permanently or

⁷Wailes, Report on Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, 151-154. Recent field studies conducted in Mississippi indicate that moisture introduced into picked cotton via humidity or man-made means improves the quality of cotton. See, U. S. Department of Agriculture and Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Station, Restoring Moisture to Cotton at Mid-South Gins, Technical Bulletin no. 1553 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1977), 1-2, 5, 10.

seasonally wet, retained moisture in normal summers, making precipitation during that season less important than in the spring when crops began to grow.

Even though rainfall and clay-based soils made most of Mississippi ideal for staple-crop cultivation, significant differences in soil quality and agricultural production existed. The state might be simplistically divided into five topsoil regions.⁸ Three of these regions consisted of rich soils forming the roughly triangular shaped cotton belt that stretched across the central part of the state and extended the length of the Mississippi River. Two of the regions, both in the eastern part of the state, were characterized by poorer soil.

The Delta, a former estuary of ancient origin ranging in width from five to sixty miles, adjoins the Mississippi River. Strikingly flat, except for a slight tilt away from the river and an occasional natural levee that rose above small streams and bottom lands, the alluvial plain acted as a natural basin for the floodwaters of the river. Centuries of overflows coated much of the Delta

⁸For a much more complex division of the state into topsoil regions, see, "Soils of the South," in U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, A Forest Atlas of the South (New Orleans and Asheville: Southern Forest Experiment Station, 1969), 7. The division of the state into topsoil regions discussed herein closely follows William N. Logan's "Soil Map of Mississippi," which may be found in Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (1951; reprint, Harper and Row, Harper Torchbook, 1965), following 162.

with a legendarily thick layer of topsoil replete with organic matter well suited to nourish cotton. Draining the Delta's swamplands for agricultural purposes required extensive amounts of capital and labor, but after several seasons, barring destructive flooding, an epidemic among plantation slaves, or a collapse of the cotton market, the necessary preparatory work paid off in cotton.⁹

Topsoils in the bluff region to the immediate east of the Delta, though only seasonally moist and prone to cracking in dry weather, also supported cotton, as well as a variety of row crops. This must surely have been the region that Robert Baird, traveling through the South in the late 1820s, had in mind when he pronounced the state "an admirable country for the growth of garden vegetables."¹⁰ Low rolling hills and thin, loamy topsoils, believed to be composed of wind-blown silt from the Delta,

⁹Forest Service, Forest Atlas of the South, 6-7; Phillips, Life and Labor, 14. Omnipresent bogs and lowlands in the Delta prompted two travellers to the area to attach upon Mississippi the label of "bayou state," which is commonly reserved for Louisiana. See Francis Pulszky and Theresa Pulszky, White, Red, Black: Sketches of American Society in the United States During the Visit of Their Guests (New York: Redfield, 1853), 92.

¹⁰Forest Service, Forest Atlas of the South, 7-8. Robert Baird, View of the Valley of the Mississippi: or the Emigrants and Traveller's Guide to the West Containing a General Description of that Entire Country; and also Notices of the Soil, Production, Rivers, and Their Channels of Intercourse and Trade: And Otherwise of the Cities and Towns, and Progress of Education of Each State and Territory (Philadelphia: H. S. Tanner, 1832), 250.

made erosion a serious problem. Large pockets of marl, a naturally occurring calcium carbonate that served as a base for fertilizers, however, compensated for the thin soils and perhaps accounted for the region's good fortune with cotton cultivation. The bluff region required little preparation for planting outside of clearing oak and hickory stands, and middle-class farmers, lacking the large slaveholdings and capital necessary to clear land in the Delta, flocked to the area.

Agricultural production on the prairies--the third agriculturally productive sub-region, which included the Jackson Prairie in central Mississippi and the Black Prairie, an extension of the Alabama Black Belt, in the north-east--rivalled that of the Delta. Unlike Delta soil, prairie soils, brownish in color denoting the absence of organic matter, required careful attention to maintain maximum production. During the summer months, they tended to develop large fissures, but, in the rainy season, the prairies absorbed water more rapidly than did the heavy topsoils of the Delta. Also more alkaline than the Delta soils, the prairies supported a variety of pine trees.¹¹

Popular myths equated the presence of pines, both the short- and long-leaf varieties with poor soil quality. While the correlation between depleted farmland and pine

¹¹Forest Service, Forest Atlas of the South, 7-8.

trees remains debatable, the sandy topsoils of the Piney Woods, the fourth sub-region, in the southeastern quadrant of the state suggest that an at least tenuous relationship exists. While not conducive to large-scale cotton cultivation, the acidic and seasonally moist soils of the Piney Woods supported abundant truck crops for the table, wild berries for preserves, and wild grasses for livestock pasturage and ranges. The narrow Pearl and Pascagoula River Valleys--Piney Woods anomalies--like other rich bottoms and canebrakes, offered farmers near Delta-like conditions. Due to good drainage, staple-crop cultivation flourished in the river valleys of the Piney Woods. The fifth soil region in Mississippi likewise consisted of poor soils. In the North-Central Hills, however, topsoils were thicker and friendlier to cotton cultivators than those of the Piney Woods. Yet, like the soil of the Black Prairie which the hills surrounded, the thin clay-based soils of the hill country experienced high levels of evaporation in extremely warm weather. Despite the shortcomings of the soils, settlers in these latter two regions found the land suitable for market production. Herdsmen and timbermen, especially those in the Piney Woods, found the forests, long burnt clear of underbrush by Indians,

ready to host their livestock and well-suited too for the production of pitch, turpentine, and charcoal.¹²

Temperature, perhaps more so than precipitation and soil quality, constituted the most influential environmental element contributing to the development of Mississippi's agriculturally-based economy. Modern-day agronomists candidly confess that the relationship among moisture, soil-borne nutrients, and temperature in the crop growth equation remains a mystery, but most agree that temperature is the determining variable. For temperature effects root growth, nutrient uptake, water absorption, photosynthesis, and plant respiration.¹³ Mississippi's winters were generally of short duration and not exceedingly severe. While streams and rivers in the northernmost counties occasionally froze solid, air temperatures infrequently dropped below thirty-two degrees for extended

¹²Forest Service, Forest Atlas of the South, 7-8. Chapter Two addresses market production of non-staple items in the Piney Woods, but see, too, 14 August 1853, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (hereafter cited as MDAH).

¹³Dirceu T. Coelho and Robert F. Dale, "An Energy-Crop Growth Variable and Temperature Function for Predicting Corn Growth and Development: Planting to Silking," Agronomy Journal 72 (May-June 1980): 503-510; M. C. Colipado and D. M. Brown, "Response of Corn (Zea Mays L.) In the Pre-Tassel Initiation Period to Temperature and Photoperiod," Agricultural Meteorology 14 (April 1975): 357-367; C. S. T. Daughtry, J. C. Cochran, S. E. Hollinger, Meteorological Models for Estimating Phenology of Corn (West Lafayette, Indiana: Laboratory for Application of Remote Sensing, 1984), 1.

periods. Northern counties in the nineteenth century averaged about two months with temperatures below freezing, central counties about one month, and southern counties twenty days. While frost usually made its appearance in mid to late October, sometimes December arrived before the first freezing weather. In any case, farmers could count on a seven to eight month long growing season, including a lengthy fall season in which crops such as turnips thrived.¹⁴

The summer, on the other hand, left a lasting impression on both visitors and residents. Most spent their days seeking refuge from the heat, but few respites could be found. One resident, Henry Waring Ball, occupied the later part of the summer of 1886 bemoaning the length and severity of the season: "The summer passes slowly--very hot indeed, dull, stupid, inconceivably wearying." North of Jackson, temperatures reached ninety degrees an average of sixty days, while south of the capitol, three months of ninety plus temperatures might be expected.

¹⁴For thermal maps of Mississippi, see Hilliard, Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture, 14-17. While winter temperatures did not often remain below freezing for long periods, excessively cold weather could take a toll on Mississippians; for an account of a young slave freezing to death while conducting an errand, see, 1 March 1856, Susan S. Darden Diaries, Darden Family Papers, MDAH. On the importance of fall crops, especially during the first years of settlement, see Sam Bowers Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoe-cake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 39-40.

Corn, a member of the grass family and the second most important crop in nineteenth-century Mississippi, grows best in such semi-tropical environments with temperatures fluctuating between 80 and 100 degrees and humidity averaging over 50 percent in the summer. All of the Deep South experienced these conditions. With root systems capable of absorbing moisture from the soil at depths of five to six feet and broad leaves to protect the soil from moisture evaporation, corn flourished and nourished white and black alike in Mississippi.¹⁵

Lying within a latitudinal belt given to warmth and high humidity, Mississippi developed, due to climatic conditions as well as good soil quality, a market economy based on the cultivation of a staple crop that in turn fostered the development of the plantation system and perpetuated the institution of slavery. Environmental forces created also, at least to the eye of some visitors to the interior, a land of pastoral splendor. Traveling between Vicksburg and Yazoo City, A. De Puy Van Buren was struck by the wilderness that flourished along the Yazoo River in apparent contempt of humankind's encroachment: "The scenery seemed to me Arcadian, as we sailed up this

¹⁵Hilliard, Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture, 14-17. On the nature of corn cultivation, see, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Corn Growing Under Droughty Conditions, Farmers Bulletin no. 773 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 5-9.

winding passage of green, and now and then caught glimpses of cotton plantations through the opening willows along the banks." Henry T. Ireys on his first visit to the country north of Vicksburg saw a land that "looked wilder, trees, cane, vine grew to the edge of the river bank; the clearings were more scattered and caving [river] banks more decided." In the antebellum period, Mississippi was a wild country. Natives and those less overawed by the lush greens of the countryside typically responded to the land in calmer voices and wrote to their Carolina and Georgia kinsmen elegies about a land of raw and natural beauty falling under the control of man. But they mourned not the passing of Arcadia. John Staples Napier of Wayne County, for instance, wrote that "the land, poor in general, [is] well covered with pine. Well covered with summer ranges, to wit, grass, good water with milles [*sic*] and other conveniences and as great a portion of health as is attached to any part of the Southern States."¹⁶ For all

¹⁶A. De Puy Van Buren, Jottings of a Year's Sojourn in the South; or, First Impressions of the Country and its People; With a Glimpse at School-Teaching in that Southern Land and Reminiscences of Distinguished Men (1859; reprint, Louisville: Lost Cause Press, 1960, microcard), 35; Henry Tillinghast Ireys, "Autobiography," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919, ed. William David McCain and Charolette Capers (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954), 12; John H. Napier III, "Piney Woods Past: A Pastoral Elegy," in Mississippi Piney Woods: A Human Perspective, ed. Noel Polk (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 15.

its wild beauty, the physical world offered a bounty to those who would conquer it.

In a land that required men to expend one full day of hard labor clearing a quarter acre of canebrake, conquer it they must. Environmental forces favored thick forests and wild animals; leaving bottom land fallow for several seasons invited self-sown cottonwoods and canebrakes to reassert their natural dominance over the landscape. When A. J. Paxton visited his brother, a Jackson lawyer turned Washington County planter, in the mid-1840s, canebrakes three miles wide and thirty miles long, penetrated only by black bears, greeted him.¹⁷ The part of the state that Paxton passed through, however, did not resemble the rest of the state. By 1840, the pioneering work of controlling the environment had been completed in most of Mississippi. Wholesale ecological change had occurred. Desoto would not have recognized mid-nineteenth century Mississippi as the same ecological wilderness he had known nor would have Pushmataha, the Choctaw chieftain, who died in 1825 five years after ceding tribal

¹⁷Evelyn Hammett, "Pioneer Days in East Bolivar," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Sillers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee, ed Wirt A. Williams (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1848), 174; A. J. Paxton, "Recollections of Deer Creek," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 104; See, too, John Milliken to [?], 26 December 1844, George Wilson Humphries and Family Papers, MDAH.

lands to the United States. Even in the wilds of the thinly populated Piney Woods, farmers and herdsmen stamped a record of their presence on the region's ecological system. Travelling between Columbia and Hobolochitto, B. L. C. Wailes remarked that the Coastal Meadows were "barren of trees, which were formerly reed brakes, which have been destroyed by the herds of cattle, and by the firing of the woods." White settlers in the 1830s placed large tracts of forests under their control, if only tentatively. Even as farmers put the plow to virgin soils, they initiated what would become a constant struggle to beat back the wildness of the land and to control the ravages of native wildlife and diseases common to the back-country.¹⁸

¹⁸13 August 1852, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, MDAH. Recent historians have correctly pointed out that Indians began altering the ecology of North America long before the white man arrived; white farmers merely accelerated the pace of change by cutting more timber, instituting European notions of property rights, and burning more forests. See William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecological History of New England (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), passim; Albert E. Cowdry, This Land, This South: AN Environmental History (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1983), passim. For an account of Mississippians, red and white, burning forests clear of underbrush, see J. P. Coleman, Choctaw County Chronicles: A History of Choctaw County, 1830-1973 (Ackerman: privately published, 1973), 35. Firing of the woods became a problem in the state as settlers began claiming land in the public domain. State law eventually prohibited burning forests and marches, except between February 1 and May 1, in several Piney Woods counties. Woods burners were subject to fines of not less than \$50 and not more than \$500, plus payment for damages caused by fires. Slaves and servants who set fires were
(continued...)

On the eve of the Civil War, substantial numbers of forest animals--predators and game--continued to occupy sparsely settled tracts of land in the Delta, Piney Woods, and remote hill country. Much of the state was sparsely settled. In 1860, only the areas around Natchez, Vicksburg, and Columbus supported a population density over thirty persons per square mile; by 1900, the population density surpassed that level across most of the state. The only exceptions to the trend in 1900 occurred in the Piney Woods, several northeastern counties, and four Delta counties.¹⁹ Difficulties in draining Delta lands and poor soils in the Piney Woods originally discouraged large numbers of settlers from occupying lands in the regions. Until the 1880s when railroads traversed these areas initiating a population boom, swamps, canebrakes, and woodlands provided habitat for a variety of wildlife. As an ever-increasing population of farmers and lumbermen found uses for the land and its products, habitat for native animals so diminished and the animal population so depleted that Timothy Dwight's assessment of colonial New

¹⁸(...continued)
liable to receive 39 lashes. See Laws of the State of Mississippi (1824-1838), 159-161, 530.

¹⁹For a map of population density in 1860, see, Hilliard, Atlas of Antebellum Agriculture, 26. The population density for 1900 was calculated based on the Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Decennial Census of the United States, 1890: Vol 1, Population, part one (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892).

England can perhaps be applied with only slight hyperbole to late nineteenth-century Mississippi: "Hunting with us exists chiefly in the tales of other times."²⁰

Yet, before the accelerated postbellum destruction of forests and swamplands, hunting played a significant role in rural Mississippi. Not only did communal hunts draw dispersed communities into closer union, game occupied the third place, after corn and pork, in Mississippians' diets. Prior to the Civil War game remained plentiful. Among the great variety of indigenous animals, squirrel, rabbit, opossum, bear, turkey, waterfowl, and deer appeared regularly on rural folks' tables. By far, deer was the most popular specie of game hunted.

Killing deer involved a fair amount of skill, but hunts possessed an aspect of sport, too. A taste for venison, as well as a desire to participate in communal activities, drew hunters to the forests. During the early 1800s, hunters, working with groups of neighbors and kin, slaughtered deer by the dozens when they burned forests and flushed the animals through a gauntlet of gunmen. As the human population increased, state laws forbade the firing of the woods, and hunters introduced trained dogs to their hunts. Thomas Bangs Thorpe, the antebellum humorist, recalled that on one Louisiana deer drive

²⁰Quoted in Cronon, Changes in the Land, 116.

hunters shot six animals but retrieved only five. Searching for the dogs, Thorpe sardonically noted, occupied most of the day. Night hunters, who carried burning light wood to illuminate deer's eyes may have had the best luck of all; Charles Lanman reported that a large hunting party in 1850 bagged one hundred deer in a single night. To have a chance at killing a deer, farmers who could not afford to spend an entire night or day hunting or who longed more for venison than the conviviality of a communal hunt might only be prepared to shoot while walking near their corn fields and vegetable patches.²¹

²¹Sam Hilliard, who stresses the significance of pork and corn in southerners' diets, and Royce Shingleton, who stresses the significance of game, have engaged in a lively exchange about antebellum foodways. In their various published works they also discuss hunting practices and the availability of game. See Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake, 13, 75-75, 78-80, 92, and "Hog Meat and Cornpone: Food Habits in the Antebellum South," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 113 (February 1969): 1-13; Shingleton, "The Utility of Leisure: Game as a Source of Food in the Old South," Mississippi Quarterly 25 (Fall 1972): 429, and "The Republic of Porkdom," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 112 (December 1968): 407-410. On the availability of game, see, too, Greene Callier Chandler, Journal and Speeches of Greene Callier Chandler (privately published, 1953), 51, who recalled an abundance of turkey, duck, deer, pigeons, partridges, rabbits, and bear in antebellum Mississippi: "There was plenty for everyone who went hunting." The practice of allowing hogs, some of which became semi-feral, to roam freely in the forests and swamps offered hunters another specie of game to hunt. For an account of one planter who killed five domestic hogs-turned-wild, see, 26 December 1850, Walter Wade Plantation Diaries, MDAH.

For contemporary accounts of hunting practices, see Edward Stuart to Annie E. Stuart, 26 May 1860, John Bull Smith Dimitry Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University (continued...)

Joseph Lightsey's hunting experiences point to the deleterious influence that humankind's presence had on native wildlife. Although Lightsey was an avid hunter, he killed few deer. He did not even enter the woods specifically seeking deer, except on night hunts. Lightsey listed only one deer kill in his 1847 hunting inventory, and three years later he killed two, supposedly with one shot. In isolated forests, families such as the Lightsey's could expect, through formal hunts or otherwise, at least one deer kill each year, but in more densely settled farm communities, venison might not appear on the table at all. Estimates of the size of the southern deer herd place the population between six and ten million in 1860. With an estimated twenty to thirty percent of the herd being killed each year, over-hunting worsened the affects that habitat destruction had on the deer population. At

²¹(...continued)
[hereafter cited as Duke]; Thomas Bangs Thorpe, "Sporting in Louisiana," in A New Collection of Thomas Bangs Thorpe's Sketches of the Old Southwest, ed. David C. Estes (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1989), 110-111.

The practice of the firing of the woods for the purpose of hunting was outlawed before 1840, see, The Statutes of the State of Mississippi of a Public and General Nature, With the Constitution of the United States and of This State (New Orleans: E. Johns and Company, 1840), 207-208. [Hereafter cited as Code (1840)]. The law, passed in 1822, forbade the firing of the woods at night on land not owned by a member of a hunting party. Violators faced a fine of \$20 and had to pay twice the damages if their fires killed or maimed an animal during an illegal hunt.

the turn of the century, the deer herd reached its nadir of one million.²²

Animals other than deer, as Lightsey's 1847 inventory suggests, more frequently fed Mississippians. His list of animals killed included fifty squirrels, two hawks, one duck, one crow, and one crane. Most likely he considered the latter two animals and the hawks nuisances, but the squirrels and duck provided variety in his family's diet. Squirrels, and rabbits, too, may have survived the encroachments of man better than deer, as they could live in small wooded areas; turkeys, on the other hand, a much more easily spooked creature that required greater range, retreated to remote forests; only residents of the Delta and coastal marshes could hope to bag annually even a small number of migratory waterfowl. According to some accounts, opossum offered a fine meal and tested hunters' skill as much as did turkey and deer. Dogs were often used to tree opossums, and fires were lighted to reveal the location of the quarry. Some slaves acquired reputations for their opossum hunting skills, but contrary to popular belief, both whites and blacks relished roasted opossum stuffed with sweet potatoes to draw out the bitter taste. Other hunters captured opossums live and feed them

²²31 November 1847, 14 January 1848, 24 February 1846, 25 February 1850, Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, MDAH. Estimates of the deer population can be found in Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake, 77-78.

table scraps for several weeks before eating them.²³ No population estimates for game species other than deer exist, but it would be safe to say that, like deer, they too felt the affects of humankind's presence. The innate ability of small game to reproduce large numbers of young and to adapt to man's intrusions into their habitat by feeding on cultivated crops, may have helped preserve their numbers.²⁴

While Mississippians hunted game species for sport and food, they sought enthusiastically to eliminate species considered dangerous to livestock, agriculture, and man. Fear, as much as sport, motivated hunters to kill Mississippi's large native mammals. Wolves (scavengers and pack hunters loathed for their attacks on livestock)

²³31 November 1847, Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, MDAH. See accounts of hunting in Shingleton, "The Utility of Leisure," 433-444; Thorpe, "Opossums and 'Possum Hunting," in A New Collection of Thomas Bangs Thorpe's Sketches, 145-149. Not all southerners ate opossum, see, Ireys, "Autobiography," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 15-16.

²⁴According to B. L. C. Wailes, some species of small game actually benefitted from large-scale settlement. The removal of Indians from Mississippi, another example of white settlers' attempt to impose control over the environment, saved otters and beavers from pelt-seekers. White farmers presumably had little use for the furs. Additionally the mill ponds constructed by whites expanded their habitat. Weasels, minks, and muskrats also went unmolested along coastal creeks until the 1880s, when lumbermen, who had previously lacked the technology and markets to make profitable the exploitation of marginal timber in the marshes, extended their clear-cutting operations into their habitat. See, Wailes, Report of the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, 313-317.

had largely disappeared by 1850. Mobile and cursed with a taste for hog meat and beef, wolves adapted with ease to man's first encroachments by moving into and out of areas in search of food. Cattlemen, who allowed their livestock to graze untended on the public lands of the Piney Woods, considered the eradication of wolves their first order of business. Using deep pits covered by a trap door and baited with meat to capture them, herdsman began their attack on the wolf population. Farmers sometimes organized small parties to hunt the animals. In response to an increase in human and domestic animal encounters with wolves, the legislature in 1837 and 1838 authorized several counties to pay five dollar bounties for wolf scalps. By 1841, the wolf population had been so decimated that the legislature rescinded the laws. Even though the threat of wolf attacks lessened as the Civil War approached, the wolf's howl and its pack nature continued to stir fear among rural folk and inspire instructive folk tales. Every child in the state, perhaps the nation as well, knew that stripping off clothes would temporarily distract pursuing wolves. Of course, fiddle music lulled the animals to sleep, provided the musician first found a perch safely above the ground.²⁵

²⁵Ibid., 315; Robert J. Baxter, "Cattle Raising in Early Mississippi: Reminiscences," Mississippi Folklore Register 10 (Spring 1976): 6-7. For the laws which offered bounties
(continued...)

In Mississippians' imagination, the black bear, whose territory at one time included every canebrake in the state, was unrivaled for its ferocity and appetite. But, in fact, the bear was docile and lethargic unless provoked. The black bear's reputation for meanness in part permitted farmers an excuse to hunt the species; its size offered them a large target. According to Wailes, a single hunting expedition into the country between Natchez and the Homochitto River recorded one hundred bear kills. Some hunted bears for their meat. At Delta hotels, bear meat, especially when taken in the spring before too much fat had been accumulated, appeared on the menu. Bear hides and oil were highly prized accoutrements for the boudoir; in youthful exuberance, Amanda Worthington looked forward to "slicking up" with bear lard upon the return of a household hunting party. In the parlor, bear skin rugs and chair backing were prized features in rural cabins until the twentieth century. Generally, however, Mississippians killed bears as a preventative measure to protect corn and stock. For a brief period prior to 1860, Bolivar

²⁵(...continued)
for wolf scalps, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (1824-1838), 756-819. Counties permitted to offer bounties included: Adams, Attala, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Issaquena, Lafayette, Marshall, Neshoba, Newton, Panola, Tippah, Tishomingo, Washington, and Yalobusha. The repeal of the law can be found in Laws of the State of Mississippi (1841), 125. For folklore about evading wolves, see J. F. H. Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906): 533-538.

County hunters, one resident estimated, took an average of eight bears a day. Nevertheless, Bolivar countians faced a seemingly endless challenge from bears. As farmers cleared more and more land, decreasing bear habitat, their appetites for corn and hogs increased. Starving bears during a postbellum outbreak of grain pilfering in Bolivar, prompted farmers to forego corn cultivation for two years. Accounts of bears raiding corn cribs and fields and carrying slain hogs under their arms testify to the deleterious effect that farming and clear-cutting forests had on their habitat and also to the hardships, however temporary, farmers paradoxically suffered when they tried to transform the wilderness into improved acreage.²⁶

By the turn of the twentieth century, the population of native wildlife had been decimated. Man had won. Many canebrakes, swamps, and forests were gone; gone with them were the days of large community deer, wolf, and bear hunts. All that remained in some areas was the solitary farmer jealously guarding his crops and family against depredations less real than imagined. Johnny Parrott, a

²⁶Amanda Worthington to Albert D. Worthington, 27 October 1857, Amanda Dougherty Worthington Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. [Hereafter cited as UNC]. Wailes, Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, 317; Baxter, "Cattle Raising," 8; Hammett, "Pioneer Days in East Bolivar," in History of Bolivar County, 179-180; Mrs. L. A. Little, "Sketch of Life in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 165-167; Ireys, "Autobiography," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 12.

lumberman and hunter, noticed the dwindling supply of wildlife in the Delta of the late 1880s. Most species had retreated into the densest canebrakes, and only burning the reeds in preparation for cutting timber brought out the small numbers that remained. As much as his lumbering operations, Parrot's style of hunting contributed to the demise of wildlife. Every animal that fled his fires became a target. Fortunately for the animals, he was not a particularly accurate shot.²⁷ By the twentieth century, so barren of large mammals had the forests become that a single sighting of a predator created a stir in communities; overnight the animal would obtain legendary size. Yet "tigers", bears, wolf packs, and panthers ten feet long lived almost exclusively in the minds of Mississippians and in areas of the nation that retained more of their backcountry pasts than the Deep South.²⁸

²⁷24 November 1887, 31 October 1888, Johnny Parrott Diary, MDAH. Some species completely disappeared before the 1880s: wild pigeons reportedly made their last appearance in the Delta about 1870. See, J. C. Burrus, "My Recollections of the Early Days of Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 104.

²⁸Several folktales originating in the early twentieth century celebrate exceedingly large wildcats. See, Beulah M. D'Olive Price, "The Legendary panther of the Forks of Hatchie," Mississippi Folklore Register 5 (Spring 1971): 15-18; Ovid S. Vickers, "The Stratton Booger," Mississippi Folklore Register 4 (Fall 1970): 92-93; Burrus, "Recollections of Early Days of Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 104.

Clearing canebrakes and forests and draining swamp-lands in preparation for agricultural and commercial pursuits not only affected native wildlife. The very destroyers of the environment often felt the ill affects of the world into which they trod. Mississippi was a sickly society; it was as William Faulkner once said, "a land primed for fatality and already cursed with it." Johnny Parrott, who lived in the part of the world that Faulkner later portrayed in his fiction, agreed that death seemed to stalk at every turn: "It takes a man with the constitution like an alligator to stand this old bottom."²⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century, settlers were exposed to a variety of illnesses, many of them directly related to qualities of a physical world more akin to Latin American jungles than to the environment of states north of the Mason-Dixon line. These qualities remained outside the realm of control until the dawn of the twentieth century, but ironically, even as the environment fell under humankind's command, new diseases incubated in an emerging modernized Mississippi struck. Efforts to draw the pathological world under humankind's control began in earnest in 1869 when the Mississippi Medical Association called for the draining of swamplands as a panacea of good

²⁹William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (1936; reprint, New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1964), 24. 7 March 1887, Johnny Parrott Diary, MDAH.

health. Perhaps better than most Mississippians, physicians in the association realized that eliminating the breeding ground of mosquitoes would create a healthier place to live. But, proposing such measures proved much easier than implementing them. Fostering a healthy environment also necessitated an educated population, trained physicians, lifestyle changes, dietary changes, and improved sanitary practices. Lacking medical professionals and knowledge of epidemiology and cursed by nature with an abundance of mosquitoes and dank swamps, Mississippians, annually experienced the perils of typhoid fever, malaria, yellow fever, intestinal parasites, small pox, measles, dysentery, and whooping cough. While some regions of the state had better fortune than others in preserving the health of their citizens, diseases associated with the backcountry visited most of Mississippi on a regular basis throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰

³⁰For a survey of epidemics and efforts to combat them, see Marshall Scott Legan, "The Evolution of Public Health Services in Mississippi, 1865-1910" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mississippi, 1968), 18-19, 35-61, 74, 109-113. For evidence of the variety of deadly affects of disease, see William D. Gale to Mrs. Dudley Gale, 16 May 1845, Gale and Polk Family Papers, UNC, who noted the prevalence of scarlet fever, measles, and "black tongue" in Vicksburg; and Chandler, Journal and Speeches, 53, in which he mentions the childhood deaths of five siblings. See, too, Frank E. Smith, The Yazoo River (New York and Toronto: Rhinehart and Co., 1954), 243-245. Coleman, Choctaw County Chronicles, 59-60. To survive in mosquito infested areas, a healthy dose of fatalism helped. During a malaria epidemic, Henry Waring Ball neatly pressed and identified by specie and (continued...)

Despite the obvious absence of a healthful environment, some residents, especially those in the Piney Woods, boasted of the recuperative affect Mississippi had on them. Daniel Kelly, living in Wayne County, bragged that his health had never been better. "I believe that I am as full of flesh as you ever saw me, I used to be subject to severe colds, and coughs in Carolina, but since I came to this country I have had no cough, and but one very slight cold." His own good health notwithstanding, Kelly confessed that the rest of his family continued to suffer as they did in Carolina from frequent bowel complaints and general sickness. William Bullock too believed Mississippi a healthy state. Traveling in the lower Delta, one of the state's most unhealthy regions, Bullock mistakenly proclaimed Natchez a healthy city. It, however, lay too close to the unhealthy climate of New Orleans, he said, to provide a safe haven during epidemics.³¹

³⁰(...continued)
 genus a mosquito that had bitten him. See Ball Diaries, 12 August 1909, MDAH.

³¹Daniel Kelly to James Kelly, 29 February 1845, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke; William Bullock, Sketch of a Journey Through the Western States of North America, From New Orleans, By the Mississippi, Ohio, City of Cincinnati, and Falls of Niagara, and New York in 1827 (London: John Miller, 1827), 250. For other accounts of Mississippi as a healthy environment, see Claiborne, "Trip Through the Piney Woods," passim; [?] to Samuel Smith Downey, 27 February 1836, Samuel Smith Downey Papers, Duke.

Bullock's opinion that serious illnesses were contagious repeated a widely held belief and reflected the population's ignorance of epidemiology. While the lack of medical knowledge and technology existed in antebellum New York and New England, as well as the South, in the South, and in Mississippi particularly, a pronounced dearth of knowledge exacerbated the unhealthy nature of the environment. Most anyone who desired to advertise himself or herself as a healer could do so with little training and little fear of challenges. Traditional doctors who administered large doses of drugs, homeopathic practitioners who preferred small doses in order to reproduce symptoms, and steam doctors--Thomasonians--who prescribed botanical cures and cayenne pepper steam baths, practiced their crafts under no real supervision. In an effort to eliminate bogus practitioners, the state implemented regulatory practices in 1824, which required physicians to be licensed and to practice in one of the state's two districts. But, the law neither imposed standards for admission to the medical profession nor required formal training. Under these laws, the possibility remained that fraudulent and deadly physicians might continue to practice. Considering the hit or miss nature of medical

treatments, it is no wonder that many Mississippians believed "the fool of the family must be a doctor."³²

Epidemiology and the treatment of diseases were at best improperly understood. Unlike the tangible teeth-gnashing ferocity of forest-dwelling predators, which bolted at the sight of gun-toting men and which obligingly fell victim to men's traps, diseases were oblivious to most of the preventive barriers erected to halt their progress. They often struck quickly and without warning. Typically, remedies and cures native to rural Mississippi evinced an ignorance of etiology and represented little more than wishful thinking informed by strong beliefs in Providence and superstition. Rural societies everywhere create their own cures, and backcountry Mississippi was no exception.

At least four types of home remedies circulated in the state. Some were based on intuition and

³²Quoted, Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1886-1887 (Jackson: R. H. Henry, 1888), 4. Greene Chandler recalled that in antebellum Mississippi "doctors were few and remedies were scarce." See, Chandler, Journal and Speeches, 53. See, also, Laws of the State of Mississippi (1824-1838), 24, 109; Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services," 81. For a brief account of Thomasonian treatments, see Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 78-79. On steam doctors practicing in Mississippi, see, Thomas Shackelford, Proceedings of the Citizens of Madison County, Mississippi and Livingston, in July 1835, In Relation to the Trial and Punishment of Several Individuals Implicated in a Contemplated Insurrection in the State (Jackson: Mayson and Smoot, 1836), 21.

superstition, which occasionally suggested an understanding of the root causes of a particular disease. For instance, in the Piney Woods, folk medicine practitioners associated outbreaks of malaria with the presence of stagnant water. Accordingly, they told their clients to cut no trees from the vicinity of their homes to avoid creating stump holes where water could accumulate. Others, who offered the same advice, argued that pine needles absorbed wind-borne malaria germs. Plowing ground a good distance from a residence would also keep malaria away. Should the fever strike, steeped dogwood bark spiked with whiskey was advised. Alcohol appeared regularly as a general cure for various fevers, including yellow fever, and some slave owners administered small doses of brandy or rum to their field hands to ward off the chills that inevitably followed constant work in the early morning damp.³³

Some cures were based solely in superstition: a buckeye carried in the pocket would ward off rheumatism; blacks in the Delta took doses of red oak bark soaked in

³³Perry A. Snyder, "Remedies of the Pineywoods Pioneers," Mississippi Folklore Register 7 (Spring 1973): 11-12. On the use of alcohol in the treatment of one disease, see, Marshall Scott Legan, "A Nineteenth Century Treatment of Yellow Fever," Mississippi Folklore Register 6 (Fall 1972): 91-93. For an interesting twist on the power of buckeyes to prevent certain death caused by fever, see, Kathryn Tucker Windham, Count Those Buzzards! Stamp Those Grey Mules! (privately published, 1979), 27.

water to protect against rheumatism. Other cures seemed completely nonsensical. Piney Woodsmen drank the blood of a freshly killed bull or warm milk from a heifer, preferably one with its first calf, to treat tuberculosis. Some cures curiously combined science and superstition. Since the antebellum period, quinine, a solution made from cinchona bark, had been used to prevent malarial fevers. Usage of the drug became widespread in the last half of the nineteenth century. After taking the medicine, rural Mississippians hung the empty blue quinine bottles on trees and shrubs outside their doors to warn evil spirits that the residents had been protected from the fever.³⁴

In some quarters, even commonplace ailments remained as mysterious as their cures. In 1853, Joseph Lightsey mourned the loss of a young nephew who died of an unfamiliar disease: "My sister Susanah lost one of her sons[,] a very interesting little fellow[.] [H]e died two weeks ago of a disease called pneumonia." Diseases also befuddled educated members of the planter class. In 1853,

³⁴Windham, Count Those Buzzards! Stamp Those Grey Mules, 27, recounts that rural southerners ascribed great power to buckeyes: "If you carry a buckeye, you'll never die drunk!" See, too, Smith, Yazoo River, 246; Snyder, "Remedies of the Pineywoods Pioneers," 12-13; Ellen Orr, "The Bottle Tree," Mississippi Folklore Register 3 (Winter 1969): 109-111. On bottle trees, see, Windham, Count Those Buzzards! Stamp Those Grey Mules, 27-28, who suggests that the use of blue plastic bleach bottles in place of Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles, which long ago replaced quinine bottles as talismans, bodes ill for the perpetuation of older generations' love of bottle trees.

B. L. C. Wailes reported a "great excitement" set loose in Grenada when small pox killed a man at nearby Coffeetown. On the following day, when Wailes departed the latter village with the dead man in his coach, he nervously watched the man, concerned that the disease might leap upon him. Riding beside the corpse, he said, was "a risk which I would rather have avoided, although a firm believer in the efficacy of vaccination, and having been vaccinated myself after arriving at manhood." Until the turn of the century, advances in the science of etiology proceeded at a snail's pace. Even with improvements in medical knowledge and practice, residents exhibited little enthusiasm for embracing the most rudimentary measures of good hygiene to prevent disease. Dr. G. W. Purnell reported that even though Hazelhurst suffered from a variety of illnesses and that townspeople contentedly looked upon their neighbors' deaths and sicknesses as inexorable occurrences: "Everyone seems lithargic [sic], and as long as there are no rumors of yellow fever, are willing to go on in the old beaten track, trusting in Providence until an epidemic threatens, and then thinking to their powers of locomotion."³⁵ Yet the popularity of miracle cures

³⁵Joseph Lightsey to Cornelius Lightsey, 1 September 1853, Joseph Lightsey Diary, MDAH. 4, 5 June 1853, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, MDAH. Purnell quoted in Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1880-1881 (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1882), 37.

(Winslow's Soothing Syrup for infants and a variety of bottled cures for women's ailments among them) attests that Mississippians did not wait idly for illnesses to strike. The prevalence of such cures also testifies to the gullibility of a population dumbfounded by the root causes of diseases.³⁶

Due in part to a dearth of statistical data, no research has been undertaken to estimate the rate of mortality among Mississippi's early settlers. Using the mortality schedules of the United States census, however, a rough estimate of deaths attributable to particular causes can be calculated. It should be remembered that because of the rudimentary understanding of pathology, errors in attribution of the cause of death likely occurred frequently. Nevertheless, the mortality schedule of the 1860 census offers a vague understanding of the leading causes of death. On the eve of the Civil War, Mississippians most frequently died of pneumonia, typhoid

³⁶For an account of the "electioneering medicine vendor" and his products, see Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1896-1897 (Jackson: Clarion Ledger Printing Establishment, 1897), 71; Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services," 80. Products like Winslow's Soothing Syrup generally contained high quantities of alcohol or cocaine, sometimes both. Other patent medicines, especially treatments for female complaints, made extraordinary claims. Paxtine's Toilet Antiseptic, for example, advertised itself as a "local treatment of female ills, curing all inflammation and discharges, wonderful as a cleansing vaginal douche, for sore throat, nasal catarrh, as a mouth wash, and to remove tartar and whiten the teeth." See Batesville, Weekly Panolian, 13 November 1902.

fever, diarrhea, dysentery, consumption, scarlet fever, measles, and whooping cough. Pneumonia killed by far more Mississippians than any other ailment, 178 per 100,000 people, testifying in part to the absence of trained medical practitioners and effective medication. By comparison, typhoid fever, a communicable disease and the second leading cause of death, claimed only 93 people per 100,000. Diphtheria and croup, both primarily childhood diseases, and consumption took just over 60 per 100,000. For a variety of reasons, southerners had long been concerned with bowel movements and the purification of their digestive tracts as a means of regulating their health. Poor sanitary conditions and tainted water supplies drawn from open cisterns surely contributed to anxieties about intestinal biliousness, as did the concomitant prevalence of diarrhea and dysentery. In 1860, the former affliction killed 48 persons per 100,000 and the latter 31. The good news for Mississippians in 1860 was that deaths attributable to measles, scarlet fever, and small pox, due largely to the availability of vaccines, were on the wane, though they continued to kill a small number each year.³⁷ (See Table 1.2).

³⁷The mortality rate for various diseases was based on data found in the U. S. Census, Statistics of the United States Including Mortality, Property, Etc., in 1860 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), 35.

(Table 1.2)
Mortality in Mississippi:
1860, 1880, 1914;
Deaths Per 100,000

Disease	1860	1880	1914	1906-1910*
Pneumonia	178.2	160.5	78.3	103.0
Typhoid Fever @	92.9	-----	32.9	25.6
Diphtheria/Croup	60.6	51.2	10.2	22.4
Diarrhea/Enteritis	48.3	39.0	47.3	122.9
Scarlet Fever	40.0	.5	.2	10.6
Influenza #	1.7	-----	9.6	16.4
Tuberculosis #	63.7	113.5	131.0	168.7
Malaria @	-----	92.7	54.2	2.6
Whooping Cough @	42.3	29.7	13.3	11.5
Dysentery @	31.2	27.5	15.5	6.5
Measles @	20.7	11.6	17.3	10.8
Syphilis #@++	1.0	3.2	11.6	5.4
Homicide #@	2.9	5.1	22.3	5.9

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistics of the United States Including Mortality, Property, and Etc., in 1860 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), 35. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Report on the Mortality and Vital Statistics of the United States as Returned at the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), 258-269; Report of the Board of Health of Mississippi From June 1, 1913 to June 30, 1915 (Memphis: Paul L. Douglas and Company, 1915), 61-63.

*The rates offered in the last column represent the average death rate by disease for the U.S. Census Bureau region that included Mississippi.

++The calculation of deaths attributable to syphilis in 1880 included all venereal diseases.

#Number of deaths attributable to these diseases increased between 1880 and 1914.

@Number of deaths in 1914 exceeds the annual average of the census registration area, 1906-1910.

After the war, mortality rates for most diseases fell sharply. Scarlet fever, for instance, had almost disappeared by 1914, and deaths due to typhoid fever diminished by two thirds. The death rate attributable to whooping cough decreased by 60 percent; diphtheria and croup claimed a fraction of lives in 1914. Better medical diagnosis and treatment caused deaths due to pneumonia to plummet from the level recorded in 1860. Additionally, data gathered from the Deep South indicated that fewer Mississippians died of the above mentioned diseases than did their nearby contemporaries.³⁸ (See Table 1.2).

These cheery figures, however, somewhat belie the serious health problems that plagued Mississippi in the postbellum era. While deaths attributable to diseases of the backcountry fell off, the diseases themselves often persisted. Furthermore, social changes brought about by the first stages of modernization in Mississippi exacerbated some health problems. The emergence of cities offers an illustration of this phenomena, for it was in the cities that epidemics spread. Epidemics of smallpox and cholera struck the state in 1866; one-half of the population of Natchez, Jackson, and Byram caught yellow fever in 1867; small pox returned to Vicksburg in 1870 and prompted the city to offer free vaccinations to indigents;

³⁸For the 1914 mortality rate, see Report of the Board of Health, 1913-1915, 61-63.

yellow fever returned in 1871; a cholera epidemic accompanied the 1873 Delta flood; smallpox and yellow fever landed a double blow in 1878.³⁹

Although yellow fever epidemics regularly visited the state until 1897, and random outbreaks occurred even later, the 1878-1879 epidemic represented the state's worst encounter with the disease. The fever apparently broke out in New Orleans in May 1878, and by mid-July, Mississippi reported its first cases. Contemporaries argued that yellow fever was unwittingly transported by sufferers from New Orleans, a city prone to outbreaks. But, asserting such a claim is defensible only if the fallacious method of reasoning post hoc, propter hoc is used. The prevalence of lowlands and bodies of stagnant water in Mississippi, breeding grounds for the vectors of the disease--mosquitoes--deserve credit for causing yellow fever epidemics.⁴⁰

Unsanitary conditions in small towns and cities that created pools of stagnant water also invited the fever. In a report prepared for the Mississippi State Board of Health several weeks prior to the 1878 outbreak,

³⁹Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services," 2-16. Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health for the Years 1878-1879 (Jackson: Power and Barksdale, 1879), 12-13, 37.

⁴⁰For examples of the post hoc, propter hoc fallacy, see correspondence published in the Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1878-1879, passim.

Dr. A. J. Ray chronicled the poor sanitary condition of Grenada. A drainage ditch had been recently excavated and the soil, permeated by years of sewerage, spread over the town's streets to form large mud bogs. According to Ray, city dwellers kept hog wallows in their backyards and "common town scavengers" maintained privies irregularly. When the epidemic struck, the bulk of the population fled, but not before several hundred Grenadians had been infected. Holly Springs, regarded as a sanctuary from the disease because of its altitude, also suffered greatly, recording 304 deaths. Health officials in Holly Springs blamed the town's first yellow fever epidemic on recent freshets, which had caused wells and cisterns to be filled with excrement from overflowed privies. No adequate figures on the number of deaths caused by the epidemic of 1878-79 have been collected, but coastal cities, Meridian, Jackson, Natchez, Vicksburg, and Greenville experienced large numbers of deaths and even larger numbers of infection. In fact, even the state board of health, which saw four of its fifteen members fall victim to the disease, did not escape the fever.⁴¹ The yellow fever epidemic

⁴¹Quoting, Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1878-1879, 4-5, 9-19, 41-45, 59-61, 63-64, 76-79. For a discussion of post-1879 yellow fever outbreaks, see Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services, 109-120; Biennial Report of the Board of Health of the State of Mississippi, 1899-1901 (Jackson: Clarion Ledger Printing Establishment, 1901), 5. On the epidemics of 1878-1879, (continued...)

might be considered a watershed event in Mississippi's health care history, as numerous reforms in the practice of medicine and a larger knowledge of disease and sanitation followed in its wake.⁴²

Despite improvements in the state's death rate due to infectious diseases, some ailments, which had previously barely touched the state, gained a foothold after 1890. In part, the proliferation of urban centers contributed to the spread of these diseases. Deaths per 100,000 caused by influenza, a bacterial infection of the lungs, increased about 85 percent between 1860 and 1914. The mortality rate for tuberculosis almost doubled, and syphilis caused almost eleven times more deaths in 1914

⁴¹(...continued)

see, Marshall Scott Legan, "Mississippi and the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878-1879," Journal of Mississippi History 33 (August 1971): 199-218; Mrs. W. A. Anderson, "A Chapter in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1909): 223-236. Sanitary conditions in Greenville were no better than in Grenada. "Green scum" covered drainage ditches, rotting sidewalks abounded, and broken wagons jutted out of the muddy streets. Disease-carrying mosquitoes found innumerable place to hide. In 1878, the fever took 33 percent of the town's population, including its mayor and entire council. See James Robertshaw, "Greenville in its Early Days," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 85, 89. On the fever and the social disruption it caused in Grenada, see J. H. Campbell to John M. Stone, 21 September, 1878, Campbell to Stone, 24 September 1878, and Dr. J. D. McRae to Stone, 19 September 1878, Governors' Papers, Record Group 27, MDAH. [Hereafter cited as Governors' Papers].

⁴²For a discussion of these reforms, see Chapter 8.

than it had in 1860.⁴³ (See Table 1.2). In cities like Jackson, Vicksburg, Greenville, and Natchez, crowded quarters occupied by transients and working-class families, generally on the outskirts of town and in the case of the latter three cities near the Mississippi River, served as incubators of disease. Prostitution and the illegal liquor trade flourished in the areas, as did, according to some accounts, the use of cocaine and opium. While the health of residents living on the respectable side of towns benefitted from drainage and street improvements, those trapped in filthy working-class neighborhoods rarely enjoyed the fruits of expanded city services. But, as Dr. B. F. Ward observed, the maladies of the working poor were not relegated to their quarters: "Out of these hot beds of syphilis, scrofula and consumption, come the cooks, nurses, chamber-maids, washer-women and carriage drivers for the white person."⁴⁴

⁴³Report of the Board of Health, 1913-1915, 61-63. Dr. B. A. Vaughn of Columbus traced two cases of diphtheria to improperly installed indoor plumbing, lending credence to the notion that some afflictions stemmed from urban lifestyles. See Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1882-1883 (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1883), 78-79.

⁴⁴Ward quoted, Biennial Report of the Board of Health of the State of Mississippi From September 30, 1903 to September 30, 1905 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1906), 6. On the development of separate and unequal housing and services, see W. W. Woollard, "History of the Liquor Fight in the Early Days of Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 215-217. On the spread of typhoid fever in an urban tenement house, see Biennial (continued...)

Poor living and working conditions, chiefly the absence of sound sanitary practices, contributed to the sickliness of lower-class city residents. One of the most striking examples of backward sanitary practices occurred in the meat preparation industry. Abuses in the industry attracted the nation's attention at the turn of the century, and in Mississippi, conditions resembled the well-documented ones in Chicago's stockyards. According to the state board of health, slaughterhouse operators discarded carcasses in streams which indirectly provided water to poor neighborhoods. The meat itself that city dwellers purchased received improper care during processing. Offal and disease originating at slaughterhouses easily made their way into communities. Even though a slaughter house near Arcola, for example, carried on numerous practices detrimental to the health of the community, the town was unincorporated, and the Circuit Court offered town folk their only recourse. Ironically, and perhaps not surprisingly, the circuit judge had for some time been too ill to

⁴⁴(...continued)

Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1880-1881, 94. On the use of drugs, see W. T. Balfour in ibid., 65-66, who observed that in Warren County "opium eating has become of late a fearful habit among our people." All types of people, he said--"lewd women," "men of loose morals," and "many refined ladies and gentlemen"--took part in the practice. See, too, 5 June 1903, Henry Waring Ball Diaries, MDAH. On the outlawing of cocaine, see Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services," 130.

conduct proceedings.⁴⁵ As the turn-of-the-century approached, concerns about unsanitary practices increased among physicians and reformers. Attitudes about health common to the general population, however, made eliminating unhealthy practices a never-ending struggle, even as Mississippi took on the trappings of the modern world.

Despite the strides made to bring the environment under control, some features of backcountry Mississippi survived until the dawn of the twentieth century. Habits of mind generally associated with the frontier enjoyed long careers. The persistence of communitarian values especially suggested the state's backcountry past.

Communitarian values appeared in two guises. First, they undergirded corporate activities. House raisings, hog killings, shucking bees, hunting expeditions, quilting bees, and assistance with crops--in part ways of life carried from other regions of the country and in part a response to dispersed settlement--informed the rhythm of backcountry life.⁴⁶ Such rituals played an important role

⁴⁵For an account of sanitary conditions in the meat-packing industry, see Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1884-1885, (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1885), 116-117, 119.

⁴⁶For accounts of communal rituals, see Nicholas P. Hardeman, Shucks, Shocks, and Hominy Blocks: Corn as A Way of Life in Pioneer America (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 58. Joseph Lightsey participated in a variety of communal rituals, including community dinners, house raisings, log rollings, and public
(continued...)

in disrupting the monotony of day-to-day existence and gave Mississippians a sense of shared experience. More importantly, in the antebellum period, communitarian values defined individuals' relationship with the state; the values, for instance, charged communities, not governments, with responsibility for building roads, clearing river channels, and constructing levees. In a competitive market economy, it is a wonder that such values survived. Their persistence testified to the lure of tradition and to Mississippians' reluctance to embrace fully the market economy even as they benefitted from it. Yet communitarian values slowly ceased to direct the progress of internal improvements as Mississippians, ever-increasingly concerned with material progress rather than protecting frontier notions of individual autonomy, came to question their worth. Before the Civil War, planters turned to the state for aid in building levees; afterwards they sought assistance in clearing river channels; by 1900, the last vestiges of communitarian values were removed from

⁴⁶(...continued)

baths. See Lightsey Diary, 8 January 1848, 18 February 1848, 23 February 1850, 8 October 1850, 30 June 1850, 30 November 1850, MDAH. Colonel Thomas Dabney, a Virginian by birth, offended two of his neighbors before learning the importance of communal rituals. First, he arrived at a house raising with twenty slaves; second, he directed from horseback a retinue of slaves laboring to save from weeds another neighbor's cotton. See Susan Dabney Smedes, Memoirs of a Southern Planter (Baltimore: Cushing and Bailey, 1888), 67.

road-building laws. In the postbellum period, as each corporate ritual in turn fell victim to the market-economy mentality the death knell of the backcountry sounded.

The environmental forces that made possible Mississippi's antebellum agricultural wealth also made travel along the state's highways a nightmare. To Mississippians, roads, however poor, served their purpose if they provided routes to markets, towns, and neighbors. Accordingly roads remained little more than mud bogs and dust bowls until the twentieth century.

Roads in the South were notoriously bad and often the subject of tall tales. According to one popular story, a traveller upon seeing a hat in the road, discovered beneath it a man astride his horse; the rider, after thanking the man for his concern about the apparently misplaced hat, expressed his pleasure in having found a good stretch of road, one covered with mud only ten feet deep. With slightly less hyperbole, an old Mississippi adage suggested much the same: if mud did not seep over the top of a mounted horseman's boot, travellers judged the road "a middling good" one.⁴⁷ Contemporaries verified that travel along common roads was difficult. Samuel

⁴⁷Smith, Yazoo River 47. While mud ten feet deep might have been an exaggeration, J. F. H. Claiborne complained that his horse sank "fetlock deep" in sand on the road between Ellisville and Augusta. See Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," 518.

Agnew noted in his diary that it took two bone-jarring days of riding in a wagon to travel from his father's Tippah County farm to Holly Springs. Despite the discomfort, he considered covering thirty miles a day excellent progress. The difficulty of travel may in part explain why Agnew, and other rural folk, infrequently went to town. Stage coaches offered a smoother ride than common wagons but did not protect from all dangers. George Rogers, traveling from Washington, Mississippi to Woodville, found little comfort in a coach. As water passed through the vehicle, Rogers sat on his feet to preserve his shoes. Fearing for his life, he also opened the windows to allow himself an escape route if the coach overturned on the boggy road. Gustavus A. Henry, likewise experienced a slow, wet journey while travelling on a road near the Bogue Chitto River. Distracted by having to ride with his feet on the seat, Henry's inattention permitted a thief to steal a trunk of clothes attached to the back of his rented carriage.⁴⁸

In 1822, the essential elements of the state's road building law entered the code book. The law, apparently taking its cue from federal legislation designed to

⁴⁸12 January 1853, Samuel A. Agnew Diaries, UNC; George Rogers, Memoranda of the Experiences, Labors, and Travels of a Universalist Preacher (Cincinnati: John A. Gurley, 1845), 275; Gustavus A. Henry to Marion Henry, 25 November 1849, Gustavus A. Henry Papers, UNC.

facilitate the movement of troops, required that county courts appoint within each militia captain's district a Board of Commissioners to supervise road work. A clerk hired by the commissioners handled administrative tasks, and an overseer monitored actual labor. The overseer, according to the law, had at his disposal for up to six days each year all males between the ages of 16 and 50, except ministers, students, teachers, and mill and ferry operators. Failure to answer the call to work resulted in a six dollar fine; failure to serve as overseer when called carried a forty dollar fine. The law offered overseers few instructions and expected little in return. Roads had to be at least twenty feet wide and causeways sixteen feet; mile posts and directional signs were required at regular intervals; roots and stumps had to be leveled to within six inches of the roadbed. Not every board of commissioners followed the law to the letter. When building one of the county's first roads, Bolivar County commissioners gave their overseer no instructions other than to make it "well blazed."⁴⁹ The requirements of the law notwithstanding, many roads were, in fact, little more than well-worn paths that farmers infrequently maintained with their scrapers and mules.

⁴⁹Cordelia McNees West, W. B. Roberts, and Florence S. Ogden, "Roads in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 63. For road-building laws, see Code (1823), 350-357.

During the antebellum era, this system of road building served the state adequately. Yet, with roads constructed by untrained hands and designed to provide transportation for staple crops, the best roads were often private ones leading to planter's homes. Recalling post-bellum roads around Greenville, James Robertshaw said that those near planters' homes were far superior to those leading into the backcountry. Only "clefts in the foliage" marked the beginning of the latter. Planters rarely performed road work themselves, opting instead to pay the small fine for not doing so or, as generally happened, making certain that their slaves received the call to labor. Writing in the Natchez Free Trader in 1846, "R" chastised his fellow planters for failing to do their part and for allowing yeomen to construct roads better suited to their common wagons than to planters' fine carriages and horses. Even though county courts complied with planters wishes by assigning them administrative positions as road commissioners and overseers, these small tasks proved irksome to some. Others did their civic duty without comment. Robert B. Alexander of Marshall County answered the road overseer's call in February 1854 and worked a part of the road near his home. In May, a busy month for planters, one Mr. Adcock, the road overseer, returned to the neighborhood and called for

all of Alexander's slaves, as well as his father's, to work the road.⁵⁰

According to state law, the responsibility for road building lay with county Boards of Police (later Boards of Supervisors) who responded to requests made by road commissioners and overseers. Commissioners, of course, chose to improve the paths that farmers most often used in their never-ending search for land and markets. Quite unsurprisingly, a comparison of two maps, one circa 1830 and one dated 1852, suggests that most roads led to centers of trade. In the early 1830s, few highways traversed the eastern half of the state; those that existed led to Natchez and to New Orleans via Jackson, Monticello, Columbia and Madisonville, Louisiana. When the small number of farmers who lived in the eastern counties wished to send their wares to market, they more often depended on the Tombigbee and Pascagoula Rivers rather than roads. Both maps indicate that New Orleans, Memphis, Natchez, Jackson, and Columbus were the largest centers of trade; by 1852, Vicksburg and Mobile, too, served as major hubs. During

⁵⁰James Robertshaw, "Greenville in Its Early Days," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 81-82; Natchez, Mississippi Free Trader, 14 October 1846. 30 January 1854, 10 May 1854, Robert B. Alexander Diary and Account Ledger, MDAH. For accounts of planters working roads, see 29 February 1860, Susan S. Darden Diaries, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; 21 January 1853, Robert and James Gordon Diaries, MDAH. Also, see, 20 June 1856, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, MDAH, for a planter who tried to convince county officials to appoint his overseer to the board of commissioners in his stead.

the late antebellum period, the number of roads increased exponentially, and the goal of connecting rural farmers with markets took on added urgency as the population expanded. The 1852 map suggests also that the market economy, not unlike a giant spider web with strands stretching to distant objects, extended its influence into previously remote areas. As these areas, connected as they were to centers of trade--Memphis for farmers in the northwest, Mobile for those in the east, New Orleans, the dream market, reigned over all--fell into the web of the market economy, residents built more highways and towns to serve their growing needs. One consequence of the increased number of roads was that small towns, such as Monticello and Columbia, which had once served as minor markets and weigh stations for farmers enroute to markets, were bypassed when new roads opened more direct routes to larger centers of trade.⁵¹

⁵¹On natural roads formed by dry river beds and ridge lines, see, Claiborne, "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," 510-511; Baird, View of Mississippi, 247. Maps used include, Thomas Cowperthwait and Co., "A New Map of Mississippi With its Roads and Distances," 1852, MDAH. Also, see the large foldout map in Samuel Augustus Mitchell, Mitchell's Traveller's Guide Through the United States, Containing the Principal Cities, Towns, and Etc. Alphabetically Arranged; Together with the Stage, Steamboat, Canal, and Railroads with the Distances, in Miles, from Place to Place (Philadelphia: Mitchell and Hinman, 1836). On the powerful sway that the international market at New Orleans held over Mississippi, see Mrs. H. B. Theobald, "Reminiscences of Greenville," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 54, who recalled that men "spoke of going 'to town' as if New Orleans were only a mile distant."

While communitarian values lay at the heart of road building laws, an inherent conflict between such values and a desire to achieve financial success entered into the road building process during the population boom of the 1830s. Individuals and companies sometimes eschewed the communitarian values that undergirded road building laws by constructing by-ways and charging users tolls. The state recognized the toll roads when it granted charters and privileges to the builders. The Yocknapatafa Turnpike and Bridge Company, for example, received a charter in 1837 to build a road between Coffeetown and Oxford, and David Harkins, who bridged the Yocknapatafa River in north-central Mississippi, received a ten-year charter and the right to collect tolls. The men who built these roads evinced more interest in making money than in communitarian values, an attitude that the state sanctioned it when approved the toll pikes. The Holly Springs and Mississippi River Turnpike Company even received state authorization to sell stock. The speculative boom of the 1830s, however, ended in an economic depression. In the following decade, the state curtailed the number of charters granted road-building companies. With the exception of taxing privileges occasionally offered Delta counties, the state's involvement in road building ended.

Mississippi returned to the plan inherited from its days as a frontier state.⁵²

For seventy years, roads were built under the system established in 1822 with but few changes. Yet, even the minuscule antebellum changes in the law suggested Mississippians' willingness to exchange their communitarian values for more efficient road-building laws. As early as 1848, specially designated road districts in each county replaced militia districts as the unit of organization, indicating that the state ceased to view roads as primarily for the use of the military. The 1848 law also enabled individuals to avoid calls to work the roads by providing farm implements and slaves to operate them. The 1871 law code raised to ten the number of days one might be required to work and defined a day as a full eight hours.⁵³

The most substantive changes to the law came about between 1871 and 1892. While men who previously refused to work on the roads had been subject to a small fine, the

⁵²Laws of the State of Mississippi (1824-1838), 719-720, 802-805, 821-822; ibid., (1840), 206-208, 297-303; ibid., (1841), 163-173. For laws granting specific Delta counties taxing privileges to build roads, see ibid., (1857), 9.

⁵³Code of Mississippi: Being an Analytical Compilation of the Public and General Statutes of the Territory and State From 1789 to 1840 (Jackson: Price and Fall, 1848), 252-254. [Hereafter cited as Code (1848)]. The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi. . . (Jackson: Alcorn and Fisher, 1871), 511-520.

amended law allowed them to pay the overseer a five dollar commutation fee. Adopting a policy of commutation permitted wealthy planters and businessmen to escape their communal responsibilities without being stigmatized as slackers or foes of communitarian values. Additionally, boards of road commissioners turned over their duties to boards of supervisors, the chief administrative body of each county, which could in turn, according to the 1892 code, contract out road maintenance to specialized construction firms for two-year periods. In a curious combination of communitarian ideals and concern for middle-class interests, contractors could demand citizens to join in road work and also collect the commutation fee. If the amount of labor and the money raised through commutation proved insufficient to meet a county's needs, then for the first time state law allowed the separate counties to levy a tax of up to one mill. Finally, by 1892, the law forbade road builders from using convicts in conjunction with communal road workers. Presumably the law referred to county prisoners since the Constitution of 1890 ended the leasing of state prisoners.⁵⁴ By the last decade of the

⁵⁴The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1880), 245-261. [Hereafter cited as Code (1880)]; The Annotated Code of the General Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce, 1892), 866-871. [Hereafter cited as Code (1892)].

nineteenth century, as the vagaries of the backcountry subsided and as professional men began their rise to prominence in the cities, the communal responsibilities that had once informed the rhythm of life in Mississippi began to wane. Responsibility for building roads passed from the control of communities and into the hands of local bureaucracies empowered by the state.

The corporate nature of road construction, however, as Bolivar County's experience illustrates, continued to some degree until the state inaugurated a highway system in 1922. Efforts to create hard surfaced roads began in the Delta in the early 1900s as professional men tried to construct better roads than the antiquated system provided. Dr. H. L. Sutherland, for example, collected donations from his neighbors to purchase hundreds of cords of hardwood. He stacked the wood on the roadway and buried it with dirt; then, he baked the piles into a hard clay-like substance. For two hundred yards, just east of Rosedale, this hard surfaced road held up for two years. In 1910, acting without county assistance, the citizens of Rosedale began covering road beds with gravel. They purchased seven train cars of gravel, which the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad transported free of charge, and covered the area around the town's depot. Forty additional cars of gravel, purchased with county funds and hauled by private subscription, extended the gravel road

to the area where Sutherland had experimented with hard surfacing. Later, Dr. J. C. Brooks paid the transportation costs for gravel needed to cover the Rosedale-Deeson road. In 1915, the county board of supervisors assumed the responsibility for road construction and created two road districts. By the end of its first year of operation, one district had been completely graveled, and the other finished its work soon afterwards.⁵⁵

Until the arrival of the professional man and the motor car, Mississippi could not fully revamp its system of road building. The persistence of communitarian values, as well as the availability of river transportation, also contributed to the state's reluctance to assume a broader role in highway construction. Keelboats, flatboats, and steamers traveled innumerable Mississippi streams. While travel along common roads was difficult, river travel was exciting, and could be dangerous. Robbers in the early days, drifting timber capable of rupturing vessels' hulls, and steamer explosions created great anxiety about journeys by boat. River transportation, especially by steamboat, attracted adventurous souls and ne'er-do-wells. Feeding the fears of travelers, the Mississippi press reported in prurient detail most every steamboat explosion occurring between New Orleans and

⁵⁵West, Roberts, and Ogden, "Roads in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 64-66.

Pittsburgh. William H. Allen, travelling from Cincinnati to New Orleans in 1832, recalled anxieties, "the dreary and tedious recurrences" of Mississippi River travel, common among steamboat passengers. Floating ice--a rarity on the lower river--explosions and groundings, and most of all, "mist, fog, dark nights. . . storms, the suddenness and terrific force of which no none who has not witnessed would hardly realize or credit" kept travellers in an excited state.⁵⁶

While some steamboats offered passengers posh accommodations, most steam-powered vessels served the cotton trade. During the 1840s, according to E. W. Gould, ten steam packets owned by planters and commission merchants and capable of carrying up to 1,500 bales, ferried goods between New Orleans and Vicksburg. Four others operated exclusively between New Orleans and Natchez. Built with shallow drafts, packets could negotiate low

⁵⁶William H. Allen, "Shadows of Steamboat Life," Knickerbocker Magazine, (August 1852): 156. For an interesting description of the "animated scene of the [Natchez] wharf" and the characters there, see, W. H. Holcombe Books, 24 January 1855, UNC: "a Thousand bales of cotton on the banks--jolly negroes and anti-know-nothing Irish rolling it about--drays, hacks, waggons, carriages crowded and jostled in the very narrow space--brilliant young ladies talking a fancy trip to 'the city'--dashing young bloods crowding up to the bar to drink luck to the new boat and unconsciously enough bad luck to themselves."

water on the Mississippi and smaller streams with ease.⁵⁷ The Mississippi was the primary waterway that cotton planters used to ship their crops, but the cotton trade on the Tombigbee River, and to a lesser extent on the Pearl River, was also important before the Civil War. Between 1839 and 1854, Aberdeen on the Tombigbee shipped on average each year some 4,400 bales of cotton. Due to the influence of a consortium of commission houses and packet captains, most of the cotton shipped down the Tombigbee went to Mobile. Visitors to Aberdeen described it as a bustling and dirty place dominated by the sights of brick warehouses, African-Americans, and steamboats. After the war, Aberdeen's share of the river trade plummeted, however, as Columbus, a city that became a prominent trading center during the Civil War, employed its position on the river and the Mobile and Ohio Railroad to cut off the small town. In 1869, Columbus shipped by river 25,000 bales of cotton, Aberdeen sent but 800. Elsewhere, too, river trade, though never totally dead, stagnated after the war, as railroads spun branch lines into remote places formally ill served by steam packets. Trade on the Pearl River, a shallow stream at the edge of the Piney Woods, never developed as fully as it did on the Tombigbee

⁵⁷E. W. Gould, Fifty Years on the Mississippi; or Gould's History of River Navigation (1899; reprint, Columbus, Ohio: Long's College Book Company, 1951), 277.

largely because area farmers cultivated little cotton. Nevertheless, efforts were made to keep the channel clear because lumbermen sent timber, charcoal, and pitch, down stream to New Orleans. After the war, the Illinois Central Railroad, running parallel to the river, captured most of the Piney Woods trade with New Orleans and Jackson; the Pearl's importance as a route to market diminished.⁵⁸ Maintaining channels on these and other rivers obviously benefitted farmers and others who shipped goods to distant market, but mostly planters benefitted from the availability of cheap and readily available transportation for their cotton. Not surprisingly then, state law provided for the protection of river channels.

The Mississippi River tended to keep itself clear of traffic-stopping obstructions, but smaller rivers needed human assistance to remain open. As with roads, responsibility for maintaining rivers devolved upon people living near them. State laws required that the legislature or county road commissioners, after an extensive

⁵⁸John E. Rodabaugh, Steamboats on the Upper Tombigbee (Hamilton, Mississippi: Tombigbee Press, 1985), 3-5, 39-41; Baird, View of the Mississippi Valley, 250. For an account of planters using the Pearl River to ship cotton in the postbellum era, see, Dr. Phillip Marshall Catchings Diary, 29 January 1885, Catchings Collection, MDAH. Small rivers like the Pearl and Tombigbee more severely suffered the affects of droughts than did the Mississippi. See, Maria Dyer Davies Diary, 25 January 1855, Davies Papers, Duke, for an account of the 1854-1855 drought and its affects on cotton and flour shipments.

survey, declare rivers and creeks navigable. Once declared navigable, rivers fell under the state's protection; sending untended timber downstream became illegal. To maintain open channels, commissioners appointed hands from a "convenient distance" to clear obstructions and to cut any tress that might fall into the river.⁵⁹ Although laws affecting the maintenance of river channels were classified with road-building laws in the various law codes and drew heavily upon well-established communitarian values, the state cast aside these values soon after the Civil War. At the insistence of Delta planters, the federal government in the late 1860s, in an attempt at sectional rapprochement, proffered funds to clean up the wasteland created by the war. Mississippi accepted with alacrity. Where river travel was concerned, anxieties about transporting crops to market supplanted communitarian values and virulent sectional animosity.

The improvement of the Yazoo River system illustrates the influence that federal assistance had upon river trade and the influence that Delta planters had upon the federal government. In the antebellum period, the Yazoo was navigable by steam packet to the Tallahatchie River, but, during the war, Federal and Confederate

⁵⁹Laws of the State of Mississippi (1824-1838), 70, 112-113, 175-175, 308-309; ibid., (1840), 118. Also, see, note 51.

troops, attempting to block river traffic by sinking vessels, literally filled the channel with debris. After 1865, planters, natives as well as Northerners who sought their fortunes in the Delta, wanted the channel cleared so that they could more easily send cotton to market. In the 1870s, the national government began removing vessels from the channel, and, in 1873, the Mississippi River and Yazoo Packet Company began operating on the recently reopened river. Preceding by a decade the Delta boom precipitated by construction of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad, these efforts initially opened the Delta to investors and accelerated settlement. By the late nineteenth century, navigation on the Yazoo River system, including Tchula Lake, the Tallahatchie River, and the Coldwater, reached 375 miles above Vicksburg. High water allowed packets greater range. Along the way, over 400 landings, many of them nothing more than wood stops, dotted the river. Around each landing, however inconsequential it might have seemed, a population dependent upon river trade arose. The extension of navigation on the Yazoo system not only allowed planters and lumbermen convenient access to markets, it fostered the development of small towns and offered employment to timber cutters who sold cord wood to

packet captains.⁶⁰ Although the arrival of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad opened the Delta to settlement and trade faster than the river system could have in twice the time, river transportation remained an important feature of Delta life throughout the nineteenth century.

During the 1850s, the Delta, despite its international reputation for producing cotton, remained a virtual wilderness. By the 1880s, the destruction of a Civil War, an inadequate levee system, and a long history of Mississippi River floods negated much of the work done by individuals to reclaim the lowlands. Large tracts of land had reverted to their primeval state. The costly and deadly redundancy of Mississippi River floods did more to hinder the development of the Delta than any other natural cause. Nineteenth-century failures of the levee system testify to the difficulty that planters had in controlling environmental forces; the success that they achieved in cajoling the federal government to aid in the construction of a levee system suggests that the market economy triumphed over communitarian values and that planters wielded a

⁶⁰Harry P. Owens, "Steamboat Landings on the Yazoo and Tallahatchie Rivers (1875-1882)," Journal of Mississippi History 47 (November 1985): 267-269, *passim*. For accounts of wood stops on the Mississippi and Tombigbee Rivers, see, James Wistar Metcalfe Diary, 27 January 1843, James Wistar Metcalfe Papers, UNC; Charles Cobb, American Railway Guide and Packet Companion for the United States (New York: Carran Dinsmore and Company, 1851), 122; Rodabaugh, Steamboats on the Upper Tombigbee, 7; Directory for the City of Mobile, 1859 (Mobile: Farrow and Dennett, 1859), 27.

substantial influence in state and national politics.⁶¹ The long battle that Mississippians waged to construct a levee system perhaps illustrates the difficulty of controlling the physical world and the substantive alterations of the landscape that occurred when powerful members of the state's elite turned from the limiting ideology of the antebellum era to embrace federal authority over states' rights, if only for the purpose of building levees. Paradoxically, it illustrates to a lesser extent the persistence of communitarian values.

While the Delta's rich soils remained a secret but a few years, the difficulty of draining the swamplands and protecting them from seasonal overflows continued much longer. Planters and politicians had long imagined the Mississippi a regional, if not a national, asset and called upon the federal government to manage the river and to prevent flooding. The combination of Jacksonian rhetoric and Whiggish concerns for internal improvements sometimes caused them to assume uncomfortable positions. In 1845, at a Memphis convention of southern and western states, John C. Calhoun laid bare a glowing inconsistency in his political thought when he argued against federal aid to internal improvements and in the same breath

⁶¹James C. Cobb, "'Deepest South,': The Mississippi Delta and the Riddle of Regional Identity," (Paper Delivered at the Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 1990), 1, 5.

pleaded for the national government to construct a levee system. Calhoun's argument became an oft-repeated cliché; Charles Ellet, Jr. in 1853 and Benjamin G. Humphreys in 1914 took up the rhetoric that dominated the Memphis convention. Protecting the rich cotton lands from overflows, they prophesied, would bring great wealth to the nation, the Mississippi Valley, and, of course, the planter class. Typical of that class's boosterism, Ellet claimed that the Mississippi Delta was "destined to bloom, the garden-spot of this great valley, if her skill, finances, and fortitude prevail, or to be known only as a desolate swamp if she falter and yield to the force of the flood."⁶² The presence and tenacity of farmers in the Delta testified to their fortitude, but marshalling the technology and finances necessary to control the river proved more difficult than bearing with the floods.

Despite the obvious benefits that would accrue to cotton cultivators behind protective levees, the state's efforts to protect the Delta from flooding were hamstrung

⁶²Charles Ellet, Jr., The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers: Containing Plans for the Protection of the Delta From Inundation; and Investigation of the Practicability and Cost of Improving the Navigation of the Ohio and Other Rivers by Means of Reservoirs (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1853), 224; Benjamin G. Humphries, Floods and Levees of the Mississippi River (Washington: The Mississippi River Association, 1914), 90. See, too, John A. Fox, A National Duty: Mississippi River Flood Problems: How the Floods Can Be Prevented (Washington: The Mississippi River Association, 1914), 28.

by the persistence of communitarian values. Until 1858, levee legislation in Mississippi followed a pattern established by a 1819 law that addressed levee construction on a county-by-county basis. A Warren County Board of Levee Commissioners, chartered by the 1819 law, received special powers and an \$8,000 state appropriation to construct a levee. Fourteen years passed before another act regarding levees made its way through the legislature. In the interim, authority to construct levees passed by default into the hands of local residents. Left to their own devices, they directed African-American and Irish labor in the building of private levees. Designed to protect individual plantations, the hodge-podge of privately-erected embankments often spared one plantation at the expense of another. Averaging only four feet in height, private levees redirected the flow of water to unprotected lands. Some leveeless planters, acting out of self-interest, were known to blast their neighbors' work in order to save their own property. Small and poorly constructed, early embankments withstood little pressure. Since excavating clay from beneath the thick layer of Delta topsoil was difficult, levee cores consisted of shifting stumps and trees, at best temporary expedients. Between 1833 and 1838, laws intended to correct the shortcomings of the levee system empowered boards of supervisors to take a more active role in constructing levees in the individual

counties. Under the new laws, levee inspectors were hired, taxes raised, and land owners paid to turn their slaves to construction of the system. All went to little effect. The 1844 overflow, arriving as it did after the swamps were filled with rainwater, convinced the legislature that riparian owners could not construct an adequate system.⁶³

The state's willingness to leave levee construction in the hands of those most affected by floods ended with the passage of the federal Swamp Act of 1850, which allowed Mississippi to use proceeds from the sales of some 3.29 million acres of swampland to build levees. In order to offset slow sales of these uncultivated lands, counties issued land scrip, which levee contractors accepted as cash. More so than any previous piece of state legislation, the introduction of contracted labor signalled the demise of community control over levee construction, for which planters had long. Yet the difficulty of controlling the river was not over. The river was not a static force in this drama. Substantial Delta floods occurred in

⁶³Robert W. Harrison, "Levee Building in Mississippi Before the Civil War," Journal of Mississippi History 12 (April 1950): 63-69. For an account of levee blasting by flooded planters, see, Smith, Yazoo River, 306. For Mississippians interested in combatting mosquito-borne diseases, levee building promised to rid the Delta of stagnant water. On the influx of mosquitoes during high water, see, Paxton, "Recollections of Deer Creek," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 103.

1850, 1851, 1854, and 1858. The 1858 flood, by far the worst of the antebellum overflows, covered nearly 6,800 square miles to an average depth of three feet and prompted the legislature to permit counties broad taxing powers to build levees. Most of the counties received authorization to tax land in the flood plain up to ten cents per acre for five years; some were allowed to tax up to twenty-five cents per acre. In 1861, James L. Alcorn, a Delta planter, surveyed the levee for the state and found an almost complete system stretching from the Tennessee border to near Vicksburg. The levees had been constructed, Alcorn estimated, for slightly less than 1.3 million dollars, though several hundred miles remained under contract at an additional cost of \$1,000,000. The protection offered by the levee, however, was at best uncertain, and the taxes raised to construct it, some planters said, more ruinous than the floods. In 1859, Buckner Darden, an adventurous but hard-luck planter, lost one-half of his crop to a flood, saw his property value drop twenty percent, and had his taxes raised to rebuild the levee.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, by 1860, even though planters had

⁶⁴Harrison, "Levee Building in Mississippi Before the Civil War," 69-95. The Swamp Act not only affected the Delta; farmers from the interior received loans and state credits to construct levees around swamps. See, Laws of the State of Mississippi (1857), 96-99, 105. A. A. Humphries and H. L. Abbot, Report Upon the Physics and Hydraulics of the Mississippi River: Upon the Protection of the Alluvial (continued...)

lost authority over levee construction, they had gained in exchange greater control over the environment, an exchange most favored.

The Civil War wiped out antebellum progress in controlling the river, returning the levee system to its pre-1848 condition. Federal troops had blasted some levees, and miles of neglected embankments fell into the river on their own volition. As soon as the war ended, planters clamored for the state to address the problem of levee construction. But, the state, saddled with its own enormous pecuniary difficulties, could not pursue the matter vigorously. In the late 1860s, however, Mississippi founded two boards--one to reconstruct levees and the other to liquidate the \$1.5 million debt accrued by the 1858 boards. Unfortunately, the boards that the state empowered to build levees and to lower taxes, assessed two separate taxes on Delta lands. By 1874, the cost of funding levee construction and paying antebellum debts sent one-half of all Delta lands to the state's unpaid tax rolls. Lacking titles to their lands and pressed by floods to abandon their plantations, planters exerted all of the political pressure that they could muster to force

⁶⁴(...continued)
Region Against Overflows; and Upon the Deepening of the Mouths; Based Upon Surveys and Investigations (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1861), 87-90, 172-176. On Buckner Darden's trials and tribulations, see, Susan S. Darden Diaries, 15 August 1859, Darden Family Papers, MDAH.

the federal government to fund a levee system. As the sectional feelings of Reconstruction politics abated, Washington consented and formed the Mississippi River Commission in 1879. The commission's work was largely limited to surveying until 1882 when technical and financial assistance arrived to bolster the fortitude that Charles Ellet had seen in the Delta of the 1850s.⁶⁵

Seemingly in defiance of the commission's efforts to protect the lowlands, the river regularly flooded and created problems familiar to backcountry Mississippi. The 1882 flood of the Mississippi, the Yazoo, and their tributaries caused by far the most suffering. During the flood, which lasted from March until May, cities like Greenville remained under water. Benevolent societies from around the country sent clothing and food to the state; the federal government supplied rations and tents to help refugees stay alive, if only barely. Unlike Washington politicians whose favor planters could curry, the favor did not offer wealthy farmers special

⁶⁵Humphries and Abbot, Report of Upon the Physics and Hydraulics of the Mississippi, 96-97. For excellent accounts of the levee system during the Reconstruction period, see, William C. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 186-193 and Day of the Carpetbagger: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 42-45, 245-246, 283-289, 486-492. Humphreys, Floods and Levees, 42, 54-57.

consideration. Planters and tenants alike suffered.⁶⁶ Writing to Governor Robert Lowry, a black farmer, Jacob Jackson, summed up the desperation that spread with the flood waters: "Me & my family & my stock will die in a few days unless you Send us Some meat & meal & rice, & some hay & oats for my horses." As with other late nineteenth-century floods, crevasses, ranging in length up to one mile, occurred and sent waves of water crashing over homes and crops. In 1882, 284 crevasses undermined the levee system, and, in the two succeeding years, 408 breaks further weakened it. According to engineers who examined the levee following the floods of the 1880s, mid-western drainage projects exacerbated flooding in the postbellum era as more water than normal passed down the river and placed antiquated levees (some with cores of rotting timber and others weakened by crayfish holes) under extraordinary pressure.⁶⁷

⁶⁶For accounts of the 1882 flood, see, Humphreys, Floods and Levees, 28; Walter Sillers, "Levees of the Mississippi Levee District in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, 87.

⁶⁷Quoting Jacob Jackson to Robert Lowry, 4 April 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH. See, also, the letters of flood victims: A. H. Brenham to Lowry, 11 March 1882; H. F. Simrall to Lowry, 15 March 1882; W. A. Drennan to Lowry, 15 March 1882; W. H. Morgan to Lowry, 20 March 1882; A. E. Anderson to Lowry, 7 April 1882; W. H. Buck to Lowry, 15 April 1882; E. F. Walker to Lowry, 1 June 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Humphreys, Floods and Levees, 24. Smith, Yazoo River, 305, reported that during some postwar floods boatmen could paddle from the hills in the east to the
(continued...)

With the assistance of the federal government, efforts at flood control and levee construction prevented disasters similar to the flood of 1882 from recurring until 1912. The 1898 flood, in fact, passed without causing a single crevasse. The 1912 overflow, however, swept the Delta with disastrous ferocity: pilings were washed from under houses, towns inundated, and thousands of livestock killed. The flood, however, offers stark evidence of Washington's involvement in controlling Mississippi's environment. An early warning system established by the National Weather Bureau at Vicksburg cautioned Delta residents about the coming flood. The flood also prompted Congress to appropriate the largest sum to date for levee construction and repair, \$4,000,000.⁶⁸

⁶⁷(...continued)
river. On technical problems afflicting the levee, see Sillers, "Levees of the Mississippi Levee District," in History of Bolivar County, 84, 88-89; William Starling, The Floods of the Mississippi River, Including an Account of Their Principal Causes and Effects, and a Description of the Levee System and Other Means Proposed and Tried For the Control of the River, With a Particular Account of the Great Flood of 1897 (New York: The Engineering News Publishing Company, 1897).

⁶⁸Humphreys, Floods and Levees, 55-60. H. C. Frankfield, The Floods of the Spring of 1903 in the Mississippi Watershed (Washington: Weather Bureau, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1904), 3-21; Starling, Floods of the Mississippi River, 41, 47, 51-52; Fox, A National Duty, 28, 40, 47, 55; Sillers, "Levees of the Mississippi Levee District," in History of Bolivar County, 94.

Ironically, even though planters had long submitted to outside assistance for aid in constructing levees, they retained some remnants of backcountry communitarian traditions, if not out of respect for those traditions then out of necessity to ensure the salvation of their plantations and towns. Levee guards, armed with rifles and sandbags patrolled the embankments to prevent nature or flooded residents from causing a crevasse. When a break occurred, every able bodied male answered the call for help and frenetically worked to fill the breach. Henry Waring Ball, a Greenville newspaper editor, described such an effort to save the city in 1890 as a colorful "comic opera." Jewish clerks, young aristocrats, and businessmen worked along side Irish and black laborers, the builders of antebellum levees, to prevent a crevasse. While communities had largely lost their influence in matters of levee construction, the river did not calmly submit to controls placed on it. Seasonal floods continued to plague the Delta until the 1930s, when, in response to the 1927 overflow, Washington built a system of hill country reservoirs to regulate the flow of water into the Delta.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Henry Waring Ball Diaries, 5 September 1890, MDAH. For an account of the 1927 flood and levee guard duty, see, Percy, Lanterns on the Levee, 242-269.

In the backcountry milieu of Mississippi, placing effective controls on the physical and pathological worlds took decades; finding suitable ideas to replace the habits of mind inherited from the frontier took even longer. Two caricatures of nineteenth-century life appear in southern literature: the image of the proud matriarch surrounded by a heavy forest churning butter with one hand and turning the pages of a volume of Shakespeare with the other; and William Faulkner's gregarious Anglo-Saxon "roaring with Protestant scripture and boiled whiskey, Bible and jug in one hand and like as not an Indian tomahawk in the other, brawling, turbulent, uxorious and polygamous."⁷⁰ By 1840, these sturdy backcountry types had largely disappeared; taking their place were market-oriented farmers who nevertheless. Even though the isolation and danger of the early nineteenth century backcountry environment, along with its peculiar and hardy types, largely disappeared after the Civil War, aspects of the backcountry persisted. Native animals and diseases, however less evident than in

⁷⁰Quoting William Faulkner, "Mississippi," in Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, ed. James B. Meriwether (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), 14. For references to matriarchs reading Shakespeare, see Mrs. P. E. Metcalfe-Collins, "Sketches of Some of the Pioneers of Washington County," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys, 13; Catherine Ann "Agatha: A Tale of Romance," Mss., Eleanor and Catherine Ware Papers, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. [Hereafter cited as LSU].

1840, continued to exist. Crevasses and poorly-maintained roads and river channels also remained.

In 1838, when the Universalist minister George Rogers came to Mississippi in search of converts, he was disappointed. Not only did he fail to proselytize large numbers, he found the state to have advanced barely beyond the stage of frontier development. Buildings in towns were mere shacks, roads were quagmires, and wild animals were an omnipresent threat. Planters lived isolated existences surrounded only by slaves and cotton. The people of the state--rowdy celebrants of their independence from authority--disappointed him most. The wildness of the land and its people, he said, exercised such a powerful influence over all things that even the immigrant New Englander forsook "the steady habits of his native land" and adopted the barbarous mannerisms of Mississippians.⁷¹

In his analysis of the South, W. J. Cash also stressed the retarding affects that persisting habits of mind inherited from the frontier had on Southern development. Among those habits were tendencies toward violence and hedonism. He, however, failed to realize that submission to passions and environmental forces failed to define the South fully. Rogers, who discovered in Mississippi

⁷¹Rogers, Memoranda of a Universalist Preacher, 208, 210, 264-266, 269.

two somewhat contradictory forces--pleasure and money--offered a more accurate assessment: "the people are characterized by that restlessness of habit which makes them impatient of every thing which does not tend either to their pleasure or worldly interest. Pleasure and gain are the deities at whose shrines every knee bows, and every soul does homage."⁷² Here Rogers suggests an important theme. This "restlessness of habit" drove men into the backcountry and motivated them to carve farms out of a land determined to check their progress. Despite the vagaries of the backcountry, regardless of the violence of backcountry men, Mississippi in 1840, as well as in 1915, was to many a land of boundless opportunity. The market economy then might be viewed as a constant in an ever-changing world. It was what led men to attempt to conquer the physical world. It might best be viewed as a bridge spanning the dim abyss between wilderness and civilization, the backcountry and a modernizing state, but the bridge did not lead directly toward progress. For Mississippians found that even though they fell into the web of the market economy, they could not, because of their dependency on communitarian values, escape the vagaries of the backcountry.

⁷²Rogers, Memoranda of a Universalist Preacher, 378. Cash, Mind of the South, 52, 60.

Chapter Two

The Web of the Market Economy

Even though the persistence of backcountry qualities of life suggested otherwise, Mississippi was not a peasant society. The market-economy mentality, the antithesis of peasantry, in fact, appeared at an early date. When the federal government in the mid-1830s opened to white settlers the lands of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian cessions, a host of immigrants, largely southern-born, rushed into the state longing to enhance their stature in the market economy. While they often continued to think of themselves as the heirs of Arcadia, quantitative changes in the state's population, as well as the corresponding increase in the size of Mississippi's annual cotton crop, testify to their intentions. Achieving economic independence while producing for the market, something of a contradiction, motivated them. Those who succeeded often remained in Mississippi, and those who failed to find their niche in the market economy not infrequently left. Motivated by a desire to participate in the market economy, Mississippians espoused a philosophy of success that emphasized the achievement of personal autonomy

through the avoidance of debt and the accumulation of wealth; they passed on to their children a desire for material success.

Despite a widespread devotion to the market economy, success was not assured. The expansion of the cotton belt that permitted Mississippi its international influence in the market ironically diminished farmers' autonomy. For it was the nature of the cotton market to determine the value of all commodities traded in the market. Whether a farmer sold to his Liverpool factor hundreds of bales of cotton or to a local planter his cotton in the seed, whether he sold livestock on the hoof or timber to coastal lumber mills, participants in the market depended to some degree on it to provide them cash for the goods and services they could not themselves command. The paradox of the market economy was that those who participated in it to ensure their independence from debt and poverty became ensnared in its web of dependence. Believing that persisting communitarian values and a faith in their economic independence insulated them from the full effects of the market, Mississippians who dabbled in it counted the affects of their participation insignificant.

That Mississippians embraced a thoroughly modern manner of thinking about the market only after 1865 seems hardly surprising. Mississippi on the eve of the Civil War, as W. J. Cash has pointed out, was removed from the

old southwestern frontier by only thirty years, about one generation; the vagaries of the backcountry remained fundamental features of life for almost three decades after 1860. Although the story of Mississippi's modernization is a long one, stretching across time, according to one student of the subject, until the end of the Civil Rights Movement, the first signs of modernity appeared before 1840 among a white population that contributed a variety of products to the market economy.¹

Sociologists, political scientists, and historians have long employed modernization theory, a hold-over from the positivism of the early twentieth century, and Marxism, its ideological opposite, to describe societies and the changes that they undergo. Where modernization theorists see a natural and healthy progression from traditional to modern social structures, scholars writing from a Marxist perspective view the transition as an augury of exploitation and alienation experienced under capitalism. According to modernization theory, all civil entities are built upon complex systems of social relationships and organized along traditional or modern principles. Traditional societies derive their structure from communitarian

¹W. J. Cash, Mind of the South (1941, reprint; Alfred A. Knopf, Vintage Books, 1969), 11; Lester Milton Salamon, "Protest, Politics, and Modernization in the American South: Mississippi as a 'Developing Society,'" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1971), passim.

values, inherited status, and the ownership of the tools of production by the producer, while modern societies, generally those that have undergone an industrial revolution, eschew communitarian values, emphasize individuals' achieved status, and divorce the producer from the means of production. Modern societies also possess a high degree of political participation, not simply that measured by voter turn-out, but that indicated by the appropriation of a society's political symbols and goals by those at the periphery of political power.² Briefly stated, modern societies are democratic and capitalistic, industrialized and urbanized.

The traditional-modern dichotomy inherent in modernization theory may be easily applied to Mississippi, but doing so down-plays the evolutionary pace of modernization and minimizes the importance of early signposts of modernity, especially the commercialization of the economy. The sixteenth-century commercialization of England's economy fostered the development of political centralization, stimulated the expansion of the market, and sent the nation's redundant sons and daughters to work in its burgeoning industries or to live in the New World; two centuries later, the descendants of those trans-Atlantic

²Richard D. Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 8-14; S. N. Eisenstadt, Modernization: Protest and Change (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 2-15.

immigrants continued the process of adaptation to the commercial world and filled the public lands of the Deep South.³ They, however, left their Upper South homes, not as refugees from modernity, but animated with a desire to plow for themselves a niche in the market economy. Scholars who would ignore the motivations of early settlers, especially the relative late-comers of the 1830s, for moving to the old southwestern frontier would miss the beginning of the long process of modernization. Immigrants arrived in Mississippi with two ideas characteristic of traditional societies: the institution of slavery and a disdain for strong centralized government. They nevertheless sought to augment their status in the market.⁴ Just as surely as early America was the child of Europe's commercial revolution, the market ethos was always present in Mississippi; it was the midwife at Mississippi's birthing.

³On the commercialization of England and changing attitudes, see Joyce Appleby, "Modernization Theory and the Formation of Modern Social Theories in England and America," Comparative Studies in Society and History 20 (April 1978): 259-262, 265.

⁴Two significant reasons have been advanced to explain Upper South whites' embrace of slavery: a low man to land ratio in the South Atlantic states during the colonial era and racial prejudices. See Peter A. Coclanis, Shadow of a Dream: Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 61; and Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York and London: Norton, 1975), passim.

In a recent study of colonial South Carolina's low country, one historian has offered a suggestive metaphor for the market at work in the Old South: "beneath the veneer of paternalism and the sheen of patriarchy . . . were always the talons of the market, their hold sure, their mark deep." The piercing talons of a bird of prey may be a fitting metaphor for the market economy's hold on Mississippi's cotton belt, especially the western river counties, but on the North-Central Hills and the Piney Woods, the market held a much weaker grip. A more adequate metaphor for the market in Mississippi may be found in Robert Penn Warren's enormous spider web: touch it, however lightly, even on the furthestmost extended strand, and the web begins steadily to entangle interlopers.⁵

Another recent writer, the Marxist historian Steven Hahn, has evoked the image of a spinning and devouring vortex to describe the plight of upcountry farmers dragged into the market economy by the force of modernity. After 1865, politicians and already committed to commercial development disrupted small farmers' traditional society when they thrust upon the upcountry the appurtenances of the modern world. In the wake of modernity's tidal surge, upcountry farmers found the values that had

⁵Coclanis, Shadow of a Dream, 52; Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1946), 188-189.

once undergirded their antebellum world powerless to combat the enemies of tradition. Even though Hahn rightly argues that the web of the postwar market economy wound all who touched it more tightly than it had prior to 1861, an interpretation that portrays as self-conscious peasants those antebellum farmers living outside the cotton belt ignores the significance of their selling cotton and other farm products. Despite Hahn's farmers' stated loathing for the market and their retention of communitarian values, prewar farmers, who ginned one bale of cotton (whether to pay taxes or to buy goods they could not produce) tweaked the strands of the web of things. Another historian, Eugene Genovese, agrees that the antebellum South, dominated by a hegemonic class of paternalists, conformed to the Marxist model of a traditional society. Southerners, planters especially, sought to bolster their prestige and power by perpetuating the peculiar institution. They lived in a world they believed to be modern, though, in fact, the very presence of slavery, Marxists historians rightly contend, serves as prima facie evidence that they had not escaped the lure of traditional social arrangements. Exercising their hegemony, planters extracted from those yeomen farmers who wished to remain aloof from the slave economy a "silent understanding," in Genovese's phrase, by which non-slaveholders pledged their loyalty to the institution of

slavery and their deference to the master class; planters in return swore to let them pass unmolested by burdensome taxes and intrusive internal improvements.⁶

Marxist historians' concept of a dual economy is a useful one. So too is the notion of traditional society withering under the force of modernity unharnessed. Yet Marxist ideology, and modernization theory for that matter, concentrates on social structure and groups' functions, neglecting the ideological underpinnings that

⁶Genovese quoted, "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy," Agricultural History 49 (April 1975), 336. See, too, Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 13-40, and Steven Hahn, The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Although Hahn draws a much sharper distinction between participating in the market and becoming subservient to it in his "The Yeomanry of the Nonplantation South: Upper Piedmont Georgia, 1850-1860," in Class, Conflict, and Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies, eds. Orville Vernon Burton and Robert C. McMath, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1982), 45, than he does in his book, he continues to portray his upcountry peasants as capable of resisting the consequences of participating in the market. See also, Hahn, "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry: The Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1860-1890," in The Countryside in the Age of Capital Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 141-179. Other Marxist interpretations of the rural economy can be found in Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States," Radical History Review 4 (Winter 1977), 42-66, and Morton Rothstein, "The Antebellum South As A Dual Economy: A Tentative Hypothesis," Agricultural History 44 (October 1967), 373-382. See also a rebuttal to these interpretations of early America, Carole Shammas, "How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?" Journal of Interdisciplinary History 13 (Autumn 1982), 247-272.

permit societies to adapt to economic conditions. Emphasizing the power of ideas to shape systems of political economy seems to lead inexorably to the Sombartian and Weberian definition of capitalism, a definition which argues that capitalists adopt first a particular manner of thinking about economic matters and thus cause their society to change in order to meet their ideals. But, capitalism is not a relevant word to associate with the antebellum South; all major economic thinkers from Adam Smith to Marx to Max Weber equate capitalism with a system of free labor. At issue is the penetration of the market ethos and the beginning of modernization. Writing in a different context, Bernard Bailyn has posited that values do not crystalize into ideology until they motivate people to act, to fuse their interests and beliefs. There exists little reason to expect that after two centuries of experience with the market economy the legatees of seventeenth-century Europe's commercial revolution would forsake it upon arriving in the Deep South.⁷ For nineteenth-century southerners, who valued the accumulation of

⁷For an assessment of Werner Sombart, Max Weber, and Marx, see Maurice Cobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, LTD: 1946), 5-18; Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 3, The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole, translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. by Frederick Engels (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1906), 697-698; Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, translated by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 45-53.

material goods and their independence, and who taught their children to do the same, the fusion of interests and beliefs occurred, if not sooner, upon their migration to Mississippi.

When Max Weber sought to illustrate the capitalistic ethos at work, he turned not to a prominent German businessman but to the Philadelphia printer and statesman Benjamin Franklin, whose aphorisms--time is money, credit is money, money begets money--neatly fit Weber's concept of the spirit of capitalism. For Weber, the capitalistic ethos valued labor, accumulation of money, and avoidance of hedonistic diversions.⁸ He might as well have adopted any number of southerners as a model. Ideas echoing Franklin's often made their way into the Commercial Review, J. D. B. DeBow's journal of commerce and planting.

⁸Weber, Protestant Ethic, passim; Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Charles Scribner, 1947), 276. For a recent assessment of Weber, see, Michael Novack, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 42-45, 48. Other economic and social thinkers also celebrated work and thrift, especially Adam Smith. But because of the institution of slavery, southerners had difficulty adopting the totality of Smith's work to their place and time. Such difficulties notwithstanding, pamphleteers of the South, such as Matthew Estes of Columbus, frequently pointed out that slavery fulfilled Smith's requirement that there exist a division of labor in a capitalistic system. The specious arguments that southerners engaged in to convince themselves that they were the heirs of Smith serve mainly to point out that, though not themselves capitalists, as defined by significant economic thinkers, they had assumed the attitude of capitalists. Perceptions perhaps matter more than reality when considering southerners' defense of slavery and their behavior in the market economy.

Chief among them were the notions that all white farmers might ensure their success and promote their personal autonomy by adopting efficient methods, achieving self-sufficiency, and working diligently.

Mississippians had not always remained true to the pursuit of virtuous living as Franklin defined it. But, according to state Attorney General D. C. Glenn, the rupture of the speculative bubble of the 1830s served as a sobering tonic, restoring to their proper place in society men of steady habits. By 1849, the state's farmers, now "earnest cultivators" all, directed their labor toward safe methods of accumulation. In the eyes of other contributors to the Commercial Review, Mississippians embraced again the virtuous life too slowly. A "Southwestern Planter" with obvious ties to Mississippi, accused planters of pursuing fame and fortune through others' labor. He encouraged members of his class to implement their belief in the virtue of work by firing their overseers. "Let him [the planter] learn his sons that idleness is the 'road to ruin,' let him teach his daughter that they are not dolls or milliner girls, but that they are the future makers of manners of this beautiful republic." Those who bowed their backs at the plow and fertilized the fields with their footprints, he promised, would receive the reward of great riches and social acclaim. Debow himself, in an essay on political economy,

admonished planters to look inward, not to the federal government, when their financial conditions begged for redress. "Be industrious, be frugal, be circumspect," he implored in the fashion of Franklin, and the boundlessness of the region would overcome short-term economic downturns. The agricultural reformer M. W. Phillips offered the same advice in terms even the dullest planter could comprehend: "keep out of debt, and control your cotton."⁹ Contributors to the Review intended that planters reading such instruction would adjust their cotton cultivation to meet international demand and thus strengthen the economic and, indirectly, the political, power of the region. Yet planters needed little encouragement from their journals to pursue their economic best interest.

Underpinning such maxims of thrift and efficiency lay the notion that through yeoman-like labor, farmers who struck a balance between capital accumulation and economic independence deserved their contemporaries' acclaim and the designation freemen. The contradictions formulated by a belief in personal economic autonomy and a high regard for capital acquisition permitted traditional values,

⁹D. C. Glenn, "Mississippi," Commercial Review 7 (July 1849), 39; "A Southwestern Planter," "True Remedy for the Embarrassment of Cotton Planters of the South and Southwest," idem., 1 (May 1846), 436; J. D. B. DeBow, "Some Thoughts on Political Economy and Government," idem., 9 (September 1850), 282; M. W. Phillips, "Duty of Cotton Planters," idem., 7 (November 1849), 411.

including communitarian ones, and the market-economy mentality simultaneously to inform behavior.

Fathers, in their advice to their children, reiterated the message located in the Commercial Review and encouraged their progeny to accumulate wealth, to obtain their educations, and to apply their talents with thrift and efficiency. In the process, fathers imbued their children with what historian James Oakes has identified as a "materialistic ethos."¹⁰ The importance that Mississippians attached to the materialistic ethos cannot be overstated.

One measure of the emphasis placed on success was the importance attached to education by southern fathers. Education offered children not only basic skills for living but taught discipline, responsibility, and the value of hard work. A Carroll County farmer, for instance, directed in his will that upon his death the family's field hands be sold to provide an education for his sons. He even went so far as to instruct his wife to sell the plantation itself, if necessary, in order to educate and to set them up in a profession. When planters spoke of educating their children, they intended that their sons obtain practical knowledge such as writing and elocution--important skills for men-on-the-make. An

¹⁰James Oakes, The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders (New York: Random House, 1982), 69.

understanding of arithmetic too might prove practical when it came time to design a cotton warehouse or to check the ledger. The education that planters desired for their children was designed to provide the acumen necessary to improve their financial condition. During James Stuart's tenure at the state university at Oxford, his letters frequently garnered his father's wrath. Oscar J. E. Stuart, a planter and inventor, received James's correspondence as an opportunity to lecture on the virtues attendant upon grammatical precision. Care should be given to details, James learned, if he were to become a wealthy lawyer. So well did he learn his lesson that he took up his father's habits and chided a younger sister for clowning in school and making bad marks in arithmetic. Those planters, who like the Worthingtons' Washington County neighbor, a Mr. Lashley, saw little need in properly educating their children, became victims of private, if not public, criticism. Amanda Worthington informed her brother that Lashley foolishly believed his son capable of operating the family estate without the benefits of a formal education. In regard to young Lashley, she believed that "the more he has in his pocket the more he

ought to have in his head, in order to keep his balance."¹¹

Sometimes the advice fathers offered went unheeded. Sometimes the recipient of the advice failed to live up to expectations; sometimes fathers, by their examples, offered contradictory guidance. Children often took to heart their fathers' advice about accumulating money and set aside admonitions to obtain an education. During his first year of study at the university, James Stuart apparently remained focused on his goal of becoming a wealthy lawyer. Yet, during his second year, he threatened in a letter to a female friend to follow in his father's footsteps, to marry at a young age, and then, as a famous Mississippi jurist had done, to set about making his fortune without a penny to his name. Albert Worthington actually carried out his decision to follow his

¹¹Quoting Amanda Worthington to Albert D. Worthington, 12 October 1857, Amanda Worthington Papers, UNC. See, too, Last Will and Testament, H. H. Weir, Lockhart-Weir Papers, MDAH; James H. Stuart to Annie E. Stuart, 15 January 1855, John Bull Smith Dimitry Papers, Duke. On Oscar J. E. Stuart, see the broadside for the Double Cotton Scraper and Double Plow he invented, Stuart Papers, MDAH, and John Hebron Moore, The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest; Mississippi, 1770-1860 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 54-57. For a young man's thoughts about school, see Harry St. John Dixon Diary, 28, 30 June 1858, MDAH. The classic work on college education in the antebellum period remains, E. Merton Coulter, College Life in the Old South (New York: MacMillan Company, 1928), 174-192. See, too, John P. Darden, The Secret of Success, or Family Affairs; A Memoir in One Volume By A Mississippian (Cincinnati: Walter Scott, 1853), 29-30.

father's example and not his advice. Citing his poor preparation for academic work, terrible food, and family obligations, he dropped out of the University of Virginia. According to Worthington, he preferred making money back in Mississippi to spending it in Charlottesville. It is not clear whether he intended to start his own farm or merely to help his father manage the plantation, but Albert, well aware of the value his father placed on frugality and capital accumulation, made his appeal based on those points. Simeon R. Adams, a newspaper publisher at Mobile and later Paulding, also tried to imbue his children with a thirst for success. He encouraged one of his sons to study diligently at college and to advance as fast as possible so that he could take over the family business. Adams' other son, Charley, a West Point cadet, however, caused his father no small chagrin when he spoke of resigning his appointment. A deficiency in mathematics prompted his decision. At first, the elder Adams refused to allow Charley to quit only to discover near the end of the term that Charley's resignation had not been voluntary. The disappointment for both Adamses must have run deep.¹²

¹²James H. Stuart to Ann L. Hardeman, 4 December 1856, John Bull Smith Dimitry Papers, Duke; Albert Worthington to "Father," 7 November 1857, Amanda Worthington Papers, UNC; Simeon R. Adams to Willie Adams, 20 December 1857, Charley R. Adams to Simeon R. Adams, 17 June 1859; Simeon R. Adams (continued...)

Not only from their fathers did children learn to long after material success. Every member of the white southern family was expected to do his or her part in making the household prosperous. John Darden, a Franklin County planter and father of the future Greenback leader Putnam, encouraged his children to live according to a code of honor, to keep their word, to associate with members of their class only, and to be wary of those with whom they would do business. The successful household that Darden envisioned, one which corresponded to the reality of many upper-class Mississippi families, placed the farmer's wife at her sewing, tending the vegetable garden, and supervising slaves in the making of soap and butter. According to Darden, the husband's responsibility lay in cultivating staple crops. A thrifty wife could be as much a boon to a Mississippi planter or businessman as one possessed of a large dowry. In 1858, James Roach, a Vicksburg banker and railroad developer, credited his wife, Mahalia, with enabling the household to achieve a \$9,000 cash surplus. While James displayed a habit of betting imported cigars on changes in the cotton market, Mahalia felt the sting of her friends' gentle rebukes

¹²(...continued)
to Charley R. Adams, 30 November 1859; Charley R. Adams to Simeon R. Adams, 6 December 1855; 1st Lt. S. B. Holabird to Simeon R. Adams, December 1859, Simeon R. Adams Papers, MDAH.

about "'a woman's duty of dressing handsomely and visiting--for her Husband's sake.'" Shamed by the sorry condition of her clothing, she wished to cultivate a desire for better clothes but could not bring herself to do so.¹³

Mississippi fathers' advice to their children about making something of themselves materially differed little from the advice offered by their counterparts in other states. Animated with a desire to improve their financial well-being, immigrants, beginning in the mid-1830s, moved into the northern third of the state in search of success. Prior to 1830, three counties had been organized north of Hinds, which lies in the central part of the state, but in 1833 alone, the population explosion experienced in the region compelled Mississippi to establish twelve new counties. At the time of the fifth census (1829), the state population barely exceeded 136,000, including 65,649 slaves. Ten years later, the total population had grown by 176 percent. Most of the increase likely occurred after 1835. (One estimate has placed at

¹³Quoting Mahalia P. H. Roach Diary, 23 July 1856, Roach-Eggleston Family Papers, UNC; see, too, James Roach Diary, 9, 10 January 1858, Roach-Eggleston Family Papers, UNC. Darden, Secret of Success, 13, 43, 51. For an example of Darden's ideal family in Mississippi, see Mrs. Jared Cook Diaries, 3 January, 12 February, 9 April 1855; 24 April 1857, MDAH. Cook sold farm produce in Vicksburg, including mutton, butter, milk, radishes, onions. The proceeds--\$260.99 in 1854, \$350.80 in 1853 in 1853, \$270 in 1852, \$150.20 in 1851, \$70 in 1850, and \$50 in 1849--in part paid for her daughter's dance lessons.

250,000 the number of slaves entering Mississippi in 1836, though that figure is perhaps inflated as the actual slave population in 1840 fell well short of that mark). After 1840, the total population expanded at a slower rate. Between 1840 and 1850, it increased by 38 percent and in the following decade by 24 percent.¹⁴ There is no certain method of calculating how much of the decennial population increases resulted from immigration. Crude estimations, however, indicate that in each decade, the population, after taking into consideration birth and mortality, expanded through natural means by no more than 12 percent, 1.2 percent per year. Assuming that about 35 percent of the population remained in Mississippi between census years, a fairly high level of persistence among whites, more than one-half of the residents in any census year might be counted as newcomers.¹⁵ The state's population

¹⁴The twelve counties created in 1833 included: Attala, Carroll, Choctaw, Holmes, Kemper, Leake, Neshoba, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Tallahatchie, Winston, and Yalobusha. Clarke, Jasper, Lauderdale, Scott, and Smith, although outside the Indian cessions, also were formed in 1833. U.S., House, Abstract of the Returns of the Fifth Census, House Document, no. 263 (1832), 36; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, 1; 56-70; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United State, 1850, 440-447; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled From the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, 254-270; James L. Watkins, King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790 to 1908 (New York: James L. Watkins and Sons, 1908), 171.

¹⁵To determine the percentage of the population increase attributable to natural means the number of deaths recorded
(continued...)

then was a highly mobile one, one that came in search of land and an opportunity to participate in the market economy.

Even after the initial rush to fill them, the fresh lands of northern Mississippi continued for a decade and one-half to entice settlers. Between 1840 and 1850, the Northern Bluffs, the Black Prairie, and the North-Central Hills regions experienced a larger percentage change in their total populations than other regions, 48 percent, 50 percent, and 58 percent, respectively. In the following decade, the rate of population growth fell in the last-named region to 32 percent, while the Black Prairie's population grew by only 13 percent. The Northern Bluffs region experienced a five percent decline in its population.¹⁶ (See Table 2.1). The decreased

¹⁵(...continued)
in the 1850 and 1860 censuses were subtracted from the number of deaths reported. The product was divided by the actual population to render the percentage growth in the population. In both census years, births by far outnumbered deaths. In 1860, the population increased through natural means by approximately 1.2 percent, and in 1850, the increase was closer to one percent. Using the higher of the two figures, the natural increase of the population was assumed to equal 12 percent every decade. In addition to the population summaries cited in note 20, see also, U.S., Bureau of the Census, Mortality Statistics of the Seventh Census of the United State, 1850, 57; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Statistics of the United States, Including Mortality, Property, and Etc., in 1860, 35.

¹⁶Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census, 1850, 440-447; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Agriculture in the United States, 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, 84-87.

availability of prime public land, the changed terms by which it was sold, the Panic of 1837, and the low price of cotton accounted for the slowed population growth in northern Mississippi.

The panic and the concomitant economic downturn in particular slowed population growth as public land sales ground to a halt. One year before the panic, public land sales in the state reached the two million acre mark. Yet with the implementation of the Specie Circular Act and the onset of the depression, sales dropped precipitously, falling by 1840 to less than 50,000 acres. During the ten-year period beginning in 1841, the federal land offices in the Black Prairie region at Columbus and the Northern Bluff region at Grenada sold more acres than the remaining offices. From 1852 to 1860, however, the Piney Woods office at Augusta sold in nearly every year the most land, and the rate of the Piney Woods population increase reflected the increased sales. Having recorded a 26 percent change between 1840 and 1850, the population of the Piney Woods grew by 46 percent in the next decade. The sudden population boom experienced in the pine barrens of the state can be attributed to the decreased availability of land in other sections and the expansion of cotton production into the region. Prime cotton lands had been snatched from the public domain at an early date, leaving by the early 1850s a large public domain in the pine

barrens, the hill country, and the swampy Delta; those regions experienced the greatest percentage change in population between 1850 and 1860.¹⁷ (See Table 2.1).

(Table 2.1)
Percentage Population Change,
by Region, 1830-1860

Region	1830-1840	1840-1850	1850-1860
Southern Bluffs	72	15	19
Northern Bluffs	66	48	-5
Delta	45	31	42
Black Prairie	54	50	13
North-Central Hills	30	58	32
Piney Woods	54	26	46
State	64	38	24

Source: U.S., House, Abstract of the Returns of the Fifth Census, House Document, no. 263 (1832), 36; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, 1; 56-70; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census, 1850, 440-447; U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population of the United State in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, 254-270.

The majority of immigrants who purchased land in Mississippi hoped to become participants in the market economy, generally as cotton cultivators. By 1860, the

¹⁷During the antebellum period, the Department of Interior had dominion over public land offices. Statistics on land sold by each office in Mississippi may be found in the annual Report of the Secretary of Interior for the years 1835-1860.

cotton belt, an arbitrary designation reserved for counties producing 1,000 or more bales, included all the state's counties but those in the southeastern corner. In a survey of farm units listed in the agricultural returns of the census, 43 percent of farms under fifty acres produced at least one bale of cotton in 1850. Sixty-nine percent did so in 1860. On farms larger than 49 acres, less than 19 percent in 1850 and 9 percent failed in 1860 to cultivate one or more bales.¹⁸

Caught in the web of the market economy, Mississippi farmers discovered that they could eschew cotton cultivation only with great difficulty. Subsistence farming, after all, would not pay mortgages and taxes. Most farmers then raised some cotton, and as the population increased, the number of cotton cultivators increased. In 1860, Mississippi farmers baled 58 percent more cotton than they had in 1850, a percentage change double the population increase of the same period. Not surprisingly, the number of bales produced in the Piney Woods and the North-Central Hills, the regions which led the state

¹⁸See the maps of the cotton belt in Hilliard, Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture, 68-71. U.S. Census, Agriculture Schedule, Copiah, Jones, Harrison, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties, 1850, and all except Washington, which is not available for 1860. Two and one-half percent of each counties reported farm units were included in the surveys. [Hereafter, the samples drawn from this schedule will be identified as Farm Survey (1850) and Farm Survey (1860)].

in population growth, rose, by over 75 percent and 67 percent respectively. Despite the phenomenal growth in cotton production, these two large regions accounted for less than one-fifth of the state's total baled crop. Of the remaining regions, only the counties comprising the Northern Bluffs, produced in 1860 less than 50 percent more cotton than they had in 1850.¹⁹

Such figures suggest an inexorable escalation in the size of the annual cotton crop, but they do not depict annual fluctuations caused by weather conditions and acts of a Providential nature, as well as the expanding and contracting number of producers. Mean production for the eleven year period beginning with the depression year crop of 1839-1840, for example, was 496,775, and the range was 191,998. For the decade concluding with the 1860-1861 crop, mean production was 713,231. The range, 701,361, nearly equalled the average, indicating broad differences between the largest and smallest annual crops in the period. Fluctuations in the size of the annually ginned crop notwithstanding, Mississippi produced approximately 20 percent of the South's total bales, and thus, the world's supply of cotton. International competition in the cotton market before the war was minuscule. The southern states

¹⁹Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United State, 1850, 458; Bureau of the Census, Population of the United States, 1860, 254-270.

produced the bulk of the cotton used in European and New England textile mills. Rivalled only by Georgia, Mississippi from 1839 until 1861 produced on average each year just over 21 percent of the South's crop. Even during the depression, 1838-1848, Mississippi's share of the region's total crop averaged just over 23 percent, more than any other single state. Together Georgia and Mississippi annually produced almost 40 percent of the region's cotton. When the crops of Louisiana and Alabama are added to the production of the two leading states, the Deep South accounted for almost three-quarters of the world's supply of cotton.²⁰

Restless southern farmers desirous of obtaining financial independence through participation in the market swelled the influence of Mississippi cotton in the international market. Just such families as Thomas Gale's Tennessee neighbors accounted for the post-1830 Mississippi boom. Smitten by the success that he had on his Yazoo River plantation, Gale, a native of Tennessee and part-time Mississippi resident, broadcast the news of his good fortune. Soon, his neighbors prepared to move to Mississippi: "The spirit of emigration seems almost general," he reported. Folk from across the South flowed into public land offices and large towns searching for acreage

²⁰Watkins, King Cotton, 29-30, see the chapter on Mississippi.

to purchase. In 1836, James D. Davidson, while passing through Vicksburg, observed the affects that the boom times had on Mississippi. Vicksburg, he said, ran "mad with speculation." Inflation, combined with a dearth of specie, made cash purchases rare; credit, however, was widely available. The city bustled with men who had determined the significance of the Indian cessions, men-on-the-make who wished to improve their financial condition. Most of them, Davidson surmised, were "gentlemen adventurers who think they have nothing more to do than come South and be the Lord of a Cotton Plantation and a hundred slaves."²¹ Others went to Mississippi with less lofty aspirations. Made wide-eyed by the sight of millions of acres of cheap public lands available on easy terms, men of moderate means saw in Mississippi their opportunity to join the master class. The search for material success, via that elusive cotton plantation and one hundred slaves or, realistically, through more modest enterprises, drove southerners not only to take-up land and produce for the market, but to be seemingly forever on the move.

It took John A. Quitman, the son of a Pennsylvania Lutheran minister, only two changes of residence and ten

²¹Thomas Gale to "Dear Sir," 22 August 1833, Gale-Polk Papers, UNC; Herbert A. Kellar, ed., "A Journey Through the South in 1836: Diary of James D. Davidson," Journal of Southern History 1 (August 1935), 356.

years before he struck upon a course that propelled him to the pinnacle of Deep South success. Although he had in common with many who went to Mississippi a desire to succeed, Quitman, as lawyer, planter, railroad builder, state legislator, governor, congressman, major general, and civil and military governor of Mexico, obtained a level of success that most immigrants only dreamed of.²² In at least one other way Quitman differed from the vast majority of those who would later follow him into Mississippi. He was a northerner. A survey of households of the 1850 and 1860 censuses reveals that even though approximately 50 percent of the population was born in Mississippi, most heads of household hailed from other slave states. Less than ten percent of heads of household were born in the northern states.²³

²²Robert E. May, John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), passim.

²³The U. S. Census, Population Schedules, 1850 and 1860 for the following counties were used to construct a data base: Copiah, Harrison, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson. Manuscript returns for Washington County in 1860 are missing. Two and one-half percent of households in each county were included. [Hereafter the surveys from this schedule will be cited as Population Survey (1850) and Population Survey (1860)].

(Table 2.2)
 Percentage Heads of Household
 Born in Various Locations,
 1850 and 1860

1850 Regions	Birthplace: Mississippi	Other Slave States	Northern States	Foreign Countries
Southern Bluffs	36.7	51.0	8.10	4.00
Northern Bluffs	1.70	98.2	0.00	0.00
Delta	9.80	64.7	5.80	19.6
Black Prairie	1.90	88.2	9.80	0.00
North-Cen- tral Hills	5.70	91.4	2.80	0.00
Piney Woods	22.5	52.5	5.00	20.0
1860 Regions	Birthplace: Mississippi	Other Slave States	Northern States	Foreign Countries
Southern Bluffs	52.8	43.3	1.80	1.80
Northern Bluffs	2.60	89.3	5.30	2.60
Delta *	17.1	37.1	14.2	31.4
Black Prairie	10.7	85.7	1.70	1.70
North-Cen- tral Hills	2.20	94.2	1.10	2.20
Piney Woods	40.0	40.0	5.00	15.0

Source: Population Survey (1850) and Population Survey (1860).

* The Delta region includes only Warren County; the 1860 manuscript returns for Washington County are not available.

According to the data presented in Table 2.2, as the rate of immigration slowed, an ever-increasing number of household heads, many of whom represented first-generation Mississippians, recorded their place of birth as Mississippi. Comparing the 1860 percentages with those derived from the 1850 census reveals that every region of the state, except the North-Central Hills, saw an increase in the percentage of heads of household born in Mississippi.²⁴

Particularly in the counties adjacent to the Mississippi River and the Gulf, northerners were not exactly a rare breed. As long as they, tacitly or otherwise, approved of the institution of slavery, they conducted their

²⁴The sole exception to the trend identified in the text may be an artifact of the data. For instance, Leake County, a North-Central Hills county, had only 35 foreign-born residents in 1860; two were counted in the survey. The survey of Leake County furthermore includes only 28 heads of household. In such a small survey, the presence of two foreign-born household heads skews the percentages. But, it should be noted too, that the percentage of heads born in other southern states increased by eight percent in Leake, and this contributed to the decreased percentage born in Mississippi. The sample population was selected from U.S., Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule, Copiah, Jones, Harrison, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties, 1850 and 1860, except for Washington County 1860 for which census records are missing. [Hereafter, the sample will be identified as Population Survey (1850) or (1860)]. For more on the immigrants from other slave states, see James D. Foust, "The Yeoman Farmer and Westward Expansion of U.S. Cotton Production," (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1967), and Herbert Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1945).

affairs without interference. Northern-born cultivators, such as Stephen Duncan and Quitman, in fact, succeeded in the market economy better than most southern-born farmers.²⁵ Aspiring to "something more than a mere support" that the Lutheran ministry promised, Quitman, when he left Pennsylvania in 1819 bound for Ohio, escaped his father's plan for him to become a cleric. In the West, he pursued a course often followed by young men on the make: he studied law and worked as a clerk in a land office. An acquaintance, whose sons had found fame and fortune in Natchez, however, convinced him to move south. In late 1821, he left Ohio for Mississippi to capitalize on the low land prices of the post-1819 depression. Quitman believed that the expansion of cotton production and the prices paid for the commodity offered attorneys a broad field in which to practice and boundless opportunities to become wealthy. His intuition proved correct. Despite a religious upbringing which stressed moderation, Quitman, who had always longed to dress the part of a dandy and to be accepted by fashionable society, soon began ordering

²⁵On the superior standing and advantages enjoyed by northerners in the Delta, particularly Stephen Duncan, see, Rothstein, "Dual Economy," 379-381.

expensive suits from Philadelphia and attending soirees hosted by established grandees.²⁶

Even though the cotton market had only indirectly led him to Mississippi, Quitman's 1824 marriage to Eliza Turner, a Natchez orphan due a share of her father's plantation, placed in his hands a portion of the Woodlands on Palmyra Island. Two years later, Quitman, who continued exclusively to practice the law while the courts settled the Turner estate, purchased a two-story federal style mansion, Monmouth, in Natchez. Borrowing heavily and forming a partnership with a planter, he purchased in 1828 a sugar cane plantation in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, and in 1834 a cotton plantation on the Mississippi near Natchez. More directly than ever, Quitman's livelihood depended on the cotton economy. He reveled in his new-found role as a haughty patrician. Yet, like many who

²⁶May, Quitman, 8, 10, 17. Gaining entry into Natchez society had always been a prize sought by many. A fortuitous marriage to a Delta belle was the goal of numerous young men on the make; if everything fell into place, marriage might lead to a survivor's share of a cotton plantation. For a Jackson area farmer who made several forays into Natchez high society in search of a bride, see Metcalfe Diary, 22 February 1843, 28 May-2 June 1843, James Wister Metcalfe Papers, UNC. Metcalfe left disappointed, having been able only to steal a few dances with a beautiful planter's daughter. A bad marriage could have a devastating affect on one's prestige. Franklin County gossip in 1861 centered on the proposed marriage of Sallie Dixon to jobless and propertyless Joe Trimble. Dixon's mother reportedly requested that the county clerk refuse to grant the young people a license should they apply. See Susan S. Darden Diary, 11, 14 February 1861, Darden Family Papers, MDAH.

signed their names for the sake of acquaintances' credit, the Panic of 1837 caught him unaware. Recovery came slowly. By 1842, he had rebounded sufficiently to assume the debts of his in-laws, and with a loan from a New Orleans commission house, he purchased the entire Turner plantation.²⁷ By the time of his death in 1859, Quitman had travelled a long distance from his Pennsylvania and Lutheran roots. He not only stood as lord over three plantations and hundreds of slaves, he had become one of the peculiar institution's staunchest defenders and a frequent supporter of filibusters into Latin American slave nations. Caught in the web of the market economy, the asceticism of his upbringing must have seemed utterly superfluous to the mature Quitman.

Few immigrants shared Quitman's good fortune. For most, in fact, moving to Mississippi required that they sacrifice familiar comforts in their pursuit of material success. Even professionals, who like Quitman believed the state offered an open field in which to practice their trades, found the road to success a rough one. The physician Edward Golladay complained that his profession scarcely provided a livelihood. If his financial status took a turn for the worse, Golladay jokingly remarked, he planned to claim a squatter's right to a cabin and a plot

²⁷May, Quitman, 21, 26, 28, 111-112.

of land. Dogtrot cabins (floorless log structures with a broad hall passing between two rooms) were the universal emblem of mobility and sacrifice in Mississippi. When hastily constructed, as they generally were, dogtrots might stand for little more than a decade. Stick and mud chimneys, few, if any, windows, and dirt floors kept the labor and capital needed to construct them at a minimum, but comfort was sacrificed in the process. Ephemeral and uncomfortable, dogtrot cabins suited a people consumed with achieving success in the market economy and willing to pull up stakes at every rumor of more fertile land at lower prices. In 1840, the idea of making something prompted Ben L. Smith to resign his teaching post in Georgia, to purchase a few slaves, and to move to Lowndes County, Mississippi. After several years of cotton farming, Smith had little to show for it. During the mid-1850s, after almost completely forsaking cotton for stock-raising, Smith realized his goal. The time for sacrificing had perhaps not subsided, but thirteen years of living in a floorless cabin ended when Smith erected a frame house. Diseases unique to the lower South and hardships encountered clearing land also required immigrants to sacrifice the familiar comforts of their former homes. In 1839, Barrett Walthall, a failed businessman from Richmond, experienced another variety of sacrifice when he moved to Holly Springs: heirloom china and trunks of

clothing shipped from Virginia disappeared at sea when the vessel transporting them sank.²⁸

Citing Gideon Lincecum's assertion that he had been "reared to a belief and faith in the pleasure of a frequent change of country," one historian has suggested that southerners owed their restlessness to cultural traits. Other historians argue that soil exhaustion prompted farmers to seek out fresh lands, though another persuasively argues that depleted soils reflected abandonment of farms not infertility. A more recent historian has suggested that native southerners, at least South Carolina's piedmont farmers, migrated to Mississippi in search of material success.²⁹ Samuel Agnew's father, a

²⁸Edward Golladay to George Golladay, 12 January 1860, George S. Golladay Papers, MDAH; see also, Seldon M. Burton to Samuel McCorkle, 3 May 1847, Samuel McCorkle Papers, MDAH. Burton felt confident that after a few weeks in Natchez, he would be on his way to fame and fortune, since he faced no competition from other doctors. Benjamin Lafayette Smith Autobiography, Mss., 3-6, MDAH. On sacrifices made by immigrants, see, Oakes, Ruling Race, 87-89. On Barrett Walthall, see, Paul Douglas Hardin, "Edward Cary Walthall: A Mississippi Conservative," (M.A. thesis, Duke University, 1940), 10.

²⁹Grady McWhiney, Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 32, quoting Gideon Lincecum, "Autobiography of Gideon Lincecum," Mississippi Historical Society Publications (1904), 446. The idea that soil exhaustion caused Upper South farmers to flee their homes is an old one. For correctives of that view, see Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century South (New York: W. W. Norton, Inc., 1978), 17. On South Carolinians leaving the piedmont, see Lacy K. Ford, Jr., Origins of Southern Radicalism: The
(continued...)

farmer from Due West, South Carolina, moved to Tippah County determined to expand his farming operation; before leaving the piedmont, he purchased two additional slaves to use on his farm. Within two years, he had on hand enough grain to last eighteen months, and he had opened a grinding mill.³⁰ Agnew was a successful farmer by Old South standards. An overarching desire to obtain something more than he had previously known lay at the heart of this moderate farmer's restlessness.

Wealthier southerners also migrated to Mississippi with the thought of expanding their farming operations, and, like their contemporaries of all classes, several moves often were required before they settled down. Patrick Henry was the first member of his family to move to the state. His brother Gustavus remained in Tennessee where he loaned money to emigrants moving to Mississippi. Trying to convince Gustavus that he should come south, Patrick cautioned that loaning money to aspiring planters involved great risks. Cotton cultivation, on the other hand, Patrick said, paid his mortgage and provided enough cash to expand his slave force; investing in land and

²⁹(...continued)
South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 39. See, also, Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, and Foust, "Yeoman Farmers."

³⁰Samuel A. Agnew Diaries, 15 December, 25 October, 14 July 1852, 29 June 1854, UNC.

slaves promised the highest return and safest course for farmers with capital. Not long after writing Gustavus, Patrick sold his plantation, purchased another in the state, and offered a third plot of land to his brother. Eventually, Patrick's pleas swayed Gustavus, who bought a 112 acre farm near Clinton. By 1849, however, he too, prepared to move on. Travelling as far as southwestern Mississippi in search of a five to six hundred acre plantation, Gustavus found none to his liking. Nevertheless, he determined to sell his slaves and farm for at least \$70,000. The sale of his 1852 and 1853 crops, he believed, would pay off his debts, and the cash brought by the sale of his real estate and chattel would allow him to invest in an ironworks or tobacco factory. His plans to become a captain of southern industry, however, were shelved. By April 1854, Gustavus owned another Mississippi plantation.³¹ Unlike the planter paternalists some historians have found in the South, Gustavus, knowing that cotton did not offer sole access to the market economy, invested in land and slaves for the sake of profit.

³¹Patrick Henry to Marion Henry, 17 March 1835, Gustavus A. Henry to Marion Henry, 21 May 1853, Gustavus to Marion, 17 April 1854, Gustavus A. Henry Papers, UNC. The thought of moving again left Elizabeth Henry, Patrick's wife with a sinking feeling in her chest: "I am very restless and to add to this anxiety of mine my good man says we are to remain here until the first of may by which arrangement I am to be thrown out of a garden." Elizabeth D. Henry to Marion, 17 March 1835, Gustavus A. Henry Papers, UNC.

Gustavus wanted something more than what he had known in Tennessee and cared not whether he achieved material success through usury, planting, or manufacturing.

For every Gustavus Henry and John Quitman who went to Mississippi and achieved success, there were undoubtedly countless residents who failed to find improving their material well-being. When the siren call of fresh lands that had once beckoned farmers from the Upper South quieted, the rocky path to success in the market economy was revealed during the depression of the late 1830s and the 1840s. To many, the sacrifice that the economy required to make was more than they could bear. With a haste equalled only by that which brought them to Mississippi, residents fled the state, bound for fresh lands at cheaper prices and a new start at improving their material condition.

Perhaps the greatest emigration from Mississippi occurred during the depression years following the Panic of 1837. On a trip to Jackson from northeastern Mississippi in 1845, Jehu Amariah Orr noted the affect that panic had on farmers. Abandoned plantations ("bits of wreckage and flotsam marking the unseen graves of those who have perished there") fell into decay. Courts conducted a brisk business foreclosing property. Under the cover of nightfall, planters, pressed by their creditors, sent away their slaves, families, horses and mules, "all

in a double-quick march to Texas." Texas, according to another contemporary, was the "stronghold of evil-doers."³² Although the rate of emigration caused by the panic cannot perhaps be accurately calculated, if the rates of be accurately calculated, if the rates of persistence established for the last three decades of the antebellum era indicate a trend, the vast majority of white residents who migrated into the state during the 1830s did not last out the decade.

The panic left an indelible impression on the state, and, post-depression boosters frequently pointed out, however falsely, that Mississippians had learned their lesson about engaging in speculative ventures. Once a theater for reckless speculation in which men made and lost large fortunes "in quicker time than anywhere else," Mississippi by the 1850s contained, according to a writer in the Southern Business Directory "a new class of citizens": "a new and more prudent class of merchants regulate her commerce, so that now, both planters and

³²J. A. Orr, "A Trip From Houston to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1845," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906), 173-178; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 6 June 1843, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke.

merchants are prosperous and are growing rich."³³ Had the writer been interested, he might also have said that a less mobile population inhabited the state.

For some time, historians have employed rates of persistence to illuminate a host of social and economic phenomena. As emigration was informed by one's success in the market economy, age and wealth played a discernible role in influencing the decision to pull up stakes; the failure of most residents to remain in one location for long periods reveals much about southerners' strong drive to succeed and the difficulty of achieving success in the market.

Almost 80 percent of Mississippi heads of household identified in 1840 failed to reappear in the 1850 census in the same county or an adjacent one. Roughly 73 percent of those identified in a survey of 1850 households could not be located in the next census. (See Table 2.3). Mortality and errors committed in taking the census accounted for some who go unidentified, but most likely of emigrated. Comparing Mississippi's rate of persistence to other areas' bolsters the image of southerners as rational actors in the market economy. A historian studying one rural New England township has found that between 1840 and

³³The Southern Business Directory and General Commercial Advertiser, vol. 1 (Charleston: Walker and Jones, 1854), 141.

1860 male heads of household persisted at a rate approaching 63 percent; persistence rates for males age 20 and over living in two mid-Western areas during the decade of the 1850s range between 27 and 31 percent. Closer to Mississippi, two recent historians have established that Orange County, North Carolina and the Edgefield District of South Carolina experienced fairly high rates of persistence, 52 and 40 percent, respectively; another historian has calculated that the persistence rate in four regions of Alabama varied between 25 and 36 percent.³⁴

³⁴Hal S. Baron, Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 84; Don Harrison Doyle, The Social Order in a Frontier Community, Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870 (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 261-262; Mildred Throne, "A Population Study of an Iowa County in 1850," Iowa Journal of History 57 (October 1959), 209-210; Orville Vernon Burton, In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 42; Robert C. Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood in a North Carolina Community, Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 164; William L. Barney, "Patterns of Crisis: Alabama White Families and Rural Change, 1850-1870," Sociology and Social Research 63 (April 1979), 532, 540. According to Myron P. Gutmann, et. al. Staying Put or Moving On? Ethnicity, Migration, and Persistence in Nineteenth-Century Texas (Austin: Population Research Center Papers, No. 12.03, 1990), Table 4, approximately 35.9 percent of Texans in six counties persisted between 1850 and 1860.

(Table 2.3)
Rates of Persistence
in Antebellum Mississippi

Heads of Household	1840-1850	1850-1860
Region	n=50	n=81
Southern Bluffs	19.0	34.6
Northern Bluffs	23.4	0.00
Delta *	23.4	25.8
Black Prairie	13.3	34.0
North-Central Hills	10.0	27.1
Piney Woods *	45.0	27.5
State Total	20.8	27.2

n = number of persisters

Source: Population Survey (1850), Population Survey (1860), and U.S. Census, Population Schedule, 1840 for Copiah, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson Counties.

*The persistence rate 1850-1860 for the Delta region includes only Warren County: the 1860 manuscript returns for Washington County are missing. The rate calculated for the Piney Woods 1840-1850 includes only Jones County: Harrison County was not formed until 1841.

The rates of persistence calculated for Mississippi favorably compare to those established in the above-mentioned areas of the mid-west and in Alabama, though, in fact, differences in the way the percentages were arrived at leave Mississippi with a comparatively low rate.³⁵

³⁵The rates of persistence established for Mississippi include as persisters those residents who moved from one county into an adjacent one. There are two reasons for considering them persisters. First, county boundaries were
(continued...)

Rates in North Carolina and South Carolina, however, compliment the findings for Mississippi. The great rush to Mississippi from the South Atlantic states had, after all, ended by 1850, and high rates of persistence should be expected in the Carolinas thereafter.

An examination of persistence rates in the sampled Mississippi counties reveals a wide range. In Jones County, for example, 45 percent of those heads of household surveyed in the 1840 census continued to live in the area in 1850, while only one of the twenty Pontotoc heads of household in 1840 could be located in Mississippi ten years later. Between 1840 and 1850, the following counties experienced rates of persistence equal to or exceeding the state rate: Warren (33%), Panola (30%), Covich (23%), and Leake (20%). Among the households surveyed in 1850, the range of percentages by county was slightly lower than that established in the previous survey, from 48 percent in Covich County to 9 percent in Panola. Only Jones and Covich ranked among the top five counties in

³⁵(...continued)
frequently changed, and a head of household listed in a county in one census, may be listed in another in the next, though in fact, he or she did not move. Second, relocating from one county to the next may have necessitated a move of negligible distance and not have involved the sale of property. By counting as persisters those who moved into adjacent counties, the rate of persistence among Mississippi household heads increased by about two percent.

persistence in both surveys.³⁶ Jones, a rural county in the middle of the Piney Woods, and Copiah, which is included in the Southern Bluff region, though topographically it resembles the Piney Woods, both lie in the heart of the earliest settled area of the state. Their well-established reputations for healthful environments and soils adequate to support a variety of agricultural pursuits contributed to the rates of persistence experienced there. Yet other counties with the same virtues experienced far less persistence. Obviously, something other than subsistence farming and a pleasing environment motivated the sampled populations to change their place of residence.

In a letter to Governor Tilgham M. Tucker, James Dickson of Columbus perhaps offered a clue to uncovering the reason for Mississippians' shallow roots. After trying to find work in Jackson, New Orleans, and Mobile, Dickson traveled to Natchez where his bad luck apparently continued. Pleading with Tucker for assistance, Dickson explained his situation: "I left Home for the purpose of making something and I don't like to return until I do."³⁷

³⁶U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Copiah, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties, 1840. Hereafter cited as, Population Survey (1840). Harrison County, one of the twelve survey counties employed in this study was not formed until 1841. Population Survey (1850) and Population Survey (1860).

³⁷James Dickson to Tilgham M. Tucker, 12 March 1842, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

Not unlike Quitman, and surely a host of others, the idea of acquiring something more than he had known and proving to his family that he deserved their respect as an independent man propelled Dickson to leave home. Many young men like Dickson left and never again returned.

Youth coupled with the search for success prompted many to remove from Mississippi. As might be expected, the youngest classification of heads of household, those men between the ages 20 and 29, persisted at a significantly lower rate than their elders. The persistence rate calculated after taking into consideration the estimated survival rate, the adjusted percentage, most accurately describes the pattern of mobility in the state. Along with increasing age came the accumulation of real estate, slaves, and status, and as these three measures of success mounted, so too did the possibility that a head of household would persist. The rate of persistence for those age 30 to 39, however, is more vexing. Perhaps the best explanation is that men in this age cohort, many undoubtedly for the first time, believed that their success lay just around the corner. Even though the median value of their real estate holdings did not exceed that of more mobile age groups, these heads of household were in the process of acquiring their own property and in the midst of expanding their families. (See Table 2.4). The idea of

of expanding their families. (See Table 2.4). The idea of making their existing businesses and farms pay appealed to them more than did starting over in a new location.

(Table 2.4)
Rates of Persistence, by Age:
1850 to 1860

Male Heads of Household Only: N=226

Age	Percentage Persisting	Survival Rate	Adjusted Percentage
20-29	20.7	.920	22.7
30-39	45.3	.888	50.9
40-49	32.1	.828	39.1
50-59	28.5	.707	40.0
60-69	38.4	.487	83.3
Over 69	9.0	.188	50.0

n=total population surveyed in 1850

Source: Population Survey (1850) and Population Survey (1860). Survival rates were taken from Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, "Migration and the Social Order in Erie County, New York; 1855," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8 (Spring 1978), 679. Their rates are calculated from Ansley J. Coale, Paul Demeny, and Barbara Vaughn, Regional Model Life Tables, and Stable Populations (New York: Academic Press, 1983), Model West, level 12.

Although little is known about those who did not remain in Mississippi, the same motivations that drew residents to the state took others away. James R. Brumby, the son of a restless farmer, who had been on the move for almost a decade prior to James' birth, was born in Holmes County in 1846. James' older siblings had been born in South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, and the familiar

pattern of moving continued during James' childhood. Twice before James reached the age of eight, the Brumbys moved within the county. Then, in 1853, they relocated to nearby Yazoo County but returned soon afterwards to Holmes when creditors seized the Brumby farm. Hard times continued to keep the family on the move. Disappointed with farming, Brumby gave up on Mississippi altogether before 1860 and migrated to Marietta, Georgia, where he opened a tannery.³⁸ Migration out of Mississippi, as suggested by the case of the Brumby's, was influenced by individual's failure to obtain material success.

While the connection between emigration and success cannot be precisely identified, a comparison of persisting and non-persisting residents' wealth indicates that those who failed to persist between 1850 and 1860 held less wealth than did those who remained. Unfortunately, the 1850 population census recorded only one measure of wealth, the value of real estate.³⁹ Yet with land representing the most valuable investment many

³⁸James Brumby, "Autobiography," Brumby and Smith Family Papers, MDAH.

³⁹Slaveholding also was a measure of wealth. Owners of slaves, like those who held real estate, persisted at a rate similar to the general population. Between 1840 and 1850, for instance, 18.6 percent of slaveholders sampled remained in the state. In Wilkinson, Warren, and Lowndes counties, two-thirds did so, and in Panola and Noxubee one-third persisted. U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Copiah, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, and Wilkinson counties, 1840 and 1850.

Mississippians made, a comparison of the median value of real estate held by those who persisted and those who did not suggests the degree to which wealth influenced decisions to migrate. Within every age cohort, except the fifty to fifty-nine classification, the median value of real estate held by those who persisted far exceeded the value held by those who did not; those who managed to acquire real estate of great value chose to remain in Mississippi more often than their neighbors whose holdings were less valuable.⁴⁰ When the success that led immigrants to Mississippi proved illusory, the market economy riveted their attention elsewhere on fresh lands available at lower prices, and the search for material success took place on a new frontier.

⁴⁰The only exception to the cited trend occurred among the surveyed population between 50 and 59 years of age. The small size of the data base might best explain the anomaly.

(Table 2.5)
Median Value of Real Estate
of Those Reporting, 1850-1860

Male Heads of Household Only

Age	Median Value of Real Estate For:		
	All	Persisters	Non-Persisters
20-29	500	700	400
30-39	800	1300	700
40-49	1000	1600	1200
50-59	640	320	900
60-69	400	1000	400
Over 69	1000	*	800

Source: Population Survey 1850.

* Only one male head of household persisted; no median value can be obtained.

Success in the market economy, as measured by wealth, then might be used as a predictor of persistence. In a rural environment such as Mississippi's, other factors, including occupational mobility, less frequently prompted people to move. Since it was the market economy, specifically cotton cultivation, that drew so many immigrants to the state, it should not be surprising that farmers, who represented 68 percent of the surveyed population in 1850, were a mobile lot. Opportunities to conduct a business other than farming were limited, and, when a farmer tired of Mississippi, he simply moved. The one exception to the occupational stability among persisting Mississippians, however, occurred among overseers.

For poor boys on the make, overseeing represented one of the shortest routes to economic independence available. Granted the work was not pleasant, the pay not generous, but expenses were low, and planters were known to offer bonuses for good crops. In the late 1830s, Wiley Vester, during his tenure as an overseer near Meridian Springs, retired his debts and saved sufficient money to earn \$160 a year on loans that he made. Yet, despite his apparent success, Vester did not intend on spending his life as an overseer. He looked forward to the day when he could buy land and slaves in his native North Carolina. Upon his return to Carolina, he hoped to attend school full-time and to marry a "good smart woman." Even though occupational mobility in the antebellum era rarely occurred, none of those heads of household who listed their occupation as overseer in 1850 continued to work as an overseer in 1860.⁴¹

The portrait of the emigrant resembles that of the immigrant. Most likely he was a farmer from a southern state; acquisitive and longing to find a place in the market economy, he also wanted to maintain his freedom

⁴¹Wiley Vester to "Dear Father," 30 November 1834, 19 March 1837, Benjamin Vester Papers, Duke. Additional literary evidence about overseers as poor boys on the make can be found in Andrew J. Watkins to Joseph Lightsey, 12 January 1851, Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, MDAH. See, too, U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Noxubee County, 1850 and 1860, for the fate of another overseer who ended up an insane pauper.

from debt and personal autonomy. Participating in the market economy, if only occasionally and in a restricted manner, brought him to Mississippi, but the inherent difficulty of achieving financial success drove him away.

The depression of the late 1830s and the 1840s was one stumbling block in the path of southerners who longed to be upwardly mobile. But, even after 1848, southerners confronted many obstacles that hindered them from achieving success in the market economy and securing their economic autonomy. Indeed, the very goal of finding a niche in the market economy confronted the one that lead southerners to seek out self-sufficiency.

Prices paid for commodities rose and fell according to the price of cotton, and so too did the price of improved farm land and slaves. Considering the large share of the international cotton market that Mississippi and southern farmers commanded, it might be assumed that they wielded control over the prices they received for their crops. The cotton market, however, was volatile, especially in the 1840s, and always dependent on the demand of textile manufacturers in Europe and the northeastern United States. While individual farmers might adjust the amount of cotton they produced in order to meet changes in the market, real or expected, the necessity of cultivating cotton for cash, even in the worst financial times, made controlling the number of bales placed in the market

difficult. To make matters worse, geographic isolation and poor communications facilities forced cotton cultivators, large and small, to rely upon commission merchants for a host of services. Immigrants with visions of growing wealthy through cotton cultivation discovered that, though the promised fertility of the soil proved true, they depended on the market for cash to purchase land, slaves, and staple goods. Any dreams of living in an Arcadia of independent producers faded quickly when they moved into Mississippi.

Planters, especially northern-born ones with close ties to New York and Liverpool, maintained a distinct advantage over producers without such friends. Yet, because of the slow pace of communications, even planters on good terms with factors rarely received current information about cotton prices. Planters who tried to watch the cotton market themselves found it nearly impossible to direct their factors with precision. Commission merchants, operating mainly out of New Orleans and Mobile, served Mississippi planters. Some houses opened branch offices in the state: in the mid-1840s, Natchez had three commission merchants, and Vicksburg had over twenty. Typically, as planters ginned their crop, they sent several bales at a time to their factor. The factor, in turn, sold the cotton at a price agreed upon by the planter or at the best price possible. During the year, planters

turned to their factors for cash advances, and profits from the sale of cotton were credited to the planter's account. Cotton cultivators who used commission merchants depended on them for the commodities they needed, as well as the profit that they realized on their crop. In the 1850s, at least one planter, disgusted by the lack of control that he had over his crop, suggested that planters form a cooperative association to bypass commission merchants. Duncan McKenzie also grew weary of his subordinate position to factors and the market. McKenzie's New Orleans commission house had sold his entire 1842 crop of twenty-one bales for 5.25 cents per pound, which after deducting the cost of transportation and insurance barely covered the amount of the advance he had received.⁴²

Cultivators of cotton, especially those in the interior of the state who ginned only a few bales each year, had even less autonomy than large planters over the price they received for their cotton. Commission

⁴²The best description of the relationship between farmers and commission merchants can be found in Harold Woodman's King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1915 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), 3-60. On commission merchants in Mississippi, see, Kimball and James' Business Directory, for the Mississippi Valley, 1844 (Cincinnati: Kendall and Barnard, 1844), 416-419, 426.. On the "Planters Chamber of Commerce" proposed by a Panola County planter, see, Miles H. McGehee, "How Shall Cotton Maintain Remunerating Prices?" Commercial Review 7 (July 1849), 74-75. Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 6 June 1843, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke.

merchants found the risks too great and the profits too small to justify dealing with small producers, the farmers most likely to pass in and out of the cotton market.

Small-scale cotton cultivators had to turn to local planters, country merchants, and itinerant speculators for the services factors provided planters. In 1850, Peter Misso and Andre Monarcho, Italian immigrants operating a grocery in Macon, for example, purchased from small farmers between 200 and 400 bales of cotton. When merchants, like Edward Jack of Warren County, discovered themselves more involved in money-lending than retailing, they often began advertising themselves as full-service factors. Some small producers who could not secure the services of adventurous middle-men such as Misso, Monarcho, or Jack sold to planters their seed cotton at greatly reduced prices. Before the panic struck, cotton in the seed sold in the Piney Woods at four cents per pound. In 1840, local planters paid only two cents. The mutually dependent relationship that developed among merchants and small producers resembled the one that factors and planters shared. Merchants depended on the cotton market for their livelihoods: exigencies that interfered with their ability to collect on farmers' accounts--a change in the cotton market or an epidemic, for example--might force them to

declare bankruptcy or to pay the outrageous interest charged by money-lenders.⁴³

Besides operating in the cotton market through secondary agents, cultivators faced wide fluctuations in the market itself that threatened to rob them of any financial independence they hoped to achieve. Hard lessons in the method of the market's function became apparent to all after the Panic of 1837: every bale of cotton that exceeded demand, caused the price of cotton to fall. John Quitman's New Orleans factor perhaps best summarized the South's dependence on textile manufacturers: "if the Crop in the U. S. prove a large one, it is generally thought prices [paid for cotton] in Europe will recede." The reverse also proved true in some years, and the size of the stock on hand in England influenced the price of cotton. In a letter to his factor, Stephen Duncan predicted that cotton production would be low in 1844. Nevertheless, "with the stocks in Europe," Duncan surmised, "the manufactures can control the market." Other contingencies affected the price of cotton, too. Bad

⁴³On Misso and Monarcho, see, R. G. Dun and Company Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Noxubee County) 20; on Jack, see, (Warren County), 4; on the affects of successive yellow fever epidemics in 1853 and 1854 and interest rates of 1.5 percent per month, see, (Warren County) 29, Dun Collection, Harvard. On the collapse of banking services in Mississippi, see, Larry Schweikart, Banking in the American South From the Age of Jackson to Reconstruction (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 23-27, passim.

weather in a large area of the cotton belt would set speculators to work calculating the consequences for total supply, and the availability of specie determined how much of the crop could be purchased.⁴⁴

From 1837 until about 1845, the South, indeed the western world, experienced a dearth of specie. In the South, the devaluation of paper currency precipitated by President Andrew Jackson's financial policies worsened the currency crisis. Currency had not always been in short supply in the South. During the 1830s, a plethora of improvement banks, planters, and commission houses, riding the tide of the boom times, had freely loaned their "shin-plaster" currency to a variety of speculators and aspiring planters. When Jackson's specie circular required debts

⁴⁴Quoting, A. J. Denniston and Company to John Quitman, 26 January 1844, Quitman Family Papers, UNC, and Stephen Duncan to Charles P. Leverich, 30 March 1844, Charles P. Leverich Papers, MDAH. For an assessment of the effect that weather conditions had on prices, see Brown & Shipley and Co., to G. Caledonia, 19 September 1840, Port Gibson Bank Papers, MDAH. On the scarcity of specie and the price of cotton, see W. Newton Mercer to Charles P. Leverich, 25 May 1843, Charles P. Leverich Papers, MDAH. Other assessments of the cotton market may be found in: A. J. Denniston and Co., to John Quitman, 6 January 1844, 4 March 1844, and R. M. Esther to Quitman, 14 September 1854, Quitman Family Papers, UNC; R. L. Adams and Company to S. T. Lockhart, 18 November 1858, and Murphy, Sykes and Co. to Lucinda Lockhart, 22 October 1859, Lockhart-Weir Family Papers, MDAH. Although the panic of 1857 was not as severe as that of 1837, it had a similar effect on the supply of currency and the price of cotton: see Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 1 November 1857, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke; Daniel Kelly to James and Ann Kelly, 21 March 1857, and Daniel Kelly to James Kelly, 8 November 1857, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke.

owed the federal government be paid with silver or gold, lenders were forced to do the same, and many debtors were revealed to be worth more on paper than in reality. The flush times which had served Joseph G. Baldwin's fictionalized Virginians so well abruptly ended, and the price of cotton, outstripping the decline in the cost of consumer items, reflected the severity of the depression. In good times and in bad, the relationship between the price of commodities and the price of cotton was, as Daniel Kelly noted, a direct one. In 1845, he said, "all necessities are quite low in Mobile, all being governed by the price of cotton;" another resident of south Mississippi, R. A. Evans observed that "everything [was] in proportion" to the price of cotton.⁴⁵ After the onset of the panic, cotton prices remained low until the late 1840s. Twentieth century economists George Warren and Frank Pearson, who have indexed wholesale prices for the period 1798 to

⁴⁵Quoting, Daniel Kelly to James C. Kelly, 29 February 1845, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke, and R. A. Evans Diary, 21 July 1857, R. A. Evans Papers, MDAH. No widely accepted terminal date for the end of the panic has been established. Some regions of the state, generally those most closely tied to major markets, recovered sooner than other; based on the recovery of the price of cotton, the date should be about 1845. Contemporaries offered various dates for a return to good times, see, Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 24 December 1840, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke; Henry Quitman to John Quitman, 10 December 1841, Quitman Family Papers, UNC; W. Newton Mercer to Charles P. Leverich, 25 May 1843, Charles P. Leverich Papers, MDAH. See, to Joseph G. Baldwin's, The Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi (Americus, Georgia: Americus Book Company, 1853), 72-108.

1932, confirm that changes in the price of cotton roughly mirrored the vicissitudes of the consumer price index, though cotton remained somewhat lower than the indexed cost of major consumer items. Corn and wheat, the nation's other significant crops, followed a similar trend. Average annual wholesale cotton prices in New York for the crop years 1838-1840 to 1848-1849 ranged from 9.5 cents to 5.63 cents per pound. Southern markets paid like prices: in Mobile, the 1843-1844 crop sold for between 6.5 and 8.8 cents, and the following year, prices ranged from 4.5 to 6.5 cents; low-middling cotton purchased at New Orleans between 1844 and 1846 cost wholesalers as little as five cents and as much as nine. Cultivators, of course, received less for their crops than the wholesale price. Following the depression, except for the crop year 1851-1852, the average annual price of cotton at New York exceeded ten cents per pound, and for a short time in the early 1850s, the indexed price of cotton surpassed the indexed price of major consumer items.⁴⁶

⁴⁶George F. Warren and Frank A. Pearson, Prices (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1933), 25-27, 31-32; Watkins, King Cotton, 29-30, 145; Arthur Harrison Cole, Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States 1700-1861: A Statistical Supplement; Actual Wholesale Prices of Various Commodities (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 291, 296, 300. Gavin Wright, Political Economy, 91-92, has argued that, despite the antebellum depressions, cotton producers kept up with the demand of textile manufacturers, a phenomena that perhaps in part explains the parallel tracks assumed by the indexed price of cotton and consumer items.

So long as specie remained dear during the 1840s, cotton prices remained low. The cost of commodities traded locally, including land and slaves, followed a similar pattern. In response to the depression, farmers attempted to adjust their production to compensate for the financial downturn of the 1830s and 1840s. As M. W. Phillips suggested, farmers understood the supply and demand feature of the cotton market. According to Phillips, cotton at eight cents per pound, a high price for the depression years, allowed farmers in the Mississippi cotton belt, and other fertile regions of the South, to dominate the cotton market and to make a profit. When the price reached ten cents, as it did after the 1848, farmers on marginal lands could profit, but eventually their participation in the market would drive down the price.⁴⁷ The opening of the Chickasaw and Choctaw cession lands, coinciding as it did with high price of cotton, made Mississippi the capitol of the southwestern cotton kingdom, but the depression deflated cotton prices and prompted farmers to respond to price changes in an economically rational manner.

⁴⁷U.S., Patent Office, Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year, 1853 (Washington, 1853), 199. Phillips assessment of supply and demand features of the cotton market proved true, except that prices remained over the ten cent mark throughout most of the 1850s.

"Dismay and panic" struck the Black Prairie in 1845 when the price paid for cotton failed to live up to farmers' expectations. According to George S. Young, farmers aimlessly roamed the countryside and greeted each other with news of the apocalyptic fall in prices. Eight years of low prices took many to the brink of financial disaster, and cotton, which if sold at market prices would not pay transportation costs, lined the banks of the Tombigbee. Small farmers, and presumably others, too, during the panic, curtailed their production, and some refused to plant cotton at all. In 1845, Daniel Kelly, for instance, broke with his customary practice and planted no cotton. When farmers, who needed perhaps sixteen to twenty cents a pound to pay off their mortgages, failed to sell their crops at that price, they looked, as did Duncan McKenzie, to other crops or sold out or simply fled. McKenzie in 1845 planted only corn. Unfortunately for him, the shortage of specie in his neighborhood prohibited him from selling much of it on a cash basis, and selling corn on credit, he said, was "the verry [sic] poorest buisness [sic] that a farmer could do."⁴⁸

⁴⁸Quoting, George Young to James McDowell, 8 March 1843, James McDowell Papers, Duke; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 28 December 1845, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke. See, too, Young to McDowell, 15 January 1845, McDowell Papers, Duke. For one farmer's difficulty paying his mortgage when faced with a collapsed cotton market, see, John P. Stewart to Duncan McLaurin, 17 May 1837, McLaurin (continued...)

For farmers with capital, the low price of commodities during the depression made possible the augmentation of their land and slaveholdings. In the Piney Woods, speculators and farmers wishing to expand their operations could purchase acreage that had sold for ten to twenty dollars several years before for as little as \$1.25 during the 1840s; George Young noted that land on the Black Prairie could be purchased at bargain prices, too. Scattered reports of slave prices in Mississippi bear out U. B. Phillips' finding that the cost of slaves rose and fell with the price of cotton during the depression. At roughly the same time that cotton prices began to recover, the cost of slaves purchased at New Orleans started to rise. Until 1853, when the price of cotton went over the twelve cent mark, the cost of slaves did not rebound to the pre-panic level.⁴⁹ The return to economic stability in the

⁴⁸(...continued)

Papers, Duke; see, also, Daniel Kelly to James C. Kelly, 29 February 1845, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke.

⁴⁹Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 24 March 1841, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke; George Young to James McDowell, 8 March 1843, James McDowell Papers, Duke. In the mid-1830s, a popular wisdom held that the time to purchase cleared land at bargain prices had passed, see H. C. Stewart to Duncan McLaurin, 4 December 1835, McLaurin Papers, Duke; [?] to James T. Harrison, 27 July 1834, James T. Harrison Papers, UNC. After the panic, land prices began a meteoric rise: Susan S. Darden reported land near the Mississippi River selling for as little as \$5 and as much as \$30, Darden Diary, 18, 19 December 1854, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; Samuel Nicholson encouraged a correspondent to purchase quickly the 880 acres (340 of it unimproved) offered him:
(continued...)

late 1840s restored to Mississippians, newcomers and longtime residents alike, a new hope for establishing themselves as successful and independent men.

Yet, however much a farmer hoped to achieve success in the market economy, economic independence (protection from debt and penury) required an initially risky investment of capital in land and labor.⁵⁰ To obtain the

⁴⁹(...continued)

"for land is rising daily." The price stood at \$6,000. See Samuel T. Nicholson to Blake Nicholson, 13 December 1853, Samuel T. Nicholson Papers, MDAH.

Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (1929; reprint, New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937), 175-181. On the falling price of slaves, see I. T. Harris to Samuel McCorkle, 26 March 1841, Samuel McCorkle Papers, MDAH. Harris offered to sell McCorkle two field hands and three children for the low price of \$2,000; before the panic struck, a field hand sold for \$2,250 in Covington County. See Duncan McKenzie to John McLaurin, n.d., Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke.

⁵⁰Of the measurable variables necessary to produce for the market economy, the available supply of labor was far more important than the amount of improved acreage tilled by farmer. Using the familiar multiplicative formula, $x = ax^b$, where x is the unknown amount of cotton, a the intercept, and b the slope, regression analysis of the relationship between cotton and labor, as well as cotton and improved acreage, reveals the significance of labor in the production equation. Substituting the values derived for the regression of cotton (the dependent variable y) and labor (the independent variable x) results in the following:

1850 $y = 1.89 * (\text{available labor} ^{1.09})$

$r^2 = .78$ $t\text{-value } a = 18.66$ $t\text{-value } b = 22.98$

1860 $y = 3.82 * (\text{available labor} ^{1.02})$

$r^2 = .71$ $t\text{-value } a = 41.94$ $t\text{-value } b = 20.75$

(continued...)

goal of economic independence, a degree of dependence was necessary. Although the depression proved to farmers the fullness of their subordination to the market, the economic downturn was temporary, as was its lessons. In the last twelve years of the antebellum period, as the market again welcomed producers with remunerative prices, an atmosphere similar to that of the mid-1830s returned. Curiously, Mississippians not only embraced success in the market economy as a symbol of economic independence, they apotheosized the antithesis of the market economy, the yeoman farmer who neither owed his soul to the market nor another man, who tilled the soil himself, and who consumed only what his family produced. Despite the prevailing Jacksonian rhetoric about market participation and success, an earlier Jeffersonian notion of economic independence continued to inform notions of virtuous behavior. Both concepts together, in fact, as adapted to post-depression Mississippi, bolstered farmers in their search for material success. Joseph B. Lightsey perhaps best

⁵⁰(...continued)

Accordingly, for every two laborers (defined herein as all slaves over 15 years of age and all white males between 15 and 65, except those dependents listing their occupations as student, minister, lawyer, etc.) added to a farm unit, a predicted increase of about two bales of cotton occurred. Since the relationship was not linear, the output increased exponentially as the number of laborers increased. T-values resulting from the regression of cotton and land suggest that the null hypothesis should be accepted.

illustrates the manner in which Mississippians adapted the yeoman ideal to their materialistic notions of success.

Joseph's father, John Lightsey, Sr., was a Piney Woods farmer. In 1849, he harvested fifteen hundred bushels of corn, two hundred bushels of sweet potatoes, one hundred bushels of oats, five bushels of wheat, and one ton of rice. He also ginned two bales of cotton. With 200 acres of improved land, Lightsey almost quadrupled the mean improved holdings of Jasper County farmers; his 520 improved acres exceeded by over four times the mean unimproved holdings of his neighbors. On his farm, he maintained large herds of livestock, including sixty swine, forty sheep, thirty head of cattle, and five oxen. While Lightsey's extensive property holdings distinguished him from his neighbors, he differed little from them in other ways. His household consisted of his wife, four children, and a family of slaves (two adults and three children). Possession of five human chattel did not qualify him to be one of the county's slaveholding elite. According to the 1850 census, Jasper County's white population held 2.3 slaves per capita; about 40 percent of slave owners held more than five. Lightsey produced sufficient meat, corn, and other foodstuffs to feed his livestock and family, both black and white members. He sold surpluses in Paulding. Like other Piney Woods farmers, he took cattle and

cotton to market.⁵¹ If the Lightsey household differed significantly from other Piney Woods families, Joseph, the Lightsey's third son, by keeping and preserving a diary, made it unique.

In 1850, Joseph B. Lightsey's world revolved around farm labor and a network of family and friends. On a daily basis, young Lightsey worked along side his father's slaves in the surrounding forests and fields and received as compensation a plot of land rent free and a monthly salary of ten dollars. Under his father's tutelage, Joseph learned the business of farming. During the winter of 1850, he travelled with John, Sr. to Mobile for two days of trading. (Two years later, they drove steers and bulls to Mobile, loaded their wagons with goods on Christmas Day, and returned home). As with farm families across the South, the season of the year determined the day's tasks and the intensity of the labor. In February 1850, Joseph split rails; in March, he planted corn and dug new ditches around a rice patch; in April, he planted cotton and hoed weeds from among the young corn stalks. Ridges for potatoes were prepared in May, and oats were

⁵¹U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Jasper County, 1850; U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Jasper County, 1850; U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedule, 1850; U.S., Bureau of the Census, The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Table 1. According to the method used to calculate self-sufficiency (see Appendix), Lightsey produced one-half again more meat and grain than his family consumed.

planted in June. The harvest began in August. The Lightsey's first tackled the corn crop, pulling mature ears and removing the green blades to sun-dry as fodder, then came cotton picking time. In January, the cycle, with little variation, began anew.⁵²

Between his farm chores, Lightsey hunted and fished and assisted his neighbors with their work. He helped one to build a chimney, another to clear a field of stumps, and yet another to pick his cotton. Opportunities to break the cycle of communal and family labor were welcomed, and Joseph regularly joined in communal activities. He attended a large community dinner hosted by an uncle; he took in the sights of a traveling menagerie and a circus; he interrupted his work long enough on at least one occasion to enjoy a swim in his future father-in-law's mill pond; and in a spirit of communal conviviality, he made a few obligatory purchases at the Paulding Presbyterian Church bazaar, despite the high prices of the goods. Whether Lightsey turned to work or to leisure, the watchful eye of his network of family and friends greeted him. In a succinct two sentence statement, which lacks any hint of melancholy or gloom, Lightsey reminds the twentieth-century reader that even though traditional values worked

⁵²Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 5 January, 4-8 March, 9, 15, 20, 25 April, 29 May, 8, 27 June, 8, 28 August, 9-12, 21 September 1850, 2, 16-26 December 1851, MDAH.

a powerful influence over rural Mississippians' rhythm of life, the routine of farm work, responding as it did to the ebb and flow of the seasons and the necessity of making a livelihood, determined the tempo of life: "This is my nineteenth birthday[.] I pulled fodder all day."⁵³

As a young man without land of his own and reassured in his farming operations by a safety-net of family financial support, Joseph Lightsey enjoyed a place in the market economy unknown to mature Mississippi farmers. Yet even in his youth, Lightsey's experiences and his recorded thoughts on farming suggest that living under the influence of communitarian values did not preclude the development of a market-economy mentality. On the small plot of land that John Sr. allowed him, Joseph planted watermelons, which he sold in Paulding, and cotton, which he sold to his father at market value. Joseph was an enterprising farmer. Between 1849 and 1852, he constructed an irrigation pond for his rice patch. Two other young men joined his venture in 1851, and together they cultivated six acres--four in corn, two in cotton. Working before breakfast and on Saturday evenings, they produced fifty bushels of corn and five hundred pounds of seed cotton; they sold their 1851 crop for eighty dollars. Despite the profits

⁵³Quoting Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 30 June 1850; but see, too, 31 November 1847; 18 February 1848; 14 January 1848; 23 February 1850; 30 November 1850, 4 October 1851, MDAH.

they achieved during the first year of the cooperative effort, the partners agreed that in 1852 they would "plant pretty well all corn and but little cotton."⁵⁴ Perhaps the small yield per acre of the previous year's crop convinced them to forgo cotton cultivation; perhaps the 1851 crop sold for less than they had planned; perhaps the young men placed more faith in their ability to grow and to profit from corn. Lightsey neglected to say. But, likely that the greater profit per acre offered by corn appealed to them. Even though the Lightsey household looked for sustenance and income to sources other than Joseph's small crops, Joseph, like other farmers, counted on his crops to bring him cash.

The best evidence of Joseph's dependence on the market appears in his diary at the close of 1850 when he recounts in double-entry fashion his "Gain" and "Expense" for the year. According to the running tally kept in the body of the diary, the year-end summary is incorrect. Failure to include some watermelon sales, however, matters less than the fact that a half-schooled, nineteen-year old Piney Woods boy thought to keep a ledger. For to attempt to do double-entry bookkeeping is to adopt the attitude of

⁵⁴Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 10 February 1852, MDAH

a market-oriented capitalist.⁵⁵ One schoolboy's ledger, however, hardly suffices as evidence of a prevailing market ethos in antebellum Mississippi; neither does it argue for the presence of an entirely modern manner of thinking about the market--that would come only after the war. Nevertheless, Lightsey's record-keeping practices suggest that the market ethos penetrated into the state's least likely region, the Piney Woods, which as late as 1860 remained on the periphery of the cotton belt.

For all of his dabbling in the market economy, Lightsey never ceased to think of himself as a yeoman farmer, but his definition of the virtuous farmer differed significantly from the Jeffersonian ideal. In an essay on farming, he suggested that tillers of the soil were not by definition virtuous. Some were lazy, practiced inefficient methods, and failed to set aside food crops and cash for a rainy day. He, on the other hand, produced crops to be consumed at home before producing for the market.

⁵⁵Accounts at the end of the year 1850 in Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, MDAH. See also accounts for the year ending 1851. It is interesting to note how Lightsey spent his money. In 1850, he paid for a hat and kerchief, bars of lead, shot, gunpowder, boots, a satin vest, suspenders, an axe, and 20 cents for labor. All, except the last, were items a bachelor farmer would necessarily use. His income, \$38.90, was derived from selling shot and gunpowder, watermelons, and cotton. On bookkeeping techniques as an indication of a market ethos see, Peter A. Coclanis, "Bookkeeping in the Eighteenth-Century South: Evidence from Newspaper Advertisements," South Carolina Historical Magazine 91 (January 1990): 23-31.

Lightsey's ideal farmer in some ways resembled the one of Jefferson's Arcadian vision: "The farmer has though to be an honest industrious goaled kind of man to insur[e] any degree of sucksess[.] . . . it is true Some men pretend to be farmers who lack all of these virtues but you may Set it down that they will not do much."⁵⁶ Yet, in rejecting the blanket application of the title virtuous to farmers, Lightsey suggested that the variety of self-sufficiency that made men poor was anathema to good citizenship. According to Lightsey, independent men worked hard, carefully planned their enterprises, and provided their households foodstuffs and cash. Self-sufficiency was merely a way to shore up a farm's bottom line.

Other southerners agreed upon the purpose of self-sufficient production. An anonymous contributor to Debow's Commercial Review, for instance, cautioned farmers to consider the health of the cotton market, the fertility of their land, and the potential rewards of self-sufficiency when deciding what to cultivate. Planting cotton from one's back door to the most distant arpent promised in some cases a higher profit than attempting to raise foodstuffs; others might profit by planting diverse crops for home consumption and the market. Regardless of the decision, farmers need to direct their energies toward

⁵⁶Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 29 December 1850, MDAH.

finishing the year in the black: "The largest amount of nett [sic] money from a given amount of means invested, looking carefully and economically into all parts of the operation, is the part of wisdom and enterprise." The editor of the Woodville Republican went even further in assessing the validity of the self-sufficiency ideal. When chastising the Concordia, Louisiana Intelligencer for encouraging farmers to pull out of the cotton market entirely and to produce foodstuffs instead, he attacked as antiquated the very notion of self-sufficiency. "The South did not owe her pristine prosperity to the policy recommended," the Republican said, "nor did she lose it by an opposite one, nor can it be regained by embracing it now."⁵⁷

Keeping alive the idea of self-sufficiency in a world devoted to the market economy was a challenge for cultivators. Not unlike most farmers of moderate means, J. W. Metcalfe planned to raise all that his household consumed: "I intend trying to raise all the meat that is used on the place and think, without accident that I will succeed." Agricultural reformers too challenged planters to cultivate sufficient grain for their households' consumption and to plant grains other than corn. In the late

⁵⁷Quoting Anonymous, "Cotton and the Cotton Planters," Commercial Review 3 (January 1847), 19; Woodville Republican, 25 February 1843.

1850s, to encourage self-sufficiency, county agricultural societies likewise employed cash prizes for achievements in fruit production and stock breeding. But, cultivators, despite the encouragement offered, faced an uphill battle in their effort to achieve self-sufficiency. After the depression, as cotton prices rose, the temptation to plant as much cotton as possible overcame many. According to one Franklin County planter, cotton's recovery infected farmers with a madness for the crop. Only "a few sensible old farmers" continued to raise livestock for meat. R. A. Evans, a Piney Woods planter, ginned in the 1850s around twenty bales of cotton each year and tried to produce grain and meat for his household. In January 1858, he put up more than one-half ton of hog meat, but a shortage of meat five months later forced him to buy bacon in Jackson. Several weeks later he purchased from a Simpson County mill 400 pounds of flour, and by the end of the year, he noted that because of a shortage of corn, he could not fatten his shoats.⁵⁸ Wishing to achieve self-sufficiency, even planning to do so, was difficult so long as material

⁵⁸James Wistar Metcalfe Diary, 31 March 1843, Metcalfe Papers, UNC; D. C. Glenn quoted in U.S., Patent Office, Report to the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1850 (Washington: 1850), 187-188. On the activities of agricultural societies, see, U.S., Patent Office, Report to the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1858 (Washington: 1858) 159. R. A. Evans Diary, 16 January, 25 May, 18 June, 25 December 1858, Evans Papers, MDAH.

success within the market economy remained farmers' overarching goal.

Even though some farmers undoubtedly fed their families, all looked to the market for tools and staples not produced on the farm. Broad-scale participation in the cotton market made it difficult for the South to erect manufactories to produce items, and dependence on outside sources for staples necessarily followed. Furthermore, the appeal of a healthy cotton economy allured all but the most ardent foodstuff producers deeper into the cycle of buying more land and slaves to produce more cotton. The end result was that, after investing in land, labor, and foodstuffs, cultivators had little capital to invest away from the farm. The web of dependence wound tighter. James Darden's experience in 1860 testifies to the tightening felt by many. In the peak cotton selling month of January, he had on balance with a New Orleans commission merchant \$371.11. The sale of 75 bales of cotton barely covered the advances he had received and the barrels of meat and molasses he had purchased.⁵⁹

While Mississippians spoke of self-sufficiency as an ideal to which they aspired, the meaning attached to it differed from that assigned by Jefferson. Unlike old

⁵⁹See the January 1860 Account of John Darden in Darden Family Papers, MDAH. See also accounts of George W. Humphries with James Strideron, George W. Humphries Papers, MDAH.

Jeffersonians who celebrated rhetorically at least a distance from the market, achieving maximum sufficiency permitted under a scheme of market production, Mississippians believed, would ensure their financial well-being and economic independence. Yet historians have traditionally failed to point out the subtle alterations to the self-sufficiency ideal that took place in the late antebellum period. Although Douglas North, for instance, has argued that the South, particularly planters, purchased from commission merchants and river-going vessels large amounts of meat packed at Cincinnati and St. Louis. Other scholars, including Robert Gallman and Sam Hilliard have found the South as a whole to be largely self-sufficient. Yeomen are another case altogether. According to Gallman, they achieved self-sufficiency less frequently than did planters, but Steven Hahn and J. Mills Thornton III insist that small farmers practiced self-sufficiency. Taking a more balanced approach to the question of foodstuff production, Gavin Wright argues that small farmers followed a "safety first strategy," concentrating on food production before attempting to cultivate market crops.⁶⁰ Literary

⁶⁰Douglas North, The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860 (1961, reprint; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966), 196-201; Robert E. Gallman, "Self Sufficiency in the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South," Agricultural History 44 (January 1970), 9; Raymond C. Battalio and John Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, A Case Study," Agricultural History 44 (continued...)

and census sources, however, suggest that farmers great and small pursued self-sufficiency as a means of securing material success within the market and that where they succeeded in achieving self-sufficiency, they did so by a slim margin.

Applying to data drawn from the 1850 and 1860 manuscript census returns of twelve counties certain assumptions about foodstuff consumption and production offers insight into individuals' ability to meet their foodstuff needs. Generally speaking, the estimates were computed by converting grain crops into corn equivalents and subtracting from the total grain production the food required by livestock and humans. Similarly, the available meat on individual farms was calculated, as were the meat requirements of the household. The difference between the available meat and the meat required for consumption indicates another variety of farmers' ability to feed their families.⁶¹ As might be predicted among a population committed to achieving material success and the rhetoric of

⁶⁰(...continued)
(January 1970), 36; Wright Political Economy, 63-64, 166; Sam Bowers Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 111. Hahn, The Roots of Southern Populism, 14-49. J. Mills Thornton III, Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 268-292.

⁶¹See Appendix for a complete discussion of the methods used to calculate self-sufficiency.

self-sufficiency, results of the calculations imply that while most Mississippi farmers produced enough foodstuffs for their families slight alterations in the formula used to determine habits of production reveals the reverse, suggesting, in fact, that notions of Arcadian yeomen had little to do with the reality of the late antebellum agricultural economy.

After subjecting the census data to the calculations described above, a pattern of foodstuff production emerges. Table 2.6 points to a central truth of antebellum agriculture: farmers with small landholdings (less than 100 acres) more successfully produced meat than grain, and farmers with large holdings more successfully produced grain than meat.⁶² Only the cohorts of farms between 100 and 299 acres achieved a measure of parity in meat and grain production. Such an observation suggests the influence that labor supply had on row-crop cultivation.

⁶²Figures 2.1 and 2.2 point to a broad trend in southern agriculture. They do not, however, as will be suggested, assuredly represent true pictures of farmers' production habits.

(Table 2.6)
 Percentage Surplus or Deficit Foodstuffs,
 by Farm Size Cohort,
 1850 and 1860

Farm Size, In Acres	1850: Grain	Meat	1860: Grain	Meat
0-19	-48	52	-33	26
20-49	5	58	-6	42
50-99	20	59	18	65
100-199	37	27	28	41
200-299	47	36	61	40
300-499	63	31	48	30
500 and More	41	-20	45	11

Source: Farm Survey (1850); Farm Survey (1860).

The availability of labor, as previously mentioned, was a key variable in the formula for successful production. Among the farms surveyed larger than 100 acres, every laborer had to produce food for 1.6 persons, a fairly favorable ratio that permitted large-scale farmers to plant cotton and grain in the same year. Since corn, Mississippi's chief grain crop, reached maturity in mid to late summer and cotton bolls neared the picking stage from late summer to early fall, farmers received the full value of their labor supply by planting both crops. Furthermore, labor consumed flour and meal. By employing laborers in a corn patch, farmers not only occupied what might have been idle hours but also made certain that workers produced a portion of the food they consumed.

Considering the exponential increase in cotton cultivation that accompanied the addition of labor to a farm unit, it might be expected that the largest farmers would also be the most efficient grain producers.⁶³ Instead, the decreased efficiency in grain production on farms larger 299 acres suggests that substantial farmers calculated to cultivate for cash enough cotton per acre to make up any shortage caused by diminished attention to foodstuffs, an assumption that slaveless and small slaveholders should not have made.

In a similar fashion, the availability of labor adversely affected grain production on small farms. Laborers on farms smaller than 100 acres had to produce grain to feed 1.3 household members, a ratio nearly equal to that recorded among the large farm-size cohorts. Considering the size of their holdings, small farmers had to extract from their land relatively more bounty and from their labor more sweat to feed their families. Common sense dictated that they concentrate on foodstuff production. Yet, they did not practice "safety first" habits of production: among farmers who owned less than 100 acres, only one-third achieved sufficiency in both meat and grain production. In 1850, the farmers who had the most reason to follow "safety first" habits of production (those with

⁶³For a discussion of the importance of the labor supply see note 50.

0 to 99 acres who neither owned slaves nor ginned cotton) 73 percent failed to produce sufficient grain and 24 percent lacked the meat necessary to feed their families. For the 1860 survey group, 79 and 24 percent, respectively, failed to meet their grain and meat needs. Had small farmers practiced "safety first" methods, they would have devoted their limited acreage and labor to foodstuff production.⁶⁴ Regardless of the logic and rhetoric which demanded self-sufficiency, neither large nor small farmers escaped the web of the market economy.

However suggestive, the economies of scale and the broad trends outlined above neglect aspects of Mississippians' production habits. While Table 2.6 insinuates that farmers as a whole produced storehouses of surplus grain and meat, they tend to obscure the variety of production habits within each cohort. By and large, the percentage of farms harvesting insufficient grain (see Table 2.7) echoed the findings portrayed above: farmers on the smallest units had more difficulty producing grain than did

⁶⁴On safety-first production, see, Wright, Political Economy, 63-66. It should be noted that of small farmers who achieved self-sufficiency in grain and meat over 70 percent in 1850 and 90 percent in 1860 also produced cotton. While the number of who accomplished this feat was not great, the highly efficient small farmers seem to have possessed no more labor than their peers who failed to achieve self-sufficiency while producing cotton. Soil quality, local variations in weather, and personal motivation likely contributed accounted for these farmers' greater success in producing for the market and the household.

their neighbors with large holdings. But, subjecting the levels of self-sufficiency to a sensitivity test indicates the marginal level of success that individual farmers had in feeding their families. Increasing by 25 percent the grain consumed by stock and humans on farms larger than 99 acres results in a substantial rise in the percentage failing to feed their families. Conversely, reducing by the same percentage the amount of grain consumed on farms smaller than 100 acres alters the portrait of self-sufficiency.⁶⁵ As displayed in Table 2.7, the changes caused by adjusting the formula are most dramatic among large farmers, suggesting that they could ill afford to modify their consumption habits upward. Despite the absence of surplus labor on small farms, landholders with less than 100 acres could in lean years and years in which they wished to produce row crops for the market might avoid starvation by slightly altering their consumption habits or depending more on unenumerated grains.

⁶⁵Justification for altering the formula lies in the fact that farmers with small landholdings depended less on grains to feed their stock than did large farmers and depended more on truck-garden vegetables. Large farmers, it is assumed, fed their stock and families perhaps better than yeoman did farmers. On the use of truck-garden vegetables, see, Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake, 172-173. Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Southern Agriculture," perform a similar sensitivity test, but they find little variation among their sample group. Under the original formula, 30 percent their sample population produced deficit amounts of grain, roughly the same percentage found among Mississippi farms.

(Table 2.7)
 Percentage Farms Deficit in Grain,
 25% Increase/Decrease in Grain Needs

Farm Size	1850	1860		1850	1860
0-19	67.4	65.9	25% Decrease *	55.8	47.7
20-49	46.0	54.8	In Grain	25.4	46.4
50-99	40.0	30.3	Needs (In Bold)	31.1	18.2
100-199	23.3	21.9	25% Increase *	60.0	62.5
200-299	22.2	7.70	In Grain	55.6	38.4
300-499	17.6	16.7	Needs	29.4	50.0
> 499	0.00	4.30	(In Bold)	53.3	43.5

Source: Farm Survey (1850) and Farm Survey (1860)

* While animal and human consumption requirements are decreased or increased by 25 percent, the meat produced under the altered grain consumption levels is assumed not to change.

The previously cited broad pattern of large farmers producing meat less efficiently than small farmers is also borne out when considering individuals' habits of meat production. (See Table 2.8). But decreasing or increasing production levels significantly alters the pattern, suggesting once again that farmers with more than 100 acres struggled to provide their households with meat. Such an observation is sustained by a body of literary evidence that indicates large farmers frequently purchased meat from commission merchants and that small farmers, particularly those in the Piney Woods and North-Central Hills, excelled at stock-raising. Small farmers' ability

to produce surplus meat not only suggests that they employed their limited labor supply in a rational manner but that they obtained access to the market economy despite their failure to cultivate cotton in large quantity.

(Table 2.8)
Percentage Farms Deficit in Meat,
25% Increase/Decrease in Meat Needs

Farm Size	1850	1860		1850	1860
0-19	23.3	52.3	25% Decrease	20.9	38.6
20-49	25.4	23.2	In Meat	20.6	12.5
50-99	24.4	18.2	Needs (In Bold)	17.8	12.1
100-199	33.3	21.9	25% Increase	76.7	53.1
200-299	27.8	23.1	In Meat	61.1	38.4
300-499	17.6	16.7	Needs	58.8	77.8
> 499	80.0	34.8	(In Bold)	93.3	73.9

Source: Farm Survey (1850) and Farm Survey (1860)

Not every immigrant who went to Mississippi dreamed of a cotton plantation and a retinue of slaves, but businessmen, attorneys, and even stock-raisers and timber cutters depended more or less upon the cotton market for their success. Attorneys and merchants counted on their patrons' success in the cotton market to maintain their financial liquidity.⁶⁶ Stock-raisers and timber

⁶⁶On lawyers' role in the cotton economy, see, Gail Williams O'Brien, The Legal Fraternity and the Making of a New South Community, 1848-1882 (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 79-90. A cursory examination
(continued...)

cutters profited from the proximity of New Orleans and Mobile, as well as large farmers' inability to produce all that they consumed.

Travellers to the southern Piney Woods realized perhaps better than some historians that the herds of cattle roaming freely represented the hidden wealth of small farmers. Estimates place the number of cattle sent to market in the last twenty years of the antebellum period at one million. Other estimates value southern livestock at one-half billion dollars in 1860. Travellers also commented on the carefree tenders of the herds, the folk: "a peculiar race of petits Paysans," according to one; the breeders of "wild, half naked, unwashed, and uncombed" children who ran "through the woods and grass followed by packs of lean and hungry curs," said another. Some historians agree that those who chose the poorer regions of the South as home suffered from a deficiency of economic acumen and energy. In order to maintain their independence, they responded to a deeply ingrained call to live out their lives at a subsistence level. While

⁶⁶(...continued)
of the R. G. Dun and Company Credit Reports suggests that many antebellum store owners were northern men, men with northern connections, or experienced salesmen and clerks. But the planter class was also well-represented among the antebellum merchant class. See R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Harrison County) 54, (Copiah County) 215, (Leake County) 7, (Warren County) 27, Dun Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.

isolated individuals surely existed in such buccolic settings, the population boom of the 1830s and continued population growth in the Piney Woods and North-Central Hills filled the forests with market-oriented producers ready to send to New Orleans, Mobile, and local markets the products of their labor.⁶⁷ No less than the Delta planter, yeomen farmers and herdsmen depended for cash on the market opened by large farmers' failure to produce meat.

In part, the travellers who observed a half-wild people haphazardously tending their herds offered an accurate assessment of most stock-raisers. Yet even the least ambitious one occasionally draped traces over his shoulders and cultivated several acres of rice, corn, and sweet potatoes, if not cotton. Most of his small landholding, in fact, might be devoted to farming, since the public domain offered adequate food and shelter for his stock. While conscientious herdsmen fed their cattle on a regular

⁶⁷Quoting, Timothy Flynt, Recollections of the Last Ten Years (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Company, 1826), 317, and W. H. Sparks, The Memories of Fifty Years, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: E. Caxton and Company, 1882), 331-332. See, too, McWhiney, Cracker Culture; Forest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," Journal of Southern History 41 (May 1975), 156; McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," American Historical Review 85 (December 1980), 1115. On local markets, see, Claiborne, "Trip Through the Piney Woods," 514-516, 522, and Adeline Russ' comments about the absence of local markets before 1840, in Adeline Russ Diary, 1836, p. 4, Henry Weston Family Papers, MDAH.

basis, most allowed their stock to range over the wild oats and summer grasses of the forests. Under these conditions, little capital was required to begin raising stock. After Thomas Leonidas Baxter migrated to Marion County, he managed on shares the stock of a Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, physician and planter. According to their agreement, Baxter tended the planter's cattle, drove them to Louisiana when necessary, and received in return one-half of the calves born. In this manner, Baxter began his own herd. Less is known about Pierre Saucier or how he acquired his cattle. But, by the early 1850s, Saucier owned, a handful of slaves, real estate valued at \$20,000, hundreds of head of stock, a grocery, and a slaughterhouse. He rented his land at Pass Christian and slaughtered some cattle for the local market; most he shipped to New Orleans, where he traded on a cash basis for the goods sold in his grocery.⁶⁸

Stock-raising was to the Piney Woods and small farmers elsewhere what cotton was to the rest of the state. Fortunes were made in the venture, and many tried their hands at it. Except for round-ups and drives and

⁶⁸Claiborne, "Trip Through the Piney Woods," *passim*; Sparks, Memories of Fifty Years, *passim*; Robert J. Baxter, "Cattle Raising in Early Mississippi: Reminiscences," Mississippi Folklore Register 10 (Spring 1976), 3-5. Information about Saucier may be found in U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Harrison County, 1850, and R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Credit Ledgers, (Harrison County) 44, Harvard.

the branding and castrating season, cattle and hogs by-and-large took care of themselves. According to a descendant of Thomas Baxter, round-ups followed the laying-by of crops in mid-July. A group of neighbors would fan out into the forest and corral all of the cattle at a central location: once gathered, the cattle would be separated by brand, and the various owners would select between 10 and 40 head to drive to market. Farmers like the Jasper County Lightseys generally avoided castrating the large breeds of stock and drove their herds to market without the assistance of neighbors. The Baxters, on the other hand, penned young, old, and infirm cattle in order to devote special attention to them during the winter months. Drives from Marion County, according to Baxter, ended in Mobile or Madisonville, Louisiana where schooners transported the stock across Lake Ponchatrain. Louisiana planters bought Baxter's breeders.⁶⁹

Although small farmers did not participate in the cotton market on a grand scale, they nevertheless participated in the market economy by selling livestock. Scattered literary evidence also suggests that planters purchased animals on the hoof from their neighbors, some of whom like Benjamin L. Smith's father, were specialized

⁶⁹Baxter, "Cattle Raising in Early Mississippi," 8-11; Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 16-26 December 1851, MDAH.

stock-raisers.⁷⁰ Whether they sold their stock to planters or in the markets at Mobile and New Orleans, stock-raisers in the end fed those cultivators who devoted their energy and acreage to cotton. Historians' concept of small landholders as subsistence farmers is flawed, and the idea of safety first production is overdrawn. By virtue of their proximity to it, farmers with small holdings, despite their failure to produce much cotton, were part of the cotton economy. For when they produced for the market, as they often did, the majority failed to make sufficient grain to feed their households, and they were forced to turn to the market for their sustenance. Of course, they could only purchase goods if they had cash, and that cash derived often from the business of stock-raising.

Similarly, timber cutters depended on cash that they received from cotton planters and market cities. Miles of virgin pine forests from just north of the coastal plain to the hill country and from the border with Alabama to the Delta attracted immigrant woodsmen. Even though the forest industries of antebellum Mississippi appear insignificant when compared to the industry that emerged after the Civil War, two trends often mentioned in connection with the postbellum lumber boom were rooted in

⁷⁰Benjamin Lafayette Smith Autobiography, Mss. 3-9, MDAH.

the prewar period. First, substantial fortunes could be made in lumber industry. In May, 1860, one knowledgeable observer noted, "The fact is that all men engaged in the mill bus[.] are making money at this time." Second, natives of New England and the Great Lake states, the Weston and Hand brothers among them, occupied a large number of skilled positions in the forest industries and owned a disproportionately large share of mills. Henry Weston, for example, arrived in New Orleans in 1847 but finding no work in Louisiana's Piney Woods went to Logtown, Mississippi where he worked as a sawyer at \$45 a month. For sawyers and other full-time mill employees, living in the communities that sprouted up around the mills, though generally isolated in rural areas, required that they, like urban laborers, depend on the market for their food and clothing. By 1851, Weston's skills and experience earned him an even larger salary, and he spoke of saving \$65 a month. In the 1850s, a three dollar a day salary would have been a large one; in fact, turn-of-the-century textile workers were lucky to receive such wages. Working primarily in Logtown, Weston remained in south Mississippi for the rest of his life and came eventually to own a mill.⁷¹

⁷¹Quoted in the R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Harrison County), 69, Harvard. For a description of the virgin forests, see J. F. H. Claiborne, (continued...)

Until the postbellum lumber boom of the 1880s, timber was in the main a by-product of farmers clearing land. Outside the Piney Woods, farmers floated cypress, pine, and oak down the Yazoo, Big Black, and Pearl rivers. But, as railroads began to make their way into the state, farmers went about cutting timber with more purpose. A contract to supply a railroad with cross-ties could keep a farm family busy after crops were harvested and provided a cash insurance against hard times in the winter. In the pine barrens, where timber was purposefully cut to send to coastal mills for processing, railroads played a less influential role in developing a lumber industry. Ironically, due to the flat terrain of the central Piney Woods, full-time professional woodcutters in south Mississippi lacked streams capable of transporting timber to market year round. Ingenious methods were adopted to get the harvest of the forest to market. John Belchen, a former slave, recalled rolling timber into man-made ditches three and one-half feet wide, fifty miles long, and lined with planks. During the dry winter months, woodcutters filled the canals with timber and stacked it nearby. When spring transformed the ditches into rivulets, slaves and other

⁷¹(...continued)

"A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906), 523. Henry Weston to Levi W. Weston, 7 January 1847, Henry to S. W. Weston, 15 December 1851, Henry to Levi, 23 August 1857, Henry to Levi, 15 July 1860, Henry Weston Family Papers, MDAH.

woodcutters used long poles to shepherd the timber to major streams and on to coastal mills. According to B. L. C. Wailes, timber floated from the north via canals turned the rivers and bays north of Biloxi into a sea of bobbing pine.⁷²

The majority of the state's large lumber mills lay within several miles of the Gulf Coast; near present-day Gulfport, Calvin Taylor and the Hands operated two of the largest mills. Mills of all types, however, existed throughout the state. One traveller's survey of Marion County's largest nine mills, for instance, noted that all ground corn but that each could be tooled to conduct other tasks as well: seven ran saws, most ran gins and rice cleaning machinery, one operated a bark peeler, and another could also operate a spinning machine and turning lathe. The largest mills in the state required specially trained mechanics and engineers to maintain their

⁷²George Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement, series 1, vol 6 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), 108-109; Wailes, Report on the Agriculture and Geography of Mississippi: Embracing a Sketch of the Social and Natural History of the State (Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1854), 349. For a discussion of early lumbering operations in the Delta, see, John Hebron Moore, Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 73-111. On farmers signing contracts to supply cross-ties, see, Nathan Fox Diary, 9 March 1854, Nathan Fox Papers, MDAH. The classic statement on the lumber industry in south Mississippi remains, Nollie W. Hickman's, Mississippi Harvest: Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (Montgomery: Paragon Press, 1962), *passim*.

efficient operation, but most millers operated single-purpose grinding mills with little outside assistance, though occasionally a mechanic was hired to construct such mills. Jobs in the large coastal lumber mills often involved great danger and demanded skilled operators to run the machinery. Occupational mobility for whites engaged in lumber mills was high: in the 1850 census, G. W. Horn listed his occupation as a mill operator, but by 1860, he considered himself a full-time charcoal burner; Samuel Lawrence, a Harrison County woodcutter in 1850, had taken up farming in Jones County by 1860. Perhaps because of the danger associated with mill work and the mobility of white employees, coastal mill owners often employed slaves. Taylor, as well as Goodmen Hester and Alexander Scarbrough, used slaves as operators, drivers, and loggers, and the Hands owned several slaves skilled at constructing steam engines and circular saws.⁷³

⁷³On Marion County's mills, see, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, 11 August 1852, MDAH. On mills in the state, see, George Young to James McDowell, 1 November 1843, James McDowell Papers, Duke, who claimed that farmers owed him \$18,000 for grinding; prior to 1843, Young had been surprised to discover his mill prosperous, see, Young to McDowell, 3 October 1842, McDowell Papers, Duke. See also Robert B. Alexander Diary, 5 January 1859, Robert B. Alexander Diary and Account Ledger, MDAH. Despite the proliferation of all varieties of mills, few skilled craftsmen in Mississippi, except on the coast, could operate them. An Oxford resident requested C. D. Fontaine of Pontotoc County to locate for him an expert mechanic to assist in erecting a sawmill. With thoughts of striking it rich as George Young had, he was willing to offer a one-half partnership or
(continued...)

While travellers to the Piney Woods frequently expressed a prejudice in favor of plantation agriculture, the value and significance of the forest industries, even those conducted in the off-season months by farmers, rarely escaped them. Small enterprises around the state constructed wagons, staves, and fence rails which were sold in local markets, though some of those commodities manufactured on the coast were certainly sent to New Orleans. Away from the coastal meadows, Piney Woodsmen operated tar and charcoal kilns. Tar kilns, large rectangular fire boxes, consumed 100 cords of wood in the process of making two barrels of tar, employing not only the owner but also local woodcutters. The tar, according to Wailes, brought between \$1.50 and \$2.00 per barrel. One storekeeper on the Hobolochitto River, a Mrs. Kimball, acted as a factor for local tar-makers, buying in one year approximately nine thousand barrels and shipping them to New Orleans. Piney Woods residents also develop industries for making pitch and charcoal and for extracting turpentine, too, all of which they pursued in the hope of

⁷³(...continued)

a monthly salary if the mechanic stayed on to operate it, see, [?] to Charles D. Fontaine, 16 August 1852, Charles D. Fontaine and Family Papers, MDAH. On slave labor in the lumber mills, see, Nollie W. Hickman, "Black labor in the Forest Industries of the Piney Woods, 1840-1933," in Mississippi's Piney Woods: A Human Perspective, ed. Noel Polk (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 80.

establishing for themselves a place in the market economy.⁷⁴

Through cotton cultivation, stock-raising, and stock-raising, Mississippians touched the web of the market economy. In varying degrees, participants in the market fell victim to it. Timber cutters and stock-raisers, except for those operating on a large scale, might have escaped the most painful fluctuations of the cotton market, but, with prices paid for all commodities tied to the price of cotton, their markets could at times run dry. Of all the market participants, cotton cultivators suffered most from fluctuations. Small farmers forever alternated between cotton and foodstuff production to beat the market; and large-scale cultivators were trapped in the numbing cycle of buying more land and slaves to raise more cotton and pay off the debts incurred to purchase foodstuff, land, and slaves, which they needed to produce more cotton. As the cotton market began to recover from the depression, more and more farmers began producing cotton. The difficulty of achieving success in the cotton market did not diminish with the return of good prices.

⁷⁴On the small forest industries in the Piney Woods, see, B. L. C. Wailes Diaries, 13, 14, 19, 27 August 1852, MDAH. See also Wailes' account of Napoleon, a planned turpentine town in the Piney Woods that had been abandoned, 15 August 1852. Wailes, Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, 349-353.

Cotton cultivation offered the most readily-apparent access to the market, but those who planted little or no cotton, discovered that other avenues to the market were available. All but a few took advantage of them. The irony, of course, was that maintaining personal autonomy while developing a dependence on the market, however slight, proved difficult. Small farmers, somewhat insulated from the exigencies of the market by their minuscule slaveholdings, their ability (if their debts were retired) to fall back into a subsistence mode of production, and their commitment to communitarian values, depended on the market less. Yet, by participating in it at all, they sacrificed to the market, perhaps unwittingly, and certainly with little thought as to the significance of their action, a measure of personal autonomy. And here, the paradoxes are multiplied. When it came time to decide in 1861 whether to secede or not, the great bulk of Mississippians came down on the side of the rhetoric of liberty and virtue and took up arms in a fight against the encroachment of modernity in a society entrenched in the market.

Chapter Three

Liberty and Virtue in a "False Republic"

However often they spoke of themselves as yeomen farmers, Mississippians during the late antebellum period behaved like market-oriented producers. They frequently moved in search of cheap lands and fertile soil, and they cultivated crops that they assumed would bring the highest prices. Liberty and virtue, Mississippians believed, inhered in those who participated in the market economy and in the process of governing. While political parties might during the 1840s derive divergent concepts of liberty and virtue from country republican and liberal strains of thought, neither questioned the centrality of slavery to the cultural homogeneity of the white antebellum South. The southern social ethic, in fact, drew life from the institution of slavery, and in turn widespread commitment to it contained differences between the two parties. As long as the two-party system offered competing notions of good government and citizenship a field of play, secession remained the watchword of bull-and-bluster politicians alone. But, when the sectional animosities of the 1850s

arose and the Whig party collapsed, the debate about southern political economy necessarily narrowed and vaulted to the fore the defense of slavery based on white liberty.

Contemporary partisan struggles did not inspire Southerners to seek liberty and virtue; defining good government and citizenship was an age-old occupation. Ancient Greek philosophers, an Italian political theorist, and Protestant justifiers of revolution in seventeenth-century England struggled with the problem. Through their efforts, they contributed to the tone of American political discourse. During the past three decades, historians have undertaken rewarding labors tracing the pedigree of American political thought, and even though disputes have arisen over the sway that one writer or another enjoyed among the Founding Fathers, students of the subject agree that the young nation constructed notions of political economy from material collected in diverse schools of Western thought. By 1840, a curious combination of Enlightenment-era ideas refracted through nineteenth-century democratic reform defined concepts of liberty and virtue. One version of good government prevalent in Mississippi stemmed from country republicanism.

As embodied in the nation's early national history, the chief tenets of country republican thought emphasized citizens' freedom to pursue their own affairs under

the protection of the law and to participate in the process of governing. Unlike their nineteenth-century heirs, country republican thinkers, when defining good citizenship, referred less to "the people" than to a natural aristocracy of talented men. Self-sacrifice and service of the commonweal, they believed, qualified the talented few to claim liberty and virtue as their unique possession. In Mississippi, the constitution of 1817, which contained property qualifications for suffrage, testified to a lingering distrust of the people; laws meting out fines for those who refused to serve as road supervisors likewise suggested the persistence of country republican ideals.¹

In recognition of the revolutionary changes that occurred in commerce and politics after 1688, Thomas

¹Works important to my understanding of country republican thought include: Bernard Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Robert Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 29 (1972): 49-80; Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (1969, reprint; New York: Norton, 1972); J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Dorothy Ross, "The Liberal Tradition Revisited and the Republican Tradition Addressed," in New Directions in American Intellectual History, eds., John Higham and Paul Conkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). On the constitution of 1817, see R. H. Thompson, "Suffrage in Mississippi," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 1 (June 1898): 25-49. On notions of duty in Mississippi road working laws, see Code (1823), 350-357; ibid., (1848), 252-254; ibid., (1871), 245-261.

Hobbes and John Locke remodeled English concepts of liberty and virtue. Taking their cue from the merchant class, Hobbes and Locke down-played the significance of participating in civic life as a means of ensuring personal liberty. Liberty and virtue, they argued, could best be achieved through individual economic success and the jealous protection of property rights. According to J. G. A. Pocock, by the late eighteenth century, "a right to things became a way to the practice of virtue."² In America, the liberties associated with the Bill of Rights (the right to possess firearms, free speech, the separation of church and state) granted those without the leisure or capacity to govern rights identical those claimed by folk who governed. including the freedom to participate freely in the market. Among Mississippians, taking part in the market economy testified to the egalitarian nature of their society, and after 1832, when the state

²Quoting, J. G. A. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 50. Pocock posits a useful paradigm for combining country republicanism and liberalism. John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.). On liberalism in America, see John Patrick Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), and Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York and London: New York University Press, 1985).

granted to all white males the suffrage, even the propertyless could proclaim themselves free and virtuous. To travellers into the Deep South, like the Russian Ivan Golovin, equal access to the market and the ballot box elevated "material instincts" at the cost of wisdom and morality. "Honor and intellect," were "in the minority with man, the government of the majority is that of dishonesty and stupidity."³

As Golovin noted, when southerners embraced the concepts of liberty and virtue postulated by Hobbes and Locke, they celebrated a world antithetical to the dictates of country republicanism. Historians of the early national period have concluded that influential country republican thinkers, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison especially, underwent similar transformations when faced with the reality of governing a population less virtuous than they had imagined. Adopting as their own country republican fears of large commercial nations and liberal notions of a market-oriented society, Jefferson and Madison left their southern admirers an ambiguous legacy. The original Jeffersonian vision, which had apotheosized yeomen farmers who eschewed the market and intrusive government power, evolved into a vision of an active

³Ivan Golovin, Stars and Stripes, or American Impressions (London: W. Freeman; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856), 112-113.

federal government concerned with protecting agricultural and industrial markets abroad. While they maintained the goal of fostering a society both free and virtuous under the tents of country republicanism, Jefferson's and Madison's mature social vision differed markedly from that they previously held.⁴

As the cotton frontier expanded, Mississippi came increasingly to resemble Jefferson's revised vision. But, where the statesman from Monticello attempted to reconcile his ideals with reality, the majority of white Mississippians professed to be more the heirs of Arcadia than the makers of the market-oriented world in which they consciously pursued material success. Few would have recognized the incongruence between the myths and realities of their political economy. Communitarian values, for instance, promoted the persisting illusion of Arcadia. If, so Mississippians believed, they dispersed responsibility for maintaining highways and rivers, liberty and virtue would be protected from the corruption of government encroachment and exorbitant taxation. By 1840, their commitment to the Jeffersonian pastoral ideal of farmers as "the chosen people of God" reflected less an organizing

⁴On Jefferson's and Madison's epiphanies, see two works by Drew McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980), and The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and Republican Legacy (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

principle than a self-serving claim to virtue. Nonetheless, as heirs of the commercial revolution, Mississippians did not seek the tranquil isolation known to their medieval ancestors. Practicing self-sufficient methods of production, after all, had become merely a way to ensure financial success. One historian, when considering southern politicians' use of Jeffersonian notions of liberty and virtue, has accurately likened the effort to "trying to rebottle the delicate old wine of pure [r]epublicanism."⁵

Yet politicians of both parties wrapped their appeals to the public in the rhetoric of independence, each promising to be the guardian of liberty and virtue. Within the context of that social ethic, political parties, particularly in the 1840s, offered diverse visions of society.

During the controversy over repudiation of state debts contracted in support of the Union Bank, Whigs and Democrats encouraged citizens to protect their liberty and virtue by refusing to submit to a type of slavery. But, the parties disagreed on the definition of submission. To Democrats, submission meant surrendering the power of the people to decide their fate. Pointing to Jefferson's

⁵Quoting Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 93, and William J. Cooper, Jr. Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 157.

statements about each generation's obligation to redefine liberty, Democrats argued that parents owed their children a debt-free start, so that they could formulate their own notions of personal autonomy. If the state reneged on paying its debts, anti-bond payers said, citizens would avoid the financial enslavement associated with heavy taxation and thus protect their independence from intrusive governmental authority. Whigs and their bond-paying allies of Democratic persuasion, took a longer view of the debt controversy. They argued that the state might best protect its honor in the international community if it upheld its contracts and refused to submit to the half-baked schemes of demagogues. Repudiation, bond payers liked to say, struck a blow at "the virtue of the body politic" and threatened to install the reign of anarchy.

The banking debate first emerged in the late 1830s. When banks began to appear in large number during the 1830s, the political parties expressed no concern for Mississippians' liberty and virtue. On the cotton frontier, a dire need for credit made banks popular institutions and fueled the rapid increase in their number. Between 1832 and 1837, the peak years of immigration, the state chartered twenty-seven institutions of issue. In the period 1836 to 1837, twenty banking institutions received charters, including eleven privately-owned banks, one waterworks bank, seven railroad banks, and one state

bank. As banks proliferated, the conservative principles that had undergirded the state's banking structure since the early nineteenth century fell victim to the speculative fever of the day. Banks had benefitted from the free-wheeling atmosphere on the cotton frontier. Farmers and speculators received credit needed to purchase land, and banks obligingly printed notes to make the cotton economy run. The Specie Circular of 1836 and the depression that followed on its heels, however, revealed that Mississippi bankers had over-played their hands; loans had been made without sufficient collateral to back them and in some cases without collateral at all. Banks lacked hard currency to redeem the quires of notes they had printed. As banks began foreclosing on unpaid loans, an air of doom swept over the state.⁶

Chartered during the initial period of economic catastrophe, the Mississippi Union Bank had been originally proposed in 1835 but did not receive its charter until February of the fateful year 1837. Both houses of the legislature passed the measure with little opposition, a fact that haunted its Democratic supporters who later

⁶On banking in the early nineteenth century, see Robert Cicero Weems, Jr., "The Bank of the State of Mississippi: A Pioneer Bank of the Old Southwest, 1790-1844" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1952), 189, 593-595, 599-600; Larry Schweikart, Banking in the American South From the Age of Jackson to Reconstruction (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 204.

turned against the institution. Indeed, as "the final banking disaster of the times," the collapse of the bank and the refusal of the state to pay debts incurred on its behalf haunted generations of Mississippians. Like other financial institutions chartered in the 1830s, the bank could make mortgage loans, receive deposits, and sell stock. Investors (required by law to be Mississippi property owners), who did not purchase their shares outright, could receive eight-year loans from the bank to buy stock provided they had sufficient collateral: real estate or slaves. One-half million dollars capital was to be raised through stock subscriptions, and Mississippi pledged its faith to secure loans for the bank's capital stock of \$15.5 million. To facilitate the bank's capitalization, the charter required the state to turn over to the Union Bank five-percent gold bonds. When the bonds matured, the bank would repay the state loan from its profits. With the faith of the state backing its operations, the bank, or so legislators believed, would supply sufficient specie to stabilize the state economy and assist Mississippians in their attempts to retire personal debts.⁷

⁷Quoting J. A. P. Campbell, "Planter's and Union Bank Bonds," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 4 (1901), 495-496. Weems, "Bank of the State of Mississippi," 191; Schweikart, Banking in the American South, 180-181; R. W. Millsaps, "History of Banking in Mississippi," Sound Currency 10 (March 1903), 28-29; J. F. H. Claiborne, Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman, vol. 1 (New York: 1860), 196-197.

Although the original charter was approved in 1837, the constitution of 1832 required that bills pledging the financial faith of the state be approved by successive legislatures. In February 1838, both legislative houses, this time with slightly more opposition, again approved the bank. Most who voted against the charter believed that because of the desperate financial condition, Mississippians could ill afford to invest one-half million dollars necessary for the bank's start-up. In response to such fears, Governor McNutt signed into law a supplement to the charter ten days after approving the 1838 law. The supplemental act required that the governor purchase \$5 million of bank stock to be paid by the sale of semi-annual five percent state bonds, effectively altering the relationship between the bank and the state. No longer was the state simply the backer of bank notes, it became a stockholder. Soon after signing the supplemental act, McNutt set about issuing the bonds, and he sent three commissioners to Pennsylvania to negotiate their sale. After they were sold, the bank began operating in 1838.⁸

According to R. W. Millsaps, a prominent banker of the late nineteenth century, the legislature intended the bank to relieve the state's economic distress. Yet the

⁸Millsaps, "History of Banking," 28-30.

Union Bank proved to be "prodigal in its loans, and lax in its securities." Millsaps laid blame for the bank's failure on the incautious lending practices of the politicians in charge of the Union Bank. In part, his assessment is correct. Former govern Hiram G. Runnels (the bank's first president), future governor and railroad entrepreneur John J. McRae (a bank director), and other directors of the bank turned the financial institution into a political one. By 1840, twelve politically well-connected Mississippians, including Runnels and McRae, had received loans equal to seven percent of the bank's capital stock. The speculative fever that set-up the terrible collapse of the 1830s raged freely among the Union Bank's Board of Directors. Emboldened by the false hope that the bank could spur economic growth, the directors ignored the international dynamics of the depression and advanced farmers credit on cotton that they assumed would sell at fifteen cents a pound. The cotton, when sold, however, brought less than nine cents a pound.⁹ While it is certainly true that the economic depression of the late 1830s and early 1840s demanded more than banking reform in Mississippi, the Union Bank exacerbated the sorry condition of the local economy rather than ameliorate it. Within two years

⁹Ibid., 31-36.

of first opening its doors, the bank's practices became widely-known and caused the public to turn against it.

Responding to public distaste for the Union Bank, Governor McNutt, who had originally signed its charter, turned against it, too. According to the nomenclature of historian Larry Schweikart, the governor had acted as an "economic stabilist" when he supported the Union Bank; as the economy spiraled downward, he evolved into an egalitarian metallist."¹⁰ Sharing with many southerners a suspicion of paper money, McNutt began his public career with a preference for hard currency, but he became a devotee of stringent banking regulation for egalitarian reasons. During his metamorphosis, McNutt waged a two-pronged attack on banking in Mississippi. First, while supporting the Union Bank to deal with the excesses of the state banking system, he demanded that sufficient specie back the paper issued. Significantly, specie was the only currency acceptable in payment for state bonds. After he became governor, McNutt continued the efforts made by his predecessor, Charles Lynch, to audit banks' supply of specie and to review their note-exchange policies. As the full effects of the panic began to be felt, McNutt implemented the second phase of his attack. Inherently suspicious of banks and bankers, he found ample evidence that

¹⁰Schweikart, Banking in the American South, 23.

by chartering banks the state created a privileged class of citizens and threatened to trample citizens' interests. Such charges, of course, were not uncommon, and many who leveled them took their cue from President Jackson's rhetoric aimed at the Second Bank of the United States. When most of the state-chartered banks refused to allow auditors access to their books, McNutt attributed the action to bankers' haughty disdain for public accountability; when the Pontotoc branch of the Agricultural Bank blatantly falsified records of its specie holdings and saw its debt to the Bank of the United States climb to over \$2.2 million dollars, McNutt's suspicions quickened. Stephen Duncan, a director of the Agricultural Bank, failed to allay the governor's fears of unegalitarian sentiment among bankers when he burned personal correspondence with a commission house that McNutt believed would have revealed a network of fraud.¹¹

In 1840, animated by a fear of privilege commonly associated with egalitarian democracy, McNutt proposed to a joint session of the legislature that state-chartered banks had been created to serve the greatest good of the greatest number, not the pecuniary interest of a few. "The relief of one portion of our fellow citizens should not be attempted, when detrimental to a more numerous

¹¹Millsaps, "History of Banking," 41.

class, who have been less reckless in their operations, and have higher claims on our sympathies." Repudiation of the debts incurred on behalf of the Union Bank, McNutt said, would reward the virtuous and punish the wicked. Lest anyone doubt the veracity of his portrait of banks as institutions of monopoly and privilege, McNutt pointed out that merely three percent of the public owned stock in the Union Bank. Extending his attack to all state-chartered banks, the governor promised that "those who produce nothing, who have long lived on the labor of others, will suffer. The honest planter, the enterprising merchant, and the laborious mechanic will be benefitted" if the state revoked banks' charters. Responding to McNutt's call for financial institutions to pay specie on demand, the legislature passed such a law in 1840. Before January 1841, nine banks failed to meet the conditions of the law and surrendered their charters. Eight more closed in 1841, and by 1860, only two continued to operate. In his 1841 address to lawmakers, McNutt, again called for stricter regulation of banking: specifically, he requested the repudiation of debts incurred on behalf of the Union Bank. Were the debt of the bank paid, he said, citizens of Mississippi would have to raise \$1.5 million in taxes. McNutt doubted that "the freemen of Mississippi" were so

"degenerate as to submit to heavy taxation to pay a claim not contracted in accordance with their supreme law."¹²

The evils associated with heavy taxation, as McNutt well knew, were part and parcel of a long-standing American claim to liberty and virtue. Submission to taxation was tantamount to surrendering one's economic and political liberty to an intrusive government and confessing that one lacked the virtue to be an independent agent. payment of the debt, McNutt passionately argued in 1841, would require that the state levy taxes on "the fire that warms us, the bread we eat, the clothes we wear, all articles of produce and every necessary of life." Even the most self-sufficient farmer would be forced to acknowledge that his inalienable rights were inferior to the rights of highly privileged bankers. Adopting a strategy that Democrats frequently employed, McNutt argued that the Union Bank charter violated the state constitution. According to the governor, payment of the bonds was "a demand founded neither in justice nor equity." The supplemental act that he had signed in 1838, McNutt said, sufficiently altered the charter to require the approval of successive legislatures. Having failed to abide by the

¹²Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi at a Regular Session Thereof Held in the City of Jackson (Jackson: C. M. Price, 1840), 18, 28, 54; Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi at an Adjourned Session Thereof Held in the City of Jackson (Jackson: C. M. Price, 1841), 15-16.

law of the land, the legislature needed to repudiate the bonds. In 1842, the representative assembly took the first step toward repudiation. It resolved not to appropriate funds for the payment of debts incurred under "repugnant laws." Neither the principle nor interest on the bonds were paid after an 1843 act declared the debts void.¹³

In two speeches before the legislature, McNutt outlined the plan of attack that Democrats followed for the next decade in their long-running battle against payment of state debts: the Union Bank charter was illegal, and chartering banks at all ran counter to the preservation of citizens' liberty and virtue. Although some individuals long associated with the Democrats, most notably Quitman, broke with the party over its stand on repudiation, the debate over debt payment occurred within the broad confines of the two-party system and testified to the classist arguments of the parties.

Divergent concepts of liberty and virtue informed the partisan rhetoric of the 1840s. Taking from country republicanism a fear of the folk, Mississippi Whigs doubted the civic virtue of their fellow citizens. Such pessimism can perhaps be explained by the Whigs' frequent electoral defeats in Mississippi. Outnumbered, at times

¹³Quoting Senate Journal (1841), 21; Laws (1842). See, too Millsaps, "History of Banking," 38-41.

overwhelmed, at the polls, Whigs self-righteously believed that, when given a choice, Mississippians preferred to sacrifice their individual and collective virtue on the altar of expediency.¹⁴ Little that occurred on the old southwestern frontier during the Jacksonian period encouraged Whigs to believe otherwise; a sense of rowdiness, egalitarianism, and individualism infected Mississippi. George Rogers, a northern divine who proselytized in the South, received a swift rebuke when he complained that the small crowds attending his sermons rarely remained to hear him out. A marshal in Jackson, whose ear Rogers had bent with his South-bashing, exclaimed in defense of his fellows, "High times, by G__d! that a gentleman can't, in a free country, run in and out of church to suit his own convenience!" Somewhat tardily, Rogers, like Ivan Golo-
vin, came to understand that "pleasure and gain are the deities at whose shrine every knee bows, and every soul does homage." In this atmosphere of energetic self-service, Whigs offered a vision of a well-ordered, hierarchical society in which each citizen remained bound to the whole by an overwhelming commonality of interests. The Franklin County Whig John P. Stewart perhaps best summed

¹⁴David Nathaniel Young, "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alabama, 1968), 93-100; Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 11-42.

up his party's outlook when, in attacking the idea of repudiation, he proclaimed that "the same policy that would suit a poor man would suit nineteen twentieths of the people of all classes."¹⁵

Unlike Democrats, who portrayed a great gulf between bankers and farmers, Whigs drew upon their ideas of the common economic and moral interest of the community when they argued for the payment of state debts. By de-emphasizing egalitarian democracy, they sought consciously to deny citizens' role in directing the course of government. Their concern for a society of law and moral behavior informed the decision to support debt payment. The Whig party's reputation for being the party of businessmen and planters was well-deserved; undoubtedly the party's stand during the repudiation controversy served Whigs' self-interest. In the days leading up to the heated gubernatorial campaign of 1841, in which the only issue discussed was repudiation, John Stewart predicted Tilghman Tucker's victory and promised to leave the state when the anti-bond paying Democrat assumed power: "I certainly will not live among a people who would hold the doctrine that they will not pay their just debts if able. We rank low already in the scale of morals and debt paying." In

¹⁵Rogers, Memoranda of the Experiences, Labors, and Travels of a Universalist Preacher, 378; John Stewart to Duncan McLaurin, 30 July 1840, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke.

the election, Tucker defeated David O. Shattuck, capturing 54 percent of the vote and all counties except twelve to the west of the Pearl River.¹⁶

While Democratic politicians and newspapers made much of Whigs' plantation belt support and lauded the "ultimate supremacy" of the people to decide the fate of the Union Bank bonds, Whigs argued that repudiation called into question the morality, honor, and independence of the state and its citizens. Appeals to the supremacy of the people, Whigs said, promised only temporary liberty. Once the debts were repudiated, they predicted, Mississippi's standing in the world of commercial credit would plummet. The state would be forced into abject poverty and backwardness. On a more personal level, Whigs argued that free and independent citizens should not allow their reputations in the wider world to spin downward. Citizens in possession of liberty and virtue would not ask to be treated by their fellow Americans as "scoundrels and puppys [*sic*]" ready for a kicking. The habit of Democrats, Tucker among them after he entered office, had of

¹⁶John Stewart to Duncan McLaurin, 30 July 1840, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke. See, too, Young, "Mississippi Whigs," 11, 134; Edwin A. Miles, Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 150-152; Brough, "History of Banking," 332-335; William L. Coker, Repudiation and Reaction: Tilghman M. Tucker and the Mississippi Bond Question (Floral Park: 1969), 23-25. Election returns can be found in the Records of the Secretary of State, Election Returns, 1841, (Record Group 18), MDAH.

differentiating between moral and legal obligations failed to impress Whigs; to Whigs, independent men responded to the duty, both moral and legal, that demanded repayment of the debt.¹⁷

Whigs most detested repudiation because it was an immoral violation of the rule of law. From the beginning of the controversy, Whigs and bond-paying Democrats held that the supplemental act of the Union Bank charter did not substantively alter the state's pledge of its faith. In the original act passed in 1837 and 1838, the state made a loan to the bank; in the supplemental act the state staked the bank start-up capital by becoming a stockholder. Granting that the relationship between the bank and the state did change, the meaning of the relationship, Whigs argued, did not. According to Whigs, the approval of the electorate in the 1837 legislative elections indicated Mississippians' readiness to create a union bank with state support. In the early 1850s, when Hezron Johnson sued the state for failing to pay either the

¹⁷Quoting Vicksburg Daily Whig, 2 and 8 February, but see, too, 11 February 1840, 20 January and 19 February 1841. According to the Woodville Republican, 24 June 1843, a sense of shame followed Mississippians throughout the nation after repudiation, just as Whigs had predicted.

interest or principle on bonds that he held, his attorneys successfully made the same argument.¹⁸

Both Whigs and Democrats viewed their opponents as self-serving demagogues and advocates of law-breaking. To the Whigs, Democrats appealed to "the reckless and the turbulent" and threatened to cast dishonor on the great seal of the state of Mississippi. Democratic governor Tucker used a similar expression to characterize Whigs: the "reckless extravagance and prodigality" of a privileged class had brought financial calamity to Mississippi, he said. Had there been no supplemental act or had the supplemental act also been approved by successive legislatures, Tucker posited that the debts would have been legally incurred and payable on demand. But, since the supplemental act changed the Union Bank's method of operation and permitted loans to be made without security, the charter had been sufficiently altered to warrant resubmission to the people for approval. Although neither the legislature nor Governor McNutt thought so in the 1830s, anti-bond payers in the 1840s and early 1850s proclaimed

¹⁸Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 19 August, 28 August 1841; Vicksburg Daily Whig, 27 February 1841; State v. Hezron Johnson, Mississippi Reports (25), 625. The Whig-dominated High Court of Errors and Appeals ruled that the state owed Johnson payment on his bonds, but the legislature never appropriated money for payment.

the debt, as well as the debt assumed in support of the Planters' Bank debt, an illegally incurred one.¹⁹

While the political culture of Mississippi Whigs owed much to country republicanism, Democrats borrowed from liberalism their notions of economic and political liberty. The Democratic party, at least in its rhetoric, celebrated egalitarian democracy. Banks, and specifically the Union Bank, anti-bond paying Democrats believed, were at odds with the principles of political equality and economic independence. According to the Lexington Union, banking also coddled "a community strictly mercantile in its character," a community detrimental to the existence of the self-sufficient yeoman farmer. Democratic appeals to Jefferson were not random or merely rhetorical devices. For example, when the Choctaw County Democratic convention of 1840 explained the principles that directed its allegiance to the party, it pointed to the 1798 Kentucky Resolutions and to Jefferson's correspondence with Albert Gallatin in which he explained his opposition to a national bank. Banking, the great bulk of Democrats agreed, meant not only special privileges for a few but taxes for the many. In a statement that resembled those made by

¹⁹Quoting Vicksburg Daily Whig, 25 May 1841, and Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi at a Regular Session Thereof Held in the City of Jackson (Jackson: C. M. Price, 1843), 13, but see, too, 27, 30-41. Jackson Mississippian, 2 October 1840, 30 April 1841; Lexington Union, 30 October, 5 June 1841.

McNutt, the Union proclaimed that Mississippians would never "submit with pusillanimous tameness" to taxation in support of an unholy cause. Sanctioning luxury and vice diminished the influence of producers, the moral and honorable citizens of Mississippi.²⁰ Unlike Mississippi Whigs, Democrats defined morality in terms of allegiance to first principles and proclaimed those who labored, including planters, the keepers of the good republic.

Within the context of the repudiation crisis, a battle fought along class lines between Democratic champions of a people's republic and Whig champions of a republic of laws occurred. Yet, for most of the antebellum period, disparate notions of government, citizenship, and proper economic behavior remained submerged under the influence of slavery. While neither republicanism nor liberalism acknowledged slavery as a legitimate force in society, southerners equated white freedom with the enslavement of blacks. This is, of course, no fresh proposition: students of the South have often linked the white social ethic to African-American enslavement.²¹ Through

²⁰Lexington Union, 30 January, 6 February, 6 March 1841; Woodville Republican, 11 March, 10 June 1843. See, also, John A. Quitman to the Editor of the Natchez Free Trader, 27 October 1841, Quitman Family Papers, UNC.

²¹See, for example, Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, 295-337, 363-387; Cash, Mind of the South, 38-41; Charles Barinetti, A Voyage to Mexico and Havana; Including Some General Observations on the United States (New York: C. (continued...))

theories of race and justifications of slavery, the white South, acting here as a homogenous whole, created a unique social ethic that borrowed heavily from republicanism an insistence on hierarchy and order and from liberalism an egalitarian spirit among whites. In the language of white southerners, submission to demagogues or privileged power mattered far less when asserting claims to liberty and virtue than did establishing a social and economic distance between oneself and slaves.

The novelist Charles Dickens observed the effect that concepts of slavery and submission had on whites' notions of liberty and virtue. In sharp contrast to his native England, Dickens noted with disgust, the region lacked an aristocracy of wealth, talent, or breeding as promised by republicanism. Whites, rich and poor, capable and infamous, though they rarely shared a meal across class lines, felt bound by their mutual contempt for blacks and their fear that they might become like slaves and lose their liberty. Heavy-handed and psychological manipulations were not necessary to maintain the social ethic in Mississippi; the market economy and universal manhood suffrage offered whites a common identity. Every white male could participate in the market and the process

²¹(...continued)
 Vinten, 1841), 126-129; Nehemiah Adams, A South-Side View of Slavery; or Three Months at the South, in 1854 (Boston: T. R. Marvin and B. B. Mussey and Company, 1854), 47-49.

of governing, while those who could not, according to the law, constituted an underclass on whose backs all but the most woebegone white could stand. The social ethic for all its uniqueness, according to Dickens, created in the South a "false republic" without sanction in liberalism or republicanism.²²

As defined in late antebellum Mississippi, liberty meant not only white manhood suffrage but also economic independence. Identifying and controlling those who did not possess liberty and who therefore constituted a threat to the South occupied a key place in the antebellum southern political economy. Since all white males had equal access to the market and the ballot box, it followed that those cut-off from political and economic liberty represented threats to the perpetuation of the social ethic. Through this variety of ipso facto reasoning, all who lacked the honor and dignity to avoid submission to the will of others, chiefly African-Americans, but also to a lesser extent whites without ties to the agriculture, fell under the rubric of the underclass. White liberty and virtue came to be equated with the perpetuation of slavery.

²²Charles Dickens, American Notes For General Circulation (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1842), quoted 283, but, see, also, 281-282.

African-Americans, slave and free, were the most rigorously circumscribed class of Mississippians. Aside from the well-known features of the southern states' Black Codes, which restricted mobility and opportunities for obtaining an education, Mississippi law specifically prohibited slaves from participating in the market. They could neither sell truck-garden vegetables without the consent of their masters, nor own livestock, nor cultivate cotton to sell as their own. Since laws prohibited all but death-bed manumissions for heroic service approved by the legislature on an individual basis, restricting slaves' access to local markets was not intended solely to prevent them from purchasing their freedom. Instead, delimiting slaves' contact with the market, the mark of independent men, and precluding black-white social contact, informed the law. Although free blacks who escaped the 1831 general exile imposed by the legislature could participate in the market, the law sharply curtailed their liberty. Mississippi law, in fact, treated free blacks as slightly less debauched than slaves but less virtuous than propertyless whites. Those who remained in Mississippi confronted a multitude of laws restricting their freedom. When they moved, they had to register with county courts. Free blacks could not own guns or knives without permits, and the state militia could execute any dogs they owned.

Assemblies of five or more free blacks and meetings with slaves were also forbidden.²³

Strict laws also limited the amount of contact that whites, especially those who did not produce for the cotton market, had with African-Americans. High-minded racial chauvinists had little desire to socialize with African-Americans. Mrs. Jared Cook, for instance, once declared that "civilized people" were better for the experience if they never spoke to African-Americans and fretted that young children "will be ruined" by social contact with blacks. Authors of the state law feared, however, that mechanics, bar keepers, and printers might seek contact with slaves. The public regarded workers at these jobs as outsiders--northerners and foreigners, it was believed--and parasites on the community of market producers. By law, tavern keepers could not sell liquor to blacks; anyone who advocated abolitionism was barred from working in print shops, jury duty in cases involving slaves, and keeping houses of entertainment. In part, a desire to control blacks' access to liquor and abolitionist literature underlay the law, but the Jeffersonian

²³On laws dealing with slaves and free blacks, see, Code (1840), 155-170, 391.

notion that liberty accrued to tillers of the earth also played a role defining good citizenship.²⁴

Mississippi then defined all blacks as lacking in virtue. It also doubted that whites who neither farmed nor owned slaves could possess the liberty that inhered in land holders. The underclass included indigents, too. Election reform under the Constitution of 1832 had opened the franchise to all free white males regardless of property holding.²⁵ By extending suffrage, Mississippi insured that the propertyless shared with the landed class and that peckerwoods shared with planters a responsibility for maintaining the social ethic. Yet the state never fully regarded propertyless whites as virtuous citizens. Considering the boom time economy of the mid-1830s, which cleared the way for farmers of common origin to establish themselves in the market economy, Mississippi viewed poverty and indebtedness as signposts of unvirtuous behavior, specifically indolence or speculation.

In the 1850s, Edward Golladay observed from under his mountain of debt, "it is terrible to be poor & vastly distressing to owe money & not have ability of paying." According to Mississippians, wretched poverty struck only

²⁴Mrs. Jared Reese Cook Diary, January 1857, MDAH; Code (1828), 328-329, 351.

²⁵On the suffrage clause of the Constitution of 1832, see May, John A. Quitman, 52-57, and Thompson, "Suffrage in Mississippi," 36.

the speculator and stock-jobber, the counter-point of the virtuous farmer. Although the state made some effort to ameliorate the condition of indigents and the infirm, beyond the doors of the state-supported Natchez Hospital publica assistance for the sickly was sparse and unevenly distributed. Furthermore, Mississippi placed upon counties the initial burden of providing shelter and sustenance for indigents but permitted counties to pass along to relatives of the poor the cost of long-term care. In the spirit of Christian compassion, benevolent associations attempted to offer assistance to deserving poor, usually in the form of cash and goods. But, as with publicly-funded relief organizations, benevolent societies statewide numbered little more than a dozen.²⁶ Taken together, the work of the state, counties, and benevolent societies inadequately met the needs of indigents.

²⁶Quoting Edward Golladay to "My Dear Brother," 12 January 1861, George Golladay Papers, MDAH. On Mississippians' ideas about the poor, see George H. Young to James McDowell, 25 September 1842, McDowell Papers, Duke. Young noted that with plenty of land available at cheap prices, even the most indigent could afford to rent acreage to support oneself. Knowing the fate of indigents, families frequently opened their homes to family members. Some farmers even rented parcels of land to family members experiencing hard times. See H. J. Curtis to Phillip J. Weaver, 10 April 1850, Phillip J. Weaver Papers, Duke; G. R. Neilson to "Dear Father," 23 April 1853, Wright Family Papers, MDAH. On benevolent societies, see "Minutes of the Leaders of the Benevolent Society of the Methodist Church, South, at Aberdeen, July 4, 1854," Columbus Sykes Papers, MDAH.

But, alleviating the suffering of the downtrodden was hardly the goal of the law. Controlling a potentially dangerous class of people cut-off from the market by their own misfortune, laziness, or contrivance prompted Mississippians to view the poor as the moral equivalent of slaves. Indigents lacked regard for their reputations, for their personal autonomy, Mississippians believed, and state law restricted their mobility just as it restricted movement of African-Americans. If caught outside their native neighborhoods, indigents could be jailed and put to work on public works projects until their home county retrieved them. For those too poor to care for themselves but too proud to confess it, county courts could intervene and place the indigent in a poor house, a shame that attached not only to indigents, but to their families, as well.²⁷

With far less subtlety than state law, James M. Wesson, president of the Mississippi Manufacturing Company, likewise defined the underclass as those without ties to the market economy. Like Matthew Estes, the Columbus pamphleteer who argued that the institution of slavery allowed virtuous whites to escape the drudgery of farm

²⁷Code (1840), 143-148. On the shame attached to a family with a loved one consigned to county care, see Susan S. Darden Diary, 26 May 1860, Darden Family Papers, MDAH. Sentiment in the state turned sharply against indigents during the depression of the 1840s when their number grew. See Vicksburg Daily Whigs, 21 March 1840.

labor, Wesson linked whites who tilled the soil to slaves. Both Wesson and Estes equated liberty with market participation and market participation with the ownership of slaves. According to Wesson, non-slaveholders deserved the opprobrium of their slaveholding peers because they breached the established division of labor based on skin color. Contrary to most southerners who looked upon factory labor as worse than slavery, Wesson thought that once the region possessed a manufacturing system, "a large and prosperous class of population will have been created out of the very dregs of society, and it may be in some instances [sic] worse than dregs." Freed from their identity with the labor of African-Americans, yeoman farmers-turned-factory workers would obtain the full potential of their liberty. Not only would operating high-speed machinery distinguish the labor of plain whites from that of African-Americans, the factory worker producing crude shoes and coarse cloth from plantation slaves would gain a firm interest in the perpetuation of slavery. By clothing slaves, factory workers would affirm white laborers' superiority to dependent blacks. Under the factory system, propertyless whites would no longer constitute a threat to the social ethic and acquire liberty and virtue.²⁸

²⁸J. M. Wesson to J. F. H. Claiborne, 11 August 1858, Claiborne Papers, UNC. Estes, A Defense of Negro Slavery, 43, 143-164.

Even though Wesson subscribed to a definition of market participation and citizenship that most Mississippians abhorred, his broader effort to connect virtue to economic and political liberty fell within the mainstream of contemporary notions of the social ethic. Suspicions of anyone not entangled by the web of the market ran high. Occasionally, newspapers report atrocities, some real but others based on rumor, that occurred when whites without direct ties to the cotton market associated with blacks. In 1841, a mechanic who associated with blacks in the area of Bayou Sara supposedly took part in a slave uprising; in 1846, a riot broke out on Jackson's Pearl Street when "low groceries" sold alcohol to blacks. Incidents such as these bolstered distrust of whites without firm ties to the land. As sectional tensions mounted in the last decade of the antebellum era, the population grew ever leery of anyone who advocated voting against the Democratic party, which by the mid-1850s claimed to be the sole protector of the racial division of labor and the southern social ethic. Daniel Kelly, during the tense late 1850s, observed from his Wayne County home the expulsion of "abolitionists" from Mobile and Clarke County. Never one to air his political opinions, Kelly was sensitive to the developing state of affairs. "I am afraid the time is close at hand, when Sweet Liberty will be bruised &

mangled, if not murdered & buried."²⁹ More insightful than most, Kelly realized that the fruits of the false republic that Mississippi nurtured when it made white liberty contingent upon the continued existence of slavery rapidly approached maturity in November 1860.

Defining and controlling the underclass--African Americans, as well as whites alienated from the market economy--was a primary object of Mississippi law. African-Americans who challenged the social ethic could be dealt with under the law, though they often were not. Deviant whites were another matter altogether. Legally, slaves accused of committing violent crimes against whites fell under the jurisdiction of the courts, but, as Robert Everest, an English minister, noted, Judge Lynch more frequently meted out justice. A hangman's noose or a braided whip wielded by a vigilance committee awaited slaves who resisted enslavement. Joseph Lightsey witnessed another variety of extra-legal justice, the gruesome summary execution of a young slave accused of murdering a white woman and her son. After a committee of citizens rounded-up two suspects and interrogated them, a crowd demanded swift justice. "The people after a consul

²⁹Quoting Daniel Kelly to James C. Kelly, 20 September 1856, John Kelly Papers, Duke. For the reference to "low groceries," see Jackson Mississippian, 23 September 1846. On the slave revolt at Bayou Sara, see Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 27 July 1841. See, too, Code (1828), 328-329.

[sic] sat on about the matter came to the conclusion of burning Haley[.] They accordingly [sic] tied him to a tree & fixed pine knots around him & set them afire[.] [T]here were over 200 people witnessed the burning." Duncan McKenzie of Covington County reported that a local slave owner consented to the lynching of one of his slaves accused of rape. Acting as though state law failed to insure sufficiently their claims to liberty, whites, with all to much frequency, proved their imagined superiority by randomly attacking blacks. Whites offered African-Americans daily reminders of their place in the social order. While travelling down the Mississippi River, Everest met a five-year old white boy skilled at imitating the speech of famous politicians. When two handsomely dressed slave children drew attention away from him, the boy began pummelling one with blows to the head. "There is no redress for the black," Everest said. "Everyone who feels inclined gives him a kick or a cuff."³⁰

³⁰Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 27 February 1851, MDAH; Robert Everest, A Journey Through the United States and Part of Canada (London: John Chapman, 1855), 96, and see, too, 102; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 14 August 1839, McLaurin Papers, Duke. On African-Americans' day-to-day resistance to slavery and masters' reaction to it, see Susan S. Darden Diary, 28 March-1 April 1858, MDAH. See, also, Darden's account of a slave hanging and the uses to which masters put such events, *ibid.*, 24 November 1854: "Our negro men, went to Fayette to see Jesse and Albert hung for murdering their master, W. Killingworth; Jesse confessed that he done it; exhorted his fellow servants to be faithful and do their duty."

The greatest collective cuff given black Mississippians came in the 1835 slave uprising scare in Madison County. But, the cuff also served as a warning to whites that their liberty and virtue, in fact their lives, depended on their continued support of slavery. Occurring on the heels of the Nat Turner uprising in Virginia, Mississippians used the occasion to send a clear signal that members of the underclass, despite the recent enfranchisement of all white males, might not expect wholesale changes in the social ethic. Much about the outbreak of vigilante violence in Madison County has the ring of legend, but the extreme response to a rebellion that never came off reveals much about the prevailing social ethic.

The trouble in Madison County began when Virgil Stewart, an adventurer who claimed to have penetrated the secrets of the Murrell gang, issued a pamphlet about John A. Murrell. According to Stewart, Murrell, a small-time criminal from Tennessee, planned to launch a regional slave insurrection. Tales of slave uprisings were not unfamiliar to planters in central Mississippi, but the thought of Murrell leading an uprising frightened more than most rumors. Not only was Murrell a criminal, he was the worst kind of criminal, a slave thief and, by definition a challenger of the social ethic. By early July, the alarm had been sounded among Madison County planters who believed slaves in their community had fallen into

Murrell's camp. As accusations began to fly, slaves were interrogated, and a vigilance committee at Livingston questioned several whites about their role in planning the uprising. To ensure the peace, Governor Hiram G. Runnels offered to arm citizens against conspirators. The committee investigating the plot, however, found no reason to associate any slaves with the planned revolution. Nevertheless, according to some historians, fifty African-Americans died at the hands of night riders. The whites, northern men and Thomasonian steam doctors to boot, questioned by the Livingston committee fared worse than the slaves interrogated; five were hanged. Before his death, one of the white master-minds of the plot reportedly explained that he viewed the uprising as less a challenge to the social ethic than a greedy grab for power. The white planners, he said, "held out the idea to the negroes that they should be free; but we intended they should work for us." ³¹

³¹Quoting Shackelford, Proceedings of the Citizens of Madison County, 35, but, see, too, 21, 24, 29, 36. On Murrell, see James Lal Penick, Jr., The Great Western Land Pirate John A. Murrell in Legend and History (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 9-31, 109-133; and Virgil A. Stewart, The History of Virgil A. Stewart and His Adventure in Capturing and Exposing the Great 'Western Land Pirate' and His Gang in Connexion With the Evidence comp. by H. R. Howard (New York: Harder and Brothers, 1836), 61. On the events at Livingston, see, too Miles, "The Mississippi Slave Insurrection Scare," 49, 59; Davidson Burns McKibben, "Negro Slave Insurrections in Mississippi, 1800-1865," Journal of Negro History 34 (January 1949), 80-81.

Few Mississippians failed to understand the significance of the events in Madison County. On July 4, 1835, an auspicious day for southerners to rise up in defense of their peculiar brand of liberty and just two days after the first Livingston plotters were hanged, a militia company at Vicksburg, also the scene of an uprising scare, violently quieted a group of hecklers at a political rally. By July 6, a spirit of vigilance gripped the city. Militia, men, citizens, and government officials rounded-up peddlers and gamblers on the assumption that they carried the slave revolt germ. Five were executed for holding abolitionist sentiments, and four were whipped, stripped, and set adrift on rafts in the Mississippi River. Similar efforts to control members of the underclass at Natchez and Grand Gulf followed, and even Columbus, on the eastern boundary of the state, sent its shady characters packing. According to a resident of Clinton, the reign of Judge Lynch at Livingston and elsewhere "probably quieted the spirit [of resistance] for years." Infrequent rumors of rebellion appeared in the antebellum period, but nothing comparable to the Madison County scare occurred.³²

³²Quoting Davidson Burns McKibben, ed. "Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Clinton, Mississippi to a Gentleman in Lynchburg, Virginia, Dated the 5th of July 1835," Journal of Negro History 34 (January 1949), 91-92. Penik, Great Western Land Pirate, 146-154. The Madison County (continued...)

During the 1830s and 1840s, overt proslavery rhetoric rarely appeared in state political campaigns as a defense of the social ethic. Due to the influence of the repudiation controversy, politicians more frequently argued for the protection of their particular version of liberty and virtue based on appeals to class interests.³³ In the late 1840s and throughout the remainder of the antebellum period, however, class appeals diminished in relation to the rise of the sectional crisis. The political culture of Mississippi and its two-party system underwent significant changes in the late years of the antebellum era, as defense of liberty and virtue centered more on

³²(...continued)

insurrection scare left the county a reputation for slave revolts. See Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 8 December 1856, UNC.

On the lessons of the 1835 scare, see Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 11 April 1852, MDAH. Although Lightsey got many of the facts about the events at Livingston wrong, he had been taught the lesson of the scare. Slaves, he believed, longed for their freedom and intended to rape and pillage if ever given the opportunity: the goal of the slaves, who he believed actually carried out a rebellion, was "to kill all the men and save the women alive[.]" The "gentleman" cited above in the letter edited by McKibben, likewise thought the slaves were bent upon "murdering all the white men and ugly women--sparing the handsome ones and making wives of them." See McKibben (cited herein), 92.

³³During national political campaigns, Mississippi Whigs and Democrats took turns labeling each other the heirs of high federalism and abolitionism. See, for example, Lexington Whig Republican, 29 October 1840; Jackson Mississippian, 24 July, 2 October 1840. In state campaigns, however, at least until the early 1850s, charges of abolitionism were not heard. On the nature of national politics in the southern arena, see William J. Cooper, Jr. The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

the protection of individual and regional rights to possess slaves than on class concerns.

Changes in the conduct of Fourth of July celebrations signalled the transformation of Mississippi's political culture. Before the late 1840s, Whigs and Democrats typically exalted the Founding Fathers as creators of the federal Union and protectors of liberty and virtue. During an 1844 celebration of national independence at Patrick's Mill (Scott County), Washington, Jackson, and the soldiers of the Revolution were toasted for their role in founding the Union and preserving it. Mention of "constitutional liberty" (to the Scott countians the equivalent of egalitarian democracy) also prompted a round of toasts. As the sectional crisis of the 1850s heated up, however, southerners turned to Founding Fathers to justify the legality and propriety of secession. In Attala County, state's rights advocates at an 1851 Fourth of July celebration argued that secession to protect southerners' right to own slaves was a patriotic, not a treasonous, act. If resistance to tyranny constituted treason, states'-rights advocates said, southerners should be "just such traitors . . . as George Washington and his

compeers were, when they resisted the tyranny of George the Third."³⁴

After the Union Democrats' temporary ascendancy to power in the early 1850s and the collapse of the Whig party, states' rights Democrats had little difficulty in transforming every imagined challenge to the extension of slavery into an affront to the southern social ethic. Calls for the South to follow the course of just such traitors as George Washington multiplied, as Mississippians increasingly looked to the Founders for approval of secession. Justifications of resistance to federal authority came evermore to turn upon the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, and the appeal that Jackson and his Unionists allies had once enjoyed diminished. According to Mary Davies, July 4, 1854, passed quietly on the eastern border of Mississippi. The old men who had once celebrated the signing of the Declaration of Independence by discharging guns, making speeches, and hosting barbecues had died; the young men who replaced them in the halls of power had come to despise the Union. By the mid-1850s, then, the uses to which southerners put their national heritage had been transformed. Those who had once castigated every opponent of Jackson as "a dm'd

³⁴Quoting Jason Niles Diary, 11 November 1851, UNC. For an account of the events at Patrick Mills, see Jackson Mississippian, 5 July, 19 July 1844.

nullifier" pushed the great hero into the basement of their pantheon of saints and waited for the North to commit a significant enough depredation against southern conceptions of liberty to justify revolution.³⁵

The first inkling that the North might satisfy the wishes of southern firebrands came about when an unheralded representative from Pennsylvania, David Wilmot, introduced to Congress his proviso in 1846. Southern reactions to the congressional proposal to prohibit slavery in territory acquired from Mexico quickly followed. Neither political party in Mississippi welcomed the proviso's restrictions, and leaders of both parties believed sectional legislation, such as the Wilmot Proviso, demanded southerners to submit to gross encroachments upon their moral and legal rights to own property.³⁶ Take away the right to move property from the South to the West and southerners would become the unvirtuous and enslaved children of the North.

Although Whigs and Democrats characterized the proviso as unnecessary, Whigs, at least early in the career of the Wilmot Proviso, evinced a willingness to compromise. After stating his loathing for the proposed

³⁵Quoting M. D. Davies Diary, 4 July 1854, Duke; Duncan McKenzie to John McLaurin, 13 November 1836, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke.

³⁶For examples of reaction to the proviso, see Jackson Mississippian, 20 April, 21 September 1849.

restrictions on the expansion of slavery, a Mississippi Whig refused to consider the proviso a last straw. Indeed, he chastised Mississippians for "forever prating about the South." The more the South complained about depredations against its constitutional liberties, he said, the less seriously the rest of the nation took the charges. Persistently characterizing legislation as "sectional," however harmful to southern concepts of liberty and virtue it might be, suggested to the nation that the South had a hidden agenda to promote. In assailing the proviso's frenetic foes, the Vicksburg Whig admitted that southern prating about liberty and virtue often was little more than a defense of slavery. The newspaper also feared that southern political rhetoric was evolving into something more than a defense of slavery and gearing toward secession and the creation of single political party. Fusion politics, the editor assumed, would lead the South to secede.³⁷

Old party lines, however, proved difficult to erase. Yet, as ill-feelings about the Wilmot Proviso mounted, a growing number of Mississippi politicians concluded that the social ethic could best be maintained if all southerners united in one party. Following the path blazed by southern congressmen, who signed a bi-partisan

³⁷Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 10 September 1846.

statement criticizing the proviso in January 1849, Mississippi Whigs and Democrats gathered in May to map out a plan for united action against the forces of abolitionism. Leading Whigs, including George Shall Yerger, William Sharkey, and C. K. Marshall, joined the convention, but Democrats controlled it. Jefferson Davis, a Democratic senator at the time, delivered the most celebrated speech of the convention when he argued that seventeen years of issuing ultimatums and then backing away had brought about the current exigency. Like the Vicksburg Whig, Davis believed that the North no longer took seriously the South's claim that slaveholding in the territories was a right of freemen. But, unlike the Whig, he proposed that the region secede to prove that its days of crying wolf had ended. For their part, Whigs attempted to douse with old party rhetoric the spirit of disunion. Even though they had at first welcomed the fusion convention, Whigs, fearful that Davis' speech might set in motion the wheels of secession, began denouncing the convention as an extra-legal body without authority.³⁸

In the months following the May 1849 convention, Democrats and Whigs unwittingly took the first steps toward forming a single southern party. For all the

³⁸For accounts of the convention, see Jackson Mississippian, 23 February 1849, and Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 16 May 1849.

tentative efforts to foster a unified southern party, a significant distance separated Democrats and Whigs. Many Democrats, like George Calhoun, endorsed the rhetoric of resistance. In letter to the Jackson Mississippian, a states'-rights newspaper, Calhoun called for the southern states in convention to cast their northern brethren from the Union. The North, Calhoun said, lacked respect for peculiar southern liberties guaranteed in the constitution, and the South should defend its rights by revoking northerners' protection under it.³⁹

While preparing for another bi-partisan convention set for October 1849, the state conducted a gubernatorial race in a an atmosphere of resistance and fusion. T. N. Waul, a leading Democrat, along with other local party leaders, encouraged his former Whig enemies to face-down "the perils that are at our door" and support the Democratic candidate for governor, Quitman. Bipartisan county-level meetings to elect delegates to the October convention echoed the urgency of Waul's statement. The meetings typically issued reports similar to the one which emanated from the Pontotoc convocation. Quitman's election, said Pontotoc County politicians of both parties, would broadcast a message that Mississippians intended to protect "our property, our feelings, and our honor." As a

³⁹Quoting George Calhoun to the Editors, Jackson Mississippian, 10 September 1849.

measure of fusionist sentiment, the Whigs, though they held their own convention and nominated their own candidate, Thomas Polk of Marshall County, passed a convention resolution praising Quitman.⁴⁰ Quitman, though a nullifier from the 1830s and states'-rights Democrat in 1849, appealed to Whigs along traditional lines; he as a bond-paying candidate and a Mexican War hero.

The interjection of the debt-paying issue into the election of 1849 ensured that Quitman, the strongest and best-known of the gubernatorial candidates, would attract a large number of Whig voters, but the debt-paying issue also revived some dormant partisan feelings. Reuben Davis, himself an independent candidate in 1849, warned that the Democratic party should not abandon its principles to support "mendicants and professional quacks" of Whiggish persuasion. Staunch anti-bond paying Democrats, among them ex-Governor McNutt, bristled to think the party would sacrifice its economic platform in order to run a states'-right candidate. He attempted, apparently without much success to label Quitman a pseudo-states' righter committed more to the cause of bond paying than to resisting northern aggression. Most Democrats, however, rushed to Quitman's side. Henry Stuart Foote, a previously

⁴⁰Jackson Mississippian, 20, 22 June 1849; Natchez Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette, 27 June 1849; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 11, 18, 1849.

little known Jackson attorney, obtained his political reputation in the 1849 campaign, and with it a seat in the U. S. Senate, when defended Quitman in debate with McNutt, calling Quitman an heir to "the true Jeffersonian and Calhoun school."⁴¹

With the Whig party running a half-hearted campaign for the governor's office Mississippians focused on the October 1, 1849 fusion convention. Endorsing the statement issued earlier by southern congressmen, the convention supported the treatment of slavery as "a domestic institution" fully protected under the compact of states. It also declared that southerners' constitutional liberties could only be protected if slavery might be introduced into all territories. While no prominent state's-rights Democrats attended the convention, they must have found comfort in the results of the affair. Besides calling for the South to meet at Nashville in 1850, delegates to the convention took a page from the rhetoric of state's-rights Democrats. The state faced two choices: it could submit to the "insulting discrimination"

⁴¹Quoting Henry Stuart Foote to John A. Quitman, 9 August 1849, in J. F. H. Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, vol. 1, 220; Reuben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 302-307. See, too, Jackson Mississippian, 17 August 1849. Even though the Whigs endorsed Quitman, they were not willing to concede local races, see Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 3 February 1849.

of congressional legislation or resist, the convention declared.⁴²

The idea that the South would never, in the words of J. H. Harmanson, "quietly submit to the insulting arrogance of the Yankee" had been gaining prominence among Mississippians. Even though the convention failed to outline the nature of a proposed resistance, Whigs who had attended the meeting hinted at the meaning of the term. Sharkey, a Whig and chief justice of Mississippi's High Court of Errors and Appeals, argued that abolitionist sentiment underlay the Wilmot Proviso and other such measures. Of course, abolition threatened southern conceptions of liberty, indeed, the fabric of southern society. To protect the social ethic, even the normally cautious Sharkey entertained the notion of secession, if the proviso passed. "The Union," he said, "must be dissolved, and the blessings which we enjoy under our Government must become a sacrifice on the altar of fantacism [*sic*]. We must become a degraded people, or abandon our country to the African race. We would say to the [abolitionists] Beware!" for they rush to their "own destruction."⁴³

⁴²Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 4, 9 October 1849, 15 February 1850.

⁴³Quoting J. H. Harmanson to J. F. H. Claiborne, 24 December 1848, Claiborne Papers, UNC; Sharkey quoted in the Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 2d sess., 1850, 533.

While disunion increasingly found favor in Mississippi, a rift in the state Democratic party quelled talk of fusion and prolonged the life of competitive politics in the state. Before the Nashville Convention could assemble to mold a common course of action, Congress passed the Compromise of 1850. During congressional and public debates over the compromise, the hope so recently entertained for the creation of a great fusion party dissipated, and the Democratic party in Mississippi split behind the leadership of the state's senators, Jefferson Davis and Henry Stuart Foote.

The compromise, originally proposed in January 1850 by Henry Clay, included seven separate bills delineating congressional action on territorial and slavery issues. The omnibus bill as it became known provided for the admission of California to the Union as a state, the settlement of Texas' boundary problem and assumption of its debts, and a new fugitive slave law. Furthermore, the compromise forbade Congress from legislating on the slavery question in the lands of the Mexican Cession and from restricting the slave trade in Washington D.C. or Maryland without a popular referendum. The South also extracted from Congress a vague promise not to restrict the free-flow of commerce.⁴⁴ Of the measures included in the

⁴⁴Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, 246-247.

compromise, southern congressmen most resented admission of California as a free state. On the broadest level, Davis and Foote agreed that the South concede too much if it endorsed congressional involvement in slavery legislation in the District of Columbia or permitted California to join the Union as a non-slaveholding state. But where Foote was willing to bend on the California question, Davis preferred an inflexible line of argument.

Early in the congressional debates over the compromise, substantive differences between Mississippi's senators emerged: Davis adopted what might be termed a negative view of congressional power to intervene in territorial matters, and Foote adopted a positive view. While Davis followed the line of argument adopted in the 1849 bipartisan statement of southern congressmen, which called for the federal government to place no limitations on the extension of slavery into western territories, Foote favored extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific. Adopting the old principle of Congressional balance between slave and free states, Foote proposed an amendment to the California admissions bill that divided the Mexican Cession at the thirty-sixth parallel and created out of California four new states, two free and two slave. As it had in 1820, congressional intervention, he believed, would ensure domestic peace, as it had in 1820. Davis, on the other hand, like John C. Calhoun,

preferred that Congress not intervene at all in determining which if any territories would adopt slavery. The Missouri Compromise line and the extension of it trounced on southerners' liberties. At one point during congressional debates, Davis called for southerners to take their chances on extending slavery into the Far West and asked that Congress only provide a level playing field for pro- and anti-slavery forces. An examination of key roll call votes on amendments to the various compromise measures reveals that throughout much of 1850 Foote and Davis maintained their interpretations of intervention. But, when congress temporarily voted down California's admission in July Davis joined Foote on several occasions to vote for the extension of the 1820 compromise line to the Pacific.⁴⁵ Preventing California's admission to the Union offered the only way to level the playing field in Davis' opinion; once the admission failed, he was willing to consider other aspects of the compromise.

Davis' willingness to accept the Missouri Compromise line, after Congress dispensed with California's

⁴⁵Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 2d sess., 1850, 517-520, 531; Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, appex., 867, 1416-1417, 1420, 1455-1456, 1479, 1483, 1504. The most complete account of Mississippi during 1850 is Cleo Hearon's, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 14 (1914), but Hearon incorrectly argues that Davis supported the extension of the Missouri Compromise line before Foote, see, 111, 121, 134-135.

admission, suggests also his commitment to defeating the spirit of the Wilmot Proviso. Davis, like other Mississippians committed to states' rights, made rejection of the proviso's intent the yardstick for measuring loyalty to the southern social ethic. On the other hand, Foote, who in 1850, began to emerge as the leader of the Unionist faction of the Mississippi Democratic party, construed commitment to peace within the federal union the yardstick of regional loyalty. The differences between Davis and Foote that came to a head during the debate over the compromise would influence Mississippi politics until 1854.

Foote, who according to one historian was "the one Mississippian most responsible for his state's acceptance of the compromise and rejection of secession in 1851," lobbied hard to pass the measures. Arrogant and eloquent, Foote was, if not a political opportunist, then, at least a political chameleon with strong Whiggish tendencies. Even though he had campaigned for Quitman in 1849 as a bond-paying, states'-rights Democrat, Foote by 1851 turned against Quitman and adopted a Whiggish defense of the southern social ethic.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Quoting John Edmond Gonzales, "Henry Stuart Foote: A Forgotten Unionist of the Forties," Southern Quarterly 1 (January 1963), 129; Henry Stuart Foote to John A. Quitman, 9 August 1849, in Claiborne, Life and Correspondence, vol. 1, 220. The reference to carrying the argument into Africa (continued...)

In his own account of the compromise measure, Foote claimed responsibility for breathing life into the Committee of Thirteen, which eventually wrote the compromise, and for formulating the omnibus format of the legislation--distinctions that Davis happily granted him. Joining with northern Democrats in support of the compromise, Foote proclaimed it the final resolution of sectional animosity. His insistence that the compromise represented a line in the sand carried much weight among Union Democrats. At a meeting of Lowndes County Unionists in July 1850 led by Joseph B. Cobb and William Barksdale, Unionists agreed that however onerous Congress' failure to extend the Missouri Compromise line, they accepted the new settlement until the North committed further aggression against the southern social ethic. Until then, they promised, the region would take "such modes and measures of redress as we may deem necessary for protection of the South." Despite the tiresome abolitionism of "our insatiate adversaries" in the North, Foote and other Unionists, unlike Davis, refused to endorse unequivocally the

⁴⁶(...continued)

suggests the content of Foote's 1849 debates with McNutt; starting with first principles, he traced the roots of southern resistance to the present. On Foote's role in the compromise, see Hamilton Holman, "Democratic Southern Leadership and the Compromise of 1850," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 41 (December 1854), 413-417; John McCardell, "John A. Quitman and the Compromise of 1850," Journal of Mississippi History 37 (June 1975), 239-266; Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, 1830.

rhetoric of southern resistance and grew impatient with the "treasonable faction" of southerners who opposed the compromise. he did not share with most of his fellow southern congressmen their fear that submission to the compromise measures would result in the death of their social ethic. When Louisiana Senator Pierre Soule equated submission with slavery, Foote rose to his feet in the upper house to denounce such claims as "the language of sedition." Perhaps because he had played a vital role in pushing the compromise measures through Congress, Foote found himself evermore isolated from traditional Democratic defenses of the southern social ethic. "Thank God," he said, "I am no secessionist, no disunionist, and thank God I am in one sense a submissionist. I am, and shall be, I trust willing to submit to any constitutional enactment adopted by Congress, that does not amount to gross oppression."⁴⁷ Of course, Foote was no abolitionist, but like other Union Democrats, he embraced the compromise as a permanent measure for ensuring sectional peace. He was also eager to collect the political bounty that Mississippians, who he believed shared his opinions, would offer when he returned home.

⁴⁷Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, appex., 1491-1500; ibid., 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, 585, 587, 594; ibid., 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, pt. 2, 1480-1481; ibid., 32d Cong., 2d sess., 1850, 48; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 17 August 1850.

Davis, a moderate among states' righters, was in a precarious position. In order to maintain his standing in the party, he had to mouth the rhetoric of resistance, but as a senator speaking to a national audience, he had to treat the idea of resistance with restraint. A man of courtly manners and military background, Davis likely would have preferred that the topic of resistance had not been brought up. Yet, when addressing Mississippians, he was not timid about broaching the subject. To Lowndes County Democrats, he said, southerners held in their hands the decision to resist the compromise measures or not. While ostensibly placing the burden of the decision upon the people, he encouraged them to defend the social ethic against what he deemed northern aggression. In Congress, however, many of his attacks against the compromise centered on traditional appeals to the rights of property holders to move their possessions, chattel or otherwise, without regard to territorial boundaries. But, with fire-eaters like Mississippi Congressman Albert G. Brown swearing to relinquish all except "principle and honor," Davis had difficult time watering-down threats of secession and war. Nevertheless, he pleaded with the Senate to believe that the pounding of the war drums was a phantom born of politicians' lust after office a revealing admission on his part, and that no military man in the South would

endorse a civil war.⁴⁸ Davis and Foote, then, hedged on the meaning of southern resistance. In the battle for the hearts and minds of Mississippi voters that followed congressional approval of the compromise, the meaning of the term resistance remained without any forcefully articulated definition.

Reaction to the compromise had been brewing since the measure was first proposed. Union Democrats, including the remnants of the Whig party, and old-line Democrats began holding organizational meetings across the state and each rallied behind their chosen acolyte in the U. S. Senate. Talk of fusion ceased. Taking his cue from suggestions he received from other southern governors, Quitman called a special session of the legislature to decide upon a proper response to the compromise. While in session, the legislature passed a resolution castigating Foote for his support of the compromise and praising the remainder of the state's delegation for their work against it. The legislature, referring to the actions of "a dominant majority" in the North, which subverted "the sovereign power" of the South, barely hid allusions to

⁴⁸Congressional Globe, 32d Cong., 2d sess., 1850, appex, 120-121, 1471; ibid., 32d Cong., 1st sess., 1850, 1003-1006. See Jefferson Davis to Lowndes County Citizens, 22 November 1850, in Lynda Lasswell Crist, ed. The Papers of Jefferson Davis, 1849-1852, vol. 4 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 139-140.

secession when it called for local conventions to send delegates to a state-wide convention in November 1851.⁴⁹

Between November 1850 and November 1851, talk of submission and Union filled the Mississippi air. Congressman Brown fired the opening salvo in this war of words at Ellwood Springs in November 1850. In one breath, Brown, defying logic, argued that he preferred to see his home state remain in the Union but hated to see it buckle with "tame submission to outrageous wrong." Continuing, he said, "If it has really come to this, that the Southern States dare not assert and maintain their equal position in the Union, for fear of dissolving the Union, then I am free to say that the Union ought to be dissolved." So noxious had the Union become he preferred to see it broken-up. A host of lesser figures picked-up Brown's bravado but generally cast secessionist rhetoric in the more discreet terms of protecting liberty and the social ethic. Signing himself "Jefferson," a writer in the Natchez Free Trader explained that Mississippians faced a choice of protecting "the inherent rights of freemen" or submitting to northern despotism and black liberty. As the rhetoric of submission and resistance grew more pronounced,

⁴⁹Laws of the State of Mississippi Passed at a Called Session of the Legislature (1850), 25. See, also, the speech of J. A. Wilcox on the development of the Southern Rights faction in the Democratic party, Congressional Globe, 32d Cong., 2d sess., 1851, appex., 282-285.

politicians increasingly invoked the names of Jefferson and Madison. State's rights legislators addressing the Mississippi house cited the former presidents' Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions when they postulated that southerners possessed "a natural independence against all external pressure." Though they professed a willingness to preserve the Union, legislators intended to fight for the social ethic until death. "There can be no equality of the races," the legislature declared in confirmation of the necessity of black slavery to foster white liberty. "They cannot live amongst us except as our slaves or as our masters. . . . we must either maintain our superiority or surrender the land of our fathers."⁵⁰

While old-line Democrats bludgeoned Mississippians with calls for resistance, Union Democrats adopted a more even-tempered tone. An amorphous party of Whigs and ex-Democrats, the Union Democrats only slowly turned over control of their party to Foote. In the beginning, he seemed too facile for their tastes, and Judge Sharkey assumed the helm of the party. Despite the distance they tried to put between the party and Foote, Union Democrats sanctioned his defense of the compromise, a defense that

⁵⁰Quoting M. W. Cluskey, ed., Speeches, Messages, and Other Writings of the Honorable Albert G. Brown, A Senator in Congress From the State of Mississippi (Philadelphia: James B. Smith and Company, 1859), 256; Natchez Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette, 3 July 1850, 8 January 1851.

also emerged in the Nashville Convention: no one loved the compromise, but resistance in the face of sectional give and take appeared as obdurate. The social ethic, they said, could best be protected within the framework of the compromise, the final word on the slavery question.

During the campaign for control of the November 1851 convention, Union Democrats broadcast Sharkey's plea that Mississippians consider the horrors of a race war that awaited if secession occurred, and they denounced the States' Right Association, in Joseph B. Cobb's phrase, as "an unconstitutional and a seditious assemblage." In 1851, old-line Democrats, according to the Black Prairie politician Samuel S. Boyd, barely hid their secessionist rhetoric behind the term resistance. Their efforts to equate Jefferson's and Madison's eighteenth-century resolutions with actual secession was "a perversion of their whole import and language." Furthermore, Democrats, Boyd noted, failed to note that Madison had renounced his Virginia Resolution in 1833 as an "extra and ultra-constitutional remedy."⁵¹

⁵¹Quoting A Southron [Joseph B. Cobb], "The True Issue Between Parties in the South, Union or Disunion," The American Whig, New Series, 36 (December 1851), 593; Samuel S. Boyd, Speech of the Honorable Samuel S. Boyd Delivered at the Great Union Festival Held at Jackson, Mississippi the 16th Day of October 1851 (Natchez: Book and Job Office of the Natchez Courier, 1851), 418. See, too, Raymond Hinds County Gazette, 31 October 1850; W. L. Sharkey to the Editor of the Southron reprinted in Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 23 (continued...)

In 1850-1851, old-line Democrats could not shake the stigma attached to being secessionists. As Felix Houston discovered when he delivered an address at a Vicksburg political rally, state politicians were more sanguine about overt resistance than their constituents. Although he believed the Democratic party had to "Quitman" the question of secession, he perceived that the crowd disagreed. He couched his pleas for resistance in less forceful terms than he wished to use. Judging from the results of the canvass for delegates to the November 1851 convention, Houston's audience more thoroughly represented Mississippians' opinion than did Houston himself. When the convention gathered at Jackson, Unionists outnumbered old-line Democrats. Only eighteen counties, all of them in the Piney Woods and Hill Country, except Sunflower, a Delta county, sent states' rights delegations. After each delegate swore allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, a committee of thirteen began preparing a report and resolutions. Not surprisingly, the document eventually approved accepted the stance of the Nashville Convention. Echoing the sentiment of the famous Georgia platform, the

⁵¹(...continued)

October 1850, and Sharkey to Luke Lea, 24 December 1850 in Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, 12 January 1851. On the 1851 convention and Foote's position see his letter to John A. Quitman, 16 October 1850, in which he labeled the convention unnecessary, in Jackson Mississippian, 1 November 1850, and, too, 8 November 1850.

Mississippi convention promised to support the Compromise of 1850 so long as congress did not attempt to interfere with slavery in the states, outlaw the interstate slave trade, restrict the operation of the peculiar institution in the District of Columbia, refuse to admit any state into the Union because it permitted slavery, or outlaw slavery in any territory. Should congress neglect southern sentiment on these issues, the state would resist with all its might.⁵²

Like their old-line Democratic rivals, the Union Democrats on the resolution-writing committee never defined the term resistance, but unlike their political foes, they denied explicitly that they intended the word to suggest secession. In a non-binding straw poll, seventy-two delegates in fact voted that no right to secession existed; only seventeen voted that it did. Among those who voted to recognize secession as a legal recourse were the authors of the convention's minority report, William

⁵²See Felix Houston to J. F. H. Claiborne, 19 September 1850, Claiborne Papers, UNC. On the difficulty that old-line Democrats had convincing voters that the debate over the compromise was not about secession, see K. McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 24 November 1851, Duncan McLaurin papers, Duke; Walter Wade Plantation Diaries, 7 March 1851, MDAH. For an account of the campaign for delegates, see Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, 16 May 1851. Press reports of the convention may be found in ibid., 21 November 1851, and the Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 19 November, 26 November, 3 December 1851. See, too, Journal of the Convention of the State of Mississippi and the Act Calling the Same With the Constitution of the United States and Washington's Farewell Address (Jackson: Thomas Palmer, 1851), passim.

R. Cannon, Wiley P. Harris, and Samuel N. Gilleland. The Lowndes County Unionist, William Barksdale broke ranks with his party and joined the convention minority in support of the right of secession. Even though a majority of delegates failed to recognize secession as a right of the states, Unionists only hinted at their concept of liberty in two curious events that took place during the convention. First, combining traditional Whiggish fears of extra-legal conventions and distrust of the people, Joseph B. Cobb, saw through the convention a resolution proclaiming the convention unnecessary. To consider secession, the resolution said, raged "war with the spirit of republican institutions, and [was] an encroachment on the sovereign power of the people." Liberty might best be protected, the convention suggested, by maintaining the status quo, however troubling it became. Second, a minor debate erupted over the inclusion of the Constitution and Washington's Farewell Address in the convention journal. Old-line Democrats preferred that neither document be included. But, Unionists, believing themselves masters of the state's destiny, pressed to have Washington's denouncement of factional politics included.⁵³ Even Union Democrats, emboldened by the false hope of their convention success, thought the second-party system moribund.

⁵³Journal of the Convention of the State of Mississippi, quoting 19-22; but, see, too, 16, 18, 47.

The old issues were by and large no longer debatable. Yet, by encouraging Mississippians to gather in a fusion party dedicated to protecting the social ethic, they opened the way for a crucial political realignment that left Mississippi by 1855 with but one effective political party. As things turned out that party was not the Union Democratic one, but the party of resistance.

Contrary to what Union Democrats wished, the November convention settled little. The gubernatorial campaign of 1852 effectively kept the compromise and the question of secession before the people. The campaign for governor had begun the previous summer as the former allies Quitman and Foote met in public debate seeking votes for themselves and their favorite delegates to the 1851 convention. After Quitman withdrew from the race in February 1852, in part because of legal trouble caused by his involvement in the Lopez affair and in part because of his shame over losing control of the convention he had called, Davis became the states'-rights candidate. By 1852, few in Mississippi doubted that when states' rights candidates spoke of resistance, they meant secession. If the vote for governor is any indication, the state was evenly divided between Unionists and secessionists. Davis, after missing several weeks of the campaign due to illness, lost by merely 999 votes in an election that polled over 55,000. He carried most of south Mississippi

and ran particularly strong into the counties east of the Pearl River. The only Piney Woods counties he did not carry, Wayne and Perry, he lost by close margins. West of the Pearl River and south of Hinds County, Davis carried seven of ten counties, and the remainder of his support came from the Prairies and several Hill Country counties. The only regions in which Davis did not fare well included the northern Delta and the far northeastern hill counties. In 1852, voters were also asked to vote on whether they wished "to submit" to the payment of the Planters' Bank bonds. Non-payment passed by a wide margin. All but fourteen counties, every one a traditional Whig stronghold, voted against paying the debt. Davis, it should be noted, carried four bond-paying counties but generally did poorly in traditional Whig strongholds, which confirmed his suspicion that Whigs and Union Democrats were essentially the same people.⁵⁴

⁵⁴On the gubernatorial campaign, see Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 12 February, 7, 21 May, 22 October 1851; Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, 25 June, 8 October 1851; Joseph B. Lightsey Diary, 27, 30 August, 3 October 1851, MDAH. See, too, an account of Davis during the campaign in Dunbar Rowland, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, papers, and Speeches, vol. 2 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 105, and Jefferson Davis to Barksdale and Jones, 2 February 1852 in ibid., 126-127. Hudson Strode's Jefferson Davis, American Patriot, 1808-1861, vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), 232-235 also includes an account of Davis during the campaign. Of course, it was not accidental that the old-line Democratically controlled legislature put the question of paying the Planters' Bank bonds in terms of submission or
(continued...)

Although the Union Democratic party successfully carried the gubernatorial election and elected a majority of state and federal legislators, they enjoyed little success during their brief tenure in office. For a time, J. A. Wilcox, J. D. Freeman, and B. D. Nabors in the U. S. House overwhelmed Senator Brown's rhetoric, and old-line Democrats followed Brown's lead by down-playing their rhetoric of resistance. Yet Union Democrats could not capitalize on their electoral victory by consolidating in one party the opponents of states'-rights Democracy. The collapse of the national Whig party did little to help their cause and neither did Foote. Foote, by all accounts, was an ineffective governor, whose chief talent appeared to be alienating people. After his defeat in the 1854 election, Foote, in fact, resigned before his term expired and emigrated to California.⁵⁵

⁵⁴(...continued)

resistance. Vote tallies by county can be found in Journal of the House of Representatives at a Regular Session Thereof Held in the City of Jackson (Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1852), 256, and tallies for the repudiation vote can be found in Records of the Secretary of State, Election Returns, 1852 (Record Group 18), MDAH. Hearon, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," facing 208, also includes the returns.

⁵⁵On Foote, see Gonzales, "Henry Stuart Foote," 135; Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 21 September 1852; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 18 May, 29 June, 20 July 1853. On the Union Democrats and Brown in Congress, see Congressional Globe, 32d Cong., 1st sess., 1851, appex., 282-286, 356-357; Albert G. Brown to J. F. H. Claiborne, 6 May 1853, Claiborne Papers, UNC.

Due to the self-destructive nature of the Union Democratic party, the greatest problem facing its rival during Foote's term involved providing long-time Democrats into the northern part of the state a piece of the political pie.⁵⁶ Tensions between the new northern counties and the river counties had always run high, but in 1853, estranged Democrats caught between their states' rights tendencies and their unionist neighbors bolted from the party in the "Chickasaw Rebellion."

The rebellion began at the Democratic convention of May 1853. Stirred to action by Foote who hoped to draw to his side Unionists who had not previously joined him, B. N. Kinyon tried to ramrod through the convention a resolution critical of President Franklin Pierce, a warm friend of old-line Democrats. When Kinyon, Foote's man at the convention, attempted to pass another resolution calling for the state ticket to be split between Unionist and states'-rights candidates, delegates booed and jeered; the measure went down by an 87-4 vote. Realizing the futility of turning the Democratic party into an extension of Foote's command, Kinyon and John Horne resigned from the convention in disgust, leaving the state's righters to battle over candidates. Personal ambition, brokered deals, and at least one "secret" caucus dominated the

⁵⁶See Albert G. Brown to J. F. H. Claiborne, 14 November 1853, Claiborne Papers, UNC.

nominating process. According to the Pontotoc County judge, Reuben Davis, the machinations of the convention left him without the nomination he wanted. Prior to the convention, Davis had attracted some support in his home county for his congressional aspirations. But, once he arrived in Jackson, he tried to broker a deal between Brown and J. J. McRae, both of whom wanted a seat in the U. S. Senate. When the convention learned of his behind the scenes machinations, it nominated William Barksdale for the congressional seat that Davis desired. Davis, who had run as an independent in 1849 and who seemed to entertain Unionist sentiments, deflected support; Barksdale, despite being known for his Unionist sentiments, received the nomination as reward for his vote in favor of the right of secession at the 1851 convention. Wearing his heart on his sleeve and talking loudly about a brokered convention, Davis cultivated a following in northeastern Mississippi and entered the November election as an independent candidate. But just as he had done in 1849, he pulled out of the race before the election.⁵⁷

⁵⁷On the "Chickasaw Rebellion," see Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, 6, 13, 27 May, 8 July 1853. For an assessment of the convention and the party's strength, see C. S. Tarpley to Jefferson Davis, 6 May 1853, in Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, vol. 2, 213. For a creative account of the "rebellion" and the 1853 campaign, see Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians, 331-333. But, see, too, James W. McKee, Jr., "William Barksdale and the Congressional Election of 1853 in Missis- (continued...)"

Just as did the Chickasaw Rebellion, the Know-Nothing party bore witness to the immediate strain placed on the Democratic party by the collapse of its Whig and Union Democratic opposition. But, the Know-Nothing failure also indicated the ultimate strength of the Democrats. Former Whigs, long familiar with a touch of nativism in their party, and out-of-office Democrats hoped to use the new party as a springboard to power. In typical Whig fashion, the Know-Nothings chastised Democrats as immoral demagogues. Curiously, the Known-Nothings, despite the obvious Whiggish nature of the party, nominated the governor in 1855 C. D. Fontaine, a staunch states' righter and anti-bond payer from Pontotoc. Party hacks intended to take advantage of Democratic dissension in the northern counties by nominating Fontaine, who apparently had no idea his name was even being considered for the position. Even stranger, Fontaine apparently accepted the nomination because he believed the Democratic party too gracious toward Union Democrats, including William Barksdale. While Whigs hoped to use Fontaine to defeat the Democratic party, Fontaine regarded his campaign as a plebiscite to decide who among the states righters, the hard core like

⁵⁷(...continued)
sippi," Journal of Mississippi History 34 (May 1972), 129-158, who attributes Davis' withdrawal to his stabbing of Barksdale.

himself or weak-minded Democratic party lackeys, should rule at home.⁵⁸ A stranger marriage than the one between Fontaine and the Know-Nothings would be difficult to imagine. Needless to say his chances for victory were limited, and with his defeat, the Know-Nothing party in Mississippi died in its infancy.

The Whigs, the Union Democrats, Democratic bolters, and the Know-Nothings each in turn fell victim to the powerful Democratic machine. None of the opposition factions could capitalize on Democratic party diversity and all except the Union Democrats offered only token

⁵⁸On nativism in Mississippi, see: Jackson Mississippian, 6 September 1844; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 26 November 1844, 3 January 1845. On Know-Nothings in Mississippi, see Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, 24 October 1855; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 18 July, 8 September 1855; Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 21 July 4 August 1855. On Democratic fears that Know-Nothings were merely Whigs by another name, see J. J. McRae to J. F. H. Claiborne, 18 November 1854, and Madison McAfee to Claiborne, 31 August 1855, Claiborne Papers, UNC. Some Democrats feared that Know-Nothings were abolitionist, though Fontaine's nomination should have convinced them otherwise. See Wiley P. Harris to Claiborne, 8 December 1854, Claiborne Papers, UNC. Some old-line Whigs also harbored suspicions of the Know-Nothings' designs; see, Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 8 December 1854, McLaurin Papers, Duke. Fontaine also agreed to accept the nomination because of his own failure to received the Democratic party's nomination for a local judgeship in 1853. The nomination went to a rival Fontaine considered soft on states' rights. See John A. G. Hancock to C. D. Fontaine, 14 November 1853; G. G. Thomason to Fontaine, 15 October 1853; T. W. W. Pulliam to Fontaine, 7 February 1853; Thomas W. Harris to Fontaine, 16 June 1853, Charles D. Fontaine and Family Papers, MDAH. On Fontaine stumbling into the gubernatorial race, see George Foote to Fontaine, 6 April 1855; James Taylor to Fontaine, 25 April 1855; A. T. McWilliams to Fontaine, 4 May 1855; A. C. Owen to Fontaine, [?] May 1855, Fontaine Papers, MDAH.

opposition. As a measure of Democratic party success, the Vicksburg Daily Whig, the leading oppositional newspaper, candidly confessed soon after the 1855 election that overthrowing the Democratic party was no possible: "We maintain that every Whig can carry out his conservative principles now, far more effectively without a separate political organization, than with it." Potential challengers to Democratic hegemony learned through the examples of Foote and Reuben Davis that those who opposed the party for personal reasons or who supported national legislation construed by Democrats as inimical to the social ethic would be castigated as "God d__d abolitionists."⁵⁹ Conversely, support for the legality of secession and disregard for fusionist tickets resulted in political rewards, as William Barksdale discovered. Isolated from external assistance and lacking an alternative vision of the social ethic, opponents of secession could only temporize until a sufficiently egregious challenge to the social ethic made further delay impossible.

By 1855, the range of political discourse had been circumscribed by the absence of a forceful oppositional party. Pockets of opposition remained, of course, but by and large, Mississippians had come to agree on the nature of the threat to their social ethic. They had also come

⁵⁹Quoting Vicksburg Daily Whig, 21 November 1851; Jason Niles Diary, 17 August 1850, UNC.

to agree on the course that resistance should take. During the last five years of the antebellum period, the southern reaction to purported northern aggression became more virulent in response to personal liberty laws, the Kansas-Nebraska controversy, and John Brown's raid. Considering the poverty of Mississippi's political rhetoric, the reaction to such events was predictable. Yet secession was not inevitable. Regardless of the diminution of political discourse, regardless of the cultural and political homogeneity fostered by devotion to the social ethic, viable options to secession existed. Curiously, the development of railroads in Mississippi spurred the growth of secessionist sentiment.

Recent historians of the secession crisis have argued that upcountry farmers in South Carolina and Alabama reluctantly answered the call for resistance. According to Lacy K. Ford and J. Mills Thornton, III, fire-eaters' rhetoric had little influence over them, but their distaste for encroaching modernization and the taxation necessary to bring internal improvements to the hill country propelled them endorse secession as a method of maintaining their independence at home.⁶⁰ Although hill

⁶⁰Lacy K. Ford, Jr., Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 337; J. Mills Thornton III, Politics and Power in a Slave Society, Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 426-442.

country resentment of planter domination of the Mississippi Democratic party fueled the Chickasaw Rebellion and Fontaine's bid for governor, poor farmers in the north-eastern part of the state generally were content with Democratic party rule. Their taxes were low, and the state had long agreed not to impose internal improvements on them. The state's disastrous experience with banking in the 1830s convinced politicians that government sponsorship of internal improvements served the people poorly.

After 1855, in the poor regions of Mississippi, a desire to attract railroads and extend the market economy drew yeomen farmers in even tighter union with the mainstream of the state's political economy. In the contradictory language of Mississippi's social ethic, railroads signalled economic independence, not dependence, since the state refused to sponsor the lines itself. However falsely, Mississippians viewed railroads as another signal of their autonomy. The more independence Mississippians accorded themselves, the more willing they were to sever their ties with the Union.⁶¹

⁶¹In the midst of the compromise debate, a writer signing himself "A Mississippi Planter," argued in a similar fashion that so long as the South remained a colony of the North, the region jeopardized its independence: "As it is, a planter desires a bale of cotton made into cloth. He gins and bales, it, drags it, often, sixty or seventy miles to a shipping point; it goes to New Orleans, thence to Boston, and finally to Lowell. It is manufactured, sent back to Boston, thence to New Orleans, thence to the point of
(continued...)

Between 1850 and 1857, the state chartered no less than seventeen railroads, many of them trunk lines. Mississippi's role in constructing the lines was limited, and indeed, it offered only one company, the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad, funds to pay for surveys; in at least one instance, the state permitted residents in the counties through which a proposed railroad would run to vote on accepting or rejecting the charter.⁶² Most Mississippians looked forward to railroads connecting them to distant markets. The editor of the Brandon Herald, in fact, believed that the people of south Mississippi would willingly pay higher taxes to construct the Gulf and Ship Island line. In 1852, residents at a mass meeting in Tishomingo County expressed anger at the state for not granting the Memphis and Charleston Railroad right-of-way through their county. The legislature's decision, they said, was an affront to "equality in the State and the rights of her citizens under the compact of government." Denying the hill country a railroad, or so Tishomingo countians

⁶¹(...continued)
original shipment, and is once more hauled through the mud to the cabin of the planter." See Commercial Review 8 (February 1850), 99. Railroads, in the public mind, offered to break the cycle of dependence by building the region's infrastructure.

⁶²Records of the railroad charters may be found in various volumes of the session laws published annually. On the Gulf and Ship Island receiving money from the state's three percent fund, see Laws (1857), 38.

argued, threaten their economic liberty. They proposed to raise funds through local taxation to underwrite the railroad. If the state ignored their wishes, they also promised to withhold state taxes. With railroad fever spreading almost as rapidly as secessionist fever, Mississippi, in the decade of the 1850s and into the early 1860s, placed hundreds of miles of track into operation. The Mobile and Ohio, the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern, the Mississippi Central, the Mississippi and Tennessee, and the Vicksburg and Montgomery all were completed before 1861.

Even as the urgent sectional crisis of 1860 began to take shape, news of railroad development challenged political news for prominence in Mississippi newspapers. The juxtaposing railroad and secession news should not surprise. The southern social ethic, after all, required that free men submit to neither political nor economic slavery, and railroads offered the South access to markets. Southerners understood the connection between railroad construction and regional economic independence. They also believed that railroads, by extending the market economy into places previously isolated from it, would instill in even the most isolated farmer a deeper appreciation for the social ethic. In 1853, for instance, a writer in a states'-rights newspaper called on farmers to invest less in slaves and cotton and more in railroad

stock. "Let them [farmers] apply a portion towards developing the sources of the country and they will be far more independent--they would concentrate more wealth at home--they would diffuse among the masses a higher degree of comfort, intelligence and independence." Such rhetoric was not limited to states' righters, however. Even the Unionist-dominated 1851 convention passed a resolution calling on the state to diversify its economy and to establish railroads in preparation for secession.⁶³ Railroads, so the argument went, would strengthen the South's economic independence by opening direct lines of trade with southeastern port cities. Cotton raised in Mississippi could be easily shipped to Liverpool via New Orleans, Mobile, and Charleston, and producers could shun northern markets altogether. In a letter to Andrew Johnson, B. B. Trousdale, a Corinth Unionist, noted that his neighbors associated the protection of their political liberty with the safeguarding of their economic liberty. They believed, he said, that once the South established its political freedom from abolitionism, the international demand for cotton would bestow on the region unprecedented prosperity.⁶⁴

⁶³Quoting Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette, 11 March 1853. Journal of the Convention, 18.

⁶⁴Despite Trousdale's distaste for the coming of secession, he was not willing to set aside the social ethic:
(continued...)

Such false expectations infused southerners' faith in cotton as the key to their economic independence. By the mid-1850s, with miles of railroad tracks traversing the state, Mississippians' believed a new day of economic independence had dawned for them. Railroads quickened the drift toward secession by fostering a misplaced faith in regional and individual independence. Yet, in fact, as more and more farmers fell into the web of the market economy, the variety of economic and political independence that they longed to obtain became increasingly elusive. Becoming participants in a modernizing economy voided all claims to independence. Similarly, with the notion of white liberty based on the continuation of black enslavement, Mississippians undercut their claims to political liberty. As sectional tensions grew worse, every imagined depredation against the social ethic provoked a round of secessionist rhetoric, testimony to the limitations of Mississippians' concept of liberty. By the 1861, lacking a vibrant political discourse, Mississippians had but one response for those who threatened to rend the fabric of their social ethic. In order to protect

⁶⁴(...continued)

"This government was made by white men, and for white men[.] [T]he negro had no part or lot in making it, and the Constitution left the Negro where GOD placed him in a subordinate condition." B. B. Trousdale to Andrew Johnson, 17 December 1860, in Leroy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson, 1858-1860, vol. 3 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972), 690.

their peculiar versions of economic political liberty, versions which conceded dependence on the market economy and slavery, Mississippians in January 1861 severed their relationship with the free states.

With the defense of the social ethic deeply ingrained in southern political rhetoric, secession was inevitable by late 1860. Politicians with Whiggish tendencies continued to mount a feeble opposition to state's rights. By 1860, even the railroad entrepreneur and Unionist, A. M. West believed the election of a Republican president should rightly move the South to seek "separate protection and safety." The black and "red republicanism" of the Republican party, Lucius Q. C. Lamar wrote a Unionist, promised to give expression to the "moral revolution"--abolitionism--that the North had dabbled with for fifty years. As both sections came to identify the protection of their unique social ethics with the success of sectional political parties, the fate of the Union hinged on the outcome of the presidential election. The success that the Democratic party had, in the words of a Pontotoc convention, in making the party "co-eval with the existence of this government," can perhaps best be seen in the results of the election.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Quoting Jackson Weekly Mississippian, 13 July 1859; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 11 April 1860; Letter of Lucius Q. C. Lamar in Reply to Honorable P. F. Liddell of Carrollton,
(continued...)

The secessionist candidate for president, John Breckenridge, carried Mississippi with little opposition. In only thirteen counties did significant anti-Breckenridge sentiment appear. Although Jefferson Davis had carried one of those counties, Marshall, in 1851, Breckenridge did best where Davis had done best, south of Hinds County, and in the heart of the hill country. Statewide, anti-Breckenridge candidates collected around 40 percent of the vote, and John Bell led the other candidates, with 36 percent. Stephen A. Douglas scored best in the northern tier of counties bordering Tennessee but collected only one-half of one percent of the state vote. When the results of the election became known, "anti-submission poles," the southern version of liberty poles, went up as did class for a secession convention. The convention that met in January 1861 was, of course, dominated by secessionists, and only one amendment calling for the continuation of the Union was offered. Confronted with the old choice of resistance or submission, liberty or slavery, the mass of southern voters, though still with

⁶⁵(...continued)
Mississippi (n.p., n.d.), 6, but, see, too, 8. Jackson Weekly Mississippian, 18 April 1860.

less enthusiasm than their political leaders, chose to defend the southern social ethic.⁶⁶

Historians have posited a variety of reasons for secession: fear, abolitionism, economic concerns, fire-brand politicians. But, the success enjoyed by the Democratic party in portraying itself as the protector of the southern social ethic, as well as economic and political liberty, perhaps influenced the decision for secession more than any other single force. Only the bravest Unionist, as Mathew Lyon and John Aughey testified, would challenge the Democratic party's identity with the social ethic. According to Lyon, secession and war visited the South because "a galling and iron despotism was riveted upon the necks of the people." Although Lyon insisted that southerners did not willingly submit to the iron

⁶⁶On anti-submission poles, see Susan S. Darden Diaries, 7 December 1860, Darden Family Papers, MDAH. Vote totals are available in W. Dean Burnham's Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955), 552-570. On the Convention, see Journal of the State Convention and Ordinances and Resolutions Adopted January 1861, With An Appendix (Jackson: Ethelbert Barksdale, 1861), 14-15. Although some anti-secession sentiment appeared in the convention, most Mississippians rallied to support the Confederacy once the deed had been done. See Gonzales, "Henry Stuart Foote," 137, and Jackson Weekly Mississippian, 12 December 1860. Stephen Douglas received a number of letters from residents in north Mississippi voicing their support of his candidacy and some after the election expressing dismay over his loss. Typical of the latter category was one from R. G. W. Jewell to Douglas, 10 December 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago: "I pray god to succor you, and give you sufficient strength to overcome the delusion which now maddens the nation."

despotism of the Democratic party, they voluntarily became enslaved to the social ethic. Sensitive southerners recognized their dependence on slavery to ensure their economic and political liberty, but they lacked the words and the vision necessary to posit a social ethic based on anything other than African-American slavery. As the secession crisis came to a head, Daniel Kelly wrote in desperation: "I hardly know what to say. Civil war is one of the last resorts; the very thought of it is awful & revolting. To submit & become vassals to negrodom is equally so." Unable to envision another course of action, Kelly could only pray "may God save us from ourselves."⁶⁷

⁶⁷James A. Lyon Diary, 1865, page 100, MDAH; Daniel Kelly to Ann Kelly, 3 December 1860, Kelly to John N. Kelly, 1 January 1861, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke. See, too, John Aughey's account of a Unionist's life in Mississippi, The Iron Furnace: or, Slavery and Secession (Philadelphia: William S. and Alfred Martien, 1863), 5-6, 50.

Part Two

The Agencies of Change

"There are men who by their sentiments belong to the past and by their ideas to the future. They have a difficult time discovering their place in the present." Louis de Bonald

Early in the summer of 1860, Flavellus Nicholson, a bachelor farmer in Noxubee County, watched helplessly but dispassionately as a drought withered his crops in the field. Freshets, which occurred in August, arrived too late to nurture his cotton and corn but just in time to keep him from participating in the presidential election campaign. The floods also hindered him from courting a young lady. When the rains ceased, Nicholson began attending political functions again. "Politics is all the go," he enthusiastically noted. With the return of pleasant weather, he resumed his social activities, too, joining in a storm party after a Breckinridge rally.¹ Winning the affection of his female friend and the politics of resistance occupied more of his time than did anxiety over

¹Flavellus Nicholson Diary, 13 June, 25, 28, 31 August 1860, Nicholson Diary-Journal, MDAH.

his crops. Neither did he seem concerned that secession might kill the social ethic.

Flush with anticipation of a call to arms, Nicholson believed that on November 6, 1860 he cast his first and final ballot in a United States presidential election. A states-rights partisan, Nicholson voted for Breckinridge. His choices, he thought, were limited: Douglas and his supporters were mere "Squatter Sovereignty men," John Bell and his allies "Union Shriekers." Lincoln, on the other hand, was "the detestable candidate of the foul mouthed Republicans." After Lincoln's election, Nicholson knew his duty. As a lieutenant in the Quitman Light Infantry, he prepared to fight the forces of abolitionism and to defend the southern social ethic. Southerners, Nicholson believed, had "determined never to be the slaves of Northern despots, though the assertion & maintenance of their rights should cost them rivers of blood." For Nicholson, the war would be a crusade for rights: "our all depends upon the issues of this great struggle."²

Four years of war, however, tempered his enthusiasm for crusades. Nevertheless, he remained unwilling to concede defeat. Nicholson attempted to reestablish the social ethic on his Noxubee County farm, but the freedmen he employed proved uncooperative. Eventually, the meaning

²Flavellus Nicholson Diary, 6 November, 10 December 1860; no, date, 1861, Nicholson Diary-Journal, MDAH.

of emancipation sank in: the South gambled her all in 1860, just as Nicholson had known, and lost. Such knowledge offered Nicholson scant comfort. In 1866, he recalled that before the war he had been a dashing young blood in attendance at a grand soiree. Yet, in the immediate postwar period, he included among his "worldly possessions . . . a wife and three children, a little household furniture, and a few mules & horses. Miserum me!" Throughout 1865 and 1866, Nicholson grew evermore embittered toward freedmen and farming in general. "Farming at present is a most awful bore without any profit." After much soul-searching, he concluded that hiring freedmen would "neither be pleasant nor profitable." In a more pensive moment, he wondered what had been gained by "this terrible war."³

For many whites in the postbellum South, the advent of emancipation forever altered the social ethic. Once the dream of asserting their independence through ownership of a cotton plantation and one hundred slaves had helped to foster the white cultural homogeneity of the antebellum period. But, the mere presence of African-Americans as free men disturbed their understanding of the social order. Some, like Nicholson, bid farewell to

³Quoting Flavellus Nicholson Diary, 16, 24 July 1865, 10, 23 August, 3 December 1866, Nicholson Diary-Journal, MDAH.

farming. Disgusted with his prospects for the future and unwilling to hire "uppity" freedmen on their own terms, Nicholson removed to Mobile where he opened a market-gardening business in 1868. Two years later he returned to Shuqulak, Mississippi where he held a series of clerk-ing jobs. He opened his own general store in 1871 and scraped together money to purchase a home and a store. When Nicholson's father-in-law, T. W. C. Wingate, a substantial planter, died in 1875, he left his estate to his daughter. Nicholson felt suddenly "better able to cope with the stern realities of life" and used his wife's inheritance to build-up his store. He also began planting. Nicholson's journey from a man of standing in the antebellum order to a man of standing in the New South was complete. More importantly, his attitude underwent a transformation. In 1889, Nicholson, boasting that his sons held important positions as railroad agents and store clerks, bestowed upon them the highest praise known to New South men: "my sons are all doing finely--making money."⁴

However important defense of the southern social ethic had been in motivating Mississippi to secede from the Union, maintaining antebellum concepts of a good republic proved difficult during the Civil War and even

⁴Quoting Flavellus Nicholson Diary, 16 December 1875, and 9 August 1889; but, see, too, 3 December 1866, 24 January, 3 July 1868, 26 June 1870, 24 November 1871, Nicholson Diary-Journal, MDAH.

more so afterwards. The exigencies of war and Reconstruction destroyed the white cultural homogeneity that had defined the antebellum political economy.

Between 1861 and 1865, policies embraced by the Confederacy and Mississippi trod on the liberty of citizens. Conscription, impressment, and the granting of privileges to a few citizens aroused in the state a sense of class-consciousness that the broad commitment to slavery and political and economic liberty had previously submerged. Emancipation contributed further to the demise of white cultural homogeneity by bestowing upon African-Americans the title "citizen." Most white Mississippians retained their unbridled hatred for African-Americans and fervently wished to return to the days when slavery formed the backbone of the social ethic. The most they could hope for was an uneasy peace with the new order.

Political violence, sharecropping arrangements, and the crop-lien law offered whites a means of establishing such a peace; legal and extra-legal initiatives also returned African-Americans to a condition much like slavery. Even though economic and political terrorism denied ex-slaves the full benefit of citizenship, they could not restore to preeminence the social ethic undiluted. African-Americans without chains and shackles upset southerners' notions of a good republic. In the immediate postbellum period, the political culture of racism that

attempted to restore at least the theories of race that had undergirded the social ethic remained a feature of Mississippi.

But great social changes also accompanied the war and Reconstruction. With the social ethic imperiled, leading men played an active role in moving the postbellum South toward new concepts of a good republic and into the commercial order of the late nineteenth century. Like Nicholson, they cast aside the old values of self-sufficiency, liberty, and virtue that had animated freemen in the antebellum period; and they defined success and autonomy in a manner that would have been antithetical to prewar southerners. The pursuit of material success via industry, railroading, and store ownership particularly attested to the changed values. Yet, like their antebellum predecessors, they refused to admit African-Americans' autonomy in the new order they created. Both new values and old, then, commingled in the postbellum period, creating a South neither thorough of the New South nor of the Old.

Chapter Four

The Distressing Influence of War

After the fall of Vicksburg, the hope and ebullience, which had led Mississippians to embark upon a war to defend the social ethic, passed. Despondency grew among the population. The war, and particularly the recent campaign and siege, had caused great suffering. Provisions were scarce and prices high; the Confederacy made extraordinary demands on citizens' time and their purses; calvary units from both sides pillaged at will. Economically and spiritually broken, Mississippians suffered under the distressing influence of war. By July 1863, they doubted that the South would emerge victorious; many wished only for a speedy return to normalcy. The achievement of normalcy, however, at least when defined as the reinstatement of the status quo ante, was not possible. For many, the impossibility of reestablishing without alteration the pre-war social ethic formed another of the distressing influences of war.

Throughout both halves of the Civil War, the labor of war and the war against free labor, the southern social ethic confronted trials destined to alter it. Pristine

notions of the social ethic, which had played a prominent role in catapulting the state toward secession, passed into obscurity as the tide of the war turned against the South. When the Confederate states adopted policies of conscription and impressment and created institutions once deemed inimical to individual rights, the goal of fostering an homogenous social order appeared to have been rejected. Consequentially, between 1851 and 1865, perceptions of the good republic as the protector of white males' political and economic liberty faded. Contrary to Call's wishes, the close of hostilities failed to restore normalcy to the South. Many of the conditions that he complained about (violence, inflation, anxiety) persisted even after 1865. White southerners nevertheless resolutely pursued the restoration of the social ethic during Reconstruction. In fact, the introduction of sharecropping arrangements, labor contracts, and the crop-lien law might be counted as efforts to reestablished concepts of white liberty and virtue based on the political, social, and economic isolation of African-Americans. The necessity of introducing the devices of subjugation testified to the new social order initiated by the war and Reconstruction.

If large numbers of Mississippians had known in 1861 that their social ethic would encounter the tests that it faced during the war and Reconstruction, they

might have temporized and reconsidered the wisdom of secession. Besides the conflagration certain to follow on the heels of secession, southerners in possession of foresight might have pointed to the 1860 drought that struck the eastern half of the state as an augur of disaster. Yet, despite the extensive crop failures, Mississippians placed their hope for the future in the imagined economic leverage offered by "King Cotton" and the power of the social ethic to foster moral and political uniformity. Such thinking proved to be wishful at best; the season of dearth promised by the drought preceded, in William Faulkner's phrase, "the four years fallow."¹ A nearly decade-long period of adjustment to free labor followed the war. Only a few Mississippians, among them William S. Yerger, who designated the ordinance of secession "An Ordinance for the Abolition of Slavery and the Desolation of the South," had premonitions of failure. Clairvoyance was a rare gift. During the interval between Lincoln's election and the firing on Fort Sumter, few Mississippi diarists or correspondents expressed anxiety for the future. Those who foresaw war predicted victory, but most allowed sectional tensions to pass without significant notice. James F. Maury, a student at the state university at Oxford, found his studies and day-to-day

¹Faulkner quoted in Absalom, Absalom! (1936, reprint: Vintage Books, 1972), 161.

concerns more interesting than the prospects of a war. Just weeks before echoes of cannon-fire rolled up the Ashley and the Cooper rivers, Maury had other things on his mind: "employed myself killing rats and reading Hume."²

Not all Mississippians remained as unconcerned about the events of 1860 and 1861. Some raised serious questions about the state's ability to keep anarchy at bay once it stepped outside the Union; other pensive souls were uncertain about the meaning of secession. The Unionist B. L. C. Wailes, for example, believed the election of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederacy assured an amicable separation from the Union; as late as February 1861, Susan Sillers Darden, the wife of a staunch secessionist, continued to think of Lincoln as president of an undivided nation. Different varieties of uncertainty also appeared as hope for peace dissipated in the spring of 1861. Across the state and around the nation, the realization spread that secession meant war. According to a former Mississippian living in the Arizona Territory, William Need, secession ensured not only war but an end to

²For Yerger's remarks on secession, see J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford: L. Stebbins, 1868), 373; quoting James F. Maury Diary, 29 March 1861, UNC.

southern commerce and slavery. "The people of the Cotton States are insane; great prosperity has made them mad!"³

Most Mississippians, however, accepted the consequences of their actions with more sanguinity. Some, in fact, did so with alacrity. Charles Fontaine, the one-time Know-Nothing candidate for governor, looked forward to the coming conflict and longed to welcome invading armies with "bloody hands & hospitable graves." Under the influence of a similar enthusiasm, the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, William Green, decreed that "Confederate States of America" be substituted for "United States" in his parishioners' prayers, and he added to the church's repertoire of prayers one his own contrivance seeking justification for the southern cause. Under the influence of such blind enthusiasm, Mississippians, young and old, male and female, rushed to defend their liberty and the social ethic in 1860 and 1861. Males joined the state militia, home guard units, and vigilance committees; females formed clubs to darn socks and sew colorful uniforms for their hometown warriors.⁴

³Quoting, William Need to John J. McRae, 8 February 1861, McRae Papers, MDAH. B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 11 February 1861, MDAH; Susan Sillers Darden Diary, 10 July 1861, MDAH.

⁴Quoting unattached Mss., 24 April 1861, William Green Papers, MDAH. See, too, Susan S. Darden Diary, 10 July 1861, MDAH.

Zeal for a war to defend the social ethic ran higher perhaps than foreboding and disinterest. Even before the close of 1860, volunteers flooded into the ranks of the recently reformed state militia. Prior to 1858, the state had compelled all white males to serve in the militia, but, in the wake of the Mexican War, reformers, including Governor Albert G. Brown, heralded the creation of a voluntary militia as a triumph of efficiency, liberty, and patriotism. Reforms, however, proceeded slowly. The legislature approved the switch from compulsory to voluntary service but neglected to implement the changes until 1860. Finally, in May, anticipating the worst outcome in the sectional crisis, the legislature authorized the formation of two brigades. Recruitment lagged prior to Lincoln's election, then accelerated between mid-November and the end of December. Adjutant-General Walter L. Sykes estimated that after mid-November seven or eight companies of at least fifty men each enrolled per week. All together, eighty-one companies formed before 1861. Wisely, Governor John Pettus refused to accept into state service most of the newly-formed companies, citing as his reason a lack of ordnance and provisions. The financial burden of supporting the troops, Pettus observed, promised to overwhelm the state treasury, as well as the communities called upon to feed them. Pettus' apprehensions about asking a barely

self-sufficient and inefficiently armed state to feed and outfit its militia were well founded. According to census data gathered in 1859, the South manufactured few fire-arms, and Mississippi made none. The value of all arms produced in the South, in fact, totaled \$73,000, while Hartford County, Connecticut alone manufactured arms valued at more than ten times that amount.⁵ Outfitting the Confederate army proved to be one of the most troublesome tasks of the war and a task resistant to the influence of unbridled enthusiasm.

Despite Pettus' reluctance to accept into the state militia all troops that applied, a significant number of soldiers entered the state service in early 1861. Before either side had fired a shot, Mississippi troops, many armed only with flint-locks and supported by their officers and private subscription, languished in camps awaiting orders. By the spring of 1861, a paltry 1,500 state militia men had been sent into action. Discontent with camp life spread through the ranks. Eager to

⁵Dunbar Rowland, Military History of Mississippi, 1803-1898 (1908, reprint; Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1978), 34-35. John Bettersworth, Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 26-28. According to B. L. C. Wailes, Pettus had an opportunity to purchase arms from the Colt factory in 1860, but the governor refused to conduct business with a northern firm. For his actions, Wailes bestowed upon Pettus the title "most bigoted and prejudiced 'Nin compoop.'" See Wailes Diary, 29 March 1860, MDAH.

enter the fray, bored with camp life, and concerned about a drawn-out conflict that would keep them from tending their crops, soldiers complained that Governor Pettus accepted into the militia only his favorites. Personal appeals to the governor to accept particular troops flowed into his office. Anxious to receive a commission as a militia chaplain, Reverend S. R. Jones appealed to Pettus' patriotism. He assured the Democratic governor that, even though he had been a Whig, the war obliterated party distinctions and "made us a most united people." Pettus remained unmoved by such appeals until hostilities began in April 1861, and, then, he ordered the militia to enroll all companies offering their services. Within one month, 200 companies joined the state militia, and Pettus again ceased receiving companies. Disgruntled with being held from the fight, Mississippians enlisted in the Confederate army instead of the militia.⁶

Before the conclusion of the war, the patriotic ardor of 1861 would be impossible to replicate. Finding and retaining eligible soldiers became problem in the later years of the war, but an excess of volunteers in

⁶Quoting S. R. Jones to John Pettus, 8 October 1861. For complaints against Pettus and appeals to be accepted into the state service, see, W. C. Falkner to John Pettus, 28 December 1860; J. W. M. Harris to Pettus, 1 May 1861; R. M. F. Lowry to Pettus, 3 May 1861; T. S. Hewes to Pettus, 8 May 1861; A. E. Fant to Pettus, 27 May 1861, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Betterworth, Confederate Mississippi, 27-28.

1861 created unique difficulties, too. With so many men enrolled in the state militia, Mississippi soon found itself unable to meet the enrollment demands of the Confederacy. In September 1861, Wiley P. Harris, a staff officer in the militia, warned Jefferson Davis that the state would fall far short of filling the manpower demands placed on it by the central government. Already, Harris said, the countryside looked deserted. Barely more than a corporal's guard could be raised to protect the population in case of a widespread slave uprising.⁷ When the war came to Mississippi, another variety of exodus, motivated by fear not patriotism, depleted the countryside of folk. Marauding armies of the Confederacy and the Union forced isolated farmers to remove their families to secure environs. Where once the state had been unable to satisfy patriots eager to fight, it soon found itself unable to locate and retain soldiers. The shortage of eligible fighting men prompted Mississippi to advance policies previously regarded as antagonistic to southern and individual rights. In a war to secure liberty, it is ironic that individual and corporate freedom fell out of favor as quickly as they did. Support for egalitarian notions of service collapsed during the war, as did the basis for

⁷Rowland, Military History of Mississippi, 39.

economic opportunism that had characterized the antebellum period.

Mississippians, as suggested by the treatment accorded those thought to be abolitionists, never tolerated wide deviations from acceptable political behavior; wartime measures institutionalized the punishment of dissenters. Even before the conflict began, secessionists attempted to coerce and quiet unionists. During the presidential election of 1860, Reverend John Aughey discovered that he had few allies in Lowndes County. "Amidst the frowns and suppressed murmurs of judges and bystanders," Aughey cast the only Union vote recorded at his polling place. Vigilance committees, adjuncts of antebellum night patrols, dealt with dissenters more harshly than did Lowndes County election supervisors. In northeast Mississippi, Aughey said, the committees enforced an unwritten code of law and order that scowled at minute deviations from the social ethic. Other counties too, had their vigilance committees with which to contend. During the war, a Winston County committee arrested a local farmer for his "abolitionist" views. Apparently, the farmer had returned a slave to his mother-in-law because he believed the slave's presence imperiled his daughter's morals. After July 1862, Aughey himself spent most of the war jailed with deserters, spies, and native guides for the Union cavalry; his son, who attempted to run for the

legislature on a platform of peace and reconstruction but found no one willing to print ballots, also landed in jail. James Lyon, another Lowndes County minister, likewise felt pressured to embrace the southern cause, but unlike Aughey, he avoided imprisonment. According to Lyon, wicked people during the late 1850s and 1860s snatched away "the liberties of the people" and subjected them to "a galling & iron despotism." Abject poverty and "a fear to speak their opinions[,] their actually giving utterance to opinions & feelings, the exact contrary of what they entertain and feel" resulted. When Lyon treated his congregation to a sermon laced with such language, several members left the church in anger.⁸

Considering antebellum southerners' adverse opinion of "abolitionists" in their midst, the rough treatment accorded the Augheys could perhaps have been predicted. Nonetheless, the conception of political liberty championed by southerners never clearly sanctioned imprisonment of mere dissenters. Neither did the prevailing concept of economic liberty embrace the creation of banks or soft currency. Yet, the exigencies of war encouraged Mississippians to discard their former antipathy for such measures of economic redress.

⁸Quoting James A. Lyon Journal, 28 February 1862 and undated page, 100, MDAH. John Aughey, The Iron Furnace; or, Slavery and Secession (Philadelphia: William S. and Alfred Martien, 1863), 50-60, 80.

The economic consequences of secession appeared in the South before the various state conventions voted to dissolve the Union. By the end of 1860, New Orleans commission houses, anticipating bloodshed, cut-off planters' credit and refused to receive cotton. According to B. L. C. Wailes, the disruption in the cotton market drove producers to the point of distraction. An Adams County planter worth no less than \$150,000 believed himself "ruined and poor;" his behavior became so erratic that family members carted him off to a lunatic asylum. The contraction of business in the western counties of the state quickly spread east. As early as January 1861, reports abounded that currency, specie and paper money, ceased to circulate in substantial amounts. Merchants closed their shops, befuddled planters held their cotton, and ordinary business transactions came to a sudden stop. Just prior to closing permanently his dry goods store, Thomas Webber, a merchant at Bahalia, fired-off a parting shot at the Confederacy that illustrates Mississippians' response to the economic decline: "I am confounded. I am ruined. My Country is ruined. Would to God I had never been born."⁹

⁹Quoting Thomas Webber Diary, 28 February 1861, Webber Papers, Duke. See, too, William Leon Cocker, "Cotton and Faith: A Social and Political View of Mississippi Wartime Finance, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1973), 109; B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 1 January 1861, MDAH; Daniel Kelly to John Kelly, 1 January 1861, John N. Kelly Papers, Duke; Tryphena Fox to "Dear Mother," 16 December (continued...)

In order to address the economic collapse brought about by secession, the state assumed powers and granted privileges that antebellum state Democrats had successfully derided as antagonistic to individuals' liberty. In the decades prior to the war, anti-bank and anti-tax sentiments had run high in response to the economic collapse precipitated by the Panic of 1837, and Mississippians afterwards retained their lasting distaste for government involvement in financial matters. With the onset of the war and the Union blockade of southern ports, the once-vibrant post-depression economy entered another period of decline. Just as in the antebellum depression, citizens hoarded currency, debts mounted, and questions about taxation were vigorously debated. Hoping to invent a medium of exchange and to take advantage of the South's dominant position in the international cotton market, the Mississippi legislature approved two bills. In the summer of 1861, it authorized the state to make loans to cotton planters. The legislature intended that the twenty-year 8 percent bonds paid planters for their cotton would circulate as currency, but they never did. Planters, who believed they could weather the financial storm by living

⁹(...continued)
1860, Tryphena Holder Fox Papers, MDAH. On the affects of secession upon northern businessmen in the South, see Samuel Coleman to William T. Walthall, 31 December 1860, William T. Walthall Papers, MDAH.

off their accumulated assets, hoarded the bonds or, as the war progressed, sold them to speculators. Addressing its previous failure to create a circulating medium in the cash-poor state, the legislature passed a second measure, the Cotton Loan Act in December 1861. The act pledged Mississippi's faith behind \$5 million of treasury notes. Issued in denominations from \$1 to \$100, the legislature intended that cotton cultivators receive the notes as an advance on their 1861 crop. As envisioned by the state, agents would assess a farmer's cotton and award the notes based on a maximum price of five cents per pound. The state would thus become the owner of the cotton, and the planter would possess a currency with which to conduct business. Furthermore, the law required that farmers withhold their cotton from the market until the state called for it. All taxes, except the military one, could be paid with the notes. Like previous attempts to provide a currency, the notes, which did little to boost the economy from its doldrums, never circulated at par value: one contemporary claimed that the established exchange rate for specie exceeded 2:1. Circulating among a host of currencies issued by other states, the Confederate government, and municipalities, state notes seemed hardly appealing. Mississippi's previous retraction of its faith

cast an air of suspicion over the wartime pledge, and few non-residents accepted the notes.¹⁰

In still another way, the state looked to cotton to bolster its economy. Despite the overwhelming anti-bank sentiment that prevailed in the late antebellum period, Mississippi in 1861 granted a number of banks, railroad companies, and insurance firms the privilege of issuing notes. Stock in the corporations could be purchased with bales of cotton, which the state valued at \$125 each, roughly 3 cents per pound. Passage of these laws by a legislature previously committed to the elimination of special privileges raised few eyebrows. But, neither did the new institutions add significant amounts of paper currency to the economy.¹¹ Just as recovery from the depression of the 1840s had required more than the elimination of financial institutions and state debts, so too did the economic crisis triggered by the Civil War. The key to recovery during both economic calamities hinged on the cotton market, and the wartime market would not recover until 1865.

Nevertheless, cotton continued to function in the southern economy as a linchpin, albeit a linchpin without

¹⁰Coker, "Cotton and Faith," 71, 87-88, 94, 138-146; Betterworth, Confederate Mississippi, 93, 98, 102-103. See, too, B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 4 July 1862, MDAH.

¹¹Betterworth, Confederate Mississippi, 111.

strength. As long as Mississippians remained ebullient about victory, cotton planters subscribed to the state a portion of their crops. But, when the economy began its collapse and battlefield losses mounted, volunteerism among the civilian population vanished. By 1863, all had been reduced to abject penury. Few residents possessed currency, and those who did held it. To prosecute the war, however, the state needed to raise revenue. But, legislative efforts to tax a population cut-off from the cotton market and lacking currency were guaranteed to raise the ire of independent-minded citizens. Unlike currency legislation, the collection of taxes became a point of contention in Mississippi. During the January 1861 secession convention, James Z. George and S. J. Gholson attempted to install a progressive tax structure that levied particularly high taxes on the state's most valuable property, slaves. Yet, the convention, afraid that planters would reexamine their support for secession, instead increased taxes across the board, including the tax on slaves, by 50 percent. Nervous, too, that non-slaveholders might interpret the tax structure as regressive, the convention levied an additional tax of 20 cents per \$100 in slave property and instituted a levy of .3 percent on all money controlled, deposited, and loaned,

safely submerging class tensions at the start of the war.¹² Within two years, however, the perception of white homogeneity that had led the convention to pursue a golden mean in its taxation policies fell victim to the war and an entropic tax base.

In its exertions to ensure citizens' allegiance to the southern cause, the state taxed citizens lightly for the first two years of the war. Mississippi also issued a variety of stay laws prohibiting the collection of private debts until twelve months after the end of the war. Despite the state's attempts to offset higher taxes with policies intended to suggest collateral sacrifice, Union penetration of Confederate lines exacerbated revenue collecting operations and forced Mississippi to discard the fiction that all suffered under the same economic burden. A new tax law in 1863 aroused the antipathy of many. It levied a direct tax of 8 percent on all property, a graduated license tax, a capital gains tax, and a tax-in-kind on agricultural produce. For most farmers, the tax-in-kind seemed a cruel denial of wartime reality.¹³ Exposed to an invading army and southern banditti,

¹²On planters subscribing cotton to the state, see Susan S. Darden Diary, 26 July 1861, Darden Family Papers, MDAH. See, too, Bettersworth, Confederate Mississippi, 93-95; Coker, "Cotton and Faith," 67-71.

¹³Coker, "Cotton and Faith," 156; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 2 February 1865, UNC.

surrendering a tithe of their produce left little for home consumption. To many Mississippians, the tax-in-kind represented yet another confession that the state regarded dimly its duty of preserving white citizens' liberty.

With the cotton economy in declension and secondary markets retrenched, the tax-in-kind aggravated farmers' financial difficulties. Currency, despite the state's attempts to create a circulating medium, remained scarce, and the blockade of southern ports kept most cotton from finding a market. In an economy only marginally self-sufficient at best, the combination of inflation, food shortages, and war sank the state into a barter economy. Prices throughout the war soared. Already reeling from the shortages attributable to the drought, residents in eastern and southern Mississippi first felt the pains of war in their stomachs and their pocketbooks. Lacking the necessities of life, a group of Rankin, Simpson, and Smith countians wrote Governor Pettus that even those who would normally aid the destitute could not. Surveying the scene around him, Duncan McKenzie confirmed that the destitute abounded. "Great God, Uncle, what an age we live in," he said. His Piney Woods neighbors, who traditionally planted few row crops but sent timber and livestock to New Orleans and Mobile, suffered from a want of bread and cash. Prices cited in diaries and correspondence, however impressionistic, suggests the severity of

the hard times experienced during the war. Barrels of pork ranged in price from \$25 and \$30 cash, and the credit price easily topped \$35. Wheat in the early years of the war reportedly cost \$5 per bushel, and flour went to \$55 in some quarters. Corn sold at upwards of \$3 a bushel, more than twice its pre-war price. A bushel of weevil eaten ears, according to one report, cost \$1. By 1862, the price paid for salt, the chief ingredient used to preserve meats, exceeded \$24 a bushel. The demand for salt remained high throughout the war, and Mississippians made herculean efforts to obtain it. Samuel Agnew's father traveled from the northeastern corner of the state to Vermillion Bay, Louisiana for salt, and B. L. C. Wailes scraped the basement where plantation meats and vegetables had been packed just to scavenge eight pounds.¹⁴

Soldiers at the front knew first-hand what food shortages meant to them, and from correspondence, they knew that their children at home often went without. In the antebellum period, the measure of independent citizens had been their ability to subsist and to produce for the market economy. But, during the war, state tax policies,

¹⁴Reports of wartime prices may be found in the following collections: Susan S. Darden Diary, 5 July 1861, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; Sally Ann Fontaine to C. D. Fontaine, 16 September 1862, Fontaine Family Papers, MDAH; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 5 July 1862, McLaurin Papers, Duke. On efforts to obtain salt, see Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 12 November 1862, UNC; B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 29 August, 1 October 1862, MDAH.

the destruction of local markets, and the removal of white males from farms precluded the maintenance of such ideal notions of liberty and virtue. Faced with depleted larders and empty pocketbooks, citizens believed that they had surrendered their liberty and virtue, if only temporarily, for the greater good of the social ethic. In return, they expected the state care for their families and soldiers at the front. As construed during the war, liberty and virtue, then, not only inhered in those who worked under the antebellum paradigm, but also in those who sacrificed their livelihoods and prospects for the future in order to secure the social ethic. Mutual sacrifice transformed white civilians into moral soldiers deserving of governmental assistance to meet their needs for subsistence. In June 1863, citizens at Benton enunciated the idea that as contributors to the war effort and possessors of liberty and virtue, they deserved to receive from the state a supply of food. If the state, they told Governor Pettus, failed to fulfill its patriotic duty to feed citizens, victory would be impossible. "It is very hard for a soldier to remain at his post or to do his full duty, when he knows his wife and children at home are starving." Ample evidence suggests that among civilians

and in the army starvation and food of poor quality caused unnecessary suffering.¹⁵

Much to the regret of plain folk at home, the state, even though it did not bolt at granting privileges to the banks and cotton planters, responded negatively to proposals to play a more active role in caring for the keepers of the social ethic. Putting aside antebellum fears of an intrusive state government, civilians forwarded to Pettus several creative plans to distribute food to hungry citizens. One writer from Lauderdale County, noting that the 1860 drought had thinned herds of beef cattle so badly that farmers completely ignored the nearly starved stock, argued that the state should confiscate and redistribute cattle among civilians outside the stricken region. According to his plan, the state could then distribute healthy stock to soldiers and sell beef on the hoof to civilians. Although the governor's correspondent neglected to suggest where the state might find healthy cattle, his implicit contention that the state had to assume a greater responsibility for feeding citizens if it wished to maintain the antebellum social ethic represented a new concept of liberty that permitted governmental intrusion into citizens' lives. Of course, the

¹⁵Petition of Destitute in Rankin, Simpson, Smith Counties, 18 August 1862, Governors' Papers, MDAH. See, also, Phil H. Gully to John Pettus, 11 March 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

short-comings of his plan became painful obvious when the state actually attempted to redistribute agricultural produce through a tax-in-kind. Barely self-sufficient in good times, caused citizens rightly complained that they could not afford to make additional sacrifices. They knew what Pettus' correspondent failed to concede: the antebellum emphasis on market production not only created a society dependent on the market for its bounty but also made it difficult to feed that society under the distressing influence of war.¹⁶ The state government, in fact, never achieved an efficient means of feeding citizens or soldiers and, indeed, failed to admit that it held responsibility for the commonweal. After the fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi's chief occupation became the maintenance of order among poorly fed soldiers and civilians, who came to see the state as less an agent for the perpetuation of the social ethic and more as an enemy of liberty.

Like foodstuffs, finished goods (clothes and shoes primarily) also were coveted before war's end. According to the historian John Bettersworth, Mississippi had "entered the Civil War a greatly undernourished [industrial] infant" and inefficiently supplied citizens with clothing

¹⁶The plan for redistributing cattle can be found in a letter, signed "A Planter" to John Pettus, 29 September 1862, Governors' Papers. See other plans in the correspondence of W. W. McLendon to Pettus, 12 March 1863; James Rives to Pettus, 26 March 1863; William Delay to Charles Clark, 28 November 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

during the war. Only four major textile factories, including the state penitentiary mill, existed in the state prior to 1861. While manufacturing establishments turned out \$6.5 million in products in 1859, almost 50 percent of the value of manufactured goods derived from the production of lumber, meal, and flour; the lumber industry alone employed almost 25 percent of all persons who worked in manufacturing facilities and accounted for 25 percent of the finished goods manufactured. Across the board, wartime production diminished to a trickle after 1860, as manpower previously employed in factories joined the military. Production also plummeted because facilities became targets for the Union cavalry and because workers, many of whom went unpaid and hungry, refused to labor long under wartime conditions. Workers at the Mississippi Manufacturing Company at Bankston, for example, struck and rioted for wages in 1864. After they threatened to burn down the factory, plant managers took the labor action seriously and invited a cavalry unit attached to General Nathan B. Forrest's command to sweep through Choctaw County arresting rebellious workers as deserters. Forrest's action ended the riots for a time, but the labor force grew embittered. Several months later, when the Union cavalry rode through the area, workers stood aside while the troops burned the factory. Manufacturing facilities at Woodville, Jackson, and Columbus, the last including a

large munitions factory that had been removed from Memphis, likewise fell to Union raiders.¹⁷

Besides destroying cotton and manufacturing facilities, Union troops also paid special attention to the destruction of Mississippi's railroad lines. A northern soldier assigned to destroy portions of the Mobile and Ohio and the Mississippi Central railroads boasted that the Union army begat "a moral impression on the Citizens of Mississippi." Reflecting on his unit's success, he correctly surmised that Mississippians would "never forget our visit for several generations to come." As if the destruction of railroads and industries by Union soldiers was not enough, Confederate troops laid railroads to waste. Civilians, dissatisfied with the military policies and shortages, took part in the destruction of railroads, too. Angered by the turn of wartime events, drunken rowdies at Ripley even burned the city to the ground. Considering the wholesale eradication of the symbols of antebellum progress, one twentieth-century commentator

¹⁷Buttersworth, Confederate Mississippi, 67-68. On labor unrest at Mississippi Mills and other locations, see J. M. Wesson to Charles Clark, 26 March 1864, and Alex Vintress to Clark, 6 February 1864, Governors' Papers; Smauel A. Agnew Diary, 25 February 1862, 6 March 1862, UNC.

accurately suggested that "war is hell and folks are worse."¹⁸

The destruction of Mississippi's scant productive capacity also made an impression on contemporaries. Ordinary items, like wooden water buckets, became scarce. Samuel Agnew complained that without a bucket school children under his command had to drink stream water filled with "wiggletails." Cotton cloth, even the plain white sheeting manufactured in southern textile mills, was rare, and, according to one report, prices paid for the cloth exceeded \$5 a yard in early 1862, a price that would eventually be considered low. Because of the cost of cloth, homespun fashions came in vogue. Yet, during the war, the price paid for cotton cards, hand-held implements used to strip cotton into fibers, rose from \$30 to \$65 a pair, making the effort to dress one's family a costly one. As prices for finished goods rose, some Mississippians began their own small manufacturing operations. Agnew, a Presbyterian minister, recognized the need for medical supplies in the army and set out 1,600 poppy plants from which to make opium; his father began tinkering in a blacksmith shop and invented an unidentified "new

¹⁸Quoting [?] to "Dear Professor," 7 March 1864, U. S. Army, Officers and Soldiers Miscellany, MDAH, and Sid Champion Papers, Forward to Sid Champion III's typescript copy of the Champion Diary, Duke. See, too, Samuel A. Agnew, 23, 28 June 1862, 31 March 1863.

implement of warfare." Farm families in northeast Mississippi also began weaving cloth in their homes in order to barter for needed foodstuffs. Unlike the penitentiary mill at Jackson, which implemented a system of putting out during the war, the farm families contracted directly with cotton producers and sold their wares on the open market. Other entrepreneurs attempted to meet the wartime demand for shoes. Homemade shoes, according to Duncan McKenzie, sold for \$8 in his neighborhood. In an attempt to cash in on the high prices paid for footwear, he purchased from a local herdsman raw sides of leather and engaged an expert to tan the hides for \$1.60 a side. Grafton Baker and his partner, a Mr. Turner, of Enterprise also tried their hand at manufacturing. They requested that Governor Charles Clark arrange for an appropriation of state funds for the purchase of \$11,000 worth of kettles and a furnace. With the necessary equipment, Baker said, he intended to make salt, and he offered to pay back the funds by selling the state one-half of his production at the discounted rate of \$10 per bushel; he proposed to sell the remainder to the state at market value.¹⁹

¹⁹Samuel Agnew Diary, 13, 22 March 1862, 12 May, 1 June, 30 October 1863, UNC. Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 28 January 1863, Duncan McKenzie papers, Duke; Grafton Baker to Charles Clark, 21 June 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On the penitentiary factory during the war, see Ledger of Accounts, Mississippi Mills Collection, MDAH William Stone of southwestern Mississippi developed a brisk business
(continued...)

Although by 1860 most Mississippians realized that the southern economy needed to be modernized through the introduction of industries, they undertook few efforts to establish factories. Less than fifteen years of uninterrupted economic growth after the post-panic depression hardly permitted an agricultural society time to industrialize. Regardless of the time factor, most Mississippians with surplus cash invested in slaves and the expansion of cotton production. Furthermore, concepts of the government's role in the economy retarded the development of a diversified, industrial economy. The wartime industrial ventures that emerged represented desperate attempts to rescue the southern economy and did not reflect a deep-seeded commitment to full-scale industrialization. Cotton, despite the harsh realities of war, remained the deity to which Mississippians paid homage.

For planters like James L. Alcorn, a dramatic game of hide and seek commenced with the war. At first, he hid cotton from Confederate troops intent on burning it, and later, he hid it from the Union cavalry. By 1863, as Union forces became a feature in the countryside, the state officially adopted a policy of burning cotton,

¹⁹(...continued)
selling hides to Confederate troops at Osyka. In January and February 1863, he sold 532 hides; his business became so brisk that he had to rent an abandoned farm house in which to store hides. See William A. Stone Diary, 7, 12 January, 2, 24 February 1863, William A. Stone Papers, MDAH.

angering the one group of citizens it had previously tried most to appease: planters. Typical of the planter response to the introduction of forced cotton-burning, B. L. C. Wailes considered the policy "an act of supreme folly and wantonness, and totally inexcusable." Faced with torch bearing armies North and South, cotton planters nevertheless tried to market their crops. After Memphis fell to the Union army in 1862, north Mississippians especially, despite threats from their patriotic neighbors, traded there. Some, like Simon Speight, exchanged cotton for perishable and rare items, which they sold to their neighbors at exorbitant prices. Speight, for example, sold baking soda for \$3 a box, plug tobacco for \$1, and brandy for \$5 per quart. Although those who traded with Union-held cities had to swear never again to aid the Confederacy in word or deed, few seemed bothered by renouncing their former allegiance. Matthew Dunn, however, anguished over the decision to sell cotton against government orders: "I don't know whether it is right or not" to trade with the enemy, he told his wife. For others, feeding their families with the goods that cotton brought concerned them more than allegiance to a dying cause. Whatever rewards line-runners believed awaited them, crossing between Union and Confederate territory to trade was a dangerous occupation. Legally, as Martha Cragan learned, trade with the North was prohibited. When she

attempted to exchange cotton for salt and cotton cards, Confederate troops confiscated her cotton, as well as her team of horses. Seeking recourse through Governor Clark, she found none. At best, he promised to try to find her team.²⁰

Despite the general ban on the cotton trade, large planters had more luck getting their cotton to market than did small producers like Cragan. In 1863, Governor Clark even signed a contract permitting John M. Syler to transport his cotton, at state expense, across Confederate lines in exchange for the opportunity to purchase 2,000 pairs of cotton and wool cards at \$20 per pair. As the western counties of Mississippi fell under Union control, such contracts became unnecessary. Illegal trade with the enemy increased, and the state could do little to halt it. At Woodville, an English merchant, Mrs. B. Beaumont, developed an intricate system of contraband trade at which both Union and Confederate troops winked. On the coast, which fell quickly to Union forces, lumbermen traded unmolested with New Orleans. Mostly they sent tar, pitch, planks, and charcoal. But, organized bands of cattle

²⁰Quoting B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 14 June 1862, MDAH; Matthew A. Dunn to Virginia Dunn, 5 September 1863, Dunn Family Papers, MDAH. James L. Alcorn to Amelia, 18 December 1862, James L. Alcorn and Family Papers, UNC; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 7 June, 11 December, 27 December 1862, 1 January, 3 May 1863; Martha Cragan to Charles Clark, 28 November 1863; Clark to Cragan, 6 December 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

rustlers also took advantage of the contraband trade with New Orleans, driving entire herds through Confederate lines. Vigilance committees in the Piney Woods attempted to halt cattle thieving by summarily executing entire bands of rustlers.²¹ But, like the state's efforts to curtail trade with Union-held cities, local efforts to stymie illegal trade met with erratic success.

Even though southerners encountered food shortages and a non-existent cotton market, the Confederate States asked citizens to make additional sacrifices. The policies of conscription, impressment, and the exemption from military service of large slaveholders seemed intentionally designed to awaken long dormant class tensions. Just as in the 1840s when proponents of repudiation feared that paying the state's debts incurred on behalf of the Union and Planters' Banks might grant a particular class unique rights, opponents of the wartime measures bristled at the thought of plain folk being required to sacrifice proportionately more than those rich enough to receive exemptions or to pay someone to serve in their place.

²¹The contract between Syler and Clark may be found in Box 56 of the Governors' Papers, MDAH. See a similar arrangement outlined in J. T. Smylie to Clark, 21 December 1863, and F. R. Tinsly to Clark, 1 February 1864, Governors' Papers. Mrs. B. Beaumont, Twelve Years of My Life, An Autobiography (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, 1887), 213, 218, 242-253. On wartime cattle rustling in the Piney Woods, see Robert J. Baxter, "Cattle Raising in Early Mississippi: Reminiscences," Mississippi Folklore Register 10 (Spring 1976), 17-19.

While people like Samuel Agnew might have believed that an adequate army could be raised only through conscription, few in the state vigorously championed the policy. Most Mississippians regarded conscription, in the words of Major James C. Rogers, as "a fatal blow at our independence"--the antithesis of the southern cause. Complaints against conscription poured into the governor's office, but with fear of retribution against dissenters mounting, many correspondents refused to sign their names. One anonymous letter writer labeled the policy an unconstitutional usurpation of individuals' liberty. The governor, he said, could "form no earthly idea how much distress & suffering our citizens are subjected to by it." According to him, most Mississippians would have been willing to serve, "but we do not want [to be compelled] & expect our Governor to arrest the inaugural of Military despotism, tyranny, & oppression." Citizens also complained that local medical boards, charged with classifying conscripts, exempted favorites. In 1864, H. W. Walter reported that 72 percent of conscripts at Brookhaven received medical exemptions. Additionally, he said, 302 of the 537 actually approved for service in the last five months of 1864 deserted before leaving the state. Confusion over who could be drafted caused violent confrontations with Confederate representatives. In order to prevent healthy males from escaping their duty and

veterans from being conscripted, one of the governor's correspondents modestly proposed that all males be branded on the forehead as eligible for service or not. The difficulties of enforcing a draft notwithstanding, the policy decimated the white male population in some neighborhoods. Charles Fontaine's mother, for example, complained that it was "a hard case" to be sixty years old and have the last remaining male in her family "taken from me;" "I understand there is only five men in the entire neighborhood of my plantation."²²

Conscription, though moderately successful in raising an army, fostered more resentment in the state than it did esprit d' corps. Furthermore, impressment and the so-called "twenty-nigger law" left many Mississippians with the idea that the Confederacy looked exclusively upon ordinary farmers as a source for supplies and manpower. A widespread sentiment of distrust developed among Mississippians who had once believed themselves egalitarians fighting a war for liberty. Confederate policy, small farmers argued, protected the planter class'

²²Quoting Major James C. Rogers to Charles Clark, 23 March 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH; "A Citizen" to John Clark, 5 October 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH; and [?] to Charles Fontaine, 26 September [?], Charles D. Fontaine Papers, MDAH. See, also, James Garner to Charles Clark, 12 March 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH. For H. W. Walter's remarks, see the Official Records, series 4, vol. 3, 976. See also, H. L. McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 2 September 1863, McLaurin Papers, Duke.

interest in slavery, more so than it protected their economic and political liberty. Although planters complained when the Confederacy burned their cotton, impressed and mistreated their slaves, and lost their tools, small producers excoriated the government more frequently for committing depredations against their liberty.²³

Impressment, the policy that permitted Confederate forces to appropriate supplies, livestock, and foodstuff, represented the most egregious Confederate effort to curtail citizens' liberty. Confederate forces impressed supplies, according to most sources, with impunity, leaving some neighborhoods with little food and few draft animals.

When the Confederacy exempted from military service planters and overseers with more than twenty slaves under their charge, the familiar contention spread that the conflict was a rich man's fight and a poor man's war. In the northern part of the state where Union troops concentrated their activities, impressment officers and Union raiders competed for horses and mules, and once loyal protectors of the social ethic found it difficult to define the enemy of their liberty. Small landholders with little means and without labor to spare bore the burdens of conscription and impressment. They could not get their small cotton

²³Petition by Planters of Richland, Holmes County to Charles Clark, 23 March 1863, Governors' Papers; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 8 February 1864, UNC.

crops to market; they lacked currency of any kind; and the cost of conscription and impressment, in terms of manpower and supplies, proved to be ruinous.

Forced to surrender to the southern cause their liberty in exchange for suffering, Mississippians' distaste for the war mounted as Confederate policies and Union armies exacted their toll. According to a Union officer, Confederate policy had made many citizens in northern Mississippi "unwilling supporters of the rebellion." Organized violence cropped up in some quarters. Besides common thievery, which became the habit of many who faced starvation, resisting Confederate officials became as popular as fighting invading armies. The most celebrated case of resistance to the southern war effort occurred in Jones County where Newton Knight, a former Confederate orderly, assembled a force of disgruntled neighbors to defend themselves against conscription and impressment. Faced with empty smokehouses and corn cribs and frequent cavalry raids, Knight's army of deserters and draft-dodgers robbed stores and individuals in Jones County. They fought pitched battles with elements of the Louisiana cavalry in Jasper and Covington counties, too. Similar vagabond armies in the North-Central Hills, particularly in Leake County, emerged to protect their young men from conscription officers and to ensure unrestricted trade. Outbreaks of lawlessness and massive resistance to

Confederate policies also broke-out in the western counties. The swamps and canebrakes in the southwestern portion of the state around Natchez as well as those near Utica hosted numerous brigands and resisters.²⁴

The historian John Bettersworth has contended that resistance to the Confederacy in the Piney Woods represented an expression of backcountry onerousness, and in part, he was correct. But, in fact, many Piney Woodsmen, as former Governor John J. McRae learned when trying to raise a company in south Mississippi, were unwilling to leave their homes undefended. Isolated small farmers around the state knew little of the world outside their immediate vicinity and saw no need in fighting a far-away enemy if doing so meant leaving their homes unprotected.²⁵

²⁴Quoting John J. Mudd to Lt. Col. John A. Rawlins, in Official Records, series 1, vol 17, part 1, 514. See, too, W. H. Handy to Charles Clark, 8 February 1864; R. S. Hudson to Clark, 13 June 1864, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On the Knights of Jones County, see the manuscripts, "Intimate Sketch of Activities of Newton Knight and the 'Free State of Jones County,'" 2-4 and "Thomas J. Knight's Story of His Father, Newton Knight," 2-3, 6-7, 12, 33, 62, Thomas Knight Papers, LSU. On similar bands of deserters and looters, see, H. Hunt to Virginia Dunn, 3 April 1865, Matthew A. Dunn Family Papers, MDAH; G. W. Mims to Charles Clark, 8 June 1863, Governors' Papers; James Worthington, "Antebellum Slaveholding Aristocracy of Washington County," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919, ed. William David McCain and Charolette Capers (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954), 350-365.

²⁵Bettersworth, Confederate Mississippi; John J. McRae to Earl Van Dorn, 28 June 1862, and McRae to W. P. Chellar, 21 May 1861, McRae Papers, MDAH.

Despite their reluctance to fight, they nevertheless perceived the sectional crisis of 1860-1861 as a threat to their cherished liberty. But, once the war became a destroyer of liberty and the market economy, Piney Woods citizens set out to kill the monster. Privileged exemptions from military service granted planters and the disproportionately large burden of support carried by moderate and small landholders turned the very advocates of revolution against the war. Egalitarian sentiments which had united the white South in times of sectional tensions abated as small farmers felt pressed to fight a war they suddenly believed they had been duped into supporting.

Matthew A. Dunn, a soldier who served in east-central Mississippi, understood the resentment that moved his fellow citizens to resist the war. Among his duties as a soldier, Dunn arrested draft dodgers, one of whom "gritted his teeth at me & asked if I dared to treat him so." As Dunn ascertained, the tide of support that had early flowed in favor of the South began to turn against the region when soldiers and citizens were asked to perform duties they found noxious to their liberty. In response to hospitals filled with the dying and the near total Union control of Mississippi, whispered talk of desertion and even reconstruction passed through army encampments. Desertions, in fact, became widespread, and neither rough treatment accorded deserters nor executions

stemmed the exodus out of the army. Indeed, such treatment tended to turn more citizens against the war, and it hardened soldiers called upon to execute their fellows. After noting the execution of three deserters, Dunn admitted, "This war is calculated to harden the softest heart." Realizing that victory eluded them and that the price of continuing the fight would be heavy, many Mississippians chose not to allow their hearts to be hardened further. In the last months of the war, some soldiers switched sides and enlisted in the victorious army.²⁶

The Civil War exposed the incongruence between antebellum ideals and reality. When faced with a choice of adopting policies to protect the economic liberty of small farmers or that of large planters, the state chose the latter. The very ideas that antebellum politicians had labeled as makers of special privilege became policy during the war. Mississippi made no effort to implement notions of egalitarian service. As the slaveholders' war became a poor man's fight, a war within the war erupted. However temporarily, yeomen farmers and non-slaveholders

²⁶Matthew A. Dunn to Virginia Dunn, 19 April 1864, 5 September 1863, 7 November 1863, 13 October 1863, Dunn Family Papers, MDAH. Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 6 August 1863, UNC; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 20 June 1864, McLaurin Papers, Duke. See to the letter signed by John LeGrand, et. al. to Charles Clark, 30 November 1863, Governors' Papers, MDAH, complaining that a Lieutenant Brock kept dogs in camp to track deserters; once he caught them, he reportedly gave deserters a choice of being hanged or severely whipped.

accused their wealthy neighbors of callously disregarding their rights within the established political economy. Yet, of all pre-war ideals, the justification of the social ethic slavery based on concerns about race persisted in the postbellum period. The long life of the social ethic under a system of free labor permitted slavery, though it went by the name of tenancy, a protracted career. In fact, reestablishing control over blacks' labor and lives motivated whites throughout the postbellum era.

In 1865, the state lay in ashes. Immediately after the war, travellers to Mississippi observed the destruction: solitary chimneys were all that remained in parts of Jackson; holes in streets and buildings at Vicksburg testified that a siege had taken place there; armies near Corinth denuded the forests. Even small towns like Okolona fell victim to the torch. In the interior of the state, weeds flourished where cotton had once stood; fences and farm homes sagged after four years without maintenance. Surveying the damage done to her son's plantation, Susan Darden lamented, "Oh, this cruel, cruel war--what ruin it has brought upon us!" More significantly even than the physical destruction of the state, the death of thousands of able-bodied males extracted from Mississippians a heavy sacrifice. No adequate statistics exist to establish the number of Mississippians who died during the war, but impressionistic evidence suggests the

toll on human life exceeded even the most gloomy pre-war prediction. Wounded participants offered telling evidence of the brutality of war. According to historian Alfred Garner, Mississippi appropriated 25 percent of its 1866 budget to purchase artificial limbs for veterans. Civilians, black and white, as well as soldiers, died as a consequence of the war. Makeshift cemeteries, as travelers frequently noted, dotted the countryside. Outside of Vicksburg, Isaac Shoemaker, a northern plantation owner, observed that mass graves, dug shallow and with haste, emitted "an exceeding offensive smell--and I saw crows sitting on them attracted by the effluvia."²⁷

While Mississippians faced an awesome task of rebuilding the state and their lives, accepting the reality of emancipation proved to be the greatest obstacle confronting whites in the post-war period. In 1869, James L. Alcorn noted that whites not only lost their liberty during the war, they lost their dignity, and here he

²⁷Quoting Susan S. Darden Diary, 28 January 1866, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; Isaac Shoemaker Diary, 11 February 1864, Duke. See, too, Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871 (University: University of Alabama Press, 1965), 142-144; James Wilford Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi (Glouster: Peter Smith, 1964), 122-123. Even the area around Natchez, which escaped large-scale battles, was "a sadly desolated district" after the war, as planters had abandoned their plantations. See J. Floyd King to Lin, 9 January 1866, Thomas B. King Papers, UNC. See, too, Letitia D. Miller Recollections, unnumbered page, MDAH, for an account of a planter's family moving repeatedly during the war.

implied their social ethic. Emancipation created a new class of citizens, a class that whites were poorly prepared to acknowledge as capable of rational and independent action much less capable of regarding as rightful claimants of liberty. White Mississippians, in fact, viewed freed people as competitors for economic and political power. Although Congress with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments opened the political arena to all-comers, it failed to open the southern economy to freed people. The nation continued to labor under the impression that blacks could best serve the commonweal as laborers.²⁸ Despite the timid efforts to make labor free, white southerners maintained a belief that their liberty and virtue depended upon the continued characterization of African-Americans as something less than citizens. Indeed, the persistence of such notions helped to subdue the tensions among whites that had arisen during the war and facilitated immediately after the war the perpetuation of ideas about white cultural homogeneity. Whites remained as determined in 1865 as they had in 1861 to resist all challengers to their social ethic. Yet freed people

²⁸James L. Alcorn to Amelia Alcorn, 17 October 1869, Alcorn and Family Collection, MDAH. On wartime and post-bellum social decline, see J. Floyd King to Lin, 9 January 1866, Thomas B. King Papers, UNC. On American attitudes toward free labor, see Gerald David Jaynes, Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1882 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), chapters 1, 2, and 3.

for their part attempted to make a place for themselves as heirs of Jacksonian concepts of liberty, virtue, and equality of opportunism.

As historians of the past three decades have pointed out, the slave community did not lack visions of liberty; day-to-day resistance, folktales, and rebellion testified to African-Americans' desire for freedom. The visitation of war upon the South intensified slaves' longing for freedom, and as the war dragged on, the frequency and intensity of resistance mounted. Slave revolts, though rare in the antebellum period, became more frequent during the war. A small rebellion in the southwestern counties in May 1861 took the lives of several planters, and a plot to revolt, reportedly hatched by German immigrants, was discovered in the summer of 1862. The presence of an invading army in a countryside depopulated by conscription somewhat lessened the physical risks associated with slave resistance but greatly aided runaways. Throughout the war, but particularly after the fall of Vicksburg, runaways flooded into Union camps. The entire populations of some plantations left at once. A Yazoo County resident awoke one morning to find that only her cook remained. Other planters, instead of waiting for their slaves to escape to freedom, left the war zone. John A. Downey of Corinth fled Mississippi bound for Texas with fifty-nine slaves. Fifteen stole away during the

journey, and once in Texas, he sold fourteen. Privately, he wished that he had "kept them and whip'd them till they had forgotten they ever heard of a Yankee."²⁹ In a state deprived of physical necessities, rumors of good northern clothes and plentiful food excited the slave community and convinced many slaves to desert their owners.

With the long dreamed of liberty as near as the Union army, slaves, according to Samuel Agnew, began to "'carry a high head.'" African-Americans had often employed religious metaphors to describe the condition of their enslavement and to uplift their community, and in the waning days of the war, the long dreamed of exodus from Egypt seemed close at hand. Attempting to avoid further chastisement, a run-away from Agnew's neighborhood shot while trying to escape, feigned lunacy. She claimed to be Jesus Christ on the way to Jerusalem. Agnew, despite his religious training, recognized her ploy but failed to understand the meaning of her play acting. To other whites, sympathetic northerners especially, the movement of blacks away from their former masters resembled nothing less than a journey of Biblical proportions. Isaac Shoemaker, during his search for a Delta plantation,

²⁹Susan S. Darden Diary, 3 July 1865, 8, 10, 12, 17, 19 May 1861, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; B. L. C. Wailes Diary, 2, 5 July 1862, MDAH; [?] to Annie F. Stuart, 15 August 1863, Dimitry Family Papers, Duke; John A. Downey to L. D. Burwell, no date, Samuel Smith Downey Papers, Duke.

witnessed 5,000 freed people--road-weary, ragged, and somewhat despondent--prepare to embark for Davis Bend and an experimental agricultural village established on the peninsula. The caravan reminded him of "the departure of the Isarlites [sic] out of Egypt."³⁰

Few former slaves benefitted from the direct federal assistance offered those freed people bound for Davis Bend, but many left their familiar slave quarters and masters with little more than a few personal items and hope for the future. A missionary who worked with the American Missionary Association commented on the ex-slaves' optimism: "If they were not the most hopeful race in the world, they certainly would sit down in despair or become desperate." But, freedmen did not sit down. In fact, of the liberties opened to them by emancipation, mobility was the first that most experienced. Although most mobile freed people simply moved off "old massa's" plantation and onto a neighboring one, several Mississippi towns and cities, as well as the Delta in general, attracted ex-slaves. In the years immediately following the war, Vicksburg, Jackson, Natchez, and Columbus experienced substantial increases in their black populations; between

³⁰Quoting Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 30 October, 1, 2 November 1862, but see, too, 5 June 1863, UNC; and Isaac Shoemaker Diary, 3 March 1864, Duke. James L. Roark's Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Norton, 1977) provides insight into the institution of slavery during the war.

1860 and 1870, the number of African-Americans living in Vicksburg grew by almost five times, while the black population in the remaining cities almost doubled. Of the five largest antebellum towns in Mississippi, only Holly Springs, which lies near Memphis in the bluff region, saw its black population decrease between 1860 and 1870. The promise of fertile land and prosperity drew freed people to the river counties throughout the postbellum period. Hill country freed people, as well as thousands from outside of the state, moved into the river counties and the Black Belt. In 1881, the state Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture estimated that ten to eleven thousand ex-slaves had immigrated into the state during the previous four years.³¹

Some freed people, enticed by state and private agents, poured into Mississippi, but others, dissatisfied with their lot, left. Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Samuel Thomas, estimated that 100,000 blacks fled the state between 1860 and 1865. Because of the well-known flaws of

³¹Quoting, J. D. Bardwell to Reverend Samuel Hunt, 2 November 1867, American Missionary Association papers, Armistead Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana (microfilm). For a discussion of the Davis Bend experiment, see, James Tyson Currie, "Vicksburg, 1863-1876: The Promise and the Reality of Reconstruction on the Mississippi" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1976), 103-159. Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (1947, reprint; New York, Harper and Row, 1965), 106-117, discusses mobility among freedmen.

the 1870 census, accurate estimates of black mobility are difficult to obtain; scattered literary evidence suggests that labor shortages remained an annual feature of plantation life for several years after the war. Yet, with the advent of the labor contract and the emergence of debt peonage, only the most determined freed people could escape the New South's slavery. Perhaps the most celebrated mass exodus from Mississippi occurred in 1879. Following the depression of the 1870s, a yellow fever epidemic, and the political violence of the decade, scores of African-Americans moved to Kansas hoping a state that had never seen slavery established within its borders would accept them as equals. Kansas, like other states at the time, sent out agents and mailed literature to prospective landowners. In 1879 alone, between 5,000 and 6,000 ex-slaves in Mississippi accepted the invitation to move to Kansas.³² Even though the promise of free land drew them to Kansas under false pretenses, those who left rightly believed the sharecropping and credit arrangements

³²Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, 27 June 1865, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Reports of the Sub-Commissioners, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (microfilm reel 1). [Hereafter cited as BRFAL, followed by the reel number in parenthesis]. Wharton Negro in Mississippi, 116-117. Eliza R. McNabb to [?], 28 January 1868, McNabb Family Papers, MDAH; William Storrow Lovell Plantation Journals, 4, 7 March, 24 May 1879, 1879, UNC; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 3 January 1880, UNC.

enslaved them just as surely as had the peculiar institution.

Even as freed people in the late 1860s began to explore their liberty of movement, white Mississippians doubted that the federal government intended to destroy the institution of slavery; for its part, the federal government appeared unwilling to define free labor as anything other than the absence of slavery. A triangular conflict between ex-slaves, white southerners, and the federal government erupted in 1865 as the various definitions of free labor conflicted.

In white Mississippians' minds, the introduction of free labor promised to eradicate the social ethic by elevating the underclass to the stature enjoyed by yeomen. Free labor, southern whites also contended, would be ill-suited to work in the cotton fields and retard Mississippi's economic recovery. Without an underclass readily identifiable by race and relegated to field labor, southerners postulated that the entire social order was up for grabs. A two-year confrontation between labor, which refused to submit meekly to slavery under a different name, and landlords, who intended to reestablish the connection between cotton production and cheap and abundant labor, occurred between 1865 and 1867. Native southerners proved most resistant to black freedom. Seven years after the war, the language of slavery persisted.

The politician-planter Jehu Amaziah Orr continued to speak of his labor force as if it were enslaved: "Mary broke [the] Singletree & ran away." Susan Darden longed for the days of slavery, so that she could whip her domestic servants for their slow movement. The government in Washington, particularly President Andrew Johnson, neglected the cause of free labor. When Johnson vetoed a bill to extend the Freedmen's Bureau, the bugbear of the southern white imagination, he gave whites license to maintain the social ethic under the rubric of free labor. According to Samuel Agnew, the phrase "liberty is freedom to work" summed up the Johnson administration's message to blacks.³³ Faced with a mobile labor supply, which, at least in the summer of 1865, seemed largely disinterested in plantation labor, white Mississippians reacted badly to the introduction of free labor.

Mislead by the Johnson administration's timidity, and resistant at any rate to approving wholesale changes in their social ethic, a pattern of reaction to free labor emerged. Maintaining control over an underclass deemed inferior by virtue of its skin color demanded that every aspect of laborers' lives be regulated. The state, as

³³Quoting Jehu Amaziah Orr Journal, 11 July 1872, UNC; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 8 May 1865, but, see, too, 24 and 29 May 1865, UNC. On white's interpretation of free labor during Johnson's administration, see R. S. Donaldson to Lt. Stuart Eldridge, 4 October 1865, BFRAL (9).

well as individual whites, employed various methods to curtail freed people's liberty. Antebellum arguments justifying close watch over non-southern whites and African-Americans died hard. "Dutch" merchants who sold groceries to freed laborers, thus interfering with traditional landlord-labor relations, discovered first-hand that the impulse which had exiled gamblers and peddlers in 1835 persisted; Federal troopers learned, too, that their blue uniforms served as reminders of their status as outsiders; and former slaves realized soon after the war that, despite emancipation and their new-found liberty of mobility, whites, when given the chance, would try to reestablish customary relationships.³⁴

In the most celebrated instance of whites reconstituting slavery under a new name, the legislature, in November 1865, passed the infamous Black Codes. Designed to reaffirm the social ethic and specifically to maintain traditional planter-labor relations, the codes dealt with vagrancy and apprenticeships. Although the clauses that dealt with children resembled northern laws of the time, the Mississippi laws applied only to African-Americans. Black orphans could be bound out to laborlords for fixed

³⁴Jason Niles Diary, 5, 11, 12, 18 June 1865, UNC; Silas May to Lt. Stuart Eldridge, 3 May 1866, BRFAL (15). On attacks against Union troops and other agencies of the federal government, see Thomas Wood to O. O. Howard, 15 June 1865[?], BRFAL (2).

terms of service, as could children determined by the courts to be cared for inadequately by their parents. Former masters obtained the privilege of securing the services of their former slaves. The laws dealing with vagrancy resembled antebellum ones regulating free blacks' liberty of assembly. All assemblies of African-Americans or African-Americans and whites might be broken up, and the law defined participants in mixed-race meetings as vagrants, subject to arrest and imprisonment.³⁵ Through these laws, the legislature testified to the persistence of the social ethic and gave voice to native whites' desire that African-Americans remain members of the underclass.

Perpetuation of the social ethic required also that black laborers' liberty be circumscribed; the Black Code indicated the persistence of antebellum ideas about the underclass. Taking a page from George Fitzhugh, paternalists like Samuel Agnew feared for the freedman's welfare as a "hireling." Incapable of caring for themselves by their proximity to savagery, devoid of self-interest, and no longer the beneficiaries of white masters' kindly tutelage, Agnew predicted that

³⁵Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 82-93. For an example of freedmen's children being seized by former owners, see S. S. Leonard's Assistant Commissioner's Report to Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 21 September 1867, and A. W. Preston to Messrs. Kinson and Bowman, 22 December 1866, BRFAL (21).

African-Americans would soon resemble northern workers. The mutual respect between master and slave that slavery established, as well as labors' ability to negotiate, would disappear, too, with the advent of free labor, Agnew said. As if to bear out the importance of the underclass to the maintenance of white homogeneity, yeoman farmers in the days immediately following the war constituted a far more serious threat to freed people than even the most unrepentant paternalist. The exigencies of war brought yeoman farmers to a level of poverty that blurred the line between themselves and African-Americans. As Samuel Thomas observed, the antipathy for the black underclass that whites had always shared increased in the postbellum period among penurious whites. "The nearer a white man is to the level of negro equality, and intelligence, and social and political standing," Thomas said, "the more he hates him." Even liberal-minded Mississippians, such as James L. Alcorn, believed the South's future turned on its ability to return African-Americans to a status of dependant labor. Neither large planters who needed labor nor small farmers who feared that their liberty in society diminished in proportion to blacks' liberty intended to make labor entirely free.³⁶

³⁶George Fitzhugh, Sociology For the South, or the Failure of Free Society (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 9-14; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 27 and 29 May 1865, UNC; Samuel (continued...)

In their effort to re-establish the social ethic, whites received some aid and comfort from federal authorities. Historians have recently begun to view critically the achievements of the federal government in establishing equality among the races. Gerald Jaynes, in his impressive study of attitudes and economics in the Reconstruction period, suggests that northerners' understanding of the relationship between capital and labor differed little from that of their southern contemporaries. Although northerners like Senator Carl Schurz frequently criticized the South for its mistreatment of freed people, they rarely offered viable alternatives to the reestablishment of the southern social ethic. In a somewhat approving tone, Schurz, in fact, predicted before the Senate that southerners would formulate a system of labor, neither totally enslaved nor totally free. As Vernon L. Wharton has pointed out in his study of race relations in Mississippi, northerners' reign of terror against labor in the 1880s and 1890s would prove how little they differed from southerners in their treatment of labor.³⁷

³⁶(...continued)

Thomas to O. O. Howard, 5 August 1865, BRFAL (1); Smauel Thomas to J. W. Webber, 26 June 1865, BRFAL (1); James L. Alcorn to Amelia Alcorn, 22 March 1864, Alcorn and Family Collection, MDAH.

³⁷Jaynes, Branches Without Roots, *passim*; Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 82, quoting Carl Schurz.

The most prevalent and detested representative of federal authority in the South, the Freedman's Bureau, confronted a formidable task. Charged with the disposition of abandoned lands and the care of refugees and freed people, the Bureau was hard pressed to impose free labor on a population, half of which detested the notion. When called upon to nullify the Black Code, to eliminate the pass system in Mississippi towns, and to protect freed people from the most egregious depredations they suffered on plantations, the Bureau went about its business admirably. Yet Bureau agents in Mississippi had little taste for distributing abandoned lands to ex-slaves. Samuel Matthews concluded that dispersing among freed people lands confiscated during the war would require "a hero;" even making available to them land to rent would necessitate a "military force to protect the freedmen during the term of their leases." Disturbing the established social and economic order by placing the bottom rail on top did not fall within the realm of federal authority, at least according to the government's front-line agents. Throughout the Bureau's existence in Mississippi, protecting freed people's political liberty occupied its time more than did opening to labor doors of economic opportunity. Perhaps indicative of the Bureau's interpretation of its role in Mississippi, Thomas believed that when freed people were permitted to achieve equality under the law

they would remain content as mere laborers. The emphasis on political equality suggested by Thomas confirmed that the Bureau, even if by accident, assisted white southerners in their war against free labor.³⁸

Early in that war, most whites determined to rid the state of African-Americans. In fact, some planters reportedly hatched a plan to recover their capital invested in slaves by selling freed people to Cuban planters. Justifications for abandoning black labor were numerous, but fears of sexual and genetic amalgamation, as well as wholesale race war, made the idea attractive to whites. Also influential in turning whites against African-American labor was the belief that free labor, especially when laborers were ex-slaves, simply would not work in cotton fields. John Kemp, Jr. stated this notion plainly when he posited that "free niggers wont work in the South."³⁹

³⁸Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, no date, BRFAL (1). Prices for land during the immediate postbellum period were low. Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 26 June 1867, UNC, records prices between \$3.35 and \$5.50 an acre, about 60 percent lower than antebellum prices.

³⁹Quoting John Kemp, Jr. to William J. Pattison, 12 September 1865, William J. Pattison papers, UNC. Some whites wished to see freed people removed from the state out of fear of race war; see John Matthews to Robert Matthews, 26 July 1866; Samuel Matthews to Robert Matthews, 19 November 1865; Samuel Matthews to John Matthews, 19 September 1867, Matthews Family Papers, MDAH. Other whites apparently tolerated the presence of freedmen only because they doubted suitable replacements for black labor could be found. See J. P. Bardwell to George Whipple, 30 May 1866, American Missionary Association Papers, Dillard University.

Without slavery and the social ethic to enforce moral and political uniformity, Mississippians looked to European and, to a lesser degree, Chinese labor. White labor, planters believed, offered a buffer (a "white guard" in J. Floyd King's phrase) between landlords and laborers. In 1866, King, an innovative and aggressive plantation manager near Natchez, transported from Germany, Denmark, and the Low Countries 100 laborers. In exchange for free passage to the United State, each laborer contracted to work for one year. As part of his experiment with white labor, he used experienced black laborers to pace the Europeans in the cotton field. Just weeks after introducing white labor to his plantation, King's experiment foundered. Thirty-five of the immigrants ran away, and, according to King, those that remained ate two-thirds more than ex-slaves and worked more slovenly than their black counterparts. Nevertheless, King refused to admit total defeat. As semi-skilled laborers and craftsmen, he believed white laborers more desirable as neighbors than freed people but susceptible by virtue of their labor to qualify as underclass upon whose back notions of white liberty might again be erected.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Quoting J. Floyd King to "My Beloved Sisters," 8 January 1866, but see, too, King to Mallery, 18 January 1866; King to Lin, 1 January 1866; King to Lin, 9 February 1866, T. B. King Papers, UNC.

Large landholders also looked to the North and the Far East for labor to supplant African-Americans, but relatively few free laborers removed to Mississippi. Nevertheless, isolated incidences of mass immigration to the state bestowed upon southerners, who desired to see freedom removed from the region, a measure of hope for the future. D. Wyatt Aiken, a South Carolina planter and publisher, estimated that in 1870 alone 1,400 northern laborers went to Mississippi via the Mobile and Ohio Railroad; two thousand went by other means. Like King, Aiken imagined that white labor would replace freed people in cotton fields, but he began to doubt that northerners, who expressed more interest in owning farms and shops than chopping cotton, would fill the South's need for labor. Ventures designed to bring Chinese laborers from the West Coast and the Far East met with no lasting success. Yet, throughout the 1870s, Mississippi planters sent agents west in search of Chinese workers. Soon after the war, rumors had spread through the state that Chinese immigrants worked for as little as \$4 a month, but when planters attempted to bring them to Mississippi, they discovered that the Chinese demanded higher wages and shorter days than even ex-slaves. The final concerted effort to bring Chinese labor into the state occurred when the Kansas fever broke out among freed people, but, like earlier arrivals, few remained in Mississippi for a long

period. Slowly, an uneasy truce, made possible by political developments, settled over landlord-labor relations in the South, and the number of attempts to attract non-black labor to Mississippi plummeted.⁴¹ In no small measure, the truce owed its existence to the entrenchment of sharecropping and the development of the crop-lien law. For through these arrangements, landlords received what they had looked for in immigrant white labor: a responsive and attentive peasantry.

Writing in 1870, Alfred Huger, another South Carolina planter, looked with hope upon the newly established landlord-labor relations. Better even than in slavery times, freed people and landlords shared an interest in cotton production. Labor relations had evolved in such a fashion as to create "the best 'peasantry' the South could possibly hope for," Huger said. Immediately after emancipation, planters were not certain that the intent of the social ethic could be so thoroughly preserved, as representatives of the federal government insisted that laborers negotiate with planters for their compensation, which was to include at a minimum food and clothing. According

⁴¹D. Wyatt Aiken, "Agriculture in Mississippi," Rural Carolinian 1 (May 1870), 475-476; Aiken, "Immigration and Labor," ibid., 4 (March 1873), 292-293. On efforts to attract white northern labor, see John Kirby to H. H. Southworth and W. H. Morgan, 2 March 1870, L. P. Yerger Papers, MDAH. On Chinese immigration to Mississippi, see Wharton, Negro in Mississippi, 97-105.

to various reports, African-Americans, however, preferred to rent, own, or lease land, but few whites intended to grant their former servants that much economic independence. Those that did found themselves the object of scorn in their communities, especially since state law prohibited blacks from entering into such arrangements. Though historians have traditionally insisted that freed people preferred wage labor, scattered reports suggest that many placed more faith in share-wage contracts. When freed people signed straight wage contracts, monthly salaries ranged from \$8 to \$26, depending on gender and qualifications. Generally, contracts stipulated that freedmen furnish their own food and clothes. Such contracts abounded in the western counties. But, in areas suffering from a dearth of cash, landlords and labor, with the approval of the Freedmen's Bureau, preferred the wage-shares system. Planters, laborers, and government officials realized that insufficient cash circulated to support a paid labor force. Doubtful of their former masters' integrity, freed people negotiated to receive a portion of the crop.⁴²

⁴²Alfred Huger quoted in Rural Carolinian 2 (October 1870), 46. On the emergence of the sharecropping system, see Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, 27 June 1865, BRFAL (1); Samuel Thomas to Col. Mayries, 23 June 1865, BRFAL (1); Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, 14 September 1865, BRFAL (1). On whites selling land to freedmen, Samuel T. Nicholson to "My Dear Brother," 18 November 1871, Samuel T. Nicholson (continued...)

Although some ex-slaves apparently preferred to be compensated with wages, complaints with the wage and share-wage systems emerged coterminous to their introductions. Freed people often complained of low wages. For example, a recently discharged black soldier who sought work at J. Floyd King's plantation, refused to sign a contract because he could not hope to live on the salary offered, \$15 a month, especially if he had to find his own rations. Opportunities to draw substantive salaries were limited and remained limited even when labor supplies exceeded demand. Once King outlined for the reluctant freedman his options, starvation or subsistence, he signed a contract. Freed people also complained that landlords cheated them. Not infrequently payment for a year's labor fell due at the close of the cotton selling season, and the freedman, who had eaten from the landlord's smokehouse for a year, found that he had been charged an exorbitant price for the privilege. Landlords most often complained that under the wage system labor lacked incentives to

⁴²(...continued)

Papers, MDAH. Freedmen, according to Annie E. Harper Mss., 63, MDAH, liked the share-wages system because it permitted them to raise livestock and feed their families while producing cotton for the market economy.

work. They misused tools and animals and believed they would be paid whether they produced one bale or three.⁴³

The sharecropping system that emerged in the initial period of black freedom, however, appealed to both landlord and laborer. Under the arrangement, risks, landlords believed, were dispersed, and tenants liked sharecropping, if landownership was not possible, since it permitted them a measure of autonomy and broke the back of gang labor that persisted under the wage system. Landlords who contracted with labor on a shares basis often stipulated production levels to ensure that compensation reflected the tenant's work effort. Share contracts took a variety of forms, but most included clauses which required kind and humane treatment, demanded tenant loyalty, and set hours of labor. The first two clauses were holdovers from slavery, and the last testified to freed people's refusal to adhere to the old sunup to sundown schedule of slave labor. Some contracts, like the one Ned Littlepage signed with his landlord, W. R. Barth, provided ex-slaves no medical care or provisions. Others, like the one P. C. Harrington signed with thirty-two freed people, offered free medical care, food, clothes, and housing.

⁴³Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 31 July, 1 and 2 August 1865, UNC. Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon, 2 June 1867, Harry St. John Dixon Papers, UNC; J. Floyd King to Lin, 17 May 1866, Thomas Butler King Papers, UNC; Susan S. Darden Diary, 22 August 1865, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; R. S. Donaldson to Lt. Stuart Eldridge, 22 July 1865, BRFAL (1).

Harrington, however, contracted to received 90 percent of his hands' crops, while Barth and Littlepage entered into a more complex arrangement. According to their contract, Barth would receive one-half of the cotton and potatoes Littlepage harvested and one-third of the corn, fodder, and peas. Littlepage purchased some of his seed crops and furnished one of the three mules he needed. The contract that James Archer signed with freed people contained elements common to both of the above-mentioned ones. Archer received one-half of the cotton picked and deducted from his tenants' percentage of the crop the cost of their food, clothing, and medicine. Besides dictating what freed people could cultivate, landlords exercised a measure of control over ex-slaves' leisure time. Contracts stipulated that tenants keep "respectable and orderly houses" and that they "use all energy and industry to make a good crop." Landlords also reserved the right to examine croppers' homes. Curtailing freedmen's contact with other laborers and keeping them from engaging in political activities motivated C. B. Moody to include in one contract a warning that his tenant's home should not become "a place of common resort for Coloured people."⁴⁴

⁴⁴All quotes derive from the following contracts: W. R. Barth and Ned Littlepage, BRFAL (49); C. B. Moody and Solomon Monroe, BRFAL (48); Eliza Walker and Freedmen, BRFAL (43); Contract with Freedmen, 18 July 1865, P. C. Harrington Papers, UNC: "Agreement with Freedmen, 1865," Archer-Finley-Moore Collection, MDAH.

Freed people embraced the sharecropping system as a protection against landlords who refused to pay wages as promised. Denied the right to rent or own land, ex-slaves' choices were restricted, but, under cropping arrangements, they at least avoided gang labor. Except for contracts signed with large plantation owners soon after the war, most freed people negotiated their contracts individually. While some contracts required no particular level of production, others did. Among those that stipulated a particular amount of cotton to be produced, freed people extracted from landlords generous terms; a Washington County planter required that his tenants harvest one bale of cotton per five acres rented, an incredibly small yield per acre that permitted cultivation of food crops.⁴⁵ Under the shares system, any cotton raised over the required rental fee accrued to the tenant. Such arrangements provided freed people a degree of autonomy unknown under slavery or the wage system. Although the shares system made it possible for laborers to control their production, freed people's lack of capital fostered a dependence for supplies on landlords, or more frequently on merchants. As long as cotton prices remained high

⁴⁵Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon, 29 January, 1870, Harry St. John Dixon Papers, UNC. See, also, Joseph D. Reid, Jr., "Sharecropping as an Understandable Market Response: The Post-Bellum South," Journal of Economic History 33 (March 1973), 120-121.

through 1868, ex-slaves stood a chance of making money under the sharecropping system. But, when production increased, normal prices returned, and the labor supply stabilized, they had difficulty staying atop their debts.

Despite the give and take evinced in sharecropping arrangements, both landlords and labor registered complaints with the system. D. Wyatt Aiken took offense that under a system of labor purportedly free he had to furnish his laborers clothing and food. Furthermore, Aiken said, the social distance that had separated capital and labor withered under the system, as his labor expected to negotiate with him. W. B. Jones, a Panola County planter, believed the sharecropping system encouraged tenants in their habits of indolence by giving them the liberty to live subsistence lives if they wanted. He, however, wanted to extract more from his land and labor than a mere existence. Jones, who had a tendency to rail against free labor, accused African-Americans of using the sharecropping arrangement to drag whites into poverty. For their part, freed people most often complained that landlords charged them high rents and paid lower prices for their produce than they could have received on the open market. Plantation stores, tenants also said, charged excessive rates for credit. Early after the war, plantation stores, especially those operated by northerners, acquired their

reputations for creative bookkeeping.⁴⁶ Such charges reflected more a hate of northerners than a distaste for unsavory business practices, for as soon as native southerners acquired sufficient cash to open their own plantation supply stores, they began fleecing tenants.

Even though the high price paid for cotton inhibited most tenants from accruing great debts between 1865 and 1868, the collapse of the cotton market afterwards made it nearly impossible for sharecroppers to avoid falling into the familiar postbellum pattern of cyclical debt. The Freedmen's Bureau did little to help tenants survive changes in the cotton market, and white landlords preferred to have a labor force tied to the land. Boards of arbitration, formed by the Bureau, initially protected tenants from landlords' most perfidious practices, but, as time passed, the boards came to be dominated by men sympathetic to landlords. Rulings in cases of contract disputes frequently ensured that freed people would accrue substantial debt to planters. Indebted tenants, as B. G. Humphreys noted, had to contract with the same landlord

⁴⁶D. Wyatt Aiken, "Labor Contracts," Rural Carolinian 3 (December 1871), 114; W. B. Jones Diary, 31 December 1873, Jones-Smith Plantation Journal, MDAH; J. Floyd King to Mallery, 18 January 1866, Thomas Butler King Papers, UNC; J. D. Bardwell to Revered Samuel Hunt, 2 November 1866, American Missionary Association Papers, Dillard University.

for the following year in order to retire the debt.⁴⁷

While the sharecropping system represented a compromise between labor and landlords, freed people's dependence on others for supplies and land created a system approaching debt peonage.

In 1867, the state provided legal sanction for the perpetuation of debt peonage. Without the cash necessary to pay or furnish supplies to tenants, postbellum landlords often turned to cotton factors and merchants; tenants looked to planters and merchants for supplies. Labor, unlike landlords who received favorable credit terms and possessed assets sufficient to carry them through their first harvests, rapidly accrued large debts under the shares system. Since the tenant owned little collateral, lenders risked much if one laborer could not pay to get out of debt. In response to complaints that tenant-debtors, when they failed to pay off their debts, subjected planters' property to seizure, the legislature passed a crop-lien law. When first passed, landlords and lenders favored the law because it promised to clarify who had a first lien on assets and defined what assets could

⁴⁷B. G. Humphreys to O. O. Howard, 10 October 1867, BRFAL (3); J. A. Shelby to Allen Almay, 30 December 1867, BRFAL (3).

be held in judgement of debts.⁴⁸ Officially known as "An Act for the Encouragement of Agriculture," the law granted money lenders a primary lien on all crops and moveable property, including draft animals. Proceedings for attaching property were simple: six months after payment of a debt fell due, the creditor filed suit in Chancery Court, and the county sheriff then confiscated sufficient property to cancel the debt.⁴⁹ Under the lien law, the give-and-take between planters and laborers disappeared, as did tenants' ability to produce crops other than cotton. More so than the sharecropping arrangement alone, the crop-lien law placed freed people under the control of landlords and merchants. For most tenants, the cycle of debts, after 1867, became inescapable.

As a measure of labor control the crop-lien law carried significant meaning, and it perhaps was not coincidental that the law passed just as Mississippi fell

⁴⁸Prior to the passage of the law, planters took great pains to protect their rental property from seizure. See the deed of conveyance in the Robert Wilson Papers, Duke: William Mansfield, a tenant on C. H. McAlphine's plantation, owed the merchant Robert Wilson \$350 for plantation and household supplies. In February 1868, just as the lien law went into effect, Mansfield conveyed to McAlphine for the price of \$1 all the cotton, corn, and potatoes he raised in 1868, as well as his horse. After McAlphine sold the crops and deducted a fee for his services, he would pay the debt and give Mansfield the remainder. In the event of a full payoff and a profit, it seems unlikely that Mansfield could escape falling back into debt in 1869.

⁴⁹Laws of the State of Mississippi (1867), 567-572.

under the directives of Radical Reconstruction. Whites, who had long associated ex-slaves' political activities with decreased productivity, recognized no distinction between African-Americans' economic and political liberty. The cycle of debt that emerged under the lien law promised to keep labor behind the plow and out of politics.

The Dixon family of Washington County understood the connection between labor control and white domination of politics. In an 1869 letter to her son, Mrs. Dixon noted that all sharecroppers on the plantation expressed satisfaction with the proceeds of their crops. On the Dixon place, hands who furnished all their provisions received three-fourths of the crop, while those who furnished one-half received 50 percent of the crop. But, Mr. Dixon remained as dissatisfied with the shares system as he had been with wage arrangements. Most of all the independent spirit evinced by the freed people alarmed him. Although planters had hoped the shares system would encourage labor to greater productivity, Dixon thought his tenants remained lazy. In September 1869, according to Dixon, several of the tenants from his plantation exhibited how indolent they had become when they paraded in front of his home on horseback, waving the Union flag and playing Yankee Doodle. The paraders openly professed to be Loyal Leaguers. Had Dixon found a purchaser for his plantation in 1869, he would have moved to California.

According to Mrs. Dixon, in 1870, however, workers on the plantation had lost their enthusiasm for politics and worked in the fields more diligently than ever. They had, she said, "passed through the Jews hands & have all come out largely in debt: no cash to buy fine horses & mules as they did last year." Other landlords, too, doubted that ex-slaves were "much benefitted by emancipation," since falling under the influence of the crop-lien law.⁵⁰

The experiences of a former slave and sharecropper best describe the depths of poverty to which tenants sank after 1867. In the 1930s, the ex-slave Wiley Brewer recalled how difficult it was to save money under the crop-lien law: "I saved my money and bought me a mule, en about 32 years I bought me a farm." Any lingering dreams of receiving from the government forty acres and a mule vanished by 1867. Freed people understood the connection between their economic and political liberty, and they realized that whites intended to keep them in a position of service. All that they demanded, as one told a representative of the American Missionary Association, was the same price for their corn and cotton and an opportunity to achieve economic autonomy. Yet they knew that so

⁵⁰Quoting Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon, 29 January 1870, but see, too, Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon; 25 January 1879, Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon; 5 November 1869, Harry St. John Dixon Papers, UNC. Also quoting B. W. Herring to Bettie Herring Wright, 28 October 1868, Wright and Herring Family Papers, UNC.

long as the antebellum social ethic persisted, bolstered by the crop-lien law, they had no chance. "We've no chance--the white people's arms are longer than ours'. What we want to do, is to lengthen the colored people's arms till they can reach as far as their old masters and stand an equal chance."⁵¹ Bound to the land by contracts and the lien law, most freed people could only watch as whites slowly diminished their liberties, economic and political. Nevertheless, the change in the social ethic had been admitted. Freed people, though still largely bound to the land, made a place for themselves in the southern economic order. As players in the economy, they soon began to raise the ire of whites also trapped by the crop-lien and unable to distinguish themselves from freed people.

⁵¹Quoting Rawick, American Slave, series 1, vol. 6, 205; [?] to Reverend G. L. Pike, 7 April 1871, American Missionary Association Papers, Dillard University.

A SOUTHERN SOCIAL ETHIC:
POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOUTH;
MISSISSIPPI, 1840-1910
VOLUME II

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by
Bradley G. Bond
B. A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1985
M. A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1987
May 1993

Chapter Five

The Political Culture of Racism

Through the two halves of the Civil War, the labors of war and the war against free labor, the antebellum social ethic survived, though it was diluted. Between 1861 and 1865, the exigencies of war obscured the economic and political liberty that had defined the social ethic. After the war, emancipation threatened to extinguish the ethic forever until sharecropping arrangements and the crop-lien law established that African-Americans would continue to form an underclass of laborers. In matters of politics, African-Americans, backed by the federal government, asserted their right to political liberty and encountered white opposition. For roughly ten years, white southerners attempted to curtail black political rights in order to ensure homogeneity among whites of all classes. Although successful in abrogating freedmen's rights, whites could not resurrect the social ethic unchanged. In their war against free labor and free men, white Mississippians fostered a political culture of racism that cherished white supremacy and cultural homogeneity more than white liberty.

In 1865, Carl Schurz, Republican senator from Missouri, foretold with the accuracy of a Jeremiah that white southerners' would react badly to African-American freedom. Former slave masters and their allies, he predicted would attempt to narrow, if not to retract forcibly, freedmen's gains in the areas of political and economic liberty. Like Andrew Jackson's southern heirs, Schurz understood the symbiotic relationship between political and economic liberty. Exhibiting strains of thought common to the Mugwump school of politics he later embraced, Schurz, as early as 1865, encouraged the Senate to establish universal manhood suffrage in the former Confederate states and, then, to permit the moral suasion of freedmen's conscientious political behavior to win over southern whites. According to the senator, reconstruction of the southern mind would proceed slowly, but freedmen and the Republican party unified in their commitment to equality would offer a formidable obstacle to any "oppressive class-legislation and individual persecution" that the southern states might undertake.¹

At once hopeful and cynical about whites' ability to reverse their habits of thought, and doubtful, too, of the federal government's jurisdiction over the southern social ethic, Schurz cautioned against undertaking

¹"Condition of the South," Senate Executive Document, 39th Cong. 1st sess., No. 2, 38-39, 42-43.

half-hearted efforts to secure freedmen's liberties.

"Nothing renders society more restless than a social revolution half accomplished. It naturally tends to develop logical consequences, but it is limited by adverse agencies which work in another direction; nor can it return to the point from which it started."²

True to Schurz's augury, white southerners exhibited little enthusiasm for broadening their version of the good republic to include freedmen. In the immediate postwar period, "adverse agencies," as well as "oppressive class legislation and individual persecution," hindered freedmen's and Republican's attempts to reconstruct the South. Landlords and merchants, but also the Freedmen's Bureau, which sanctioned sharecropping arrangements, nullified the fullness of free labor. By 1867, the machinery necessary to stymie one-half of the revolution Schurz advocated had been set in motion, as African-Americans became virtually shackled to the land. The second part of the revolution called for by northern Republicans, the granting of political equality to freedmen, likewise met with "adverse agencies." Through political violence, intimidation, and the law, postbellum whites evinced their refusal to brook challenges to the social ethic. Their success in suppressing African-American voices in the

²Ibid., 37.

field of politics, however, inaugurated a long period in which race played a dominant role in Mississippi politics. By 1877, freedmen had passed from slavery to enfranchisement to de facto disfranchisement, and the South fell under the steel-fisted control of the Democratic party, equally determined in 1882 as it was in 1860, to rule the South or ruin it. Although race, at least in the abstract, had always informed the conduct of southern politics, the emergence of freed people as citizens, as well as the efforts to deny African-Americans their liberty, transformed the political culture of white homogeneity into the political culture of racism.

Before the Civil War concluded, Mississippians understood the meaning of Reconstruction and loathed the thought of social, economic, and political revolution. W. H. Claiborne, writing in his diary, voiced the sentiments of southerners for generations to come: "'Reconstruction!' Great God, the very word is pregnant with blasted hopes, blighted prospects, and liberty lost forever; degradation, utter misery, and slavery of the most horrible measure." Implicit in the word "reconstruction" lay a rebuke of ideals that had led southerners to leave the Union in 1861. Reconstruction meant to whites defeat on the field of battle and the inauguration of a fixed challenge to the social ethic. At Clinton, the survivors of a slain rebel shared Claiborne's repulsion at the thought of

Reconstruction. They erected a lasting monument to the lost cause and their foreboding: "CAPT ADDISON HARVEY BORN JUNE 1837 KILLED APRIL 19 1865 Just as the Country's Flag was Furled forever Death saved him the pain of defeat." The pain of defeat (confiscation, emancipation, occupation, African-American liberty) intimated an unwelcome revolution. Robert Somers, the sympathetic English journalist who journeyed through the postbellum South, reported that whites feared most of all that their "life and property, virtue, and honour" would be desecrated in what they considered the hog wallow of black equality.³

Freedmen, of course, interpreted the meaning of Reconstruction more optimistically than did southern whites. Ex-slaves, much to the chagrin of landlords, quickly expressed their pleasure with the demise of the social ethic by moving away from their former homes. Approximately one-third of the recently freed men and women bade farewell to their ex-masters and struck out to build a place for themselves in a new world of freedom. Those that remained in familiar places, likewise, revolutionized the social ethic by demanding liberties and privileges unknown to them as slaves. James L. Alcorn,

³W. H. Claiborne Diary, no date, 1863[?], J. F. H. Claiborne Papers, UNC; V. S. Naipaul, A Turn in the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 179; Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871 (University: University of Alabama Press, 1965), 153.

the Unionist turned Confederate general, blinked when he caught a glimpse of the new order that freedmen envisioned. At an Episcopal church in Helena, Arkansas, he observed a peaceful congregation composed of both races; black soldiers and their white officers comprised one-half of the assembly. "The black wenches who would flaunt down the aisle with their Balmorals well exposed and turn into any pew where a vacant seat remained regardless of the color that had preceded them" disturbed Alcorn even more than did the mixed-race congregation. Not only did the social ethic demand the rigid segregation of the races, concepts of virtue (proper behavior and seemliness, as well as economic distinctions) required that blacks as unfree producers be treated as members of the underclass. Whites sensitive to the changed circumstances of the postbellum era typically justified their obdurate insistence that blacks occupy the bottom rung of society as did a South Carolina planter when speaking to J. T. Trowbridge: "They've always been our owned servants, and we've been used to having them mind us without a word of objection, and we can't bear anything else from them now."⁴

⁴James L. Alcorn to Amelia Alcorn, 22 March 1864, Alcorn Papers, UNC; J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford: L. Stebbins, 1868), 291.

Some Mississippians spoke a plainer language of animosity and defiance than did Trowbridge's South Carolinian. In 1873, W. B. Jones, a Mississippi planter, argued that the experiment with African-American freedom had rendered no positive changes in the minds and morals of ex-slaves. Without the forceful hand of white masters to guide them, freedmen devolved into a primitive condition, "the condition of the utmost negro simplicity viz a Buckshot[,] a hungry belly[,] & a stink."⁵ Underpinning such racist rhetoric lay the undiluted antebellum social ethic: if African-Americans were permitted equal access to markets and civil and political liberty, the distinctions that had established white cultural homogeneity would wither and yeomen whites would be dragged into the filth and degradation of the underclass. Revolution against the social order, sponsored by those engaged in drudgery, including yeomen whites indistinguishable from ex-slaves by their labor, would naturally follow.

Establishment of liberty among African-Americans not only promised to destroy the social ethic but threatened the laws of nature. As interpreted by southern whites, the notion of equality embodied a logical and dangerous fallacy. Echoing Jones' refrain, the Matthews brothers, Samuel and John, as well as J. Floyd King,

⁵Quoting W. B. Jones Diary, 11 January 1872, 31 December 1873, Jones-Smith Plantation Journal, MDAH.

argued that "nature's law" propelled the Teutonic race onward and upward and dictated that blacks languish at "the brute level." Attempts by the federal government to institute equality offended white southerners' sense of civilization and propriety and precluded white males, "the real man," in Oscar J. E. Stuart's phrase, from exercising the power that nature bestowed upon him. Struck by the state of postwar affairs, Duncan McKenzie bemoaned his misfortune in having to standby while "a class of beasts in human shape. . . [,] nurtured and raised in such a way that the lash has become a part of their constitution," grasped political and social rights under government protection. Few white southerners attempted to constrain their feelings about black equality. According to an officer in the Freedmen's Bureau, former slave owners pointedly told him they preferred the hogs to eat ex-slaves "rather than they should lose them."⁶ The antebellum social ethic, supposedly routed at Shiloh and surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse, persisted. Whites'

⁶Quoting Samuel Matthews to Robert Matthews, 19 November 1865, John to Robert Matthews, 26 July 1866, James and Samuel Matthews Letters, MDAH; J. Floyd King to Lin, 8 September 1866, Thomas B. King Papers, UNC; Oscar J. E. Stuart to Albert G. Brown, 4 November 1875, Stuart Papers, MDAH; Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 25 February 1867, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke; James H. Matthews to Major George D. Reynolds, 27 November 1865, in "Report of the joint Committee on Reconstruction," House Reports, 39th Cong. 1st sess., No. 30, part 3, 185. Variations on the theme of African-American savagery might be found in Annie E. Harper Manuscript, (64), MDAH.

concepts of liberty and virtue still depended upon the presence of an underclass without the full access to the market or the electoral process.

White attitudes toward black equality undergirded the "oppressive class-legislation" and the political culture of racism during the Reconstruction period. The response of the Dixons, owners of a large Washington County plantation, to the notion of free men perhaps best illustrates the impulse which quickened in the development of the political culture of racism. Once substantial slaveholders, the Dixons watched helplessly as many of their former slaves moved away. Ex-slaves who remained on the plantation, as well as others who came to work, received wages during the first two years of Reconstruction. But, conducting the day-to-day operations of a large, and according to the Dixons, decaying plantation ceased to satisfy the landlords. Mrs. Dixon's discontent grew rapidly. Watching the African-American women who operated her household, she concluded that free labor "demoralized" them; other contemporaries referred to such behavior as laziness or impudence. In late 1869, Mrs. Dixon and a female companion heard a disturbance outside her home. Going to the porch to discover the origins of the noise, the women were treated to a parade of freedmen. Most of the paraders worked for the Dixons, and all

belonged to the Loyal League. They rode fat horses, flew the Union flag, and marched behind a fife and drum corps which filled the dusty air with a rendition of "Yankee Doodle." As the parade passed the Dixon home, the freedmen cheered and hurraed their white audience. Mrs. Dixon, writing her son about the incident, bristled at their behavior: "I don't think they really meant anything more than to imitate whitefolks [sic], but it looked to me very much like 'equality' & was of course very distasteful." After they had passed in review, Mr. Dixon halted their advance and demanded that they return the union flag to its owner, a tenant on a neighboring plantation. Two months after the parade, Mrs. Dixon ebulliently reported to her son that the first full year of sharecropping had left the tenants without spending money and largely in debt; no longer could they purchase horses to ride in Loyal League parades.⁷ Faced with the curtailment of their economic liberty and white resistance to their political expression, a different sort of demoralization set in among the Dixons tenants.

Planters in general responded in a similar fashion to their tenants' egalitarian behavior. Recognizing that they needed freedmen's labor to cultivate cotton, planters

⁷Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon, 5 November 1869; Mrs. Dixon to Harry St. John Dixon, 29 January 1870, Harry St. John Dixon Papers, UNC.

infrequently reacted violently to challengers of the social ethic. Socially acceptable, though equally oppressive, avenues were open to them. Armed with the crop-lien law, wealthy planters singly and in league with merchants, wielded power sufficient to subject African-Americans to debt peonage or to make it difficult for egalitarian-minded tenants to find positions. Common knowledge among contemporaries of the pre- and post-war periods held that the closer a white man stood to the freedmen in matters of economics, the more jealously he defended his tenuous status as a free man. But, accepting such knowledge at face value would fail to recognize that, by refusing to relinquish the social ethic, leading Mississippians' facilitated and sanctioned the violent behavior of others. Although the ancien regime had not explicitly prohibited whites from cuffing slaves at will, neither had it condemned the practice; but, during the postbellum period, public attacks on "sassy" or "impudent" freedmen fell within the domain of all white southerners, testifying to their anxiety about protecting the social ethic.⁸

The easy brutality bred in a slave society and exacerbated by wartime deprivations lingered, and in fact, became endemic after 1865. "Sacrifice, suffering, and

⁸For the rough treatment accorded "sassy" freedmen, see Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 5 and 14 July 1865, 16 April 1867, UNC.

defeat," the historian George Rable observed, "had rubbed emotions raw." So too did the prospect of African-Americans achieving political liberty agitate whites. Much of the violence that occurred in the immediate postwar period had germinated in the fecund soil of war-inspired animosities and shortages. The theft of cotton, corn, and horses continued in postbellum Mississippi, as whites who had come to see the war as a sacrificial slaughter conducted for the salvation of slaveholders, sought to avenge their losses by raiding their neighbors' larders. Persistent lawlessness prompted prominent whites to call for a revival of night patrols. Ostensibly intended to check brigands of both races, the night patrols, a holdover from slavery, functioned also as a reminder that former masters preferred to circumscribe African-Americans liberty than risk an underclass revolution. Night patrols also served to warn white desperadoes that depredations against property would be regarded as an affront to the social ethic.⁹ Just as in the 1830s when Madison countians had employed night patrols and vigilante justice to inform recently enfranchised yeomen that free men were expected to support the peculiar institution, postwar night patrols suggested

⁹George Rable, But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 3. On calls for night patrols, see R. S. Donaldson to Samuel Thomas, 22 August 1865, BRFAL (1).

that militant enforcers of the social ethic regarded criminal behavior as the hallmark of marginally autonomous men. The appearance of brigands in black-face testified that even criminally-inclined whites shared that assumption and wished to pin responsibility for their nefarious acts on ex-slaves.

Some white criminals during Reconstruction took advantage of the widely-held belief that free blacks survived only by crime. Before a Tippah County robbery victim came face to face with the perpetrator who had committed a string of break-ins, enforcement officers had been on the look out for a black bandit. A close look at the criminal, however, revealed that he had corked his face black. In Attala County, fifteen whites wearing black face disguises plundered a Kosciusko dry goods store and warned the two "Dutch" clerks, Baum and Melinger, to leave town or be hanged. The looters apparently discerned a connection between black liberty and foreign-born clerks who served black customers. Like their ancestors, who had run gamblers and peddlers out of Vicksburg, postbellum whites feared the alliance of black labor, yeoman whites, and foreigners. The union of egalitarians and marginal producers, black and white, conjured up images of black freedom and class warfare. Treating freedmen like autonomous citizens, whites liked to crow, naturally led to bloody insurrection under the leadership of unscrupulous

whites and strong-willed African-Americans. Therefore, suppression of lawlessness, whether committed by whites or blacks, was demanded. James H. Matthews, a sub-commissioner in the Freedmen's Bureau office at Magnolia, correctly asserted that white nervousness about the inauguration of race war bespoke the cruel treatment that blacks received at the hands of native southerners. "A man seldom fears a man with whom he deals justly, while he does fear the man who he has wronged. . . . To fear a negro insurrection, then, is to confess the negro outraged, and violence is apprehended as the result."¹⁰ Just as racist assumptions permitted whites to equate criminal behavior with black skin and black liberty with foreign values, persistent talk of a coming insurrection provided an excuse for hunting, flogging, and killing freedmen and their allies, real and imagined.

Fours years of war failed to dim white southerners' enthusiasm for the social ethic; neither did

¹⁰Quoting James H. Matthews to Major George D. Reynolds, 27 November 1865, in "Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction," 185. Accounts of white criminals disguising themselves as African-Americans might be found in Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 5 May 1867, UNC; and Jason Niles Diary, 5, 11, 18 June 1865, UNC. On Mississippians' fears of a race war, see H. C. Shaw to B. B. Butler, 27 December 1867, Mrs. Roy Rollins Papers, MDAH: "I fear there [*sic*] will be a war between the negroes and white people in the course of another year, if there is I will fight against them to the last, won't you?"

attempts by the federal government to guarantee black equality lessen the affection that they expressed for the ethic. During the Constitutional Convention of 1865, the first opportunity that Mississippi had to protect black liberties, defense of the social ethic, more so than directives from Washington, determined the state's response to emancipation, black suffrage, and the idea of secession. Led by old-line Whigs, who gained control of the convention by virtue of the Democratic party's lack of organization, the convention attempted to preserve ante-bellum ideals without alarming Republicans in Congress. Considering that Provisional Governor William Sharkey, an old-line Whig appointed to his post by President Andrew Johnson, never developed a liking for white manhood suffrage, the convention's failure to install black voting rights proceeded from well-worn Whig notions of individual liberty and economic achievement. Johnson, too, encouraged Sharkey and the convention to offer only nominal acknowledgement that Reconstruction meant a revolution in southern values. Even though he recognized that northern firebrands would applaud any effort at self-denunciation, the president suggested that the convention extend limited voting rights to freedmen. By granting the suffrage to those who could read the United States Constitution, who could write their names, and who owned and paid taxes on

real estate valued at \$250, Johnson hoped to keep his opponents at bay.¹¹

At the time of the August 1865 convention, Johnson intended that Mississippi endorse his suffrage proposal to demonstrate to northern opponents their willingness to surrender the social ethic. But, the convention refused to acquiesce to his demands, much less to those made by abolitionists of the Republican party. Except in reference to slavery and secession, the Constitution of 1865 resembled the 1832 one. The Declaration of Rights found in the 1832 document, for example, reappeared in the postwar constitution and pronounced that "all free men, when they form a social compact, are equal in rights." Presumably, "all free men" referred to whites and African-Americans and extended political liberties to ex-slaves. Yet no article in the Constitution specifically delineated blacks' rights; one, however, specifically limited the franchise to white males. The double-talk about equality and white manhood suffrage did not fail to impress upon freedmen the meaning of emancipation. Considering the 1865 Constitution's defense of the social ethic, a group of ex-slaves, meeting to protest the document, predicted

¹¹By far, William C. Harris' Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1967), chapter 3, offers the best account of state politics after the war. See, too, Andrew Johnson to William Sharkey, 16 August 1865, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

that a Mississippi legislature would soon attempt to enslave African-Americans again, or at least to remove them from the state.¹²

In other matters also, delegates to the August convention registered a resounding refusal to relinquish the social ethic. Although old Whigs dominated the convention, a sufficient number of secessionist Democrats won election to the convention to cause a ruckus over the nullification of the secession ordinance. James F. Trotter, a secession Democrat on the Committee on Ordinances and Laws, for instance, denounced the wording of a proposed statement forswearing secession. Specifically, he feared that by declaring the ordinance of secession "null and void" the convention suggested that advocates of disunion were traitors and open the door for their prosecution. He preferred that the ordinance be "repealed and abrogated," a distinction, Trotter argued, that enabled participants in the conflict to avoid criminal indictment. Amos Johnston, a Hinds County Whig and author of the majority report, however, insisted that the ordinance be declared null and void. Such phrasing, Johnston said, merely indicated that the ordinance had never possessed

¹²Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature, Held in the City of Jackson, October, November, and December 1865 (Jackson: J. J. Shannon and Co., 1866), 21, 26. For an account of the Vicksburg freedmen's protest of the Constitution, see Harris, Presidential Reconstruction, 50.

binding force and did not in 1865. After considerable wrangling, the actual renunciation of secession declared the ordinance "null and of no binding force," a slight concession to Trotter.¹³

Similarly, the abolition of slavery, passage of which President Johnson required for readmission to the Union, created dissension, but unlike the debates over the secession ordinance, leading foes and friends of abolition were former Whigs. During the campaign to elect convention delegates, Whigs, most notably those in Hinds County, had quarreled over the nature of abolition. George L. Potter, for example, told voters in Hinds County that the state should never unconditionally abolish slavery; he expected the Johnson Administration to offer some form of compensation if slaveholders asked for it. Amos Johnston and William Yerger, also Whigs from Hinds County, however, assumed a common-sense stand on the question of abolition. They argued that by outlawing slavery the South would live up to the victors' ideals and avoid the evils associated with Reconstruction. Since convention delegates were elected on an at-large basis, all three men won seats in

¹³Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi, August, 1865 (Jackson: E. M. Yerger, 1865), 33-34, 174-176. [Herein cited as Convention Journal (1865)]. Winbourne M. Drake, "The Mississippi Reconstruction Convention of 1865," Journal of Mississippi History 21 (1959), 244. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction, 55-56.

the convention, and they infected the convention with their campaign debates. Although Potter and his allies attempted to block uncompensated abolition, they failed at every turn. In the end, William Yerger carried the day with an impassioned speech calling abolition if only to appease Radicals in the North and thus to avoid perhaps the imposition of social and political equality for freedmen. Yet, Potter succeeded in altering the wording of the amendment to suggest that the institution of slavery had been destroyed by force, not voluntarily. Albert T. Morgan, a Yazoo County carpetbagger, denounced the convention's carefully worded abolition of slavery. The delegates did not mean to surrender their claim to reimbursement, and "they did not mean to estop their successors from resolving that, after all, slavery had not been destroyed."¹⁴ They did intend, however, to leave the question of abolition and black freedom in doubt.

By November 1865, barely three months after the adjournment of the constitutional convention, Mississippi's first Reconstruction-era legislature purposefully moved toward reinstituting controls upon African-Americans

¹⁴Quoting Albert T. Morgan, Yazoo; or, on the Picket Line of Freedom in the South: A Personal Narrative (1884, reprint; New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 204-205. Harris, Presidential Reconstruction, 48-50; Donald H. Breese, "Politics in the Lower South During Presidential Reconstruction, April to November 1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1963), 395-396; Convention Journal (1865), 29-30.

just as the Vicksburg freedmen had predicted. In the process, the legislature garnered the wrath of Radicals in Congress and assured the advent of Radical oversight of Reconstruction. Before it adjourned, the constitutional convention of 1865 appointed a delegation to instruct the legislature in methods of perpetuating the social ethic. Led by Judge Robert S. Hudson of Yazoo County, the delegation filed a report with the legislature calling upon the state to withhold from freedmen "some unbridled privileges for the present." Fear of insurrection, the report said, did not motivate the committee, but freedmen's moral and intellectual inferiority did. Before freedmen could achieve full citizenship, they had to be instructed in the "ultimate good" that accrued to those who were industrious and behaved in a seemly fashion: "the wayward and vicious, the idle and dishonest, the lawless and reckless, the wicked and improvident, the vagabond and meddler must be smarted, governed, reformed and guided by higher instincts, minds and morals higher and holier than theirs." In language that evoked the militancy of the early 1860s, the Hudson committee invited legislators who disagreed with the outlined policies to resign their positions and leave the state. Their charge to adhere to the social ethic found numerous supporters, among them the newly-elected governor, Benjamin G. Humphreys, who inspired the legislature in his annual message to follow the

instructions of the Hudson Committee. "The purity and progress of both races require that caste must be maintained."¹⁵ In the initial period of Reconstruction, white Mississippians could not reconcile the thought of African-Americans freely involved in the market economy and politics with their ideal notions of the social ethic.

Even though, as historian William C. Harris has pointed out, some Mississippians preferred that freedmen be given full rights as citizens, most members of the 1865 legislature refused to consider extending political liberties to African-Americans. As measured by the most significant piece of legislation passed in 1865, the Black Code, the great body of whites refused to think of freed-people as free people. The recent triumph of the constitutional convention and the persistence of the antebellum social ethic made a sudden reversal of age-old ideas impossible. Indeed, the nation as a whole lacked a true commitment to equality. Had the legislature's Joint Committee on Freedmen, headed by Horatio F. Simrall, looked to the laws of northern states concerning African-American rights, it could not have found an example of

¹⁵The Hudson Committee report can be found in the Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, October, November, and December Session of 1865 (Jackson: J. J. Shannon and Company, 1866), 13-17. Humphreys annual address is reprinted in Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi, October, November, and December Session of 1865 (Jackson: J. J. Shannon and Company, 1866), 14-17.

equitable treatment. The message from the North, then, was mixed. On one hand, Congress called upon the southern states to secure blacks' liberty, while northern state legislatures limited black testimony in court, established Jim Crow facilities in public transportation, and defined vagrancy in such a manner as to curtail the free movement of blacks.¹⁶ Faced with the choice of following Congressional Radicals' demands or the example set by northern legislatures, Mississippi emulated the latter and established forms of control closely akin to those that had dictated the behavior of slaves.

The cornerstone of the postbellum laws that became known as the Black Code appeared under the innocuous title, "An Act to Confer Civil Rights on Freedmen, and for Other Purposes." As implemented, the law prohibited ex-slaves from owning or renting property in the countryside, required that black town residents receive certificates from local officials entitling them to live within the corporate limits, and prohibited interracial marriages. Despite omnipresent murmurings in favor of the wholesale exile of blacks from Mississippi, a panacea for desperate men, the civil rights law also forbade laborers from voiding their contracts and provided punishments for outsiders who enticed labor from the state. Freedmen

¹⁶Harris, Presidential Reconstruction, 128-129.

gained under the law the right to sue and to be sued, as well as the right to testify in civil and criminal cases. The latter provision, more so than any other aspect of the civil rights bill, became a sticking point in the debates over the law. Diehards in the legislature, like Samuel J. Gholson, delayed passage of the civil rights bill by dominating floor discussions of the measure. He labeled as appeasement legislation designed to put freedmen in the witness chair and feared that the introduction of black testimony heralded the entrenchment of African-American liberty. Governor Humphreys, angered by the legislature's month-long failure to pass some form of the bill, admitted to both houses that placating northern firebrands motivated him to advocate the bill. Despite efforts by Gholson and Senator M. D. L. Stephens to outlaw black testimony, both houses passed the civil rights bill with the testimony provision. At the same time that Humphreys appealed to the legislature to approve the bill, he had provisions included in it that encouraged freedmen to work, taxed the black population for the support of black indigents, and reorganized the state militia in anticipation of a race war "or any possible combination of vicious white men and negroes."¹⁷ White southerners doubted the unanimity of

¹⁷Ibid., 133-134, quoting Memphis Appeal, 28 November 1865. See, also, House Journal (October 1865), 210-213, 217, 284; Senate Journal (October 1865), 222-226, 232.

the antebellum period that they so cherished could be replicated without defining blacks' as less than citizens. They also possessed lingering doubts about African-American fitness to live at peace among whites revealed a gap between native southern and Radical views of Reconstruction. For moderate southerners, like Humphreys, guarantees that African-Americans might no longer be slaves sufficiently established all the rights that blacks should enjoy.

African-Americans and their southern allies correctly interpreted the Black Code as evidence that the region, without guidance, would fail to reconstruct itself. The Black Code, according to Samuel Thomas, the chief officer of the Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi, instituted another form of slavery, which returned freed-people to their old masters "to live and work according to their peculiarly southern ideas." The legislative debate over permitting blacks to testify in court, Thomas argued, proved that whites continued to consider empowered African-Americans as impudent; legislative debates over outlawing miscegenation and interracial marriages suggested that whites' still thought of blacks as objects to be mistreated and exploited. Freedmen, Thomas warned, would not stand by meekly if whites persisted in defining and treating them as less than full citizens. J. H. Matthews, Thomas' subordinate at Magnolia, also registered dismay at

the passage of the Black Code. Although he had hoped the legislature would permit freedmen "the right to live and to own and accumulate property, . . . the ugly fact stares us in the face, that there is a wide gulf between our anticipations and realizations."¹⁸ Mistreatment of freed-people, especially under the apprenticeship clause of the Code, prompted the military governors of Mississippi to abrogate much of the Code.

Even though some white Mississippians could not make peace with the idea of blacks in the witness chair, most rallied to support the Code, which also provided rough treatment for vagrants, apprentices, and miscegenists. The editor of a Natchez newspaper, for example, proclaimed that Mississippi's laws extended to African-Americans all the liberty that members of an inferior race could handle. Furthermore, the editor said, the legislature had been "remarkably liberal" in conveying rights to blacks without passing laws repugnant to "the good sense of the community."¹⁹ Such unabashed glee over the Black Code testified to Mississippians' mistaken belief that they had resurrected the social ethic without significant alterations. Native whites' reluctance to reconstruct the

¹⁸Quoting J. H. Matthews to Stuart Eldridge, 12 December 1866, BRFAL (1). Samuel Thomas to [?], no date, 1865, BRFAL (1); Samuel Thomas to O. O. Howard, 14 December 1865, BRFAL (1).

¹⁹Natchez Daily Courier, 13 September 1866.

prevailing mentality brought the full weight of the nation's distrust against Mississippi. With the passage of the various southern states Black Codes, the rupture between the president and Congress that moderates had hoped to avoid began. Primarily in reaction to the Codes, Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts of 1867, placing Reconstruction under the direct guidance of federal authorities.

Slightly more than a year after the passage of the Black Code, the first military governor of the state, General E. O. C. Ord, arrived to oversee the reconstruction of the white southern mind. Remarkably unfit by his temperament and his sympathy for upper-class southerners to implement Radicals' wishes, Ord, nevertheless, was charged with making certain that Mississippi, in another constitutional convention, recognized the rights and liberties of freedmen. According to the terms of Congressional Reconstruction sent down from Washington, all registered males, black and white, would be permitted to vote for or against calling a new convention. Presumably most southerners would want to vote in favor of a convention. In order to validate the results of the convention referendum, one-half of registered voters had to cast ballots. All told some 137,561 citizens registered; 54 percent of them were freedmen, representing approximately 80 percent of the eligible black population and placing

blacks in a position to control the results if they voted as a bloc.²⁰ The first bi-racial election in Mississippi history possessed all the features of future Reconstruction era campaigns: a Republican party committed to equality, cooperative and unreconstructed elements of the Democratic party, and a dedicated, extra-party faction of klansmen.

Although native whites lost control of the reconstruction process in 1867, they refused to give up their social ethic without a fight. Convinced by the results of registration that blacks would participate in the voting process and carry the day in favor of Radical Reconstruction, some old secessionist Democrats tried to garner the support of the newly enfranchised. Former governors Albert G. Brown and John J. McRae, the newspaper editor Ethelbert Barksdale, and the president of the secession convention William S. Barry hastily formed a Cooperationist movement, which became the refuge for antebellum politicians who wished to retain their power by making slight concessions to the new order. With the assistance of black voters, Cooperationists believed they could control the convention and grant minor gains to African-Americans without sacrificing the old order totally.

²⁰William C. Harris, The Day of the Carpetbagger: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 79-82.

Their efforts, however, fell short of the desired results for two reasons. First, the inchoate Republican party in Mississippi exposed Cooperationists' paternalism and linked the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan with attempts to stymie African-American liberties; second, an alternative strategy, developed under the leadership of George Potter, cut into the Cooperationists' mass appeal to whites.²¹

In some ways, the strategy developed under the banner of the Constitutional Unionism, Potter's faction of the Democratic party, offered a middle ground between violent resistance to black equality as advocated by the Klan and cooperation with moderate Republicans as advocated by the state's former Democratic leaders. Through a strategy of "masterly inactivity," boycott, Potter hoped to invalidate the election by encouraging more than one-half of the electorate to refrain from voting. Without a new constitution, the Potterites hoped to perpetuate military rule and to provoke sufficient outrage among whites, North and South, to overthrow the Congressional Republicans. Once the foes of military rule united in their opposition to it, the South, Potter believed, could reconstruct itself as it saw fit. Unlike the Cooperationists who hoped to woo black voters with promises of friendship, Constitutional Unionists wished to

²¹Ibid., 86-90.

reestablish the old order without compromise. The method designed to achieve their goals promised to antagonize Congressional Radicals and perhaps to strengthen federal military might in Mississippi, but the end the Constitutional Unionists sought, they thought, justified any temporary setbacks. The strategy of masterly inactivity almost worked. Of the nearly 58,000 whites registered to vote, it has been estimated that only 20 percent voted.²²

The Republican party, on the other hand, mobilized such a large percentage of the African-American vote (approximately 80 percent of the 79,000 registered black males) that freedmen offset the Constitutional Unionists' strategy. Turnout among freedmen surprised even the most optimistic Republican party organizers. Aided by agents of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Loyal League, the party oversaw the politicization of an electorate dedicated to securing their liberty. In their efforts to mobilize the ex-slaves as a voting bloc, the Republican party found the Klan to be an easy foil. The convention, Republican organizers said pointing to the Klan, pitted loyal men against disloyal men, deserving blacks against obstreperous whites. Indeed, the Republican party so successfully conveyed the idea that white southerners, if placed in control of the convention, would not recognize black

²²Ibid., 107-109.

liberty that denouncing General Ord as soft on former rebels became the hobby of the party in 1867 and 1868. Not only did the Republican party's efforts to mobilize the black electorate for the convention ensure the creation of a new constitution, the party elected a majority of the delegates from its own ranks; less than twenty of the 97 convention delegates, however, were African-Americans.²³

As in the convention of 1865, debates over the franchise dominated the 1868 convention. With the Radical branch of the Republican party holding sway over Congress, most Mississippians expected the largely Republican convention to disqualify former rebels, and, in fact, the first suffrage proposal to reach the floor of the convention made unquestioned loyalty to the Union during the war necessary for anyone wishing to vote, hold office, serve on juries, and even teach in public schools. Furthermore, as proposed by Edward J. Castello, the measure required that potential voters take an oath denouncing efforts to deprive anyone of their right to vote and accepting the extension of civil and political liberties to all men. Yet, when Castello's measure left the Committee on the Franchise, the disqualifying clause applied only to Confederates who had previously served as federal

²³Ibid, 57-58, 106-107.

officeholders. Albert T. Morgan, the Yazoo County carpet-bagger, however, reinserted the loyalty oath provision of Castello's proposal and permanently disqualified all rebels from voting.²⁴

Conservatives in the convention, both Democrats and old Whigs, bolted at the proposed suffrage measures. R. B. Mayes, a probate judge in Yazoo County, predicted that the elevation of African-Americans to full citizenship would keep him from winning another election; former governor Benjamin Humphreys expected to be disfranchised for his participation in the war. Humphreys was sanguine about his prospects: "A white man's government is at an end, and perhaps it is well. White folks have certainly shown great incapacity for self government. Perhaps negroes will do better." He, however, distrusted black voters and anticipated retaliation from them. "At any rate," Humphreys wrote Oscar J. E. Stuart, "the experiment will be tried. You and I will have to take back seats, or be elevated, at the end of a rope--such is the civilization of the age." In the convention, former Whigs continued to hope that some form of property qualifications would be passed, and Democrats proposed a variety of measures to protect former Confederates' suffrage. Among

²⁴Ibid., 139-193; Journal of the Proceedings in the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi, 1868 (Jackson: E. Stafford, 1871), 63-68. [Herein cited as Convention Journal (1868).]

the amendments proposed by conservatives, one removed disabilities for all soldiers below the rank of Brigadier General; another granted ex-Confederates the suffrage so long as they had voted in favor of calling the constitutional convention; and yet another called for disabilities to be attached only to rebels disqualified by the 14th Amendment and the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. Largely because the Constitutional Union party had left the convention without a significant number of white conservative delegates, none of the amendments passed, though Morgan's amendments were dropped. When the suffrage measure came to a vote before the full convention, it carried by a 44-25 margin, sending the convention into an uproar. Opponents of the disqualifying clause turned the convention floor into a scene of bedlam and pandemonium; Charles Townsend, a leading conservative, denounced the president of the convention, Beroth B. Eggleston, for packing the franchise committee with friends of disqualification. For his bilious remarks, Townsend was voted out of the body. Within twenty-four hours of the suffrage amendment's passage, more than a dozen dissatisfied delegates followed him out of the convention.²⁵

²⁵Quoting Benjamin Humphreys to Oscar J. E. Stuart, 8 August 1867, John Bull Smith Dimitry Papers, Duke. See also, R. B. Mayes to Oscar J. E. Stuart, 4 July 1867. Both letters were written prior to the convention and reflected the fears of white Mississippians about the suffrage (continued...)

As finally amended, the franchise measure attached to about 2,500 antebellum politicians, who had joined the Confederacy as soldiers or officials, temporary voting disabilities. Yet, county registrars might lift the disabilities without legislative approval in the near future. Even though those whose participation in the war had cost them their political liberties felt outraged by the convention's action, most Mississippians, as Ord's replacement as military commander General Alvan Gillem, observed did not care about the disqualification of former Confederates. The requirement that all voters swear to support political and civil equality, however, aroused native whites' animosity. Most voters in the state, Gillem posited, loathed the thought of ex-slaves receiving equitable treatment before the law and considered the extension of political and civil liberties to African-Americans an affront to the social ethic. Upper-class Mississippians, and Gillem included himself among that constituency, feared not the displacement of former Confederates or the creation of black voters.²⁶ Such men

²⁵(...continued)
 amendments that would be passed by a Republican-dominated convention. See, Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 145; Convention Journal (1868), passim. See, too, the roll call analysis of convention Radicals in the Subject File Collection, "Reconstruction," MDAH.

²⁶Alvan Gillem to Joseph S. Fowler, 17 March 1867, Fowler Papers, UNC.

believed themselves capable of moulding ex-slaves' opinions as easily as they could plain whites'. While Gillem may have been correct about the sentiments of Mississippi's well-heeled, he miscalculated ordinary folks' distaste for African-American liberty, especially when juxtaposed to the disqualification of white voters.

Under Republican command, the convention did not halt its effort to reconstruct the southern mind at redefining citizenship. Two important measures approved by the convention, the establishment of common schools and the elimination of legal bans against miscegenation, evinced the body's commitment to social equality and further aroused white antipathy for the constitution. Establishment of common schools had been considered since the 1840s, but disagreements over funding always hindered the state's effort to create a school system. With the extension of political and civil liberties to freedmen, the widespread desire for education among ex-slaves, and the ascendancy of the Republican party, advocates of common schools discovered a constituency eager to further the cause of education. As long as Republicans controlled the law-making process, public education remained a focus of their labors. According to the convention's instructions, the first legislature was empowered to erect a uniform system of free public schools for all children between the ages of five and twenty-one. Money raised

through the sale of state lands, fines and licensing fees, and a two-dollar poll tax would support the schools. Conservatives in the convention, disturbed by the thought of white and black children being educated together, attempted amend the school plan to provide for segregated schools, but the motion was tabled. Another motion designed to obstruct the establishment of integrated schools, undoubtedly the brainchild of delegates from majority black counties, called for school funding to be diverted to alternative schools if a white child living in a predominantly black district chose not to enroll in the public school system. It too went down to defeat.²⁷ The inauguration of public schools, testimony to post-war willingness to permit the state a greater influence in community affairs, bothered white Mississippians less than did the idea of educating African-Americans. Despite the efforts to educate children, black and white, by the early 1870s, whites' violent reaction to public schools for African-Americans, as well as the ones established by the Freedmen's Bureau and the American Missionary Association, effectively ended the experiment with bi-racial public education.

²⁷Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 151; George D. Humphrey, "Public Education for Whites in Mississippi," Journal of Mississippi History 3 (January 1941), 26-28; see, too, the Subject File Collection, "Reconstruction," Roll Call Analysis, MDAH. For opposition to integrated schools, see Jackson Daily Clarion, 11 March 1868.

The convention's handling of interracial sexual relations, like its effort to institute a common school system, suggested that some delegates wished to foment a social revolution based on egalitarian principles. Prohibition of black-white social interaction had, of course, been a feature of the antebellum social ethic, but legal prohibitions against interracial marriages appeared initially in the Black Code. Even though much of the debate over the Code had centered on permitting ex-slaves to testify, one article forbade whites and blacks from marrying. The law defined as black anyone who had at least one African-American ancestor three generations removed. Broad-based support for a bill outlawing interracial marriages appeared in the legislature, and the civil rights bill of 1865 failed to outlaw miscegenation, despite efforts to include such a provision. The legislature perhaps feared that whites who continued to exploit black women sexually, as had some masters in slavery times, would fall under the law. Samuel Thomas of the Freedmen's Bureau believed such conduct persisted in the postwar period. When given the opportunity to ban interracial marriages, the Constitutional Convention of 1868 narrowly defeated the measure, permitting white males to exploit black women and relying on popular reaction to discourage open, affectionate interracial relationships. Among delegates considered radical only three of

forty-five voted in favor of the ban. Even though the convention made interracial unions nominally legal, the mass of whites during Reconstruction and beyond detested the thought of bi-racial relationships, depriving any egalitarian sentiments that the convention might have possessed.²⁸

In June 1868, the Constitution was sent to Mississippi voters for ratification. Political factions participating in Mississippi's second bi-racial election, except for the Republican party, which made direct appeals to white voters, employed the same tactics in 1868 as they had in 1867. The Republican party's effort to expand its base to include whites, however, met with disaster, as few whites supported the Constitution. Some African-Americans, suspecting that the Republican party would read them out of the party, also refused to ratify the Constitution. Previously, freedmen had been wooed into the party by promises to divide the population into loyal and disloyal men with the latter playing a minor role, if any at all, in politics. The sudden emphasis on attracting whites to the Republican cause left loyal black voters without faith in party leadership, including General

²⁸On the early Reconstruction legislation outlawing miscegenation, see House Journal (October 1865), 209-120. On the 1868 convention's treatment of the subject, see Convention Journal (1868), and the Subject File Collection, "Reconstruction," Roll Call Analysis, MDAH.

Gillem. At a Grenada meeting of Republicans, evidence of the rift between black and white Republicans appeared. As approximately one thousand freedmen gathered to hear a group of Republican speakers, local Democratic luminaries intruded on the meeting. Republican leaders attempted to lead the crowd in jeers against the Democrats, but rank-and-file Republicans called for an open debate. For their part, Democrats did not wait passively for Republican distresses to open the way for their victory. Democratic leadership, according to Gillem, who endorsed the conservative party's strategy, encouraged black voters to restore voting rights to all whites, just as whites had given blacks the ballot.²⁹ Such appeals and the rift in the Republican party prohibited Republicans from solidifying their base among African-Americans. Their failure to garner white votes negated the 17,000 majority enjoyed by registered blacks. Control of Mississippi's Reconstruction, temporarily in the hands of local Republicans, passed to the party in Washington.

After three years, the strategy of the Constitutional Unionists apparently paid off; Congress had

²⁹Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 166-188, 193-195. For an account of the Grenada Republican meeting, see the letter signed "M" published in the Democratic newspaper, Jackson Daily Clarion, 8 June 1868. On Gillem's opinion of the 1868 election, see "Condition of Affairs in Mississippi," House Miscellaneous Documents, 40th Cong. 3rd sess., No. 53, 64.

acquired authority over Reconstruction. But, contrary to their wishes, the inauguration of Congressional supervision was not accompanied by the election of Democratic administrations at Washington or Jackson. Soon after conservative delegates walked out of the constitutional convention, the Democratic party began working to defeat the constitution and to elect stalwart southern men to the legislature in the hope that similar men could be sent to Congress. The Democratic strategy adopted in 1868 mandated that Mississippi reject the constitution and, under moderate military rule, elect Democrats to state and national offices. James Z. George, an increasingly influential member of the Democratic party's inner circle, firmly connected the perpetuation of the antebellum social ethic to the defeat of Republicans at home and Washington: "If the Radicals elect the President, then we are doomed to reconstruction under African rule--if the Democrats succeed, we shall be returned to our just constitutional rights."³⁰ Voting the straight Democratic ticket, beginning with "Against the Constitution," became the battle cry of the party. Nothing short of the survival of the social order was at stake. Just as in the sectional

³⁰George quoted in Jackson Daily Clarion, 25 March 1865. Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 166, 194-195. ON the 1868 Democratic presidential nomination and Mississippi delegates' stand on the nominee, see New York Times, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10 July 1868; Jackson Daily Clarion, 19 June, 7 July 1868.

crisis of the 1850s, when the party's rhetoric turned frenzied and hyperbolic, Democrats organized vigilance groups to ensure that wavering voters cast their ballot properly.

A volume of Congressional testimony recounts the success that the Democratic party experienced in their 1868 campaign of intimidation. Except for the few scalawags and carpetbaggers who formally belonged to the Republican party, the mass of whites, old Whigs and secessionists, carried the election against the constitution with force. Robert W. Flourney, a leading scalawag from Georgia known for his firm commitment to equality, told the Congressional committee that Democrats in northeast Mississippi brandished guns and knives at polling places and broke the leg of one Republican candidate for superintendent of education. Other witnesses who appeared before the committee told of more subtle forms of intimidation and fraud. A. Morley Patterson, for instance, reported that white men in disguises warned blacks that their names would be written down if they voted. He took threats against him so seriously that he refused to return home for three months after the election. In Copiah County, according to various witnesses, night riders told blacks that their supplies would be cut-off if they attended the election; African-Americans who attempted to vote encountered drunken crowds bearing ropes and brick bats. Some

who wished to ratify the constitution reported that they could not find tickets, and others said election supervisors refused to accept the ballots they held.³¹

Perhaps the most flagrant incidence of intimidation occurred after the election. During the constitutional convention, a Committee of Five, headed by Republican William Gibbs, was formed to rule on the validity of the election. After the election, the committee began collecting complaints about election fraud and considered throwing out the entire vote in seven counties. As they met to consider their options, a party of twenty-five prominent men, including William Sharkey, George Potter, and John J. McRae burst into the committee room and told the committee to count all ballots cast. Several of the intruders allowed the Gibbs committee to see pistols they carried in their belts. Officially, the Democrats carried the election to defeat the constitution by a 7,600 majority, but stirred by reports of intimidation and its own experience with the gentleman's mob, the committee voted to throw out the vote in seven counties, transforming the previous majority into a minority of 3,380. For a brief moment, it seemed to stalwart Republicans that right had emerged victorious over might. Yet, General Gillem,

³¹Testimony of the violence used to carry the 1868 ratification election can be found in "Condition of Affairs in Mississippi," 23-24, 148-149, 172-173.

who believed "a fairer expression of opinions" was not possible under existing circumstance, refused to approve the committee's action. Publicly, he argued that the committee lacked the power to decide such matters. Aided by Gillem, the Democratic party leapt its first hurdle on the way toward defeating what it perceived as anarchy, corruption, and carpetbag rule.³²

Democratic success in defeating the constitution, however, failed to produce the desired results as the nation sent a Republican majority to Congress and Ulysses S. Grant to the White House. Among Democrats, Grant evoked fear and suspicion, but, as events developed in 1869, their fears seemed misplaced. Lacking a constitution, Mississippi's fate remained in doubt until early 1869 when Grant, at the request of conservative state politicians, pressured Congress to permit a second vote on the constitution with a separate vote to be taken on the measures excluding certain whites from voting. The election, slated for November 1869, also featured a race for governor between Louis Dent, Grant's brother-in-law, who favored ratification of the disqualifying measures,

³²Quoting Alvan C. Gillem to Joseph S. Fowler, 27 July 1868, Fowler Papers, UNC. Gillem's phrase, "a fairer expression of opinions," testified to his private belief that white Mississippians would not and could not be expected to endorse black suffrage. "Condition of Affairs in Mississippi," 2-3, 8. On the reaction to defeat of the constitution, see Natchez Weekly Democrat, 6 July 1868.

and James L. Alcorn, a recently converted Republican, who preferred the constitution without its proscriptive features. Although rabid conservatives tried to mount another campaign of "masterly inactivity" to defeat the constitution, they made little headway among a people desirous of peace. Without an opposition party to agitate against ratification of the constitution, the electorate not only approved it and placed Alcorn in the governor's office, but the state also ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments.³³

According to historian Michael Perman, the much delayed passage of the constitution and Alcorn's victory signified the rise of Centrists in Mississippi politics. Centrists, Ord and Gillem to name two, had always played a prominent role in Mississippi's Reconstruction, but, with the ratification of the constitution, more whites moved into the Centrist camp. Some converts to Centrism likely acted out of a spirit of opportunism. Alcorn and Horatio Simrall, the chair of the committee which wrote the civil rights bill of the Black Code, calculated that agitation over African-Americans' liberties would end soon; they longed to direct state's economic reconstruction that promised to follow. Centrists reluctantly accepted minor changes in the social ethic to avoid wholesale social and

³³Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 199-264.

political revolution. Alcorn, a Delta planter, who before the war directed efforts to construct a levee system, justified his move into the Republican party as a defensive one, one which he hoped would enable him to lead the economic revitalization of the state and to quiet Radicals' pleas for social justice. As Alcorn put it, he wanted "to pluck our common liberty and common prosperity out of the jaws of inevitable ruin" that would follow if the southern social ethic was supplanted by the notion of free labor and free men. Most of all Alcorn feared yeomen whites' response to Radicals' pleas for social justice. If, because of emancipation and the extension of civil rights, yeomen recognized that nothing separated them from the condition of African-Americans, Alcorn feared the inauguration of the politics of class. He preferred that the social ethic remain anchored in the political culture of racism, not class.³⁴

³⁴Quoting James L. Alcorn, Views of the Honorable James L. Alcorn on the Political Situation of Mississippi (Friar's Point: n.p., 1867), 4. Michael Perman, The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879 (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina press, 1984), 45-48. It should be noted that New Departure Democrats who cooperated with Centrist Republicans often refused to break with the party of their fathers. In part, they did so to avoid the stigma of joining the party of Radicalism, but they also hoped their association with the Alcorn wing of the party would fortify advocates of a moderate Reconstruction. On the opprobrium that attached to former Democrats who joined the Republican party, see Susan S. Darden Diary, 10 October 1868, Darden Family Papers, MDAH: "Who would have thought a man like Mr. [Prosper King] Montgomery would favor the Republican party?"

Due to Alcorn's Centrist affiliation, his ascendancy to the governor's mansion widened the rift that earlier appeared in the Republican party. From its birth in Mississippi, the party had been torn between supporting black liberty or advocating half-hearted, Centristic support for reform of the social ethic. As long as the question of disfranchising former rebels occupied party politics in Mississippi, Republicans avoided internecine struggles over black equality. Yet, the election of Grant, who appeared ready to abandon Congressional Radicals, brought to the fore questions of freedmen's role in society and the party. The sudden conversion to Centrist dogma by prominent secessionists Ethelbert Barksdale and Albert G. Brown caused the Radical wing of the party dismay, too. It had been, after all, largely at the insistence of Centrists that Grant pushed through Congress the plan for separate votes on the disqualifying measures of the constitution and abandoned his kinsmen, Dent, in the gubernatorial election. Despite Radical Republicans' concerns about uniting with moderate Democrats, Alcorn welcomed Democrats aid in constructing an easy peace with black liberty.³⁵

³⁵Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 203, 207-208, 214-217, 223; Perman, Road to Redemption, chapters 2 and 3. See, too, Columbus Southern Sentinel 23 and 26 March 1867. On the demagogic nature of many Democrats' sudden conversion to Centrism and the Democratic press' habit of throttling (continued...)

To Radical Republicans, the union of significant whites with the party of black equality brought to mind images of the lion and lamb together at rest. Just two years prior to Alcorn's election, Robert W. Flourney had estimated that there was "not a foot square in this state where a meeting of white and black persons would be permitted to organize a republican party. Mobs and murder would certainly be the result." Yet, in 1869, county-level Democratic meetings lavished praise on the Republican party and blacks for disclaiming the disfranchisement of some whites. The reintroduction of two white men's parties promised to turn Mississippi politics away from the issue of equality and toward economic reconstruction. If only to ensure that labor remained without a political advocate, both parties under Centrist control promised "fair" treatment of freedmen. At the same time that Centrists determined to redirect the course of Reconstruction, the life of Mississippi freedmen's warmest ally, the Loyal League, began to wane.³⁶ Abandoned by Centrist and

³⁵(...continued)
 free expression of Republican's opinions, see E. P. Jacobson to J. F. H. Claiborne, 8 November 1872, Claiborne Papers, UNC. See, too, A. W. Ross to James L. Alcorn, 21 March 1871, Governors' Papers, MDAH, for a Republican angered by Alcorn's cooperation with Democrats: "have we no Men in the Republican Partey [sic], or have we Lost Confidence in one a nother [sic], god for Bidit."

³⁶Quoting Robert W. Flourney to Benjamin F. Butler, 23 May 1876, Benjamin F. Butler Papers, Library of Congress, in
 (continued...)

without an effective local organization to offer support, blacks during Alcorn's administration faced severe challenges to their only recently obtained liberty.

While leading Democratic politicians and journalists united with the opposition party, the great mass of Mississippians remained less willing to make any adjustments to black equality. A correspondent of the Forest Weekly Register, "Friend of the Right," equated the extension of political and civil liberties to freedmen with the empowerment of mules and asses. Other editors agreed that "Plows and Politics" did not mix. Despite the ascendancy of Centrists in Mississippi and the removal of most federal troops, many whites believed the social ethic doomed under moderate rule. In the rhetoric of the unreconstructed, defense of the social ethic through attacks on black equality and federal authority, the twin demons of the unreconstructed, remained prominent. But, most of all, conservative whites resented the apotheosis of African-Americans and believed that by extending the franchise to

³⁶(...continued)

Michael Fitzgerald, The Union League Movement in the Deep South (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 48; but see also Flournoy to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 May 1867, ibid., 52, and 98 for an account of the League's activities in 1868-1869.

them the federal government effectively destroyed the ethic.³⁷

During the late 1860s and early 1870s, as prominent whites celebrated the emergence of a mild Reconstruction settlement, the Ku Klux Klan became the primary vehicle through which the unreconstructed carried out their defense of the undiluted social ethic. A direct line linked a number of antebellum politicians, Lamar and his friend Edward C. Walthall among them, to the Klan and Redemption. Most studies of postbellum violence differentiate between the activities of lower-class Klansmen and the support offered by white politicians who abetted Klan violence by constantly decrying "black rule." Although historians have argued that Klansmen typically occupied a low position in society and lacked wealth, an examination of 91 men indicted for violations of federal civil rights laws in northern Mississippi indicates that middling farmers outnumbered yeomen in the Klan. The surveyed group held on average real property valued at \$1,660 and

³⁷Forest Weekly Register, 9 January 1869; Columbus Southern Sentinel, 23 April 1866. See, too, Forest Weekly Register, 19 February 1870; J. Floyd King to Lin, 22 June 1867, Thomas B. King Papers, UNC. On conservative whites' loathing of federal authority, see L. Q. C. Lamar to Jimmy, 11 August 1869, Lamar Papers, UNC: "The truth is our loves & friendships are the only things which the Yankee sons-of-b_____ cannot confiscate." Like many Mississippians, Lamar equated the presence of federal authority in the state with the establishment of African-American liberty and liberty with the eradication, or confiscation, of the social ethic.

personal property valued at \$1,614. Some of the Klansmen surveyed owned substantial property, and eighteen included in their households at least one black servant. Most of the 91 identified in the 1870 census were farmers, but seven considered themselves laborers, two were lawyers, ten were skilled craftsmen, one taught school, three worked as merchants or clerks, and one called himself a "huckster."³⁸ The occupations of the accused Klansmen, as well as the groups middling average income, suggest that the Klan appealed to a cross-section of rural southerners.

Faced with a crescendo of Klan violence, the Centrist peace with black liberty lasted little more than

³⁸By far, the best chronicle of Klan violence in Mississippi is Allen Trelease's, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), 88, 274, 296. His study is based on "Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," House Reports, 42nd Cong. 2nd sess., No. 22, vols. 11-12. On the role of prominent Mississippians in the Klan, see Fred M. Witty, "Reconstruction in Carroll and Montgomery Counties," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 20 (1909), 131; James B. Murphy, L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 100-101. The data base of persons indicted under violations of the Enforcement Acts was derived from an unattached report in the Source-Chronological File, Northern and Southern Districts of Mississippi, January 1871-December 1875, General Records of the Department of Justice, RG 60, National Archives, Microcopy Rolls 1-4. [Herein cited as Department of Justice, (reel number)]. It should be noted that the averages cited included only Klansmen who reported the value of their real and personal property in the 1870 census. Also the mean value of real estate holdings for those reporting was \$988 and the mean value of personal property was \$600. Both figures are substantially lower than the averages, suggesting great disparities in the wealth of Klansmen.

two years, as African-Americans and Radical Republicans solidified their defenses. The Klan's successful suppression of freedmen's voices not only led to the downfall of Centrist politicians, but charted for Democrats an alternative path to Reconstruction that bypassed black liberty. Attacks against the perceived enemies of the social ethic mounted after Alcorn's 1869 election. Besides "uppity" freedmen, who refused to cower before whites, and an occasional federal officer, the Klan launched attacks against the signposts of the new order: Republicans, schools, and merchants. Alcorn opposed such violence as an impediment to economic revitalization and attempted to quash the Klan by passing laws prohibiting the wearing of disguises, establishing a state criminal investigative unit, and placing the militia under his command. None of the measures dealt the Klan a death blow. But, Alcorn's refusal to call for federal troops, as his Republican rival Adelbert Ames demanded, provided Radicals reason to attack him.³⁹

³⁹Harris, Day of the Carpetbaggers, 380-402. For an account of a Klan attack against one prominent Republican's tenants, see, Lieutenant Governor Ridgely C. Powers to E. P. Jacobson, 14 June 1871, Department of Justice, (2); "Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," vol. 11, 590. See, also, ibid., 484, 487, 496. Witty, "Reconstruction in Carroll and Montgomery Counties," 129-130; W. H. Braden, "Reconstruction in Lee County," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1909), 144; E. C. Coleman, Jr., "Reconstruction in Attala County," ibid., 10 (1911), 159.

The two most prominent acts of Klan violence that drove a wedge between Radical and Centrist Republicans, the whipping of carpetbagger Allen P. Huggins and the Meridian race riot of 1871, also amply justified Congress' decision to intervene in Mississippi. Centrists, as the events of 1871 bore out, tended to turn a blind eye to Klan outrages. The Klan in Monroe County, Huggins' adopted home, reportedly formed in 1869. According to local lore, none other than Nathan Bedford Forrest and his brother William, while conducting business for the Memphis and Selma Railroad, organized the first Klan. Encouraged by the Forrest brothers, respectable men of Aberdeen, including former state Senator Samuel J. Gholson and hotel owner Warren A. Webb, enlisted in the organization. But, even before the Forrest boys arrived, the county had experienced racial conflict. At least two white vigilance groups and three chapters of the Loyal League jealously protected their members against real and imagined insults. Tensions between the proponents of the new order and defenders of the old mounted in 1869 and 1870, as several northern-born Republicans, riding Alcorn's coattails, ascended to office. J. B. Woodmansee, a carpetbagger from

Indiana, won the post of county clerk, and Huggins became superintendent of schools in August 1870.⁴⁰

Huggins, a native of Michigan who served in the Union army, arrived in Mississippi soon after the war and joined the Freedmen's Bureau at Jackson. He briefly held the office of Monroe County sheriff, and, in mid-1869, he became assistant internal revenue assessor. In Aberdeen, Huggins acquired a reputation for advocating social justice. While his affection for an egalitarian society permitted him to build a powerful following among African-American Republicans, whites denounced him as a traitor to his race. Because of his political views, a local Baptist church refused to accept him as a member. Already an object of scorn by virtue of his origin and political affiliation, Huggins became the target of Klan violence when he advanced a plan to construct sixty common schools. Striking upon the watchwords of the Democratic party after 1874, extravagance and waste (signposts of behavior antithetical to free and virtuous men), whites objected to Huggins' plan to raise property taxes by 15 mills and to apply the state ordained poll tax for the benefit of the bi-racial schools. But, Reuben O. Reynolds, an attorney

⁴⁰"Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," vol, 11, 266-267; George Leftwich, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 6 (1906), 57; E. F. Puckett, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," ibid., 11 (1910), 127.

for several Monroe County Klansmen, hinted at the veiled reason whites' disdained public education: the educators of blacks inculcated within their students disrespect for the social ethic and taught children that "a war between the two races was inevitable, and that when the war came they must kill from the cradle up."⁴¹

Whether Reynolds believed that the public schools promoted race war or not, the message that he and other whites read in the creation of schools precluded the perpetuation of the antebellum social ethic. In the months prior to Huggins' whipping, the Klan stepped up its activities against blacks, and Huggins noticed a decided change of demeanor among local freedmen. They approached him as if they had "stolen a sheep from me and expect me to punish them by burning their houses down over their heads." Although the torture accorded his black allies disturbed him, Huggins saw no need to prosecute Klansmen vigorously or to use federal forces against the Klan until he became a victim. After his own beating, Huggins informed Ackerman that only the introduction of 500 troops and the declaration of martial law would suppress violence. Neither suggestion was heeded, and the Klan continued its cruel treatment of Republicans and

⁴¹"Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," vol. 11, 282, 289. Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 7 February 1871, 20 February 1871, UNC. Leftwich, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," 66.

freedmen, including the murder of the ex-slave Alexander Page. By the time of Page's murder, Huggins' bloody shirt had been sent to Congress as a symbol of southern resistance and inspired the passage of the Ku Klux Klan and Enforcement Acts of 1871.⁴² Prosecution of Page's murderers, though not entirely successful, determined that U. S. Courts, even in Mississippi, might protect African-American's liberties.

Unlike the Huggins affair, which stemmed solely from whites' refusal to permit blacks enjoyment of their liberty, the March 1871 race riot at Meridian stemmed as much from Republican factionalism as it did from Klan violence. In view of Alcorn's timid rebuke of the Klan, some white Republicans began to dismiss him "a tired Demagogue." By 1870, Henry Niles, an Attala County Republican, had turned against the governor: "Many of his superiors in honor are in the Penitentiary; and many of

⁴²Accounts of the events leading up to Huggins' whipping and Page's death can be found in "Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," vol 12, 923, 915-917; Allen P. Huggins to A. T. Ackerman, 14 January 1871; Huggins to Ackerman, 28 June 1871; John H. Pierce to Ackerman, 24 January 1871; G. Wiley Wells to Ackerman, 21 August 1871, Department of Justice, (1). See, too, Trelease, White Terror; Harris, Day of the Carpetbaggers, 386. See, also, Jennie Shaw to "My Beloved Sister," 30 March 1871, Mrs. Roy Rollins Papers, MDAH, for an approving account of Huggins' mistreatment: "everybody rejoiced. . . for everybody hated him." Shaw believed such activities would restore a system of justice in the country by making blacks afraid to speak against white perpetrators of violence. She also thought Huggins had gone too far in squandering public funds for organs, sofas, and fine furniture to outfit black schools at Aberdeen.

his superiors in morals and piety are in Hell." African-Americans, too, wearied of Alcorn's "reasonable, sensible management" of the party and state.⁴³ Increasingly after 1871, they blamed him for the violence that racked the African-American community.

During the early 1870s, responding to Klan violence in Alabama, several hundred blacks led by Daniel Price, a white school teacher, began arriving in Meridian. Soon after Price and the freedmen arrived, Alabama Klansmen started raiding Meridian and returning purported contract-breakers to Alabama. Neither Meridian's carpet-bagger mayor William Sturges, an Alcorn appointee, nor its scalawag sheriff Robert J. Moseley, expressed an interest in ending depredations against freedmen. As the black community's anger toward Sturges, Moseley, and Alcorn mounted, Senator Ames called for the appointment of a black man, Peter Cathay, as mayor. In the highly charged atmosphere at Meridian, freedmen reorganized the town's Loyal League to defend against violence. Tired of the constant attacks against freedmen, black leaders at Meridian (William Clopton, Aaron Moore, and Warren Tyler) called a mass meeting to organize a strategy of self defense. The rhetoric at the meeting was vitriolic and

⁴³Quoting Henry Niles Diary, 6 May 1870, Jason Niles Papers, UNC, and Alcorn to R. H. Walker in the Jackson Mississippi Pilot, 25 September 1873, clipping in the Alcorn Papers, MDAH.

the mood tense. All whites, Klansmen and Alcorn Republicans alike, fell under the freedmen's suspicion. Later that night, a fire of mysterious origin engulfed the store belonging to Mayor Sturges' brother Theodore and quickly spread to other buildings. Reports circulated that Clopton, deranged by alcohol, rode among the fire brigades prodding freedmen to quit their posts. Whites' suspected that a reborn Nat Turner had entered their midst. By morning, groups of whites and blacks exchanged gun fire in the streets, each race determined to commit genocide.⁴⁴

Two days after the fire, Clopton, Moore, and Tyler, faced a local justice of the peace to answer charges of inciting a riot. The courtroom, filled with arms-bearing men, resembled the scene on the street more than a chamber of justice. During the testimony against the black leaders, a white witness angered Clopton, who rushed the man. Shots rang out. The brief volley that followed wounded Clopton, killed two black onlookers, and split the justice's skull. Tyler and Moore escaped amidst the gun play, but Tyler lived less than an hour before a mob discovered his hiding place and riddled his body with bullets; the mob later removed Clopton from his jail cell

⁴⁴Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 396-398; Fitzgerald, The Union League Movement, 197-199. The testimony of William G. Ford is most helpful in sorting out the details of the Meridian riot, see "Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," vol. 11, 97-101.

and lynched him. Moore, a state representative, however, made his way through the sixty miles of woods that separated him from Jackson. For the next week, white vigilantes rode roughshod over Meridian and the surrounding countryside, killing approximately thirty freedmen and running Mayor Sturges out of town. At the insistence of Moore, Governor Alcorn reluctantly agreed to send the state militia to Meridian, but by the time it arrived, the damage had been done.⁴⁵

The outbreaks of violence damaged Centrists' confidence in their ability to govern effectively and widened the emerging gap between white moderates of both parties and Radicals. Even though Alcorn vacated the governor's mansion in 1871, the Radicals could not mount an effective campaign within the party to win the gubernatorial nomination. Alcorn's lieutenant governor, Ridgely C. Powers, a Kemper County planter, won the office with strong support from New Departure Democrats, the new name by which Democratic Centrists went. In many ways, Powers' political ideas resembled Alcorn's, but under his administration, the Civil Rights bill of 1873, which required that public accommodations in Mississippi provide equal access to all citizens, became law. Too much credit should not be given Powers for the passage of the bill,

⁴⁵Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 396-398; "Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi," 11, 97-101.

however. For the measure owed its success to the tireless efforts of its author, Ham Carter, a freedman. Yet the affect of the bill was more symbolic than real. Although the state supreme court ruled in one case that theaters had to open their seating to both races, local courts continued to rule against blacks who sued to integrate transportation facilities.⁴⁶ Under Powers' leadership, the Centrist peace with the new racial order remained as firmly opposed to equality as it had under Alcorn.

After four years of Centrist domination of the governor's office, a battle between moderate Republicans, again lead by Alcorn, and Radicals, behind Ames's banner, developed in the campaign of 1873. Not since the days of the 1868 ratification vote had the choice for Mississippi's electorate been portrayed in such plainly racial terms. The election would determine whether the state remained on its course of Centrist rule or whether it would take a new path leading to equality under Ames. The editors at the race-baiting Forest Weekly Register recorded a typical white response to Ames in a prayer it suggested readers adopt: "Lord send meningitis, small pox, cholera, measles, whooping cough, if we have incurred your divine displeasure. Heap upon us all the imprecations of

⁴⁶Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 430-480. On lawsuits filed by Carter to establish integrated public transportation, see Forest Weekly Register, 3 June 1871; Jackson Weekly Clarion, 18 May 1871.

the 109th Psalm; but we implore thee, that our state be not cursed with such small Ames." Centrist Democrats considered the threat of Ames' election to be so serious that they decided not to field a rival moderate ticket and disbanded their party. "Old issues," Hiram Cassedy, Sr., an antebellum Democrat observed, "have become extinct, and party names have lost their prestige, the Democratic name serves no other purpose now than to arouse fears, North and South, by which alone the Republican party are enabled to keep up their organization."⁴⁷ Even if it meant the dissolution of their fathers' party, white Mississippians determined to defeat resurgent Radicalism. Yet, for all their efforts, Ames defeated Alcorn.

Soon after the election, Democratic-Conservatives, stung by the advent of Radical rule, abandoned cooperation for the color line, a strategy based on protracted conflict against black liberty. Dissatisfaction with the prospects of Radical ascendancy developed even before Ames took the oath of office. Less than a month after the election, in fact, prominent whites in east Mississippi fired the first signal flares of the coming Redemption when they began reorganizing the Democratic-Conservative party. Most historians distinguish the practitioners of

⁴⁷Quoting Forest Weekly Register, 9 April 1873; Hiram Cassedy, Sr. to the Editor, Jackson Weekly Clarion, 4 September 1873. See, too, Perman Road to Redemption, 155.

the color line from more cooperative tacticians in the Democratic camp, but, by 1874, the distinction between the factions had blurred. Embracing Centrist doctrines, Democratic-Conservatives in the re-formed party came to suspect, had cost them the 1873 election. To recoup their losses, they needed to distinguish themselves from Republicans of every stripe. Democratic-Conservative's common association of Ames's Republicanism with "negrophilism" was extended to describe all Republicans. Burr H. Polk noted the sudden vitriol his Democratic-Conservative friends reserved for him: "Those people can hardly be fair or just in any way to a Republican." Ames's victory, according to the emerging proponents of the color line, testified to the evils that accrued under the influence of black suffrage. African-Americans won offices, received protection under the government, and expected to be treated as equals in social situations. Besides bringing the wrath of Democrats against him for being the darling of Mississippi Radicals, Ames's habit of sacrificing moderate Republicans who refused to support him tore apart his party. "Sorehead" Republicans and Democrats were all the same to Ames. His radical rhetoric of equality also made it difficult for some whites to remain in the party. Furthermore, Ames' unflinching support of Thomas W. Cardoza, the new state superintendent of education, who

faced embezzlement charges in Warren County, alarmed even his supporters.⁴⁸

Aided indirectly by Grant, who, after the election of 1872, tired of the constant flurry of affairs in the South and began courting Democratic-Conservatives, native whites searched for a strategy to unseat Ames. The "very salutary effect" of federal prosecutions under the Enforcement Act convinced whites that violence could not overthrow the Radicals; in 1872, for instance, the federal court in the northern district of state indicted 678 persons, convicted 262, and carried over 353 cases against the perpetrators of racial violence at elections. Democrats needed an issue other than race to attack Radicalism, and, in late 1874, that issue was found: taxes. "If you would know how poor a man is," a New Yorker who owned land in the state said, "just ascertain the number of acres he owns and pays taxes on in Mississippi." Opponents of Reconstruction had long complained that taxes

⁴⁸Quoting Burr H. Polk to Captain A. C. Fisk, no date, Department of Justice, (4). See, too, Jackson Weekly Clarion, 3 December 1874; Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 422-423, 619. Evidence of Ames popularity might be found in John Adolphus to Adelbert Ames, 10 April 1874, Governors' Papers, MDAH: "you are the best governor that we could have had on the Seat[.] [Y]ou have done more for the colored Race . . . thene [sic] any governor who ever has been on the Seat." Whites, of course, found Ames' popularity among blacks unsettling. Some, in fact, believed Ames used to his office to reorganize the Loyal League, or at least some similar secret society, and inspired African-Americans to plot a race war. See Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 3 July 1873, UNC.

exceeded the ability of farmers to pay. But, the taxpayer's movement that sprung out of the reorganized Democratic-Conservative party wanted more than retrenchment and reform. It also sought to overthrow Radical rule. According to Michael Perman, the bi-partisan nature of the early taxpayer's associations offered a method of accomplishing both goals. Under the cover of bi-partisan tax reform, Democratic-Conservatives might conduct their campaign against Radicalism without making a direct appeal to racial antipathies. The subtlety of the tactic did not escape Ames's supporters. C. P. Lincoln, county clerk at Grenada, argued that the "same rebellious spirit that prompted them in 1861" moved white Mississippians to join the taxpayers' movement; an editor of the Jackson Pilot suspected a revival of the "Ku Klux Democracy" in the new strategy.⁴⁹

In order to defeat Radicalism and to instruct the legislature in matters of economic reform, a statewide Taxpayer's' Convention convened at Jackson on January 4, 1875. Even though a number of Alcorn Republicans attended the meeting, Democrats, many of them members of the agricultural reform society, the Patrons of Husbandry,

⁴⁹Quoting C. P. Lincoln to J. E. Carpenter, no date, Justice Department (1); Jackson Weekly Pilot, 13 February 1875, cited in Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 631. See, too, Perman, Road to Redemption, 163, 165-168, and "H" to the Editor, Water Valley Courier, quoted in the Jackson Daily Clarion, 30 January 1875.

dominated the proceedings. Indeed, the convention's address to Mississippi taxpayers focused on the distress that farmers suffered, chiefly low cotton prices, high taxes, and the forced sale of their land. "By reason of the general poverty of the people, and the greatly depressed values of all property, and especially of our great staple," the address read, "the present rate of taxation is an intolerable burden and much beyond their ability to pay." In 1869, the convention said, taxes on land valued at \$100 amounted to 10 cents, but Radical rule had raised the rate to 40 cents. Under such burdensome taxation, the keepers of the social ethic, plain farmers, lost their land. Republicans' spending habits equally outraged the convention. Government salaries, the common schools, and the cost of public printing all fell under the taxpayers' indiscriminate indictment of Radicalism.⁵⁰

Every clause of the convention address heralded conservatives' efforts to preserve the antebellum social ethic. High taxes and debt (the bane of antebellum free

⁵⁰Quoting Jackson Daily Clarion, 6 January 1875. For a sympathetic treatment of the taxpayers' complaints, see Ross Moore, "Social and Economic Conditions in Mississippi During Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University 1938), 71. Contemporaries' complaints against Republican tax policies can be found in the following sources: Susan S. Darden Diary, 28 November 1876, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; Batt Moore, Jr. to John Fewell, 12 February 1876, L. B. Brown to Fewell, 14 January 1867, Fewell Papers, MDAH; A. Q. Withers to George H. Williams, 25 October 1874, Justice Department (1).

men), the break-up of plantations (and the master class' loss of direct authority over labor), and extravagant expenditures for schools and other public institutions (the specter of social equality and levelling) represented attacks on the ethic. Besides the stinging indictment of economic conditions, white Mississippians also received from the convention a blue print for defending the social ethic. First the black vote had to be neutralized, then the Radicals overthrown. As Ames observed, "the true sentiment of the assembly was the 'color line' though the platform said nothing about it."⁵¹ Despite the apparent bi-partisan support given the address by Republicans like Congressman George C. McKee, Ames's observation that the attack on Radical fiscal policies equaled a defense of the social ethic proved correct, as the convention address became a virtual platform of the anti-Ames forces.

At the same time the taxpayers' movement took wings, white-liners, advocates of the color line in politics, also began to organize in force. Led by W. H. McCardle of the Vicksburg Herald, the unreconstructed used the off-year elections of 1874 to register their disdain for the course of Radical rule. In Columbus, according to

⁵¹Quoting Abelbert Ames to E. Benjamin Andrews, 24 May 1895, Ames Papers, MDAH. Vernon Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 177-179, convincingly argues that Republican fiscal policy was just and necessary to repair damage to the state caused by the war.

Henry B. Whitfield, "a lot of rowdies" distributed handbills reading "Bread or No Bread" to intimidate blacks into voting the Democratic ticket. Through the influence of such tactics, elections, Whitfield said, no longer resembled the democratic events his forefathers had enjoyed and did not deserve the name election. "Outrage" better described the election of 1874. Henry Bickerstaff agreed, but he preferred the term "mobocracy." In Iuka, Bickerstaff told Attorney General George H. Williams, "all the efforts possible are being made to re-enslave the Negro." White-liners and taxpayers had driven from Tishomingo County all but four white and a few black Republicans.⁵² Informed, at least theoretically, by diverse sentiments, the white-line and taxpayers' movements differed mainly on tactics. Republicans' tendency to lump the movements together grew out of the events that occurred at Vicksburg in December 1874.

As local taxpayers' associations prepared for the January meeting and white-liners revelled in their off-year election victories, Vicksburg erupted in violence that a Congressional investigating committee would label "a perfect carnival of released rascality." Neither white-liners nor taxpayers played innocent roles in the

⁵²Quoting Henry B. Whitfield to G. Wiley Wells, 9 December 1874, and Henry Bickerstaff to George H. Williams, September 1874; but see, too, R. A. Hill to Williams, 18 September 1874, Justice Department (1).

affair. As the largest city in the state and home to a strong Republican party, Vicksburg served as an indicator of Mississippi's mood, and, in the early 1870s, a mood of violence swept through the city. Vicksburg was not unfamiliar with racial violence since a riot in 1872 had paralyzed the city for several days. But the outbreak that occurred in mid-December 1874 made the previous incident seem restrained by comparison.

The difficulties that precipitated several days of racial warfare originated with the 1873 election of freedmen Peter Crosby to the post of sheriff. Soon after his election, citizens opposed to him and Ames organized taxpayers and white leagues. The clubs dedicated themselves to identifying mismanagement and fraud in local government and intended to unseat black officials. Without much effort, the taxpayers' league discovered that one of Crosby's surety guarantors had died without posting the bond necessary for Crosby to hold his office, and they set about removing him from office. Whites gloated at the possibility of removing a "corrupt" black official, especially Crosby, who as sheriff, had the power to seat juries. But, their interests extended beyond the sheriff's office. To carry the November 1874 elections, white-liners forced the registrar of voters, a Radical Republican, to flee; then, capitalizing on the information gathered by the taxpayers' club against Crosby and their

recent electoral success, they forced Crosby to resign. The mob appointed a new sheriff. Despite the growing air of violence in Vicksburg, a sufficient number of strong-willed Republicans remained in office to block the complete success of the white-liners. On December 7, a band of armed whites stormed into town to arrest Crosby, who continued to organize resistance to the emerging mob rule. With the former sheriff under their command, they drove freedmen outside the city where another company of brigands waited to fire on them in an open field. Simultaneous attacks in other quarters of the city ensued, and for several days vigilantes rode through the countryside killing blacks at every turn. As news of the riot spread, whites from as far away as Trinity, Texas wired an ominous message that hinted at the villainous desires of most white southerners: "Do you want any men? Can raise good crowd within twenty four hours to kill out your negroes." The murder spree ended only after Ames convinced President Grant to send federal troops.⁵³

The arrival of troops in Mississippi only bolstered whites' resolve to bring Radical rule to an end, but politically astute whites knew that running Ames out

⁵³Quoting "Vicksburg Troubles," House Report, 43rd Cong. 2nd sess., Document 265, ix, but see, too, ii-xvii. Susan S. Darden Diary, 7 December 1874, Darden Family Papers, MDAH, records the efforts of Jefferson County residents to help the white population at Vicksburg. Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 647-649.

of office necessitated the use of legitimate means. If they voted Ames out, whites hoped to prevent Ames from attracting the sympathy and support of northern Republicans. Toward that end, L. Q. C. Lamar dispatched several friend to speak to the Congressional committee that investigated the Vicksburg outrage. Lamar informed his friend, E. D. Clark, that he should emphasize Crosby's corruption as the driving force behind the riot, and he should try to keep W. H. McCardle, the leader of the most reactionary wing of the Democratic-Conservative party, away from the committee. Clark, along with Thomas Catchings and other Democrats, complied with Lamar's wishes and argued before the committee that blacks had precipitated the mob action by electing corrupt officials and marching through town in support of Crosby.⁵⁴

Despite widespread sentiment among Republicans like C. P. Lincoln that only "a 'color line' of blue" promised to disrupt the influence of anti-Radical forces, Grant offered no indication that he would employ troops to ensure Ames's success in the gubernatorial election of 1875. Nevertheless, white politicians used the familiar fear of insurrection to mobilize the electorate. While such sentiments might seem to twentieth-century readers

⁵⁴L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, 24 December 1874, Lamar Collection, Special Collections, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi; Lamar to Clark, 24 December 1874, Kate Freeman Clark Collection, MDAH.

mere fear-mongering, Democratic party leaders apparently suspected Ames would do anything to remain in office. Responding to the creation of a new state militia under Ames's control, Lamar told his wife that the governor intended to sacrifice "his negro regiments" in order to persuade Grant to "take possession for him." Distemper among leading Democratic-Conservatives grew daily as the election of 1875 approached, but they employed the tension advantageously. Exploiting apprehensions of a race war that infected the general population, Democratic-Conservatives, who revived their party in August 1875, put forward a statewide ticket for the first time since 1868 and swore to be the protectors of whites' liberties. The platform adopted in convention included statements of allegiance to political and civil liberties for all and support for public education, as well as calls for reduced state expenditures, farmer relief, and levee construction. The party even took tentative steps to woo freedmen to the party, "and thus," according to the Clarion, "give permanence and success to our party and its principles."⁵⁵

⁵⁵Quoting C. P. Lincoln to J. E. Carpenter, no date, Justice Department, (1); L. Q. C. Lamar to "Wife," 15 February 1875, quoted in Edward Mayes, L. Q. C. Lamar: His Life, Times and Speeches, 1825-1893 (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1896), 211; Jackson Daily Clarion, 4 March 1875. See, too, Jackson Daily Clarion, 27 January 1875.

Although white liners in the Democratic-Conservative convention bolted at the idea of appealing to black voters, party leaders quieted their dissent by suggesting that the appeals were for northern consumption only. No one took seriously the idea of converting large numbers of faithful Republican voters. W. B. Jones, a planter from north Mississippi, for instance, complained that his tenants viewed the election as another effort to place the bottom rail on top, and he did not intend to submit any longer. While "Baseballs & Elections" captured his tenants' attention, the cotton crop went unpicked. Their enthusiasm for the election notwithstanding, Jones did not permit them to vote in early November: "These niggers did not attend." Others also realized that Democratic-Conservative appeals to justice meant little in Mississippi. Ames predicted that white liners would carry the day in November, even if they did not in the August convention; blood-thirsty whites would punish those who had ever voted the Republican ticket. The convergence of the white line and taxpayers' policies in the reorganized Democratic-Conservative party foretold white Mississippians' willingness to carry the election by any means necessary.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Quoting Jackson Weekly Clarion, 4 August 1875; W. B. Jones Diary, 1-3 November 1875, Jones-Smith Plantation Journals, MDAH. See, Adelbert Ames to Blanche Ames, 4 August 1875, in Blanche Ames, comp., Chronicles From the Nineteenth Century: Family Letters of Blanche Butler and (continued...)

While making token efforts, barbecues and two-party meetings, to persuade black voters to join them, Democratic-Conservatives throughout the campaign made no effort to stop whites from abusing blacks and Republicans. Fully aware of whites' strategy after the Vicksburg riot, Susan S. Darden, the wife of a prominent Franklin County planter and Democrat, worried about a Republican in-law's safety. "What could have induced him to act so? Oh, Lord have mercy upon him & stop him in his mad career." Occasionally Democratic speakers, like Edward C. Walthall, promised that "colored men shall be protected in the free exercise of their right to vote if it takes white men's blood to do it." But, such hyperbole served less as a commitment to black voting rights than as a warning that bloodshed was anticipated. The Republican newspaper, the Jackson Pilot saw through such rhetoric: "While the platform is peace, the canvass will be war." Although they infrequently offered freedmen the proverbial carrot of inducement, Democrats often used a literal stick to control black votes; they disrupted Republican meetings and wantonly attacked blacks at work in the fields. W. F. Simonton reported to Ames that a group of young whites had gone so far as to lock five blacks in a sweltering boxcar

⁵⁶(...continued)
Adelbert Ames, vol. 2, (Clinton, Massachusetts: Colonial Press, 1957), 124.

and threatened to hold them until they promised to vote Democratic-Conservative ticket.⁵⁷

In Monroe County, intimidation, violence, and persuasion so often converged that blacks had difficulty distinguishing the various Democratic tactics. Democrats in Monroe County, one of the hotbeds of Klan activity, actually expended little energy trying to convert black voters. In 1875, Reuben Reynolds, a leading Democrat, feebly tried to convince a black audience that his party had their best interest in mind when it advocated Ames' ouster. Even though he threatened to have their landlords turn them off the land, the crowd refused to believe him. Recognizing one of his most vocal opponents as a tenant on his wife's plantation, Reynolds discharged the man on the spot. The discharged man, however, refused to denounce his party and fired a parting shot at Reynolds, "All right, Colonel, de grass-hoppers has already eat up everything anyhow." Chiding the audience for its recalcitrance, Reynolds reminded the blacks that they owned no property and possessed no means of livelihood: "the only way you can rid yourselves of the white people is to catch

⁵⁷Quoting Susan S. Darden Diary, 28 August 1875, Darden Family Papers, MDAH; Walthall in the Jackson Weekly Clarion, 13 September 1875; Jackson Weekly Pilot, 14 August 1875, quoted in Perman, Road to Redemption, 168. See, too, W. F. Simonton to Adelbert Ames, 13 September 1875; E. C. Walker to Adelbert Ames, 26 August 1875; J. B. Algood to Ames, 12 September 1875; J. A. Orr to Ames, 16 April 1875, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

yourselves by the seats of your pants and lift yourselves 200 yards above the tops of the trees, d__n you!" On another occasion, Reynolds attempted to trap his audience into confessing that they decided on political candidates based on race. As he had expected, blacks, when given a choice between four white Democrats and a black one convicted of stealing hogs, sided with the black man.⁵⁸

Reuben Davis, also of Monroe County, made an even firmer connection than Reynolds had between the Democratic-Conservatives in 1875, violence, and the perpetuation of the southern social ethic. Speaking before a bi-racial crowd, Davis sarcastically asked if the blacks believed whites so foolishly as "to feed and clothe you and then let you vote for the d__n carpet bagger?" A lone voice in the back of the room cried, "Yes." As Davis reached for his pistol, friends of the freedman pointed out that he suffered a hearing impairment and perhaps misunderstood the question. Resuming his speech, Davis announced that if the Democrats did not win, "I am for war and bloody war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt." In response, the black man, who had obviously feigned his deafness, answered, "Me, too," and the crowd raced out the

⁵⁸Leftwich, "Reconstruction in Monroe County," 75-77.

windows to escape the coming fracas.⁵⁹ However much Reynolds and Davis wished to dictate political opinions to freed people, the new citizens ignored when possible the threats of white Democrats.

Despite blacks' commitment to the Republican party and concern about preserving their liberty, the national party abandoned its Mississippi constituency. Dedicated Republicans discerned early during the 1875 campaign that their chances of preserving Ames and Republicanism were slim. The "Ku Klux Democracy and the Weak Knead [sic] Republican President of the North," Allen M. Green noted, left Republicans, especially blacks, at the mercy of white liners. At Clinton, a small hamlet outside of Jackson, the full force of white-line violence was displayed and forced Grant to show his hand. On September 4, 1875, shots rang out at a bi-racial political meeting. Within twenty-four hours, train loads of Vicksburg residents, the state's best practiced rioters, arrived to aid whites in the mayhem that followed. Rumors spread among Clinton's white population that African-Americans were preparing a

⁵⁹Ibid., 75-77. In 1875-1876, black resisted white violence. At Mayfield, in 1876, armed blacks ran off Democrats, who tried to interrupt a meeting. One white observer was stunned by their behavior: "Negroes that I have been raised up with, hunted with, stood in front of me with their guns and tried to keep me from getting Walter [Forrest, who was injured by the angry Republicans] out of the way." See H. L. Lott to A. B. Hunt, 29 October 1876, Governors' Papers, MDAH. See, too, D. H. Sessions to John Stone, no date, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

wholesale slaughter for them; freedwomen would dispatch white women and children, while black men killed adult males. Tension in the white community spread when Ames, after failing to convince Grant to send support, ordered the state militia into town. To white's eyes, black troops marching through Clinton to keep whites from defending themselves suggested a revolution, social and political, that was more than they could bear. Although no one knew who had started the riot, whites blamed Ames, who intended, they said, to provoke national outrage through the riot. The entire incident left scores of people dead, and permitted Democratic-Conservatives to turn the dead whites into martyrs of their revolution to secure the liberty and virtue of whites based on African-American subjugation. Transparent images of those slain, back-lighted by flaming pine knots, became the focus of a pre-election parade in Jackson. Sarah Chilton, whose son died in the riot, proudly informed a friend that the incident had "roused the people like the trump of Gabriel, and after that left nothing undone to secure our rights, and to crush anarchy." To Republicans, the Clinton affair and John Stone's November victory signalled that the national party would allow "a portion of her citizens to be killed and slaughtered up at the will and pleasure of

another portion just because they differ in Color and political Sentiment."⁶⁰

By November 1875, the Democratic policy of rule or ruin had established itself as a successful one. Even though a grand jury investigating election outrages in north Mississippi believed it could indict thousands of election law violators, it chose not to fearing additional violence. Not even the once successful federal courts could prevent the crescendo of intimidation and violence in 1875. Democratic policy and Republican acquiescence, prompted the grand jury foreman, William D. Frazee, to bid "farewell to liberty, farewell to the freedom of the ballot box."⁶¹ The liberty that African-Americans had once believed possible to achieve seemed suddenly distant. In the new era of Democratic rule, former distinctions between Centrists and the unreconstructed disappeared as violence came to play a predominant role in Mississippi politics. In fact, events in the 1876 presidential election differed only in matters of detail from the abuses practiced in the overthrow of Ames.

⁶⁰Quoting Allen M. Green to Edward Pierepont, 23 September 1875, Justice Department (3); Sarah Chilton to Mrs. L. N. Brown, 17, 25 September, 1, 17, 24, 28 October, 13 November 1875, Norton-Chilton-Dameron Family Papers, UNC. Harris, Day of the Carpetbagger, 660-661.

⁶¹Quoting Grand Jury Report, 8 July 1876, Justice Department (3).

The Republican party, though never completely wiped out in the post-Redemption era, foundered for direction after 1875. A candidate for the U. S. House in 1876 felt so alone in his effort to fight the Democracy that he sought assurances from the Attorney General that northern Republicans actually wanted him to win. Without the backing of federal troops, the Republican party in Mississippi stood no chance of victory; neither did the presence of troops ensure victory. As for African-Americans, Mississippi's white Republicans believed, the national party abandoned them altogether except when it needed a southern outrage to carry the vote in the North. Democratic efforts in 1875-1876 so completely overwhelmed the Radical party that a Republican from Holmes County, speaking for his demoralized allies, suggested that "each Republican. . . ought just to choose his Democratic master and go scripture fashion, and have his ear nailed to the Doorpost of the misery in which he is to remain a slave forever!"⁶²

For the mass of black voters, developments within Mississippi and the national Republican party between 1875

⁶²Quoting Judge T. Walton to Alphonso Taft, 3 September 1876, Justice Department (2); the last quote can be found in a bundle of unsigned letters from Mississippians submitted by Ira Tarbell, 25 August 1876, Justice Department (3). See, too, J. H. Pierce to Taft, 3 September 1876, 21 August 1876; T. J. Reed to Taft, 3 September 1876; John R. Cavett to Taft 23 August 1876; H. R. Ware to Taft, 11 November 1876, Justice Department (3).

and 1876 meant the loss of their civil and political liberties. Yet the black leadership of the state Republican party continued to curry the favor of the national leadership. Through a complicated arrangement with the Democratic party, leaders of the black wing of the Republican party continued to receive local offices and patronage jobs. Fostering the idea that black resurgence was possible made it easy for Democrats to characterize all tests of their domination as the harbinger of Black Republicanism.⁶³ Despite the arguments of leading Democrats, L. Q. C. Lamar among them, that disfranchisement was not "a political possibility," the reality of black voting in the Redeemer period testified that bulldozing and intimidation successfully kept African-Americans away from the polls. From a high of 80 percent in 1868, black voter participation fell to 16.8 percent in the 1882 Congressional elections. Without such statistics to back their arguments, opponents of the social ethic found it

⁶³Even though most African-Americans were denied the suffrage by white violence after 1874, the black community did not cease its political activity. One correspondent of Governor Stone testified to the rage that African-Americans felt about the curtailment of their liberties. "Mississippi is hell," he said, and he promised take revenge against the white South for its depredations. He also swore to "soon come to Jackson to kick your ass." See, "A Negro" to John M. Stone, 26 September 1878, Stone Papers, MDAH. So acute was the suffering and violence spawned by the political culture of racism, that his strong words could only have been written from the relative safety of Baltimore.

difficult to prove that subtle forms of violence supplanted the highly publicized variety of 1875-1876.

Nevertheless, the influence of violence and intimidation kept many blacks away from the polls, and, as William Baskin, a Republican, noted, blacks' defensive retreat from the suffrage lessened their importance to both parties. Most Mississippians denied that election bullies hindered African-Americans in exercising the suffrage. L. Q. C. Lamar in an article published in the North American Review enunciated a clever dodge that shortly became Democratic doctrine. He posited that those who suggested blacks could be bullied into voting the Democratic ticket admitted that African-Americans lacked the independence of mind necessary for citizenship.⁶⁴ The argument was entirely specious, of course, but such apparently benign pronouncements purporting to recognize African-American liberties kept critics of the South off balance.

⁶⁴Quoting L. Q. C. Lamar, "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised?" North American Review 128 (March 1879), 231-238. William Baskin to "Dear Sister," 26 August 1876, William Baskin to Mary Middleton, 19 August 1876, Middleton Family Papers, MDAH. On violence committed during the election of 1875, see, "Mississippi Election of 1875, Senate Reports, 44th Cong. 1st sess., Document 527, passim. On the rise of bulldozing, see, D. L. Smythe to John M. Stone, 27 April 1876; T. C. Catchings to Stone, 22 April 1876; J. B. Chrisman, 2 April 1879; J. M. Patrick to James Hill, 23 May 1877, Governors' Papers, MDAH

The overwhelming success that Democrats enjoyed in eliminating black influence at the polls embedded in Mississippi politics a faith in propriety of violence against African-Americans so bold as to profess they were citizens. That culture, which originally stood for violence against blacks, devolved into a system of politics that suppressed white dissent as well. Anyone with the temerity to test the Democratic party, the self-proclaimed keeper of the social ethic by virtue of its victory over Radicalism, received the opprobrious label "Black Republican." After 1876, the political culture of racism, then, not only assured that African-Americans would not return to the polls in large numbers, but it promised to treat all intraparty and third party challenges to the Democracy as threats against the social ethic, threats to white domination of politics. Where once the social ethic had fostered cultural homogeneity under the rubric of white liberty and black enslavement, the political culture that emerged from Reconstruction made no promises of securing political liberty to whites. It promised only to maintain the racial division of society and to persecute anyone, white or black, who questioned Democratic policies.

Chapter Six

Of Merchants and Railroads

The social ethic emerged from the period of Reconstruction changed. Before the war, whites had based their understanding of liberty and virtue on the institution of slavery. Independent citizens, those who produced for the market and achieved self-sufficiency, wished to avoid the condition of servitude known to black southerners. The Civil War and Reconstruction, by removing the legal barriers that perpetuated slavery, called into question the old fiction of white cultural homogeneity; only through strenuous efforts did whites successfully assert that the mass of African-Americans would remain without liberties identical to those that they enjoyed. But, damage to the social ethic had been done. The presence of African-Americans as free citizens, if only nominally so, removed the base upon which white liberty had been erected. The South was a new South. Taking advantage of the fluid social order created by the exigencies of the 1860s and 1870s, merchants, railroad builders, and industrialists attempted to lead the region into the emergent commercial order. In the process, they recreated the social ethic so

that values of the New South might be reconciled with those of the Old.

Less than a year after Robert E. Lee surrendered his command at Appomattox Courthouse, Elizabeth R. McNabb observed a change among the young men of her neighborhood: "Simon Catchings is coming back to Summitt[.] [H]e and J. B. Quinn are going to have a store. Everybody wants to be merchants, doctors, or lawyers. Lucius Quinn is reading medecine [sic] so is Will Lamkin[,], John Quinn, Dick Bridges, Frank Martin[,], and a host of others."¹ These men, long-time Pike County residents all, understood that the Confederacy's demise heralded a new age. Like their kinsmen, the purposeful settlers of the old southwestern cotton kingdom, McNabb's neighbors re-created the South and make a place for themselves on the postbellum frontier.

Unlike historians who have battered and bludgeoned each other over questions about continuity and change in the South, contemporaries understood that they lived in a new world. Sensing that the war had devalued the ideals born on the old southwestern frontier, McNabb's neighbors eschewed their former habits and embraced new ones. Four years of war and the promise of a Reconstruction imposed by a power outside the region bid not fair to the full

¹Elizabeth R. McNabb to "My Dearest Friend," 29 March 1866, Elizabeth R. McNabb Papers, MDAH.

resuscitation of the Old South's myths and realities. Most obviously, military defeat made irrelevant the dream of owning a plantation and one hundred slaves, which James Davidson had found so pervasive in the halcyon days of the 1830s.² Without the mastery over labor afforded by slavery, owning a plantation after 1865 became an odious task for surviving whites imbued with the dream of material success. Furthermore, events in the mid to late 1860s suggested that the federal government intended to close the material and moral gap separating the South from the rest of the nation. Most whites, while accepting material progress for themselves, challenged, at times with violence, ex-slaves' claims to the economic and political fruits of free-labor ideology. White Mississippians clung to tenets of the social ethic that bolstered their standing as free men but forsook aspects of the ethic in order

²For a recent review of the literature dealing with the themes of consensus and change, see Harold Woodman, "Economic Reconstruction and the Rise of the New South, 1865-1900," in John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen, eds. Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1987), 254-307. One historian of Mississippi has notably entered the debate over consensus and continuity and has chosen a middle ground. The plantation elite did not disappear from the Natchez district after the war, Michael Wayne argues, but black liberty forcibly disrupted plantation authority: see, The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-1880 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1983), 203. On James Davidson, see Herbert A. Kellar, "A Journey Through the South in 1836: Diary of James D. Davidson," Journal of Southern History 3 (August 1935), 356.

to seek success in fields other than those planted in cotton.

The reason for Mississippians' sudden willingness to seek out material success away from the farm seems obvious enough: emancipation profaned the fullness of the antebellum social ethic. But, as Harold Woodman has pointed out, determining why the transformation from Old South to New South took place consumes less energy than determining how it came about. Woodman's postulation has meaning for historians who see a decided difference between the South of the pre- and post-war eras. For, if the late nineteenth-century South deserved the adjective "new," historians must determine the modus operandi by which the region changed. Public policy, of course, opened the way for the transformation. Railroad builders, lumbermen, and other industrial adventurers benefited from legislation designed to facilitate the development of a new Mississippi. The crop-lien law played a similar role in the countryside by turning over to rural merchants the function of antebellum cotton factors and creating a new class of prominent men. Even though the great mass of Mississippi's working population remained tied to agriculture, a significant number (roughly 20 percent in 1880) otherwise employed suggested that antebellum rhetoric about the virtue of yeomen-like labor had lost its

authority.³ New ideas about success, self-sufficiency, and efficiency, as well as changes in public policy, drove McNabb's friends to embrace the new order.

The ideas that propelled them to seek success in uniquely New South ways were not original to their generation. The New South Creed, defined by historian Paul Gaston as a body of ideas about material progress, originated among far-sighted railroad promoters and levee builders of the antebellum period. Besides their passion for building up Mississippi, the prophets of progress, pre- and post-war, shared a sense of regional destiny, a faith in the curative powers of cotton for all that ailed the region, and an insistence on the rigid division of labor based on racial criteria.⁴ Yet evidence of a persisting set of ideals common to men of vision before and after the war should not be taken as an indication of a South unchanged. Whereas antebellum prophecies of an economy well-integrated into the national one fell largely from the lips of exceptional men, the number of the

³Woodman, "Economic Reconstruction and the Rise of the New South," 282-283. For the percentage of the work force engaged in non-agricultural pursuits, see William T. Winn, "Mississippi," in U. S., Department of Treasury, Report of the Internal Commerce of the United States, Part II of Commerce and Navigation; The Commercial, Industrial, Transportation, and Other Industries of the Southern States (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1886), 493

⁴Paul Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 15-42.

progress-minded grew exponentially after the war, and their rhetoric took on an aggressive tenor.

Visionary men had always seen cotton as the South's trump card in national politics and economics, but New South prophets envisioned a region that produced, refined, and marketed the crop as finished goods. Increased cotton production, according to a postbellum Noxubee County newspaper editor, would lead not only to the expansion of the cotton kingdom but to a boom in manufacturing and investment of all types. The fortunes that would accrue to wise investors in the postbellum cotton kingdom, another editor claimed, would transform Horace Greeley's famous command for young men to move west into a command to "go South."⁵

Despite the persisting belief that cotton offered Mississippi access to economic splendor, New South prophets, by adding an industrial component to their vision redefined the region and in the process altered the meaning of success. The New South, they said, would be a land of cotton fields and textile mills, saw mills and railroads, truck gardens and country stores. Occasionally an adventurous soul would engage thoughts of discovering

⁵Quoting Macon Mississippi Sun, 24 February 1884, but, see, too, Grenada Sentinel, 17 November 1883; Vicksburg Evening Banner, 4 May 1887, and Grenada Sentinel, 3 June 1882.

great mineral wealth in the state.⁶ Ensuring the triumphant ascension of a New South, however, required that prophets of the new order disabuse themselves of many of the region's self-conscious peculiarities. In the language of the New South prophets, the sectional conflict and Civil War became an anomaly, a time when barbarism reigned among a peaceful and progressive people. Defeat had taught Mississippians the foolhardiness of their grasp for independence; according to proponents of the New South Creed, olden times and ways were forever forgotten. In the view of a Natchez editor, Mississippians stood ready to "take up with the new habits, the new methods, the new tastes, which the new condition of affairs renders necessary." As "a new people," they were prepared to enter "the battle of life" with their contemporaries in the

⁶On the development of industries not directly dependent on cotton, see Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, 3 February, 19 February, 2 May 1887; Macon Mississippi Sun, 19 March 1888. Despite losing money on a venture to develop Mississippi's mineral wealth, Lamar did not count his investment in mineral exploration a total loss. From his financial loss, he learned the importance of agriculture in Mississippi: "Mississippi is the Seat [of] a splendid agricultural Empire, the fertility of whose soil surpasses the fabled fertility of the Nile; but ever Since a certain great disappointment of mine, I have ceased to regard her Ecological or Mineralogical value as of any importance." Lamar to S. A. Jonas, 15 June 1884, Jonas Papers, MDAH. Eugene Hilgard, the state geologist, was a tireless advocate of mineral exploration and attracted others to his cause. See James Hubbard to Eugene Hilgard, 8 February 1872, Hilgard Papers, MDAH.

rest of the nation.⁷ In order to compete with the industrializing North and the expansive West, New South prophets, without forswearing cotton, recognized the need for a diverse economy.

Desires to foster a diversified economy notwithstanding, railroads occupied a place of prominence in all plans to create a New South. From the antebellum period until the late nineteenth century, railroads functioned in myth and reality as a connection between the isolated farmer and the market. During the sectional crisis of the 1850s, sentiment in favor of railroad building grew, and railroads represented southerners' willingness to achieve economic and political independence. Even though few lines saw their way to completion prior to the war, railroads in operation by 1861 infused Mississippians with unbounded ebullience. Small groups would gather to watch surveying and roadbed crews pass through, and even seasoned travellers marvelled at the sight of a steam engine, the leviathan itself, puffing noisily amid pastoral scenes. In the postbellum period, as rail lines "grid-ironed" the state, they acted less as noisy novelties and

⁷On the Civil War as a time of barbarism, see Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, 5 January 1877. Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, 18 May 1887; Natchez Daily Democrat, 20 November 1875.

more as bellwethers of industrial expansion.⁸ Just as promoters of the lines had planned, entrepreneurs followed the first trains down the track and began constructing towns, mills, and farms.

All wealth, progress, and success, New South prophets said, emanated from cotton and railroads. Boosters correctly surmised that cotton and railroads would be the linchpins of the economy, though they badly misjudged the state's mineral wealth and the role that other industries would play in the state's economic advancement. Despite their importance, cotton and railroads were outward signs of the South's newness. The transforming experience of the postwar period, the transformation which permitted Mississippians to advocate the inauguration of a commercial order, occurred far removed from the eyes of census takers and with such stealth that individuals often failed to recognize its onset. Where antebellum ideals had championed the virtue of self-sufficient production within the market economy and debt-free living to assure

⁸For an account of an antebellum railroad passing through the Piney Woods, see Dionysius Lardner, Railway Economy; A treatise on the New Art of Transport, Its Movement, Prospects, and Relations, Commercial, Financial, and Social With an Exposition of the Practical Results of the Railways in Operation in the United Kingdom, on the Continent, and in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1850), 327-328. Lardner attributed the passage of the railroad through the isolated forests of Mississippi to "the irrepressible spirit of enterprise" among the population. See, too, Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, 14, 27 January 1887.

personal political independence, postbellum desires to create a modern state required that Mississippians make virtues of a Yankee-like lust for money and interdependent economic relationships. Few late nineteenth-century southerners would have availed themselves of the opportunity to announce that they had forsaken self-sufficiency. But, creating a South of plantations, factories, and railroads required a degree of interconnectedness with the market economy that antebellum citizens, despite their desire for the rewards of the market, had not known.

If antebellum Mississippians simply dabbled in the web of the market economy, their descendants submitted to the entangling grasp of a far more intricate web. By willfully surrendering to the pull of the postwar market, erecting a rail system, and fostering industry, Mississippi's culture of self-sufficient farmers transformed itself into one of efficient, cash-oriented businessmen. To some postbellum Mississippians, accumulating money took precedence over achieving economic independence. The Leake County representative of the credit-ranking firm R. G. Dun and Company paid Hector H. Howard, Jr. a uniquely New South compliment suggestive of the changing values. Howard, a druggist and general store owner, "appears to understand his bus. very well and will make money (Yankee like)." Of course, the desire to obtain great riches had always led men to the antebellum frontier, but, after the

war, with the wealth-creating opportunity of slavery closed, cash took on an added significance, especially when so many Mississippians had resigned their tenuous claims to self-sufficiency. When their pecuniary success seemed impossible, some lost their perspective on life itself when their pecuniary success seemed lost. Philip M. Catchings, a planter and merchant in Simpson County, while contemplating the impending death of his infant child and his looming financial failure had difficulty distinguishing which two more deeply affected him. "Our Baby has been expected to die for a week. I think will die this morning in a few hours[.] I am about ruined. I don't think that I will Ever recover my losses from this overflow[.] The Baby died at 8 oclock [sic] at night." In a new age that emphasized wealth over independence, some faced a temptation to engage in illegal activities. It is not known how J. E. Reynolds responded to an offer to pass counterfeit money in Mississippi, but the promise of being placed "upon the highway to fortune and affluance [sic]" would surely have appealed to many New South citizens.⁹

⁹Quoting R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Noxubee County), 14H, Harvard University; Dr. Philip Marshall Catchings Diary, 8 December 1880, Catchings Collection, MDAH; B. B. Walker to "Dear Sir," January 1871, J. E. Reynolds Papers, MDAH. During a bitter dispute over an inheritance, R. A. Evans denigrated his brother for teaching his children to love money and sug-
(continued...)

Other southerners sought temporal rewards in distinctly New South fashion. J. F. Herndon knew of nothing that would hinder his journey toward fortune and affluence. With a resolution unrivaled even by Flem Snopes, Herndon, determined to establish a place for himself in the economic order of the postbellum world. Reversing the course that his predecessors had taken, Herndon, a store clerk, decided to move east in search of the riches that eluded him in Texas. "I intend," he wrote a friend, "to have money if I am sent to the Dry Tortugas or to Hell for it." Such determination, literally Herndon's selling of his soul to the devil, knew no bounds. After purchasing "a Spring stock of goods" in New York, he hoped to return South, "look out for breakers," and make a handsome profit on his \$2,000 investment. In February 1871, Herndon opened a store at the crossroads town of Brooksville in Noxubee County. But, his dreams of achieving the easy wealth of a merchant soon encountered the realities of the rural trade. Six months after his arrival, R. G.

⁹(...continued)

gested an old-time cure for their materialism. Refusing to pay his brother a dime, since "it takes all the money I can make to support my family and pay my honest debts," Evans chastised him, saying: "I am sorry to hear that your children have learned to love money so well that they cry when they hear that they will not get money from Miss[.] I think you are courting a great error in teaching them to love it so & their clothes don't amount to much in the eyes of the lord. So you can tell them to go to church." R. A. Evans to "Dear Brother," 6 June 1872, Evans Papers, MDAH.

Dun and Company's local representative characterized his prospects as hopeless and warned potential creditors that Herndon spoke of moving on. With an unsalable stock valued at between \$500 and \$800, Herndon lived in a hell on earth bound by poverty and creditors' demands for payment. By June 1872, he had sold his business but not before leaving a lasting impression on the Dun representative, who described his motives and business habits as "trickery & sharp."¹⁰ Although Herndon might have been more willing than most to engage in questionable practices, he shared with innumerable imitators consumed with a yearning to become a new man in the New South.

It is significant that Herndon sold his soul to the devil in exchange for a country store. The country store, as much as cotton and the railroad, stood as a symbol of the New South. Rich and poor, immigrant and long-time southerners looked to the retail trade as a promising means of achieving success in post-emancipation Mississippi. The store itself, quite often little more than a ramshackle building with a bowed roof and sagging floor, served as a polling place, gossip mill, and center of rural social life. But, more importantly, as merchants evolved into investment bankers and plantation suppliers, the country store provided a link between the cotton

¹⁰R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers (Noxubee County), 38.

kingdom of the Old South and the cotton kingdom of the New.

During the Civil War, southern financial markets collapsed and commission houses closed their doors, leaving the region without adequate short- or long-term lenders. In the immediate postwar period, rural merchants took over the lending duties once performed by cotton factors. Unlike cotton factors, however, postbellum country store operators, also served as factors and brokers for small-scale cotton cultivators; factors had never been willing to take the single bale producer as a customer because the risk had been too great. After the war, largely through the influence of sharecropping, the number of small producers multiplied. Country merchants furnished the new yeoman class, knowing that the risk was secured under the crop-lien law. Since they dealt almost exclusively with a large number of small producers, they survived and failed according to the fluctuations of the cotton market. Scattered references in the credit ledgers of R. G. Dun and Company suggest how tightly the fates of merchants and farmers were intertwined. Of one merchandising concern, Dun observed, "their success depends upon the cotton crop;" of another, "their future success depends almost entirely on the crop this year therefore a

fair precaution should be used;" and of another, "he advances the planters & is entirely dependent on them."¹¹

Even though postbellum merchants supplanted cotton factors as the primary financiers and suppliers of the rural economy, some merchants continued to act as little more than agents for surviving commission houses. Jacob Halberg, a Noxubee County planter and merchant dealt exclusively with the Mobile firm of Foster and Gardner. But, Halberg was an exception. Other merchants, rarer even than Halberg, continued the antebellum tradition of country store owners becoming commission merchants. At Greenville, Samuel Worthington, Davis M. Buckner and William Mason, along with their wives, formed a dry goods and banking house in 1871. Capitalized with \$125,000, which Worthington had won in a law suit, their company

¹¹Quoting R. G. Dun and Company, *Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers* (Leake County), 10; (Warren County), 82, (Marshall County), 106, Harvard University. The best general description of the postbellum country store can be found in Thomas D. Clark's Pills, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1944), passim. But, see, too, Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 120-125; and Woodman, King Cotton and His Retainers, 295-313. During the great flood of 1882, the close relationship between country store owners and petty cotton producers became evident, as flood waters made it impossible to plant a crop. Some merchants and planters refused to furnish tenants with supplies, even as famine threatened. E. F. Walker to Robert Lowry, 1 June 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH, reported that "the merchants are all up to thire [sic] eyes in furnishing and I am a renter and can not get any help." See, too, W. H. Morgan to Lowry, 20 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH. For a merchant who attempted to assist flood victims, see Thomas Mount to Lowry, 23 March 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

specialized in "buy[ing] and sell[ing] eschange [sic] and shave[ing] notes." The company, like similar furnishing agencies, suffered greatly during the Panic of 1873, and by the mid-1870s, the Bank of Greenville bought them out, transforming what had been a sophisticated furnishing business into a modern banking institution.¹²

In the late 1860s and early 1870s, most merchants lacked the capital held by Worthington, Buckner and Company to engage in complicated furnishing and money shaving--currency speculation--operations. Wholesale houses, confusingly referred to at times as commission houses, extended Crump and other nascent merchants like him, a line of goods. Based in St. Louis, Cincinnati, New York, and Boston, wholesale suppliers took advantage of the emerging transportation and communication revolutions of the post-bellum period and looked South for new markets. Typically, they offered merchants a stock to sell on commission and carried their accounts until the first of the year when the merchants' customers had sold their cotton. Such arrangements dispersed risks for the merchant and offered

¹²R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers (Noxubee County), 38; (Washington County), 37, 53, 86-87. The precise role that the wives of Worthington, Buckner, and Mason played in the firm is unknown. They apparently held property that they used to secure credit during the early days of operation. To avoid losing property should they fail, other merchants transferred their personal property to their wives names, a form of property frequently referred to in the Dun ledgers as "petticoat property."

wholesalers an expanded market without an extensive capital outlay. But, like other merchants, those who served as virtual agents of large suppliers (and that would include the great majority of Mississippi's country merchants) tied their fate to the cotton market. R. A. Crump, who opened a small dry goods business at Artesia in the late 1860s, turned to distant suppliers for credit. Despite the credit granted by a wholesale house, he struggled to keep his business afloat in the early years, and, in late 1872, Dun reported that "like all Country Merchants he has sold largely on credit & is some what [sic] behind with his comm[.] merchants."¹³

Merchants, many of whom viewed the retail trade as simply a route to success more lucrative and less wearisome than farming, developed into the cornerstone of modern American business. Their close working relationships with vertically integrated wholesalers allowed them to play a role in late nineteenth-century America similar to that enjoyed by railroads: they symbolically and actually linked the South to modern America. Whereas in the antebellum period, country merchants acted merely as adjuncts to southern cotton factors, after the war they provided a firm connection between isolated

¹³R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Lowndes County), 162, but see, too, 24, 112.

consumers/producers and large markets. As such, their suppliers expected them to follow closely the unstated dictates of modern business, and R. G. Dun's representatives, agents of modernization themselves, reported their acumen and personal habits to potential creditors.¹⁴

Although the first generation of postbellum merchants lacked the expertise possessed by later generations, they were the makers of an intermediate stage of economic advance.

While the arrangements made with distant wholesalers helped to secure for merchants a prominent place in postbellum society, the crop-lien law bolstered their status in the community and made them representative men of the New South. Originally passed in 1867, the crop-lien law permitted lenders first claim on the crops and unfixed assets of defaulting debtors. By providing lenders security against loss in cash-poor Mississippi, the lien law turned over to merchants an enormous amount of power over the rural economy. Not only did the crop-lien wielding merchants wrest from planters control over labor, they also expanded their lending operations to include small producers. Antebellum cotton factors had extended credit only to large cotton cultivators. Under the protection of the crop lien, merchants, however, could

¹⁴ On Dun and merchants as signposts of a new era, see Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 120-122.

furnish even the smallest producer. Interest, though not specifically mentioned in the law, would, of course, be added to the cost of goods. With a vested interest in the crop, merchants insisted that farmers cultivate a crop that could be sold to cover potential losses, and in the late nineteenth century, cotton was the only widely marketable crop. Robert Somers, travelling through the South during Reconstruction, accurately observed that "a new class of [business] houses are springing up . . . whose conditions of advance are almost necessarily marked by a degree of rigour that was unknown in former times, and that will probably grind and impoverish the mass of poorer cultivators, white and black, for a long time to come."¹⁵

The crop-lien law achieved its purpose as even the most humble producers acquired the wherewithal to cultivate cotton in the depressed economy of the early 1870s. By accident, the lien law also propelled merchants to the forefront of New South society by making them the chief financial and marketing agents of the crop. Living on credit himself, the country merchant extended credit to

¹⁵Somers quoted in Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 156. On the country merchant and the crop lien, see, ibid, 156-161; Woodman, King Cotton and His Retainers, 310-311; Joseph D. Reid, Jr., "White Land, Black Labor, and Agricultural Stagnation: The Causes and Effects of Sharecropping in the Postbellum South," Explorations in Economic History, 26 (January 1979), 31-35; Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, "Debt Peonage in the Cotton South After the Civil War," Journal of Economic History 32 (September 1972), 641-669.

all-comers. In the unlikely event that a farmer paid off his debt and interest, the merchant benefited by clearing a name from his books. But, if the farmer failed to retire his debt, the merchant could seize his assets, generally bales of cotton first but also land, which the lender might then rent. Thus, with the proceeds of one year wiped out and a debt carried over, the farmer faced another year in which he worked in essence for the merchant.¹⁶ The cycle of receiving supplies, planting cotton, borrowing against the crop for foodstuffs, and falling further into debt at the end of the year spun endlessly. Debts, like stores and plantations, passed from one generation to the next.

Dependent on the cotton crop for success, merchants entered into a close relationship with farmers. As Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch have pointed out, the relationship acquired overtones of feudalism. Merchants typically attempted to establish a monopoly over the furnishing business in a particular neighborhood by demanding that debtors receive supplies only at their stores. Such arrangements tended to keep the number of clients that patronized a particular merchant small. In 1880, Ransom and Sutch estimated, the average country

¹⁶For accounts of the way the crop lien worked to elevate merchants to wealth and to place farmers in debt, see the sources cited in note 14.

store furnished only seventy farms. On the whole, New South credit arrangements, both those established with suppliers and through the crop lien, restricted the capital and net value of rural stores, while at the same time they granted great power to merchants.¹⁷ An examination of the Dun credit ledgers suggests that most merchants had their entire net worths tied up in farm land, a highly depreciated asset in postbellum Mississippi.

The limited nature of the country merchant's business made planters the perfect store owners. Owning a rural store had obvious appeal. Using their land as collateral, planters could receive from a wholesale house a stock of goods to sell to his laborers. Labor, after all, would need supplies to plant cotton, as well as foodstuffs to feed their families. By supplying his own tenants, the planter who ran a furnishing businesses could avoid sticky questions about control over the crop that arose when field hands received advances from a merchant. Faced with opening his own store to supply his tenants or losing autonomy over them to merchants backed by the crop lien, W. M. Connor of Fox Trap, entered the retail business in 1878. Connor, with hands sufficient to produce about 400 bales of cotton a year, likely supplied few farmers other than those that worked for him. Other planter-merchants

¹⁷Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, chapters 7 and 9, especially 137.

expanded their store operations to furnish neighboring farmers. B. R. Long and five old planters of Marshall County began a small general store to control their hands' finances. Not long after opening, however, local farmers started calling on them for supplies, and the old planters broadened their business to include the purchasing of cotton "on a small scale principally from patrons." Still other planters became silent partners in country stores. S. C. English of Panola County kept afloat a rural concern in the lean postbellum years and, undoubtedly, viewed his backing as a potentially lucrative investment that enabled him to retain a measure of autonomy over his tenants and their crop.¹⁸

For merchants who survived the fierce competition of the furnishing trade and established a monopoly, rich awards awaited. Samuel Bigham had been a moderate farmer before the war, employing one white laborer. After the war, his dream of enlarging his farm and owning slaves lost its pertinence, and he traded in his plow for a cash register. In the late 1860s, Bigham opened a clothing store at Plentitude where he struggled to make a living. Although his business failed to make him wealthy, he parlayed his reputation for Yankee-like efficiency into

¹⁸Quoting R. G. Dun and Company, *Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers* (Marshall County), 99, but see, too, (Noxubee County), 54, and (Panola County), 78 a/4, *Harvard University*.

election as Panola County treasurer and eventually held an 800 acre plantation.¹⁹ Land, though greatly depreciated in the first fifteen years after the war, remained the chief signpost of wealth in late nineteenth-century Mississippi. Merchants used their real estate holdings as collateral to secure supplies and eagerly accumulated the land of defaulters, which they often rented. Not infrequently, then, merchants, even those in trades other than furnishing, used their new found prestige as men of the New South to become large landowners.

Land, cotton cultivation, and merchandising had always gone hand in hand. It should not be surprising then that merchants became landowners and landowners became merchants. In 1847, Norfleet R. Sledge migrated to Mississippi and carved a plantation from the loess hills of Panola County. At the same time, he opened a dry goods store, which remained in operation for eleven years. Wearing his country merchant's hat, he functioned as a cotton broker for his neighbors. A progressive-minded planter, Sledge used his position as a director of the fledgling Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad Company to

¹⁹R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers (Pontotoc County), 148 D. Biographical material on Bigam might be found in the U. S. Census, Population Schedule, Manuscript Returns, Pontotoc County, 1860, 1870; U. S. Census, Slave Schedule, Manuscript Returns, Pontotoc County, 1860; Goodspeed, Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, vol. 1, 385.

ensure that the line ran near his home, offering easy access to Memphis and Jackson, and indirectly to New Orleans. By 1861, he held, according to Dun's credit ledger, nearly \$500,000 in property, 10 percent of which he loaned at interest. Then, the war came. The effects of the war on Sledge's prosperity remain unclear, but, like Robert Penn Warren's Gilbert Mastern, he, "who had made one fortune with his bare hands, out of the very air, could now, with all his experience and cunning and hardness . . . snatch another one, much greater than the first." Even before the war drew to a close, Sledge set about snatching another fortune. Taking a partner to bolster his depleted capital, Sledge re-entered the retail business and remained involved in the store until his death in 1881. During the postbellum period, he also groomed his sons to assume control of the country store; as well-taught pupils, they expanded their father's trade throughout the northwestern corner of the state. Norfleet, Jr. owned stores in Memphis, Lula, Mastodon, and Como, the original one. With his brother, O. D., Norfleet also held two plantations, one of 5,000 acres in Panola County and another that produced 1,000 bales of cotton each year.²⁰

²⁰Quoting Robert Penn Warren, All The King's Men (1946, reprint; San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1974), 162. Biographical material
(continued...)

In their snatching of a fortune from the postbellum South, the Sledge brothers undoubtedly benefitted from the crop-lien law, their father's experience, and the access to Memphis and beyond offered by the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad. Railroads not only permitted merchants access to wholesalers but facilitated their development of furnishing monopolies by opening ready markets for the cotton they purchased. The establishment of their oligarchic authority over the furnishing business in their little fiefdoms, in fact, depended on a railroad connection to cotton markets and wholesale houses. Any merchant who operated on a railroad line stood a better chance of success than one who opened a store far removed from a line.

W. H. Scales, a Lowndes County merchant, understood the importance railroads in postbellum Mississippi and built a furnishing empire along the Mobile and Ohio. Scales' father, N. F., a doctor, planter, and merchant,

²⁰(...continued)

about the Norfleets can be found in R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers (Panola County), 63, 78T, 78E; Goodspeed Brothers, Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Embracing an Authentic and Comprehensive Account of the Chief Events in the History of the State and a Record of the Lives of Many of the Most Worthy and Illustrious Families and Individuals, vol. 2 (Chicago: Goodspeed Brothers, 1891), 785-786; Sixth Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad to the Stockholders Embracing Reports of the Chief Engineer, Treasurer and Superintendent (Memphis: Bulletin Publishing and Job Printing House, 1859), np.

had migrated to Lowndes County before 1860. The younger Scales at first seemed disinterested in following in his father's footsteps and conducted a pair of schools in northeast Mississippi. Around 1856, however, W. H. removed to Camden, Arkansas, a rendezvous point for travelers to the West, where he opened a general store. After the war and his father's death, Scales returned to Mississippi to assume control of the plantation and store. Like other merchants of the time, Scales struggled to build a successful furnishing trade in the unsettled political and economic atmosphere of the 1870s. With the assistance of a partner's bankroll, Scales operated stores at West Point, Crawfordsville, Starkville, Brooksville, Macon, and Mobile. By 1890, he held some 1,200 acres of land and bought and sold cotton down the Mobile and Ohio line.²¹ As dominating forces in the local credit and cotton markets, country store owners parlayed their monopolies into large landholdings and further consolidated their grasp on the countryside.

After the war, merchants assumed and extended the authority over the rural economy that cotton factors had once enjoyed. In the long history of Mississippi's

²¹On the Scales, see R. G. Dun and Company, *Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers*, (Lowndes County), 13, 100; (Noxubee County), 17, Harvard University; Goodspeed, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi*, vol. 2, 722-723.

modernization, they played the role of intermediaries, linking the rural South to the modernizing nation through the many characters they assumed--cotton broker, retail salesman, investment banker, and town builder. For an entire generation of postbellum men in search of a respite from the back breaking and unrewarding labor of farming, the business world beckoned. Yet relatively few farmers answered the call, and fewer still lasted long in business. Perhaps the most enduring portrait of a postbellum businessman in southern literature is William Faulkner's story about a tenant farmer's son, Flem Snopes, who rises to the merchant class. Common and mean, though blessed with a keen business acumen acquired while witnessing his father fall into the crop-lien trap, Snopes slowly horned into the Varner family's monopolistic hold on commerce in Yoknapatapha County. Appealing though the Snopes saga might be, the Dun credit ledgers indicate that few new men entered the commercial world of the immediate post-war period. Of the more than 360 businesses sampled from the Dun files, including 106 whose owners could be located in census records, only one businessman could be positively identified as coming from the yeoman class.

In other senses, the great majority of the 106 proprietors who operated stores between 1867 and 1878 and who could be located in the ninth census might be considered new men. Many entered the commercial world only

after the war; as a group, the businessmen were young when they opened their concerns; and a disproportionately large number of those identified hailed from foreign lands. Approximately 81 percent of the identified businessmen opened their operations after the Civil War, and most first appeared in the Dun ledgers within 24 months of 1870.

(Table 6.1)
A Statistical Portrait
of Postbellum Business Owners

Nativity	Number	Average Age *	In Business in 1860
Mississippi	18	38.9	3
Other Southern States	56	40.1	8
Northern States	12	34.5	8
Foreign Countries	20	43.6	1
Sample Population	106	39.7	20

Source: R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, Copiah, Harrison, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson counties, Baker Library, Harvard University. U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Manuscript Returns, 1870, for the above-named counties.

* Average age refers to business owners' age at the time Dun records the business opened.

Curiously, a relatively large number of postbellum business operators had immigrated from European nations, particularly the German states. Most of those identified in the census as immigrants worked in skilled trades,

though several peddled goods or operated country stores. Of the immigrants, the Dun reporters labeled four as Jews and generally attached to their reports some ignominious comment. Simon Krouse, for example, was "one of the Slippery Jews;" Jacob Greenwald purportedly was an arsonist. The immigrants, especially the Jewish merchants, enjoyed an advantage over most native southern country store owners. Many immigrant businessmen in the South had family relations in the New York or New Orleans supply houses and could perhaps obtain slightly advantageous terms for dry goods while offering their clientele exceptional service as cotton brokers.²²

Not every immigrant businessman enjoyed such a relationship with distant suppliers, of course. Morris Weiss, a Jewish immigrant, apparently had made his way in as a store owner without the help of kinsmen. In 1868, with the assistance of a partner Weiss opened a dry goods store. Four years later, just before the onset of the panic and the devastating Greenville fire of 1874, Weiss mortgaged everything he owned in order to buy out his partner's interest. Simultaneous disasters in 1873 and

²²On Krouse, see R. G. Dun and Company, *Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers*, (Marshall County), 57, 75; on Greenwald, (Panola County) 78L, 78H. On antebellum Jewish merchants, see (Wilkinson County), 139, 152, Harvard University. On Jewish merchants with New Orleans commercial connections, see Elliott Ashkenzai, *The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840-1875* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 64-103, 142-156.

1874 seemed not to slow Weiss' ascent in the commercial world. In 1875, he built two tall brick storehouses from which he conducted his business.²³ As a new man in the New South, Weiss stood out among his contemporaries largely because of his success.

While most of the businessmen sampled might be considered new men because of their age, inexperience, and nativity, only a single example of a plain Mississippian entering into commerce can be cited. In 1879, J. A. Bowie, a twenty-five year old laborer, opened a drug store at Edinburgh, Leake County. Dun's representative noted that Bowie had "very little education" but believed him "likely to succeed & to gain slowly." New men of the Flem Snopes variety simply lacked the experience and capital to break into the postbellum commercial order. Merchants, particularly country store operators, but other businessmen as well, needed cash or credit to open their concerns. Few post-war Mississippians possessed cash to speak of, and only established farmers held real estate, the state's chief asset, sufficient to secure credit. Furthermore, to succeed in a skilled trade, yeomen farmers needed training that life on the farm often did not

²³On Weiss, see R. G. Dun and Company, *Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers*, (Washington County), 20, 32, 64, Harvard University. For another account of a successful Jewish merchant, Jacob Alexander, see *ibid.*, (Washington County), 10, 63, and Goodspeed Brothers, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi*, vol. 1, 299.

provide. Plain folk eking out an existence simply lacked the resources to become movers and shakers in the New South.

(Table 6.2)
Occupations of Postbellum Business Owners

General Store	49	Seafood (retail)	2
Manufacturer	15	Farmer	2
Saloon Keeper	7	Physician	2
Druggist	5	Jeweller	2
Hotel Keeper	4	Wholesale Grocer	1
Baker	3	Other	2
Miller	2		
n=96			

Source: R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, Copiah, Harrison, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington, and Wilkinson Counties, Harvard University. Business owners represented in the table include only the 106 located in both the Dun ledgers and the 1870 census. Ten business owners in the sample were not identified in the credit ledgers as practicing a trade. Some had multiple occupations: physician/druggist and druggist/saloon keeper were frequent combinations.

To ascend into the merchant class, men had to possess mortgageable assets, and, in the immediate postwar period, only the owners of moderate or substantial acreage held land enough to secure credit. Many rural merchants, as previously suggested, came from the planter class, but, as the benefits of the crop lien law became apparent, more and more men of substance in the rural South entered the

commercial world. Among the businessmen sampled from the Dun files who opened stores after 1870, approximately 20 percent listed their occupation in the ninth census as farmer. By and large, the farmers-turned-merchants failed to record the value of their real and personal property, but those that did typically held moderate amounts ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars. A second demographic pool composed of merchants not listed by Dun as businessmen in 1860 revealed that 30 percent considered themselves farmers before the war. Taken together, the samples suggest that in the 1860s and 1870s, a statistically significant number of neophyte merchants travelled the short distance from middle-class farmer to retail trader.²⁴

In 1860, three of the merchants included in the last mentioned sample held government posts and nine worked as clerks, physicians, or skilled craftsmen. Four claimed to be merchants though Dun's ledgers failed to list them as businessmen. The credit ranking firm surely committed errors of omission on occasion, especially where small merchants were concerned. Even though the 1860 merchants might have operated inconsequential and isolated

²⁴The sample of R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, Harvard University, was drawn from the counties listed at Table 6.2. Business owners were then located in the U. S. Census Bureau, Population Schedule, Manuscript Returns, 1860 and 1870.

concerns, three, with personal property (slaves and other non-fixed property) valued at between \$3,000 and \$35,000, could not be considered men of small standing in their communities. It seems likely, then, that the 1860 merchants held multiple occupations; they were farmers and merchants, just as were their postbellum heirs. Cases of large planters operating postbellum furnishing businesses as silent partners have already been cited. Yet the significance of the four 1860 merchants lies not in their dual employment but in what their bi-vocational habits suggest about the composition of the business class: men with established reputations and wealth obtained as farmers occupied key positions in the commercial world. A survey of thirteen lumber mill owners in business during 1884 suggests that the trend persisted in the postbellum period and in trades other than the retail trade. Of the thirteen, eight listed their occupations in the 1880 census as farmers, two were merchants, one was a lumber dealer, and one a miller. Although the wealth of the group could not be ascertained, the men were long-time residents and likely well-established members of their communities. Before the war, for example, the lumber dealer, D. G. Dismukes of Mashulaville, had been engaged

in a dry goods business with connections to New York cotton factors.²⁵

As intermediate agents of economic modernization, postbellum men of commerce, an informal and expansive coterie of established men of status and wealth, led Mississippi from a farming to a diversified commercial economy. In the post-emancipation South, the old frontier drive to succeed propelled men to secure access to the riches of the market economy in fields other than planting. The advent of a commercial class, composed quite often of old planters, then established a set of economic and social elite that resembled the antebellum elite. For many acquisitive men on the make who had once dreamed of asserting their independence through ownership of a cotton plantation and one hundred slaves, commerce offered a path to success in a world no longer supportive of the dream.

The inchoate transformation of Mississippi did not fail to impress Samuel Matthews. Writing to his brother, who had emigrated to Arizona, Matthews, a Panola County planter, employed assurances of a coming racial peace and

²⁵The sample of lumber mill operators was drawn from Rand McNally and Company, Directory and Shipping Guide of Lumber Mills and Lumber Dealers in the United States and Canada (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, Publisher, 1884), 239-246. Additional information about them was located in the U. S. Census, Population Schedule, Manuscript Returns, 1880. On Dismukes, see, too, R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, (Noxubee County), 25. See, also, the census sources cited in note 23.

industrial development to lure him back to Mississippi. "There is a general feeling among our people to cease to depend on negro labor, to build up manufactures and as soon as possible cease to export raw cotton but work it up at home."²⁶ Like postbellum southerners from every state, Matthews looked beyond the intermediate level of economic advance embodied in commerce and counted on industry impacting his state with revolutionary force.

Even though Matthews omitted reference to railroads in his letter, his vision of a Mississippi rebuilt on a native textile industry required completion of an efficient transportation system. Some Mississippians placed their faith in railroads as if steam engines and iron tracks were an elixir designed to relieve all aches and pains. Fannie E. Eaton, for example, noted that "the people all have the railroad fits very bad, some very bad indeed." Others spoke about distinct advantages that proceeded from railroad development. J. F. H. Claiborne, a long-time proponent of economic expansion in the coastal counties, linked all progress, agricultural and industrial, to the development of a railroad linking the entire to the Gulf Coast. "The great want of this country," he said, "is a railroad, with proper feeders to lift this mighty forest and bring it, as it were, to the lap of the

²⁶Samuel Matthews to John Matthews, 19 September 1867, James and Samuel Matthews Letters, MDAH.

ocean."²⁷ Whether coastal entrepreneurs pursued their position in the New South through forest industries or the cultivation of scuppernongs, rice, tobacco, or cotton, they needed efficient and cost-effective access to markets.

Notwithstanding Mississippians' enthusiasm for railroads, progress in traversing the state with track proceeded at a snail's pace. The lingering economic malaise of the Reconstruction period and the state's reluctance to commit its resources to private enterprises offered builders few incentives to begin their projects. The wartime destruction that wreaked havoc over most of Mississippi's 862 miles of track made the effort to grid-iron the state with track more difficult. During the war, U. S. Grant's troops molded rails taken from the roadbed below Jackson into "bow ties"; Union and Confederate raiders destroyed bridges, freight cars, and engines; both armies commandeered and abused trains at will. Lines in north and central Mississippi most frequently fell victim to the destructive influence of the war. The Mississippi Central, which ran between Jackson and the Tennessee border, lost three-quarters of a million dollars worth of

²⁷Quoting Fannie E. Eaton to Mary A. Barnes, no date, Barnes Family Papers, MDAH; Claiborne quoted in E. G. Wall, The State of Mississippi: Resources, Condition and Wants. Compiled and Arranged by Order of the State Board of Immigration and Agriculture (Jackson: Clarion Steam Printing Establishment, 1879), 78, 81.

equipment between 1861 and 1865. Replacing or repairing wartime damage took years. Travelling on the Mississippi Central, Whitelaw Reid complained of a "dismal night of thumpings over broken rails and contortions of the cars" relieved only by a midnight portage at a burned out bridge. Cordelia Scales, who lived along the Mississippi Central in Marshall County, nonchalantly informed Loulie Irby that "the train fell through the trussel [sic] in our field yesterday," but, anxious to see her friend, she added, "don't let it detain you, for you get off this side of the breakage."²⁸

At the close of the war, the only major railroads that remained in operation included the Mississippi and Tennessee, the Vicksburg and Meridian, the Mississippi Central, and the Mobile and Ohio. Recovery from wartime destruction depended on the infusion of capital and the management skills of northern and foreign entrepreneurs. To stimulate the recovery of southern railroads, President Andrew Johnson issued executive orders in August and October 1865 permitting railroad companies to purchase

²⁸Quoting Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Southern Tour, May 11, 1865 to May 1866 (New York), 425; Cordelia Scales to Loulie Irby, 11 December 1866, Cordelia Lewis Scales Letters, UNC. See, too, Charles E. Dameron to "Grandma," 4 March 1866, Norton-Chilton-Dameron Papers, UNC. For a report of the condition of the railroad after the war, see Ninth Annual Report the President and Directors of the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad, to the Stockholders; Embracing the Reports of the Treasurer (Memphis: C. F. Chamberlain and Company, 1865), 31-37.

captured rolling stock and shops on credit. Interest on the short-term government loans equalled 7.5 percent over a two-year period, and the government automatically applied toward the liquidation of indebtedness a portion of each participating company's receipts earned from transporting U. S. troops and mails. Some fifty southern railroads purchased \$5 million worth of equipment, and the Mississippi Central acquired fifty-eight box cars. Already overburdened by unpaid first and second mortgage principal and coupon payments, the Mississippi Central faced a postbellum debt of over \$500,000 with little prospects for recovery.²⁹

To increase the flow of traffic along the Mississippi Central and to retire the railroad's debts, Absalom M. West, the ex-Confederate general who headed the company, began planning an extension to Paducah, Kentucky. With the Mississippi Central connecting Jackson and Paducah, farmers in the fertile cotton belt of Mississippi, West knew, would obtain rail access to New Orleans and the Midwest. In 1867, attempting to rally stockholders to back the extension, West appealed to their diminished sectional animosities: "discard all sectional

²⁹For the railroads in operation immediately following the war, see Lewis' Southern Directory, 1871 and 1872 (n.p, n.d.), 85, 91. John F. Stover, History of the Illinois Central Railroad (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), 150-151.

differences," he encouraged, "and together resolve that we will not mar the prospect before us. With one will and one purpose let us work harmoniously, and we shall succeed in accomplishing what an opposite course will assuredly defeat." For all his enthusiasm about the extension, West's appeals did not play well outside the Mississippi Central board room; he could not convince another railroad to assist in the expansion of the line. Desperate for cash, the Mississippi Central turned to the Southern Railroad Association. Recently formed by Henry S. McComb, a Delaware entrepreneur who had arranged the Mississippi Central's postwar purchase of boxcars, the association signed a sixteen-year lease with the railroad in 1868. McComb agreed to complete the extension to Paducah and to pay the railroad's more than \$500,000 debt.³⁰

Soon after obtaining the Mississippi Central, McComb acquired the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern, which linked Jackson to the Crescent City, consolidating both lines under the name New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago. The Gulf South and the Midwest were

³⁰Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi Central Railroad Company to the Stockholders, for the Year Ending August 31, 1867 (New Albany, Indiana: Norman and Matthews, 1867), 16; John Stover, The Railroads of the South, 1865-1900: A Study in Finance and Control (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 162-165; E. G. Campbell, "Indebted Railroads, A Problem of Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History 6 (1940), 168-169, 186-187.

connected. In the late 1860s, McComb also obtained control of the Mississippi and Tennessee, which sliced through the northwestern Delta, intersecting the Mississippi Central at Grenada. With the old debts of the three lines and his own encumbered in signing the leases, McComb faced a formidable task in making the railroads profitable. By establishing "a rigid system of economy in everything," McComb believed that his railroad network could succeed. Accordingly, he outfitted machine shops at McComb City and Water Valley to serve his main line; he constantly scouted fuel suppliers for the lowest prices; and occasionally, he reminded his Mississippi Division manager, E. D. Frost, to receive only cotton that could be shipped forthrightly. Realizing that Mississippi's hope for prosperity, as well as his own, depended on the development of the state's agricultural resources, McComb also initiated some measures to encourage truck farming, especially potato culture, along the line.³¹

Despite his efforts to build an efficient and profitable railroad, McComb's debts crippled the Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans. Strapped for cash, he turned to the south-looking Illinois Central, which agreed to

³¹Stover, Southern Railroads, 162-165. H. S. McComb to E. D. Frost, 8 November, 12 November, 17 November 1870, Mississippi Central Railroad Company, In-Letters 1854, 1870, Illinois Central Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. [Hereafter cited as Newberry].

invest heavily in McComb's consolidated company. As the Chicago-based railroad poured funds into McComb's enterprise, it discovered what one Illinois Central official identified as the "perfidy and treachery of McComb in his management"; attorneys employed by McComb endangered the railroad's claims to lands by improperly recording transactions in Mississippi, and the high echelon of employees, including McComb, received salaries that rivaled their peers' in the much larger Illinois Central. While McComb and his associates drew large salaries, workers in the Mississippi Division went unpaid. By mid-1875, "pernicious men" and "scoundrels," as one of McComb's lieutenants described them, parked their engines until they received their pay in full. The engineers' walk-out lasted almost two months and garnered sympathy weigh station and shop workers at Water Valley and McComb City; the citizens of Water Valley, E. D. Frost complained, gave "aid and comfort" to the strikers, and the company considered removing its foundry to McComb rather than nurse "a viper" at Water Valley. But, the Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans' problems would not have been solved by taking revenge against Water Valley. Road gangs and section workers also joined the strike, and even wood suppliers, who Frost believed "have no energy to work," lost confidence in the railroad. Fuel became so scarce on the line that engineers who remained on the job had to

scavenge wood from ditches to fire their boilers. Throughout the summer and early fall of 1875, employees caused considerable damage to railroad machinery and track, derailing more than one train.³² McComb's response to the strike, especially the massive dismissals that he announced, served as a prelude to the bloody railroad strikes of 1877 and suggested that the makers of the New South differed little in their attitudes toward labor than planters or national business tycoons.

McComb's failure to manage his railroad efficiently, more so than the labor unrest, caused the Illinois Central to initiate bankruptcy proceedings against the New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago. McComb denied that his railroad's condition was terminal, and he blamed the Illinois Central for its decline. The Illinois Central, he complained, had steadily raised the cost of transferring shipments to its trunk line, and Chicago ticket agents warned potential passengers that travel over the war-ravaged New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago remained

³²On McComb's management of the railroad, see A. M. Clayton to W. H. Osborn, 30 December 1881, W. H. Osborn In-Letters, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. On the strike, see E. D. Frost to H. S. McComb 15, 27, 28 June, 13, 15, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30 July, 3 October, 3, 12 November 1875, E. D. Frost Out-Letters, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. On labor unrest along the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, see Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 22 August 1867, 29 April, 5, 6, 10 June, 30 July 1868, UNC.

dangerous. In 1876, despite McComb's effort to block a take-over, the Illinois Central succeeded in having a friendly receiver appointed to administer the New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago. Six years later, the Illinois Central formally signed a 400-year lease of the New Orleans to Paducah railroad and placed the rail link between the Gulf region and the Midwest on firm financial footing.³³ With a foothold in the Mississippi Valley, the Illinois Central became the broker of other railroad enterprises in central and western Mississippi.

In the postbellum period, the involvement of northern, and in many cases foreign, capital became a common denominator in the construction and operation of Mississippi railroads. With the economic collapse that accompanied the exigencies of the 1860s, few Mississippians, despite their hopes of rebuilding the cotton kingdom and opening pine forests to development, possessed the financial wherewithal to invest in expensive projects. Native railroad promoters could not count on the state's assistance either. After Mississippi's disastrous experience with state-funded banks and repudiation in the 1830s

³³Stover, Southern Railroads, 165-179. On charges of unfair competition, see E. D. Frost to H. S. McComb, 24 July and 28 August 1875, 3 January 1876, E. D. Frost Out-Letters, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. See, too, William McCominick to Stuyvesant Fish, 27 November 1882, Stuyvesant Fish In-Letters, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry.

and 1840s, delegates to the constitutional convention of 1868 passed laws to prohibit the state from aiding private enterprises. Furthermore, the 1868 constitution required counties and towns interested in subscribing to the stock of an enterprise to pass bond issues by a two-thirds majority of voters who had been specifically registered for the special election.³⁴ During the 1870s and early 1880s, outright antipathy for railroads rarely appeared, but Mississippians' insistence on low taxes and governmental retrenchment bode ill for broad support of local bond issues. Designed, at least in part, to skirt the constitution, the state passed a number of laws between 1871 and 1882 which directly and indirectly granted railroads aid.

The first piece of legislation passed to aid in the construction of railroads, the Subsidy Act, was the brainchild of William D'Alton Mann, a former Union officer and owner of the Mobile Register. Even though Mississippi railroads failed to receive the full largess promised by the law, its passage signified the state's willingness to help railroads evade the restrictions of the constitution. Sympathetic to Centrist ideas in politics, Mann viewed James L. Alcorn's gubernatorial election as an invitation to promote the construction of the Mobile and Northwestern

³⁴On postbellum laws regarding subscription, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (1877), 28, 31-32; Laws of the State of Mississippi (1882), 52-53.

Railroad. The line, as advertised by Mann, would cut through Mississippi's untapped pine forests and through its fertile cotton lands bringing mills and manufacturing to the state. In 1871, Mann began paying visits to the Mississippi legislature. Subsequently, he convinced the state to grant the Mobile and Northwestern all state lands within twenty miles of the road, a total of some one million acres. Much of the land had reverted to the state when owners failed to pay taxes on it. At the same time, the railroad obtained the right to purchase at two cents per acre 750,000 acres of swamp land donated to Mississippi by Congress in 1850.

Unconvinced that he could build the line and populate the land rapidly enough to pay the cost of construction, Mann beseeched the legislature to pass in 1871 the even more favorable Subsidy Act. This law, clearly in violation of the constitution, appropriated \$4,000 for each mile of track laid by any railroad company, provided that at least twenty-five miles were completed by September 1875. Legislative support for the measure originated with representatives through whose districts the proposed route would pass, and, since the projected line traversed the state from southeast to northwest, a large number of legislators fell under the influence of Mann's promises of a commercial revolution. Passage of the measure did not ensure its success, however. From the time that it

received Alcorn's signature, the capitol rumor mill hummed with reports of undue influence (some said bribes) that Mann brought to bear against reluctant legislators.³⁵

In 1872, responding to the whispered charges against Mann, Governor Ridgely C. Powers threatened to repeal the law as unconstitutional. Yet, Mann prevailed upon the governor to submit his questions about the law's constitutionality to Attorney General Joshua S. Morris. Unbeknownst to the governor, Mann, according to a House investigation conducted in 1873, secretly retained Morris and promised him a bonus if he ruled in favor of the Subsidy Act. Morris found for the law, just as Mann had paid him to do. With dissent about the constitutionality of the law quelled, it ran its course. In September 1875, when time expired for railroads to earn their construction bounty, only the Ripley Railroad in north Mississippi qualified to receive any money. Professing penury, the state paid but a portion of the promised cash. For all his efforts, Mann and the Mobile and Northwestern received not a single cent from the state. As word of Mann's treachery spread, construction firms and communities

³⁵On Mann, see William C. Harris, Day of the Carpet-bagger: Congressional Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 532-540. For the Subsidy Act, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (1871), 745-748.

doubted his trustworthiness and refrained from investing in the railroad.³⁶

Even with the \$4,000 per mile award promised railroad companies, the Subsidy Act failed to draw entrepreneurs to the state. The political climate in the early 1870s undoubtedly caused many prospective builders to look elsewhere. Then, too, despite the professions of the state's Centrist leadership that Mississippi wished to embrace modernity, the economic climate seemed hardly friendly to investors. Questions about labor, race relations, and taxes, as well as the declining cotton market gave them pause. Passage of the Abatement Act in 1875, the second concession, albeit an indirect one, that the state made to railroads, offered potential investors tangible proof that Mississippi wanted to reverse the pattern of economic declension under which it suffered.

Throughout the immediate postwar period, state and local taxes levied by Republican administrations hamstrung private efforts to build-up the planting, and to a lesser extent, manufacturing, interest of Mississippi. Land owners, especially Delta planters who had to pay antebellum levee taxes, believed themselves overburdened by high taxes. As taxes mounted, planters abandoned to the state

³⁶On the investigation into Mann's dealings with the state, see Journal of the House of Representatives (1873), 1532-1572.

large tracts of land. Much of the acreage owned in the Delta represented unimproved swampland; typically large Delta landholders considered only one-quarter of their acreage improved and profitable. The expense of draining and clearing the land had prohibited planters from doing so before the war, and friendly tax assessors had not entered much of the unimproved acreage on the tax rolls. Republican administrations in the late 1860s, however, began enforcing the strict assessment provisions of the 1868 constitution, placing unproductive swamp and woodland on the tax rolls. Debts accrued under the General Levee Board of 1858 and the consolidated debts of the reconstituted levee board, the Liquidating Levee Board of 1867, left farmers in the western counties with a considerable tax burden. Just to pay old levee debts, planters in the river counties owed each year up to \$5 per acre. As if to heap insult on injury, the state lacked funds to repair the levee system, leaving a population that considered itself overtaxed without protection against floods. Unable to pay their taxes, many planters saw their land revert to the state; in 1871, planters in seven northern Delta counties abandoned 1.37 million acres.³⁷

³⁷Robert L. Brandfon, Cotton Kingdom of the New South: A History of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta From Reconstruction to the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 42-49.

Without a sufficiently large supply of cotton, fruits, and vegetables to ship to distant markets, railroad builders could not justify the expense of laying track in the state, and the rate of taxation, especially in the fertile Delta, prohibited an agricultural rebound. The Abatement Act, passed in 1875, offered delinquent taxpayers a reprieve for the unpaid taxes due between 1865 and 1874. The immediate impact of the law was limited. In 1878, in fact, 2.36 million acres of land on which taxes remained due reverted to the state. But, by declaring a moratorium on the collection of outstanding taxes, the state opened the Delta to speculators who wished to purchase state lands at low prices. Through a series of legal suits, holders of levee bonds secured the right to purchase forfeited lands with 5 percent cash and the remainder in the bonds and scrip issued by the Liquidating Levee Board. Lands that had long been dormant went on the market and fell into the hands of speculators; and, as Robert Brandfon has observed, "land speculation was the starting point for progress." For with the sale of vacated acreage, buyers turned their attention to clearing and draining the land. All told the Abatement Act and court action to permit levee board bonds to be used as scrip,

restored approximately two million acres of land to the tax rolls by 1881.³⁸

Between 1875 and 1883, the effects of Redeemer taxation policy appeared in the annual production of cotton and in the inauguration of railroading in the heart of the Delta. Although annual crop totals are not available by county, the western counties, just as they had been in the antebellum period, produced a disproportionately large share of the state's cotton. Yearly increases in the total number of bales produced, it might be assumed, reflected a proportionate rise in the production of the various regions. Beginning in the crop year 1868-1869 and ending in the crop year 1875-76, the annual cotton crop hovered around the one-half million mark, though in three separate years, the state produced more than 600,000 bales. After the Redeemers seized power, annual production exceeded 740,000 bales. For the first time since the Civil War, Mississippi reported over one million bales in the crop year 1882-1883.³⁹ Undoubtedly, forces other than the Abatement Act (the crop lien and the settlement of labor questions to name two) conspired to

³⁸Ibid, 49. Report of the Auditor of Public Accounts, 1881 (Jackson: Power and Barksdale, 1881), 55-56. For the Abatement Act, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (January, 1875), 11-21.

³⁹James L. Watkins, King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790 to 1908 (New York; James L. Watkins and Sons, 1908), 171, passim.

encourage the recovery of cotton cultivation. Yet, cotton production and railroad development surely benefitted from the state's changed tax policies that opened cheap lands to speculative buyers.

Railroading in the postwar Delta has been rightly associated with the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Company. For decades, promoters had dreamed of constructing a rail link between New Orleans and Memphis via Vicksburg. During the 1870s, railroad developers became sidetracked with designs to route Vicksburg traffic to the Mississippi and Florida coasts; but, both the Memphis and Vicksburg Railroad and the Vicksburg, Pensacola, and Ship Island foundered in their attempt to link the cotton kingdom with the Gulf of Mexico. One advocate of a route to the coast, William McCaughlan, testified to the importance Mississippians placed on penetrating the western cotton counties with a railroad: "I have seen men die on this coast of old age that have spent their lives in waiting for some northern company to come here and build up this country[.] I hope those that are left are convinced that waiting won't pay." By 1881, the failure of coast-looking entrepreneurs to construct more than twenty-five miles of track south of Vicksburg opened the Delta to outside investors. In 1882, Collis P. Huntington, the western railroad builder, purchased two unfinished lines, including three-quarters of a million acres of formerly

abandoned land owned by the companies. Within two years, Huntington completed a 450 mile track between New Orleans and Memphis: the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railway. Throughout the 1880s he continued to purchase small lines in the Delta, some of them narrow gauge, to modernize them, and also to purchase land. Eventually, he turned over the operation, construction, and outfitting of his rail empire to the Denver-based Financial Improvement Company.⁴⁰

Running parallel to the Illinois Central and about eighty miles to the west, Huntington's railroad competed with the Chicago-based railroad. J. C. Clarke, president of the ICRR, watched jealously as Huntington "traverse[d] the Richest and most thickly populated portion of Mississippi" and entertained notions of constructing a rival feeder line from Jackson or Canton to the Mississippi River opposite Arkansas City. The competition between the two lines lasted until 1892 when Huntington's debts forced him to sell some of his assets, including the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas.⁴¹ Fueled by ready access to

⁴⁰Quoting William McCaughlan to John M. Stone, 5 August 1878, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On early railroads in the Yazoo-Delta and Huntington's role in the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas, see Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Company: Laws and Documents, vol. 1 (n.p. n.d.), 562-563, 829-838.

⁴¹J. C. Clarke to James Fentress, 15 July 1881, 19 July 1880, J. C. Clarke Out-Letters, 1880-1883, vol. 3, Chicago, (continued...)

markets and the availability of cheap company-owned lands, the Delta boom of the nineteenth century took off in earnest once the ICRR obtained the line known thereafter as the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley.

In spite of the passage of the Abatement Act and the promise of state lands offered to railroad companies, the anticipated railroad boom of the late nineteenth century awaited the implementation of even more favorable legislation. Writing to the president of the Vidalia and Western Railroad, J. C. Clarke surmised that until "a more enlightened and liberal policy shall manifest itself in reference to railroads," investment in Mississippi would remain minuscule. Clarke failed to name which policies most stymied railroad development in the state, but the legislature certainly felt pressure from its agrarian members to apply laws, especially tax laws, even-handedly to all entities in Mississippi. Striking a balance between a desire for rail transportation with a perhaps even more widespread demand for low personal taxes propelled the state to charge railroads privilege taxes ranging from \$37.50 to \$75 per mile of track in 1875. Privilege taxes rose to \$40 per mile for short lines and \$80 for long ones in 1880. Four years later, the largest lines in the state

⁴¹(...continued)
St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. Brandfon, Cotton Kingdom of the New South, 70-72, 80.

paid \$100 per mile. In addition to the privilege taxes charge, the state in the early years of the Redeemer period levied taxes on acreage owned by railroad companies but not used for railroad purposes.⁴² None of the taxes, of course, amounted to unreasonably large amounts since railroads had yet to own large tracts of land.

On one hand, the state treated railroads as any other entity, but the legislature also passed laws designed to facilitate railroad construction and profitability. The legislature, for instance, passed a law relieving railroads of civil and criminal liabilities if they permitted passengers to ride atop freight trains, and it extended the Abatement Act to purchasers of foreclosed railroads, allowing new lines to grab large tracks of land at low prices. Then, in 1882, the state exempted future railroads from paying taxes for ten years after their charter. In the past, short lines had received tax-exempt status, but the 1882 act applied to all companies without discrimination. Unlike the Subsidy and Abatement acts, tax exemption had an immediate impact on railroad building in the state. As the table below suggests, the greatest percentage increase in railroad mileage occurred in the

⁴²J. C. Clarke to H. M. Gastrell, 19 July 1880, J. C. Clarke Out-Letters, 1880-1883, vol. 3, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. Laws of the State of Mississippi (January 1875), 66-67; ibid., (1876), 264-265; ibid., (1878), 87; ibid., (1884), 29-31.

decade of the 1880s. Also, the number of railroad companies chartered increased rapidly. Before the passage of the tax exemption, the state chartered nine railroads between 1878 and 1880. But, in the 1882 and 1884 legislative sessions, the state granted sixteen charters, in 1888 thirteen, and in 1890 twelve. The passage of the various acts beneficial to railroads, as well as the return to quiet on the political front, provided investors a climate conducive to the construction of railroads.⁴³ By 1882, the old quarrel about lending state aid to private enterprises seemed to have been settled, and the ever-increasing amount of railroad track in the state testified to the wisdom of the policy, at least according to New South prophets.

⁴³Before 1882, several lines received tax-exemptions. See the charter of the Port Gibson, Utica, and Crystal Springs Railroad Company, Laws of the State of Mississippi (1878), 463-483. The data on charters was compiled from the published information in Laws of the State of Mississippi (published biennially, 1875-1890). After 1890, the state ceased chartering private enterprises. Some of the charters undoubtedly were granted to railroads consolidating or taking-over extant companies. For the statute exempting railroads from taxation, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (1882).

(Table 6.3)
 Railroad Mileage and Percentage Change,
 1860-1910

January 1, Year	Miles in Operation	Percentage Change
1860	862	-----
1870	990	14.80
1880	1127	13.80
1890	2397	112.7
1900	2788	16.30
1910	4342	55.70

Source: Henry V. Poor, Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1890 (New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1890); Henry V. Poor, Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1900 (New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1890), Henry V. Poor, Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1910 (New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1910).

Besides tax exemptions railroad companies enjoyed lucrative arrangements with the state that enabled them to use convict labor in laying their track. As part of Redeemers' efforts at retrenchment, the state began leasing convicts in 1876. French and Jobes, the company which acquired the first contract for prisoners, leased each convict for \$1.10 and agreed to furnish them food, clothing, and medicine. Planters and railroad companies sublet gangs of men for common labor. Eventually, James A. Hoskins and Jones S. Hamilton, planters and New South entrepreneurs, obtained the lease and cultivated an association with the Illinois Central. Although J. C. Clarke of the ICRR complained about the cost of employing Hoskins' and

Hamilton's convict labor at gravel pits near Brookhaven and threatened to replace the gangs with a steam shovel, the leaseholders contracted with the railroad to do the work. The lessees also employed convicts in a jute bag manufacturing experiment and built "a plug lumber [railroad] line" between Brookhaven and the Pearl River. Since the dummy line (a railroad serving only a lumber mill) ran through prime forest lands, ICRR officials sold Hamilton and Hoskins old iron rails, plates, bolts, and nuts at a discount in exchange for the privilege of buying hardwood fuel at the bargain rate of \$2.25 a cord. In 1881, Hamilton and Hoskins sold between 2,000 and 2,500 cords to the ICRR. Delays in constructing the line through to the Pearl River forced them to curtail their operations and to sell hardware and land.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Albert Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (1951, reprint; New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), 167-168. On Hamilton's and Hoskins' association with the Illinois Central, see J. C. Clarke to J. S. Hamilton, 3 August 1880, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. From the same collection (vol. in parenthesis), see Clarke to W. H. Osborn, 16 March 1880, (1); Clarke to Hamilton, 21 January 1880, 9 May 1881, 29 April 1881 (2), 22 November 1881 (3), 3 April, 2 May, 6 July, 18 November 1882 (4). On Hamilton's financial distress, see Clarke to J. A. Deaton, 14 January 1881, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. Other entrepreneurs expressed an interest in purchasing used rails, and the practice of selling iron ones to purchase steel rails appeared common. See Clarke to A. M. West, 14 October 1880, and Clarke to Wesson and Persons, 15 October 1880, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago, St. Louis, and (continued...)

Using convict labor to build the dummy railroad, Hamilton and Hoskins realized only short-term success. The Gulf and Ship Island Railroad most notably benefitted from the system of convict leasing. Although not the first coast-bound railroad to secure convict labor--the Ship Island, Ripley and Kentucky achieved that distinction--the GSIRR depended heavily upon convicts for the construction of the line. Chartered before the Civil War, the GSIRR received a large grant of lands from the federal government to facilitate its construction; the war, however, intervened and hindered the company from completing a single mile of track. In 1882, the state legislature resurrected the vision of a railroad between the Gulf Coast and Jackson and construction on the line began in 1886. Some 700 convicts completed twenty-five miles of railroad from present-day Gulfport northward within months of their arrival on the line. Financing the railroad proved to be a burden, even though it was to run through a region many promoters believed rich with potential for grape and orange cultivation, as well as timber culture. One of the prime movers associated with the GSIRR, William H. Hardy, who had previously played a similar role with

⁴⁴(...continued)

New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry. On the development of a railroad that began as a dummy line, see Sammy O. Cranford, "The Fernwood, Columbia, and Gulf: A Railroad in the Piney Woods of South Mississippi," (Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 1983), 1-93.

the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad, spent much of 1888 and 1889 trying to coax New York and English bankers to invest in the railroad. Despite his difficulties, Hardy, who thought of the GSIRR as "my road," remained convinced, as he told his wife, that completion of the railroad would "make us indepent [sic] financially in our old age." Financiers agreed to a series of small loans only after Hardy secured the convict labor, a cheap and predictable labor pool. But, the loans, Hardy feared, were just enough "to keep my convicts fed and clothed & worked."⁴⁵

By the mid-1880s, Mississippi had opened its doors to railroad developers, and additional miles of track soon rolled across the state. Large tracts of land, some of it given to companies and some purchased at low prices; the availability of convict labor; and tax-exempt status provided the impetus for the rapid extension of the market economy. Even though the first generation of visionaries had imagined that rails would link the old cotton kingdom to distant markets, postbellum dreamers intended to employ rail lines as conduits for a host of

⁴⁵For memorials in favor of the Gulf and Ship Island, see Laws of the State of Mississippi (1818), 225-227, 251-255. Stover, History of the Illinois Central Railroad, 293. On Hardy's experiences in London and New York, see William H. Hardy to Hattie Hardy, 25, 30 July 1888, 4, 15 November 1889, Hardy Papers, Cook Memorial Library, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

other goods, chiefly the finished products made by Mississippi's nascent industries.

W. W. Willis, of Wheeler and Willis, a Corinth manufacturer of flooring, ceiling, and siding, understood the significance that a railroad would have for his business. Writing to Governor Stone, Willis said that with sufficient financing a railroad between Burrusville and the Tennessee River would link the "Superior Stone Land" of his neighborhood to Mobile. The northeastern section of Mississippi would become a great supplier of glass, porcelain, and clay, Willis believed, and farms would be occupied by new immigrants to the region. Merchants, too, attempted to use railroads to expand their businesses. In 1879, a group of store owners at Kosciusko convinced officials of the Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans to lower rates to and from their central Mississippi town. With lower rates, they argued, more goods could be bought and sold in their stores, and business over the railroad would increase proportionately. After a one-year experiment, J. C. Clarke informed the merchants that the special rates had failed to increase business as projected and would end.⁴⁶ Willis' and the Kosciusko merchants' appeals suggested the importance of railroads in postbellum

⁴⁶W. W. Willis to John M. Stone, 20 April 1880, Governors' Papers, MDAH; J. C. Clarke to A. Hay, 10 October 1880, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry.

Mississippi. The railroad became a symbol of the New South, symbiotically linking not only cotton cultivators to distant markets but also merchants and neophyte industrialists.

Railroads, however, were more than symbols. They were the agents of New South economic expansion. Yet, even with the promise of great wealth and spectacular growth, Mississippians at times only reluctantly subscribed to railroad stock and donated land for depots and shops. Local boosters, such as stockholders and attorneys, played a central role in animating a sentiment in favor of railroads and bringing isolated communities into the modern age. James Fentress, chief counsel for the Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans, explained the duties of a railroad attorney to L. P. Yerger: "to use your influence to conserve the good will of the people towards the Railroad Company and help them to realize that their interests and ours do not conflict." Yerger played a similar role with the Georgia Pacific. He succeeded in extracting from his Leflore County neighbors a subscription pledge for the construction of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad. As an archetypical man of the New South, Yerger realized the importance of railroads to Mississippi, but he did more than promote railroads. Lending agencies in Jackson, New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Memphis, used his office to collect on planters' debts and

paid him a commission for directing prospective borrowers to their companies; by 1892, Yerger also worked for the Schlitz Brewery Company, though employer and employee had a rocky relationship.⁴⁷

Yerger's ever-increasing association with the symbols and agents of the New South began with his employment as a railroad attorney, suggesting the significance of railroads to Mississippi's economic advance. His career, in fact, mirrored the state's economic advance, as it emerged in stages. Even though he started as a railroad attorney filing real estate transactions and conducting other common legal business, Yerger became a booster for more than one railroad, a loan originator to the

⁴⁷James Fentress to L. P. Yerger, 29 September 1885, Lafayette P. Yerger Papers, MDAH. J. W. Johnston (President, Georgia Pacific Railway Company) to Yerger, 15 March 1888, reminded Yerger of the importance of local subscriptions: "I have no hopes of success, unless the people along the line will help us." See, also, letters from Johnston to Yerger, 14, 19, 21 March, 6, 25 April 1888. On his involvement with other agencies of the New South, see S. R. Benton (Equitable Mortgage Company, Jackson) to Yerger, 22 February, and Benton to Yerger, 22 February 1888; Chaffe and Powell (New Orleans) to Yerger, 28 April 1888; P. M. Hardy (Delta Trust and Banking, Company, Jackson) to Yerger, 3 October 1889, and 2 January 1892; W. D. Lawson (Delta Trust and Banking, Company, Jackson) to Yerger, 2 October 1889; Graves and Vinton (Memphis) to Yerger, 9 October 1890; New South Building and Loan Association (New Orleans) to Yerger, 4 September 1891; F. E. Kalberg to Yerger, 1 August 1890; Eugene Westhoff to Yerger, 19 February 1892. Westhoff, a representative of the Schlitz Brewery chastised Yerger for failing to follow his instructions and refused to honor Yerger's bill for services: "We did not employ you as you mention in your letter to keep the minds of the people in proper frame during the time, etc. We did not need to resort to any such means."

builders of the new cotton kingdom, and an agent for a large industry interested in moving to Mississippi. Just as Yerger's postbellum career began with railroads, late nineteenth-century development began there, too.

While Yerger's career might serve as a metaphor of New South development, he barely concerned himself with one of the most crucial ingredients in Mississippi's economic advance: land. To railroad companies, land represented an asset. Companies, of course, needed land on which to build their tracks, depots, and shops, but they also needed vacant land around their property to sell to potential rail users. James F. McCool, an Attala County attorney and state legislator, more so than Yerger, concentrated his practice on securing land for the Canton, Aberdeen, and Nashville Railroad. James Fentress, who also served as chief counsel for the CANRR, charged McCool with obtaining rights of way for the line. McCool, Fentress said, must "go to work and have your people show enterprise and public spirit." Ideally, the CANRR wanted to obtain rights of way through Attala County before a rival line could do so and thus ensure that the company had the best available land on which to build.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Quoting James Fentress to C. L. Anderson and James F. McCool, 15 June 1882, but see, too, Fentress to McCool, 5 May, 4 June 1880.

McCool, however, had other plans. Instead of transferring titles to the CANRR, he began purchasing prime lands in the hope that he could found a town on the railway line. Word of McCool's extracurricular activities reached Fentress, who chastised his local attorney: "I would be glad to see you get rich and if I can aid you will do so--and as soon as a line is located & rights of way gotten I hope you will buy lands that will make you rich." His undercutting operation found out, McCool admitted to Fentress that he had purchased some land but fully intended to transfer the rights of way to the company.⁴⁹ He did not explain to the solicitor, and likely did not need to, that since he intended to build a town on the line, the best price for land could be obtained before the company laid its track. McCool's efforts to secure land pointed to a central truth of the New South era: railroad companies depended on acquiring cheap, vacant lands that they could sell to farmers, town builders, and businessmen. If New South development began with railroads, the second phase of development depended upon the companies' ownership of land.

Railroad companies, many of which came to possess large tracts of land, intended to sell it to developers or

⁴⁹James Fentress to C. L. Anderson and James McCool, 4 May, 6 June 1882; Fentress to McCool, 12 April 1882; Fentress to Anderson, 1 May 1882, McCool Family Papers.

settlers. Two postbellum railroads, the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley, as well as the Gulf and Ship and Island, obtained extensive acreage. With approximately 600,000 acres in the mid-1890s, the YMVRR undertook a program to lure immigrants to the Delta. Like the state of Mississippi, which had its own settler recruiting program, J. C. Clarke of the Illinois Central, hoped to attract "the right kind, [of immigrant] to this country." The state commissioner of immigration agreed that Mississippi needed most of all "people of kindred races, that we may be homogeneous." But Mississippi wanted more than common laborers and white tenant farmers; it hoped to entice "settlers who will bring along with them means and energy to enter upon business for themselves, to buy our cheap lands, become permanent residents, and help to build up the prosperity of the state." Both the railroad company and the state devoted extraordinary energy in discrediting what they referred to as myths about Mississippi, especially stories of poverty and frequent disease. "We do not continually eat pork, nor drink whiskey or creek water, and thus we have good health," a New Yorker explained to prospective purchasers. Actual settlers discovered that extracting a living from the alluvial plain was more difficult than advertised. Johnny Parrott, who purchased eighty acres of Delta woodlands in the mid-1880s and began clearing it to plant cotton, commented on the

inhabitants of the region. They bore signs of hard work and of living in a miasmatic climate: "the looks of the people especially the women look like they were half dead."⁵⁰

Cheap land, of course, was the main lure used by the YMVRR to attract settlers. The Delta, a railroad pamphlet boosted, comprised 10 percent of the state's acreage but produced 27 percent of Mississippi's crops. Cotton flourished in the region, but so too did truck gardens. According to propaganda issued by the company, a farmer, after deadening timber and clearing land for three years, could expect to produce on 45 acres of railroad land corn, peas, and hogs worth \$4,750. The pamphlet advertised land at \$7 per acre, with 20 percent down and the remainder at 6 percent interest for seven years. Gross payments for 40 acres including principal and interest totaled almost \$350. During the three years it would take to clear the land, settlers could sell timber, as Parrott did, and scrape by with a small garden. If the prospect of barely making a living frightened farmers from

⁵⁰Quoting J. C. Clarke to E. G. Wall, 5 February 1881, Clarke Out-Letters, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company Papers, Newberry; E. G. Wall, Handbook of the State of Mississippi (Jackson: Power and Barksdale Steam Printer, 1882), 30; Johnny Parrott Diary, 15 June 1887, MDAH. See, too, Illinois Central Railroad Company, Railroad Lands For Sale Owned by the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Company in the Famous Yazoo Valley of Mississippi (n.p., 1896), 7.

purchasing lands, the railroad hedged its bet by boasting of vast virgin woodlands: "LUMBERMEN CAN MAKE FORTUNES." Cypress covered swamps offered mill owners a seemingly plentiful harvest, and best of all, pamphleteers for the railroad said, farmers and lumbermen could find easy access to Memphis, Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, Chicago, and points east on the YMVRR.⁵¹

Before railroad company guides could show potential settlers its lands, a small number of land companies obtained vast tracts from the YMVRR. In the mid-1890s, the Delta Pine and Land Company, N. T. Burroughs, the Southern Land Company, the Moffatt Company of Denver, and a consortium of Milwaukee breweries grabbed up hundreds of sections of land in Tallahatchie, Leflore, Sharkey, and Quitman counties. The Delta Pine and Land Company, a Chicago-based group of investors headed by Thomas Watson and his two sons, originally acquired some 450,000 acres in the late 1880s. Company policy at the time required that land purchasers buy with cash a minimum of 10,000 acres. As Delta Pine and Land Company acreage passed into the hands of large lumber cutters, few farmers entered the

⁵¹Illinois Central Railroad Company, Railroad Lands for Sale, 3, 9, 13, 19-21, 31, 37. For other efforts by the ICRR to attract investors to the region, see ibid., One Hundred Cities and Towns Wanting Industries in the States of South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana On the Lines of the Illinois Central Railroad and Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad (Chicago: Eggerston and Hoffman, n.d.), 96-125.

land. With the timber harvested, the land sold to farmers in the early twentieth century at a higher price as improved acreage than it would have as timberland. Land companies representing outside interests were not alone in the Mississippi Delta. The Jackson firm of Swan and Burroughs possessed some 300,000 acres of timber land, some of which they sold in 31,000 acre blocks. The great land bonanza opened by the Illinois Central and the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley brought almost as much attention to the Delta's cypress as its fertile cotton lands. Some entrepreneurs, like a correspondent of L. P. Yerger, sought out timber.⁵² Concentration of land and interest in Delta timber proceeded naturally out of the spirit of the New South in which a commercial mentality reigned supreme.

Unlike the YMVRR, which possessed its acreage without contention, the Gulf and Ship Island experienced difficulties selling its lands because it lacked clear title to them. In 1856, the federal government committed to the GSIRR alternate sections of land on either side of

⁵²The extent of landholding among the five large owners named may be viewed on the map "Illinois Central Railroad Lands For Sale in the Famous Yazoo-Mississippi Delta," (1897?) in the Map Collection of the Illinois Central Railroad Archives, Newberry. On the Delta Pine and Land Company, see Brandfon, Cotton Kingdom of the New South, 61-67. For other large landholders and attempts by outsiders to monopolize the Delta's assets, see F. C. Nelson to L. P. Yerger, 3 August 1889; W. W. Marmuke, 28 March 1890, Lafayette P. Yerger Papers, MDAH. Marmuke asked Yerger to locate for him a tract of land with 500 to 1,000 million feet of cypress on it.

its track provided the line passed from Mississippi City to Jackson within ten years. Had the railroad been completed, it stood to gain 120 sections of land, or nearly 11,000 acres. The only restriction attached to the land grant prohibited settlers from obtaining title to company lands until the railroad completed its work. Much happened in the ten years allowed the company to construct the line. The war, first of all, intervened and ended all hopes of linking the coast and the capitol. Then, in the post-war period, the GSIRR lost its charter, only to regain it. Meanwhile, in the 1880s, agrarians began calling upon Congress to cancel land grants made to unfinished railroads, and Congress passed a forfeiture law in 1890, leaving the GSIRR virtually landless the year before the Illinois Central acquired it. William Hardy, the railroad's booster, had planned to reap a fortune for his years of labor by selling lands along the line. With the loss of land and the company, he looked to lands other than those owned by the GSIRR to make him rich. "My only chance is to make my fortune out of the Gulfport Lands owned by me and Milton," he told his wife.⁵³

⁵³Quoting William H. Hardy to Hattie Hardy, 28 June 1897, Hardy Papers, University of Southern Mississippi. David Maldwyn Ellis, "The Forfeiture of Railroad Land Grants, 1867-1894," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 33 (1946), 31, 53-54; Stover, The Illinois Central Railroad, 290.

Even though the Gulf and Ship Island lost most of its land, the Illinois Central considered the vacant public domain through which it passed ripe for development. Not long before acquiring the GSIRR, Illinois Central officials had viewed lumbermen and forests as nuisances. In the 1880s, the company thought of transporting lumber as a civic duty, or an occupation in the "dull season." Shipping lumber by rail, company officials pointed out, required special cars, cars that returned South empty. Nevertheless, the ICRR encouraged lumbermen to continue their work "in the hope that it [the land] may then be available for some agricultural production." For decades independent woodcutters had cut over the public domain, but vast tracks of virgin pine forests still stood in south-central Mississippi. Just as the government was forcing the GSIRR to forfeit its claim to the lands, lumbermen who had clear-cut the forests of the old Northwest flooded into the state seeking of cheap timber lands. Before the 1890s, lumbermen had operated in the Pearl and Pascagoula River basins, floating timber chiefly to Biloxi to be worked into railroad car sills and marketed. Other lumbermen harvested turpentine; A. C. Danner, for instance, leased three-quarters of a million acres from the

Mobile and Ohio Railroad and sublet it to small producers.⁵⁴ But, most of the Piney Woods forest industries remained anemic until the ICRR took command of Hardy's railroad.

⁵⁴Quoting J. C. Clarke to J. M. Wesson, 6 October 1882, Clarke Out-Letters, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company, Newberry, and James Fentress to Stuyvesant Fish, 22 October 1887, Fish In-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago St. Louis, New Orleans Railroad Company, Newberry, but, see, too, Clarke to F. B. and W. S. Hall, 9 August 1880, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Clarke Out-Letters, vol. 2, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans Railroad Company, Newberry. Nollie Hickman, Mississippi Harvest: Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915 (Montgomery: Paragon Press, 1962), 46, 55, 58, 65; Cyril Edward Cain, ed., Four Centuries On the Pascagoula: History and Genealogy of the Pascagoula River Country, vol. 2 (1962, reprint; Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1983), 43-45.

(Table 6.4)
Estimated Merchantable Pine Timber
in Mississippi, 1880

Region	Feet, In Billions
South Mississippi: Long-Leaf Pine	18.2
West of Pearl River	6.80
East of Pearl River	7.60
Mixed Growth Region #	3.78
North Mississippi: Short-Leaf Pine	6.80
Northeast	1.60
North-Central/Northwest	5.20
State	25.0

Source: U. S., Department of the Treasury, Report on the Internal Commerce of the United States, Part II of Commerce and Navigation, The Commercial, Industrial, Transportation, and Other Industries of the Southern States, William T. Winn, "Mississippi," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 491. Timber covered 58 percent of the state.

The mixed growth region lay in the northern half of the Piney Woods; figures exclude some 200,000 acres of timber injured by turpentine operators.

Technical improvements to sawmill machinery, the arrival of northwestern investors, and the completion of the GSIRR and other lines opened the Piney Woods to development. As early as the mid-1880s, the Mississippi Gulf Coast began to register the impact of railroads. Along the Louisville and Nashville, stretching between New Orleans and Mobile, one million tons of lumber and three million tons of unworked logs and timber were shipped from twenty depots. In 1885, the West Pascagoula station alone

sent over three million tons of lumber and logs. Additionally, all stations along the line received together some 1.4 million tons of lumber and 4,000 tons of logs, suggesting that the region shipped outside its borders a large quantity of logs and worked up very little lumber at home. The Louisville and Nashville shipped more than lumber, however; vegetables and fruits received at coastal harbors went out to the burgeoning mill towns of the area by rail. In fiscal year 1884-1885, the L & N shipped some 146,000 pounds of vegetables and in 1885-1886, 251,800 pounds. The New Orleans and Northeastern, which operated through the interior of the Piney Woods between the Crescent City and Meridian, shipped 5.8 million pounds of vegetables. By the early 1890s, the lumber boom and the operation of at least one large textile mill, testified to the prescience of Claiborne's vision of an economically diverse Piney Woods.⁵⁵

Both the Gulf and Ship Island and the New Orleans and Northeastern reached into the interior counties of the state providing lumber barons access to the forests of south-central Mississippi. The railroads intersected at

⁵⁵O. B. Collins to A. C. Falconer, 4 February 1877, Governors' Papers, MDAH; U. S., Department of the Treasury, Report of the Internal Commerce of the United States, Part II of Commerce and Navigation, The Commercial, Industrial, Transportation, and Other Industries of the Southern States, William T. Winn, "Mississippi," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 476-483, 496, 501.

Hattiesburg, a weigh station founded by William Hardy. Even though small timber cutters had operated near Hattiesburg for a number of years, the completion of the railroads attracted large operators to the area. By 1893, Hattiesburg area mills produced one million feet of lumber a day and saw an additional six million of feet pass through the city via the rail lines; in 1911, thirty lumber wholesalers had offices in the city. Most of the mills around Hattiesburg turned out crudely sawn timber and little dressed lumber. Besides the national demand for timber and ample forests, northern lumbermen were attracted to the area by land prices, reportedly as low as \$1.25 an acre. In one transaction, Fenwick Peck, a Pennsylvania native, purchased 400,000 acres at just such a price; within several years, he had cut approximately 200 million feet of timber. John Kamper, who opened his first mill at Laurel, thirty miles north of Hattiesburg on the New Orleans and Northeastern, sold 16,000 acres at \$4 per acre to an Iowa-based company headed by George and Silas Gardiner and Lauren Eastman. Taking advantage of cheap lands, plentiful timber, and railroads, the Gardiner-Eastman Company came to dominate the south-central Mississippi lumber trade. During a twenty-seven day period in

1903, for instance, they shipped on average 700 train cars of lumber every twenty-hours.⁵⁶

Extraordinary changes in the industrial development of Mississippi occurred as railroads opened small towns to large markets. Most notably, the penetration of railroads into the Piney Woods wrought great changes in the way people lived and worked. One measure of development, the capital invested in industry, indicates the growth experienced in Jones County. Between 1880 and 1890, capital investment in Jones County (Laurel) industries leaped from \$3,200 to \$358,000, a 11,088 percent change; Perry County (Hattiesburg) saw a 7,346 percent change. At the same time, the value of goods manufactured in Jones and Perry counties increased by 4,774 percent and 9,104 percent, respectively. Although the rate of industrial growth experienced in the Piney Woods exceeded the state's growth rate, Mississippi as a whole saw the value of its manufactured products increase by 148 percent between 1880 and 1890 and by 116 percent in the next decade. Similarly, the change in capital invested in Mississippi industries reached 214 percent between 1880 and 1890 and 141 percent between 1890 and 1900. During

⁵⁶Jo Dent Hodge, "The Lumber Industry in Laurel, Mississippi, at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," Journal of Mississippi History 25 (November 1973), 361-363, 371. John Ray Skates, "The Early Years," in Kenneth G. McCarty, Hattiesburg: A Pictorial History (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 6-11.

the 1880s, twenty-six counties experienced an at least 100 percent change in the value of manufactured products; eighteen other counties recorded positive growth rates of less than 100 percent. In the 1890s, forty-eight counties had a growth rate in the value of goods manufactured of more than 100 percent. Capital investment likewise increased across the state. Between 1880 and 1890, the percentage increase in capital invested in industry surpassed 100 percent in thirty-three counties, and between 1890 and 1900, fifty-nine counties duplicated the feat.⁵⁷

Most of the industries opened in the late nineteenth century were small concerns. In 1870, Mississippi manufacturing establishments employed on average 3.93 hands. By 1890, the average number of laborers employed in manufacturing facilities reached 9.34 hands. With few exceptions, the average number of workers at any single manufacturing concern likely remained small, but the value

⁵⁷U.S., Bureau of the Census, Report on the Manufacturing of the United States at the Tenth Census, June 1, 1880, Embracing General Statistics (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 140-141; ibid., Report on Manufacturing Industries in the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890: Part I, Totals for States and Industries (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 484-487; ibid., Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900: Manufactures, Part II, States and Territories (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Office, 1902), 462-471. For an overview of economic progress in the Piney Woods, see Arthell Kelly and Robert C. Spillman, "Sequence Occupancy of the Piney Woods in Southeastern Mississippi, 1805-1976," The Mississippi Geographer 4 (Spring 1976), 32-34.

of goods produced in various industries rose rapidly. The proliferation of manufacturing establishments accounted for the increased production. Data included in the 1880 and 1900 censuses suggest the increase in productive capacity: statewide, lumber (planed and sawn) was valued at \$2 million in 1880 and in 1900 at \$15.7 million; the value of cotton goods manufactured rose from less than \$700,000 to \$1.5 million; the value of cotton compressed and ginned increased from \$3,250 to \$2.2 million; and the value of cottonseed oil and cakes, barely at \$500,000 in 1880, hit the \$6.7 million mark in 1900.⁵⁸

One consequence of the proliferation of industry and railroads was the growth of cities. In 1910, the census counted eleven urban centers in Mississippi with 4.8 percent of the state's population. All but one of the towns contained a substantial number of manufacturing establishments, and each was traversed by a railroad. Even though the cities supported only 11.2 percent of the state's industrial concerns, the manufacturing facilities located in urban centers accounted for almost 30 percent of Mississippi's industrial output. The census failed to provide figures for the manufacturing capacity of smaller

⁵⁸In addition to the sources cited in note 53, see, too U.S. Bureau of the Census, Compendium of the Ninth Census, June 1, 1870 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 829-830. On the early manufacture of cottonseed oil, see Milkey and Herring to Eugene Hilgard, 28 March 1872, Eugene W. Hilgard Papers, MDAH.

towns, but population changes in railroad towns indicate that commerce and industry followed rail lines. Towns located at the intersection of two railroads, Winona and Durant, for example, saw their populations double between 1880 and 1900. Other towns along the Illinois Central experienced phenomenal growth, too. McComb City, the town that Henry McComb had built to service his railroad, included less than 2,000 people in 1880 but exceeded 6,000 in 1910. Even along lesser lines, towns grew around railroad depots. At Hattiesburg the population increased from 1,171 in 1890 to 11,733 in 1910; at Laurel, the population grew from about 200 in 1880 to 3,193 in 1900, to 8,465 in 1910.⁵⁹

As the web of the market developed more and more complicated interlocking strands spun from railroads, industries, and commerce, the amateur store owner and the part-time industrialist of the immediate post-war period felt increasingly out of place. Specialists, some of them recently arrived from the North, assumed a commanding position in the commercial order. Master mechanics and railroad engineers kept the commercial order running

⁵⁹U.S., Bureau of the Census, Compendium of the Ninth Census, 236-240; ibid., Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Population (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882), 233-237; ibid., Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in 1910, vol. II Population 1910, Reports by States With Statistics for Cities and Other Civil Divisions (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 1028-1036.

smoothly, just as did accountants and clerks. One-half of the eight skilled railroad employees of the Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans who could be located in the 1880 census hailed from northern states or foreign lands. None of the eight, about whom years of residence could be ascertained, had lived in Mississippi more than seven years.⁶⁰ These men of Mississippi, by virtue of their skills and recent arrival in the state, were truly men of the New South.

By 1900, as the web of commerce spread throughout the state, conducting the affairs of even small country stores could be nearly as complicated as operating a train. Men with special skills (typing, accounting, and shorthand) frequently found positions with retail merchants. To obtain their skills, the retail specialist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century attended training schools, like the Harris Practical Business College at Jackson ("The Only Business University of the South") and Eastman National Business College at Poughkeepsie, New York. A 1908 directory of Eastman alumni listed 158 Mississippians as graduates. Some, of course, worked as merchants and planters, but many held positions

⁶⁰The names of the engineers and mechanic used in the survey were taken from an 1884 photograph of Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans employees, found in that railroad company's papers at the Illinois Central Archives, Newberry. U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Manuscript Returns, Copiah County, 1880.

unique to the New South. They worked for produce and wholesale supply houses, railroads, cotton buying firms, and banks as clerks, bookkeepers, and traveling salesmen. Many, like J. H. Tyrone, a shoe salesman at Aberdeen, boasted that the education they received at Eastman prepared them for the illustrious positions they held. Others, like T. R. Trotter, Jr., a Winona bookkeeper, credited Eastman with their "financial birth." All who contributed comments to the directory looked upon their training at Eastman as security against what Philip M. Essig called "the cold business world."⁶¹ Even more than skilled railroad workers, the Mississippians who travelled to Poughkeepsie to be trained as the keepers of the New South served as signposts of the new order, for they became Mississippi's first generation of professional commercial men dedicated to perpetuating and extending the commercial order.

For all of the transformations in postbellum society (the emergence of a commercial class, the proliferation of railroads, and the development of industry) some aspects of life in Mississippi did not change.

⁶¹Directory by States and Counties of More Than Eight Thousand of the Students and Graduates of Eastman, Poughkeepsie, New York, Part Two, Southern and Gulf States (n.p., 1908), 143-155, quoting, 143, 150. Reference to the Harris school can be located in Maloney's 1907 Jackson City Directory, vol. 5 (n.p., n.d.), 88. Maloney's also lists Draughton's Practical Business College as operating in Jackson.

Mississippians' success in making the transition into the commercial order notwithstanding, the state retained its dogged insistence on the validity of one aspect of the social ethic: the founding of concepts of white liberty and virtue in the relegation of African-Americans to a peripheral role in society. Noting that "the war has hewn a pathway for Southern energies in a new direction," a newspaper editor at Columbus took up the New South's clarion call when he pleaded for a rapprochement between the races in order to promote industry in the state. Mostly, he said, Mississippi needed "men of labor and skill to settle among us, capital to export our latent resources, and train and elevate the negro to be able to do his part of the great work of Southern economic development." On the surface, such rhetoric embodied a promise to protect freedmen in their right to free labor. Subsequent editorials published in the same newspaper, however, called into question freed people's capacity to play a vital role in society and reminded ex-slaves that they should not seek employment away from the plantation. Another editor, writing in the 1880s, likewise intimated that industry would promote racial peace, but he also suggested that African-Americans would be left behind during Mississippi's economic advance. The prospects of a cottonseed oil mill being built in Grenada promised to release "a set of forces that will convert this little

dull old town into an active commercial centre." Yet, fearful that Grenada might fall under the spell of foreign ideals, he warned that industrial growth should occur "under the restraining [sic] influence of a high moral public sentiment," within the boundaries of southern notions of blacks place in society.⁶²

Stripping away the elements of the New South creed intended to animate Mississippians with a spirit of boosterism leaves a formula for economic advancement that is as old as the cotton kingdom itself: black labor, working in fields of cotton, would produce a crop that Southern white men would market and, then, manufacture into yarn, cloth, and clothes. Other white men in the postbellum period, of course, would construct railroads, operate factories, market truck-garden vegetables, and control the retail trade, but blacks, except in the lumber camps of south Mississippi, would remain conspicuously absent from the commercial world.⁶³ Neither would they be independent producers in the market economy. While much of the

⁶²Columbus Southern Sentinel, 26 November 1867; Grenada Sentinel, 3 June 1882, but see, too, Columbus Southern Sentinel, 10 December, 20 December 1867.

⁶³On African-American labor in the lumber camps, see Nollie Hickman, "Black Labor in the Forest Industries of the Piney Woods, 1840-1933," in Mississippi's Piney Woods: A Human Perspective, ed. Noel Polk (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 152-174.

rhetoric that poured from the region immediately after the war obliquely acknowledged the victory of free-labor ideology, nothing inherent in the creation of a New South required the acceptance of it. Indeed, the economic advance achieved in Mississippi occurred without removing large numbers of freedmen from the cotton fields, and perhaps, considering merchants' dependence on the crop lien, it might be argued that creating a New South demanded that freedmen remain tied to the land, that the social ethic remain intact. Despite the evolution of Mississippi's economy, the variety of advance that modernization theorists associate with broad economic and political democratization remained in the future when Mississippians no longer cared whether their clothes, furniture, or canned goods had been processed by black hands.

Part Three

Accepting and Rejecting Change

"We cannot escape history." Abraham Lincoln

"Memory is the thread of personal identity, history of public identity. Men who have achieved any civic existence at all must to sustain it, have some kind of history, though it may be history that is partly mythological or simply untrue. That the business of history always involves a subtle transaction with civic identity has long been understood, even in America where the sense of time is shallow." Richard Hofstadter

Even in Mississippi, still a relatively young state in 1880, a strong sense of history informed concepts of behavior, public and private. Even had they wished, Mississippians could not have put out of mind their collective past. While events and phenomena since 1860 (Civil War, Reconstruction, and commercial development) challenged antebellum concepts of political economy, the persistence of aspects of the social ethic stymied wholesale changes in Mississippi.

The new state capitol, finished in 1903, symbolized white Mississippians' inability to escape their history and their unwillingness to do so. It also denoted their efforts to construct upon the ruins of the past a bright and prosperous future. According to a

twentieth-century writer, the new capitol was "the product of a new century, a place of power and utility rather than of tradition." In imitation of the national capitol, the designers of the Mississippi state house used Bedford stone in its construction, and they capped the capitol dome with an all-American symbol, an eagle. As if to symbolize the new age in which Mississippians lived, the builders of the capitol benefitted from a gift of the Illinois Central Railroad, a short line connecting the construction site with the main railroad. Built atop the ruins of the old penitentiary, much about the new capitol suggested that Mississippians derived their civic identity from the postbellum commercial order. But, in fact, the capstone of the building was laid in place on June 3, 1903, Jefferson Davis' birthday, an auspicious and symbolic reminder that white citizens founded their concepts of a good republic in the southern social ethic.¹

Despite the significant ideological adjustments demanded by the new order, white Mississippians, cultivators as well as men of commerce and industry, refused to resign the moral imperatives which defined their notions of the social ethic. They continued to place a high value

¹Quoting Mississippi: A Guide to the Magnolia State; Compiled and Written by the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration (New York: Hastings House, 1938), 217; but, see, too, Mrs. Albert G. Weems, "Work of the United Daughters of the Confederacy," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 4 (1901), 73-78.

on individuals' success in the market economy and the rigid division of labor according to race. Postbellum Mississippians, like their antebellum ancestors, espoused an interpretation of history, and thus a sense of civic identity, reflective of their essentially unattenuated social ethic. Yet, for all of the similarities between antebellum and postbellum concepts of history and the social ethic, significant differences appeared. In fact, two views of history coexisted. One was nurtured by the makers and keepers of the new order; the other belonged to plain farmers.

According to the makers and keepers of the new order (professionals, physicians, and merchants) emancipation had forever destroyed the homogeneous South. Despite their fear that their world had been unalterably changed, the makers and keepers of the commercial order benefitted in the New South era. Just as antebellum whites feared that those without liberty, blacks, might threaten the good order of society, the makers of the commercial world accounted those left behind by the postbellum advance a danger to the reestablishment of homogeneity. Prohibition and disfranchisement of the ignorant and the vile became the watchwords of respectable citizens in the postbellum period. Curiously, they also hastened to form professional societies from which they sought to eliminate evidence of heterogeneity in society.

Agrarians also viewed postbellum society as splintered and contentious. But, unlike the makers of the commercial order, agrarians rested blame for the demise of the antebellum political economy on the new order itself. Under the influences of the crop-lien law, railroads, industry, and merchants, farmers lost their claim to possess liberty and virtue. They ceased to be self-sufficient producers within the market economy and became instead enslaved to the market. Like their contemporaries who benefitted from the advent of the commercial order, agrarians wished to recapture the halcyon days of post-1830s Mississippi. Yet, their vision of an homogenous social order founded on concepts of Jacksonian egalitarianism, as farm protest organizations discovered, was ill-suited for survival in the postbellum era.

Two diverse groups, then, offered competing visions of a good republic. The first attempted to create an homogenous society by removing from political influence the ignorant; the second attempted to remove distinctions among whites characteristic of the commercial era. Accomplishing the goals of either group was impossible. The resulting uneasy peace that middle-class reformers and agrarians reached instead apotheosized the only element that they both shared: theories of race. In the early twentieth century, a new breed of politician emerged. The rednecks, as they were known, evinced a commitment, at

least rhetorically, to the empowerment of all white people and the preservation of the commercial order. Only by resuscitating theories of race, which demanded the presence of a black underclass, could the rednecks successfully combine the class-conscious critique of both middle-class and agrarian reformers. In the twentieth century, just as in the 1830s, concerns about ensuring white unanimity to perpetuate black subservience submerged class tensions.

Chapter Seven

To Create an Homogeneous Society

Despite the postbellum South's lust after railroads and industrial development, critics of the emergent commercial order believed that contemporaries' misplaced their faith in economic advance as a prerequisite for building a good republic. During the late 1880s, as William Hardy hot-footed from New York to England seeking investors for his Gulf and Ship Island Railroad, he entertained thoughts of expanding the line into central Mississippi. Not unlike other financially besieged railroad executives, Hardy intended to boost the railroad's capital base by borrowing from the pool of fresh investment to lay track already over budget. Local investment in an extension would also positively influence northern and English lenders. In the mid and late 1880s, Hardy and his agents aroused the interest of Leake County residents when they hosted mass meetings and examined potential routes. In the end, Hardy only filled their heads with dreams of having a railroad of their own. Before details of expansion into the county could be completed, outside investors offered the G. & S. I. R. R. the funds it sought. Taking

the news of Hardy's retreat sanguinely, L. B. Garrett, editor of Leake County's only newspaper, encouraged his readers to look elsewhere if they wished to improve their well-being. What the county needed, Garrett assured, was "good, neat respectable houses of worship worse than she needs Railroads, foreign immigration, capital, factories and etc."¹

While the effort to cast in the best possible terms the sad news that a railroad would not be coming to Carthage perhaps motivated Garrett to shift his support from the Gulf and Ship Island to the spiritual development of his town, expressions favorable to the financial and moral improvement of Mississippi often went hand in hand during the postbellum period.² Nationwide, as the commercial order of the late nineteenth century disrupted notions of the good republic, Americans turned increasingly for instruction to familiar codes of conduct. When Mississippians sought the familiar, they turned to the antebellum social ethic and visions of a moral and homogeneous society.

¹Quoted, Carthage Carthaginian, 2 June 1888.

²Just one week prior to encouraging his readers to seek a spiritual rebirth, the Carthage Carthaginian, 26 May 1888, gave railroad development and the Blair Bill before Congress, which proposed outlawing Sabbath work, prominent coverage.

In the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s, a series of revivals shook Mississippi. Those left behind by the commercial order as well as the seemingly well-adjusted scurried to find comfort in revival meetings. Many of the revivals originated in the small towns and crossroad villages, but some, led by travelling evangelists, took place in larger towns. The Presbyterian minister Samuel Agnew kept a jealous watch over the revivals that occurred near his Tippah County home. Campbellites, Methodists, and "a very disorderly and noisy" assembly of Baptists at various times reached into Agnew's backyard, at times his own church, for converts. Never diffident about denouncing revivalists, Agnew bristled when he repudiated an "extremist" cowboy-evangelist, who preached the necessity of perfection to avoid damnation; two years after the Baptist church at Jericho passed through the throes of revival, a renegade group of the congregation broke away, justifying to Agnew his disdain for the interjection of emotion into spiritual matters.³

Of the travelling evangelists, none attracted more of the faithful than Sam Jones. On repeated trips to Mississippi, Jones addressed large audiences of the faithful and the curious. In 1889, about 600 crowded into

³For the description of the Jericho Baptists, see Samuel A. Agnew Diaries, 31 August 1893, UNC; on Harris, see, Agnew Diaries, 3 April 1893. See, too, Agnew Diaries, 1, 2, 15 September 1893, 1 June 1895, 20 July 1895.

Hazelhurst's Compress Building to hear him, and, during the 1890 North Mississippi Methodist Conference at Okolona, an estimated 1,500 gathered to witness the great revivalist at work. Cut from the same cloth as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, the evangelist made even "the old hardened cases . . . wriggle and writhe under his skinning process." Burdened by "the presence and power of the Holy Ghost" unleashed by Jones, nearly 100 converts joined the Methodist church at Okolona. While the necessity of leading lost sheep into the Christian fold drew Jones to Mississippi, his audiences came for guidance in their daily lives. After hearing him preach at Hazelhurst, one reporter wondered "how any nice, pure virtuous girl who listened to him can again tolerate or permit the 'arm-clutch.'"⁴ Perhaps better than the remainder of revivalists, Jones exhibited a flare for linking temporal respectability and Heavenly bliss, an exciting prospect for Mississippians adrift in a changing world.

The same influence that propelled Mississippians to seek private and public respectability at revival meetings also prompted them to aspire to civic respectability. In the late 1880s, city officials, at the insistence of their constituents, strove to improve their

⁴Ackerman Choctaw Plaindealer, 1 August 1890; Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 20 June 1889. See, too, Ackerman Choctaw Plaindealer, 5 February 1897.

communities and promote a decorous lifestyle for the emerging commercial class. The establishment of fire companies and water works, as well as the strict enforcement of ordinances regarding safe and clean sidewalks, were two improvements that symbolized Mississippians' desire to establish order in their new world. After three years of debate, most of which centered on the wisdom of higher taxes, the city of Jackson installed a water works in 1889. Public demand for better fire protection tilted the debate in favor of a water works, but so too did fears that Meridian, which began operating a water works in 1887, would outpace the capitol city in attracting businessmen, schools, and industries. At the same time, Jackson, and even the small town of Carthage, began cracking-down on residents who failed to maintain sidewalks around their homes.⁵

Among city dwellers interested in obtaining for themselves and extending to others the badge of respectability, the formation of building and loan associations was a Godsend. Although the associations usually had a parent company in a large southern city, local investors viewed them as vehicles for the moral elevation of clerks

⁵On the establishment of water works at Meridian and Jackson, see Jackson Weekly Clarion Ledger, 8 December 1886, 12 April 1888, 16 May 1889. On city ordinances addressing the need for clean sidewalks, see ibid., 12 October 1884, and Carthage Carthaginian, 8 July 1892.

and skilled laborers. Home ownership, boosters liked to boast, lent a sense of respectability and belonging that residence in a boarding or rental house could not.⁶ Like finding salvation at a tent revival, beautifying thoroughfares, patronizing local merchants, and electing men of good standing to office, erecting neat homes for families of moderate means ensured that the commercial order would mend the moral and economic rift separating white beneficiaries of the commercial from whites left behind.

The makers and keepers of the New South's commercial order, the middle class, seized responsibility for creating a good society: an homogeneous one in which Victorian notions of order, duty, and respectability were epitomized. Some historians would prefer to discard the idea of a self-conscious and unique "middle class" on the grounds that it fails to recognize the centrality of ethno-cultural identities in the late nineteenth century; others contend that the so-called "middle class" represented nothing more than an ephemeral social group born of an intermediate stage of development. Consensus historians, however, correctly suggest that a self-conscious middle class existed. But, unfortunately they argue

⁶On building and loan associations, see Carthage Carthaginian, 15, 22 March 1889, 28 February 1890; Crystal Springs Meteor, 29 March 1889; Jackson Evening News, 18 February 1898. On the connection between local improvements and prosperity, see ibid., 7 June 1897.

unfortunately that the middle-class, like the antebellum Whigs, served mainly as a link in the cultural formation of liberalism and do not deserve serious consideration in their own right.⁷ Yet the southern middle class of the late nineteenth century was unique. The beneficiaries of the commercial order--professionals, merchants, industrialists, and planters--gleaned their notions of a good republic from ideas of right behavior informed by a self-conscious awareness of their place in the New South; concepts of others' place in society were informed by notions of the past, specifically ideas about the social ethic.

As beneficiaries of the new commercial order, middle-class Mississippians insisted that their cities undertake water works projects, frowned on their neighbors' failure to maintain sidewalks, and lived in new homes constructed by building and loan associations. Despite their apparent friendliness toward the New South, its makers and keepers sensed a great loss. In antebellum times, the white population, rich and poor, had been bound

⁷For an excellent overview of the historiography of the middle-class, see Stuart M. Blumin, "The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals," American Historical Review 90 (April 1985): 302-303, 312, 338. As used herein, "middle-class" defines less a group distinguished by economic status than an amorphous group of citizens committed to ideas of order, respectability, and duty. For a similar definition of the middle class, see C. Robert Haywood, Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 4.

by a common fealty to the social ethic; in the postbellum period, white farmers, laborers, and mechanics suffered from the stark disparities of the commercial order. An homogeneous republic no longer existed. Instead, according to middle-class reformers, whites left behind by the commercial order consumed too much alcohol; they committed crimes too frequently and began their criminal careers at a youthful age; they fell under the sway of sorehead politicians; they retarded the state's sanitary and educational advance. In short, they were alienated from the mainstream of the commercial order by their own failure to adapt or by their refusal to do so.

Those who found a place in the new order concentrated their energy in two broad tracks of moral reform: the cosmetic and the reactionary. First, they sought to eradicate evidence of their contemporaries' shortcomings; teachers and physicians, through the formation of professional organizations, strove not only to standardize their trades but to dictate to society uniform educational and sanitary practices. Prohibitionists too wished to eradicate signposts of disparities in the commercial order. Second, middle-class protagonists of the antebellum social ethic endeavored in reactionary fashion, as had their antebellum ancestors, to isolate those deemed too morally and intellectually inferior to occupy a place in the political economy of the South. For late

nineteenth-century reformers, the degenerate included ignorant whites, the illiterate and the alcoholic, but especially African-Americans. The disenfranchising clause of the 1890 constitution represented the pinnacle of their struggle to redefine the underclass and to reify the social ethic.

Dr. Benjamin Ward believed that where once the South had surpassed other regions in dispersing wealth equally among its citizens, free and independent producers all, the advent of a commercial age begot poverty and dependence. Arcadia was no more; the classless society of the antebellum period had been subsumed. Ward, a prominent member of the Mississippi Medical Association, traced the region's moral, spiritual, and economic declension to two forces: abolition and industry. To Ward, a true lover of the pastoral ideal, industry stood not only for cotton and lumber mills, but all machines, including centralized political and commercial ones, that interfered with man's quest for independence. The commercial world demanded that farmers, to secure sustenance and seed, surrender their independence to the country storekeeper and their wives and daughters to the cotton fields or mills. Whipped, the formerly zestful southern family fell victim to multifarious agents of social decay. Emancipation only made matters worse, Ward said. Free-roaming and unruly blacks threatened whites' safety and proved poorly

suited to the restraints demanded of them by a free social order. Their degenerate habits spread like tuberculosis among downtrodden whites. If only some means could be found to control African-Americans, Ward believed, the Gotterdammerung certain soon to appear on the horizon might be stayed.⁸

Other Mississippians too feared that the commercial order had forever suffocated the virtues of the antebellum South. Remembering her childhood spent among Madison County's planter class, Belle Kearney, a leader of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and later a woman's suffrage advocate, lamented the ascension of moral laxity in the postwar period. Once well-educated and decorous men enjoyed the privileges granted by the institution of slavery, and they set the standard by which all Mississippians wished to live. "It was an era which can never be reproduced; for the factors that created and sustained it have passed--never to appear again." The strains of the commercial order and the emancipation of African-Americans made impossible the survival of the Old South. While broadly agreeing with Ward and Kearney, Letitia D. Miller attributed New South declension to "the rather fanatical Yankee schoolmarm, who broke down all the old barriers,

⁸See clipping of the Atlanta Constitution, 9 May 1887, Benjamin F. Ward Family Papers, MDAH.

old restraints, and knew not how to erect new ones."⁹ While these backward-looking social critics correctly believed that the postbellum South differed from the era that had preceded it, they based their judgements on a view of the Old South that had little to do with reality and much to do with bucolic fantasies of the world in which they wished to live. The sometime shrill calls to revive the antebellum order testified to the impossibility of doing so.

Regardless of their sorrow for the Old South's passing, few late nineteenth-century Mississippians would have wanted to return to it. Most of the middle-class reformers who spoke in mournful tones about the end of an era enjoyed an exalted status in society and wished to preserve it. Not unlike the twentieth-century sociologist Howard Odum who felt torn between affection for the romance of the Old South and the promise of technological progress in the New, middle-class Mississippians wished to forsake neither era. B. W. Griffith, a banker and mayor of Vicksburg, understood the dilemma of his age. How does

⁹Belle Kearney, "Patrician Days in Madison County," Mss., 16 MDAH; Letitia D. Miller Recollections, 15, MDAH. For an assessment similar to Kearney's, see "A Recollection of Thirty Years Ago," Annie Laurie Broidrick Papers, UNC. Almost forty years after Kearney and Ward penned their longing for a return to the homogeneity of the past, William Alexander Percy, Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son (1941, reprint; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1973), published his classic statement on the theme.

one ensure commercial success in the New South without forsaking the values of the Old? He answered his own question by promising businessmen who went to the state a cozy respite from "the chill of commercialism" amidst the ruins of the past, its fallen buildings and its besieged values.¹⁰

The "chill of commercialism" and the warmth of the social ethic, however much besieged, coexisted with ease among middle-class Mississippians. It is not insignificant that Kearney and Ward traced Mississippi's moral and social decay to the introduction of African-Americans into the free social order. Middle-class Mississippians' readiness to look to the past for lessons about the present fostered the development of a civic identity based on the antebellum social ethic. Even though the abolition of slavery robbed the ethic of a key component, white Mississippians' refused to surrender their racial chauvinism and made possible its postbellum replication in near pristine form. Neither is it insignificant that the keepers of the New South, because of the uneasiness they felt about their heterogeneous world, used professional organizations to homogenize society. The treatment accorded whites and African-Americans by teachers and physicians as well as

¹⁰Howard Odum, An American Epoch; B. W. Griffith quoted in typed mss., of his 1911 address before the Southern Commercial Congress, B. W. Griffith and Rondo A. Westbrook Papers, MDAH.

the versions of a well-ordered society propounded by nascent professionals evinced the social ethic's persistence.

Professionals had long attempted to organize themselves, but not until the 1870s and 1880s did they succeed in doing so on a permanent basis.¹¹ Teachers and physicians were among the most influential late nineteenth century professionals. The cause of establishing public schools had attracted Mississippi politicians and progressive-minded citizens since the antebellum period, but the state neglected to implement an educational system until

¹¹Even professionals traditionally distrusted by the population formed societies. Testifying to their desire to correct the public image of their professions and to assert their importance in the commercial order, bankers and lawyers began organizing professional societies. Self-education and protection against unscrupulous practitioners occupied bankers' and lawyers' in convention. Also, as evinced at the 1907 Vicksburg meeting of the bar association, conventioners played the role of sophisticated bourgeois movers and shakers as they dined on a banquet of soft-shell crab, roasted squab, and neapolitan ice cream. On proceedings of the bar association, see Report of the Second Annual Meeting of the Mississippi State Bar Association Held at Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1907 (np. nd.), 35; the menu follows page 20. The original bar association formed in 1885, passed out of existence in the 1890s, and reformed in 1906. For essays presented at a convention, see, Proceedings of the Mississippi Bar Association at its 6th Annual Meeting Held January 6, 1891 (Jackson: State Ledger Printing Establishment, 1892), 10-12, 32-34; a report of an earlier meeting may be found in Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 29 March 1888. On the bankers' association, see Proceedings of the Mississippi Bankers' Association: Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention, West Point, Mississippi, May 20-21, 1913 (Jackson: Tucker Printing House, 1913), and Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention: Mississippi Bankers' Association, Vicksburg, May 5-6, 1914 (np. nd.).

Reconstruction.¹² From its inception, the public school system faced formidable foes. Whites, especially those of Democratic persuasion, complained that Republican administrations expended money extravagantly on schools and protested that tax dollars supported the education of future field hands, an exercise in futility.¹³ When the taxpayers movement and racist sentiment brought Redeemers to power in the mid-1870s, educational concerns, to the detriment of children of both races, quickly assumed a low priority. Nearly a decade passed before Mississippians returned their attention to public education. When the state again became interested in education, it placed a great burden on schools to improve the social and religious condition of communities, improve business, and foment a greater sense of democracy among the future leaders of the state.¹⁴

Undoubtedly, the introduction of industry and railroads accounted for a burgeoning interest in

¹²On antebellum enthusiasm for establishing a system of public schools, see, J. S. B. Thacheron to Governor A. G. Brown, in the Natchez Mississippi Free Trader, 10 September 1845, and 5 November 1845, quoting the Yazoo City Whig.

¹³Percy Easom, "Public School Legislation in Mississippi, 1860 to 1930" (Ph.D. diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1937), 21-26.

¹⁴For public perceptions of what schools should do, see, Jackson New Mississippian, 15 November 1887.

education. Writing to the Clarion, "GTH" posited that educated children possessing the technological and business skills demanded by the New South would make Mississippi competitive in the national economy; smart children would elevate Mississippi to its rightful position in the nation. To achieve such a goal, "GTH" advocated higher taxes and a longer school term. At the same time, the state responded to calls from teachers, farmers, and politicians to "educate girls and get good teachers in every household" by chartering the Industrial Institute and College at Columbus in 1884, the first female school of its kind in the nation.¹⁵ The primary function of the I. I. & C, like that of the Agricultural and Mechanical College founded in 1878, was to educate young folk in the agricultural and domestic arts and thus to mould leaders of the commercial order.

¹⁵Quoting, "GTH" Jackson Weekly Clarion, 2 September 1885, and "Old Boots" idem., 3 March 1886. On the Industrial Institute and College and Mississippi A & M, see David G. Sansing, Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 65-68; and J. M. Martin, "True History of Incorporation of the Industrial Institute and College," Mississippi Historical Society Publications Centenary Series 4 (1921), 277-280, who credited Annie C. Peyton with sparking interest in the college. One advocate of the I. I. & C. suggested that the college would be the equivalent of a "pension [for] the women of Mississippi" who contributed to the war effort; see, Jackson Weekly Clarion, 24 February 1886. On educational goals as interpreted by a southern teacher, see Lyman Hall, "Needs of the New South," Annals of the American Political and Social Sciences (September 1903): 22-25.

Teachers' efforts to establish for themselves a select position in the New South likewise contributed to the renewed concern for educational reform.¹⁶ Their interest in the I. I. & C. reflected not only a desire to educate females but a desire to replace ill-prepared teachers with trained ones. Just two years prior to Education Superintendent John Preston's convincing the state to inaugurate a qualifying exam for teachers, teachers showed signs of an emergent professionalism. At the 1884 statewide teachers' convention, one of the first in Mississippi, participants demanded that a licensing system be established. Administered by county school superintendents, the examinations tested teachers' subject knowledge and their competency to teach particular grades: any score over 75 percent entitled a teacher to a certificate, but a low passing score relegated a teacher to the lower grades and lower pay. In 1886, according to Leake County superintendent D. E. Sullivan, a large number of test-takers failed even to complete one-half of the exam.¹⁷

¹⁶Hinds County teachers had attempted to organize themselves in the antebellum period through meetings and training institutes. See Jackson Mississippian, 12 September 1848, and Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 2 June 1849.

¹⁷Easom, "Public School Legislation in Mississippi," 47; Jackson New Mississippian, 1 January 1884; Carthage Carthaginian, 9 October 1886. For a report of the business conducted at the Northeast Mississippi Teachers Association meeting, see, Dabney Lipscomb to John L. Johnson, 5 July 1886, John Lipscomb Johnson Papers, UNC. Dabney Lipscomb (continued...)

As teachers learned about the method of examination, they passed in greater numbers. The inauguration of teachers' institutes in 1887 perhaps helped, too, though some superintendents complained that few potential instructors attended the early training sessions. Typically, a school principal or district superintendent conducted an institute one month prior to the scheduled exams; some, however, held classes one Saturday a month throughout the year with separate days of instruction for white and black teachers. Tuition for the normal classes was \$2.25, plus the price of room, board, laundry services, and book rental. While advertisements in the Carthaginian indicated that teachers' institutes, specifically the one conducted by Carthage High School principal George J. Leftwich, emphasized subjects such as "Theory and Practice of Teaching," a newspaper editor at Ackerman reported that teachers at a Choctaw County institute took up questions of "practical benefit, as [well as] many questions of importance to the fraternity."¹⁸ Having received from the

¹⁷(...continued)
was the principal of the preparatory department at the A & M college.

¹⁸Carthage Carthaginian, 11 April 1889; Ackerman Choctaw Plaindealer, 1 August 1890. See, too, Carthage Carthaginian, 23 April, 28 May, 19 November 1887, 21 April 1888. Although several small private schools professed to train teachers, the state did not found a teachers' school until it chartered Mississippi Normal College in 1910. See, Sansing, Making Haste Slowly, 81.

state the implicit right to govern admission of members into their profession and to train themselves in sound educational principles, teachers overtly claimed to be respectable New South citizens. As such, they began demanding educational reforms and offering to make over in their own image the youth assigned to their care.

Certification examinations and training institutes operated on a local level, but statewide teachers' meetings vaulted the new professionals into the public arena. In some ways, the annual teachers' association convention served as an training institute: teachers heard essays delivered on subjects ranging from the benefits of agricultural instruction in the schools to the positive and negative influence of the grading system to the proper use of dictionaries as spelling aids. Yet, they also employed annual meetings as forums for educational reform. In a series of resolutions, the association in 1889 asked Mississippi to raise teachers' pay, levy higher poll taxes, charter a normal school, and pay the cost of summer institutes.¹⁹ They also reminded the state of the importance of educating black Mississippians, in segregated schools, and called for the adoption of uniform textbooks, if not

¹⁹Jackson Weekly Clarion Ledger, 3 January 1889. It is not clear whether the state teachers' association was affiliated with any national organization, but advertisements for discounted fares to the Nashville meeting of the National Educational Association appeared in the Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 11 July 1889.

for the entire state, then within each county. The last-listed request drew fire from critics who objected to paying higher property taxes for the sake of maintaining a uniform system of textbooks. In some counties, however, textbook committees immediately began fulfilling the association's request. Despite objections, the state tentatively settled the matter in 1890 when it chartered a statewide textbook commission.²⁰

In exchange for passage of educational reforms and receipt of the prestige accorded other keepers of the New South, teachers promised to inculcate students with a sense of good behavior and respectability. Teachers had long made such claims to create good citizens. But, when late nineteenth-century teachers spoke of influencing children to be moral citizens, they did so with an urgency not previously felt. In a world perceived as badly splintered, teachers had an audience eager to hear that society once again might achieve homogeneity. Yet teachers were not entirely certain how to define good citizenship or a good republic. Contrary opinions about what constituted virtue in the New South appeared at the 1889 Copiah County

²⁰Jackson Weekly Clarion Ledger, 3 January 1889. On the textbook controversy, see, the letter signed "What Next," Raymond Gazette, 18 October 1890; Carthage Carthaginian, 21 May, 15 August 1890. Easom, "Public School Legislation in Mississippi," 156. See, the speech of Miss Anna Tillman, a teacher, who considered the use of specified textbooks by districts across the state as another sign of Mississippi's progress: Raymond Gazette, 21 March 1891.

teachers' institute. A proponent of classical education, for example, argued that schools should not "turn out mere money making machines" while another "professor" suggested that good citizenship and wealth were not mutually exclusive. Good citizens grew wealthy and created jobs for others less adapted to the social order. The terms of the debate reflected the residual influence of competing antebellum notions of the good republic: the yeoman farmer or the market producer. But, the Copiah convention apparently ignored the different versions of good citizenship and endorsed a third version. Nurturing students to be servants of God was teachers' goal in the heterogeneous New South. As Margaret Lackey argued in her address, "Qualifications of Teachers," imparting to students a love of God, man, and the Ten Commandments outweighed scholastic achievement, technical or classical.²¹

The conflict over which code of morality ought to apply to the public school classroom remained confined to professional conventions. Mississippians in general cared little which code of morality turned, in the words of a newspaperman, "the bantling fresh from the nest," the "ungovernable little wretch" to "toil and patience and soul weariness." They only wished that their children exit

²¹Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 14 February 1889.

the school system as respectable citizens.²² Besides, room enough existed within the curriculum to combine lessons in morality founded on principles of both Christianity and the commercial order.

In the public schools of Hattiesburg, the official curriculum detailed teachers' roles as keepers and reformers of the New South. By the early twentieth century, Hattiesburg was a quintessential New South city, prospering but rife with the disparities common to the era. Wealthy sawmill owners lived in large Victorian homes on the southern fringe of town. Not far beyond the trolley car line, which carried the lumber barons to their offices, but not as far west of town as the Normal School the state had started to construct, prostitutes and mill workers lived in what middle-class citizens would have considered a moral and social abyss. Providing the children of those trapped between the Bay Street trolley line and the college sufficient moral fortitude to resist the easy temptations of their world fell upon the shoulders of Hattiesburg's teachers.²³

The school district's curriculum and policy manual directed almost every aspect of teachers' conduct, within

²²Ackerman Choctaw Plaindealer, 3 September 1897.

²³John Ray Skates, "The Early Days," in Kenneth G. McCarty, Jr. Hattiesburg: A Pictorial History (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984).

the classroom and without. The district, for instance, reminded teachers to set good examples for their students and to "make every study and every school duty do effective work in moral training." Success in the commercial order demanded more than the knowledge obtained from books; virtuous citizens needed to possess control over their minds and bodies, apparently arduous tasks in the new order considering educators' emphasis on control. Second graders might expect a stern rebuke if they counted on their fingers or slouched but a gentle correction when they mispronounced a word. "In correcting a mispronounced word," the district suggested, "instead of repeating [the] incorrect form just say he mispronounced." Teachers of the fourth grade were expected to begin cultivating in their students "an abiding taste for the best literature"; fifth graders received their first lessons in history, as well as physiology and hygiene: code words for prohibition instruction. In the upper grades, students studied agriculture and algebra. But, regardless of students' classification, all learned that "the will" must hold sway over common passions. The district coached its teachers to imbue students with a formula guaranteed to produce respectability and success in the New South: knowledge awakens feeling, feeling solicits the will, the will determines conduct. Virtuous citizens who avoided "sin

and selfishness" would obtain happiness through an appreciation of beauty and capital accumulation.²⁴

Teachers were not alone in claiming the privilege of defining virtue in the New South. Like teachers, physicians wished to instill the state and their profession with a sense of self-control and proper behavior. Delivering the commencement address before the Memphis Hospital Medical College graduating class, Dr. Benjamin F. Ward reminded the young doctors of the qualities their profession demanded they possess: "Manhood is the vertebral column that gives support and stamina to professional character. . . . No man rises to the full standard of the true physician who is a moral or physical coward."²⁵ Doctors not only had to meet the challenges of practicing their profession (long hours in service of a dispersed population and mental exhaustion) but they also had to live in such a way as to set a moral example for their communities. As exemplars of moral behavior, Ward contended, physicians might legitimately profess to be keepers of the New South.

²⁴Manual of the Public Schools of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1910-1911 (Hattiesburg: The Martin Publishing Company, n.d.), quoted 65, 13, 23, 64, see too, 14, 34.

²⁵Clipping of "Address to the Graduating Class of the Memphis Hospital Medical College," 111, in the Benjamin F. Ward Family Papers, MDAH.

Just as teachers asserted for themselves the right to be counted as keepers of the commercial order, physicians portrayed themselves as pivotal players in the New South in order to soften some of its rough edges. Perhaps as early as the first statewide meeting of doctors in 1856, physicians began equating Mississippi's physical well being with its economic health. After the war, doctors, particularly those on the state Board of Health, endorsed the admonition that good health fostered prosperity; formation of the board of health in 1875 institutionalized the belief. Across the state, doctors measured their success and failure as healers in terms of dollars and cents. Dr. P. H. Griffin of Meridian counted that city's losses during the 1878-1879 yellow fever epidemic not by the number of deaths but by the amount of money lost due to the quarantine, the cost of drugs, lost wages, and the replacement of destroyed bedding and clothing. As late as 1909, the link between health and wealth received prominent billing at the masthead of the state's first public health bulletin: "Public health is the foundation on which reposes the happiness of the people and the prosperity and power of the country."²⁶ Physicians

²⁶Quoting the pamphlet, "Tuberculosis: Its Causes, Prevention, and Cures," in Report of the Board of Health of Mississippi From September 30, 1909 to June 30, 1911 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1911), 105. See, too, Griffin's comments, Report of the Board of Health for (continued...)

perhaps had an advantage over teachers in claiming the title paladins of the new order; their work during the yellow fever epidemic of 1878-1879 catapulted them into the public arena.

Like other professionals in the late nineteenth century, medical care-givers organized themselves, chartering the Mississippi Medical Association in 1868 for the express purpose of elevating the "character and the protection of the proper rights and interests of those engaged in the practice of medicine." The state association pledged to follow the rules governing the American Medical Association, to initiate only graduates of respectable medical colleges, and to disassociate with members guilty of gross misconduct in the profession or society.²⁷ Membership in the state association grew slowly but steadily. In 1872, about 80 doctors were enrolled, but, in 1904,

²⁶(...continued)
the Years 1878-1879 (Jackson: Power and Barksdale, 1879), 159. See, too, Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1880-1881 (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1881), 45.; Biennial Report of the Board of Health of the State of Mississippi from September 30, 1905 to September 30, 1907 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1907), 5.

²⁷"Constitution and By-Laws of the Mississippi Medical Association as Revised and Proposed by the President, Dr. W. G. Kiger," Mississippi Medical Monthly 2 (October 1892), 73. Transactions of the Mississippi State Medical Association at the Fifth Annual Session Held at Holly Springs April 3rd and 4th, 1872 with Constitution and By-Laws and Roll of Members (Columbus: Excelsior Book and Job Office, 1872), 16-19.

that number had shot up to approximately 520, an increase of 378 in a year.²⁸

One of the chief functions of professional organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the regulation of those who wished to join a profession. Teachers successfully challenged admission of the untrained into the schoolhouse, and members of the state medical association battled corrupt pharmacists and quacks. Numerous articles appeared in the association's official journal warning physicians of shysters in the drug business, who substituted cheap ingredients for those prescribed by doctors. The editor of the Mississippi Medical Monthly called upon the Board of State Medical Examiners to investigate vigorously the practices of pharmacists. Fear of druggists' malevolent ways grew to such proportions that one physician, I. J. M. Goss, warned doctors that "the manufacture of drugs is too much like many other things now, it is to make money; and the jobber thinks nothing of imposing his old worthless stock, upon any unsuspecting physician who does not have time to make his own tinctures, or upon such as are too indolent to do

²⁸Transactions of the Mississippi State Medical Association . . . 1872, (20); Transactions of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session of the Mississippi State Medical Association Held at Jackson April 4th, 5th, and 6th 1894 With Rolls of Members (Jackson: Clarion-Ledger Printing Establishment, 1894), 23. Leon S. Lippincott, "History of the Mississippi State Medical Association," (Mss., 1931), no page, MDAH.

so." Despite physicians' distrust of pharmacists, the medical association categorically refused to approve alliances between doctors and honest pharmacists or to sanction physicians taking out patents for medicines.²⁹ An exaggerated sense of propriety and concern for professional ethics informed the association's fear of pharmacists and the medical marketplace.

Quacks, even more so than druggists, raised the ire of physicians, though sometimes the medical association defined illegitimate practitioners in a self-serving manner.³⁰ Before 1860, those who wished to advertise

²⁹Goss quoted in Marice C. Brown, "Early Pharmaceutics in the Deep South," Mississippi Folklore Register 8 (Winter 1974): 234. A native of Georgia, Goss published a volume, New Medicines and Their Special Therapeutics, describing concoctions that used ingredients such as alcohol, herbs, and cobwebs. His nephew Zeno A. Goss, a physician at Columbia, owned a copy of the book; it is not known if he followed his uncle's advice. For attacks on druggists, see, J. W. Carthart, "Substitution of Cheap Pharmaceutical in the Filling of Prescriptions," Mississippi Medical Monthly 1 (December 1891): 149-153; "Incompetent Boards of State Medical Examiners," ibid., 157-158. See, too, "Constitution and By-Laws of the Mississippi State Medical Association," Mississippi Medical Monthly 2 (October 1892), 73.

³⁰Working with the state, Mississippi physicians established regulations for medical practitioners. But, through the medical association, they also sought to regulate doctors that would not normally be considered quacks. After publishing a pamphlet, "Arraignment of the Official Conduct of the Mississippi State Medical Association," Dr. T. T. Beall was drummed out of the association for making critical remarks. The association treated him as just another crack-pot, calling his publication, "a tissue of misrepresentation of facts and misconstruction of motives." See, Transactions of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Session of the Mississippi State Medical Association Held at Meridian April (continued...)

themselves as doctors had only to purchase a license. Except for the cost of the certificate, nothing prohibited self-proclaimed physicians from practicing any brand of healing they wished. Describing the antebellum licensing process, which continued until the early 1880s, Dr. W. R. Blailock, Chief Health Officer for Leake County, acerbically noted that any doctor could be licensed "even if the sum total of his knowledge consists in his having seen at some period of his life, through a powerful telescope, some of the fly-leaves of an antiquated work on midwifery." Beginning in 1875 with the formation of the board of health, interest in professionalizing health-care providers took shape under the auspices of physicians. Citizens, too, demanded that doctors bear a stamp of approval. In the wake of the yellow fever epidemic of 1878-1879, the board's warning about the sanitary conditions of the state awakened Mississippians even more to the importance of trained physicians. The financial cost, both the immediate price-tag of fighting the fever and the long-term damage to the state's reputation, threatened to weaken Mississippi's appeal as an investment. In 1882, new

³⁰(...continued)
16th and 17th, 1891 (Jackson: Clarion-Ledger Printing Establishment, 1891), 36.

regulatory laws, requiring that applicants for medical licenses pass an examination, went into effect.³¹

Critics of the regulatory laws judged the means of certification a species of class legislation, though physicians insisted that protecting the reputation of legitimate doctors formed the sole purpose of the tests, a hair-splitting distinction to critics.³² Just as with the teachers examinations, licensing tests proved to be a stumbling block for many prospective physicians wishing to practice in Mississippi. According to Dr. Ward, nearly one-half of the medical school graduates taking the test between 1900 and 1904 failed; inadequate writing skills and a lack of scientific knowledge, kept most from receiving their license. But, if examples of answers given in 1894 and published in the Mississippi Medical Monthly are representative prospective doctors' performance on the exam, writing skills had less to do with some students'

³¹Blailock quoted, Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1880-1881 (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1882), 45. On the early work of the Board of Health, see, Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health for the Years 1878-1879 (Jackson: Power and Barksdale, 1879), 1. On the regulation of physicians, see, too, Marshall Scott Legan, "Evolution of Public Health Services in Mississippi, 1865-1910" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mississippi, 1968), 81; Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health 1884-1885 (Jackson: J. L. Power, 1885), 9; Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1886-1887 (Jackson: R. H. Henry, 1888), 4-5.

³²See, the remarks of E. P. Sale, president of the Board of Health, Biennial Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health, 1886-1887 (Jackson: R. H. Henry, 1888), 4.

failure to receive a license than did a dearth of scientific knowledge. Using all of his scientific erudition, one test taker succinctly described the male heart as "larger than the female"; one listed the elements of the body as "animal and vegetable"; one said without a doubt that the umbilical cord should be cut, "when the head is born"; and another ascribed to Divine Providence the inability of the stomach to digest itself. Such examples notwithstanding, of the forty-three young men taking the exam in 1894, thirty-two received their certificates; among the eleven who failed only four had not completed medical school. With an eye toward protecting the public from unlicensed practitioners and discrediting mediocre medical schools, the state Board of Health heaped insult upon injury when it published in local newspapers the names of those who failed the exam along with the colleges they had attended. In 1894, three of the graduates who failed to receive a license hailed from the Louisville Medical College and two from Tulane University.³³

But, physicians formed professional associations for reasons other than protecting their standing in the New South. Beginning in the early 1890s, the state

³³Quoted in, "Meeting of the State Board of Health," Mississippi Medical Monthly 3 (December 1894): 261-262. Biennial Report of the Board of Health of the State of Mississippi From September 30, 1903 to September 30, 1905 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1906), 8.

medical association published its own quarterly journal dedicated to the perpetuation of scientific knowledge. The articles printed generally discussed some aspect of medical treatment, and, since the journal editors, N. L. Clarke and M. J. Lowry, fancied themselves specialists in obstetrics, an inordinate number of the essays dwelt on techniques used in delivering children. Generally, however, physicians published their clinical findings and explained unique cures that they had discovered. County medical associations also used their meetings as forums for the discussion of ailments and treatments. Despite doctors' self-confidence in their own rigorous methodology, what passed for safe and even progressive scientific practice might shock twentieth-century patients.³⁴ Even

³⁴On the dispersion of medical knowledge, see N. L. Clarke, "The Faulty Practice of Obstetrics: A Factor in the Production of Invalidism in Women," Mississippi Medical Monthly 3 (December 1894): 233-239; M. J. Long, "Induction of Abortion for the Relief of Pernicious Vomiting of Pregnancy and Puerperal Nephritis, With Report of Cases," ibid., 1 (September 1891): 8-10; W. S. Sims, "Syphilitic Affliction of the Eye, Ear, Throat and Nose," ibid., 1 (October 1891): 20-27. On ordained practices that twentieth-century readers might find offensive, see the praise bestowed upon the scientific success of Dr. F. E. Daniel, a Mississippi native who edited the Texas Medical Journal. Dr. Daniel's article, "Castration of Sexual Perverts," presented at the American Medico-Legal Congress, received special recognition from the editors of the Mississippi journal: "F. E. Daniel," ibid., 3 (December 1894): 253-255. See also the rejoinder to Clarke, ibid., 233-239, by a Dr. Guice, who advocated electric shocks to the abdominal wall to intensify contractions and hasten birth. On local medical association meetings and papers presented, see Transactions of the Mississippi State Medical Association at the Fifth Annual Session . . . 1872, (continued...)

when discussing a subject like mosquito abatement as a method of preventing yellow fever, Mississippi doctors revealed their lack of medical knowledge. In 1904, despite the long-running contention of the Mississippi Board of Health that stagnant water, and, by association, mosquitoes were related to epidemics of yellow fever, attending the medical association convention engaged in heated debates about mosquitoes as agents of disease. Dr. J. T. B. Berry, a former member of the Havana Commission, could not convince his stodgy peers in the association that mosquitoes carried the disease. In fact, the convention passed a resolution denying that mosquitoes were vectors of the fever, and the physicians petitioned the federal government to remove the Ship Island quarantine station to Dry Tortugas and thus eliminate the threat of infection to which coastal residents were exposed.³⁵

By the early 1890s, the bulk of the medical association's and the Board of Health's work fell under the heading of sanitation. Hard lessons about hog wallows and unkept outhouses had been learned in the yellow fever

³⁴(...continued)

58; "Society Proceedings: Choctaw County Medical Society," Mississippi Medical Monthly 2 (January 1893): 211-213.

³⁵Transactions of the Mississippi State Medical Association . . . 1901, 2-9. Fears that the yellow fever would spread to Mississippi from Ship Island had long been prominent among coastal residents. See, Edward Cary Walthall to William T. Walthall, 26 January 1888, William T. Walthall Papers, MDAH.

outbreak of 1878-1879, and physicians wished to avoid another epidemic. Although doctors bickered over the causes and cures of disease, they united in the attempt to improve the sanitary condition of the state as a means of ameliorating some of the disparities of life in the New South.³⁶ Altering long-established sanitary practices, however, was not an easy task. Many practices, especially those that dealt with water use and the disposal of excrement, had been born on the frontier and passed, like heirlooms from generation to generation. Writing in her memoirs, Letitia Miller recalled that before the Civil War members of her family regularly suffered from various stomach ailments. With knowledge acquired during the late nineteenth century, she realized that her family's habit of drinking water obtained from a cow lot well likely caused the dreaded outbreaks of diarrhea with which she had grown up.³⁷ Spreading such elementary sanitary knowledge among Mississippians, rural and urban residents alike, prompted the state Board of Health to undertake an ambitious educational program.

³⁶In 1894, a group of physicians organized a society to rival the Mississippi Medical Association. But, according to "The Medical and Surgical Society of Mississippi," Mississippi Medical Monthly 3 (December 1891), 257-259, while the competing associations differed over means, both shared a commitment to the "promotion of sanitary science in the state."

³⁷Letitia D. Miller Recollections, MDAH.

The Board of Health singled out what it labeled "soil pollution," a euphemism for the practice of contaminating the ground with bodily waste, as the chief enemy of good health. A number of ailments, particularly hookworm infestation, could be traced directly to Mississippians' unsanitary methods of waste disposal. The incidence of hookworm infestation, an intestinal disease caused by parasites that retard growth and can cause death, apparently escalated in the late 1800s as a transient population flooded into lumber mill encampments in the Piney Woods. Ill prepared for a sudden population boom, rural communities found themselves harboring a set of rough and poorly educated men more wild than tame; sanitary facilities, where they existed, became overloaded, and run off from privies escaped into the water supply. Drinking contaminated water, as well as coming into contact with polluted soil, transported the parasites to humans. Yet mill workers alone should not be blamed for the spread of hookworms. In 1911, the Board of Health found that of 20,979 farm households surveyed in forty-three counties, some 12,712 (60 percent) had no outdoor toilets. Males, the board reported, often used barns and sheds as rest-rooms; children regarded all of the outdoors as a suitable privy. Not surprisingly, infection rates among school

children, who spent their summers out of doors and shoeless, ranged as high as 91 percent.³⁸

Concerned that the presence of hookworms threatened the social homogeneity that they desired to foster, the state Board of Health undertook a campaign to eradicate the parasites. In a pamphlet designed for general distribution, the board advised Mississippians to install proper privies, to refrain from spitting on floors, and to protect against mosquito and fly infestation of privies. To inspire healthful behavior, the pamphlet attacked unsanitary practices on several fronts: Biblical injunctions against soil pollution were cited, and photos of hookworm sufferers, their dwarfed and hollowed frames juxtaposed to the unaffected, were included. The pamphlet also contained working drawings for sanitary privies with automatically closing lids. Additional steps to eliminate hookworm infection began in 1916 with an experimental program conducted in four Pearl River County communities. With the assistance of the Picayune city government, lumber mill operators, and public schools, doctors took stool samples and initiated treatment of the afflicted. They also constructed a number of sanitary privies and

³⁸Report of the Board of Health of Mississippi, From September 30, 1909 to June 30, 1911 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1911), 121-124. On the survey of farm households, see, Report of the Board of Health of Mississippi From July 1, 1911 to June 30, 1913 (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1913), 73-74.

implemented strict guidelines for maintaining outhouses. Citizens who cooperated with the Board of Health had their names listed in the county newspaper and at rural post offices; in the remote community of Vinegar Bend, the board enticed residents to participate in the program by allowing them to observe under a microscope hookworms twisting in their own stool samples.³⁹

Physicians sought to eliminate other diseases that threatened Mississippians but with less vigor than they had employed in the anti-hookworm campaign. Neither the Board of Health nor doctors in general evinced as much concern for ridding the state of pellagra and tuberculosis, diseases from which African-Americans more often than whites died. Hookworms affected both races in color-blind fashion, but tuberculosis and pellagra killed many more blacks than whites. In 1914, for instance, deaths per 100,000 attributable to pellagra stood at 30.8 among

³⁹For a copy of the pamphlet, "Hookworm Disease" and photographic evidence of the physical retardation caused by the parasite, see, Report of the Board of Health . . . 1909-1911, 121-142. The Biblical injunction cited may be found in Deut. 23: 12-13: "Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: And thou shalt have a paddle upon thou weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee." See, ibid., 125. For the Pearl River County eradication program, see, Report of the Board of Health of Mississippi June 1, 1915 to June 30, 1917 (Memphis: Dixon-Paul Printing Company, 1917), 49-60. See, too, a report of similar work on a smaller scale at other sites, Report of the Board of Health . . . 1913-1915, 23-24.

whites and 87.6 among blacks; for tuberculosis, the disparities between the white and black death rate broadened. The absence of proper medical treatment for blacks, a product of physicians' lack of concern for blacks' health, accounted for the higher mortality. Dr. Ward suggested that because of their innate inferiority, moral and intellectual, blacks could not lift themselves from the sanitary equivalents of hog wallows in which they lived. Even had racist insights such as Ward's not existed physicians would have found it difficult to mount a campaign against either pellagra or tuberculosis. Both diseases were products of the New South's commercial order: impoverished diets accounted for the proliferation of pellagra among sharecroppers trapped under the crop lien; foul water and cramped living quarters nurtured tuberculosis.⁴⁰ Physicians, for all their concern about creating a virtuous society, homogeneous and white, healthy and wealthy,

⁴⁰For Dr. Benjamin Ward's comments regarding tuberculosis, see, Biennial Report of the Board of Health, 1903-1905, 6. On concern over the spread of tuberculosis, see, Report of the Board of Health, 1909-1911, 44, in which the board advocated the creation of state sanitarium. See, idem., 61, and Report of the Board of Health, 1913-1915, 63. Pellagra, an indication of low protein levels and deficient amounts of niacin (a catalyst of metabolism and a coenzyme derived from leafy vegetables), captured the attention of the federal government before Mississippi exhibited concern for its sufferers. See, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Dietary Studies With Reference to Food of the Negro in Alabama, 1895-1896 U. S. Department of Agriculture Experiment Station Bulletin no. 38 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897): 8, 11, 20, 55-64.

failed to include among their goals either the eradication of economic disparities or benevolence toward African-Americans.

White middle-class reformers, in fact, believed emancipated African-Americans poorly suited by genetic code to live in the commercial order. The antebellum social ethic had defined virtuous citizens as those who participated in the market and who reveled in the political liberty accorded yeoman producers in a free social order. As slaves, African-Americans, by law, could not participate in the market or take part in political affairs. Whites' persisted in thinking of all blacks as slaves into the postbellum period, even though the Civil War and three federal amendments challenged such notions. By the late 1880s and early 1890s, as the reign of Jim Crow ensued to encourage development of a separate and black middle-class, the makers and keepers of the commercial order doggedly continued to view blacks as at best field hands, a burden for the New South. Allies in the black community, who advocated prohibition or penal reform, could of course be found, but by and large, the white middle-class thought of African-Americans and their segregated world as the antithesis of an homogeneous

society.⁴¹ Just as their ancestors had built the southern social ethic upon the institution of slavery, reformers set about defining liberty-loving Mississippians in such a way as to deny African-Americans a stake in society as freemen.

No post-Redemption Mississippian better characterized white attitudes toward African-Americans than H. S. Fulkerson, the Vicksburg newspaper editor. In his racist diatribe, The Negro: As He Was; As He Is; As He Will Be, Fulkerson bespoke his generation's bewilderment at living

⁴¹The white attitudes outlined here reflect widespread ignorance of black businessmen. As the system of Jim Crow segregation began to be formed in the late nineteenth century and blacks found themselves unwelcome in white businesses, they began to form their own. Black bankers, craftsmen, physicians, and industrialists played a role unseen by whites but a prominent one nevertheless: Neil R. McMillen, Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 164-186. See, for instance, the Jackson Evening News, 6 April 1899, account of black leaders, mostly ministers, meeting with the Jackson Board of Trade to locate land for a "negro cotton factory." The object in creating the factory, according to Rev. O. P. Ross, was to offer society an example of productive African-Americans: "when the negro became a producer and a good citizen that nobody would want to kill him." See, too, D. W. Woodward, Negro Progress in a Mississippi Town: Being a Study of Conditions in Jackson, Mississippi (Cheyney, Pennsylvania: Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race, 1908), and Charles Banks, Negro Bankers of Mississippi, (Cheyney, Pennsylvania: Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race, 1908). A survey of R. G. Dun and Company, Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers, located only one black merchant operating in the years 1865-1880, (Warren County), 81M, 217. Thomas M. Broadwater, a shoemaker since 1869, also served as city cotton weigher and as wharf and harbor master during the early 1870s. In 1874, Dun's agent described him as a "Negro politician, owes more than he is wor[th]."

in a world populated by emancipated freed people. Like his antebellum predecessors who had written similar volumes, he feared the consequences of an empowered underclass and assumed that blacks possessed an inherent depravity and intellectual impotence that made them unworthy of citizenship in a free social order. According to Fulkerson, trouble for African-Americans and the South began when Reconstruction governments extended to ex-slaves responsibilities they were incapable of bearing. The high number of black convicts in the penitentiary testified to their biological unfitness for freedom; some 87 percent of state prisoners were black, according to his calculations. To Fulkerson, the whole of American civilization depended on the emergence of "an Ideal American," a type which through the "homogeneity and assimilating qualities of the people" made possible a good republic. Instead of facilitating the ascension of the well-adjusted "Ideal American," emancipation and the federal government had fostered "an unequal yoking; a yoking forbidden of reason, forbidden of instinct, forbidden of Heaven!". The social equality of the antebellum world had been disrupted and an obnoxious, but necessary, caste system installed to prevent the amalgamation of the races certain to follow. In order to right the incongruence between the nation's reigning theory of government founded on the notion of social equality and the failure of blacks to exhibit even

an inkling of moral courage and civic responsibility, Fulkerson proposed that the government purchase the maritime provinces and certain Caribbean islands as a homeland for ex-slaves.⁴² By removing from the South the perceived cause of postbellum injury and insult, Fulkerson, and other middle-class reformers, believed the region again could achieve the social and political homogeneity that had propelled it to greatness in the antebellum era.

While the solution to the problem of a heterogeneous and contentious social order articulated by Fulkerson found few admirers, his line of reasoning echoed the sentiments of numerous white Mississippians. Prohibitionists in particular utilized the bugbear of immoral, uncontrollable African-Americans to further their cause and stigmatize white allies of the whiskey trade as friends of disorder, the postbellum equivalent of branding whites co-conspirators in slave insurrections. Even northern advocates of prohibition had difficulty escaping the southern social ethic. In a National Temperance Society publication, A. Burwell, for instance, urged Mississippi to adopt a strict law against the sale of

⁴²H. S. Fulkerson, The Negro; As He Was; As He Is; As He Will Be (Vicksburg: Commercial Herald Printers, 1887), quoted, 69, but see, too, 14, 34, 47, 99, 110, 118. On white southerners' concepts of African-Americans' inherent incapacity for living in a free social order, see John S. Hughes, "Labeling and Treating Black Mental Illness in Alabama, 1861-1910," Journal of Southern History 58 (August 1992): 436-439.

alcoholic beverages by pointing out that the state owed its poverty to the proliferation of whiskey. Consumers were non-producers, and non-producers were consumers. The proceeds of "the cotton crop just about pays for the whiskey" drunk in Mississippi, if not exclusively, then mainly, by those who worked the crop. When Charles Betts Galloway, Episcopalian Bishop for the state, called for Mississippians to forsake alcohol, he too made a connection between the whiskey trade and the social exigencies caused by emancipation. In his mind, prohibition was "the watchword of moral reform," but no group would benefit from moral reform more than African-Americans. According to Galloway, reform-minded whites were compelled by their own humanity and love of order to embrace prohibition: "Every true friend of the negro is an enemy of the liquor traffic."⁴³

Since the antebellum period, temperance advocates had regarded their cause as a means of securing social homogeneity but had not bothered to equate

⁴³A. Burwell, Dramshops, Industry and Taxes: Address to the People of Mississippi (New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1875), quoted 22, see too, 6. Charles B. Galloway, Handbook of Prohibition: Specially Designed for Circulation in the State of Mississippi, (n.p. 1886), 3, 87. For an outsider's perspective of motivations for prohibition, see, James Hancock, "Mississippi's Experience With Prohibition," in The 1916 Year Book of the United States Brewer's Association, 105.

African-Americans with the social evils they wished to address; their firm commitment to a social ethic based on black enslavement amply proved the degeneracy of African-Americans. Postbellum prohibitionists, however, saw an indisputable connection between the social ills of the South and emancipation. As elements of moral reform, temperance and prohibition had survived in Mississippi since the late 1820s. The first substantive attempt to curtail the liquor trade occurred with the passage of the short-lived gallon law of 1839, which prohibited the sale of whiskey in quantities less than a gallon. But popular interest in prohibition remained narrow until the Reconstruction era, when, through private laws arising from citizens' petitions, the legislature declared illegal the sale of alcohol within certain counties or smaller entities. Private laws proved to be inefficient tools for prohibitionists. Counter-petitions could just as easily sway the next biennial legislature to sanction the liquor trade; in fact, a number of communities passed from wet to dry to wet again.⁴⁴

Postwar efforts to pass anti-liquor laws began in earnest after Frances Willard of the Women's Christian Temperance Union toured the state and spoke before the

⁴⁴William Graham Davis, "Attacking the 'Matchless Evil': Temperance and Prohibition in Mississippi, 1817-1908 (Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 1975), 10, 19, 21, 39, 43-46, 49.

legislature in 1882. A state chapter of the WCTU was formed soon after Willard's tour, and speakers from around the nation followed Willard into Mississippi. Like the evangelists who worked the state at the same time, the prohibitionist lecturers established a cottage industry around their cause. Sentimental tracts and pamphlets portraying the consequences of enslavement to liquor flooded the state. Although the Mississippi prohibition movement split over whether to promote passage of laws requiring uniform statewide prohibition or local option, the supporters of local option successfully lobbied the legislature to pass a law requiring a popular vote to decide if any county would be wet or dry. Neither prohibitionists nor their foes wholeheartedly favored the law when it went into operation; local option was regarded as merely a political expedient. Agitation for statewide prohibition continued until 1908 when the state banned the sale of alcohol all together.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Davis, "Attacking the 'Matchless Evil'", 81-82, 97; T. J. Bailey, Prohibition in Mississippi: or Anti-Liquor Legislation From Territorial Days, With its Results in the Counties (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1917), 127; W. H. Patton, "History of the Prohibition Movement in Mississippi," Mississippi Historical Society Publications X (1909): 181-185, 193; Galloway, Handbook of Prohibition, 1, 22. For an example of the pre-1886 petitioning campaign undertaken to receive a license to sell liquor, see, Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 January 1885. See, too, Laws of the State of Mississippi (1870), 380-381, 383-384, and Petition of "a majority of the legal voters of Iuka" dated 1 February 1882 to Robert Lowry, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On the role
(continued...)

Arguments in favor of prohibition changed little throughout the history of the movement to expel liquor from Mississippi. In 1844, Duncan McKenzie, a Covington County planter, could not for his life "discover any material difference between drunkenness and theft, whoredom, lying, murder and etc. [T]he first is leading to all the rest in fact it is the main Spring by which all the brutal passions of human nature are Set in operation." Controlling one's "brutal passions" and, in the words of Daniel Kelly, submitting "submissively . . . to [H]im [H]is will at all times and in all things" remained throughout the nineteenth century the focus of

⁴⁵(...continued)

of temperance unions in prosecuting illegal retailers of liquor, see William Hardy to Hattie Hardy, 10 July 1874, William Hardy Papers, University of Southern Mississippi. On the organization of a local prohibition association, see, Carthage Carthaginian, 4 July 1885: it should not be surprising that Dr. Benjamin F. Ward was the leader of the Carthage association. On traveling speakers, see the advertisement for Luther Benson's tour, see Jackson Weekly Clarion, 21 January 1885: Benson, of Indianapolis, was the author of a typically suggestive tract, "Fifteen Years in Hell." Despite complaints about the inefficiency of local option, thirty-nine counties in Mississippi were dry by 1890, including four in which no vote had ever been taken on the matter; see, Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 March 1890. On the split among prohibitionists over local option or statewide prohibition, see ibid., 15 July 1889, in which the WCTU sharply criticized the Prohibition Convention of Mississippi for failing to endorse a blanket prohibition law, and Raymond Hinds County Gazette, 9 February 1884. The role of the WCTU in organizing prohibition forces can not be overstated. See Crystal Springs Meteor, 28 November 1885.

prohibitionists and other reformers such as teachers.⁴⁶

In true New South fashion, prohibitionists of the 1880s and 1890s also pointed out that closing taverns would restore vigor and efficiency to laborers made unproductive by their love of liquor. According to the official organ of the WCTU, one year after Lincoln County prohibited the sale of alcohol, the number of criminal cases on court dockets plummeted from 114 to 37, school attendance rose, and the county produced 2,000 more bales of cotton than it had under the influence of alcoholic spirits. In the early twentieth century, citizens of Greenville petitioned their mayor to prevent flagrant violations of the law, including the operation of brothels and gambling dens, both of which owed their existence to the availability of illegal whiskey.⁴⁷ Portrayals of alcohol as a thief of

⁴⁶Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 5 May 1844, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke; Daniel Kelly to James C. Kelly, no date, James N. Kelly Papers, Duke. On temperance agitation in the antebellum period, see, Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig, 29 April 1845, 30 September 1845; Vicksburg Weekly Whig, 6 May 1844, 9 April 1853; Liberty Advocate, 1 February 1845; Lexington Union, 23 July 1842.

⁴⁷Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 5 May 1844, Duncan McLaurin Papers, Duke. Meridian White Ribbon, September 1888. See, too, the Petition to "The Honorable Mayor and City Council of Greenville," no date, Leroy Percy Papers, LSU. Impressionistic evidence of vast behavioral changes after the passage of local option laws may be found in Bailey, Prohibition in Mississippi, *passim*; for a glowing report of Wesson without whiskey, see Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 October 1885, quoting Wesson Times.

Arguments opposed to prohibition tended to concentrate on constitutional issues. Prohibition, according to wets,
(continued...)

prosperity and a gateway to other immoral behaviors frequently appeared in the prohibitionist press, establishing the prohibitionist cause as the central means of eradicating all unvirtuous civic behavior.⁴⁸

⁴⁷(...continued)

threatened personal liberty and commerce. Prohibitionists answered such charges by pointing to Mississippi's refusal to permit a lottery in the state. Just as the lottery would be injurious to the morals of the state, so too would be the perpetual approval of the whiskey trade. See, Jackson Weekly Clarion, 31 December 1884, 28 January 1885; Jackson New Mississippian, 6 July 1886. J. A. P. Campbell denounced prohibition as a purely moral issue outside the realm of politics; see Mss. of a speech in J. A. P. Campbell Papers, UNC. Johnny Parrott, an English immigrant, opposed prohibition for other reasons: "The county will be called prohibition because they will stuff all the boxes if it cannot be carried any other way. All the cussed old Methodist preachers are doing their best to bring about Prohibition. I suppose they think that they will be able to talk the people into giving them their money instead of spending it for liquor." See, Johnny Parrott Diary, 18 July 1887, MDAH.

⁴⁸All varieties of undesirable behavior were attributed to the presence of the whiskey trade. Samuel A. Agnew reported that drunk youths set aside their bottles and started shooting each other, and he argued that "the dreadful traffic in whiskey" was responsible for breaking up a Booneville church when one of its leading members was prosecuted for selling liquor illegally. See, Agnew Diaries, 24 June 1867 and 29 July 1886, UNC. Mrs. E. O. Miller to John M. Stone, 15 February 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH, pleaded with the governor to send a detective to Ellisville to find the "'blind tigers' and gambling dens" that turned her husband into a beast. Prohibitionists stirred a great fear of alcohol among respectable citizens. Jehu Amaziah Orr, a long-time politician, for instance, penned a plaintive prayer in his diary: "My poor Son is under the influence of whiskey. God help him." See, Orr Diary, 28 June 1890, Orr Papers, UNC. For a sense of how little prohibitionists' attacks on alcohol changed over time, compare William Henry Holcombe Diary, 20 January 1855, Holcombe Books, UNC, and L. L. Pickett to E. L. Noel, 6 March 1908, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

Aspects of educational reform, women's suffrage agitation, and the effort to disfranchise African-Americans sprang directly from the prohibition movement. Not only did leading proponents of prohibition take up other reforms, the movements shared a desire to advance the influence that middle-class whites had over society.

According to prohibitionists, the presence of alcohol in society precipitated a host of immoral activities in which Christian men and the government itself tacitly acquiesced. Particularly upsetting to prohibitionists was the fact that public schools received a portion of their funding from the licensing fees charged tavern keepers. However removed from the public mind remained the process public school funding, the goal of nurturing future servants of the commercial order, prohibitionists argued, was undermined by one of the primary enemies of homogeneity and self-control. In 1884, L. S. Foster of Jefferson County, labeled the extant system of funding public schools evidence of absent moral and fiscal nerve. Not only was the use of such funds immoral, it provided foes of educational expenditures an excuse for not supporting higher appropriations for schools. According to Foster, little of the whiskey money made its way to Jefferson County students. Two-thirds of the fees collected went toward the trial and detention of criminals who committed their misdeeds under the influence of

alcohol, leaving approximately 36 cents to be expended on each child. Incensed by the parsimonious funding of education perpetuated by dependence on the liquor trade, Foster calculated that under the present system each child was maintained in school six days a year. "At this rate every one would be as old as Methuselah before he learned to spell ba-ba."⁴⁹

With the spread of local prohibitory ordinances, the necessity of legally abolishing the hypocritical funding of one variety of moral reform by its antithesis diminished. But, prohibitionist groups, especially the WCTU, undertook other efforts which aimed to further moral reform among children through the elimination of the whiskey trade. In 1888 and 1890, the WCTU convinced the state legislature to require that school districts teach courses in health and hygiene. Ostensibly designed to take the backwoods edge off of students and make them at least appear as miniature burghers, lessons in the course delivered a strong anti-liquor and anti-narcotic message. Governor Robert Lowry, a party lackey who held office without enthusiastic support, vetoed the first bill, but when John Stone re-took the office in 1890, he approved the measure.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Jackson Weekly Clarion, 31 December 1884.

⁵⁰Bailey, Prohibition in Mississippi, 127.

Moulding virtuous and productive citizens into servants of the commercial order motivated teachers and prohibitionists to counter the pervasive appeal of strong drink. The image of children lurking in pool rooms and saloons or running errands for brothels and gamblers frightened the WCTU, and early in the 1890s, the temperance union employed Belle Kearney as its organizer of youth chapters. Unlike the adult union, the "Y's," as they were known, opened their doors to males as well as females so long as they would wear "the white flower of a blameless life." Besides working among school-age children, the WCTU actively recruited members at the Industrial Institute and College. While the college curriculum did not include a normal course, many of its graduates became teachers; the WCTU liked to boast that the 200 student members attending the I. I. & C. would become fierce proponents of prohibition.⁵¹

⁵¹Quoting Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 September 1890. For youthful alcoholics serving as couriers and lookouts for gamblers and brothels, see, Petition to "The Honorable Mayor and City Council of Greenville," no date, Leroy Percy Papers, LSU. On activities of the youth section of the WCTU, see Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 28 February, 15 May, 30 June, 1890. Youth chapters were founded at most large cities, but also little hamlets like Waynesboro, Shubuta, and Okolona; see, ibid., September 1888. On activities of the WCTU at the Industrial Institute and College, see ibid., August 1888. Women not associated with the WCTU also took up a variety reforms. Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 4 April 1891, 4 January 1893, 30 April 1898, UNC, chronicles the good deeds undertaken by Ladies Benevolent Societies to reform the communities of Bethany and Hopewell.

Rescuing children from the evils of Coca-Cola and cigarettes, as well as alcohol, thrust the WCTU into the forefront of the campaign to create an homogeneous society. But, of all the struggles undertaken by the WCTU, none, outside of women's rights agitation, distinguished it from other reform groups more than did the effort to reform the penal system. Dramatic changes in the Mississippi penal system occurred during the 1890s under the impetus of farmers' organizations; the WCTU, however, centered its reform efforts on juvenile offenders. In one of the first issues of the WCTU newspaper, editor Harriet B. Kells called for her fellow female prohibitionists to welcome ex-convicts back into society. Even the simplest gesture would do much to wipe away the indignity of being a convicted criminal. Kells suggested that the WCTU clothe former prisoners as they made their way back home. At the same time, she initiated a campaign to build separate facilities for youthful convicts. Throughout the post-Reconstruction period, the number of juvenile offenders escalated. As the treatment accorded all prisoners, but especially children, became known, the number of petitions requesting pardons for young criminals increased, too.⁵²

⁵²Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, November 1888, 15 January 1890. During the late nineteenth century, juveniles, like other offenders, faced long sentences for minor (continued...)

Although the WCTU was not alone in advocating penal reform, the initial recognition of juveniles' special needs originated with the temperance union. Not until 1896 did the legislature pass a juvenile reformatory bill, but the governor vetoed it. Stymied but not deterred, the WCTU and other reform groups continued to advocate construction of a reformatory. An experimental program at the Rankin County prison farm begun in 1910 testified to the influence that such a program enjoyed among young convicts. According to the teacher hired to educate the boys, Emily Butts, she miraculously transformed a ragged bunch of gamblers, swearers, and smokers into decorous and gainfully employed citizens.

⁵²(...continued)

crimes. Most youths, because of the nature of their crimes, received sentences of one year: Johnnie Williams, a twelve year old was sentenced to one year in jail for stealing sweet cakes from a confectionery, and Willie Defoor (15) and William Sims (18) had to work off the debt they incurred by mischievously damaging a watermelon patch. Stories of mistreatment had long circulated. See Petition to Robert Lowry, 5 May 1883; R. A. Pickett to John M. Stone, 8 November 1890; S. S. Henderson to Stone, 8 November 1890, Governors' Papers, MDAH. The fate of Roberta Johnson, a fourteen year old runaway charged with fighting in public, illustrates the treatment to which juveniles were subjected. In a letter to her father from a county plantation, she reported, "They are whipping me and treating me badly[.] . . . Pa for god sake come to my relief and you will make a good pious girl out of me." See, Roberta Johnson to Rubin Johnson, 18 July 1881; W. W. Cook to Stone, 20 December 1881, *ibid.* Like other youthful offenders, Johnson received a pardon. See, too, Abram Jones to Stone, 16 November 1893, *ibid.*

As feverish reformers of society, members of the WCTU sought to convert children into teetotalers. Through Sunday Schools and YMCAs where they recruited members for the "Y's," in public schools where they warned against the evils of strong drink and drugs, and in prisons where juveniles learned to correct their bad habits, the WCTU attempted to ensure that white children avoided the perils of the commercial order and adapted to it.

Out of the prohibition movement sprang a kindred reform crusade dedicated to the elevation of women to a position of leadership in Mississippi. In the early days of postbellum prohibition fervor, males alone conducted the business of the state prohibition association; some members of the association, in fact, wish to ban females from speaking at meetings. With the formation of the WCTU in the early 1880s, however, women assumed a leading role in the campaign to create an homogeneous society.⁵³ As a unique organization composed solely of women, the WCTU soon incorporated women's rights into its struggle to eliminate the whiskey trade. The wedding of the two

⁵³Davis, "Attacking the 'Matchless Evil,'" 97. Many Mississippi newspapers recognized the influence of the WCTU by permitting local chapters a full column in their editions. For an example, see, Jackson New Mississippian, 11 May 1886; Crystal Springs Meteor, 30 July 1886. Throughout the late 1880s, such columns appeared in most newspapers published at the various county seats.

concerns, prohibition and women's rights, seemed quite natural to leaders of the WCTU.⁵⁴

At the masthead of the White Ribbon, the official newspaper of the WCTU which first rolled off the presses in 1888, ran the slogan "Woman's Protest Against the Destruction of her 'Business'--Home-Keeping," testimony to the wedding of moral reform and women's rights. Women might not only protest the political powers that permitted alcohol a free reign, but they took seriously their traditional role as defenders of family values, characterizing it in the language of the New South as a "Business."

⁵⁴As used here, the term "women's rights" refers to political rights, but the WCTU wished to establish equality in the work place, too. In the Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, January 1889, the temperance union proposed that fifty women with one-hundred dollars each purchase and operate the Crystal Springs Canning Factory, opening employment to women only. If that proved to be impractical, it was suggested that women found an egg farm or women's underwear factory "to solve the pay question practically." Other women, imbued with a sense of their rights, pursued political office. A Mrs. Snell, for instance, attempted to run for Superintendent of Education. According to the Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 11 July 1889, she was qualified to hold the office, but she apparently never tried to procure signatures on her qualifying petition. Women's rights advocates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often combined a host of "moral" and political issues. The Woman's Suffrage Association, founded in 1897, for example, advocated not only broadened suffrage by creation of a state hospital for tuberculosis patients, laws prohibiting spitting on board trains, and laws establishing joint custody of minor children. See "History of the Mississippi Woman's Suffrage Association, 1897-1919," Mss., 6, 13, Nellie Nugent Somerville Papers, MDAH, and Mississippi Woman's Christian Temperance Union: Thirtieth Convention, 56-57.

According to the WCTU, men were the chief enemies of the home, not all men but perhaps most. "Unstable prohibitionists" and "Christian men out of line with the declared policy of their churches," as well as farmers who worked their wives like slaves during the week and came to town on Saturdays to binge, constantly fell under the WCTU's indictment.⁵⁵

But African-American males in particular suffered the wrath of the temperance union. Even though prohibitionists, the WCTU included, pitched their cause to black ministers, many of whom united with the anti-whiskey advocates, African-Americans, especially males, were widely perceived as the primary obstacle to passage of statewide prohibition. Harriet B. Kells, editor of the WCTU newspaper, lamented the fact that blacks, voting as a block, could obstruct passage of local option laws. In a phrase worthy of H. S. Fulkerson, Kells characterized blacks as "the ignorant, vicious, non-tax-paying population," which "legislates for the enlightened Christian property holder." While in kinder moments, she might encourage her readers to proselytize in the black community so that rescue African-Americans might be rescued from "a bondage more hopeless than their former slavery," Kells based her

⁵⁵Quoted, Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 30 April 1889, 15 October 1890, but see, too, 30 July 1889, 15 June 1889, quoting New York Tribune.

appeals for women's suffrage on the assumption that white women at the polls would offset any evil influence that blacks exerted.⁵⁶

With the emergence of the WCTU as an active player in the prohibition movement and women as keepers of the New South order, debate arose about the role that women should play in politics. Some women, even some within the ranks of the WCTU, frowned upon the extension of political rights. They feared that women would lose the moral influence wielded in their homes, and others feared the disruption women voters would cause the Democratic party. Dora Dunbar of West Point, for instance, feared that if women obtained the right to vote, prohibition, the cause that made so many women activists, would exchange its moral appeal for political force. As a political issue, prohibition would draw women into the new Prohibition party, draining their strength as moral reformers in a futile bid to supplant the Democratic party in the South, an exercise that would restore blacks to the terrible political power they had enjoyed during Reconstruction. Regardless of the power women might obtain at the voting booth, Dunbar believed they could neither match the influence of men nor the moral appeal of prohibition; in the

⁵⁶Quoting *ibid.*, October 1888, August 1888. For a similar appeal to blacks see, the Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 October 1885.

process of becoming mere political operators, women would forsake the innate moral leadership they assumed in the community and the home. Mollie McGee Snell objected to the granting of political rights to women for similar reasons: as keepers of the home, women possessed the most important political power they might ever wish for; they incited the brains of their children and husbands to vote in a responsible manner. While obtaining the vote themselves would ostensibly increase women's authority at the voting booth, it would dilute their influence at home.⁵⁷

Besides such opposition to the extension of suffrage, women feared that the interjection of their gender into the political process might break the strong hold the Democratic party exercised over southern politics.

⁵⁷Jackson Weekly Clarion, 1 April 1885; Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, September 1888. See too, the letter signed "Embard" in the Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 22 August 1889, and the speech of Annie C. Peyton, one of the activists who successfully lobbied the state to charter the Industrial Institute and College, reprinted in Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 July 1886: "What this country needs in NOT STATESWOMEN, but mothers--earnest, Christian women, who read the Bible, and are guided by it--who love home, and take care of it, and who train their children in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord.'" Agitation to pass a 16th Amendment securing women's right to vote most offended Peyton, she said, because female advocates conducted Sabbath Day strategy sessions. According to Peyton, women obtained as much power as she needed on the day they married, though she also argued in favor of women's education as a source of empowerment: "We do not complain that we are fettered, save by ignorance and poverty, and honest education will break these chains." See, too, Crystal Springs Meteor, 28 November 1885, on woman's moral influence.

Although some women welcomed the idea of female prohibitionists upsetting the unholy alliance of the Democratic party and whiskey brokers, most quaked at the thought of precipitating another Reconstruction-like era of "Black Republican" rule.⁵⁸ As women filtered into the WCTU, an organization outside the mastery of males, politicians grew alarmed at the possibility of a vibrant Prohibition party. Even though leadership of the WCTU remained uncertain about allying with the national third party, the willingness of the women's union to consider seriously the benefits of the uniting with the Prohibitionists separated it from the male-dominated state prohibition association. Repeatedly the State Prohibition Executive Committee, headed by W. C. Black, declared its enmity toward the

⁵⁸The WCTU frequently loosed bitter denunciations of the Democratically controlled state government. In early 1890, for instance, the Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 January 1890, castigated male politicians for permitting the whiskey trade to operate: "This Christian government is in partnership with the liquor traffic." This attitude coupled with the active courtship of women through the suffrage issue made the Prohibition party a threat to Democratic dominance. As the Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 7 June 1888, noted, "it is disagreeable enough for white men in the South to struggle against the vote of the unlettered black man without a similar contest raging between white and black females." But, the author of that observation also predicted that women would disregard the Prohibition party.

Other Mississippians too feared the alliance of African-Americans and wets. In 1889 in Leflore County, Judge S. S. Calhoun, according to one report, "delivered a speech which, for giving backbone to the negro and tending to override the white prohibitionists of the county, could scarcely have been discounted by a carpet-bagger in reconstruction days." See, B. T. Hobbs to A. H. Longino, 8 March 1900, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

third party and portrayed the few thousand Mississippians who enrolled with the Prohibitionists as soreheads. The WCTU, on the other hand, agonized over the decision, dragging out familiar arguments in rejection of the third party and inverting them to justify a split from the Democrats. For example, the WCTU argued at one time that if sufficient southern females joined the party of prohibition and the party won a presidential election, the Prohibitionists would usher in a new day of southern political domination. The dream of an unreconstructed, even a resurgent, South infected females who assumed the moral high ground offered by prohibitionist sentiments. In another instance, at the sixth annual WCTU convention in 1889, Kells advocated that the union support the Prohibitionists, even though they endorsed women's suffrage, in order to sever all dependence on African-Americans in the dry crusade. But the trepidations awakened by the prospects of a third party exterminating the color-line kept the WCTU from officially embracing it.⁵⁹ Maintaining and strengthening the color-line, an object collateral to fostering a homogeneous society, was, after all, a variety of moral reform encouraged by the WCTU and made all the

⁵⁹See, Jackson New Mississippian, 24 October 1885; Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, December 1888, 30 April 1889; Jackson, Weekly Clarion, 24 December 1884.

more important in a political age of Democratic bolters and soreheads.

Since the Redeemer victories of 1874 and 1875, disgruntled office seekers frequently ran independent campaigns against regular Democratic party nominees. Some of the bolters united with Republicans and Greenbackers and overtly wooed black voters. Prohibitionist sentiment merely introduced to the political fracas of the 1880s another politically active coterie with which the Democratic party had to reckon. The anxiety generated by the threat of women, the most vocal among prohibitionists, entering the political arena made it imperative that official party candidates reach out to prohibitionists. Events surrounding the 1886 battle for the Democratic congressional nomination in the central district of the state sealed prohibitionists' allegiance to the Democratic party. Just months after the legislature passed the statewide local option law, C. E. Hooker, a favorite son among Democrats and prohibitionists, faced long-time bolter and occasional party loyalist Ethelbert Barksdale in the primary election. Barksdale, a member of a prominent political family and a former newspaper editor, assembled a cast of supporters easily characterized by the Hooker camp as politically dangerous and wet. The presence of two out-of-favor wets among Barksdale's supporters (Jones S. Hamilton, leaseholder of the state penitentiary,

and John McGill, the white Republican mayor of Jackson) ensured that "drys" would portray the election as a moral crusade. Charges and counter-charges of corruption permeated the county conventions, but, as if to signal the demise of threats to transform moral reform into an anti-Democratic issue, Hooker received the nomination.⁶⁰

Even though the 1886 election and passage of the local option law by a Democratically controlled legislature settled the question of party loyalty for most prohibitionists, they remained relentless in their attempt to remove from office the friends of alcohol and immorality. Several of Barksdale's allies during the election emerged as central figures in a far more important political battle over moral reform and Democratic control of political machinery. In January 1888, John McGill lost his bid for reelection. On the surface, his defeat appeared to be little more than a classic Redeemer-era battle between Democrats and "Black Republicans." Considering his alliance with the Barksdale faction two years earlier, it might be argued that his overthrow was a matter of revenge orchestrated by party regulars. But, much more was at stake in the 1888 election than party loyalty or "home rule."

⁶⁰Accounts of the contested primary appeared in many south-central Mississippi newspapers, but for the most insightful, see, Jackson New Mississippian, 24 August 1886.

As a white Republican, McGill could count on finding few friends among Jackson's Democrats, a search made all the more difficult by his courtship of Barksdale. Despite the opposition McGill faced, most citizens of Jackson, even hardened Democrats, could not deny that the mayor had lowered their tax burden, retired most the city's debt, and augmented internal improvements by bridging the Pearl River. Such fiscal accountability, however, failed to silence McGill's critics. For all of his success in managing the city's affairs, McGill's tenure in office had been tempestuous. Over his objections that prohibition would drive the whiskey trade underground and away from his watchful eye, prohibitionists took advantage of the local option law and outlawed the sale of alcohol in quantities less than one gallon. His opposition to the gallon law did not endear him to advocates of moral reform, who initiated a campaign against him. Rumors began to circulate that McGill secretly favored prohibition but wished, through his public rejection of it, to drive his enemies into the dry entourage. With taverns closed, his critics charged, McGill hoped to gain control of the black market whiskey trade.⁶¹

⁶¹U.S., Senate, "Municipal Election at Jackson, Mississippi," 50th Cong., 1st sess., Sen. Misc. Doc. 166, 5, 10-11, 391, 402. See, too, reports of the testimony in Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 19 April, quoting New Orleans, Picayune, and 17 May 1888. Opponents of the various
(continued...)

Ascribing to the mayor such Machiavellian motives permitted prohibitionists to label McGill the instigator of all criminal activities. In the eighteen months preceding the 1888 election, plenty of blame was placed in McGill's lap. The whiskey trade tolerated, if not encouraged, by the dishonorable mayor, prohibitionists said, accounted for the presence of prostitutes on the streets and three murders that occurred between 1886 and 1888. One involved the shooting of a town drunk, who became obnoxious at a tavern. The second left Roderick Gambrell dead and Jones S. Hamilton charged with the crime. Gambrell, the editor of Jackson's prohibition newspaper, the Sword and Shield had passionately denounced Hamilton during the 1887 election campaign. Hamilton, feeling insulted, retaliated with sharp words of his own. The exchanges between Gambrell and Hamilton soon animated intense feelings on the streets of Jackson, as residents chose sides in the debate. When someone ambushed Gambrell while he walked across the new Pearl River bridge, the city knew that the tensions of the past two years would soon come to head.⁶²

⁶¹(...continued)

Republican administrations in Jackson had long imagined an unsavory alliance between the city's mayors and unscrupulous blacks. See, Jackson New Mississippian, 1 January 1884.

⁶²"Municipal Election at Jackson," 2-4, 7-8.

On December 24, 1887, even as Hamilton sat in the city jail awaiting trial, the city erupted. Christmas Eve, traditionally a night of boisterous celebration, turned bloody on South President Street when McWillie Mitchell, grandson of ex-Governor William McWillie, had his throat slashed. His assailant, an African-American identified as Bob Whitesides, was mortally wounded by Percy Gambrell, one of Mitchell's companions and a relative of Roderick. Investigators generally agreed that Mitchell, Gambrell, and another white youth had spent their evening blowing horns and shooting fire-crackers on the streets. Accounts differed as to whether they had been drinking. Just before Mitchell was killed, the white youths had exchanged words with Whitesides and several of his friends, who were drinking whiskey on a street corner. The exchange provoked Whitesides to rush into a butcher shop and snatch a knife with which he attacked Mitchell. More so than the murder itself, reports that a black police officer had instigated it by commanding Whitesides to "carve him" excited the passions of the anti-McGill forces.⁶³

According to civic reformers, McGill's refusal to break with his black constituents and join them in cleaning up the city nurtured the evil ways of Jackson's

⁶³Ibid., 5.

murderous and immoral. The murders of two prominent citizens, both of them "drys", testified to the disorder promoted by the mayor's administration. Of course, McGill's political allegiances and the composition of the police force, roughly one-half African-American, did little to assuage the moral reformers. Within days of Mitchell's murder, Democrats and Republicans, including representatives of the federal government, organized a Committee of 100 to unseat the mayor. Predictably race became a focus of the anti-McGillites. The Committee of 100 appealed to Jacksonians to unite against a Republican administration in the capitol city of a Democratic state. The Young Men of Jackson, a hastily formed vigilance committee, also linked straight-out Democratic politics with moral reform. "One of our number [was] coldly, cruelly, and hellishly murdered in the dark by a negro bully set on by a negro policeman of this negro-cursed city"; nothing short of overthrowing "this black and damnable machine miscalled a government" would satisfy them. Legitimate political organizations too took up the cause of political revolution. In the wake of the Mitchell murder, the Democratic Reform ticket, headed by mayoral aspirant William Henry, quickly adopted as its motto "Down with negro policemen and jailers," hoping to appeal to all anti-McGillites, its base of support, as well as others angered by the administration's tolerance for

depravity. Faced with such opposition and fearful of a violent election day, McGill, after consulting with the Republican faithful, Democratic soreheads, and black community leaders, obtained the resignation of all black candidates from the Republican ticket. He also received from the black community a pledge not to cast ballots.⁶⁴

Three weeks after the Jackson mayoral election, United States Senator James Z. George wrote Governor Robert Lowry a congratulatory note for his handling of the affair. Bloodshed had been avoided, and the election, judging by its results, seemed well managed to the former leader of the Revolution of 1875. Nevertheless, the events of December and January had been disruptive to the good order normally enjoyed in Mississippi. To avoid future disruptions, George recommended that the governor ignore the public clamor for a constitutional convention and veto any measure that the legislature might pass convening one.⁶⁵ It was not coincidental that public sentiment in favor of a convention, a sentiment that had persisted since the adoption of the 1869 constitution,

⁶⁴Ibid., 14, 17, 23.

⁶⁵James Z. George to Robert Lowry, 25 January 1888, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Although George obviously opposed calling a constitutional convention, he is credited with penning the law which made that document famous.

reached a crescendo after the Jackson election.⁶⁶ The state's attention had been riveted on events taking place in Jackson, a reminder of the perils presented by African-American citizenship. For several years, farmers in the eastern part of the state had outlined plans for a constitution, and, with the evidence offered by events at Jackson, the keepers of the New South order joined spiritedly in the crusade to reform the state's organic law. The forces which provoked the overthrow of McGill's administration, middle-class opposition to African-American liberty and favor for prohibition, flowed together in the Constitutional Convention of 1890.

Previous historians of the convention have properly accorded its calling to multifarious forces. The Farmers' Alliance, particularly chapters in the eastern counties of the state, had since the mid 1880s advocated a convention as a means of correcting injustices committed against poor white counties and farmers.⁶⁷ But, middle-class reformers had remained cool toward the idea of a

⁶⁶Justifications for calling a convention changed through the years. Originally, unbridled hate for anything which reminded Mississippians of Reconstruction motivated calls, but by 1885, advocates of a new constitution pointed to a host of changes needed--none of which mentioned disfranchisement. Only in the late 1880s did disfranchisement assume importance. See Jackson Weekly Clarion, 16 September 1885.

⁶⁷For a discussion of farmers' specific motivations in advocating a convention, see Chapter 8.

convention until the late 1880s. Undoubtedly, the affair at Jackson swayed many to embrace the convention, as did the apparent awakening of African-American voters indicated by 1889 reorganization of the state Republican party and the political stirring among white critics of the Democratic party. Indicative of the sentiment that motivated middle-class reformers to support disenfranchisement, William T. Walthall began in 1890 a four-year search to validate a rumor that the Georgia legislature had voted "'on the question whether the negro should be emigrated or exterminated' and that the proposition to 'exterminate' had been Lost only by a tie of the presiding officer."⁶⁸ To middle-class reformers, tangible threats to creation of a homogeneous body politic had started to congeal, and the disfranchisement of the ignorant and the

⁶⁸Quoting Edward C. Walthall to William T. Walthall, 2 May 1890, MDAH, but, see, too, John B. Gordon to William T. Walthall, 26 January 1894, William T. Walthall Papers, MDAH. Both J. Morgan Kousser, The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), 139-145, and Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (1951, reprint: New York: Harper Torchbook, 1965), 58-64 emphasize the influence of internal and external political pressures in calling the convention. James P. Coleman, "The Origin of the Constitution of 1890," Journal of Mississippi History XIX (April 1957): 69-92, and Eric Charles Clark, "The Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890: A Political Analysis," (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1975), concentrate on the role of agrarian discontent. Neither view lacks merit, but the emphasis here is on the constitution as means of reestablishing the antebellum social ethic.

vile, black and white, represented the most practical solution to the problem.

After two failed efforts to convene a convention, Governor John Stone and both houses of the legislature approved the measure in 1890. Portrayed by middle-class reformers as a panacea for restoring social harmony, the convention, as all but the dumbest Mississippian knew, was convened to revoke blacks' political rights. The line of reasoning employed to cover, if barely, the state's sinister motives proclaimed that politicians, Democrats especially, taught their children a sad lesson when they resorted to physical violence and vote fraud to offset African-American votes. In the plain terms of Frederic Speed, Mississippians decided in the convention that it was "cheaper to out count the niggers than to kill them."⁶⁹ Through disfranchisement, it was hoped that more than peace at the ballot box could be established. Ideally, the removal of African-Americans from the political life of the state would return them to what southerners imagined as a voiceless and powerless status in society similar to that established by their previous condition of servitude. Others among the advocates of disfranchisement had broader dreams. Convention president Solomon S. Calhoun argued that disfranchisement was the first step in

⁶⁹Frederic Speed to A. M. Paxton, 23 September 1894, John M. Stone Papers, MDAH.

fulfilling the vision of H. S. Fulkerson, a separate nation for African-Americans. As things stood in 1890, "conflicting aspirations & apprehensions must lead to continual jars & frequent hostile collisions, which would not occur with homogeneous races" living in their own nations.⁷⁰

Notwithstanding the rhetoric that promoted the permanent settling of, as William S. McAllister put it, "our race problem on the safe basis of intelligent supremacy," some Mississippians opposed the convention. As previously noted Senator George had not initially supported the convention, and had he been able otherwise to placate his agrarian constituents George probably would have declared against it in the end. His colleague in the senate, Edward C. Walthall, acting as the latter-day grandee that he was, refused to support the convention, too, even when Congress began considering the "Force Bill" to reestablished federal observers at southern elections. Masterful politicians like himself, Walthall believed, knew how to control black voters, or at least to keep them in their place, and needed not run the risk of arousing anew the nation's antipathy. Walthall knew also that the Fifteenth Amendment prevented the outright restriction of African-Americans' voting rights. For the hardened

⁷⁰See two untitled manuscripts in the Solomon S. Calhoun Papers. Quoting a speech delivered in Illinois in 1910, 10.

supporters of the convention, flaunting their disregard for the amendment strengthened their resolve to restrict suffrage.⁷¹

Plans to erase blacks from the political, and thus social and economic, world came in many guises. Mississippians trotted out sincere, quixotic, and even facetious disfranchising measures, but most represented some form of educational or property qualification. J. A. P. Campbell, a former judge, became the fiercest advocate of property qualifications as a means of restricting voting rights. Realizing that the Farmers' Alliance viewed the convention as their opportunity to unseat the staid Redeemer clique, Campbell tried to sell his idea as a sure-fire method of

⁷¹William McAllister quoted in Raymond, Hinds County Gazette, 1 May 1886. In 1890, few Mississippians mentioned the 15th Amendment as an obstacle in disfranchising blacks, but it was assumed that subtle forms of suffrage restriction that failed to target specifically African-Americans would not violate the amendment. Writing to the Jackson Weekly Clarion, 29 August 1889, M. Green argued that the federal guarantee of voting rights without regard to color did not establish African-Americans as men or citizens. Only Divine Providence could anoint flesh with the powers of reason and concern for justice, attributes that whites had long argued blacks were missing. For a disapproving exposition on disfranchisement and the southern interpretation of the 15th amendment, abbreviated in Green's letter, see, Andrew C. McLaughlin, "Mississippi and the Negro Question," Atlantic Monthly 70 (December 1892): 828-837.

On Walthall's opposition to the convention, see, Jackson Clarion-Ledger, 31 October 1889 and Walthall to W. H. McCardle, 20 July 1890, William H. McCardle Papers, MDAH. After passage of the constitution, Walthall defended it in Congress when arguing against passage of the Henry Cabot Lodge's "Force Bill." See Grenada Sentinel, 1 November 1890; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd sess., 1362-1363; idem., 51st Cong., 2nd sess., Appendix, 72.

restoring the political equality ordained in the Constitution of 1832, which first granted to all white males the right to vote. Like his predecessors, who pledged that the formation of a broad electorate fostered a sense of shared responsibility, Campbell argued that elimination of the class line that threatened white unity and social homogeneity was the best defense against the encroaching rule of the underclass. Under his plan, the privilege of voting, for it was not a natural right, accrued to the worthy. For every 80 acres of land owned, one vote would be granted; additional votes would be allowed for every \$500 to \$1,000 of real estate owned for those with fewer acres. A maximum of five to ten votes per male citizen might be established, Campbell suggested. Most blacks, though legally eligible to vote, would be disfranchised under Campbell's plural voting scheme, but, according to his calculations, only 20 percent of whites would lose their right to vote. Best of all, in Campbell's mind, plural voting based on property qualifications would encourage whites to abandon tenancy and eradicate the growing class division apparent in the rise of agrarianism.⁷² Campbell found few admirers of his plan. One anonymous letter writer called it "the most dangerous proposition ever offered our people." The plural vote scheme based on

⁷²Jackson New Mississippian, 31 July 1889, but see, too, 30 April 1890, 4 June 1890. Raymond Gazette, 5 April 1890.

property was so unpopular, in fact, that Campbell failed to win a seat in the convention. His son, R. B., a Washington County delegate, was a virtual lone voice heard in the convention in favor of the plan.⁷³

With the idea of property qualifications doomed before the convention met and knowing that the Fifteenth amendment prohibited a frontal assault on African-American voting rights, delegates had to whip the devil around the stump to disfranchise the depraved.⁷⁴ The WCTU, long the

⁷³Quoting "Pro Bono" in the Carthage Carthaginian, 27 June 1890. "Caucasian" in the Raymond Gazette, 19 April 1890, decried Campbell's plan as weak, as it left open the door for blacks to vote. On the hopeless fate of the Campbell plan in convention, see the correspondence of the delegate Irvin Miller, Carthage Carthaginian, 22 August 1890.

So loathed was Campbell's plan, wags could not resist poking fun at it. In derision of Campbell, Samuel D. Harper, editor of the Raymond newspaper, offered his own complicated version of plural voting: every male over twenty-one, not born out of wedlock after 1866, would receive one vote; for every dependent female living in his household, plus his wife and any minor sons, he would be granted an additional vote. But, the sum of bonus votes would be reduced by the number of bastard children fathered and the number of dogs owned over the age of ten days. See, Raymond Gazette, 19 April 1890. J. Foote, in a letter to convention delegate Charles K. Regan, 30 July 1890, Charles K. Regan Papers, MDAH, offered another facetious answer to Campbell's plan: "I wish you would advocate the fat man[']s plan for the restriction of votes & increase them also. 'Every man who weighs over 200 has 2 votes & if his wife weighs 200 he is entitled to cast her 2 votes.'" By Foote's own admission, he would then be able to cast four ballots.

⁷⁴The colorful phrase used to describe the method of disfranchisement pursued by the convention--"the devil must be, in a manner, whipped around the stump. . ."--derives from the Memphis Appeal, quoted in Eric Charles Clark, "The Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890: A Political (continued...)

enemy of the irresponsible and immoral, perhaps best represented the spirit of the convention. Although women occupied no seats at the convention, champions of their cause waged war against "the ignorant, vicious, negro vote," the very enemy that the WCTU had often accused of siding with the whiskey lobby, railroad magnates, and ring leaders to block prohibition legislation. WCTU observers at the convention proclaimed that such an alliance not only perpetuated the whiskey trade but facilitated blacks' as well as other degenerate pretenders to citizenship continued access to the ballot. In order to remedy the "great mistake" committed under the auspices of federal constitutional amendments (the unleashing of a "'free negro' spirit" and the founding of "equality of two antagonistic races on the same ground and under the same laws"), the convention needed to reestablish the reign of the morally and mentally superior.⁷⁵

During the constitutional convention, the WCTU overtly turned against what prohibition leader J. B. Chrisman called "white ignoramuses," as well as African-Americans. Harriet Kells had little patience for delegates unwilling to sacrifice through educational

⁷⁴(...continued)
Analysis" (M. A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1975), 100.

⁷⁵Quoted, Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 June 1890, 15 July 1889, November 1888.

qualifications an estimated 12,000 ignorant white voters for the sake of disfranchising 90,000 blacks. Any delegate who refused to disfranchise the illiterate, Kells said, was "unworthy of the gift of the office of constable from the people"; they were as unfit for leadership as the obviously degenerate were unfit for citizenship.⁷⁶ Attacks against those left behind by the commercial order of the New South opened the door for women to seek the franchise. By giving women the right to vote, the WCTU newspaper argued, justice for the state's moral leaders would be served and "the progressive spirit of the age" fortified. Even though the WCTU argued that female voters would elevate the moral character of political contenders, the convention was more concerned about protecting the moral influence of "our women" by keeping them from the political fray.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, in late August, less than ten days after the convention opened, J. W. Fewell of Meridian put forward a proposal to grant women who owned, or whose

⁷⁶Quoting J. B. Chrisman in Carthage Carthaginian, 19 September 1890; Kells quoted in Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 July 1889.

⁷⁷Quoting Raymond Gazette, 30 August 1889, and Carthage Carthaginian, 29 August 1890. The last quote may be found in Irvin Miller's letter from the convention in which he related the proposition to disfranchise wife-beaters. See, too, S. S. Calhoun's assessment of women's moral superiority and the implied need to protect it from the sullyng effects of politics; Address to the Madison County Fair, 1891, Mss., Solomon S. Calhoun Papers, MDAH.

husbands owned, three hundred dollars of unencumbered real estate, the right to vote. A similar pre-convention plan had been proposed by Judge Warren Cowan, and according to Cowan's calculation, the enfranchisement of women would turn a 22,000 black majority into a 15,000 white majority without antagonizing northern observers. After much heated debate over Fewell's proposal and consideration of many substitutes and amendments, the franchise committee, headed by Senator George, voted it down by one vote. For years, the WCTU and later-day women's suffrage advocates looked back wistfully to the pre-convention days when they felt certain their political rights would be secured. The poll tax and residency requirements passed by the convention appealed to them, but the "understanding clause," which permitted illiterate whites to avoid the educational qualification of the constitution, prolonged in their view the rule of "white ignoramuses" at the expense of women.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Clark, "The Mississippi Constitutional Convention," 106-107. On Cowan, see, Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon, 15 April 1890; Jackson New Mississippian, 30 April 1890, quoting Woman's Journal. Mississippi Woman's Christian Temperance Union: Thirtieth Convention, 20. On the franchise measures passed in convention, see, Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi Begun at the City of Jackson on August 12, 1890 and Concluded November 1, 1890 (Jackson: E. L. Martin, 1890), 228-230, 628-633.

With the defeat of women's suffrage at the 1890 convention, women activists altered their arguments in favor of the extending the franchise. The former argument that the moral superiority of women would be diminished by their involvement in politics was stood on its head. According to
(continued...)

To middle-class reformers, the constitution achieved mixed results; one class of voters considered ignorant and vile retained the right of suffrage, but blacks were effectively disfranchised; provisions establishing statewide prohibition did not make their way into the constitution, but a permanent ban on lotteries did. Agitation to reform society persisted into the twentieth century. Occasional triumphs were achieved: a state reformatory for juvenile criminals and a sanitarium for tuberculosis patients were founded; eventually, women received the right to vote. Yet middle-class reformers could hardly consider themselves victorious in creating an homogeneous society. The task was too daunting, and the

⁷⁸(...continued)

Nellie Nugent Somerville, "American institutions can not be preserved without the infusion in to the body politic of a new moral force." Disfranchised women could not teach their sons the proper and patriotic use of the ballot. See Somerville's "Address Before the First Annual Woman's Suffrage Convention, March 28, 1898," Somerville Papers, MDAH. Also, see, Somerville's Moral Leadership: The True Basis of Woman Suffrage (Greenville: Democrat-Times Printing, n.d.), in which she characterized the demand that women work but not vote as "the double-standard of morals," and offered suffrage advocates a slogan: "'Let the women think.'" Political freedom inevitably followed, Somerville added, "the consciousness of moral and intellectual freedom." Appeals based on women's moral leadership remained a feature of suffrage advocates' arguments, as they sought, like the WCTU, to create an homogenous society: "Every question in this life must be decided in the light of responsibility to God." See "Address of the State President Before the Woman's Suffrage Club of Clarksdale, Mississippi, U.S.A., November 18, 1898" Somerville Papers, MDAH. After 1890, some Mississippians seemed sanguine about the reality of woman's suffrage; see Henry Waring Diaries, 11 February 1895, MDAH.

political tensions, in part set loose by the Constitution of 1890, opened Mississippians' eyes even more to heterogeneity of the age. If, as Solomon Calhoun said, "the great object of political economy is to equalize the distinctions of wealth," the goal of creating an homogeneous society was nowhere in sight after 1890. It was the nature of the commercial order, after all, to divide society between the great and the small: those committed to the present who based their concepts of a good republic on oppressive aspects of the antebellum social ethic and those uneasy in the present who based their concepts of a good republic on communitarian and democratic aspects of the social ethic. Emancipation, Mississippians knew, had removed the glue which held together the disparate aspects of the ethic. Unfortunately, at the same time that both halves of white society, agrarians and middle-class reformers, clashed over prevailing notions of political economy, they sought, symbolically and actually, to eradicate African-Americans from the New South. Turning against racial prejudices would have done much to create an homogeneous order, but as Adelbert Ames observed, that was nearly impossible for southerners, whose sense of the good republic depended upon the existence of a black underclass: "The days are many before Christ's Sermon on

the Mount will be our practical religion. Mississippi like other states has a weary task before it."⁷⁹

⁷⁹Quoting Solomon S. Calhoun, "Address to Confederate Veterans," Mss., 14, Calhoun Papers, MDAH; Adelbert Ames to Dunbar Rowland, 20 March 1929, Ames Papers, MDAH.

Chapter Eight

Another Version of Homogeneity

Prompted by a desire to create a society that conformed to their ideal notions of the Old South, the benefactors of the New South initiated attacks on postbellum social ills. According to middle-class reformers, Mississippians obviously left behind by the commercial order retarded the state's economic and moral advance. Those physicians and teachers, prohibitionists and advocates of disfranchisement, who formed the core of the middle-class reform movement, strove to eliminate ignorance, disease, and immorality (the latter through prohibition and revocation of African-Americans' voting rights) in order to restore to the South a unified social order. Agrarians, less amorphous as a group than the middle-class and composed in part of the very individuals held up to ridicule by other reformers, also sought to create a homogeneous society. But, unlike middle-class reformers, agrarians embraced a vision of the past and of the good republic, founded in the liberalism of Jacksonian America; they looked forward to the restoration of a just polity and a "humane economy" in which material success, liberty,

and virtue might be protected against the encroachment of the commercial order.¹

Mississippians, of course, had long been familiar with the market economy. During the antebellum period, the market-economy mentalité and concepts of liberty and virtue undergirded the social ethic which in turn accounted for white cultural homogeneity. Inspired by Thomas Jefferson's Arcadian vision, notions of egalitarian democracy, and a desire for material success, antebellum Mississippians defined free and virtuous men as those who avoided debt, who prospered as self-sufficient producers within the context of the market economy, and who participated in the process of governing. As construed by pre-war Mississippians, independent men frowned on governmental intrusion into the economy and eschewed temptations to engage in speculative behavior; liberty-loving men also supported the institution of slavery and aspired to own human chattels. Even though antebellum citizens touched the web of the market economy, they considered their participation inconsequential. It was, after all, benign. Only African-Americans were required to be enslaved to the market economy.

¹Norman Pollack, The Humane Economy: Populism, Capitalism, and Democracy (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), passim.

While the market economy fostered illusions of cultural homogeneity and white liberty, southern farmers remained ardent defenders of concepts of liberty and virtue founded in property rights. The Civil War and Reconstruction, emancipation and the rise of the commercial order, however, unsettled their easy faith in the market as the well-spring of citizenship. It became instead the source of their economic and political decline. Once transformed into the commercial order, the market economy threatened to enslave white farmers. By 1880, the rural legatees of the antebellum social ethic doubted that they could preserve their inheritance. Sources of liberty and virtue, African-American slavery, self-sufficiency, and market participation, had disappeared, after all. The sense of shared responsibility for maintenance of the social ethic that the antebellum economy had permitted yeomen and planters to embrace was no more. Oligarchic control of politics and the economy emerged. The advent of industry, which drew farmers' children from their ancestral home, the crop-lien law, and free labor challenged the social ethic and agrarians' notions of liberty and virtue. But between 1877 and 1896, agrarians attempted to reestablish the social ethic that celebrated the liberty and virtue of white men by invigorating the old ideal with elements of cooperation.

At the epicenter of the agrarian critique of corporate capitalism lay notions of class and cooperation. Where once the market had permitted those who were frugal and cautious to achieve liberty, the postbellum market, indeed the entire political economy, of the late nineteenth century appeared to serve the interests of a few. Not only merchants and railroad officials but also politicians accrued great wealth and power at the expense of farmers. As a besieged minority, small-scale farmers espoused a sense of class-consciousness that had been dormant in Mississippi since the debate over repudiation of state debts. Speaking to an audience of farmers in 1895, Solomon S. Calhoun struck upon the theme of exploitation by the powerful: it is "you against the strong, against the schemes of blood-sucking wealth." Even L. Q. C. Lamar's personal secretary, the poet S. A. Jonas, employed a similar dichotomy when describing the inequities of the period. According to Jonas, farmers fared worse than industrial laborers in the commercial order. No longer self-sufficient, postbellum cultivators had become enslaved to speculators at Liverpool and New York. Southern farmers, Jonas said, should take up the cry: "the time has come/for the farmer to be free." Such portrayals of the commercial order stood in sharp contrast to "chill

of commercialism" that the banker B. W. Griffith acknowledged.²

Other agrarians also traced farmers' economic and political decline to the ascendancy of corporate capitalism. The Clay County farmer W. W. Graham, who has achieved among twentieth-century students of agrarian reform a celebrity that surpassed his contemporary fame, offered a bitter denunciation of the commercial order's habit of enslaving producers. In two often-quoted letters dated 1877, Graham blamed the loss of his farm on the machinations of "men who wear gauntlet gloves [and] make a living and riches off of farmers." After the grandee who held his mortgage died, the local elite auctioned off his land. Penniless, and unable at any rate to penetrate the secret rules of the auction set-up by the courthouse clique and "disinning [sic] tricksters," he watched as the brother of the original mortgage-holder acquired his farm for one-eighth of its value. Without land to call his own and apparently doomed to tenancy, a condition of servitude he refused to consider, Graham wrote Governor John Stone. "We have a class and always have had that is dominating over and plundering the farmers and it has been growing

²Quoting Solomon S. Calhoun's Silver Address, 12 June 1895, p. 5, Calhoun Papers, MDAH; S. A. Jonas, untitled poem, Jonas Papers, MDAH, but see too, "Carnegie;" Griffith's "Address to the Southern Commercial Congress," 1911, B. W. Griffith and R. A. Westbrook Papers, MDAH.

worse. . . . If any farmer in the South was in any condition there would be just such an uprising as there is now in the North."³ To Graham and other agrarians, the commercial order drew life from producers and elevated to positions of influence in government and the economy self-serving speculators. It should not be surprising, then, that agrarians attacked the prevailing social order for its economic and political failures.

Imbued with a sense of class-consciousness, agrarians pointed to the absence of self-sufficiency, the presence of the crop-lien law, and the intrusion of industry into southern life as evidence that a powerful elite had altered the region's political economy and made farmers subservient to the market. Unlike antebellum farmers, great and small, who embraced the fiction of their self-sufficiency, late nineteenth-century cultivators suffered no illusions about their inability to feed their families. In fact, restoring to the economy an egalitarian quality that enabled producers to achieve self-sufficiency while producing for the market motivated farmers to attack the

³Quoting W. W. Graham to John Stone, 15 November 1877 and 6 December 1877, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Both James Sharborough Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi, 1871-1900: A Study in Non-Conformity" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1952), 265-266, and Michael R. Hyman, The Anti-Redeemers: Hill Country Political Dissenters in the Lower South from Redemption to Populism (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 1-2 quote Graham extensively. The unrest in the North that Graham mentioned, of course, was the railroad strikes of 1877.

commercial order. The Pike County Farmers and Mechanics Club, for instance, traced Mississippi's postbellum economic declension to the over-production of cotton and indirectly to the crop lien law, as well as the fickleness of African-American labor. In an 1885 statement of their credo, club members swore allegiance to the market economy and their commitment to the destruction of corporate capitalism. They intended "to devote the larger and best of land to food crops, making cotton a surplus and independent crop, thus doing away with so much labor which is required in the present all cotton system."⁴ Curtailing cotton cultivation would not only drive prices upward but precipitate the emigration of black labor, removing forever the underclass and creating a truly egalitarian social ethic. With fewer acres given to cotton, farmers might use fertilizers to increase their per acre production and devote their energies more fully to foodstuffs. Just as had their antebellum ancestors, farmers in the Pike County club planned to achieve a measure of agricultural success by returning to self-sufficient habits of production.

Happiness, the agricultural reformer M. W. Phillips frequently said in his monthly journal, Southern Farmer, accrued to efficient cultivators, those who used fertilizers, cultivated deeply, and practiced

⁴Carthage Carthaginian, 17 January 1885.

self-sufficiency. Practitioners of such habits of production exhibited "a spirit of industry, enterprise, and intelligence" similar to that common among farmers in the late 1840s and 1850s. According to Phillips, farmers who longed to revel as had their antebellum ancestors in the liberty and virtue of life in Arcadia kept "a clean kitchen, a neat wife in it, a spinning piano, a clean cupboard, a clean dairy, and a clear conscience."⁵ Even though his notion of the virtuous farmer shared little with Jefferson's Arcadian vision, Phillips' willingness to admit in the farmer's home such a symbol of success as a spinning piano suggests postbellum ease with market production. To restore respectability to farmers, he advocated, however, the return to a moral economy that licensed self-sufficiency within the context of market production.

Other agrarians also encouraged their fellows to break the stranglehold that the commercial order possessed by diversifying their agricultural production. Planting a variety of crops would not only foster self-sufficiency but would stimulate adventurous farmers to specialize in truck gardening or stock raising. With the great cities of the North and burgeoning southern ones demanding fresh meat and beasts of burden, stock raising, in the minds of some Mississippians, offered farmers access to the market

⁵Southern Farmer 4 (February 1870), 52.

economy. Particularly farmers in the eastern half of the state where native grasses flourished stood to benefit from becoming professional stock raisers. Apparently, reformers' admonitions influenced some farmers to forsake cotton. In the late 1880s, reports circulated of men and even some women in north Mississippi quickly making "independent fortunes" by raising "fancy breeds of horses, mules, and cattle."⁶ But, such observations were impressionistic and based on the development of specialized farms, not the widespread abandonment of cotton cultivation. (See Table 7.1). While in 1880 the number of milk cows in the state exceeded the number counted in 1860, the average number per farm declined by over 100 percent. Other stock failed even to recoup the population levels recorded in 1860.

⁶Quoting Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 8 March 1888. See too, Carthage Carthaginian, 24 January 1885.

(Table 8.1)
Mississippi Livestock:
Population and Value by Farm, 1860-1890

	1860	1870	1880	1890
Value of Stock	\$1135.9	\$440.2	\$263.6	\$234.8
Number of Swine	41.5	11.9	11.4	8.00
Number of Milk Cows	5.70	2.56	3.11	2.15

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, A Compendium of the Ninth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 708-709; ibid., Compendium of the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1883), 650, 678, 681; ibid., Abstract of the Eleventh Census, 1890 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890), 95, 105.

Despite the loud crowing of agricultural reformers, Mississippi's projected transformation into a stock-raising country must be considered a failure. Nevertheless, proponents of stock and dairy farming never tired of preaching their gospel of agricultural wealth. Stephen D. Lee, the former Confederate general and president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, saw two advantages in stock raising and dairy production. Stock raising, as well as dairy farming, cost little money and demanded little labor, and the two pursuits offered farmers outside the Delta access to the market economy. Predicting that the hill country would soon be without black labor, as tenants moved into the Yazoo Basin to work on great

plantations, Lee told a gathering of farmers that the exodus of African-Americans was inevitable and that they had best prepare for it by taking advantage of the good grass country in which they lived.⁷ Others, even those who did not represent farmers, constantly reminded Mississippians that "all cotton will not do." Like Lee, B. W. Griffith asserted that though cotton would remain a feature of southern agriculture, wise farmers treated it as he imagined antebellum Mississippians had, as a supplemental market crop. Another southern banker also advocated stock raising as a way to rid the region of blacks. "Nothing but cotton," W. B. Harrison of Oklahoma told a meeting of Mississippi bankers, "means a ten dollar mule hitched with rope traces to a two dollar plow, dragging behind it a black man lazier than the mule . . . whose highest ambition is to raise enough pickaninnies . . . so he will not have any cotton picking to do himself."⁸ According to a variety of reformers, diversification not only presented farmers access to markets other than the cotton market but also offered an excuse to dismiss black laborers.

⁷Jackson Weekly Clarion, 29 December 1886.

⁸Quoting Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 8 March 1888; Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention: Mississippi Bankers' Association, Vicksburg, May 5-6, 1914, (n.p., n.d.), 113, but see, too 71, and "Helping the Southern Farmer," Mss., B. W. Griffith and Westbrook Papers, MDAH.

While Griffith and Harrison looked upon diversification as a rational response to postbellum economic exigencies, farmers themselves more often than not thought of diversification as a way to reestablish a moral and egalitarian economy. Corn, molasses, sugar cane, and poultry, agrarian reformers liked to say, proffered farmers weary of enslavement to the cotton market continued access to the broader market.⁹ According to Samuel Meek, if farmers returned to a policy of self-sufficiency, they might again profess to do "a noble work" and rightfully claim to possess liberty and virtue. Harking back to the rhetoric of the Jacksonian period, Meek told the Philotecnic Society of the A & M College that "one such [self-sufficient] man, in his plain gab and unpretending simplicity is worth ten thousand of those butterfly fopplings, who infest every circle of society--who toil not and neither do they spin, but, surpass Solomon, in all of his glory, in the magnificent splendor of their nothingness." Self-service through the consumption of only those goods made at home promised to restore the moral political economy of the antebellum period. Another agricultural reformer given to poetry

⁹Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 8 March 1888. See too, the apocryphal story of the young boy, who through his own success as a corn farmer, convinced his father to become a more cost-conscious and self-sufficient farmer in Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention: Mississippi Bankers' Association, Vicksburg, May 5-6, 1914 (n.p. n.d.), 40-41.

offered besieged farmers an inspiring jingle: "Remember 'tis not what you sell, but what you save,/That makes a farmer free instead of a slave." The state geologist, Eugene Hilgard, likewise posited that "it is home-making, not money-making, that evokes the willing help of every member of a rural household" and preserves the autonomous farmer "from fortune's freaks."¹⁰

Even though the antebellum ideal of self-sufficiency within the context of market production persisted, postbellum farmers confronted a market economy different from the one known to their fathers. After the Civil War, Mississippi farmers no longer produced one-fifth of the world's supply of cotton. International competition in the cotton market increased, and the large supply of cotton drove down the price paid for the crop. Besides the advent of international cotton production, southern farmers also faced a wholesale market in decline. From the close of the Civil War until 1900, wholesale prices for all commodities, including cotton, fell. Under the classic equation for determining commodity prices, the price paid for cotton depended on the supply of cotton and

¹⁰Quoting Samuel Meek, "Address to the Philotecnic Society of the A & M College," 18 April 1882, Samuel Meek Papers, MDAH; J. W. Day in the Crystal Springs Meteor, 17 March 1883; and Eugene Hilgard, "All Cotton and No Comfort," Rural Carolinian 4 (September 1873), 629-630. See too, S. A. Jonas, untitled address, Jonas Papers, MDAH, and Solomon S. Calhoon, "Address of the Madison County Fair," 4 November 1891, Calhoon Papers, MDAH.

gold and the demand for the two commodities. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the supply of gold, in relative terms, was down, as was the demand for cotton; conversely, the supply of cotton and demand for gold soared.¹¹ The fall in wholesale prices that precipitated suffering in the rural South then might be linked to the failure of nations to meet the demand for hard currency and the inability of cotton producers to curtail their production.

Considering the general decline in wholesale prices, southern farmers had ample reason to curtail their staple-crop cultivation and return to self-sufficient habits of production. But, doing so, required that they first break the back of the commercial order and its local agent, country merchants. Throughout the period of agrarian reform, the merchant class acted as a lightening rod for farmers' complaints about the commercial order. It was merchants, farmers said, who shackled cultivators to cotton production by requiring that they plant the staple crop alone as security for loans. After the passage of the 1868 lien law, farmers in need of credit to plant their crops and to provide sustenance prior to the harvest signed liens with lenders bestowing upon merchants primary

¹¹George F. Warren and Frank A. Pearson, Prices (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. and London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1933), 32, 70, 78-79.

claim to crops and assets should the farmer fail to pay off his debt. Of course, merchants charged extraordinarily high interest rates to carry farmers on their books and demanded that farmers plant cotton, the only staple grown in Mississippi that promised some remuneration. Soon after the passage of the law, farmers began characterizing merchants as thieves of their liberty. Merchants might not only require that farmers cultivate cotton on every acre of their land and order the sale of the crop at a specified price, but they also demanded that farmers receive supplies from them. A correspondent of the Rural Carolinian spoke for a generation of farmers when he observed that "the lien law and making all cotton and no provisions, will ruin this Southern country, and that pretty soon."¹² The liberty and virtue that accrued to independent men who made cotton and foodstuffs, the writer feared, had become as scarce in the countryside as a farm-raised beef.

Among agrarian advocates of self-sufficiency, members of the Grange, the Patrons of Husbandry, most loudly proclaimed that restoration of antebellum notions about production would break farmers' dependence on merchants. Speaking to the Bowling Green Grange in 1886, T. S. Wright, a central-Mississippi farmer, voiced the

¹²Quoting L.D.R. to Wyatt Aiken, Rural Carolinian, 3 (February 1872), 12.

familiar appeal for farmers to abandon cotton. "Make your farms self-sustaining and cotton the surplus crop," he said, "and at no distint [sic] day we will be able to fix our own price upon the products of our farms, and no longer be under the control of speculators." Members of the Bowling Green Grange frequently discussed the best methods for divorcing themselves from cotton production; some Grangers spoke of completely forsaking cotton; others argued that cultivators should divide their acreage equally between corn and cotton, while others still believed commercial fertilizers promised to lift farmers out of poverty. Regardless of the method employed, Grangers advocated diversification as the best means of upsetting the entrenched power of merchants and speculators. Another speaker at the Bowling Green Grange argued that "if we as farmers & grangers will pay more attention to the raising of every thing at home . . . we would be the most independent people that lives; for to no man living need he bow, the man that walks behind the plow."¹³ Only by practicing self-sufficiency and purchasing all necessities with cash might farmers recapture the liberty and virtue that had inhered in their antebellum fathers.

¹³Quoting Patrons of Husbandry, Mississippi State Grange Papers, 8 April 1886 and 17 May 1884, MDAH. But see, too ibid, 16 February 1884.

To some late nineteenth-century observers, farmers' greed placed them in a condition of peonage. As soon as merchants opened their books to them, avaricious farmers developed a lust for goods that independent men naturally neglected. The Macon New South complained that the "good clothes and the kind of food which they affect are not strictly in keeping with our rough work and the splendid appetite which our farm work brings us." Others, like the editor of the Aberdeen Examiner, warned farmers who could not live on the depressed prices paid for cotton to plant different crops and to cease trying to "get even by whinnying [sic] and cursing the laborers and supplymen and railroad. They are the bane of any country."¹⁴ Although such messages were intended to fortify farmers in their pursuit of material success, agrarians more accurately linked their failure to escape the deadly web of the market to the lien law.

In fact, among agrarians enchanted with the idea of returning to what they believed to be the halcyon days of the antebellum era, ultimate blame for their peonage rested upon the lien law. During the antebellum period, small farmers had avoided close contact with commission merchants and passed in and out of the cotton market at will. But, as local merchants supplanted distant factors

¹⁴Macon New South, 22 October 1881; Carthage Carthaginian, 8 May 1886 quoting Aberdeen Examiner.

and the economy slowed, especially after the Panic of 1873, small farmers found it difficult to escape the demands of the cotton market. The liberty to forsake cotton whenever they wished had vanished. Turning to merchants for cash to plant their crops, farmers became more severely entangled in the web of the market economy, by 1880 an extremely complicated web of relationships, than had their antebellum predecessors. Foreclosure and permanent tenancy necessarily followed.

Tenancy represented the most evident variety of peonage that confronted farmers who fell into a cycle of revolving debt under the crop-lien law. Unfortunately, the 1870 census neglected to count the number of tenant farms, but the two censuses following it did. In 1880, 44 percent of farms in Mississippi were operated by tenants; 27 percent were worked on shares and 17 percent were rented for a fixed amount of money. In 1890, 53 percent were tenant operated, and the portion rented for a share of the crop rose to 32 percent. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, then, tenants occupied over one-half of Mississippi farms. Generally, tenancy followed black labor. In both 1880 and 1890, counties with black populations exceeding 49 percent had the highest concentration of tenancy. Yet, even in the predominantly white Piney Woods region, tenants held over 20 percent of farms. All around them, Mississippi farmers saw neighbors lose their

farms, and a sense of alarm spread that the crop-lien law would drag more and more of them into tenancy. But mostly they objected to the crop lien because it refused to permit them to act as independent producers in the Jacksonian tradition of their fathers.

So long as the lien law operated to keep black labor tied to the land, white farmers found no reason to object to it. Yet, when the impression that whites passed from landownership to tenancy became widespread, agrarians' attitudes changed. Even if it was not true that a large number of whites had lost their land and been forced into tenancy, agrarians argued that the crop lien law augmented the power of the merchant class at the expense of productive men. During the mid-1880s, agrarians clamored for a new lien law. Specifically, they wanted the legislature to outlaw the process known as "hypothecation" that permitted lenders to execute liens against future crops. Despite merchants' and planters' opposition to reformation of the crop-lien law, Governor Lowry and a reform-minded legislature approved a new law in 1886. Under the revised lien law, lenders received liens only on crops in the field or already picked. Although the law did not prevent lienholders from seizing homesteads, stock, or cotton, it promised to prevent the long-term

revolving debt that threatened white farmers with peonage.¹⁵ Celebration of the new lien law, however, was short lived. Farmers in need of credit still had to turn to local merchants who charged exorbitant interest, and they still had to plant cotton at the expense of food-stuffs. Regardless of agrarians' self-proclaimed triumph in 1886, their relationship to the commercial order had not been significantly altered.

Agrarians, however, realized that the crop-lien law and merchants were mere agents of the commercial order and the version of capitalism, corporate, that it fostered. Even had they destroyed the crop lien and the merchant class, their liberty would not have been secured. To strike a blow for the Jacksonian ideal of independence as self-sufficiency within the context of market production, farmers had to keep alive among their children a desire to live in the Arcadian world of the antebellum period. Much like prewar farmers, M. W. Phillips feared that boys who eschewed cultivation and the countryside to

¹⁵Jackson Weekly Clarion, 23 and 30 September 1885, 3 March, 1 September, 15 December 1886; Carthage Carthaginian, 10 October 1885, 10 February, 20 March 1886. On planters' complaints that they would be forced to assume mortgages for their tenants in order to secure for them the capital necessary to plant cotton, see Macon New South, 22 October 1881, and the letter signed "Amite," in Jackson Weekly Clarion, 7 October 1885. See, too, Jackson ibid., 3 February 1886, for a criticism of the new law as weak. For a positive response to the new law, see Grenada Sentinel, 6 February 1886.

become clerks and merchants would lose their claim to liberty: "Among one hundred merchants and traders not more than three acquire their independence."¹⁶ But, in reality, few farm boys forsook the plow for the clerk's desk. More realistically, farmers who found themselves removed from the land, particularly those who involuntarily abandoned cultivation, made their way into Mississippi's burgeoning mills, creameries, and railroad shops.

Little is known about the common laborers who filled late nineteenth-century Mississippi factories, but it would be safe to suppose that many had only recently deserted the farm. Even though few actually surrendered their liberty and virtue to work in factories, some rural counties between 1880 and 1890 experienced substantial increases in the number of industrial workers employed within their boundaries. Besides Piney Woods counties and others like Carroll, Copiah, and Pike that contained well-known manufacturing operations, Alcorn and Lee in the North-Central Hills region saw the number of workers in manufacturing facilities more than double. In 1880, Alcorn County manufacturing facilities provided employment for 139 workers, and in 1900, some 598 worked there. Over the same period, Lee County's population of employees engaged in manufacturing went from 62 to 175. Statewide,

¹⁶The Southern Farmer 4 (February 1870), 52; The Southern Farmer 4 (May 1871), 197.

the industrial labor population exploded from 5,805 in 1880 to 26,418 in 1900, while the number of manufacturing establishments posted a 225 percent increase, topping out at 4,772 at the turn of the century. Yet, as a percentage of the total population, the number of employees engaged in manufacturing never exceeded .017 percent. Despite the relative scarcity of industrial development in Mississippi, factories in the countryside proffered agrarians daily reminders that preservation of their independence within the context of the market economy demanded unflagging commitment to the values of their fathers.

For most farmers who wished to maintain their notions of independence, seeking employment in a mill was not an appealing option, but fleeing Mississippi was. Just as had their fathers' neighbors moved to Texas during the depression of the 1840s, a constant stream of Mississippians made their way west in the late nineteenth century. In both 1877 and 1893, Reverend Samuel A. Agnew witnessed an exodus of his neighbors. Generally, Agnew doubted that moving would benefit the emigrants; Texas, after all, suffered under economic and political conditions similar to those of Mississippi. Emigration also carried a number of risks. Few farmers could expect to receive the full value of their land when they sold out, and many Mississippians who thought of leaving had debts to settle before they could move. Jeff Aldridge, an

Alcorn County farmer, considered moving. But, like others who thought of escaping their enslavement to the market, he first had to retire the debts accrued under the crop lien. Selling some of his livestock to build his reserve of corn, which he hoped to sell locally, would be a good initial step, Aldridge believed. Turning over to his creditor the full bale of cotton he hoped to cultivate on seven or eight acres would help, too. Like other farmers ensnared by the system of revolving debt, Aldridge assigned emigration a high priority. "I become more discouraged about this country the longer I stay [in] it but how in the thunder am I to get out of it[.] I am owing some and it seems that every year puts me in a little worse but if I am spared to make a crop next year if I can't come out one way I will another."¹⁷ Liberty and virtue, according to late nineteenth-century farmers, might still inhere in their class, but only if cultivators escaped the grasp of the commercial order and continued to work the land as had their fathers.

Establishing themselves as autonomous producers and the keepers of liberty and virtue dictated that agrarians reform not only the crop-lien law but also that they revise their relationship with railroads, merchants, and

¹⁷Quoting Jeff Aldridge to B. A. Aldridge, 5 October 1881, Aldridge Family Letters, MDAH; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 23 November, 18 December 1877, 2 August, 23 October 1893, UNC.

the Democratic party. Even though agrarians adopted traditional goals and means to combat the commercial order, the most striking feature of the late nineteenth-century agrarian movements, as historians and contemporaries have recognized, was the introduction of cooperation into reform rhetoric. Cooperation, typically associated with the Farmers' Alliance, had been pioneered by the Grange, almost a decade before the Alliance endorsed it. According to Grangers' assessment, farmers had developed a dependence upon merchants and speculators for their sustenance and thereby surrendered their claims to liberty and virtue. In order to halt the moral, political, and economic declension of the countryside, farmers needed to unite against the forces that oppressed them, chiefly the merchant class.

However much farmers wished to break their enslavement to the cotton market, large numbers failed to produce alternative crops. To deal effectively with the problems confronting the rural South, Grangers knew that they had to combat directly the source of their economic enslavement, and they did not demur at identifying their enemy. Reverend Agnew posited that "the object [of the Grange] is to break down the merchants." Grangers rightly suspected that they owed their low status in the postbellum political economy to the rise of the merchant class, and they, not unlike later agrarian reformers, attempted

to unseat local merchants deemed unfair to farmers. In the 1870s, organized farmers bestowed upon particular merchants a stamp of approval. Generally, the store owners selected as official Grange merchants were members of the organization or at least agreed to offer members discounted prices. But, the relationship between the selected merchants and the Grange often lasted for a short time only, as store owners refused to honor the agreements they had struck with the agrarians.¹⁸

As the informal arrangements entered into by farmers and merchants collapsed, chapters of the Grange in Mississippi considered a host of other remedial actions designed to soften the rough edges of the commercial order and reinstate farmers to their proper role in society. In the 1880s, "cooperation" became the watchword of the organization. According to Grangers, and their successors in the Farmers' Alliance, cooperation described less a spirit of brotherhood among farmers than a tool that might be used to destroy merchants' power. But, agrarians had a dim understanding of the late nineteenth-century commercial order. A Copiah County agrarian, for instance, believed the world of commerce operated like the cotton market: too many merchants meant that farmers would be

¹⁸Quoting Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 2 October 1886, UNC. On the difficulty of finding a permanent Grange merchant, see, Susan S. Darden Diary, 9 May 1874, Darden Family Papers, MDAH.

hurt, just as an overstock of cotton at Liverpool signalled doom for cultivators. Eliminating two-thirds of the merchants in his hometown, he said, would create lower prices for farmers, and lower prices meant a return to business conducted on a cash-only basis.¹⁹ In order to curtail the number of active merchants and to help farmers escape the cycle of revolving debt, county Granges formed cooperative stores.

Although not every county organized a cooperative store, those that did typically demanded that participating chapters subscribe to store stock. Once the designated capital of a store had been underwritten, goods, generally non-perishable plantation supplies but also clothing, sugar, and flour, would be ordered by individual farmers through their local Granges; all orders for a particular item would be made at once, permitting the cooperative to negotiate the lowest possible price. A popularly elected board of directors that controlled day-to-day operations of each store set the retail price for goods just over the wholesale cost. Like the cooperatives organized later by the Farmers' Alliance, the Grange experiment in bulk buying faltered. Holmes County Grangers, for instance, briefly established a cooperative store at Lexington in

¹⁹Patrons of Husbandry, Mississippi State Grange Papers, 17 March 1883, MDAH; see, too the letter signed "Suvatco," in Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 28 June 1888.

1880 and moved it to Bowling Green in 1881. But, the store survived only one year more before permanently closing its doors.²⁰

The Farmers' Alliance succeeded no better than the Grange in establishing a just economy through cooperative stores. In 1887, the first year of its organization in Mississippi, sub-Alliances began operating cooperative stores. In some quarters, local merchants sought to drive them out of business by boycotting the wholesalers who supplied cooperatives. Counter-boycotts of wholesalers who dealt with non-Alliance merchants followed, but efforts at cooperation on a local level proved as ineffective as they had for the Grange.²¹ Hoping to concentrate farmers' energies, the Mississippi Alliance, drew a lesson from its related organization in Texas and opened an Exchange in 1888. The Exchange was to function as a cooperative clearinghouse, pooling the stock subscriptions of sub-Alliances and ordering all variety of farm goods in bulk in order to negotiate with suppliers the lowest possible prices. Unlike merchants who charged extraordinary interest on the goods farmers needed, the Exchange operated on a strictly cash basis, a feature of the

²⁰Patrons of Husbandry, Mississippi State Grange Papers, 3 and 17 January, 6 March 1880, 1 April 1881, 19 May 1883, 16 February, 20 September 1884, 11 July 1889, MDAH.

²¹Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 8 March 1888.

cooperative that doomed it. After receiving from sub-Alliances a large share of its operating capital and taking advantage of tax exemptions offered by the city of Winona, the Exchange opened in February 1888. But, rumors of corruption within the Exchange management and the absence of an efficient distribution system caused the cooperative to close its doors three years later without offering a lasting challenge to the commercial order.²²

On the whole, the efforts at recreating capitalism failed. Neither the Grange nor its successor could successfully manage an alternative economic order. Even as it undertook its most adventurous attack against the postbellum commercial order, membership in the Grange was declining. From a high of 31,000 in 1875, membership in the Grange declined to 10,000 in 1878 and dipped below 4,000 in 1885. The disappearance of the Grange might be traced to the increased number of rural middle-class men (planters, merchants, and physicians) who obtained control

²²Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi," 144-151; Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 30 August 1888. On the necessity of operating the Exchange on a cash basis, see, David Russell Hearn Diary, 9 October 1890, Hearn Family Papers, MDAH, and Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 21 February 1887, UNC, who noted the Alliance's insistence that official merchants to the organization conduct business only through cash transactions. One critic of the Exchange believed that the Alliance needed to open stores in each county to permit farmers to divide bulk orders of sugar and flour more readily among themselves than they could if they depended on only one central store. See, Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 21 February 1889.

of the organization and converted it into little more than a fraternal order.²³

The Farmers' Alliance, born out of agrarians' frustration with the commercial order and the failure the Grange, not only sought through cooperatives to overturn the influence of merchants and supply men, it also determined to eradicate the bugbear of the age: trusts. When the Mississippi Alliance spoke in its constitution of fostering brotherhood, social harmony, and a government friendly to farmers, it had in mind the creation of a social order based on economic egalitarianism. It also wished to end "the prostitution of the public service to the advancement of selfish ends." In order to achieve the brotherhood of producers that they envisioned, the Alliance, at least in its early days, forsook politics and preached that "their own mutual benefit, educationally and financially" demanded unity.²⁴ Nothing represented the

²³On the decline of the Grange, see, Ferguson, "Agrarianism in Mississippi," 75, 83; Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 30 June 1877, 24 September 1880, 29 April 1884, UNC. On the fraternal nature of the Grange, see, Robert B. Alexander Diary and Account Ledger, 8 and 10 February 1873, MDAH; Sallie Stone Trotter Ledgers, Midway Grange Account Book no. 199, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi; A. B. Grosh to R. B. Mayes, May 1869, John Bull Smith Dimitry Papers, Duke.

²⁴Quoting Jackson Weekly Clarion 15 December 1886; Carthage Carthaginian, 23 July 1887; see too, "Constitution and By-Laws of the Mississippi Farmers' Alliance," 1887, as reprinted in the Jackson New Mississippian, 1890, in the Brad Carter Collection, MSU. The Alliance took its self-
(continued...)

inequities of the late nineteenth-century commercial order more than monopolies. Trusts and monopolies assumed various forms, according to the Alliance and its allies. G. A. Wilson, an Alliance man and candidate for Congress in 1888, included the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad on his list of trusts that robbed the productive population of life. Besides possessing great tracts of land tax-free, the railroad had purchased land for eight cents an acre and sold it to farmers for five to thirteen dollars. "Their charter," he said, "gives them the right to buy up the earth on a speculation and hold it free from taxation." Despite the state railroad commission, the line and others like it combined to regulate prices. Among the monopolies identified by agrarians, the jute-bagging trust was the incarnation of evil.²⁵ The trust, a

²⁴(...continued)

appointed duty of fostering an egalitarian order seriously; in fact, sub-Alliances enforced a rigid discipline on their members. Investigating behavior deemed immoral was a goal of the Pearl Alliance. John Leverance, for example, was investigated for "associating" with African-Americans but found innocent of the charges. See, David Russell Hearn Diary, 20 September, 1 November 1890, Hearn Family Papers, MDAH.

²⁵Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 23 February 1888; Carthage Carthaginian, 25 April 1890. Agrarians also likely loathed the jute bagging trust because, according to Department of Agriculture statistics, some \$3 million worth of jute were annually imported from India, thus denying southern farmers by virtue of the tariff the opportunity to grow jute. Nevertheless, Louisiana and Texas farmers produced some jute, and the experimental station at Audubon Park, Louisiana conducted tests on jute cultivation. See, (continued...)

collection of manufacturers who turned out the crude sacks in which bales of cotton were shipped, set prices and eliminated competition.

To restore to capitalism the sense of egalitarianism that had existed in the late antebellum period, the Alliance, just months after its birth, began planning to defeat the jute-bagging trust. In a circular letter sent to sub-Alliances, the state executive committee issued a challenge: "For the first time since our organization you are called upon to exhibit your valor in doing battle against our avowed enemy--monopoly--to prove your devotion to the principles upon which our organization is founded." The original plan put forward by the committee envisioned creation of a bagging plant with a capital stock of \$500,000 underwritten by farmers' five dollar stock subscriptions. Like the Exchange, the bagging factory would depend on farmers pooling their orders through sub-Alliances and conduct all business on a cash basis. Although the plan arrived too late to defeat the jute-baggers in 1888, the Alliance hoped to have its plant in operation by late summer 1889. In the meantime, the committee encouraged farmers to use any bagging other than jute and

²⁵(...continued)

U.S., Department of Agriculture, Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1893, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 570.

suggested pine straw and cotton as substitutes; other agrarian reformers also took up the idea of removing jute from the list of items protected by the tariff.²⁶

From 1888 until the start-up of the Alliance bagging factory in 1889, trust-busting rhetoric propelled the growth of the farmers' movement. One observer of the Alliance estimated in May 1889 that the number of sub-Alliances and Agricultural Wheels in Mississippi exceeded 2,000, not including some 800 chapters for African-Americans. Acting upon the impulse that drove the organization, twenty-one county alliances in April 1889 sent representatives to Jackson to negotiate a lease with the Penitentiary Board of Control for use of the old prison factory. Ten thousand dollars, a paltry portion of the originally projected capital stock, had been subscribed, but the Alliance representatives sold another \$15,000 of stock to the Jackson Board of Trade. Despite the little capital that it held, the Alliance signed a \$225 per month lease with the penitentiary board, which permitted the farmers' organization to use prison labor. The initial enthusiasm over the bagging factory faded quickly. It

²⁶Quoting "Circular Letter to Members of the Farmers Alliance of Mississippi," n.d., but see also Letter from the Executive Committee, 17 September 1888, Baskin Family Papers, MSU; Macon Mississippi Sun, 17 August 1888; Carthage Carthaginian, 21 June 1889.

folded in 1891, as did the Exchange, amid rumors of malfeasance.²⁷

Speaking before an audience of farmers at the Madison County Fair in 1891, Solomon S. Calhoun, posited that farmers' cooperative enterprises and the bagging factory had failed because cultivators lacked the expertise to manage businesses successfully. Conducting a business, even if its market was local, required a dependence on distant suppliers, railroads, and commercial credit, the antithesis of the cooperative sentiment. Besides, Calhoun said, farmers often set themselves up to fail by employing as their agents those unfit for other work. "Some day, after about three hundred and thirty thousand flat failures, we will learn that brains, experience, long training and careful accurate business honesty are never cheap in any country and that the true economy is to buy them at a high price." In part, Calhoun's assessment conformed to agrarians' ideals. A successful operation indeed depended upon honesty and economy. Other agrarians too made similar statements. In praising the operation of a Yazoo County cooperative stock farm, a newspaper editor, for instance, predicted that the enterprise would be successful because businessmen, armed with

²⁷Jackson New Mississippian, 28 August 1889; Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 4 and 11 April 1889; Carthage Carthaginian, 4 April, 3 May, 21 June 1889, 1 August 1890;

the ideals of the late nineteenth-century commercial order, managed it.²⁸ But, both Calhoun's and the editor's suggestion that farmers in the future should hire men of the commercial order to run enterprises designed to defeat the order represented a candid confession of the cooperative vision's inability to function in the New South.

Agrarians' failure to implement their vision of a moral economy did not deter them from seeking to create an homogeneous society. Despite the disappointment of watching over the collapse of cooperative stores and the bagging factory, they nevertheless maintained their goal of restoring egalitarianism to the political system. Even though the Granger and Alliance movements habitually disavowed any affiliation with politics, agrarians recognized in postbellum politics a rising breed of politicians immune to farmers' pleas to reestablish a just economy. According to agrarians, politicians used their offices to legislate in favor of bond-holders, railroads, and corporate power in general. Taxes on farmers were oppressive, railroads gouged the land and the people, currency was in short supply, and political candidates employed sectional feelings to obfuscate and quiet discontent. So long as the agrarian movements focused their plans for reform upon

²⁸Solomon S. Calhoun, "Address to the Madison County Fair," 1891, Calhoun Papers, MDAH. Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 14 March 1889.

cooperation and trust-busting and ignored the Greenback and Populist parties, the opponents of agrarian reform permitted them to pass unmolested.²⁹ Yet, when political reform became agrarians' concern, the dominant party marshalled its energy to quiet dissenting voices.

Breaking with the Democratic party proved to be agrarians' most difficult task. At the close of the Reconstruction period, the Democratic party emerged as the keeper of white supremacy and political power. All challengers to its authority received the opprobrious label "Black Republican." The party's fear of fusion between white yeomen and the African-American wing of the Republican party perpetuated the political culture of racism that developed during Reconstruction. Even within party circles, the slightest deviation from official policy might result in chastisement. The closed nature of the party, then, forced agrarians in the 1880s and 1890s to seek redress of their grievances outside the Democratic party.

At the peak of the Granger movement, the overwhelming majority of farmers involved in the organization swore fealty to the Democratic party. During the battle over Redemption, in fact, Grangers had mobilized the white

²⁹Grenada Sentinel, 24 August 1889; Hazelhurst Copiah Signal, 20 June 1889; David Russell Hearn Diary, 20 December 1890, Hearn Family Papers, MDAH.

population behind the banner of tax reform and inspired vigilance committees to keep African-Americans from participating in elections. Yet, between 1875 and 1883, the state Democratic party opened itself to charges of neglect and underhanded tactics, providing agrarian dissenters in Mississippi a venue for attack.³⁰ Intraparty competition for offices and the debate over silver coinage offered agrarians weapons with which to assail Redeemer-era politics as corrupt and non-democratic and lent the agrarian critique of postbellum politics a rhetoric based on class concerns.

Soon after Redemption, according to agrarian reformers, especially those who coalesced around the Greenback party, the Democratic party fell under the sway of courthouse cliques and local economic elites. Challengers of party principles and functionaries, however subtly, found themselves out of office and not infrequently leading a dissident campaign to clean-up government and restore political equality. The conduct of local nominating conventions, one of which James D. Lynch described as being dominated by "tricky combinations, and such swopping

³⁰On the Democratic party's efforts to assuage dissent by adopting elements of agrarian reform, see Michael Perman, The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879 (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), passim. Although Perman concentrates on the Reconstruction period and immediately afterwards, the same policies of the drift and balance persisted afterwards.

of votes" that he questioned the party's integrity, remained a constant source of contention among agrarians. Agrarians resented the party solidarity enforced on them by Democratic leadership in convention. During the 1875 campaign, for instance, James Z. George encouraged Leflore County whites "for once to lay aside all prejudice and preference and act together as a unite for the common good." Maintaining unity among whites proved difficult after the initial Redeemer success. With the restoration of Democratic supremacy, candidates for office multiplied. As the number of contenders grew, so too did the insistence that party loyalty dictate who should carry the party banner. J. H. Doss understood the necessity of party loyalty. When he wrote the governor's office asking for an appointment as county registrar, the political culture of racism demanded that he assert his loyalty to the party by claiming to be "a 'full blooded white man.'"³¹

Politicians cut-off from Democratic party favor began leading dissident campaigns against the party just two-years after Redemption. Between 1877 and 1878, dissidents united with Greenbackers and black Republicans, those who suffered most from planter and merchant

³¹James Z. George to Colonel L. A. Outlaw, no date, Lafayette P. Yerger Papers, MDAH; J. H. Doss to A. C. Falconer, 2 March 1877, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

domination of politics and the economy. The development of independent tickets in the late 1870s generally grew out of complaints with the local Democratic party elite. But, even though the efforts to unseat Democrats failed to capture a broad audience, the party employed bulldozing and violence to quiet fusionists; they also frequently referred to dissidents as "Black Republicans" intent on restoring African-Americans' political liberty. When Reuben Davis, a white leader of Monroe County's Redemption and long-time political dissident, challenged the ring politicians of the First Congressional District in 1878, he had to seek the support of blacks whom he had once characterized as unfit to vote. Like other dissidents in the late 1870s, Davis discovered that whites who sought black support found themselves on the receiving end of the tactics that had secured Mississippi's redemption.³² By far, the strongest efforts to loosen the Democratic party's hold on the state occurred in 1881 and 1882. Although none of the dissident campaigns succeeded, they suggested the lengths to which Democrats would go to stymie "bolters" and "soreheads" and thus to eliminate the influence of "ignorant" voters, white and black.

³²Clarke Leonard Miller, "'Let Us Die to make Men Free;' Political Terrorism in Post-Reconstruction Mississippi, 1877-1896" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1983), 24-38, 152.

In 1880, intraparty challengers to Redeemer rule and advocates of the free coinage of silver combined to hand the leaders of the Democratic party a minor defeat in the senatorial nomination of that year. The canvass for the nomination suggested not only that agrarians viewed the Democratic party as an enemy of their economic liberty, it also suggested, as one agrarian put it, that they refused to perpetuate the fiction that ring politicians carried "the democratic party in its breeches pocket." Trouble between the Lamar and agrarian wing of the Democratic party had been in the making since Redemption. Ethelbert Barksdale, chair of the party executive committee from 1877 to 1879 and editor of the Jackson Clarion, acted as informal leader of the agrarian faction. Opposed to Lamar, who, he believed, kept him out of elective office, Barksdale built an oppositional faction within the Democratic party in response to the senator's refusal to vote as instructed by the legislature for the Bland-Allison Silver Bill. The Bland Bill, which in 1878 received the approval of both houses of Congress, proposed to remonetize a limited amount of silver. Since 1873, when a nation-wide depression began and the United States ceased coining silver, southern farmers had called for the federal government to inflate the amount of currency in circulation as a means of economic redress. In the eyes of farmers and other debtors, Lamar's opposition to the

measure testified to his identification with the interests of the commercial order.³³ His well-known coolness toward the payment of government bonds in greenbacks augmented agrarians' efforts to portray him as an enemy of antebellum concepts of an egalitarian and just economy.

Not long after Lamar recorded his vote against the Bland Silver Bill, Blanche K. Bruce announced his resignation from the Senate, opening an office to which Barksdale might aspire. Even though Barksdale avoided an overt announcement of his candidacy, he soon began marshalling agrarian forces to oppose Lamar. Fearful that Barksdale's presence in the Senate would precipitate his own demise in Mississippi political circles, Lamar, in equally subtle fashion, initiated a whispering campaign among the Democratic faithful encouraging them to support his former law partner and ex-Confederate General Edward C. Walthall for the Senate seat. According to Lamar, Walthall would excel in the Senate where he failed; he was "aggressive, alert, ready, full of wit and sarcasm." Yet Walthall appeared reluctant to campaign for the nomination. He believed his

³³Quoting "Demokratia" to A. J. Frantz, 21 April 1879, Patrick Henry Papers, MDAH. Most Mississippians supported the Bland Silver Bill for its inflationary impact. More money in circulation would increase the value of land, crops, and all property. And, as H. L. Muldrow proclaimed, "I desire the time to come when an investment in real estate will be considered as it was before the war, the surest, safest and best investment that can be made of money." See Muldrow to Lafayette Reynolds, 3 March 1878, Reynolds Papers, Duke.

entrance into the campaign, coupled with his close association with Lamar, would turn the nomination process into a referendum on the financial questions. Such questions, which Walthall thought "had been needlessly brought into the canvass when we should have kept them out or stood, as to them, upon the platform of the party," threatened to disrupt party unity and Democratic control of state government.³⁴

Upsetting the Democratic party's hold on the dispensation of patronage and policy decisions was precisely what Barksdale had in mind when he made Lamar's stand on the financial issues of the day fodder for the canvass. But Barksdale was not the sole representative of the agrarian wing of the party to enter the campaign. Otho R. Singleton, an unequivocal advocate of the free coinage of silver and greenback issuance, vigorously campaigned for the office and, in fact, received the endorsement of the state Grange newspaper, the Patron of Husbandry. Among farmers hard hit by the depression and the "Crime of 1873," Singleton's advocacy of dual inflationary policies rang true. Barksdale, on the other hand, something of a moderate among agrarians or perhaps a mere disgruntled

³⁴Quoting L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, 18 February 1879; Edward C. Walthall, to Clark, 5 December 1879, Kate Freeman Clark Collection, MDAH. See, too, Bradley G. Bond, "Edward C. Walthall and the 1880 Senatorial Nomination; Politics of Balance in the Redeemer Era," Journal of Mississippi History 50 (February 1988), 1-20.

office seeker who sought agrarian support, opposed the Greenback measure of a fiat monetary system. He favored instead the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold to be represented by treasury certificates.³⁵ His position on the financial questions of the day, reminiscent of Andrew Jackson's aversion to banks and soft currency, appealed to agrarians also.

Although removed from the public scramble for office, Walthall could not keep his opinions out of the press; his kinsman, E. D. Clark, a Vicksburg newspaper editor, saw that Walthall's name remained before the people. So as not to distance himself from agrarians or Lamar, he held to the Democratic party line of supporting free silver and greenback issue but refused to criticize Lamar's vote against the Bland Bill, though privately he opposed it. Most of all, Walthall wished to see the nation establish a stable currency without pursuing extremely inflationary policies, but he wished also that the state Democratic party would march in lock-step behind Lamar's leadership. Because of his refusal to denounce Lamar, attacks on Walthall mounted. The Holly Springs South, for example, characterized Walthall's and Lamar's

³⁵Columbus Patron of Husbandry 25 October 1879; Jackson Weekly Clarion, 11 June 1879. See, too, Irwin Unger, The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 337-338, 377-378.

position on currency questions as identical to those espoused by New York financiers. Allusions to a "Bond holder and Bond Holding loving [?] autocrat" were associated with both men. In response to such criticism, Lamar suggested that aspirants to the Senate clarify their positions on matters of currency by publishing in state newspapers answers to a series of questions. With Lamar's and Clark's assistance, Walthall maintained in his responses an affection for gold, silver, and greenback currency, as well as the payment of government bonds in specie.³⁶ His position on currency reform swayed few agrarians, and certainly contributed to his defeat in the nominating convention.

When the Democratic legislative caucus met to choose a candidate for the Senate in January 1880, it seemed apparent that the public debate over candidates had not ordained an outright favorite. No candidate had a clear lead going into the caucus, but Lamar controlled the administration of the meeting. After fending off an attempt by the Barksdale forces to permit Independent, Greenback, and even some Republican legislators to participate in the caucus, however, Lamar's role in hand-picking

³⁶Quoting L. Q. C. Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, 26 December 1879, but see, too, Edward C. Walthall to Clark, 22 December 1879, Kate Freeman Clark Collection, MDAH. Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 January 1880. Jackson Comet, 4 January 1880.

a senator faltered. During months of campaigning, Barksdale and Singleton had secured substantial support, and Barksdale nearly captured the nomination on the first ballot. Singleton ran a close second and Walthall a distant third. Yet, through thirty-five ballots and six nights of caucusing, none of the three leading contenders received the nomination. Then, on the seventh night of the caucus, Walthall withdrew his name. By prior arrangement with Lamar, W. S. Featherstone of Holly Springs, a hotbed of anti-Lamar and Greenback sentiment, immediately nominated James Z. George. The irony of Featherstone nominating a "hard money Democrat" did not fail to strike many at the convention. George's entrance as a candidate, however, made little impact on the body until the forty-ninth ballot when Barksdale suddenly withdrew from the race, sending his support to George, who won the nomination.³⁷

After the caucus, the press continued to criticize Lamar for his stand on financial questions but believed the compromise selection of George for the Senate ended the internecine struggle between the agrarian and Lamar wings of the party. Events between 1881 and 1883, including Barksdale's success in having Robert Lowry nominated

³⁷Quoting Edward C. Walthall to Edward Donaldson Clark, 27 January 1880; but, see, too Walthall to Clark, 23 January 1880, Kate Freeman Clark Collection, MDAH. Jackson Weekly Clarion, 14 21, 28 January 1880.

for governor, proved, however, that dissidents would not permit ring politicians to control of the Democratic party. Despite their differences over gubernatorial candidates, the Lamar and Barksdale wings of the party united to defeat a fusion ticket of Greenbackers and Republicans headed by Benjamin E. King. The color line and fears of a Radical return to power animated the Democrats' campaign against King, a former Democrat. Evoking the specter of Radicalism, the Democratic press portrayed the fusion ticket as another form of Republicanism dedicated to the establishment of "extravagance, corruption, disorder, and violence." Fusionists' efforts to attract broad support by including African-Americans on their county tickets served mainly to stir remembrances of Radical rule. Repeatedly during the campaign, Lowry employed race-baiting rhetoric to castigate King and remind voters of the link between dissident whites and African-Americans: "as the stream could not rise above its source, neither can the candidate rise above his constituency." According to Lowry, Mississippi faced a clear choice of repeating the excesses of Reconstruction or preserving the political culture of racism. Not surprisingly, few blacks found their way to the polls; approximately 32 percent of the registered 130,000 blacks cast ballots. Perpetrators of fraud and violence at the polls

destroyed the ballots of many African-Americans who voted for King.³⁸

The best known of the post-Redemption intraparty challenges occurred in 1882. James R. Chalmers, already gerrymandered out of his seat in Congress by the Lamar wing of the party, attempted to retake a seat in the newly formed Second District, Lamar's home district, against Van Manning, a long-time associate of the senator. Black voters made up roughly 50 percent of the registered population in this north-central Mississippi district, and for Chalmers to win, he needed their support, as well as that of agrarians.³⁹ Yet Chalmers' bolt from the party in 1881 represented less a critique of regular Democrats' economic policies than an attempt by an out-of-office politician to find a position. Because he lacked an alternative economic program, Chalmers exposed himself to charges of being a mere "sorehead" and a rabble rouser who threatened Democratic unity by appealing to equally dissatisfied white Republicans. His campaign nevertheless attracted agrarian support since it represented a challenge to Lamar.

Chalmers discovered, however that to defeat the Lamar forces, he had to defeat the regular Republican

³⁸Miller, "Political Terrorism in Mississippi," 247-272," quoting Lowry, 259, from Jackson Weekly Clarion, 15 September 1881.

³⁹Miller, "Political Terrorism in Mississippi," 287-336.

party in Mississippi, too, which fell under the control of James Hill, John Lynch, and Blanche K. Bruce, all black members of the national patronage machine. The recently installed Chester A. Arthur administration, weary of dealing with the African-American wing of the party in the South, agreed to shift responsibility for patronage from the state's three leading black Republicans to Chalmers and even opened its coffers to the dissident Democrat. Immediately, Chalmers began naming leading white Republicans to positions as postmaster, federal attorney, and federal supervisor of elections. In part, Chalmers courted white Republicans to hedge his chances for election, but he also hoped to weaken black Republican support for the regular party. George McKee, a white Republican and former congressman, who approved of the Chalmers strategy, correctly understood that Lamar and Bruce had earlier arranged to permit the former a hand in naming Republicans to minor offices. "Bruce & Lamar," McKee posited, "humbug the different administrations and keep up negro rule in the Rep[ublican] party in order that fear of negro rule in the State may keep men in the Dem[ocratic] party." But, Chalmers also opened his campaign to white Republicans to

upset the color line tacitly agreed to by major players in both parties.⁴⁰

The strategy of dispensing patronage to their Republican allies and leaving major offices open only to regular Democrats, as practiced by the leadership of the black wing of the Republican party, ensured that race-baiting would keep the mass of whites solidly behind the Democratic party. As long as the Republican party remained under the control of black officials, Democrats could successfully label any dissident white an ally of Radicalism and an enemy of the southern social ethic. But Chalmers escaped the full impact of that strategy by developing the fissure between Republican party factions. Democrats, however, did not shrink from "prostituting the ballot," as Greene Chandler labeled the fraudulent and violent tactics that occurred in 1882, and carried the election for Manning. Although James Hill, who lost his race for Congress to Ethelbert Barksdale, demurred at prosecuting white election bullies out of fear that "such investigations would be productive of evil rather than

⁴⁰Quoting George C. McKee to William E. Chandler, 6 July 1882, from Willie D. Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi, 1882-1884," Journal of Southern History 12 (February 1941), 93-94. See, too, Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi, 1878-1882," Journal of Mississippi History 2 (1940), 123-135; Halsell, "James R. Chalmers and 'Mahoneism' in Mississippi," Journal of Southern History 10 (1944), 37-58. On the deal struck between Lamar and Bruce, see, also, Lamar to Edward Donaldson Clark, 15 March 1877, Kate Freeman Clark Collection, MDAH.

good," Chalmers did not let his defeat pass without contesting it. Congressional and judicial investigations failed to place him in his rightfully won seat.⁴¹

Chalmers' defeat in 1881 served as an augur of the rough treatment accorded other Democratic politicians who attempted to unite with Greenbackers/Independents and testified to the persistence of the political culture of racism. Henry C. Niles, a white Republican observed, that as long as the Democratic party alternately used the black wing of Republican party as a stalking horse and a tool to control dissenters, "the negro [will be] on top--the 'race issue' will be the cry in every contest--and we will be the sufferers."⁴² Using the race issue to ensure party solidarity, the Democratic party from the late 1870s until the 1890s construed attacks on the commercial order as efforts to reestablish "Black Republican" rule.

Nevertheless, Greenbackers, taking advantage of agrarian discontent, captured county level offices with

⁴¹Quoting Greene C. Chandler to B. H. Brewster, 22 December 1882, United States, Justice Department, Source Chronological File, National Archives, Washington, D. C., (microfilm) reel 2. [Hereafter cited as Justice Department (reel number)]. See, too, J. L. Morphis to Brewster, 21 August 1882; C. L. Bates to Coffeetown Times, 22 December 1882, Justice Department (2); and Chandler to Brewster, 20 October 1882; Luke Lea to Brewster, 7 December 1882, 17 January 1883, Justice Department (4).

⁴²Henry C. Niles to William E. Chandler, 25 November 1882, in Halsell, ed., "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi," 97-98.

the assistance of bolting Democrats. In both Copiah and Madison counties, for instance, Greenbackers along with Independents, among them former Republicans and Democrats, held positions until their party folded in 1882. Justifications of the reign of terror that Copiah County Democrats unleashed against the opposition and its leader, J. P. "Print" Matthews, centered on fears of "Black Republican" rule. Local Democrats dismissed the agrarian and anti-clique rhetoric of Matthews' faction and labeled it friendly to African-Americans and drunkards. "The race issue," according to the Crystal Springs Monitor, "is paramount in Southern politics. It cannot be concealed, it must be admitted that the white people are determined to keep the negro beneath them socially, and to use him for their own supremacy in the political world." Just as north Mississippi Democrats had regarded Chalmers' test of their machine as the design of jealous Republicans, Copiah County Democrats refused to brook the Matthews critique. Party leadership in Copiah unleashed upon the Matthews faction a reign of terror that took its leader's life and carried the election. At the same time, Madison County Democrats and Republicans united in a largely bloodless

overthrow of a two-year old Greenback/Independent fusion government.⁴³

Regardless of the anti-clique, anti-corporate content of the agrarian campaigns during the early 1880s, Greenbackers and their allies could not overcome characterizations of their dissent as friendly to African-American rule. The political culture of racism held too powerful a sway over the Mississippi electorate.⁴⁴ Even as agrarians lost control of local governments, regular Democrats liked to remind white voters that "every man who wishes to see white supremacy and Democratic rule continued in Mississippi, should go to the polls," driving home the demand for party loyalty. In 1886, Senator George also delicately cautioned agrarians about the consequences of bolting from the party: "the pure democratic white element must govern the South and under no circumstances,

⁴³Quoting Crystal Springs Monitor, 23 September 1882; but, see, too, Monitor, 15 August, 9 September 1882. The Congressional investigation into the 1882 Copiah County election details the activities of the local Democratic party, as well as the party in Madison County. See, "Mississippi in 1883," Report of the Special Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1883 with the Testimony and Documentary Evidence, Senate Report, 48th Cong. 1st sess., No. 512, xxvii-lxxxii.

⁴⁴Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America (Oxford, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), Introduction and Chapter 1, also point out that agrarians had difficulty combatting the influence of "sectional politics."

would Negro supremacy be tolerated."⁴⁵ With the political culture of racism firmly entrenched, Democrats turned every portrayal of the party as the enemy of economic and political equality into an attack against the white social ethic. Some Democrats, in fact, conceded the cliquish nature of the party, but reminded the discontent that "its doors are always open for the reception of new members." Dissatisfied voters, regulars liked to say, needed only to participate in the primary system to throw out politicians who did not represent their will.⁴⁶

But agrarians did not think of their dissent as a challenge to the social ethic. In fact, they argued that by restoring homogeneity to society through the establishment of a just economy and the apotheosis of the Jacksonian vision of a good republic, the social ethic might best be protected. To agrarians, particularly after their defeats in the 1880s, which culminated in Putnam Darden's 1885 lost gubernatorial campaign, Democratic control of the nominating process quelled the spirit of democratic egalitarianism that had in part defined antebellum concepts of liberty and virtue. Through their control of local party elections, regular Democrats proved themselves the "most trusted ringsters" and sent to Jackson men who

⁴⁵Quoting Macon Mississippi Sun, 31 October 1884, and Grenada Sentinel, 30 October 1886.

⁴⁶Quoting Jackson Weekly Clarion, 28 January 1885.

would protect the interests of merchants, planters, and railroads. In 1885, agrarians discovered how the party leadership quieted dissent in nominating conventions. Governor Robert Lowry, despised by agrarian and middle-class reformers alike, sought renomination as the Democratic-party standard bearer with the backing of Lamar and other prominent party leaders who considered the governor easily controlled. Knowing that Lowry would have to face a concerted effort to place Darden's name in nomination, local leaders attached a significant condition on participation in county-level conventions: only voters who had cast straight-out Democratic tickets in 1884 could join in nominating a gubernatorial candidate. With the party's most consistent foes eliminated from local conventions, Lowry's nomination was nearly secured. The previous disappearance from Mississippi's political culture of the beat-level convention, the sole access to party decision-making that plain folk had, made his election a certainty. Disgusted by the heavy-handed tactics of the Democratic party clique, many rural voters, after the Darden movement had been put down, simply refrained from voting.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Quoting George G. Dillard to B. T. Hobbs, 17 September 1887, Hobbs Family Papers, MSU. On the nominating process and the changes it underwent during the Redeemer period, see Crystal Springs Monitor, 2 September 1879, Carthage Carthaginian, 11 and 18 July 1885; Jackson Weekly Clarion, 25 February 1885. See too, Frank Burkitt to John M. Stone, 18 May 1881, Stone Papers, MDAH. On one voter's disgust with
(continued...)

Besides ring politics and the political culture of racism, other varieties of concentrated power alarmed agrarians. They particularly believed railroad companies, which received tax exemptions, large parcels of land, and stock subscriptions from county governments, were antithetical to their concepts of a just social order. Railroads, agrarians feared, had amassed great power through their domination of the transportation business and the special privileges they received from the state. In the minds of farmers, who felt themselves squeezed by high freight rates, railroads resembled the antebellum banking industry. Farmers, especially those from the poorer districts of northeastern and southern Mississippi who depended less on railroads than their agrarian peers elsewhere in the state, saw the railroads that penetrated their worlds as killing machines. Many farmers in the Piney Woods particularly, since they planted relatively little cotton, continued as they had in antebellum times to herd cattle, and, of course, railroads were one of the chief enemies of cattle and herdsman. Not only did trains kill and maim cattle, railroad companies refused to compensate farmers for their loss at more than one-third of the value of injured animals. According to A. E. Lewis, a

⁴⁷(...continued)

Lowry and party tactics to win his nomination, see Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 3 November 1885, UNC.

herdsmen in southern Mississippi, if "the grinding process" went unimpeded much longer, "the end of the last cow will soon be reached." To herdsmen like Lewis, the obligation for building fences belonged to local governments and railroads. He equated the state's refusal to protect the economic livelihood of cattlemen as an effort to bolster and extend the commercial order at the expense of farmers. Yet he hoped that Governor Lowry would be "as just to cow drivers as you would be to any other class." Beginning in 1880, legislators friendly to agrarians tried to pass laws requiring railroad companies to erect fences around their tracks. But, the measure, which failed in 1880 and 1882, did not pass the legislature until 1884. As passed, the law permitted individual counties to decide whether fences should be erected, at county expense, around railroad tracks.⁴⁸ Complaints against the killing and maiming of cattle by trains concerned only a few Mississippi agrarians. Despite their concerns for safeguarding their cattle, they also successfully lobbied county governments to lift the stock law. But, railroads jeopardized farmers' rights to pursue their economic and political liberty in other ways, too.

⁴⁸A. E. Lewis to Robert Lowry, 26 January 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Jackson New Mississippian, 19 February 1884. See, too Senate Journal (1880), 229-235. On farmers requesting a railroad to fence its property, see Grenada Gazette, 26 May, 23 June 1888.

Frank Burkitt, the future Populist leader in Mississippi, honed his political skills in the 1880s castigating the corrupting influence of railroads, especially the Memphis, Birmingham, and Atlantic. Since the 1870s, the M B & A had undertaken an aggressive campaign to convince local governments, including that of Choctaw County, to support its completion through stock subscriptions. But, more than a decade after originally pitching the railroad to county officials and receiving several thousand dollars, the organizers of the line skipped over Choctaw, leaving the county without a return on its investment. Statewide farmers and their allies registered similar complaints and added to them complaints that railroads priced small haulers out of business.⁴⁹ Out of such complaints, and under Burkitt's leadership, the legislature began considering creation of a state board to referee relations between railroads and farmers.

In 1884, after previously failing to establish a railroad commission, both houses of the Mississippi legislature concurred on the necessity of a board to settle citizens' disputes with railroads. According to the law, the governor would appoint three commissioners at a salary of \$2,500 a year. Charged chiefly with hearing complaints, railroad commissioners, especially after the High

⁴⁹Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 55.

Court of Errors and Appeals emasculated their enforcement powers, spent most of their time recommending depot and track repairs. Opposition to the law had come primarily from railroad officials and the state's New South prophets who feared the "obnoxious measures" proposed would prevent railroads from expanding by lowering rates and fostering what amounted to a state-run monopoly. The ruin of the commercial order would surely follow, they said. But, once the law passed, even the Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, which had opposed it, recognized the weakness of the railroad commission and professed suddenly to believe it might be able to save shippers from high rates.⁵⁰

The railroad commission achieved no great fame as a protector of shippers. In fact, within two years of its creation, agrarians began characterizing the commission itself as a agency of corporate power. Commissioners served at the pleasure of the governor, not the people, and felt obligated to make him happy. Furthermore, agrarians said, commissioners received large salaries to do

⁵⁰Quoting Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier, 30 March 1887, but see, too ibid., 12 April 1887. On the passage of the law, see Jackson New Mississippian, 25 March, 6 May 1884, 28 April 1885, and Jackson Weekly Clarion, 24 November 1886. On complaints about railroad rates, see A. L. Rives to Robert Lowry, 25 February 1882, Governors' Papers, MDAH, and Jackson Weekly Clarion, 18 December 1878, quoting Raymond Hinds County Gazette. On the early operation of the railroad commission, see Daniel C. Vogt, "Problems of Government Regulation: The Mississippi Railroad Commission, 1884-1956" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1980), chapters 1 and 2.

their work. In response to such criticism, the legislature enlarged commissioners' duties, making them a board of control to supervise Mississippi's penitentiary, as well as its railroads.

Beginning in 1886, agrarian and middle-class reformers united in opposition to the convict lease system. While the keepers of the New South order looked upon convict leasing as inhumane, agrarians believed that it permitted the few to reap great profits at the expense of the many. In 1886, reports circulated that, in order to sign over the state's convict lease to the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad, former Attorney General Thomas C. Catchings had secretly cancelled some \$60,000 to \$80,000 in debt owed the state by the former leaseholders, Hamilton and Hoskins. To agrarians, Hamilton and Hoskins, railroad and lumber mill builders, represented all that was evil in the commercial order, and the state condoned their activities by granting them the right to lease its prisoners. By all accounts, Hamilton and Hoskins had been poor managers of the penitentiary and neglected to build, as prescribed by law, a central housing unit at Jackson.⁵¹ They and other sub-lessees, however, had not failed to reap large profits. As news of Catchings' generous treatment of the

⁵¹Grenada Gazette, 20 July 1888; Jackson Weekly Clarion, 15 December 1886; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks; Steve Sullivan, "Prison Without Walls: A History of the Mississippi State Penal System," Mss., 105, MDAH.

lessees spread, reports of prisoner abuse and profiteering emerged to further enrage agrarians.

The Grange leader and Redeemer-era state treasurer, Colonel W. L. Hemingway, for instance, was reported to have cleared 110.5 acres of prime Delta land for \$10 per acre with convicts he leased from the state; a Leflore County planter cleared 150 acres at \$5 per acre; and a Washington County planter, the state board of control calculated, produced hundreds of bales of cotton at a rate of 75 cents per 100 pounds. One sub-lessee in Madison County paid only 15 cents per day for the convicts he employed. By far, the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad Company, once it obtained the convict lease in 1886, was the worst abuser of its charges. A legislative investigation in 1887 embraced agrarians' complaints with the lease system and accused lessees with possessing a "thirst for gain" that supplanted feelings of humanity. Comparing the treatment accorded convicts to the treatment of slaves, the legislative committee posited that slaves fared better than prisoners since planters felt obliged to care for their investment. Convict leasing, on the other hand, "simply restores a state of servitude worse than slavery, in this, that it is without any of the safe-guards resulting from ownership of the slave." On the G. & S. I. R. R., Marshall Seal found "convicts alive with lice and vermin. He also discovered prisoners without adequate

clothing, food, or medical attention and frightened to report abuses because of threatened retaliation. Smaller lines that used convicts as common laborers perhaps treated their charges even worse than did the G. & S. I. R. R., and the death rate experienced among Mississippi convicts reflected the abuses they suffered.⁵²

Although leading agrarians preferred to eliminate the convict leasing system, rural folk in general doubted that a network of prison farms owned and operated by the state would serve as severe enough correctives. To "clothe them [convicts] in purple and fine linen, and feast them on the fat of the land," the Carthaginian worried, would coddle criminals as northern prison-reform advocates wished. While northern states might be able to afford to treat their convicts in such a fashion, the editor feared that Mississippi could not. Considering the large number of African-Americans imprisoned, the state,

⁵²Quoting "Report of the House Committee to Investigate the State Penitentiary: Submitted February 7, 1887," in House Journal (1888), 3, 16, 13, but see, too, 19. On convict leasing in Madison County in 1883, see Lessee Accounts, 26 November 1883, David Russell Hearn Family Papers, MDAH. Between 1880 and 1885, 5.3 percent of the white prison population died, and 10.97 percent of the black population died while held by the state. Over the same period, Midwestern state that had implemented a system of prison farms experienced a death rate of only 2.45 percent. As the board of control gained supervisory powers over the penitentiary, the death rate fluctuated but generally declined. In 1886 the rate was 9.08 percent, in 1887 15.44 percent, in 1892 17 percent, and in 1893 5 percent. See, ibid., 34-35, and Sullivan, "Prison Without Walls," 120.

he believed, should not endorse any reform that might make life easier within the prison system than it was on the outside for the average sharecropper. Objections like his notwithstanding, talk of converting the penitentiary into a self-sustaining farm system resulted in the end to the leasing of state prisoners in 1894 and the coterminous erection of three prison farms in central Mississippi.⁵³

Despite the penitentiary reforms endorsed by agrarians, wealthy planters could still benefit from the availability of convict labor after 1894. Although the state could not lease its convicts, counties continued to do so. By the twentieth century, however, fewer counties leased out their convicts to private individuals, but many turned them over instead to companies who maintained public roads. According to the Department of Agriculture, Mississippi convicts employed at road work in 1900 conducted labor valued at \$18,645, while convicts who did not work outside the jail cost counties \$65,405. The report went on to calculate that prisoners employed in road work

⁵³Quoting Carthage Carthaginian, 14 February 1885. For a similar argument see, William Hardy to J. F. Session, in Jackson Weekly Clarion, 28 December 1887. On the lease and farm systems, see ibid, 10 February 1886, 28 February 1889, and 18 August 1886, quoting Vicksburg Post. The constitution of 1890 forbade the state from leasing convicts after 1894. See Ruby E. Cooley, "A History of the Mississippi Penal Farm System, 1890-1935: Punishment, Politics, and Profit in Penal Affairs," (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1981), 47, 50; Sullivan, "Prison Without Walls," 119.

could be maintained at 25 cents per day, but those who remained in jail required 30 cents a day for their upkeep. At the state prison farms conditions improved little. Joe Baddy, a convict held at the Raymond farm, for example, complained that prisoners were "treded midy crule" and that they were "all lousey."⁵⁴ But agrarians, and most other Mississippians, ignored reports of such conditions. The evil associated with the state granting special privileges to keepers of the commercial order had, after all, been ended, and the issue of prison reform had been formally addressed by the constitutional convention.

Throughout the 1880s, agrarians had agitated for a the convening of a constitutional convention. Unlike the keepers of the commercial order, who endorsed the idea of a convention in the late 1880s to enforce their vision of a homogeneous society based on disfranchisement, agrarians viewed the convention as an opportunity to restrain corporate authority. Agrarians, in fact, loathed plans to disfranchise African-Americans that had been bandied about since 1876 and suspected that poor or illiterate whites might suffer under the policy. They preferred instead to

⁵⁴Quoting Joe Baddy to A. J. McLaurin, 14 June 1896, Governors' Papers, MDAH. J. A. Holmes, "Road Building With Convict Labor in the Southern States," reprint from the Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, 1901, 320, MDAH. Other convicts found the prison farm system to their liking; T. Dabney Marshall, for instance, especially liked the prison library. See Marshall to Miss Alice, 10 September 1895, Crutcher-Shannon Family Papers, MDAH.

eliminate the offices of lieutenant governor and superintendent of education, make the judiciary elective, limit governors to one term, deprive corporations of tax exemptions, and recalculate the method of appropriating state funds among the counties. Implicit in agrarians' demands for a constitutional convention was an attempt to shift the balance of political and economic power away from a select few and restore to people liberty and virtue in a just social order.⁵⁵ Agrarians, however, derived little pleasure from the constitution that resulted, though they forced the convention to adopt some of the measures they favored.

By far, rewriting the formula used to determine appropriations most motivated farmers to embrace the idea of a constitutional convention. Since 1868, when Ames and "his dirty crew," according to Frank Burkitt, had written into the constitution a method of appropriations based on the number of qualified electors in each county, Black Belt counties received a disproportionate share of the state funds. Farmers in the thinly populated counties of northeastern and southern Mississippi asserted that since blacks did not receive the benefits of state funds, black

⁵⁵On agrarians' demands of the convention, see Ackerman Choctaw Plaindealer, 4 April 1890; Carthage Carthaginian 27 June 1890; Grenada Gazette, 9 August 1889; Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 23, 28 February 1889. See, too, the Farmers' Alliance Memorial in Charles K. Regan Papers, MDAH.

majority counties deserved to have their funding and representation reduced. In 1890, for instance, forty counties had a majority white voting age population; thirty-four had a black majority. Yet, the white counties elected fifty-two members of the state House and twenty-one members of the senate; the black counties, on the other hand, sent sixty-eight representatives to the lower house, and twenty-five to the upper house. According to Burkitt's calculations, three white males in Yazoo County elected four representatives, while 1600 white males in Itawamba County elected only one.⁵⁶

During the constitutional convention of 1890, a variety of remedies to address the inequities of appropriation were put forward. But the convention embraced a compromise that included elements of white and black county proposals. Under the measure approved, white counties agreed to accept franchise qualifications and received in return thirteen new seats in the legislature. Additionally, several white districts were carved from black counties. For their part, black majority counties retained their predominant influence in the senate, and the upper house received the sole authority to pass revenue acts. The black counties also had passed in the

⁵⁶Eric Charles Clark, "The Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890: A Political Analysis," (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1973), 77-78.

convention a law establishing a state electoral college, thereby limiting agrarian influence in elections. By and large, agrarians supported the compromise appropriations measure, but white politicians from the Delta bristled at the thought of losing leverage in the legislature.

However much agrarians liked to think that they had wrested from Delta planters and restored to plain folk a measure of political authority, the convention's use of the 1880 census to calculate racial majorities neglected changes in the distribution of the population. In the end, black counties continued to elect more representatives to the house than did white counties.⁵⁷

Where appropriations were concerned, then, agrarians might be counted losers. They fared little better in other matters decided upon by the convention. Funding for schools, for example, continued to favor black majority counties, as the state appropriated money based on the number of educable children in each county. Literacy qualifications and poll taxes for the suffrage, designed by middle-class reformers to eliminate the ignorant and venal, black and white, from the political process, also passed, of course. But, the inclusion of an "understanding clause" in the constitution soothed most agrarians'

⁵⁷Albert Kirwan, "Apportionment in the Mississippi Constitution of 1890," Journal of Southern History 14 (May 1948), 235-236; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 82-83. Clark, "Mississippi Constitutional Convention," 87, 93.

feelings as it ensured that plain whites might continue to vote. On the issue of suffrage other agrarians considered their success more stunning than it actually was. The elimination of African-Americans promised by literacy qualifications and the prejudicial application of the understanding clause, they thought, removed the prospect for the oppression of white dissenters, who could no longer be labeled foes of the political culture of racism. But, as they soon found out in the political canvasses of the 1890s, the political culture of racism was not moribund. The only unqualified successes that agrarians achieved in the convention involved the taxation of corporations and the election of judges.⁵⁸

Having failed to implement a revolution in Mississippi politics, agrarians began to focus on matters of national reform. Specifically, they embraced, though tentatively at first, the sub-treasury plan advocated by the emergent Populist party. Unlike previous attempts to unseat the commercial order by diluting the authority of the government and politicians, the sub-treasury system depended on the intrusion of the government into matters purely personal. The plan called for the federal government to erect warehouses where farmers could store crops

⁵⁸Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi Begun at the City of Jackson on August 12, 1890 and Concluded November 1, 1890 (Jackson: E. L. Martin, 1890), 612.

until prices reached a satisfactory level. Provisions of the sub-treasury system allowed farmers to borrow 80 percent of staple crops' local market value upon storage and pay two percent of the crop value for storage. After selling their crops, farmers would repay the sub-treasury the actual sum borrowed and retain the profits. Through the establishment of sub-treasury warehouses, farmers would obtain currency, avoid the application of the crop-lien law, and break their dependence on credit. In 1891, just two years after its proposal, the Farmers' Alliance, still professing allegiance to the Democratic party, began applying the sub-treasury as a yardstick to measure politicians' support for farmers. According to Frank Burkitt, the Alliance wished to reform the Democratic party from within in order to preserve the political culture of racism. He found, however, that high ranking Democrats doubted his sincerity. Both of the state's United States senators, George and Walthall, who replaced Lamar in 1885, opposed the measure, as did the Democratic party leadership. Leaping at the opportunity to turn George out of the Senate, Barksdale and Burkitt mounted a campaign to elect sub-treasury men to the state house. Even though

they elected a number of agrarians, Alliancemen failed to elect enough to unseat George.⁵⁹

In 1892, the Democratic elite explicitly reminded agrarians of their entrenched authority, sending a significant number of farmers into the newly-formed Populist party. Led by Burkitt, the party made inroads into Democratic strongholds in the eastern half of the state, and especially in the North-Central Hill Country. As a third party making efforts to unite with the white wing of the Republican party, Populists faced the full wrath of the Democratic party. Not only did Populists threaten party control over economic and political matters, they threatened to disrupt white supremacy, though in fact they made few appeals to African-American voters. Portrayed as a sorehead determined to resurrect "Black Republicanism," Burkitt especially suffered Democratic denunciations. He responded in private to such charges by claiming that he had been "born a plebian [sic]" and preferred "to suffer with my people than to eat from the flesh pots of Egypt. Every impulse of nature revolts at the treatment the money power has visited upon the laboring people of the country

⁵⁹On the 1891 election for legislative offices, see Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 89-91. See, too a report of Burkitt's speech on the third party in Macon Mississippi Sun, 20 February 1891. Not all Alliancemen favored the sub-treasury; some looked upon it as granting an unconstitutional power to the federal government. See Grenada Sentinel, 13 March 1891.

for the past twenty-five years and every beat of my heart is in sympathy with the wealth producers of the land. The Democratic party has ceased to hear them cry for relief and I cannot follow it further."⁶⁰ The cooperative vision that had made the Exchange possible reemerged among Populists and for about three years offered agrarians a powerful critique of the political and economic inequities of the commercial order.

Despite the denunciation of Democratic party rulers and the alternative vision of the social order offered by Burkitt and the Populists through the sub-treasury plan, the party failed to elect a single Congressman in 1892 and did not fair as well as they had the previous year in electing legislators. In 1892, in fact, none of the seven congressional districts recorded a Populist vote of more than 38 percent. Most of the districts saw only about 20 percent of ballots cast in favor Populists. Two years later, when congressional seats

⁶⁰Quoting Frank Burkitt to Walter A. Barker, 21 July 1892; but, see, too, Barker to John M. Stone, 27 July 1892, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On Burkitt as a demagogue, see Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger, 26 July 1888; Grenada Sentinel, 22 October 1892. The Sentinel's criticism of Burkitt as a demagogue and mere sorehead testifies to the divisiveness of the Populist party; the Grenada newspaper was the Alliance organ in the county. But, it felt obliged to quote Burkitt making reference to farmers as "damn fools," and saying that "the d__d country fools have got to have somebody to lead them, and it had as well be me as anybody else."

again came open, the total vote for Populist candidates declined by 21 percent.⁶¹

The last hurrah for Mississippi Populists occurred in Burkitt's 1895 bid for governor, an election he lost by some 25,000 out of 60,000 cast. The failure of the sub-treasury perhaps accounted for Burkitt's weak showing, as did the emergence of free silver in Populist rhetoric. Most importantly intimidation and the political culture of racism quelled the enthusiasm of many agrarians. Just as they had in 1882 during the Chalmers bolt from the party, Democratic leaders courted African-American votes to suppress the fusion of Populists and white Republicans. Despite their own surreptitious trading with African-American leaders of minor offices for black electoral support, Democrats successfully portrayed Burkitt's fusion campaign as a threat to white supremacy. Most Mississippians, of course, were not aware of any such deals, but they plainly understood the threat of "Black Republican" resurgency as described by the Democratic party. Even high ranking party members were sometimes fooled by Democratic rhetoric. James McCarthy, for instance, praised Burkitt's gubernatorial foe, Anselm J. McLaurin, for preserving white supremacy in Mississippi. "The rest of the country may be given over to Negro rule

⁶¹For returns of 1892 and 1894 congressional election, see Carthage Carthaginian, 30 November 1894.

and Republican highway robbers, but all Mississippi, God bless her, will always remain true to Democracy, Good Government, and White supremacy."⁶² As Chalmers and the other dissident Democrats had discovered, Populists learned too that combatting the political culture of racism proved difficult.

The acceleration of free-silver agitation in 1896 and the Democratic party's rededication to the idea heralded the end of the Populist revolt. As an issue of reform, free silver neglected the cooperative vision and reform previously embraced by agrarians. In the mid-1890s, silver men, according to a Scott County resident, became "as thick as fiddlers are said to be in that country where perpetual summer exist [*sic*] and overcoats are never needed."⁶³ Most Mississippi Democrats had supported free-silver since the 1870s, and they used the occasion of the presidential election to remind agrarians that they

⁶²Quoting James S. McCarthy to Anselm J. McLaurin, 7 November 1895, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On the use of race to detract from Populist support, especially after the election of 1892, see Memphis Commercial Appeal 13, 14 June 1895; Grenada Sentinel, 27 June 1894; Natchez Evening Banner, 2 December 1892. On the continuation of the agreement between the Democratic party elite and black Republican leadership, see R. S. Haynie to Anselm J. McLaurin, 14 April 1897, Governors' Papers, MDAH. On the fusion of Democratic dissenters and Populists, see D. T. Pitts to John M. Stone, 6 November 1891, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

⁶³Goodwyn, The Populist Moment, 125-173, uses the term "shadow movement" to describe the free-silver cause. Quoting, too, J. L. Powder to Anselm J. McLaurin, 13 April 1896, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

were natural allies. Although the introduction of the free-silver issue into the 1896 campaign temporarily encouraged agrarians, the split in the ranks of free-silverites precipitated by the appearance of William Jennings Bryan on the tickets of both the Democratic and Populist parties, killed Populism across the South. Not all Mississippi Democrats were saddened by the election results in 1896 that returned a Republican to the White House. The Democratic elite, particularly members of that small coterie residing in the Delta, celebrated Bryan's defeat and the death of Populism. The "revolutionary talk" that had animated political conversations since 1891 ceased. As Henry Waring Ball observed, "I never thought to see southern men rejoicing at a Republican victory, but it has come to pass. I have had my hand almost shaken off today. And now how the little fence corner country newspapers are going to howl and weep and swear and cuss us!"⁶⁴

Howling and weeping, even swearing and cursing, the Democratic party could withstand; attempts to disrupt the political culture of racism, it would not tolerate.

⁶⁴Quoting Henry Waring Ball Diary, 24, November 1896, UNC. Not all Democrats rejoiced at the introduction of the free-silver issue into the campaign. S. S. Calhoon attempted to persuade farmers that free and unlimited coinage would devalue currency and that a devalued currency most harmed producers. See, "Address on Silver," 12 June 1895, Solomon S. Calhoon Papers, MDAH.

Although the road to establishing dominance had been a long one, by 1896, the party could proclaim its supremacy over all contenders. Methods used to suppress Populists in the 1890s differed little from the treatment reserved for Chalmers in 1882. Any deviation from the Democratic faith resulted in the political death of dissenters.⁶⁵ But, the agrarians of the 1880s and early 1890s had at least tried to install again in society a sense of homogeneity. Like their antebellum heirs, they envisioned a world in which self-sufficient producers also raised crops and livestock for the market. To distinguish white yeomen from the underclass, they preferred to see black laborers at work in cotton fields that they rented. Agrarians' concepts of a cooperative and just economy and their notions of liberty and virtue for whites harkened back to the late antebellum period. Their failure to establish their vision, indeed their own class-consciousness, testified to the heterogeneity of the commercial order, as well

⁶⁵Populists particularly discovered their break with the Democratic party ended their political careers. The chair of the Democratic Executive Committee in Leake County, for instance, considered R. L. Wallace unfit to hold the office of circuit clerk because he had voted Populist in the congressional election of 1892; George W. Gates derisively referred to J. L. Calcote as an "Ex Popolite Sheriff." See, George W. Gates to Anselm J. McLaurin, 1895, and O. A. Lockett, Jr. to John M. Stone, 30 October 1895, Governors' Papers, MDAH

as the order's permanence in society and the irrelevance of their interpretation of history.

Postscript:

The World the Rednecks Made

Despite the defeat of Populism in 1895 and 1896, agrarian influence upon the political economy of Mississippi continued. Demagogic politicians, the so-called rednecks who assumed seats of power during the early twentieth century, paid homage to their agrarian predecessors; they reveled in denunciations of privileged power and proclaimed themselves protectors of plain white folk. Unlike the agrarians of the 1890s, the twentieth-century rednecks were not unabashed foes of modernity. They also sought to sustain the world envisioned by the makers of the commercial order. By alternately denigrating the commercial order and seeking to sustain it, the rednecks evinced the problems inherent in discarding modernity and the difficulty of escaping the southern social ethic. In their effort to define the good republic, they most vigorously championed the one aspect of the social ethic shared by both middle-class and agrarian reformers, the theories of race that had undergirded the antebellum ethic. Liberty and virtue inhered in all whites regardless of class.

Ironically, the full fruition of the agrarian critique of the commercial order did not occur until after the collapse of Populism. Late nineteenth-century agrarians viewed mill owners, merchants, and African-American labor with equal disdain and considered their apotheosis in the social order the antithesis of a good republic. Restoration of antebellum concepts of liberty and virtue demanded that the representatives of the new order be removed from the state. Toward that end, whitecappers, vigilantes analogous to the 1835 persecutors of the social ethic's foes, initiated a campaign of violence against the symbols of the new order. Violence and intimidation occurred primarily in south Mississippi, but other regions had their whitecappers, too.

Contemporaries knew that whitecappers derived largely from the yeoman class and that the perpetrators of violence fought not only against blacks. W. T. Rawlins of Franklin County posited that the threats of violence received by cotton gin owners, merchants, and black tenants originated with small-scale, white farmers: "it was entirely a farmers['] organization [that made the threats] for the purpose of protecting themselves against thieving negroes also for the purpose of controlling the labor of the county for the farmers." According to Rawlins, whitecappers perceived their status in the social order as endangered by the presence of African-Americans in the

free labor market; they also perpetuated the myth that free blacks could survive only by thievery. Most importantly, Rawlins said, whitecappers intended to return African-Americans to a subservient position in the social order by denying them access to employment in mills and cutting off their credit with local merchants.¹ Unable to secure work as tenants or mill hands, African-Americans might thus be forced to pick cotton as seasonal labor, providing white yeomen not only pickers but ample reason to doubt blacks' claims to liberty and virtue.

Mill owners and planters, as the chief employers of African-American labor and owners of large tracts of land, were targets of whitecap violence, too. In 1893, John Lemoit and John P. Foxworth of Columbia watched as whitecappers drove tenants from their plantations. Lemoit inferred that the whitecappers believed "if we are deprived of labor we will then be forced to sell." The Chicago owners of Norwood and Butterfield, Lincoln County manufacturers of long-leaf yellow pine, lost black laborers to whitecap violence. In January 1893, whitecappers demanded that African-Americans working in the lumber yard leave the mill. Norwood and Butterfield's Mississippi representatives correctly surmised that his company

¹W. T. Rawlins to John M. Stone, 29 October 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH. See, too D. C. McInnis to Stone, 15 August 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

engaged the wrath of whitecappers because it held vast parcels of land and robbed white farmers of labor. Encouraged by the mill owners, Governor Stone offered rewards ranging from \$100 to \$350 for the capture of whitecappers, and the company paid an additional reward for the prosecution of six confessed brigands. Norwood and Butterfield's troubles with whitecappers did not end in early 1893. At the close of the year, when farmers looked to sign sharecroppers to contracts, the mill experienced a mysterious series of fires. One destroyed the company's engine house and another damaged a locomotive.²

For roughly five years, whitecappers burned barns, stores, and mills; they attacked African-Americans and chased them from the state. Through the intervention of Governor Stone and the lengthy prison sentences handed out to convicted whitecappers, violence began to diminish just as the agrarian revolt came to a close. Whitecappers, however, made a lasting impression on African-Americans. Black mill laborers at Ellisville, nothing more than "pore negros" according to P. K. Meshack, believed they could find peace and justice only in Africa. "The Whole Reason for the Negros wants [sic] to leave, is because theare

²Quoting John Lemoit to John M. Stone, 15 February 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH. Norwood and Butterfield Company to Stone, 11 January, 12 December 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH. But, see, too, Joseph H. Neville to Stone, 24 June 1893; R. M. Wilkerson to Stone, 27 March, 28 August 1893, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

[sic] is so much mobing[.] Lynching are among them till it forces the Negros to wants [sic] to go some wheare [sic] to prevent such things."³ Despite whitecapping activity, African-Americans retained a faith in the law developed during Reconstruction, though the steady retraction of its protection continued without an apparent end in sight.

By 1895, African-Americans had been marginalized in society: their voting rights had been circumscribed; their economic liberty restricted; and Jim Crow's reign well established. The rise of whitecapping testified to the persistence of antebellum theories of race. So too did the treatment accorded the Webb family and their tenants. In 1891, a young white woman, Blanche Webb, disappeared from Union County. At first, her parents reported that she had decided suddenly to visit her sister, but an investigation revealed that Blanche had not taken any clothes. Immediately, the Webbs were suspected of killing their daughter. Then, investigators discovered one of the Webb's tenants, Bill Wall, also missing. Reverend Samuel Agnew began to suppose that "there is something very black which will come to light yet." Within days, Agnew learned that Blanche, with her parents'

³P. K. Meshack to John M. Stone, 24 August 1895; but see, too, A. E. Perkins to Stone, 30 October 1892, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

knowledge, had run away with Wall. Blanche's love for an African-American prompted Agnew to condemn her as "a wantton [sic] slut;" Wall was apparently murdered; and the remainder of the Webb's tenants left the county. The Webbs themselves were driven away and denounced as "a sorry set."⁴

The attitude that permitted Union County whites to persecute the Webbs and their tenants stemmed directly from antebellum theories of race. Whites, who dared to associate with African-Americans as equals--politically, socially, economically--became victims of vigilante justice. Although the benefactors of the commercial order and agrarians offered diverse critiques of the late nineteenth century, they shared a distaste for African-American liberty. Widespread white commitment to ages-old theories of race that required blacks to remain members of the underclass without claims to citizenship in order to ensure white liberty and virtue made possible the rise of the rednecks.

James K. Vardaman, first among the rednecks, embodied the complexities of the emergent social ethic of

⁴Quoting Samuel Agnew Diary, 27 January 1892, 19, 16 December 1891, UNC. In addition to the restrictions sanctioned by the Constitution of 1890 and whitecap depredations, the state began to enforce Jim Crow rules in public facilities. See, J. M. Buchanan to John M. Stone, 18 November 1891, Governors' Papers, MDAH on the segregation of inmates at the East Mississippi Insane Asylum.

the early twentieth century. On one hand, as a champion of penitentiary reform, road-building improvements, and American imperialism, Vardaman represented the New South middle-class from which he came. But, he overtly used race-baiting rhetoric and his calls for the repeal of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to secure the support of yeomen Democrats. Detecting the racial antipathies inherent in Mississippi Populism and realizing that Populists' class appeals failed to garner offices, Vardaman, while canvassing the state as a straight-out Democratic gubernatorial hopeful in 1895, cautioned audiences that the clique controlling the party intended to use African-American voters to carry the nomination and election for Anselm J. McLaurin. The Constitution of 1890, Vardaman argued, had supposedly ended the secret arrangement that leading Democrats had made with the black wing of the Republican party. Self-respecting citizens should no longer brook the arrangement. According to T. J. Ford, Vardaman spoke truthfully about the intentions of the Democratic party: "We have been calculating on the negro vote which is inclined to the straight Democratic [ticket] because of our course in breaking up the whitecaps. When Vardaman was here, he made a most imprudent speech using such expression[s] as these. 'To educate a negro is to spoil a good field hand.'" But, Vardaman's strategy of driving whites away from the ordained candidate of the

Democratic party failed. Populist contenders employed a similar strategy, denying him his obvious constituency, and the Democratic faithful held the party line. To many Mississippians, Vardaman was just another dissenter in a season of dissent, and they sent McLaurin to the Governor's mansion.⁵

Despite his failure to obtain an office in 1895, Vardaman placed his name in the 1899 gubernatorial race. As an officer of the Mississippi National Guard fighting in Santiago, Cuba, however, Vardaman posed only a minor threat to the Democratic elite's hold on the governor's office. Nevertheless, he undertook a letter-writing campaign to muster support among Mississippi journalists. But, as the newspaper editor Henry Waring Ball observed, party leadership had already anointed Andrew Longino as McLaurin's successor. In fact, ring control of the election ensured Vardman's defeat in the nominations, as local

⁵Quoting T. J. Ford to John M. Stone, 24 September 1895. See, too, Albert Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (1951, reprint; New York, Evanston, and London: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 107-109. McLaurin believed that Vardaman's attempt to capture the non-Populist agrarian vote served backfired. "Vardaman and his friends by their attacks upon me have disgusted the people of the state and are benefitting me wherever it is known." See, Anselm J. McLaurin to A. M. Kimbrough, 24 June 1895, Kimbrough Family Papers, MDAH.

leaders, most notably in Hinds and Carroll counties, mobilized solid black support for Longino.⁶

As long as leading Democrats dictated party action and nominations, Vardaman and his allies were cut-off from political office. In 1902, however, the passage of a primary election law effectively ended the influence of party elites. Since the 1870s, some counties had used primary elections to nominate candidates for local offices, and the Populists had taken up the cry for electoral reform in the 1890s. The appearance of African-Americans at the voting booth in 1895 and 1899 proved to the rednecks that the Constitution of 1890 had failed to remove blacks from a position of influence in state politics. The primary law, which provided for the popular election of all state officers and county-level party convention delegates, promised to eject blacks from the voting process. Adopting a rule that counties had previously used to determine voter eligibility, the law required that citizens establish an identity with the party for two years before participating in a primary. A ruling by the Democratic executive committee in 1903 effectively prohibited African-Americans from voting in primary elections as it further stipulated that all white

⁶Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 110-121; Henry Waring Ball Diary, 1 and 11 February, 1899, UNC.

Democrats who could vote in the general election might vote in the primary.⁷

The effects of the primary law were evident immediately. Heralded as a great reform that restored liberty to the people, the law removed the layers of control over nominations and elections that the Democratic party had laid down since 1877. It opened the way for politicians like Vardaman to make direct appeals to the people and to eschew party executive committees. Old-line politicians, including James McCool, the former railroad lawyer, found themselves facing challengers as they never had before. McCool, in fact, considered dropping out of a legislative race in 1906 to avoid the vitriol emanating from his opponent. As McCool's son informed him, the cost of the canvass, both financially and psychologically, exceeded the value of trying to defend oneself against charges made by the political and moral pygmies who had recently emerged on the political scene.⁸

⁷Edmund F. Noel, "Mississippi Primary Election Laws," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 8 (1904), 241; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks 125-127. See, too, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 24 July 1891 and 2 August 1899, UNC. Agnew, whose native Union County, had a primary law since the early 1890s opposed the law; in fact, since he had not voted for the Democratic nominee for Congress in 1898, he could not vote in the gubernatorial primary of 1899.

⁸Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 132. Jason McCool to James McCool, 20 October 1906, McCool Family Papers, MDAH. On his father's contemplated withdrawal from the race, the young McCool posited that "I think it is the best for it
(continued...)

Besides opening Democratic party politics to those who might formerly have been forced to bolt the party, the primary law demanded that candidates seek the support of the people. The direct intrusion of the people into the nomination process promised to infuse the politics of the early twentieth century with a measure of race-baiting not known since 1874. Rednecks' use of overtly racist rhetoric and class-conscious characterizations of their Democratic foes distinguished them from other party contenders of the twentieth century. But, the rednecks also needed the support of Mississippi's respectable bourgeois. Curiously, then, Vardaman and his redneck allies endorsed reforms previously advocated by the benefactors of the commercial order. They implemented penitentiary reform, provided uniform textbooks in public schools, passed statewide prohibition, and promoted the development of good dirt roads.⁹

While embracing notions of an homogenous society embraced by Mississippi's middle class, Vardaman also characterized the commercial order as inimical to plain

⁸(...continued)
will take so much money and an iron constitution to go through with it[,] and after all in case of success there is nothing to it but a little honor."

⁹George Coleman Osborn, James Kimble Vardaman: Southern Commoner (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1981), 39; William F. Holmes, The Great White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1970), 160-165; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 162-175, 188.

people. Increases in corporate taxes and a judiciary elected entirely by the people, Vardaman liked to say, promised to restore a sense of balance to Mississippi politics. No single event illustrated Vardaman's and the rednecks' class consciousness more than their effort to reform the state university. When Vardaman assumed office in 1904, the university was perceived as a bastion of privilege mired in disciplinary problems. The highly publicized difficulties that the university administration had in controlling social fraternities attracted the attention of the newly-elected governor and the state House of Representatives. At one of Vardaman's first meetings with the board of trustees, the governor, according to one observer, "seemed impressed that something was wrong, but wholly unable to designate what it was. . . . the spirit of change combined with a want of information seemed dangerous." Although the majority of a House investigating committee empaneled by Vardaman demurred at criticizing the university, a minority report written by the governor's allies labelled the entire university rotten. "Secret societies" exercised an unhealthy influence and relegated poor boys to a second-class citizenship at the university. Hoping to expel fraternities from campus, the minority proclaimed that "the rich and the poor, when they enter her door, must have an equal chance in the great battle of life." Vardaman, however, was slow

to upset the university system, though he refused to permit Chancellor Robert B. Fulton to accept a Carnegie Foundation grant of \$25,000 for a university library and eventually appointed a number of his friends to the university's governing board. Then, in 1905, the governor changed his tactics. He fired the entire faculty, hoping to have sixty to one hundred applicants for each position. When the applicants did not appear, most of the faculty, excluding Fulton (whose brother-in-law, John Sharp Williams, led the anti-Vardaman faction) and several other prominent foes of the governor, were reappointed for one-year terms.¹⁰

Considering the class-conscious and race-baiting politics promoted by Vardaman and the federal government's threat to reduce the state's representation in Congress if the rednecks eliminated African-American suffrage, Jehu

¹⁰Quoting R. H. Thompson to Jehu Amaziah Orr, 10 June 1904, Orr Papers, UNC; House Journal (1904), 346-347 in Holmes, The White Chief, 169, but see, too, ibid., 167-175. Early in his administration, Vardaman also closed the State Normal College, a black school at Holly Springs, reduced the salaries of academic professors at Alcorn A & M, increased salaries of vocational instructors at the black agricultural and mechanical college, and closed several academic programs at the A & M college at Starkville. See, David G. Sansing, Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 77-79; James Allen Cabiniss, The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years (University: University of Mississippi Press, 1949), passim; John K. Bettersworth, People's University: The Centennial History of Mississippi State (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), passim.

Amaziah Orr thought the future of the state grave. "I look upon the future," he said, "with painful apprehension. The Politicians [Democrats and Republicans, Vardamanites and others] are playing with fire." Other informed and conscientious Mississippians feared the rise of the rednecks in political circles, too. Vardaman's constant promises to repeal the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments spawned a renewed outbreak of whitecapping and lynching. Henry Waring Ball also looked upon the future with dread. In 1903, an African-American accused of attacking a young white girl was lynched in Ball's hometown, Greenville. Ball went to see the body hanging from a telephone pole. "It was quite a gala occasion, and as soon as the corpse was cut down all the crowd betook themselves to the park to see a game of baseball. Lord Lord! I am 20 degrees out of my latitude."¹¹ The easy violence bred by Vardaman's racist rhetoric and his portrayal of wealthy white Mississippians as foes of poor whites frightened some of society's respectable members,

¹¹Quoting Henry Waring Ball Diary, 5 June 1903, UNC. See, too, Osborn, James Kimble Vardaman, 39. It should be noted that despite his obvious role in precipitating the rebirth of whitecapping, Vardaman attempted to break up the violence, fearing that attacks on the commercial order would harm Mississippi's economic advance. See, A. U. Montgomery to James K. Vardaman, 28 July 1906, Governors' Papers, MDAH; and a series of letters signed by A. J. H., a Pinkerton Detective hired by the governor to investigate whitecap incidents: A. J. H. to Vardaman, 20 March, 23 March, 11, April, 15 April, 2 May, 8 July 1904, Governors' Papers, MDAH.

though Vardaman was not without the support of other professionals and middle-class reformers.

Like Orr, C. B. Galloway, an Episcopal minister, understood the consequences of Vardaman's pandering to "class prejudice." The chief cause of "the alarming growth of the mob spirit is the small politics of our day--the easy stock-in-trade of the little demagogue." While the little demagogues might in reality have an affection for the commercial order, they also employed a class-conscious rhetoric that attracted agrarians to their side.¹² Skillfully, they espoused a social ethic derived from the middle class and agrarian reform movements but relied most heavily for their version of a good republic on the one element that both movements shared: the idea that white liberty and virtue demanded the preservation of a black underclass. Under the redneck regimes of the early twentieth century, antebellum concepts of the social ethic that equated class and race became paramount.

Regardless of the changes that had occurred in postbellum Mississippi--the rise of professional men, the advent of industry, the confession that self-sufficiency

¹²Quoting Charles B. Galloway, "Some Thoughts on Lynching," South Atlantic Quarterly (October 1906), 352. But, see, also, Edgar Gardner Murphy, "Shall the 14th Amendment Be Enforced," North American Review 180 (January 1905), 109-133; William Hayne Levell, "On Lynching in the South," Outlook 16 (November 1901); Clarence Poe, "Lynching: A Southern View," Atlantic Monthly 93 (February 1904), 155-165.

no longer existed--white citizens continued to look upon the presence of a black underclass as the mark of their independence. Just as had their forefathers in the 1850s, twentieth-century whites created, in the words of James Silver, a "closed society." Though whites might disagree over the role of industry and agriculture, dissent over African-Americans' place in the political economy of the South would not be tolerated. In 1904, at the height of whitecapping, Mary Church Terrell, Honorary President of the National Association of Colored Women, observed that "lynching is the aftermath of slavery."¹³ Had she wished, she might also have added that the entire post-bellum social ethic, its defense of traditional society and protection of the commercial order, drew upon ante-bellum theories of race and southerners' fears that emancipation had forever made impossible the unchallenged assertion of white supremacy.

¹³Quoting Mary Church Terrell, "Lynching From a Negro's Point of View," North American Review 178 (June 1904), 856. See, James W. Silver, Mississippi: The Closed Society (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), especially Introduction and Chapter 1.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Private Manuscripts

Special Collections, University of Chicago, Chicago.

Stephen A. Douglas. Papers.

Armisted Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans.

American Missionary Association. Papers. (microfilm).

Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham.

Davies, Maria Dyer. Papers.

Dimitry, John Bull Smith. Papers

Downey, Samuel Smith. Papers.

Kelly, John N. Papers.

McDowell, James III. Papers.

McLaurin, Duncan. Papers.

Meek, Alexander Beaufor. Papers.

Metcalf, James Wistar. Papers.

Reynolds, Lafayette P. Papers.

Shoemaker, Isaac. Diary, 1864.

Vester, Benjamin H. Papers.

Baker Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.

R. G. Dun and Company. Mercantile Agency Credit Ledgers.
Copiah, Jones, Harrison, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall,
Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington,
Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi.

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Hill
Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Percy, Leroy. Papers.

Ware, Eleanor and Catharine Ann. Papers.

Special Collections, University of Mississippi, Oxford.

Lamar, L. Q. C. Collection.

Walthall, Edward Cary. Collection.

West, A. M. Collection.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson
(MDAH).

Adams, Simeon Roe Family. Papers.

Alcorn, James L. and Family. Collection.

Alexander, Robert B. Diary and Account Ledger.

Aldridge Family Letters.

Ames, Adelbert. Papers.

Archer-Finlay-Moore. Collection.

Booth, Roswell Valentine. Journal.

Brantley, A. H. Scrapbook.

Brookdale Farm Record.

Calhoun, Solomon S. Papers.

Campbell, Josiah A. P. and Robert. Papers.

Catchings, Dr. Philip Marshall. Collection.

Claiborne, J.F.H. Papers.

Clark, Kate Freeman. Collection. (microfilm).

Cook, Mrs. Jared Reese. Diary.

Darden Family. Papers.

Dunn, Matthew A. Family. Papers.

Evans, R. A. Papers.

Fewell, John W. Papers.

Fontaine, Charles D. and Family. Papers.

Fowler, Joseph S. Papers.

Fox, Tryphena Holder. Collection.

Golladay, George S. Papers.

Gordon, Robert and James. Diaries.

Green, William M. Papers.

Griffith, B. W. and Rondo A. Westbrook. Papers.

Harper, Annie E. Manuscript.

Hearn, David Russell and Family. Papers.

Henry, Patrick. Papers.

Hilgard, Eugene W. Papers.

Holcombe, William Henry. Books.

Humphreys, George Wilson and Family. Papers.

Humphries, W. W. Estate Plantation Account Book.

Jonas, S. A.. Papers.

Jones-Smith Plantation Journal.
 Kearney, Belle. "Patrician Days of Madison County."
 Killona Plantation Journals, 1836-1886.
 Kimbrough, A. M. Family. Papers.
 Lee, Stephen Dill. Papers.
 Leverich, Charles P. Papers.
 Lightsey, Joseph B. Diary.
 Lockhart-Weir Family. Papers.
 Lyon, James A. Journal.
 Matthews, James and Samuel. Letters.
 McCardle, William H. Papers.
 McCool Family. Papers.
 McCorkle, Samuel. Papers.
 McNabb, Eliza R. Letters.
 McRae, John J. Papers.
 Meek, Samuel M. Papers.
 Miller, Letitia D. Recollections.
 Nicholson, Flavellus G. Diary-Journal.
 Parrott, Johnny. Diary.
 Patrons of Husbandry. Mississippi State Grange. Papers.
 Regan, Charles K. Papers.
 Rollins, Mrs. Roy. Papers.
 Smith, Benjamin Lafayette. Autobiography.
 Somerville, Nellie Nugent. Papers.
 Stone, John M. Papers.
 Stuart, Oscar J. E. and Family. Papers.
 Sykes, Columbus. Papers.
 Timberlake, William Poindexter. Papers.
 Wade, Walter Plantation. Diaries.
 Wailes, B. L. C. Diaries.
 Walthall, William T. Papers.
 Weston, Henry Family. Papers.
 Yerger, L. P. Papers.

Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University,
 Starkville.

Baskin Family Papers.
 Carter, Brad. Papers.
 Trotter, Sallie Stone. Ledgers. Midway Grange Account
 Books.

Illinois Central Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.

Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans Railroad Company.
Papers.

Map Collection.

Mississippi Central Railroad Company. Papers.

New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago Railroad Company.
Papers.

Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Agnew, Samuel A. Diary.

Alcorn, James Lusk. Papers.

Ball, Henry Waring. Diary.

Bateman, Mary E. Diary.

Broidrick, Annie Laurie. "A Recollection of Thirty Years
Ago,"

Bullock, John and Charles Eaton Hamilton. Papers.

Crutcher-Shannon Family. Papers.

Dixon, Harry St. John. Papers.

Gale and Polk Family. Papers.

Henry, Gustavus A. Papers.

King, Thomas Butler. Papers.

Lovell, William Storrow. Plantation Journals.

Maury, James F. Diary, 1861.

Niles, Jason. Diary.

Norton-Chilton-Dameron Family. Papers.

Orr, Jehu Amaziah. Papers.

Quitman Family. Papers.

Roach and Eggleston Family. Papers.

Scales, Cordelia Lewis. Letters.

Worthington, Amanda Dougherty. Papers.

Cook Memorial Library, University of Southern Mississippi,
Hattiesburg.

Hardy, William H. and Hattie Lott. Papers.

Official Papers

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Governors' Papers.

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. (microfilm).

Source-Chronological File, Northern and Southern Mississippi, Department of Justice. (microfilm).

U.S. Census, Manuscript Returns. Agricultural Schedule, 1850, 1860. Copiah, Harrison, Jasper, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington (except 1860), Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi. (microfilm).

U.S. Census, Manuscript Returns. Population Schedule, 1840, 1850, 1860. Copiah, Harrison (except 1840), Jasper, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington (except 1860), Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi. (microfilm).

U.S. Census, Manuscript Returns. Slave Schedule, 1850 and 1860. Copiah, Harrison, Jasper, Jones, Leake, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Panola, Pontotoc, Warren, Washington (except 1860), Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi. (microfilm).

Printed Government Documents.

United States

Congressional Globe. 31st Cong., 1st sess. 1850.

_____. 31st Cong., 2nd sess. 1850.

_____. 32nd Cong., 1st sess. 1851.

_____. 32nd Cong., 2nd sess. 1851.

_____. 51st Cong., 2nd sess. 1891.

Mississippi in 1875: Report of the Select Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1875, With the Testimony and Documentary Evidence. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. Agriculture in the United States, 1860: Compiled From the Original Returns of the Eighth Census. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864.

- _____. Compendium of the Ninth Census, June 1, 1870.
Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872.
- _____. Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and States of the United States Obtained at the Department of State From the Returns of the Sixth Census. . . Washington, D.C.: Thomas Allen, 1841.
- _____. Eleventh Decennial Census of the United States. 1890: Volume 1. Population. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892.
- _____. Mortality Statistics of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Washington, D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1855.
- _____. Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled From the Original Returns of the Eighth Census. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864.
- _____. Report on Manufacturing Industries in the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890: Part 1, Totals for States and Industries. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895.
- _____. Report on the Manufacturing of the United States at the Tenth Census, June 1, 1880, Embracing General Statistics Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883.
- _____. Report on the Mortality and Vital Statistics of the United States as Returned at the Tenth Census. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885.
- _____. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, 1853.
- _____. Statistics of the United States, Including Mortality, Property, Etc., in 1860. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882.
- _____. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Population. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882.
- _____. Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in 1910, Volume II; Population 1910, Reports by States With Statistics for Cities and Other Civil Divisions. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912.

- _____. Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900; Manufactures, Part II, States and Territories. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Office, 1902.
- U.S. Congress. House. Ku Klux Conspiracy, Mississippi. 42nd Cong., 2nd sess., House Reports. No. 22. Vols. 11-12.
- _____. House. Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. 39th Cong., 1st., sess. House Reports. No. 30, part 3.
- _____. House. Vicksburg Troubles. 43rd Cong., 2nd sess. House Misc. Doc. No. 53.
- _____. Senate. Condition of the South. 38th Cong., 1st sess. S Exec. Doc. No. 2.
- _____. Senate. Mississippi Election of 1875. 44th Cong., 1st sess. Senate Reports. Doc. 527.
- _____. Senate. Municipal Election at Jackson, Mississippi. 50th Cong., 1st sess. S Misc. Doc. No. 166.
- _____. Senate. Report of the Special Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1883, with the Testimony and Documentary Evidence. 48th Cong., 1st sess. Senate Reports. No. 512.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Corn Growing Under Droughty Conditions. Farmers Bulletin. No. 773. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary Studies With Reference to Food of the Negro in Alabama, 1895-1896, Department of Agriculture Experiment Station Bulletin. No. 38. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1893. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. A Forest Atlas of the South. New Orleans and Asheville: Southern Forest Experiment Station, 1969.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture and Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Station. Restoring Moisture to Cotton at

Mid-South Gins. Technical Bulletin. No. 1553. Wash-
ington: Government Printing Office, 1977.

U.S. Department of Interior. Report of the Secretary of
Interior. various publishers, 1830-1860.

U.S. Department of Treasury. Report of the Internal Com-
merce of the United States, Part II of Commerce and
Navigation; The Commercial, Industrial, Transporta-
tion, and Other Industries of the Southern States.
"Mississippi." William T. Winn. Washington, D. C.:
Government Printing Office, 1886.

U.S. Patent Office. Report of the Commissioner of Patents
for the Year, 1850. Washington, D.C.: Government
Printing Office, 1850.

_____. Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the
Year, 1853. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing
Office, 1853.

Mississippi

Code of Mississippi: Being an Analytical Compilation of
the Public and General Statutes of the Territory and
State from 1789 to 1840 (Jackson: Price and Fall,
1848).

Journal of the Convention and Ordinances and Resolutions
Adopted January 1861, With An Appendix. Jackson:
Ethelbert Barksdale, 1861.

Journal of the Convention of the State of Mississippi and
the Act Calling the Same with the Constitution of the
United States and Washington's Farewell Address.
Jackson: Thomas Palmer, 1851.

Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of
Mississippi. (Title and publisher varies, 1850-1903).

Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi. (Title
and publisher varies, 1840-1903).

Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Constitu-
tional Convention of the State of Mississippi, Au-
gust, 1865. Jackson: E. M. Yerger, 1865.

Journal of the Proceedings in the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi, 1868. Jackson: E. Stafford, 1871.

Journal of the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Mississippi Begun at the City of Jackson on August 12, 1890 and Concluded November 1, 1890. Jackson: E. L. Martin, 1890.

Laws of the State of Mississippi. (Title and publisher varies, 1824-1903).

Report of the Auditor of Public Accounts, 1881. Jackson: Powers and Barksdale, 1881.

Report of the Mississippi State Board of Health. (Title and publisher varies, 1879-1917).

The Annotated Code of the General Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce, 1892).

The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi of a Public and General Nature. . . (Jackson: Alcorn and Fisher, 1871).

The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of the State Mississippi of a Public and General Nature. . . Jackson: J. L. Power, 1880.

The Statutes of the State of Mississippi of a Public and General Nature. . . New Orleans: E. Johns and Company, 1840.

Travellers' Accounts, Memoirs, Commentaries, and Published Correspondence

A Southron [Joseph B. Cobb]. "The True Issue Between Parties in the South, Union or Disunion." The American Whig. New Series. 36 (December 1851): 587-602.

Adams, Nehemiah. A South-Side View of Slavery; or Three Months at the South, in 1854. Boston: T. R. Marvin and B. B. Mussey and Company, 1854.

Alcorn, James L. Views of the Honorable James L. Alcorn on the Political Situation of Mississippi. Friar's Point: n.p., 1867.

- Allen, William H. "Shadows of Steamboat Life." Knickerbocker Magazine 40 (August 1852): 123-159.
- Ames, Blanche, comp. Chronicles From the Nineteenth Century: Family Letters of Blanche Butler and Adelbert Ames vol. 2 (Clinton, Massachusetts: Colonial Press, 1957).
- Aughey, John. The Iron Furnace: or, Slavery and Secession. Philadelphia: William S. and Alfred Martien, 1863.
- Bailey, T. J. Prohibition in Mississippi: or Anti-Liquor Legislation From Territorial Days, With Its Results in the Counties. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1917.
- Baird, Robert. View of the Valley of the Mississippi: or the Emigrants and Traveller's Guide to the West Containing a General Description of that Entire Country: and Also Notices of the Soil, Production, Rivers, and Their Channels of Intercourse and Trade: And Otherwise of the Cities and Towns, and Progress of Education of Each State and Territory. Philadelphia: H. S. Tanner, 1832.
- Baldwin, Joseph G. The Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi. New York: D. Appleton, 1853.
- Banks, Charles. Negro Bankers of Mississippi. Cheyney, Pennsylvania: Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race, 1908.
- Barinetti, Charles. A Voyage to Mexico and Havana: Including Some General Observations on the United States. New York: C. Vinten, 1841.
- Beaumont, Mrs. B[etty]. Twelve Years of My Life, An Autobiography. Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, 1887.
- Boyd, Samuel S. Speech of the Honorable Samuel S. Boyd Delivered at the Great Union Festival Held at Jackson, Mississippi the 16th Day of October 1851. Natchez: Book and Job Office of the Natchez Courier, 1851.
- Bullock, William. Sketch of a Journey Through the Western States of North America, From New Orleans, By the Mississippi, Ohio, City of Cincinnati, and Falls of Niagara, and New York in 1827. London: John Miller, 1827.

- Burrus, J. C. "My Recollections of the Early Days of Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Sillers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee. Edited by Wirt A. Williams. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1948.
- Burwell, A. Dramshops, Industry and Taxes: Address to the People of Mississippi. New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House, 1875.
- Chandler, Greene Callier. Journal and Speeches of Green Callier Chandler. Privately published, 1955.
- Claiborne, J. F. H. "A Trip Through the Piney Woods," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906).
- _____. Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman, Major-General, U.S.A. and Governor of the State of Mississippi. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1860.
- Crist, Lynda Lasswell., ed. The Papers of Jefferson Davis, 1849-1852. Vol. 4. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1983.
- Darden, John P. The Secret of Success, or Family Affairs; A Memoir in One Volume By A Mississippian. Cincinnati: Walter Scott, 1853.
- Davis, Reuben. Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891.
- Dickens, Charles. American Notes for General Circulation. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1842.
- Ellet, Charles, Jr. The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers: Containing Plans for the Protection of the Delta From Inundation; and Investigation of the Practicability and Cost of Improving the Navigation of the Ohio and Other Rivers by Means of Reservoirs. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1853.
- Estes, Matthew. A Defense of Negro Slavery; As it Exists in the United States. Montgomery: Press of the Alabama Journal, 1846.
- Everest, Robert. A Journey Through the United States and Part of Canada. London: John Chapman, 1855.

- Fitzhugh, George. Sociology For the South, or the Failure of Free Society. Richmond: A Morris, 1854.
- Flynt, Timothy. Recollections of the Last Ten Years Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Company, 1826.
- Fox, John A. A National Duty: Mississippi River Flood Problems: How the Floods Can be Prevented. Washington: The Mississippi River Association, 1914.
- Fulkerson, H. S. The Negro; As He Was; As He Is; As He Will Be. Vicksburg: Commercial Herald Printers, 1887.
- Galloway, Charles B. Handbook of Prohibition: Specially Designed for Circulation in the State of Mississippi. N.p., 1886.
- Golovin, Ivan. Stars and Stripes, or American Impressions. London: W. Freeman; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856.
- Goodspeed Brothers. Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi, Embracing an Authentic and Comprehensive Account of the Chief Events in the History of the State and a record of the Lives of Many of the Most Worthy and Illustrious Families and Individuals. 2 vols. Chicago: Goodspeed Brothers, 1891.
- Gould, E. W. Fifty Years on the Mississippi; or Gould's History of River Navigation. 1899. Reprint. Columbus, Ohio: Long's College Book Company, 1951.
- Graf, Leroy P. and Ralph W. Haskins, eds. The Papers of Andrew Johnson, 1858-1860. Vol. 3. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972.
- Hall, Mrs. Basil [Margaret]. The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall Written During a Fourteen Months' Sojourn in America, 1827-1828. Edited by Una Pope Hennessy. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931.
- Hammett, Evelyn, "Pioneer Days in East Bolivar," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Sillers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee, ed. Wirt A. Williams (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1948).

Humphries, A. A. and H. L. Abbot, Report Upon the Physics and Hydraulics of the Mississippi River: Upon the Protection of the Alluvial Region Against Overflows; and Upon the Deepening of the Mouths: Based Upon Surveys and investigations. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1861.

Ireys, Henry Tillinghast. "Autobiography," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William David McCain and Charlotte Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.

Lamar, L. Q. C., et. al. "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised?" North American Review 128 (March 1879): 231-238.

Letter of Lucius Q. C. Lamar in Reply to Honorable P. F. Liddell of Carrollton, Mississippi (n.p., n.d).

Mayes, Edward. L. Q. C. Lamar: His Life, Times and Speeches, 1825-1893. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1896.

McKibben, Davison Burns., ed. "Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Clinton, Mississippi to a Gentleman in Lynchburg, Virginia, Dated the 5th of July, 1835," Journal of Negro History 34 (January 1949): 91-94.

McLaughlin, Andrew C. "Mississippi and the Negro Question." Atlantic Monthly 70 (December 1892): 828-837.

Mississippi Boy Convicts. Jackson: Hederman Brothers Printers, 1911.

Mitchell, Samuel Augustus. Mitchell's Traveller's Guide Through the United States, Containing the Principal Cities, Towns, and Etc. Alphabetically Arranged; Together with the Stage, Steamboat, Canada, and Railroads with the Distances, in Miles from Place to Place. Philadelphia: Mitchell and Hinman, 1836.

Morgan, Albert T. Yazoo; or, on the Picket Line of Freedom in the South: A Personal Narrative. 1884. Reprint. New York: Russell and Russell, 1986.

Murphy, Edgar Gardner. "Shall the Fourteenth Amendment Be Enforced." North American Review 180 (January 1905): 109-133.

- Orr, J. A. "A Trip From Houston to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1845," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906): 173-178.
- Paxton, A. J. "Recollections of Deer Creek," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William David McCain and Charolette Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.
- Poe, Clarence. "Lynching: A Southern View," Atlantic Monthly 103 (February 1904): 155-165.
- Pulszkey, Francis and Theresa Pulszkey. White, Red, Black; Sketches of American Society in the United States During the Visit of Their Guests. New York: Redfield, 1853.
- Rawick, George, ed. The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement. Vols. 6 and 7. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977.
- Reid, Whitelaw. After the War: A Southern Tour, May 11, 1865 to May 1866. Cincinnati and New York: Moore, Wilstach and Baldwin, 1866.
- Robertshaw, James. "Greenville in its Early Days," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William David McCain and Charolette Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.
- Rogers, George. Memoranda of the Experiences, Labors, and Travels of a Universalist Preacher. Cincinnati: John A. Gurley, 1845.
- Rowland, Dunbar. Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers, and Speeches. Vol. 2. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923.
- Shackleford, Thomas. Proceedings of the Citizens of Madison County, Mississippi and Livingston, in July 1835, In Relation to the Trial and Punishment of Several Individuals Implicated in a Contemplated Insurrection in the State. Jackson: Mayson and Smoot, 1836.
- Smedes, Susan Dabney. Memorials of a Southern Planter. Baltimore: Cushing and Bailey, 1888.

- Somers, Robert. The Southern States Since the War, 1870-1871. 1871. Reprint. University: University of Alabama Press, 1965.
- Somerville, Nellie Nugent. Moral Leadership: The True Basis of Woman Suffrage. Greenville: Democrat-Times Printing, n.d.
- Sparks, W. H. The Memories of Fifty Years: Containing Brief Biographical Notes of Distinguished Americans, and Antecedents of Remarkable Men; Interspersed With Scenes and Incidents Occurring During a Long Life of Observation Chiefly Spent in the Southwest. 4th ed. Philadelphia: E. Caxton and Company, 1882.
- Starling, William. The Floods of the Mississippi River, Including an Account of Their Principal Causes and Effects, and a Description of the Levee System and Other Means Proposed and Tried For the Control of the River, With a Particular Account of the Great Flood of 1897. New York: The Engineering News Publishing Company, 1897.
- Stewart, Virgil A. The History of Virgil A. Stewart and His Adventure in Capturing and Exposing the Great 'Western Land Pirate' and His Gang in Connexion with the Evidence. Compiled by H. R. Howard. New York: Harder and Brothers, 1836.
- Terrell, Mary Church. "Lynching From A Negro's Point of View." North American Review 178 (June 1904): 853-868.
- Theobald, Mrs. H. B. "Reminiscences of Greenville," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William David McCain and Charolette Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.
- Thorpe, Thomas Bangs. A New Collection of Thomas Bangs Thorpe's Sketches of the Old Southwest. Edited by David C. Estes. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1989.
- Trowbridge, J. T. A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868. Hartford: L. Stebbins, 1868.

Van Buren, A. De Puy. Jottings of a Year's Sojourn in the South: or, First Impressions of the Country and Its People; With a Glimpse of School-Teaching in that Southern Land and Reminiscences of Distinguished Men. 1859. Reprint. Louisville: Lost Cause Press, 1960. (microcard).

Wailes, B. L. C. Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi; Embracing a Sketch of the Social and Natural History of the State. Jackson: E. Barksdale, 1854.

Wall, E. G. Handbook of the State of Mississippi. Jackson: Powers and Barksdale Steam Printer, 1882.

_____. The State of Mississippi: Resources, Condition and Wants. Compiled and Arranged by Order of the State Board of Immigration and Agriculture. Jackson: Clarion Steam Printing Establishment, 1879.

Woodward, D. W. Negro Progress in a Mississippi Town: Being a Study of Conditions in Jackson, Mississippi. Cheyney, Pennsylvania: Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race, 1908.

Worthington, James, "Antebellum Slaveholding Aristocracy of Washington County," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William David McCain and Charolette Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.

Contemporary Publications Relating to Business, Education, and Professional Societies

Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi Central Railroad Company to the Stockholders, for the Year Ending August 31, 1867. New Albany, Indiana: Norman and Matthews, 1867.

Cobb, Charles. American Railway Guide and Packet Companion for the United States. New York: Carran Dinsmore and Company, 1851.

Directory by States and Counties of More Than Eight Thousand of the Students and Graduates of Eastman, Poughkeepsie, New York, Part Two, Southern and Gulf States. N.p., 1908.

Directory for the City of Mobile, 1859. Mobile: Farrow and Dennett, 1859.

Illinois Central Railroad Company. One Hundred Cities and Towns Wanting Industries in the States of South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana On the Lines of the Illinois Central Railroad and Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad. Chicago: Eggerston and Hoffman, n.d..

Illinois Central Railroad Company. Railroad Lands For Sale Owned by the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Company in the Famous Yazoo Valley of Mississippi. N.p., 1896.

Kimball and James' Business Directory, for the Mississippi Valley, 1844. Cincinnati: Kendall and Barnard, 1844.

Larnder, Dionysius. Railway Economy: A Treatise on the New Art of Transport, Its Movement, Prospects, and Relations, Commercial, Financial, and Social With an Exposition of the Practical Results of the Railways in Operation in the United Kingdom, on the Continent, and in America. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1850.

Lewis' Southern Directory, 1871 and 1872. N.p., n.d.

Maloney's 1907 Jackson City Directory. Vol. 5. N.p., n.d.

Manual of the Public Schools of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1910-1911. Hattiesburg: The Martin Publishing Company, n.d.

Mississippi Women's Christian Temperance Union: Report of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, Held in Tupelo, Mississippi, October 11th to 14th, 1914. Jackson: Jones Printing Company, 1913.

Mississippi Women's Christian Temperance Union: Report of the Thirty First Annual Convention, Held in Europa, Mississippi, October 23rd to 26th, 1915. N.p., n.d.

Ninth Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad, to the Stockholders; Embracing the Reports of the Treasurer. Memphis: C. F. Chamberlain and Company, 1865.

Poor, Henry V. Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1890. New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1890.

- . Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1900. New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1900.
- . Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1910. New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1910.
- Proceedings of the Mississippi Bar Association at its Sixth Annual Meeting Held January 6, 1891. Jackson: State Ledger Printing Establishment, 1892.
- Proceedings of the Mississippi Bankers' Association: Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention, West Point, Mississippi, May 20-21, 1913. Jackson Tucker Printing House, 1913.
- Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention: Mississippi Bankers' Association, Vicksburg, May 5-6, 1914. N.p., n.d.
- Rand McNally and Company. Directory and Shipping Guide of Lumber Mills and Lumber Dealers in the United States and Canada. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, Publisher, 1884.
- Report of the Second Annual Meeting of the Mississippi State Bar Association Held at Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1907. N.p., n.d.
- Sixth Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad to the Stockholders Embracing Reports of the Chief Engineer, Treasurer and Superintendent. Memphis: Bulletin Publishing and Job Printing House, 1859.
- The Southern Business Directory and General Commercial Advertiser. Vol. 1. Charleston: Walker and Jones, 1854.
- Transactions of the Mississippi State Medical Association at the Fifth Annual Session Held at Holly Springs April 3rd and 4th, 1872, with Constitution and By-Laws and Roll of Members. Columbus: Excelsior Book and Job Office, 1872.
- Transactions of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Session of the Mississippi State Medical Association Held at Meridian April 16th and 17th, 1891. Jackson: Clarion-Ledger Printing Establishment, 1891.

Transactions of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session of the
Mississippi State Medical Association Held at Jackson
April 4th, 5th, and 6th, 1894 With Rolls of Members.
Jackson: Clarion-Ledger Printing Establishment, 1894.

Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Company: Laws and Documents.
Vol. 1. N.p., n.d.

Contemporary Periodicals

Commercial Review, 1847-1860.

Commercial Review, After the War Series, 1865-1872.

Rural Carolinian, 1870-1873.

Mississippi Medical Monthly, 1891-1894.

Newspapers

Aberdeen Examiner

Batesville Weekly Panolian

Carthage Carthaginian

Choctaw Plaindealer

Crystal Springs Meteor

Crystal Springs Monitor

Columbus Southern Sentinel

Columbus Patron of Husbandry

Forest Weekly Register

Grenada Gazette

Grenada Sentinel

Hazelhurst Copiah Signal

Jackson Comet

Jackson Daily Clarion

Jackson Evening News
Jackson Weekly Clarion
Jackson Weekly Pilot
Jackson Mississippian
Jackson Mississippian and State Gazette
Jackson Weekly Clarion-Ledger
Jackson Weekly Mississippian
Lexington Union
Lexington Whig Republican
Liberty Advocate
Macon Mississippi Sun
Macon New South
Memphis Commercial Appeal
Meridian Mississippi White Ribbon
Natchez Daily Democrat
Natchez Daily Democrat and Courier
Natchez Daily Courier
Natchez Free Trader
Natchez Mississippi Free Trader
Natchez Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette
Natchez Weekly Democrat
Raymond Hinds County Gazette
Raymond Gazette
Vicksburg Evening Banner
Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Whig
Vicksburg Daily Whig

Vicksburg Weekly Whig

Woodville Republican

Secondary Sources

Articles

Anderson, Mrs. W. A. "A Chapter in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1909): 223-236.

Appleby, Joyce. "Modernization Theory and the Formation of Modern Social Theories in England and American." Comparative Studies in Society and History 20 (April 1978): 259-285.

Arsenault, Raymond. "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture." Journal of Southern History 50 (November 1984): 597-628.

Barney, William L. "Patterns of Crisis: Alabama White Families and Rural Change, 1850-1870." Sociology and Social Research 63 (April 1979): 524-543.

Battalio, Raymond C. and John Kagel. "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, A Case Study." Agricultural History 44 (January 1970): 25-37.

Baxter, Robert J. "Cattle Raising in Early Mississippi: Reminiscences." Mississippi Folklore Register 10 (Spring 1976): 1-23.

Blumin, Stuart M. "The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals." American Historical Review 90 (April 1985): 302-338.

Bond, Bradley G. "Edward C. Walthall and the 1880 Senatorial Nomination; Politics of Balance in the Redeemer Era." Journal of Mississippi History 50 (February 1988): 1-20.

Braden, W. H. "Reconstruction in Lee County." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1909): 135-146.

- Brown, Marice C. "Early Pharmaceuticals in the Deep South." Mississippi Folklore Register 8 (Winter 1974): 232-240.
- Campbell, J. A. P. "Planter's and Union Bank Bonds." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 4 (1901): 493-498.
- Campbell, E. G. "Indebted Railroads, A Problem of Reconstruction." Journal of Southern History 6 (1940): 167-188.
- Coclanis, Peter. "Bookkeeping in the Eighteenth-Century South: Evidence from Newspapers Advertisements." South Carolina Historical Magazine 91 (January 1990): 23-31.
- Coelho, Dirceu T. and Robert F. Dale. "An Energy-Crop Growth Variable and Temperature Function for Predicting Corn Growth and Development: Planting to Silking." Agronomy Journal 72 (May-June 1980): 503-580.
- Coleman, E. C., Jr. "Reconstruction in Attala County," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1911): 147-164.
- Coleman, James P. "The Origin of the Constitution of 1890." Journal of Mississippi History 19 (April 1957): 69-92.
- Colipado, M. C. and D. M. Brown, "Response of Corn (Zea Mays L.) In the Pre-Tassel Initiation Period to Temperature and Photoperiod." Agricultural Meteorology 14 (April 1975): 357-367.
- Drake, Winbourne, M. "The Mississippi Reconstruction Convention of 1865." Journal of Mississippi History 21 (1959): 225-256.
- Ellis, David Maldwyn. "The Forfeiture of Railroad Land Grants, 1867-1894." Mississippi Valley Historical Review 33 (1946): 27-60.
- Fischer, David Hackett. "Climate and History; Priorities for Research." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 10 (Spring 1980): 821-830.
- Gallman, Robert E. "Self Sufficiency in the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South." Agricultural History 44 (January 1970): 5-23.

- Genovese, Eugene. "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy." Agricultural History 49 (April 1975): 331-342.
- Gonzales, John Edmond. "Henry Stuart Foote: A Forgotten Unionist of the Forties." Southern Quarterly 1 (January 1963):
- Hahn, Steven. "The 'Unmaking' of the Southern Yeomanry: The Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1860-1890," in The Countryside in the Age of Capital Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- _____. "The Yeomanry of the Non-plantation South: Upper Piedmont Georgia, 1850-1860," in Class, Conflict, and Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies. Edited by Orville Vernon Burton and Robert C. McMath, Jr. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1982.
- Halsell, Willie D. "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi, 1878-1882." Journal of Mississippi History 2 (1940): 123-135.
- _____. "James R. Chalmers and 'Mahoneism' in Mississippi." Journal of Southern History 10 (1944): 37-58.
- _____, ed. "Republican Factionalism in Mississippi, 1882-1884." Journal of Southern History 7 (February 1941): 84-101.
- Harris, J. William. Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta's Hinterlands. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1985.
- Harrison, Robert W. "Levee Building In Mississippi Before the Civil War." Journal of Mississippi History 12 (April 1950): 63-97.
- Haygood, Tamara Miner, "Cows, Ticks, and Disease: A Medical Interpretation of the Southern Cattle Industry," Journal of Southern History 52 (November 1986): 551-564.
- Hearon, Cleo. "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 14 (1914): 7-230.

- Hickman, Nollie W. "Black Labor in the Forest Industries of the Piney Woods, 1840-1933." Mississippi's Piney Woods: A Human Perspective. Edited by Noel Polk. Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1986.
- _____. "The Lumber Industry in South Mississippi, 1890-1915." Journal of Mississippi History 20 (June 1958): 211-223.
- Hilliard, Sam Bowers, "Hog Meat and Cornpone: Food Habits in the Antebellum South." Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 113 (February 1969): 1-13.
- Hodge, Jo Dent. "The Lumber Industry in Laurel, Mississippi, at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century." Journal of Mississippi History 25 (November 1973): 361-379.
- Holman, Hamilton. "Democratic Senate Leadership and the Compromise of 1850." Mississippi Valley Historical Review 41 (December 1954): 403-418.
- Holmes, J. A. "Road Building With Convict Labor in the Southern States." Reprint, from Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture, 1901.
- Hughes, John S. "Labeling and Treating Black Mental Illness in Alabama, 1861-1910." Journal of Southern History 58 (August 1992): 435-460.
- Humphrey, George D. "Public Education for Whites in Mississippi." Journal of Mississippi History 3 (January 1941): 26-36.
- Katz, Michael B., Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, "Migration and the Social Order in Erie County, New York; 1855." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8 (Spring 1978): 669-701.
- Kellar, Herbert A. "A Journey Through the South in 1836: Diary of James D. Davidson," Journal of Southern History 1 (August 1935): 345-377.
- Kelly, Arthell and Robert C. Spillman, "Sequence Occupancy of the Piney Woods in Southeastern Mississippi, 1805-1976." The Mississippi Geographer 4 (Spring 1976): 25-40.
- Kirwan, Albert. "Apportionment in the Mississippi Constitution of 1890." Journal of Southern History 14 (May 1948): 234-246.

Koeniger, A. Cash, "Climate and Southern Distinctiveness." Journal of Southern History 54 (February 1988): 21-44.

Leftwich, George. "Reconstruction in Monroe County." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 9 (1906): 53-84.

Legan, Marshall Scott, "A Nineteenth Century Treatment of Yellow Fever." Mississippi Folklore Register 6 (Fall 1972): 91-93.

_____. "Mississippi and the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878-1879." Journal of Mississippi History 33 (August 1971): 199-217.

Martin, J. M. "True History of Incorporation of the Industrial Institute and College." Mississippi Historical Society Publications. Centenary Series, 4 (1921): 277-280.

Merrill, Michael. "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States." Radical History Review 4 (Winter 1977): 42-66.

McCardell, John. "John A. Quitman and the Compromise of 1850." Journal of Mississippi History 37 (June 1975): 239-266.

McDonald, Forest and Grady McWhiney. "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation." Journal of Southern History 41 (May 1975): 147-168.

_____. "The South From Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation." American Historical Review 85 (December 1980): 1095-1118.

McKee, James W., Jr. "William Barksdale and the Congressional Election of 1853 in Mississippi." Journal of Mississippi History 34 (May 1972): 129-158.

McKibben, Davison Burns. "Negro Slave Insurrections in Mississippi, 1800-1865." Journal of Negro History 34 (January 1949): 73-90.

Metcalfe-Collins, Mrs. P. E. "Sketches of Some of the Pioneers of Washington County," in Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys: Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1919. Edited by William

- David McCain and Charolette Capers. Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1954.
- Miles, Edwin A. "The Mississippi Slave Insurrection Scare of 1835." Journal of Negro History 42 (January 1957): 48-60.
- Millsaps, R. W. "History of Banking in Mississippi," Sound Currency 10 (March 1903): 16-48.
- Napier, John H. III. "Piney Woods Past: A Pastoral Elegy," in Mississippi Piney Woods: A Human Perspective. Edited by Noel Polk. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986.
- Noel, Edmund F. "Mississippi Primary Election Laws," Mississippi Historical Society Publications 8 (1904): 253-292.
- Orr, Ellen. "The Bottle Tree." Mississippi Folklore Register 3 (Winter 1969): 109-111.
- Owens, Harry P. "Steamboat Landings on the Yazoo and Tallahatchie Rivers (1875-1882)." Journal of Mississippi History 47 (November 1985): 266-283.
- Price, Beulah, M. D'Olive. "The Dog-Trot Log Cabin: A Development in American Folk Architecture." Mississippi Folklore Register 4 (Fall 1970): 92-93.
- _____. "The Legendary Panther of the Forks of Hatchie." Mississippi Folklore Register 5 (Spring 1971): 15-18.
- Puckett, E. F. "Reconstruction in Monroe County." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 11 (1910): 103-162.
- Ransom, Roger and Richard Sutch. "Debt Peonage in the Cotton South After the Civil War." Journal of Economic History 32 (September 1972): 641-669.
- _____. "The Ex-Slave in the Post-Bellum South: A Study of the Economic Impact of Racism in a Market Environment." Journal of Economic History 33 (March 1973): 131-148.
- Reid, Joseph D., Jr. "Sharecropping as an Understandable Market Response: The Post-Bellum South," Journal of Economic History 33 (March 1973): 106-130.

- _____. "White Land, Black Labor, and Agricultural Stagnation: The Causes and Effects of Sharecropping in the Postbellum South." Explorations in Economic History 16 (January 1979): 31-55.
- Roland, Charles P. "The Ever-Vanishing South." Journal of Southern History 48 (February 1982): 3-20.
- Ross, Dorothy. "The Liberal Tradition Revisited and the Republican Tradition Addressed," in New Directions in American Intellectual History. Edited by John Higham and Paul Conkin. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Rothstein, Morton. "The Antebellum South As A Dual Economy: A Tentative Hypothesis." Agricultural History 41 (October 1967): 373-382.
- Shalhope, Robert. "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography." William and Mary Quarterly. 3d ser., 29 (1972): 49-80.
- Shammas, Carole. "How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?" Journal of Interdisciplinary History 13 (Autumn 1982): 247-272.
- Shingleton, Royce. "The Republic of Porkdom." Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 112 (December 1968): 407-410.
- _____. "The Utility of Leisure: Game as a Source of Food in the Old South." Mississippi Quarterly 25 (Fall 1972): 429-446.
- Sillers, Walter. "Levees of the Mississippi Levee District in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Silvers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee. Edited by Wirt A. Williams. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1948.
- Skates, John Ray. "The Early Years," in Kenneth G. McCarty, Hattiesburg: A Pictorial History. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982.
- Snyder, Perry A. "Remedies of the Pineywoods Pioneers." Mississippi Folklore Register 7 (Spring 1973): 11-14.

- Thompson, R. H. "Suffrage in Mississippi." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 1 (1898): 25-49.
- Thorne, Mildred. "A Population Study of an Iowa County in 1850." Iowa Journal of History 57 (October 1959):
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in Frederick Jackson Turner: Wisconsin's Historian of the Frontier. Edited by Martin Ridge. Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.
- Vickers, Ovid S. "The Stratton Booger." Mississippi Folklore Register 4 (Fall 1970): 92-93.
- West, Cordelia McNeas, W. B. Roberts, and Florence S. Ogden. "Roads in Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Sillers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee. Edited by Wirt A. Williams. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1948.
- Witty, Fred M. "Reconstruction in Carroll and Montgomery Counties." Mississippi Historical Society Publications 10 (1909): 115-134.
- Woodman, Harold. "Economic Reconstruction and the Rise of the New South, 1865-1900," in Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham. Edited by John Boles and Evelyn Nolen. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1987.
- Woollard, W. W. "History of the Liquor Fight in the Early Days of Bolivar County," in History of Bolivar County, Mississippi; Compiled by Florence Warfield Sillers and Members of the Mississippi Delta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the County History Committee. Edited by Wirt A. Williams. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1948.

Books

- Appleby, Joyce. Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republic Vision of the 1790s. New York and London: New York University Press, 1985.

- Ashkenzai, Elliott. The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840-1875. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1988.
- Bailyn, Bernard. Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Baron, Hal S. Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Bettersworth, John. Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943.
- _____. People's University: The Centennial History of Mississippi State. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980.
- Brandfon, Robert L. Cotton Kingdom of the New South: A History of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta From Reconstruction to the Twentieth Century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Brown, Richard D. Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865. New York: Hill and Wang, 1976.
- Burnham, W. Dean. Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955.
- Burton, Orville Vernon. In My Father's House Are Many Mansions; Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Cabiniss, James Allen. The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years. University: University of Mississippi Press, 1949.
- Cain, Cyril Edward, ed. Four Centuries on the Pascagoula: History and Genealogy of the Pascagoula River Country. 2 vols. 1962. Reprint. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1983.
- Cash, W. J. The Mind of the South. 1941. Reprint. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Vintage Books, 1969.
- Cason, Clarence. 90 Degrees in the Shade. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935.

- Clark, Thomas D. Pills, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store. Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1944.
- Clark, Thomas D. and John D. Guice. The Old Southwest, 1795-1830. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.
- Cobb, Maurice. Studies in the Development of Capitalism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1946.
- Coclanis, Peter. Shadow of a Dream: Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Coker, William L. Repudiation and Reaction: Tilghman M. Tucker and the Mississippi Bond Question. Floral Park: 1969.
- Cole, Arthur Harrison. Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States 1700-1861: A Statistical Supplement; Actual Wholesale Prices of Various Commodities. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.
- Coleman, J. P. Choctaw County Chronicles: A History of Choctaw County, 1830-1973. Ackerman: Privately published, 1973.
- Cooper, William J., Jr. Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.
- _____. The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Coulter, E. Merton. College Life in the Old South. New York: MacMillan Company, 1928.
- Cronon, William. Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecological History of New England. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
- Crowdy, Albert E. This Land, This South: An Environmental History. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1983.
- Daughtry, S. T., J. C. Cochran, S. E. Hollinger. Meteorological Models for Estimating Phenology of Corn. West Lafayette, Indiana: Laboratory for Application of Remote Sensing, 1984.

- Diggins, John Patrick. The Lost Soul of American Politics. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Doyle, Don Harrison. The Social Order in a Frontier Community, Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. Modernization: Protest and Change. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966.
- Faulkner, William. Absalom, Absalom! 1936. Reprint. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1964.
- _____. The Hamlet. 1931. Reprint. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.
- _____. "Mississippi," in Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters. Edited by James B. Meriwether. London: Chatto and Windus, 1967.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982.
- Fitzgerald, Michael. The Union League Movement in the Deep South. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.
- Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman. Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods; A Supplement (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974).
- Ford, Lacy K., Jr. Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Franklin, John Hope. The Militant South, 1800-1861. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.
- Garner, James Wilford. Reconstruction in Mississippi. New York and London: Macmillan Company, 1901.
- Gaston, Paul. The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.
- Genovese, Eugene. The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South. New York: Pantheon, 1965.

- Gray, Lewis. History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1933.
- Goodwyn, Lawrence. The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America. Oxford, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Hahn, Steven. The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hardeman, Shucks, Shocks, and Hominy Blocks: Corn as A Way of Life in Pioneer America. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.
- Harris, William C. Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.
- _____. Day of the Carpetbagger: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Haywood, Robert C. Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991.
- Hickman, Nollie W. Mississippi Harvest: Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915. Montgomery: Paragon Press, 1962.
- Hilliard, Sam Bowers. Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1984.
- _____. Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860. Edwardsville and Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.
- Holmes, William F. The Great White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.
- Howe, Daniel Walker. The Political Culture of the American Whigs. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Humphries, Benjamin G. Floods and Levees of the Mississippi River. Washington: The Mississippi River Association, 1914.

- Hyman, Michael R. The Anti-Redeemers: Hill Country Political Dissenters in the Lower South From Redemption to Populism (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).
- Jaynes, Gerald David. Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1882. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Kenzer, Robert C. Kinship and Neighborhood in a North Carolina Community, Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987.
- Kirwan, Albert D. Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925. 1951. Reprint. New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbook, 1965.
- Kousser, J. Morgan. The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Locke, John. Two Treatises of Government. Edited by Michael Oakeshott. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.
- Marx, Karl. Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Vol. 3 in The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole. Edited by Frederick Engels. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1906.
- May, Robert E. John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1985.
- McCoy, Drew R. The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980.
- _____. The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- McMillen, Neil R. Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- McWhiney, Grady. Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988.

- McWhiney, Grady and Perry D. Jamieson. Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage. University: University of Alabama Press, 1982.
- Miles, Edwin A. Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.
- Mississippi: A Guide to the Magnolia State; Compiled and Written by the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration. New York: Hastings House, 1938.
- Moore, John Hebron. Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.
- _____. The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest; Mississippi, 1770-1860. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.
- Morgan, Edmund S. American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia. New York and London: Norton, 1975.
- Murphy, James B. L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973.
- Naipaul, V. S. A Turn in the South. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- North, Douglas. The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860. 1961. Reprint. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966.
- Novack, Michael. The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Oakes, James. The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders. New York: Random House, 1982.
- O'Brien, Gail Williams. The Legal Fraternity and the Making of a New South Community, 1848-1882. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986.
- Odum, Howard. An American Epoch: Southern Portraiture in the National Picture. New York: Henry Holt, 1930.
- Osborn, George Coleman. James Kimble Vardaman: Southern Commoner. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1981.

- Penick, James Lal, Jr. The Great Western Land Pirate John A. Murrell in Legend and History. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1981.
- Percy, William Alexander. Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941.
- Perman, Michael. The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Phillips, Ulrich Bonnell. Life and Labor in the Old South. 1929. Reprint. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937.
- Pocock, J. G. A. The Machiavellian Moment. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- _____. Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Pollack, Norman. The Humane Economy: Populism, Capitalism, and Democracy. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990.
- Rable, George. But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984.
- Ransom, Roger L. and Richard Sutch. One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Roark, James L. Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction. New York: Norton and Company, 1977.
- Rodabaugh, John E. Steamboats on the Upper Tombigbee. Hamilton, Mississippi: Tombigbee Press, 1985.
- Rowland, Dunbar. Military History of Mississippi, 1803-1898. 1908. Reprint. Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1878.
- Sansing, David G. Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi. Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

- Schweikart, Larry. Banking in the American South From the Age of Jackson to Reconstruction. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- Silver, James W. Mississippi: The Closed Society. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964.
- Smith, Frank E. The Yazoo River. New York and Toronto: Rhinehart and Company, 1954.
- Stover, John F. History of the Illinois Central Railroad. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975.
- _____. The Railroads of the South, 1865-1900: A Study in Finance and Control. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955.
- Strode, Hudson. Jefferson Davis, American Patriot, 1808-1861. Vol. 1. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955.
- Thornton, J. Mills, III. Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1978.
- Trelease, Allen. White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971.
- Unger, Irwin. The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Warren, George F. and Frank A. Pearson. Prices. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1933.
- Warren, Robert Penn. All the King's Men. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1946.
- Watkins, James L. King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790 to 1908. New York: James L. Watkins and Sons, 1908.
- Wayne, Michael. The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-1880. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- Weaver, Herbert. Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1945.

Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

_____. The Theory of Social and Economic Organization. New York: Charles Scribner, 1947.

Wharton, Vernon Lane. The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890. 1947. Reprint. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Windham, Kathryn Tucker. Count Those Buzzards! Stamp Those Grey Mules. Privately published, 1979.

Wood, Gordon S. The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787. 1969. Reprint. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1972.

Woodman, Harold. King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1915. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968.

Wright, Gavin. The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century South. New York: W. W. Norton, Inc., 1978.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. Honor and Violence in the Old South. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Theses, Dissertations and Other Unpublished Materials

Breese, Donald H. "Politics in the Lower South During Presidential Reconstruction, April to November 1865." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1963.

Clark, Eric Charles. "The Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890: A Political Analysis." M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1975.

Cobb, James C. "'Deepest South,': The Mississippi Delta and the Riddle of Regional Identity." Paper Delivered at the Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1 November 1990.

Coker, William Leon. "Cotton and Faith: A Social and Political View of Mississippi Wartime Finance, 1861-1865." Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1973.

- Cooley, Ruby E. "A History of the Mississippi Penal Farm System, 1890-1935: Punishment, Politics, and Profit in Penal Affairs." M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1981.
- Cranford, Sammy O. "The Fernwood, Columbia, and Gulf: A Railroad in the Piney Woods of South Mississippi." Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 1983.
- Davis, William Graham. "Attacking the 'Matchless Evil': Temperance and Prohibition in Mississippi, 1817-1908." Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 1975.
- Easom, Percy. "Public School Legislation in Mississippi, 1860 to 1930." Ph.D. diss., George Peabody College for Teachers, 1937.
- Ferguson, James Sharborough. "Agrarianism in Mississippi, 1871-1900: A Study in Non-Conformity." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1952.
- Foust, James D. "The Yeoman Farmer and Westward Expansion of U.S. Cotton Production," Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1967.
- Gutman, Myron P. "Ethnicity and Residential Persistence in Nineteenth-Century Texas." Paper Delivered at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 15 March 1991.
- Hardin, Paul Douglas. "Edward Cary Walthall: A Mississippi Conservative." M.A. thesis, Duke University, 1940.
- Legan, Marshall Scott. "The Evolution of Public Health Services in Mississippi, 1865-1910." Ph.D. diss., University of Mississippi, 1968.
- Miller, Clarke Leonard. "'Let Us Die to make Men Free:' Political Terrorism in Post-Reconstruction Mississippi, 1877-1896." Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1983.
- Moore, Ross. "Social and Economic Conditions in Mississippi During Reconstruction." Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1938.
- Salamon, Lester Milton. "Protest, Politics, and Modernization in the American South: Mississippi as a 'Developing Society.'" Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1971.

- Sullivan, Steve. "Prison Without Walls: A History of the Mississippi State Penal System." Unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.
- Vogt, Daniel C. "Problems of Government Regulation: The Mississippi Railroad Commission, 1884-1956." Ph.D. diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1980.
- Weems, Robert Cicero, Jr. "The Bank of the State of Mississippi: A Pioneer Bank of the Old Southwest, 1820-1844." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1952.
- Young, David Nathaniel. "The Mississippi Whigs, 1834-1860." Ph.D. diss., University of Alabama, 1968.

Appendix

Calculating Foodstuff Production

In order to calculate farmers' habits of foodstuff production, I applied methods employed by economists Raymond Battalio and John Kagel. Other economists use different methods, but Battalio's and Kagel's appear most reasonable.¹

To limit the number of farm units examined, I divided the state into six regions based on socio-economic characteristics (primarily cotton and corn production but also racial composition). Unlike others who have studied southerners' habits of foodstuff production, I included

¹Besides Raymond C. Battalio and John Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, A Case Study," Agricultural History 44 (January 1970), passim see too, Robert E. Gallman, "Self-Sufficiency in the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South," Agricultural History 44 (January 1970), 3-23; Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), appendix E; Samuel Bowers Hilliard Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860, (Carbondale and Evansville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), passim. J. William Harris, Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta's Hinterlands, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 200-201; Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods; A Supplement, vol. 2. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 95-98.

three counties which barely qualified as cotton belt counties and one which did not. From each county, I randomly selected from the 1850 and 1860 agricultural censuses two and one-half percent of farms, but at least ten, for inclusion in the data bases. Additional data about each farm unit was obtained from the population and slave schedules. Heads of household not traceable in the population schedules were discarded and replaced.

Calculating the degree of self-sufficiency achieved on individual farms and among farms of various classes requires data on foodstuff production and an understanding of southerners' consumption habits. Manuscript returns of the U.S. census contain production data, but determining levels of consumption involves some guess work. Economists who have dealt with the topic of foodstuff production turn to historical monographs, government publications, and contemporary accounts to determine stock and human consumption, as well as the live and slaughter weights of farm animals.

According to contemporaries and agricultural historian Lewis Gray the "standard" adult slave ration consisted of 1 to 1.5 pecks (16 to 24 pints) of meal and 3.5 pounds of bacon per week. Assuming that the free farm population consumed similar amounts, and not all historians would agree with that assumption, adults (those 15 years of age and over) annually consumed 16.25 bushels of

grain and 182 pounds of meat. For this study, adults were allotted about three cups of grain, including corn and meal, and 8 ounces of meat.² The level of meat consumption, as it was based solely on pork intake, underestimates white farmers' consumption of other home-raised meat. I have allocated adult consumers a meat ration derived from all stock sources but have not increased the consumption rate to reflect the greater variety and larger portions that whites surely enjoyed. Children aged 14 and under presumably received one-half of the adult ration. Summing the meat and grain needs of all consumers resulted in the total foodstuff requirements of humans.

Calculating the amount of grain required to feed farm animals followed a similar procedure. I divided enumerated species into adult and youthful consumers. Following Battalio's and Kagel's example, mature livestock and draft animals received grain according to the following schedule: horses 21.6 bushels per year, milk cows and other cattle 2.25 bushels, sheep .5 bushel, and oxen and mules 14.256 bushels. Young animals consumed one-half the grain fed adult stock.³ When calculating consumption

²Lewis Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States, vol. 2, 239-240; Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Antebellum Agriculture," 26.

³Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Southern Agriculture," 36. Neither the seventh nor eighth censuses divided farm animals into adult and young populations. Based on the annual reproduction recorded in the twelfth census (1900),

rates for livestock, hogs present a special case. According to census bureau instructions, enumerators counted all swine in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, but as most farmers permitted their hogs, if not also most of their beef cattle, to roam freely much of the time, I assumed that only swine intended for slaughter received corn. According to Samuel Hilliard, the number of slaughterable swine depended on the age and size of a herd. Assuming that all farmers possessed herds capable of reproducing shoats equal to the number of feeders butchered each year, I fixed the number of feeder hogs at 45 percent of those enumerated. Each of the hogs intended for slaughter consumed five bushels of grain.⁴ Adding the grain requirements of all stock and human consumers resulted in the total grain needs per farm. I also determined the total grain requirement for each farm-size cohort.

Although corn played a major role in southerners' diets, farmers also consumed and fed their stock other grains. Wheat, peas and beans, oats, and sweet and Irish

however, a rough estimate of adult herds can be made. Ninety-four percent of the horses and mules enumerated in the 1850 census were assumed to be adults, as were ninety percent of all sheep, milk cows, oxen, and other cattle. I employed the same ratios of adult to young livestock for the 1860 data bases, except for oxen. The 1860 census included only adult oxen, and I made no provision for calculating the number or consumption requirements of oxen under two years of age.

⁴U.S., Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census, 1850, xxiii-xxiv; Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake, 104.

potatoes rounded out the fare. In parts of South Carolina and Louisiana, and even in southern Mississippi, rice replaced corn as the grain of choice, but among the Mississippi farms surveyed, few (2.9 percent in 1860) cultivated it.⁵ I excluded rice when calculating the amount of grain available for consumption. In order to calculate farmers' total grain production, I converted grain crops into corn equivalents after deducting from each the portion of the crop necessary to supply seed for the following year. Based on nutritional value per bushel (and in some instances the relative price of the crop) wheat converted to corn equivalents at a rate of 1.3:1, potatoes at a rate of 4:1, oats at 2:1, and peas and beans at 1.285:1.⁶

The final series of calculations necessary for converting census data into a meaningful set of numbers involved establishing slaughter rates and carcass weights for butchered stock. Feeder hogs, as it has been previously mentioned, accounted for 45 percent of the enumerated swine. Assuming that each hog weighted ninety pounds

⁵See Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake, 159, 229 on the use of rice as a substitute for corn.

⁶Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Southern Agriculture," 28; Gallman, "Self-Sufficiency in the Cotton Economy," 10. I assumed that farmers held in reserve the following percentages of their harvested grain to use as seed: corn 5 percent; oats and potatoes 10 percent; wheat 13 percent; peas and beans 8.3 percent.

after foraging for fifteen months and that penned hogs converted the five bushels of grain allowed them into fifty pounds of live weight, antebellum swine weighted approximately 140 pounds when slaughtered.⁷ Undoubtedly large planters and specialized stock-raisers fed their swine more grain and allowed them to gain more weight before slaughter, but records of hog weights at killing time are ambiguous. For example, in December 1859, the manager of Columbus Sykes' Noxubee County plantation slaughtered 48 hogs, which averaged 194.89 pounds, and R. A. Evans of Simpson County slaughtered eight, which averaged 127.5 pounds. While the stated weights seem straight-forward, neither Sykes nor Evans made plain whether the weights represented carcass or dead weights.⁸ Historians know far more about the weights of animals slaughtered in the northern states, and the proposed live weight of southern swine equals 70 percent of the live weight of those raised in the North. After deducting the weight of inedible portions from the carcass weight of

⁷Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Southern Agriculture," 29.

⁸J. C. Jackson to Columbus Sykes, 23 December 1859, Sykes Papers, MDAH. R. A. Evans Diary, 16 January and 25 May 1858, MDAH. See also, Robert B. Alexander Diary, 24 November and 4 December 1854, MDAH, and Duncan McKenzie to Duncan McLaurin, 29 December 1856, McLaurin Papers, Duke. On two separate days of slaughtering swine, Alexander recorded average weights of 154 and 118.2 pounds. McKenzie claimed that his hogs would weigh about 200 pounds after feasting on nothing more than forest mast.

slaughtered swine, I assumed that each hog rendered 106.4 pounds of meat. Just as southerners depended largely on corn to fulfill their grain needs, they looked primarily to pork to meet their protein needs. Yet, they also consumed other domestic animals. According to the estimations of Battalio and Kagel, southerners slaughtered about 40 percent of their enumerated sheep, 14 percent of their milk cows, 16.6 percent of their oxen, and 28.6 percent of their stock listed as "other cattle." Assuming that all stock, like swine, weighed 30 percent less than the same species bred on northern farms, I estimated that sheep produced 19.53 pounds of meat, milk cows and other cattle 239.85 pounds, and oxen 426.4 pounds.⁹

The foregoing assumptions are reasonable and generally accepted by economists, but they should be embraced with some reservations. At best, the consumption and conversion ratios represent averages. Few historians would doubt that the planter class took better care of their stock and converted live animals into meat a higher rate than most yeomen; few would doubt that some southerners ate more meat and grain than others or that wild game played an important role in farmers', particularly yeomen's diets. Additionally, historians know far too little about southerners' consumption of sheep, milk cows, and

⁹Battalio and Kagel, "Structure of Southern Agriculture," 36-37.

oxen or the amount of grain fed these breeds of stock. Adopting the methods outlined above required a leap of faith. In order to live up to the prescribed assumptions, farmers and their stock, in fact, had to undertake some imaginative activities, activities requiring supernatural abilities: a farmer with one horse had to feed 94 percent of it as though it were an adult and 6 percent of it as if it were a colt; a farmer who owned two hogs presumably slaughtered nine-tenths of one; a farmer with one oxen slaughtered less than 17 percent of it and received more than 70 pounds of meat. Despite these illogicalities and the stated reservations, statistical analysis permits historians to examine to what degree Mississippians successfully practiced self-sufficiency while producing for the market.

Vita

Bradley G. Bond is the son of M. E. and Ione G. Bond; he is married to the former Deborah Weatherford. A 1981 graduate of Petal High School, Petal, Mississippi, Mr. Bond received the Bachelor of Arts and the Master of Arts from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1985 and 1987, respectively.

Between 1987 and 1993, Mr. Bond was a Ph.D. candidate at Louisiana State University. For the academic year 1989-1990, he was the Department of History's T. Harry Williams Fellow. While at Louisiana State University, Mr. Bond published one scholarly article; he also served on a search committee for the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and on the advisory council for the Division of Instructional Support and Development. Additionally, in 1992, Mr. Bond was named a Conference Fellow to the "Minds of the South Symposium" at Wake Forest University and participated in a panel discussion entitled "The Future of Scholarship."

Prior to entering graduate school, Mr. Bond worked as a sports writer and as a market research/advertising assistant. He teaches at Georgia State University.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

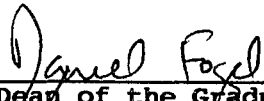
Candidate: Bradley G. Bond

Major Field: History


Title of Dissertation: A Southern Social Ethic: Political Economy
in the Nineteenth-Century South; Mississippi,
1840-1910

Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

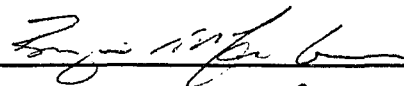

Dean of the Graduate School

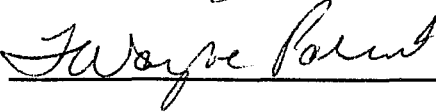
EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Date of Examination:

December 1, 1992

